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A Student's Guide to Phonology and Morphology

Eric D. Reymond

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To Robin, Lucy, and Oliver

ἀρχὴ γὰρ αὐτῆς ἡ ἀληθεστάτη παιδείας ἐπιθυμία
"The beginning of wisdom is open yearning for instruction" (Wis 6:17).

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Abbreviations

Grammatical Abbreviations

1cp	first common plural
1cs	first common singular
2fp	second feminine plural
2fs	second feminine singular
2mp	second masculine plural
2ms	second masculine singular
3fp	third feminine plural
3fs	third feminine singular
3mp	third masculine plural
3ms	third masculine singular
abs.	absolute
acc.	accusative
adj(s).	adjective(s)
Aram.	Aramaic
cohort.	cohortative
const.	construct state
du.	dual
esp.	especially
fem.	feminine
fp	feminine plural
fs	feminine singular
gen.	genitive
impv.	imperative
inf(s).	infinitive(s)
intrans.	intransitive
l(l).	line(s)
masc.	masculine
mp	masculine plural

ms	masculine singular
nom.	nominative
pl.	plural
ptc(s).	participle(s)
sg.	singular
spec.	specifically
suf.	suffix
trans.	transitive

Other Abbreviations

AfAsL	*Afroasiatic Linguistics*
AfO	*Archive für Orientforschung*
AKM	Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
ANEM	Ancient Near Eastern Monographs
ANESSupp	Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement Series
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Series
BA	Biblical Aramaic
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *Hebrew Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906.
BH	Biblical Hebrew
BHS3	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Edited by Elliger, K. and W. Rudolph. 3rd edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1987.
BHT	Babylonian Hebrew (Pronunciation) Tradition
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
C. Ap.	Josephus *Contra Apionem*
CEWAL	*Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages*. Edited by Roger D. Woodard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
DCH	*The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Edited by David J. A. Clines. 8 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993–2007.

DJBA	Sokoloff, Michael. *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods*. Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2002.
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DJPA	Sokoloff, Michael. *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*. 2nd ed. Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2002.
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
EHLL	*Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*. Edited by Geoffrey Khan. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
Ges[18]	*Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*. Edited by Wilhelm Gesenius et al. 18th ed. Berlin: Springer, 2012.
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910.
HALOT	Koehler, Ludwig and Walter Baumgartner. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated by M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000.
HAR	*Hebrew Annual Review*
HBH	*A Handbook of Biblical Hebrew*. Edited by W. Randall Garr and Steven E. Fassberg. 2 vols. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016.
HdO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HGhS	Bauer, Hans and Pontus Leander. *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testamentes*. 2 vols. Halle: Niemeyer, 1922.
HSK	Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBS	Jerusalem Biblical Studies
JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*

Joüon	Joüon, Paul. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. 2 vols. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1993.
JPS	*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
LBH	Late Biblical Hebrew
LSAWS	Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, and H. S. Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Revised edition. Oxford: Clarendon, 1968.
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text, specifically the Leningrad Codex, as represented in *BHS3*
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NWS	Northwest Semitic
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
Or	*Orientalia* NS
OrGand	Orientalia Gandensia
Orientalia	Orientalia: Papers of the Oriental Institute (Moscow)
OTWSA	*Oud Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap van Suid-Afrika, Pretoria*
pers. comm.	personal communication
PIASH	Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities
PLO	Porta Linguarum Orientalium
PNWS	Proto-Northwest Semitic
PS	Proto-Semitic
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
RH	Rabbinic Hebrew
SLIH	*The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*. Edited by Stefan Weninger, Geoffrey Khan, Michael P. Streck, and Janet C. E. Watson. HSK 36. Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton, 2011.
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch

SSLL	Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament.* Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 15 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006.
THT	Tiberian Hebrew (Pronunciation) Tradition
ThWQ	*Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten*. Edited by H.-J. Fabry and U. Dahmen. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2011–.
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplement Series
WS	West Semitic
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*
ZAH	*Zeitschrift für die Althebraistik*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

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Preface
Transliteration, Etymological Bases, and Basic Terms

In the course of describing Biblical Hebrew (BH), I will often transliterate the relevant Hebrew word or phrase. In relation to the Tiberian Hebrew pronunciation tradition (THT), I will attempt to represent the word(s) according to their phonemes. A phoneme is a "unit of sound in a language … that can distinguish one word from another" (*OED*). The pair of sounds represented by the letters /l/ and /r/ are examples of two phonemes in English. The two sounds are similar (both are called liquid consonants), but English speakers hear them as meaningfully discrete sounds. This means that we can create and use individual words that differ in only this one feature. For example, we immediately recognize that "lace" and "race" are different words. Even if we did not understand the words already, we would assume that two words which differed only in this one consonant were distinct words with different meanings, as with the imaginary words "lupish" and "rupish." Some languages, by contrast, do not distinguish these liquid consonants as distinct phonemes. Japanese, for example, has a single liquid consonant phoneme, which is commonly realized somewhat like our /r/.[1] For this reason, pairs of distinct words like "lace" and "race" (or "lupish" and "rupish") would not typically appear in Japanese.

