

Reading the New Testament as Second Temple Jewish Literature Titles and Abstracts

12–13 September 2017 Trinity College Dublin

This two day conference is devoted to the exploration of how literature found in the New Testament, as cultural artefacts, inform our understanding of ancient Jewish culture, traditions, intellectual trends, and languages. International experts shall gather to present and discuss on this theme.

If you would like to **support the Trinity Centre for Biblical Studies** and future meetings like this please contact either:

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12 September

9:30-10:15 Menahem Kister (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) Rabbinic Literature and the New Testament: Jesus' Parables and Beyond

This lecture will deal with affinities of some parables attributed to Jesus in the synoptic Gospels with passages in Rabbinic Literature. I seek to demonstrate that, notwithstanding the chronological gap between the two corpora, they illuminate each other. In conclusion, I plan to touch upon a passage in Paul's Epistle to the Romans and its relationship to a passage of Rabbinic Literature.

10:40-11:25 David Shepherd (Trinity College Dublin) "Leading the Blind": 2 Kings 6 and the subduing of Saul in Acts 9

In seeking to understand the transformation of Saul, Christ's enemy, into Paul, Christ's evangelist, New Testament scholarship has explored a wide array of literary parallels to Acts 9:1-19, including (amongst others) texts from 2 and 4 Maccabees, the Acts of Peter and even the Genesis Apocryphon from Qumran. While narratives from the Hebrew Bible have thus far been conspicuously absent from lists of proposed parallels, it is noteworthy that New Testament scholars are increasingly recognizing the ways in which Luke-Acts bears witness to the influence and reception of the Elijah and Elisha traditions in Second Temple Judaism. This paper suggests that the conversion of Saul in Acts 9:1-19 offers a further illustration of this influence and that this narrative can only be understood properly with reference to the often overlooked episode of Elisha's blinding of the Arameans.

11:30-12:15 Serge Ruzer (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) Paul as Witness to a Contemporaneous Liberation-through-Torah Jewish Idea

In his 1984 Hebrew essay "On Metamorphoses of the Notion of Freedom," Shlomo Pines addressed Paul's insistence on "standing in freedom" in the context of the apostle's rejection of the redemptive value of ritual precepts of the Torah. Paul was thus portrayed as having taken one crucial step further vis-à-vis the pattern of thought that conceived of the Torah as the ultimate liberator from the constraints of mundane existence – namely, to the liberation from the Torah itself. Though the Torah-as-liberator pattern is attested in later rabbinic sources, Pines's presupposition was that on this point these sources might have reflected an earlier tradition. Indeed, possible evidence to the tradition's early provenance can be discerned in the notion of the Torah of liberty found in the New Testament Epistle of James: Far from propagating an idiosyncratic idea, the early second century CE author of James seems to converse with a broader contemporaneous proto-rabbinic idea. In addition to that, this talk offers a re-assessment of Paul's own strategies; it is suggested that the apostle's arguments for liberty from the ritual "works of the Torah" themselves contain a residue reflection of the perception of the Torah's message as declaration of freedom. Paul's writing, therefore, bears witness to this perception's currency already in mid-first century Judaism.

2:00-2:45 Esther Eshel (Bar Ilan University)
Demonology in Palestine during the Last Centuries B.C.E.

One of the earliest Jewish notions of evil spirits is found in the Book of Watchers (1 En. 1–36). These ideas were further adopted, adapted, and reconfigured in various ways in the Dead Sea Scrolls and influenced many social groups during the Second Temple period and later. The Scrolls provide the largest and most significant data set for analyzing these developments, but do we know of other ethnic groups in addition to the Hellenistic Judaism who lived in Palestine during that period? What was their notion and practice concerning demonology? A unique witness to this issue can be seen in the Hellenistic city of Maresha. The focus taken here is a group of 137 Aramaic ostraca, dating to the third or second centuries B.C.E., which may be understood as divination texts. In these texts various demons and spirit are mentioned, among them are some that are Akkadian in origin, as well as the well-known female demon Lilith. I seek to trace the possible origins of these texts and their cultural sources relating to demons, as well as development and usage, in Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity.

