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### Psalm 45

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# Psalm 45— 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 45

- A defining characteristic of Psalm 45 is the skilful use of the direction of address to give structure to the psalm: of the **153** (9 x 17) words, **119** (7 x 17) are specifically addressed to the king and his bride and **34** (2 x 17) spoken *about* them.
- As in Psalm 44, the meaningful centre is to be found in terms of the poetic structure: the central verseline, **v. 10** (17 = 8 + 1 + 8).

## Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: || Sub-canto boundary: |

- Van der Lugt: 2-3, 4-6 | 7-8, 9-10 || 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 (2 cantos with 8 strophes, 17 verselines and 39 cola).
- Fokkelman: 2-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-10 || 11-13, 14-16, 17-18 (2 parts with 7 strophes, 17 verselines and 41 cola, taking vs. 6 and 11 as tricola).
- Labuschagne: 2, 3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-10 || 11-13, 14-16, 17-18 (2 cantos with 8 strophes determined by the direction of address, 17 verselines and 40 cola, taking v. 6 as a tricolon on account of the *atnach*, which Van der Lugt disregards).

## Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the *atnach*.
- Column **c**: words specifically addressed to the couple; **d**: words spoken about them.
- The verselines, 1-17, coincide with the Masoretic verses 2-18.

	Total	a	b	c	d
1	לְמִנְצַחַּ עַל־שְׁנַיִם לְבָנֵי־קָרַח <sup>^</sup>	5	5		
	מְשָׁבִיל שִׁיר יְדִידָתָ:	3		3	
	Heading, v. 1	8	= 5	+ 3	
2	Introduction: רָחַשׁ לְבִי דְבַר טוֹב	4	4		4
	spoken about the king אָמַר אָנִי מַעֲשֵׂי לְמַלְכָּה <sup>^</sup>	4	4		4
	לְשׁוֹנִי יַעַט סוֹפֵר מְהִירָ:	4		4	4
	Strophe 1 Total, v. 2	12	= 8	+ 4	= 0 + 12
3*	יָפוּ יָפִיתָ [יְפִיפִיתָ] מִבְּנֵי אָדָם	4	4		4
	הוֹצֵק חֵן בְּשִׁפְתוֹתֶיךָ <sup>^</sup>	3	3		3
	עַל־כֵּן בֵּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהִים לְעוֹלָם:	5		5	5
	Strophe 2 Total, v. 3	12	= 7	+ 5	= 12 + 0

