

THE THIRD BIRMINGHAM BIBLICAL STUDIES
POSTGRADUATE DAY CONFERENCE
“*Unity and Diversity in Text and Tradition*”
University of Birmingham 3 July 2013

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



PROGRAMME

SCHEDULE

- 09:00 – Registration
09:30 – Conference Introduction
09:45 – Guest Speaker - Christina Kreinecker, “What Text? What Tradition? The Case of the New Testament.”
10:30 – Philip Engmann, “The Scarlet Pimpernel: Unity First, Diversity Second.”
11:00 – Tea & Coffee
11:15 – Edgar Ebojo, “The Greek New Testament, Then and Now: Scribal Criticism and Visual (Dis)Unity in Manuscripts and Editions.”
11:45 – Catherine Quine, “The Diversity of the Dragons of Ezekiel 29 and 32: A Re-examination of Their Unification.”
12:15 – Lunch (catered) and Mingana Collection Tours
13:45 – Lonnie Bell, “Unity and Diversity Across the First Five Centuries of New Testament Textual Transmission.”
14:15 – Hanne Kirchheimer, “Unity or Diversity in 2nd Temple Judaism? A Critique of the Use of the Term 'Sect' in Qumran Studies.”
14:45 – Tea & Coffee
15:00 – Matthew Steinfeld, “You Took the Words Right Out of My Mouth...and *Changed Them!*”
15:30 – Guest Speaker - Jonathan G. Campbell, “Moving Beyond the Rewritten Bible/Rewritten Scripture Debate: A Spectrum of Scribal Activity.”
16:15 – Round Table Discussion
16:45 – Conference Conclusion
17:00 – Dinner (to be held at a nearby restaurant)

ABSTRACTS

GUEST SPEAKERS

Jonathan G. Campbell

University of Bristol

“Moving Beyond the Rewritten Bible/Rewritten Scripture Debate: A Spectrum of Scribal Activity.” When Geza Vermes originally coined the term ‘Rewritten Bible’ in 1961, he helpfully highlighted one key way in which Jews in the last few centuries BCE and first centuries CE interpreted their sacred texts. In doing so, moreover, he sparked a scholarly debate about the precise nature and extent of Rewritten Bible (or ‘Rewritten Scripture’, as many now prefer to call it) that has gone on ever since. However, much of that debate in recent years has unhelpfully expanded the concept of Rewritten Bible/Rewritten Scripture to the point of meaninglessness, while simultaneously failing to take account of a number of significant compositions generally omitted from the discussion. By drawing those compositions in particular into the debate, and also by appealing to what we now know about ancient scribal culture more broadly, this paper seeks to argue that it is time to move beyond thinking in terms of Rewritten Bible/Rewritten Scripture and instead envisage a wide spectrum of scribal activity.

Christina Kreinecker

University of Birmingham

“What Text? What Tradition? The Case of the New Testament.”

Given the fact that the textual tradition of the NT does not emerge in a pure or linear form, identifying connections, let alone the genealogy between variant readings, can be a tricky task. Looking into one language tradition is complex in itself, but even more questions have to be faced when different languages and different genres (biblical manuscripts, early Christian commentary literature, documentary evidence etc.) are involved.

Concerning this “diversity” in the manuscript tradition of the NT and its genres, this paper will offer examples at the interface of the Greek, Latin and Coptic versions. By thinking outside the box of one language, different questions and challenges arise – like who actually is babbling incomprehensibly in 1Corinthians or what the women really saw when they came to the tomb at the end of the Gospel of Mark. But of course, there is not a clear answer to all of these questions. Even so, comparing different versions and translations (Greek–Coptic; Greek–Latin) allows for new thoughts and ideas that may help to establish a path through the jungle of NT textual traditions.

Additionally, by taking into consideration the world “outside” the early Christian tradition (documentary evidence), a claim will be made for a “unity” of tradition beyond the biblical text, that shows that the actual texts of the NT are also children of their times.

POSTGRADUATE SPEAKERS

Lonnie Bell

University of Edinburgh

“Unity and Diversity Across the First Five Centuries of New Testament Textual Transmission.”

A sizeable number of textual critics have held that the early period (pre- ca. 300 C.E. but especially the second-century) of New Testament textual transmission was markedly less stable than that of the later period (post ca. 300 C.E.). For the Gospel of John we have a unique situation in which three

papyri (P⁵², P⁶⁶, and P⁹⁰) for a single book are extant for the period leading up to the turn of the third century and, even more, are partially overlapping for the same section of text (18:31 – 19:7). In this paper I will seek to answer the question, what does a comparison of scribally induced error in these early fragmentary papyri (ca. 200 or earlier) with that in the overlapping portions of the later uncials (ca. 350 or later) reveal concerning diachronic unity and diversity in transmission attitudes and practices, at least for this one Gospel? This involves looking at both the number and character of singular and sub-singular readings, as well as those that are narrowly attested and likely to have been independently introduced by the respective scribe. I will review the arguments of the proponents of discontinuity, paying special attention to the evidence cited, and will conclude with my own comparison of P⁵², P⁹⁰ and the overlapping portions of P⁶⁶ each with Ι, B, W, and A.

