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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18820/23099089/actat.v38i1.13>

ISSN 1015-8758 (Print)  
ISSN 2309-9089 (Online)

Acta Theologica 2018  
38(1):167-169

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# REVIEW

## DICTIONARY OF DAILY LIFE IN BIBLICAL AND POST-BIBLICAL ANTIQUITY, VOLUME I: A-DA

YAMAUCHI, E.M. & WILSON, M.R. (eds.).  
(Peabody: Hendrickson, 2014). Xxxvi + 400 pp., ISBN  
978-1-61970-460-2

This book is the first volume of the *Dictionary of daily life in Biblical and post-Biblical Antiquity*. In the introduction (pp. 1-4), Yamauchi rightly notes that often the entries in biblical reference tools are keyed to the words that actually occur in the Bible. However, with this procedure, extant and important evidence is excluded *a priori*. For example, while abomination is included, abortion is not. Therefore, the *Dictionary of daily life* is founded on a new framework based on the Human Relations Area Files (for an introduction see <http://hraf.yale.edu>), an anthropological grid of human society, which systematically and comparatively surveys various aspects of culture, whether they are highlighted in the Bible or not. Yamauchi notes that:

The biblical texts were not intended to give us a complete representation of their worlds. In fact, they take for granted what was well known to both the writers and readers, but of which we are not aware. It is as though we hear the vocalization of an operatic libretto, but do not see the scenery and the costumes of the singers. Thanks, however, to extra-biblical texts and archaeology, we are able to recreate much of the background for the Bible (p. 1).

In the introduction, Yamauchi discusses a number of entries from this and the further volumes as illustrations for this principle. He notes that the *Dictionary* is unique in attempting to trace the developments of the features of the biblical world over the centuries after the New Testament era. This is done because it “is instructive to understand how the Jewish rabbis, in following the traditions of the Pharisees, debated over the application of biblical laws in changing circumstances, and how the Church Fathers also responded to these same developments” (p. 2). The editors have chosen to concentrate on 120 subjects, not because of their prominence in the biblical text, but because of their significant roles in the Ancient World.

Each entry briefly summarises references to the subject discussed in (1) the Old Testament and (2) the New Testament, followed by (3) the Near Eastern world, primarily Mesopotamia and Egypt, with some references to Anatolia and Persia; (4) the Graeco-Roman world, from the Minoans and Mycenaean, to Homer, and through the Hellenistic era, the Roman Republic, and the Roman Empire; (5) the Jewish world, including the Old Testament Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Philo, Josephus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Mishnah, and the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud, and (6) the Christian world, including the church fathers up to Chrysostom and Augustine, as well as the early Byzantine empire to Justinian. Each article contains a bibliography of both source material for the article and secondary literature (p. 3).

After a brief survey of “Periods, Ages and Dates” (pp. xxxiii–xxxvi), the volume contains the following entries: “Abortion” (pp. 5-10); “Adoption” (pp. 11-17); “Adultery” (pp. 18-26); “Age & the Aged” (pp. 27-35); “Agriculture” (pp. 36-42); “Alcoholic Beverages” (pp. 43-52); “Animal Husbandry” (pp. 53-59); “Aphrodisiacs & Erotic Spells” (pp. 60-66); “Aqueducts & Water Supply” (pp. 67-74); “Archives” (pp. 75-81); “Armies” (pp. 82-90); “Art” (pp. 91-99); “Astrology” (pp. 100-108; it is not clear why astronomy is not included in this entry or where else it will appear); “Athletics” (pp. 109-117; I looked in vain for Uta Poplutz, *Athlet des Evangeliums: Eine motivgeschichtliche Studie zur Wettkampfmotaphorik bei Paulus*, HBS 43, Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 2004); “Banks & Loans” (pp. 118-126); “Banquets” (pp. 127-125); “Barbers & Beards” (pp. 136-145); “Baths & Bathing” (pp. 146-156); “Beggars & Alms” (pp. 157-166); “Bellows & Furnaces” (pp. 167-175; cross-reference is made to a further article on metallurgy); “Birds” (pp. 176-189); “Boats & Ships” (pp. 190-198); “Bones & Objects of Bone” (pp. 199-207); “Bottles & Glass” (pp. 208-216); “Bribery” (pp. 217-225); “Butchers & Meat” (pp. 226-235); “Calendars” (pp. 236-246); “Camels” (pp. 247-252); “Celibacy” (pp. 253-261); “Census” (pp. 262-271); “Ceramics & Pottery” (pp. 272-279); “Childbirth & Children”

(pp. 280-289); “Cities” (pp. 290-305); “Citizens & Aliens” (pp. 306-321); “Clothing” (pp. 322-336); “Communications & Messengers” (pp. 337-357); “Contraception & Control of Births” (pp. 358-366); “Cosmetics” (pp. 367-373; I looked in vain in the bibliography for Ronja Jacob, *Kosmetik im antiken Palästina*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 389, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2011), and “Dance” (pp. 374-388).

The volume closes with a select bibliography (pp. 389-396, the biblical world, Old Testament, New Testament, the Near Eastern world, the Graeco-Roman world, the Jewish world, the Christian world – one looks in vain for the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, 1970ff, see [https://www.antike-und-christentum.de/rac\\_tools](https://www.antike-und-christentum.de/rac_tools)). Other than eight colour photographs and one illustration on pages 397-400 (showing an ancient tuyere for the entry “Bellows & Furnaces” and various Egyptian depictions of birds for the entry “Birds”), the volume does not contain any illustrations.

The up-to-date entries offer a wealth of information for students and scholars alike. While some of the material can also be found in more traditional Bible dictionaries (such as the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1992) or in dictionaries that include the later reception of biblical material in Judaism and Christianity (such as the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its reception*), some entries present material and offer astute analyses that are not readily available elsewhere. With one exception, the over thirty authors are from the United States of America. Curiously, not a single Israeli author is included.

Other volumes of the *Dictionary of daily life* are volume II (*De-H*); volume III (*I-N*, 2016), and volume IV (*O-Z*, 2016); a one-volume edition (1862 pages in length!) was published in 2016. Good companion volumes are F. Crüsemann, K. Hungar, C. Janssen *et al.* (eds.), *Sozialgeschichtliches Wörterbuch zur Bibel* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 2009) and C. Hezser (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of Jewish daily life in Roman Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).