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Network Science in Biblical Studies

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Abstract: This article introduces the special issue of ASE on network science and biblical studies. After a short presentation of network science and the concept of networks, the article discusses the application of network science in three domains: the natural and built environment of ancient Judaism and Christianity, the social networks of Jewish and Christian actors, and the analysis of textual corpora. In the next part, some technical terms of network science are clarified. The introductory article concludes with the presentation of the contributions to the special issue.

Keywords: Network Science, Social Network Analysis, Network Analysis of Texts, Historical Network Analysis, Vector Semantics

Catherine Hezser, <i>Between Scholasticism and Populism:</i> <i>Rabbinic and Christian Networks in the Roman Empire</i>	27
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Abstract: Between the first and fourth centuries C.E. networks of like-minded individuals who shared certain religious beliefs and practices developed in both Jewish and Christian society. These networks emerged in the context of Roman imperialism which connected, integrated, and to some extent homogenized the various sectors of the population through road connections, infrastructure, and Romanization. Both rabbis and Christian leaders tried to distinguish themselves from certain aspects of their Graeco-Roman cultural environment by, at the same time, functioning within it and adopting some of its features. This study compares rabbinic and Christian leaders' networking activities within the shared Roman imperial context of the first centuries C.E.

Keywords: Rabbis, Bishops, Imperialism, Romanization, Communication, Travel

Rikard Roitto, <i>The Johannine Information War:</i> <i>A Social Network Analysis of the Information Flow</i> <i>Between Johannine Assemblies as Witnessed by 1-3 John</i>	47
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Abstract: Social network analysis is applied heuristically to understand how the Epistles of John attempt not only to promote their vision of the community's identity and theology, but

also to strengthen their own position in the Johannine social network and weaken the position of its competitors. Insistence on social distance from competing teachings is central to 1 and 2 John, while 3 John is occasioned by the Johannine School being marginalized by an assembly. The strands of these letters can be described in terms of network analysis as attempts to weaken certain social ties and strengthen others to allow the Johannine School more uncontested dispersion of information in the assemblies of the network.

Keywords: Epistles of John, Social Network, Johannine Community, Network Theory, Information Flow, Conflict

Sean F. Everton, Rob Schroeder, *The Church Among Jews and Gentiles: A Network Simulation*

of the Christian Mission to the Jews

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Abstract: How successful was the Christian Church's mission to the Jews? The answer to this is a function of numerous factors, such as underlying demographics, fertility rates, competition, and (most importantly) when Christians and Jews severed their ties with one another. Some believe the split as early as 70 CE, but others present evidence that Jews and Christians regularly interacted until the 4th and possibly 5th centuries. In this paper, using computer network simulations that capture various factors, we run a series of models that estimate the proportion of Jewish converts to Christianity from approximately 40 to 600 CE. Our models suggest that whether one considers the Church's mission to the Jews a success largely depends on what one considers a "success." If one measures it solely in terms of raw numbers, then probably not. However, if one considers that the potential pool of Jewish converts was relatively small compared to Gentiles, it was perhaps more successful than many early Church scholars believe.

Keywords: Social Networks, Network Simulations, Early Church, Mission to the Jews, Jewish Converts

Vojtěch Kaše, Nina Nikki, Tomáš Glomb, *Righteousness in Early Christian Literature: Distant Reading*

and Textual Networks

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Abstract: The article joins the scholarly discussion about the meaning of righteousness language in biblical literature with consideration of changes in the concept from archaic Greek literature to fourth century Christian texts. The article seeks to showcase and evaluate how methods from the area of computational linguistics and distributional semantics can contribute to the discussion. The article suggests that, together with formal network models, namely word co-occurrence networks and similarity networks, the methods reveal changes in large corpora of textual data which are too subtle to be detected by close reading. On the other hand, some questions require or benefit greatly from combining distant and close reading methods.

