

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

Incontro annuale sulle origini cristiane
Annual Meeting on Christian Origins

Centro Residenziale Universitario di Bertinoro

15 – 17 settembre, 2022

University Residential Centre of Bertinoro

September 15 – 17, 2022



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.

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Incontro annuale 2022 | 2022 Annual Meeting

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CISSR Annual Meeting on Christian Origins

Bertinoro, September 15 – 17, 2022

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

9:00 – 9:15 | Opening of the Meeting (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

Presiding: Mara Rescio & Emiliano R. Urciuoli

9:15- 11:15 | Joint Session AM 1 (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

ISSUES OF METHOD: NEW 'SECULAR' APPROACHES TO EARLY CHRISTIAN RESEARCH

Presiding: Roberto Alciati & Emiliano R. Urciuoli

JHON S. KLOPPENBORG (University of Toronto)

Argumentum e Silentio: From Absence to Lacunae

MARKUS VINZENT (King's College, London / Max-Weber-Kolleg, Erfurt)

Not Probable, but Interesting: The Subversive Nature of the *Argumentum e Silentio*

WILLIAM ARNAL (University of Regina)

A Secular Approach to Paul and Nag Hammadi: Religion as Political Imaginary

EDUARD IRICINSCHI (Ruhr University Bochum, CERES)

Imagine There's a New Heaven: Eschatological Images and Their Political Use in Late Antique Manichaeism

Break 11:15 – 11:45

11:45 – 13:15 | Parallel Session AM 2.A (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

RE-DATING EARLY CHRISTIAN TEXTS

Presiding: Enrico Norelli

MARKUS VINZENT, *Christi Thora: Die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments im 2. Jahrhundert*, Herder, Freiburg i.B. 2022.

Discussants: Claudio Gianotto (University of Turin), Wolfgang Grünstäudl (University of Münster), Markus Vinzent (King's College, London / Max-Weber-Kolleg, Erfurt)

11:45 – 13:15 | Parallel Session AM 2.B (Garrison Room – Rivellino)

THE JOHANNIST CONSTELLATION: SYSTEMIC QUESTIONS AND DIFFERENT ANSWERS

Presiding: Michael Daise

MARIDA NICOLACI (Pontifical Theological Faculty of Sicily, Palermo)

Semantic Connections between the Theological Employ of $\delta\omicron\chi\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ and the Sanctification of the Name in the Fourth Gospel

ALESSANDRO CAVICCHIA (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Jerusalem)

Casting Out the “Ruler of This World” (John 12:31): Dualistic Literary Devices in John 18:36; 19:16b-42

FEDERICO ADINOLFI (Institute of Religious Sciences, Mantua)

After the Apocalypse: The Johannine Signs Gospel as a Millenarian Transformation of Mark

Lunch Break 13:15 – 15:15

15:15 – 17:15 | Joint Session PM 1 (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

WOMEN IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Presiding: Maria Dell’Isola & Mario Resta

BARBARA CROSTINI (Newman Institute, Uppsala)

Women-with-Child on Show: Painting Motherhood from Dura to Luke

MARIANNA CERNO (University of Udine)

Dreams and Virtues of the «Women of Clement». Matthidia and Procula in the Light of a Newly Recovered Pseudo-Clementine Fragment

TOMMASO INTERI (University of Turin)

Womanhood as Exegetical Paradigm in Eusebius

ALESSANDRO DE BLASI (University of Padua)

(Im)pious Sisterhood. Once More on Greg. Naz. *carm.* II 1, 41, *Contra Maximum*

Break 17:15 – 17:45

17:45 – 18:45 | Joint Session PM 2 (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

BOOK DISCUSSION (1)

Presiding: Luca Arcari

ANNELIES LANNOY, *Alfred Loisy and the Making of History of Religions: A Study of the Development of Comparative Religion in the Early 20th Century*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2020.

Discussants: Andrea Annese (University of Bologna), Cristiana Facchini (University of Bologna), Annelies Lannoy (Ghent University)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

9:30 – 11:00 | Joint Session AM 1 (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

THE BIBLE AND CONFLICT

Presiding: Sarah E. Rollens

JAMES C. CROSSLEY (MF School of Theology, Religion, and Society, Oslo / St Mary's University, London / CenSAMM)

The Quest for the Working-Class English Jesus

DANIEL C. ULLUCCI (Stonehill College, Easton, Mass.)

Group Formation via Violent Ideation: Roko's Basilisk and Matthew 10:32-33

STEPHEN L. YOUNG (Appalachian State University, Boone, NC)

Babylon's Sea Merchants: Revelation and the Gendered Politics of Decline and Renewal

Break 11:00 – 11:30

11:30 – 13:00 | Parallel Session AM 2.A (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

RE-EXPLORING THE APOCRYPHAL CONTINENT: TEXTS, PARATEXTS, AND CONTEXTS

Presiding: Luigi Walt

ÁNGEL NARRO (University of Valencia) & ISRAEL MUÑOZ GALLARTE (University of Córdoba)

The New Critical Edition of the Acts of Thomas: Methodology and Publication Plans

MARCO STROPPIA ("Girolamo Vitelli" Papyrological Institute, University of Florence)

Un nuovo frammento della cosiddetta "Storia di Giuseppe" // A New Fragment of the So-called "History of Joseph"

ENRICO NORELLI (University of Geneva)

Mt 27,24 and Gospel of Peter v. 1 as Mutually Independent Readings of Dt 21,1-9

11:30 – 13:00 | Parallel Session AM 2.B (Garrison Room – Rivellino)

FROM THE HISTORY OF EXEGESIS TO RECEPTION HISTORY AND BEYOND (1. New Testament and Christian Origins)

Presiding: Laura Carnevale

AMIEL DRIMBE (Baptist Theological Institute of Bucharest / Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City)

History Hidden, Not Revealed: Matthew 27:51–53 in the Earliest Reception (ca. 100–200 CE)

MARKUS VINZENT (King's College, London / Max-Weber-Kolleg, Erfurt)

Paul's Letters Read in a Historical Exegesis of Reception vs. One of Retrospection

EMANUELE CASTELLI (University of Messina)

The Birth of the Term Χριστιανισμός: With Some Preliminary Remarks on the Reception History of the Terms Ἰουδαϊσμός and Χριστιανός

Lunch Break 13:00 – 15:00

15:00 – 17:15 | Joint Session PM 1 (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

ANTHROPOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS CONCERNING RELIGIOUS FORMS AND PRACTICES

Presiding: **Adriana Destro & Francesca Sbardella**

ADRIANA DESTRO & MAURO PESCE (University of Bologna)

An Anthropological Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles: For a New Commentary

LAURA VOLPI (University of Milan)

Eating White People's God: Being Christian Today in the Upper Peruvian Amazon Rainforest

CATERINA FRANCESCA FIDANZA (University of Bologna)

Feather Art in South America between Sky and Earth: 'Sacredness' of Forgotten Museum Objects

FRANCESCA SBARDELLA & ELISA FARINACCI (University of Bologna)

