

Psalm 44— 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 44

- The psalm has a singularly regular concentric canto- and strophic structure: five cantos with eight strophes and 28 bicolic verselines. Like Psalm 42-43, it has a meaningful centre on strophic level: the middle canto, *vs. 10-17*, coinciding with the 2 middle strophes, the 8 middle verselines and the 16 middle cola.
- The use of syntax ('main clauses' and 'subordinate clauses') to weave the YHWH 'echad formula in that part of the text that deals with God's past saving acts (vs. 2-9).

Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: ||

- Van der Lugt and Labuschagne: 2 || 3-5, 6-9 || 10-13, 14-17 || 18-21, 22-25 || 26-27 (5 cantos with 8 strophes, 28 verselines and 56 cola).
- Fokkelman: 2-3a, 3b-4 || 5-6, 7-9 || 10-11, 12-13 || 14-15, 16-17 || 18-20, 21-22 || 23-25, 26-27 (6 stanzas with 12 strophes, 28 verselines and 56 cola).

Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the atnach.
- Column **c**: words in the main clauses; **d**: words in the subordinate clauses.
- the numbering of the verselines is shown in brown.

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	Heading, v. 1	4	4			
2	אֱלֹהִים בְּאֶזְנוֹנוֹ שָׁמְעֵנוּ	1	3		3	
	אֲבוֹתֵינוּ סִפְרוּ לָנוּ	3	3		3	
	פֶּעַל פְּעֻלָּת בִּימֵיהֶם	2	3	3	3	
	בִּימֵי קָדְמָ:	2		2	2	
	Canto I Strophe 1 Total, v.2	11	= 6	+ 5	= 11	+ 0
3	אֲתָה יְדָד גּוֹיִם הוֹרַשְׁתָּ וַתִּטְעֵמָּ	3	5		5	
	תָּרַע לְאֲמִים וַתִּשְׁלַחֲמָ:	3		3	3	
	Total, v. 3	8	= 5	+ 3	= 8	+ 0
4	כִּי לֹא בַחֲרָבָם יִרְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ	4	5			5
	וַיִּזְרְעוּם לֹא-הוֹשִׁיעָה לָמוֹ	4	4			4
	כִּי-יִמְיָנָה וַיִּזְרְעֵהָ וְאוֹר פָּנֶיהָ	5	5			5
	כִּי רָצִיתָם:	2	2			2
	Total, v. 4	16	= 16	+ 0	= 0	+ 16
5	אֲתָה-הוּא מֶלֶכִּי אֱלֹהִים	6	4		4	
	צִוְהָ יִשׁוּעוֹת יַעֲקֹב:	3		3	3	
	Total, v. 5	7	= 4	+ 3	= 7	+ 0
	Strophe 2 Total, v. 3-5	31	= 25	+ 6	= 15	+ 16
	Total, v. 2-5	42	= 31	+ 11	= 26	+ 16

6	בְּךָ צָרִינוּ נִנְגַח־ בְּשִׁמְךָ נָבוֹס קְמִינוּ: Total, v. 6	7	3	3	3	$3 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0$
7	כִּי לֹא בִקְשָׁתִי אֶבְטַח־ וְחָרְבִי לֹא תוֹשִׁיעֵנִי: Total, v. 7	8	4	4	4	$4 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0$
8	כִּי הוֹשַׁעְתָּנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ־ וּמִשְׁנֵאֵינוּ הִבִּישוּת־: Total, v. 8	9	3	3	3	$3 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0$
9	בְּאַלְהִים הִלָּלְנוּ כָּל־הַיּוֹם־ וְשִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם נוֹדָה סֶלָה: Total, v. 9 Strophe 3 Total, v. 6-9 Canto II Total, v. 3-9 Total, v. 2-9	10	4	4	4	$4 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0$
10	אַךְ־זָנַחְתָּ וְתִכְלִימְנוּ־ וְלֹא־תֵצֵא בְּצַבְאוֹתֵינוּ: Total, v. 10	11	3	3	3	$3 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0$
11	תְּשִׁיבֵנוּ אַחֲוֹר מִנִּי־צָר־ וּמִשְׁנֵאֵינוּ שָׁסוּ לָמוּ: Total, v. 11	12	4	4	4	$4 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0$
12	תִּתְּנֵנוּ כְּצֹאן מֵאֶבֶל־ וּבְגוֹיִם זָרִיתָנוּ: Total, v. 12	13	3	3	3	$3 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0$
13	Four middle cola: תִּמְכַּר־עַמְּךָ בְּלֹא־הוֹן־ וְלֹא־רִבִּית בְּמַחִירֵיהֶם: 56 = 26 + 4 + 26 Two middle verselines: 13+2+13 Total, v. 13 (vs. 13-14) Strophe 4 Total, v. 10-13	14	4	4	4	$4 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0$
14	תְּשִׁימְנוּ חֲרָפָה לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ־ לְעַג וְקָלֶס לְסַבִּיבוֹתֵינוּ: Two middle words: 192 = 95 + 2 + 95 Total, v. 14 Total, vs. 13-14	15	3	3	3	$3 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0$
15*	תְּשִׁימְנוּ מָשָׁל בְּגוֹיִם־ מְנוֹד־רֵאשׁ בְּלֵאמִים [בְּלֵאמִים]: Total, v. 15	16	3	3	3	$3 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0$
16	כָּל־הַיּוֹם כָּל־מַתִּי נִגְדִי־ וּבִשְׁתַּ פָּנָי כִּסְתֵנִי: Total, v. 16	17	4	4	4	$4 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0$
17	מִקּוֹל מְחַרְרֵךְ וּמְגִדְרֵךְ־ מִפָּנָי אוֹיֵב וּמִתְנַקֵּם: Total, v. 17 Strophe 5 Total, v. 14-17 Total, v. 13-17 Canto III Total, v. 10-17 Canto II-III Total, v. 3-17	18	3	3	3	$3 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0$
			3	3	3	$3 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0$
			25/26	= 13 + 12/13	= 25/26 + 0	
			32/33	= 17 + 15/16	= 32/33 + 0	
			50/51	= 27 + 23/24	= 50/51 + 0	
			106/107	= 66 + 40/41	= 78/79 + 28	

