

SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE ICI REPORT FOR JANUARY 2015

(a) 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!

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

Take note that the Call for Papers is now open on the system and closes on 11 February 2015.

Watch this space in the next newsletters for more information on the ICI meetings at the Buenos Aires conference! We will also try to give advice on affordable accommodations.

(b) 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.)

(c) 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:

Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew: Steps Toward an Integrated Approach

Authored by Robert Rezetko and Ian Young

This book seeks to break fresh ground in research on the history of ancient Hebrew. Building on theoretical and methodological concepts in general historical linguistics and in diachronic linguistic research on various ancient Near Eastern and Indo-European languages, the authors reflect critically on issues such as the objective of the research, the nature of the written sources, and the ideas of variation and periodization. They draw on innovative work on premodern scribally created writings to argue for a similar application of a joint history of texts and history of language approach to ancient Hebrew. The application of cross-textual variable analysis and variationist analysis in various case studies shows that more complete descriptions and evaluations of the distribution of linguistic data advances our understanding of historical developments in ancient Hebrew.

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

https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/9781628370461_OA.pdf

(d) 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](#).

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>

(e) PUBLICATIONS: ONLINE BOOKS – NEW BOOKS ADDED

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

The Birth, the Curse and the Greening of Earth: An Ecological Reading of Genesis 1–11

Habel, Norman. *The Birth, the Curse and the Greening of Earth: An Ecological Reading of Genesis 1–11*. Earth Bible Commentary, 1. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

Few people realize that the first character in the Bible (after the headline sentence of Genesis 1.1) is Earth. What if we read the creation story and the primal myths of Genesis from the perspective of that key character, rather than from the anthropocentric perspective in which our culture has nurtured us?

This is the project of Norman Habel's commentary, resisting the long history in Western culture of devaluing, exploiting, oppressing and endangering the Earth. Earth in Genesis first appears wrapped in the primal waters, like an embryo waiting to be born. On the third day of creation it is actually born and comes into existence with its green vegetation as a habitat for life of all kinds.

It is hardly a moment before Earth is damaged by human sin and suffers a divine curse, and then must cry out for justice for the blood of Abel it has been compelled to drink. It is an even greater curse when Earth, together with almost all life on Earth, comes near to total annihilation at the Flood. Has Earth brought this fate upon itself, or is it the innocent victim of human wrongdoing?

Genesis has God regretting the threat to Earth and its children that the Flood has brought, and vowing to green Earth again, remove the curse, restore the seasons and make a personal covenant of assurance with Earth and its creatures.

The ecological approach of this commentary was first developed in the five-volume multi-authored series, *The Earth Bible* (2000–2002). In *The Earth Bible Commentary*, of which this is the first volume, a group of scholars dedicated to the re-valuing of Earth pursue these themes in their commentaries on the books of the Bible. Other volumes in preparation are: Deuteronomy, Ruth, Job, Psalms Book 2, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah 1–39, Joel, Matthew, Luke, Colossians, Revelation.

Korean Feminists in Conversation with the Bible, Church and Society

Lee , Kyung Sook and Kyung Mi Park, eds. *Korean Feminists in Conversation with the Bible, Church and Society*. Bible in the Modern World, 24. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

This book offers scholars and students outside Korea some insight into what forms feminist biblical interpretation takes in Korea and what approaches Korean feminists adopt for dealing with the Bible in their writing and their professional lives.

The contributors to this book represent a wide spectrum of the Korean feminist Christian movement. They include university and seminary teachers, ministers, and field workers. This book is a product of their numerous meetings and discussions on the practical issues that define contemporary Korean women's lives. In it, the contributors reflect on the diverse situations modern Korean women have faced and continue to struggle with, among them, the traditional religious culture based on Confucianism, economic globalization, postcolonialism, the problems of migrant women labourers, and the trauma of being forced into sexual slavery for Japanese soldiers during World War II.

They view these situations in the light of the lives and experiences of women in the Old and New Testaments, and they look to the Bible for resources for dealing with them.

This is socially engaged biblical interpretation. It goes beyond the academic study of the Bible to a wider engagement with the church and with Korean society.

The volume is published in cooperation with Ewha Institute for Women's Theological Studies.

