

Meter in Ancient Hebrew Poetry A History of Modern Research

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The following sketch of past research on the question of meter in ancient Hebrew poetry is meant to be as concise as possible. “Bibliography” is short for “Annotated Bibliography” at www.ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com.

In the field of metrical analysis, among those whose efforts are now largely forgotten, the work of Francis Gomarus, William Jones, Francis Hare, and Gustav Bickell might be mentioned. Gomarus applied standards of meter derived from Latin and Greek poetry, Jones from Arabic literature. Hare and Bickell took classical Syriac poetry as a model, and pioneered the counting of syllables. Conrad Gottlob Anton, Julius Ley, and Eduard Sievers pioneered the counting of stress maxima across the stichoi of a line.

Discussion in Charles Augustus Briggs, *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1899) 355-426; Eduard König, *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die biblische Literatur komparativisch dargestellt* (Leipzig: Weicher, 1900) 313-360; Jacob Ecker, *Porta Sion. Lexikon zum lateinischen Psalter (Psalterium Gallicanum) unter genauer Vergleichung der Septuaginta und des hebräischen Textes - mit einer Einleitung über die hebr.-griech.-latein. Psalmen und dem Anhang: Der apokryphe Psalter Salomons* (Trier: Paulinus, 1903) 22-181; William Henry Cobb, *A Criticism of Systems of Hebrew Metre* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905); Charles Augustus Briggs and Emily Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Psalms* (2 vols; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1906-1907) xxxviii-xliii; George Buchanan Gray, *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915; repr. with a “Prolegomenon” by David Noel Freedman; New York: Ktav, 1972; repr. of 1915 ed. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2002); and Joachim Begrich, “Zur hebräische Metrik,” *TRu* NF 4 (1932) 67-89. A synopsis of Anton, Ley, and Sievers’ work is provided below and in “Bibliography.”

Among others in their day, Francis Brown, “The Measurements of Hebrew Poetry as an Aid to Literary Analysis,” *JBL* 9 (1890) 71-106; Crawford Howell Toy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1899), Friedrich Baethgen, *Die*

Psalmen (2d ed.; HAT 2/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1904); William Rainey Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1905), Charles Augustus Briggs and Emily Grace Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Psalms* (2 vols; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1906-1907), George Buchanan Gray (*The Forms of Hebrew Poetry; Isaiah I-XXXIX* [only chaps. 1-27 are covered] [ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912]; Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray, *Job* [Gray alone is responsible for the discussion of rhythms in the introduction and pertinent notes] [ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1921]), Édouard Dhorme (*Le Livre de Job* [Paris: Gabalda, 1926]; Eng. trans. *A Commentary on the Book of Job* [tr. Harold Knight; London: Thomas Nelson, 1967]), and Robert Gordis (“The Structure of Hebrew Poetry,” in *Poets, Prophets, and Sages: Studies in Biblical Interpretation* [Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1971 (Hebr. 1944)] 61-94), counted stress maxima across the stichoi of a line, much as Ley and Sievers before them.

Controversies that occupied center stage up into the 1950’s include those associated with the names of Joachim Begrich, Georg Fohrer, Gustav Hölscher, Friedrich Horst, Sigmund Mowinckel, Theodore H. Robinson, and Stanislav Segert. Discussion in: Luis Alonso Schökel, *Estudios de poética hebrea* (Barcelona: Juan Flors, 1963) 119-93; Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship* (tr. D. R. Ap-Thomas; 2 vols.; Oxford: Blackwell; Nashville: Abingdon, 1967) 2:159-75, 261-66; and Harm van Grol, *Versbouw*, 51-53, 55-58. Too cursory to be helpful: Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (tr. Peter R. Ackroyd; New York: Harper & Row, 1965) 57-64; 731-32). For relevant studies by Begrich and Segert, see “Bibliography.” The contributions of Hölscher, Horst, Mowinckel, and Segert are discussed below.

