

A Review of

[Joshua Blau's](#)

Phonology and Morphology of Biblical Hebrew (PMBH) ¹

by David Steinberg

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PMBH is a translation and reediting of

[תורת ההגה והצורות של לשון המקרא מאת יהושע בלאו](#) (Blau 2010a).

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Dr. Blau was one of the leading Hebraists and Arabists of the twentieth century. Anyone who has studied his papers must be impressed by his profound learning and closely argued logic. Thus he is well suited to writing the [Bauer and Leander](#) of the first half of the twenty-first century. I am writing this note in the hope that: (a) some of my comments might be helpful to those using this major work; and, (b) **my observations will be of use in revising the book at some future date.**

1. A Peculiar Situation

When dealing with vocalized texts from the past, though occasionally historic spellings cause complications, scholars normally have graphemes representing both consonants and vowels from the same period. This is true whether we are referring to texts in Old and Middle English, Old and Middle French etc. When studying these languages, scholars will use the texts, and any other relevant information, to reconstruct a synchronic consonantal and vowel phonology of a given dialect in a given period.

With Biblical Hebrew, the traditional approach is quite different and when you think about it, rather bizarre. The printed [text of the Hebrew Bible](#) consists of -

- (a) The consonantal skeleton of [Biblical Hebrew](#) (c. 850-550 BCE) i.e. letters representing consonants and [some vowels](#) (PMT) written in a script and,

more importantly , an orthography² different from that used when the texts were originally written down. (See [Phonemic Structure of Hebrew](#)).

(b) The superimposed pointing of the [Tiberian Masoretic tradition](#) i.e. the vowel signs and the [cantillation](#) signs, which indicate [syllabic word stress](#), of the [Masoretic Text](#). These represent the [extinct pronunciation tradition](#) of the [Masoretes](#) of [Tiberias](#) (c. 850 C.E.) which the [Tiberian Masoretes](#) used in reading the biblical text. It must be pointed out that the Jewish scribes, who presumably maintained the traditions of pronunciation of this ancient form of Hebrew, during the millennium and a half up to the time of the Masoretes, were always familiar with various forms of Aramaic and for most or all of this period had an evolving Western (Palestinian) Jewish Aramaic as their native tongue. [An evolving, and highly Aramaicized, form of Hebrew](#) was still spoken by some elements of the Judean peasantry until the mid second century CE. The most prominent scholar of this form of Hebrew [has written](#) -

... Aramaic had a far-reaching impact and left its mark on all facets of the language, namely, orthography, phonetics and phonology, morphology including inflection, syntax, and vocabulary. **There is room for investigation as to whether Mishnaic Hebrew was a Hebrew-Aramaic mixed language.** This question may be posed owing to the fact that A(ramaic) had a pervading influence in all spheres of the language, including inflection, which is generally considered to be impenetrable to foreign influence....

Thus, the pointed Hebrew Bible imposes on a mid-first millennium BCE consonantal structure a vocalization system, influenced by Aramaic, of about 1,500 years later!

The reason that this strange arrangement is maintained is that, though the Tiberian pointing is the latest of the sources of information regarding the pronunciation of Biblical Hebrew, it alone provides a [complete transcription of its vowel phonemic system as well as enough additional information](#) to reconstruct its phonetic system (*[TH]) with some certainty. In addition, the superbly crafted

and comprehensive nature of the Tiberian masoretic system, in many cases preserves evidence of early pronunciations lost in the various non-Tiberian traditions³.

However, the strange approach does not end there. The conventional scholarly transcription of TH ([TH_{CST}/TH_{SBL}](#)) **does not, in fact reflect the known pronunciation of the Tiberian Masoretes** ([/TH/](#) [*\[TH\]](#)) and the actual pronunciation of the text by scholars ([\[BH_{IH}\]](#) or [\[TH_{CSP} IS-ENG\]](#)) reflects modern pronunciations quite at variance with BH ([*EBHP](#)/[*LBHP](#)), TH and [TH_{CST}/TH_{SBL}](#).

PMBH lies within the tradition described above.

2. What PMBH Provides

PMBH follows the evolution of many linguistic elements from Proto-Semitic ([PS](#) - say prior to 3000 BCE) until the period of the authorship of the Hebrew Bible (mainly c. 750-400 BCE) and then their evolution within the precursors of the Tiberian reading tradition ([PTH](#)) until its crystallization in the pointed Tiberian Hebrew ([TH](#)) of the Masoretic Text ([MT](#)) c. 850 CE. [Modern Jewish traditions of pronunciations of pronunciation of the MT and the Samaritan reading tradition](#) are drawn on where relevant as is other evidence exterior to the Tiberian tradition (comparative Semitics, Greek transcriptions ([BH_{Gk-Lat}](#)), Qumran Hebrew ([BH_{Qum}](#)), Babylonian pointing ([BH_{Bab}](#))).

Basically the material in this book (excluding chapter 1) can be looked as providing the equivalent of a massive series of diachronic footnotes which could be appended to any synchronic grammar of TH such as [A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar](#) by Naude, Kroeze, Van Der Merwe (1999).

3. Target Audience and their Interests

There would seem to be two main audiences for this book:

- a) scholars and students of languages, particularly Semitic languages;
- b) scholars and students of Biblical Hebrew ([BH](#)) and the Hebrew Bible.

These readers, particularly students of [Biblical Hebrew verse and wordplay](#), will be mainly interested in reconstructing as closely as possible the synchronic linguistic systems (quality and quantity of vowels and consonants, stress system, syllabification etc.) of the varieties of Hebrew occurring in the Hebrew Bible at the time of authorship or final editing ([*/EBHP/](#), [*\[EBHP\]](#), [*/LBHP/](#), [*\[LBHP\]](#)).

At a most basic level, such scholars require a guide on how to vocalize the consonantal text to resemble as closely as possible its form when written.

Such a guide is presented, for example in [Beyer 1969](#) (*Althebräische Grammatik: Laut- und Formenlehre*), [Harris 1941](#) (Linguistic Structure of Hebrew pp. 144 ff.), my own [Biblical Hebrew Poetry and Word Play - Reconstructing the Original Oral, Aural and Visual Experience](#) and in the following quote from [Sáenz-Badillos 1993](#) (pp. 69-70)

On the assumption that the consonantal system of pre-exilic Hebrew has in general been satisfactorily preserved, there have been various attempts to reconstruct the vocalization and pronunciation of classical BH, which certainly differs considerably from that established by the Masoretes fifteen centuries later. Basing themselves primarily on comparative grammar, scholars have tried to highlight the most important changes, mainly phonetic, which can be detected in Hebrew after 600 BCE.

