

# MICHAEL KNIBB

Michael Anthony Knibb

14 December 1938 – 6 December 2023

elected Fellow of the British Academy 1989

by

CHARLOTTE HEMPEL

*Summary.* Michael A. Knibb FBA FKC was a world-leading scholar in two pioneering fields, the Ethiopic Old Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls, along with messianic and apocalyptic expectations and thought across a wide range of ancient Jewish and Christian literature. Much of Knibb's scholarship was based on meticulous primary research on a large number of manuscripts spanning two millennia from the late 3rd century BCE until the 19th century CE. The linguistic range of the primary sources that underpin his scholarship covers Hebrew, Aramaic, Ethiopic, Syriac, Greek, Latin and Coptic. Knibb's foundational research includes editions of two books of the Ethiopic Old Testament – the Books of Enoch and Ezekiel. Alongside his major contribution in the form of scholarly editions, Knibb also published a wide range of incisive and penetrating scholarly literature on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Biblical Studies including the Apocrypha, related authoritative texts commonly referred to as Pseudepigrapha, Prophecy, Apocalyptic, and Messianism. His beautiful and accessible translations of the Book of Enoch and a selection of the Dead Sea Scrolls have been widely used and appreciated.

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M. A. Kiehl.

## Education and early career

Michael Knibb, a distinguished scholar of Ethiopic Studies and Second Temple Judaism, died on Wednesday 6 December 2023 at the age of 84. Knibb was born on 14 December 1938 in Leicester to Leslie Charles and Christian Vera Knibb. Michael Knibb was their youngest son and close in age to his younger sister Rose Marie Knibb. The family owned a wholesale business as fruit and vegetable merchants, and supplied Leicester Market. They were comfortably off, and Knibb's two older brothers, Leslie and Charles, took over the business from their father. Knibb was educated in Leicester at Mill Hill School and Wyggeston Grammar School for Boys, where famous alumni include both David and Richard Attenborough.

After leaving school, and with the intention of being ordained, Knibb studied Theology at King's College London, earning a BD with First Class Honours in 1961. It was as an undergraduate in 1960 that Knibb travelled abroad for the first time with a fellow student on a grant secured from Goldsmiths College. The pair travelled to Jordan via a cargo ship from Marseilles to Cyprus and a short plane journey to Jerusalem. He embarked on a second journey to the same region in 1966 which included Syria and Lebanon. Both journeys were not uneventful and included an emergency appendectomy in Jordan and a period of quarantine in Iraq during a yellow fever outbreak respectively.

After graduating, Knibb crossed the Atlantic for the first time. He travelled Third Class on the Queen Mary to spend a year at Union Theological Seminary in New York City on a Fulbright Scholarship, obtaining a Master of Sacred Theology magna cum laude, and formed enduring friendships before continuing his studies at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Only three years after completing his undergraduate degree, Knibb returned to King's as Lecturer in Old Testament Studies in 1964. He completed his doctoral thesis in Semitic Studies supervised by the distinguished Semitic scholar Edward Ullendorff FBA in 1974.

It was during his time as a Lecturer that Michael Knibb met his wife Christine Marie Knibb, *née* Burrell. Christine also grew up in Leicester where she enjoyed the social scene of the Tennis and Squash Clubs. It was there that she got to know Michael's older brothers. Michael and Christine's courtship blossomed in London after his brother Charles let Michael know that 'Christine is coming to London. You ought to take her out.' This brotherly piece of advice would lead to Michael and Christine's very happy marriage of over 50 years.

Knibb would spend his academic career at King's College London where he thrived personally, as a scholar, and as a gifted senior leader and administrator at his home institution and beyond. Knibb advanced to Reader in Old Testament Studies in 1982, soon after to Professor of Old Testament in 1986, before being awarded the Samuel Davidson

Chair of Old Testament Studies in 1997, which he occupied until his retirement in 2001 and – as Emeritus – until his death in 2023.

### Aethiopica

Among the breadth of Michael Knibb's scholarship his contribution to Ethiopic Studies is predominant and frames his scholarly career with the publication of two landmark editions published in his early career and during his retirement respectively.<sup>1</sup> The scriptures of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church are perhaps less well-known to readers familiar with the Jewish Scriptures (Tanakh) and the Old Testament canons of various Christian denominations. While sharing books of Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox Christians, the Ethiopic Old Testament also includes less well-known ancient Jewish works that were transmitted, and thus preserved, by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church across millennia. Of particular importance in our context are two ancient Jewish works preserved and revered by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church: the Book of Jubilees and the Book of Enoch. The Book of Jubilees contains a revelation to Moses by an angel of a substantially modified account of the events depicted in Genesis to Exodus 16.<sup>2</sup> This larger narrative is prefaced by a setting on Mount Sinai during which God presents Moses with the tablets of the law alongside further divine instructions. The Book of Enoch, also known as 1 Enoch, is characterised by features associated with apocalyptic literature that go beyond what we find already in the biblical books of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelation. The experiences attributed to the patriarch Enoch – who according to a cryptic reference in Genesis 5:24 'walked with God, and he was not, for God took him' – include heavenly journeys, vivid visionary experiences, and an elaborate angelology. The remains of a significant number of fragmentary manuscripts of both Jubilees and Enochic material have also emerged from among the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran, a topic to which we will return below.

Having completed his doctoral research in Semitic Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) under Edward Ullendorff's supervision, an updated version of Knibb's thesis was published in 1978 in two volumes under the title *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*.<sup>3</sup> This Edition remains a significant point of reference since Knibb was able to draw on Aramaic,

<sup>1</sup>M.A. Knibb (in consultation with Edward Ullendorff), *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), and M.A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Text of the Book of Ezekiel: A Critical Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>2</sup>M.A. Knibb, *Jubilees and the Origins of the Qumran Community: An Inaugural Lecture* (London: King's College, 1989).

<sup>3</sup>Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch*.

