

Verses in the ‘Wrong’ Chapter: When Chapter Division and Structural Segmentation in the Old Testament Do Not Match

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1. Introduction

When we read through the Old Testament, it appears that from time to time a new chapter starts in the wrong place, in other words, that the last verse or the first verse of a particular passage has ended up in the wrong chapter. The places in a biblical book where traditionally a new chapter is made to begin are not always in line with the places where the biblical text divides itself into segments according to the structural coherence of the text itself. As a result, the start of a new chapter in such places will take the translator’s and reader’s attention away from the segmentation and literary structure of the text. Both the translator and the reader are under the influence of the traditional chapter division.

This article focuses on places in a number of Old Testament books where this problem occurs. For each of the examples — individual verses that appear to be in the ‘wrong’ chapter — the question needs to be asked, where the verse belongs in the source text and how the text is segmented at that point. For the sake of consistency, this will be decided on the basis of syntactic and structural criteria. Segmentation of texts is a much wider topic, but this article concentrates on places in the text where segmentation and chapter division are (at least potentially) in conflict.

A translation should show readers that a structural part of a book is not the same as a numbered chapter. When in a translation the text is divided into segments, this should be done in the right places and not automatically where

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tradition starts a new chapter. A translator's understanding of the segmentation of the text should not be governed by chapter division. When we translate the Bible, we should already be aware of this during the translation process, if we are to render the text in accordance with its own structure and show its segmentation to the readers.

2. Where should the verse go in a translation? Syntactic discontinuity

Exegetes and translators should look for signs of structural and syntactic discontinuity in the text itself and see if syntactic discontinuity occurs before or after the verse under consideration. The idea behind discontinuity is that the more a syntactic construction stands out and is different in comparison with its syntactic context in neighbouring sentences, the more this construction is an indication of structural discontinuity in the flow of the text. (An example of such a construction is *we-X-qatal*, in which another sentence part precedes the *qatal* form.) Discontinuity is mirrored by cohesion. For example, if the verse is a response to a preceding direct speech, logically the verse should come under the same chapter as that direct speech. Another example of cohesion is the paragraph, defined as “a narrative block of material organized by a coherent *wayyiqtol* chain” in Hebrew.¹⁾

We should also consider signs of discontinuity in manuscripts in which the text has been transmitted. The *petuchot* and *setumot* in manuscripts such as the Codex Leningradensis, the Codex Aleppo and the Codex Cairensis are indications of textual division as applied by the Masoretes.²⁾ Although these indications are not part of the text itself, they are helpful in that they indicate where the text was divided at a relatively early stage of transmission and

1) Roy L. Heller, *Narrative Structure and Discourse Constellations: An Analysis of Clause Function in Biblical Hebrew Prose*, Harvard Semitic Studies 55 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 56, 431.

2) On the Masoretic division of the text into sections and verses and the extent to which *petuchot* and *setumot* play a role in this see Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Third edition, revised and expanded (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 48-50, 198-201. As Tov notes, a unit could be either “open” (*petuchah*), i.e., starting on a new line while the last line of the preceding unit was left blank after the last word, or “closed” (*setumah*), i.e., indicated by a space within the line.

interpretation.³⁾ These indications predate the division into chapters, which was established only in 1204-1205 by Stephen Langton.⁴⁾

In the process of translation, the dominant numbering tradition in the target language or in a computer environment (such as ParaText) in which the translation is being prepared should not channel and narrow the translator's or the reader's understanding of the segmentation of a particular text and prevent the translator from making choices in the segmentation and paragraph division of that text.

3. Less controversial examples

It may be helpful to look, first of all, at a number of less controversial examples. In most of these cases, the verse should go with and be included in the section that precedes, irrespective of the traditional chapter division.

3.1. The verse is followed by a *we-X-qatal* construction

In the two examples below, the opening clause of the verse that comes *after* the verse under consideration is a *we-X-qatal* construction, a sign of syntactic discontinuity (in contrast to a construction with only a *wayyiqtol*).⁵⁾ This would already indicate that the verse under consideration still goes with the preceding

3) We have consulted David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Leningrad Codex: A Facsimile Edition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leiden: Brill, 1998); <http://www.aleppocodex.org> for the Codex Aleppo; and <http://www.seforimonline.org/seforimdb/pdf/266.pdf> for the Codex Cairensis: Samuel David Loewinger, ed., *Codex Cairo of the Bible From the Karaite Synagogue at Abbasiya: The Earliest Extant Hebrew Manuscript Written in 895 by Moshe Ben Asher, a Limited Facsimile Edition of 160 Copies* (Jerusalem: Makor, 1971).

