



## **What Makes a People?**

**LOCATION: Theological Faculty, Universitätsplatz 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor: HS 122**

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Session 1, morning **8:30**

Chair: Jeremy Corley, St Patrick's Pontifical University

email: [Jeremy.Corley@spcm.ie](mailto:Jeremy.Corley@spcm.ie)

Keynote speaker 1 (8:30-9:30)

Jutta Jokiranta, University of Helsinki

email: [jutta.jokiranta@helsinki.fi](mailto:jutta.jokiranta@helsinki.fi)

Title:

What Makes a People in the Dead Sea Scrolls?

*Abstract:*

Recently, scholars have increasingly understood the constructed nature of groups and ethnic categories. Ethnicities can be approached as cognitive perspectives on the world rather than fixed entities. Even ethnic categories are not based on groupings of people but rather of abstract entities drawing from various events, actions, artefacts, symbols, etc. Here this social-psychological research is used to inquire into the processes of feeding and remaking categories in the Scrolls.

Speaker 2 (9:30-10:00)

Dalia Marx, Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem

email: [marxdalia@gmail.com](mailto:marxdalia@gmail.com)

Title:

Separatism vs. Inclusivity: The Mixed Marriage Crisis (Ezra 9-10), and Its Footprints in Jewish Law and Lore

*Abstract:*

The proposed lecture will deal with the literary aftermath of Ezra's decree to the Jewish men to divorce their foreign wives (Ezra 9-10, Nehemiah 13:23-26). It is known that there is no indication if the decree was fulfilled, fully or partly. Furthermore, many scholars doubt that there was even actual attempt to do so. We will explore some Second Temple possible responses to Ezra's decree, for example, the book of Ruth that presents a different attitude toward foreign people, and especially women. We will relate to some early rabbinic texts dealing with the concept of *zera qodesh* ("holy seed"), which excludes the possibility of

marrying whoever is considered an outsider. And with the emergence of the conversion as an institutionalized path to Join the Jewish people. We will also show how these exclusive and inclusive tendencies continued to inform the Jewish identity and perception of peoplehood throughout the generations.

Speaker 3 (10:00-10:30)

Stefan Beyerle, University of Greifswald

email: [beyerle@uni-greifswald.de](mailto:beyerle@uni-greifswald.de)

Title:

Social Conflicts in Persian Times Yehud, Elephantine and Samaria

*Abstract:*

In the Hebrew Bible texts like Neh 5:1–13 reflect on social conflicts in Persian times Yehud. Inscriptions, papyri and ostraca from Samaria and the Nile-island of Elephantine also inform about Jewish everyday life and vital social tensions in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Even, taking into account different parties and social identities in Samaria, Yehud and Elephantine, all these societies were based on a common religious tradition that referred to a god called YHWH or YHW. Furthermore, some conflicts and social relationships remained the same, also in later, Hellenistic times—see, e.g., the role of women, and especially widows, in the Book of Judith (8:7, 10; 16:23–24). In this paper, I want to analyse the socio-religious environment in Persian times “Judaisms,” by taking also into account later Hellenistic reflections from Deuterocanonical writings.

COFFEE BREAK (10:30-11:00)

Speaker 4 (11:00-11:30)

Renate Egger-Wenzel, University of Salzburg

email: [renate.egger-wenzel@plus.ac.at](mailto:renate.egger-wenzel@plus.ac.at)

Title:

The Jewish Way of Life in the Greek Versions of the Book of Esther

*Abstract:*

The narrator of the book of Esther speaks only in the long version of the Greek text about a Jewish “way of life” (τὴν ἀγωγὴν, 2:20). According to 2:7 Mordechai educates his foster child Esther along these principles and at the end of the book he does the same for “all his people” (10:3). Mordechai having by then become the alleged successor of king Artaxerxes, is the narrator suggesting that he is educating the Jews and/or those fellow citizens who have converted out of fear and/or the entire Persian Empire? –Add. B, which cites the edict of king Artaxerxes instigated by Haman, also mentions a Jewish way of life that is allegedly disastrous for the Persian Empire (τὸ ἔθνος μονώτατον ἐν ἀντιπαραγωγῇ παντὶ διὰ παντὸς ἀνθρώπῳ κείμενον διαγωγὴν νόμων ξενίζουσιν παραλλάσσον, B5) and the conclusion that Jewry has to be utterly destroyed. Here an in-group wishes to eliminate an out-group, which is a whole people.

