

2020 BNTS seminars

The Book of Acts Chairs: Sean Adams and Matthew Sleeman

Session One

Panel review and discussion of Christine Aarflot, *God (in) Acts: A Narrative Analysis of the Characterization of God through God's Actions in the Acts of the Apostles* (Wipf & Stock, 2020, forthcoming)

Panellists: Julia Snyder (Universität Regensburg, Germany), James Morgan (Université de Fribourg, Switzerland), Mark Elliott (University of Glasgow); *Response:* Christine Aarflot

Session Two

Nicholas Moore, Cranmer Hall, Durham, “‘He Saw Heaven Opened’”: Heavenly Temple and Universal Mission in Acts’

A number of scholars in recent years have given attention to the temple theme in Acts (and Luke), arguing that the location of sacred space or divine presence passes from the Jerusalem temple to Jesus (G. R. Lanier *JTS* 2014) or Christian believers (J. B. Green *RevBib* 1994; N. H. Taylor *HvTSt* 2004; G. O. Holmås *JSNT* 2005) or both (D. H. Jung *ExpTim* 2017). This transfer is understood as a key component of the universal mission that Acts traces. This paper suggests that such arguments run the risk of overriding the muted but important motif of *heaven as temple*. I argue this by attention to three scenes: in Luke’s Gospel, Jesus’ trial and crucifixion, and in Acts Stephen’s speech and martyrdom, and the Cornelius narrative. All three episodes presuppose understandings of heavenly space in specifically cultic terms. Moreover, Jesus’ location in a celestial sanctuary does not conflict with Acts’ concept of a centrifugal mission; instead, access to divine sacred space through the gift of the Spirit undergirds the universal spread of the Way.

Richard Cleaves, University of Gloucester, ‘Reading the New Testament in Roman Britain: The Bloomberg Tablets and Archival Ethnography’

The first pieces of writing contemporary with Paul and the New Testament were published in Britain as recently as 2016. Of the 405 stylus writing tablets from the Bloomberg excavations in London from 2010 to 2014, eighty carry legible texts and bear the names of ninety-two persons. They constitute an archive of letters and legal and financial documents that give an insight into the lives of merchants and traders in Roman London from 55 to 85 CE. That world and those people would have been recognised by the people who occupied the world of the New Testament at that time. Drawing on insights into the imagination from the world of philosophy, archaeology and education, I will offer a reading of the tablets informed by the methodology of archival ethnography. That will involve a consideration of the nature of the tablets and what they tell us about the people who wrote them, leading on to a study of specific tablets which will enable us to imagine being there with those people around the time the tablets were written in the way a modern-day ethnographer would ‘be there’. I shall then offer an imagined reading of selected passages from Luke-Acts: each reading will imagine how the people responsible for the tablets might have read those passages in the light of what we know about them from our study of the tablets. Finally, I will demonstrate that the reading is warranted by reference to the commentators and their study of the language, context and other issues to do with the text. By inviting people to draw on their imagination in

this kind of way they will come to read biblical texts in new ways that are rooted in the historical world of the New Testament as it can be glimpsed in Roman Britain.

Session Three

Mi Ja Wi, Nazarene Theological College, Manchester, 'What Happens to "Good News to the Poor" in Acts 16:16-18?'

The paper explores, what happens to the slave girl in Philippi in Acts 16:16-18, asking whether Jesus' mission statement in Luke 4:18-19 is still being carried out by Paul and his companions. The slave girl with a spirit of python is a radical outsider and a doubly marginalised figure in terms of her status, gender, ethnicity and religion. She is an unnamed person, owned and exploited by multiple owners for a profit-making purpose. Ironically, she is the only female slave, for that matter, the only woman who prophesies in the book of Acts, but is silenced. While Paul drives the spirit of python out from her, the question remains in what sense good news is proclaimed to this unnamed slave girl who has been held captive and oppressed by her owners. From what and whom has she been freed if she is freed at all? Why does she not feature in Luke's narrative, given the attention he gives to an unnamed woman in Luke 7 (or a woman in Luke 13)?

Daniel Robbins, University of Aberdeen, 'A Lukan Epistemology of Testimony'

This paper will consider how apostolic testimony contributes and shapes the exhibited and commended epistemology within Luke's writings. In contrast to the long-standing political readings of Acts, Kavin Rowe's work has helped highlight the fundamentally theological horizon against which Luke understands all reality. His claim that 'the theological vision of Acts is the outworking of a particular practical epistemology' (Rowe, *World Upside Down*, 151) serves as the starting point for this paper.

Testimony language appears in the opening and closing of both the Gospel of Luke (1:2; 24:48) and Acts (1:8; 28:23). Within the Gospel of Luke, testimony tends to describe the apostolic commission (Luke 9:1-6; 21:12-19) and thus frames much of Acts. In particular, apostolic testimony is presented as the ascended Jesus' *own* prophetic speech, and not so much 'witness to' his speech. In Acts, when testimony occurs outside of courtroom settings, it has a dual function of proclamation (e.g. Acts 20:21, 24) and guarantee (Acts 1:22; 2:32; 3:15). Within trial settings, the terms used to describe testimony recall the promise of divine activity (Luke 21:15) and therefore places each of Acts' legal trials within the greater context of the heavenly courtroom of Isaiah 43:8-13. Thus, apostolic testimony seems to have a dual role of heralding of the final judgment to be rendered by the risen Christ and as epistemic guarantee. Apostolic testimony is both proclamation and *paradosis*.

Yet, in our current intellectual climate, testimony can feel like an odd fit for serious knowledge. This implies that Luke's underlying epistemology and the 'certainty' he aims to provide differ from many contemporary epistemologies on offer. Specifically, this will likely differ from reductionist (Hume, Lackey) and anti-reductionist (Reid, Audi, Goldberg) camps within the philosophical epistemology of testimony. The paper will conclude with some tentative conclusions regarding Luke's theological epistemology.

Monique Cuany, Haute École de Théologie, St-Légier, Switzerland, 'The *Kontrastschema* and the Christ-event in Acts'

One of the recurrent features of early apostolic preaching in Acts is the so-called *Kontrastformel* (contrast formula) or *Kontrastschema* (contrast scheme). As the terminology suggests, the speeches repeatedly present the death and resurrection of

Jesus as the result of two contrastive actions: human beings killed or crucified him, but God raised him from the dead (cf. 2:23-24, 36; 3:13-15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:39-40; 13:27-30). This opposition of human and divine activity, coupled with the occasional emphasis the speeches put on human 'ignorance' as a factor leading to Jesus' death, has often led to the conclusion that the author of Acts views the death of Jesus as a mistake, an error without any positive connotation, which is overcome or corrected by God through the resurrection.

The present paper challenges this common reading. Through a study of the first occurrence of the contrast formula in the Pentecost speech, it highlights the shortcomings of this interpretation, re-evaluates the role of the formula in the context of the argument of the speech, and discusses the consequences of this re-examination for an assessment of Luke's understanding of the Christ-event.

The Book of Revelation Chairs: Meredith Warren and Garrick Allen

Session One

Wilson Bento, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 'To Whom It May Concern: Considerations on the Functionality of Narratee(s) in the Book of Revelation'

Stories may be described as containing three levels of communication: (1) between Author and Reader, (2) between Narrator and Narratee, and (3) between characters in the story-world. This is also applicable to the book of Revelation ever since the publication of *Semeia 14*, where it has been defined by scholars as consisting of a 'narrative framework'. While several scholars have taken the task of analyzing the book of Revelation as a story by using the tools of Literary Criticism, the role of the Narratee(s), i.e. the seven churches, has been largely unexplored or defined merely as a receiver of the story. This paper challenges this assumption by addressing the following question: 'What is the functionality of the narratee(s) in the book of Revelation?' In order to address this question, the paper will consist of five parts: (1) How the churches have been viewed as audience in literary analysis on the Book of Revelation, (2) a methodological definition of narratee and its function in a story, (3) General considerations on the churches as functional narratees in the story, (4) an experimental case study with the church of Ephesus, and (5) results and further research on the topic. This paper will demonstrate that instead of regarding the churches merely as receivers of a story, it is appropriate to view them as functional narratees through which one may understand how the book of Revelation organizes itself in telling its message.

