

SOCIETY REPORT

SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE



A half a century ago, Samuel Sandmel delivered the now-famous presidential address, “Parallelomania,” at SBL’s 1962 Annual Meeting. He reminded members then what is worth reminding us again:

Someday some cultural historian might want to study a phenomenon in our Society of Biblical Literature. Two hundred years ago Christians and Jews and Roman Catholics and Protestants seldom read each other’s books, and almost never met together to exchange views and opinions on academic matters related to religious documents. Even a hundred years ago such cross-fertilization or meeting was rare. In our 97th meeting we take it as a norm for us to read each other’s writings and to meet together, debate with each other, and agree or disagree with each other in small or large matters of scholarship. The legacy from past centuries, of misunderstanding and even of animosity, has all but been dissolved in the framework of our organization. Would that humanity at large could achieve what has been achieved in our Society.

Biblical Studies is a wide-ranging field of texts, contexts, interpretive methods, and religious traditions. SBL members recover the past through history and cultural studies, and reflect on the present through contextualized interpretations and the study of contemporary traditions. It is a capacious discipline, one that models humanistic values in a modern culture.

SBL has seen many developments this year, from the launch of SBL Press to a task force to support and nurture SBL’s international contexts and global

identities. In the context of Sandmel’s celebration and hope regarding what has mattered and what matters still, here are two more.

In 2012, SBL received a grant to explore the formation of an independent learned society for scholars of the Qur’an, one that would affiliate with SBL and widen our horizons in the study of sacred texts. In May 2014, the International Qur’anic Studies Association (IQSA) ratified its bylaws and filed for incorporation as an independent learned society. Nearly 135 years after SBL was founded to foster the academic study of the Bible, it has helped foster and support a sister field.

In 2011, SBL received a grant to develop a website to inform and educate the general public about the Bible and biblical scholarship. In July 2014, Bible Odyssey (bibleodyssey.org) launched, signaling our responsibility to advocate widely for the role we play in the public square.

Samuel Sandmel would have celebrated both developments. SBL members know more fully than most that religion has always been a primary human cultural trait. What better topic for the public to appreciate in order to respect differences, to display good will, to foster the common good? Respect for diversity, tolerance, and inclusivity are core values of SBL. Our discipline is a symbol—a model—of mutual understanding and respect.

Imagine the next fifty years.

John F. Kutsko, Executive Director

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Founded in 1880, the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) is the oldest and largest, international, interdisciplinary, learned society devoted to the critical investigation of the Bible. The Society has published the flagship journal of biblical scholarship, the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, since 1881 and has been a member of the American Council of Learned Societies since 1929. With a membership of nearly 8,500 scholars, teachers, students, religious leaders, and interested individuals from over one hundred countries, the Society is more diverse than ever before. The mission of the SBL to “foster biblical scholarship” is a simple one. It could not be carried out without the more than one thousand member volunteers who donate their time and talents to this mission.

The SBL offers its members diverse resources in order to accomplish our mission. Many of these are tangible, like the diverse electronic resources that promote research and teaching. These include, but are by no means limited to, the entire backlist of the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, the *Review of Biblical Literature*, and the *Tyndale Archive of Biblical Studies*. Members of the Society have access to the member directory and the program books for our Annual and International Meetings, allowing them to network with other scholars who share common academic interests. We provide an annual Job Report tracking employment in biblical, religious, and theological studies. The SBL Font Foundation is developing specialized fonts for biblical studies that are available to individual scholars at no cost. We support women and underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities in the profession with mentoring and recruiting programs. Special programs and sessions are developed for students and those outside the academy. The Society also fosters biblical scholarship through a variety of publishing partnerships.

For over a century SBL has provided, through a system of congresses, a chance for its members to gather and exchange ideas, to network and form relationships. Members receive substantial discounts on registration and housing at these events. These dynamic meetings allow scholars to renew old relationships with colleagues and mentors, and to meet and interact with the leading scholars in the field. The meetings are designed as forums to encompass the diverse needs of our members. They include smaller, intimate regional meetings, the diverse and growing International Meeting, and the largest gathering of biblical scholars in one single place, our Annual Meeting. Over half of SBL’s members attend the Annual Meeting. SBL’s meetings keep scholars active and up-to-date, provide them access to the latest tools and resources, and expose members to diverse subjects and ideas. Special sessions are provided for students to help prepare them for their future in biblical studies. Members are provided training for creating portfolios and have an opportunity to apply for jobs listed on our employment services website. The Annual Meeting hosts job interviews at its career center. A professional photographer is available at the career center to take “headshots” for use on CVs and on social and professional media at a substantially reduced rate.

Members of SBL have opportunities to publish papers in the flagship *Journal of Biblical Literature*, write for Bible Odyssey, write a review for the *Review of Biblical Literature*, and submit books for possible publication with SBL Press. Members receive substantial discounts on SBL Press books at the congresses and also receive substantial discounts from affiliate organizations on their journals and books. These affiliate publishers include de Gruyter, the Pennsylvania State University Press, Cambridge University Press, Sage Publications, Monash University Press and many others.

The Society sponsors several awards and travel grants, including the Paul J. Achtemeier Award for New Testament Scholarship, the David Noel Freedman Award for Excellence and Creativity in Biblical Scholarship; the de Gruyter Prize for Biblical Studies and Reception History; the Regional Scholar Awards, and Travel Grants.

Besides these tangible benefits of membership, SBL offers a substantial number of other benefits that are no less important, if less concrete. The Society is the oldest academic organization supporting biblical scholarship. SBL advocates for the field of biblical studies in higher education and in the public square. It is an academic brand that gives its members a professional identity beyond their institution. Membership in the Society allows you to be counted as a colleague with your peers in the guild. It is an important professional credential. In this regard, too, the membership roll is an important tool, and by joining SBL you increase our ability to advocate for your guild.

Recently SBL developed an in-depth member profile survey. With this aggregated information, we can assist departments and institutions in creating new positions or making the case for keeping faculty positions open. With these data we can approach funding agencies to develop programs and services that strengthen the field and give new opportunities to biblical scholars. Through the member survey, we can better see trends, respond to them, and more effectively allocate SBL resources to help define and shape worldwide biblical scholarship.

Please join, renew, participate, and fill out your member profile.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN LANGFITT, SBL MEMBER SINCE 1970

In the fall of 2013 John Langfitt contacted Navar Steed, SBL's Manager of Membership and Subscriptions. John had discovered that his society membership had expired several years before. He didn't just want to renew his membership, however. He wanted to correct the oversight and insisted that he pay dues for the years his membership had lapsed. John had joined SBL in 1970 and wanted his record to show continuous membership to the present day.

Navar was used to renewing memberships and updating membership information, but John's request to pay back dues was a new one. It was so unusual that Missy Colee, SBL's Director of Technology, had to be brought into the loop. Navar and Missy worked together to "fix" John's membership history. As of today, John Langfitt has been a continuous member of SBL since 1970—just shy of 45 years of membership, service, and scholarship.

We interviewed John to find out why his continued SBL membership was so very important to him. Here's what he said.

While still a student John was introduced to the SBL by Professors James Muilenburg, Herman Waetjen, and Dieter Georgi. "My professors were inviting me into the guild, thereby affirming and endorsing my potential as student, teacher, and scholar. When I was a teaching assistant for Visiting Professor W. D. Davies at the University of California, he encouraged me to transfer my student membership to professional status. When I arrived at Illinois College for my first teaching position, Department Chair Malcolm Stewart and Professors Iver Yeager and Royce Jones both confirmed and affirmed the wisdom of my following Davies' advice. Even though later I was called into administrative service and leadership, these people and this society constituted my academic 'home base.'"

Joining SBL affirmed John's expressed desire to study, research, and teach. He told us his membership opened more opportunities to meet and engage students and scholars in other institutions of learning. SBL was the most inclusive professional study group for biblical research then and now. John said he knew after his first SBL Annual Meeting in 1971 that he "was in the right place." He said, "SBL became, and still is, my scholarly guild. It widened my perspective, challenged some assumptions, created alternative perspectives to test, and encouraged study and research. It provided ready access to colleagues in other schools, some of whom became models for teaching and scholarship early in my time as a professor."

John said that his best connections to scholarship and study were done through his association with SBL. However, it wasn't just about career. Being a member of SBL was also personal and he forged formative and lifelong relationships: "This is where I had significant personal relationships in the early years of my career."

In 45 years of membership John has contributed his time as a volunteer and in administrative positions. While John's level of active participation changed over time, he said what did not change was his "identification with and commitment to this organization, the purposes of which I celebrate and affirm and to which I offer continued loyalty and personal support. I attended the Annual Meeting whenever possible. I donated to special fund appeals to recognize contributing scholarship and support the developing student involvement. I read articles and books. Whether as a student, a teacher, an educational leader, or a religious leader, I have proudly identified myself as a member and affirmed the mission of this outstanding academic Society."

When asked, "What has SBL meant to you?" John responded, "If you have read this far, you probably know. This is my guild. Here I found opportunities and encouragement for personal growth and growth as a student of biblical literature. Here I am connected, even to this day. Here I was accountable as a student and scholar. The Society stimulated personal enthusiasm for the Bible and its impact on human life. I learned new ideas. I grew as a student, researcher, and teacher in my early years. And the Society has kept me connected personally to an important degree, for which I am very grateful."



*This is my guild ...
Here I am connected*

RECOGNIZING SBL VOLUNTEERISM: SHABBAT ARRANGEMENTS AT THE ANNUAL MEETING BY ESTHER HAZON

Sabbath meals and religious services at the Annual Meeting (AM) are organized each year by volunteers. For the past fifteen years, these events have been coordinated by SBL/ASOR member Joe Weinstein, a computer scientist specializing in mobile internet communication at Raytheon BBN Technologies in Cambridge, MA and an avid hobbyist in ancient Near Eastern archaeology who has conducted *inter alia* statistical analysis of ancient pottery. Since his first undertaking at the 1999 AM in Boston, Joe has steadily expanded and enriched the Sabbath program.

The program was conceived at the 1992 AM in San Francisco as numerous Sabbath observers, who had spent the day on their own, converged on Saturday night at the kosher vegetarian restaurant in Chinatown. Esther Chazon and Adele Reinhartz hosted Sabbath meals in their room at the 1993 and 1994 meetings, with the help of local SBL members Adele Berlin (Washington) and Sara Tanzer (Chicago). The popular event spilled over into the halls, making a move into larger facilities imperative. Edith and Meir Lubetski graciously undertook the organization during the next few years. They arranged Sabbath meals, services, and a talk by Cyrus Gordon at the Mikveh Yisrael “Synagogue of the American Revolution” in Philadelphia (1995); a presentation about local history during Sabbath dinner at the Anshe Sfard synagogue in New Orleans (1996); Sabbath meals in the kosher restaurant in Chinatown in San Francisco (1997); and Sabbath meals and services with a Torah scroll on loan from a local synagogue that were held in a hotel suite in Disney World (1998). In advance of the 1999 AM, the Lubetski’s asked Joe Weinstein to take over the organization of the Sabbath program, which he has been doing with much enthusiasm and ongoing success ever since. The participants, numbering about forty SBL/AAR/ASOR members on Friday nights, owe a debt of gratitude to Joe and the various local synagogues and organizations that have hosted the group. In addition to those mentioned above, thanks should be extended to Chabad of Downtown San Diego, who hosted in 2007 and will host again this year, Bnai Israel Congregation in Baltimore (2013), Chabad of the South Loop and the Loop Synagogue in Chicago (2012), Congregation Keneset Israel and the Sabra Grill in San Francisco (2011), Boston University Hillel and Boston Chabad (2008), Mikve Yisrael again in Philadelphia (2005), and Anschei Minsk in Toronto (2002). In AM venues where there is no synagogue nearby, as was (and will be) the case in Atlanta (2003, 2010, 2015) and San Antonio (2004, 2016), Joe has (and hopefully will again) find a suitable facility at the meeting for Sabbath meals and services as well as arrange to bring in food from a kosher caterer.

