

# **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,” *J ECS* 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,” *J ECS* 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,” *J ECS* 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.<sup>1</sup>

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):

<sup>1</sup>Charles 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.

<a href="#">manual</a>	Technical or other documentation, not necessarily in printed form. <code>biblatex-sbl</code> treats this as an alias for <code>@book</code> .
<a href="#">misc</a>	<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>
<a href="#">online</a>	An online resource without a print counterpart. <code>biblatex-sbl</code> treats this as an alias for <code>@article</code> .
<a href="#">proceedings</a>	A single-volume conference proceedings. This type is not fully supported. <code>biblatex-sbl</code> treats this as an alias for <code>@collection</code> .
<a href="#">mvproceedings</a>	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> .
<a href="#">inproceedings</a>	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> .
<a href="#">reference</a>	A single-volume encyclopaedia or dictionary. <code>biblatex-sbl</code> treats this as an alias for <code>@book</code> .
<a href="#">mvreference</a>	A multi-volume <code>@reference</code> . <code>biblatex-sbl</code> treats this as an alias for <code>@@mvbook</code> .
<a href="#">inreference</a>	<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>
<a href="#">review</a>	<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>
<a href="#">seminarpaper</a>	An <a href="#">SBL</a> 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.
<a href="#">set</a>	An entry set. This entry type is special. See the <code>biblatex</code> manual for details.
<a href="#">thesis</a>	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 Fields

`biblatex-sbl` supports many of the entry fields outlined in the `biblatex` manual. There are also a number of custom entry fields supported by `biblatex-sbl`. These are documented below.

`bookeditor` field (name)

`booktranslator` field (name)

`maineditor` field (name)

`maintranslator` field (name)

`releasedate` field (date)

`releaseday` field (datepart)

`releasemonth` field (datepart)

`releaseyear` field (datepart)

`revdauthor` field (name)

`revdeditor` field (name)

`revdshorttitle` field (literal)

`revdsubtitle` field (literal)

`revdtitle` field (literal)

`revdtitleaddon` field (literal)

`revdtranslator` field (name)

`sblxref` field (literal)

<code>series</code>	field (literal)
<code>shortbooktitle</code>	field (literal)
<code>shortmaintitle</code>	field (literal)
<code>withauthor</code>	field (name)
<code>withauthortype</code>	field (literal)
<code>witheditor</code>	field (name)
<code>witheditortype</code>	field (literal)
<code>withtranslator</code>	field (name)
<code>withtranslatortype</code>	field (literal)
<code>withbookauthor</code>	field (name)
<code>withbookauthortype</code>	field (literal)
<code>withbookeditor</code>	field (name)
<code>withbookeditortype</code>	field (literal)
<code>withbooktranslator</code>	field (name)
<code>withbooktranslatortype</code>	field (literal)
<code>withmainauthor</code>	field (name)
<code>withmainauthortype</code>	field (literal)
<code>withmaineditor</code>	field (name)
<code>withmaineditortype</code>	field (literal)
<code>withmaintranslator</code>	field (name)
<code>withmaintranslatortype</code>	field (literal)

### 4.3 Entry Options

### 4.4 Reprints

## Abbreviations

<i>ABC</i>	<i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> . Albert Kirk Grayson. <a href="#">TCS</a> 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<sup>1</sup></i>	<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

## References

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