

ICI REPORT FOR AUGUST 2013

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

Date: Saturday, November 23, 2013

Time: 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Room: Camedon - Sheraton Inner Harbor

Current ICI participants, which includes anyone receiving this report, and those who are interested in knowing more about the program are invited to attend this Advisory Board discussion.

We are aware that many of us will not be able to come to Baltimore. If you wish to share concerns, new ideas, and/or feedback on any aspect of the collaboration with us at the meeting, but you cannot do that in person, please send your comments by e-mail to me or to [Leigh Andersen](#) at the SBL and your note will be read at the meeting.

(b) SBL NEW GREEK TESTAMENT

The SBLGNT is edited by Michael W. Holmes, who utilized a wide range of printed editions, all the major critical apparatuses, and the latest technical resources and manuscript discoveries as he established the text. The result is a critically edited text that differs from the Nestle-Aland/United Bible Societies text in more than 540 variation units. For a free download click [here](#).

(c) SBL OPEN-ACCESS WEB-RESOURCES: SBL INTERVIEWS

This is a series of 20 minute conversations with Bible scholars who work in diverse areas of biblical studies, archaeology, classics, and ancient Near Eastern studies. Just click [here](#).

(d) SBL OPEN-ACCESS WEB-RESOURCES: SBL MEMBERS SYLLABI COLLECTION

As per title, just click [here](#). Please consider adding yours syllabi to the collection. For information about how to do that, please go to the notice at the bottom of that page.

(e) LISTENING AND ENGAGING SESSIONS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SBL

We continue working to make this happen. We will have more sessions than before. More information will be available in the next report.

(f) PUBLICATIONS: ONLINE BOOKS – NEW BOOKS ADDED

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

- (1) Miller, Robert D., Ed. *Syriac and Antiochian Exegesis and Biblical Theology for the 3rd Millennium*. Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 6. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2008.

The observation that scholarly work on the Bible is of little use to theologians is the starting premise for this volume. As a possible solution to this impasse, the contributors explore the potential insights provided by a distinct tradition of biblical interpretation that has its roots in both the patristic School of Antioch and in the Syriac Fathers, such as Ephrem and Jacob of Sarug, and which has survived and developed in the Churches of the Antiochene Patrimony, such as the Maronite and Syriac. Some of the essays have a patristic focus, examining Aphrahat (Craig Morrison), Ephrem (Sidney Griffith), the 4th-century *Book of Steps* (Robert Kitchen), John Chrysostom (Paul Tarazi), and other Syriac fathers (Edward Mathews). Others engage with modern historical-critical method more directly (Angela Harkins, Stephen Ryan, Anthony Salim). Another still challenges the very assumption assumed by other contributors of an Antiochene “School” (John O’Keefe). The volume concludes with a series of responses from Paul Russell, Robert Miller, and Ronald Beshara, respectively, that consider the various essays from different angles. Here one of the key questions asked is whether biblical interpretation done “with Antioch” is relevant to the church today

- (2) Farag, Lois. *St. Cyril of Alexandria, A New Testament Exegete*. *Gorgias Studies in Early Christianity and Patristics*. Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2007.

This study portrays Cyril of Alexandria as exegete and theologian through an examination of his Commentary on the Gospel of John. It begins with an attempt to place Cyril and his commentary within their context. Cyril’s multifaceted personality becomes evident in the years before he became bishop. A Christian Egyptian and a citizen of the Roman Empire, raised in the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria and trained as an ascetic in Scetis, a student of Scripture and rhetoric, Cyril became a writer, an exegete, and a reader in the Church of Alexandria. This work argues that Cyril wrote his Commentary on the Gospel of John early in his writing career, almost a decade before becoming bishop.