The program’s success is due to Joe’s careful advance planning and hard work on-site. Months ahead of the AM, Joe circulates the program to the ever growing email list together with such useful information as walking directions from conference hotels to the program’s venue, arrangements for walking groups to the venue in locations where personal safety is an issue, a list of local synagogues and prayer times, and a list of nearby kosher and vegetarian restaurants. In recent years Society members mourning the loss of a relative who require a quorum to say the mourner’s prayer have turned to Joe to organize these prayer services, which are usually held during session breaks near the registration desk. Without this possibility some of our members would not be able to attend the AM. This essential service as well as the Sabbath program and kosher meals not only answer the religious needs of many Society members but also make these moments a socially, religiously, and intellectually rewarding encounter that enhances the participants’ AM experience.

To participate in the program that Joe arranges, simply send an email to the official address that SBL recently set up for this purpose: shabbat@sbl-site.org.

Joseph Weinstein





This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the launching of the journal *Semeia* by the Society of Biblical Literature (1974). This journal, it should be noted, is actually part of a broader venture involving a variety of publications: for example, the journal becomes a book series in 2002, "Semeia Studies";¹ similarly, a book series accompanied the publication of the journal from the start, under a variety of names, including "Semeia Studies."² It would be more accurate, therefore, to speak of *Semeia* as a project. It is the beginning of this venture that we commemorate this year.

As President of the Society, I have been asked to offer a reflection on this milestone. I do so with great pleasure, given what I consider to be the pivotal significance of this project for the Society over the course of these four decades. Indeed, the initial publication of the journal in 1974 may be taken, and so I have done for some time now, as the ideal signifier for the momentous shift that began to take place in biblical studies in the mid 1970s: from a modernist to a postmodernist foundation for criticism; from a discipline to a field of studies in terms of academic-scholarly configuration; and from a focused to a multilens angle of vision.

For this reflection I thought it imperative to engage in discursive archaeology. I decided to revisit the first issue of the journal in 1974 in order to ascertain the rationale provided for publication as well as the explanation given for the adoption of the subtitle that it carried for the duration of its run, *An Experimental Journal of Biblical Literature*. Such an exercise, I thought, would allow me to get a better grasp of the vision behind the project at birth and thus a better sense of its accomplishments over the years. The exercise proved most fruitful in two respects, the personal and the discursive. As a former associate editor of both *Semeia* (2000–2007) and the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (1996–2002), the exercise, I should add, proved most revealing and instructive as well.

From a personal point of view, the exercise unleashed a flood of memories. My mind went back to 1974, and I saw myself still in doctoral work, a recipient of what was at that time a standard training in traditional historical criticism, by then well into what had come to be known as composition criticism.³ From such a perspective, it was the *Journal of Biblical Literature* that set the pace for the Society and to which I looked for inspiration and guidance in the discipline. Still, I subscribed to *Semeia* from the first. I thought it, rather vaguely at the time, an important thing to do, a way of keeping abreast of newfangled developments, from which I was both quite distant and insulated. What the recollection brought out was, in effect, a dichotomy involving the *Journal* and *Semeia* in both the Society and the discipline.

From a discursive point of view, the exercise yielded much valuable information. The first issue, edited by Robert Funk and dealing with the impact of structuralism on parable studies, contained not only an introduction but also a conclusion in which the rationale for the new journal was discussed, including the choice of subtitle.⁴ The introduction, fairly compact, was authored by Amos Wilder and addressed both the launching and the topic of its first issue.⁵ The conclusion, quite brief, was penned by Funk and dealt solely with the journal.⁶ Both pieces confirmed my own recollection of the dialectic between the tried-and-true and the newfangled in the mid 1970s.

Revisiting the Beginning

In the conclusion, Funk describes the journal as "experimental" in both content and form, although the emphasis is by far on form. As far as content is concerned, Funk simply argues that the journal will prove "experimental" if it succeeds in "opening new doors in biblical study" (275). This, he adds, only the readers will decide in time. With respect to form, the difference, Funk notes, will be obvious from the outset and has a variety of aims in mind: (1) reducing publication costs by way of different typographical practices (typescript; ragged right); (2) improving scholarly communication through simplification of the mechanics involved (numbering of sections and sense paragraphs; sparing use of notes; using a list of works consulted; adding an abstract); and (3) controlling the flow and volume of publication (prompt; upon demand).

In the end, Funk, while acknowledging that a change in form does not necessarily signal a change in content, expresses his belief that such alterations in "style" are called for by and reflect alterations in "stuff." In other words, only a new journal, with a new form, can do justice to new contents coming to the fore in the discipline—an "experimental" journal. At the same time, Funk adds that the term "innovative," while not altogether inappropriate to describe the changes in question, is best put aside on the basis of what he regards as its "slightly immodest" claims, since "there are precedents for nearly everything *Semeia* aspires to do (275).

Funk, therefore, considers "experimental" as a less radical choice than "innovative," at least on the surface. Such a distinction might seem to temper the revisionist character of the project. However, despite any perceived continuity with the past, the fact remains that a new journal is considered imperative for the "new doors" to be opened in biblical studies.

In effect, any toning down conveyed by such a distinction is directly belied by the scope of the proposal.

In the introduction, Wilder employs, quite without qualms, both “experimental” and “innovative” to describe the thrust of the journal. The emphasis is strictly on content, on the “new doors” to be opened, both in general and in specific terms. First, he cites the prevailing interest in language then in evidence across the entire disciplinary spectrum as the overall context and impetus for the journal. Then, he points to ongoing discussions in parable studies from such a linguistic perspective within the context of the Annual Meetings of the Society as the immediate genesis for both journal and issue. Thus, in effect, the proposal emerges out of the Parables Seminar, with the papers presented at its sessions in the 1973 Annual Meeting as the contents of the first issue,⁷ and reflects the growing impact of the broad-based linguistic turn in the academy upon biblical studies.⁸ According to Wilder, therefore, the journal was intended to foreground this emerging focus on language by providing a suitable channel for discussions already at work in the discipline, most sharply perhaps in parable research but also increasingly evident as well in a number of other working groups within the Society.⁹

Such a focus on language, Wilder takes pains to explain, should by no means be construed as a disparagement of the established methods of research or as an attempt to create an oppositional front within the discipline. Indeed, he cautions, along the lines of Funk, one must refrain from making any “undue” claims on behalf of these new methods. To the contrary, such novel approaches should be seen as “in continuity” with the established methods and their traditional concern with questions of language, although, of course, in the light of “new considerations and tasks” as well as “new sophistications” (3–4).

While such a qualification might seem again to downplay the revisionist character of the project, the fact remains that such new concerns and methods cannot be accommodated within the existing contours and venues of the discipline and demand instead the creation of a new journal. Again, any toning down conveyed by the qualification is immediately contradicted by the magnitude of the proposal.

Semeia as Semeion

This revisiting of the first issue served to establish *Semeia*, as both journal and project, in my mind as in itself a semeion or cultural sign of the 1970s, both with respect to the discipline and the Society. Despite the nuanced positions offered by both Funk and Wilder on the use of “experimental” or “innovative” to describe the new journal—a quite understandable move in context, as a new mode of discourse sought to establish itself within a long-standing disciplinary framework—it is clear that *Semeia* was conceived, in the light of the *Journal*, as the “experimental” pole of a dichotomy present in both Society and discipline, for which the *Journal* functioned as the “established” pole. In sum, the archaeological inquiry more than confirmed my own recollection of the state of affairs at the time.

This state of affairs could be readily summarized as follows. While the *Journal* would preserve its tried-and-true historical orientation, *Semeia* would turn to the newfangled question of language. The *Journal* would remain the vehicle for the grand model of interpretation present in biblical studies since its inception, historical criticism, with its view of historiography as empiricist, objectivist, and representationally direct. *Semeia* would function as the venue for a new grand model of interpretation beginning to affect biblical studies, literary criticism. One need only look at the contents of this first issue—major structuralist studies of the parables, with their usual designs and diagrams, by John Dominic Crossan, Dan O. Via, and Norman R. Petersen—to realize that not a single one of these essays would have been considered suitable for publication by the *Journal*, dismissed outright as “questionable” scholarship.

Beyond the Binary

Much has transpired since those early days of the mid 1970s in terms of the *Semeia* project, the craft of biblical criticism, and the binomial between the *Journal* and *Semeia*. With respect to *Semeia* as project, a number of important developments must be noted. First, over the years the project expanded well beyond its initial, envisioned literary focus to encompass a multitude of other areas of research—sociocultural, ideological, cultural, religious, and historical studies. Second, no matter the area or topic in question, *Semeia* maintained a matchless record of cutting-edge scholarship, pushing boundaries in all directions and breaking new ground on any number of fronts. Third, in all areas and topics *Semeia* pursued interdisciplinary research in highly creative and sophisticated fashion, engaging in critical dialogue with many fields of study and discursive frameworks across the academic spectrum of the human and social sciences.

With regard to criticism, much that first appeared as experimental in its pages became in time standard,

and even mainstream, fare. *Semeia* proved instrumental, therefore, in changing the nature of critical practices, the repertoire of offerings at professional meetings, and the course of studies in doctoral programs. With respect to the *Journal-Semeia* binomial, the discursive borders, while continuing firmly in place for quite some time, have in recent years become less and less pronounced. On the one hand, the editorial board of the *Journal* now includes names that would only have figured before as associate editors of *Semeia* and “Semeia Studies”; as a result, the table of contents has begun to incorporate more *Semeia*-like material. On the other hand, Semeia Studies would readily welcome today, as its predecessors in the project did in the past, proposals that would have revisionings of historiography as topic; indeed, historical studies has been as exciting a field over the last forty years as any. Thus, the vision of having journals that truly represent the full scope of what the Society does as a learned organization is by no means as distant today as it once was, which is as it should be. To be sure, much remains to be done along these lines, but there can be no doubt that the process has started and is underway.

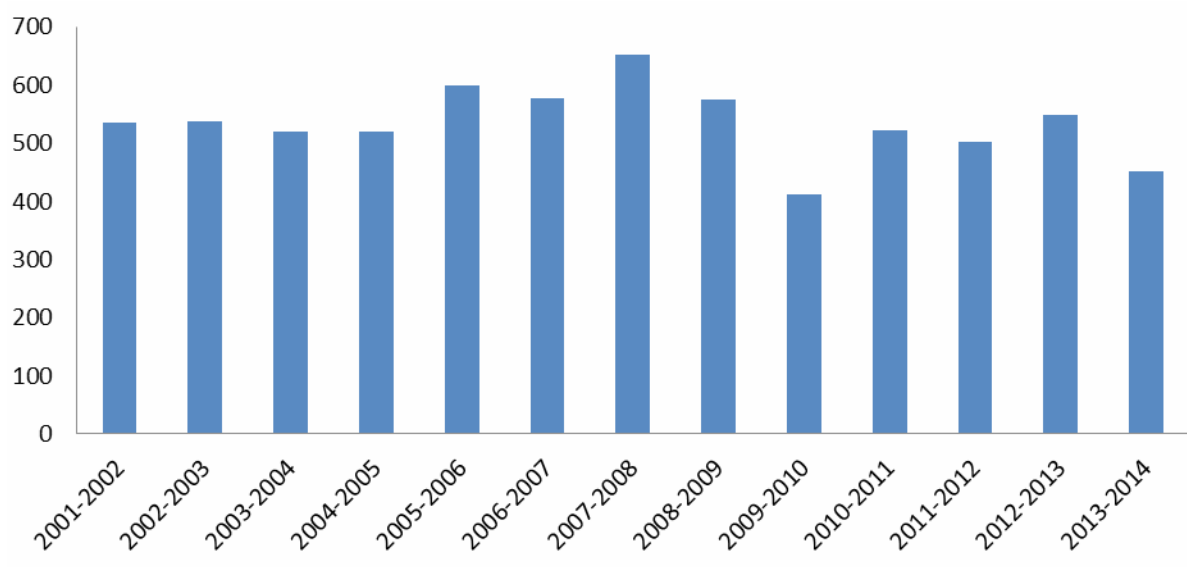
At forty years of age, therefore, the *Semeia* project deserves the warmest of congratulations—its various general editors, its many associate editors, and its devoted contributors and readers. The project has transformed criticism in every respect and profoundly so. It has moved its angle of vision from a historical-philological focus to a multilens inquiry. It has changed its configuration from a discipline (fairly set object of study; fairly unified approach and framework; fairly coherent body of research) to a field of study (multiple objects of study; multiple approaches and frameworks; multiple bodies of research). It has moved its mode of criticism from a modernist (scientific; progressive; teleological) to a postmodernist (multitheoretical; multidirectional; multipurpose) foundation.

