Psalm 18 — 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 18

- This exceptionally long psalm (52-verselines) concludes the distinct Second Sub-group of Davidic Psalms in Book I (9-18), which is opened by the 40-verseline long Psalm 9-10. The nine psalms have altogether 156 (6 x 26) verselines – see the Introduction, p. 5.
- A comparison between Psalm 18 and the parallel text in 2 Samuel 22 shows that in many respects the Samuel text is qualitatively superior to that of Psalm 18. The logotechnical analyses reveals that both versions are numerical compositions in their own right.
- The identical strophic structure of both texts is to a great extent determined by the change in direction of address (words addressed to God, and words spoken about him).

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

- Labuschagne: 2-3 || 4-6, 7-9, 10-13, 14-16 || 17-20, 21-25, 26-30 || 31-35, 36-39, 40-43, 44-46 || 47-49, 50-51 (5 cantos, 14 strophes, with 52 verselines and 111 cola), with due regard for the sudden switches in the way God is referred to.

The identical strophic structure of both texts is to a great extent determined by the change in direction of address (words addressed to God, and words spoken about him).

Logotechnical analysis

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a,b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a, despite the lack of an atnach after v. 1-2a</td>
<td>21 = 12 + 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, v. 3</td>
<td>12 = 8 + 4 = 12 + 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canto 1 Strophe 1 Total, v. 2b-3</td>
<td>15 = 11 + 4 = 15 + 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophe</td>
<td>Total, v. 4-6</td>
<td>Total, v. 2b-6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18 = 9 + 9 = 0 + 18</td>
<td>33 = 20 + 13 = 15 + 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>14 = 10 + 4 = 0 + 14</td>
<td>32 = 19 + 13 = 0 + 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10 = 6 + 4 = 0 + 10</td>
<td>9 = 6 + 3 = 0 + 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9 = 5 + 4 = 0 + 9</td>
<td>6 = 6 + 3 = 0 + 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>23 = 12 + 11 = 0 + 23</td>
<td>43 + 31 = 0 + 74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>74 = 43 + 31 = 0 + 74</td>
<td>30 = 16 + 14 = 0 + 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>9 = 6 + 3 = 0 + 9</td>
<td>6 = 6 + 0 = 0 + 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Strophe 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total, v. 7</th>
<th>Total, v. 4-7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>32 = 19 + 13 = 0 + 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>32 = 19 + 13 = 0 + 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>32 = 19 + 13 = 0 + 32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Strophe 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total, v. 7-9</th>
<th>Total, v. 4-9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33 = 22 + 11 = 0 + 33</td>
<td>51 = 31 + 20 = 0 + 51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Strophes 2-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total, v. 10-12</th>
<th>Total, v. 4-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 = 12 + 11 = 0 + 23</td>
<td>74 = 43 + 31 = 0 + 74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Strophe 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total, v. 10-13</th>
<th>Total, v. 4-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 = 16 + 14 = 0 + 30</td>
<td>74 = 43 + 31 = 0 + 74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Emended text, v. 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total, v. 14</th>
<th>Emended text, v. 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 = 6 + 3 = 0 + 9</td>
<td>6 = 6 + 0 = 0 + 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Middle words: 376 = 186 + 186

Emended text, v. 2b

- MT's 2 middle cola: 
- Middle words: 376 = 186 + 186
- Em. text: 373 = 186 + 186

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Strophe 8
Total, v. 26-30 36 = 19 + 17 = 36 + 0

Canto III
Total, v. 17-30 97 = 48 + 49 = 36 + 61
Total, v. 4-30 204 = 112 + 92 = 41 + 163
Emended text, v. 4-30 201 = 112 + 89 = 41 + 160
Total, v. 2b-30 219 = 123 + 96 = 56 + 163
Emended text, v. 2b-30 216 = 129 + 93 = 56 + 160