Frank Moore Cross, Jr. and David Noel Freedman (*Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* [joint Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1950; SBLDS; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975; 2d ed.; Biblical Resource Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997] 5-8, 129) affirmed the approach of Ley and Sievers based on the counting of stresses even as they revived an approach based on syllable counting. Freedman applied the syllable counting method to a wide variety of poetic texts. Cross adopted a notation designating long and short cola which, in his own words, “leaves open the question” of whether the “rhythm” of Hebrew verse was accentual or syllabic-quantitative (“The Prosody of Lamentations 1 and the Psalm of Jonah,” *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins

Univ. Press, 1998] 99-134; 102). This is not the case. In some of his essays, a long colon, generally speaking, is one which contains three stress maxima; a short colon, two. In other studies, a long colon is a colon with an aggregate syllable count and/or word count superior to that of the short colon with which it is paired. For a list of relevant studies by Freedman and Cross, see “Bibliography.”

Others have adopted the syllable counting method, including Robert C. Culley (*Oral Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms* [Near and Middle East Series 4; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967]; “Metrical Analysis of Classical Hebrew Poetry,” in *Essays on the Ancient Semitic World* [ed. John W. Wevers and Donald B. Redford; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970] 12-28); Douglas K. Stuart (*Studies in Early Hebrew Meter* [HSM 13; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976]); Andrew H. Bartelt (*The Book around Immanuel: Style and Structure in Isaiah 2-12* [BJSUCSD 4; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996]); Paul R. Raabe, *Obadiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24D; New York: Doubleday, 1996); and David M. Howard, Jr. (*The Structure of Psalms 93-100* [BJSUCSD 5; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997]).

Those who have voiced the most trenchant doubts about the possibility that ancient Hebrew verse instantiates metrical structures in terms of fixed numbers of syllables or patterns of rhythmic stresses include Michael Patrick O’Connor (*Hebrew Verse Structure* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1980; reissued 1997 with “The Contours of Biblical Hebrew Verse: An Afterword to Hebrew Verse Structure”] 631-61) 55-68, 146-52); James L. Kugel (*The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981; repr. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998] 71-75; 298-99); Dennis Pardee (“Ugaritic and Hebrew Metrics,” in *Ugarit in Retrospect: Fifty Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic* [ed. Gordon Douglas Young; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1981] 113-130); and Donald R. Vance (*The Question of Meter in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* [Studies in Bible and Early Christianity 46; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001]. To be sure, O’Connor and Pardee sometimes express their doubts less apodictically. For example, O’Connor states the following: “[A] minority view holds that there is a strictly recoverable metrical component to the poetry of the Heb. Bible (e.g. Eduard Sievers), but it is more generally assumed that there is an unrecoverable or opaque metrical element in the verse” (“Parallelism,” in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* [gen. ed. Alex Preminger and Terry V. F. Brogan; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993] 877-79; 878). Perhaps, then, the “unrecoverable or opaque metrical

element in the verse” will one day be recovered to the satisfaction of the guild. O’Connor, Kugel, and Pardee’s relevant contributions are listed in “Bibliography.” The objections of Vance appear to be a function of the standard he uses to define metricality. The prosodic regularities of ancient Hebrew verse are comparable to “the inconsistent alternation of shorter with longer lines” typical of early Japanese poetry; the “irregularly stressed meters” of a swath of Scottish Gaelic poetry; the “lines of variable length” of medieval Spanish poetry; the “imparisyllabic lines” in older Western Slavic and Russian poetry; the flexibly balanced dicola and tricola of early Latin ritual formulae and the half lines ranging in length from 5 to 7 syllables of the Saturnine verse-form; and the lines of variable length characteristic of folk verse in a number of Turkic and Uralic languages: quotations are from the relevant articles in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. The prosodic regularities of ancient Hebrew verse are not comparable to the regularities of the sonnet in Italian, French, or English.

