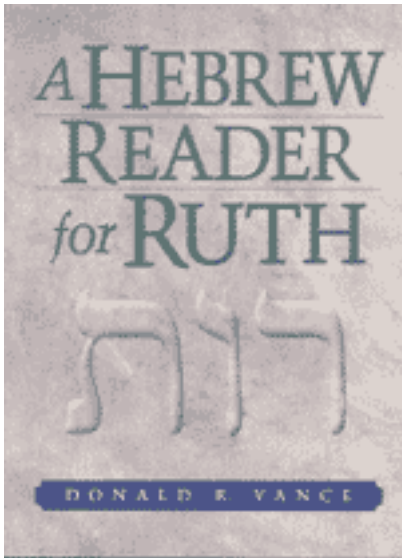


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Vance, Donald R.

A Hebrew Reader for Ruth

Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003. Pp. x + 85. Paper.
\$12.95. ISBN 1565637402.

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Donald Vance's book is written for intermediate-level students of Biblical Hebrew. Verse by verse it presents the Hebrew text of the book of Ruth with the author's translation and morphological and syntactical analysis of every word. Furthermore, Vance discusses many instructive and/or problematic linguistic traits and extensively references and quotes the opinions of the standard reference grammars.

The book is intended as a help for students making the transition from reading textbooks to reading the biblical text on their own. This is achieved partly by the analysis of every word and partly by extensive references to the standard grammars and often quoting and discussing passages from them.

Granted, the word-by-word analysis is also available in Bible software such as BibleWorks, so in this respect the book presents nothing new. However, by including the concise discussions and numerous references to the standard grammars, the book should prove extremely helpful to students not yet used to freely consulting the grammars. Like any answer key it demands a certain amount of discipline from the students in order not to move to the answers too quickly, but used wisely it should be a great benefit, especially to those working on their own.

I have found the word-by-word analyses accurate. However, Vance mostly does not mention if the form is a pausal form or if accent retraction has taken place. Since he uses abbreviations, providing this information would not have taken up much room. Inclusion of this information would have made the analysis truly exhaustive and could have helped students sharpen their eye for details.

Vance's choice of reference grammars includes the most important works in the field, with one exception. Although he often refers to Joüon's grammar in its original French 1923 edition, he never refers to T. Muraoka's excellent English translation and revision of this work (2 vols.; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991). This is a great pity, since Muraoka's English edition of this work is one of the most authoritative statements on Biblical Hebrew grammar.

The book is very carefully edited, and I have noted only a few minor glitches, with one exception. The several references to "Wms" (5, 9, 60, 64, 75) have no match in the bibliography. A Hebraist quickly recognizes it as referring to Ronald Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967; 2nd ed. 1976), but the student is left helpless.

All in all Vance has done a great service to Hebrew students wanting to make the transition from textbook to the biblical text. The book is warmly recommended.