

IATG³: Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete

Siegfried M. Schwertner. IATG³: Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014. 726 pp. \$252.00. Hardcover. ISBN: 9783110205756.

Though outsiders to a profession often remark at how many acronyms, abbreviations, and jargon-laden expressions roll off of insider's tongues, those on the inside often find themselves staring at an abbreviation and wondering what it means. This is understandable, given that Siegfried Schwertner has listed a staggering 18,300 abbreviations in his recent edition of IATG³: *Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete* (*International Glossary of Abbreviations for Theology and Related Subjects*). In this catalog, which has been building for decades, Schwertner aims for "a contribution towards the standardization of title abbreviations"(xiv).

The content of the book is divided into two sections: abbreviations and their corresponding bibliographic title; bibliographic titles and their corresponding abbreviations. Schwertner refers to the former section as Analytical and the latter as Bibliographical. The total number of entries exceeds the 1992 edition by 4,000, and has thickened the book by 238 pages (now 726). As in the second edition, the early pages of the book ([XI]-- XLIII) introduce the publication (in German, English, French, Italian, and Spanish) and offer abbreviations to interpret the Bibliographic section (mostly of primary source documents like ancient texts, holy books, and other canonical materials).

The 1992 edition featured a preface in German. This edition adds one in English. Further, the publishers have made some nice changes on the layout: bold-faced page numbers are now found on the top, outside corner of the page, rather than the inside corner; the kerning is less tight, which offers a more readable type; and the spine lists the title and author, as opposed to the minimalistic IATG² of the earlier edition.

A first-time user will need to consult the Bibliographical Notes section (xv) to become familiar with some of the symbols (-,=,/, <, >).

We might wonder who in the library, beyond a Ph.D. student or a serials librarian, would use this volume. Imagine a first-year student reading a journal article and seeing a footnote that cites the abbreviation JBL. The student would have no reason to know what that means. But if they were to consult IATG³, they would find on page 93 that JBL corresponds to *Journal of Biblical Literature*. If they wanted to know more about that title, they could cross-reference to the Bibliographic section, which would tell them that it began in Philadelphia in 1890, is still an active publication, and is related to other abbreviations (JSBL and SBLMS). Though this example might sound naïve when discussing a common title like JBL, one can imagine how helpful this could be when trying to identify some of the lesser-known titles among the 18,300 entries.

The only criticism I can offer for this volume relates not to what it is, but what it is not. It is difficult to thumb through these pages and not imagine the incredible possibilities for a digital database version. Such a project would use IATG³ as a gateway to other resources: serials locators such as OCLC WorldCat FirstSearch, full-text periodical databases like *ATLAS*[®], and numerous emerging e-book collections.

But for now this print edition will suffice. It remains a critical apparatus for interpreting the other parts of a theological collection. Schwertner has done library professionals and patrons a tremendous service by compiling this resource with such attention to detail. Granted, the high cost (\$252) might seem prohibitive. Yet it is worth noting that this is a stand-alone volume whose former edition lasted 22 years. With that in mind, I would recommend that all theological librarians find a spot on their shelves for IATG³.

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