

ALBERTO CAMPLANI - ALESSANDRO SAGGIORO

Editorial

The first issue of 2009 was almost entirely dedicated to the proceedings of the meeting entitled «Pagan city – Christian city». The second one more closely resembles in terms of organization the projected future layout for the journal. The table of contents shows that the material is arranged in sections – essays dedicated to a specific theme, individual articles, notices, book reviews, and indices. The thematic section, in this case «The teaching of the history of religions in Europe, between school and University: ideas, problems, and projects», gives its title to the issue. There follows the section of single articles, which do not arise from a particular occasion and deal with a wide variety of subjects. In this issue, they range from a thorough analysis of the method and thought of Angelo Brelich (Corrado Bologna) to textual studies on the *Book of Genesis* (Giovanni Garbini) and regarding the *Odes of Solomon* within Gnostic circles (Monica Casadei). The issue concludes with notices, book reviews, and indices.

In the course of 2009 we are commemorating the anniversary of the death of Raffaele Pettazzoni. We deem it appropriate to devote to him a thematic section that is clearly related to his teaching. It will include not only considerations on methodology, but also reflections on the discipline's social function – something that is admittedly less obvious and yet indubitably no less important for our understanding of both the individual and the scholar. The discipline, in fact, is not merely an academic product that is therefore destined to exist and achieve its end only within university lecture-halls. Rather, it is an instrument of knowledge that must be aimed at active engagement with society as a whole. In these difficult times for our university, this is an undertaking to which the teachers in the Department have dedicated themselves personally and with an assumption of further duties. At the Sapienza University as of 2010, for example, there will be a Master's degree in «Religions and cultural mediation». Under the direction of Emanuela Prinzivalli, this new programme is aimed at creating a bridge between university studies and the social and cultural dynamics of today's world. We hope to establish a seminal relationship between the productive, economic, administrative, and social realities and the world of education.

Therefore, the movement from the world of the university to that of the school and vice versa is to be understood as a key moment for

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renewed reflection upon the purpose of advanced study. When at the height of his scientific activity and already an acknowledged figure of international repute, Pettazzoni had stressed the need for the history of religions to be taught in Italian schools. He did so despite the obstacles posed by the Concordat and perpetuated in Article 7 of the Constitution of the Italian Republic. While engaged in politics in a modest but meaningful fashion, Pettazzoni at the same time published works such as *Miti e leggende* (1948-1963) and *Lecture religiose* (1959), which he thought might be read with profit by students and workers. Times have changed, but, at least in Italy even after the revision of the Concordat, things have remained more or less the same. For what concerns Italy, we can speak of religious illiteracy both at the level of confessional milieux and in the overall horizon of culture and education. It is a matter of values and knowledge at every level of civic life.

Consequently, we think it useful to examine the theme of the teaching of religion in schools, with a focus that ranges from Italy to the international level. We shall start with a general review of the problem at the level of schools and academic thought in Italy, subsequently widening our vision to take in the broader field of Europe. There is a wide variety, which ranges from the complete rejection of any non-confessional teaching (Greece) to the articulated designing of structures and didactic models (Nordic countries), including situations more (Spain) or less (Italy, Poland) in a constant state of dialectic between these two extremes. There are at least two aspects that, with all due caution, may serve to unite. On the one hand, there is the desire to explore new methods, to rethink past teaching on religious subjects, and to design new programmes and courses as well as the texts to accompany them. On the other hand, there is a political tendency, in the decision-making sphere of Europe, towards educational schemes more attentive to pluralism which is an integral element of European history: a plural reality that is increasingly open to the rest of the world, which in turn is at home in Europe.

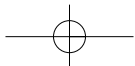
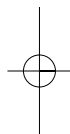
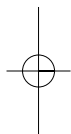
As a result, there is urgent need for serious reflection upon the teaching of religion in schools as a means for understanding and analysing the multiple forms of European identity. But this is also desirable as it can provide a meeting-point for diverse identities and thus a possible basis for coexistence between identity and otherness.

This issue's thematic section was created in the wake of several episodes occurring in Europe, which are covered more extensively in the opening article by A. Saggioro. We feel obliged to thank all the authors, who, at short notice, have provided studies and materials for this section. We owe an especial note of thanks to Maria Chiara Giorda. Aside from providing a comprehensive essay on the Italian situation, she has generously contributed ideas and time. Finally, given the breadth of the topic

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and scope of the problems faced by this thematic section, we deem it appropriate to make a permanent call for papers and notes, to be published in a reserved space in upcoming issues of the journal.



Sezione monografica / Theme Section

*L'insegnamento della Storia delle religioni in
Europa tra scuola e università*

*The teaching of the History of religions in
Europe, between school and university*

