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Marco Rizzi (Ed.)

HADRIAN AND THE CHRISTIANS

 MILLENNIUM STUDIES

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Hadrian and the Christians

Millennium-Studien

zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.

Millennium Studies

in the culture and history of the first millennium C.E.

Herausgegeben von / Edited by
Wolfram Brandes, Alexander Demandt, Helmut Krasser,
Hartmut Leppin, Peter von Möllendorff

Band 30

De Gruyter

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Edited by
Marco Rizzi

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Diese Publikation wurde im Rahmen des Fördervorhabens 16TOA021 – *Reihentransformation für die Altertumswissenschaften („Millennium-Studien“)* mit Mitteln des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung im Open Access bereitgestellt. Das Fördervorhaben wird in Kooperation mit dem DFG-geförderten *Fachinformationsdienst Altertumswissenschaften – Propylaeum* an der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek durchgeführt.



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ISBN 978-3-11-022470-2

e-ISBN 978-3-11-022471-9

ISSN 1862-1139

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hadrian and the Christians / edited by Marco Rizzi.
p. cm. — (Millennium-Studien : Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. ; Bd. 30 = Millennium studies : studies in the culture and history of the first millennium C.E. ; Bd. 30)
Essays in English or Italian.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-3-11-022470-2 (hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-3-11-022471-9 (ebook)
1. Church history — Primitive and early church, ca. 30–600.
2. Hadrian, Emperor of Rome, 76–138. 3. Rome — History — Hadrian, 117–138. 4. Christianity and other religions — Judaism — History — Early church, ca. 30–600. 5. Judaism — Relations — Christianity — History — Talmudic period, 10–425.
I. Rizzi, Marco, 1962–
BR162.3.H33 2010
261.2'60937—dc22

2010013062

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

© 2010 Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin/New York

Printing: Hubert & Co. GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen

∞ Printed on acid-free paper

Printed in Germany

www.degruyter.com

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Introduction

The Second century played a key role in the development of ancient Christianity. From Pliny's perception of the *nova superstitio* as separated from its Jewish roots to Celsus' powerful attack on Christianity under Marcus Aurelius and thereafter, this period saw the wide social diffusion of Christianity, the flourishing of its early literary production according to the standard patterns of classical literacy¹ and above all its institutionalisation, centred on the emerging figures of the monarchic bishops². On the other hand, the Roman empire from Trajan to the Antonine dynasty enjoyed a relative political and military tranquillity (lasting almost until the last three decades of the century) and a great cultural effervescence, evidenced by phenomena such as the Neosophistic movement³ or the philo-Hellenistic attitude of emperors like Hadrian.

The aim of this book is to examine the connection between these two historical processes in order to figure out whether any specific factor within this broader context eased or accelerated the affirmation of Christianity in the Second century Roman world⁴. The emergence of Christian identities and ecclesiastical institutions and of Christianity's relationship to the social and cultural reality of the Empire has received great attention in recent scholarship, from the point of view of which, the making of Christianity must be considered as a long term phenomenon, lasting three centuries or more; following the methodological suggestions of authors such as Foucault or Bourdieu, recent scholarship has stressed the role of discursive analysis and other socio-cultural hermeneutical tools in order to explain such historical transformation⁵.

However, such an approach should not lead us to underestimate the effective role played by concrete historical subjects (namely the emperors or the upper levels of the ruling elites), who held the policy-making power within a

1 On this topic see GRANT 1988; RIZZI 1993; EDWARDS – GOODMAN – PRICE 1999; WLOSOK 2005.

2 On this much debated issue see the classical surveys by DIX 1955; FAIVRE 1977; and the annotated anthology by CATTANEO, esp. 93–109; more recent are LAMPE 1989, 301–345; BRENT 1995 (but see the criticism by SIMONETTI 1996, 33–36).

3 See ANDERSON 1993. See also SCHMITZ 1997 on the “political” aspect of the Neosophistic movement.

4 Assuming that the “Second century” stretches from Trajan's death (117) to Commodus' death (192) and coincides with a period of major political stability for the empire.

5 See for instance LIEU 2004; PERKINS 2009 (with an up-to-date bibliography), who interweaves the making of Christian identity with that of the Greek and Latin elites in the new context of the Roman domination, as reconstructed respectively by ANDO 2000 and HINGLEY 2005. See also HUSKINSON 2000.

society which was far less differentiated and articulated than a modern one, thus their actions heavily influenced social and cultural trends, alongside strictly political ones. In other words, if in the Second century climate of cultural, social and religious flourishing, Christianity found a special and effective means of integration within the more general transformation of the empire, and if this special integration allowed the emerging religion to establish and root itself in Roman society, can we identify in imperial policies a moment or an undertaking which favoured Christian diffusion?

The hypothesis this book investigates is whether and to what extent the reign of Hadrian opened a door to Christianity, as well as to other social and religious agents, in the form of new possibilities for self-definition and external self-presentation. In contrast with other agents, however, Christian communities fully seized this opportunity, and in so doing gained a more relevant space in Greco-Roman society which ultimately led to the first Christian peace under the Severan dynasty⁶. As a matter of fact, Hadrian's twenty-years reign constitutes a decisive turning point for the Roman imperial *oikumene* on the political, social, cultural, artistic and, as importantly, religious levels, as Mario Attilio Levi has shown in a series of influential studies⁷. Some aspects of Levi's assumptions have been softened by subsequent scholarship⁸; nevertheless it is possible to individuate a distinct ideology which directed Hadrian's efforts in changing Roman imperial *oikumene*, as Alessandro Galimberti's monograph has recently pointed out⁹.

Of course, Hadrian could build on his predecessors' actions, especially on those of Trajan¹⁰. Moreover, Hadrian's policies were neither consistent nor homogeneous during his reign. In actual fact, many innovations that became established during the reign of his immediate successor, Antoninus, or even that of Marcus Aurelius, and that seem to be consistent with Hadrian's original strategy, may be different from his original intentions (likewise, the judgment on Hadrian's impact on Christian history should be measured, according to the

6 On this topic, DAL COVOLO 1987 is still the best account.

7 See LEVI 1994, and in a summarised form LEVI 1994/2000. On further developments in scholarship, see the monumental (although diffuse) commentary to Hadrian's life in the *Historia Augusta* by FÜNDLING 2006. Specific contributions will be cited below. BIRLEY 1997 remains important for the reconstruction of Hadrian's biography; for a biographical account and a general survey on Hadrian's reign see also SPELLER 2003; MORTENSEN 2004; ROMAN 2008.

8 See, for instance, LE BOHEC 2003, who better qualifies the relevance of Hadrian's innovations in Roman military doctrine and practice.

9 GALIMBERTI 2007.

10 FELL 1992 and BENNETT 1997 have emphasised the innovations introduced by Trajan in the administration of the empire and in the relationship with the new emerging provincial elites, referring also to the "inauguration of a new era" (BENNETT 1997, 75–86). See also FERNANDEZ URIEL 2009.

extant sources, on phenomena spread over a wider temporal span, which takes in the period up to the middle of the Third century¹¹). However, in comparison with Hadrian, neither Trajan, nor Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius showed an equal breadth of political vision and radicalism in restructuring Roman administrative and military apparatus.

Proceeding from the assumption that Hadrian was not only one actor among many, but the architect of the effort toward a reorganisation of the Roman world, the contributions collected in this book explore from different perspectives and with different forms of historical evidence some aspects of Hadrian's political, cultural and religious policies and, specifically, the impact they had on the religious world of the Second century. Central to this project was the political legitimisation of what has been called the "multifaceted identity"¹², in which differences in ethnic and local as well as religious and cultural identities were fully accepted and encouraged within the empire in the name of direct loyalty to the emperor. In accordance, the emperor was to be considered the central political institution of the Roman *oikumene*, rather than the Senate or the traditional administrative apparatus, which provoked both diffidence and hostility, as shown by the dramatic conflict between Hadrian and the Senate at the very beginning of his reign and by the hindrance posed to his deification. For this reason, the cultural effervescence which characterised Hadrian's years provided Christianity with a chance to legitimate its religious identity as one component among others in the religious world of the Second century. This chance was welcomed by contemporary Christian groups (among which we must also number those who were considered "heretics" thereafter, like the "Gnostics") and recorded by subsequent Christian generations, even attributing to Hadrian actions or intentions which now sound dubious to us. This point will be illustrated in the first contribution in this book, after its short introduction summarises Hadrian's main political and cultural innovations¹³. The final contribution will investigate the works of three Christian writers of the Second century (Aristides, Justin, and Ignatius of Antioch) in this respect.

11 See below for the reference to the *Encomium of Origen*.

12 See BORG 2004, 3, and in the same volume especially JONES 2004. Here the term "multiple identity" will be preferred in order to emphasise the relevant impact on the level of personal identity-making produced by Christianity as a more exclusive religion than the Greco-Roman.

13 These are not the focus of this book, which rather considers the general framework, as reconstructed by the studies quoted above and *infra*. In any case, although judgement on the novelty of Hadrian's policies may vary, it remains the case that only with Hadrian did Christianity start to present itself explicitly as a philosophical movement and to openly address an external audience or Emperors (even if fictionally) according to the standards of Greco-Roman literacy. These are two of the main points considered in the first chapter.

Hadrian himself was an example of such a composed identity – an ancient source defines him as *varius, multiplex, multiformis* – as shown here by Marco Galli, who explores the close connection between *paideia* and politics in Hadrian's view and criticises some recent developments in Hadrianic studies. The process of multiple identity-making initiated by Hadrian, and its lasting effects, are examined by Livia Capponi with regard to Egypt – a region that occupied a significant place in Hadrian's interests.

It is even possible to point to a precise date (124/5) for the decisive shift in Hadrian's politics, as shown by the significant convergence of Elena Calandra's new interpretation of Hadrian's *Villa* at Tibur in the light of recently published archeological data and the new reading by Alessandro Galimberti of the witnesses to Hadrian's religious policy. This date is extremely significant for its implications for the debated issue of "the parting of the ways" between Christians and Jews. The Bar Kochba revolt in 132–135 is commonly accepted as the *terminus post quem* for the definitive separation; Bar Kochba is reported to have executed Palestinian Christians who refused to follow him in the war against Rome. However, if we place Hadrian's first attempt to incorporate all ethnic, religious and cultural identities (including the Jews) within the new framework of his empire in year 124/5, the Bar Kochba revolt can be considered as the very (and bloody) end, rather than the starting point, of the debate between Christians and Jews – and among the Jews themselves – over this new situation, as demonstrated by Giovanni Bazzana's reading of the historical and literary sources about the revolt.

The Jews' disregard of the possibility offered by Hadrian was probably caused, on the one hand, by the link between the religious and ethno-political aspects of the Jewish identity which had already led to the failure of Philo's program of conciliation between Judaism and Hellenism under Roman patronage in First century Alexandria, and on the other hand, by the strong autocratic intention of Hadrian's politics. The refusal of the Jews remained the only failure in the ambitious project for a Roman empire as *varius, multiplex, multiformis*, imagined and fostered by Hadrian as a mirror of himself: in this way, he started a process which represents a crucial turn in the history of the ancient Mediterranean *oikumene*.

This book is the result of a collaboration between some Italian scholars, who have tried from a multi-disciplinary perspective to overcome well-established, but no longer satisfactory, historical and hermeneutical paradigms used to explain the development of Christianity in the Second century; their task was to combine institutional issues and social-cultural processes as they has been made possible by Hadrian's initiative. Rather than assemble a miscellaneous volume, the authors therefore aimed to write a unitary study to which each has contributed a chapter strictly related to the others by means of a long and amicable sharing of ideas. Other friends also took part in this process: Domitilla

Campanile, Chiara Carsana, Roberta Mazza, Maria Teresa Schettino, Fabrizio Slavazzi and, in many ways, this book is indebted to them. The editor and the contributors are particularly grateful to the Editorial Board for accepting to have it published in the Millennium Series and especially to Professor Wolfram Brandes, who first considered the project.

MARCO RIZZI

Hadrian and the Christians

MARCO RIZZI

Conscious of the fragile legitimacy of his power (having been Trajan's chief collaborator and having therefore exercised command over the main part of the Roman military apparatus¹), Hadrian during his rule strived to build, around this control of the army, a new model of political imperial organisation that overcame the ineffective system of client-to-patron nets, but was not restricted to a simple monopoly of military strength which was manifestly incapable of preserving the unity of such wide and differentiated geographical and social conditions. In fact, after the bloody confrontation with the Senate in Rome at the beginning of his reign, Hadrian substantially modified the basic structure of the traditional imperial policies. Here, we shall briefly summarise the main features of his action, before considering its implication on the cultural and the religious plane.

A first aspect was concerned with the abandonment of his predecessors' expansionistic strategy and the elaboration of a new military doctrine; as is well known, Hadrian's new approach was characterised by a more defensive attitude, according to which the army was aptly reorganised and trained for specifically defensive duties; legions were permanently settled in border areas for preserving the territories already under Roman control, as shown by the construction of the Britain *vallum* and, moreover, were frequently checked as to their effectiveness in reacting to external assault, according to the instructions given in the Lambaesis inscription².

A second domain affected by Hadrian's intervention was the juridical; he created four jurisdictional districts within Italy and, besides other initiatives, reorganised the Athenian legislative code, as reported by Jerome³. Worthy of note was also the role Hadrian assigned to his juridical advisers within the *consilium principis*, which led to the increased relevance of such specialised

1 The eight Asian legions strengthened by contingents coming from the Danubian front for a campaign against the Parthians. The formal adoption and the relationship between Trajan and Hadrian had little substantial weight.

2 On Hadrian's military doctrine, see LEVI 1994 and the discussion by LE BOHEC 2003; see also SPEIDEL 2006.

3 See Eus. *Chron. (Versio Armena* 166 Schöne); and G. Syncell. 659. GALIMBERTI 2008 is the first to deal accurately with this episode and to locate it within the complex of Hadrian's juridical activities. On this topic generally see BAUMANN 1989; PAVON TORREJON 2009.

figures in the imperial administration. Likewise, Hadrian restructured the political and administrative careers of the ruling elites in a way which remained substantially unaltered until Constantine⁴.

1. Hadrian as political and cultural innovator

Hadrian's decisive policy, however, aimed to create new relations between politics and culture in the framework of a more articulated and less Latin-centric empire; in this respect, Hadrian's innovations were first of all founded on a different distribution of power relationships between the empire's centre and peripheries and between traditional and emerging élites. Already the massive insertion of provincials in the ranks of the Senate had altered its character and traditional composition during the preceding principeds; Hadrian pursued the process of relative marginalisation of the Latin senatorial class with its traditional provincial attachés, even though he obtained its support, in order to promote the local leading élites. In this way the upper classes of the Empire could find a reference and balance point in a new image of the *princeps*, no longer built through the Augustan system of personal clientele, but instead through the emperor's role as recognisable leader of this diffuse ruling class. The main evidence in favour of this interpretation relies on some of the most impressive symbolic and ideological features of Hadrian's principdom. The decentralisation of government functions from Rome to Hadrian's *Villa* at Tibur, with its complex machine of symbolically reshaping the emperor's world and the emperor's role in the world⁵, finds its exact parallel in Hadrian's many travels throughout provincial territories, with the clear aim of the reorganisation and stabilisation of the Roman military and administrative presence, but also of assuring a more direct link between the *princeps* and his subjects within the panoply of civic, ritual and euergetic acts that the sovereign presence allowed for and involved. This implied equalisation between the provinces and with Italy, starting from the level of local authorities that constituted an immediate and visible representation of power.

According to this interpretation, the attitude generally labelled as Hadrian's "philhellenism" – which with relevant political, social and religious implications is more than merely an aesthetic-cultural category – may be better understood. Hadrian's cultural policy should not be reduced to a simple dialectics of opposition and agreement between Hellenism and Romanism; this is only the

⁴ As stated in *Epit. de Caes.* 14,11: *Officia sane publica et palatina nec non militiae in eam formam statuit quae paucis per Constantinum immutatis hodie perseverat.*

⁵ From this perspective, LEVI 1994/2000, 62–68, has proposed an intriguing interpretation focused on the function of the edifice isolated by the ditch.

partial representation that emerges from the *Encomium of Rome* by Aelius Aristides, a political-cultural manifesto of Second century Hellenism. Avoiding reduction to this bipolar dimension, the identitary system shaped by the complex phenomenon labelled “Second Sophistic” was based on the conscious acceptance of the multifaceted identities of individuals as well as groups, cities and regions, thus local patriotism as well as civic, regional and even “barbaric” loyalties happened to interlock, and each of these features contributed to the structuring of identities and multiple and pluri-dimensional self shaping⁶. The Second Sophistic movement expressed a wider system of values and reflected conceptions that resulted in various concretisations and reached and involved the entire ancient society: from artistic to propagandistic production, from statuary and portrait painting to coinage, largely beyond mere literary production. In affirming such a widespread and socially penetrative ideology, the sources agree in recognising that, even though its spread began under Trajan, Hadrian gave it a decisive impulse, personally cherishing the Greek *paideia* ideal⁷ and, according to Philostratus’ *Lives of the Sophists*, weaving a thick network of relationships of patronage as well as of actual and equal intellectual correspondence with many exponents of the Sophistic movement.

A central feature in the spread of Greek *paideia* comes from the full legitimisation and diffusion of the “philosophical way of life” among the upper classes, based on a complete acceptance of the values of *paideia* and the practice of contemplative *otium*, and on the self-representation of their members according to the portrait-painting and funerary art innovations of the time: Hadrian’s direct influence is recognised to be decisive by the sources as well as by historiography⁸. It is clear that the construction of such a new representation of ruling class characteristics might involve and equate the traditional established élites with emerging ones, notably the representatives of the rhetorical professions and of the neo-sophistic *star system*⁹. These representatives became important conduits not only for the propagandistic management of the

6 This emerges from the most recent historiography on the Second Sophistic that has abandoned a mostly, if not exclusively, stylistic-literary evaluation for the identification of figures and social roles connected to rhetoric-literary practice as well as to other forms of public communication. See especially the collection of studies in BORG 2004, with particular attention to the contributions of C.P. Jones, B. Yildirim, G.W. Bowersock and E. Bowie collected in the first section “Beyond Greek Identity and the Sophists”, 11–63; it is worth noting that in this volume the term “multi-faceted identities” is employed to express what is here called multiple identity.

7 *HA Hadr.* 1; 15 f.

8 See ZANKER 1995; B. BORG, *Glamorous Intellectuals: Portraits of Pēpaidoumenoi in the Second and Third Centuries AD*, in BORG 2004, 157–178.

9 Besides the already mentioned *Lives of the Sophists* by Philostratus, a relevant witness of this climate is offered by Suetonius’ work devoted to *Grammarians and Rhetoricians* and composed precisely during Hadrian’s reign.

consensus to the imperial system¹⁰ but also, in particular, for the mobility and the acquisition of social prestige, modifying the forms of political integration at various levels¹¹. Again according to Philostratus' witness the role played by the possibilities of multifaceted identities as afforded by the Second Sophistic was decisive also in this case, even including the three paradoxes enounced by Favorinus about himself: "Speaking Greek though being a Gaul, being put on trial for adultery though being a eunuch, continuing to live though having disagreed with the emperor"¹².

The plural-identities system becomes decisive in the third area of Hadrian's reform project, the religious one¹³. The *Historia Augusta* attributes to Hadrian a veneration for domestic rituals and contempt for foreign ones¹⁴, nevertheless, in his provincial peregrinations he always cared about the fostering and the revival of local cults, gaining support and determining the action of provincial élites in this direction¹⁵. However, in this the religious aspect was correlated to a precise reorganisation of sacred spaces to imbue them with political meaning and to develop the relationships established around them: religious *collegia* that appear as places of the organization of power, "where learned élites organise themselves and strengthen their *status* and their interests"¹⁶, multiplied.

If the case of Achaia is relevant in renovating religious traditions firmly established and accepted in the Roman world, we possess some significant witnesses to Hadrian's confrontations with different religious phenomena. The most well known and extensive case is surely Egypt, where Hadrian faced widespread riots in Alexandria following the rediscovery of an ancient statue of

10 This is a theme more frequently addressed by modern historiography.

11 In this perspective also CIVILETTI 2002, 34 f.

12 Philostr. *Vitae soph.* 1, 8: Γαλάτης ὄν ἑλληνίζειν, εὐνοῦχος ὄν μοιχείας κρίνεσθαι, βασιλεῖ διαφέρεσθαι καὶ ζῆν.

13 See the *Conclusion* in this volume.

14 *HA Hadr.* 22; the passage ought to be read as a part of the anti-Christian polemics of the Fourth century author who depicts a traditionalist and anti-Christian Hadrian.

15 GALLI 2004, 315–356 has analysed the case of Achaia, observing "un processo di ridefinizione e di riattivazione di una memoria religiosa che darà luogo ad una grande varietà di interventi, manifestando un effetto catalizzante a partire dall'età adrianea e sviluppandosi soprattutto nel corso dell'età antonina" (p. 315 "a process of redefinition and reactivation of a religious memory that would give rise to a great variety of interventions, having a catalysing effect from the age of Hadrian and developing especially in the course of the Antonine age"). In particular, within "un'articolata politica imperiale incentivata dal decisivo impegno delle élites locali" (p. 329 "an articulate imperial politics stimulated by the decisive engagement of the local elites"), the new birth of Delphi-Pylea and the concrete euergetic attention toward Argos Heraion are directly ascribed to Hadrian, while the continuity of Hadrian's policy in the Antonine era is exemplarily attested to by the reestablishment of Asklepius' sanctuary in Epidaurus through the intervention of the powerful senator Antoninus Pythodorus.

16 GALLI 2004, 328.

Apis¹⁷, and where, especially, the controversial episode of Antinous – that precipitated one of Hadrian’s most important religious acts – took place¹⁸. From a general point of view, it is preferable not to follow Levi¹⁹, who does not see innovative elements in Hadrian’s religious policy since he restricted his action to support for divergent cults, as long as they were widely disseminated, while only marginally supporting novelty through new cult objects “che infondessero spirito nuovo e fresco nelle abituali pratiche”²⁰; the very circumspect nature of Antinous’s deification and its poor success would be, according to Levi, evidence of Hadrian’s conservative attitude on religious issues. In fact, if Antinous was the object of strong polemic among Christian authors spanning from Justin into the post-Constantinian era, the impact of his cult was not so limited and local as Levi would suggest²¹.

Hadrian’s innovation, in this field too, seems to refer more to the function assigned to cults than to their actual content. By expanding imperial patronage in euergetically visible forms (and the foundation of Antinoopolis could have this meaning) and by rebuilding social and religious practices around cult places, Hadrian most probably aimed at establishing a specific and new type of relationship between the emperor and his subjects, focused less on the imperial cult or on his filiation from the divine father than on a religious and ritual sharing between the *princeps* and his subjects. Thus, for instance, Hadrian’s Eleusinian initiation could represent the “subjective” aspect with, nevertheless, precise political implications²², whereas the iconographic and symbolic programme of the *villa* at Tibur could constitute the propagandistic objectivation of such a religious policy²³. From this perspective, salvation cults as well as Christianity seem to have played an interesting role for Hadrian.

2. Hadrian as political-theological innovator

Evidently, all of this implies a profound reorganisation of the Roman theological-political apparatus²⁴ that changed the religious system within its boundaries, wherein the emperor acted once more as the principle of unity and

17 *HA Hadr.* 12.

18 On Antinous, the last overview is JONES 2010, 75–83. The episode is analyzed also in this volume by CAPPONI and GALLI. See also GARDNER – CURTIS – VOUT 2006.

19 LEVI 1994/2000, 110–130.

20 LEVI 1994/2000, 121; “(...) that breathed fresh new life into habitual practices”.

21 On this specific point see NADIG 2000.

22 See in this volume GALIMBERTI.

23 See in this volume CALANDRA.

24 On the theological-political issue in the ancient and late ancient world I refer to RIZZI 2002.

the representative of the consensus between sovereign and subjects, a consensus that reached from *res humanae* to *res divinae*. This theological-political model differs greatly from those of the first imperial period (from Seneca's *De beneficiis* to the discourses on kingship addressed to Trajan by Dio Chrysostom, the pseudo-Pythagoric treatises of Ecphantus, Stenidas and Diotogenes or the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*); in all these texts, the sovereign is placed on a qualitatively different level from the rest of humanity, creating a specific relationship to the divine in the form of the *nomos empsychos* or in that of the representative reflex of the *logos* as cosmic regulator – this latter is a theme deemed to have declined in a specifically Christian way from the Fourth century onwards²⁵. Hadrian's religious role, formalised through the traditional office of *pontifex maximus*, seems to have had more of a “horizontal” character coalescing different ritual practices (given the impossibility or the inutility of a frustrated syncretism) than a vertical one shaping the ruler as a reflex of the divinity on earth as would happen later in the solar political-theologies introduced by the Severi or in the Constantinian political-theology itself.

We possess a text that might validate this interpretive hypothesis. Between the Fourth and Fifth centuries, Macarius Magnes relates a pagan objection to Christians that focuses on the political-theological concept of divine monarchy already postulated by Aristotle quoting the famous Homeric verse: “No good thing is a multitude of lords; let there be one lord”.²⁶ Macarius makes the Christians' imaginary opponent say:

“Let's inquire expressly upon the one God's monarchy and the polyarchy of those who are adored as gods, since you do not know even how to expose the concept of monarchy. Monarch, indeed, is not he who is alone, but he who commands alone. He commands upon his tribesmen, men like him, as much as the emperor Hadrian was a monarch not because he was alone or because he reigned on oxen or sheep, but because he reigned on men belonging to his same descent and who had his same nature. Likewise, God would not be properly called monarch, if he did not command on gods; indeed his divine majesty and his heavenly and great dignity deserved this”²⁷.

25 On this set of issues, see RIZZI 1996 and RIZZI 1998.

26 Arist. *Metaph.* 10, 1076 A, quoting Hom. *Il.* 2, 204: οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη· εἷς κοίρανος ἕστω.

27 *Apocrit.* 4, 20: Καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ὧδε τοῦ λόγου τὸ κομψὸν πλάσμα, τὸ μέντοι περὶ τῆς μοναρχίας τοῦ μόνου Θεοῦ καὶ τῆς πολυαρχίας τῶν σεβομένων θεῶν διαρρηθὴν ζητήσωμεν, [ὡς] οὐκ οἶδας οὐδὲ τῆς μοναρχίας τὸν λόγον ἀφηγήσασθαι. Μονάρχης γάρ ἐστιν οὐχ ὁ μόνος ἄν, ἀλλ' ὁ μόνος ἄρχων· ἄρχει δ' ὁμοφύλων δηλαδὴ καὶ ὁμοίων, οἷον Ἄδριανὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς μονάρχης γέγονεν οὐχ ὅτι μόνος ἦν οὐδ' ὅτι βοῶν ἢ προβάτων ἦρχεν, ὧν ἄρχουσι ποιμένες ἢ βουκόλοι, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἀνθρώπων ἐβασίλευε τῶν ὁμογενῶν τὴν αὐτὴν φύσιν ἐχόντων. Ὡσαύτως Θεὸς μονάρχης οὐκ ἂν κυρίως ἐκλήθη, εἰ μὴ θεῶν ἦρχε· τοῦτο γὰρ

The divine monarchy theme had acquired peculiar relevance through the appearance of problems connected with the only ancient exclusivist monotheism, the Jewish; after Philo, Hellenised Judaism had focused its debates on this topic in the pursuit of two aims: on the one hand, to legitimise the belief in one God and, on the other hand, to lessen its political implications, reducing the issue to a merely theological and philosophical problem; the following entire theological-political debate would develop along this line, as has been more than adequately reconstructed by Erik Peterson.²⁸ In Macarius' text, on the contrary, the divine monarchy is defined by the effective exercising of power and command and not through generic features of uniqueness or superiority: from this perspective, the reference to Hadrian poses a crucial question that has been expressed by Peterson and that, so far, has not found a satisfactory answer. The pagan model reworked by Macarius has been variously attributed to Porphyry, Hierocles, Julian or to representatives of the political-philosophical and intellectual élites of Third and Fourth century Paganism. According to these authors, the concept of the monarchic exercise of power, far from being a confirmation of monotheism, necessarily required the plurality of divinities that could make it possible: the command of the one alone requires the presence of the many. Therefore it seems to be extremely significant that the exemplary value of Hadrian's figure remained intact in successive tradition: evidently he was recognised as the first, true monarch in the Roman tradition. Beyond the example used by Macarius there would be a tradition that indicated Hadrian as the first consistent expression of a purely political monarchy, in which the sovereign commands his equals that represent the entirety of mankind or at least a significant enlargement of the basis of "equals" according to the above mentioned processes of integration of peripheral élites. This being the case, the religious element also could have and would have had to be shared by the emperor and his subjects, though not in the shape of a unique religion or an omni-comprehensive syncretism, nor as a polytheist and hierarchically ordained theology (as would be the case later for theurgic Platonism in the Third and Fourth centuries). On the contrary, the religious element took the socially more effective form of a sovereign who shares in his subjects' cults and of subjects who willingly made him part of their rituals.

If that is true, Hadrian's attitude towards Judaism, whose monotheistic exclusivism might create conflict (as would be the case) in opposition to such a design, should be particularly significant. The Jewish war and destruction of Jerusalem were the effects of a related military effort and represent an act too charged with meaning to be the product of contingency: Bar Kochba's

ἔπρεπε τῷ θεῷ μέγεθει καὶ τῷ οὐρανίῳ καὶ πολλῷ ἀξιώματι (on this work see GOULET 2003).

28 PETERSON 1994.

insurrection must have, at least partly, represented a challenge with more general implications than the simple and well known contentiousness of a marginal people²⁹. Thus, it is not completely implausible to consider that, at the outbreak of the revolt, the most extremist Jewish sectors faced Hadrian's hypothetical offer to reconstruct the Temple or his intervention to support the Jerusalem cult as he did in the other provinces. Beside the controversial passage in the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the Jewish sources that can be so interpreted³⁰, another element to support this idea can be found in the *Historia Augusta* which, speaking of Alexander Severus, relates:

“He also wished to build a temple to Christ and give him a place among the gods – a measure which, they say, was also considered by Hadrian. For Hadrian ordered a temple without an image to be built in every city, and because these temples, built by him with this intention, so they say, are dedicated to no particular deity, they are called today merely Hadrian's temples”³¹.

Usually this piece of information is linked with the passage in Hadrian's biography which relates how the emperor would have some temples dedicated to himself during his voyage through Asia in 123–125³²; thus, the information (which probably comes from a Christian source since it establishes a connection between Hadrian and Alexander Severus, who was the most favorable to Christians among the Severian dynasty and would even put an image of Christ in his *lararium*³³) can stem from the simple tendentious reinterpretation of a real political-religious act, actually linked to the imperial cult. Nevertheless, during the first two centuries a cult without images had been the subject of an intellectual debate that stretches from Plutarch³⁴ who maintained, following a Pythagoric tradition, that the absence of images was the very origin of Roman religious tradition in the name of greater purity and correctness of *pietas*, to Lucian who attributed the invention of the idea of divinity to the Egyptians in his treatise *On the Syriac Goddess* and affirmed that for this reason their temples were empty at the beginning³⁵. In this perspective, Hadrian's interest and openness to religious forms marked by aniconic cults (as in the case of Judaism

29 See ECK 1999; ECK –FOERSTER 1999.

30 See in this volume BAZZANA.

31 *HA Alex. Sev.* 43, 6: *Christo templum facere voluit eumque inter deos recipere. Quod et Hadrianus cogitasse fertur, qui templa in omnibus civitatibus sine simulacris iusserat fieri, quae hodiequae, idcirco quia non habent numina, dicuntur Hadriani, quae ille ad hoc parasse dicebatur.*

32 *HA Hadr.* 13.

33 *HA Alex. Sev.* 29, 2.

34 Plut. *Numa* 8.

35 Luc. *De syr. dea* 2 s. A precise opposition to this perspective, favouring instead the cult of images, can be found in Dio Chrysostomus' *Olympicus* (*Orat.* 12 Keil): on the theological-political implications of this debate see RIZZI 2002, 272–284.

and, secondarily, Christianity) is not unlikely and provides the basis for the information of a possible rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple or similar interventions.

Such a hypothesis can be further validated by Tertullian's definition of the emperor in his *Apologeticum* as *omnium curiositatum explorator*, among a group of emperors who opposed or at least did not drive the anti-Christian legislation:

“What sort of laws are these which the impious alone execute against us – and the unjust, the vile, the bloody, the senseless, the insane? Which Trajan to some extent made naught by forbidding Christians to be sought after; which neither a Vespasian, though the subjugator of the Jews, nor a Hadrian, though fond of searching into all things strange and new, nor a Pius, nor a Verus, ever enforced?”³⁶.

This passage results from a very complicated textual tradition as far as Hadrian's position in the list is concerned; the *recensio fuldensis* presents the text as it has been quoted, whereas the other recension (P) creates the sequence Trajan, Hadrian, Vespasian, Pius, Lucius Verus that seems to be less plausible from the chronological point of view; eventually Eusebius, in the Greek version of this passage inserted in his *Ecclesiastical History*, proposes the correct chronology – Vespasian, Trajan, Hadrian, Pius, Lucius Verus – with a clear normalising effort. The quoted passage from the *Apologeticum* is preceded by the emphatic memory of Marcus Aurelius who, according to Tertullian, neutered the anti-Christian legislation, prohibiting delations; of course Trajan's relevant position can be explained by his rescript to Pliny that would have substantially anticipated Marcus Aurelius who constituted the most immediate precedent the apologist could appeal to. Thus, despite its chronological inconsistency, it is a possibility that the P reading is original, though in the complicated issue of the double redaction of the *Apologeticum*: the proximity between Hadrian and Trajan, though sacrificing chronology, could aim at emphasising continuity in the policy towards Christians, albeit within a tolerance inspired by a *curiositas* that the Christian author feels compelled to maintain a distance from through the usage of the concessive *quamquam*.

Supporting a persisting Christian tradition that interpreted Hadrian's *exploratio* in a strictly religious sense, another odd reading from manuscript tradition could be quoted; in the first 18 chapters of the apocryphal *Acts of John* (a later addition dating perhaps from the Fifth century, to the original kernel of the narrative which dates from the Second century) it is related that the apostle was summoned by the emperor Domitian following a Jewish denunciation and

36 Tertul. *Apol.* 5, 7: *Quales ergo leges istae, quas adversus nos soli exsequuntur impii iniusti, turpes truces, vani dementes, quas Traianus ex parte frustratus est vetando inquiri christianos, quas nullus Vespasianus, quamquam iudeorum debellator, nullus Hadrianus, quamquam omnium curiositatum explorator, nullus Pius, nullus Verus impressit?*

was sent into exile in Patmos. However, we possess a shorter variant of the narrative that substitutes Hadrian for Domitian in a conspicuous anachronism; but this version adds that the emperor was willing to receive information on John's teaching.

However, if connected to the political novelty of Hadrian's renovation of different cults throughout the empire, these clues seem to confirm, however unclearly, a consistent theological-political design that structured the system of beliefs among the empire boundaries in a new way, linking everything through the figure and the action of the emperor himself. Thus, there appeared to be a shift from the traditional Roman policy of generic religious tolerance (still attributed to Hadrian in the above quoted passage from the *Historia Augusta* that so misunderstood or consciously altered his intentions) to an active policy of controlled acceptance and integration of the most differentiated cults and doctrines. It has been observed that this took place in a symbolic universe made up of multiple and multifaceted identities and loyalties wherein cultural, civic, regional and religious elements could live together in the most varied combinations, all linked by a common loyalty to Rome through the mediatory figure of the emperor – himself being multiple in his forms and in his aspects – who was no longer an individual, albeit with divine pretences, but an institution of a strongly political and human kind.

3. Hadrian and the Christians

In their attempts to excavate and interrogate the different stages of Hadrian's political, administrative, religious and monumental activity, all the researches presented in this volume locate a crucial turning point around the year 124/125. At this point, the process of administrative reform widened its scope to embrace a deeper political and religious rebuilding of the entire imperial *oikumene*. In 131–132 Hadrian would achieve a result in the Greek environment through the realisation of the *panhellenion*; during the second journey to Egypt the episode involving Antinous took place and during these years one should hypothetically set the definitive separation between Judaism and Christianity (a substantial separation, particularly in the mutual self-consciousness of the two religions). Indeed, the necessity of such distinction between the two groups emerged at the same time in which religious cults acquire a novel and different value according to Hadrian's new political theology. Before this point, it was common for Christians to be generically labelled as "Jews".

In this broad perspective, it is clear that the Jewish revolt in 135 represented the refusal by the most intransigent Judaism to become part of such a system of multifaceted identities in the name of the preservation of a complete identity that would give birth to the linguistically secluded system of rabbinic Judaism.

In contrast, some evidence hints at a different attitude among Christian groups toward the spaces that Hadrian's project could open up to those in a comparatively different and certainly more difficult condition.

Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*³⁷, devotes two pieces of information to Hadrian, aside from the memory of the Jewish campaign and the bishops' lists of Rome and Jerusalem; the first³⁸ is the inception of Christian apologetic activity with Quadratus and Aristides who addressed two discourses to Hadrian that, according to Eusebius, were still preserved and read by his contemporaries³⁹; the second, to which Eusebius devotes more space, is the birth (or, according to his picture, the reappearance⁴⁰) within orthodox Christianity of the so-called "Gnostic heresies" and the first writings of their orthodox opponents⁴¹. Both details fit the pattern of opportunities offered by Hadrian's turning point as it has been described so far.

The significance of the Christian apologetic enterprise in the Second century, beginning with Hadrian's reign, can be considered to be entirely integral to the literary and communicative pattern of that period. It is enough to observe, for instance, the structural isomorphism between Christian apologies and the text of Apollonius' apology preserved by Philostratus⁴² and intended to be read at the presence of Domitian. Since this did not happen, the text probably circulated in its written form and faced contrasting critical evaluations which Philostratus counteracted with observations on its content and style⁴³; although (or maybe because) these texts were simple rhetorical *fictiones* in the case of Philostratus as well as of the Christian apologists, yet they illuminate the rhetorical and literary context with its related social scenery in which Second century Christian apologetic production should presumably set itself. We can know very little about the direct impact of Christian apology but, if it is inscribed in the environment of sophistic culture and communicative practice, it might be more accurately depicted: if the style and tone of a rhetorical apology *de magia*, like those of Apollonius or Apuleius, was discussed and criticised, maybe it was also possible to read and discuss the apologies *de novitate* or *de impietate* that were brought to the literary market by Christians keen to seize the moment of general *curiositas* for religious themes introduced by Hadrian.

37 Eus. *HE* 4, 3–9.

38 Eus. *HE* 4, 3.

39 We possess only a fragment of Quadratus quoted by Eusebius and the entire text of Aristides, albeit through a very complicated textual tradition (see the *Conclusion* in this book).

40 Since Eusebius believed that the first Gnostic was Simon Magus, a contemporary of the Apostles as reported in *Acts* 8; obviously, it is a mere fictive genealogy.

41 Eus. *HE* 4, 7–8.

42 Philostr. *Vita Apoll. Tyan.* 8, 7.

43 Philostr. *Vita Apoll. Tyan.* 8, 6.

There are, besides, numerous other points of formal contact between sophistic and Christian production⁴⁴; however, it is more interesting to observe how Christian apologetics and, more generally, Christian thought of the Second century fluctuated between an ethnic self-definition – according to which Christians constituted a *genus (ethnos)* with their own *nomos* alongside the others in the empire⁴⁵ for which reason they ought to be included in the composite Roman empire, as was entirely consistent with the pluri-ethnic perspective and the multiple identities of the Second Sophistic – and a philosophical model according to which Christianity represents one or even “the true” philosophy with a universalist nature, within a general philosophical system characterised by recognised and legitimate traditions and schools. The clearest case is the prologue to Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho* in which the Christian apologist narrates his peregrinations from one teacher to another from the main philosophical traditions, eventually reaching the knowledge and practice of Christian “philosophy”⁴⁶. This practice should not be construed only as a “way of life” (as it has been clarified by Hadot), but also as an exercise in which Christian school-teaching competed with other teachers and other philosophical traditions⁴⁷. It is clear that this could happen only on the basis of the acceptance and the insertion of the philosophical ideal within the “official” imperial culture, and the discarding, again on Hadrian’s initiative, of the prejudices against “philosophy” which perceived it as a genuine opposition to the Roman legal system.

It is precisely around the problem of “philosophy” that the internal fight among Christian traditions mentioned by Eusebius as the second characterising event of Hadrian’s reign emerges. In the section devoted to Gnostic schools and their opponents, Eusebius repeatedly emphasises the authentic and divinely-inspired character of Christian “philosophy”⁴⁸; on the other hand, Eusebius

44 For a summarised treatment see RIZZI 1996.

45 In the case of Aristides’ apology, these *ethne* are differently identified in the Greek text and the Syriac translation (but both versions quote Greeks, Jews and Egyptians – on this issue see in this book the *Conclusion*); in contrast, the statements of Athenagoras, who writes under Marcus Aurelius, are more generic, though he links the Christian *ethnos* to its own peculiar *nomos*. On the topic of Christian self-definition as a new *genos* see BUELL 2005.

46 Just. *Dial.* 1–7.

47 This can be deduced from the *Acts* of Justin’s martyrdom and from the information, related by Eusebius, regarding his conflict with the cynic teacher Crescens who denounced him. It is worth noting that in the imperial capital (where Justin’s trial takes place) hostility to the above-mentioned philosophical practice was particularly strong and therefore a conflict among teachers could have more relevant implications for public order.

48 Eus. *HE* 4, 7, 13: the “divine *politeia* and philosophy” of the Catholic church; 14: the “divine and philosophical principles” of the Christian doctrine; 4, 8, 3: “Justin, true

himself attributes to Gnostic communities a specific organisational shape, the scholastic-philosophical *didaskaleion*, contrasting it with the ecclesiastical organisation founded on bishops whose successions are listed in his work seat by seat. If it is taken into consideration that Irenaeus, writing in the second half of the Second century, deemed Greek philosophy to be the matrix of every heresy since it was the mother of Gnosticism, it is easy to see how, facing an extremely differentiated Christian scenery with regard to the acceptance or rejection of Christian philosophical self-definition as well as organisational models and communal *leadership* forms⁴⁹, Eusebius tries to antedate to the very beginning of Christian public history the results of a process of self-definition and homogenisation that seems to have been extended far into the Third century – the troublesome events of Origen’s life and of the Alexandrian *didaskaleion* constituting the climax and end of this process⁵⁰.

This line of thought could also involve the literary production on martyrdom. It is pertinent to observe that, even though there had been earlier persecutions and Christian victims, only during the Second century does a literature appear the aim of which is to preserve a memory of those who bore witness. If we go beyond the exemplarity of martyrs for their communities and try instead to see how Christian martyrdom represented a kind of concrete exercising of communal internal *leadership* and external projection onto the stage of urban life in imperial provinces⁵¹, we can grasp that hagiographic production became useful only when Christianity found itself in a more general condition of the real possibility of external projection⁵².

4. Conclusion

Observing these summarised trajectories of Christian history it can be hypothesised that the political and cultural changes begun under Hadrian created the conditions for the beginning of an explicit process of Christian external projection through the channels of literary communication and of

lover of the true philosophy”, 4: whose “conversion from the Greek philosophy to the θεοσέβεια” did not happen on a whim, but after a deep examination (κρίσις).

49 This can be summarised in outline through the figures of teacher, bishop and inspired “prophet” which remain effective for the entire Second century or at least until the Montanist crisis that determined an irreversible decline and the reduction of prophecy to an exegetical activity.

50 See what I wrote in RIZZI 2001, 38–80.

51 See RIZZI 2003.

52 It ought not to be forgotten that the actual *incunabulum* of Christian martyrdom literature, the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, was written by a church and addressed to another community, but begins by mentioning that Polycarp’s witness had been deemed worthy of the wonder not only of Christians, but also of Pagans.

public activity in order to obtain legitimacy specifically with the élites. Such a process was characterised by many of its actors through the presentation of Christianity according to a philosophical-didascalic model, – a particular form of the religious-sapiential *pepaideuomenos* character that uses Hadrian's innovations, on the one hand through the space opened for the publicity of philosophical and religious *paideia* and, on the other, through the sovereign legitimisation of the “philosophical way of life” as a model followed by élites. Such a process continued at least until the first part of the Third century and the Severian re-employment of Hadrian's cultural model: the apogee of this process, Philostratus, has an intriguing Christian parallel in the *Encomium of Origen* of the pseudo-Gregory the Thaumaturgus that marks not only the climax and the exhaustion of the didascalic model in Christianity but also, in the author's character and in his autobiography, the Christian consciousness of a possible multifaceted identity according to the above-proposed scheme is expressed.

Thus, such a model of Christian integration in the imperial horizon exercised a precise function for its intellectual legitimisation (indeed, Eusebius, an heir to this tradition, emphasises the “philosophical” character of the Christian doctrine), but from a historical point of view it was hindered by difficulties in integrating social differences within the community broadening beyond the élites that philosophical lifestyle that the upper classes considered to be their own property and that the people probably regarded as too abstract. In fact, the process of political centralisation initiated by Hadrian offered another decisive impulse to Christian history when it allowed the monarchic-representative development of the bishopric activity that would go on to lose its “charismatic” or intellectual features that were still present at the end of the Second century, in order to assume an institutional function.