As a result, biblical studies has become more and more like other fields of study in the academy—complex, conflicted, shifting. In the process, the Society has become more and more like other learned societies as well—a big tent striving to accommodate and serve all. In all this, the *Semeia* project has played a fundamental role, and I have no doubt that it will continue to do so in years to come. We should all be duly grateful. I certainly am, and I am simply delighted that my term as President of the Society coincides with this anniversary and celebration. Let me utter, in conclusion, a heartfelt twofold statement: for all that *Semeia* has accomplished, well done!; for all that remains for *Semeia* to accomplish, Ad multos annos!

Notes

1. The journal was published from 1974 through 2002, encompassing ninety-one volumes, all thematic in nature. At that point, it was converted into a book series. It is only fair to point out that such a move was not supported by the General Editor at the time, David Jobling, or the editorial board. The overt reason given by the Society for such a move was that the publication of the journal, which called for four volumes per year, had fallen considerably behind.
2. The history of publication is complex. The following phases can be distinguished. (A) To begin with, a book series was launched alongside the journal, “Semeia Supplements.” It consisted of single-author volumes in a similar critical vein. The first of these was published a year later: Robert Tannehill, *The Sword of His Mouth* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975). Four other volumes followed. (B) Then, with the sixth volume the name of the series was changed to “Semeia Studies Supplements.” This was, for the first time, an edited collection of essays: Martin Buss, ed., *Encounter with the Text: Form and History in the Hebrew Bible* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979). (C) All the volumes that followed bore the title of “Semeia Studies” and were edited collections. The first of these was: Robert Polzin and Eugene Rothman, eds., *The Biblical Mosaic: Changing Perspectives* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982). Consequently, what happens in 2002 is a merger of journal and book series, heretofore independent publications, into a book series.
3. Composition criticism called for a focus on the text as it stands, not so much in terms of the redaction of written sources and oral traditions by an author but rather in terms of the crafting of the work as a whole, both linguistically and theologically, by an author. This was a transitional step between the redaction criticism of the post World War II period and the turn to Literary Studies of the 1970s. For an excellent exposition of this development, see John R. Donahue, “Redaction Criticism: Has the Hauptstrasse Become a Sackgasse?” in Edgar V. McKnight and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, eds., *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994).
4. Robert W. Funk, ed., *A Structuralist Approach to the Parables* (Semeia 1; Missoula, MT: The Society of Biblical Literature, 1974).
5. Robert W. Funk, “Semeia and the Stuff and Style of Scholarship,” in Robert W. Funk, ed., *A Structuralist Approach to the Parables* (Semeia 1; Missoula, MT: The Society of Biblical Literature, 1974), 275–78.
6. Amos T. Wilder, “Semeia, An Experimental Journal for Biblical Criticism: An Introduction,” in Robert W. Funk, ed., *A Structuralist Approach to the Parables* (Semeia 1; Missoula, MT: The Society of Biblical Literature, 1974), 1–16.
7. The Parables Seminar, Wilder explains (1–2), was proposed in the summer of 1972 by Robert Funk as a continuation of the Gospels Seminar, whose five-year term was coming to an end that fall (1968–1972), and was approved that same fall for a similar five-year term beginning in 1973 (1973–1978). Funk not only had been a member of the Gospels Seminar but also was Executive Secretary of the Society at the time. The narrower focus of interest reflected the discussions on parables already underway within the Gospels Seminar.
8. The proposal for the journal, Wilder points out (2), was drafted by Robert Funk in the fall of 1973 and approved in January of 1974. The journal, as reflected in its originally proposed title, “Experimental Journal for Linguistic and Literary Arts in Biblical Studies,” would focus on “all aspects of language running from literary criticism to linguistics.”
9. The following are mentioned: Biblical Criticism and Literary Criticism; Linguistics; Art and the Bible; The Bible and the Humanities; Task Force on Genre; Seminar on Form Criticism; Seminar on Paul.

The latest iteration of the jobs report—to be released in early November 2014—focuses on data from January 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014. The report builds on previous versions, which analyzed data from January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2012 and January 1, 2001 through December 31, 2010. The number of positions advertised with AAR and SBL rose in the 2010–2011 AY and held steady through the 2012–2013 AY. Details of these positions seemed to indicate that the job market for our members was rebounding, gaining permanent faculty positions as it was before the recession of 2008–2009, even if it fluctuated slightly each year. Data for the 2013–2014 AY, however, largely reverse the gains of the past four years. After dropping in the 2008–2009 AY 36.8% below their 2007–2008 AY peak of 652 positions, the number of positions again declined significantly in the 2013–2014 AY (-30.7% from the 2007–2008 AY).

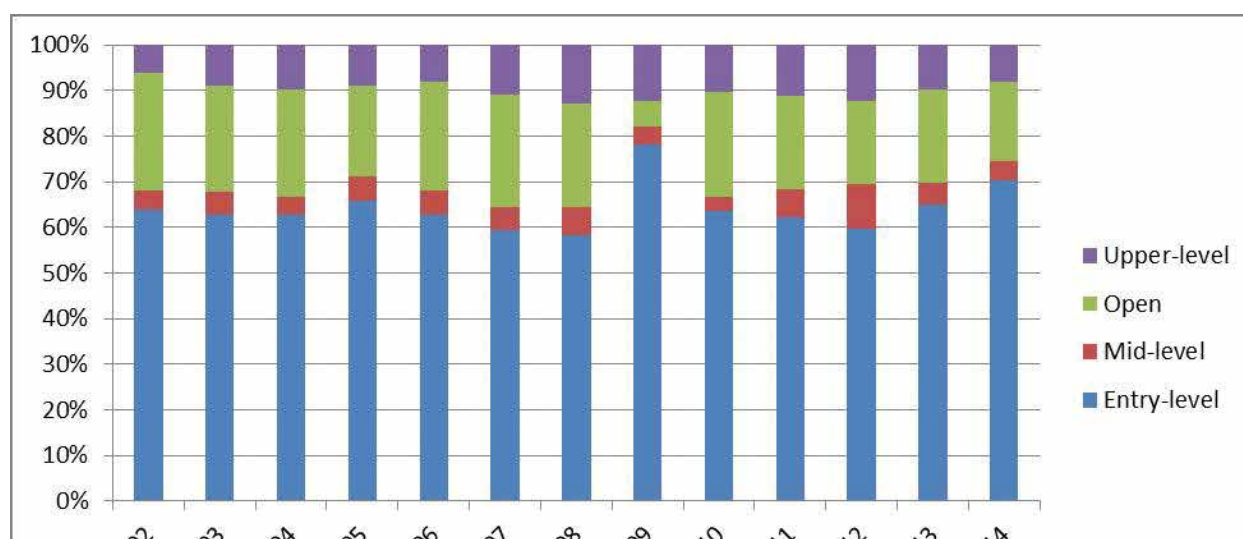


Institutions

The number and share of positions at private not-for-profit institutions in the U.S. has steadily declined since the 2010–2011 AY, while the number at public institutions has remained steady during the same period. This pattern is of particular concern because private institutions account for over three-fourths of positions. Classifications based on the types and share of the highest degrees institutions confer provide more reason for this concern. Along with special focus institutions, research institutions, which account for more positions than any other type of institution, are the locus of declines. Baccalaureate institutions were hard hit during the financial crisis, contracting by 50.7% from the 2007–2008 AY to the 2009–2010 AY, but they have since stabilized. More specifically, in terms of enrollment, it is the mid-size research institutions and the smallest special focus institutions that have experienced the sharpest declines over the past two academic years. The data show 34 fewer positions at privates in 2013–2014 AY compared to the 2012–2013 AY. Declines at these two types of privates account for 32 of the 34 positions. In other words, reductions in positions at mid-size research institutions and the smallest special focus institutions account for almost all the reductions at private institutions.

Types of Positions

Based on appointment type and rank characteristics, we determined that the majority of declines in faculty positions during the past two academic years (2012–2013 AY and 2013–2014 AY) have come from upper-level positions. The chart below shows the relation between positions by level and total faculty positions. Unfortunately, the organizations' data do not show whether such positions are being replaced by other types of positions, such as adjunct positions.



Skills and Experience

Holding a PhD, prior teaching experience, and interdisciplinary teaching or research abilities continue to be ranked highest among the twelve options for skills and/or experiences desired or required by hiring institutions. A majority of institutions required (59.5%) or desired (10.6%) candidates to hold a PhD. Almost half of hiring institutions required (29.9%) or desired (18.1%) prior teaching experience, while over one-fifth required (9.7%) or desired (12.2%) interdisciplinary teaching or research abilities. Clear differences exist based on the position's type of institution, however, and are explained in the full report.

Employment Trends

A subset of the employers that list jobs with SBL and AAR conducts interviews for positions at the Annual Meetings. The organizations have collected feedback from these employers since 2005 via web-based surveys. Survey feedback includes the number of applications per position, whether the position was filled, and some characteristics of the appointee. The number of applications per position varied widely over the years with the average fluctuating between 42 and 95 applications. Except for the 2007 CY and 2008 CY, over 80% of positions were filled at the time of the survey. In both the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 AY, however, the percentage of jobs that might remain unfilled had decreased to 3.7%. Also welcome news for candidates is the fact that over three-fourths (76.2%) of appointments were tenure-track positions.

Perhaps more instructive for candidates than the skills and/or experiences desired or required by hiring institutions, survey respondents were asked whether appointees will have completed the PhD by the time they are hired. While there has been some fluctuation in the data, the most recent year's responses (2012) show that 90.0% of appointees would be hired with the PhD degree completed. The average since 2005 is 79.8%. Moreover, only 4.8% of candidates on average since 2005 interviewed with a PhD completion date more than one year away.

This past July, five years of planning, researching, writing, editing, interviewing, producing, programming and uploading “hit the streets” when the SBL launched its new public website, Bible Odyssey.

The creation of the site was a group effort, one guided and implemented by two stellar editorial boards and a team of dedicated SBL staff members and student interns.

It took many years to develop Bible Odyssey as our vision was ambitious—to include peer-reviewed content in multimedia formats, with pages and pages of depth beneath the simple primary navigation: people, places, and passages.

In addition, we wanted to have links, dictionary terms, and Bible citations easily accessible and three searchable English translations of the Bible. While we all have come to take such features for granted, building them well takes time and effort, and the developer who wrote the code for such features is one of the lesser-sung heroes of the project. (Hats off to you, Debra!)

The launch of a website is less like the launch of a book (in stores now!) and more like the opening of a Broadway show—especially one that seeks to build an audience and run for many years to come. While these are still early days, we are doing well: our audience has quadrupled in just two and a half months. But with the web, the data can change in a moment’s notice. The important thing is that the site’s audience continues to grow every month, the content is being used in the classroom, and site visitors spend longer than average when they visit (most sites are happy with a minute; we average about 4 to 7 minutes per session).

