

CISSR – Centro Italiano di Studi Superiori sulle Religioni  
*Italian Centre for Advanced Studies on Religions*

## ***7th Annual Meeting on Christian Origins***

CEUB – University Residential Centre of Bertinoro, Italy  
September 29 – October 2, 2021

**ONLINE EDITION**



**Il Centro Italiano di Studi Superiori sulle Religioni (CISSR)**, fondato nel 1999, promuove la ricerca scientifica sulle religioni, soprattutto nell'ambito della storia del cristianesimo e del giudaismo. Il Centro favorisce lo sviluppo degli studi sulle religioni nella formazione universitaria, organizzando convegni scientifici, offrendo supporto per la formazione post-universitaria e promuovendo iniziative culturali sulle religioni.

*The Italian Centre for Advanced Studies on Religions (CISSR), founded in 1999, promotes the scientific research on religion, with a special focus on the history of Christianity and Judaism. The Centre fosters the development of religious studies in the academia, organizing scientific meetings, providing support for post-graduate studies, and promoting cultural initiatives on religions.*

## **Incontro annuale 2021 | 2021 Annual Meeting**

### **Comitato scientifico | Scientific Committee**

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**Organizzazione scientifica | Scientific Organisation:** M. Pesce, M. Rescio, E.R. Urciuoli

**Cura del programma | Programme Book Editing:** M. Rescio, E.R. Urciuoli, L. Walt

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**CISSR – Italian Centre for Advanced Studies on Religions**

**7th Annual Meeting on Christian Origins**

Bertinoro (Italy), September 29 – October 2, 2021

**29th September (Wednesday)**

**11:15 – 11:30**

**Introduction to the Conference**

Mauro Pesce, Mara Rescio, Emiliano Rubens Urciuoli

**11:30 – 13:30**

**Women in Early Christianity**

Chairs: Maria Dell'Isola and Mario Resta

**11:30 Maria Dell'Isola** (Syddansk Universitet)

Women Facing Martyrdom: The Interplay between Temporality and the Experience of Social and Gendered Roles

**12:10 Mario Resta** (Università degli Studi di Bari “Aldo Moro”)

Lay or Consecrated, Subjected and Subtracted:  
The Abduction of Women in 4th Century Canonical Legislation

**12:50 Aliyah El Mansy** (Universität Marburg)

Female Economic Power and Its Impact on Women's Religious and Social Agency

**15:00 – 17:00**

**The Bible and Conflict**

Chairs: Sarah E. Rollens and James G. Crossley

**15:00 Daniel C. Ullucci** (Stonehill College, Easton, MA)

Killing, Ritual Killing, or Human Sacrifice?

**15:40 Robyn Walsh** (University of Miami)

*Argumentum ad Lunam*: Discourse and Competition on the Moon

**16:20 James G. Crossley** (St. Mary's University, Twickenham)

Political Apocalypticism and Millenarianism in the Study of Christian Origins

**17:30 – 19:30**

## **Heterotopias of Religious Authority in Ancient Christianity**

Chairs: Tobias Nicklas, Luigi Walt

**17:30 Stephanie Hallinger** and **Tobias Nicklas** (Universität Regensburg)

“Beyond Canon” – An Introduction into the Project

**18:10 Mari Mamyán** (Universität Regensburg)

Infant Jesus as an Outsider:

The Motif of Strangeness in the Armenian Infancy Gospel

**18:50 Luigi Walt** (Universität Regensburg)

“Here You Grew Up, Here You Are Happy”: The Double Church of Bishop Theodore in Aquileia, between Utopia and Heterotopia

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**30th September (Thursday)**

**11:30 – 13:30**

## **The Historical Jesus before H.S. Reimarus: New Perspectives & Methodologies**

Chairs: Cristiana Facchini, Fernando Bermejo-Rubio, Miriam Benfatto

**11:30 Miriam Benfatto** (Università degli Studi di Bologna)

The Last Supper of Jesus and the Passover Meal Compared:  
John Lightfoot's Interpretation (1602-1675) and Rabbinic Literature

**12:10** **Cristiana Facchini** (Università degli Studi di Bologna)

Richard Simon and the Historical Jesus

**12:50** **Pierluigi Piovanelli** (École pratique des hautes études, Paris)

“Wie unser deutscher Hermann Samuel Reimarus...” Why Voltaire is virtually absent from the Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung?

**15:00 – 17:00**

### **Canonized Gospels and Their Constellations**

Chairs: Michael Daise, Mauro Pesce, Mara Rescio

**15:00** **Judith König** (Universität Regensburg)

The Woman Who Took Initiative:

A Look at Mark 5:24-34 from the Perspective of Power Dynamics

**15:40** **Michael Daise** (College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA)

Dismantling and Raising the Sanctuary in Mark, John and Thomas

**16:20** **Mauro Pesce** (Università degli Studi di Bologna)

The Relationship between Mark and John

**17:30 – 19:30**

### **Keynote Lecture**

**17:30** **Richard S. Ascough** (Queen’s University, Kingston, ON)

Women, Work, and Worship in Occupational Associations and Early Christ Groups

**18:30** Open Discussion

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**1st October (Friday)**

**11:30 – 13:30**

### **Issues of Method: New ‘Secular’ Approaches to Early Christian Research**

Chairs: Roberto Alciati and Emiliano Rubens Urciuoli

**11:30 Roberto Alciati** (Università degli Studi di Firenze)

A Desert ‘Cityfied’ by Monks? Notes on Life of Antony 14.7

**12:10 Jörg Rüpke** (Max-Weber-Kolleg, Universität Erfurt)

Religion, Urban Resilience and Early Christianity

**12:50 Emiliano R. Urciuoli** (Max-Weber-Kolleg, Universität Erfurt)

Christ and Debord:

