

BLENDED INTENSIVE PROGRAM 2022/23

Digitizing a lexicon. How to work with words for the study of Religions in the Graeco-Roman World.

[3rd lesson, 31.03.23]

Creating a lemma for the Lexicon of Religions in Graeco-Roma world.

(Digital) tools, methods of analysis and research perspectives

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Projet FNS «Religious Competition in Late Antiquity»

RELIGIOUS COMPETITION IN LATE ANTIQUITY

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ReLAB

*Religious Competition in Late Antiquity:
A Laboratory of New Categories,
Taxonomies and Methods*

A research project (2019-2023)
founded by the [Swiss National Science Foundation](#)
and held at the [Department of History](#)
[of the University of Fribourg](#).

MORE

BOOKMARKS

ASDIWAL. Revue
genevoise d'anthropologie et
d'histoire des religions

MYTHOS. Rivista di Storia
delle religioni

SEMITICA & CLASSICA.
International Journal of
Oriental and Mediterranean
Studies

Sourcebook on religious interactions and competitions in Late Antiquity

1. Notions: new terms and semantic evolution of previous terms

e.g. αἵρεσις → from αἰρέω, «to take», «something that is taken», i.e. «choice»

- From the Hellenist time, «philosophical school» (the different αἵρέσεις correspond to the philosophical schools diffused around the Mediterranean)
- The «Christian turn», αἵρεσις as «heresy», even if the evolution is not immediate and there are several steps. Concurrent meanings: αἵρεσις can signify both «philosophical school» and «heresy» in Late Antiquity!

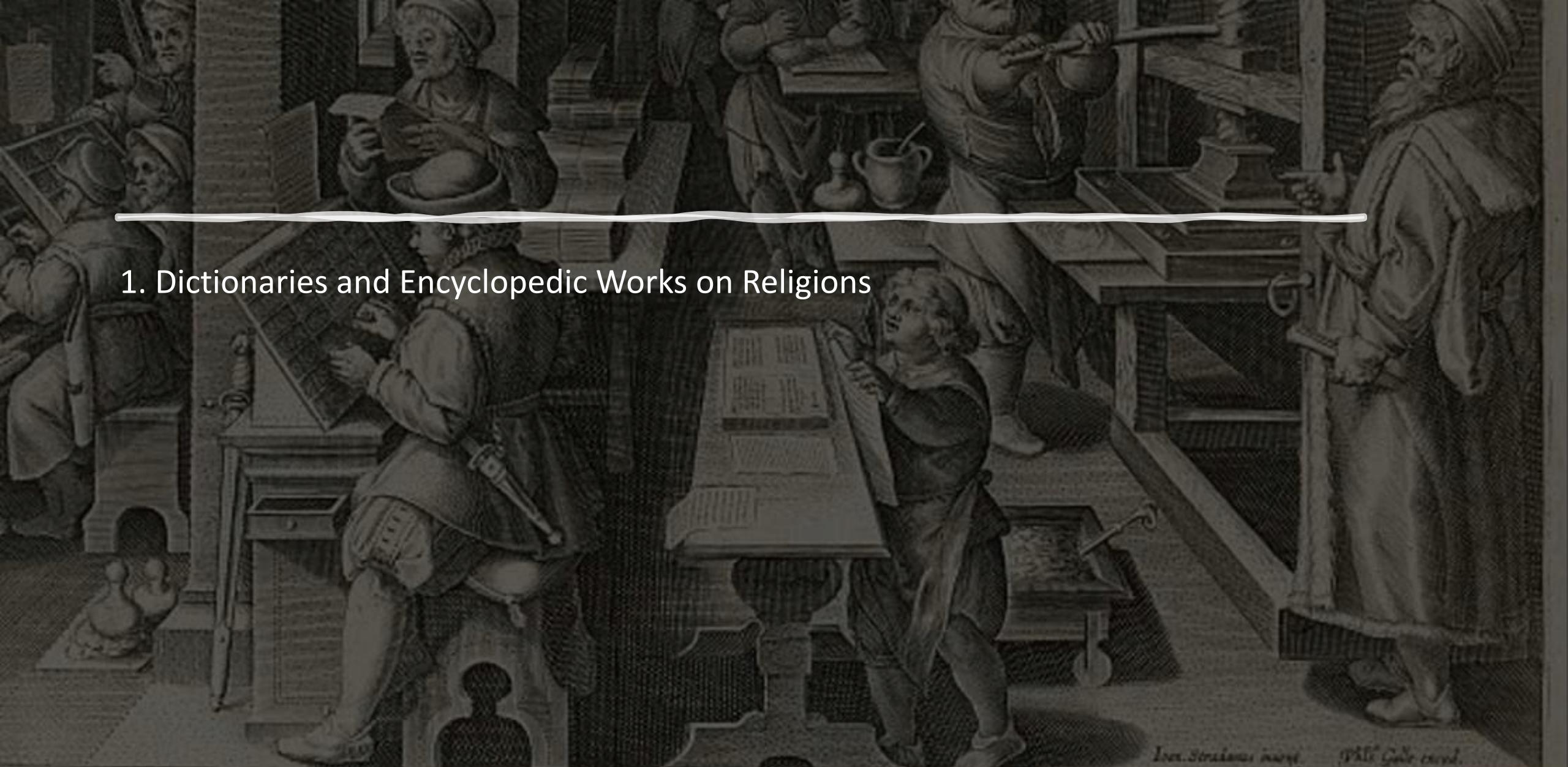
2. Figures/Concepts: the emergence of some figures or concepts that embody the religious competition