Keywords: Righteousness, Paul of Tarsus, Quantitative Textual Analysis, Computational Linguistics, Distributional Semantics, Word Co-Occurrence Networks

Tamás Biró, *Who Circumcised Abraham?*

A Cognitive Network Model for the Interpretations of Gen 17

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Abstract: The verb "to circumcise" in Gen 17:24, and elsewhere in that chapter, appears in the niphal form, entailing a passive meaning, and the agent of the action remaining unknown. At the same time, Abraham's circumcision plays a central role in Judaism. It is not simply the prototype of all subsequent instances of a ritual that is central to Jewish identity; but it is also the starting point of a recursive chain of ceremonies by which any later circumcision acquires its religious significance. Hence, the importance of the agent of the first circumcision. First, I describe how this ritual is embedded in the network of concepts, entities, narratives,

precepts and further mental representations in Judaism. Subsequently, I shall present a selection of answers from various traditions to the question posed in the title. Then, I introduce a network of meanings, which shall serve as a linguistic model interpreting the agent-less niphil forms of the verb 'to circumcise' in Gen 17. This model yields different interpretations under various conditions, corresponding to various traditions. Consequently, it is argued to describe the computation taking place in the human mind, which is able to produce alternative interpretive traditions.

Keywords: Circumcision, Judaism, Midrashim, Biblical Exegesis, Anaphora Resolution, Simulated Annealing

István Czachesz, *The Bible as a Network of Memes:*

Analyzing a Database of Cross-References

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Abstract: This article puts forward the theory that the Bible is a network of cultural items (memes) that developed through an evolutionary process and has been transmitted for many centuries in a relatively stable form. Biblical cross-references reveal how the verses and passages of the Bible are connected into a network that is analogous to genetic networks in biology. The article presents a network model of cross-references, based on the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*. The article discusses the history of the database and the origin of the references; network statistics that yield insights into the history of the cross-references; node centrality statistics and the popularity of the respective verses in the history of Western biblical interpretation; and the modular structure of the network. The results are interpreted as tentative evidence for the collective behavior of populations in Western history being co-determined by a network of biblical memes.

Keywords: Cultural Evolution, Cross-References, Treasure of Scripture Knowledge, History of Interpretation, Node Centrality, Community Detection

Articles

Giorgio Jossa, *I "voi" di Gesù.*

Una spia per identificare i destinatari delle sue parole

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Abstract: For the gospel passages too, as for any other historical document, it is impossible to interpret their meaning correctly without knowing their context, without therefore assigning them a precise place and time. The scholar of Christian origins is well aware that for the gospels the operation is considered to be mostly impossible, but he cannot resign himself to saying that the original context is irretrievably lost. There are, in fact, a few ways of attempting to recover it. One of these is to try to identify who the recipients of Jesus' words really were; to try in particular to understand to whom Jesus was addressing himself when he said "you". Some gospel pericopes allow this operation.

Keywords: Historical Jesus, Synoptic Gospels, Exegesis

Brandon E. Bruning, Jessica Ann Hughes, *Sham Synagogues and Fake Jews: Advancing the Thesis of Pauline Pagans at Smyrna and Philadelphia (Rev 2:9, 3:9)*

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Abstract: New Testament scholars continue to identify the opponents of John of Patmos and his addressees at Smyrna and Philadelphia—despite John's testimony that "they say they are Judeans and are not, but are lying"—as a Jewish "Synagogue of Satan" (2:9, 3:9), not gentile imposters. Since 2001, David Frankfurter has identified the Smyranean and Philadelphian opponents as "Pauline or neo-Pauline" gentiles who threatened the Jewish identity of John's con-

gregations. This proposal anticipated recent Pauline scholarship wary of Christian theological anachronisms, but the resulting "Paul within Judaism" shares more with Frankfurter's "John within Judaism" than with his "Pauline" foil. Refining Frankfurter's hypothesis to distinguish "neo-Pauline" inheritors from Paul promises a clearer view of John, his disciples, and his adversaries in relation to the contested reception of Paul's instructions for his gentile disciples.

