

# Psalm 62— 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 62

- Whereas its predecessor is a prayer, Psalm 62 is not directly addressed to God, except for the coda in v. 13, which is very reminiscent of the codas in Psalms 54, 56, 59 and 60.
- The most significant feature of the poem is the strong numerical structure, which overlies the even stronger bipartite structure proposed by Pieter van der Lugt.
- A feature this psalm shares with Psalms 39, 53, 54, 57-59, 61, and many others, is the structural use of the numerical value of a key-word: in this case to define the number of words after *atnach*: 37, the numerical value of **הַבָּל**, 'vanity', in v. 10a ( $5 + 2 + 30 = 37$ ).

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

- Van der Lugt and Labuschagne: 2-3, 4, 5, 6-7 || 8-9, 10 | 11, 12-13 (2 cantos with 8 strophes, 16 verselines and 35 cola).
- Fokkelman: 2-3, 4, 5 || 6-7, 8-9 || 10, 11, 12-13 (3 stanzas, otherwise similarly, except that he finds 34 cola, taking v. 13 as a bicolon).

## Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the *atnach*.
- Column **c**: words spoken about God; **d**: words addressed to God (v. 13).
- The numbering of the verselines is shown in **brown**.

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	לְמִנְצַחַת עַל־יְדוּתוֹן מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד: Heading	5	5			
2	אֵךְ אֶל־אֱלֹהִים <sup>1</sup> דִּימְיָה נִפְשִׁי <sup>^</sup> 1	5	5		5	
	מִמְנוּ יִשׁוּעָתִי: 2	2		2	2	
	Total, v. 2	7	= 5	+ 2	= 7	+ 0
3	אֵךְ־הוּא צוּרִי וַיִּשׁוּעָתִי <sup>^</sup> 2	4	4		4	
	מִשְׁנֵבִי לֹא־אֶמְנָט רַבָּה: 4	4		4	4	
	Total, v. 3	8	= 4	+ 4	= 8	+ 0
	<b>Strophe 1 Total, v. 2-3</b>	<b>15</b>	= 9	+ 6	= 15	+ 0
4	עַד־אָנָּה תִּהְיוּתָנוּ עַל־אִישׁ 3	5	5		5	
	תִּרְצָחוּ כְּלָכֶם 2	2	2		2	
	כְּקִיר נִטוּי <sup>^</sup> 4	2	2		2	
	גִּדְרֵי תִדְחַוְיָהּ: 2	2		2	2	
	<b>Strophe 2 Total, v. 4</b>	<b>11</b>	= 9	+ 2	= 11	+ 0
	Total, v. 2-4	<b>26</b>	= 18	+ 8	= 26	+ 0
5	אֵךְ מִשְׁאֲתוֹ יַעֲצוּ לְתַדְדִּיחַ 5	4	4		4	
	יִרְצוּ כָּזָב 2	2	2		2	
	בְּפִיו יִבְרַכּוּ <sup>^</sup> 6	2	2		2	
	וּבִקְרָבָם יִקְלְלוּ־סֵלָה: 2	2		2	2	
	<b>Strophe 3 Total, v. 5</b>	<b>10</b>	= 8	+ 2	= 10	+ 0
	Total, v. 2-5	<b>36</b>	= 26	+ 10	= 36	+ 0

