

University of Glasgow
British New Testament Society Conference
22–24 August 2024



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We are delighted to welcome you to the 2024 British New Testament Society Conference at the University of Glasgow.

ATTENDANCE AND REGISTRATION

Resident Delegates:

Check in at Cairncross House or Queen Margaret Residence where you will be accommodated. Check-in is Thursday from 14.00. Check-out is Saturday by 10.00. Luggage storage will be available at the Bridie Library (Glasgow University Union) on Saturday after check-out. Name badge collection will take place at Glasgow University Union (GUU).

All Delegates, including non-resident Delegates: register and collect your name badge at Glasgow University Union (map at [p. 4](#)) (32 University Avenue, G12 8LX).

Meals

Breakfast, coffee breaks, lunch, evening dinner, and evening drinks will be provided at Glasgow University Union.

N.B. If you have informed us of any dietary restrictions, please also ensure that the GUU catering staff are aware of your special meal requirements.

Morning Prayer

Prayer will take place at 7.30 on Friday and Saturday morning at the Memorial Chapel (accessed from Professors' Square). We are grateful to the chaplaincy team for facilitating morning prayer.

CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Arrivals

Route to Residences

If you are travelling by train, alight at Glasgow Central Station or Glasgow Queen Street Station. From there, take the bus or taxi to your accommodation:

From Glasgow Central Station to Cairncross House, take bus **2** or **3** from Argyle Street, or walk (1.3 miles, 30 minutes).

From Glasgow Central Station to Queen Margaret Residence, take bus **6** or **6A** from West Regent Lane.

From Glasgow Queen Street Station to Cairncross House, take bus **3** from Howard Street.

From Glasgow Queen Street Station to Queen Margaret Residence, take bus **6** or **6A** from St Vincent Palace.

Taxis take about 15 mins to go to Cairncross House, and 20 mins to go to Queen Margaret Residence from the stations.

Direct Route to University

If you are travelling by train, alight at Glasgow Central Station or Glasgow Queen Street Station. From there, take the bus, subway, or taxi to Glasgow University Union for the registration:

From Glasgow Central Station to Glasgow University Union, take the **subway** from St. Enoch to the Kelvinbridge or Hillhead Station and then walk for 8 minutes. Alternatively, you can also take bus number **4A** from Argyle Street which directly stops in front of GUU (stop University Union).

From Glasgow Queen Street Station to Glasgow University Union, take the **subway** from Buchanan Street to the Kelvinbridge or Hillhead Station then walk for 8 mins.

Taxis take about 10/12 mins to go to Glasgow University Union from the stations.

Glasgow Taxis (0141 429 7070)

Download the app: <https://www.glasgowtaxi.co.uk/passenger-services/smartphone-apps/>

GlasGo Cabs (private hire) (0141 332 5050 / 0141 774 3000)

Download the app: <https://glasgocabs.co.uk/app/>

Saltire Private Hire (0141 319 5344)

E: contact@saltireprivatehire.co.uk

If you arrive at **Edinburgh airport** you can take the Bus AIR (<https://www.citylink.co.uk/travelling-with-citylink/air/> for online tickets) from exit D. The journey takes about 1 hour and leaves you at Buchanan Bus Station, where you can take the bus or taxi to go to your accommodation (bus 77 to Cairncross House or 6 to Queen Margaret Residence—not from Buchanan station, but from Theatre Royal). To reach Glasgow University Union (for registration), you can take the subway from Buchanan Street to Kelvinbridge Station and then walk for 8 mins.

If you arrive at **Glasgow airport** you can take the bus 500 Airport Express (<https://www.firstbus.co.uk/greater-glasgow/routes-and-maps/glasgow-airport-express>, 15 mins travel) that leaves you at Buchanan Bus station. The taxi from the airport takes about 20 mins to arrive at accommodation.

Conference accommodation is at: Cairncross House (map below) and Queen Margaret Residence (maps below).

Conference meeting is at the University of Glasgow—Gilmorehill Campus (map below).

Parking at the Campus:

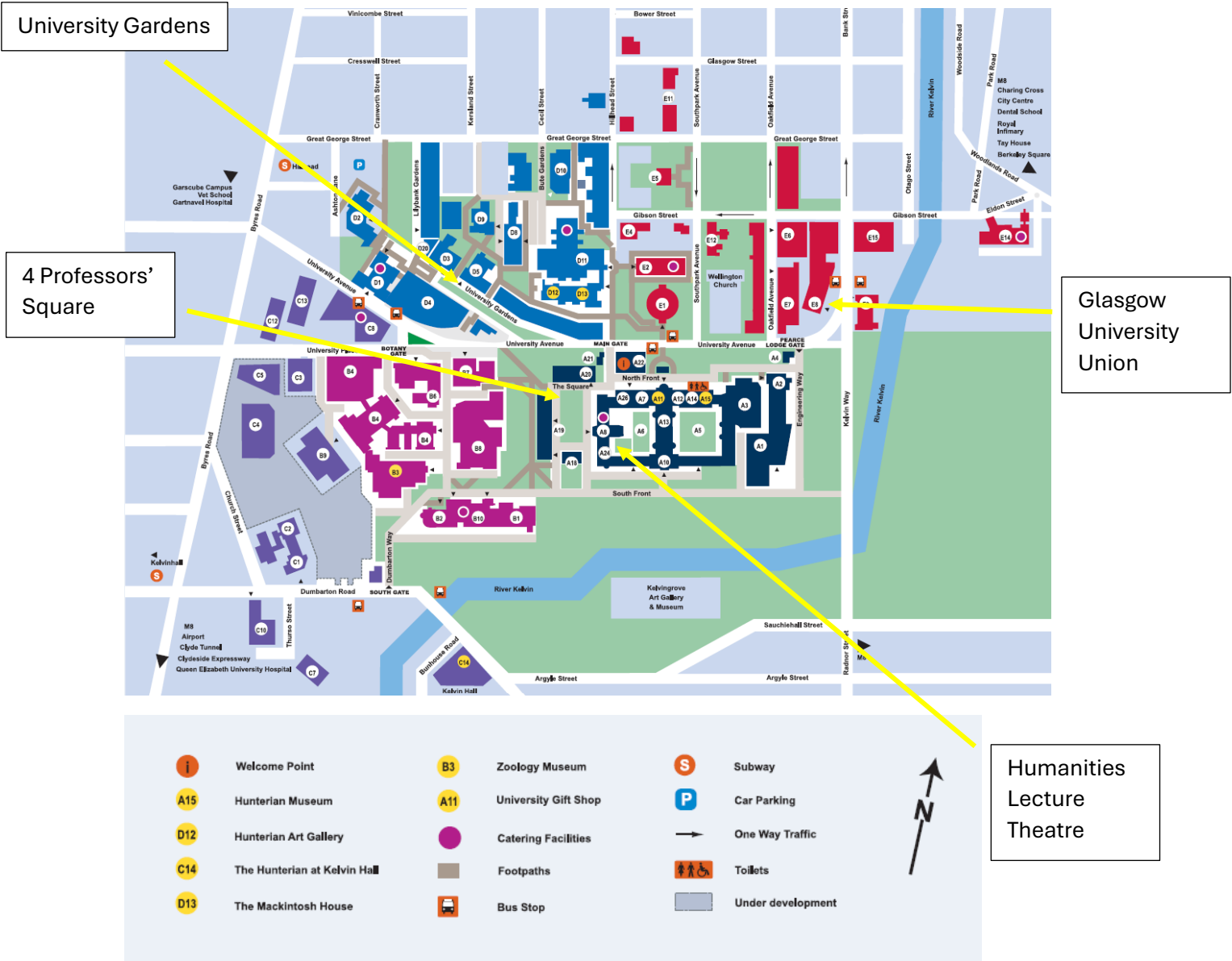
University residences offer parking spaces on a first-come, first-served basis. However, if you need to park on the main campus, you can apply for a permit using this link: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/estates/parkingattheuniversity/visitorparking/>

Blue badge holders do not need to pay for parking, but still must register.

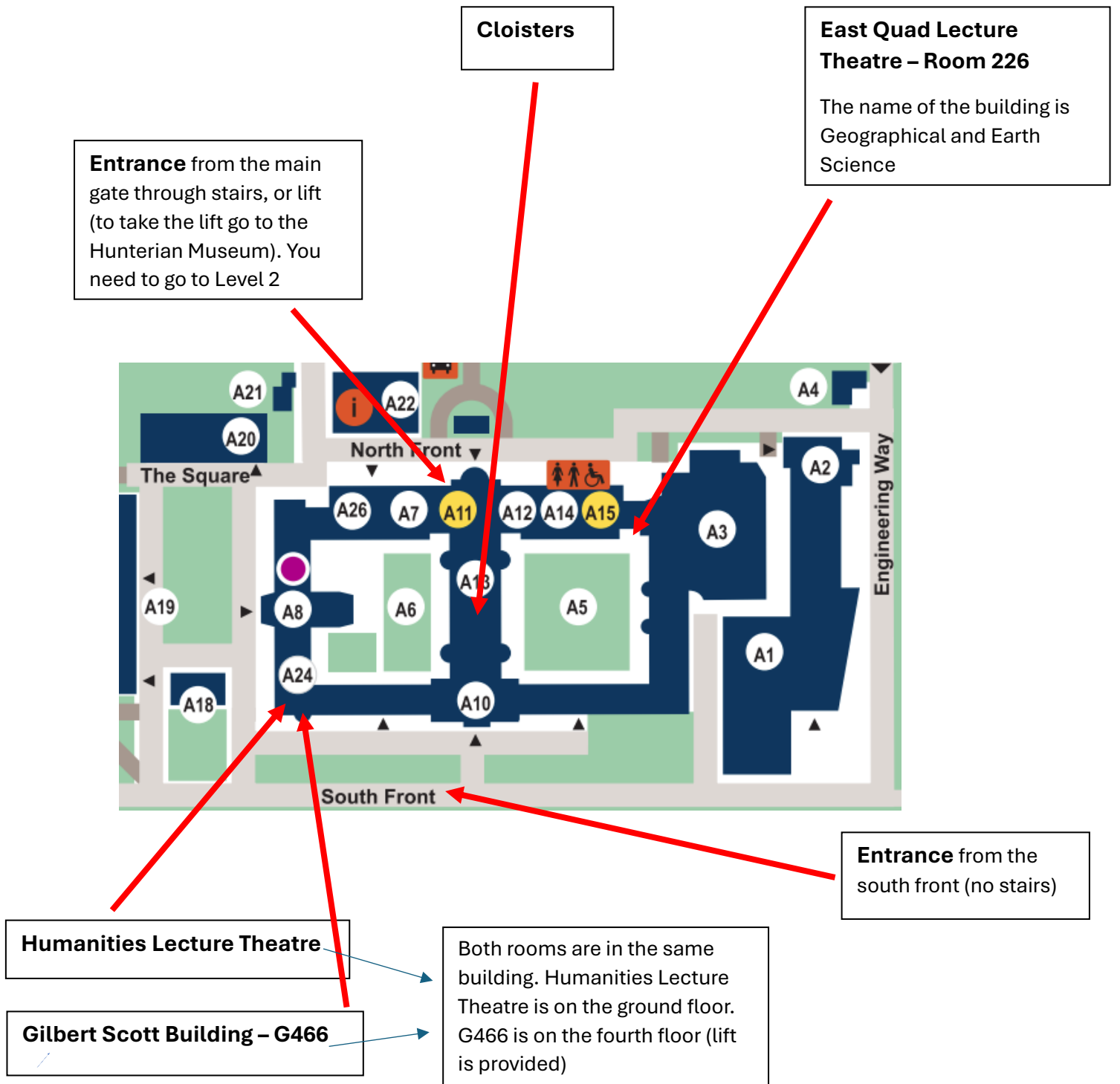
For directions and campus maps, see the interactive map of the University of Glasgow:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/explore/maps/>