Greek and Ethiopic manuscript evidence that had not been available to the early 20th-century editions by Johannes Flemming<sup>4</sup> and Robert H. Charles FBA.<sup>5</sup> Knibb's Introduction to the Edition in Volume 2 offers a comprehensive assessment of the textual evidence and related material on 1 Enoch from the 3rd century BCE to the 19th century CE. In particular, Knibb was able to draw on the significant new evidence of eleven ancient Aramaic manuscripts preserving Enochic traditions from among the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>6</sup> In doing so, he was in the enviable position of having been given access to the page proofs of the edition of these Aramaic scroll fragments prepared by Jozef T. Milik.<sup>7</sup> While Milik considered the manuscripts as copies of the Book of Enoch and a related Astronomical Book, further research suggests that the finds from Qumran belong to booklets of Enoch traditions also attested in the Book of Enoch rather than a unified work composed in Aramaic.<sup>8</sup> It is for this reason that Knibb does not maintain Milik's siglum 4QEnoch<sup>9</sup> for the Aramaic manuscripts from Qumran, in favour of the more neutral Aramaic<sup>a-g</sup> and Aramaic<sup>astr.a-d</sup>. Evidence from Qumran preserves the remains of material related to four of the five parts of Ethiopic Enoch, known as the Book of Watchers (1 Enoch 1–36), the Astronomical Book (1 Enoch 72–82),<sup>10</sup> the Book of Dream Visions (1 Enoch 83–90), and the Epistle of Enoch (1 Enoch 91–107).<sup>11</sup> It is not

<sup>4</sup>J. Flemming, *Das Buch Henoch: Äthiopischer Text mit Einleitung und Commentar (Texte und Untersuchungen, neue Folge vii.1)*; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902).

<sup>5</sup>R.H. Charles, *The Ethiopic Version of the Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906).

<sup>6</sup>See Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 2*, pp. 6–15, 42–6. The Aramaic fragments go back to the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE with one earlier manuscript that was out of scope for Knibb's Edition, cf. *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 2*, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup>J.T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). See also the subsequent editions by L. Stuckenbruck, '201 4QEnoch<sup>a</sup>', and E.J.C. Tigchelaar & F. García Martínez, '208–209 4QAstronomical Enoch<sup>a-b</sup>', in S.J. Pfann, P.A. Alexander, *et al.* (eds), *Qumran Cave 4: 26 Cryptic Texts and Miscellanea Part 1 (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert, 36)*; Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), pp. 3–7 and 95–171 respectively.

<sup>8</sup>Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, pp. 6–7, and M.A. Knibb, 'The Book of Enoch or Books of Enoch? The Textual Evidence for 1 Enoch', in G. Boccaccini & J.J. Collins (eds), *The Early Enoch Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 21–40.

<sup>9</sup>The siglum 4Q is the standard reference to Qumran Cave 4 from where the Aramaic fragments were recovered beneath a large amount of earth, substantially by Bedouin, and to a lesser extent by archaeologists and scholars, see J.T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judaea*, trans. J. Strugnell (London: SCM, 1959), pp. 16–17, and Milik, *Books of Enoch*, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>The evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls has revealed that ancient Aramaic manuscripts reminiscent of the Astronomical Book circulated independently of the other booklets, see Milik, *Books of Enoch*, p. 273; Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 2*, p. 8; Tigchelaar & García Martínez, '208–209. 4QAstronomical Enoch<sup>a-b</sup>', p. 95; and G.W. Nickelsburg & J.C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 37–82* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress, 2012), p. 335.

<sup>11</sup>For a further subdivision of the final chapters of the Epistle of Enoch see K. Coblenz Bautch, '5.1.1 Textual History of 1 Enoch', in *Textual History of the Bible Online* (Leiden: Brill, 2020) [https://doi.org/10.1163/2452-4107\\_thb\\_COM\\_0205010100](https://doi.org/10.1163/2452-4107_thb_COM_0205010100) (last accessed 1 June 2026).

possible to determine the original language of the Ethiopic Book of the Parables (1 Enoch 37–71) nor of the final chapter (1 Enoch 108), neither of which have been attested in either Aramaic or Greek to date.<sup>12</sup>

Knibb's Edition shares the widely-held view that the Ethiopic translation is a daughter translation of an earlier Greek version of 1 Enoch, and considers recourse by the translators responsible for the Ethiopic translation to an Aramaic text very likely.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, three decades after his Edition was published, Knibb was cautiously sympathetic about the identification of sparse remains of an ancient Greek translation of the Epistle of Enoch from Qumran.<sup>14</sup>

Knibb was also able to draw on the 1937 edition of the 4th-century CE Greek Chester Beatty-Michigan papyrus,<sup>15</sup> as well as two recently available Ethiopic manuscripts – Tana 9 and Ullendorff – neither of which had been accessible to Flemming or Charles.<sup>16</sup> The 15th-century CE manuscript Lake Tana 9 was available in the form of microfilm taken by Ernst Hammerschmidt in 1968 in the monastery of St Gabriel on the island of Kebran on Lake Tana.<sup>17</sup> Knibb's editorial approach was to produce what is known as a diplomatic edition with the 18th-century CE manuscript Rylands Ethiopic MS. 23 as a base-text.<sup>18</sup> Rylands MS. 23 is presented alongside textual notes offering a wide range of textual evidence gleaned from a collation of manuscripts in Ethiopic and Greek.<sup>19</sup> The selection of this base manuscript was grounded in the fact, established already by Dillmann, that a group of 18th- and 19th-century Ethiopic manuscripts preserve more reliable access to the original translation than a mostly earlier group of manuscripts which suffers from frequent errors, omissions and additions.<sup>20</sup> In this

<sup>12</sup>Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 2*, pp. 6–7; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 1–36; 81–108* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress, 2001), p. 11. See further M.A. Knibb, 'Christian Adoption and Transmission of Jewish Pseudepigrapha: The Case of 1 Enoch', *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 32 (2001), 396–415 at 411–13.

