

## **ICI REPORT FOR NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2013**

### **(a) ICI MEETING AT THE SBL ANNUAL MEETING IN BALTIMORE**

We are glad to report that we had a very good Advisory Board discussion in Baltimore with current ICI participants as well as with others who are interested in knowing more about the program. We discussed and evaluated the present initiatives. Particular attention was given to webcasting of six sessions to some ICI contexts (see below). We also reflected on how the SBL ICI could cooperate with some other similar scholarly organizations in promoting and fostering biblical scholarship globally. It was also emphasized in the discussion that ANEM allows publications in Spanish, while IVBS also accommodates publications in local vernaculars – provided that there are suitable people available to help with the peer-reviewing. We thank all participants for their valuable input, and will follow up the suggestions that were made of new initiatives.

If you wish to share concerns, new ideas, and/or feedback on any aspect at any time, please send your comments by e-mail to [Louis Jonker](mailto:Louis.Jonker@sbl-site.org) or to [Leigh Andersen](mailto:Leigh.Andersen@sbl-site.org) at the SBL.

### **(b) WEBCASTING OF SESSIONS OF THE SBL ANNUAL MEETINGS**

In 2012, SBL experimented with broadcasting two Annual Meeting sessions from Chicago to two ICI countries via Skype. Even with some technical glitches, the experiment was deemed a success. Lessons were learned from the experiment, and with better technology and equipment, we transmitted six sessions from the Baltimore meeting in November to groups in Bolivia, Brazil, , Egypt, Ghana, India, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, South Africa, and Ukraine. We thank Chris Hooker of the SBL staff for his tireless efforts to make this work. The initial and informal feedback from some groups shows that it was a great success, although some suggestions were also made how this can be made even more interactive. Chris and Tim Langille of the ICI Liaison task group will compile full feedback from these groups in order to learn from our experience for the San Diego conference in 2014. We are excited that the decision has already been taken to expand on this initiative, and also to consider the recording of meetings for later viewing in other parts of the world. More information will be provided in following newsletters.

Please take note that recordings of the presidential addresses of previous years are available at <http://www.sbl-site.org/aboutus.aspx>

### **(c) TRAVEL GRANTS FOR THE 2014 ANNUAL MEETING**

The SBL Travel Grants offer opportunity to four current SBL members to attend the Annual Meeting, participate in the program, enhance their professional development,

and network with fellow scholars. These grants help facilitate the work of Program Units and the International Cooperation Initiative (ICI). Two of the four awards (\$2,500.00 each) are made to members who have submitted accepted proposals to a Program Unit and have demonstrated that the work of the unit and the field will be enhanced by the person's participation. The Society will provide lodging (one room, single or shared) for four nights and complimentary meeting registration. Preference is given to members from ICI countries. The other two awards (\$1,000 each) will be granted to members participating in the ICI who have never attended an Annual Meeting. The grants defray transportation, hotel accommodations, and other expenses incurred for the Annual Meeting. Applications for the 2014 Annual Meeting will be accepted until March 1, 2014. For more information on applying for an SBL Travel Grant, please contact Beth Tracy [beth.tracy@sbl-site.org](mailto:beth.tracy@sbl-site.org).

(d) 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. Below is information on the latest volume, and we are looking forward to three more volumes that will be published in the coming months.

**The latest volume**

Israel Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel*. ANEM/MACO. Atlanta: SBL, 2013.

(to download the book click [here](#))

Although Israel was dominant for most of the time the kingdoms of Israel and Judah coexisted, it has remained in Judah's shadow in both the Hebrew Bible and consequently in the attention of modern scholarship. This book presents the first comprehensive history of the northern kingdom and description of the archaeology of northern Israel from the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1350 B.C.E.) until the kingdom's fall in 720 B.C.E. and beyond. It tells the story of the northern kingdom primarily in its formative phases. The narrative is based in archaeology and makes use of the most updated field research, with the addition of what is known from ancient Near Eastern and biblical texts. Finkelstein's thirty years of fieldwork in the northern kingdom have paved the way for a new understanding of the history and archaeology of ancient Israel.

