

**A GRAMMAR OF
THE HEBREW
LANGUAGE**

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A Grammar of the Hebrew Language by George Bush

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BY

GEORGE BUSH,

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PROF. OF HEB. AND ORIENT. LIT. IN THE NEW-YORK CITY UNIVERSITY.

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P R E F A C E.

It is not without considerable hesitation that I have concluded to insert the words 'Second Edition' in the title-page of this Grammar. It is in all essential points a new and independent work, written with little reference to its predecessor, and retaining but few of its distinguishing features. The simple fact that it is a work on the same subject, and by the same author, is all that I can adduce to justify the appellation.

The reasons which have prompted so entire a re-modelling of the original work are of a multifarious character, some of which are more easily felt than described. A desire to avail myself of the friendly hints of many eminent scholars and teachers of Hebrew led me, in the first instance, to endeavor, without making any material alteration in the plan, simply to correct what was erroneous, to supply what was defective, and to elucidate what was obscure, in the former edition. But it struck me, as I proceeded, that in the present state of Hebrew learning in our country, the attempt might be safely made to incorporate in my work some of the results of the recent labors of German philologists in this department. As a marked advance has been made of late years in explaining the reasons of many of the facts of the language, it seemed desirable to unite with the purposed simplicity of the former treatise, such a scientific view of the interior principles and structure of the Hebrew, as should satisfy the inquiries of the intelligent learner. But as this could not be done without losing sight, in great measure, of the previous work, I soon resolved upon re-writing the whole.

In the execution of this plan I lay claim to no merit but that of having attempted to make a judicious use of the materials furnished by those who have gone before me in the same field. From these I have selected and arranged, with my best judgment, whatever seemed adapted to the design of a sound practical system of Hebrew Grammar. Without an intentional adherence to any particular school, I must perhaps acknowledge myself most largely indebted to the labors of Ewald, of whose grammatical works a fuller account is given in the Introduction. To him I wish particularly to assign the credit of two among the most valuable and interesting features of my work: I allude to the doctrine of the *Floating Shewa* and the *Fore-tone*; which under his plastic hand are made to solve very happily some of the leading problems of the punctuation. In addition to Ewald, the Grammars of Gesenius, Jahn, Lee, Schröder, Roorda, Hurwitz, and Stuart, have been constantly before me, as well as those of the older school of Buxtorf and Opitius, all which, by various suggestions, have contributed more or less to give form and character to my own. To Gesenius especially I am indebted for the illustration (p. 49) of the mutual vocal relations of *a, e, i, o, u*, by means of the triangular diagram.

To the very valuable Grammar of my friend and official associate, Prof. Nordheimer, I have made occasional references, and they would probably have been still more numerous but for the fact, that the body of my work was entirely written before I became aware of his intention to publish. Had I known it at an earlier date I might have questioned the expediency of going on with my own undertaking. Perhaps it had been wiser to have waved it, as it was; but one is slow to come to a decision that would require him to throw away the labor of many months; and as I perceived that our several plans were in many respects different, I determined on the whole to cast my bread also upon the waters. It is due, however, to Prof. N. to say, that with a singular freedom from the influences that often weigh with authors, he has evinced from the first a kindly interest in my enterprise, and proffered every assistance in his power in conducting the work through the press. For this generous service, and for the many valuable suggestions on the subject of Hebrew Grammar and Philology in general, derived from my intercourse with him, I am happy in this opportunity of expressing my unfeigned thanks.

Nor will gratitude for literary courtesies allow me to pass unnoticed the aid very kindly tendered in correcting the proof-sheets of the latter half of the volume by Prof. J. Seixas, a well known teacher of Hebrew in the United States. My only regret is that circumstances did not permit him to afford to my pages from the outset the benefit of his accurate revisals. As it is, although the portion submitted to his practised eye is more especially free from errors of the press, yet I think I may assure the reader of the *general* typographical correctness of the whole work. Occasional inaccuracies in the vowel-pointing or letters may here and there be detected additional to those that appear in the table of Errata, but they are mostly of a very trifling nature, and the learner may go forward in the full confidence of not being misled in any important point, either through the lapse of type or pen. Extraordinary care particularly has been bestowed in this respect upon the Analysis of the First Chapter of Genesis at the close of the volume, which will be found of great service as a Praxis for the beginner, and the use of which will perhaps supply the best test of the adaptedness of the Grammar to its objects. This Analysis might have been considerably extended, but it is believed that after the thorough initiation into the vowel structure of the language, he will have little difficulty in solving any apparent mysteries that may occur in his subsequent progress.

With an earnest hope that the work may conduce somewhat to the furtherance of the interests of Hebrew literature—but another name for *sacred philology*—the author commends it to the favor of the public.

G. E.

New York, July 1st, 1839.

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