<sup>13</sup>Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 2*, pp. 21–2, 37–46. For the view that the translators of the Ethiopic translation relied, rather, on an Aramaic text see E. Ullendorff, 'An Aramaic "Vorlage" of the Ethiopic Text of Enoch?' in *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Etiopici (Problemi Attuali di Scienza e di Cultura, Quaderno N. 48; Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1960)*.

<sup>14</sup>Knibb, 'Book of Enoch or Books', p. 35. It was Émile Puech who identified the sparse remains of papyrus fragments in Greek as preserving parts of the Epistle of Enoch, see É. Puech, 'Sept fragments grecs de la Lettre de Hénoch (1 Hén 100, 103, et 105) dans la grotte 7 de Qumrân (= 7Q Héngre)', *Revue de Qumrân*, 18 (1997), 313–23.

<sup>15</sup>See Campbell Bonner, *The Last Chapters of Enoch in Greek* (London: Christophers, 1937).

<sup>16</sup>See Flemming, *Das Buch Hénoch*, and Charles, *Book of Enoch*.

<sup>17</sup>See M.A. Knibb, *Translating the Bible: The Ethiopic Version of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1999), p. 7.

<sup>18</sup>Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 2*, pp. 25, 32–7, and 47.

<sup>19</sup>Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 1*, pp. xi–xiii.

<sup>20</sup>See A. Dillmann, 'Rezension zu R.H. Charles: The Book of Enoch, Oxford 1893', *Theologische Literaturzeitschrift*, 18 (1893), cols 442–446; Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 2*, pp. 35–6, including

context, Knibb highlighted a significant example where an ancient Aramaic fragment aligns with the younger group of Ethiopic II manuscripts.<sup>21</sup> The earliest attested Ethiopic manuscript Tana 9 goes back to the 15th century and is singled out with the addition of an Appendix indicating its most significant readings in Volume 1.<sup>22</sup> In addition, Knibb's extensive Introduction and the Notes accompanying his English Translation in Volume 2 include detailed assessments of a wider range of textual evidence in Aramaic, Greek, Syriac, Ethiopic, Latin and Coptic. Knibb's approach to offer the text of a single Ethiopic base manuscript was labelled 'daring' by George Nickelsburg,<sup>23</sup> and critiqued in two serious and almost contemporary German reviews by Klaus Berger<sup>24</sup> and Ernst Hammerschmidt.<sup>25</sup> Both reviewers lament the lack of editorial interventions in Knibb's Edition of the Ethiopic text, where other text witnesses suggest a superior reading to the base text. Both also welcome Knibb's approach to his English Translation where he does, on occasion and transparently, diverge from the readings of his base text Rylands MS. 23 and offer something akin to an eclectic translation. This led Hammerschmidt to judge the text-critical value of the Introduction and English Translation as the most significant scholarly contribution of Knibb's edition of 1 Enoch.<sup>26</sup>

Let us return to Berger's review for a moment, and especially his focus on a significant rich and neglected repertoire of early citations from 1 Enoch in Ethiopic ecclesiastical writings that date back as early as the 14th and 15th centuries CE. In his treatment of this issue Berger also includes a substantial list and discussion of citations in the latter part of his review, offering a set of evidence that goes considerably further than a provisional list published earlier by Milik in 1976.<sup>27</sup> In 2005 Knibb offered a careful assessment of the text-critical value of the quotations originally identified by Milik.<sup>28</sup> Amongst other

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footnotes 29–31. Note should also be taken of Knibb's discussion of the lack of uniformity also in the younger second group of Ethiopic manuscripts, see Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 2*, pp. 28–32. See also the discussion in S. Uhlig, *Das äthiopische Henochbuch (Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit 5)*; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1984), pp. 488–9.

<sup>21</sup> See the discussion in the notes accompanying the translation of 1 Enoch 5:1 of the reading in manuscript Aramaic<sup>a</sup> 1 ii 11 in Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 2*, pp. 64–5 as well as pp. 45–6 of the Introduction.

<sup>22</sup> Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 1*, pp. 425–8.

<sup>23</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, p. 18.

<sup>24</sup> Klaus Berger, 'Review of Michael A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*', *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 11 (1980), 100–9.

<sup>25</sup> E. Hammerschmidt, 'Review of Michael A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental & African Studies*, 44 (1981), 573–5.

<sup>26</sup> See Hammerschmidt, 'Review Knibb, *Book of Enoch*', at 574–5.

<sup>27</sup> Berger, 'Review of Knibb, *Book of Enoch*', and Milik, *Books of Enoch*, pp. 85–8.

<sup>28</sup> M.A. Knibb, 'The Text-Critical Value of the Quotations of 1 Enoch in Ethiopic Writings', in F. García Martínez & M. Vervenne (eds), *Interpreting Translation: Studies on the LXX and Ezekiel in Honour of Johan Lust* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), pp. 225–35, reprinted in M.A. Knibb, *Essays on the Book of Enoch*

things he draws attention to the inclusion of paraphrases and allusions alongside quotations in Milik's list, and identifies a misidentified quotation from Jude 14–15 which is referred to as a quotation of 1 Enoch by Berger.<sup>29</sup> Knibb concludes that while the ecclesiastical quotations are of limited text-critical value, they do shed significant light on the history of the text and its reception in 15th-century CE Ethiopian Christianity.<sup>30</sup>

The extensive engagement with the complex textual evidence underpinning the important subsequent German translation of 1 Enoch published by Siegbert Uhlig goes beyond the manuscripts collated by Knibb and includes, in addition, the significant manuscript Cambridge University Library Add. 1570,<sup>31</sup> fragments of Ethiopic Enoch<sup>32</sup> alongside a selection of quotations from 1 Enoch dating from the 15th and – more tentatively – the 14th century.<sup>33</sup> As we shall see, Knibb would go on to incorporate the above Cambridge University manuscript in his critical edition of Ethiopic Ezekiel, on which more will be said below.<sup>34</sup> A broader range of manuscripts still was consulted in the Commentary on 1 Enoch by George Nickelsburg, which also includes a helpful table comparing the 20th-century editions, translations and commentaries bar Flemming's 1902 edition.<sup>35</sup>

