The Wisdom of Jonah in the Late Antique History of Interpretation

The Prophet Jonah’s adventures have generated a rich profusion of works of art, liturgical texts, and learned commentaries—equal perhaps to the number of questions this short tale raises and controversies it provokes. In late antique and early mediaeval Islamic legends, Jonah is taught by ascetics and scholars. The Jerusalem Talmud speaks of his wife who piously went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem until the sages sent her home. Generations of Christian interpreters retold the biblical story, filling gaps of the text in a way that modern reader-response critics would find admirable. Yet the very need to substitute explanation for gaps results from the nature of Jonah’s story: simple but puzzling, steeped in Levantine realities and yet incredible. What are the hallmarks of the interpretation of the book of Jonah in the three monotheistic religions? Did the generations of readers attach importance to the wisdom themes in the book and elaborate on them? Who really is Jonah: a prophet or a sage? Dr. Sonek’s paper will offer tentative answers to these questions.

KRZYSZTOF SONEK was educated in Poland, Italy, Israel, and the United Kingdom. He received his doctoral degree in Theology (Old Testament studies) from Oxford University in 2007. Over the last two years, he has been doing research on the philological and theological aspects of the book of Jonah. The focus of his current research is on the reception history of the Abrahamic narratives in the context of the concept of monotheism in late antique Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Friday 21 March 2014 1.00pm–2.00pm
Treacy Boardroom, CTC

BYO Lunch ~ Tea / Coffee / Wine provided
All Staff and Postgraduate Students are welcome to attend