The King James Version at 400: Assessing Its Genius as Bible Translation and Its Literary Influence

Burke, David G., John F. Kutsko, and Philip H. Towner, eds. *The King James Version at 400: Assessing Its Genius as Bible Translation and Its Literary Influence*. Biblical Scholarship in North America 26. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

In this collection of essays, thirty scholars from diverse disciplines offer their unique perspectives on the genius of the King James Version, a translation whose 400th anniversary was recently celebrated throughout the English-speaking world. While avoiding nostalgia and hagiography, each author clearly appreciates the monumental, formative role the KJV has had on religious and civil life on both sides of the Atlantic (and beyond) as well as on the English language itself. In part 1 the essayists look at the KJV in its historical contexts—the politics and rapid language growth of the era, the emerging printing and travel industries, and the way women are depicted in the text (and later feminist responses to such depictions). Part 2 takes a closer look at the KJV as a translation and the powerful precedents it set for all translations to follow, with the essayists exploring the translators' principles and processes (with close examinations of "Bancroft's Rules" and the Prefaces), assessing later revisions of the text, and reviewing the translation's influence on the English language, textual criticism, and the practice of translation in Jewish and Chinese contexts. Part 3 looks at the various ways the KJV has impacted the English language and literature, the practice of religion (including within the African American and Eastern Orthodox churches), and the broader culture. The contributors are Robert Alter, C. Clifton Black, David G. Burke, Richard A. Burrige, David J. A. Clines, Simon Crisp, David J. Davis, James D. G. Dunn, Lori Anne Ferrell, Leonard J. Greenspoon, Robin Griffith-Jones, Malcolm Guite, Andrew E. Hill, John F. Kutsko, Seth Lerer, Barbara K. Lewalski, Jacobus A. Naudé, David Norton, Jon Pahl, Kuo-Wei Peng, Deborah W. Rooke, Rodney Sadler Jr., Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, Harold Scanlin, Naomi Seidman, Christopher Southgate, R. S. Sugirtharajah, Joan Taylor, Graham Tomlin, Philip H. Towner, David Trobisch, and N. T. Wright.

Interested Readers: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David J.A. Clines

Aitken, James K., Jeremy M. S. Clines, Christl M. Maier, eds. *Interested Readers: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David J.A. Clines*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

Readers of the Hebrew Bible are interested readers, bringing their own perspectives to the text. The essays in this volume, written by friends and colleagues who have drawn inspiration from and shown interest in the scholarship of David Clines, engage with his work through examining interpretations of the Hebrew Bible in areas of common exploration: literary/exegetical readings, ideological-critical readings, language and lexicography, and reception history.

The contributors are James K. Aitken, Jacques Berlinerblau, Daniel Bodi, Roland Boer, Athalya Brenner, Mark G. Brett, Marc Zvi Brettler, Craig C. Broyles, Philip P. Chia, Jeremy M. S. Clines, Adrian H. W. Curtis, Katharine J. Dell, Susan E. Gillingham, Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, Edward L. Greenstein, Mayer I. Gruber, Norman C. Habel, Alan J. Hauser, Jan Joosten, Paul J. Kissling, Barbara M. Leung Lai, Diana Lipton, Christl M. Maier, Heather A. McKay, Frank H. Polak, Jeremy Punt, Hugh S. Pyper, Deborah W. Rooke, Eep Talstra, Laurence A. Turner, Stuart Weeks, Gerald O. West, and Ian Young.

Tel Dan in Its Northern Cultic Context

Davis, Andrew R. *Tel Dan in Its Northern Cultic Context*. *Archaeology and Biblical Studies*, 20. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

This work presents in detail a description of archaeological data from the Iron II temple complex at Tel Dan in northern Israel. Davis analyzes the archaeological remains from the ninth and eighth centuries, paying close attention to how the temple functioned as sacred space. Correlating the archaeological data with biblical depictions of worship, especially the “textual strata” of 1 Kings 18 and the book of Amos, Davis argues that the temple was the site of “official” and family religion and that worship at the temple became increasingly centralized. Tel Dan's role in helping reconstruct ancient Israelite religion, especially distinctive religious traditions of the northern kingdom, is also considered.

Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective

Leander, Hans. *Discourses of Empire: The Gospel of Mark from a Postcolonial Perspective*. Semeia Studies 71. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

This inventive work explores Mark's Gospel within the contexts of the empires of Rome and Europe. In a unique dual analysis, the book highlights how empire is not only part of the past but also of a present colonial heritage. The book first outlines postcolonial criticism and discusses the challenges it poses for biblical scholarship, then scrutinizes the complex ways with which nineteenth-century commentaries on Mark's Gospel interplayed with the formation of European colonial identities. It examines the stance of Mark's Gospel vis-à-vis the Roman Empire and analyzes the manner in which the fibers of empire within Mark are interwoven, reproduced, negotiated, modified and subverted. Finally, it offers synthesizing suggestions for bringing Mark beyond a colonial heritage. The book's candid use of postcolonial criticism illustrates how a contemporary perspective can illuminate and shed new light on an ancient text in its imperial setting.

The Holy Seed Has Been Defiled

Johnson, Willa M. *The Holy Seed Has Been Defiled: The Interethnic Marriage Dilemma in Ezra 9-10*. Hebrew Bible Monographs, 33. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

In the Book of Ezra–Nehemiah, Ezra commands Yehudite men to put away their foreign wives to avoid further defiling the 'holy seed'. What is the meaning of this warning? Are Ezra's words to be understood as a concern about race-mixing or is it emblematic of some more complex set of problems prevalent in the fledgling postexilic community? Ezra's words, with their seemingly racialized thinking, have been influential in much political, religious and popular culture in the USA. It has been a backdrop for constructing racial reality for centuries, melding seemingly biblical ideologies with accepted European Enlightenment-era ideas about racial superiority and inferiority.

Willa Johnson combines archaeological data with social-scientific theory to argue for a new interpretation. In this anthropological and narratological analysis, Johnson views Ezra's edict in the light of ancient Yehudite concerns over ethnicity, gender, sexuality and social class following the return from exile. In this context, she argues, the warning against intermarriage appears to be an effort to reconstitute identity in the aftermath of the cataclysmic political dominance by first the Babylonian and then the Persian empires.

This book represents a postmodern interdisciplinary approach to understanding an ancient biblical socio-political situation. As such, it offers fresh perspectives on ways that interpretations of the Bible continue to reflect the ideologies of its interpreters.

The Letter to the Romans: Salvation as Justice and the Deconstruction of Law

Waetjen, Herman C. *The Letter to the Romans: Salvation as Justice and the Deconstruction of Law*. New Testament Monographs, 32. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

Romans, says Waetjen, is the first publication of the Christ movement. To understand it well is therefore a task of monumental importance, and to understand it today requires a postmodern hermeneutics, in which the interpreter's subjective experience of reading the text is correlated with historical-critical knowledge and social-scientific criticism. That hermeneutics has to create a new genre of commentary, making room for readers' prior understandings as well as for a dynamic form of close reading and consistency building. The outcome is a contemporizing of Paul's theology that induces conversation with Derrida, Žižek, Badiou and Agamben and others.

The central theme of Romans is, according to Waetjen, the healing of humanity through the realization of 'the justice of God', which is disclosed in the movement 'out of trust into trust', or, more specifically, out of the trust of Abraham into the trust of Jesus Christ. Living on this side of the law of Sinai and therefore being conscious of the condition of sin requires the reconciliation of Christ's death and the justification of Christ's resurrection in order to participate in the New Humanity of life-giving spirits.

Consequently Romans is more than a rhetorical effort to mediate conflicts between Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome. Composed prior to his journey to Jerusalem with the possibility of martyrdom before him, the letter is Paul's major theological testament.

Textual History and the Reception of Scripture in Early Christianity

de Vries, Johannes and Martin Karrer, eds. *Textual History and the Reception of Scripture in Early Christianity*. Septuagint and Cognate Studies, 60. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

The essays in this volume summarize an international research project on early Christian citations from Israel's scriptures. These quotations are not only theologically significant but are also part of the textual history of the Septuagint and adjacent textual traditions of the Greek and Hebrew Old Testament. The essays discuss relevant manuscripts (Bible codices, papyri, etc.) up to the fifth century, signs and marginal notes (e.g., the diplé)

that were used in the ancient scriptoria, and the specifics of the reception history in early Christianity from Matthew to 1 Peter and from the apostolic fathers to Theophilus of Antioch. The contributors are Felix Albrecht, Ronald H. van der Bergh, Heinz-Josef Fabry, Kerstin Heider, Martin Karrer, Christin Klein, Arie van der Kooij, Siegfried Kreuzer, Horacio E. Lona, Martin Meiser, Maarten J. J. Menken, Matthias Millard, Darius Müller, Ferdinand R. Prostmeier, Alexander Stokowski, Martin Vahrenhorst, Christiane Veldboer, and Johannes de Vries.

