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*Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*  
*Anno Accademico 2004-2005*

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## STUDIUM BIBLICUM FRANCISCANUM

### ANNO ACCADEMICO 2004 – 2005

L'anno accademico 2004-2005 è iniziato il 5 ottobre 2004 con la concelebrazione eucaristica presieduta da P. Artemio Vítores, Vicario Custodiale, nella chiesa di S. Salvatore. L'8 novembre 2004 si è svolta la prolusione dell'anno accademico 2004-2005. Ha presieduto la celebrazione eucaristica S.E. Mons. Pietro Sambì, Nunzio Apostolico. La prolusione è stata tenuta da Eugenio Alliata, che ha presentato il volume *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae* di Fra Giovanni da Fedanzola.

Anche quest'anno la Facoltà ha avuto diversi professori invitati: allo SBF Leslie Hoppe (*Isaiah 1-39 e The Poor among you*), Jacob Naluparayil (*Jesus as the Son of God in Mark*), Cesare Marcheselli-Casale (*Lettere pastorali: Chiese in fermento*). Allo STJ hanno insegnato Maroun Lahham (*Teologia pastorale*), Alberto Mello (*Libri profetici*), Telesfora Pavlou (*Ecclesiologia*), Silvio Merlini (*Introduzione alla psicologia, Introduzione alla sociologia, Teologia naturale*), Gabriel Romanelli (*Storia della filosofia moderna, Storia della filosofia contemporanea*). Da segnalare anche la promozione a professore aggiunto di Giovanni Loche (21.01.2005).

Il numero complessivo degli studenti è stato di 114, 38 iscritti allo STJ (33 ordinari, 3 straordinari, 1 uditore, 1 fuori corso); 76 iscritti allo SBF (30 iscritti alla Licenza, 11 alla Laurea, 3 al Diploma di Formazione biblica, 24 straordinari, 8 uditori).

Sette studenti dello STJ hanno conseguito il Baccalaureato. Tre sono state le Licenze in Scienze bibliche e Archeologia allo SBF, dove si è discussa anche la prima tesi di Laurea in Scienze bibliche e Archeologia. Oltre a l'escursione al Sinai (19-22 dicembre 2004), guidata da P. Kaswalder, è stata organizzata anche un'escursione di due settimane in Turchia a conclusione del seminario tenuto da F. Manns (13 giugno - 3 luglio 2005).

Diversi sono stati gli incontri di studio realizzati durante l'anno (si veda in seguito la cronaca). Il 12 marzo 2005 è stato nostro ospite il Cardinale Carlo Maria Martini che ha tenuto una conferenza dal titolo "Ricerche sul Codice Vaticano", a cui hanno partecipato professori e studenti.

Dal 29 marzo al 1 aprile 2005 si è svolto il Corso di Aggiornamento Biblico-Teologico dal titolo "L'Eucaristia dottrina e culto". I conferenzieri sono stati G. Bissoli (*In Memoria: profezia, evento, rito. Introduzione al tema del corso*), A. Niccacci (*Il banchetto dell'Alleanza e il banchetto della Sapienza*), L.D. Chrupcała (*Fate questo in memoria di me - Lc 22,19; 1Cor 11,24*), C. Marcheselli-Casale (*Riconoscete il corpo del Signore*), F. Manns (*Il pane che discende dal cielo*), G. Sgreva (*Fondamentali indicazioni eucaristiche dei Padri della Chiesa*), E. Alliata (*L'Eucaristia nell'arte cristiana antica*), L. Cignelli (*Maria donna eucaristica*), F. Bouwen (*L'Eucaristia nel dialogo ecumenico*). Il corso è stato concluso da un intervento del Decano.

Il 29 aprile 2005 P. Jean-Michel Poffet, Direttore dell'École Biblique, ha incontrato i professori dello SBF per illustrare il progetto dell'École "La Bible et ses Traditions".

Tra gli avvenimenti di rilievo di questo anno accademico è da segnalare che il 18 gennaio 2005 la Congregazione per l'Educazione Cattolica ha promosso il Pontificio Ateneo Antonianum a Università Pontificia. Il Rettore Magnifico, P. Johannes Baptist Freyer, ha visitato la nostra sede dal 15 al 21 aprile 2005, presiedendo il 19 aprile 2005 il Consiglio di Facoltà, convocato per la designazione del Decano della Facoltà e del Moderatore dello STJ. G.C. Bottini e D. Chrupcała sono stati confermati nelle loro cariche. La Congregazione per l'Educazione Cattolica (4 dicembre 2004) ha definitivamente approvato la Facoltà di Scienze Bibliche e Archeologia.

## ATTIVITÀ DEGLI STUDENTI

### Tesi di Licenza

MULENGA A., *Integrity of Worship. An Exegetical Study of Deuteronomy 27:1-8*, 88 pp. (moderatore: L.J. Hoppe).

