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# How This Poetry Masters the Flow of Speech. The Structure of Psalm 4 in the Hebrew Original as Found by Investigating Two Layouts and Supported by a an Observation on Mendelssohn's and Meschonnic's Translations

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# *How This Poetry Masters the Flow of Speech. The Structure of Psalm 4 in the Hebrew Original as Found by Investigating Two Layouts and Supported by a an Observation on Mendelssohn's and Meschonnic's Translations*

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I thank Dr. Stephan Packard for correcting proofs my English text.

## **Exposition of the Problem: The Lack of Authorized Layouts in Biblical Hebrew Poetry**

- <sup>1</sup> By analyzing psalm 4 (ʾBēqorʾi ʾanēni ʾelohe tsidqî) as an example, this essay intends to show the specific problem of biblical Hebrew poetry: the lack of a final layout authorized by “the poet” which could indicate the “original” verse structure. What we have is a variety of Hebrew “textual witnesses”<sup>1</sup>, the fragments from the Judean Desert being the earliest ones (ca. 250 v. – 100 n. Chr.)<sup>2</sup>. The main part of manuscripts however, stem from the early and late Middle Ages. Four sources show signs of a concept of writing systems for poetry that tries to indicate the rhythmical structure and division of these poems:

Signs of a “Semiotik der Textgestalt” as Raible puts it<sup>3</sup>. First, there are the special layouts in medieval manuscripts for the kernel poems of the Hebrew Bible, including Mose’s Song at the sea (Ex 15), Mose’s leave-taking song (Dtn 32), Debora’s victory song (Ri 5) and Samuel’s thanksgiving song (2 Sam 22) which is identical with psalm 18. Second, the explicit rules for writing these songs are fixed in the “Writers’ Treatise”<sup>4</sup>. Third, there is the peculiarity of the Masoretic accents, a system of diacritic signs, indicating divisions and combinations of speech units<sup>5</sup>. Fourth, exceptional translations have to be taken seriously as practical observations of the original Hebrew verse structure and equivalents for them. The current PhD project, from which this essay is an extract, focuses on the German and French translations of Moses Mendelssohn, 1783<sup>6</sup> and Henri Meschonnic, 2001<sup>7</sup> for two reasons. First, they explicitly look at and reflect on the biblical Hebrew psalms as poetry and try to give optic equivalents for their structure. Second, both focus on the Masoretic accents as a guide to the rhythmic arrangement and movement of the poems<sup>8 9</sup>. Within the scope of this essay, these translations are not analyzed, but only the first part of the actually twofold project is presented. Nevertheless, their translations are shown here as an important support for the thesis that the Hebrew psalms call for a structuring layout.

- 2 The main thesis of the investigation is that caesuras or rather incisions of different degrees do play a central role in biblical Hebrew poetry<sup>10</sup> and are closely connected to the weaving of key words and paronomasies, forming a tricky work of parallelism on phonetic, grammatic and semantic layers. The outline of an analysis of psalm 4 is based on some methodological preparations. A summary of basics of biblical Hebrew language will provide the important terms; an exhibition of “Textbilder”<sup>11</sup> visually demonstrates the problem of layouting biblical Hebrew Poetry; and a colometric analysis, transliteration and interlinear translation should finally allow readers with no knowledge of biblical Hebrew to understand the short psalm and to follow me diving into it.

## Summary of Basics and Terms for Biblical Hebrew Language and Poetry

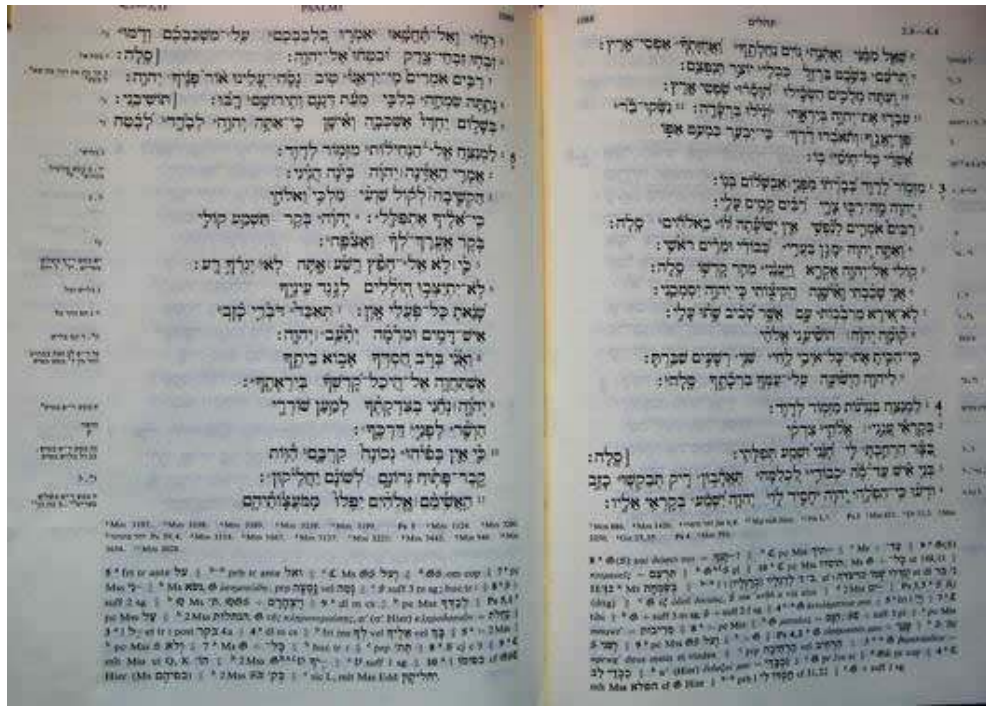
- 3 The peculiarity of the Hebrew language is its “trilaterality”. Most words are derived from a root of 3 consonants. 7 verb patterns change the lexical meaning of the word (e.g. passive, causative, factitive, reflexive)<sup>12</sup>. The “status constructus” designates a noun proclitically connected with the following one, whose relationship to it is that of a genitive to its governing noun; the stress lies on the second word. The distinction between “imperfect” (“yiqtol”) and “perfect” (“qatal”) gives the aspect under which an action is told (durative vs. completed); second, it works as a relative tense system (priority vs. successivity; “yiqtol” mainly for present/future, “qatal” for the past). By the composed or inverted verb forms “wayyiqtol” (progress in the past) and “wēqatal” (progress in the future) a system of time phases is approached<sup>13</sup>. Verbal sentences have a finite verb as predicate, nominal sentences have other predicates. The inverted tenses can only be followed by or include their subjects. The NS has either the word order S-P or P-S; the VS dominantly has P-S<sup>14</sup>.
- 4 The scholarly standard edition of the Hebrew Bible is the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS <sup>5</sup>1997)<sup>15</sup>, whose basic text is the codex Leningradensis / Petropolitanus (1008 C.E.). Originally, the biblical Hebrew text wrote consonants only. The term “Masoretes”

