

HUMANITAS

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Non uno itinere **Ebraismi, Cristianesimi, Modernità** *Studi in onore di Mauro Pesce* *in occasione del suo ottantesimo compleanno*

a cura di

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Franco Motta ed Enrico Norelli

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Abstract: Letters and documents that could be attributed to the family of Apollonios son of Heracles illustrate the private and business life of wealthy Greeks in Egypt during the late 1st and early 2nd centuries CE. Based in Hermopolis Magna, the metropolis of the Hermopolite nome in Egypt, the family operated a large and flourishing weaving business from the time of the Ptolemies onward. During the period from which the letters and documents originate, Apollonios himself was the official head of the weaving workshop and at the same time held the highest office in another nome, far from home. Several members of the family, including Apollonios himself, may be compared to Paul of Tarsus in terms of their excellent level of education.
Keywords: Papyri, Weaver, Letter Writing, Literacy, New Testament Letters.

GIOVANNI BAZZANA, <i>Apocalyptic Time. Anthropology of History and the Nature of Time in Ancient Apocalyptic Literature</i>	32
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Abstract: The present essay deals with two apocalyptic texts (Daniel and the *Apocalypse of Paul*) and their regimes of temporality, which are clearly different from modern Western paradigms. The case of apocalyptic literature draws attention to the crucial role played by temporality and historical consciousness in shaping literary genres, cultural forms, and ideological stances. A better appreciation of these contexts, through the application of insights drawn from the field of the anthropology of history and temporalities, might lead to a more adequate and effective understanding of ancient apocalypses

and of the cultural and religious practices of those who wrote and read them through the centuries.

Keywords: Time, Historicity, Apocalypse, Daniel, Apocalypse of Paul.

CARLO CARLETTI, *Storia del cristianesimo e produzione epigrafica* 41

Abstract: The article discusses some of the theses developed in the historiographical debate in the last five decades concerning the role of epigraphic production in the study of early Christianity. The first considers the influence of Christianity, regarded as a religion of the Book and the Scriptures, on the development of written culture in Late Antiquity, including epigraphy. The second relates to selection criteria used for the study of epigraphic testimonies with regard to their contents and their relationship with the context in which they have been exposed or found. The last point considers the discussion on how the Christian imaginary has influenced funerary epigraphic habits in the Western areas of the Roman Empire.

Keywords: Epigraphy, Early Christianity, Written Culture, Late Antiquity, Historiography.

ISTVÁN CZACHESZ, *Toward a Unified Theory of Magic, Miracle, and Divination* 50

Abstract: The problem of magic in the ancient Mediterranean world has received much attention in recent scholarship, while divination is usually treated as a separate issue. In biblical studies, it is customary to use magic and miracle as diametrically opposed categories. Both magic and divination have been thought to be all but non-existent in ancient Judaism and Christianity. The aim of this essay is to outline a unified, explanatory model of magic, miracle, and divination, drawing on behavioral and cognitive science and evolutionary theory. It will be argued that the categories of magic and divination are in fact well-suited to investigate early Christian texts and practices, and a cognitive approach sheds new light on the connection between magic and miracle.

Keywords: Magic, Divination, Miracle, Cognitive Science, Early Christianity.

JOHN S. KLOPPENBORG, *Community Detection in Ostia Antica and the Diffusion of Elective Cults* 60

Abstract: The many inscriptions from the Roman colony of Ostia Antica offer opportunities to reconstruct occupational and cultic networks, to track social mobility among Roman *liberti* (some of whom rose to positions of authority and influence in their own guilds and even to the rank of *decurion* and *eques*), and to see the various ways in which the cults of Isis, Sarapis, and Cybele were imbricated in the activities of occupational guilds.

Keywords: Ostia Antica, Occupational Guilds, Cultic Associations, Social Mobility.

TOBIAS NICKLAS, *Eine "Passionsgeschichte" in Ps-Cyprians De duobus montibus Sina et Sion* 74

Abstract: The last decades have seen a paradigm shift in Jesus studies. The historical Jesus problems regarding the transmission of Jesus traditions have become increasingly understood as crucial. This, again, has led to an increasing

interest in extracanonical Jesus traditions preserved in apocryphal Gospels. At the same time, passages in patristic literature in which narratives about Jesus of Nazareth are paraphrased, retold or even re-enacted have not yet come into view. Many of them show characteristics which are closely comparable to what we find in apocryphal Gospels. The article illustrates this thesis with the help of a long passage from Pseudo-Cyprian’s treatise *De duobus montibus Sina et Sion*, which, on account of its creative narrative interpretation of Scripture, offers an otherwise unknown passion narrative that cannot be explained from the canonical Gospels alone and is, unfortunately, highly anti-Jewish.

Keywords: Jesus Traditions, Patristic Literature, Apocryphal Gospels, Anti-Judaism, Reception of Scriptures.

MARA RESCIO - LUIGI WALT, *The Esoteric Rule on Parables.*

Mark 4:10-12 and Its Earliest Reception History

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Abstract: The article argues for a renewed understanding of the Markan saying about parables and the mystery of the kingdom (Mark 4:10-12) in light of its earliest reception by Matthew and Luke. The saying plays a crucial role in developing Mark’s narrative strategy, as it provides readers with a key theoretical rationale for the double dimension the evangelist attributes to Jesus’ teaching method. The focal point of this method is that “parables” (i.e. coded language) are used by Jesus to maintain a harsh duality between insiders and outsiders. Such an idiosyncratic view, however, did not go unnoticed to the first readers of the Gospel and prompted both Matthew and Luke to engage in a softening or silencing manoeuvre which would have profound repercussions for the later reception of Mark. It was not merely Mark’s radical theory of parables that troubled them, but also the esoteric communication pattern behind it.

Keywords: Gospel of Mark, Synoptic Gospels, Esotericism in Antiquity, Parables of Jesus, Reception History.

SARAH E. ROLLENS, *Two “Un-Scientific” Concepts in the Study of Christian Origins*

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Abstract: Mauro Pesce’s work on early Christianity consistently strove to provide “scientific” accounts of the tradition’s history. In the same spirit, this essay examines two concepts in the study of Christian origins (mission and scripture) that are decidedly “un-scientific” and exposes their problematic features. By denaturalizing such concepts, we stand to get closer to a more realistic account of the dynamics of earliest Christianity.

Keywords: Jesus Movement, Mission, Scripture, Scientific Study.

DANIEL ULLUCCI, *Redescribing Spiritual Sacrifice as Moralistic Therapeutic Rhetoric*

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Abstract: This paper addresses the concepts of “spiritualization” and “spiritual sacrifice” in early Christianity. Numerous scholarly models posit that a spiritual turn took place sometime in Late Antiquity, and that this internalizing of religion led to the cessation of animal sacrifice and the advent of a modern conception of religion. This paper challenges these models by pointing out the relative scarcity of such terminology in early Christian texts and by pointing to a modern parallel in the competitive use of the term “spiritual” – the growth of “spiritual but not religious” identity constructs. In light of these points, there is little evidence

to support a sweeping metaphysical, “spiritualizing” shift as an explanation for the decline of sacrifice and the growth of Christian anti-sacrificial discourse.

Keywords: Axial Age, Spiritualization, Spiritual Sacrifice.

- EMILIANO RUBENS URCIUOLI, *The Origins Pit, the Jerusalem Pendulum, and the Cat-Eyed Historian* 127

Abstract: The article singles out and discusses some recent historical research on Christian origins that programmatically reflects on the role of Jerusalem in the rise and expansion of the Jesus movement. Epistemological and methodological considerations spurred by Marc Bloch’s famous engagement with the “obsession with origins” frame the analysis of the type of centrality ascribed to Jerusalem and the Jerusalemite Christ group/s in the earliest experiments with mythmaking and social formation. The discussion of a new radical method of history writing that aims to reset the quest for origins concludes the article.

Keywords: Obsession with Origins, Jerusalem, Centrality/Marginality, Redescription, Retrospection.

2. *Pluralità delle origini cristiane. Testi, pratiche, gruppi*

- RAFAEL AGUIRRE, *La viuda pobre y el Templo (Mc 12,41-44)* 139

Abstract: Considered in isolation, it is clear that this short text highlights the poor widow’s generosity and trust in God. But if it is placed in the context of the Markan account, new possibilities of interpretation are opened. This article considers that the fundamental context in which this pericope must be situated is the section of Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem (Mark 11:11–13:2). The words of Jesus do not praise the generosity of the widow or set her as an example, but consider her a victim of the corrupt system of the Temple, which is to be destroyed.

Keywords: Poor Widow, Temple, Scribes.