Johannes de Moor, Willem van der Meer, Marjo Korpel, and others of the Kampen school develop a theory of unit delimitation in Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry attentive to the phenomenon of parallelism on multiple levels (Willem van der Meer and Johannes De Moor, ed., *The Structural Analysis of Biblical and Canaanite Poetry* [JSOTSup 74; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988]). The Kampen school’s text model is so broadly gauged that the elevated prose of Ruth and Genesis is also considered poetry. In a recent work, Marjo Korpel and Johannes de Moor (*The Structure of Classical Hebrew Poetry: Isaiah 40-55* [OTS 41; Leiden: Brill, 1998]) count stresses as an index of rhythmical balance. Korpel has also taken the lead in the Pericope Project, a study of unit delimitation markers in ancient manuscripts. The data is of great interest, though exaggerated claims are sometimes made on its behalf. Overview at www.pericope.net. A Korpel bibliography is provided in “Bibliography.”

Donn W. Leatherman provides a useful summary and critique of the approaches of Cross and Freedman, Collins, O’Connor, and the Kampen school (*An Analysis of Four Current Theories of Hebrew Verse Structure* [Ph.D. diss., McGill University, Montreal, 1998] available online at http://www.collectionscanada.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk.1/tape10/PQDD_0028/NQ50205.pdf).

Jan Fokkelman develops a theory of Hebrew poetic structure and applies it to a large corpus of texts. He counts both stressed syllables and all syllables, though he deemphasizes the stressed syllable counting method and

takes the counting of all syllables to a new level. A Fokkelman bibliography is provided in “Bibliography.”

Harm van Grol develops a metrical theory that brings greater coherence and precision to the classical stress counting method. Van Grol’s relevant publications are listed in “Bibliography.”

In more recent times, besides van Grol, others who count stress maxima across versets and lines and regard the stresses as having metrical value include W. Randall Garr (“The Qinah: A Study of Poetic Meter, Syntax and Style,” *ZAW* 95 [1983] 54-75); Stephen A. Geller (“Hebrew Prosody and Poetics. I. Biblical,” in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* [3d ed.; gen. ed. Alex Preminger and Terry V. F. Brogan; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993] 509-11); Aloysius Fitzgerald (“Hebrew Poetry,” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* [ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy; Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990] 201-208); Roland Murphy (“Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry,” in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* [ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991] 392-397); Gene R. Schramm (“Poetic Patterning in Biblical Hebrew,” in *Michigan Oriental Studies in Honor of George G. Cameron* [ed. Louis L. Orlin; Ann Arbor: Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Michigan, 1976] 167-191); and Wilfred G. E. Watson (*Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques* [2d ed.; JSOTSup 26; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995 (1st ed. 1984); corr. repr. with suppl. bibliog.; London: T & T Clark, 2005] 97-110).

In the last fifty years, a number of commentators have applied a stress counting method to a large corpus of texts. Examples include Luis Alonso Schökel, *Estudios de poética hebrea* (Barcelona: Juan Flors, 1963) 165-88 [Is 1-21]; 188-89 [Is 43-44]; 451-87 [Is 24-27]; 489-523 [Is 28-30]; Hans Wildberger, *Jesaja: 1. Teilband: Jesaja 1-12* (2d ed., BKAT 10/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980 [ET *Isaiah 1-12* (CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990)]); idem, *Jesaja: 2. Teilband: Jesaja 13-27* (BKAT 10/2, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978 [ET *Isaiah 13-27* (CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997)]); idem, *Jesaja: 3. Teilband: Jesaja 28-39* (BKAT 10/3; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982 [ET *Isaiah 28-39* (CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002)]); and Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150 Revised* (WBC 21; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002). Peter C. Craigie might also be listed here (*Psalms 1-50* [2d ed.; suppl. Marvin E. Tate; WBC 19; Nashville: Nelson, 2004 (¹1983)]). He counted “words” as units and though he refrained from describing them as prosodic units dominated by a

single main stress, they are equivalent to them. Craigie is followed by Marvin E. Tate (*Psalms 51-100* [WBC 20; Waco: Word, 1990]). A lucid exposition of the traditional stress counting method is that of John Bright, *Jeremiah*, (AB 21; New York: Doubleday, 1965) cxxvi-cxxxviii. A list of Alonso Schökel's relevant contributions is provided in "Bibliography."

