



atla  **Newsletter**

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This is a PDF version of the Atla Newsletter Digest. View the
Atla blog at atla.com for the latest Atla news.

BACK

CHANGE, GROWTH, AND
GRATITUDE

BLOG POST

Change, Growth, and Gratitude

by Stephen Sweeney, President 2019-2020 / December 06, 2019

From the President



December is a time to think about change. Six months of the fiscal year have gone by (if you have a July 1 start), the calendar is about to turn to a new year, and that can sometimes give pause for thought. That thinking should be reflective of the past year – successes have been reached to continue the good work of our libraries and institutions, or learning experiences may have been had to cause a course correction.

Change can be a good thing; this past year at Atla, for example, the Board has thought about our brand and our public image, we have considered input gathered by the Moral Ownership Committee of the Board, and we have an election coming up just next month to continue to secure our future.

Gratitude can be a fruit of change. Looking back over the past year with an eye to what's ahead of us, I am thankful to Atla: our members, our Board, the staff, and everyone who makes up our great association. Thank you for the gifts you bring to Atla; we are healthier and more robust due to the good work accomplished by the Association (you) over the past year.

← BACK

DESIGN THINKING: MORE THAN A
PROCESS, A PHILOSOPHY

BLOG POST

Design Thinking: More Than a Process, a Philosophy

by Marie Jacobsen / November 20, 2019

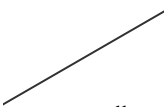
From Staff Leadership



In November, I attended a Human Resources compliance conference. The opening keynote speaker was Christopher J. Collins, PhD, who is an Associate Professor of Human Resource Studies and Director of Executive Master of Human Resource Management Program at Cornell University. Dr. Collins addressed his philosophy on the topic of design thinking for better policy development and performance management.

During his keynote address, Dr. Collins brought forth the concept of design thinking as an approach to problem-solving and enhancing experiences by understanding users' needs. He mentioned that organizations today have the mindset that they are experts in their fields and are convinced that they have the best approaches to problem-solving. Using their dominant logic and mastered analytical skill-set thinking, they focus and react to changing trends as an organizational disrupter

Dr. Collins pointed out that organizations are increasingly not reaching out to their employees to obtain their thoughts and ideas about how to solve problems or make products or services better. Instead, they lose out on the critical experiences and emotions of these employees, which could help them better understand the needs of product/service users. For most organizations, ideas and innovation are not generated from this precious resource. He indicated that to drive innovation, businesses must have the capacity to design and the need to fuse design internally within the organization by developing a culture that fosters creative thinking. He stated that interaction, experimentation, watching, and listening to the voice of the employee is key to organization innovation today.



“He indicated that to drive innovation, businesses must have the capacity to design and the need to fuse design internally within the organization by developing a culture that fosters creative thinking.”

Although his presentation focused on policy development and performance management, the topic resonated with me in terms of how organizations are approaching problem-solving. He pointed out that the observations and empathy

of employees must be used to tackle and re-frame ill-defined or unknown problems into human-centric design thinking. He feels that design thinking helps to shape persona.

Is design thinking easy to implement? No, it is difficult for organizations to recognize that the expertise they take pride in may be questioned by the voice of the employee, who is providing a different perspective. It's difficult for organizations to challenge assumptions because they have relied on established patterns of thinking.

An organization must be ready to break out of their routines and limitations so they can solve problems and create innovative ideas that will generate better solutions. By doing so, employee design thinking will increase the success of change management. According to Dr. Collins, design thinking through employee problem-solving and enhancing needs should not be a process—it should be a philosophy.

BACK

2020 ATLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ELECTION OPENS JANUARY 2

BLOG POST

2020 Atla Board of Directors Election Opens January 2

November 22, 2019

Association News



The 2020 Atla Board of Directors Election will open on Thursday, January 2, 2020, and will close on Thursday, January 30, 2020. The election will be performed via electronic ballot by Survey & Ballot Systems.

Ballots including candidates' biographical information and statements will be posted on a customized website hosted by Survey & Ballot Systems. Candidate information can also be found on the Atla Blog <<https://www.atla.com/blog/2020-statements/>>.

Personalized access codes to the voting site will be sent via e-mail to eligible voting members (Institutional Member Representatives, Individual Members, and Retired Members) in good standing as of January 1, 2020. The e-mail will come from the Atla Election Coordinator and the displayed e-mail address will be noreply@directvote.net. You may wish to add this address to your address book or alert your IT staff to allow it through your institution's firewall.

If you are an Individual member who also serves as an Institutional Member Representative, you will receive two distinct ballots with different access codes in order to fulfill your voting opportunities as articulated in the Atla Bylaws.

If you have any questions about voting procedures or your membership status, please contact a member representative at memberrep@atla.com or Gillian Harrison Cain, Director of Member Programs, at gcain@atla.com.

BACK

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

BLOG POST

2020 Board of Directors Candidate Statements

November 22, 2019

Board of Directors



The Nominating Committee has named the following candidates for the four director positions to be filled on the Board for the term of 2020-2023.

The election will be conducted via electronic ballot from January 2 through January 30, 2020. For information about voting, read the 2020 Atla Board of Directors Election article <<https://www.atla.com/blog/2020election/>>.

The Board candidates have been asked to make brief statements addressing three questions identified by the Atla Board:

1. What do you see as the challenges of understanding the broad and diverse views of our association?
2. The Board focuses on the future of the association and emphasizes strategic leadership. What strengths would you contribute to this process?
3. The Board has authority as a group, not as individuals. This means board members are expected to deliberate candidly but to speak externally with one voice once a decision is reached. If others were to describe how you participate in a deliberating body, what would they say?

The candidates are (in randomized order by www.random.org <<http://www.random.org/>>):

- ▶ Karl Stutzman, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana, USA
- ▶ Leslie A. Engelson, Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky, USA
- ▶ James Darlack, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Hamilton, Massachusetts, USA
- ▶ Robert Roethemeyer, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA
- ▶ Michelle Spomer, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA (incumbent)
- ▶ Kerrie Burn, University of Divinity, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- ▶ Wesley Custer, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, USA
- ▶ Michael Bradford, Harvard Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

Karl Stutzman



Current Position

Director of Library Services, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Education and Professional Development

- BA, Goshen College
- MLS, Indiana University
- Certificate in Theological Studies, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Previous Positions

- Assistant Director for Digital Library Services, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
- Fulfillment Coordinator, Private Academic Library Network of Indiana
- Systems Coordinator, Private Academic Library Network of Indiana
- Access & Digital Services Librarian, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
- Interim Librarian for Access Services & Acquisitions, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Leadership Positions in Atla

- Secretary, Small Libraries Interest Group (2018-)
- Founding Chair, Emerging Technology Interest Group (2013-2014)

Leadership Positions other than Atla

- Executive Committee (Vice Chair, Chair, Past Chair), Private Academic Library Network of Indiana Board (2018-2020)
- Member, Future Framing Task Force, Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (2018-2019)
- Participant, Colloquy on the Role of Theological School Librarians, Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion (2013)
- Board Member (Vice President, President, Past President), Chicago Area Theological Library Association (2010-2012)

Statement

Political polarization in the current North American environment and the embrace of a global organizational vision make it increasingly difficult to hold together the diverse and strongly-held views of Atla members on any number of issues. Yet Atla remains a space where I can cross boundaries and build strong relationships with other “connectors and collectors in religion and theology” regardless of

politics, religion, ethnicity, or lifestyle. The focus of our association on a common passion for theological librarianship helps us to build bridges and incorporate broad diversity. To the process of building a strategic vision for the future of Atla, I bring listening skills and sensitivity to persons who are different from me, as well as a generative passion for thinking about new possibilities. I am energized by thinking strategically and by collaborating with members of a team. Persons who've worked with me on a deliberating body might say that I'm respectfully candid in expressing my own views, which are sometimes divergent. I believe they would also indicate that I am a team player who readily supports and carries out the will of the group once there is a move toward consensus, even if that consensus represents something different from the views I originally expressed in the deliberations.

Leslie A. Engelson



Current Position

Metadata Librarian, University Libraries, Murray State University

Education and Professional Development

- BA, Northwest University
- MLIS, University of Washington
- Alma Administrator, ExLibris

Previous Positions

Technical Services Librarian (1998-2011), Co-Interim Library Director (2000), and Interim Systems Librarian (2000), Hurst Library, Northwest University

Leadership Positions in Atla

- Atla Open Press Advisory Council, Member, (2017-present)
- Various Search Committees, Member, (2016, 2018, 2019)
- Tellers Committee, Member (2015-2017), Chair (2016-2017)
- Theology Cataloging Bulletin, Editor in Chief, (2012-present)
- Annual Conference Committee, Vice-Chair (2011-2012), Chair (2012/2013)
- NACO Funnel, Participant (2007-present)
- Technical Services Interest Group, Member (2004-present), Vice-Chair (2012-2016)
- Collection Evaluation and Development Committee, Vice-Chair (2003/2004), Secretary (2004/2005), Chair (2005/2006), Co-Chair (2006/2007)

Leadership Positions other than Atla

- Calloway Country Friends of the Library, Treasurer (2019-Present)

Statement

In the twenty years I have been a member of Atla, I have found it to be a place of professional growth with colleagues who have become friends. It is also not the same organization today that it was twenty years ago. Atla's broadened vision has attracted a more diverse membership, expanded its products, and encouraged exploration into the organization's role in the world of scholarly communication. This broadened vision also presents challenges such as the tangible loss of long-held and beloved conference traditions and the intangible uncertainty regarding the identity of the organization and an individual's fit within it. This is a crucial time for the board to ensure that the organization remains faithful to the vision without diluting its core purpose or values.

As Atla has grown and changed over the years, so has my professional trajectory. Initially serving as a liaison to the School of Ministry at Northwest University, I have since taken a position at a secular institution that has no focus on theological or religious studies. However, I remain a member of Atla because of the rich opportunities for professional growth and development, as well as support in the area of technical service. Because of my ability to both appreciate and see beyond the traditionally defined boundaries of the organization, I am able to benefit from and contribute to the organization through the various roles in which I have had the privilege to serve. Additionally, I appreciate the complexity of factors that impact scholarly communication and Atla's role in that process as both publisher and disseminator. My roles as an author and editor, as well as a librarian, have sharpened my interest in and awareness of the changing landscape of scholarly communication.

Not content to sit on the sidelines, I am an active participant in all committees on which I serve. I am an active listener, open to the thoughts and ideas of others. As with most librarians, I am an information gatherer and I apply critical thinking to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the options, well aware of complexities that defy simple solutions. I would love to have the opportunity to use my experience in scholarly communication activities as well as my abilities to see outside the box, critically assess, and creatively adapt, to serve the membership of this valuable organization. If elected to the board, I look forward to engaging in thoughtful and intentional conversations that help move Atla forward as "the hub of worldwide scholarly communication in theology and religion."

