Psalm 9-10— 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 9-10

- In the Masoretic tradition Psalms 9 and 10 are counted as two separate psalms, but there is ample evidence to show that they belong inextricably together to form a single poem. Unlike Psalms 7 and 40, which are indeed *composite* poems, the present psalm has been designed, in my judgement, as a *single* numerical composition. This also holds true for Psalm 42-43. The mere fact that Psalms 9 and 10 are counted as separate poems in MT is not sufficient to regard them as comprising two psalms. In fact, there is no cogent evidence indicating that they constitute a composite consisting of two originally independent poems. Therefore, it remains hard to explain why Psalms 9 and10 were ever regarded as separate psalms in the Masoretic tradition.

  Let me provide evidence to substantiate my view of Psalm 9-10 as a single entity:

1. The LXX understood the composite poem as a single composition, which is also the case in some Hebrew manuscripts.

2. Unlike the other 'nameless' psalms in (the 'Davidic') Book I (1, 2 and 33), whose lack of a heading can be explained, there is no explanation for the fact that Psalm 10 has no heading other than because it is structurally part of Psalm 9. In my judgement, the 'nameless' Psalm 1 was composed by the editor/composer of the Psalter as the introduction to Book I and to the entire Psalter and Psalm 2 to introduce the first group of Davidic psalms (3-8), while Psalm 33 was specifically composed to prelude the alphabetic acrostic Psalm 34 in the last group of Davidic psalms (32-41).

3. The *selah* at the end of Psalm 9 clearly indicates that this is not the end of the psalm; nowhere in the Psalter is a *selah* to be found at the bottom of a poem. In fact, in my opinion, the *selah* signifies the striking arithmetic middle of the twin psalms: 10:1, its meaningful centre. This brings us to the most distinctive feature of the poem, its perfectly balanced structure, with the **7** words of 10:1 at the arithmetic centre. It is flanked by **156** (6 x **26**) words on either side 319 = **156** + **7** + **156**. Moreover, the meaningful centre coincides precisely with the *lamed*-verseline, as in several alphabetic acrositics – see the General Introduction, "The alphabetic acrostics". In addition, the Psalm 9-10 as a whole has **136** (8 x **17**) words after atnach.

   Finally, there is an exact parallel to be found in the twin psalms 111 and 112. Psalm 111 is made up of **72** words, while Psalm 112 has **77** words, altogether 149 words. Their mathematical centre is constituted by the **5** words in 112:1a, the meaningful centre of the twin psalms: 149 = 72 + **5** + 72. For particulars, see my analysis of Psalm 111.

4. There is no doubt about Psalm 9 being a partial alphabetic acrostic; the successive letters *aleph* through *kaph* are all present, except the *daleth.* Psalm 10 begins with a *lamedh*-verseline (v. 1a) and ends with verselines having the successive initial letters *qoph* (12a), *resh* (14a), *shin* (15a) and *taw* (17a). Such evident vestiges of an acrostic in Psalm 10 cannot simply be waved aside. The fact of the matter is that the composite poem as a whole is a *defective* alphabetic acrostic, and in my view, the defectiveness is not due to corruption of the text. The only corruption is the missing word with initial *tsadeh* in 10:10a, which can be restored – see below "Textcritical remarks".

In Ps. 9:9a the *heh* is present as the second letter of the initial word, which need not pose a problem (compare Nah. 1:7b). This means that the psalm really lacks only five letters: *daleth, mem, nun, samekh* and *ayin*. My explanation for the defectiveness is that these letters were deliberately omitted by the author in order to achieve a *hidden acrostic*. Taken in their normal alphabetic order, these five letters constitute the words דָּם נֹסֵעַ, 'the *blood* of a *wayfarer*'. This ingenious little acrostic may be interpreted as a subtle comment on the fact that YHWH is called 'the avenger of *blood*' (9:13), and more specifically, as an explication of the metaphor of the lion lurking in ambush to sieze an innocent *passer-by* (10:9-10). Therefore, we need not endeavour on our part to 'restore' the presumed corrupted alphabetic acrostic. See also my Analysis of Psalm 34, where we find a comparable ingenious arrangement of the initial letters. For another example of a hidden acrostic, see Observation 2 in my Analysis of Psalm 119.

5. In terms of the change in the direction of address, words directly addressed to God and words spoken about him, the 7 words of 10:1 are part of the *words addressed to God*, starting in 9:20-21 (the call on God to act) and ending in 10:1 (the question why he does not act). This means that there is no strong caesura between Psalm 9 and Psalm 10.