As far as the eleven fragmentary Aramaic manuscripts attested among the Qumran Dead Sea Scrolls are concerned, Knibb's methodologically rigorous approach highlights limitations based on their fragmentary nature, the presence of passages which do not correspond to anything found in the Ethiopic text of Enoch, and their limited scale which he calculates as a little under 20 per cent of the Ethiopic text.<sup>36</sup> Here, Knibb's approach differs sharply from the approach taken by Milik, whose edition of the Aramaic fragments relies on later Greek and Ethiopic evidence to reconstruct hypothetical Aramaic readings where they are not preserved. Milik's approach has been contested given the enormous gap of around 1700 years between the Aramaic fragments and the earliest surviving manuscripts in Ethiopic.<sup>37</sup> As a result, Knibb excludes the Aramaic evidence

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*and Other Early Jewish Texts and Traditions (Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha, 22; Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 176–87.*

<sup>29</sup> Knibb, 'Quotations of 1 Enoch', p. 230.

<sup>30</sup> Knibb, 'Quotations of 1 Enoch', p. 235.

<sup>31</sup> Uhlig, *Das äthiopische Henochbuch*, pp. 470–7. On this manuscript see also Knibb, 'Book of Enoch or Books', p. 38.

<sup>32</sup> Uhlig, *Das äthiopische Henochbuch*, p. 472.

<sup>33</sup> Uhlig, *Das äthiopische Henochbuch*, p. 476

<sup>34</sup> See, Knibb, *Ethiopic Text of the Book of Ezekiel*, and M.A. Knibb 'Editions of Ethiopic Biblical Texts and Their Apparatuses: Experiences and Lessons from Ezekiel', in M. Heide & S. Weninger (eds), *Studies in the Ethiopic Old Testament: Prolegomena to a Critical Edition of the Jeremiah Cycle (Supplements to AETHIOPICA, 11; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2022)*, pp. 47–63.

<sup>35</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, p. 17.

<sup>36</sup> See Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 2*, p. 12.

<sup>37</sup> See Knibb, 'Book of Enoch or Books', pp. 32–3.

from the textual apparatus of his Edition of 1 Enoch in Volume 1, but includes it extensively in the Introduction and Notes to the English translation in Volume 2.

Michael Knibb remained committed to his approach of constrained editorial interventions only to his English translation of 1 Enoch when he returned to this issue in 2001.<sup>38</sup> There he does, however, acknowledge the need for a pragmatic approach with reference to interpreting the textual evidence:

In practical terms, at least for the purposes of interpretation and comment, we have little alternative to using a conflation of all three witnesses, drawing on the Aramaic where it really is possible, but otherwise using the best Greek and/or Ethiopic evidence available. But there is a very real danger of creating a text that never existed as such in antiquity, and it seems to me important that we keep in mind the different contexts in which the original Aramaic text, the Greek translation, and the Ethiopic translation were produced and transmitted and the different kinds of status that each type of evidence has.<sup>39</sup>

The points made above, and more fully elsewhere in the same paper, highlight the importance of discriminating the material manuscript remains in Aramaic, Greek and Ethiopic underpinning the Enoch tradition. In this context Knibb reminds us again that the complete text of 1 Enoch in Ethiopic is not preserved before the 15th century CE<sup>40</sup> and emphasises, in addition, the Christian environment of this translation and its transmission. The earliest complete text of Ethiopic Enoch from the 15th century CE, principally Tana 9, is, according to Knibb, to be considered as an independent witness. The same applies to the remains of the eleven fragmentary manuscripts from among the Dead Sea Scrolls which contain a more limited amount of ancient Enochic traditions. The Jewish provenance of these Aramaic manuscripts is assured. Knibb further considers the possibility of a Jewish provenance for the Greek translation from Aramaic originals likely, acknowledging however the lack of positive evidence to support this hypothesis. In a subsequent paper Knibb expands further on this important issue and concludes that the Ethiopic text of Enoch is ‘a new edition’ of an ancient Jewish composition that was translated from the Greek in a Christian cultural environment.<sup>41</sup>

While Knibb’s cautious editorial approach to his edition of the Ethiopic text of 1 Enoch leaves us without a definitive eclectic text in Ethiopic, his fidelity to and emphasis on existing manuscripts, within the contexts of their cultural and religious provenance, foreshadows a pivot in manuscript studies in his field towards the approach known more

<sup>38</sup> Knibb, ‘Christian Adoption and Transmission’.

<sup>39</sup> Knibb, ‘Christian Adoption and Transmission’, pp. 404–5.

<sup>40</sup> Knibb, ‘Christian Adoption and Transmission’, pp. 403 and 413.

<sup>41</sup> Knibb, ‘Book of Enoch or Books’, p. 29, and more extensively in Knibb, ‘Christian Adoption and Transmission’.

recently as the ‘new’ or ‘material philology’.<sup>42</sup> This approach emerged, appropriately for our purposes, in medieval French and Norse manuscript studies, and offers a critique of the quest for the best ‘disembodied’ text in favour of paying due attention to the material artefacts that bear the texts.

On the other hand, it is worth returning to Knibb’s reflection, quoted above, that

for the purposes of interpretation and comment, we have little alternative to using a conflation of all three witnesses, drawing on the Aramaic where it really is possible, but otherwise using the best Greek and/or Ethiopic evidence available ...<sup>43</sup>

On the basis of many years of extensive research and intimate familiarity with the underlying manuscript tradition of 1 Enoch, such carefully considered judgements would have been accessible to Knibb himself. There can be little doubt, however, that many readers consulting his Ethiopic Edition of 1 Enoch are not immediately in a position to come to a critically informed decision of the most compelling Aramaic, Greek and Ethiopic readings. A more pragmatic approach, alongside due caution, may arguably have served those readers well.