e.g. θεῖος ἀνὴρ → the «divine man»

- This expression is associated to some figures (heroes, demigods, etc.) from the archaic period
- In Late Antiquity, we can assist to what P. Brown defined the «emergence of the divine men», this figure becomes more diffused in both Christian and “pagan” (as well as Jewish) literary production as a way of defining and reclaiming identities.

A quick look at the tools for the research on lemmas

- FORMATS:
 1. On paper;
 2. scanned versions (PDF format);
 3. fully digitalized.
- CONTENTS:
 1. Dictionaries about Religions in general;
 2. Dictionaries and Vocabularies to the study of Latin and Greek terms;
 3. Research on ancient sources;
 4. Research of scientific literature;
 5. Database of articles and books (thus included the “academic social networks”).

An engraving depicting a busy printing house. In the foreground, a man in a dark, patterned coat sits at a desk, reading a large open book. To his right, another man stands at a desk, looking up at a large sheet of paper. In the background, several other figures are engaged in various tasks: one is writing at a desk, another is using a tool on a piece of wood, and a third is standing near a large wooden frame. The scene is filled with books, papers, and printing equipment, creating a sense of industrious activity.

1. Dictionaries and Encyclopedic Works on Religions

IMPRESSIO LIBRORVM.

Potest vt vna vox capi aure plurima:

Linunt ita vna scripta mille paginas.

Inex. Stradanus inu. Phil. Galle excud.

Dictionnaire des faits religieux

sous la direction de
Régine Azria
Danièle Hervieu-Léger
Dominique Iogna-Prat

QUADRIGE



puf

Specific «religious systems»

Christianity:

- Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church
- HarperCollins Bible Dictionary

Judaism:

- Encyclopaedia Judaica
- Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion
- JPS Dictionary of Jewish Words

Islam:

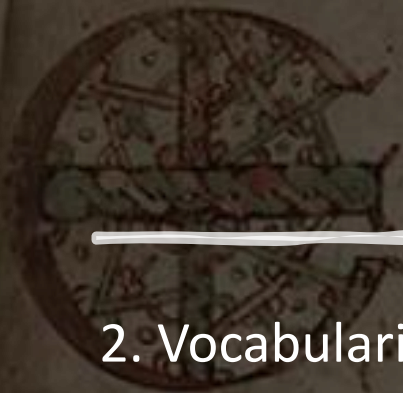
- Encyclopaedia of Islam
- Oxford Dictionary of Islam

