Gods gedachten tellen. Numerieke structuuranalyse en de elf gedachten Gods in de Genesis - 2Koningen

Nobel, Hans

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
1993

Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database

Citation for published version (APA):

Copyright
Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the “Taverne” license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment.

Take-down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): http://www.rug.nl/research/portal. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

Download date: 15-01-2022
Summary of

Counting the Thoughts of God.
Numerical Structure-analysis and the Eleven Thoughts of God in Genesis - 2Kings.

The main objective of this thesis is to find an empirical scientific basis for testing the hypothesis as formulated by C.J. Labuschagne: the biblical writings are numerical compositions. In the present study the question whether biblical writings are numerical compositions, is restricted to an investigation into the divine 'monologues' in the books of Genesis - 2Kings, to find out whether they are numerical compositions. This topic is treated here as purely literary, which means that historical questions have not been taken into consideration and that no research has been done with regard to the compositional techniques in vogue in biblical times.

The only object of this literary investigation is the biblical text as we have it in Codex Lenini-

gradensis. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the formulation of a methodologically accountable analytical technique, which is suitable to ascertain whether texts in these books, as transmitted in Codex L, can be described as texts of which the form has been determined by numerical structures in such a way, that a significant relation exists between the (numerical) form and the (textual) content.

The distinction between the literary and historical question, which is made in this study for methodological reasons, does not imply that historical questions are irrelevant to Old Testament research. It is in the interest of methodological clarity that the research is here restricted to literary questions. The answers to questions concerning the compositional techniques of the biblical writers are not decisive with regard to the desirability or the scientific possibility of detecting the numerical form of biblical texts. The study of the relation between the numerical form of the text and its contents is part and parcel of a text-immanent approach and can therefore be performed without knowledge of the answers to questions concerning the origin of the text.

Still another restriction has been imposed upon the present study of the biblical texts as numerical compositions. This limitation concerns the symbolical meaning of the numbers used to give structure to the text, and their eventual function to 'deepen' the meaning of the text. No other meaning of the text has been studied here than the meaning which can be read from the 'surface' of the text with the help of the scientific methods of text-research.

In the light of its results the numerical structure-analysis, defined and performed in this study, proves to be able to delimit literary units which are meaningful as regards their content, and to detect the way in which the text has been organized, without using arguments drawn from the content of the text. Moreover, it can be used, again without resorting to arguments based upon the content of the text, to detect meaningful relations between successive smaller literary units and between even larger texts, which belong together because they contain the same literary technique.

This numerical structure-analysis, which can be regarded as an improvement upon the method advanced and practised by Labuschagne, functions as a protective ring of preconditions and specific theories successfully sustaining the basic theory that the biblical texts are numerical compositions. It can be regarded as a contribution to the development of a new paradigm for the literary analysis of biblical texts, enabling scholars to reassess within a new framework the validity and relevance of traditional research techniques and to preserve them as instruments for biblical study as a whole.
The present thesis consists of two parts. The first part is methodological in its approach and deals with numerical structure-analysis, defining its method. In the second part the method is applied to a number of texts chosen in an a-select way, focusing upon the delimitation and internal organization of smaller literary units and upon the macrostructural relations within the texts in the books of Genesis - 2 Kings, in which the same literary technique (the divine 'monologue intérieur') occurs.

With the numerical structure-analysis of Labuschagne as point of departure in Part 1 the possibilities and boundaries of such an analysis have been explored. Chapter 2 of Part 1 has an introductory function and gives a survey of various investigations into the structural and symbolical function of numbers, providing a first demarcation of the area in which the numerical structure-analysis has its place and obtains its specific character, which is more than merely numerical analysis. Chapter 3 offers a critical evaluation of the logotechnical text-analysis advanced and practised by C. Schedl, focusing upon the problems concerning the structure and the genesis of the biblical text. In Chapter 4 the development of the numerical structure-analysis, as advanced by Labuschagne, is described. Against the backdrop of this development, ranging from an investigation into a specific literary technique (divine speech in the Pentateuch) to full-fledged numerical structure-analysis of Old Testament texts, the area in which the numerical structure-analysis can be valid and relevant, is more precisely explored.