Villa Adriana scenario del potere

ELENA CALANDRA

Nel complesso quadro delle linee politiche e culturali attuate dall'imperatore Adriano, la villa che questi si fa erigere a Tivoli rappresenta senza dubbio un osservatorio privilegiato¹. Di essa si intende proporre una lettura nuova, tenendo conto sia della ricca messe di studi in materia sia dei risultati degli scavi più recenti, filologicamente editi, ma che necessitano di una interpretazione nel quadro più ampio della visione politica adrianea e della declinazione che Adriano volle conferire al culto imperiale. Si è pertanto ritenuto opportuno indagare, secondo un orientamento differente rispetto alla letteratura precedente, sugli spazi e sui tempi del potere a Villa Adriana: ossia sulle modalità con cui l'imperatore volle tradurre nella residenza la propria linea politica e la propria concezione del potere, destinando a queste edifici e percorsi, e sui tempi con cui mise in opera tale progetto. Nella dimora tiburtina, infatti, si ritrovano, concentrati e come potenziati dall'unicità del luogo, i simboli e le forme del potere che Adriano promuove e diffonde in tutto l'impero, in un gioco di rispecchiamenti e di rimandi che inevitabilmente riconduce all'ideatore.

Il ruolo diretto di questi nella progettazione del complesso tiburtino è incontrovertibile: Adriano è evocato dalle fonti come matematico, scultore, architetto², e grazie a tale versatilità indubbiamente è in condizione di entrare nel merito delle decisioni progettuali; va tuttavia riconosciuto con il Gros che "l'activité de l'imperial architecte est inséparable de sa pensée (...) on ne saurait séparer (...) la spéculation intellectuelle de la réalisation matérielle"³.

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- 1 Dell'abbondantissima letteratura su Villa Adriana, che di per sé implica una selezione, si citano solo le pubblicazioni a carattere generale di uscita più recente: ADEMBRI 2000; ADRIANO 2000; SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2001; MOSSER-LAVAGNE 2002; HADRIEN 2002; SLAVAZZI 2002, 55–62; REGGIANI 2002; CORTÉS COPETE – MUÑIZ GRIJALVO 2004; BASSO PERESSUT- CALIARI 2004.
 - 2 *Hadr.* 14, 9; *Aur. Vict.* 14, 6; *Epit. de Caes.* 14, 2; *Dio* 69, 3, 1–4; *Tert. Apol.* 5, 34. Discussione e bibliografia in CALANDRA 1996, 189–190; GROS 2002, 33–53. Di particolare rilievo la vicenda della costruzione del Tempio di Venere e di Roma nell'Urbe, per il quale secondo Dio, 69, 3, 1–4, Adriano effettua schizzi preparatori o forse il progetto, ma è criticato dall'architetto di corte, Apollodoro di Damasco, che per questo motivo, oltre che per non chiariti screzi, è mandato a morte (discussione e bibliografia in CALANDRA 1996, 74–75). Sui programmi figurativi SLAVAZZI 2000, 63–67; SLAVAZZI 2002, 52–61; SLAVAZZI 2002a; SLAVAZZI 2010.
 - 3 Citazione da GROS 2002, 48. Sul tema COARELLI 1984, 47–48; CALANDRA 1996, 189–190; su Adriano progettista in prima persona SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 1988, 15–26.

A maggior ragione egli interviene, se si pensa che la Villa sorge con una vocazione a metà fra destinazione pubblica e fruizione privata, come appare chiaro già al suo nascere: una lettera, tramandata da un'iscrizione, che Adriano invia all'Anfizionia di Delfi nel settembre del 125 d.C., come luogo di redazione reca appunto Tivoli⁴. La circostanza non è priva di significato, in quanto in questo modo viene sancito il principio secondo cui il luogo del massimo potere può mutare, e nei fatti si trova dove è l'imperatore in quella data contingenza.

In realtà, non si hanno testimonianze dirette e puntuali sull'identità dei frequentatori effettivi del luogo, anche se non è difficile immaginare che si trattasse dei membri della corte, degli alti funzionari dell'impero, degli ambasciatori⁵, e probabilmente anche dei nobili abitanti delle ville vicine⁶. Le stesse dimensioni del complesso, e l'articolazione di questo in apparati dislocati variamente nell'ampia distesa insediata dalla Villa, mostrano chiaramente che Adriano non era l'unico occupante, ma che la Villa era pensata per l'accoglienza di un folto gruppo di persone (Figg. 1 e 2).

In proposito si possono individuare due ordini di indicatori: gli impianti termali e gli edifici di spettacolo. Gli impianti termali sono ben quattro: se si escludono le terme del Teatro Marittimo, che costituisce, anche se non solo, uno spazio ritagliato esclusivamente per l'imperatore all'interno della Villa, le altre terme sembrano graduare la natura dei frequentatori sulla base di una gerarchia dimensionale. Le Grandi Terme erano con tutta probabilità destinate alla servitù: imponente dovette essere il numero della manodopera impiegata nella conduzione della Villa, come provano le Cento Camerelle, che ne erano le abitazioni⁷; le dimensioni ridotte e la raffinatezza della decorazione architettonica e dell'arredo statuario inducono invece a supporre una fruizione per pochi sia per le Piccole Terme sia per le Terme con Eliocamino⁸. L'impressione di un'alta frequentazione, almeno in determinate circostanze, è confermata dal cosiddetto Teatro Greco, così definito da Pirro Ligorio, che si trova verso il confine nord della Villa, tanto che si è supposto che fosse aperto anche al

4 BOURGUET 1905, 82; commenti in BLOCH 1937, 154; ALEXANDER 1938, 149–150. La natura intermedia fra uso pubblico e privato è peraltro già prefigurata dall'*Albanum Domitiani* (RAEDER 1983, 278–279; LIVERANI 1989, 17–18).

5 Non si hanno informazioni complessive sulla corte di Adriano, i cui membri sono ricostruibili ipoteticamente: un nucleo consistente dovette essere costituito dai letterati, di lingua greca ma anche latina (sintesi in CALANDRA 1996, 166–171), cui vanno aggiunte personalità di qualche rilevanza politica o amministrativa (vedasi per esempio BEAUJEU 1955, 210–215, che cita come eminenti Emilio Caro, Erode Attico, Giulio Euride, Giulio Quadrato, Minucio Natale).

6 Da ultimo MARI 2002, 181–202.

7 I percorsi della servitù erano sotterranei: SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 1973, 219–259; SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 1982, 50–55; DE FRANCESCHINI 1991, 637.

8 Sintetica discussione in CALANDRA 1996, 215.

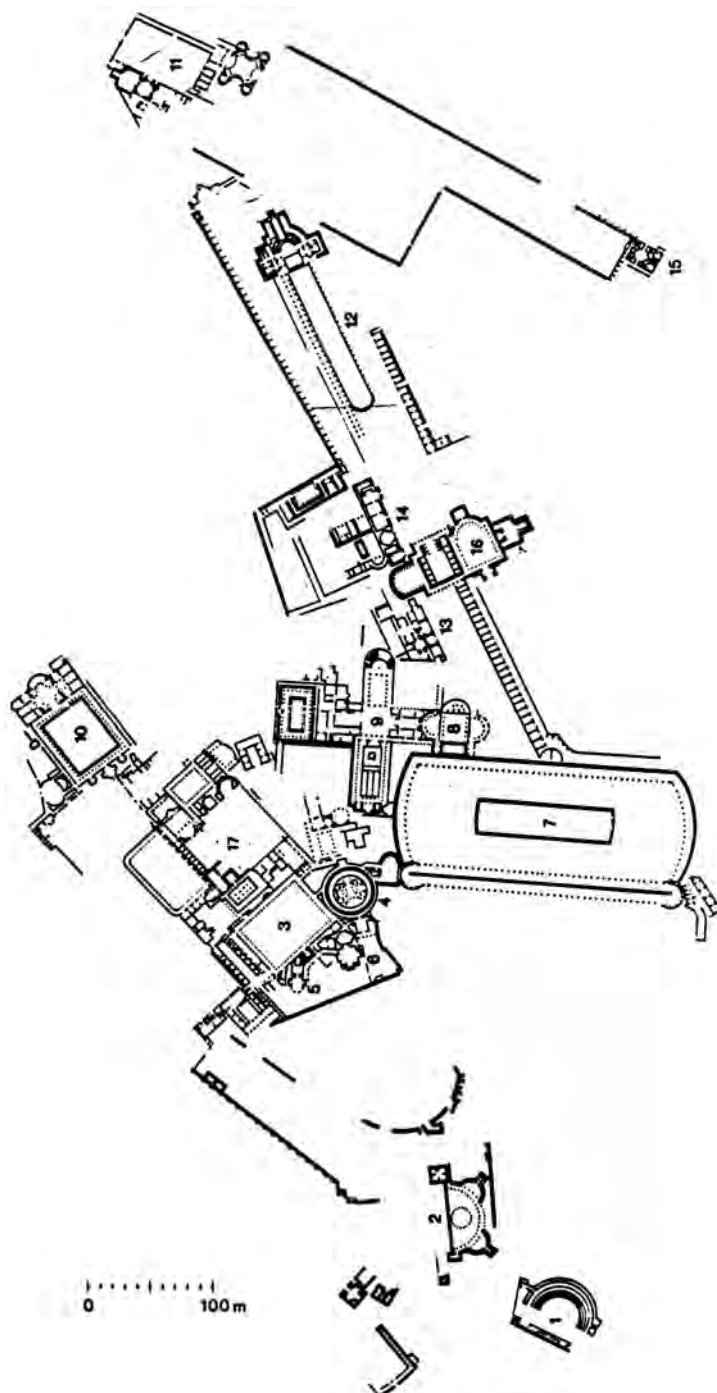


Fig. 1. Tivoli, Villa Adriana. Pianta. (Da COARELLI 1984)

1. Teatro greco.
2. Tempio di Afrodite Cnidia.
3. Cortile delle Biblioteche.
4. Teatro Marittimo.
5. Biblioteca Latina.
6. Biblioteca Greca.
7. Pecile.
8. *Coenatio* estiva.
9. Stadio.
10. Piazza d'Oro.
11. Accademia.
12. Canopo.
13. Piccole Terme.
14. Grandi Terme.
15. Torre di Roccabruna.
16. Vestibolo.
17. Villa repubblicana e area centrale del palazzo.



Fig. 2. Tivoli, Villa Adriana. Plastico. (Da ADRIANO 2000)

pubblico esterno; invece l'*Odeon*, che sorge nei pressi dell'Accademia ed era decorato da un ciclo di Muse da poco filologicamente restituito all'integrità⁹, per le dimensioni ridotte potrebbe essere stato destinato solo alla corte¹⁰. A questi due edifici vanno accostati due impianti attualmente mal noti, l'Arena, la cui funzione è da appurare, e lo Stadio, posti ad est della Piazza d'Oro e su un livello inferiore rispetto a questa¹¹.

a. Gli spazi del potere

Date queste premesse, pare opportuno concentrare l'attenzione su alcuni nodi problematici. La residenza di Adriano, infatti, appartiene a un filone ben preciso, che discende dalle dimore dei dinasti di età ellenistica e, prima ancora, dei sovrani macedoni: sono questi gli antecedenti delle dimore dei primi *principes* romani, che al tempo stesso si alimentano anche al substrato delle ville degli *optimates* di età repubblicana. È questo il caso delle residenze imperiali, urbane come la *Domus Aurea* di Nerone e il palazzo dei Flavi, o di villeggiatura

⁹ RAUSA 2002, 43–51.

¹⁰ Scheda in DE FRANCESCHINI 1991, 592–594.

¹¹ Per gli edifici di spettacolo CALANDRA 1996, 214–215; per l'Arena SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2001, 411, è favorevole all'identificazione in un'arena effettiva, con quattro accessi (stessa interpretazione funzionale in STRANO 2000, 90).

come Capri e Sperlonga per Tiberio, Baia per Claudio, Albano per Domiziano¹².

1. La tradizione dinastica ellenistica

Il legame con questa tradizione non sempre è stato posto nella luce giusta, anzi è stato frequentemente lasciato in disparte¹³. L'assunzione del linguaggio architettonico dei sovrani ellenistici, in questo modo, non fa che rappresentare la traduzione della concezione monarchica elaborata da Alessandro e soprattutto dai suoi successori¹⁴, e viene adottata da Adriano, nell'ambito della Villa, per esprimere il linguaggio del culto imperiale.

Una precisazione si rende a questo punto necessaria: lo stato delle conoscenze della Villa è limitato quasi esclusivamente alle architetture, in quanto gli scavi dei secoli scorsi, volti al recupero delle sculture e dei mosaici, non hanno salvato la documentazione giudicata di scarso rilievo, come per esempio la ceramica (e non solo), utilissima alla comprensione dell'originaria funzione degli ambienti. D'altra parte gli elementi architettonici, scultorei e musivi hanno subito dispersioni tali che solo in parte è stato possibile dimostrarne la provenienza dall'uno o dall'altro edificio della Villa. Quanto si verrà esponendo, pertanto, presenta forti limiti, e rischia di essere sconfessato almeno in parte nel momento in cui futuri scavi apportino nuove evidenze.

Il referente più immediato per Villa Adriana è rappresentato dai palazzi dei Tolemei ad Alessandria, che diversamente dalla residenza tiburtina sorgevano nel cuore della città, come si verifica per la *Domus Aurea*. A parte questa differenza, l'analogia con la reggia alessandrina è notevole, sia per l'ampiezza della superficie occupata, sia per l'articolazione dello spazio costruito in rapporto a quello naturale; i nuclei di edifici a Tivoli si dispongono in modo accortamente calcolato secondo assi ben individuabili che si inquadrano adeguatamente, in ampiezza come in altezza, nel paesaggio movimentato della valle dell'Aniene. L'inconsueta struttura architettonica di alcuni edifici, che si presentano coperti da volte veloidiche¹⁵, induce addirittura a supporre che Adriano abbia fatto

12 MIELSCH 1990, 102–104 (per Tiberio), 104–105 (per Claudio), 65–69 (per Domiziano); GIULIANI 1982, 233–258 e CALANDRA 1996, 194–196 (per Adriano).

13 Fanno eccezione PANDERMALIS 1976, 391–395; LA ROCCA 1986, 10–15; CALANDRA 1996, 217–237 e 275–276.

14 Sulla dimensione urbana delle regge LAUTER 1987 352–353; per le modalità di espressione della concezione della regalità da parte dei sovrani ellenistici VÖLCKER-JANSSEN 1993; NIELSEN 1994; VIRGILIO 2003. Sull'aspetto urbanistico globale di Villa Adriana MAC DONALD 1986, 283; PURCELL 1987, 187–203; anche RAKOB 1973, 113–125.

15 In proposito vanno citati: il vestibolo della Piazza d'Oro, la sala ovest esterna al recinto di questa, la cupola dell'Eliocamino nelle omonime Terme, la sala ottagonale delle Piccole

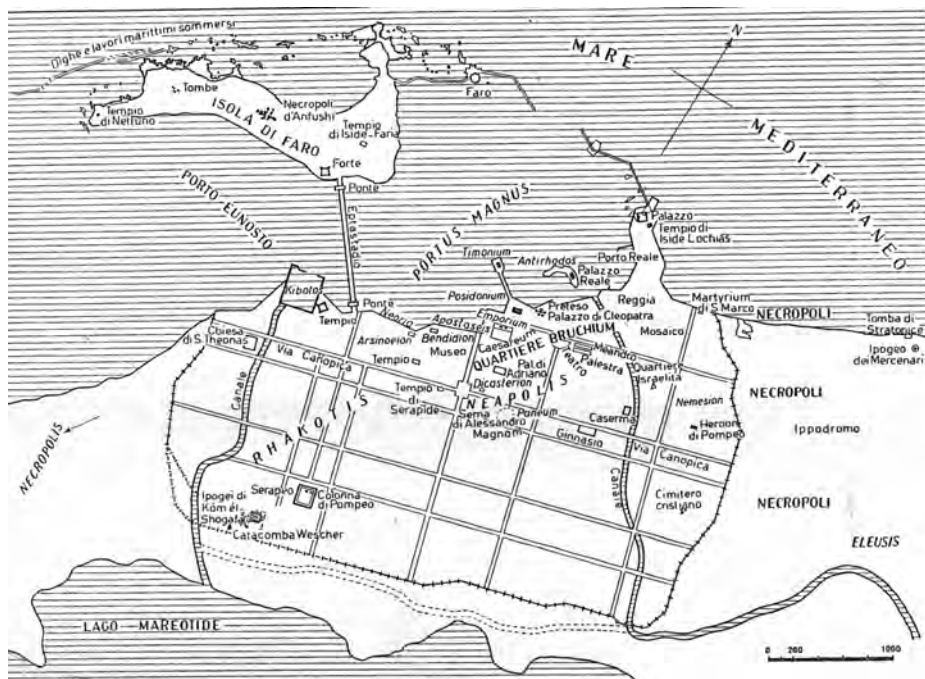


Fig. 3. Alessandria. Pianta, con la zona dei palazzi. (Da A. ADRIANI, *Alessandria*, in *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica*, vol. I, Roma 1958)

tradurre in materiali durevoli i padiglioni e le tende che animavano i palazzi Alessandrini, alternandosi ai nuclei edificati¹⁶ (Fig. 3).

Al tempo stesso, un ruolo fondamentale è giocato dal paesaggio: esso talora è lasciato naturale (o così era in apparenza), e in tal caso il rimando ai *paradeisoi* persiani è ovvio; più spesso artificiale, esso è rimodellato tramite terrazzamenti e costruzioni, con una sensibilità che molto deve alla matrice pergama, come mostrano a Pergamo i palazzi degli Attalidi, scaglionanti sul versante scosceso della montagna. Alla trasformazione del paesaggio d'altra parte non è estraneo l'uso dell'acqua, che diviene essa stessa una componente architettonica e un veicolo di retaggi dinastici: il cosiddetto Teatro Marittimo, con il canale anulare che lo circonda, riproduce l'insularità di una parte dei palazzi, ad Alessandria come ad Antiochia sull'Oronte, e, prima ancora, di Ortigia rispetto alla reggia di Siracusa¹⁷ (Fig. 4). Vivaci giochi d'acqua movimentano il Ninfeo-Stadio, mentre

Terme, la Sala dei Filosofi, il Serapeo del Canopo e l'edificio a sud-est di esso, il Tempio di Apollo nell'Accademia e, da ultimo, il padiglione nell'*Antinoeion*.

16 CALANDRA 2000, 57–62.

17 Discussione sulle stratificazioni concettuali nel Teatro Marittimo in CALANDRA 1996, 217–227.



Fig. 4. Tivoli, Villa Adriana. Il Teatro Marittimo. Foto dell'Autore.

gli specchi dell'Edificio con Peschiera, del Pecile, del Canopo, con le loro superfici riflettenti moltiplicano la scenograficità dell'insieme.

L'edilizia palaziale di età ellenistica si ripropone anche nella scelta delle singole tipologie architettoniche, che già le ville dell'aristocrazia romana avevano recepito e convertito, come narrano le pagine di Cicerone e di Plinio il Giovane – per citare gli esempi più illustri: è questo il caso di *turres*, *triclinia*, *stibadia*, *diaetae*, *ambulationes* e impianti termali, ginnasi e biblioteche, stadi e ippodromi, edifici di spettacolo¹⁸.

2. Il culto imperiale a Villa Adriana: ipotesi e suggestioni

Alcune ricorrenze fra la Villa e le testimonianze monumentali a Roma, ad Atene e nelle province sono innegabili, e vanno perciò indagate, ricostruendo una topografia del potere o, piuttosto, del culto imperiale, nella stessa Villa, che dall'impero "importa" simboli e tipi architettonici, miscelandoli e sovrappo-
nendo gli uni agli altri in un contesto che ne risulta del tutto nuovo. In tale

18 CALANDRA 1996, 203–215.

ambito programmatico, il rituale del culto imperiale si traduce attraverso la prassi, consolidata dal modello dei dinasti di età ellenistica, del simposio e/o dell'epifania del sovrano agli occhi della corte: le grandiose tende per banchetto erette da Alessandro a Susa e da Tolomeo II ad Alessandria, descritte da Ateneo di Naucrati¹⁹, figurano come il luogo migliore di incontro del regnante con il suo pubblico.

Il Canopo

Come Canopo, menzionato nel passo in cui l'*Historia Augusta* cita la villa tiburtina²⁰, è identificato il complesso composto da uno specchio d'acqua (l'Euripo), sul quale si affaccia la struttura con volta a ombrello convenzionalmente nota come Serapeo.

Il programma figurativo che appare agli occhi del visitatore è affidato a tipi statuari afferenti al mondo greco, classico ed ellenistico. L'adozione delle statue delle Cariatidi, in effetti, rappresenta senza dubbio il caso più clamoroso di uso di simboli tra Atene, Roma e Tivoli: come è noto, copie delle Cariatidi dell'Eretteo sull'Acropoli di Atene si trovano anche nel Foro di Augusto a Roma, e incontrano una notevole fortuna come elementi decorativi nell'edilizia pubblica occidentale, nel foro di Merida e nei teatri di Vaison-La-Romaine e di Vienne. In particolare, le copie tiburtine riproducono solo due fra le Cariatidi ateniesi, la C e la D²¹, e si inseriscono nell'allestimento del Canopo, denso di rimandi e di riferimenti: sulle sponde dell'Euripo, lungo il lato corto, si affacciano infatti le statue di *Ares* (o, più genericamente, di un guerriero) e di *Hermes*²², e di due Amazzoni²³; sul lato lungo occidentale, si trovano le quattro Cariatidi e due Sileni; nei pressi, ma di più incerta collocazione, sono tre immagini di fiumi (il Tevere, il Nilo, e forse il Tigri), un cocodrillo, una testa di pantera; al centro del canale, fuoriuscenti dalle acque, uno o forse due gruppi di Scilla²⁴.

19 Per la prima Ath. 12, 538 C-539 A, per la seconda Ath. 5, 196 E-197 C.

20 *Hadr.* 26, 5: *Tiburtinam villam mire exaedificavit, ita ut in ea et provinciarum et locorum celeberrima nomina inscriberet, velut Lycium, Academicum, Prytanium, Canopum, Poecilen, Tempe vocaret. Et, ut nihil praetermitteret, etiam Inferos finxit.* Sull'allestimento statuario del Canopo ZANKER 1972, 155-157, con ricca bibliografia e *status quaestionis*; discussione e aggiornamento bibliografico in CALANDRA 1996, 241-248; da ultimo CALANDRA 2000a, 69-72; ANDREAE 2000, 77-80; sugli aspetti funzionali SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2001, 241-264.

21 SCHMIDT 1973, 19-27; KRUSE 1975, 139; RAEDER 1983, I 76-79, 83-84; SLAVAZZI 1996, 38-39; SCHNEIDER-HÖCKER 2001, 199-203; VON HESBERG 2007, 68-71.

22 ZANKER 1972, n. 3198; RAEDER 1983, I 84 e 85, 87-88, con bibliografia.

23 RAEDER 1983, I 83, 86-87, e I 90, 92-93, con bibliografia; da ultimo BOL 1998, 40-41, 179-180, n. I.10 e 62-63, 210-211, n. III.7.

24 ANDREAE 2000, 77-80.

Fin qui, le certezze. Le scoperte avvenute nei pressi del Grande Vestibolo negli ultimi anni obbligano a ridiscutere il quadro che si era in precedenza prospettato circa il Canopo, che vale comunque la pena di riprendere in quanto le interpretazioni avanzate appartengono alla storia di un problema critico non concluso. All'apprestamento statuario sin qui ricostruito, l'Andreae ha proposto di aggiungere il gruppo dell'accecamento del Ciclope, di cui restano tre teste di compagni di Odisseo, rinvenute in una calcara nella Villa: il gruppo, la cui versione più nota è quella nella villa di Tiberio a Sperlonga, sarebbe stato collocato nel Serapeo, all'imbocco del corridoio. Secondo l'Andreae, il programma fu rimaneggiato dopo la morte e la divinizzazione di Antinoo, quando il gruppo odissiaco venne sostituito da uno nuovo, di tipo egizio, direttamente ispirato alla tragica morte del giovane favorito dell'imperatore²⁵. Questo secondo ciclo è stato immaginato dal Grenier, con una proposta restitutiva di indubbia suggestione: secondo questa, nell'Euripo sarebbe stata rappresentata la cerimonia cultuale del risveglio solare di *Osiris – Apis (Sarapis)*, che appare emergente da un fiore di loto, alla presenza di sacerdotesse e delle principali divinità dell'Egitto, tra cui appunto Antinoo – *Osiris*²⁶. Per quanto affascinante, difficilmente tale lettura può essere accolta totalmente, in quanto vi è qualche forzatura nei calcoli e nei rapporti fra le statue, per di più non tutte provenienti con certezza dal Canopo, come invece il Grenier presuppone. Come si vedrà tra breve, quest'interpretazione è stata di recente confutata in modo radicale alla luce delle scoperte relative all'*Antinoeion*.

Mantenendo per certa a questo punto solo la lettura della parte "ellenica" del programma figurativo, si può ipotizzare con alto grado di verosimiglianza che il Serapeo avesse la funzione di sala per banchetti, con uno *stibadion* per diciotto invitati; accanto a questo, un ulteriore edificio, pure caratterizzato da cupola a ombrello, doveva costituirne una sorta di duplicazione, probabilmente usata di notte – a questo impiego indirizza la mancanza di finestre e il ritrovamento di venti candelabri²⁷. Un numero di invitati più elevato, d'altra parte, poteva essere accolto nello spazio intorno allo specchio d'acqua dell'Euripo, forse protetto da un pergolato vegetale, cui rinvia proprio la forma di sostegno delle Cariatidi e dei vicini Sileni, intervallati agli archi e agli architravi. La destinazione a sede di banchetti per il Canopo trae conferma anche dal luogo da cui il complesso deriva il nome: Canopo era infatti un sobborgo di Alessandria, nel quale secondo il racconto di Plutarco, Antonio e Cleopatra, adepti dell'associazione dei "viventi inimitabili", trascorsero fastosi giorni banchettando sontuosamente²⁸.

25 ANDREA E 2000, 77–80.

26 GRENIER 1989, 925–1019; GRENIER 2000, 73–75.

27 ANDREA E-ORTEGA 1992, 95–103.

28 Plut. *Ant.* 28.

Come è evidente da quanto si è sin qui esposto, il Canopo si presenta come un luogo intricato di significati. Lo Zanker pone infatti il complesso in relazione con i viaggi dell'imperatore, e considera le statue come copie di opere celebri ammirate da Adriano; lo studioso inoltre accosta alle Amazzoni, copie di due delle statue della disputa efesia del 435 a.C., l'*Ares* e l'*Hermes*, che giudica ricreazioni di un tipo famoso, e pensa a un modello celebre anche per le statue dei fiumi²⁹; il Raeder considera l'*Ares* e l'*Hermes* come *Umbildungen* di età romana³⁰. Valutato nella sua integrità, il nucleo può essere letto come un'espressione della politica pacificatrice di Adriano, ispirata al richiamo augusteo all'età dell'oro, vista l'accezione pacifica dell'*Ares* e dell'*Hermes*³¹, tanto che si è parlato di un'aura di *pietas* che aleggia su tutto il programma³²; le *Korai* e i Sileni rappresenterebbero i ministri del culto – in questi ultimi, in realtà, è stata giustamente ravvisata anche un'intonazione dionisiaca³³, cui non è estranea la memoria dei Sileni nella *pompé* di Tolomeo II³⁴. A ribadire il quadro di pacificazione ecumenica, l'Andreae propone di identificare nelle statue delle Amazzoni ferite le province, guarite da Adriano come già le Amazzoni nell'*Artemision* di Efeso³⁵. Il Canopo viene così a costituire la citazione dei luoghi principali dell'impero: Atene, Efeso, l'Egitto ellenistico, cui vanno aggiunte le statue dei grandi fiumi dell'Ecumene.

Il programma così configurato doveva appalesarsi agli occhi dei simposiasti, convenuti nel Serapeo o lungo le sponde dell'Euripo: la visione e la fruizione dell'allestimento statuariale, insieme alla consumazione del banchetto alla presenza dell'imperatore, erano esse stesse parte del rituale del culto imperiale.

La Piazza d'Oro

L'elaborazione di un linguaggio in parte nuovo per esprimere il culto imperiale individua tipi edilizi altrettanto nuovi, o quanto meno caricati di nuove valenze. Alla critica non è da tempo sfuggito il forte nesso planimetrico che accomuna il *Traianeum* di Italica, la cosiddetta Biblioteca di Adriano ad Atene, e la Piazza d'Oro a Villa Adriana³⁶. Naturalmente il riferimento al solo parametro tipolo-

29 ZANKER 1972, nn. 3194–3198 e 3200–3201, 157–165. Sul ruolo di Villa Adriana come ambientazione delle memorie di viaggio vedasi per esempio RUGGIERI TRICOLI–VACIRCA 1998, 127.

30 RAEDER 1983, 303–304.

31 ANDREAЕ 2000, 77–80.

32 CAIN 1998, 1242.

33 MIELSCH 1990, 99–101.

34 Ath. 5, 199 B.

35 ANDREAЕ-ORTEGA 1992, 81–83.

36 Sulla Piazza d'Oro memorabile edizione di RAKOB 1967; COARELLI 1984, 58–61; DE FRANCESCINI 1991, 463–477; CALANDRA 1996, 229–237; CALANDRA 2000, 57–62; SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2001, 265–276; CALANDRA 2004, 94–95.

gico può rivelarsi decettivo, in quanto non si può applicare in modo biunivoco una funzione a una data planimetria, e per giunta in contesti diversi, mentre è più opportuno procedere per disamine specifiche. È questo il caso dei tre edifici in questione, rinsaldati da una catena di collegamenti ben ricostruibili.

Il primo, il *Traianeum* di Italica (Figg. 5 e 6), è voluto da Adriano in memoria del padre adottivo nella patria di famiglia³⁷; la cosiddetta Biblioteca (Figg. 7 e 8) sorge ad Atene, nel centro reale della città, nella quale occupa un ruolo monumentale indubbio. Ciò è ben chiaro a Pausania, che vede l'edificio poco dopo la costruzione: al Periegeta si deve la prima sfuggente definizione del complesso, da cui la critica derivò, come ovvio, la funzione primaria di biblioteca: “cento colonne di marmo frigio; e le pareti sono costruite con lo stesso materiale dei portici. Ci son poi ambienti adorni di un tetto dorato, e di alabastro, e inoltre di statue e pitture; questi ambienti servono da biblioteca”³⁸. Come è stato variamente dimostrato, concorrenti con quelle proprie di una biblioteca dovettero essere anche le funzioni di archivio/catasto e di foro/*Kaisersaal*, che accomunano l'edificio ateniese alla Biblioteca di Alessandria e al *Forum Pacis* a Roma³⁹. La Biblioteca di Atene si carica a maggior ragione dell'ulteriore significato di edificio per il culto imperiale, se la si pone in significativa sequenza con la Biblioteca ateniese di *Pantainos*, anch'essa dedita al culto imperiale oltre che alla conservazione dei libri⁴⁰, e con il Foro di Traiano a Roma, che era pure archivio (per documenti storici) e biblioteca: un'analogia confluenza della cultura, incarnata dal bene librario, e del diritto, rappresentato dal patrimonio archivistico, si ripete dunque a breve distanza di tempo fra i due imperatori. All'atto pratico, si può immaginare che l'ambiente centrale fosse quello sacro, in cui l'imperatore era venerato con le altre divinità, mentre i vani perimetrali (gli *oikémata*) fungevano da archivio e da biblioteca. A questa non doveva peraltro essere estraneo il carattere memoriale, insito già nel nome del *Traianeum*, se si pensa che prima ancora la colonna sul Foro di Traiano era la tomba dell'edificatore medesimo⁴¹.

37 Edizione critica di LEÓN 1988; da ultimo LEÓN 2004, 131–133, con cautele sul rapporto tipologia architettonica – funzione in relazione al *Traianeum* di Italica verso la Biblioteca di Adriano.

38 Paus. *Perieg.* 1, 18, 9.

39 Per la funzione forense del complesso KYRIELEIS 1976, 431–438; GROS-TORELLI 1988, 389. Ad Alessandria la Biblioteca di Adriano (culturalmente *Hadrianeion* dopo la sua morte), è costruita nel 127 d.C. come sede dell'archivio di stato, affiancandosi al più antico archivio nel *Nanaion* (COARELLI 1991, 79–81). Osservazioni funzionali su questa tipologia in MITCHELL 1992, 718–722, KARIVIERI 1994, 89–113, CALANDRA 1998, 261–272. Da ultimo sulla Biblioteca TIGHINAGA 2000, 119–124.

40 YEGÜL 1982, 7–31.

41 CASTRÉN 1994, 3–4; SETTIS 1988, 56–75; GRASSIGLI 2003, 159–176.

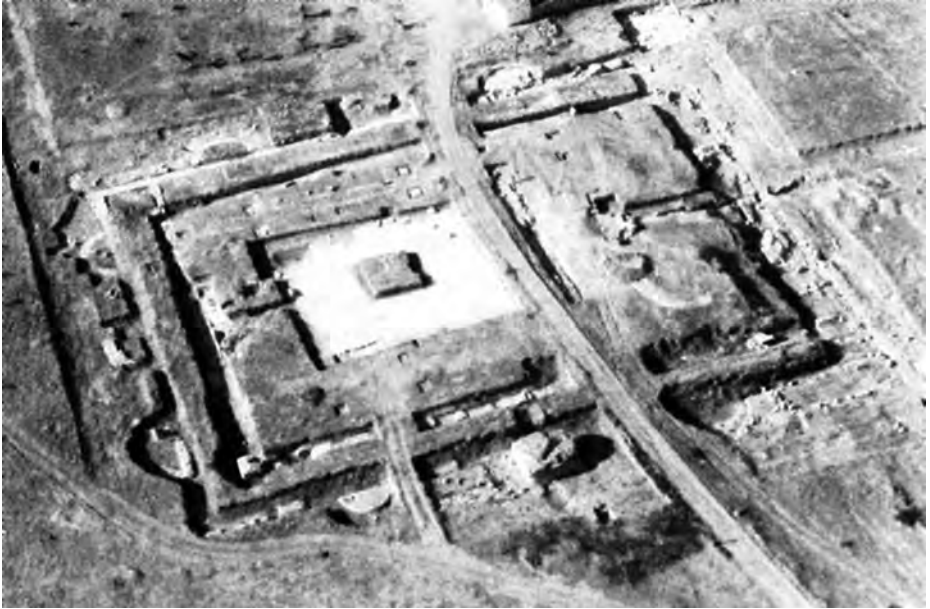


Fig. 5. Italice. Il *Traianeum*. Foto aerea del 1980. (Da ADRIANO 2000)

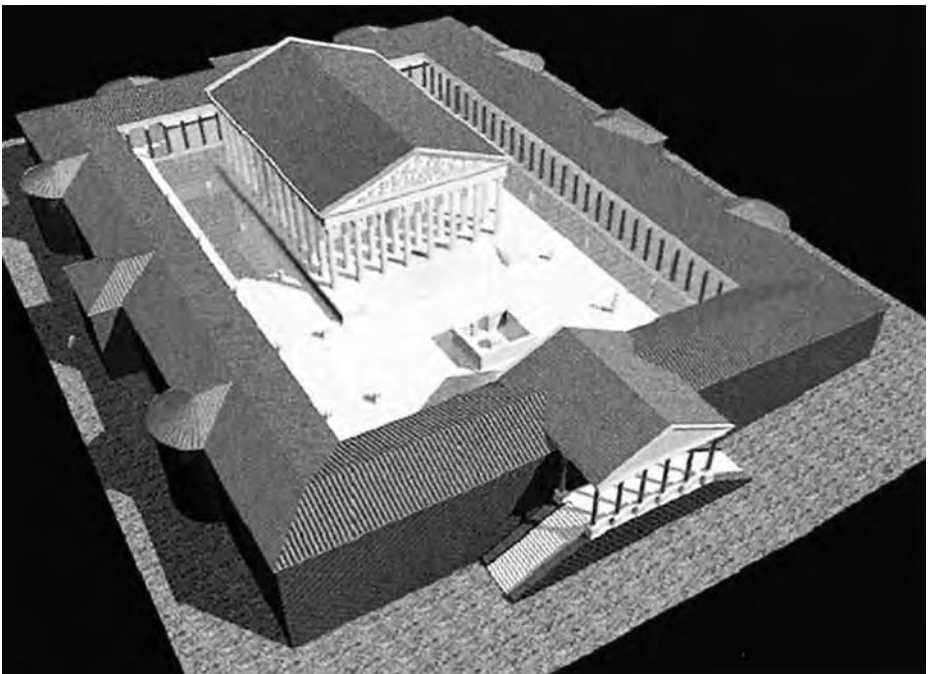


Fig. 6. Italice. Il *Traianeum*. Ricostruzione virtuale. (Da REGGIANI 2002)

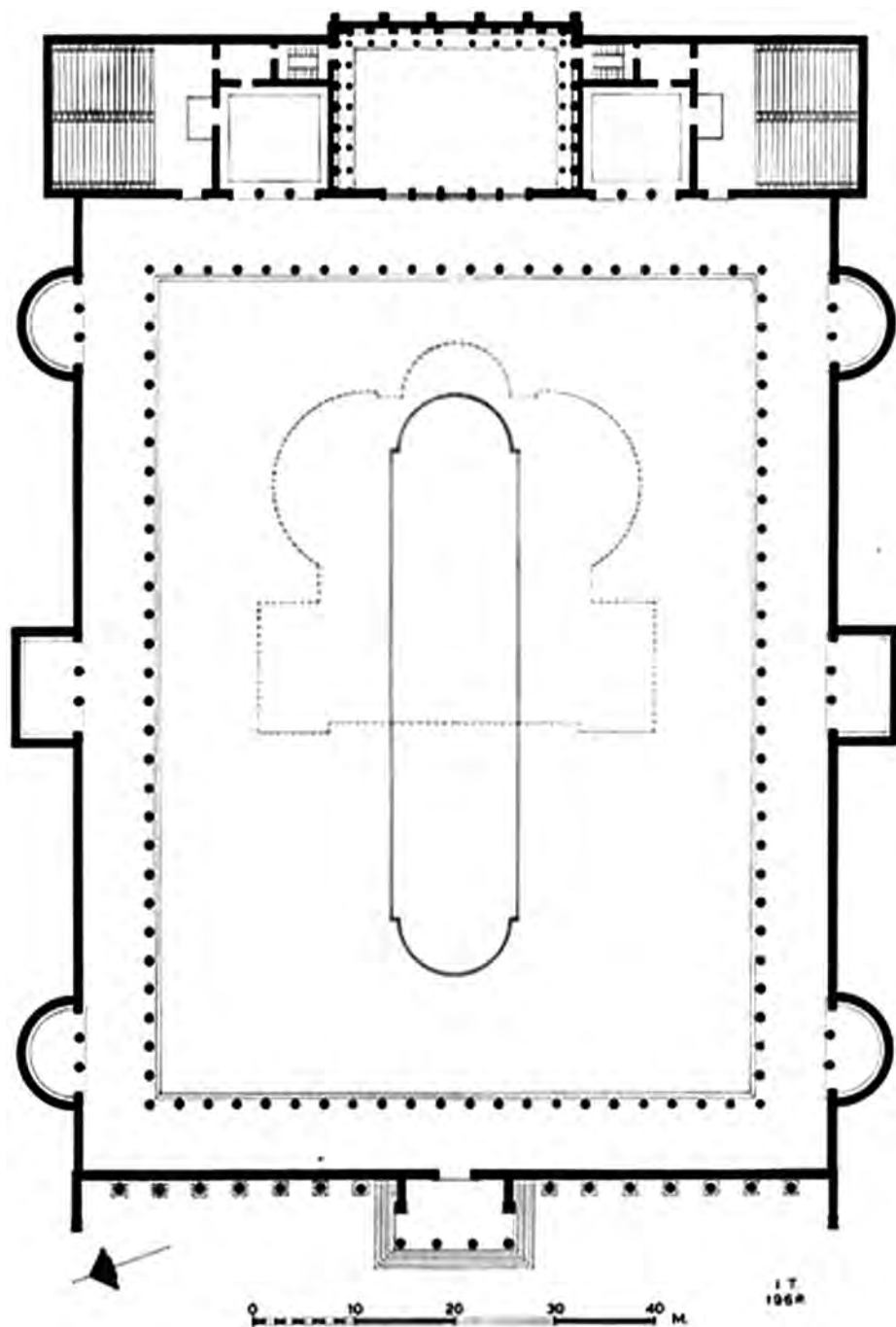


Fig. 7. Atene. La Biblioteca di Adriano. Pianta. (Da J. TRAVLOS, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Athen*, Tübingen 1971)



Fig. 8. Atene. La Biblioteca di Adriano (in secondo piano) e l'agorà romana viste dal lato settentrionale dell'Acropoli. Foto dell'Autore.

La vocazione non solo privata della Villa suggerisce un *continuum* rispetto alle imprese pubbliche sin qui invocate. Se si torna a considerare la Piazza d'Oro (Fig. 9), lo studio della planimetria e degli alzati, ma soprattutto la ricognizione dei marmi, di altissimo pregio come i *sectilia*, ha permesso di ipotizzare che essa occupasse un ruolo preminente pur nell'eccellenza della sede⁴²: la Piazza d'Oro poteva infatti essere usata sia come sala per le udienze e come luogo di epifania, sia come *triclinium*, ipotesi sostenibile grazie alla presenza dell'*ambulatio*; né si può escludere l'uso simposiastico, accomunante peraltro a molti altri edifici della Villa. Funzioni simili indirizzano dunque verso funzionalità parallele a quella della Biblioteca ad Atene: si potrebbe pensare che l'edificio nella Villa fosse "vissuto" direttamente dal sovrano con la sua persona fisica, che assumeva la sacralità del culto, e che invece ad Atene la Biblioteca accogliesse i componenti e gli elementi del culto. La coincidenza planimetrica, dunque, si sostanzia con funzionalità complementari.

L'apparato statuario voluto da Adriano per la Piazza d'Oro non è invece particolarmente eloquente in questa direzione, salvo che per un aspetto, che

42 GUIDOBALDI 1994, 259–260.



Fig. 9. Tivoli, Villa Adriana. Piazza d'Oro. Foto dell'Autore.

nell'attestazione odierna non risale ad Adriano, ma che da lui fu certamente voluto e progettato: dalla Piazza d'Oro provengono infatti due ritratti, di Marco Aurelio e di Caracalla, che fanno balenare l'idea di una galleria di effigi imperiali⁴³. Ciò ulteriormente confermerebbe la destinazione culturale del complesso, pensato da Adriano anche in proiezione futura, e in vista della fruizione da parte dei successori – filone poco riconoscibile nell'ambito della Villa, ma comunque da tenere in debita considerazione, dal momento che la residenza non fu occupata dal solo Adriano, ma anche dagli imperatori successivi, di cui si conservano ritratti fino ai primi decenni del III secolo d.C.

⁴³ Si tratta di Marco Aurelio III tipo "Museo delle Terme 726", databile al decennio dopo il 161 d.C., e di Caracalla II "Alleinherrscher – Typus" o "tipo Tivoli", databile agli anni 215–217 d.C. (da ultimo CALANDRA 2002, 68–70). Per gli altri ritrovamenti da ultimo CALANDRA 2002, 71.



Fig. 10. Tivoli, Villa Adriana. Edificio dei Pilastri Dorici. Foto dell'Autore.

L'Edificio dei Pilastri Dorici

Il complesso (Fig. 10) presenta alcuni tratti grazie ai quali può essere ascritto alla sfera del culto imperiale. Esso è costituito da una grandissima sala rettangolare, circondata dal portico a pilastri dorici, che forma una galleria voltata a botte, su cui si impostava probabilmente un secondo piano, realizzato in materiale leggero; l'ambiente centrale era scoperto. La sala introduceva a un ambiente absidato adibito a giardino, nel quale si entrava attraversando o una saletta rettangolare diaframmata da due colonne o due coppie di corridoi laterali⁴⁴.

Le caratteristiche morfologiche complessive inducono a cercare i precedenti ancora una volta nei palazzi di età ellenistica: ineludibile pare il richiamo ai peristili, a partire da quelli macedoni, che costituivano gli ambienti di maggior importanza, usati per il ricevimento, l'accoglienza, il banchetto. I peristili, rigorosamente a due piani, erano infatti articolati intorno a un colonnato architravato, che al pianoterra delimitava un porticato ospitante le *klinai*, i letti per il simposio⁴⁵. Su questa linea, dunque, anche l'Edificio dei Pilastri Dorici

⁴⁴ Da ultimo SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2001, 325–330.

⁴⁵ Come nei palazzi di Pella e di Demetriade (NIELSEN 1994, 89–92, 93 e 97–98).

poteva avere una destinazione simposiastica, collegabile, come si è visto in precedenza, alla pratica del culto imperiale, anche se va ridimensionato il ruolo di Sala del Trono che era stato attribuito a esso per la vicinanza planimetrica con l'Aula Regia del palazzo dei Flavi sul Palatino⁴⁶.