Edgar Ebojo

University of Birmingham

“The Greek New Testament, Then and Now: Scribal Criticism and Visual (Dis)Unity in Manuscripts and Editions.”

This presentation compares and contrasts scribal activities and literary features of some of the earliest NT MSS with the critical printed editions, aiming to investigate what elements of ancient book production and scribal culture have been lost at the advent of the printed age, with its deep fascination for the “original text”.

Philip Engmann

The Regent University of Ghana

“The Scarlet Pimpernel: Unity First, Diversity Second.”

The theory of Paul Kahle seems to be superseding that of de Lagarde in recent times and this paper argues that OT textual variants that have proven difficult to harmonize seem to have promoted the multiple text theory. (For example, variant readings attributed to *double-entendre* would hardly attract the multiple text theory). This paper argues that textual critics should not be too quick to declare a variant reading as *crux interpretum* or *non-liquet* and that the guideline, *lectio difficilior preferenda est* holds the difficult text, allowing further research into it until a convincing solution can be found. The *Urschrift* search for the widely variant LXX/MT/DSS Deuteronomy 32:43 text for example, has proven to be a ‘scarlet pimpernel’ because it has been debated for about four-hundred years with no scholarly consensus yet. (Labuschagne, Bogaert, Albright, Tim McLay, Arie van der Kooij, Tov, Rofé, BHQ editors, etc. have argued for one or other of the various recensions and various permutations, combinations and emendations). The soft option would be to declare this variant text *non-liquet* and appeal to the multiple text theory as an explanation for the variant readings. However, incorporating relevant past arguments and taking advantage of current research, this paper suggests an original reading with sound arguments that plausibly explain these widely divergent readings. The paper argues against the current trend of viewing the third and fourth colons of LXX as secondary additions, arguing instead that a scribe or translator is more likely to corrupt a text than to add to it. The paper explores possible sources of corruption in these cola and the brilliantly-argued emendation of Alexander Rofé, but disagrees with his application of it, suggesting a different use of ‘the Rofé emendation’, which consistently maintains the rich poetic parallelistic momentum of the song right up until the very end.

Hanne Kirchheimer

University of Birmingham

“Unity or Diversity in 2nd Temple Judaism? A Critique of the Use of the Term 'Sect' in Qumran Studies.”

Previous studies have tended to use the term 'sect' for the Community reflected in the texts chosen for this study and 'sectarian' for their writings.

This study tries to examine why the Qumran Community has been classified as a 'sect'. It does so by analyzing the reception story of the scrolls, seeking to uncover how the dominant story of the 'sect' came into being, addressing how the first impression of the site and the scrolls as well as existing theories about Second Temple Judaism contributed to this.

The study additionally seeks to clarify what is meant by the term 'sect', as defined by sociologists of religion; and takes up a discussion of whether or not it is helpful to classify the Qumran Community as a 'sect'.

Catherine Quine

University of Nottingham

“The Diversity of the Dragons of Ezekiel 29 and 32: A Re-examination of Their Unification.”

Much of the interpretation of the form, purpose and nature of the references to Egypt in Ezekiel 29-32 depends on the understanding of the earliest verses of chapters 29 and 32. This paper explores the origins of the dragon imagery in Ezekiel 29:2-5 and 32:2-3 by focussing on the language of the water used within them and argues that, in Ezekiel 29 we see a reference to and use of Egyptian ideas, whereas in Ezekiel 32 we see a use of Semitic/Hebrew ideas. In previous scholarship, the tendency has been to see the two uses of dragon imagery as drawn from one set of ideas. The most common explanations have been, a non-mythological analogy comparing Pharaoh to the Nile crocodile, and secondly, an analogy comparing Pharaoh to the Nile crocodile combined with a form of the Behemoth/Rahab/Leviathan myth, where the dragon represents chaotic forces. A few scholars have also argued for the possibility of a form of the Egyptian Sobek/Set myths being used. Notably, although scholars differ on the origins, they have tended to assign both texts to the same set of ideas. Through studying the terms יְאָו, נֶהֶר and יְמִים, this paper argues that the reference to a dragon in הַיּוֹר draws specifically on known Egyptian ideas surrounding both the Nile and crocodiles. In contrast, Ezekiel 32 refers to a dragon in הַנֶּהֶר recalling known Hebrew and Semitic traditions surrounding a Rahab/Leviathan creature in the seas. This paper calls into question the uniformity the academic tradition has seemingly imposed upon the texts, and calls for more focus on the biblical texts themselves. It also demonstrates the importance of the contribution that more studies of the role of water in the Hebrew Bible would make, particularly when dealing with mythology and cosmology in the biblical texts.

Matthew Steinfeld

University of Birmingham

“You Took the Words Right Out of My Mouth...and Changed Them!”

One of the three major ways New Testament scholars determine the Greek text for critical editions is through Patristic citations. However, oftentimes these citations misrepresent their authors' words due to changes made within the transmission history. Each citation has a history of its own. This paper will use Origen's citations of the epistle to the Galatians to draw a better perspective on the nature and use of Patristic citations in Greek New Testament textual criticism.