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Hebräisches und aramäisches Wörterbuch zu den Texten vom Toten Meer
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The Hebräisches und aramäisches Wörterbuch zu den Texten vom Toten Meer (HAWTTM), prepared by the Qumran-Wörterbuch project funded by the Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, of which the first volume (the Hebrew words beginning with א and ב) has just appeared, aims to be not only a dictionary of the Hebrew and Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls, but, more comprehensively, to fill the lexicographical gap between the Biblical and the Rabbinic lexicon. As such, its objective is to discuss all the Hebrew and Aramaic words that are attested, roughly, in the three following collections: (1) the non-biblical literary texts found in the caves around Qumran (the Dead Sea Scrolls), virtually all of which should be dated from the third to the first century BCE; (2) the non-literary documentary texts found in the Judaean Desert as well as the inscriptive evidence from Hellenistic and Roman period Judaea up to the end of the second century CE, most of which stemming from the first and second centuries CE; and (3) those medieval manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah that are copies of non-biblical works from the Second Temple Period, to wit, Ben Sira, the Damascus Document, and the Aramaic Levi. The inclusion of all the Genizah Ben Sira material (on which see briefly below), with many lexical items that are not found in either Biblical Hebrew or in the Dead Sea Scrolls makes this dictionary much more complete than if it had been only a dictionary of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

This long-running project of the Akademie der Wissenschaften at Göttingen provides a dictionary of the classical type of the Hebrew and Aramaic of this period. Thus, it not merely provides the meaning or meanings of words, but the broader linguistic background of the lemmata. With verbs, it refers to the common semitic root and its meaning; with other words it refers to the root, and—in this volume of Hebrew words—it lists the attestation of the word in earlier (Biblical Hebrew) and later (generally up to piyyut) forms of Hebrew. With nouns and other non-verbal words, it refers to the vocalisation of the Tiberian and Samaritan traditions, and, where available, to Greek and Latin transcriptions. Likewise, it provides the different orthographical and morphological forms attested in the corpus. Not only the possible meanings of words are given, but it describes its different semantic and syntagmatic relationships to other words of the lexicon as attested in the corpus, always with extensive quotations, and German translations, of syntagmata or the context.
The work on this dictionary began in 2002. Given the fragmentary character of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the frequent difficulty of reading, the editors had to create their own electronic database of the corpus, compare different editions and readings of the texts, and they often had to decide on the readings by checking either the original texts or the best available photographs (occasionally readings are justified with references to specific photographs). Because of the ongoing work on the Dead Sea Scrolls, with continuous improvements on older readings and editions, and the occasional publication of hitherto unedited fragments, the Göttingen project, executed by two major specialists in West Semitic linguistics and the Dead Sea Scrolls, and assisted by a host of students and postdocs, is a unique achievement, unequalled anywhere in the world. (The first attempt to include the Dead Sea Scrolls lexicon in a dictionary, in Clines’ *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, failed because too much had yet not been published.) This first volume only contains the lemmata beginning with א and ב, but through its many quotations, translations, and cross-referencing, one can easily determine that the project is much further on the road, and that one can expect from now on a steady publication of new volumes.

A dictionary of this kind is not intended as a simple tool to help a reader or translator of individual texts. Rather, it records, describes, and analyzes the lexicon of the preserved corpus from a crucial transitional period in the history of the Hebrew language. It thus serves both the Hebrew or Semitic linguist and any philologist working on ancient Hebrew and Aramaic texts. In addition, this dictionary will undoubtedly become a primary tool for all scholars interested in the Dead Sea Scrolls, including Dead Sea Scrolls specialists. It brings for the first time ever all the material together; it provides a judicious treatment and discussions of the reading of the texts—when multiple readings are possible it mentions both but sometimes expresses preference for one; and, its translations are not, as far too often in other works, crib renderings, but demonstrate the editors’ interpretation and knowledge of the texts and scholarship. In short, even though explicit references to secondary discussions are relatively sparse, this dictionary encapsulates the results of many decades of philological and linguistic Dead Sea Scrolls research and makes it accessible to a broader audience of Hebrew, Biblical, and Jewish Studies scholars.

All the above can easily be illustrated by some random examples from this volume. For example, both sub א בר 1 (p. 307) and sub בר (p. 325) the dictionary discusses whether רותנו ב or ריתנו ב in 1QM 13:9 and ברתנו in the parallel text of 4Q495 2 1 should be understood as a form of ברא (less likely) or ברר (more likely). Here the dictionary does not even consider it helpful to refer to the older, but clearly incorrect, reading דיתנו פ. The long section of בוליעל distinguishes between an abstract meaning “Bosheit, Niedertracht, Nichtsnutzigkeit”