- MICHAEL A. DAISE, «*The Voice of One Calling in the Wilderness*». *Reflections on John the Baptist and Isaiah 40:3* 148

Abstract: In four *loci* within literature from Qumran and the Gospels, Isaiah 40:3 is put in a midrashic relationship with a biblical idiom for prudent living found elsewhere in Jewish scripture. In three of these, the two are conflated into a single reference: 4QLevi^b ar 1,7; Luke 1:76; and John 1:23. In the fourth, the reference to the idiom (1QS IV,2-3) appears in proximity to a quotation and allusions to Isaiah elsewhere in the same work (1QS VIII,13-14; IX,19-20). The midrash turns on shared vocabulary: the idiom’s language of “making straight” one’s “ways” dovetails Isaiah’s admonition to «prepare the way of the Lord» and «make straight a highway for our God», and the result in each case is that Isaiah’s call to prophetic mission is simultaneously cast as wise and righteous living.

Keywords: Isaiah, Wisdom, Qumran, Gospels, Midrash.

- PHILIP F. ESLER, «*Obey “Him”*» (*Matt 17:5*). *The Law of Moses and the Gospel of Matthew* 154

Abstract: The approach to ethnic identity inaugurated by Fredrich Barth facilitates the recognition of the Ἰουδαῖοι of Matthew’s time as an ethnic group,

with the name being an ethnonym based on their ethnic homeland of Judea. Christ-movement identity was different, being non-ethnic or trans-ethnic (in the latter case, like voluntary associations honoring a particular god and embracing members of different ethnic groups). This situation casts doubt on the assertion that Matthew's Gospel was "within Judaism". In particular, neither in Matt 5:17-19 nor in Matt 5:20-48 does Jesus require adherence to the law of Moses. Matthew's transfiguration (Matt 17:1-8) shows that obedience to Jesus, not to Moses, was required. Jesus was someone who was very close to God and remained personally present to his followers, unlike Moses.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Mosaic Law, Judean Identity, Christ-movement Identity, Obedience.

CARLOS GIL ARBIOL, *El pasado de Pablo ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ (Ga 1,13)*. . . 167

Abstract: In recent years, scholars have brought back the discussion about the relationship between Paul's past and his Jewish identity after his calling. What was the former life ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ that Paul refers to in Gal 1:13-14? Was it a life that was over? Is Paul speaking of a religion he abandoned, or of a way of life that changed? If the latter is the case, what did he abandon from his former life and what did he not? The scarcity of occurrences of the noun Ἰουδαϊσμός makes these questions difficult to answer. There are, however, important hints in the Maccabean literature. A close reading of the four texts where the author speaks of Ἰουδαϊσμός sheds new light to answer those questions about Paul's former life ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ.

Keywords: Second Temple Judaism, Early Christianity, Ἰουδαϊσμός, Paul of Tarsus, Maccabean Literature.

SANTIAGO GUIJARRO, *¿Por qué una "Vida"? Necesidad retórica y género literario en Marcos*. 175

Abstract: The identification of the Gospels as "lives" of Jesus has recently awakened interest in reading them as ancient biographies. However, before addressing this task, it would be helpful to clarify why their authors chose this literary genre. This paper explores this question in the case of Mark, inquiring about the relationship between context and discourse. To this end, it turns to the category of "rhetorical situation" in order to find out to what extent this determines the choice of literary genre. An analysis of certain key features of the Gospel reveals that the decision on the biographical genre responds to a need in the traumatic aftermath of the Jewish War to propose a model that would redefine what it meant to follow Jesus.

Keywords: Rhetorical Situation, Hellenistic Biography, Jewish War, Imitation, Discipleship.

GIORGIO JOSSA, *Gesù perché fu messo a morte?*. 184

Abstract: Jesus' death is considered an enigma. This has led many scholars to look for a specific cause. However, this is not needed. Jesus' condemnation was due to Judaic action. The only episode that could worry Pilate – namely, Jesus' regal entrance in Jerusalem – did not have consequences. Even for the Sanhedrin, there were no facts to justify Jesus' condemnation. The Cleansing of the Temple had a symbolic meaning. It was Jesus' activity as a whole that caused concern among Judaic authorities. In Galilee, Jesus' activity had reli-

gious and social features and was opposed by the Pharisees, but in Jerusalem it also became political and involved the chief priests. The trial before the Sanhedrin ended with a religious motivation (his messianic presence) that became political before Pilate (his regal presence).

Keywords: Sanhedrin, Pilate, Jerusalem, Temple.

- PETER LAMPE, *The Irony of Salvation. A Fundamental Pattern of Early Christian Soteriology* 193

Abstract: A definition of irony is derived from an investigation of its use in Greek and Roman literature, especially rhetorical literature, and applied to early Christian writings. The essay explores the irony in Mark's passion narrative (in Mark 15:16-20.34), in the images of the disciples in Mark, of Jesus as crucified messiah, and of Paul. The early Christian paradoxical combination of contrasts exposes an ironic *sub-contrario* thinking that is a fundamental pattern of Christian soteriology. What is empirically ostensible (Jesus' crucifixion, but also the apostles' weaknesses) is not left as it is but ironically stands for the opposite (or at least something other) being true, which represents a meaning-giving coping strategy for dealing with the hardships of existence.

Keywords: Irony, Rhetoric, Soteriology, Mark, Paul.

- EDMONDO LUPIERI, *Prostitutes, Prophets, Priests. Some Cases of Woman Power in and outside the Early Church* 208

Abstract: Part of a project on the power of women in the first centuries, this essay studies two different early testimonies. In the first section, the author discusses how Luke applies priestly attributes to the prophetess Anna to extol her, while Revelation connects priestly attributes with female prostitution and pseudo-prophecy to describe the degeneration of John's adversaries, Jewish (or Jewish-Christian) authorities. In the second section he studies the case of women concelebrating Gnostic eucharist and prophesying in the church of Marcus "the Magician", as told by Irenaeus. He finally hypothesizes that the fear of women priests in orthodox confessions is connected with ritualized sexual activities that, according to the heresiologists, were constitutive of the religious life of minority groups.

Keywords: Prophecy, Priesthood, Prostitution, Revelation, Marcus the Magician.

- ANDREA NICOLOTTI, «*In un luogo a parte*». *Sulla traduzione di un passo evangelico (Gv 20,7)* 216

Abstract: In the Gospel of John it is said that Peter, having reached the tomb of Jesus on Sunday morning, saw the linen clothes lying inside and the napkin that was upon his head away from them, having been folded up. The translation of the Greek text is controversial and has given rise to some interpretations that modify its meaning in order to describe the resurrection of Jesus as a dematerialization. I propose a reexamination of the text.

Keywords: Jesus, Burial, Clothes, Sudarium, Resurrection.

- ROMANO PENNA, *Lo scandalo e la fede. Da Gesù a Paolo* 226

Abstract: According to Kierkegaard, the theme of scandal belongs to the DNA of Christianity. In fact, it characterises Christian origins with respect to both

Jesus and Paul. Jesus provokes scandal with the liberty of his behaviour towards the publicans and the prostitutes, in addition to his violent gesture in the Temple. Moreover, he scandalises even his disciples with the event of his passion and death. Paul, on the other hand, concentrates his reflection entirely on the death of Jesus on the cross, which is considered to be the manifestation of an unexpected wisdom of God, in front of which human wisdom is wrong-footed. In fact, the God of the gospel has little or nothing to share with the reason of the philosophers and with the law of Moses, since his identity precedes and exceeds every rational pursuit.

Keywords: Historical Jesus, Pauline Theology, Faith, Paradox.

EKKEHARD STEGEMANN - WOLFGANG STEGEMANN, *Hellenistischer Einfluss in der Theologie des Paulus?* 235

Abstract: This article discusses the question of whether Paul's theology is influenced by "Hellenism". The historian Johann Gustav Droysen, who coined this term, understood it as a fusion of Greek and other cultures with the simultaneous dominance of Greek culture. In Paul's case, then, it would be a fusion of Greek culture with Jewish culture. The Greek letters of the Diaspora Jew Paul show influences of Hellenistic philosophy, and particularly of Stoicism; however, Paul differs especially from the Stoic conception of the human being. Because of their physical constitution, for which the term "flesh" stands in Paul's letters, humans are incapable of being disciplined by reason. This possibility exists only through the revelation of God in Christ and the associated mediation of the Holy Spirit.

Keywords: Paul, Hellenism, Theology, Flesh, Spirit.

