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THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

EARLY CHRISTIANITY

EDB

EDIZIONI DEHONIANE BOLOGNA

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This contribution assesses the thorny issue of the literary genre of the *Letter to the Hebrews* from the vantage point of the pragmatics of communication. The analysis of the *épistolarité* of a text that has been thought by some originally to have been a letter—no matter whether fictional or real—cannot be done without an analysis of its communicative dimension. The investigation identifies and assesses the indicators of communication between persons and groups distant from each other: the initial address, the relationship between issuers and recipients (that is, between “we” and “you”), the exhortation, the final epistolary conclusion, and the articulation of the doctrinal statement and the exhortations arising therefrom. Finally, it is pointed out that the question of the *épistolarité* of this text cannot be validated through the history of its reception. Has this text indeed been received and understood as a letter through the centuries?

Steeve Bélanger, *L'Épître aux Hébreux dans le contexte
spéculatif sur la figure de Melchisédech durant la période
du Second Temple de Jérusalem (II^e siècle avant notre ère –
I^{er} siècle de notre ère)*

31-77

The figure of Melchizedek is one of the most enigmatic of the biblical traditions. Between the second century B.C.E. and the end of the first century C.E., this figure reappeared in different Judean and Christian traditions according to two extremely different speculative perspectives. The first one presented Melchizedek as a human figure, the second as a “suprahuman” figure. The presentation of the figure of Melchizedek by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews obliges one to consider two different things. First, the Epistle to the Hebrews participates in the Judean discussions and speculations of the Second Temple period about Melchizedek. Second, the presentation of the figure of Melchizedek as a “suprahuman” figure in this text is close to but extremely different from other “suprahuman” traditions about Melchizedek. Consequently, the *Epistle to the Hebrews* cannot be understood as a text external to Second Temple Judaism, but must be understood as an original text on Melchizedek internal to Second Temple Judaism.

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| Simon C. Mimouni, <i>Le «grand prêtre» Jésus «à la manière de Melchisédech» dans l'Épître aux Hébreux</i> | 79-105 |
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The *Epistle to the Hebrews* poses a number of important problems as to its author, dating, and location as well as to its cultural and religious environment, on which no consensus exists among the exegetes and historians. It attaches such importance to the Messianic doctrine of the priesthood of Christ that it can be considered as a whole to be a preaching centered on this theme. Thus, Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, is designated as the prominent “priest” (Heb 10:21) or as the eminent “high priest” (Heb 4:14)—assertions that rely on a critical discussion of the priesthood, the sanctuary, and its sacrifices, topics that occupy the central part of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* (Heb 3:1 - 10:39).

Early Christianity

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| Simon Buttica, <i>Paul et la culture antique de l'honneur. Contexte et enjeux de la justification par la foi dans la Lettre aux Galates</i> | 107-128 |
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Following in the footsteps of Krister Stendahl, the *New Perspective on Paul* regularly interpreted the Pauline teaching on justification in a missiological and ecclesiological sense as a solution to the problem of the inclusion of the pagans—beside the Jews—in the seed of Abraham and of their rights in the Church. However, if the setting of the Pauline Gospel of grace is surely the mission to the non-Jews, the response made by the apostle to this question is not necessarily on the same level. On the contrary, as seen in the *Letter to the Galatians*, it is firstly an anthropological one (e.g. 1:10–12; 2:15–21; etc.), though an anthropology that should not be linked to the medieval dramatic of the conscience but to the Mediterranean code of honour. In short, it is the man of Antiquity and his *cursus honorum* that Paul targets in his argumentation and it is in this specific context that the present article aims to interpret his Gospel of justification.

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| Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte & Leendert F. Groenendijk, <i>Family Discourse, Identity Formation, and the Education of Children in Earliest Christianity</i> | 129-149 |
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In the second century Christians began to educate and instruct their children in a Christian fashion. This new form of *paideia* signifies a step in the formation of Christianity as an independent social movement. It originated as an *interpretatio christiana* of existing cultural patterns, and had its roots in both the family discourse that from the outset was constitutive for the early Christian movement and the instruction of newcomers to that movement. Existing cultural patterns were incorporated into the new movement, and thus a new, Christian practice of *paideia* came about.

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| Cambry Pardee, <i>Peter's Tarnished Image: Scribal Polishing in the Gospel of Luke (Ms. 0171)</i> | 151-174 |
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Peter's failures as a disciple are numerous and severe, yet Peter came to be regarded as a “pillar” of the Church. For the most part, the Church fathers and early exegetes embraced or explained Peter's shortcomings, but at least one early scribe was dissatisfied with the tarnished image of Peter in the *Gospel of Luke*. This paper analyzes a third-century manuscript of *Luke* (MS 0171) that has been strategically altered in order to polish the reflection of Peter in the Passion Narrative. Four significant omissions transform the episode and soften the harsh depiction of Peter. A full transcription of the *Luke* fragments is included. Such a scribe and manuscript could plausibly be situated in the anti-Peter sphere of heterodox Christianities in Egypt and the East or in the pro-Peter, proto-orthodox milieu of Rome and the West. This fragmentary manuscript is a testament to the dynamic role of scribes in the transmission of Gospel tradition.

Religion in Modern Age

- Cristiana Facchini, *Luigi Luzzatti e la teoria della tolleranza religiosa. Per una storia del consumo pubblico delle scienze delle religioni* 175-200

Luigi Luzzatti was one of the most important political figures of Liberal Italy. Raised in a Jewish family from Venice, Luzzatti was an outstanding economist and expert of constitutional law. Moreover, he was seriously engaged with matters pertaining to the conflict between Church and State that deeply characterized Italian and European history. This article aims to present his theory of religious tolerance, as he conceived it during his long career. Moreover, the article highlights a new insight into the role the study of religion played in nineteenth century Europe, claiming that, despite the conflict between Church and State and the alleged path to secularization, theories of religion played an important role in the public debate, often connecting scholarly research with political reforms and policies.

Discussion of Books

- Luca Arcari, Daniele Tripaldi, Thomas Witulski, *Discussion of Thomas Witulski's Works on dating the Revelation* 201-236

- Adriana Destro, Mauro Pesce, Claudio Gianotto, Luca Arcari, *Discussion of the Book of Adriana Destro – Mauro Pesce, Il racconto e la scrittura. Introduzione alla lettura dei vangeli*, Roma, Carocci, 2014 237-257

- Simon C. Mimouni, Claudio Gianotto, Mauro Pesce, *Discussion of the Book of Simon C. Mimouni, Jacques le Juste, frère de Jésus de Nazareth. Histoire de la communauté nazoréenne/chrétienne de Jérusalem du I^{er} au IV^e siècle*, Paris, Bayard, 2015 259-288

Book Reviews 289-303

D.T. Roth, *The Text of Marcion's Gospel* ("New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents", 49), Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2015 (Maurizio Girolami).

A. Sestili (a cura di), *Sesto Giulio Africano. I Cesti*, introduzione, traduzione e note, testo greco a fronte, Roma, Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, 2014; *Le Chronographiae. Le scritture del tempo. Frammenti e testimonianze*, introduzione, traduzione e note, testo greco a fronte, Roma, Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, 2015 (Osvalda Andrei).

Emanuela Colombi (a cura di), *Le passioni dei martiri aquileiesi e istriani*. 2 volumi ("Fonti per la storia della Chiesa in Friuli, serie medievale", 14), Roma, Istituto storico italiano per il Medioevo - Udine, Istituto Pio Paschini per la storia della Chiesa in Friuli, 2013 (Riccardo Macchioro).