The Visual Representation of Total Religious Institutions

Break 17:15 – 17:45

17:45 – 19:00 | Joint Session PM 2 (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

LECTIO MAGISTRALIS

Presiding: **Mara Rescio**

SABINE R. HÜBNER (University of Basel)

The First Christians of Egypt: New Documentary Evidence from the Egyptian Hinterland

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

9:00 – 11:15 | Joint Session AM 1 (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

GOSPEL OF THOMAS, NAG HAMMADI, GNOSTICISM

Presiding: **Andrea Annese & Francesco Berno**

LOUIS PAINCHAUD (Laval University, Québec)

The Mystery of the Kiss in the Gospel According to Philip (CG II,3)

STEPHEN J. PATTERSON (Willamette University, Salem/Portland)
Wisdom, Immortality, and Apocalyptic in the Gospel of Thomas

MARIA FALLICA (Sapienza University of Rome)
The Fifth Gospel and the Gospel of Thomas: An Apocryphal Narrative for the 21st Century

EDUARD IRICINSCHI (Ruhr University Bochum, CERES)
'Talking It Over': Dialogue, Mastery of Emotions, and the Mind in the Nag Hammadi Literature

MARTA ADESSI (Sapienza University of Rome)
The Scribal Notes of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Their Peculiarities in the Light of the Corpus of Coptic Colophons and Scribal Subscriptions

Break 11:15 – 11:45

11:45 – 13:15 | Parallel Session AM 2.A (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

CONTEXTS OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY (11:30 – 12:30)

Presiding: John S. Kloppenborg

DANIEL C. MAIER (University of Zurich)
The Economic Crisis of 33 C.E. and the Rise of Early Christianity: How Roman Financial Legislation Impacted Everyday Life in the Eastern Mediterranean

HARRY O. MAIER (Vancouver School of Theology)
Ritual and Urban Networking with Ignatius of Antioch

HISTORICAL JESUS (12:30 – 13:00)

FERNANDO BERMEJO RUBIO (UNED - National Distance Education University)
Were Jesus' Disciples Left Unmolested? Rethinking the Fate of James, the Brother of John

11:45 – 13:15 | Parallel Session AM 2.B (Garrison Room – Rivellino)

FROM THE HISTORY OF EXEGESIS TO RECEPTION HISTORY AND BEYOND (2. Judaism and Early Christianity)

Presiding: Edmondo Lupieri

CATERINA MORO (Roma Tre University)
Ideas on Human Conception in Judaism and Their Scriptural and Scientific Foundations

CARLA NOCE (Roma Tre University)
The Process of Human Conception in Some Christian Exegetical Traditions of the First Three Centuries: Mary and the Others

GAMBRY G. PARDEE (Pepperdine University, London)
Patriarch, Disciple, Defender: Portraits of Levi in Jewish and Christian Literature

Lunch Break 13:15 – 15:15

15:15 – 16:15 | Joint Session PM 1 (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

BOOK DISCUSSION (2)

Presiding: Luca Arcari

NICOLA DENZEY LEWIS, *The Early Modern Invention of Late Antique Rome*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2020.

Discussants: Roberto Alciati (University of Florence), Sarah Rollens (Rhodes College, Memphis), Nicola Denzey Lewis (Claremont University, CA)

Break 16:15 – 16:45

16:45 – 18:15 | Joint Session PM 2 (Jacopo da Bertinoro Room – Rivellino)

FROM THE HISTORY OF EXEGESIS TO RECEPTION HISTORY AND BEYOND (3. Round Table Discussion: History of Exegesis, Reception History, Retrospection and Beyond)

Presiding: Cambry G. Pardee

C. G. PARDEE, J. M. TRIPP (eds.), *Sacred Texts & Sacred Figures: The Reception and Use of Inherited Traditions in Early Christian Literature*. A Festschrift in Honor of Edmondo F. Lupieri, JAOC 25, Brepols, Turnhout, 2022.

Discussants: Laura Carnevale (University of Bari), Caterina Moro (Roma Tre University), Carla Noce (Roma Tre University), Louis Painchaud (Laval University), Cambry G. Pardee (Pepperdine University, London), Markus Vinzent (King's College, London / Max-Weber-Kolleg, Erfurt), Edmondo Lupieri (Loyola University Chicago)

PROGRAMME UNITS & ABSTRACTS

(Programme Units are listed in alphabetical order)

Keynote Lecture

SABINE R. HÜBNER (University of Basel)

The First Christians of Egypt: New Documentary Evidence from the Egyptian Hinterland

The recently discovered History of the Episcopate of Alexandria implies an early and swift expansion of Christianity along the main traffic arteries of Egypt and confirms indirectly the anecdotes narrated by Eusebius about thriving Christian communities in the Egyptian hinterland from the times of Demetrius (189-232) on. The scattered and late papyrological evidence for Christians seems to tell a different story, however. Have we potentially overlooked something? While most research has focused so far on the papyri from Oxyrhynchus, the Arsinoite nome (modern Fayum) is by far the most richly documented region of Egypt during the first three centuries of Roman rule. Where, if not there, should we look for evidence for the earliest stirrings of Christianity in rural Egypt? This paper discusses evidence from the Arsinoite nome for the spread of Christianity, the first local Christian leaders, the many facets of Christian identity, and the part Christians played in the fabric of the province's social and political life.

Anthropological Investigations Concerning Religious Forms and Practices

(Chairs: Adriana Destro, Francesca Sbardella)

ADRIANA DESTRO & MAURO PESCE (University of Bologna)

An Anthropological Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles: For a New Commentary

The Acts of the Apostles offer an immense field of research to an anthropological investigation: ritual models; models for integration, competition, and conflict of religious movements in the cities; models of coexistence of religious groups in the Roman Empire; cosmological conceptions, etc. Furthermore, the Acts have been used in the Christian Churches for about two thousand years. This fact also permits to investigate how the profound cultural changes in medieval and modern times have profoundly conditioned the conflict of interpretation of this text.

LAURA VOLPI (University of Milan)

Eating White People's God: Being Christian Today in the Upper Peruvian Amazon Rainforest

In contemporary Peruvian Amazon, the word cristiano (Christian) is often used as an element of self-representation, distinguishing human beings both from non-humans (such as plants, animals, spirits) and from those who belong to distinct ethnic groups. Catholic or Protestant symbolism, moreover, is employed by various native people to mark children's bodies and to domesticate "non civilized" creatures. Nevertheless, many indigenous interlocutors remain surprised when faced with the attribution of religious meaning to these linguistic expressions and cultural practices. With this talk I want to provide an explanation for this apparent contradiction, highlighting that in the South American jungle, Christianity does not represent an adherence to a common value and belief system. It represents, on the other hand, one of the many ways of categorizing the social world. In this way, I want to show that Amazonian peoples, far from uncritically importing allogenic institutions,

categories, and beliefs, are able to domesticate them in light of their own peculiar thought systems. This fact attests the great creativity of these populations who, thanks to their capacity for «endogenous transformation» (Carneiro da Cunha 2007: XII), guarantee themselves the almost infinite possibility of reshaping and regenerating from their relationship with the otherness. From this point of view, it does not seem surprising that the dark period of colonization is now described, by several indigenous people, as a time of mutual inclusion between “us and them” and the conversion process as a mechanism of predation of Western divinity.