Speaker 5 (11:30-12:00)

Oda Wischmeyer, University of Erlangen

email: [oda.wischmeyer@fau.de](mailto:oda.wischmeyer@fau.de)

Title:

ἔθνος und ἔθνοι in der Weisheitsliteratur von Proverbia, Sirach und Sapientia

*Abstract:*

An den Texten lässt sich eine zunehmende religiöse Perspektive auf das Thema „Volk/Völker“ beobachten. Die ältere Weisheit behandelt das Thema im Rahmen politischer Unterweisung und Reflexion. Bei Sirach tritt im „Lob der Väter“ eine historische Komponente hinzu. Sapientia verbindet das Thema mit der Frage nach der richtigen Religion.

LUNCHBREAK (12:00-14:00)

18<sup>th</sup> July 2022 – afternoon session

Chair: Barbara Schmitz, University of Würzburg

email: [Barbara.schmitz@uni-wuerzburg.de](mailto:Barbara.schmitz@uni-wuerzburg.de)

Keynote speaker 6 (14:00-15:00)

Stefan C. Reif, University of Cambridge

email: [scr3@cam.ac.uk](mailto:scr3@cam.ac.uk)

Title:

The Notion of the Nation: How Hebrew Terminology Has Adjusted to Changing Circumstances

*Abstract:*

Since language and thought are inevitably interconnected within any cultural tradition, it is not surprising to find terminology recreating itself in the light of conceptual considerations. Hebrew expressions, no less than those of any other language and perhaps even more than most, have had a dynamic that has allowed them to adjust as circumstances have required. To understand that dynamic in one historical context it is helpful to relate it to linguistic developments over a broader period. The object of this paper will be to assess the manner in which the senses of words relating to the notion of people (among them *‘am* and *goy*) had to adjust over the centuries and to delineate the roles of thinkers, codifiers and exegetes in that historical process. Has such a process consistently involved tendencies towards exclusiveness, or have there also been periods in which inclusiveness reigned supreme?

Speaker 7 (15:00-15:30)

Jeremy Corley, St Patrick's Pontifical University

email: [Jeremy.Corley@spcm.ie](mailto:Jeremy.Corley@spcm.ie)

Title:

Sociology of Ben Sira

*Abstract:*

What makes a people? Surely: the members of the society. Written from a near-elite perspective, Ben Sira's book speaks of the social life of the people of Jerusalem around 200 BCE, mentioning farmers and physicians, priests and paupers, scribes and slaves, merchants and traders. An essay from 2002 by Richard A. Horsley and Patrick A. Tiller surveys "Ben Sira and the Sociology of the Second Temple," while Oda Wischmeyer's 1995 monograph on the book's culture includes wide-ranging discussion of the society. Other studies have mainly focused on the upper echelons of society, particularly political and priestly leadership. This paper will re-examine the sociology of Ben Sira's society, with special attention to those on the lower end of the social scale.

COFFEE BREAK (15:30-16:00)

Speaker 8 (16:00-16:30)

Núria Calduch-Benages, Pontifical Gregorian University

email: [ncalduch@gmail.com](mailto:ncalduch@gmail.com)

Title:

Ben Sira's Catalogue of Generosity (Sir 7:32-36)

*Abstract:*

The reading of Bradley C. Gregory's *Like an Everlasting Signet Ring* (2010), and more specifically the section 7.3.2 entitled *Almsgiving without limits*, encouraged me to choose Sir 7,32-36 as the text subject of my paper. In my view, this passage (cf. also Sir 4:1-10 and 12:1-6) suits very well the topic of the ISDCL Conference 2022 (What Makes a People). Being charitable with the needy (the poor, the afflicted, the sick and the dead) is a religious duty for the faithful Jew of all times. Aware of his responsibility as a teacher, Ben Sira never misses an opportunity to inculcate the practice of charity to his disciples. Our aim is to show how the sage reads the old texts and adapts them to his own agenda.