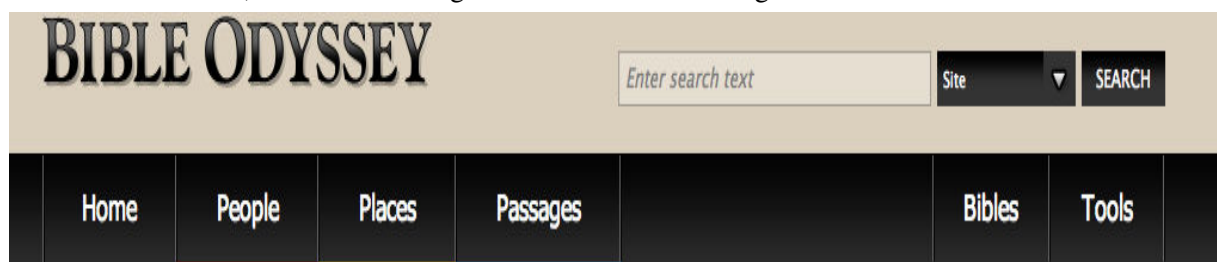
One unexpected positive result has been the questions our readers have submitted to us via the “Ask a Scholar” button. This was our way to welcome user-generated content and interactivity that advisors and focus groups encouraged. In our more skeptical moments, we anticipated that Ask a Scholar would become a “vent” button for people frustrated by our critical approach (and lack of a comments section). We have been gratified and

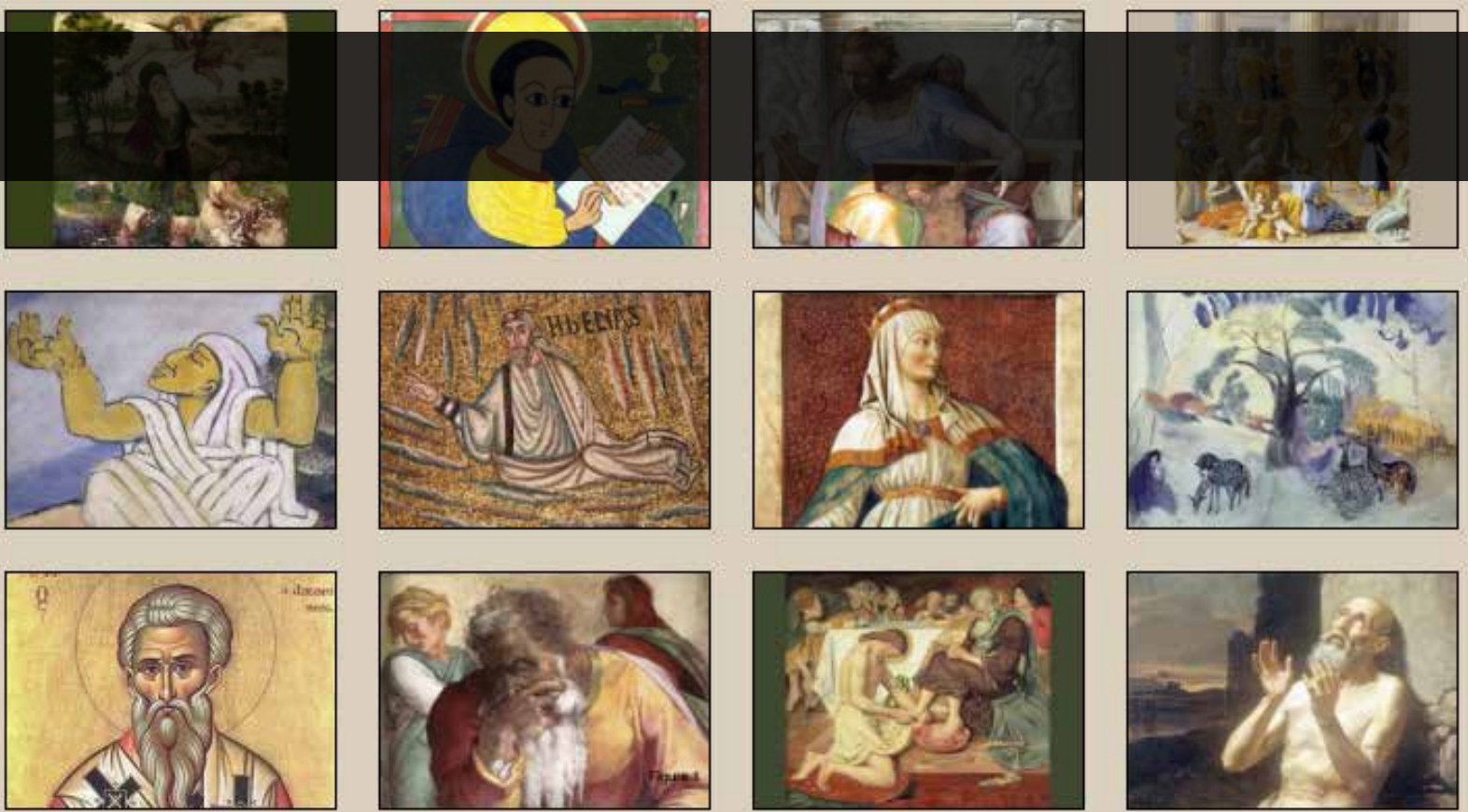
encouraged by the thoughtful, eager, and informed questions, and we work quickly to answer these questions and to publish the equally thoughtful responses of our SBL members. (You can find these under Tools/Ask a Scholar on the site’s main navigation.)

Bible Odyssey is not just born digital; it is born global. We have visitors, of course, from Australia, Europe, and North America, but the site raises the flags of all the countries that show up in our web analytics: India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Russian Federation, Ghana, Kenya, Republic of Moldova, Iran, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and many more. If you have contributed to Bible Odyssey, your content has gone world-wide and is making an impact on interested and earnest “students” of the biblical world. The power of the Internet has this advantage over the printed book and the physical classroom. And SBL is harnessing that power.

Bible Odyssey still needs your help to reach its fullest potential. We will continue to add content (Have ideas? Contact us!), and we look to you to help increase its use in college and university classrooms. We are already planning a series of public lectures for regional meetings that feature Bible Odyssey contributors on popular topics of interest to the general public.

For years we heard that the NEH would never touch the Bible as a topic with a ten-foot pole. Either times have changed or we misheard. The NEH approached the SBL’s former executive director Kent Richards (now executive director emeritus) six years ago, *inviting* a proposal. And what we have discovered through Bible Odyssey is that there is an active, global, highly informed and educated public out there, willing to ask hard questions and who value the expertise gained from a humanities PhD in biblical studies and its many related fields. They are not in it for the easy answers and know that knowledge is earned, that complexity is the norm, and that one can learn best from others by listening, reading, evaluating, and discussing in an environment of free and respectful exchange.





Above: Screenshot of the "People" page on www.bibleodyssey.org.

Left: Bible Odyssey visitors by country, for the period July–August 2014.

Below: Site statistics for the period July–August 2014.

Country	Visitors
★ The United States	4,893 70.9%
★ Canada	350 5.1%
★ Australia	303 4.4%
★ The United Kingdom	286 4.1%
★ Malaysia	148 2.1%
★ New Zealand	108 1.6%
★ Germany	65 0.9%
★ Israel	63 0.9%
★ South Africa	47 0.7%
★ The Philippines	47 0.7%
★ India	42 0.6%
★ Ireland	40 0.6%
★ The Netherlands	34 0.5%

[My Dashboard](#) Bible Odyssey

The Basics

[Summary](#) [Visitors](#) [Actions](#) [Unique](#)

Visitors Expand	6,914
Actions Expand	27,425
Average actions	4.0
Total time	32d 1h
Average time per visit	6m 39s
Bounce rate	21%

Archive Moves into New Home

Philatelic calm has returned to the Methodist Center on the Drew University campus, home of the extensive Methodist collections, the special collections and archives of the university, and the archive of the Society of Biblical Literature. During the past year staff and researchers endured the deafening racket of machinery as 7,000 holes were drilled into the concrete floor above the reading room for a new shelving system.

Thanks to a \$1 million gift from Norman Tomlinson, a library donor in Miami, the second floor of the building became a sealed micro-environment specially designed for valuable and fragile material that is best kept at ideal temperature and humidity levels. The security system was also improved and a non-water fire-suppression system added. The installation of moveable compact shelving doubled the shelving capacity. Some 1.75 miles of shelving became almost 3.5 miles—about the length of a 5K run.

After John Kutsko visited the Archives this past spring, he wrote: “When I walked into the Drew University Archives Center, I felt a deep and admittedly geeky pleasure seeing SBL’s archive—its institutional history—housed in a state of the art facility, and managed—really cared for—by dedicated people who obviously love this work. For any academic, this is beauty—materials well-organized, ordered, indexed, searchable. It wasn’t just relief, knowing these materials were easily available as the basis of research and history writing; I felt proud of what SBL members have accomplished from 1880 onward. The archive preserves that legacy.”

Overview of Holdings

While the Archive has some early records, they are scant. Chief among them is a pair of record books kept by the first secretaries; these books encompass the years 1880 through 1920, including reports of Council and the major meetings of the Society. Other than the reports published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, there are also few records for 1921–1929. While the files for 1930–1960 are not extensive, they include documents for annual meetings and regional meetings, reports of the treasurer, financial ledgers, and IRS returns.

From 1961 to the present, the files are plentiful and varied. Sets of documents have been regularly sent from the Atlanta offices to the Archive as well as from past officers. Financial records are virtually complete. Correspondence files of the Executive Secretaries and some of the Presidents are extensive and include not only exchanges with committee chairs and constituents, but communication with the various learned societies. The general files of Robert W. Funk, George W. MacRae, Paul J. Achtemeier, David Lull, Kent Harold Richards, and John Kutsko document the dramatic growth of the work of the Society and the leadership of the Executive Secretaries.

The most expansive files cover the annual meetings, the international meetings, publications, and Scholars Press. Every phase of planning for the annual meetings is fully documented, providing insight into the complexities of such a major event. The minutes of the Publication Committee, as well as documents from the editors of *JBL*, *Semeia*, and the various series, show the care given to the selection and editing of current research. The era of Scholars Press is fully documented. The holdings include, of course, a fairly comprehensive record of the publications of the Society.

What Do the Archives Lack?

Documents that would significantly enhance the collection include:

- Virtually any material from 1880 to 1960, including program leaflets and books, correspondence, committee reports, and photographs.
- Media reports on any aspect of the work of SBL, including newspaper coverage of the annual meeting and regional meetings in the host cities.
- Photographs from the annual meetings and other gatherings of governance groups and program unit officers (but only with description, including names).
- Multiple copies of program books prior to 1970.

Contact Andy Scrimgeour via email (ascrimge@drew.edu) or phone (908-246-4742).



Planning

The Finding Aid to the Archive will become available on the SBL website in the coming year and be regularly updated thereafter. The policies of the Archive were recently reviewed and updated by the executive director and archivist and will be added to the online SBL Policy Manual. Scrimgeour retired as Dean of Libraries at Drew University on June 30, 2014 and anticipates moving to North Carolina in 2015. He has been SBL's archivist since 1980. While he would like to continue to process material over the next couple of years, it is time to consider a succession plan. With Scrimgeour's retirement, SBL will review the Drew-SBL agreement to see if any modifications might be in order. The SBL Archive has been located at Drew University since 2000. Funds to support a project to speedily and comprehensively process all uncataloged material should be explored. The identification of donors to establish an endowment to support the Archive would be another worthy goal.

SBL MEMBER PROFILE

Prior to the expanded member profile launched in 2013 that members fill out voluntarily, the Society could identify only a few categories of information about its members: type of membership (which, of course members select), locality (the country in each member's mailing address), and institution with which a member is associated. This information provides very minimal assistance to the Society's officers in service to its members.

For example, while membership type shows the representation of members who are students and those who are not students, it does not show what the particular occupations of nonstudents are. Occupation-related questions in the expanded profile permit a far more nuanced assessment of member occupations and, therefore, make possible a more detailed evaluation of initiatives and resources that meet members' needs based on their occupations. Other information in the member profile includes demographics, departments of employment, faculty employment status, highest degree attained, courses taught, and areas of specialization. *Continued efforts by members to fill out and update their profiles will only increase the potential for SBL to respond to member's professional needs.*

It should be noted that, in terms of percentage growth, SBL membership has dramatically moved toward international representation. Consider, for example, that since 2001 the total non-US membership in SBL has more than doubled—a 102 percent increase—three times the rate that US membership grew in the same period. Membership growth in Africa leads all regions at 228.1% from 2004 to 2014. Note, too, that the Society's members now represent over 2,200 institutions in ninety-four countries and six continents. This dramatic and important development in the guild will continually affect the member profile, and categories will become increasingly nuanced in this global context.

As members continue to fill out and update their profiles, moreover, we will be able to see other ways in which SBL's membership changes and diversifies, whether in terms of the types of institutions at which they are employed or study, the types of degrees they earn, or their areas of specialization. SBL's membership has diversified geographically over the past several years. Has it diversified in terms of gender, the age of its members, or the types of occupations members hold? These are questions that can be answered in time with broad participation in the member profile.

We recognize that the categories used to designate race/ethnicity in the member profile questionnaire have a long and troubled history. As our Society becomes more international, we recognize, too, that categories used within the USA and Canada may not be optimal in our efforts to reduce the unintended North American perspective. We would value comments from SBL's membership about the categories that have been used and how they might be made more appropriate to all the locations and all the contexts of our members.

