

It is my pleasure to distribute the ICI REPORT for May 2009

(a) PLEASE PASS THE INFORMATION

Feel free to distribute this report among all those you think might find it helpful. If you are a member of other professional organizations related to biblical studies, we urge you to send our newsletters to those responsible for communication within those groups as well. There is still a significant number of colleagues who have not heard about the initiative.

(b) INTERNATIONAL TEACHING COLLABORATION

The establishment of a successful teaching collaboration was consistently highlighted as one of the most important goals in the survey that preceded the establishment of ICI and has guided it since. The centrality of the teaching collaboration aspect of our initiative was emphasized time and again in all our meetings.

The databases that we agreed that were required to facilitate international collaboration in teaching are now up and running.

Scholars who would like to participate should go to
<http://www.sbl-site.org/educational/ICIscholar.aspx>

For a list of scholars who have already joined the project, go to
<http://www.sbl-site.org/educational/ICIscholarList.aspx>

If your institution wishes to participate, please go to
<http://www.sbl-site.org/educational/ICIinstitution.aspx>

May I encourage to register. Please add your name or your institution (if appropriate) by following the links mentioned above.

(c) NEW ONLINE BOOKS, SERIES, AND REQUEST FOR SUBMISSIONS

Ten new volumes have been added to the list of books freely available online from countries whose GDP per person is significantly lower than the average of the USA and EU. We remain committed to the goal of publishing volumes each month. We would like to hear from you about any particular books you would like to see added to the list in the near future. For the books added this month see below. We are working on ways to create pdf files (of reasonable size) of volumes for which we do not have e-files.

If you have or know of someone who has a manuscript that might be appropriate for publication in the series International Voices in Biblical Studies (IVBS), please contact Louis Jonker (lcj@sun.ac.za) or Monica Melanchthon (monixm@gmail.com)

If you have or know of someone who has a manuscript that might be appropriate for publication in Ancient Near East Monograph Series/Monografias Sobre el Antiguo Cercano Oriente (ANEM/MACO), please contact Roxana Flammmini (roxflamm@yahoo.com.ar) or Billie Jean Collins (billie.collins@sbl-site.org) or myself (ehud.ben.zvi@ualberta.ca).

(d) CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please send Sharon Johnson (sharon.johnson@sbl-site.org) any information about national, regional or local scholarly conferences, so we may develop a central place in the web where anyone can learn what is going around in terms of research.

(e) MEMBERSHIP

Please encourage your colleagues and graduate students to join the Society and to contribute to shaping its future. Students from countries whose GDP per person is significantly lower than the average of the USA and EU (i.e., most of the world) have to pay only US \$ 10 and scholars from the same countries only US \$ 15 to become full members. Anyone who wish to become a member and for whom this amount represents undue hardship is encouraged to contact Leigh.

(1) Avalos, Hector, Sarah J. Melcher, and Jeremy Schipper, eds. *This Abled Body Rethinking Disabilities in Biblical Studies*. Semeia Studies 55. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

The burgeoning field of disability studies has recently emerged within the humanities and social sciences and, as a result, disability is no longer seen as the biological condition of an individual body but as a complex product of social, political, environmental, and biological discourses. The groundbreaking essays of *This Abled Body* engage biblical studies in conversation with the wider field of disability studies. They explore the use of the conceptual category "disability" in biblical and Near Eastern texts and examine how conceptions of disability become a means of narrating, interpreting, and organizing human life. Employing diverse approaches to biblical criticism, scholars explore methodological issues and specific texts related to physical and cognitive disabilities. Responses to the essays by established disability activists and academics working in the social sciences and humanities conclude the volume. The contributors are Martin Albl, Hector Avalos, Bruce C. Birch, Carole R. Fontaine, Thomas Hentrich, Nicole Kelley, Janet Lees, Sarah J. Melcher, David Mitchell, Jeremy Schipper, Sharon Snyder, Holly Joan Toensing, Neal H. Walls, and Kerry H. Wynn.

