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Review of BibleWorks for Windows 3.5

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“All do not have the power to perform miracles, heal diseases, speak in tongues, or interpret the tongues.’ This makes it clear that Paul did not teach that tongues was a necessary gift to prove that one has the indwelling Spirit (224).

As to editorial matters, I noted only one typo (‘voatives’ for vocatives [12]), but a major difficulty is that the page numbers in the ‘Subject Index’ are frequently incorrect and incomplete: ‘Adverb’ not on 187-90, but 195-198; ‘Infinitive’ not 159-70, but 165-77; ‘Epexegetical’ correctly as 166, 169, but also 171 (2x), 172, 175 (2x).

Young’s work treats grammatical sections in rather conventional style. The chapters that allow it to be called a ‘linguistic’ approach seem tangentially related to the grammar and of dubious helpfulness for the majority of second-year students. For example, chapter 14, ‘Sentence Structure,’ introduces the student to a modified transformational grammar “appropriate for Greek and other inflected languages that do not follow English word order.” But the chapter is not well-integrated into the book, its abbreviations are abundant and normally undefined. As the chapter stands, the payback is paltry for the investment of energy required to understand the chapter. Young correctly assesses the chapter himself: “We must not be overly optimistic regarding the value of transformational grammar for exegesis” (205).

Chapters 17 and 18, ‘Discourse Analysis’ and ‘Diagramming,’ are helpful in conceptualizing the exegetical task. Chapter 17 examines seven interrelated features: genre, structure, cohesion, propositions, relations, prominence, and setting and provides some illustrative biblical references. Chapter 18 presents a “thought-flow” diagram of James 1:2-8 which reminds the student that not every word, phrase, or sentence carries primary meaning or importance. However, both chapters seem like foreign intrusions into a grammar which properly belong in an introductory course in exegesis.

Although my students passed the departmental Greek diagnostic exam with the same pass rate as students using other grammars, I will not use this text again for teaching Greek II.

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of hard disk space and the program ships only on CD ROM. The necessary hardware should include a 486 DX (or higher), with 8 MB RAM, a good quality VGA color monitor, at least one GB of hard disk, and a CD ROM drive. The program comes with two executable files, one written for 16-bit Windows 3.1 and one for 32-bit Windows 95 or Windows NT. The computing environment for this review was the following: Pentium Pro 200 Mhz PC1 motherboard with 64 MB of RAM, 5 GB Maxtor EIDE HDD, a STB 3D Virge Graphics Card with 8 MB RAM, and 12x CD-ROM drive.

The Hebrew and Greek characters are displayed on the screen. BWW also includes 20 Windows and Mac TrueType and PostScript fonts for scalable accented Greek and scalable vocalized Hebrew. Just to have these fonts at one’s disposal is worth $50 of the program’s price.

The feature list is long and includes the following Bible versions: six different English translations (KJV, RSV, NKJV, NASB, ASV, Young’s Darby, Basic English, and NRSV), six German translations, three Dutch, one Danish, one Finnish, three French, one Hungarian, three Italian, and three Spanish. Also included are the Latin Vulgate, BHS Hebrew OT 4th correlated edition 1990, Westminster BHS OT text and morphologically tagged database, Rahlf’s LXX text in Greek, a morphologically tagged LXX database (CATSS), UBS 4th edition Greek NT, Greek NT Nestle-Aland 27th, Scrivener’s Beza TR, and an electronic version of the Analytical Greek NT (AGNT2) and the Analytical Lexicon of the Greek NT, both by Timothy and Barbara Friberg.

To have this huge amount of raw data at one’s fingertips is sometimes a little intimidating. But BWW includes even more, namely the electronic version of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Easton’s Bible Dictionary (1897, basically a systematic description of biblical terms), History Time Lines, Nave’s Topical Bible (comparable to Easton’s Bible Dictionary, with direct access to the reference texts), A. T. Robertson’s Word Pictures in the Greek NT, the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, and Bible outlines by Bruce Metzger.

The package includes the BDB-Gesenius Lexicon revised by Whitaker, the abridged BDB-Gesenius Lexicon, Thayer’s Greek-English/French Lexicon, Friberg’s Greek-English Analytical Lexicon, the UBS Greek Dictionary, and Louw and Nida’s Greek-English Lexicon Based upon Semantic Domains. The Hebrew lexicons are keyed to the page numbers in TWOT, the Englishman’s Strong’s Numbers (in French, English, Dutch and German), and the Greek and Hebrew Tense/Voice/Mood Verb Parsing Numbering system.

BWW definitely is a mouse-driven program and lacks support for some shortcut keys. The now already standard “button help” is also included in BWW. I also liked very much that BWW utilizes the often forgotten right-hand button of the hard-worked mouse. When one pushes, for example, the right-hand button pointing on any Greek and Hebrew in the text window, four different options appear: (1) Search on form, (2) Show morphology/definition, (3) Search on root, (4) Root search and morphology, (5) Lookup root in revised BDB, (6) Append to command line [in order to search—thus saving a lot of time], (7) Do search on vowel points. The easy access to root searches or searches for specific forms is powerful. One can find all the occurrences of a specific root in basically no time.
Working with BWW is rapid and efficient. A frequent user of the program should soon be able to perform complex morphological searches from the command line, although BWW also includes a useful “Morphological Code Assistant” that allows the user to choose, with the help of the mouse, the morphological Greek or Hebrew specification. The morphologically tagged database is one of the greatest assets for my work. Instead of going to my faithful Even-Shoshan, it is much faster and more efficient to search via BWW and get the results in less than 1 second (or in more complex searches up to 15 seconds) with the resultant verses right at my fingertips. BWW allows the user also to make reference list files and add personal notes to individual verses or chapters.

The on-line help, as well as the printed handbook of BWW, are of a high standard. The English is readable and the suggestions and instructions comprehensible. One would wish for some more practical examples of more complex morphological searches and also for more accessible on-line help on the regular search expressions (such as the Boolean operators), which are well hidden deep inside the on-line help. From version 3.5 on, Hermeneutika includes also several instructional videos made with Lotus Screencam (which is provided) in order to facilitate the novice’s grasping of the basic concepts and techniques of BWW.

It is possible to delimit the text corpus to be searched by just clicking and choosing the relevant books. Proximity searches are possible as well. Furthermore, a detailed record of each search details the occurrence of a word in a specific book as compared to the entire OT or NT (in percentage). It is even possible to look at individual chapters in order to see phrase clusters or combinations.

All in all, I like BWW. There are, however, things that I would like to see changed: more usage of shortcut keys, more complete language reference tools (as for example a complete Koehler/Baumgartner or BDB lexicon and not just an abbreviated version—although the Whitaker-revised BDB is a step in the right direction. The inclusion of more up-to-date dictionaries or encyclopedias (such as ISBE or ABD) would also greatly facilitate work. While the printed page is definitely not dead, the advantages of the electronic format and search capabilities are indeed strong.

I would say: Thumbs up for electronic publishing. Thumbs up for the programmers at Hermeneutika. This is definitely the way to go, saving many hours of leafing through hundreds of pages. Clergy as well as scholars should have a closer look at BWW.

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