18	כָּל־זֹאת בָּאתָנוּ וְלֹא שָׁכַחְנוּךָ ^א וְלֹא־שָׁקַרְנוּ בְּבְרִיתְךָ: Total, v. 18	19	5	5	5	
			3		3	3
			8	= 5	+ 3	= 8 + 0
19	לֹא־נִסּוּג אַחֲזֹר לְבָנוּ ^א וַתֵּט אֲשֶׁרִינוּ מִנִּי אֲרָחֶךָ: Total, v. 19	20	4	4	4	
			4		4	4
			8	= 4	+ 4	= 8 + 0
20	כִּי דָפִיתָנוּ בְּמִקּוֹם תַּנּוּיִם ^א וַתִּכַּס עֲלֵינוּ בְּצַלְמוֹת: Total, v. 20	21	4	4		4
			3		3	3
			7	= 4	+ 3	= 0 + 7
21	אִם־שָׁכַחְנוּ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ ^א וַנִּפְרֹשׁ כַּפֵּינוּ לְאֵל זָר: Total, v. 21	22	4	4		4
			4		4	4
			8	= 4	+ 4	= 0 + 8
	Strophe 6 Total, v. 18-21		31	= 17	+ 14	= 16 + 15
22	הֲלֹא אֱלֹהִים יַחְקֶר־זֹאתָ ^א כִּי־הוּא יָדַע תַּעֲלָמוֹת לֵב: Total, v. 22	23	4	4	4	
			5		5	5
			9	= 4	+ 5	= 4 + 5
	Total, v. 21-22		17	= 8	+ 9	= 4 + 13
23	כִּי־עָלֶיךָ הִרְגָנוּ כָּל־הַיּוֹם ^א נִחַשְׁבָנוּ כְּצֹאן טִבְחָה: Total, v. 23	24	5	5	5	
			3		3	3
			8	= 5	+ 3	= 8 + 0
	Total, v. 22-23		17	= 9	+ 8	= 12 + 5
24	עוֹרָה לְמָה תִּישֵׁן אֲדֹנָי ^א הֲקִיֶצֶה אֶל־תִּזְנוּחַ לְנִצָּח: Total, v. 24	25	4	4	4	
			4		4	4
			8	= 4	+ 4	= 8 + 0
25	לְמָה־פָּנִיךָ תִּסְתִּיר ^א תִּשְׁפַח עֵינֵינוּ וְלִחְצָנוּ: Total, v. 25	26	3	3	3	
			3		3	3
			6	= 3	+ 3	= 6 + 0
	Strophe 7 Total, v. 22-25		31	= 16	+ 15	= 26 + 5
	Canto IV Total, v. 18-25		62	= 33	+ 29	= 42 + 20
26	כִּי שָׁחָה לְעֶפֶר נַפְשֵׁנוּ ^א דָּבַקָה לְאָרֶץ בְּטַגְנוּ: Total, v. 26	27	4	4	4	
			3		3	3
			7	= 4	+ 3	= 0 + 7
27	קוֹמָה עוֹרְתָה לָנוּ ^א וַיִּפְדָנוּ לְמַעַן חֲסֹדֶךָ: Total, v. 27	28	3	3	3	
			3		3	3
			6	= 3	+ 3	= 6 + 0
	Canto V Strophe 8 Total, v. 26-27		13	= 7	+ 6	= 6 + 7
	Total, v. 23-27		35	= 19	+ 16	= 28 + 7
	Total, v. 2-27		192/193	= 112	+ 80/81	= 137/138 + 55
	With the heading and סְלָה (1x), v. 1-27		197/198	= 116	+ 81/82	