3. *Ebraismi e cristianesimi tra Antichità e Medioevo*

ANDREA ANNESE, *Il Dialogo del Salvatore (NHC III,5) e la "costellazione giovannista"* 248

Abstract: This contribution analyzes the *Dialogue of the Savior* (NHC III,5) in light of the concept of a "Johannist Constellation" of texts, proposed by Mauro Pesce and Adriana Destro. Selected passages from the Dialogue are investigated to verify whether this text can be included in the Johannist Constellation by considering (in particular) cosmology, Christology, soteriology, and the themes of heavenly ascent and mystical vision. The Gospels of John and Thomas, in view of their connections with the Dialogue, take on an important role in the analysis.

Keywords: Dialogue of the Savior, Johannist Constellation, Heavenly Ascent, Vision Mysticism, Gospel of Thomas.

LUCA ARCARI, *L'Apocalisse di Pietro. Tra esperienze di contatto in prima persona con l'oltre-mondo e scrittura* 257

Abstract: This essay aims at reconsidering the various preserved forms of the *Apocalypse of Peter* as mirrors of *longue durée* processes of transmission. According to such a perspective, it is quite difficult to explain the Greek version of the Akhmim Fragment as a "secondary", manipulated, and/or ideologically oriented version, especially when it is compared to the supposed original Ethiopic text. Both the Greek and the Ethiopic transmissions of the

Apocalypse of Peter appear as individual appropriations of previous visionary accounts, which are based on contextual and rewritten practices of personal contact with an Otherworld. Visionary narratives are disseminated and transmitted thanks to various modes of communication, among which writing emerges as just one of many that have been in place for a long time.

Keywords: Apocalypse of Peter, Visionary Texts in Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity, Visionary Texts as Living Texts.

- RICHARD BAUCKHAM, *Isaiah's Prophetic Canon (Ascension of Isaiah 4:21-22)* 265

Abstract: *Ascension of Isaiah* 4:21b-22 is a list of canonical scriptures in which the author identifies “parables” (prophecies in enigmatic or allegorical form) of the story of Jesus. There are two categories: psalms and prophets. The list of authors of Psalms (David, Solomon, Korah, Ethan, Asaph), along with a reference to those by unnamed authors, is probably intended to cover the whole Book of Psalms, written by inspired prophets. The list of prophets may originally have been only of those who lived before or during Isaiah’s lifetime; Daniel, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are later additions. In the phrase “the words of the righteous Joseph” the name is probably a corruption of Job, who was understood as a type of Jesus.

Keywords: Ascension of Isaiah, Interpretation of Psalms, Interpretation of Prophets, Job.

- MIRIAM BENFATTO, *Sulle tracce di una ricezione ebraica del corpus apocrifo neotestamentario* 274

Abstract: This paper aims to show how apocryphal Gospels have been taken into account in Jewish anti-Christian polemical literature. The first part deals with an overview of Anti-Christian Jewish polemics, while the second part looks at how the Apocrypha were used in this literature, and what value was attributed to the narratives of Jesus that were not included in the New Testament. Examples will be given from the *Sefer Nestor ha-Komer* (9th century), an anonymous dissertation written in Judeo-Arabic in an Islamic area and translated into Hebrew; the *Sefer Niṣṣaḥon Yaśan* (13th century), an anonymous anthological collection from the Franco-German context; and the *Sefer Ezer ha-Emunah* (14th century), drafted by Mošeh ha-Kohen of Tordesillas in Spain.

Keywords: Jewish Anti-Christian Polemical Literature, Early Christian Apocrypha, *Sefer Nestor ha-Komer*, *Sefer Niṣṣaḥon Yaśan*, *Sefer Ezer ha-Emunah*.

- ANTONIO CACCIARI, *L'antigiudaismo nell'Ad Diogneto. Alcune riflessioni* 282

Abstract: This article focuses on the passages of the *Ad Diognetum* that attack some elements of Judaism. From an examination of these texts and from a comparison with Christian apologetics, it appears that the topic present in the *Ad Diognetum* is largely indebted to collections of anti-Jewish texts that were previously put together and used by pagan authors like Celsus.

Keywords: *Ad Diognetum*, Anti-Judaism, Christian Apologetics.

- PIERO CAPELLI, *Sulle radici bibliche della mistica ebraica*. 296

Abstract: The earliest literary expressions of Jewish mysticism (Hekhalot literature and the *Sefer Yeširah*, Mesopotamia and Palestine, 4th to 7th centuries)

are relatively independent from symbolism and intertextuality based on the Bible. By developing a spiritual discourse of its own and resorting to quotations from Scripture only as prooftexts, this literature shows very scant interest for mystical exegesis of Scripture – though the ascetic and ascensional techniques of Merkabah mysticism had precise literary antecedents (and possibly even practical ones) in Scripture (e.g., in the stories about Elijah and Elisha). In later mystical literature from Iberia and Provence (*Sefer Bahir*, *Sefer ha-Zohar*, Yosef Gikatilla, 11th to 13th centuries), mythologies that had originally been independent from Scripture (e.g., about the origin of evil) were gradually more deeply grounded in it by systemically resorting to intertextuality and mystical exegesis of biblical episodes and themes. Along with the textualization of the Talmud in medieval Ashkenaz, the rooting of Jewish mysticism in Scripture in Sefarad became a structurally crucial process in the making of medieval rabbinic Judaism.

Keywords: Rabbinic Mysticism, Qabbalah, Biblical Quotations, Intertextuality, Exegesis.

- LAURA CARNEVALE, *Consolarsi da lontano. Autorità femminile e gerarchia nelle lettere di Maria di Cassobola e Ignazio di Antiochia* 308

Abstract: This paper aims to provide reflections on the letters of Mary of Cassobola and Ignatius of Antioch, which are attributed to a 4th century Arian forger, the so-called Ps.-Ignatius. After briefly recalling the framework of the “Ignatian question”, I analyze the cultural and doctrinal setting of these two letters and their representation of the relationship between Mary and Ignatius. What clearly emerges is the authoritative role attributed to this woman; furthermore, such a role is grounded not on a charismatic or prophetic capacity, but on her ability of managing issues of ecclesiastical hierarchy and on her biblical knowledge.

Keywords: *Corpus Ignatianum*, Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, Women with Authority, Mary of Cassobola, Asia Minor.

- CLAUDIO GIANOTTO, *Il finale lungo di Marco e la formazione del “vangelo tetramorfo”* 316

Abstract: Starting from the recognition of the secondary character of the so-called Longer Ending of the Gospel of Mark and of its circulation in the second half of the 2nd century CE, the paper tries to highlight the occasion that led to its composition and the aim of the new edition of the Gospel of Mark in the collection of the four Gospels.

Keywords: Longer Ending of Mark, Collection of the Four Canonical Gospels, New Testament Canon.

- SIMON C. MIMOUNI, *Les baptistes nasaréens et dosithéens* 325

Abstract: This study explores the Nasareans and the Dositheans. When considering each group, one wonders whether they belong to the Baptist movement at all, as this membership is not as obvious as it might seem at first glance. Of these two Judean Baptist groups, one (the Nasareans) certainly existed, while the other (the Dositheans) may not have. These groups are no less important because of their membership in the Baptist movement, which played a role in the emergence of religiosities such as Elchasaism, Mandaicism, and Manichaeism.

Keywords: Nasareans, Dositheans, Baptist Movements.