Gli Hospitalia

Si può chiudere la trattazione sul culto imperiale nella Villa con una suggestione, riguardante la destinazione dell'edificio noto come "Hospitalia" (Fig. 11). Diversamente rispetto ai complessi sin qui affrontati, che presuppongono l'intervento "dall'alto" dell'imperatore nella prassi culturale, gli *Hospitalia* suggeriscono una modalità differente di veicolazione del culto imperiale, per così dire "dal basso". Sotto il profilo planimetrico, l'edificio presenta due sequenze di *cubicula*, destinati ai pretoriani, separate da un corridoio, mentre in fondo si trova un ampio vano. Il complesso può essere ipoteticamente identificato in un luogo di culto per vari motivi: la posizione dell'ambiente di fondo, che ha un certo risalto nella pianta; la presenza in esso di una base, certamente di statua; la vicinanza della pianta a quella della Caserma dei Vigili di Ostia⁴⁷. La presenza di un simile tipo costruttivo a Villa Adriana può forse stupire, ma solo in apparenza: la Villa in effetti non era abitata solo dall'imperatore e dalla corte, ma doveva annoverare fra i suoi occupanti, oltre alla servitù, anche il corpo di guardia addetto alla persona dell'imperatore. Tale lettura, basata solo sul dato planimetrico, può naturalmente essere corretta nel prosieguo delle indagini.

b. I tempi del potere

Una tradizione ormai consolidata, che rimonta agli studi del Bloch sui bolli laterizi, ha allineato la sequenza delle fasi costruttive della Villa⁴⁸. Tale proposta cronologica prevede la seguente articolazione:

prima fase: luglio 118 d.C. – estate 121 d.C. : Palazzo Imperiale, Biblioteca Greca, Biblioteca Latina, Terrazza Superiore delle Biblioteche, Teatro Marittimo, Sala dei Filosofi, *Hospitalia*, Pecile e Cento Camerelle, Terme con Eliocamino, Stadio, Piccole e Grandi Terme;

seconda fase: seconda metà 125 d.C. – estate 128 d.C. : Piazza d'Oro, Ninfeo Fede, Palazzo d'Inverno, Ninfeo – Stadio, Canopo, Padiglione e Terrazza di Tempe, Edificio dei Pilastrini Dorici, Roccabruna, Accademia, *Odeon*, Palestra, Teatro Greco;

46 COARELLI 1984, 57 e 59; MacDONALD-PINTO 1995, 79–80.

47 COARELLI 1984, 52; MacDONALD-PINTO 1995, 68.

48 BLOCH 1937, 134–135 e 172–173.

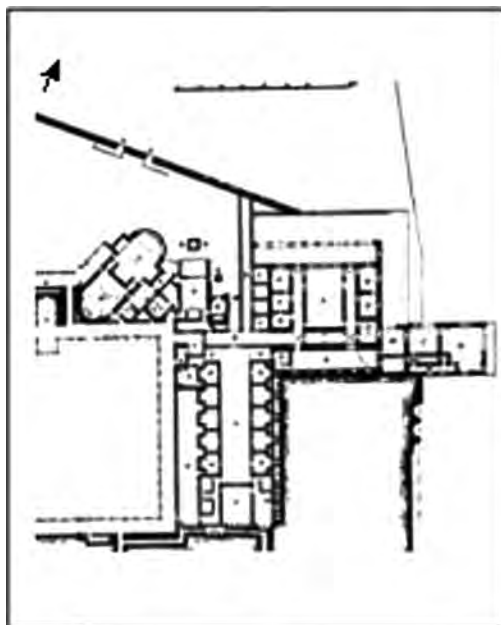


Fig. 11. Tivoli, Villa Adriana. *Hospitalia*. Pianta. (Da F. COARELLI, *Lazio*, Roma-Bari 1984)

terza fase: 133 / 134 d.C. – morte di Adriano: completamenti e approntamenti⁴⁹.

Come si osserverà anche dal diagramma stratigrafico (Fig. 12), la scansione non è così rigida, e può essere piuttosto letta come una sequenza costruttiva pressoché ininterrotta, con alcuni nodi cronologici individualizzanti, che possono essere posti in relazione con i viaggi dell'imperatore: senza che si debba pensare che i lavori nella Villa conoscessero un incremento in sua presenza o diminuissero in sua assenza, l'innegabile importanza dei viaggi in relazione alla villa è posta in luce già dall'*Historia Augusta*⁵⁰.

Dalla prima alla seconda fase: dall'*otium* al *negotium*

La pura successione cronologica delle fasi edilizie si carica di una valenza programmatica tutt'altro che casuale, se si prova a esaminare il significato delle costruzioni realizzate in ciascuna delle fasi individuate – assumendo sempre come presupposto la cautela sulla funzione della maggior parte degli edifici, per i motivi prima indicati. Ferma resta naturalmente la convinzione che è difficile

49 Sintesi in COARELLI 1984, 49–52.

50 *Hadr.* 26, 5.

inquadrate la personalità politica di Adriano in schemi troppo rigidi, soprattutto in una creazione, come Villa Adriana, che può riservare ancora molte sorprese. La lettura che qui si propone, pertanto, si basa sull'esame delle evidenze attuali e su aspetti che, allo stato attuale delle conoscenze, possono trovare spiegazione maggiore se riguardati secondo un'angolazione nuova.

I FASE

Palazzo Imperiale	Caserna dei Vigili
Terme con Eliocamino	
Terrazza Superiore delle Biblioteche	
Biblioteca Latina	Hospitalia - - Triclinio Imperiale
Biblioteca Greca	
Teatro Marittimo - - Sala Filosofi - - Lato N Pecile	
Pronao Teatro Marittimo	
Edificio con Tre Esedre (?) Lati E, O, S Pecile - - Stadio	

TRA LA I E LA II FASE

Grandi Terme	
	Pecile e Cento Camerelle
Ninfeo - Stadio (? o forse della II?)	
Piccole Terme	
Vestibolo	

II FASE

Piazza d'Oro
Casa colonica presso la Piazza d'Oro
Ninfeo Fede
Padiglione di Tempe
Terrazza di Tempe
Edificio dei Pilastrini Dorici
Edificio Criptoportico -- Ninfeo -- Stadio
Canopo -- Valle di Tempe
Roccabruna
Accademia
Odeon (?)
Palestra (?)
Teatro Greco (?)

Fig. 12. Tivoli, Villa Adriana. Schema delle fasi. (Da CALANDRA 1996)

La prima fase complessivamente è conosciuta meglio delle successive, e da questa è opportuno muovere, prima di tutto per ovvie ragioni cronologiche. I nuclei ascritti a questa fase, se osservati sotto il profilo funzionale, rientrano nelle strutture che nella villa romana di tradizione repubblicana caratterizzano l'*otium* e lo svago privato: delle terme e dello Stadio si è parlato in precedenza; il Palazzo Imperiale sorge addirittura su strutture preesistenti di età repubblicana⁵¹; le cosiddette Biblioteche, Greca e Latina, in realtà erano morfologicamente delle *turres*, ossia edifici a più piani con possibilità panoramiche, e funzionalmente dei luoghi di accoglienza o anche *triclinia* per i banchetti; il Pecile era un'*ambulatio*, pur con parallelismi pubblici⁵². Certamente eccezionale appariva il Teatro Marittimo, che costituiva una sorta di appendice pseudogalleggiante della Villa, ritiro appartato e intimo nella già selettiva compagine della Villa, e villa nella Villa esso stesso. Di servizio, e necessari fin dall'inizio dell'impresa monumentale, sono invece le Cento Camerelle e gli *Hospitalia*.

Questa prima fase, ancorché letta sempre (e giustamente) integrata con la seconda, aveva comunque un'autonomia e una ragion d'essere già al momento della costruzione: essa conteneva *in nuce* gli assi attorno ai quali si sarebbe articolata l'attività edilizia futura, e rappresentava il primo fulcro attorno al quale si imperniava la modellazione del paesaggio. La prosecuzione delle linee tracciate in questo primo momento avrebbe avuto una ricaduta diversa.

Un significativo mutamento si registra infatti progressivamente nelle attività edilizie più tarde, ascrivibili alla seconda e alla terza fase della villa; la seconda segue al grande viaggio che Adriano compie in tutto l'Impero fra il 121 e il 125 d.C.⁵³, la terza si pone dopo l'ultimo, che si svolse fra il 128 e il 132 d.C.⁵⁴. Alla seconda fase sono riferibili, fra gli altri, la Piazza d'Oro, il Canopo, e l'Edificio dei Pilastri Dorici: tutti edifici che si discostano, per tipologia architettonica, nella pianta come nell'alzato, e per funzione conseguentemente presumibile, da quelli della prima fase. Per quelli della seconda fase si è tentata in precedenza una lettura volta a porre in luce lo stretto legame con l'espletamento del culto imperiale, visivamente tradotto dal rituale epifanico del sovrano di fronte al pubblico (la corte, i dignitari, gli ambasciatori...) convenuto, a riunione o a banchetto: ne consegue dunque che se l'intera ideazione della Villa si rifa alla dimensione regale costruita dai dinasti di età ellenistica, a maggior ragione l'immagine del sovrano quale emerge nella seconda fase si caratterizza in senso autocratico.

51 In realtà, questa è la tradizione divulgata da una copiosa serie di studi, da ridiscutere a seguito di possibili nuove conoscenze che emergano dagli scavi. *Status quaestionis* in CALANDRA 1996, 197–201.

52 COARELLI 1997, 207–217.

53 Da ultimo BIRLEY 2004, 68–69.

54 Da ultimo BIRLEY 2004, 69, 128–132.

Come i bolli laterizi assicurano, il momento nodale, dunque, va riconosciuto nell'anno 125 d.C., con il quale prende avvio la seconda fase⁵⁵. L'incidenza di tale anno nell'ideazione adrianea, visibile dall'osservatorio di Villa Adriana, si coglie anche su registri più ampi.

Nel 125 d.C., infatti, Adriano termina il primo grande viaggio come imperatore, durante il quale matura una visione politica nuova. Adriano avvia allora il processo panellenico, di cui dapprima aveva progettato la sede a Delfi. L'individuazione della località pitica è suggerita senza dubbio dalla storicità cultuale del sito, che vanta una tradizione millenaria di confluenze fra le comunità elleniche. Vi è tuttavia un immediato precedente da tenere nel debito conto: Nerone, notoriamente filelleno (anche se di un filellenismo spesso negativamente declinato e per questo moralmente biasimato), intesse un rapporto privilegiato con la città, sulla quale impernia una politica interrotta dalla sua repentina morte⁵⁶. Allineandosi con la politica neroniana, Adriano recupera le relazioni con Delfi, o meglio con l'Anfizionia del santuario delfico, ma si espone a un fallimento per le lotte interne all'Anfizionia stessa⁵⁷. Il 125 d.C., anno in cui termina il primo viaggio attraverso l'impero, segna per Adriano la prima visita a Eleusi come imperatore; dopo il passaggio nel Norico, infatti, nell'avanzato 124 d.C. egli è ad Atene, dove permane, salvo spostamenti nella stessa Grecia, fino all'estate del 125 d.C., quando si fa iniziare a Eleusi. Tale pratica, che si completerà con il raggiungimento del più alto grado iniziatico, l'*epopteia*, nel 128 d.C., va ben oltre l'adesione personale a pratiche di indubbia fascinazione, e avvalorata l'operazione successiva, cioè l'abbandono di Delfi come sede del *koinón*. Assumendo il titolo di *Panhellenios* proprio a Eleusi, Adriano fa convergere la propria scelta su una formula antica, quella del *koinón*, forgiata *ex novo*: il *Panhellenion*, inaugurato nel 131–132 d.C., che ha sede e riconoscibilità monumentale ad Atene⁵⁸. In tale contesto, non è forse irrilevante ricordare che nell'occasione è iniziato anche Antinoo⁵⁹.

Il segnale di un mutamento, peraltro, si coglie anche nella titolatura monetale: nel 124–125 d.C., legittimato il proprio potere anche nei confronti del

55 Per l'importanza del 125 d.C. anche MARI-REGGIANI-RIGHI 2002, 24.

56 CORTÉS COPETE 1999, 237–251.

57 Da ultimo CORTÉS COPETE 1999a, 91–112.

58 Sul *Panhellenion* si citano solo SPAWFORTH-WALKER 1985, 78–104; SPAWFORTH-WALKER 1986, 88–105; WILLERS 1990, 54–67 e 93–103; ANTONETTI 1995, 149–156; CALANDRA 1996, 102–105; SPAWFORTH 1999, 339–352; ROMEO 2002, 21–37. Per le questioni topografiche relative all'identificazione del *Panhellenion* CALANDRA 1996, 107–110, e CALANDRA 1998, 261–272. Netamente culturale la posizione di HOEPFNER 2002, 63–66, che concentra l'attenzione sulla pianta della Biblioteca, e la confronta con l'Accademia di Platone.

59 MEYER 1991, 234. Aur. Vict. 14, 4; *Hadr.* 13, 1. Sull'iniziazione eleusina di Adriano, con le implicazioni politiche relative, si veda GALIMBERTI 2007, 86–92 e 131–132, e di nuovo il contributo di A. Galimberti in questo volume.



Fig. 13. Tivoli, Villa Adriana. Grande Vestibolo. Foto dell'Autore.

predecessore, Adriano nella monetazione si riallaccia ad Augusto, e modifica la propria immagine, cui fa conferire una fisionomia più individualizzata⁶⁰.

La terza fase e i culti sotterriologici

La portata e l'intensità del messaggio figurativo del Canopo si moltiplica, se si considera la contiguità a esso di un interessante complesso, di recente riportato alla luce dagli scavi: il Grande Vestibolo (Figg. 13 e 14)⁶¹.

Come ben si legge in pianta, esso appare una sorta di duplicazione planimetrica del Canopo, pur nella diversità dimensionale; le due planimetrie sono

60 MATTINGLY 1936, CXII-CXVI. In generale sull'*imagerie* di Adriano e di Antinoo BONANNO ARAVANTINOS 1998, 163–177.

61 REGGIANI 2003, 105–111; MARI 2003, 145–185; MARI 2003a, 7–25; SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2003, 113–144; SGALAMBRO 2003, 315–343; MARI 2004, 263–314; SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2004, 231–261; SGALAMBRO 2004, 425–447; MARI 2005, 125–140; MARI 2006, 35–45; REGGIANI 2006, 55–73; MARI–SGALAMBRO 2007, 83–104. Critico verso l'identificazione del complesso nella tomba di Antinoo è PRACCHIA 2006, 75–97.

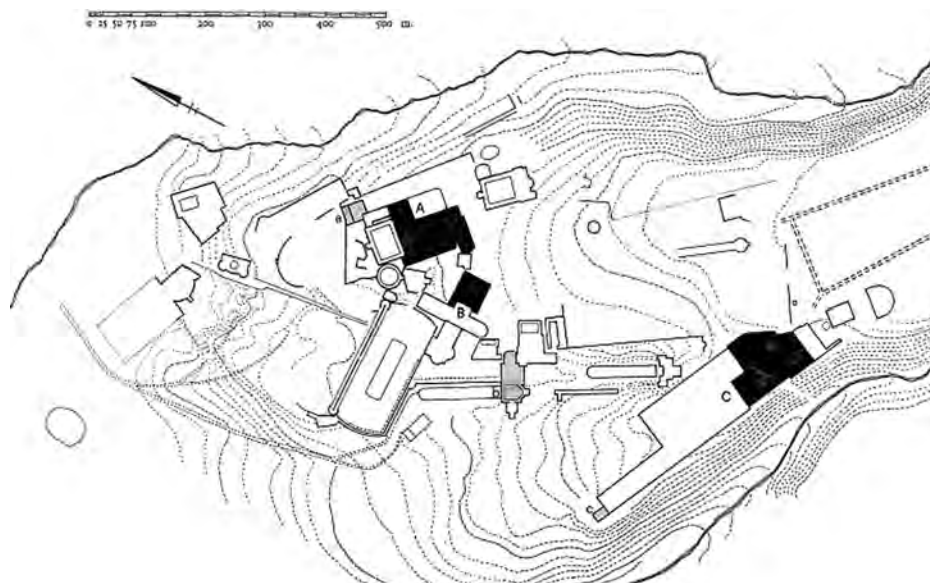


Fig. 14. Tivoli, Villa Adriana. Pianta con l'indicazione dei nuovi scavi. Sono evidenziati i tre nuclei palaziali con ingressi relativi: Aa (Palazzo Orientale e Vestibolo della Valle di Tempe), Bb (Palazzo Invernale e Grande Vestibolo), Cc (Piccolo Palazzo o Accademia e Torre di Roccabruna). (Da REGGIANI 2002)

molto simili fra loro, rettangolari con un lato corto curvo da una parte e desinenti in un edificio a pianta mistilinea dall'altra. Il complesso introduceva alla Villa, e al tempo stesso costituiva una prolessi del Canopo, con cui condivideva l'orientamento, e assumeva un ruolo nodale e di smistamento verso altri blocchi di edifici, data la collocazione "all'angolo fra i due lunghi bracci delle Cento Camerelle"⁶². In realtà, il Grande Vestibolo assolveva una funzione ulteriore, e di notevolissimo rilievo: prospiciente su di esso sorgeva infatti un complesso piuttosto singolare, che può essere così descritto, con le parole dello scavatore, il Mari: "una grande esedra a doppio muro con un diametro interno di 27 metri dotata di ambienti di rin fianco attestati su due prolungamenti alle estremità e preceduta – a breve distanza – da due compatte costruzioni di m 15 x 9 (identificabili come templi), chiuse in un recinto rettangolare lungo m 63 e largo 23, con l'ingresso (ancora interrato) in posizione centrale sulla strada per il Vestibolo"⁶³. L'edificio appartiene alle opere più tarde della Villa per la tecnica edilizia, costituita da una muratura cementizia a scaglie di tufo rivestita di blocchetti rettangolari⁶⁴ (Figg. 15 e 16).

62 Citazione da MARI 2003, 145; MARI-REGGIANI-RIGHI 2002, 25.

63 MARI 2003, 147–148.

64 MARI 2003, 148.

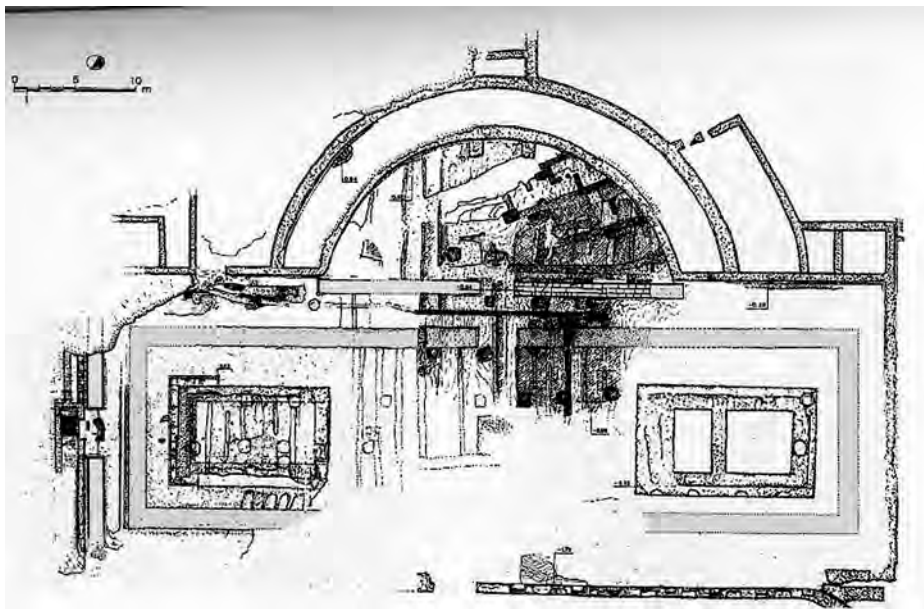


Fig. 15. Tivoli, Villa Adriana. Pianta dell'*Antinoeion*. (Da ADEMBRI – MARI 2006)

La Salza Prina Ricotti aveva attirato l'attenzione sull'area in cui sorge il complesso, convincentemente identificato dal Mari dapprima in una struttura cultuale per divinità egizie, e poi incontrovertibilmente nell'*Antinoeion*, luogo sacro ad Antinoo e forse tomba del giovanetto⁶⁵.

L'identificazione è stata fondata su vari ordini di indizi, emersi in successive campagne di scavo. I due templi, prostili tetrastili su podio, per tipologia annoverano confronti con gli Isei di età ellenistica e romana⁶⁶; al tempo stesso, la quantità e la natura dell'apparato decorativo, architettonico e scultoreo, di tipo egizio, appartenente al complesso in questione, rinviano a un santuario egizio⁶⁷, che già di natura potrebbe trovare una collocazione in un'area, quale quella tiburtina, fortemente sacralizzata in senso isiaco⁶⁸: a questo complesso, e non al Serapeo del Canopo, è anzi attribuibile una parte consistente della statuaria egizia ed egittizzante che il Grenier aveva ricostruito come pertinente appunto a

65 SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2003, 113–144, ripercorre le vicende dell'individuazione sul terreno del complesso.

66 MARI 2003, 156–159, cita gli Isei di Pompei, di Râs es-Soda fra Alessandria e Canopo, quello di Tolomeo III nel Serapeo di Alessandria e quello in Campo Marzio a Roma di età predomiziana.

67 MARI 2003, 159–163.

68 ADEMBRI 1997, 326–331.



Fig. 16. Tivoli, Villa Adriana. *Antinoeion*. Foto dell'Autore.

tale complesso⁶⁹. Dubbi sull'appartenenza al Serapeo del nucleo statuario riassemblato dal Grenier, peraltro, sono prospettati anche dalla Adembri, a proposito dei culti isiaci in area tiburtina⁷⁰, dalla Ensoli, a proposito di un nucleo di statue identificate come i sacerdoti isiaci con il sembiante di Antino⁷¹, e dalla Salza Prina Ricotti, che riferisce invece alcuni dei ritrovamenti egizi alle terrazze parallele all'Euripo⁷².

Dirimenti per provare l'identificazione in Antino⁷¹ della divinità venerata sono due osservazioni: in primo luogo, è dimostrato che almeno una delle statue rappresentanti il giovanetto divinizzato come Osiride, riferite dal Grenier al

69 È impossibile riprendere l'imponente lavoro di riscontro antiquariale effettuato dal Mari, che ricostruisce le provenienze spesso per le singole statue: basti qui citare MARI 2003, 163–180, e MARI 2004, 279–301, per il posizionamento dei tre gruppi di sculture rinvenuti nel corso del Settecento nelle proprietà Michilli e in quelle dei Gesuiti, nonché nel Pantanello a opera di Gavin Hamilton.

70 ADEMBRI 1997, 326

71 ENSOLI 2002, 99–101.

72 SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2003, 137–138.

Serapeo, proviene proprio da questa zona della Villa⁷³; in secondo luogo, l'iscrizione sull'obelisco del Pincio, qui innalzato, dopo varie collocazioni, nel 1822, fa riferimento alla collocazione di una tomba in un giardino, o piuttosto in campagna, "proprietà del Principe di Roma": definizione che ben si attaglia alla Villa⁷⁴. Accettando tale ipotesi, l'obelisco avrebbe potuto essere posto su un basamento, di cui sono state rinvenute le tracce, a metà fra i due templi⁷⁵. Un ulteriore rafforzamento a quest'interpretazione è la collocazione esterna del complesso, presso uno degli ingressi della Villa, come si addice a una sepoltura (anzi, in questo caso, quasi sicuramente a un cenotafio)⁷⁶.

La densità programmatica del Canopo, in realtà, già in passato aveva suggerito di individuare in esso la tomba di Antinoo: la proposta iniziale è ascrivibile al Kähler, che fu seguito negli anni dallo Hannestad e dalla scuola danese; tuttavia le argomentazioni della Salza Prina Ricotti, basate sui dati di scavo, dimostrarono l'infondatezza dell'identificazione⁷⁷. Essa, comunque, ideologicamente ha un suo valore: non a caso la vera tomba del giovane è stata riconosciuta in un complesso la cui specularità, topografica e planimetrica, rispetto al Canopo non è casuale. Anche deprivando il Canopo di buona parte o di tutta la componente egizia a esso annessa, si può comunque leggere nell'asse Canopo – Vestibolo una sorta di "alone" legato alla personalità e al culto di Antinoo, che viene a occupare un'area non irrilevante nella pur notevole scala dimensionale della Villa⁷⁸.

73 A tale statua, colossale, in marmo pario, al Museo Gregoriano Egizio, è possibile apparentare una serie di almeno altre nove immagini di Antinoo come Osiride (MARI 2004, 300–301).

74 MARI 2004, 303–309 e, sulla stessa linea, SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2004, 253–261. La traduzione è quella di GRENIER-COARELLI 1986, 217–253.

75 MARI 2004, 305.

76 Gli accessi della Villa sono tre: Aa, Palazzo Orientale e Vestibolo della Valle di Tempe; Bb Palazzo Invernale e Grande Vestibolo; Cc Piccolo Palazzo, o meglio Accademia, e Torre di Roccabruna (MARI-REGGIANI-RIGHI 2002, 27, fig. 34); SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2003, 123–124; SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2004, 231–261; MARI 2004, 309–313.

77 KÄHLER 1975, 35–44, seguito da HANNESTAD 1982, 69–108, che ribadisce anche in anni recenti tale posizione (HANNESTAD 1999, 103–115); JASHEMSKY-SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 1992, 579–597 e SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 1992, 121–157.

78 In questo ambito va menzionata anche la proposta di Grenier e di Coarelli, che, muovendo dal testo dell'obelisco del Pincio, ravvisarono la tomba monumentale di Antinoo nei resti del grandioso edificio della Vigna Barberini sul Palatino; secondo tale ipotesi, i tondi ora in opera sull'Arco di Costantino sarebbero appartenuti all'*heroon* del giovane oppure a un arco, probabilmente quello d'ingresso della Vigna stessa, che dalle monete appare essere stato a tre fornic (GRENIER-COARELLI 1986, 217–253). Anche se l'argomentazione di maggior vigore, ossia la nuova traduzione del testo dell'obelisco, viene a cadere, l'ipotesi non è priva di suggestione, e induce comunque a supporre che anche a Roma potesse esservi un'attestazione del culto del giovane bitinico. Per altre ipotesi

La presenza in essa del memoriale di Antinoo induce a riflettere sul significato che la figura del giovane riveste nel disegno adrianeo, e avvalorata ancora più la destinazione pubblica della Villa, rappresentando in essa un ulteriore spazio di rappresentazione del potere. La disperazione dell'imperatore, infatti, rientra in minima parte nella sfera privata, ma le manifestazioni che egli costruisce intorno al giovane portano ben al di là della vicenda personale: Antinoo è eletto a strumento per la diffusione di un nuovo culto, che può essere visto come un'ipostasi di quello imperiale. Le ragioni alla base di una simile scelta programmatica si colgono meglio se si analizzano le circostanze della morte del giovane. Come suggerisce il passo di Cassio Dione⁷⁹, Antinoo si sarebbe immolato sacrificandosi nel Nilo durante la festa dei *Neilōa*, per garantire l'immortalità ad Adriano; alla morte sarebbe seguito il catasterismo del giovane, divenuto in questo modo dio: questa figura sotto molte denominazioni, in Occidente ma soprattutto nel più recettivo Oriente⁸⁰, e viene effigiata in numerose statue attestate in tutto l'impero (Fig. 17)⁸¹; a lui viene intitolata una città, *Antinoe* o *Antinoupolis*⁸².

In realtà, con il fine di garantirsi l'immortalità, proprio di tutte le dottrine soteriologiche, Adriano stesso si era fatto iniziare a Eleusi: ne consegue dunque una sorta di "cumulo" di pratiche culturali diverse, che ha un riflesso significativo ancora una volta nella Villa⁸³, in un ritratto nel quale è stato riconosciuto l'imperatore stesso (Fig. 18), ringiovanito grazie alle pratiche misteriche⁸⁴. A tale identificazione la critica è pervenuta grazie all'accostamento a un'emissione monetale, nota come Δ-0, che presenta la legenda HADRIANUS AUG P P REN, collegata alla rinascita eleusina⁸⁵. L'identificazione è molto controversa, ma l'effigie acquista un rilievo ancor maggiore, se si considera la provenienza dalla Villa: l'esemplare in essa rinvenuto proviene da un "butto", e dunque è impossibile individuarne la collocazione originaria – anche se non si può e-

collocazioni, a Roma, di un sacrario di Antinoo, MARI 2004, 304, nota 58. Ipotesi sui culti isiaci a Villa Adriana in ENSOLI 2002, 94–112.

79 Fonti antiche sulla morte di Antinoo e sulla fondazione di *Antinoe*: Aur. Vict. 14, 7; Dio 69, 11, 2; *Hadr.* 14, 5–7. Cfr. GALIMBERTI 2007, 95–98. Da ultimo su *Antinoe* CALANDRA 2008, 139–165.

80 Per le epiclesi MEYER 1991, 163–172.

81 Nel lavoro dedicato alla ritrattistica di Antinoo, MEYER 1991, 233–235 analizza le tipologie statuarie con cui Antinoo è rappresentato. Per una bibliografia su Antinoo vedasi CALANDRA 2008, 162–164.

82 Da ultimo CALANDRA 1996, 57–162 e 132–34.

83 Si è ipotizzato che nell'oscurità delle gallerie e dei criptoportici si celebrassero riti misterici (MacDONALD-PINTO 1995, 135; LAVAGNE 2000, 16; *contra* SALZA PRINA RICOTTI 2001, 311–315). Un Iseo, con valenze anche eleusine, è stato identificato nella Palestra in seguito a scavi recentissimi (MARI 2007, 23–27).

84 RAEDER 1983, I, 88, 89–92.

85 Lo scioglimento di REN in RENATUS si deve a BEAUJEU 1955, 169. L'emissione di aurei Δ-0 fu individuata da von STRACK 1933, 28 e 209, e datata fra il 136 e il 137.



Fig. 17. Antinoo, statua da Eleusi, Museo di Eleusi. Foto dell'Autore.



Fig. 18. Hadrianus Renatus, ritratto da Tivoli, Villa Adriana. Antiquarium. (Da CALANDRA 1996)

scudere a questo punto un sacrario, di dimensioni non precisabili, legato proprio ai culti eleusini, speculari e complementari a quelli egizi. L'importanza del ritratto aumenta ulteriormente, se si considera che non era un *unicum*, in quanto se ne conoscono varie repliche, a provarne una certa diffusione⁸⁶.

86 Per un aggiornamento sul ritratto HANNESTAD 1993, 65 e 68 e HANNESTAD 1999a, 117–120; per lo *status quaestionis* SCHRÖDER 1993, n. 54, 204–207, con ricca bibliografia; discussione in CALANDRA 1996, 161–162; l'identificazione in Adriano si ripropone in HANNESTAD 1999, 117–121, e in HANNESTAD 2001, 141–151. Contraria all'identificazione del ritratto in Adriano è EVERS 1994, 273–279.

Osservazioni conclusive

Considerata la vocazione almeno in parte pubblica della Villa, si impone ora una comparazione fra questa e le realizzazioni che l'imperatore promuove a Roma e nell'impero. Specularità e consonanze sono state poste in luce in queste pagine: non si può però tacere su una dissonanza di fondo, tuttavia solo apparente. Rispetto all'immagine che Adriano intende offrire di sé nell'impero, la Villa costituisce un modo di autorappresentarsi in senso autocratico, almeno in parte diverso dall'afflato universalistico che anima i viaggi, il rapporto con le province e la monetazione provinciale⁸⁷. Anzi, in alcune realizzazioni nella Villa, della seconda e della terza fase, Adriano abbandona l'atteggiamento di calcolata riservatezza manifestato nel restauro del *Pantheon*, che non porta il suo nome (e così la maggioranza degli edifici da lui costruiti o restaurati): non gli è infatti più necessaria la prudente politica di progressivo autoaccreditamento che ha caratterizzato i primi anni del suo principato.

Per nulla forzato, dunque, suona il raccordo tra la vicenda biografica dell'imperatore e le modalità con cui questi plasma e completa la Villa: in una personalità come quella adrianea la vita privata e il comportamento politico sono compenetrati in modo inscindibile.

87 Emblematizzato dopo la morte dell'imperatore dall'*Hadrianeum* a Roma (oggi Palazzo della Borsa, a Piazza di Pietra): CLARIDGE-MARTINES-NISTA 1999.

La *paideia* di Adriano: alcune osservazioni sulla valenza politica del culto eroico

MARCO GALLI

1. Paideia e politica

Quale ruolo ha avuto la dimensione della *paideia* greca nella costituzione e nel consolidamento dell'impero attuato da Adriano? Quali connessioni esistono tra il mondo degli interessi religioso-filosofici dell'imperatore e la dimensione politico-militare della gestione del potere? Una tale indagine, troppo ampia per questa sede, non solo comporterebbe la disamina di una documentazione relativa ai numerosi atti ed alle molteplici evergesie fatte a Roma e nelle città visitate dal successore di Traiano, ma anche dovrebbe necessariamente delineare le dinamiche di un più vasto fenomeno politico e culturale, in cui l'impero di Roma, con le sue tendenze ecumeniche, si confrontava, instaurando un proficuo dialogo, con le realtà provinciali¹.

Non solo per l'imperatore, ma anche per un'intera classe di funzionari, amministratori, brillanti politici ed al contempo celebri *pepaideumenoï*, in cui si articolano le aristocrazie provinciali, è ineludibile il nesso tra *paideia* e politica con tutte le ambiguità che dall'esercizio di tale ruolo possono derivare. Un'impostazione che consideri l'unitarietà di una *paideia* fortemente politicizzata, funzionale a formare ed anche a influenzare le opinioni politiche, ci sembra offrire una comprensione più adeguata dell'operato di Adriano, contro analisi che invece separano rigidamente i termini del dibattito².

Particolarmente esemplificativo di questo ultimo atteggiamento è l'impostazione della recente mostra del British Museum *Hadrian. Empire and Conflict*, come si evince dalle considerazioni iniziali espresse dal curatore Thorsten

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- 1 Un quadro complessivo: LEVI 1994/2000, BIRLEY 1997, con i recenti contributi in CORTÉS COPETE – MUÑIZ GRIJALVO 2004, GALIMBERTI 2007; fondamentale la recente disamina di MORTENSEN 2004. Adriano e Roma: KNELL 2008, BOATWRIGHT 1987, STIERLIN 1984. Adriano e le province: CALANDRA 1996, BOATWRIGHT 2000. Adriano e Atene come capitale della memoria ellenica: GALLI 2002, 7–12 assieme a KNELL 2008, KUHLMANN 2002, 81–87, BIRLEY 1997a, WILLERS 1990, con il classico GRAINDOR 1973 (orig. 1934).
 - 2 Per il nesso tra paideia e politica v. le recenti discussioni intorno all'ampio dibattito sul fenomeno della Seconda Sofistica in CORDOVANA-GALLI 2007, BORG 2004, GOLDHILL 2001.

Opper: “Closely tied to this assessment of Hadrian’s foreign and military policy is the interpretation of his strong philhellenism; in the past Hadrian, the great traveller and peaceful ruler with a passionate interest in Greek culture, has been contrasted with his militaristic, aggressive predecessor, Trajan. Much of this oversimplified and anachronistic concept does not stand up to scrutiny. To some extent, if not within scholarly circles then at least among a wider public, the Roman Hadrian needs to be rediscovered behind the persuasive image of the *graeculus*, or ‘little Greekling’, that so dominated the debate”³.

Sotto l’influsso della suggestiva presentazione degli splendidi pezzi esposti a Londra, ci si può chiedere se, per mettere in piena luce un “Roman Hadrian”, sia utile ridimensionare la natura di un ‘Greek Hadrian’. A tale opera di “revisione ideologica” risponde il riesame della famosa statua di Cirene (fig. 1), scoperta nel 1861 nel tempio di Apollo, che rappresenta l’imperatore Adriano con indosso il mantello di foggia greca. A seguito delle analisi condotte in occasione dell’esposizione del 2008 si è giunti ad considerare la scultura come risultato di un assemblaggio moderno, risultato di uno scorretto restauro vittoriano, di una testa raffigurante l’imperatore Adriano ma non originariamente appartenente alla statua con *himation*⁴. Nonostante tutta la cautela che le nuove analisi del pezzo impongono, sarebbe auspicabile una revisione del contesto di ritrovamento per valutare l’ipotesi di un precedente accorpamento dei due pezzi, i quali ritenuti incoerenti da un punto di vista moderno, potrebbero, in realtà, essere stati assemblati già in antico. Questa ipotesi potrebbe essere avvalorata dalla presenza di una ben diffusa pratica attestata proprio nella stessa Cirene. Ad esempio, alla ristrutturazione del locale dell’*Augusteum*, avvenuta dopo il terribile terremoto del 356 d.C., appartiene infatti la rappresentazione dell’imperatore Marco Aurelio che assembla una testa ritratto ed un corpo femminile panneggiato, opportunamente rimaneggiato in forma di togato⁵.

Al di là del singolo caso dell’Adriano cirenaico in foggia greca, che necessita un maggior approfondimento rispetto alla sbrigativa conclusione di “restauro vittoriano”, ciò che emerge è proprio la nuova linea interpretativa, come icasticamente chiosato dal curatore dell’esibizione: “As this statue can physically be exploded, so can much of the myth of Hadrian as a peaceful philhellene”⁶. La rappresentazione del *princeps* ‘alla greca’ non rientrerebbe dunque nei rigidi canoni dell’iconografia romana ufficiale e, più precisamente, fissati nell’abito civile come togato, in apparato militare come comandante, in nudità come gli dei ed eroi del mito.

3 OPPER 2008, 22.

4 OPPER 2008, 69 ss.

5 CIRENE 2000, 79 s., 126 ss.

6 OPPER 2008, 70.



Fig. 1. Londra, British Museum: statua di Adriano con mantello in foggia greca dal tempio di Apollo a Cirene [da OPPER 2008].

Quindi *imperator* versus *pepaideumenos*? Proprio nel caso specifico di Adriano tale rigida contrapposizione sembra contraddetta dall'esistenza delle immagini testimoniate sui tondi dell'Arco di Costantino raffiguranti il sovrano in situazioni e abbigliamento maggiormente diversificati rispetto alla norma⁷. Tale circostanza, considerando che proprio il massimo esponente del potere doveva verosimilmente rappresentare il primo modello di un diffuso *habitus*, in cui la formazione intellettuale (*paideia* religioso-filosofica) è inscindibilmente connaturata all'esercizio attivo dell'attività politica e militare, induce a contrastare quest'impostazione assai riduttiva e in parte fuorviante, tesa a limitare ed isolare gli ambiti legati più propriamente all'azione (quella strategica militare per la salvaguardia e difesa dell'impero, quella legislativa-amministrativa, ecc.) dalle politiche religiose e culturali⁸.

Nell'ottica di una comunicazione simbolica il maggior elemento unificatore di tale interazione era *in primis* il corpo stesso dell'imperatore, fisicamente evocato nello spazio urbano dalle numerose statue che lo raffiguravano e ne ricordavano le azioni, ma che, proprio nell'eclatante caso di Adriano, si concretizzava addirittura nell'epifania stessa del sovrano durante i suoi numerosi "viaggi"⁹: gli *itineraria principis* sono forse il dato più evidente e per noi più rilevante di uno stretto connubio tra il mondo intellettuale (*paideia* religioso-filosofica) e la dimensione politico-militare, aspetti sempre integrati nelle concrete realtà politiche e sociali dei contesti urbani, santuariali o territoriali, in cui Adriano si trovava ad agire ed operare¹⁰.

È sullo sfondo di un'idea ecumenica dell'impero, al cui interno fossero possibili identità multiple (locali, centrali, religiose, culturali) che assistiamo al recupero da parte di Adriano in chiave politica e ideologica delle tradizioni religiose e culturali elleniche: tale ideologia, introdotta in Grecia da Alessandro Magno e perseguita da Augusto e, tenacemente, da Traiano, viene ora lasciata in eredità ad Adriano.

7 ARCO DI COSTANTINO 1999, 66 ss. figg. 19–24.

8 Per la compenetrazione delle sfere dell'agire politico-religioso e l'attività intellettuale come parte dell'*habitus* delle aristocrazie romane del II sec. d.C. v. FLINTERMAN 1995, assieme a SCHMITZ 1997, GLEASON 1995.

9 *HA Hadr.* 17.8: *peregrinationis ita cupidus, ut omnia, quae legerat de locis orbis terrarum, praesens uellet addiscere*; sui "viaggi" di Adriano v. HALFMANN 1986, spec. 40–44 per le motivazioni, 188–210 per gli itinerari; inoltre v. BIRLEY 2004, LEHNEN 1997, CONTINI 1991; l'arrivo dell'imperatore nelle città dell'Oriente greco e le manifestazioni celebrative in GALLI 2008 e FONTANI 2007; WITULSKI 2008 (*non vidi*).

10 Politica religiosa e memoria culturale in Adriano: KUHLMANN 2002, politica religiosa di Adriano in Oriente: KRANZ 1990; istanze religiose: GALIMBERTI 2007, CLINTON 1989a, GUARDUCCI 1965, DEN BOER 1955. Adriano nei santuari della Grecia: GALLI 2004; sulle trasformazioni del paesaggio sacro v. GALLI 2001.

2. La dimensione ecumenica dei culti eroici

Su di un medaglione della fine del suo regno appare la scritta TELLVS STABIL, quindi *tellus stabilita*, al rovescio indicante la personificazione femminile adagiata (fig. 2), con la mano destra appoggiata al globo, intorno alla quale vengono rappresentati quattro fanciulli (le quattro stagioni), mentre sul dritto campeggia il busto di Adriano con la testa ricoperta dalla pelle di leone¹¹: questa scelta delle due raffigurazioni rendeva tangibile l'associazione tra Adriano-Ercole e l'Età dell'Oro. Come l'eroe-semidio, simbolo della conquista e della civiltà, anche l'imperatore si avvicinava così alla natura di navigatore, viaggiatore e, soprattutto, *Victor* per antonomasia. In questa chiave è da vedersi il recupero adrianeo del culto dell'eroe nella specifica versione dell'*Hercules Gaditanus*: i coni monetali aurei della prima fase del suo regno riproducono un'edicola con la statua di Ercole al suo interno con la clava appoggiata a terra e tenuta dritta con la legenda HERC GADIT. La celebrazione del culto di Ercole viene ulteriormente enfatizzata anche sul tondo del lato settentrionale nell'Arco di Costantino¹², nel pilastro orientale, affiancato al tondo che riproduce la caccia al leone; si tratta di una scena di sacrificio in cui l'imperatore *velato capite* dedica la pelle leonina alla divinità, rappresentata come statua di culto nella parte alta del tondo. La natura di *Invictus* del dio-eroe, che appare seduto secondo la celebre iconografia di Lisippo, è sottolineata dalla presenza delle *loricae* sistemate ai lati e della vittoria alata sulla mano sinistra del dio; è significativo notare che la raffigurazione di tale statua di culto è attestata anche su altri coni monetali dell'imperatore (fig. 3).

La celebrazione di Ercole, specialmente quello del celebre e antico santuario di Cadice (fig. 4), non richiama unicamente l'origine della *gens Aelia* da Italica, l'antica colonia romana sulle rive dell'odierno Guadalquivir nella Baetica. Il santuario gaditano segnava nella geografia antica il limite simbolico ad Occidente della terra conosciuta e, al contempo, costituiva il punto di partenza per l'Oriente. L'assimilazione tra l'imperatore ed Ercole, che anticipa in modo eclatante quella di Commodo, si richiamava anche con particolare forza allusiva alla figura di Alessandro. Attraverso il filtro, dunque, di una consolidata *paideia* ellenica e grazie ai viaggi in Oriente ed Occidente, emulando Dioniso ed Ercole,

11 Sul dritto la leggenda poco visibile HADRIANVS AVGVSTVS, con la testa dell'imperatore rivolta verso destra e coperta dalla pelle di leone, in cattivo stato di conservazione, mentre sul rovescio TELLVS STABIL con la rappresentazione della Terra come figura femminile sdraiata con la destra appoggiata sul globo, intorno alla quale sono disposti quattro fanciulli rappresentanti le quattro stagioni, v. TOYNBEE 1934, tav. 19 n. 10, che preannuncia l'assimilazione tra l'imperatore ed Ercole che si avrà con Commodo, *ibidem* tav. 19 n. 11.

12 ARCO DI COSTANTINO 1999, 66 ss. fig. 22.



Fig. 2. Medaglione (età di Commodo) con la rappresentazione della *Tellus Stabulata* [da <http://www.coinarchives.com> = 00748q00]



Fig. 3. Aureo di Adriano (119–122 d.C.) con rappresentazione dell'*Hercules Invictus* [da <http://www.coinarchives.com> = 00039q00]



Fig. 4. Aureo di Adriano (119–122 d.C.) con rappresentazione dell'*Hercules Gaditanus* [da <http://www.coinarchives.com> = 00706q00]

l'imperatore portò la visione dell'*oikoumene* alla sua logica conclusione nella compagine unitaria dell'impero.

Nell'ottica di una concezione ecumenica del potere propagata da Adriano, alcuni atti simbolici compiuti durante gli *itineria principis* possono essere letti come strategie mirate a ridisegnare, superando le diverse identità etniche, un sentire comune al fine di diffondere il senso di coesione e di identità comune non solo politica ma anche culturale dettata, voluta e protetta da Roma. La riviviscenza del culto degli eroi, inaugurata da Adriano e raccolta come eredità dalle *élites* dell'impero, si connota non tanto come recupero nostalgico del

passato né come dato biografico di una posa intellettuale quanto, al contrario, come fattore politico e sociale nella definizione di una comune identità: citando le pregnanti parole di W. Burkert, il culto eroico è un centro di identità sociale in relazione ad uno luogo specifico¹³.

Nell'ottobre del 130 d.C. durante la permanenza in Egitto il giovane Antinoo, *puer regius* di origine bitinica, che le fonti dipingono come il favorito dell'imperatore, muore in circostanze non chiare nel Nilo. L'episodio della morte-sparizione nel fiume proietta l'intera narrazione sul piano di una tradizione mitica, dove Antinoo spariva tra le acque di un fiume alla stregua di molti altri eroi e figure mitiche dell'antichità. Come ci indica la profusione di immagini realizzate in seguito all'evento ma anche come testimoniano varie fonti di poco posteriori agli avvenimenti, la figura del giovane bitinico risultava potentemente suggestiva: una volta inserita nelle genealogie eroiche del mito (secondo quanto affermato da Celso e da Origene) la creazione di un *Antinoo heros*, densa di istanze religiose e dottrinali, fu recepita già dai suoi contemporanei in perfetta sintonia con la tradizione mitica¹⁴. La creazione di un vero e proprio culto da parte di Adriano veniva sancita in Egitto con la fondazione della città di Antinopolis nell'ottobre del 130 d.C.¹⁵ e con l'istituzione di feste e agoni, di un clero e, significativamente, con la diffusione di immagini adeguate ai contesti della *consecratio* di Antinoo scomparso nel Nilo. La creazione del nuovo eroe sembra comportare un diretto coinvolgimento dell'imperatore. La testimonianza che Adriano stesso si sia cimentato nella realizzazione di una produzione oracolare per Antinoo non deve essere ridotta nuovamente ad un mero dato biografico, ma ricondotta ad una cosciente adesione del *princeps* all'insieme di pratiche religiose tradizionali¹⁶.