Each phoneme, however, can be articulated in a number of different ways, depending on various factors such as where it occurs in a word and the character of surrounding letters. In English, for instance, the exact pronunciation of the /l/ phoneme is different depending on the preceding vowel. To pronounce the /l/ in the word "fall," the tongue is low, toward the base of the mouth, whereas in the word "fell," it is considerably higher, in the middle of the mouth. Such distinct pronunciations of a single pho-

1. See, e.g., Laurence Labrune, *The Phonology of Japanese*, Phonology of the World's Languages (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 92–94.

neme are called allophones. The allophones are different realizations of a single phoneme.

Since in my transliteration of THT, I will indicate only phonemes, I will not distinguish between allophones in Hebrew, like spirantized and nonspirantized *begadkepat* letters. A *bet* with a *dagesh* will be transliterated exactly like a single *bet* without a *dagesh*: *b*. Nor will I attempt to discriminate between vowels accompanied by *matres* and those without *matres*. A *qamets* in the interior of a word will be represented in the same way as a word-final *qamets* with *mater he*: שָׁמְרָה *šåmrå* (< **šāmərā*) "she guarded." Furthermore, as this example indicates, when transliterating a word in the Masoretic Text (MT; i.e., Leningrad Codex B19a), I will make a distinction where relevant between the phonemes as they would have been perceived by the Tiberian Masoretes and the vowels and consonants of pre-Masoretic times. The transliteration of words from the era(s) preceding that of the Tiberian Masoretes will also avoid any indication of obvious allophones (like the *begadkepat* distinctions) or *matres*, though, it should be admitted, the knowledge of what specifically constituted a phoneme in this period is harder to determine. Because this earlier pre-Masoretic pronunciation is not explicitly indicated by the vowel symbols in the texts that we possess, such transliterations are preceded by an asterisk. An asterisk does not imply that a form is from Proto-Semitic (PS) or Proto-Northwest Semitic (PNWS), but simply that it is not explicitly reflected in the orthography of the Tiberian Masoretes. Moreover, not every word or example is reconstructed back to its PS/PNWS form. Such reconstruction is done only where relevant. Usually, where a given word's development is fully traced, the starting point is the hypothetical form of the word after PNWS and before the Canaanite evidenced in the Amarna correspondences (ca. 1350 BCE). In these cases, I will usually present the nouns/adjectives with the nominative case vowel (**-u*).

When I transliterate words as preserved in the MT, I will generally use the following system of transliteration: *hireq* and *hireq yod* = *i*, *sere* and *sere yod* = *e*, *segol* = *ɛ*, *patakh* = *a*, *qamets* = *å*, *holem* = *o*, *qibbuts* and *shureq* = *u*. *Shewa* is not transliterated because it was not recognized as a phoneme; also, I will not transliterate epenthetic vowels, like the furtive *patakh* or the short vowel (e.g., /ɛ/ or /a/) in the second syllable of absolute singular nouns like מֶלֶךְ (= *mɛlk*) "king."[2] One will also notice that I do not dis-

2. See Geoffrey Khan, "Syllable Structure: Biblical Hebrew," *EHLL* 3:670–73.

tinguish between long and short vowels.[3] In addition, I will represent the letter *śin* (שׂ) as /s/ in transliterations of THT. This system of transliteration, it should be noted, does not exactly correspond to the pronunciation of THT, which was a good deal more complex.

Overall, the description of the language that follows in this book pertains to a version of Hebrew that precedes the time of the Tiberian Masoretes. This is the era (very roughly the Second Temple era) when many of the features we are familiar with as "Biblical Hebrew" (e.g., the spirantization of *begadkepat* consonants; merging of /ś/ and /s/; compensatory lengthening) likely developed. Usually, but not always, a word in transliteration that precedes the same word in Hebrew letters (often in parentheses) is indicating the form from the Second Temple era. The version of Hebrew described here is an ancestor of the Tiberian Masoretic pronunciation and vocalization, but not identical with it. Due to this lineage, there is often a correlation between the symbols of the Tiberian vocalization system and the vowels of this pre-Masoretic version of Hebrew, such that one will frequently observe the following correspondences: *hireq* = *i*, *hireq yod* = *ī*, *sere* = *e* or *ē*, *shewa* = *ə* or zero (i.e., no vowel), *segol* = *ɛ* or *e*, *patakh* = *a*, *qamets* = *ā* or *o*, *holem* = *o* or *ō*, *qibbuts* = *u* or *ū*, and *shuruq* = *ū*. Although it is counterintuitive, it is only the latter set of correspondences that coincide with the typical transliteration of BH. That is, the Hebrew of the Bible is typically transliterated (and pronounced) in a way that does not explicitly reflect the pronunciation implied by the vowel symbols. For this pre-Masoretic version of Hebrew (from the Second Temple era), I will still transliterate *śin* (שׂ) as /s/ since already by the middle of the first millennium BCE the phoneme /ś/ had begun to be pronounced as /s/. Nevertheless, when indicating forms of a given word from before 500 BCE I will indicate the phoneme as /ś/.