- ENRICO NORELLI, *Il "re Erode" e la condanna di Gesù nel Vangelo di Pietro* 345
- Abstract:* The beginning of the excerpt from the *Gospel of Peter* found at Akh-mim seems to show that this work did not contain an actual trial of Jesus but assigned to "King Herod" alone the order to torture and crucify him. Such a course of events was likely due to the use of *testimonia* (not only of Ps 2:[1-]2 LXX, as has been recognized for a long time, but also of Hos 10:6a, which was linked to the Passion story as early as Mark 15:1) and the interpretation of the "king" as Herod Antipas (who was not a king, though ancient sources sometimes call him so) following Justin Martyr. The apologist uses phrases that clearly aim to suggest that Antipas was a king in order to connect Hos 6:10a with him. Also, the verb *παροδίδωμι*, known to be associated with Jesus' Passion because of Isa 53:6-12, has a narrative function unique to the *Gospel of Peter* with Herod as the subject of v. 5. Despite the common scholarly opinion, the episode of Jesus being sent from Pilate to Herod and back at Luke 23:6-12 does not seem to have influenced the assumption of Herod's role in the *Gospel of Peter*; both stories are best explained as independent narrative developments of Ps 2:2 and Hos 10:6a, including the apparently shared issue of their friendship.
- Keywords:* Gospel of Peter, Early Passion Narrative, Early Christian *Testimonia*, Herod in the Passion Narrative.
- GIORGIO OTRANTO, *Note sulla comunicazione dei cristiani nei primi tre secoli* 357
- Abstract:* Epistolography plays a key role in the Pauline foundation of early communities and is a literary genre privileged by Christians during the first three centuries. Aside from individual letters (Ignatius), as the Christian generic tradition takes shape we see the rise of collective epistles written by entire communities to be read before the faithful of the addressed community. In the 2nd century, the two most common subjects are communications regarding martyrdoms and discussions on the date of Easter. In the 3rd century, new subjects appear, and individual letters become prevalent. Apart from Cyprian's letters, important collections are lost, such as those of Origen and Dionysius of Alexandria. Eusebius informs us of their existence and collects many letters and fragments in dedicated volumes.
- Keywords:* Epistolography, History of Christianity, Communities, Communications.
- MAURO PERANI, *La nascita e lo sviluppo della scrittura ebraica italiana nelle yešivot pugliesi dei secoli XI-XII* 365
- Abstract:* The article investigates the role that the *yešivot* of Bari, Otranto, Oria, and Trani played in the birth of Italian Hebrew script after Hebrew reappeared in the West with the Venosa epitaphs. The Salento's *yešivot* produced a great number of texts in the 11th century. After the massacres of the 13th century, the Jews emigrated to the North, where they were able to protect their manuscripts, some of which were purchased by libraries and book collectors. Some other manuscripts were dismembered in the second half of the 16th century and were reused in book binding. A number of images from important manuscripts accompany the article.
- Keywords:* Jews of Puglia, 11th Century, Italian Hebrew Script, Italian Hebrew Manuscripts.

LORENZO PERRONE, «*Sii difficile da imitare!*». *Appunti sul lessico dell'“eccezione” in Origene* 395

Abstract: Taking as a pretext the unique occurrence of the term for “rare” (σπάνιος) in the Septuagint, the article explores its rather frequent use by Origen as a main witness of biblical and Hellenistic Greek. The lexical analysis unveils a more consistent scriptural connection than is apparent at first glance, one which conforms to the approach typical of the Alexandrian exegete. It especially helps to appreciate in which respect he regards something as rare, infrequent, or exceptional. Not only does he qualify as such different aspects of reality from a mere phenomenical point of view, but on a deeper level he does so especially with regard to ethics and theology. This realm provides for him the most eloquent illustration of the experience of “rarity” or “exceptionality”: both the practice of virtue and the true knowledge of God are indeed rare and exceptional. Yet, in spite of this apparently pessimistic view of humankind, everyone, according to Origen, has the chance to become personally “rare” and “difficult to imitate”.
Keywords: Origen, Rare, Rarity, Exception.

EMANUELA PRINZIVALLI, *Fingersi Ignazio. Le ragioni di un falsario del IV secolo* 411

Abstract: The essay aims to investigate the reasons for Ignatian pseudo-epigraphy in 4th century Christian Antioch. The forger tries to strengthen the pride in the identity of the Christians of Antioch in order to overcome a long period of internal conflicts.
Keywords: Pseudo-Ignatius, Church of Antioch, History of Ancient Christian Doctrines.

MARCO RIZZI, *Origene o Ambrogio? A proposito di un passo del Sermo 273 di Agostino* 420

Abstract: The paper discusses Dominic Keech’s proposal that there is a parallel between Augustine’s *Sermo* 273 and a passage from Rufinus’ translation of Origen’s *Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* concerning the interpretation of Rom 8:3. Upon closer consideration, however, it is possible to identify Augustine’s dependence on Ambrose’s works, particularly *De incarnationis Dominicae sacramento*. The conclusion offers some methodological observations about the use of computer-based tools to determine connections between texts and the modes of reading proper to ancient authors.
Keywords: Origen, Ambrose, Augustine, Epistle to the Romans, Jesus’ Virgin Birth.

DANIELE TRIPALDI, *Filologi e dèi. Divinazioni e divagazioni sul Vangelo secondo Giovanni segreto* 427

Abstract: This article aims to argue for the surviving Coptic copies of the *Secret Gospel According to John* (NHC II,1–IV,1) as textual evidence for reconstructing and evaluating its lost and problematic Greek “past”. Two case studies in detecting traces of such a past are offered, both revolving around the misinterpretation of Greek interrogative sentences as relative.
Keywords: “New Philology”, Coptic Translations, Greek Interrogative Sentences, Semantic Diffractions, Divination.

- MARCO VITELLI, *Tra giudaismo palestinese e giudaismo della diaspora. Considerazioni sull'identità giudaica di Flavio Giuseppe* 433
- Abstract:* The contribution addresses the issue of Josephus' religious identity in the Roman period of his life. During these years did he, a Jerusalem priest, radically change his way of living Judaism when he became a Roman Jew, as some scholars think? Does the confrontation between the *Bellum Iudaicum* and Josephus' later works attest to his passage from Palestinian Judaism to Diaspora Judaism? These are the questions the paper tries to answer. In particular, Josephus' personal attitude to the Diaspora is analyzed. The result of the analysis is as follows: Josephus did not radically transform his religious identity, but reshaped it by enhancing the Pharisaic component of his formation and opening himself to certain instances of Diaspora Judaism without a drastic break with the past.
Keywords: Josephus, Jewish Identity, Diaspora.
4. *La ricerca sul Gesù storico in Età moderna e contemporanea*
- FERNANDO BERMEJO-RUBIO, *Riflessioni sulla dimensione politica della vicenda di Gesù di Nazareth (Un confronto critico con Mauro Pesce)* 442
- Abstract:* This article surveys Mauro Pesce's (and Adriana Destro's) most recent contribution to the debate on whether Jesus was involved in the political matters of his time (M. Pesce - A. Destro, *Was Jesus a Political Revolutionary?*, in *ASES* 36[2019], pp. 453-468) and analyzes its conclusion that, since the Galilean preacher did not think to establish the kingdom himself, his message and his action were ultimately "nonpolitical". I set forth a series of reasons why I do not consider this conclusion plausible enough from a historical and an argumentative standpoint. Furthermore, I make several suggestions and remarks which should seriously be taken into account if a hypothesis aimed to explain the Golgotha scene (namely, a collective crucifixion) can be considered compelling.
Keywords: Jesus of Nazareth, Politics, Religion, Historiography, Collective Crucifixion.
- FRANCESCO BERNO, *Per una Chiesa latitudinaria. Note su Gesù e le origini cristiane nel The Primitive Constitution of the Christian Church di John Toland* 451
- Abstract:* The present article aims at providing an in-depth analysis of Toland's interpretation of "Christian Origins", which he developed in his *The Primitive Constitution of the Christian Church*. Specific attention is paid to two closely related issues, namely Toland's exegesis of some pivotal New Testament and Patristic passages and the effect of the resulting perspective on the early quest for the "historical Jesus" before Reimarus.
Keywords: John Toland, Christian Origins, Historical Jesus, *Primitive Constitution*.
- GIANFRANCO BONOLA, *La figura di Gesù in Spirito dell'utopia (1918) di Ernst Bloch. Un profeta mite, cardine della trasmutazione umana e divina* 458

Abstract: The paper analyzes the pages devoted to the figure of Jesus in the first edition of Ernst Bloch's *The Spirit of Utopia* (1918), especially in the paragraph entitled "Jesus". Here, after having considered and rejected the hypotheses that made him a mythical figure or an example of a Middle-Eastern deity of vegetation, Bloch traces Jesus back to the Jewish milieu, though he questions the sacrificial interpretation of his death and the theology of substitutionary atonement. Even by naming Jesus the "son of man" and placing him in an apocalyptical perspective, Bloch stresses the defeat of his messianic attempt and instead brings his altruistic teaching, spiritual purity, and unveiling function to the forefront. While the "Jesus paradigm" will be an element of the figure of the yet unknown final Messiah, in his earthly history the mild prophet Jesus promoted the overcoming of an execrable form of humanity and (in synergy with Gnosis) made an unbearable model of divinity obsolete.

Keywords: Ernst Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia* (1918), Jesus as a Prophet, Failed Redemption, Final Messiah.

DARIO GARRIBBA, <i>La ricerca ebraica su Gesù e il Giudaismo nel XIX secolo. Spunti e osservazioni</i>	475
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Abstract: It is widely acknowledged that since the mid-19th century European Judaism has been interested in the historical Jesus and tried to describe him as a Jew; thus, Jewish scholars were the first to situate Jesus within the Judaism of his time. But in which Judaism? What image, what reconstruction did they give of that Judaism? Reviewing the works of the exponents of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, this paper shows how much Jewish scholars were conditioned in their reconstructive efforts by the portrayal of ancient Judaism in Christian and, in particular, German liberal historiography. Joseph Salvador's singular work *Histoire de la domination romaine en Judée, et de la ruine de Jérusalem* stands out from this picture.