Jesus Followers, Situationists, and the Management of Urban Life

**15:00 – 17:00**

### **Papyri, Inscriptions, and the Contexts of Early Christianity**

Chairs: John S. Kloppenborg and Peter Arzt-Grabner

**15:00 Jeremiah Coogan** (University of Oxford)

Revelation’s Heavenly Tax Office:

Roman Provincial Bureaucracy and the Textuality of John’s Apocalypse

**15:40 Romeo Popa** (Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg)

Magic and Argument: The Function of the Verb βασκαίνω  
in Gal 3:1 in the Light of the Documentary Papyri

**16:20 Marco Stroppa** (Istituto Papirologico “G. Vitelli”, Università degli Studi di Firenze)

Codici tardoantichi di piccolo formato – fra religiosità privata e praticità: Esempari editi e inediti della collezione dei PSI / Late Antique Miniature Codices – Between Private Religiosity and Practicality: Published and Unpublished Specimens from the PSI Collection

17:30 – 19:30

## Book Discussion

Chairs: Luca Arcari and Franco Motta

Recent Publications on Christian Origins

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**2nd October (Saturday)**

11:30 – 13:30

## Anthropological Knowledge: Materials, Approaches, and Perspectives

Chairs: Adriana Destro and Francesca Sbardella

**11:30 Gaetano Mangiameli** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

Environments and Cultures in Anthropology between Past and Future

**12:10 Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce** (Università degli Studi di Bologna)

Anthropological Aspects of a Book on John the Baptist and Jesus

**12:50 Zelda Alice Franceschi** (Università degli Studi di Bologna)

La missione selvaggia. Lavoro, tecnica ed evangelizzazione nel Chaco argentino con comunità wichí (1900-1950) / The Wild Mission: Work, Technique, and Evangelization in the Argentine Chaco with Wichí Communities (1900–1950)

15:00 – 17:00

## Gospel of Thomas, Nag Hammadi, and Gnosticism

Chairs: Claudio Gianotto, Andrea Annese, Francesco Berno

**15:00 Anne Pasquier** (Université Laval, Québec)

The Anonymous Treatise Contained in the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae:  
Similarities and Differences with Gnostic Sources

**15:40 René Falkenberg** (Aarhus Universitet)

Jesus said, “I am not your male teacher; I am your female disciple”:  
Pedagogy and Gender in the Coptic Manuscript of the Gospel of Thomas

**16:20 Daniele Tripaldi** (Università degli Studi di Bologna)

Finding the Undivided Solitary:  
Towards a Philological Re-Assessment of Gos. Thom. 61

**17:30 – 19:00**

## **Religious Practices and Experiences in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism and Early Christianity (2nd Cent. BCE – 4th Cent. CE)**

Chairs: Luca Arcari and Daniele Tripaldi

**17:30 Angela Kim Harkins** (Boston College)

Entering into the ‘Possible Narrative World’ of Hermas’s Visions

**18:10 Harry O. Maier** (University of British Columbia, Vancouver)

Toward a Sticky Turn in the Study of the Shepherd of Hermas

**18:50 – 19:30**

## **Oral and Written Sources of Early Christian Texts**

Chairs: Enrico Norelli and Claudio Zamagni

**18:50 Clara Sanvito** (Universidad Eclesiástica “San Dámaso”, Madrid)

Traces of the Use of Testimonia in the Epideixis  
of Irenaeus of Lyons and in His Contemporaries



## PAPER ABSTRACTS

(Programme Units are listed in alphabetical order)

### **Keynote Lecture**

Richard S. Ascough (Queen's University at Kingston, ON)

#### **Women, Work, and Worship in Occupational Associations and Early Christ Groups**

There is plenty of evidence in early Christian texts suggesting that Christ adherents were laborers. For example, Acts tells stories of women and men in various occupations while Paul presents himself as “working with his hands” while with the Thessalonians. Using evidence from occupational associations, I will examine the broader context of labour practices, giving particular attention to how the gods populated working environments. Given the size of the Christ groups, it is unlikely that there were any exclusively “Christian” workplaces. Thus, I will explore strategies that Christ adherents might use to find balance between the diverse cult practices related to their occupation and the singular commitment to Christ that their leaders expected them to uphold.

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### **Anthropological Knowledge: Materials, Approaches, and Perspectives**

(Chairs: Adriana Destro, Francesca Sbardella)

*The purpose of the Unit is to increase discussion and confrontation of methods and perspectives that anthropologists are elaborating. The field of investigation includes ancient, modern, contemporary religious phenomena and connected events.*

Gaetano Mangiameli (Università degli Studi di Milano)

#### **Environments and Cultures in Anthropology between Past and Future**

The relation between environment and culture is a long-established subject of anthropological research that is frequently connected to the ethnographic understanding of “indigenous religions” and that is portrayed in tune with the different theoretical

approaches that have characterized the history of social and cultural anthropology, from evolutionism to structuralism, from functionalism to interpretive anthropology. This is certainly true of animism and totemism, two anthropological categories that have been constructed, discussed and reconstructed by different scholars in different intellectual contexts. In the last decades a renewed interest has reframed religions with reference to sustainability and environmental values, and more recently the relations between humans and non-humans have been investigated through an ontological lens. Besides an important past, it seems that the triangle “environment-culture-religion” has a promising future in anthropology.

Adriana Destro and Mauro Pesce (Università degli Studi di Bologna)

### **Anthropological Aspects of a Book on John the Baptist and Jesus**

Four theoretical and methodological aspects of the new book of A. Destro and M. Pesce (*Il Battista e Gesù. Due movimenti giudaici nel tempo della crisi*, Rome 2021): 1. Multiple birth of revolutionary movements in short periods of time. 2. Social reasons for multiple responses to endemic crises. 3. Relationships between groups and territories in critical periods. 4. Differences between John and Jesus.

