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HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS
AND BIBLICAL HEBREW

Steps Toward an Integrated Approach

HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS
AND BIBLICAL HEBREW
Steps Toward an Integrated Approach

Robert Rezetko
Ian Young

SBL Press

SBL Press
Atlanta

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Dedicated to Martin Ehrensvärd
with gratitude for a duodecad
of collaboration and friendship

*In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities,
but in the expert's there are few.*

Shunryu Suzuki

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Note to the Reader: One table (6.4) and eighteen figures (7.2; chapters 8–9, *passim*) in this volume include non-black/white colors, and we ask that the reader of the printed edition refer to the digital edition in order to fully appreciate these color graphics.

Acknowledgments

The present book had its beginning in papers we gave in sessions on “Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew” at a joint meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and the National Association of Professors of Hebrew in 2010. We originally intended for those papers to be published as articles in the volume of conference proceedings, *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew*, which was planned (as were the 2009 and 2010 conferences) and edited by Cynthia Miller-Naudé and Ziony Zevit, and which appeared near the end of 2012. After our articles were written, however, we decided that their length and content were more appropriate for a separate volume, and so we withdrew our articles from the collection and began to formulate them into this book instead. Looking back more than three years later we see clearly that our ideas and arguments have developed considerably. We probably would not have reached this point without the dialogue with other participants in the diachrony debate. We are grateful for the mutual interaction and we feel it has advanced the field of Biblical Hebrew scholarship.

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Robert Rezetko, Edinburgh
Ian Young, Sydney
August 2014

List of Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, D. N., ed. <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABH	Archaic Biblical Hebrew
AbrN	<i>Abr-Nahrain</i>
AbrNSup	Abr-Nahrain: Supplement Series
ANES	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Studies</i>
ANESSup	Ancient Near Eastern Studies: Supplement Series
AO	Der Alte Orient
AOS	American Oriental Series
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
AV	Authorized Version
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBS	Ben Hayyim, Z. <i>The Book of Ben Sira: Text, Concordance and an Analysis of the Vocabulary</i> (Hebrew). Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language. Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language and Shrine of the Book, 1973.
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 1907.
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentum
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BH	Biblical Hebrew
BHS	Elliger, K. and W. Rudolph, eds. <i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . 4th rev. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1990.
BHSCT	Young, I., ed. <i>Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology</i> . JSOTSup 369. London: T&T Clark, 2003.
BibOr	Biblica et orientalia
BICS	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>

- BIOSCS** *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*
- BKAT** Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
- BM** *Beit Mikra*
- BurH** Buried History
- BZAW** Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
- CahRB** Cahiers de la Revue biblique
- CBET** Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology
- CBH** Classical Biblical Hebrew
- CBQ** *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
- CBR** *Currents in Biblical Research*
- CEEC** *Corpus of Early English Correspondence*
(<http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/domains/CEEC.html>)
- CILT** Current Issues in Linguistic Theory
- CLIP** Corpus Linguistics and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Language
- Concise DCH** Clines, D. J. A., ed. *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009.
- CTVA** Cross-Textual Variable Analysis
- DBH** Miller-Naudé, C. and Z. Zevit, eds. *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew*. LSAWS 8. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012.
- DCH** Clines, D. J. A., ed. *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. 8 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993–2011.
- DJD** *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*. 40 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1955–2010.
- DSD** *Dead Sea Discoveries*
- DSS** Dead Sea Scrolls
- EBH** Early Biblical Hebrew
- EHLL** Khan, G., ed. *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- ELL** Brown, K., ed. *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. 14 vols. 2d ed. Philadelphia: Elsevier Science, 2006.
- EModE** Early Modern English
- ErIsr** *Eretz-Israel*
- FRLANT** Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
- GKC** Kautzsch, E., ed. and rev. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Translated and revised by A. E. Cowley. 2d ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910.
- HALOT** Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, eds. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000.

HAR	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HS	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
HSK	Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
JANES	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JEngL	<i>Journal of English Linguistics</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
JL	<i>Journal of Linguistics</i>
JM	Joüon, P. <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> . Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. Subsidia biblica 27. 2d ed. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2006.
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JNSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JPS	Jewish Publication Society Version
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods: Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KEHAT	Kurzgefasste exegetische Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KJV	King James Version
LAEME	<i>A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English</i> (http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/laeme1/laeme1.html)
LALME	<i>A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English</i> (http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme/elalme.html)
LBH	Late Biblical Hebrew
LDBT	Young, I., R. Rezetko, and M. Ehrensverd. <i>Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts, Volume 1: An Introduction to Approaches and Problems, Volume 2: A Survey of Scholarship, a New Synthesis and a Comprehensive Bibliography</i> . BibleWorld. London: Equinox, 2008.
Lesh	<i>Leshonenu</i>