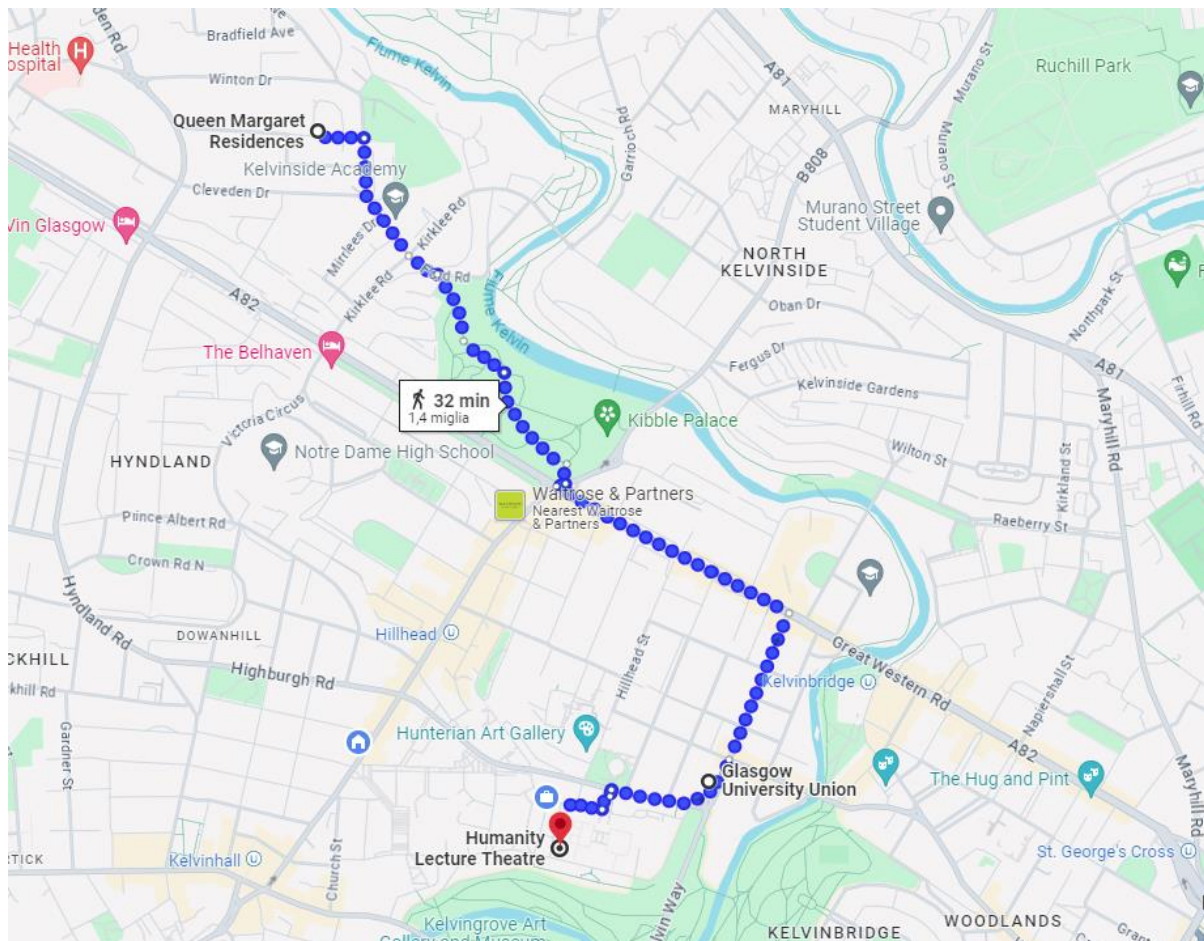
Gilmorehill Campus



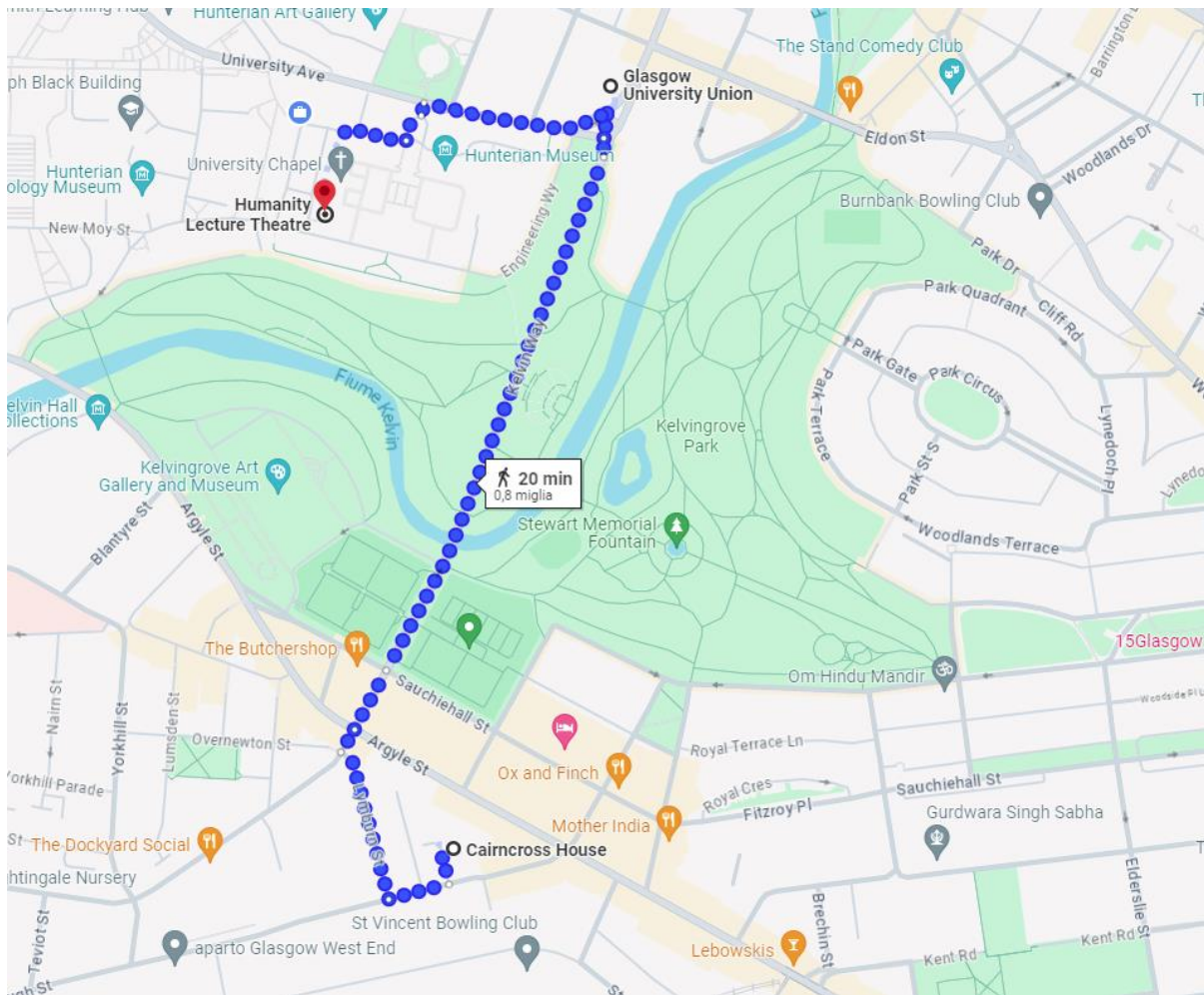
Gilbert Scott Building (Plenaries, Simultaneous Short Papers, and Wine Reception)



From Queen Margaret Residence to University Glasgow Union (GUU) to the Humanities Lecture Theatre



From Cairncross House to University Glasgow Union (GUU) to the Humanities Lecture Theatre





Meeting The Material Bible: A Public Afternoon with Manuscripts

Thursday 22nd August 2024, 12:00 – 14:00

Humanity Lecture Theatre, University of Glasgow, G12 8QQ

(Register for Free [Here](#))

12:00-12:20

Emanuele Scieri (University of Glasgow)

Meeting the Annotated Bible

12:20-12:40

Kimberley Fowler (University of Groningen)

The Story of Codex H

12:40-13:20

Revd Archimandrite Markos Mitchell

(Glasgow Greek Orthodox Church)

Life and Culture on Mount Athos

13:30-14:00

A Tour of the Hunterian Museum:

Manuscripts in the Special Collections

Contact emanuele.scieri@glasgow.ac.uk

[Accessibility Information](#)

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Visit to the University of Glasgow Library Special Collections

On **Friday afternoon** (23 August), it is possible to book time to examine biblical manuscripts and early printed books. There are two available time slots, each accommodating up to 12 people:

- From 2 to 3 pm
- From 3 to 4 pm

Attendance will be on a first-come, first-served basis. The event will be held at the University of Glasgow Library, 12th floor, just a 5-minute walk from Professor's Square. If you are interested, please email Martina at Martina.Vercesi@glasgow.ac.uk with your preferred time slot **by 19 August**.

Cairncross House contact

20 Kelvinhaugh Place
Glasgow
G3 8NH
Tel: +44 (0)141 221 9334

Queen Margaret Residence contact

Bellshaugh Court
Kirklee
Glasgow
G12 0PR
Tel: +44 (0)141 339 3273

Campus Security Team

Email: security-main-campus@glasgow.ac.uk
Communal Tel: 0141 330 4282
Emergency Tel 24/7: 0141 330 4444 OR ext. 4444

Wifi

If you are already registered for Eduroam, this network should be available to you.

Otherwise:

1. Click UofGvisitor icon
2. Click "connect"
3. Click "Get online" when prompted by your browser
4. You will remain connected for 2 hours. To keep using UofGvisitor Wifi, simply reconnect when session expires.

Places to Eat/Drink/Shop on Campus

James McCune Smith Learning Hub (Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm)

Hub Kitchen
Hub To Go - *Snacks, Pots, Sandwiches*

Tinderbox
Treehouse Pizza Café

Gilchrist Postgraduate Club, Gilbert Scott Building (Monday - Friday 8am - 7pm)

Library Café, University Library (Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm)

Gift shop on Campus <https://www.universityofglasgowshops.com/>

Bear in mind that Glasgow University is located in the West End and is surrounded by lots of cafes, restaurants, and shops!

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Thursday 22nd August

15.00–17.00	Arrivals and registration with tea & coffee	Glasgow University Union
16.15–16.45	Seminar chair AV meeting	12 University Gardens 102
17.00–17.45	Civic Wine Reception Kindly sponsored by Glasgow City Council	University Cloisters
17.45–19.15	Civic Welcome on behalf of the Lord Provost by Bailie Scanlon Welcome by Helen Bond Plenary Paper (1) Jennifer Strawbridge, University of Oxford <i>Blindness and the New Testament: An Encounter with the Divine or with Sin?</i>	Humanities Lecture Theatre
19.30–21.00	Dinner	Glasgow University Union
21.00–12.00 am	Social hours (Bar) (Note: Bar requires a £5 minimum on card payments)	Glasgow University Union

Friday 23rd August

From 7:30	Breakfast	Glasgow University Union
09.00–10.30	Seminar session (1) (See page 13 for rooms and Teams links)	Gilmorehill Campus
10.30–11.00	Coffee/Tea Break	Glasgow University Union
11.00–12.30	Seminar session (2) (See page 13 for rooms and Teams links)	Gilmorehill Campus
12.45–14.00	Lunch	Glasgow University Union
14.00–15.00	Free time	

15.00–16.30	Simultaneous Short Papers (See page 13 for rooms and Teams links)	Gilmorehill Campus
16.45–17.30	General Meeting	Humanities Lecture Theatre
17.30–18.00	Coffee/Tea Break	Glasgow University Union
18.00–19.30	Plenary paper (2) Steve Walton, Trinity College Bristol <i>“The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Acts 3:13)—Is That All? Learning about God from the Book of Acts</i>	Humanities Lecture Theatre
19.45–21.00	Dinner	Glasgow University Union
21.00–1.00 am	Social hours (Bar) (Note: Bar requires a £5 minimum on card payments)	Glasgow University Union
Saturday 24th August		
From 7:30	Breakfast & Check out	Glasgow University Union (Store Luggage at the Bridie Library, GUU)
09.15–10.45	Seminar session (3) (See page 13 for rooms and Teams links)	Gilmorehill Campus
10.45–11.15	Coffee/Tea Break	Glasgow University Union
11.15–12.45	Plenary paper (3) George van Kooten, University of Cambridge <i>An Archimedean point for dating the Gospels: the pre-70 CE date of John, the special Lukan-Johannine relationship, the posteriority of Luke, and the nonnecessity of Q</i>	Humanities Lecture Theatre
13.00–14.00	Lunch (then depart)	Glasgow University Union

SEMINAR & SIMULTANEOUS SHORT PAPER LOCATIONS & LINKS

Plenary Papers:	Humanities Lecture Theatre
BNTS Plenary Microsoft Teams	
General Meeting:	Humanities Lecture Theatre
Ancient Judaism & Christianity:	5 University Gardens Room 101
BNTS Ancient Judaism and Christianity Microsoft Teams	
Book of Acts:	12 University Gardens Room 101
BNTS Book of Acts Microsoft Teams	
Book of Revelation:	4 University Gardens Room 202
BNTS Book of Revelation Microsoft Teams	
Early Christianity:	5 University Gardens Room 205
BNTS Early Christianity Microsoft Teams	
Johannine Literature:	4 Professors' Square Room 205
BNTS Johannine Literature Microsoft Teams	
Later Epistles:	4 Professors' Square 305
BNTS Later Epistles Microsoft Teams	
New Testament & Christian Theology:	4 University Gardens Room 203 (First Session on Friday: Humanities Lecture Theatre for the joint session with Paul Seminar)
BNTS New Testament and Christian Theology Microsoft Teams	
Paul:	Humanities Lecture Theatre
BNTS Paul Microsoft Teams	
Synoptic Gospels:	East Quad Lecture Theatre Room 266 on Friday / 12 University Gardens 102 on Saturday
BNTS Synoptic Gospels Microsoft Teams	
Simultaneous Short Papers 1:	Humanities Lecture Theatre
BNTS Simultaneous Short Papers 1 Microsoft Teams	
Simultaneous Short Papers 2:	Gilbert Scott Room 466
BNTS Simultaneous Short Papers 2 Microsoft Teams	
Simultaneous Short Papers 3:	East Quad Lecture Theatre Room 266
BNTS Simultaneous Short Papers 3 Microsoft Teams	

PLENARY PAPER DETAILS AND ABSTRACTS

Plenary Paper (1): Thursday Evening

Chair: Garrick Allen

Jennifer Strawbridge, University of Oxford

‘Blindness and the New Testament: An Encounter with the Divine or with Sin?’

For numerous ancient writers—from Callimachus and Paul to the authors of Tobit, the Gospel of John, and Acts—loss of sight and divine action are intimately related. In many cases, blindness involves some kind of human-divine encounter, yet descriptions of this relationship between blindness and the divine and reasons given for divinely inflicted sight loss vary greatly.

For some ancient writers, blindness is the result of knowing too much or signals great insight or prophetic ability; for others, blindness is a sign of ignorance and loss of power. For some, blindness is the result of being too close to the divine; for others, blindness signals separation from the divine.

Certainly blindness can be (and has been) used to argue for God’s power, both to remove sight and to restore it. This paper, however, explores the assumptions associated with blindness as knowledge or ignorance, as divine intimacy or separation and whether a spectrum of knowledge and divine encounter exists onto which ancient persons with sight loss are placed. Through engagement with well-known figures who experience divinely inflicted sight loss or restoration (e.g. Tiresias, Tobit, Paul, the sightless in John 9) this paper addresses the question: Does a discernible shift take place concerning perceptions of blindness in early Christian writings and why does this matter?

Plenary Paper (2) The Graham Stanton Memorial Lecture: Friday Evening

Chair: Helen Bond

Steve Walton, Trinity College Bristol

“The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Acts 3:13)—Is That All? Learning about God from the Book of Acts’

Handout available at: <https://stevewalton.info/handout-for-my-graham-stanton-memorial-lecture/>

James Dunn asserts that Paul has nothing to say about God which cannot be found in the Jewish Scriptures, that his understanding of God is ‘axiomatic’. This paper engages with the book of Acts to see how far that is an accurate picture of Luke’s portrayal of God there: is God only ‘the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’ (3:13) or is there more to be said? There are a considerable number of mentions of God in Acts, especially in the theologically loaded speeches—significantly more than mentions of Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, I shall study a series of case studies: the gateway to Acts (1:1–2:47); the healing of the man at the Beautiful Gate and the speech, Sanhedrin hearing, and prayer which flow from it (3:1–4:31); a sequence about the sharing (or not) of possessions (4:32–5:11); and Saul’s encounter with the exalted Jesus on the road to Damascus (9:1–22). I shall conclude by summarising how God is portrayed, what God does or is done to God, the functions of talk of God, the impact of

Luke's portrait of Jesus and the Spirit on his understanding of God (and vice versa), and the agents and adversaries God has, and thus that Luke's portrait of God is a significant advance on the portrait he inherits from Scripture.

Plenary Paper (3): Saturday Morning

Chair: Andrew Byers

George van Kooten, University of Cambridge

'An Archimedean point for dating the Gospels: the pre-70 CE date of John, the special Lukan-Johannine relationship, the posteriority of Luke, and the nonnecessity of Q'

As revolutions are often coming from the margins of their own day, this paper that addresses some marginal issues in the New Testament writings is not very exciting in itself, but, to borrow an imagery of James Watt's Glaswegian (!) steam engine, might build up the pressure that will move our understanding of the Gospels forward. It remains to be seen if this force can be managed or ends in a spectacular explosion of the machinery. If it works, it might offer the simplest solution of the interrelation between all four Gospels.

An Archimedean point for the solution of this problem is now proposed in the present tense that John uses to tell that 'there is in' (ἔστιν δὲ ἐν) Jerusalem a monumental Herodian pool-with-five-porticoes (5:2), which was probably destroyed during the First Jewish Revolt against Rome (66–70 CE). This argument has been proposed before by Bengel (1742), Blass (1907), Robinson (1976/85), and Wallace (1990) but is now for the first time based on broader grammatical, historical, and archaeological observations.

Subsequently, this paper draws attention to the verbatim parallels between the Gospels of John and Luke that were already noticed by Cribbs, Shellard, Morgan, and Matson. If the Gospel of John is to be dated before 66 CE, it seems likely that John is prior to Luke and that it was Luke who was using John. If that is the case, what was John's argument in the Johannine-Lukan parallels, and what did Luke make of it? It is argued that especially the major agreements have their background in John's particular agenda. Luke mainly employs John in his narrative of the trial, death, and post-resurrection appearances of Jesus and it seems that he, as in a Διὰ τριῶν, makes use of all three Gospels before him, including John's.

