

**ELEMENTS OF
HEBREW BY AN
INDUCTIVE METHOD**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649102235

Elements of Hebrew by an inductive method by William R. Harper

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AN INDUCTIVE METHOD

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

WILLIAM R. HARPER, PH. D.

PROFESSOR OF SEMITIC LANGUAGES IN YALE UNIVERSITY; PRINCIPAL OF THE
SCHOOLS OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HEBREW

TWELFTH EDITION, WITH INDEX.

NEW YORK:
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

1890.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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CHICAGO.

IN MEMORIAM

Prof. J. Henry Senger

PJ4567

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TO THOSE
WHO HAVE STUDIED OR WHO SHALL STUDY
IN THE SCHOOLS OF
THE INSTITUTE OF HEBREW
THIS VOLUME IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

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PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION.

The first edition of the *ELEMENTS* was issued in July, 1881; the second, in October, 1882; the third, in February, 1883; the fourth, in November, 1883; the fifth, in November, 1884. All these editions, the first excepted, were printed from one set of plates, with only such changes and additions, from time to time, as the use of the same plates would permit. The peculiar circumstances of publication explained, although they could not excuse, the incomplete, and often imperfect, treatment accorded in these editions to very many of the subjects. While the present edition lays no claim to completeness, or to freedom from error, it will certainly be found more nearly complete and perfect than preceding editions. The author can only regret that regular and special duties of a most exacting nature, have not permitted him to give that amount of time, or that attention to the preparation of the book, which justice to the subject, to those who may use the book, and to himself, demanded.

The present edition, which contains nearly one hundred additional pages, and is entirely re-written, differs considerably from the former editions, and radically from other grammars now in common use. Some of the distinguishing features of the grammar deserve, perhaps, special mention:

1) For the purpose, not of aiding the beginner to pronounce, but of teaching the exact force and value of the several consonant- and vowel-sounds, a minute system of transliteration has been employed, by which the attention of the student is directed from the very beginning to the details of the vowel-system. Too little, by far, is made in Hebrew study, of the vowel-system, without a correct knowledge of which all effort is merely groping in darkness.

2) A tolerably exhaustive treatment, more complete perhaps than any that has yet appeared in English, is given of the various vowel-sounds. Each sound is treated separately, the laws which regulate its occurrence and the grammatical forms in which it appears being carefully noted.

3) Certain important distinctions, not heretofore generally recognized by American teachers, are indicated throughout the grammar; e. g., (*a*)

the tone-long δ (ֿ), heightened from ä , which is seen in Segholates, in ה'ֿ Imperfects and Participles, and elsewhere; (b) the naturally long e (ֿֿ) contracted from ay , which occurs in plural nouns before the pronominal suffixes ֿֿ , ֿֿ , and in certain Imperfects before נֿֿ ; (c) the δ obscured from \hat{a} , as distinguished from the $\hat{o} = aw$.

4) Instead of adopting a new Paradigm-word for each class of weak verbs, the verb קטל is retained, with such variation as the particular weak verb under consideration demanded; e. g., עטל , for the פ' guttural verb. קטט , for the ע"ע verb, קול for the ע"י verb. There can be no objection to this method. Many grammarians have adopted it in the treatment of noun-formation. Experience has shown that, in this way, men learn the verb more rapidly and more thoroughly.

5) In the treatment of the strong verb, the student is referred, in every case, to the primary form or ground-form from which the form in use has arisen in accordance with the phonetic laws of the language. That treatment which starts with stems having the form which occurs in the Perf. 3 m. sg., or Impf. 3 m. sg., is, at the same time, unscientific and unsatisfactory. The bugbear of Hebrew grammar is the weak verb. Nor will it be otherwise so long as the effort is made to explain the forms of weak verbs from those of the strong verb. How absurd, for example, to derive יקום from a form like יקטל ; but how simple to derive it from a form like יקטל , the ground-form of קטל . Together with the form in use, the student should learn also the primary form from which the usual form is derived. This method will furnish a knowledge of the language, which will be not only more scientific, but also more lasting.

6) Particular attention is given to the subject of noun-formation, and on this is based the treatment of noun-inflection. The same method which would teach the primary forms of verbal stems, will also teach the primary forms of noun-stems.

7) That fiction of Hebrew grammarians, the connecting-vowel, has been practically discarded. The Hebrew has no connecting-vowels. The vowels incorrectly called connecting-vowels are the relics of old case- or stem-endings. These case- or stem-endings, summarily disposed of in current grammars under the head of "paragogic" vowels, are restored to the position which their existence and occurrence demand.

But it is asked, What has a beginner to do with all this? Why should a grammar which proposes only to consider the "elements" of the language, take up these subjects? While this may do for specialists, of what service is it to him who studies Hebrew only for exegetical purposes? Our reply is this:—

1) The experiment of teaching men something about Hebrew grammar, of giving them only a superficial knowledge, has been tried for half a century; and it has failed. Men instructed in this manner take no interest in the study, learn little or nothing of the language, and forget, almost before it is learned, the little that they may have acquired. If for no other reason, the adoption of a new system is justified by the lamentable failure of the old to furnish any practical results.

2) Those who take up the study of Hebrew are men, not children. Why should they not learn, as they proceed, the explanation of this or that fact? Why should the student be told that the Infinitive Construct (קטל) is formed from the Absolute (קטול) by rejecting the pretonic qāmēç? Is it not better that he should learn at once that the \bar{o} of the Construct is from \ddot{u} , while the \hat{o} of the Absolute is from \hat{a} , and thus be enabled to grasp all the more firmly those two great phonetic laws of the language, *heightening* and *obscuration*?

3) The best way, *always*, to learn a thing is the right way, even if, at first, it is more difficult. If there is a difference between the \bar{o} of the Imperfect, Imperative and Infinitive Construct on the one hand, and the \hat{o} of the Infinitive Absolute and Participles on the other, what is gained by passing over it in silence?

4) In order to learn any subject, the student must be interested in that subject. Is he not more likely to be interested in an accurate, scientific treatment, than in an arbitrary, superficial treatment?

The treatment adopted in the ELEMENTS is an inductive one, so far as it was possible to make it such. In the discussion of each subject there are first given sufficient data, either in the way of words taken from the text, or of Paradigms, to form a basis for the work. The words cited are from the early chapters of Genesis, with which the student is supposed to be familiarizing himself, as the subjects are being taken up. Where these chapters furnished no suitable example, a word is taken from some other book, the chapter and verse being cited in each case. It is intended that the student shall feel in all his work that he is dealing with the actual facts of the language, and not with hypothetical forms. After the presentation of the "facts," the principles taught by these facts are stated as concisely as possible. While the book is an elementary treatise, and for this reason, does not aim to take up the exceptions and anomalies of the language, it will be found to contain a treatment of all that is essential, and to include everything of importance which can be classified. In the treatment of the strong and weak verbs, a list is given under each class of the more important verbs be-