LHBOTS	Library Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
<i>LingI</i>	<i>Linguistic Inquiry</i>
<i>LS</i>	<i>Louvain Studies</i>
LSAWS	Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic
<i>LSoc</i>	<i>Language in Society</i>
<i>LVC</i>	<i>Language Variation and Change</i>
LXX	Septuagint
MdB	Le Monde de la Bible
ME	Middle English
MH	Mishnaic Hebrew
ModE	Modern English
MT	Masoretic Text
MUTUEP	Münchener Universitätsschriften Texte und Untersuchungen zur Englischen Philologie
NAB	New American Bible
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	VanGemenen, W. A., ed. <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> . 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OE	Old English
OL	Old Latin
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
PCH	Peripheral Classical Hebrew
<i>QC</i>	<i>Qumran Chronicle</i>
QH	Qumran Hebrew
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RBL</i>	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
RH	Rabbinic Hebrew
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
SBH	Standard Biblical Hebrew
SBLAIL	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and Its Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSBL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLTCS	Society of Biblical Literature Text-Critical Studies

SCH	Standard Classical Hebrew
ScrHier	Scripta Hierosolymitana
SEMLL	Studies in English Medieval Language and Literature
SJ	Studia Judaica
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
<i>SLang</i>	<i>Studies in Language</i>
<i>SN</i>	<i>Studia Neophilologica</i>
SOTSM	Society for Old Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch
SRSIK	Studien zur romanischen Sprachwissenschaft und interkulturellen Kommunikation
SSLL	Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics
SSN	Studia semitica neerlandica
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia theologica</i>
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
Syr.	Syriac Peshitta
TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	Kittel, G. and G. Friedrich, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1964–1976.
<i>TDOT</i>	Botterweck, G. J., H. Ringgren, and H.-J. Fabry, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Translated by J. T. Willis, D. E. Green, G. W. Bromiley, and D. W. Stott. 15 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006.
TEL	Topics in English Linguistics
Tg.	Targum
TiLSM	Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs
<i>TLOT</i>	Jenni, E. and C. Westermann, eds. <i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated by M. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997.
TNK	JPS Tanakh
VA	Variationist Analysis
<i>VOT</i>	Andersen, F. I. and A. D. Forbes. <i>The Vocabulary of the Old Testament</i> . Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1992.
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
Vulg.	Latin Vulgate
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WO	Waltke, B. K. and M. O'Connor. <i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> . Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>

xx

Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew

ZAH

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. BACKGROUND

A convenient point to begin telling the story behind this book is in the 1990s with the so-called “maximalist” and “minimalist” (or “traditionalist” and “revisionist”) controversy.¹ It was then that we saw the publication of writings by Knauf,² Davies,³ and Cryer,⁴ which in one way or another looked to undermine the conventional linguistic chronology of preexilic Early (or Classical or Standard) Biblical Hebrew (EBH, CBH, or SBH) developing into postexilic Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH). To these, Ehrensverd⁵ and Hurvitz⁶ tried to offer strong rebuttals, emphasizing the relevance of external linguistic controls, such as the nature of the language of monarchic-era inscriptions and the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS). But these only managed to intensify the debate rather than resolve it, which in turn led to the publication of a pivotal collection of essays in a book edited by Young.⁷ The contributors later became known as,

¹ Before this time, in the 1970s and 1980s and earlier, arguments over the history of Biblical Hebrew centered mainly on the nature and date of the Priestly material in the Pentateuch.

² E. A. Knauf, “War ‘Biblisch-Hebräisch’ eine Sprache?,” *ZAH* 3 (1990): 11–23.

³ P. R. Davies, *In Search of ‘Ancient Israel’* (2d ed.; JSOTSup 148; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 97–101.

⁴ F. H. Cryer, “The Problem of Dating Biblical Hebrew and the Hebrew of Daniel,” in *In the Last Days: On Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic and Its Period* (ed. K. Jeppesen, K. Nielsen, and B. Rosendal; Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1994), 185–98.

⁵ M. Ehrensverd, “Once Again: The Problem of Dating Biblical Hebrew,” *SJOT* 11 (1997): 29–40.

⁶ A. Hurvitz, “The Historical Quest for ‘Ancient Israel’ and the Linguistic Evidence of the Hebrew Bible: Some Methodological Observations,” *VT* 47 (1997): 301–15.

