

The sblfonts Package

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Abstract

sblfonts provides a LaTeX package for setting up font and language support for documents conforming to the requirements of the Society of Biblical Literature. Greek and Hebrew languages are supported using the SBL fonts. If these fonts are not available then fonts included with TeXLive are used.

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1 Introduction

This package is intended to be used with the SBL fonts and a Unicode TeX engine (lualatex is recommended). The SBL fonts are free for personal use and can be downloaded from <https://www.sbl-site.org/resources/fonts/>. It is, however, possible to use the package with any Unicode font and there is limited support for 8bit fonts under pdflatex (in particular pointed Hebrew is not easily possible).

The sblfonts package only sets up fonts for the default Roman family. You can set up typewriter and sans serif families in the usual way if you need them.

1.1 Usage

To use default LaTeX fonts, load the package with no options. The LaTeX source is shown in Figure 1 and the output is shown in Figure 2.

In reality, you will want to install the SBL fonts, use lualatex, and load the package with `\usepackage[sblfonts]{sblfonts}`. Note that it is not necessary to mark up inline Greek and Hebrew with lualatex.

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```

\documentclass{article}
\usepackage{sblfonts}
\begin{document}
\begin{quotation}
  \selectlanguage{polytonicgreek}
  Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
  οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.
\end{quotation}
\begin{quotation}
  \selectlanguage{hebrew}
  בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ: והארץ היתה תהו ובהו ויחשך
  על-פני תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על-פני המים:
\end{quotation}
Inline Greek (\foreignlanguage{polytonicgreek}{Ἐν ἀρχῇ}) and Hebrew
(\foreignlanguage{hebrew}{בראשית}) are also possible.
\end{document}

```

Figure 1: Example L^AT_EX source showing default Greek and Hebrew fonts.

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ: והארץ היתה תהו ובהו ויחשך על-פני
תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על-פני המים:

Inline Greek (Ἐν ἀρχῇ) and Hebrew (בראשית) are also possible.

Figure 2: Example output showing Greek and Hebrew in default L^AT_EX fonts.

1.2 Bug Reports and Feature Requests

Bug reports and feature requests can be made at the sbltex GitHub repository. See <https://github.com/dcpurton/sbltex>.

2 Package Options

<hr/> <hr/>	mainlang	<code>mainlang = <i><babel language></i></code>	Default: <i>unset</i>
		Set the main language of the document. If this is unset, the main language is the language passed to the document class or if that is unset, american .	
<hr/> <hr/>	mainlanguageoptions	<code>mainlanguageoptions = <i><babelprovide options></i></code>	Default: <i>unset</i>
		Set the options passed to <code>\babelprovide</code> when loading the main language (in addition to <code>import</code> , <code>main</code>). This is not used if the main language is passed to <code>babel</code> via the document class options.	
<hr/> <hr/>	mainfont	<code>mainfont = <i><package></i> <i><fontspec name></i></code>	Default: <i>unset</i>
		Set the main font. Under <code>pdftex</code> this is the name of a font package to load. Under Unicode engines it should be a <code>fontspec</code> name which is passed to <code>\babelfont</code> . The optional arguments passed to the package or <code>\babelfont</code> can be specified in the <code>mainfontoptions</code> option.	
<hr/> <hr/>	mainfontoptions	<code>mainfontoptions = <i><package options></i> <i><fontspec options></i></code>	Default: <i>unset</i>
		The optional arguments passed to the font package under <code>pdflatex</code> or <code>\babelfont</code> under Unicode engines.	
<hr/> <hr/>	grfont	<code>grfont = <i><NFSS font></i> <i><fontspec name></i></code>	Default: <i>unset</i>