* Note: In Psalms 44:15 and 149:7 the words בְּל־אֲמִים in Codex L are clearly synonymous with בְּנוֹיִם, 'among the peoples', and in Psalms 57:10 and 108:4 with בְּעַמִּים, 'among the nations'. This means that the *primary meaning* is to be found in reading בְּל־אֲמִים, 'among the nations', which is indeed written as a single word in many Hebrew manuscripts and Editions. The reading בְּל־אֲמִים (two words in Codex L in all four psalms) may be explained as a denigrating wordplay purporting to depict the foreign nations as 'non-nations' (the word אֲמִים, 'nations', is attested in Ps. 117:1b). In Pss. 44:15, 57:10 and 108:4, I have chosen to count the words בְּל־אֲמִים as a single word, בְּל־אֲמִים. In Psalm 149:7, however, I count them as two words – see my Analysis of [Psalm 149](#).

Observations

1. In terms of the 192 words of the emended text, the arithmetic centre is constituted by the 2 words in v. 14b (192 = 95 + 2 + 95): לעג וקלס, 'derision and scorn'.

In MT, 3 words are at the centre (193 = 95 + 3 + 95):

לעג וקלס לסביבותינו, 'the derision and scorn of those about us'.

The arithmetic centre in terms of words falls within a larger centre, which is a more likely candidate as meaningful centre. It is to be found on *verseline* level: the two verselines in vs. 13-14, which are surrounded by 26 verselines with 13 on either side (28 = 13 + 2 + 13). Their pivotal position is underscored by the 4 middle cola, with 26 cola on either side (56 = 26 + 4 + 26):

תִּמְכַרְעַמָּךְ בְּלֹא-הוֹן ^ וְלֹא-רַבִּית בְּמַחֲרִיקָם:
 תְּשִׂימֵנוּ חֲרָפָה לְשִׁכְנֵינוּ ^ לְעַג וְקִלְס לְסָבִיבוֹתֵינוּ:

You have sold your people for a trifle // demanding no price for them.

You made us the taunt of our neighbours // the derision and scorn of those about us.

The meaningful centre on verseline level contains the gist of the more extensive description of the crisis in which YHWH's people find themselves vis-à-vis their neighbours: the impressive lament in the middle canto, vs. 10-17, dealing with Israel's pitiful situation due to God's punishing judgement. In my opinion, the entire lament may be regarded as the consciously designed meaningful centre. In terms of content, it clearly constitutes a coherent literary unit.

2. The psalm appears to have a singularly regular concentric structure on poetic level (5 cantos and 8 strophes (1 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 1), supported on colon and verseline level:

v. 2	Canto I	(1)	Introductory prayer	2 verselines	4 cola
vs. 3-9	Canto II	(2)	God's past saving acts	8 verselines	16 cola
vs. 10-17	Canto III	(2)	God's judgement	8 verselines	16 cola
vs. 18-25	Canto IV	(2)	Profession of innocence	8 verselines	16 cola
vs. 26-27	Canto V	(1)	Concluding prayer	2 verselines	4 cola.

The beginning of the middle canto is marked by the *selah* at the end of Canto II (v. 9).

3. The divine name number 26 features in the 26 Masoretic verses, in the 26 cola flanking the two middla cola, and in the 26 words in the main clauses in vs. 2-5. Note the conspicuous presence of the YHWH 'echad formula in the division of the 39 words in the main clauses in vs. 2-9 (column c): 39 = 26 (vs. 2-5) + 13 (vs. 6-9). The formula refers symbolically to YHWH's uniqueness, as revealed in his unparalleled saving acts. See the General Introduction under "Special patterns".

Apart from these occurrences of 26, both divine name numbers feature also in:

vs. 3-9	17 words after atnach
vs. 14-17	26 words in total in MT
vs. 10-17	51 (3 x 17) words in total in MT
vs. 3-17	78 (3 x 26) words in the main clauses in the corrected text
vs. 18-21	17 words before atnach
vs. 22-23	17 words in total
vs. 22-25	26 words in the main clauses (column c).

4. Van der Lugt has observed the apparent structuring role of the number 8: there are 192 (3 x 8 x 8) words in total in the emended text, 8 strophes, 56 (7 x 8) cola; Canto I and V together have 8 cola, and II, III and IV have 8 verselines and 16 cola each.
5. The name YHWH does not occur in the psalm; אֱלֹהִים, however, occurs 5 times, and אֲדֹנָי once (v. 24); the word אֱל in v. 21b refers to a foreign god. See Observation 5 in my Analysis of [Psalm 42-43](#).

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