

SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE ICI REPORT FOR MAY 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>

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 CERCAÑO 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)

A Critical Engagement: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of J. Cheryl Exum

Clines, David J.A., Ellen van Wolde, eds. *A Critical Engagement: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of J. Cheryl Exum*. Hebrew Bible Monographs 38. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

This volume honours the distinctive contribution to Hebrew Bible studies over four decades by Cheryl Exum, Professor Emerita of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield. Her special

interests have lain, first, in the modern literary criticism of the Hebrew Bible, where her key work was *Tragedy and Biblical Narrative: Arrows of the Almighty*. A second area has been feminist criticism of the Hebrew Bible; here her notable contributions were *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives* and *Plotted, Shot, and Painted: Cultural Representations of Biblical Women*. A more recent, and now almost favourite, theme is the Bible and cultural studies, especially the Bible and art. Key works here have been a series of edited volumes, such as *Beyond the Biblical Horizon: The Bible and the Arts*, and *The Bible in Film / The Bible and Film*. Her fourth area of continuing interest has been the Song of Songs, with many articles culminating in her perceptive commentary in the *Old Testament Library* series.

Reconfiguring Mark's Jesus: Narrative Criticism after Poststructuralism

Elliott, Scott S. *Reconfiguring Mark's Jesus: Narrative Criticism after Poststructuralism*. *The Bible in the Modern World* 41. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011.

As readers, we are captivated by the resemblance of literary characters to actual persons. But it is precisely this illusion that allows characterization to play host to dominant ideologies of both 'literature' and 'the self'. This is especially true when we confuse narrative figures and historical persons.

Over the last thirty years, New Testament narrative criticism has developed into a major methodological approach in Biblical Studies. But for all its ingenuity and promise, it has been reluctant to let go of conventional historical-critical moorings. As a result, one is hard pressed to find any substantive difference between reconstructions of the historical Jesus and narrative-critical readings of the character Jesus.

Reconfiguring Mark's Jesus endeavors to reorient and advance narrative criticism by analysing the Gospel of Mark's characterization of the figure of Jesus in relation to three other fundamental aspects of narrative discourse: focalization, dialogue, and plot. This intertextual reading, in which Mark is set alongside two ancient novels—*Leucippe and Clitophon* and *The Life of Aesop*—problematizes implicitly modern notions of literary characters as autonomous 'agents', as well as 'naturalizing' treatments of literary characters as historical referents. Highlighting the inherent ambiguity of narrative discourse, particularly with regard to referentiality, human agency, and the complex relationship between literature and history, *Reconfiguring Mark's Jesus* illustrates the diverse and complex ways that narratives, of necessity, produce fragmented characters that refract the inherent paradoxes of narrative itself and of human subjectivity.

Warfare, Ritual, and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts

Kelle, Brad E., Frank Ritche Ames, Jacob L. Wright. *Warfare, Ritual, and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts*. Ancient Israel and Its Literature 18. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014.

Contributors investigate what constituted a symbol in war, what rituals were performed and their purpose, how symbols and rituals functioned in and between wars and battles, what effects symbols and rituals had on insiders and outsiders, what ways symbols and rituals functioned as instruments of war, and what roles rituals and symbols played in the production and use of texts.

Features:

- Thirteen essays examine war in textual, historical, and social contexts
- Texts from the Hebrew Bible are read in light of ancient Near Eastern texts and archaeology
- Interdisciplinary studies make use of contemporary ritual and social theory

(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.

(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.

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.

September 24-28, 2015

Society of Biblical Scholars (SBS) & Institute for Biblical Preaching (IBP) in Africa

(at St. Paul's University, Kenya) This year's SBS conference, and IBP seminar, organized by Hokma House—Centre for Biblical Research (Jos, Nigeria), will be hosted by St. Paul's University (Limuru, Kenya). Paper and panel proposals are invited on the interdisciplinary theme: 'Engaging Scripture, Transforming Culture: Exegesis, Criticism, Hermeneutics, and Theology'. How can biblical exegesis, criticism, hermeneutics and theology shape and contribute more meaningfully to our engagement of the scriptures, esp. in Africa? Presenters and panelists may focus on one or more of these four areas, but will need to be conversant with the history, development and current state of research in each area in order to be able to evaluate the current enterprise of biblical studies, esp. in Africa, and propose major ways forward for the discipline. The second part of the theme explores the role of exegesis, criticism, hermeneutics and theology in transforming culture. Papers outside the theme are welcome! SBS membership is not required to attend or participate in this year's meeting. New members are welcome to apply for membership.

Contact: Rev. Dr. Randeé Ijatuyi-Morphé, Director, and Professor of Biblical Studies, ECWA Theological Seminary, Jos, Nigeria (hokmahouse@gmail.com;

meetings@hokmahouse.org); Rev. Dr. K. Gatumu, Senior Lecturer, SBS/IBP Liaison at SPU (kgatumu@spu.ac.ke).

(For more information: www.hokmahouse.org).

November 21-24, 2015

2015 SBL Annual Meeting

Atlanta, Georgia

[More information](#)

December 20-23, 2015

Philosophical Investigation of the Hebrew Scriptures, Talmud and Midrash

The conference will take place in Jerusalem and will explore "The Questions of God's Perfection." The conference will explore whether understanding God as perfect being is appropriate as a basis for Jewish theology and for religious belief more generally, bringing together perspectives on this question from philosophers, theologians, scholars of Bible and scholars of rabbinic literature. Invited participants will be Oliver Crisp, James Diamond, Jerome Gellman, Lenn E. Goodman, Moshe Halbertal, Yoram Hazony, Brian Leftow, Berel Dov Lerner Alan Mittleman, David Shatz, Eleonore Stump, Alan Torrance, Shmuel Trigano, and Howard Wettstein. Scholars wishing to present papers at the conference should submit abstracts of 500-1,000 words together with a current CV to meiravi@herzlinstitute.org

[Call for Papers](#)

July 3-7, 2016

2016 SBL International Meeting

Seoul, South Korea

[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) 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