

SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE ICI REPORT FOR APRIL 2015

(a) THE NEXT SBL INTERNATIONAL MEETING

The 2015 International Meeting will take place in Buenos Aires from July 20-24. This meeting will be hosted by the Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina. We are very excited about this meeting. 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!

For more information, see: <http://sbl-site.org/meetings/Internationalmeeting.aspx>

Take note that the REGISTRATION is now open and the program book will be made available on 1 May.

ICI meeting in Buenos Aires

Normally, ICI holds a forum meeting at the SBL International and Annual meetings. This year, the meeting at the International Meeting in Buenos Aires will take another form. Join the ICI panel discussion on Wednesday 22 July 2015 from 4PM till 5.30PM (venue to be announced) to hear what SBL offers to biblical scholarship worldwide through ICI, and come and voice your opinion in the open discussion time.

The panel will consist of the following:

- John F. Kutsko, Society of Biblical Literature and Emory University, Presiding
- Louis Jonker, University of Stellenbosch (8 min)
- Funlola Olojede, University of South Africa (8 min)
- Roxana Flammini, Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina/CONICET (8 min)
- David Clines, University of Sheffield (8 min)

Thereafter, an open discussion of 50 min will follow.

Housing at the Meeting

Please note that there will be a small number of rooms available at the headquarters hotel, the Hilton Buenos Aires. You have the option of booking this hotel during registration. **There is also a list of more affordable options available on the IM website.**

All these are within walking distance of the conference hotel. See:

https://www.eiseverywhere.com/file_uploads/430811d76ad38027cfc12bbfad767330_1MHotels.pdf.

Student Volunteers

The SBL is now offering student members the opportunity to volunteer at the International Meeting. Volunteer benefits include free conference registration and a

complimentary 1-year SBL membership. Please contact [Samantha Spitzner](#) for more information on how to volunteer.

(b) THE SBL ANNUAL MEETING, ATLANTA

The SBL Annual Meeting will be held from November 21-24, 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia. Please note that the deadline for paper proposals has passed now.

Registration is open now, together with the conference **accommodation reservations**. For more information, see: <http://sbl-site.org/meetings/AnnualMeeting.aspx>

Please note that registration rates will increase on May 22, so take advantage of the Super Saver discount and register today!

Like last year, we hereby supply a list of **accommodation options** that are a little further away from the conference venues, but are more affordable for ICI attendees and of good quality.

Hotel	Address	Price	Website
Savannah Suites Pine St.	140 Pine St. NE, Atlanta, GA	\$46/night	www.savannahsuites.com
The Ashby House	1071 Martin Luther King Dr., Atlanta, GA	\$225/person for 5 night stay	www.theashbyhouse.com
Red Roof Inn & Suites	585 Parkway Drive NE, Atlanta, GA	\$59/night	www.redroof.com/atlanta
AAE Wellesley Hotel & Hostel	1377 Virginia Ave.	\$61/night	www.atl.aeworldhotels.com
Motel 6 Atlanta Downtown	311 Courtland St., Atlanta, GA	\$80/night	www.motel6.com
Castleberry Inn & Suites	186 Northside Dr. SW, Atlanta, GA	\$92/night	www.castleberryinn.com

(c) BIBLICAL SCHOLARS IN FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES

We are very glad to announce that a decision was taken at the ICI Executive meeting in San Diego in November 2014 that ICI will provide more support to francophone biblical scholars in terms of the following:

- Encouraging **mentoring** relationships (including preparation of manuscripts for publication) between “experts” and younger scholars in francophone countries. This will be facilitated through the existing mentoring channel which is available on the ICI web page (see <https://www.sbl-site.org/educational/ICITeaching.aspx>).
- Providing links to useful French biblical **scholarly resources** through the monthly ICI newsletter. (This will become a regular entry in our newsletter soon. One useful link which can be made available already is the well-known scholar, Thomas Römer’s

- classes at the College de France (see <http://www.college-de-france.fr/site/thomas-romer/#course>).
- Including **French publications** in the ICI book depository. We are in negotiation with some French publishers to get them on board for this initiative. (The same will happen for Spanish scholarship.)