⁷ I. Young, ed., *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology* (JSOTSup 369; London: T&T Clark, 2003).

in the words of Zevit, “consensus scholars” and “challengers.”⁸ But the dialogue did not end there either. It continued in three sessions of meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature in San Antonio (2004), Philadelphia (2005), and Vienna (2007), and the proceedings were published in the journal *Hebrew Studies*⁹ and in a book edited by Ben Zvi and others.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Young, Rezetko, and Ehrensverd who had unexpectedly abandoned the ship of the “consensus scholars” while descending Mt. Scopus in the late 1990s, wrote the two-volume work *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts (LDBT)*.¹¹ Our aim was to review and critique previous scholarship on the linguistic dating of biblical writings, and also to propose, on the basis of many case studies, a new perspective on the language of Biblical Hebrew (BH): not only is the linguistic dating of biblical writings unfeasible, but the distribution of linguistic data in the Masoretic Text (MT) of the Hebrew Bible suggests that EBH and LBH are better explained in general by a model of co-existing styles of literary Hebrew throughout the biblical period. It goes without saying that our argument in *LDBT* has not convinced everyone. Nevertheless our co-authored books provoked a second series of interchanges in another five sessions of meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature in New Orleans (2009) and Atlanta (2010). The proceedings of those sessions, and some additional contributions, have been published in a book edited by Miller-Naudé and Zevit.¹² At the same time that book was being put together, Hornkohl and Kim

⁸ Z. Zevit, review of I. Young, ed., *Biblical Hebrew: Studies in Chronology and Typology*, *RBL* 8 (2004) (<http://www.bookreviews.org>).

⁹ *HS* 46 (2005): 321–76; 47 (2006): 83–210.

¹⁰ E. Ben Zvi, D. V. Edelman, and F. H. Polak, eds., *A Palimpsest: Rhetoric, Ideology, Stylistics and Language Relating to Persian Israel* (Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts 5; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2009).

¹¹ I. Young, R. Rezetko, and M. Ehrensverd, *Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts, Volume 1: An Introduction to Approaches and Problems, Volume 2: A Survey of Scholarship, a New Synthesis and a Comprehensive Bibliography* (BibleWorld; London: Equinox, 2008).

¹² C. Miller-Naudé and Z. Zevit, eds., *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew* (LSAWS 8; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012). The editors acknowledge that the impetus for the conference sessions and collection of articles was *LDBT* (C. Miller-Naudé and Z. Zevit, “Preface,” in *DBH*, xi). There were five sessions, not four as stated by the editors in the preface, which were co-sponsored by the Society of Biblical Literature and the National Association of Professors of Hebrew, and there were twenty speakers: 2009: two sessions, nine presentations (Zevit, Drescher, Naudé, and Holmstedt; Polak, Cook, Forbes, Paul, and Joosten); 2010: three sessions, eleven presentations (Bar-Asher Siegal, Ehrensverd, Roger Good [not included in *DBH*], and Notarius; Rezetko [not submitted to *DBH*], David Emanuel [not included in *DBH*], Bloch, and Cohen; Pat-El, Young [not submitted to *DBH*], and Hurvitz).

completed and published Ph.D. dissertations related to the topic.¹³ It is clear that *LDBT* has kicked up a lot of dust among Hebraists and biblicists.¹⁴

In spite of its historical precursors, it is crucial that we state clearly and emphatically that *the core of the present book is not an extension or defense of LDBT's main ideas or a rejoinder to the responses to LDBT*.¹⁵ *LDBT* was

¹³ A. D. Hornkohl, "The Language of the Book of Jeremiah and the History of the Hebrew Language" (Hebrew; Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 2011), published as idem, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah: The Case for a Sixth-Century Date of Composition* (SSLL 74; Leiden: Brill, 2014); D.-H. Kim, "The Use of Linguistic Evidence in the Dating of Biblical Hebrew Texts: A Sociolinguistic Evaluation" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2011), published as idem, *Early Biblical Hebrew, Late Biblical Hebrew, and Linguistic Variability: A Sociolinguistic Evaluation of the Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts* (VTSup 156; Leiden: Brill, 2013).

