

Contents

Presentazione/Presentation	9
----------------------------------	---

Mauro Pesce, <i>Alla ricerca di un nuovo schema mentale</i> (<i>Appunti utili anche per la linea editoriale di</i> <i>Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi nei prossimi anni</i>)	13
--	----

If my observations in this article are adequate to what is happening, we are facing a world in transformation, in transition. A complex world made up of many factors whose overlapping and crossing creates novelty. The purpose of these pages was twofold: to invite to ask oneself whether one's research is determined by mental schemes that respond to conditions of the past (thus making it ineffective for the present and for the future); to invite to raise questions about the transformations necessary for future researches on the history of Christianity in the context of a transition to a new era.

Keywords: A new era, Mental schemes of the past, New mental schemes, History of Christianity, Globalization.

John S. Kloppenborg, <i>Argumentum e silentio: four silences.....</i>	41
---	----

In the argument from silence ("I have no evidence of *p*; if *p* were true, I would have evidence of *p*; therefore *p* is false"), the critical issue is whether the conditional is secure. In historical studies, silence must be understood as silence in relation to a particular evidentiary set. An inference *e silentio* becomes unsafe when the evidentiary set is known to be defective; and when the kind of data of which *p* is an instance is not the kind of evidence has survived. In neither case is an inference *e silentio* safe.

Keywords: Philology, Conjectural Emendations, Christ Groups, Eucharistic Meals.

Early Christianity

Ralph J. Korner, <i>The Steady Hand of an Ecstatic Seer,</i> <i>Part I: John's Literary Genius in Communicating</i> <i>His Visionary Apokalypsis</i>	55
--	----

The apparently disorganized visionary content of the book of Revelation suggests a disoriented and perhaps even psychotropic visionary. Nonetheless, the ecstatic Seer's literary record of

that apocalyptic journey is a multi-valent masterpiece that uses three literary devices simultaneously to recount a linear narrative and a reiterative structure. This two-part article focuses, in part 1, upon how John's use of the "space/time referent" and the linguistic equivalents of the two clauses "and I saw" and "after these things I saw" also elucidate coherent structures for Jewish prophetic visionary texts, and, in part 2, upon how they provide structure for Jewish apocalypses. Distinctive to John's Apocalypse, however, is the fact that it leverages those three literary devices to create a reiterative structure that serves implicitly to reinforce his explicit statements to his seven *ekklesia* communities that the return of Jesus the Jewish *Christos* was imminent.

Keywords: Revelation, Apocalypse, Prophecy, Vision, Space-time.

Jan N. Bremmer, <i>Method and Madness in Dating the Passion of Perpetua</i>	87
---	----

I fully agree with Rebillard that, unlike many earlier studies, we should not try to reduce the early martyrdom accounts to just a reflection of their court cases. While the more authentic ones sometimes come close to being eye-witness reports, they always contain theological reflections and often literary embellishments as well. However, it is also important to stress that this examination should be as unprejudiced as possible. To exclude beforehand internal evidence robs the historian of an important source of information. To avoid analysing earlier discussions makes one invent the wheel again. In the end, there is no satisfactory solution to the problem of historical authenticity that covers all cases, and we must rest content with the fact that no reconstruction of the original form of the accounts can claim absolute certainty. Like any other historical source, these texts, too, must be examined on their own terms.

Keywords: *Passion of Perpetua*, Martyrdom, Historical authenticity, Eye-witness reports, Absolute certainty.

Revisiting *Gospel of Thomas*, logion 61

Andrea Annese, <i>Revisiting Gos. Thom. 61: Between "Old" and "New" Philology</i>	101
---	-----

This introductory article contextualizes the essays by Daniele Tripaldi and René Falkenberg on *Gos. Thom. 61* within the current debate on the "Old Philology" and the "New Philology," as well as on the Nag Hammadi Codices. It also provides some brief methodological considerations on the study of the *Gospel of Thomas* and other early Christian texts.

Keywords: *Gospel of Thomas*, Old Philology, New Philology, Nag Hammadi Codices, Late Antique Egypt.

Daniele Tripaldi, <i>Unearthing the Solitary: An "Old Philology" Note on Gos. Thom. 61,5</i>	105
--	-----

The article contests the scholarly consensus that the text of *Gos. Thom. 61,5* as transmitted by NHC II needs emendation. On a strictly "old" philological basis, I argue instead that the Coptic reading šēf should be maintained as it is, and that it originated as a translational error from Greek. I suggest that this semantic diffraction proves that the whole saying probably circulated in Greek before being rendered into Egyptian. Some provisional conclusions are finally drawn about the linguistic *facies* and the grammatical interpretation of the reconstructed *logion*, leading to a new English translation of both the Coptic and the divined Greek texts.

