

# Introduction to Hebrew Poetry

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OT 613 – Psalms (2 credits)

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**Poetic language:** “Its principal trait is a multilevel parallelism.” (Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, p. 132). (1) sound, (2) morphology and syntax, (3) lexicon, (4) semantics

## Terminology

1. Stich
2. Hemistich
3. Distich and tristich
4. Acrostic
5. Chiasmus
6. Ballast variant
7. Anacrusis
8. Zeugma
9. *Constructio prāgnans*
10. *Qinah*
11. Oxymoron
12. Metonymy
13. Metaphor and Simile
14. Paronomasia

History of the study of Hebrew poetry

Robert Lowth (1753), J. G. von Herder (1783)

Ras Shamra discoveries—Ugaritic materials (1929)

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## I. Poetic Language: Its principal trait is a multilevel parallelism.

- A. Sound
- B. Morphology and Syntax
- C. Lexicon
- D. Semantics

## II. Parallelism in grammatical and semantic structure

- A. Synonymous (e.g. Prov. 11:25)
- B. Antithetic (e.g. Prov. 11:1)

- C. Emblematic (e.g. Prov. 11:22)
- D. Climactic or stairlike (e.g. Psalm 29:1-2)
- E. Synthetic or formal (a catch-all category)

### ANALYSIS OF HEBREW POETRY

Psalm 111 (an acrostic)		Psalm 29
2-4-3    3-3 3-3    4-3 3-3-3	(1)	abcd
3-3        3-3 4-4    3-3 4-4-3	(2)	abef
		abeg
 (1) Psalm 19		
(1) hassamayim m <sup>e</sup> sapp <sup>e</sup> rim k <sup>e</sup> bod 'el	4-4	abc
The-heavens are-enumerating the-glory-of God		
uma <sup>c</sup> seh yadayw maggid hara <sup>q</sup> ia <sup>c</sup>		cba
And-the-work-of His-hands is-reporting the-firmament		
(2) yom l <sup>e</sup> yom yabbia <sup>c</sup> 'omer	4-4	abcd
Day to-day spouts information		
w <sup>e</sup> laylah l <sup>e</sup> laylah y <sup>e</sup> hawweh da <sup>c</sup> at		abcd
And-night to-night declares knowledge		
(6) From-the-end-of the-heavens is-his-exit	3-3	abc
And-his-circuit is-upon their-ends		cA
(7) 3-2    abc de	(9) 3-2    abc fg	
3-2    abc de	3-2    abc fg	
(8) 3-2    abc de	(10) 2-2    ab/B	
3-2    abc de	2-2    ab/B	

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