4) As E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 49, points out, “[T]he earliest manuscript containing Langton’s division is the Paris manuscript of the Vulgate from the 13th century. This division was transferred from the Vulgate to the manuscripts and editions of the Hebrew Bible” and to translations of the Bible. This “Exemplar Parisiensis” was created around 1224 (Joop H. A. van Banning SJ, “Reflections upon the Chapter Division of Stephan Langton”, Marjo C. A. Korpel, Joseph M. Oesch and Stanley E. Porter, eds., *Method in Unit Delimitation*, Pericope 6 [Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007], 141-161, esp. 146-147). As Penkower notes, it was only in the late 15th and early 16th century that chapters started to be marked, as is clear from early Latin and Hebrew printed Bibles. Verses were marked with actual numbers only since 1548 (Jordan S. Penkower, “Verse Divisions in the Hebrew Bible”, *Vetus Testamentum* 50 [2000], 379-393, esp. 381-384).

5) The *X* stands for a nominal phrase in Genesis 32:2 and a time phrase in Joshua 5:2.

segment and that the division of the text comes after it. In addition to the syntactic discontinuity, there are other reasons why the verse should go with what precedes; these are mentioned below.

Genesis 32:1

1 (ישכם לבן בבקר) Early in the morning, Laban kissed his sons and daughters and bade them good-by; then Laban left on his journey homeward.

2 (ויעקב הלך לדרכו) *we-X-qatal* Jacob went on his way, ...⁶⁾

In the Hebrew (BHS), this verse is numbered as 32:1. The traditional numbering, 31:55, in a number of translations (including NRS, GNB and the Russian Synodal Translation⁷⁾) as well as the Vulgate, the Rabbinic Bible of 1548 and the Koren Hebrew Bible edition makes more sense.⁸⁾ Even translations which number this verse as 32:1 often start a new section (with a section title) directly after it (for example TOB). The Codex Leningradensis does not mark a division of the text at this point; the nearest *petuchah* only occurs between 32:3 and 4, i.e., after the Mahanaim episode. Wenham summarizes the diversity of opinions among commentators as to whether 32:2-3 constitute a separate episode still belonging to chapter 31 or the start of a new section. But at the same time he points out that the majority of commentators include 32:1 (31:55) in the section that precedes.⁹⁾

6) Renderings are quoted from TNK (Jewish Publication Society Tanakh, 1985) unless otherwise indicated. A list of abbreviations of other translations: BFC (Bible en Français Courant, 1997), CEV (Contemporary English Version, 1995), GNB (Good News Bible, 1976), GrNB (Dutch Groot Nieuws Bijbel, 1996), GuNa (German Gute Nachricht, 1997), LUT (Revidierte Lutherbibel, 1984), NBV (Dutch Nieuwe Bijbelvertaling, 2004), NIV (New International Version, 1978), NRS (New Revised Standard Version, 1989), TOB (Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible, 2010).

7) The 1876 Synodal Translation's numbering system has determined the numbering in most other Bible translations in Russia, both in Russian and in other languages.

8) M. Koren, תורה נביאים כתובים (Jerusalem: Koren, 1962, 1966, etc.). Likewise, chapter 32 starts after this verse in the Rabbinic Bible of 1525 (consulted for this article at: <https://ia700402.us.archive.org/10/items/RabbinicbibleotMikraotGedolotBombergshetwanc h.jacobBenChaim.1525/RabbinicBible.Tanakh.BenChayyim.Bomberg.1545..pdf>). The references to the Rabbinic Bible of 1548 are taken from Penkower, "Verse Divisions", 388-392.

9) Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, WBC 2 (Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 266, where he also writes: "... without 32:1 (31:55) the previous section is incomplete; it tells of the flight of Jacob and his pursuit by Laban, and some reference to Laban's return home is surely to be expected. Thus 32:1 (31:55) makes a more apt conclusion to this episode than does 31:54".

Joshua 5:1

1 (ויהי כשמע) When all the kings of the Amorites ... heard how the Lord (הוֹבִישׁ) had dried up the waters of the Jordan ..., ... no spirit was left in them because of the Israelites.

2 בעת ההיא אמר יהוה) *we-X-qatal*) At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and proceed with a second circumcision of the Israelites."