Among the most significant of these, including some which had already begun to take place before the exile, are the following: elision of syllable- or word-final *alef*, which probably occurred quite early, spirantization of the *bgdkpt* consonants, which resulted originally in their dual realization as plosives or fricatives, with fricative realization clearly dominant later, neutralization of velar and pharyngeal phonemes (*/ħ/ > /h/, /ǵ/ > /ʕ/*)..., neutralization of */ś/* and */s/*, 'segolization' which introduced anaptyctic vowels to avoid sequences of two consonants (**kalbu > keleb, *sipru > sepeṛ*), pretonic vowel lengthening and consonant reduplication, perhaps with displacement of the accent to the final syllable, Philippi's law, by which short */i/* changes to */a/* in closed accented syllables ... and the law of attenuation by which */a/* in certain environments changes to */i/* (**massima > missim*), reduction of certain vowels to *shewa* or, in the environment of a laryngeal

consonant, to another ultrashort vowel, reduction of final doubled consonants, vowel changes before and after the laryngeals, reduction of double laryngeals and of double /r/, disappearance of intervocalic /h/, weakening of the pharyngeal and laryngeal consonants, possibly a further contraction of diphthongs or the use of anaptyctic vowels (**baytu > bayit, *mawtu > mawet*), etc.

... It is not always easy to determine the precise date of each of these events. But it is certain that they occurred between the time when Hebrew was still a living language and the era of the Masoretes. In addition to recording the actual changes in language, which in many instances were not confined to Hebrew, the Masoretic pointing system also reflects the linguistic views of the Masoretes in a variety of ways, with evidence of Aramaic influence and of unduly subjective reconstruction. Approaching the matter from the opposite direction, that is, by eliminating from Masoretic Hebrew whatever has resulted from the processes listed above, various attempts have been made, with differing degrees of success, to reconstruct pre-exilic Hebrew, including its morphology.

See also [*Linguistic Changes Affecting the Pronunciation of Biblical Hebrew 2000 B.C.E. - 850 C.E. According to Various Scholars*](#) and [*Phases of Biblical Hebrew and its Antecedents*](#)

Given the ubiquity of web connections, in a modern book these should be duplicated in online sound files as is done for [Akkadian poetry](#), [Chaucer's Middle English poetry](#) (also <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/changlang/activities/lang/chaucer/chaucerpage1.html>) and for [Old English](#) (<http://faculty.virginia.edu/OldEnglish/Beowulf.Readings/Grendel.html>).

Regrettably, this book does not provide any accessible guide to the reconstruction of the synchronic linguistic system of Biblical Hebrew. Indeed, some of the histories of forms [ignore the intermediate forms most likely to have existed during the period of Biblical Hebrew](#) (900-c. 400 BCE). It, as implied above, really provides diachronic background to the synchronic system of Tiberian Hebrew which binds together a consonantal skeleton of the mid first millennium BCE and a vocalization system of the late first millennium CE. In truth, as regards pre- and early post-exilic [BH](#), it conforms to Dr. Blau's description of de Saussure's view (p. 1) -

(de Saussure) disparaged historical linguistics as “atomistic”; he believed that it focused on mere details and neglected what really matters. He extolled a synchronic approach as capable of discovering the system of a language, which he saw as the goal of genuine linguistics. In his opinion, a language makes up a closely knit system, comparable to a chessboard. A small change in the position of one chess piece, even one of inferior rank, may completely change the relations between all the pieces and thus the whole system.

Dr. Blau himself indicated that what is needed (a synchronic description of the original Biblical Hebrew language system) could be accommodated within a diachronic study -

1.1.15.⁴ Though historical(-comparative) linguistics is, as a rule, atomistic, this need not be the case. In principle, **it may compare the linguistic systems of different languages or of one language at different periods.** Thus the tense system of Biblical Hebrew, in which the participle does not constitute an integral part of the tense system, may be compared with that of Rabbinic Hebrew, in which the participle has been, to a great extent, absorbed into the tense system. Thus historical and synchronic approaches may be united.

4. Requirements not Met in this Book

(a) Uniform Lines of Derivation of Phonology, Words, Structures etc.

Wherever possible, all derivations should be explicitly traced: (see [A Note on the Use of Post-Exilic Evidence Regarding the pronunciation of BH](#))

i) from [*Proto-Semitic](#) (PS) to [*Proto-Northwest Semitic](#) (PNWS) to [*Proto-Hebrew](#) (PH) to [Classical Biblical Hebrew](#) (CBH, [*/EBHP/+](#)), [Post-Classical Biblical Hebrew](#) (PCBH, [*/LBHP/](#) evidenced in the vowel letters of the [Proto-Masoretic Text](#) (PMT)) **The book is lacking in this requirement - see [Telescoped Derivations](#)**, and then,

ii) to [*Proto-Tiberian Hebrew](#) ([*/PTH/+](#)) and [Tiberian Hebrew](#) ([/TH/+](#)) bringing in evidence for parallel lines of pronunciation tradition from (in order of importance) - Biblical Hebrew as reflected in Greek and Latin transcriptions ([BH_{Gk-Lat}](#)); Biblical Hebrew as reflected in the orthography of biblical Dead Sea Scrolls ([BH_{Qum}](#)); Biblical Hebrew

pointed with Palestinian Vocalization ([BHPal](#)); Biblical Hebrew pointed with Babylonian Vocalization ([BHBab](#)) ; and, the range of [modern pronunciations](#). The book generally meets this requirement.

(b) *Tables and Short Prose Syntheses*

These should head the dense paragraphs of diachronic examples and analyses in order to form a synchronic understanding of the language systems. Wherever possible, such tables should provide columns for PS, PNWS, PH, CBH, PCBH, PTH and TH. This book is very weak in this area.

Bauer and Leander was not exemplary in this regard but did provide some useful tables (pp. 297, 300, 302, 304, 308, 314, 315, 318, 321, 388, 389, 410).

A fundamental need is for tables showing the comparative linguistic structures (phonemic systems, noun forms etc.) of **Proto-Hebrew*, **Biblical Hebrew*, **Proto-Tiberian Hebrew and Tiberian Hebrew*.⁵

(c) *Clear and Classified Statements of Conclusions*

The reader would be greatly helped if conclusions for each issue discussed would be clearly stated and be flagged as to whether the conclusions are securely indicated by the evidence or whether it is one of the issues where [current evidence is inadequate to firmly decide the issue](#).

(d) *Sound Files* - [see above](#).