2:50-3:35 Loren Stuckenbruck (Ludwig Maximilians University Munich)
Melchizedek and Priesthood in Second Temple Literature

As is well known, Hebrews in the New Testament refers to the priesthood of Jesus no less than four times as being "after the order of Melchizedek," and scholarly discussion on Hebrews has centred on the question of whether "Melchizedek" functions as a prototype, represents an ontological being to whom Jesus is superior, or operates as a dynamic equivalent. Drawing on texts found in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110, the paper inquires into how the priesthood of Melchizedek, as received in other Second Temple writings, not only presupposes the influence of Psalm 110 but also, and especially, is related to other priesthoods. In this respect, special focus is placed on the textual reconstructions in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, *Visions of Amram*, and 11Q13 among the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as on Jubilees chapter 14 and Slavonic Enoch 71. It is hoped that the way Melchizedek is related to priestly figures in Jewish tradition sheds light on how Hebrews negotiates the Melchizedek-Jesus correspondence in Hebrews.

4:00-4:45 Noam Mizrahi (Tel Aviv University)
The Poetics of Angelic Discourse: Revelations 2–3 and the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*

A salient feature of the book of Revelation is its extensive employment of "seven" not only as a symbolic number but also as a structural principle for constructing sevenfold literary units. Yet some specific aspects of this literary hallmark remain obscure. For instance, no satisfactory rationale was found, so far, for the series of proclamations to seven churches of Asia Minor that comprise the literary unit of Rev 2–3. This mystery, however, can be illuminated (at least to some degree) by reading Revelation against the background of poetic traditions of the Second Temple period. Analysis of some passages of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*—a liturgical composition whose fragmentary copies were discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls—prompts a new solution for questions posed by Rev 2–3. At the same time, the comparison also sheds light on some literary peculiarities of the *Songs*.

4:50-5:35 R. Steven Notley (Nyack College, New York)
Reading Gospel Parables as Jewish Literature

Story parables in the Gospels are one of the most characteristic features of Jesus' pedagogy. Much has been written about their religious and literary setting, particularly in relation to their literary cousins - the rabbinic parable. This study will compare and contrast the two corpora of these literary creations in the fresh light of the publication of a collection of 456 Tannaitic parables (Notley and Safrai, *Parables of the Sages*, Carta, 2011). The rabbinic anthology allows us to more easily trace early developments within the genre. It also assists to identify generic similarities and differences with the Gospel parables. Issues of language, form, use and non-use of Scripture, and arcing themes become more readily apparent. Of particular interest for the subject of the historical Jesus, Jewish parables belong to haggadah and customarily serve to communicate theological ideas. Any clarity brought to the form and message of the Gospel parables (in light of the wider genre) means a more finely attuned understanding

of Jesus' theological message. While we can rightly expect to find ideas distinctive to each community, there are points of commonality within the parables that are a reason for pause in our reading of the Gospel parables. This study will suggest that the Gospel parables are best understood as part of a broader literary genre that emerged within the world of the sages of Israel.

5:45-6:30 Doron Mendels (Hebrew University, Jerusalem)

How did Paul Capitalize on the Jewish Split Diaspora to spread his Message?

Against the background of my earlier research on Jewish Nationalism where I emphasized the dichotomy between the perception of Jewish nationalism in the Land of Israel and its lack in Paul's teachings (and most probably also in the Jewish Western diaspora), this lecture will deal with the issue of how and why the Book of Acts and the Letters of Paul can be used as evidence for the evolving split among the Jews as early as the first century BCE, that is the Western Diaspora as opposed to Eretz Israel. I will show that one of the main reasons for the difference between the image of Paul in Palestine and his "European" one is the dichotomy between Western and Eastern Jewry. In the last chapters of the Book of Acts Paul is in conflict with the Pharisees (the Rabbis, as they are presented by Luke in the Book of Acts), mainly because he was associated with the clash of Jesus with them earlier in the century. Yet in the Jewish Western Diaspora (according to chapters 13-21.6 of Acts, and passages in his Letters), he is well received by many Jews though resented by others as a result of his teaching in the synagogues. It will be argued that the Western Jewish diaspora had little, if any, associations with the memory of Jesus and his history in Palestine (in particular at a time when the Gospel narratives were not yet written down and published), unlike Palestinian Jews who were haunted by it. Hence Paul had more leverage to act as a "rabbi" in a constituency that was in part willing to accept him, in particular because the Jews there were "free" from Rabbinic lore (and direct authority). In a recent study of mine (not yet published) I demonstrate that the dramatic rift in Judaism, so clearly seen through Paul's deeds and speeches, reflects a reality that was wisely used by Paul and the Apostles to spread their message.