Those who count stress maxima but avoid the term "meter" in reference to stress patterns include Robert Alter (*The Art of Biblical Poetry* [New York: Basic Books, 1985] 9); "The Characteristics of Ancient Hebrew Poetry," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible* [ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987] 611-624; 613), Benjamin Hrushovski [Harshav] ("Prosody, Hebrew," *EncJud* 12 [1971] cols. 1195-1240; 1200-1202), David L. Petersen and Kent Harold Richards (*Interpreting Hebrew Poetry* [Guides to Biblical Scholarship, Old Testament Series; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992] 37-47); and Klaus Seybold ("Poesie I," *TRE* 26 (1996) 743-48; 745).

Those who speak of symmetry and balance across the members of a poetic line without committing themselves to any particular method of measuring proportions include Adele Berlin ("Reading Biblical Poetry," in *The Jewish Study Bible* [ed. Adele Berlin and Mark Zvi Brettler; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004] 2097-2104; 2098-99) and Patrick D. Miller, Jr. ("Meter, Parallelism, and Tropes: The Search for Poetic Style," *JSOT* 28 [1984] 99-106; 102-3). A list of Berlin's relevant contributions is provided in "Bibliography."

The metrical theories of Steven T. Byington, Duane L. Christensen, Morris Halle and John J. McCarthy, Elcanon Isaacs, Hans Kosmala, Jerzy Kurylowicz, and Oswald Loretz and Ingo Kottsieper have attracted relatively little attention. Brief discussions include: David W. Cotter, *A Study of Job 4-5 in the Light of Contemporary Literary Theory* (SBLDS 124; Atlanta: Scholars Press 1992) 52-73 and Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, 97-110.

Klaus Seybold argues at length for the appropriateness of the concept of meter relative to ancient Hebrew verse (*Poetik der Psalmen* [Poetologische Studien zum Alten Testament 1; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2003] 102-159). He offers a critique of the approaches of O'Connor and Fokkelman. Seybold makes primary stress counts and a study of accentual rhythms standard features of his analysis, but also counts syllables and consonants (with Loretz and Kottsieper). He views syllables and consonants as complementary indices of the measured out nature of ancient Hebrew verse, but also notes

the difficulties and limitations of the syllable, consonant, and mora (Christenson) counting methods (*Poetik der Psalmen*, 125-126). A list of Seybold's relevant contributions is provided in "Bibliography."

Another approach to meter in ancient Hebrew poetry involves the identification of timing units below the word level, such as "metra" and "feet," on a par with prosodic names known to be important in other poeties. Pioneers of this approach include Gustav Hölscher, "Elemente arabischer, syrischer und hebräischer Metrik," in *Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft für Karl Budde: zum siebzigsten Geburtstag am 13. April 1920* (ed. Karl Marti; BZAW 34; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1920) 93-101; Sigmund Mowinckel, "Zum Problem der hebräischen Metrik," in *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet zum 80. Geburtstag* (ed. Walter Baumgartner; Tübingen: Mohr, 1950) 379-94; idem, "The Metre of the Psalms," in *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (2 vols.; tr. Dafydd Rhys Ap-Thomas; Nashville: Abingdon, 1967) 2:159-75; Friedrich Horst, "Die Kennzeichen der hebräischen Poesie," *ThR* 21 (1953) 97-121; and Stanislav Segert, "Vorarbeiten zur hebräischen Metrik I-II," *ArOr* 21 (1953) 481-542; idem, "Die Versform des Hohenliedes," in *Charisteria Orientalia praecipue ad Persiam pertinentia* [Jan Rypka FS] (ed. Felix Tauer, Vera Kubícková, and Ivan Hrbek; Praha: Nakladatelství Československé Akademie Ved, 1956) 285-99; idem, "Die Methoden der althebräischen Metrik," *CV* 1 (1958) 233-41; idem, "Problems of Hebrew Prosody," in *Congress Volume, Oxford 1959* (VTSup 7; Leiden: Brill, 1959) 283-91. Vincent DeCaen follows in their path. See "Bibliography" and www.chass.utoronto.ca/~decaen/.

