

It is my pleasure to distribute the ICI REPORT for November/December 2009

(a) THE ICI MEETING AT THE SBL MEETING

A wide range of geographical locations was represented and specialists in various aspects of the field were present, including some colleagues who were "new" to the initiative. I would like to particularly acknowledge the presence of a representative of the European Association of Biblical Studies, Dr. Outi Lehtipuu, at the meeting. She brought EABS's message of support for the initiative. We anticipate that the EABS and its members will contribute to the success of ICI and to achievement of its goals.

At the meeting there was acknowledgment that the achievements of the ICI over the last two years have been impressive and appreciation was expressed for the good work that has been done. Most of the discussion in the meeting, therefore, was centered on the need for more and better communication about the ICI and its work. In some areas, particularly the Teaching Collaboration, it is apparent that people have not known (or perhaps not understood) how it can be useful to students, scholars, and institutions. With regard to this matter, it was suggested that local liaisons in global regions should act as primary sources for communication. Josey Snyder, who works with SBL membership, was asked to look into targeting members in ICI qualifying countries and asking them to spread the word about ICI. Similarly, scholars who teach students from ICI qualifying countries are strongly encouraged to inform them of the ICI so that they can take the information back with them to their home countries.

There was a brief discussion regarding the donation of books to under-resourced areas. SBL has been working independently as well as with the Theological Book Network, to distribute books. The question as to whether SBL could make an announcement on the web site was raised and Leigh Andersen will work on this.

(b) INTERNATIONAL TEACHING COLLABORATION: LOCAL INITIATIVES

I mentioned in a previous report the local initiative taken by my own University. (For a reminder see below). We should develop more initiatives like this one, and above all we should make sure that potential students are well aware of these learning opportunities.

Reminder: The University of Alberta has initiated its own "International Cooperation in Teaching in the Field of Biblical Literature, Ancient Israel, Early Judaism and Early Christianity" aimed at developing a "two-way learning experience" across and beyond the financial boundaries that limit the scope of many international teaching collaborations. According to the pilot program, qualified (grad. or top undergraduate) students from ICI qualifying countries will be able to apply for registration as visiting (or open) students in classes taught by profs. Braun, Landy and myself. If accepted-- the basic requirements for admission to graduate courses at the University of Alberta apply--they will become e-learners in the course, but as any other student in the course, they will have to complete the required assignments and will receive the same feedback. If they register as "visiting students," they will also receive official credits from the University of Alberta, as any other student. Funds will be fundraised to pay for the equivalent of full tuition for one student for one course per year. The same initiative allows now students at the University of Alberta (be them graduate or top undergraduate) in the pertinent areas to take up to two

courses relevant to their studies as e-participants in academic institutions in ICI qualifying countries provided that they have received approval from their advisor/supervisor and the Faculty office, before registering to the course.

(c) PUBLICATIONS: IVBS

We were shown the prototype of the IVBS website during the meeting in New Orleans. It looks good. It is anticipated that the site will be ready and functional as of February 1 2010, with the first works being published a few months later. I want to stress that the goal of the series is to further scholarship by ensuring wide-availability and maximal, global readership for works written by scholars in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Central-Eastern Europe, and the Pacific Islands. If you become aware of manuscripts or articles that meet the criteria of IVBS, kindly encourage authors to submit them to IVBS for publication. For more information about IVBS please contact the general editors: Monica Melanchthon (monixm@gmail.com) and Louis Jonker (lcj@sun.ac.za). I encourage all the participants in this advisory body to consider submitting mss and to encourage others to do so.

(d) PUBLICATIONS: ONLINE BOOKS

For the list of the books published online as of December 3 2009 go to

http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/Books_ICIbooks.aspx

Despite the fact that November is the busiest month at the SBL office, the following books were added in November:

Brighton, Mark Andrew. *The Sicarii in Josephus's Judean War: Rhetorical Analysis and Historical Observations*. Early Judaism and Its Literature 27. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009.

This book offers a comprehensive study of the Sicarii in Josephus's *Judean War*. Detailed rhetorical analyses are provided not only for the Masada narrative, where Josephus tells how the Sicarii famously committed suicide, but also for all other places in War where their activities are described or must be inferred from the context. The study shows how Josephus adopted the Sicarii in his narrative to develop and bring to a resolution several major themes in War. In a departure from the classical proposal that the Sicarii were an armed and fanatical off-shoot of the Zealots, this work concludes that from a historical perspective, "Sicarii" was a somewhat fluid term used to describe Jews of the Judean revolt who were associated with acts of violence against their own people for religious/political ends.

Peters, Melvin K. H., editor. *XIII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies: Ljubljana, 2007*. Septuagint and Cognate Studies 55. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008.