6	אך לאלהים <sup>2</sup> דומי נפשי <sup>א</sup>	7	4	4	4	
	כי־ממנו תקותי:		3	3	3	
	Total, v. 5-6		17	= 12 + 5	= 17 + 0	
7	אך־הוא צורי וישועתי <sup>א</sup>	8	4	4	4	
	משגבי לא אמוט:		3	3	3	
	Strophe 4 Total, v. 6-7		14	= 8 + 6	= 14 + 0	
	<b>Canto I Total, v. 2-7</b>		<b>50</b>	= <b>34</b> + 16	= 50 + 0	
8	על־אלהים <sup>3</sup> ישעי וכבודי <sup>א</sup> 54+2+54	9	4	4	4	
	צור־עזי מחסי באלהים <sup>4</sup> : 17+1+17		4	4	4	
	Meaningful centre (v. 8b) Total, v. 8		8	= 4 + 4	= 8 + 0	
9	בטחו בו בכל־עת עם	10	5	5	5	
	שפכו־לפניו לבבכם <sup>א</sup>		3	3	3	
	אלהים <sup>5</sup> מחסה־לנו סלה:		3	3	3	
	Total, v. 9		11	= 8 + 3	= 11 + 0	
	Strophe 5 Total, v. 8-9		19	= 12 + 7	= 19 + 0	
	Total, v. 7-9		26	= 16 + 10	= 26 + 0	
	Total, v. 2-9		69	= 46 + 23	= 69 + 0	
10	הבגל = 37 (5 + 2 + 30)	11	4	4	4	
	Middle words of vs. 6-13 (74 = 34 + 6 + 34)		3	3	3	
	Strophe 6 Total, v. 10		12	= 9 + 3	= 12 + 0	
	<b>Canticle II.1 Total, v. 8-10</b>		<b>31</b>	= 21 + 10	= 31 + 0	
11	אל־תבטחו בעשק	13	3	3	3	
	ובגזל אל־תהבלו		3	3	3	
	חיל כִּי־ינוב <sup>א</sup>	14	3	3	3	
	אל־תשיתו לב:		3	3	3	
	Strophe 7 Total, v. 11		12	= 9 + 3	= 12 + 0	
	Total, v. 10-11		24	= 18 + 6	= 24 + 0	
12	אחת דבר אלהים <sup>6</sup>	15	3	3	3	
	שתיים־זו שמעתי <sup>א</sup>		3	3	3	
	כי עז לאלהים <sup>7</sup> :		3	3	3	
	Total, v. 8-12		52	= 36 + 16	= 52 + 0	
	Total, v. 2-12		102	= 70 + 32	= 102 + 0	
13	<b>Coda</b>	16	3	3	3	
	ול־אדני חסד <sup>א</sup>		3	3	3	
	כי־אתה תשלם		2	2	2	
	לאיש כמעשהו:		8	= 3 + 5	= 0 + 8	
	Total, v. 13		17	= 9 + 8	= 9 + 8	
	Strophe 8 Total, v. 12-13		29	= 18 + 11	= 21 + 8	
	<b>Canticle II.2 Total, v. 11-13</b>		<b>60</b>	= 39 + 21	= 52 + 8	
	<b>Canto II Total, v. 8-13</b>		<b>74</b>	= 47 + 27	= 66 + 8	
	Total, v. 6-13		86	= 55 + 31	= 78 + 8	
	Total, v. 2-9 + 12-13		110	= 73 + 37	= 102 + 8	
	Total, v. 2-13		115	= 78 + 37		
	With the heading, v. 1-13		117	= 78 + 39		
	With סלה (2x), v. 1-13					

## Observations

1. In terms of the 110 words of the poem the arithmetic centre is constituted by the two words צור־עזי , 'my rock of refuge', in v. 8b (110 = 54 + 2 + 54). It falls precisely within the middle colon, flanked by 17 cola on either side (35 = 17 + 1 + 17), which is obviously the meaningful centre:

My rock of refuge, my shelter is God!

The pivotal position of v. 8b is reinforced by the fact that the middle occurrence of the 7 instances of אֱלֹהִים is situated exactly within the meaningful centre. See the General Introduction, "Special devices to highlight the meaningful centre".

As observed by Van der Lugt, on word level, the 6 middle words, significantly flanked by 52 (2 x 26) words on either side, are also meaningful (110 = 52 + 6 + 52):

ישעי וכבודי צור־עזי מחסי באלהים

my safety and my honour, my rock of refuge, my shelter is in God.