6. The unity of Psalm 9-10 as a single literary entity is additionally underscored by the coherence in thought content: the deliverance of the oppressed is the leading idea in both sections. Moreover, there are numerous verbal repetitions in the composition as a whole, which cannot be dismissed as coincidence. To mention only a few key-words, such as אֱנוֹשׁ, 'human being' (already preluded in Ps. 8:5a), reverberating here at the end of both sections (9:20a, 21b and 10:18b), דרשׁ, 'seek' (9:11b, 9:13a, 10:4a, 10:13b and 10:15b), דַּךְ, 'the oppressed' (9:10a and 10:18a), and רָשָׁע, 'godless', which runs as a unifying thread through the entire poem (9:6, 17, 18, 10:2, 3, 4, 13, 15). For other verbal repetitions within the composition as a whole, see the fourteen additional examples mentioned by Van der Lugt (*CAS*, § 10.4.4).

7. As in many psalms with a bipartite structure, each of the two cantos of the psalm has its own meaningful centre on word level, in addition to the common meaningful centre in Ps. 10 :1. Therefore, this cannot be adduced as evidence for the existence of two poems.

Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: || Sub-canto boundary |

- Van der Lugt: 9:2-3, 4-5, 6-7 | 8-9, 10-11, 12-13 | 14-15, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21 ||

  10:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 | 7-8b, 8c-9, 10-11 | 12-13, 14, 15-16, 17-18 (2 cantos (1 + 1) with 6 sub-cantos (3 + 3) and 20 2-verseline strophes (10 + 10), 40 verselines and 81 cola (taking only 10:5 as a tricolon and 10:8-9 as three bicolic verselines).

- Fokkelman: 9:2-3, 4-5 | 6-7 8-9 || 10-11, 12-13 || 14-15, 16-17 | 18-19, 20-21 ||

  10:1-2, 3-4 | 5-6, 7-8 || 9-11 || 12-13, 14 | 15-16, 17-18 (6 stanzas with 19 strophes, 39 verselines and 81 cola, taking 10:8 and 9 as tricola).

- Labuschagne: Like Van der Lugt, I find 2 cantos with 6 sub-cantos, 20 strophes, 40 verselines and 81 cola.

- Christensen includes the heading of Psalm 9 in the word-count and takes Psalm 10 as an independent composition - see his analysis on his website www.bibal.net.

- For an overview of other divisions of the text, see Van der Lugt, *CAS*, Psalm 10, § 6.

Logotechnical analysis of Psalm 9-10

- 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
Heading: לַמְנַצֵּחַ עַלְמוּת לַבֵּן מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד׃ 1	5	5		0				
2 אוֹדֶה יְהוָה בְּכָל־לִבִּי^ א 1	4	4				4		
אֲסַפְּרָה כָּל־נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ׃	3			3		3		
Total, v. 2	7	=	4	+	3	=	7	+ 0
3 אֶשְׂמְחָה וְאֶעֶלְצָה בָךְ^ 2	3	3				3		
אֲזַמְּרָה שִׁמְךָ עֶלְיוֹן׃ occurs only here עֶלְיוֹן	3			3		3		
and in Ps. 18:14 Total, v. 3	6	=	3	+	3	=	6	+ 0
Strophe 1 Total, v. 2-3	13	=	7	+	6	=	13	+ 0
4 בְּשׁוּב־אוֹיְבַי אָחוֹר^ ב 3	3	3				3		
יִכָּשְׁלוּ וְיֹאבְדוּ מִפָּנֶיךָ׃	3			3		3		
Total, v. 4	6	=	3	+	3	=	6	+ 0
5 כִּי־עָשִׂיתָ מִשְׁפָּטִי וְדִינִי^ 4	4	4				4		
יָשַׁבְתָּ לְכִסֵּא שׁוֹפֵט צֶדֶק׃	4			4		4		
Total, v. 5	8	=	4	+	4	=	8	+ 0
Strophe 2 Total, v. 4-5	14	=	7	+	7	=	14	+ 0
6 גָּעַרְתָּ גוֹיִם אִבַּדְתָּ רָשָׁע^ ג 5	4	4				4		
שְׁמָם מָחִיתָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד׃	4			4		4		
Total, v. 6	8	=	4	+	4	=	8	+ 0
7 הָאוֹיֵב תַּמּוּ חֳרָבוֹת לָנֶצַח 6	4	4				4		
וְעָרִים נָתַשְׁתָּ^ אָבַד זִכְרָם הֵמָּה׃	5	2				5		
Total, v. 7	9	=	6	+	3	=	9	+ 0
Strophe 3 Total, v. 6-7	17	=	10	+	7	=	**17**	+ 0
Sub-canto I.1 Total, v. 2-7	**44**	=	24	+	20	=	44	+ 0
8 וַיהוָה לְעוֹלָם יֵשֵׁב^ 7	3	3						3
כּוֹנֵן לַמִּשְׁפָּט כִּסְאוֹ׃	3			3				3
Total, v. 8	6	=	3	+	3	=	0	+ 6
9 וְהוּא יִשְׁפֹּט־תֵּבֵל בְּצֶדֶק^ ה 8	4	4						4
יָדִין לְאֻמִּים בְּמֵישָׁרִים׃	3			3				3
Total, v. 9	7	=	4	+	3	=	0	+ 7
Strophe 4 Total, v. 8-9	13	=	7	+	6	=	0	+ 13
Total, v. 6-9	30	=	**17**	+	13	=	**17**	+ 13