13 Sulla rinascita dei culti eroici v. GALLI 2007, GALLI in c.d.s., BURKERT 1977, 316: “der Heroenkult ist ein Zentrum ortsgebundener Gruppenidentität”; BOARDMAN 2002, spec. 157 ss: *Imaging the Past: the Hero and the Heroic*.

14 Per un'approfondita disamina della fonti relative al discorso relativo alla creazione del mito di Antinoo v. GALLI 2007, 192: “Nonostante il materiale discusso da Celso sembri essere stato notevolmente abbreviato da Origene, esso è ricomponibile grazie alle numerose citazioni dell'autore cristiano, da cui si evince che nell'opera del polemistia pagano la presenza di Antinoo si inseriva in un'ampia disamina degli eroi pagani del mito, i quali erano stati sottoposti alla prassi della divinizzazione. Costituisce un fatto oltremodo significativo che prima di affrontare il confronto Antinoo–Cristo, Origene discuta approfonditamente il ‘catalogo degli eroi’ redatto da Celso (...) Inserito in questa diretta ‘filiazione eroica’ la presenza di Antinoo si collocava in una ideale continuità come l'ultima e più attuale creazione di un eroe antico”; sul rapporto Adriano–Antinoo nelle arti visive v. anche BONANNO ARAVANTINOS 1998.

15 FOLLET 1968 è fondamentale per la documentazione egiziana inerenti le visite di Adriano e l'istituzione e i caratteri del culto di Antinoo; v. anche CALANDRA 2008.

16 Sul culto dell'imperatore nelle province orientali dell'impero v. CHANIOTIS 2003, CLAUS 1999, spec. 140–144; per la rinascita e funzione dei culti oracolari nel II sec.

Il fatto che la *paideia* di Adriano, così efficacemente finalizzata al recupero di una memoria culturale condivisa, trovasse un fertile terreno in cui diffondersi è testimoniato dall'immediato consenso e dalla conseguente emulazione che l'«invenzione» di un nuovo culto eroico produsse. Un passo dell'*Historia Augusta* suggerisce che, con l'effettiva approvazione dell'imperatore, il culto di Antinoo fosse entusiasticamente recepito e pienamente accolto tra le aristocrazie di lingua greca sia in Egitto che in Grecia¹⁷. La diffusione proprio in questi due ambiti costituisce un dato significativo; il senso di coesione culturale che caratterizza la visione ecumenica di Adriano si cristallizzava in due poli principali: la Grecia e l'Egitto. Quest'ultimo, come è stato recentemente suggerito, conservava riflessi della cultura e delle tradizioni elleniche: «Alla fine del I sec. a.C. il paesaggio egiziano esplorato dai nuovi conquistatori conserva ancora, come ai tempi di Erodoto, le più antiche vestigia della grecità e la memoria delle sue stesse origini; centri focalizzatori di questa memoria sono i santuari dedicati agli eroi greci». Anche per il primo visitatore greco Ecateo di Mileto, come sottolinea Jan Assmann, la cultura egiziana risaliva in ultima istanza agli eroi greci¹⁸.

Non risponde ad una scelta casuale che Adriano, dopo aver fondato la città di Antinoopolis, si rechi con l'imperatrice Sabina e il resto del seguito a visitare (19–20 novembre 130 d.C.) un altro dei luoghi maggiormente densi di una *vis admonitionis* degli eroi greci in terra egiziana: la statua del colosso del Faraone Amenophi III, a cui i romani sovrapposero l'identità dell'eroe omerico Memnon, figlio dell'Aurora e re degli Etiopi. L'immagine del Colosso, posto in un territorio come quello della Tebaide ricco di altre memorie della grecità, emetteva alle prime luci del giorno un suono: a causa di questo fenomeno naturale la statua, dotata quindi di una voce, venne ritenuta divina divenendo così luogo dell'apparizione, rinnovata ogni giorno, dell'antico eroe greco. La creazione del nuovo culto eroico di Antinoo, carico di risvolti misterici e oracolari, si inserisce quindi in un paesaggio denso di «luoghi della memoria» greca, dove a sua volta, l'antichità della cultura greca, incarnata dal mito omerico di Memnon *niger*, una volta sovrappostosi all'identità del faraone

d.C. BENDLIN 2006; sulla produzione di testi poetici da parte di Adriano v. GAMBERALE 1993.

17 *Hadr.* 14, 7: *et Graeci quidem volente Hadriano eum consecraverunt oracula per eum dari adserentes, quae Hadrianus ipse composuisse iactatur*, [«furono i Greci che, per volere dell'imperatore, lo divinizzarono, affermando che si ricevevano da lui dei responsi oracolari che, stando alle voci, era stato lo stesso Adriano a preparare», v. GALLI 2007, 194; per l'analisi della diffusione del culto in Grecia anche dopo la morte dell'imperatore v. GALLI in c.d.s. Sul fenomeno della memoria culturale nell'età della Seconda Sofistica v. CORDOVANA-GALLI 2007 assieme ad ALCOCK 2001; memoria culturale e religione nel regno di Adriano: KUHLMANN 2002.

18 BRAVI 2007, 79 con ampia disamina del culto eroico greco in terra egiziana; ASSMANN 2001, 416: «pone la cultura egiziana in una luce greca e ascrive l'origine di istituzioni e invenzioni egiziane a eroi e coloni greci».

defunto, si fonde con il passato egiziano. I due episodi appaiono, quindi, strettamente concatenati e rivelano le stesse dinamiche della *paideia* di Adriano: gli eroi, connessi in epoca classica con il passato e le origini stesse delle *poleis*, divengono nell'organismo vivente dell'impero il simbolo della comunità degli Elleni.

3. L'imperatore e l'eroe

Attraverso questi gesti concreti si traduce l'adesione di Adriano alle correnti più vive del pensiero politico e religioso dei suoi tempi. Ancora tra il I e il II sec. d.C. Plutarco sottolinea come nel paesaggio greco le tombe e le reliquie degli eroi costituiscano emergenze monumentali che conservano la memoria culturale della grecità:

“Ma di ben tante cose dovevano tenere memoria gli uomini del passato! Numerose erano le indicazioni di luoghi, le opportunità di agire, i santuari degli dèi d'oltremare, gli occulti sepolcri degli eroi; e tutto ciò era tanto difficile da trovare per chi affrontasse lunghi viaggi fuori della Grecia”¹⁹.

Le varie forme di commemorazione degli eroi, autentici esempi di 'figure di memoria', sono la traccia visibile dell'identità greca, anche nei paesi più lontani dalla Grecia.

Quale riflesso è riscontrabile nelle immagini del connubio tra *paideia* e politica? Quale spazio fu concesso nella pur rigida struttura dell'arte ufficiale a questa interazione? Se sembra che ci si debba limitare ai generici richiami al c.d. classicismo adrianeo o alle importanti testimonianze offerte dai ritrovamenti della residenza imperiale a Tivoli²⁰, una scultura recentemente pubblicata raffigurante Adriano compendia, nel modo più diretto, il coinvolgimento di Adriano nella celebrazione di Antinoo in forma eroica e il carattere ufficiale del culto.

Si tratta di un busto in marmo (fig. 5) ritrovato nell'importante contesto archeologico della villa del celebre sofista ed evergete Erode Attico nei pressi dell'odierna località di Astros, nel Peloponneso, che riproduce in modo inconfondibile le fattezze di Adriano secondo una conosciuta tipologia ufficiale, il c.d. “*Rollockenfrisur*”-*Typus*²¹. Il ritratto, in una realizzazione di alto livello

19 Plut. *De Pyth. or.* 27, 407 f: τοῖς μὲν οὖν τότε πολλὴν ἔδει μνήμην παρεῖναι· πολλὰ γὰρ ἐφράζετο καὶ τόπων σημεῖα καὶ πράξεων καιροὶ καὶ θεῶν ἱερὰ διαποντίων καὶ ἡρώων ἀπόρρητοι θῆκαι καὶ δυσεξεύρετοι μακρὰν ἀπαίρουσι τῆς Ἑλλάδος. Discussione del passo in GALLI 2005, 254 s.

20 Una lettura aggiornata del classicismo adrianeo in CALANDRA 1997, inoltre TOYNBEE 1934.

21 SPYROPOULOS 2006, 106, fig. 16: nel catalogo dei singoli ritratti ritrovati nello scavo della Villa di Erode Attico vengono citati in tedesco brevi commenti redatti da K.

qualitativo, presenta il sovrano nella lorica decorata, secondo la consuetudine, a rilievo ma – peculiarità questa che rimane assolutamente senza confronti – con l'effigie del giovane bitinico: al posto della tradizionale immagine della Gorgone viene qui riprodotto, invece, il volto di Antinoo che, nonostante le ridotte dimensioni, conserva perfettamente la distintiva fisionomia e la caratteristica capigliatura attestate nei numerosissimi esemplari statuari conservatisi.

Ma un nuovo attributo dell'Antinoo-*Gorgoneion* colpisce immediatamente l'attenzione: la presenza delle ali sui lati della testa che richiamano, come nota G. Spyropoulos con il commento di K. Fittschen, l'iconografia di Perseo. La sostituzione dell'immagine della testa di Medusa con quella di colui che l'ha sconfitta sembra giustificare l'interpretazione proposta; alla generica cifra apotropaica della Gorgone si sostituirebbe, in questo modo, il più suggestivo rimando ad un eroe, come Eracle e Teseo, vittorioso e conquistatore. Nella figura di Antinoo-Perseo, adesso assunto al ruolo di entità protettrice e garante della *virtus* di Adriano, si può anche leggere un riflesso di una delle memorie antiche della civiltà greca sul suolo d'Egitto. La tradizione della presenza dell'eroe greco Perseo ha origini lontane: a Chemmi (Akhmim), come risulta dal testo erodoteo, esiste un santuario di Perseo, riservato al suo culto eroico e segnato dall'epifania dell'eroe ritenuta apportatrice di prosperità per tutto il paese. Similmente a quanto accade per Perseo, accolto e venerato già da lungo tempo nella terra del Nilo, anche al nuovo *heros* Antinoo furono dedicati, secondo l'uso greco, giochi ginnici²².

Il busto loricato dalla Villa di Erode Attico da Loukou sembra, nella valutazione di chi la pubblica, di esecuzione metropolitana, la qual cosa servirebbe ad evidenziare maggiormente il carattere programmatico e ufficiale di un'immagine così innovativa, scelta appositamente per l'iconografia imperiale.

Un ulteriore caso archeologico serve ad approfondire questa tematica. Che il ricorso ad una precisa memoria culturale, modellata sulla reviviscenza del culto eroico nell'enigmatica figura del giovane bitinico, e la sua associazione al culto del *princeps*, conquistatore e difensore dell'*imperium romanum*, fossero esperibili come momenti inscindibili dello stesso processo di identificazione nel potere di

Fittschen. Sul tipo FITTSCHEN-ZANKER 1985, 49 ss. Il ritrovamento del pezzo è avvenuto nel 1995 come risulta da SPYROPOULOS 2003, 469 s. con fig. 15 che mostra il busto di Adriano ancora *in situ*: si tratta del settore ovest della villa nella c.d. Basilica, dove si sono ritrovati anche altri numerosi ritratti della famiglia imperiale. Sulla villa e la storia dei ritrovamenti a partire dal XIX sec. v. SPYROPOULOS 2006, 11–47, assieme a SPYROPOULOS 2001.

22 Hdt. 2, 1: “Gli abitanti di Chemmi sostengono che Perseo appare spesso nel loro paese e spesso all'interno del tempio; che vi si trova un sandalo calzato da lui, lungo due cubiti, e che, quando Perseo si mostra, tutto l'Egitto gode di prosperità. Questo è quanto dicono di Perseo; ed ecco quanto fanno in suo onore, alla maniera dei Greci: indicano giochi ginnici completi di tutte le specialità”; sulla documentazione egiziana relativa a Antinoo v. FOLLET 1968.



Fig. 5. Museo di Astros (Kinouria): busto loricato di Adriano con Antinoo-Perseo dalla villa del sofista Erode Attico a Loukou/Eua [da SPYROPOULOS 2006]

Roma è illustrato con particolare evidenza dal contesto del santuario di Poseidone presso l'Istmo di Corinto (fig. 6)²³.

Scoperti durante gli scavi americani, importanti frammenti scultorei documentano la presenza di Adriano in una statua loricata, definita del “tipo Hierapytna” (fig. 7). Questa presentava una decorazione sul pettorale unica nel suo genere raffigurante al centro il Palladio e ad esso sottostante il gruppo del *Lupercal*, con la tradizionale lupa colta nell'atto di allattare i gemelli divini (fig. 8). I resti qui descritti della statua loricata di Adriano provengono proprio dall'interno della cella del tempio principale di Poseidone assieme ad alcuni straordinari frammenti di una statua di Antinoo (fig. 9), caratterizzata da un altissimo livello qualitativo, tanto da far pensare ad un esemplare eccezionale analogo alla celebre statua ritrovata, pressoché integra, nel santuario di Apollo a Delfi (fig. 10)²⁴. Ad Adriano, nuovo Enea e nuovo Romolo, con il Palladio e il simbolo delle origini di Roma si affianca ora Antinoo, riconosciuto nei numerosi santuari dell'Ellade come nuovo *heros*. L'eccezionale ritrovamento da Loukou e il caso di Istmia, cui potrebbero far seguito anche altri riscontri, dimostrano che il culto eroico costituiva una parte non secondaria del culto del sovrano stesso, che celebrava questo ultimo nella piena espressione della sua *virtus* militare di ascendenza divina.

4. Conclusioni: greco, egiziano e romano

Imperator o *pepaideumenos* dunque? ‘Roman Hadrian’ o ‘Greek Hadrian’? Questa impostazione avvertibile nella recente critica si mostra inadeguata. Il fenomeno della *paideia* incarnato dal modello di Adriano è parte di un più ampio ‘discorso’ che si è articolato a diversi livelli e con diversa intensità nelle classi abbienti delle province dell'impero²⁵. Non si tratta semplicemente di tendenze puramente intellettuali, né di adesione a forme culturali o religiose caratterizzanti le realtà locali, né tanto meno di forme di resistenza al dominio di Roma; al contrario, come ha sottolineato recentemente O. Cordovana, si deve leggere “quella *paideia* di autoconsapevolezza culturale e filosofica”²⁶ come efficace strumento di coesione: “L'affermazione in età imperiale di un'identità culturale che attinge al passato è asserzione di una cultura aristocratica e urbana

23 GALLI 2008, 100 s. Lo studio del fenomeno Antinoo e della sua diffusione nei circoli dell'*élites* greca sarà approfondito in GALLI in c.d.s.

24 GALLI 2007, 194–206 assieme a GALLI 2004, 320–328.

25 Sul fenomeno della Seconda Sofistica v. n. 2 assieme a SCHMITZ 1997, GLEASON 1995, ANDERSON 1993; fondamentale per l'*habitus* di un *pepaideumenos* ANDERSON 1989.

26 CORDOVANA 2007, 22.

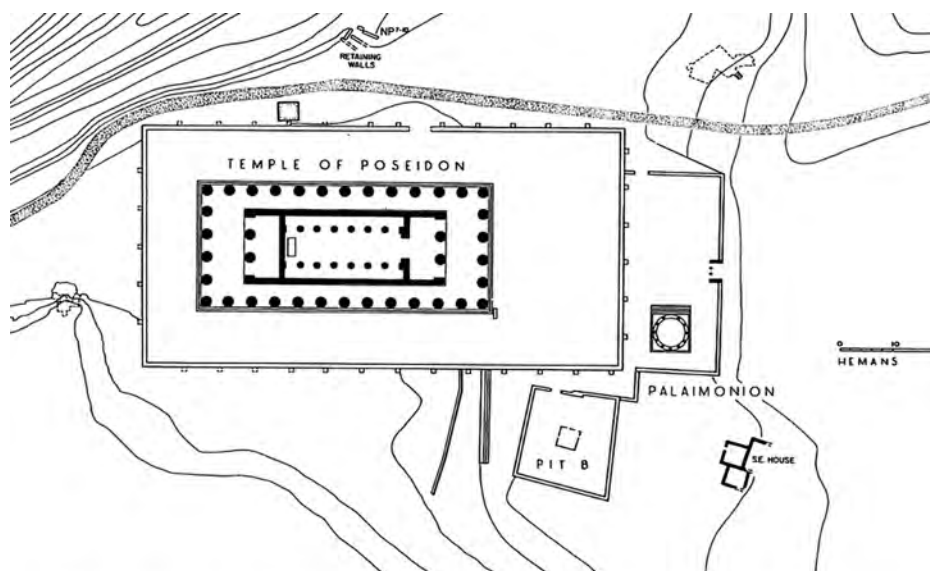


Fig. 6. a-b Isthmia, Santuario di Poseidone: pianta e ricostruzione (fase di età adrianea) [da T. E. GREGORY (ed.), *The Corinthia in the Roman Period*, Suppl. JRA 8 (1993)]



Fig. 7. Istanbul, Museo Archeologico: statua loricata di Adriano da Hierapytna (Hierapetra)
[da OPPER 2008]



Fig. 8. Atene, Stoà di Attalo: statua loricata di Adriano dall'agorà, raffigurazione del Palladio e scena del *Lupercal* (particolare) [da E. B. HARRISON, *Portrait Sculpture, The Athenian Agora* I (1953) 71 ss. tav. 36]

spesso alquanto integrata, che condivide in gran parte il sistema del potere romano”.

Durante il regno di Adriano la figura stessa della persona dell'imperatore, non casualmente definito come “*varius, multiplex, multiformis*” (*Epit. de*



Fig. 9. Isthmia, Museo: Frammenti ricomposti della testa di Antinoo dalla cella del tempio di Poseidone [da M. C. STURGEON, *Sculpture I: 1952–1967*. Isthmia IV (1987) 132 s. n. 57 tav. 62–65]

Caes. 14–16) incarnava un'identità composita (romana, greca e, come abbiamo visto, egiziana) che rendeva tangibile l'idea di un impero in cui era possibile la coesistenza di identità multiple: tale consapevolezza spinse Adriano ad attuare in modo più pervasivo rispetto ai suoi predecessori una politica di innovazione religiosa, di cui il "caso Antinoo" è certamente quello più eclatante, ma, come dimostrano i saggi del presente volume, non l'unico. Il recupero di contesti sociali, religiosi e geografici periferici (ad esempio la "riscoperta" degli antichi santuari della Grecia o la fondazione di una Antinoopolis) fu parte integrante di questo discorso delle identità nella compagine unitaria dell'ecumene dominata:



Fig. 10. Delfi, Museo: Statua di Antinoo dalla terrazza del tempio di Apollo
[Foto dell'Autore]

un discorso inaugurato da Adriano ma portato avanti con particolare convinzione dalle aristocrazie locali.

Sotto l'influsso del modello di *paideia* incarnato e propagato negli atti e nei gesti evergetici di Adriano, le reliquie connesse alla memoria degli eroi omerici, ora riscoperti ed esaltati da un Plutarco o da un Pausania²⁷, sembrano riconquistare concretamente gli spazi della città, dei santuari e, perfino, dei grandi complessi residenziali, favorendo la ricreazione, partecipata e commossa, di un sentimento comune. Le manifestazioni in onore degli eroi, quelli antichi e quelli "contemporanei", che avevano luogo sul suolo egiziano, greco e microasiatico rivelano la tensione ad un'unità religiosa della cultura imperiale. I vari paesaggi dell'impero erano emblematicamente compendiate nel luogo stesso di residenza eletto per il corpo del sovrano. Il paesaggio di Villa Adriana si struttura infatti attorno a 'luoghi della memoria', greci ed egiziani, dove gli ambiti culturalmente più significativi dell'ecumene si ricompongono in un unico spazio: ad esempio, la presenza del Canopo, sede egiziana dei campi Elisii, e della valle di Tempe, dove viene situato l'accesso all'Elisio greco²⁸.

Adriano è stato un valido *imperator*, ma spesso parte della storiografia moderna ha corso il rischio di adombrare questo aspetto: per tali sue doti militari è stato, già presto, ritenuto degno di essere immortalato sulle immagini della Colonna Traiana²⁹. Rispetto all'epopea di conquiste del suo predecessore, prima tra tutte la guerra partica esemplata sull'impresa di Alessandro, Adriano fu costretto ad orientarsi diversamente, affrontando in modo pragmatico il problema del consolidamento e gestione dell'immenso organismo dell'impero ereditato. Ritiratosi dalle conquiste fatte, mantenendo il dominio solo dell'*Arabia Petraea*, si concentra sulla difesa dei confini e a sedare le rivolte locali. Ma anche in questo aspetto l'attività militare non può essere scissa dal conseguente e più articolato impegno organizzativo che si concretizzerà nella riforma dell'esercito, nella riorganizzazione amministrativa, fiscale e giudiziaria.

Si tratta dunque di una potente opera di ridefinizione del potere che comporterà un parallelo riassetto dell'importante ruolo delle *élites* locali. Tali sfere dell'agire del *princeps* non sono separabili da un comprovato esercizio di una *paideia*, "multiforme e varia", la cui funzione è, con pari dignità, quella di dare struttura e coesione alle dinamiche del presente. In questa ottica la rinascita del culto eroico, inaugurato da Adriano nel II sec. d.C., è da leggersi, dunque,

27 Paesaggi della memoria ellenica in Plutarco e Pausania v. GALLI 2005, ALCOCK 1996; Adriano e il pensiero religioso del suo tempo in MAZZA 1999.

28 Sui luoghi egiziani a Villa Adriana v. MARI-SGALAMBRO 2007, MARI 2007, i contributi in ADEMBRI-MARI 2006 e REGGIANI 2006, inoltre ENSOLI 2002, GRENIER 2000, CALANDRA 2000a, GRENIER 1989, HANNESTAD 1999, ADEMBRI 1997.

29 TÖPFER 2008, con un particolare accento sul ruolo decisivo di Adriano durante le campagne militari di Traiano.

come elemento di una più ampia strategia di coesione all'interno di una visione ecumenica dell'impero perseguita tenacemente dall'imperatore che, erroneamente, si è voluto ridimensionare come "*graeculus*".

Hadrian, Eleusis, and the beginning of Christian apologetics

ALESSANDRO GALIMBERTI

According to the biographer of the *Historia Augusta* (*Hadr.* 22, 10) Hadrian's attitude on religious matters was marked by a fundamental duality: full of scruples in the care of Roman sacred duties, he was at the same time contemptuous of foreign cults¹. If one moves beyond Rome, Hadrian's religious policy did not fail to revive and accentuate some of the archaic traditions (especially the ideology linked to the figures of Romulus and Numa), as Augustus, whom Hadrian certainly looked at, had already done²; however, the attitude towards foreign cults was different so there are, in my opinion, good reasons to question the second part of the biographer's statement.

There is no doubt that one of the most important religious events in which the Emperor himself had a prominent place was his initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries. A discussion of Eleusis, however, entails entering more generally into the relationship Hadrian maintained with Greece – of which the Villa at Tibur is a paradigm³ – and considering different forms of religion apart from the traditional ones which influenced Hadrian's religious policy. This policy was a consequence, as I try to show here, of the way the Emperor built his relationship with Christianity and, crucially, with Judaism.

1 *Hadr.* 22, 10: *Sacra romana diligentissime curavit, peregrina contempsit*. Tertullian (*Apol.* 5, 7: *Quales ergo leges istae, quas adversus nos soli exercent impii iniusti, turpes truces, vani dementes, quas Traianus ex parte frustratus est vetando inquiri Christianos, quas nullus Hadrianus, quamquam omnium curiositatum explorator, nullus Vespasianus, quamquam Iudaeorum debellator, nullus Pius, nullus Verus impressit?*), Dio (69, 11, 3: τὰ τε γὰρ ἄλλα περιεργότατος Ἀδριανός, ὡσπερ εἶπον, ἐγένετο, καὶ μαντείας μαγγανείαις τε παντοδαπαῖς ἐχρήτη), the *HA* (*Hadr.* 14, 11: *semper in omnibus varius*) and the *Építome de Caesaribus* (14, 11: *varius, multiplex, multiformis*) agree in identifying Hadrian's cultural attitude as an intellectual attitude urged by curiosity (*omnium curiositatum*) in tension with research (*explorator*, περιεργότατος). For *Hadr.* 22, 10 see FÜNDLING 2006, 986–992.

2 For a framework of Hadrian's religious policy see BEAUJEAU 1955, 111–278. For Eleusis, and the panhellenic policy see GALIMBERTI 2007, 126–139.

3 See CALANDRA in this volume and CALANDRA 1996, 179–277, with previous bibliography.

1. Hadrian and Eleusis

Hadrian cultivated his passion for Greek παιδεία from an early age to such a degree that he earned the name of *Graeculus*⁴. He visited Greece in his great journeys as Emperor and stayed in Athens three times (between 121/2 and 125, in 128/9 and finally in 131/2).

The value of the Eleusinian worship in Hadrian's biography appears first in his attendance to it in all three visits to Athens: he participated in the ritual mystery as a *mystes* and later as an *epoptes*; he stated that the month of *Boedromion*, during which the Great Mysteries were celebrated, would be the first of the Athenian calendar, and he also rebuilt a bridge over the river *Cefisus* (previously destroyed by a flood) to connect Eleusis to Athens more quickly. He assigned names referring to Eleusis to the δῆμοι of Antinoopolis; for his Eleusinian initiation he chose the Sebasteios tribe – namely, the tribe that remembered Augustus; finally, according to Aurelius Victor⁵, Hadrian practiced the mysteries *Atheniensium modo* also in Rome. In fact, we have an issue from the year 121 with the symbolic representation of Ἄϊών, which is certain to be placed in connection with the *Natalis Urbis* of that year which was solemnly celebrated by Hadrian, and the inauguration of the Temple of Venus and Rome, through which the cult of *Roma Aeterna* was promoted. It cannot be excluded that the appearance of Ἄϊών also contains an allusion to the mysteries, since the latter indeed promised a form of immortality, *aeternitas*.

Eleusis and the mysteries also have a central role in Hadrian's *Panhellenion*. An Athenian inscription that may be dated between 131/2 and 138 refers to the admission of the Lydian city of Thyatira in the *Panhellenion* according to Hadrian's will. Here, Athens is identified not only as the seat of the new assembly, but also as “a benefactor releasing all the fruit of the Mysteries”⁶.

In Hadrian's time two arches stood at Eleusis, copies of the arch in Athens' *Panhellenion* which flanks the main entrance of the sanctuary; both copies were surmounted by a single dedication (τοῖν θεοῖν καὶ τῷ αὐτοκράτορι οἱ Πανέλληνας)⁷: since Hadrian is placed on the same level as the goddesses (Demeter and Kore/Persephone) and the dedicators are the Πανέλληνες it is significant

4 *Hadr.* 1, 5: *Imbutusque impensius Graecis studiis, ingenio eius sic ad ea declinante, ut a nonnullis Graeculus diceretur; Epit. de Caes.* 14, 2: *Atheniensium studia moresque hausit.* See FÜNDLING 2006, 261–263. Some of these reflections already in GALIMBERTI 2007, 123–153.

5 14, 4: *initia Cereris Liberaeque, quae Eleusina dicitur, Atheniensium modo Roma percoleret.*

6 SPAWFORTH 1999, 340, ll. 14–16. Other fragments on Hadrian and Eleusis in WÖRRLE 1992, 337–349; FOLLET-PEPPAS DELMOUSOU 1997, 296.

7 *IG II²* 2958. CLINTON 1989a, 56–68, oppose the hypothesis of an allocation of entries to Antoninus and Marcus. The erection of the arches would have been at the end of Hadrian's reign.

that the arches of Eleusis are dedicated to Hadrian as “programmatically” panhellenic through his participation in the Eleusinian ritual. The mystery cult was most likely enacted by Hadrian as a religious glue for his panhellenic plan: this appears to be confirmed by the fact that *post mortem* Hadrian is recalled at Eleusis as θεὸς/Ἀδριανὸς / [Παν]ελληνίσιος⁸. Eleusis therefore leads to Athens (and *vice versa*) and the key to this relationship is the *Panhellenion* that Hadrian wanted in 131/2⁹.

2. Hadrian, the Jews, and the Christians

We have now to examine Hadrian’s attitude towards the Jews, comparing it with his attitude towards Christians. It should be said from the outset that we are considering an era in which the Jewish and the Christian questions are still closely related, not so much in terms of identifying who belonged to one or the other faith, but in terms of mutual interference.

The Romans appear to have had clear ideas for some time regarding the first aspect, as is shown by certain circumstances relating to the Jews and Christians under the *Flavi* and then under Trajan: Vespasian’s search for descendants of the family of David after the Jewish war, resumed under Trajan; the establishment of the *fiscus Iudaicus*, with its subsequent escalation by Domitian and its immediate abolition by Nerva in 98¹⁰; and Pliny’s rescript to Trajan¹¹. However, in the first decades of the Second century the mutual interference between Judaism and Christianity seems to have become a mutual rivalry that depended on Hadrian’s desired order. That is, since his initiation at Eleusis, Hadrian seems to have opened new perspectives for the various cults of the empire, including Christianity as we will show, that did not hesitate to enter into this new framework with the first Christian apologists (Aristides and Quadratus) in order to emphasise aspects of identity to distinguish themselves from other religions, especially Judaism.

In 130, during his visit to Egypt, Hadrian travelled through Judea where the situation appears to have been of no concern. Indeed, until then, relations between the Jews and Hadrian seem to have been good: in 117 the Emperor had exiled from Palestine Marcus Turbo (*Hadr.* 5, 8), one of the protagonists of the bloody repression against the Jews of the Diaspora, which ended shortly before

8 *IG* II² 3386, on a base of a statue dating between 180 and 182 A.D.

9 OLIVER 1970, n° 39; GRAINDOR 1973, 102–111; BEAUJEAU 1955, 178–181. In the same year Hadrian presided at the opening of the Sanctuary of Zeus Olympian in Athens.

10 GOODMAN 1989, 40–44.

11 Plin. *Ep.* 10, 97, on which SORDI 1984, 67–73; JOSSA 2000, 106–115.

the start of Hadrian's reign. A rabbinic text (*Bereshit Rabbah* 64, 8) witnesses a personal friendship between Hadrian and Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, to whom Hadrian promised to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem¹². Since Tertullian (*Apol.* 5, 7) writes that Hadrian was *omnium curiositatum explorator*, he was probably not lacking in interest for the Jews and Moses' Law.

However, as is known, the Jews rebelled under the leadership of Simon Bar Kochba in the spring of 132, following either the ban on circumcision (*Hadr.* 14, 2) or the decision to build Aelia Capitolina on the ruins of Jerusalem, or the plan to erect a temple to Jupiter (Dio 69, 12, 1). Despite the fact that scholars disagree on the causes that triggered the revolt of 132–135¹³, some evidence suggests that the rebellion had been carefully prepared. According to Dio (69, 13) the legions encountered great difficulties, as the rebels' strategic positions in the region were equipped with tunnels and walls – that is, work that had taken time to carry out – and the rebels had weapons which they had built for the Romans and which that the Romans had refused because they were adulterated. The investigation into the military operations presents a clear fact: the revolt was particularly violent and, given the extension of the war, Hadrian had to commit his best generals with an extraordinary mobilisation of legions¹⁴. According to Dio, together with the Jews there were also other peoples whose names are unknown (Dio 69, 13, 2): perhaps some of the Arabs recently subjected by Trajan, who saw in the revolt of Simon the chance that would free themselves as well from the yoke of the Roman Empire, were among them. Finally, the radicalism of the rebels was a serious obstacle: Simon gave a strong messianic mark to his action by proclaiming himself “Prince of Israel”, with the blessing of Rabbi Akiba, and then issuing coins bearing the legend “Freedom of Israel” and his assumed name – his previous name, Bar Kosiba, was changed to Bar Kochba or “Son of the star” which made explicit reference to the prophecy of *Num* 24, 17. Despite the bloody resistance, the uprising was finally quelled: Jerusalem was rebuilt as a Roman colony and took the name Aelia Capitolina, acquiring the appearance of a Greek city forbidden to the Jews, and the province of Judea became the province of Syria-Palestine.

If we turn now from the political to the religious and cultural aspects, there are a number of significant outcomes which can be explained, I believe, in connection with the collapse of the war in 135. The final dissolution of the

12 For an analysis of the sources relating to the relationship between Hadrian and Rabbinic Judaism, see BAZZANA in this volume.

13 *Status quaestionis* in ISAAC-OPPENHEIMER 1998, 220–256, and above all see BAZZANA in this volume. For *Hadr.* 14, 2 see FÜNDLING 2006, 675–679.

14 ECK 1999, 77–89. For a recent development on the state of studies on the revolt of 132 and a critical evaluation of them, see ISAAC-OPPENHEIMER 1998, 220–256.

Jewish state marks, in fact, the cessation of Jewish messianic hopes, which had risen again after the end of the revolt of 66–73, and of various apocalyptic tendencies such as those found in texts like *4 Ezra*, *The Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*, and the *Fourth book of the Sibylline Oracles*. Judaism at this point narrowed its horizons to concentrate on rabbinical speculation led by the Pharisees in connection with the Jewish disaster, and thus opened up new chances for Christianity.

Hadrian may have had an initial “philosophical” notion about Christians during his meeting with Epictetus in Nicopolis in 112. For instance, in the *Diatribai* (4, 7, 6) we learn that Epictetus discussed the Γαλιλαῖοι and their concept of martyrdom¹⁵.

In 115 Hadrian was in Antioch and the city was shaken by a violent earthquake¹⁶: he remained in the Syrian city during the following two years (since he had been entrusted with the legation of Syria during Trajan’s Parthian war)¹⁷, that is, during the years in which the martyrdom of Ignatius¹⁸, head of the Antioch church, took place in Rome.

This is evidence of the divergence between Judaism and Christianity. Ignatius, who is the first author to use the term Χριστιανισμός¹⁹ in an *Epistula* recommending unity and obedience to the Bishop addressed to the community of Philadelphia (*Phil.* 8) and sent while he was being taken to Rome, felt the need to emphasise how in Antioch he had acted “as a man who seeks to achieve the perfect union” because “where division is, where anger, there God dwells

15 JOSSA 2000, 99–102, has no doubts on the equivalence between Γαλιλαῖοι and Christians (but see MEYER 1962, 530 note 1); *contra* HENGEL 1996, 92–93. Epictetus, while recognising the courage of Christians, disapproves of it in terms of rational conduct. It is worth noting that in a letter found in the desert of Judah, Bar Kochba speaks of “Galileans” (BENOIT-MILIK-DE VAUX 1961, 159–160) as potential enemies of the insurgents and that Justin *1Apol.* 31, 6 speaks of the torments that Bar Kochba inflicted on Christians because they had not joined the revolt: καὶ γὰρ ἐν τῷ νῦν γεγενημένῳ Ἰουδαϊκῷ πολέμῳ Βαρχαχέβας ὁ τῆς Ἰουδαίων ἀποστάσεως ἀρχηγέτης Χριστιανούς μόνους εἰς τιμωρίας δεινὰς, εἰ μὴ ἀρνοῖντο Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ βλασφημοῖεν, ἐκέλευεν ἀπάγεσθαι.

16 Malalas 11, 15: Ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς Ἀδριανὸς βασιλεὺς πρὸ τοῦ βασιλεῦσαι ἦν μετὰ Τραϊανοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως, ὡς γαμβρὸς αὐτοῦ, ὅτε ἔπαθεν ἡ αὐτῆ Ἀντιόχου πόλις ἡ μεγάλη ὑπὸ τῆς θεομηνίας, τότε συγκλητικὸς ὑπάρχων. ἦσαν δὲ καὶ πολλοὶ συγκλητικοὶ ἀπὸ Ῥώμης ὄντες ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ πόλει Ἀντιοχεῖα· οἵτινες καὶ ἐκελεύσθησαν παρ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔκτισαν ἐν Ἀντιοχεῖα οἶκους πολλοὺς καὶ λουτρά.

17 *FGrHist* 257 F36 IX; *Amm.* 22, 12, 8; *Hadr.* 4, 6. See MICHELOTTO 1979, 324–338.

18 Malalas 11, 10: ἐμαρτύρησε δὲ ἐπὶ αὐτοῦ τότε ὁ ἅγιος Ἰγνάτιος ὁ ἐπίσκοπος τῆς πόλεως Ἀντιοχεῖας.

19 In *Magn.* 10, 1 and 3; *Rom.* 3, 3; *Phil.* 6, 1. See CORWIN 1960, 31–51; MEEKS-WILKEN 1978, 13–24; BROWNE-MEIER 1987, 49 e 93–105. Not forgetting, of course, the testimony of *Acts* 11, 26, that “at Antioch for the first time the disciples were called Christians”.

not” and (*ibid.* 10) how, thanks to his work, “the Church of Antioch in Syria has recovered the peace” – perhaps an allusion to the existence of a conflict with Judaism. Thus, turning to the Romans (*Rom.* 11), Ignatius recommends they “elect a pious messenger who goes to Syria to congratulate on the peace the community which has recovered its size and reconstituted its body”: in fact, Antioch was the seat of a major Jewish community (in both numerical strength and importance), and Ignatius does not fail to remind the Romans, who were more attentive to matters of public policy than to those of a religious order, that the Christians did not intend to stir up disorder and that his action was a work of pacification.

3. Hadrian and the beginning of Christian apologetics

According to the *communis opinio*²⁰ both Aristides’ and Quadratus’ *Apologies* were addressed to the Emperor during Hadrian’s visit to Athens in 124/5²¹. These two texts mark the birth of Christian apologetics. While we have nothing of Quadratus except a weak track in Eusebius²², we possess a Greek and a Syrian version of Aristides’ text²³. Aristides argues in a large section of his writing (chapters 2–13) against the pagan religion and its false declaration, proclaiming the diversity of Christianity compared with Judaism and paganism (2, 2 [Greek]): “It is clear, King, that there are three types of people in this world, among these are the worshippers of those among you who are called gods, the

20 For a different hypothesis, see below.

21 Jer. *Chron.* 199 Helm: *Hadrianus sacris Eleusinae initiatus multa Atheniensibus dona largitur. Quadratus discipulus apostolorum et Aristides Atheniensis noster philosophus libros pro christiana religione Hadriano dedere compositos*; Eus. *HE* 4, 3, 1: Τραϊανου δὲ ἐφ’ ὅλοις ἔτεσιν εἴκοσι τὴν ἀρχὴν μῆσιν ἐξ δέουσιν κρατήσαντος, Αὔλιος Ἀδριανὸς διαδέχεται τὴν ἡγεμονίαν. τούτῳ Κοδρᾶτος λόγον προσφωνήσας ἀναδίδωσιν, ἀπολογίαὶν συντάξας ὑπὲρ τῆς καθ’ ἡμᾶς θεοσεβείας, ὅτι δὴ τινες πονηροὶ ἄνδρες τοὺς ἡμετέρους ἐνοχλεῖν ἐπειρώοντο· εἰς ἔτι δὲ φέρεται παρὰ πλείστοις τῶν ἀδελφῶν, ἀτὰρ καὶ παρ’ ἡμῖν τὸ σύγγραμμα. ἐξ οὗ κατιδεῖν ἔστιν λαμπρὰ τεκμήρια τῆς τε τοῦ ἀνδρὸς διανοίας καὶ τῆς ἀποστολικῆς ὀρθοτομίας. Although there are those who think they should be addressed to his successor (see BIRLEY 1997, 183), all the witnesses speak of Hadrian. See also Jer. *De vir. ill.* 20, *Ep.* 70, 4; G. Syncell. 658; Oros. 7, 13, 2. *Status quaestionis* in POUDERON-PIERRE-OUTTIER-GUIORGADZÉ 2003, 32–37.

22 To support the orthodoxy of Quadratus, Eusebius quotes these words of the apologist (*HE* 4, 3, 2): τοῦ δὲ σωτήρος ἡμῶν τὰ ἔργα ἀεὶ παρὴν ἀληθῆ γὰρ ἦν, οἱ θεραπευόμεντες, οἱ ἀναστάτες ἐκ νεκρῶν, οἱ οὐκ ὄφθησαν μόνον θεραπευόμενοι καὶ ἐπιδημοῦντες μόνον τοῦ σωτήρος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπαλλαγέντος ἦσαν ἐπὶ χρόνον ἰκανόν, ὥστε καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἡμετέρους χρόνους τινὲς αὐτῶν ἀφίκοντο.

23 There are some other fragments in Armenian and Georgian translations, now collected by POUDERON-PIERRE-OUTTIER-GUIORGADZÉ 2003.

Jews and Christians”²⁴. Aristides feels the need to distinguish the Christian identity in the face of other religions and, therefore, in the second part of his writing dwells on the nature and content of Christianity, highlighting the originality and superiority of his faith. Though not judging the firmness and validity of any argument of the *Apology*, we must recognise that we are dealing with a good quality level of information, which shows that Christianity fits with dignity into the religious debate of Aristides’ time. In the manner of a philosopher – as he is designated by sources – Aristides is attempting to present Christianity as a doctrine based on scripture and rich in moral values, the more so when we consider that the writing was addressed to the Emperor.

The two *Apologies* had an impact within Christianity: Eusebius (*HE* 4, 3, 3) and Jerome (*De vir. ill.* 20) state that the *Apologies* were still read during their time, and fourth century papyrus fragments belonging to Aristides’ *Apology* confirm this.

In order to illustrate Hadrian’s attitude toward Christianity, we must connect the chronology of the writings of Aristides and Quadratus (to which we will return) with the most significant document of Hadrian’s reign, namely the imperial rescript to the *proconsul Asiae* Minucius Fundanus of 124/5²⁵. The rescript was requested by a petition of the provincials of Asia to the predecessor of Fundanus, Licinius (or Serenus) Granianus, regarding the measures to be taken against those Christians who were prosecuted for their beliefs. As has been observed, Hadrian built on Trajan’s approach, extending it in a manner more favourable to the Christians by strengthening the penalties against false accusers, on whom the burden of proof fell, and, above all – according to the interpretation of some modern scholars which is based on the distinction, already there in Pliny, between *nomen* and *flagitia* – stipulating that the accuser had to not only demonstrate adherence to Christianity (*nomen*), but also the existence of common crimes (*flagitia*); others, however, think that the rescript simply provides evidence that the accused were Christians²⁶.

24 The opposition between Christians as *tertium genus* and the Jews and Gentiles is in the *Kerygma Petri* (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 6, 5, 41, 5–6), see JOSSA 2000, 122–123. In the Syriac version there are four families: “This is manifest to you, King, that the race of men in this world are four: the Barbarians and the Greeks, the Jews and the Christians”. See also ALPIGIANO 1988; and Rizzi’s *Conclusion* to this volume.

25 Just. *1Apol.* 68, 3–10; Eus. *HE* 4, 9, 1–3.

26 For the first interpretation, see SORDI 1984, 74–75, for the second, KERESZTES 1967, 54–66; 1967a, 120–129; 1979, 287; JOSSA 2000, 106–115, who emphasises the power of discretion of magistrates and the Roman social and political responsibilities of the accused.

Hadrian also showed a particular interest in Christianity. If we believe the *HA (Alex. Sev. 43, 5–6)*²⁷, he had temples built empty of sacred images dedicated to Christ, among the other gods, but had to abandon the project after meeting with resistance from traditionalists.

Finally, it does not seem to be a coincidence that during the Jewish revolt, Christians did not want to turn against Rome: so Justin, who writes under Antoninus Pius, says (*IApol. 31, 6*) that: “In the war that the Jews waged recently, Bar Kochba, leader of the Jewish revolt, commanded to direct to terrible torments only Christians, unless they had denied Christ and had not blasphemed”, and Jerome (*Chron. 199 Helm*) confirms that, “Kochba, head of a Jewish sect, killed Christians with persecution of all kinds when they refused to help him against the Roman armies”²⁸.

4. Hadrian’s Eleusinian initiation, the first Christian apologists, and the Jews

Under these circumstances I believe it is finally possible to reconstruct a coherent path within Hadrian’s religious policy that relates to its focus on the mystery religion of Eleusis and its relationship with Christianity and Judaism. Hadrian, as we have seen, became a worshipper of the Eleusinian mysteries in 124/5 and returned to Eleusis in 131; Aurelius Victor declares that in Rome Hadrian celebrated the *Initia Cereris Liberaeque, quae dicitur Eleusine, Atheniensium modo* (14, 4).

What is most striking, however, is that Jerome twice (*De vir. ill. 19* and *Ep. 70, 4* [to Magnus]) connects Hadrian’s initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries, an anti-Christian persecution and the presentation to the emperor of first the *Apology* of Quadratus and then that of Aristides:

“And when Hadrian passed the winter at Athens to witness the Eleusinian mysteries and was initiated into almost all the sacred mysteries of Greece, those

27 *Capitolium septimo quoque die, cum in urbe esset, ascendit, templa frequentavit, Christo templo facere voluit eumque inter deos recipere. quod et Hadrianus cogitasse fertur, qui templa in omnibus civitatibus sine simulacris iusserat fieri, quae hodieque idcirco, qui non habent numina, dicuntur Hadriani, quae ille ad hic parasse dicebatur; sed prohibitus est ab his, qui consulentes sacra repperant omnes Christianos futuros, si id fecisset, et templa reliqua disserenda.* See below for a discussion of this text.