Ian Paul, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, USA, 'Elijah and the Elijah narrative in the Book of Revelation'

Elijah is not mentioned by name in the Book of Revelation, but both the figure and another character from the Elijah narrative feature at important moments, and are the subject of much debate. In chapter 11 an angel commands John to measure the temple, which most commentators take to be a metaphor for the followers of Jesus as the spiritual temple of God on earth. The image is quickly translated into the story (told in the angel's words) of 'my two witnesses' who perform signs, testify, are killed, and are then raised to life. At first they look like the two olive trees of Zechariah's writing, but quickly are described in terms alluding to Elijah (calling down fire, and shutting up the sky so there is no rain) and Moses (turning waters to blood, and calling down plagues). Earlier, in the messages to the assemblies in the seven cities, those in Thyatira are criticised for 'tolerating that woman Jezebel', the only mention of her name in the New

Testament. Given the connections between the messages and the 'apocalyptic' body of the book, this raises the question of the connections between this use of the Elijah narrative and the allusion to Elijah in chapter 11. These two allusions to the Elijah narrative also raise questions about Revelation's characterisation compared with the source narratives, and how this relates to mention of Moses and Elijah elsewhere in the NT.

Nicholas Moore, Cranmer Hall, Durham, "God's Temple in Heaven Was Opened": Judgment, Salvation, and Cosmic Cultus in Revelation'

Both Revelation's apocalyptic opening of heaven, and its portrayal of heavenly space in cultic terms, have received attention in scholarship. The intersection of these two features, however, has been somewhat overlooked. This paper examines references to the opening of the heavenly temple in Revelation, arguing that they relate primarily—though not only—to judgment. I then briefly compare them to other New Testament representations of an open heavenly temple, before returning to Rev 21. Here we note a 'startling transformation' in temple language (Gregory Stevenson), in particular the statement of the temple's absence (Rev 21.22). I argue that this shift is a coherent development from what we observe earlier in Revelation. Amidst its distinctive emphasis on the eschaton, chapter 21 nevertheless draws Revelation's climax closer to the conceptualities found in other NT texts: Christ's opening of heaven effecting or enabling salvation.

Martina Vercesi, University of St Andrews, 'Circumstantes Candidati Milia Multa (Pass. Perp. 3,8): The Role of Revelation in Martyrdom Accounts Between the II and III Century'

As Paul Middleton has emphasized in his study, 'martyrdom is a major theme in the Apocalypse' (2018). However, the role of the martyrs and the significance of the language used to refer to them in the Book of Revelation are still debated among scholars. Moreover, regarding the relationship between the Apocalypse and martyrdom in early Christianity, in his article 'The Concept of Martyrdom in Revelation' (2012), Jan W. van Henten has tried to examine whether the book of Revelation accorded martyrdom the same importance and shared a concept of martyrdom with other early Christian communities. Nevertheless, in this paper, I attempt to answer to the opposite question, that is: how is the interpretation of Revelation used in martyrdom literature? And in what forms do we find it?

In particular, starting with the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*—the most ancient document at our disposal—I intend to examine the reception of both the quotations and imagery of the Apocalypse of John in martyrdom documents between the II and the III century in order to offer some reflections on whether and how the exegesis of Revelation shaped the theology of martyrdom in the early communities.

Further, this paper can also give us the chance to discuss some questions which could arise from this analysis: is there a correlation between the role of 'martyrs' pictured in Revelation and the role of the martyrs depicted in early Christian literature? The Book of Revelation was condemned in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, while it had a good acceptance in the West: does the question of how and to what degree martyrdom stories from these different regions correspond to Revelation relate to this phenomenon?

Session Two

Book Review: Michelle Fletcher, *Reading Revelation as Pastiche: Imitating the Past* (London: T&T Clark, 2017).

Panel: Zanne Domoney-Lyttle (University of Glasgow) and Sean Ryan (University of Roehampton)

Session Three

Tim Tse, University of St. Andrews, 'God does not sit in chairs: Solving the Paradox of Revelation 5:6-7'

Modern scholarship on the book of Revelation has often been confused by John's vision, and the strange grammar through which he presents it. One question that has not satisfactorily resolved is Rev. 5:6-7, which suggests both that Jesus is on Yahweh's throne (ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου) in heaven, and yet also that he must approach the throne in order to take the scroll from the one seated upon the throne. Consequently, Beale even suggests that 'John may not have intended that his syntax be analysed to determine the precise positions of the heavenly beings here [5:6-7] and in 4:6' (Beale, *Revelation*, 350). However, throughout Revelation John seems to use ἐν μέσῳ in quite a normal manner, which would suggest that his use in Rev 5:6-7 should follow convention. Apart from this paradox, there is nothing to suggest that John does not see the Lamb on the throne. This paper will argue that the locative paradox of the lamb both on the throne and approaching the throne can be better resolved by de-anthropomorphizing God, as described in John's vision. John describes God as light, which being non-corporeal does not sit. More importantly, John's transformation of ἀνὰ μέσον, used to describe God's position above the ark in the LXX to ἐν μέσῳ is significant. If the ark is in the temple, God's logical position is ἐν μέσῳ of the four cherubim, not merely above them. If God and the Lamb occupy the space defined by the cherubim, it is possible for God (depicted as light) and the Lamb to be simultaneously on the throne, and also for the Lamb to move to take the scroll from the right hand of the enthroned one. In short, God does not sit in chairs.

Jamie Davies, Trinity College, Bristol, 'Reading the Apocalypse with Christopher Nolan'

It is often observed that the cinema of Christopher Nolan is characterised by an exploration of nonlinear or disrupted narrative, and explorations of time, space, and memory. These interests have shaped his contribution to a range of film genres, such as the disruption of cause-and-effect and memory in thrillers *Memento* (2000) and *Inception* (2010), the more explicit exploration of general relativity in sci-fi epic *Interstellar* (2014), and the overlapping and disjointed narrative timeline(s) of his war film *Dunkirk* (2017). Little is known about his forthcoming espionage thriller *Tenet* (July 2020) but indications are that this, too, will exploit temporal nonlinearity. Nolan's manipulation of time and space reflects his interest in a post-Newtonian understanding of the cosmos, but they are not without their ancient counterparts.

Second temple Jewish cosmology is sometimes oversimplified as a three-tiered system, the uppermost being heaven which, though exalted, essentially belongs to the same space-time continuum. However, it has been suggested that a more sophisticated framework operates in at least some texts, notably the heavenly ascent visions of *I Enoch* and the *Hekhalot* literature. There, heaven is described as something like a 'parallel universe' in which earthly laws of time, space, and thermodynamics are disrupted in the seer's narrated experience. The book of Revelation, I suggest, belongs in this category.

This paper will bring these seemingly disparate discussions into dialogue, arguing that Nolan's explorations of time, space, and nonlinear narrative (and the Einsteinian physics they reflect) offer a powerful lens with which to examine themes of time and space in apocalyptic literature, especially the book of Revelation. In particular, it will explore how Nolan's storytelling might shed light on the vexing issue of the book's structure, which (I argue) similarly deploys nonlinear storytelling, the disruption of cause and effect, and complex depictions of time and space.