Religions in Antiquity:

- Routledge Encyclopedia of Ancient Mediterranean Religions
- Encyclopedia of Religious and Philosophical Writings in Late Antiquity
- [Der Neue Pauly]
- [Religions in Antiquity, in the form of a Handbook]



Several companions and handbooks dedicated to more specific subjects



2. Vocabularies and Lexicon

μαρτυροῦσθε ὅτι ἡ ἀποστολή
 αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἀληθινή· καὶ ἡ
 ἀποστολή αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἀληθινή·
 καὶ ἡ ἀποστολή αὐτῶν ἐστὶν
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 ἀποστολή αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἀληθινή·

καὶ ἡ ἀποστολή αὐτῶν ἐστὶν
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 αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἀληθινή· καὶ ἡ
 ἀποστολή αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἀληθινή·

- An example of lemma analysis:
εἶδωλον, from shadow to idol





1. Etymology

εἶδωλον
(*eidolon*)



Connected to the ie theme
*weid- («see»?)



ἴδειν («I have seen»)
Lat. *video* («to see»)

2. Homeric use of εἶδωλον

Iliad V 449-453

αὐτὰρ ὁ εἶδωλον τεῦξ' ἀργυρότοξος Ἀπόλλων
αὐτῶ τ' Αἰνεία ἴκελον καὶ τεύχεσι τοῖον,
ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' εἰδώλω Τρῶες καὶ δῖοι Ἀχαιοὶ
δήουν ἀλλήλων ἀμφὶ στήθεσσι βοείας
ἀσπίδας εὐκύκλους λαισήϊά τε πτερόεντα.

“But Apollo of the silver bow fashioned a **wraith** in the likeness of Aeneas himself and in armor like his; and around the wraith the Trojans and noble Achaeans struck the bull’s-hide shields about one another’s chests, the round shields and fluttering bucklers”. (trad. A. T. Murray, LCL 170).