		Set the Greek font. For <code>pdflatex</code> this should be an NFSS font name which supports the LGR encoding. For Unicode engines this should be a <code>fontspec</code> font name. If unset, then under <code>pdflatex</code> the default font is <code>grmn1000</code> and under Unicode engines the default font is CMU Serif or <code>mainfont</code> if it supports Greek. With the Unicode engines, the optional arguments passed to <code>\babelfont</code> can be specified in the <code>grfontoptions</code> option.	
<hr/> <hr/>	grfontoptions	<code>grfontoptions = <i><fontspec options></i></code>	Default: <i>unset</i>
		The optional arguments passed to <code>\babelfont</code> for the Greek font under Unicode engines. This option is ignored under <code>pdftex</code> .	
<hr/> <hr/>	grlangoptions	<code>grlangoptions = <i><babelprovide options></i></code>	Default: <i>unset</i>
		Set the options passed to <code>\babelprovide</code> when loading <code>polytonicgreek</code> (in addition to <code>import</code> , <code>onchar=ids</code> fonts).	
<hr/> <hr/>	hefont	<code>hefont = <i><NFSS font></i> <i><fontspec name></i></code>	Default: <i>unset</i>
		Set the Hebrew font. For <code>pdflatex</code> this should be an NFSS font name which supports the NHE8 encoding. For Unicode engines this should be a <code>fontspec</code> font name. If unset, then under <code>pdflatex</code> the default font is <code>david</code> and under Unicode engines the default font is David CLM or <code>mainfont</code> if it supports Hebrew. With the Unicode engines, the optional arguments passed to <code>\babelfont</code> can be specified in the <code>hefontoptions</code> option.	

In reality, `pdflatex` is really only supported for interest. You should use `lualatex` for any right-to-left languages.

hefontoptions `hefontoptions = <fontspec options>` Default: *unset*
 The optional arguments passed to `\babelfont` for the Hebrew font under Unicode engines. This option is ignored under `pdftex`.

helangoptions `helangoptions = <babelprovide options>` Default: *unset*
 Set the options passed to `\babelprovide` when loading `hebrew` (in addition to `import`, `onchar=ids` fonts).

2.1 Using SBL Greek and Hebrew fonts

Under Unicode engines, the following options control whether the SBL Greek and Hebrew fonts should be used. Under `pdftex` the similar looking `Alegreya-OsF` and `frank` fonts are used.

sblfonts `sblfonts = true | false | fallback` Default: *fallback*
 This is a shortcut option for setting both `sblgreek` and `sblhebrew` at the same time. Under `pdftex`, `false` and `fallback` behave the same.

sblgreek `sblgreek = true | false | fallback` Default: *fallback*
 This option controls if and when the SBL Greek font should be used. The order of fonts tried for each option is:

true Under Unicode engines: SBL BibLit, SBL Greek, `Alegreya`. Under `pdftex`: `Alegreya-OsF`.

false Under Unicode engines: `mainfont` (if specified) otherwise CMU Serif. This is useful if the test to detect Greek support in `mainfont` is not accurate. Under `pdftex`: the same as the `fallback` option.

fallback Under Unicode engines: `mainfont` (if specified and if Greek is supported) otherwise CMU Serif. Under `pdftex`: `mainfont` (if specified and if the LGR encoding is supported), otherwise `grmn1000`.

sblhebrew `sblhebrew = true | false | fallback` Default: *fallback*
 This option controls if and when the SBL Hebrew font should be used. The order of fonts tried for each option is:

true Under Unicode engines: SBL BibLit, SBL Hebrew, Frank Ruehl CLM. Under `pdftex`: `frank`.

false Under Unicode engines: `mainfont` (if specified) otherwise David CLM. This is useful if the test to detect Hebrew support in `mainfont` is not accurate. Under `pdftex`: the same as the `fallback` option.

fallback Under Unicode engines: `mainfont` (if specified and if Hebrew is supported) otherwise David CLM. Under `pdftex`: `mainfont` (if specified and if the NHE8 encoding is supported), otherwise `david`.

3 Implementation