(Aramaic *měsar* means “to transmit”) refers to several generations of scholars whose efforts were directed towards the exact transmission of the biblical text. Between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E. they added a system of vocalization as well as accent signs to the text. Two systems of diacritical accents for the twenty-one prose and the three so-called poetic books structure the text with a set of dividing and combining accents (*tě’amím*, sg. *tá’am* = “taste; sense”). Their function is threefold: phonetic (stress syllable), syntactical and musical (musical motifs). The main dividers in poetry are *silluq* (*sof pasuq*) for the end of a “verse”, *atnach*, the main divider within a “verse” and *‘ole wěyoréd*, a third divider that occurs in verses without *atnach* or precedes it in longer “verses”. The Masoretic period – mainly syntactical – marked off by *sof pasuq* is not always identical with the rhythmical units of the poem. The numbering of these MV-“verses” comes not until 15<sup>th</sup> century and stems from the Vulgata. Since then, “verse” has designated the prose-MV as well as of the poetry-MV. Here, I will distinguish between MV (Masoretic verse) and PV (poetic verse).

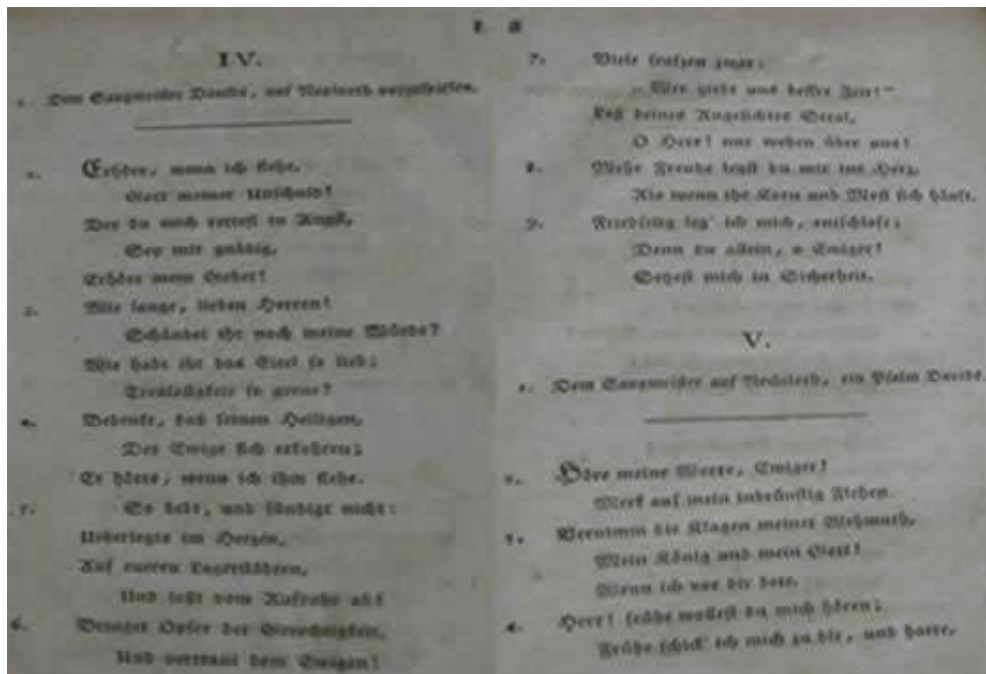
- 5 “Colon, comma and caesura as basic terms of ancient colometry provide the basic concepts of the present study. The flow of speech calls for a division into syntactical units of different size by incisions (caesuras) of different strength, challenged by the system of Masoretic accents. The colon (capital letter (A) for main caesura) as a syntactical independent word group often coincides with *atnach*, the comma (small letter (a) for minor caesura) syntactically depends on the colon<sup>16</sup>. “Strophe”, literally “turn” in ancient Greek, shows the beginning of a new section within a poetic composition. As in modern poetry, strophes in biblical Hebrew poetry do not have to be groups of verses of the same rhythmical structure, but can be marked off optic-graphically only<sup>17</sup>.

