

Psalm 67— 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 67

- Psalm 67 is the menorah psalm *par excellence* in the Psalter. Its main feature is the artistic way in which the number of fullness, 7, and the divine name numbers have been used with great skill and precision to give structure to the poem, in terms of verselines, cola, words, key-words, and even letters.
- The 7 verselines form the backbone of the menorah structure, with v. 5 at the centre, which stands out as being the only 3-colon verseline in the poem. Its middle colon, v. 5b, contains the 3-word meaningful centre on word level: תִּשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִיִּשׂוֹר, 'you judge the peoples with equity'. The central verseline is positioned at the arithmetic centre of the carefully demarcated central core of the psalm, vs. 4-6. All four centres are in their own way meaningful, for they express the gist of the poem: the blessing of Israel and the happiness of the whole world depend upon God's just judgement of all nations.

Strophic structure

- Van der Lugt and Labuschagne: 2-3, 4-6, 7-8 (3 strophes with 7 verselines and 15 cola).
- Fokkelman: 2-4, 5-6, 7-8 (3 strophes with 7 verselines and 15 cola).

Logotechnical analysis

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

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	לְמַנְצַח בְּנִינֹת מְזֻמֹּר שִׁיר: Heading, v. 1	4	4			
2	אֱלֹהִים יִחַנְנוּ וּבְרַכְנוּ [^] יְאֵר פְּנֵיו אֶתְנוּ סֵלָה: פְּנֵיו = 47 (17 + 14 + 10 + 6 = 47)	1	3	3		3
3	לְדַעַת בְּאֶרֶץ דְּרָכָה [^] בְּכָל-גּוֹיִם יִשׁוּעָתֶךָ: Total, v. 3	2	3	3	3	
	Strophe 1 Total, v. 2-3	12	6	6	6	6
4	יִדְוֶה עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים [^] יִדְוֶה עַמִּים כָּלָם: Total, v. 4	3	3	3	3	
5	יִשְׁמְחוּ וַיִּרְנְנוּ לְאֻמִּים כִּי-תִשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִיִּשׂוֹר [^] Middle words: 22+3+22 Middle colon: 7+1+7	4	3	3	3	
6	יִדְוֶה עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים [^] יִדְוֶה עַמִּים כָּלָם: Total, v. 6	5	3	3	3	
	Strophe 2 Total, v. 4-6	22	13	9	22	6
	Total, v. 2-6	34	19	15	28	6

7	אָרְצֵךְ נִתְּנָה יְבוּלָהּ [^]	6	3	3	3
	יְבָרְכֵנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵינוּ:		3	3	3
	Total, v. 7		6	= 3 + 3	= 0 + 6
8	יְבָרְכֵנוּ אֱלֹהִים [^]	7	2	2	2
	וַיִּירָאוּ אֶת־כָּל־אֶפְסֵי־אָרְצֵךְ:		5	5	5
	Total, v. 8		7	= 2 + 5	= 0 + 7
	Strophe 3 Total, v. 7-8		13	= 5 + 8	= 0 + 13
	Total, v. 4-8		35	= 18 + 17	= 22 + 13
	Total, v. 2-8		47	= 24 + 23	= 28 + 19
	With סָלָה (2x), v. 1-8		49	= 24 + 25	
	With the heading, v. 1-8		51	= 28 + 23	
	With the heading and סָלָה (2x), v. 1-8		53	= 28 + 25	

For many of the observations below I am indebted to my daughter, who wrote her doctorate term paper on the six-branched menorah and the menorah texts in the Old Testament (particularly Exod. 30:26-28; 40:17-32; 1 Chron. 28:12-18; 2 Chron. 13:10-11; Psalm 67 and Zechariah 4): Trudy Labuschagne, *De Menora in woord en beeld. Een studie over de vorm, functie en betekenis van de Menora in het Oude Testament en de latere symboliek* (Groningen, 1992). See also my *Numerical Secrets of the Bible*, p. 168f.