1. ANCIENT JUDAISM & CHRISTIANITY

Chairs: Yael Fisch & J. Thomas Hewitt

Session 1

Kendall Davis, University of Edinburgh

‘Making Jesus in Our Own Image: The Nonviolent Messiah as “Redefinition” of Jewish Messianism?’

In the synoptic gospels Jesus is portrayed as messiah. Yet scholars often insist that Jesus or the gospels redefine what this entailed. As Sigmund Mowinckel states, “For Jesus, the Jewish Messianic idea was the temptation of Satan, which He had to reject.” One of the most typical ways that Jewish messianism is allegedly redefined in the synoptics is the rejection of violence. The story goes that while Jewish messiahs are violent, conquering warlords, the synoptic messiah is a peaceful, suffering messiah who rejects violence as antithetical to his mission. This paper will critique this trope by discussing (1) the role of violence in synoptic portrayals of Jesus in comparison with other Jewish messiahs of the period and (2) how the synoptic gospels position their discussion of God’s anointed one in relation to broader “messianic expectations.” While the synoptic Jesus has a complex relationship with violence, the messianism of the synoptic gospels is best understood not as a redefinition of Second Temple Jewish messianism but as a particular instance of that very phenomenon.

Barbara Crostini, Newman Institute

‘The Dubious Reputation of the Widow of Zarephath from Dura Europos to Luke 4’

One of the *crux interpretum* of Luke 4, a pivotal passage in the structure of the third Gospel, is finding a reason for the extremely violent reaction of the inhabitants of Nazareth against Jesus: they wanted to throw him off a cliff. Their action is all the more puzzling as it appears to contradict their initial welcoming of Jesus’ reading in the synagogue. The words of Isaiah that Jesus reads out, though extreme and in many ways revolutionary, had not by themselves raised opposition, and neither had Jesus’s authoritative teaching, up to a point. What did Jesus say for the atmosphere to change so dramatically, from cheerful welcoming to hostile pursuit? The analysis of a panel painting on the West wall of the early third-century synagogue at Dura Europos suggests a possible answer. In it, the widow of Zarephath is represented wearing yellow garments, which in Roman theatrical conventions signified a prostitute’s trade. I suggest that the disproportionate reaction was due to the reverberations of her reputation. Through their violence, Nazarenes were dissociating themselves from such dubious performative traditions. The passage itself is constructed to obfuscate a direct connection to the Sareptian by inserting Naaman’s episode in-between, a decoy which nevertheless keeps the referent towards Syria, while preserving a dramatic ending in Jesus’s mysterious escape “off stage”.

Matthew Sharp, University of St Andrews

‘Supercelestial Gods Between Philosophy and Apocalyptic’

The myth of the soul’s ascent in Plato’s *Phaedrus* 246e–247b is a source-text utilised by “pagans,” Jews, and Christians alike in the first three centuries CE to describe a

supercelestial location where the highest God dwells (e.g., Philo, *Opif.* 70–71; Maximus of Tyre 11.10; Origen, *Cels.* 6.19–20). Recent scholarship on ancient Jewish pseudepigrapha has also drawn on this conversation to help explain the ouranological schemes of certain apocalypses such as *3 Baruch* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (Poirier 2004; Kulik 2019). In this paper I argue that these apocalypses are not drawing on this Platonic tradition but are working with a different cosmology. Rather than positing a separate realm “above heaven” they simply add more heavens, which exhibit a physical continuity with the heavens below. This comparison has implications for how we understand different notions of “transcendence” across various texts, traditions, and scholarly canons. It also has implications for the interpretation of some New Testament texts that speak of Christ’s ascent above the heavens (Eph 4:10; Heb 7:26).

Session 2

Panel review of Grant Macaskill, *The Entangled Enoch: 2 Enoch and the Cultures of Late Antiquity* (Brill, 2024).

Book Abstract: This study reframes and reorients the study of 2 Enoch, moving beyond debates about Christian or Jewish authorship and considering the work in the context of eclectic and erudite cultures in late antiquity, particularly Syria. The study compares the work with the Parables of Enoch and then with a variety of writings associated with late antique Syrian theology, demonstrating the distinctively eclectic character of 2 Enoch. It offers new paradigms for research into the pseudepigrapha. Book site:

<https://brill.com/display/title/69998?language=en>

Panellists: Annette Yoshiko Reed, Harvard University; Liv Lied, Norwegian School of Theology

Respondent: Grant Macaskill, University of Aberdeen

Session 3

Nathanael Vette, University of Edinburgh

‘Within What Judaism? Interbellum Judaism (70-130 CE) and the Study of Formative Judaism and Christian Origins’

Redescribing Christian documents as ‘within Judaism’ has now become *de rigueur*. Corpora like the Pauline epistles, Gospels and Acts – as well as early Christian attitudes towards Torah, gentiles and ritual purity – are increasingly seen, not as distinctive Christian expressions, but as representing the diversity of ‘Second Temple’ Jewish practices and beliefs. The trend has challenged stubborn chauvinistic myths of early Christian uniqueness. What the ‘within Judaism’ approach has largely failed to appreciate is Jewish uniqueness, particularly the distinctiveness of certain periods in Jewish history. To this point, the ‘within Judaism’ label has been applied to the authentic Paulines and canonical Gospels, corpora on either side of 70 CE. While Paul’s experience as a Jew would have been mostly continuous with what came before (inviting comparisons to other Second Temple material), the experience of Jews living after 70 CE was not. When early Christian documents are read alongside Jewish documents and practices confidently dated to the period between 70 and 130 CE, the broad contours of an Interbellum Judaism emerge: there is a shared interest in 1) the destruction and reimagining of the Temple; 2) the continuation and renewal of the covenant; 3) the restoration of the land and the Messianic kingdom; 4) identity formation and redefinition; and 5) perseverance, piety and prayer. Adopting Interbellum Judaism as an

analytical and hermeneutical category would refine the welcome insights of the ‘within Judaism’ approach.

Ryan Heinsch, Crown University

‘Living Like a Gentile: Paul, Jubilees, and the Transgression of Group Halakha’

In Galatians 2:14—the so-called “Antioch Incident”—Paul accuses Peter of living like a gentile. While scholars have long held that Paul’s description of Peter was factual because Peter had abandoned kashrut, more recent proposals suggest that Paul’s language was meant to be hyperbolic (e.g., Willitts) or subversive irony (e.g., Nanos). This paper will challenge these claims by considering Paul’s description of Peter alongside of a similar accusation found in Jubilees 6:32–35 made against other presumably Torah observant groups who transgress the observance of Jubilees’s preferred calendar. From this, it will be argued that Paul’s description of Peter was honest—not hyperbolic or ironic—but necessitates location within the broader context of intra-Jewish halakhic dispute that could treat the transgression of a group’s halakha as akin to living like a gentile. The accusation of living like a gentile, then, does not mean that Peter had abandoned kashrut, but it does mean that, in abandoning table-fellowship with foreskinned gentiles, Peter violated a salient aspect of the halakha to which he and other such messianics subscribed.

Logan Williams, University of Aberdeen

‘Korban and Conflicting Commandments: The Pharisaic Ruling on the Vow of Mark 7.11’

In Mark 7.11, Jesus reports that the ‘tradition of the elders’ includes a ruling on a rather complicated legal case in which one speaks to their parents, ‘Whatever you would benefit from my property is Korban!’. Jesus objects to the ruling of the Pharisaic tradition which considers this vow binding. While commentators often proceed as if the Pharisaic position is obviously incoherent, this paper explores the possible legal reasoning that justified the elders’ ruling by tracing how Jews understood and practiced the fifth commandment and prohibitive vowing in the late second temple, Tannaitic, and Amoraic eras. In light of the rabbinic explication that obligation to vows can override positive commandments (הנדריים חלים על דבר מצוה) and the widespread principle that honouring God ranks higher than honouring parents (e.g., Jos. C. Ap. 2.206), I tentatively argue that the elders’ position was based on the conviction that the (d’Orayta) obligation to abide by a vow (Num. 30.3; Deut. 21.21–23) constituted a matter of honouring God and could therefore override the obligation to honour parents if those two obligations came into conflict. Properly understanding the Pharisaic position will facilitate a more precise account of Jesus’ objection to this ruling in Mark 7.9–13.

2. THE BOOK OF ACTS

Chairs: Monique Cuany & James Morgan

Session 1: The Book of Acts and Graeco-Roman culture

Todd Thomason, University of Edinburgh

‘When You Hear “Aeneas,” Think Aeneas as well as Rome’

This paper builds upon Michael Kochenash's 2017 JBL article "You Can't Hear 'Aeneas' without Thinking of Rome." Kochenash establishes that Aeneas was not (as many commentators assert) a common name in Luke's time and argues persuasively that readers of Acts 9 would naturally associate this name with the mythic hero of Vergil's Aeneid. Given (1) the strong familial connection to the mythic Aeneas that Julius Caesar promoted, and Caesar Augustus later proliferated, and (2) the heavenly pro-Roman, pro-Augustan nature of the Aeneid, Kochenash rightly identifies Aeneas as a name that would evoke Rome's dominion in the minds of Luke's audience. However, after firmly establishing these symbolic associations, Kochenash does not take the next, natural step of interpreting Peter's healing of Aeneas in light of them. I contend that Luke's depiction of a man named Aeneas as paralyzed, unable to support even his own weight, is an intentional, symbolic reversal of the iconic portrait of Aeneas within the Roman imperial milieu – a reversal that serves Luke's proclamation of Jesus as Kyrios and Christos.

Rubin McClain, University of Glasgow

'Utopian Language as Rhetoric of Pedagogy'

The early church in the book of Acts exemplifies God's empowering presence following Pentecost. The community embraces a communal life marked by values such as sharing goods, recurring times of prayer, and meals together (Acts 2:42–47). This summary underscores the community's significance within the narrative, typically analyzed by scholars either as a literary convention transitioning the narrative or as an allusion to ancient utopias. Despite differing perspectives, I argue for interpreting this passage as a unified whole. This summary statement intentionally alludes to utopic ideals to emphasize the community's values and practices within a rhetorical unit of a 'summary statement' as articulated in Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks. While the content is recapitulated throughout the narrative with diminishing detail, the repetition serves pedagogical purposes for the listener through mimesis or imitation. By merging the interlocking concepts of the literary depiction of utopias and rhetorical summary statements, we discover the author's pedagogical purposes. The repetition of the ideal community encourages listeners and recipient communities to imitate the early church's vision for life and practice.

Session 2: Book review

Book: Monique Cuany, *Proclaiming the Kerygma in Athens: the argument of Acts 17:16-34 in light of the Epicurean and Stoic debates about piety and divine images in early post-Hellenistic times*

Respondents: Loveday Alexander, University of Sheffield and University of Manchester, and Kavin Rowe, Duke University

Book abstract: Two major questions still divide and puzzle commentators with respect to Paul's speech in Athens (Acts 17:16-34): What is the relationship between the speech's message and Greek philosophy? And what is the link between the speech's main part and its 'Christian conclusion'? After analysing the debates on piety and divine images between Stoic and Epicurean philosophers in early post-Hellenistic times, this book presents a new interpretation of the argument of Paul's famous speech in light of this religious and philosophical context. It argues that far from being an unrelated 'appendix' with little relationship to the rest of the speech, the Christological conclusion of the discourse represents the very climax of its argument. It also suggests that this argument would have been much more understandable by a Greek audience than has been thought in the past.

The study then concludes with suggestions for our evaluation of Luke's attitude towards Graeco-Roman culture and the apologetic purpose of the book of Acts.

Session 3: Exegetical studies on Acts

Ellen Howard, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

'The Gospel in Motion: A Narratological Analysis of Acts 22:22-29'

This paper provides a narratological analysis of the episode in Acts where Paul uses his Roman citizenship to avoid a beating in Jerusalem. Luke's detailed portrayal of this event is intentional as it holds significant rhetorical importance within the broader context of Luke/Acts. This incident, set against the backdrop of racial tensions between Jews and Gentiles, underscores key themes in Acts such as the acceptance of the gospel among Gentiles and the spread of the gospel 'to the ends of the earth'. Luke's narrative structure is carefully crafted, with Paul's citizenship playing a crucial role in his protection and eventual mission to Rome. This analysis situates the passage within the larger narrative discourse, suggesting that Luke uses Paul's Roman identity not only to advance the plot but also to emphasize the key themes and purposes of Luke/Acts as a whole.

Keith Pinckney, University of St. Andrews

'Re-Narrating Israel's Wilderness Story in Acts 7:39-46: A comparison in early Jewish Exegesis'

Stephen's speech in Acts 7 is a response to an accusation made of him speaking against the temple and the law of Moses. Stephen's point is to highlight that this isn't the case, by providing a rebuttal using Israel's scriptures. This paper analyzes a small section of the speech Acts 7:37-43. It is not self-evident why/how this pericope uses Deut. 18:15, LXX Num 14:3, Ex. 32:1, 23, Amos 5:25-27 to refute the opponents. Rather than haphazardly citing verses to meet rhetorical goals, this paper argues that Stephen makes exegetical argument(s) in ways that are like what we find elsewhere in early Judaism. These include techniques like allusion, omission, addition, compression, and re-narration. When compared with other early Jewish texts such as MT Jer. 42-44, 4Q175, CD 3, 5-9, LAB 10:7, 12:1-10, Ant.2.12.4, 3.79-99, 1 Cor. 10 amidst both their similarities and differences we see that the author of Acts is best situated in his reuse of Israel's scriptures within early Jewish exegetical practices, of these same texts, to highlight the rebellion of his contemporaries.

3. BOOK OF REVELATION

Chairs: Martina Vercesi & Sean Ryan

Session 1: Panel on the *Editio Critica Maior* of the Book of Revelation with Prof. Dr Martin Karrer and Dr Darius Müller

Overview of the *Editio Critica Maior*

Textual History and Textual Changes

Textual Structure and Punctuation

General Discussion

Examples

Consequences for the Interpretation of Revelation

General Discussion

Session 2: Textual Criticism of the Book of Revelation

Aly Abd El Kadermaria, University of Milan “La Statale”

‘The Theologumenon of the Throne in Rev: A Textual Criticism Investigation of an Issue of Early-Christian Royal Theology’

This paper delves into the reception and use of the lemma «θρόνος (throne)» in Rev, of whose lexicon this term represents a peculiar character (47/62 occurrences in NT), worth investigating for two main reasons:

It is absent from the other Johannine writings (de Boer, 2018).

The textual transmission of Rev repeatedly displays peculiar variant readings (e.g., «στόμα [mouth]» [Rev 22:1]) of this word.

The reception of θρόνος from the LXX and the Second Temple Jewish literature to the NT and the early-Christian writings (I-IV CE) will be evaluated to deepen the comprehension of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of these Rev “θρόνος-verses,” particularly comparing their usage before and after Constantine’s age. This research intersects also the debate about the text types of Rev (e.g., the “Western” one), challenging their traditional definition (Parker, 2008) and emphasizing the need to broaden the range of their potential witnesses (e.g., allusions to Rev 22:1 in *Acts Thom.*) to understand the text of Rev and its significance in the early-Christian communities.

