

Typesetting Biblical Hebrew Poetry

Colby Goettel
Brigham Young University
Provo, UT 84602
colby.goettel@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Fundamentally, everything in IT is problem solving. I believe it is what has driven all of us into this field, what keeps us going. This project is rooted in problem solving and that's the direction this paper will take: what the initial problem is, what obstacles lie in wait, and how they were solved.

2. FORM OF BIBLICAL HEBREW POETRY

Biblical Hebrew poetry has a unique form and it quite different than English poetry. Hebrew poetry is not based off rhyme or meter, but parallelism. Mimicking this form is complex and not very straightforward. Here is a short example from Isaiah 53:5 showing some of the complexities of Biblical Hebrew poetry:

וְהוּא מְחַלֵּל מִפְּשָׁעֵינוּ⁵ מִדָּבָר מַעֲוֹנֹתֵינוּ
מוֹסֵר שְׁלוֹמֵנוּ עָלָיו וּבְחִבְרָתוֹ נִרְפָּא-לָנוּ:

As can be seen from this example, the lines are indented at different levels and there's a space in the middle of the lines. To make matters worse, the level of indentation can vary anywhere from one to four levels; the space in the middle can be present, not present, or doubly present. There is very little consistency between lines.

3. SPECIFICATIONS

Each line is indented at least once, but sometimes more. These indentations need to be vertically consistent. When a new line appears in the middle of a line due to length, the new line needs to be indented as much as its parent line. This also means that new lines must appear and lines cannot bleed off the page.

Each line can contain multiple sections, but sometimes none. These sections need to be spaced out.

Not every verse starts on a new line; sometimes the verse starts in the middle of a line.

4. OBSTACLES

5. PROBLEM SOLVING

6. CONCLUSION

7. REFERENCES

- [1] M. Bowman, S. K. Debray, and L. L. Peterson.
Reasoning about naming systems. *ACM Trans.*
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