¹⁴ Many have interacted with the books, praising or criticizing, agreeing or disagreeing, sometimes misunderstanding or misrepresenting the content or argumentation. Leaving private emails to the side, we are aware of well over one-hundred sources of interaction, including conference sessions, course syllabi, personal blogs, discussion groups and mailing lists (Ancient Near East 2, Biblical Studies, B-Hebrew), online journals (*The Bible and Interpretation*), M.A. theses and Ph.D. dissertations, journal articles and books, ongoing theses and dissertations, and other research projects underway. Aside from brief entries in journal announcements and booklists (*DTT*, *JSOT*, *ZAW*, *ZBG*), we are aware of the following full-scale reviews: S. Holst, *JSOT* 24 (2010): 145–48; J. Joosten, *Babel und Bibel* 6 (2012): 535–42; M. Wang, *OTE* 24 (2011): 533–46; and Z. Zevit, "Not-So-Random Thoughts on Linguistic Dating and Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew," in *DBH*, 455–89. Hendel interacts with *LDBT* in an informal context: R. Hendel, "Unhistorical Hebrew Linguistics: A Cautionary Tale," *The Bible and Interpretation* (September 2011) (<http://www.bibleinterp.com/opeds/hen358022.shtml>). Forbes focuses on *LDBT*'s test of accumulation: A. D. Forbes, "The Diachrony Debate: Perspectives from Pattern Recognition and Meta-Analysis," *HS* 53 (2012): 7–42. As for the criticisms, the most frequent ones are that *LDBT* (supposedly) is anti-diachronic in its outlook, lacks or abuses historical linguistic theory and method, misrepresents or exaggerates the fluidity of language during the Hebrew Bible's long history of composition and transmission, and has a problematic explanation related to "style"; and then there are various sorts of cherry picking, red herring, straw man, and *ad hominem* arguments. On the other hand, it is unfortunate that some major studies proceed as if there has been no controversy at all in recent decades, or pretend that *LDBT* had never been published (cf. the remark in Zevit, "Not-So-Random," 457). Two recent examples that proceed silently or dismissively are O. Cohen, *The Verbal System in Late Biblical Hebrew* (trans. A. Aronsky; HSS; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013); W. M. Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew: Its Origins through the Rabbinic Period* (AYBRL; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

¹⁵ For our replies to some of the writings mentioned above, see appendix 3, and M. Ehrensverd, "Diachronic Change in the Biblical Hebrew Verbal System," in *DBH*, 181–92; R. Rezetko, review of R. M. Wright, *Linguistic Evidence for the Pre-Exilic Date of the Yahwistic Source*, *JTS* 60 (2009): 605–9; idem, "What Happened to the Book of

principally a book about the *linguistic dating* of Biblical Hebrew *texts* (or *writings*).¹⁶ This book is about the *historical linguistics* of Biblical Hebrew

Samuel in the Persian Period and Beyond?," in *A Palimpsest: Rhetoric, Ideology, Stylistics and Language Relating to Persian Israel* (ed. E. Ben Zvi, D. V. Edelman, and F. H. Polak; Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts 5; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2009), 237–52; idem, "The Spelling of 'Damascus' and the Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts," *SJOT* 24 (2010): 110–28; idem, "Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew: Review of an Approach from the Perspective of Paraleipomenon" (review-essay of R. B. Good, *The Septuagint's Translation of the Hebrew Verbal System in Chronicles*), *HS* 52 (2011): 397–409; idem, "Evaluating a New Approach to the Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts" (review-essay of D.-H. Kim, *Early Biblical Hebrew, Late Biblical Hebrew, and Linguistic Variability: A Sociolinguistic Evaluation of the Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts*), *JHS* 13 (2013) (<http://www.jhsonline.org>); idem, "The Qumran Scrolls of the Book of Judges: Literary Formation, Textual Criticism, and Historical Linguistics," *JHS* 13 (2013) (<http://www.jhsonline.org>); idem, "The (Dis)Connection between Textual and Linguistic Developments in the Book of Jeremiah: Hebrew Bible Textual Criticism Challenges Biblical Hebrew Historical Linguistics," in *Empirical Models Challenging Biblical Criticism* (ed. R. F. Person, Jr. and R. Rezetko; SBLAIL; Atlanta: SBL Press, forthcoming); R. Rezetko, I. Young, and M. Ehrensävär, "A Very Tall 'Cautionary Tale': A Response to Ron Hendel," *The Bible and Interpretation* (September 2011) (<http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/rez358028.shtml>); I. Young, "Late Biblical Hebrew and the Qumran Peshier Habakkuk," *JHS* 8 (2008) (<http://www.jhsonline.org>); idem, "Is the Prose Tale of Job in Late Biblical Hebrew?," *VT* 59 (2009): 606–29; idem, "What Is 'Late Biblical Hebrew'?", in *A Palimpsest: Rhetoric, Ideology, Stylistics and Language Relating to Persian Israel* (ed. E. Ben Zvi, D. V. Edelman, and F. H. Polak; Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts 5; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2009), 265–80; idem, "Collectives: Biblical Hebrew," in *EHLL* 1:477–79; idem, "'Loose' Language in 1QIsa^a," in *Keter Shem Tov: Essays on the Dead Sea Scrolls in Memory of Alan Crown* (ed. S. Tzoref and I. Young; Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts 20; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2013), 89–112; idem, "Patterns of Linguistic Forms in the Masoretic Text: The Preposition ׀ 'From,'" in *Interested Readers: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David J. A. Clines* (ed. J. K. Aitken, J. M. S. Clines, and C. M. Maier; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 385–400; idem, "The Greek Loanwords in the Book of Daniel," in *Greek through the Ages* (ed. T. V. Evans and J. Aitken; Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming).

