

It is my pleasure to distribute the ICI REPORT for February 2009 and to share with you our best wishes for 2009.

(a) 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.

(b) INTERNATIONAL TEACHING COLLABORATION

The beta version of the database will be running, most likely, in March.

In the meantime, if you have not done this already, let us know if your institution would like to participate either by allowing/encouraging its students to take--free of charge--courses via e-communication with professors outside their country, involve such professors as co-supervisors of theses, or invite these professors to teach a term or two in their institutions--for a low or no fee. If you are unsure whether your institution is in the list, please contact Leigh Andersen leigh.andersen@sbl-site.org.

(c) NEW ONLINE BOOKS AND REQUEST FOR SUBMISSIONS

Twelve new volumes have been added to the list of books freely available online from countries whose GDP per person is significantly lower than the average of the USA and EU. We remain committed to the goal of publishing about ten volumes by the end of each month. We would like to hear from you about any particular books you would like to see added to the list in the near future. For the books added this month see below. Please note that two of the books are from the Brown Judaic Studies series, which has joined our common endeavour.

If you have or know of someone who has a manuscript that might be appropriate for publication in International Voices in Biblical Studies (IVBS), please contact Louis Jonker (lcj@sun.ac.za) or Monica Melanchthon (monixm@gmail.com). We are working on the web presence of IVBS.

If you have or know of someone who has a manuscript that might be appropriate for publication in 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).

(d) CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please send Sharon Johnson (sharon.johnson@sbl-site.org) any information about national, regional or local scholarly conferences, so we may develop a central place in the web where anyone can learn what is going around in terms of research.

(e) MEMBERSHIP

Leigh sent a message to the list about two weeks ago. As one of the attachment to that message clearly demonstrates, the SBL has very few student members outside North America, Europe, New Zealand, and Australia. In fact, there is one or no students at all from institutions in most of the countries at the focus of the ICI efforts. Collaboration must be a two-way street. Thus, we would like to see the numbers of institutions from these countries grow and especially those of graduate students members with the hope that they will raise their concerns, carry a voice in the future of the Society and in the development of ICI so that we may, all together, foster scholarship in biblical literature into the 21st century. Students are supposed to pay only \$ 10 membership, and if this would represent undue hardship, they may contact Leigh--may I mention also that membership for scholars from the same countries is only \$ 15. I, like Leigh, would like to encourage you to distribute the membership form for residents of qualifying countries to colleagues and students not only in your home institution but in your region as well. Many of you receiving this message are not in countries whose GDP per person is substantially lower than the average between the USA and EU and therefore, neither you nor your students qualify for these special rates. This said, I like Leigh hope that you, too, will promote SBL membership regardless of your location. Please note that attached form includes space for sponsoring a colleague or student in a qualifying country at the special membership rate. If you would like to help in this way, please be sure that your form is sent directly to Leigh. If you would like to donate to SBL for this purpose, but do not have a specific individual you wish to sponsor, please write "Donation" in the name field of the sponsorship section. Alternatively, you may go to our Society Fund website and select International Cooperation Initiative under the "Donate to" heading (<https://www.sbl-site.org/membership/donatenow.aspx?>).

(f) LIST OF NEWLY ADDED BOOKS

(1) Allen, James P., *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*. Writings from the Ancient World 23. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.

The Pyramid Texts are the oldest body of extant literature from ancient Egypt. First carved on the walls of the burial chambers in the pyramids of kings and queens of the Old Kingdom, they provide the earliest comprehensive view of the way in which the ancient Egyptians understood the structure of the universe, the role of the gods, and the fate of human beings after death. Their importance lies in their antiquity and in their endurance throughout the entire intellectual history of ancient Egypt. This volume contains the complete translation of the Pyramid Texts, including new texts recently discovered and published. It incorporates full restorations and readings indicated by post-Old Kingdom copies of the texts and is the first translation that presents the texts in the order in which they were meant to be read in each of the original sources.

(2) Arnold, Bill T. *Who Were the Babylonians?* Archaeology and Biblical Studies 10. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2004.

Who was Hammurapi, and what role did his famous "law code" serve in ancient Babylonian society? Who was the mysterious Merodach-baladan, and why did the appearance of his emissaries in Jerusalem so upset Isaiah? Who was Nebuchadnezzar II, and why did he tear down the Solomonic temple and drag the people of God into exile? In short, who were the Babylonians?

This engaging and informative introduction to the best of current scholarship on the Babylonians and their role in biblical history answers these and other significant questions. The Babylonians were important not only because of their many historical contacts with ancient Israel but because they and their predecessors, the Sumerians, established the philosophical and social infrastructure for most of Western Asia for nearly two millennia. Beginning and advanced students as well as biblical scholars and interested nonspecialists will read this introduction to the history and culture of the Babylonians with interest and profit.