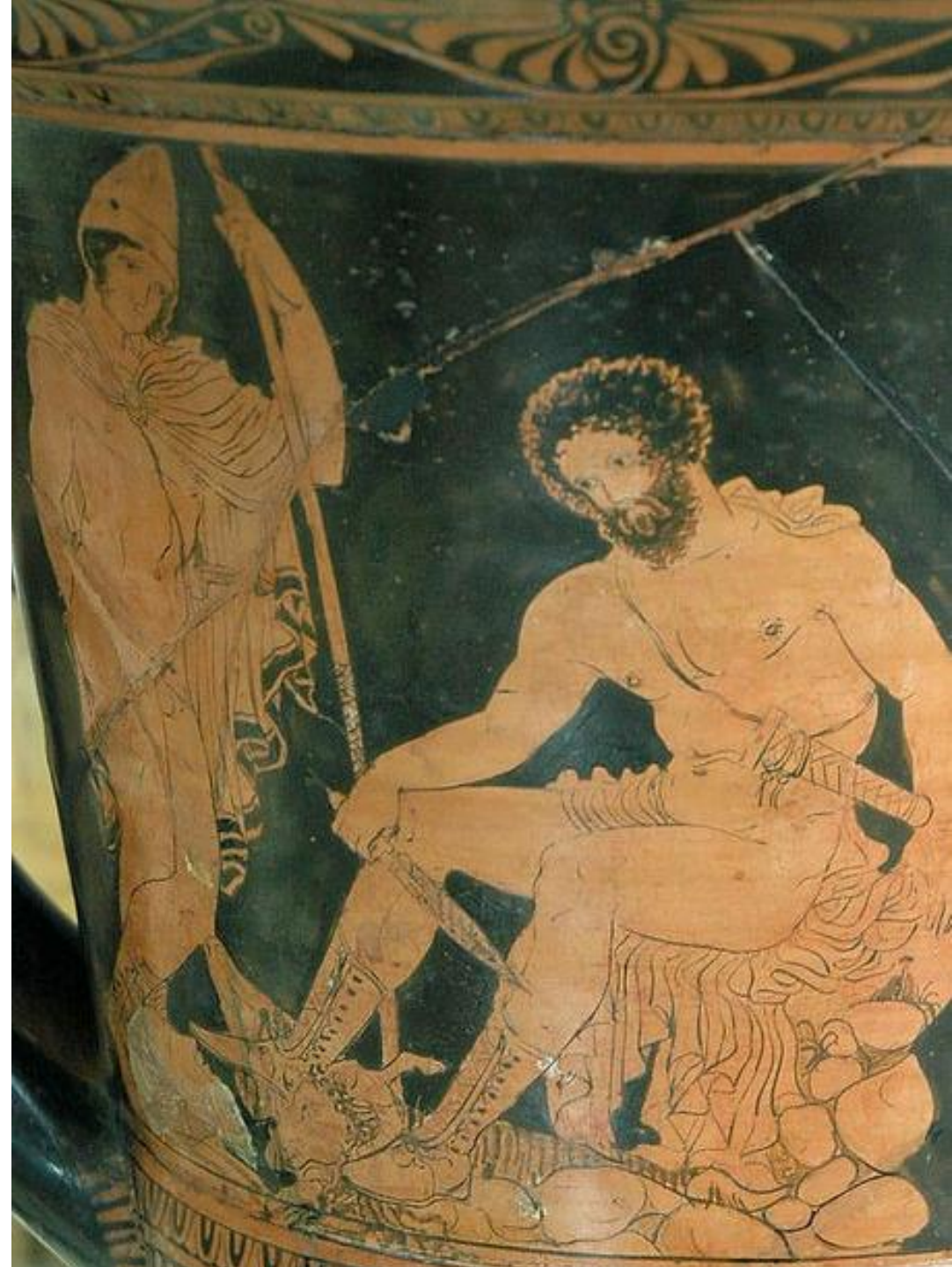


2. Homeric use of εἶδωλον

Odyssey XI 601-604

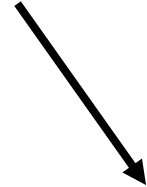
τὸν δὲ μέτ' εἰσενόησα βίην Ἡρακλεΐην,
εἶδωλον· αὐτὸς δὲ μετ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι
τέρπεται ἐν θαλίσῃ καὶ ἔχει καλλίσφυρον Ἥβην,
παῖδα Διὸς μέγαλοιο καὶ Ἥρης χρυσοπέδιλου.

“And after him I became aware of the mighty Heracles—his phantom; for he himself among the immortal gods takes his joy in the feast, and has for wife Hebe of the beautiful ankles, daughter of great Zeus and of Hera of the golden sandals” (trad. A. T. Murray LCL 104)



2. εἶδωλον in Archaic and Classical time

- Stesichorus, *Palinodia* (fr. 16 Page) τὸ εἶδωλον αὐτῆ[ς] («her shadow»), referring to Helen's shadow that was taken to Troy.



The same term is largely used by **Euripides** in the *Helen* to talk about the shadow of the woman that remained in Troy while she was in Egypt.

- Plato: he uses the term in a polemical perspective, since he opposes εἶδος and εἶδωλον

3. The «Septuaginta turn» of εἰδωλον

- In the Septuaginta, the term εἰδωλον is used to translate different terms (see Barbu 2011).
- Some examples:
 - *gilulim* (“rubbish”)
 - *teraphim* (“instrument for divination”)
 - *hevel* (“vanity”), addressed to the enemies of God, especially the false divinities.



This term is progressively associated to an idea of something that is delusional and foolish, but at the same time that is object of a false veneration, since only God deserves to be venerated.