CATERINA FRANCESCA FIDANZA (University of Bologna)

Feather Art in South America between Sky and Earth: ‘Sacredness’ of Forgotten Museum Objects

Feather art in America is an ancient tradition and its manifestations reveals a set of symbols linked to power and to the sacred. Feathers are referring to the sky, to the divine world and the sacredness of the existence: from sky to the earth, from spiritual world to material one. In many cultures, they consider birds as sacred beings and so, wearing feather ornaments means connecting to the divine and to his power. Guido Boggiani, an Italian painter and ethnographer who lived between 1861 and 1901, during his long-term trip to Paraguayan Chaco, collected many feather objects, over all artifacts that proceeded from Ishir-Chamacoco people. All these objects are locked up and hidden into the boxes in Muciv’s warehouses in Rome. If it is true that objects can communicate with us and tell us their stories, then, what can we ask to this precious and hidden collection? How to bring objects out of the sacredness of museum space and give them back the meaning of their original sacredness? At this point, it is necessary to understand whether it is possible to make people and objects talk to each other, in the contemporary world, to reveal some aspects of a “colonial” encounter. Also revealing, making this kind of artifacts protagonist, what was meant for sacredness in this indigenous world in the moment of the encounter with the Italian ethnographer.

FRANCESCA SBARDELLA & ELISA FARINACCI (University of Bologna)

The Visual Representation of Total Religious Institutions

The limit of physical access that commonly characterizes monastic communities, has often produced research work in which the relational dimension of the experience on the field may appear distorted and incomprehensible to the external eye. By comparing different experiences of recording reality in European Catholic monasteries, we intend to problematize the relationship between field experience, ethnographic text, film and photographic representations of the of everyday life practices in total religious institutions. By examining the documentary by the German director Philip Gröning, the photographic reportage by Franco Zecchini and the ethnography conducted as a postulant by Francesca Sbardella, we want to explore the ways in which these different types of interpretative mediation modify and hybridize both the modalities of documentation of religious life in total institutions as well as the epistemological paradigms of academic research within the history of religion discipline.

[The] Bible and Conflict

(Chairs: Sarah E. Rollens and James Crossley)

JAMES C. CROSSLEY (MF School of Theology, Religion, and Society, Oslo / St Mary’s University, London / CenSAMM)

The Quest for the Working-Class English Jesus

While English Deism and (to lesser extent) Thomas Paine are regularly mentioned in accounts of the quest for the historical Jesus in the late eighteenth century, the ongoing dissenting and radical traditions into the nineteenth century typically are not. With reference to the first half of the

nineteenth century, this paper will show that there was a sustained interest not just in the “human Jesus” with minimal if any reference to the supernatural but also in the “historical Jesus” in the sense of reconstructing Jesus from behind the embellishments and, in some cases, taking the new German scholarship seriously. This paper will look at how emerging working-class interests drove much of this “quest” and how anxieties about such revolutionary and/or violent Jesuses—and, of course, anxieties about a potentially revolutionary and violent working class—led to a softening of perceived excesses in sympathetic bourgeois reconstructions of Jesus. All this took place before sustained Anglican establishment attempts to domesticate German scholarship and it is scholarship “from below” that deserves its inclusion in the history of the quest for the historical Jesus, not just for its own sake but for the ignored questions they raised about class. Otherwise, we might ask why they should be excluded if establishment Anglicanism is not.

DANIEL C. ULLUCCI (Stonehill College, Easton, Mass.)

Group Formation via Violent Ideation: Roko’s Basilisk and Matthew 10:32-33

This paper considers the role of threats of violence (psychological violence) in group formation. Many religious texts claim that unbelievers will face the wrath of superhuman beings. This paper focuses on the power of a subset of such threats in group formation. It compares an infamous internet thought experiment known as Roko’s Basilisk with Matthew 10:32-33. Roko’s Basilisk proposes a hypothetical scenario where people contribute to the creation of an artificial intelligence because they have been presented with the idea that this sentient AI, once created, will punish anyone who did not aid in its creation. In Roko’s thought experiment, the very idea of this AI existing caused people to create it. The words of Jesus in Mt 10:32-33 are remarkably similar. This comparison can contribute to our analysis of the spread of religious ideas and of religion itself as distributed cognition. As in Roko’s Basilisk, the threat of future punishment for non-participation encouraged people to redirect enormous physical and mental resources to create a new entity, the set of ideas and practices known as Christianity.

STEPHEN L. YOUNG (Appalachian State University, Boone, NC)

Babylon’s Sea Merchants: Revelation and the Gendered Politics of Decline and Renewal

Revelation 17–19’s depiction of Babylon the Great Whore – a cipher for Rome – repeatedly emphasizes sea trade in connection with her domination by passions, sexual unrestraint, and effeminate luxury. This is not an observation about Rome’s resources or a theology of wealth. Babylon’s association with sea trade reflects the writer’s participation in wider Mediterranean literary culture’s competitive mythmaking about decline and eschatology. Especially in Roman sources that adapt themes from histories of decline like myths of the races or ages of mankind (e.g., Hesiod’s *Works and Days*; Aratus’s *Phaenomena*), there’s a stress that in the golden age there was no property, trade, or sea travel. These are all, instead, phenomena of the iron age (e.g., Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 1). And whether Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, Philo’s *De Opificio Mundi*, Paul’s letters, Virgil’s *Fourth Eclogue*, or Horace’s *Odes* and other Augustan propaganda about Rome’s decline in morals and marriage: such myths of decline naturalize ideologies of masculinity and femininity via masculine origins, feminine decline, and masculine restoration. Revelation’s history of Babylon, her defeat, and new heaven and earth resonate with such mythmaking – from its allusions to the golden age throughout Revelation 21–22, to its violent destruction of effeminate sexual immortality, to the exclusion of women from the eschatological Jerusalem. The writer also notably ends the sea itself (Rev 21.1; often explained via links with ANE mythology), trade, and the acquisition of wealth, which contrasts with Babylon the luxuriating and unrestrained whore. Given redescriptions of Revelation as the product of a literate Christ-teacher in competition with other Jewish Christ-teachers, Revelation 17–19’s mythmaking about Babylon and sea commerce becomes an additional opportunity to interrogate polemical uses of gendered histories of decline. The writer contests other Christ-teachers not only with the sexual polemic noted by many, but also

with a history of decline that naturalizes his authority by erasing the competition and making his expertise and goals seem obvious.