28 The passage of Justin is quoted by Eus. *HE* 4, 8, 4; Jer. *Chron.* 201 Helm: *Chochebas, dux Iudaicae factionis, nolentes sibi Christianos adversum romanum militem ferre subsidium omnimodis cruciatibus necat; see also Oros. 7, 13, 4: Iudaeos sane, perturbatione scelerum suorum exagitatos et Palaestinam provinciam quondam suam depopulantes, ultima caede perdomunt, ultusque est Christianos, quos illi Cocheba duce, cur sibi adversum Romanos non adsentarentur, excruciant.*

who hated the Christians took opportunity without instructions from the Emperor to harass the believers. At this time he presented to Hadrian a work composed on behalf of our religion, indispensable, full of sound argument and faith and worthy of the apostolic teaching, in which, illustrating the antiquity of his period, he says that he has seen many who, oppressed by various ills, were healed by the Lord in Judea as well as some who had been raised from the dead. Aristides, a most eloquent Athenian philosopher and a disciple of Christ while yet retaining his philosopher's garb, presented a work to Hadrian at the same time that Quadratus presented his. The work contained a systematic statement of our doctrine, that is, an Apology for the Christians, which is still extant and is regarded by philologists as a monument to his genius" (*De vir. ill.* 19–20)²⁹.

"Did not Quadratus, a disciple of the apostles and bishop³⁰ of the Athenian church, deliver to the Emperor Hadrian (on the occasion of his visit to the Eleusinian mysteries) a treatise in defence of our religion. And so great was the admiration caused in everyone by his eminent ability that it stilled a most severe persecution. The philosopher Aristides, a man of great eloquence, presented to the same Emperor an Apology for the Christians composed of extracts from philosophic writers" (*Ep.* 70, 4)³¹.

How can such a combination of Hadrian's Eleusinian initiation, the persecution, and the *Apologies* of Quadratus and Aristides be explained? According to Jerome's statement, Hadrian's Eleusinian initiation of 124/5 – *dedisset occasionem his qui Christianos oderant absque praecepto imperatoris vexare credentes* – which was not an isolated incident, had negative consequences for Christians. I do not exclude the perspective that the *Apologies* of Aristides and

29 *Cumque Hadrianus Athenis exegisset hiemem, invisens Eleusinam et omnibus paene Graecis sacris initiatus, dedisset occasionem his qui Christianos oderant absque praecepto imperatoris vexare credentes, porrexit (scil. Quadratus) ei librum pro nostra religione composito valde utilem plenumque rationis et fidei apostolica doctrina dignum. Aristides Atheniensis, philosophus eloquentissimus et sub pristino habitu discipulus Christi, volumen nostri dogmatis rationem continens eodem tempore quo et Quadratus Hadriano principi dedit, id est Apologeticum pro Christianis, quo usque hodie perseverans apud philologos ingenii eius indicium est.*

30 It is a confusion of Jerome: the bishop Quadratus lived later than our apologist. See BARDY 1949, 75–86 (who, however, denies the value of Jerome's entire testimony); ZANGARA 1983, 2957–2958 (the bishop Quadratus probably lived in the age of Marcus Aurelius); GRANDOR 1973, 172–173 and ALPIGIANO 1988, 268, accept the identification of Jerome without question.

31 *Quadratus, apostolorum discipulus et Atheniensis ecclesiae pontifex, nonne Adriano principi Eleusinae sacra invisenti librum pro nostra religione tradidit et tantae admirationi omnium fuit, ut persecutionem gravissimam illius excellens sedaret ingenium? Aristides philosophus, vir eloquentissimus, eodem principi Apologeticum pro Christianis obtulit contextum philosophorum sententiis.*

Quadratus should be read as an initial reaction of Christianity in the face of the “competitiveness” now presented by the mystery cults after Hadrian’s initiation.

Hadrian’s intention to build temples without sacred images which were dedicated to Christian worship and which, considering Hadrian’s great attention to the mystery cults³², i.e. their soteriological nature, could reveal a very interesting point of contact with Christianity (whose dimension of salvation needs no explanation), was first suggested by *HA Alex. Sev.* 43, 5–6³³. The Christian “reaction” can be detected, in my opinion, also from other evidence. Aristides intends to give Christianity a philosophical dignity; Jerome, who brings together Hadrian’s Eleusinian initiation and the presentation of the *Apologies* of Quadratus and Aristides, said that Quadratus’ *Apology* was *valde utilem plenumque rationis et fidei apostolica doctrina dignum*. A passage from Eusebius³⁴, also on the presentation of Quadratus’ *Apology*, states that in 124/5 (the year of Hadrian’s rescript to Minucius Fundanus) the climate for Christians was not favourable, and the rescript certainly proves the existence of an anti-Christian persecution in the province of Asia³⁵. When Jerome says that the *Apology* of Quadratus weakens a *gravissimam persecutione...qui Christianos oderant absque praecepto imperatoris* (“contrary to the Emperor’s will”) *vexare credentes* he could be alluding to the rescript to Fundanus, which the *Chronicon* (199 Helm) reported immediately after the news of the presentation of the *Apologies* of Quadratus and Aristides to the Emperor. The rescript imposes more restrictions on the prosecutors of the Christians: Jerome therefore qualifies the persecution as *gravissima* because it represents a serious abuse contrary to imperial provisions.

However, the chronology of Jerome’s news opens the possibility for a different hypothesis that I intend to suggest here.

It is known that in 128/129 Hadrian was in Athens: while an Ephesian inscription (*SIG*³ 838) reports that Hadrian sailed from Eleusis to Ephesus in 129, the Armenian version of Eusebius’ *Chronicon* (166 Schöne) says that *Adrianus Athenis hiemavit et vidit Eleusinas res*. Both in *De viris illustribus* and in the *Epistula*, Jerome says that Hadrian *invisit sacra Eleusina (invisens Eleusinam; Eleusinae sacra invisenti)*. In the *Chronicon* under the year 125, Jerome writes that *Hadrianus sacris Eleusinae initiatus multa Atheniensibus dona largitur*. After

32 In the year 124 Hadrian was probably initiated also into the Samothracian mystery cult. See GALIMBERTI 2007, 130.

33 SCHMID 1964, 298–315; ANGIOLANI 1994, 23–25 believe (in my opinion, wrongly) the news to be unfounded; for the historicity see SORDI 1984, 98–102.

34 *HE* 4, 3, 1–2: τούτω (scil. Ἀδριάνω) Κοδράτος λόγον προσφωνήσας ἀναδίδωσιν, ἀπολογίαν συντάξις ὑπὲρ τῆς καθ’ ἡμᾶς θεοσεβείας, ὅτι δὴ τινες πονηροὶ ἄνδρες τοὺς ἐνοχλεῖν ἐπειρῶντο.

35 Quadratus may be identified with the homonymous prophet who preached in Asia Minor (Eus. *HE* 5, 17, 2).

this follows the news of the presentation of the *Apologies* of Quadratus and Aristides.

Nevertheless, the same *Chronicon* under the year 131 states that *Hadrianus Athenis hiemem exigens Eleusina inuisit*. The latter expression coincides exactly with that of *De vir. ill.* 19, according to which Hadrian spent the winter in Athens (*cumque Hadrianus Athenis exegisset hiemem, invisens Eleusinam*)³⁶, but also with that of the Armenian translation of the *Chronicon* (*Adrianus Athenis hiemavit et vidit Eleusinas res*): so Hadrian's attendance to Eleusinian rites mentioned by Jerome in the *De viris illustribus* and in the *Epistula* could be related to the winter 131/2, though the Armenian version and the *Chronicon* under 131 lack an important detail, that we have in both the *De viris illustribus* and the *Epistula*: namely the fact that in these two texts the visit to Eleusis is linked to an anti-Christian persecution. Therefore³⁷, it follows that the submission of *Apologies* to Hadrian could not have taken place in 124/5 but could have done so in 131/2.

Consequently, the date of Aristides' *Apology* would be 131/2: even though Aristides in Eusebius *HE* 4, 3, 3 and in Jerome's *Epistula*³⁸ is mentioned after Quadratus, in the *Chronicon* and in the *De viris illustribus*³⁹ Jerome says that the *Apologies* of Quadratus and Aristides were simultaneously presented to Hadrian. Since a later chronology is more suitable for Aristides' text (the Syriac version is dedicated to Antoninus Pius) it is permissible to assume that Aristides' *Apology* was presented in 131/2.

If this hypothesis is correct, we can explain why Jerome in *De viris illustribus* and in the *Epistula* speaks of a *persecutionem gravissimam* and of *qui Christianos oderant absque praecepto imperatoris vexare credentes*. In 132 the revolt of Bar Kochba broke out, whose preparation, according to Dio (69, 12, 2–13, 1), was

36 The same Jerome in *Chronicon* (198 Helm) places a visit to Athens by Hadrian in the winter of 123: *Cefisus fluvius Eleusinam inundavit, quem Hadrianus ponte coniugens Athenis hiemavit*. The *Versio Armena* put it under 127: *Cephisus fluvius Eleusinam obruit, cuique pontem Adrianus fecit*. Besides the different chronology, in neither case is there any trace of the Hadrian's initiation into the Eleusinian rites linked to the submission of *Apologies*.

37 Most probably Hadrian reached the degree of *epoptes* in Eleusis according to Dio 69, 11, 1: ἀφικόμενος δὲ ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐπόπτευσεν τὰ μυστήρια. This news is earlier than Hadrian's visit to Egypt in 130.

38 *HE* 4, 3, 3 (no exact date): καὶ Ἀριστείδης δέ, πιστὸς ἀνὴρ τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς ὀρμώμενος εὐσεβείας, τῷ Κοδρᾶτῳ παραπλησίως ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ἀπολογία ἐπιφωνήσας Ἀδριανῷ καταλέλοιπεν.

39 *Chron.* 199 Helm (under 125): *Quadratus discipulus apostolorum et Aristides Atheniensis noster philosophus liber pro Christiana religione Hadriano dedere compositos*. POUDERON-PIERRE-OUTTIER-GUIORGADZÉ 2003, 39, prefer to maintain the date of the *Chronicon* (125) for the defence of Aristides and exclude the second journey (128/129) as "rien n'autorise à désigner le second voyage de préférence au premier".

made some time before, because the Jews had already been preparing militarily for a long time and addressed (69, 13, 2) “many other foreigners, driven by lust for money, [that] they were providing aid, so most of the *ecumene* was agitated for this reason”. Justin (reproduced by Eusebius)⁴⁰ said that Bar Kochba had unleashed a true anti-Christian persecution. Faced with such anti-Christian hate, Jerome could speak of *gravissimam persecutionem* because it was contrary to Hadrian’s rescript of 124/5, and because the torments inflicted by Bar Kochba against the Christians were neither intended nor endorsed by Rome which, in a difficult situation of warfare, had enjoyed Christian loyalty.

Finally, it is worth noting that the prologue of Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho*, which reports the dialogue between a Jew and a Christian, closes with a reference to a conversation about the Jewish war of 132 which shows that the war was in progress at the time of the fictional dialogue; it was an argument which remained a hot topic for both the Jews and the Christians⁴¹.

Thus, Jerome, who alleges in his letter a serious anti-Christian persecution and who in *De viris illustribus* talks about anti-Christian hate, could allude to the rescript to Minucius Fundanus but also – as we have pointed out – to the divergences between Jews and Christians during the Bar Kochba revolt of 132.

5. Conclusions: Hadrian’s religious policy

Both the rescript to Fundanus and the *Apologies* of Quadratus and Aristides were born in a social climate in which Christians felt the need to gain protection: the addresses to the Emperor appear to have been successful as, on the one hand, Hadrian’s rescript shows a protective attitude towards the Christians and, on the other, during the Jewish revolt Christians felt the need to clarify their estrangement from Judaism. Whether the persecution cited by Jerome happened in 124/5 or in 131/2, the same link between an anti-Christian persecution and Hadrian’s participation in the Eleusinian mysteries remains an uncontroversial fact.

I believe that the years between 124/5 and 131/2 mark a significant turning point in Hadrian’s religious point of view, which showed new soteriological

40 *IApol.* 31, 6 = Eus. *HE* 4, 6, 2: ἐστρατήγει δὲ τότε Ἰουδαίων Βαρχαχβεβας ὄνομα, ὃ δὴ ἀστέρα δηλοῖ, τὰ μὲν ἄλλα φονικὸς καὶ ληστρικός τις ἀνὴρ, ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ προσηγορίᾳ, οἷα ἐπ’ ἀνδραπόδων, ὡς δὴ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ φωστὴρ αὐτοῖς κατεληλυθὼς κακουμένοις τε ἐπιλάμψαι τερατευόμενος.

41 Just. *Dial.* 9, 3: ἔδοξε καὶ τῷ Τρύφωνι οὕτως ἡμᾶς ποιῆσαι, καὶ δὴ ἐκνεύσαντες εἰς τὸ μέσον τοῦ ξυστοῦ στάδιον ἤειπεν· τῶν δὲ σὺν αὐτῷ δύο, χλευάσαντες καὶ τὴν σπουδὴν ἡμῶν ἐπισκώψαντες, ἀπηλλάγησαν. ἡμεῖς δὲ ὡς ἐγενόμεθα ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ τόπῳ, ἔνθα ἐκατέρωθεν λίθινοί εἰσι θῶκοι, ἐν τῷ ἑτέρῳ καθεσθέντες οἱ μετὰ τοῦ Τρύφωνος, ἐμβαλόντος τινὸς αὐτῶν λόγον περὶ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γενομένου πολέμου, διελάλουν.

interests. Between 121 and 125 Hadrian made his first big journey to Greece that culminated with the initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries to which, along with the Delphi sanctuary⁴², he fuses the establishment of a precise panhellenic project: the conclusion of such a project would be the establishment of the *Panhellenion* in Athens in 131/2. These are the same years in which the conflict between Judaism and Christianity was increasing in Asia Minor and, more generally, in the East, as the two groups began to become aware of each other's differences.

A defining moment in 124/5 could be also demonstrated by the evolution of the project phases of the Villa at Tibur⁴³. Between the years 118/121, 125/128 and the last years of Hadrian's Principate (129–138), we can see different evolutionary phases: the break at precisely 125 coincides with Hadrian's initiation to Eleusis and the inauguration of the "new course" of his religious policy.

42 See OLIVER 1989 nn° 75–76 and most recently GALLI 2004, 331–332; TALAMO 2007, 217–219; GALIMBERTI 2007, 137–138.

43 See CALANDRA in this volume.

The Bar Kokhba Revolt and Hadrian's Religious Policy

GIOVANNI BATTISTA BAZZANA

The many scholarly opinions collected in a volume published ten years ago and devoted to the study of the period between the two Jewish uprisings of 66 and 132 were all in agreement on the thick darkness that still enshrouds the historical contours of the fateful war associated with the name of Bar Kokhba¹. Admittedly, the most recent years have seen the publication of some new documents (above all, the startling letters written by Bar Kokhba himself) that have greatly enhanced our knowledge of the social and political life in the area here considered². However, the actual dynamics of the final confrontation between Israel and the Roman empire remain still unknown, even though these events have been treated as key passages in the most authoritative reconstructions of ancient Jewish history³. The perceived importance of the war is confirmed by the sheer number of publications that in the latest years have tried to contribute to a better historical understanding.

1. Methodological premise

A short methodological assessment is needed because of the enormous ideological import at stake in the historical memory of the events connected with the last Jewish war against Rome. On the one hand, Bar Kokhba's attempt to reject Roman rule is widely interpreted in contemporary Israeli society and political discourse as the true antecedent of the State of Israel's foundation and of its long and successful fight to obtain and preserve the right to exist⁴; on the other hand, many critics chose this exemplary event to underpin their picture of

1 OPPENHEIMER 1999.

2 For a preliminary survey of these sources (mainly papyrological) a good reference point can be COCKLE-COTTON-MILLAR 1995.

3 It suffices to refer to the two works of SCHÜRER 1973, 645–672, and SMALLWOOD 1976, 428–466. The first has chosen exactly the Bar Kokhba's revolt as its conclusion, whereas the second, even within a different span of time, envisages the revolt as "Jews' last bid for freedom".

4 See the impressive account of the changes introduced in the Jewish memory of Bar Kokhba by Zionism in ZERUBAVEL 2003.

the Jewish people as obstinate and incapable of living peacefully as part of a supernatural organism (in so doing, of course, they revive a dumb, but unfortunately long standing anti-semitic slander)⁵. Any attempt to address the historical issues connected with the war of 132–136 must deal with this entangled situation; thinking that historical analysis could be done in a “neutral” space would be disingenuous or outright dangerous.

In the present treatment, I will try to focus my attention on the clash between Israel and the Hadrianic political project of building a hybridized Mediterranean empire. As the most recent reflection on the phenomenon of hybridization or globalization has noted, the traditional perspective on these cultural changes has been excessively focused on their positive consequences and on the opportunities offered to oppressed subjects of developing a liberated and liberating agency. On the contrary, sometimes the discourse of hybridization may become an ideological blanket that allows dominating agencies to hide the existence of other political, ethnic, or class inequalities⁶. I contend that a similar clash of opposing agencies may be fruitfully read into the political and cultural interactions that led to the revolt of 132⁷. Such historical occurrences are envisaged as a relevant example of the complexities and tragic outcomes entailed in cultural conflicts in antiquity as well as today.

However, putting aside these methodological observations, one has to note that many contributions of the '70s and the '80s could not succeed in clarifying some key aspects of the events surrounding the revolt. This partial failure cannot be attributed to scholarly inadequacy, because the sources themselves offer many interpretive problems. On the one hand, the scanty Greco-Roman texts appear to be either too brief (as in the case of Dio Cassius' narrative) or tainted by the stain of untrustworthiness (as for the alleged Hadrian's policy described in the *Historia Augusta*). On the other hand, Jewish and Christian sources, which seem to have preserved information pertaining to the war, have not been widely employed in historical reconstructions, since these witnesses are not very clear and require long and unrewarding interpretive work to become useful as historical sources.

Maybe the most debated and still shadowy issue in the entire reconstruction ought to be identified in the immediate causes of the uprising. Of course, it is easy to see that the remotest reason for the war was the long standing Jewish hostility against Roman rule but we will note that even this picture is far from

5 ISAAC-OPPENHEIMER 1985.

6 See the criticism leveled to the seductiveness of optimistic usages of the concept of “creolization” in KHAN 2007.

7 Even Schiffman recognizes this aspect with a somewhat different emphasis: “We have to face the reality that these great struggles, generally assumed to be part of the heroic history of the Jewish people, were to a great extent inner Jewish struggles in which revolutionaries fought the Jewish ruling classes” (SCHIFFMAN 2002, 234).

being unproblematic. It is quite evident that ancient explanations of the war are mostly in disagreement among themselves and therefore a relevant part of the scholarly interest has been devoted to reconciling and harmonizing the divergent witnesses. In the present contribution the focus will not be directed mainly to the presentation of new evidences, but on a new evaluation of documents already known: the chance for a fresh examination of this dossier comes from the new perspective on Hadrian's policy proposed in the present volume. In particular, it would be very interesting to re-examine Hadrian's attitude in the Eastern part of his empire and put his troubled relations with the Jewish people within the broader context of his political initiatives toward eastern religions and cults. This could contribute in blurring the widespread idea of a clear cut opposition between Roman rule and the entire people of Israel. This author's intention does not consist in underplaying Hadrian's responsibility in the violent crash of Israel's independence and in the terrible expulsion of the children of Israel from their homeland, but in trying to reveal some artificial historical constructs that can only hinder a correct comprehension of past events. One of these is certainly the idea that the revolt broke out as a consequence of Roman (and Hadrian's) inability to understand Israel's specificities and to control political developments in the region; it is important to observe that our sources show a coherent and conscious project of political theology from Hadrian's side and that the emperor's actions ought to be judged on this basis⁸. Besides this *case study* on imperial religious policy, an aim of this contribution will be the examination of Israelite reactions to Hadrian's initiatives during the Second century mainly before and immediately after the war. This analysis will strengthen the idea that, since in the Land of Israel many different groups appear to have been active and competing in this period, answers differed and varied greatly in relation to varying interests and agendas. The starting point for an examination that would have required more space and time has been identified in the issue of the causes for the uprising, since this moment of critical tension can be considered very suitable to envisage the interests of single groups and their relations to Roman political actions.

8 A significant example of this scholarly attitude can be read in GOLAN 1986, who maintains that the emperor was guided by the compelling intention to eliminate a supposed Christian problem and in so doing he did not realize that he was raising a pugnacious Jewish opposition.

2. Dio's witness

Usually, scholars consider Dio's witness in book 69 of his historical work to be the most reliable source of information about the events in the Land of Israel at the beginning of the Second century. Indeed, this narrative shows some features that are clearly at variance with the style of historical writing common to Cassius Dio's time and to other Latin authors; such elements can reduce the probability of redactional intervention and rewriting on the material the Third-century historian took from his sources⁹. As far as the present issue is concerned, it is important to observe that Dio attributes only religious and ideological motives to this revolt among the others he mentions in his work. For other uprisings, the Greek historian resorts to his favourite pattern of a popular movement triggered by the social and economic exploitation brought on by Roman occupation.

Albeit trustworthy, Dio's narrative presents the readers with some problems in its end section, where the tradition of the text has undergone some modifications. This can be supposed since a long chunk of the text, comprising book 69 and consequently the narrative about the Jewish revolt, has been preserved only through the mediation of Xiphilinus, author of a later epitome. The scholarly opinion is equally divided in its judgement upon Xiphilinus' reliability in his epitomizing activity. However, since the passage here at issue seems to have been a sensitive spot for a Byzantine author, it is advisable to apply a sound critical examination to Xiphilinus' interests and agendas in order to detect possible signs of his redactional activity. Here we do not have space enough for a complete and detailed analysis of Dio's entire description of the Jewish war and consequently we will examine only the key sentence he devotes to the causes of the revolt¹⁰.

The historian refers to two main reasons for the Jewish uprising and he explains both of them in a single sentence and in two parallel subordinate clauses¹¹.

9 These features have been observed and studied by ISAAC 1983–1984, now published in IDEM 1998, 211–219, where the Israeli historian notes that Dio does not seem to use some usual Latin historiographical patterns: for example, he never mentions the leading figure in the revolt (Bar Kokhba) and does not attribute atrocities and terrible violence to the rebels.

10 A careful and penetrating examination of this passage has been recently presented by ELIAV 1997: the following observations will rely greatly on the results of this beautiful piece of historical-critical analysis.

11 The text is from Cassius Dio 69,12,1: "At Jerusalem he (Hadrian) founded a city in place of the one which had been razed to the ground, naming it Aelia Capitolina, and on the site of the temple of the god he raised a new temple to Jupiter. This brought on a war of no slight importance nor of brief duration, for the Jews deemed it intolerable that foreign races should be settled in their city and foreign religious rites planted there".

Ἔς δὲ τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα πόλιν αὐτοῦ ἀντὶ τῆς κατασκαφείσης οἰκίσαντος, ἦν καὶ Αἰλίαν Καπιτωλίαν ὠνόμασε, καὶ ἐς τὸν τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τόπον ναὸν τῷ Διὶ ἕτερον ἀντεγείραντος πόλεμος οὔτε μικρὸς οὔτ' ὀλιγοχρόνιος ἐκινήθη. Ἰουδαῖοι γὰρ δεινὸν τι ποιούμενοι τὸ ἀλλοφύλους τινὰς ἐς τὴν πόλιν σφῶν οἰκισθῆναι καὶ τὸ ἱερὰ ἀλλότρια ἐν αὐτῇ ἰδρυθῆναι.

The most lively debate has focused on the second reason presented by the historian: that Jews were not capable to suffer the edification of a temple dedicated to Jupiter “on the site τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ”. This attempt from Hadrian's part has been judged highly unlikely since it would have required either a massive misjudgement of the actual political situation in Judea or a conscious imperial intention to raise a Jewish violent reaction¹². Indeed, Hadrian had at his disposal plenty of examples of the Jewish sensitivity to the presence of idolatrous cults or simply images on the Temple site¹³. It is well known that Hadrian's policy was more inclined to pacify and consolidate his domains than to provoke open and violent confrontations. Many interpreters have tried to solve the difficulty by formulating hypotheses that in many cases resulted in artificial solutions¹⁴. Even the opinion that Dio erroneously anticipated the building of a temple that Hadrian decided to locate in Aelia Capitolina only after crushing the Jewish revolt in 136 does not seem more convincing. It is worth noting that all the ancient witnesses seem to agree in knowing no pagan sanctuary on the Temple mount; on the contrary it looks highly probable that, even after the war, on the site of Herod's Temple there was only a honorary statue of the emperor, while the shrine of Jupiter was erected in the western part of the city¹⁵.

The above mentioned difficulties have been solved by the reading of Yoram Eliav, who has thoroughly examined the text and its literary genre. As observed

12 This is the interpretation recently proposed by GOODMAN 2003, who clearly speaks of Hadrian's “final solution” for the problem posed by the Jews.

13 It is enough to recall the complicated events that took place under the principate of Caligula when he attempted to introduce some novelties exactly on the Temple mount. Anyway, it is difficult to think that Hadrian, having directly witnessed the critical situation brought on by the Jewish revolt in the last years of Trajan's reign, could consciously aim at creating a new *casus belli* to solve the entangled problems of Israel and its relations to the Roman empire.

14 In my opinion this is the case of BOWERSOCK 1980, who proposed to read Dio's phrase to mean not “on the site of the Temple” as usually done, but “instead of”, implying that Hadrian meant to build a new temple for Jupiter not on the place of the Jewish Temple, but in another location in Jerusalem.

15 This is clear in some ancient pilgrimage descriptions and in Jerome's report in *In Isaiam* 1, 2, 9 (*ibi Adriani statua et Jovis idolum collocatum est*): the presence of a pagan temple on the mount can be read only in Epiphanius (*De mens.* 14) and in the *Chronicon Paschale* (1, 474). However, it ought to be considered that the second witness is probably dependent from the first one, whereas the bishop of Salamis does not appear to be entirely reliable, since he seems confused posing the beginning of the revolt in the 117.

above, Cassius Dio structured his explanation using two subordinates; each of them is intended to introduce a cause of the war. First of all, there is Hadrian's project of rebuilding Jerusalem as a Roman *colonia* with the settlement of foreigners and pagans in it; the second cause is the building of Jupiter's temple. Notwithstanding this apparently very well balanced structure, Eliav has succeeded in exposing some inconsistency in the sentence here at issue¹⁶. The Israeli scholar has convincingly maintained that the second cause of the war was not part of Dio's original text, but it belongs to Xiphilinus' redactional interventions. This line of reasoning seems to be entirely acceptable considering that the Byzantine author wrote after the great Constantinian building activity of the Fourth century and that he was understandably inclined to trust the ideal history of Jerusalem that he could read in such Christian writers as Eusebius.

Apart from the second reason, Cassius Dio explains the war as a consequence of another imperial intervention: the rebuilding of the city, which had been devastated by Titus some sixty years before, as a Roman *colonia*. The Greek writer affirms that this decision as well was intolerable for the Jewish population. As far as this project is concerned, it can be maintained that it was surely established and made public in 130 when Hadrian visited the Land of Israel before the revolt – this datum is strengthened by plenty of evidence and, most significantly, by the discovery of coins minted exactly in order to celebrate the event¹⁷. The classical reconstruction of the Bar Kokhba revolt connects the rebuilding of the city, with the new name of Aelia Capitolina, and the introduction of foreign and Gentile cults; indeed, new Roman foundations usually followed a consistent political and administrative pattern. In this scheme the presence of civic and imperial cults was strictly linked to the political and administrative life of Roman *coloniae* and of their citizens – that was how the new political entities became part of the wider Roman world system. The usual practice included a legal exemption from public pagan rites for the Jewish communities in the remnant of the empire¹⁸, but it is not difficult to see how

16 The Israeli scholar has been able to indicate three significant elements: 1. the discordance between Hadrian's action and the Jewish reaction (affirming that "the Jews deemed it intolerable that (...) foreign rites be planted in their city" does not imply that a pagan temple was built exactly on the eastern height); 2. the usage of the term ἀντεγείρω would imply a provocative intention from Hadrian's part that would be completely unusual in the "soft" and peaceful depiction of this emperor Dio tries to give elsewhere; 3. the phrase ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ to indicate the Temple in Jerusalem is nearly never used by Gentile authors, while it seems better suitable for a Byzantine writer.

17 On this point the clearest and definitive argument can be read in BOWERSOCK 1980, 135–136.

18 Many documents attesting this Roman policy towards Jewish communities particularly in Asia Minor are collected in the 14th and 16th books of Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* (the debate on the issue of their authenticity has been very lively, as witnessed, for instance, by PUCCI BEN ZEEV 1998).

the possible renewal of Jerusalem's *status* could appear as an intolerable offence for at least a part of Israel. Some important analyses of this issue have succeeded in fitting this Hadrianic foundation within the context of the Second century imperial policy in the East and more specifically in the Land of Israel. It is worth mentioning the comparison, made by Benjamin Isaac, between the Hadrianic foundation of Aelia Capitolina and the colony created in Caesarea Maritima by Vespasian some forty years before. If observed closely, both these imperial initiatives show peculiarities that seem to be connected with the specific and troublesome political situation in *Judaea*: in the case of Jerusalem we have the unusual foundation of a colony that is on the very same place as a legion encampment, whereas Caesarea was the first Roman colony founded without importation of people coming from other parts of the empire¹⁹. In both cases it is very clear that the Roman government attributed to these new foundations a relevant political and military function – as far as Aelia Capitolina is concerned, this appears to have been the main aim of Hadrian's initiative, when, after the war, he strove to regain control of the territory. However, even in more usual conditions, Roman colonies had the first aim of asserting imperial presence in conquered lands and of being precious reservoirs of new conscripts for legionary recruitment. Benjamin Isaac has clarified what kind of consequences this change of *status* had on the city of Caesarea. First of all, though, it should be noted that the city obtained the new privilege as a reward for the support its citizens gave to the Flavians during the first Jewish revolt. Notwithstanding this previous history, it is clear that the fidelity to the empire showed by the city in the following years found its reasons in the very fact of its promotion to the new administrative *status*; it must be remembered that the foundation brought with it a panoply of benefits and privileges, firstly of fiscal nature, that should have pleased the citizens. Isaac's argument on this point is well based on two documents that it is useful to cite here, since both of them refer to citizens of Caesarea who served in Roman legions. It is very interesting to note that these epigraphic sources mention Jews who are citizens of Caesarea and who have taken part in the repression respectively of the first and the second uprising against Rome²⁰. Repeatedly Peter Schäfer has showed that Hadrian's administrative action in the Land of Israel met the favour of a relevant part of the Jewish population; it is easy to identify the social strata that could

19 ISAAC 1998, 87–111, has described these two peculiar foundations in detail and has appended a rich amount of parallel cases that can stress the special character of the administrative practices adopted in *Judaea*.

20 The first text (*CIL* XVI 15) mentions a Lucius Cornelius Simon who has come to the West after the first revolt in the First century CE, whereas the second epigraph (*CIL* XVI 107) refers to Barsimso, son of Callisthenes, who seems to have been recruited exactly at the beginning of the Bar Kokhba war in 132: consequently it can be easily hypothesized that he had to fight against other Jews.

obtain the greatest advantages from a quiet and controlled situation²¹. A large number of witnesses, mainly of an archeological and numismatic nature, can confirm the idea that Hadrian's policy gained some approval because of the privileges and the benefits he granted: that is particularly clear for some cities such as Tiberias and Sepphoris in Galilee where it is very difficult to hypothesize that the majority of the population was formed by Gentiles²². As far as many of these cities are concerned, we know very well that *Hadrianeia* were dedicated to the cult of the emperor; this forged a very useful link between colonial foundation and introduction of pagan cults in a way that Cassius Dio seems to envisage for Aelia Capitolina. Anyway, this evidence can also demonstrate the rationality and political opportunity of Hadrian's project which was not a mere provocative act directed against Israel's religious tradition, but could have been designed to meet some approval. Only too narrow a concept of the opposition between Judaism and Hellenism in the Land of Israel at this time allows to maintain the strict image of a complete and total refusal, on Israel's side, of the empire and its institutions.

3. The witness in the *Historia Augusta*

The Roman sources on the outbreak of the revolt are not limited to Dio's exposition: it is worth examining also the witness preserved in Hadrian's biography written by a pseudo-Spartianus and included in the *Historia Augusta* collection. According to this text the causes of the uprising were quite different: indeed, pseudo-Spartianus seems to say that the Jews began their war against Rome because they were prohibited to practice their ancestral custom of circumcising newborns (*moverunt ea tempestate et Iudaei bellum, quia vetabantur mutilare genitalia*)²³. Even though scanty historical reliability is usually credited to the *Historia Augusta* witnesses, it must be noted that this piece of evidence has received a good amount of scholarly attention. In classical reconstructions of the Bar Kokhba war a Hadrianic ban on circumcision is taken as an acquired historical datum²⁴, even though evidence external to the *Historia Augusta* account is inconsistent at best. Rabbinical texts that seem to hint at this imperial prohibition show too many peculiar characters to be employed as first hand

21 SCHÄFER 1990.

22 See the recent conclusions drawn from a lucky season of archeological inquiries in Sepphoris in CHANCEY-MEYERS 2000 or WEISS 2005.

23 See the discussion in FÜNDLING 2006, 669–675.

24 This idea is maintained also in the most recent revision of SCHÜRER 1978, 649–653, but the editors have inserted a *nuance*, recognizing that this imperial decree had not explicit anti-Jewish purposes since it was extended also to other Eastern peoples (Samaritans, Nabateans, Egyptians...), who practiced circumcision in antiquity.

reliable historical sources²⁵. These kind of evidence will be re-examined later, since it requires a careful and specific analysis whose results must be judged, for the time being, tentative at best.

Recently, an Israeli scholar working on Roman legislation concerning genital mutilations has reviewed the entire case and the documents connected to it²⁶. Alfredo Rabello finds his argument on the well known legislative act of Antoninus Pius, who permitted the Jews to circumcise only their sons²⁷, but he tries to assemble some more evidence. In fact, it is not possible to recuperate a direct legislation against the Jewish practice, whereas it is clear that Hadrian intervened to strengthen the law against castration already introduced some years before by Domitian. Again, Ulpian has preserved the formulation of Hadrian's forbidding act: *nemo enim liberum servumve invitum sinentemve castrare debet, neque quis se sponte castrandum praebere debet. At si quis adversus edictum meum fecerit, medico quidem, qui exciderit, capitale erit, item ipsi qui se sponte excidendum praebuit* ("no one is indeed allowed to castrate a son or a slave either with or without consent, and no one is allowed to offer himself willingly to castration. If anyone will act against my decree, he will be condemned to the capital punishment, even if he is a physician, who performed the surgery, or even if he is someone who offered himself willingly to the operation")²⁸. Rabello tries to show how the text of this imperial decree should imply a ban on circumcision as well: to reach this goal, he has to commit himself to a long terminological digression in order to demonstrate that *circumcidere* ought to be considered part of the lexical sphere of *excidere*. In a more recent contribution, Ra'anan Abusch, working on the same texts employed by Rabello, has demonstrated that Antoninus Pius' decree limiting the Jewish right to circumcise only to the sons of Jewish parents could be consistently read as the prosecution of Hadrian's legislative action protecting slaves from genital mutilation, and specifically castration²⁹. Indeed, Rabello's argument has to rely heavily on the *Historia Augusta* witness, since this is the only ancient source that mentions a Hadrianic ban.

25 Recently many authoritative scholars have spoken eloquently against the traditional interpretation that reads in a number of rabbinic accounts the memory of Hadrianic persecutions against various Jewish religious practices and, among them, notably circumcision. For complete collections of the passages at issue see OPPENHEIMER 2003.

26 RABELLO 1975, that has been now republished with some adjustments in RABELLO 2000.

27 According to the witness of the *Digesta* (48, 8, 11): *Circumcidere Iudaeis filios suos tantum rescripto divi Pii permittitur: in non eiusdem religionis qui hoc fecerit castrantis poena irrogatur*. This disposition would render probable a previous Hadrianic intervention on the practice of circumcising also Jewish newborns.

28 *Digesta* 48, 8, 4, 2.

29 ABUSCH 2003.

The riddle posed by this odd piece of evidence can be solved only by observing the practice of circumcision within the wider context of Roman attitudes toward foreign customs. This analysis has been recently attempted in many contributions that focused on ancient perceptions of Israel and on the possible Greco-Roman roots of anti-Semitism³⁰. These analyses have clarified how hostile Roman representations of genital modifications were; it seems that, in this case, they inherited a Greek concept of genital surgery as barbarian violence exercised on the natural, and hence perfect, shape of the human body. Latin satires are full of acrimonious references to Israelites and their sexual character defined by the barbaric attribute of circumcision. Misconceptions of foreigners, in this case, are strengthened by the Roman idea that circumcision was somehow related to the fabled Jewish inhuman sexual appetite³¹. It would suffice here to say that even these observations are not strong enough to justify a Hadrianic initiative against circumcision: the practice was well known and equally despised under other Roman rulers as well. Therefore some other reasons were needed to trigger the imperial legislative action.

The issue of circumcision as an important identity marker has been much studied in the last few years, since the scholarly interest has been attracted by mechanisms of group identity definition in antiquity and by the social and anthropological problems connected to them. Of course, a relevant argument has grown around ancient Israelite identity markers and their modification or rejection through the encounters with the Hellenistic and Roman culture. It is clear that the situation was more fluid and entangled than the following Rabbinic systematizations let us know³². It is worth reviewing here, as an example, the picture of these developments Shaye Cohen has drawn in a particularly piercing series of contributions. He has correctly emphasized how the concept of “Jewishness” shifted from a primary ethnic value to a mainly political and religious one exactly in the period between the late Hellenistic and the early Roman times. This change was not without consequences as far as the role of circumcision was concerned: from a simple ethnic marker it became more and more a sign charged with theological-political meaning. It can be hypothesized that this idea was clear to the Roman political elites already a

30 The most complete treatment of this theme in SCHÄFER 1997, but a contribution more focused on the issue of circumcision can be read in CORDIER 2001.

31 Many of Martial's epigrams are construed around puns that revolve on circumcised Jews and their sexual behaviour (see, for example, 11, 94), but even Tacitus speaks of *proiectissima ad libidinem gens* when he writes his famous digression on the Land of Israel in the fifth book of the *Historiae*.

32 A relevant contribution to shed light on ancient debates and the numerous different interpretations of “Jewishness” in the Greco-Roman world has come from the recent book of COHEN 1999 who has demonstrated the inconsistency of our sources not only at the level of factual observations but also as far as the terminological usage is concerned.

generation or two before Hadrian's reign; at least, a significant turning point should be connected with the problem of exacting the infamous *fiscus Iudaicus* under the Flavian dynasty³³.

It is worth adding a note on another value Greco-Roman observers seem to have attached to circumcision: many authors viewed the Israelite "sign" not only as a simple ethnic distinction, but they followed in a long standing polemical tradition that interpreted circumcision as a practice consciously adopted to differentiate Israel from the other despised nations. This is particularly clear in Tacitus' violently polemical attack, where he explicitly affirms that the Israelites *circumcidere genitalia instituerunt, ut diversitate noscantur* ("They instituted circumcision of genitals in order to be singled out through such distinction")³⁴. Of course this slander was frequently connected to the other ancient accusation against Israel, namely that the people was very proud of its distinctions because of its hatred for humankind (*odium generis humani*). It is easy to understand how Israelites, who wanted to become part of the wider imperial environment and were willing to be "assimilated" to Greco-Roman culture, had also to be ready to give up those sign of "Jewishness" that were considered more despicable. Reflecting along these lines, Peter Schäfer proposed some years ago an altogether different interpretation of the *Historia Augusta* information: he examined a text preserved in *tShab* 15(16), 9 that refers to *mšwkym*, people who underwent the operation called *ἐπισπασμός* in order to hide their circumcision. Since the reference to *mšwkym* is connected in the Rabbinic text to "Hadrian's times", this document has often been employed as an indirect support to the *Historia Augusta* witness. On the contrary, Schäfer has persuasively demonstrated that it is impossible to think that Hadrian compelled adult Israelites to eliminate their circumcision (at best he could have forbid to circumcise newborns). Nevertheless, the German scholar maintains that the *Tosefta* passage could find a suitable historical context, if we suppose that many Israelites underwent the *ἐπισπασμός* in order to escape the identification by Greek and Roman observers as members of the people of Israel³⁵. This being the case, it seems reasonable to suppose that the *Historia Augusta* wrongly interpreted as a

33 That the issue was not unproblematic is witnessed by the famous narrative in Suetonius: the historian tells us that in his youth he saw a ninety year old Jew examined on a public place about his prepuce (*Domitian* 12, 5–6). Compare also the analysis in GOODMAN 1989.

34 *Hist* 5, 5, 2.

35 This being the case, the *Tosefta* reference to a possible recircumcision should be related again to Hadrian's time, but it should now presuppose an initiative of Bar Kokhba intended to restore the proper respect of God's law. Schäfer had already presented this hypothesis in his earlier volume on the Bar Kokhba revolt (SCHÄFER 1981), but he has reaffirmed and complemented it through a careful study of the ancient practice of *ἐπισπασμός* in a more recent contribution (SCHÄFER 1999).

ban a strong Hadrianic impulse to Israelite assimilation through the abandonment of some traditional practices, and particularly circumcision. Could this picture be reconciled with the other project of founding a Roman colony in Jerusalem? Before answering this question, I prefer to analyze another ancient source.

4. The witness of the *Epistle of Barnabas*

There is a third source of information on the causes of the revolt that is not always taken into consideration by scholars and anyway has not been attributed a great weight³⁶. It is a brief reference in the sixteenth chapter of the apocryphal *Epistle of Barnabas*, where the anonymous author of this Christian text criticizes the Israelite cults in the Jerusalem Temple, affirming that they are substantially acts of idolatry. The text quotes some Old Testament passages that appear to have been real *clichés* in the anti-Jewish polemic of early Christian groups in as much as the latter employed ancient prophetic texts in which God attacks the hypocritical attitude of some Israelite liturgies. Then the *Epistle of Barnabas* goes on adding a very enigmatic hint at the reconstruction of the shrine in Jerusalem³⁷: *νῦν καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς τῶν ἐχθρῶν ὑπηρέται ἀνοικοδομήσουσιν αὐτόν*. It is worth noting that on this very passage is not based only the idea of a reconstruction of the Temple through Roman and particularly Hadrianic intervention, but also the majority of the hypotheses regarding the possible date of the Christian apocryphon itself³⁸. However, it must be admitted that this hypothesis has not received the approval of the majority of the scholars and therefore its problems will require a thorough examination in the following lines³⁹.

First of all, the textual tradition of *EpBar* 16, 4 ought to be analyzed since it presents some incongruities even among the few ancient manuscripts that have

36 Overtly SMALLWOOD 1976, 435, calls it “a legend”.

37 “And now they, as the servants of their enemies, shall rebuild it”: *Ep. Bar.* 16, 4, for the text see KRAFT 1971, 190.

38 This classical opinion had been already voiced by GRAETZ 1908, 125–127, and DERENBOURG 1867, 412–415; recently it has been reaffirmed by BARNARD 1979, who anyway poses this expectation at the beginning of Hadrian’s principate and does not connect it with the Bar Kokhba revolt. Often this text has been related to a midrashic narrative (*BerR* 64, 10) that seems to refer to a similar situation: since the historical trustworthiness of Rabbinic materials has been correctly questioned, this passage will receive a special treatment below.

39 The hypothesis is rejected in the most recent commentary on the *Epistle of Barnabas* (see PROSTMEIER 1999, 501–515); an alternative option has been proposed by PRIGENT 1981, 75–78, who speaks of a simpler opposition between the Jerusalem Temple and the new spiritual sanctuary that was being built in the cultic life of Christian communities.

preserved this apocryphal writing. It is worth noting that verse 4 is connected to the preceding verse 3 by a γίνεταί that appears only in two out of the four witnesses of the *Epistle of Barnabas*: thereby only the codex *Sinaiticus* and the *Hierosolymitanus* linked through this Greek word the two verses and made the latter the realization of the prophecy announced in verse 3. It is interesting to observe that this structure creates a very clear asyndeton – therefore it is not difficult to suspect that this is the original reading and that it was modified as a *lectio difficilior*. The possible insertion of γίνεταί in this place through the intervention of a copyist can be dismissed. It is highly unlikely that a Byzantine copyist identified the Israelite Temple, which is mentioned here in negative terms, with the Christian sanctuary that Constantine built in Jerusalem. Even more significant can be considered a variant reading detected again in the *Sinaiticus*, the oldest witness of the *Epistle of Barnabas*: in that manuscript a second καὶ is written between ἀντοὶ and ὡς τῶν ἐχθρῶν. This being the case, we would have to read two distinct subjects in the sentence here at issue, but it is not easy to establish if this was the original text. An answer to this question can be gained only after a thorough examination of the entire context of chapter 16.

As stated above, verse 4 can be meaningfully interpreted only if it is conceptually connected to the preceding Isaian quotation. It is worth noting that in this case the text of *Is* 49, 17 (“Behold, they who have cast down this Temple, even they shall build it up again”) seems to have been deeply modified from its original tone⁴⁰. The following verse is introduced by γίνεταί that should be linked to νῦν in order to show how the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in the events contemporary to the writing of the letter: “It has so happened. For, through their going to war, it was destroyed by their enemies. And now also they, as servants of the enemies, shall build it”. The debate among the interpreters has expectedly focused on the identification of those who rebuild the Temple and of those who are called “servants of the enemies”. The “spiritualizing” reading that implies a reference to Christian communities as spiritual sanctuaries cannot be maintained – indeed, the author takes on this

40 The LXX text that is here quoted would sound: “And soon you (Zion) will be build by those who have destroyed you” without any reference to the Temple. Correctly CARLETON PAGET 1994, 17–23, has observed that such a relevant modification of the biblical text is completely at variance with the usual practice of the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas*. This analysis strengthens the hypothesis that the changes were introduced in order to adapt the LXX quotation to the following verse 4: indeed, the latter had to be the “fulfilment” of the Isaian prophecy. It is quite possible that the oracle had been already adapted to the Temple in some Jewish groups, since Carleton Paget can indicate the interesting parallel of *Tb* 14, 4–6. On this basis the American scholar too agrees in denying that the new sanctuary could have been a pagan one; nevertheless he does not think that the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple was a Hadrianic initiative, since he prefers to attribute this imperial intervention to Nerva (following a proposal of SHUKSTER—RICHARDSON 1983).

theme only after verse 6. On the contrary, the section here at issue focuses clearly on a material building and therefore verse 4 should be interpreted within this context. The quotation from Isaiah implies that the authors of the destruction and of the rebuilding should be the same people⁴¹: in this case the material responsibility has to be assigned to the Romans since Titus's destruction in 70 CE is certainly in view. However, a participation of Israel in both acts cannot be discarded, since the first part of verse 4 is aimed at showing the weight of Israel's moral responsibility in the eyes of the Christian redactor. As Israel provoked the ruin of the Temple waging war against the Romans, likewise the people is now compelled to rebuild the sanctuary in the shameful condition of enslavement to the Roman enemies⁴².

