THE INTRODUCTIONS TO THE SPEECHES IN THE BOOK OF JOB
ARE THEY IN PROSE OR IN VERSE?

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There is no doubt at all concerning the prologue and the epilogue of the Book of Job. They are in prose, and editions and codices agree. This applies to chapters i, ii, and xiii 7-17, and also to iii 1. But it does not apply to the introductions to the individual speeches, nor does it apply to the introduction of Elihu in xxxii 1-6a. These are written and printed as prose, but the accents are verse accents. This also applies to the so-called prose introduction of Elihu. The massoretic text there has verse accents.

The evidence as found in the lists in Ginsburg, Michaelis 1720, and to a lesser degree in Baer’s 1875 text is as follows:

iii 2. The accents are compatible with both prose and verse, but בֵּית is a verse accent. It is found in Baer, Jablonski (Berlin 1699), edition 14 in Michaelis’ list; and in Ginsburg’s codices 17, 22, 26, 28, 41, 64. With regard to מַלְשֶׁנָה, there is the divergence of opinion found in every instance throughout the book as to whether the silluq is יִבְלָשְׁנָה or מַלְשֶׁנָה. The evidence is very evenly divided, and he would be very rash who would state categorically which of the two is to be preferred.

iv 1. The accepted reading is בֵּית(ם), definitely a verse accent. בֵּית is found only in Ginsburg’s 7, 9, 15, 19, 28, 29, 42, 64. בֵּית may be either prose or verse, Baer has כּוֹנֶנֶן which is definitely verse. כּוֹנֶנֶן may be either prose or verse, but כּוֹנֶנֶן (verse) is found in Athias, Baer, Kittel; Ginsburg’s codices 15, 17, 22, 28, 36, 41, 64; editions 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 18.

vi 1. All are agreed that the accent in בֵּית is compatible with both prose and verse, as is that of בֵּית. But Jablonski and Baer have כּוֹנֶנֶן, and so also Erfurt 2 and 4, a verse accent.

viii 1. All are agreed that כּוֹנֶנֶן definitely carries a verse accent. כּוֹנֶנֶן could be either prose or verse. So also כּוֹנֶנֶן; but Athias, Jablonski and Baer have כּוֹנֶנֶן, a verse accent, and also Ginsburg codices 17, 22, 26, 36, 37, 41, 64, and Michaelis editions 17 and 18.

1 I have checked many of these codices and editions, but not all of them.
ix 1. מ"עב is compatible with both verse and prose. So also the second word מ"עב, but Jablonski and Baer have the verse accent מ"עב, and so also Ginsburg codices 17, 22, 34, 36, 37, 64, and Michaelis edition 14.

xi 1. The first of the four words is מ"עב, definitely a verse accent. The second is מ"עב or מ"עב (Ginsburg codices 7, 13, 15, 22, 26, 27: a very frequent alternative to מ"עב throughout the three poetical books), both compatible with both verse and prose. But Baer, as very frequently when מ"עב only is found in the three books, has the verse accent מ"עב. The third word is מ"עב, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer have מ"עב, a verse accent, and so also Ginsburg codices 17, 20, 22, 26, 28, 37, 41, 64, and Erfurt 1, 2, 4.

xii 1. The first of the three words is מ"עב, compatible with both verse and prose. The second is מ"עב, also compatible with both verse and prose, but again Jablonski and Baer have the verse accent מ"עב, and so also Ginsburg codices 17, 22, 26, 28, 36, 37, 64; Erfurt 2, 4; Michaelis edition 14.

xv 1. The first of the four words is the verse accent מ"עב, but Ginsburg codices 15, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 42 have מ"עב, compatible with both verse and prose. The second word is מ"עב or מ"עב (Ginsburg codices 7, 13, 20, 28, 36, 41, 64; editions 3, 6, 10), both compatible with both verse and prose, but Baer has the verse accent מ"עב. The third word is מ"עב, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer have the verse accent מ"עב, and so also Ginsburg editions 23, 26, 34, 37, 41, 64; Erfurt 1, 2, 4; Michaelis edition 14.

xvi 1. The first of the three words is מ"עב or (Ginsburg codices 7, 14, 20, 64) מ"עב, both compatible with both verse and prose, but Ginsburg editions 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 18 have the verse accent מ"עב, and so also Michaelis editions 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 19, 20. The second word is מ"עב, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer have the verse accent מ"עב, and so also Ginsburg codices 36, 37, 41, 64; Erfurt 2; Michaelis edition 14.

xviii 1. All are agreed that the first word is מ"עב, with the verse accent. The second word is מ"עב, compatible with both verse and prose. The third word is מ"עב, compatible with both verse and prose, but the verse accent מ"עב is found in Baer, in Ginsburg codices 26, 28, 34, 36, 37, 64; Erfurt 1, 2, 4 and Michaelis edition 14.

