As per the self-archiving policy of Oxford University Press: the review below is the submitted version. The final version is published in the *Journal of Semitic Studies* 65 (2020), pp. 639–641.

Eric D. Reymond, *Intermediate Biblical Hebrew Grammar: A Student's Guide to Phonology and Morphology* (Resources for Biblical Study, 89). Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2018. xx, 334 pp. $44.95 paperback. ISBN 978 1 62837 189 5

This grammar is intended for intermediate and advanced students of Biblical Hebrew, focusing particularly on phonology and morphology and their historical development, and as such it proves to be a very useful, in-depth study tool. Although this volume does not function as an intermediate textbook, it does offer handy learning tips at the end of each chapter.

In his preface the author explains his transliteration system for the Tiberian Hebrew (Pronunciation) Tradition (THT), which is a simplified and reduced version of what students may have encountered in their beginner's textbook. His transliteration system may at first cause some confusion to those who are used to the various forms of transliteration of the vowels (e.g. *ḥireq* and *ḥireq-yod*). For the Pre-Masoretic pronunciation of Hebrew (from roughly the Second Temple era) a different, more complex system is used in this volume. However, with the help of these different transliteration systems Reymond is able to clearly illustrate the phonological and morphological changes that occurred in the Hebrew language over a long period.

In the Introductory chapter Reymond makes the student aware of the fact that the Biblical Hebrew pronunciation taught in class usually reflects modern, Israeli Hebrew, such as the letter *ḥet* being the equivalent to *ch*, or the twofold pronunciation of *qamets* as either 'long */ā/*' or 'short */o/*', which derives from the Sephardic tradition. Moreover, when students learn the forms of certain words, they may not realize that these forms actually reflect a type

of Hebrew that dates from the first millennium CE, such as the form of the word for ‘king’, *mɛlɛk*. He continues by explaining why it is useful to understand the type of Hebrew that goes back to the period when the Bible was actually written and copied. For instance, it enables the student to draw closer to the biblical text and understand more clearly the sound and rhythm of the language. Knowledge of the language’s historical development further helps to explain certain pairs of verbal roots, such as נצר / נטר, both of which seem to derive from a Proto-(Northwest) Semitic root *nt̲r* ‘to guard’, or the existence of pairs of antonyms with similar sounds, such as סָכָל ‘folly’ and שָׂכָל ‘prudence’. Knowledge of ancient Hebrew phonology can also help explain certain translations and provide the grounds for new interpretations. In addition, understanding the Hebrew morphology from the era of the biblical authors makes it, for example, easier to predict the forms of segolate nouns with pronominal suffixes: *mɛlɛk* ‘king’ was most likely pronounced as **malk*, which is the basis of the form with pronominal suffixes: מַלְכִּי < **malkī* ‘my king’. The author makes the student also aware of the dialectal and chronological varieties of the Hebrew language in the era of the Bible (he refers to the well-known division of the language into four different epochs: Archaic Biblical Hebrew, Standard Biblical Hebrew, Transitional Biblical Hebrew and Late Biblical Hebrew).

The second chapter offers a thorough treatment of the consonants and the (possible) articulation of the various phonemes in the first millennium BCE. It introduces the student to the scholarly debates surrounding the pronunciation of the consonants. For example, Reymond discusses the different views on the beginning of the spirantized pronunciation of the *begadkefat* phonemes (many scholars believe that it took place around 400 BCE, although some, such as P. Kyle McCarter, argue for a much later date, namely the first century BCE). Reymond’s in-depth discussion of the consonantal phonemes is often supported by evidence from Proto-(Northwest) Semitic, other Semitic cognates, the Septuagint, the Secunda, Jerome’s transcriptions, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. In his section on the loss of gemination

and the shewa, Reymond offers a very useful, pacifistic variant of the 'Skin ʾem alive' mnemonic, which helps students to remember which geminated consonants tend to lose their dagesh when they are followed by a shewa. He uses the phrase "Shy queens swim alone" (+ צ) instead, and I have successfully tried and tested this variant in my own Hebrew classes!

In the third chapter Reymond discusses the complex historical development of the vowels, starting with the Tiberian tradition and moving backwards in time. The reconstruction of the vocalic dimension for the early periods is a challenging undertaking given the fact that the orthography did not typically indicate vowels in the interior of words. Reymond nevertheless convincingly argues the value of such a reconstruction, which relies heavily on the transcription of Hebrew words in the Septuagint and the Secunda and on comparative evidence from the cognate Semitic languages. Students will find Reymond's explanation of phenomena such as compensatory lengthening and epenthesis very useful. They will also appreciate the timeline at the end of the chapter: it presents a (very hypothetical) chronological sequence of some of the phonological phenomena discussed in the foregoing, starting with the Canaanite Shift (ca. 1500 BCE) and ending with the merger of /*ḫ*/ and /*ḥ*/ (ca. 100 BCE-200CE).

The next chapter focuses on the development of nominal patterns. Again, a complex topic because not every noun can easily be attributed to a particular etymological base pattern, and there are traces of inconsistency among the Hebrew traditions in different eras. For instance, Reymond mentions the segolate noun גֶּפֶן 'vine', which appears to be a **qatl* noun in THT but might have been a **qutl* noun in an earlier period (see גופר in 1QIsa[a] at Isa. 34:4). Moreover, we even find inconsistency in the Bible itself: the segolate noun חֶסֶר / חֹסֶר 'lack' could go back to the **qatl* or **qitl* base on the one hand, or the **qutl* base on the other. Reymond points out that although the memorization of the nominal base patterns seems like an added burden to the students, it is a worthwhile undertaking. Not at least because it helps

them to remember vocabulary and to predict the inflection of a noun. Students will particularly value Reymond's explanation of the case system in Northwest Semitic and its collapse by the end of the second millennium BCE.

The fifth and final chapter deals with the morphology of Hebrew verbal forms. According to the author, knowledge of the history of the forms will help students to produce and remember the verb in its various articulations. In his historical reconstruction of the verbal system Reymond also includes Proto-Semitic and often refers to verbal forms in the Semitic cognates. Particularly useful is his timeline of the development of finite verbs (in Proto-Northwest Semitic, in Hebrew around 100 BCE, and in the Tiberian tradition). Students will further appreciate the author's explanation of the enigmatic passive Qal stem. He offers clear examples, explains how a passive Qal verb can be identified, and indicates when the stem was probably lost from Hebrew (at least by late Second Temple period).

Students will find the charts of nouns and verbs that follow very helpful, as well as the appendix, which contains a number of guidelines for producing the basic nominal and verbal forms. However, this volume will also appeal to scholars of Biblical Hebrew who seek an overview of the recent scholarly developments in these areas of the language, thanks to the up-to-date insights and bibliographic references.

Alinda Damsma

University College London