

# Psalm 46— Logotechnical Analysis

## Guidelines

- Please read the [General Introduction](#) and 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 46

- As in Psalm 42-43, a refrain delimits the canto framework of Psalm 46. The bipartite structure of the psalm is buttressed, in terms of content, by the two different focal points: YHWH and his *city* in Canto I (vs. 2-7), and YHWH and *the world* in Canto II (vs. 9-12).
- A defining characteristic of the psalm is the use of the well-known double *kabod* pattern (55 = 23 + 32) to give structure to Canto I and to symbolize YHWH's presence.
- The number of fullness, **7**, is used in the total number of words: **91** (**13 x 7**), in the **7** words of the two refrains, and in the **7** occurrences of אֱלֹהִים, 'God', to symbolize the 'fullness' of God's presence.

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

- Van der Lugt: 2-4, 5-7 || 8, 9-11, 12 (2 cantos, 5 strophes, 11 verselines and 23 cola).
- Fokkelman and Labuschagne: 2-4, 5-7, 8 || 9-11, 12 (similarly, but taking the refrain in vs. 8 and 12 as a device for concluding the two cantos).

## Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the atnach.
- Column **c**: words about YHWH and his city; **d**: words about YHWH and the world.
- The numbering of the verselines in **brown** and **green** displays the pattern 11 = 7 + 4.

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	לְמִנְצַח לְבִנְיָקָרְחָה עַל־עֲלָמוֹת שִׁיר: Heading, v. 1	3 6 = 3 + 3	3	3		
2	אֱלֹהִים לָנוּ מִחֶסֶה וְעִזָּה עֲזָרָה בְּצָרוֹת נִמְצָא מָאֵד: Total, v. 2	1 4 4 8 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0	4	4	4	
3	עַל־כֵּן לֹא־נִירָא בְּהַמִּיר אֶרְצָה וּבְמוֹט הַרִים בְּלֵב יָמִים: Total, v. 3	2 6 4 10 = 6 + 4 = 10 + 0	6	6	4	4
4	יִהְיֶמוּ יַחְמְרוּ מִיַּמִּינֵהוּ יִרְעֲשׂוּ הַרִים בְּנֹאֲוֹתוֹ סֵלָה: Total, v. 4 Strophe 1 Total, v. 2-4	3 3 3 6 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0 24 = 13 + 11 = 24 + 0	3	3	3	3

5	נִהַר פְּלִיגֵי יִשְׁמְחוּ עִיר־אֱלֹהִים <sup>^</sup> קִרַּשׁ מִשְׁכְּנֵי עֲלִיּוֹן: Total, v. 5 Total, v. 2-5	4	$\begin{array}{r} 5 \quad 5 \quad 5 \\ 3 \quad \quad 3 \quad 3 \\ \hline 8 = 5 + 3 = 8 + 0 \\ 32 = 18 + 14 = 32 + 0 \end{array}$
6	אֱלֹהִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ בַּל־תִּמְוֹט <sup>^</sup> יַעֲזֹרֶה אֱלֹהִים לַפְּנוֹת בְּקֶרֶת: Total, v. 6	5	$\begin{array}{r} 4 \quad 4 \quad 4 \\ 4 \quad \quad 4 \quad 4 \\ \hline 8 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0 \end{array}$
7 Middle verseline	הָמוּ גוֹיִם מִטּוֹ מִמְּלָכוֹת <sup>^</sup> נָתַן בְּקוֹלוֹ תְּמוּגַ אֶרֶץ: 11 = 5 + 1 + 5 Middle word: 91 = 45 + <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">1</span> + 45 Total, v. 7 Strophe 2 Total, v. 5-7 Total, v. 2-7	6	$\begin{array}{r} 4 \quad 4 \quad 4 \\ 4 \quad \quad 4 \quad 4 \\ \hline 8 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0 \\ 24 = 13 + 11 = 24 + 0 \\ 48 = 26 + 22 = 48 + 0 \end{array}$
8 Refrain	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עִמָּנוּ <sup>^</sup> מִשְׁנֵב־לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה: Strophe 3 Total, v. 8 Total, v. 6-8 Canto I Total, v. 2-8	7	$\begin{array}{r} 3 \quad 3 \quad 3 \\ 4 \quad \quad 4 \quad 4 \\ \hline 7 = 3 + 4 = 7 + 0 \\ 23 = 11 + 12 = 23 + 0 \\ 55 = 29 + 26 = 55 + 0 \end{array}$
9	לְכוּ־חֲזוּ מִפְּעֻלוֹת יְהוָה <sup>^</sup> אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם שְׁמוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ: Total, v. 9	8	$\begin{array}{r} 4 \quad 4 \quad 4 \\ 4 \quad \quad 4 \quad 4 \\ \hline 8 = 4 + 4 = 0 + 8 \end{array}$
10	מִשְׁבִּית מִלְחָמוֹת עַד־קִצָּה הָאֶרֶץ קִשְׁת יִשְׁבֵר וְקִצֵּץ חֲנִית <sup>^</sup> עֲגָלוֹת יִשְׂרָף בְּאֵשׁ: Total, v. 10 Total, v. 9-10	9	$\begin{array}{r} 5 \quad 5 \quad 5 \\ 4 \quad 4 \quad 4 \\ 3 \quad \quad 3 \quad 3 \\ \hline 12 = 9 + 3 = 0 + 12 \\ 20 = 13 + 7 = 0 + 20 \end{array}$
11	הֲרַפּוּ וּדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהִים <sup>^</sup> אֲרוּם בְּגוֹיִם אֲרוּם בְּאֶרֶץ: Words cited as spoken by God v. 11 Strophe 4 Total, v. 9-11	10	$\begin{array}{r} 5 \quad 5 \quad 5 \\ 4 \quad \quad 4 \quad 4 \\ \hline 9 = 5 + 4 = 0 + 9 \\ 29 = 18 + 11 = 0 + 29 \end{array}$
12 Refrain	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עִמָּנוּ <sup>^</sup> מִשְׁנֵב־לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה: Strophe 5 Total, v. 12 Canto II Total, v. 9-12 Total, v. 2-12 With the heading, v. 1-12 With the heading (3x), v. 1-12	11	$\begin{array}{r} 3 \quad 3 \quad 3 \\ 4 \quad \quad 4 \quad 4 \\ \hline 7 = 3 + 4 = 0 + 7 \\ 36 = 21 + 15 = 0 + 36 \\ 91 = 50 + 41 = 55 + 36 \\ 97 = 53 + 44 \\ 100 = 53 + 47 \end{array}$

