

biblatex-sbl

SBL Style Using biblatex

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1 Introduction

biblatex-sbl provides support to biblatex and LaTeX for citations, bibliography, and a list of abbreviations in the style recommended by the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL). The style conforms to the second edition of the *SBLHS*.

The style supports all examples given in the handbook (see biblatex-sbl-test.pdf). Shorthand citations and a list of abbreviations containing journals, series, and shorthands are handled automatically. Repeated authors in the bibliography are replaced by a horizontal line. *Ibidem* is supported, but not enabled by default. Only note style citations, not Author-Date citations are supported. Primary sources can be cited in parentheses. biblatex-sbl is compatible with biblatex's support for hyperref.

For anything not covered in this manual, please see the biblatex documentation. Bugs and feature requests can be submitted at <https://github.com/dcpurton/biblatex-sbl/>.

2 Requirements

biblatex-sbl requires at least version 3.0 of biblatex and the xparse package. biber must be used. bibtex is not supported. For localization babel and csquotes are recommended.

3 Usage

The following minimal example will set up biblatex-sbl to conform to the defaults of the *SBLHS*.

```

\documentclass{article}
\usepackage[style=sbl,backend=biber]{biblatex}
\addbibresource{<bibfile.bib>}
\begin{document}
\printbiblist{abbreviations}
\printbibliography
\end{document}

```

3.1 Localization

By default biblatex-sbl uses American style punctuation and quotation marks. You can choose a different style by including the babel and csquotes packages in your document preamble. e.g.,

```

\usepackage[german]{babel}
\usepackage{csquotes}
\usepackage[style=sbl,backend=biber]{biblatex}

```

Currently english (including variants such as british, australian, etc.), spanish, and german are supported.

3.2 Commands

The standard commands for biblatex-sbl generally follow those defined by biblatex. Included below are the most typical commands. For more commands and options, reference the biblatex manual.

`\autocite[<prenote>][<altpostnote>|<postnote>]{<key>}`

`\autocite` inserts a citation as a footnote. It works as in the standard biblatex styles, except that that postnote argument can be divided into two using the pipe (|) character. This creates an altpostnote field which is used in some of the examples from §6.4 of the *SBLHS*. e.g.,

```

\autocite[See][1.3|8:223]{clementinehomilies}
1. See The Clementine Homilies 1.3 (ANF 8:223).

```

To use only altpostnote you must still include the pipe character. e.g.,

```
\autocite[III. 1-164|]{PGM:betz}
```

1. *PGM* III. 1–164 (Betz).

```
\cite[⟨prenote⟩][⟨altpostnote⟩|⟨postnote⟩]{⟨key⟩}
```

`\cite` works in the same way as `\autocite` except that the citation is placed directly into the text instead of in a footnote.

```
\parencite[⟨prenote⟩][⟨altpostnote⟩|⟨postnote⟩]{⟨key⟩}
```

`\parencite` works in the same way as `\autocite` except that the citation is placed inside parentheses instead of in a footnote. This is most useful for citing primary sources. e.g.,

```
\parencite[2.233-235]{josephus:ant}
```

(Josephus, *Ant.* 2.233–235)

```
\journalcite{⟨key⟩}
```

```
\seriescite{⟨key⟩}
```

```
\shorthandcite{⟨key⟩}
```

`\journalcite`, `\seriescite`, and `\shorthandcite` inserts the respective abbreviation into the text and also adds it to the list of abbreviations. The abbreviation is hyperlinked to the list of abbreviations if the `hyperref` package is loaded.

These commands ignore the `prenote` and `postnote` fields, so can safely be used anywhere within a database entry.

```
\printbiblist
```

This command prints a bibliography list. In `biblatex-sbl` all abbreviations (journals, series, and shorthands) can be printed using the following command:

```
\printbiblist[...]{abbreviations}
```

See the `biblatex` manual for an explanation of available optional arguments.

```
\printbibliography
```

Inserts the bibliography. See the `biblatex` manual for an explanation of available optional arguments.

3.3 Package Options

`biblatex-sbl` defaults to the recommendations of the, but it also supports many of the standard options from `biblatex` as well as a few custom ones outlined below.

`ibidtracker=true, false`

default: `false`

This option controls the *ibidem* tracker. The possible choices are:

`true` Enable the tracker: *ibid.* will be used.

`false` Disable the tracker: *ibid.* will not be used.

`citepages=sbl, permit, omit, separate`

default: `sbl`

Use this option to fine-tune the formatting of the pages field the first time an entry is cited.

