

BNTS 2020 simultaneous short papers

Seminar A Chaired by: Alison Jack, University of Edinburgh

James Crossley, St Mary's University, Twickenham/CenSAMM, 'Weeding the Garden of England: John Ball, the Peasants' Revolt and the New Testament'

The priest John Ball—known as one of the leading figures of the so-called Peasants' Revolt of 1381—was said to have made famous comments about Adam and Eve ('When Adam delved and Eve Span, Who was then a gentleman?'). However, his use of the New Testament has been overlooked in modern receptions of the 1381 uprising, often to the point of not being noticed at all. I will show that New Testament texts were integral to Ball's theology which, to some extent, fuelled the 1381 uprising. I will look at allusions to the Parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43), ideas about communally shared possessions and distribution according to need in the earliest church (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35), a reapplication of Johannine language (e.g., John 4:23; 5:25; 8:31-32) to the present, and an understanding of the labour involved in making the bread of the eucharist, in order to show how these references were used as part of a consistent revolutionary eschatology and an alternative vision for England. Ideas about alternative hierarchies and revolutionary transformation will be discussed, some of which will be of comparative interest to New Testament scholarship on the first century in that they provide a corrective to romanticised ideas of egalitarianism allegedly found in the New Testament. Some consideration will also be given to why New Testament texts have been overlooked in the history of the reception of Ball.

Melissa C. M. Tan, University of Aberdeen, 'A Fresh Look at the Social-Scientific Model of Honour-Shame: Philippians 3:4-11 as a Test Case'

Approximately 40 years have passed since Bruce Malina pioneered (and popularized) the use of social-scientific analytical tools in New Testament scholarship. Criticisms of his work range from overgeneralizations to ethnocentrism and anachronism. One specific criticism can be made regarding Malina's own North-American-centric context, which supplied an implicitly individualistic lens through which he made observations on the collectivistic society he was analysing. As a possible remedy to this issue, what if one were to substitute the implicitly individualistic lens for an explicitly collectivistic lens?

Focusing on the honour-shame model in particular, this paper is an experiment in augmenting Malina's original honour-shame model with honour-shame dynamics taken from explicitly collectivistic societies. This paper will analyse Philippians 3:4-11 as a test case for the proposed methodological shift by using cultural insights from ancient Eastern philosophies to nuance the honour-shame model. Collectivistic social dynamics—such as an emphasis on social equilibrium (as opposed to social challenges), a more pervasive honour than Malina himself even posited, and the concept of 'face' as it relates to one's status—will guide an identification and analysis of Paul's subtle, tacit expressions of honour and shame. Special attention will be paid to key culturally-load-bearing terms utilized by Paul as he reflects on how Christ has affected his evaluation of his life and accomplishments. In particular, Paul's desire to 'share in [Christ's] sufferings' (3:10) will be interrogated.

In short, this paper will demonstrate how an explicitly collectivistic understanding of honour-shame can result in a richer understanding of Paul's faith and identity in Christ.

Additionally, the specific dynamic of shame—a generally negative, unwanted and unwelcomed experience—will appear in a surprisingly positive light.

Siobhán Jolley, University of Manchester, 'Merry Mary Quite Contrary, or the Merits of Artemisia's *Magdalene* minus Melancholy'

Artemisia Gentileschi's 1623 *Mary Magdalene in Ecstasy* marks a notable departure from the biblical figure and the canon of artistic reception, in portraying an emotionally-positive Magdalene. This paper will examine the construction of the melancholy Magdalene from biblical texts, demonstrate its deconstruction in this image, and ultimately use it to exemplify the potential merit of reception that deviates from the biblical text.

Whilst the characterisation of the Magdalene lacks abundant source material in the New Testament, the mood of those texts is uniformly bleak. Her main narrative roles are as witness to the crucifixion (Matt 27:56, 61; Mark 15:40; John 19:25), and mourner tasked with anointing the body of the dead Christ (Matt 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). Even at the joyful resurrection encounter she is weeping and then rebuked, but never joyful (John 20:11-18). Texts used to form the composite Magdalene only bleaken the picture – she is sinful, weeping (Luke 7:38), and berated (Luke 7:39; 10:40; John 12:5). Little surprise, then, that the Magdalene of fine art is a predominantly melancholy figure.

