Psalm 66— 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 66

- This is the first of three 'nameless' psalms (66, 67 and 71) among the predominant Davidic psalms in Book II. Like Psalm 50 (ascribed to Asaph) and Psalm 72 (ascribed to Solomon) its heading is integrated into the initial verse, in contrast to the other psalms, of which the headings constitute separate verses. See Table VIII.
- From a numerical perspective, the structure of the poem is clearly defined by the numbers **28** and **56**, multiples of **7**, the number of fullness, in conjunction with the four crucial imperatives in the initial lines of vs. 1b, 5, 8, and 16, and the three *selahs* which have a demarcating function.

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

- Van der Lugt: 1b-4, 5-7, 8-9 || 10-12 || 13-15, 16-18, 19-20 (3 cantos with 7 strophes, 19 verselines and 45 cola).
- Fokkelman: 1b-4, 5-7 || 8-9, 10-12 || 13-15, 16-18, 19-20 (3 cantos with 7 strophes, 19 verselines and 45 cola). Fokkelman counts 147 words, because he regards לָמוֹ in v. 7c as 'redundant'. This deletion disrupts the numerical structure.
- Labuschagne: 1b-4 || 5-7 || 8-9, 10-12 | 13-15 || 16-19, 20 (4 cantos, 7 strophes, 19 verselines and 46 cola, taking v. 4 as a tricolon).

Logotechnical analysis

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

			Total	a	b	c	d
1a	לַמְנַצֵּחַ שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר^ Heading		3	3			
1b	הָרִיעוּ לֵאלֹהִים כָּל־הָאָרֶץ׃	1	4	4			4
2	זַמְּרוּ כְבוֹד־שְׁמוֹ^		3	3			3
	שִׂימוּ כָבוֹד תְּהִלָּתוֹ׃		3		3		3
	Total, v. 1b-2		10	= 7	+ 3	= 0	+ 10
3	אִמְרוּ לֵאלֹהִים מַה־נּוֹרָא מַעֲשֶׂיךָ^	2	5	5			5
	בְּרֹב עֻזְּךָ יְכַחֲשׁוּ לְךָ אֹיְבֶיךָ׃		5		5		5
	Total, v. 3		10	= 5	+ 5	= 0	+ 10
	Total, v. 1b-3		20	= 12	+ 8	= 0	+ 20
4	כָּל־הָאָרֶץ יִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְךָ	3	4	4			4
	וִיזַמְּרוּ־לָךְ^		2	2			2
	יְזַמְּרוּ שִׁמְךָ סֶלָה׃		2		2		2
	Total, v. 4		8	= 6	+ 2	= 0	+ 8
	Total, v. 3-4		18	= 11	+ 7	= 0	+ 2
Canto I Strophe 1 **Total, v. 1b-4**			**28**	= 18	+ 10	= 0	+ 28

	Hebrew	v	Total	=		+		=		+	
5	לְכוּ וּרְאוּ מִפְעֲלוֹת אֱלֹהִים^	4	4		4						4
	נוֹרָא עֲלִילָה עַל־בְּנֵי אָדָם׃		5				5				5
	Total, v. 5		9	=	4	+	5	=	0	+	9
6	הָפַךְ יָם לְיַבָּשָׁה	5	3		3						3
	בַּנָּהָר יַעַבְרוּ בְרָגֶל^		3		3						3
	שָׁם נִשְׂמְחָה־בּוֹ׃		3				3				3
	Total, v. 6		9	=	6	+	3	=	0	+	9
7	מֹשֵׁל בִּגְבוּרָתוֹ עוֹלָם	6	3		3						3
	עֵינָיו בַּגּוֹיִם תִּצְפֶּינָה^		3		3						3
	הַסּוֹרְרִים אַל־יָרוּמוּ לָמוֹ סֶלָה׃		4				4				4
	Total, v. 7		10	=	6	+	4	=	0	+	10
Canto II Strophe 2	**Total, v. 5-7**		**28**	=	16	+	12	=	0	+	28
	Total, v. 1b-7		**56**	=	**34**	+	22	=	0	+	56
8	בָּרְכוּ עַמִּים אֱלֹהֵינוּ^	7	3		3						3
	וְהַשְׁמִיעוּ קוֹל תְּהִלָּתוֹ׃		3				3				3
	Total, v. 8		6	=	3	+	3	=	0	+	6
9	הַשָּׂם נַפְשֵׁנוּ בַּחַיִּים^	8	3		3						3
	וְלֹא־נָתַן לַמּוֹט רַגְלֵנוּ׃		4				4				4
	Total, v. 9		7	=	3	+	4	=	0	+	7
Strophe 3	Total, v. 8-9		13	=	6	+	7	=	0	+	13
	Total, v. 3-9		59	=	33	+	**26**	=	0	+	59
	Total, v. 1b-9		69	=	40	+	29	=	0	+	69
10	כִּי־בְחַנְתָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים^	9	3		3				3		
Middle words:	צְרַפְתָּנוּ כִּצְרָף־כָּסֶף׃		3				3		3		
148 = 73 + 2 + 73	Total, v. 10		6	=	3	+	3	=	6	+	0
	Total, v. 8-10		19	=	9	+	10	=	6	+	13
11 Middle verseline:	הֲבֵאתָנוּ בַמְּצוּדָה^	10	2		2				2		
19 = 9 + 1 + 9	שַׂמְתָּ מוּעָקָה בְמָתְנֵינוּ׃		3				3		3		
Middle cola: 46 = 22 + 2 + 22	Total, v. 11		5	=	2	+	3	=	5	+	0
12	הִרְכַּבְתָּ אֱנוֹשׁ לְרֹאשֵׁנוּ	11	3		3				3		
	בָּאנוּ־בָאֵשׁ וּבַמַּיִם^		3		3				3		
	וַתּוֹצִיאֵנוּ לָרְוָיָה׃		2				2		2		
	Total, v. 12		8	=	6	+	2	=	8	+	0
Strophe 4	Total, v. 10-12		19	=	11	+	8	=	19	+	0
Canticle III.1	**Total, v. 8-12**		**32**	=	**17**	+	15	=	19	+	13
	Total, v. 3-12		**78**	=	44	+	**34**	=	35	+	43
	Total, v. 1b-12		88	=	**51**	+	37	=	35	+	53