#	Text	Vs									
10	וִיהִי יְהוָה מִשְׂגָּב לַדָּךְ^	9 ו	4		4						4
	מִשְׂגָּב לְעִתּוֹת בַּצָּרָה:		3				3				3
	Total, v. 10		7	=	4	+	3	=	0	+	7
11	וְיִבְטְחוּ בְךָ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ^	10	4		4				4		
	כִּי לֹא־עָזַבְתָּ דֹרְשֶׁיךָ יְהוָה:		5				5		5		
	Total, v. 11		9	=	4	+	5	=	9	+	0
	Strophe 5 Total, v. 10-11		16	=	8	+	8	=	9	+	7
	Total, v. 8-11		29	=	15	+	14	=	9	+	20
	Total, v. 6-11		46	=	25	+	21	=	26	+	20
	Total, v. 5-11		54	=	29	+	25	=	34	+	20
12	זַמְּרוּ לַיהוָה יֹשֵׁב צִיּוֹן^	11 ז	4		4						4
Middle words	הַגִּידוּ בָעַמִּים עֲלִילוֹתָיו:		3				3				3
of Psalm 9: 156 = 77 + 2 + 77	Total, v. 12		7	=	4	+	3	=	0	+	7
Middle colon: 43 = 22 + 1 + 22	Total, v. 8-12		36	=	19	+	17	=	9	+	27
13	כִּי־דֹרֵשׁ דָּמִים אוֹתָם זָכָר^	12	5		5						5
	לֹא־שָׁכַח צַעֲקַת עֲנָוִים:		4				4				4
	Total, v. 13		9	=	5	+	4	=	0	+	9
	Strophe 6 Total, v. 12-13		16	=	9	+	7	=	0	+	16
	Total, v. 10-13		32	=	17	+	15	=	9	+	23
	Sub-canto I.2 Total, v. 8-13		45	=	24	+	21	=	9	+	36
	Total, v. 6-13		62	=	34	+	28	=	26	+	36
14	חָנְנֵנִי יְהוָה רְאֵה עָנְיִי מִשֹּׂנְאָי^	13 ח	5		5				5		
	מְרוֹמְמִי מִשַּׁעֲרֵי מָוֶת:		3				3		3		
	Total, v. 14		8	=	5	+	3	=	8	+	0
15	לְמַעַן אֲסַפְּרָה כָּל־תְּהִלָּתֶיךָ	14	4		4				4		
	בְּשַׁעֲרֵי בַת־צִיּוֹן^ אָגִילָה בִּישׁוּעָתֶךָ:		2		3				5		
	Total, v. 15		9	=	7	+	2	=	9	+	0
	Strophe 7 Total, v. 14-15		17	=	12	+	5	=	17	+	0
	Total, v. 13-15		26	=	17	+	9	=	17	+	9
	Total, v. 11-15		42	=	25	+	17	=	26	+	16
16	טָבְעוּ גוֹיִם בְּשַׁחַת עָשׂוּ^	15 ט	4		4						4
	בְּרֶשֶׁת־זוּ טָמָנוּ נִלְכְּדָה רַגְלָם:		5				5				5
	Total, v. 16		9	=	4	+	5	=	0	+	9
17	נוֹדַע יְהוָה מִשְׁפָּט עָשָׂה	16	4		4						4
	בְּפֹעַל כַּפָּיו נוֹקֵשׁ רָשָׁע^ הִגָּיוֹן סֶלָה:		4		4						4
	Total, v. 17		8	=	8	+	0	=	0	+	8
	Strophe 8 Total, v. 16-17		17	=	12	+	5	=	0	+	17
	Total, v. 14-17		34	=	24	+	10	=	17	+	17
	Total, v. 8-17		79	=	48	+	31	=	26	+	53
	Total, v. 2-17		123	=	72	+	51	=	70	+	53