In the Hebrew (BHS) this verse is numbered as 5:1. It is also the traditional numbering in many translations, including NRS, GNB and the Russian Synodal Translation. The Rabbinic Bible of 1525 adds the number of the new chapter at the start of this verse, but also makes a clear break in the text after it. The Codex Aleppo and Codex Cairensis have a *petuchah* before this verse, but a *setumah* after it, while the Codex Leningradensis has a *setumah* before and after. The topic changes (to circumcision) in the verse that follows. Thus, Butler treats 5:1 as "the final verse of the section" of 3:1–5:1 ("Crossing to Conquer").¹⁰ Quite a few translations start a new section (with a section title) directly after it (for example GNB, CEV, BFC and NBV). Numbering verse 1 as 4:25 would have done more justice to the structure and segmentation of the text.

3.2. The verse is followed by a *wayyiqtol-X* construction in the next verse

In the examples below, the opening clause of the verse that comes *after* the verse under consideration is a *wayyiqtol* construction with a time phrase (like the ויהי construction in 1Sa 7:2) or with an explicitly repeated subject. These are signs of syntactic discontinuity (in contrast to a construction with a *wayyiqtol* only). This would already indicate that the verse under consideration still goes with the preceding segment and that the division of the text comes after the verse. In addition to the syntactic discontinuity, there are other reasons why the verse should go with what precedes; these are mentioned below.

Exodus 6:1

1 (ויאמר יהוה) Then the Lord said to Moses, "You shall soon see what

10) Trent C. Butler, *Joshua*, WBC 7 (Dallas: Word Books, 1983), 51.

I will do to Pharaoh: he shall let them go because of a greater might; indeed, because of a greater might he shall drive them from his land.”

2 (וידבר אלהים) *wayyiqtol-X*) God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the Lord …”

In the Hebrew (BHS) as well as in many translations (including NRS, GNB and the Russian Synodal Translation), this verse is numbered as 6:1, but it still contains the Lord’s answer to what Moses said (in 5:22-23). It should also be noted that the agent in 6:2 (אלהים) is still the same as in 6:1 (יהוה) and is nevertheless explicitly referred to again, which makes the *wayyiqtol-X* construction in 6:2 syntactically more discontinuous than in 6:1. The Codex Leningradensis has a *setumah* after 6:1. The Rabbinic Bible of 1525 adds the number of the new chapter at the start of this verse, but also makes a clear break in the text after it (for the *parashah* that follows).¹¹⁾ The topic changes (to God’s name and covenant) only in the verse that follows, while “5:1 – 6:1 deal with … the confrontation between Israel … and … the Pharaoh”.¹²⁾ Translations often start a new section (with a section title) directly after 6:1 (for example GNB and TOB). Thus, numbering 6:1 as 5:24 would have done more justice to the structure and segmentation of the text.

Numbers 30:1

1 (ויאמר משה אל בני ישראל) So Moses spoke to the Israelites just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

2 (וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות) *wayyiqtol-X*) Moses spoke to the heads of the Israelite tribes, saying, …

In the Hebrew (BHS) this verse is numbered as 30:1. This verse is obviously the conclusion of the section of chapters 28–29, since it summarizes how Moses carried out the command (28:1-2) to instruct the Israelites.¹³⁾ This is in line with other concluding formulae in Numbers, for example at 1:19; 3:51;

11) A *parashah* is a weekly reading from the Torah in the synagogue.

12) John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Dallas: Word Books, 1987), 62.

13) This is also how 30:1 is treated in W. H. Gispen, *Het boek Numeri. Tweede deel: Hoofdstuk 20:14–36:13*, Commentaar op het Oude Testament (Kampen: Kok, 1964), 193. J. Milgrom, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Numbers* (Philadelphia; New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 250 refers to this verse as a “fulfillment subscript”.

4:37; 5:4; 9:22; 15:36; 27:23. The Codex Leningradensis has a *petuchah* after 30:1. The Rabbinic Bible of 1525 adds the number of the new chapter at the start of this verse, but makes a very clear break after it (for the *parashah* that follows). The topic and addressee (“the heads of …”) change only in the verse that follows. Thus, the traditional numbering in many translations (for example NRS and GNB; not the Russian Synodal Translation), 29:40, makes more sense. Even translations which number this verse as 30:1 often start a new section (with a section title) directly after it (for example TOB).

1Samuel 7:1

6:21 (וישלחו) They sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim to say, “…”

1 (ויבאו אנשי קרית יערים) The men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the Ark of the Lord and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill …

2 (ויהי מיום שבת הארון) *wayhi-X*) A long time elapsed from the day that the Ark was housed in Kiriath-jearim, twenty years …

The Codex Leningradensis, Codex Aleppo, Codex Cairensis each have a *petuchah* after 7:1. The Rabbinic Bible of 1525 adds the number of the new chapter at the beginning of this verse, but has a break after it. In terms of coherence of the narrative, 7:1 still contains the fulfilment of the messengers’ request in 6:21, whereas 7:2 is about the change in time towards the next section of the narrative. Translations number this verse as 7:1 but often start a new section (with a section title) directly after it (for example GNB and TOB). Numbering 7:1 as 6:22 would have done more justice to the structure and segmentation of the text. For reasons of content, Klein draws the same conclusion:

There is a clear break between 7:1 (the provision for an attendant for the ark) and 7:2-14, the account of Samuel’s victory over the Philistines. The present chapter division, therefore, is mistaken; 7:1 must be treated with the materials from chap. 6.¹⁴⁾

14) Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, WBC 10 (Dallas: Word Books, 1983), 55.