On a different note, Knibb’s English translation of the Book of Enoch was included and widely appreciated in a collection of Old Testament Apocrypha edited by H.F.D. Sparks FBA in 1984.<sup>44</sup> Sparks’ Preface recounts the considerable further editorial duties that emerged from the incorporation of Knibb’s translation:

Dr. Knibb’s translation was in modern idiom. Very naturally he was unwilling to archaize, in order to make his contribution conform in style with the others. The only alternative was to modernize the others. And I undertook to do this as part of my own responsibility as Editor.<sup>45</sup>

Given Sparks’ volume extends to almost a thousand pages, his task was no mean feat.

In 1995 Knibb delivered the *Schweich Lectures on Biblical Archaeology* of the British Academy on the theme of *Translating the Bible: The Ethiopic Version of the Old Testament*.<sup>46</sup> This was an opportunity for him to return to the complex textual history of the Ethiopic Old Testament that he had previously tackled for 1 Enoch. The first lecture ‘Problems and Solutions’ offers a fresh assessment of the prevalent view on the history

<sup>42</sup> See, e.g. M.J. Driscoll, ‘Words on the Page: Thoughts on Philology, Old and New’, in J. Quinn & E. Lethbridge (eds), *Creating the Medieval Saga: Versions, Variability, and Editorial Interpretation of Old Norse Saga Literature* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2010), pp. 85–102, and L.I. Lied, ‘Text-Work-Manuscript: What is an Old Testament Pseudepigraphon’, *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, 25 (2015), 150–65, and S.G. Nichols, ‘Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture’, *Speculum*, 64 (1990), 1–10.

<sup>43</sup> Knibb, ‘Christian Adoption and Transmission’, pp. 404–5.

<sup>44</sup> Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch 2*, pp. 16–18.

<sup>45</sup> H.F.D. Sparks (ed.), *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon 1984), p. xi.

<sup>46</sup> Knibb, *Translating the Bible*.

of the translation of the Old Testament into Ethiopic in three stages. This position was first introduced in the 19th century by August Dillmann, who proposed a three-stage sequence consisting of an ancient (*antiquus*), a vulgar (*vulgatus*), and a third (*tertius*) recension.<sup>47</sup> On this view, the earliest Ethiopic translation from the Greek, known as the Old-Ethiopic, was prepared during the 5th–7th centuries CE. The beginnings of this process are attested already in a series of inscriptions quoting portions of the Old and New Testaments in Ethiopic from the 6th century CE. Based on the lack of contemporary ancient evidence, Knibb is sceptical about the suggestion that Syriac influence on the Ethiopic translation can be traced back to the missionary activity of Syrian monks from the 5th century CE. After reviewing this ongoing debate, he offers a close assessment of cases where the Ethiopic translation of Ezekiel displays philological and textual proximity with Syriac. He concludes that the evidence can be attributed more compellingly to the so-called vulgar recension of the Ethiopic translation of the 14th century, when Syriac was channelled into the Ethiopic translation by way of the growing influence of Arabic.<sup>48</sup> Knibb's methodological approach again puts the preserved Ethiopic manuscript tradition front and centre. A key issue that he returns to is the significant gulf between the earliest Ethiopic manuscripts of the Old Testament and a distinct Old Ethiopic translation. In particular, Knibb raises doubts about our ability to form a considered picture of the latter, an issue to which we will return below.

Knibb further addresses the ongoing debate about the question of the source language from which the Ethiopic Old Testament was translated.<sup>49</sup> All three of Knibb's Schweich Lectures forensically weigh up the evidence for the view that the earliest translators of the Ethiopic Old Testament were working entirely, or almost entirely, from a Greek translation of the original Hebrew and Aramaic text. In favour of an underlying Greek translation Knibb highlights the close correspondence in word order between the Greek and Ethiopic versions,<sup>50</sup> the use of transliterated Greek terms, as well as translation errors that presuppose a Greek source.<sup>51</sup> In the final two lectures Knibb goes on to offer

<sup>47</sup> See the discussion of the development of the Ethiopic translation of the Old Testament in A. Dillmann, *Biblia Veteris Testamenti Aethiopica Tomus Secundus, sive Libri Regum, Paralipomenon, Esdrae, Esther*, Fasc. 1 (Leipzig: Vogelii, 1861), pars posterior, pp. 1–5.

<sup>48</sup> See Knibb, *Translating the Bible*, pp. 22–35 where he draws particular attention to a paper by H.J. Polotsky FBA who showed that a series of alleged Christian Aramaic and Syriac loanwords in the Ethiopic translation were, in fact, derived from Jewish Aramaic usage, see H.J. Polotsky, 'Aramaic, Syriac, and Ge'ez', *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 9 (1964), 1–10.

<sup>49</sup> See, e.g. E. Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible (Schweich Lectures, 1967)* (London: British Academy, pbk edn 1988), and Knibb, *Translating the Bible*, pp. 14–16.

<sup>50</sup> This observation goes back already to A. Dillmann, 'Äthiopische Bibelübersetzung', *Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 2nd edn, 3 vols (1877), I, pp. 203–6 at p. 204, as acknowledged in Knibb, *Translating the Bible*, pp. 55–6.