Alexander N. Chantziantoniou, University of Cambridge, 'The Faithfulness of Jesus in the Apocalypse of John: ΠΙΣΤΙΣ Language with Reference to Jesus in the Book of Revelation'

The debate over whether to take the phrase ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ as an objective genitive ('faith in Christ') or a subjective genitive ('faith[fulness] of Christ') has raged ever onwards over the course of the past two centuries, particularly among Pauline scholars. While the debate has ventured beyond the borders of Paul for brief excursions into the synoptics or the patristics, the book of Revelation has remained relatively unexplored. In his lonely essay on the topic, David deSilva has rightly observed that virtually any contribution to the question from Revelation must be inferred from glosses adopted in commentaries and the arguments occasionally rallied in their defence. For all the controversies swirling around the Apocalypse, the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ debate is not one of them. But perhaps not for long. Recent studies indicate a growing interest in ΠΙΣΤΙΣ language and its application to Jesus in the book of Revelation. In this paper, anticipating the inevitable, I will examine the use of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ in Revelation with particular reference to the genitive constructions in Rev 14:12 (τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ) and 2:13 (τὴν πίστιν μου), where Jesus is brought into direct grammatical contact with 'faith(fulness)'. I will argue in favour of a subjective genitive reading in both cases, and I will do so in two steps. First, I will draw from lexical semantics to disambiguate the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ lexicon in the Apocalypse, and offer syntactical observations about the grammatical constructions in which this language is used. Second, I will apply these insights to a close reading of Rev 14:12 and 2:13 within their immediate and wider contexts in the book of Revelation. I will conclude with a brief exploration of the symbolic world of the Apocalypse in an effort to test the theological plausibility of conclusions otherwise reached on lexical and textual grounds.

Nathan Betz, KU Leuven, Belgium, 'City, Tower, Bride: Re-evaluating Hermas's Use of Revelation 21–22'

The influence of John's Revelation on the Shepherd of Hermas has been disputed, and more frequently than not, doubted. Despite widespread scepticism, a detailed study of his 'tower' figure would seem to demonstrate that the author had an intimate knowledge of Revelation in general and of the 'New Jerusalem' figure of Revelation 21–22 in particular. Indeed, Hermas seems to have drawn on this knowledge repeatedly and specifically as he developed his notion of the tower, which is one of the work's central images. In this paper, I confirm and strengthen Massaux's, Osiek's, and Hill's cautious affirmation that their may well be literary influence from Rev. 21. I do so by marshalling lexical, notional, and theological evidence to support my claim. I focus especially on a comparison and analysis of an improbably dense cluster of more than a dozen topoi shared between Rev 21–22 on the one hand and Shepherd Vis. 3–4 and Sim. 8–9 on the other. A list of these topoi includes, but is not limited to, city, church, bride, sea, wall, precious stones, gate(s), rectangularity, magnitude, mountain(s), angels, virtues, vices, rewards, and so forth. Hermas's literary use, and more importantly, theological configuration, of these topoi suggests that Revelation should not be dismissed, as

Gebhardt, Harnack, Spitta, and others have, as a literary source for The Shepherd. Instead, Revelation 21–22 should probably be looked at as a valuable quarry from which Hermas mined literary and theological material in order to construct one of his text's most important figures.

Early Christianity Chairs: Dominika Kurek-Chomycz and Francis Watson

Session One

Tyler Hoagland, University of St Andrews, 'How Hard Is It to Enter into the Kingdom of God? The Narrow Gate of the Ninth *Similitude* of the *Shepherd of Hermas*'

The phrase ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ only appears in the *Shepherd of Hermas* within the interpretation of the tower vision of *Similitude* 9. Yet in just 6 chapters it occurs 13 times, far more frequently than other texts in the so-called Apostolic Fathers. The verb that accompanies the phrase in *Hermas* is always some form of εἰσέρχομαι (with the single exception of 106.2 [*Sim.* 9.29.2]). While the combination of εἰσέρχομαι and βασιλεία is not unheard of in early Christian literature, there are few places with a similar concentration of this phrase.

In the ninth *Similitude* of the *Shepherd of Hermas* language of 'entering into the kingdom of God' (εἰσέρχομαι εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ) plays a pivotal role in critiquing the wealthy members of the congregation in *Similitude* 9. This thesis will be determined through a close rhetorical and grammatical examination of the occurrences of βασιλεία in the ninth *Similitude*, with particular attention given to its use in the Shepherd's interpretation of the third mountain (97.2-3 [*Sim.* 9.20.2-3]) and the interpretation of the new gate in the old rock (89.3-5 [*Sim.* 9.12.3-5]), where the author has chosen to place the prepositional phrase εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ before εἰσέρχομαι. The final section of the paper will consider other early Christian texts that also use the phrase εἰσέρχομαι εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ in order to assess whether there is any evidence for a correlation between the various occurrences of this phrase. Because of their substantial use of βασιλεία, the synoptic gospels are particularly important conversation partners.

Jeffrey Hubbard, Yale University, USA, 'Flipped Scripts in Hermas' Erotic Dreams: A Reading of the *Shepherd's* Virgins in Light of Roman Oneiric Literature'

Studies of the *Shepherd of Hermas* have devoted significant time to identifying the many literary and cultural influences imbedded in this complex text. Its apparent independence of the writings that would become the New Testament, very infrequent use of the Hebrew Bible, and consistent veiled allusions to Greco-Roman concepts and tropes make it difficult to identify any one milieu out of which the *Shepherd* emerged. The cautious scholar must acknowledge that the *Shepherd* arose out of several literary contexts.

This paper examines an often-overlooked literary family to which the *Shepherd of Hermas* belongs: Roman oneiric literature. Following the methodological suggestions of Patricia Cox Miller, I suggest that the erotic visions which permeate the *Shepherd* are best interpreted in light of Roman fascinations with the meaning of dreams, especially sexual dreams. By placing the *Shepherd* in conversation with Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica*, and Michel Foucault's influential analysis thereof, I argue that Hermas' provocatively erotic yet chaste visions are employed to craft a new kind of Roman dream, one that is distinctively Christian. My argument proceeds in essentially two parts. First, I situate the

Shepherd in its context of Roman oneiric literature with a close reading of Artemidorus and his acclaimed interpreter, Foucault. I establish that the average Roman male expected to have sexual dreams that portended his success or failure in public life. Second, I demonstrate the ways in which Hermas' erotic dreams also correspond to his position in his community, and argue that Hermas' submission to the women of whom he dreams represents a Christian reformulation of a familiar Roman *topos*.

Response to both papers: Francis Watson, Durham University

Session Two

Kylie Crabbe, Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, 'Counter Voice on Disability in Early Christian Literature: The Case of Antipatros and His Sons in the *Acts of John*'

Informed by contemporary disability theory, recent studies have examined the frequent portraits of those with sensory and physical impairments in early Christian literature and criticized their ableist elements. This paper analyzes an episode from the second-century *Acts of John* (56-57), in which the character Antipatros asks for healing for his twin sons, whom he cannot support as he ages and plans to murder. The discussion builds on insights from these recent studies. However, rather than applying a contemporary critique or radical intervention in the text, it argues that the episode reveals an ancient text already engaged in a multi-layered critique of negative attitudes towards those with disabilities, when read in light of its literary and historical setting. First, the passage censures medical commerce, in a form familiar from other texts. Second, it exploits a series of ambiguities and negative characterizations in order to critique Antipatros and his request; I argue that his name, economic circumstances, and threat of murder undermine him as both father and inquiring disciple. The structure of the narrative supports the negative portrait, while leaving Antipatros's ultimate choices ambiguous. By contrast, the apostle John consoles those whose presence in the story had been obscured, ultimately recasting the Lord 'who always console[s] the downtrodden' as the one who redirects compassion towards the sons themselves.

Response: Dominika Kurek-Chomycz, Liverpool Hope University

Session Three

Sarah Parkhouse, Australian Catholic University/Wartburg, 'The Canon of the *Pistis Sophia* Books I-III'

The *Pistis Sophia*, from the Coptic Askew Codex, is a lengthy 'gnostic' text, which outlines esoteric teachings from the risen Jesus to his disciples. At the beginning of Book One, Jesus discloses that he had previously taught only in general terms and that there were many things he had not explained. This presumably refers to the teachings held within the canonical gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), among other texts and traditions. Now, he is going to explain all the 'mysteries' and does so by answering the disciples' questions.

This paper examines the 'canon' employed by *Pistis Sophia*. Books I-III contain quotations from numerous Psalms, Odes of Solomon and Isaiah, which have their source named, as well as quotations from Matthew, Luke and Romans that are simply explained to be the words of Jesus or Paul. These quotations comprise a groups of texts that the author views as authoritative, and one which both limits and goes beyond the usual biblical scriptures. *Pistis Sophia* essentially presents a canon independent from other canons.