Gerhard Fecht brings his understanding of Egyptian prosody to bear on Hebrew and Phoenician metrics. He counts "lines" or what are more conventionally called stichoi and does not make a sharp distinction between prose and poetry (*Metrik des Hebräischen und des Phönizischen*. [ÄAT 19; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1990]).

William Sanford LaSor, "An Approach to Hebrew Poetry through the Masoretic Accents," in *Essays on the Occasion of the Seventieth Anniversary of the Dropsie University (1909-1979)* (ed. Abraham Isaac Katsh and Leon Nemoy; Philadelphia: Dropsie University, 1979) 327-353; Paul Sanders, Raymond de Hoop, Thomas Renz (*Colometry and Accentuation in Hebrew Prophetic Poetry* [KUSATU 4; Waltrip: Spenner, 2003]), and Vincent DeCaen attempt to establish poetic colometry on the basis of the neumatic accents and/or other prosodic markers preserved in the Tiberian and/or other ancient traditions. Sanders and de Hoop claim that the subdivision of the text in MT implied by the accents and other delimitation markers is, in addition

to being a prosodic representation of the text as it was traditionally understood and recited, a dependable guide to the poetic conventions the underlying text adhered to. They are contributors to the Pericope project (see under Marjo Korpel in “Bibliography” for further information). Other Pericope project collaborators who discuss examples of ancient Hebrew poetry rely less consistently than do de Hoop and Sanders on the witness of delimitation markers in ancient manuscripts when it comes to scanning the underlying text. E. J. Revell has offered a critique of Sanders’ approach. To be sure, stichographic arrangements of text in ancient manuscripts deserve close attention. An overview has been provided by Emanuel Tov. A list of DeCaen, de Hoop, Revell, Sanders, and Tov’s relevant contributions are provided in “Bibliography.”

Surveys of Research on Ancient Hebrew Verse

The history of research on ancient Hebrew verse in general and on meter in particular is canvassed in many of the works already mentioned. Overviews by others are worth mentioning: J. Kenneth Kuntz, “Engaging the Psalms: Gains and Trends in Recent Research,” *CurBS* 2 (1994) 77-106; idem, “Biblical Hebrew Poetry in Recent Research, Part I,” *CurBS* 6 (1998) 31-64; idem, “Biblical Hebrew Poetry in Recent Research, Part II,” *CurBS* 7 (1999) 36-79; Klaus Seybold, “Beiträge zur neueren Psalmenforschung,” *TRu* 61 (1996) 247-274; David M. Howard, “Recent Trends in Psalms Studies,” in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches* (ed. David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999) 329-68; online www.bethel.edu/~dhoward/articles/FOTSPsalms2.htm; idem, “The Psalms and Current Study,” in *Studying the Psalms: Issues and Approaches* (ed. Philip Johnston and David Firth; Carlisle: Apollos, 2005) 23-40; Marvin Tate, “Rethinking the Nature of Hebrew Poetry,” in *Psalms 1-50* (Peter C. Craigie; 2nd ed., WBC 19; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004) 371-414.

