

itself, but since Jonah is separated because of content, why is Daniel not also kept separate? Regardless of this, Barstad deals with both books intelligently in their respective places.

The chapter on Poetic and Wisdom Literature is, again, replete not only with up-to-date insights about the literature itself but also with a survey of the history of scholarship. Barstad is especially thorough in his treatment of the Psalms (23 pages). A short chapter covering Jonah, Ruth and Esther finishes the book.

More than a mere survey of the books of the Old Testament, this book also functions as a primer in responsible hermeneutics. Throughout, Barstad argues that older critical methods, while still applicable and helpful, are insufficient in and of themselves. The current diversity of methods, including especially final form literary analysis, is a necessary and beneficial development. The book is sprinkled with helpful excurses (not so named) on topics like the 'The Bible and Archaeology', 'The Deuteronomistic History and History' and 'Prophecy as a Phenomenon', which correct common misunderstandings and misuses of the Old Testament, and which are invariably fascinating. The end matter includes a glossary of historical, literary and scholarly terms which is a treasure in and of itself.

While intended for undergraduate students, *A Brief Guide to the Hebrew Bible* contains an astounding amount of information in comparatively little space, making it useful for laypeople, pastors, scholars not specialising in Old Testament and graduate students in Old Testament who want a quick and accessible overview of Old Testament scholarship. Barstad manages to encompass and distil the bewildering diversity of contemporary scholarship and present it in a way that is both understandable and engaging for the non-specialist.

Kerry Lee
Edinburgh, Scotland

A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew

Jo Ann Hackett

Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2010; xxv + 302 pp., £26.99, hb; ISBN 978-1-59856-028-2

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Jo Ann Hacketts *Elementare Einführung ins Bibelhebräische* stellt eine klar geschriebene und kreative Grammatik des Bibelhebräischen dar, die in einem Semester vermittelt werden kann. Sie bringt traditionelle Lehrmethoden auf den neuesten Stand und verbessert sie mit Hilfe origineller Beiträge. Hacketts Grammatik ist deduktiv, aber sie folgt einer natürlichen Anordnung und besitzt somit viele Vorteile eines induktiven Ansatzes. Die Autorin vermeidet es, den Studenten mit Fachausdrücken zu überfrachten, aber sie lehrt traditionell anspruchsvolle Konzepte, wenn dies einem besseren Verständnis dient. Zwei Besonderheiten dieser Grammatik bestehen zum einen in Hacketts Termi-

nus für die *wayyiqtol* Form (konsekutives Präteritum) und zum anderen in der Anführung von Verbparadigmen, die mit der grammatischen Form der ersten Person beginnen statt der dritten. Diese ausgezeichnete Grammatik umfasst nützliche Appendices und eine CD-Rom mit Aussprachehilfen zu hebräischen Wörtern.

SUMMARY

Jo Ann Hackett's *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* is a clearly written and fresh one semester Biblical Hebrew grammar, updating and improving traditional teaching methods with some original contributions. Hackett's grammar is deductive, but it is organised intuitively and so has many of the advantages of the inductive approach. She avoids overwhelming the student with technicalities but teaches traditionally advanced concepts when they aid comprehension. Two unique features of the grammar are Hackett's term for the *wayyiqtol* form (consecutive preterite) and the presentation of verb paradigms starting with first person forms instead of third person forms. This excellent grammar includes helpful appendices and a CD-ROM with audio pronunciations of Hebrew words.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette première introduction à l'hébreu biblique contient une présentation claire et novatrice de la grammaire de cette langue, mettant à jour et améliorant les méthodes traditionnelles d'enseignement avec des apports originaux. Cette grammaire est déductive, mais étant organisée intuitivement, présente bien des avantages de l'approche inductive. L'auteur a su éviter de submerger l'étudiant de points techniques mais expose les notions qu'on présente traditionnellement lorsque celles-ci aident à la compréhension. On peut signaler deux éléments originaux de cette grammaire : la désignation de la forme *wayyiqtol* comme un prétérit consécutif, et l'arrangement des paradigmes verbaux en commençant par la première personne au lieu de la troisième. Des appendices utiles et un CD-ROM donnant la prononciation des mots hébreux sous forme audio accompagnent cette excellente grammaire.

* * * *

Jo Ann Hackett's *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* is an outstanding addition to the range of introductory Hebrew grammars. Clearly and concisely written, it approaches teaching Biblical Hebrew from an original (if, at times, idiosyncratic) angle, updating and improving traditional methods.

Hackett's grammar is designed for one semester (10 or 15 weeks, three or two lessons per week). Reading mechanics are covered in the first six chapters, nouns, pronouns and adjectives in chapters seven through eleven, and verbs from chapter twelve on. Other parts of speech are scattered throughout the book. The fact that the mechanics of reading and pronunciation occupy the first six chapters means that, if the schedule of two to three lessons per week were rigidly kept, this would take up two to three weeks, which seems excessive. As Hackett predicts in her introduction, however, instructors will

likely want to cover more ground early on in order to make time for more difficult lessons later in the semester.

