In the past two decades more than two dozen different textbooks have been published, either in print or online, each promising to lead the student to the promised land of Biblical Hebrew competence, each taking a different path to do so.¹ One of the newest and most distinctive in its approach is that of Jo Ann Hackett, who long served at Harvard University as Professor of the Practice of Biblical Hebrew and Northwest Semitic Epigraphy and who recently relocated to the University of Texas at Austin as Professor of Middle Eastern Studies and Religious Studies. Her volume, *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*, is divided into thirty chapters and is designed for either a fast-paced, one-semester course or a full-year course.² Each chapter includes an explanation of the chapter topic, examples of the grammatical concepts in action, and exercises for students. The book is accompanied by a CD containing a number of valuable resources, including audio files and text files. The audio files cover vocabulary for each chapter, the main paradigms in the book, recitations of Hebrew-to-English exercises for all chapters, and a reading of Gen 22:1–19. The text files include vocabulary lists, Hebrew-to-English exercises, textbook appendices A–D, verb paradigms, and an answer key for the English-to-Hebrew and Hebrew-to-English exercises.

An immense amount of thought has gone into this textbook. Each chapter endeavors to explain the grammatical concepts in an accessible manner. One of the book's main strengths is its careful and clear introduc-

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¹ For contributing to this review, I wish to express my thanks to my research assistant, Tina Sherman (doctoral student at Brandeis University), to my teaching assistant, Justin Buol (M.A., University of Minnesota), and to Dr. Rebecca Thurman (Adjunct Instructor, Luther Seminary).

² A partial list of these new offerings is included in the appendix at the end of this review.

1. A partial list of these new offerings is included in the appendix at the end of this review.
2. I found it impossible to complete the textbook within a single semester and instead used it over the course of a full academic year (two fifteen-week semesters), in a primarily undergraduate class that met five times per week, fifty minutes per class. We finished about two weeks early, sufficient to move from the textbook to work through all of Jonah.
tion, spanning chapters 1–6, of the historical-linguistic background of Hebrew, the alphabet step-by-step, and the vowels. Another strength is that, more than most introductory grammars, the text provides an extended orientation to the system of Masoretic accents, introducing the sòp pāsûq, the ’atnah, the sillûq, the zāqēp qâtôn, the rēbîa, the mûnah, the tîphâ, and the mērkâ (112, 119, 125, 130, 137, 144). Used properly, the accent system can help students acquire more effective oral skills, learn phrasing, and, of course, help them organize the syntax of the sentence for translation.

While she does endeavor to remain true to the word “basic” in the title of her textbook, Hackett still attempts in a significant number of ways to mark a departure and a reorientation in Hebrew language pedagogy. If it succeeds, it will be a game changer, with new approaches to the teaching of the verb and to the sequence and organization of the presentation of Biblical Hebrew grammar and syntax.3 The goal of the remainder of this review is to address the pedagogical implications of some of the distinctive choices made by Hackett in this introductory grammar and to try to assess their advantages and disadvantages. There will be correspondingly less attention devoted to the theoretical foundations or linguistic implications of the textbook, in order to focus on how the textbook functions in the classroom, based on the experience of having taught with it for a year in a richly diverse class at a large state research university.4 What follows is commentary on my experience with the text in four key areas: the pedagogy of the Hebrew verb, the organization of the material, the homework exercises provided, and the approach to transliteration and to presentation of the Hebrew vowels. The final section of the review lists some corrections and suggestions for improvement should a second edition of the text be produced.

Pedagogy of the Hebrew Verb

Hackett’s presentation of the Hebrew verb makes several strategic rearrangements of the traditional method of instruction. The most significant innovations are: introducing a change in the standard terminology for describing the “tense” system of Biblical Hebrew; presenting the verb “tenses” in the reverse order in which they appear in most introductory textbooks; reordering the standard sequence of forms in the conjugation of the verb to begin the paradigm from the first person rather than the third; and presenting the volitive forms as a single group in the verb charts.