13 September

9:30-10:15 George Brooke (Manchester University)

Comparing Matthew and Luke in the Light of Second Temple Jewish Literature

Abstract: In this paper the argument will be made that Luke provides a framework for his narrative about Jesus that is based on the institution of the Temple but that the narrative as a whole is filled with instability marked by features of inclusiveness, whereas Matthew provides a framework of hope in the fulfilment of prophetic texts but that the narrative as a whole is marked by a special wisdom and restricted and restricting structure. As such the two Gospels play with features of Jewish societal self-understanding that are variously represented in 1 and 2 Maccabees, or in the sectarian scrolls found in the Qumran caves.

10:40-11:25 Cana Werman (Ben Gurion University)

Second Temple Messiahs: 1 Enoch and the New Testament

The messianic Son of Man is known from the four Gospels and the *Similitudes*, chapters 37-71 of 1 Enoch. In a few recent articles and books, scholars pointed to the white bull, the eschatological leader mentioned in the *Animal Apocalypse*, as another occurrence of the Son of Man. I suggest otherwise. A close reading of 1 and 2 Maccabees as well as of three units embedded in the Damascus Document will enable me to offer a clarification of the *Animal Apocalypse*'s purpose and expectations and to identify not one but two Messiahs in this work, and not of the Son of Man's type, but the Davidic (90:37) and the Priestly (90:38) type.

11:30-12:15 Garrick Allen (Dublin City University)

The “Rewrittenness” of the New Testament

This paper explores the ways in which the New Testament functions as a witness to Jewish literary production, focusing on the concept of Rewritten Scripture. I argue that certain New Testament works offer insight into critical discussions regarding Rewritten Scripture as a concept. These early Christian texts lend credibility to the idea that the generic aspects of the Rewritten Scripture are secondary to its identity as a flexible set of exegetical procedures practiced on a scriptural base tradition. I explore this issue by, first, briefly analysing the controversial history of scholarship on rewritten texts. Next, I analyse the ways in which Matthew’s use of Mark constitutes rewrittenness as a test case. I conclude with some observations regarding the scope of rewritten scripture, arguing that it represents a process that extends well beyond the confines of Qumran and early Judaism into the literary communities of early Christianity.

3:50-4:35 Ishay Rosen-Zvi (Tel Aviv University)

Paul and the *Goyim* revisited

In a past publication I have claimed (together with Adi Ophir) that Paul’s epistles take part in the emergence of the *goy* as a new, nonethnic, privatized and generalized category. In contrast to the scholarly consensus, according to which Paul simply borrows his binary distinction between Jews and *ethnê* from Jewish tradition, we claimed that despite scattered cases where *goy* or *ethnê* are used to refer to indefinite groups of individuals, no such tradition existed, and that Paul’s *ethnê* precedes the Tannaitic *goy* in consoling the binary division between the Jews and their “others”. Scholars, we argue, tend not to distinguish between attitude toward gentiles and the very conceptualization of “the gentile”. They assume that forging the “gentiles” inevitably leads to exclusion. But for Paul it is exactly the combat for inclusion that leads him to reform and to privatize the biblical *ethnê*. But if so, how are we to account for the relationship between these two – very different and yet similarly radical – moments of consolidation of the individualized *goyim*: Paul and the Tannaim? It is this puzzle that I wish to revisit in my paper.

4:50-5:35 Benjamin Wold (Trinity College Dublin)

Universal and Particular Law in the Letter of James and Early Judaism

Hellenistic Jewish authors regularly considered how to reconcile a universal God with the particularism of the Mosaic Torah. Our best exemplar, Philo of Alexandria, associates the “law of nature” with the “pre-Sinaitic law” and creation with “right reason.” Some scholars have concluded that among Qumran discoveries there is no clear interest in natural law and similar philosophical questions to those found in Hellenistic Jewish writings are entirely absent. In the letter of James, we find teaching about the “implanted word” (1:21) alongside the perfect “law of freedom” (1:25). Does James reflect Stoic conceptions of natural law, that human beings are born with an unformed *λόγος* and implanted preconceptions which allow them to form ideas such as good and bad? In this paper, James 1:21-25 is explored alongside several compositions from Qumran where the “mystery of existence” (רז נהיה) occurs to consider the intellectual environments exerting influence on James as well as to challenge conclusions that universal law is virtually non-existent among Qumran discoveries.