

SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE ICI REPORT FOR JULY 2014

(a) REPORT ON ICI FORUM MEETING HELD AT THE SBL INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA

We had a very successful ICI Forum meeting in Vienna. Thank you for everybody who attended (over 25 persons present!) and contributed to our discussions. Your support is of immense value for this initiative, but also for the SBL as organization.

After reporting on the progress with present initiatives (see <http://sbl-site.org/InternationalCoopInitiative.aspx>) a discussion was held in the forum meeting on what else could be done to further enhance the internationalization of the SBL. The following new initiatives were suggested, and they will be followed up in due time:

- Developing a more sophisticated *search capability on the Online Books depository* which will enable scholars to search on authors' names, titles, themes, etc.
- Facilitating *room-sharing at international conferences* through the ICI liaison network (see below).
- Developing new ways in which *Francophone colleagues* can contribute to the international efforts of fostering biblical scholarship. (If you would have any suggestions in this regard, please feel free to contact either David Hamidovic [Lausanne, david.hamidovic@unil.ch] or Corinne Lanoir [Paris, corinne.lanoir@iptheologie.fr] to offer your assistance.)
- Developing a *discussion forum for biblical studies organizations* in different parts of the world. (This initiative is strongly supported by the Executive of the SBL, and a first meeting of representatives of other biblical studies organizations will hopefully be held in San Diego during the SBL Annual meeting.)
- Developing *synergy between the efforts of the ICI and the SBL Student Advisory Board*. (Jan Nyland, who serves on this board, is busy putting together a mailing list of international institutions where postgraduate programmes in biblical studies are offered, in order to communicate more directly with postgraduate students in the field. Should anyone be interested in this initiative of the Student Advisory Board, please contact Jan at jan.nylund@teol.lu.se.) One suggestion that was already made to this board is to investigate the possibility of instituting annual prizes for best Master's or Doctoral studies completed in that particular year.
- Developing a *mentoring network for the preparation of manuscripts* for publication in scholarly journals. (The suggestion was made to integrate this function with the already existing teaching collaboration and mentoring programme.)

If you would be interested in being involved in any of these new suggestions, please contact me as soon as possible. Since the ICI does not see its role to do all these things on behalf of its members, but rather to facilitate networks where these can be put into practice, we are heavily dependent on your enthusiasm, willingness and time!

(b) THE NEXT SBL INTERNATIONAL MEETING

We are very excited about the fact that the next SBL International Meeting will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 20-24 July 2015. It would be good to see scholars from all over the world attending this meeting, in order to deliberate and interact with our colleagues from Latin-America!

(c) SBL ANNUAL MEETING IN SAN DIEGO, CA

The SBL Annual Meeting will take place in San Diego, California, from 22-26 November. The Call for Papers is closed, and the online program book is available now.

See: http://sbl-site.org/meetings/Congresses_ProgramBook.aspx?MeetingId=25

Registration and accommodation bookings are open. See the following link:

http://sbl-site.org/meetings/meetings_registrationAM.aspx

An **ICI forum meeting** will again be held at the San Diego conference, where any interested person will be welcome to join us to share their ideas and views on how the work of the ICI can be expanded/improved. The meeting will take place on SATURDAY 22 NOVEMBER at 09:30-10:30AM in Room 310 B (Level 3 Aqua) - Hilton Bayfront (HB). We look forward to meeting you there!

More affordable accommodation in San Diego? Following up on a suggestion by one of our ICI-members, we looked into the possibility of making available the ICI liaison network to members and non-members from ICI countries to find somebody who would be interested in sharing a room in San Diego to make accommodation costs more affordable. We are happy to announce that you may send a message to Tim Langille (tim.langille@gmail.com), our liaison officer who will then distribute your request through the ICI network. Mention in your e-mail from when till when you will need accommodation, your gender, and contact details. Further contact can then be established directly.

(d) PUBLICATION IN ANEM/MACO

ANEM/MACO is a series that was established by the SBL at the request of the International Cooperation Initiative (ICI), and which is co-edited by Ehud Ben Zvi and Roxanna Flammini. The series publishes volumes on the Ancient Near East (including ancient Israel) electronically and makes them freely available for download. (Paperback and hardback versions of the volumes are available too, for a reasonable price.) Any work published in ANEM/MACO is freely available in electronic version to anyone in perpetuity. To view the volumes published in the series, please go to http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/Books_ANEmonographs.aspx

The latest volume in ANEM/MACO is:

Divination, Politics, & Ancient Near Eastern Empires

Edited by Alan Lenzi and Jonathan Stökl

This collection examines the ways that divinatory texts in the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East undermined and upheld the empires in which the texts were composed, edited, and read. Nine essays and an introduction engage biblical scholarship on the Prophets, Assyriology, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the critical study of Ancient Empires.