To read the full report, follow this link: <http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/memberProfileReport2014.pdf>.

What's New?

Not much ... other than a new name ... and a new *SBL Handbook of Style* ... and a new Hebrew Bible edition ... and several new series ... and thirty-seven new titles published in paperback, hardcover, and e-book formats. Other than that, 2014 has been a fairly uneventful year.

A New Name

July 1 marked the beginning of a new chapter, as the Society's publications department officially became SBL Press. The establishment of SBL Press strengthens our identity, visibility, and mission in several key ways.

As John Fitzgerald, chair of SBL's Research and Publications Committee explained, "The change is a small one but is intended to have important consequences. We want to make clear that we are a publisher in our own right, not just a professional organization with a publishing program. Inasmuch as we already are a member in good standing of the Association of American University Presses, we believe this change will help solidify our identity in the university press world. Doing so should raise the value of our imprint for tenure and promotion, and that is in our best interest as a learned society."

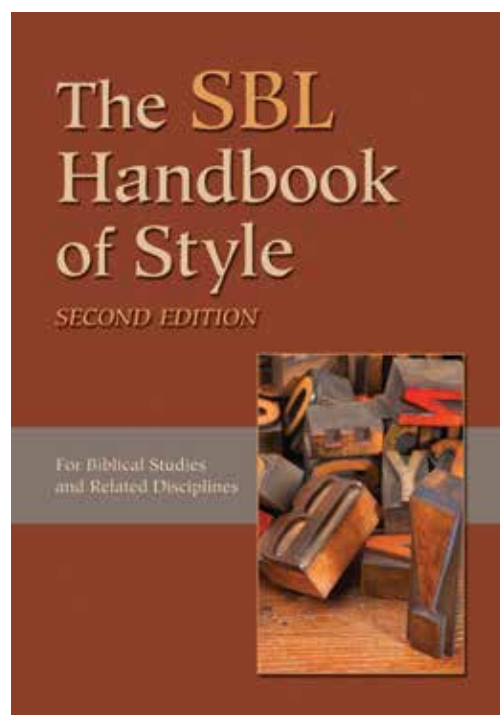
Since the publication of our first monograph (C. C. Torrey's *Lives of the Prophets*) sixty-eight years ago, we have released over 800 individual titles in 34 different book series—roughly 150,000 pages of the finest of biblical scholarship. In the past five years alone we have published 137 titles, and our output increases with each passing year. In addition, *JBL* continues to be the flagship journal in the field, as well as the biblical studies journal most frequently cited in academic publications, and *RBL* remains the leading source for informed and informative reviews of books across the spectrum of biblical studies and its cognate disciplines.

As SBL Press, we look forward to many years of service to our members by maintaining an unwavering commitment to the scholarly excellence for which the Society is known and the uncompromising standards that one expects from an experienced press.

A New *SBL Handbook of Style*

Fifteen years after the appearance of the first edition of *The SBL Handbook of Style*, the second edition both continues and extends its original goal: to collect information that will help save time for scholars writing in the many related and intersecting fields of biblical studies. To that end, SBLHS 2 has been thoroughly updated to reflect the latest practices among scholars, editors, and publishers as well as to take into account current trends in scholarly publishing. This edition has been meticulously supplemented with important new subject matter that fills gaps in the first edition. Chapters and sections have been reorganized and restructured to be more intuitive and logical.

At 366 pages, this edition is substantially expanded from the first (280) and contains some important additions, such as a list of ancient Near Eastern archaeological site names; a discussion of how to cite Qur'anic sources; information on Unicode fonts; an expanded list of capitalization and spelling examples; a section on Islamic dates; an introduction to the principles of transliteration and transcription, plus discussion of Sumerian, Hittite, Old Persian, Moabite, Edomite, Ammonite, Syriac, Mandaic, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Turkish; a comprehensive list of publishers and their places of publication; explanation of electronic resource identifiers (DOIs versus



URLs) and detailed guidelines for citing a variety of electronic sources; clearer and more comprehensive guidelines for preparing indexes; and an expanded list of technical abbreviations.

Today more than ever Carol A. Newsom's advice rings true: "Every graduate program should make *The SBL Handbook of Style* a required text." To learn more about SBLHS 2, visit its webpage at <http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/SBLHandbookofStyle.aspx>.

A New Hebrew Bible Edition

This year SBL Press welcomed to its publishing program *The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition* (formerly the *Oxford Hebrew Bible*). Under the leadership of Editor-in-Chief Ron Hendel, HBCE will publish twenty-one volumes of a Hebrew text reconstructed via an eclectic, rather than a diplomatic, approach. The goal of the HBCE is to approximate the manuscript that was the latest common ancestor of all the extant manuscripts. This "earliest inferable text" is called the archetype.

The HBCE represents a new model for a critical edition of the Hebrew Bible, although it will be familiar to scholars who use critical editions of other ancient works such as the Septuagint or New Testament. The HBCE will consist of critical texts of each book of the Hebrew Bible, accompanied by extensive text-critical commentary and introductions to each volume. A critical text (sometimes called an eclectic text) is one that contains the best readings according to the judgment of the editor.

In addition to print volumes, HBCE will offer a sophisticated electronic version, which will include all the material from the print volumes plus important texts and versions, including photographs of manuscripts. The electronic HBCE will be an interactive polyglot edition, including the HBCE critical text and commentary. It will be free and open-access, and its open architecture will allow scholars to use the texts and data for other projects. Thus the HBCE will not only provide a critically edited eclectic Hebrew text but also create electronic tools for a new generation of biblical scholars.

New Series

SBL Press expanded its series lineup to thirty (see the complete list on p. 32) through the creation of three new series and acquisition of two already-existing series. In addition to HBCE (see above), SBL Press launched Writings from the Islamic World under the editorial leadership of James T. Robinson. WIW will make available original sources from the Arabic tradition, including translations of the Bible and commentaries, as well as texts, translations, and studies related to the cognate literature. Texts in Arabic will be the primary focus, but works produced in Armenian, Hebrew, Persian, and Syriac will also be included. The inaugural WIW volume is Robert W. Thomson's translation of an Armenian commentary on the Gospel of John by Nonnus of Nisibis.

Two other new series are still under development. The Bible and Its Interpretation will publish monographs, collections of essays, and reference works that explore various facets of biblical interpretation of all times and places. The Bible and Its Reception will publish volumes that explore the ways that popular culture, media, politics, literature, film, music, and visual arts have adopted, adapted, and used biblical texts, themes, and figures.

Finally, SBL Press welcomed two established series that explore various aspects of the New Testament and its various contexts. Volumes in Emory Studies in Early Christianity investigate early Christian literature in the context of ancient Mediterranean literature, religion, society, and culture through the use of interdisciplinary methods informed by social, rhetorical, literary, and anthropological approaches. Works within the Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity series use insights from various disciplines (e.g., sociolinguistics, semiotics, rhetoric, ethnography, literary studies, social sciences, cognitive science, and ideological studies) to develop an interpretive analytic—an approach that evaluates and reorients its strategies as it engages in multifaceted dialogue with the texts and other phenomena that come within its purview.

New Titles

In the midst of these new developments, SBL Press series editors and staff found time to publish thirty-seven new titles—all in paperback, hardcover, and e-book—across the range of biblical studies (see the full list on p. 17). To highlight but a few achievements, 2014 saw the publication of two Bible and Women volumes, one devoted to feminist biblical studies in the twentieth century and another on the Hebrew Bible Writings and related books. Also noteworthy were volumes published in our two open-access series: Ancient Near East Monographs and International Voices in Biblical Studies. In addition, SBL Press published the works of scholars from around the globe—Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, Oceania, South America—on an astonishing variety of subjects, from Greek erotica to interpretive esoterica, from ancient legal records to modern legal wranglings, from Qumran's Thanksgiving Hymns to the book of Revelation's untold tales,

and from the workings of collective memory in early Jewish and Christian texts to the Gospel of Mark as a resource for working with those with poor mental health. Finally, SBL is pleased to be moving in the right direction with regard to gender representation, having increased the share of female authors and editors from 20 percent in 2013 to 35 percent in 2014.

Journal of Biblical Literature

Not content to rest on its laurels as the flagship journal in the field—not to mention the most frequently cited biblical studies journal in academic publications, the *Journal of Biblical Literature* instituted several significant changes over the past year.

Most noticeably, 2014 saw the launch of a new feature that promotes discussion and the exchange of ideas in a manner not typically found in academic journals. The *JBL* Forum highlights approaches, points of view, and even definitions of “biblical scholarship” that may be outside the usual purview of many readers. The one constant is that *JBL* Forum will always include an exchange of ideas on the matter at hand. Thus the June Forum featured Ronald Hendel’s “Mind the Gap: Modern and Postmodern in Biblical Studies” and responses to it by Stephen D. Moore and Peter Miscal, George Aichele, and Richard Walsh. The September Forum included Serge Frolov’s “The Death of Moses and the Fate of Source Criticism” and responses by Philip Y. Yoo, Shawna Dolansky, and David M. Carr. In addition to publishing the Forum lead articles and responses, we offer an online platform where interested members can continue the discussion. Through the *JBL* Forum we hope not only to inform readers but, more important, to spark conversation and thereby to enhance the journal’s contribution to the primary mission of the SBL: to foster biblical scholarship.

Less noticeable, but no less significant, has been an increase in the size of *JBL*. For years *JBL* issues were 200 pages, no more and no less, but over the past year we have expanded the length of the typical issue by over 15 percent, to an average of 232 pages per issue. This enables us to include at least two additional articles each issue, which benefits both our authors, whose peer-reviewed work is published in a more timely fashion, and our readers, who enjoy greater variety and diversity in the articles from which to choose.

Thanks to General Editor Adele Reinhartz, Managing Editor Billie Jean Collins, Editorial Assistant Georgette Ledgister, and the forty-one international members of the editorial board for not only maintaining but also increasing *JBL*’s 133-year legacy of excellence.

Review of Biblical Literature

Since its online debut in January 1998, the *Review of Biblical Literature* has established itself as the SBL’s most widely distributed publication and the premier source of biblical studies book reviews in the world. The data permit no other conclusion:

- After publishing 32 reviews during its first year, *RBL* has published an average of 40 reviews each month since then and currently offers access to over 7,500 reviews.
- Thanks to the cooperative efforts of our reviewers, editors, and staff, *RBL* published 390 reviews during the past twelve months. With an average of 4 pages per review, the past year’s output would fill 1,560 published pages, while the 7,510 reviews published since the beginning of *RBL* through the end of September 2014 would require over 30,000 printed pages.
- As is well known, *RBL* announces the publication of reviews in a weekly newsletter. Less well known is the fact that the newsletter is distributed to over 9,000 subscribers, many of whom have no other connection with the Society than *RBL*.
- The weekly newsletter plays a significant role in leading scholars, students, and interested laypersons to the *RBL* website, which records over two million hits each year. To put it in different terms, between 5,000 and 6,000 *RBL* pages are viewed each and every day.

But the number of reviews published and the number of visitors to the website is only part of the story. *RBL* also reviews a wide spectrum of books from publishers large and small across the entire range of biblical studies and its cognate disciplines. In addition, over the past twelve months we have published reviews by scholars from twenty-seven different countries, which underscores our international scope. These countries include: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malawi, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, U.K., and U.S. Once again, roughly half (49.5 percent) of *RBL* reviews were authored by scholars outside of the U.S.

