

Introduction to Book V (Psalms 107-150)

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Overview of the Numerical Features of the Psalms in Book V

As in the case of Book I and Book II, there is no absolute certainty about the precise number of psalms in Book V. In Codex L and many Hebrew manuscripts, as well as in LXX, Theodotion, the Syriac Version, Vulgate and Jerome, Book V has **43** psalms, which brings the grand total of the Psalter to 149 (so numbered in Codex L). This is because Psalms 114 and 115 are joined and regarded as a single psalm (see *BHS* at Psalm 115). In form and content, however, Psalms 114 and 115 constitute two distinct psalms. This is reflected in other text editions such as Letteris, Ginsburg and Snaith, and in modern translations. From this viewpoint, Book V has 44 psalms, and the Psalter as a whole 150.

In the Introductions to Book III and Book IV, I have adduced ample evidence showing that these two books are very closely connected. Book V, which may *appear* to stand on its own, is in fact joined to Book IV. This is shown by the great similarity in design of the three episodic psalms 105 and 106 (in Book IV) and 107 (in Book V). Please consult the “Specific features” in my Analyses of Psalms 105-107. The boundary between Book IV and Book V is, to say the least, unnatural, because these three sister psalms are apparently enjambed. Despite this, the 44 psalms of Book V appear to have a distinct compositional structure.

First, let me present a survey of these 44 psalms in terms of ‘authorship’ and the apparent sub-groupings of *seven* and *eleven* in line with what we encountered in the preceding books:

Psalms 107-113 (sub-group of **7** psalms – **4** nameless, **3** Davidic)

Psalms 114-117 (**4** nameless psalms)

Psalms 107-117 (first sub-group of **11** psalms)¹

Psalms 118-119 (**2** nameless psalms)

Psalms 120-134 (**15** Songs of Ascents – **10** nameless, **4** Davidic, **1** Solomonic)

Psalms 135-145 (**11** psalms - **3** nameless, **8** Davidic)

Psalms 146-150 (**5** nameless)

Altogether 44 psalms: 28 nameless, 15 Davidic, 1 Solomonic; MT in Codex L has 43.

The **15** Songs of Ascents, Psalms 120-134, may be regarded as one of the incontestable, coherent sub-groups in Book V: its *pièce de résistance*. Being a fixed group, these **15** psalms fall in the same category as the stabilized sub-group of **11** Davidic psalms of Book I (19-29), the **7** Korahite psalms of Book II (42-49), the **15** Davidic psalms of Book II (51-65), the **11** Asaphite psalms of Book III (73-83), the **11** Mosaic psalms of Book IV (90-100) and the **11** psalms in Book V (135-145).

¹ MT in Codex L has **10**, taking 114 and 115 as a single psalm; Ginsburg and Letteris have **11** psalms.

Since the 15 Songs of Ascents are a coherent group, what we have to sort out is the relationships between the 13 psalms in Psalms 107-119 and the 16 psalms in Psalms 135 through 150. But let me first present the numerical features of Book V in the following tables:

Table XVII: supposed authorship, the number of Masoretic verses, the occurrences of the name YHWH, the word *'elohim* and other designations;

Table XVIII: the number of poetic verselines, the total number of words, and the words before and after *atnach* (*excluding* the headings);

Table XIX: the total number of words, words before and after *atnach* (*including* headings);

Table XX: the word-count of the headings and their positioning in the first verse.