## Exhibition of "Text Pictures" as a Call For a Semiotics of Textual Shape

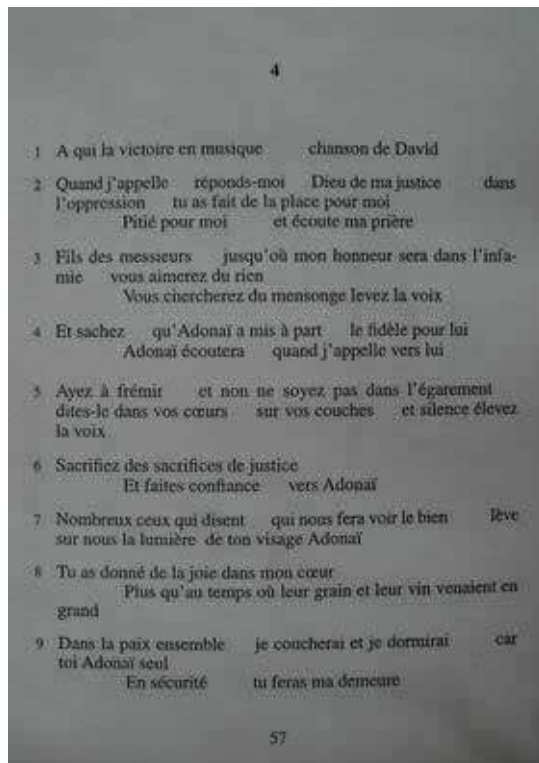
BHS <sup>5</sup>1997



Mendelssohn, 1783



## Meschonnic, 2001



## Analysis and Edition of the Hebrew Original Psalm 4

- 6 Colometric Analysis, Transliteration<sup>18</sup> and Interlinear Translation<sup>19</sup>

### Suggestions for Two Editions

- 7 The following editions present two possible versions of a poetic layout for psalm 4<sup>20</sup>. Both visualize specific aspects of the rhythmical and thematic design and should therefore be considered as complementary results of an intimate look at the original text. Consequently, they are discussed side by side. The first indicates only the main caesuras by spaces (cola) and without supposing a division into strophic units. Additionally, key words, echoing significantly through the “text”, are underlined in this edition. The second differentiates between main and minor caesuras (cola and commata) by two sizes of spaces and elucidating the text further by a proposition for a strophic structure. For both the arrangement into two columns reflects traditional Jewish conventions for writing biblical poetry. The central position of the title already appears in texts from the Judean Desert<sup>21</sup>. The “pure” Hebrew letters heighten the optic force of rhythmical groupings and paronomastic links.

edition psalm4a

למנצח בנגינות מזמור לדוד

בקראי ענני אלהי צדקי	בצר הרחבת לי	חנני ושמע תפלתי
בני יאש עד מה כבודי לכלמה	תאהבון ריק תבקשו כזב סלה	
ודעו כי הפלה יהוה חסיד לו	יהוה ישמע בקראי אליו	
רגזו ואל תחטאו	אמרו בלבבכם על משכבכם ודמו סלה	
זבחו זבחי צדק	ובטחו אל יהוה	
רבים אמרים מי יראנו טוב	נסה עלינו אור פניך יהוה	
נתתה שמחה בלבי	מעט דגנם ותירושם רבו	
בשלוש יחדו אשכבה ואישן	כי אתה יהוה לבדד לבטח תושבני	

#### edition psalm4b

למנצח בנגינות מזמור לדוד		
בקראי ענני אלהי צדקי	בצר הרחבת לי	חנני ושמע תפלתי
בני יאש עד מה כבודי לכלמה	תאהבון ריק תבקשו כזב סלה	
ודעו כי הפלה יהוה חסיד לו	יהוה ישמע בקראי אליו	
רגזו ואל תחטאו	אמרו בלבבכם על משכבכם ודמו סלה	
זבחו זבחי צדק	ובטחו אל יהוה	
רבים אמרים מי יראנו טוב	נסה עלינו אור פניך יהוה	
נתתה שמחה בלבי	מעט דגנם ותירושם רבו	
בשלוש יחדו אשכבה ואישן	כי אתה יהוה לבדד לבטח תושבני	

### Observations on the Hebrew Poem

- 8 The PV in these editions of psalm 4 are at the same time identical with writing's technical unit, the line, and the borders of the Masoretic sof pasuqs. It is only because the heading

is separated from and centered above the text that the counting of sof pasuqs diverges from that of the PV. Fokkelman sees psalm 4 as “a very regular composition”<sup>22</sup>.