Pistis Sophia also seemingly uses a number of non-scriptural texts, including the Apocryphon of John, the Gospel of Mary and the Ascension of Isaiah. These texts are not quoted as “proof-texts”, but the allusions suggest that they were not only part of the author’s library but inspirational in the composition of Pistis Sophia.

The paper will be circulated in advance to all those who register for the seminar.

Tom de Bruin, Newbold College of Higher Education, ‘Effect, Affect, and Economics: How Can Critical Fan Studies Inform Parabiblical Research?’

In the last decade, a number of Early Christian scholars have explored the usefulness of the critical field of Fan Studies for interpreting parabiblical writings. Many have found this field to offer a rich interpretive lens for understanding issues such as canon and canonicity, or examining subaltern, non-orthodox voices. Scholars like Meredith Warren and Sarah Parks have demonstrated that as fan fiction influences media canon, so do parabiblical texts influence the biblical canon. Recently, Kasper Bro Larsen has argued that fanfiction and ‘early Christian Apocrypha’ have similar literary strategies and functions, suggesting that parabiblical writings both democratize the creation of meaning and gatekeep it. While certainly productive, many of these analyses fail to take the full economies, history and production contexts of contemporary fanfiction and adaptation into account.

This paper presents the results of initial monograph research into Fan Studies and Christian traditions, offering a more nuanced and historicized reading of the relationship between parabiblical writings and fan fiction, and considering the (heuristic) implications of this relationship for Early Christian scholarship. I will explore two facets of fan studies that can potentially elucidate the study of parabiblical texts. The first is the tension between politics/power and play in fanfiction and parabiblical writings. I explore the implications of the creation of these texts, which are both the outcome of a fan’s love for the source material and a powerplay of identity politics. Secondly, I will examine the affective and esoteric economies that support authors, tradents and copyists. These two facets will demonstrate the usefulness of the Fan Studies discourse in examining early Christian parabiblical writings.

Johannine Literature Chairs: Andy Byers and Cor Bennema

Session One

Jan van der Watt, University of Pretoria, South Africa & Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands, ‘A Grammar of the Ethics of John’

The ethics of John is one of the hot topics in Johannine research today. It was not always the case, but recent insights in the analysis of a text from ethical perspective opened new avenues to identify and describe ethical data. Due to the structured and complex nature of ethics in John, I have chosen to call it the grammar of ethics. In this paper an overview of the grammar of ethics of John will be given in order to highlight the different ethical aspects as they are functionally interrelated. It will be argued that the Johannine literature offers a comprehensive ethical grammar, although the documents (i.e. Gospel and Letters) were written within contexts of conflict that moulded the presentation of the (ethical) material.

Stacey Van Dyk, University of Oxford, 'Antiquity as Authority in the Fourth Gospel: Jesus as Matching and Surpassing his Ancestor Jacob'

Twice in the first chapter of the Fourth Gospel John the Baptist claims that Jesus 'ranks above me' because 'he came before me' (1:30; cf. 1:26-27). In his brief testimony about Jesus of Nazareth, John makes four additional claims: to divine ancestry, to direct communication with the God of Israel, and to incomparable meritorious deeds. These particular authority-conferring claims reflect ideas about the nature and expression of authority found throughout the ancient world. Yet John the Baptist includes a fourth qualification that he views as surpassing all others: Jesus came 'before' him and therefore 'ranks above' him. The Baptist's claim to the exceptional antiquity of Jesus comes again to the forefront in considerations of Jesus' authority vis-à-vis his forefather, Jacob (1:43-51; 4:1-42). In chapter 4 of his Gospel, the Evangelist portrays Jesus as being asked to justify his claims to authority: 'Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and flocks and herds?' (4:12) The response given by Jesus to the Samaritan woman indicates that his authority rests, first of all, on having met the three qualifications for authority accepted throughout the ancient world. But in addition, the Evangelist makes the further claim that Jesus surpassed the authority of his forefathers due to his greater antiquity (his pre-existence). In this way, the Fourth Evangelist's portrayal of Jesus as matching and surpassing the authority of Jacob permits him to make the claim that true knowledge of God could only come from the one who had truly 'seen God' (1:18). This unsurpassed revelation of the God of Israel by his 'one and only Son' is then portrayed as inaugurating a new eschatological era, effectively ending the prior age of the Law (1:16-17), in which Jesus-followers might now see themselves as inheriting all the promises of the Scriptures.

Session Two

Jenny Read-Heimerdinger, Newman University, Birmingham, 'Linguistic Clues to the Structure of John's Gospel'

For the past 40 years or so, linguists have been working on the grammar of Koine Greek that operates outside the domain of traditional sentence grammar. The purpose has been to identify principles of the language that function above the level of the sentence (discourse analysis). In this work, there is a focus on the cohesion of a text and in recent applications of the approach, attention has been paid to analysing how authors structured their writings. By explaining and applying the tools that discourse analysis provides, this paper explores the structure of John's Gospel. The organisation of the book is examined, from the overall macro-structure down through the hierarchical levels to the smallest units. The resultant framework is considered for its possible implications for the exegesis of John's Gospel, and further avenues of study arising from the analysis are suggested.

Paulus de Jong, University of St Andrews, 'The Spirit and the Law'

Despite the numerous monographs on either the Law or the spirit in the Fourth Gospel, Johannine scholarship does not often treat these two topics together. Against this lack of proper attention, I contend that the role of the spirit is indispensable for understanding the Johannine logic of Jesus' relation to the Law. In my paper I will provide a survey of various passages relating to the spirit in John. I will particularly focus on which traditions from the Jewish scriptures John reuses in these passages, and how these traditions are relevant for understanding the relation between Jesus and the Law.

Berti Józsa, University of Edinburgh, 'A Linguistic-theological Justification for an Activity/Work Metaphorical Network in the Gospel of John'

The Gospel of John displays a theological challenge when it comes to the question of obtaining eternal life (soteriological work, or work for salvation). Although scholars agree that actions of faith are metaphorically expressed through concepts such as λαμβάνω, ἔρχομαι, ἀκούω, βλέπω, μένω, a full analysis of these action-oriented concepts within the theological framework of 'work' in the gospel has not yet been provided. Other concepts that hint at such action-oriented belief are εὐθύνω, πεινάω, διψάω, ἐσθίω, πίνω, τρώγω, ἀκολουθέω, περιπατέω, τηρέω/τηρῶ, φυλάσσω, μένω, and καρπὸν φέρειν, not to mention the verbs ἐργάζομαι and ποιέω within the context of John 6:27-28, for example. With the help of a more developed conceptual metaphor theory I would like to argue that these scattered instances of metaphorical linguistic expressions are part of a larger activity metaphorical network and form the kernel of what we could call the 'Johannine work theology'. Acknowledging the 'literary craft' and highly figurative and allusive structure of the gospel, I claim that such a selective and sporadic linguistic analysis and framework is feasible in the Fourth Gospel.

Session Three John's Use of the Synoptics [joint with Synoptic Gospels]

Four 15-minute papers (circulated to seminar members 2 weeks in advance) from Helen Bond (University of Edinburgh), Catrin Williams (University of Wales Trinity St David), Wendy North (Durham University), and Elizabeth Corsar (University of Edinburgh), followed by a 30-minute Panel Discussion and Q&A.

Later Epistles Chairs: Katherine Hockey and David Moffitt

Session One Paraenesis and Eschatology in the Petrine Epistles

Kenny Chi-Kin Lei, University of Oxford, 'Paraenesis and Post-mortem Salvation: Reading I Peter 3:19 in light of Clement's *Adumbrationes* on I Peter'

First Peter 3:19 (Christ went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison) is traditionally the major scriptural support for the doctrine of Christ's descent to Hades (*descensus ad inferos*). Modern scholarship, however, quite plausibly detaches this verse from Christ's descent by arguing that the text rather speaks of Christ's ascension in condemning the fallen angels (e.g. Dalton 1965; Elliott 2000; Pierce 2011). One major argument often put forward is that a notion of post-mortem salvation contradicts the paraenetic elements in I Peter, because any possibility of conversion after death would seriously undermine the encouragement to live a righteous life here and now. In other words, only a divine judgment would motivate believers to remain faithful in the present.