Hackett introduces a new set of terms for the various verb “tenses.” As she notes in her introduction to the volume: “I have also deliberately not used the rubrics ‘perfect,’ ‘imperfect,’ or ‘converted,’ because they carry with them either complete misinformation (‘converted’) or old-fashioned methods of dealing with the Biblical Hebrew verbal system (‘perfect’ and ‘imperfect’)” (xx). In contrast to more traditional nomenclature, she advocates the following reorganization:

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3. An equally significant fresh start to Biblical Hebrew language instruction takes a different tack, attempting to meet the needs of adult learners of a second language using modern language pedagogy. See John A. Cook and Robert D. Holmstedt, Biblical Hebrew: An Illustrated Introduction (online: http://ancienthebrewgrammar.wordpress.com/2010/08/18/bhii/).

4. The class of eighteen was composed of a mixture of undergraduates (freshmen through seniors) and graduate students, as well as one faculty colleague from a different academic field and two mature learners. All eighteen students were new to Biblical Hebrew, though several students had prior exposure to Modern Hebrew. Most were new to ancient languages. In fairness, colleagues using the textbook in a different teaching context could have different experiences and impressions.
Whatever the merits of the more historically accurate description of the converted imperfect as the “consecutive preterite,” the question remains whether there is a pedagogical gain to adopting this new system. The shifts from morphological descriptions for the nonconverted forms (calling them “suffix” or “prefix” forms), to a transliteration approach for the converted perfect (“vt-qatal”), and then finally to historical linguistics to identify the converted imperfect as a “consecutive preterite” require the student to juggle multiple inconsistent sets of terminology. The majority of Biblical Hebrew students will likely never pursue advanced study of Northwest Semitics, where in-depth knowledge of historical linguistics, morphology, and phonology are necessary. As such, it is not clear how the additional complexity introduced with these new “tense” names benefits the average student of first-year Biblical Hebrew. However imperfect, pun intended, the older system has the virtue of being consistent and much simpler to learn. That said, Hackett’s discussion of the history of the converted imperfect form in lesson 15 (90–91) provides a valuably clear and concise explanation that should help students understand this form.

A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew is also innovative in its presentation of the verb “tenses” in the reverse order in which they appear in most introductory Biblical Hebrew textbooks. It presents the imperfect (ch. 12) before the perfect (ch. 16) and also before participles (ch. 18). The benefit of this approach is that it introduces the converted imperfect form, which is more important for past narration than the perfect, relatively quickly. It is not clear, however, that this benefit outweighs the advantages of presenting the perfect and the participle, which are simpler forms, with fewer consonantal and vocalic changes occurring with shifts in person, gender, or number, before the imperfect. Verbal roots are easier to identify in these simpler forms, which is helpful for beginning students who are new to the triliteral root system of Semitic languages. In addition, the textbook retains the use of the perfect third masculine singular as the lexical form for presenting verbs in the vocabulary. This means that students are required to memorize the vocalization and form of the perfect as a complete grammatical abstraction, for purposes of learning vocabulary, weeks before they are introduced to its conjugation and meaning. Finally, in my experience, teaching the participle before introducing verbs gives students a chance to see clearly the vocalic changes triggered by the presence of gutturals in initial, medial, and final root position, which helps prepare students for the kinds of variations to be expected in the verbal paradigms.