ARAMAYO N.A., «*Al tercer dia hubo una boda*» *Analisis Exegetico de Jn 2,1-11*, 142 pp. (moderatore: F. Manns).

OHAZULIKE M.P.C., *La necessità della sofferenza di Cristo. Analisi letteraria esegetica e teologica di Lc 24,25-27 nel suo contesto (Lc 24,13-35)*, 101 pp. (moderatore: G. Bissoli).

### Tesi di Laurea

ELUVATHINGAL Frederick D., *An Exegetical Inquiry into 1 John 3:11-18. Aggadah of Cain and Abel in the New Testament and in early Judaism*, Jerusalem 2004, 502 pp. (Moderatore: F. Manns; Correlatore: L. Cignelli; Censore: C. Marcheselli-Casale).

#### *Dalle conclusioni:*

Two questions were posed: 1) Was the devil Cain's father? 2) Why did Cain commit fratricide? According to the author of 1 John Cain has his provenance from and appurtenance to the evil one. He also states that Cain murdered his brother, because Cain's own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous (1

Jn 3:12). This is an *aggadah* of the Cain and Abel story found in NT. In the biblical account Cain is the eldest son of Adam and Eve. Since the two interconnected questions above are not answered directly in the Cain-Abel story of Gen 4:1-16, we extended our research into extra-biblical literature - Palestinian, Hellenistic, Apocalyptic, and Rabbinic traditions and documents dealing with this story. The results of this inquiry are positive and illuminating.

1 Jn 3:11-18 is seen as one unit bound by the exhortation to love, placed at the centre of the letter. 1) Fratricide is a sinful sign that Cain belongs to the devil. 2) Cain is traditionally made a model for unbelievers, which may help us to explain 1 John's interpretation of Cain as a model for the adversaries.

By extending our study to include references and allusions to Cain and Abel in NT (chapter 2), we found that both the Jews and Jesus claim to have God as Father, and yet the Jews seek to kill Jesus. In doing so they are being accused of acting like their father, the devil. Just as Cain acted then, the Jews are acting now - an evidence that their father too is diabolic. The Jews are not physically children of the devil, but on the moral level their actions betray their provenance as well as their appurtenance. Moreover, they partake of the devil's moral condition of untruthfulness. It is because Jesus said the truth that they attempt murder. There are references to Cain's wickedness in NT.

By Abel's sacrifice which God accepted, he is attested to be righteous, an extra-biblical tradition that the author of Hebrews is familiar with. That reiterates the view expressed by the author of 1 John. Through his faith Abel lives on and is still speaking (Heb 11:4). Spilt blood of Abel is subordinated only to that of Jesus. The revelatory value of both is stressed. Abel is portrayed in Pseudepigraphic literature (*TestAbr*) as a judge seated in heaven, the appropriate place for a righteous one, and Abel is the first righteous one. Abel's story is a vivid reminder that the righteous suffers and dies, yet live on like Abel (Wis 3).

Human beings often fail to understand God's reasoning. God refuses to accept Cain's sacrifice for specific reasons. Cain's utterly negative reaction gives sufficient grounds to conclude that it was because of his evil disposition that God withheld his benevolence. Therefore the issue lies within human beings, and one's own possible guilt. The only way then is patient acceptance of it. But Cain reacted negatively to reproof and degenerated himself into fratricide. This understanding goes well with Johannine explanation: Cain committed fratricide, because his deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Relevant, then, is God's admonition, "If you do well, will you not be accepted - And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it" (Gen 4:7). This interpretation is an answer in the affirmative to the second question - one concerning Cain's evil deeds.

Abel's righteousness and Cain's wickedness, even before the issue of sacrifice, form part of the biblical tradition. NT depicts Abel as a champion of righteousness and Cain as the typical evil-doer. Late Jewish, Patristic

and later Christian interpretations emphasized the antithesis, “righteous v/s wicked.”

Divine mercy is inexhaustible. Blood revenge is not the only possible response. The otherwise terrible story of fratricide is also an assurance that God will protect even evil-doers if they acknowledge their guilt and turn to him for assistance (God places a protective sign on an apparently repenting Cain). The goal of divine chastisements is conversion of heart. The LXX translation draws a sorrowful figure of Cain, with allusions to his admission of guilt.

Both the sons - Cain and Abel - inherited nobility and are placed on the same positive level at the beginning (Philo). Evil does not come from God, but from the devil. Cain shunned wisdom and, by his deeds, became wicked.