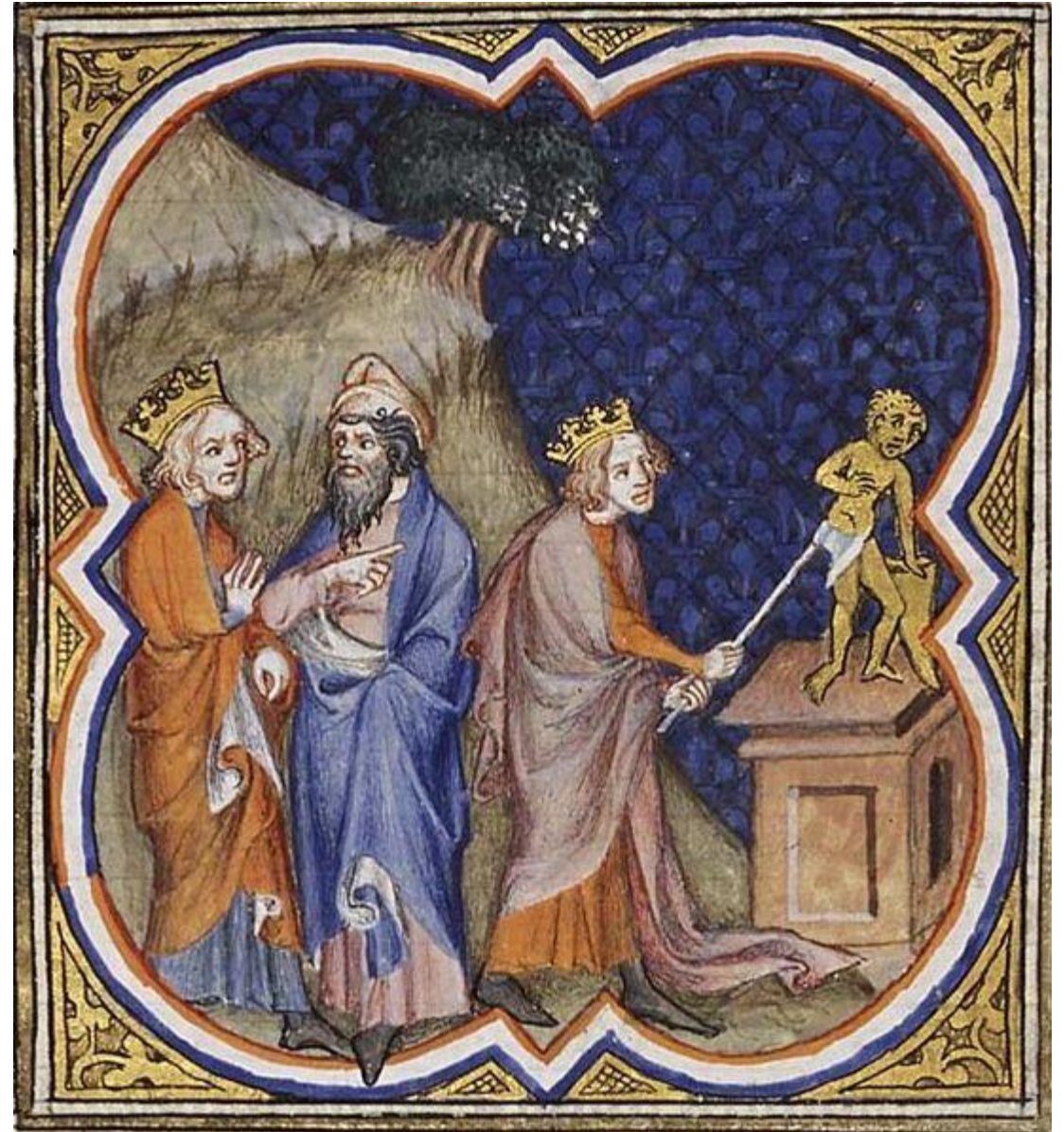
3. The «Septuaginta turn» of εἴδωλον

- The book of *Wisdom* (ch. 14-16) and the condemnation of the εἴδωλα.