Features:

- Interdisciplinary approaches include propaganda studies
- Essays examine how biblical and other ancient Near Eastern texts were shaped by political and theological empires
- Index of ancient sources

To download the book for free, paste the following link into your browser:

http://sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/9781589839984_OA.pdf

(e) PUBLICATION IN IVBS

IVBS is a series that was established by the SBL at the request of the International Cooperation Initiative (ICI), and which is co-edited by Monica Melanchthon and Jione Havea. IVBS encourages in particular submissions from scholars in the present seven international regions for which it has editorial boards: Africa, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, Middle East-South Asia, Northeast Asia, Pacific, and Southeast

Asia. Interregional collaborations are also welcome. IVBS publishes works in English and in any other language for which its editors can find qualified peer reviewers. Any work published in IVBS is freely available to anyone in perpetuity. The series publishes work generally in the area of reception history and criticism. The scope is not limited to any particular biblical text or historical timeframe. The works will mainly be published in English and, wherever possible, also in primary languages of authors. For more information please go to <http://ivbs.sbl-site.org/home.aspx>. If you would consider publishing your work in this series, feel free to contact one of the two general editors, [Monica Melanchthon](#) or [Jione Havea](#).

(f) PUBLICATIONS: ONLINE BOOKS – NEW BOOKS ADDED

(For the full list, please go to http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/Books_ICIbooks.aspx)

Biblical Curses and the Displacement of Tradition

Britt, Brian. *Biblical Curses and the Displacement of Tradition*. Bible in the Modern World, 34. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

In *Biblical Curses and the Displacement of Tradition* Brian Britt offers an intriguing perspective on curses as the focus of debates over the power, pleasure, and danger of words. Biblical authors transformed ancient Near Eastern curses against rival ethnic groups, disobedient ancestors, and the day of one's own birth with great variety and ingenuity.

Transformations of biblical curses proliferated in post-biblical history, even during periods of 'secularization'. This study argues that biblical, early modern, and contemporary transformations of curses constitute displacements rather than replacements of earlier traditions.

The crucial notion of displacement draws from Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Nietzsche's critical philosophy, and Benjamin's engagement with textual tradition; it highlights not only manifest shifts but also many hidden continuities between cursing in biblical texts and cursing in such 'secular' domains as literature, law, politics, and philosophy. The tradition of biblical cursing—neither purely 'religious' nor purely 'secular'—travels through these texts and contexts as it redefines verbal, human, and supernatural power.

The Lord of the Entire World: Lord Jesus, a Challenge to Lord Caesar?

Fantin, Joseph D. *The Lord of the Entire World: Lord Jesus, a Challenge to Lord Caesar?* New Testament Monographs, 31. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

How would the confession, 'Jesus is Lord', have been understood in the first-century Roman world? Was it more than a statement of one's devotion to Jesus? Was it also an implicit challenge to the living Caesar, the lord of the Roman empire?

There were many lords in the first century and the use of the title *kyrios* was complex. Clearly Paul was influenced by the use of this title for Yahweh in the Greek Old Testament. But he was also part of a culture in which the title was used for many persons, including fathers, slave owners, government officials—and the emperor.

However, the title *kyrios* was used sparingly of emperors in the early and mid-first century. On the basis of the extant evidence, scholars since Deissmann have come to differing conclusions as to whether a challenge to the emperor is contained in the phrase.

Fantin proposes a more powerful method of resolving the question, drawing upon the insights of relevance theory. He examines a whole range of persons referred to with this title, and evaluates the potential influence of such contexts on Paul's usage. Only then is it possible to draw compelling conclusions on whether any challenge is likely to be implied.

In *The Lord of the Entire World*, Fantin shows that the living Caesar was indeed acknowledged in Paul's time as the supreme lord of the Roman world. Key New Testament texts such as Romans 10.9, 1 Corinthians 8.6 and Philippians 2.11 show that in all likelihood the Christian confession was in fact a challenge to imperial authority.

Israelite Prophecy and the Deuteronomistic History: Portrait, Reality, and the Formation of a History

Jacobs, Mignon R. and Raymond F. Person, Jr. *Israelite Prophecy and the Deuteronomistic History: Portrait, Reality, and the Formation of a History*. Ancient Israel and Its Literature, 14. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

This collection of essays examines the relationship of prophecy to the Deuteronomistic History (Deuteronomy–2 Kings), including the historical reality of prophecy that stands behind the text and the portrayal of prophecy within the literature itself. The contributors use a number of perspectives to explore the varieties of intermediation and the cultic setting of prophecy in the ancient Near East; the portrayal of prophecy in

pentateuchal traditions, pre-Deuteronomistic sources, and other Near Eastern literature; the diverse perspectives reflected within the Deuteronomistic History; and the possible Persian period setting for the final form of the Deuteronomistic History. Together the collection represents the current state of an important, ongoing discussion.