Let us now come back to the question set previously aside: is it possible to imagine a Hadrianic political project that included all the three aspects here examined (the foundation of a colony in Jerusalem, the discouragement of circumcision, and the building of a new Jewish Temple)? I would like to recall here the new picture of Hadrian's religious policy proposed by Marco Rizzi⁴³: since it seems that the emperor attempted to include Christianity in the new political and religious structure of the empire, it is not impossible to hypothesize a similar attempt directed toward Israel. In this perspective, the Roman authority decided that some Israelite specificities had to be set aside: for example, circumcision seemed to overemphasize the ethnic character of Israel and was viewed as a sign of exclusivism in the eyes of Greco-Roman observers. Pursuing this aim, Hadrian could easily obtain the support of some Israelite groups that were eager to be "assimilated" into the Hellenistic environment and to present Judaism more as a cultural phenomenon than as an ethnic identity. On the other hand, the rebuilding of Jerusalem as a colony and, moreover, of the Temple were entirely in agreement with traditional Roman policies of inclusion of foreign cults in the imperial *pantheon* and much more with Hadrian's practice elsewhere. Besides, these two projects enabled the emperor to reward his supporters within Israel. From a Roman point of view, finally, the attempt to create a communal space for different deities and rituals could offer a great opportunity for implementing, at the very same time, the representation of

41 It is the use of this quotation that renders implausible the reference to a pagan temple and the idea that here the *Epistle of Barnabas* envisaged the enslavement of Israelites to be used as workmen in the building of a shrine for Jupiter (for this hypothesis, see recently HVALVIK 1996, 18–23, and SCHWARTZ 1992a).

42 This reading can be useful in explaining the καὶ inserted in the codex *Sinaiticus*: it was intended to clarify that the αὐτοί in the second sentence of verse 4 and the authors of the reconstruction were the Romans, because the copyist had no knowledge of a Jewish reconstruction of the Temple. This being the case, the variant could be considered secondary not only because of its slight textual support, but as *lectio facillior* as well.

43 See the *Introduction* to this volume.

power and the power of representation. It is clear that a Temple rebuilt through Hadrian's intervention was intended to be the ultimate sign both of his beneficial concern for his subjects and of his authority.

Recently, James Rives has proposed an intriguing reading of Vespasian's religious policy that would explain the Flavian decision of destroying the Temple after the conquest of Jerusalem in 70 CE. According to Rives, the emperor might have been troubled by the civic character of the Jerusalem cult and by its value as an identity marker that would have extended its influence throughout all the Israelite communities of the empire⁴⁴. While I acknowledge the merit of Rives' analysis in explaining the Flavian stance towards Israel – which the author himself judges as a failure – I would not agree in depicting Hadrian's policy simply as an extension or perfection of the Flavians', as Jodi Magness does in a recent contribution⁴⁵. On the contrary, it seems reasonable to think that in this field as well Hadrian moved in a political direction very different from that sketched by his predecessors.

Was Hadrian's project deemed to be a failure as far as Israel was concerned? Probably the answer to this question must remain undisclosed, but asking it can help us in illuminating some other aspects of the relations between the Roman empire and Israel. A comparison with the case of Christianity can be particularly fruitful, since the outcomes of the two trajectories were so different. In a recent and much discussed book, Daniel Boyarin has examined Paul's attitude toward Israel. It is very interesting to observe that the description he has come up with appears to be remarkably similar to Hadrian's political project⁴⁶. Paul intended to annihilate differences among human beings at every social and political level, but to attain his goal he had to move his discourse to a spiritual level and to negate physical differences as well – in his agenda, ethnic markers as circumcision could have no place. It is important to note a relevant divergence in Hadrian's project: while Paul could base its political view on a strongly apocalyptic message, Hadrian had to remain among institutional boundaries and therefore he chose to emphasize the integrative value of multifaceted identities⁴⁷. In both cases the physical sign of circumcision could find no place, but, as far as Christianity is concerned, Paul's shaping of the religious movement initiated a process that finally brought the new religion to become, after the elimination of the most lively apocalyptic aspects, the fundamental pillar of the

44 RIVES 2005.

45 MAGNESS 2008.

46 BOYARIN 1994: Boyarin's ideas have been widely discussed and criticized but they will be employed here since they allow to think about the political agenda implied in Paul's thought in a way that was unusual even few years ago. For a similar approach see SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA 2000.

47 On this important theme see the articles collected in BORG 2004.

Constantinian empire⁴⁸. The fate of Israel was altogether different, since, at the end of the road, it was forced to transform itself into a purely ethnic religion in Christian Europe as well as in the Islamic East⁴⁹. But to grasp more adequately Hadrian's role in this transformation we need to take a closer look at the Land of Israel in the period between the two wars.

5. The Land of Israel between 70 and 135

It is clear that Hadrian had to face a very fluid and dangerous political situation in the Land of Israel when he began his reign in 117. This is clear not only from the ensuing events, but it must have been easily foreseeable at the time in the wake of the Diaspora revolt that troubled the end of Trajan's principate. Until some years ago, anyway, the political and administrative condition of the province was completely unknown, since there were no significant sources of information on it. Luckily, the findings of some documentary texts in the desert of Judah have allowed us to refresh our picture of those times and of the attitude of the people toward Roman rule. Expectedly, it seems that the Romans proceeded to reorganize the administrative structure of the province after the first rebellion as they did elsewhere in their domains: judicial responsibility was entrusted to the governor and to the other Roman military and financial representatives on the place⁵⁰. Interestingly enough, we lack any evidence of relatively autonomous Israelite institutions after the end of the *Sanhedrin* in 66⁵¹; instead, we are well informed, through the findings of two rich private archives, about the apparently good acquaintance of the people with Roman administrative rationalism and with the use of Greek as official language. The Roman power structure was not based only on military presence, but it relied also on the autonomous administration of cities and of their councils. This picture is confirmed for the Land of Israel by the rich material coming from Caesarea Maritima⁵² and it may be helpful in explaining how Hadrian believed

48 The key role of Hadrian's political renovation in the fundamental process of differentiation between Christianity and Judaism is a topic that would require a further and more thorough inquiry: however, recent contributions to the lively debate on "the parting of the ways" have identified in the Bar Kokhba revolt the decisive turning point of this story (see, for example, the articles in DUNN 1992).

49 See the perspective exposed in NEUSNER 1992.

50 For a good assessment see COTTON-ECK 2005.

51 On this point there has been much speculation particularly regarding Josephus's attitudes in his two accounts about the political situation of Judaea (see MASON 1991) or the roles possibly played by Agrippa II or some Jabnean figures as Johanan ben Zakkai (on the Rabbinic narratives and their historical evaluation see the comments below).

52 For a complete survey of the archeological and epigraphical material see now RABAN-HOLUM 1996.

that the foundation of a colony in Jerusalem could strengthen the Roman grip on the province.

Of course, the following events demonstrate that these intended projects encountered a bitter opposition and it is clear that this aversion focused also on the religious and cultural aspects of Roman rule. A significant feature can be considered the rejection of Greek as an administrative language and the adoption of Hebrew that seems to have characterized the Bar Kokhba domain exactly as it happened during the first war sixty years before⁵³. However, to understand in full the relevance of Hadrian's political project an examination of Rabbinic sources is needed; interestingly enough, these texts present many ambiguities. Notwithstanding many historiographical assumptions, it is quite difficult to assess what attitude the Rabbinic groups had in the face of Roman rule between the second and the third centuries CE⁵⁴. Resuming what has been stated above, we know very well that the Rabbis chose to write their texts in Hebrew and Aramaic, but many pieces of evidence attest that a number of early teachers knew and used Greek⁵⁵. As far as the support to Bar Kokbah is concerned, there are many (admittedly legendary) narratives of Aqiba's investiture of the revolt leader⁵⁶, whereas many relevant figures of the aftermath seem to have lived at their ease in the most Hellenized or Romanized centres⁵⁷. Finally it must be observed that the Rabbis certainly did not reject circumcision and in the end the emergence of the patriarchal figure marked the transformation of Judaism into an ethnic religion. Nevertheless, there were earlier Israelite voices that presented Judaism to the Romans as a philosophical school and this idea seems to have fascinated also some teachers in the climate of the Second Sophistic⁵⁸. In order to solve this riddle, the newest and most reliable methods to interpret Rabbinic documents historically are needed.

53 On this theme see COTTON 1999.

54 The recent contribution by BELAYCHE 2004 is almost completely unhelpful because the admittely huge amount of data assembled is almost never evaluated according to critical principles.

55 See, for example, the debate in *JPea* 1, 1, 15c.

56 The texts are collected and evaluated in SCHÄFER 1978.

57 Leaving aside Caesarea, it is interesting to analyze the case of Sepphoris where Judah I, the redactor of the *Mishnah*, lived and where the most recent excavations have unearthed a synagogue with a complex, and strongly Hellenized, iconographical cycle (see note 20 above).

58 This is quite clear already in Josephus's apology, but the comparison between Jewish Mishnaic and Talmudic thought and the intellectual practice of Greek philosophy has been pursued in many authoritative works (for instance, by J. Neusner and recently in an intriguing analysis of misanthropy in an essay by KOVELMAN 2005, 135–154).

6. The Rabbinic witnesses

Readers of Rabbinic accounts about Bar Kokhba and the episodes connected with the second revolt against the Romans cannot avoid being startled by the mainly legendary or even folkloric character of the narratives: notwithstanding Hadrian's appearance in many of them, it is very dangerous to use these witnesses at face value as reliable descriptions of the relationships between the empire and Israel at the beginning of the Second century CE⁵⁹. The large amount of narratives that can be found in the Talmudic and midrashic collections is continuously affording plenty of material for lively methodological debates. For at least three decades, Rabbinic scholars have been discussing the historical value to be attributed to these documents, but they have not yet reached a consensus. The classical method treated the texts as absolutely reliable; because the various passages are attributed to rabbis who lived in different generations spread throughout the centuries from the first to the fifth CE, any narrative was dated exactly with reference to this generational attribution, which was considered to be totally trustworthy⁶⁰. In some groundbreaking studies Jacob Neusner has tried to apply to Rabbinic texts the same *Formgeschichte* that had been used to analyze the literary and historical formation of the Christian gospels. This analysis shows that the traditional attributions could have been fabricated when the texts were collected and redacted in order to enhance the relevance or the importance of some opinions; of course, such a doubtful result left historians with not many materials that can effectively be used to know something about the earliest rabbis. However, historical research should be able to develop a set of rules that would enable us to distinguish between valueless materials and trustworthy sources in both of the two *Talmudim* as well as the many *midrashim*. In the following pages, we will try to apply some of these rules to texts referring to the relationships between Roman emperors and Jewish rabbis.

It is safe to state from the outset some of the rules that will guide the following analysis. First, in principle, each text examined will be dated according to the collection where it can be read today. For instance, a narrative on Hadrian found in the *Babylonian Talmud* will be considered as a Sixth century CE text,

59 A very careful survey of these sources has been conducted by Peter Schäfer in his book on the Bar Kokhba war, but he has come up with few relevant historical data.

60 On this method are founded the most influential reconstructions of ancient Jewish history as those of URBACH 1987 or ALON 1989, but the very same path is followed in more recent contributions, as, for instance, JAFFÉ 2006: it suffices to observe the ideological character of such a reconstruction, whose author can state that “les Sages, qui devinrent progressivement les dirigeants de la société juive et dont les activités religieuses s'orientent vers des démarches réalistes et constructives, [ne] aient pu adhérer à une quelconque mouvance mystique ou apocalyptique” (p. 104).

since this is the most likely period for the redaction of the collection at hand – to date the text at an earlier time, some sound and compelling reasons would be required. This being the case, the burden of proof will stay on those who want to lower the narrative dating rather than the other way around⁶¹. In order to assess with a reasonable degree of certainty the antiquity of Rabbinic witnesses, it is fundamental to analyze thoroughly the redactional and ideological context of each passage; Neusner's careful studies have demonstrated that some *midrashim* (for instance, *Bereshit Rabbah* or *Vayygra' Rabbah*) were composed in the Fourth century and therefore their depiction of Rome was consistently influenced by the contemporary confrontation with the newly christianized Constantinian empire⁶². To maintain that these midrashic narratives are witnesses of earlier times, it cannot suffice to refer to the attribution of the texts to Second century rabbis – one has to show that the passages disagree from the usual picture of Rome as the centre of anti-Jewish Christian policies. In addition to this methodological caveat, I will try to apply to the texts also a less established analytical tool, one that has been employed, with some significant results, in a recent treatment of ancient Rabbinic literature on martyrdom⁶³. It has been noted above that main characters in Rabbinic narratives are usually the rabbis themselves who lived in the great span of time between the first and the Sixth century CE. Interestingly enough, Boyarin has chosen not to take the narratives at face value ascribing them to the time in which the mentioned rabbis presumably lived, but to consider these characters essentially as "personifications" or archetypal figures put on the narrative stage in order to embody religious ideas or social concepts developed in later centuries. Let us try to explain this method in reference to the current theme, the relationships between Roman emperors and the people of Israel. In doing so, it is interesting to consider a figure that was to become an archetype also in Christian writings: the emperor Nero. Surprisingly enough, on the last representative of the Julio-Claudian dynasty there appear to be very few Rabbinic witnesses – the main ones are grouped in a long passage in *bGit* 55b-56a. We can read here an entirely positive description of Nero, in which the presence of legendary traits is impressive; mentioning two of them can suffice to assess this point. First of all, even the Jewish war of 66 is not attributed to Nero's responsibility. On the contrary, the guilt for this tragic event is minimized at the level of a misunderstanding caused by the intervention of a wicked Samaritan (a usual

61 On this very problematic issue, see the many and diverging interventions in NEUSNER–AVERY-PECK 1999, 123–230.

62 NEUSNER 1987.

63 This is the fascinating book by BOYARIN 1999: notwithstanding the doubtful results of some evaluations throughout the volume, Boyarin's approach to Jewish sources seems to open new and more fruitful paths to historical inquiry.

villain in Rabbinic narratives). Secondly, the account ends with Nero's conversion to Judaism. There are here some clear signs of folkloric developments, but the kernel of this story can easily be connected with the time and place of the redaction of the *Babylonian Talmud*: the Sassanian empire fighting against the Roman-Christian empire in the Fourth century. It is easy to see that Nero's character is positively depicted not only because he's traditionally opposed to Vespasian, the destroyer of the Jerusalem Temple, but also because Nero became the archetype of anti-Christian (since he was supposed to have initiated the first persecution) and anti-Roman attitudes (an ancient widespread legendary prophecy focused on the figure of *Nero redivivus*, regarding him as still alive and ready to command an Eastern army against Rome for its final destruction)⁶⁴.

The main goal of the present analysis will consist in checking the hypothesis that certain figures of emperors in Rabbinic literature are conceived as "archetypes" of some ideas about the relationships between the imperial authority and the people of Israel (just as certain Rabbinic characters stand for specific concepts in Boyarin's suggestion). As far as Hadrian is concerned, it is worth noting that his character in Rabbinic literature underwent a very peculiar treatment: whereas other emperors named in these sources are always put either in good (as in the case of Nero) or bad light (as it happens with Titus's portrayal that will be examined below), Hadrian's picture is characterized by ambiguity. Surprisingly enough, notwithstanding the tragic events of 132–136, the expected negative narratives can be read side by side with accounts that show an almost encomiastic attitude⁶⁵. Unfortunately, the majority of these texts cannot be employed for historical reconstruction since they appear in very late collections, usually medieval *midrashim*, which is true for slandering as well as positive accounts. To the first group belongs the narrative of *Debarim Rabbah* 51, 1 that describes Hadrian's blasphemous behaviour in the Temple (this clear anachronism seems to eliminate any argument regarding the evaluation of the historicity of the text)⁶⁶. The second attitude is portrayed in the amusing tale of *Vayygra' Rabbah* 25, 5, in which Hadrian enters into a conversation with a hundred-years-old fig planter. This narrative requires a more thorough examination⁶⁷:

64 On this narrative see the careful analysis in STEMBERGER 1978, 346–349.

65 This favourable attitude towards Hadrian is not restricted to Rabbinic sources: we have an earlier and admittedly even more puzzling witness of it in the famous passage in the fifth book of the *Sybilline Oracles* (5, 48) that should presumably antedate the Bar Kokhba war.

66 Some information on the debate about the dating of this writing can be read in the brief presentation in STEMBERGER 1992, 430–431.

67 The text in MARGOULIES 1956.

Hadrian, (his bones be ground to dust!), once passed along the paths leading to Tiberias and saw an old man standing and digging trenches to plant shoots of fig-trees. He said to him: "Greybeard, greybeard! If you had got up early to do the work you would not have had to work late!" He answered him: "I have worked early and am working late, and let the Lord of Heaven do as it pleases Him." He said to him: "By your life, old man! How old are you this day?" "A hundred years old" he answered. He said to him: "So you are a hundred years old, and yet are standing and digging trenches to plant shoots of fig-trees! Do you ever hope to eat of them?" He replied: "If I am worthy I shall eat, and if not, then as my forebears have worked for me so will I work for my children." He said to him: "On your life! If you are privileged to eat of them, let me know" In the course of time the trees produced figs. He said: "Now it is time to let the king know." What did he do? He filled a basket with figs and went and stood at the gate of the palace. He was asked: "What is your business here?" He answered: "I want to come before the king." When he came in the latter asked him: "What is your business?" He answered him: "I am the old man whom you passed by as I was digging trenches to plant shoots of fig-trees, and you said to me: 'If you are privileged to eat of them, let me know.' See, I have been so privileged and have eaten of them, and these figs are some of the fruit." Thereupon Hadrian exclaimed: "I command that a chair of gold be set down and that he sit upon it." He further said: "I command that you empty this basket of his and fill it with denarii." His servants said to him: "Will you show all this honour to that old Jew?" He answered them: "His Creator honours him, and shall not I honour him too?"

Doubtlessly this text fits perfectly in the vital context of the *midrash*, *Vayygra' Rabbah*, where Judaism and Christianity are harshly competing on the landscape of the Constantinian empire⁶⁸. All the elements in the story ought to be interpreted in this perspective: the old man who stands for the people of Israel, always serving God and waiting for a reward that only the unbelievers can deem impossible, and the figs that stand for a clear eschatological reward for the faithful servants. It is worth noting that there appears to be a kind of paradoxical reversal that could probably sound unexpected. Indeed, the reward to Israel's faithfulness is given by the emperor himself. It is Hadrian himself who overcomes the hostility of his anti-Jewish collaborators and lets the old man sit on the golden throne. As stated above, this narrative fits perfectly into the theology of history developed in Fourth century *midrashim*: the succession of powers, which oppress Israel, would climax with Rome, but eventually even this empire will be compelled to leave its place to the people of Israel⁶⁹. However, in such a picture, a little unexpected particular still stands out: it is quite odd that the sanction of Israel's final vindication comes from the most wicked emperor, Hadrian.

The problematic knot attached to Hadrian's figure is far more difficult to solve than those of other Roman characters appearing on the stage of Rabbinic

68 See the balanced assessment by VISOTZKY 2003, 154–172.

69 See on this theme FELDMAN 2000.

literature. It seems that a passage taken from *Bereshit Rabbah* (64, 10)⁷⁰, the twin *midrash* of *Vayyqra' Rabbah*, can confirm this observation:

In the days of R. Joshua b. Hananiah the [Roman] State ordered the Temple to be rebuilt. Pappus and Lulianus set tables from Acco as far as Antioch and provided those who came up from the Exile [i.e. Babylon] with all their needs. Thereupon Samaritans went and warned [the Emperor]: "Be it known now unto the king, that, if this rebellious city be built and the wall finished, they will not pay tribute (*mindah*), impost (*belo*) or toll (*halak*)". *Mindah* is land tax; *belo* is poll-tax; *halak* is tax on crops. "Yet what can I do," said he, "seeing that I have already given the order?" "Send a command to them that they must change its site or add five cubits to it or lessen it by five cubits, and then they will withdraw from it of their own accord." Now the Community [of Israel] was assembled in the plain of Beth Rimmon; when the [royal] dispatches arrived, they burst out weeping, and wanted to revolt against the [Roman] power. Thereupon they [the Sages] decided: "Let a wise man go and pacify the congregation. Then let R. Joshua b. Hananiah go, as he is a scholar of Scripture." So he went and harangued them: "A wild lion killed [an animal], and a bone stuck in his throat. Thereupon he proclaimed: 'I will reward anyone who removes it.' An Egyptian heron, which has a long beak, came and pulled it out and demanded his reward. 'Go,' he replied, 'you will be able to boast that you entered the lion's mouth in peace and came out in peace.' So, let us be satisfied that we entered into dealings with this people in peace and have emerged in peace."

Since Graetz's seminal studies, this text has been considered the strongest proof about Hadrian's intention to reconstruct the Jerusalem Temple. The foundation of this reasoning is offered by the presence of Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, who supposedly lived in the first half of the Second century and is frequently depicted (sometimes in this very same *midrash*, *Bereshit Rabbah*) while discussing with the emperor Hadrian. As observed above, this passage cannot be trusted unconditionally, since it is very clear that it was conceived in the Fourth century, when the collection at issue was formed. Nevertheless, putting aside the narrative *cliché* of the Samaritan intromission that ruins all the diplomatic work, it must be noted that the passage seems to contain some historical information: there appears a Roman attitude towards reconciliation with Israel's religious practice and, on the other hand, a fundamental distrustfulness in the Israelites. An apt contextualization is easily found in the Fourth century with reference to Julian's project to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple, since this later proposal is far better witnessed than Hadrian's⁷¹. Anyway, a question remains still unresolved: why has Hadrian been chosen to represent the Roman sovereign who intends to reconstruct the Temple? Even though we have here an identification with Julian, this narrative choice seems to strengthen the information derived from the *Epistle of Barnabas*.

70 The text in THEODOR-ALBECK 1965.

71 A convenient summary on the sources about this attempt can be read in LEVENSON 2004.

The ambiguity in the relationship between Hadrian and the Temple is even more evident if the treatment of other imperial figures is examined. An apt starting point is offered by Titus, whose importance in the history of Israel is surely undeniable. Vespasian's successor is the main character in many Rabbinic stories, but the majority of them shows clear legendary features, as in the narrative of his death (again in *bGit* 56b-57a) which is brought about, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, by a fly. However, Titus is connected to the Temple also in two relatively older texts that are comprised in the two redactions of the *Abot deRabbi Nathan*⁷². The text appended to the version B has many parallels in the *Babylonian Talmud* as well as in other *midrashim* and depicts the emperor as a classic *hybris* character: he enters the Temple to commit the most blasphemous acts (these are paradoxically emphasized in later redactions up to the point that Titus, after having unrolled a *Torah* scroll on the altar, has sexual relations with two prostitutes in that very place) and to defy the power of Israel's God. It is clear that, after the tragic events of 70 CE, this text written in the Third century has already imposed on Titus the image of the disrespectful and humiliating domination of Rome on the people of Israel⁷³. The other version of this narrative, inserted in the first chapter of the redaction A, shows a different and most interesting stance: here, Titus is again depicted while entering the Temple, but this time he goes to the altar and hits it shouting "Wolf, wolf!". This slander, a Greek loanword in the Aramaic writing, is again directed against Israel's God, who is implicitly accused of having devoured Temple's offerings without being able to protect his people facing the Roman attack. The narrative seems to be particularly interesting inasmuch as Titus is not represented in a generic and typified anti-Jewish attitude, but he appears as a contesting or reforming figure in the wake of some Old Testament prophetic passages. It cannot be by chance that the nearest parallel (*tSuk* 4, 28) attributes this same act to a different character, a woman, apostate and married to a Gentile, of the priestly *mšmn* ("watch") of Bilgah (on the contrary the earliest witness, *mSuk* 4, 8, has significantly deleted the story, leaving just a very brief reference). By examining these contexts, it is not difficult to identify in Titus' narrative the probable original version of the story. The *Mishnah* traditions had every reason to delete such an anti-Temple text, since this collection, between the end of the second and the beginning of the Third century, staged a nearly obsessive attempt to revive, on an entirely theoretical level, the principles and the practices of the Temple cult. We ought still to judge whether such a tradition could have originated in the Third century, when the *Abot deRabbi Nathan* were collected – linking the text with the scanty information we possess on the Flavian policy in the Land of Israel would probably lead to dangerous speculations. However, an

72 For the text, see SCHECHTER 1887.

73 See how this strand of tradition is interpreted by SCHREMER 2008, 188–189.

anti-Temple stance in Third century Rabbinic Judaism could be a reasonable possibility and even more so, if we accept the hypothesis that the reconstruction of the Temple by the Romans could have played a role in the war of 132–136.

This hypothesis could be strengthened through the analysis of another set of documents where the main character is one of Hadrian's successors who receives the name of "Antoninus"⁷⁴. This emperor is often depicted in relation to or in discussion with Judah I, who was the first *nasi'* in the traditional dynasty of Israel's patriarchs. Since Judah lived between the end of the second and the beginning of the Third century it is quite difficult to identify "Antoninus" with Antoninus Pius. Scholars have repeatedly debated this issue and the most probable identification suggested has been with one of the Severan emperors, although the majority opinion indicates Caracalla, since there are many sources referring to his favourable attitude towards Judaism. The many narratives depicting Judah in connection to Antoninus can easily be dated to the Third century, since the Rabbinic materials stemming from the following period never mention Judah's successors in the patriarchate, even though they are widely known through pagan and Christian contemporary sources⁷⁵. These narratives represent the patriarch as a client of the emperor and often their economic relationships are relatively well detailed. This cannot be judged an entirely anachronistic picture, since the most trustful reconstructions of the Palestinian context in the Third century have convincingly demonstrated that Judah had no formalized administrative role, but that probably he enjoyed particular influence through special connections to the Roman government⁷⁶.

Of course the perspective appears to be more complicated if the "archetypes" of the two characters are taken into consideration: Antoninus embodies the imperial policy after Hadrian's reign, while Judah represents the Rabbinic generation who follows the Bar Kokbha revolt and lives in a more positive *Zeitgeist* whose summit is the redaction of the first halakic collection. A significant relationship emerges in two texts from the *Jerusalem Talmud* (*yMeg* 1, 12 and *ySanh* 10, 6). Antoninus is ready to perform many beneficial acts in favour of the people of Israel – most important, for the present topic, is his promise to build an altar. Despite some oppositions Judah grants Antoninus this privilege and therefore the narrative can easily be fitted in the context of the Third century imperial evergetism that focused mainly on the building of

74 This character is usually identified not with Antoninus Pius, but with Caracalla: anyway, since we are examining these narrative figures only as "types" embodying a political attitude towards the people of Israel, these identifications will not change the fundamental reasoning.

75 This is the case, for instance, of the many polemical writings in which the Davidic descent is advocated by Christian theologians of the end of the Fourth century against the claim of Israel's patriarchal dynasty.

76 See the picture depicted in the recent contributions of HEZSER 1997 and JACOBS 1995.

synagogues. However, this particular can be interpreted also as the realization of the agreement between Empire and Judaism that Hadrian sought through the rebuilding of the Temple. Nevertheless, the conclusion of these narratives is the most striking feature: Antoninus asks to be circumcised in order to enter the world to come. As for Nero's case cited above, it is clear that this information has no historical value, but we ought to note Judah's answer: the patriarch affirms that, even though Antoninus will not be circumcised, this will not prevent him from entering the world to come. This statement is followed by a lively halakic debate that ends with a strong downgrading of the importance of the circumcision⁷⁷. It is worth noting also that this feature could fit easily in the above sketched hypothesis on Hadrian's religious policy. It would be easy to interpret the attitude of the generation embodied by Judah as an agreement with Hadrian's religious-political project after the dramatic experience of the Bar Kokhba revolt.

7. Conclusion

Notwithstanding the problematic character of the sources informing on Hadrian's attitude towards Israel, a careful analysis of the extant documentation has enabled us to sketch a description of the emperor's religious policy. On the one hand Hadrian tried to bind Israel to Rome through benefactions, such as the rebuilding of the Temple and the conferral of the status of colony on Jerusalem, while, on the other hand, he wanted to erase the major sign of the Israelite distinction, which was identified in antiquity with the practice of circumcision. Israel's response to the imperial move involved at least two opposing positions: some accepted the offer as a good way to obtain integration in the Greco-Roman world, while others fought back fiercely not only against the Roman authority, but also particularly against the negotiation propounded by their fellow Israelites. From such a tragic clash the religious life of Israel was radically changed and the very notion of "religion" was shaped in ways that would go on to influence the entire western world until modern times.

77 See on the theme the analysis in COHEN 1998.

The pseudo-Hadrianic Epistle in the *Historia Augusta* and Hadrian's religious policy

ALESSANDRO GALIMBERTI

1. Status quaestionis

In order to illustrate and better understand Hadrian's religious policy and to assess his fortune in the light of what emerged in this volume, it is useful to consider a much discussed document, namely the so-called pseudo-Hadrianic epistle to his brother-in law Servianus, which is reported in *HA QT* 8¹.

Flavius Vopiscus, the alleged author of the biography, speaking of the prohibition on entering Egypt that Aurelian applied to Saturninus in 270 after appointing him head of the Eastern border, denigrates the Egyptians, Christians and Samaritans "and others who always show great spirit of independence with their dissatisfaction with the present times" (7, 5), and uses in support of this claim the epistle allegedly by Hadrian which was found in the books of his freedman Phlegon of Tralles "from which the kind of life lead by the Egyptians is revealed" (7, 6).

1 *Hadriani epistolam promam ex libris Flegontis liberti eius proditam, ex qua penitus Aegyptiorum vita detegitur. Hadrianus Augustus Serviano consuli salutem. Aegyptum, quam mihi laudabas, Serviane carissime, totam didici levem, pendulam et ad omnia famae momenta volitantem. [2] Illic qui Serapem colunt, Christiani sunt et devoti sunt Serapi, qui se Christi episcopus dicunt, [3] nemo illic archisynagogus Iudaeorum, nemo Samarites, nemo Christianorum presbyter non mathematicus, non haruspex, non aliptes. [4] Ipse ille patriarcha cum Aegyptum venerit, ab aliis Serapidem adorare, ab aliis cogitur Christum. [5] Genus hominum seditiosissimum, iniuriosissimum, civitas opulenta, dives, fecunda, in qua nemo vivat otiosus. [6] Alii vitrum conflant, aliis charta conficitur, omnes certe <petitores> [linifiones] videntur; et habent podagrosi, quod agant, habent praecisi, quod agant, habent caeci, quod faciant, ne chiragrici quidem apud eos otiosi vivunt. [7] Unus illis deus nummus est. Hunc Christiani, hunc Iudaei, hunc omnes venerantur et gentes. Et utinam melius esset morata civitas, digna profecto, quae pro sui feconditate, quae pro sui magnitudine totius Aegyptii teneat principatum. [8] Huic ego cuncta concessi, vetera privilegia reddidi, nova sic addidi ut praesenti gratias agerent. Denique ut primum inde discessi, et in filium meum Verum multa dixerunt, et de Antinoo quae dixerint, comperisse te credo. [9] Nihil illis opto, nisi ut suis pullis alantur, quos quem ad modum fecundant, pudet dicere.*

[10] *Calices tibi alassontes versicoloris transmissi, quos mihi sacerdos templi obtulit, tibi et sorori meae specialiter dedicatos, quos tu velim festis diebus convivii adhibeas. Caveas tamen, ne his Africanus noster indulgenter utatur.*

The epistle says that: in Alexandria the worshippers of Serapis are Christians, with Bishops among them (§ 2); the astrologers, the soothsayers and the *aliptes*, including numerous Jewish *archisynagogoi*, Samaritans and Christian priests and even the revered Patriarch adore both Serapis and Christ; Christians, Jews and “other people” have money as their only god (§ 7); the Egyptians are ungrateful because, as the emperor himself complains, they have denigrated his son and Antinous (§ 8). The letter ends with a reference to glasses that Hadrian sent to Servianus, “dedicated especially to you and my sister”, and the recommendation that “our Africanus do not use them immoderately”.

The letter is considered to be a forgery due to the following inaccuracies²:

- a) The epistle is vitiated by a manifest anachronism: Hadrian wrote to *Serviano consuli* in 130, the date of the journey to Egypt, but Servianus was only consul under Hadrian in 134.
- b) In 130 Pauline died and yet in the epistle she is alive.
- c) L. Ceionius Commodus was only adopted by Hadrian in 136.
- d) L. Ceionius Commodus is referred to in the letter by the *cognomen* of Verus, a name he never took.
- e) The reference in 7, 6 (*Hadriani epistulam promam ex libris eius Flegontis liberti eius proditam*) is dubious because it refers to *Hadr.* 16, 1 (*nam et Phlegontis libri Hadriani esse dicuntur*), that is, a work of which there is no trace in the production of Phlegon (*FGrHist* 257).
- f) The generalised description of the Egyptians is full of *topoi*, which goes back to Juvenal (III 76) and Ammianus (especially the fifteenth book).³

Accordingly, Wolfgang Schmid⁴ has identified the author as a pagan who wrote under the impression of the destruction of the Serapeum of Alexandria in 391; the Patriarch alluded to in 8, 4 (*ipse ille patriarca*) is Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria⁵; the purpose of the epistle is to discredit the Alexandrian church, and the mention of the Samaritans in proximity to the Jews and Christians is found in the *Codex Theodosianus* (13, 5, 18) that Vopiscus assumed his readers would know.

Ronald Syme⁶ identifies *ille patriarca* with the Jewish patriarch Gamaliel IV, a contemporary of Theodosius, who is mentioned by Jerome in a letter (*Ep.* 57, 3) of 395/396; according to Ammianus (15, 3) the “Africanus” at the end of the epistle can be identified with a certain Africanus (not otherwise known),

2 Summarised by PASCHOUD 2001, 245–246, with extensive bibliography. See also briefly FÜNDLING 2006, 1166–1168.

3 See especially SCHWARTZ 1976, 262; SCHWARTZ 1992, 29–34; BALDINI 1995, 40 and note 15 with bibliography.

4 SCHMID 1966, 153–184.

5 Hypothesis in GEFFCKEN 1920, 286–289.

6 SYME 1971, 17–29, followed by PASCHOUD 2001, 252–253.

governor of Lower Pannonia, who in 355 was victim of his excessive freedom of speech; the purpose of the epistle is to discredit the Egyptian religion in general, a religion which no one could seriously be interested in because of the *furor* and *levitas* of the Egyptians.

Richard Klein⁷, for whom the letter is certainly a fake, highlights the fact that the text is very stratified and *QT* 8 refers to different situations, some distant in time and others contemporaneous with the author of *HA* (the destruction of the Temple of Serapis, anti-Arian fights in Alexandria, the death of Athanasius and events immediately following).

Finally Baldini⁸ considers the epistle to be an echo of a literary controversy between the author of *HA* and some Jeromian circles.

2. Traces of Hadrian's religious policy in *HA QT* 8

Although I believe that the letter is indeed a fake, nevertheless it seems to me that it provides some clues which merit a degree of belief with relation to Hadrian's religious policy⁹. Therefore, I believe that in the first place it is necessary to isolate these clues.

If Vopiscus claims (7, 6) to have read the epistle in the works of Phlegon (*ex libris Phlegontis*)¹⁰, among which was the *Autobiography* of Hadrian (*Hadr.* 16, 1: *Famae celebris Hadrianus tam cupidus fuit ut libros vitae suae scriptos a se libertis suis litteratis dederit, iubens ut eos suis nominibus publicarent. Nam et Phlegontis libri Hadriani esse dicuntur*), there is no reason to suspect this claim: indeed it is likely that the letter was part of Hadrian's *Autobiography*, certainly known to the author of the *Vita Hadriani* (see 1, 1; 3, 3; 3, 5; 7, 2)¹¹. The

7 KLEIN 1994, 95–115.

8 BALDINI 1995, 35–56. Among the “minor” hypotheses SCHWARTZ 1976, 261–265; 1987, 203–206 suggests a parallel between *QT* 8 and the *peregrinatio Aetherae* (text of Constantinian age) based on limited, and in my opinion not very significant, linguistic evidences.

9 ZECCHINI 2002, 29–36 makes some interesting comments on the reliability of some reports of Proculus in *QT* 12–13. On the romance features of *QT* in general see CHASTAGNOL 1970, 69–98; POIGNAULT 2001, 251–268. For KHULMANN 2002, 169 “Dieses unechte Dokument [scil. the epistle] gibt keinen Aufschluss über religiöse Einstellungen Hadrians”; see also FÜNDLING 2006, 1166–1168.

10 The alleged counterfeiter would be in an uncomfortable position by citing the work of Phlegon that is its source: if it was false he would have had every interest in ignoring it. On this matter see FÜNDLING 2006, 773–774. BIRLEY 1997, 240 hypothesises that Phlegon accompanied Hadrian during his trip in Egypt in 130/131.

11 The composition of the *Autobiography* could date to after the first of January 138, the day of the death of L. Aelius Caesar, who had been adopted by Hadrian as his successor in 136, as illustrated by the speech given by Dio Cassius (69, 20, 2–5) in which Hadrian

Autobiography, however, probably included the imperial correspondence¹². We must not forget that Phlegon was an author quoted by Christian writers (Origen) for mentioning, in his *Olympic Games* (*FGrHist* 257 F16 d-e), the prophecies concerning the Passion of Jesus, and thus, as noted by Santo Mazzarino¹³, would be an easy target for the anti-Christian feelings of the author of *HA*.

That L. Ceionius Commodus is wrongly designated with the name Verus is not surprising, because this is also the way he is named in the brief biography dedicated to him¹⁴ and in the the *Life of Antoninus Pius* and in the *Life of Lucius Verus*: all these biographies are part of a group which is considered – although one must take this with the necessary caution – to be more reliable in historical terms. Verus could simply be a nickname that Hadrian gave his adopted son in a confidential text like a private letter, taking into account the fact that, it is certain that Hadrian called Mark *Verissimus*, perhaps in opposition to his foster-brother Verus¹⁵.

The fact that *QT* 8, 10 says that Pauline, Hadrian's sister, died in 134 is not, in my opinion, decisive for at least two reasons: the commonly accepted date of Pauline's death (130) is the result of a hypothesis based on Dio 69, 11, 4 ("For this thing [the excessive honours paid to the death of Antinous] therefore, Hadrian was mocked, and also because when Pauline, his sister, died he was in no hurry to make some honours to her") in which it is, however, not certain that Pauline's death has taken place in the same year (130) as that of Antinous, neither does the expression used in the epistle (§ 10: *calices tibi allasontes versicoloris transmissi, quos mihi sacerdos templi obtulit, tibi et sorori meae specialiter dedicatos*) indicate clearly whether in 130 Pauline was alive or dead.

turned to Antoninus Pius and which derived probably from Hadrian's *Autobiography* which Dio not only used in book 69 (1, 6; 11, 2), but also elsewhere (65, 3, 3; 66, 17, 1). See LEWIS 1993, 697–702.

- 12 A letter from Hadrian to Antoninus Pius, a copy of which is preserved in papyrus, was attributed by BOLLANSÉE 1994, 279–302 to Hadrian's *Autobiography*. This confirms that the Emperor was using personal documents and especially letters in his *Autobiography*.
- 13 MAZZARINO 1966, 231.
- 14 See CALLU 1991, 105 (*Verus*: *Ael.* 4, 1 e 3; 5, 6; 6, 7; 7, 2; *Verus Caesar*: *Ael.* 2, 1; 6, 6; 7,4; *Verus* 1, 6; *Hadr.* 23, 11; 24, 1. *Aelius Verus*: *Ael.* 1, 2; 3, 1; 7, 1; *Anton. Pius* 4, 1; 5.), who explains (106): "Aelius a été rangé parmi les Veri à cause de son enfant. A l'opposé du normal, l'effet a été rétroactif, tellement, à cause de leur ressemblance, ce qui valait pour le descendant était perçu comme applicable à l'ascendant". MAZZARINO 1966, 231–232 also believes that the letter is a fake because L. Aelius Caesar was never called Verus. It is worth quoting an interesting observation from the same Mazzarino about Egyptian Christianity (231, to which we will return below): "Che nella lettera si trovano continue menzioni del cristianesimo egizio, non sarebbe in sé e per sé un forte argomento contro l'autenticità".
- 15 *AE* 1940, 62; Dio 69, 21, 2; *HA M. Ant.* 4, 1.

The “Africanus” (8, 1), I think, is probably to be identified as T. Sestius Africanus, consul of 112 with Trajan, also known by Pliny the Younger who remembers him in a letter (*Ep.* VII 6, 11) as a grandson of the famous Julius Africanus (known to Quintilian *Inst.* X 1, 118, XII 10, 11), or as the jurist Sextus Caecilius Africanus mentioned by Gellius (*NA* 20, 1), rather than with the otherwise unknown legate of Lower Pannonia.

The Christians appear twelve times in the *HA* and eight times beside the Jews¹⁶; the Samaritans also appear beside both Christians and Jews in *Hel.* 3, 5 ([Elagabalus] *dicebat praeterea Iudaeorum et Samaritanorum religiones et Christianam devotionem illuc transferendam* [scil. in the temple of Elagabalus on the Palatine (see § 4)], *ut omnium culturarum secretum Heliogabali sacerdotium teneret*). I do not think that either here or elsewhere we should assume any knowledge of the *Codex Theodosianus* by the author of the epistle, as Christians, Jews and Samaritans also appear elsewhere in the *HA*.

The alleged reminiscences of Egypt in Juvenal and Ammianus are not decisive. Certainly, Vopiscus could use these authors¹⁷ (Juvenal was also a contemporary of Hadrian!) in order to “colour” the text of Hadrian's letter: one example may be the conflicting opinions on the Egyptians, (*QT* 8, 6 and 8, 7). It is worth noting that in the fifteenth *Satire* Juvenal speaks of a violent conflict which occurred in 127 between the communities of Tentyra and Ombus for religious reasons (they worshipped two different gods) which resulted in an episode of cannibalism, saying: “Egypt certainly is a wild land” (vv. 44–45: *horrida sane Aegyptus*). Therefore it is probable that during his journey in Egypt Hadrian encountered a turbulent religious situation, as is also suggested by the revolt that broke out, probably after 123, with the discovery of a statue of the god Apis (Dio 69, 8, 1; *HA Hadr.* 12, 1). Dio says that the riot was quelled only by a letter from Hadrian, who criticised the Alexandrians (ὅτι Ἀλεξανδρέων στασιασάντων οὐκ ἄλλως ἐπαύσαντο, ἕως οὗ ἐπιστολὴν Ἀδριανοῦ ἐδέξαντο ἐπιτιμῶσαν αὐτοῖς). Now, if we reject the hypothesis that the letter mentioned by Dio¹⁸ is to be identified with the text of *QT* 8 (in fact, I believe that the text

16 DESSAU 1921, 124–128; SYME 1971a, 65–75; LIEBMAN-FRANKFORT 1974, 579–607; STERTZ 1977, 694, 708–710; GOLAN 1988, 318–339.

17 See e.g. SCHWARTZ 1992, 31 which refers to Juv. 3, 76 (*grammaticus, rhetor geometres pictor aliptes / augur schoenobates medicus magus, omnia novit / Graeculus esuriens*) to affirm that “en *QT* 8, 2, le *Graeculus* est remplacé par des dignitaires des trois cultes, non païens”. In my opinion, *Graeculus* is an allusion to Hadrian, who had been given this nickname as a young man (see *Hadr.* 1, 5).

18 Thus SCHWARTZ 1996, 262–263 who rejects the hypothesis on the grounds that the dedicatee of the epistle is Servianus, while the Alexandrians are in Dio. The claim is fragile in my opinion because the text is only an *excerptum Vaticanum* extremely brief, and it cannot be ruled out that here also Dio has as his source Hadrian's *Autobiography* that, as we have said, probably contains some stories about the imperial correspondence that Dio knew.

alludes to one of the frequent *στάσεις* between Greek and Jews which regularly took place in Alexandria)¹⁹ it is hard to deny that mentions of this situation are also found in our letter that – if it did not derive its information solely from Juvenal – comes fairly close to describing the actual situation that Hadrian found in Egypt. Moreover, we can find traces of very hostile feelings toward the Egyptians, which are similar to those found in *QT* 8, in the *Apology* that Aristides presented to Hadrian at Athens²⁰.

As for the gossip about Antinous which Hadrian complains about in the letter (§ 8), suffice to say that Dio, in the context of Hadrian's journey in Egypt (69, 11, 4), says that “Hadrian was mocked” because of what his actions after the death of his favourite. It is known that the tradition hostile to Hadrian, which reflected the point of view of the traditionalists, was not gentle with Hadrian over the story of Antinous.

The fact that in the epistle the worshippers of Serapis (§ 2) and the Samaritans (§ 3) appear alongside Christians and Jews can be explained also by looking at a different context than that of the fourth century. As regards the worshippers of Serapis, one should remember that the news could be understood in light of the policy of promoting the Egyptian cults that was already in place under Vespasian and was continued by Hadrian²¹. The emissions of 130 and 131 broadcasting the *adventus Hadriani* in Egypt repeatedly show the emperor (and his wife Sabina) next to Serapis, and Isis (*BMC* III 339, 344, 487, 507); one coin from 132–3 depicts Serapis saluting the Emperor within the columns of the temple of God, holding a sceptre in his left, while Hadrian with his right hand touches a temple with the inscription *Hadrianon*²². It is likely that during his journey in Egypt Hadrian visited the Temple of Serapis at Memphis where the Apis Bull was ritually buried, and that this discovery, as has been mentioned, had given rise to a riot among the Egyptians²³. Significant contact between Christians and worshippers of Serapis were also noted during the Second century AD²⁴.