1Chronicles 22:1

1 (ויאמר דויד) David said, “(זה הוא בית יהוה האלהים) Here will be the House of the Lord (ונה מבנה לעלה) and here the altar of burnt offerings for Israel.”

2 (ויאמר דויד wayyiqtol-X) David gave order to assemble the aliens living in the land of Israel …

In 22:1, David still refers back with pronouns (זה) to Ornan’s threshing floor of verse 28 and to “the altar of burnt offerings” of verse 29.¹⁵ Like Dirksen, Braun treats 22:1 as the final verse of the section of 21:1–22:1.¹⁶ The Codex Leningradensis and Codex Aleppo have a *setumah* before 22:1, but also after it the Codex Leningradensis has a *setumah* and the Codex Aleppo has a *petuchah*. And although the Vulgate and the Rabbinic Bibles of 1525 and 1548 start the new chapter with this verse, the Rabbinic Bible of 1525 as well as most translations make a break in the text after it. Translations number this verse as 22:1 but mostly start a new section (with a section title) directly after it (for example GNB and TOB). Thus, numbering 22:1 as 21:31 would have done more justice to the structure and segmentation of the text.

2Chronicles 31:1

1 (וככלות כל זאת יצאו כל ישראל הנמצאים) When all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out … and smashed the pillars, cut down the sacred posts, … to the very last one.

(וישובו כל בני ישראל) Then all the Israelites returned to their towns, each to his possession.

2 (ויעמד יחזקיהו wayyiqtol-X) Hezekiah reconstituted the divisions of the priests and Levites …

The Codex Aleppo has a *petuchah* before and after 31:1, while the Codex Leningradensis has a *petuchah* before and a *setumah* after it. Although the Rabbinic Bible of 1525 adds the number of the chapter at the beginning of this verse, it has a break not only before this verse, but before the preceding and following verse as well. However, 31:1 refers back to what precedes in more ways than one. Thus, the phrases “all this” and “who were present” are

15) P.B. Dirksen, *1 Kronieken*, Commentaar op het Oude Testament (Kampen: Kok, 2003), 272 notes the connection between verse 28 and 22:1.

16) Roddy Braun, *1 Chronicles*, WBC 14 (Dallas: Word Books, 1986), 216.

anaphoric, and all the Israelites “returned” after having been instructed to “come” in 30:1. Roubos treats 31:1 as the end of 30:1–31:1.¹⁷⁾ Although 31:1 could in itself be seen as a short paragraph of its own, it is clear that the topic changes only in verse 2. Translations number this verse as 31:1 but not infrequently start a new section (with a section title) directly after it (for example NIV, CEV and LUT). Numbering 31:1 as 30:28 would have done more justice to the structure and segmentation of the text.

3.3. The verse itself contains a *wayyiqtol*-X construction and should go with what follows

The opening clause of Numbers 22:41 is a *wayyiqtol* construction with a time phrase, the same sign of syntactic discontinuity as in 1Samuel 7:2 above. The verse should go with the text that follows.

Numbers 22:41

41 (וַיְהִי בַבֶּקֶר) In the morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth-baal.

From there he could see a portion of the people.

23:1 (וַיֹּאמֶר) Balaam said to Balak, “Build me seven altars here and ...”

The context shows that 22:41 forms the start of the first proceedings by Balak and Balaam, the “preparations for the first oracle, 22:41–23:6”.¹⁸⁾ There is actually a similar structural pattern in the narrative that is essentially followed for each of the first three of Balaam’s oracles: Balak takes Balaam to an observation point to view Israel not only in 22:41, but in 23:13–14a and 23:27–28 as well, each of these verses forming the start of a narrative around an oracle.¹⁹⁾ Translations number this verse as 22:41 but not infrequently start a new section (with a section title) directly before it (for example GNB and TOB).

17) K. Roubos, *II Kronieken*, De Prediking van het Oude Testament (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1985), 257–264. He notes on p. 264: “Only after that [after the smashing of cultic objects] did all festival participants return to their possessions”.