`sbl` The postnote field is not printed for first citations. e.g.,

```
\autocite[159]{leyerle:1993}
```

1. Blake Leyerle, “John Chrysostom on the Gaze,” *JECS* 1 (1993): 159–74.

```
\autocite[159]{leyerle:1993}
```

2. Leyerle, “Chrysostom,” 159.

```
\autocite{leyerle:1993}
```

3. Leyerle, “Chrysostom,” 159–74.

If postnote is not a page range, then it is printed in parentheses after pages. e.g.,

```
\autocite[a note]{leyerle:1993}
```

1. Blake Leyerle, “John Chrysostom on the Gaze,” *JECS* 1 (1993): 159–74 (a note).

```
\autocite[a note]{leyerle:1993}
```

2. Leyerle, “Chrysostom,” 159–74 (a note).

`permit`

The postnote is printed in parentheses after the pages field. e.g.,

```
\autocite[159]{leyerle:1993}
```

1. Blake Leyerle, “John Chrysostom on the Gaze,” *JECS* 1 (1993): 159–74 (159).

```
\autocite[159]{leyerle:1993}
```

2. Leyerle, “Chrysostom,” 159.

If postnote is not a page range, then pages is printed for subsequent citations, and the postnote is printed in parentheses. e.g.,

```
\autocite[a note]{leyerle:1993}
```

3. Leyerle, “Chrysostom,” 159–74 (a note).

omit

The pages field is not printed unless postnote is empty or not a page range. e.g.,

```
\autocite[159]{leyerle:1993}
```

1. Blake Leyerle, “John Chrysostom on the Gaze,” *J ECS* 1 (1993): 159.

```
\autocite[159]{leyerle:1993}
```

2. Leyerle, “Chrysostom,” 159.

```
\autocite{leyerle:1993}
```

3. Leyerle, “Chrysostom,” 159–74.

```
\autocite[a note]{leyerle:1993}
```

4. Leyerle, “Chrysostom,” 159–74 (a note).

separate

The postnote is printed in parentheses after the pages field preceeded by the bibliography string thiscite. e.g.,

```
\autocite[159]{leyerle:1993}
```

1. Blake Leyerle, “John Chrysostom on the Gaze,” *J ECS* 1 (1993): 159–74 (esp. 159).

```
\autocite[159]{leyerle:1993}
```

2. Leyerle, “Chrysostom,” 159.

If postnote is not a page range, then firstcite is not used. e.g.,

```
\autocite[a note]{leyerle:1993}
```

3. Leyerle, “Chrysostom,” 159–74 (a note).

fullbibrefs=true, false

default: false

The *Student Supplement for the SBLHS* permits two styles for the bibliography entry for Bible dictionaries and encyclopaedias, and multivolume commentaries for the entire Bible by multiple authors.¹

This option applies to @inreference and @incommentary entry types.

true

The bibliography entry is printed in long form. e.g.,

1. *Student Supplement for the SBL Handbook of Style, Second Edition*, compiled by Melanie Greer Nogalski et al., ed. Joel M. LeMon and Brennan W. Breed (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, February 2015), <https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/SBLHSupp2015-02.pdf>, 4–5.

Stendahl, Krister. “Biblical Theology, Contemporary.” Pages 418–32 in vol. 1 of *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by George A. Buttrick. 4 vols. New York: Abingdon, 1962.

false

The bibliography entry is printed in a short form. e.g.,

Stendahl, Krister. “Biblical Theology, Contemporary.” *IDB* 1:418–32.

`sblfootnotes=true, false`

default: true

This option controls the style of footnotes.

true

Footnotes are printed with a with a normal number followed by a period and the first line indented:

1. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (New York: Crossroad, 1992).

false

Footnotes are printed with a superscript (or whatever other default has been set up by your style):

¹Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (New York: Crossroad, 1992).

4 Database Guide

4.1 Entry Types

This section gives an overview of the entry types supported by `biblatex-sbl`. Many work in the same way as `biblatex`. Some standard entry types have custom usage, and some are unique to `biblatex-sbl`. These are documented more fully.

`ancienttext` This is a custom type for `biblatex-sbl`. It is used for the special examples in *SBLHS* §6.4.1, §6.4.3 and §6.4.8.

Unless `options = {skipbib=false}` is set explicitly, a `@ancienttext` entry will not appear in the bibliography. (Although, see `ANRW` `entrysubtype` below for an exception.) The `sblxref` field is used to refer to the entry which should appear in the bibliography instead of the `@ancienttext` entry.

The entry pointed to by `sblxref` along with the postnote is printed in parentheses after the `altpostnote`, `editor`, and `translator` fields they are present. `translator` and `editor` fields are omitted for subsequent citations. e.g.,

```
\autocite[319]{suppiluliumas}
```

1. “Suppiluliumas and the Egyptian Queen,” trans. Albrecht Goetz ([ANET](#), 319).
2. “Suppiluliumas and the Egyptian Queen” ([ANET](#), 319).

```
\printbibliography
```

Pritchard, James B., ed. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.