Wisdom of Salomon 14, 15-16

Ταλαίπωροι δὲ καὶ ἐν νεκροῖς αἱ ἐλπίδες αὐτῶν,
οἵτινες ἐκάλεσαν θεοὺς ἔργα χειρῶν ἀνθρώπων,
χρυσὸν καὶ ἄργυρον τέχνης ἐμμελέτημα καὶ
ἀπεικάσματα ζῶων ἢ λίθον ἄχρηστον χειρὸς ἔργον
ἀρχαίας.

“But wretched, with their hope placed in lifeless objects,
are those who have called **gods the works of human hands**,
artfully wrought gold and silver representing living beings,
or a useless stone worked by an ancient hand” (tr. ESV)



4. εἶδωλον and idolatry in early Christian writings

- Creation of new terms from εἶδωλον, for example εἰδωλολάτρια and εἰδωλομανία.

- Paul, First Letter to the Corinthians 10, 14

Διόπερ, ἀγαπητοί μου, φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας

“Therefore, my beloved, flee from **idolatry**” (tr. ESV)

- John, Apocalypse 21, 8

τοῖς δὲ δειλοῖς καὶ ἀπίστοις καὶ ἐβδελυγμένοις καὶ φονεῦσιν καὶ πόρνοις καὶ φαρμάκοις καὶ εἰδωλολάτραις καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ψευδέσιν τὸ μέρος αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ καιομένῃ πυρὶ θείῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν ὁ θάνατος δεύτερος.

“As for the cowards, the unbelievers, the depraved, the murderers, the sexually immoral, the magicians, the **idolaters** and all liars, their part is in the lake of fire and brimstone: that is the second death” (tr. ESV)

4. εἶδωλον and idolatry in early Christian writings

- Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus to the Greeks* 4, 52

Αἱ δὲ χελιδόνες καὶ τῶν ὀρνέων τὰ πλεῖστα κατεξερωσίν αὐτῶν τῶν ἀγαλμάτων εἰσπετόμενα, οὐδὲν φροντίσαντα οὔτε Ὀλυμπίου Διὸς οὔτε Ἐπιδαυρίου Ἀσκληπιοῦ οὐδὲ μὴν Ἀθηνᾶς Πολιάδος ἢ Σαράπιδος Αἰγυπτίου· παρ' ὧν οὐδὲ αὐτῶν τὴν ἀναισθησίαν τῶν ἀγαλμάτων ἐκμανθάνετε.

The swallows and most other birds fly right up to the statues and relieve themselves on them, regardless of Olympian Zeus, Asclepius of Epidaurus, even Athena Polias, or Sarapis the Egyptian; but these very animals fail to make you understand the insensibility of the **statues!**

[→ **ἄγαλμα**, lexicon of images]

5. εἶδωλον and *idolum*

Tertullian, *On idolatry* 4, 1

Idolum tam fieri quam coli deus prohibet. Quanto praecedit, ut fiat quod coli possit, tanto prius est, ne fiat, si coli non licet. Propter hanc causam, **ad eradicandam scilicet materiam idololatriae**, lex diuina proclamat, **ne feceris idolum**, et coniungens, neque **similitudinem** eorum quae in caelo sunt et quae in terra et quae in mari, toto mundo eiusmodi artibus interdixit seruis dei.

“God prohibits an **idol** as much to be made as to be worshipped. In so far as the making what may be worshipped is the prior act, so far is the prohibition to make (if the worship is unlawful) the prior prohibition. For this cause-the **eradicating, namely, of the material of idolatry**-the divine law proclaims, **Thou shall make no idol**; and by conjoining, "Nor a similitude of the things which are in the heaven, and which are in the earth, and which are in the sea," has interdicted the servants of God from acts of that kind all the universe over” (tr. Thelwall 1869)

[→**similitudo**, lexicon of images]