Keywords: Synagogue of Satan, Revelation, Paul, Ephesians, Anti-Semitism

Marius A. van Willigen, <i>Philo's and Ambrose's Explanation of the Dreams in Gen 37-47</i>	221
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Abstract: The dreams of the patriarch Joseph (Gen 37), the dreams of the butler and the baker (Gen 40) and the dreams of Pharaoh (Gen 41) are significant dream examples in the Joseph narrative. The Jewish exegesis of these dreams by Philo of Alexandria and the Early Christian exegesis of these dreams by Ambrose of Milan (337-397) will be discussed here. Next, we want to investigate whether Philo's exegesis of the dreams influenced Ambrose's exegesis or whether this is unlikely. Although we know that Philo influenced Ambrose far and wide, his influence on the interpretation of the dreams in the Joseph story seems to have been slight. Further investigation reveals that Ambrose relied on Origen for his exegesis of these dreams. As for the scholarly investigation of the latter, a complicating factor is that Origen's exegesis of Genesis is only partially left.

Keywords: Jewish and Christian Exegesis, Joseph's Dreams, Philo of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose of Milan, Exegetical Influence

Book Discussion

Discussione del libro di Francesco Benigno, Vincenzo Lavenia, <i>Peccato o crimine. La Chiesa di fronte alla pedofilia</i> , Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2021, V + 284 pp. (I Robinson. Letture).....	245
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Abstract: In Justin's quotation of the Immanuel prophecy, Isa 8:4 was compiled within Isa 7:10-17 so that Jesus was given both the names Immanuel and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. In this article the writer shows that early Jewish reception history enables us to see similarities to Justin's exegesis. Parallels come from rabbinical writings which in their present forms are late, but the traditions must be older because they are related to the interpretation that Hezekiah is Immanuel and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. The Jewish way of identifying Immanuel and Hezekiah is also presented in Justin's work and is detected already in 2 Chr 32:7-8.

Keywords: Bat Qöl, Hezekiah, Immanuel Prophecy, Jewish Reception History, Justin, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz

Nathan Betz, <i>"The City is the People": The New Jerusalem of Rev 21-22 in Origen</i>	313
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Abstract: The New Jerusalem of Rev 21-22 is one of the most heavily contested biblical figures in the earliest centuries of the Christian church. Of those who contributed to the conversation the most, Origen is likely the most influential. And yet no proper study has been made of Origen's contribution to the figure's reception. In this article, I review the reception of Revelation's New Jerusalem prior to Origen, its likely influence on Origen, and the Alexandrian's unique reception and hermeneutical perspectives on, and applications of, the figure throughout his corpus. What emerges in Origen is a richly interpersonal interpretation that bespeaks not only persons human and divine but their intimate union both in the church today and in the consummation in the age to come. As such, Origen both solidifies prior allegorical readings of Rev 21-22 and sets the agenda for subsequent Greek patristic interpretations.

Keywords: Origen of Alexandria, Book of Revelation, New Jerusalem, Eschatology, Ecclesiology, Deification

Abstract: This paper aims at showing that Origen's exegesis of the parable of the wicked tenants (Or. *CMt* 17, 6-12) depends on Plato's cosmogonical myth in the *Statesman* (Pl. *Pol.* 268d-274e). Particular attention is played to the use of the word περιωπή in the concrete meaning of lookout post (Or. *CMt* 17, 7 and Pl. *Pol.* 272e). Origen's interpretation was equally influenced by Numenius' of Apamea treatise *On the Good*, which inspired Origen in linking the theme of God's withdrawal in contemplation (secondary meaning of περιωπή) with the image of the divine sowing and planting of the souls into the bodies. This study shows how Origen's imagery and exegesis was influenced both by the direct reading of Plato's dialogues and by the middle-platonic tradition.

Keywords: Origen, Platonic Myths, Parable of the Wicked Tenants, History of Salvation, Middle-Platonism

Ángel Narro - Israel Muñoz Gallarte, <i>The First Two Acts of the Apostle Thomas and His Martyrdom in the Greek Manuscript Tradition of the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas</i>	371
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Abstract: This article is aimed at analyzing the manuscripts of the third-century apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* (AT) that contain only the first two acts of the apostle and his martyrdom. The Greek manuscripts which include the text of the AT in Bonnet's critical edition have never been revisited. In our research, we have detected an important number of manuscripts presenting the above format of the text – including four unedited codices –, which allows us to establish a more solid connection among the different texts and manuscripts of the AT that focus only on the first two acts and the martyrdom.