Keywords: *Constitutio textus*, Philological Divination, Semantic Diffractions, Lexicon of Isolation and Solitude, Greek *Gospel of Thom.*

In logion 61 of the *Gospel of Thomas*, we find a number of old text-critical problems to be addressed, yet once again, in this new reading of the text. The method of new philology informs the present study, which accordingly demands a 4th–5th century contextualisation in the religious milieu that penned down and read the Coptic text of the *Gospel of Thomas* in Nag Hammadi Codex II.

Keywords: New Philology, Coptic Literature, *Gospel of Thomas*, Salome, Eucharist.

Ancient Christianity

Milan Vukomanović and Bojana Radovanović, *A Quest for Epiphanius' Collyridians – The Pilgrimages of the Mother of God*.....

141

This article proposes a new hypothesis regarding the background and religious activity of the fourth-century Christian community of Collyridians, to which Epiphanius of Salamis dedicated an entire chapter of his *Panarion*. Epiphanius provides only a few details about the origin of this sect, but even this limited amount of data betrays authenticity. The heterodoxy of the Collyridians has rarely been examined in the scope of the wider religious, cultural and social-historical frameworks pertaining to Roman and Early Christian history. This context includes not only the issues of Mariology, but also women's religious service, non-Christian religious landscapes, and travel and pilgrimage in Late Antiquity. Epiphanius' account has been observed through the combined contextual, social-historical and philological lenses. In order to elucidate the origin and character of the Collyridian ritual practice, this essay has paid more attention to both the original geographical setting and the later movement of this sect, pointing to their ultimate religious destination. Our main thesis is that the Collyridians fled from Thrace and Scythia to Roman Arabia under the Gothic persecution of Christians. In the aftermath of this event, they performed their pilgrimage at the most ancient *locus sanctus* pertaining to the Virgin Mary in Judea, known as Kathisma, and situated halfway from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.

Keywords: Collyridians, Epiphanius's of Salamis *Panarion*, Heterodoxy, Kathisma, Pilgrimage.

Modernity and Christian Origins

Miriam Benfatto, *La discrezione come strategia inquisitoriale alla fine del XVIII secolo. Il caso dell' Histoire critique de Jésus Christ (1770) del barone d'Holbach*.....

167

The aim of this essay is to show one of the Church's response strategies to Paul-Henri Thiry d'Holbach's (1723–1789) book, *Histoire critique de Jésus Christ, ou, Analyse raisonnée des Évangiles. Ecce Homo* (1770) and, consequently, to the interpretation of Christianity conveyed by the text. The presentation of unpublished censorship notes, composed for the purposes of the Index and the Holy Office at the end of XVIII century, appears as a privileged point of view for the study of a particular aspect of Catholic reaction. This can be placed within the broader framework of the Church's responses and reactions to books considered heterodox and impious.

Keywords: Paul-Henri Thiry d'Holbach, *Histoire critique de Jésus Christ*, Book Censorship, Holy Office, Censorship Notes, Jesus in Modern Thought.

Apocalyptic Imageries in Contemporary American Political Discourse

- Jeanne Petrolle, *Apocalypse Never: Tony Kushner's Angels in America Counters the End of the World*..... 189

Tony Kushner's Pulitzer-prize winning play *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes* (1991–92) uses apocalyptic motifs—end times, revelation, angels, prophecy, new heaven—to analyze American politics. The two-part play laments political corruption and social cruelty while imagining the emergence of an all-inclusive, multiracial, multiethnic polis in which unlikely partners achieve unity across difference in a utopian community of care. Kushner's uses of apocalyptic demonstrate that the genre offers religious and secular authors alike a powerful symbolic vocabulary for political discourse. In the United States, apocalypse tropes are often made to serve conservative or reactionary political agendas, but Kushner's play illuminates the progressive potential of the ancient text's visual language; *Angels in America* exemplifies a variation of the genre theologian Catherine Keller calls *counter-apocalypse*.

Keywords: Tony Kushner, *Angels in America*; Gay Culture; LGBTQ Literature; Apocalypse; American Politics and the Bible.