```
1 <*package>
2 <@@=sblfonts>
3 \NeedsTeXFormat{LaTeX2e}
4 \ProvidesExplPackage{sblfonts}{2026-05-06}{1.1}
5   {Society of Biblical Literature Font and Language Set Up (DCP)}
6 \keys_define:nn { sblfonts }
7   {
8     , mainlang      .tl_set:N    = \l__sblfonts_mainlang_tl
9     , mainlangoptions .clist_set:N = \l__sblfonts_mainlang_options_clist
10    , mainfont      .tl_set:N    = \l__sblfonts_mainfont_tl
11    , mainfontoptions .clist_set:N = \l__sblfonts_mainfont_options_clist
12    , grfont        .tl_set:N    = \l__sblfonts_grfont_tl
13    , grfontoptions .clist_set:N = \l__sblfonts_grfont_options_clist
14    , grlangoptions .clist_set:N = \l__sblfonts_grlang_options_clist
15    , hefnt         .tl_set:N    = \l__sblfonts_hefont_tl
16    , hefntoptions  .clist_set:N = \l__sblfonts_hefont_options_clist
17    , helangoptions .clist_set:N = \l__sblfonts_helang_options_clist
18  }
19 \str_new:N \l__sblfonts_sblgreek_str
20 \str_new:N \l__sblfonts_sblhebrew_str
21 \sys_if_engine_opentype:TF
22   {
23     \keys_define:nn { sblfonts }
24       {
25         , sblfonts .choices:nn = { true, false, fallback }
26           {
27             \str_set:NV
28               \l__sblfonts_sblgreek_str
29               \l_keys_choice_str
30             \str_set:NV
31               \l__sblfonts_sblhebrew_str
32               \l_keys_choice_str
33           }
34         , sblfonts .default:n = { true }
35         , sblgreek .choices:nn = { true, false, fallback }
36           {
37             \str_set:NV
38               \l__sblfonts_sblgreek_str
39               \l_keys_choice_str
40           }
41         , sblgreek .default:n = { true }
42         , sblgreek .initial:n = { fallback }
43         , sblhebrew .choices:nn = { true, false, fallback }
44           {
45             \str_set:NV
46               \l__sblfonts_sblhebrew_str
47               \l_keys_choice_str
48           }
49         , sblhebrew .default:n = { true }
50         , sblhebrew .initial:n = { fallback }
```

```

51     }
52 }

```

For pdftex make sblfonts, sblgreek and sblhebrew noops.

```

53 {
54   \keys_define:nn { sblfonts }
55   {
56     , sblfonts .meta:n    = { sblgreek = #1 , sblhebrew = #1 }
57     , sblfonts .default:n = { true }
58     , sblgreek .code:n   = {
59       \str_if_eq:nnT {#1} { true }
60       {
61         \tl_set:Nn \l__sblfonts_grfont_tl
62           { Alegreya-0sF }
63       }
64     }
65     , sblgreek .default:n = { true }
66     , sblhebrew .code:n   = {
67       \str_if_eq:nnT {#1} { true }
68       {
69         \tl_set:Nn \l__sblfonts_hefont_tl
70           { frank }
71       }
72     }
73     , sblhebrew .default:n = { true }
74   }
75 }
76 \ProcessKeyOptions

```

3.1 Language Set Up

\babelprovide macros need to be run outside of ExplSyntax.

```

77 \tl_set_eq:NN \@sblfonts@mainlang \l__sblfonts_mainlang_tl
78 \clist_set:Ne \@sblfonts@mainlang@options
79 {
80   , import
81   , \clist_use:N \l__sblfonts_mainlang_options_clist
82   , main
83 }
84 \clist_set:Ne \@sblfonts@grlang@options
85 {
86   , import
87   , onchar = ids ~ fonts
88   , \clist_use:N \l__sblfonts_grlang_options_clist
89 }
90 \clist_set:Ne \@sblfonts@helang@options
91 {
92   , import
93   , onchar = ids ~ fonts
94   , \clist_use:N \l__sblfonts_helang_options_clist
95 }
96 \ExplSyntaxOff

```

```

97 \newcommand*{\@sblfonts@load@american}{%
98   \expandafter\babelprovide\expandafter
99     [\@sblfonts@mainlang@options]{american}}
100 \newcommand*{\@sblfonts@load@mainlang}{%
101   \expandafter\babelprovide\expandafter
102     [\@sblfonts@mainlang@options]{\@sblfonts@mainlang}}
103 \newcommand*{\@sblfonts@load@polytonicgreek}{%
104   \expandafter\babelprovide\expandafter
105     [\@sblfonts@grlang@options]{polytonicgreek}}
106 \newcommand*{\@sblfonts@load@hebrew}{%
107   \expandafter\babelprovide\expandafter
108     [\@sblfonts@helang@options]{hebrew}}
109 \ExplSyntaxOn

```

`_sblfonts_load_languages:` Load American, Polytonic Greek and Hebrew languages using babel.