Contexts of Early Christianity

(Chairs: John S. Kloppenborg)

DANIEL C. MAIER (University of Zurich)

The Economic Crisis of 33 C.E. and the Rise of Early Christianity: How Roman Financial Legislation Impacted Everyday Life in the Eastern Mediterranean

Roughly around the time of Jesus' death, another event was taking place in the Roman Empire, which probably seemed for the people of Rome far more significant concerning their city's future development than the death of an innocent preacher at the borders of their empire. This event was an economic crisis through the reintroduction of a long-forgotten Roman law established by no other than Julius Caesar himself, which required creditors to invest a certain percentage of their capital into landownership in Italia. This action led to an unprecedented "bank run"; in the form of an immediate request by the financial elite to repay debts all over the empire to invest this money back in the Roman heartland. Particularly the Eastern Mediterranean suffered the consequences because many investments had taken place in this area before these developments. In the following years, we encounter a critical perspective on lending, even more so on usury, in the New Testament (Luke 6,35) and other early Christian writings (Apoc. Pet. 10:1). In my paper, I want to raise the question of whether this cataclysmic event may have shaped early Christians' economic reality. By analyzing Tacitus' accounts next to critical portrayals of lending and financial topics in early Christian literature, a deeper understanding of the economics of the first Jesus followers can be fostered. At the same time, we can learn from the Roman accounts, which describe the paths which led to this crisis, how widespread financial transactions like money-lending were in every economic milieu of the Roman Empire, which sheds a new light on these topics use in the parables (Matt 25:27, Luke 19:23). In summary, this crisis highlights the importance of understanding the economic background when analyzing the Umwelt of the New Testament.

HARRY O. MAIER (Vancouver School of Theology)

Ritual and Urban Networking with Ignatius of Antioch

This paper draws on the ritual theory of Catherine Bell to explore the creation of networks of urban Christ religion in second century Asia Minor. The letters of Ignatius of Antioch (which I am inclined to view as pseudonymous), attributed to the prisoner and martyr bishop journeying to Rome during the first half of the second century, seek to create and control city networks of affiliated assemblies of Jesus believers. The letters ritualize their protagonist's journey to Rome as a sacred urban procession and further ritualize their audiences as participating with him in his journey toward martyrdom. In the letters, Ignatius uses ritual to create competition for urban space, which – with the help of modern urban studies – is best understood within the dynamic and densely populated settings of the eastern Mediterranean urban face-block neighborhood. The letters show that Ignatius is concerned that meetings only happen under the supervision or knowledge of elected officials of the Christ assemblies he endorses. By portraying these urban locations as places where correctly conceived ritual unfolds, the letters construct cityspaces as heretical or spaces of right belief, valences that the epistolary corpus created. The urban and the written conspire to form a spatial and imagined network of urban spaces, complete with ritualized urban space-time configurations. As a point of comparison, the paper examines associations to consider ways in which other groups were using ritual to engage in analogous neighbourhood practices and urban networking, thereby creating city spaces of their own. Use of association evidence as comparanda enables us more fully to understand emergent Christianity as an urban religion and to consider how

religious practices and urban space were in a dynamic relation with one another in the creation of group definition, cooperation, competition, and rivalry.

Discussion of Books

(Chairs: Luca Arcari, Franco Motta)

The presentations held in the Annual Meeting on Christian Origins in Bertinoro are focused on recent books with a fresh approach to Second Temple Judaism texts, practices and beliefs, as well as to the historical Jesus and to texts and materials more or less explicitly linked to the early groups of Jesus followers (1st–2nd cent. CE). These presentations are also open to innovative methodological approaches to the study of religions according to sociology, cognitive science of religion, anthropology, literature, psychology, archaeology. Another important field is the history of the research on the historical Jesus from the Late Middle Ages to nowadays.

1. ANNELIES LANNOY, *Alfred Loisy and the Making of History of Religions: A study of the Development of Comparative Religion in the Early 20th Century*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2020.

Discussants: Andrea Annese (University of Bologna), Cristiana Facchini (University of Bologna), Annelies Lannoy (Ghent University).

2. NICOLA DENZEY LEWIS, *The Early Modern Invention of Late Antique Rome*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2020.

Discussants: Roberto Alciati (University of Florence), Sarah Rollens (Rhodes College, Memphis), Nicola Denzey Lewis (Claremont University, CA).

From the History of Exegesis to Reception History and Beyond

(Chairs: Laura Carnevale, Edmondo Lupieri)

1. New Testament and Christian Origins

AMIEL DRIMBE (Baptist Theological Institute of Bucharest / Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City)

History Hidden, Not Revealed: Matthew 27:51–53 in the Earliest Reception (ca. 100–200 CE)

Matthew 27:51–53 is a well know crux in the area of NT studies. Modern scholars still debate whether this is an historical account or an apocalyptic vision lacking historicity. The latter interpretation is favoured by the fact that Matthew is the only writing that records the astonishing events. In this study, a fresh approach is suggested, that could bring historicity and apocalypticism together – namely the earliest reception of the text in Ignatius, Magn. 9 (ca. 117–138); T. Lev. 4 (ca. 180–190); Tertullian, Adv. Iud. 13 (ca. 198–206); and Clement, Strom. 6.6 (ca. 198–203). The earliest interpreters of Matthew 27:51–53 explained away the omission of the event in other contemporary writings besides Matthew, referring to the supernatural blindness with which God has numbed the eyewitnesses of Jesus' crucifixion. For these ancient exegetes, it was an historical event set in an "anti-apocalyptic" context. It was history hidden, not revealed.

MARKUS VINZENT (King's College, London / Max-Weber-Kolleg, Erfurt)

Paul's Letters Read in a Historical Exegesis of Reception vs. One of Retrospection

Exegesis in the tradition of reception history, as developed over the past decades, moved the reader's eyes away from authors and their works and directed them towards their audience and readership throughout history. Though the author did not entirely die, as suggested by some,

neither did their work move into the background. On the contrary, given that - as the term 'reception' implies - author and work are 'received' by their respective audiences, it is still the canonical angle that any kind of reception exegesis underpins. As a result, most of the big series of reception exegesis is exactly this, a reception of the classics, or the canonicals (Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Philo..., the canonical New Testament writings, the Apostolic Fathers...). Retrospection, however, starts with a critical reflection of this state of the art and through dissections of history searches for both, the left asides of this process of canonization. In these particular cases, the paper is looking at those collection of Paul's letters that have not even been critically reconstructed or edited and where even the authorship is highly disputed like the 10-letter collection of Pauline letters by Marcion of Sinope, individual letters like the disputed Letter to the Laodiceans and others.

EMANUELE CASTELLI (University of Messina)

The Birth of the Term Χριστιανισμός: With Some Preliminary Remarks on the Reception History of the Terms Ιουδαϊσμός and Χριστιανός

The earliest occurrences of the term χριστιανισμός are to be found in three letters of Ignatius of Antioch: Magn. 10:1-3, Rom. 3.3 et Philad. 6:1. Is the word therefore a creation of Ignatius? Some scholars believe so, while others prefer to remain cautious on the issue. Still other scholars exclude that χριστιανισμός is a neologism of Ignatius. The author of this paper re-examines the issue from various perspectives and in the light of some preliminary remarks on the reception history of the terms Ιουδαϊσμός and χριστιανός.