However, Artemisia's 1623 work escapes this trajectory. Though renowned for depictions of biblical women, as noted by Garrard, Magdalenes are rarely amongst Artemisia's celebrated works. Yet her *Magdalene in Ecstasy* is an exception—and she is happy (with the rewards of faith), not forlorn or sexualised (per Caravaggio et al.) Whilst implicit in the Magdalene story, this idea is rarely made explicit. Yet, as with her own biography in Bronzini's profile, Artemisia rewrites the Magdalene's story and shifts the focus, thereby offering a narrative that deviates from the canon without diminishing it. From this, this paper will demonstrate the benefits of reception that enriches and explores spaces in biblical texts rather than directly replicating them, as a tool for a revocalisation of silenced biblical women.

Seminar B Chaired by: Dirk Jongkind, Tyndale House/University of Cambridge

Michael Dormandy, Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford, 'Turning over a New Leaf: The Role of Complete Manuscripts in New Testament Citation of the Old Testament'

The New Testament writers revel in citing and expounding the Jewish Scriptures, but how practically did they access the texts? I consider three main possible formats: memory, a notebook of extracts and complete rolls of Jewish Scripture books. All three probably played a part, but I argue that complete rolls were more significant than is often thought. I argue that scholars have exaggerated the practical difficulties of referring to ancient books, relative to memory. I discuss palaeographic evidence that rolls, as well as codices, were used not only for continuous reading, but also for reference. In particular, I use Kathleen McNamee's research into marginalia in manuscripts to highlight evidence of annotation that suggests ancient people not only read through books, but also referred back to them. I also investigate the citation technique of other ancient authors, including Philo and Catullus, who seem to have cited from complete books at least some of the time. Although Philo was obviously deeply familiar with the Jewish Scriptures, his citation of pagan authors varies widely in accuracy, sometimes extremely vague, sometimes specifying a particular passage precisely. I argue that this suggests he sometimes used memory, but sometimes had a complete manuscript before him. I

discuss and interpret a particular passage of Catullus, where he appears to portray himself needing to refer to books to write his poems. This is anything but an obscure historical or text-critical issue: knowing that the NT authors were frequently citing from continuous text manuscripts gives us a new appreciation of their artistry in citing the OT. They may not use OT texts to mean the same as they meant in their OT context, but I argue they frequently had sight and understanding of that context, which means their hermeneutical adaptation of it was deliberate.

Peter Head, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, 'Female Letter Carriers and the Recommendation of Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2'

Hitherto, discussions of the role of Phoebe in the delivery and earliest reception of Paul's letter to the Romans have not compared her role with that of other female letter carriers in antiquity (with the exception of Marjanen's excellent discussion which noted two other female letter carriers). In this paper I survey ten examples of female letter carriers among the documentary papyri (from the first century BCE through to the third century CE), with special attention to their anticipated role in aiding the reception of the letter they carried. [N.B. A. Marjanen, 'Phoebe, a Letter Courier' in *Lux humana, Lux aeterna: essays on biblical and related themes in honour of Lars Aejmelaeus*, ed. A. Mustakallio et al.; Suomen Eksegeettisen Seuran Julkaisuja 89 (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society & Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 495-508.]

Timothy Sailors, Eberhard-Karls-Universität, Tübingen, Germany, 'Alteration of the Synoptic Gospels by the Evangelists and by Subsequent Copyists: Can We always Tell the Difference?'

The formation, redaction, and transmission of Synoptic material and the Synoptic Gospels themselves are intertwined processes. For any given unit of textual variation, there are multiple variant readings. Often, one can ascertain the history of the text's development with some degree of certainty, recognizing which reading was anterior and which readings are the results of later alteration. However, on occasion we may be unable, based on the extant evidence alone, to determine which of two attested readings most likely gave rise to the other. Even when one may suppose, based on non-textual evidence (e.g., the logic, theology, or rhetoric of a text), that one attested reading seems as though it may well have given rise to the other, it is not in every case clear at what stage or by whom such an alteration was made. Was a given textual alteration produced by an evangelist deliberately changing the words of a source gospel in the course of creating new wording for a new gospel? Or was the alteration introduced only at a later stage in the course of copying and textual transmission? More fundamentally, is it in all cases possible for us to tell the difference?

Investigations of the textual relationship between the Synoptic Gospels (i.e., the Synoptic Problem), cannot but be based on the respective texts of the Synoptic Gospels. The text of each of the Synoptic Gospels, however, changed over the course of even its earliest transmission history. In this regard, three things must be borne in mind: There is every reason to suppose that such changes took place already within the text of gospels that were then subsequently used by other evangelists; the texts of each of the Synoptic Gospels continued to be altered even after the initial stage of their redaction/composition; and once the Gospels began circulating together it is manifestly clear that harmonizations, interpolations, and other textual alterations occurred between the Gospels—doubtless affecting passages too in which we are today unable to recognize such phenomena.

