

Psalm 47— 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 47

- The psalm has a very regular poetical structure:
 - Canto I vs. 2-6 2 strophes, 5 verselines (2 + 3) and 10 cola (4 + 6)
 - Canto II vs. 7-10 2 strophes, 5 verselines (3 + 2) and 10 cola (6 + 4).
- Syntax appears to have been used to generate extra *kabod*- and divine name numbers. The **46** words in the main clauses in vs. 2-9 (divided into **23** + **23**), are probably based on the fact that 46 represents the numerical value of the keyword זָמְרוּ, 'sing praises', occurring no less than 5 times in vs. 7-8.
- The concluding verse (10), the only 2-verseline strophe, is clearly a coda.

Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: ||

- Van der Lugt and Labuschagne: 2-3, 4-6 || 7-9, 10 (2 cantos with 4 strophes, 10 verselines and 20 cola).
- Fokkelman: 2-3, 4-5 || 6-8, 9-10 (2 stanzas with 4 strophes, 10 verselines and 20 cola).

Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the atnach.
- Column **c**: words in the main clauses; **d**: words in the subordinate clauses.
- The numbering of the verselines is shown in **brown**.

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	לְמִנְצַחַת לְבִנְיָקֶרַח מְזִמּוֹר : Heading, v. 1	4	= 4	+ 0		
2	כָּל־הָעַמִּים תִּקְעוּ־כָרָא [^] 1	4	4		4	
	הָרִיעוּ לְאֱלֹהִים בְּקוֹל רָנָה : 4	4		4	4	
3	The name יְהוָה [^] 2	4	4			4
	מְלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ : 5	5		5		5
	Strophe 1 Total, v. 2-3	17	= 8	+ 9	= 8	+ 9
4	יְדַבֵּר עַמִּים תַּחֲתֵינוּ [^] 3	3	3		3	
	וּלְאֲמִים תַּחַת רַגְלֵינוּ : 3	3		3	3	
5	יִבְחַר־לָנוּ אֶת־נִחְלָתָנוּ [^] 4	4	4		4	
	אֶת גְּאוֹן יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר־אָהַב סֵלָה : 5	5		5	5	
	Total, v. 4-5	15	= 7	+ 8	= 15	+ 0
	Total, v. 2-5	32	= 15	+ 17	= 23	+ 9
6	Vs. 6-7, the 2 middle עֲלֵה אֱלֹהִים בְּתִרוּעָה [^] 5	3	3		3	
	יְהוָה [^] בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר : 3	3		3	3	
	4 middle cola: 20 = 8 + 4 + 8 Total, v. 6	6	= 3	+ 3	= 6	+ 0
	Strophe 3 Total, v. 4-6	21	= 10	+ 11	= 21	+ 0

	Canto I	Total, v. 2-6	38	=	18	+	20	=	38	+	0
7		זָמְרוּ אֱלֹהִים זָמְרוּ [^] 6	3		3				3		
		זָמְרוּ לְמִלְכֵנוּ זָמְרוּ: 6	3				3		3		
		(7 + 13 + 20 + 6 = 46)							6	=	3 + 3 = 6 + 0
		Meaningful centre							12	=	6 + 6 = 12 + 0
8		כִּי מָלַךְ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֱלֹהִים 7	5		5				5		
		זָמְרוּ מִשְׁכִּיל: 7	2		2				2		
		Total, v. 8	7	=	7	+	0	=	2	+	5
9		מָלַךְ אֱלֹהִים עַל־גּוֹיִם [^] 8	4		4				4		
		אֱלֹהִים יָשַׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא קָדְשׁוֹ: 8	5				5		5		
		Total, v. 9	9	=	4	+	5	=	9	+	0
		Strophe 3	22	=	14	+	8	=	21	+	5
		Total, v. 6-9	28	=	17	+	11	=	23	+	5
		Total, v. 2-9	60	=	32	+	28	=	46	+	14
10	Coda	נְדִיבֵי עַמִּים נֶאֱסָפוּ 9	3		3				3		
		עִם אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתָם 9	3		3				3		
		כִּי לְאֱלֹהִים מִגְּנֵי־אָרֶץ 10	4		4				4		
		מֵאֵד נִעְלָה: 10	2		2				2		
		Strophe 6	12	=	12	+	0	=	6	+	6
		Total, v. 8-10	28	=	23	+	5	=	17	+	11
		Canto II	34	=	26	+	8	=	23	+	11
		Total, v. 2-10	72	=	44	+	28	=	52	+	20
		With the heading, v. 1-10	76	=	48	+	28				
		With סָלָה (1x), v. 1-10	77	=	48	+	29				

