
EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The 79th annual meeting of Atla convened from June 18 to 21, 2025, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Atla members, colleagues, and staff dedicated to librarianship and information access gathered for collaboration, professional development, and community. Conference attendees shared work, life, and other updates with faces both new and familiar. In addition to scholarly conversation, attendees also held space for worship, shared meals, explored Pittsburgh's sights, and remembered colleagues who passed during the year.

Like the previous three iterations of Atla Annual, the conference was presented in a hybrid format, offering flexibility and allowing those interested to attend either in person or remotely. Sessions were recorded, regardless of modality, and made available to attendees after the event.

In this volume of the *Summary of Proceedings*—the final volume—you will find a range of research, inquiry, advice, and best practices shared at Atla Annual 2025. The *Summary of Proceedings* serves as a record of the four-day event, from business meeting summaries and the annual association update to papers, presentations, and collaborative sessions.

The conference was bookended by two engaging and highly relevant plenary addresses. The opening plenary was given by Dr. Frank Yamada, the Executive Director of The Association of Theological Schools. It focused on the tectonic shifts taking place in theological librarianship and considered the many roles librarians play in the age of accelerating digital technologies. The closing plenary by Keith Webster, the Helen and Henry Posner, Jr. Dean of the University Libraries at Carnegie Mellon, delved into scenario planning, the rise of artificial intelligence, and the future of theological librarianship.

The papers and presentations shared throughout the conference likewise touched on a variety of significant and pressing topics in theological librarianship. For example, three contributions to the *Summary of Proceedings* touch on the importance of engaging the profession worldwide, three are focused on technology and artificial intelligence, and four center on strategies for building resources on

cultural study and diversity. Other timely topics include librarian neutrality, leadership development, collection building, and creative programming for engagement.

I invite you to review the contents and enjoy the range of material at your own pace. However, if you are wondering where to start, I have some suggestions. The panel presentation from Ezra Choe, Gerrit van Dyk, Robin McCall, Dee Roberts, and David Schmearsal explores the nuances of neutrality and the concept of hospitality in a library setting, taking into consideration current events and varying work environments. Christine Love-Rodgers's analysis of university librarians in the United Kingdom presents results of survey data collected and includes recommendations for library associations based on the findings. A panel presentation from Marlon Patterson, David Schmearsal, and Vincent Williams shifts focus to student workers in the library, exploring how these students can be an asset for the library while they are introduced to the profession.

Thank you to the presenters, conference attendees, and Atla staff for once again curating an important and necessary space for the sharing of knowledge in religion, theology, and librarianship. Our community is made stronger by your contributions and engagement.

I hope you will join us in celebrating eighty years of Atla at Atla Annual 2026 in Denver, Colorado.

Katie Thorman
Editor-in-Chief