# Hebrew Study Notes

The following Study Notes have been prepared to assist students who have studied, or are studying, Greek but who need some basic orientation to Hebrew in preparation for taking Biblical Exegesis (BIBL 503).

Note that there will no longer be a test prior to BIBL 503 to examine students' knowledge of this material. The assignments in BIBL 503 will do that.

### **BIBL 503: HEBREW LANGUAGE PRELIMINARY MATERIALS**

These notes introduce very basic data about Biblical Hebrew, knowledge of which is prerequisite for students seeking admission to BIBL 503 without prior credit from courses that cover this information in greater detail (e.g., LANG 510, 500). They also provide some rudimentary descriptions and illustrations of English grammatical terms for those to whom these are not familiar. The data on the phonetic and writing system in the first section (I) should be memorized as thoroughly as possible, since it is fundamental to all discussions based upon the Hebrew text. The following sections (II-III) should be read carefully with a view to understanding the main grammatical constituents of the language, which will be alluded to frequently in exegesis of the Hebrew Bible; you should be able to make use of these in conjunction with basic Hebrew language tools such as those cited below in IV.

Needless to say, this overview is highly abbreviated. For students wishing fuller information, most of the topics are accompanied by cross-references to two introductory grammars: Allen P. Ross, Introducing Biblical Hebrew (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), abbreviated IBH; and Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, Basics of Biblical Hebrew: Grammar (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), abbreviated BBHG. These and similar grammars are readily available in the Regent-Carey library. In addition, a somewhat fuller version of these notes is available from the Registrar for those not daunted by detail. Another resource that may be helpful for a conceptual understanding of the language (albeit rather technical at points) is that of Gary A. Long, Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Hebrew: Learning Biblical Hebrew Grammatical Concepts through English Grammar (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), abbreviated here as GC 101. Similarly, a more extensive discussion of grammatical categories (such as case, gender, tense and verbal stems) may be found in Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), abbreviated IBHS.

### I. Writing System, and Pronunciation (Phonology)

# 1. Introduction (IBH: 33-34, cf. 11-16, 19-20; IBHS: 22-28)

The Hebrew writing system differs significantly from English in that its alphabet essentially indicates only **consonants**. In addition, the direction of writing is right to left.

Vowels were originally not indicated in the writing system (they were, of course, pronounced in speech). Later, they were incorporated into the written Hebrew Bible in two stages: firstly, three consonants (h, w, y) were used not only to represent consonants but also to mark certain vowels in words, being known as 'vowel letters' in this latter usage; secondly, at a much later stage, vowels were attached to all syllables by means of diacritics known as 'vowel points' - this is the stage of Hebrew represented by the Hebrew Bible (the Massoretic Text). Since it incorporated rather than displaced the preceding system of vowel letters, vowels were often indicated by both a vowel letter and vowel points in conjunction with each other.

# 2. Consonants (IBH: 19-32, 63-64; BBHG: 1-5; GC 101: 7-12)

The following table represents the 23 Hebrew consonants, based upon 22 letter forms, in terms of (1) printed form; (2) handwritten form, which will be more variable (letters will normally be written beginning at the top); (3) transliteration, i.e. a sign derived from the English alphabet conventionally used as the equivalent of the Hebrew letter (transliteration conventions vary in some details); (4) name of the consonant (precise spelling of the names varies, depending upon how precisely they are transliterated from Hebrew - see following section for the value of vowel transliterations); (5) approximate pronunciation. Most of the consonants are of a uniform height, and many have a comparable square shape. Note that the following 6 letters differ in pronunciation, depending on whether they are accompanied by a dot (known as dagesh lene) or not (if preceded by a vowel): b, g, d, k, p, t. Five letters have a modified form at the end of a word: k, m, n, p, s. Three guttural (formed in the throat) consonants are unfamiliar from an English perspective, particularly the third: s, s, s, and s.

Printed	Written	<u>Translit.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Pronunciation</u>
×	×	,	'Ále <u>p</u>	no perceptible pronunciation (compare English silent /h/ as in heir, light)
<u> </u>	E	b	Bê <u>t</u>	as English b in bet, tab
ב		<u>b</u>		as English v in vet, give
<b>a</b>	λ	g	Gîmel	as English get, beg
٦		<u>g</u>		as English ghetto. Alternative transliteration: $\overline{g}$
7	<u> </u>	d	Dále <u>t</u>	as English den, bed
7	•	<u>d</u>		as English then, mother
n .	ה	h	Hē	as English hen. Note that, in the rare situations where the consonant occur at the end of a word, it is written wit an internal dot, as a. On usage as vowel letter, see below
٦	٦	W	Wāw	as English wet, towing. On usage as vowel letter, see below
ĭ	7	Z	Záyin	as English zoo, ooze
П	ח	ḥ	Ḥē <u>t</u>	as Scottish loch, German Bach
מ	ט	ţ	Ţē <u>t</u>	approximately as English ten, bu originally different from n (below, l consonant)