5. *Specific Critique of PMBH*

(a) *Scope and Nature of Introductory Section*

The existing introductory section is very good but introductory sections should cover, in outline, the full range of linguistic issues required to follow the book's arguments. Two important items -

i) Dr. Blau's reconstruction of the stress history of PS to PNWS to PH to BH depends on four assumptions all of which are contested by a number of respected senior scholars in the field⁶:

- a) that many suffixes in PNWS and PH ended in unstressed [anceps vowels](#);
- b) that in the transition between PH and BH all final short vowels were dropped. Thus in BH all words ended in either consonants or long vowels⁷. Earlier anceps vowels either survived as long vowels or were dropped;
- c) that in PS stress fell either -
 - i. [on penultimate syllable](#), if it was long closed or containing a long vowel, and otherwise on the antepenult; OR,
 - ii. the long vowel most closely preceding the case and mood endings the syllable containing that vowel is stressed. If there is no such long vowel, the syllable preceding the case and mood endings is stressed.
- d) that in PH stress was uniformly penultimate;
- e) that the [Canaanite shift](#) commenced before the shift to uniformly penultimate stress and affected only long stressed *a* i.e. [á:]. (Many scholars in the field consider that the Canaanite shift affected all instances of long *a* - stressed or not).

It seems to me that the book should discuss these issues in the introduction rather than leaving the reader to pick up bits here and there. An outline of Dr. Blau's *stress stages* should be included in the introduction. A highly slimmed down version of [Blau 1976/1993](#) p. 30-34 would do.

ii) Somewhere it would be desirable to discuss the nature of [long and short vowels](#) and [gemination](#).

(b) *Terminology* (terms should have been listed and defined at the beginning of the book)

In PMBH the term "Biblical Hebrew" seems to be used with a range of meanings which includes the precursor of the language of the Bible (my [Proto-Hebrew](#)) which still retained (some?) case endings (e.g. in 4.4.4.5) which must be dated prior to 1000 BCE and TH of c. 850 CE. In my view a closely defined system, such as my own [Stages of the Hebrew Language](#), would clear up much confusion. The comments in this paper use [my terminology](#).

(c) *Telescoped Derivations*

The signs <,> are used whether the derivation is direct, or whether intermediate stages were going unnoticed. This is particularly important in cases where the skipped intermediate forms are likely to have existed during the period of Biblical Hebrew (900-c. 400 BCE). It would be desirable to use another symbol, such as [→](#), for abridged shifts - i.e. intermediate stages not marked. E.g. - in 1.15.3 presumably, in IPA notation, the shifts are

**/maqa:'ma:tu/ (Proto-Northwest Semitic - [PNWS](#)) > */maqā'mōtu/ or */maqō'mōtu/ (Proto-Hebrew - [PH](#)) > */maqō'mōt/ (Biblical Hebrew = [EBHP](#)+) > */mqo:'mo:t/ (Proto-Tiberian Hebrew - [PTH](#)) > /məqo'mot/ ([TH](#)+ c. 850 CE *vowel length no longer phonemic*)*

The TH form /məqo'mot/ was probably pronounced by the Tiberian Masoretes as **[mäqo:'mo:θ] (< *[mäqo:'mo:θ]) ([short vowels restricted to closed unstressed syllables](#)).*

Putting in the full derivation would not only be clearer and would provide the probable [Biblical Hebrew](#) form, but would also eliminate the need for 1.15.4n.

(d) *Transcriptions of Proto-Tiberian and Tiberian Hebrew*

This book, following the [conventional scholarly transcription of the TH vowel system](#) usually transcribes e.g. שָׁמַר "he guarded" as *šāmar*. I would argue that **this should always be asterisked** (**šāmar*) since, as is clear from the book itself, the only transcription directly justified by שָׁמַר is *šə'mar* whereas **šāmar* is deduced (reconstructed) from both שָׁמַר and a number of other sources of evidence ably discussed in the book. Looking at this word, its history from PH to the MT form is probably something like -

**/ša'mara/* (PH) > **/ša'mar/* (BH=[EBHP](#)) > **/šā'mar/* (*pretonic lengthening c. 300 BCE*)⁸ > **/ša:'mar/*⁹ ([PTH](#) *c. 400 CE*) > **/šâ:'ma:r/* (*stress lengthening c. 600 CE*) > *šâ'mar/* (TH *c. 850 CE* *vowel length no longer phonemic*)

The TH form */šâ'mar/* was probably pronounced by the Tiberian Masoretes as [*\[šô:'me:r\]](#).

(e) *Phones and Phonemes*

In the introductory section the author takes some pains to explain the difference between phonemes and phones. However, the italicized Hebrew transcriptions mix the two. I would suggest that a clear statement be made at the beginning of the book such as the following -

- 1) Something similar to [Phones and Phonemes](#).
- 2) All italicized Hebrew transcriptions in this book:
 - i) refer to *Proto-Tiberian Hebrew* unless otherwise indicated; and,
 - ii) are phonemic¹⁰ except that they include the [spirantized allophones of the bgdkpt](#) consonants where relevant. In other words *yām* = */yām/* (IPA */ya:m/*). Phonetic transcriptions will be presented in the traditional square brackets [].

(f) *oe, e or ε?*

The use of *oe* instead of *ę* or *ε* for [IPA ε](#) really only adds to obscurity

(g) *Notation for Long Vowels*

In a historical grammar of Biblical Hebrew it is most desirable to distinguish the long vowels by origin (cf. 1.10.2.3.2n) see - [Vowel Length](#).

(h) *Notation for [Anceps vowels](#)* (see also below)

Anceps vowels are clearly marked in [Blau 1972](#) (*Torat Hahege Vehatzurot* eg. p. 97) and in *Bauer and Leander*. I have noticed only one case where it is marked i.e. on p. 160 (see immediately below)

In all other cases, that I noticed the presumed anceps vowels are marked as if they were long vowels - *ā, ī, ū* - while it is probable that these vowels were either short or anceps. N.b. if typographical limitations were causing problems [Hendel-Lambdin-Huehnergard](#) indicated the anceps using the tilde i.e. *ã ĩ ũ* and I use this convention.

Sections that I noticed to contain or refer to anceps vowels include (this is clearly an incomplete list)

1.15.4n - should be **qamĩ*(PH)

1.18.1 and note

3.3.5.3.3.5 and note

p. 93 several places

3.3.5.4.1.

3.5.7.2.2.

3.5.7.2.3n.

3.5.12.2.2n.

3.5.12.2.8n.

p. 160 several places

4.2.2.3.2.

4.2.2.3.3

4.2.2.6.2.

4.2.2.7.3

4.2.3.3.1

4.3.2.2.6

4.3.3.1.2n

4.3.3.3.4

4.3.3.4.1n

4.3.3.4.4n

4.3.5.2.2.4

4.3.8.7.2.1

(i) Possible Errors or Omissions

1.3.4 - Recent work ([Young, Rezetko, Ehrensward 2008 chapt. 12; Vern 2011.](#)) has shown it to be very likely that the **so called "archaic poetry"** of the Bible **could have been authored at any time after 1000 BCE** probably using a standard set of archaizing features¹¹. **This is a significant point in a historical grammar.**

1.3.8 - Is the statement "The use of ³ *et* with the pronominal suffix becomes more common than object suffixation on the verb." correct? See Polzin 1976 (*Late Biblical Hebrew: Toward an Historical Typology of Biblical Hebrew Prose*. Scholars Press pp. 28 ff.)