2014 SBL PRESS BOOK TITLES

- Peter Bing and Regina Höschle, trans., *Aristaenetus, Erotic Letters* (WGRW)
- Dexter E. Callender Jr., ed., *Myth and Scripture: Contemporary Perspectives on Religion, Language, and Imagination* (RBS)
- Mark A. Chancey, Carol Meyers, and Eric M. Meyers, eds., *The Bible in the Public Square: Its Enduring Influence in American Life* (BSNA)
- C. L. Crouch, *Israel and the Assyrians: Deuteronomy, the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon, and the Nature of Subversion* (ANEM)
- R. Alan Culpepper and Paul N. Anderson, eds., *Communities in Dispute: Current Scholarship on the Johannine Epistles* (ECL)
- Wilson de Angelo Cunha, *LXX Isaiah 24:1-26:6 as Interpretation and Translation: A Methodological Discussion* (SCS)
- Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, ed., *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship* (AIL)
- Diana V. Edelman, ed., *Deuteronomy–Kings as Emerging Authoritative Books: A Conversation* (ANEM)
- Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs: An Eclectic Edition with Introduction and Textual Commentary* (HBCE)
- Trine Bjørnung Hasselbalch, *The Redactional Meaning of the Thanksgiving Hymns: Linguistic and Rhetorical Perspectives on a Heterogeneous Collection of Prayers from Qumran* (EJL)
- Jione Havea, David J. Neville, and Elaine M. Wainwright, eds., *Bible, Borders, Belonging(s): Engaging Readings from Oceania* (SemeiaSt)
- Shalom E. Holtz, *Neo-Babylonian Trial Records* (WAW)
- Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritchel Ames, and Jacob L. Wright, eds., *Warfare, Ritual, and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts* (AIL)
- Hisako Kinukawa, ed., *Migration and Diaspora: Exegetical Voices of Women in Northeast Asian Countries* (IVBS)
- Jennifer L. Koosed, ed., *The Bible and Posthumanism* (SemeiaSt)
- Alan Lenzi and Jonathan Stökl, eds., *Divination, Politics, and Ancient Near Eastern Empires* (ANEM)
- Francisco Lozada Jr. and Fernando F. Segovia, eds., *Latino/a Biblical Hermeneutics: Problematics, Objectives, Strategies* (SemeiaSt)
- Christl M. Maier and Nuria Calduch-Benages, eds., *The Writings and Later Wisdom Books* (Bible and Women)
- Simon Mainwaring, *Mark, Mutuality, and Mental Health: Encounters with Jesus* (SemeiaSt)
- Eric F. Mason and Troy W. Martin, eds., *Reading 1–2 Peter and Jude: A Resource for Students* (RBS)
- Jennifer Houston McNeel, *Paul as Infant and Nursing Mother: Metaphor, Rhetoric, and Identity in 1 Thessalonians 2:5–8* (ECL)
- Stephen D. Moore, *Untold Tales from the Book of Revelation: Sex and Gender, Empire and Ecology* (RBS)
- Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalms Studies*, 2 vols. (HBS)
- Reinhard Müller, Juha Pakkala, and Bas ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing: Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible* (RBS)
- Richard D. Nelson, *Historical Roots of the Old Testament (1200–63 BCE)* (BibEnc)
- Robert Rezetko and Ian Young, *Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew: Steps Toward an Integrated Approach* (ANEM)
- Eric D. Reymond, *Qumran Hebrew: An Overview of Orthography, Phonology, and Morphology* (RBS)
- David T. Runia and Gregory E. Sterling, eds., *Studia Philonica Annual XXVI, 2014*
- The SBL Handbook of Style*
- Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed., *Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century: Scholarship and Movement* (Bible and Women)
- JoAnn Scurlock, *Sourcebook for Ancient Mesopotamian Medicine* (WAW)
- Tom Thatcher, ed., *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity: A Conversation with Barry Schwartz* (SemeiaSt)
- Robert W. Thomson, *Nonnus of Nisibis, Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John* (WIW)
- W. Dennis Tucker Jr., *Constructing and Deconstructing Power in Psalms 107–150* (AIL)
- Caroline Vander Stichele and Susanne Scholz, eds., *Hidden Truths from Eden: Esoteric Readings of Genesis 1–3* (SemeiaSt)
- Mirjam van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah: An Analysis of Its Pluses and Minuses* (SCS)
- Jan G. van der Watt, ed., *Review of Biblical Literature, 2014*
- Brill Reprints
- J. K. Elliott, *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Application of Thoroughgoing Principles, Essays on Manuscripts and Textual Variation*
- Daniel E. Fleming and Sara J. Milstein, *The Buried Foundation of the Gilgamesh Epic: The Akkadian Huwawa Narrative*
- Charles R. Krahmalkov, *A Phoenician-Punic Grammar*
- Eric F. Mason, “You Are a Priest Forever”: *Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*
- Takamitsu Muraoka and Bezalel Porten, *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic*

International Meeting

As predicted, the meeting in Vienna broke records to become the largest International Meeting of SBL, with 1,052 attendees. Forty-six different countries were represented at the International Meeting.

Much like the Annual Meeting, the number of International Meeting program units has essentially plateaued during the past five years even while the number of sessions and participants continues to grow. Fluctuations in these numbers appear to be related more to the location of the meeting than the types of units at the meeting. One hundred four of the 158 units (65.8%) created since 2000 have been discontinued, a figure that contrasts sharply with Annual Meeting program units and indicates the far more variable nature of the International Meeting. An average of 11.3 units have been added since 2000, while 7.4 units have been discontinued. The variability of the International Meeting with respect to its location and the brevity of IM program unit terms are major topics of concern that require further evaluation. With such evaluation and careful planning, we hope to continue to receive the consistently positive feedback that International Meeting attendees have provided over the past several years. Since 2009, 79.4 percent of attendees have rated the conference at least four out of five points, 94.0 percent were satisfied with the program, and 84.3 percent indicated that the topic of their interest was well represented at the meeting.

Partnerships such as the one with the European Association of Biblical Studies for the 2014 meeting in Vienna will continue to characterize the International Meeting. The 2015 meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina will involve groups such as the Asociación Bíblica Argentina (ABA), RIBLA, the Society for Pentecostal Studies, and Teologanda. The 2016 meeting in Seoul, Korea will feature partnership with the Korea New Testament Society, Korea Old Testament Society, and Society of Asian Biblical Studies. Such partnerships enrich the meeting immeasurably, supporting academic excellence and the exchange of knowledge and ideas globally.

Annual Meeting

The Society's 2013 Annual Meeting was held in Baltimore with total registrations for the meeting of 10,234 of which 4,369 were SBL members. We hosted 159 exhibiting companies with a total of 312 booths sold. The total square footage of exhibit space sold was 30,400. These totals are up 10 percent from 2012 in Chicago.

New initiatives for 2014 include; giving attendees the ability to opt out of having the program book mailed to them or to completely opt out of having a program book printed. This will help the meetings become more environmentally friendly. Other offerings will include: an upgraded Cyber Center, with computers and charging stations, four publisher search kiosks, and free wireless internet throughout the convention center. Finally, we are setting up eight semiprivate booths for acquisition editors to meet with potential authors. In appreciation of our exhibitors, this service will be free of charge for 2014.

The Annual Meeting program continues to grow and diversify. The total number of program sessions, the number of unique participants, and the average number of sessions per program unit hit peaks in 2014. The cause of this is not strictly that there are more units than previous years but that the representation of consultations—a type of unit limited to two sessions per year—has decreased while the representation of sections—a type of unit with a higher limit of four sessions per year—has increased. Primarily for this rea-

FUTURE SBL ANNUAL MEETINGS

2015 Atlanta, Georgia
 2016 San Antonio, Texas
 2017 Boston, MA
 2018 Denver, CO
 2019 San Diego, CA
 2020 Boston, MA
 2021 San Antonio, TX

FUTURE SBL INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

Buenos Aires, Argentina
 20–24 July 2015
 Seoul, Republic of Korea
 3–7 July 2016
 Berlin, Germany
 2017 (dates TBD)

REGISTRATION

son the number of program unit sessions has reached a record high. While the program at the Annual Meeting continues to grow—and some would argue fragment into less helpful, meaningful, or productive pieces—growth via new program units is limited. At the same time, collaboration through joint sessions has increased, mitigating the fragmentation of the program due to growth and fostering more multi-disciplinary conversations. Joint sessions in 2004, for example, involved around 9 percent of program units, while joint sessions in 2013 and 2014 have involved over 20 percent of units.

Despite the significant growth of the program over the past decade, feedback about the meeting's content and its applicability to members' careers remains overwhelmingly positive. Nearly 95 percent of attendees rate the conference at least four out of five points, 90 percent are satisfied with the program, and over 91 percent indicate that the topic of their interest is well represented at the meeting. Eighty-five percent of attendees say that the program content was relevant to their career and the meeting contributed to building their professional network. Moreover, Annual Meeting Program Committee efforts to increase collaboration among program units seem to be paying off. Concern about the program being too large and fragmented has decreased from 25 percent to 21 percent (2012–2013), while responses that the program is of acceptable size and diversity have increased from 57 percent to 63 percent (2012–2013).

While the program continues to deliver what attendees want remarkably well, there are a number of issues that need to be addressed, including how the meeting's reach might be extended through virtual means, how presenters (especially first-timers) might be supported, and how the meeting might more earnestly engage public interest in our field. To paraphrase a survey respondent, content is no longer isolated or immobile; most people do not attend a conference for content. The most important aspects of conferences are the interaction, discussion, and community. While the overwhelming majority of respondents say that the meeting facilitates such things, mobilizing content and providing ways to involve scholars remotely might increase these qualities to wider (perhaps geographically, financially, or otherwise disadvantaged) groups. The Annual Meeting Program Committee and Student Advisory Board have discussed ways to address many of these issues and, with the launch of Bible Odyssey, we are also considering how the meeting might capitalize on and reinforce the new interest in the Society and field that Bible Odyssey has already begun to generate.

Regional Meetings

The Society has eleven regional groups, which are comprised of SBL members who have come together to meet locally. Some groups are affiliated with other professional societies. Any SBL member may attend any Regional Meeting, but information is only sent automatically to members within the region. For more information, including links to regional meetings programs and participation directions, go to: <http://www.sbl-site.org/meetings/regionalMeetings.aspx>.

2015 Regional Meeting Schedule

Central States	March 22–23	St. Louis Marriott West	St. Louis, MO
Eastern Great Lakes	March 12–13	Mohican Lodge	Perrysville, OH
Mid-Atlantic	March 5–6	Loyola University Maryland	Baltimore, MD
Midwest	February 6–8	Olivet Nazarene University	Bourbonnais, IL
New England	April 24	Andover Newton Theological School	Newton Centre, MA
Pacific Coast	March 8–9	Azusa Pacific University	Azusa, CA
Pacific Northwest	March 27–29	Marylhurst University	Portland, OR
Rocky Mountains – Great Plains	March 29–30	University of Denver	Denver, CO
Southeast	March 6–8	Nashville Airport Marriott	Nashville, TN
Southwest	March 13–14	Marriott Hotel, DFW North	Irving, TX
Upper Midwest	April 17–18, 2015	Luther Seminary	St. Paul, MN

The International Cooperation Initiative marked its official seven-year anniversary in Vienna at the SBL International Meeting. The first organizational meeting of ICI was held in Vienna in 2007, and it is gratifying to see how much has been accomplished in the intervening seven years. The ICI Forum meeting in Vienna had over twenty-five attendees, which is a record number of scholars at the IM showing support for and interest in the work of ICI. The lively discussion at the 2014 IM resulted in several new suggestions for enhancing ICI, including such things as developing a discussion forum for biblical studies organizations in different parts of the world; enhancing the search capabilities of the Online Books depository; and developing a closer working relationship with the SBL Student Advisory Board. Action is being taken on these and other suggestions, and the conversations will continue in San Diego at the Annual Meeting.

Members from forty-three countries participated in the 2014 IM with eighteen ICI countries represented: Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Hungary, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, and South Africa.

At the 2014 Annual Meeting, the ICI will support the transmission of sessions to offsite audiences in ICI countries via Webex conferencing. This technology was used successfully at the 2013 meeting. The SBL technology team has considered the feedback from offsite participants to improve the process this year. Scholars and students from seven countries will participate: Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Egypt, India, Nigeria, and Peru.

SBL has received numerous requests to record and post sessions from the Annual Meeting, which would bring the meeting to interested parties at times that would be convenient for them. While the element of actual interaction with the meeting would be absent, such recorded offerings would allow far more people to benefit from the scholarship presented in sessions. There are many factors to consider before this step can be taken, not the least of which is the expense of recording in meetings where third-party vendors and employees have to be involved. SBL will continue to explore the possibilities.