This paper aims to problematize such an assumption that post-mortem salvation necessarily contradicts paraenesis. By systematically examining Clement's commentary on I Peter (the *Adumbrationes* on I Peter preserved in Cassiodorus's Latin translation), I discuss how Clement holds together post-mortem salvation and paraenesis. I argue that, for Clement, it is the concept of *imitatio Dei* that motivates one's righteous behaviour. As post-mortem salvation demonstrates God's goodness to humanity, believers are motivated to imitate God to become stewards of this grace, thus going on a soul's journey towards perfection. This shows that Clement's reading of I Peter is based on a positive paraenetical motivation rather than a negative motivation, which is often presupposed by modern commentators. The implication is that, while maintaining the current consensus of reading I Peter 3:19 as referring to Christ's ascent rather than

descent, one should perhaps base his interpretation on other grounds other than the contradiction between post-mortem salvation and paraenesis, as the former does not necessarily negate the latter.

Benjamin E. Castaneda, University of St Andrews, 'Virtue and the Kingdom of Christ: Christology, Eschatology, and Ethics in 2 Peter 1:3-11'

In 2 Peter 1:3–11, the author creatively adapts terminology and imagery from Greco-Roman culture and Stoic philosophy to exhort Christians to pursue the life of virtue. For the author, however, the goal of the virtuous life is not εὐδαιμονία but entrance into the kingdom of Christ (1:11), an unusual departure from the stock phrase 'the kingdom of God' in early Christian tradition. This suggests that the author links paraenesis and eschatology via Christology. To put it another way, the author grounds the virtuous life in the person and work of Christ, who is creating a society of people who partake in his nature and practice the ethic of his kingdom. The logic of the passage bears this out, unfolding naturally into sections that address the past, the present, and the future. First, the author reminds the recipients of Christ's prior all-sufficient provision for them (1:3-4) in order to urge them to pursue the totality of the virtuous life in the present (1:5-10), with the result that they enter the Christologically-oriented eschatological hope (1:11).

Session Two Praise and Prayer in Hebrews and James

Bryan Dyer, independent scholar, "'In the Midst of the Assembly I Will Praise You": Hebrews 2:12 and Its Contribution to the Argument of the Epistle'

This paper studies Ps 21:23 LXX in Heb 2:12 and zeroes in on the fascinating image that it presents: Jesus worshipping within the Christian community. This image is sometimes lost as it appears in the second half of a quotation in which the first part seems to make the more significant point (Jesus' solidarity with his siblings). Yet this striking image of Jesus praising God makes an important theological and sociological contribution to the epistle's argument. As this paper will argue, this image contributes to a larger attempt by the author to solidify commitment to the community and ground the group's identity in Jesus.

Niclas Förster, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster, Germany, 'James, Elijah and the Prayer of a Righteous Man as Example in Paraenesis (Jas 5,16-18)'

The paper is divided into two parts. The first part discusses Elijah as an example for prayer in Jas 5,16-19. This example story should encourage the readers to pray for another to be cured because, the more righteous a man is, the more potent in his prayer. The verses Jas 5,17-18 recall the famous intercessory prayer of Elijah whose prayers for rain to start or stop were definitely answered by God. Elijah is like the readers of the letter of James and they share the quality of righteousness (ὁμοιοπαθῆς ἡμῖν).

The second part of the paper tries to shed light on tradition about James the brother of Jesus as a famed intercessor who was constantly praying in Jerusalem's temple on behalf of his people (Eusebius, Hist. eccl. II 23,6 quoted from Hegesippus). According to rabbinic texts it was the righteous man Elijah (and also Honi, the so-called circle maker, famous among the Rabbis for his petitionary prayers) for whose sake heaven and earth were created. In Judeo-Christian circles this idea was transferred to James for whose sake heaven and earth came into being (*Gos. Thom.* 12, *NHC* II, 2 34,25-30). Therefore, James the Just will 'rule over' the disciples after the crucifixion of Jesus.

The investigation in the second part of the paper will concentrate on the question if the author of the letter of James wanted to underline that all Christians could share the quality of righteousness and pray successfully as Elijah did before them. Not only James the Just is like Elijah before. Thus, not only James is an outstanding intercessor (and new Elijah) and must rule over the Christian community. This would be a remarkable difference to how James the Just was regarded in later Judeo-Christian legendary traditions.

Session Three [joint with Paul]

Sydney Tooth, Oak Hill College, London, 'The Eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Comparison'

One of the main arguments made against Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians is that its eschatological account is incompatible with that of 1 Thessalonians. It is repeatedly claimed that the two accounts are simply too different to come from the same author. On the other hand, those who support Pauline authorship argue that they really are not that different or that any apparent differences are easily reconcilable. Yet, despite the fact that this debate continues ad nauseum, an extended comparison between the two has not previously been undertaken. The best way to progress this discussion is by leaving aside the authorship of both letters and focusing on what is said in the text itself. We should compare their eschatologies point by point, for the debate is too easily coloured by scholars' presuppositions about authorship - either exaggerating or minimising any potential difference between the letters. The goal of this paper is to provide that thorough comparison. Thus, I examine the eschatology of 1 and 2 Thessalonians in five different aspects: (1) terminology (particularly the use of 'parousia' and 'day of the Lord'), (2) timing of the end (and any preceding events), (3) eschatological fates, (4) agency (the respective roles of Jesus and God in these events), and (5) circumstances for writing the letters. In each of these categories I analyse the evidence in both letters and determine whether or not they are compatible accounts - can both letters conceivably have come from the same author, or are they too irreconcilably different for that to be possible?

Jennifer Strawbridge, University of Oxford, paper title TBD

T. J. Lang, University of St Andrews, 'Financing Ransom in Ephesians'

In Eph 1:13-14, Paul describes believers as having been 'sealed' by a holy *pneuma*, which is somehow related to a promise (*epangelia*). This *pneuma* is additionally described as a 'first instalment' or 'security' (*arrabōn*) on an inheritance (*klēronomia*), which itself is then again additionally related to the ransoming of a possession (*eis apolutrōsin tēs peripoiēseōs*). This essay contends that there is economic sense in the syntax of this cluster of financial terminology. It then relates such economic reasoning to other fiscal images in the letter. It concludes by reflecting more broadly on the expression of theological ideas in an economic register.

Session One Judaism and Rome

Kimberley Fowler, University of Durham, 'Judaism and Rome Research Project Overview' (20 mins)

Dr Fowler will report on a recently completed a five year ERC funded research project, Judaism and Rome: Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire, and will introduce to the seminar the digital resources it has made available (<http://www.judaism-and-rome.org/>).

Crispin Fletcher-Louis, University of Gloucestershire, 'The *Testament of Moses*, Jewish and Roman Republicanism, and the apotheosis of Augustus'

The *Testament of Moses* is a Roman-era prophetic retelling of Israel's history. It both laments the oppressive presence of Rome in the holy land and simultaneously describes Israel's divinely bestowed institutions as the perfect fulfilment of some ideals of the Republic. Rivalry with Rome becomes pointed polemic in the climactic tenth chapter, where there is a prediction that all Israel will experience an eagle-borne exaltation that rivals the apotheosis Rome's senate had recently accorded the one man, Augustus. On this reading, inter alia, the *Testament* contributes valuable evidence for the, much disputed, character of Augustus' funeral (in Sept. 14 CE). Rome's political ideals inform the meaning of the Jewish text, which, in turn, informs our understanding of a key episode in Roman history.