Israel Finkelstein is Professor of Archaeology at Tel Aviv University. He has conducted numerous field projects, including excavations at biblical Shiloh and Megiddo. He is the author of many books, notably *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (Israel Exploration Society) and *Living on the Fringe* (Sheffield Academic Press), the co-author, with Neil A. Silberman, of *The Bible Unearthed* and *David and Solomon* (both from Free Press), and was awarded the prestigious Dan David Prize in the Past Dimension in 2005.

To view the other volumes published in the series, please go to [http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/Books\\_ANEmonographs.aspx](http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/Books_ANEmonographs.aspx)

(e) 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 (who took over as co-general editor from Louis Jonker in November 2013). 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>

**The latest volume**

Michael Avioz, Elie Assis, and Yael Shemesh (eds.) *ZER RIMONIM Studies in Biblical Literature and Jewish Exegesis Presented to Professor Rimon Kasher*. IVBS. Atlanta: SBL, 2013.

The present volume is a collection of original papers written in honor of Professor Rimon Kasher, emeritus professor of Bible at Bar-Ilan University, where he taught for nearly forty years. All the papers included in this volume were written in modern Hebrew, but a short summary of each paper is supplied in English. These contributions are the fruits of ongoing research done in Israel by Israeli scholars. The authors whose papers are presented here teach at Bar-Ilan University and at other Israeli universities: Tel Aviv University; Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Haifa University, Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

## (f) 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))

**Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond**

Creangă, Ovidiu, ed. *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond*. Bible in the Modern World, 33. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

The study of masculinity in the Bible is increasingly becoming established as a field of critical inquiry in biblical gender studies. This book highlights a variety of methodological approaches that reveal the complex and multifaceted construction of masculinity in biblical and post-biblical literature. It focuses uniquely and explicitly on men and the world they inhabit, documenting changes in the type of men and masculinities deemed legitimate, or illegitimate, across various social and historical contexts of the ancient Near East. At the same time, it interrogates readers' assumptions about the writers' positioning of male bodies, sexuality and relationships in a gender order created to reflect men's interests, yet in need of constant reordering.

In this volume specific features of biblical masculinity are explored: the masculinity of less favoured sons in Genesis (Susan Haddox); the ideology of Temple masculinity in Chronicles (Roland Boer); the masculinity of Moses (Brian DiPalma); the performative nature of masculinity in the Sinai episode (David Clines); Deuteronomy's regimentation of masculinity (Mark George); Joshua's hegemonic masculinity in the Conquest Narrative (Ovidiu Creangă); Naaman's disability in relation to ideologies of masculinity (Cheryl Strimple and Ovidiu Creangă); Job's position as a man in charge in the Testament of Job (Maria Haralambakis); Priestly notions of sexuality in the covenant of the rainbow and circumcision in Genesis (Sandra Jacobs); Samson's masculinity in terms of male honour (Ela Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska); the popular depiction of Jeremiah as a 'lamenting prophet' against the book of Jeremiah's male ideology (C.J. Patrick Davis); the gendered interaction of a Bible-study group with Daniel's dreams (Andrew Todd). Finally, David Clines and Stephen Moore offer closing critical reflections that situate the book's topics within a broader spectrum of issues in masculinity.

**Echoes of Friendship in the Gospel of John**

Culy, Martin M. *Echoes of Friendship in the Gospel of John*. New Testament Monographs, 30. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

Friendship in the Graeco-Roman world took a wide variety of forms, with some 'friendships' involving nothing more than a political alliance or patron-client

relationship and others involving deep personal intimacy. When Jesus says his disciples are to be called ‘friends’, what type of friendship does he have in mind?

Friendship may seem a relatively insignificant motif in the Gospel of John, since the author does not explicitly set out to provide a philosophical discourse on the nature of friendship, nor does he explicitly state that the narrative is about friendship. In this study, however, Culy, having carefully examined Graeco-Roman literature on friendship, demonstrates that the language of what he calls ‘ideal friendship’ actually pervades the Fourth Gospel from beginning to end and serves as a primary vehicle for characterizing the relationships that are introduced in the Prologue and fleshed out throughout the course of the narrative.