James Darlack



Current Position

Director, Goddard Library, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Education and Professional Development

- BSB, University of Valley Forge

- BRE, University of Valley Forge
- MAOT, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- MANT, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Theological Librarianship Class (LIS 590TL, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign/Atla)
- MSLIS, Drexel University
- DMin, (Currently enrolled at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary)

Previous Positions

- Assistant Librarian for Reference & Bibliographic Instruction (2005-2015), Goddard Library, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Library Assistant for Acquisitions & Accounts (2004-2005), Goddard Library, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Library Assistant for Public Services (2001-2004), Goddard Library, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Leadership Positions in Atla

- Contract Editor, Websites on Religion LibGuide (2019)
- Chair, Tellers Committee (2018-2019)
- Member, Tellers Committee (2016-2017)
- Member, Lifetime Members Taskforce (2017)
- Participant, Teaching & Learning Colloquy on the Role of Theological School Librarians (2013)
- Participant, Creating the Leaders of Tomorrow Cohort (2014)

Leadership Positions other than Atla

- Chair of Library Directors Committee, Boston Theological Interreligious Consortium (2017-present)
- Hamilton Campus Academic Affairs Committee, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (2015-present)
- Executive Board Secretary, Empowerment International Christian Ministries – Lilongwe, Malawi (2016-date)
- Board of Elders, Gloucester Assembly of God (2005-2007; 2009-2011; 2014-2016)

Statement

As librarians, we are familiar with change. Technology changes. Our patrons change. Higher education changes. In the last century, the landscape of Christianity has changed — dramatically. A demographic reversal has occurred. Christianity in Europe and North America has witnessed a decline, while Christianity in the Global South has seen exponential growth. These changes have been mirrored in theological education.

I have had the privilege of serving in non-profit board leadership during times of transition and change — addressing fiscal challenges, leadership transitions, and organizational conflict. I have learned that strategic leadership is accomplished only through cooperation and dialogue. Each member brings unique conviction and experience as gifts in service of the organization’s mission and objectives, but these gifts must be shared with an openness to learn, a willingness to listen, and a desire to understand. Vigorous and amicable debate is essential in working toward shared goals, but unity in leadership is of paramount importance. As direction is set, each member leans-in to the common goal.

In the midst of change, Atla has responded. The recent ‘rebranding’ acknowledges that ‘the first word’ of our association can no longer simply be “American.” Open access initiatives recognize that economic change

does not always follow demographics. Organizations largely based in the West can help shift resources where need is greatest, while amplifying the voice of the Majority World. Initiatives in diversity, equity, and inclusion recognize the pluriform nature of the religious landscape — and the need for representation, dialogue, and understanding. While the religious and educational landscape changes, Atla’s legacy of excellence will continue through open dialogue, innovation, and collaboration.

Robert Roethemeyer



Current Position

The Wakefield-Kroemer Director of Library and Information Services, Kroemer Library, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Education and Professional Development

- BA, University of Nebraska, Lincoln
- MDiv, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis
- MA in Library Science, University of Missouri, Columbia

Previous Positions

Public Services Librarian (1988-1997), Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis

Leadership Positions in Atla

- Member, Annual Conference Committee (2016-2019)
- Co-Chair, Local Host Committee (Indianapolis 2018)
- Mentor, “Creating Leaders of Tomorrow” Program (2012, 2014-2015)
- Member, Search Committee for Director of Member Programs (2014)

Leadership Positions other than Atla

- Ordained Member, Concordia Historical Institute Board of Governors (2019-present)
- Member, Academic Libraries of Indiana Shared Collections Committee (2018-present)
- Chair, Board of Directors, Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS) (2012-2014)
- Board of Directors, Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS) (2010-2015)
- Member, Resource Sharing Advisory Council, Indiana State Library (2011-present)
- Chair, Resource Sharing Task Force, Academic Libraries of Indiana (ALI) (2006-2008)
- Executive Committee, Chicago Area Theological Library Association (CATLA) (2005-2008)
- Board of Directors, Academic Libraries of Indiana (ALI) (2003-2008, 2011-2012)
- Executive Committee, Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (PALNI) (2001-2004)
- Board of Directors, Private Academic Library Network of Indiana (PALNI) (1997-present)

Statement

Slow down. Listen. Seek to understand. These are watchwords for the challenges presented by the rapidity of change all around us. Once we understand the broad themes, our challenge is to collaborate around them, probing them from diverse viewpoints. We do so understanding also that we have a shared responsibility to prioritize and to work toward common goals. And Atla members have more in common than not. While there are many associations serving libraries as well as other societies and academies fostering theology and religion, Atla distinctively brings these two worlds together. At this intersection, theological librarians come together to solve common problems, meet common needs, and accomplish common goals. The Atla 2018 conference in Indianapolis attempted to capture this spirit with the theme – “Connecting at the Crossroads: Creative Collaboration in a Changing Landscape.”

My service on campus and in other library associations, as well as my global work, has nurtured my strengths in strategic leadership. In addition to my role as the Wakefield-Kroemer Director of Library and Information Services, I currently serve my seminary as Vice President for Strategic Planning and Mission Execution. In that role, I help to guide strategic planning, assessment, accreditation, archives, and institutional research – the long game activities of the institution. My Midwest library colleagues have elected me as member-at-large to the inaugural boards of two library collaboratives. First, to the Academic Libraries of Indiana, serving seventy-two academic libraries in Indiana. Then to the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services, serving over six hundred libraries of all types in Michigan and Indiana. Finally, over the last seven years, I have had the opportunity to visit nearly twenty partner seminaries around the globe. From those evaluative and consultative visits, we have developed an initiative to reach seminary-to-seminary and library-to-library to help address the strategic themes that emerged and to thereby uplift global theological education.

During my tenure on the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services board of directors, I became intimately familiar with the same policy-based governance model that Atla uses. In that model, the Board has authority as a group, not as individuals. My colleagues on that board would describe me as the one who actively listened to the deliberations, often connecting the diverse perspectives and seeing the patterns and insights. I would often speak last, reflecting back the collective discoveries.

Michelle Spomer



Current Position

Donald G. Miller Librarian and Director of the Clifford E. Barbour Library, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Education and Professional Development

- MLIS, San Jose State University

- MDiv, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary
- BA, University of Washington

Previous Positions

- Head of Stamps Library (2013-2016), Stamps Library, Azusa Pacific University
- Associate Professor, Theological Bibliography & Research (2011-2013), Stamps Library, Azusa Pacific University
- Head of Reference (2010-2011), University Libraries, Azusa Pacific University
- Reference & Instruction Librarian (2005-2009), Stamps Library, Azusa Pacific University
- Reference & Electronic Services Librarian (2004-2005), Annie Gabriel Library, California Baptist University
- Circulation Supervisor, Reference & Public Services Librarian, Adjunct Professor (1996-2004), Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

Leadership Positions in Atla

- Director, Board of Directors (2016 – present)
- Co-chair, Local Host Committee (2013 – 2016)
- Chair, Annual Conference Committee (2014 – 2015)
- Member, Annual Conference Committee (2013 – 2016)
- Member, Education Committee (2012 – 2013)
- Chair, Publications Committee (2010 – 2011)
- Member, Publications Committee (2008 – 2010)
- Chair, College & University Interest Group (2009 – 2010)
- Secretary, College & University Interest Group (2007 – 2009)
- [consultant, Annual Conference Committee, Education Committee, poster sessions]

Leadership Positions other than Atla

- Member, Brill Library Advisory Board (2009 – 2011)
- Member, Elections & Nominating Committee, California Academic & Research Libraries (2007 – 2009)
- Member, SAGE Library Advisory Board (2012 – 2014)
- Southern California Theological Library Association
 - President (2007 – 2008)
 - Vice President (2006 – 2007)
 - Secretary (2005 – 2006)
- Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium
 - Member, Product Review Committee (2007 – 2016)
 - Chair, Product Review Committee (2009 – 2010)
 - Vice Chair, Product Review Committee (2008 – 2009)

Statement

I am thankful for the opportunity to be considered for the Atla Board of Directors for a second term, and I believe I have much experience and several strengths to offer. I have been a theological librarian for nineteen years, and have worked in both university and seminary settings. As a result, I have been involved with various planning processes and committees, including strategic planning, curriculum review, library design and renovation, and project management. I have also been committed to and involved with Atla by serving on several committees and presenting at conferences. In the last three years on the Board, I have enjoyed actively engaging with my colleagues and working toward Atla's organizational ends.

I believe that the biggest strength of Atla is the membership. I am constantly grateful for the diversity of institutions, traditions, and opinions that are represented in Atla, all brought together by the pursuit of religious and theological librarianship and scholarship. As a Board member, it's my goal to listen to and engage with Atla members in order to inform and enrich Board discussions.

Kerrie Burn



Current Position

Library Manager (2014-present), Mannix Library, Catholic Theological College, University of Divinity, Melbourne, Australia

Education and Professional Development

- Bachelor of Science, University of Melbourne, 1988
- Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies, University of Melbourne, 1992
- Graduate Diploma in Theology, Melbourne College of Divinity, 2003
- Master of Arts (Research), Melbourne College of Divinity, 2007
- Thesis title: The Australian Baptist Heritage Collection: Management of a Geographically Distributed Special Collection
- Associate Fellow, Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Awarded 2007
- Distinguished Certified Professional, ALIA, Awarded 2018 – AFALIA (DCP)

Previous Positions

- Senior Librarian (Research Support) (2012-2014), Australian Catholic University Library
- Research Management System Development Administrator, (2010-2012), Division of Research, Southern Cross University
- ePublications Librarian (repository) (2009-2010), Southern Cross University Library
- Team Leader Resource Services (2007-2009), Southern Cross University Library
- Senior Librarian (1998-2007), Whitley College, Baptist College of Victoria
- Librarian (1993-1998), Ridley College, a college in the evangelical Anglican tradition

Leadership Positions in Atla

- Member, International Theological Librarianship Education Task Force (Feb 2018-present)
- Presenter, Atla Annual Conference, Indianapolis, 2018
- Member, Roman Catholic Denominational Group (2018-present)

Leadership Positions other than Atla

- Chair, University of Divinity Library Committee (2014-present)
- Member, University of Divinity Academic Board (2014-present)
- Manager, University of Divinity Online Library Hub (2015-present)

- Project Manager, Library Resources Goal, University of Divinity Strategic Plan (2015-present)
- Manager, University of Divinity Online Library Hub
- Project Team member, Australian Research Council-funded Discovery Project, A Baroque Archbishop in Colonial Australia: James Alipius Goold, 1812-1886 (2017-present)
- Member, Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission (March 2018-present)
- Member, Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand (April 2019-present)
- Member, Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association (ALIA)

Statement

In recent years I have been impressed by Atla's vision and mission, its growing engagement with the international theological library community, and have witnessed how alignment with its core values underpins its strategic decision-making. Two core values particularly speak to me, these being: hospitality, inclusion, and diversity; and collegiality and collaboration. My professional esteem has only improved since attending three Atla Annual conferences and becoming a member of Atla's International Theological Librarianship Education Task Force. The additional step of becoming a nominee for the Atla Board provides another opportunity to give back to the community that has been a source of both professional challenge and rich reward over many years.

The University of Divinity is a collegiate institution, established in Melbourne in 1910. The University's teaching and research is conducted through eleven associated Colleges representing the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Churches of Christ, Lutheran, Salvation Army, Coptic Orthodox, and Uniting Churches in Australia. This unique ecumenical venture means that collegiality and collaboration are part of our DNA. As a member of the University's Academic Board and Chair of its Library Committee, this is fundamental to my approach. The University is an institutional member of Atla, and recently became the first institution outside North America to contribute to Atla Digital Library. Engaging more with Atla arose from my desire to contribute to projects with international colleagues, and was based on the belief that theological and religious studies librarians around the world share many of the same concerns and aspirations.

