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A Concordance to Psalms in the Ethiopic Version

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This carefully planned and beautifully executed concordance to the Ethiopic (Ge'ez) version of the Psalms makes a significant contribution to the study of the Ethiopic Bible and to the field of Ethiopic studies. It is the first volume in what it is to be hoped will be a concordance to the entire Ethiopic Bible. Devens is an accomplished scholar in the field of Semitic and Ethiopic studies and well qualified to pioneer this effort. In an earlier study the author has given careful consideration to the special problems attendant on the design of an Ethiopic concordance and offered a sample concordance to the book of Obadiah ("Designing a Biblical Concordance," in *New Trends in Ethiopian Studies: Papers of the Twelfth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Michigan State University, 5–10 September 1994* [Lawrenceville, N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1994]). Building on this earlier work and the principles established there, she has now produced a complete concordance to the Psalms. It is appropriate that the first scholarly concordance to the Ethiopic version of the Bible be devoted to this oft-cited book. The only critical edition of the Psalms in Ethiopic is that of Hiob Ludolf, published in 1701. In the absence of a modern critical edition, Devens has chosen to base the concordance on the widely available and still serviceable edition of the Capuchin scholar and missionary Francesco da Bassano (1924–25). This edition, and the concordance, include a version of the Ethiopic titles to the Psalms and Ps 151. The design of the concordance, which demonstrates a masterful command of matters grammatical and lexicographical, is

explained in the introductory pages. Dedicated to the author's teacher, Wolf Leslau, it generally follows the principles of his *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987) and is intended to be used in conjunction with that work. The layout is simple and clear. Each word is given a separate entry, organized by base form. The base forms, in alphabetic consonantal order, are given on the left column of each page in a large and handsome Ethiopic font, followed by the individual verbal and nominal entries in a slightly smaller font. One major exception to the alphabetical principle is the grouping together of consonants that are used interchangeably in the Ge'ez manuscript tradition. This decision is justifiable on linguistic and historical grounds and, since it is fully explained in the introduction, should not be a cause of confusion. Ample context phrases are given in the center of the page, with the keyword indicated by underlining. Devens has skillfully chosen sensible phrases to represent the context, utilizing space markers to indicate when less significant words have been eliminated (e.g., to keep subjects and verbs together). In the case of a few high frequency words (e.g., *westa*) the numerous occurrences are listed without context. The final two columns contain the Psalm citations, with chapter and verse given according to both the Ethiopic (da Bassano) and NRSV enumeration. Ample aids to the reader, such as cross-references and superscript markers to identify ambiguous forms are used throughout, although no glosses or morphological tags are provided. Given the nature of a concordance that includes context phrases, it is perhaps inevitable that the few typographical errors that do occur should be replicated in several places. Examples are the misprinted number at the conclusion of the title to Ps 59 (NRSV Ps 60) on pages 112, 186, 192, 364, and 540 and *Yusef* spelled with a vowel of the second rather than the seventh order on pages 43, 133, 148, 177, 195, 231, 380, 441, 446, and 539. The da Bassano edition has *Yosef* consistently. The concordance concludes with useful lists of proper names, cited phrases (e.g., "forever and ever"), and twenty-nine minor corrections to the da Bassano edition (only three of which are noted in da Bassano's corrigenda). This is a very useful book that will be an important addition to research libraries and one that students of the Ethiopic Bible will want to own.