

A Tribute to Philip R. Davies (1945-2018)

It was a real shock to me when I heard of Philip Davies' death. Since both of us retired from university teaching, I hadn't seen as much of him, but we often had shorter or longer conversations at scholarly meetings. Our most recent communication was an email in which he sent me an article of his and asked me for one of mine, and said, "Hope to see you before too long".

I initially met Philip in 1983 at the first SOTS conference I attended after moving to England. I had already known his work for some time and was wanting to get to know him. At our first meeting we had a long conversation and a lot to drink, and he became a fast friend. We had common interests, especially in the Second Temple Period, including a particular focus on the Persian period. This didn't mean that we always agreed—far from it! Philip liked to throw out ideas. I've heard him argue a case passionately one day, and its opposite the next! Some of his ideas I liked and some I hated. But they were always stimulating. I learned a great deal from Philip, both from his writings and from his conversations, even when I disagreed. The last article I sent to him (from the *Festschrift* for Israel Finkelstein) was an argument about whether Jeroboam I existed. The article came about because of a discussion that we had at an EABS session in which he and I took opposite sides. Whether he was convinced by my published argument, I am sorry to say I don't know.

But Philip was much more than a scholarly conversationalist. He provided a good deal of help and moral support in a number of projects of mutual interest. This was especially true with the European Association of Biblical Studies. The idea was originally Niels Peter Lemche's, but Philip and I, along with a number of others, contributed to the discussion that led to its founding in 1996. I was the first president, but although Philip had no formal office, he and I worked closely together (being near to each other at the Universities of Hull and Sheffield, which are not far apart in England). In many ways, it was as if the new scholarly association had two presidents! My office, originally designated for three years, was later

extended to five as we got the fledgling organization under way, with many discussions, position papers, and late-night debates about how to organize, administer, and make the EABS a success. The idea of organizing the association around research groups was Philip's original idea and is still in place. After I finished my term as president, Philip and I became joint executive officers of the EABS, and finally Philip became president in his own right.

In 2009 when Philip was president of EABS and I was president of SOTS, we managed to set up a joint meeting that included these two organizations and also the Dutch-Belgium OTW (Het Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap in Nederland en België). Philip himself had been president of SOTS in 2007. He was also a founder member of the European Seminar in Historical Methodology which I organized for seventeen years. I very much appreciated his advice and moral support over the years, as well as his contributions to our discussions and his papers in the twelve volumes that came out of our meetings.

I hardly need to say anything about the many volumes that he authored and edited, because most of you will already be familiar with them. His many articles—often deliberately provocative and controversial—have stimulated and advanced the field, whether Qumran, history of ancient Israel, the Second Temple period, the Persian period, or other aspects relating to the Bible. Others can also speak more knowledgeably about his work with Sheffield Academic Press.

He and his wife Birgit were very hospitable, and I often shared in this hospitality at their home. I shall miss him in every respect: as a scholarly mind, as a conversation partner, as a drinking companion, as a friend.

Lester L. Grabbe
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