

# 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).

### 1.1 Usage

To use default L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X fonts, load the package with no options. The L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 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<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 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<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 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

---

**mainfont** `mainfont = <package> | <fontspec name>` Default: *unset*

Set the main font. Under `pdftex` this is the name of a font package to load. Under Unicode engines it should be a `fontspec` name which is passed to `\babelfont`. The optional arguments passed to the package or `\babelfont` can be specified in the `mainfontoptions` option.

---

**mainfontoptions** `mainfontoptions = <package options> | <fontspec options>` Default: *unset*

The optional arguments passed to the font package under `pdf $\text{latex}$`  or `\babelfont` under Unicode engines.

---

**grfont** `grfont = <NFSS font> | <fontspec name>` Default: *unset*

Set the Greek font. For `pdf $\text{latex}$`  this should be an NFSS font name which supports the LGR encoding. For Unicode engines this should be a `fontspec` font name. If `unset`, then under `pdf $\text{latex}$`  the default font is `grmn1000` and under Unicode engines the default font is CMU Serif or `mainfont` if it supports Greek.

---

**hefont** `hefont = <NFSS font> | <fontspec name>` Default: *unset*

Set the Hebrew font. For `pdf $\text{latex}$`  this should be an NFSS font name which supports the NHE8 encoding. For Unicode engines this should be a `fontspec` font name. If `unset`, then under `pdf $\text{latex}$`  the default font is `dauid` and under Unicode engines the default font is `DavidCLM` or `mainfont` if it supports Hebrew.

In reality, `pdf $\text{latex}$`  is really only supported for interest. You should use `lua $\text{tex}$`  for any right-to-left languages.

### 2.1 Unicode only options

The following options control whether the SBL Greek and Hebrew fonts should be used.

---

**sblfonts** `sblfonts = true | false | fallback` Default: *fallback*

This is a shortcut option for setting both `sblgreek` and `sblhebrew` at the same time.

---

**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** SBL BibLit, SBL Greek, Alegreya.

**false** `mainfont` (if specified) otherwise CMU Serif. This is useful if the test to detect Greek support in `mainfont` is not accurate.

**fallback** `mainfont` (if specified and if Greek is supported) otherwise CMU Serif.

---

**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** SBL BibLit, SBL Hebrew, Frank Ruehl CLM.

**false** mainfont (if specified) otherwise DavidCLM. This is useful if the test to detect Hebrew support in mainfont is not accurate.

**fallback** mainfont (if specified and if Hebrew is supported) otherwise DavidCLM.

### 3 Implementation

```
1 <*package>
2 <@@=sblfonts>
3 \NeedsTeXFormat{LaTeX2e}
4 \ProvidesExplPackage{sblfonts}{2026-04-04}{1.0}
5   {Society of Biblical Literature Font and Language Set Up (DCP)}
6 \keys_define:nn { sblfonts }
7   {
8     , mainfont      .tl_set:N    = \l__sblfonts_mainfont_tl
9     , mainfontoptions .clist_set:N = \l__sblfonts_mainfont_options_clist
10    , grfont        .tl_set:N    = \l__sblfonts_grfont_tl
11    , hefont        .tl_set:N    = \l__sblfonts_hefont_tl
12  }
13 \str_new:N \l__sblfonts_sblgreek_str
14 \str_new:N \l__sblfonts_sblhebrew_str
15 \sys_if_engine_opentype:T
16   {
17     \keys_define:nn { sblfonts }
18       {
19         , sblfonts .choices:nn = { true, false, fallback }
20           {
21             \str_set:NV
22               \l__sblfonts_sblgreek_str
23               \l_keys_choice_str
24             \str_set:NV
25               \l__sblfonts_sblhebrew_str
26               \l_keys_choice_str
27           }
28         , sblfonts .default:n = { true }
29         , sblgreek .choices:nn = { true, false, fallback }
30           {
31             \str_set:NV
32               \l__sblfonts_sblgreek_str
33               \l_keys_choice_str
34           }
35         , sblgreek .default:n = { true }
36         , sblgreek .initial:n = { fallback }
37         , sblhebrew .choices:nn = { true, false, fallback }
```

```

38             {
39                 \str_set:NV
40                 \l__sblfonts_sblhebrew_str
41                 \l_keys_choice_str
42             }
43     , sblhebrew .default:n = { true }
44     , sblhebrew .initial:n = { fallback }
45 }
46 }
47 \ProcessKeyOptions