<sup>51</sup> Knibb, *Translating the Bible*, p. 19 *passim*. Elsewhere Knibb offers an example of a misreading of the Greek original of Ezek 32:12 in the manuscript tradition from the 16th century CE or earlier which is put

a sustained examination of translation techniques ('Translation Techniques' and 'Consistency and Diversity') which draws on a range of nuanced methodological insights developed in research on translation technique in Septuagint research in order to shed fresh light on his analysis of the Ethiopic translation of the Old Testament.<sup>52</sup> With customary methodological sensitivity, Knibb highlights the lack of certainty about the character and text of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek witnesses underlying the Ethiopic translations. In addition, he emphasises that what amounts to almost a millennium<sup>53</sup> between the initial Ethiopic translation and the earliest surviving manuscripts from the 14th century will doubtlessly have resulted in a wide range of further interventions.<sup>54</sup>

The major contribution which Knibb completed during his retirement was a first critical edition of the Ethiopic book of Ezekiel which was published in 2015, a landmark contribution that was built on foundational research supported by a British Academy Research Readership. This edition is based on a collation of fifteen manuscripts, dating from the 15th to the 17th century CE.<sup>55</sup> The Ethiopic manuscripts of Ezekiel are grouped into manuscripts labelled Eth I and II. A key difference between both groups is the significantly truncated text of Ezekiel 42–48 in Eth I, chapters that are complete in the Eth II manuscripts.<sup>56</sup> While the Ethiopic translation is based on an underlying Greek translation, those manuscripts from approximately the start of the 17th century display features that point to a further revision in light of the Hebrew text, a process labelled the 'academic recension' by August Heider.<sup>57</sup> A notable exception is the late 16th-century manuscript

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right in the group of manuscripts from the 17th–18th centuries, see M.A. Knibb 'Hebrew and Syriac Elements in the Ethiopic Version of Ezekiel', *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 33 (1988), 11–35 at 25.

<sup>52</sup> See further S.P. Brock, 'Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 20 (1979), 69–87; J. Barr, *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations (MSU XV = Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, 1979, Nr. 11; Göttingen: Niedersächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, 1997)*; and Anneli Aejmelaeus, 'Translation Technique and the Intention of the Translator', in B.A. Taylor (ed.), *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* (Atlanta GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), pp. 531–52.

<sup>53</sup> Knibb speaks of an interval of up to nine centuries between the translation of the Old Testament and the earliest available manuscripts, see Knibb, 'Hebrew and Syriac Elements', pp. 15–16, and Knibb, *Translating the Bible*, pp. 17–19. In 2005 he refers to 'nine hundred or more years', see Knibb, 'Quotations of 1 Enoch', p. 226.

<sup>54</sup> M.A. Knibb, 'The Greek *Vorlage* of the Ethiopic Text of Ezekiel', in A. Voitila & J. Jokiranta (eds), *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, 126; Leiden: Brill, 2008)*, pp. 413–21, here p. 416. See further Knibb, *Translating the Bible*.

<sup>55</sup> Knibb, *Translating the Bible*, pp. 2–8.

<sup>56</sup> Knibb, *Translating the Bible*, p. 6.

<sup>57</sup> A. Heider, 'Die aethiopische Bibelübersetzung: Ihre Herkunft, Art, Geschichte und ihr Wert für die alt- und neutestamentliche Wissenschaft' (PhD diss., Vereinigte Friedrichs-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 1902). See also Knibb, *Translating the Bible*, pp. 34–7.

Cambridge Add 1570 which – distinctively for manuscripts from this early period – bears an early text that has been revised in light of the Hebrew and also attests the complete text of chapters 42–48.<sup>58</sup> Knibb’s edition of the Ethiopic text of Ezekiel is made up of three sections, each of which is tailored to the distinct patterns in the manuscript evidence:

1. An edition of Ezekiel 1–39 accompanied by a textual apparatus based on all the manuscripts;
2. An edition of Ezekiel 40–48 as attested in the older manuscripts (Eth I) accompanied by a textual apparatus based on the older manuscripts;
3. An edition of Ezekiel 40–48 as attested in the younger manuscripts (Eth II) with the distinctive witness of Cambridge Add 1570 – an old manuscript that shares features of the younger manuscript group – on facing pages.

Two years after the publication of the Edition, Knibb published a first instalment of a textual commentary on the Ethiopic text of Ezekiel 1–11.<sup>59</sup>

Knibb’s editorial approach for the edition of the Ethiopic text of Ezekiel was intended ‘to present a critical edition of the oldest accessible text, not an edition based on a single manuscript’.<sup>60</sup> This approach differs substantially from his editorial approach in his diplomatic edition of 1 Enoch which was based on a single 18th-century manuscript. We may wonder what motivated this change in approach. In an obituary of Michael Knibb, Alessandro Bausi seems to suggest that the trajectory of Knibb’s editorial practice was part of an incremental detachment from the influence of his mentor Edward Ullendorff.<sup>61</sup> It is true that the Edition of 1 Enoch was published ‘in consultation with’ Professor Ullendorff. It is also true that Edward Ullendorff was a formidable presence who did not hesitate to make his opinion heard clearly. However, the fact that Michael Knibb himself offered a strong defence of the editorial approach for his edition of 1 Enoch in 2001, the year of his retirement, suggests that he owned that approach for many decades and made a careful case for its merits. Knibb would offer a series of further reflections on the principles and choices made in preparing editions of Ethiopic biblical texts in 2022.<sup>62</sup> We might speculate whether the potentially larger audience addressed by an edition of the Book of Ezekiel, included in all major Jewish and Christian bibles, incentivised Knibb to take a more pragmatic approach and ensure his own editorial judgment was accessible to his readers on every page.

<sup>58</sup> Knibb, *Translating the Bible*, pp. 28–9.

<sup>59</sup> M.A. Knibb, ‘Textual Commentary on the Ethiopic Text of Ezekiel 1–11’, *Aethiopica*, 20 (2017), 7–49.

<sup>60</sup> Knibb, *Translating the Bible*, p. 38.

<sup>61</sup> Alessandro Bausi, ‘In memoriam Michael A. Knibb (1938–2023)’, *Aethiopica*, 27 (2024), 306–8.

<sup>62</sup> Knibb, ‘Editions of Ethiopic Biblical Texts’.

## The Dead Sea Scrolls

Michael Knibb's close engagement with the Aramaic fragments of Enochic material from Qumran left him well-equipped to offer a significant body of research on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Among his publications on the wider body of Scrolls from Qumran was a widely used volume with the title *The Qumran Community*, which offers introductions, translations and judicious commentary on a series of wide-ranging extracts of primary texts. The volume covers the Damascus Document, the Community Rule, the Rule of the Congregation, the Hymns, the Genesis Apocryphon, the Prayer of Nabonidus, Commentaries on Nahum, Habakkuk and Psalms, as well as two exegetical compositions known as Florilegium and Testimonia. Published in 1987 and reprinted twice, this volume has been widely used and appreciated by students, teachers, scholars and the wider public in the English-speaking world.