Reasons for fratricide, as enumerated in the above mentioned works and authors, are 1) Cain’s envy at rejection of sacrifice, 2) his greedy character and, 3) being a selfish principle, tendency to destroy his rival, God-loving principle. Cain chooses a life full of evil deeds (*TBenj*). He is defeated by the Satanic enemy (*ApocMos, Vita*). Conquest by the devil has macro-cosmic dimensions (Philo, Wis 10). Envy and resultant fratricide are examples of it. Fratricide affects the earth (LAB).

Abel is a lover of righteousness (Josephus) and all his deeds are righteous; he is the first martyr and the first accuser (cf. Gen 4:10), and the judge appointed by God (*TestAbr*). The original bliss of humankind, as portrayed by Josephus, especially the spontaneous growth of all things, reflects the Greek tradition. The human race was afterwards affected by evil. Primitive human being fell from the age of simplicity on account of one’s greed and desire for luxury. Seth’s progeny, on the contrary, lived in harmony and without civil strife.

Chapter 5 analyses Cain-Abel story in Targum and Midrash. Tj1 and PRE hold that Cain’s father is a fallen angel. If so many evil deeds are attributed to him in different traditions, alleging diabolic parentage too is understandable. The Ancient Near Eastern thinking hardly made adequate distinction among physical, moral, spiritual, and metaphysical spheres.

The Targumim present a debate on philosophical theology between the brothers in the field: Cain denies and Abel defends the compatibility of divine mercy with divine justice, and the exercise of both in the creation and governance of the world. The doctrine of retribution is also debated in some accounts. It is current concerns about love and justice applied to God that are expressed in the form of a debate. Divine justice is generally tempered with love. The righteous excites his love while the wicked provokes him to justice.

The concept of “evil inclination” is read by PT into “couching sin” (Gen 4:7 RSV). Cain, representing humanity, has control over it. Consequently humans are ultimately responsible for whether to do right or to sin. By the plural “bloods” in God’s accusation (Gen 4:10) it becomes the voice of the blood of

the righteous who were to rise from Abel. Cain is responsible not only for the death of one person, but for the death of Abel's posterity who would have been righteous. The story continues with this line of righteous posterity in the person of Seth, one born in the very "image and likeness" of Adam, as Adam was of God (Gen 5:3). Seth becomes a "type" and progenitor of a line, as too did Cain. The contrast and hostility between the seed of Cain or of the devil, and the seed stemming from God's creation of Adam (Gen 3:15) thus continues. Historical datation of targumic traditions is made by comparing the main themes in it with those expressed in dated Hellenistic and Palestinian traditions.

Finally in chapter 6 we revisit the Johannine passage. The Johannine community of the 1st century as well as the author of 1 John knew of prevalent Jewish traditions. Against that background the author formulated an absolute contrast between those who are the children of God and those who are the children of devil. His basis for it is clear: Being righteous, doing acts of righteousness and of loving. Thus the presence of Cain casts its shadow over both language and thought of the whole chapter. He did not love his brother, but on the contrary, hated him and committed fratricide. Thus we have the author say, "Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer" (1 Jn 3:15). In the immediate context of John's community it was to strengthen its members to stand firm on his side, and not to be swayed away by opponents' untruthful claims. By loving one another they stand on sure grounds - in the message they heard from the beginning.

Why does the author of 1 John exhort his community not to be like Cain and to love one another? It is because of human choice - the free arbiter placed within humans. They are free to choose the good or the evil. Divine paternity of Christians is a NT teaching. God the Father granted that Christians become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4). Jesus is the only begotten son. Christians are (adopted) children in His beloved Son (Rom 8:29; Eph 1:5f.). This is a gratuitous gift, unmerited by humans. Yet humans are free to reject it in favour of the devil and his plans. In this sense both the good and the evil are without humans, transcending them, and not within them. Human beings participate in the one or the other, the good or the evil, by choice. By accepting divine paternity, the Johannine community should stand on the author's side, believe in the name (person) of Jesus Christ, and after the example of Jesus, love one another. This is the gist of Johannine instruction.

*Cain-Abel Story.* Long before nations like Greece and Israel began to write history as a way of explaining the present by reference to causes in the past, they had their myths to account for origins of the universe and human beings, the problem of evil, divine retribution etc. The present reality is interpreted to be based upon what happened to heroes and gods in the primeval time. They function as paradigm for the present.

The story of Cain and Abel, started in the Jewish tradition, thus became a popular mythical narrative, and took different forms in different cultures and

backgrounds. In fact, not only the Cain-Abel story, but the whole of the primeval history has become so. This story tries to answer the perennial question of the source of evil, the problem of evil. Thus, as a popular influential story it was circulated, interpreted and re-interpreted. At some time or other it also reached the Johannine community. It was present there in the background as a deep reflection on human life. All that was needed for John was to hint at it. Everybody knew what it was all about. John uses it to bring home the Christian ideal of sharing love.

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*TAVOLE*

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