

NOTIZIARIO

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“La religione nella storia della cultura europea – Religion in the History of European Culture”

9th EASR Annual Conference and IAHR Special Conference, Messina 14-17 September 2009

Si è svolta nello scorso mese di settembre a Messina la IX Conferenza Annuale della European Association for the Study of Religion (EASR), fortemente voluta ed organizzata – a nome della Società Italiana di Storia delle Religioni (SISR) – da Giulia Sfameni Gasparro, ordinario di Storia delle religioni nell'Ateneo messinese, Vicepresidente della SISR e Presidente della stessa EASR dal 2000 al 2007. La conferenza, che per l'accordo con il Comitato Direttivo della International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) – nelle persone del Presidente Rosalind Hackett e del Segretario Tim Jensen – si configurava anche come una IAHR Special Conference, ha riunito nella città siciliana oltre trecento studiosi di tutto il mondo, pronti a confrontarsi su un tema complesso e quanto mai attuale, secondo le direttrici delineate nell'invito dalla sua organizzatrice: «La scelta del tema proposto *La Religione nella storia della cultura europea* intende sollecitare la riflessione sul ruolo esercitato dal fenomeno religioso nella lunga e diversificata storia culturale europea. In pari tempo – in conformità agli obiettivi della EASR – si vuole sottolineare l'apporto specifico recato alla formazione e agli sviluppi della disciplina storico-religiosa dalla sua «identità europea», in quanto frutto – nella metodologia comparativa e nella definizione dell'oggetto «religione» – della riflessione scientifica sorta e sviluppata nell'ambito della cultura europea, a partire dal XVII sec., con antecedenti significativi nei secoli precedenti e già nel mondo greco-romano. Ricorrendo nel 2009 il cinquantenario della morte di Raffaele Pettazzoni, fondatore della SISR, co-fondatore e Presidente della IAHR, una sezione della Conferenza sarà dedicata alla valutazione della sua fisionomia scientifica e del suo ruolo nella storia della disciplina».

Muovendo da tali prospettive, venivano individuate alcune problematiche e definiti i diversi ambiti e le scansioni cronologiche secondo cui il tema proposto avrebbe potuto articolarsi attraverso gli approfondimenti offerti dai singoli studiosi o da gruppi di essi: 1. L' «Europa re-

ligiosa» nel contesto mediterraneo: tra Asia e Africa; 2. La storia della «Storia delle religioni»; 3. Incontri e conflitti di popoli e culture, il ruolo delle religioni nello scenario europeo; 4. L'Europa: centro di «diffusione» di tradizioni religiose e polo di «attrazione»; 5. Il ruolo e il contributo di una «Associazione Europea per lo studio delle religioni» (EASR) nello scenario mondiale della IAHR; 6. Raffaele Pettazzoni: uno studioso italiano nel concerto internazionale della IAHR.

L'incontro, organizzato in Italia nel cinquantenario della morte del Pettazzoni e a dieci anni dalla fondazione della EASR, ha inteso in prima istanza riproporre una riflessione attenta sulla specifica fisionomia scientifica e sul ruolo culturale della «Storia delle religioni» come disciplina storica nata in Europa. Tale riflessione ha voluto programmaticamente porsi in linea ideale di continuità con le argomentazioni proposte da U. Bianchi durante i lavori del XVI Congresso Internazionale della IAHR svoltosi a Roma nel settembre 1990 (45 anni dopo l'VIII Congresso della IAHR svoltosi a Roma nel 1955 e presieduto dal Pettazzoni). Già allora si era affrontato il tema centrale relativo a «La nozione di religione nella ricerca comparativa»¹, la cui importanza imprescindibile è stata ribadita nelle parole di saluto rivolte dalla Prof. G. Sfameni Gasparro agli studiosi convenuti in Messina, lo scorso 14 settembre, e riuniti nell'Aula Magna dell'Università:

« Dear Rector, Authorities, Colleagues,

I am extremely happy to welcome you to the inauguration of the 9th Annual EASR Conference and IAHR Special Conference, here in the Main Hall of the University of Messina. I am grateful to you for having responded with such generosity and commitment to the invitation – on behalf of the Italian Society of the History of Religions – to reflect on the role of “Religion in the history of European Culture”, a theme of wide-reaching and fundamental importance. [...] Over the next few days we will be involved in an intense analysis of a wide variety of historico-cultural contexts, from antiquity to the present day, and in comparing interpretative methods and formulas which without doubt, thanks to the diversity of our respective positions, will be a source of mutual stimulus and enrichment. [...] I would also like to thank all those Colleagues who chose to entrust me with the difficult yet at the same time prestigious role as President of the new Association in the year of its creation – the most important and delicate period in its life –, and who then confirmed my post in the two subsequent triennial cycles of its activity. I accepted this role not only and not so much as a personal acknowledgement (since many other Colleagues would be better suited than I to hold the position), but rather as an act of homage to

¹ U. Bianchi (ed.), *The Notion of «Religion» in Comparative Research. Selected Proceedings of the XVI Congress of the IAHR Rome, 3rd-8th September, 1990*, Roma 1994.

the Italian tradition of historico-religious studies, and in particular to the school represented by the teaching of Ugo Bianchi, in turn influenced by the teaching of the great Master Raffaele Pettazzoni, the co-founder and president of the IAHR, and the 50th anniversary of whose death we celebrate on this occasion, with a review of his scholarship. I need not here stress the authoritativeness and academic importance of the contributions made to the progress of historico-religious research by these great scholars. I would only like to recall the dedication and tenacity with which my Master Ugo Bianchi wished to maintain and strengthen the links between the Italian Society of the History of Religions, as a national organisation with a specific tradition of studies, founded by Raffaele Pettazzoni, and the vast and varied international panorama expressed in and represented by the IAHR. He always maintained that a fundamental duty of the scholar of religious phenomena was dialectic exchange with other scholars, including those with different methodological perspectives, defending tenaciously one's own position, but always interested in and respectful of those of others, with the aim of achieving real progress in the historical knowledge of these phenomena. His great dedication led him to be intensely involved in the scientific activities of the IAHR, culminating in the organisation of the 16th IAHR Congress in Rome in 1990 on the central theme of our discipline (*The notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research*) and in his election as the Association's President, for the period 1990-1995. U. Bianchi taught for ten years in Messina and here, in April 1966 -under the aegis of the IAHR- he organised the great and seminal International Colloquium on the origins of Gnosticism, which brought together in the University of Messina the leading authorities on the subject². Anyone who is familiar with this field of study will not consider as merely rhetorical the definition 'epoch-making' when applied to that event, and will acknowledge Ugo Bianchi the merit of having foreseen, with brilliant intuition supported by his meditated knowledge of the related historical questions, the importance and the scientific fruitfulness of the problem. This, then, is the tradition within which this Conference is placed, in the hope that it can live up to its inspiring model. [...].

Fondandosi su tali premesse, la Conferenza ha trovato ampie adesioni nell'ambiente scientifico europeo ed internazionale, con la partecipazione di studiosi provenienti dalle diverse società nazionali aderenti alla EASR, ma anche dagli Stati Uniti, dal Canada, dal Brasile, dalla Russia, dall'Asia, dal Giappone, che nelle tre giornate si sono avvicendati, in un clima di confronto e dialogo scientifico, nelle cinque Sessioni e nei sedici *Panels*.

Tematiche di ampio respiro, atte a sollecitare stimoli e riflessioni

² U. Bianchi (ed.), *Le origini dello gnosticismo*, Colloquio di Messina, 13-18 aprile 1966, *Studies in the History of Religions, Supplements to Numen* XII, E.J. Brill, Leiden 1967.

negli intervenuti, sono state affrontate nelle otto *Plenary Sessions* da esperti di fama internazionale, che hanno risposto con sollecitudine e fattivo impegno all'invito dell'Organizzatrice. Tali contributi sono oggi in stampa nel secondo numero della Rivista *Historia Religionum*, diretta da Giovanni Filoramo.