Zelda Alice Franceschi (Università degli Studi di Bologna)

### **La missione selvaggia. Lavoro, tecnica ed evangelizzazione nel Chaco argentino con comunità wichí (1900-1950)**

#### ***The Wild Mission: Work, Technique and Evangelization in the Argentine Chaco with Wichí Communities (1900–1950)***

This presentation traces the history of the Franciscan mission of *Propaganda Fide*, Misión Nueva Pompeya founded in 1900. The stories recalled by the indigenous community (first and second hand) and the writings by the missionaries show a double face of missionary action. On the one hand, an action of education and schooling in the sacred texts, on the other, a pragmatics of mechanics that remains imprinted in bodies and in daily life to this day. We can say that the missionaries deposited on the bodies a knowledge that future or contemporary extractive industries (sugar cane, cotton, tannin) would be able to make the most of. This technical and pragmatic side of missionalization is overlooked, all the more so because it has often concerned the male population. What about women? What were the tasks of indigenous women in the mission? What did their marginalization in technology and mechanics entail? This paper will highlight the mechanical knowledge of the Franciscan and

Anglican missions at the beginning of the twentieth century, which is the counterpart of the religious one, and will shed light in particular on the role of women.

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## **[The] Bible and Conflict**

(Chairs: Sarah E. Rollens and James Crossley)

*This unit examines the ways that biblical texts have been cultural resources for ideological conflict and competition. On the one hand, biblical texts show evidence of social conflict and competition in the period in which they were written. First Corinthians, for instance, suggests that Paul's audiences experienced numerous forms of conflict and competitiveness among themselves, which Paul tried to manage in his letters. On the other hand, early Christian groups routinely viewed themselves in conflict with outsiders as well, as the Apocalypse of John illustrates with its particularly violent language. By attending to these features of the texts, we learn more about the social dynamics of early Christianity and the challenges that they faced. To study conflict and competition in the Bible is therefore to examine the propulsive forces of socio-political development in early Christianity. We can, moreover, also attend to how biblical texts have been deployed in more recent settings for conflicted and competitive political ends. The dispute over same-sex marriage in the U.S., for instance, shows how people on both sides of political debates easily try to appropriate the authority of the biblical texts. Thus, while containing evidence for ancient conflict and competition, the Bible continues to be mobilized for more contemporary political and ideological purposes—situated in their own modern contexts of conflict and competition.*

Daniel C. Ullucci (Stonehill College, Easton, MA)

### **Killing, Ritual Killing, or Human Sacrifice?**

This paper questions the scholarly use of the term 'human sacrifice.' At once appalling and strangely alluring, the term is often the ne plus ultra of religious polemics, but is also used positively. The Christian Bible, for example, abhors the sacrifices of Tophet but then sees the sacrifice of Jesus as the climax of history. Scholarly analysis has tended to follow these vacillations, freely using 'human sacrifice' as an analytic term. This paper argues that the term 'human sacrifice' is always an emic valuation. It is not a useful scholarly category, despite its seemingly innocuous descriptive character. Redescribing 'human sacrifice' allows a view into the ways scholarship is complicit in perpetuating models of conflict, most significantly in contemporary examples of religiously motivated and state-sanctioned killing.

Robyn Walsh (University of Miami)

### ***Argumentum ad Lunam: Discourse and Competition on the Moon***

Increasingly scholars are aware and accepting of Paul the Apostle's use of Middle Platonic/Stoic terminology in his descriptions of cosmology, moral psychology, and the function of certain substances (e.g., pneuma) in his descriptions of (in)corporeality, adoption, and the transformation of Christ and those "in Christ." Studies along these lines identify points of contact between Paul and his philosophical ilk, identifying how similar lines of discourse among various Platonists, Aristotelians, Stoics, Pythagoreans, and figures like Philo help to illuminate the nuances of Paul's thought, while simultaneously spackling over lacunae left by the "occasional" nature of his extant corpus. In this paper, I would like to move beyond a justification framework set to prove Paul's use of popular philosophy. Rather, I will take this reality for granted and ask what Paul's claims about cosmology signify in terms of his competitive position in the emerging "wonder-culture" of the imperial period. Specifically, in a period in which discourses, claims, and demonstrations involving the moon were rife, what was Paul's position on this celestial marker and what role did it play in justifying his cosmology over and against those in the competitive landscape of both Christ-groups and philosophy writ large?

James G. Crossley (St. Mary's University, Twickenham)

### **Political Apocalypticism and Millenarianism in the Study of Christian Origins**

This paper explores representations of political apocalypticism and millenarianism within scholarship on Christian Origins. In doing so, it investigates such frameworks as 'myths of innocence' or 'primitive rebellion' that scholars use to theorize ancient apocalypticism.

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### **Canonized Gospels and Their Constellations**

(Chairs: Michael Daise, Mauro Pesce, Mara Rescio)

*Sources, Locations, History*

*In this combined unit we seek to facilitate the aims of two panels which regularly meet during the CISSR Annual Meeting on Christian Origins—'Mark and the Other Gospels' and 'The Johannist Constellation: Systemic Questions and Different Answers'. Drawing from the first panel's interest in 'the relationship between canonical and extra-canonical materials', and from the second panel's concern to map 'a "constellation" of socio-religious texts' which*

*address ‘cosmic fractures’ between ‘realms above and below’, we welcome papers that treat the Gospels of Mark and/or John either in relation to each other or in relation to other canonical or apocryphal works. The specific topics addressed, as well as methodological criteria, are open.*

Judith König (Universität Regensburg)

### **The Woman Who Took Initiative: A Look at Mark 5:24-34 from the Perspective of Power Dynamics**

The “haemorrhaging woman” who approaches Jesus in Mark 5:27 has already gotten much attention from exegetes. This is not surprising, as even though she remains without a name and appears only here in the Gospel of Mark, the text devotes several verses to her description and her inner perspective—something that doesn’t go without saying in Mark. The clear focus on the woman herself also distinguishes the Markan from the Lukan and Matthean versions of the story. Interestingly, however, the text has rarely been analysed from a perspective of power dynamics. Taking this perspective, one could ask: How is the woman presented in comparison to Jesus? Is there an evaluation of her initiative to seek out Jesus and to be healed? And how does this initiative and the healing, which is attributed to her faith (and explicitly not to any intentional action of the part of Jesus), relate to the description of Jesus’ authority and power in Mark’s overall narrative? Many interesting discoveries still lie hidden in an undervalued pericope that presents a healer that does not heal and a patient without patience.