4	תגור־תרֶבֶה על־יֶרֶךְ גְבוּרָה הוֹדֶה וְהִדְרֶה: Total, v. 4	5 5 5 <u>2 2 2</u> 7 = 5 + 2 = 7 + 0
5	וְהִדְרֶה צָלַח רֶכֶב עַל־דְּבַר־אֲמֶת וְעִנּוּה־צָדִיק וְתוֹרֶה נוֹרְאוֹת יְמִינֶה: Total, v. 5	3 3 3 5 5 5 <u>3 3 3</u> 11 = 8 + 3 = 11 + 0
6	חֲצִיף שְׁנוּנִים עַמִּים תַּחְתִּיף יַפְלוּ בְּלֵב אוֹיְבֵי <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">תַּמְלִיךְ</span> : Total, v. 6	2 2 2 3 3 3 <u>3 3 3</u> 8 = 5 + 3 = 8 + 0
	<b>Strophe 3 Total, v. 4-6</b>	<b>26 = 18 + 8 = 26 + 0</b>
7	כִּסְאָה אֱלֹהִים עוֹלָם וְעַד שֶׁבֶט מִיֶּשֶׁר שֶׁבֶט מַלְכוּתֶה: Total, v. 7	4 4 4 <u>4 4 4</u> 8 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0
	Total, v. 4-7	<b>34 = 22 + 12 = 34 + 0</b>
	Total, v. 3-7	<b>46 = 29 + 17 = 46 + 0</b>
8	אֶחָבֶה צָדִיק וְתִשָּׂא רִשְׁעֵה עַל־כֵּן מִשְׁחֶה אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמַן שֶׁשׁוֹן מִחֲבֵרֶיךָ: Total, v. 8	4 4 4 5 5 5 <u>3 3 3</u> 12 = 12 + 0 = 12 + 0
	<b>Strophe 4 Total, v. 7-8</b>	<b>20 = 16 + 4 = 20 + 0</b>
9	מִרְוָאֶתְלוֹת קָצִיעוֹת כָּל־בְּגֹדְתֶיךָ Middle words: מְנִי שְׁמֹחֶה: <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">מְנִי־הִכְלִי שֵׁן</span> 153 = 75 + <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">3</span> + 75 Total, v. 9	5 5 5 <u>5 5 5</u> 10 = 5 + 5 = 10 + 0
10	Middle verseline: בְּנֹת <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">מַלְכִים</span> בִּיקְרוּתֶיךָ נִצְבָּה שֶׁגַל לִימִינֶה בְּכַתֶּם אוֹפִיר: 17=8+1+8 Meaningful centre Total, v. 10	3 3 3 5 5 5 <u>8 = 3 + 5 = 8 + 0</u>
	<b>Strophe 5 Total, v. 9-10</b>	<b>18 = 8 + 10 = 18 + 0</b>
	Total, v. 3-10	<b>76 = 49 + 27 = 76 + 0</b>
	<b>Canto I Total, v. 2-10</b>	<b>88 = 57 + 31 = 76 + 12</b>
11	שְׁמַע־בַּת וְרָאִי וְהִטִּי אָזְנִי וְשִׁכְחִי עַמִּי וּבֵית אָבוֹי: Total, v. 11	5 5 5 4 4 4 <u>9 = 5 + 4 = 9 + 0</u>
12	וְיִתְאוּ <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 0 2px;">תַּמְלִיךְ</span> וּפְיֹדֶה כִּי־הוּא אֲדַנִּי וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִי־לוֹ: Total, v. 12	3 3 3 5 5 5 <u>8 = 3 + 5 = 8 + 0</u>
	Total, v. 11-12	<b>17 = 9 + 8 = 17 + 0</b>
13	וּבַת־צֹר בְּמִנְחָה פָּנִי יִחַלּוּ עֲשִׂירֵי עָם: Total, v. 13	5 5 5 2 2 2 <u>7 = 7 + 0 = 7 + 0</u>
	<b>Strophe 6 Total, v. 11-13</b>	<b>24 = 15 + 9 = 24 + 0</b>
	Total, v. 3-13	<b>100 = 64 + 36 = 100 + 0</b>

14	כָּל־כְּבוֹדָהּ בַּת־מֶלֶךְ פְּנִימָהּ מִמְשַׁבְּצוֹת זָהָב לְבוֹשָׁה: Total, v. 14	5 5 5 3 3 3 8 = 5 + 3 = 0 + 8
15	לְרַקְמוֹת תּוֹבֵל לְמֶלֶךְ בַּתּוֹלוֹת אַחֲרֶיהָ רְעוּתֶיהָ מוֹבְאוֹת לָאֵל: Total, v. 15	3 3 3 3 3 3 2 2 2 8 = 6 + 2 = 0 + 8
16	תּוֹבֵלָנָה בְּשִׁמְחַת וְגִיל תְּבֹאֲנָה בְּהִיכַל מֶלֶךְ: Total, v. 16	3 3 3 3 3 3 6 = 3 + 3 = 0 + 6
Vs. 14-16 spoken Strophe 7 Total, v. 14-16		22 = 14 + 8 = 0 + 22
about the bride in the palace Total, v. 11-16		46 = 29 + 17 = 24 + 22
Total, v. 3-16		122 = 78 + 44 = 100 + 22
17	תַּחַת אֲבֹתֶיהָ יִהְיוּ בְּנֵיהָ תִּשְׁתַּמְּנוּ לְשָׂרִים בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ: Total, v. 17	4 4 4 4 4 4 8 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0
18	אֲזַכִּירָה שְׁמֶךָ בְּכָל־דֶּר וְדָר עַל־כֵּן עַמִּים יִתְוַדְּדוּ לְעַלְמֶךָ וְעַד: Total, v. 18	5 5 5 6 6 6 11 = 5 + 6 = 11 + 0
Strophe 8 Total, v. 17-18		19 = 9 + 10 = 19 + 0
Canto II Total, v. 11-18		65 = 38 + 27 = 43 + 22
Total, v. 2-18		153 = 95 + 58 = 119 + 34
With the heading, v. 1-18		161 = 100 + 61

- In v. 3a: I read two words, יָפֹוּ יָפִיתְ, 'very beautiful are you' (see *BHS*), instead of the the one word in MT, יָפִיפִיתְ, 'you are the fairest'. In the emended text, the total number of words amount to **153** (9 x 17), with **119** (7 x 17) directly addressed to the king and his bride, and **34** (2 x 17) spoken about them. This most intriguing compositional formula lends credibility to the proposed emendation.