Keywords: Jewish Historiography, Second Temple Judaism, Historical Jesus, *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Joseph Salvador.

CRISTIANA FACCHINI, <i>Storio-grafie del Gesù storico</i>	483
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Abstract: This article aims to reflect upon the history of scholarship with respect to the field of inquiry surrounding the "historical Jesus", focusing especially on the 19th and early 20th centuries. In doing so, it describes some new approaches that have shed light on classics of the field, highlighting the methodological potentiality of a cultural history that focuses on the complexity of the cultural context with its social and religious interactions, which themselves imply the process of cultural transferences. Moreover, it also invites us to broaden the methodological approach to the study of this distinctive historiographical theme, so that we might also include media studies.

Keywords: History of Scholarship, Historical Jesus, Cultural History, Media and Religion.

GIOVANNI FILORAMO, <i>Fino a che punto è moderno il Gesù di Piero Martinetti?</i>	492
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Abstract: Stimulated by Pesce's works on modern research on the historical Jesus, the author returns to the way in which he presented the Jesus of the Italian philosopher Piero Martinetti (1872-1943) in some of his previous

contributions. Reading Pesce's works gave him two fundamental questions: how does Martinetti's reconstruction of Jesus in *Gesù Cristo e il cristianesimo* (1934) fit into modern research on the historical Jesus, and to what extent can we speak of a modern Jesus in this regard? The contribution responds to these questions through a series of examples.

Keywords: Piero Martinetti, Historical Jesus.

HALVOR MOXNES, *Jesus' Itinerancy in Historical Context* 500

Abstract: Did Jesus' itinerancy imply that he was a vagrant and homeless? This essay explores the presentation of Jesus' itinerancy in Schleiermacher's *The Life of Jesus* (early 19th century) and compares it to modern studies of Jesus. In early modern Europe, vagrants and the homeless were regarded as a threat to society and therefore could no plausibly serve as models for Schleiermacher, who presented Jesus as «a great man» and a respected teacher. The influence of social and political perspectives on recent Jesus studies have inspired modern scholars to place Jesus as itinerant in the context of homelessness, vagrancy, and poverty.

Keywords: Jesus, Itinerancy, Vagrancy, Homelessness, Poverty.

PIERLUIGI PIOVANELLI, *À propos de la damnatio memoriae d'Ernest Renan dans la recherche contemporaine sur le Jésus historique* 510

Abstract: Ernest Renan has become one of the most ostracized figures in contemporary historiography of historical Jesus research. The roots of the problem probably lie in Albert Schweitzer's contemptuous dismissal of the French scholar's *Life of Jesus*, an unfortunate consequence of the nationalistic tensions between German and French intellectuals on the eve of the First World War. Regrettably, a certain number of German and North American theologians seem to have inherited this age-old bias. Others claim that Renan's work promoted cultural anti-Semitism without realizing that Renan was strongly opposed to this form of hatred. As recent studies have shown, Renan's impact on academia and society at large was far more positive and lasting than what is portrayed in standard accounts of historical Jesus research.

Keywords: Antisemitism, Historical Jesus, Orientalism, Ernest Renan, Albert Schweitzer.

ANNALISA SCHINO, *Il profeta Gesù secondo Hobbes* 518

Abstract: This article investigates the image of Christ proposed by Hobbes on the basis of a peculiar reading of the Holy Scriptures. In Hobbes' vision, Christ, on the one hand, is assimilated to Moses according to the Averroistic-Libertine model of the great *Legislatores*, prophets with strong political ambitions; on the other hand, Christ's role is strongly spiritualized on the basis of the beginning of his political reign after the Second Coming. Meanwhile, Christ's role in the historical, pre-Second Coming period is to teach the way of salvation (that is, moral conduct). This shift in time and this strong idealization of Christ's tasks get rid of any apocalyptic prophecy and open the way to reflection on the possibility of recognizing every citizen as having full freedom of conscience.

Keywords: Hobbes, Christ, Bible, Prophecy, *Libertinage érudit*.

GUY G. STROUMSA, *Renan, le judaïsme et l'islam. Orientalisme et monothéisme* 529

Abstract: Ernest Renan, the famed author of the all-time bestseller *La vie de Jésus*, was also the leading historian of religion of 19th century France. Renan sought to offer a united and comparative approach to the study of the religious history of the Semitic peoples. For him, the Semites, who in most fields were much less gifted than the Indo-European peoples, contributed one major idea to humanity: that of a single God. Renan devoted many efforts to aspects of Judaism and Islam, but he has often been accused of both antisemitism and of Islamophobia. The purpose of this article is to shed some new light on his general approach (in particular of ancient Judaism) and what it does, and does not, entail.

Keywords: Renan, Judaism, Orientalism, Monotheism, Semites.

5. Filosofia, teologia e politica tra Medioevo e XX secolo

ISABELLA ADINOLFI, *Su The Banality of Evil* 539

Abstract: This essay examines some aspects of Hannah Arendt's *The Banality of Evil*. The political thinker spoke of the «duty to understand the new type of criminal represented by A. Eichmann». The essay therefore aims first to clarify what “understanding” means for Arendt, and then why each of us has, according to her, the “duty” to understand. Finally, it focuses on the controversies sparked by the definition of “banality of evil”.

Keywords: Hannah Arendt, Ethics, Shoah, Evil, Thoughtlessness

ROBERTO ALCIATI, «*Il tacere non conviene nell'ora presente*». *Baldassarre Labanca e la bancarotta della teologia* 549

Abstract: Mauro Pesce has recently emphasized the need for a multidisciplinary approach to the history of Christianity, inviting colleagues to engage with the social and cognitive sciences. This call is not new. In 1895, another historian of Christianity, Baldassarre Labanca, suggested a strategic alliance with the positivists as a way out of the conundrums of theology and confessionalism in religious studies. The aim of this paper is to reconstruct the main characteristics of Labanca's proposal, which is in many ways similar to Pesce's.

Keywords: Baldassarre Labanca, Scientific Study of Religion, Positivism, Theology.

PAOLO BETTILOLO, *Sine intermissione orate. La lectio divina nella pratica e nel pensiero di Giuseppe Dossetti*. 558

Abstract: The essay examines the proposal and the practice of a *lectio continua* of the Bible in today's church, which was developed during the second half of the 20th century by the Italian Catholic Reformer Giuseppe Dossetti. It focuses on the problematic relationship between the Christian tradition and modernity.

Keywords: Giuseppe Dossetti, Bible, Prayer, Church, Modernity.

LUIGI CANETTI, *Semantiche della purgazione e del debito nel cristianesimo medievale* 567

Abstract: The sacrificial model of Latin Christianity found its apex in the invention of Purgatory as the third place in the afterlife. It entered into crisis because, during the commercial revolution of the 12th-14th centuries, balance

was now conceived as a property of the incessant movement determined by the dynamics of credit and financial debt. Credit was no longer identified exclusively with the credit accumulated with good works (alms, prayers, pilgrimages) that compensate the debt of guilt generated by sin; instead, credit was granted to the merchant not on the basis of goods already available but on the basis of guarantees of insurance and planning, something which only time – the new measurable time of the merchant – could verify.

Keywords: Debit, Gift Money, Purgatory, Sacrifice.

GUGLIELMO FORNI ROSA, *La théologie spirituelle de Thomas Müntzer* . . . 579

Abstract: Thomas Müntzer's theological-political writings were mostly composed during the summer or autumn of 1524, a time of hard unease and great risk. The immanentist interpretation of Friedrich Engels (1850), like that of the historians who preceded him, does not correspond to the texts left by Müntzer and seriously distorts their fundamentally religious nature. Müntzer condemns those theologians, both "papists" and Lutherans, that take the Bible away from the people to whom it was addressed, creating material and spiritual misery. The true knowledge of God can instead be achieved only once suffering and hardships make us resemble Christ, allowing the immediate presence of God into our spirit.

Keywords: Thomas Müntzer, Radical Reformation, Eschatology (16th century).

UMBERTO MAZZONE, *Strutture e procedure al Concilio di Trento* 587

Abstract: The understanding of the procedures by which the meetings of the Council of Trent were held, the rules that guided the proceedings, the organization of its bureaucracy, and the management of the expenses is necessary to fully comprehend how the discussions unfolded. The Council of Trent falls fully within the historical process of the political assemblies contemporary to it. If the preparation, the organization, and the maintenance of an assembly that is going to last for a long time always constitute a substantial effort for those who convened it, the commitment demanded of the Curia was truly substantial. The papacy in the mid-16th century managed to see to it that the bureaucratic structure of the Council was firmly in its own hands. This fact turned out to be fundamental in the management of more delicate procedural matters, such as that of the conciliary finances.