Michael Daise (College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA)

### **Dismantling and Raising the Sanctuary in Mark, John and Thomas**

I will look at the relationship between the Gospels of Mark, John and Thomas through the prism of an observation I made in an earlier paper for this annual conference, the prospect that the logion on ‘dismantling and rebuilding’ the sanctuary, ascribed to or spoken by Jesus, carries royal overtones. In that earlier paper I argued that, when read with Josephus’ account of Herod’s renovation of the sanctuary (Jewish Antiquities 15), this saying connotes the erection of a new shrine that accompanies the establishment of a new dynasty. And in a recent monograph, I teased out the implications of this claim for the (royal) christology of the Fourth Gospel (John 2:19-21). More work remains, however, for both the contexts from which this language was drawn (ancient Near East, Hellenistic-Roman Mediterranean) and the tradition-historical development of the logion in the gospels; and in this paper I will trace these matters out as they relate to the use of this saying in Mark, John and Thomas.

Mauro Pesce (Università degli Studi di Bologna)

### **The Relationship between Mark and John**

This paper will address some questions which have emerged in research for the recent monograph *Il Battista e Gesù: due movimenti giudaici nel tempo della crisi*, by A. Destro & M. Pesce (Carocci, 2021). Did John know Mark? And if so, how did John critique Mark's conception of John the Baptist? What were the sources of information and the historical and religious contexts in which Mark and John wrote about the Baptist? In 1-4:3 John presents a radical critique of the conceptions of the Baptist movement of his time, following which the Baptist and not Jesus was the Light of God and the Messiah. John had a good knowledge of the Gospel of Mark and introduced a series of corrections of Mark's narrative, on the basis of his own special information. A profoundly different image of the Baptist, of the first baptist phase of Jesus's activity and of Jesus's first followers emerges from these chapters of John's Gospel.

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### **Gospel of Thomas, Nag Hammadi, and Gnosticism**

(Chairs: Claudio Gianotto, Andrea Annese, Francesco Berno)

*This unit welcomes contributions on the Gospel of Thomas, the Nag Hammadi texts and other Gnostic documents (e.g. Codex Tchacos, Codex Bruce, Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae). The unit is open to contributions that address both specific and cross-cutting issues, from whatever critical perspective (literary, socio-anthropological, historiographical, etc.). Interdisciplinary approaches and methodological renewal are strongly encouraged. Among the topics that are particularly welcomed, we mention (for example): a) contents, composition, milieu of Thomas; b) the context of the Nag Hammadi codices; c) concepts conveyed by Gnostic texts and traditions.*

Anne Pasquier (Université Laval, Québec)

### **The Anonymous Treatise Contained in the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae: Similarities and Differences with Gnostic Sources**

One theme in particular runs like a thread throughout the anonymous treatise of Bruce, the revelation of the heavenly Jerusalem, associated with that of the earth, intelligible, heavenly and material. These topics are inseparable from the myth of the heavenly and spiritual Man described as the beginning and end of knowledge. Its teaching is largely similar to the one presented in other texts from the Nag Hammadi Library. This teaching is

elaborated from multiple sources. Several languages are used, different voices intermingled: philosophical language, biblical language taken from the Old and New Testaments, or drawn from Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature. However, it is not a syncretic work, in the sense of an amalgam of different cultural and heterogeneous traditions, philosophical and religious. The different voices that it borrows are well integrated at the narrative level, in a coherent narrative of mytho-theological form. There is both diversity and harmonization of voices, which means that the sources and the borrowings that are put in relation are reinterpreted, sometimes even subverted. It is also expressed in a particular tone: a hymnic language characterizes the whole discourse. However, one can notice some important differences with other texts found in the Nag Hammadi collection. For example, it presents a positive vision of the organization of the material cosmos. This explains, among other things, that Bruce's Anonymous has a much more positive attitude towards Old Testament texts that are interpreted allegorically. The fact that there are explicit quotations from the Jewish and Christian scriptures also shows that they are now accepted as sacred. These data reveal a later text than those found in the Nag Hammadi Library, in their original composition. The question arises of the context of the production or of the writing of the text. This can therefore give us the opportunity to discuss the evolution of Gnosticism, adapting itself in new environments, and what we mean by "Gnostics".

René Falkenberg (Aarhus Universitet)

### **Jesus said, "I am not your male teacher; I am your female disciple": Pedagogy and gender in the Coptic manuscript of the Gospel of Thomas**

When we study Thomas, which Thomas do we study? Most believe to study the 1st–2nd century Thomas, which hopefully agrees with our modern editions. The Thomas we actually do have is found in three fragmentary Greek witnesses from the 3rd century and in one full Coptic version from the 4th–5th century. The Greek and Coptic do not attest a stable textual transmission. Thomas is simply an evolving text, both before it was buried and after it was unearthed, because we are also part of this process, when correcting and numbering the text in editions and translations. In our very first translations, for instance, the number of logia was counting 112, 113, 114, and 118; in fact, one scholar was so annoyed by this difference that he instead divided the text into 250 verses! To by-pass the obvious problems with an evolving text, the present paper will engage in reading the text of Thomas as the Coptic is physically preserved in Nag Hammadi Codex II. Ideally, such a reading should be detached from earlier suggestions of textual correction and numbering as we find them in our usual editions of Thomas. A case study will concern two intertwining subjects that are

well-known from earlier Thomasine studies, namely the relationship between teacher and disciple, and also the speculation on gender in Thomas.