Erica Leonardi, University of Milan “La Statale”

“And you have tried those saying themselves to be apostles and are not, and have found them liars” (Rev 2:2). Between “apostles” and “jews”, the Sitz im Leben and textual tradition of Rev 2:2’

Given the textual weakness of Rev 2:2, affected by significant variants, e.g. “Jews” instead of “apostles” within the Latin and Armenian tradition, this contribution aims to reconsider the *constitutio textus* of this verse. The scarcity of direct pre-4th century witnesses for Revelation suggests surveying the secondary tradition of Rev 2:2. After a synoptical comparison of the “seven letters” (Rev 2 – 3) to define the context of Rev 2:2, a lexical and form critical analysis will be promoted to discuss its *Sitz im Leben* and its possible references to overlapping Early Christian traditions, namely the Pauline and Lukan ones (e.g. Acts 19:1). The survey of the textual tradition of Rev 2:2 will also allow to evaluate if its variant readings harmonise to 2:9 and 3:9, highlight a layered redaction or preserve an earlier text. The case study of Rev 2:2 both aims to a methodological discussion of the philological approach to Rev textual tradition and suggests rediscovering the core relevance of the *Sitz im Leben* of these difficult NT loci.

Andrea Riccardo Rossi, University of Milan “La Statale”

‘Textual Criticism on the Book of Revelation and the Earliest Quotations from the Latin Christian Authors (III-IV cent.). The “Thousand Years Pericope” (Rev 20:1-10) as Case Study’

This paper aims to contribute to the critical discussion on the *constitutio textus* of Rev 20:1-10. Its edited text mostly relies on uncials *Sinaiticus* and *Alexandrinus*: the complete loss of

pre-4th cent. manuscripts witnessing this pericope and the politico-theological dismissal of chiliasm under Constantine suggest re-examining the earliest (indirect) textual transmission of this passage. The analysis will be held in two stages:

First, the quotations from Rev 20:1-10 up to the 4th century will be systematically gathered and examined.

Second, the variant readings found therein will be discussed, focusing on the peculiar *lectiones* found in the Early Christian Latin authors – notably, the earliest textual witnesses to this pericope.

At last, the relationship between the *textus receptus* of Rev 20:1-10 and its “*Vetus latina*” text (cf. Geigenfeind 2020) will be discussed. Indeed, the pre-4th cent. Latin quotations from this passage display a distinctive, uniform text (cf. the septenary *theologoumenon* [Rev 20:7]): they might therefore preserve an ancient step in the textual tradition of Rev 20:1-10, distinct from that of the later Greek manuscripts.

Session 3: Receptions of the Book of Revelation

Mark W. Elliott, University of the Highlands and Islands

‘Ambrose and the Apocalypse of John: the value of his interpretation’

The Apocalypse of John was used, albeit not well used by Ambrose of Milan: there was no commentary on it by him. However, it can be argued that the ecclesiological interpretation by Augustine was prepared for not only by Tyconius the Donatist, but by the bishop-mentor of the future author of the City of God. For in a sample of Ambrose’s ‘spiritualising’ interpretation we learn: there is a future resurrection but we prepare for it by getting the soul lighter. The threat of judgement like a coming storm is viewed as an encouragement to correction, to a ‘penitentiary’ lifestyle—cf. his positive interpretation of 1 Jn5:16 (‘the sin that leads to death’). One can see Ambrose’s ‘spin’ of the text of the Apocalypse as a case of application to his own ecclesial situation. Or one could also view it from the angle of ‘biblical theology’ or the *analogia fidei* (as it came to be known in the Early Modern period), where texts were read in the light of other, clearer biblical texts. Or, lastly, Ambrose’s approach can be seen partly as apologetic or possibly taking account of understanding of reality with a fair amount of speculation, which could yet be defended on the ground of (as his forerunner Origen would disclaim): ‘has the reader got any better ideas?’

Olga Vasiloglou, University of Aberdeen

‘Reading the Apocalypse of John in the Context of Asia Minor Shavuot Practices’

The Apocalypse of John has rarely been read as evidence of Jewish liturgy taking place in Asia Minor in the first and second centuries. Although different parts of the book have been read as drawing on Jewish festival imagery, like the heavy use of Yom Kippur symbols in chapters four and five, such analysis usually has at its center the symbolic language of the book, drawing mainly from the OT for its own purposes. In this paper, I will attempt to demonstrate how the language of the book specifically points to the festival of Shavuot, a connection that has been generally overlooked. I will place these symbols alongside reconstructed Shavuot practices in Asia Minor and will attempt to envision what kind of liturgy this would have looked like. This will require some imagination, since I will deal with both textual materials, like Origen’s 1st Homily on Ezekiel, and non-textual material from, for example, the city of Magdala.

Luise Rössel, University of Glasgow

'Imagining futures in post-apocalyptic speculative fiction: reading Revelation with Octavia Butler'

Biblical reception history, focusing on the cultural, artistic, and social influence and use of the biblical texts, is particularly drawn to the Book of Revelation because of the text's visual nature and drastic imagery which have continuously inspired artists of all kinds. When looking at literary engagements with Revelation, most scholars focus on explicitly (evangelical) Christian literature such as *The Left Behind Series* by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins (1995-2007) or *The Late Great Planet Earth* by Hal Lindsey (1970). In this paper, I pay attention to a genre that is largely overlooked by biblical reception historians, speculative fiction. I will look at Octavia Butler's post-apocalyptic *Parables* duology, comprised of *Parable of the Sower* (1993) and *Parable of the Talents* (1998). I argue that Butler directly engages with Christian faith and the Christian Bible in general and with Revelation in particular to ask how Christian societies imagined their future in the past, how this might have influenced the ongoing present, and what can be learned from it for the future going forward.

4. EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Chairs: Kimberley Fowler & Jane Mclarty

Session 1

Triantafillos Kantartzis, Ludwig Maximillians Universität, München

'The Narrator's Craft: Unveiling Jesus Through the Authorial Lens in the Acta Pilati'

This study delves into the narrative dynamics of early Christian apocryphal texts, with a focused examination of the *Acta Pilati* from the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. It highlights the text's complex narrative structure and its nuanced depiction of Jesus Christ. The paper investigates the role of the author/outer narrator in shaping the portrayal of Jesus through the integration of embedded character narratives. Key questions include how the author/outer narrator influences the narrative delivery and the extent to which narrative interventions contribute to the understanding of Jesus' character and the text's theological discourse, particularly in relation to early Christian perceptions of Jesus' identity and mission. By analyzing the interplay between the authorial voice and character testimonies, this study aims to uncover the sophisticated narrative mechanisms that shape Christological perspectives. This approach not only sheds light on the *Acta Pilati's* contribution to early Christian narrative art but also underscores the significance of narrative strategies in crafting theological identities within the Christian apocryphal tradition.

Amy Saunders, University of Durham

“Sethians” and “Valentinians” or just Interacting Traditions?’

The modern study of “Gnosticism,” much like its historical adherents, is concerned with proper naming and categorisation. We are concerned, for example, with naming and delineating groups: “Sethians” wrote the *Apocryphon of John* and “Eastern Valentinians” the *Tripartite Tractate*, and Irenaeus' presents a “Western Valentinian” account in Book One of *Against Heresies*. Despite these contrasting attributions, a comparative study of the preexistent realm in these three accounts could reveal a more interrelated textual tradition.

Said accounts bear noteworthy resemblances not only in naming concerns, but also in the structures of their systems: in each, multiple generations of procreation form a complex family tree of progressive expansion away from the Father. These commonalities are not exact, and variations are not always the “Sethian” versus the two “Valentinian” texts. Rather, across different categories, two texts frequently agree, while another deviates, and the combination is variable. I therefore propose that when analysed using narrative and structural methods these texts suggest a far more shared heritage – and less distinction between their traditions – than previously assumed.

Priscilla Buongiorno, Durham University

‘The Star in Their Eyes: A Hermeneutical Interpretation of the San Celso Sarcophagus in Milan [WP32 243, 4-6]’

This paper problematises the peculiar rendition of the epiphany cycle on the San Celso sarcophagus, which depicts the three Magi following the star away from the manger. The symmetry and orientation of the scenes towards the apocalyptic Christ at its centre suggest that the San Celso sarcophagus represents a testimony to the early Christian visual hermeneutic in Milan. Dated to the early or mid-fourth century, this sarcophagus constitutes one of the first examples of early Christian iconography known from the Ambrosian city, although much of the background around its commission and realisation remains unknown. The complex weave of iconographical choices and literary sources here shown is coherent with a hermeneutical construction. The paper will discuss the epiphany cycle and the parallel established with the Protoevangelium of James, brought forth by the nativity and Thomas’s disbelief scenes. Additionally, it will argue that the themes of sin and gender, as portrayed on the sides of the chest (healing of the woman with the issue of blood and Peter smiting the rock), may hint towards a female commission.

Session 2

Carolyn Davison, Queen’s University Belfast

‘Damasus: Elogia, Evolving Identity and the New Testament’

Damasus, bishop of Rome (366-384 AD), operated in an era of dynamic change with regards to what it meant to be a Christian and, in particular, a Roman Christian. With persecution becoming a distant memory, an amended collective memory befitting of the evolving status of Roman Christians, under the authority of the bishop of Rome, was needed. Damasus utilised the Catacombs of St Callixtus, arguably the most prominent subterranean burial complex in Rome, to promote his vision of an evolved, unified Roman-Christian identity. An integral element of this utilisation was the placing of elogia, written in the style of Virgilian hexameters, in key martyrial areas.

The prevailing view in modern scholarship is that Damasus employed the elogia to innovatively rewrite Christianity in Graeco-Roman military language. However, focussing on *The Elogium of the Saints*, this paper proposes that Damasus did not intend to set such a precedent. Rather, he cleverly affiliated the Roman Church with Graeco-Roman identity while simultaneously, through the image of the soldier, anchoring it in the teaching of the New Testament (Philippians 2:25, 2 Timothy 2:3 and Philemon 1:2). This paper proposes that Damasus’ solution for the evolving Roman-Christian identity was one in which what it meant to be ‘Christian’ and ‘Roman’ aligned, while standing firm in the apostolic message.

Elizabeth Clayton, Oxford University

‘When you come together frequently, the powers of Satan are overthrown’ (Eph. 13.1): Ignatius of Antioch’s Apotropaic Eucharists’

The Ignatian letters offer intriguing details on the nature of Christian communities at a key point in the development of their worship practices. One dynamic of Ignatius’ presentation of Eucharistic gatherings is especially confounding—that these meetings can cast down Satan and undo his destruction. He writes to the church in Ephesus, “Try your hardest therefore to come together frequently, to give thanks (εὐχαριστία) and glory to God. For when you come together frequently, the powers of Satan are overthrown” (Eph. 13.1). This paper will thus argue that, for Ignatius, since unity accomplishes the end of all war on heaven and earth (Eph. 13.2), and the celebration of the Eucharist both manifests and bolsters a community’s unity (Phld. 4; Smyr. 6.2; 8.1), the Eucharist therefore takes on a kind of apotropaic function. Further, drawing on observations and insights of ritual studies scholars (namely Catherine Bell), the paper will consider how Ignatius imagines the Eucharist can promote and represent unity in such a way that its practice has implications beyond the material world.

Isaac A. Olivarez, Cambridge University

‘Christians, Accusations, and Myths: Eating People? Or, An Eating People?’

A particular set of accusations against Christians associated them with “Thyestean” feasts, “Oedipodean” intercourse, and Bacchic rites. This Thyestean-Oedipodean-Bacchic confluence of accusations implied that Christians were guilty of killing and eating people at their incestuous feasts. Upon closer inspection, a motif that emerges from these accusations is that they represented more than surface-level misunderstandings of Christian eucharistic practices. Rather, they were culturally-rooted attempts to discredit dangerous religious innovations within the Roman Empire. Moreover, they provide a vital witness from non-Christian sources to one of early Christianity’s most salient features: meal fellowship. This perception shaped their reality: their eating habits often became the impetus for their mistreatment. What transpired surrounding the dining rituals of these mythological figures apparently remained familiar enough by the third century CE to delineate a certain amoral standard for those both circulating and refuting these rumours. Still, rather than abandoning shared meals, Christians insisted on meal-centred gatherings. This distinction was central to the early stages of Christianity’s development, as can be seen at key junctures of the early church’s growth in Acts.

Session 3: Book Panel on Tom de Bruin’s *Fan Fiction and Early Christian Writings: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and Canon* (London: Bloomsbury, 2024)

Tom de Bruin, Radboud University

Kelsie Rodenbiker, University of Glasgow

Julia Lindenlaub, Cambridge University Press

Richard Britton, Independent Scholar

5. JOHANNINE LITERATURE

Chairs: Elizabeth Corsar & Paulus de Jong

Session 1

Cor Bennema, London School of Theology

‘Volition in the Johannine Writings’

Volition is a neglected subject in Johannine scholarship. People in the realm below do not know God, are enslaved to sin and under the devil’s influence. While Jesus came to make God known, liberate people and invite them to enter God’s realm, John indicates that people are incapable of coming to Jesus to experience this reality, except by divine initiative. Part I presents the argument that all people have volition but their volition is affected by the different forces that operate in John’s polarized narrative world. Part II examines how divine volition intersects with human volition. Frey (2018) argues that divine drawing precedes human belief and divine hardening precedes human unbelief. Contra Frey’s symmetry, I will argue that while human belief is effected by prior divine action, the cause for human unbelief is found in people themselves, under the influence of external forces (cf. Tops 2022; Attridge 2014). In fact, people’s rejection or acceptance of Jesus are both volitional acts, but not entirely autonomous because external forces (whether the devil or God) influence human volition.

Simon Dürr, Pädagogische Hochschule Karlsruhe

‘Seeing and Interpreting the Light: Resonances of Johannine Anthropology with Ancient Philosophical Traditions about the Human Calling’

This paper investigates the resonances of Johannine anthropology with ancient philosophical traditions about the vocation of human beings in the cosmos. In particular, the two-part structure of such a vocation, first, seeing the world in relation to God and, second, interpreting this insight in one’s life and actions, which finds full expression in Epictetus, but is more widespread in ancient philosophical tradition, opens new aspects for a fuller understanding of some of the language of seeing and witnessing in the fourth Gospel. A brief look at 1 John finds similar resonances, though with a more concretely ethical import.

Ben Castaneda, Edinburgh Theological Seminary

‘The Johannine Jubilee: Reading Restoration in 1 John’

In this paper I will explore the presentation of Jesus as the agent of eschatological restoration in 1 John. Building on the work of Paul Sloan and Logan Williams in Gospels scholarship, I will argue that distinctive features of 1 John’s argumentation incorporate and reformulate scriptural and Second Temple traditions associated with the Jubilee. In this paper, I will focus on two of these features. First, Jesus is identified in 2:1–2 as the heavenly “advocate” (παράκλητος) before the Father and as the “atoning sacrifice” (ἱλασμός; cf. 4:10) concerning our sins. Over against many commentators who downplay the connection, I would contend that this is a reworking of the Day of Atonement legislation in Leviticus 16 and specifically Lev 25:9, inaugurating the Jubilee year. As a parallel, remission of sins and a heavenly mediator likewise feature in 11QM^{elch}, a text shaped by Jubilee traditions. Second, the communal love ethic described in 1 John (e.g., 3:16–18) serves as an outworking of Jesus’s sacrifice for sins. I argue this reformulates the Jubilee legislation and its receptions (e.g., Lev 25:35, 39; Deut 15:7), with compassion for one’s poor and needy “brother” motivated by love.

