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Jesus Sayings and Gospel Literature

Cecilia Antonelli, <i>L'identificazione Bartolomeo-Natanaele: testimonianze antiche e interpretazioni moderne</i>	19
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The information about the apostle Bartholomew in the Synoptic lists and about Nathanael of Cana in Jn 1:45–51, already in antiquity led to interest in the identity of these two figures. They were mutually identified as a single character on the basis of the presumed common link with Philip. Although ancient sources attest many other identifications for Nathanael, the one with Bartholomew has always been at the heart of the interest of modern critics, who closely analyzed its historical plausibility, even more than the reasons why, and ways in which, it might have been produced, and firmly established. After a broad presentation of the ancient testimonies, this paper focuses on the different positions of modern scholars, and finally brings some methodological conclusions: on the one side, sources external to the New Testament are indispensable for understanding the data transmitted within it. On the other side, the problem of the actual historical reliability of the information conveyed by the ancient authors and works must be clearly distinct from that of their “internal” literary understanding and their own interpretation of facts and events.

Keywords: Bartholomew, Nathanael, History of Exegesis, Jesus Disciples, Gospel Harmonies.

Andrea Annese, <i>Il Vangelo secondo Tommaso e il platonismo. Considerazioni in margine a un recente volume</i>	61
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This article aims to scrutinize the hypothesis, proposed by some researchers, of Platonic or Platonizing influences in the Gospel of Thomas. The observations developed here are primarily stimulated by Ivan Miroshnikov’s recent volume, *The Gospel of Thomas and Plato. A Study of the Impact of Platonism on the “Fifth Gospel”* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). After summarizing Miroshnikov’s theses, this article presents a series of observations in dialogue with them and other studies. The issue of the extent and character of possible Platonic influences on the Fifth Gospel will be examined, as well as the diffusion and reception of philosophical doctrines in a given cultural context (from the viewpoint of historical-religious trajectories), in particular in early Syriac Christian context.

Keywords: Gospel of Thomas, Platonism, Ivan Miroshnikov, Edessa, Syriac Christianity.

The question of the provenance of the *Gospel of Thomas* raises a rather disturbing ambiguity that may seriously challenge a long-held consensus regarding *Thomas'* Syrian origin. Both versions of the document (in Greek and Coptic) were found in Egypt, and there is no extant Syriac text or fragment that could conclusively confirm the Syrian phase of transmission of the "gospel." Nevertheless, the conviction of scholars as to the eastern Syrian birthplace of our document is still adamant. This view was rarely disputed during the 20th century, after having gained almost instant confirmation among the most renowned scholars in the field. In this paper, I dispute the most frequent arguments employed by advocates of the Syrian origin of *Thomas*: 1) the argument based upon the triple name of the apostle Thomas (i.e. Didymus, John, Thomas); 2) the argument based on parallels with Syrian Christian documents; 3) the linguistic argument.

Keywords: Gospel of Thomas, Eastern Syria, Gnosticism, Early Christianity, Thomas Didymus.

Federico Adinolfi, *Il Vangelo dei Segni e i suoi predecessori. La Semeia-Quelle come rilettura post-70 di Marco e di Q [II parte]*

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In this final part of a two-part essay an attempt is made to identify the most plausible historical context and the socio-religious matrix in which the Johannine Signs Gospel took shape. The essay argues that the document is the product of a Jesuanic-Baptist group of southern origin, whose distinctive memory of Jesus as a baptizer and miracle-worker in Judaea was subsequently expanded, through contact with the Gospel of Mark and its Galilean tradition, into a full-blown missionary gospel with one single 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.

Keywords: Signs Gospel, Baptist groups, Temple rebuilding, Gospel of John, Sayings Source Q.

Early and Late Antique Christianity

Antonio Cacciari, *Variazioni sul tema del "sostituzionismo" in età protocristiana: lo Pseudo-Barnaba*

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Starting from a controversial passage in the Epistle of Barnabas (IV, 6), this paper seeks to demonstrate that: a) the reading offered by Codex Sinaiticus (8) is supported by morphology and syntax, as well as by the historical context of the Epistle of Barnabas; and b) the dispute about the "covenant" regards Judaism, rather than Judaizing Christians.