Chapter 5 brings an introduction to the method of numerical structure-analysis, which focuses primarily upon the delimitation and the internal organization of smaller literary units.

- In Paragraph 1 of this central chapter the starting-point for the analysis is explained as: the counting of words within verses in relation to the syntactical units or clauses in literary units, delimited without resorting to criteria based upon the content. The character of the method is explained as three-dimensional, because of the attention paid systematically to the relation between the numerical structures occurring on different levels of counting, e.g. the relation between the distribution of words and the distribution of syntactical units on the basis of specific criteria for the allotment of words to different categories.
- In Paragraph 2 the technique of numerical structure-analysis is explained: the structuring formulas, expressing the elements counted on the basis of diverse criteria, are used to describe and interpret the numerical information.
- In Paragraph 3 the criteria for the allotment of words are discussed. It appears that the binary formal criterium of the verse divider, the 'amáh, and the binary syntactical criterium of main clause and subordinate clause are of primary importance.
- In Paragraph 4 the problem of the structuring numbers is dealt with. A distinction is made between independent structuring numbers, which have been limited to a minimum (17, 23, 26, 32 and their multiples) and the numbers bound to each other, because they function only within certain numerical patterns and models.
- The difference between numerical patterns and numerical models is discussed in Paragraph 5. A pattern is described as a numerical structure on only one level of counting. Models have a three-dimensional character and constitute the numerical structure on two levels of counting. In this respect attention is paid to the so-called surplus-technique, which should only be used under strict conditions.
- In Paragraph 6 the numerical chiasmus and the numerical inclusion are discussed. They give information about the organization of the text within the literary units and describe the delimitation of the literary units and the connection between them.
- Finally, Paragraph 7 offers insight in the use made of the computer and its facilities to carry out numerical structure-analysis.

The final chapter of Part 1, Chapter 8, discusses the practical application of the improved method developed by Labuschagne. Special attention is paid to the use of the computer as a means to a more exact vision of the text in such a way that the numerical structure-analysis is not just applied to the text, but also to the texts and the problem of the number of the prophetic speeches in the Pentateuch.

In Part 2 the method of numerical structure-analysis is applied to a number of texts. The texts that have been chosen are the ones in which a specific literary technique (the divine 'monologue intérieur') occurs. In Chapter 2, Genesis 18:1-19:19; Exod. 13:17-18, the logical structure of the biblical text is studied. The text is divided into smaller units and the relations between these units are explored. In Chapter 3, Genesis 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17; 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17-19, the logical structure of the biblical text is further explored. The text is divided into smaller units and the relations between these units are explored. In Chapter 4, Genesis 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17; 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17-19, the logical structure of the biblical text is further explored. The text is divided into smaller units and the relations between these units are explored. In Chapter 5, Genesis 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17; 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17-19, the logical structure of the biblical text is further explored. The text is divided into smaller units and the relations between these units are explored. In Chapter 6, Genesis 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17; 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17-19, the logical structure of the biblical text is further explored. The text is divided into smaller units and the relations between these units are explored. In Chapter 7, Genesis 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17; 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17-19, the logical structure of the biblical text is further explored. The text is divided into smaller units and the relations between these units are explored. In Chapter 8, Genesis 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17; 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17-19, the logical structure of the biblical text is further explored. The text is divided into smaller units and the relations between these units are explored. In Chapter 9, Genesis 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17; 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17-19, the logical structure of the biblical text is further explored. The text is divided into smaller units and the relations between these units are explored.

The present thesis is concluded in Chapter 10, in which the results of the study are summarized and the methodological framework is discussed. The central position, expressed in the seven thoughts of God's provisions which function in spite of their gross interpersonal solidarity, cannot bear the dead justice and at the same time.
The method presented in this study can be regarded as a critical continuation of the method developed by Labuschagne. It does not only supply his method with a methodological foundation, but also claims to make a substantial contribution to the improvement of his analytical techniques. The method has become stricter. The applications in Part 2 show that this improved method is capable of substantiating and protecting the basic theory that biblical texts are numerical compositions.