Michael Knibb's first academic publication was a programmatic article on 'The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period'.<sup>63</sup> The terminology 'Intertestamental Period' is today rightly recognised as reflecting a Christian perspective that implicitly erases a vibrant and creative literary period in Jewish history.<sup>64</sup> Knibb's influential paper, on the other hand, has withstood the test of time exceedingly well and remains a standard reference point. His article identifies a pattern of theological claims that Israel's state of exile persists far beyond the restoration in the Persian period. These accounts commonly describe the unfolding of God's plan before, during and after the writer's own time. The end of exile is expected to continue until this divine intervention will augur in a new age to come. The article closes with a prescient research agenda to explore the relationship between prophecy, apocalyptic and wisdom – areas that thematically capture prominent threads in Knibb's remaining publications.

Michael Knibb's remarkable scholarly contribution to the study of a wide range of ancient Jewish and Christian literature was honoured with a *Festschrift* entitled *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb*, published in 2006.<sup>65</sup> The editors' introduction captures Knibb's contribution as follows:

<sup>63</sup> M.A. Knibb, 'The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period', *Heythrop Journal*, 17 (1976), 249–72; see also M.A. Knibb, 'Exile in the Damascus Document', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 25 (1983), 99–117.

<sup>64</sup> See further S.D. Fraade, 'Qumran *Yahad* and Rabbinic *Havurah*: A Comparison Reconsidered', in S.D. Fraade, *Legal Fictions: Studies of Law and Narrative in the Discursive Worlds of Ancient Jewish Sectarians and Sages (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, 147)*; Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 125–43.

<sup>65</sup> C. Hempel & J.M. Lieu (eds), *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, 111)*; Leiden: Brill, 2006).

Michael's scholarly output and the contributions brought together in this volume to honour his achievements demonstrate the way in which traditions moved seamlessly between canons and were shaped and re-shaped creatively in the biblical, early Jewish and Christian literature. Michael was a champion of a number of the sources that are dealt with in this volume long before they became semi-fashionable. His own scholarship both in making texts available and accessible to students as well as his detailed studies on themes and texts has played a major part in bringing this literature to the forefront of our minds.<sup>66</sup>

### The Septuagint

Knibb's deep engagement with the Greek translation underlying the Ethiopic Old Testament, especially in his Schweich Lectures, also contributed to scholarship on the Septuagint. A highlight of Knibb's career was the invitation to serve as the fifty-third President of the distinguished Leuven Colloquium (*Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense*) in 2004 on the subject of *The Septuagint and Messianism*.<sup>67</sup> Knibb's Presidential Address was devoted to the crucial question of the extent to which the translators of the Septuagint introduced references of a messianic kind into the translation that were not attested in their Semitic sources.<sup>68</sup> Knibb offered a concisely comprehensive review of the scholarly debate. In doing so he remained focused on the meagreness of the evidence before incisively cutting through this ongoing debate by calling for a sharper definition of what is meant by messianism: 'I suggest that part of the confusion in the present debate is caused by the fact that what is more appropriately described as kingship ideology tends at times to be taken as messianism.'<sup>69</sup>

In an age when canonical boundaries determined an implied academic hierarchy, some might have considered Knibb's early career was devoted to a niche area of study. However, his own substantial contribution to research on the Ethiopic Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls resulted in a legacy that has played a very significant role in shaping a new centre of gravity in the study of the Bible and its ancient and medieval context. For instance, it is now taken as a given that the boundaries and text of the emerging Hebrew Bible remained fluid until the end of the 1st CE and beyond. Moreover, the Second Temple Period (515 BCE – 70 CE) has emerged as a period of intense intellectual and scribal creativity, as well as the foundational period for the emergence of early Judaism

<sup>66</sup> Hempel & Lieu (eds), *Biblical Traditions in Transmission*, p. xiii.

<sup>67</sup> M.A. Knibb (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium*, 195; Leuven: Peeters, 2006).

<sup>68</sup> M.A. Knibb, 'The Septuagint and Messianism: Problems and Issues', in Knibb (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism*, pp. 3–19.

<sup>69</sup> Knibb (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism*, p. xiv.

and emerging Christianity. Across all of Knibb's formidable scholarly legacy, methodological rigour remained of singular importance, both in his own work and in his critique of the work of others. His razor-sharp focus on the primary evidence would challenge established analyses without fear or favour. While he did not hold back on where he stood, he was always gracious and even-handed. Others may testify on whether his graciousness was ever tested by the distinctive challenges of Senior Leadership in Higher Education to which we shall now turn.

### Senior leadership

Michael Knibb served as Dean of the former Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies (1984–1986), and twice as Head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies (1989–1993 and 1998–2000), at King's. His two terms as Head of Department overlapped with a period of significant change within a newly created School of Humanities headed by the then recently appointed Cervantes Professor of Spanish Barry Ife. As Deputy Head of the new School, Knibb was instrumental in guiding the Department and the new School through a challenging transition. The context for the change was the rapid expansion of the Higher Education sector at the time. The creation of the School of Humanities meant the end of the Faculties of Music and Theology and Religious Studies at King's. The change for Theology and Religious Studies was associated with leaving behind staff offices in a prime location on a generous corridor at the heart of the King's Building on the Strand. Barry Ife describes his experience of passing through what he calls 'the divine corridor' in close vicinity of the Chapel: 'When I was a student in the 1960s, the rest of us felt obliged to face the wall whenever these superior beings swept past with their gowns flowing behind them.'<sup>70</sup>

The new accommodation in the recently refurbished Chesham Building was adjacent to the College Bar rather than the Chapel, and offered a more constricted space. Michael Knibb's pivotal role at such a period of change and its challenges speaks to his administrative acumen and integrity. From 1991 to 1995 Knibb was a Member of the Council of King's College and Head of the School of Humanities in 2000–2001, the year before his retirement. Like the ancient authors to whom he devoted much of his academic endeavours he was very much orientated to the future and, above all, the future of the Department, the Humanities, and the College.