Daniele Tripaldi (Università degli Studi di Bologna)

### **Finding the Undivided Solitary: Towards a Philological Re-Assessment of Gos. Thom. 61**

This paper aims at re-addressing well known textual and exegetical problems afflicting since ever the interpretation of Gos. Thom. 61. By supposing and arguing for a semantic diffraction in v. 5, new light will hopefully be shed on the textual history and general frame of meaning of this complex logion.

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### **Heterotopias of Religious Authority in Ancient Christianity**

(Chairs: Tobias Nicklas, Luigi Walt)

*This unit is aimed to present the work of the newly launched Centre for Advanced Studies “Beyond Canon”, granted by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and based at the University of Regensburg, Germany.*

Stephanie Hallinger and Tobias Nicklas (Universität Regensburg)

### **“Beyond Canon” – An Introduction into the Project**

The paper offers an introduction to the main questions and observations of the Beyond Canon Project (Universität Regensburg, Germany). The project’s focus is on the development of (mainly Christian) extracanonical literatures after the more or less final formation of the New Testament Canon in the fourth century CE. It is interested in the relation of extracanonical traditions in textual, liturgical/ritual and material transmission.

Mari Mamyán (Universität Regensburg)

### **Infant Jesus as an Outsider: The Motif of Strangeness in the Armenian Infancy Gospel**

Several scholars have made interesting observations about the Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts which would lie behind the stories about Jesus in the text of the Paidika Iesou (most commonly known as the Infancy Gospel of Thomas). My task in this paper will be to focus on the Armenian Infancy Gospel, which is in fact a later representation of the Paidika



in a new cultural, religious, and historical setting. Compared to the Paidika, the Armenian Infancy Gospel underwent considerable changes and these alterations are first and foremost related to the image of the infant Jesus. Therefore, the centerpiece of the paper will be the discussion of the new image of Jesus as a child, most particularly his portrait as an ‘outsider’ who is contrasted to local people. The accentuation of Jesus’ (and his family’s) otherness is expressed not only by the repeated use of the label անտառ (foreigner, stranger) throughout the entire text but also by the antagonistic and hostile behavior of ‘insiders’ towards Jesus and his relatives alike. The motif of strangeness is well represented in the complex itinerary of the Holy Family’s journey to Egypt and back to Nazareth, touching upon the cities of Arabia, Assyria, and Egypt. The analysis will be guided by questions such as: What did the editors of the Armenian text imply by making a specific accent on the foreignness of Jesus? Who are the ‘insiders’ of the text and with whom are they associated?

Luigi Walt (Universität Regensburg)

### **“Here You Grew Up, Here You Are Happy”: The Double Church of Bishop Theodore in Aquileia, between Utopia and Heterotopia**

Towards the end of nineteenth century, archaeological excavations were started to the north of the present Patriarchal Basilica of Aquileia, Italy. During the first phase of excavation, completed in 1915, the Bohemian archaeologist Anton Gnirs succeeded in bringing to light a pair of large mosaic floors, belonging to two parallel halls displaying dedicatory inscriptions to Bishop Theodore, who was active in the city in the first decades of the fourth century. Further excavations, carried out by Italian archaeologists under the foundations of the medieval bell tower and all around the area, confirmed the presence of an original basilical complex, consisting of three different main halls, a baptismal font, and some living quarters. To date, this complex is purported to be one of the most remarkable examples of pre-Constantinian Christian architecture, among the earliest church buildings discovered in the Western Mediterranean. The main goal of this paper will be to lay the groundwork for a systematic reinterpretation of the iconographic program underlying the rich mosaic floors of the Theodorian complex, starting from a fresh re-reading of its dedicatory inscriptions. New insights, in particular, will be offered regarding the function that the two main halls of the complex may have been intended to perform, as well as on their being evidence of a delicate phase of social and cultural transition underwent by early Christian groups in Aquileia at the turn of the Constantinian Era.

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## **[The] Historical Jesus before H.S. Reimarus:**

### **New Perspectives & Methodologies**

(Chairs: Cristiana Facchini, Fernando Bermejo-Rubio, Miriam Benfatto)

*Since the 15th century several different historical factors influenced the research of the Christian past and the analysis of the figure of Jesus. The increasing refinement of philology and the study of ancient texts fuelled by Humanism proved to be relevant in readdressing theological questions concerning the nature of early Christianity. The Reformation set forth a religious conflict that rekindled ancient polemics and, in turn, the study of antiquity. The search for the most authentic religious experience of Jesus and the Christian community became one of the most debated topics among different religious groups. Moreover, thanks to technological innovations such as the rise of print and the amelioration of communication infrastructures, ideas and texts circulated widely both in print and manuscripts disseminating new representations of Jesus and early Christianity. Finally, as a result of the emergence of new science and the discoveries linked to the age of exploration, new notions of religion appeared and greatly influenced the understanding of history Christianity. This unit invites papers devoted to the historical depiction of Jesus, ancient Judaism, and the birth of Christianity composed by different religious groups and individuals, including Catholics, Jews, Reformed Churches and radical dissenters, from 1500 to 1780.*

Miriam Benfatto (Università degli Studi di Bologna)

### **The Last Supper of Jesus and the Passover Meal Compared: John Lightfoot's Interpretation (1602–1675) and Rabbinic Literature**

The study of the historical Jesus includes the effort to situate him in the Judaism of his time, in the various religious and cultural forms of Second Temple Judaism. In the mid-seventeenth century, Anglican priest and Hebraist John Lightfoot (1602-1675), within the broader context of his biblical studies, produced a commentary on the New Testament based on Jewish and rabbinic literature: *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae* (1658-1678). This study includes commentaries on the gospels of Matthew (1658) and Mark (1663), the first letter to the Corinthians (1664), the gospels of John (1671) and Luke (1674), as well as a commentary on Acts and some annotations on the letter to the Romans published posthumously (1678). Lightfoot, unlike other authors, favored the sources of rabbinic literature and Jewish commentaries to explain certain passages in the New Testament. The Jewish literature he used would contain evidence and confirmation of the messianicity of Jesus. The attempts of Lightfoot, who was close to the circles of English Puritanism, are connected to the more general debate taking place among the different religious groups on the interpretation of the authentic religious experience of Jesus and are therefore linked - in

this case - to the criticism of the Catholic interpretation, as well as to the project aimed at the conversion of the Jews. The aim of this paper is to present Lightfoot's interpretation of the episode of Jesus' last supper as a Passover meal, on the basis of rabbinic literature. Jesus and his disciples, as Jews, would have respected the pesach customs according to the Judaism of their time.