This book represents the current state of Septuagint studies as reflected in papers presented at the triennial meeting of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies (IOSCS). In method, content, and approach, the proceedings published in this volume demonstrate the vitality of interest in Septuagint studies and the dedication of the authors—established scholars and promising younger voices—to their diverse subjects. This edition of the proceedings continues an established tradition of publishing volumes of essays from the international conferences of the IOSCS. The

contributors are Melvin K. H. Peters, Christian Amphoux et Arnaud Sérandour, Jean-Marie Auwers, Cameron Boyd-Taylor, Reinhart Ceulemans, Mario Cimosà and Gillian Bonney, Johann Cook, Evangelia G. Dafni, Dries De Crom, Nicholas de Lange, Cécile Dogniez, Peter J. Gentry, Katrin Hauspie, Robert J. V. Hiebert and Nathaniel N. Dykstra, Philippe Hugo, Jan Joosten, Edgar Kellenberger, Arie van der Kooij, Siegfried Kreuzer, Julia G. Krivoruchko, Timothy M. Law, R. Timothy McLay, Michaël N. van der Meer, James M. Scott, Raija Sollamo, and Georg Walsler.

A few more books will be added either before the end of December or early January.

We continue looking at possibilities to expand this program.

(e) PUBLICATIONS: ANEM/MACO

We had a very positive meeting of the ANEM/MACO editorial board in New Orleans. We are working to implement a publication plan according to which a significant number of volumes of high quality will be published in the series during the coming three years.

If you have a manuscript for the Ancient Near East Monograph Series/Monografias Sobre el Antiguo Cercano Oriente (ANEM/MACO) please contact Roxana Flammini (roxflamm@yahoo.com.ar) or Billie Jean Collins(billie.collins@sbl-site.org) or myself (ehud.ben.zvi@ualberta.ca). Keep in mind that Ancient Near East includes Ancient Israel.

(f) Composition of the Task Force

As per the original recommendations that lead to the establishment of ICI, there is a small Task Force appointed the SBL Executive Director whose purpose is to monitor the progress of the initiative and suggest changes as necessary. Up to now the Task Force was composed by Saul Olyan, Leigh Andersen and myself as chair. This composition reflected the team that developed the recommendations. As time passed, it was felt that the Task Force should be composed of individuals who are directly responsible for important sectors of ICI. Thus the new Task Force is composed of Louis Jonkers (IVBS), Monica Melanchthon (IVBS), Roxana Flammini (ANEM/MACO), Nat Levto (who will be the point person to increase awareness of ICI and its programs among scholars and students), Leigh Andersen (SBL office) and myself as chair. I am sure that you will join me in thanking Saul Olyan for the great contribution he made to international collaboration in our area of studies.

(g) EVENTS

Please let submit basic information about events to Sharon Johnson at sharon.johnson@sbl-site.org

There are a number of other events that may be of interest to this group.

December 2009

12/30 Call for Papers Deadline. The Society of Asian Biblical Studies (SABS) will hold its next meeting at the Divinity School, Chung Chi College, Chinese University of Hong Kong, June 14-16 2010. SABS seeks to

bring together scholars interested in and committed to Biblical Studies in various contexts of Asia/Oceania, including those in diaspora. For further information, please contact Monica Melanchthon at styofabs@gmail.com or Tat-siong Benny Liew at bliew@psr.edu

January 2010

1/16- 1/20 4th African Association for the Study of Religion (AASR) Conference in Africa, "Religion, Environment and Sustainable Development" at Ogsfemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. See AASR site (<http://www.a-asr.org/>) for more information.

June 2010

6/14-6/16 The Society of Asian Biblical Studies (SABS) will hold its next meeting at the Divinity School, Chung Chi College, Chinese University of Hong Kong.

SABS seeks to bring together scholars interested in and committed to Biblical Studies in various contexts of Asia/Oceania, including those in diaspora. For further information, please contact Monica Melanchthon at styofabs@gmail.com or Tat-siong Benny Liew at bliew@psr.edu

Call for Papers- deadline is December 30, 2009 (see above)

July 2010

Zoroastrians

ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies is organizing its Thirtieth Ninth International Conference on the theme of The Zoroastrians, to be held at the University of Oxford, 08-10 July 2010.

The conference aims to study Zoroastrian religion and culture, and it will start on Thursday 08 July at 9am, finishing on Saturday 10 July at 1pm. Each speaker's paper is limited to 30 minutes, with an additional 10 minutes for discussion.

If you wish to participate in the conference, please contact our Oxford address:

ARAM, the Oriental Institute, Oxford University, Pusey Lane, Oxford OX1 2LE, England. Tel. ++1865-514041. Fax ++1865-516824. Email: aram@aramsociety.org

July 27-29

Indonesian Biblical Scholars Meeting in Jakarta

The theme is The Development of the Wisdom's Tradition in the Bible.

For more information e-mail [Yonky Karman](mailto:ykarman@cbn.net.id) ykarman@cbn.net.id

(h) MEMBERSHIP

Please keep encouraging your colleagues and graduate students to join the Society and to contribute to shaping its future. Students from ICI qualifying countries have to pay only US \$ 10 and scholars from the same countries only US \$ 15 to become full members. Anyone who wishes to become a member and for whom this amount represents undue hardship is encouraged to contact Leigh. Please contact also Josey Snyder with any question related to this program.

(i) 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.

Best wishes,

Ehud

Ehud Ben Zvi, SBL - International Cooperation Initiative