- Erik Grayvold, *Marks and Tweets: Apocalyptic Imagery in the US Anti-Vaxxer Movement*..... 213

The article explains the reception of Revelation 13:1–14:1 by the anti-vaccination movement in the United States and how it impacts political discourse in the United States. Given the pericope's already politically charged context, the movement's current use of the text increases the text's political nature and transforms political adversaries into monsters or beasts, thus making an already polarizing issue more extreme. Initially, the anti-vaccination movement invoked the Mark of the Beast by alleging that the coronavirus vaccines carried a microchip. Later, individuals such as Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene used social media to shift the message to refer instead to vaccine passports as the Mark of the Beast to attack President Joseph Biden.

Keywords: the Mark of the Beast, Vaccines, Christian nationalism, Social media, Marjorie Taylor Green, Kanye West.

- Lorenzo Cozzi, *Apocalypse and Prophecy in Nicholas of Lyra's Commentary. Beyond the State of the Art* 241

In this article, I intend to retrace the fundamental coordinates of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* by Nicholas of Lyra (1270–1349) and its critical reception in contemporary scholarship. Noting that in the current bibliographic baggage the observations have focused exclusively on the analysis of the sources and on the spread of Nicholas' work, I therefore undertake to open a further level of analysis. The pivot of this new perspective is epitomised in the concept of prophecy, which, emerging in the conclusion of the *Commentary*, allows us to reconnect with renewed depth the work of the Lyranus to its context of provenance.

Keywords: Apocalyptic Thought, Theory of Prophecy, History of the Franciscan Order, Exegesis, John's Apocalypse, Nicholas of Lyra.

Book Reviews	261
Lynne Moss Bahr, <i>"The Time Is Fulfilled". Jesus's Apocalypticism in the Context of Continental Philosophy</i> , London, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2019 (Luca Pellarin).....	261
Jörg Frey in collaboration with Jacob Cerone, <i>Qumran and Christian Origins</i> , Waco, Baylor University Press, 2022 (Daniele Minisini).....	263
Daniele Menozzi, <i>Il potere delle devozioni. Pietà popolare e uso politico dei culti in età contemporanea</i> , Roma, Carocci, 2022 (Marco Papasidero).....	265
Rudolf Knopf, <i>Commentary on the Didache and on 1-2 Clement</i> , Eugene OR, Pickwick, 2023 (Clayton N. Jefford) .	267

Contents

Presentazione/Presentation	279
----------------------------------	-----

Christianity and China

Matteo Nicolini-Zani, <i>Esegesi interculturale nella missione cinese di fine epoca Ming: Manuel Dias Jr. e la "Spiegazione corretta" (1644) dell'iscrizione cristiana di Xi'an</i>	283
---	-----

The article presents the exegetical writings of the Jesuit missionary to China Manuel Dias Jr. (1574-1659), with particular reference to his *Correct Explanation of the Tang "Stele Eulogy on the Luminous Teaching"* (1644). It describes the nature, structure and peculiarities of exegetical approach of this work, which constitutes the first treatise in Chinese composed by a European on the Xi'an Christian inscription (781). The background of the Chinese commentarial tradition in which the literary production of the first exegete of the late Ming Jesuit China mission is placed is particularly highlighted.

Keywords: Jesuit China mission, Manuel Dias Jr., Tang Christianity, Xi'an Christian stele, Catholic apologetics.

Significance of the Jews for Modern Christian History

Cristiana Facchini, <i>Controversies and Conversations: Sarra Copia Sulam (1592-1641) and her Jewish-Christian Salon in Venice</i>	301
--	-----

This article offers an introduction to the confrontation about the "immortality of the soul" that erupted in Venice between the Jewish poetess Sarra Copia Sulam (1592-1641) and a member of her salon, the priest Baldassarre Bonifaccio.

Keywords: Sarra Copia Sulam, Baroque Venice, Jewish-Christian literary salon, immortality of the soul, Jewish-Christian relations.

The essay concerns the brief story of the Jewish Community of Udine-San Daniele del Friuli, founded on 20 January 1929 thanks to the initiative of nine heads of families, to which around 80 people joined, which remained in operation until the autumn of 1931, as it failed to obtain legal recognition by the state. In fact, following the promulgation of the Falco Law of 30 October 1930, which regulated the entire organizational structure of Italian Jewry and the subsequent Royal Decree of 24 September 1931, according to which the Jewish Community of Gorizia also included the Province of Udine, the newborn Community of Udine-San Daniele del Friuli was united with that of Gorizia. The situation of the Jews of Udine is compared with the very different situation of the Jews of Treviso, Bologna and Naples, whose communities never attempted a merger with the others present in the neighboring areas.