Table XVII: Masoretic verses and divine name count

Psalms	'Author'	Masoretic verses	The name YHWH	Elohim	Other designations
107	No name	43	12	-	EI 1 Elyon 1
108	David	14	1	6	-
109	David	31	7	-	-
110	David	7	3	-	-
111	No name	10	4	-	YH 1*
112	No name	10	2	-	YH 1*
113	No name	9	6	-	YH 2*
107-113	Total	124	35	-	YH 4* EI1
114	No name	8	-	-	Adon 1 Eloah 1
115	No name	18	10	-	YH 2 + YH1*
116	No name	19	15	-	YH 1*
117	No name	2	2	-	YH 1*
114-117	Total	47	27	-	YH2 YH3* Adon1 Eloah1
107-117	Total	171	62	6	YH2 YH7* Adon1 Eloah1 EI1
118	No name	29	22	-	YH 6
119	No name	176	24	-	-
118-119	Total	205	46	-	YH 6 + 46 YHWH = 52 (2x26)
120	No name	7	2	-	-
121	No name	8	5	-	-
122	David	9	3	-	YH 1
123	No name	4	2	-	-
124	David	8	4	-	-
125	No name	5	4	-	-
126	No name	6	4	-	-
127	Solomon	5	3	-	-
128	No name	6	3	-	-
129	No name	8	3	-	-
125-129	Total	30	17	-	-
130	No name	8	4	-	YH 1
131	David	3	2	-	-
132	No name	18	6	-	-
133	David	3	1	-	-
134	No name	3	5	-	-
120-134	Total	101	51 (3x17)	-	YH 2

135	No name	21	15	-	YH 2* Adon 1
136	No name	26	1	-	EI 1 Adon 1
137	No name	9	2	-	-
138	David	8	6	-	YH 2 Adon 1
139	David	24	3	-	Eloah 1 EI 1
140	David	14	7	-	Adonay 1 Eli 1
141	David	10	3	-	Adonay 1
142	David	8	3	-	-
143	David	12	4	-	-
144	David	15	4	1	-
145	David	21	10*	-	-
135-145	Total	168	58	1	YH2 YH2* Adon5 EI3 Eloah1
146	No name	10	9	-	YH 2* EI 1
147	No name	20	5	-	YH 2* Adon 1
148	No name	14	4	-	YH 2*
149	No name	9	2	-	YH 2* EI 1
150	No name	6	-	-	YH 1 YH 2* EI 1
146-150	Total	59	20	-	YH 1 YH 10* EI 3
135-150	Total	227	78 (3x26)	1	YH3 YH12*Adon5 EI6 Eloah1
107-150	Total	704	237	7	YH13 YH19*Adon6Eloah2EI7

* YH 19* relates to the occurrences in the *hallelu-yahs*.

Observations

1. The three Davidic Psalms 108-110 have altogether **52** (2 x **26**) Masoretic verses. The next two, Psalms 122 and 124 have **17** verses. The 15 Davidic Psalms have altogether **187** (11 x **17**) verses.
2. On the other hand, the occurrences of YHWH (*including halleluyahs*) in the sub-sections are indeed significant:

Psalms 108 stands out with its 6 occurrences of Elohim.

Psalms 118-119, Bridge Psalms, YHWH 46x + YH 6x = **52** (2 x **26**)

Psalms 120-134, Songs of Ascents, YHWH **51x** (3 x **17**) + YH 2x

Psalms 135-150, YHWH 87x + YH 15x = **102** (6 x **17**), Elohim 1x (144:9)

Psalms 107-150 have altogether **7** occurrences of Elohim.

This may explain the use, here and there, of alternative designations such as EI (**7x**), Elyon (1x), Eloah (2x) and Adon (6x).

The 237 occurrences of YHWH bring the total number of instances in the Psalter up to 689. Book I **272**, Book II 32, Book III, 44, Book IV **104**, Book V 237.

Table XVIII: Verselines and word count *excluding* headings and *hallelu-yahs*

Psalms	'Author'	Verselines	Word Total	Before atnach	After atnach
107	No name	43	278	149	129
108	David	13	96/95*	57	39/38*
109	David	30	224	140	84
110	David	8	63	35	28
111	No name	10	72	41	31
112	No name	10	77	44	33
113	No name	9	56	33	23
114	No name	8	52	28	24
115	No name	18	133	74	59
114-115	Total	26	185	102	83
116	No name	19	129	76	53
117	No name	2	15	12	3
107-117	Total	170 (10x17)	1195/1194*	689	506/505*
118	No name	29	198	107	91
119	No name	176	1064/1063*	639	425/424*
118-119	Total	205	1262/1261*	746	516/515*
107-119	Total	375	2457/2455*	1435	1022/1020*
120	No name	7	49	33	16
121	No name	8	54	32	22
122	David	10	59	33	26
123	No name	5	39	29	10
124	David	9	54	32	22
125	No name	6	47	33	14
126	No name	8	48	37	11
127	Solomon	8	57	34	23
128	No name	8	45	32	13
129	No name	8	52	30	22
130	No name	8	52	34	18
131	David	5	30	19	11
132	No name	20	129	73	56
133	David	4	37	26	11
134	No name	3	23	13	10
120-134	Total	117	775	490	285
107-134	Total	492	3232/3230	1925	1307/1305
135	No name	21	163	94	69
136	No name	26	166	88	78
137	No name	12	84	62	22
138	David	10	75	46	29
139	David	23	174	105	69
140	David	13	110	68	42
141	David	12	93	54	39
142	David	11	70	48	22
143	David	17	114	73	41
144	David	20	129	89	40

