ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HEBREW LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS ONLINE. General Editor: Geoffrey Khan, Associate Editors: Shmuel Bolozky, Steven E. Fassberg, Gary A. Rendsburg, Aaron D. Rubin, Ora R. Schwarzwald, Tamar Zewi, Advisory Board: Moshe Bar-Asher, Aharon Maman, Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé, Yael Reshef, Brill, 2013. Hardback $2,180, Annual Subscription Price: $450.

The *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics* (henceforth *EHLL*) bills itself a comprehensive encyclopedia of the Hebrew language in all time periods. It offers state of the art articles on the linguistic study of Hebrew and aims to provide the consensus view on various linguistic phenomena. Having reviewed the online version of the *EHLL*, I can say that it lives up to these claims.

   The breadth of the *EHLL* is impressive. It contains more than 850 articles written by around 400 authors. In addition to standard fare on phonology, morphology, and syntax, it includes numerous articles on specialty topics. Some of the more exotic entries include "Bumper Stickers," "Esperanto and Hebrew," "Insults," and "Saint Victor's Abbey in Paris." Because of this range, I was unable to review (or read!) all of the articles contained in the *EHLL*. Instead, I mostly read articles in my area of expertise: the linguistic study of Biblical Hebrew and Comparative Semitics. I also took the opportunity of reviewing the *EHLL* to do some research of my own by reading up on various Iron Age languages related to Biblical Hebrew.

   The majority of the articles that I read were excellent: succinct, informative, and up-to-date. "Idioms" by Andy Warren-Rothlin, "Canaanite Shift" by John Huehnergard and "Egyptian Loanwords" by Aaron D. Rubin stood out in particular. Overall the editors took particular care in selecting the authors for each article. To cite a few examples from the E's: Aaron D. Rubin has distilled his 2004 "An Outline of Egypto-Semitic Morphology" into a cutting-edge article entitled "Egyptian and Hebrew," while Takamitsu Muraoka has parleyed his 1985 monograph *Emphatic Words and Structures* into a readable article with the title "Emphatic Lamed."

   The *EHLL* was not free of errors, however, which is unsurprising given its scope. There were five problems that I noticed while using the *EHLL*: typos, software glitches, interpretive inconsistencies, lacunae, and – most seriously – idiosyncratic interpretations of the data.

   Many of the articles contained typos. In all of the articles I read, there was no space between Hebrew words and their transliteration (e.g., יִכְתֹּב *yiḵtōḇ* from "Afroasiatic and Hebrew: Linguistic Features"). I suspect that this

problem affects every article. There were also a few problems with the Hebrew font and the transliteration of foreign words. The title of Carl Gaenssle's *The Hebrew Particle* אשר, for example, appears as "*The Hebrew particle*רשׁא" in the bibliography of "Relative Particles," while /ˈsōpir/ appears as "/ₜsōpir/" in "Canaanite Shift." Switched or missing consonants also occurred frequently, which produced factual errors in several cases. In "Sibilant Consonants," Hans Rutger Bosker lists the sibilant consonants in Modern Hebrew as "שׁ [s]; ז [č]; שׂ [z]; צ [ts]," which is a typo for שׂ [s]; ז [z]; שׁ [č]; צ [ᵗs]. The phonemic values of the *zayīn* and *šin* have been switched and the superscript on ᵗ*s* is rendered in regular font. Less seriously, the fifth row of Table 2 in Zewi's "Syntax: Biblical Hebrew" bears the label: "nominal clause including a inite [sic] form of היה." And so on.

Overall the online interface was easy to navigate: topics are arranged alphabetically in a database and subdivided by letter. I did encounter a few bugs, however. The search function, for example, returned errors on many occasions, even for simple searches such as "Huehnergard, John." The links cross-referencing "Word Order: Biblical Hebrew," "Possession: Pre-Modern Hebrew," "Adverbial" were broken in Zewi's article on Syntax.

There are also some interpretive inconsistencies between articles. In "Egyptian Loanwords," for example, Aaron D. Rubin refers to חֲנִית *ḥănît* 'spear' as a Canaanite loanword into Egyptian, but Azzan Yadin-Israel calls it an Egyptian loanword into Hebrew in "Contact of Hebrew with Other Languages." Similarly, Tamar Zewi and Robyn Vern disagree on the correct interpretation of the final vowels on forms such as חַיְתוֹ אֶרֶץ *ḥaytô-ʾereṣ* 'beasts of the field' (Gen 1:24; Ps 79:2) and שָׂרָתִי בַּמְּדִינוֹת *śārātî bam-mĕdînôt* 'a princess among provinces' (Lam 1:1). Zewi treats them as the remnants of the Semitic case endings in "Syntax: Biblical Hebrew," while Vern calls them paragogic vowels in "Case: Vestiges of Case Inflection." Of course, different authors are entitled to different interpretations of the data. Still, it would be helpful to at least note the controversy for those unfamiliar with the issues or provide a cross-reference.