Keywords: Jews, Emancipation, Synagogue, Rabbis, Community.

Jesus Research

- Mauro Pesce, *Anonymous Sayings, and Sayings Attributed to Jesus* 347

Many sayings were attributed to Jesus by some among the earliest written works of Jesus's followers: the letters of Paul, the four canonized gospels, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, and by various other writings. Some sayings attributed to Jesus in these early works of Jesus's followers are with reasonable certainty not of Jesus, and have been falsely attributed to him (e.g. Matt 18:15–17). Among the sayings attributed to Jesus, quite a few also exist as sayings not attributed to him and transmitted anonymously. This occurs in the letters of Paul, the Epistle of James, the *Didachè* and several other early Christian writings. Finally, many sayings that are transmitted as anonymous in one work, are attributed to Jesus in other works. The article wants to face the following question: How to explain that many sayings transmitted anonymously some early Christian writings, are instead attributed to Jesus in other early Christian works.

Keywords: Historical Jesus, Synoptic Gospel, Paul's Letters, *Didachè*, Epistle of James.

- John S. Kloppenborg, *Attributing Unattributed Sayings* 357

The burden of this response is to suggest that in addressing the phenomenon of unattributed sayings, we must be prepared to parse sayings into various categories – commonplaces, floating or fully mobile sayings, striking maxims needing authorization, and saying that are sufficiently distinctive, like Yogi Berra's utterances, that they need no attribution.

Keywords: Unattributed sayings, various categories of sayings, commonplaces, mobile sayings, distinctive sayings.

Early Christianity

- Ralph J. Korner, *The Steady Hand of an Ecstatic Seer, Part 2: John's Literary Genius in Communicating His Visionary Apokalypsis* 367

The apparently disorganized visionary content of the book of Revelation suggests a disoriented and perhaps even psychotropic visionary. Nonetheless, the ecstatic Seer's literary record of

that apocalyptic journey is a multi-valent masterpiece that uses three literary devices simultaneously to recount a linear narrative and a reiterative structure. This two-part article focuses, in part 1, upon how John's use of the "space/time referent" and the linguistic equivalents of the two clauses "and I saw" and "after these things I saw" also elucidate coherent structures for Hebrew prophetic visionary texts, and, in part 2, upon how they provide structure for Jewish apocalypses. Distinctive to John's Apocalypse, however, is the fact that it leverages those three literary devices to create a reiterative structure that serves implicitly to reinforce his explicit statements to his seven *ekklesia* communities that the return of Jesus the Jewish Christos was imminent.

Keywords: Revelation, Apocalypse, Prophecy, Structure, Vision, Literary devices.

Ángel Narro – Israel Muñoz Gallarte, *A New Edition, Translation, and Commentary of the Abridged Version of the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas in the Ms. Pet. Φ 906 (Z1) [BHG s.n.]*

403

This article presents a new edition of the Greek text, with translation and commentary of the abridged version of the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* in the ms. Pet. Φ 906 (Z1). This manuscript was already known and used by Bonnet in his critical edition of the Greek *Acts of Thomas*. However, it is of major interest for a better understanding of the transmission of the text. The discovery of new Byzantine manuscripts containing different versions of the first two acts of Thomas and his martyrdom justifies the need of an isolated analysis of this text.

Keywords: Greek *Acts of Thomas*, Martyrdom, Edition, Translation, Early Christianity.

Christianity and Modernity

Simon C. Mimouni, *Politiques de la religion: prophétismes, messianismes, millénarismes*

427

In this "debate," which encompasses both a discussion and a conference, I would like to continue my research published under the title *Politiques de la religion*. To do so, I would like to address the questions that have shaped and continue to, in some way, influence research on the origins of Christianity between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, particularly in German New Testament exegesis. However, I will not delve into this question, which would have to be examined in its entirety, instead I will examine it indirectly by considering only some of the concepts that have driven it. Obviously, the elements included in this "debate" do not directly pertain to the history of the origins of Christianity, except through the epistemological premises of research, indeed of all research. To understand the past, the historian must navigate through the present and its patterns of thought, especially those related to political and cultural, which are often silent, not if not insidious, and constantly evolving. Therefore, he or she must keep his or her mind on the alert, keeping abreast of new concepts that may emerge, especially in philosophical circles, without necessarily allowing himself or herself to be contaminated by them.

