

It is my pleasure to distribute the ICI REPORT for January 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

I hope that a beta version running soon of the databases we talked about will be up and running before the next report. The people at the SBL are working on this matter.

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.

In addition, may I encourage those who actively participated in the productive (and lively) conversation we had at the ICI Advisory Board about practical plans for two-way collaboration involving two institutions to share their comments, plans and hopefully at some point, experiences with the list. So we may all learn.

(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.

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).

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

The SBL continues charging only US\$15 for a regular membership and US\$10 for a student membership for any interested scholars and students in countries whose GDP per person is significantly lower than the average of the USA and EU and who apply through the relevant form (see website). (Just for comparison, the regular charge is US\$65, and US\$25 for students.) Should individuals be unable to pay by credit card, please contact Leigh to set other arrangements.

(f) LIST OF NEWLY ADDED BOOKS

(1) Albl, Martin C., trans. Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa: Testimonies against the Jews. Writings from the Greco-Roman World 8. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2004.

This volume provides the first translation into any modern language of Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa's Testimonies against the Jews, a late fourth-century C.E. example of the scriptural testimonia genre. In this genre early Christians compiled biblical quotations, arranged under topical headings and accompanied by interpretive remarks, that functioned as "testimonies" in support of basic Christian beliefs and claims. In his notes Albl describes a unified yet flexible tradition that spread over the entire Mediterranean region, was expressed in Greek, Latin, and other languages, and flourished from the first century well beyond the fifth century. This volume, with Greek text and English translation on facing pages, will enable and stimulate greater interest and research in a neglected area of scholarship.

(2) Boer, Roland, ed. Bakhtin and Genre Theory in Biblical Studies. Semeia Studies 63. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

This volume offers a meeting between genre theory in biblical studies and the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, who continues to be immensely influential in literary criticism. Here Bakhtin comes face to face with

a central area of biblical studies: the question of genre. The essays range from general discussions of genre through the reading of specific biblical texts to an engagement with Toni Morrison and the Bible. The contributors are John Anderson, Roland Boer, Martin J. Buss, Judy Fentress-Williams, Christopher Fuller, Barbara Green, Bula Maddison, Carleen Mandolfo, Christine Mitchell, Carol A. Newsom, David M. Valeta, and Michael Vines.

(3) deSilva, David Arthur, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Second Edition. *Studies in Biblical Literature* 21. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2008.

This second edition demonstrates how the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews radically transforms the meaning of terms such as "honor" and "loyalty" for the members of the Christian minority community he addressed.

Thus, for example, "honor," a value that formerly supported kinship and political structures within the dominant Greco-Roman culture, is transformed into a term that signifies support for the fictive kinship within, and commitment to the values of, the alternative Christian culture. DeSilva's painstaking examination of how shame, honor, and benefaction helped to maintain the integrity of the Christian minority community will be of interest to students of rhetoric, interpreters of Hebrews, and those interested in first century social relationships.

(4) Dietrich, Walter, Joachim Vette, trans. *The Early Monarchy in Israel: The Tenth Century B.C.E.* *Biblical Encyclopedia* 3. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2007. {Note: This book will be available towards the end of this week}

The Hebrew narrative art achieves its highest level in the stories of Saul, David, and Solomon. But beyond that, the description of these all-too-human characters and the dramatic events of the birth of the Israelite state depicts a change of eras that became determinative for half a millennium of Israelite history. In this volume Dietrich introduces readers to the stories of the early Israelite state from a variety of perspectives:

literary-critical, historical, and theological. After tracing how biblical and extrabiblical texts describe the period, Dietrich skillfully untangles the knotty questions related to the history of the period and perceptively examines the development of this literary corpus as well as the other biblical material that came to be associated with it. In a concluding chapter Dietrich revisits the stories of Saul, David, and Solomon to explore what they teach about theological issues of enduring significance, what they teach about God, humanity, the state, the use of force, and the relationship between

women and men.

(5) Gray, Alyssa M. *A Talmud in Exile: The Influence of Yerushalmi Avodah Zarah on the Formation of Bavli Avodah Zarah*. Brown Judaic Studies 342. Providence, Brown University, 2005.

Scholars have long noticed the many parallel passages in the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds and have offered various explanations for them. The current scholarly consensus is that these parallels are not due to the Babylonian Talmud's knowledge of, and reliance on, the earlier. In this book, Alyssa Gray sets out an original methodology for studying parallels in a Babylonian Talmud tractate and its Jerusalem Talmud counterpart (tractate Avodah Zarah), demonstrating that BT Avodah Zarah drew upon its predecessor.

She argues that this dependence can be demonstrated through what she terms "macro" and "micro" analysis, and that differences between the parallels can often be traced to BT's reworking of prior materials in keeping with its own cultural concerns.

(6) Greer, Rowan A. and Margaret M. Mitchell, trans. *The "Belly-Myther" of Endor: Interpretations of 1 Kings 28 in the Early Church*. Writings from the Greco-Roman World 16. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

The story of Saul and the woman at Endor in 1 Samuel 28 (LXX 1 Kings 28)

lay at the center of energetic disputes among early Christian authors about the nature and fate of the soul, the source of prophetic gifts, and biblical truth. In addition to providing the original texts and fresh translations of works by Origen, Eustathius of Antioch (not previously translated into English), and six other authors, Greer and Mitchell offer an insightful introduction to and detailed analysis of the rhetorical cast and theological stakes involved in early church debates on this notoriously difficult passage.