¹⁶ Several important clarifications in *LDBT* in this regard are often overlooked by our critics: "[W]e have limited the scope of our work to linguistic dating of biblical texts. We will not say much about the relative dating of linguistic features, or linguistic change, except when it pertains to the dating of the texts" (*LDBT* 1:4); "Note that historical linguistics, rather than the dating of texts, is much more commonly concerned with the relative dating of linguistic features, i.e. linguistic change, and the mechanisms of such change..." (*LDBT* 1:61 n. 32); and of course we did not deny language variation and (ongoing) change in ancient Hebrew: "It is an axiom of linguistics that languages change over time" (*LDBT* 2:94). Again we refer the reader to appendix 3 where we discuss some misunderstandings and misrepresentations of *LDBT*.

language (linguistic forms and uses). The framework of *LDBT* was the marginal discipline of “linguistic dating of texts” as practiced by some Hebraists and biblicists. The framework of this book is historical linguistics, a major area of research in the humanities and social sciences that is applied to countless premodern and modern languages, ranging from Akkadian in ancient Iraq to Zuni in modern New Mexico. For reasons we discuss in chapter 2 these different fields of research, linguistic dating and historical linguistics, are altogether different topics and they are based on completely different theoretical and methodological foundations. The present book does, however, develop in detail several of the ancillary matters in *LDBT*. First we summarize those matters and others which together constitute the *central issues* of this book (1.2). Then we describe the *specific objectives* of the monograph (1.3). Finally we present the new terminology we use for describing the broad contours of language variation in ancient Hebrew (1.4).

1.2. ISSUES

We should begin the discussion of central concepts and practices which lie at the core of this book by underlining several matters that are not in doubt or under consideration. First, along with many Hebraists and biblicists we acknowledge the literary antiquity and complexity of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁷ The writings that make up the Hebrew Bible have their roots in at least the early monarchic period in the early first millennium B.C.E., and the long and complicated history of production, which involved the telling, writing, editing, and copying of the biblical stories, lasted until early in the Common Era. Second, ancient Hebrew, spoken and written, was not a static entity that never changed. “All languages change all the time (except dead ones). Language change is just a fact of life; it cannot be prevented or avoided.”¹⁸ Campbell’s pronouncement is equally true for ancient Hebrew. And there is no doubt in our minds that the history of Hebrew is reflected in the Hebrew Bible. Third, the theories and methods of contemporary historical linguistics can and should be applied to ancient Hebrew in general and the language of the Hebrew Bible in particular. And it is precisely here, in the application of historical linguistics to the language of biblical writings, where this book seeks to make headway. We believe, however, that progress will come only on the heels of thoughtful and thorough consideration, in a historical linguistic framework, of key theoretical and methodological issues and questions such as those that follow.

¹⁷ See, for example, D. M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁸ L. Campbell, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (3d ed.; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 3.

Objective. What is the normal objective of diachronic linguistic research? Is it descriptive or prescriptive? Is its focus on linguistic description or linguistic dating? What are the differences between historical linguistics and linguistic dating? What circumstances would there have to be for the prescriptive undertaking of linguistic dating to be possible?

Sources. What counts as evidence in historical linguistics? What are the inherent limitations of using old writings as sources of data in historical linguistic analysis? What problems are introduced when the sources of data are non-authentic, composite, and/or unsituated in time and place? What importance do historical linguists give to the evaluation of the quantity and quality of the sources of the data? How much does the nature of the sources matter? Do all sources have equal value? Does it matter whether the sources of data are literary or non-literary (documentary)? What is the normal attitude of historical linguists toward literary writings and religious literature in particular? To what degree are literary writings amenable to historical linguistic analysis? How much attention should be paid to the text type, genre, degree of poeticality and/or orality, and so on, of the sources? What is the place of philology in historical linguistic theory and method? And so on.

Variation. What is language variation? What kinds of variation occur in language? What extra-linguistic/independent factors condition language variation? What is the difference between stable, unstable, and stabilized language variation? How can language variation in particular writings and corpora of writings be empirically defined in terms of quantity and quality? How important is it to control for dialect, text type, genre, and other parameters in studies of language variation? What is the relationship between language variation in speech and language variation in writing? To what degree do written sources, especially literary sources, constrain language variation? What are reliable sample sizes and token frequencies for analyses of language variation? How does language variation in individual speakers/writers relate to language variation in groups of speakers/writers? What is language change? What is the difference between language “change,” “innovation,” “diffusion,” and related terminology? What kinds of change occur in language? What is the difference between conscious and unconscious language change and why does it matter? What is the relationship between language variation and language change? And so on.