Although such vexing methodological challenges do not face us in every verse of the Synoptic Gospels, they do indeed appear. As a case in point, this paper examines the textual variation of the lowly preposition describing the descent of the spirit either 'upon' or 'into' Jesus at his baptism (Mark 1:10//Matt 3:16//Luke 3.22). Small though the word is, interpreters frequently regard it as having been theologically significant for early Christians reading and transmitting these gospels. This supposition then plays a role in both the text-critical reconstruction of the Synoptic Gospels and in redaction-critical explanations of the relationship between them. Is this, however, borne out or logically demanded by the pluriform extant textual evidence? The evidence for the text of this phrase in the Synoptic Gospels—in the most ancient Greek, Latin, and Syriac manuscripts, in a citation from Eusebius, and in the most ancient manuscript evidence for Irenaeus of Lyon's citation of the passage from Matthew—reveals how difficult, even impossible, it may be to reconstruct with certainty the very earliest texts of Mark, Matthew, and Luke in this verse. The lines between composition, redaction, and transmission are blurry.

Seminar C Chaired by: Janet Unsworth, Edgehill Theological College, Belfast

Anna D. Budhi, University of Manchester, 'Cicero's Unshakable Virtus and the Masculinity of Jesus the Defendant'

'Virtus is the badge of the Roman race and breed. All else is false and doubtful, ephemeral and changeful: only virtus stands firmly fixed, its roots run deep, it can never be shaken by any violence, never moved from its place. With this virtus your ancestors conquered all Italy first, then razed Carthage, overthrew Numantia, brought the most powerful kings and the most warlike peoples under the sway of this empire.' (Cicero, *Philippic* 4 5.13)

This is masculine perfection as defined by Cicero and the citizens of the Roman empire, but how does this impact the understanding of a Jewish man on trial for blasphemy in first century Palestine? This paper attempts to discover elements of the masculinity of Jesus in the eyes of Cicero based upon this passage of his speech. This will be compared with the scene taken from chapter 19 of the Gospel of John during the trial before Pontius Pilate and the power play that is seen during both the scourging of Jesus and the dialogue between Pilate and Jesus before his sentencing. By studying the passage from the Philippic speech that defines the masculine ideal of 'virtus', I will compare the actions and words of Jesus in John's gospel to decipher the extent of Jesus' manliness, or unmanliness. I will be using an adapted version of a method devised by N. T. Wright of critical realism and its dialogue between hypotheses and historical sources to discover the masculinity of the historical figure of Jesus.

Matthew Joss, University of St Andrews, "'He Saw and Believed": An Explanatory Coherence Evaluation of John 20:8'

In John 20:8, the beloved disciple 'saw and believed'. We know what he saw—an empty tomb and graveclothes—but what did he believe? There are two opposing views about this. On the one side are those such as Rudolf Schnackenburg who firmly holds that "according to the context" this refers "undoubtedly, to the full faith in the resurrection of Jesus" (1987, 312). On the other side, those such as Paul Minear make equally strong claims that this cannot be right. Indeed, "the context wholly fails to support that answer" (1976, 127). Rather than believing Jesus rose, the beloved disciple believed Mary's testimony that the tomb was empty and Jesus' body was missing. Here, both

Minear and Schnackenburg appeal to the context saying that it definitively confirms their opposing opinions. They cannot both be correct, so how are we to decide whose case is stronger?

To try and resolve this conflict, principles from the inference to best explanation (IBE) will be used to help evaluate the text. In particular, the method of explanatory coherence, a model which has been used in contexts such as the history and philosophy of science, decision making, legal judgements, and everyday reasoning, will be utilized. First, the principles of IBE and explanatory coherence will be unpacked and explained. Second, they will be used to map the arguments and counter-arguments, allowing third, an evaluation of the arguments to take place. It will conclude with a general evaluation of explanatory coherence's strengths and weaknesses for biblical studies.

Joel White, Freie Theologische Hochschule, Gießen, Germany, 'Where Did John the Baptist Baptize Jesus?'

"Bethany beyond the Jordan" is, according to John 1:28, the site where John the Baptist baptized Jesus (and many others). It has been traditionally located in the lower reaches of the Jordan river just a few miles north of Dead Sea. In spite of early attestation in church tradition, this location has been called into question by some scholars in recent years, especially due to difficulties in squaring the traditional site with other geographical and temporal information in the Apostle's account. The most viable alternative proposal locates the site on the Jarmuk River in the region of Batanea, east of the Sea of Galilee. In this paper I will examine the evidence for and against both sites and decide which option should be preferred. I will conclude with a brief discussion of the implications of John's baptismal site for his theology.