In addition to presenting the verb tenses in a non-traditional order, the text also abandons the traditional sequence used for the classical Semitic languages:5

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5. The same approach has been adopted by Russell Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi in Invitation to Biblical Hebrew: A Beginning Grammar; and by Brian L. Webster in The Cambridge Introduction to Biblical Hebrew (see appendix below for full references).
I have listed the verbal paradigms in the order first-person, second-person, then third-person, unlike the traditional Biblical Hebrew textbook order, which begins with the third-person, since that is in the suffix conjugation the simplest form of the verb. Most of us have learned the verbal paradigms in the traditional way, but I have found that listing pronominal suffixes from first-person to third-person (יִהְיֶה, יִהְיֶהַ, and so on), while listing verbal forms from third-person to first-person, is confusing to many students. (xix)

While Modern Hebrew may be taught with verb paradigms starting in the first person, on analogy with modern European languages, when it comes to the classical language, the stated goal of wishing to avoid confusing students is not accomplished. It is nearly impossible to “teach” the paradigm—the logic of the pattern of vowel reductions—by beginning from the first rather than the third person (or “zero”) form. Indeed, presenting the order of the verb paradigm in the same sequence as nouns and prepositions are declined had untoward consequences: students began blurring the boundaries in ways that I had previously experienced only infrequently as a teacher. Precisely because of the implicit and false correspondence created between the two different systems, when students were introduced to the infinitive construct, they began to inflect it as if it were a perfect verb or, conversely, put “noun” endings on the perfect verb, resulting in grotesque hybrids like כְּתַבְכֶם rather than כְּתַבְתֶּם. This took some time to untangle. In the end, to help the students learn the verb paradigms more effectively, I began encouraging them not to memorize verb patterns from the textbook but to begin from the third person and to use the helpful plasticized paradigm cards distributed by the software company Bible Works (www.bibleworks.com).

The format of the verb paradigm charts in this volume requires one additional comment. The charts are broken into five columns, with the “prefix conjugation” on the far right, and then, reading right-to-left, the “volitites,” the “consecutive preterite,” the “suffix conjugation,” and a combined column with the infinitives and participles (see, e.g., 116, 128, 141, 149, 156, 158). For the most part, this is a sensible arrangement, the exception being column two, the “volitites.” In this column, the cohortative, imperative, and jussive forms are not organized first by form and then by person, but rather are presented simply in descending order from first to third person: 1cs (cohort.), 2ms (impv.), 2fs (impv.), 3ms (juss.), and so on. Thus, there is a sequence of cohortative, imperative, jussive, adjacent to the imperfect first, second, and third persons.

While this may create a theoretical elegance, permitting a volitive sequence to be presented as the logical counterpart to the imperfect sequence, the question is whether this is pedagogically helpful to the student. The actual presentation of the grammar of volitites does clearly distinguish between the imperative (68–69) and the cohortative and jussive (82–83), but this distinction is not preserved in the paradigms. This inconsistent approach makes little sense, either morphologically or semantically. Morphologically, it does not highlight the differences between the imperative, which lacks a prefix, and the jussive and cohortative, which retain the prefixes of their respective persons. Semantically, it creates a false analogy with the imperfect: as if there were a consistent and logical progression from cohortative to imperative to jussive, on analogy with going from first person to second person to third person in the verb. This may help the student understand that the cohortative, imperative, and jussive do all function similarly under this broader category of “volitive,” but it obscures the semantic distinction between an explicit subject form, like the cohortative (“Let me arise”), and the imperative, which is without subject (“Arise!”). In short, presenting the volitites in this manner makes it harder, not easier, for the student to grasp and organize the distinctive
features of these forms. The manuscript form of the textbook retained the more conventional approach in presenting the paradigm, with separate column headings for each of “jussive” and “imperative.” The two columns were reorganized into the single continuous column of “volitives” by the time the book went to galleys and for publication and were clearly intended as an enhancement. I would recommend returning to the earlier format as an aid to student learning.