Periodization. What is a language period(s) (or phase, stage, state)? Is the idea of a language period even valid? How can a language period be isolated? What set of linguistic facts should exist in order to establish empirically a language period? What degree of linguistic heterogeneity is acceptable to be able to continue to talk about a language period? How does the language of individual speakers/writers relate to the language of a language period as a whole? How little or much time can a language period be? How do language

variation and (ongoing) change relate to language periodization? What is a language transition(s)? Is the idea of a language transition even valid? How can a language transition be isolated? And so on.

1.3. OBJECTIVES

This book does not look to address, much less to give exhaustive treatments, of all the abovementioned issues and questions; nor does it aim to be a general introduction to the theories and methods of historical linguistics or language variation and change. Rather, our objectives are more modest and more focused on issues which we deem crucial for diachronic linguistic research on BH. We have three main goals in this book.

First, we explore the *objective* and *sources* of historical linguistics and the *variation* and *periodization* of language, from both theoretical and methodological standpoints, and from cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary perspectives. We begin by examining these issues largely independent of the writings, theories, and methods of Hebraists and biblicists (chapter 2; parts of 4 and 7), and then we look more closely at the relevance of our findings for BH (chapters 3–10). In particular, we aim to underline what we believe are significant shortcomings in research on the history of BH, and suggest some prospective solutions to these problems.

Second, having explored general issues related to language variation and change (chapter 2), we introduce and illustrate several methods which can advance and enrich historical linguistic research on BH: *cross-textual variable analysis* (CTVA; chapters 4–6) and *variationist analysis* (VA; chapters 7–9). A summary of modern-day text-critical perspectives on the Hebrew Bible is an essential prelude to CTVA (chapter 3). The first method we introduce, CTVA, compares language variations in different versions of the same writing. The CTVA includes a general introduction to theory and method and various non-biblical illustrations (chapter 4). The second chapter on CTVA looks at language variations in a series of synoptic passages in the MT (chapter 5).¹⁹ The third chapter on CTVA focuses on language variations in manuscripts/witnesses of the book of Samuel (chapter 6).²⁰ The second method we introduce, VA, compares changing proportions of occurrence of two or more language variables in different writings. The VA includes a general introduction to theory and method and extra-biblical illustrations (chapter 7). Assorted VA lexical and grammatical studies follow in the next two chapters, respectively (chapters 8–9). In addition to exploring language variation and change, the application of CTVA

¹⁹ 2 Sam 22//Ps 18, 1 Kgs 22//2 Chr 18, 2 Kgs 18–20//Isa 36–39, and 2 Kgs 24–25//Jer 52.

²⁰ The MT, Qumran scrolls of Samuel (1QSam, 4QSam^a, 4QSam^b, 4QSam^c), and selected data in the Septuagint (LXX).

and VA to BH helps to clarify the nature of these (literary/religious) sources of ancient Hebrew.

The stimulus for the chapters on CTVA and VA is the notion that the determination of facts (or data) precedes the articulation of theories (or ideas).²¹ Our contention is that much theorizing on the history of BH has been based more on extra-linguistic assumptions, intuitions, and ideologies than on the linguistic details of the biblical writings themselves. Any theory of the history and periodization of BH must take account of at least two sorts of linguistic facts: variation of forms/uses in the MT Bible (VA) and variation between the MT and other textual traditions (CTVA). Therefore this book is more than “mop-up work” of any paradigm, whether ours or others’. It is mainly about data-mining. As such our focus is on the question of *what* rather than *why* (causes) and *how* (mechanisms).²²

Third, we operate from cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary perspectives. On the one hand, we include insights not only from general historical linguistics but also, to varying degrees, from studies of other Ancient Near Eastern and Indo-European languages.²³ On the other hand, our fact-gathering incorporates a

²¹ The application of the scientific method to language involves the following steps: gather and observe some data, make some generalizations about patterns in the data, develop hypotheses that account for these generalizations, test the hypotheses against more data, and revise and retest the hypotheses to account for any new data. See A. Carnie, *Syntax: A Generative Introduction* (3d ed.; Introducing Linguistics 4; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 7–18.

²² Clearly we must establish the linguistic facts before we attempt to explain them. See J. M. Anderson, *Structural Aspects of Language Change* (Longman Linguistics Library 13; London: Longman, 1973), 1–2; Campbell, *Historical*, 322–23. In addition, the explanation of linguistic facts requires input from various other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, such as history, archaeology, geography, anthropology, psychology, and sociology, and such an undertaking is a step beyond this book’s intentions. Finally, Drescher claims that a “model” of the history of BH is needed in order to use linguistic criteria to date the biblical writings (B. E. Drescher, “Methodological Issues in the Dating of Linguistic Forms: Considerations from the Perspective of Contemporary Linguistic Theory,” in *DBH*, 19–38 [23, 35]). However, this book deals with historical linguistics instead of linguistic dating, and in historical linguistic theory the determination of facts naturally precedes the articulation of theories (or models).