Since the vocalization of the Masoretes so regularly and neatly corresponds to the Hebrew of this era (i.e., the Second Temple era), it is not necessary to transliterate every word from the Masoretic Hebrew spelling into a romanized version. Only in the discussion of the vowels (in ch. 3) is it necessary to transliterate all the words, in order to clearly distinguish Masoretic from pre-Masoretic pronunciations. Thus, in that chapter the

3. Vowel length was not regularly used to distinguish words in THT. See Geoffrey Khan, "Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew," *ZAH* 9 (1996): 14–15; he writes: "Meaningful contrasts between words were not usually made by differences in vowel length alone" (14).

features discussed are always illustrated with transliterated versions of the words, with the Masoretic Hebrew spellings in parentheses. If nothing else, this should reinforce the idea that the Masoretic pointing/vocalization represents only one stage in a very long linguistic development.

The reconstruction of the history of any dead language is fraught with uncertainties. The reconstructions of particular Hebrew words in the various stages before they reached their form in the MT are quite hypothetical. I have tried to adhere to generally accepted ideas, but, due to the nature of the evidence, much remains uncertain. This is particularly true in relation to the history of the vowels and their development.

In addition, because the present work seeks to introduce students to the historical study of Biblical Hebrew, especially as a means of providing greater access to ancient Hebrew literature, I have generally avoided documenting all previous scholarship on the various phenomena described (including all competing interpretations). Instead, I have usually opted to follow the most recent conclusions by scholars as presented especially in the *Encyclopedia of the Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, where readers can find further discussion as well as references to more in-depth and detailed studies. The chronological sequence of linguistic developments presented especially in chapter 3 should be viewed as particularly tentative.

In cases where I am entirely unsure what vowel to reconstruct for a given word in a pre-Masoretic era, I use *V* to represent simply "vowel." The symbols < and > indicate linguistic developments and derivations, respectively. They function, in essence, like arrows. The notation "x > y" indicates that x became y; conversely, "y < x" indicates that y derives from x.

In describing the morphology of BH, I will use the standard transliteration of the root **qtl* in its earliest form. The root is realized in BH with a *tet*, קטל "to kill"; this *tet* is a later development of the root. The earlier (nonemphatic) /t/ was pronounced as *tet* (/ṭ/) due to the influence of the preceding emphatic *q*. This root, **qtl*, will be used to indicate the etymological bases of nouns and verbs, which reflect the early forms of nouns and verbs. In these cases, the form will be preceded by an asterisk (e.g., **qatl*).

When I refer to a word's "stem," I refer to that part of a word that remains consistent throughout its inflection. For example, the word דָּבָר "word, matter" is inflected with many suffixal components, including suffixal morphemes like *-*īm* (to make the plural form דְּבָרִים) and the set of possessive pronouns like *-*ō* (to make the expression דְּבָרוֹ "his word"). The

stem of דְּבָרִים and דְּבָרוֹ is דבר. The stem vowels of both the plural form and the singular form with the third-person masculine singular suffix are *ə-ā* (represented with the symbols *shewa-qamets* in THT). For the verbal form יִכְתְּבוּ "they will write," the stem is כתב and the vowel of the stem is simply *ə*, while for הִגַּדְתָּ "you told," the stem is הגד and the vowels of the stem are *i-a*. The verbal categories *qal*, *piel*, *hiphil*, and so on are referred to as conjugations.

It is assumed that students know what the construct state is. This is not the only state for a noun, however. A noun that is not in the construct state and is not accompanied by a suffixed pronoun is said to be in the absolute state. This is essentially the form of the word found in a dictionary entry.

The word "pause" refers to a place in a verse where a person reading or reciting would extend the pronunciation of a word. This typically results in a longer form of the word, one in which the vowels are often not reduced or elided and sometimes where the vowels are lengthened. A word that appears in such a place is said to be "in pause" or to be a "pausal form." Pause usually is marked by the *atnach* symbol, ֑ (in the middle of the verse), the *silluq* symbol, ׀ (at the end of a verse) and sometimes by the *zaqef* symbol, ׇ (at the quarter point and three-quarter point of the verse). A word that is not in pause, that is most of the words of a verse, is said to be "in context" or to be a "contextual form." These forms often reflect vowel reduction and/or elision of vowels. All words are either pausal or contextual.