(2) Bautch, Richard J., *Developments in Genre between Post-Exilic Penitential Prayers and the Psalms of Communal Lament*. Academia Biblica 7. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

Penitential prayers become well attested in Judaism after the exile, but their exact relation to psalms of communal lament has been uncertain. Now Richard J. Bautch identifies which elements of these prayers reflect literary conventions characteristic of communal laments and how these conventions are modified in the prayers. Based on a careful review of prayers from Third Isaiah and the Writings, Bautch concludes that confession of sin dominates these expressions of penitence. In addition, by analyzing elements constitutive of this shared form, Bautch is able to state the literary relationship between the psalms of communal lament and the post-exilic prayers of penitence in a detailed and convincing manner.

(3) Berger, Yitzhak. *The Commentary of Rabbi David Kimhi to Chronicles: A Translation with Introduction and Supercommentary*. Brown Judaic Studies 345. Providence, Brown Judaic Studies, 2007.

Rabbi David Kimhi is among the most important medieval Jewish exegetes on the Prophets and Writings, and this volume provides a translation of his commentary to the biblical book

of Chronicles, widely considered to be among his earliest works. In his introduction, the author traces the development of Kimhi's exegetical methods, and discusses his contribution to the interpretation of Chronicles as well as his attitude toward text-critical methods that had already begun to develop in response to this problematic biblical book. Extensive notes provide elucidation of Kimhi's comments, comparison to those of his predecessors, and references.

(4) Berquist, Jon L., ed. *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period*. Semeia Studies 50. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

The long-held view that the Persian period in Israel (known as Yehud) was a historically derivative era that engendered little theological or literary innovation has been replaced in recent decades by an appreciation for the importance of the Persian period for understanding Israel's literature, religion, and sense of identity. A new image of Yehud is emerging that has shifted the focus from viewing the postexilic period as a staging ground for early Judaism or Christianity to dealing with Yehud on its own terms, as a Persian colony with a diverse population. Taken together, the thirteen chapters in this volume represent a range of studies that touch on a variety of textual and historical problems to advance the conversation about the significance of the Persian period and especially its formative influence on biblical literature. Contributors include Richard Bautch, Zipporah G. Glass, Alice W. Hunt, David Janzen, John Kessler, Melody D. Knowles, Jennifer L. Koosed, Herbert R. Marbury, Christine Mitchell, Julia M. O'Brien, Donald C. Polaski, Jean-Pierre Ruiz, Brent A. Strawn, and Christine Roy Yoder.

(5) Blaine, Bradford B. Jr., *Peter in the Gospel of John: The Making of an Authentic Disciple*. Academia Biblica 27. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

In this narrative-critical study Bradford B. Blaine Jr. argues, against conventional scholarship, that John's Gospel presents Peter and the Beloved Disciple not as competitors but as colleagues who together serve as composite halves of the ideal Johannine Christian, with Peter representing praxis and John representing faith. Not only does Peter carry out activities fundamental to Johannine discipleship during Jesus' earthly ministry, which include believing in Jesus, following him, and publicly confessing him, but he also demonstrates post-Easter missionary skills and is invested by the risen Jesus with pastoral responsibilities. Finally, in dying a martyr's death, Peter glorifies God. Peter, in fact, is depicted in this Gospel as an inspirational founding member of the Johannine community.

(6) Campbell, William Sanger. *The "We" Passages in the Acts of the Apostles: The Narrator as Narrative Character*. Studies in Biblical Literature 14. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

This book explores the narrative significance of the "we" passages in Acts within the boundaries of acceptable ancient grammatical practice. It contends that the occasional first-person plural narrator represents a character whose entrance at crucial moments in Paul's career parallels the role of Barnabas, the apostle's earlier companion. Although consistent with the grammatical practice of ancient writers, the use of the "we" style in Acts nonetheless represents a variation of those conventions because the author of Acts wrote anonymously and never claimed personal participation in the events narrated. In analyzing the function of the narrator as narrative character, the book presents narrative literary

strategy as a fruitful approach to these enigmatic texts whose narrative possibilities have in the past been subordinated to their historical potential.