Imprints, Voiceprints, and Footprints of Memory: Collected Essays of Werner H. Kelber

Kelber, Werner H. *Imprints, Voiceprints, and Footprints of Memory: Collected Essays of Werner H. Kelber*. Resources for Biblical Study, 74. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

Jesus and his followers defined their allegiances and expressed their identities in a communications culture that manifested itself in voice and chirographic practices, in oral-scribal interfaces, and in performative activities rooted in memory. In the sixteen essays gathered in *Imprints, Voiceprints, and Footprints of Memory*, Werner Kelber explores the verbal arts of early Christian word processing operative in a media world that was separated by two millennia from our contemporary media history. The title articulates the fact that the ancient culture of voiced texts, hand-copying, and remembering is chiefly accessible to us in print format and predominantly assimilated from print perspectives. The oral-scribal-memorial-performative paradigm developed in these essays challenges the reigning historical-critical model in biblical scholarship. Notions of tradition, the fixation on the single original saying, the dominant methodology of form criticism, and the heroic labors of the Quest—stalwart features of the historical, documentary paradigm—are all subject to a critical review. A number of essays reach beyond New Testament texts, ranging from the pre-Socratic Gorgias through medieval manuscript culture on to print's triumphant apotheosis in Gutenberg's Vulgate, product of the high tech of the fifteenth century, all the way to conflicting commemorations of Auschwitz—taking tentative steps toward a history of media technologies, culture, and cognition of the Christian tradition in the West.

The Web of Religion and Science: Bellah, Habermas and Giddens

Reiner, Hanan. *The Web of Religion and Science: Bellah, Habermas and Giddens*. Gorgias Studies in Religion, 21. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2005.

Scholars from various fields of study have long dealt with the relationship between religion and science. This subject has found a particular expression in sociology. Sociologists and other scholars agree that even though religion and science can be seen as separate from each other, there are several commonalities between the two.

However, beyond the basic recognition of this congruence, no attention has been given to the following questions:

1. Where can we identify the common ground between religion and science?
2. What is the meaning of the common ground in a context informed by sociological theory? By comparing Bellah's theory of modern religion and the social scientific thought of Anthony Giddens and Jurgen Habermas, Hanan Reiner provides some answers to the proposed questions.

(g) EVENTS

The SBL maintains a significant list of events taking place anywhere in the globe. For the full list please go to <http://www.sbl-site.org/meetings/events.aspx>

A selection of events is listed below—mainly those taking place in ICI regions.

Please provide information on conferences in your region, including calls for papers, to Sharon Johnson at sharon.johnson@sbl-site.org.

October 9-10, 2014

International Theological Conference “The Knowledge of God: East and West. Dogmatic and Spiritual Dimensions“

The Conference intends to be a theological forum for Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Ukrainian Greek Catholic and Protestant theologians to discuss different approaches to the “knowledge of God” based on Western and Eastern traditions. The Conference will take place at the Faculty of Philosophy and Theology of the Ukrainian Catholic University, L’viv, Khutorivka St. 35a.

[More information](#)

November 22-25, 2014

[SBL Annual Meeting](#)

The SBL Annual Meeting is the largest gathering of biblical scholars in the world. Each meeting showcases the latest in biblical research, fosters collegial contacts, advances research, and focuses on issues of the profession. The Annual Meeting will be held in San Diego, California. (See note above about accommodation sharing.)

(h) SBL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FREELY AVAILABLE

There are links to numerous educational resources on the SBL website. The following are freely available: (i) Resources on Teaching the Bible; (ii) Freely downloadable

Hebrew, Greek and Transliteration fonts (amongst others); (iii) Resources on Bible translations and commentaries; and (iv) Research tool resources.

See <http://sbl-site.org/educational/default.aspx>

The exciting news was also received recently that the newly-developed **Bible Odyssey** online portal had been launched now. See www.bibleodyssey.org. The following update was posted in the most recent SBL Newsletter:

SBL's new website, Bible Odyssey, has been up for a few weeks now. The Ask a Scholar section has been quite busy. Here are some of the questions sent in. (We have transliterated the Hebrew for this newsletter):

- “The well where Hagar received her revelation— *be'er lakhay ro'i* — is mentioned as a place where Isaac was before the meeting with Rebekah. And he later comes to live near it. Is there any tradition that Isaac missed his brother Ishmael after he was expelled from the house of Abraham at Sarah's insistence?”
- “Why is *'almah* in Proverbs 30:19 translated as the abstract *neotéti* in the LXX and *adolescentia* in the Vulgate (and, of course, ‘youth’ in the Douay-Rheims, a translation of the Vulgate), but differently--as a concrete noun--in Protestant translations?”

If anyone wishes to be an occasional volunteer to answer “Ask a Scholar” questions they should contact [Moira Bucciarelli](#), indicating their area of expertise.

(i) PLEASE PASS THE INFORMATION.

It is surprising that we continue to have correspondence from scholars in ICI countries that are just learning about the ICI programs. Please share this newsletter with your colleagues and students and become a liaison for your institution and SBL. (Please contact our liaison officer, [Tim Langille](#), if you would like to assist as contact person in your region.) Your advocacy for ICI strengthens biblical studies as a discipline and builds relationships in the global community. Thank you for those who have done so in the past—we also receive letters from people who received the newsletter from someone else.

With best wishes for your Bible scholarship!

Louis Jonker, SBL – International Cooperation Initiative