Armin W. Geertz (University of Aarhus, Denmark), nella sua relazione dal titolo *Religion, cognition and culture: A European idea?* ha riproposto un tema di ricerca a lui particolarmente caro e connesso con la *Cognitive Science of Religion*, la cui definizione è tutt'oggi in corso presso la Facoltà di Teologia ed il Dipartimento di *Study of Religion* della sua Università: «The *Religion, cognition and culture* (RCC) is closely integrated with university-wide conglomerates in Aarhus, such as the research initiative MINDLab, the Center for Functionally Integrative Neuroscience (CFIN), and the Cognition, Communication, and Culture (CCC) network, all consisting of researchers from the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, health sciences, the university hospitals and the psychiatric hospital. In a recent statement developed by the RCC, we assume that humans are simultaneously biological and cultural beings. In hominin history these two aspects of human biology and human culture have never been separate. Each newborn human is both unfinished and uniquely equipped, biologically and cognitively organized to flourish in socio-cultural environments that its genes could never anticipate. All this matters to explanations for how religious minds function. [...] The RCC is a European institution obviously. But there is also nothing like it in the United States, and those institutions that work with cognition and religion in England follow the American example, whereas other European centers such as the one in Groningen and the research project in Helsinki share assumptions similar to the RCC». Partendo da queste premesse, egli ha postulato come indispensabile il mantenimento di *links* «between religion, cognition and culture».

Diversa la prospettiva dello studioso italiano Enrico Montanari, dell'Università Roma "La Sapienza", che ha riproposto la figura ed il magistero di Raffaele Pettazzoni ed, in particolare, ha invitato a riflettere sul tema *Comparative Method and Historic-Religious "Commitment": the Concept of "Saecular Faith" in R. Pettazzoni*: «Pettazzoni's historicist conception is not non-religious nor irreligious: it proposes a "secular faith" in a "religion of this world", and therefore it is presented as a "third way" between Catholic faith and secular agnosticism, defined "defeatist"». Secondo lo studioso, in Pettazzoni «"religious history" is an ineliminable ingredient of the history of civilizations, along with the history of arts, of economy, of philosophy, etc.», e pertanto è indispen-

sabile una «elaboration of an inclusive “historical science of religions”, which is compatible and complementary with a perspective of “phenomenological” type».

Nella sua qualità di Segretario Generale della EASR dal 2000 al 2005 e attuale Segretario Generale della IAHR, Tim Jensen (University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark) ha presentato il tema *The EASR within the World Scenario of the IAHR 2000-2009. Observations and Reflections*, ripercorrendo le tappe che hanno segnato la ‘vicenda’ dell’associazione europea: «The EASR was founded at an IAHR Special Conference in Cracow, Poland (May 2000), and it became affiliated with the IAHR at the IAHR XVIIIth World Congress in 2000 in Durban, SA. Since 2001, the EASR has held an annual conference each and every year, and it has, I think, also adopted new member associations each and every year. The EASR, consequently, is now a successful and rather powerful IAHR regional association with (2009) 21 (22?) member associations».

Al mondo mediterraneo antico, quale terreno privilegiato di incontro tra popoli culture e religioni, si è rivolto Jörg Rüpke (University of Erfurt, Germany) in un vivace contributo dal titolo *Hellenistic and Roman Empires and Euro-Mediterranean Religion* teso ad analizzare la formazione di «an Euro-Mediterranean political and cultural space (with its many contacts beyond) and inquire into the characteristics of a religious “koine” within that cultural space».

Quale membro del Consiglio direttivo della SISR, Giovanni Filoramo dell’Università di Torino è intervenuto con una relazione dal titolo *Dangerous Liasons. Roman Catholic Church and Jewish Communities in the History of Religious Europe*, soffermandosi su uno degli aspetti più complessi e problematici della vicenda religiosa europea, connessi con la storia della Chiesa Cattolica di Roma: «The history of relations between Jews and Catholic Church has experienced three stages. In the first the policy of the Church has fluctuated between two positions, both already present in Paul: an attitude of openness towards the Jews in view of their final conversion (*Rom* 9-11) that makes their presence in Christian society needed; and a policy of exclusion, linked to the dangers that may come to the Christians because of mixing with Jews imitating their practices and customs (*Gal* 4-5). With notable exceptions, in the *societas Christiana* until the modern age has prevailed the first position. The rupture of confessional unity and the religious conflicts that followed helped the second position, encouraging the process of ghettoization. The third period, dominated by the emergence of racial antisemitism, culminated in the Holocaust. A common thread that binds