Keywords: Epistle of Barnabas, Judaism, Covenant, Supersessionism, Proselytism.

Gaetano Spampinato, *Profeti, martiri e "ipocriti". Funzioni e ruoli sociali nel montanismo delle origini*

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In this article I examine the roles and social functions of some figures of early Phrygian Montanism, analyzing the polemical sources that report them—in particular, those sources quoted by Eusebius of Caesarea in the *Ecclesiastical History* when dealing with the birth and spread of the "New prophecy." Although prophets play a central role in the movement, other figures (such as the martyrs-confessors Alexander and Themiso, the administrator Theodotus, etc.) seem to have a precise function too, in different forms. One, for example, consists of

offering their support to the prophets—also, but not exclusively, in a “physical” manner. This role appears in some descriptions of attempted refutations of Montanist prophets, where the anti-Montanists opponents are sent away by these figures.

Keywords: Montanism, Prophecy, Phrygia, Montanist martyrs, Prophetic interpretation.

Modern Jewish Interpretation of Jesus

Miriam Benfatto, *Da “Yeshu” al Gesù ebreo.*

La rivalutazione ebraica di Gesù tra filosofia e ricerca storica

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This essay presents some representations of the figure of Jesus in Jewish philosophical and historical production of the 18th and 19th centuries and their connection with the modern Jewish attempt to negotiate a place in “western” society. This paper will present some particular Jewish portraits of Jesus from medieval religious and apologetic literature. It will then present an analysis of examples taken from philosophical and historical literature in which the image of Jesus acquires clearly positive and exemplary traits. A link is drawn between the re-evaluation and, in a sense, the re-appropriation of the figure of Jesus, and the creation of the modern and multiple Jewish “identities.”

Keywords: Reclaiming Jesus, Jewish Enlightenment, Jewish Jesus, Wissenschaft des Judentums, Jewish Historiography.

On Jonathan Z. Smith

Marianna Ferrara, *Magical Persistence.*

Rethinking the Vedic Taxonomy of Wisdom with Jonathan Z. Smith's Approach to Alterity and Canon

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In the essay *In Comparison a Magic Dwells* (1979/1982), J.Z. Smith discusses the problems of comparison and analyzes the limits of standard models applied in the study of religions: how to compare, what one can compare, and, above all, which comparison is adequate for the history of religions? Starting from these methodological questions, this article will deal with magic as an abstract notion for the interpretation of textual canons in the religious traditions of ancient India, especially as concerns the alleged exclusion and late inclusion of the “fourth Veda” in the mainstream of tradition. This article will redescribe the construction of the Vedic canon, adopting Smith's proposal to consider “magic” as “just one possibility in any given culture's rich vocabulary of alterity” (*Trading Places*, 1992/1995, 221) and “canon” as “one form of a basic cultural process of limitation and of overcoming that limitation through ingenuity” (*Sacred persistence: Toward a redescription of canon*, 1977/1982, 52).

Keywords: J.Z. Smith, Comparison, Atharvaveda, Magic, Canon.

Discussion of Books

Discussione del libro di Francisco Socas, Pablo Toribio
(a cura di), *Martin Seidel. Origo et Fundamenta Religionis
Christianae. Un tratado clandestino del siglo XVII*
(Madrid, CSIC, 2017):

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Abstract: The maximalist/minimalist debates of the 1990s reflect a positive moment of epistemological and methodological discussions within the field of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament historical studies, in spite of some concerned voices viewing such debates as reflecting a crisis in the writing of ancient Israelite history. These debates actually allowed for rethinking the traditional ways in which the history of "ancient Israel" was being produced, the status of the Hebrew Bible as a historical source, and they even opened up the possibility of addressing a new and wider historiographical genre in the field: the history of ancient Palestine, as a more critical historiographical horizon overcoming the limitations of the traditional focus on "ancient Israel." This paper considers, in a first place, the relevance of the so-called minimalist positions for a critical historiography of ancient Israel/Palestine, and in a second place, the prospects for writing histories of the region beyond issues of historicity related to ancient textual traditions.