#	Hebrew	v								
18	יָשׁוּבוּ רְשָׁעִים לִשְׁאוֹלָה^	י 17	3		3					3
	כָּל־גּוֹיִם שְׁכֵחֵי אֱלֹהִים׃		4				4			4
	Total, v. 18		7	=	3	+	4	= 0	+	7
19	כִּי לֹא לָנֶצַח יִשָּׁכַח אֶבְיוֹן^	כ 18	5		5					5
	תִּקְוַת עֲנִיִּים תֹּאבַד לָעַד׃		4				4			4
	Total, v. 19		9	=	5	+	4	= 0	+	9
	Strophe 9 Total, v. 18-19		16	=	8	+	8	= 0	+	16
	Total, v. 14-19		50	=	32	+	18	= 17	+	33
20	קוּמָה יְהוָה אַל־יָעֹז אֱנוֹשׁ^	19	5		5			5		
	יִשָּׁפְטוּ גוֹיִם עַל־פָּנֶיךָ׃		4				4	4		
	Total, v. 20		9	=	5	+	4	= 9	+	0
21	שִׁיתָה יְהוָה מוֹרָה לָהֶם	20	4		4			4		
	יֵדְעוּ גוֹיִם^ אֱנוֹשׁ הֵמָּה סֶלָה׃		4		2			4		
	Total, v. 21		8	=	6	+	2	= 8	+	0
	Strophe 10 Total, v. 20-21		17	=	11	+	6	= 17	+	0
	Sub-canto I.3 Total, v. 14-21		67	=	43	+	24	= 34	+	33
	Total, v. 12-21		83	=	52	+	31	= 34	+	69
	Canto I Total, v. 2-21		156	=	91	+	65	= 87	+	69
10:1 Middle words:	לָמָה יְהוָה תַּעֲמֹד בְּרָחוֹק^	ל 21	4		4			4		
	תַּעְלִים לְעִתּוֹת בַּצָּרָה׃ 156 + 7 + 156 = 319		3				3	3		
Meaningful centre of the psalm	Total, v. 1:		7	=	4	+	3	= 7	+	0
2	בְּגַאֲוַת רָשָׁע יִדְלַק עָנִי^	22	4		4					4
	יִתָּפְשׂוּ בִּמְזִמּוֹת זוּ חָשָׁבוּ׃		4				4			4
	Total, v. 2:		8	=	4	+	4	= 0	+	8
3	כִּי־הִלֵּל רָשָׁע עַל־תַּאֲוַת נַפְשׁוֹ^	23	6		6					6
	וּבֹצֵעַ בֵּרֵךְ נִאֵץ יְהוָה׃		4				4			4
	Total, v. 3:		10	=	6	+	4	= 0	+	10
4	רָשָׁע כְּגֹבַהּ אַפּוֹ בַּל־יִדְרֹשׁ^	24	5		5					5
	אֵין אֱלֹהִים כָּל־מְזִמּוֹתָיו׃		4				4			4
	Total, v. 4:		9	=	5	+	4	= 0	+	9
	Total, v. 1-4:		34	=	19	+	15	= 7	+	27
5	יָחִילוּ דְרָכָיו בְּכָל־עֵת	25	4		4					4
	מָרוֹם מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ מִנֶּגְדּוֹ^		3		3			3		
	כָּל־צוֹרְרָיו יָפִיחַ בָּהֶם׃		4				4			4
	Total, v. 5:		11	=	7	+	4	= 3	+	8
6*	אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ בַּל־אֶמּוֹט^	26	4		4					4
	לְדֹר וָדֹר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־בְרָע׃ [אָלָה] *סֶלָה		5				5			5
	Total, v. 6:		9	=	4	+	5	= 0	+	9
	Total, v. 5-6:		20	=	11	+	9	= 3	+	17
	Total, v. 3-6:		39	=	22	+	17	= 3	+	36
	Total, v. 2-6:		47	=	26	+	21	= 3	+	44
	Sub-canto II.1 Total, v. 1-6:		54	=	30	+	24	= 10	+	44