the three periods is the continuation of a tradition of anti-Judaism of ideological nature. It has fed during the twentieth century a Catholic anti-Semitism. The Shoah has put in place a process of self-criticism, which led the Catholic Church to rediscover the profound bond with the Jews as “elder brothers”».

Di carattere metodologico, l'intervento di Kim Knott, EASR General Secretary (University of Leeds, UK) dal titolo *Theoretical and methodological resources for breaking open the secular and exploring the boundary between religion and non-religion* ha inteso proporre agli studiosi presenti interrogativi urgenti sul tema del “secularism” e sull'uso di categorie come “agnosticism and atheism”: «Given that these concepts and their associated fields of belief, practice and organisation represent a counter-field of interest for scholars of religion, as well as an increasingly important arena in the politics of religion, we ignore them at our peril».

Sull'analisi della problematica dei rapporti tra cultura e religione europea e culture e religioni “extraeuropee” che con essa hanno interagito si è incentrata la relazione di Maya Burger (EASR President, University of Lausanne, Switzerland), *Europe and India: an Essay in Creative Misunderstanding*: «the impact of India on the history of ideas in Europe has not always been adequately acknowledged. Its influence on the history of religions as an European academic discipline has not been studied with the same intensity and commitment. The encounter with India (apart from the more general, abstract theorizing about the encounter with the so called “other”) has had a lasting impact on the formative period of the history of religions (for example W. Hegel, F. M. Müller, M. Eliade), and, thus, on the shaping of our perception of Indian history. Its epochalization uses mostly European categories. But this is an episode in the *European* history of religions. It promises to be creative to turn back to some decisive moments in this history in order to situate theoretical debates of the discipline in the light of this encounter».

A conclusione della Sessione Plenaria, Kari Elisabeth Børresen (Senior Professor, University of Oslo, Norway) nella relazione *The Formation and Significance of Christian Gender Models in European Culture* ha illustrato il tema della parità dei diritti uomo-donna, offrendo un attento e puntuale panorama delle posizioni delle diverse Chiese europee: «the historical construction of theological anthropology, from Late Antiquity to the 20th century, with focus on women's gradual achievement of creational *imago Dei*, (cf. the new holistic definition of human Godlikeness, accepted in Western theology after the II Vatican Council). [...] The paper will also analyse the concordant anthropology

of these variants of monotheistic religion. A main challenge in the EU, (cf. national concordats with the Holy See), is that socio-political gender equality is less developed in the so-called Catholic and Orthodox countries than in the Northern welfare states, which are more influenced by Protestant culture. In a global perspective, it is necessary to clarify the conflict between collective liberty for pre-modern religions, which prescribe gender-specific female rights, and the 21st-century actualisation of women's universal human rights».

Intenso è stato lo svolgimento dei lavori, scandito dalle relazioni presentate all'interno delle Sessioni e dei Panels. L'articolazione delle Sessioni ha, sostanzialmente, seguito le direttrici inizialmente delineate nel progetto, e i numerosi contributi, variegati per interesse, sono stati suddivisi in cinque ambiti:

1. *“Religious Europe” in the Mediterranean context: between Asia and Africa.* Contacts and influences: Antiquity and Late Antiquity; the Middle Ages; the Modern Age, the Contemporary Age.

2. *The History of the “History of Religions”*

a) A European “invention”?

b) Reflections on the religious phenomenon and theories of culture

c) Methodologies and theories on the origin and nature of religion: the contribution of European culture and the current scientific debate.

3. *Meetings and conflicts between peoples and cultures: the role of religions in the European Scenario.* From Antiquity to the present day.

4. *Europe: centre for the “diffusion” of religious traditions and pole of “attraction”.* From Antiquity to the present day.