7	٦	у	Yō <u>d</u>	as English yet, saying, . On usage as a vowel letter, see below
<b>⊃</b>	<b>3</b>	k	Kap	as English ken, take
٥		<u>k</u>		as German ich
٦/٦	7	k/ <u>k</u>		final forms, at end of word (usually $\underline{k}$ )
ל	ל	1	Lắme <u>d</u>	as English let, tell
מ	D	m	Mēm	as English mate, tame
מ	Ħ	m		final form, at end of word; pronounced as a
ב	ן כ	n	Nûn	as English not, ton
7	•	n		final form, at end of word; pronounced as 1
٥	Ø	S	Sấme <u>k</u>	as English seal, lease
ע	אר	6	ʻÁyin	a guttural sound with no English or Indo-European equivalent; approximately as in the exclamation "Aagh" or hard; often pronounced silent, as 'Alep
Ð	Ð	p	Pē(h)	as English pat, tap
פֿ		<u>p</u>		as English fit, lift. Alternative transliteration: $\overline{p}$
η	7	<u>p</u>		final form, at end of word; pronounced as 5
Z	ک	Ş	Ṣā́ <u>d</u> e(h)	approximately as English -ts, e.g., at sight, cats; and German Zeit
r	7	Ş		final form, at end of word; pronounced as y
7	P	q	Qō <u>p</u>	approximately as English plaque; usually pronounced as 3
٦	Ť	r	Rēŝ	as English rat, tar
w	v	Ś	Śîn	approximately as English seal, lease (i.e. typically pronounced like D); originally closer to English flashlight or sluice
ψ̈́	$\dot{\psi}$	š	Ŝîn	as English shop, posh; note that Śîn/Ŝîn are distinguished graphically

only by the position of the dot above the letter (thus, from a formal point of view, the alphabet as exemplified by acrostics such as Psalm 119 contains only 22 consonants) as English tame, mate

ħ	N	t	Tāw	as English tame, mate
ת		<u>t</u>		as English thin, pith

### 3. Vowels (IBH: 33-39, 43-45; BBHG: 8-14; GC 101: 12-15)

The Hebrew system of vowelling consists essentially of five pairs of vowels, conventionally differentiated as short and long (e.g., a/ā); they are presented in this way below, with the short vowel first. Each vowel is typically indicated by one or more small dots or lines placed under the consonant that it is pronounced after. In some cases they are optionally combined with a vowel letter (',',',), the pronunciation remaining the same: use of the vowel letter in such cases is known as full or plene writing; when the vowel letter is omitted, it is known as defective writing. As in the case of the consonants, the table below provides conventional but not universal spelling of names and phonetic representations; the consonant \( \text{\t

Printed	Translit.	Name	Pronunciation
ā	a	Pá <u>t</u> aḥ	as English <b>u</b> p, French <b>à</b> la carte; alternatively, as English <b>a</b> pple. E.g., בַּׁחַל, náḥal
Ţ	ā	Qāmeş	as English father, park. E.g., דְּבֶר, dābār
בָּה	ā(h)	Qấmeṣ-Hē	as qāmeṣ alone; only found at the end of a word. E.g., בְּנָה, $b\bar{a}n\bar{a}(h)$ . Alternative transliterations: $\hat{a}$ ; or (ambiguously) $\bar{a}h$
בָּי	ā(y)	Qấmeṣ-Yō <u>d</u>	as qāmeṣ; found in certain very restricted contexts. E.g., בְּנִיו, bānā(y)w. Alternative transliterations: (ambiguously) â, āy

Ĵ	e	S <sup>e</sup> gôl	as English yet, event. E.g., מְּלֶה, mélekַ
ੜ੍ਹ	e(h)	S <sup>e</sup> gôl-Hē	as s <sup>e</sup> gôl alone; only found at the end of certain words. E.g., שָּׁדָה , śāde(h). Alternative transliteration: (ambiguously) eh
בֶּי	e(y)	S <sup>e</sup> gôl-Yō <u>d</u>	as s <sup>e</sup> gôl alone; only found in a few restricted environments: e.g., چَئْرة, $b\bar{a}n\dot{e}(y)\underline{k}\bar{a}$ . Alternative transliterations: $\hat{e}$ ; (ambiguously) $ey$ .
ij	ē	Şērê	as English g <b>a</b> te, gr <b>ea</b> t, s <b>ay</b> . E.g., יַשֶּׁב,
בֿי	ê	Şērê-Yō <u>d</u>	as ṣērê alone, in certain environments. E.g., בֵּית־לְּחָם, bê <u>t</u> -léḥem
בַּה	ē(h)	Şērê-Hē	as ṣērê alone; only at the end of certain words. E.g., בּנֵה, $b\bar{o}n\bar{e}(h)$ . Alternative transliterations: (ambiguously) $\bar{e}h$
j	i	Ḥấreq	as English w <u>i</u> t, <u>i</u> nto. E.g., יִשְׁמֵע, <i>yišma</i> '
בּֿנ	î	Ḥấreq-Yō <u>d</u>	as English s <u>ee</u> n, mach <u>i</u> ne. E.g., שיר, <i>šîr</i>
Ē	ī	Hîreq	as hîreq-yōd: occasionally the long vowel is written without the vowel letter (defective writing), and it is thus formally indistinguishable from the short vowel (although recognizable on other grounds). E.g., אָיר, $\tilde{s}\tilde{t}r$
Ţ	O	Qấmeş ḥāṭû <u>p</u>	approximately as English not, bottle. E.g., בָּל־הָּעָם, kol-hā 'ām. Note that the name is comparable to qāmes and the form is identical; of the two vowels, qāmes is much commoner (see further below, I.4.2.3)
ত্ৰ	ō	Ḥốlem	as English note, boat. E.g., פֿתַב, $k\bar{o}t\bar{e}b$ ; שנֵא, $s\bar{o}n\bar{e}$ . Note that this sign is written above and slightly to the left of the consonant, rather than below as is more typical; and that it may merge with the dot of $w/w$
בו	ô	Ḥốlem-Wāw	plene writing, equivalent to Ḥólem and generally interchangeable with it. E.g., בּוֹתֵב, kôṯēḇ; שׁוֹנֵא, śônēʾ