While it is not among Hackett’s innovations in teaching the verb, the presentation in the text of verbs with guttural roots does deserve comment. The current coverage of these variant roots is too brief to meet the needs of beginning Biblical Hebrew students, even if the goal is simply to help students recognize the forms. Lesson 12 introduces the imperfect and imperative for strong verbs; immediately following, lesson 13 covers the imperfect for I-Guttural (I-G), II-Guttural (II-G), III-Guttural (III-G), I-א, and III-א verbs but neglects to cover the corresponding imperative forms. In fact, the book only inconsistently discusses the changes that happen with these verbal roots in verb tenses other than the imperfect and in the derived stems. For example, the discussion of the nip’al in lesson 20 includes a chart showing the third masculine singular forms for I-א, III-א, I-G, III-G forms (123), but the full paradigms are not provided. Forms with gutturals in the hip’il and pi’el stems receive even less attention than the nip’al (see 135 and 142, respectively). There is not a single complete paradigm in any of the derived stems for the aforementioned I-G, II-G, III-G, I-א, and III-א verbs, leaving students to figure out for themselves how the presence of gutturals will impact these verbal forms.

Organization of the Material

As noted above, the textbook is divided into thirty chapters. The criteria for distributing the contents across those thirty chapters are unclear, however. For example, four and a half chapters (chs. 2–6) are devoted to learning the consonants and vowels and only one chapter each to prepositions, including forms with pronominal suffixes (ch. 9), and nouns with pronominal suffixes (ch. 11). Chapter 10 covers three substantial topics: bound forms, construct chains, and demonstrative adjectives, and chapter 30 covers two complex topics: geminate verbs in all stems plus numbers larger than ten. Yet the verb stems nip’al and hip’il, arguably complex, but no more so than construct chains or geminates, are broken up into two chapters each (chs. 19–20 and 21–22, respectively). Hackett acknowledges in her introduction that “the last 6 lessons are more challenging than the first 24, so the ideal division into two or three lessons per week will probably never be followed” (xix). It would, perhaps, have been more helpful had the contents of the text been distributed such that the less complicated material was grouped into fewer chapters and the more complicated material distributed across more chapters, so that the expected pace of the class could be a consistent two chapters per week for the whole semester of the course (or one chapter per week for a full-year course). The order in which the material is presented creates an additional challenge. Verbs are introduced relatively late in the semester (they do not appear until lesson 12). In fact, nouns, adjectives, and prepositions are covered in their entirety before verbs are introduced. In my experience, while this sequence allowed students to get comfortable with verbless predication before beginning to work with verbs, it became somewhat tiresome to not be able to create more dynamic sentences due to the lack of verbs.

One further aspect of the organization of the text is worth noting. The perfect of the strong verb is introduced in chapter 16, but the new list of vocabulary words employed in the lesson to introduce this tense consists entirely of verbs that contain a weak consonant: specifically, I-נ, I-י, and I-ז verbs. Hackett notes...
that the imperfect of I-ן, I-י, and I-א verbs “will be learned later” (99)—in fact much later, in chapter 27 (beginning at p. 181). Verbs with these roots behave normally in the qal perfect, so an extended discussion of them is not needed in lesson 16. However, delaying the presentation of them in the imperfect means discussion of common narrative actions such as sitting, descending, knowing, walking, falling, and so on is limited to the perfect and cannot include the imperfect, imperative, or infinitive. The full presentation of III-ן, I-א, I-ת/ת, and II-י/ו verbs is not introduced until the last chapters of the book (chs. 25–28). There is certainly an understandable method in so doing, but, as a result of this approach, some of the most common verbs (ישב, ישוב, הלך, נפל, מבלה, etc.) cannot be utilized until the class is almost at an end.

Homework

An abundance of homework is an essential component for a successful Hebrew grammar text. In my experience, the amount of homework provided in this textbook was often insufficient to reinforce the grammatical concepts taught in the lesson. In addition, the homework that was included was not always a good fit for the topics being taught in the chapter. For example, lesson 19 introduces the concept of derived stems and begins with the nip'al. For homework, there are only twelve sentences to translate from Hebrew to English (only six, 50%, include a nip'al verb), three short English-to-Hebrew sentences, and instructions to recite (but not translate) Gen 22:1–6. The second sentence of the homework consists of two clauses, each of which features a verb prefixed with a nun. Unfortunately, only one is nip'al: the first is qal, and, furthermore, it has a pronominal object suffix attached. This is overly tricky for students who have just learned the nip'al. The exercises in lesson 20, which continues the nip'al, are also insufficient. There are four English-to-Hebrew phrases, none of which include a verb (they are instead focused on the numbers one and two, another topic of the lesson). Of the twelve Hebrew-to-English sentences, seven include a nip'al verb, and only one sentence has more than one nip'al verb. The textbook alone does not provide students with an adequate supply of exercises to gain mastery of the strong verb in the nip'al stem.