If the entry contains options = {skipbib=false}, then the bibliography entry will be like @book. Any shorthand is also printed in the same way as a @book shorthand.

The following values for the entrysubtype field are supported:

[ANRW](#) The ANRW entrysubtype is particularly for citing [ANRW](#) as outlined in §6.4.8 of the [SBLHS](#). In this case, the entry *will* appear in the bibliography. See `biblatex-sbl-test.pdf` for full details of the required database entry.

[chronicle](#) Formats the title using an upright shape font without quotation marks. e.g.,

```
\autocite[lines 3--4|125]{esarhaddonchronicle}
```

1. Esarhaddon Chronicle, lines 3–4 (Albert Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, [TCS](#) 5 [Locust Valley, NY: Augustin, 1975], 125).

[COS](#) Suppresses parentheses around *COS* and the postnote for subsequent citations. e.g.,

```
\autocite{greathymnaten}
```

1. “The Great Hymn to the Aten,” trans. Miriam Lichtheim ([COS](#) 1.26:44–46).
2. “Great Hymn to the Aten,” [COS](#) 1.26:44–46.

[inscription](#) Similarly to *chronicle*, this formats the title using an upright shape font without quotation marks.

[article](#) An article in a journal or magazine. Also use this type for review articles ([SBLHS](#) §6.3.4) and electronic journal articles ([SBLHS](#) §6.3.10).

[book](#) A single-volume book with one or more authors.

[mvbook](#) A multivolume @book. `biblatex-sbl` treats this as an alias for @book.

There is one entrysubtype supported:

[RIMA](#) The citation for [RIMA](#) ([SBLHS](#), 97) is treated like a series with a number when cited in full, but as a shorthand with a volume when cited in short form. See `biblatex-sbl-test.pdf` for full details.

- inbook** A part of a book which forms a self-contained unit with its own title. `biblatex-sbl` treats this as an alias for `@incollection`.
- bookinbook** This type is similar to `@inbook` but intended for works originally published as a stand-alone book. The main difference is that the title is printed in italics instead of in quotation marks. See §6.4.4 in `biblatex-sbl-test.pdf` for an example.
- suppbook** Supplemental material in a `@book`. Use this for an introduction, preface or foreword written by someone other than the author (*SBLHS* §6.2.14).
- classictext** This type is a custom type for `biblatex-sbl`. It is used for the special examples in *SBLHS* §6.4.2 and §§6.4.4–6.
- Unless `options = {skipbib=false}` is set explicitly, a `@classictext` entry will not appear in the bibliography. The `sblxref` field is used to refer to the entry which should appear in the bibliography instead of the `@classictext` entry.
- If present, the translator and series are printed in parentheses following the postnote. e.g.,

```
\autocite[15.18-19]{tacitus:ann:jackson}
1. Tacitus, Ann. 15.18–19 (Jackson, LCL).
\printbibliography
Tacitus. The Histories and The Annals. Translated by Clifford H. Moore and John Jackson.
4 vols. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937.
```

If the entry contains `options = {skipbib=false}`, then the bibliography entry will be like `@incollection` except that the title is set in italics instead of within quotation marks.

The following values for the `entrysubtype` field are supported:

- churchfather** Entries using the `churchfather` `entrysubtype` print the entry pointed to by `sblxref` within parentheses following the `altpostnote`. The `postnote` field applies to the entry in `sblxref`. `altpostnote` is always separated from the title by a space.

```
\autocite[28.3.5|252]{augustine:letters}
1. Augustine, Letters of St. Augustin 28.3.5 (NPNF1 1:252).
\printbibliography
Augustine. The Letters of St. Augustin. In vol. 1 of The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 1. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. 1886–1889. Repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.
```


- collection** A single-volume collection with multiple, self-contained contributions by distinct authors which have their own title. The work as a whole has no overall author but it will usually have an editor. `biblatex-sbl` treats this as an alias for `@book`.
- mvcollection** A multi-volume `@collection`. `biblatex-sbl` treats this as an alias for `@mvbook`.
- incollection** A contribution to a collection which forms a self-contained unit with a distinct author and title.
- commentary** A single-volume commentary on a book (or part of a book) of the Bible by one or more authors. This entry type is similar to `@book`, except that any volume and maintitle is only printed in the bibliography, not the citation.
- mvcommentary** A multi-volume commentary on a single book of the Bible by one or more authors or a multi-volume commentary on the whole Bible by multiple authors. `biblatex-sbl` treats this as an alias to `@mvbook`.
- incommentary** A contribution to a commentary which forms a self-contained unit with a distinct author and title. This is typically a commentary on a book of the Bible appearing in a single or multi-volume commentary on the entire Bible.

