

ALESSANDRO SAGGIORO  
ANDREA NICOLOTTI  
ELISABETTA BIANCO  
MARIA G. CASTELLO  
ADELE MONACI CASTAGNO  
LUIGI PROVERO  
PAOLO COZZO  
SILVIA CAVICCHIOLI  
MAURO FORNO  
PAOLO SODDU  
IGOR SPANÒ  
ROBERTO ALCIATI  
EMILIANO R. URCIUOLI  
MAURO MORMINO  
FABRIZIO FERRARI  
CRISTIANA FACCHINI  
MARIA FALLICA  
CHIARA GHIDINI  
MARINELLA CERAVOLO  
ELENA ZOCCA  
EMMA FATTORINI  
MARIO GANDINI  
VALERIO SEVERINO

ISSN 0393-8417



SMSR

88/1 (2022) *Ritualità e cerimonie nella storia*

# SMSR

STUDI E MATERIALI DI STORIA DELLE RELIGIONI

88/1 (2022)

## Ritualità e cerimonie nella storia

Dipartimento di Storia, Antropologia, Religioni, Arte, Spettacolo



Morcelliana

# STUDI E MATERIALI DI STORIA DELLE RELIGIONI

Fondata nel 1925 da Raffaele Pettazzoni

88/1 - GENNAIO-GIUGNO 2022

DIRETTORE RESPONSABILE / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Alessandro Saggioro

VICEDIRETTORE / DEPUTY EDITOR: Sergio Botta

CAPOREDATTORE / CHIEF OF EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Marianna Ferrara

COMITATO DI REDAZIONE / EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Julian Bogdani, Paola Buzi, Alberto Camplani, Tessa Canella, Anna Maria Gloria Capomacchia, Francesca Cocchini, Carla Del Zotto, Serena Di Nepi, Pietro Ioly Zorattini, Mara Matta, Caterina Moro, Giulia Piccaluga, Emanuela Prinzivalli, Federico Squarcini, Lorenzo Verderame, Claudio Zamagni

SEGRETARIA DI REDAZIONE / EDITORIAL SECRETARIAT: Andrea Annese, Ludovico Battista, Francesco Berno, Marinella Ceravolo, Angelo Colonna, Maria Fallica, Arduino Maiuri, Valerio Salvatore Severino, Maurizio Zerbini

COMITATO SCIENTIFICO / ADVISORY BOARD: Rossana Barcellona (Università di Catania), Alessandro Bausi (Universität Hamburg), Philippe Blauddé (Université d'Angers), Carlo G. Cereti (Sapienza Università di Roma), Riccardo Contini (Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli), Maddalena Del Bianco (Università di Udine), Francisco Díez de Velasco (Universidad de La Laguna), Jean-Daniel Dubois (Paris, EPHE), Giovanni Filoramo (Università di Torino), Armin W. Geertz (University of Århus), Gaetano Lettieri (Sapienza Università di Roma), Bruce Lincoln (University of Chicago), Christoph Markschies (Humboldt-Universität, Berlin), Annick Martin (Université de Rennes 2), Russell McCutcheon (University of Alabama), Santiago Carlos Montero Herrero (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), Enrico Norelli (Université de Genève), Guilhem Olivier (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), Tito Orlandi (Sapienza Università di Roma), Giulia Sfameni Gasparro (Università di Messina), Paolo Siniscalco (Sapienza Università di Roma), Natale Spineto (Università di Torino), Kocku von Stuckrad (Universiteit van Amsterdam), Michel Tardieu (Collège de France), Roberto Tottoli (Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli), Hugh Urban (Ohio State University), Ewa Wipszycka (University of Warszawa), Elena Zocca (Sapienza Università di Roma)

---

*Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni perseguono nel loro campo speciale i fini della scienza e della cultura. Alla scienza storica contribuiscono facendo oggetto di storia la religione nel suo svolgimento. Alla cultura schiudono più larghi orizzonti, promuovendo una maggiore partecipazione del pensiero italiano alla conoscenza di forme e momenti di civiltà meno prossimi e meno noti.*

(Raffaele Pettazzoni 1925)

DIREZIONE: Dipartimento di Storia, Antropologia, Religioni, Arte, Spettacolo  
Sapienza - Università di Roma - Piazzale Aldo Moro 5 - 00185 Roma  
Fax 06 49913718 e-mail: smsr@uniroma1.it

## CONDIZIONI DI ABBONAMENTO

Anno 2022 (due fascicoli)

Italia € 40,00

Estero € 65,00

MODALITÀ DI PAGAMENTO / HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

- Bonifico: BPER Banca - Iban IT96M0538711205000042708552  
Causale: Abbonamento "SMSR" anno ...
- Ordine tramite sito web: [www.morcelliana.net](http://www.morcelliana.net)

PER INFORMAZIONI E RICHIESTE

Editrice Morcelliana S.r.l.

Via G. Rosa, 71 - 25121 Brescia / Tel. 030 46451 – Fax 030 2400605

E-mail: [abbonamenti@morcelliana.it](mailto:abbonamenti@morcelliana.it)

AMMINISTRAZIONE / SALES MANAGEMENT

Editrice Morcelliana – Via G. Rosa 71 – 25121 Brescia, Italy

Tel. +39 030 46451 – Fax +39 030 2400605

E-mail: [redazione@morcelliana.it](mailto:redazione@morcelliana.it) - [abbonamenti@morcelliana.it](mailto:abbonamenti@morcelliana.it)

Sito internet: [www.morcelliana.it](http://www.morcelliana.it)

L'I.V.A. è assolta dall'editore ai sensi dell'art. 74 lett. C. DPR 633/72

Autorizzazione de Tribunale di Roma n. 6732 del 10/02/1959

© 2022 Editrice Morcelliana S.r.l.

Stampa: LegoDigit srl - Via Galileo Galilei 15/1 - 38015 Lavis (TN)

INDICIZZAZIONI / INDEXING

*Ebsco Publishing*

*Bibliographic Information Base in Patristics (BIBP)*

*European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH)*

*Index to the Study of Religions Online (Brill Publisher)*

*Old Testament Abstracts Online (OTA)*

*Catholic Biblical Quarterly Online (CBQ)*

*Torrossa*

*Gli scritti proposti per la pubblicazione sono sottoposti a doppio referaggio anonimo*

*I fascicoli della rivista sono monografici*

# STUDI E MATERIALI DI STORIA DELLE RELIGIONI

Fondata nel 1925 da Raffaele Pettazzoni

88/1 (2022)

**Ritualità e cerimonie nella storia**

pubblicati dal Dipartimento di Storia, Antropologia,  
Religioni, Arte, Spettacolo  
Sapienza - Università di Roma

MORCELLIANA

*Stampato con il contributo della Sapienza Università di Roma*

*Finito di stampare nel maggio 2022*

---

## Sommario

ALESSANDRO SAGGIORO, <i>Mario Gandini, in memoriam</i> .....	5
--	---

### SEZIONE MONOGRAFICA

#### *Ritualità e cerimonie nella storia*

ANDREA NICOLOTTI, <i>Ritualità e cerimonie nella storia. Una prospettiva feconda</i> .....	9
ELISABETTA BIANCO, <i>Ritualità e cerimonie dei re spartani</i> .....	23
MARIA G. CASTELLO, <i>Il cerimoniale imperiale tardoantico tra liturgia e prassi politica</i> .....	40
ADELE MONACI CASTAGNO, <i>Adventus e traslazione di reliquie a Uzalis tra realtà storica e memoria</i> .....	52
LUIGI PROVERO, <i>San Carlo Magno: la costruzione cerimoniale di una centralità politica</i> .....	67
PAOLO COZZO, <i>L'articolazione del calendario liturgico e l'organizzazione del cerimoniale di corte nell'Europa di età moderna</i> .....	88
SILVIA CAVICCHIOLI, <i>Simboli patriottici in movimento. Riti funebri all'alba della nazione italiana</i> .....	103
MAURO FORNO, <i>Chiesa e rituali di traslazione delle reliquie durante il Ventennio fascista</i> .....	121
PAOLO SODDU, <i>I funerali nella repubblica dei partiti. Da De Gasperi a Craxi</i> .....	135

### SAGGI / ESSAYS

IGOR SPANÒ, <i>“Una forma leggiadra”. Simboli sessuali dell'altalena in India nel rito del mahāvratā e in alcune pratiche contemporanee</i> .....	151
ROBERTO ALCIATI - EMILIANO R. URCIUOLI, <i>The Parvenu and the Quixote. A Bourdieuan Reading of Ignatius of Antioch, To the Philadelphians 8</i> .....	176
MAURO MORMINO, <i>La Passio antica (BHG 1272z) di Menodora, Metrodora e Ninfodora martiri a Pythia Therma in Bitinia</i> .....	196