While maintaining a single voice on any decision-making body will always present challenges, I believe that valuing relationships over personal agendas is a key ingredient to success. It is important to recognize and value the richness of Atla's history while also embracing change. While each Atla Board member brings different perspectives to the table, these differences ideally inform discussions, enrich one another's understanding, and ultimately lead to decisions that deliver on strategic goals and are made in the best interests of the whole Association. I believe that the challenge of dealing with the membership's diverse views requires Board members to actively listen, to be open to new ideas, and to foster an environment where mutual trust and respect are paramount. This is the spirit that I would bring to the Atla Board.

My career to date has included roles in theological libraries, university libraries, and research departments, allowing me to develop a broad skill set. Strengths developed through previous board and committee experience include governance, policy development, strategic planning, quality assurance, risk assessment, and project management. Being proactive about my professional development has always been a priority and conference attendance has afforded opportunities to learn from library colleagues in many parts of the world. My professional interests include management of special collections, collaborative collection development, institutional repositories, and library history, and I have researched and published in these areas. I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Atla Board, building on the connections that already exist within our increasingly international theological library community.

Wesley Custer



Current Position

Director of Instructional Services, B. L. Fisher Library, Library, Information, and Technology Services, Asbury Theological Seminary

Education and Professional Development

- BA, Trevecca Nazarene University
- MDiv, Asbury Theological Seminary
- MA, Asbury Theological Seminary
- MLIS, Florida State University

Previous Positions

- Technology/Production Specialist (2009-2013) B. L. Fisher Library (Florida-Dunnam Campus), Asbury Theological Seminary
- Adjunct Faculty (Koine Greek) (2013-2014), Warner University
- Manager of FL Information Commons (2013-2015), B. L. Fisher Library (Florida-Dunnam Campus), Asbury Theological Seminary
- Faculty Associate II Information Services Librarian (2015-2018), B. L. Fisher Library (Florida-Dunnam Campus), Asbury Theological Seminary
- Director of Instructional Services (2018-present), B. L. Fisher Library, Asbury Theological Seminary

Leadership Positions in Atla

- Chair, Professional Development Committee (2017-2018)
- Member, Professional Development Committee (2015-2017)
- Chair, Methodist Denomination Fellowship (2014-2015)
- Member, Methodist Denomination Fellowship (2013-)

Leadership Positions other than Atla

- Vice-president Florida Theological Library Association (2016-2017)
- President, Florida Theological Library Association (2017-2018)
- Member, Asbury Theological Seminary Strategic Planning Committee (2011-2012)

Statement

The community of Atla embodies diverse viewpoints and goals that can produce challenges for the Association. We include many expressions of librarianship in the world of religious and theological disciplines in the humanities. It can be difficult to see the world through someone else's eyes, especially when their point of view is different from your own. This is true of theological, social, and professional perspectives

and identities of all kinds. This produces an opportunity to grow and own our core of commonality without denying our valuable diversity. I want to see Atla grow its influence and leadership in the larger world of librarianship, combining all of our strengths to drive innovation!

In leadership situations, I naturally look for new angles forward, acknowledging that we built the “box” in which we find ourselves and it can be remade as the community chooses. I am naturally collaborative in my leadership style. I work hard to be very inclusive of everyone in a group regardless of my own agreement or disagreement. I will argue for what I think is best or the most correct, but I always support the decision of the team. One of my strengths is to see the connectedness of ideas and what implications may come out of our decisions. It is important that a group think through the intended and unintended results of any particular decision.

I think that they would say that I tend to be analytical and collaborative. I always seek a way forward that each member of the group embraces at least 80%. If that level of personal buy-in can be achieved in the leadership body, the direction and objectives are likely to succeed. It bothers me if the group or an individual silences someone’s opinion, and I want to hear new ideas and old ones. It does a great deal of damage when those in leadership act against each other by spreading disagreement through those they lead. There must be a unified voice from the leading body!

Michael Bradford



Current Position

Senior Continuing Resources Cataloger, Harvard Library, Harvard University

Education and Professional Development

- BA, Indiana University, Bloomington
- MLS, Indiana University Purdue University, Indianapolis
- Name Authority Cooperative (NACO) Training and Certification, Library of Congress and Atla
- Cooperative Online Serials Program (CONSER) Training and Certification, Library of Congress and Atla
- XML & RDF-Based Systems Certification, Library Juice Academy

Previous Positions

- Serials and Electronic Resources Librarian (2005-2012), Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard Divinity School
- Supervisor, Serials Cataloging Unit (2002-2005), Hesburgh Libraries, University of Notre Dame
- Serials Fast Track Cataloger (2001-2002), Indiana University Libraries, Indiana University Bloomington

- Serials Conversion Coordinator for the Lilly Library (2000-2001), Indiana University Libraries, Indiana University Bloomington

Leadership Positions in Atla

- Chair, Professional Development Committee, 2019-Present
- Member, Professional Development Committee, 2015-Present
- Member, Technical Services Interest Group Steering Committee, 2010-2015
- Member, Technical Services Interest Group, 2007-Present
- Lead, Atla CONSER Funnel Project, 2015-Present
- Member, Atla CONSER Funnel Project, 2010-Present
- Member, Atla NACO Funnel Project, 2007-Present

Leadership Positions other than Atla

- Intern, ALA, ALCTS Standards Committee, 2014-2015
- Member, ALA ALCTS Continuing Resources Section, Continuing Resources Cataloging Committee, 2015-2018
- Lector, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Brookline, Massachusetts – 2007-2009
- Member, North American Serials Interest Group, Continuing Education Committee – 2006-2008
- Member, ALA ALCTS Serials Section, Committee for the Study of Union Listings – 2005-2006
- Liaison, Indiana Academic Library Association to the Indiana Library Federation Publications Committee, 2004-2005

Statement

I have been involved with Atla since 2007 and I have seen how the Association seeks out members from a variety of backgrounds to encourage them to get actively involved in leadership roles of the Association. This diversity of backgrounds is what makes us thrive and the continual renewal of talent within leadership, at all levels, makes it an active and relevant Association. The Board is a microcosm of that renewal of diverse talent.

I don't consider myself a theological librarian, but rather a librarian who works in a theological setting, because I do not have that theological background. I joined Atla because it would be the primary source of my professional development, based on the type of library I was working in. From the outset, I was encouraged to get involved and am grateful for those encouragements. I also bring experiences that differ from many of my Atla colleagues. I am affiliated with a large academic research institution that has a school of divinity. Some of the challenges I see in my library are vastly different than those of my brethren in standalone seminaries and smaller colleges and universities. This is our strength.

The Board focuses on the direction of the Association and they work for us, the membership. We are all owners, and we elect the Board to make the best strategic decisions to bring our Association forward. It can sometimes be hard to see the forest from the trees when that focus is conceptual forward-looking strategies. I would bring my quiet strength to Board deliberations. I don't speak for the sake of being heard. If I feel a point needs to be discussed, I will bring it forward. I am also level-headed and value the exchange of ideas and coming to common ground. I am also willing to have my mind changed. A healthy debate is critical to the decision-making process. Supporting those decisions, no matter which side of the debate you personally fell, is also critical.

I have been in leadership positions within Atla and external to Atla. Whether it's on a departmental task force, a university-wide committee, or other non-professional activities, I bring these same values to the table. I have been fortunate that other members, who have seen these traits in me, see that they would be an asset if I were to be elected to the Board, and I feel I could bring my unique voice, together with the other voices of the Board, together, to forward the goals of our Association and our membership.

BACK

ATLA DIGITAL LIBRARY WEBINAR
SERIES

BLOG POST

Atla Digital Library Webinar Series

November 22, 2019

Events, Research Tools



Atla Digital Library
Webinar Series

The Atla Digital Library brings together digital collections of scholarly, historical, and cultural significance that are relevant to the study, teaching, and learning of religion and theology. This free resource includes more than 65,000 records from multiple institutions, including Atla Institutional and Affiliate member libraries. Since its launch in 2017, this research tool has continued to grow both in the number of resources and institutions, but also in popularity among researchers. This response has inspired our upcoming webinar series focused on the Atla Digital Library <<https://www.atla.com/research-tool/atla-digital-library/>>.

This January and February, Atla staff will be hosting four webinars ranging from an introduction to this research tool, detailed information for interested participants, and tips and techniques for researchers. If you are an instructor, researcher, or an institution who is interested in adding their digital collections, we may have a webinar for you.

Introduction to the Atla Digital Library

Wednesday, January 8, 2020, 1:00 PM-2:00 PM CST

The Atla Digital Library was introduced in 2017 and has been growing ever since. It is a great resource for scholars, educators, and learners looking for religion and theology resources across multiple institutions. Are you interested in having your digital collections included in the Atla Digital Library or curious to learn more about it? In this workshop participants will learn more about what the Atla Digital Library is, what is needed to contribute collections, and how to get started contributing.

<<https://www.atla.com/event/introduction-atla-digital-library/>>
LEARN MORE

Metadata in the Atla Digital Library

Wednesday, January 22, 2020, 1:00 PM-2:00 PM CST

The Atla Digital Library made available its Metadata Guidelines & Best Practices in the Fall of 2017 for the purpose of assisting contributing institutions with providing quality metadata that works well in the Atla Digital Library system. This workshop will go over these guidelines, discuss common metadata issues, look at tools for reviewing and revising metadata, and talk about what makes for good shareable metadata. The goal is to help contributing institutions create and develop metadata that works well in the multi-institution context of the Atla Digital Library.

<<https://www.atla.com/event/digital-library-metadata/>>
LEARN MORE

Rights Management in the Atla Digital Library

Thursday, February 6, 2020, 1:00 PM-2:00 PM CST

Items found within the Digital Library are intended to be used for noncommercial educational and research purposes. To that end, participants in the Atla Digital Library have sole responsibility to ensure that the items they contribute are either free of any copyright or other restrictions that would prohibit their display or that they have secured necessary permissions from the copyright holders to digitize and display the contributed items. To consistently and clearly communicate copyright status to Digital Library users, items found therein include a rights statement. The preferred standard of the Digital Library are statements included in the RightsStatements.org <<https://rightsstatements.org/en/>> schema or an appropriate Creative Commons license.

<<https://www.atla.com/event/rights-management-in-the-atla-digital-library/>>
LEARN MORE

Using the Atla Digital Library to Find Resources

Thursday, February 20, 2020, 1:00 PM-2:00 PM CST

The Atla Digital Library provides a single point of access to digital items held across many member institutions, streamlining the discovery of primary resources and enabling historical documents, photographs, and other materials to come into dialogue with one another in new ways. This session will introduce attendees to the search features of the Atla Digital Library, providing information on the available facets, as well as tools and techniques for refining queries and optimizing results.

BACK

NEW ATLA SERIALS EXCHANGE
(ASE) IS COMING THIS JANUARY

BLOG POST

New Atla Serials Exchange (ASE) is Coming this January

by Christy Karpinski / November 21, 2019

Association News, Programs & Projects



We are excited to inform you that Atla will launch a new and updated version of Atla Serials Exchange (ASE) on January 15, 2020. The upgraded ASE will be available at <https://ase.atla.com>. <<https://ase.atla.com/>> It will provide an improved user interface and search experience, along with real-time posting and claiming of offerings, automated removal of items once they are claimed, and bulk upload of offerings.

With the move to the new version of ASE, the current ASE will no longer accept submissions or claims on items as of December 1, 2019. At that point, we will be moving all existing offerings that have been added between January 1, 2019, through December 1, 2019, into the new ASE. Items added before then will need to be re-added. Beginning January, we will ask participants to verify that their listed items are still available to ensure that the offerings are correct and up to date.