Session 2

Gwangsoo Lee, University of St Andrews

‘The Death of the Good Shepherd Discourse in John 10 and Its Background’

There is an agreement that the shepherd-sheep analogy plays a crucial role in John’s Christology. However, there are different views on its background. Some claim the influence of the Greco-Roman context. Jerome H. Neyrey, for example, argues for significant similarities between the rhetorical tradition of the “Noble Death” and John’s discourse on the noble shepherd. However, he overlooks the anomaly of Jesus’ death in light of the shepherd analogy of ancient Israel. Many cling to the Jewish background. John Quasten, for example, argues that an understanding of the parable requires a look at the conditions of pastoral life in the Holy Land. This position naturally leads to an examination of the biblical background. Jesus teaches his willing death (vv. 11, 15, 17), and his teaching causes controversy among his hearers (vv. 19–21). This reaction is evidence of the difference between Jesus’ use of the shepherd-sheep analogy and the audience’s precedent. I argue that Jewish Scripture and Greco-Roman literature have the typical shepherd imagery, but John unusually describes the death of Jesus in shepherd language.

Marlene Reid, University of Aberdeen

‘Rhetorical Parallels: Connecting John 4:1-43 “inside” the Gospel of John’

In John 4, disclosure of the Samaritan woman’s verbalization of five references to the identity of Jesus is connected to rhetorical parallels throughout the Gospel. First, reference to a “prophet προφήτης” (4:19), evokes the expected προφήτης like Moses of Deut 18:18 with verbalization in the Gospel (i.e., 1:21, 25; etc.). Second, she refers to “knowing the Μεσσίας is coming, Οἶδα ὅτι Μεσσίας ἔρχεται (4:25). The cognate verb Οἶδα disclosed the woman’s knowledge of the coming Μεσσίας. She proclaimed, “he will reveal to us all things” ἀναγγελεῖ ἡμῖν πάντα. Most importantly, the Μεσσίας is connected to the Jewish Μεσσίας of the Hebrew Bible paralleled with Andrews’ usage, “we have found the Μεσσίας” (1:41). Third, “Come, see a man” δεῦτε ἴδετε ἄνθρωπον (4:29) influenced the Samaritans and its counter verb Ἔρχεσθε καὶ ἴδετε “come and see” in similar instances (1:39; etc.). Fourth, she engaged fellow Samaritans, “can this be the Christ?” μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός; (4:29). The usage of Χριστός confirms the Jewish Χριστός as the focus of the dialogue (i.e., 1:20, 25; etc.). Fifth, the Samaritan villagers identify Jesus as “Savior of the world,” ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου (4:42). The word, σῶζω and its cognate σωτὴρ inform the continuity between the Samaritan’s recognition of ‘Jesus as the Savior’ (i.e., 3:17; etc.) and his self-identification of “I, who speak to you, am He” (4:26; etc.).

Samuel Voo, Vancouver School of Theology,

‘Implications of Johannine Exegetical-compositional Technique for the Debate on the “Jewishness” of the Fourth Gospel’

This paper seeks to address the ongoing debate about the Jewishness of John from the evidence of a particular subset of ancient compositional techniques in John that scholars today call “composite allusions.” Composite allusions are here defined as multiple allusions within a single literary unit that direct the reader / audience to more than one literary source or tradition; sources and traditions, furthermore, which interact together in their receiving literary context for an exegetically discernible purpose. First, this paper will sketch a methodological overview for detecting and analyzing such allusions, which includes an integration of recent insights from ancient media criticism; secondly, I will seek to demonstrate notable parallels between such Johannine composite allusions and composite allusions within other Jewish literature of the late Second Temple Period; and, finally, I will argue on the basis of such parallels that this evidence strengthens the case for the “Jewishness” of John.

Session 3: John and Paul

Alexander Bevan, KU Leuven,

‘The Significance of εἰρήνη in the Johannine Portrayal of Jesus as the Way to the Father: An Illustrative Comparison of εἰρήνη in the Gospel of John (14:27; 16:33) and Romans 5:1–11’

In Johannine scholarship, the significance of εἰρήνη in the Fourth Gospel has received little attention except to reinforce the text’s perceived “high” Christology within the emergence of early Christianity. Consequently, scholars have often presupposed the interference of the biblical οὐλψ and given privilege to a Christocentric reading of εἰρήνη in the Farewell Discourse (Jn. 14:27;16:33). Such interpretations reaffirm the traditional translation given for εἰρήνη in the New Testament as an essential element of the kingdom and synonymous in Christian thinking with salvation. Mindful of Dunn’s methodological maxim “let John be John”, however, this paper aims to examine the particular contribution of the Fourth Gospel to the wider polyvalent meaning of εἰρήνη. Through an illustrative comparison on the use of the lexeme in Jn. 14:27 and 16:33 and its relation to language including προσαγωγή, ἔχθρός and καταλλάσσω in Rom 5:1–11, this paper studies the shared and unique sense of the lexeme in John’s portrayal of the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. Whilst scholars often demarcate the text to define εἰρήνη as consolatory and spiritual in relation to Jesus’ repeated words of assurance (μὴ ταρασσέσθω ὑμῶν ἡ καρδία in Jn. 14:1.27d), Jesus’ giving of εἰρήνη arguably presupposes but also reinforces the text’s portrayal of the relationship between the Johannine Jesus and the Father (Jn. 14:5–14). Through a comparison with Paul’s use of εἰρήνη in relation to προσαγωγή, ἔχθρός and καταλλάσσω in Rom 5:1–11, the paper will argue for an analogous sense of the lexeme coherent with the Johannine portrayal of the friendship (Jn. 15:15) between the disciples and Jesus, as the one to show the way to the Father (Jn. 14:6.9). In such a way, the Fourth Gospel contributes towards a distinctively theocentric perspective towards the meaning of εἰρήνη.

Crispin Fletcher-Louis, University of Gloucestershire

‘The Philippians Christ Hymn and Johannine Gospel Traditions’

The Philippians Christ Hymn (Phil 2:6–11 + 3:20–21) offers a distinctive version of the Christ story. In light of the arguments of Crispin Fletcher-Louis, *The Divine Heartset: Paul’s Philippians Christ Hymn, Metaphysical Affections, and Civic Virtues* (2023) the hymn is best explained if it is reliant on Johannine traditions and Paul writes from Ephesus.

The Hymn and the Fourth Gospel share themes and language. Both interpret Christ’s divine identity: through the language of ruler cult (esp. divine equality: Phil 2:7c; John 5:18), in conversation with popular stories of the gods’ self-transformation, and in dialogue with a philosophical—especially Platonic—account of reality. In both, Christ is a divine lover, whose revelation of the nature of true love (ἀγάπη) inspires and directs relations between believers. In both, Christ is praised as a universal saviour and founder of a trans-local, non-ethnic, religion or philosophy. And in both, the divine relations reveal a new economy of glory, positioned in relation to ancient patterns of civic praise and a philosophical critique of vainglory.

Brian Bunnell, Furman University

‘The Kingdom of God is Not Enough: Christological Linguistics in the Gospel of John and the Deutero-Paulines’

Despite the prevalence of the expression 'kingdom of God' in their antecedent literary traditions, the Gospel of John and the Deutero-Paulines share an impulse to depart from the standard syntagm and employ alternative idioms to advance a common Christological interest. As for John, and in contrast to Mark, the fourth evangelist prefers the expression 'eternal life' to make God's future kingdom present through personal experience with Jesus (e.g., John 3:15; 5:24, 17:3, etc.). In the case of the Deutero-Paulines, and in contrast to Paul's authentic letters, later writers modify the term 'kingdom' with Christological vocabulary rather than or in addition to the term 'God' to make God's future kingdom present through the veneration of Jesus (e.g., 'kingdom of Christ' [Eph 5:5], 'kingdom of the Son' [Col 1:13], etc.). By analyzing the key texts in each case, I demonstrate that this shared linguistic phenomenon betrays a mutual concern, namely, an interest to counter the non-event of the kingdom with one that is immediate.

Jason Chambers, Carolina College of Biblical Studies

'Sanctification in Pauline and Johannine Apocalyptic Thought'

Sanctification represents believers' growing awareness of God's immanent presence in Christ during the delayed Parousia. Pauline apocalyptic theology contextualizes this delay within a cosmic scheme of redemption rather than merely a narrow focus on individual salvation. The call is for a living hope, an active anticipation of God's kingdom, aligning with recent scholarly consensus on an "already, but not yet" eschatological framework. Johannine apocalyptic theology uniquely contributes to this discourse by revealing that 'eternal life' is available in the believer's mystical union (experiential reality) through the Spirit, as illustrated through legal and cultic metaphors. In a divine courtroom, Christ's presence by the Spirit as both sacrificial Lamb and Priest sanctifies believers, inviting them into ongoing purification. So, Paul and John present sanctification as an active, participatory process to bridge the temporal gap of the Parousia. Believers' participation in the mysteries of Christ during this delay is an active, not passive, engagement with Christ's triumph (glorification), as evidenced by the cross and resurrection, which secures their future glorification.

6. LATER EPISTLES

Chairs: Katherine Hockey & Kelsie Rodenbiker

Session 1: Catholic Epistles

Ben Castaneda, Edinburgh Theological Seminary

'Eschatological Jubilee in James'

Recent scholarship has often suggested connections between Leviticus and James. Luke Timothy Johnson suggests that allusions to Leviticus 19 are scattered throughout James, while Darian Lockett argues that the Levitical categories of purity and pollution serve as a helpful rubric for understanding the ethical life of the Jamesian community. However, there is still room for fruitful exploration of other ways in which Leviticus might shape the argument and structure of James. In particular, this paper will evaluate the significance on James of the Jubilee legislation (Lev 25) shaped through the lens of later Jewish interpretation (e.g., Deut 15; Isa 61; 11QMelch). I will argue that several features of the argument in James, such as "the law of liberty" (1:25), the contrast of rich and poor (1:9–11; 2:1–13; 5:1–6), the prohibition of vows (5:12), and the restoration of sinners from their wandering (5:19–20) suggest that the author envisioned the recipients as living in the eschatological Jubilee.

Daniel Eng, University of Glasgow,

‘A Case for Paratextual Hermeneutics in the Catholic Epistle Collection’

This paper highlights paratexts as a critical part of understanding the Catholic Epistles (CE) as a collection. Paratexts are devices that embellish and surround a literary work to introduce the text to the reader. No textual composition is presented on its own, devoid of features such as prefaces, titles, footnotes, etc. These represent illocutionary intent of their editors in that they provide “reading guides” to their readers. Paratexts exist in biblical manuscripts also, framing the text to bring about perlocutionary responses. While there is a resurgence of interest in the CE particularly in interpreting them as a discrete collection, paratexts are still often overlooked in this endeavour. One of the most comprehensive paratextual systems is called the Euthalian Apparatus and they supplement the texts in a variety of ancient manuscripts. In the CE, James is sometimes presented as the frontispiece of this collection. I evaluate two features of the Euthalian apparatus called the κεφάλαια-τίτλοι (titles) and ὑπόθεσις (hypothesis) to examine how this fronting of James influences how we approach the CE.

Nicholas Moore, ‘Bede on Jude’

Cranmer Hall, Durham

The Venerable Bede is known as the first historian of the English people, but he was also saturated in Scripture both as a monk and as a learned biblical commentator. Writing in the North of England at the beginning of the eighth century, he produced numerous biblical commentaries, including the first extant Latin commentary on the Catholic Epistles. This paper explores his brief commentary on the even briefer Letter of Jude. At first glance a simple and straightforward text, on closer examination the commentary reveals a number of noteworthy features of the exegesis of this astute scholar from Western late antiquity. Bede demonstrates his doctrinal acuity in comments about the Trinity and Christology, and his deep scholarship in handling non-canonical material. His knowledge of the Fathers and the tradition is evident. There are also a few instances of typological or allegorical and moral interpretations. Above all, what emerges is an impression of a bright and imaginative reader of the text who at the same time seeks to be faithful, practical, and concise.

Session 2: Panel Session

Panel discussion with David Horrell, University of Exeter and Travis Williams, Tusculum University on *1 Peter* (ICC) and the process of writing a commentary.

Session 3: Pauline Traditions

Jonathan Berglund, University of Aberdeen

‘I’m a Slave 4 U’’: Before Britney, “Paul the Prisoner” of Ephesians’

Ephesians has long been grouped among the Pauline “prison letters,” but since its banishment from the so-called “undisputed” letters, much of its carceral imagery has gone overlooked. One such image is the figuration of Paul’s bonds in Eph 3:1-13. By looking closely at ancient practices of incarceration and enslavement, this paper argues that Ephesians presents Paul not foremost as a prisoner but an enslaved captive of war. Paul’s carceral servitude to the divine warrior (Ps. 68) explains how his imprisonment could be “for you Gentiles.” Ephesians can thus be understood not only as participating in the “prison epistle” tradition associated with Paul but also in what Chris de Wet has called early Christian “doulology” (de Wet 2015). This feature of Ephesians, which has been widely

overlooked due to its “disputed” status, raises new questions when thinking about the letter’s theology, its instructions toward enslaved persons (6:5-8), and early images associated with the Apostle.

Judson Greene, University of Cambridge

‘Zoology, Anthropology, and Atonement: Cleansing “through [Jesus’] Eternal Spirit” (Heb 9:14)’

Scholars continue to debate the meaning and referent of the “eternal spirit” of Hebrews 9:14. Against the majority of scholars who take this as a reference to the Holy Spirit, I agree with those who identify this as Jesus’ own eternal spirit, and offer a new argument to support this view. In the immediate context, the author references Old Covenant sacrifices that “sanctify for the purification of the flesh” (9:13), alluding particularly to the red heifer ritual which cleansed from corpse defilement (Numbers 19). In contrast with these sacrifices that cleanse flesh after touching death, Jesus’ sacrifice cleanses our conscience from “works of death.” But what makes Jesus’ sacrifice more effective? Since the *flesh* of animals purifies *flesh*, it makes good sense that Jesus’ *spirit* purifies the *spirit*, i.e., the conscience. Because Jesus makes his offering from a pure conscience/spirit, his sacrifice cleanses the worshipper’s conscience. Other passages in Hebrews (10:5–10 particularly) corroborate this reading.

Michael Robertson, Universität Regensburg

‘Why Crete?: The Letter to Titus and Apostolic Foundation in the Second Century’

Although the letter to Titus claims that Paul wrote the document to Titus on Crete (Titus 1:1–5), most scholars doubt both the claimed authorship and the claimed destination of Titus. This raises the question—why inscribe Crete as the document’s destination? In this paper, I argue that Titus claims Crete as a destination in order to bolster the place of the Cretan assemblages within early Christian networks of the second century (see Concannon, *Assembling Early Christianity*, 2017) by allowing them to claim Pauline origin. In order to demonstrate this thesis, I will first examine the apostolic origin story of the Cretan assemblages as found in Titus. Next, I will give an overview of the dating of Titus to show that the writing of Titus aligns with the time period under discussion. I will then show how Crete was connected with other Christian assemblages in the letters of Dionysios of Corinth. Finally, I will demonstrate how Titus was used to bolster the claim to a Pauline foundation of the assemblages on Crete.