We will refer to open and closed syllables. An open syllable has the sequence consonant + vowel; a closed syllable has the sequence consonant + vowel + consonant. We will also refer to the tonic syllable, that is, the syllable that bears the tone, accent, or stress.[4] This will also be called the accented syllable or the stressed syllable. The syllable that precedes the tonic syllable is the pretonic syllable. The syllable that precedes the pretonic is the propretonic syllable. In פָּרָשִׁים "horse riders," the last syllable, שִׁים-, is the tonic syllable; it is also a closed syllable. The preceding consonant and vowel, -רָ-, is the pretonic syllable; it is an open syllable. The initial -פָּ is the propretonic syllable; it is also an open syllable.

It is also helpful to identify here four types of irregular nouns and their salient characteristics: geminate nouns (e.g., עַם "people"), segolate nouns

4. Although tone, accent, stress can refer to different linguistic phenomena, they are used here synonymously.

(e.g., מֶלֶךְ "king"), a subcategory of which are middle-weak nouns with a diphthong (e.g., זַיִת "olive"), and etymological III-*vav/yod* nouns, also commonly called III-*he* nouns (e.g., חֹזֶה "seer"). Geminate nouns are those that have a doubled consonant as part of their base, something revealed whenever a pronominal suffix or suffixal morpheme is attached to their stem: עַם "people" and עַמִּים "peoples"; חֵץ "arrow" and חִצִּים "arrows"; חֹק "statute" and חֻקִּים "statutes." The gemination is explicit in the nouns with the feminine morpheme: חֻקָּה "statute." Segolate nouns are those that have three different root consonants (i.e., no geminated root consonants) and that, in their historical singular form, had a single vowel (**qatl*, **qitl*, **qutl*). With the exception of some III-*vav/yod* segolates, the masculine segolate nouns are all accented on their first syllables in the absolute (e.g., מֶלֶךְ "king," סֵפֶר "book," and קֹדֶשׁ "holy thing"), thus distinguishing them from most other nouns, which are accented on their last syllable (e.g., דָּבָר "word"). The etymological base vowel of the segolates (**qatl*, **qitl*, **qutl*) is typically revealed in forms bearing a pronominal suffix: מַלְכִּי "my king," סִפְרִי "my book," קָדְשִׁי "my holy thing." Feminine segolate nouns can be identified by their initial syllable, which is a closed syllable that begins with a root consonant (e.g., מַלְכָּה "queen," where the initial *mem* is a root consonant and the first syllable is *mal-*). Almost universally, the plural forms of the absolute segolate nouns exhibit the sequence of **ə-ā* in their stem (realized in THT spelling as *shewa-qamets*): מְלָכִים "kings" and מְלָכוֹת "queens." Middle-weak nouns with a diphthong lose the diphthong in construct or with a pronominal suffix or suffixal morpheme: זֵית "olive" and זֵיתִים "olives"; מָוֶת "death" and מוֹתִי "my death." Etymological III-*vav/yod* nouns exhibit an */e/ (> *segol* in THT) as a final vowel in the masculine absolute, קָצֶה "end," but an */ā/ (> *qamets* in THT) in the feminine absolute, קָצָה "end." The final */e/ and *he mater* (in the masculine) are absent with a pronominal suffix or suffixal morpheme: קָצֵהוּ "his end."

As for verbal forms, the label *qāṭal* refers to what is often referred to as the suffix-conjugation or perfect; *yiqṭol* refers to the prefix-conjugation or imperfect; *wayyiqṭol* to the *vav*-consecutive imperfect and *wəqāṭal* to the *vav*-consecutive perfect. The jussive/preterite verb form is referred to as the short-*yiqṭol*. Other verbal forms are referred to by their traditional labels (imperative, cohortative, infinitive construct, infinitive absolute, participle, and passive participle).

The following book presumes a certain familiarity with Biblical Hebrew. In particular, it presumes some knowledge of how the Hebrew

noun and verb inflect. Since students coming into an intermediate or advanced Hebrew class often have different backgrounds, it will be useful for some students to review the basics of Hebrew morphology. In the appendix, I have gathered a number of different guidelines that aid in producing the basic nominal and verbal forms.

1
Introduction

1.1. What Is Biblical Hebrew?

When we speak about Biblical Hebrew what do we mean? Of course, we refer to the language of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (HB/OT). But behind this common label hides an often unacknowledged fact: the language we learn in "Biblical Hebrew" class is not really the language known to the Bible's writers and early readers.[1] In relation to phonology, we often learn the pronunciation of the consonants and vowels that is current in modern Israel today. When we learn the forms of certain words, we learn how some speakers and readers in the first millennium CE read and spoke Hebrew.