Cristiana Facchini (Università degli Studi di Bologna)

### **Richard Simon and the Historical Jesus**

More or less when Wagenseil translated into Latin the *Hizzuk emunah* (1681), with other Jewish anti-Christian texts, Richard Simon published in French a strange combination of essays which were destined to immense success and circulation. Indeed, Simon translated Leon Modena *Historia de' riti hebraici*, a text that was reprinted dozens of times since its first appearance in 1637 and 1638 and that was used in different ways by Christian scholars. This paper aims at introducing some of Simon's cultural and historical strategies meant to unearth the Jewish context of early Christianity, and its development. Using ethno-graphic reports and textual evidence Simon offered a relevant contribution to the early modern discourse about Jesus and his religious movement.

Pierluigi Piovanelli (École pratique des hautes études, Paris)

### **“Wie unser deutscher Hermann Samuel Reimarus...” Why Voltaire is virtually absent from the Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung?**

It is well known that, for Albert Schweitzer, Reimarus was the first to make a clear distinction between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. We all know that this was, in fact, an arbitrary choice and that several European scholars (Martin Seidel, Jean Meslier, John Toland, Thomas Chubb, and others) before Reimarus had already contributed to create the presuppositions for a critical research on the historical figure of Jesus. What is probably less known is that Voltaire too devoted several pages to the historical Jesus in three works published at the end of his life, in 1767-1777. This aspect of Voltaire's work had not escaped the notice of David Friedrich Strauss, who had published in 1870 a very well documented biography of the philosopher of Ferney. According to Strauss, Voltaire resembled so much Reimarus “as for his position on Christianity and positive religion.” It is therefore all the more intriguing that a few decades later Schweitzer has almost ignored Voltaire's contribution. We will try to understand the reasons for this oversight.

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## **Issues of Method: New ‘Secular’ Approaches to Early Christian Research**

(Chairs: Roberto Alciati, Emiliano Rubens Urciuoli)

### *Urban Religion and Beyond*

*The principal aim of this Unit is to promote cross-disciplinary research characterized by a common agenda: a radical de-metaphysicization of the explanatory narratives of the processes of creation, transmission, blending, memorization, and survival of religious representations, experiences, and practices documented by Jesus followers across the ancient Mediterranean world between the 1st and 4th century CE. Since we are persuaded that a strategy of consilience among different perspectives is necessary to account for the complex formative dynamics of any large-scale symbolic system, the Unit programmatically resorts to ‘secular’ approaches which are too often opposed to each other – like cognitive and evolutionary approaches, historical discourse analysis, post-colonial studies and model-based sociological exegesis. More generally, we would like to contribute to the creation of a trans-disciplinary area where a new scientific policy in the research on Christian origins can be successfully pursued. Aim of this year’s Unit is to showcase and discuss both preliminary achievements and new lines of investigation of the research programme on “Religion and Urbanity: Reciprocal Formation” commenced at the Max-Weber-Kolleg in Erfurt in 2018 and now approaching the end of its first funding phase.*

Roberto Alciati (Università degli Studi di Firenze)

### **A Desert ‘Cityfied’ by Monks? Notes on Life of Antony 14.7**

According to the Life of Antony, *hē erēmos epolisthē monachōn* (14,7). Quite recently, it has been proposed to translate this passage as follow: “the desert was cityied by monks” (Rapp 2014). The choice is certainly more literal than the traditional “the desert was made a city by the monks”. This translation becomes intriguing, especially when put in relation to the following sentence: “[monks] inscribed themselves in the way of life of the Heavens” (*apographamenōn tēn en tois ouranois politeian*). But what does ‘cityfying’ the desert mean? And what is the (new?) ‘cityness’ of the desert which seems to be introduced by the monks? It has become a historiographical commonplace to say that monks, unlike other Christians, withdraw from the urban environment and all that pertains to it. However, the sentence from the Life of Antony quoted above seems to suggest a different trajectory. This paper attempts to clarify the semantic field of terms related to polis in this specific biography.

Jörg Rüpke (Max-Weber-Kolleg, Universität Erfurt)

### **Religion, Urban Resilience and Early Christianity**

Cities are strange places, maximising density and attachment to place on the one hand and using these very conditions as a basis for wide ranging movements and connectivity in the settlement tiers of their urban landscape as much as in external flows for often increasing distances. Religious practices and imaginations of “dwelling and crossing” (Th. Tweed) and changing power relations in a situation by transcending that situation (J. Rüpke) is congenial and probably connected to that *condition urbaine*. Against this background my paper will inquire into the use of religion challenging and strengthening urban resilience, that is, the ability to cope with threats and disaster (as visualized later by Tertullian in *De pallio*) by staying in the same place. The historical constellation under scrutiny is Rome in the second quarter of the second century, a city planfully annihilating the memories of civil war (AD 69) but being aware of the precarious nature of Roman superiority and imperialism, ending expansion at the time of maximum extension. How did a group of people behave in that situation who must have been aware of the crushing of the Bar Kochba rebellion and the permanent devastation of Jerusalem as a religious centre, namely “Hebrews”/“Judaei” and – perhaps triggered by these very events – the centrifugal, more and more groups rather than sub-groups of “Christiani”, creating their own religious genealogy in the form of gospels and letter-collections. For that purpose a closer look is taken at the text production in the city itself (1 Clem, Jac, Gospels, Shepherd of Hermas).