בה	ō(h)	Ḥốlem-Hē	as Ḥoślem, occurring very rarely at the end of words. E.g., קירה, $q\hat{r}r\bar{o}(h)$ . Alternative transliteration: (ambiguously) $\bar{o}h$
<u> </u>	u	Qibbûş	as English p <b>u</b> t, b <u>oo</u> k. E.g., מְשְׁלָּח, <i>mušlāḥ</i>
בֿוּ	û	Šûreq	as English rule, pool. E.g., סוּסִים, sûsîm
<u>u</u> ;	ū	Qibbûş	Like Ḥîreq, the long vowel is occasionally written defectively without the vowel letter, in which case it is represented by qibbûş and formally indistinguishable from the short vowel. E.g., סֵסִים, sūsîm
Ţ	e	Š <sup>e</sup> wā', Shewa	an indistinct vowel sound resulting from reduction of a full vowel in an open unstressed syllable; as typical pronunciations of English télephone, ambássador. E.g., שְׁמוּאֵל, šemû'ēl. Alternative transliteration: a; (ambiguously) ĕ
Ķ	ă	Ḥấṭep-Pá <u>t</u> aḥ	this and the following two signs are known as composite shewas (composed of shewa and the short vowel sign inherent in the name); they normally replace Shewa under guttural consonants, with little perceptible difference in pronunciation. E.g., אַרָצוֹת, 'arāṣôt. Alternative transliteration: superscript a
<b>Ä</b>	ĕ	Ḥấṭepႍ-S <sup>e</sup> gôl	E.g., אֲלֹהִים, 'ĕlōhîm. Alternative transliteration: (ambiguously) superscript <sup>e</sup>
ž.	ŏ	Ḥấṭep-Qấmeṣ	Abbreviated from Ḥấṭep-Qấmeṣ-Ḥāṭûp; pronounced as simple shewa, or as English ought. E.g., קּדָשִׁים, qŏd̄ašîm. Alternative transliteration: superscript o

# 4. Additional Details

# 1. Stress and Syllabification (IBH: 39-40, 49-50; BBHG: 17-24, 26-27; GC 101: 16)

Stréss émphasizes one or more sýllables in á single word (márked in this séntence bý án áccent). Hebrew words are normally stressed on the final syllable; alternatively, stress falls on the

penultimate syllable (last but one), marked here by a stress mark (e.g.,  $m\acute{e}le\underline{k}$ , אַלָּלָּי, ln the absence of such a mark, stress on the final syllable may be assumed.

Syllabification in Hebrew is normally limited to two structures: open syllables, consisting of one consonant followed by one vowel (CV); closed syllables, consisting of consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC). Most alterations in the vowelling within Hebrew words result from changes in stress and syllabification.

## 2. Ambiguous signs

Several of the vowel points introduced above are used in different ways and would need to be distinguished for accurate reading, transliteration and analysis.

A second usage, known as dagesh forte, marks a doubled or repeated consonant. It occurs in most consonants, including b, g, d, k, p, t, always preceded by a vowel.

- (2) Shewa (IBH: 43-46; 11, 14, 20-21). In addition to marking a brief, reduced vowel ("vocal shewa"), this is also used regularly after any consonant within a word not followed by any vowel at all ("silent shewa").. Typically, shewa directly following a single (non-doubled) consonant preceded by a short vowel (i.e., pátah, segôl, híreq, qibbûş and qámes-hāṭûp) within the word is silent. In most other circumstances, it is vocal.
- (3) Qắmeṣ/Qắmeṣ ḥātûp (IBH: 50-53; BBHG: 21-22). The ambiguous sign denoting both these vowel sounds will usually represent Qắmeṣ (ā); Qắmeṣ ḥātûp (o) will occur much less frequently and only in closed unstressed syllables (CVC).

# 5. Optional Reading Practice

The Hebrew lines read right to left; the corresponding transliterations in the following lines read left to right; thus, in the first two lines, אָבוֹת on the far right corresponds to  $\dot{a}\underline{b}\hat{o}\underline{t}$  on the far left.

אָבוֹת, אָבִי, אֲבוֹת, אָבִי, אֲבוֹת, אָבִי, אֲבִוֹת, אַבִּיִם, אֲבִיָּהוּ, אֲבִיּהוּ, אֲבִיּהוּ, אֲבִיּם, בָּאתָם, בָּאתָם, בּוֹאָה בּוֹאָה ('father'] ' $a\underline{b}$ 0t, ' $a\underline{b}$ 0t, ' $a\underline{b}$ 0t, ' $a\underline{b}$ 1thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 1thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 2thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 2thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 3thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 3thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 3thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 3thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 4thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 4thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 4thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 5thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 6thû, ' $a\underline{b}$ 

נְמָלָה, נְּמַלָּה, נְּמַלִּינוּ, הַגְּמַלִּים, גְּמַל אַבְרָם, נְמַל לוֹט; דּוֹרַשׁ, יִדְרֹשׁ, תִּדְרְשׁנָה, מִדְרָשׁ, דְּרְשׁוּ נְּמָל 'camel'] gāmāl, gemālāh, gemallénû, haggemallîm, gemal 'abrām, gemallê lôt;

[พาา: 'to seek'] dôrēš, yidrōŝ, tidróšnā(h), midrāš, diršû

### II. Grammatical Forms (Morphology)

## 1. Introduction: Root and Affixes (BBHG: 121-122; IBHS: 83-85)

Hebrew words typically embody two primary components: a **root**, or sequence of usually 3 consonants occurring in a fixed order, which carries a general meaning; and various **affixes** added to the root to form specific developments of the root meaning in particular words. For instance, the sequence or root מלך generates words dealing with the concept of kingship and rule. Specific affixes yield individual words such as מֹלֶךְ (king), מֹלֶךְ (ruling), קֹלֶךְ (he ruled).