Keywords: Hebrew Bible / Old Testament, Biblical Minimalism, Historiography, Paradigm Shift.

Francesco Berio, <i>L'Atto copto di Pietro (P. Berol. 8502.4): una allegoria anti-eretica romana? Tra figlia di Pietro / Grande Chiesa e Tolomeo / Simon Mago, per una nuova collocazione d'un frammento petrino</i>	301
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Abstract: The article aims at providing an original reading of the Coptic *Act of Peter* preserved in BG 8502.4, arguing in favor of its heresiological origin and suggesting the possibility that it could restore a privileged insight into the 2nd century Christian Rome. The relationships that the literary work maintains with the most relevant Greek and Latin witnesses of the Petrine Acts are also investigated, as well as the indirect attestations of narratives dedicated to the daughter of Peter.

Keywords: *Act of Peter*, Rome, Ptolemy, Valentinians.

- András Handl, *A Roman Saint on the Move: Relic Migration and the Dissemination of Bishop Callixtus I's Cult in Rome and in the Carolingian Francia* 327

Abstract: Although the cult of bishop Callixtus I of Rome (217?-222?) is little known today, in antiquity his cult spread rapidly across the Carolingian Francia. Indeed, by the end of the first millennium, Callixtus became one of the more popular Roman martyrs both within and outside Rome. But how did this happen? And, more importantly, why? This contribution aims to answer both these questions by outlining the origins, development, and especially the expansion of Callixtus' cult North of the Alps. It also sheds light on patterns of distribution of Callixtus's cult, the interplay between the distribution of his relics and the dissemination of his cult, and the most important mechanisms underlying this spread. Specifically, this contribution argues that a combination of three factors boosted the cult's quick dissemination: his office as a pope, his demonstrable martyrdom, and the Roman origins of his relics.

Keywords: Callixtus I of Rome (217?-222?), Cult of Saints, Cult of Relics, Relic Translation, Francia.

- Thomas J. Kraus, *Small in Size, Fabulous Artefacts, and 'Christian'?: P.Ryl. III 463 (Gospel of Mary), P.Ryl. I 28 (Palmomancy) and Late Antique Miniature Books* 349

Abstract: The fascination of the world of miniature books from (late) antiquity can be demonstrated by means of descriptions and analyses of a miniature fragment and a miniature booklet from the John Rylands Library (*P.Ryl. III 463* and *P.Ryl. I 28*). In addition both papyri help to illustrate and visualize their handling and potential purposes. But not only is the uniqueness of every miniature book (or fragment of it) and the realization that each such object deserves individual attention a main objection of this study, the two papyri serve to rectify uniform claims about their purpose and use. Further, they help to modify too optimistic assumptions that miniature codices have been "invented" by Christians, though a certain preference among Christians for using such a small format (for certain texts) might be deduced from the bulk of extant and fragmentary exemplars.

Keywords: Miniature Codex, Categories, Purpose and Use, *P.Ryl. III 463, Gospel of Mary, P.Ryl. I 28, Palmomancy, Pseudo-Melampous, Divination.*

- Danijel Dojčinović, Predrag Dragutinović, *The Serbian Slavonic Tradition of the Biblical Apocrypha: An Overview Regarding their Status* 369

Abstract: This article deals with a wide range of topics related to Serbian Slavonic Apocryphal writings, drawing special attention to their status in Serbian medieval literature. First, there is a general introduction, followed by two sections dedicated to the codices and social context of the Serbian Slavonic Apocrypha, and finally, the article concludes with a few hermeneutical observations. The Serbian Slavonic Apocrypha have yet to be investigated thoroughly. One common misconception is that the Apocrypha were considered as "forbidden" or even heretical literature. However, the Serbian Slavonic manuscripts reveal that the Apocrypha were transmitted together with other ecclesial texts used for religious services. They were not considered as non-canonical or dangerous, but rather as literature "beyond canon," that was useful for the faithful.