2. Judaism and Early Christianity

CATERINA MORO (Roma Tre University)

Ideas on Human Conception in Judaism and Their Scriptural and Scientific Foundations

This paper addresses the issue of the origins of ideas on human conception in Jewish literature from Late Antiquity, and the possible influence of Greek medical and philosophical theories. The analysis will include the scriptural passages quoted in Rabbinical text, such as Leviticus 12:2 ("if a woman produces seed and bears a male"), the book of Job and Psalms, but also Pseudoepigrapha and New Testament texts, in an attempt to trace a story of how Jewish authors assimilated ideas from their environment and created an "embryology" of their own.

CARLA NOCE (Roma Tre University)

The Process of Human Conception in Some Christian Exegetical Traditions of the First Three Centuries: Mary and the Others

The paper departs from an analysis of the 8th Origenian Homily on Leviticus, wherein the passage of Leviticus 12:2 ("if a woman produces seed and gives birth to a male") is interpreted - as part of the exegesis of the purification prescription of the childbearing woman - at first literally and then according to a spiritual reading. Mary's extraordinary conception is contrasted with that of other women, which Christian exegesis, based on different contemporary medical and philosophical conceptions, represents in various ways: the focus of the investigation is on the relationship between such theories and the proto-Christian exegetical developments of some scriptural passages dealing with human conception.

GAMBRY G. PARDEE (Pepperdine University, London)

Patriarch, Disciple, Defender: Portraits of Levi in Jewish and Christian Literature

In 2014 Simcha Jacobovici and Barrie Wilson argued that *Joseph and Aseneth* is really a "disguised history" about Jesus's marriage to Mary Magdalene. While their thesis has been met with skepticism, one aspect of the connection between *Joseph and Aseneth* and Mary has not been

addressed—the Levi Defender Tradition. In this paper I first look at the distinctive role of Levi the Disciple in the *Gospel of Mary*. I then turn to the varying portraits of Levi the Patriarch, particularly as defender, in Jewish texts from the Hebrew Bible and the Second Temple Period [*Jubilees*, Philo, *Judith*, *The Aramaic Levi Document (4Q213)*, *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Josephus]. Next, I look closely at the role of Levi the Patriarch as defender in *Joseph and Aseneth*. Finally, I explore the ways in which characteristics of the “Jewish” Levi the Patriarch, especially in *Joseph and Aseneth*, were transferred to the “Christian” Levi the Disciple in the *Gospel of Mary*. Literary similarities between these two texts—one an apocryphal Jewish romance and the other a “Gnostic” Christian revelation discourse—abound: 1) the ostensible male protagonist (Joseph, Jesus) has a favored female companion (Aseneth, Mary); 2) the protagonist himself does not consistently appear in the narrative; 3) the presence and privilege of the woman leads to division among the protagonist’s male companions (patriarchs, disciples); 4) division leads to outright aggression, manifested in plots of physical violence and in verbal abuse; 5) finally, Levi, both the patriarch and the disciple, is exhibited as Defender.

3. Round Table Discussion: History of Exegesis, Reception History, Retrospection and Beyond

Taking advantage of the physical presence of some contributors in Bertinoro, we would like to collect and confront our ideas on the subject among us and with the colleagues at the Meeting. Since four of them participated in the confection of the volume newly edited by Cambry Pardee and Jef Tripp, *Sacred Texts & Sacred Figures. The Reception and Use of Inherited Traditions in Early Christian Literature*. A Festschrift in Honor of Edmondo F. Lupieri, (JAOC 25), Brepols, Turnhout 2022, this book could be the starting point for our discussions [in case the book is not out yet at the time, we can present and discuss our ideas independently; if the book is out, we would ask the Publisher to provide all panelists with a copy].

Gospel of Thomas, Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism

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

LOUIS PAINCHAUD (Laval University, Québec)

The Mystery of the Kiss in the Gospel According to Philip (CG II, 3)

The oldest document that has come down to us from the origins of Christianity, Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians, closes with a kiss Ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς πάντας ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ, “Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss” (1 Thess 5:26). This fraternal kiss was destined to become in late antiquity a central communion ritual in both Eastern and Western Christian liturgy. It was replaced in the Middle Ages by the use of a tablet, the osculatory, and today takes the form of an embrace or a handshake when and where it survives. While patristic literature abounds with advice and warnings on how to give and receive this “holy kiss,” few sources explain its theological meaning, basis, and significance. *The Gospel according to Philip* is perhaps one of the most important sources in this regard. However, while scholarly and popular attention has focused on the frequent kisses Jesus used to give to Mary Magdalene in this text (Gos.Phil. 63:33b-37a), little attention has been paid to the passage that gives the basis and function of this kiss (Gos.Phil. 58:17b – 59:6a). And for good reason: lacunae that are difficult to fill, an unknown verb, $\kappa\omicron\epsilon\iota\omega$, whose identification is still not unanimously agreed upon, and an improbable syntax make it particularly difficult to edit, translate, and interpret. The present paper will attempt to resolve these difficulties and shed light on the meaning and coherence of this important but difficult passage.

STEPHEN J. PATTERSON (Willamette University, Salem /Portland)

Wisdom, Immortality, and Apocalyptic in the Gospel of Thomas

What shall we make of the presence of at least three distinct eschatological concepts in the Gospel of Thomas--sapiential, Platonic, and apocalyptic? This paper will offer a brief analysis of the relevant sayings and propose a solution to this perennial puzzle.

MARIA FALLICA (Sapienza University of Rome)

The Fifth Gospel and the Gospel of Thomas: An Apocryphal Narrative for the 21st Century

“Philology, as well as the novel, is nothing else than an exegesis of the possible, inasmuch as it presupposes the contribution of the imagination.” These words by Italian novelist Mario Pomilio (1921-1990) best introduce his masterpiece, *Il Quinto evangelio* [The fifth Gospel, 1975], which imagines an investigation throughout history looking for traces of a mythical and elusive fifth gospel. In a highly experimental fashion, the novel presents several re-writings of ancient and modern episodes of dissent and censure of the history of Western Christianity, refashioning them as episodes of the living testimony to the fifth gospel, the very core of the Christian experience. The Gospel of Thomas has been detected as a clear source for the sayings that Pomilio attributes to the fifth Gospel in the novel. In the paper, I will contextualize Pomilio’s understanding of the apocryphal literature and his positioning as an “apocryphal writer” and I will show how the semantics of the fire and the understanding of Jesus’ followers as passers-by dominate Pomilio’s reception of the Gospel of Thomas.

EDUARD IRICINSCHI (Ruhr University Bochum, CERES)

‘Talking It Over’: Dialogue, Mastery of Emotions, and the Mind in the Nag Hammadi Literature

The role of dialogues in the Nag Hammadi literature has been thoroughly examined from various methodological and historiographical perspectives. These dialogues were mostly examined by scholars as expressions of the text's initial *Sitz im Leben*, be it homiletic or educational, and were stylistically connected to the ancient questions-and-answers literature (according to Kurt Rudolph). The present paper will examine some examples of dialogues in several Nag Hammadi texts (Apocryphon of John; First Revelation of James; The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth) and place them next to selected passages from the Manichaean Berlin Kephalaia (they circulated in Egypt roughly at the same time). It will also suggest regarding these dialogues as emotional scripts whose purpose was both the mastery of feelings and knowledge of the mind.