xix 1. All are agreed that the first of the three words is מ"עב, compatible with both verse and prose. The second word is מ"עב, also, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer have מ"עב, a verse accent, and so also Ginsburg codices 17, 22, 26, 28, 37, 64; Erfurt 2, 4; Michaelis edition 14.

xx 1. All are agreed that the first of the four words is מ"עב, definitely a verse accent. The second word is מ"עב, where Baer has the verse accent מ"עב. The
third word is נֶפֶשׁ, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer have נַפֶּשׁ, a verse accent, and so also Ginsburg codices 17, 22, 28, 37, 41, 64; Erfurt 2; Michaelis edition 14. Also Athias has the form נַפֶּשׁ, where the נ is definitely a verse accent.

xxi 1. All are agreed that the first word is בֹּשֶׁה, compatible with both prose and verse. The second of the three words is בֹּשֶׁה, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer have בֹּשֶׁה, a verse accent, and so Ginsburg codices 15, 17, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 36, 37, 41, 64; Erfurt 2, 3.

xxii 1. The first of the four words is בֹּשֶׁה, a verse accent, but בֹּשֶׁה is found in Ginsburg codices 22, 23, 28, 29, 34, 42, 64 and edition 3, compatible with both verse and prose. The second word is נֶפֶשׁ or נֶפֶשׁ (Ginsburg codices 7, 13, 26, 28, 41, 64), but Baer has the verse accent נֶפֶשׁ. The third word is נַפֶּשׁ, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer have נַפֶּשׁ, a verse accent, and so also Ginsburg codices 17, 22, 26, 28, 37, 41, 64; Erfurt 1, 2; Michaelis edition 14.

xxiii 1. All are agreed that the first of the three words is בֹּשֶׁה, compatible with both verse and prose. The second is בֹּשֶׁה, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer have בֹּשֶׁה, a verse accent, and so also Ginsburg codices 17, 22, 26, 41; Erfurt 2, 3, 4.

xxv 1. The first word of the four is בֹּשֶׁה, a verse accent, though Erfurt 1, 2, 4 have בֹּשֶׁה, compatible with both verse and prose. The second word is נֶפֶשׁ or נֶפֶשׁ (Ginsburg codices 7, 13, 17, 41; edition 3), both compatible with both verse and prose. The third word is נַפֶּשׁ, compatible with both prose and verse. but Jablonski and Baer have נַפֶּשׁ, a verse accent, and so also Ginsburg codices 22, 26, 41; Erfurt 1, 2; Ginsburg edition 3 and Michaelis edition 14.

xxvi 1. All are agreed that the first of the three words is בֹּשֶׁה, compatible with both verse and prose. The second is בֹּשֶׁה, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer have בֹּשֶׁה, a verse accent, and so also Ginsburg codices 17, 22, 26; Erfurt 2; Michaelis edition 14.

xxvii 1. The first of the five words is נֶפֶשׁ, compatible with both verse and prose. The second is נֶפֶשׁ, a verse accent. The third is נֶפֶשׁ or (Kittel) נֶפֶשׁ, both compatible with both verse and prose. The fourth is נֶפֶשׁ, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer have נַפֶּשׁ, a verse accent, and so also Ginsburg codices 9, 15, 17, 22, 26, 43; Erfurt 1, 2; Ginsburg edition 10 and Michaelis edition 14.

xxix 1. The first of the five words is נֶפֶשׁ, compatible with both verse and prose. The second is נֶפֶשׁ, a verse accent. The third is נֶפֶשׁ, compatible with both verse and prose. The fourth is נֶפֶשׁ, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer again have נַפֶּשׁ, a verse accent, and so also
Ginsburg codices 17, 22, 26, 34, 41; Erfurt 1, 2, 4; Ginsburg edition 10; Michaelis edition 14.

xxxiv 1. The first of the three words is הֹרֵך, compatible with both verse and prose. The second is וָוָוָו, also compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer again have הֹרֵך, a verse accent, and so also Ginsburg codices 17, 19, 22, 26, 34; Erfurt 2, 4; Michaelis edition 14.

xxxv 1. All are agreed that the first of the three words is הֹרֵך, compatible with both verse and prose. The second word is וָוָו, again Jablonski and Baer have הֹרֵך, a verse accent, as also Ginsburg codices 7, 17, 22, 34, 41, 42; Erfurt 1, 2; Michaelis edition 14.

