

# 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)<sup>1</sup>

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).

<sup>1</sup> 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             |
| <b>107-117</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>171</b>       | <b>62</b>        | <b>6</b> | <b>YH2 YH7* Adon1 Eloah1 EI1</b>  |
| 118            | No name      | 29               | 22               | -        | YH 6                              |
| 119            | No name      | 176              | 24               | -        | -                                 |
| <b>118-119</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>205</b>       | <b>46</b>        | <b>-</b> | <b>YH 6 + 46 YHWH = 52 (2x26)</b> |
| 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                | -        | -                                 |
| <b>120-134</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>101</b>       | <b>51 (3x17)</b> | <b>-</b> | <b>YH 2</b>                       |

|                |              |            |                  |          |                                  |
|----------------|--------------|------------|------------------|----------|----------------------------------|
| 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*              | -        | -                                |
| <b>135-145</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>168</b> | <b>58</b>        | <b>1</b> | <b>YH2 YH2* Adon5 EI3 Eloah1</b> |
| 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        | <b>Total</b> | 59         | 20               | -        | YH 1 YH 10* EI 3                 |
| <b>135-150</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>227</b> | <b>78 (3x26)</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>YH3 YH12*Adon5 EI6 Eloah1</b> |
| <b>107-150</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>704</b> | <b>237</b>       | <b>7</b> | <b>YH13 YH19*Adon6Eloah2EI7</b>  |

\* 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***

| <b>Psalms</b> | <b>'Author'</b> | <b>Verselines</b> | <b>Word Total</b> | <b>Before atnach</b> | <b>After atnach</b> |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 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   | <b>34</b>   | 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                              |
| <b>120-134</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>810</b>                                       | <b>525</b>  | <b>285</b>                      |
| 135            | No name      | 167  | 96  | 71                              |
| 136            | No name      | 166  | 88  | <b>78</b>                       |
| 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        | <b>130</b>                                       | 90  | 40                              |
| 145            | David        | 159  | 89  | 70                              |
| 138-145        | Total        | 945  | 586   | 359                             |
| All Davidic    | Total        | 1527   | 947   | 580                             |
| <b>135-145</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>1362</b>                                      | <b>832</b>  | <b>530</b>                      |
| 146            | No name      | 81/ <b>85</b>                                    | 53/ <b>57</b>                                     | 28                              |
| 147            | No name      | 137(MT)140/144                                   | 74/ <b>78</b>                                     | 63(MT)/66                       |
| 148            | No name      | 107/111  | 61/65   | 46                              |
| 149            | No name      | <b>60/64</b> (MT)<br>59/63                       | <b>34/38</b> (MT)<br>34/38                        | <b>26</b> (MT)25                |
| 150            | No name      | 33/37  | 18/22   | 15                              |
| <b>146-150</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>418</b> (MT)/ <b>421/441</b>                  | <b>240/260</b>                                    | <b>178</b> (MT)/181             |
| <b>107-150</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>5052</b> (MT) <b>5086</b><br><b>5054/5086</b> | <b>3040</b> (MT)/ <b>3072</b><br><b>3040/3072</b> | <b>2012</b> (MT)<br><b>2014</b> |

\* 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).<sup>2</sup>

## 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](#).

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

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