<u>2. Nouns</u> (*IBH*: 71-72, 76-78, 98-105, 320-321, 329-331, 340-343, 370-372, 388, 394; *BBHG*: 28-39, 97-110; *GC 101*: 25-28, 37-38; *IBHS*: 95-124))

Hebrew nouns are characterized by specific forms in terms of (1) gender (masculine or feminine: typically abbreviated as masc. or m., fem. or f.); (2) number (singular, plural, or rarely dual: sg. or s., pl. or p., du. or d.); and (3) state (absolute or construct: abs. or a., cons. or c.). Words modifying nouns (typically adjectives, verbs) or referring back to them (pronouns) agree with them in gender and number. 'State' is an unfamiliar concept: the construct state identifies a noun as modified by another, following noun (e.g., 'the word of the Lord').

Masc. nouns typically have no suffix (ending) in the sg.; in the pl., the suffix is usually -im (abs.) or  $-\hat{e}$  (cons.). For the fem., the sing. is  $-\bar{a}(h)$  (a.),  $-a\underline{t}$  (c.); the pl. is  $-\hat{o}\underline{t}$ . Adjectives will be inflected in the same way, agreeing with the noun they modify: e.g., 'the **good** shepherd' (attributive usage); 'the shepherd is **good**' (predicative). The definite article (corresponding to English 'the') is usually ha-, prefixed to the noun: e.g., הַּמְּלָּה, 'the king'.

3. Pronouns (IBH: 94-95, 108-123, 159, 167-178, 364-365; BBHG: 70-95, 222-234; GC 101: 39-58; IBHS: 290-340)

Personal pronouns correspond to English 'I, me, my; you, you, your; he, him, his', etc. Subject pronouns are expressed in Hebrew by separate words, most commonly in statements without a verb (the verb BE being implied): e.g., 'He - the king' = 'he is the king'. They are identified by gender (m. and f.) and number (s. and p.), as are nouns; and also by person (1st s. and p. - I/we; 2nd m.s., f.s., m.p. and f.p. - he/she, they). Pronouns used as objects of verbs (e.g., 'I see him') or modifying nouns (e.g., 'her father') are usually suffixed to the verb or noun, with comparable differentiation of forms by person, gender and number.

Other pronouns are less complex in form: i.e. demonstrative ('this, these'; 'that, those'), generally with separate forms for m./f., s./p.; and interrogative ('who?, what?'), relative ('who, which'), whose forms are invariable.

<u>4. Prepositions</u> (*IBH*: 45-46, 59, 370, 387, 394-395, 402-403, 410-411, 418; *BBHG*: 50-60; *IBHS*: 187-225)

Prepositions (e.g., English 'in, with, from') are typically used before nouns and pronouns. Some of the commonest Hebrew prepositions are prefixed directly to the following noun (e.g., אָלְיֶּלָּךָ, 'to a king').

<u>5. Conjunctions</u> (*IBH*: 73-74, 156-157, 321-322, 358-359, 386, 402-404, 410, 418; *BBHG*: 43-46, 192-203; *GC 101*: 33-35; *IBHS*: 519-563, 647-654)

Conjunctions serve to define logical and temporal relations between phrases and especially clauses: e.g., English 'and, but, although, when, because'. Hebrew possesses a comparable but smaller range of conjunctions. It is dominated by one conjunction in particular, the monosyllabic form 1 that is prefixed to the initial word of the following clause or phrase (it sometimes appears with variant vowelling). Although conventionally translated as 'and', it in fact correlates clauses in a wide variety of ways and so can be translated by diverse conjunctions (for instance, by all of the English conjunctions listed above), and it therefore requires careful analysis to identify the logic and flow of a passage.

### 6. Verbs

The concepts of root (the sequence of three consonants associated with a general meaning) and pattern or affixes (added prefixes, suffixes and vowel patterns within the root) are especially important for the verb, since a particular pattern will consistently carry a particular value in every verb with which it is associated.

Hebrew possesses sets of forms roughly comparable to English tenses and moods (see 6.1). It also possesses what are known as stems, for which no precise analogy exists in English (see 6.2). Stems define the relationship between the subject and verb in different ways, including active and passive, so that they are somewhat comparable to voice in English. The basic form is known as the Qal stem, comparable to the English active voice ('I see' as opposed to 'I am seen').

# 1. The Regular Verb: Qal Stem

(1) Perfect (IBH: 86-91; BBHG: 138-147, cf. 192-203; GC 101: 87-98; IBHS: 455-478, 479-495, cf. 519-542). This is one of two primary tenses or conjugations, also known as the Perfective or suffix conjugation; normally abbreviated Pf. It typically marks completed action; although not referring primarily to time, it is most commonly (but not invariably) translated by an English perfect or agriculture (e.g., 'I have seen, I saw').

The subject of the Perfect is marked by suffixes on the verb, which resemble pronouns in form and in differentiation for person (1st, 2nd, 3rd), number (s., p.), and gender (m., f. - in the 3rd s. and 2nd s./p.). Thus, 'he saw' (3.m.s. Pf.) would be marked by a different suffix than 'she saw' (3.f.s. Pf.) or 'you saw' (which in Hebrew could be 2.m./f. s./p. Pf.). Noun subjects are modified by 3rd person verbal forms.

(2) Imperfect (IBH: 131-133; BBHG: 165-171, cf. 192-203; GC 101: 87-98, cf. 99-115; IBHS: 455-478, 496-518, cf. 543-563). The Hebrew Imperfect is also known as the Imperfective or prefix conjugation; abbreviated Impf. It indicates incomplete or ongoing action: it may be translated in a given context as an English continuous tense (e.g., 'he was/is/will be going'); as habitual or repeated action ('he used to go, he goes, he will [regularly] go'); and by various contingent ideas typically represented in English by a modal verb such as can/could, may/might, shall/should (e.g., 'he may go, [if] he should go, he can go').

The subject of the Imperfect is marked for person, g. and n., much like the Perfect. It is indicated primarily by a set of prefixes, with additional suffixes in some cases as markers of gender or number.