```

110 \cs_new_protected:Nn \_sblfonts_load_languages:
111   {
112     \tl_if_eq:NnT \languagename { nil }
113     {
114       \tl_if_empty:NTF \l__sblfonts_mainlang_tl
115         { \@sblfonts@load@american }
116         { \@sblfonts@load@mainlang }
117     }
118     \@sblfonts@load@polytonicgreek
119     \@sblfonts@load@hebrew
120     \babeladjust{ select.write = shift }
121   }
122 \cs_set_eq:NN \@sblfonts@load@languages \_sblfonts_load_languages:

```

(End of definition for _sblfonts_load_languages:.)

```

123 \sys_if_engine_opentype:TF
124   {
125     \RequirePackage { fontspec }
126     \sys_if_engine luatex:T
127       { \RequirePackage [ bidi=basic, provide** ] { babel } }
128     \sys_if_engine xetex:T
129       { \RequirePackage [ bidi=default, provide** ] { babel } }
130   }
131   {
132     \RequirePackage [ NHE8, LGR, T1 ] { fontenc }
133     \RequirePackage [ bidi=default, provide** ] { babel }
134   }

```

`\babelprovide` macros need to be run outside of `ExplSyntax`.

```

135 \ExplSyntaxOff
136 \@sblfonts@load@languages
137 \ExplSyntaxOn

```

3.2 Font Set Up

`_sblfonts_load_default_greek_font:` Load the default L^AT_EX Greek font.

```

138 \cs_new_protected:Nn \_sblfonts_load_default_greek_font:

```

```

139 {
140   \bafont [ polytonicgreek ] { rm }
141   [
142     Extension      = .otf ,
143     ItalicFont     = cmunti ,
144     BoldFont       = cmunbx ,
145     BoldItalicFont = cmunbi ,
146     \l__sblfonts_grfont_options_clist
147   ]
148   { cmunrm }
149 }

```

(End of definition for _sblfonts_load_default_greek_font:.)

_sblfonts_load_default_hebrew_font:

```

150 %
151 %   Load the default \LaTeX\ Hebrew font.
152 %
153 \cs_new_protected:Nn \_sblfonts_load_default_hebrew_font:
154 {
155   \bafont [ hebrew ] { rm }
156   [
157     Extension      = .otf ,
158     UprightFont    = *-Medium ,
159     ItalicFont     = *-MediumItalic ,
160     BoldFont       = *-Bold ,
161     BoldItalicFont = *-BoldItalic ,
162     \l__sblfonts_hefont_options_clist
163   ]
164   { DavidCLM }
165 }

```

(End of definition for _sblfonts_load_default_hebrew_font:.)

```

166 \sys_if_engine_opentype:TF
167 {

```

Use main font for Greek and Hebrew if it supports it unless SBL fonts have been explicitly asked for. **Note:** Some fonts support only monotonic Greek, but there generally isn't a way to tell this without checking which glyphs are actually present.

```

168   \tl_if_empty:NTF \l__sblfonts_mainfont_tl
169   {

```

Initially set Greek and Hebrew to CMU Serif and David CLM

```

170     \_sblfonts_load_default_greek_font:
171     \_sblfonts_load_default_hebrew_font:
172   }
173   {
174     \bafont { rm }
175     [ \l__sblfonts_mainfont_options_clist ]
176     { \l__sblfonts_mainfont_tl }
177     \fontspec_if_script:nF { grek }
178     {
179       \str_if_eq:VnT \l__sblfonts_sblgreek_str { fallback }
180       { \_sblfonts_load_default_greek_font: }

```



```

181     }
182     \fontspec_if_script:nF { hebr }
183     {
184         \str_if_eq:VnT \l__sblfonts_sblhebrew_str { fallback }
185         { \__sblfonts_load_default_hebrew_font: }
186     }
187 }

```

Try to load SBL fonts if asked for.

For Greek: SBL BibLit, SBL Greek, Alegreya

For Hebrew: SBL BibLit, SBL Hebrew, Frank Ruehl CLM

Note: The SBL font is strongly advised for biblical Hebrew. Alegreya and Frank Ruehl CLM are included in TeXLive so should be present.