FABRIZIO FERRARI, <i>Il cuore e le malattie cardiache nella medicina esorcistica vedica</i> .....	222
CRISTIANA FACCHINI, <i>Seeing Religion. Religious Diversity and Urbanity</i> .....	242
MARIA FALICA, <i>Rewriting the Continental Reformation for the Italian Public. The Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans by Antonio Brucioli</i> .....	265
CHIARA GHIDINI, <i>The Song of No Hindrance. Liang Hanyi as Buddhist writer</i> .....	281
MARINELLA CERAVOLO, <i>L'agency della sacerdotessa-EN del dio Nanna a Ur tra religione, economia, politica e cultura</i> .....	298

#### CONFERENZE / LECTURES

ELENA ZOCCA, <i>Il pianto di Maria: storia di un'assenza, genesi di una presenza. Riflessioni in margine alla nuova edizione di Morte e Pianto rituale di Ernesto De Martino</i> .....	323
--	-----

#### NOTE / NOTES

EMMA FATTORINI, <i>La cristianità tra pace e guerra. I due volti di papa Pacelli</i> .....	345
CORA PRESEZZI, « <i>Compareat in spiritu in valle Iosaphat</i> ». <i>Nota a partire da un recente volume di Guido Dall'Olio</i> .....	359

#### MATERIALI / MATERIALS

MARIO GANDINI, <i>Raffaele Pettazzoni nella memoria e negli studi (iv). Dal 1966 al 1968</i> .....	373
--	-----

#### RECENSIONI / REVIEWS

Jon Keune, *Shared Devotion, Shared Food: Equality and the Bhakti-Caste Question in Western India* [Ludovica Tozzi], p. 391 - Renaud Gagné, *Cosmography and the Idea of Hyperborea in Ancient Greek. A Philology of Worlds* [Mariachiara Giorda], p. 395 - Stefania Palmisano - Nicola Pannofino, *Religione sotto spirito. Viaggio nelle nuove spiritualità* [Marco Papasidero], p. 398

## Saggi / Essays

# The Parvenu and the Quixote

## A Bourdieuan Reading of Ignatius of Antioch, *To the Philadelphians* 8

### 1. Foreword

If anyone has been able to lure priests and scholars away from Paul and Jesus, it is Ignatius<sup>1</sup>. Except for the Pauline epistles and the canonized gospels, hardly a body of early Christian literature has drawn together more academic debate and denominational strife than the corpus of extant letters of Ignatius of Antioch<sup>2</sup>. With this article, however, our aim is not to carve out space for ourselves within the densely populated field of “Ignatian studies”. We cannot claim to be specialists of Ignatius. Nor do we expect to be admitted into the club after the publication of this paper. Therefore, this short introduction will neither unfold the state-of-the-art on all the Ignatian issues that surround our subject matter nor belabor the many discussions that set the stage for our own argument. We will proceed in a different way. We will define the nature (§ 2.) and set the limits (§ 3.) of our scientific interests in a specific topic of the Ignatian research without pretending to convince ourselves or the reader that what we think we know about the biographically elusive figure of Ignatius of Antioch builds on a historically well-founded, disciplinary repository of knowledge. Rather, we set ourselves a different goal.

The reason why the Ignatian corpus has, for so long, garnered such attention and sparked such heated debate is simple: Ignatius’<sup>3</sup> received letters are in many ways our earliest witness for a whole range of phenomena that not only shape our knowledge about who was a Christian then but also part the ways in which Christianities continue define who is a Christian today. One of these big Ignatian issues – namely, what makes somebody a Christian rather than a Jew – is the problem most at stake in *To the Philadelphians* 8, a chapter not infrequently considered «one of the most intriguing glimpses gi-

---

<sup>1</sup> For the reasons explained in the conclusion, this article is a fruit of a joint effort. However, pp. 176-185 are to be attributed to Roberto Alciati, while pp. 186-194 to Emiliano R. Urciuoli. We are grateful to Paul M. Kurtz and Stephen L. Young for offering extensive feedbacks and insightful remarks, as well as for helping the text live up to the expectations we placed in it.

<sup>2</sup> Literature on Ignatius is legion. For an idea of its magnitude, see the bibliography collected and organized by Charles Munier for the period from 1870 to 1988 (C. Munier, *Où en est la question d’Ignace d’Antioche? Bilan d’un siècle de recherches 1870-1988*, in *ANRW* II.27.1 [ed. W. Haase, De Gruyter, Berlin 1993], pp. 357-484) and most recently updated by M. Vinzent, *Writing the History of Early Christianity: From Reception to Retrospection*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2019, pp. 448-464.



ven us of debate in the church early in the second century»<sup>3</sup>. In what follows we will capitalize on such longstanding scholarly interest in Ignatius' *To the Philadelphians* 8 to offer a Bourdieuan re-description of its rhetoric and social locations. The goal is to leverage our re-description as an opportunity to interrogate the common pattern in Early Christian studies of singling out one Christian voice (or text) within competitive ancient social spaces and proceeding as though Early Christian materials represent unique moments in history. Our re-description will encourage de-familiarizing our Christian sources so that we can treat them as examples of broader social phenomena. By documenting the competitive and rhetorical textures of *To the Philadelphians* 8, we will gain insights into questions and phenomena that go far beyond church history, history of Christianity, and even history of religion (§ 4.).

## 2. Unlocking Ignatius

After expounding the core of his ecclesiastical (or ideological) agenda – that is, «do nothing without the bishop» and «be imitators of Jesus Christ»<sup>4</sup> – a Christ-believing writer, Ignatius by name, offers the following instructions to the members of a Christ group based at Philadelphia, a small city of commercial importance situated in Lydia, Asia Minor:

«I, then, did my part as a man set on union. Where there is division and anger, God does not dwell. All, then, who repent the Lord forgives, if they turn in repentance to the unity of God and the council of the bishop. I believe the grace of Jesus Christ who will remove every bond from you. I exhort you to do nothing from partisanship but in accordance with Christ's teaching. For I heard some say, "If I do not find (it) in the archives (ἐν τοῖς ἀρχείοις) I do not believe (it to be) in the gospels". And when I said, "It is written", they answered me, "That is just the question". But for me the archives (ἐμοὶ δὲ ἀρχεῖα) are Jesus Christ, the inviolable archives (τὰ ἄθικτα ἀρχεῖα) are his cross and death and his resurrection and faith through him – in which, through your prayers, I want to be justified»<sup>5</sup>.

Writing from Troas<sup>6</sup>, the author refers to a dispute in which he reportedly engaged with certain unnamed people in Philadelphia as he was passing through the city and met some local Christ believers. As we shall see it later, the word «archives», repeated here three times, does not appear again in the body of the letter. Nor is the bizarre formula «for me the archives are Jesus Christ» to be found in other early Christian writings before or after the (disputed) date of this statement. Herein lies the oddity and thereby the uncanny charm of this text for the exclusive club of specialists. Far less odd, instead, is

<sup>3</sup> W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius and the Archives*, in «Harvard Theological Review» 71 (1978), pp. 97-106: p. 97. See also J. Speigl, *Ignatius in Philadelphia. Ereignisse und Anliegen in den Ignatius-briefen*, in «Vigiliae Christianae» 41 (1987), pp. 360-376: pp. 363-365.

<sup>4</sup> Ignatius, *Phld.* 7.2.

<sup>5</sup> Ignatius, *Phld.* 8.1-2 (transl. W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1985, pp. 204-207).

<sup>6</sup> See Ignatius, *Phld.* 11.2.

the give-and-take interplay between the claim «it is written» – a form of reference used already by Paul to frame, for Christ believers, his interpretations of events as divinely prophesied or sanctioned in Jewish scriptures<sup>7</sup> – and the Hamletic mode of casting doubt on this very point – i.e., «that is just the question». There were evidently “some” (τίνων), in Philadelphia, who were questioning critical parts of Ignatius’ preaching on Jesus since they could not ground them in the Jewish scriptures. Scholars of early Christianity feel completely at home in this report of what definitely looks like a second-century Christian rendition of a Jewish-Christian confrontation<sup>8</sup>. At this point, in fact, they start debating on whether or which kind of “Judaizing” features should be assigned to Ignatius’ opponents according to the information provided and the spatiotemporal coordinates of the text<sup>9</sup>.

Although this intermediate exchange resonates only among scholarly specialists, the style of Ignatius’ final reaction, despite its idiosyncratic lexicon, might sound familiar to many ears unacquainted with biblical and early Christian studies. Imagine a politician who, having been reminded of the overarching legal framework of his measures, defensively asserts: «My ideas and my policies are rooted in the constitution». Instead of nodding in agreement, somebody replies: «Well, are you sure? This is precisely the question!». The politician answers: «Ok, you know what? My ideas and my policies are the constitution». Put this way, such debate becomes understandable to a much wider audience than biblical scholarship or the usual readers of this journal, and perhaps familiar to a more extended family than the academic kin group of early Christian studies.

