Dictionaries of ancient Hebrew have their share of idiosyncrasies. It is important to remember that there is nothing sacred about the subdivisions of meaning a given dictionary offers.

Three Hebrew-to-English dictionaries deserve mention. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. The first is classic and is based on the work of the great lexicographer Wilhelm Gesenius. The second is based on a revision of Koehler-Baumgartner, another formidable tradition of lexicography. The last is the most innovative, with full coverage of ancient Hebrew inscriptions, DSS vocabulary, and proposals by comparative philologists. It is not yet finished.


Two Hebrew-to-German dictionaries deserve mention. The first exists in an English edition [(2) above], much revised, and not always for the better. The second, like BDB, is based on the work of Gesenius. It is beautifully done, but not yet finished.


An excellent Hebrew-to-Spanish dictionary deserves mention. In some ways, this dictionary beats all the others! It is impossible not to learn new things from reading its entries carefully.


Two Hebrew-to-Hebrew dictionaries deserves note. The first is incorporated into a concordance of the Hebrew Bible. Use of this dictionary will significantly improve one’s competence in ancient Hebrew. The author attempts to gloss ancient Hebrew words with other ancient Hebrew words as much as possible. The second is the best Hebrew-to-Hebrew dictionary available.


Beginning students might consider purchasing (1) and (7). Scholars with an interest in classical Hebrew philology will need to have all eight! I leave out a discussion of the electronic versions of these and other dictionaries (where they exist). My hands-on experience with them is too limited.