5. *Religion: Art and Archaeology.*

Nella prima sessione si è affrontato il tema del ruolo dell'«Europa religiosa» nel mondo mediterraneo, attraverso l'individuazione delle specificità proprie di ogni cultura – dall'età antica (Mesopotamia, Fenicia, Grecia, Roma), tardoantica e medievale, a quella contemporanea – e l'esame dei contatti e delle reciproche influenze tra il continente europeo, l'Asia e l'Africa; nella seconda si è valutato il “ruolo” della «Storia delle religioni» come disciplina nata in Europa, e formatasi anche attraverso il confronto con le diverse opzioni metodologiche (quale ad esempio la teologia, la sociologia, la filosofia, la fenomenologia delle religioni), cercando di modulare le più diverse risposte all'interrogativo *What is This Religion?*. La terza e la quarta sessione sono state poi dedicate agli incontri e ai conflitti di popoli e culture, e di mondi religiosi

(cristianità, ortodossia, secolarizzazione, new age) dall'antichità ai nostri giorni considerando e valutando il ruolo dell'Europa come centro di «diffusione» di tradizioni; nella quinta, la riflessione si è rivolta all'esame dei rapporti fra arte, archeologia e religione, attraverso l'analisi di reperti e materiali di ambiente siceliota, tunisino e asiatico.

Le giornate, infine, sono state cadenzate dalla successione dei sedici *Panels*, tutti centrati su tematiche urgenti nell'attuale dibattito scientifico internazionale. Se ne offre un quadro riepilogativo, riportando in estratto la presentazione degli studiosi che ne hanno coordinato l'organizzazione:

1: Wanda Alberts, University of Bergen, Norway- Tim Jensen, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark, *Textbooks and syllabuses for religion education (RE): the notion of religion and the representation of individual religions*: «Textbooks for education about religion are often as influential on knowledge about religions as are the syllabuses or general frameworks for the school subject. In this panel, we would like to analyse textbooks and syllabuses for (non-confessional) education about religion from different European countries».

2: Wanda Alberts, University of Bergen, Norway- Tim Jensen, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark, *Non-confessional RE in European Post-communist Countries*: «In this panel we want to initiate the mapping, analyses and discussions of Religion Education in public schools in post-communist countries in Europe. [...] As for the situation in individual countries the paper should describe and analyse relevant laws, syllabuses or curricula as well the training of the teachers teaching RE».

3: Giovanni Casadio, University of Salerno, Italy, *Raffaele Pettazzoni: an italian scholar in the International Context of the IAHR*: «This section is addressed to honour 50 years after his death Raffaele Pettazzoni (1883-1959), the man who was the founder of the study of the history of religions in Italy and the most universal scholar of religion in the past century at a world level, with select contributions by eminent scholars from all the parts of the world with which he was in contact and where his oeuvre is still read and influential. Presentations are aligned according to three main foci: 1. Crucial issues of his activity in the field of the study of religion, both in its idiographic and nomothetic aspects. 2. Reception and evaluation of his work in the various national traditions of the academic study of religions. 3. Interaction with the political and academic milieus of his times, focused on the liaison with his closest

colleagues and disciples. Some papers are based on fresh materials available in the Fondo Pettazzoni della Biblioteca comunale “G.C. Croce” at San Giovanni in Persiceto and offer new views that promise to be groundbreaking for any future research».

4: Sarah Claerhout, Ghent University, Belgium, *The European Experience and the Concept of Religion*: «Today, several scholars question the utility of ‘religion’ as an analytical tool, its clarity as a term, its theological neutrality and its validity as a description of reality. Some call for abandoning the concept altogether, while others suggest that it has distorted the traditions of nonwestern cultures rather than describing them. [...] The concept of religion helped them to give structure to their experience of themselves and of other cultures. If the concept of religion is all that problematic, how do we explain the fact that it was central to the European cultural experience for centuries on end? [...] By looking at different historical and cultural contexts, it will trace the process through which Europeans recognized themselves and others in the descriptions in terms of ‘religion’. [...]».