(3) Bellis, Alice Ogden and Joel S. Kaminsky, ed.. *Jews, Christians, and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures*. Symposium Series 8. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

This volume explores how Jewish and Christian religious commitments affect theological appraisals of the Hebrew Scriptures. Further, it documents how contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue influences modern critical reflection on the theology of the Hebrew Bible. Growing out of the Society of Biblical Literature's Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures Section, this volume presents essays by leading Jewish and Christian scholars of the Hebrew Bible.

These essays capture central debates emerging from the changed landscape in which Jews and Christians now study the Bible in each other's presence. In addition they reflect the excitement generated by the greater clarity and new depths of meaning that Jews and Christians perceive in the biblical text when they work together in the task of interpretation. Thus Joseph's words in Gen 43:3 become prophetic for a new situation: "You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you." Symposium Series

(4) Gordon, Cyrus H. *A Scholar's Odyssey*. Biblical Scholarship in North America 20. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Winner of the 2000 National Jewish Book Award for Autobiography/Memoir. Cyrus H. Gordon was Professor Emeritus of Hebrew and Near Eastern Languages and Literatures at New York University, and Professor Emeritus of Classics at Brandeis University.

This memoir of the late Cyrus Gordon, linguist, biblical scholar, and provocative interpreter of the ancient Mediterranean world, provides a rich portrayal of the individuals who he encountered over the years and the ideas that shaped his interpretations. His achievements include his *Ugaritic Grammar*, which made Canaanite religious literature accessible to scholars; his pioneering emphasis on the connections between the ancient Greek and Hebrew worlds; and his decipherment of Linear A, which led to his controversial conclusion that the Minoans of ancient Crete were Semites. His book describes archaeological digs in the 1930s, code-breaking during World War II, and scholarly triumphs and travails throughout the decades.

(5) Green, Barbara. *Mikhail Bakhtin and Biblical Scholarship: An Introduction*. Semeia Studies 38. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.

Though the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) has been widely appropriated in the various humanities and social science fields, his thought has not yet been widely utilized in biblical studies. This book presents both the wide-ranging elements of his complex thought and also sketches the context of the life from which it emerged. It also offers access to the conversation going on in circles beyond the study of religion, specifically philosophy, anthropology, and literary

studies. Bakhtin's interest in matters specifically literary as well as more broadly cultural make him a theorist helpful to biblical scholars seeking to renegotiate the sometimes disparate realms of language and history. Bakhtin's careful attention to details of language shared by narrator and characters as well as his far-reaching sense of what happens when language is reused repeatedly within the tradition make his ideas stimulating within the vortex of current biblical discourse. His insistence that the multiplicity of voices decenters control from any single speaking or interpreting position challenges a number of positions in theology and hermeneutics, while his sense that the author does not disappear from the work of art challenges recent suppositions of language theory and linguistics.

(6) Hayes, Katherine M. *"The Earth Mourns" Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*. Academia Biblica 8. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2002.

This book brings current research on oral traditional poetry to bear on a recurrent biblical prophetic metaphor: the mourning earth. Tracing persistence and flexibility in phraseological and thematic patterning within a set of nine prophetic compositions, the study explores in each passage the particular expression and literary impact of the metaphor and its attendant themes and motifs. Since consideration is given to the diachronic dimensions of the nine texts, the study serves as an illustration of the operation of an oral or oral-derived aesthetic within the biblical prophetic traditions over a range of historical settings as well as prophetic genres.

(7) Kaltner, John and Steven L. McKenzie, eds. *Beyond Babel: A Handbook for Biblical Hebrew and Related Languages*. Resources for Biblical Study 42. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature 2002.

According to the well-known story in Genesis 11, the Lord saw the Tower of Babel under construction and said, "Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech" (Gen 11:7, nrsv). In generation after succeeding generation, students of the Bible have had reason to regret the confusion of languages in the biblical world and the ancient Near East.

Beyond Babel helps to ease the pain of such students by providing a general introduction to and overview of the languages that are significant for the study of the Hebrew Bible and ancient Israel. Included are essays on Biblical and inscriptional Hebrew; Akkadian; Northwest Semitic dialects (Ammonite, Edomite, and Moabite); Arabic; Aramaic; Egyptian; Hittite; Phoenician; Post-biblical Hebrew; and Ugaritic.

Each chapter in the volume shares a common format, including an overview of the language, a discussion of its significance for the Hebrew Bible, and a list of ancient sources and modern resources for further study of the language. The contributors are Peggy L. Day, Frederick E. Greenspahn, Jo Ann Hackett, Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., John Kaltner, Charles R. Krahmalkov, Baruch A. Levine, David Marcus, Simon B. Parker, and Donald B. Redford. A general introduction by John Huehnergard discusses the importance of the study of Near Eastern languages for biblical scholarship, helping to make the volume an ideal resource for persons beginning an in-depth study of the Hebrew Bible.

(8) Kirk, Alan and Tom Thatcher, eds. *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*. Semeia Studies 52. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.

