sprinkled throughout the commentary, which deal with topics that require more
detailed elucidation—e.g., “Does Paul Ask for Manumission?” (412-415). While the
author periodically makes comments that are based on the structure of the original
text, all citations of Greek or Hebrew wording are transliterated.

While the initial two volumes published in the new ECC series (1 & 2
Timothy and Philemon) were published in the same year, there are some
conspicuous differences in the layout and appearance of the two works. While
both commentaries sport similarly designed dust jackets, the actual covers of the
books themselves are of starkly different colors. The series boasts a fresh
translation of the text; but while in the 1-2 Timothy volume the entire translation
was placed at the beginning, the Philemon volume has the translation is
interspersed throughout the commentary. Similar lack of standardization also
applies to the locations and designations of the bibliography and indices as well as
to the layout of the commentary proper. While such differences are trifles in terms
of substance, their conspicuous nature makes one wonder if the two volumes
really constitute a series, or just merely two independent commentaries that were
given similar dust jackets.

Regarding accuracy, the reference at the end of the first paragraph on page 87
mistakenly refers to “pp. 34-36,” but should read “pp. 49-53.” The word “pluperfects”
is spelled incorrectly on page 364. On the same page, the reference to “sec. III.B., 18-
23” should read “sec. III.B., 18-22.”

In the final analysis, this work is well done and finally allows Philemon to be
considered as an independent book in its own right and as worthy of detailed
examination. It is also a highly informative source for examining the sensitive and
difficult issues associated with Philenon. For these reasons, including the fact that
this volume contains probably the single best compilation of social background
information on slavery in the ancient world in relation to Paul’s letter to Philenon,
it should find its place on the bookshelves of professors, students, pastors, and
studious laity.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

CARL COSAERT

Bienkowski, Piotr, and Alan Millard, eds. *Dictionary of the Ancient Near East.*

The editors of the *Dictionary of the Ancient Near East* are both at the
University of Liverpool. Piotr Bienkowski is Curator of Egyptian and Near
Eastern Antiquities, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, and
Honorary Research Fellow. Alan Millard is Rankin Professor of Hebrew and
Ancient Semitic Languages.

The *Dictionary of the Ancient Near East* is a one-volume reference work, with
entries written by experts in a variety of fields, covering major aspects of the
history, culture, and language of the Ancient Near East. The coverage of
chronological periods ranges from the Lower Paleolithic to the Persian conquest
of Babylon in 539 B.C. Entries deal with a broad spectrum of topics, including
people, places, chronology, geography, institutions, religion, poetry, economy,
trade, and architecture. Most entries include major bibliographic references, and some are illustrated. The book includes a map of the Ancient Near East, a chronological chart, a king list of the principal dynasties, and an index.

Although the Dictionary does not cover Egypt, it has a broader scope than other recent reference works on the Ancient Near East, such as the Encyclopedia of the Archaeology of Ancient Egypt, edited by Kathryn A. Bard (2000), and The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Ancient Near East, edited by Eric M. Meyers (5 vols.; 1997).

Doing justice to the copious information now available on the Ancient Near East in a one-volume work is a heroic task, which the contributors and editors have done well to accomplish. The material is useful even to the specialist as a quick reference resource, but clearly presented in language understandable to the novice. Asterisks before words for which main entries exist facilitate access of information.

It would have been helpful if a small map had been included at the beginning of each entry dealing with a geographical item, to indicate the location of the place under discussion. Many of the sites and rivers discussed cannot be found or are difficult to find on the few maps included in the volume. The well-chosen illustrations are in black and white, undoubtedly keeping the cost of production down.

Due to the fact that specialists from a variety of fields contribute, the quality and coverage of entries are not consistent. Some entries are biased toward one regional area. For instance, the entry for “Economics” covers only Mesopotamian concerns and nothing is said about those of other regions. The rationale for concluding coverage with 539 B.C. is that with the emergence of the Persian Empire, the Ancient Near East was incorporated into a larger empire that had increased interaction with the Greek world. It is true that at this time the center of power shifted eastward from the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to the Iranian Plateau. However, the Persian period, which extends down to 332 B.C., is a direct continuation of Ancient Near Eastern history. For example, the Persian monarch continued to take the hand of Marduk as “king of Babylon.” Persia’s links to the ancient cultures of Mesopotamia, particularly that of the Assyrian Empire, are woven into the fabric of its art and architecture. While selected topics relevant to the Persian Empire are represented in the Dictionary, cutting off broad coverage at 539 B.C. limits the usefulness and effectiveness of this volume.

While there are limitations inherent in this work, it is an important reference resource for students and scholars alike. It can be recommended for all who have an interest in the Ancient Near East.

Andrews University

CONSTANCE E. GANE


Though this volume stands alone, it is the fourth in a distinguished series of massive one-volume reference works issued by the publisher, including Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (1992), Dictionary of Paul and His Letters (1993), and Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments (1997). A similar series