Keywords: Religion and Politics, Prophetism, Messianism, Millenarism, History of Judaism.

Lucia Felici, *Il sacro vincolo, una nuova donna. I trattati sul matrimonio di Erasmo da Rotterdam*

455

This essay analyses Erasmus of Rotterdam's two treatises on marriage, the *Encomium matrimonii* and the *Institutio Christiani matrimonii*, and more briefly, their fortunes. These are two very innovative texts in terms of the conjugal bond and woman, which became disruptive in the

275

historical context marked by the rise of the Protestant Reformation. Marriage was considered by Erasmus to be a sacred and natural bond, superior to ecclesiastical celibacy, the abolition of which was proposed, and central to individuals, the State and the new Christian society. Given its significance, the humanist legitimised divorce in the case of unsuccessful unions. The valorisation of marriage also entailed the definition of a less traditional view of women.

Keywords: marriage, female condition, divorce, ecclesiastical celibacy, family, education, religious and social renewal, morality, anticlericalism, irenicism, naturalism, rationalism.

Elena Cerqua, <i>An Amorous Rebellion. Cainitic Love and Conflictual History in Miguel de Unamuno</i>	485
---	-----

Conflict and violence are at the core of Miguel de Unamuno’s philosophical and political thought. A never-ending dialectic is the method of his reasoning according to his conception of life as a continuous fight of opposites, preferred to the deathly stillness of any synthesis. Considering this theoretical frame, the present paper argues that the unamunian antagonistic relationship among fellow citizens is shaped on a Biblical paradigm, as he touches on the Abel and Cain myth and on the foundation of the City of Enoch (Gen 4:1–18). According to Unamuno, indeed, in violence resides the origin of civilization and its prosecution in the State, composed of loving “brothers” fighting a metaphorical civil war. At this regard, the paper theorizes the influence of the First Johannine Epistle and proposes that Unamuno’s hateless reinterpretation of fratricide is combined with the Heraclitean conception of global harmony as πόλεμος, which prevents the end of collision by rendering it perpetual and reciprocal.

Keywords: Unamuno, Cain, fratricide, war, dialectic.

Books’ Discussion

Andrea Annese, <i>Loisy, Harnack, Troeltsch and the Comparative Study of Religions: Notes on a Recent Volume</i>	507
--	-----

Alfred Loisy (1857–1940) is a key figure for the history of Christianity and the history of exegesis. While his involvement in the so-called “Modernist crisis” and his role as a Biblical scholar have been the subject of several publications, his role in the history of religions and in the historical development of religious comparativism is far less investigated. A recent monograph by Annelies Lannoy (*Alfred Loisy and the Making of History of Religions*, 2020) is now helping to fill this scholarly lacuna. In the present article, I will offer some considerations on Lannoy’s book, taking it as a starting point to develop some additional thoughts on the theoretical and methodological connections that Loisy has with John Henry Newman and with Ernst Troeltsch. In particular, I will address Troeltsch’s “relativization” of Christianity and its relation to religious comparativism. I will also recall the pivotal debate between Loisy and Harnack.

Keywords: Alfred Loisy, Ernst Troeltsch, Adolf von Harnack, John Henry Newman, comparative study of religions, historical “relativism.”

Book Reviews

Clare K. Rothschild, <i>The Muratorian Fragment: Text, Translation, Commentary</i> , Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2022 (Andrea Annese)	519
---	-----

Tobias Nicklas, Jens Schröter (eds.), <i>Authoritative Writings in Early Judaism and Early Christianity. Their Origin, Collection, and Meaning</i> , Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2020 (Francesco Berno)	521
Stefano Villani, <i>Making Italy Anglican. Why the Book of Common Prayer Was Translated into Italian</i> , Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022 (Lucio Biasiori)	523
Giulio Firpo, <i>Le rivolte giudaiche</i> , Bari-Roma, Laterza, 2023 (Dario Garribba).....	526
Dorothea Keller, <i>Gattung und Stil in der Vulgata des Hieronymus. Untersuchungen zur hieronymianischen Bibelübersetzung am Beispiel hebräischer Wiederholungsfiguren</i> , Göttingen, Edition Ruprecht, 2022 (Giulia Leonardi)	528
Roger D. Woodard (ed.), <i>Divination and Prophecy in the Ancient Greek World</i> , Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2023 (Daniel Ullucci)	530