At the end of the book, Schuele includes an answer key to the exercises and several lists: a list of the most common verbs and nouns, Persian and Greek loanwords, verbal paradigms, a list of idiomatic expressions in biblical Aramaic, and a comparative wordlist of Aramaic and Hebrew (e.g., Aramaic: גְּשֵׁם “flesh” Hebrew: בָּשָׂר). The appendixes nicely round out the concise presentation of the grammar and provide quick helps perfect for a classroom setting.

As a final note, the publisher has done a fine job of setting the Hebrew font in proportion to the English, in contrast to many publications where the Hebrew font is disproportionately large. However, while the fonts are proportional, it would be easier on the eyes if all the fonts were slightly larger.

The aim of Schuele’s grammar is to prepare students to get into the text, not to equip students with a full understanding of the complexities of Aramaic morphology. The book stays true to its purpose of being an inviting introduction and complement to Rosenthal’s reference grammar. At no point does it seem that Schuele is writing merely for the specialist. I highly recommend this grammar to students who are studying biblical Aramaic for the first time and to those who have studied Aramaic in the past but want to revisit the basics.

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The appearance of Huehnergard’s textbook makes the field seem almost crowded, given the numerous Ugaritic grammars and manuals that have appeared in recent years (e.g., Pierre Bordreuil and Dennis Pardee, A Manual of Ugaritic [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 2009]; William M. Schniedewind and Joel H. Hunt, A Primer on Ugaritic: Language, Culture, and Literature [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007]; and Michael Williams, Basics of Ancient Ugaritic [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2012]). However, we can be grateful that the encouragement of colleagues prevailed on Huehnergard to publish his textbook, which was first created some 25 years ago and “revised sporadically since then” (p. xiii).

The first chapter introduces Ugaritic studies with an overview of language, archaeology, literature, resources, and the implications of Ugaritic for biblical studies, and the author explains at some length the conventions and organization of the book. For the beginning student, the chapter is at once both readable and comprehensive, with its illustrations (map, diagram, and photos) and numerous references for further investigation. Despite its quarter-century-old origin, the list of resources is impressively up to date, including several internet resources.

The “précis of the grammar” in chs. 2–6 proceeds predictably through matters of orthography (ch. 2), phonology (ch. 3), morphology (ch. 4), syntax (ch. 5), and poetic form (ch. 6). These chapters are mostly well laid out along with lists of forms/constructions and uses, tables of paradigm forms, and examples with full citations. The consistency of the typesetting style might stand
to be improved: the use of the vertical-wedge word divider for bullet lists is a playful feature, though it is not used in every instance (cf. pp. 16 and 25); the abbreviations in the table headers are perhaps unhelpfully overpragmatic, with both conj. and cj. for conjugation depending on the constraint of column width. A potentially confusing feature for students is the variant labeling of the prefix conjugations in the verb paradigms. In some instances, the indicative, jussive-preterite, and volitive conjugations are placed in a single “pref. conj.” column with a hyphen to denote the variation of vowel termination that distinguishes these three, while in other tables they appear separated into distinct columns (cf. pp. 68 and 70). For the beginning student, it would be helpful to have an additional header line in the latter cases to clarify the relationship between these three conjugations and the umbrella category “pref. conj.”

Chapter 7 provides basic vocabulary and exercises in three sections, coordinated with a suggested reading plan for the grammar. The vocabulary is given with full vocalization and frequently with syllabary and cognate data. The exercises begin with vocalization and translation of transliterated Ugaritic phrases and sentences (exercise 1) to back-translation exercises from English into Ugaritic (exercises 2–3). Huehnergard acknowledges (pp. 16–17) the limited purpose of these exercises to drill vocabulary and specific features from the grammar reading, and that they are not drawn from any existing Ugaritic text. A key to the exercises appears in an appendix.

