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# Using an Open-Source Library Catalog for Specialized Bibliographies

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**ABSTRACT** This presentation reports on two specialized bibliography projects: The Andrews Bibliography of Ethnic/Minority Scholarship in Theology (ABEST) and the Hisban Interactive Archive Project (HIAP). An open-source library catalog, Koha, was used. The processes of citation collection and representation are discussed.

## BACKGROUND FOR ABEST

As a part of a Lilly Endowment, Inc., Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative Grant to support theological education for pastors in urban settings, the seminary grant team at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary proposed a bibliography of BIPOC authors that enriches Seminary pedagogy. The motivation was to meet a felt need as expressed in 2021, to raise the profile of BIPOC theologians and biblical scholars. The project was supported by the Seminary and approved by the Lilly Endowment. Work began on the project in the fall of 2022.

**ABEST Purpose Statement:** God asks us to serve all ethnic and cultural groups (Matt. 28:19). This requires us to reflect theologically outside of our own cultural context. To support this, the Andrews Bibliography of Ethnic Minority Scholarship in Theology ([abest.andrews.edu](http://abest.andrews.edu)) will help you locate academic resources in the fields of biblical, theological, and pastoral studies by Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous authors. ABEST has been created by the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in partnership with Lilly Endowment Inc.

The bibliography's expectations included publishing it in a digital interface that was familiar to general users, expandable over time, and sustainable (no cash commitments). Many excellent products would have worked admirably for this project but they would have

required ongoing financial obligations. So we selected Koha, an open-source library management system.

### **CITATION HARVESTING FOR ABEST**

The first problem we faced was to identify relevant authors. Graduate student assistants reviewed public faculty pages from ATS member schools. Potential authors for inclusion in the bibliography were determined based on the evidence from those pages. Of these, approximately 700 were included.

The second problem was to find an efficient way to enter the citations into the database. Several challenges emerged. The most difficult was the prospect of training and supervising student assistants in data entry. We also needed to clarify which entries to include and what “added value” to incorporate. The logistics of growing a live database one entry at a time also were not appealing. We landed on having the student assistants perform author searches in *Atla Religion Database (Atla RDB)* and export the results into the EndNote bibliographic manager. This harvesting tool proved congenial for the students, though they did not discriminate regarding reference types.

### **MARC RECORD DEVELOPMENT**

The third problem was to transfer the data from EndNote to the Koha database. First, we exported the citations into a tab-delimited spreadsheet. This process worked exceptionally well for standardizing and adding fields. The student assistants were assigned tasks on a shared Google Sheet. After the funds for student assistants were depleted, I toggled between Excel and Open Refine to complete the added-value features. These included adding subject headings for the featured authors to distinguish them from other co-authors; delimiting the entries to formal scholarly articles, book chapters, and books; campus access links to content; public access links to content; and curriculum tags. Then I added MARC tags used in Koha as column headings. This final spreadsheet was uploaded into MarcEdit and imported into Koha. Tweaks were needed for titles with Greek and Hebrew fonts, but other than that, records were displayed as intended.

As it stands now, ABEST includes citations for 506 books, 640 chapters in edited books, and 3174 journal articles. This data reflects the work of approximately 700 authors from ATS faculty across North America. Based upon their race/ethnicity as reflected in ATS data, the data distinguishes four categories: Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous.

## EVALUATION

In retrospect, I suggest this process proved efficient and allowed for a typical learning trajectory. Contrasted with the direct entry of each citation, which would have required much more training and fixed the fields in ways that were not adequately developed until much later. As such, we could create the added-value features over time and then present the complete final product.

The link to ABEST is <https://libguides.andrews.edu/ABEST>. Documentation on the scope, delimitations, added value fields, and search tips is provided at <https://libguides.andrews.edu/ABEST>. The next steps include updating coverage with new citations, engaging authors for additional citations, including authors who may not be ATS faculty, and promoting the use of the database.

## BACKGROUND FOR HIAP

Andrews University has an ongoing program of archaeological digs in Jordan, beginning in 1968. As of the date of the presentation, a team from Andrews University was working on a site in Jordan, and was able to see the missiles flying back and forth overhead from Israel and Iran. This fifty-year-plus legacy of collaboration between Andrews University and Jordan in the Madaba Plains region southwest of Amman is unparalleled. The objective of the HIAP is to facilitate research and access to the findings of these digs. Drs. Oystein LaBianca, Paul J. Ray, Jr., and I were awarded Faculty Grants from the Andrews University Office of Research and Creative Scholarship to digitize and make publicly accessible for ongoing research the hidden collections of the Institute of Archaeology.

## PHASE I: THE HISBAN BIBLIOGRAPHY

The challenge this bibliography addresses is that many publications help support archaeological research on Hisban and the surrounding region. However, because these citations represent a variety of publishers and genres from over 50 years, they cannot readily be found in one source. So, we found and/or scanned searchable PDF copies of over 300 articles by the original dig participants and an additional 1,000 publications pertinent to the archaeological story of the region. These PDF files are in a non-public archive with locally controlled access and are available for text mining and controlled access AI tools.

However, the citations are provided in a public-facing bibliography that includes links to where any user can find the content, whether or not affiliated with the project. Many of the citations by the original participants are open access, so the bibliography links to them in the Andrews University institutional repository. Currently, the bibliography exists as a PDF file. The proposal is to move it to a Koha database to enhance public access and searching. See <https://libguides.andrews.edu/HIAP>. The works by Andrews University authors on archaeology are aggregated in the institutional repository, see <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/hiap/>.

## PHASE II: THE DIGITAL PRESERVATION OF DIG RECORDS FOR 1968 TO 1975

Deep in the Institute for Archaeology are unique hard copy records for the archaeological digs at Hisban from 1968 to 1975. These include scrapbooks of site documentation photographs, an object index on 5x7 cards, and handwritten field notes in file boxes. All are in a deteriorating condition.

We have scanned over 6,000 photographs and are still going strong. See <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/hiap-photos/>. We explored uploading a subset of photos into an instance of a Koha catalog. However, we are also exploring a repository-based solution to empower a search that correlates photographs with the full text of publications and documents.

**EVALUATION**

The display features of Koha are limited. Adding thumbnails of the photos would help, though that may be difficult. Full-text searching is not an option in Koha for publications, and the correlation of photographs to text would not be enhanced. Thus, there is interest in finding a repository-based solution. However, we plan to use Koha for the bibliography.

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