Keywords: Council of Trent, Political Assemblies, Rules and Procedure, Order of Business, Administrative Staff.

DANIELE MENOZZI, *Intorno alle origini del mito della congiura giudeo-massonica* 595

Abstract: In the construction of modern Catholic antisemitism, the myth of the "Jewish-Masonic Conspiracy" played an important role. The French Revolution, which started the process of secularization and produced the disintegration of Christendom, would have originated from a plot hatched by Masonry, secretly led by Jews. The first attestation of this theory is found in a letter that the Jesuit Augustin Barruel, the famous author of the *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du jacobinisme* (1797-1798), declares he received in 1806 from a Piedmontese army captain, Giovanni Battista Simonini. Historiography has long held that it was Barruel's invention. Recent studies have instead shown

a fact that has long been known by local scholars: Simonini did historically exist. His letter circulated widely in Catholic counter-revolutionary circles before being made public in 1878 through the memoirs of the Jesuit who had assisted Barruel in the final years of his life.

Keywords: Catholic Antisemitism, Myth of the Jewish-Masonic Conspiracy, Interpretation of the French Revolution, Society of Jesus, Giovanni Battista Simonini.

FRANCO MOTTA, *Un'esegesi copernicana. Paolo Antonio Foscarini* 603

Abstract: The article analyzes the *Lettera sopra l'opinione dei pitagorici* of the Carmelite friar Paolo Antonio Foscarini, a well-known text in the events that led to the condemnation of Copernicanism by the Roman Church. The book, which was prohibited in the decree of the Congregation of the Index of 1616 because it asserted the possibility of a heliocentric interpretation of the Bible, can be fully understood only when considered within the broader plan of a renewal of knowledge designed by its author. In the case of astronomy, the *Lettera* shows how Foscarini ascribed a key role to a realist view (instead of hypotheticalist, as maintained by some scholars) of the knowledge of nature attainable by physical and mathematical sciences.

Keywords: Copernicanism, Biblical Exegesis, Science and Religion, Counter-reformation.

PAOLO POMBENI, *Il sacramento del potere. Il problema del rapporto tra cultura religiosa e legittimazione politica* 610

Abstract: This article aims to offer some reflections on the role the Catholic Church has exerted on “shared feelings” (*idem sentire*) within Italian political life. Departing from a historical background defined by conflict between the state and the church, the article analyses the role that the Christian Democratic Party (*Democrazia Cristiana*) played in the aftermath of World War II as a unifying cultural force. Moreover, the article investigates whether the role played by the Catholic world to forge social solidarity is still relevant today.

Keywords: Religion and Power, Roman Question, Catholic Church and Politics, Church and Democrazia Cristiana, Civic Religion and Church.

FRANCESCA SOFIA, *Sul dialogo interconfessionale di Raffaello Lambruschini. I rapporti epistolari con Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi* 619

Abstract: The religious reflection of Raffaello Lambruschini (1788-1873) enjoyed an extraordinary fortune in Italy in the first decades of the last century, when in the eyes of a large group of Catholic Modernists he appeared as a distant, but vital, spiritual father. It is up to these distant studies to bring the dense network of contacts maintained by the Tuscan intellectual with the Protestant world to light. These include the Genevan historian and economist Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi, whose full correspondence with Lambruschini we publish here, while correcting some erroneous attributions.

Keywords: Raffaello Lambruschini, Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi, Italian Religious Reform (19th century), Bianca Milesi, Unitarian Doctrines.

- GIOVANNI VIAN, *Francesco Mari tra esegesi biblica e modernismo*.
Note su alcuni provvedimenti romani 627
- Abstract:* Francesco Mari (1873-1934), Umbrian priest and biblical scholar, participated in the renewal of biblical studies according to a historical-critical approach. He was repeatedly condemned by the Holy See for his alleged modernistic tendencies. These notes mainly examine the complaints against the Umbrian presbyter, after the apostolic visit to the diocese of Nocera Umbra and the publication of *Il quarto Vangelo* (his exegetical study on the Gospel according to John, condemned in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1910), with a nod to a new censorship in 1916, again with the charge of modernism.
- Keywords:* Francesco Mari, Catholic Modernism, Biblical Studies, Holy Office, Gaetano De Lai.
- Bibliografia di Mauro Pesce (Pubblicazioni scientifiche 1967-2021),*
 a cura di Mara Rescio e Luigi Walt 634

FRANCO MOTTA

L'ESEGESI COPERNICANA
DI PAOLO ANTONIO FOSCARINI

Da studioso delle origini cristiane Mauro Pesce, nel corso della sua carriera di ricerca, ha fatto ingresso – non estemporaneo, ma stabile, e meditato – nel territorio della storia moderna. Vorrei qui ricordare in particolare i suoi studi sui rapporti fra scienza e religione nel XVII secolo, in particolare sulla dialettica fra cosmologia copernicana ed esegesi biblica geocentrica in quell'effimero e straordinario contesto di passaggio che furono gli anni che precedettero la condanna di Copernico da parte della Chiesa romana (1616): il contesto in cui l'ermeneutica biblica di Galileo, espressa nelle lettere a Benedetto Castelli (1613) e a Cristina di Lorena (1615), sembrò poter aprire la via alla convivenza tra fede e scienza sperimentale sulla base di un'ambiziosa prospettiva di delimitazione delle rispettive sfere di interesse.

Nell'affrontare questi temi Pesce ha portato con sé la vocazione forse più peculiare della sua disciplina d'origine, e cioè la sorvegliata attenzione al testo e alla stratificazione dei significati e delle fonti che in esso si realizza: e se i risultati sono stati di primo rilievo dal punto di vista euristico (in primo luogo la scoperta della doppia redazione da parte di Galileo, motivata da considerazioni di prudenza verbale, della lettera a Castelli), in questa sede mi piace ricordarne anche il corposo aspetto didattico, concretizzatosi a cavallo fra anni '80 e '90 in alcuni cicli seminariali sull'ermeneutica galileiana nell'ambito del corso di Storia del cristianesimo, da lui tenuto presso l'allora Facoltà di Scienze politiche di Bologna¹.

1. Fra i protagonisti della breve stagione del dibattito su eliocentrismo e Bibbia che si interrompe, in Italia, con la condanna di Copernico nel 1616 un ruolo di primo piano spetta al carmelitano Paolo Antonio Foscarini, nome notissimo a chiunque si sia anche solo avvicinato a quel tema, ma di certo comprensibilmente meno noto agli altri, visto che la sua vicenda è

¹ Per i titoli degli studi in cui è sfociata la ricerca di Mauro Pesce sui rapporti fra scienza moderna ed ermeneutica biblica rinvio alla bibliografia dell'autore compresa in questo volume. Dal punto di vista della formazione alla ricerca nell'ambito degli studi galileiani, il suo insegnamento ha introdotto all'attività scientifica Alfredo Damanti, di cui ricordo l'imprescindibile *Libertas philosophandi. Teologia e filosofia nella Lettera a Cristina di Lorena di Galileo Galilei*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma 2010, nonché chi scrive, che con Pesce ha curato una edizione critica della *Lettera a Cristina di Lorena sull'uso della Bibbia nelle argomentazioni scientifiche*, Marietti 1820, Genova 2000.

legata in tutto e per tutto alla lettera a stampa in difesa del sistema copernicano da lui pubblicata nel gennaio del 1615 e messa all'Indice poco più di un anno dopo.

Assieme alla *Lettera a Cristina di Lorena* di Galileo, la *Lettera sopra l'opinione dei pitagorici e del Copernico* di Foscarini è il testo che fa pendere la bilancia della censura romana verso la condanna dell'eliocentrismo, a conclusione di un anno di incertezza durante il quale si consuma la crisi dei teologi di curia davanti alle incognite della nuova scienza: una crisi prima superata, appunto, con la soluzione di compromesso del 1616 (la censura espurgatoria di Copernico) ma che sfocia poi nel 1633 (la condanna di Galileo per il *Dialogo dei massimi sistemi*) nell'avvio di una lunga stagione di arroccamento culturale della Chiesa, superata solo parzialmente, sul piano strettamente astronomico, con l'accoglimento della sintesi newtoniana e la revisione dell'Indice voluta da Benedetto XIV².

