Psalm 13— 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 13

- Like Psalms 11 and 12, this poem is characterized by its lucid structure: it divides into three strophes, determined by the well-defined categories 'lamentation', 'supplication', and 'expression of trust'. The middle strophe is made up of **17**-words.
- Its special feature is the use of the numerical value of the keyword פָּנֶיךָ, 'your face' (vs. 2b), to define the total number of words: **52** (17 + 14 + 10 + 11).
- The meaningful centre on word level, v. 4a, is highlighted by the middle occurrence of the name YHWH, a feature it shares with Psalms 11 and 12.

Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: ||

- Van der Lugt and Labuschagne: 2-3, 4-5, 6 (3 strophes, 6 verselines and 13 cola).
- Fokkelman: similarly, except that he finds 5 verselines, taking v. 6 as a tricolic verseline by disregarding the *atnach* in v. 6c.
- For an overview of other divisions of the text, see Van der Lugt, *CAS*, Psalm 13, § 6.

Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the atnach.
- Column **c**: lamentation and expression of trust in God; **d**: the supplication for help.
- The numbering of the verselines is shown in brown.

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	לַמְנַצֵּחַ מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד׃ Heading, v. 1	3	3	0		
2　1	עַד־אָנָה יְהוָה תִּשְׁכָּחֵנִי נֶצַח^	5	5		5	
	עַד־אָנָה תַּסְתִּיר אֶת־פָּנֶיךָ מִמֶּנִּי׃　52 = פָּנֶיךָ	6		6	6	
	(17+14+10+11 = **52**)　　　Total, v. 2	11	= 5	+ 6 =	11	+ 0
3　2	עַד־אָנָה אָשִׁית עֵצוֹת בְּנַפְשִׁי	5	5		5	
	יָגוֹן בִּלְבָבִי יוֹמָם^	3	3		3	
	עַד־אָנָה יָרוּם אֹיְבִי עָלָי׃	5		5	5	
	Total, v. 3	13	= 8	+ 5 =	13	+ 0
	Strophe 1　　Total, v. 2-3	24	= **13**	+ 11 =	24	+ 0
4 Four middle words: הַבִּיטָה עֲנֵנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהָי^　3	4	4			4
52 = 24 + 4 + 24　הָאִירָה עֵינַי פֶּן־אִישַׁן הַמָּוֶת׃	5		5		5
	Total, v. 4	9	= 4	+ 5 =	0	+ 9
5　4	פֶּן־יֹאמַר אֹיְבִי יְכָלְתִּיו^	4	4			4
	צָרַי יָגִילוּ כִּי אֶמּוֹט׃	4		4		4
	Total, v. 5	8	= 4	+ 4 =	0	+ 8
	Middle strophe: Strophe 2　Total, v. 4-5	17	= 8	+ 9 =	0	+ **17**

6		וַאֲנִי בְּחַסְדְּךָ בָטַחְתִּי	5	3	3		3
		יָגֵל לִבִּי בִּישׁוּעָתֶךָ		3	3		3
6c	**Coda**	אָשִׁירָה לַיהוָה^	6	2	2		2
6d	Words spoken about God	כִּי גָמַל עָלָי׃		3		3	3

Strophe 3	Total, v. 6	11 = 8 + 3 = 11 + 0
	Total, v. 2-6	**52** = 29 + **23** = 35 + **17**
	With the heading, v. 1-6	**55** = **32** + **23**

Observations

1. On the level of words, the first 4 words of the supplication for help in v. 4a constitute the arithmetic middle of the poem: (**52** = 24 + **4** + 24). Being the opening words of the prayer for help (vs. 4-5) and significantly made up of **17** letters, it is a very meaningful centre:

    הַבִּיטָה עֲנֵנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהָי,

    Look now and answer me, YHWH my God.

2. In terms of the three strophes based on the categories 'lamentation' (vs. 2-3), 'supplication' (vs. 4-5) and '' expression of trust' (v. 6), the middle strophe, vs. 4-5, has clearly been designed as the larger meaningful centre of the psalm. Note that it is significantly made up of **17** words, matching the **17** letters of the 4-word arithmetic centre:

Strophe 1, vs. 2-3	Lamentation	5 cola	24 words
Strophe 2, vs. 4-5	Supplication for help	4 cola	**17** words
Strophe 3, v. 6	Expression of trust and thanks	4 cola	11 words.

    Note also that the unity of Strophe 1, the lamentation, is corroborated by the fourfold question עַד־אָנָה, 'how long?'

3. The poem is purposefully made up of **52** words in order to signify the presence of God. This number does not only represent the double divine name number **26** but also the numerical value of the word פָּנֶיךָ, 'your face' (= 'your presence'), occurring in vs. 2b. For the use of the numerical value of an important word in the text to define the number of words – a feature this psalm shares with the preceding Psalm 12 -, see the General Introduction, "The numerical value of a keyword in the text."

    The presence of God is additionally expressed by the use of **23** words in the compositional formula **52** = 29a + **23**b – which is the *kabod* number signifying God's glory and his presence. Including the 3-word heading in the word count, the text has **32** words before *atnach*, (the other *kabod* number). In my opinion, a 3-word heading was deliberately devised to achieve the double *kabod* pattern: **55** = **32** + **23**. See the General Introduction, "Special patterns".

4. The psalm is phrased throughout as a prayer directly addressed to God, except for the very last verseline (v. 6c-d), where the poet speaks *about* God. Being different from the rest of the poem in both form and content (praise), it clearly functions as a coda. See the General Introduction, "The use of a coda as a device for conclusion", and compare Observation 4 in my Analysis of Psalm 7.

5. The name יהוה occurs 3 times (2a, 4a, and 6c) with the middle instance once again precisely in the arithmetic centre (v. 4a), as in the two preceding psalms. See Observation 3 in my Analysis of Psalm 11, and Observation 4 in that of Psalm 12.

Taken together, Psalms 11, 12 and 13 contain **13** occurrences of the divine name. The number **13** is the numerical value of *'echad*, 'one'. See Observation 2 in my Analysis of Psalm 11. Is it mere coincidence that this is the **13**th psalm in the Masoretic numbering? Probably not, for the same phenomeon occurs in Psalms 5, 17 and 31 - compare Observation 2 in my Analysis of Psalm 5!