Familiarizing ourselves with past people’s “exotic” issues is only half of «the whole art of the business» that Jonathan Z. Smith has associated with a productive style of teaching religion<sup>10</sup>. The other half consists in de-familiarizing familiar subjects, that is, in exoticizing our academic/professional or everyday way of dealing with the so-called “primary sources” through established reading practices in order to find new and untested cross-temporal and cross-cultural connections. In fact, on account of our training in the discipline, the limited set of appropriate questions addressed, language used, techniques adopted, and concerns invested in scholarship on *To the*

<sup>7</sup> Rom 1.17; 1 Cor 4.6; etc. See on this S.E. Porter - C.D. Stanley (eds.), *As It Is Written: Studying Paul’s Use of Scripture*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta 2008.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., Iustinus, *Dial.* 57.

<sup>9</sup> W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius and the Archives*, cit., pp. 101-106; C.P. Hammond Bammel, *Ignatian Problems*, in «Journal of Theological Studies» 33 (1982), pp. 62-97; C. Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius of Antioch in Syria and Asia*, Edwin Mellen, New York 1992, pp. 174-179; E. Norelli, *Ignazio di Antiochia combatte veramente dei cristiani giudaizzanti?*, in G. Filoramo - C. Gianotto (eds.), *Verus Israel. Nuove prospettive sul giudeocristianesimo*, Paideia, Brescia 2001, pp. 220-264; D. Boyarin, *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick 2018, pp. 116-118.

<sup>10</sup> J.Z. Smith, *The Devil in Mr. Smith: A Conversation with Jonathan Z. Smith*, in W. Braun - R.T. McCutcheon (eds.), *Reading J.Z. Smith: Interviews & Essays*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2018, pp. 62-84: p. 70. Cf. J.Z. Smith, *On Teaching Religion: Essays by Jonathan Z. Smith*, Oxford University Press, New York 2013.

*Philadelphians* 8 has made us entirely accustomed to what is going on there. It is our conviction, instead, that the “native” features and the long-codified idiom of the letter must *become exotic again* in order to be re-apprehended, viewed, and explained in new and non-segregating fashions.

To illustrate this latter point, we propose an example. In a 2019 article, Jonathon Lookadoo moves precisely from Ignatius’ account of his dispute at Philadelphia to challenge what he describes as a «consensus position in Ignatian studies»<sup>11</sup>: namely, that Ignatius had scant interest in, and knowledge of, the Jewish scriptures, and that this lack of awareness led him «to demote [them] in order to elevate the gospel»<sup>12</sup>. Starting with sifting through almost forty years of Ignatian research<sup>13</sup>, Lookadoo does, indeed, show a certain recurrence of scholarly readings that point to the nexus between Ignatius’ exegetical abilities and his underestimation of Scriptures. Then the author ultimately summarizes his argument as follows:

«Although it is common for Ignatian scholars to interpret *Epistula ad Philadelphios* 8:2 as Ignatius’s demotion of the archives in favor of the gospel, the foundations for this interpretation appear to be less firm than usually assumed. When reading Ignatius’s narrative in the context of his letter, the more pertinent question is not Ignatius’s exegetical abilities but rather his interpretive priorities. Ignatius appeals to the gospel as the story through which the archives must be understood, but he does not thereby disparage the archives. Rather, he sets out what he sees as the proper relationships between scripture and the revelation that comes through Jesus»<sup>14</sup>.

Lookadoo then proceeds to recover Ignatius’ varying reference techniques in an attempt to showcase the latter’s «awareness of Jewish scripture»<sup>15</sup>. Two fundamental problems vitiate such an approach. First, to show that Ignatius’ familiarity with Jewish scriptures was good or even greater than usually assumed tells us rather little about how, exactly, he esteemed them. Karl Marx was, no doubt, extremely conversant with what is written in the “capitalist archives”, but he did not perform like them, nor was he persuaded that the new materialist epistemology of his scientific socialism must be grounded in the “capitalist scriptures” – that is, in the anthropology and analysis of human economy and society as provided by key classic liberal thinkers. Second, and more important for our argument here, the point made by Lookadoo against his academic opponents is, if not merely a matter of rhetoric, a *matter of nuance*, which only the shared mastery of the internal vocabulary of the discipline, along with the agreement on its inner nuances, can make it look like a substantial analytical divergence and perceived as such by colleagues. Indeed, none of the scholars Lookadoo describes as representatives of the «consensus position» ever went so far as to say Ignatius had done away

<sup>11</sup> J. Lookadoo, *Ignatius of Antioch and Scripture*, in «Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum» 23 (2019), pp. 201-227: p. 201.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibi*, p. 204.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibi*, pp. 201-203.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibi*, p. 208.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibi*, p. 209.

with the Jewish-scriptures-as-revelation in the same censorious manner as, for instance, Marcion did when he invalidated them<sup>16</sup>. Rather, by more or less centering their arguments on Ignatius' ability to cite and debate the Scriptures, these Ignatius scholars all ultimately aim to suggest that Ignatius' hierarchical arrangement of the relation between the Jewish scriptures and Christ's revelation affirms the ultimate hermeneutic primacy of the latter in a way that ends up downgrading the former as auxiliary and *ad hoc* probative material. And this is something that Lookadoo's article is not able to conclusively deny but only partially cover up with – or, better, euphemize through – the re-formulation of Ignatius' posture in the terms of «interpretive priorities».

To make things clearer, we return to the example of the cynical politician. If one's legislative acts and executive measures are elevated to the standards for understanding and enforcing the constitution – not the other way around – then the constitution, as a result, is no longer in force. In practice, it is downgraded/dethroned. Such a method might well be called «interpretive priority», instead of a disparagement of the superordinate legal framework. Still, one would probably have a hard time convincing the Supreme Court that this would not be changing the rules of the game, as an outlaw.

With this example of an intra-disciplinary conversation, we seek to stress that the logic of specialized academic debates often works to linguistically disguise major consensus under the appearance of minor disagreements. Fixation with minor differences is, indeed, what ultimately continues to grease the cogs of that machine which is specialized scholarship, and thus to keep the discursive apparatus running in the seemingly walled-off factory of the discipline. The involuntary effect is the impediment of reading strategies that, conversely, might otherwise open up a given text to cross-disciplinary interests, bring it to bear on cross-cultural issues, and shed light on cross-temporal phenomena.

As we argue, Ignatius' *To the Philadelphians* 8 should be unlocked by means of an external interpretative apparatus. On the one hand, this strategy implies an attempt to exoticize the *terms* of the intra-disciplinary debate in order to make its *themes* familiar in a more cross-cutting, trans-disciplinary way – rather than treating them as though they were incomparable human phenomena demanding and deserving *sui generis* understandings. On the other, our purpose goes beyond a simple call for comparativism predicated on a denial of the unique character of Christian sources and their problematics, which is eschewed by protectionist heuristic approaches and reverent conceptual apparatuses<sup>17</sup>. The act of unlocking Ignatius' letters should challenge the monopoly of the few scholars of antiquity versed in exegesis and with vested interests in exegetic battles in order to make the “Ignatian prob-

---

<sup>16</sup> On the issue see, e.g., J.M. Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2015; M. Vinzent, *Marcion and the Dating of the Synoptic Gospels*, Peeters, Leuven 2014.

<sup>17</sup> S.L. Young, “Let's Take the Text Seriously”: *The Protectionist Doxa of Mainstream New Testament Studies*, in «Method & Theory in the Study of Religion» 32, 4-5 (2019), pp. 328-363.

lems” resonate with the larger concerns and stances of thousands of human beings, past and present, engaged in recognition struggles and power games.

### 3. *Cognition and recognition in the battle over the archives*

Before unlocking Ignatius, we have to draw the boundaries of our engagement with «Ignatian problems»<sup>18</sup>. Several debated issues of Ignatian research intersect at *To the Philadelphians* 8. Yet their impingement on our interpretation of the text varies greatly and thus we will only focus on those that are integral to our argument. From the general to the specific, an inexhaustive list of interrelated discussions reads as follows:

1. the historical enigma of the author (i.e., did a second-century leader of at least a fraction of Syrian Christ groups named Ignatius<sup>19</sup> ever exist? Did he ever pass through Philadelphia as a prisoner under custody en route to martyrdom in Rome and actually engage in the confrontation later reported to some Philadelphian Christ-believers?)<sup>20</sup>;

2. the dating and the authenticity of the letter (the two aspects relate to each other and to the question of priority and authenticity of the so-called middle recension of Ignatius’ literary corpus)<sup>21</sup>;

<sup>18</sup> H. Bammel, *Ignatian Problems*, cit.

<sup>19</sup> See Ignatius, *Rom.* 2.2 (τὸν ἐπίσκοπον Συρίας).