18) H. Jagersma, *Numeri, deel II*, De Prediking van het Oude Testament (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1988), 134.

19) R. D. Cole, *Numbers*, New American Commentary 3B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000); Lénart J. de Regt and Ernst W. Wendland, *A Handbook on Numbers*, Translator’s Handbooks (United Bible Societies, forthcoming).

Numbering 22:41 as 23:1 would have done more justice to the structure and segmentation of the text. The Codex Leningradensis has no *petuchah* or *setumah* before or after 22:41 and so gives no other indication about segmentation.²⁰⁾

4. More controversial examples

The examples in this section are more controversial, either because their segmentation in the context is not straightforward or because translations have segmented the text in a variety of ways, some putting the verse with what precedes and others with what follows.

4.1. The verse is followed by a *wayyiqtol-X* construction in the next verse

1 Samuel 21:1

1 (ויקם וילך) He [David] got up and left, and Jonathan went into the city.

2 (ויבא דוד) David came to Nob, to the priest Ahimelech ... (translation taken from NRS)

In the Hebrew (BHS) this verse is numbered as 21:1. On the face of it, this verse simply marks a change of location between two chapters. However, in verse 1 the two characters are still David and Jonathan, just as in the preceding passage. (This situation changes in verse 2.) Such cohesion is an indication that the verse is still part of the preceding passage. In addition, in the Hebrew David's name is repeated not in verse 1 (in contrast to the Septuagint) but only in verse 2, which shows syntactic discontinuity after verse 1. Thus, the traditional numbering for verse 1 in many translations, which is 20:42b (as in NRS and GNB) or 20:43 (as in the Vulgate and the Russian Synodal Translation), makes more sense: the verse still belongs to the narrative of chapter 20.²¹⁾ Likewise, the Rabbinic Bible of 1525 adds the number of the new

20) The same applies to the Rabbinic Bible of 1525, which in fact seems to mark the start of chapter 23 at 22:38.

21) C. J. Goslinga, *Het eerste boek Samuël*, Commentaar op het Oude Testament (Kampen: Kok, 1968), 380.

chapter after this verse. Even translations which number this verse as 21:1 often still insert a section title after it (for example TOB and BFC). Klein also treats it as part of 20:1–21:1.²²⁾ The only reason why this segmentation might be considered controversial or surprising is that it goes against the Codex Leningradensis and Codex Aleppo, which have a *petuchah* before verse 1, not after.

2Samuel 3:1

1 (ויהי המלחמה) The war between the House of Saul and the House of David was long drawn-out; but David kept growing stronger, while the House of Saul grew weaker.

2-5 (ויולדו לדוד בנים) Sons were born to David in Hebron: ...

6 (ויהי בהיות המלחמה) During the war between the House of Saul and the House of David, Abner supported the House of Saul.

Verse 1 is still a brief summary of the war between the two Houses in chapter 2. At the start of verse 2 a *wayyiqtol-X* construction occurs, with a new subject (“sons”), an indication of structural discontinuity after verse 1. The Codex Leningradensis and Codex Cairensis have a *setumah* after verse 1. The Rabbinic Bible of 1525 adds the number of the new chapter at the beginning of this verse, but also has a break after it. For these reasons, numbering 3:1 as 2:33 would have done more justice to the structure and segmentation of the text.²³⁾ Translations number this verse as 3:1 but often insert a section title directly after it (for example GNB and TOB).

Why, then, would this be controversial? There is an alternative. After the interruption of the war narrative by verses 2-5 (a list of David’s sons), a new segment begins in verse 6. (The Codex Leningradensis and Codex Cairensis have a *petuchah* before verse 6.) And since verse 6 repeats and takes up the beginning of verse 1 (“the war between the House of Saul and the House of David”), it would be consistent to treat verse 1 as the beginning of a new segment as well — a new segment, then, which is interrupted in verses 2-5 and taken up again in verse 6. (Also, more of the narrative of which verse 1 is a

22) R. W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, 201-210, esp. 209.

23) Anderson treats this verse as part of 2:12–3:1, even though he calls it an “isolated verse” (A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, WBC 11 [Dallas: Word Books, 1989], 46).

summary is found after this summary than before.²⁴⁾ According to this analysis, the number 3:1 is actually correct. (LUT and NBV insert a section title directly before this verse.)

Numbers 22:1

1 (ויסעו) The Israelites then marched on (ויחנו בערבות מואב) and encamped in the steppes of Moab, across the Jordan from Jericho.