After his election as a Fellow of the British Academy in 1989, and concurrently with his leadership at King's, Knibb served as Chair of the Academy's 'Oriental and African

<sup>70</sup>I am grateful to Professor Sir Barry Ife CBE FKC for generously sharing his recollections of working closely with Michael Knibb in Senior Leadership at King's.

Studies' Section from 1992 to 1994, and then the short-lived combined 'African and Oriental Studies – Theology and Religious Studies' Section from 1994 to 1996. From 1992 to 1995, he served as a member of the Academy's Council. This was followed from 1995 to 1998 by service on the Humanities Research Board of the British Academy (HRB), the forerunner of the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB). From 1996 to 1998 Knibb chaired the HRB Postgraduate Committee. He further served on the Governing Body of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) from 2000 for several years after his retirement from King's. Beyond King's and the British Academy, Knibb served in a substantial number of editorial roles, among which his tenure as Booklist Editor of the *Society for Old Testament Study* from 1980 to 1986 may be singled out as representative.

### Off duty and at home

Michael Knibb was always impeccably attired in well-tailored suits and Church's shoes. I am quite sure he never left his office at King's in shirtsleeves. Barry Ife captures his aura perfectly:

That 'elder statesman' impression he always gave was partly due to the fact that he always dressed formally in College and (for all we knew) at home, in the garden and on the beach?

We may be confident that Michael would have been effortlessly identified as an Englishman in New York during his Fulbright visit. While first impressions might suggest Michael was rather formal and reserved, he was, in fact, very warm in personal interactions and enjoyed a mischievous sense of humour. He was also much more progressive than one might have expected, and a self-confessed *Guardian* reader. Knibb's closest professional relationships, both academic and in Higher Education administration, included more women than was perhaps the pattern at the time. He had a warm collegial friendship with the renowned Finnish Septuagint scholar Raija Sollamo and her doctoral student Sarianna Metso, now of the University of Toronto, who spent some of her doctoral studies at King's College working under Michael's supervision. He retained a strong friendship with Professor Morna Hooker, now Professor Emerita at the University of Cambridge, and worked closely with Professor Judith M. Lieu FBA, now also Professor Emerita at the University of Cambridge, and Dr Vanessa Davies, formerly Director of the (Modern) Language Centre at Kings before embarking on a distinguished career in the Civil Service and the Law. During his service in Senior Leadership at King's, Michael worked closely with his Senior Professional Services colleague Dr Trudi Darby, and their convivial lunches continued beyond his retirement. Darby

reports that everyone in the office knew that Michael had a sweet tooth and ‘a chocolate biscuit went a long way’.<sup>71</sup> While the centre of gravity of his professional network was continental Europe, especially the Low Countries and Germany, Professors Adela and John J. Collins were close colleagues and friends across the Atlantic.

This takes us to Michael’s long and happy marriage to Christine, which sustained them both. Though Michael came to international travel not until he was an adult, he and Christine explored the globe with travels to South America, New Zealand, India, China, Indochina, Iran, Syria and frequent European breaks, especially to France. Michael and Christine also visited Ethiopia, where Michael’s attempt to keep a low profile failed when his local hosts recognised who he was. This led to an impromptu lecture and a boat tour on Lake Tana, home to the monastery on the island of Kebran where one of the oldest Ethiopic manuscripts Michael had studied intensively for both his 1 Enoch and Ezekiel editions (Tana 9) is located. As keen walkers Michael and Christine also completed many of Britain’s long-distance paths, including the Coast to Coast Walk and the Offa’s Dyke Path. Michael also enjoyed the finer things in life such as good food and wine, the arts, and his membership of the Athenaeum Club. Michael and Christine were generous hosts, both in their home in Berkhamsted and in a range of wonderful restaurants in London.

In sum, Michael Knibb’s scholarship made significant lasting contributions to the fields of Biblical Studies, and what may conveniently be referred to by the imprecise designations Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha which reflect a Western Christian canonical perspective. Arguably his biggest legacies are lasting contributions to manuscript studies both on the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran and the Ethiopic Old Testament. Despite the fact that Ethiopic manuscripts were available to European scholars long before the discoveries from Qumran, both fields of study explored an incrementally expanding evidence base. Both these major spheres of Knibb’s scholarship come together already in his doctoral work on 1 Enoch, where Scrolls research in the form of the Aramaic Enoch fragments and Ethiopic manuscript Studies coalesced. Moreover, there was a need in both fields to create a scholarly infrastructure that established fields of scholarship take for granted. Thus, Siegbert Uhlig and others established *Aethiopia: International Journal of Ethiopian and Eritrean Studies* in 1998, and Jean Camignac founded *Revue de Qumran* in 1958. This was followed by a second specialist journal *Dead Sea Discoveries* founded in 1994 by Lawrence Schiffman, James C. VanderKam and George Brooke, to name but a few examples.

Knibb wore his formidable linguistic range and learning lightly. In all areas of his scholarship his contributions are forensic, authoritative, crisp and clear. In his students Knibb nurtured methodologically rigorous engagement with the primary evidence. At

<sup>71</sup>I am grateful to Dr Trudi Darby for sharing her reminiscences.

the same time, he was exceedingly generous, open-minded, and positively encouraged dissent and independence of thought.

Michael Knibb's remarkable contribution to Aethiopia and Qumran Studies shaped a pioneering phase of scholarship in both fields. Many of his publications will remain standard points of reference for a long time to come. Blessed with a wealth of manuscript evidence, Knibb's publications offer a treasure of detailed philological, textual and literary research, alongside judicious assessments of the place of the primary evidence within existing historical and textual paradigms, which illuminate entangled Jewish and Christian literatures and histories over the course of millennia.

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