<sup>20</sup> Since the mid-nineteenth century, the question of the life of the historical Ignatius has been strictly connected to the issue of authenticity and common authorship of the earliest corpus of letters transmitted under his name. Within the last fifty years of the research, what is generally recognized as the first most serious challenge to the historicity of an early bishop-figure who authored, among other letters, *To the Philadelphians* has come from R. Joly, *Le dossier d’Ignace d’Antioche*, Éditions de l’Université de Bruxelles, Bruxelles 1979. According to Joly, Ignatius bishop of Antioch is an invented figure, his journey to martyrdom is pure fiction, and *To the Philadelphians* is a forgery that belongs to a pseudepigraphic corpus of letters produced in the late second century. For a critique of this position, see A. Brent, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Martyr Bishop and the Origin of Monarchical Episcopacy*, T & T Clark, London 2007, pp. 109-119; E. Norelli, *Χριστιανισμός ε χειριστιανός in Ignazio di Antiochia e la cronologia delle sue lettere*, in M.B. Durante Mangoni - M. Vitelli - D. Garribba (eds.), *Gesù e la storia. Percorsi sulle origini del cristianesimo*, Il Pozzo di Giacobbe, Trapani 2015, pp. 171-189.

<sup>21</sup> Over the last two decades, dating options have ranged from the first to the last quarter of the second century: e.g., 110-130 (E. Norelli, *La tradition paulinienne dans les lettres d’Ignace*, in J. Schröter - S. Buttica - A. Dettwiler [eds.], *Receptions of Paul in Early Christianity: The Person of Paul and His Writings Through the Eyes of His Early Interpreters*, De Gruyter, Berlin - Boston 2018, pp. 519-552); about 135 (A. Brent, *Ignatius of Antioch and the Second Sophistic: A Study of an Early Christian Transformation of Pagan Culture*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2006); 140s (T.D. Barnes, *The Date of Ignatius*, in «The Expository Times», 120, 3 [2008], pp. 119-130); 165-175 (T. Lechner, *Ignatius adversus Valentinianos? Chronologische und theologiegeschichtliche Studien zu den Briefen des Ignatius von Antiochien*, Brill, Leiden 1999); 170s (R. Hübner - M. Vinzent, *Der Paradox Eine. Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert*, Brill, Leiden 2019); M. Vinzent, *Writing the History*, cit.); around 180 (O. Zwierlein, *Die Urfassungen der Martyria Polycarpi et Pionii und das Corpus Polycarpianum. Vol. 2: Textgeschichte und Rekonstruktion. Polykarp, Ignatium und der Redaktor Ps.-Pionius*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2014). The situation is equally confusing for the underlying question of the authenticity of Ignatius’ letters in their generally accepted form, that is, as presented to us in a seven-letter corpus called “middle recension.” Since the end of the nineteenth century, the latter is considered the oldest and the genuine among the three extant collections of letters transmitted under the name of Ignatius (the other two textual traditions of the letters are called “long” and “short

3. the choice between the alternative readings «ἀρχαίους ... ἀρχεῖα ... ἀρχεῖα» and «ἀρχαίοις... ἀρχαῖα... ἀρχαῖα», that is, between «archives» and «ancient things»;

4. the number and geographical provenance of Ignatius' opponents in general<sup>22</sup>;

5. the salient religious traits of Ignatius' opponents in the dispute reported in *To the Philadelphians* 8, in particular;

6. the actual matter of disagreement (i.e., do Ignatius' opponents refer to something specifically *not* «written» and, if so, what exactly?)<sup>23</sup>.

Apart from these six vexed questions, we have omitted other minor Ignatian problems that also cluster around the particular dispute reported in *To the Philadelphians* 8. Yet only points 3 and 5 intersect with our purposes and thus demand a clear position. For the rest, we shall content ourselves with the following assumptions on where, when, and what: somewhere between the 120s and the 170s CE, a writer calling himself Ignatius and claiming to be in chains for Christ<sup>24</sup> at Troas addressed by letter some members of the Christ group in Philadelphia and recalled that, during his stay in the city, he confronted a group of local Christ believers who had cast doubt on his preaching of Jesus as Christ. In what follows we will focus on the putative dispute over the relationship between the author's belief in the «Christ's sufficiency»<sup>25</sup> as supreme mediator between God and humankind, on the one hand, and some previous authoritative writings, on the other. To do so, we need to nail down precisely what kinds of authoritative written texts were at stake (point 3) and what relationship Ignatius' opponents were likely to have with them (point 5).

---

recension"). However, in the last fifty years, the «modern consensus» (W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, cit., p. 4) on the authenticity of the middle recension has been continually challenged. For a detailed overview and critique of the dissenting positions, see A. Brent, *Ignatius of Antioch*, cit., pp. 95-143. The middle recension contains six letters addressed to as many Christ groups based in six different cities (Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, Smyrna) and one letter to the bishop Polycarp of Smyrna. *To the Philadelphians* is included only in the middle and, in a different version, in the long recension.

<sup>22</sup> For an overview of the debate over how many forms of "errors" Ignatius faces in his letters – with scholars' positions wavering from one to three different fronts of adversaries – see E. Norelli, *Ignazio di Antiochia combatte*, cit.

<sup>23</sup> For the observance of the Jewish law as the issue at stake, see C.K. Barrett, *Jews and Judaizers in the Epistles of Ignatius*, in R. Hamerton-Kelly - R. Scroggs (eds.), *Jews, Greeks, and Christians: Essays in Honor of W.D. Davies*, Brill, Leiden 1976, pp. 220-244; M. Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch: A Social-Scientific Approach to the Separation between Judaism and Christianity*, Routledge, London 2003, pp. 203-211 (who sociologically broadens the nature of the conflict to the question of the status of the Gentiles within the Jesus movement). Other scholars, instead, argue for a christological bone of contention such as the physical reality of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. See E. Molland, *The Heretics Combated by Ignatius of Antioch*, in «Journal of Ecclesiastical History» 5, 1 (1954), pp. 1-6; E. Norelli, *Ignazio di Antiochia combatte*, cit.; D. Boyarin, *Judaism*, cit., p. 118. Yet there is no certainty on this point either. See either: C. Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, cit., p. 176; W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius and the Archives*, cit., p. 102.

<sup>24</sup> Ignatius, *Phld.* 5.1 and 7.2.

<sup>25</sup> W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, cit., p. 210.



This twofold set of problems can be resolved through recourse to a 1978 article by William R. Schoedel entitled *Ignatius and the Archives*. Schoedel demonstrates that the «unparalleled description of the Scriptures as “archives”»<sup>26</sup> is not only more logical internally<sup>27</sup>, as already noted by other scholars and editors<sup>28</sup>, but it also coheres with a comprehensive and learned understanding of the Jewish scriptures as «public records» (δημόσια ἀναγραφαί) and «holy archives» (ἱερὰ ἀναγραφαί), as found in Greco-phone Jewish milieus of the ancient Mediterranean and documented by Josephus and, less explicitly, by Philo. Indeed, especially the Judean historian happens to clearly treat the scriptures of Israel as literary phenomena analogous to the annalists’ records, that is, archives, of the societies of the ancient Near East (Egypt, Babylonia, Phoenicia) as set in comparison with the less accurate but more stylistically adorned historiography of the Greeks<sup>29</sup>. Such parallels help identify precisely what Ignatius assumes his Philadelphian contenders might have meant in using the word ἄρχεῖα.

Equally convincing is Schoedel’s argument that Ignatius understood the fundamental error of his antagonists in Philadelphia to be their paying «altogether too much attention to the Bible»<sup>30</sup>. The core problem of their attitude towards and involvement with «the broader set of Jewish doings – including the verbal ones»<sup>31</sup> is that they were ultimately too «fascinated with the Scriptures»<sup>32</sup>. After all, neither here nor in other passages of the letter does Ignatius refer to doctrinal points of disagreement or foreground the law-observant attitude of his opponents, whereas the uncircumcision of some equally unspecified evil teachers is mentioned in *To the Philadelphians* 6.1<sup>33</sup>. This allows Schoedel to claim Ignatius was confronting non-Jewish Christ-believers who «have adopted a view of Scripture from Hellenistic Judaism and were sufficiently skilled in exegesis to be able to retort to the like of Ignatius,

<sup>26</sup> Id., *Ignatius and the Archives*, cit., p. 98.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, note 3. See also Id., *Ignatius of Antioch*, cit., p. 208, note 7. In the Ignatian letters, the form ἄρχεῖον in its variants occurs only in *Phld.* 8.2 (three times). The alternative reading ἄρχαίσις appears only in the first of the three occurrences of the term («If I do not find [it] in the ancient things, I do not believe [it to be] in the gospel») and is documented in the Greek and in the Latin (= *in veteribus*) text of the middle recension. In the other two passages, the Latin clearly finds a different Greek word than ἄρχεῖα.

<sup>28</sup> T. Zahn, *Ignatii et Polycarpi Epistulae Martyria Fragmenta*, Hinrichs, Leipzig 1876, p. 6; J.B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers, vol. 1,2: S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp*, MacMillan, London 1889<sup>2</sup>, p. 271, note 2.