Cyril's commentary on the Johannine Gospel reveals his exegetical method and his strong Trinitarian theology. Influenced by his rhetorical training, he begins with the literal meaning and then directs his readers to the deeper, spiritual, hidden, and enigmatic meaning of the text. Cyril's spiritual interpretation aims to disclose the type of Christ and discover the deep and hidden meaning of scripture. The Trinity is the framework within which Cyril articulates his understanding of the Incarnation and redemption. The unity, oneness, and indivisibility of Christ are preserved at all times and under all conditions, not only within his own nature but also within the Trinity. The commentary also focuses the nature and work of the Holy Spirit: the indwelling of the Spirit is the beginning of the newness of life.

- (3) Sorek, Susan. *Remembered for Good: A Jewish Benefaction System in Ancient Palestine*. The Social World of Biblical Antiquity, Second Series, 5. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

This is the first monograph devoted to the system of community benefaction practised by Jews in Palestine from the second century BCE to the sixth century CE. Principal is the evidence from synagogue inscriptions erected to patrons and donors from the second century CE onwards. All these inscriptions are reviewed, together with a re-examination of how they are to be translated.

Sorek is especially interested in the motivation for benefactions, and concludes that the Jewish system attested in the inscriptions is specific to the Jewish community. It was not merely a copy of the well-known Graeco-Roman system of euergetism, in which rich citizens contributed from their wealth to public expenses. But neither was the Jewish system properly an expression of charity, as has often been thought. Sorek argues that the benefaction system is best understood as an expression of *hesed*, the meaning of which she explores in detail.

- (4) Gray, John. *The Book of Job*. Text of the Hebrew Bible, 1. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010.

John Gray, who was Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Languages in the University of Aberdeen, left at his death in 2000 a complete manuscript of a commentary on the Book of Job. Rich in text-critical and philological observations, the manuscript has been carefully prepared for the press; it will soon become a standard work for scholars and students of the biblical book, and a fitting tribute to the sound judgment and innovative scholarship of its author.

Gray's commentary on Job, which is prefaced by a lengthy general introduction, is the first volume in a new series of commentaries on the text of the Hebrew Bible. All the volumes will concentrate on the text criticism and philology of the Hebrew text, a feature notably lacking or merely perfunctory in many current biblical commentary series.

- (5) Anderson, Robert T. and Terry Giles. *The Samaritan Pentateuch: An Introduction to Its Origin, History, and Significance for Biblical Studies*. Resources for Biblical Study, 72. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.

The Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) is the sacred scripture of the Samaritans, a tenacious religious community made famous by Jesus' Good Samaritan story that persists to this day. Not so widely known is the impact of the SP outside the Samaritan community. Recently there has been a resurgence of interest in this scripture, as evidenced by several translations of the SP as well as reference in Qumran scroll studies to the SP or an SP-like tradition in an effort to describe some of the textual evidence present in the scrolls. This volume presents a general introduction to and overview of the SP, suitable for a course text and as a reference tool for the professional scholar.

(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>

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

September 19-20

[Biblical Studies, West and East: Trends, Challenges and Prospects](#)

Conference hosted by the Department of Theology of the Ukrainian Catholic University. Abstracts are being accepted for the three panels: Current Methods and Approaches in Biblical Studies, Judaic Context of the New Testament, Hebrew and Greek Bibles. Indications of interest should be made as soon as possible with an abstract of up to 300 words and a short CV to Yuriy Shchurko. Inclusion in/and panels will be confirmed by September 3rd 2013 at the latest. For more information: <http://ucu.edu.ua/eng/announcements/1490/>

November 23-26**[SBL Annual Meeting](#)**

The SBL Annual Meeting is the largest gathering of biblical scholars in the world. Each meeting showcases the latest in biblical research, fosters collegial contacts, advances research, and focuses on issues of the profession. The Annual Meeting will be held in Baltimore, Maryland. **[More information.](#)**

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 opens in October.

(h) PLEASE PASS THE INFORMATION.

Ehud

Ehud Ben Zvi, SBL - International Cooperation Initiative