- (3) Preterite (IBH: 136-138; BBHG: 192-203; IBHS: 543-563). The term Preterite normally denotes a simple past action ('he went'), and it is widespread in Hebrew past narrative contexts; abbreviated Pret., with alternative designation as Imperfect with waw-consecutive. Formally it is a prefix conjugation like the Impfect, and in most cases the two are morphologically identical; the preterite is distinguished especially by consistent association with a specific form of the prefixed conjunction \(\green\) (usually \(\green\) with doubling of the following consonant of the prefix).
- (4) Imperative and Related Volitional Forms (IBH: 149-153; BBHG: 206-219; GC 101: 99-115; IBHS: 564-579). The imperative is the mood of direct command: e.g., 'come here!'; 'depart from me'. The Hebrew imperative occurs only in the four second-person forms (you, sg./pl., m./f.).

Volition is expressed in relation to a 1st person subject by means of the cohortative ('let me/us go', 'I/we have the intention of going'). It is expressed in relation to 3rd person subjects (and also in principle to 1st-2nd) by means of forms that like the preterite are usually indistinguishable from the Imperfect: e.g., 'let him write' (i.e. it is the speaker's will that he write).

(5) Infinitive (IBH: 161-169; BBHG: 235-255; GC 101: 80-83; IBHS: 580-611). Hebrew possesses two infinitive forms. The first, known as the Infinitive Construct (Inf. c. or Inf. cons.), corresponds to the English infinitive ('we wish to go', 'it is good to go'), and also to the English verbal noun ('after going', 'for the sake of going').

The second form is the Infinitive Absolute (Inf. abs.). This second infinitive has no precise English counterpart: it typically occurs with a finite verb (e.g., Perfect, Imperfect) of the same root, which it emphasizes; e.g., 'dying you shall die' (you will definitely die) or 'going you shall go' (you must certainly go).

(6) Participle (IBH: 126-128, 157-158, 365; BBHG: 258-269; GC 101: 73-79; IBHS: 612-631). The participle is a verbal adjective, typically marked in English by the suffix -ing: e.g., (1) 'running water', (2) 'the water is running', (3) 'the living (= those who are living) and the dead'. The Hebrew Active participle (Act. ptc.) is employed in the same ways; and, as an adjective, it will be inflected for gender, number and state.

The Passive (Pass.) ptc. differs in form from the Active but is used in the same ways and with the same suffixes. It describes the noun which it modifies as being subjected to an action rather than performing it (e.g., 'the written book', 'the book is written' as opposed to 'the writing scribe', 'the scribe is writing').

# 2. The Regular Verb: Derived Stems

The Qal stem described in the preceding section derives its name from the Hebrew word אַכָּל, meaning 'light' (with reference to the basic or fundamental nature of the stem, which is in fact by far the most common in the Hebrew Bible). The remaining names of stems, below, represent the 3rd m.sg. Pf. of the verb פעל ('to do') in the appropriate stem: thus, הַפְּעֵל, nip 'al, means 'it was done' and exemplifies the prefix ni- that is typical for the stem; הְפְעֵיל, hip 'îl, means 'he caused to do' and highlights the typical hi- prefix and long î-vowel within the root; and so on. A few other stems are also attested but are in general too rare to warrant mention here.

With minor exceptions, each of the stems will possess the same set of conjugations (Perfect, Imperfect and Preterite) and other forms (Imperative, Infinitives, 1 rather than 2 Participles), with the same values as described for the Qal. In most respects they will also have the same subject prefixes and suffixes (the specific vowel of the prefix conjugation will vary, however); they are differentiated primarily by the infixed vowels within the root, and often by additional prefixes. The precise meaning of each stem is complex and not always clearcut, so the following descriptions represent a starting-point and broad generalization only.

- (1) Niphal (IBH: 187-190; BBHG: 286-293; GC 101: cf. 116-120; IBHS: 378-395). The Niphal prefixes ni- to the root (this is not always apparent, though). It is typically passive in relation to the Qal of the same root: בָּחַב, 'he wrote' (Qal); בְּחַב, 'it was written' (Niphal). However, this Passive value will often not be apparent in translation (e.g., בְּחָלֵי, 'he was delivered' OR 'he escaped'); and, as the previous example implies, the Niphal will often have reflexive or middle connotations ('he obtained deliverance for himself, delivered himself').
- (2) Piel (IBH: 193-197; BBHG: 307-313; GC 101: cf. 116-120; IBHS: 396-417). The Piel usually doubles the middle root consonant (radical): e.g., אָדָל, 'he was great' (Qal); יְּבָּדְל, 'he made great, magnified' (Piel). In relation to the meaning of a root in the Qal, the Piel has a causative or more precisely factitive value: i.e. it signifies effectuation of the state inherent in or resulting from the Qal. Thus, 'to be white' > 'to make white, whiten, bleach'; 'to go across' > 'to cause to have crossed, to land [someone] on the other side'; 'to bring' > 'to cause to have been brought, to deliver, to hand over'. It often corresponds approximately to the force of such English verbal affixes as -en (white > whiten), en- (light > enlighten), -ize (final > finalize) and -fy (beauty > beautify).
- (3) Pual (IBH: 200-201; BBHG: 328-332; GC 101: cf. 116-120; IBHS: 418-423). This is the Passive equivalent of the Piel, characterized again by doubling of the middle radical but with a different vowel pattern: e.g., פַּחַב, 'it was set down in writing'. Its factitive value will therefore be the same, but it identifies the subject as the goal or recipient rather than the performer of the verbal action.