## Observations

- In terms of the 91 words of the psalm, the arithmetic centre is constituted by **בְּקוֹלוֹ**, 'with his voice', in v. 7b (91 = 45 + 1 + 45). The pivotal word, together with 5 words on either side, constitute a larger **11**-word centre, vs. 7-8a, which is apparently the meaningful centre on word level (91 = 40 + 11 + 40):

7 הָמוּ גוֹיִם מִטּוֹ מִמְּלָכוֹת<sup>^</sup> נָתַן בְּקוֹלוֹ תְּמוּגַ אֶרֶץ<sup>8a</sup> יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עִמָּנוּ

Nations rage, kingdoms totter // he utters **his voice**, the earth melts:  
 YHWH of Hosts is with us!

This statement expresses in a nutshell the profession of faith in the power of the God of Israel amid warring nations. However, as in the preceding psalms, there is a more likely, consciously designed, meaningful centre on poetic level, **v. 7**, which is the middle verseline (11 = 5 + 1 + 5):

הָמוּ גוֹיִם מָטוּ מִמְלָכּוֹת ^ נָתַן בְּקוֹלוֹ תְמוּנָה אֶרֶץ

Nations rage, kingdoms totter // he utters **his voice**, the earth melts.

The notion of the power of **the voice of God** in connection with his presence in the world is very reminiscent of Psalm 29. For particulars, see my Analysis of Psalm 29.

2. The psalm clearly divides into two main sections, vs. 2-8 and vs. 9-12, each of which is concluded by the refrain (vs. 8 and 12).

Canto I vs. 2-8 **55** words describing the relationship between YHWH and his *city*;

Canto II vs. 9-12 36 words expressing what YHWH does in the *outside world*.

Canto I is obviously delimited by the *selah* after v. 8. For a comparable function of *selah*, see Observation 2 in my Analysis of [Psalm 47](#).

Canto I is additionally defined by the fact that it is made up of **55** (5 x 11) words divided into **32** in vs. 2-5 and **23** in vs. 6-8, overlying the strophic structure. In my opinion, this is a case of purposeful design, because the double *kabod* pattern, **55 = 32 + 23**, symbolically signifies God's **presence**, the quintessential idea of the psalm. For other examples of the double *kabod* pattern, see the General Introduction, "Special patterns", the paragraph "The double *kabod* pattern".

3. On rhetorical grounds, Van der Lugt defends a different canto structure: Canto I (2-7) and Canto II (8-12), arguing that the refrain in vs. 8 and 12 functions as a device for inclusion in his Canto II.
4. At the end of Canto II, in v. 11, just before the refrain, the speaker cites **9** words as spoken by God himself, significantly without any introduction, which is a rhetorical device to focus special attention on the oracle. Compare Pss. 50:7-15 and 89:4-5.
5. The **11** verselines are outlined in the **11 = 7 + 4** pattern, with **7** in the section about Yahweh and his city (Canto I, vs. 2-8) consisting of **55** (5 x 11) words, and **4** in the section about Yahweh and the world (Canto II, vs. 9-11). For a similar pattern, see [Psalm 95](#).
6. The name יהוה occurs 3 times (vs. 8a, 9a and 12a): twice in combination with זַבְאוֹת, 'Hosts', in the refrains (vs. 8a and 12a). The word אֱלֹהִים, 'God', occurs no less than **7** times. The term עֲלִיּוֹן, 'Most High' (v. 5b), is an important key-word in the Psalter – please consult Observation 6 in my Analysis of [Psalm 9-10](#).

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