Keywords: Biblical Apocrypha, Serbian Slavonic Tradition, Canon.

Abstract: The exegesis of Acts 1:6-8 played a fundamental role in the eschatological polemic that the physician and theologian Arnau de Vilanova kept up with professional theologians (i.e. teachers at the University of Paris and Dominicans). In Arnau de Vilanova's final polemical work, the unedited *Praesentatio facta Burdegaliae*, the Catalan thinker offers Pope Clement V a synthetic account of his exegesis of these Biblical verses. Therein Arnau de Vilanova puts forward an exegesis based purely on common sense, knowledge of grammar and fidelity to the letter of the text. Interpreted thus, the words of Jesus Christ in Acts 1:7-8 fail to divulge the *tempora vel momenta* to the Apostles alone, though not to those destined to live in future times. Yet Christ refuses to divulge these *tempora vel momenta* to them should they seek to acquire knowledge thereof "via their own human powers," rather than via revelation. The Holy Spirit shall be able to reveal them. The proclamation on the part of Arnau de Vilanova, then—based as it was upon divine revelation rather than natural speculation—to the effect that the Antichrist would arrive in the mid-fourteenth century, was compatible—invariably in the Catalan author's view—with the words uttered by Jesus Christ in Acts 1:7.

Keywords: Arnau de Vilanova's *Presentatio facta Burdegaliae*, Acts of Apostles, Polemical Exegesis, Eschatology.

Eleonora Rai, *A Strange Case of Co-authorship. Humana industria, the Holy Spirit, and the Inspiration of the Scriptures according to Leonard Lessius (1500s-1800s)*

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Abstract: This article explores the link between two doctrines of Jesuit theologian Leonard Lessius (1554-1623): His theory of the inspiration of the Scriptures and his theology of salvation, which defend human free will and cooperation in the relationship with the divine, even at the expense of God's sovereign authority. According to Lessius, human agency is fundamental to the creation of the Scriptures. This article retraces the controversy *de Scriptura* generated by Lessius' doctrine in the *longue durée* (1580s-1890s), including within the Society of Jesus itself, from the disputes between Lessius and the Leuven theologians, and his clash with Roberto Bellarmino (in the late 1500s), to the nineteenth-century discussion about Lessius' doctrine during the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) and within the Congregation of the Index (1890s).

Keywords: Inspiration of the Scriptures, Free Will, Human Agency, Theological Controversies, Vatican Council I, Leonard Lessius.

Reflections on Methods

Sergio Botta, *Tassonomie, pappagalli ed eroine mitiche: appunti per una comparazione critica intorno all'uso delle religioni indigene in Dario Sabbatucci e Jonathan Z. Smith*

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Abstract: The goal of this paper is to analyse the contribution of Jonathan Z. Smith to the study of Indigenous Religions and compare it to the usage in the Italian History of Religions, especially in the work of Dario Sabbatucci. On several occasions, Smith focused on the ways scholars (re)constructed the image of Indigenous Religions and, consequently, on the epistemological agenda of Religious Studies. Smith's contribution was severely critical. On the one hand, he focused on the epistemological limits of a discipline—esp. phenomenology of religion—which manufactured a fictional image of Indigenous Religions as a foundational ground for a generalization of the Western concept of religion. On the other hand, he paved the

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way for a critical reassessment of the foundations of the History of Religions. By comparing Smith scholarship with Dario Sabbatucci's work, I will try to provoke a self-reflective "reaction" in those who still position themselves within the "Roman school" and a "rectification" of the usage of the *taxon* Indigenous Religions.

Keywords: Jonathan Z. Smith, Dario Sabbatucci, Indigenous Religions, Comparison, History of Religions.

Book Discussion

Maria Paiano, *Il ritorno di un integrista nella Chiesa post-conciliare.*

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