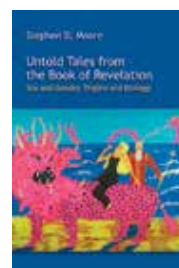
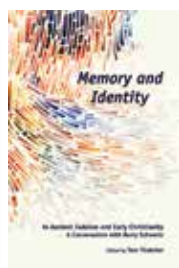
The ICI open access book series are continuing to thrive. Ancient Near East Monographs has published three titles in 2014: *Deuteronomy—Kings as Emerging Authoritative Books: A Conversation*, edited by Diana V. Edelman; *Divination, Politics, and Ancient Near Eastern Empires*, edited by Alan Lenzi and Jonathan Stökl; and *Israel and the Assyrians: Deuteronomy, the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon, and the Nature of Subversion* by Carly C. Crouch. There are two volumes scheduled for publication in the first quarter of 2015. International Voices in Biblical Studies published *Exegetical Voices of Women in Northeast Asian Countries*, edited by Hisako Kinukawa.

SBL continues to add books to the Online Books depository each month. Over 420 titles are now available freely to students and scholars in ICI countries, thanks to our partnerships with the following publishers: Brown Judaic Studies, Catholic Biblical Association, Fortress Press, Gorgias Press, Sheffield Phoenix Press, Westminster John Knox Press, and Wiley-Blackwell. The SBL technology team is exploring ways to enhance this site both in terms of search ability and security.

We are grateful for the work of the ICI liaisons. They have been called upon to distribute the monthly ICI newsletter throughout their countries, to participate in the transmitted ICI sessions from the AM, and to recruit groups outside their own institutions to participate as well. In addition, the liaison network was used to connect scholars making plans to attend the Annual Meeting to facilitate room and expense sharing.

SBL currently has 520 members from ICI countries, 343 of whom have taken advantage of the special ICI membership rate. This is an increase of 23% from 2013.

In 2014, eighteen institutions have subscribed to *JBL* at the ICI rate; there have been three *RBL* ICI subscriptions.



AWARDS

Paul J. Achtemeier Award

JAMES W. BARKER, Assistant Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Rhodes College, is the 2014 recipient of the Paul J. Achtemeier Award for New Testament Scholarship. James, a member of SBL since 2003, received his PhD from Vanderbilt University in 2011. His dissertation, “John’s Use of Matthew,” was directed by Amy-Jill Levine, and it will be published in 2015 by Fortress Press. In 2014 James also received the SBL Midwest Regional Scholar Award, and he published “The Reconstruction of *Kaige/Quinta* Zechariah 9,9” in *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*. He will attend the 2014 Annual Meeting in San Diego and present his award paper entitled, “Ancient Compositional Practices and the Gospels: A Reassessment.”

David Noel Freedman Award

GUY DARSHAN is the recipient of the 2014 David Noel Freedman Award for Excellence and Creativity in Hebrew Bible Scholarship. He teaches at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he earned his PhD. He completed a postdoctoral year at the University of Chicago (2012–2013), and in 2014 became a Harry Starr Fellow in Judaica at Harvard University. His recent articles have been published, or are forthcoming, in *JBL*, *JAOS*, *VT* and *ZAW*. He has received several prestigious academic awards. His research interests include the development of biblical literature and its text, and comparative study of the Bible in the ancient eastern Mediterranean context. Guy has been a member of SBL since 2012, and will attend the 2014 Annual Meeting in San-Diego to present his award paper entitled: “The Origins of the Foundation Stories Genre in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Eastern Mediterranean.”

Call for Papers

The 2015 Achtemeier, Freedman, and de Gruyter Award Call for Papers opened October 1, 2014. See the SBL Website for information regarding requirements: <http://www.sbl-site.org/membership/SBLAwards.aspx>.

De Gruyter Award

JENNIFER STRAWBRIDGE is a Research Lecturer in Theology at Keble College, University of Oxford where she also serves as Chaplain and Fellow. She received her D.Phil. from the University of Oxford in 2014. She also holds degrees from Yale Divinity School (MDiv), Berkeley Divinity School at Yale (Diploma in Anglican Studies), Oxford (MSt and MA), and Washington and Lee University (BA). Jenn has published articles in the *Anglican Theological Review* and *Studia Patristica*, with one forthcoming in the *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*. Her research focuses the reception of Pauline writings in early Christian texts with a new project on apocalyptic thought in early Christianity.

From left to right: James W. Barker, Guy Darshan, and Jennifer Strawbridge.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2014 SBL TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENTS

Annual Meeting Participant Grant Winners

Bruk Ayele Asale – University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

Lubunga W'Ehusha – University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

Annual Meeting Attendee Grant Winners

Yael Epstein – Bar-Ilan University, Israel (Yael Epstein has had to postpone attending the Annual Meeting until 2015)

Juan Manuel Tebes – Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina, Argentina

Tiffany Webster – The University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

The SBL Travel Grants offer opportunities to current SBL members to attend the Annual Meeting, participate in the program, enhance their professional development, and build their network with fellow scholars. These grants help facilitate the work of Program Units, the International Cooperation Initiative, Status of Women in the Profession Committee, Underrepresented Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee, and other SBL Committees representing scholars in the field. These grants are intended to support underrepresented and underresourced scholars. As such, preference will be given to women, ethnic/racial minorities, and members from ICI-qualifying countries. A key criterion is an applicant's demonstrable financial need.

Two of the four Travel Grants are awarded to members whose proposals have been accepted by a Program Unit and have demonstrated that the work of the unit and the field will be enhanced by that member's participation. The other grants are awarded to members who have never attended an Annual Meeting. The Society's Travel Grants provide for lodging for four nights, complimentary meeting registration and reimbursement for travel expense to a designated amount set within the award guidelines.

The Travel Grant Committee members are representatives from the International Cooperation Initiative, Status of Women in the Profession Committee, Underrepresented Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee. This year's committee included:

Alejandro Botta • Mignon Jacobs • Susanne Scholtz • Shannell Smith • Ehud Ben Zvi

We would like express our sincere thanks to all applicants and donors of the Society. Your contributions to the Society of Biblical Literature strengthen our mission to *foster biblical scholarship* globally.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The 2015 call for applications is now open. Applications are due by April 5, 2015.



BRUK AYELE ASALE is currently completing his PhD in Biblical Studies at the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics (SRPC), University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) in South Africa. The area of his PhD research includes New Testament (Jude), Second Temple Literature (1 Enoch), and Judaism and Ethiopian Christianity (Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewa-hido* Church). Besides his PhD thesis, Bruk has published a number of articles in academic journals and books as well as several articles in local languages. Prior to his PhD studies, Bruk has received his MTh, BTh, and Diploma in Library and Information Science from the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST), Mekane Yesus Seminary (MYS), and Addis Ababa University (AAU), respectively. Bruk began his formal teaching career in 1986. He has served as Assistant Instructor, Instructor, and Dean of the Theology Department at MYS (2000–2009). In addition, he taught at other theological colleges in Addis Ababa as a part-time instructor, including EGST.

LUBUNGA W'EHUSHA is a native of the Democratic Republic of Congo; he holds a PhD in Biblical Studies from the University of KwaZulu Natal as well as a MTh and MDiv in Biblical Studies from the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (currently Africa International University). Before embarking on theological training, Dr. Lubunga had previously graduated with a MSC in Geology in his home country, the Democratic Republic of Congo. He had served as lecturer, academic Dean and Acting Principal at the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa in Pietermaritzburg between 2009 and 2012. He has a long experience of teaching Old Testament subjects and biblical Hebrew in several seminaries and universities in Kenya, DR Congo, Burundi and South Africa. Moreover, he is presently doing research in the field of theology, environment, and land as a Postdoctoral Fellow of the University of KwaZulu Natal. He has written numerous journal articles, conference papers, and chapters in published books. More recently, he read a paper entitled “Moving at the Pace of the Cattle: Care for Nature in Genesis” during the conference of the Old Testament Society of Southern Africa (OTSSA) held at the University of Johannesburg 2014. In San Diego Dr. W'Ehusha will present a paper entitled, “A Concern for Nature in the Law of Warfare: An Ecological Reading of Deuteronomy 20:19–20.”

JUAN MANUEL TEBES is a Near Eastern historian with areas of specialization in the history and archaeology of the Iron Age in southern Levant and northwestern Arabia. He currently teaches Ancient Near Eastern history at the Catholic University of Argentina and the University of Buenos Aires. He is also researcher at the National Research Council of Argentina. He has been fellow at the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem, the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman, the Maison de l'Archéologie et de l'Ethnologie in Paris, and the Centre for Classical and Near Eastern Studies of Australia in Sydney. Among Dr. Tebes's many awards are the Fulbright Fellowship, the CONICET Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowships, and the Fernand Braudel-IFER Post-Doctoral Fellowship. He has published numerous works, among them his books *Centro y periferia en el mundo antiguo. El Negev y sus interacciones con Egipto, Asiria, y el Levante en la Edad del Hierro (1200–586 a.C.)* (SBL & CEHAO, 2008), *Nómadas en la encrucijada: Sociedad, ideología y poder en los márgenes áridos del Levante meridional del primer milenio a.C.* (Archaeopress, 2013), and *Unearthing the Wilderness: Studies on the History and Archaeology of the Negev and Edom in the Iron Age* (ed., Peeters, 2014), and a large number of articles in scholarly journals, including “A New Analysis of the Iron Age I ‘Chiefdom’ of Tel Masos (Beersheba Valley),” which was awarded the “Sean W. Dever Memorial Prize” by the Albright Institute.

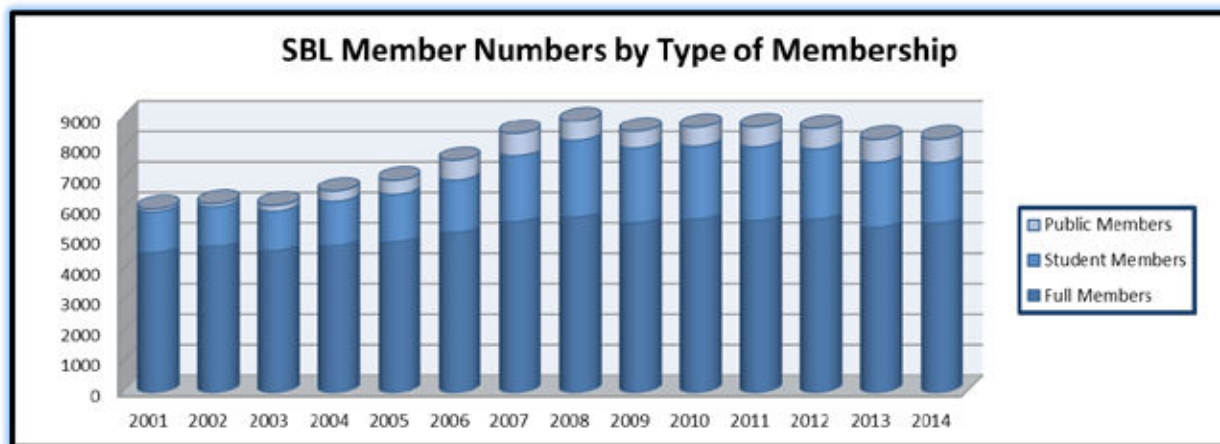
TIFFANY WEBSTER is a final year PhD candidate at the University of Sheffield's Institute for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies. Her thesis is entitled “When the Bible Meets the Black Stuff: A Contextual Bible Study Experiment.” Having previously completed a BA honours in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics at King's College London and an MA in Biblical Studies



Research at the University of Sheffield, Tiffany combined her interests in sociology and anthropology of religion with her passion for the Bible and its reception to develop a unique thesis that focuses upon contextual interpretations of the Bible. In the specific case of her thesis, Tiffany has been reading the Bible with a group of South Derbyshire coal miners. Building upon this work, Tiffany is keen to develop an anthology of contextual exegeses with British men. In addition to focusing upon the production of new, previously unheard readings of the Bible, Tiffany also focuses upon the methodological refinement of the process Contextual Bible Study. Tiffany is passionate about public engagement with research and has thus far produced two of her own public engagement projects, as well as participating in another collaborative project. She is also an ambassador for the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement. For further details on her research and publications please see her webpage: <http://usheffield.academia.edu/TiffanyWebster>

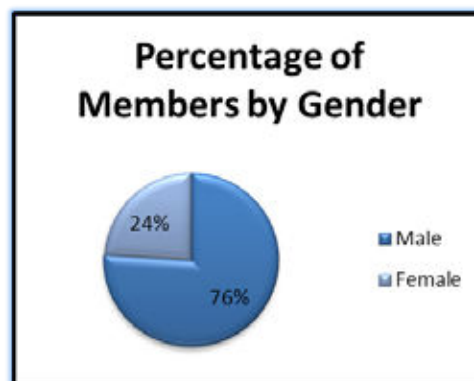
Photos left to right: Bruk Ayele Asale, Lubunga W'Ehusha, Juan Manuel Tebes, Tiffany Webster.