19 As the confrontation with Syncellus could reveal (348: Ἀδριανός Ἰουδαίους κατὰ Ἀλεξανδρέων στασιάζοντας ἐκόλασεν) on which now see FIRPO 2005, 114–115; see also PUCCI 1981, 121–132.

20 See 12, 1, where the Egyptians are described as “the most evil and stupid of men”, on which see Rizzi in this volume.

21 For CRACCO RUGGINI 1981, 200 Hadrian's epistle “appare più che altro parte di una tradizione (probabilmente al fondo veritiera, e in ogni caso assai precoce) che volle Adriano preoccupato della purezza del culto serapico, inquinato da commistioni allotrie, perfino giudaiche e cristiane”.

22 BEAUJEAU 1955, 193; BIRLEY 1997, 244–245. BURKHALTER 1990, 206–207, analyses documents proving the existence of an archive set up by Hadrian at Alexandria called *Hadrianon/Hadrianeion*.

23 *Ibidem*.

24 See the essay by Capponi in this volume.

As for the Samaritans²⁵, it is known that ancient hostilities, which dated to the time of the return from exile and the subsequent reconstruction of the Second Temple by Ezra and Nehemiah, which led to the founding of an “alternative” temple to that of Jerusalem on Mount Gerizim [Ios. *AJ* 11, 302–347], kept them separate from the Jews,— a separation which lasted until the time of Alexander the Great (who destroyed Samaria) and, after the parenthesis of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (who installed the worship of Zeus on the Mount), to the time of John Hyrcanus (who destroyed the temple in 128 [*AJ* 13, 254–258, 280–281]). Still, in AD 37 Pilate was deposed by Tiberius for having brutally dispersed the crowd of Samaritans, who had gathered to worship on Gerizim (*AJ* 18, 85–89); at the time of Claudius, the Samaritans were in conflict with the Jews in Palestine (*AJ* 20, 131–136) and, during the great anti-Roman revolt of 67, around 11,000 Samaritans were killed by Petilius Cerialis (*BJ* 3, 307–315).

Samaritans' presence in Egypt²⁶ alongside the Jews was not viewed as a problem after, first with Alexander (*AJ* 11, 345) and then at the time of the conquest of Palestine by Ptolemy Soter, many “of the hilly region of Judea, from places nearby in Jerusalem, Samaria and those of Gerizim” (*AJ* 12, 7) had emigrated to Egypt, in part deported by the Lagid king, in part “attracted by the excellence of the country and by the liberality of Ptolemy” (*AJ* 12, 9). In Alexandria they had clashed with the Alexandrian Jews at the time of Ptolemy Philometor (*AJ* 13, 74–79) over the question of whether primacy was to be given to the Temple of Jerusalem (as Ptolemy eventually decided) or to that on Gerizim.

The relationship between Hadrian and the Samaritans was studied by Beaujeau²⁷ who emphasised the testimony of a very late text, the *Samaritan Chronicles*²⁸, whose oldest manuscripts date to the thirteenth century (the so-called Adler chronicle)²⁹, that: “the king Hadrian won in Sichem and made good to the Samaritan woman: he built a great temple at Mount Gerizim and called it the Temple of Saphis”. This witness has been juxtaposed to some bronze issues of Antoninus Pius (*BMC Palaest.* 48) found at *Flavia Neapolis*, near the Gerizim, which depict a temple in a high position. Although it remains difficult to identify Saphis (it is thought to be *Zeus Xenios* or *Hellenios* or *Hypsistos* or Serapis) and, although there is no evidence of the Samaritans in

25 For PASCHOUD 2001, 241 “Les Samaritains peuvent avoir éveillé l’attention de l’auteur de l’*HA* pour une raison qui nous échappe totalement”.

26 MONTEVECCHI 1996, 81–92.

27 BEAUJEAU 1955, 264. The translation that follows is taken from the French.

28 BEAUJEAU 1955, 262–267.

29 The *Samaritan Chronicles* is made up of four texts: the *Tolidah*, the *Samaritan Book of Joshua*, the *Annals of Abu'l-Fath*, the *Adler Chronicle*. See MOR 1989, 19–31; STENHOUSE 1989, 218–265.

Egypt at the time of Hadrian, this is nonetheless evidence of a relationship between Hadrian and the Samaritans.

It should be remembered that Hadrian's visit to Egypt in 130 also had an appendix in Judea, therefore one could hypothesise that Hadrian had relationships with the Samaritans, just as with the Jews, before the revolt. Despite the fact that the *Chronicles* state that Hadrian "did good" in destroying Sichem and building a temple to a deity other than Yahweh, indeed it is difficult to believe that what Hadrian did was welcomed by all Samaritans. Perhaps it is better to think that, since the relationships between the Rabbis and Hadrian before the revolt are described in idyllic terms, the tradition available to us reflects the views of both Samaritans and Jews which were favourable to the Romans. After all, that the Samaritans were internally divided is confirmed by the fact that the temple built by Hadrian was set alight shortly after his departure resulting in a massacre³⁰.

3. Conclusions

In the light of these considerations it seems to me that the epistle of *QT* 8 bears witness to Hadrian's religious policy in Egypt, albeit in a confused way. So why did the author of the *HIA* feel the need to retrieve a document relating to Hadrian's journey in Egypt?

Part of the answer to this question is provided by our author where (7, 2–4)³¹ he maintains his hostility to the Egyptians and thus justifies the insertion of the epistle in his *dossier* in order to support the validity of his thesis. But Vopiscus says nothing more, and therefore it is legitimate to ask why he chose Hadrian.

30 Both MOR 1989, 19–31 and HALL 1989, 50–52 consider that, beyond the presence of legends, the texts of the chronicles connected with the construction of Hadrian's temple on Gerizim are reliable.

31 *Saturninus oriundus fuit Gallus, ex gente hominum inquietissima et avida semper vel faciendi principis vel imperii. Huic inter ceteros duces, quod vere summus vir esset, certe videretur, Aurelianus limitis orientalis ducatum, dedit sapienter praecipiens, ne umquam Aegyptum videret. Cogitabat enim, quantum videmus, vir prudentissimus Gallorum naturam et verebatur, ne, si praeturbidam civitatem vidisset, quo eum naturam ducebat, eo societate quoque hominum duceretur. Sunt enim Aegyptii, ut satis nosti, vani, ventosi, furibundi, iactantes, iniuriosi atque adeo varii, liberi, novarum rerum usque ad cantilenas publicas cupientes, versificatores, epigrammatarii, mathematici, haruspices, medici. Nam <in> eis Christiani, Samaritae et quibus praesentia semper tempora cum enormi libertate displiceant. Ac ne quis mihi Aegyptiorum irascatur et meum esse credat, quod in litteras rettuli.*

Recently François Paschoud³² has claimed it was natural that Vopiscus read the *Vita Hadriani* and thought about Hadrian's journey to Egypt of 130 in the context of the ban imposed by Aurelian on Saturninus. However, this answer, adhering to the placement of the text in *HA*, needs to be integrated not only with the considerations expressed so far regarding the historical circumstances of Hadrian's reign, which the epistle itself refers to, but also with the guidance laid down by Hadrian regarding his religious policy.

The fact that in the epistle, along with Samaritans and Jews, the Christians appear in an unfavourable light (see above 8, 2 and 7) must be attributed, I think, to the anti-Christian feelings of the author of the *HA*. Yet Christianity, like Judaism and the cult of Serapis, is certainly among the religions with which Hadrian established a relationship, although in the epistle he deplores the severe situation in Egypt. We have no information on the relationship between Hadrian and the Christians of Egypt, but we know that the story of Antinous, which finds its own place in Egypt, had not received the acclaim of Christian circles³³.

On the relationship between Hadrian and Egypt, reference to the emperor's journey to Egypt in 130 is not enough, in my opinion. Egypt is in fact linked to some of the religious forms that Hadrian promoted, albeit in tempered form, in Rome³⁴, as well as to the name of Antinous and Antinoopolis³⁵.

Each of the four sides of the Pincius obelisk to the memory of Antinous is adorned with hieroglyphic inscriptions in Hellenised style and carved with scenes that celebrate the apotheosis of Antinous, placed next to Hadrian, who is himself besides Harachte-Ra, the Egyptian sun god. According to the *HA*³⁶, Hadrian had to transfer the Colossus of Nero (consecrated to the Sun) to a position lower than its original one to make room for the Temple of Venus and Rome and, at the same time, planned to build a similar statue in honour of the Moon. It is worth recalling Vespasian's Egyptian interest (in Serapis, but also in

32 PASCHOUD 2001, 242.

33 See e.g. Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 4 (= 110 Butterworth); Tert. *Ad Nat.* 2, 10–11; Prudent. *Contra Symm.* 1, 271–277. For a collection of Christian sources on Antinous cf. GUYOT 1981, 250–254; NADIG 2000, 245–256.

34 See GALIMBERTI 2007, 144–146.

35 At Antinoopolis the tribe *Paulinios* includes the *demos Isidios*; during his trip to Egypt Pancrates, the prophet of Heliopolis (home of the Phoenix), was met by Hadrian.

36 *Hadr.* 19, 12–13: *Transtulit et colossum stantem atque suspensum per Decrianum architectum de eo loco, in quo nunc templum Urbis est, ingenti molimine, ita ut operi etiam elephantos viginti quattuor exhiberet. Et cum hoc simulacrum post Neronis vultum, cui antea dicatum fuerat, soli consecrasset, aliud tale Apollodoro architecto auctore facere Lunae molitus est.*

the worship of the Sun and Moon)³⁷ – undoubtedly a significant precedent that Hadrian would have followed knowingly – taking particular account of the fact that Vespasian transformed the statue of Colossus, which was originally portrayed as Nero, into a statue of the Sun³⁸ before it was consecrated to the same deity and placed next to Hadrian's Temple of Venus and Rome. One of the most famous monuments of the Villa at Tibur is the Canopus,³⁹ and intellectuals of the age of Trajan and Hadrian such as Tacitus and Plutarch expressed interest in Egyptian cults: Juvenal, a contemporary of Hadrian, in the fifteenth Satire lashes out against the senselessness of the Egyptian cults.

I therefore believe that the epistle of *QT* 8 allows us to identify some of Hadrian's religious policies: his relationship with Judaism (even in its Samaritan form), Christianity and Egyptian cults. The epistle is therefore a *pastiche* packaged by Vopiscus which retains the historic core of the text of Hadrian's letter while placing it in a context unrelated to the Second century and interpolating personal events of his time for polemical reasons. Finally, to Vopiscus, who was writing most probably between the late fourth and early decades of the fifth century, Hadrian was still interesting as the emperor whose religious policy had settled his accounts with Judaism, established a new course with Christianity and reviewed the relationship with the Egyptian cults.

37 Tac. *Hist.* 4, 81–84; in 76 on *aurei* of Vespasian (*BMC* II 48, 52, 53) appears *aeternitas* personified in his right hand holding a head *radiata* which represents the sun in his left hand and another head depicting the moon. Cf. BEAUJEAU 1955, 48, 147.

38 Suet. *Vesp.* 18, 1; Dio 66, 15, 1; Plin. *NH* 34, 45; cfr. LEVICK 1999, 128.

39 *Hadr.* 26, 5: *Tiburinam villam mire exaedificavit, ita ut in ea et provinciarum et locorum celeberrima nomina inscriberet, velut Lycium, Academicum, Prytanium, Canopum, Poecilen, Tempe vocaret.* GRENIER 1989, 925–1019, analysing the statuary decoration of the “Serapion” of the Canopus of Hadrian's Villa, has insisted on Hadrian's Egyptian programme. However, recent excavations of MARI 2002–2003, 145–186, 2003–2004, 263–314, raise the question of the origin of the statues of the so-called Temple of Serapis, and therefore of their original location.

Serapis, Boukoloi and Christians from Hadrian to Marcus Aurelius

LIVIA CAPPONI

1. Egyptian gods in the Diaspora Revolt

Any discussion of Hadrian's role in favouring religious pluralism cannot avoid surveying the situation in Egypt in the Second century AD. This chapter will take into consideration the role of Egyptian gods, in particular Serapis, in the religious life of Egypt from the end of the reign of Trajan to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and will explore the possible overlaps between the cult of Serapis and the rise of Christianity. The documents will be tested against the hypothesis that Hadrian's religious policy of pluralism gave the early Christian communities an opportunity to flourish.

The Diaspora Revolt (AD 116–17) had implications and repercussions that affected Egyptian religion. A rebellion in Judea was provoked by the dedication of a statue to Jupiter-Serapis by the *Legio III* of Lusius Quietus,¹ and the *Historia Augusta* talks about a Jewish revolt generated by the discovery of the body of the Apis Bull in Egypt.² Serapis or Osirapis, a fusion of Osiris and the Apis Bull, was essentially the sacred bull of Memphis after its death, a combination god which had existed in Egypt since Pharaonic times as a god of the underworld and a symbol of the annual resurrection of nature. Under the Ptolemies, Apis was assimilated by or associated with various Hellenistic deities – including Zeus, Helios, Dionysos, Hades and Asklepios – to form Serapis, a Hellenised god of the sun (Helios), fertility (Dionysos), the underworld and

1 The *vexillatio* of the *legio III Cyrenaica* dedicated a statue with the inscription *[I]ovi O(ptimo) M(aximo) Sarapidi pro salute et victoria* (CIL III 13587 = ILS 4393). The date is uncertain, as the statue could be of either Trajan or Hadrian. See FIRPO 2005, 107–116. According to a comment by Hippolytus Romanus (III century) to *Mt* 24,21, the legion of Quietus put a statue of Kore in the temple of Jerusalem. On the Diaspora Revolt see BEN ZEEV 2005.

2 *HA Hadr.* 12,1. FÜNDLING 2006, 599 thinks the episode took place at the time of Hadrian's trip to Gaul (somewhere between 121 and 125), and believes (in my view incorrectly) that neither the Jewish revolt nor the early part of Hadrian's reign can be linked to this passage. On a probable trip of Hadrian's to Egypt at the very beginning of his reign, see CAPPONI 2010.

healing (Asklepios and Hades), who eventually became being the most popular god in Egypt and the patron deity of the city of Alexandria.³

Egyptian documents lend further support to the view that the Jews attacked Egyptian religion during the Diaspora Revolt and destroyed many pagan temples, possibly including parts of the Alexandrian *Serapeum*.⁴ The iconoclastic attitude of the Jews against pagan images and temples explains why the documents describe them as ἀνόσιοι, ‘impious’. The author of *POxy* 4.705 stated that: ‘Our one hope and final expectation depended on the banding together of the villagers of the nome to fight against the impious Jews’, and a letter of the *epistrategos* of Apollonopolis-Heptacomia to the prefect Rammius Martialis attributes responsibility for the disasters in Egypt to the ‘impious Jews’.⁵ When the Jews lost in battle, the Greeks offered sacrifices to the gods⁶ and, when the revolt was suppressed, they instituted an annual memorial.⁷ Eudaimonis, the mother of the *strategos* of the Apollonopolite nome, wrote in a letter: ‘Be sure that I shall pay no attention to God until I get my son back safe’, as if the god in question was directly involved in the war.⁸

One may wonder what part the Egyptian Christians decided to take in the Diaspora Revolt. After the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem in 70 and the capture of Masada in 74 it was not a good idea to support the Jews, who had a bad reputation as rioters and anti-imperial rebels despite the apologetic efforts

3 See a description of Serapis in Macr. *Sat.* 1,20,13: *Eidem Aegypto adiacens civitas, quae conditorem Alexandrum Macedonem gloriatur, Sarapin atque Isin cultu paene attonitae venerationis observat. Omnem tamen illam venerationem soli se sub illius nomine testatur inpendere, vel dum calathum capitis eius infigunt, vel dum simulachro signum tricipitis animantis adiungunt quod exprimit medio eodemque maximo capite leonis effigiem: dextra parte caput canis exoritur, mansueta specie blandientis: pars vero laeva cervicis rapacis lupi capite finitur, easque formas animalium draco conectit volumine suo, capite redeunte d dei dexteram qua conpescitur monstrum* (‘In the city on the borders of Egypt which boasts Alexander of Macedon as its founder, Serapis and Isis are worshipped with a reverence that is almost fanatical. Evidence that the sun, under the name of Serapis, is the object of all this reverence is either the basket set on the head of the god or the figure of a three-headed creature placed by his statue. The middle head of this figure, which is also the largest, represents a lion’s; on the right a dog raises its head with a gentle and fawning air; and on the left the neck ends in the head of a ravening wolf. All three beasts are joined together by the coils of a serpent whose head returns to the god’s right hand which keeps the monster in check.’) On Serapis as the Ptolemaic patron god of Alexandria, in place of the original patron deity Agathos Daimon, see BELL 1954, 19–22, who also interprets Serapis as a protector of sea travellers. On Serapis and Alexandria, see also FRASER 1960, 19, STAMBAUGH 1972, 1–53 and TRAN TAM TINH 1982, 115–116.

4 On damage to buildings and roads during the Diaspora Revolt, see APPLEBAUM 1951 and 1962 and SMALLWOOD 1976, 399.

5 SMALLWOOD 1976, 58.

6 *CPJ* 2.439.8–10.

7 *CPJ* 2.450.ii.33–35. The festival was still celebrated in 202.

8 *CPJ* 2.442.25–28.

of Josephus and the early rabbinic schools. At least some Christians, moreover, probably saw the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem as an opportunity to cut their Jewish roots and build a separate identity that might be more acceptable throughout the empire. The sudden disappearance after the Diaspora revolt of the documents concerning the Egyptian Jews suggests that there was not much continuity between the Jewish and the Christian communities in Egypt, as the former was virtually obliterated while the latter expanded.⁹

Although the Egyptian documents do not talk explicitly about the position of the Christians in the Diaspora Revolt, we might suspect they did not support the Jews. According to Justin, in fact, in the Bar Kochba revolt of 132–5, the Christians supported Rome, and even suffered violence on the part of the Jewish rebels for doing so.¹⁰ It is likely that a good number of Christians in Egypt wanted to be seen as independent from Judaism, and thus did not support the Jews. Paradoxically, they may have been on the side of Serapis.¹¹

9 BEN ZEEV 2005, 266 states that the consequences of the Diaspora Revolt ‘equalled or even surpassed those of the two more famous Jewish wars of 66–70 and 132–5’.

10 Just. *I Apol.* 31,6; Eus. *HE* 4,8,4. Jer. *Chron.* 201 Helm; Oros. 7,13,4. GALIMBERTI 2007, 150 note 156 rightly notes that in Justin (*Dial.* 9,3) the conversation between Jews and Christians on the Bar Kochba Revolt is a sign that it was still a topical issue in his time.

11 A passage in the book on dreams by Artemidorus of Daldis (*Oneirokritika* 4,24) says that a στρατοπεδάρχης (*praefectus castrorum*) fighting against the Diaspora Revolt at Cyrene had written on his sword the Greek letters ικθ, *iota* for *Ioudaiois*, *kappa* for *Kurenaiois*, and *theta* for θάνατος, to form the message: “death to the Jews of Cyrene”, according to the interpretation by DEL CORNO 1975, 338 note 34. STRASSI 2008, 89–90 suggests an identification with the *stratopedarches* mentioned in *PMich* 8.478.26. It is impossible not to think of the Greek ιχθ[ύς] (with a *chi* instead of the *kappa*), the ‘fish’ that became a symbol of Christ and a catchword of the Christians. The earliest known reference to the fish as a Christian symbol is in Clement of Alexandria (150–215, in *Paed.* 3,11), where he recommends his readers engrave their seals with the dove or fish. That a soldier of the Roman army had Christian sympathies is unsurprising, since many Roman soldiers appear in the New Testament as Christian converts or god-fearers. *Acts* 10,1–22 presents the centurion Cornelius, a god-fearer from Caesarea. In *Acts* 27, 43 a centurion is willing to save Paul. A devout soldier features in *Acts* 10, 7. *PMich* 8.483 and 484 portrays a centurion of the *legio XXII Deiotariana* called Julius Clement, in Alexandria at the time of Hadrian. In 484.1, a letter from the centurion to his brother Arianus, there is the *chi-rho* symbol, possibly the abbreviation of the word ‘centurion’, ἑκατοντάρχης. In l. 14 the writer mentions the ‘good pilot’ ἀγαθὸς κυβερνήτης, an image often used to describe Christ.

2. Hadrian and Serapis

Abundant evidence indicates that Hadrian played a major role in the restoration work on buildings destroyed in the Diaspora Revolt.¹² For this reason he was hailed as saviour and benefactor both in Egypt and in Cyrenaica. An inscription on Mons Claudianus shows that the emperor celebrated his victory over the Diaspora Jews by erecting a temple to Zeus-Helios-Serapis ‘on behalf of safety and eternal victory’.¹³ There is also a debate over whether or not Hadrian restored the Alexandrian *Serapeum*, possibly damaged in the war.¹⁴ In any case, Hadrian portrayed himself as the saviour and defender of Serapis. Coins of Hadrian show the emperor clasping hands with Serapis, sitting in the Serapeion, and even assimilated with Horos and Serapis himself, while the empress Sabina is represented as Serapis’ wife Isis.¹⁵ A portrait of Serapis in the animal form of a bull was also found in Hadrian’s villa at Tibur, an important centre for Hadrian’s symbolic system of images¹⁶. Furthermore, after Hadrian left Britain in 122, he received news from Egypt regarding trouble over the Apis Bull, which suggests that he was still expected to protect the cult at that time.¹⁷

According to Galimberti, a major turning point in the religious policy of Hadrian was 124/5, when the emperor joined the Eleusinian mysteries and subsequently promoted mysteries elsewhere, including early forms of Christianity.¹⁸ At this date he also seems to have passed an edict in which he prohibited persecutions of Christians. A controversial passage in the *Historia Augusta* reports that Hadrian built temples without images, which were used for the veneration of different spiritual deities and which were also attended by Christians:

‘Every seven days, when he [sc. Alexander Severus] was in the city, he went up to the Capitolium, and he visited the other temples frequently. He also wished to build a temple to Christ and give him a place among the gods – a measure, which, they say, was also considered by Hadrian. For Hadrian ordered a temple without an image to be built in every city, and because these temples, built by him with this intention, so they say, are dedicated to no particular deity, they are called today merely Hadrian’s temples. Alexander, however, was prevented from carrying out this purpose, because

12 APPLEBAUM 1951.

13 *OGIS* 2.678, 421. The inscription is dated to 23 April 118. A temple to Serapis and Isis as Tyche at Mons Claudianus is also documented in a *proskynema*; see SHELTON 1990.

14 According to MCKENZIE 2007, 195 Hadrian did not rebuild the *Serapeum* of Alexandria.

15 *BMC* III 339, 344, 487 ff., 507 f. BIRLEY 1997, 238–239 attributes them to Hadrian’s visit of 130.

16 See Elena Calandra in this volume.

17 As BIRLEY 1997, 245 put it, ‘Hadrian may be assumed to have inspected the animal about which there had been so much trouble’.

18 GALIMBERTI 2007, 151–153 and see the chapters by Galimberti in this volume.

those who examined the sacred victims ascertained that if he did, all men would become Christians and the other temples would of necessity be abandoned.¹⁹

In Egypt, indeed, Hadrian built new temples, where Serapis and Isis were worshipped along Hellenic gods such as Helios, Zeus Hypsistos, Dionysos, Saturn, Asklepios, Ceres-Demeter-Kore.²⁰ This was in order to promote the integration of the Alexandrian and Egyptian religion with the Graeco-Roman *pantheon* and ultimately to foster loyalty to the empire. All these gods were deities of the underworld and symbols of resurrection and salvation and could be associated with Christ – at least in the eyes of the pagans.²¹

Apparently, Hadrian himself noticed an overlap of Egyptian Christianity with the worship of Serapis. In a letter to his brother-in-law Servianus, transmitted in the *Historia Augusta*, the emperor laments that,

‘The land of Egypt, the praises of which you have been recounting to me, my dear Servianus, I have found to be wholly light-minded, unstable, and blown about by every breath of rumour. There, those who worship Serapis are, in fact, Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are, in fact, devotees of Serapis. There is no chief of the Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no Christian presbyter, who is not an astrologer, a soothsayer, or an anointer. Even the Patriarch himself, when he comes to Egypt, is forced by some to worship Serapis, by others to worship Christ.’²²

19 *HA Alex. Sev.* 43,5–6: *Capitolium septimo quoque die, cum in urbe esset, ascendit, templum frequentavit, Christo templo facere voluit eumque inter deos recipere, quod et Hadrianus cogitasse fertur, qui templa in omnibus civitatibus sine simulacris iusserat fieri, quae hodieque idcirco, qui non habent numina, dicuntur Hadriani, quae ille ad hic parasse dicebatur; sed prohibitis est ab his, qui consulentes sacra repperant omnes Christianos futuros. Si id fecissent, et templa reliqua disserenda.* See GALIMBERTI 2007, 149 note 153 for literature on the historicity of this information. MÉLÈZE MODRZEJEWSKI 1997, 307–312 believes that a similar turning point took place in Alexandria and that Hadrian supported Christians, as does JAKAB 2001, 63–65.

20 See, for instance *OGIS* 2.678, the dedication around AD 118 of a temple to Zeus-Helios-Serapis by Hadrian on Mons Claudianus, to commemorate his victory over the Jews.

21 BELL 1954, 20–22 on the ritualistic aspects of Serapis. See for instance the oath formula, found in *PSI* 10.1162 ‘by the god who separates earth from heaven and light from darkness and day from night and the world from chaos and life from death and birth from decay’. Other mystical characteristics of the cult were meals and the so-called *katoché*, that is, segregated life in the temple of Serapis as a form of spiritual purification. The story of the Carthaginian martyrs Satyros, Perpetua and Felicitas who were led to their execution dressed as priests of Saturn and priestesses of Ceres is emblematic of this confusion. *Passio Perpetuae* 18, 4. On the similar iconography of Serapis and Christ, see below, note 30.

22 *HA QT* 8, 2: *Aegyptum, quam mihi laudabas, Serviane carissime, totam didici levem, pendulam et ad omnia famae momenta volitantem. Illic qui Serapem colunt Christiani sunt, et devoti sunt Serapi qui se Christi episcopos dicunt. Nemo illic archisynagogus Iudaeorum, nemo Samarites, nemo Christianorum presbyter non mathematicus, non haruspex, non*

It has long been orthodox to believe that this letter is completely spurious. However, both in his recent book on Hadrian and in the present volume, Galimberti suggests that it contains some clues to Hadrian's authentic religious policy.²³ The letter shows clearly that Hadrian was surprised by the presence of Christians in the *Serapeum*, as if this was an anomalous situation, different from the developments of Christianity in the rest of the Mediterranean. This 'Egyptian anomaly' is worth further investigation.

3. A cosmopolitan temple

From the times of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–246 BC), the *Serapeum* hosted the famous library which in turn housed, among other famous texts, the Greek Bible 'of the Seventy', or *Septuaginta*. This translation was the most important sacred text for the Egyptian Jews and, later, became the version of the Bible used by the Christians.²⁴ Other copies of the Bible were presumably kept in the Great Synagogue of Alexandria, until its destruction in the Diaspora Revolt under Trajan,²⁵ and as late as AD 197, the Christian apologist Tertullian states that the *Serapeum* still contained the library and the Septuagint.²⁶ The importance of the Septuagint as a core text defining the identity of the Jewish and Christian communities in Egypt should not be underestimated. In my view, it is likely that the presence of the Septuagint made the *Serapeum* a holy place for both Jews and Christians.

Serapis and the *Serapeum* had a special relationship with the Greek translation of the Bible since the times when Demetrius of the Phaleron, the director of the library and the promoter of the translation under Philadelphus, regained his sight thanks to a miracle of Serapis and composed paeans to the

aliptes. Ipse ille patriarcha cum Aegyptum venerit, ab aliis Serapidem adorare, ab aliis cogitur Christum.

- 23 For the earlier literature on the debate on the authenticity of this letter, see Galimberti's contribution to this volume.
- 24 On the Septuagint as the highlight of the library, see the *Letter of Aristeas*, written by a Jew of Egypt possibly in the Second century BC. On the importance of the *Serapeum* and Serapis for the Jews, see MUSSIES 1979. On the library in the *Serapeum* and the translation of the Bible, see COLLINS 2000.
- 25 On the destruction of the synagogue, see the Talmud of Jerusalem: *γSuk* 5,55–58b. See also *γSuk*. 5, 51a; *γSuk*. 5, 55a. We do not know where the synagogue was, but we can hypothesise that it was in a Jewish quarter, the Delta being the most famous. We may also hypothesise that Hadrian might have built a pagan temple on the foundation of the Great Synagogue as a sign of his success in quelling the Diaspora Revolt. Under Cyril (412–444) many synagogues were closed (Socr. *HE* 7, 13) and were then converted to churches, including one named after St George.
- 26 *1Apol.* 18, 8: *Ita in Graecum stilum exaperta monumenta reliquit. Hodie apud Serapeum Ptolemaei bibliothecae cum ipsis Hebraicis litteris exhibentur*; for the date see *OCD*³ 1487.

god which were long sung in his sanctuaries.²⁷ The temple, moreover, was in the Jewish quarter, the Delta, and evidence shows that the *Serapeum* attracted both Jews and Christians as late as the fourth century, when the lamp workshop near the temple manufactured pagan, Christian and Jewish lamps.²⁸ Finally, Rufinus, writing in 402, provides details about the temple, which he saw two or three decades earlier. There were *hexedrae* and quarters for the Egyptian priests (*pastophoria*) but also houses (*domus*) in which temple keepers or those called 'the ones who make themselves pure (ἀγνεύοντες) had been accustomed to gather'.²⁹ Among these people might have been Jews and Christians.

The iconography of Serapis as a Greek bearded god with sun-rays around his head like Helios, ram's horns like Ammon, a serpent encircling his sceptre like Asklepios, the horn of plenty in his left hand like Pluto, a club like Herakles, a sceptre in his left hand and the right hand raised as a sign of majesty like Zeus, presents strong points of contact with the iconography of Christ.³⁰ Serapis also appears as a sacrificial bull and, alternatively, a shepherd, which recalls the image of Christ as both a sacrificial lamb and as the 'good shepherd'.³¹ In addition, the so-called 'Serapis aretalogies', a genre of religious poetry popular in Egypt, speak of the miracles performed by Isis and Serapis in tones and language similar to those used in Christian literature for Mary and Jesus. In particular, the beginning of the aretalogy of Isis, with the words ἐγὼ εἶμι followed by the liturgical epithets, was taken and used in the Christian liturgy.³²

Some Christian documents have provoked debate among scholars because they contain allusions to the worship of Serapis. *PMich* 3.213, of the Third century, presents the words τοῦ θεοῦ θέλοντος commonly used by Christians,

27 Diog. Laert. 5,76.

28 MCKENZIE 2007, 249; 410 note 109, with reference to MLYNARCZYK 1995.

29 Rufin. *HE* 11,23.

30 I have reworked the description of Serapis offered by TRAN TAM TINH 1982, 115. On the iconography of Christ as a case of religious competition with the image of earlier pagan gods, see MATHEWS 2005 *passim*.

31 On the Christian use of Greek sacrificial concepts and imagery, see the recent stimulating book by PETROPOULOU 2008.

32 TRAN TAM TINH 1982, 117 notes that 'no kinship is guaranteed' between the Isiac formulations and the analogous Christian ones. The epithets of Isis and Sarapis attested in documents have been listed by BRICAULT 1996. HARKER 2008, 67 n. 88 notes that some Serapis miracles are included in the sources of the Principate, e.g. Dio 77,15,1, a vision of Geta appeared to Caracalla in the temple of Serapis; Dio 79,7,3 states that a fire miraculously appeared in the *Serapeum* shortly before Caracalla's death, but did not damage the temple. See Serapis miracles in literature related to the *Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs*, *CPJ* 2.157; 2.154 set in the *Serapeum*; *SB* 6.9213. See also the "Isis aretalogies" in which all the goddesses of the world are merely names for the one true goddess Isis (e.g., *POxy* 11.1380). On Serapis and Isis as important elements in Christian self-definition see TRAN TAM TINH 1982.

but begins with an invocation to Serapis. Epithets such as κύριος or θεός in Egyptian papyri were often used with reference to Serapis who, as a god of healing and the underworld, is often addressed in prayers for the sick.³³ The *proskynema*, the genuflection traditional in the worship of Serapis, was soon adopted and continued by Christians in their own acts of devotion,³⁴ and a hitherto neglected Second-century letter from the Fayum, BGU 3.714, from a certain Tasoucharion to her brother Neilos, mentions a *proskynema* to Serapis, and prayers for the safety of the recipients, along with greetings (ll. 15–16) from a certain ἄππα Σατορνείλος.³⁵ The title Ἀρ(ρ)ᾶ was an honorific title for Christian monks and priests of high rank, and is likely also to be Christian in our document.³⁶ The document, therefore, is important as it shows clearly that in the Second century Christians of the Fayum respected Serapis and performed the *proskynema* to the god. The earliest Christian letter quoted by Naldini in his collection of Christian documents, *PMich* 8.482, is dated 23 August 133 and probably comes from Alexandria. Here, the anonymous writer tells his brother (ll. 15–17): ‘If you wish to come and take me with you come, and wherever you take me, I will follow you and as I love you the god will love me’.³⁷ In another Second-century document, *PMich* 8.493, a certain Sabinus writes to his mother and his wife in Karanis that he is awaiting to be tried by the new chief-judge in Alexandria and (ll. 14–15) that, ‘with god’s help I shall leave without

33 Such as in *POxy* 14.1678 of the Third century, in which Dios prays to the god to save his sister. For Christian expressions such as ἐλεεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ and χάρις τῷ θεῷ in apparently ‘pagan’ papyri, cf. BELL 1944, 193 no. 17 and 18. On the epithets of Christ see HURTADO 2003, on Christian *nomina sacra* featured in the Antonine period see HURTADO 2006, 95 ff. in which he argues that *nomina sacra* originated from abbreviations in the Septuagint. See *Suppl.Gr.* 1120 of AD 66–175, *PMich* inv. 1571 of 175–225, *PChester Beatty II* + *PMich* inv. 6238 of 80–150, *PBodmer II* + Inv. Nr 4274/ 4298 of 90–130, *PBodmer* 14 and 15 of 125–190, *POxy* 50.3523 of 150–175.

34 In the early Second century, Claudius Terentianus writes to Tiberianus, a veteran of the Roman army, that ‘everyday I do a *proskynema* in your name to the lord Serapis and to the gods venerated in the same temples’. *PMich* 8.476; STRASSI 2008, no. 11; see also *PMich* 8.477, 478. Sasnos, a Greek of the Second or Third century (*WChr* 116 p. 147) advises: “Worship the divine, offer sacrifice to all the gods, make a pilgrimage to every shrine and leave behind a *proskynema*, hold especially in esteem the gods of the fathers and worship Isis and Serapis, the greatest of the Gods, the redeemers, the good, the well-pleasing, the benefactors”. On the Christian use of the *proskynema* see YOUTIE 1978, 265–268; *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* 3 (1983) 77 f.; 4 (1987) 59–62. GERACI 1971, and the commentary to *POxy* 55.3809.3–7.

35 *BL* 1.61, 11.20. See the same characters in *BGU* 2.601 and 602, and *PGiss* 197. Cf. *BGU* 3.801 = CHAPA 1998 no. 3, another letter of Tasoucharion to Nilus.

36 See NALDINI 1998, 38. *PBon* 44 (*SB* 5.7616), another Second-century letter, from Agathos Daimon to Kronion, probably from Tebtunis, mentions both the *proskynema* to Serapis and (l. 4) a θεῖος Eustathios as beloved by both the writer and the recipient. See COPPOLA 1933, 666. *BL* 3.191.

37 NALDINI 1998, nr. 1 [ὁ]ς φειλῶ σοι ὁ θεὸς ἐμὲ φειλήσει (ll. 25–6).

delay'.³⁸ These documents are (convincingly) regarded as 'Christian', because of their tone and the echoes of the Gospels that they contain. However, one cannot exclude that the unnamed 'god' they refer to is the Alexandrian god *par excellence*, Serapis, who is commonly invoked in Second and Third-century documents of Alexandrian origin.

The Egyptian worship of Serapis certainly played a role in preparing a spiritual background for the diffusion of Christianity. The Egyptians, who were trained to celebrate the annual sacrifice and resurrection of Serapis for the redemption of their sins, became genuinely interested in the story of the resurrection of Jesus and Christian communities emerged, above all in the area of the Fayum. Both the literary texts and the documents show that the Antonine period was a turning point for the diffusion of Christianity.³⁹ It cannot be a coincidence that Minucius Felix in the *Octavius* (2.4) rebuked his friend Caecilius who, on the way to the shore of Ostia, after seeing an image of Serapis, 'raised his hand to his mouth as is the custom of the superstitious common people, and pressed a kiss on it with his lips'. Minucius Felix saw the devotion to Serapis as unsurprising and common among lower-class Christians, though an impulse that should be discarded as 'vulgar'.

4. The earliest churches in Alexandria

Mark is traditionally credited for evangelising Alexandria during his visits there in the middle of the First century AD when he converted Annianus, who became the first bishop around 62. However, this tradition, recorded by Eusebius in the early Fourth century, is commonly regarded as a later construction diffused by the Church of Rome.⁴⁰ Our knowledge of the growth of Christianity in Egypt in the Second and Third centuries, therefore, comes mainly from the papyrological documentation. Christian manuscripts of the Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John on papyrus codexes, in the form of modern books, survive from the Second century, and reflect the spread of the new faith

38 493.14–15 σὺν θεῷ ἐν τάχει ἀπαλλαγῆσομαι.

39 On the earliest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, see HURTADO 2006. On the epithets of Christ see HURTADO 2003. On Christian *nomina sacra* featured in the Antonine period see HURTADO 2006, 95 ff., suggesting that *nomina sacra* originated from the abbreviations featuring in the Septuagint. See *Suppl.Gr.* 1120 of AD 66–175, *PMich* inv. 1571 of 175–225, *PChester Beatty* II + *PMich* inv. 6238 of 80–150, *PBodmer* II + Inv. Nr 4274/ 4298 of 90–130, *PBodmer* 14 and 15 of 125–190, *POxy* 3523 of 150–175.

40 Eus. *HE* 2, 16 and 24. For Jer. *De viris illustr.* 8, St Mark died in the eighth year of Nero, that is, 61. For the legend of Mark as a later construction imposed by Rome: PEARSON 1986, 210.

outside Alexandria.⁴¹ In the Third century Antonius Dioskorus is described as a Christian in an official text dealing with minor public offices in Arsinoe (Medinet el-Fayum),⁴² while Eusebius⁴³ indicates that there were Christians in Antinoopolis (el-Sheikh 'Ibada) at about this time, and that a conference was held at Arsinoe by Dionysius for the presbyters and teachers from surrounding villages. Later, in the period 330–350 the number of churches mentioned in the documents dramatically increased and the diffusion of monasteries reshaped the geography of the countryside.⁴⁴

Not much is known about the earliest Christian churches in Alexandria. The *ekklesia* of Theonas, the cathedral built by the patriarch Peter I (AD 300–11) and named in honour of his predecessor, is described as a *basilica*⁴⁵ and is generally identified with the Mosque of One Thousand Columns in the western part of the city, an area close to Christian cemeteries.⁴⁶ According to McKenzie, this church was newly built and did not enshrine an earlier religious building. However, it is interesting to note that the rabbinical sources describe the Great Synagogue of Alexandria as a grand *basilica* (with a Latin word). Although this is a mere hypothesis, it would be indeed attractive to think that the Theonas church was built on the synagogue's foundations.⁴⁷

Another early church is the so-called church of Boukolou or Baukalis, near the martyrium and the underground tomb of St Mark.⁴⁸ The origins and location of the Boukolou church are mysterious. According to the *Acts of St Mark*, this church was built 'in the area beside the sea under crags called Boukolou'.⁴⁹ For Pearson, the martyrdom of St Mark took place in the north-

41 BELL 1944, 199 ff; ROBERTS 1979, 12–14.

42 VAN MINNEN 1994.

43 HE 6, 11, 3 and 7, 24, 6.

44 PEARSON 1986, 235–306 on the early development of monasticism in Egypt. Bagnall and Wipszycka studied the spread of Christian names in the population and assert that by 312 18 per cent of the population was Christian. BAGNALL 1982; 1987 and 1993, 53–54; 264, 278; WIPSZYCKA 1986, 173–181; 1988, 164–165. On Byzantine Egypt see now BAGNALL 2007.

45 Athan. *Chronicon Praevium* 11 (PG 26, col. 1356D).

46 MCKENZIE 2007, 240 (however, this hypothesis is not proven).

47 The size and splendour of the synagogue were the subjects of glowing descriptions in the schools of Palestine and Babylon: "He who has not seen it, has not seen the glory of Israel", said the rabbis (*jSuk* 51b). It was a vast Hellenistic-style edifice where the officers of the Alexandrine congregation would wave a flag to signal congregants on distant benches when to respond. The building is described as a *basilica* with columns and 70 seats, holding 100,000 worshippers, and as a double *stoa*. See *Midr. Teh.* on Ps. 93.

48 *Act. Marc.* 5 (PG 115 col. 168 A); MCKENZIE 2007, 240.

49 *Act. Marc.* 5 (PG 115, col. 168 A) *Boukolou topoi*: CALDERINI–DARIS 1988, I, 105, 173; II, 62–64 on *Boukolon kome*; GASCOU 1998, 37–39, 43–44; MCKENZIE 2007, 240–242; the church was enlarged under Constantine, and was the see of the presbyter Arius.

western quarter of Alexandria, near the beaches where the Jewish community lived by the Kibotos harbour – part of the Eunostos harbour – in the Delta quarter.⁵⁰ Interestingly, Strabo states that from before the foundation of Alexandria *boukoloi* ('herdsmen') lived in the area of Rhakotis near the Alexandrian *Serapeum* in the Delta quarter.⁵¹ But a search for *boukolos* shows that, while in Greece the term indicated an adept of Dionysos, in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt it could mean 'devotee of Serapis'.⁵² As a matter of fact, Serapis was often represented as either the sacrificial Apis Bull or as a shepherd.

This information suggests that the site of the church of Boukolou could have been the site of an earlier temple to Serapis. This should not surprise us, as evidence exists of other early Christian churches in Alexandria built on Serapis shrines. Further documents seem to indicate that there was some connection between the neighbourhood of the *boukoloi* and the cult of Serapis. *PHeid* 7.400, two Second-century letters from Sempronius to Saturnila, mention the *proskynema* to Serapis and a 'quarter of the *boukoloi*' (ll. 15–16), probably in Alexandria,⁵³ while a Third-century letter from Ptolemais to Zosimos⁵⁴ mentions a place called Boukolia in Alexandria alongside a *proskynema* to Serapis.⁵⁵ We must now, therefore, investigate the identity of the *boukoloi*.

5. The revolt of the *Boukoloi*

A pressure group called '*Boukoloi*' troubled Egypt around 172, during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, in a major revolt that was quelled by Avidius Cassius. In 175, however, Avidius Cassius went to Alexandria and was declared emperor by his troops in the East,⁵⁶ and in 176 Marcus Aurelius spent the winter in Alexandria quelling the sedition.⁵⁷ Dio's description, summarised by Xiphilinus, depicts the *Boukoloi* in violent tones, as transvestites and cannibals:

'The people called the Bucoli began a disturbance in Egypt and under the leadership of one Isidorus, a priest, caused the rest of the Egyptians to revolt. At first, arrayed in women's garments, they had deceived the Roman centurion, causing him to believe that they were women of the Bucoli and were going to give him gold as

On the meaning of *Boukolou* cf. PEARSON 1986, 141, 153, n. 122, 242. GASCOU 1998, 391.

50 PEARSON 2004, 109–110

51 Strabo 17,1,6.

52 *LSJ* s.v.; *UPZ* 57.

53 See SIJPESTEIJN 1976, 169–181; YOUTIE 1982, 92–94; CHAPA 1998, no. 4.

54 *WChr* 21 (BGU 2.625).

55 *SelPap* 1.120.