A similar problem arises in lesson 22, which covers the hip'il of I-G verbs and the hop'al stem. For exercises, there are twelve Hebrew-to-English sentences, four English-to-Hebrew phrases, and an instruction to practice reading (but not translating) Gen 22:1–8. Of the twelve Hebrew-to-English sentences, over seven contain a I-G hip'il verb. However, only one sentence contains a hop'al verb. The English-to-Hebrew phrases concern numbers and have no verbs. It is reasonable to say that the hop'al is rare and “need not be learned well at this point,” but in this chapter there are only five total occurrences of a hop'al verb: four in the lesson, and one in the homework. For a chapter that supposedly has introducing the hop'al as a goal, this does not give students much to go on, and should they want more knowledge of the hop'al, they have to look outside the textbook.

An insufficient quantity of relevant homework is one issue, but an additional concern is the inconsistency between translations proposed in the grammar, and those provided in the answer key for the exercises. For example, the translation of שָׁמַע בְּקוֹל in exercise 9 of lesson 29 in the answer key is “listened to the voice

6. The Hendrickson website for this volume notes that an additional workbook containing graded reading of biblical passages, glosses, and additional vocabulary is in the works and will be keyed to this book.
7. A more extensive discussion of how to distinguish nip'al verbs from other verbs beginning with nun would be a helpful addition to these chapters.
of.” Yet when this phrase is introduced in the textbook in lesson 13, the suggested translation for the idiom is, more accurately, “to obey,” a translation that is also appropriate for this exercise. The translations in the answer key also often fail to capture the nuances of verbal syntax. For example, they do not distinguish between simple future as a translation of the imperfect and the volitional or jussive use of the nonconverted imperfect when embedded in a narrative context. They frequently seem to be reduced to the future tense. Toward the end of the year, students were pointing out this homogeneity of translation in class, often with some frustration.

Transliteration and the Hebrew Vowels

Transliteration is pedagogically helpful for students to understand at every point in the study of Biblical Hebrew. The use of a phonetic transliteration system in A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew does not take full advantage of the benefits of using transliteration in teaching Biblical Hebrew. One unintended consequence of this approach is that it produces somewhat unconventional forms like “Joseph Qimkhi” (4) and can create other confusions for a student trying to distinguish whether [kh] represents the phoneme [h] or two separate consonants [k] + [h]. More significantly, mastering the more scientific system of transliteration is the only way that I know to help students learn clearly to distinguish between short, long, and changeably long vowels and the relation between vowel length and syllable structure. Using the phonetic transliteration system, with nothing visually to mark the distinction between [v], [v̄], and [v̂], students found it very difficult to understand the structure of a syllable, despite sections seeking to teach this (such as, “Unaccented syllables and the vowels they may contain” [24]). These sections were actually more cumbersome than necessary to teach, since the text gives students only the vowel name in phonetic transcription but no graphic symbol or image. I found it necessary to “start over” by providing a vowel chart, with both the vowels and the scientific transliteration, organized by length, and then teaching the rules. The scientific system of transliteration also proves very helpful in distinguishing compensatory lengthening from virtual doubling, especially in conjunction with the definite article before a guttural or with rules for the preposition מִן. Such phenomena are described in words in the textbook (21, 34, 44), but I think it more helpful to students actually to show them in operation, using transliteration, so the changes can be visualized. A summary of technical transliteration of consonants and vowels is included in appendix A and appendix B, respectively, but since the text does not use the technical system, it is not clear what benefit the student will derive from having these appendices.