2 (וירא בלק בן צפור) Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

The *wayyiqtol-X* construction in verse 2 introduces a new character, Balak son of Zippor. Because of this structural discontinuity, verse 1 would seem to belong to the preceding section and it would make sense to number this verse as 21:36. The Codex Leningradensis has a *setumah* after verse 1. The Rabbinic Bible of 1525 starts the new chapter with this verse, but also makes a clear break in the text after it (for the *parashah* that follows). Some translations (for example CEV) insert a section title between verse 1 and 2. Likewise, Jagersma treats verse 1 as the end of 21:33–22:1 and Gispén treats it as the end of Part 2 of Numbers: “10:11–22:1 … until its arrival in the steppes of Moab”.²⁵⁾

However, the wider context in the book of Numbers makes this a controversial example. The change of location in verse 1 is important; the steppes of Moab are connected with the narrative that follows (Balak is the king of Moab). The steppes of Moab are mentioned in other opening verses in the book as well (33:50 and 35:1).²⁶⁾ On this basis, 22:1 does seem to be the beginning of a new segment, as many translations indicate with a section title (for example GNB and TOB).²⁷⁾ Although Milgrom calls this verse “an editorial transition”, he adds: “It forms an inclusion with the last verse of the book (36:13) as a time bracket”.²⁸⁾

24) Compare Goslinga’s observation that “it is more probable that verse 1b means to point forward to what is narrated in verses 2-5, but especially in verses 6-21, which can serve as illustration and confirmation of the news about David’s prosperity.” (C. J. Goslinga, *Het tweede boek Samuël*, Commentaar op het Oude Testament [Kampen: Kok, 1962], 57).

25) H. Jagersma, *Numeri, deel II*, 108-110; W. H. Gispén, *Het boek Numeri. Eerste deel: Hoofdstuk 1:1-20:13*, Commentaar op het Oude Testament (Kampen: Kok, 1959), 155.

26) L. J. de Regt and E. W. Wendland, *A Handbook on Numbers*.

27) Also Philip J. Budd, *Numbers*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1984), 248-249.

28) Milgrom, *Numbers*, 184.

4.2. Verses typical for the end of a section but often numbered with the chapter that follows

2Chronicles 13:23

23 So Abijah slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city of David. His son Asa succeeded him. (בימיו שקטה הארץ עשר שנים) (*we-X-qatal*) In his days the land had rest for ten years. (translation taken from NRS)

In the Hebrew (BHS) this verse is numbered as 13:23, and the Codex Leningradensis and Codex Aleppo have a *petuchah* after the verse. Likewise, Dillard treats it as the end of chapter 13, discussing verse 22-23 together.²⁹⁾ Some translations number it as 13:23 and insert a title for a new section after this whole verse (for example LUT, GuNa and GrNB). At least the first part of this verse is like any ending typical of a narrative section about a particular king. What makes the example controversial is the fact that many translations (for example NRS, GNB and the Russian Synodal Translation) nevertheless connect this verse with what follows, numbering it as 14:1 (the traditional verse number). The Rabbinic Bible of 1525 adds the number of the new chapter at the start of this verse as well, but it makes a clear break after the whole verse. The same applies to, for example, NIV, which inserts a section title after this verse.

One could consider connecting the first half of the verse with what precedes (the section on Abijah) as 13:23, and connecting the second half with what follows (the section on Asa) by inserting a section title before the second half (as in TOB, BFC and NBV).³⁰⁾ The syntactic discontinuity of the *we-X-qatal* construction in the second half of the verse would support this segmentation. A minor problem with such a division of the verse might be the fact that the second half of the verse refers to Asa only with a suffix pronoun (in בימיו), not by name, and this suffix pronoun connects the clause to the earlier reference to Asa in the first half of the verse.

2Chronicles 21:1-2

29) Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1987), 109.

30) K. Roubos, *II Kronieken* makes exactly this division, treating the first half of the verse with chapter 13 (pp. 140-148, esp. 147) and the second half with chapter 14 (p. 148).

1 Jehoshaphath slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the City of David; his son Jehoram succeeded him as king.

2 (ולו אחים בני יהושפט) He had brothers, sons of Jehoshaphath: ...

Again, verse 1 is like any ending typical of a narrative section about a particular king. However, neither the Codex Leningradensis nor the Codex Aleppo have a *petuchah* or *setumah* after verse 1, perhaps because the section does not seem to end here, but continues with Jehoram's brothers.