- (4) Hithpael (205-208; BBHG: 384-391; GC 101: cf. 116-120; IBHS: 424-432). The Hithpael also doubles the middle radical, but in addition it prefixes the syllable הָּה, hit- (the /h/disappearing, like the /n/ of the Niphal, in many environments). It typically functions as a reflexive of the Piel, 'reflexive' describing an action performed by the subject to or for itself: e.g., הָהָבָּדִל, 'he magnified'; הַּהְנַבִּל, 'he magnified'; הַּהְנַבְּל
- (5) Hiphil (IBH: 211-215; BBHG: 345-352; GC 101: cf. 116-120; IBHS: 433-446). This stem prefixes הַ or הַ, hi-/ha-, often with a characteristic long î-vowel within the root (although both the /h/ and the /î/ are apt to disappear): e.g., הָבָּדִיל, 'he was great', הָגְּדִיל, 'he magnified, praised'. The Hiphil resembles the Piel in being causative in relation to the Qal, and sometimes a root will occur in both Piel and Hiphil with no clear difference in meaning. In principle, though, the Hiphil describes causation of an action or process, rather than of a resultant state. Thus, in the case of גדל ', 'to be great', the Piel would tend to emphasize the resultant condition of greatness, and the Hiphil the process leading to that condition. However, as indicated above, a sharp distinction is not always apparent and should not be pressed in isolation.
- (6) Hophal (IBH: 218-220; BBHG: 367-371; GC 101: cf. 116-120; IBHS: 447-452). The Hophal corresponds to the Hiphil in having prefixed  $\bar{\eta}$ , ho. Like the Pual in relation to the Piel, this is the passive causative counterpart of the Hiphil; and, like the Pual, this is not a common stem.

# 3. Weak Verbs (IBH: 226-299; BBHG: 150-400 passim, 418-445)

Many weak verbs are extremely common and significant in Hebrew. Essentially, they will be inflected in the same way as the regular verb, in all stems: their suffixes, in particular, will usually be identical; consonantal prefixes will also be the same; and this will often be the case for vowelling of the root. Moreover, the syntactic value of conjugations, stems, etc. will not differ.

## III. Clause and Sentence Syntax

# 1. Clauses (GC 101: 123-141; IBHS: 44-80)

The main constituents of a single statement or clause are the Subject and the Predicate. 'Subject' describes the entity about which a statement is made (typically, the agent of an action or the recipient of an experience such as a passive verb): e.g., 'the king judged the people'; 'the people were judged by the king'.

The predicate constitutes the statement or comment made about the subject. In English it will usually consist of a verb (including the verb TO BE); and other elements that in turn modify the verb. These other elements can include an object ('people' in the firsts example of the previous paragraph); adverbs (e.g., 'quickly', 'well'); prepositional phrases (e.g., 'in Israel'); and subordinate clauses introduced by a conjunction (e.g., 'when he came', 'because they saw him'). The Hebrew predicate can be characterized by most of these elements. However, Hebrew omits a verb in many situations where English uses the verb BE: e.g. (with the predicates in bold type), 'the king - in his palace' or 'the king - there' or 'the king - good'.

The word-order in English usually defines the subject and object by their position in relation to the verb, the subject preceding and the object following. Hebrew by contrast usually adopts the order Verb - Subject (when expressed by an independent noun) - Object; if there is no verb (as in the examples of the previous paragraph), the subject or predicate may come first.

# 2. Sentences & Paragraphs

The main feature of syntax at this level in prose is the frequent coordination of clauses by means of the conjunction j, typically translated as 'and' but in fact capable of linking the clauses in a variety of ways: e.g., as a temporal series (for instance, 'after X happened, then Y happened, so that Z followed'). Common sequences include the following: Perfect...wa+Preterite (e.g., יְמָלֹרְ, 'and he reigned'; typically past narrative); Imperfect...wePerfect (e.g., יְמִשְׁנַי, 'and he will judge'; typically future prediction); Imperative...wePerfect (e.g., הְשָׁנַטְיּ, 'and [you shall judge', as a subsequent command).

Another feature of the language at this level (as at lower levels of syntax) is repetition of key words or synonyms to mark development of a theme, or resumption and variation of the theme at a later point in the text; and switches to a new idea will similarly be marked by the absence of previous keywords and introduction of others. These can be identified in a translation if one is sensitive to the relationship between synonyms, or if one uses a fairly literal version; but it is often more apparent in Hebrew since repetitions typically involve multiple appearances of a single root and of synonyms closely associated in the text with that root. Parallelism in poetic texts represents a conspicuous instance of this device.

### IV. Basic Bibliography for Reading the Hebrew OT

### 1. Hebrew Printed Texts

BHS is now the standard Hebrew text for exegesis of the OT. The order of books varies in Hebrew from English Bibles in that the Writings (Psalms to 2 Chronicles) are located in the third main division, after the Latter (Major and Minor) Prophets. Cf. #3

Elliger, K. and W. Rudolph, eds. Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. 3rd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1987
[abbreviated BHS]

cf.

Kelly, P.H., D.S. Mynatt, and T.G. Crawford. *The Masorah of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998

### 2. Interlinear Hebrew-English Texts

This type of resource provides a word-by-word literal gloss below each Hebrew word of the Hebrew text, and (in the volumes cited below) a consecutive translation in the margin. While interlinears do not necessarily parse forms, they can be used in conjunction with a parsing guide or analytical lexicon to identify the root underlying a given form, which can then be researched further in a concordance or lexicon. They also give a broader overview of a passage than parsing guides or analytical lexicons, allowing one to note repetition of identical or similar vocabulary and other patterns in the text. Cf. #3.