1.7.12 - Given the total confusion among historians today about what elements (Canaanite, Aramaean, Shosu) made up the eventual Israelite regional "tribes" and the general agreement that these "tribes" formed in situ, they might consider replacing -

"Moreover, one must not lose sight of the fact that the languages of the Israelite tribes were very close to the dialects of the Canaanites whom they conquered,"

by something like -

"The Israelite people probably developed out of an amalgam of groups originating from both within and outside cis-jordanian Canaan. Even those originating from elsewhere probably spoke languages derived from [Proto-Northwest Semitic](#) and were thus close to the dialects of the Canaanites"

1.10.2 - note [Hendel-Lambdin-Huehnergard](#) p. 8 -

Original *śin* was a lateral fricative [ʃ], pronounced like *hl* (cf. *bōśem* ≈ Greek *balsam*;

kaśdim ≈ Akkadian *kaldū*), becomes [s]

Original *samekh* was pronounced like [č], as in "check" (Egyptian transcriptions)

Original *šin* was perhaps [s], as in Arabic, becomes [š]

1.10.2.19 - Mention [The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew \(Sheffield Academic Press\)](#)?

1.11.3 - Should "variable" be "variant"?

1.15.6 - other [scholars argue](#) that, **unlike the word-final *heh* in the example, [word-final *alef* was still consonantal](#) in pre-exilic [EBHP](#)**. This possibility should be mentioned

1.16.1 - Re the statement " like *dāg* 'fish', according to the Sephardic pronunciation ". From [Morag 1970](#) (col. 1142) it would appear that in the Sephardic pronunciation גָּ and גַּ would be identical except, perhaps, for a slight, non-phonemic, stress lengthening in the former? If this is correct in this גָּ and גַּ (and *גָּ , if it were to exist) would all be pronounced [deg] in Sephardic Hebrew.

1.16.2 - there are problems with this para.

- First **yiwqad* implies that spirantization of the *bgdkpt* consonants took place in PH or even earlier ([see my comment below](#))

- Otherwise the para. is ok if the shift "**yīqad* 'it will burn' < **yiwqad*" is seen as occurring after the loss of mood endings. If, however, the shift is pushed back to the PH phase it should be reformulated -

**yīqad* (BH=[/EBHP/](#)) 'it will burn/is burning' < **yiw'qadu* (PH)

**yībaš* (BH=[/EBHP/](#)) 'it will become dry' < **yiy'bašu* (PH)

OR

**yīqad* (BH=[/EBHP/](#)) 'let it burn' < **yiwqad* (PH)

**yībaš* (BH=[/EBHP/](#)) 'let it dry up! etc' < **yiwbaš* (PH)

1.16.7 - "...according to regular sound correspondence, should..." should be "...according to regular sound correspondence of the second consonant, should...".

- Is פְּלִמוּנִי similar to the Arabic process of *nahf*?

1.18.3 - re. Nestorian shift *ħ* > *x*. The same shift occurred in [Ashknenazi](#) (and hence Israeli) Hebrew.

1.19.10 - This is confusing. I would suggest in substance one of the two following -

Total dissimilation is reflected by the disappearance of the (second) glottal stop in **'a'ħuzu* 'I shall take'. This yields an intermediate form **'āħuzu*, exhibiting compensatory lengthening of the *a:* from this, by the shift *á:* > *ó:* and the above-mentioned dissimilation (§1.19.9) and the shift to uniform penultimate stress to the Proto-Biblical Hebrew form **'ō'ħuzu*. The word's evolution would be -

**'a'ħuzu* > **'āħuzu* > **'ō'ħuzu* (PH) > **'ō'ħiz* (BH=[/EBHP/](#)) > **'ō'ħiz* (PTH) > **'o'ħez* ([/TH/](#))

OR

Total dissimilation is reflected by the disappearance of the (second) glottal stop in **'a'ħuz* 'let me take!'. This yields an intermediate form **'āħuz*, exhibiting compensatory

lengthening of the *a*; from this, by the shift *á:* > *ó:* and the above-mentioned dissimilation (§1.19.9) and the shift to uniform penultimate stress to the Proto-Biblical Hebrew form **'ōħuz*. The word's evolution would be -

**/'a'ħuz/ > */'āħuz/ > */'ōħuz/ (PH) > */'ōħiz/ (BH=EBHP+) > */'ō'ħiz/
(PTH) > */'o'ħez/ (TH)*

1.20.6 - in the phrase "...phonemics (or phonology, dealing with the smallest units of language, i.e., sounds or phonemes)," there is a danger of confusion of *phones* with *phonemes*. I suggest substituting "...phonemics (or phonology, dealing with the smallest units of language, i.e., sounds (*phones*) and *phonemes*).

2.4.13 - it would be **most useful to give examples in American English and British RP for each of the vowels** (Dr Blau does this in [Blau 1976/1993](#) p. 9) as well as [sound file illustrations](#).

2.4.14 - For clarity I suggest that they change the first sentence

"The distinction between a short high back vowel (short *u*, written *qibbuṣ*) and a long high back vowel (long *u*, written *shuruq*) is alien to [Biblical Hebrew](#)."

TO

"The distinction between a short high back vowel (short *u*, written *qibbuṣ*) and a long high back vowel (long *u*, written *shuruq*) is alien to [Tiberian Hebrew](#)."

2.4.15n - is this view widely accepted by his peers? If not other views should be noted.

p. 69 - I would suggest that this table be a **comparison of at least [Biblical Hebrew](#) and [Tiberian Hebrew](#)** (cf. my own effort at [Consonantal Phonemes in Biblical, Tiberian Masoretic and Israeli Hebrew](#) and Wikipedia [Phonology of Biblical Hebrew](#) and [Hebrew Phonology: Regional and historical variation](#).)

3.1.3 - The statement "Neither the linguist nor the naïve reader is interested in phonetic differences that do not differentiate meanings" would not be true of e.g. scholars interested in [Biblical Poetry and wordplay](#) where the sound of the language could be important.