Taking up the friendship motif as a tool of characterization, the Gospel of John points to a striking implication of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus: that followers of Jesus are invited to enjoy a level of intimacy with him that can actually, and perhaps only, be compared to the level of intimacy that he enjoys with the Father. The Johannine Jesus, then, came not just to save the world but also to offer those who would follow him a relationship that Graeco-Roman philosophers only dreamed of, a relationship where all the ingredients of ideal friendship were present.

### **The Future of the Biblical Past**

Boer, Roland and Fernando F. Segovia. *The Future of the Biblical Past*. Semeia Studies, 66. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.

What does global biblical studies look like in the early decades of the twenty-first century, and what new directions may be discerned? Profound shifts have taken place over the last few decades as voices from the majority of the globe have begun and continue to reshape and relativize biblical studies. With contributors from Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America, this volume is a truly global work, offering surveys and assessments of the current situation and suggestions for the future of biblical criticism in all corners of the world. The contributors are Yong-Sung Ahn, George Aichele, Pablo R. Andiñach, Roland Boer, Fiona Black, Philip Chia, Nancy Cardoso Pereira, Jione Havea, Israel Kamudzandu, Milena Kirova, Tat-siong Benny Liew, Monica Melancthon, Judith McKinlay, Sarojini Nadar, Jorge Pixley, Jeremy Punt, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Fernando F. Segovia, Hanna Stenström, Vincent Wimbush, and Gosnell Yorke.

### **The Hebrew Bible and Philosophy of Religion**

Gericke, Jaco. *The Hebrew Bible and Philosophy of Religion*. Resources for Biblical Study, 70. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.

This study pioneers the use of philosophy of religion in the study of the Hebrew Bible. After identifying the need for a legitimate philosophical approach to Israelite religion, the volume traces the history of interdisciplinary relations and shows how descriptive varieties of philosophy of religion can aid the clarification of the Hebrew Bible's own metaphysical, epistemological, and moral assumptions. Two new interpretative methodologies are developed and subsequently applied through an introduction to what the biblical texts took for granted about the nature of religious language, the concept of deity, the properties of Yhwh, the existence of gods, religious epistemology, and the relation between religion and morality.

### **Proclus the Successor on Poetics and the Homeric Poems: Essays 5 and 6 of His Commentary on Plato's Republic**

Lamberton, Robert. *Proclus the Successor on Poetics and the Homeric Poems: Essays 5 and 6 of His Commentary on Plato's Republic*. Writings from the Greco-Roman World, 34. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.

Proclus's Commentary on Plato's Republic contains in its fifth and sixth essays the only systematic analysis of the workings of the allegorical text to reach us from polytheist antiquity. In the context of defending Homer against the criticisms leveled by Socrates in the Republic, Proclus, a late-antique polytheist thinker, provides not only a rich selection of interpretive material, but also an analysis of Homer's polysemous text whose influence can be observed in the work of the founder of modern semiotics, Charles Sanders Peirce. This first modern translation into English, with Greek text facing and limited commentary, makes it possible to appreciate the importance of Proclus in the history of both hermeneutics and semiotics.

#### **(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.

Please provide information on conferences in your region, including calls for papers, to Sharon Johnson at [sharon.johnson@sbl-site.org](mailto:sharon.johnson@sbl-site.org).

**January 27-29, 2014****International Conference on New Research in Hebrew Language and Culture**

Hosted by the New Department of Hebrew, Faculty of the Humanities, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

The conference will deal with a variety of topics, including: Hebrew Language and Culture in Africa; The Bible and Its Commentaries; Ancient and Modern Translations of the Bible in Africa; Linguistic Approaches to Hebrew; Comparative and Typological Approaches to Hebrew; Rabbinical Literature; Philosophical Sources in Hebrew; Comparative Study of Hebrew Language; Literature and Religion; Hebrew Language and Science; Hebrew Language and Politics; Hebrew Language and Law. Paper proposals for 25 minute talks related to the conference themes should be sent by the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013. The primary and preferred language of the conference is English. Papers in Hebrew may be accepted provided that the full text in English is supplied for conference participants. Abstracts [in English or Hebrew] should be emailed to Dr. Gudrun Lier [gelier@uj.ac.za](mailto:gelier@uj.ac.za).