<sup>29</sup> For references, see W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius and the Archives*, cit., pp. 989-101; Id., *Ignatius of Antioch*, cit., p. 208. Note that in his English translation of the letter Bart Ehrman prefers the expression «ancient records» to «archives» (B.D. Ehrman [ed.], *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 2003, p. 291).

<sup>30</sup> W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius and the Archives*, cit., p. 104.

<sup>31</sup> D. Boyarin, *Judaism*, cit., p. 115.

<sup>32</sup> W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius and the Archives*, cit., p. 105. See also C. Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, cit., 176.

<sup>33</sup> «But if anyone expounds *Ioudaismos* to you do not listen to him; for it is better to hear *Christianismos* from a man who is circumcised than *Ioudaismos* from a man uncircumcised; both of them. if they do not speak of Jesus Christ, are to me tombstones and graves of the dead on which nothing but the names of man is written» (transl. Id., *Ignatius of Antioch*, cit., p. 200; slightly modified).

“that is just the question”<sup>34</sup>. Theologically inoffensive as they may have been, they were exegetically pugnacious and competitive.

We leave aside the highly specialized question as to whether the formula “Judaizers” is an appropriate re-descriptive shorthand for the scriptural approach of these people or, as we are inclined to think, a derogatory label «applied to them by our author to discredit them and deny them a Christian identity»<sup>35</sup>. What really matters is Schoedel’s point that the main bond between these people and what Ignatius considers the Jewish way of doing things (Ἰουδαϊσμός) is *epistemological and hermeneutical*, rather than ethnic, doctrinal, or orthopractic. Moreover, this fascination-cum-hermeneutic ability supposedly entails the habit of treating Scriptures *allegorically*<sup>36</sup>. Beyond the subtleties of the terminology shared by both ancient Christian writers and scholars of early Christ religion, “allegory” means that the materials stored in the scriptural archives provide the «fundamental master code or “ultimately determining instance”»<sup>37</sup> capable of explicating every empirical fact worth believing – including, of course, the cross, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. To say it with Daniel Boyarin, according to the epistemology of the Philadelphian opponents there is no such a thing as a «nonscriptural kerygma», that is, an authoritative proclamation that does not need to rely on «the exegeting of Jewish scriptures»<sup>38</sup>.

In sum, what ultimately prevents the Philadelphian opponents from accepting Ignatius’ message is a consistent allegorical attitude performed as a conclusive epistemological practice and grounded in the master narrative of the Scriptures. Despite his rather «talismanic»<sup>39</sup> use of the appeasing formula «it is written», Ignatius does not follow the same rule. Rather, he capitalizes on the possibility that, within an allegorical episteme, any single event or series of events can potentially become – and be proclaimed as – «a master narrative in its own right»<sup>40</sup>. Therefore, building on its «distinctive» quality<sup>41</sup>, a singular empirical case can change its status from a historical signifier (to be interpreted according to a predominant code) to the «transcendental signified» that provides the code and sets out the rules of interpretation<sup>42</sup>. As Marxist literary theorist Frederic Jameson puts it, Ignatius’ Jesus becomes the new «absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation»<sup>43</sup>. Christ, the

<sup>34</sup> Id., *Ignatius and the Archives*, cit., p. 106; also Id., *Ignatius of Antioch*, cit., pp. 202, 205 and 209.

<sup>35</sup> E. Norelli, *Ignazio di Antiochia combatte*, cit., p. 242.

<sup>36</sup> W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius and the Archives*, cit., p. 105; Id., *Ignatius of Antioch*, cit., p. 209.

<sup>37</sup> F. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as Socially Symbolic Act*, Routledge, London 1983, p. 43.

<sup>38</sup> D. Boyarin, *Judaism*, cit., p. 117.

<sup>39</sup> J.M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2004, p. 37.

<sup>40</sup> F. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, cit. p. 18.

<sup>41</sup> See Ignatius’ conclusive statement that «the gospel has something distinctive (ἐξάίρετον δέ τι): the coming of the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, his suffering and resurrection» (*Phld.* 9.2) which reverses the epistemological-hermeneutical relation with the Scriptures.

<sup>42</sup> F. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, cit., p. 43.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibi*, p. 1.



“door of the Father” (cf. *John* 10:7 and 9) “through which” the parade of the patriarchs and prophets of Israel is made to “enter” (*To the Philadelphians* 9.1), is also, technically, the door of perception.

If we turn back to the scholarly debate over Ignatius’ use of Jewish scriptures, our claim becomes clearer that the «interpretive priority» of the gospel, as advocated by Lookadoo<sup>44</sup>, inevitably fades into the «disparage[ment]»<sup>45</sup> of Scriptures, which other commentators ultimately understand as a call for a less serious and systematic engagement with biblical exegesis<sup>46</sup>. Just as Jameson’s belief in «the priority of the political interpretation of literary texts»<sup>47</sup> implies the downgrading of other interpretative methods (psychoanalytic, stylistic, structural, etc.), so also Ignatius’ belief in the «Good News of Jesus’ actual physical death and resurrection»<sup>48</sup> unseats the Jewish archives from their epistemic pedestal. Their validity becomes sectorial, their applicability auxiliary, and thus the appeal to them optional. What is eventually at stake here is a feedback loop of double-authorization. Ignatius shares with other cultural producers of his time the general posture to authority that ancient, revered, and exotic texts, such as the Jewish scriptures, are loci of true knowledge and divine wisdom. Yet his specific understanding of Christ as their hermeneutic key works as a self-authorizing way for him to monopolize the legitimacy of these writings – which includes the right to suspend this legitimacy when needed.

A conflict over epistemology is unlikely to tell the whole story about *Philadelphians* 8. Together with this *clash of knowledge-systems* – whose opposition is semantically represented by the Archives as scriptural kerygma versus the Gospel as nonscriptural kerygma<sup>49</sup> – comes the *power game* between Ignatius and his opponents. The battle over the archives includes both knowledge and acknowledgment, cognition and recognition. This is the moment when the conceptual apparatus of Pierre Bourdieu’s general theory of practice comes into play. In what follows Bourdieu will be used not only to recast what scholars think they know by pointing to phenomena they are not accustomed to relating to what they know but also to broaden the interest and the appeal of this text to a larger audience. The next paragraph will introduce and deploy the two key notions of our Bourdieuan re-description of the battle over the archives. In the conclusion we will pinpoint exactly why and how this particular Ignatius reading taps into larger questions in the study of religion than those fought over by specialist of early Christ religion.

---

<sup>44</sup> J. Lookadoo, *Ignatius of Antioch*, p. 203.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibi.*, p. 208.

<sup>46</sup> T. Nicklas, *Jews and Christians? Second Century ‘Christian’ Perspectives on the ‘Parting of the Ways’*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2012, p. 126.

<sup>47</sup> F. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, cit., p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> D. Boyarin, *Judaism*, cit., p. 117.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem.*

#### 4. *Exogenous tools for unlocking Ignatius: «allodoxia» and «hysteresis»*

Not all the conceptual tools forged by Bourdieu are equally famous. As opposed to key notions in his theory of practice like «field», «habitus», «capital», and «doxa»<sup>50</sup>, the concepts of «allodoxia» and «hysteresis» (or «hysteresis effect») are far less known, if not almost completely neglected<sup>51</sup>. In this section of the article, we aim to show that, despite their small scholarly fortune, these two notions are much more useful than previously recognized to deepen and widen understanding of the clash of hermeneutics as reported in *To the Philadelphians* 8.

##### 4.1. Allodoxia

The word «allodoxia» is taken from Plato's *Theaetetus*. A special coinage built on analogy with the verb ἀλλογονόεω («to mistake one person for another»), the term appears in the opening sentence of Socrates' so-called third puzzle about false belief. As Timothy Chappell has suggested<sup>52</sup>, what is distinctive in this argument is, on the one hand, that the two objects involved in the false judgment are both existent and, on the other, that the mistake arises by inadvertency. Socrates proposes that false belief «happens when somebody *accidentally* confuses two different objects»<sup>53</sup> and explains the dynamics of this perceptual fallacy as follows:

«We say that false belief is a kind of interchange of beliefs (*allodoxia*). It happens when someone [inadvertently] exchanges one thing with another thing in his understanding and says that [the one] is [the other] [or that the one is true of the other]. In this way, the thinker will always have a belief about what it is. But he forms a belief about one thing that it is, instead of forming it about another thing that it is»<sup>54</sup>.

Allodoxia means inadvertently mis-taking someone or something for someone or something else, as «when, waiting for someone, we seem to see that person in everyone who comes along»<sup>55</sup>. Therefore, despite the apparent construction of the two words, it is not possible to take «allegory» and «allodoxia» as related descriptive categories of an interchange in perception (allodoxia) and interpretation (allegory). In Bourdieu's thinking, which aligns

<sup>50</sup> See T. Rey, *Bourdieu on Religion: Imposing Faith and Legitimacy*, Equinox, London 2007, pp. 39-56.