(d) PUBLICATION IN ANCIENT NEAR EAST MONOGRAPHS (ANEM) / MONOGRAFÍAS SOBRE EL ANTIGUO CERCANO ORIENTE (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:

Disembodied Souls The Nefesh in Israel and Kindred Spirits in the Ancient Near East, with an Appendix on the Katumuwa Inscription

Authored by Richard Steiner

Biblical scholars have long claimed that the Israelites “could not conceive of a disembodied *nefesh* [soul].” In this book, Richard C. Steiner rejects that claim based on a broad spectrum of textual, linguistic, archaeological, and anthropological evidence spanning the millennia from prehistoric times to the present. The biblical evidence includes a prophecy of Ezekiel condemning women who pretend to trap the wandering souls of sleeping people—a prophecy that has been only partially understood until now because of the obscure technical terms that it contains. The extrabiblical evidence suggests that a belief in the existence of disembodied souls was part of the common religious heritage of the peoples of the ancient Near East.

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

http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/9781628370775_OA.pdf

(e) PUBLICATION IN INTERNATIONAL VOICES IN BIBLICAL STUDIES (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](#).

The latest volume in IVBS is:

Migration and Diaspora: Exegetical Voices of Women in Northeast Asian Countries

Edited by Hisako Kinukawa

The third meeting of the Society of Asian Biblical Studies was held at Sabah in June 2012, addressing the theme of Migration and Diaspora. This book contains five essays written by women from Northeast Asian countries for this occasion. Three are on Hebrew Scriptures and two are on the Christian Testament. All writers used a cultural analysis of their own social locations, and literary, historical, and postcolonial criticism as their methods of reading the texts, even though they may not explicitly mention which criticisms are used.

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

<http://ivbs.sbl-site.org/uploads/IVBS%20PAPERS1.pdf>

(f) PUBLICATIONS: ONLINE BOOKS – NEW BOOKS ADDED

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

Slavery, Abolitionism, and the Ethics of Biblical Scholarship

Avalos, Hector. *Slavery, Abolitionism, and the Ethics of Biblical Scholarship*. Bible in the Modern World 38. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

In this immensely wide-ranging and fascinating study, Avalos critiques the common claim that the abolition of slavery was due in large part to the influence of biblical ethics. Such a claim, he argues, is characteristic of a broader phenomenon in biblical scholarship, which focuses on defending, rather than describing, the ethical norms encountered in biblical texts.

The first part of Avalos's critique explores how modern scholars have praised the supposed superiority of biblical ethics at the cost of diminishing or ignoring many similar features in ancient Near Eastern cultures. These features include manumission, fixed terms of service, familial rights, and egalitarian critiques of slavery. At the same time, modern scholarship has used the standard tools of biblical exegesis in order to minimize the ethically negative implications of many biblical references to slavery.

The second part of the book concentrates on how the Bible has been used throughout Christian history both to maintain and to extend slavery. In particular, Avalos offers detailed studies of papal documents used to defend the Church's stance on slavery. Discussions of Gregory of Nyssa, Aquinas and Luther, among others, show that they are not such champions of freedom as they are often portrayed.

Avalos's close readings of the writings of major abolitionists such as Granville Sharp, William Wilberforce and Frederick Douglass show an increasing shift away from using the Bible as a support for abolitionism. Biblical scholars have rarely recognized that pro-slavery advocates could use the Bible just as effectively. According to Avalos, one of the complex mix of factors leading to abolition was the abandonment of the Bible as an ethical authority. The case of the biblical attitude to slavery is just one confirmation of how unsuitable the Bible is as a manual of ethics in the modern world.

Textual Memory: Ancient Archives, Libraries and the Hebrew Bible

DuToit, Jaqueline S. *Textual Memory: Ancient Archives, Libraries and The Hebrew Bible*. The Social World of Biblical Antiquity 2/6. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

In modern scholarship the Hebrew Bible represents a collection of books, perhaps even a library of books. Some think that it is a selection of ancient oral traditions that were eventually written down, edited and preserved. Others suggest that the biblical corpus resulted from a merging of regional libraries in ancient Palestine or was the outcome of the Hasmoneans' need to legitimize their rule by claiming ownership of a library of books originating in the Jerusalem temple. No matter how tantalizing these hypotheses are, the implications of a concrete understanding of the origins of the Bible as library or archive are not often fully appreciated by scholars.

Textual Memory explores how various disciplines, including Assyriology, biblical studies, archival science and library history, have made sense of the thousands of collections of clay tablets and ancient written material discovered over the past two hundred years in the Middle East. And it raises the question whether the great libraries of Ashurbanipal and Alexandria, among others, are able to suggest models of how the Hebrew Bible came into being. Can the temple libraries in Mesopotamia or Egypt offer us any clues about who decided what should be preserved and why? What have ancient archival practices of careful selection, conservation, classification and dissemination of information to contribute to our understanding of the creation of the Hebrew Bible?