3.1.4 - The statement

The fact that allophones are predictable, because they appear in defined environments, enables the reader to identify them readily. Biblical Hebrew is a case in point. In unvocalized biblical texts there is no graphic difference between *bgdkpt* letters pronounced as stops or as spirants. Nonetheless a reader familiar with the language can easily distinguish them, despite the great phonetic difference. Because each realization generally appears in a well-defined phonetic environment (spirants occur after vowels, otherwise stops occur), the ordinary reader readily differentiates them.... Moreover, even polyphonic letters (like *w* marking both [š] and [s] ... are easily differentiated

rather overstates the case. We must assume that the developers of the Hebrew and Syriac vocalization systems were well aware that the users of their vocalized texts would have a range of linguistic abilities in their ancestral language with many not understanding the text at all. I agree with [Sáenz-Badillos 1993](#) (p. 111)

The resulting (Tiberian pointing) system is quite comprehensive, faithfully reproducing the phonological structure of the language while also providing sufficient phonetic information to read it correctly

3.2.1.1 - Re. statement "Before the introduction of vowel letters, Hebrew script was entirely consonantal, notating consonants only." two points:

- instead of "notating" wouldn't it be better to use "denoting" or "representing"?
- the idea that "Hebrew script was (originally) entirely consonantal" reflects the views of Cross and Freedman. They based it on the view that a Phoenician style orthography was employed in the early Iron Age being replaced by an Aramaean orthography, regularly writing final vowels from, say, the ninth century BCE. We have virtually **no epigraphic evidence to substantiate Phoenician style orthography ever being used in the two Israelite kingdoms. It may have been the case that Israelite writing started as purely consonantal or it may be that there was virtually no Israelite writing prior to the importation of Aramaean orthography regularly indicating final vowels.**

3.2.1.2 - Re. "All the letters of the Hebrew alphabet mark separate **phonemes**." It might be more accurate to write "In [Biblical Hebrew](#), each letter of the Hebrew alphabet marks one or more separate **phonemes**."

3.2.2.2 - in the passage - "the ancient Jews. Otherwise, why did the Jews", the use of the term "Jews" is anachronistic. "Israelites" or even "Hebrews" would be better

3.2.4.1 Two points:

- add to the ref. "Blau 1982a" two others [Steiner 2006](#) and [Wevers 1970](#).
- suggest replacing "It stands to reason that ..." with "It can be demonstrated that..."

3.3.2.2 and 3.5.7.6.9n - There does not seem to be a mention of the **probable onset of spirantization of these consonants**. Probably [most scholars](#) would agree with [Gogel's](#) statement (p. 40)¹² -

"... it is possible only to say that the earliest date of this double pronunciation of the /b/, /g/, /d/, /k/, /p/, /t/ consonants was sometime during the second half of the first millennium B.C."

If this is correct, one can assume that it would not have affected pre-exilic [EBHP](#) though it may or may not have been a feature of post-exilic [LBHP](#).

3.3.3.1.5n - Add refs. to [Ancient Hebrew by Richard C. Steiner in Hetzron 1997](#) and [Khan 1994](#)

3.3.3.3.8n - two points -

- "...standard Israeli pronunciation *wo`ōniyyōt*" should be replaced by "standard Israeli pronunciation *vo`oniyyot*". On lack of vowel length distinction in Israeli Hebrew see [Berman 1997](#).
- unless there is a demonstrable phonemic or even audible phonetic distinction in vowel length in Sephardi Hebrew "... according to Sephardic tradition it is pronounced *wa`oniyyōt*." should be replaced by Hebrew "...according to Sephardic tradition it is pronounced *wa`oniyyot*."

3.3.3.4.3 - "...borrowed from Hebrew" should be replaced by "...borrowed from Hebrew **via Aramaic**".

3.3.3.4.4 - The term "merger", though technically correct, is confusing to the non-linguist. In ordinary English "merger" implies some sort of combination which is not what it means here. What Dr. Blau is describing is a 2 stage process -

a) (up to at least 300 BCE) there are 4 separate phonemes - /h̥/, /ħ/ (IPA [x]), /ç/, /ç̥/

b) /ħ/ > /ħ̥/; /ç̥/ > /ç/ while original /h̥/ and /ç/ remain unchanged. Thus the original 4 phonemes have become 2.

3.3.5.1.5 - The text should mention the possibility that the Biblical Hebrew (/EBHP/) suffix was *ó:h* (found in some Arabic dialects) with the derivation something like

- *h̥ū (PS) > - *úh(u(:)) (PH) > - *ó:h (EBHP) > *ó: (PTH)

See also the discussion in [Gogel](#) p. 159 footnote 186.

3.3.5.4.2. - PH **ganabathéma* has [spirantized](#) *b* but hard *t* and PH **ahebatki* has a hard *b* and *t* - all in the same paragraph!

3.3.5.2.1 - re. "(This is usually pronounced with -ā as "compensation" for the dropping of the ה.)". There seem to be two problems here. First ה is clearly a mistake, it should be *h*. Second my understanding is the feminine nominal **unstressed** suffix in most varieties of spoken Arabic is phonemically and phonetically short i.e. /a/ [a] whereas the feminine nominal **stressed** suffix in Biblical Hebrew is supposed to be long */ā/ *[ā].

3.3.5.3.3n - As it is unclear, and historically misleading, I suggest they modify

The original form of **lahaḥăṭī* was **lahaḥăṭī*; the last syllable is irrelevant here.

TO something like

**ləhaḥǎṯī* derives from the earlier **ləhaḥǎṯī* with the post-exilic dropping of [word-final glottal stops](#) and the [reduction of the initial unstressed vowel](#). In turn this derives from the original Biblical Hebrew form **ləhaḥṯī*.

3.3.5.3.4 shouldn't

**šəmarēm < *šəmaraym < *šəmarahim*

be

**šəmarēm* (LBHP http://www.houseofdauid.ca/anc_heb_abb_dia - PCBH) <

**šəmaraym* (EBHP) < **šəmarahim*

It would be very useful if the text would state whether the lengthening of the vowel following the first consonant in

הל 'to her' < [lahā](#)

was stress lengthening or compensatory lengthening

3.4 - somewhere there should be a mention that in pre-exilic [EH](#) there is almost no use of internal vowel letters. Thus it seems certain that these were added, after the exile, to any surviving pre-exilic Hebrew texts.

3.4.1.1 - suggest deleting "incidentally"

3.4.2.2 - Our only [evidence of "northern contraction" is of ay > ē](#). As Dr. Blau has pointed out in connection with the MT "... (historically incorrect) impression that the two diphthongs were simultaneously monophthongized (in the first page of "The Monophthongization of Diphthongs as Reflected in the Use of Vowel Letters in the Pentateuch". It is thus, not necessarily correct, and going beyond the meager evidence to assume that in "northern Hebrew" the shift *aw > ō* had also occurred.

3.4.2.4 - re. **niglay'tī > נגליתִי* - **/niglay'tī/* in EBHP may well have been pronounced **[nigley'tī]* (see [Hendel-Lambdin-Huehnergard](#) pp. 9,19)

3.4.2.4 - a comparison with contemporary Western Aramaic would be enlightening here.

3.4.7.1 - ref missing fifth line.

3.4.7.2 - should "**yaššāmirū < *yanšāmirū*" be "**yaššamirū < *yanšamirū*"

3.4.8.3 - The pre-exilic EBHP form, corresponding to TH *wə* was **wa*. This should be noted.