Verbs are introduced two-fifths of the way through. The problem is that the later the translation and creation of full sentences is delayed, the longer the student lacks the full advantage of inductive learning. The ideal grammar has the advantages of both deductive and inductive teaching methods: clear categories and structure so the student has a place to put the data mentally, and realistic translation situations as soon as possible, since retention and comprehension are best facilitated through application. This being said, the delay of the introduction of verbs in Hackett's grammar is less serious than it initially appears for two reasons. First, as mentioned, teachers will likely choose to cover the first several lessons more rapidly than later lessons. Second, the Hebrew noun system is relatively simple, and full sentences are possible using only nouns. Due to this, Hackett's grammar manages to teach the material as intuitively as possible for a deductive grammar while avoiding the pitfalls of an inductive grammar like that of Kittel, Hoffer and Wright, which fails to provide a mental structure (i.e. paradigms) until relatively late in the book.

Hackett avoids overwhelming the student with technicalities but does not shy away from teaching traditionally advanced concepts when they aid comprehension. When a rule has exceptions, Hackett notes this in the text teaching the rule and then relates the exception(s) in a footnote. This arrangement is advantageous in that the text is not bogged down with minutiae, but the student also is not left in the dark concerning something for which standard Hebrew pedagogy has no systematic means of teaching outside of an introductory grammar. Students of Hackett's grammar will be well prepared for more advanced discussion afterward, and will not be left constantly wondering whether a rule applies in a particular case. Knowing the exception ahead of time allows the rule to function as a genuine rule.

Hackett often chooses morphologically descriptive terms, like 'prefix conjugation' instead of syntactic terms like 'imperfect'. At times, her terminology is unique. For example, her name for the *wayyiqtol* form, often called converted imperfect or imperfect consecutive (both of which Hebraists consider inaccurate, but which stubbornly persist in introductory grammars anyway), is 'consecutive preterite': 'consecutive' because of the presence of a prefixed waw (with an aside to the student about the history of the form) and 'preterite' for the form's aspect/tense. Hackett confesses this uniqueness to the student and explains its reason. One can only hope that other Hebrew instructors will follow her lead.

Another area where Hackett is unique with a good reason is in the presentation of verbal paradigms. The standard way of presenting the Hebrew verb is in the order third, second, and first person forms, singular then plural. Instead, Hackett presents verbs in the order first, second, third person to more closely approximate the way other languages are learned. Furthermore, all charts

are presented in a right-to-left direction to coincide with the direction of Hebrew reading. The only disadvantage to this organisation is its lack of cross-compatibility with other grammatical tools, which universally present third person first. However, its benefit for students learning Hebrew may outweigh any drawbacks.

The grammar contains eight appendices, including the standard paradigm lists and glossaries, as well as the text of Genesis 22:1-19 (used at several points in the grammar) and a set of guidelines to aid in the identification of weak roots. Also included is a CD-ROM that contains, among other things, the answers to the exercises, vocabulary lists and audio pronunciation of Hebrew words.

It is clear that this grammar was written by someone who is well acquainted with the specific problems of teaching and learning Biblical Hebrew. From its organisation to its up-to-date and even original terminology, Hackett's *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* is a very welcome addition to the market of introductory Hebrew grammars.

Kerry Lee
Edinburgh, Scotland

Judges **Word Biblical Commentary 8** **Trent C. Butler**

Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009; xcii + 538,
£29.99, hb.; ISBN 978-08499-0207-9

SUMMARY

Judges by Trent Butler is an outstanding addition both to the Word Biblical Commentary series and to scholarly literature on the book of Judges, being both very readable and rigorously scholarly. Butler's approach is conservative and up-to-date, arguing for an early composition date and treating Judges as a literary unit. The volume contains an extensive and helpful bibliography and appendix of tables. The occasional division of the text into units of three or more chapters makes parts of this volume cumbersome, and there are a number of typographical errors, but *Judges* remains exceedingly useful and scholarly.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce commentaire sur le livre des Juges vient ajouter un volume remarquable à la série du *Word Biblical Commentary*, ainsi qu'aux études académiques sur ce livre biblique. Il est à la fois très lisible et d'une grande rigueur scientifique. L'approche est conservatrice. L'information est bien à jour. L'auteur considère que la date de composition du livre est ancienne et l'aborde comme une unité littéraire. L'ouvrage comporte une bibliographie substantielle et des tables en appendice. Le texte est parfois divisé en sections de trois chapitres, voire davantage, ce qui peut rendre l'utilisation de ce commentaire malaisée, mais cela