For example, when we speak of the pronunciation of *ḥet* as equivalent to the *ch* in the North American English pronunciation of "Chanukkah" or in the Scottish pronunciation of "loch," we reflect of course a pronunciation for the letter typical of modern, Israeli Hebrew. This pronunciation, contrary to what one might assume, developed at the earliest in Europe in the early second millennium CE.[2] Needless to say, this is well after the HB/OT had been written. In a similar manner, when we learn that the word for "king" was pronounced *mɛlɛk* (IPA [ˈmɛlɛχ]), with the accent on the first of two syllables, we are learning the form of the word that perhaps became part of the literary register of "Biblical Hebrew" only in the first

1. This, of course, is not a new observation; Alexander Sperber made this point many years ago in his *A Historical Grammar of Biblical Hebrew: A Presentation of Problems with Suggestions to Their Solutions* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 17, though his analysis of how the contemporary articulation of the language differs from that of antiquity is not followed in the present work.

2. See Ilan Eldar, "Ashkenazi Pronunciation Tradition: Medieval," *EHLL* 1:188; Nimrod Shatil, "Guttural Consonants: Modern Hebrew," *EHLL* 2:169, 171.

millennium CE. Even then, speakers likely did not conceive of such words as having two syllables, in the same way that modern students do not consider a word with furtive *patakh* (e.g., רוּחַ "spirit") to have two syllables.[3]

Curiously and perhaps counterintuitively, we do not even learn precisely the pronunciation of the vowels known to the scribes and scholars who innovated the vowel marks that lie beneath (and sometimes above) the consonants. For example, when we speak of the twofold pronunciation of *qamets* as either "long /ā/" or "short /o/" we reflect the modern pronunciation, which derives from Sephardic tradition.[4] Although this basically reflects a pronunciation of BH current at the turn of the eras, it does not reflect the manner in which the Masoretic scribes pronounced Hebrew.[5] When the Masoretic scribes used the *qamets* symbol, it marked what was for them, in their oral tradition, not two vowels, but a single vowel: /å/, the "aw" in North American English "paw" (i.e., IPA [ɔ]).[6]

As I hope will be obvious, learning about the language in the time that it was used to write and copy the Bible (and also about the language's development) has many benefits for the student of the Hebrew scriptures. In the first place, it allows one to get closer to the text, allowing readers to perceive more clearly the sound and rhythm of the biblical language (both in its ancient and medieval realizations). This can be both inspirational as well as instructive. In some cases, perceiving the earlier pronunciation(s) of the language can help explain apparent ambiguities in the lexicon. For example, the word חָפַר in the *qal* means "to dig, search for" and the word חָפֵר in the *qal* means "to be ashamed." Although the verbs appear identical in many of their forms (e.g., חָפְרוּ "they dug" Gen 26:18 and חָפְרוּ "they were ashamed" Ps 71:24; יַחְפְּרוּ "they will search" Deut 1:22 and יַחְפְּרוּ "they will be ashamed" Ps 40:15), it is likely that the two words were distinguished in their pronunciation during most of the first millennium BCE. The first root ("to dig, search") may have been real-

3. See, e.g., Choon-Leong Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 13.

4. Joshua Blau, *Phonology and Morphology of Biblical Hebrew*, LSAWS 2 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 108–9.

5. See "*Qamets* in the Tiberian Hebrew Tradition" in ch. 3 §16.

6. The shift in quality from what was previously /ā/ to /å/ (= [ɔ]) was simultaneous with the shift of short /o/ or /u/ to /å/ (= [ɔ]). The exact pronunciation of the vowel in terms of its length is much more complicated; see Khan, "Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition," 4.

ized with a lighter, less guttural sound than the second ("to be ashamed"): **ḥāpərū* versus **ḫāpərū*.[7]

In addition, knowledge of the history of Hebrew helps explain certain pairs of Hebrew roots, like נטר/נצר both of which seem to derive from a PS/PNWS root *nṭr* "to guard." At the least, knowing the link between such roots can aid in the acquisition of vocabulary. For example, it seems helpful to link in one's mind the more common (and hopefully therefore more easily remembered) verb נצר "to guard" with the rarer נטר "to guard" (which appears with this simple sense at least three times in the Song of Songs, and with the nuance "to preserve anger" in another five passages).[8] Knowing the link between the two roots also helps explain the etymology of the noun מַטָּרָה "guard, target" (which often occurs in the expression חֲצַר הַמַּטָּרָה "courtyard of the guard," i.e., prison).

Pairs of antonyms with similar sounds can also be explained by means of historical phonological developments in the language, as with סֶכֶל = *sɛkl* < **sakl* "folly" (Qoh 10:6) versus שֶׂכֶל = *sɛkl* < **śikl* "prudence" (1 Sam 25:3) and the pair סוֹרֵר < **sōrēr* "who are stubborn" (Isa 65:2) versus שֹׂרֵר < **sōrēr* < **śōrēr* "one who rules" (Esth 1:22). Although sharing a common pronunciation in THT, these pairs of words were earlier distinguished. Such an explanation may also help the student to remember the sense of such pairs. Even if one already knows the vocabulary items individually, it is useful to set them side-by-side and consider them together.