MARTA ADESSI (Sapienza University of Rome)

The Scribal Notes of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Their Peculiarities in the Light of the Corpus of Coptic Colophons and Scribal Subscriptions

The collection of Nag Hammadi represents since its discovery a major turning point in the history of Coptic studies and, more broadly, studies on Early Christianity and Gnosticism. Its exceptionality is made evident by the nature of the works contained in the codices, the circumstances of the discovery, the way the codices have been preserved, as well as their codicological peculiarities. Considering the extreme interest and uniqueness of the aspects mentioned here, perhaps less attention has been paid to the short texts at the end of some of the works contained in four of the codices, which fall into the category of ‘colophon’ or rather – in view of the problematic nature of this definition – ‘scribal subscription’. Although their ‘otherness’ from what is generally assumed to be the typical Coptic colophon is clear, nevertheless this dissimilarity must be problematised by analysing the notion of Coptic colophon and the position these texts occupy in the context of the Nag Hammadi collection. Moreover, while emphasising their exceptionality, such scribal notes have recently been added to the section devoted to the collection of Coptic colophons within the “PATHs” database (<https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/>, PI Paola Buzi). This paper aims to provide an overview of the scribal

notes contained in the Nag Hammadi Codices, with an analysis of their terminology and their graphical features by considering the most recent contributions on the subject and, especially, by confronting their characteristics with those of the 'standard' Coptic colophons and scribal subscriptions, highlighting differences and points of contact between the cases examined.

Historical Jesus

(Chair: Fernando Bermejo Rubio)

FERNANDO BERMEJO RUBIO (UNED - National Distance Education University)

Were Jesus' Disciples Left Unmolested? Rethinking the Fate of James, the Brother of John

According to one of the countless objections to the "political" interpretation of Jesus' story, his disciples were not persecuted after his death. This last statement, however, seems to be untenable. For example, Acts 12:2 asserts that Agrippa I ("Herod") had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. In this paper I will argue in a systematic way that 1) we have very good reasons to trust this brief report in Acts; 2) it is possible to glimpse, with the highest degree of probability, the true (political) reasons of James' execution by the Judaeo-pro-Roman king; and 3) this conclusion, on the one hand, has some bearing on a reassessment of the story of the Jewish movements of resistance against Rome, and, on the other hand, it counters the above-mentioned objection.

Issues of Method: New 'Secular' Approaches to Early Christian Research

(Chairs: Roberto Alciati, Emiliano R. Urciuoli)

JHON S. KLOPPENBORG (University of Toronto)

Argumentum e Silentio: From Absence to Lacunae

From text criticism and the problem of conjectural emendation to the reconstruction of the early Jesus movement, where almost all of the data relevant to such a reconstruction is missing, scholars have been faced with the problem of the absence of evidence. This paper offers a modest case for treating silences as lacunae to be supplied in the light of logical necessity and strong comparative data.

MARKUS VINZENT (King's College, London / Max-Weber-Kolleg, Erfurt)

Not Probable, but Interesting: The Subversive Nature of the *Argumentum e Silentio*

The paper starts from Popper's observation that 'every interesting and powerful statement must have a low probability; and vice versa: a statement with a high probability will be scientifically uninteresting, because it says little and has no explanatory power'. Combined with the notion of the argument from silence, we could say that the more noise or evidence we have, the less explanation is needed and, scholarly, the less interesting our research is. This is certainly true for many over-researched areas which are more a repetitive going again and again over the same grounds, piling secondary literature on secondary literature. And yet, tackling silence or silenced areas seems to promise a more fruitful endeavour. I will showcase this in talking about the reconstruction of pre-canonical Paul.

WILLIAM ARNAL (University of Regina)

A Secular Approach to Paul and Nag Hammadi: Religion as Political Imaginary

In their brilliant new book, *The Dawn of Everything*, David Graeber and David Wengrow describe three primordial human freedoms, and three modalities of the exercise of power. The freedoms include: the

freedom to leave, the freedom to disobey orders, and the freedom to imagine and create new social forms. The modalities of power are: sovereignty (raw power), charismatic leadership, and bureaucracy. My paper will focus on and compare two ancient Mediterranean “religious” sources — the letters of Paul and the Nag Hammadi document known as Hypostasis of the Archons — despite their vast differences in provenance, genre, and ideology. My argument is that documents that we today think of as “religious” can be imagined more effectively as efforts to deploy one of Graeber and Wengrow’s primordial freedoms — the freedom to imagine new social forms — in the service of transforming the modality of political power as they experience it. From Paul’s perspective, the ideal modality of power is sovereignty of a very particular sort; in Hypostasis, it is ultimately bureaucracy. Behind my argument as a whole is the conviction that a truly secular approach to ancient religion must be willing to dissolve the binary between religion and other human doings, including the acts of imagination with which we make sense of an engage with the real material world.

EDUARD IRICINSCHI (Ruhr University Bochum, CERES)

Imagine There’s a New Heaven: Eschatological Images and Their Political Use in Late Antique Manichaeism

This article will turn to the reworking of Gregory Bateson’s 1935 notion of “schismogenesis” in David Graeber and David Wengrow’s 2021 *The Dawn of Everything*, and apply it towards understanding formative processes in early Manichaean literature and the efforts of its authors to distinguish it from Christian and Jewish religious literature. The article will also borrow Burton Mack’s definition of formative religion as mythmaking and the imagination of new social formations to suggest that it might have been Mani’s political acts, interpreted as eschatological parrhesia, which allowed for a schismogenetic formation of Manichaean “churches” as mirror images, so to speak, of contemporary Christian and Jewish groups.

[The] Johannist Constellation: Systemic Questions and Different Answers

(Chairs: Michael Daise, Mauro Pesce)

MARIDA NICOLACI (Pontifical Theological Faculty of Sicily, Palermo)

Semantic Connections between the Theological Employ of $\delta\omicron\zeta\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ and the Sanctification of the Name in the Fourth Gospel

Starting from some instances in which the two concepts of “glory” and “holiness” are variously correlated in the LXX, even by a clear synonymic parallelism (Lv 10:3; PsSal 11:7; Ez 28:22; 38:23), the paper intends to show how much the meaning of awe, respect or reverence, implied by the root $\acute{\alpha}\gamma$ -, may explain not only the close connection between holiness and glory in the Septuagint religious language, but also precisely the employ of the verb $\delta\omicron\zeta\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ to mean the sanctification of God’s Name in some passages of the Fourth Gospel (see Joh 12:28): that is, the fullest, suitable receptiveness and assertion of divine majesty, boundlessly worthy of respect. Even till the death.

