

## ICI REPORT FOR APRIL 2012

### (a) SBL International Meeting

The Universiteit van Amsterdam will host the 2012 SBL International Meeting. This meeting is in conjunction with the 2012 annual meeting of the European Association of Biblical Studies (EABS) and the triennial joint meeting of the Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap in Nederland en België (OTW) and the Society for Old Testament Study (SOTS) from July 22-26.

We are fully aware that most of you will not (be able to) be at the meeting. Yet some of you will. So we are planning an ICI informal meeting. Please let me ([ehud.benzvi@ualberta.ca](mailto:ehud.benzvi@ualberta.ca)) or Leigh ([leigh.andersen@sbl-site.org](mailto:leigh.andersen@sbl-site.org)) know if you plan to attend the ICI (informal) meeting.

### (b) NEW ICI WEBPAGE

Please visit our new page at <http://www.sbl-site.org/InternationalCoopInitiative.aspx> and let us know what additional changes you would like to see implemented.

### (c) PUBLICATIONS: ONLINE BOOKS – NEW BOOKS ADDED

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

The following books were added since the last report:

- (1) Everson, A. Joseph and Kim, Hyun Chul Paul, eds. *The Desert will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah*. Ancient Israel and its Literature, Vol. 4. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009.

Isaiah's vision of the future is nothing less than a portrait of shalom involving peace, wholeness, and hope both for the human community and the earth. Throughout the scroll, imagery drawn from nature affirms that renewal of life, like the renewal of the earth, is possible for the human family. The essays in this volume explore the poetic artistry and symbolic imagery in the Isaiah scroll. They examine specific texts, interpreting important language and imagery in those texts, delineating the functions and implications of such imagery and metaphors

throughout the entire book of Isaiah, and presenting fresh methodological and interpretive considerations in reading Isaiah. The contributors are Willem A. M. Beuken, Carol J. Dempsey, A. Joseph Everson, Chris A. Franke, James M. Kennedy, Hyun Chul Paul Kim, Francis Landy, Roy F. Melugin, Gary Stansell, Marvin A. Sweeney, Patricia K. Tull, Roy D. Wells, and Hugh G. M. Williamson.

- (2) Lyons, William John; Økland, Jorunn; eds. *The Way the World Ends? The Bible in the Modern World*, 19. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009.

The richly varied collection of 15 essays in this volume showcase the afterlife of the Book of Revelation. It is a biblical book that has left its mark in many fields of intellectual endeavour: literature, film, music, philosophy, political theology, and religious ideology. It is perhaps paradoxical that this book, which promises God's punishment upon anyone expanding on its contents, has nevertheless accumulated to itself over two millennia vast amounts of commentary, exposition, and appropriation.

Offered at the close of the 'Blair/Bush years', this volume also exposes and highlights the often deeply ironic resonances generated while studying the reception history of Revelation during a period when the book has both significant public currency and a potentially terrifying global impact.

- (3) Sigal, Phillip, *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth according to the Gospel of Matthew*. Studies in Biblical Literature 18. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

This is a republished edition of Sigal's pioneering work with a new preface by Eugene Fisher of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and an updating epilogue by Thomas Kazen of the Stockholm School of Theology. Sigal argues that, from a halakhic perspective, Jesus' teachings on Sabbath and divorce in the Gospel of Matthew use the same methods of interpretation as those of his proto-rabbinic contemporaries. The Jesus of the Gospel of Matthew should thus be seen as a charismatic prophetic first-century proto-rabbi— independent in his halakhah and frequently anticipating later rabbinic positions—rather than as transcending proto-rabbinic halakhah or as an adherent of a particular school. Sigal concludes that, had it not been for the expulsion of Christian Jews from the synagogues after 90 C.E., Jesus could have been remembered as one of the rabbis

of the Mishnah and that neither Christology nor halakhah were decisive for the break.

- (4) Sugirtharajah, R.S., *Troublesome Texts, The Bible in Colonial and Contemporary Culture*. The Bible in the Modern World, 17. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008.

The nine substantial essays in this volume deal with three wide-ranging though interconnected issues: the perceived status and standing of the Bible today; aspects of the current state of biblical studies, especially the uneasy tension between the increasingly esoteric agenda of mainstream scholarship and the hermeneutical concerns of those occupied with marginal readings; the significance of postcolonial scholarship and pointers for its future at a time when empire has once again become a reality and a global subject of debate.

