Figures: Line Drawings, Photos, and Tables

1. Can illustrative figures be included within an SBL publication?
   Authors may include such material when it is vital to a work's argument. An author who plans to include figures should specify the types and numbers of figures in the book proposal.

2. What limitations are there on the types of material that can be included?
   In general, the reproduction of line drawings and tables presents no complications; however, photos sometimes require SBL to use offset printing, which is a much more expensive process than our usual approach. In some cases SBL may decline a request to include photos or ask an author to seek a subvention to offset the increased printing costs. Further, SBL rarely includes color figures in its books, and then only upon provision of a subvention to offset all additional printing expenses. As a rule, figures are printed on regular paper, not on plates located at the back of the book.

3. When are permissions needed, and whose responsibility is it to secure them?
   Any material still under copyright (potentially any work created or published after 1923) will require permission for reproduction. The author is responsible to secure permissions to reproduce copyrighted material and to pay any associated licensing fees. As a rule, an author will need to contact the publisher of the copyrighted work with the permission request (but see point 5 below). Publications staff can assist authors with permissions requests as needed, such as by supplying a sample request letter. These authorial responsibilities apply only to interior figures, not to the book cover, for which SBL staff is responsible for securing needed permissions.

4. What type of permissions should the author request?
   SBL books are distributed in paperback and hardcover, as well as in e-book form through various outlets, so authors should request nonexclusive print and electronic world rights to the copyrighted material. If the copyright holder will not grant electronic rights, the author should discuss with Press staff which is preferable in this case: to omit the figure or to exclude the book from e-book publication.

5. How much should authors expect to pay for permissions?
   There is no standard scale for reproduction of copyrighted material, and fees will vary widely. We recommend that authors requesting permission start with a presumption of gratis use and negotiate as needed from there. To build the best case for gratis permission, authors should note that the work will be published by a not-for-profit organization—SBL is registered with the U.S. government as a 501(c)3 entity—and will have a limited print run. In cases where the copyright holder (e.g., a publisher) is not the creator of the work (e.g., a scholar), it is often helpful to enlist the assistance of the creator in convincing the copyright holder to grant gratis permission.

6. What sources for copyright-free images are available?
   In addition to the usual sources (museums, prior publications, personal photos), authors may find usable versions figures in Wikipedia/Wikimedia (most of which are available at no charge under Creative Commons licenses; see http://creativecommons.org/) or in Flickr.com (some of which can be freely reproduced).

7. What size of figures may be included within a book?
    The standard trim size of SBL books is 6" x 9", with a standard margin of .75". Thus, the usable display area is 4.5" x 7.5", and figures wider or taller than this may be impossible to include. In some cases a figure can be arranged landscape (i.e., rotated 90 degrees) on the page. In other cases authors may have to consider other options (e.g., posting material online and listing the URL in the published book) for making their material available.

    Authors using tables should note especially the narrowness of the display area: 4.5". The average column width of a table with four columns will be 1.125", enough space for only 18–20 characters. A table with five or more columns will often need to be placed landscape on the page or completely redesigned. In short, remember that the tables and figures you design for 8.5" x 11" (or A-4) manuscript pages will not always work in a published book.

8. In what form should illustrative figures be submitted?
    Each line drawing and photo must be submitted in hard copy (i.e., as a part of the manuscript) and in electronic form, that is, as a separate electronic file (jpeg or tiff), not merely embedded within a word-processing document. Authors should format tables within the manuscript by using their word-processor's table function; they should not use tabs to align the columns in a table.

9. What is the minimum acceptable resolution for line drawings and photos?
    All line drawings and photos must be at least 300 dpi (dots per inch) at their published display size. Resolution and size are relative to each other, so that a 300 dpi 2" x 2" photo displayed at 4" x 4" will be only 150 dpi, which is not acceptable for publication. The easiest way to gauge if a figure is of a high enough resolution is to determine its size in pixels. Some images list their sizes (e.g., http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cyrus_Cylinder.jpg); the size of others can be determined by opening the file in Photoshop and going to Image > Image Size and reading the size under Pixel Dimensions. If one divides the width and the height by 300, the result is the dimensions of the image at the correct resolution. For example, an image 2934 pixels wide by 2336 pixels high will be ca. 9.75" by 7.75" at 300 dpi, easily above the minimum requirements.

10. How can authors secure electronic versions of their figures?
    In many cases the copyright holder can provide an e-version of the figure; in other cases, an author can scan a high-quality photo of the image or download it from an online source (see number 6 above). Scanning a photo from a book or journal is often inadequate, since it is two steps removed from the original. Scanning a photocopy of a page from a book or journal is always unacceptable. If an author needs to scan an image, he or she should scan it according to the following settings: grayscale, 600 dpi, and 100 percent size. Authors may submit color e-files, with the understanding that Publications staff will convert them to grayscale. Thus, the author must take care that any subtleties easily apparent in the color version are equally apparent when converted to grayscale. For example, the distinction between certain colors used to present data in a graph when converted to grayscale may not be discernable.