xxxvi I. All are agreed that the first word of the three is הֹרֵך, compatible with both verse and prose. So also for the second word וָוָו, but once more Jablonski and Baer have הֹרֵך, a verse accent, and so also Ginsburg codices 17, 22, 26, 34, 41; Erfurt 2, 4; Michaelis edition 14.

xxxviii 1. Most agree that the first word of the four (five) is - הֹרֵך, compatible with both verse and prose. Erfurt 1, 2 have הֹרֵך, also compatible with both verse and prose, and so Michaelis editions 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 19, 20. The second word is וָוָו, compatible with both verse and prose. The third word is הָהָה, a verse accent. The fourth word is הָהָה, though some codices omit the *paseq*. This reading is not in accordance with the rule propounded by W. Wickes *Naphtalim* (1881), 79, 76. He says that the servus to what he calls Great Rebbia (i.e. *rebbia* only in the verse books) is rarely הָהָה, and that the servus to *rebbia mudrash* is always munach. Here Ginsburg codices 17, 22, 26, 34, have הָהָה, and so also Jablonski and Baer; Erfurt 2; Michaelis edition 14.

xl 1. The first word of the four is הָהָה, which may be הָהָה (which is a verse accent) or הָהָה (which is a prose accent), but Ginsburg codices have (so Ginsburg says) הָהָה: 5, 13, 17, 15, 19, 22, 26, 34, 40, 42, and editions 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18. This is not a true variation, but is due to the habit of scribes of not being precise as to the angle at which (say) הָהָה is written, since sometimes the sign is exactly upright (*metheg*) and sometimes it slants downwards to the right (*tipcha, tarcha*). In any case the accent is compatible with both verse and prose. The third word is הָהָה, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski and Baer have הָהָה, a verse accent, and so also Ginsburg codices 7, 17, 22; Erfurt 2; Michaelis edition 14.

xl 3. The first word of the four is הָהָה, though, as before, some Ginsburg codices have הָהָה, both accents being compatible with both verse and prose. All are agreed that the second word is הָהָה, compatible with both verse and prose. The third word is הָהָה, compatible with both prose and verse, but Jablonski and Baer have הָהָה, a verse accent, and so also Ginsburg codices.
7, 17, 22, 26, 41, and edition 10; Erfurt 2; Michaelis edition 14. xl 6. This verse is almost exactly a replica of xxxviii 1.
xlii 1. All are agreed that the first word of the four is נֹא יָבָא, compatible with both verse and prose. So also with the second word, whether the accepted בְּרֵא or בָּרַע, which is found in Ginsburg codices 7, 13, 17, 22, and editions 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 18. The third word is יֹאְשֹׁי, compatible with both verse and prose, but Jablonski, Baer, Michaelis edition 14, and Ginsburg codices 17, 21, 26, 43 have יָאָשֹׁי, a verse accent.

This leaves xxxii 1-6a, which is the 'prose' introduction of Elihu. Here there is no accent which is prose as against verse, and there are some which are definitely verse accents and not prose accents. Thus the introductory pattern of the separate speeches is maintained here also. The definitely verse accents are:

Verse 1: יָאָשֹׁי; verse 2: בָּרָא יָאָשֹׁי, בֵּיאָשֹׁי; verse 3: יֹאְשֹׁי and יָאָשֹׁי; verse 4: בָּרָא יָאָשֹׁי; verse 5: יָאָשֹׁי, and (Jablonski, Baer, Erfurt 2, 4, Michaelis edition 14) יָאָשֹׁי. Verse 6 is divided after the true verse pattern, and is in three sections, the first of which is marked by יָאָשֹׁי. The previous word is יָאָשֹׁי, but Jablonski, Baer, Erfurt 2, 4, and Michaelis edition 14 have יָאָשֹׁי.

CONCLUSION

Everywhere in the 'prose' introductions to the Book of Job, the accents are verse accents. As in the truly verse portions (the speeches) of the Book, so here also there are many accents which are both verse and prose accents, but everywhere also accents which are definitely verse and not prose. There are manuscripts and editions which emphasise the verse nature of the accents, and some to a considerable extent. These are Ginsburg 17 (Add. 15250), 22 (Harley 1528), 26 (Or. 2091), 28 (Add. 9406), 36 (King’s 1), 37 (Harley 5775), 41 (G 4), 64 (Harley 5715). Also three of the 4 Erfurt codices, 1, 2, 4, have a number of such instances, especially Erfurt 2. Erfurt 3 agrees only occasionally. Particularly we cite the editions by Jablonski, Baer and the Michaelis edition 14 (Hutter, Antwerp 1587). It might be thought, because of the emphasis by Jablonski and Baer, that this emphasis on verse accents is German, but this is not so, since Ginsburg 17, 22, 36, 37 are Sephardi.