

ICI REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2012

(a) ICI FORUM MEETING AT THE SBL ANNUAL MEETING.

We had a very good meeting. Our conversations combined a sense of appreciation for the initiative with suggestions for additional things to do or about how to enhance what we are doing. For instance, can we add a text search function to the books in the ICI depository? Can we think of ways to make it even more worthwhile for ICI students and staff to make the onerous trip to the USA for the SBL Annual Meeting? How can we enhance the teaching aspect of our collaboration?

Representatives of the European Association of Biblical Studies, including its president-elect, participated in the ICI Forum, re-iterated their support for the initiative and willingness to contribute to its success, both within and outside Europe.

(b) TWO SESSIONS AT THE SBL ANNUAL MEETING WERE SKYPED

The following two sessions (a) The Future of Biblical Studies: Trends, Possibilities, and Problems and (b) Hebrew Bible, History, and Archaeology were skyped; each to a group that included a combination of scholars and students from the 'local' area. The first group was in Hong Kong and the second in Warsaw. It is important to stress that the sessions involved two-way interactions, in the form of ability to ask questions, make comments and the like. My thanks to all those who made the skyping of the sessions possible, both at the SBL site and at the local sites in Warsaw and HK.

I want to stress that there was total agreement that our experiment with skyping sessions went very well and we should plan to skype sessions in the future.

(c) PUBLICATIONS: ONLINE BOOKS – ANNOUNCEMENT

I am glad to announce that Westminster John Knox Press has joined our initiative.

(d) PUBLICATIONS: ONLINE BOOKS – NEW BOOKS ADDED

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

Important Note: Staff at the SBL office bears a huge burden every November, as they take care of every detail associated with the SBL Annual Meeting. Thus usually we do not add new volumes at the end of November. But this time, they graciously agreed to

add some volumes and particularly one that was explicitly requested by a member of this forum. I am sure you join me in thanking the SBL office.

- (1) Brodd, Jeffrey and Jonathan I. Reed, eds. *Rome and Religion: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult*. Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series, 5. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.

This book presents an up-to-date discussion of the Roman imperial cult (the divinization of the emperor) and its general importance in early Christianity and ancient Mediterranean religions. It features opening and closing essays by Karl Galinsky, a foremost authority on Roman history and culture. Thirteen other essays explore related aspects and draw on a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives, including theory, method, archaeology, epigraphy, and art. The authors are classicists, biblical and religious scholars, historians, and archaeologists, with expertise in various cultural milieus. Reflecting this spectrum of backgrounds and interests, the book addresses issues and phenomena covering a broad expanse of subjects, locations, and methodological concerns.

The contributors are Jonathan L. Reed and Jeffrey Brodd, Karl Galinsky, Steve Friesen, James Constantine Hanges, Eric Orlin, Barbetta Stanley Spaeth, Nancy Evans, Dan Schowalter, James S. McClaren, Warren Carter, Robin M. Jensen, L. Michael White, and H. Gregory Snyder.

- (2) Gerstenbeger, Erhard S. *Israel in the Persian Period: The Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.E.* Biblical Encyclopedia, 8. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.

Although the Persians are seldom mentioned explicitly in the Hebrew Bible, the Persian period (539–331 B.C.E.) gave new shape to ancient Israel, as the biblical text evolved and the foundations of the Judeo-Christian tradition were laid. Therefore, contrary to earlier views, Persian politics, culture, and religion were the setting within which the nascent Jewish community lived and took shape. Against the backdrop of the history and intellectual world of Persia, Gerstenberger describes this exciting 200-year period in the history of Israel, which saw both the creation of biblical literature (historical, prophetic, and poetic writings, especially the Psalms) and important theological developments (e.g., the shape and characteristics of the Jewish community, monotheism, and new means of shaping one's world).

- (3) Wachtel, Klaus and Michael W. Holmes, eds. *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament: Changing Views in Contemporary Research*. Text-Critical Studies, 8. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.

This collection of essays by respected scholars represents the state of the art of textual criticism as applied to the New Testament. Addressing core topics such as the causes and forms of variation, contamination and coherence, and the goals and the canons of textual criticism, it presents a first-class overview of traditional and innovative methodologies as they are applied to reconstructing the initial wording of the New Testament writings. In this context, the new Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM) is introduced and discussed extensively. Integrating established approaches and procedures, the CBGM features a new category of external evidence: genealogical coherence of witnesses.

(e) LIAISON NETWORK

The Liaison Network is active and working. For the ICI Liaisons list, along with contact information for each liaison, is posted on the SBL web site at <http://www.sbl-site.org/InternationalCoopInitiative.aspx>. If you wish to be part of this initiative and serve as a country or local representative, please contact Tim Langille tim.langille@gmail.com.

(f) 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.

December 20-21 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE THE SOCIETY FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES IN INDIA (SBSI)

The Society for Biblical Studies in India (SBSI) will hold its biennial conference in Bangalore, Whitefield at the Ecumenical Christian Center. The Theme for this conference is Biblical Jubilee: Indian Liberation Hermeneutics. For more information contact [Rev. Dr. K. Jesurathnam](#), Secretary, SBSI.

(g) PLEASE PASS THE INFORMATION

You are encouraged 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.

Happy holidays to all,

Ehud

Ehud Ben Zvi, SBL - International Cooperation Initiative