```

### 3.1 Language Set Up

\babelprovide macros need to be run outside of ExplSyntax.

```

48 \ExplSyntaxOff
49 \newcommand*{\@sblfonts@load@american}{%
50   \babelprovide[import, main]{american}}
51 \newcommand*{\@sblfonts@load@polytonicgreek}{%
52   \babelprovide[import, onchar=ids fonts]{polytonicgreek}}
53 \newcommand*{\@sblfonts@load@hebrew}{%
54   \babelprovide[import, onchar=ids fonts]{hebrew}}
55 \ExplSyntaxOn

```

\\_sblfonts\_load\_languages: Load American, Polytonic Greek and Hebrew languages using babel.

```

56 \cs_new_protected:Nn \_sblfonts_load_languages:
57 {
58   \tl_if_eq:NnT \languagenname { nil }
59   { \@sblfonts@load@american }
60   \@sblfonts@load@polytonicgreek
61   \@sblfonts@load@hebrew
62   \babeladjust{ select.write = shift }
63 }
64 \cs_set_eq:NN \@sblfonts@load@languages \_sblfonts_load_languages:

```

(End of definition for \\_sblfonts\_load\_languages:.)

```

65 \sys_if_engine_opentype:TF
66 {
67   \RequirePackage { fontspec }
68   \sys_if_engine luatex:T
69   { \RequirePackage [ bidi=basic, provide** ] { babel } }
70   \sys_if_engine_xetex:T
71   { \RequirePackage [ bidi=default, provide** ] { babel } }
72 }
73 {
74   \RequirePackage [ NHEB, LGR, T1 ] { fontenc }
75   \RequirePackage [ bidi=default, provide** ] { babel }
76 }

```

\babelprovide macros need to be run outside of ExplSyntax.

```

77 \ExplSyntaxOff
78 \@sblfonts@load@languages
79 \ExplSyntaxOn

```

## 3.2 Font Set Up

`\_sblfonts_load_default_greek_font:` Load the default L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X Greek font.

```
80 \cs_new_protected:Nn \_sblfonts_load_default_greek_font:
81   {
82     \babelfont [ polytonicgreek ] { rm }
83     [
84       Extension      = .otf ,
85       ItalicFont     = cmunti ,
86       BoldFont       = cmunbx ,
87       BoldItalicFont = cmunbi
88     ]
89     { cmunrm }
90   }
```

*(End of definition for `\_sblfonts_load_default_greek_font:`)*

`\_sblfonts_load_default_hebrew_font:`

```
91 %
92 % Load the default \LaTeX\ Hebrew font.
93 %
94 \cs_new_protected:Nn \_sblfonts_load_default_hebrew_font:
95   {
96     \babelfont [ hebrew ] { rm }
97     [
98       Extension      = .otf ,
99       UprightFont    = *-Medium ,
100      ItalicFont      = *-MediumItalic ,
101      BoldFont        = *-Bold ,
102      BoldItalicFont = *-BoldItalic
103     ]
104     { DavidCLM }
105   }
```

*(End of definition for `\_sblfonts_load_default_hebrew_font:`)*

```
106 \sys_if_engine_opentype:TF
107   {
```

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.

```
108   \tl_if_empty:NTF \l__sblfonts_mainfont_tl
109   {
```

Initially set Greek and Hebrew to CMU Serif and David CLM

```
110     \_sblfonts_load_default_greek_font:
111     \_sblfonts_load_default_hebrew_font:
112   }
113   {
114     \babelfont { rm }
115     [ \l__sblfonts_mainfont_options_clist ]
116     { \l__sblfonts_mainfont_tl }
117     \fontspec_if_script:nF { grek }
118     {
```

```

119         \str_if_eq:VnT \l__sblfonts_sblgreek_str { fallback }
120         { \__sblfonts_load_default_greek_font: }
121     }
122     \fontspec_if_script:nF { hebr }
123     {
124         \str_if_eq:VnT \l__sblfonts_sblhebrew_str { fallback }
125         { \__sblfonts_load_default_hebrew_font: }
126     }
127 }