Recognizing commonly occurring variations among roots can help explain other incongruities in the lexicon as well as facilitate sight reading. For example, being alert to the fact that sometimes the same basic root or verb will appear with different sibilants (e.g., *tsade* and *zayin*) makes reading Ps 68:4–5 all the easier (יַעַלְצוּ "they will rejoice" [v. 4] … וְעִלְזוּ "rejoice!" [v. 5]). Being aware of the possibility of byforms between certain weak root classes (e.g., II-*vav*/*yod* and I-*vav*/*yod*) can also sometimes

7. See below for an explanation of the difference between /ḥ/ and /ḫ/. Similarly, for the first half of the first millennium BCE (if not for a period after), the absence of spirantized allophones for the *begadkepat* letters would mean that words like *nimšaḥ* "he is anointed" (1 Chr 14:8) would be distinct from **nimšak* "he is postponed" (cf. תִּמָּשֵׁךְ Ezek 12:25).

8. Although נטר in the sense "to preserve anger" can be explained as derived from another root entirely, it seems likelier that this is simply a nuance of the verb נטר; one can compare, e.g., the use of שמר "to guard" in a similar sense, parallel with נטר, in Jer 3:5, as well as alone in Amos 1:11.

help one quickly identify a possible meaning of a word, such as for וַתְּנִיקֶהוּ (from נוק or ניק; Exod 2:9), especially where the context is clear (as in Exod 2:9, which contains the phrase וְהֵינִקֶהוּ "and nurse it!" from the more common ינק). The phrase וַתְּנִיקֶהוּ is translated "she nursed it."

Cognizance of the phonology of ancient Hebrew can help explain certain translations, if not provide the grounds for new interpretations. Note, for instance, the translation of עָרֶיךָ (in 1 Sam 28:16) "your adversary" in JPS and "your enemy" in NJB, NRSV. The word, however, looks like a defective spelling of the phrase "your cities," that is, a spelling without the *yod mater* (עָרֶיךָ*). The dictionaries (like *HALOT*, Ges[18]) suggest that עָרֶךָ is derived from the Aramaic equivalent to Hebrew צַר. Evaluating this suggestion depends (at least partially) on understanding the relationship between Aramaic ע and Hebrew צ. Do other words exhibit this correspondence? If so, how frequently do such correspondences occur in the lexicon of Biblical Hebrew?

Learning more about the morphology of Hebrew in the era of the Bible's authors is also helpful. Such knowledge makes the inflection of words more comprehensible and, thus, easier to remember. If a student learns that through the first millennium BCE the word for "king" was most likely pronounced something like **malk* and not "*mɛlɛk*," the forms of the word with pronominal suffix are more comprehensible: מַלְכִּי < **malkī* "my king," מַלְכָּהּ < **malkāh* "her king," מַלְכֵּנוּ < **malkēnū* "our king." In addition, understanding that nouns as seemingly disparate as קֹדֶשׁ "holiness," בְּאֹשׁ "stench," and עֳנִי "poverty" all derive from the **qutl* base helps us predict, for example, their consistent form with suffixes: for example, קָדְשׁוֹ < **qodšō* < **qudšahu* (Isa 52:10), בְּאֳשׁוֹ < **boʾšō* < **buʾšahu* (Joel 2:20), עָנְיוֹ < **ʿonyō* < **ʿunyahu* (Job 36:15).

The following book is intended for the intermediate or advanced student who wishes to learn more about the history of the Hebrew language, specifically its phonology and morphology. But, not all historical aspects of the language are treated. I concentrate most on those aspects that will encourage a student to better remember the words and their inflection. Students should not expect to learn every detail in the book; it is most important to learn the general principles. The specific examples that can be memorized are outlined at the end of each chapter.

In addition, this book intends to provide students with a "full" picture of the language's morphology by providing tables of the inflection of individual words for most classes of nouns/adjectives as well as tables that set similar verbal inflections side by side. The nouns/adjectives are classified

primarily according to their historical bases which usually reflect common manners of inflection. These tables can also be used by the student as an easy resource in vocalizing unpointed Hebrew texts. Ultimately, it is hoped that the study of the book will provide the student greater access to the texts of the Bible and to other early Hebrew writings.