Finally, the discussion of šēwā’ (21–23) is helpful as regards the rules for distinguishing between the vocal and silent šēwā’. At the same time, it would be even more helpful to the student not simply to speak of “two uses” (22) but to emphasize that the same sign is being used in two fundamentally different and inconsistent ways: both to mark the reduced vowel and to mark a zero, or nonvowel. Similarly, section 11.8, “The two pronunciations of the vowel qāmes” (62), seems to try to do too much in collapsing everything under a single vowel name. The guidelines provided are helpful, but still more valuable would be to explain that the same grapheme is in effect being used to mark two completely different vowels. Equally helpful would be to provide the standard names for each, to distinguish regular qāmes from qāmes ḫātāp. Part of pedagogy involves mapping and naming the phenomena being taught. Providing the student with only the one term, qāmes, makes it more challenging to distinguish between the two distinct phonemes.
Some Specific Suggestions for a Potential Second Edition of the Textbook

It is important to express gratitude to Professor Hackett, who provided a complete copy of *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* while it was still in manuscript form and who granted permission for the department to use it during the past academic year, because we were experimenting to find a more “user-friendly” textbook than Thomas Lambdin’s, a textbook that I hold in esteem. Hendrickson published the volume at a remarkably fair price, and the book benefited immensely from the design and typesetting expertise of Bob Buller. Allan Emery, as Senior Editor, agreed to share prepublication galleys of the volume, in PDF format for ease of searching, in order to facilitate this review. The publisher was also responsive to suggestions made prior to publication. It appears that six minor suggestions that I passed on to him then made their way into the published volume. The following are some additional suggestions to consider for a possible second edition of the text, along with a list of typos found in the textbook and answer key.

- The concept of parsing is not introduced until lesson 24, after all the major stems have been covered. Ideally, this material would be presented in lesson 12 with the introduction to the verb, so that students can be encouraged to begin parsing all verbal forms they encounter from that point forward.

- Lesson 18 covers the participial forms of the strong verb. Since verbs of type I-ן, I-י, and I-ך are introduced in lesson 16, it would be helpful if lesson 18 indicated that these verbs are declined like those of the strong verb.

- The converted perfect is introduced in lesson 16 of the text (98), but I could not find any discussion of the characteristic shift of stress to the *ultima* that occurs in the first- and second-person forms (nçָתַבְתִּי > כָּתַ֫בְתִּי). This shift in stress is a valuable marker and should be brought to the attention of students.

- It is important to provide the beginning student with full verbal paradigms of both strong and weak verbs as a reference point. Appendix H contains key paradigms for verbs with weak root letters. Since the lessons do not provide full paradigms for the I-G, II-G, III-G, I-א, and III-א verbs in all tenses and stems, it would be beneficial to students to expand appendix H to include this material.

- Hackett’s treatment of the hop’al and pu’al need to be supplemented; she gives them no more than a paragraph each (135, 144). Although they are rare, their patterns are not that difficult to learn after having learning the hip’il and pi’el, respectively. Teaching these stems has the added benefits of reinforcing: (1) the overall logic and organization of the system of verbal *binyanim*; and (2) the use of the morphological markers to distinguish between *binyanim*.

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9. The suggestions were sent by email on 12 March 2010 and included: noting that the preposition יָ֫צֵל follows the ב pattern of declension with pronominal suffixes (46); using the formulation *qal stem*, rather than *conjugation*, so as to avoid confusion with the immediately following discussion of the “prefix conjugation” in the next sentence (66); identifying הָ֫נְקָה as the *definite* direct object marker rather than just “direct object marker” (as originally on 69); adding “scroll” to the definition of ספר in the vocabulary list (71); including the two additional I-א verbs (78); and two corrections to the answer key (lesson 17, no. 9; lesson 22, no. 10).
Typos to be corrected include the following:

- Textbook, p. 53 (lesson 10): The vocabulary entry for בָּת lists the singular form with an attached first common singular pronominal suffix. Since pronominal suffixes have not yet been presented in the text, the singular construct form should be listed instead, so that the entry matches those of אָב, אָח, and בֵּן on the same page.