Come noto, la *Lettera* di Foscarini si muove nell'alveo di un'ermeneutica concordista, vale a dire di una concezione biblica che riconosce nel testo sacro la presenza di enunciati dotati di valore non soltanto religioso, ma anche storico, geografico, o naturalistico, e che suppone che essi debbano concordare con le conclusioni delle scienze profane – e dunque, nel caso specifico del sistema del mondo, con le risultanze della filosofia naturale – al di là delle possibili divergenze nella lettera del testo.

La prima parte dell'opuscolo introduce preliminarmente i progressi apportati dalle novità celesti alla visione del cosmo, chiudendosi con un elenco dei passi biblici più problematici, quelli solitamente invocati a sostegno della stabilità della terra e del moto del sole, divisi in sei classi. La seconda parte, la più corposa, avanza una proposta relativa alle norme esegetiche da adottare nell'interpretazione dei luoghi citati e, più in generale, di quei luoghi della Scrittura dai quali emerge un possibile riferimento a verità di ordine naturale: alle «classi contrarie che contengono et apportano tutte le machine e le legioni che più gravemente oppugnar possono, e travagliare la predetta opinione [copernicana]» sono così opposti «sei fondamenti, [...] a guisa di fermissimi bastioni et inespugnabili macerie»³. Ciò che rende interessante questa parte, tuttavia, è che i «sei fondamenti» di Foscarini sono in larga parte una rassegna argomentata degli argomenti fisici e astronomici che militano per l'eliocentrismo, e da questo punto di vista questa sezione, la più lunga e articolata della *Lettera*, può essere intesa anche

² La documentazione relativa alla lunga storia della questione copernicana nella storia della Chiesa fino alla Restaurazione è stata raccolta da P.-N. Mayaud, *La condamnation des livres coperniciens et sa révocation à la lumière de documents inédits des Congrégations de l'Index et de l'Inquisition*, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma 1997.

³ *Lettera sopra l'opinione de' Pittagorici, e del Copernico, della mobilità della terra e stabilità della sole, e del nuovo pitagorico sistema del mondo*, in Napoli, presso Lazzaro Scoriggio, 1615, pp. 18-19. Nel citarne il titolo tralascio d'ora in poi l'uso arcaico «de' Pittagorici» in favore di «dei pitagorici».

come un'esposizione sintetica – prima di tutto *ad usum theologorum*, con ogni probabilità – del sistema copernicano.

La terza parte, infine, la più breve e quella più propriamente esegetica, propone l'interpretazione allegorica di due immagini bibliche che possono rinviare a enunciati di ordine naturale: quella del candelabro d'oro che Dio ordina a Mosè di foggare (Es 25,31 ss.), che l'autore suggerisce possa celare l'allegoria di un sistema del mondo con il sole al centro, e quella del frutto dell'albero della conoscenza di Gen 2,16-17, che Foscarini ipotizza essere il fico d'India o la melagrana: questi frutti, infatti, con la loro «moltitudine di granelli», duri nel nucleo del seme e di consistenza più morbida nel corpo esterno, sembrano rinviare alla figura della terra, «ch'essendo nel centro suo, o nelle parti più vicine a quello, sassosa, metallica e soda, quanto più s'accosta poi alla circonferenza tanto più pare che habbia le parti sue tenui, e rare»⁴.

2. Nella prima parte della *Lettera*, dunque, Foscarini passa in rassegna i luoghi biblici tradizionalmente assunti contro la cosmologia copernicana, dividendoli in sei classi. La prima classe comprende le autorità che affermano la stabilità della terra (Sal 92[93],1 e 103[104], 5; Qo 1,4), la seconda quelle che descrivono il moto del sole (Sal 18[19],6; Qo 1,5-6; Is 38,8; Sir 48,26; Gs 10,12), la terza quelle che fissano il cielo in alto e la terra in basso, ossia al centro dell'universo (essenzialmente la parafrasi in At 2,19 «dabo prodigia in caelo sursum, et signa in terra deorsum» della profezia di Gioele, «dabo prodigia in caelo et in terra», Gl 3,3), la quarta quelle che collocano l'inferno al centro del mondo, dunque nel centro della terra (e qui Foscarini non menziona luoghi biblici, ma «la comune opinione de' theologi»), la quinta quelle che contrappongono cielo e terra, laddove la terra è implicitamente intesa quale luogo più infimo dell'universo, dunque centrale e stabile (Gen 1,1; Sal 115[113],15; Mt 6,10; 1Cor 15,47; Col 1,16 e 3,2), la sesta, infine, quelle che indicano che dopo il Giudizio il sole si fermerà a oriente, un'affermazione «più tosto di Padri e di teologi che della divina Scrittura»⁵.

Di per sé, questo catalogo di autorità bibliche geocentriche è la risistemazione di un *corpus* anticopernicano diffuso, all'epoca, in forma più o meno completa, e di cui l'esempio più articolato è fornito dalla chiusa dell'opuscolo *Contro il moto della terra* di Ludovico delle Colombe, composto fra il 1610 e il 1611 e circolante in forma manoscritta negli ambienti antigalileiani di Firenze⁶. A risultare interessante dell'uso che Foscarini fa

⁴ *Ibi*, 59-60.

⁵ *Ibi*, 14-18.

⁶ Riprodotto in *Le opere di Galileo Galilei. Edizione nazionale* (d'ora in poi OG), III/1, pp. 251-290. Delle Colombe ne indirizzò una copia a Clavius nel maggio del 1611. Cfr. Damanti, *Libertas philosophandi*, cit., pp. 12-13.

di questo elenco di *auctoritates* è però il fatto che esso non è riprodotto per fissare un indubbio *status quaestionis* – il geocentrismo del mondo descritto dalla Scrittura – dal quale muovere per impostare una nuova esegesi dei passi biblici addotti, bensì in quanto conseguenza di una distorsione della lettura della Bibbia determinata dalla tradizione recepita, fondata sul sapere degli antichi ed espressa dall’astronomia aristotelica nella sua sintesi tolemaica.

In questo senso il tema dell’accomodamento, ossia dell’uso, da parte degli autori ispirati della Bibbia, di un linguaggio “accomodato” alle comuni impressioni dei semplici («per accomodarsi alla capacità del vulgo assai rozo e indisciplinato», nelle parole di Galileo)⁷, che ha un ruolo così centrale nella *Lettera a Castelli* e nella *Lettera a Cristina*, appare secondario nella *Lettera sopra l’opinione dei pitagorici*, e fa la sua comparsa a un terzo del trattato, nell’introdurre il primo tra i fondamenti di metodo esegetici, e peraltro attraverso un prestito, implicito ma del tutto evidente, proprio dalla *Lettera a Castelli*⁸.

Il problema del rapporto fra statuto veritativo della Bibbia e questione cosmologica, in questo senso, risulta a mio parere in parte diverso, in Foscarini, rispetto a Galileo: a volte, certo, i profeti hanno scritto del moto del sole e della centralità della terra per adattare al comune senso del popolo affermazioni comunque relative alla struttura del cosmo; altre volte, però, è stata l’obbedienza all’autorità degli antichi, con la loro immagine di un universo geocentrico, a far vedere in alcuni passi biblici riferimenti al mondo naturale che non erano nelle intenzioni dei profeti, distorcendone il significato. La distinzione può apparire sottile, ma a mio parere non è secondaria, e certamente risulta utile per comprendere le intenzioni e il peculiare tessuto epistemico della *Lettera sopra l’opinione dei pitagorici*, che difficilmente può essere identificata come un’ingenua proposta di revisione in senso copernicano dei luoghi della Scrittura addotti come prove della realtà del geocentrismo.

3. Da questo punto di vista è senza dubbio interessante l’esordio del testo, che Foscarini pone sotto il segno della disputa fra antichi e moderni, in particolare adducendo a prova della superiorità delle conoscenze del mondo naturale da parte di questi ultimi («[le] isperienze de’ moderni, che in ogni modo han chiuse in alcune particolarità le venerabili bocche degli

⁷ *Lettera a Cristina*, OG, v, pp. 309-348, qui p. 315.