If an entry contains an `sblxref` field, then the bibliography entry is printed in either short or long form as described above under `fullbibrefs`. Otherwise this entry is treated as an alias for `@incollection`.
- lexicon** A single-volume lexicon or theological dictionary. `biblatex-sbl` treats this as an alias for `@book`.
- mvlexicon** A multi-volume lexicon or theological dictionary. `biblatex` treats this as an alias for `@mvbook`.
- inlexicon** An article in a lexicon or theological dictionary. This is a custom type for `biblatex-sbl`. The required `sblxref` must contain the entry name of a `@lexicon` or `@mvlexicon`. The `@inlexicon` entry does not appear in the bibliography. Instead the lexicon pointed to by `sblxref` appears in the bibliography.

Subsequent citations do not include the article title, only the name of the lexicon. e.g.,

```
\autocite[511]{dahn+liefeld:see+vision+eye}
```

1. Karl Dahn and Walter L. Liefeld, "See, Vision, Eye," *NIDNTT* 3:511–21.

```
\autocite[511]{dahn+liefeld:see+vision+eye}
```

1. Dahn and Liefeld, *NIDNTT* 3:511.

```
\printbibliography
```

Brown, Colin, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–1985.

manual	Technical or other documentation, not necessarily in printed form. <code>biblatex-sbl</code> treats this as an alias for <code>@book</code> .
misc	<p>A fallback type for entries which do not fit into any other category. Use the <code>howpublished</code> field to supply publishing information in free format, if applicable.</p> <p>This type is also set up to be able to insert an item into the list of abbreviations. So it is permissible to include just <code>journaltitle</code> and <code>shortjournal</code> or <code>series</code> and <code>shortseries</code>, or <code>shorthand</code> and relevant fields. In this case ensure that <code>options = {skipbib}</code> is set.</p>
online	An online resource without a print counterpart. <code>biblatex-sbl</code> treats this as an alias for <code>@article</code> .
proceedings	A single-volume conference proceedings. This type is not fully supported. <code>biblatex-sbl</code> treats this as an alias for <code>@collection</code> .
mvproceedings	A multi-volume <code>@proceedings</code> entry. This type is not fully supported. <code>biblatex-sbl</code> treats this as an alias for <code>@mvcollection</code> .
inproceedings	An article in a conference proceedings. This type is not fully supported. <code>biblatex-sbl</code> treats this as an alias for <code>@incollection</code> .
reference	A single-volume encyclopaedia or dictionary. <code>biblatex-sbl</code> treats this as an alias for <code>@book</code> .
mvreference	A multi-volume <code>@reference</code> . <code>biblatex-sbl</code> treats this as an alias for <code>@@mvbook</code> .
inreference	<p>An article in an encyclopaedia or dictionary. The required <code>sblxref</code> field must contain the entry name of a <code>@reference</code> or <code>@mvreference</code>.</p> <p>The bibliography entry is printed in either short or long form as described above under <code>fullbibrefs</code>.</p>
review	<p>A book review in a journal. This is similar to the <code>@article</code> entry type. Use the <code>revdauthor</code>/<code>revdeditor</code> and <code>revdttitle</code> fields to specify the author/editor and title of the book being reviewed.</p> <p>Note that review articles are treated like articles and should use the <code>@article</code> entry type.</p>
seminarpaper	An SBL seminar paper. This is a custom entry type for <code>biblatex-sbl</code> . See §6.4.11 of <code>biblatex-sbl-test</code> for an example.
set	An entry set. This entry type is special. See the <code>biblatex</code> manual for details.
thesis	A unpublished thesis written for an educational institution to satisfy the requirements for a degree. Use the <code>type</code> field to specify the type of thesis and the <code>institution</code> to specify the educational institution.

unpublished A work with an author and a title which has not been formally published, such as a manuscript or the script of a talk. Use the fields `howpublished` and `note` to supply additional information in free format, if applicable.

See §6.3.8 of `biblatex-sbl-test` for an example.

4.2 Entry Options

4.3 Reprints

Abbreviations

<i>ABC</i>	<i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> . Albert Kirk Grayson. TCS 5. Locust Valley, NY: Augustin, 1975
<i>ANET</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969
<i>ANF</i>	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Part 2, <i>Principat</i> . Edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–
<i>COS</i>	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> . Edited by William W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002
<i>IDB</i>	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by George A. Buttrick. 4 vols. New York: Abingdon, 1962
<i>J ECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>LCL</i>	Loeb Classical Library
<i>NIDNTT</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> . Edited by Colin Brown. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–1985
<i>NPNF</i> ¹	<i>The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i> , Series 1
<i>PGM</i>	<i>Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri</i> . Edited by Karl Preisendaz. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973–1974
<i>RIMA</i>	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
<i>SBL</i>	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>SBLHS</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Handbook of Style</i> . 2nd ed. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014
<i>TCS</i>	Texts from Cuneiform Sources

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