Once the site is live, detailed documentation on using the new ASE will be provided, along with a training webinar in early February.

We encourage you to share this information with members of your staff or other persons at your institution who assist with ASE postings.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Christy Karpinski, Atla Digital Projects Coordinator <<https://www.atla.com/about/contact-us/>>.

We hope you will enjoy the new ASE and apologize for any inconvenience this may cause your institution.

About ASE

The Atla Serials Exchange (ASE) allows Atla's Institutional Members to freely exchange duplicate serials by listing materials offered in a shared database where others can view and claim materials. Learn more

<<https://www.atla.com/learning-engagement/member-projects-and-programs/atla-serials-exchange/>>.

BACK

ANA CACKLEY JOINS ATLA AS
COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

BLOG POST

Ana Cackley Joins Atla as Communications Assistant

November 20, 2019

Association News



We are pleased to introduce Ana Cackley as Communications Assistant in the Member Programs Department.

Ana has a background in bookselling and theatre, as well as administrative and non-profit work. She will be writing and editing articles for the [Atla](https://www.atla.com/blog/) blog, assisting with professional development webinars, and will be the first point of contact for Atla members. She holds a Bachelor's in English and Drama from the University of Virginia and is about to begin a Master of Fine Arts in Writing for Children and Young Adults at Hamline University.

In her *copious* amounts of free time, Ana enjoys cuddling with her cat, practicing aerials, and trying to catch up on her to-be-read list.

Please join us in welcoming Ana to Atla.

BACK

VIEW THE NEW ATLA FOR ALUM
TOOLKIT

BLOG POST

View the New Atla for Alum Toolkit

November 19, 2019

Research Tools



Earlier this year, we reached out to the Atla community requesting ideas related to promotional materials for Alum products. We heard you and are excited to present digital materials to help you promote the resources your library provides to your alumni.

The Alum ToolKit <<https://www.atla.com/research/alum-toolkit/>> includes editable flyers and bookmarks promoting *Alta Religion Database*[®] (*Atla RDB*[®]) for Alum, *AtlaSerials*[®] (*Atlas*[®]) for Alum, and *AtlaSerials PLUS*[®] (*Atlas PLUS*[®]) for Alum. We made sure to leave space for you to write out instructions to your patrons on how they are to access the research tools.

We are always looking to add more resources to the Toolkit. Use this form <<https://www.atla.com/blog/alum-promo/>> to tell us what you would like added.

What is Atla for Alum?

Many academic institutions subscribe to Atla for Alum products to serve their alumni and provide their alumni/ae the ability to access the same Atla products they used as students. Institutions provide this access to maintain long-term and mutually beneficial relationships with graduates of their institution. Learn more about subscribing. <<https://www.atla.com/research-tool/atlas-for-alum/>>

View a list of subscribing schools <<https://www.atla.com/schools/>> to see if your alma mater provides access to its alumni.

View the kit and download the materials. <<https://www.atla.com/research/alum-toolkit/>>

BACK

ISKANDAR BCHEIRY RELEASES
NEW BOOK: 'AN EARLY
CHRISTIAN REACTION TO ISLAM'

BLOG POST

Iskandar Bcheiry Releases New Book: 'An Early Christian Reaction to Islam'

by Iskandar Bcheiry / November 19, 2019

Publications & Resources



How did Christians of the Middle East interact with and view Muslim Arabs during the seventh century? This is what Atla staff member Iskandar Bcheiry <<https://www.atla.com/person/iskandar-bcheiry/>> discusses in his latest book, *An Early Christian Reaction to Islam: Išū'yahb III and the Muslim Arabs*. Examining Syriac manuscripts of the letters of Išū'yahb III, a patriarch of the Church, Iskandar explores the changing views of this fascinating historical figure.

Iskandar became interested in the topic after he was dissatisfied with western scholarship around Muslim and Christian relations during that time. Every scholar's perspective was that Išū'yahb III had either a positive or a negative

view of Muslim Arabs. However, Iskandar saw that the patriarch's views on Muslim Arabs changed and evolved over the years. He discussed this briefly at the North American Patristics Annual Meeting 2017 in Chicago during his presentation, "The History and Identity of the Monastic Complex Discovered on the Island of Sir Bani Yas in the United Arab Emirates During the Early Period of Islam."

This book will be an exemplary resource for both the scholarly and theological librarianship communities. It focuses on Syriac texts and how important they are in understanding early Islam. It will also draw academic attention to other Syriac manuscripts around the world and help them to be studied, cataloged, and published.

In this article, Iskandar will go into more detail about the book, its sources, and the scholarly work that surrounds Išū'yahb III and early Christian-Islamic relations. The book is published by Gorgias Press on November 19. You can purchase it here <<https://www.gorgiaspress.com/an-early-christian-reaction-to-islam>>.

An Early Christian Reaction to Islam

Iṣū'yahb III and the Muslim Arabs

Iskandar Bcheiry



GORGAS ❖ PRESS

<<https://www.gorgiaspress.com/an-early-christian-reaction-to-islam>>

Abstract

The year 652 marked a fundamental political change in the Middle East and the surrounding region. On this date, the Sasanid Empire collapsed, and the major part of the Byzantine dominion in the East was lost to the hands of Muslim Arabs. The conquests of the Arabs were followed by deep cultural, social, and religious changes that affected the lives of the populations in the seized territories. An important and contemporary source of the state of the Christian

Church at this time is to be found in the correspondence of the patriarch of the Church of the East, Iṣū'yahb III (649-659), which he wrote between 628 and 658. This book discusses Iṣū'yahb's view of and attitudes toward the Muslim Arabs. Although his view of the Muslim Arabs has been a subject of discussion by many scholars, there are still questions to be clarified about his attitudes toward the Muslim Arabs, especially with regard to the chronological development of his views, the issue of the dating of his letters and their chronological arrangement, and the identification of literary sources that he relied upon in portraying the Muslim Arabs.

“An important and contemporary source of the state of the Christian Church at this time is to be found in the correspondence of the patriarch of the Church of the East, Iṣū'yahb III (649-659), which he wrote between 628 and 658.”

IṢŪ'YAHB III (649–659)

Among the great fathers of the Church of the East is Patriarch Iṣū'yahb III (649–659), who was born around 590 to the Persian Christian nobleman named Bastomag. He entered his son Iṣū'yahb as a novice in the Monastery of Beth 'Abē. It was a famous monastery that belonged to the Nestorian monastic circle, where each monk lived in a separate shelter but acknowledged the rule of an abbot and worshiped with his fellow monks in a common chapel. Iṣū'yahb progressed so rapidly that at quite an early age he was appointed bishop of Nineveh. This happened in 628/629, and he took part in an important embassy to Emperor Heraclius in Syria under his namesake, Patriarch Iṣū'yahb II (628–

646). Around the year 640, he was appointed metropolitan for Ḥidyāb. After the death of Patriarch Maremmeh (646–649), Iṣū'yahb III was appointed catholicos of the Church of the East. He died in 659 after having ruled for approximately ten years.

Political and Religious Challenges

Iṣū'yahb III lived in a period marked by radical political and religious shifts. The first half of the seventh century was a difficult time for the Church of the East. The Sasanid Shah Khosrow II (595-628) forbade the Nestorians from electing a new patriarch after the death of Patriarch Gregory I (596-604), and the seat was vacant until the death of the Shah in 628. During this period, the Jacobites, the “denominational” rivals of the Nestorians, organized themselves in the Persian territory and established an ecclesiastical system, extending the Jacobite activity from the Byzantine territories into Persian territories. Furthermore, after the collapse of the two major powers in the region (the Byzantines and the Persians), a new ruling power arose which came to dominate the major part of the Middle East.

The Muslim Arabs defeated their adversaries and won a vast territory that contained a mosaic of populations, cultures, religions, sects, and languages. For the two previous centuries, the different Christian groups fought against each other by various means; however, during the second half of the seventh century, the new Arab rulers brought a new way of conceiving the God-human relationship. The religion of Islam appeared as the other face of the Arab conquests and influenced the social, cultural, economic, and religious structures of Middle Eastern society.

“For the two previous centuries, the different Christian groups fought against each other by various means; however, during the second half of the seventh century, the new Arab rulers brought a new way of conceiving the God-human relationship.”

In addition to the challenge of the Muslim Arabs, the seventh-century Nestorian Church suffered from the attempted secession of the Christians of Fars and East of Arabia, whose metropolitan at that time was Šem‘ūn of Riv-Ardashīr. The Nestorians in Fars had always been reluctant to submit to Seleucia-Ctesiphon in Iraq, where the catholicos resided. The Nestorian sources show that the Christian community in the Arabian Gulf area and Fars was regularly involved in ecclesiastical schisms and divisions led by the metropolitan of Fars. The nature of these issues is not clear but probably had to do with questioning the authority of the catholicos as the head of the Church of the East. In order to contain the complex situation, Išū‘yahb III in his correspondence claimed the support of the miraculous deeds of the holy men (ascetics and monks) as part of his strategy to win the hearts and the minds of his people, and to negotiate a ground of collaboration with the new Arab power so as to preserve and build his church.

Išū‘yahb’s Letters

We have received 106 of Išū‘yahb’s letters in a beautiful Syriac manuscript from the tenth century (Vat. Syr. 157), which is preserved in the Vatican Library. These letters are valuable documents that inform us about the history of the Church of the East prior to the Islamic conquest and during the twenty years following this conquest (630-656). The letters are divided in Vat. Syr. 157 into three groups according to a chronological order that reflects the three stages of

Išū'yahb's career. The first group of letters contains fifty-two letters (Ep. 1B-52B) written by Išū'yahb when he was bishop of Nineveh. The second group of letters contains thirty-two letters written by Išū'yahb when he became a metropolitan of Ḥidyāb (Ep. 1M-32M). The third group contains twenty-two letters written after his ascension to the patriarchal office (Ep. 1C- 22C). The letters are a source that reflects the personality of Išū'yahb as a pastor and a man involved in building a platform of collaboration between the church and the political government of his time.

“The letters are a source that reflects the personality of Išū'yahb as a pastor and a man involved in building a platform of collaboration between the church and the political government of his time.”

Išū'yahb III and the Muslim Arabs: An Evaluation of the Literature

The letters of Išū'yahb, especially his letters to the Nestorian local communities in Fars and East Arabia (Ep. 14C-21C), have attracted some scholarly attention in relation to the study of early Muslim-Christian relations, the origin of Islam, the early Arab Muslim conquests, and the reactions of the Christian community toward these conquests. These scholarly discussions examined Išū'yahb's views of Islam from different points of view. I would like to discuss some of these studies according to their different approaches:

Rubens Duval

Rubens Duval, a French orientalist and specialist in Aramaic language and history, offered a great service to the scholarly world by editing the entire corpus of the letters of Išū'yahb with a Latin translation, based on two manuscripts, Vatican 157 and Paris 336, in *Išō'yahb Patriarchae III Liber Epistularum* (1904-1905). In the introduction to his edition, Duval expressed his doubt that all the letters that were attributed to the frame time of Išū'yahb's bishopric in fact date back to the era of his bishopric: "Pars Prima scribendi arte valet, tamen nobis obscurior est, quia argumentum epistulae plerumque ignoramus." Duval's doubt about the chronological arrangement of the letters attributed to Išū'yahb's bishopric became an opening issue that was taken and built upon by later scholars, notably Jean Maurice Fiey.