1.2. Varieties of Ancient Hebrew

Before moving on to studying the sounds and forms of Biblical Hebrew, we should pause and consider the varieties of the Hebrew language in antiquity. In the first half of the first millennium BCE (1000–500 BCE), one can imagine a variety of dialects and subdialects of Hebrew spread across the southern Levant. Ultimately, these dialects, in contact with Phoenician to the north and Aramaic to the east, would have exhibited different traits, partially dependent on their proximity to these other languages.[9] The northern varieties of Hebrew, as attested in inscriptional material, do, in fact, seem to attest certain features common to Phoenician, but distinct from the Hebrew of the southern region, that is, Judah. For example, the word "wine" is found in ostraca from Samaria written *yn* in the absolute state, reflecting presumably a resolved diphthong, *yēn*, while the same word is found in Judean texts spelled with a medial *yod*, presuming the preservation of the diphthong, *yyn* = **yayn*.[10] Scholars, especially Gary A. Rendsburg, have found traces of similar features in portions of the Bible.[11] The dialect of the Balaam or Deir ʿAlla inscription, on the other hand, evidences traits that are similar to Hebrew, though it mainly contains Aramaic-like features, reflecting in one way or another its presumed place of composition (and discovery): Transjordan (i.e., just east of the Jordan River, close to Aram-Damascus).[12] It is no wonder, therefore, that

9. On the dialect continuum of Syria-Palestine, see W. Randall Garr, *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000–586 B.C.E.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1985), 205–40.

10. See ibid., 38–39, and below "Triphthongs and Diphthongs," §3.12.

11. See Gary A. Rendsburg, "A Comprehensive Guide to Israelian Hebrew," *Or* 38 (2003): 5–35 and the references cited there.

12. See Holger Gzella, "Deir ʿAllā," *EHLL* 1:691–93. The inscription's mixture of traits may reflect an archaic, rural dialect; the dialect geography between the Canaanite west and Aramaic east; the shift in political dominance from Israel to Damascus. Note also Garr, *Dialect Geography*, 223–24; John Huehnergard, "Remarks on the Classification of the Northwest Semitic Languages," in *The Balaam Text from Deir ʿAlla Re-*

within the Bible itself we find numerous small differences between books, sources, and authors that are commonly dated to the first half of the first millennium BCE.

In addition to the different dialects reflective of geographic location, different varieties of the literary language are perceptible within the Bible. The Hebrew of the biblical corpus itself is typically divided into four different epochs: Archaic Biblical Hebrew, Standard Biblical Hebrew, Transitional Biblical Hebrew, and Late Biblical Hebrew.[13] The first three of these are commonly located between the years 1200–500 BCE. Standard Biblical Hebrew represents the language of most books of the Bible. Archaic Biblical Hebrew is exemplified in the the Song of Deborah (Judg 5), which contains much material that is typically considered both extremely old as well as reflective of northern Hebrew (e.g., some *qåṭal* 2fs [suffix-conjugation] verb forms end with **-tī* [as in Aramaic]: קָמְתִּי "you [Deborah] arose" Judg 5:7).[14] Transitional Biblical Hebrew is found in works that were composed close to or during the exile, such as Jeremiah.[15] Late Biblical Hebrew is found in books such as Daniel and Ezra, and is exemplified by numerous linguistic shifts that have parallels in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in rabbinic literature.[16]

Still, the vocalization of the text as we have it in the MT has likely been made uniform to a degree that largely masks most dialectical and many chronological differences.[17] So, for example, the archaic/northern/

evaluated: Proceedings of the International Symposium Held at Leiden, 21–24 August 1989, ed. J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 282–93; and Naʿama Pat-El and Aren Wilson-Wright, "Deir ʿAllā as a Canaanite Dialect: A Vindication of Hackett," in *Epigraphy, Philology, and the Hebrew Bible: Methodological Perspectives on Philological and Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of Jo Ann Hackett*, ed. Jeremy M. Hutton and Aaron D. Rubin, ANEM 12 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 13–23.

13. On the periodization of Biblical Hebrew and the difficulty of diachronic analysis, see Aaron Hornkohl, "Biblical Hebrew: Periodization," *EHLL* 1:315–25. Specific articles pertain to each of these varieties of the literary language.

14. Instead of קַמְתְּ. See Hornkohl, "Biblical Hebrew: Periodization," 1:318. See also Agustinus Gianto, "Archaic Biblical Hebrew," *HBH* 1:19–29; Alice Mandell, "Biblical Hebrew, Archaic," *EHLL* 1:325–29.

15. Aaron D. Hornkohl, "Transitional Biblical Hebrew," *HBH* 1:31–42; Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah*, SSLL 74 (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

16. See, e.g., Avi Hurvitz, "Biblical Hebrew, Late," *EHLL* 1:329–38; Matthew Morgenstern, "Late Biblical Hebrew," *HBH* 1:43–54.