For the most part, the *EHLL* covers almost every aspect of the Hebrew language. But I did notice one major lacuna: there are not any articles on diachrony in Biblical Hebrew or the linguistic dating of biblical texts, two topics that have been hotly debated in the past few years. Perhaps the editors wanted to avoid controversy or partisanship, but such an omission is unfortunate given recent, scholarly interest in the topic. As a compromise, the editors could have solicited articles from scholars on both sides of the debate.

More seriously, a few articles offered idiosyncratic explanations for certain linguistic phenomena instead of providing the consensus view. Most of these idiosyncrasies were minor. In Thamar Gindin's article on Persian loanwords, for example, she suggests that "[p]ossible OP [Old Persian] syntactic influence and calques in Esther include the extensive use of construct-state adjectives imitating Persian *bahuvrīhi* compounds, e.g., טוֹב לֵב *ṭōḇ lēḇ,* 'good hearted (i.e., happy)' (Est. 5.9)." Yet such constructions are unlikely to be modeled on Persian *bahuvrīhi* compounds. Construct state adjectives are a common Semitic phenomenon (compare Akkadian *rapaš uznim* 'wide of ear' i.e. 'wise') and occur in Afro-Asiatic as well (Egyptian *iqr n ḏbꜥw·f* 'excellent of fingers' i.e. 'adroit'). The article on mimation contains another idiosyncasy. Here, Holger Gzella states that "Since it has no clearly identifiable function of its own, some scholars consider the *–m* to be part of the basic case markers." But mimation *does* have a clearly identifiable function – to mark boundedness; it indicates that a noun is *not* in construct with another noun.

A few problems were more serious. The articles "Phonology: Biblical Hebrew" and "Morphology: Biblical Hebrew" by Gary Rendsburg contained numerous idiosyncrasies that only someone trained in Semitic linguistics would notice. This is unfortunate since non-Semitists – Hebraists, Biblical Scholars, general linguists, and graduate students – are likely to consult these articles for information first. Such quirks undermine the *EHLL*'s goal of providing the consensus view on linguistic issues.

Several of Rendburg's explanations crumble under the weight of comparative Semitic data. In §5.1 of "Morphology," Rendsburg cites אַחַת *ʾaḥat* 'one (f.)' as "a rare instance of a *d* assimilating to the following consonant" in Hebrew. This change, however, did not occur in Hebrew, but rather in Proto-West-Semitic since the feminine form of one reflects **ʾaḥad-t > *ʾaḥatt* in many West Semitic languages (compare Geꜥez *ʾaḥatti*, Ugaritic *åḥt*, Sabaic *ʾḥt*, and Phoenician *ʾḥt*).

Comparative Semitic data also weakens Rendburg's explanation for the absence of an independent 3fpl form in the suffix conjugation. He claims that: "the original 3fs suffix was *-at*, while the original 3fpl suffix was - . The former shifted to -   due to a phonological rule in Hebrew, which once more resulted in an ambiguity, since both the 3fs and 3fpl forms were now the same" ("Morphology" § 3.2). Comparative evidence, however, suggests that the original 3fpl suffix was *–ā* (compare Aramaic *qatal-ā* 'they f. killed', Ethiopic *qatal-ā* 'they f. killed', and Akkadian *pars-ā* 'they f. were divided'). This suffix shifted to *–ō* with the Canaanite shift and then

presumably merged with the 3mpl suffix *–ū* after developing a back allophone (See Pat-El and Wilson-Wright, 404).

Unfortunately, these examples are not exhaustive. Other idiosyncrasies include the suggestion that *ʿayīn* can change to *ʾaleph* at random ("Morphology" § 4.7); the suggestion that *ay* can become *ā,* which is absent from JM §103k and GKC §107a n. 4 ("Phonology" § 3.3); a proposed change of *ā > a > e* in the *nota accusativi* ("Morphology" § 4.3); and a comparison of the Egyptian *sḏm-n-f* form with the *way-yiqtol* consecutive preterit ("Morphology" § 3.8). The editors should have exercised greater oversight in vetting these articles.

In addition to these idiosyncrasies, several of Rendsburg's references are out of date or have been superseded by more recent treatments. In §2.2 and §2.4 of Phonology, Rendsburg cites Joshua Blau's 1982 *On Polyphony in Biblical Hebrew.* Yet Richard Steiner's "On the Dating of Hebrew Sound Changes (*Ḥ > Ḥ and *Ġ > ʿ*) and Greek Translations (2 Esdras and Judith)" *JBL* 124/2 (2005): 229–267 and "Variation, Simplifying Assumptions, and the History of Spirantization in Aramaic and Hebrew," in the Moshe Bar-Asher festschrift respectively provide a more up-to-date treatment of these topics.

Despite these flaws, some of which could easily be fixed in subsequent online releases, the *EHLL* remains an excellent research tool. As mentioned above, I used it to do some of my own research and was pleased with the information I found there. The *EHLL* belongs on the shelves (or hard drives) of university and seminary libraries or anyone with a serious interest in the linguistic study of Hebrew.

References

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