145*	David	21/22* / 22*	150/157*	83/87*	67/70*
135-145	Total	186/187*	1328/1335*	810/814*	518/521*
146	No name	10 / 9	81	53	28
147*	No name	20/21* / 21	137/140*	74	63/66*
148	No name	14 /14	107	61	46
149	No name	9 / 9	60/59*	34	26/25*
150	No name	6 / 5	33	18	15
146-150	Total	59/60* / 58	418/420*	240	178/180*
107-150	Total	737/739* / 737*	4978/4985*	2975/2979*	2003/2006*

- * The number of verselines and words based on the restored texts of 145 and 147.
- * Psalms 145-150, Van der Lugt's count (2006) in green.

Observations

- In terms of verselines, I found the following significant multiples of **17** and **26**:
Psalms 108-110, three Davidic psalms, have altogether **51** (3 x 17) verselines;
Psalms 107-117, First Group of Eleven Psalms, **170** (10 x 17) verselines;
Psalms 135-145*, Second Group of Eleven Psalms **187** (11 x 17) verselines;
I regard this as additional evidence supporting my delimitation of the two sub-groups of **11**, provided that my identification of the verselines is correct. Concerning the total number of verselines, there is difference of opinion between Fokkelman (742)*, Van der Lugt (737)* and myself (739)*. The precise assessment of the number of verselines depends partly on how one deals with the textcritical problems in Psalms 108, 119, 145, 147, and 149. In any case, given the striking statistics in regards Books I-IV, Book V appears to be out of step, especially as regards 146-150.

Table XIX: Word count *including* the headings, without and *with hallelu-yah*

Psalms	'Author'	Word Total	Before atnach	After atnach
107	No name	278	149	129
108	David	98/99(MT)	60	38/39(MT)
109	David	227	143	84
110	David	65	37	28
111	No name	74/76	41/43	31
112	No name	77/79	44/46	33
113	No name	56/60	33/35	23/25
107-113	Total	871/879	507/513	364/366
114	No name	52	28	24
115	No name	133/135	74/76	59
116	No name	129/131	76/78	53
117	No name	15/17	12/14	3
114-117	Total	329/335	190/196	139
107-117	Total	1200/1214	697/709	503/505
118	No name	198	107	91
119	No name	1063/1064(MT)	639	424/425(MT)
118-119	Total	1261/1262(MT)	746	515/516(MT)
120	No name	51	35	16
121	No name	56	34	22
122	David	62	36	26
123	No name	41	31	10

124	David	57	35	22
125	No name	49	35	14
126	No name	50	39	11
127	Solomon	60	37	23
128	No name	47	34	13
129	No name	54	32	22
130	No name	54	36	18
131	David	33	21	11
132	No name	131	75	56
133	David	40	29	11
134	No name	25	15	10
120-134	Total	810	525	285
135	No name	167	96	71
136	No name	166	88	78
137	No name	84	62	22
138	David	76	47	29
139	David	177	108	69
140	David	116	71	45 (3 salah)
141	David	95	56	39
142	David	75	50	25
143	David	117	75	42 (1 salah)
144	David	130	90	40
145	David	159	89	70
138-145	Total	945	586	359
All Davidic	Total	1527	947	580
135-145	Total	1362	832	530
146	No name	81/ 85	53/ 57	28
147	No name	137(MT)140/144	74/ 78	63(MT)/66
148	No name	107/111	61/65	46
149	No name	60/64 (MT) 59/63	34/38 (MT) 34/38	26 (MT)25
150	No name	33/37	18/22	15
146-150	Total	418 (MT)/ 421/441	240/260	178 (MT)/181
107-150	Total	5052 (MT) 5086 5054/5086	3040 (MT)/ 3072 3040/3072	2012 (MT) 2014

* The numbers marked green represent the word-count including the *hallelu-yahs*.