The final chapter of Part 1 deals with Codex Leningradensis and accounts for the decision to study the text as it occurs in Codex L, and not a text which is the result of textual criticism. Special attention is paid to the layout of this important manuscript and it is shown that the division of the text in subsections by means of the parashot is of paramount importance to the numerical structure-analysis. There is no justification for the way in which this layout has been blotted out in the printed editions of the Hebrew Bible, e.g. in the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. The remarkable layout of Codex L has been illustrated by means of some examples in the Supplement. In connection with the layout an investigation has been carried out on the problem of the number of verses in the Pentateuch, focusing especially upon the two Decalogues.

In Part 2 the method of numerical structure-analysis is applied to texts of the Old Testament. Chapter 7 discusses the problem of the selection of texts necessary for testing the method. The texts that have been selected are the eleven texts in the corpus Genesis - 2Kings in which a specific literary technique occurs, namely the divine ‘monologue intérieur’ which expresses what God ‘thinks’. There appears to be eleven texts of this nature, seven in the Primeval History and four in the rest of the corpus: Gen. 1:26; 2:18; 3:22; 6:3; 6:7; 8:21f; 11:6f; 18:17-19; Exod. 13:17; Deut. 32:20-36; Judg. 2:20-22. In this chapter the literary and theological function of this literary technique are dealt with. Its function is to express the provisions made by God in the course of the history of humankind.

Chapter 8 contains the analyses of the first seven texts in which thoughts of God occur, while Chapter 9 brings the analyses of the other four. A detailed study of texts such as Gen. 2:4-3:21, Gen. 18:1-33, Deut. 32:1-43 and Judg. 2:6-23 shows that there is a numerical macrostructure combining the smaller literary units to form larger units.

Chapter 8 is concluded by a paragraph in which the numerical macrostructural relation between the first seven thoughts of God and its theological meaning is discussed. Within the methodological framework, set for drawing conclusions on a macrostructural level, the macrostructure of the first seven divine thoughts is described as a numerical menorah-model, of which the structure appears to be meaningful with regard to the contents. The fourth thought, in the centre of the menorah, with the words ‘their having committed sin’ (Gen. 6:3) in a central position, expresses the essence of the problem which is the common factor connecting the seven thoughts of God. Moreover, these seven thoughts of God appear to contain divine provisions which fundamentally affect the course of human history. God YHWH is shown to be reluctant to put an end to the dramatic interaction between himself and the human beings, in spite of their gross misbehaviour. The human dilemma of upholding God’s justice and interpersonal solidarity appears to have become a burden to YHWH. Realizing that humans cannot bear the deadly burden of this dilemma, YHWH takes it upon himself to uphold his justice and at the same time shows his solidarity with the trespassers of his justice.

Chapter 9 is concluded with a study of the macrostructural relation between the remaining four thoughts of God, which do not concern the whole human race but more particularly Abraham and God’s people. These four divine thoughts are shown to be closely connected...
with the first seven thoughts of God by means of the unmistakable numerical pattern [11=7+4]. Both this combination of four divine thoughts and the combination of all eleven thoughts appear to have a meaningful content. In the divine thoughts concerning Abraham and God’s people there seems to be a difference between God’s people and the other nations: in contrast to the nations God’s people are informed about what God intends to do. Consequently God’s people become responsible for the well-being of the nations and will have to put up with the dilemma of the nearness to and distance from the nations. In these four divine thoughts God makes fundamental provisions in the history of his people, like He did with regard to the human race in the first seven. The divine purpose seems to be that God’s people, in obedience to YHWH, learn to be subservient to the victory over the dilemma of upholding God’s justice and interpersonal solidarity.

Chapter 10 is a summary of the results of the numerical structure-analysis carried out in this study. The conclusion is that the numerical structure-analysis has proved to be an important instrument for the literary basic analysis of biblical texts, particularly the texts of the Old Testament. It can contribute significantly to the understanding and exposition of these writings.