Emiliano R. Urciuoli (Max-Weber-Kolleg, Universität Erfurt)

### **Christ and Debord: Jesus Followers, Situationists, and the Management of Urban Life**

The paper aims to heuristically draw connections between two urban “avant-gardes.” I am referring to two movements separated by almost two millennia but both engaged in the project of a unitary theory and practice of urban life: the advocates of Christ religion (50-313 e.v.) and the members of the Situationist International (1957-1972). In this experimental paper early Christian homologues of concepts like “non-work,” “generalized self-management,” “counter-mapping,” “constructed situation,” “détournement,” will be examined through the lens of the ancient city.

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## **Oral and Written Sources of Early Christian Texts**

(Chairs: Enrico Norelli, Claudio Zamagni)

*Aim of the unit is the reconstruction of the sources used by the authors of apocryphal and canonical Gospels and other early Christian writings. Also relations between sources of early Christian writings and groups of Jesus' followers can be taken into consideration. Particularly welcomed will be papers about (1) materials used by the authors of the Gospels concerning Jesus and / or his disciples (a. single sayings or collections of sayings of Jesus; b. stories about Jesus' actions; c. information of any kind coming from individuals or groups); (2) texts drawn from the Hebrew Bible and its ancient translations or from any early Christian writing used as a source. (3) Bible testimonia; (5) faith and liturgical formulas; (6) not-canonized Jewish works circulating in the different Jewish groups of the 1st and 2nd centuries used as sources.*

Clara Sanvito (Universidad Eclesiástica “San Dámaso”, Madrid)

### **Traces of the Use of Testimonia in the Epideixis of Irenaeus of Lyons and in His Contemporaries**

The second half of the *Epideixis* by Irenaeus of Lyons (II century) is entirely composed of quotations taken from Scripture and their respective exegeses. These quotations are organized according to five topics: (1) the pre-existence of the Word and his character as the Anointed One, King and Saviour; (2) the birth of the Son of God; (3) the place and lineage of the Son of God's incarnation; (4) Christ's life in the flesh; (5) the fulfilment of the Law in faith and the call of the gentiles through the preaching of the apostles. It has been noticed how often, in other early Christian authors such as Pseudo-Barnabas, Justin, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria, these quotations are mentioned in the same order, in the same form and with the same exegeses. However, it is quite evident that Irenaeus and these other authors did not quote one another; it is more probable that they all quoted the same chain of *testimonia*. Regarding the issue, I would like to give and explain a few observations, above all studying the first thematic section, i.e. the juxtaposition of the hemistiches of Psalm 109 and Psalm 71, considered as just one quotation, the quotation of the same three passages of Genesis and Exodus in the same order so as to demonstrate the pre-existence of the Word, and the association of Is 66:1 and Is 40:12 with the same exegesis.

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## **Papyri, Inscriptions, and the Contexts of Early Christianity**

(Chairs: John S. Kloppenborg and Peter Arzt-Grabner)

*We invite papers that discuss aspects of the intellectual, literary, material, and political contexts of the early Christ cult in the first three centuries with the help of inscriptions, papyri, ostraca, and tablets. Papers dealing with the methodology of comparing texts in general or with particular genres and topics are as welcome as papers on recently identified manuscripts containing texts of the New Testament and other early Christian literature.*

Jeremiah Coogan (University of Oxford)

### **Revelation's Heavenly Tax Office: Roman Provincial Bureaucracy and the Textuality of John's Apocalypse**

The critique of imperial political and economic structures visible in John's Apocalypse has led many interpreters to conclude that the Seer occupied a marginalised social position distant from Roman power. This paper challenges that consensus by locating the textuality of the Apocalypse in the context of provincial bureaucracy in Roman Asia. I first contextualise the textual features of the Apocalypse with epigraphic, documentary, and literary evidence for administrative functionaries (often enslaved individuals) in the Roman bureaucratic apparatus of the first and second centuries CE. I centre neglected evidence from Roman Asia while also incorporating relevant evidence from other regions of the Roman Mediterranean. Then, second, I re-read several features of Revelation's divine realm in light of the bureaucratic and archival textuality that characterised Roman provincial administration, including the negotiation of status in breaking a seal, the marking of human bodies, and the management of tax and census records. Attention not only to the Roman empire writ large but to the overlooked particularities of bureaucratic and archival textuality illuminates significant details of the text. Even more importantly, the distinctive role of textual objects in John's Apocalypse reveals a theo-political imaginary that emerges out of intimate familiarity with Roman provincial bureaucracy. Critique need not require distance.

Romeo Popa (Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg)

### **Magic and Argument: The Function of the Verb βασκαίνω in Gal 3:1 in the Light of the Documentary Papyri**

The spread of the evil eye superstition and the development of a broad range of protective devices and practices clearly show the real fear of this harmful influence among people in antiquity. This concern has frequently led letter writers to use especially in the Roman period a certain formula in order to ward off this danger – ἀβάσκαντος. Such wishes of

protection refer mainly to people, only in some cases to animals or objects. Most part of the evidence relates to children from the addressees' households, who were, according to the common perception, particularly vulnerable. Thus the verb βασκαίνω automatically evokes images of helpless children, who need special protection against dangerous attacks from outside. The implications of this language for the Pauline argumentation in Gal and the play with the emotions of the addressees are discussed on the basis of some examples from papyrus private letters.