Keywords: Acts of Thomas, Apocryphal Acts, Manuscripts, Critical Edition

Emiliano Rubens Urciuoli, <i>Time to Build: The Cult Building at Dura, the Church of Tyre, and the Christians' Right to the City</i>	389
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Abstract: Around 240-241 CE a house located on a peripheral street of the border garrison town of Dura-Europos (Eastern Syria) is remodeled to better function as a Christian cult building. This labor-intensive renovation and "beautification" project reflects a clear sense of confidence on the part of the houseowner/s and the users of the structure. The interaction of the Durene Christ group with the urban ecology of Dura is the subject of the first section of the article. In the second part, the analysis moves westwards in search of the earliest account of a grandiose Christian church. Between 313 and 321 CE, in the city of Tyre, a new religious building is dedicated to the newly legally recognized Christian God. Eusebius of Caesarea's detailed description of the structure reflects a clear sense of spatial pride and visual revenge. The article aims to re-interpret Eusebius' agenda by means of the concept of "right to the city" (H. Lefebvre), understood as the right to participate in the urban *œuvre* through the exercise of collective power over the processes of urbanization. The construction of the church of Tyre represents the spectacular manifestation of the achievement of a new and transformed access to urban life.

Keywords: Dura Europos, Urban Religion, Eusebius of Caesarea, Tyre, Right to the City

An-Ting Yi, <i>Thomas Wagstaffe and His Unpublished Account of Codex Vaticanus (Vat. gr. 1209)</i>	417
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Abstract: Although the manuscript had already been used from the sixteenth century onward, scholarly knowledge of the famous Codex Vaticanus (Vat. gr. 1209 in the Vatican Library) was very limited even in the first half of the eighteenth century. Scholars outside Rome had to rely on secondary and imprecise information. However, there is one remarkable piece of work that has long been overlooked. Probably during the course of 1738 and 1739, Thomas Wagstaffe prepared a detailed account of Codex Vaticanus, including not only general introductions but also analyses of different dimensions of the manuscript. Wagstaffe's account was never published, and it is currently preserved in the *Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma*. Based on the personal examination of this archive entry, this article gives relevant historical contexts, details its current state of conservation and content, provides transcriptions of some notable portions, and offers a critical evaluation of Wagstaffe's descriptions and judgements of the manuscript. These findings on the one hand show the pioneering nature of the work, and on the other hand shed light on the history of biblical textual scholarship.

Keywords: Thomas Wagstaffe, Codex Vaticanus, Textual Criticism, History of Scholarship, Eighteenth Century.

Marijke H. de Lang, <i>Johann Jakob Griesbach: a Re-Evaluation of the Role His Synopsis Played in the Development of His Two Gospel Hypothesis</i> ..	443
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Abstract: Although it is often assumed that Johann Jakob Griesbach's groundbreaking Synopsis (1774) was the basis for the formulation of his Two Gospel Theory (1783), this article will try to prove that in fact the two were unrelated. The Two Gospel Theory did not emerge from the careful study of his synopsis and as an answer to the literary problem of the interrelation of the synoptic gospels, but first and foremost as a response to the problem of the historical reliability of the Gospels, raised by the publication of the work of Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768).

Keywords: Johann Jakob Griesbach, Two Gospel Hypothesis, Synopsis, Hermann Samuel Reimarus

Book Discussions

Discussione del libro di Chiara Lombardi e Luigi Silvano (a cura di), <i>Apocalisse ieri oggi e domani. Atti della giornata di studio in memoria di Eugenio Corsini (Torino, 2 ottobre 2018)</i> , Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 2019, VIII + 176 pp. (Studi e ricerche 174)	455
Discussione del libro di Michel Lauwers, ed., <i>Labeur, production et économie monastique dans l'Occident medieval. De la Règle de saint Benoît aux Cisterciens</i> , Turnhout, Brepols, 2021, 600 pp. (Collection d'Études Médiévales de Nice 17)	469

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