Taylor, Bernard A.

Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint: Expanded Edition


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The expanded edition of Bernard Taylor’s The Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint: A Complete Parsing Guide (published by Zondervan) from 1994 is highly welcome and should find a place on the shelf of anyone who is seriously working with the Septuagint. There are several important improvements from one edition to the other. On the one hand, the underlying CATSS database has been corrected, which has led to several changes in the parsing of words. Second, English-translation equivalents for the Greek words were included, taken from the revised edition of the Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint by Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie (Stuttgart, 2003). Thus the users of this analytical lexicon find not only an analysis of every single word of the Septuagint but also a first hint at the meaning of the word in question.

Since most students learn either Classical Greek of New Testament Koiné Greek, which differs from the Septuagint Koiné in word forms or vocabulary, an analytical lexicon is very helpful especially for beginners in LXX studies. Although good and reliable translations in modern languages are available (NETS; LXX Deutsch; La Bible d’Alexandrie), the lexicon is useful to check their correctness and to examine the way they handle difficult passages. One could object that computer programs as BibleWorks, Logos, or Accordance also have the ability to show the parsing of the words of the LXX, but one should note that all of these programs use different versions of the CATSS database, so
that there are important differences in the way the electronic text has been corrected and parsed.

The lexicon is based on the text of the Septuagint in the edition of Alfred Rahlfs and its revised edition by Robert Hanhart (2006). This means that the words are given as they are represented in this edition (including accents, etc.) and that they are parsed according to the context of this edition. Readings of the critical apparatus are not included. Since quite often readings from the apparatus are preferred in the Göttingen edition of the Septuagint, it would be helpful to include the apparatus in future versions.

After a short preface that gives some information about the history of the project, pages xii–xiii inform readers about the “Features of the Analytical Lexicon.” This paragraph should be read by everyone who wants to use the book because the organization of the entries is explained in a very clear way. It is followed by a short “Introduction” (xxv–xxvi), which gives information about the underlying Rahlfs-Text and the way the entries are organized. A paragraph titled “Using the Lexicon” (xxv–xxvi) then addresses the question of who might use this lexicon for what reason and benefit. A list of abbreviations (xxvii–xxx) closes this introductory part of the lexicon.

The main part of the lexicon is organized in a strictly alphabetical way; it begins with α (indeclinable number) and ends with the lemma ἀῶν and the entry “noun neuter genitive plural of ἀόν.” When the user then looks up the lexeme ἀόν, he or she finds a reference to the genitive ἀοῦ and the translation equivalent “egg.” The lexical forms are printed in bold type so that they are easy to find. Verbs are quoted in the first person singular present active, not in the form of the infinitive. Deviating meanings, such as for the middle or passive, are given, although it would be helpful for a quick orientation to print the abbreviations M: and P: in bold face.

The lexicon lists the words throughout in their Koiné forms, not in the Classical Greek forms. In cases, when similar but clearly different forms are used, they are kept distinct in the analytical lists. In cases such as these—the introduction (xxii) refers to ῥήγνυµι and ῥήσσω—the lexicon by Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie has only one entry; therefore, there is no translation equivalent connected with ῥήσσω but a reference to ῥήγνυµι. Similarly, according to the introduction, there should be a reference from ἐξολλύει to ἐξολλύω to ἐξόλλυµι, but the entry ἐξολλύω is missing. A very positive feature is that all proper names are given (most of the entries under the heading ζ consist of proper names), albeit without an attempt to translate them, which could be helpful in cases like Ζωή.

The translation equivalents are shortened entries of the Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint; they communicate different meanings, the use of the word in metaphorical
expressions, grammatical and contextual information, and sometimes, for example, in the cases of participles, special meanings. Sometimes the underlying Hebrew or Aramaic word is given (see s.v. ἥξεα, meaning “thing,” rendering Hebrew דבָּד). Hebrew and Aramaic is also used when the word is a transliteration or when its use can be explained by a misreading on the Hebrew level (cf. ὕπαξ in Ezek 41:8). Some of the important information the Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint gives is not communicated; it would be helpful to have the hints that a specific word is a hapax or a neologism. In some cases the lexical entries are very long, and since no references to biblical texts are given, it is hard to decide what meaning could be appropriate in a particular context. But it is obvious that the author had to draw a line between the analytical and the lexicographical demands of this project.

The layout of the book in two columns is very reader-friendly, and it has obviously been proofread very carefully. A minor detail: obviously a premature version of a file has been printed on pages 271–81, because here internal information about the font version used in the book is printed at the bottom of the page.

In sum, this analytical lexicon is a very helpful tool to enter into the specifics of the language of the Septuagint, and it should be used alongside a grammar and a dictionary. The inclusion of the translations from Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint into Taylors’s analytical lexicon provides easy access to a broader view of the lexicographical situation when used beside Muraoka’s lexicon, which now covers the whole text of Septuagint.