Speaker 9 (16:30-17:00)

Severino Bussino, Roma Tre University

email: [severinoangelomaria.bussino@uniroma3.it](mailto:severinoangelomaria.bussino@uniroma3.it)

Title:

"When one is wise to his people's advantage" (Sir 37:23): the Intelligence of Politics in the Book of Ben Sira

*Abstract:*

At least in three passages, Sir 10:3; 16:4; 37:23, the Sage, Ben Sira, explicitly offers a reflection on the wisdom required to rule over people. In this study, we will analyse these passages and the role they play in the complete teaching of Ben Sira. We will also focus on the theme of Politics and on the concept of Authority pointed out by these texts.

Speaker 10 (17:00-17:30)

Otto Mulder

Email: [omulder@hetnet.nl](mailto:omulder@hetnet.nl)

Title:

Samaritans as אֲנֹכִי 'a non-nation' in Sir 50:25-26

*Abstract:*

The theme of ethnicity in a conflict between the Judeans in Jerusalem and the Samaritans about the authority of the Second Temple and the sanctuary on Mount Gerizim is documented in Sirach 50:25-26. Ben Sira expresses his abhorrence in an invective with the literary form of a numerical aphorism concerning the inhabitants of Seir and Philistea and the foolish people that wanders in Shechem as the third. In commentaries these two verses in 50:25-26 are often neglected, or seen as a peculiar appendix, or as an isolated text about hostility of the Samaritans as a fraternal small sectarian group. The qualifications "foolish people" and "a non-nation" point to a long-standing historical conflict, asking for an investigation into the Hebrew and Greek version of 50:25-26 in the context of the Praise of the Fathers and other contemporary documents, the NT and Jewish and Samaritan literature.

BUSSINESS MEETING (17:30-18:45)

19<sup>th</sup> July 2022 – MORNING SESSION (8:30)

LOCATION: **Theological Faculty, Universitätsplatz 1, Ground floor: HS 107**

Chair

Núria Calduch-Benages, Pontifical Gregorian University

email: [ncalduch@gmail.com](mailto:ncalduch@gmail.com)

Speaker 11 (8:30-9:00)

Barbara Schmitz, University of Würzburg

email: [barbara.schmitz@uni-wuerzburg.de](mailto:barbara.schmitz@uni-wuerzburg.de)

Title:

*Laos* in the First Book of Maccabees: A Hasmonean Perspective in the Context of Limited Statehood

*Abstract:*

In the First Book of Maccabees, the word *laos*, "people", is used in diverse meanings and different narrative settings. The paper analyzes the polysemic use of the word *laos* and explores its narrative function in the First Book of Maccabees. Furthermore, it contextualizes the narrative results in the conditions of the Seleucid Empire in the second century BCE with its specific policy and governance under the conditions of limited statehood.

Speaker 12 (9:30-10:00)

Pierre Jordaán, North-West University

email: [Pierre.Jordaan@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Pierre.Jordaan@nwu.ac.za)

Title:

The People in 2 Maccabees 3 i.e. the “Heliodorus” Scene

*Abstract:*

The view of the deity in 2 Maccabees and the people seem to be dynamic rather than stagnant. On the one hand the deity sometimes punishes his people through the enemy. On the other hand, he can also defend them against the same enemy. In this sequence of events the “Heliodorus scene” in 2 Maccabees 3 is quite unique. A protagonist and his helpers as well as an antagonist and his helpers can be shown. However, on the side of protagonist - minor, insignificant players like the “widows and orphans” are also found. Robert Doran says their mentioning here is a “rhetorical ploy” and refers to LXX Ps 67:6 as possible background. However, Doran unfortunately does not venture to investigate LXX Ps 67:6 further. Upon closer investigation this text might show interesting context for the Heliodorus scene. It demonstrates how “the people” should operate, the role of the temple and finally, when one can expect the deity to get involved. This is a new contribution as the relationship between LXX Ps 67:6 and 2 Maccabees 3 has never been looked at this way.

Speaker 13 (10:00-10:30)

Friedrich V. Reiterer, University of Salzburg

email: [friedrich.reiterer@plus.ac.at](mailto:friedrich.reiterer@plus.ac.at)

Title:

Einige Schwerpunkte der Rede vom „Volk“ im Buch der Weisheit

*Abstract:*

Im Buch der Weisheit finden sich unterschiedliche Worte, die „Volk“ bedeuten. Der Häufigkeit nach aufgelistet sind das λαός, πλῆθος, ἔθνος, ὄχλος und ἀλλότριος; vgl. auch ἐχθρός und πολέμιος. – Der Autor lebt mitten in der religiösen, geistigen und gesellschaftspolitischen Auseinandersetzung seiner Zeit: es sind dies Schwierigkeiten und Anfeindungen aus dem Umfeld und auch Spannungen innerhalb des eigenen Volkes. Die Beobachtungen zur Wortwahl, mit der die „Gesprächspartner“ und das Volk des Herrn sorgsam abwendig bezeichnet werden, bietet einen Einblick in den sozialen und religiösen Kontext des gesamten biblischen Buches.