- 9 PV.1, the opening verse of the psalm, is the only tricolon in editions 4a and 4b. Accepting the accentual theory<sup>23</sup> that for a rule, each word in Hebrew takes an expiratory accent, PV. 1 has the pattern 3/3/3. PV.1 stands out from the rest of the text by this tricolonic structure as well as by its expressive minor caesuras that are visible in 4b. There is much invested into the rhythmical and phonetic composition of this first verse line. The appellative imperative with vocative addressed to God is the dominant speech attitude of the psalmist. Beginning with a nominalized infinitive in the function of a temporal subordinate clause, PV.1 has a sequence of three imperatives (“anéni” [‘answer me’] (PV.1Ab), “channéni” [‘have mercy upon me’] (1Ca), “ushéma” [‘and hear’] (1Cb)) that is interrupted by a clause of statement in the middle colon (“batstsár hirschávta lí” [‘in the narrowness you have widened for me’] (1Bab)). The three cola are held together by the forceful i-sound that rings seven times through this line and continues less intensively in the following one<sup>24</sup>. Commata Aa and Ba alliterate on “b” (“bēqorí” [‘on my shouting’] - “batstsár”), and the two imperatives in Ab und Ca (“anéni”-“channéni”) as well as “bēqorí”-“tsidqí” [‘my justice’] - “lí”-“tēfillatí” [‘my prayer’] rhyme with each other. The central statement in the B-colon reflects the typical feature of the Hebrew tenses not to mark firm time steps. Consequently, the qatal “hirschávta” in 2B can be interpreted as a narrative (completed in the past: “you have [already] widened”), a performative (instantaneous: “you widen [in the moment of my speaking]”), a prophetic (imagined as present: “you [will] widen) or a precativ, ie. optative (wish: “widen [!]”) perfect. The statement thus hints at the general tension between fulfillment and expectation that characterizes the whole poem<sup>25</sup>.
- 10 PV.2 no longer addresses God but the “bēne-ísh” [‘sons of men’], “ísh” designating men of a higher status<sup>26</sup>. Because of this remarkable “turn” of address,<sup>27</sup> and with regard to the special rhythmical structure of PV.1, which is the verse most rich in caesuras, it constitutes its own strophe in e4b. Moreover, it corresponds to the last verse PV.8, which is also a strophe of its own. PV.1 echoes the sounds of PV.8 (cf. the alliteration “bēqorí”-“bēshalóm” [‘in peace’] (8A), and “toshivéni” [‘you make me sit’] (8Bb) rhyming with “anéni” and “channéni”) and thematically answers to the cry for divine attention in PV.1 with a complete confidence in God. This confidence is the result of several perlocutive efforts to move God, people and oneself into a reciprocal relationship stretched out for the “good” (“tów” (6Ab)). The whole psalm therefore is one single performative act<sup>28</sup> driving at a confidence in God which itself is just the condition for the desired experience of divine presence. The psalm calls for a circle reading, constituting this confidence again and again through the act of reading itself.
- 11 PV.2-5, taken as one strophe, concentrate on the difficult interdependence between the collective and the individual aspect of the worship of God. The individual cry “bēqorí” to God now corresponds to the alliterative appeal to the “bēne-ísh” in form of a rhetorical question. The two cola of the verse line (4+4) both have minor caesuras: the PV.2a after the vocative, the PV.2Bab between the parallel predicates “te’ehavún” [‘you will love’] and “tēvaqshú” [‘you will search’] that depend on the interrogative words “ad-mé” [‘till when’] in 2Ab. In PV.3-5, we find an accumulation of seven imperatives (PV.4Ab is a vetitive)<sup>29</sup> towards these “bēne-ísh” of whom was said in PV.2 that they hurt the “kavód” [‘honour’] of the psalmist and do not care for God. The sequence of appeals begins with the call for realization (“udéú” [‘and realize’]), immediately explained by the conjunctive

clause with “ki” [that], that is externally parallel to the second ki-clause in PV.8Ba, which there gives the climactic reason for the individual’s absolute trust in God. The ki-clause in 3Abc prepares that in 8B [because]. Similar to the latter, it is rhythmically exceptional because of the unusual distance of “ló” from the predicate<sup>30</sup>, which leads to a deictic caesura in the argument “ki hiflá ’adonáy chasíd ló” [that the Lord has sort out a/the pious for him(self)]. Furthermore remarkable for this bicolon is its number of accented words, which are chiasmically mirrored in PV.8 (5+4 vs. 4+5). The B-colon presents either the psalmist’s claim or his strong wish that God hears or will hear his prayer. Looking at and hearing this colon reveals its direct connection with 1A and thereby a characteristic feature of the whole composition: the net of key words (“bēqorí”, “shēmá” [hear], “tsédeq” [rightness/justice], “lév” [heart], “shacháv” [to lie down], “batách” [to trust], underlined in e4a) that are rhythmically and phonetically tied together.