²³ The cross-linguistic approach we have in mind here is not the comparative method, diachronic typology, and so on. Rather, the idea is that comparison with historical linguistic study of other languages (comparative historical “linguisticography”), that is, what is done, and how and why, may provide helpful analogies for supporting and/or correcting theoretical and methodological aspects of diachronic linguistic research on ancient Hebrew. See the remarks on various languages in *LDBT* 1:46–47, 61–62, as well as the use of premodern English in Drescher, “Methodological.” The cross-linguistic approach can be considered an extension of the principle of uniformity.

joint “history of texts–history of language” approach (i.e., CTVA; chapters 4–6) and also the quantitative approach of variationist historical sociolinguistics (i.e., VA; chapters 7–9). We are setting our aim high, but not unreasonably or unrealistically so. Kabatek’s comment on the study of the history of Spanish—a topic we return to later—articulates our thoughts well and gets to the heart of this book:

The postulated reform of historical linguistics [which combines the history of texts and the history of language] may seem utopian or too complex if on the one hand it includes a variationist perspective and on the other discursive traditions [= the history of texts] are taken into account. But we think that the proposal, although it complicates things, does not complicate them in an arbitrary and artificial way, but rather by proposing a more adequate [research] model, *justified by the objects themselves and, therefore, corresponding to the most fundamental objective of scientific study*.²⁴

The motivation behind the integrated or interdisciplinary approach to the history of BH which we are proposing is rooted mainly in our experience working with scribally-created writings, whether with literary-critical, text-critical, or historical linguistic intentions. Perhaps an equally important factor, however, is the growing unease we have felt while participating in the linguistic dating/historical linguistics debate of the past decade. Our sense is that meaningful conversation, and determined collaboration, between Hebraists and biblicists, historical linguists, literary critics, and textual critics, and so on, is long overdue. Several scholars have argued that literary- and/or text-critical studies should pay more attention to historical linguistics.²⁵ We have frequently

²⁴ J. Kabatek, “Las tradiciones discursivas del español medieval: historia de textos e historia de la lengua,” *Iberoromania* 62 (2005): 28–43 (41; emphasis added). The original statement is: “La postulada reforma de la lingüística histórica [que combina la historia de los textos y la historia de la lengua] parece a lo mejor utópica o demasiado compleja si por un lado se incluye una perspectiva variacionista y por otro lado se tienen en cuenta las TD [tradiciones discursivas]. Pero pensamos que la propuesta, aunque complique las cosas, no las complica de manera arbitraria y artificial, sino proponiendo un modelo más adecuado, justificado desde los objetos mismos y, entonces, correspondiente al objetivo más fundamental del estudio científico.”

²⁵ R. D. Holmstedt, “The Nexus between Textual Criticism and Linguistics: A Case Study from Leviticus,” *JBL* 132 (2013): 473–94; J. Joosten, “Textual Developments and Historical Linguistics,” in *After Qumran: Old and Modern Editions of the Biblical Texts—The Historical Books* (ed. H. Ausloos, B. Lemmelijn, and J. Treballe Barrera; BETL 246; Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 21–31; idem, “Textual History and Linguistic Developments: The Doublet in 2 Kgs 8:28–29 // 9:15–16 in Light of 2 Chr 22:5–6,” in *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scrolls Studies in Honour of Julio Treballe Barrera: Florilegium Complutense* (ed. A. Piquer Otero and P. Torijano Morales; JSJSup 157; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 133–45.

said that historical linguistics should not (in fact, cannot) proceed apart from literary and textual criticism.²⁶ But, given especially the nature of the sources of data for ancient Hebrew, this really should not be an either/or effort. That it is often one-dimensional is partly due to this or that scholar's feeling that one discipline is more objective or authoritative than another, but it is also one of the harmful effects of specialization. Our hope is that this book has some success in "communicating across the academic divide."²⁷

1.4. TERMINOLOGY

In this book we usually talk about particular linguistic items and the specific writings and manuscripts where they appear. And we focus mainly on BH. Sometimes, however, it is helpful to speak about linguistic forms/uses in terms of their occurrence in the entire corpus of ancient Hebrew writings. Following some others, we have decided to use the phrase "Classical Hebrew" for the four premishnaic corpora: the Hebrew inscriptions, Ben Sira, the DSS, and the Hebrew Bible.²⁸ Furthermore, although it is customary to speak about two main types or periods of Biblical Hebrew, Golden Age or Early, Classical, or Standard BH on the one hand, and Silver Age or Late BH on the other,²⁹ we will sometimes use "Classical Hebrew" and speak instead about linguistic forms/uses that are "standard" in the classical corpus and others that are "peripheral" or "non-standard" in the same corpus.³⁰ By forms/uses that are "peripheral" or

²⁶ For example: "The text-critical dimension of language study has too often been ignored in biblical scholarship. Yet it is, logically, an issue that must be discussed before any conclusions are drawn from the extant texts" (I. Young, "Concluding Reflections," in *BHSCT*, 312–17 [312]).

