

Sources and Notes

In General

The first sefer I created a guide sheet for was Shemuel, both because I had to prepare my students for a bekiut exam that included the entire book, and also because I came across Shimon Bar-Efrat's wonderful commentary (Mikra LeYisra'el series, Jerusalem: Magnes, 5756). Bar-Efrat's careful division of Sefer Shemuel into coherent narrative units with thoughtful titles is what initially gave me the idea to create this type of a review sheet. In my Shemuel page, the "micro" division (plus titles) is mostly based on Bar-Efrat, though I have made many changes. The "macro" division into larger units is from M. Z. Segal's "Sifrei Shemuel" (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1987).

In other narrative books I tried to create titles for the smaller units similar to those that Bar-Efrat used in Shemuel, though I am aware that I have been only partially successful. In terms of dividing the other books of Nevi'im and Ketuvim into coherent thematic units, I made eclectic use of three types of sources:

First and foremost were the parashiyot petuhot and setumot, as they appear in the important biblical codices. I relied heavily (but not slavishly) on the parasha divisions. On the one hand, I did not create a new section every time there is a parashah petuhah or setumah. But on the other hand, nearly every time that I did mark off a new section it coincides with a petuhah or a setumah.

The masoretic codices agree among themselves on parashiyot petuhot and setumot the large majority of the time. Nevertheless, there are some significant disagreements among them (even among the codices based on the tradition of the Aleppo codex). On the rare occasions where my own division is based on a parashah division that appears in one (but not all) of the codices, I noted this in square brackets. Also: in certain books (end of Yehezkel, Mishlei, Kohelet, Ruth) there are unusually long sections without any parashah divisions at all. In these cases I noted the parashah divisions in square brackets whenever they do occur. In Mishlei specifically, because the division of large parts of the book is necessarily arbitrary, I based it on parashah divisions where possible, and noted them whenever they do occur throughout the book (in square brackets).

Second, I made use of the "macro" and "micro" divisions by those of the classical parshanim who were concerned with carefully dividing the books, such as: Ralbag, Abravanel, Meiri (on Mishlei), Sa'adia Gaon, and others.

For my third and final group of sources, I checked various popular modern commentaries (e.g. Hartom, Da'at Mikra, Segal, Olam ha-Tanakh) to see where they divided the sefarim and how they titled the units. I found that they often recycle each other's work when it comes to this, but sometimes do have interesting insights into the structure and arrangement of the books.

Though I made eclectic use of all these sources, what ultimately decided the divisions and titles were my own impressions as a reader, and I added many elements entirely on my own. Responsibility for errors thus lies entirely with me.

Notes on Specific Books

I worked on Yehoshua and Shofetim early on, also because of my students' bekiut test. I tried to make the pages on Yehoshua and Shofetim especially clear, useful and easy to use, because I assume that these are the very first books of Nakh that many people read. Since beginnings are always hard, I tried to make use of these

first two pages as light introductions to my concept of guide sheets for bekiut in Nakh. Since each of these two short books has its own separate page, there was enough space to accomplish this. In Yehoshua, I made special efforts to present the long, difficult section on the nahalot of the tribes in a clear way that would make it easier to read in its entirety. On the page for Shofetim I had a lot of space left, so I added an explanation of the structure of Shirat Devorah. The initial idea for such an explanation came from a chart found in Olam ha-Tanakh (p. 51). But I made sweeping changes to it, which I think make mine a far more useful chart.

Yeshayahu: Shadal was very helpful at some difficult points.

Yirmiyahu: The nevu'ot in Yirmiyahu are divided as Abravanel proposed, according to introductory formulas. (Segal later followed Abravanel with one exception.) I wanted to adapt Abravanel's summaries of the individual nevu'ot as well, but it didn't prove to be practical so I made my own (which still need some work). The division of Yirmiyahu with titles from the phrases in 1:10 is mine.

Mishlei: As I mentioned above, I began new units at parashot petuhot whenever possible (as indicated on the guide-sheet).

Kohelet: The division still needs more work to make the daily units more even.

Eichah: The titles of the five kinnot are from Da'at Mikra, with small changes.

Daniel: The division of Daniel is more or less dictated by the book's contents. The earliest authority to delineate the book's parts explicitly was, to the best of my knowledge, Saadia Gaon.

Divrei ha-Yamim: I tried to make the titles of large and small sections reflect the book's own structure and purposes (as I understood them). Thus, even when sections of Divrei ha-Yamim have parallels in Melakhim, the titles in Divrei ha-Yamim are often different.