Ultimately, this book is a historiographical synthesis of current scholarship on ancient Near Eastern archives and libraries from different disciplinary perspectives. Its purpose is to better understand how we should conceive of the Bible as religious tradition and literary heritage.

Emotions in Biblical Law: A Cognitive Science Approach

Kazen, Thomas. *Emotions in Biblical Law: A Cognitive Science Approach*. Hebrew Bible Monographs 36. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

This study pioneers the use of insights from cognitive sciences, such as evolutionary biology, neuroscience, and developmental psychology, as heuristic tools for interpreting ancient texts. The approach could be described as 'psycho-biological'. The focus is on emotions in the various Pentateuchal legal collections. Kazen discusses the role of disgust, empathy, fear, and a sense of justice, for particular moral and ritual issues: purity and holiness; humanitarian concern for vulnerable categories; ethnocentrism and xenophobia; divine punishment and demonic threat; revenge, compensation, and ransom (kofer), together with removal (kipper) rites.

The book consists of two main parts, framed by an introductory chapter and a concluding discussion. In the first part, Kazen explores cognitive foundations, including biological and neuroscientific underpinnings for basic affects, and the role of culture in

shaping both conventional morality and ritual behaviour. Four particular emotions are then outlined. In the second part, these insights from cognitive science are applied in analyses of particular texts. After an overview of the Pentateuchal legal collections, each of the four emotions is dealt with in a separate chapter. Kazen constantly relates a cognitive science approach to more traditional source and redaction-critical analysis, regarding them as complementary.

As a result, the Pentateuchal legal collections are seen as emotional texts, expressing strong affects—which influences our understanding of the character of Israelite ‘law’. Kazen suggests that interaction and conflict between various emotions can explain discrepancies and tensions between humanitarian concerns and ethnocentrism, and between empathy and justice. He also demonstrates that viewing emotions as common denominators contains a potential for solving some difficult and long-standing conundrums. He argues that a focus on the human embodied experience rather than on theological convictions and theoretical ideas may avoid some interpretative dead ends and open up new avenues for understanding ancient texts.

Reading 1-2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students

Mason, Eric F. and Troy W. Martin, eds. *Reading 1-2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students*. Resources for Biblical Study 77. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014.

Scholars engage the best contemporary work on 1–2 Peter and Jude in this student-oriented book. The first four chapters in this collection—on authorship and pseudonymity, literary relationships among the three books, epistolary rhetoric, and apocalyptic elements—consider important, foundational issues related to all three epistles. These essays lay the groundwork for more focused chapters that examine theology and theory in 1 Peter as well a stylistic, theological, and thematic overlap in Jude and 2 Peter.

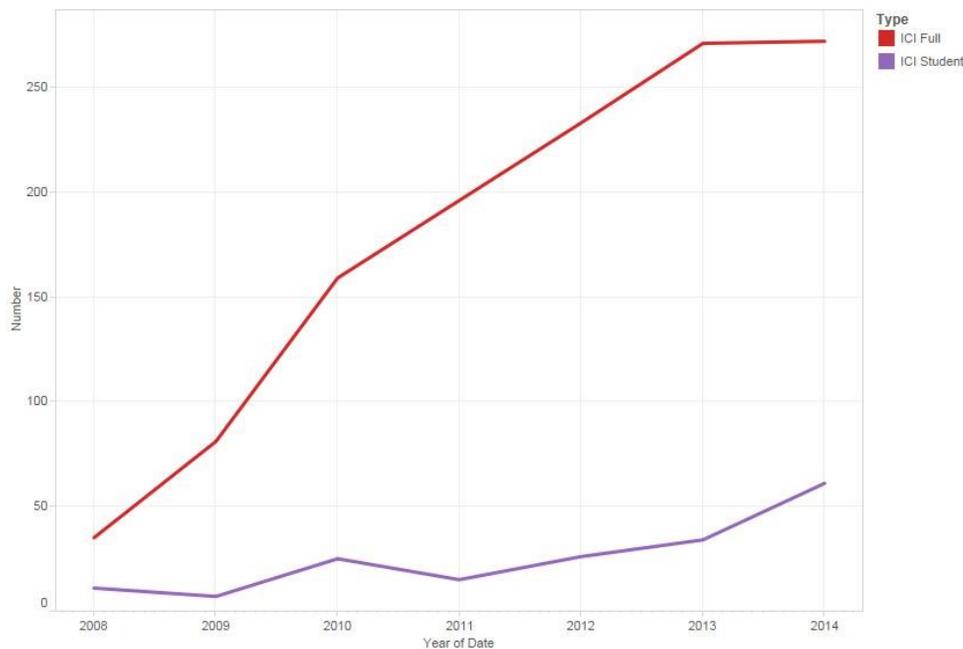
Features:

- A range of theological, literary, and theoretical approaches
- Definitions for specialized terminology
- Historical and cultural background information
- Explanations of methodologies

(g) SBL MEMBERSHIP IN ICI COUNTRIES

Please take note that scholars living and working in ICI countries (for a list of these countries, see <http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/ICICountries.pdf>) pay a reduced membership fee for SBL. See the membership form accompanying this newsletter which should be used to apply for or renew reduced membership.

The following graph shows the growth in SBL Full and Student membership in ICI countries.



(h) JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE (JBL) ARCHIVE

Take note that an archive with JBL articles from volume 122.1 of 2003 through volume 130.1 of 2011 is now available online to people accessing the SBL website from any ICI country. See http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/ICI_JBLarchive.aspx. All articles in those volumes can be downloaded for free!

(i) 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.

May 7-9, 2015**East-West Theological Forum**

The 4th conference of the East-West Theological Forum will be held on 7-9 May 2015 at Sogang University, Seoul, Korea.

The 2015 conference has been called for on the theme: "Crisis and Hope: The Church in a Changing World". We cordially invite you to our coming conference and to submit papers for EWTF Prize (10,000 US\$) or proposals for parallel session.

For more information, see <http://www.ewtfr.org/>

May 21-24, 2015**Holiness: On the Holy, the Holy One, Sanctification and Saints: The Bi-annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality**

Saint Augustine College, Johannesburg, South Africa

Announcing its second biannual conference, the Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS), in collaboration with the Spirituality Association of South Africa (SPIRASA), warmly welcomes researchers on Spirituality to a meeting at the campus of St. Augustine College in Johannesburg, South Africa. Submissions on any topic of current interest within the field of Spirituality are invited. Particularly welcome are proposals for papers, panels and workshops on topics related to the specific theme of holiness. (See above.)

July 12-15, 2015**European Association of Biblical Studies Annual Meeting**

Cordoba, Spain. July 12- July 15.

More information is available at <http://www.eabs.net/site/>

Information for students is available <http://www.eabs.net/site/student-zone/>

July 20-24, 2015**2015 SBL International Meeting**

Buenos Aires, Argentina

[More information](#)

September 11-13, 2015**Oceania Biblical Studies Association**

Conference will be held at Piula Theological College, Upolu, Samoa, in the beautiful South Pacific.

Email the Secretary for OBSA: [Nasili Vaka'uta](#) for more information.

November 21-24, 2015**2015 SBL Annual Meeting**

Atlanta, Georgia

[More information](#)

September 4-9, 2016**2016 Meeting of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament (IOSOT)**

Stellenbosch, South Africa

To register for updates, go to the news page on www.iosot2016.co.za

(j) 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>

Also remember to check the newly-developed **Bible Odyssey** online portal. See www.bibleodyssey.org. This portal offers wonderful educational resources, but also resources for broader popular audiences. Use this site to popularize our academic studies in faith communities!

(k) NEWS FROM ICI REGIONS

C.I. David Joy, the ICI liaison in India writes the following on past events in that region:

- The Society for Biblical Studies in India (SBSI) arranged a one day seminar in Kottayam, Kerala, for biblical scholars of that region in February 2015.
- A collection of essays on biblical themes had been published jointly by CSS and SBSI.
- Information sessions were held in Serampore University affiliated colleges about the SBL-ICI and about regional and international meetings for biblical scholars.

- SBL-ICI India organized a half day seminar for lay leaders of the church in equipping them for interpreting the Bible in Trivandrum on 16 April 2015.

Joel Ruark, an SBL student representative on Stellenbosch University campus in South Africa, organized an information session for postgraduate students in biblical studies where the work of SBL and ICI was introduced. The picture below shows the attendance at the meeting where Old and New Testament scholars, proff Jeremy Punt and Louis Jonker, also shared their experiences of SBL.



Please feel free to send further ICI news snippets from the region to Louis Jonker.

(I) PLEASE PASS ON THE INFORMATION

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 to 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