13	אָב֣וֹא בֵיתְךָ֣ בְעוֹל֑וֹת^	12	3	3			3		
	אֲשַׁלֵּ֖ם לְךָ֣ נְדָרָֽי׃		3		3	3		
	Total, v. 13		6	= 3	+ 3	= 6	+ 0
14	אֲשֶׁר־פָּצ֥וּ שְׂפָתָ֑י^	13	3	3		3	
	וְדִבֶּר־פִּ֝֗י בַּצַּר־לִֽי׃		4		4	4	
	Total, v. 14		7	= 3	+ 4	= 7	+ 0
15	עֹל֥וֹת מֵחִ֣ים אַעֲלֶה־לָּךְ֮	14	4	4		4	
	עִם־קְטֹ֪רֶת אֵ֫ילִ֥ים^		3	3		3	
	אֶֽעֱשֶׂ֣ה בָקָ֣ר עִם־עַתּוּדִ֣ים סֶֽלָה׃		4		4	4	
	Total, v. 15		11	= 7	+ 4	= 11	+ 0
	Total, v. 10-12		19	= 11	+ 8	= 19	+ 0
Canticl III.2 Strophe 5	Total, v. 13-15		24	= 13	+ 11	= 24	+ 0
	Numerical chiasmus, v. 10-15		43	= 24	+ 19	= 43	+ 0
Canto III	**Total, v. 8-15**		**56**	= 30	+ **26**	= 43	+ 13
	Total, v. 3-15		**102**	= 57	+ 45	= 43	+ 59
	Total, v. 1b-15		**112**	= 64	+ 48	= 43	+ 63
16	לְכֽוּ־שִׁמְע֣וּ וַאֲסַפְּרָ֑ה	15	3	3			3
	כָּל־יִרְאֵ֥י אֱלֹהִ֑ים^		3	3			3
	אֲשֶׁ֖ר עָשָׂ֣ה לְנַפְשִֽׁי׃		3		3		3
	Total, v. 16		9	= 6	+ 3	= 0	+ 9
17	אֵלָ֥יו פִּֽי־קָרָ֑אתִי^	16	3	3			3
	וְ֝רוֹמַ֗ם תַּ֣חַת לְשׁוֹנִֽי׃		3		3		3
	Total, v. 17		6	= 3	+ 3	= 0	+ 6
	Total, v. 16-17		15	= 9	+ 6	= 0	+ 15
18	אָ֭וֶן אִם־רָאִ֣יתִי בְלִבִּ֑י^	17	4	4			4
	לֹ֖א יִשְׁמַ֣ע ׀ אֲדֹנָֽי׃		3		3		3
	Total, v. 18		7	= 4	+ 3	= 0	+ 7
	Total, v. 16-18		22	= 13	+ 9	= 0	+ 22
19	אָ֭כֵן שָׁמַ֣ע אֱלֹהִ֑ים^	18	3	3			3
	הִ֝קְשִׁ֗יב בְּק֣וֹל תְּפִלָּתִֽי׃		3		3		3
	Total, v. 19		6	= 3	+ 3	= 0	+ 6
	Total, v. 18-19		13	= 7	+ 6	= 0	+ 13
Canto IV Strophe 6	**Total, v. 16-19**		**28**	= 16	+ 12	= 0	+ 28
	Total, v. 8-19		84	= 46	+ 38	= 43	+ 41
	Total, v. 1b-19		**140**	= 80	+ 60	= 43	+ 97
20	בָּר֥וּךְ אֱלֹהִ֑ים^	19	2	2			2
	אֲשֶׁ֥ר לֹֽא־הֵסִ֘יר תְּפִלָּתִ֥י		4		4		4
	וְ֝חַסְדּ֗וֹ מֵאִתִּֽי׃		2		2		2
Coda Strophe 7	**Total, v. 20**		**8**	= 2	+ 6	= 0	+ 8
	Total, v. 13-20		60	= 31	+ 29	= 24	+ 36
	Total, v. 1b-20		148	= 82	+ 66	= 43	+ 105
With the heading and סֶלָה (3x), v. 1a-20			154	= **85**	+ 69		