ALESSANDRO CAVICCHIA (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Jerusalem)

Casting Out the “Ruler of This World” (John 12:31): Dualistic Literary Devices in John 18:36; 19:16b-42

This presentation is a follow up of a previous research (cf. A. Cavicchia “Il linguaggio della «glorificazione» di Gesù Nazareno nella passione giovannea (cf. Gv 19,16b-42)”, *La trasfigurazione e il Monte Tabor. Letteratura storia archeologia* [ed. Carafa, P. et alii], Milano – Roma 2021, 31-58). According to the subject proposed for the unit concerning the ‘Johannist Constellation’, the main issue addressed by the paper will consider the way in which the “Ruler of this world has been cast out” (cf. John 12:31) through Jesus’ glorification (cf. John 12:28.32). The presentation will briefly consider John

18:36, in which Jesus' kingdom is described as not being "from down here" (ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐντεῦθεν), and which can be understood as a narrative program of the following passion account. The paper will then deal with the actualization of such a kingdom in John 19:16b-42, while highlighting the kind of Johannine dualism (if there is one) and its literary devices, particularly employed in the structure itself of John 19:16b-42, the double entendre, the Johannine irony and the fulfillment of the Scriptures in John 19:23-24.31-37.

FEDERICO ADINOLFI (Institute of Religious Sciences, Mantua)

After the Apocalypse: The Johannine Signs Gospel as a Millenarian Transformation of Mark

The view that the Gospel of John depends on the Gospel of Mark has gained considerable favor in recent years. This paper argues that this is probably true even with respect to the earliest stage of its compositional history: the Signs Gospel. Writing in the aftermath of the destruction of the Temple, the author of the Signs Gospel made a selective relecture of Mark, taking up those aspects most congenial to his purpose: to demonstrate that Jesus is the awaited royal and prophetic Messiah who, as shown by his powerful signs, is able to rebuild the Temple and restore the nation after the catastrophe of 70 C.E.

Re-dating Early Christian Texts

(Chairs: Claudio Gianotto, Enrico Norelli)

This unit aims to (re)discuss the date of composition of the Gospels and other proto-Christian texts according to or in dialogue with recent scholarly suggestions. This year we will discuss the recent book by Markus Vinzent, *Christi Thora: Die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments im 2. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg i.B.: Herder, 2022). It describes the formation of the New Testament as a deliberate selection, editing, and harmonizing of existing writings by specific authors, taking place in the second half of the 2nd century. Discussants: Claudio Gianotto (University of Turin), Wolfgang Grünstäudl (University of Münster), Markus Vinzent (King's College, London / Max-Weber-Kolleg, Erfurt).

Re-exploring the Apocryphal Continent: Texts, Paratexts, and Contexts

(Chairs: Tobias Nicklas, Luigi Walt)

ÁNGEL NARRO (University of Valencia) & ISRAEL MUÑOZ GALLARTE (University of Córdoba)

The New Critical Edition of the Acts of Thomas: Methodology and Publication Plans

After having collated 70 manuscripts that contains the Greek *Acts of Thomas* in one of their multiple forms, we can observe a clearer vision of the big picture of their textual transmission. Our research up to this moment has shown that we are dealing with a very complex textual tradition in which the material should be organized based on different criteria. The first one is the format. Bonnet did not distinguish in his edition the various forms in which the text was transmitted and mixed up, consequently, all the textual witnesses as they were transmitted a similar text. We have detected that there exists three more or less stable textual forms (even if there are also curious exceptions): 1) Manuscripts that contain the whole story or almost all the acts (as in mss. U and P in Bonnet); 2) Manuscripts that preserves only the first two acts and the martyrdom (chs. 1-29; 163-170 in Bonnet); 3) Manuscripts that transmit just the first two acts. Once established these three groups, we can apply a second criterion based on the content. Even if this is the part of the work that will be developed during the following months, the comparison among the different manuscripts during the *collatio* process has allowed us to establish different families of manuscripts preserving the same version

(with their obvious variants) in each one of the three groups abovementioned. Thus, in this paper we will explain the organization of all this textual material and the methodology that we are following to edit in a comprehensive way the texts, and we will focus in the major methodological issues and the most significant elements that we have found out so far.

MARCO STROPPA (“Girolamo Vitelli” Papyrological Institute, University of Florence)

Un nuovo frammento della cosiddetta “Storia di Giuseppe” // A New Fragment of the So-called “History of Joseph”

(Italiano) Un inedito papiro di Vienna, databile al VI/VII sec. d.C., contiene una porzione dell’opera cosiddetta “Storia di Giuseppe”, considerata un apocrifo dell’Antico Testamento (cfr. *Apocalypsis Henochi graece edidit* M. Black. *Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum, quae supersunt graeca, una cum historicorum et auctorum judaeorum hellenistarum fragmentis collegit et ordinavit* A.-M. Denis, Leiden 1970, pp. 235-236, per il testo, e *The Old Testament pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. J.H. Charlesworth, New York 1985, pp. 468-475, per un commento e una traduzione); in particolare il testo sembra coincidere con quello di P.Lond.Lit. 226 = fr. A (VI/VII sec. d.C.). Entrambi i papiri sono lacunosi – il testo di P.Vindob. è anche abbastanza scorretto e trascurato –, ma dal confronto fra di essi è possibile migliorare la lettura e la comprensione di ciascuno. Quindi il P.Vindob. è un nuovo testimone indipendente di quest’opera, poiché non appartiene a un codice come tutti gli altri frammenti finora noti, ma probabilmente a un *rotulus*. Il componimento è caratterizzato dalla ripetizione dell’espressione Ἰωσήφ μνησθεῖς τοῦ Ἰακώβ, “Giuseppe che ricorda Giacobbe”, come una sorta di ritornello. Sulla base di questo aspetto caratterizzante è stato recentemente ipotizzato che possa essere una sorta di coro di una *pièce* teatrale, ma sulla base delle informazioni provenienti dal nuovo papiro potrebbe essere invece un componimento ben diverso e più tardo rispetto alla datazione proposta, I a.C - II/III d.C. (cfr. Piotrkowski, Zs. Szántó, “Fragment F” of the “History of Joseph”, ZPE 220, 2021, pp. 74-83).

(English) An unpublished Vienna papyrus from the 6th/7th CE contains a fragment of the so-called “History of Joseph”, considered an apocryphal of the Old Testament (see *Apocalypsis Henochi graece edidit* M. Black. *Fragmenta pseudepigraphorum, quae supersunt graeca, una cum historicorum et auctorum judaeorum hellenistarum fragmentis collegit et ordinavit* A.-M. Denis, Leiden 1970, pp. 235-236, for the text, and *The Old Testament pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. J.H. Charlesworth, New York 1985, pp. 468-475, for commentary and translation); in particular, the text overlaps that of P.Lond.Lit. 226 = fr. A (6th/7th CE). Both papyri are incomplete — P.Vindob.’s text is also quite incorrect and neglected — but by comparing them it is possible to improve the reading and understanding of each one. Therefore the P.Vindob. is a new independent witness of this work, since it does not belong to a codex like all the other fragments previously known, but probably to a *rotulus*. The composition is marked by the repetition of the expression Ἰωσήφ μνησθεῖς τοῦ Ἰακώβ, “Joseph remembering Jacob”, as a sort of refrain. On the basis of this characterizing feature, it has recently been hypothesized that it could be a sort of choir of a dramatic play, but according to the information from the new papyrus it could instead be a very different and later composition compared to the proposed dating, 1st BC and 3rd/2nd AD (see Piotrkowski, Zs. Szántó, “Fragment F” of the “History of Joseph”, ZPE 220, 2021, pp. 74-83).