3.5 - Title "The Vowels of Hebrew" should be "The Vowels of Tiberian Hebrew" or "The Vowels of the Tiberian Tradition of Reading Biblical Hebrew"

3.5.2.1n - ref. should be added "James Barr *The Variable Spellings of the Hebrew Bible*, OUP, 1989"

3.5.2.2 - '*qām* = םֶקָ' and '*dāg* = גֶד' should be '*qām* > םֶקָ' and '*dāg* > גֶד'

3.5.2.5n - Suggest modifying -

In vocalized Israeli spelling, originally long *ī* is always spelled with a following י, since in fact the spelling of vocalized Hebrew texts is based on biblical orthography, with regularizations.

TO READ

Standard Israeli spelling of vocalized Hebrew texts is based on biblical orthography, with regularizations. Thus, although no vowel length distinctions are maintained in modern Israeli Hebrew or in the Israeli reading of the Bible, in vocalized Israeli spelling historically long *ī* is always spelled with a following י.

3.5.2.8 - I find this para. confusing. Perhaps they might consider something like

Tiberian pointing indicates only vowel quality except for the ultra-short vowels. It appears that the Tiberian masoretes pronounced all vowels long except for those marked as ultra-short and vowels in closed unstressed syllables. The latter were pronounced short. Thus there were many historically short vowels, not indicated by vowel letters, pronounced long by the Tiberians alongside historically long vowels (*ī, ē, ō, ū*) usually indicated by vowel letters. Thus the presence or absence of vowel letters altered neither the phonemic or phonetic shape of Tiberian Hebrew pronunciation.

3.5.3.1 and 3.5.3.3 - see comment on 1.16.1

3.5.4.7 and 3.5.7.1.4- this material is very important and should be part of the introduction

3.5.6 - "Vowels: The Hebrew Phonemes" should be "Vowels: The Tiberian Hebrew Phonemes".

3.5.7, 3.5.12.2 - Under Dr. Blau's approach, the final vowels of the masculine singular adjectives, primitive form **qatul* and *qatil* are lengthened. E.g.

**/ga'dulu/ > */ga'dōl/; */ka'bidu/ > */ka'bēd/.*

What was the form of the corresponding feminine and plural forms of these words in **pre-exilic EBHP**? **Two possibilities that occur to me -**

| Noun in Absolute Case | | <u>Proto-Hebrew</u> | <i>Biblical Hebrew (EBHP)</i> | <u>Proto-Tiberian Hebrew</u> | <u>Tiberian Hebrew</u> | Comments |
|--|---------------|---|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| גדל (pre-exilic spelling; MT generally גדול 'big') | <u>ms.</u> | */ga'dulu/ | */ga'do:l/ | */ga:'do:l/ | /gɔ'dol/ *[gɔ:'do:l] | Assumes that in Biblical Hebrew grammatical analogy obtained between the different members of this morphological class. See 1.15.3. |
| | <u>fs.</u> | */gadu'latu/ | */gado:'la:/ | */gədo:'la:/ | /gədo'ɓ/ *[gədo:'ɓ:] | |
| | <u>mp.</u> | */gadu'li:ma/ (oblique case) | */gado:'li:m / | */gədo:'li:m/ | /gədo'lim/ *[gədo:'li:m] | |
| | <u>fp.</u> | */gadu'lo:tu/ | */gado:'lo:t/ | */gədo:'lo:t/ | /gədo'lot/ *[gədo:'lo:t] | |
| | | | | | | |
| | <u>ms.</u> | */ga'dulu/ | */ga'do:l/ | */gɔ:'do:l/ | /gɔ'dol/ *[gɔ:'do:l] | Assumes that, in feminine and plural forms, */u/ > /ō/ due to pretonic lengthening, i.e. c. 300 BCE. |
| | <u>fs.</u> | */gadu'latu/ | */gadu'la:/ or [gado'la:] | */gədo:'la:/ | /gədo'ɓ/ *[gədo:'ɓ:] | |
| | <u>mp.</u> | */gadu'li:ma/ (oblique case) | */gadu'li:m / *[gadu'li:m] or *[gado'li:m] | */gədo:'li:m/ | /gədo'lim/ *[gədo:'li:m] | |
| <u>fp.</u> | */gadu'lo:tu/ | */gadu'lo:t / *[gadu'lo:t] or *[gado'lo:t]. | */gədo:'lo:t/ | /gədo'lot/ *[gədo:'lo:t] | | |
| | | | | | | |
| כבד | <u>ms.</u> | */ka'bidu/ | /ka'bɛ:d/ | */ka:'bɛ:d/ | /kɔ'bɛd/ *[kɔ:'bɛ:d] | Assumes that in |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 'heavy' | fs. | */kabi'datu/ | */kabe:'da:/ | */kəbe:'da:/ | */kəbe'do/ *[kəbe:'do:] | Biblical Hebrew grammatical analogy obtained between the different members of this morphological class. See 1.15.3. |
| | mp. | */kabi'di:ma/ | */kabe:'dīm/ | */kəbe:' di:m/ | /kəbe'dim/ *[kəbe:' di:m] | |
| | fp. | */kabi'do:tu/ | */kabe:' do:t/ | */kəbe:'do:t/ | /kəbe'dot/ *[kəbe:'do:t] | |
| | | | | | | |
| 𐤇𐤃𐤃 'heavy' | ms. | */ka'bidu/ | /ka'bē:d/ | */ka:'bē:d/ | /kə'bēd/ *[kə:'bē:d] | Assumes that, in feminine and plural forms, */i/ > /ē/ due to pretonic lengthening, i.e. c. 300 BCE. |
| | fs. | */kabi'datu/ | */kabi'da:/ *[kabi'da:] or *[kabe'da:] | */kəbe:'da:/ | */kəbe'do/ *[kəbe:'do:] | |
| | mp. | */kabi'di:ma/ | */kabi'dīm/ *[kabi'di:m] or *[kabe'di:m] | */kəbe:' di:m/ | /kəbe'dim/ *[kəbe:' di:m] | |
| | fp. | */kabi'do:tu/ | */kabi'dōt/ *[kabi'do:t] or *[kabe'do:t] | */kəbe:'do:t/ | /kəbe'dot/ *[kəbe:'do:t] | |

3.5.7.6.9n - re "Accordingly, it stands to reason that spirantization was, indeed, an early feature." It would be more correct to say "Thus, this consideration does not exclude the possibility that [BGDKPT](#) spirantization was an early feature."

3.5.8.6 - extra space left between * and *bittu*

3.5.10.7 - see comment on 1.16.1

3.5.12.1.2 - Stress is indeed phonemic but like consonant [gemination](#) and the vocal *šwa* it carries a very light phonemic load.

3.5.12.2 - History of stress. This important section should be summarized in the introduction.