Observation

The three Davidic Psalms 108-110 have altogether **390** (15 x **26**) words. The two Davidic Psalms 122 and 124 have **119** (7 x **17**) words.

Table XX: The headings: word count and their positioning in the first verse

Psalms	'Author'	Hallelu yah	First verse	Separate verse	Conclusion	Context
107	No name	-	-	-	-	
108	David	-	-	3 words	-	
109	David	-	3 words	-	-	
110	David	-	2 words	-	-	
111	No name	Hallelu yah	2 words	-	-	
112	No name	Hallelu yah	2 words	-	-	
113	No name	Hallelu yah	2 words	-	Hallelu-yah	
114	No name	-	-	-	-	
115	No name	-	-	-	Hallelu-yah	
116	No name	-	-	-	Hallelu-yah	
117	No name	-	-	-	Hallelu-yah	
118	No name	-	-	-	-	
119	No name	-	-	-	-	
120	No name	-	2 words	-	-	
121	No name	-	2 words	-	-	
122	David	-	3 words	-	-	
123	No name	-	2 words	-	-	
124	David	-	3 words	-	-	
125	No name	-	2 words	-	-	
126	No name	-	2 words	-	-	
127	Solomon	-	3 words	-	-	
128	No name	-	2 words	-	-	
129	No name	-	2 words	-	-	
130	No name	-	2 words	-	-	
131	David	-	3 words	-	-	
132	No name	-	2 words	-	-	
133	David	-	3 words	-	-	
134	No name	-	2 words	-	-	
135	No name	Hallelu yah	2 words	-	Hallelu-yah	
136	No name	-	-	-	-	
137	No name	-	-	-	-	
138	David	-	1 word	-	-	
139	David	-	3 words	-	-	
140	David	-	-	3 words	-	
141	David	-	2 words	-	-	
142	David	-	-	5 words	-	2 or 3?; 63:1b!
143	David	-	2 words	-	-	
144	David	-	1 word	-	-	
145	David	-	2 words	-	-	
146	No name	Hallelu-yah	-	-	Hallelu-yah	
147	No name	Hallelu yah	-	-	Hallelu-yah	
148	No name	Hallelu yah	-	-	Hallelu-yah	
149	No name	Hallelu yah	-	-	Hallelu-yah	
150	No name	Hallelu yah	-	-	Hallelu-yah	
Total	15 Davidic	9 Hallelu yah	60 words	11 words	10x	1 psalm

Observation

1. Distribution of *hallelu-yah*: note that there are no Davidic psalms having a *hallelu-yah*:

Psalms 107-117	First Group of Eleven Psalms	7x
Psalm 135	First psalm of the Second Group of Eleven Psalms	2x
Psalms 146-150	The Concluding Hallelu-yah Psalms	10x.

In Codex L, the *hallelu-yahs* at the beginning are all written without *maqgef*, except in Psalm 146; those at the end are always written with *maqgef*. In the Ginsburg Edition, *halleluyah* is written throughout as a single word.

Note the single 'context' in 142 (1b), which is rather similar to that of 63 (1b).²

The Compositional Structure of Book V

Book Va: Psalms 107-119

107 108 109 110 111 112 113 and 114 115 116 **117**

118 119 Concluding/Transition psalms

Book Va: Fourth Expansion of the Davidic Psalter: Psalms 107-119

Book Vb: Psalms 120-150

120 121 122 123 124 125 126 **127** 128 129 130 131 132 133 **134**

135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 **145**

146 147 148 149 **150**

Book Vb: Fifth Expansion of the Davidic Psalter: Psalms 107-119

Books I-V: Davidic Psalter: Psalms 1-150

For a full discussion of the structure of Book V, please consult the separate chapter, [Compositional Structure of the Psalter](#).

² I am indebted to Dr Koorevaar for having drawn my attention to the 'context' in Psalms 63 and 142.

Book V: Select Bibliography – in cooperation with Pieter van der Lugt

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