<sup>51</sup> Hysteresis is listed and discussed among the Bourdieuan key concepts only in C. Hardy, *Hysteresis*, in M.J. Grenfell (ed.), *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, Routledge, New York 2014, pp. 126-148. This is never the case for allodoxia.

<sup>52</sup> T.D.J. Chappell, *Reading Plato's 'Theaetetus'. Translation and Commentary*, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin 2004, pp. 166-171.

<sup>53</sup> T.D.J. Chappell, *Reading Plato's 'Theaetetus'*, cit., p. 168, original emphasis.

<sup>54</sup> Plato, *Theaet.*, 189b-c (transl. T.D.J. Chappell, *Reading Plato's 'Theaetetus'*, cit., p. 166).

<sup>55</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2000 (ed. or. 1997), p. 144.

with Plato's ordinary disparagement of *doxa*, the term *doxa* always implies something derogatory. *Doxa* does not bode well for whom it is assigned:

Aim of the concept is to indicate that somebody is mistaken in good faith. Allodoxia is misperception related to the categories of perception of the person who employs them. She or he does not have enough capacity of discrimination and she or he confuses things that a person with greater visual acuity is able to distinguish»<sup>56</sup>.

The connection between the «good faith» and the incompetence of the perceiver highlights a second important feature of Bourdieu's allodoxia. Falling into allodoxia goes unnoticed because the misperceiving agent «lack[s] the guidelines or principles needed»<sup>57</sup> to avoid misperceptions. Yet, according to Bourdieu's understanding of knowledge processes as strictly dependent on the social context, when someone gets the wrong end of the stick it is not simply because she or he is not skilled enough to realize her or his mistake. The error occurs, in fact, within a domain of knowledge whose objective conditions and dominant discourse encourage this false recognition and lead the agent to fail<sup>58</sup>. Bourdieu singles out a specific social type who happens to be particularly prone to fall victim to allodoxia: the *parvenu*.

Parvenu is any «newcomer» in a field ruled by longtime «inheritors» of its valued capital/s<sup>59</sup>. The parvenu's mastery of the shared principles of seeing, judging, and experiencing in a given social arena is too basic, rough, and derivative. However, realizing such deficiency would imply an admission to being (still) unfit, perhaps irreparably so. There is no payoff to this awareness and no short-term empowerment in learning. Consequently, misperception can easily go unnoticed. Bad taste, for instance, is likely to be taken for its opposite:

«Allodoxia, the heterodoxy experienced as if it were orthodoxy [...], in which avidity combines with anxiety, leads the petit bourgeois to take light opera for 'serious music', popularization for science, an 'imitation' for the genuine article, and to find in this [...] false recognition the source of a satisfaction which still owes something to the sense of distinction»<sup>60</sup>.

Even for the use of ad hoc categories such as «heterodoxy» and «orthodoxy» alone<sup>61</sup>, this passage provides substantial food for thought about Ignatius and his Philadelphian opponents. According to his adversaries, Ignatius' haste to get straight to Jesus leads him to lose touch with the master code of

<sup>56</sup> Id., *Sociologie générale. Volume 2. Cours au Collège de France (1983-1986)*, Seuil, Paris 2016, pp. 59-60. Our translation from the French original.

<sup>57</sup> Id., *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1984 (ed. or. 1979), p. 323.

<sup>58</sup> See Id., *Questions de Sociologie*, Minuit, Paris 1984, p. 250; *Distinction*, cit., p. 461; *Pascalian Meditations*, cit., p. 185.

<sup>59</sup> Id., *Distinction*, cit., p. 19.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibi*, p. 323.

<sup>61</sup> For a sociology of heresy and orthodoxy that draws on Bourdieu, see J. Berlinerblau, *Toward a Sociology of Heresy, Orthodoxy, and Doxa*, in «History of Religions» 40, 4 (2001), pp. 327-351.

the archives, thereby taking his crucified Messiah for the source and horizon of truth. This inability to identify with the right «manner of applying, showing or exploiting competence»<sup>62</sup> marks him, in their eyes, as a scriptural parvenu.

Ignatius' attitude brings to mind Trimalchio, the major character of the first-century Latin novel *Satyricon* by Petronius. Trimalchio is a freedman who has made a vast fortune that he invests also in organizing lavish banquets. However, Trimalchio's table manners are boorish. Since at his own banquet Trimalchio does not observe the etiquette, some «recognized possessors of the legitimate manner»<sup>63</sup> – in this case the novel's readers – raise the question of his behavior. Yet contrary to Trimalchio's tasteless ostentation and affectation of culture, Ignatius' *Christianismos* cannot be safely said to be a product of his «distance from the centre of cultural values». Instead, it is the result of a deliberate attempt to canonize a non-legitimate source of revelation – what he calls «the gospel» – via a «controlled transgression» of the rules of the game<sup>64</sup>. When Ignatius replies «it is written», he is juxtaposing formal legitimization (of the scriptural epistemology of truth and error) and actual subversion (of the hierarchical principle that defines what counts as «written» as only written in the Scriptures)<sup>65</sup> in a way that is unacceptable for his opponents. The only possible outcome is a mutual misunderstanding among the two parties that, in this case, manifests itself as an overt disagreement expressed by the phrase «that is just the question». Ignatius' revolt is stopped by his adversaries' «call to order»<sup>66</sup>.

#### 4.2. Hysteresis

Also «hysteresis», Bourdieu's second conceptual tool, deals with misperception and bad alignment. Yet the temporal dimension is paramount here. Coming from the Greek ὑστέρησις, the term literally means «lagging behind». The word was first used in 1881 by Scottish engineer Alfred Ewing to explain the phenomenon whereby the change in magnetism of a metal body lags behind changes in the magnetic field, so the metals retain the characteristics impressed on them by an earlier state of the field. Ewing showed, in essence, that the behavior of ferromagnetic materials depends on their history. Their actual status cannot be explained with a restrictive focus on the present

<sup>62</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, cit., p. 95.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibi*, p. 95.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibi*, p. 326.

<sup>65</sup> This makes the question of Ignatius' potentially explicit reference to the material artifact «of any written gospel or pregospel literature» irrelevant: see D. Boyarin, *Judaism*, cit., p. 117. Against the hypothesis of a reference to anything written, see H. Paulsen, *Studien zur Theologie des Ignatius von Antiochien*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1978, p. 43; W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, cit., p. 208 note 6.

<sup>66</sup> P. Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1996 (ed. or. 1992), p. 68.

but refer to their protracted relation with an earlier magnetizing environment. Hysteresis is a lag in magnetization between inputs and outputs<sup>67</sup>.

Transferred from metallurgy to human social behavior via a largely physicalist understanding of fields as fields of forces<sup>68</sup>, Bourdieu's hysteresis describes a sort of backwardness that affects human beings when the structures of perception, the categories of appreciation, and the practices generated by a habitus turn to be «ill-adapted because they are attuned to an earlier state» of the related field<sup>69</sup>. The consequence is a mismatch between field and habitus<sup>70</sup> – a dispositional time lag that makes people think, perceive, and act out of sync<sup>71</sup>. Borrowing from Marx, Bourdieu sometimes calls hysteresis the *Don Quixote's effect*<sup>72</sup>. Quixote's enduring belief in the wandering knight as a timeless form of life compatible with all economic forms of society – rather than a time-contingent practice whose dispositions only align with a particular social system – is a legendary example of hysteresis. More glaringly than a well-behaved habitus, hysteresis lays bare the strict connection between temporality, beliefs, dispositions, and actions. Hysteresis normally occurs when an environment changes at a faster rate than the agent's systems of cognition and perception, whose outputs are still affected by, and attuned to, the previous state of the objective conditions.<sup>73</sup> A misperception in its own way, hysteresis can thus be seen as an ill-timed version of allodoxia.<sup>74</sup>

Turning again to Ignatius, we can see that, once confronted with his acceleration towards Christ, the Philadelphian opponents ask him to slow down, observe the etiquette, and stick to the archives. Ignatius reacts impatiently by suggesting that the problem they claim to see is generated by their own backwardness, that is, by a system of interpretive dispositions and exegetic commands attuned to a past state of the world and the related techniques of knowledge. The coming and revelation of Christ have made this whole epistemic-cum-ritual technology fully obsolete: «... for me the archives are Jesus Christ, the inviolable archives are his cross and death and his resurrection and faith through him»<sup>75</sup>. Ignatius warns the readers that the good old master code of the archives is out of sync. For the *Christianismos* has pushed their hermeneutical armor, the *Ioudaismos*, out of date. Therefore, it is not he who thinks and acts as a parvenue of Scriptures but his opponents who think and act as the Quixotes of the divine. In reporting this dispute, Ignatius clearly stakes his claim as a sufferer for Christ to win readers potentially caught between

---

<sup>67</sup> C. Hardy, *Hysteresis*, cit., p. 128.