Strophe 9
Total, v. 31-35 39 = 20 + 19 = 0 + 39
Total, 17-35 136 = 68 + 68 = 36 + 100

Strophe 10
Total, v. 36-39 28 = 16 + 12 = 28 + 0
Total, v. 36-40 34 = 19 + 15 = 34 + 0
Total, v. 17-40 170 = 87 + 83 = 70 + 100
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strophe</th>
<th>Total, v.</th>
<th>MT, with heading and Emended text, v.1-51</th>
<th>MT, with heading and Emended text, v.1-51</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canto IV</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-49</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total, v. 38-41: 26 = 14 + 12 = 26 + 0
Total, v. 36-41: 40 = 23 + 17 = 40 + 0
Total, v. 42-43: 15 = 8 + 7 = 0 + 15
Total, v. 17-43: 191 = 99 + 92 = 76 + 115
Total, v. 40-43: 27 = 15 + 12 = 12 + 15
Total, v. 36-43: 55 = 31 + 24 = 40 + 15

Total, v. 44-46: 23 = 13 + 10 = 23 + 0
Total, v. 36-46: 78 = 44 + 34 = 63 + 15
Total, v. 32-46: 106 = 58 + 48 = 63 + 43
Total, v. 17-46: 214 = 112 + 102 = 99 + 115

Total, v. 4-50: 351 = 195 + 156 = 118 + 233
Total, v. 4-50: 348 = 195 + 153 = 118 + 230

Total, v. 51: 10 = 10 + 0 = 0 + 10
Total, v. 50-51: 17 = 15 + 2 = 7 + 10
Total, v. 49-51: 26 = 21 + 5 = 14 + 12
Total, v. 47-51: 40 = 29 + 11 = 14 + 26

MT, total, v. 2b-51: 376 = 216 + 160 = 133 + 243
Emended text, v. 2b-51: 373 = 216 + 157 = 133 + 240

MT, with heading and Emended text, v.1-51: 397 = 228 + 169
Emended text, v.1-51: 394 = 228 + 166
There are several text-critical problems, which make it difficult to make definitive decisions about the issues at this stage of my research. At the outset we should be careful not to use the text of 2 Samuel 22 to ‘restore’ Psalm 18. The two texts must be studied with due respect for the two traditions they represent. The safest way is to be conservative in regards textual criticism, albeit that there are exceptions. In my view, the three words גַּנֵּבָנִים, ‘amid hail and glowing coals’ of MT in v. 14c – lacking in many manuscripts, in the LXX, and in 2 Sam. 22:14 - should be regarded as a writing error and left out of consideration. This ‘extra’ colon in v. 14 is not only a repetition of v. 13b, but it also disturbs the regular pattern of bicolon verselines in the whole section of vs. 10-30.

For the same reason, the lectio difficilior in v. 13a must be retained: the words , as was often proposed in light of 2 Sam. 22:13 (see \textit{BHS}).

The word count of MT (normal black) and the emended text (green) are both shown in the chart.

The introductory formula  in vs. 2a, which is really part of the heading, is also left out of consideration, except in the total word count.

\begin{tabular}{l l l}
\hline
 vs. 14-16 MT text & 26 = 17a + 9b \\
 vs. 14-16 emended & 23 = 17a + 6b \\
 vs. 4-16 MT text & 107 = 64a + 43b = 5c + 102d \\
 vs. 4-16 emended & 104 = 64a + 40b = 5c + 99d \\
 vs. 2a-16 MT text & 122 = 75a + 47b = 20c + 102d \\
 vs. 2b-16 emended & 119 = 75a + 44b = 20c + 99d. \\
 vs. 4-30 MT text & 204 = 112 + 89 \\
 vs. 4-30 emended & 201 = 112 + 86 \\
 vs. 4-51 MT text & 361 = 205 + 156 \\
 vs. 4-51 emended & 358 = 205 + 153. \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