7. NEW TESTAMENT AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Chairs: Erin Heim & Jamie Davies

Session 1: Joint session with the Paul Seminar

Review panel: Matthew Novenson, *Paul and Judaism at the End of History* (CUP, 2024).

Session 2

Invited paper: Andrew Torrance, University of St Andrews

‘Knowing the Cosmic Christ as the End of Creation’

This paper explores how cosmic Christology, as presented in Colossians 1, can reshape our understanding of creation's teleology. It examines how Colossians 1 supports a teleological perspective that challenges overly future-oriented interpretations of the Christian life—interpretations that place our ultimate end in the eschaton. I argue that such future-oriented teleologies are problematic because they fail to recognize God (in and through Christ) as both the beginning and the end of creation, insofar as God cannot be confined to a future location. Additionally, I raise concerns about how these future-oriented teleologies can undervalue the goodness of creation and, consequently, the Christian life in the here and now.

Christopher de Stigter, University of Durham

'Necessary Knowledge: Paul and Modern Apophaticism'

Since the rise of Kantian epistemology, there has been a steady movement towards apophaticism in modern theology. This is evident in the ubiquitous insistence upon God's 'non-objectifiability' or 'wholly otherness' (Bultmann, Barth), the 'infinite qualitative distinction' between God and humanity (Kierkegaard), and the grammatical limits of 'God talk' (McCabe). Knowledge of God, even knowledge through revelation, is bracketed by human finitude and divine transcendence. This epistemological turn often relied on Paul for its exegetical support. I argue, however, that Paul sits uneasy next to this modern apophaticism. I explore this through two interrelated loci: 1) Paul's Christology and 2) Paul's epistemology of love. In short, Paul's Christology requires a *necessary* connection between knowing the man Jesus Christ and knowing the *essence* of God's love. If this claim is sustained, it reframes and limits the undergirding claims of modern apophaticism. Any remainder or apophatic caution regarding theological knowledge is not due to the philosophical limits of human knowledge or the metaphysical distance of God, but in the *surplus* of knowing God in Christ.

Session 3

David Johnson, Regents Theological College

'Calculating Affects: Affects, Embodiment, and the Epistemology of Wisdom in Revelation 13.18'

What knowledge *does*? What scripture *does*? This paper explores the interplay between Affect Theory and biblical interpretation, drawing insights from the author's Pentecostal context where experience plays a significant role in understanding scripture. Affect Theory, emerging from various disciplines, assumes humans are non-dualistic, seeking an integrated mind-body experience. Moving beyond the linguistic dominant worldview, Affect Theory analyzes feelings, emotions, passions, bodily experiences, and affects, asking what the biblical text *does*. By considering pre-cognitive affects, embodied forces, and 'sticky' moments, the paper seeks to understand the relational, political, and transformative nature of affects in shaping epistemology by examining Revelation 13.18 as a case study. The paper investigates the affective dimensions of the call to have 'wisdom' in calculating the number of the beast. In addition to considering the interpretative possibilities of the text, the paper contributes by examining what this process does to the readers. The paper considers the nature of wisdom in Revelation by discerning the impact and experience of this difficult process on readers.

Emma Swai

“I was blind but now I see”–The Theology of Seeing-Knowing in Contemporary Worship Lyrics’

New Testament depictions of healing can be texts of terror for disabled Christians; contemporary worship music has that same potential embedded within its use of disability as metaphor and narrative prosthesis. This is particularly true with reference to the use of the see-knowing blended metaphor domain, where blindness is designated as the state from which someone with spiritual knowledge or understanding departs.

The function of worship lyrics as a method of communicating knowledge and theology has been historically recognised, one example being the statement ‘Methodism has always been able to sing its creed’ in The Methodist Hymn Book of 1933. If worship lyrics conceivably shape and embed cultural knowledge, they can also reinforce theological assertions (Saterlee, 2009); Christian traditions use ‘ableist language and metaphors, without examining the values at the heart of the oft-repeated hymns and stories’ (Lawson Jacobs and Richardson, 2022).

Using the example of blindness, this paper will argue that although worship lyrics are mediated objects of New Testament writings, they actually display a different theology of disability and spiritual knowledge. Whereas New Testament authors can both employ and challenge metanarratives of blindness through the utilisation of nuance, such as in the depictions of Bartimaeus (Mark 10) and Paul (Acts 9; 22; 26), original linguistic analysis evidences that contemporary worship lyrics display a more binary model, positioning visual impairment as explicitly and unequivocally a negative lack of spiritual knowledge, thereby creating the linguistic exclusion of blind Christians.

Through its comparison of New Testament and worship lyric depictions of blindness, this paper will demonstrate how worship lyrics create a theology of knowledge which marginalises visually impaired people on the basis of their inadequacy in Christ, in opposition to New Testament perspectives.

8. PAUL

Chairs: Andy Boakye & Ryan Collman

Session 1: Joint session with New Testament & Christian Theology

Panel review of Matthew V. Novenson, *Paul and Judaism at the End of History* (CUP, 2024)

Session 2: Paul within Judaism

Clay Mock, Independent Researcher

‘Paul’s Religion within Judaism’

Does Paul say what he left “Judaism” for? Scholars have assumed Paul converted to the “religion” “Christianity,” yet others claim he left “Judaism” but is still within “Judaism.” While the former is highly questionable, the latter is terminologically confusing. I argue that Paul has language for what he turned to when leaving “Judaism.” He says so in 1 Corinthians 4:17: my ways in christ. This was the language of freelance “religious” expertise, a “religious” possibility for ethnicities like Judeans, Romans, or Greeks. By comparing his use of τὰς

ὁδοῦς with examples from Hebrew, Greek, and Latin sources I demonstrate the cultural grammar of freelance “religious” expertise. Second, I compare 1 Cor 4:17 with Galatians 1:13-14. The similarities between ἀναστροφὴν and τὰς ὁδοῦς imply that Paul did not change “religions.” Paul still freelanced as he turned from judaizing Judeans to pneumaticizing the nations. Paul’s “religion” never changed and there’s no evidence he left “Judaism,” a term that might better serve our purposes as an ethnic heuristic.

Michael Francis, Catholic University of America

‘Paul and Law within Philonic Judaism’

“Within Judaism” readings of Paul successfully demonstrate the significance of the apostle’s gentile audience for appreciating the focus of his negative comments concerning Jewish law. An implicit question remains, however, for readings that do not adopt a Sonderweg position. To the degree that Jews are redeemed ultimately by Christ and spirit rather than Jewish law, how should Paul’s convictions be best understood “within Judaism”? On what grounds might other Jews consider the non-ultimacy of that which defines their identity? The paper explores the question by means of comparison with Philo of Alexandria, focusing on Philo’s perspective on (1) the role of law, Jewish or otherwise, (2) the character and comparative value of different forms of obedience and motivations for commendable conduct, and (3) the modulations of command and compliance appropriate to agents of different degrees of ethical standing. The paper will argue that Philo’s perspective on law as it pertains to the truly wise and virtuous is an important analogue to Paul’s assessment of Jewish law in relation to those redeemed by Christ and spirit.

Joel Willits, North Park University

“Neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision Counts for Anything” (Gal. 5:6): Paul’s Manifesto for the Necessity of Ethnic Differentiation between Jew and Gentile in the Ekklesia’

In this paper, I will argue that Paul’s letter to the Galatians amounts to a manifesto for the theological necessity for Jewish and Gentile believers in the ekklesia. The paper will reexamine the letter from the standpoint of a Torah-observant first-century Jewish believer in Messiah who assumed Jewish believers in Messiah continued to pattern their lives by the Mosaic Torah. This more historically plausible perspective dynamically changes one’s understanding of Paul’s soteriology and ecclesiology. Far from erasing Jewish and Gentile ethnic identity, Paul argued for the theological necessity of both abiding ethnic identities. In Galatians, Paul teaches that the diminishment of one means the diminishment of the other; they are mutually interdependent in salvation and the reception of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Paul emphatically stated that the Galatian Gentiles should reject the notion of an ethnic transformation to Jewish ethnic identity by circumcision because to do so was to deny the truth of the Gospel. Seen from this angle, I will argue that the purpose of Paul’s ethical discourse in the latter part of the letter was to guide the conduct of ethnically Gentile Messiah believers who, unlike Jews, do not pattern life after the stipulations of the Mosaic Torah. Thus, so interdependent were the Jew and the Gentile in the Messiah’s ekklesia that their distinct ethnicities gave no advantage in the reception of righteousness (Gal 5:5-6). What is more, in the sharing of the common faith of Messiah, ethnic differentiation of Jew and Gentile should result in mutual self-giving in slavery to each other expressed through love (5:13-14).

Session 3: Reading Ephesians within Judaism

Daniel J. Atkins, Nazarene Theological College/University of Manchester

‘Chosen in Messiah: Israel within God’s Messianic *oikonomia* in Ephesians’

Does Ephesians dissolve Israel’s election in favour of “the Church”? In this paper, I bring a key proposal of the Paul within Judaism Schule – that Paul’s undisputed letters are addressed specifically to gentiles – into conversation with the theme of a “hidden plan” in Ephesians. First, I read Ephesians 1:3-14 in light of a gentile audience, finding that the “we” of v.3-12 are Paul’s Jewish kin and the “you all” of v.13 are gentiles-in-Messiah. Second, with this reading in place, I interpret Ephesians’ claim in 1:4-6 that Jews, or Israel, are chosen in Messiah “before the foundation of the world” as an instance of STP Jewish apocalyptic. Third, I consider Israel’s distinction in Ephesians 1-3 in light of my reading of 1:4-6. I find that Israel’s primordial election in Messiah does not negate their distinction from gentiles-in-Messiah. Although Israel and the gentiles are united as “one new humanity” in the Messiah, Israel is the forerunner, locus, and servant of God’s messianic *oikonomia*. Finally, I consider what this interpretation means for a Christian theology of Israel.

Zachary McNeal, University of Edinburgh

‘Gentiles and the Polity of Israel: The Jewish *Politeia* in Ephesians, Philo and Josephus’

Ephesians is usually regarded as a theological treatise of the late 1st century dealing with issues of an increasingly institutionalized church. Further, in spite of the roles that Gentiles and Israel play in the rhetoric of the letter, issues of Jew-Gentile relations are not regarded as central to its theological and ecclesiological “core.” In this paper, I will challenge this reading by comparing the views of Josephus’ *Antiquitates judaicae*, Philo’s *De specialibus legibus* and Ephesians on the *politeia* of Israel. I will argue that *politeia* is used similarly in all three of these roughly contemporaneous writers to describe the Jewish “way of life,” especially as represented by adherence to the Mosaic law. I will then demonstrate that the relationship of Gentiles to the *politeia* of Israel is the central concern of the letter, with the various sections serving to integrate Jew and Gentile ethically and theologically into a single *politeia*.

Daniel Thorpe, University of Aberdeen

‘When Jews were Gentiles: Re-Reading τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί in Ephesians 2.11’

The scholarly consensus is that the implied audience of Ephesians is gentile (Barth, 1967; Lincoln 1990; Dahl, 2000; Yee, 2005; Thiessen, 2020; Jiménez, 2022) or at least primarily gentile (MacDonald, 2000; Darko, 2008; Cohick, 2020). Scholars note the use of “τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί, οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία” (2.11) as evidence to support the consensus. However, in this paper, I will propose that the terms “τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί, οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία” refer not to gentiles, but to apostatizing Jews (cf. Strelan, 1996) who had forsaken covenant by way of epispasm (1 Macc 1.15) and by abandoning eighth day circumcision (1 Macc 2.48). Since the descriptors in Eph 2.11 provide the primary evidence for a gentile audience, I wish to reconsider them. First, the use of ποτὲ in Eph 2.11 is not temporal, but suppositional, “you are presumably gentiles in the flesh”. Second, the use of ἐν σαρκί with τὰ ἔθνη indicates covenant language (cf. Sir 44.20; Jub 15.25–34), which in turn heightens intra-Jewish rhetoric. Third, the use of outgroup language “children of destruction” (Jub 15:26) and “sons of Belial” (Jub 15:33) or in Gal 2.14 where Paul tells Peter that he is ὑπάρχων ἐθνικῶς (“being as a Gentile”) suggests that it is not abnormal for Jews to polemicize circumcision and therefore, “other” apostatizing Jews who had abandoned covenant (cf. Soon, 2023). One implication of this reading is that the unification brought about by Messiah in Eph 2.14–15 is, in fact, intra-Jewish, therefore, traditional readings of Eph 2.14–15 are rendered invalid.

9. SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Chairs: Tim Carter & Séamus O'Connell

Session 1

Sandra Huebenthal, Passau University

'Homo Oeconomicus: An Unlikely Reader of the Parables?'

Adele Reinhartz' attempt to befriend the Beloved Disciple was a milestone in Johannine scholarship, although it was based on a scientific no-go. Reinhartz promoted of the implied author of the Fourth Gospel to a real person she could interact with and showed that an occasional violation of scientific rules can be fruitful. This paper aims at a very similar thing: For the sake of the argument, it promotes the economic model of the "homo oeconomicus" to a real person and follows him along reading some of the Matthean and Lukan parables. It will turn out that the rational agent is not an unlikely reader of the gospel at all, and that reading Parables through the lens of modern economic theory provides fresh perspectives and a different vocabulary for understanding the Gospels and the evolution of cooperation.

Ellen Howard, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich

'Seeing and Speaking: The Dynamics of Focalization in the Prodigal Son'

This paper will focus on narrative focalization within the Parable of the Prodigal Son as presented in the Gospel of Luke. This study aims to delve into the intricacies of narrative perspectives, particularly focusing on 'who speaks' and 'who sees' within the parable. By examining the narrator's role and the shifts between internal and external focalization, this paper seeks to uncover the layers of meaning that contribute to the overall impact of the parable. The narrative technique employed in the parable offers a unique lens through which the characters and their actions are perceived, thereby influencing the reader's understanding and interpretation of the text. Through a detailed analysis of the narrative structure and the use of focalization, this paper will assess the implications of these narrative choices on the depiction of characters and the conveyance of the parable's moral and theological themes. The study will draw upon existing scholarly work on biblical narrative techniques while also contributing new insights into the function of focalization in biblical parables.

Session 2: Book Review Panel

We will be reviewing Justin Strong's book, *The Fables of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke: A New Foundation for the Study of Parables*, Studies in Cultural Contexts of the Bible 5 (Paderborn: Brill, 2021). Strong is Associate Professor in New Testament Studies at MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society in Oslo, and his book won the Manfred Lautenschlaeger Award for Theological Promise in 2022.

We are delighted that our reviewers will be Richard Burrige, Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Manchester, and James Crossley, Academic Director of CenSAMM and Professor of Bible, Society and Politics at MF Oslo.