Green, Jay P., Sr., ed. *The Interlinear Hebrew-Greek-English Bible*, vols. 1-4. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1985 [RCL - BS 3.5 Ref/Stacks]

Kohlenberger, John R., III, ed. *The Interlinear NIV Hebrew-English Old Testament*, vols. 1-4. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987 [RCL - BS 715 Ref]

### 3. Bible Software

AcCordance Bible Software. OakSoft Software (www.oaksoft.com)

[Mac-based; some scholars allege that this is the most powerful and desirable Bible software package]

Bible Windows 6.0. Silver Mountain Software

[BHS, grammatically tagged; NT Greek texts; Vulgate; LXX; various lexicons including Classical Greek, versions, etc. \$166.00 US, Eisenbrauns 3/02]

Bible Works 5.0. Hermeneutika

[Large range of morphologically tagged Bible versions - BHS, NT Greek texts, LXX, Latin; huge range of versions, etc. \$300.00 US, Eisenbrauns 3/02]

Gramcord

[PC counterpart of AcCordance, to which some scholars allege this is inferior]

Original Languages Library. Logos 2000

[BHS; several Greek NT texts; LXX, grammatically tagged; Vulgate, etc.; and a wide range of lexicons, English versions and other resources. Morphological search capabilities not clear. \$300.00 US, Eisenbrauns, 5/02]

### 4. Parsing Guides

These are ordered according to the sequence of the OT text and are therefore among the most useful and accessible tools for study of a specific OT passage: they take each word (or most words) in Gen. 1:1, 1:2, and so on. The final entry in this section, by Einspahr, functions as a parsing guide but is in fact an index to the most commonly used Hebrew-English lexicon (BDB, see below): thus, it simultaneously provides an analysis of all but the most common forms and indicates the precise page and subsection within BDB where it is discussed. Note, further, that the software listed in #3 will usually serve as the most efficient method of parsing a form within a text; and that it will also serve the purpose of (and often includes electronic versions of) the resources listed under each of the other headings.

```
Armstrong, Terry A., Douglas L. Busby and Cyril F. Carr. A Reader's Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989 [RCL - PJ 4833 A69 Ref]
Beall, Todd S., William A. Banks and Colin Smith. Old Testament Parsing Guide. Revised ed. Nashville:

Broadman, 2000 [RCL - PJ 4645.B43 Ref]
Owens, John Joseph. Analytical Key to the Old Testament, vols. 1-4. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990, 1992, 1991, 1989 [RCL - PJ 4731.B53 O94 Ref]
```

cf. Bruce Einspahr. Index to Brown, Driver and Briggs Hebrew Lexicon. Chicago: Moody, 1976
[RCL - PJ 4833.B683 E35 Ref/Stacks]

### 5. Analytical Lexicons

Since standard Hebrew lexicons list words according to their roots or basic forms, it is necessary to be able to distinguish the root from any prefixes and other modifications it displays in a given context in order to be able to research it further. An analytical lexicon lists every word as it stands in alphabetical order, including definition of its root. Thus, the word אַמְלֹךְ ('you/she will reign') will appear in a lexicon under מִמְלֹךְ. When a word is discussed without reference to its precise Biblical context, an analytical lexicon may be more suitable than a parsing guide or softward programme for identifying its root and meaning. Cf. #3.

Davidson, Benjamin. The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon. London: Bagster, 1871?; reprinted Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970/Peabody: Hendrickson, 1981

[RCL - PJ 4833.D3 Ref]

### 6. Lexicons

The first of the lexicons listed below is the most accessible and is still very useful, but it is old and therefore is less reliable as an index of current opinion (particularly with reference to other ANE languages and the related issue of etymology); note, again, the value of Einspahr in aiding access to this work. Note also that BDB adopts a more rigorously etymological organization than the others, entering all derivatives of a root (nouns as well as verbs) under that root: thus, שַׁבְּח, מוֹשֶׁב, שֹׁבֶח, מוֹשֶׁב, שֹׁבֶח, מוֹשֶׁב, שֹׁבְח, מוֹשֶׁב, ווֹשֶׁב, שֹׁבְח, מוֹשֶׁב, ווֹשֶׁב, שֹׁבְח, מוֹשֶׁב, ווֹשֶׁב, ווֹשְׁב, ווֹשְׁב, חוֹשֶׁב, ווֹשְׁב, וּשְׁב, ווֹשְׁב, ווֹשְב, ווֹשְׁב, וּשְׁב, ווֹשְׁב, ווֹשְב, ווֹשְׁב, ווֹשְׁב, ווֹשְׁב, ווֹשְׁב, ווֹשְׁב, ווֹשְׁב, ווֹשְׁב,

Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907; republished Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995

[abbreviated BDB] [RCL - PJ 4833.G48 Ref/Stacks]

cf. Bruce Einspahr. Index to Brown, Driver and Briggs Hebrew Lexicon. Chicago: Moody, 1976

[RCL - PJ 4833.B683 E35 Ref]

Clines, David J.A., ed. The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew: volume 1 [א] - volume 5 [מדן]. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993-(2001) [abbreviated DCH [RCL - Ref]

Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm. The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament in English, vols. 1-5. Translated by M.E.J. Richardson. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1999, 2000

[abbreviated KB/KBL, or HAL/HALAT based on the German title]

[RCL - BS 443.K63 Ref]

### 7. Theological Dictionaries (cf. #3)

Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds. Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, volume 1 [אָב] - volume 1 [עוו־פָּנִים]. Translated by John T. Willis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977 rev. ed - (2001) [original German edition Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1970-2001]

[abbreviated TDOT]

[RCL - BS 440.B5713 Ref/Stacks - vols. 1-6]

Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, vols. 1-2. Chicago: Moody, 1980 [abbreviated TWOT] [RCL - BS 440.T49 Ref/Stacks]

Jenni, Ernst, and Claus Westermann. Theological Lexicion of the Old Testament, vols. 1-3. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997 [original German edition, 1984] [abbreviated Jenni/Westermann or TLOT] [RCL - BS 440.T4813/BS 440.T444 Ref]