Observations

1. The entire text of the psalm, including the heading, has 51 \((3 \times 17)\) Masoretic verses, of which the arithmetic centre is the word יִלָּם, 'me' (vs. 25a): 397 = 198 + 1 + 198. The Masoretic text of the poem (v. 14c included), excluding the heading and , is made up of 376 words, divided into 52 \((2 \times 26)\) verselines 112 cola. The arithmetic centre of these 376 words is \textit{v. 26b}: 376 = 186 + 4 + 186, which may have been designed as the poem's meaningful centre:

\begin{center}

\end{center}

'With the loyal you show yourself loyal, with the blameless you show yourself blameless'.

However, in terms of the 112 cola of the poem, the two central cola, also situated in \textit{v. 26} (112 = 55 + 2 + 55), constitute an even more meaningful centre:

\begin{center}

\end{center}

'With the blameless you show yourself blameless'.

Let us now consider the \textit{emended text}: the arithmetic centre of its 373 words is the single word : 373 = 186 + 1 + 186. Since this cannot be regarded as a meaningful centre, such a centre may be found in terms of the 111 cola \((55 + 1 + 55)\): \textit{v. 26b}, which happens to coincide with the 4-word arithmetic centre of the MT text.

In terms of the 52 verselines the two middle verselines of both MT and the emended text are constituted by vs. 25-26 \((52 = 25 + 25\) verselines), which are also meaningful. The conclusion to be drawn from the evidence is that it can hardly be considered a decisive factor in deciding for or against an emendation.

The evidence is not decisive, but seems to suggest that the emended text should be preferred, as is shown by the following list of the relevant occurrences:
However, the scales may turn in favour of the emended text, if the significant number of \textbf{104 (4 x 26)} words in vs. 4-16, Canto II, and \textbf{119 (7 x 17)} in vs. 2b-16, Cantos I-II, were consciously designed. The fact that the latter passage (Cantos I-II, with in total \textbf{17} verselines) is concluded by the abrupt change to 2\textsuperscript{nd} person form in vs. 16c, strongly suggests that it was designed as a literary unity.

This brings us to the strophic structure of the text, which is, in my opinion, to a great extent determined by the switch in the way God is referred to: in 2\textsuperscript{nd} person (Column c) or in 3\textsuperscript{rd} person (Column d). Therefore, such transitions should be taken into account when we try to determine the structure of the text: between vs. 3||4, 25||26, 30||31, 35||36, and 46-47. The transition in 49a||49b is an exception, for it clearly functions only as a device for drawing special attention, as in Ps. 23.4. Finally, v. 51 may be regarded as a coda. For the coda, see the \textbf{General Introduction}, “The use of a coda as a device for conclusion”.

In this respect it is significant that the main body of the Song between the Prelude and the Coda consists of \textbf{338 (13x26)} words: \textbf{17 (Prelude) + 338 + 10 (Coda) = 382}.

2. I propose the following canto and strophic structure:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Strophe 1 (2-3) \textit{Spoken to God: affirmation of trust in YHWH as a refuge.}
\item Strophe 2 (4-6) \textit{Spoken about God: praise to YHWH for deliverance from enemies.}
\item Strophe 3 (7-9) \textit{Spoken about God: YHWH's anger was evident on the earth.}
\item Strophe 4 (10-13) \textit{Spoken about God: YHWH displayed his power in nature.}
\item Strophe 5 (14-16) \textit{Spoken about God: he thundered from heaven and shot arrows.}
\item Strophe 6 (17-20) \textit{Spoken about God: reaching from on high, YHWH delivered me.}
\item Strophe 7 (21-25) \textit{Spoken about God: he treated me according to my righteousness.}
\item Strophe 8 (26-30) \textit{Spoken to God: YHWH, you reward the just with your loyalty.}
\item Strophe 9 (31-35) \textit{Spoken about God: YHWH is my help in times of war.}
\item Strophe 10 (36-39) \textit{Spoken to God: your help made me prevail over my enemies.}
\item Strophe 11 (40-43) \textit{Spoken to God: you helped me to destroy my assailants.}
\item Strophe 12 (44-46) \textit{Spoken to God: you delivered me from strife among the nations.}
\item Strophe 13 (47-49) \textit{Spoken about God: I praise YHWH for his steadfast love.}
\item Strophe 14 (50-51) \textit{Spoken to God: for this I will extol you among the nations.}
\end{enumerate}