ENRICO NORELLI (University of Geneva)

Mt 27,24 and Gospel of Peter v. 1 as Mutually Independent Readings of Dt 21,1-9

Dt 21,1-9 has long been recognized as a subtext for the washing of Pilatus’ hands in Mt 27,24. The beginning of the “Akhmîm fragment” of the *Gospel of Peter* (= *GP*) preserved in the codex BAAM 0522 (formerly P. Cair. 10759) is the end of an episode having to do with Pilate and the washing of hands. Most scholars believe that *GP* depends on Mt here, but some, as Crossan, Koester and others, disagree. A close comparison between Dt 21,1-9 (in the Septuagint) and both gospels shows that *GP* certainly relies (also?) directly on Dt. Moreover, *GP* shows no contact with Mt’s redaction on this point and the

uses of that pericope made by the two authors are so different that they seem to go back independently from each other to Dt 21,1-9, already circulated in Christian environments as a prophecy related to Jesus' Passion.

Women in Early Christianity

(Chairs: Maria Dell'Isola, Mario Resta)

BARBARA CROSTINI (Newman Institute, Uppsala)

Women-with-Child on Show: Painting Motherhood from Dura to Luke

Despite recent studies that have demonstrated the ancient character of stories about the Virgin in the *Protoevangelium* of James, the classical pose of the Virgin with Child is seldom related to Jewish ideas of motherhood. Yet, it is possible to find in the mural paintings of the synagogue of Dura-Europos (ca 240s CE) a template for this iconographical scheme in the panel of the widow of Sarepta on the West Wall. The iconographical similarity between the widow holding her resurrected child and images of a standing Mary with child was already noted by Du Buisson in 1932, but its implications go much beyond appreciation for aesthetic conventions. In this paper, I argue that the widow of Sarepta provides a model for the Virgin-with-child by offering a paradigm of female agency that highlights the role of prophetic women. While the child is part of the women's prophetic message in both the widow's and Mary's case, their single, man-less status is a prerequisite for their divine visitation. The belief in and devotion to the image of Mary-with-Child attributed to the evangelist Luke reinforces the parallels with Jewish antecedents, as this image is made into an *acheiropita* that is acceptable within Jewish mentality as an object 'not-made-by-human-hands' and therefore not an idol. A connection between Dura and Luke that I suggested elsewhere for the interpretation of the West Wall is here considered further from this point of view of the representation of women.

MARIANNA CERNO (University of Udine)

Dreams and Virtues of the «Women of Clement». Matthidia and Procula in the Light of a Newly Recovered Pseudo-Clementine Fragment

An unknown fragment, whose discovery was announced in 2018 and whose edition is forthcoming, provides us with a fresh perspective on the pseudo-Clementine subject. The recovered fragment – presumably dated between the third and the sixth century – describes the events from the birth of the future pontiff to his departure towards Judea, that is the beginning of Clement's saga, of which Rufinus' *Recognitiones* recount instead the ending. In the fragment, a few women stand out for their role, their characterisation and their contribution to the development of the events. The most significant of them are Matthidia, Clement's mother, and Procula, Pontius Pilate's wife: different not only in character, but also in beliefs and customs, these two women live side by side with men who are opposite from each other for their acting towards Clement and in everyday life. Despite the differences, not least the religious one – Pilate's wife secretly converted to Judaism –, Matthidia and Procula share definite inner values, the same ones that are also found in other male and female characters of the fragment who raise and train the young Clement. Finally, these women share the experience of premonitory dreams that are crucial in the story. In the light of the recovered fragment and of the known tradition on the two characters, which involves a particular branch of New Testament apocrypha, the paper outlines a comparative portrait of Matthidia and Procula, an emblematic expression of the cultural melting-pot and of the trans-religious environment of Judeo-Christianity of the first centuries.

TOMMASO INTERI (University of Turin)

Womanhood as Exegetical Paradigm in Eusebius

Ancient biblical exegesis often leaves few spaces for any insight into the concrete reality of its authors and their public. Nonetheless, a critical reading of its categories can lead to a deeper comprehension of the hermeneutical dynamics at play, thus casting light on the cultural references that base the exegetical procedure. In this perspective, taking into account how Eusebius of Caesarea deals with images of womanhood and paradigms of femininity in his *Commentary on the Psalms* can offer an example of the ways in which the bishop recurs to cultural perspectives of his time to argue for his interpretation of the Psalter. An account of these readings would naturally include selected references to Origen's passages which deal with the same topics, given the debt that Eusebius owes to the Alexandrian in terms of exegetical methodology. On the one hand, this analysis allows to deepen our understanding of how the Caesarean developed his hermeneutical procedure in the light of Origen's previous experience; on the other hand, it lets us specify whether the culturally accepted standards on gender roles found actual correspondence into Eusebius' exegetical and theological thinking, and how and why they translated into the specific consideration of the woman and femininity that emerges from the work.

ALESSANDRO DE BLASI (University of Padua)

(Im)pious Sisterhood. Once More on Greg. Naz. *carm.* II 1, 41, *Contra Maximum*

As highlighted long time ago by P. Brown, Christian authors had an ambiguous notion of the prominent role women started to play in late antique Christian society: "The woman [...] was both a weak link and bridgehead." Gender boundaries, moreover, exercised massive influence on the perception of reality. No wonder, in this respect, that in the 4th century rising phenomena, such as that of mixed communities leading some sort of shared ascetic life (see 1 *Cor.* 9, 4-5), caused much concern among Church Fathers. In his letter to Eustochius, e.g., Jerome harshly reproaches the so-called *agapetae* calling them *meretrices univirae* (*ep.* 22, 14). Within this framework a specific passage of Gregory Nazianzen's poem directed towards his enemy Maximus the Cynic (*carm.* II 1, 41, 49-53) becomes finally clear. While venting anger against the usurper who had tried to seize the Constantinople see in 381, Gregory alludes to certain female helpers who spurred him to the betrayal: "Your nannies [μαῖα] made you bold, those helpers of yours, you write and play with!" Who are Maximus' "nannies", though? Scholars have made several attempts to understand the passage, but they have all missed the point, since manuscript evidence shows that the text is corrupt. In this paper, I will present my new critical edition of the poem and my proposal for restoring it: thanks to various parallels within Gregory's oeuvre, it will come out that this reference to the entourage of Maximus should be linked to the wider issue of the *subintroductae*, condemned in Nicaea (325).