<sup>68</sup> P. Bourdieu - L. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflective Sociology*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1992, p. 101.

<sup>69</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, cit., p. 109.

<sup>70</sup> C. Hardy, *Hysteresis*, cit., p. 128.

<sup>71</sup> P. Bourdieu - L. Wacquant, *An Invitation*, cit., p. 130.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*. See also Id., *Distinction*, cit., p. 109; *Pascalian Meditations*, cit., p. 160.

<sup>73</sup> For a list and description of cases in Bourdieu's writings, see C. Hardy, *Hysteresis*, cit., pp. 131-137.

<sup>74</sup> See P. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, cit., p. 142.

<sup>75</sup> Ignatius, *Phld.* 8.2.

two dissonant schemes of beliefs and actions: the dispositions and expectations they acquired through basic scriptural training, on the one hand, and the aspirations they developed with reference to the new state of the world and redefinition of the «right of entry»<sup>76</sup> into the world to come, on the other.

#### 4.3. *Sociologizing the battle of the parvenus and the Quixotes*

By re-describing with Bourdieu the confrontation between Ignatius and his opponents, we are not weighing the two parties' knowledge of Scriptures according to any measurable standard. Crucially, we are *not* engaging in the scholarly debate within which Lookadoo's article positions itself in order to challenge the consensus on Ignatius' deficient familiarity with the Scriptures and his inability to exegetically outdo his adversaries<sup>77</sup>. As already indicated, we lack too much contextual information to be able to give a warranted sound assessment of this disparity. However it is noteworthy that, once questioned about the legitimacy of his Christocentric epistemological structure, Ignatius does not react in the way one might expect, notably in the way Paul did every time his authority was challenged by other Jewish opponents: Ignatius does not show his exegetical muscles<sup>78</sup>, does not oppose a competing educational pedigree<sup>79</sup>, does not boast of having had extraordinary ecstatic and out-of-body experiences<sup>80</sup> that could largely compensate for the real or perceived deficiencies of his claims to authority. He simply – and proudly – «refrains from continued exegesis» as game of truth and instead «refers to a higher authority: the cross, death and resurrection of Christ»<sup>81</sup>.

Assuming Magnus Zetterholm is right to look at the «nature of the conflict»<sup>82</sup> beyond both christology and exegesis, and to identify it with an intra-group recognition struggle, we could imagine the «frustration» of some Jesus-believing Gentiles<sup>83</sup>. With «neither profound interest» in, nor familiarity with, «Judaism», these Gentiles felt barred from having the status of peers, as «covenantal partners»<sup>84</sup>, and saw themselves rather reduced to a subordinate position within a local Christ group controlled by circumcised and uncircumcised believers who «represent[ed] the same interests»<sup>85</sup>. In line

<sup>76</sup> P. Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, cit., p. 223.

<sup>77</sup> J. Lookadoo, *Ignatius of Antioch*, cit.

<sup>78</sup> See *Gal.* 3-4.

<sup>79</sup> See *Phil.* 3,4-5.

<sup>80</sup> See *Gal.* 1,1-16; *2Cor.* 12,1-7.

<sup>81</sup> M. Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity*, cit., p. 209.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibi*, p. 207.

<sup>83</sup> Although Zetterholm does not use the category of recognition (see A. Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 1995) and rather draws on Coser's theory of social conflicts (L.A. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict*, Free Press, New York 1956). See M. Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity*, cit., p. 207.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibi*, pp. 205 and 207.

<sup>85</sup> W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, cit., p. 202. The minor difference between Schoedel's and Zetterholm's positions on the identity of the Philadelphian antagonists are of very little interest here. On this see M. Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity*, cit., p. 205.

with the foregoing sociological analysis, this likely scenario might include the emergence of someone fit for the purpose of, and being interested in, leading the parvenus in a «symbolic revolution». Arising from frustration, this is expressed in a hermeneutical revolt bearing cognitive implications<sup>86</sup>.

Acting as an intermediary between the evolving system of powers and capitals that were the rising Christian religion field<sup>87</sup>, on the one hand, and the long-established technology of truth-making as predicated upon the Jewish scriptures, on the other, Ignatius attempts to turn the main weakness of these dissatisfied troops into their key strength. In *Philadelphians* 8, he tries *de facto* to empower the parvenus at the expense of the Quixotes by saying something like: your Gentile provenance and cultural pedigree cannot be used any longer to belittle you. For the coming of Christ has devalued both the Jewish ethnic privilege and the Jewish diplomas in epistemology for good. There is neither amateur nor professional. We are all undergraduate in Jesus Christ!<sup>88</sup>

### 5. Conclusive remarks (or: looking back after the Bourdieuan journey)

Since 2012, in both joint publications<sup>89</sup> and individual researches,<sup>90</sup> we have continually resorted to Bourdieu's sociology to craft our analyses and shed light on the early and late antique Christ believers. We consider Bourdieu's «cultural materialism»<sup>91</sup> a critical, even indispensable component of a

<sup>86</sup> «A symbolic revolution [...] may be incomprehensible as such to us because the categories of perception which it produced and imposed have become natural to us and because those it overthrew have become strange to us» (P. Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, cit., p. 394 note 38). «[A] symbolic revolution turns cognitive structures upside down and sometimes, to a degree, social structures» (Id., *Manet. Une révolution symbolique*, Seuil, Paris 2013, p. 13, transl. in B. Fowler, *Pierre Bourdieu on social transformation, with particular reference to political and symbolic revolutions*, in «Theory and Society» 49, 6 [2020], pp. 439-463: p. 450).

<sup>87</sup> E.R. Urciuoli, *Enforcing Priesthood: The Struggle for the Monopolisation of Religious Goods and the Construction of the Christian Religious Field*, in R.L. Gordon - G. Petridou - J. Rüpke (eds.), *Beyond Priesthood: Religious Entrepreneurs and Innovators in the Imperial Era*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2017, pp. 317-337.

<sup>88</sup> Or better: in the new discipline that Ignatius himself calls  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\mu\alpha\theta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ , «Christ's teaching» (*Phld.* 8,2).

<sup>89</sup> R. Alciati - E.R. Urciuoli (eds.), *P. Bourdieu, Il campo religioso. Con due esercizi*, Accademia University Press, Torino 2012; R. Alciati - E.R. Urciuoli, *Andare in crisi. La conversione cristiana antica al di là delle metafisiche del soggetto*, in «La società degli individui» 70, 1 (2021), pp. 21-36.

<sup>90</sup> R. Alciati, *Nec tu ignobilis Symeoni Anthiochino poteris comparare. Vulfilaco, stilita longobardo*, in «Reti Medievali Rivista» 16 (2015), pp. 127-145; Id., *Monaci d'Occidente. Secoli iv-ix*, Carocci, Roma 2018; Id., «God is Never Anything Other Than Society»: *A Materialistic Interpretation of Tertullian's Theodicy in De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, in «Annali di storia dell'egese» 36, 1 (2019), pp. 117-137; E.R. Urciuoli, *Enforcing Priesthood*, cit.; Id., *Un banale circuito infernale: il 'mercato oblativo' all'origine del campo religioso cristiano*, in G. Cuniberti (ed.), *Dono, contro dono e corruzione. Ricerche storiche e dialogo interdisciplinare*, Edizioni dell'Orso, Alessandria 2017, pp. 321-367; Id., *Servire due padroni. Una genealogia dell'uomo politico cristiano (50-313 e.v.)*, Scholè, Brescia 2018.

<sup>91</sup> The term was coined by the British Marxist cultural critic Raymond Williams. See R. Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture*, Verso, London 1980. See also A. Milner, *Cultural Materialism*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 1993. After all, Bourdieu himself describes



rigorous, secular epistemology and research agenda for the study of ancient Christ religion. In our view, using Bourdieu is not a way to brush up and varnish the sources with a distinguished social-scientific vocabulary in order to ask and answer with different language the same questions that have been posed by specialists (theologians, exegetes, historians) for generations. Nor do we want to buy into «methodological pluralism». In our field, in fact, the latter is often mistakenly identified with, and practiced as, «the belief that all methods are equally good for all purposes»<sup>92</sup>, as long as the «protectionist *doxa*»<sup>93</sup> of New Testament and early Christian studies may stand and not fall: that is, as long as the conceptual refreshments and the methodological renewals *do not* affect the core belief in the uniqueness of the subject matter, its stories, its events, its developments, and its struggles. In our view, Bourdieu represents an unparalleled guide for scholarly journeys moving from specific historical fieldworks to the general workings of societies and power struggles and then back again to history. At the end of the trip, if done properly, the empirical material *must* look completely transformed.