Observations

- In terms of the 47 words of the psalm, the middle word is עַמִּים, 'the peoples' (v. 5b), flanked by 23 words, the *kabod* number signifying God's presence: $47 = 23 + 1 + 23$. The number 47 happens to be the numerical value of the word פָּנָיו, 'his face' (v. 2b), which was chosen deliberately as an additional device to symbolize God's presence. The middle word is positioned at the centre of 3 words which may be considered the meaningful centre on *word level* ($47 = 22 + 3 + 22$):

תִּשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִיִּשׁוּר, 'you judge the peoples with equity'.

Since the pivotal words fall precisely within the middle colon (v. 5b), the whole phrase may have been intended to be the meaningful centre on *colon level* ($15 = 7 + 1 + 7$):

בִּי־תִשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִיִּשׁוּר, 'for you judge the peoples with equity'.

The larger meaningful centre is significantly flanked by 7 cola on either side, the number of fullness. This number occurs again in the number of words addressed to God (Column c): 28 (4 x 7).

- A letter-count reveals that the 47 words of the psalm consist of 208 letters, a multiple of 26 (8 x 26), which is probably not a matter of coincidence. Neither is it by chance that the two identical verses, v. 4 and v. 6, are both made up of 26 letters. In addition, the *paseq* slash in both verses divides their 26 letters neatly into 9 + 17. The same applies to the *paseq* slash in v. 4, which divides the 51 letters of vs. 3-4 into 34 + 17.*

* The function of the *paseq* slash here is obviously to generate additional divine name numbers, a function of which I have discovered many instances relating to the division of words in the book of Deuteronomy. For some examples, see my logotechnical analysis of Deut. 4:5-8, 4:32-35, 7:25-26, 9:5-6, and 9:18-21, in my commentary, *Deuteronomium*, (De Prediking van het Oude Testament), Nijkerk 1987, volume IA, p. 240, 285, and volume IB, p. 142, 181, and 201. See also Hans Nobel, *Gods gedachten tellen. Numerieke structuuranalyse en de elf gedachten Gods in Genesis – 2Koningen* (Dissertation, University of Groningen, 1993), p. 96. It would be very worthwhile to study this phenomenon more deeply.

3. The middle colon is highlighted in still another way: it is situated within the **middle verseline**, v. 5 ($7 = 3 + 1 + 3$). The **7** verselines, which coincide with the 7 Masoretic verses, constitute the backbone of the menorah pattern. There is every reason to believe that the *selah* at the end of v. 5 functions as a device to draw attention to the central verseline. Compare its attention drawing function in in Psalms 55, 57, 61 and 68. See Observation 1 in my Analysis of [Psalm 61](#) and [Psalm 68](#).

This pivotal 3-colon verseline, v. 5, has a perfect chiasmic structure:

וְשִׂמְחוּ וּרְנְנוּ לְאֻמִּים	Let nations rejoice and sing for joy,
כִּי־תִשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִיִּשׁוּרֶ־אָרֶץ	for you judge peoples with equity
וּלְאֻמִּים בְּאֶרֶץ תִּנְחָם:	and on earth you guide nations .

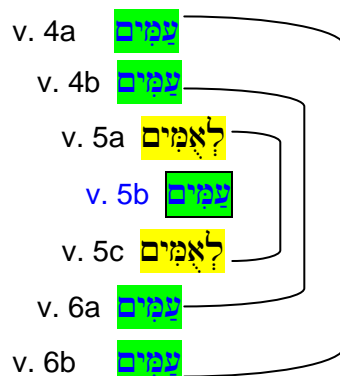
In addition to this, the middle verseline significantly stands out as being the only *3-colon verseline*. It is flanked by six 2-colon verselines: $15 = 6 + 3 + 6$. A closer examination also reveals that the central verseline is enveloped by two identical 2-colon verselines, v. 4 and v. 6, which are both made up of 6 words and **26** letters. The **7** cola of vs. 4-6 clearly constitute the central core of the poem.