Session 3

Barbara Beyer, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg

‘John the Baptist, the New Samuel’

The gospels portray John the Baptist as a new kind of Elijah: his words and actions resemble those of the great prophet, thereby preparing for the ministry of Jesus (Luke 1:17). This serves to create anticipation (Mal 3:23–24), idealise John as a witness to Jesus’ identity (Luke 3:16–17), and embed the narrative in the salvation history of Israel—a prominent theme in Luke. However, there is another typology specific to Luke that serves similar purposes: that of John as a new kind of Samuel, the judge. As it is more subtle, it has thus far been overlooked. Yet the narrative around his birth contains clear allusions, e.g. the motif of the barren mother and direct quotation (Luke 1). Moreover, by portraying John as a kind of Samuel, he carries a transitional role in history as a new time for the people of God commences. This paper will compare the two typologies (John–Elijah, John–Samuel) in the gospels and thus illuminate how these traditions are situated in the textual universe of ancient Christianity.

Tyler Brown, Keble College, University of Oxford

‘The Sign of Jonah as the Key to the Lukan Jesus’s Opening of the Scriptures (24:44–47): Retrieving and reinforcing a forgotten patristic view’

Where is it really “written” (γέγραπται) that the Messiah must (1) suffer, (2) rise from the dead on the third day, and that (3) repentance must be preached to all nations in his name (Luke 24:44–47; cf. 24:25–27)? Despite this claim’s foundational importance, the answer has proven elusive.

Luke’s Sign of Jonah has similarly proved an enigma, with most today holding that it refers only to Jonah’s preaching. However, a neglected thread of patristic interpretation identifies the Sign of Jonah with the entire sequence of death, third-day resurrection, and proclamation of repentance to all nations.

The paper traces this view in Justin, Hilary, Ephrem, and ps.-Chrysostom. Then, it uncovers hitherto overlooked verbal connections between Greek Jonah, the Sign of Jonah pericope, and the opening of the Scriptures (Luke 24:44–47) which reinforce this ancient opinion. Concluding that Jonah is the key intertext for this Lukan claim, the paper recovers and re-presents a patristic view of Luke’s Sign of Jonah and opening of the scriptures different from any on offer in contemporary scholarship.

10. SIMULTANEOUS SHORT PAPERS

Chairs: Michelle Fletcher & Tom de Bruin

Session 1

Chair: Dorothee Bertschmann, College of the Resurrection, Mirfield and Durham University

Lily Tsai Su, University of Glasgow

‘The Reception and Compositional Technique of the Pastoral Epistles’

Most scholars today largely believe that the Pastoral Epistles (PE) were pseudonymously composed. And yet, the Pauline authorship of the PE was taken for granted by early Christians. Ancient scribes and readers received the PE as authentically Pauline and used manuscript paratexts to defend their status. What strategies did the author(s) use to enable early Christians, as well as the scribes and readers who produced the paratexts, to receive

the PE as authentically Pauline? This paper examines the PE's reuse of antecedent texts in the compositions, along with manuscript paratexts (including subscriptions and Euthalian apparatus) that attest to the reception of the PE, to understand the compositional and exegetical techniques the author(s) employed to produce the personal letters to Paul's coworkers. In this paper, I argue that the PE's strategic reuse of antecedent texts in compositions is part of the pseudepigraphical strategy to present the new texts as authentically Pauline and speak to early Christians in a new context. This paper offers a new perspective for understanding the transmission and reception of the PE.

Ian Paul, Fuller Theological Seminary,

'OT Allusions in the Book of Revelation: The Big Picture'

Much analysis of the use of Jewish scriptures in the New Testament focuses either on the particular use and meaning of individual texts, or perhaps even on the way a particular book of the Jewish scriptures is utilised in a New Testament text. But rarely is any analysis done at a macro-level, looking at the overall use of the variety of Jewish scriptures across a whole NT book. This paper attempts such an analysis. It maps the whole range of the 676 allusions to the Jewish scriptures in the Book of Revelation's 404 verses, as listed in the UBS 3 Greek NT. It notes the ways that different books of the OT make their presence felt at different points in the narrative of Revelation, and how that affects both the way we read Revelation overall, and the theological connections between Revelation and these different texts.

Chris Jameson, Durham University

'John the Commentator: New Avenues for Insights into the Earliest Christian Contexts'

"Narrative asides, or those parenthetical departures from narrative which allow for correction, elaboration, and interpretation, are replete in John's Gospel with as many as 165 instances, compared with around 15 in each Synoptic. The intrusive and correctivenature of the narrative asides present in John's Gospel are the author's attempt to interpret the established story of Jesus for the reader, even offering commentary on the evangelist's own retelling of the story, to prevent misunderstanding and provide new intimations and limitations on the Jesus event. Several asides in John's Gospel seem to address or elaborate upon earlier gospel literature or tradition, or even upon possible misunderstandings of earlier Christian theology existing in his day.

One great benefit that may be gained from this research is a new way to discuss the interaction of gospel authors, moving the New Testament scholarly community away from discussions about literary dependence and instead toward discussions of literary engagement between early Christian authors, especially seen in the explicit, early commentary provided by Johannine asides. In that Johannine asides reveal new aspects and significance of the Jesus event and address prior historical and theological misconceptions, we witness the process of the earliest reception and use of the Christian tradition by the Christian community. A further benefit of this research is uncovering the unique Johannine voice by examining these frequent asides and the concerns of the evangelist which they pointedly reveal. Rather than being excludable marginal notes, the frequency and essential significance of the asides allow us to identify the author's chief concerns. Finally, research into the little-known literary-rhetorical device of narrative asides provides a crucial corrective to hermeneutical methods which have until now ignored the significance of this favorite Johannine technique. To establish each point, brief examples of asides which correct, elaborate, interpret, or otherwise engage other traditions are explored from 1st century authors and compared with use in John."

Session 2

Chair: Olabisi Obamakin, Durham University

Siobhán Jolley, The National Gallery, London and King's College London & Rachel Miller, University of Manchester

'Why Let the Truth Get in the Way of a Good Story? On Magdalenes, Jezebels, and Women of Ill-Repute'

Though Mark Driscoll's self-serving 'Jezebel spirit' tirade dominated Christian discourse in April, it was but the latest example of invoking biblical women by reputation. From admonitory artworks to institutional asylums, calling women Magdalenes or Jezebels has long since been a shorthand slur for those who fall short of patriarchal models of propriety. This paper ponders why these are still the stories we tell. Through feminist analysis of New Testament texts that have shaped the expansive reception of Mary Magdalene and Jezebel (the Luke 7:36-50 anointing woman and critique of Jezebel in Revelation 2:20-23), this paper explores how ancient ideas are still brought to bear on women today, using these pericopes' shared themes of sexual immorality, prophecy, and legacy. Illuminating our analysis with examples from wider cultural reception, we argue that these archetypes of fallen women endure because patriarchal preoccupation with women's agency endures. Ultimately, we make the case that we should indeed let a truth get in the way of a good story.

Heike Omerzu, Københavns Universitet

'Exploring the Ambiguity of Mark's Family Ethics'

The Gospel of Mark contains neither systematic reflections on family and marital ethics nor detailed instructions on such matters like, for example, in the New Testament household codes (cf. e.g., Eph 5:22-6:9; Col 3:18-4:1; 1 Pet 2:13-3:7). However, Mark offers sufficient indirect ethical orientation on family and marital ethics alongside occasional direct instructions. In this paper, these various statements will be examined within their narrative and socio-cultural contexts, to then conclude with an outline of the Gospel of Mark's family and sexual ethics alongside some reflections on the lived reality of Mark's audience. The starting point will be the family as the overarching social structure in early Christianity, to inquire from there into the various family members, their specific roles, and their relationships with each other in terms of ethical aspects. More specifically, this concerns parents, children with respect to their parents and in their own right (or daughters/sons, siblings, and slaves), as well as spouses, including issues of marriage and divorce. It will be shown that there is a noticeable ambiguity regarding family ethics in the Gospel of Mark as it both adheres to traditional family forms and values while, within the horizon of the (still relatively) imminent eschatological expectation, reconfiguring the concept of the household to designate the community of Christ-believers as the new family of God (*familia dei*), with children (unlike than in the surrounding society) being some of the most esteemed members. This ambiguity might be understood as an expression of the intertwining of different traditions, yet it might also reflect the attempt to reconcile various demands in early Christian ethics and thus reflect the lived reality of Mark's audience.

Justin Meggitt, University of Cambridge

'Babilons Bastards' [sic] and the end of Hell: Benjamin Lay's antislavery exegesis of Revelation'

The language of apocalypse is increasingly employed to describe the phenomenon of Atlantic slavery but the role of the book of Revelation in the discourse of those who either

supported or resisted it has received little attention. Although Revelation's presence is often faint in early antislavery works, Benjamin Lay's *All slave-keepers that keep the innocent in bondage, apostates* (1737), provides a significant exception. As Marcus Rediker puts it in his recent, influential biography of Lay, Revelation was the 'foundation of Benjamin's book and his larger political philosophy' (*The Fearless Benjamin Lay: The Quaker Dwarf Who Became the First Revolutionary Abolitionist*, 2017, p 86). In Lay's hands it became a script for his antislavery activism and something he sought to actualise in his day-to-day prefigurative praxis. Lay provides an important case study of how physical, religious, and philosophical alterity, as well as occupational class, can combine to generate distinctive, consequential, and emancipatory forms of exegesis of Revelation.

Session 3

Chair: Tom de Bruin, Radboud University

Zara Zhang, University of St Andrews,

'The Delay Motif in Old Testament and New Testament Eschatology'

The delay of the parousia in certain NT texts is often understood as a late and novel development in early Christianity. But this paper presents that the concept of delay is already prevalent in OT eschatology. Prime examples of this include Exod 32 (golden calf) and 1 Sam 13 & 15: both Moses and Samuel promised to return, but were delayed; their actual return was triggered by idolatry/unlawful sacrifices, and judgment followed. "Delay" is also frequent in Isaiah, and some of these passages also feature "imminence." Major OT apocalyptic events (e.g., Flood, Sodom, exodus) arguably all have been prolonged, though they were also "sudden." OT texts that involve delay (such as Exod 32) are often cited, or alluded to in Jewish apocalyptic literatures as well as in the NT. In summary, the concept of delay in Matt 24-25 and 2 Thess 2 is "indigenous" to Biblical thought. This calls for a fresh look at the "progressive" nature of NT eschatology and how the early church may have grappled with the reality of the delay.

James Crossley, CenSamm & MF Oslo

'Towards a History of the English Radical Bible'

The 'Radical Bible' is a term used to describe a long-established cliché or assumption in political discourse that the Bible supports, justifies, or authorises ideas about the transformation of the dominant political, economic, and social order. In England, this is a tradition that arguably stretches back to at least the fourteenth century, certainly in a prominent public form. But it is one which has undergone regular updating through rural and urban discontents, the English Revolution, Jacobinism, the Industrial Revolution, the emergence of the working class and dissenting middle class, questions of democratic representation, various forms of socialism, imperialism, fascism, internationalism, the Cold War, immigration, and so on. This paper will outline a materialist framework for understanding and analysing this history and construction of the Bible by focusing on the Gospels and Acts, explaining which emphases and texts have been forgotten, retained, and rethought—and why. Suggestions will then be made about how to go about writing a reception history of the English Radical Bible.

Karen Wenell, University of Birmingham

'The Kingdom of God and the Plantationocene'

The Kingdom of God, as performative space, has many connections: with earth and heaven, with past injustices and present harms, with calls for rights and solidarity, with religious devotion and practice, not least in the recitation of the Lord's Prayer over centuries – 'your Kingdom come' (Matthew 6:10). It could be maintained that the Kingdom has too many associations with its negative past to remain useful – with slavery, with crusades, with colonisation, and more broadly with supersession and christianised universal thinking. This paper argues that continued interpretation of the Kingdom of God requires coming to terms with the present need for decolonised ways of thinking and consideration of the implications of life in the Plantationocene, a term used by scholars (e.g. Haraway, Barua, Murphy & Schroering) as a way to articulate processes of planetary change in our current era characterised by the ongoing effects of environmental and racial domination of the plantation model. Cautiously, the vegetal imagery of the Synoptic Kingdom of God suggests possibilities for repair and re-performance in new interpretative directions for our time.

PLACE TO VISIT IN GLASGOW

The Hunterian Museum (<https://www.gla.ac.uk/hunterian>)

In Gilmorehill campus. Permanent exhibitions include: the rest of the Antonine Wall, Dr William Hunter's story (the Scottish obstetrician, teacher, collector and founder of the Hunterian Museum), and Lord Kelvin's story (Glasgow's greatest scientist).

Five minutes' walk from the Hunterian Museum is **The Mackintosh House** (<https://www.gla.ac.uk/hunterian/visit/ourvenues/themackintoshhouse/>), a careful reassembly of the main rooms of the Glasgow home of the famous artist and designer couple Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh.

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum

(<https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/venues/kelvingrove-art-gallery-and-museum>)

A favourite museum in Glasgow with 22 galleries. It is also in the middle of Kelvingrove Park, which is worth exploring itself!

Glasgow Cathedral (<https://www.glasgowcathedral.org/>)

On the East side of Glasgow is the Cathedral (12th century) dedicated to St Mungo. Worth visiting also is the close by Necropolis, a Victorian garden cemetery full of architecture and sculptures.

The Clydeside Distillery

Just a 20-minute walk from the university, you'll find the Clydeside Distillery. There, you can enjoy a tour of the facility and taste authentic Scottish whisky!