- 12 This net of lexical references is the main guide to van der Lugt’s division of the “rhetorical structure” into cantos and strophes. This network of repetitions constitutes several external parallelisms with the result – according to van der Lugt’s division – of one linear parallelism for the structure of the poem as a whole (a.b. | a’.b’)<sup>31</sup>. בקארי ושמע „bēqorí...ushēmá” (PV.1AB) [when I am crying... and hear] and ישמע בקארי „yishmá bēqorí” (PV.3B) [he (will) hear(s) when I am crying] form an external chiasm. צדקי “tsidqí” (PV.1A) and צדק “tsédeq” (PV.5A) are both part of a status constructus connection, and within the poem they are placed “exactly linearly”<sup>32</sup>. בלבבכם “vilvavchém” (PV.4B) [in your hearts] and בלבי “bēlibbi” (PV.7A) [in my heart] bundle up in one word the basic opposition of individual and collective confidence in God that structures the poem. In the same vein, we have משכבכם “mishcavchém” [your beds] in PV.4B and אשכבה “’eshkevá” [I want to lie down] in PV.9A. Both pairs of key words can be combined by a diagonal line in the typography. ובטחו “uvitchú” [and trust] in PV.5B and לבטח “lavétach” [safely] in 8B, like “tsidqí-tsédeq”, form an external parallelism and are placed exactly vertically, one below the other. These two key word pairs, that designate positive actions and effects of a life with God, both function as an inclusion<sup>33</sup>, embracing those lines that communicate people’s mistrust of or – even worse – disdain for God. These key word pairs themselves are distributed symmetrically over the whole poem, “tsidqí-tsédeq” reigning over the first right part and “uvitchú-lavétach” taking over from the former – over the second left part. In this macro concept of composition, we also consequently meet the principle of parallelism. רבים “rabbím” [many] (MV.6A) and רבו “rabbú” [they were many] (MV.7B) belong into this row of structuring key words as well, as they are arranged in an exact chiasm<sup>34</sup>. In Hebrew, these key words stem from the same root of three consonants respectively. The play with paronomasies and figurae etymologicae is a dominant device in Hebrew texts, and without punctuation this characteristic feature clearly also becomes a device for the eyes. This concept of a phonetic texture is widened by words that are interlaced by rhyme. So the aforementioned ענני “’anéní” (PV.1A) and חנני “channéní” (PV.1C) are additionally connected with תושבני “toshivéní” (PV.8B)<sup>35</sup>; as are graphically – in an eye-rhyme – בני “bēne” (PV.2A) and תושביני “toshivéní”.
- 13 Back to the thematic and structural unit of PV.2-5: The sequence of imperatives is intensified in PV.4 and 5. The dynamic force of these two lines is the consequence of the continuous head position of the imperatives. Their appellative function effects several minor caesuras that constitute the two significant own-word-kommata רגזו “rigzú”

[,shake'] und ודמו "wědómmu" [,be silent'] that frame the line at its beginning and end. The A-colon is outstandingly short (2+4)<sup>36</sup>, preparing PV.5, the climax of the appeal to the people (2+2). This last verse line of the unit culminates in the main point of the psalmist's argument and is completely concentrated on the grammatical mode of imperative. Offers of justice ("tsédeq") and confidence ("uvitchú") in God are the central demands for the people. In PV.6 we have, similarly to PV.2, another change of speech attitude that marks a kind of cut in the poem. The direct vocative to the "bēne ísh" with a sequence of imperatives shifts to a direct quotation of an indefinite quantity of people ("rabbim" (many)). This quotation is a question that is in an external linear parallelism to the psalmist's rhetorical question in PV.2 (עד מתי "ad-mé" [,till when'] vs. מי, mi" [,who']). The gesture of this last question is controversial in exegesis and translations and depends on interpretation. The crucial point is whether the question of the many "mí yar'énú tóv" (PV.6Ab) [,Who let us see the good?'] is understood as an honest and deep desire or as an ironic mockery<sup>37</sup>. If it is interpreted positively, as in this analysis, the psalm gets more complex. The "rabbim" then could be seen as a part of the "bēne-ísh" (PV.2) in whom the psalmist's rhetorical efforts to persuade have already shown results. In this perspective, especially in PV.6 as well as in the poem as a whole, individual and collective desire and search for God confront, combine and overlap one another. So the psalmist can identify himself with this group in the key preposition עלינו "alénu" [,above us'] in PV.6B<sup>38</sup>. Regarding the sequence of words with accents, PV.6 (4+3) slightly diverges from PV.2 (4+4). The distribution of minor caesuras is also different. It further differs between the two cola of PV.6 itself, although the number of words around the minor caesuras is identical. Observing the massoretic maqqefs (a line combining two words) namely, makes of "mí-yar'énú" and "nēsa-'alénu" one tone unit with a stress on the second word only and in the consructus connection "'ór panécha" [,light of your face'] the stress also is on the second word (as in "bēne ísh").

- <sup>14</sup> The abrupt change of mood in PV.7 is characteristic for the tension of the poem. In 7A, the psalmist withdraws again into an individual relationship to God. The separation from the people is mirrored firstly through the key word "bēlibbi" that echoes both "vilvavché" (PV.4Ba) and "'alénu" (PV.6Ba), and secondly through the declarative sentence with the qatal "natattá" [,you have given'] that echoes the qatal "hirschávta" in PV.1B. The declarative status of PV.7 is brought out by the chiasmic syntax of the two qatal-forms "natattá"-x / x-"rabbú". If the suffixes in "děganám wětiroshám" [,their grain and their must'] are referred to the "rabbim" in PV.6A, and harvest is taken as an expression of material or better physical goods, this only reveals how absolute and consequently demanding the decision for God is. It is therefore a substantially individual decision that everyone must come to for himself before meeting others that can either support or endanger one's confidence. The division by one main caesura consolidates the declarative effect of the verse line. PV.7 prepares PV.8, which completely returns to the individual communication with God with which the poem had begun in PV.1. In edition 4b this movement in a "full circle"<sup>39</sup> is visible immediately, since PV.1 and PV.8 correspond to each other as the only "one-verse-strophes".
- <sup>15</sup> PV.8 as the last verse line is – similarly to the opening verse line PV.1 – especially richly composed in its rhythm and phonetic allusions. Firstly, there is the alliteration between "bēqorí", "batstsár" (PV.1Aa,Ba) and "bēshalóm" (PV.8Aa) which three stand at the head of a colon respectively. The root שָׁלַם "shlm" – if its etymology is kept in mind – is the vanishing point of all arguments of the poem. Its basic meaning is "to be finished,