Jean Maurice Fiey

Jean Maurice Fiey, a French Dominican friar and prominent historian of the Syriac churches, discussed the life and deeds of Išū'yahb III in a significant article, "Īšō'yaw le Grand. Vie du Catholicos Nestorien Īšō'yaw III d'Adiabène" (1969 and 1970). In his article, Fiey takes into consideration Duval's suggestion that not all the letters in manuscript Vat. Syr. 157 were attributed to the time frame of Išū'yahb's bishopric do, in fact, date back to the era of his bishopric. Fiey asserted that the first ten letters of Išū'yahb (Ep. 1B-10B) were written when Išū'yahb was still a monk in the monastery of Beth 'Abē. The rest of the letters that were classified under the bishopric of Išū'yahb, according to Fiey, were written before the Muslim Arabs' conquest of the region of Nineveh. According to Fiey, therefore, there is no mention of the Muslim Arabs in the correspondence of Išū'yahb during his time as bishop of Nineveh. The few letters that clearly mention the Muslim Arabs, such as the famous Letter 48B, should be reassigned to the period of Išū'yahb's metropolitanate at Ḥidyāb. The chronological time frame of Išū'yahb and the arrangement of his letters as being proposed by Fiey led many scholars, including William Young, Sebastian Brock, Robert Hoyland, and Ovidio Ioan, to disregard some letters that I believe are in

fact witnesses to the Muslim Arabs as being the secular authority in Nineveh during Išū'yahb's bishopric. This issue will be the subject of my discussion in chapter 2.

William G. Young

William G. Young, a church historian and specialist in Muslim-Christian relations, served as a missionary in Pakistan since 1947. From 1966 to 1969, he was professor of Church History at Gujranwala Theological Seminary, Gujranwala, Pakistan. In 1970, he was appointed the bishop of Sialkot in the Church of Pakistan. In his groundbreaking article "The Church of the East in 650, Patriarch Išo'yab III and India" (1968), Young treated briefly the relationship between Išū'yahb and the Muslim Arabs. In this article, Young claimed that Išū'yahb was metropolitan of Irbil around 628 or shortly afterward — but this date does not fit the chronological time frame of Išū'yahb, being too early. In his important and one-of-a-kind book titled *Patriarch, Shah and Caliph: a study of the relationships of the Church of the East with the Sassanid Empire and the early caliphates up to 820 a.d.* (1975), Young treated the historical circumstances behind Išū'yahb's view and relationship with Muslim Arabs in a larger context and at greater depth. However, Young follows and relies on Fiey's understanding of the chronological arrangement and time frame of Išū'yahb's life and letters.

"Young treated the historical circumstances behind Išū'yahb's view and relationship with Muslim Arabs in a larger context and at greater depth."

Sebastian Brock

Sebastian Brock, the leading scholar in Syriac studies, discussed Iṣū'yahb's view of the Muslim Arabs in his "Syriac Views of Emergent Islam" (1982). In this important and noteworthy survey of Syriac sources, Sebastian Brock looks at Iṣū'yahb's letters as a source that helps us understand the question of how Syriac Christians adapted the emergence of Islam into their worldview. The letters, according to Brock, convey a great deal of information about the life of the Church of the East during the period of the transition from Persian to Arab rule. However, Sebastian Brock follows Fiey's chronological arrangement of Iṣū'yahb's letters. He states that the chronological distribution in the Syriac manuscript Vat. Syr. 157 in some cases cannot be correct.

Victoria Erhart

Victoria Erhart, an expert in the history of Late Antiquity, particularly Syriac church history, in her well written article "The Church of the East during the Period of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs" (1996), describes the situation during the early period of Muslim Arabs' conquests and the reaction of the Christians of the Church of the East. According to Erhart, it is difficult to know how to interpret Iṣū'yahb III's remarks on Islam, which occur mainly in highly polemical, heavily rhetorical letters written in a very defensive tone. Erhart recommends that a detailed study of the full corpus of Iṣū'yahb III's letters is necessary to assess his seemingly contradictory statements about the Arabs and the providential reasons for their conquest. That is a recommendation upon which the present study intends to act.

Robert Hoyland

Robert Hoyland, a professor of Late Antiquity and Early Islamic Middle Eastern history in Oxford who also teaches at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World in New York, approached the subject of early Islam in an innovative study, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (1997). Hoyland examined a large collection

of historical sources to understand early Islam. In this survey and discussion, Hoyland also discussed the letters of Patriarch Išū'yahb III. According to Hoyland, the writings of Patriarch Išū'yahb reflect generally good relations with the Muslim Arabs. However, the Muslims were mentioned only in their dealings with Christians, not as a religion per se. In his discussion, Hoyland plainly follows Fiey's chronological arrangement of Išū'yahb's letters.

“According to Hoyland, the writings of Patriarch Išū'yahb reflect generally good relations with the Muslim Arabs. However, the Muslims were mentioned only in their dealings with Christians, not as a religion per se.”

Martin Tamcke

Martin Tamcke, a professor in the Department of Ecumenical Theology and Oriental Church and Mission History at Georg August Goettingen University, Germany, and an expert in the academic field of Syriac church history, discussed some aspects of Išū'yahb's life and deeds in his informative article “The Catholicos Ischo'jahb III and Giwargis and the Arabs” (2005). Also in this article, Martin Tamcke follows Fiey's chronological arrangement of Išū'yahb's letters.

Ovidiu Ioan

Ovidiu Ioan, a scholar who concentrates his research mostly on authors from the Church of the East during the seventh century, dedicated an important book to Išū'yahb and his relationship with the Muslim Arabs: *Muslime und Araber bei Išō'jahb III. (649–659)* (2009). In his book, Ioan analyzed the letters of Išū'yahb III in connection with the history, theology, and hagiography of the Church of the East. Ioan summarized Išū'yahb's references to the Muslim Arabs in “nine

foundational theses.” Among these nine theses: Išū’yahb accepts that God has given the Arab Empire. The Arab conquest is treated as an event in world politics. The Arabs are not hostile to Christianity. They praised Išū’yahb’s own belief system, i.e., that of the Church of the East. They honor the priests and the saints of the Church of the East. They have shown themselves helpful toward the churches and monasteries. Ioan has presented an important study that seeks to understand the hagiographical aspects in Išū’yahb’s letters. This is an important step upon which I would like to build. However, he also follows Fiey’s chronological analysis.

Herman Teule

Herman Teule, professor emeritus in Eastern Christianity at Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and specialist in the field of Middle Eastern Christianity and Islam, in his bibliographical article about Išū’yahb and his letters “Isho’yahb III of Adiabene” (2009), focuses on two of Išū’yahb’s letters: Ep. 48B and Ep. 14C. Teule explicitly states that Letter 48B dates back to the time of his episcopate, a statement that contradicts Fiey’s dating. However, Teule dated the letter to a time before the year 637, which is rather contrary to the historical circumstances in which the letter was written, because it mentions the Muslims Arabs who arrived in the region of Nineveh in the middle of the year 637. Though Teule correctly attributes the letters to the time of Išū’yahb’s bishopric, he still follows Fiey’s chronological arrangement.

Michael Philip Penn

Michael Philip Penn, a professor of religion and gender studies at Mount Holyoke College and expert in Syriac historiography and Muslim-Christian relations in early Islam, in his recently published book *When Christian First Met Muslims: A Sourcebook of the Earliest Syriac Writings on Islam* (2015), presents a collection of Christian historical sources from the first two centuries of Islam that mention Muslims and Islam directly or indirectly. Išū’yahb’s letters are included among

these sources. Penn not only discusses the statement of Iṣū'yahb about Muslims but also presents his own translation of the original Syriac text of selected passages. Penn deals with only three of Iṣū'yahb's letters: Letters 48B, 14C, and 15B. Penn refers briefly to the doubts of the scholars regarding the chronological arrangement order of Iṣū'yahb's letters. He states that "No one has contested the attribution of these letters to Išo'yahb III. ... most recent scholars, however, suggest that a later scribe misordered several of the letters, including 48B, which they say belongs to the period when Išo'yahb was a metropolitan or catholicos." Penn does not offer his own judgment, but he follows the others regarding the chronological arrangement order by taking the year 637 as the date of the appointment of Iṣū'yahb as metropolitan on Ḥidyāb.

Marikje Metselaar

Marikje Metselaar is a specialist in the history of Eastern Christianity with a major focus on the Church of the East and its doctrinal development. In her valuable dissertation "Defining Christ: The Church of the East and Nascent Islam" (2016), Metselaar examines chronologically the development of Christology and its terms in the Church of the East from the fourth up to the end of the seventh centuries. Metselaar dedicates most of her attention to the letters of Iṣū'yahb III in the context of a nascent Islam. In her dissertation, she concludes that the allocation of several letters of Iṣū'yahb III is clearly wrong or disputable, and the reconstruction of many events remains therefore tentative. However, Metselaar does not completely follow Fiey's assumption that the last episcopal letters were misplaced and belonged to Iṣū'yahb's metropolitan period. Metselaar suggests an alternative interpretation for some events mentioned in Iṣū'yahb III's letters, which would justify that letter 48B, which dealt with Arabs, belonged to his bishopric period. According to Metselaar, letter 48B is the only letter in which Iṣū'yahb III explicitly referred to the religion of the Muslim Arab rulers. Though Metselaar correctly attributes letter 48B to the time of Iṣū'yahb's bishopric, she misses the interrelation between this letter and other letters during Iṣū'yahb's episcopacy which also refer to the Muslim Arabs.

Summary of the Above Literature

For the most part, the above-mentioned scholars follow Fiey's familiar pattern, including his opinion regarding the chronological order of the letters. The exception is Metselaar, who not only expressed doubt about Fiey's opinion regarding the chronological order of the letters, but also suggested an alternative interpretation of six letters: Ep. 50B-52B, Ep. 1M-2M, and most importantly Ep. 48B, which Fiey concluded to be misplaced as it dealt with Arab governors. According to most of the scholars, the Muslim Arabs were not mentioned by Išū'yahb when he was bishop of Nineveh, or for a few (Metselaar and Teule), their attention was limited to Ep 48B, which prevented them from looking elsewhere for additional information about the Muslim Arabs.

Under the leadership of Patriarch Maremmeh, the relationship with the Muslim Arabs was described as good. The main concern of Išū'yahb was consolidating his church. The rise to power of Muslim Arabs was presented as God's will. They aided churches and monasteries, and revered priests and monks. They praised the faith of the Christians. They demanded payments (poll tax) from the Christians but did not force those in Mazūn to abandon their faith. The Muslim Arabs were courted by the Jacobites as well as the Nestorians. What was said about Muslim Arabs had to do first with Christians, their doctrines, and their religion, but there are no references to Islam apart from Christianity. Most studies regarding Išū'yahb's view of the Muslim Arabs are focused on two letters, Ep. 48B and Ep. 14C. Most of these studies are fair accounts of Išū'yahb's later view of the Muslim Arabs, especially from the time of his patriarchate, but the present study aims to explore how his views emerged over time.

“Under the leadership of Patriarch Maremmeh, the relationship with the Muslim Arabs was described as good. The main concern of Išū‘yahb was consolidating his church.”

A New Approach of Examination

The thought of Išū‘yahb emerged from a particular social, political, and religious situation over the course of many years, and therefore, a historical-critical method of exploring the writings of Išū‘yahb is needed in order to trace the development and significance of the author’s writings (his letters) within their specific historical contexts. This is what Erhart called for, and what Ovidiu Ioan in *Muslime und Araber bei Išō‘jahb III. (649–659)* and Metselaar in “Defining Christ: The Church of the East and Nascent Islam” attempted.