(<https://www.theclydeside.com/>)

Bookshops

If you're looking to buy books, Glasgow offers a wide variety of great bookshops: try Caledonia Books (<https://www.caledoniabooks.co.uk/>), Thistle books (<https://thistlebooks.co.uk/>), and the Voltaire & Rousseau Booksellers (<https://voltaireandrousseaubooks.com/>)

Lanes

Glasgow is full of hidden lanes where you can find restaurants, independent shops, cafés and much more. Here is what you can find in the West End:

<https://www.visitwestend.com/discover/the-lanes/>

More useful information about Glasgow can be found here:

<https://www.visitglasgow.org.uk/convention-bureau/meeting-planners/>



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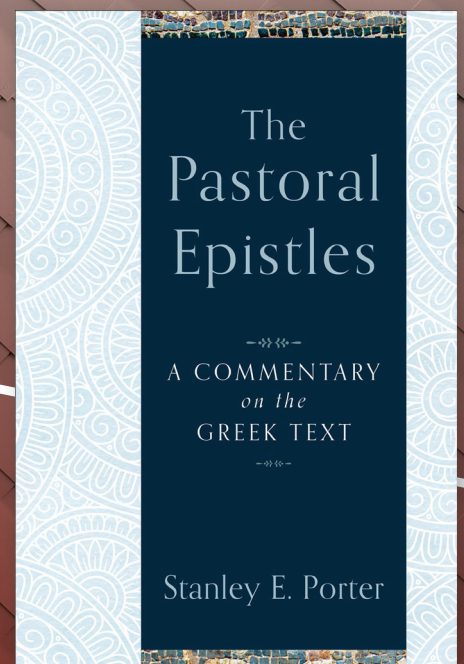
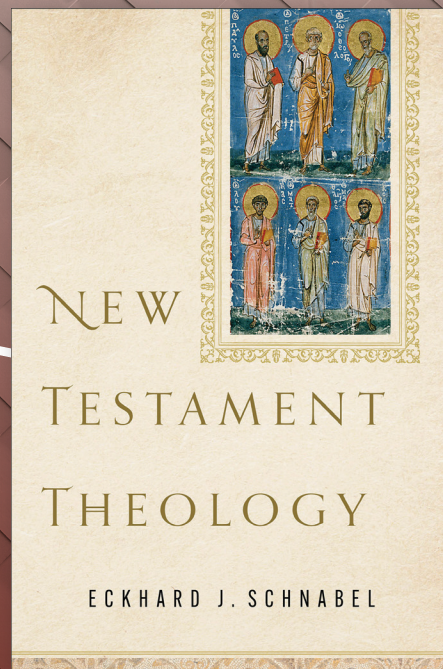
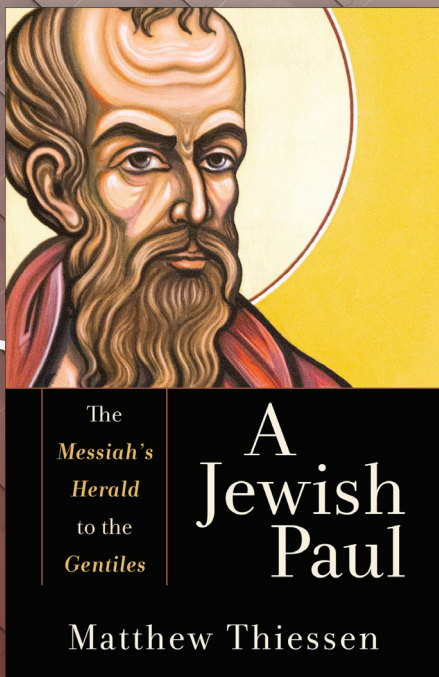
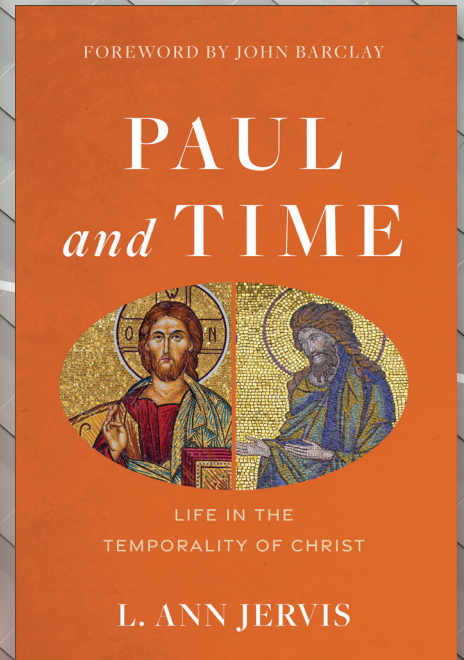
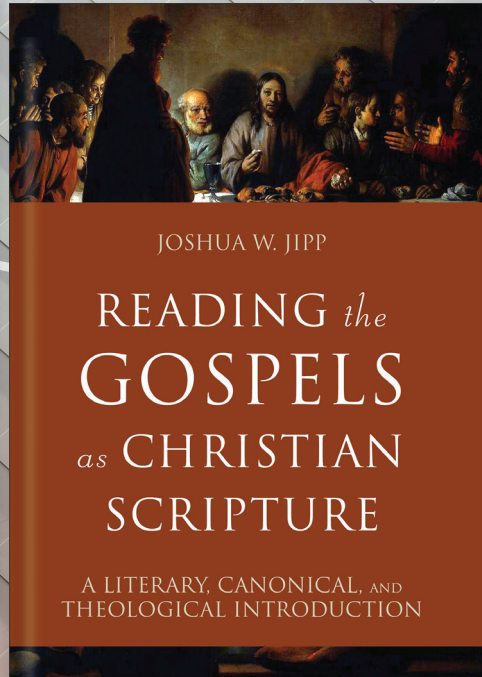
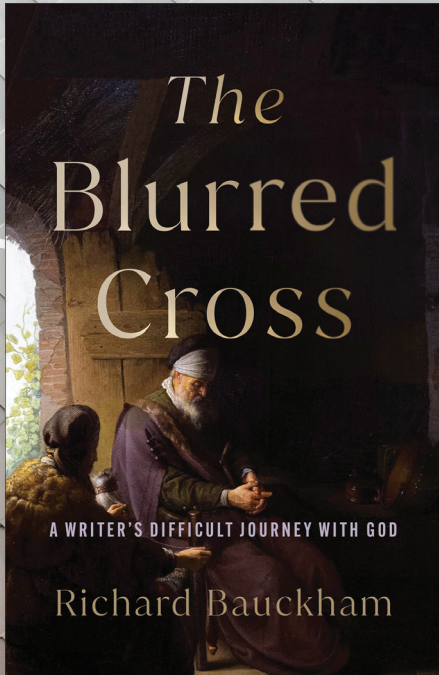
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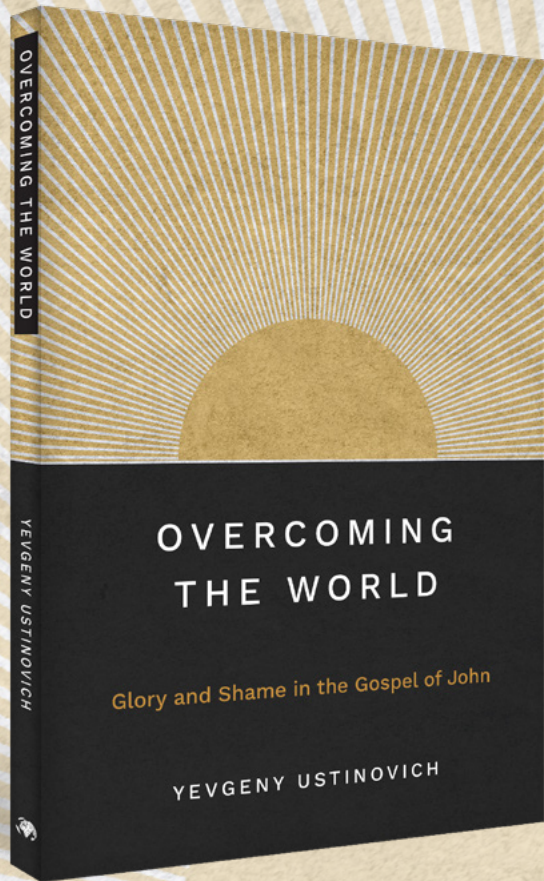


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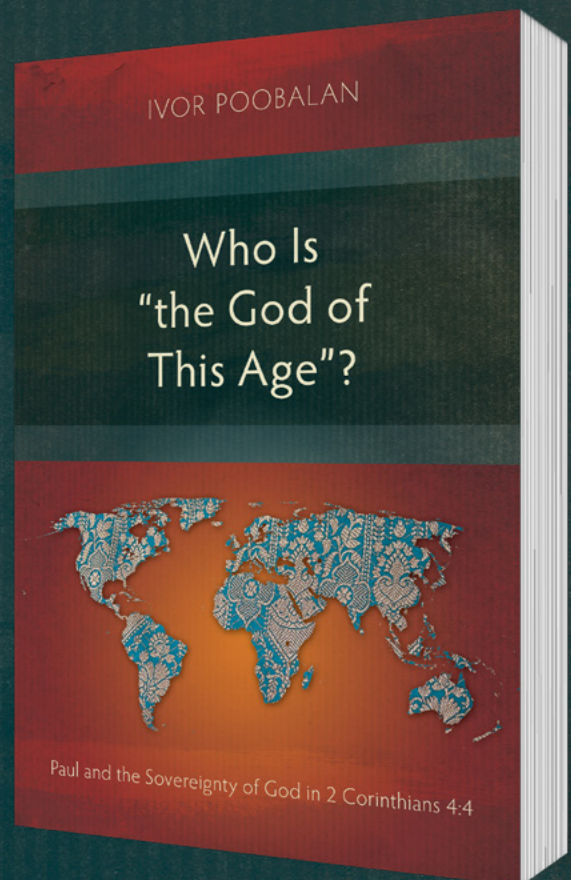
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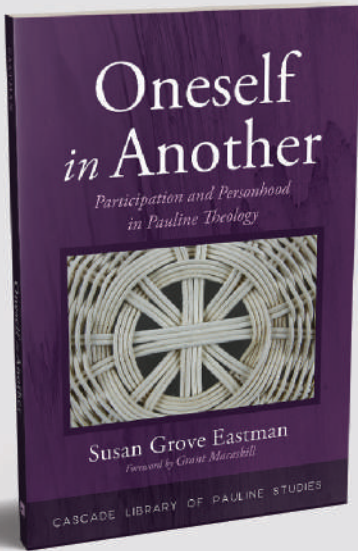
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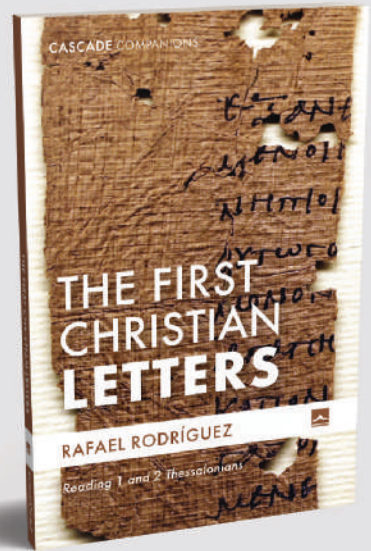
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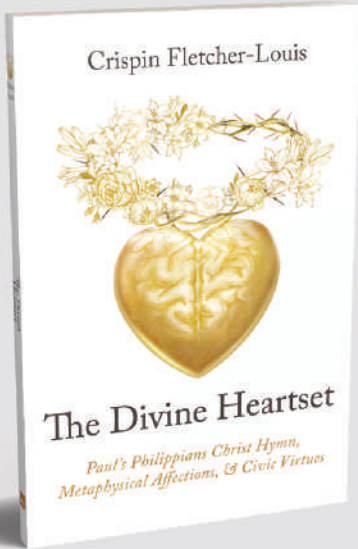
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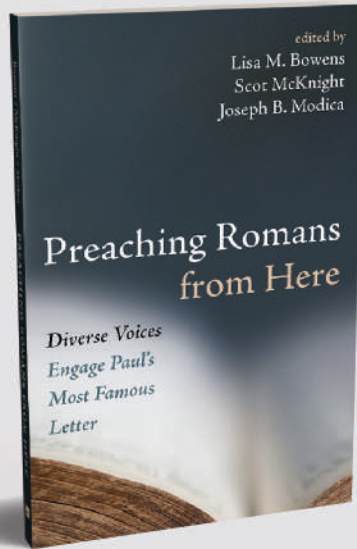
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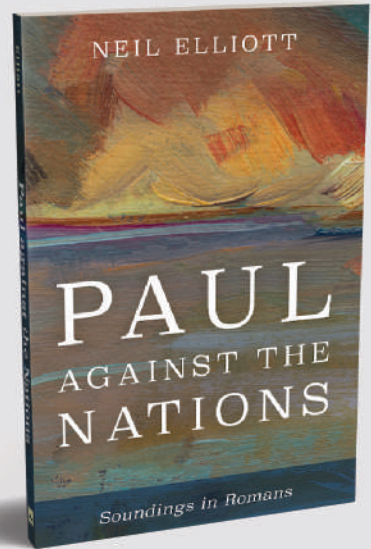
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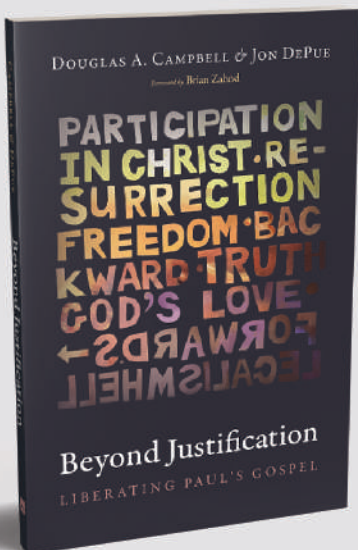
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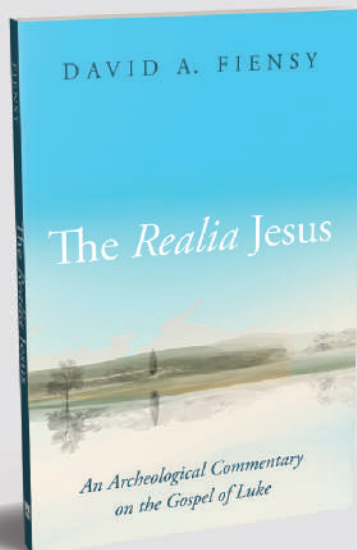
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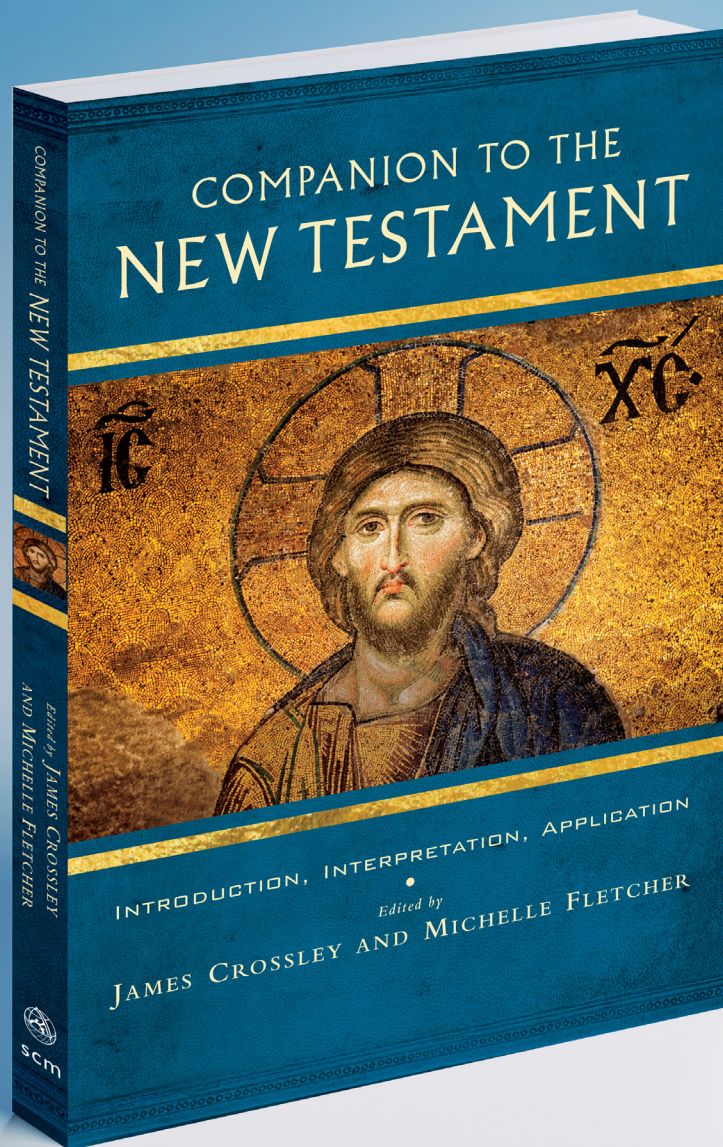
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