This is how the poem is structured in a menorah pattern, in terms of its **7** verselines, 15 cola, **47** words, and **208** (8×26) letters:

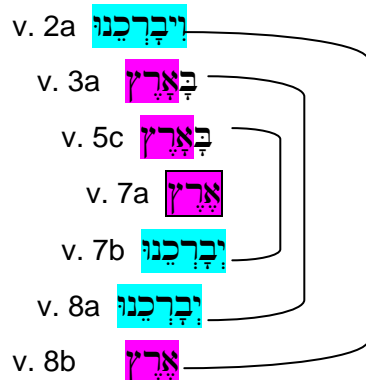
v. 2	2-colon verseline	6 words, 28 letters
v. 3	2-colon verseline	6 words, 25 letters
v. 4	2-colon verseline	6 words, 26 letters
v. 5	3-colon verseline	10 words, 45 letters
v. 6	2-colon verseline	6 words, 26 letters
v. 7	2-colon verseline	6 words, 29 letters
v. 8	2-colon verseline	7 words, 29 letters.

To sum up: the **3 middle words** are situated in the **pivotal colon**, which is positioned in the middle of the **pivotal verseline**, which, in its turn, is situated in the middle of the **central core** (vs. 4-6), demarcated by two identical verselines (vs. 4 and 6). Separately and together, the four centres are most meaningful. They express the quintessential idea of the poem on different levels: God's blessing for his people and the happiness of the whole world is based upon his just judgement of the nations.

4. It is intriguing to note that the middle word of the poem in v. 5b, **עַמִּים**, is situated precisely at the centre of the **7** occurrences of the two key-words taken together, **עַמִּים**, 'peoples' (**5x**), and **לְאֻמִּים**, 'nations' (**2x**), in the central core.

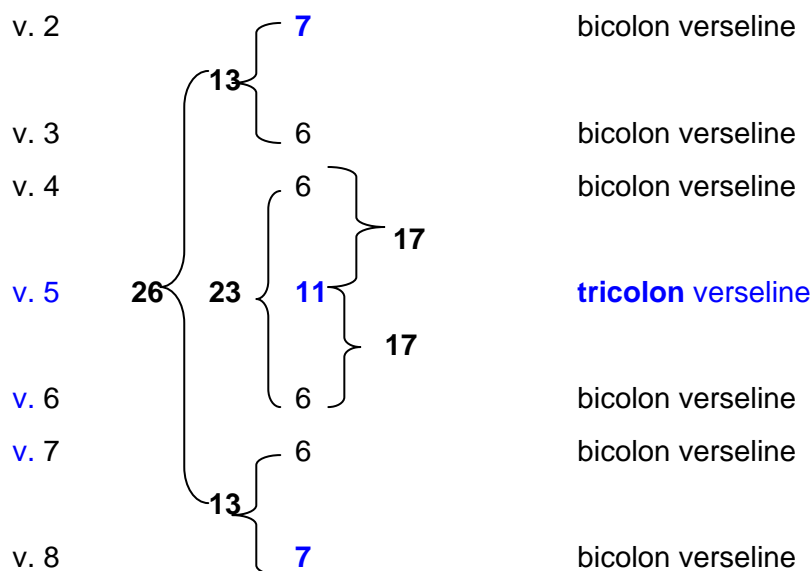


In the whole poem, there are also **7** occurrences altogether of two other crucial key-words, **יְבָרְכֵנוּ**, 'he will bless us' (3x), and **אֶרֶץ**, 'earth' (4x):



Note the regular concentric pattern of the first set of two key-words in the central core, and the alternating concentric pattern of the other set in the poem, in which the two key-words correspond precisely with their counterparts in the opposite branches.

5. If we *include* the two *selahs* in the word-count, the text has **49** words (**7 x 7!**), distributed over the **7** verselines in a regular concentric menorah pattern, with **11** words at the centre, and the number of fullness, **7**, at both outer branches:



The addition of the two *selahs* does not only make the concentric menorah pattern numerically more perfect, it also generates the divine name numbers **17** (2x) and **26** (**13 + 13**), as well as the *kabod* number **23**, and, last but not least, the number of fulfilment, **11** ($49 = 19 + 11 + 19$). Moreover, it is important to note that the placement of the two *selahs* does not change the pivotal position of the word **עַמִּים** ($49 = 24 + 1 + 24$) nor that of the 3 central words of the psalm proper, **תִּשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִיִּשׂוּר**. Now it is no longer the pivotal word but the 3-word centre that is being flanked by the *kabod* number **23** on either side ($49 = 23 + 3 + 23$). These observations show that the *selahs* were carefully positioned to enhance the numerical aspects of the text.