Observations

- The psalm does not have a meaningful centre in terms of its 72 words, the arithmetic middle being between the first two words of v. 6b. It is only in terms of the 10 verselines and the 20 cola that such a centre can be found: the 2 pivotal verselines and 4 pivotal cola, situated in vs. 6-7, astride the two cantos:

עָלָה אֱלֹהִים בַּתְרוּעָה ^ יְהוָה בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר:

זָמְרוּ אֱלֹהִים זָמְרוּ ^ זָמְרוּ לְמִלְכֵנוּ זָמְרוּ:

God has gone up to the shout of triumph // YHWH with the sound of the horn!

Praise God, sing praises // praise our king, sing praises!

The announcement of YHWH's enthronement and the call to hail him as the King is particularly meaningful, since it expresses the gist of the psalm.

- At first sight and in terms of content, the psalm may appear to divide into two sections, of which the boundary is marked by the *selah* after v. 5.

vs. 2-5 Canto I the call to all nations to acclaim Israel's God

vs. 6-10 Canto II the solemn celebration of YHWH's universal kingship.

However, on rhetorical grounds, Pieter van der Lugt (in a manuscript dealing with the psalms of Book II) has argued convincingly that the text divides into vs. 2-6 and 7-10.

Canto I vs. 2-6 YHWH has subdued the nations for the sake of his people

Canto II vs. 7-10 God has accepted his kingship and rules over the nations.

The function of the *selah* may merely be to draw attention to what is said in v. 5.

3. The logotechnical unity of vs. 2-9 strongly suggests that v. 10 stands out as a coda. This is corroborated by the striking reference to the 'people of the God of Abraham' (compare v. 4), and by the fact that v. 10 is the only 2-verseline strophe.
4. The name יהוה occurs twice (vs. 3a and 6b) and only in Canto I, where it clearly functions as a device for inclusion. In Canto II, which is about YHWH's rule over the nations (v. 9), the author explicitly used the designation אֱלֹהִים, 'God', to express that he is also their God. There are 8 instances of אֱלֹהִים (or 7, as in Psalm 46) – see *BHS* at 47:10a-a).
5. The epithet עֶלְיוֹן, 'Most High', expressing YHWH's supremacy, occurs in v. 3a – compare Ps. 46:5b. For the importance of this keyword, see Observation 6 in my Analysis of [Psalm 9-10](#).
6. The sacred numbers symbolizing God's presence feature in the following instances:

vs. 2-3	17 words in total
vs. 2-5	32 words in total, with 17 words after atnach
vs. 2-5	23 words in the main clauses (Column c)
vs. 6-9	23 words in the main clauses (Column c)
vs. 6-9	17 words before atnach
vs. 2-9	32 words before atnach
vs. 8-10	23 words before atnach and 17 words in the main clauses
vs. 7-10	34 (2 x 17) words, with 26 words before atnach
vs. 2-10	52 (2 x 26) words in the main clauses (Column c).

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Dr. C.J. Labuschagne Brinkhorst 44 9751 AT Haren (Gron) The Netherlands labuschagne.cj@planet.nl	Senior Lecturer in Semitic Languages (retired), University of Pretoria, South Africa and Professor of Old Testament (retired), University of Groningen, The Netherlands
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