(7) Curtis, Byron G. *Up the Steep and Stony Road: The Book of Zechariah in Social Location Trajectory Analysis*. Academia Biblical 25. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.

How do we account for the strange fourteen-chaptered form of the book of Zechariah? What is the social and historical matrix from which this book derives? Marshaling data about the social typology of religious movements led by such twentieth-century African prophets as Alice Lenshina, Isaiah Shembe, and Simon Kimbangu, Curtis constructs a new method of reading prophetic books, a method he calls "social location trajectory analysis," and applies this method to interpret the book of Zechariah in a new light. The author suggests that Zechariah was a product of a single generation in the early Persian period and reopens the possibility that it might, after all, have but one principal author, the eponymous prophet whose name is borne by all fourteen chapters.

(8) Geoghegan, Jeffrey C. *The Time, Place and Purpose of the Deuteronomistic History: The Evidence of "Until This Day."* Brown Judaic Studies 347. Providence, RI, Brown Judaic Studies, 2006.

Knowing when and why Israel's earliest national history (the so-called Deuteronomistic History) was compiled is essential for rightly interpreting that history as well as for tracing the development of Israelite religion and culture. Yet the field of biblical studies has never been more divided over these issues. Some argue that the production of Israel's history belongs to the late preexilic period (7th–6th centuries B.C.E.), when the monarchy still existed and those responsible had access to authentic and, in some cases, fairly ancient sources. Others argue that Israel's history belongs to the late postexilic period (5th–4th centuries B.C.E), when those responsible for its compilation had little or no access to actual sources and much of what they wrote was invented in order to justify political structures and territorial claims in Persian-period Yehud or even Hellenistic-period Syria-Palestine. The present study addresses these important questions by analyzing the phrase "until this day," which, like similar formulae used by Greek and Roman historians (most famously, Herodotus), was the biblical historian's way of highlighting archaeological artifacts and religio-political structures that existed during the time of his writing. The outcome of this analysis is not only the identification of when and where the biblical historian carried out this enterprise, but also what interests—both political and religious—governed his recounting of Israel's past.

(9) Killebrew, Ann E. *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity: An Archaeological Study of Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, and Early Israel 1300–1100 B.C.E.* Archaeology and Biblical Studies 9. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.

Ancient Israel did not emerge within a vacuum but rather came to exist alongside various peoples, including Canaanites, Egyptians, and Philistines. Indeed, Israel's very proximity to these groups has made it difficult—until now—to distinguish the archaeological traces of early Israel and other contemporary groups. Through an analysis of the results from recent excavations in light of relevant historical and later biblical texts, this book proposes that it is possible to identify these peoples and trace culturally or ethnically defined boundaries in the archaeological record. Features of late second-millennium B.C.E. culture are critically examined in their historical and biblical contexts in order to define the complex social

boundaries of the early Iron Age and reconstruct the diverse material world of these four peoples. Of particular value to scholars, archaeologists, and historians, this volume will also be a standard reference and resource for students and other readers interested in the emergence of early Israel.

(10) Nir, Rivka. *The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Idea of Redemption in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*. Early Judaism and Its Literature 20. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

The *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* is a pseudepigraphic apocalyptic work ascribed to Baruch, son of Neriah and scribe of Jeremiah. Its overt content concerning the last days of the First Temple period disguises a description of the fall of the Second Temple in 70 c.e. Contrary to the general scholarly view, this book attempts to show that the internal structure and central ideas of *II Baruch* must be understood in a Christian context. This theological identity is reflected mainly in traditions which describe the destruction of Jerusalem and the three apocalyptic visions which depict the coming of the Messiah and the eschatological redemption. The author's conclusion may shed light on the Christian character of other Pseudepigraphic and apocalyptic books.

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