

THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE'S STATEMENT ON ACCESS TO
ANCIENT WRITTEN MATERIALS

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The Society of Biblical Literature wishes to encourage prompt publication of ancient written materials and ready access to unpublished textual materials. In order to achieve these ends, the society adopts the following guidelines.

1. *Recommendation to those who own or control ancient written materials:* Those who own or control ancient written materials should allow all scholars to have access to them. If the condition of the written materials requires that access to them be restricted, arrangements should be made for a facsimile reproduction that will be accessible to all scholars. Although the owners or those in control may choose to authorize an official edition of any given ancient written materials, such authorization should neither preclude access to the written materials by other scholars nor hinder other scholars from publishing their own studies, translations, or editions of the written materials.

2. *Obligations entailed by specially authorized editions:* Scholars who are given special authorization to work on official editions of ancient written materials should cooperate with the owners or those in control of the written materials to ensure publication of the edition in an expeditious manner, and they should facilitate access to the written materials by all scholars. If the owners or those in control grant to specially authorized editors any privileges that are unavailable to other scholars, these privileges should by no means include exclusive access to the written materials or facsimile reproductions of them. Furthermore, the owners or those in control should set a reasonable deadline for completion of the envisioned edition (not more than five years after the special authorization is granted).

The Research and Publications Committee directed that the statement on access be sent to funding agencies, publishers, primary repositories, be published in *Religious News Studies*, and be circulated through the American Council of Learned Societies to other learned societies interested in literary and artifactual remains (encouraging their participation in policy development). The Committee approved further distribution as widely as possible.