Strong-Stress Meter in Ancient Hebrew Poetry: The Pioneers

Primary stress analysis of ancient Hebrew verse was pioneered by Julius Ley. One often reads of the “Ley-Sievers method,” but despite the latter’s qualifications, it is Ley more than Sievers to whom we may go back with profit, as Ernst Vogt pointed out in 1961. Vogt’s comments, still worth reading, are quoted in Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (trans. Peter R. Ackroyd; New York: Harper and Row, 1965) 732. In Ley’s work, the minimal counting unit is what linguists today call the prosodic word. In Sievers’ work, the minimal counting unit is still the prosodic word,

but the parameters of the unit are defined in terms of an iambic-anapestic rhythm. Ley conceived of the bipartite line as the fundamental building block of ancient Hebrew poetry, and identified the tripartite line (‘dreigliedrige Langverse’) as a rare variation thereof (*Leitfaden der Metrik der hebräischen Poesie* [Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1887] 8-17).

Julius Ley

In his last published essay, Ley refers back to the following studies for the principles of his approach:

Grundzüge des Rhythmus, des Vers- und Strophenbaues in der hebräischen Poesie: Nebst Analyse einer Auswahl von Psalmen und anderen strophischen Dichtungen der verschiedenen Vers- und Strophenarten mit vorangehendem Abriss der Metrik der hebräischen Poesie (Halle: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1875); *Leitfaden der Metrik der hebräischen Poesie nebst dem ersten Buche der Psalmen nach rhythmischer Vers- und Strophenabteilung mit metrischer Analyse* (Halle: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1887); “Die metrische Beschaffenheit des Buches Hiob,” *TSK* 68 (1895) 635-92; “Die metrische Beschaffenheit des Buches Hiob,” *TSK* 70 (1897) 7-42; Die Bedeutung des Ebed Yahwe im 2 Teil des Jesaja,” *TSK* 72 (1899) 163- ; 187- ; last published essay: “Metrische Analyse von Jesaja Kapitel I,” *ZAW* 22 (1902) 229-237.

Further bibliography: *Die metrischen Formen der hebräischen Poesie* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1866); “Über den Rhythmus in der hebräischen Poesie,” *NJahrbPP* 41 (1871) 65- ; 257- ; “Über den Rhythmus, Vers- und Strophenbau in der hebräischen Poesie,” *NJahrbPP* 42 (1872) 209- ; “Emendationen zu den Psalmen mit Hilfe der Metrik,” *TSK* 50 (1877) 501- ; “Beiträge zur hebräischen Grammatik und Metrik,” *NJahrbPP* 61 (1891) 341- ; 408- ; “Origenes über hebräische Metrik,” *ZAW* (1892) 212- ; “Beiträge zum Rhythmus und zur Metrik der hebräischen Poesie,” *NJahrbPP* 63 (1893) 607- ; *Das buch Hiob: nach seinem Inhalt, seiner Kunstgestaltung und religiösen Bedeutung: mit einem Vorwort von E. Kautzsch* (Halle: Buchhandlung Waisenhauses, 1903).

Eduard Sievers

Sievers’ expertise in prosody and phonology was immense. We might not wish to follow him in detail, but his fundamental approach to ancient Hebrew prosody, especially insofar as it agrees with that of Ley, retains validity.

Sievers adds a second primary stress to “long” words and deletes stress on “short” words in accordance with assumptions about the number of unstressed syllables that intervene between stressed syllables. But Sievers’ stress rules have little foundation in the received tradition. They unduly curtail the variety of shapes and sizes of the “foot” in ancient Hebrew verse. The foot in ancient Hebrew belongs to the dimension of rhythm, not meter (for this distinction, see the Glossary at www.ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com). To be sure, “ultra-long” words like **בְּשִׁבְעַתֶּיכֶם** and **מִמְחֶשְׁבֵי־יְדֵיכֶם** sometimes receive two stress maxima in ancient Hebrew. Zero to two non-monomoraic syllables between stress maxima is indeed the norm. In a loose sense, ancient Hebrew possesses an iambic-anapestic rhythm, but said rhythm characterizes both poetry and prose.