Psalms 67 shares the menorah pattern with several other psalms – see the general introduction under "Special Patterns" – but this psalm is unquestionably the menorah psalm *par excellence* in the Psalter. No wonder that in Jewish tradition Psalm 67 was traditionally written in the form of the six-branched menorah (*mistakenly* called 'seven-branched' – see below, "Note on the six-branched lampstand").

See Trudy Labuschagne, *op. cit.*, p. 83 and compare J.D. Eisenstein, "Menorah", in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, VIII (1904), 493-495; L. Yarden, *The Tree of Light. A Study of the Menorah, the Seven-Branched Lampstand*, Uppsala 1972, p. 1-2, and 24; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, II (1971), col. 1368; and R. Meynet, *Rhetorical Analysis* (JSOTS 256) 1998, p. 63. For an example of Psalm 67 written as a menorah on a Shivviti plaque, consult <http://www.newthoughtkabbalah.com:80/kabbalisticagamshivvitiplaque.htm>. For the Shivviti plaque, see my Analysis of [Psalm 16](#), Observation 7.

6. If we *include* the 4-word heading in the word-count, *excluding* the two *selahs*, the total number of words in the text increase to **51** (3 x **17**), generating an additional divine name number. Now v. 5a-b is at the centre: **51** = 22 + **7** + 22.

Finally, if we *include* the two *selahs* as well as the heading in the word-count, the latter formula changes to 53 = **23** + **7** + **23**.

To conclude: the logotechnical analysis of Psalm 67 reveals that it is of paramount importance to analyse the *poetical body* of a psalm to detect its structure at the time of its composition, before paying attention to the numerical aspects of the text including the headings and technical terms.

7. As in Psalm 66, the name YHWH is absent; the word אֱלֹהִים, 'God', occurs 6x.

Note on the six-branched lampstand

The lampstand had **6** branches, 3 on each side (see Exodus 25:31-40), but because it had **7** lamps (one on the central shaft and one on each of the branches), it is generally loosely, in my opinion mistakenly, called the *seven-branched lampstand*. The most recent major study on the menorah is the monumental monograph published by Rachel Hachlili, *The Menorah, The Ancient Seven-armed Candelabrum. Origin, Form and Significance*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, Volume 68, Brill, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2001, 539 pages, 92* pages Plates (ISBN 90 04 120173). See my review of this volume in *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, XXXIV, 3 (2003), pp. 323-327.

There appears to be a *confusio in terminis* among scholars, when it comes to describing the shape of the menorah: 'seven-armed', 'seven-branched', 'six-branched', or having 'six arms'. Unfortunately Hachlili contributes to the confusion by using such terms interchangeably, despite her assertion that the menorah should be described as being 'seven-armed'. She missed the opportunity to make an end to the confusion by using one term consistently: either 'seven-armed', which she seems to prefer (pretending to follow Josephus) or better, 'six-branched' (following the Hebrew Bible).

In my opinion the only correct description is 'six-branched'. C.L. Meyers has correctly defined the menorah as a 'six-branch-plus-central-axis arrangement' (C.L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult*, Missoula 1976, p. 34). Hachlili's own description of its shape is remarkably enough in accordance with that of Meyers: "consisting of a vertical shaft, with a base in various forms. This supports six arms, three of which are attached to each side of the shaft" (p. 121). Despite this, she pretends to follow Josephus, who, according to her, described the menorah in the Temple of Herod, "very simply as having seven arms and a base" (p. 23, where she cites Josephus's *War* 7, 148-49, and *Ant.* 3, 144-46):

Affixed to a pedestal was a central shaft, from which there extended slender branches, a wrought lamp being attached to the extremity of each branch; of these there were seven...

Josephus does not speak of 'seven branches', but refers to the *seven lamps*; the words 'of these there were seven' do not refer to the arms, but to the lamps! Moreover, one cannot possibly regard Josephus's 'central shaft' as a 'branch', or worse still, as a 'curved arm', as Hachlili seems to do: "it (the Second Temple menorah) had seven upward-curving arms" (p. 36), and that it "consists of seven curved arms" (p. 275).

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