Ref	Hebrew	v#	T	A	B	C	D
7*	פִּיהוּ מָלֵא וּמִרְמוֹת וָתֹךְ^ **פ**	27	5/4	5/4			5/4
	תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנוֹ עָמָל וָאָוֶן:		4		4		4
	Total, v. 7:		9/8 =	5/4 +	4 =	0 +	9/8
8ab	יֵשֵׁב בְּמַאְרַב חֲצֵרִים	28	3	3			3
	בַּמִּסְתָּרִים יַהֲרֹג נָקִי(^):		3	3			3
8c-9a	עֵינָיו לְחֵלְכָה יִצְפֹּנוּ(:)	29	3		3		3
	יֶאֱרֹב בַּמִּסְתָּר כְּאַרְיֵה בְסֻכֹּה:		4	4			4
9bc	יֶאֱרֹב לַחֲטוֹף עָנִי^	30	3	3			3
Middle words of Ps. 10 :	יַחְטֹף עָנִי בְּמָשְׁכוֹ בְרִשְׁתּוֹ		4		4		4
10* 78 + 7 + 78 = 163	יָצוּד יִדְכֶּה יָשֹׁחַ* **צ**	31	2/3	2/3			2/3
	וְנָפַל בַּעֲצוּמָיו [חֵלְכָאִים] *חֵיל כָּאִים:		3/4		3/4		3/4
	Total, v. 10:		5/7 =	3 +	4 =	0 +	5/7
11	אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ שָׁכַח אֵל^	32	4	4			4
	הִסְתִּיר פָּנָיו בַּל־רָאָה לָנֶצַח:		5		5		5
	Total, v. 11:		9 =	4 +	5 =	0 +	9
Sub-canto II.2 Total, v. 7-11:			43/44 =	24+	19/20 =	0+	43/44
12	קוּמָה יְהוָה אֵל נְשָׂא יָדֶךָ^ **ק**	33	5	5		5	
	אַל־תִּשְׁכַּח עֲנָוִים:		3		3	3	
	Total, v. 12:		8 =	5 +	3 =	8 +	0
13	עַל־מֶה נִאֵץ רָשָׁע אֱלֹהִים^	34	5	5		5	
	אָמַר בְּלִבּוֹ לֹא תִּדְרֹשׁ:		4		4	4	
	Total, v. 13:		9 =	5 +	4 =	9 +	0
	Total, v. 12-13:		**17** =	10 +	7 =	**17** +	0
14	רָאִתָה כִּי־אַתָּה עָמָל וָכַעַס **ר**	35	5	5		5	
	תַּבִּיט לָתֵת בְּיָדֶךָ		3	3		3	
	עָלֶיךָ יַעֲזֹב חֵלְכָה^	36	3	3		3	
	יָתוֹם אַתָּה הָיִיתָ עוֹזֵר:		4		4	4	
	Total, v. 14:		15 =	11 +	4 =	15 +	0
15	שְׁבֹר זְרוֹעַ רָשָׁע^ **שׁ**	37	3	3		3	
	וָרָע תִּדְרוֹשׁ־רִשְׁעוֹ בַל־תִּמְצָא:		5		5	5	
	Total, v. 15:		8 =	3 +	5 =	8 +	0
	Total, v. 12-15:		40 =	24 +	16 =	40 +	0
16	יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם וָעֶד^ **ת**	38	4	4			4
	אָבְדוּ גוֹיִם מֵאַרְצוֹ:		3		3		3
	Total, v. 16:		7 =	4 +	3 =	0 +	7
	Total, v. 14-16:		30 =	18 +	12 =	23 +	7

17	תַּאֲוַת עֲנָוִים שָׁמַעְתָּ יְהוָה^ ת 39	4		4			4			
	תָּכִין לִבָּם תַּקְשִׁיב אָזְנֶךָ׃	4			4		4			
	Total, v. 17:	8	=	4	+	4	=	8	+	0
18	לִשְׁפֹּט יָתוֹם וָדָךְ 40	3		3			3			
	בַּל־יוֹסִיף עוֹד^ לַעֲרֹץ אֱנוֹשׁ מִן־הָאָרֶץ׃	7		3		4		7		
	Total, v. 18:	10	=	6	+	4	=	10	+	0
	Total, v. 16-18:	25	=	14	+	11	=	18	+	7