Sievers parsed the fluent prose of Genesis, Samuel, Jonah, and the narrative frame of the book of Job into prosodic phrases of roughly equal dimensions. One is reminded of the efforts of another great prosodist, George Saintsbury, whose *A History of English Prose Rhythm* (London: MacMillan, 1912) describes the measured rhythms of a swath of great English prose. A part of ancient Hebrew prose lends itself to this kind of analysis, even if said prose also differs in decisive ways from verse as found in, e.g., Isaiah, Amos, Zephaniah, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Lamentations, and Song of Songs.

Metrische Studien I: Studien zur hebräischen Metrik. Untersuchungen. Textproben (ASGW 21/1-2; Leipzig: Teubner, 1901); *Metrische Studien II: Die hebräische Genesis. Texte. Zur Quellenscheidung und Textkritik* (ASGW 23/1-2; Leipzig: Teubner, 1904-1905); “Alttestamentliche Miscellen” (1-10) [1: Isa 24-27; 2: Jonah; 3: Deutero-Zechariah; 4: Malachi; 5: Hosea; 6: Joel; 7: Obadiah; 8: Zephaniah; 9: Haggai; 10: Micah], in *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Philologisch-historische Klasse* 56/4-59/1 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1905-1907); *Amos. Metrisch bearbeitet* (with Hermann Guthe; ASGW 23/3; Leipzig: Teubner, 1907); *Metrische Studien III: Samuel. Metrisch herausgegeben. Text* (ASGW 23/4; Leipzig: Teubner, 1907).

Ley and Sievers were not the first to recognize that ancient Hebrew verse instantiates a strong-stress meter. That prize goes to a classicist, orientalist, and Hebraist of the 18th century, Conrad Gottlob Anton. Another scholar, Christian Ludwig Leutwein, came to the same conclusion in the same decade as Anton. Two decades before Ley, Ernst Meier, whose knowledge of

poetry, folklore, and prosody was far-reaching, also made the stress maximum the determining principle of measurement.

Conrad Gottlob Anton

Coniectura de metro Hebraeorum antiquo : psalmorum exemplis illustrata (diss.; Leipzig: Langenheim, 1770); *Treue Uebersetzungen Lateinischer, Griechischer und Hebräischer Gedichte in den Versarten der Originale: Conrad Gottlob Antons Treue Übersetzungen Lateinischer, Griechischer und Hebräischer Gedichte in den Versarten der Originale. Nebst einer Abhandlung von der genauesten Nachahmung des alten Sylbenmaasses deren unsre Sprache in treuen Übersetzungen fähig ist* (Leipzig: Crusius, 1772); *Poetische Uebersetzung des Hohen Liedes Salomonis in dem Sylbenmasse des Originals: nebst einer Einleitung von der wahrscheinlichsten Erklärung desselben* (Leipzig: Langenheim, 1773); *Editionis in qua psalmi ad metrum revocabuntur et recensentur varietate lectionis et perpetua annotatione illustrabuntur Specimen exhibet* (Wittenberg: Dürr, 1780); *Salomonis Carmen Melicum Quod Canticum Cantorum Dicitur Ad Metrum Priscum Et Modos Musicos Revocavit, Recensuit, In Vernaculam Transtulit, Notis Criticis Aliisque Illustravit Et Glossarium Addidit* (Wittenberg: Selbstverlag, 1800); *Carmen alphabeticum integrum ope rationis in hymnis decantandis vel apud Hebraeos usitatae psalmo IX. et X. conjuncto restituit* (Wittenberg: Tzschiedrich, 1805); *Vaticinium Jacobi genes. XLIX. historice, philologice, exegetice, critice consideratum* (diss.; Wittenberg: Meinel, 1808).

Christian Ludwig Leutwein

Versuch einer richtigen Theorie von der biblischen Verskunst (Leipzig: Fues, 1775).

Ernst Meier

Die Form der hebräischen Poesie nachgewiesen (Tübingen: Osiander, 1853).