It would theoretically be possible to number this verse as 20:38 if verse 1 would form the end of the preceding section (on Jehoshaphath). That is how Roubos and Dillard treat this verse.³¹⁾ However, there are reasons why the section does not end with verse 1. Similarly to 2Chronicles 13:23 above, verse 2 refers to Jehoram only with a suffix pronoun (in ולו), not by name,³²⁾ and this suffix pronoun connects the clause to the earlier, first reference to Jehoram in verse 1 (a form of syntactic continuity). This syntactic continuity is why verse 2 is not a clear start of a new segment after verse 1. In the Hebrew (BHS) as well as in translations (including the Russian Synodal Translation), verse 1 is given that number (2Ch 21:1). The Rabbinic Bible of 1525 starts the new chapter with this verse as well. Even so, translations often insert a title for a new section after the verse (for example GNB and TOB).

Jeremiah 31:1

1 (בעת ההיא) At that time—declares the Lord—I will be God to all the clans of Israel, and they shall be My people.

2 Thus said the Lord: ...

In BHS as well as in translations (including the Russian Synodal Translation), this verse is numbered as 31:1. In the Rabbinic Bibles of 1525 and 1548 this verse comes under chapter 31 as well. But it should be noted that it is numbered as 30:25 in the Koren Hebrew Bible edition, so printed editions of the Hebrew Bible do not agree at this point. The Codex Leningradensis and Codex Cairensis have a *setumah* after verse 1. Indeed, when the phrase בעת ההיא 'at that time'

31) K. Roubos, *II Kronieken*, 198-200; R. B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 151-153.

32) R. B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 162-163 ignores this when he translates without comment: "Jehoram [sic] had brothers".

occurs in the book of Jeremiah, it is a reference to what precedes. The phrase here refers back to 30:18-21.³³⁾ While this phrase forms the start of a paragraph in the same section, it is not the start of a new section with a new topic.³⁴⁾ Hence, although TNK follows the traditional numbering of 31:1, it rightly inserts a break between verse 1 and 2. Similarly, a few other translations, for example BFC and GuNa, insert a section title after verse 1, i.e., just before the prophetic formula “Thus said the Lord”, which introduces a new message. Keown et al. treat verse 1 as part of what precedes in the same way.³⁵⁾

2Chronicles 5:1

1 (וְתֵשֶׁלֶם כָּל הַמְּלָאכָה) Thus all the work that Solomon did for the house of the Lord was finished. [*setumah* in Codex Leningradensis and Codex Aleppo] (וַיָּבֵא שְׁלֹמֹה) Solomon brought in the things that his father David had dedicated, and stored the silver, the gold, and all the vessels in the treasuries of the house of God. [*petuchah* in Codex Leningradensis; end of column in Codex Aleppo]

2 (אֵז יִקְהִיל שְׁלֹמֹה אֶת זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and ... to bring up the Ark ... (translation taken from NRS)

In the Hebrew (BHS) and in most translations (including the Russian Synodal Translation), this verse is numbered as 5:1. The Rabbinic Bible of 1525 adds the number of the new chapter at the start of this verse as well, but makes a break after it. The construction at the beginning of the next verse (*'az-yiqtol-X*) is a strong indicator of structural discontinuity after verse 1. Thus, verse 2 is the start of a new segment, with the new topic of bringing up the ark. (This is supported by the *petuchah* in Codex Leningradensis.) Accordingly, most translations with section titles have one directly after verse 1, thus connecting verse 1 with what precedes. Likewise, Dillard treats this verse under chapter 4 and Roubos treats it as the end of 3:1–5:1.³⁶⁾ Theoretically this means that numbering 5:1 as 4:23 (and 5:2 as 5:1) would do more justice to the structure and segmentation of the

33) A. van Selms, *Jeremia, deel II*, De Prediking van het Oude Testament (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1984), 69.

34) The examples are Jer 3:17; 3:18; 4:11; 8:1; 33:15; 50:4; 50:20.

35) Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26–52*, WBC 27 (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 101–103, 105.

36) Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 32–33, 37; K. Roubos, *II Kronieken*, 30, 58.

text.

What makes this controversial is that in verse 1 only the first sentence is a summary of the section that precedes. The information about the things which Solomon's father David had dedicated (verse 1b) is not part of that summary and can therefore be treated as a short segment or paragraph in its own right. Theoretically, this would imply the following for the numbering of verses: 5:1a would be 4:23; 5:1b would be 5:1; 5:2 would still be 5:2.

4.3. A verse that should be part of the chapter that follows

Deuteronomy 28:69

69 (אלה דברי הברית) These are the terms of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to conclude with the Israelites in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant which He had made with them at Horeb.

29:1 (ויקרא משה) Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: ...