(7) Harrak, Amir, trans. *The Acts of Mar Marcellus the Apostle*. Writings from the Greco-Roman World 11. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.

The Syriac Acts of Mar Marcellus the Apostle discusses the introduction of Christianity into Upper Syria, Mesopotamia, and Persia at the end of or slightly after the apostolic age by Mar Marcellus. The Acts continues the Teaching of Addai (Thaddaeus in Eusebius of Caesarea), one of the seventy disciples of Jesus, who dispatched Marcellus from Edessa to the east. The Acts traces Marcellus's itinerary and preaching in Mesopotamia until his reaching Babylonia, where he founded the first church near

the Hellenistic city of Seleucia on the Tigris. By the early fifth century, the birthplace of Christianity in Babylonia became the patriarchal seat of the Church of the East, whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction and cultural influence extended during the early medieval period as far as China. This volume contains the Acts of Maʿr Maʿrāzā in Syriac and a relevant account from Kitaʿb al-Majdal in Arabic, both translated for the first time into English. This annotated translation of the Acts of Maʿr Maʿrāzā offers specialists and lay people alike a major source dealing with the early history of Christianity in the Middle East.

(8) Lawrence, Jonathan D. *Washing in Water: Trajectories of Ritual Bathing in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature*, Academia Biblica 23. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.

Although most scholars recognize that Christian baptism is related to Jewish ritual bathing, many assume that Christians transformed and rejected Jewish bathing practices. To correct this overly simplistic view, Lawrence mines archaeological and textual materials to outline a larger context for Jewish and Christian bathing. Using archaeological data from Jerusalem, Judea, Qumran, and the Galilee, as well as his own close reading of the Hebrew Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and other Second Temple literature, Lawrence identifies a spectrum of functions—ritual, metaphorical, or initiatory—that bathing served during the Second Temple period. He thus offers a new approach to the study of ritual bathing and suggests that, despite the polemics of later Christian and Jewish texts, the earliest Christians drew on a tradition shared with the Qumran community and other Jewish groups, in which each group chose its own emphases for ritual bathing.

(9) Miller, Patrick and J. J. M. Roberts. *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the "Ark Narrative" of 1 Samuel*. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2008. (Originally published by Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

On the basis of crucial comparative data, the authors present a fresh and exciting analysis of a difficult biblical source: the so-called Ark Narrative. The authors demonstrate that Yahweh, not the ark, is central to the narrative and that the issue is Yahweh's control of history. The narrative seeks to prove that it was not the Philistines or their god but Yahweh himself who shaped Israel's destiny.

(10) Smith, Mark S. *The Rituals and Myths of the Feast of the Goodly Gods of KTU/CAT 1.23: Royal Constructions of Opposition, Intersection, Integration, and Domination*. Resources for Biblical Study 51. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.

In a fresh, in-depth study of the Ugaritic text often called "The Birth of the Beautiful Gods," Smith applies the tools of detailed philological analysis and recent theoretical advances in the study of myth and ritual to illuminate this text as a sophisticated, integrated whole. In a series of rituals and myths, "The Feast of the Goodly Gods" captures a ritual moment of cosmic integration between the beneficial deities and the destructive cosmic enemies, in particular the gods after whom the text is named. This important volume not only brings the world of this fascinating Ugaritic text to life, setting it clearly within its royal context, but also provides a model for the integration of philological analysis and contemporary theories especially ritual studies in the interpretation of ancient texts, including the Bible.

(11) Stern, Elsie R. *From Rebuke to Consolation: Exegesis and Theology in the Liturgical Anthology of the Ninth of Av Season*. Brown Judaic Studies 338. Providence, Brown University, 2005.

From Rebuke to Consolation considers the constellation of texts related to the lectionary cycle for the Ninth of Av season. It demonstrates that the lectionary cycle articulates a theology of consolation which is not present in the constituent biblical texts. The related midrashic texts and liturgical poems echo and further develop this theology which the targum, which does not relate solely to the texts in their liturgical context, does not. The book explores the synagogue as a context for the public interpretation of biblical texts and as a site for popular rabbinic interpretation.

(12) West, Gerald O. *Reading Other-Wise: Socially Engaged Biblical Scholars Reading with Their Local Communities*. Semeia Studies 62. Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

How do ordinary Bible readers "other" than scholars collaborate with academics in interpretation that focuses on the various contexts and realities of their lives and local communities? Often neglected in the scholarly guild, these readers' voices are heard throughout the essays in this volume, which explore interpretation at the intersection of faith communities and the academy from a variety of cross-cultural perspectives and locations, such as South Africa, India, Jamaica, Brazil, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This collection provides a rich array of resources and challenges, sharing insights that academics and nonacademics alike can offer to face the many struggles of our time. The contributors include Eric Anum, Valmor Da Silva, Bob Ekblad, Stephen C. A. Jennings, Werner Kahl, Kari Latvus, Janet Lees, Mogomme Alpheus Masoga, Monika Ottermann, Naveen Rao, Nicole M. Simopoulos, and Gerald O. West.

To access the books, please go to

<http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/onlinebooks.aspx>

Regards to all and best wishes,

Ehud

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