17. See Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization*, 19–20.

Aramaic-like *qåṭal* second feminine singular ending *-*tī* found vocalized in Judg 5:7 seems also to be reflected in the consonantal text of other parts of the Bible, but frequently not in the vocalization (e.g., וְיֶרְדְתִּי "go down!" Ruth 3:3 and הָלַכְתִּי "you went" Jer 31:21).[18] In addition, even the consonantal text seems not to have been immune from alteration. It is likely that the spelling of words was also made uniform at a certain time, perhaps in the exilic era or just after.[19] Notice, for example, that the third masculine singular suffix on most nouns is almost uniformly marked with a *vav mater* in the MT, though in epigraphic sources from preexilic times, the same suffix is almost uniformly written with a *heh mater*. The *heh mater* as marker of the third masculine singular suffix becomes regular in epigraphic sources only in the postexilic era. This implies, of course, an updating of the orthography of biblical texts in the exilic or postexilic era.

In the second half of the first millennium BCE (ca. 500–1 BCE), in addition to LBH, one finds evidence of still other varieties of the language.[20] The Hebrew of the DSS evidences (in certain texts) traits that are distinct from any other dialect of Hebrew, while still maintaining a close proximity in other ways to earlier (Biblical) Hebrew.[21] Many of these texts were presumably written and certainly were copied in circa 200–1 BCE. Other loosely contemporary dialects were also written. The Hebrew evidenced in early rabbinic writings such as the Mishnah is foreshadowed in a few DSS (e.g., 4QMMT and 3Q15 [the Copper Scroll]). Later Judean Desert texts (e.g., the Bar Kochba texts from the 100s CE) exhibit a slightly different version of Hebrew.[22] In addition, Samaritan Hebrew was likely a distinct dialect (based on various textual, social, and political factors),

18. See GKC §44h.

19. See ibid., 72–73.

20. See Gary A. Rendsburg, "Biblical Hebrew: Dialects and Linguistic Variation," *EHLL* 1:338–41; Geoffrey Khan, "Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Background of the Masoretic Text," *EHLL* 1:304–15; Khan, "Biblical Hebrew: Pronunciation Traditions," *EHLL* 1:341–52.

21. See, e.g., Elisha Qimron, *Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, HSS 29 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986); Eric D. Reymond, *Qumran Hebrew: An Overview of Orthography, Phonology, and Morphology*, RBS 76 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014); Steven E. Fassberg, "Dead Sea Scrolls: Linguistic Features," *EHLL* 1:663–69; Jan Joosten, "The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *HBH* 1:83–97.

22. See Uri Mor, *Judean Hebrew: The Language of the Hebrew Documents from Judea between the First and Second Revolts* (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2016) (in Hebrew); also Mor, "Bar Kokhba Documents," *EHLL* 1:254–58.

though its details only become clear from evidence recorded in the early twentieth century CE (specifically the oral reading tradition of the Samaritan Pentateuch).[23] Nevertheless, this version of Biblical Hebrew seems to reflect traits from a much earlier era, as demonstrated by the second feminine singular *qåṭal* (suffix-conjugation) verb forms regularly ending with *-*ti*, as in the paradigmatic verb פקדת *fåqadti*.[24]

During the first millennium CE, in addition to the varieties of Rabbinic Hebrew, there were preserved different pronunciation traditions of Biblical Hebrew, including ones from the regions of Tiberias, Palestine, and Babylon.[25] The latter two are primarily known to us through their unique pointing and vocalization systems (the Palestinian and Babylonian) which reveal a different articulation of the vowels from that known to us from the Tiberian Masoretic system.[26]

Furthermore, for all times and places, we must recognize that the manner in which individuals read and spoke varied by context. An individual in a ritual context would speak in a manner very different from how he or she would speak in the context of discussing the weather with a friend. Similarly, that same individual would speak of the weather in one way, but probably write about it in yet another. Due to such variables, words were likely articulated in subtly different ways and sometimes these were reflected in the orthography while in other cases they were not.

23. Moshe Florentin, "Samaritan Hebrew: Biblical," *EHLL* 3:445–52; Florentin, "Samaritan Tradition," *HBH* 1:117–32.

24. Ze'ev Ben-Ḥayyim, *A Grammar of Samaritan Hebrew: Based on the Recitation of the Law in Comparison with the Tiberian and Other Jewish Traditions* (Jerusalem: Magnes; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 108. Ben-Ḥayyim notes that, although this trait might have been preserved due to Aramaic influence, it likely originates in Hebrew (103–4).

25. See Khan, "Biblical Hebrew: Pronunciation Traditions," 1:341–52; Khan, "Tiberian Reading Tradition," *EHLL* 3:769–78; Yosef Ofer, "The Tiberian Tradition of Reading the Bible and the Masoretic System," *HBH* 1:187–202; Shai Heijmans, "Babylonian Tradition," *HBH* 1:133–45; Joseph Yahalom, "Palestinian Tradition," *HBH* 1:161–73.

26. Note too the Tiberian-Palestinian tradition (see Holger Gzella, "Tiberian-Palestinian Tradition," *HBH* 1:175–85).