completed”, then “to stay intact, unhurt”<sup>40</sup>. Completeness, thus the seemingly paradox experience of the psalmist, is not gained within human community, but in solitude with God. To confirm this basic conviction – that God himself is the best and only fulfilling partner: for everyone – the poem is performed.

- 16 PV.2A and PV.6B are then to be read as persuasions that everyone for himself is demanded to get “shlm” with God. It is only by this individual frame that the universal demand can be revealed. The fulfillment however would be a world without this colourful psalm. This basic tension of the whole poem between solitude and community is expressed most directly in the neighbourhood of the roots “shlam” and “ychd”. The root  $\text{טח}$  “ychd” means not only “at the same time”, but above all “together”<sup>41</sup>. In PV.8, the poet has solved the tension for himself: He declares to be complete by being alone with God. To be thus alone is unambiguously positively connotated in PV.8<sup>42</sup>. As for the accented words, PV.8 – as was already mentioned – chiastically echoes PV.3 (5+4 / 4+5). These two verses are moreover connected by a similar syntactic and rhythmic structure. Both cola contain an explaining ki-clause that directly addresses ‘adonáy (tetragramm twice) and that is interrupted by a minor caesura. The Masoretes marked this minor caesuras by the dividing accents *dēchi* and *atnach*. This structural interdependence is motivated by a striking semantic parallelism. While in PV.3A it is argued that God chose the psalmist as his special “pious”<sup>43</sup>, God is now addressed directly in the second person (“‘attá” [you]), and the argument is repeated more exclusively and personally: It is y o u, God, who alone makes me be alone and safe.
- 17 Here we meet the crucial point of rhythmical arrangement and semantic interpretation of the poem that is diversely discussed. The problem is the reference of “lěvadád” [alone] as well as the dichotomy or trichotomy of the verse. “Lěvadád” can either refer to the subject ‘adonáy (you, God, alone), or together with “lavétach” to the predicate that also contains the object “me” in its suffix (you, God, let me sit alone)<sup>44</sup>. Probably with regard to its length, the Masoretes gave MV.9 (PV.8) two main dividers, ‘olewēyoréd and *atnach* (as MV.2 (PV.1))<sup>45</sup>. In contrast to PV.1 with its four independent clauses, in PV.8 the *atnach* falls in between the syntactic unit of the ki-clause. It is therefore more probable to see PV.8B as one colon consisting of two commata (*atnach* indicating a minor caesura) instead of assuming two cola (main caesuras) here. In psalm 4Bab “lěvadád” und “lavétach” are divided by the major divider “*atnach*”. Logically, 4Bab complement each other, that is, the “missing links” are repeated in each comma respectively<sup>46</sup>. Nevertheless, it is not necessary to assume a trichotomic structure for PV.9 as Fokkerman proposes<sup>47</sup>. PV. 8 taken as a bicolon, as van der Lugt does, reveals the *atnach* here to be a minor caesura within the B-colon that is obviously parallel to the minor caesura in the A-colon.
- 18 Just a brief look back again at Mendelssohn’s and Meschonnic’s arrangements of psalm 4 may for now suffice to show how their translations support the importance of the semiotics of textual shape. Only with such layouts does the originally sung poetry receive a visual equivalent, revealing its effective web to us late readers.