Among the essays here are an examination of Victorian reconstructions of the life of Jesus and of the Buddha, and how these discourses were moulded and motivated by orientalism, colonialism, race and issues of British national identity; the complexities of the use of the Bible in Sri Lanka, war-torn and beset with communal strife, when the Bible itself is rife with vengeance and punishment; the political and hermeneutical ramifications of the Asian tsunami, and the use of natural disasters for decolonization and recolonization; imperial intentions and a postcolonial sub-text evident in the Johannine letters; the fortunes of the English Bible as its promoters struggle to uphold its credibility in a market-driven culture; suicide-bombing and asylum-seeking. All of these are issues of global significance and concern, but they are hardly ever addressed by biblical scholars.

The essays contain both theoretical discussion and practical questions as to the usefulness of the Bible at a time when its contested role has been complicated by its tainted association with oppressive causes..

- (5) Valeta, David, *Lions and Ovens and Visions; A Satirical Reading of Daniel 1-6*. Hebrew Bible Monographs, 12. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008.

Are the stories of Daniel at the court of the Persian king simply cheerful tales of a clever and successful courtier, as many assume? Valeta doubts it, insisting that the playful and fantastic storyline must have a more serious meaning.

The key to these narratives lies in their genre. These tales of lions and ovens and

the like are examples of Menippean satire, argues Valeta, an ancient genre foregrounded in modern literary study by Bakhtin, who saw in the characteristic interplay of voices in the Menippean satire a prime instance of his 'dialogism'. Especially typical of the Menippean satire is an indecorous mixing of styles and elements, which may be the explanation why the Daniel narratives are both comic and serious, Hebrew and Aramaic, episodic and unified.

Viewed as satire, the Daniel narratives emerge in their true colours as resistance literature to the regime of Antiochus IV—and so form a perfect accompaniment to the visions of Daniel 7–12.

#### (d) 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>. Events that may be of interest to you include:

April 30 - May 4 The 8th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East

The conference will be held in Warsaw, Poland. It will be organised jointly by the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw and Institute of Archaeology University of Warsaw. For more information <http://www.8icaane.org/>

June 13-15, 2012 SOCIETY OF ASIAN BIBLICAL STUDIES (SABS)

The next meeting of the Society of Asian Biblical Studies will be held in Sabah, Malaysia from the 13-15 June 2012. Arrival the 12th and departure on the 16th. Kindly block these dates in your calendar and look for updates on the SABS website. <http://www.sabs-site.com>

July 9 – July 20 Polemos/Pulmus: Ways of Confrontation in Judaism, Paganism and Christianity in Late Antiquity

A summer course offered by the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest, Hungary. The course aims at exploring the nature and various ways of confrontation between and within Early and Rabbinic Judaism, the Early Church, and Pagan religions and schools of thought. The sessions discuss how these movements coped with conflicts within and without; what their strategies were in confronting and accommodating foreign ideas, competing religions, worldly powers or internal

subversion; and what role these external and internal confrontations played in shaping them. Course faculty include Daniel Boyarin, Shaye J. D. Cohen, John M. Dillon, Mark Edwards and Guy G. Stroumsa. For more information <http://www.summer.ceu.hu/polemos-2012>

#### July 22-26 SBL INTERNATIONAL MEETING (I-SBL)

The Universiteit van Amsterdam will host the 2012 SBL International Meeting. This meeting is in conjunction with the 2012 annual meeting of the European Association of Biblical Studies (EABS) and the triennial joint meeting of the Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap in Nederland en België (OTW) and the Society for Old Testament Study (SOTS).

#### August 28-30 OCEANIA BIBLICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION (OBSA) ANNUAL MEETING

The meeting will be held at the Sia'atoutai Theological College in Tonga.

For more information please go to

<https://sites.google.com/site/wavesofthemoana/about-obsa>

or send an e-mail to [OBSAMail@gmail.com](mailto:OBSAMail@gmail.com)

#### **Note:**

Please submit basic information about events to Sharon Johnson at [sharon.johnson@sbl-site.org](mailto:sharon.johnson@sbl-site.org).

#### (g) PLEASE PASS THE INFORMATION

You are encouraged 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.