3.5.12.2.14n - There is another school of thought that should be noted i.e. that the *hiphil* developed (quoted from [Hendel-Lambdin-Huehnergard](#) p. 39)

perfect **haqtıla* > **hiqtıl* → *hiqtîl* (not *hiqtēl*)

imperfect **yuhaqtılu* > **yaqtıl* → *yaqtîl* (not *yaqtēl*)

jussive **yuhaqtıl* > **yaqtıl* > *yaqtēl*

imperative **haqtıl* > *haqtēl*

3.5.12.2.15 - I think that these are jussives i.e. not 'he will tell' but 'let him tell'. As I understand it Dr. Blau is implying something like the following (all phonemic)-

a. Stage 1 (=EBHP?)

| | <i>Indicative</i> | <i>Jussive</i> | <i>Preterite</i> |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <i>Qal</i> | yiq'tul | 'yiqtul | way'yiqtul |
| <i>Piel</i> | yaqat'til | ya'qattil | wayya'qattil |
| <i>Niphal</i> | yiqqa'til | yiq'qatil | wayyiq'qatil |
| <i>Hiphal</i> | yaq'til | 'yaqtıl | way'yaqtıl |
| <i>Hithpiel</i> | yitqat'tal | yit'qattil | wayyit'qattil |

a. Stage 2 (= Hellenistic period post-fourth century BCE?)

| | <i>Indicative</i> | <i>Jussive</i> | <i>Preterite</i> |
|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <i>Qal</i> | yiq'tol | yiq'tol | wayyiq'tol |
| <i>Piel</i> | yəqat'tel | yəqat'tel | wayyqat'tel |
| <i>Niphal</i> | yiqqa'tel | yiqqa'tel | wayyiqqa'tel |
| <i>Hiphil</i> | yaq'til | yaq'tel | wayyaq'tel |
| <i>Hithpiel</i> | yitqat'tel | yitqat'tel | wayyitqat'tel |

- Dr Blau gives the forms **yábdel* and **yəbdábbēr*. In the pre-exilic period would these not more closely resemble -

**/yábdil/* [perhaps pronounced](#) **[yábdel]* and **/yadábbir/* perhaps pronounced **[yadábber]*?

3.5.12.2.16 - Some of the many other theories of the development and form of the *waw conversive* should be weighed (see [Smith 1991](#) which could be added to the bibliography)

3.5.13.1 - For clarity I suggest that -

"Thus the first vowels of ..."

be modified to -

"Thus, in Proto-Tiberian Hebrew, the first vowels of ..."

4.1.1.3 - "discontinuous" should be explained

4.1.2.1n - "does not exist" should be "cannot exist" since the former could be taken to mean that it does not happen to be found in the corpus whereas the latter indicates that it would be ungrammatical, which is correct.

4.2.1.1

- "deictic" and "affective" should be explained
- re. "Moreover, they are the only part of speech in which compound words occur. Semitic languages, in general, and Hebrew, in particular, are characterized by a lack of compound words." What about Arabic *naħt*?

4.2.2.2.1 - For clarity I suggest that -

"The use of two forms for the same function is quite remarkable; it is found in other Semitic languages..."

be modified to -

"Although the use of two forms for the same function may seem unusual, it is found in other Semitic languages..."

4.2.2.2.2 - For clarity I suggest that -

"When one language exhibits variety in a certain pattern, in contrast with uniformity in the other language, it appears to imply that..."

be modified to -

"When one language exhibits variety in a certain pattern, in contrast with uniformity in other cognate languages, this usually implies that..."

4.2.2.3.1 - "...has to be interpreted as preserving the early form..." for accuracy should be replaced by "...could be interpreted as preserving the early form...". This is not a trivial point. **The recent discussion on dating biblical texts should be reflected somewhere in the book** and key refs. should be added to the bibliography (see the items I have listed under [Zevit](#), [Young 1993](#), [Young 2004](#), [Young](#), [Rezetko](#), [Ehrensward 2008](#) and [Vern 2011](#)).

4.2.2.3.2 - may be interested in looking at the presentation in the table [Examples of the "Anceps" Approach](#)

4.2.2.3.3 - re. **anâ* - why use circumflex instead of macron?

4.2.2.4.4 - We cannot exclude the possibility that the [EBHP](#) might have been **/hu'a(:)/* and **/hi'a(:)/* (see [Gogel 1998](#) p.153 footnote 179.)

4.2.2.5.1 - replace "with the progress of culture" with its judgmental, nineteenth century cultural evolution sound by "over time" or the like.

4.2.3.4.1 - see comment on 3.3.5.1.5

4.2.3.4.2n - define "allegro" in this linguistic context.

4.2.4.2.3 - define "epicine"

4.2.6.2.1 - in this and the following section, in my view a couple of points that need to be clarified are -

- in EBHP ׀ was probably pronounced */ša/ plus [gemination](#) of the following consonant. This phonetically might have sounded *[šɛ] or *[šɛ]

- in EBHP אשׁר was [probably pronounced](#) */ašr/ (see [Hendel-Lambdin-Huehnergard](#) p. 23) or */ašar/¹³.

- for clarity and accuracy -

"The relative ׀ , followed by a geminated consonant—the main relative and subordinating conjunction in Rabbinic Hebrew—is limited in Biblical Hebrew. ׀ or ׀ is attested in Deborah's Song, in the story of Gideon, and in the Israelite sections of the Book of Kings. Therefore it seems likely that ׀ reflects the vernacular of Northern Palestine, which was, as a rule, avoided; ׀ was replaced by אשׁר, because it was not considered standard by the Judean scribes and redactors...."

should be modified to -

"The relative ׀ , followed by a geminated consonant—the main relative and subordinating conjunction in Rabbinic Hebrew—is limited in the **Masoretic Text**. ׀ or ׀ is attested in Deborah's Song, in the story of Gideon, and in the

Israelite sections of the Book of Kings and in **Psalms**.

Therefore it seems likely that ψ or ψ reflects the vernacular of Northern Palestine, which was, as a rule, avoided; ψ was replaced by ψ , because it was not considered standard for prose by the Judean scribes and redactors...."

4.2.7.2 - two points

- no primitive form is proposed for ψ
- it would be most useful to lay out the reconstructed PH and BH forms of ψ and ψ cf. [Hendel-Lambdin-Huehnergard](#) p. 23 where the following are proposed -

mî ("who") < *miya* (Amarna), cf. Ugaritic *my*

māh ("what") corresponds to Arabic *mā*, Ugaritic *mh*

4.3.2.2 - see comment on 3.5.12.2.16

4.3.2.2.7 - I believe that -

'I will separate' should be 'I intend to separate' or 'let me separate'

'we will separate' should be 'let us separate'

4.3.2.2.10 - mention could be made of the negation of the infinitive construct with ψ

4.3.2.2.12 - suggest that 'archaic poetry' be replaced by 'archaic or archaizing poetry'. See comment on 1.3.4.

4.3.2.4.2 - 'special objections' should be replaced by 'specific objections'.