```

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.

```

128     \str_if_eq:VnT \l__sblfonts_sblgreek_str { true }
129     {
130         \fontspec_font_if_exist:nTF { SBL ~ BibLit }
131         {
132             \babelfont [ polytonicgreek ] { rm }
133             [
134                 ItalicFont      = SBL ~ BibLit ,
135                 BoldFont        = SBL ~ BibLit ,
136                 BoldItalicFont = SBL ~ BibLit
137             ]
138             { SBL ~ BibLit }
139         }
140         {
141             \fontspec_font_if_exist:nTF { SBL ~ Greek }
142             {
143                 \babelfont [ polytonicgreek ] { rm }
144                 [
145                     ItalicFont      = SBL ~ Greek ,
146                     BoldFont        = SBL ~ Greek ,
147                     BoldItalicFont = SBL ~ Greek
148                 ]
149                 { SBL ~ Greek }
150             }
151             {
152                 \babelfont [ polytonicgreek ] { rm }
153                 [
154                     Extension      = .otf ,
155                     UprightFont    = *-Regular ,
156                     ItalicFont     = *-Italic ,
157                     BoldFont       = *-Bold ,
158                     BoldItalic     = *-BoldItalic
159                 ]
160                 { Alegreya }
161             }
162         }
163     }

```

```

164 \str_if_eq:VnT \l__sblfonts_sblhebrew_str { true }
165 {
166   \fontspec_font_if_exist:nTF { SBL ~ BibLit }
167   {
168     \bafont [ hebrew ] { rm }
169     [
170       ItalicFont      = SBL ~ BibLit ,
171       BoldFont        = SBL ~ BibLit ,
172       BoldItalicFont = SBL ~ BibLit
173     ]
174     { SBL ~ BibLit }
175   }
176   {
177     \fontspec_font_if_exist:nTF { SBL ~ Hebrew }
178     {
179       \bafont [ hebrew ] { rm }
180       [
181         ItalicFont      = SBL ~ Hebrew ,
182         BoldFont        = SBL ~ Hebrew ,
183         BoldItalicFont = SBL ~ Hebrew
184       ]
185       { SBL ~ Hebrew }
186     }
187     {
188       \bafont [ hebrew ] { rm }
189       [
190         Extension = .ttf ,
191         UprightFont = *-Medium ,
192         ItalicFont = *-MediumOblique ,
193         BoldFont = *-Bold ,
194         BoldItalic = *-BoldOblique
195       ]
196       { FrankRuehlCLM }
197     }
198   }
199 }

```

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

```

200 \tl_if_empty:NF \l__sblfonts_grfont_tl
201 {
202   \bafont [ polytonicgreek ] { rm } { \l__sblfonts_grfont_tl }
203 }
204 \tl_if_empty:NF \l__sblfonts_hefont_tl
205 {
206   \bafont [ hebrew ] { rm } { \l__sblfonts_hefont_tl }
207 }
208 }
209 {

```

For `pdflatex`, load font using a package.

```

210 \tl_if_empty:NF \l__sblfonts_mainfont_tl
211 {
212   \RequirePackage
213   [ \l__sblfonts_mainfont_options_clist ]

```



```
214     { \l__sblfonts_mainfont_tl }
215   }
```

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

```
216   \tl_if_empty:NF \l__sblfonts_grfont_tl
217     {
218       \DeclareFontFamilySubstitution
219         { LGR }
220         { \rmdefault }
221         { \l__sblfonts_grfont_tl }
222     }
223   \tl_if_empty:NF \l__sblfonts_hefont_tl
224     {
225       \DeclareFontFamilySubstitution
226         { NHE8 }
227         { \rmdefault }
228         { \l__sblfonts_hefont_tl }
229     }
230 }
231 \endinput
232 </package>
```