The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel

Finkelstein, Israel. *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel*. Ancient Near East Monographs, 5. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

Beginning with the Canaanite city-states, through the Saulide dynasty, to the fall of Israel, Finkelstein presents the first comprehensive history of Israel integrating the analysis of more than thirty years of archaeological work with interpretation of ancient Near Eastern and biblical texts. Though Judah dominates the pages of the Hebrew Bible and contemporary studies, Israel dominates here as Finkelstein reveals the glory of the Omride dynasty, outlines how the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah developed parallel to one another, and highlights Israel's transformation from kingdom to foundational idea.

Features:

- Archaeological analysis of the region of the northern kingdom
- Primary and secondary textual analysis from the ancient Near East and the biblical narrative
- Maps, tables, and images
- Discussion of Israel's legacy

Valuable and Vulnerable: Children in the Hebrew Bible, Especially the Elisha Cycle

Parker, Julie Faith. *Valuable and Vulnerable: Children in the Hebrew Bible, Especially the Elisha Cycle*. Brown Judaic Studies, 355. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013.

Just as women in the Bible have been overlooked for much of interpretative history, children in the Bible have fascinating and compelling stories that scholars have largely ignored. This groundbreaking book focuses on children in the Hebrew Bible. The author argues that the biblical writers recognized children as different from adults and used these ideas to shape their stories. She provides conceptual and historical frameworks for understanding children and childhood, and examines Hebrew terms related to

children and youth. The book introduces a new methodology of childist interpretation and applies it to the Elisha cycle (2 Kings 2-8), which contains forty-nine child characters. Combining literary insights with social-scientific evidence, the author demonstrates that children play critical roles in the world of the text as well as the culture that produced it.

Evidence of Editing: Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible

Reinhard Muller, Juha Pakkala, Bas Ter Haar Romeny. *Evidence of Editing: Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible*. Resources for Biblical Study, 75. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014.

A new perspective on editorial activity in the Hebrew Bible for research and teaching

Evidence of Editing lays out the case for substantial and frequent editorial activity within the Hebrew Bible. The authors show how editors omitted, expanded, rewrote, and compiled both smaller and larger phrases and passages to address religious and political change. The book refines the exegetical method of literary and redaction criticism, and its results have important consequences for the future use of the Hebrew Bible in historical and theological studies.

Features:

- Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic examples of editorial activity
- Clear explanations of the distinctions between textual, literary, and redaction criticism
- Fifteen chapters attesting to continual editorial activity in the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings

(f) 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!

(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.

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.

[More information](#)

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

Buenos Aires, Argentina

[More information](#)

(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>

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!

(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.

(j) GOODBYE TO LEIGH ANDERSEN

Leigh Andersen of the SBL Publications section has been the liaison officer for ICI since its inception. Many scholars from ICI countries have communicated through her to the ICI and SBL. Leigh retired in December 2014 and will therefore no longer occupy this position. Her friendliness, professionalism and patience always made a huge impression on everybody who got to know her and communicated with her. She will surely be missed by many scholars in the world. We wish Leigh and her husband Don a happy retirement, with good health and enough opportunity to do all those leisure things that they never had time for during their careers. Go well, Leigh, and we hope to see you in Atlanta at the next SBL Annual Meeting!

We are very fortunate that **Beth Tracy**, the Executive Administrative Assistant in the office of the Executive Directory, John Kutsko, is now taking over the role as our ICI liaison. We are in very capable hands, and we are looking forward to good cooperation. Thanks Beth, for your willingness to take on this task! Should anybody need to contact SBL-ICI, you can reach Beth at beth.tracy@sbl-site.org.

With best wishes for your Bible scholarship IN 2015!

Louis Jonker, SBL – International Cooperation Initiative