Following Kittel, Schmidt and Kraus, Van der Lugt rearranges vs. 4-5, regarding וְהִדְרֶךָ in v. 5a as dittography and צָלַח רַכֵּב in v. 5a as part of v. 4b. Deleting וְהִדְרֶךָ and reading יָפִיפִיתְ in v. 3a as one word, he counts 151 words instead of 153.

## Observations

- The middle three words in v. 9b, מִן־הִיכָלֵי שָׁן, 'from ivory palaces' (75 + 3 + 75), do not qualify as the consciously designed meaningful centre, because they are not particularly meaningful. A far better candidate is to be found, as in Psalm 44, in terms of the poetic structure: the middle verseline, v. 10 (17 = 8 + 1 + 8):

בָּנוֹת מְלָכִים בְּיַקְרוּתֶיהָ  
נֹצֵבָה שְׂגֹל לִימִינָהּ בְּקֶתֶם אוֹפִיר:

Daughters of kings are among your ladies of honour //  
At your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

These words addressed to the king about his harem and his wedding day, with his bride at his right hand, are an eloquent expression of what the poem is all about, rendering them a most appropriate meaningful centre.

2. In **vs. 3-10** the author addresses *the king*. Precisely after the central verseline, in v. 11, he suddenly addresses *the bride*. The abruptness of the address directed to her, without any introductory formula, is obviously a rhetorical device to cause surprise.

In **vs. 11-16** the poet is primarily concerned with *the royal bride*. In this section we find other elements of surprise. Having addressed the bride directly in vs. 11-13, the speaker suddenly switches to **3rd person form** in vs. 14-16. Another surprise is that she is once again addressed directly in v. 15c: 'to you' (לָךְ). In my view, there is no need to read לָהּ, 'to her', for the abrupt switch is clearly an attention drawing device.

The MT reading can be explained as the obvious desire to achieve **7** instances of the suffix ל- (as e.g., in Psalm 8!), to match the **7** occurrences of the word מְלִכָּה. Note that the middle occurrence of the suffix, יְפִיךָ, 'your beauty', is positioned next to the middle instance of the **7** occurrences of מְלִכָּה (v.12a)! This is obviously to emphasize the bride's **beauty** desired by **the king**, which is what this section is all about!

In **vs. 17-18** the poem is concluded by the second part of the address to *the king*.

Therefore, we have to conclude that the structure of the poem is fundamentally determined by the direction of address:

Strophe 1 v. 2	introductory words spoken about the king	12 w.
Strophe 2 v. 3	spoken to the king about his beauty	12 w.
Strophe 3 vs. 4-6	spoken to the king about his weapons	26 w.
Strophe 4 vs. 7-8	spoken to the king about his high status	20 w.
Strophe 5 vs. 9-10	spoken to the king about his wedding day	18 w.
Strophe 6 vs. 11-13	spoken to the bride, welcoming her	24 w.
Strophe 7 vs. 14-16	spoken about the bride in the palace	22 w.
Strophe 8 vs. 17-18	spoken to the king about his future dynasty	19 w.

Significantly, the words in Strophes 1 and 7 spoken about the king and his bride (Column d) amount to **34** (2 x 17) and the words specifically addressed to them (Column c) amount to **119** (7 x 17) giving a total of **153** (9 x 17 and the sum of the numbers 1-17). That there are exactly 100 words spoken to the royal couple in vs. 3-13 may simply be coincidence.

3. The divine name numbers feature in the following instances:

vs. 4-6	<b>26</b> words in total
vs. 4-7	<b>34</b> (2 x 17) words in total
vs. 3-7	<b>17</b> words after atnach
vs. 11-12	<b>17</b> words in total
vs. 11-16	<b>17</b> words after atnach
vs. 3-16	<b>78</b> (3 x 26) words before atnach
vs. 2-18	<b>17</b> Masoretic verses coinciding with the 17 verselines
vs. 2-18	<b>153</b> (9 x 17) words in total
vs. 2-18	<b>119</b> (7 x 17) words addressed to the royal couple, and <b>34</b> (2 x 17) spoken about them.

4. As in Psalm 44, the name YHWH is absent; אֱלֹהִים occurs 4 times: 3c, 7a, 8b (2x).

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