Marco Stroppa (Istituto Papirologico "G. Vitelli", Università degli Studi di Firenze)

### **Codici tardoantichi di piccolo formato – fra religiosità privata e praticità: Esempi editi e inediti della collezione dei PSI**

#### ***Late Antique Miniature Codices – Between Private Religiosity and Practicality: Published and Unpublished Specimens from the PSI Collection***

The category of "miniature codices" was identified by E.G. Turner and has been the subject of multiple investigations in recent years. On the one hand, the horizon of research has also been extended to small-format rolls, in order to piece together a history of the small-format book including the period prior to the adoption of the codex, on the other side the connections between the history of small format codices and the history of codex as a format in general, regardless of its size, are evident. In particular, an attempt was made to classify the artefacts into additional "subcategories" that can illustrate the production and use of this specific book product. A debate has thus developed on the number of Christian texts among the miniature codices, a fact that had led some scholars to identify Christianity as a privileged environment for the invention of this specific format. Some papyri from the Florentine collection (PSI), either recently published or awaiting publication, bring new data for fine-tuning these questions.

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### **Religious Practices and Experiences in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism and Early Christianity (2nd Cent. BCE – 4th Cent. CE)**

(Chairs: Luca Arcari and Daniele Tripaldi)

*For a long time history of Judaism and ancient Christianity has been analyzed as a process of evolving debates and ideological conflicts around 'orthodoxy' matters. Such an approach was the product of the traditional exegetical paradigm focused on literary and theological profiles of ancient Jewish and/or Christian authors and groups. As far as historical sources allow it, with*



*this panel we shall attempt instead to identify and describe multifarious religious practices documented for Jewish and early Christian groups between the 2nd cent. BCE and the 4th cent. CE, both in the context of the social formations they developed and as integral part of the wider Graeco-Roman environment. Moving beyond the classical literary and narrative paradigm, scholars are therefore invited to look at texts as complex socio-cultural artifacts and therefore present papers aiming at ‘seeing’ through texts, and reconstructing baptismal praxis as well as other initiation rituals, banquets as well as cultic meals and gatherings, teaching practices, experiences of contact with the world of numinous power (visions, heavenly journeys, dreams, glossolalic phenomena and speeches, divination and prophecy), prayers, dietary habits, healings and exorcisms, funerary rites, and so on. Finally, particular attention will be reserved to discursive modalities through which Jewish and/or proto-Christian religious experiences are re-codified and rendered in cognitive as well as in cultural terms.*

Angela Kim Harkins (Boston College)

### **Entering into the ‘Possible Narrative World’ of Hermas’s Visions**

My interdisciplinary project applies insights from the cognitive science of seeing and mental imaging to the apocalyptic visions of Hermas. The apocalypse genre, though relatively rare in antiquity, is significant for understanding early Judaism and Christianity because it was an incredibly generative literary form that invited readers and hearers of subsequent generations to engage and interpret these texts in new ways, often producing further writings. This research project uses the cognitive literary approach known as enactive reading, as it is described in Marco Caracciolo’s work (de Gruyter 2014), to understand how specific literary details contribute to the experience of presence in a narrative world, the otherworldly landscape of the apocalyptic visionary, Hermas. Enactive reading takes what is known about the cognitive science of visual perception and applies it to the reading of narratives. The cognitive science of visual perception shows that our eyes take in specific focus points of images that our minds extend to produce a complete image of a scene. What we experience as a visual image of an entire scene is an illusion that is constructed by our mind extending the specific focal points of attention based on our past experiences of what we know of the world and how it operates. Cognitive literary theory, specifically enactive reading, can be useful for scholars of religion because its bio-cultural understanding of the process of imaginative reading pushes for the reintegration of the mind and body, a dualism that persists in the field of biblical studies. These interdisciplinary studies will be used to construct a process of immersive reading as an embodied practice in which the life experiences of the reader and hearer are brought to bear on the narrative that is being imagined and generate further insights into the apocalyptic world. Enactive reading relies on empirical data on the reading experiences of non-specialist readers. This

data provides a contrast to the discipline-specific training of biblical scholars who read for theological or historical information. For example, biblical scholars trained to examine discipline-specific questions about orthodox theology, genre, and/ or history often read against the grain of the narrative, overlooking the very literary details that allow for an immersive experience of a narrative. These crucial details are the brief snippets of concrete language that describe kinesthetic movement and the seer's interior emotional state. While these narrative details are disregarded by modern historical-critical scholars, enactive reading identifies these types of details as key elements that invite the reader to imagine a character's proprioception (the awareness of having an extended body that can move through space) or interoception (the awareness of bodily changes in the skin, viscera, and emotions). These first-person narrative details are then extended and completed in the imagination, allowing Hermas to possess the complexity of an inner consciousness that readers recognize in living individuals. These narrative details allow Hermas's visions to become vividly perceptible in the mind as events that take place in a space with solidity and density, what cognitive literary theorists describe as a "possible narrative world."

Harry O. Maier (University of British Columbia, Vancouver)

### **Toward a Sticky Turn in the Study of the Shepherd of Hermas**

This paper moves beyond traditional treatments of the Shepherd of Hermas (date, authorship, Christology, penitential theology, etc.) to explore the text with the help of affect theory. In order to use Hermas as a "complex socio-cultural artifact" and to see through the text as a form of apocalyptic teaching practice it engages the theory of affect developed by Gilles Deleuze, the network theory of Bruno Latour, and the queer phenomenology of Sarah Ahmed. Ahmed theorizes the role of "sticky objects" as magnets of feeling and sources of the generation of affect and Deleuze and Latour invite consideration of such objects as joined together in networks of space, objects, persons, and cognition as dynamic events. Bringing these theorizations together, the paper considers the way Hermas' persuasive apocalypse strategies place characters and objects within a series of affective fields. It analyzes these fields using anthropological theory of the partible self to consider ways in which bodies and objects interpenetrate each other in the Hermas' visions of the construction of the church as a tower made up of differing kinds of stones which spatialize varying kinds of affect. Joined with one another, these theoretical explorations promote a deeper understanding of the Hermas' apocalypse as a means of social formation in a network of Christ followers amidst a densely populated Roman neighbourhood.

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