However, in my study, I would like to reconstruct the development of Išū‘yahb’s view toward Islam by re-examining the chronological aspects of some letters written during his bishopric of Nineveh in addition to Ep. 48B, which according to my opinion, contain references to Muslim Arabs; these references were overlooked by Fiey and the many scholars who have followed Fiey’s analysis. This issue will be taken up in chapter 2. Then, the question of Išū‘yahb’s efforts to build up a platform of collaboration, or rather, a loyal and stable friendship between the Arabs and the Church of the East, will be discussed according to Išū‘yahb’s three approaches, which correspond to three periods in his career. This is the topic of chapter 3. In chapter 4, I will not only return to the monastic and theological backgrounds of Išū‘yahb’s views but will point to specific texts that the patriarch relied on, and how inter-textual correspondences and

mirroring affected his portrayal of the Muslim Arabs, as well as his understanding of his church and his own role in it. In the end, a fifth, brief chapter gathers the book's conclusions: a new interpretation of Iṣū'yahb's letters toward Islam and the Muslim Arabs, and his strategies for the consolidation and preservation of the church.

Add this book to your collection. <<https://www.gorgiaspress.com/an-early-christian-reaction-to-islam>>

BACK

LIBRARY MAKERSPACE:
BLOOMFIELD COLLEGE LIBRARY
IMPACT GRANT

BLOG POST

Library Makerspace: Bloomfield College Library Impact Grant

November 15, 2019

Programs & Projects



Bloomfield College Library <<https://bloomfield.edu/academics/library>> of Bloomfield, New Jersey, is creating a makerspace for their students! As recipients of a 2018-2019 Atla Library Impact Grant <<https://www.atla.com/membership/member-benefits/institutional/library-impact-grants/>>, Bloomfield College Library used the resources provided to further develop the makerspace concept at their institution.

What's a Makerspace?

A makerspace is a space where students can create, invent, and socialize. It provides access to tools and technology that allow the students to work on projects and learn new skills. Makerspaces might include things like 3D printers, robotics, craft supplies, electronics, or sewing machines. Simply put, it is a place where students can go to practice hands-on creativity. It is a space to make things.

Places like these are necessary, says Bloomfield College Library, because, "At an institution such as Bloomfield College, which enrolls a sizable percentage of first-generation college students, readily-accessible technological resources are important educational inclusions. This is especially cogent for students in disciplines that are not technology-centric." As a result, Bloomfield College Library is developing and outfitting a place where all can learn.

What did they do?

They bought equipment for the students to use, including a 3D printer, computer speakers, 3D Printing Tape, a 3D Pen, Canakit Raspberry Pis (a mini, single-board computer), an SD Card/USB Adapter, and Arduino Starter Kits. They also

wrote and updated makerspace user guides, so that students can learn to use the equipment. Library student employees were also encouraged to try out the guides and equipment so that they can help others with any questions.



3D Printer

The grant year was not without its challenges, however. The makerspace was not able to be launched on its own, since smaller items needed to be supervised to prevent them from being damaged or stolen. The library also faced struggles in outreach. Although a June makerspace workshop was planned, the event had to be canceled due to low registration numbers. But plans are in place to solve these issues. A Student Makerspace Club is in the works, including a drafted organization constitution. Bloomfield College Library hopes that this will encourage promotion and participation, and allow for more interaction between students and faculty. They also hope that in the future, the makerspace will be able to function independently, and say that, "Future funding will seek to solve this issue by providing a glassed-in area of the library, with locking doors, to house makerspace equipment."

About Atla Library Impact Grants

Atla Library Impact Grants are available annually to institutional members for up to \$1,000. The purpose of a Library Impact Grant is to raise awareness of the importance of theological libraries and serving the communities that Atla represents. Bloomfield College Library, through its creation and support of the makerspace program, is doing exactly that.

BACK

RECIPROCAL BORROWING
PROGRAM MEETING OVERVIEW

BLOG POST

Reciprocal Borrowing Program Meeting Overview

by Charlotte Nahon / November 14, 2019

Programs & Projects



On November 7, 2019, Atla held a virtual meeting for current Reciprocal Borrowing <<https://www.atla.com/learning-engagement/member-projects-and-programs/reciprocal-borrowing/>> participants and those interested in the program. During the meeting, Member Programs Coordinator Charlotte Nahon shared information about the program, welcomed new participants, and proposed goals for the 2019-2020 membership year.

Goals for this year include:

- ▶ Developing new marketing materials to promote the program to patrons and students
- ▶ Integrating the sign-up form and profile update form with the new My Atla web portal
- ▶ Conducting outreach to eligible Atla member libraries have not joined this program yet

In addition, participants have asked for a standard form to verify if a student is at a participating location. Atla staff will explore creating this. We welcome suggestions for marketing materials and feedback you would like to share about this program. Use the Contact Us <<https://www.atla.com/about/contact-us/>> form to get in touch!

If you were not able to make it to the meeting or are interested in what was discussed, please click here <<https://vimeo.com/371875587/de7f188133>> for a recording of the meeting.

The Reciprocal Borrowing Program

The Reciprocal Borrowing Program creates an arrangement between participating North American Atla Institutional and Affiliate-Candidate Members to grant check-out privileges to each other's patrons or students. A patron or

student walks into a participating library, shows proof of current enrollment at another participating library, and checks out materials based on the library's local lending policies.

Look to see if your institution's library participates in the program and find a library close to you (and their contact information) on this map. A spreadsheet of participating libraries is also available.

BACK

WELCOME NEW INSTITUTIONAL
AND AFFILIATE MEMBERS

BLOG POST

Welcome New Institutional and Affiliate Members

November 22, 2019

Association News, Member News



Welcome to Part Two of our New Members update! Click [here](https://www.atla.com/blog/welcome-new-institutional-members-2/) to see our previous article on our New Members <<https://www.atla.com/blog/welcome-new-institutional-members-2/>>. Please join us as we welcome our new institutional and

affiliate members who have joined in recent months. We would like to take this opportunity to help you get to know these institutions a little better.

Institutional Member Ateneo de Davao University, Davao City, Philippines



Ateneo de Davao University <<http://www.addu.edu.ph/>> was founded in 1948 when a group of American Jesuits took responsibility for the St. Peter's Parochial School, which eventually grew into the university. In addition to offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs, Ateneo de Davao University also participates in programs such as the Mindanao Peace Games (2015), which promotes inter-university, inter-religious, intercultural, and interpersonal contact through sports, and the Al Qalam's Salaam Youth Movement (2017), which promotes unity in diversity, and sustainable and inclusive peace in Mindanao (the second largest island of the Philippines, where Davao City is located).

The Fr. Mateo Gisbert, SJ Library <<http://library.addu.edu.ph/>> was built in honor of Fr. Mateo Gisbert, a 19th century Spanish Jesuit who served in Davao. He was known for his respect for the indigenous Bagobo peoples of Mindanao and

spoke their language fluently. He also wrote a Spanish-Bagobo dictionary in 1892. Today, the library features Periodical, Technical Services, Reserve & Graduate, and Filipiniana & Reference sections among others.

Affiliate Member Texas Baptist Institute & Seminary, Henderson, Texas



Texas Baptist Institute & Seminary <<https://tbi.edu/>> opened in 1948, and currently holds candidate status with the Association for Biblical Higher Education. The institute also houses two museums on campus: the Antiquity Encounter Museum and the Sweetgum Grove Baptist History Museum. The latter of these is a replica of an early twentieth-century church, complete with historically accurate furniture and displaying a number of church artifacts.

The Fannie Kirkland Memorial Library <<https://tbi-ind.phoebe.opalsinfo.net/bin/home>> features a number of resources, including various open access journals, writing centers, and works of classic Christian literature. They continually update their collections and databases in order to provide students with the best possible materials.

Affiliate Member Hayfield University, Fullerton, California



Hayfield University <<https://www.hayfieldun.org/>> holds candidate status with the Association for Biblical Higher Education. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation also recognizes Hayfield University within its database. Hayfield University has a international student program and accepts students from South Korean, China, Mongolia, and Romania among others.

The Hayfield University Library <<https://www.hayfieldun.org/library>> has a collection of over 15,000 books, journals, periodicals, and other materials that are available as resources for students and faculty. In addition, they also have a computer lab and a media collection, as well as research assistance in the form of a professional librarian.

Institutional Member Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines



Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary <<https://www.apnts.edu.ph/>> (APNTS) was established in 1977 by the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene. The board wanted to form a graduate seminary that would serve their congregants in the Asia-Pacific region. As a result, the seminary is the first masters-level theological institution of the Church of the Nazarene to exist outside of the United States. The student body of APNTS currently represents seventeen different nations.

The APNTS Library <<https://apnts-gnec.kari.opalsinfo.net/bin/home>> provides information resources and assistance to the Christian learning community. In addition to their collection of materials and resources, they also have a YouTube account, which provides additional tutorials and instructions. The library also features a special collection devoted to resources for librarians.

Institutional Member Mid-America Christian University, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Mid-America Christian University <<https://www.macu.edu/>> (MACU) was originally established in 1953 as South Texas Bible Institute. Its founder, Dr. Max R. Gaulke, served as the first president until 1975. The university moved to its current campus in Oklahoma City in 1985. In addition to traditional graduate and undergraduate programs, MACU also offers certificate programs and degrees for adult and continuing education students.

The Charles Ewing Brown Library <<https://www.macu.edu/academics/library>> contains 166,000 volumes, including print books, digital books, media, and periodicals. They also have a large selection of databases to help students and faculty with their research. The library has also created online video tutorials that help researchers navigate the website, search for materials, and learn about different resources.

Not a member? Learn more about joining the Association.

<<https://www.atla.com/membership/>>

BACK

CALL FOR PROPOSALS – NEW
EDITED VOLUME ON SPECIAL
COLLECTIONS IN RELIGION AND
THEOLOGY

BLOG POST

Call for Proposals – New Edited Volume on Special Collections in Religion and Theology

by M. Patrick Graham / December 04, 2019

Professional Development



Special collections of religious and theological materials have been part of the landscape of academic libraries in North America from their beginnings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, largely due to their missions to train Christian ministers. Many libraries founded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries came by their rare book collections with the retirements of faculty or ministers connected to their schools. Such materials presented opportunities for their use supporting academic programs, but they often also presented challenges, due to their condition and requirements for environmental and security measures.

All this to say, special collections in academic libraries were deeply interwoven into institutional histories and typically presented librarians with both opportunities and challenges—circumstances that continue to the present.

Proposals

Books@Atla Open Press (<http://books.atla.com> <<https://books.atla.com/atlapress>>) seeks essays and chapters for publication in a new edited volume on the topic of special collections of religious and theological materials, serving not only to explore and reconstruct the historical record of what libraries and librarians have done, but also to uncover and articulate the values, strategies, and aspirations connected with such collections.

Appropriate articles for the volume include the following:

- ▶ historical treatments of specific special collections in theology and religion;
- ▶ essays on those librarians or others who first gathered the materials and established the collections;
- ▶ essays on strategies for building, supporting, and developing special collections;

- ▶ investigations into how such collections might best serve researchers and the missions of their institutions currently;
- ▶ analysis of the difficulties facing special collections in the future

Submission Guidelines

Inquiries on this project and proposals for articles should be submitted electronically by February 15, 2020 to openbooks@myatla.org. Proposals must include a 250-word abstract describing the topic and a working title for the article. Review of submissions will begin immediately.