Chapter 8 consists of a selection of texts, including (in order) six letters, four legal texts, two economic texts, and one selection each from the Kirta and Baal and Yamm epic texts. The texts are presented in transliterated form, cross-referenced to color photographs at the back of the book, and with a somewhat graded analysis: that is, the first two letters as well as the first legal text are followed by both a vocalization and notes, whereas the remainder are accompanied only by notes. However, vocalization and translations of all the texts helpfully appear in an appendix. Only one of the short economic texts has an accompanying line drawing, but references to standard treatments of the texts are provided in all cases, as well as references to treatments of the various genres.

Close to half the book consists of reference materials (pp. 138–246): a glossary with fully vocalized forms (ch. 9), a bibliography, an appendix by John L. Ellison on the Ugaritic script, another appendix providing an answer key to the exercises and texts, a third appendix of paradigms, an index of texts, and 51 color plates of the selected texts.

Given the emergent choice of Ugaritic textbooks, the pedagogical character is perhaps the most significant feature for review. I found it helpful in this regard to examine Huehnergard’s Introduction next to Schniedewind and Hunt’s Primer, because though they are quite similar in design and aim, their approaches are quite different. Huehnergard introduces the field of Ugaritic studies, focusing particularly on the philological analysis of Ugaritic texts, and he shows an acute awareness of the larger issues of Semitic grammar as well as the significance of Ugaritic for biblical studies. This is in contrast to Schniedewind and Hunt’s primer, which presents the Ugaritic language as a window to the culture and literature of ancient Ugarit. Huehnergard’s approach is clearly less deductive, intending that the student read the grammar
and complete the several exercises before jumping into Ugaritic texts themselves. By contrast, Schniedewind and Hunt introduce the grammar in the course of their analysis of the selected texts. As with his Akkadian grammar, Huehnergard is more concerned that students learn the language than how to read the script (although the appendix on how the signs were written will be immensely helpful to students). For this reason, line drawings are absent and transliteration abounds, including in the comparative data. I find this approach more helpful to comparative work, however, than Schniedewind and Hunt’s odd use of square script for Hebrew words alongside their claim not to presume a knowledge of Biblical Hebrew in contrast to Huehnergard (p. xiii).

These contrasts are not intended to disparage either text, but they will undoubtedly sway some instructors toward one or the other, depending on their own pedagogical preferences. And though my own preference would be for Huehnergard’s textbook, it is also gratifying to see that a variety of options now exist for beginning Ugaritic courses.

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In this supplement to the Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (BDAG), Chamberlain aims to be concise but not elementary. He assumes the user has “sufficient command of ancient Greek” but not Hebrew or other Semitic languages (p. x). He chooses not to treat the most common Greek words or words that he feels have been treated adequately in BDAG, focusing rather on those words that have received inadequate or no treatment. In the cases of words that have received inadequate treatment, Chamberlain offers information to be considered in addition to BDAG’s entry. In cases of words that have received no treatment, Chamberlain’s constructs his entry by addressing the following relevant issues: morphology; extrabiblical usage; list of all occurrences if the number is 6 or fewer; range of usage; citations for distinct usage; sense according to a non-Jewish Hellenistic reader; explanation of any unique septuagintal sense (pp. viii–x).

A fundamental premise is Chamberlain’s conviction that septuagintal Greek does not constitute a distinct Jewish-Greek dialect; “the vocabulary [of the Septuagint] is demonstrably normal Hellenistic Greek” (p. xxviii). However, he correctly recognizes the unique features present in septuagintal Greek. Chamberlain champions his work as the “first systematic attempt to acknowledge every word or use that conforms to ordinary expectations for fundamental/classical Koine Greek on the one hand, and on the other hand to account for all the instances in which ‘in manifold and diverse ways’ the LXX vocabulary confronts use with unprecedented challenges” (p. xii). Resulting from his venture is a taxonomy of categories for the unique septuagintal features, which he catalogs in Appendix I (pp. 187–201). In fact, Chamberlain