VanGemeren, Willem A., ed. New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, vols. 1-5. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997 [abbreviated NIDOTTE] [RCL - BS 440.N438 Ref]

### 8. Concordances (cf. #3)

Even-Shoshan, Abraham, ed. A New Concordance of the Old Testament Using the Hebrew and Aramaic Text. 2nd ed. Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1989 [RCL - BS 1121.E945 Ref]

Kohlenberger, John R., III, and James A. Swanson. The Hebrew-English Concordance to the Old Testament with the NIV. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998 [ordered by Hebrew words with English text] [RCL - BS 1121.K65 Ref]

Wigram, George V. The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970 [original publication London: Bagster, 1843]

[RCL - BS 1121.E54 Ref/Stacks]

#### 9. Reference Grammars

Gesenius, W. Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar. Edited and enlarged by E. Kautzsch. 2nd ed. revised by A.E. Cowley. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910 [abbreviated GKC] [RCL - PJ 4564.G5 Ref/Stacks]

Joüon, Paul and T. Muraoka. A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew, vols. 1-2. Rome: Biblical Institute Press. [RCL - PJ 4567.J7613 Stacks]

Waltke, Bruce K., and M. O'Connor. An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990 [RCL - PJ 4707.W35 Ref/Stacks]

Williams, Ronald J. Hebrew Syntax: An Outline. 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976 [RCL - PJ 4701.W72 Stacks]

### V. Requirements and Assignments

### Requirements

The competency exam, to be scheduled and administered by the Registrar's office, will test the following areas of knowledge based upon the information provided in these notes.

- -knowledge of the consonants (including their order), vowels and pointing of Hebrew, so as to be able to read individual Hebrew words in both Hebrew script and transliteration and to look up words in lexicons and concordances: see Section I;
- -familiarity with the main grammatical categories and concepts of the language, so as to be able to understand parsing guides, lexicons and other tools that use them: see Section II and (briefly) III;
- -acquaintance with the types of secondary literature that will be necessary to access information on the Hebrew of the Biblical text, including actual location and use of at least one volume or resource listed in each of IV.1-8;
- -ability to use the secondary literature in order to identify the morphology and basic meaning of individual inflected words within an OT context; to research the meaning of such words in Hebrew and theological lexicons; and to identify the frequency and distribution of words within the Hebrew Bible and individual sections of it, with the aid of concordances or other word-search resources

While memorization of the material will increase one's facility in using it, and knowledge of the alphabet and vowels is virtually essential, the exam will be conducted on an open-book basis: any written or electronic resources found helpful are admissible, including these notes. If the number of participants is small, the exam will be held in the library, and it will be the responsibility of each student to locate the relevant bibliographic resources with which to answer the questions. If the numbers make this impracticable, you will be provided with photocopied materials within which you will be able to find the answers (primarily extracts from interlinears, concordances, dictionaries, etc.). In both cases, the exam will be subject to a time limit of ca. 2 hours, and it will assume prior familiarity with the types of data and bibliographic information listed above: you will not have time to figure everything out for the first time (such as where or what the parsing guides are) in the exam!

### Sample Questions

- 1.1. What is the first word of the Hebrew Bible? Write it out in Hebrew and transliteration -consult BHS, parsing guide, interlinear or software
- 1.2. What are the two principal forms that make up this word? To what grammatical category do they belong?
  - -parsing guide or interlinear
- 1.3. What is the meaning of the second form here? What other meanings does it have? -lexicon (with the help of Einspahr, if using BDB); and/or theological lexicon
- 1.4. How often does it occur in Genesis, and do any of those usages resemble that in 1:1? Does it appear to be a keyword in Genesis? How often does it occur in the Hebrew Bible? Are there any other books where it is especially frequent?
  - -concordance; note also that many of the words in BDB are listed exhaustively (specifically those entries preceded by a dagger)

- 2.1. How often does the word אֲלֹהִים occur in Gen. 1? How often is the name יהוה used there?
  -BHS, parsing guide, interlinear or software; or possibly a literal English version
- 2.2. How often do these two names occur in Gen. 2? Is there a clear transition point in their usage?
- 2.3. What is the morphology of אֱלֹהִים (what part of speech is it, what affixes)? -parsing guide or interlinear; grammatical notes
- 2.4. What is the gender and number of verbs modifying this word in Gen. 1? -parsing guide and interlinear
- 2.5. How many different verbs are predicated of אַלהִים in Gen. 1? What is their predominant tense? Are any used in a stem other than the Qal? Which?
  -parsing guide and interlinear, or Einspahr; possibly a commentary.
- 3.1. What is the meaning of the verb בָּרָא in Gen. 1; where does it occur there?
- 3.2. How often does this verb occur in the Hebrew Bible? What subjects are associated with it, and what objects? How is it used in Hebrew? How in other Semitic languages?
  -in addition to tools listed frequently above, theological lexicons will be useful for theologically significant words on both their etymology and Biblical meaning; for other Semitic languages, lexicons will give cognate usages and meanings at the beginning of the entry on a root or individual word, where applicable.
- 3.3. Does this verb occur in any derived stems, or in any tenses apart from the Perfect?
  -Lexicon, concordance (e.g., Wigram).
- 4.1. What Hebrew words are translated by 'heaven' (at least in older versions) and 'earth' in Gen. 1? How often do they occur there?
- 4.2. Where in the Psalms are they linked in a similar way?
- 4.3. What other vocabulary from Gen. 1 appears in those psalms?
- 4.4. Answer 4.2-3 with reference to other poetic books: e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah.

### Exam

The exam will contain a series of questions comparable to the above, including a few drawn directly from the sample questions 1.1-2.5; it will focus on two or three different passages, which it will be necessary to locate and examine on the basis of a Hebrew text with respect to its morphology and lexical forms.