Observations

1. In terms of its 148 words, the arithmetic centre of the poem is constituted by the two words כְּצָרָף־כָּסֶף, 'as silver is refined', in v. 10b (148 = 73 + 2 + 73). The reference to God's 'testing' or 'refining' of the people of Israel in the desert, has obviously been intended as the meaningful centre on word level.

   On verseline and colon level, the middle verseline (and the two middle cola), v. 11 (19 = 9 + 1 + 9 verselines and 46 = 22 + 2 + 22 cola), situated within the middle strophe, vs. 10-12, may be considered the larger meaningful centre:

   הֲבֵאתָנוּ בַמְּצוּדָה ^ שַׂמְתָּ מוּעָקָה בְמָתְנֵינוּ׃

   You have brought us into the net // you have bound our bodies fast.

2. If we include the heading and the *selahs* in the word-count, the 6 words of v. 10 now constitute the arithmetic centre of the entire text (154 = 74 + 6 + 74), which is a particularly meaningful centre on word level:

   כִּי־בְחַנְתָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים ^ צְרַפְתָּנוּ כִּצְרָף־כָּסֶף׃

   For you tested us, God // you refined us as silver is refined.

   In my judgement, when the psalm was supplied with a heading, a 3-word heading and 3 *selahs* were deliberately chosen to improve the meaningful centre of the poem on word level. Compare Observations 5 and 6 in my Analysis of Psalm 67.

3. There is no concensus among scholars about the precise structure of the poem, but the logotechnical evidence strongly suggests a canto structure based *primarily* on the structuring function of the numbers **28** and **56** (2 x **28**) in the pattern 28 + 28 + 56 + 28 + 8. This division is supported by two striking factors: *first*, the imperatives in the initial verselines of vs. 1b, 5, 8, and 16, by which the speaker addresses specific groups, and *second*, the evident demarcating function of the three *selahs*. On the basis of these considerations in conjunction, I propose to divide the text into 4 cantos and a coda:

Canto I	vs. **1b**-4	Acclaim God, **all the earth!**	**28 words** + *selah*
Canto II	vs. **5**-7	Come, **nations,** see God's deeds!	**28 words** + *selah*
Canto III	vs. **8**-15	Bless God, **all peoples!**	**56 words** + *selah*
Canto IV	vs. **16**-19	Come, hear, **all you devout!**	**28 words**
Canto I-IV	vs. 1b-19		**140** (5 x **28**) **words**
Coda	vs. 20	Individual concluding praise	8 words.

   Note the striking compositional formulae of both **Cantos I-II** and **III**, **56** = **34** + **22** and **56** = **30** + **26** respectively. It is difficult to give a specific reason for the use of the numbers **28** and **56**, apart from the fact that they are both multiples of **7**, the number of fullness symbolizing the fullness of the praises due to God. Compare the prominent role played by the number **7** in Psalm 65!

   Logotechnically, the coda stands outside the concluding canto. For the coda, see the General Introduction, "The use of a coda as a device for conclusion".

4. The unity of vs. 10-15, the 2nd person passage in Canto III, in which the poet addresses God directly (43 words in Column c), is underscored by the numerical chiasmus formed by vs. 10-12 and 13-15. At the same time the chiasmus underlines the unity of Canto III (vs. 8-15).

Note that the 16 words in vs. 3-4 are not addressed to God by the speaker, but are supposed to be spoken by all the earth. This means that there are **105** (15 x **7**) words spoken about God.

5. Despite the predominant use of the number of fullness, there are still a considerable number of occurrences of the divine name numbers:

vs. 1b-7	**34** (2 x **17**) words before atnach
vs. 3-9	**26** words after atnach
vs. 8-12	**17** words before atnach
vs. 3-12	**78** (3 x **26**) words in total, with **34** (2 x **17**) after atnach
vs. 1b-12	**51** (3 x **17**) words before atnach
vs. 8-15	**26** words after atnach
vs. 3-15	**102** (6 x **17**) words in total
vs. 1b-15	**85** (5 x **17**) words before atnach.

6. As in Psalms 65 and 67, the name YHWH is absent; אֱלֹהִים, 'God', appears no less than 8x and אֲדֹנָי, 'my Lord', 1x (v. 18b).

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