Social and cultural memory theory examines the ways communities and individuals reconstruct and commemorate their pasts in light of shared experiences and current social realities. Drawing on the methods of this emerging field, this volume both introduces memory theory to biblical scholars and restores the category “memory” to a preeminent position in research on Christian origins. In the process, the volume challenges current approaches to research problems in Christian origins, such as the history of the Gospel traditions, the birth of early Christian literature, ritual and ethics, and the historical Jesus. The essays, taken in aggregate, outline a comprehensive research agenda for examining the beginnings of Christianity and its literature and also propose a fundamentally revised model for the phenomenology of early Christian oral tradition, assess the impact of memory theory upon historical Jesus research, establish connections between memory dynamics and the appearance of written Gospels, and assess the relationship of early Christian commemorative activities with the cultural memory of ancient Judaism. Contributors include April D. DeConick, Arthur J. Dewey, Philip F. Esler, Holly Hearon, Richard Horsley, Georgia Masters Keightley, Werner Kelber, Alan Kirk, Barry Schwartz, Tom Thatcher, and Antoinette Clark Wire.

(9) Lasine, Stuart. *Knowing Kings: Knowledge, Power, and Narcissism in the Hebrew Bible*. Semeia Studies 40. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2001.

In *Knowing Kings*, biblical scholar and comparatist Stuart Lasine offers a unique study of kingship and biblical kings. Using methods derived from psychology, literary theory, and the social sciences, he demonstrates the crucial role played by information management in the maintenance and exercise of monarchical power, and explores the paradoxical nature of the king’s position in the center of society. Lasine’s interdisciplinary approach includes illuminating interpretations of the biblical Saul, David, and Solomon, as well as the kingly figures Adam and Job. Among the non-biblical monarchs discussed are Ramesses II, Esarhaddon, Homer’s Achilles and Sophocles’s King Oedipus. Lasine shows that the concept of narcissism provides a valuable tool for understanding the behavior of biblical kings, including the divine king and parent Yahweh. *Knowing Kings*, painstakingly researched and carefully documented, is frequently surprising as Lasine employs a variety of inventive styles to keep the discussion lively and to sustain the reader’s interest.

(10) Turner, John D. and Ruth Majercik, eds. *Gnosticism and Later Platonism: Themes, Figures, and Texts*. Symposium 12. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2001.

This volume is devoted to an exploration of the relation between Gnosticism and later Platonism in the first four centuries C. E. The essays presented here originated in presentations made during the 1993–1998 meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature’s Gnosticism and Later Platonism Seminar by ranking scholars in the fields of Gnosticism and the history of later Greek, especially Platonic, philosophy. Not only do they represent the cutting edge of this branch of scholarship, but they also introduce the reader to many facets of Sethian and Valentinian texts, ritual, and doctrine, to the metaphysics of Moderatus, the Chaldaean Oracles, Numenius, Amelius, Plotinus, and Iamblichus, and to the nature of negative theology and theurgy. The topics include: Platonic and Gnostic doctrines of Matter (Einar Thomassen and Kevin Corrigan); Gnostic ritual and Neoplatonic theurgy (John D. Turner and Gregory Shaw); the case for a pre-Plotinian Middle Platonic origin of the theological interpretation of Plato’s Parmenides in such works as the Anonymous Commentary on the Parmenides and the Nag Hammadi Sethian treatises Zostrianos and Allogenes (Kevin Corrigan and John D. Turner); the relationship between the metaphysics of Iamblichus and the Platonizing

Sethian treatises, especially Marsanes (John Finamore); Platonic and Gnostic uses of negative theology (John P. Kenney and Michael A. Williams); and the nature of Providence in Plotinus and Sethian Gnosticism (Frederick M. Schroeder).

From Brown Judaic Studies

(11) Corley, Jeremy. *Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship*. Brown Judaic Studies 316. Providence, R.I., Brown University, 2002.

How did the ancient Israelites view friendship? Our best source is the Wisdom of Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus), written in Jerusalem in the early second century B.C.E. Corley's work is the first in-depth study in English of Ben Sira's teaching on friendship, setting Ben Sira's thought in the context of earlier Hebrew, Greek, and Egyptian writings on friendship. Working with the medieval Hebrew manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah, the volume provides a thorough elucidation of Ben Sira's seven main poems on friendship, and then summarizes the sage's theology of friendship.

(12) Sinkoff, Nancy. *Out of the Shtetl: Making Jews Modern in the Polish Borderlands*. Brown Judaic Studies 336. Providence, R.I., Brown University 2004.

Out of the Shtetl: Making Jews Modern in the Polish Borderlands explores the cultural and intellectual history of the encounter of Polish Jews with the West, the European Enlightenment, and the Jewish Enlightenment (the Haskalah) in Berlin in the eighteenth century. It does so through a study of the lives of Mendel Lefin of Satanów (1749–1826) and his most eminent disciple, Joseph Perl (1773–1839), two exemplary representatives of eighteenth-century enlightened Polish Jewry. Their formulation of the moderate Jewish Enlightenment had a profound influence on its development in both Austrian Galicia and Russia in the nineteenth century. By articulating a response to the most influential intellectual currents of their day specific to the Polish-Jewish community, Lefin and Perl gave voice to the shaping of the modern East European Jew.

Best wishes,

Ehud

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