

Clines, David J. A., ed. *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Vol. 1. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993. 475 pp. \$80.00.

Appearance of the first volume of *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* is a welcome and long-overdue event in the development of Hebrew lexicography. The dictionary, projected to consist of eight volumes, is designed as the successor to *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, by F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, known as BDB, of which publication began in 1891 and was completed in 1907. However, the dictionary is a new work, not a revision of BDB. The succession involves taking into account a century of change, including the discovery of the Qumran corpus of classical Hebrew texts and the emergence of modern linguistics.

Volume 1 begins with a preface by the editor, an introduction to the dictionary as a whole, descriptions and lists of text sources covered by the dictionary (including especially Qumran material and inscriptions, etc., with bibliographic data), and a key to abbreviations and signs. The bulk of the volume is devoted to Hebrew words beginning with the letter Aleph, for which there is an English-Hebrew index at the end.

The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew differs from previous dictionaries of ancient Hebrew in two major respects, both of which add greatly to its usefulness. First, it systematically covers not only the language of the Hebrew Bible, but also that of Ben Sira, the Qumran manuscripts, and ancient Hebrew inscriptions from earliest times. Second, its working philosophy is based in principles of modern linguistics, especially the rule that meanings of words are established by the ways in which they are used in patterns and combinations within sentences.

Users of BDB will find the format of the new dictionary familiar in that an entry/article for a Hebrew word includes elements such as the part of speech, a simple translation, a list of forms, and a semantic analysis. Unlike BDB, the dictionary includes the number of occurrences of a given word in the Hebrew Bible, Ben Sira, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and inscriptions. A more significant difference, in accordance with the linguistic approach of the dictionary, is the inclusion of a full syntagmatic analysis, which exhaustively registers for a verb the subjects, objects, and prepositions with which it is used, for a noun the verbs which have it as subject or object, the adjectives used to modify it, and so on. An entry also takes note of synonyms and/or antonyms and, in the case of a verb, a list of words that may be morphologically derived from the verbal root.

Omitted from the *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, by contrast with BDB and some other lexicons such as that of L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, is evidence of cognate languages. This evidence is excluded because it does not represent Hebrew usage. Listing Semitic cognate words in the dictionary entries could convey to users who failed to read the

introduction the misimpression that the meaning of a given word is partly based upon its Semitic etymology. In spite of this danger, I think judiciously presented lists of well-established cognate words would be helpful for many users, e.g. as indices to entries in dictionaries of other Semitic languages.

It is impossible, of course, for a reviewer to check thousands of references for accuracy. My study of the first volume of the dictionary indicates that its entries are generally well conceived and carefully done. Positive characteristics include: hierarchical arrangement of semantic and syntagmatic analyses, summaries at the beginning of some long analyses, flexibility of format with regard to the integration of semantic and syntactic data, clear explanations which express caution when necessary, and appropriate redundancy.

The tremendous syntactic detail included in the dictionary, which makes it so valuable as a reference tool, poses a challenge to the user who is attempting to quickly find a particular piece of information in a long section of an entry. Section headings such as SUBJ (= subject), NOM CL (= noun clause), APP (= apposition), etc., are well marked, and long sections group references in quasi-paragraph format. However, within such a group there is no easily discernible, generally applicable principle by which Hebrew words appearing in a particular syntactic relation to the main headword are arranged. To me the most logical solution would be to alphabetize the Hebrew words. If more than one reference to the same word must be presented, e.g., because the word is used both in a technical and less technical sense, these references should be juxtaposed.

As stated in the preface, constraints of cost-effectiveness and time do not allow the dictionary to take into account all of the secondary scholarly literature. The editor states that "we can hope to do no more than report the position of the best scholarship we can find" (10). The focus of the dictionary is not so much on state-of-the-art translation equivalents as on providing comprehensive, contextually conditioned evidence so that the user can arrive at his/her own conclusions regarding precise meanings.

Although *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* cannot meet all our needs, it does well what it sets out to do and is on its way to setting a new high standard for Hebrew lexicography. May it be completed soon!

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Davies, Gordon F. *Israel in Egypt: Reading Exodus 1-2*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series no. 135. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992. 204 pp. \$50.00.

The last two decades have witnessed the development of several new directions in exegesis which diverge from diachronic literary methods