Kimberley Fowler, University of Durham, 'The Romans and the Purification of the Jerusalem Temple in the *Testimony of Truth* (NHC IX, 3)'

The *Testimony of Truth* is a Christian text found as the third tractate in Nag Hammadi Codex IX, and probably dates to the second century CE. The text's essential purpose is to present its 'truth' over and against other Christian 'heresies', by using and interpreting the NT and various Jewish literary traditions. This paper considers the discussion in *Testim. Truth* 69,32-70,24 of the building of the Jerusalem Temple by Solomon, whom it is claimed was aided by demons that were imprisoned in the Temple in water jars. The author narrates that when the Romans entered the Temple (a reference to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE) they discovered the water jars, and the demonic spirits escaped, purifying the jars. It is stated in the text that each character and feature of the story is symbolic. However, the next part of the tractate is very badly damaged, and it is therefore somewhat a matter of conjecture as to precisely how the author understands each aspect of the narrative. This paper will argue that the Romans can be understood as performing an act of purification on the Temple, which itself was essentially a demonic entity (a view which seems to go further than other early Christian perspectives). In this sense, the Romans act as God's agents to punish the Jews. I will therefore argue that the *Testimony of Truth* can be read within the broader early Christian tradition which presented Rome as God's tool of vengeance against his wayward people. Moreover, I will highlight the more extreme attitude of the *Testimony of Truth's* author in comparison to more mainstream Christian opinion on this issue, which contributes to the text's anti-Jewish polemic.

Session Two Book Review Panel [joint with Synoptic Gospels]

Book: Sean A. Adams, *Greek Genres and Jewish Authors: Negotiating Literary Culture in the Greco-Roman Era*, Waco: Baylor University Press, 2020.

Panel: Helen Bond, University of Edinburgh and Elizabeth Shively, University of St. Andrews

Book description: The ancient world, much like our own, thrived on cultural diversity and exchange. The riches of this social reality are evident in the writings of Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman eras. Jewish authors drew on the wide range of Greek literary conventions and gave fresh expressions to the proud traditions of their faith and ethnic identity. They did not hesitate to modify and adapt the forms they received from the surrounding culture, but their works stand as legitimate participants in Greco-Roman literary tradition. In *Greek Genres and Jewish Authors*, Sean Adams argues that a robust understanding of ancient genre facilitates proper textual interpretation. This perspective is vital for insight on the author, the work's original purpose, and how the original readers would have received it. Adopting a cognitive-prototype theory of genre, Adams provides a detailed discussion of Jewish authors writing in Greek from ca. 300 BCE to ca. 135 CE—including New Testament authors—and their participation in Greek genres. The nine chapters focus on broad genre divisions (e.g., poetry, didactic, philosophy) to provide studies on each author's engagement with Greek genres, identifying both representative and atypical expressions and features. The book's most prominent contribution lies in its data synthesis to provide a macroperspective on the ways in which Jewish authors participated in and adapted Greek genres—in other words, how members of a minority culture intentionally engaged with the dominant culture's literary practices alongside traditional Jewish features, resulting in unique text expressions.

Session Three The New Testament and the Qumran Literature

Jonathan Darby, Nazarene Theological College/University of Manchester, Singing in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Corporate Song of Praise of Psalm 154/Syriac Psalm II'

The Great Psalms Scroll from Qumran (11QPs^a/11Q5) contains three Psalms previously known only in Syriac recension and preserved in the Nestorian tradition. The Psalm makes explicit reference to the liturgical practice of corporate sung praise, and I argue that this theme runs throughout and characterises the Psalm as a whole. This paper explores the nature and function of corporate singing within the community as envisaged in this text, and on the basis of my analysis I argue that singing is presented as a prominent and habitual liturgical practice which was considered to be as acceptable to God as sacrificial offerings of animals and incense. These observations indicate that the liturgical practice of corporate singing was considered to be of prime importance as part of the regular cycle of communal religious life. Its role in Torah-instruction and meditation also renders it a primary mode of the interpretation and transmission of sacred texts. For members of the community that possessed low to non-existent levels of literacy, singing becomes a vital means of receiving, internalising and passing on sacred texts. Equally, trained and training scribes would be shaped as participants and agents of the same liturgical practices. In these ways, the prominent and habitual practice of communal singing must be considered an influential factor upon processes of oral and textual transmission within Second Temple Judaism.

Hyung-Tae Kim, Durham University, 'An Interpretation of 'Born of Woman' in Gal 4:4 in Light of IQH^a 5:24-37'

Many scholars have argued that the expression 'born of woman' in Gal 4:4 is simply 'a Jewish locution for a human birth or idiom for being human.' A close look at the occurrences of 'born of woman' in early Jewish writings (e.g. Job 14:1; 15:14; 25:4; IQS 11:20-21), however, leads us to find a connection between 'born of woman' and the Adamic narrative in Gen 1–3. Particularly, the parallelism between Gal 4:1-7 and IQH^a 5:24-37 is striking in terms of (1) the use of the phrase 'born of woman'; (2) the eschatological dualism between the old age and the new age; (3) God's recovering of humankind's dominion; (4) God's placing his Spirit in human beings; (5) God's appointing of the ages; (6) the context of new creation. The evidence for the connection between 'born of woman' in IQH^a 5:31-32 and the Adamic narrative in Gen 2 is as follows: (1) the use of עפר for God's creation of Adam; (2) Gen 2:22 uses the verb בנה, a cognate of מונה in IQH^a 5:32, to describe Eve's creation; (3) the expression 'kneaded with water' may indicate that God forms Adam from dust watered by the stream which rose from the earth in Gen 2:6; (4) the importance of the Adamic theme in Hodayot. The Adamic motif and the new creation context of IQH^a 5:24-37 shed light on the interpretation of 'born of woman' in Gal 4:4 and a Pauline Adam-Christology (Cf. Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:45-49). God sent Christ as the new Adam to redeem his people from slavery under the law and their Adamic sin. The 'lord of all' (κύριος πάντων) in Gal 4:1, which alludes to Gen 1:26-30, and the use of 'Spirit' and 'hearts' in Gal 4:6 in the context of new creation also support this interpretation.

Paul Chairs: Dorothee Bertschmann and Matt Novenson

Session One

J. Thomas Hewitt, University of Aberdeen, "In the Lord" is not "in Christ": The Distinctive Syntactical and Conceptual Functions of a Linguistic Doppelgänger'

Paul's uses of the analogous phrases *en christō* and *en kyriō* have received recent attention, particularly by scholars interested in Paul's participatory thought. Several such investigations detect no real difference between the expressions (Konstan and Ramelli 2007; Campbell 2012), but these treatments are characterized by two errors: 1) fixation on the connotation of the preposition *en* to the neglect of its objects *christos* and *kyrios*; 2) and disregard for the idioms' distinct syntactical functions. As a result, the phrases *en christō* and *en kyriō* have come to be regarded inaccurately as uniformly participatory expressions and are treated uncritically as ciphers for the modern construct of participatory soteriology or 'union with Christ.' In this paper, I correct this misapprehension by assessing the distinctive syntactical and conceptual functions of *en kyriō* vis-à-vis a description, informed by Paul's messianology, of the functions of *en christō*. I demonstrate that the syntactical functions of *en kyriō* are markedly less varied than those of *en christō* and that the so-called participatory use of *en kyriō* is—quite unlike that of *en christō*—never with reference to solidarity with the messiah in his suffering, death, resurrection, or (perhaps most surprisingly) authority. Further, I argue that these differences are best explained not in terms of an alleged 'Pauline dialectic' between 'indicative' and 'imperative' (Neugebauer 1961; Bouttier 1962; cf. Kramer 1966), but rather with reference to distinctions between Paul's conceptions of messiahship and lordship.