²⁷ M. H. Strober, "Communicating Across the Academic Divide," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (<http://chronicle.com/article/Communicating-Across-the/125769/>; cited January 2, 2011); cf. idem, *Interdisciplinary Conversations: Challenging Habits of Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

²⁸ *DCH* 1:14, 30–66; J. F. Elwolde, "Developments in Hebrew Vocabulary between Bible and Mishnah," in *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira: Proceedings of a Symposium Held at Leiden University 11–14 December 1995* (ed. T. Muraoka and J. F. Elwolde; STDJ 26; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 17–55 (48–55); W. Th. van Peursen, *The Verbal System in the Hebrew Text of Ben Sira* (SSL 41; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1–5, 401–2. Schniedewind, *Social*, 5–6, also includes early Rabbinic Hebrew in his corpus of Classical Hebrew.

²⁹ For additional terminology see *LDBT* 1:7. Here we are setting aside the small corpus of so-called Archaic Biblical Hebrew (ABH) writings.

³⁰ Other descriptions might be normative, common, central vs. non-normative, uncommon, non-central, marginal. Of course in reality ancient Hebrew was more complex than even the conventional three-stage model allows (chronologically, regionally, and otherwise). See, for example, the discussion of "The Linguistic Status of

“non-standard” in the classical corpus, we mean those that are considered to characterize “Late Biblical Hebrew,” which we here label “Peripheral Classical Hebrew.” So, in summary, we sometimes refer to “Standard Classical Hebrew” (SCH) and “Peripheral Classical Hebrew” (PCH) throughout this book.

At this point we need to make several clarifications. First, we are not using “standard” and “peripheral” as they appear in studies of dialect geography or historical dialectology. Rather, SCH and PCH are merely *descriptive* labels for linguistic items which occur more or less frequently in the surviving written specimens of ancient Hebrew. Second, SCH and PCH are general tags, subjective labels, which we do not intend to quantify, since ultimately we feel it is more productive to speak about specific (and sometimes normalized and proportional) numbers of linguistic items in particular writings and manuscripts. Third, using PCH instead of LBH allows us to circumvent persistent confusion over the meanings and connotations of “late” and LBH as well as judgmental views of LBH as something “less-than-classical.” For example, very often it is the case that scholars label some linguistic item as “LBH” when that item occurs infrequently in the postexilic writings of Esther–Chronicles or does not appear there even once.³¹

Biblical or Ancient Hebrew” in R. Holmstedt, “Issues in the Linguistic Analysis of a Dead Language, with Particular Reference to Ancient Hebrew,” *JHS* 6 (2006) (<http://www.jhsonline.org>). We look closely at the issue of periodization in chapter 2 (2.5) and chapter 9 (9.5).

³¹ We have discussed this issue in many publications. As an example—it is simple to cite many other examples in the writings of many other scholars—Pat-El has written about several syntactic changes from “CBH” to “LBH.” One of those changes, the rise of the causal subordination particle on the basis of *šel-* alongside other particles such as *כי*, appears only twice in BH, in Jonah 1:9 (*בְּאִשֶּׁר לִי*) and Qoh 8:17 (*בְּשֵׁל אִשֶּׁר*), and never in the “late” or “LBH” books of Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. For the full discussion see N. Pat-El, “Syntactic Aramaisms as a Tool for the Internal Chronology of Biblical Hebrew,” in *DBH*, 245–63 (254–59). Pat-El’s argument that the “distribution [in Jonah, Qoheleth, and various Aramaic and post-Classical Hebrew sources] makes it a perfect candidate for an Aramaism” is plausible, but her further comment that “it replaces an earlier particle” is problematic (*ibid.*, 258). We might ask in what sense do two occurrences in all of BH of the *šel-* construction *replace* *כי* (not counting other particles) when the latter appears thousands of times in BH, in “early” and “late” writings alike, including hundreds of times in the books of Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles where the *šel-* construction is *unattested*? Furthermore, we would argue, even if the use of this feature in Jonah and Qoheleth is late, it has only minimal value for establishing the internal chronology of BH, or for the “linguistic dating” of biblical writings to the late or postexilic period (*ibid.*, *passim*), since none of the “early” books of Genesis–Kings or even the undisputed “late” books of Esther–Chronicles have this construction.