3. In addition to the \textbf{52 (2 x 26)} verselines and the \textbf{51 (3 x 17)} Masoretic verses, the divine name numbers occur in the following instances (of which some may be coincidence):

\begin{itemize}
\item vs. 4-9 \textit{51 (3 x 17) words in total}
\item vs. 14-16 \textit{26 words in total, with 17 before atnach}
\item vs. 4-16 \textit{102 (6 x 17) words spoken about God}
\item vs. 4-16 (emended) \textit{104 (4 x 26) words in total}
\item vs. 2b-16 (emended) \textit{119 (7 x 17) words in total}
\item vs. 17-20 \textit{26 words in total}
\item vs. 21-25 \textit{17 words after atnach}
\item vs. 2b-25 \textit{104 (4 x 26) words before atnach (MT and emended text)}
\item vs. 26-30 \textit{17 words after atnach}
\item vs. 4-30 \textit{204 (12 x 17) words in total}
\item vs. 29-31 \textit{26 words in total}
\item vs. 17-35 \textit{136 (8 x 17): 68 (4 x 17) before, and 68 (4 x 17) after atnach}
\item vs. 36-40 \textit{34 (2 x 17) words in total}
\item vs. 17-40 \textit{170 (10 x 17) words in total}
\end{itemize}
vs. 38-41  
26 words in total

vs. 36-41  
17 words after atnach

vs. 38-43  
26 words addressed to God

vs. 36-46  
78 (3 x 26) words in total, with 34 (2 x 17) after atnach

vs. 17-46  
102 (6 x 17) words after atnach

vs. 50-51  
17 words in total

vs. 49-51  
26 words in total

vs. 4-51  
156 (6 x 26) words after atnach

vs. 4-51 (emended)  
153 (9 x 17) words after atnach.

For more particulars, see page 17 in my logotechnical analysis of the book of 1 Samuel.

In vs. 3 we find the first occurrence of the 26 instances of the word יֹיָש, ‘rock’, in the Book of Psalms: 18:3; 18:32; 18:47; 19:15; 27:5; 28:1; 31:3; 49:15 (Qere); 61:3; 62:3; 62:7; 62:8; 71:3; 73:26; 78:15; 78:20; 78:35; 81:17; 89:27; 94:44; 94:22; 94:26; 95:1; 105:41; 114:8; 144:1.¹

The 17th instance occurs in Ps. 78:35, the middle verseline and meaningful centre of the psalm. Moreover, the middle instance of the 7 occurrences of the divine title Elyon in the Asaphite Psalms also falls exactly in Ps. 78:35. See my analysis of Psalm 78.

The 26 instances of יֹיָש, ‘rock’, in the Psalter is strongly reminiscent of the 26 instances of the word מַהֲלוֹה, ‘happy’. See my analysis of Psalm 1, Observation 3.

4. The name YHWH occurs 19 times: 16 instances in the poem and 3 in the heading.
In 2 Samuel 22 there are 18 occurrences: 16 in the poem and 2 in the heading. In v. 14b we find the important key-word Elyon, ‘Most High’, which functions as a device for inclusion together with the only other instance within this sub-group, in 9:3b.

5. In order to study the differences between the two parallel texts, please consult the logotechnical analysis of 2 Samuel 22.

¹ I owe gratitude to Sister Maria Hulsker of the Greek Orthodox Convent in Asten, the Netherlands, who drew my attention to this remarkable feature.