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## NOTES

1. Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Minneapolis u. Assen/Maastricht, Fortress u. Van Gorcum, 1992, p.21.
2. Cf. Tov, *Ibid.*, p.29, 33f., 105f. a. Tov "Special Layout of Poetical Units in the Texts from the Judean Desert", in Janet Dyk (ed.), *Give ear to my words. Psalms and other Poetry in and around the Hebrew Bible. Essays in honour of Professor N.A. van Uchelen*, Amsterdam, Societas Hebraica Amstelodamensis, 1996, p.115-128.
3. "Semiotics of the Textual Shape", Wolfgang Raible, *Die Semiotik der Textgestalt. Erscheinungsformen und Folgen eines kulturellen Evolutionsprozesses*, Heidelberg, Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1991.
4. *Masseketh Soferim. Tractate for Scribes*, translated into English with Introduction and Notes by Rev. Dr. Israel W. Slotki, in A. Cohen, *The Minor Tractates of the Talmud. Massekoth te%annoth in two Volumes*, 2 Bde., translated into English with notes, glossary and indices under the editorship of Rev. Dr. A. Cohen, London, The Soncino Press, <sup>2</sup>1971, p. 211-324.
5. Cf. William Wickes, *Two Treatises on the Accentuation of the Old Testament ת"א ספרים on Psalms, Proverbs, and Job. ספרים on the Twenty-One Prose Books*, New York, Ktav Publishing House, 1970 [<sup>1</sup>1881 u. <sup>1</sup>1887].
6. Moses Mendelssohn, *Die Psalmen*, uebersetzt von Moses Mendelssohn, mit allergnaedigsten Freyheiten, Berlin, Friedrich Maurer, 1783.
7. Henri Meschonnic, *Gloires. Traduction des psaumes*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 2001.
8. Cf. e.g. Moses Mendelssohn's "Be'ur" (Hebrew for "explanation") on the song at the sea (Ex 15), *Hebräische Schriften II,2. Der Pentateuch*, bearbeitet von Werner Weinberg, Stuttgart u. Bad Canstatt, Friedrich Frommann Verlag (Günther Holzboog) (= *Gesammelte Schriften, JubA*, 24 Bde., begonnen von I. Elbogen, J. Guttmann u. E. Mittwoch, fortgesetzt von A. Altmann u. E. J. Engel in Gemeinschaft mit F. Bamberger u.a., Bd. 16), 1990c, p.125-134. I am greatly indebted to Prof. Daniel Krochmalnik and Dr. Rainer Wenzel (College of Jewish Studies, Heidelberg) for giving me access to Dr. Wenzels German translation, that is expected to be published in the JubA, which helped me in understanding the rabbinical Hebrew.
9. As for Meschonnic, cf. *Ibid.*, p.7-52 a. *Critique du rythme. Anthropologie historique du langage*, Lagrasse, Éditions Verdier, 1982, esp. p.395-405, p.458-475.
10. This is a central argument insisted on in Lowth's *De sacra poesi Hebraeorum*, 1753 as well as in Mendelssohn's be'ur. Cf. Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, übers. von G. Gregory, 2 Bde., Hildesheim, Georg Olms Verlag, 1969, p.52f.; *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum. Praelectiones Academiae Oxonii Habitaе*, subjicitur *Mettricae Harianae Brevis Confutatio et Oratio Crewiana*, Oxonii, Clarendoniano, 1753, p.194.
11. The term occurs in J.W. Rothstein, *Hebräische Poesie. Ein Beitrag zur Rhythmologie, Kritik und Exegese des Alten Testaments*, Breslau, Hinrich, 1914, p.73.
12. Cf. Joshua Blau, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1976, p. 41, 45.

13. Cf. Rüdiger Bartelmus, *Einführung in das Biblische Hebräisch*, Zürich, Theologischer Verlag, 1994, p. 201-207; Blau, *Ibid.*, pp. 45-47; Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew, Part Three, Syntax*, 1991, Rom, Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, p.366f.
14. Blau, *Ibid.*, 82, 90-92; Joüon, *Ibid.*, §155.k, p.579.
15. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, ed. together with A. Alt, O. Eißfeldt, P. Kahle by R. Kittel, Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, <sup>5</sup>1997.
16. Cf. Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik. Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft*, München, Max Hueber Verlag, 1960, p.461-467; Angelika Neuwirth, "Zur Struktur der Yūsuf-Sure", in Werner Diem a. Stefan Wild (eds.), *Studien aus Arabistik und Semitistik. Anton Spitaler zum siebzigsten Geburtstag von seinen Schülern überreicht*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1980, p.123-152.
17. Cf. Jost Schneider, „Strophe“, in *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, Neubearbeitung des Reallexikons für deutsche Literaturgeschichte, gemeinsam mit Georg Braungart u.a. hg. von Jan-Dirk Müller, 3 Bde., Bd. 3, Berlin u. New York, Walter de Gruyter, 2003, p.529.
18.  
The transliteration is not a scholarly transcription, but its aim is just to connect to the Hebrew sounds in the general school pronunciation. The so-called shwa mobile, designating the reduced or "murmer" vowel at the beginning of a syllable, however, is transliterated as "ë" instead of a simple "e". Cf. *Das Hohelied Salomos*, übersetzt, transkribiert u. kommentiert von Klaus Reichert, München, Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, <sup>2</sup>2003, p.88f. The vertical lines separate Hebrew word units.
19. Cf. Ludwig Köhler u. Walter Baumgartner, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament*, Bosten u. Leiden, Brill, <sup>3</sup>2004.
20. Cf. Josua Reichert's and Karl Neuwirth's project *Der Haidholzener Psalter*, München u. Berlin, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1988; J.P. Fokkelman, *The Psalms in Form. The Hebrew Psalter in its Poetic Shape*, Leiden, Deo Publishing, 2002; for concise poetic stocktakings to psalm 4 cf. J.P. Fokkelman, *Major Poems of the Hebrew Bible at the Interface of Prosody and Structural Analysis*, V. 2, Assen, Van Gorcum, 2000, p.59-62; Pieter van der Lugt, *Cantos and Strophes in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, Leiden u. Bosten, Brill, 2006, p.112-117.
21. Cf. Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert*, Leiden u. Boston, Brill, 2004, p.166-178, esp. p.174f.
22. Cf. Fokkelman, 2000, *Ibid.*, p. 59. In his view, there are three strophes, "each consisting of a quartet of cola", that "are framed by two tricola in a beautiful inclusion". Cf. the corresponding layout in, Fokkelman, 2002, *Ibid.*, p.17.
23. Cf. Eduard Sievers, *Metrische Studien. I. Studien zur hebräischen Metrik, Erster Teil: Untersuchungen*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1901, p.99.
24. Cf. Pieter van der Lugt, *Ibid.*, p.113.
25. For the different aspects of the perfect (qatal) cf. Joüon, *Ibid.*, pp.362-365. For the so called "precativ or optative perfect" cf. Iain W. Provan, „Present and Future in Lamentations 56: The Case For a Precative Perfect Re-Examined“, 1991, VT 41/2, p.164-175.
26. Cf. Hermann Hupfeld, *Die Psalmen*, Bd.1, <sup>2</sup>1867, Gotha, Perthes, p.122.
27. Cf. van der Lugt, *Ibid.*, pp.77-81; Fokkelman, 2000, *Ibid.*, p.59.
28. Cf. Hubert Irsigler, „Psalmen-Rede als Handlungs-, Wirk- und Aussageprozeß. Sprechaktanalyse und Psalmeninterpretation am Beispiel von Psalm 13“, in Klaus Seybold a. Erich Zenger, *Wege der Psalmenforschung*, <sup>2</sup>1995, Freiburg, Basel u. Wien, Herder, p.87.
29. Vs. van der Lugt, *ibid*, p. 113, who takes it as a prohibitive; cf. Joüon, *Ibid.*, §117.j, p.386.
30. Cf. Hermann Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, <sup>2</sup>1968, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, p.17.
31. Cf. van der Lugt, *Ibid.*, p.112-114, 116. He assumes two cantos that both contain two strophes: I = MV.2.3, II = M4.5. | I = MV.6.7, II = MV.8.9, cf. p.112.
32. *Ibid.*, p.113.

