

Lexicon and Root in Hebrew

In the morphology of Hebrew, an important question related to the nature of the lexicon is the status of the root. Traditional Hebrew grammar accords the root a central role, and a morpheme lexicon allows the separate representations of root and vowel pattern. However, in a word-form lexicon, one in which morphemes are not represented independently, the position of the root is less clear. While it is possible to represent morphemes indirectly in a word-form lexicon (the second edition of the textbook has some discussion on p. 70), many proponents of a word-form lexicon have taken the position that the root is not a component of Hebrew morphology. Under a root-less approach, words are derived by changing the vowel patterns of existing words, rather than being derived from roots.

Consider each of the following sets of words, each of which conforms to a specific morphological pattern. For each group, write an informal morphological rule deriving the words from a root. Then determine under a rootless approach to Hebrew morphology what each of these words could be derived from. Is there a pattern which can define the base of the group as a whole? (Note: ignore phonological changes, such as the addition of [a] at the end of *hišmia*.)

A.

הלביש
האכיל
השמיע
הרקיד
הצחיק

B.

קריא
שביר
הפיד
עמיד
אכיל

C.

רקדן
פחדן
כתבן
שחקן
בטלן

What can we conclude about the role of the root in Hebrew morphology?