Barbara Beyer, Humboldt University Berlin, 'Determined by, Dependent on, and Dominated by Christ: Being "in Christ" in Paul'

While Adolf Deissmann once called the way in which people nowadays use Paul's phrase 'in Christ' a chameleon, this is actually true for the apostle himself. In some places, it describes a circumstance (modal), sometimes it is equal to $\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ plus a genitive (instrumental), and other places appear to be spatial. It all comes down to the understanding of the preposition $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$, which turns out to be the real chameleon. In order to determine what it means to 'be in Christ', one must ask whether there existed a similar phrasing in contemporary Greek which Paul could draw on. With much effort Deissmann sought to locate Paul's use of $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ within the context of Greek literature and the Septuagint, yet his references date too far back to explain the apostle's usage. This paper traces a formulation which is strikingly similar to Paul from the Classical period (esp. Euripides, Xenophon, and Hesiod) down to later developments in the Hellenistic and imperial periods (Polybius, the Greek Papyri, the *Vita Aesopi*, Dio Chrysostom, up until Libanius). As it will turn out, this formulation represents the background on which the apostle could rest his speech of being in Christ. By adapting it to his own purposes it communicates that the believers are determined by, dependent on, and dominated by Christ their Lord. Two key passages will serve to show this: The argument of Rom 1–8 with its frequent spatial and hegemonial language employs $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$ to describe the present existence of the believers as being dependent on Christ, just like Phil 3:7–11 does with a more eschatological perspective. Thus, by considering new evidence from contemporary Greek sources Paul's use of the phrase $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}$ turns out to be less puzzling than has often been thought.

Matthew Pawlak, University of Cambridge, 'Paul and Diatribe: Romans as Dialogical, but not Dialogue'

The contention that Romans should be read in light of ancient diatribe has been influential in scholarship. Stowers considers dialogical exchanges to be 'the most distinctive feature of diatribe style,' and finds such exchanges to be prevalent throughout Romans (1981: 2, 174–84). While the discovery of Paul's dialogue partner has produced much exegetical fruit, it has become too easy to lose track of the interlocutor's hypotheticalness in terms of narrative voice. The way that several scholars lay out dialogical passages in Paul and Epictetus make the text appear like a theatrical piece, with clear distinctions between speaking parts (see Campbell, 2009: 587–90; King, 2018: 269–70; Stowers, 1981: 158–65, 172). Such division implies a sharper demarcation between speakers than can be safely assumed. One may expect fully realized characters who speak with their own voices in dialogue, but not here. I will lay out an alternative proposal for conceptualising voice in Romans, and diatribe more broadly. I argue that as a rhetorical performance, diatribe is a one-man show. Whether the audience is Epictetus's classroom or the Roman church, it is clear from this vantage point that there is only one speaker. The voice of the hypothetical interlocutor cannot be fully separated from the voice of the author. There is a level of self-consciousness to the performance such that both Paul and his audience remain aware that even when the 'interlocutor' speaks, there is a sense in which it is still Paul. While this paradigm adds a layer of ambiguity and complexity to the simpler notion of clearly demarcated dialogue, it better illustrates the liveliness and imprecision of diatribe. I will conclude by discussing the implications of this conception of voice in dialogical, diatribe-like texts for the debate over the identity of Paul's 'interlocutor' in Romans.

Session Two

Joseph Longarino, University of Heidelberg, Germany, 'Apocalyptic and the Passions: Overcoming a False Dichotomy in Pauline Studies'

In debates about the conception of sin in Romans 5–8, there are two major alternatives on offer. The apocalyptic school tends to speak of sin as a power that is extrinsic—but not necessarily external—to the human person, analogous to a demon or quasi-demonic figure inhabiting individuals and reigning over humanity. The moral-philosophical interpretation of Paul, by contrast, contends that sin should be understood as a representation of the passions within the human constitution. These two views are often opposed to each other as mutually exclusive. However, this obscures the extent of the compatibility of the two positions, which runs deeper than is often realized. This paper lays out the major arguments of the apocalyptic position in order to test whether and to what extent the fundamental concerns of this school are in fact at odds with the proposal of the moral-philosophical interpretation of sin. The proposal of this paper is that the major concerns of the apocalyptic school—to understand sin as a universally determinative reality, as a force prior to and exceeding human action, as a power from which only God can deliver humanity—can be accommodated by the basic stance of the moral-philosophical interpretation of sin as the passions. By overcoming the false dichotomy often posited between the two views, new avenues of research can be pursued for a more fruitful discussion.

Jamie Davies, Trinity College Bristol, 'Why Paul Doesn't Mention "the Age to Come"?'

Given how commonplace it is in Pauline studies to speak of his two-age inaugurated eschatology, it may come as a surprise to learn that Paul rarely (if ever) mentions 'the age to come'. References abound to 'this age' (Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 1:20; 2:6-8; 3:18; 2 Cor 4:4), the 'present age' (1 Tim 6:17; 2 Tim 4:10; Tit 2:12), or the 'present evil age' (Gal 1:4), but nowhere do we find a clear example of the expression 'age to come' (with the exception, if authentic, of Eph 1:21). This has not stopped many scholars filling in Paul's blank for him, insisting that, even though he doesn't say it, Paul *must* be working with a 'two age' eschatological framework, inherited from Jewish apocalyptic thought and reworked in the light of the Christ event. Moreover, this christological adaptation is often cited as a sign of Paul's theological genius, an indication of his distinctive modification of (or departure from) Jewish thought. This thesis has not gone unchallenged, however, with Second Temple Judaism scholars questioning how much Pauline eschatology really is discontinuous with the apocalyptic tradition. This paper, while endorsing some version of a Pauline 'two age' inaugurated eschatology, pushes in the other direction, examining the linguistic evidence, and suggesting that the best explanation is a more radical theological adaptation of the apocalyptic 'two age schema' than familiar 'now-and-not-yet' frameworks. Paul, I argue, avoids a simple deployment of 'age to come' vocabulary because he recognises that the Christ event effected a far more radical eschatological and ontological transformation than a simple overlap in the 'two ages' timeline. The Pauline vocabulary suggests, rather, a christological transformation involving an infinitely *qualitative* distinction between the 'present age' and the '*aiōnial* life' or new creation, the 'kind of time' brought about by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Ann Jervis, Wycliffe College, Toronto, Canada, 'Paul's Conception of the Temporality of Living "in Christ"'

This paper proposes that Paul understands the risen and ascended Christ to live in temporality rather than without time. Christ's temporality is tensed insofar as Christ's past, present and future co-exist. (This is not to be understood as eternity, as eternity is classically understood). Christ's temporality shapes the time of those who live in him. Believers live sequential tenses while inhabiting Christ's time. Christ's past is present in his present; and it is available to those in him. Christ's past functions not only as a past that *affects* and *causes* the future. Events in Christ's past, such as his suffering and death, are *in* Christ's present, and so able to be shared and entered by those in him. Christ's resurrection—a past event—is present. Though believers' resurrection is in their future, they may now share *Christ's* resurrection (Rom 6:4). This is not because believers are time travelers but results from the fluidity of Christ's tenses. Christ's past is in Christ's present, and his temporality embraces and includes the time of those in him. The primary future event for Christ is his *Parousia*. That Paul understood Christ's future, like his past, to be in Christ's present is evident when the apostle declares that Christ is now head of all rule and authority (Col 2:10), that now is the day of salvation (2 Cor 6:2), and that being in Christ is being new creation (2 Cor 5:17). For those in Christ the presence of his future manifests itself in a peculiar kind of waiting and hoping in sequential time; waiting and hoping grounded not in current absence but in the presence of the future. The day of the Lord's nearness means they can act as if it had arrived (Rom 13:11-13). They can live as if the passing of the shape of the world had already happened (1 Cor 7:29-31). They are of the day (1 Thess 5:8). Those in Christ live in sequential time enveloped by the time of Christ, in which both Christ's past and future are present.

Session Three [joint with Later Epistles]

Sydney Tooth, Oak Hill College, London, 'The Eschatologies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Comparison'

One of the main arguments made against Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians is that its eschatological account is incompatible with that of 1 Thessalonians. It is repeatedly claimed that the two accounts are simply too different to come from the same author. On the other hand, those who support Pauline authorship argue that they really are not that different or that any apparent differences are easily reconcilable. Yet, despite the fact that this debate continues ad nauseum, an extended comparison between the two has not previously been undertaken. The best way to progress this discussion is by leaving aside the authorship of both letters and focusing on what is said in the text itself. We should compare their eschatologies point by point, for the debate is too easily coloured by scholars' presuppositions about authorship - either exaggerating or minimising any potential difference between the letters. The goal of this paper is to provide that thorough comparison. Thus, I examine the eschatology of 1 and 2 Thessalonians in five different aspects: (1) terminology (particularly the use of 'parousia' and 'day of the Lord'), (2) timing of the end (and any preceding events), (3) eschatological fates, (4) agency (the respective roles of Jesus and God in these events), and (5) circumstances for writing the letters. In each of these categories I analyse the evidence in both letters and determine whether or not they are compatible accounts - can both letters conceivably have come from the same author, or are they too irreconcilably different for that to be possible?