2. In terms of the two divine name numbers, the numerical structure of vs. 2-9 + 12-13 is very significant, because of its strong pattern: 26 + 17 + 26 + 17, which overlies the strophic structure; note also the skilfully contrived division of the divine name number 26 into its two component parts, 15 (YH) and 11 (WH), not only in vs. 2-4, but also in vs. 7-9 (cf. [Psalm 63](#)):

vs. 2-4	26 words, with 15 (YH) in vs. 2-3 and 11 (WH) in v. 4
vs. 5-6	17 words
vs. 7-9	26 words, with 15 (YH) in vs. 7-8 and 11 (WH) in v. 9
vs. 12-13	17 words.

Not only formally, but also in terms of content, vs. 2-9 + 12-13 appear to constitute a coherent numerical unit, while the 24-word vs. 10-11 clearly fall outside this pattern. This seems to suggest that these 24 words were added secondarily into the original numerical composition, most probably by the author himself. The original passage (2-9 + 12-13) is a psalm of trust, expressing confidence in God as shelter and refuge. The secondary passage, vs. 10-11, however, deals with the vanity of human beings relying on material riches, and is strongly reminiscent of [Psalm 39](#).

The purpose of the addition is obviously to contrast trust in God with trust in riches. An additional reason for the addition may have been to achieve five alternating sections about God and his reliability, on the one hand, and man and his weakness, on the other:\*

vs. 2-3	God and his reliability
vs. 4-5	Man and his weakness
vs. 6-9	God and his reliability
vs. 10-11	Man and his weakness
vs. 12-13	God and his reliability.

This division of the text is solely based on content and not on logotechnical or rhetorical considerations.

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\* My co-reader, Dr. Jim MacMillan, kindly drew my attention to the alternating passages.

3. The addition was formulated in such a way that it has exactly 24 words, in order to achieve the overall compositional formula of the poem:  $110 = 73a + 37b$ . Therefore, in my view, the 37 words after atnach have been devised deliberately. The number 37 represents the numerical value of הַבְּכִל, 'vanity' (in v. 10a), which is a keyword, as in Psalm 39. See Observation 4 in my Analysis of [Psalm 39](#).
4. As shown by the strong numerical structure of the poem in its original form, there was a caesura between vs. 6 and 7. In the present form of the text, however, there is a caesura between vs. 2-7 (Canto I) and 8-13 (Canto II), as Van der Lugt has convincingly argued, taking vs. 6-7 as a single strophe, which corresponds to vs. 2-3.
5. It is important to note that the poet speaks throughout the psalm *about* God in 3<sup>rd</sup> person, but in the last verse (v. 13) he suddenly addresses God directly (8 words). From a logotechnical point of view, the abrupt switch was obviously deliberate in order to have exactly 102 (6 x 17) spoken *about* God. From a rhetorical viewpoint, the change in the direction of address signifies a coda, as in Pss. 54, 56, 59 and 60.
6. In addition to the divine name numbers cited above, they feature also in:
 

vs. 2-5	<b>26</b> words before atnach
vs. 2-7	<b>34</b> (2 x 17) words before atnach
vs. 8-12	<b>52</b> (2 x 26) words in total
vs. 2-12	<b>102</b> (6 x 17) words in total
vs. 8-13	<b>52</b> (2 x 26) words spoken about God
2-9+12-13	<b>78</b> (3 x 26) words spoken about God
vs. 2-13	<b>102</b> (6 x 17) words spoken about God
vs. 1-13	<b>78</b> (3 x 26) words before atnach (including the heading).
7. As in Psalms 61, 63 and 65-67, the name YHWH is absent. The designation אֱלֹהִים, 'God', occurs exactly 7 times in the psalm (2a, 6a, 8a, **8b**, 9c, 12a, 12c), with the middle instance falling precisely within the meaningful centre. In my view, the use of אֲדֹנָי, 'Lord', in v. 13a is deliberate, in order to achieve 7 occurrences of אֱלֹהִים.

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