Sub-canto II.3   Total, v. 12-18: 65 = 38 + 27 = 58 + 7
Canto II   **Total, v. 2-18: 155/156** = 88+ 67/**68** = 61+ 94/95
Total, v. 1-18: 162/163 = 92+ 70/71 = **68**+ 94/95
With סֶלָה (1x*): 163/164 = 92+ 71/72 = **68**+ 95/96
Canto I-II Grand Total, 9:2 - 10:18: 318/319 = 183+ 135/**136**= 155+ 163/164
With the heading, 9:1 – 10:18: **323/324** = 188+ 135/136
With סֶלָה (3x*) and הִגָּיוֹן (1x): 327/328 = 188+ 139/140

Textcritical remarks

* The word-count of the corrected text is highlighted. In order to resolve the textcritical problems in 10:7 and 10:10, I venture to put forward the following suggestions:

- First, regarding the problematic אָלָה, 'curse', in 10:7a, I follow Van der Lugt (*CAS*, § 10.1) in removing this word from v. 7, transferring it to the end of v. 6 and changing it to סֶלָה, which was most probably the original reading.

- Second, in 10:10b I follow the Qere of the Masoretes, reading two words חֵיל כָּאִים, 'host of dejected persons', (cf. LXX), instead of the one word in MT, חֶלְכָּאִים, 'unfortunate persons' (see *BHS*). The effect on the word count can be seen in the chart.

- Finally, in 10:10a I follow the Qere reading יִדְכֶּה, 'he strikes'. More importantly, I also insert the obviously missing word beginning with a *tsadeh*, in v.10a, which in my opinion is יָצוּד, 'he hunts' (from the verb צוּד). The *tsadeh* is not the initial letter, but in light of Ps. 9:9, where the *heh*-word is preceded by a waw: וְהוּא, this poses no problem (compare also Nah. 1:7b).

  Of all earlier suggestions, Brigg's proposal to insert the verb צוד - more correctly the imperfect form יָצוּד - makes the best sense in the context of the vivid description of the predatory onslaught by the godless on the poor: "He hunts (him), strikes (him), crouches (over him)", which is a perfect depiction of the hunting lion in vs. 8-9. Moreover, this verb occurs together with ארב, 'lurk, lie in wait' (vs. 9, 'like a lion') in a comparable context in Micah 7:2 and, more importantly, in Job 38: 39-40, where the lion is explicitly mentioned and where we find all three verbs occurring in Psalm 9: not only ארב, 'lurk', and צוד, 'hunt', but also שחח, 'crouch'.

- The proposed corrections do not only restore the letters of the alphabetic acrostic in vs. 7 and 10, but also the numerical structure which was negatively effected by the loss of the word אָלָה in vs. 7a. In this way, the 163 words of Psalm 10 are maintained, and its logotechnical structure, as well as that of the entire poem, is considerably improved. And what is more, the correction in 10:7a also restores the 7-word arithmetic centre of Psalm 10 (vs. 9b-10a)!

  In my judgement, the two corrections proposed above bring us closer than ever to what the final author/editor had in mind.

Observations

1. In terms of the 319 words of the psalm, the middle word is בְּרָחוֹק, 'far off', but the 7 words of 10:1 constitute the arithmetic centre. They are flanked by exactly **156** (6 x **26**) words on either side (319 = **156** + 7 + **156**).

<div dir="rtl">לָמָה יְהוָה תַּעֲמֹד בְּרָחוֹק ^ תַּעְלִים לְעִתּוֹת בַּצָּרָה</div>

Why, YHWH, do you stand far off? // Why hide away in times of trouble?

The pressing question why God does not act, constitutes a very meaningful centre for a prayer for deliverance of the oppressed. The problem of the presumed 'aloofness' of God is strongly reminiscent of Psalm 73, where the two notions 'far from God' and 'near God' function as a structuring device – see my Analysis of Psalm 73.

It is important to note that the arithmetic centre of the poem coincides with the *lamedh*-verseline at the middle of the alphabetic acrostic, which normally falls between the letters *kaph* and *lamed,* so that the middle verseline is either the *kaph-* or the *lamedh* verseline – see the General Introduction, "The alphabetic acrostics".