In the Hebrew (BHS), this verse is numbered as 28:69. The Codex Leningradensis and Codex Aleppo both have a *setumah* before the verse and a *petuchah* after;³⁷⁾ they treat the verse as transitional instead of lending support to including the verse only with what precedes or only with what follows. TNK treats the verse as transitional by inserting a blank line before and after the verse. Plaut treats it as “a postscript to the preceding and also an introduction to what follows”.³⁸⁾

However, it is most likely that the verse forms the introduction to chapters 29 – 30. Deuteronomy “consists in a series of speeches made by Moses ... each introduced by a superscription (1:1; 4:44-49; 29:1 [28:69]; 33:1)”.³⁹⁾ The demonstrative pronoun אלה “these” can be taken to refer ahead to what comes; that is how it functions in Deuteronomy 1:1; 4:45 and 12:1, and also how the demonstrative pronoun זאת functions in Deuteronomy 4:44; 6:1 and 33:1. This makes the construction at the beginning of verse 69 a much stronger indication

37) This *setumah* and *petuchah* are marked in the Rabbinic Bible of 1525 as well.

38) W. Gunther Plaut, ed., *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, Revised edition (New York: Union for Reform Judaism, 2005), 1361.

39) Stephen K. Sherwood, *Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, Berit Olam Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2002), 220.

of structural discontinuity (after what has preceded) than the *wayyiqtol-X* construction at the beginning of 29:1. Many translations insert a (major) section title before the verse, whether it is numbered 28:69 (LUT, GuNa and GrNB) or 29:1 (for example GNB and TOB). The traditional numbering, 29:1, in many translations, including the Russian Synodal Translation, makes more sense.

5. Concluding remarks

Commentaries often divide the text in the same places as we have proposed, though often with little explanation of the reasons why. The examples illustrate that with a view to a consistent approach, the most important criteria for segmentation (and for deciding to which chapter a verse should ideally have belonged) are structural and syntactic discontinuities that stand out in the text itself. If these structural and syntactic criteria are followed, translators as well as readers will have a better understanding of the segmentation at those points in the text. These segmentations are often supported by the *petuchot* and *setumot* in the Codex Leningradensis, Codex Aleppo and Codex Cairensis (unless of course the verse is preceded as well as followed by a *petuchah/setumah*).

On this basis, the majority of the verses discussed are in the 'wrong' chapter. Traditional chapter and verse numbering should not determine or influence our analysis of the segmentation and structure of biblical texts. Even though in most situations translators will be expected to adhere to a specific tradition of chapter and verse numbering as such, the translation should respect the actual segmentation of the text itself at the same time. (In fact, the Rabbinic Bible of 1525 is an early example of this: its breaks do not coincide with its chapter numbers.) Thus, even in the many contexts where it may not be practical to change the chapter and verse numbering as such, verses in the 'wrong' chapter should be translated and presented in accordance with their position in the segmentation of the text, as if they were in the 'right' chapter. (In some situations, translators may have been given the freedom to bring the division into chapters in line with the actual segmentation in the source text itself, or even to omit chapter and verse numbering in the layout presentation altogether.)

Especially when translations are prepared in the framework of the traditional

chapter division – which is often the case when translations are prepared in ParaText – translators should take special care that their understanding of the segmentation of the text is not governed or influenced by chapter division, but by analysis of the structure of the text itself, so as to render and display the text in accordance with its structure and segmentation. This can be done by means of paragraph divisions, blank lines and section titles in what the translator considers to be the right places in the text, so that the presentation of the translation is more in accordance with the literary structure of the book.

<Keywords>

Chapter Division, Verse Numbering, Segmentation of Texts, Syntactic Discontinuity, Segmentation in Translation.

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<Abstract>

Verses in the 'Wrong' Chapter: When Chapter Division and Structural Segmentation in the Old Testament Do Not Match

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In Old Testament books, the places where traditionally a new chapter is made to begin are not always in line with the places where the biblical text divides itself into segments according to the structural coherence and syntactic discontinuities in the text itself. Some individual verses appear to be in the 'wrong' chapter. Starting with less controversial examples and moving on to more controversial ones, it is argued that translators (and readers) can and should be guided from the start by the segmentation on the basis of structural and syntactic discontinuities in the text itself, rather than being influenced by the traditional chapter division. For each verse that is discussed, recommendations are given about its position in the segmentation of the text. Comparisons are made with the segmentation of the text according to the Codex Leningradensis, Codex Aleppo and Codex Cairensis, as well as the Rabbinic Bibles of 1525 and 1548 and a number of exegetical commentaries. The article closes with some implications for the practice of Bible translation. Even without altering the traditional chapter numbering as such, it is still recommended to show the segmentation in the text itself with the help of paragraph divisions, blank lines and section titles in what the translation team considers to be the right places in the text.