Jennifer Strawbridge, University of Oxford, “‘Begotten Not Made’: Colossians I and Credal Formation’

T. J. Lang, University of St Andrews, ‘Financing Ransom in Ephesians’

In Eph 1:13-14, Paul describes believers as having been ‘sealed’ by a holy *pneuma*, which is somehow related to a promise (*epangelia*). This *pneuma* is additionally described as a ‘first instalment’ or ‘security’ (*arrabōn*) on an inheritance (*klēronomia*), which itself is then again additionally related to the ransoming of a possession (*eis apolutrōsin tēs peripoiēseōs*). This essay contends that there is economic sense in the syntax of this cluster of financial terminology. It then relates such economic reasoning to other fiscal images in the letter. It concludes by reflecting more broadly on the expression of theological ideas in an economic register.

Synoptic Gospels Chairs: Andy Angel and Elizabeth Shively

Session One

John Dennis, London School of Theology, ‘Jesus as Isaiah’s Divine Strong One: The Echo of Isaiah 40:10a in Mark 1:7’

The contention of this paper is that the Baptist’s declaration of Jesus as ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου in Mark 1:7 echoes Isa 40:10a so that Jesus plays out the script of Yahweh both in Isa 40:3 and Isa 40:10a. Rikki Watts and Elizabeth Shively have alerted us to the significance of Mark 3:23-30 and particularly v. 27 for John’s designation of Jesus as ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου in 1:7. In the immediate context, Jesus is ‘stronger than’ John (1:7) because he is endowed with the Spirit ‘to engage in conflict with Satan (vv. 10, 11-12)’ (Shively). The prologue thus anticipates Jesus as the implied strong man in the parable of Mark 3:23-30 where he overcomes Satan the ‘strong man’ (ὁ ἰσχυρός, 3:27). Mark 3:27 most likely echoes Isa 49:24-26 (Shively, Watts) and thus it appears that Jesus is playing out the script of Yahweh in Isa 49:25-26. Watts contends that this Isaianic backdrop to 3:27 ‘is highly suggestive of Yahweh’s INE [Isaiah’s New Exodus] coming ‘in strength’... (1:7, 14f.)’ But further argumentation is needed to establish the Isaianic backdrop to Jesus as the stronger one in Mark 1:7. Building upon Shively and Watts concerning the Isaianic context of Mark 3:27 and the implications for Jesus’ identity there, I suggest that, given the established importance of the larger context Isa 40 (cf. 1:3) for Mark’s Christology in the prologue and beyond, Mark intends that the ‘stronger one’ in Mark 1:7 echoes LXX Isa 40:10a which promises that Yahweh, on his ‘way’ to deliver his people (40:3), ‘is coming’ with divine ‘strength’ (ἰσχύς) and ‘kingly authority’ (κυριεία) (LXX 40:10a). If this is the case, Jesus plays out the script of Yahweh not only in Isa 40:3 but also in Isa 40:10a.

Tobias Siegenthaler, University of St Andrews, “‘Remember me, when (...)’ (Luke 23:42)—The Cupbearer, Remembrance, and Three Days’

In contrast to the two other synoptic gospels Luke includes a curious conversation in his narrative of the crucifixion. It is the conversation of the two criminals who were crucified right and left to Jesus. (Luke 23:39-43) One of them says to Jesus ‘remember me, when (μνήσθητί μου ὅταν) you come into your kingdom.’ (NRSV) This phrase may remind us of Joseph’s words to the cupbearer after interpreting his dream in Genesis 40:14: ‘remember me through yourself, when (μνήσθητί μου διὰ σεαυτοῦ, ὅταν) it should go well with you’ (NETS). This paper aims to compare the two narratives, which contain more striking parallels: Both include someone being hung on a pole or tree, in

both the motif of three days is mentioned, and in both a cupbearer plays an important role. Furthermore, the imagery of bread and wine are in the background of both stories. Most strikingly Luke casts Jesus not in the role of Joseph—as we might expect him to do, as Jesus is assumed to be the son of Joseph—but rather in the role of the cupbearer. What is he achieving through that intertextual play and how does it support Luke's unique portrayal of Jesus?

Emma Swai, Liverpool Hope University, 'The Ideal Synoptic Mind?'

Being of 'right mind,' in Mark 5:15, is often understood to be a sign of healing, but 'mind' is a problematic term which presupposes a similar understanding between the original language texts of the synoptic gospels and modern English translations, when in fact the term 'mind' is a single translation for numerous corresponding Greek references. In Luke 24:25, the use of *νοῦς* describes the capacity of reason in relation to the positive attribute of having that 'mind' opened, following on from the negative assumption that the mind had previously been closed. Where the focus is on the ideal 'mind,' it is reasoning and understanding that is being described, not a particular part of the body, as would potentially be understood from a twentyfirst century perspective; 'You shall love the Lord your God...with all your mind' (Matt 22:37) stems from *διάνοια* and the human faculty of understanding, focusing on the reasoning behind a love for God rather than the modern interpretation of an emotional reaction.

By bringing together the synoptic gospels' fragmentary comments on the 'right mind,' defined as proper understanding and reasoning, this paper will construct the multi-faceted concept of 'right mind' contained within the gospel texts, as opposed to the modern view of a singular, healthy mental organ. It will introduce the social and cultural models of disability to the study of the synoptic mind, thereby paying particular attention to the importance of external social factors, and will show how interpreting the synoptic standard of a 'right mind' can contribute to the judgement of those individuals who challenge social expectations of what correct reasoning and understanding is deemed to be.

Session Two Book Review Panel [joint with NT and Second Temple Judaism]

Book: Sean A. Adams, *Greek Genres and Jewish Authors: Negotiating Literary Culture in the Greco-Roman Era*, Waco: Baylor University Press, 2020.

Panel: Helen Bond, University of Edinburgh and Elizabeth Shively, University of St. Andrews

Book description: The ancient world, much like our own, thrived on cultural diversity and exchange. The riches of this social reality are evident in the writings of Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman eras. Jewish authors drew on the wide range of Greek literary conventions and gave fresh expressions to the proud traditions of their faith and ethnic identity. They did not hesitate to modify and adapt the forms they received from the surrounding culture, but their works stand as legitimate participants in Greco-Roman literary tradition. In *Greek Genres and Jewish Authors*, Sean Adams argues that a robust understanding of ancient genre facilitates proper textual interpretation. This perspective is vital for insight on the author, the work's original purpose, and how the original readers would have received it. Adopting a cognitive-prototype theory of genre, Adams provides a detailed discussion of Jewish authors writing in Greek from ca. 300 BCE to ca. 135 CE—including New Testament authors—and their participation in Greek genres. The nine chapters focus on broad genre divisions (e.g., poetry, didactic, philosophy) to provide studies on each author's engagement with Greek genres,

identifying both representative and atypical expressions and features. The book's most prominent contribution lies in its data synthesis to provide a macroperspective on the ways in which Jewish authors participated in and adapted Greek genres—in other words, how members of a minority culture intentionally engaged with the dominant culture's literary practices alongside traditional Jewish features, resulting in unique text expressions.

Session Three John's Use of the Synoptics [joint with Johannine Literature]

Four 15-minute papers (circulated to seminar members 2 weeks in advance) from Helen Bond (University of Edinburgh), Catrin Williams (University of Wales Trinity St David), Wendy North (Durham University), and Elizabeth Corsar (University of Edinburgh), followed by a 30-minute Panel Discussion and Q&A.