COFFEE BREAK (10:30-11:00)

Speaker 14 (11:00-11:30)

Armando Rafael Castro Acquaroli, Faculdade Católica de Santa Catarina

email: [castroacquaroli@gmail.com](mailto:castroacquaroli@gmail.com)

Title:

Epistle of Jeremiah: Which Idols? The Critique of Idolatry in the Epistle of Jeremiah (Bar 6)

*Abstract:*

The Epistle of Jeremiah (EpJer=Bar 6) is a late deuterocanonical writing, which deals with the theme of idolatry. In this article some lexical elements relevant to current research are studied, bringing to light new perspectives based on their historical background: the Hellenism. In addition, the EpJer only mentions the name of one deity, Bel, well known in Babylon. The point of view here defended is that the religious environment created by EpJer is actually a narrative fiction who intends to criticize the gods of the entire Hellenistic diaspora, not only the ones of Babylon. Thus, it is possible to track some gods like Artemis, Zeus and Aphrodite on the liturgical ceremonies described by the author of the text.

Speaker 15 (11:30-12:00)

Eve-Marie Becker, University of Münster

email: [beckerev@uni-muenster.de](mailto:beckerev@uni-muenster.de)

Title:

μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (Mt 28,19): Das Verhältnis von Jüngerschaft und Gottesvolk vor und bei Matthäus

*Abstract:*

Vor dem Hintergrund der neuesten Forschungsdiskussionen über die religionsgeschichtliche Provenienz des MtEv sucht der Beitrag die Vorstellung der "Heidenmission" am Schluss des Evangeliums zu deuten: Wer wird hier von wem zur Jüngerschaft unter τὰ ἔθνη ausgesandt? Welche Vorstellung von Jüngerschaft ist mit dieser Sendungsinstruktion verbunden?

LUNCH BREAK (12:00-14:00)

19<sup>th</sup> July 2022 – afternoon session

Chair: Stefan C. Reif, University of Cambridge

email: [scr3@cam.ac.uk](mailto:scr3@cam.ac.uk)

Keynote speaker 16 (14:00-15:00)

Maren Niehoff, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

email: [maren.niehoff@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:maren.niehoff@mail.huji.ac.il)

Title:

Jews, Indians and Barbarians: Constructing Jewish Identity in Rome

*Abstract:*

This paper investigates how Philo and Josephus, two Jewish authors writing in a Roman context, constructed Jewish identity by reference to the Indian gymnosophists and the overall category of barbarian philosophy. India and barbarian philosophy aroused lively debates in first century CE Rome, following Alexander's Eastern expedition and Rome's increasing identification with the Trojans rather than the Greeks in Homer's epic. Jewish authors engaged these discourses and connected certain motifs to their ancestral heritage. Philo is the first to address these issues in his treatise on freedom, where he criticizes Greek philosophy as superficially concerned with rhetoric. Barbarian philosophers, such as Jews and Indians, by contrast, are committed to practical ethics and achieve true freedom. Philo

also preserves an alternative perspective on the connection between Jews and Indians, one probably proposed by competing Jewish exegetes. They interpreted the Binding of Isaac as a sacrifice parallel to the Indian gymnosophists' custom of self-immolation on the pyre. Philo rejected this interpretation on the grounds that it does not appreciate Abraham's free response to God's request. Finally, Josephus makes an important contribution both by transmitting the tradition that the Jews descended from the Indian gymnosophists and by fashioning Elazar's speech on Masada (J.W. 7.351-7), which uses the example of Indian self-sacrifice to recruit the other rebels against Rome to commit suicide rather than falling into Roman hands.