Accepted authors must submit completed manuscripts by December 1, 2020. Articles should run approximately 6000 to 8000 words and conform to the Books@Atla Open Press Author Guidelines (see Step Three, <https://books.atla.com/atlapress/guidelines> <<https://books.atla.com/atlapress/guidelines>>). Anticipated publication date is Fall 2021.

BACK

SCOOP: OPEN EDUCATION AND
ATLA

BLOG POST

SCOOP: Open Education and Atla

by Christine Fruin / December 04, 2019

Scholarly Communication, SCOOP



As a priority scholarly communication initiative for 2019-2020, Atla is turning its attention toward open education. To that end, the Atla Scholarly Communication Committee <<https://www.atla.com/about/committees-councils-task-forces/scholarly-communication-committee/>> prepared and distributed a survey in October to gauge Atla member awareness, interest, and implementation regarding open education and open educational resources (OER). Below are some of the highlights and findings from that survey.

Findings from the Atla Survey on Open Education and OER

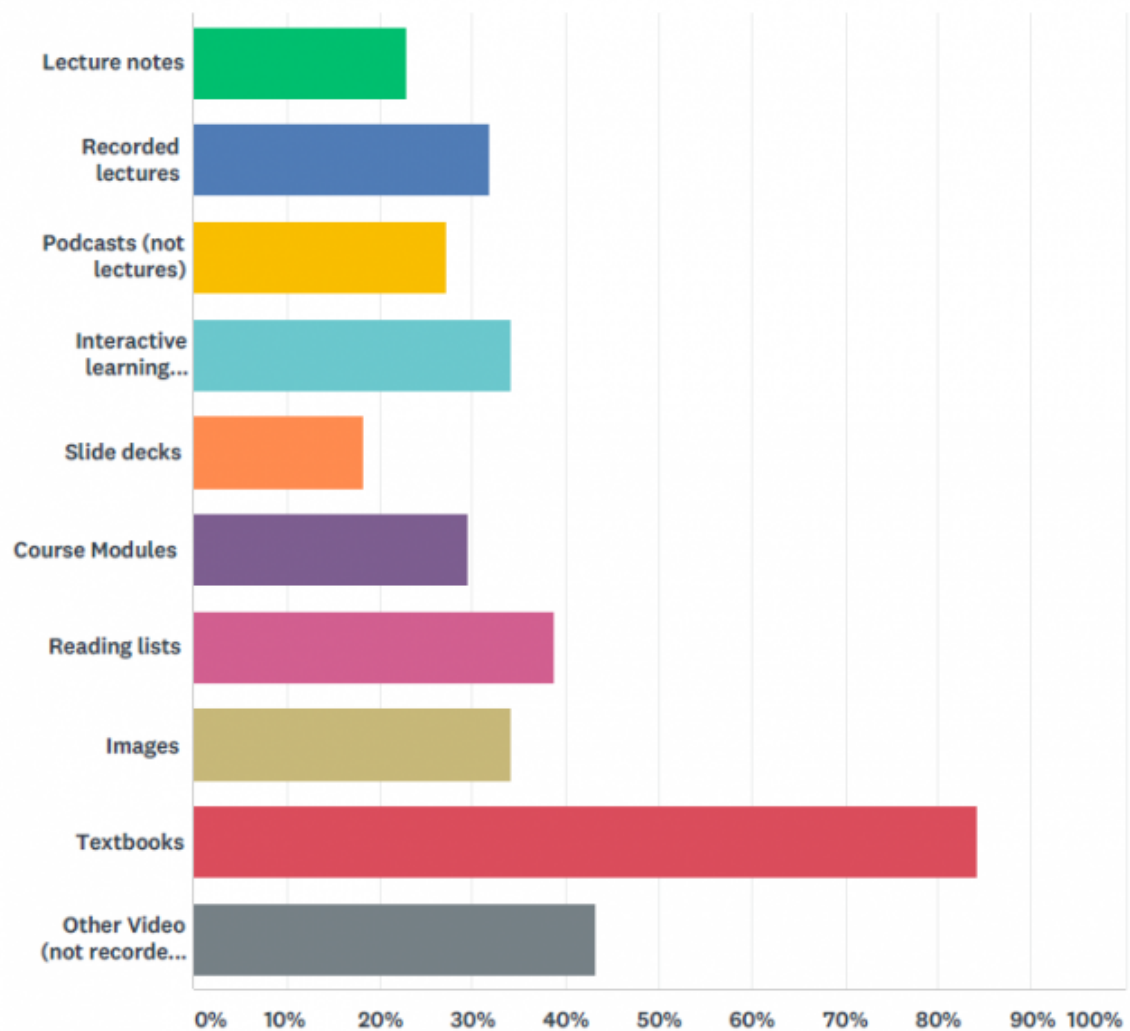
Forty-four Atla member institution representatives completed the survey, providing data and feedback on the current state of awareness, interest, and initiatives around open education issues at their respective campuses. Of those responding, 34% indicated that they were fairly knowledgeable about OER, but hadn't done much work in the area while 50% indicated that they have limited or only some understanding about OER.

While nearly half of the responding institutions indicated that their faculty have expressed interest in the creation or adoption of OER, nearly 90% of respondents indicated that at the present time no individual or office at their campus has been designated a role in supporting open education, and more than 54% of respondents indicated that no open education activities have been undertaken at their campuses.

Several barriers were identified as predominantly impacting the development of open education activities at survey respondents' campuses:

Faculty time and interest in participating in creation of OER	81.82%
Awareness of faculty about the availability of OER	79.55%
Skepticism over usefulness	72.73%
Concerns about quality	72.73%
Availability of relevant materials	70.45%
Copyright and licensing confusion	61.36%
Lack of institutional support	36.36%
Library staff time	36.36%
Institutional policies on instructional materials	15.91%

When questions from faculty are received about locating available OER, respondents most commonly utilize a search engine such as Google or existing open textbook libraries such as OpenStax to identify available OER. Survey respondents believe that open textbooks, reading lists, and other interactive learning objects would be the most desired types of OER at their institutions:



What Types of Open Resources Do You Think Would be Most Utilized at Your Institution?

The survey concluded with a request for suggestions of how Atla could help its members as librarians, and the faculty and students they serve, to learn more about open education and implement OER for their courses. The following suggestions were offered:

- ▶ Offer grants to support the creation of OER that have broad appeal or that cluster around theological perspectives and ideologies
- ▶ Create OER objects that individual institutions could adapt
- ▶ Assist with the identification of existing open textbooks and other OER that are highly relevant to theology curricula

- Education on the application of open education principles to seminaries and other theological education institutions
- Create short videos or infographics that can be adapted and reused at member institutions to educate faculty on OER as it applies to the study and teaching of theology and religion

Next Steps

Atla staff and the Scholarly Communication Committee are already at work in providing some of the suggested resources and opportunities. To promote open education and OER creation and adoption, Atla will be offering various professional development opportunities for its members. On December 10th, Atla Scholarly Communication Committee member and Duquesne University librarian Melody Diehl Detar will present a webinar on “Open Education Resources: From the Beginning.” <https://www.atla.com/blog/open-educational-resources-webinar/> We are also preparing a half-day pre-conference workshop on open education and OERs at the 2020 Atla Annual Conference in Detroit to be led by Regina Gong <https://sparcopen.org/people/regina-gong/>, Open Education Resources & Student Success Librarian at Michigan State University.

Recently, the updated and revised “Websites on Religion” <https://atla.libguides.com/wor> was launched on Atla LibGuides, which is a good starting point for identifying openly available resources that can be utilized in teaching and research. We will also investigate ways that we can host OER in the fields of theology and religious studies on our open platforms such as the Atla Digital Library <https://dl.atla.com/> and fund OER creation through a grant program to support library-faculty partnership to develop textbooks or other learning objects. Stay tuned for further announcements about these and other opportunities!

Further Reading

In March 2018, the SCOOP dug into the A, B, C's (and R's) of OER.

<https://www.atla.com/blog/the-scoop-the-a-b-cs-and-rs-of-oer/>

<<https://www.atla.com/blog/the-scoop-the-a-b-cs-and-rs-of-oer/>>

A 2018 article from EdSurge explores the growth of OER at religious colleges but the challenges of locating faith-based materials.

[https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-10-24-oer-is-growing-at-religious-](https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-10-24-oer-is-growing-at-religious-colleges-but-raises-unique-challenges)

[colleges-but-raises-unique-challenges](https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-10-24-oer-is-growing-at-religious-colleges-but-raises-unique-challenges) <[https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-10-24-oer-](https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-10-24-oer-is-growing-at-religious-colleges-but-raises-unique-challenges)

[is-growing-at-religious-colleges-but-raises-unique-challenges](https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-10-24-oer-is-growing-at-religious-colleges-but-raises-unique-challenges)>

In November 2018, the open access book *OER: A Field Guide for Academic Librarians* was published. This book includes examples of how to facilitate conversations and foster the development of best practices for OER adoption

and creation. <https://commons.pacificu.edu/pup/3/> <<https://commons.pacificu.edu/pup/3/>>

About SCOOP

The SCOOP, Scholarly COmmunication and Open Publishing, is a monthly column published to inform Atla members of recent developments, new resources, or interesting stories from the realm of scholarly communication and open access publishing.

BACK

ATLA DIGITAL LIBRARY
WELCOMES AUSTIN
PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY!

BLOG POST

Atla Digital Library Welcomes Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary!

by Christy Karpinski / December 04, 2019

Research Tools



We are pleased to welcome Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary as the newest contributor to the Atla Digital Library! <<https://dl.atla.com>> Austin's 19 digital collections include 197 items made up of materials such as audio and video of lecture series, letters, archival photographs, and much more. Explore highlights from these collections below.

The Presbyterian Photographs Collection



<<https://dl.atla.com/concern/works/hq37vw415>>

The Presbyterian photographs collection <<https://dl.atla.com/collections/presbyterian-photographs-collection>> is part of the Presbyterian History Collections. It is a collection of Presbyterian-related photographs brought together by the archivist. The photographs primarily document the early 20th century history of the Presbyterian Church, in Texas and the southwest. The photograph above is an example of a First Presbyterian Church in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Jones (Arthur Gray) papers

THE
Community House

FOR SOLDIER AND CIVILIAN
BACK OF THE ALAMO

This building erected by citizens of San Antonio as an expression of their appreciation of the services the men in uniform are rendering our Country, with the hope that here may be formed many pleasant and lasting friendships



War Camp Community Service, directed by the Playground and Recreation Association of America, a part of the War and Navy Departments Commission on Training Camp Activities

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS June 18, 1918

Dr. A. G. Jones,
San Antonio, Texas.

Dear Sir:

It is planned to have San Antonio the first city in the United States with its entire population singing the Star Spangled Banner, -all learning the National Anthem before the Fourth of July.

We know we have your entire sympathy with such a project and may we ask your active cooperation in the following programme for Sundays the 23rd. and 30th. of June.

Singing of the first verse of the Star Spangled Banner at the conclusion of each service.

With this letter is a copy of the authorized version, the one which will be used through out the city and which we ask you to be sure to have your organist use.

We shall, if you so request, invite a competent song leader from the nearby Army Camps to lead the singing of the National Anthem at your services; please notify this office if you need such a leader.

A similar letter to this is being sent every pastor.