56 See a letter of Avidius Cassius preserved on papyrus, *SB* 10.10295; BOWMAN 1970.

57 As is suggested by *CIL* III 6578, a statue base of 176 found in Alexandria, with a dedication to Marcus Aurelius by a tribune of the *Legio II Traiana*.

ransom for their husbands, and had then struck him down when he approached them. They also sacrificed his companion and after swearing an oath over his entrails devoured them. Isidorus surpassed all his contemporaries in bravery. Next, having conquered the Romans in Egypt in a pitched battle, they [the Bucoli] came near to capturing Alexandria, too, and would have succeeded had not Cassius been sent against them from Syria. He contrived to destroy their mutual accord and to separate them from one another (for, because of their desperation as well as their numbers he had not ventured to attack them while they were united) and thus, when they fell to quarrelling, he subdued them'.⁵⁸

It has been noted that the portrayal of the *Boukoloi* is similar to the characterisation (in Dio 69.13) of the Jews in the Bar Kochba Revolt of 132–5: a small revolt that spread to the rest of the country, people committing atrocities against the Romans, a special general being sent from another field of operations, the extraordinary strength of the enemy due to their unity and desperation, and the winning strategy of dividing to conquer. The atrocities committed by the *Boukoloi*, such as cannibalism and torture, recur in Dio's description (68.32) of the Jews in the Diaspora Revolt. However, these analogies must be read as propaganda and by no means imply any Jewish presence in the revolt of the *Boukoloi*.⁵⁹ According to Winkler, the story of the *Boukoloi*, far from being an impartial account, must be read from the point of view of Roman fear of Alexandria and, indeed, the story shows literary elements taken from contemporary fiction, such as Achilles Tatius and Lollianus who characterised the *Boukoloi* as 'desperadoes'.⁶⁰

Most probably, the revolt of the *Boukoloi* was not simply a native revolt against Roman rule by dissatisfied Egyptian farmers and herdsmen of the area of the Delta.⁶¹ Dio understood and reported that these people were a specific political group called 'Herdsmen', but the term did not (only) indicate real herdsmen. Most probably, the *Boukoloi* were a political and religious group of

58 Dio [Xiphilinus] 72,4: καὶ οἱ καλούμενοι Βουκόλοι κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον κινηθέντες καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους Αἰγύπτιους προσαποστήσαντες ὑπὸ ἱερεὶ τινι [καί] Ἰσιδώρῳ, πρῶτον μὲν ἐν γυναικείῳις στολαῖς τὸν ἑκατόνταρχον τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἠπατηκότες ὡς δὴ γυναῖκες τῶν Βουκόλων καὶ χρυσία δώσουσαι αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀνδρῶν προσίοντα σφίσι κατέκοψαν, καὶ τὸν συνόντα αὐτῷ καταθύσαντες ἐπὶ τε τῶν σπλάγγχων αὐτοῦ συνώμοσαν καὶ ἐκεῖνα κατέφαγον· ἦν δὲ Ἰσιδωρος ἀνδρία πάντων τῶν καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἄριστος· ἔπειτα ἐκ παρατάξεως τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ Ῥωμαίους νικήσαντες μικροῦ καὶ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν εἶλον, εἰ μὴ Κάσσιος ἐκ Συρίας πεμφοθεὶς ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ στρατηγήσας ὥστε τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους σφῶν ὁμόνοιαν λῦσαι καὶ ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ἀποχωρίσαι, διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἀπόνοιαν καὶ τὸ πλῆθος αὐτῶν οὐκ ἐθάρρησε συμβαλεῖν ἀθροῖς αὐτοῖς, οὕτω δὲ στασιάζσαντας ἐχειρώσατο. See also *HA M. Ant.* 21,2; *HA Avid. Cass.* 6,7 on *Bucolici*.

59 See MILLAR 1985, 412.

60 WINKLER 1980, 177; for RUTHERFORD 2000, 109: 'The human sacrifice here is strongly reminiscent of the *Scheintod* in Achilles Tatius, and the possibility arises that Cassius Dio, or his source (possibly Marius Maximus), was influenced by contemporary fiction.'

61 ALSTON 1999 sticks to the interpretation of the *Boukoloi* as herdsmen and rural classes.

anti-Roman fighters and martyrs – possibly adepts of Serapis, as the Egyptian meaning of the term *boukolos* suggests – and this idea would help to explain why the leader of the revolt, Isidorus, was a priest.⁶² The cult of Serapis had inspired earlier Alexandrian riots against Roman emperors, and many allusions to Serapis feature in the *Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs* and related literature.⁶³ It is thus possible that the *Boukoloi* were Egyptian anti-imperial militants, possibly including lower-class men with a common religiosity based on the idea of martyrdom. An interesting piece of evidence is a fragmentary Second-century document from the Fayum, *SB* 14.11650, probably an oracle, which predicts that ‘when the moon will be in the constellation of Leo (...) there will be a *ταραχή* in Egypt (...) and there will be death for the *Boukol[oi]*’. It is worth noting that oracles were usually associated with Serapis.⁶⁴

The years of the revolt of the *Boukoloi* were a time of anti-imperial revolts elsewhere, especially the revolt of Avidius Cassius, a revolt in which the Christians may have participated along with other rebels.⁶⁵ According to Eusebius, by 171/2 in the hills of Phrygia, Montanus and two prophetesses had organised an insurrectional group and urged Christians to become martyrs. Hippolytus Romanus (*In Dan.* 4,18 f) quotes the case of a group of Christians led by a bishop who withdrew to the desert waiting for the imminent return of Christ. The governor believed them to be brigands and was about to send the army against them when his (Christian?) wife convinced him not to do so.

After the revolt of Cassius, some who had made predictions ‘as if inspired by the gods’ (in the plural) were banished. Obviously, their predictions were against the Roman emperor and in favour of Cassius. The *Historia Augusta*

62 BALDINI 1978, 643 first hypothesised that the revolt of the *Boukoloi* had a religious character (he also thought – see p. 650 – that the rebellion might have attracted a Jewish anti-Roman group). For WINKLER 1980, 181, ‘something happened around 171/2 A.D., and [Avidius] Cassius did something to restore the order which the Romans preferred. The rest is fiction and anecdotal history’. A document from Tebtunis (Fayum) of around AD 150, *PSI* 12.1234, mentions a τάξις or ‘class’ of *ιεροβούκοι*, probably a priestly category. In two documents from the Fayum, *PBerlLeihg* 1.10 and *PFamTebt* 20.1 (both of AD 120/1), a certain Boukolos is the priest of the cult of Alexander the Founder and the chief-judge at Alexandria. Another Boukolos, son of Ho(rus?), is a priest in *PStrasb* 5.381 (possibly of AD 55–67).

63 See miracles of Serapis in literature related to the *Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs*, for ex. *CPJ* 2.157, 2.154 set in the *Serapeum*, and *SB* 6.9213; see HARKER 2008, 67 note 88.

64 The text also mentions a βασιλεύς (l. 6), possibly either a Roman emperor or a messianic king.

65 A passage in Tert. *Ad Scap.* 2,5 suggests that the supporters of the revolt of Cassius, including some Christians, were accused of maiestas: *Sic et circa maiestatem imperatoris infamamur; tamen nunquam albiniani, nec nigriani, uel cassiani inueniri potuerunt christiani, sed idem ipsi qui per genios eorum in pridie usque iurauerant, qui pro salute eorum hostias et fecerant et uouerant, qui christianos saepe damnauerant, hostes eorum sunt reperti.*

states that a man predicted that when he fell from a tree and turned into a stork, fire from heaven and the end of the world would follow. He did fall, allowing a stork to emerge from his vest, and was promptly arrested, although Marcus Aurelius mercifully pardoned him.⁶⁶ According to Dio, however, the emperor was so clement that after the death of Avidius Cassius he asked the Senate for a universal amnesty and put no rebel to death.⁶⁷

Montanism and other millenarian movements such as those mentioned above expected the end of the world, and this led to behaviour that might be considered as politically subversive. Although a connection between such movements and the revolt of Avidius Cassius cannot be demonstrated, there are striking similarities between the movement of the *Boukoloï* in Egypt and the *Circumcelliones* and Donatists in Fourth-century Northern Africa.⁶⁸ According to recent studies, anti-imperial movements based on the idea of martyrdom (of the Maccabean type) were common in the lower classes in Northern Africa even before the Fourth century,⁶⁹ thus we may be looking at a phenomenon of *longue durée* that involved both the *Boukoloï* and Christians in Egypt, and their African counterparts.

The second great issue of Christian apologetic literature took place in such a framework when, after the revolt of Cassius, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus were travelling in the East. At least five apologists defended Christianity in works addressed to the emperor and his heir.⁷⁰ Apollinaris recalled episodes in which Christian soldiers remained loyal to Marcus Aurelius on the Danube in 175. At roughly the same time, Melito, bishop of Sardis, complained about new Roman decrees that ordered the expropriation of Christian property and the persecution of Christians, and asserted the loyalty of Christians to the empire. In 177, Athenagoras said that no slave would accuse the Christians, even falsely, of murder or cannibalism (although, according to Eusebius, these charges had actually been made against Christians by slaves from the persecuted churches of Lyons and Vienne in the summer of the same year).⁷¹ Finally, in 180 or 181, Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, alludes (*To Autolytus* 1,11) to the revolt of

66 *HA M. Ant.* 13,6.

67 Dio 72,27–28.

68 Epiph. *Haer.* 49,1; Tert. *Fug.* 9,4; Eus. *HE* 5,6,18–19. On Montanism, see HIRSCHMANN 2005 and TABBERNEE 2007. On the anti-imperial movement of the *Circumcelliones* in Fourth-century North-Africa that is ultimately that of the Donatists, see CACITTI 2006, according to whom (p. 4), the term *circumcelliones* designated deviation from the canonic rule, characterised by the anti-social behaviour of individuals or groups of a monastic or a clerical nature. They distinguished themselves by their extreme poverty, itinerant habits and the exercise of violence directed against the establishment of justice, and by peculiar liturgical customs.

69 CACITTI 2006, 14.

70 For an analysis of the works of these apologists, see GRANT 1988.

71 Athen. *Leg.* 35; Eus. *HE* 5,1,14.

Cassius and pleads for the loyalty of Christians to the emperor. Two decades later, Tertullian⁷² still spoke of the loyalty of Christian soldiers to Marcus Aurelius, and reiterated that no Christians had supported Cassius.

All of these apologetic works may well have reflected some laws passed in 176–180 that punished Christians (along with other rebels) for their supposed participation in the revolt of Avidius Cassius. The participation of some Egyptian Christians in the revolt links them to the *Boukoloï*, as the revolt of the *Boukoloï* de facto helped Cassius to become emperor. In other words, the *Boukoloï*, willingly or not, were deemed responsible for the rising of Cassius against the emperor.⁷³ It is not impossible that at least some Egyptian Christians, like the *Boukoloï*, celebrated anti-imperial revolution as a religious mission and martyrdom as a value. As a matter of fact, evidence shows that martyrdom and the cult of the corpses of martyrs were especially valued in Egypt: as late as the Fourth century, St Anthony exhorted Egyptian Christians to stop keeping the mummies of relatives and martyrs at home.⁷⁴

6. The end of the Serapeum and the normalisation of Egyptian Christianity

Soon after the suppression of the revolt of the *Boukoloï*, the Alexandrian *Serapeum* was burned down. Clement of Alexandria⁷⁵ mentions ‘the akra which they now call Rhakotis, where stands the honoured sanctuary (*hieron*) of Serapis’ as reconstructed by 190, while Jerome states that the *templum* (that is, the actual sanctuary) was burned in 181.⁷⁶ The destruction of the *Serapeum* may be a further indication that the *Boukoloï* were connected with the worship of Serapis.

While Athanasius was patriarch (328–73) many churches were erected in the city and by 375 the city had almost twelve, according to Epiphanius. These included the *Caesareum*, a church built on the earlier temple to Augustus, the

72 *Apol.* 5,6; 35,9.

73 Minucius Felix (*Oct.* 30,5) and Tertullian (*Apol.* 9,9) struggled to defend Christians from the accusations of infanticide and cannibalism, all accusations previously weighed against the *Boukoloï*; see WINKLER 1980, 81–82 and also Eus. *HE* 5,1,14. Naturally, however, these were stereotypical accusations directed against the anti-imperial rebels, whoever they were.

74 Athan. *Vit. Ant.* 90–91. On the cult of martyrs in Egypt between local traditions and Christianity, see FRANKFURTER 1994, 31–32; CLARYSSE 1995.

75 *Protr.* 4,42 and 47.

76 Jer. *Chron.* 208 Helm. The *Serapeum* was rebuilt between 181 and 215/16, when it miraculously survived a fire during the reign of Caracalla. It is possible that the *Serapeum* was the Pantheon built by Severus in 205 MCKENZIE 2007, 195–203 and note 130 p. 402. Indeed, the name *Pantheon* would be appropriate for the *Serapeion*, as other gods were worshipped there together with Serapis.

Kaisareion, and another built on a temple to Hadrian, the *Hadrianon*. Other churches include the Kyrinos, Theonas, Baukalis, St Mark, Pieirios, Serapion (notably), the Persaia, Dizya, and the church of Annianos.⁷⁷ The temple of Dionysos was converted into a church in honour of Theodosius' son Honorius and was also called the church of Cosmas and Damian. Other churches were erected by Theophilus, such as a church in honour of Theodosius, one to Raphael on Pharos, the church of Three Young Men, and one dedicated to Mary in the Eastern part of the city.⁷⁸ Many of these churches may have been temples to Serapis and pagan sanctuaries.

The Council of Nicaea in 325 established new dogmas and rules for the Christian religion and under Theodosius Christianity became a state religion. At this point, Christians could not afford to tolerate local aberrant variants of the cult, and even the Egyptians had to conform to the standards imposed by the church. The destruction of the *Serapeum* of Alexandria in 391 by Theodosius (385–412) and the Alexandrian bishop Theophilus marked the beginning of a new era:

‘The governor of Alexandria and the commander-in-chief of the troops of Egypt assisted Theophilus in demolishing the heathen temples (...) All the images were accordingly broken in pieces, except one statue of the aforementioned god, which Theophilus preserved and set up in a public place; “Lest,” said he, “at a future time the heathen should deny that they ever worshipped such gods”.’⁷⁹

Among the ‘heathens’ mentioned in this passage, we should perhaps count the descendants of the *Boukoloï* and the radical Alexandrians who had supported the anti-imperial revolt of Avidius Cassius. Egyptian Christianity was normalised, and its anomalous behaviours erased. The site of the *Serapeum* hosted a new church to St John the Baptist.⁸⁰

7. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that during the Roman period and at the time of Hadrian, the Alexandrian *Serapeum* could have been attended by both Jews and Christians. The presence of the Septuagint in the library of the *Serapeum* probably made this temple holy for Egyptian Jews and, above all, for Christians. Documents also show that Christians in Egypt often worshipped Serapis. A Second-century letter shows Tasoucharion, a woman from a Christian

⁷⁷ MCKENZIE 2007, 231, 246–247.

⁷⁸ MCKENZIE 2007, 232–233 thinks that most of these churches were new buildings and did not reuse previous structures.

⁷⁹ Socr. *HE* 5,16.

⁸⁰ SCHWARTZ 1966, 97; PEARSON 2004, 108; MCKENZIE 2007, 245–248.

community of a certain Apa Satorneilos, making the customary genuflection to Serapis. This, in turn, lends support to the view (also supported by Galimberti) that the core of Hadrian's letter to Servianus concerning the Christian presence in the Alexandrian *Serapeum* is reliable. After the end of the Diaspora Revolt and the obliteration of the Jewish communities in Egypt, Hadrian's policy of religious pluralism and his favourable attitude towards mystery cults may have created more space for the development of early Christianity.

This paper has also hypothesised that the *Boukoloï*, who were the protagonists of an anti-imperial revolt in the 170s and were partly responsible for the rise of Avidius Cassius, were not (or not only) 'herdsmen', but also a political and religious group based on the worship of Serapis. Due to the overlaps and affinities between Christian revolutionary movements and the *Boukoloï*, some Christians were accused of fomenting Cassius' revolt, hence the efforts of some apologists to prove that Christians had always been loyal to Marcus Aurelius. The involvement of at least some Egyptian Christians in the movement of the *Boukoloï* and the rise of Cassius may be real and may be compared with other millenarian or 'heretic' movements in the Near East and in Northern Africa which participated in anti-imperial revolts.

The cults of Isis and Serapis, with their 'purification, abstinence, and initiation rituals – elements not foreign in other mystery cults – had unintentionally paved the way for the successful integration of Christianity'.⁸¹ These cults presented a universalist doctrine that abolished ethnic and social barriers, promised a happy existence in the eternal afterlife, celebrated martyrdom and imposed precepts of continence and abstinence, including a daily liturgy and, also, often castration. Most of these elements were borrowed and developed by Egyptian Christianity. In this respect, Eusebius reports the rumour that Origen, who lived an ascetic life and longed for martyrdom, had castrated himself in order to emulate the evangelical precept that 'there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake'.⁸² Indeed, castration was an element of the Serapis cult, and Egyptian Christianity tolerated and even took on some aspects of this cult, thus, Origen's Christian attitude is close to that of 'extremist' Serapis worshippers.

Hadrian indeed favoured religious pluralism in Egypt. He built pluralistic temples in which different yet similar gods were associated and avoided persecutions against Christians, and this could be one reason for the appearance and spread of Christian texts in Antonine Egypt. An indication of this policy of religious pluralism may be the promotion of the cult of Antinous, an entirely new cult that was added to the already crowded Graeco-Roman pantheon. The

81 TAKACS 1995, 204.

82 On Origen's castration: Eus. *HE* 6,8,1. Ascetic life: *HE* 6,3,11–12. Desire for martyrdom: *HE* 6,2,3 and 6,3,3–5.

target audience for the cult of Antinous was the Greek élites, while the lower classes (excluding, naturally, the Jews) were left with Serapis, Christ, or the other gods. The amazing spread of the cult of Antinous suggests that Hadrian's religious pluralism worked on a universal level and acted as a unifying factor for the empire. However, Hadrian's policy of religious pluralism eventually backfired on the empire, because it gave space to anti-imperial movements which periodically rose against the emperors. Avidius Cassius took advantage of these heterogeneous pressure groups and used them to promote his own rise as an alternative emperor, although his coup eventually failed. The triumph of Christianity in Egypt may be regarded as one vast, yet unpredictable, result of the religious pluralism that Hadrian had first promoted.

The rise of Christianity as a tolerated, then official, religion in the Fourth century imposed a normalisation of worship in Egypt. Naturally, Isis and Serapis worshippers in Alexandria and elsewhere did not simply turn into Christians and forsake old convictions.⁸³ The cults co-existed up to the moment of active Christian intervention, which took the form of imperial edicts and, in the case of Alexandria, under Theodosius involved the physical annihilation of temples honouring Isis and Serapis.⁸⁴ The destruction of the *Serapeum* in 391 put an end to all forms of religious pluralism. All the Pantheons which had been subsidised by Hadrian were systematically destroyed, or converted into churches.

In the fifth book of his *Histories*, Tacitus states that, when Titus entered the temple of Jerusalem in 70, all the gods (in the plural) escaped:

‘The doors of the inner shrine were suddenly thrown open, and a voice of more than mortal tone was heard to cry that the Gods were departing. At the same instant there was a mighty stir as of departure’.⁸⁵

According to the passage in the *Historia Augusta* mentioned above, Tacitus may have wanted to represent the temple of Jerusalem as a kind of *Pantheon* similar to the temples without icons inaugurated by Hadrian where a plurality of ‘invisible’ or ‘spiritual’ gods were worshipped. He may also have spontaneously associated the Jewish temple of Jerusalem with the aniconic pantheons attended by Christians in his time. The ‘Christian Virgil’ Prudentius sounds even more sarcastic than Tacitus when he mocks the pathetic crowd of pagan gods and phantoms (*laruas*) that lurked behind the doors of Roman *Capitolia*:

“ipse magistratum tibi consulis, ipse tribunal | contulit auratumque togae donauit
amicum, | cuius religio tibi displicet, o pereuntum | adsertor diuum, solus qui

83 TAKACS 1995, 4–5.

84 Theodoret. *HE* 5,22.

85 Tac. *Hist.* 5,13: *Apertae repente delubri fores et audita maior humana vox excedere deos; simul ingens motus excedentium*. Prof. E. Gruen pointed out the sarcasm of this passage in the Classics seminar in Durham in 2007.

restituendos | Vulcani Martisque dolos Ueneris peroras | Saturnique senis lapides
Phoebique furores, | Iliacae matris Megalesia, Bacchica Nysi, | Isidis amissum
semper plangentis Osirim, | mimica ridendaque suis sollemnia caluis | et
quascumque solent Capitolia claudere laruas.”⁸⁶

86 *C. Symm.* 1,622–631: “It is he that conferred on thee the office of consul and the judgement-seat, and gave thee the gold-wrought toga to wear, he whose religion does not win thy favour, thou upholder of gods outworn, who alone dost plead for the restoration of those tricks of Vulcan and Mars and Venus, old Saturn’s stones and Phoebus’ prophetic frenzies, the Ilian Mother’s Megalesian festival, the Bacchic rites of the Nysian god, the farcical ceremonies of Isis ever mourning for her lost Osiris, which even her own bald-heads must laugh at, and all the goblins which the Capitol by custom keeps within it”.

Conclusion: Multiple identities in Second century Christianity

MARCO RIZZI

We may strengthen the views propounded in this volume by examining Christian texts which date directly from Hadrian's time or from its nearest years, and by checking the coherence of the Christians' self-presentation in these texts within the framework of Hadrian's religious policy as reconstructed in the preceding pages. Indeed, we cannot rely on a great number of literary witnesses: I will take into consideration Aristides' *Apology* (frequently quoted above), the prologue of Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* (probably written in the mid-Second century but explicitly set immediately after the outburst of the Jewish war), and the *Letters* of Ignatius of Antioch, who was executed at the end of Trajan's reign – in some ways, his epistolary can help us to understand Christian self-consciousness immediately before Hadrian's ascent to the throne.

1. Aristides' *Apology*: the Christians as *tertium genus*

As has been frequently stated in these pages, Aristides' *Apology* constitutes the first explicit, "public" presentation of a conscious Christian identity as distinguished from other ethnic and religious identities within the Roman Empire. The very complex textual tradition of this work, however, requires a closer examination; we do not possess its original Greek text, with the exception of a few papyrus fragments which are only partially useful for our present purpose. Instead, we have an ancient and authoritative Syriac translation, another partial translation into ancient Armenian, limited to the first two chapters, a kind of extended Greek quotation or paraphrase which was inserted into the *Romance of Barlaam and Joasaph* – a work attributed to John of Damascus, but probably written in the Tenth century –, and, finally, some fragments in ancient Georgian which come from a hagiographical narrative (as the *Romance of Barlaam and Joasaph* is also)¹.

¹ All the details of the textual problems and the different redactions can be found in POUDERON 2003, to which I refer for further information. Nevertheless, my conclusions are very different from Pouderon's on the specific issue under discussion. I consider the Syriac translation (quoted as *Syr.*), the Greek text of the *Romance of Barlaam and Joasaph*

Aristides builds and structures his *Apology* by cataloguing the various human races starting from their different cultic practices, and by criticising them from a Christian point of view; he ends with a positive presentation of the Christian faith as the true and correct conception of the deity. The three versions we possess, however, disagree about the number of human races and on their articulation, which is the topic discussed in chapter two of Aristides' *Apology*. On the one hand, the Syriac version, along with the Armenian, speaks of four races: Barbarians, Greeks, Jews and Christians. On the other hand, the Greek paraphrase mentions only three races, omitting the names of Barbarians and Greeks, but speaks in general terms of "polytheists" "which venerate a multitude of gods" and subdivides them into Chaldeans, Greeks, and Egyptians². Even the Syriac version, however, follows this scheme in its subsequent development, which criticises the religion of the Barbarians, the Greeks and the Egyptians in the same order. The specific narrative context of the *Romance of Barlaam and Joasaph* (set at the court of the Indian king, where many astrologers and foretellers were in charge) explains why here Barbarians are substituted by Chaldeans and why astrology is criticised more harshly than in the Syriac redaction. In any case, doubt remains over whether Aristides' original scheme was ternary or quaternary.

The assumption of the Christians as a third race (*tertium genus*) was a commonplace in Second and Third century Christian apologetics, as is well known; a closer examination of the Syriac redaction of Aristides' text could, however, also confirm that the original scheme was a ternary one, and it could explain how it was subsequently transformed into the quaternary. The Syriac text reads: "It's clear to you, king, that four races of human beings exist in this world: Barbarians and Greeks, Jews and Christians"³. Immediately following this, the Syriac redaction presents the family trees of the Barbarians, Greeks, Jews, and Christians. It is worth noting that in the Greek redaction of the *Romance of Barlaam and Joasaph* there is, of course, no mention of the genealogies of Barbarians and Greeks, while the family trees of Jews and Christians have been transposed to subsequent chapters⁴, a change made necessary by the insertion of the Chaldeans, which modified the original catalogue of races. But an accurate reading of the genealogies in the Syriac text shows that Barbarians and Greeks share the same descent from Chronos: "The Barbarians, indeed, trace the origin of their kind of religion from Kronos and from Rhea and their other gods; the Greeks, however, from Helenos, who is said

(quoted as *Gr.*), and the papyrus fragment *LondLitt.* 223 (2486) (quoted as Π²), according to the edition in POUDERON 2003.

2 Arist. *Apol.* 2, 2 *Gr.*: οἱ τοὺς πολλοὺς σεβόμενοι θεοὺς εἰς τρία διαιροῦνται γένη, Χαλδαίους τε καὶ Ἑλληνας καὶ Αἰγυπτίους.

3 Arist. *Apol.* 2, 2 *Syr.*

4 Arist. *Apol.* 14, 1 *Gr.* and 15, 1 *Gr.*

to be sprung from Zeus. And by Helenos there were born Aeolus and Xythos; and there were others descended from Inachos and Phoroneus, and lastly from the Egyptian Danaos and from Kadmos and from Dionysos”⁵.

The Greeks’ cult to Chronos is confirmed in a subsequent chapter, in which the full genealogy of the Barbarians is reconnected to the cultic activity of the Greeks: “First of all, the Greeks bring forward as a god Kronos, who is translated as Kewan [Saturn]. And his worshippers sacrifice their children to him, and they burn some of them alive in his honour. And they say that he took to him among his wives Rhea, and begat any children by her. By her too he begat Dios, who is called Zeus (...). And after Kronos they bring forward another god Zeus. And they say of him that he assumed the sovereignty, and was king over all the gods”⁶.

A detailed list of the deities worshipped by the Greeks follows this passage. In previous chapters, Barbarians were said to practice the cult of various natural elements (such as sky, earth, water, fire, winds, sun, and moon) and of dead men, without any mention of the deities referred to in their family tree in the introduction (chap. 2 *Syr.*). Finally, immediately after having dealt with the Greeks, Aristide’s *Apology* criticises the Egyptian cults, which are defined as “most stupid and wicked of all”⁷.

From this discussion, we can conclude with a fair amount of probability that the original racial scheme used by Aristides has not been fully preserved either by the Syriac version or by the Greek paraphrase. We can suppose that he mentioned three races (Barbarians, Jews and Christians), among which the Barbarians also included Greeks and Egyptians. The Syriac translator was probably misguided by the mention of the Greeks in the family tree of chapter 2 and by the large space devoted to their cults in subsequent chapters. Accordingly, in the opening summary he increased the number of the races to four, omitting the name of the Egyptians which was, however, contained in the list used in the Greek redaction to qualify the *primum genus*, “the first race”.

Such a reconstruction is not without significance for the general hypothesis propounded in this book. In this way, Aristides’ *Apology* would be an expression of a Greek vision, to which the internal distinction between Greeks and Barbarians must be traced; however, such a distinction would be reversed in the

5 Arist. *Apol.* 2, 2 *Syr.*

6 Arist. *Apol.* 9, 1–2 *Syr.* The Greek text is almost identical: οὕτως παρεισάγεται αὐτοῖς πρὸ πάντων θεῶς ὁ λεγόμενος Κρόνος καὶ τούτῳ θύουσι τὰ ἴδια τέκνα. δὲ ἔσχε παῖδας πολλοὺς ἐκ τῆς Ῥέας καὶ μανεῖς ἤσθιε τὰ ἴδια τέκνα. (...) δεῦτερος παρεισάγεται ὁ Ζεὺς, ὃν φασὶ βασιλεῦσαι τῶν θεῶν αὐτῶν (...).

7 Arist. *Apol.* 12, 1 *Syr.* and *Gr.*: Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ ἀβελτερώτεροι καὶ ἀφρονέστεροι τούτων ὄντες (...).

oppositional use which characterises it in later Christian writers such as Tatian⁸. Moreover, it must be understood from a point of view which fits well with Roman and, specifically, Hadrian's philhellenism: within the wide horizon of the Roman Empire, Barbarians (including Romans) and Greeks shared the same descent from Chronos and the same superiority originating in the Greek cultural tradition, especially from philosophy, which is explicitly praised in Aristides' *Apology*⁹. Such a superiority is underscored particularly in relation to the Egyptians, with whom the survey of the *genera* within the Empire ends, in line with the attention paid to Egypt by Hadrian, if not direct connected to one of his journeys there¹⁰.

Indeed, what matters for Aristides is to distinguish sharply Christians from Jews and to make the first a "third race" which is easily insertable within the ecumenical imperial system by means of the open presentation of their way of life as living philosophical research: "But the Christians, King, while they went about and made search, have found the truth; and as we learned from their writings, they have come nearer to truth and genuine knowledge than the rest of the nations"¹¹.

2. Justin's Dialogue with Trypho and the Jewish revolt

The same idea of wandering in search of the truth and finally finding it in Christianity stands at the centre of the prologue of Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*¹². Two aspects of this autobiographical report are worth noting: Justin's remarkable self-presentation as a philosopher and his characterisation of Christianity as the only true philosophy, which can lead to the absolute truth, and the narrative setting of the *Dialogue* in the years of the Jewish revolt of 135 AD.

Chapters 1–9 of Justin's *Dialogue* sketch a short intellectual autobiography of the Christian writer; it originated with Justin's casual meeting with a cultivated Jew, Trypho, and some of his friends. Justin is addressed as a

8 Who wrote in a very different cultural, political and religious context, in which the irenic attitude of Hadrian's policy towards Christians was dismissed and substituted by sporadic or more planned persecutions.

9 Arist. *Apol.* 8, 1 and 13, 1 *Syr.*; 13, 5 *Gr.*

10 On the date of Aristides' *Apology* and Hadrian's stay in Athens after the journey to Egypt in 130 see GALIMBERTI's first paper in this volume.

11 Arist. *Apol.* 15, 1 *Syr.* The expression indicating "wandering and searching" appears also in Arist. *Apol.* 16, 1 *Syr.*; its authenticity is confirmed by Π² which reports this fragment of the text, and by the Greek paraphrase that reworks and widens the original expression.

12 Just. *Dial.* 1–9. Text and further information in BOBICHON 2003; see also the relevant commentary in VISONÀ 1988.

philosopher since he was wearing a typical cloak, the *pallium*, which constitutes a sort of uniform for Greek and Roman professional teachers of philosophy¹³. Justin accepts without contradiction the address from his companions and defines his own philosophy at the same time in theological¹⁴ and eudaimonist¹⁵ terms; moreover, he remembers his philosophical career and his unsatisfactory apprenticeship with a Stoic teacher, with a Pythagorean after him, and finally with a Platonist, although for different reasons in each case; only the meeting with an enigmatic ancient sage ends Justin's philosophical training and makes him adhere to the sole "sure and useful philosophy"¹⁶, i. e. Christianity.

The words "philosopher", "philosophy" and "philosophical" appear 26 times in these chapters. The full identification of Christianity as a "philosophical way of life" is confirmed by Justin wearing the robe of a professional philosopher, as has been said, but also by his subsequent career – as witnessed by the acts of his martyrdom. Surely, such self-presentation went further than a simple adherence to a cultural model, as in the wearing of beards by Roman and Greek members of the cultivated elite that we can observe in their portraits¹⁷. Thus Justin – who was born in Palestine nearby Flavia Neapolis (Sichem) to parents who moved there after the Jewish war in 70¹⁸, who taught philosophy in Rome and whose fate was to be executed in that city¹⁹ – appears to us as an exemplary case of multiple and articulated identity: a Roman citizen, a Greek-speaking Palestinian, a Christian convert, and a professional philosopher. Scholars have discussed such a complex nexus, especially in relation to the intellectual confrontation between Christianity and classical culture and, more specifically, philosophy; the problem of biblical hermeneutics which the *Dialogue* deals with is also generally taken into consideration within such a framework. However, while the autobiographical report of the prologue has been discussed in detail, far less attention has been devoted to its fictional setting in the years around 135, i. e. at the time of the 'war suddenly burned in Judea'²⁰, which was the focus of the conversation among Trypho's companions (although Justin doesn't record its contents) and the cause of Trypho's condition of exile.²¹

Scholars assume that the narrative context of Justin's *Dialogue* is fictional and far from its actual redaction, which we can date around 160, on the basis of

13 Just. *Dial.* 1, 1–2.

14 Just. *Dial.* 2, 1.

15 Just. *Dial.* 3, 4.

16 Just. *Dial.* 8, 1: (...) ταύτην μόνην εὑρισκον φιλοσοφίαν ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ σύμφορον.

17 See RIZZI above.

18 Just. *1 Apol.* 1, 1.

19 *Act. Iust.* 3, 3.

20 Just. *Dial.* 9, 3: (...) ἐμβαλόντος τινὸς αὐτῶν λόγον περὶ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γενομένου πολέμου (...).

21 Just. *Dial.* 1, 3.

a passage from the text²², which seems to indicate that it has been written after his *Apologies*, dated around 150. Even if few scholars propound a date closer to the events in 135 for the writing of the *Dialogue*, such a fictional scenery remains full of significance, and we can say the same of its dedication to a certain Marcus Pompeus²³, about whom we have no historical information but who must have been a Roman citizen, as shown by his name. The sharing of a probable Roman viewpoint by Justin is confirmed, for instance, by the statement that ‘the circumcision according to the flesh was given you from Abram onwards as a sign which distinguishes you from us and from other people’²⁴: here, *us* can be read as indicating Christians but also, in more general terms, as indicating Greek speaking people or the Romans *tout court*.

Justin’s statement, according to which the Jews promoted a systematic and well organised defamation campaign against the Christians which charged them with atheism and anomy²⁵, appears even more relevant; it is well known from Justin’s *Apologies* and from other Christian writers of the Second century that such accusations were widespread at various levels in the Roman world. Similar statements frequently recur in Justin’s *Dialogue*; in the context of a three-way confrontation (Christians and Jews debating before a Roman reader) they seem to be an attempt to remove responsibility for the charges against the Christians from the Roman authorities and to attribute them to Jewish machinations, as in, for example, a *cliché* we can read in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*²⁶.

In general, Justin’s *Dialogue* sketches a picture of Palestinian Judaism as divided against itself, between a permeable position regarding instances from the Christian field – which assumption sheds some light on the problem of the “trueness” of the character Thrypho, who may seem unhistorical at first glance because he is too indulgent to Justin’s observation – and, in contrast, a strongly anti-Christian attitude that is directly connected to persecutory activities by Justin, which he ascribes to the inspirers and actors of Bar Kochba’s revolt.

In such a view, the fictive setting of the *Dialogue* in the years around 135 reveals its full significance: Justin recreates before the eyes of a Roman observer,

22 Just. *Dial.* 120, 6.

23 Just. *Dial.* 141, 5.

24 Just. *Dial.* 16, 2: ἡ γὰρ ἀπὸ Ἀβραὰμ κατὰ σάρκα περιτομὴ εἰς σημεῖον ἐδόθη, ἵνα ἦτε ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἔθνῶν καὶ ἡμῶν ἀφορισμένοι.

25 Just. *Dial.* 108, 2: καὶ οὐ μόνον οὐ μετενοήσατε, μαθόντες αὐτὸν ἀναστάντα ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἀλλ’, ὡς προεῖπον, ἄνδρας χειροτονήσαντες ἐκλεκτοὺς εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐπέμψατε, κηρύσσοντας ὅτι αἴρεσίς τις ἄθεος καὶ ἄνομος ἐγήγερται ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ τινος Γαλιλαίου πλάνου ὃν σταυρωσάντων ἡμῶν, οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ κλέψαντες αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ μνήματος νυκτός, ὁπόθεν κατετέθη ἀφηλωθεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ, πλανῶσι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους λέγοντες ἐγγεῖρθαι αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνεληλυθέναι κατειπόντες δεδιδασχέναι καὶ ταῦτα ἄπερ κατὰ τῶν ὁμολογούντων Χριστὸν καὶ διδάσκαλον καὶ υἱὸν θεοῦ εἶναι παντὶ γένει ἀνθρώπων ἄθεα καὶ ἄνομα καὶ ἀνόσια λέγετε.

26 *Mart. of Polyc.* 12, 2; 13, 1; 17, 2.

Marcus Pompeus, the dispute he had at the exact moment during Hadrian's reign when both the writer and his reader were conscious that a decisive religious and political shift had taken place. After the repression of the Diaspora revolts during Trajan's reign, the possibilities of religious pluralism opened by Hadrian's policy appeared convincing to a section of the Jews, which was willing to distance itself from the sectarian attitude that caused the Palestinian tragedy of the year 70. If one adopts this hermeneutical key, the *Dialogue* poses a debate about religious universalism and about whether the Jews or the Christians were its true champions. This is not a merely exegetical problem, it also reveals a decisive point in the self-definition of both religions under the new climate of Hadrian's reign. It makes plausible also Trypho's friendly attitude towards his Christian interlocutor and his argument.

So, the argument put by Justin in a decisive moment of the political and religious history of the Empire sets out before Romans the manner in which Christians build their own identity, which no longer excludes 'any single race of men, whether barbarians, or Greeks, or whatever they may be called, nomads, or vagrants, or herdsmen living in tents'²⁷; such a new religious identity can lead all to conversion to a way of life that wears the unmistakable robes of the Hellenistic philosophical traditions, but that surpasses all previous ones, and even Moses' heritage²⁸.

3. Ignatius of Antioch: cities and churches in competition for prestige

Modern scholars generally agree on the authenticity of seven letters from Ignatius of Antioch's epistolary *corpus* and date them to the second decade of the Second century²⁹. They witness Ignatius' effort to foster the model of monarchic episcopacy in the Asian churches and to substitute the pre-existing structures based on a college of presbyters; moreover, Ignatius' opponents are generally

27 Just. *Dial.* 117, 5: οὐδὲ γὰρ ὅλως ἐστὶ τι γένος ἀνθρώπων, εἴτε βαρβάρων εἴτε Ἑλλήνων εἴτε ἀπλῶς ὀπιτιοῦν ὀνόματι προσαγορευομένων, ἢ ἀμαξοβίων ἢ αἰκῶν καλουμένων ἢ ἐν σκηναῖς κτηνοτρόφων οἰκούντων (...).

28 The composition date of the *Acts of the Apostles* has become a matter of lively scholarly debate over the last few years; a hypothetical dating to within or immediately before Hadrian's reign would well accord with the reflections I make here; see for instance PERVO 2006 and NASRALLAH 2008. But the use of *Acts* to support my position would require an updated discussion here and since there is no explicit scholarly consensus about it I prefer not emphasise such an hypothesis. Perhaps also this book could offer some further material to better locate the redaction of *Acts*.

29 Text and notes in AYÁN CALVO 1991. BRENT 2006 offers a treatment of Ignatius' letters with an approach that is close to mine in part.

characterised on theological and doctrinal grounds as docetist and Judaizing. In my opinion, Ignatius' letters seem also to echo the deep-rooted and everlasting competition for prestige among the prominent Asian cities, especially the strong rivalry between Ephesus and Smyrna about which we are well informed by epigraphic, archaeological and literary sources and especially by the contemporary production of the writers of the Second Sophistic. A closer analysis of the address formulae which open Ignatius' letters should confirm such an assertion³⁰.

Writing to the community in Ephesus and also to that in Rome, Ignatius is over-abundant in words of praise and celebration; he uses terms such as μέγεθος³¹ or μεγαλότης³² only in the case of these two cities, and he has recourse to an embarrassing series of superlatives in the letter addressed to the Christians in the Capital. We are very well informed due to a mass of epigraphic evidence about the frequently grotesque competition among Asian *poleis* for obtaining such titles from this or that political authority; therefore, it is impossible not to formulate the hypothesis that Ignatius is transposing the lexicon and conventions of contemporary rhetoric and political life to the Christian domain. If this were so, we must provisionally conclude that the self-comprehension of the Christian communities addressed by Ignatius was still involved in the problem of the self-representation of Greek cities within the general framework of imperial civilisation during his time, thus the identity of a Christian community was strictly connected to the municipal one, forging a link between religious and civic community which was felt as constitutive rather than accidental, also by Christians.

This statement could be confirmed by the anachronistic epithet “celebrated in the centuries” referring to the Ephesians Church³³ (which was at best eight decades old), and by a symmetrical examination of the concluding greetings of Ignatius' letters. Any sign to other Asian cities is missing in the epistle to the Ephesians, and the fact that Ignatius wrote it in Smyrna is only revealed by a hint to Polycarp, but the latter is not qualified as a bishop³⁴. The greetings to Magnesians, also written in Smyrna, are proffered by Ignatius on behalf of Ephesians Christians; he mentions Polycarp as a bishop, while the other cities

30 See also Rizzi 2006, 53–54.

31 Ign. *Eph. inscriptio*.

32 Ign. *Rom. inscriptio*.

33 Ign. *Eph.* 8, 1: διαβοήτου τοῖς αἰῶσιν. It's impossible to see here a reference to the eons of the Jewish or Gnostic terminology, which is totally foreign to Ignatius.

34 Ign. *Eph.* 21, 1: Ἀντίμουχον ὑμῶν ἐγὼ καὶ ὄν ἐπέμψατε εἰς θεοῦ τιμὴν εἰς Σμύρναν, ὅθεν καὶ γράφω ὑμῖν, εὐχαριστῶν τῷ κυρίῳ, ἀγαπῶν Πολύκαρπον ὡς καὶ ὑμᾶς.

inhabited by Christians are mentioned in generic terms³⁵; Smyrnaeans and Ephesians are associated in Christ's love by Ignatius' greetings to the Trallians³⁶ and also in the person of Burrus, who was sent by both churches to bestow honours on Ignatius in the Troad region, from where the latter writes to Philadelphians³⁷. Ignatius' letter to the Romans was to be dispatched by some Ephesians called, in superlative terms, ἀξιομακάριστοι³⁸; finally, writing to Smyrnaeans from the Troad region, Ignatius associates them to Burrus with 'your brothers' Ephesians, thereby recommending that ὁμόνοια could spill over from the community's internal relations to the mutual partnership of the two churches³⁹.

In short, Ignatius appears very attentive in attributing the importance according to circumstances and opportunities and the deserved rank of each city and community – in the precise place assigned by the ancient epistolary praxis to a well-defined formulary function; we can note also the clear prevalence of Ephesus, with which Smyrna is associated only in those cases in which Ignatius could presume the inhabitants of the latter would have known the contents of his letters since they were addressed to them or transmitted by people known to them.

This is the context in which Ignatius insists on diffusing and making Christian communities accept his ternary hierarchical structure made up of bishop, presbyters, and deacons, within which the one bishop is 'an image of the Father'⁴⁰; frequently in his letters Ignatius emphasises the necessity for Christians to do nothing without the presence or authorisation of the bishop, especially on the liturgical level, in a clear hint of the difficulties and resistances which Ignatius' ecclesiastical model faced and which he considered as worrisome as the doctrinal deviations considered above.

This is not the place to examine further the issue of the origin and development of the monarchic episcopate during the Second century but perhaps we can formulate a suggestive question: if such a hierarchical model for structuring Christian communities had been theorised by Ignatius almost *ex*

35 Ign. *Magn.* 15: Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς Ἐφεσίοι ἀπὸ Σμύρνης, ὅθεν καὶ γράφω ὑμῖν, παρόντες εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ὡσπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς, οἱ κατὰ πάντα με ἀνέπαυσαν ἅμα Πολυκάρπῳ, ἐπισκόπῳ Σμυρναίων. Καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ δὲ ἐκκλησίαι ἐν τιμῇ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς.

36 Ign. *Trall.* 12, 1. 13, 1: Ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ Σμύρνης ἅμα ταῖς συμπαρούσαις μοι ἐκκλησίαις τοῦ θεοῦ, οἱ κατὰ πάντα με ἀνέπαυσαν σαρκί τε καὶ πνεύματι. (...) Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἡ ἀγάπη Σμυρναίων καὶ Ἐφεσίων.

37 Ign. *Phil.* 11, 2: Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς ἡ ἀγάπη τῶν ἀδελφῶν τῶν ἐν Τρωάδι, ὅθεν καὶ γράφω ὑμῖν διὰ Βούρρου πεμφθέντος ἅμα ἐμοὶ ἀπὸ Ἐφεσίων καὶ Σμυρναίων εἰς λόγον τιμῆς.

38 Ign. *Rom.* 10, 1: Γράφω δὲ ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἀπὸ Σμύρνης δι' Ἐφεσίων τῶν ἀξιομακαρίστων.

39 On Ignatius' concept of ὁμόνοια see BRENT 2006, 231–308, with whom, however, I do not agree on every aspect.

40 Ign. *Trall.* 3, 1: (...) ὡς καὶ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ὄντα τύπον τοῦ πατρὸς (...).

abrupto and it spread out irreversibly in the second half of the Second century and the first decades of the Third – even before its own full theoretical definition and the elaboration of a coherent terminology that we find only in the *Apostolic tradition*, in Tertullian, and in Cyprian during the Third century – is it really possible to explain or even understand Ignatius' model without presuming any form of relation with the Roman model of a monarchic Empire including cultural, religious, and ethnical diversities which was first outlined by Trajan, begun by Hadrian, fully established by subsequent emperors, and rhetorically and ideologically illustrated by Aelius Aristides' *Encomium of Rome*?⁴¹

The same Ignatius acknowledged the difficult acceptance of his hierarchical model in his own community when, while leaving his own city in chains he admitted that 'the church of Syria (...) has God as shepherd in my place. Only Jesus Christ will be its bishop and your love'⁴². Perhaps it was not fortuitous that the mono-episcopal model began spreading from the Greek cities of Asia Minor, foremost in celebrating the imperial cult during the years from Trajan and Hadrian through to Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, a period judged as fully favourable by the entire Christian tradition. If this were true, Constantine in his claim to be emperor and apostle would not be the hero of a historical watershed, but merely the unintended heir of Hadrian's political-theological innovation.

41 HÜBNER 1997 and LECHNER 1999 argue that Ignatius' letters are a forgery from mid-Second century; this assumption would be perfectly fitting with the reflections I propose here. Since there is no full acceptance of their hypothesis by scholars, however, I maintain the traditional date, as I do about the composition date of the *Acts of the Apostles* (see note 28 above).

42 Ign. *Rom.* 9, 1: Μνημονεύετε ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ ὑμῶν τῆς ἐν Συρίᾳ ἐκκλησίας, ἥτις ἀντὶ ἐμοῦ ποιμένι τῷ θεῷ χρῆται. Μόνος αὐτὴν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐπισκοπῆσει καὶ ἡ ὑμῶν ἀγάπη.

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