Conference organizers:

Prof. Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé, University of the Free State ([millercl@ufs.ac.za](mailto:millercl@ufs.ac.za))

Prof. Jacobus A. Naudé, University of the Free State ([naudej@ufs.ac.za](mailto:naudej@ufs.ac.za))

Dr. Gudrun Eli Lier, University of Johannesburg ([gelier@uj.ac.za](mailto:gelier@uj.ac.za))

Prof. Yosef Rivlin, Bar-Ilan University ([joseph.rivlin@biu.ac.il](mailto:joseph.rivlin@biu.ac.il))

**January 30 – February 1, 2014****Exploring New Frontiers for Post-western Biblical Studies**

The Biblical Studies Department of the United Theological College, Bangalore, India, is organizing Bible Darshan, an International Conference from January 30-Feb.1, 2014, in Bangalore, India on the theme: Exploring New Frontiers for Post-western Biblical Studies  
Coordinator: Dr. Dexter S. Maben ([utcbibledarshan@gmail.com](mailto:utcbibledarshan@gmail.com))

**June 22-25, 2014****[Meeting of Society of Asian Biblical Studies \(SABS\)](#)**

The next meeting of the SABS will be held from the 22nd to the 25th of June 2014 (arrival 22nd and departure 26th) in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The meeting is jointly hosted by the Church of Christ in Thailand and the McGilvary College of Divinity, Payap University. The theme of the conference is "Violence in the Human and Earth

Community—Asian Biblical Response.” For more information regarding this conference go to <http://www.sabs-site.com/>. Please write to [the Secretary](#) for any queries.

**July 6-10, 2014**

**[SBL International Meeting &  
European Association of Biblical Studies Meeting](#)**

To be held in Vienna. Call for papers is presently open and is closing on February 5, 2014.

(h) NEW FREE FONT – SBL BibLit

The Society of Biblical Literature is pleased to announce the newest font in the SBL fonts series, SBL BibLit. This font contains Latin, Greek, and Hebrew characters, including the characters suitable for the transliteration of Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean languages. When combined with appropriate software keyboards, SBL BibLit allows for the use of one font for all biblical languages. For more information, please go to <http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/2013FontAnnouncement.pdf>

(i) PLEASE PASS THE INFORMATION.

It is surprising that we continue to have correspondence from scholars in ICI countries that are just learning about the ICI programs. Please share this newsletter with your colleagues and students and become a liaison for your institution and SBL. Your advocacy for ICI strengthens biblical studies as a discipline and builds relationships in the global community.

(j) CHANGE OF GUARD

During the past six years the name of Ehud ben Zvi was synonymous with the ICI and particularly this newsletter. He led this initiative from the beginning and served as chair during the past six years. Ehud decided to retire from this position, although he will remain a member of the ICI executive (ex officio as co-editor of ANEM). It was decided that Louis Jonker (Stellenbosch, South Africa) will lead the initiative further as chair of the ICI executive. Louis has been involved in the ICI since its first consultation during the Vienna ISBL in 2007, and has served as co-general editor of IVBS since 2008. He is stepping down from that role, and Jione Havea will take that position in IVBS.

We thank Ehud ben Zvi for his tireless efforts to foster biblical scholarship globally, and his hard work in the ICI. We will still count on his wisdom and support in coming years!



For a fitting tribute to Ehud's work, see the 2013 SBL report:  
[http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/SR2013\\_efile.pdf](http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/SR2013_efile.pdf) (page 7)

We wish all readers of this newsletter a blessed festive season!

Louis Jonker, SBL – International Cooperation Initiative (incoming chair)  
Ehud Ben Zvi, SBL - International Cooperation Initiative (outgoing chair)