

**THE ELEMENTS OF THE  
HEBREW LANGUAGE.  
[LONDON-1870]**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649743766

The Elements of the Hebrew Language. [London-1870] by A. D. Jones

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Cover @ 2017

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BY  
REV. A. D. JONES, A.M.

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"ALTIUS ALIO PLUS INVENIENS POTEST, OMNIA NEMO."

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Indober:  
WARREN F. DRAPER, PUBLISHER.  
MAIN STREET.  
1870.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1870, by  
WARREN F. DRAFER,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.



56,687

ANDOVER:  
PRINTED BY WARREN F. DRAFER.  
PRESS, BARD, AVERY & PRYDE.

## PREFACE.

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EXCEPT among the adherents to the Jewish faith the study of the Hebrew language has been strangely and almost universally neglected. There is no good reason why this should be so; but many and important reasons why it should not. For, notwithstanding its many curious and remarkable grammatical contrivances, it is, on account of its general uniformity and simplicity of construction, a language of which a thorough knowledge may be easily and pleasantly acquired.

Besides the consideration from a religious point of view, that it is the language which contains the oracles of God—the *θησαυρός* of divine wisdom,—its study will afford exercise for the acutest intellects, and give pleasure to the lover of the curious in philology. Indeed, as being the most ancient language which has

come down to us in a written form, a knowledge of it is essential to every complete and well-grounded linguist.

Heretofore, the study of the Hebrew language has been left almost exclusively to students of theology; and therefore but few, except theologians, know anything about it; and even among them, there may be found some not over-burdened with a knowledge of it.

Probably one reason why so little attention has been paid (except by theological students) to the study of Hebrew heretofore, has been the erroneous but long-prevailing idea, that it is a *hard* and *disagreeable* language to acquire a knowledge of; but nothing could be further from the truth; for there is not a lad of ordinary capacity who cannot obtain a knowledge of it in less time, and with far more ease, than he can that of either Latin or Greek; and yet both boys and girls learn these languages.

But perhaps the *principal* reason why so little attention has been paid to this language has been the want of a proper elementary book with which to *commence* the study of it. To meet this want is the object of this little volume. The Grammars in present use, though



excellent in themselves, are nevertheless of too high a class, far too minute and complicated in their construction, for *young beginners*. In saying this, let us not be understood as wishing to pull down other Grammars in order to build up this; these Grammars stand, and are capable of standing, on their own merits; and nothing that we could say, even were we disposed, would either raise or depress them in the estimation of scholars; all we mean is, that in the study of Hebrew, the more simple the book for the *beginner* the better. It has been, therefore, our endeavor in this attempt, to furnish a book with which the student can take up the study of the Hebrew language, and prosecute it with ease and success. To that end, we have merely given the general principles of the language, omitting many of the nicer distinctions and minutiae, as well as those endless "exceptions," found in most Grammars, and which too often serve rather to impede than facilitate the student. This, then, must be our apology for venturing to offer another Grammar of the Hebrew language to the public; namely, that it might assist young beginners in their first efforts

in this study, and enable them the better to understand the more learned and philosophical Grammars already in use.

The arrangement of this Grammar is such, that it can be at once introduced into any classical school, of either sex, and studied in the same manner as those of Latin or Greek, though with far more ease. It is true, the introduction of the study of Hebrew into the classical course of our schools may be considered an experiment; but such an experiment, as we believe, if properly made, will prove eminently successful. If it be thought that there are serious obstacles in the way to such an undertaking, it will be found on trial, that these obstacles are only

“Dwarfs dressed up in giant's clothes”;

and that, contrary to the natural order of things, they will appear *less* the *nearer* you approach them; and when fairly met, become nothing at all.

If classical teachers in general, through the want of a competent knowledge of the language, may not themselves be able at first to teach it, they will find it an easy matter to procure the services of a clergyman who can; for

we believe that the clergy will readily and cheerfully lend their aid towards introducing into our schools this important branch of Oriental study. And why should not the Bible be studied in the original tongue as well as Homer, Virgil, Horace, and other heathen authors? There is no good reason whatever. How many there are who can repeat scores of lines from these heathen authors, whilst their own Bible lies a sealed book to them, except in a translation!

We commend this subject to the consideration of teachers; hoping that those who shall make the experiment of introducing it into their schools, may find themselves abundantly rewarded. And we firmly believe that every student who shall, have gone through this elementary work, with ordinary care and application, will at least have acquired a *taste* for the study of Hebrew, and at the same time, find himself prepared to enter upon the more critical study of the larger Grammars, to which this can be considered only as an *introduction*.

Some teachers may object to the *Key* appended to this little volume, on the ground that it leaves too little for the pupil himself to do. It has, however, been added at the suggestion