

More significantly, however, those individuals who disagree with Callaham's assertions concerning memorization and such will be less than pleased with this text. Callaham states,

Contemporary advances in technology allow study method [*sic*] to reduce dependence upon onerous and time-consuming rote memorization. Indeed, it is less necessary than in previous eras to store a great deal of raw data in the brain for reference, for most anyone in any location with a capable mobile device can access an electronically searchable copy of the Bible in its original languages. Therefore, this course focuses upon developing student's ability to read—not like computers—but as critical thinkers. That is to say, this course pointedly does not advocate the memorization, nor the reproduction, of the details of comprehensive paradigm charts in order to amass a mental database of forms prior to reading biblical texts. Furthermore, this textbook contains no decontextualized lists of vocabulary words to commit to short term memory. Instead, the course leads students to develop recognition-based reading skills. Hence through their reading, students will readily pick up unfamiliar BA forms and vocabular words as they appear in the textbook and in BA texts (xi).

Students and educators, alike, though, must discern for themselves whether or not appropriating Callaham's specific methodologies as laid out in *BABI* truly pay the dividends that he claims. Such matters notwithstanding, there is no better resource available for learning biblical Aramaic via the biblical Hebrew "contrast and comparison" method that can contend with Scott M. Callaham's *Biblical Aramaic for Biblical Interpretation: A Parallel Hebrew-Aramaic Handbook*. Its primary users are likely Bible college and seminary students alongside (hopefully!) industrious pastors. Highly recommended!

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A Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon, by Frank Matheus. Wilmore, KY: GlossaHouse, 2020. x + 388 pp. \$29.99.

There is a dearth of up-to-date, inexpensive, and user-friendly lexicons for biblical Aramaic. While BDB remains quite useful in many ways, it was first published in 1907. This, therefore, predates not only the modern linguistic period but also the discoveries of several important documents that are highly pertinent to the study of Aramaic, such as, for instance, the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran and other sites in the Judean desert. In contrast, however, *HALOT* is much more recent (and, in certain respects, also more comprehensive). The fifth (and final) volume of the *Hebrew Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* set (Aramaic) was first published in 2000 by Brill. The entire work was re-issued in 2001 (also by Brill) as an unabridged two-volume work. Though

lexicographers agree that *HALOT* is irreplaceable for all serious study, its exorbitant cost often places it out of reach for most students and its overarching format (this includes the sheer wealth of information available!) is somewhat counter-intuitive for many uninitiated users. Many of the same caveats relevant to *HALOT* also apply to Gzella's *TDOT* (Eerdmans, 2018).

Enter *A Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon (BHAL)*, a comprehensive dictionary based upon Frank Matheus's *PONS Kompaktwörterbuch Althebräisch-Deutsch*. *BHAL* utilizes modern lexical approaches, offers efficient access to the most pertinent information/data in an uncomplicated but comprehensive way, is exceptionally cost-effective, and is extremely clear in its presentation, thus allowing students to have quick access to all of the key details at a glance.

Said otherwise, *BHAL* offers numerous forms that help the user to find the word they are looking for quickly in its specific grammatical format; alongside this, with nearly 10,000 entries in total (see ix), *BHAL* covers the entire biblical vocabulary, including the Aramaic portions. It is, however, solely the Aramaic component of this lexicon that will be the focus of this review.

With respect to the fundamentals, the verbs are cited as roots without vowels and their forms are listed in the usual order from the suffix conjugation (also known as the so-called "perfect") and the prefix conjugation (also known as the so-called "imperfect") to the participle. The nouns are arranged (as normal) from *status absolutus* in the singular (citation form) to *status constructus* in the plural with the grammatical assignments being represented by a number, the resolution of which can be found in the footer on each page (more on this later). As noted by the author, this not only saves space but also helps to keep the lexicon "compact and well structured" (ix). All *ketib/qere* variants are listed in full and are appropriately marked. Matheus further notes, "The listed verbal forms follow the usual sequence from the third to the first person, from the masculine to the feminine, from the singular to the plural" (ix).

By way of comparison, while the Aramaic portion of William L. Holladay's *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1988) is twenty-nine pages, *BHAL* is a mere twenty-five pages. One should also note that *BHAL* has substantially larger "headings" for each main entry (*aleph*, *bet*, etc.) and contains far more white space than Holladay. The total content, therefore, is substantially less per entry in *BHAL* than in Holladay. In addition to this, another irritant is the egregious fact that *BHAL* does not effectively leverage bold face type for the actual definition of each word (unlike Holladay). This makes searching through the lexicon itself a somewhat cumbersome and unnecessarily dense task at times. One does note, though, that all (undisputed) incidents are recorded in *BHAL* via the ° (open dot) sign.

The definitions themselves are, as a whole, quite clear (though somewhat lackluster). Disappointingly, however, unlike Holladay, who uses the full terms for each of the stems (i.e., *Peal*, *Hitpeel*, *Hafel*, etc.), *BHAL* only uses abbreviations. In addition, unlike Holladay, Hebrew

cognates for any given word are not included in the definition. This means that students looking to learn biblical Aramaic via the comparative method are at a (severe) disadvantage using *BHAL*.

In sum, while Frank Matheus's *A Biblical Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon* is an up-to-date tool that could, perhaps, supplement (at least in certain ways) Holladay's trusted work, one would be hard-pressed to persuade me that it substantially improves on (let alone supplants) that text. In fact, I would argue that if given the choice, one would be foolish not to opt for Holladay.

That said, however, the most up-to-date, cost-effective, and user-friendly (stand-alone volume) for biblical Aramaic lexicography remains Ernst Vogt's *A Lexicon of Biblical Aramaic: Clarified by Ancient Documents* (Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2011). To be clear, Fitzmyer's work (unlike *BHAL*) leverages a good majority of the texts found in the Judean desert (including some of the most recent work on certain fragmentary texts, such as the *Genesis Apocryphon* of Qumran Cave 1). In addition to this, Fitzmyer's work not only employs a much more conservative use of white space than *BHAL* but also judiciously leverages bold face type for all word definitions, contains clear and effective mark(s) for *hapax legomenon* (unlike *BHAL*) while also retaining Holladay's dagger for all undisputed incidents, and, best of all, contains snippet citations of the context for each passage under discussion.

To conclude, whatever strengths are contained within Frank Matheus's *A Biblical Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon* they cannot make up for its not insignificant deficiencies in terms of user-friendliness, comprehensiveness, and so forth. In brief, I cannot in good conscience recommend this volume.

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40 Questions About Bible Translation, by Mark L. Strauss. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2023. 352 pp. \$24.99.

NIV translator Mark L. Strauss uses Kregel Academic's 40 Questions format to excellent effect as he answers *40 Questions about Bible Translation*. In the first of six parts in his book, he covers the necessity, goals, and methods of Bible translation, focusing especially on the strengths and weaknesses of formal equivalence translations and of functional equivalence translations.

In the second part, Strauss briefly covers textual criticism and canon (what to translate) before speaking with obvious intelligence to several other preparatory questions: Should you make a revision or a new translation? Should you work with a committee or do individual translation work? How should your theological perspective play into Bible translation? Who is your audience? What reading level and social register are