- Textbook, p. 79 (lesson 13): Since paradigms are provided in the chapter for stative verbs with I-G and for the small set of verbs with patah as their theme vowel (לָמַד, רָכַב, and שָׁכַב), it would be helpful to include these verbs in the vocabulary list at the end of the chapter.

- Textbook, p. 204 (lesson 28): Exercise 7 has a typo in the first word: there should be no dâgêš in the first yôd of וְיִגְדַּל. This exercise is also confusing. The sentence is a quote from 2 Sam 7:26. The wāw attached to the first word, וְיִגְדַּל, has the meaning “so that,” which it acquires from being in sequence with the imperatives in 2 Sam 7:25. A footnote to the exercise explains this by stating that the wāw “suggests connection with an earlier imperative and should be translated ‘so that.’” It would be more helpful if a simple presentation of the rules of clause sequences were provided somewhere in the textbook. Then this exercise could include a note explaining that in this context, the preceding volitive form occurs in a verse not included in the homework.

- Answer key, lesson 15, exercise 4: The translation should read “Baal of the Astartes” rather than “Baal and the Astartes.”

- Answer key, lesson 30, exercise 6: The excerpt of the women’s song and its repetition by an irate Saul (1 Sam 18:7–8) is given correctly in the Hebrew in the textbook exercise, but the translation in the answer key is incorrect. The Hebrew of the song sung by the Israelite women reads: “his thousands” and “his tens of thousands.” Saul’s later partial repetition of the song excludes the pronominal endings on “thousands” and “tens of thousands.” The answer key translation, however, reads only: “thousands” and “tens of thousands” for both the women’s song and for Saul’s speech. The distinction between what the women sang and what Saul repeated should be preserved.

- Answer key, lesson 30, exercise B16: This example, taken from Lev 19:12, appears to contain a proofreading oversight. The answer key translation reads: “You will not swear [= Do not swear/take an oath] in my name falsely and defile the name of your god! I am Yahweh.” It should read “your God” rather than “your god,” as the latter does not make sense alongside the Tetragrammaton.

Conclusion

A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew introduces many novel approaches to teaching the language, animated by innovative terminology and the attempt to reorganize more conventional sequences of instruction. Sufficient supporting material is not yet provided, however, to make the textbook work on its own, especially in regard to adequate amounts of homework, precision of translation, and teaching the verb paradigms. In my own experience, the very points where Hackett’s grammar sought to make the most innovative contributions caused, in the end, the greatest difficulty for students. Throughout the course, it rapidly became necessary to supplement the textbook with material from other sources. No introductory
Biblical Hebrew text ever stands on its own in the classroom: All of us have, over the years, accumulated the kinds of supplementary materials and “oral torah” to explain or work around particularly difficult or obscure points of the grammar to bring the textbook alive. Precisely because of the innovations this textbook seeks to introduce, it would be helpful to provide an “instructors’ guide,” to share some of the linguistic assumptions that are implicit in the volume, as well as some of the pedagogical techniques used by Professor Hackett in her classrooms over the past several decades to make this new approach work.

**APPENDIX: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RECENT INTRODUCTORY BIBLICAL HEBREW TEXTBOOKS**

This list, which is not comprehensive and covers works only in English, builds upon one prepared by Prof. Aaron Koller, Yeshiva University, with additions and revisions by me. It is arranged alphabetically except where companion volumes (workbooks, answer keys, etc.) have been published.


   This volume bears no relation to Brian Webster’s more recent textbook, *The Cambridge Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (see details below). The two are independent of one another, and each follows a different approach.


   The first volume is their traditional grammar; the second employs modern foreign-language acquisition theory.


This volume is available gratis in PDF format for download at: http://www.regentpublishing.com/authors/davidmcmlemens/.