⁸ «In mille luoghi gli si attribuiscono [a Dio] il venire, il dipartirsi, l’aspettare, l’affrettare, e membra corporali, occhi, orecchie, labbra, faccia, voce, volto, mani, piedi, ventre, vestimenta, arme, et insieme molte passioni, come l’adirarsi, il dolersi, il pentirsi, e simili»: *Lettera sopra l’opinione dei pitagorici*, cit., p. 20. Cfr. *Lettera a Castelli*, OG, v, pp. 282-288: «Così [nella Scrittura] vi apparirebbono non solo diverse contraddizioni, ma gravi eresie e bestemmie ancora; poi che sarebbe necessario dare a Iddio e piedi e mani e occhi, e non meno affetti corporali e umani, come d’ira, di pentimento, d’odio».

antichi») un dato storico e incontrovertibile come la scoperta del continente americano e delle terre poste al di sotto dell'Equatore:

«Erano paradossi non meno strani che sia questo della mobilità della terra. L'affermare appresso molti antichi di grave e riguardevole autorità che vi fossero gli antipodi, e che nella zona torrida vi si potesse habitare, e come quello da molti, così questo da tutti di commun consenso fu tenuto impossibile, e negato affatto, e nondimeno la picciola autorità, ma molta diligenza e valore de' moderni ha dimostrato [...] l'uno e l'altro essere verissimo»⁹.

Di qui si dipana, nelle pagine d'esordio che danno il tono a tutto il resto dell'opera, una trafila di argomentazioni gravitanti attorno all'opposizione fra una verità che si impone alla ragione grazie all'osservazione e all'esperienza, da un lato, e un'impalcatura di astrazioni, dall'altro («i molti sogni d'Aristotele, e di altri filosofi antichi»), la cui credibilità si regge soltanto sull'ossequio alla tradizione. Ne consegue la distinzione fra un dominio della verità fattuale, governato dall'osservazione, e un dominio dell'illusione metafisica che, con le scoperte delle novità celesti, è giunto a definitiva crisi:

«Se essi [*scil.* gli antichi] avessero visto, et osservato quello che han visto et osservato i moderni; et avessero le loro ragioni intese, senza dubbio haverebbono anco essi mutato parere, e creduto alla evidentissima verità di questi, onde non bisogna attribuire tanto agli antichi che tutto quello ch'essi affermarono si habbia come per pregiudicato a credere, e tenere per certissimo, quasi fusse rivelato, e disceso dal cielo»¹⁰.

È in questa prospettiva epistemica che vanno compresi due passaggi della *Lettera* che, a mio parere, hanno dato adito a interpretazioni del pensiero di Foscarini non del tutto aderenti al testo. Il primo è quello in cui il padre carmelitano si appella al primato della sacra pagina quale fonte di verità, e che ha fatto sostenere che egli sarebbe «pienamente convinto della superiorità conoscitiva delle Scritture, così come è certo dell'inadeguatezza dei mezzi umani a poter conoscere e intendere compiutamente il dettato scritturistico»¹¹.

Foscarini, in effetti, scrive che «quello che importa dunque in questa materia è che, dove alcuna cosa si conosce ripugnare all'autorità divina, et alle sacre lettere dettate dallo Spirito santo [...] all'ora non solo si deve abbandonare ogni ragione humana, ma l'istesso senso»¹². Va però notata la

⁹ *Lettera sopra l'opinione dei pitagorici*, cit., pp. 6-7.

¹⁰ *Ibi*, p. 7.

¹¹ P. Ponzio, *Teologie e copernicanesimo. Bellarmino, Campanella, Foscarini*, in M. Bucciantini - M. Camerota - F. Giudice (eds.), *Il caso Galileo. Una rilettura storica, filosofica, teologica. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Firenze, 26-30 maggio 2009*, Olschki, Firenze 2011, pp. 91-107, qui p. 97.

¹² *Lettera sopra l'opinione dei pitagorici*, cit., p. 7.

collocazione di queste righe, che segue immediatamente quella delle righe citate poco sopra a proposito delle fallaci convinzioni dell'astronomia antica, rendendo chiaro come la «ragione humana» che si deve abbandonare è quella che ha immaginato il sistema tolemaico con i suoi immaginifici correttivi alle irregolarità del moto planetario, le «innumerabili difficoltà e rappezzamenti di orbi [...], di epicicli, di equanti, di deferenti, di eccentrici e di mille altre imaginationi e chimere»¹³. Contrariamente a questo, invece, l'opinione copernicana si pone con l'evidenza della verità che è propria dell'esordio dell'età conoscitiva dei moderni («apparve dunque l'opinione pitagorica e del Copernico in scena al mondo»), e per questo il compito dell'esegeta non sta nel tenere fermo alla superiorità conoscitiva della parola divina nell'ambito della natura, bensì nel concordare l'interpretazione con il quadro della nuova conoscenza del mondo:

«Se dunque è vera l'opinione pitagorica, senza dubbio Iddio avrà talmente dettate le parole della Scrittura sacra che possano ricevere senso accommo a quell'opinione, e conciliamento con essa. Questo è il motivo che m'indusse a considerare, et a cercare (stante la probabilità evidente della già detta opinione) il modo, e la strada di accordare molti luoghi della Scrittura sacra con essa, et interpretarli (non senza fondamenti theologici e fisici) in modo tale che non gli contradicano affatto»¹⁴.

Parole che, mi sembra di poter con buona ragione ritenere, corrono in parallelo a quelle delle scritture copernicane di Galileo¹⁵.

Il secondo passaggio, strettamente legato a questo, riguarda la presunta attitudine ipoteticista di Foscarini, il suo annettere «alla concezione eliocentrica solo una preminenza matematica, che non implicava di necessità un correlato realistico, pertinente, cioè, all'effettivo ordine fisico dei fenomeni»¹⁶.

Al contrario, è proprio il piano fisico (seppure in una visione empirica dei fenomeni e delle loro cause che non abbraccia la complessità dello sperimentalismo galileiano) quello nel quale Foscarini rivendica il radicamento della propria proposta di interpretazione della Bibbia. Ora, l'unico

¹³ *Ibi*, p. 9.

¹⁴ *Ibi*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁵ Cfr. la *Lettera a Castelli*, cit., p. 283: «Essendo di più manifesto che due verità non posson mai contrariarsi, è ofizio de' saggi espositori affaticarsi per trovare i veri sensi de' luoghi sacri, concordanti con quelle conclusioni naturali delle quali prima il senso manifesto o le dimostrazioni necessarie ci avesser resi certi e sicuri». Non è naturalmente da escludere che Foscarini, nel passaggio citato, riprenda proprio queste considerazioni, come sembra suggerito anche dall'affermazione del principio per cui «una verità non è contraria all'altra» (*Lettera sopra l'opinione dei pitagorici*, cit., p. 12).

¹⁶ M. Camerota, *Galileo Galilei e la cultura scientifica nell'età della Controriforma*, Salerno, Roma 2004, p. 283. L'autore si rifà in questo alle analoghe considerazioni di B. Basile, *Galileo e il teologo Foscarini*, in Id., *L'invenzione del vero. Studi sulla letteratura scientifica da Galilei ad Algarotti*, Salerno, Roma 1983, pp. 9-48, in part. p. 21 e di S. Caroti, *Un sostenitore napoletano della mobilità della Terra. Il padre Paolo Antonio Foscarini*, in F. Lomonaco - M. Torrini (eds.), *Galileo e Napoli*, Guida, Napoli 1987, pp. 81-121, in part. p. 96.

passaggio della *Lettera sopra l'opinione dei pitagorici* nel quale il carmelitano menziona la teoria ipoteticista è proprio quello che segue la critica alle «mille altre imaginationi e chimere» degli aristotelici:

«Gl'istessi seguaci dell'opinione comune [*scil.* quella tolemaica] han confessato nel descrivere il sistema del mondo essi non potere indovinare, né insegnare il vero sistema, ma solo andare investigando quello che sia più verisimile, e che con buone ragioni salvi più comodamente le apparenze celesti»¹⁷.

In altri termini, la visione ipoteticista, puramente matematica, della conoscenza dei cieli non è, per Foscarini, il livello ordinario sul quale debbono essere posti i conseguimenti della nuova scienza, bensì il portato dell'incapacità dell'astronomia aristotelica di adattare l'osservazione dei movimenti dei corpi celesti ai presupposti teorici del geocentrismo. Ne fanno fede le righe che seguono immediatamente quelle citate, e nelle quali emerge di nuovo l'affermazione del *saltus* conoscitivo che segna l'avvento dell'astronomia dei moderni:

«Successe poi il trovato dell'occhiale di prospettiva, e scoperse con ferma sensazione varie belle cose nel cielo tutte curiose, et incognite insino a questi secoli»¹⁸.

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¹⁷ *Lettera sopra l'opinione dei pitagorici*, cit., p. 9.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*. Da questo punto di vista concordo con R.J. Blackwell, *Galileo, Bellarmine, and the Bible*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame IN-London 1991, pp. 87 ss. (con tr. ingl. della *Lettera* in appendice, pp. 217-251), secondo cui Foscarini riconosce la possibilità che lo studio dei fenomeni naturali possa conseguire una piena conoscenza della realtà.