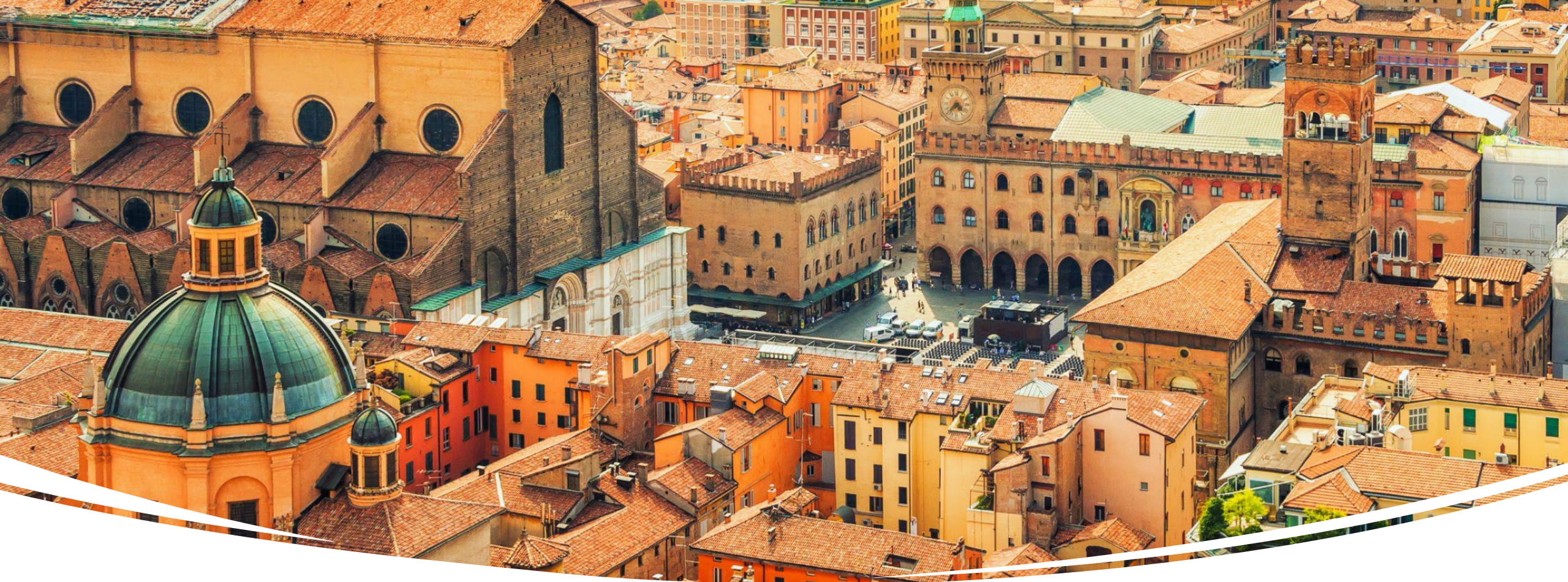
6. The «criminalisation» of the *idolum*

Thosodian Code 16, 7, 6

*Impp. Arcadius et Honorius aa. Caesario praefecto praetorio. Eos, qui, cum essent christiani, **idolorum se superstitione impia maculaverint**, haec poena persequitur, ut testandi in alienos non habeant facultatem, sed certa his generis sui propago succedat, id est pater ac mater, frater ac soror, filius ac filia, nepos ac neptis, nec ulterius sibi progrediendi quisquam vindicet potestatem. Dat. X kal. april. Constantinopoli Arcadio III et Honorio III aa. conss.*

The emperors Arcadius and Honorius Augustus to Caesarius, prefect of the praetorium. Those who, while they were Christians, **have defiled themselves with the impious superstition of idols**, shall be subjected to the punishment of no longer having the capacity to test in favour of strangers, but to have their families inherit from them in the following manner: father and mother, brother and sister, son and daughter, grandson and granddaughter; let no one arrogate to himself the right to go further. Given on the tenth of the Kalends of April at Constantinople, under the Consulate of Augustus Arcadius for the fourth time and Honorius for the third time (23 March 396).

[→ *superstitio*]



Thank you and see you in Bologna!