5: Nicola Cusumano, University of Palermo, Italy, *Memory and Religion in the Greek World*: «The connection between memory and religion seems to be quite “structural”, since every system of beliefs and *dromena* recalls a specific “collective memory”, which, in its turn, needs to be focused upon as a specific historical object, especially when the social existence takes the shape of a religious experience. [...] Our work aims at giving value, through this panel case-studies, to the tools and procedures used to preserve the *philia* and the *koinonia* of a social *cosmos* from threats and tensions of the *anomia*, the violence and the loss of origins, for which suitable tools of settling and repair are researched. [...]».

6: Fabio Mora, University of Messina, Italy, *The Circulated Sacred Text*: «The study of sacred, canonical texts may not substitute the empirical observation of the religious communities which are founded on them. But their reception and regular use of these texts is very important in their religious identities. [...] Papers may be submitted in any of the official languages of the Congress and should either deal with comparative issues in the experience of sacred texts or with the empirical reshaping of the sacred text in any single religious confession».

7: Marco Pasi, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, *The presence of esoteric currents and ideas in Italy from the 18th century to our days*: «A significant amount of research has been done in Italy on the history of esoteric ideas, but this has been mainly focused on the Middle Ages or

the early modern period. From the presence of magic, alchemy, and astrology in medieval thought, to the revival of Hermetic and Neoplatonic ideas during the Renaissance up to the Scientific Revolution, the importance of this field of research for the history of Italian culture has been widely acknowledged. But the permanence of these ideas and cultural traditions in Italy in the period that begins with the Enlightenment, has perhaps received less attention from academic scholars, and still offers many interesting, potentially fruitful threads for research [...].».

8: Tuula Sakaranaho - Helena Kupari, University of Helsinki, Finland, *Conceptualizing Religiosity: Perspectives of Social Memory*: «During recent decades an interest in understanding collective or social memory has rapidly grown in social and cultural studies. Memory as a social phenomenon is usually approached as a reflexive process in action, which involves different dynamics of producing, conveying, sustaining and reconstructing shared memory in different contexts. The focus on memory has also proven very applicable to the study of religious groups, beliefs and practices. [...] This panel welcomes research on religion and social or collective memory from a variety of perspectives. In particular, we invite papers which discuss empirical cases in light of theoretical insights, or theoretical papers as such».

9: Donald Wiebe, University of Toronto, Canada- Ennio Sanzi, University of Messina, Italy- Carla Sfameni, University of Messina, Italy, *From One Side to the Other of the Mediterranean Sea in Late Antiquity: Religious Traditions in Comparison*: «The Mediterranean area in late antiquity is a relevant field for a historical-comparative analysis of important religious phenomena, such as the so-called Oriental Cults, Magic and, of course, Christianity and its “heresies”. The aim of this panel is to analyse noteworthy aspects of these religious phenomena, and to consider the different interpretations of the same phenomenon in different contexts (for example the various and specific ways in which the same symbol can be used and interpreted or the way in which the same existential problem, for instance, salvation, was expressed in different situations). [...]».

10: Concetta Giuffré Scibona, University of Messina, Italy, *Mysteries, Dionysism, Orphism. Analogies, tangencies and differences*: «On the basis of the historical-comparative method and analysis of the sources, the aim is to examine issues relative to the analogies, relations of historical transmission and opposition, differences and possible convergences of the phenomena evoked in the title, in the common context of “mystical” cults. Particular attention will be paid to ritual factors and soteriological perspectives, of both a locative and utopian nature».

11: Annika Hvithamar, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark- Ivar Kh. Maksutov, Moscow State University, Russia, *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe: traditions and transformations*: «Throughout the 20th century the Orthodox Church has been treated as the forgotten branch of Christianity. The political situation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe meant that the study of religions was restricted and that students and scholars of religion were cut off from the study of religion in the West. In reverse the same could be said about the study of Eastern and Central European religion in the Western hemisphere. [...] The panel is a contribution in further reflection on Orthodox Christianity and on its ways of representing or embodying tradition in Europe in the twenty-first century».