4.3.3.4.1 - table column heading "*Personal pronoun" should probably be "*Akkadian personal pronoun" or "*Proto-Semitic personal pronoun"

4.3.3.4.7 - suggest replacing "...as common sense would demand..." with "...as might be suggested by common sense..."

4.3.4.3.2 - it might be desirable to replace -

"... in Arabic the infinitive follows the finite verb; in Biblical Hebrew it precedes it. There are also significant morphological differences between the infinitives in the two languages."

with -

"... in Arabic the verbal noun (*maṣdar*) follows the finite verb; in Biblical Hebrew the infinitive absolute precedes it. There are also significant morphological differences between the infinitives/verbal nouns in the two languages."

4.3.4.3.2n - should explain what "inner object" means.

4.3.4.3.4n - should explain what "neutral usage" means.

4.3.5.1.9 - in the table why does "*hitpā^ēel*" have a long *ā* in this [Proto-Biblical Hebrew](#) reconstruction? and why the [spirantization](#) of *t* in *hitpā^ēel* and *hitpa^{cc}el* at this linguistic stage?

4.3.5.2.3.1 - re. **yahšub* > יְהִי שׁוּב . At some point in the text Dr. Blau should make clear whether he sees the prehistory of such guttural forms as -

a) **yahšubu* (PH) > **yahšub* (BH=[EBHP](#)+) > **yahšōb* (PTH) > **yahšob* ([\(TH\)](#)⁺ c. 850 CE vowel length no longer phonemic); OR

b) **yahšubu* (PH) > **yahšub* > **yihšub* (BH=[EBHP](#)+) > **yahšōb* (PTH) > **yahšob* ([\(TH\)](#)⁺).

4.3.5.2.3.1 - should explain what "neuter stative" means and give a couple of examples..

4.3.5.4.4 - other scholars (eg. Huehnergard) maintain that *u* remained the prefix vowel of the *piel*/prefix-tense until it was reduced to *šwa*

4.3.8.5.1 - see comment on 1.15.4n

4.3.8.7.4.2 - re. ...read: *wayyāqom*." See comment on 1.16.1.

4.3.8.8.5 - suggest altering "The doubling does not take place in word-final position.." to "In Tiberian Hebrew, the doubling does not take place in word-final position.." (cf. [Were Word-Final Geminated Consonants Maintained in EBHP?](#))

4.4.2.4. - The statement "יוֹשֵׁבִית 'sitting' < **yāšibt*; שׁוֹמְעֵת 'hearing' < **šāmiʿt*" leaves out the probably pre-exilic EBHP. I would see their history being -

*/*yāšib(a)tu(n)*/ (PS) > */*yōšibtu*/ (PH) > */*yōšibt*/ (*[EBHP](#)+) > */*yōšɛbɛt*/ (PTH) > /*yōšɛbɛt*/ ([/TH/](#)+) pronounced *[yo:šɛ:vɛθ]

*/*šāmiʿ(a)tu(n)*/ (PS) */*šōmiʿtu*/ (PH) > */*šōmiʿt*/ (*[EBHP](#)+) > */*šōmaʿat*/ (PTH) > */*šōmaʿat*/ ([/TH/](#)+)

4.4.4.3N. - Wouldn't most scholars place the rise of the object marker תָּא well after the disappearance of the case endings?

4.4.4.5. - "In Biblical Hebrew..." should be "In Proto-Biblical Hebrew as.."

4.4.5.9n. "southern dialects" should be replaced by "the Southwest Semitic languages" as in 4.4.5.9.

4.4.6.1. - The *p* (in **awp*) is [spirantized](#) but the *t* (in **bayt*) is not though they presumably date from the same (pre-exilic EBHP?) period and should be treated similarly.

4.4.6.11. Suggest that amending "In the following, we will cite some of the most important nominal patterns, arranged..." to "In the following, we will cite some of the most important nominal patterns, **in Tiberian Hebrew** arranged..."

4.4.6.11.26n - For clarity I suggest that -

"The original forms are ..."

be modified to -

"The Proto-Tiberian forms were..."

¹ [Blau 2010](#)

² The internal vowel letters, not resulting from diphthong reduction, as we know from epigraphic finds, must have been added during the post-exilic period see [Table - Matres Lectionis in JEH](#) http://www.houseofdauid.ca/anc_heb_bib_heb_EH.htm#ML .

³ [Kutscher 1982](#) §246 -

As in the Septuagint, (in the Secunda) the short /i/ and /u/ of the Masoretic vocalization are transliterated by [e] and [o].... (T)his apparently parallels the situation in Mishnaic Hebrew. Therefore, it seems highly probable that this pronunciation represents the substandard, that is to say, the pronunciation that prevailed in the spoken Hebrew and Aramaic in Palestine at that time. But the original /i/ and /u/, as preserved for us by the Masoretes, survived in the standard pronunciation, i.e. in the reading of the bible text in synagogue. Although the vocalization of the Masoretes is known to us only from a period about 600 years later than that of the (Secunda) transliterations, it faithfully preserved older forms. This is proved by the fact that nearly all short [u]'s and a large number of the [i]'s in the Masoretic texts represent PS /u/'s and /i/'s. Therefore, of course they must reflect an earlier stage of the language..... (T)he Septuagint also sometimes reflects the substandard pronunciation rather than the standard.

⁴ Hebrew version p. 3.

⁵ Cf. my own efforts in these areas - [Proto-Semitic to Tiberian Hebrew - Vowel Phonemes with Possible Allophones](#), [Consonantal Phonemes in Biblical, Tiberian Masoretic and Israeli Hebrew](#)

⁶ cf http://www.houseofdauid.ca/anc_heb_bib_heb_history.htm

⁷ Cf my [Did Word-Final Short Vowels Exist in EBHP and Were All Word-Final Vowels Marked by Vowel Letters?](#)

⁸ [Blau 1976/1993](#) p. 31 REMARK A.

⁹ [Gibson 1965](#) p. 37 "One other Tiberian vowel phoneme is known not to have existed before about the fifth century A.D., namely /ǎ/ (IPA /ɔ/), which is in origin a merger of a previous /a:/ and certain allophones of /u/"

¹⁰ In [Pre-Tiberian Hebrew](#) and [Tiberian Hebrew](#) the mobile *šwa* (ə) is considered a phoneme ([Blau 1976/1993](#) p. 11 footnote (1)) and "(the *d)ageš forte* (= consonant gemination) is ... phonemic, though its phonemic load is light..." ([Blau 1976/1993](#) 4.2.1.2).

¹¹ See [Sáenz-Badillos](#) §3.3; [Kutscher 1982](#) p. 79 ff.

¹² cf. 1.18.4n

¹³ cf. *Linguistic Structure of Hebrew* by Zellig S. Harris, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 61, No. 3. (Sep., 1941), pp. P146-147.