Speaker 17 (15:00-15:30)

Francis M. Macatangay, University of St. Thomas

email: [frfrancismac@hotmail.com](mailto:frfrancismac@hotmail.com)

Title:

"For we are children of prophets": The Idea of a People in the Book of Tobit

*Abstract:*

In the fourth chapter of the Book of Tobit, Tobit gives his son Tobias a piece of paternal advice on how to choose a wife. Tobit tells Tobias to "take a wife from among the descendants of your fathers and do not marry a foreign woman who is not of your father's tribe" (Tob 4:12). The fundamental rationale that Tobit offers his son for this instruction is that "we are children (lit. "sons") of prophets." This paper briefly explores the possible meanings of the claim of biological descent from the prophets as it pertains to the idea of a people in the Book of Tobit.

COFFEE BREAK (15:30-16:00)

Speaker 18 (16:00-16:30)

József Zsengellér, Károli Gáspár University

email: [zsengeller@t-online.hu](mailto:zsengeller@t-online.hu)

Title:

The Identity of "Israel" in the Book of Tobit

*Abstract:*

The Book of Tobit has different interpretational levels. Keywords of the book have different meanings in different relations. Israel means the geographical space of life of Tobit and his relatives before the exile. At the same time, it is the political unit of the northern yahwists in the *eretz*. The third meaning of Israel is the religious community through the geographical borders. Like the book of Ezekiel, the book of Tobit also generates from the two geographically and politically shaped religiously Yahwistic people (ethnic groups?), Judah and Israel one unit called Israel. This process is happening in the exile. In the book of Tobit the two groups are symbolized on the one hand by Tobit (northern Israelites) and Sarah (southern Judahites). Both groups have problems, diseases, are healed by God's angel) and led to each other and united in marriage. The different geographical settings of the



protagonists refer also to the two different captive groups whose salvation or common lot is prepared and promised to happen in or from Media. The united Israel will return to Jerusalem and will be centred around its temple. In my view the book of Tobit creates an identity for the post-exilic Yahwistic returnees in Yehud (Jerusalem) called Israel.

Speaker 19 (16:30-17:00)

Marcin Chrostowski, Adam Mickiewicz University

email: [marcinchrostowski@gmail.com](mailto:marcinchrostowski@gmail.com)

Title:

The Heroes of the Book of Tobit as Paradigmatic Figures of the Assyrian Diaspora

*Abstract:*

The book of Tobit is regarded among the scholars as a didactic work about the life of a pious Israeli family in exile in Assyria. However, a thorough study of the chief recensions of Tobit and its onomastics leads to the hypothesis that the author of the book of Tobit referred to the authentic events of the first deportations of Israelites to Mesopotamia in the 8th century BC, led by the Assyrian kings. The diaspora, which was created as a result of this, retained its identity, which is described in Tobit. An important example is Achikar (Tob 1:22) defined as chief cupbearer, keeper of the signet, administrator and treasurer. In Greek, these terms are rare or *hapax legomena*. They become clear in the analysis of the Aramaic and Hebrew fragments of Tob (4Q196–200) and through the knowledge of the hierarchy of officials in the Assyrian court. The author of the book of Tobit used these realities in order to give his work a Mesopotamian colour. Achikar, described as an Israelite serving the Assyrian kings, may have been an example of foreigners who attained high dignity in the Assyrian court. The onomastics of other figures (Raguel) and their description, suggesting the life of the Israelites in the Diaspora, are similar.

Speaker 20 (17:00-17:30)

Risimati Hobyane, North-West University

email: [Risimati.Hobyane@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Risimati.Hobyane@nwu.ac.za)

Title:

What Makes a People According to Judith? A Relook at Judith 5:1-24: A Greimassian Perspective?

*Abstract:*

The concept “people” could in point of fact be seen as a driving force behind the authorship of *Judith*. This paper applauds many insightful contributions that have already been made by various scholars on this theme. However, I contend that the theme and concept of people is still a topic wide open for further exploration. In this paper, I explore the use of the concept “people” in the *Judith* narrative. The paper does not only aim at identifying and describing the concept, but also aspire to further demonstrating its distinct function toward the implied reader as they read the story. The analysis here will be done from both the figurative and thematic level of analysis of the Greimassian semiotic approach to literary texts. This paper asserts that the utilisation of the concept “people” is possibly an

intentional literary strategy by the author to encourage the reader (first and implied) to embrace the idea of Jewish reunification in the second temple period.

18:00

FESTIVE DINER for ISDCL members on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the ISDCL in the Sternbräu, Griessgasse 23