In terms of the 81 cola of the poem, the middle colon coincides exactly with the arithmetic centre (81 = 40 + **1** + 40), which highlights the meaningful centre on word level in yet another way.

2. Each of the two sections of the psalm has its own meaningful centre. In Psalm 9, the two middle words are הַגִּידוּ בָעַמִּים, 'proclaim among the nations', in 12b (**156** = **77** + **2** + **77**).

3. The meaningful centre of Psalm 10 is constituted by the **7** words (once again **7**!) in vs. 9c-10a (163 = **78** + **7** + **78**), which are flanked by **78** (3 x **26**) words on either side.

יַחְטֹף עָנִי בְּמָשְׁכוֹ בְרִשְׁתּוֹ : יָצוּד יִדְכֶּה יָשֹׁחַ

He seizes the poor, drags him away in his net // hunts, strikes, crouches (over him).

The metaphor of the hunting lion, lying in ambush for a passer-by, is a most fitting meaningful centre for this part of the poem.

4. The division of the text into words directly addressed to God and words spoken about him appears to have been employed to weave extra divine name numbers into the text:[*]

9:6-7	**17** words addressed to God
9:6-11	**26** words addressed to God
9:14-15	**17** words addressed to God
9:11-15	**26** words addressed to God
9:14-17	**17** words spoken about God
9:8-17	**26** words addressed to God
9:20-21	**17** words addressed to God
10:5-6	**17** words spoken about God
10:4-6	**26** words spoken about God
10:7-8	**17** words spoken about God
10:12-13	**17** words addressed to God
10:1-18	**68** (4 x **17**) words addressed to God.

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[*] Van der Lugt counts 180 words adressed to God (*CAS*, § 10.5), while I find 155, because I do not reckon 10:2 as addressed to God, neither 10:5-6, but only 10:5b (see the chart, Column c).

5. Additionally, there are a considerable number of occurrences of the divine name numbers woven into the text in terms of the division by *atnach*:

9:6-7	**17** words in total
9:4-7	**17** words before atnach
9:6-9	**17** words before atnach
9:8-12	**17** words after atnach
9:10-13	**17** words before atnach
9:6-13	**34** (2 x **17**) words before atnach
9:13-15	**26** words in total, with **17** before atnach
9:11-15	**17** words after atnach
9:2-17	**51** (3 x **17**) words after atnach
9:12-21	**52** (2 x **26**) words before atnach
9:2-21	**156** (6 x **26**) words in total
10:1-4	**34** (2 x **17**) words in total
10:3-6	**17** words after atnach
10:2-6	**26** words before atnach
10:7-8	**17** words in total
10:2-18	**156** (6 x **26**) words in total, with **68** (4 x **17**) after atnach
9:2 – 10:18	**136** (8 x **17**) words after atnach.

6. The word שִׁמְךָ, 'your name', occurs twice in Psalm 9 (vs. 3b and 11a) and seems to be used as a unifying key-word to link Psalm 9 with Psalms 7 and 8 – see Ps. 7:18 and Ps. 8:2,10. The same holds true for the designation עֶלְיוֹן, 'Most High', in 9:3b, with regard to Psalm 7, where it occurs in v. 18. See Observation 6 in my Analysis of [Psalm 7]. It is an important key-word, occurring **22** times in the Psalter: **17**x in Books I-III (of which **7** instances are to be found in the Asaphite psalms, 73-83 – see Observations 1 and 2 in my Analysis of [Psalm 78]) and **5**x in Books IV and V.

7. The name יהוה occurs 9x in Psalm 9 (9:2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 20 and 21) and 5x in Psalm 10 (10:1, 3, 10, 12 and 17), together **14** times. Significantly enough, there are **52** (2 x **26**) occurrences altogether in Psalms 1-10, with **17** in Psalms 6-8 and **26** in Psalms 6-9. See Observation 7 in my Analysis of [Psalm 7], and for particulars, see the [General Introduction], "The name YHWH woven into the fabric of the text", and particularly Table I in the Introduction to [Book I].

    The word אֱלֹהִים occurs 3x (9:18, 10:4 and 13) and אֵל 2x (10:11 and 12). The divine title עֶלְיוֹן, 'Most High', occurs 1x (v. 3b). The only other instance in this sub-group (Psalms 9-18) is to be found in Ps. 18:14b. The two occurrences function as a literary device for inclusion to delimit the psalms in this sub-group.