To clarify this point further, it should be stressed that our re-description of the dispute over the archives as an epistemological conflict involving alldoxia and hysteresis has not aimed at rebranding the technical theological categories that are normally used to explain why and how the two opposing parties ended up talking past each other as representatives of two differently developing versions of Christ religion. In fact, naming somebody «parvenu» and «Quixote» is not the same as calling them «Ignatius» and «Ignatius' opponents», «Gentile-Christians» and «Jewish-Christians», «Christians» and «Jews», or the like. Rather, it is a way to push historical empirical individuals and construed group categories out of their disciplinary/discursive comfort zones, plunge them into the challenging realm of cross-temporal and cross-cultural regularities, and see how they react. Herein lies the specific value of Bourdieu's general theory of practice when it comes to finding a balance between the «two opposite impulses» of familiarization (i.e., «take the exotic and make it familiar») and de-familiarization (i.e., «take the familiar and make it exotic»), to borrow again from J.Z. Smith's teaching practice<sup>94</sup>.

Certainly the reason why the social types of the parvenu and the Quixote, the figures of the unskilled neophyte and backward-looking cavalier, resonate quite plainly with what, after Ignatius, will be established as Christianity and Judaism is connected to the history of the relations between Christians and Jews. Parvenus and Quixotes can be found all over the history of the polemic

---

his approach as «intended to bring a materialist mode of questioning to bear on realms from which it was absent and into the sphere of cultural production in particular» (P. Bourdieu, *A Reply to Some Objections*, in Id., *In Other Words: Essays Toward a Reflexive Sociology*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1990, p. 106).

<sup>92</sup> M. Stausberg - S. Engler. *Introduction: Research Methods in the Study of Religion/s*, in Idd., *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, Routledge, London 2011, p. 4.

<sup>93</sup> S.L. Young, «Let's Take», cit.

<sup>94</sup> J.Z. Smith, *The Devil in Mr. Smith*, cit., p. 70.



representations of these relations as well as the history of the projections of «universal negative tendencies and intractable social tensions» onto fictitious entities and imaginary relations<sup>95</sup>. On the one hand, late antique, medieval, and early modern Jewish authors had more than occasionally painted the Christians as scriptural parvenus: people so biblically untrained, exegetically sloppy, and spiritually dupe or self-deceived that they took the first Galilean preacher around as the redeemer of humankind – a pitiful *allogoxia* than can be explained away by the very system of expectations and hopes (i.e., messianism) constructed during the Second Temple Period<sup>96</sup>. On the other hand, for millennia, Christian church leaders, theologians, preachers, scholars, politicians, etc. have disparaged and persecuted Judaism as a petrified, lagging-behind belief and ritual system incapable of realizing that its époque was long over and thus unable to adapt its master hermeneutics to the new configuration of history and the world<sup>97</sup>.

That being said, what Bourdieu invites us to see is that, despite the particularly dramatic history of the Jewish-Christian relations as foreshadowed in Ignatius' letters, the underlying agonistic logic of knowledge and acknowledgment, cognition and recognition *is anything but exceptional*. Rather, the so-called «parting-of-the-ways»<sup>98</sup> and its bi-millennial implications prove to be paradigmatic of more general, cross-cultural, and cross-temporal ways of «imposing faith and legitimacy»<sup>99</sup>. In *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu addresses the social genesis of the literary field and sets out the fundamental rules of functioning of all social fields. In the process, he contends that

«[t]he calls to order and the sanctions (the most terrible of which is discredit, the exact equivalent of an excommunication or a bankruptcy) are the automatic product of the competition that particularly pits the consecrated authors [...] against the newly arrived, [...] who tend to contest established authorities in the name of values (disinterestedness, purity, etc.) which the latter proclaim, or are called on to impose»<sup>100</sup>.

Later, he then describes the counterstrategy of the parvenus:

«The new entrants are bound to *continually banish to the past* — in the very process by which they achieve existence, that is, legitimate difference or even, for some shorter or longer period, exclusive legitimacy — those consecrated producers against

<sup>95</sup> D. Boyarin, *Judaism*, cit., p. 106.

<sup>96</sup> See already R.T. Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*, Williams & Norgate, London 1903; more recently, D. Barbu, *L'Évangile selon les Juifs: à propos de quelques témoignages anciens*, in «Anabases» 28 (2018), pp. 157-180; F. Bermejo-Rubio, *L'invenzione di Gesù di Nazareth. Storia e finzione*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2021 (ed. or. 2018), pp- 416-422.

<sup>97</sup> See the millennia-spanning overview of D. Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*, W.W. Norton, New York 2013.

<sup>98</sup> J.D.G. Dunn (ed.), *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 1992; H. Becker - A.Y. Reed (eds.), *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2003; D. Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 2004.

<sup>99</sup> T. Rey, *Bourdieu on Religion*, cit.

<sup>100</sup> P. Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, cit., p. 68.

whom they measure themselves and, consequently, their products and the taste of those who remain attached to them»<sup>101</sup>.

Although Bourdieu is here specifically talking of artists, critics, writers, and gallery managers, the explanatory power of his general theory of practice allows for the replacement of the contingent signifiers. He explicitly challenges us to replace «consecrated producers» and «new entrants» with «Jews» and «Christians», and to see what happens. And what happens is that, identified, respectively, by their allodoxia and their hysteresis, «parvenu» and «Quixote» are neither misnomers nor alternative nomenclatures for Ignatius and his opponents, or later the Christians and the Jews. On the contrary, Ignatius and his opponents, Christians and Jews, turn out to be *temporally and spatially contingent ways* of covering the social positions of the parvenu and the Quixote as caught up in their inevitable mutual misperceptions stemming from their recurring struggle over recognition.

In this respect, the unfortunate circumstances whereby Ignatius remains hidden in the darkness of the second century<sup>102</sup> can be turned into an opportunity. As repeatedly shown in this article, the field of Ignatian studies is characterized by the recurrence of heated debates on opaque issues on which scholars cannot agree – and probably never will. Our claim is that, given the state of extant testimonies, any attempt to re-create an “original” Ignatius, digging him up from the muddle of history, is less productive than looking again at what is plainer to see in his letters from a completely different point of view. Indeed, if the texts of Ignatius have been able to draw interpreters away from Paul and Jesus, we aimed – with Bourdieu – to draw scholars of early Christian religion away from internal exegetical exercises and turn them, instead, to broader questions such as: how are authoritative forms and techniques of knowledge used in order to claim or deny which authority among groups and related cultural producers, for which recognition purposes, and on behalf of whom? In like manner, and again via Bourdieu, we hoped to turn scholars of religion’s attention to the often impenetrable, closed universe of early Christian texts like Ignatius’ letters. Albeit beclouded by historical fog, fraught with philological difficulties, and loaded with internalist discussions, they nevertheless attest to the cross-cultural and cross-temporal regularities in which field struggles manifest themselves, emerging positions are chastised, old forms of capital are banished to the past. The religious discourse both reveals and conceals – i.e., codifies – these social dynamics.

---

<sup>101</sup> *Ibi*, pp. 157-158, original emphasis.

<sup>102</sup> C. Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, cit., p. 1.

## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this paper is to analyze a short passage of the literary corpus attributed to Ignatius of Antioch (i.e., To the Philadelphians 8) and offer a new description of both its rhetoric and social locations. Tapping into Pierre Bourdieu's epistemology and theory of action, the aim is to question the common pattern of early Christian studies of naturalizing one voice (or a text) within competitive ancient social spaces and proceeding as though Early Christian materials represent unique moments in history. Our re-description will encourage de-familiarizing our Christian sources so we can treat them as examples of broader social phenomena. By documenting the competitive and rhetorical textures of To the Philadelphians 8, we gain insights into questions and phenomena that go far beyond church history, history of Christianity, and even history of religion.*

*Scopo di questo contributo è analizzare un breve passaggio tratto dal corpus letterario attribuito a Ignazio di Antiochia (Lettera ai Filadelfiesi 8) e offrire una nuova descrizione, sia della sua collocazione retorica sia di quella sociale. Attingendo all'epistemologia e alla teoria dell'agire di Pierre Bourdieu, l'obiettivo è quello di mettere in discussione il modello – consueto negli studi sulle origini cristiane – di naturalizzazione di una voce (o di un testo) fra le molte presenti negli spazi sociali e di procedere come se i materiali del cristianesimo antico rappresentassero momenti unici nella storia. La nostra ri-descrizione incoraggerà a de-familiarizzare dalle nostre fonti cristiane in modo tale che le si possa trattare come esempi di fenomeni sociali più ampi. Dando conto delle strutture competitive e retoriche di Filadelfiesi, siamo in grado di ottenere informazioni utili su problemi e fenomeni che vanno ben al di là della storia della chiesa, del cristianesimo, e persino della storia delle religioni.*

## KEYWORDS

Ignatius of Antioch, Pierre Bourdieu, familiarizing/defamiliarizing, allodoxia, hysteresis

Ignazio di Antiochia, Pierre Bourdieu, familiarizzare/de-familiarizzare, allodoxia, isteresi