11bis: Ivar Kh. Maksutov, Moscow State University, Russia, *Workshop: International Online- Conference for the Study of Religions: 2007, 2008, 2009*

12: Attilio Mastrocinque, University of Verona, Italy- Jörg Rüpke, University of Erfurt, Germany, *Religious experience in sanctuaries in the Roman world*: «For the ancient Mediterranean, “religious experience” is a term that is not usually associated with the public temples of cities or villages, but rather confined to “mystery religions” or even attributed to “oriental origins”. This panel explores forms of religious experiences located in or stimulated by sanctuaries and architectural space for the whole spectre of religious infrastructure and group».

13: Mario Mazza, University of Roma “La Sapienza”, Italy- Giovanni Casadio, University of Salerno, Italy- Natale Spineto, University of Torino, Italy, *La storiografia storico-religiosa italiana tra la fine dell’800 e la seconda guerra mondiale*: «Se la storia delle religioni si impone, nelle Università europee, nell’ultimo trentennio del XIX secolo, in Italia la prima cattedra della materia è istituita solo nel 1923. Raffaele Pettazzoni, che ne diventa titolare, ha un ruolo fondamentale per lo sviluppo successivo della disciplina, ma la sua attività scientifica non esaurisce il quadro degli studi religiosi italiani del suo tempo. Lo scopo di questo panel è di studiare la situazione di tali studi fra la fine dell’800 e la seconda guerra mondiale, per porre in risalto le figure di studiosi, le tradizioni di ricerca, le prospettive di analisi dei fatti religiosi che hanno preceduto l’istituzione della prima cattedra ufficiale, che si sono proposte come alternative rispetto all’insegnamento di Pettazzoni oppure hanno affrontato, sul piano teorico o nella pratica della ricerca, le problematiche comparative – che costituiscono il centro dell’interesse della storia delle religioni – dal punto di vista offerto dagli studi specialistici su aree religiose particolari [...]».

14: Jörg Rüpke, University of Erfurt, Germany- Kocku von Stuckrad, University of Groningen, Netherlands, *Workshop: How to write a History of Religion of Europe?*: «Early in 2009, Hans G. Kippenberg, Jörg Rüpke, and Kocku von Stuckrad published a two-volume “Europäische Religionsgeschichte” with the subtitle of a plural of pluralisms (“ein mehrfacher Pluralismus”). This panel will – after a short introduction into this textbook – review the concept and achievement of the volumes. [...]».

15: Marcello Massenzio, University of Roma “Tor Vergata”, Italy- Paolo Scarpi, University of Padova, Italy, *History of religions as comparative history: West, the Other and the origin of the religious fact*: «The History of religions as comparative history was born as a product of western reflexivity in order to explain western historical and distinctive patterns in relation to the “Other”. At the same time, the discipline was charged of a crucial problem, that is the origin of the religious fact, which, beyond the different hypotheses and conjectures, had not any evenemential answer. However, the possible answer not only faces the religious fact as historical-cultural product, but also discusses on the very same categories through which the religious fact has been traditionally explained. In Italy the History of religions has moved in this perspective applying the method of contrastive comparison».

16: Kim Knott, University of Leeds, United Kingdom- Veikko Anttonen, University of Turku, Finland, *Theorizing the Sacred: Secular and Religious Approaches*: «The panel is designed to discuss analytic potential of the semantic study of vernacular terms denoting ‘sacred’ in Indo-European and Finno-Ugric languages at the emic level of operation (lat. *sacer*, *sanctus*; Greek *hieros*, *hagios*; Gothic *weihs*, *heilig*; Finnish *pyhä*) and theoretical benefits of conceptualization of the ‘Sacred’ into an etic level category. [...]».

A conclusione di questo percorso, teso a offrire un quadro riepilogativo degli intensi lavori congressuali, occorre segnalare al lettore la preparazione in corso dell’edizione dei *Proceedings* della Conferenza, a cura di G. Sfameni Gasparro. I volumi racchiuderanno i contributi presentati nelle cinque sessioni e in alcuni dei Panels (9, 11, 15). Oggetto di pubblicazioni monografiche a cura dei singoli organizzatori saranno invece i materiali presentati negli altri Panels.