33. *Ibid.*, p.113 sees only „uvitchú-lavétach” as an inclusion.
34. In van der Lugt’s typographic interpretation the two words belong to different strophes; that they are nevertheless phonetically tied, corresponds to his definition of “concatenation”, *Ibid.*, p.113, 572.
35. Cf. *Ibid.*, p.114.
36. Against the arrangement of BHS in MV.5 I do not suppose the main, but only a minor caesura to be between the parallel phrases “‘imrú vilvavchém” and “‘al mishcavchém”. The structure of this B-colon parallels that of 3B (“te’ehavún ríq / tē’vaqshú chazáv”).
37. Cf. van der Lugt, *Ibid.*, 112, 116f; Hupfeld, *Ibid.*, <sup>2</sup>1867, p.123f., 131, 132, 134; Fokkelman, *Ibid.*, 2000, p.59, 60.
38. Cf. Hupfeld, *Ibid.*, who takes MV.7B as the continuation of the many’s speech, which is taken for improbable by the later reworking by Riehm, p.131.
39. Cf. Fokkelman, *Ibid.*, 2000, p.60.
40. Köhler u. Baumgartner, *Ibid.*, p.1418.
41. Cf. *Ibid.*, 387f.
42. Cf. Hupfeld, *Ibid.*, p.136f. and Fokkelman, *Ibid.*, 2000, p.61, 17, 18.
43. Cf. Hupfeld, *Ibid.* p.124-127 a. Gunkel, *Ibid.*, p.15.
44. The dominant interpretation is the reference to the subject, cf. Fokkelman, *Ibid.*, 2000, p.61f.; Hupfeld, *Ibid.*, p.117, 136f.
45. For the concept of “continuous dichotomy” of the Masoretic accents cf. Wickes, *Ibid.*, [1887], p.30 a. [1881], p.30f., 38; vs. Flender’s argument for a “Dreiteilung” by the divider ’ole wēyored, cf. Reinhard Flender, *Der biblische Sprechgesang und seine mündliche Überlieferung in Synagoge und griechischer Kirche*, Wilhelmshaven, Florian Noetzel, 1988, p.35-38.
46. Cf. Mendelssohn’s expression “כְּמֶשְׁחָלָב” kēmēshulav’ [as intertwined], 1990c, *Ibid.*, p.130.
47. Cf. Fokkelman, *Ibid.*, 2000, p.61f. and his layout, *Ibid.*, 2002, p.17. The layout incomprehensibly contradicts his own argumentation in the corresponding annotations, p.155 where he pleads for the reference of “lēvadád und lavétach” together to the object.

## ABSTRACTS

By analyzing Psalm 4 (Bēqor’í ‘anēni ’elohe tsidqí) as an example, the essay “How This Poetry Masters the Flow of Speech” demonstrates the specific problem of Biblical Hebrew poetry: the lack of a form authorized by “the poet” that could indicate the “original” verse structure. The arrangements of two editions of Psalm 4 are supported by Mendelssohn’s 1783 and Meschonnic’s 2001 translations. These editions make clear that the force of Biblical Hebrew verse relies on the effective art of breaking speech into corresponding rhythmical elements, and that this art calls for a visual equivalent.

En prenant pour exemple le psaume 4 (Bēqor’í ‘anēni ’elohe tsidqí), l’essai *How This Poetry Masters the Flow of Speech* montre le problème spécifique de la poésie biblique hébraïque: l’absence d’une mise en page dernière et autorisée par le “poète” qui pourrait indiquer la structure versifiée “originale”. Les suggestions de deux éditions du psaume 4 sont confortées par les arrangements des traductions de Mendelssohn, en 1783, et Meschonnic, en 2001. On commence à comprendre que la force du vers biblique hébreux repose sur un art efficace de briser le discours en membres rythmiques correspondants et que ce mouvement appelle à un équivalent visuel.

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