```

188     \str_if_eq:VnT \l__sblfonts_sblgreek_str { true }
189     {
190         \fontspec_font_if_exist:nTF { SBL ~ BibLit }
191         {
192             \bafont [ polytonicgreek ] { rm }
193             [
194                 ItalicFont      = SBL ~ BibLit ,
195                 BoldFont        = SBL ~ BibLit ,
196                 BoldItalicFont = SBL ~ BibLit ,
197                 \l__sblfonts_grfont_options_clist
198             ]
199             { SBL ~ BibLit }
200         }
201         {
202             \fontspec_font_if_exist:nTF { SBL ~ Greek }
203             {
204                 \bafont [ polytonicgreek ] { rm }
205                 [
206                     ItalicFont      = SBL ~ Greek ,
207                     BoldFont        = SBL ~ Greek ,
208                     BoldItalicFont = SBL ~ Greek ,
209                     \l__sblfonts_grfont_options_clist
210                 ]
211                 { SBL ~ Greek }
212             }
213             {
214                 \bafont [ polytonicgreek ] { rm }
215                 [
216                     Extension      = .otf ,
217                     UprightFont    = *-Regular ,
218                     ItalicFont     = *-Italic ,
219                     BoldFont       = *-Bold ,
220                     BoldItalic     = *-BoldItalic ,
221                     \l__sblfonts_grfont_options_clist
222                 ]
223                 { Alegreya }
224             }
225         }
226     }

```

```

227 \str_if_eq:VnT \l__sblfonts_sblhebrew_str { true }
228 {
229   \fontspec_font_if_exist:nTF { SBL ~ BibLit }
230   {
231     \bafont [ hebrew ] { rm }
232     [
233       ItalicFont      = SBL ~ BibLit ,
234       BoldFont        = SBL ~ BibLit ,
235       BoldItalicFont = SBL ~ BibLit ,
236       \l__sblfonts_hefont_options_clist
237     ]
238     { SBL ~ BibLit }
239   }
240   {
241     \fontspec_font_if_exist:nTF { SBL ~ Hebrew }
242     {
243       \bafont [ hebrew ] { rm }
244       [
245         ItalicFont      = SBL ~ Hebrew ,
246         BoldFont        = SBL ~ Hebrew ,
247         BoldItalicFont = SBL ~ Hebrew ,
248         \l__sblfonts_hefont_options_clist
249       ]
250       { SBL ~ Hebrew }
251     }
252     {
253       \bafont [ hebrew ] { rm }
254       [
255         Extension = .ttf ,
256         UprightFont = *-Medium ,
257         ItalicFont = *-MediumOblique ,
258         BoldFont = *-Bold ,
259         BoldItalic = *-BoldOblique ,
260         \l__sblfonts_hefont_options_clist
261       ]
262       { FrankRuehlCLM }
263     }
264   }
265 }

```

Override Greek and Hebrew fonts if specified in grfont and hefont options.

```

266 \tl_if_empty:NF \l__sblfonts_grfont_tl
267 {
268   \bafont [ polytonicgreek ] { rm }
269   [ \l__sblfonts_grfont_options_clist ]
270   { \l__sblfonts_grfont_tl }
271 }
272 \tl_if_empty:NF \l__sblfonts_hefont_tl
273 {
274   \bafont [ hebrew ] { rm }
275   [ \l__sblfonts_hefont_options_clist ]
276   { \l__sblfonts_hefont_tl }
277 }
278 }

```

```

279 {
For pdf $\text{\LaTeX}$ , load font using a package.
280 \tl_if_empty:NF \l__sblfonts_mainfont_tl
281 {
282   \RequirePackage
283     [ \l__sblfonts_mainfont_options_clist ]
284     { \l__sblfonts_mainfont_tl }
285 }

```

Override Greek and Hebrew fonts if specified in `grfont` and `hefont` options.

```

286 \tl_if_empty:NF \l__sblfonts_grfont_tl
287 {
288   \DeclareFontFamilySubstitution
289     { LGR }
290     { \rmdefault }
291     { \l__sblfonts_grfont_tl }
292 }
293 \tl_if_empty:NF \l__sblfonts_hefont_tl
294 {
295   \DeclareFontFamilySubstitution
296     { NHE8 }
297     { \rmdefault }
298     { \l__sblfonts_hefont_tl }
299 }
300 }
301 \endinput
302 </package>

```