Yours truly,

Ed. Bernard Chickler
Secretary.

OVER
WRITE ON BOTH SIDES

Arthur Gray Jones (1868-1929) was pastor at the First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio, Texas from 1895 to 1921 and Professor of Systematic Theology at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary from 1921 to 1927. This collection <https://dl.atla.com/collections/jones-arthur-gray-papers> consists of correspondence, sermons, printed material, photographs, and other material documenting the career and personal life of Arthur Gray Jones.

The letter pictured above describes a project initiated by “The Community House for Soldier and Civilian,” to have San Antonio be the first city in the U.S. to have its entire population sing the Star Spangled Banner for the Fourth of July. Leading up to that, they asked that after each Sunday church service in June they sing the first verse of the song.

Heyer Lectures



<https://dl.atla.com/concern/works/k930c4520>

The Heyer Lectures <https://dl.atla.com/collections/heyer-lectures> collection is made up of video documentation of the lectures in this series. The Heyer Lectureship was established to honor George S. Heyer Jr., professor emeritus of the history of

Doctrine, for his 30 years as a valued member of the Austin Seminary Faculty. The purpose of this annual lecture is to symbolize and advance the important relationship between the academy and the church, to recall the long-lasting cooperation between UT-Austin and the seminary, and also to encourage the positive relationship between faith and knowledge.

The image above is from a 2019 lecture titled “The Last Jews: What the Experiences of Intermarried Families Can Teach us About the Holocaust”. In it, Tatjana Lichtenstein explores the experiences of intermarried Jewish and non-Jewish families in World War II-era Bohemia.

You can see all of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary’s collections here: <https://dl.atla.com/collections/austin-presbyterian-theological-seminary> <<https://dl.atla.com/collections/austin-presbyterian-theological-seminary>> and all of the over 66,000 works in the Atla Digital Library <<https://www.atla.com/research-tool/atla-digital-library/>> here: <https://dl.atla.com> <<https://dl.atla.com>>

BACK

ALA ANNOUNCES FREE
FACILITATION SKILLS TRAINING
FOR SMALL AND RURAL LIBRARY
WORKERS

BLOG POST

ALA Announces Free Facilitation Skills Training for Small and Rural Library Workers

December 09, 2019

Professional Development



The American Library Association (ALA) has announced a professional development opportunity — including funding to attend an in-person workshop at the 2020 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago — to help small and rural library workers develop the communication skills they need to thrive in the 21st-century library.

Twenty-five library workers will be selected to be part of Libraries Transforming Communities: Facilitation Skills for Small and Rural Libraries

<http://www.ala.org/tools/librariestransform/libraries-transforming-communities/ltctravelstipend>.

Participants will complete a five-part online course, participate in virtual coaching sessions, and attend an in-person workshop — free of charge and with travel funding provided — specially designed to address the community engagement needs of small and rural libraries.

The opportunity is open to library employees who work in small or rural https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/reference/ua/2010ua_faqs.pdf communities with a legal service area population of 25,000 or less, in accordance with the Institute of Museum and Library Service (IMLS) definition. All library types (e.g., public, college/academic, K-12) are welcome, and no facilitation or community engagement experience is necessary.

Learn more and apply online. Applications are due by Jan. 20, 2020.

Participating library workers will learn:

- ▶ Basic skills for facilitating a conversation
- ▶ How to ask the right questions
- ▶ How to move from talking to action
- ▶ Strategies for discussing divisive topics

“Whether hosting a storytime or leading a town hall meeting, library workers today need communication skills to fulfill their broad mission as community educators and leaders,” said ALA President Wanda Brown. “Since launching ALA’s Libraries Transforming Communities initiative in 2014, library employees from small and rural communities have been asking ALA for facilitation training to help them become better conveners, and we’re proud to deliver with this special project.”

Participants will be selected through a competitive, peer-reviewed application process. Grantees will receive free entry to the one-day workshop; travel expenses paid to Chicago; and two nights lodging at a conference hotel.

Questions? Contact ALA’s Public Programs Office at publicprograms@ala.org.

BACK

ATS FIRST PUBLIC DRAFT OF
STANDARDS AND POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES

BLOG POST

ATS First Public Draft of Standards and Policies and Procedures

by Debbie Creamer, Mitzi Budde / December 09, 2019

Association News



On December 2, the ATS Board of Commissioners released the *First Public Draft of the Proposed ATS Commission Standards* (text only version <<http://www.ats.edu/uploads/accrediting/documents/rst-public-draft-of-standards-with-text-only-%282%20dec%202019%29.pdf>> and annotated version <<http://www.ats.edu/uploads/accrediting/documents/rst-public-draft-of-standards-with-annotations-%282%20dec%202019%29.pdf>>) and the *First Public Draft of the Proposed Policies and Procedures* (annotated version <<http://www.ats.edu/uploads/accrediting/documents/first-public-draft-of-policies-and-procedures-%282%20dec%202019%29.pdf>>). These drafts are in response to the membership's unanimous vote at the June 2018 Biennial meeting to authorize the Board to undertake a redevelopment of the *Standards and Policies and Procedures* — the first major revision since 1996.

A nineteen-member task force

<<https://www.ats.edu/uploads/accrediting/documents/redevelopment-task-force-members-%28nov%202019%29.pdf>> appointed by the Board of Commissioners led the process to redevelop new *Standards and Policies and Procedures*, building upon the four-year work of the ATS Educational Models and Practices Project <<https://www.ats.edu/resources/current-initiatives/educational-models-and-practices-theological-education>>. This past year the task force engaged more than seven hundred ATS participants from nearly two hundred member schools, gathering more than a thousand member comments. They heard clearly the membership's desire for a simpler set of standards focused on both educational quality and contextualized flexibility, as well as more streamlined accreditation processes.

The Proposed Changes

The drafts released seek to address those membership desires by proposing standards and policies that focus more on general principles than prescriptive practices. As a result, the proposed *Standards* (text only <<http://www.ats.edu/uploads/accrediting/documents/rst-public-draft-of-standards-with-text-only-%282%20dec%202019%29.pdf>>) are much briefer than the current standards (eighteen pages vs. ninety-eight pages). And the proposed *Policies and*

Procedures are only thirty-five pages without annotations, compared to the seventy-five pages of *Commission Procedures* and *Board Policy Manual* that they replace; they also simplify many accreditation processes (e.g., by reducing the number of substantive changes requiring ATS approval and by proposing shorter self-study reports).

Redevelopment of ATS Accreditation: First Year in Review

Librarians have had significant representation in the work of the task force. Two Atla members sit on the task force itself (Mitzi Budde and Debbie Creamer), and information during the “year of listening” was gathered from librarians at the Atla annual meeting, various regional Atla meetings, a focus group of Atla board members and local library directors in Chicago, and feedback invited in the *Atla Newsletter* and an Atla webinar.

Among the proposed changes that came specifically from these listening sessions, you will notice that the standard on libraries (currently Standard 4, proposed Standard 6) is now proposed as “Library and Information *Services*” instead of “Library and Information *Resources*” and, in the overall framework of the standards, the section on libraries is now described as part of the “central core, focusing on student learning and formation and on those programs and personnel that most directly support student learning and formation” (from the cover page).

We Invite Your Feedback

These drafts are the first of three public drafts that seek feedback from the membership before they vote on a final draft at the June 2020 Biennial meeting in Vancouver. The task force has arranged for multiple ways for stakeholders (from ATS member schools as well as from the wider public) to provide input — all described on the ATS Redevelopment web page

<<https://www.ats.edu/accrediting/overview-accrediting/redevelopment-ats-commission-standards-and-procedures>>. One way you can let your voice be heard is by attending one of

six regional sessions or one of two webinars scheduled for next February and March (registration information is here <<https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5311012/rtf-regional-sessions-registration>>). Another way you can provide input on these drafts is by completing the brief survey at this link <<https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5265839/survey-on-proposed-ats-commission-standards-and-policies>>. And as always, you can just email your comments to the Redevelopment Task Force.

BACK

NEW CONSORTIUM FOR ATLA
LIBRARIES: SCELCL SHARED PRINT
PROGRAM

BLOG POST

New Consortium for Atla Libraries: SCELCL Shared Print Program

December 11, 2019

Publications & Resources



SCELCL <<http://www.scelc.org>> is the first consortium in the Western United States to offer participation in a consortial shared print program, including OCLC/Sustainable Collection Services GreenGlass Group Collection Analysis <<https://www.oclc.org/en/sustainable-collections.html>>, at a discount to Atla libraries.

The SCEL C Shared Print program <<https://www.scelc.org/libraries/shared-print>> currently includes thirty-five academic institutions of all sizes and the collective collection represents the full range of academic disciplines. We welcome Atla member libraries to learn more about the program.

Throughout North America, library consortia are encouraging their members to pledge to retain and share a reasonable number of copies of scholarly monographs. These Shared Print programs protect against the loss of resources as pressure grows to reduce and repurpose space in library buildings. SCEL C is a member of the Partnership for Shared Book Collections <<https://eastlibraries.org/partnership-shared-book-collections>> (PSBC), a federation supporting cost-effective retention of and access to print book collections with the goal of ensuring the long-term preservation, accessibility, and integrity of these scholarly print resources, and is active in CRL's Print Archive Network (PAN) Forum <<https://www.crl.edu/programs/print-archive-network-forum-pan>>.

GreenGlass gives libraries a powerful data analysis tool to understand their collections in relation to other groups of libraries, and to model retention scenarios both at the local and group level. As a group, SCEL C Shared Print participants commit to retaining both unique items and widely held items, of which no more than 25% of the library's collection is targeted through the analysis process for retention. Participating libraries pledge to share retained resources with each other, and to retain targeted titles on behalf of the wider scholarly community, for at least fifteen years. Titles not targeted for retention can be de-accessioned or moved to alternative housing, allowing librarians to redesign existing library space.

For more information, please review:

- ▶ A Video message from Cohort 1 <<https://vimeo.com/237780369/3be4025094>> participants
- ▶ Press release celebrating Cohort 1 accomplishments

- ▶ MOU <<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ox1pteyr5xulqqzswcfghxm6kfq92zmf/view>> – to be signed by all participants
- ▶ FAQ <<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k93zcbhniv8qiu5hpftecxfayd3mrhy/view>>
- ▶ Policies and Guidelines

Register for Upcoming Webinar

To learn more about the SCELCE Shared Print program, GreenGlass, and the collaboration between Atla and SCELCE, join us for a webinar on Thursday, January 30, 2020, at 1:00 PM CT

<https://zoom.us/webinar/register/wn_aib4isdnqbclcstp5nt_hg>. SCELCE Executive Director Rick Burke, Linda Frodyma Wobbe, SCELCE Liaison to the Shared Print Committee, and Glenn Johnson-Grau, Head of Acquisitions & Collection Development at Loyola Marymount University and SCELCE Shared Print Consultant will share more information about the program and be available to answer your questions. Gillian Harrison Cain, Director of Member Programs at Atla will offer ideas and invite discussion about how Atla members can coordinate and collaborate within the larger context of the SCELCE program.

Even if you cannot attend in person, feel free to register

<https://zoom.us/webinar/register/wn_aib4isdnqbclcstp5nt_hg> and we will send you a link to the recording after the session.

To express your interest in learning more about the SCELCE Shared Print program, please complete the Shared Print Interest form

<<https://scelc.org/libraries/member-library-benefits/shared-print-program/shared-print-interest-form>>.