Society membership remains stable. As of the beginning of October 2014, we have 8,302 members from around the world. This number typically increases as we approach the end of November 2014 and the Annual Meeting.



The majority of our members, 5,548, have chosen full membership in the Society. This is an increase of 2.5 percent over last year. Our public members have grown to 779 an increase of 2.5 percent. The society continues to nurture student biblical scholars; our student membership category now totals 1,980.

The membership of the SBL is more diverse than ever before. The percentage of international members has been slowly increasing over the last ten years. In 2001 international members made up only 23 percent of our total membership and today it is at 32 percent. We saw an increase of 1 percent over last year. Women make up 24 percent of our membership today, a figure that has remained level since last year. Of our members who identify ethnicity, almost 14 percent identify themselves as Asian descent, Hispanic, African descent, Native American, or Pacific Islander. This percentage has increased by 2 percent in the last two years.



The majority of our members (38%) fall in the age range of 31–59, closely followed by those between the ages 51–65 (35%). This has not changed from last year's demographic figures. The remaining members are divided: 18 percent of our membership is above the age of 65 while 9 percent is below the age of 30.

The number of International Cooperative Initiative members in the Society of Biblical Literature has increased over the last several years. Currently we have a total of 343 ICI members. Of those members, 284 are full members and 59 are student members. Our ICI members come from 61 countries around the world. Nigeria and South Africa, with a total of 54 and 69 ICI members respectively, account for over 35 percent of the ICI membership.

We are continuing with the process of building a network of ICI Liaisons; so far over 70 people have volunteered. We also have over 50 members who have volunteered as ICI Scholars.

ICI Membership	
Full	284
Student	59
Total ICI	343
Countries	61

REGIONAL SCHOLAR AWARDS

The Regional Scholars' Program has been developed by the Society of Biblical Literature's Council of Regional Coordinators to recognize promising younger scholars in the field of biblical studies. Its objective is to encourage their intellectual development through a mentoring program and to provide practical assistance in securing a place to present their work at the Society's Annual Meeting.

Information on the application process is available from the Regional Coordinator of each region. For more information about regions, including a list of Regional Coordinators and the Regional Scholar Award program policy, visit the SBL website at <http://www.sbl-site.org/meetings/regionalMeetings.aspx>.

TOAN DO has recently begun his five-year Postdoctoral Fellowship at The Australian Catholic University Melbourne Campus. Prior to this post, Toan was an adjunct at Saint Meinrad School of Theology, IN (2010–2011), and was appointed Assistant Professor of Scripture Studies at Sacred Heart School of Theology, WI (2011–2014). Toan earned his dual doctoral degrees (STD in Theology and PhD in Biblical Studies) from the University of Leuven, Belgium, with residence at Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Germany, and holds an STL/MA (Theology/Scripture) from Leuven and a PhD/MA (Philosophy) from the Catholic University of America. Toan's dissertation *Rethinking the Death of Jesus* was published earlier this year by Peeters-Leuven University Press; he also has articles published in *BETL*, *ZNW*, *Biblica*, *JBL*, *REW*, *LBD*, and *IJAC*. Toan is preparing the commentary on the Johannine Epistles for the *Paulist Biblical Commentary*; he is also an associate editor for the *International Journal of African Catholicism*. Toan's teaching and research interests include the Johannine literature, NT textual criticism, and classical/biblical Greek.

CAMERON B. R. HOWARD is assistant professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. She received her PhD from Emory University in 2010. She also holds an MTS from Emory University and a Th.M. from Columbia Theological Seminary. Prior to joining the faculty at Luther, she taught at the School of Theology at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, and the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Her publications include contributions to *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics* (SBL 2008), *The New Interpreter's Bible One-Volume Commentary* (Abingdon 2010), the twentieth-anniversary edition of the *Women's Bible Commentary* (Westminster John Knox 2012), and the journal *Word & World*. Her current research focuses on post-colonial approaches to the literature and history of the Persian period. Committed to making critical biblical scholarship accessible to clergy and laypeople, Howard is a frequent contributor to WorkingPreacher.org and co-hosts a monthly podcast at EntertheBible.org.

MATTHEW THIESSEN is Assistant Professor of New Testament at Saint Louis University. In 2010, he earned his PhD at Duke University. His dissertation, which was published as *Contesting Conversion: Genealogy, Circumcision, and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Christianity* (Oxford University Press, 2011), won the Manfred Lautenschlaeger Award for Theological Promise 2014. His research focuses on Jewish and Christian identity construction in antiquity, and has been published in such journals as the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *New Testament Studies*, *Novum Testamentum*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, and *Journal for the Study of Judaism*. He is currently working on a monograph on the apostle Paul's use of the Abraham narrative to defend his circumcision-free mission to the gentiles.

JOHN B. WHITLEY is a Visiting Scholar at the Boston University School of Theology. He earned his ThD in Hebrew Bible from Harvard Divinity School and also holds degrees from Yale Divinity School (MAR) and Florida State University (BA). John has published articles in the *Harvard Theological Review* and the *Journal of Biblical Literature* and his research and teaching interests include the religion and literature of Second Temple Judaism, the reception-history of the Hebrew Bible, and the ancient Near East. His doctoral dissertation, "Harnessing the Prophetic Voice: Allusion and Rewriting in Prophetic Collections from the Second Century B.C.E.," examines the use of allusion and hypertextuality in 4QApocryphon of Jeremiah C, 4QPseudo-Ezekiel, and Daniel 7–12 and is currently being revised for publication.



STATE OF FINANCIAL POSITION JUNE 30, 2014 AND 2013

FINANCES

	<u>FY 2014</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,524,048	1,403,688
Marketable securities	2,091,981	1,614,460
Accounts receivable	160,036	213,596
Pledges receivable, net	4,400	6,700
Prepaid expenses and other assets	47,217	22,230
Book inventories, net of valuation reserve	78,999	42,963
Furniture and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation	60,071	75,786
Net share of Luce Center assets	<u>2,005,178</u>	<u>1,942,471</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 5,971,930</u>	<u>\$ 5,321,894</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	227,050	246,072
Deferred revenue		
Memberships and subscriptions	537,888	504,978
Annual meetings	747,226	691,617
International meeting	145,276	106,239
Other	<u>65,425</u>	<u>62,833</u>
Total Deferred Revenues	<u>1,495,815</u>	<u>1,365,667</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>1,722,865</u>	<u>1,611,739</u>
Net Assets		
Unrestricted net assets	3,619,742	3,141,268
Temporarily restricted net assets	334,693	274,257
Permanently restricted net assets	<u>294,630</u>	<u>294,630</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>4,249,065</u>	<u>3,710,115</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$ 5,971,930</u>	<u>\$ 5,321,894</u>

Three major accomplishments:

1) SBL's Statement of Financial Position has been steadily improving for the past five years. That progress continues this year with the increase in net assets of \$538,810 that is shown on the Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets.

2) SBL transferred \$200,000 from cash flow to its general investments in the calendar year 2014, in order to continue to build the investment portfolio and provide the Society with a solid financial base. Executive director reports to Council and members have noted two goals that this reinforces: (1) build investments for long-term organizational stability and (2) balance the budget with a Net Operating Reserve (NOR).

3) SBL has built a solid budget for Fiscal Year 2015 that includes funds for an *RBL* website redesign, the maintenance of the Bible Odyssey website, and WiFi at the Annual Meeting, to name just a few programs and services.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

BUDGET 2014–2015

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
Revenues and gains		
Congresses	\$ 1,342,579	\$ 1,379,235
Membership		
Membership fees	572,572	587,321
Marketing	37,327	48,776
Professions		
Employment Center	100,464	110,710
Fonts		1,550
Grant Revenue	172,062	96,459
Publications		
Book Sales	559,077	463,634
Subscriptions	315,249	290,493
Royalties	129,294	163,667
Marketing	45,375	34,525
Permissions	14,886	16,680
Membership	101,042	
Development and fundraising	44,220	48,503
Investment income (loss), net	421,563	217,483
Rental income (loss), net	6,924	22,069
Total Revenues and Gains	<u>\$ 3,862,634</u>	<u>\$ 3,481,105</u>
Expenses		
Program expenses		
Congresses	\$ 1,141,076	\$ 1,111,705
Membership	174,726	210,293
Professions	376,179	301,940
Publications	1,149,911	1,034,460
Regions	116,261	128,822
Research and technology	<u>141,219</u>	<u>162,276</u>
Total Program Expenses	3,099,372	2,949,496
Development and fundraising	58,721	85,484
General and administration	<u>165,631</u>	<u>159,754</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 3,323,724</u>	<u>\$ 3,194,734</u>
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	538,910	286,371
Net Assets at Beginning of the Year	<u>3,710,155</u>	<u>3,423,784</u>
Net Assets at End of the Year	<u>\$ 4,249,065</u>	<u>\$ 3,710,155</u>

Revenues	
Congresses	1,269,642
Development	45,000
Membership	633,183
Professions	124,055
Publications	1,123,797
Total Revenue	<u>\$ 3,195,677</u>

Expenses	
Administration	104,483
Congresses	1,108,093
Development	75,625
Membership	169,223
Professions	305,280
Publications	1,206,833
Regions	105,139
Technology	120,773
Total Expense	<u>\$ 3,195,449</u>

Increase (Decrease) in	
Net Assets	<u>\$ 228</u>

The financial information summarized here was derived from the Society's audited financial statements. The independent auditor's report by Mauldin & Jenkins, dated 14 October 2014, states that the financial statements present fairly the financial position of the Society and when presenting the audited financials to the finance committee praised the integrity of the data that enabled for such a clean audit. For SBL's full audit report, please visit SBL's website.



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Thank you for your contributions to the Society of Biblical Literature. Your support to the Society goes beyond the breadth and depth of the annual meetings and programs. Your support nurtures future generations in the field of biblical studies.

Long-time member of SBL, John Langfitt (see the interview on p. 3), said that while his level of active participation changed over time, what did not change was his “identification with and commitment to this organization, the purposes of which I celebrate and affirm and to which I offer continued loyalty and personal support. I attended the Annual Meeting, whenever possible. I donated to special fund appeals to recognize contributing scholarship and support the developing student involvement.”

Your support to the Society reinforces our mission to advance the academic study of biblical texts; develop resources for diverse audiences, facilitate broad and open discussions, and promote cooperation across global boundaries. Again, thank you for your commitment to the Society of Biblical Literature.

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Thank You, Leigh

If there is one smiling face and soft Southern voice that authors, editors, and members identify with SBL Press, it is that of Managing Editor Leigh Andersen. Thus it is with great sadness and profound appreciation that we acknowledge Leigh's retirement at the end of 2014.

Leigh's service to the Society and to SBL Press exceeds that of any other member of the staff: more than twenty-one years by the time she finishes. Leigh began in 1993 as a Production Assistant with Scholars Press, working in the current Emory Alumni Building just down the driveway from the Luce Center. In time the Society established its own publications program, and Leigh made the move up the hill to join the SBL staff as Managing Editor, a role she continued to fill even through our most recent transformation into SBL Press.

During her years working on SBL books, Leigh has been involved in some way with the publication of over five hundred different SBL titles. Since many of these books were published in multiple formats, it is no wonder that earlier this year Leigh assigned her one thousandth SBL ISBN. In addition to all that, Leigh has been the point person in SBL's relationship with Brown Judaic Studies for as long as anyone can remember, and in recent years Leigh has played a crucial role in developing and advancing SBL's International Cooperation Initiative.

Leigh's productivity has been matched only by her collegiality with authors, editors, members, and co-workers alike, and although we will miss having Leigh as a colleague, we take solace in knowing that we will always have Leigh as a friend.



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