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REVIEW ARTICLE

HISTORY OF RELIGIONS IN ITALY: A POSTSCRIPT

My short review, "History of Religions in Italy: The State of the Art" (*History of Religions* 20 [1981]: 253–62), has provoked a number of reactions from Italian scholars which, though positive on the whole, nevertheless contained several criticisms concerning the incompleteness and the methodological framework of my attempt.¹ A postscript seemed necessary, in order to complete the review with data concerning those fields which for the most part had been neglected. However, once again I can but warn the reader—especially the Italian reader—that "it would be quite unrealistic to think that a survey such as the one we are attempting here could be exhaustive."²

I will start by mentioning several materials sent to me by authors already cited in my previous survey: U. Bianchi, D. M. Cosi, G. Filoramo, G. Piccaluga, S. Ribichini, G. Romanato, P. Scarpi, and

¹ I have noticed two *lapsi calami*, and two others were pointed out by readers: p. 253, n. 1 (J. Waardenburg has published two articles entitled "Religionswissenschaft in Continental Europe"; the one that should have been mentioned appeared in *Religion: Journal of Religion and Religions* [August 1975], pp. 27–54); p. 258, n. 29 (a typographical error: the organizer of the congresses in philosophy of religions was A. Babolin only); p. 259, n. 38 (the translation of the *Sāmkhyakārikā* belongs to C. Pensa, first printing [1960]); p. 259, n. 42 (G. Tucci's *Tibet ignoto* is a new edition of his 1933 classic, translated into English by R. M. McBride in 1936, under the title of *Shrines of a Thousand Buddhas*).

² See my article cited above, p. 255. Of more than 200 titles mentioned in my survey, several were books that I have reviewed extensively elsewhere; most of them were articles which I had received and read. Some of them, nevertheless, came to my attention only through bibliographies prepared for me by their authors, whom I wish to thank. A very few of them I had seen only briefly during my stays in Italy.

G. Sfameni-Gasparro.³ Since in my earlier review Italian orientalist studies were neglected for the most part, I will devote this "Postscript" to them.⁴

Several studies in Indology and Tibetology, by O. Botto, C. Della Casa, R. Gnoli, L. P. Mishra, C. Pensa, S. Piano, M. Piantelli, and G. Tucci,⁵ either escaped my notice or were not mentioned because they did not fall within the chronological framework which I had set for my review (1975–spring 1979, when the survey was completed). However, the absence of important works on Iranian religions, mainly those of Gherardo Gnoli, director of both the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Rome, and the Istituto Universitario Orientale of Naples (which publishes the important review, *Annali*

³ U. Bianchi, introduction to *Arché e Telos. L'antropologia di Origene e di Gregorio di Nissa*, ed. U. Bianchi and H. Crouzel (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1981), pp. 9–28; D. M. Cosi, "Nota sull'utilizzazione cristiana della leggenda della fenice," in *Arché e Telos*, pp. 274–79; G. Filoramo, *Luce e Gnosi. Saggio sull'illuminazione nello gnosticismo* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1980) (see my review in *Aevum* 55 [1981]: 191–92), *Introduzione alla storia delle religioni I: Oggetto e metodo* (Turin: G. Giappichelli, 1981), and two articles in *Augustinianum* 20 (1980): 595–613, 21 (1981): 329–37; *Perennitas. Studi in onore di Angelo Brelich*, ed. with an introduction by G. Piccaluga (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1980) (the vol. contains thirty-six contributions, eighteen of which are by Italian scholars such as U. Bianchi, P. Carozzi, M. Marconi, G. Piccaluga, G. A. Privitera, P. Scarpi, etc.); S. Ribichini, *Adonis. Aspetti "orientali" di un mito greco* (Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1981) (see my review in *Aevum* [1982]); G. Romanato and F. Molinari, *Cultura cattolica in Italia ieri e oggi* (Turin: Marietti Ed., 1980) (see my review in *Problemi di Civiltà* 6 [1980]: 11–12); G. Romanato, M. G. Lombardo, and I. P. Culianu, *Religione e Potere* (Turin: Marietti Ed., 1981) (of the latter author, see also I. P. Culianu, *Iter in silvis. Saggi scelti sulla gnosi e altri studi*, vol. 1 [Messina: Ed. dr. A. Sfameni, 1981]); P. Scarpi, "Picus: Una mediazione per la storia," in *Bollettino dell'Istituto di Filologia Greca* (Padua) 5 (1979/80): 138–63; and G. Sfameni-Gasparro, "Restaurazione dell'immagine del celeste . . .," in *Arché e Telos*, pp. 231–67.

⁴ I wish to thank G. Gnoli, T. Orlandi, and M. Pesce for their valuable aid and for the many books and offprints which they sent to me during the past two years.

⁵ O. Botto, *Buddha e il Buddhismo* (Fossano: Editrice Esperienze, 1974); *Upaniṣad*, trans., with introduction and notes, C. Della Casa (Turin: Unione Tipografica-Editrice Torinese, 1976); *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu*, ed. R. Gnoli, pts. 1–2 (Rome: IsMEO, 1977–78), and *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Śayanāsanavastu* (Rome: IsMEO, 1978); L. P. Mishra, "Elements of Devotional Mysticism in the Vinayapatrikā," in *East and West* 27 (1977): 1–4, and *Rāmānuja e il misticismo viṣṇuista dell'India meridionale* (Rome: Città Nuova Ed., 1978); C. Pensa, "L'incontro fra Oriente e Occidente oggi," in *Suppl. no. 2 to AION* 35 (1975): 25–53, and "Meditazione buddhista intensiva: Esperienze e riflessioni," *Conoscenza religiosa* 4 (1978): 319–40; S. Piano, *Guru Nānak e il Sikhismo* (Fossano: Editrice Esperienze, 1971), and "Note in margine al Viṣṇu-Māhātmya," in *Indologia Taurinensis* 3–4 (Turin: Istituto di Indologia, 1977); M. Piantelli, *Śaṅkara e la rinascita del Brāhmanesimo* (Fossano: Editrice Esperienze, 1974), and *Īśvara-gītā*, trans., with introduction and notes, M. Piantelli (Parma: L. Battei, 1980); G. Tucci, *Le religioni del Tibet* (Rome: Edizioni Mediterranee, 1976), and "Om Swat: The Dards and Connected Problems," in *East and West* 27 (1977): 1–4.

de l'Istituto Universitario Orientale, cited hereafter as AION) represented one major shortcoming of my review.⁶ As far as Islamic studies are concerned, A. Bausani is still the leading figure in this field.⁷

In my survey, I only mentioned the Istituto per le Scienze Religiose of Bologna, directed by G. Alberigo, which issues the series Testi e Ricerche di Scienze Religiose (containing mainly studies in the history of Christianity and related subjects) published by Paideia in Brescia. It would nevertheless be interesting to cite the names of the researchers of this institute, although most of them are historians of different periods of Christianity and/or theologians. This is true of A. Acerbi, G. Alberigo, G. Batteli, P. Bettio, P. C. Bori, M. Degli Innocenti, U. Mazzone, D. Menozzi, E. Norelli, L. Perrone, P. Pombeni, and G. Ruggeri.⁸ Mauro Pesce must be considered separately, since he is not only a specialist in the New Testament and primitive church but also one of the outstanding Italian Hebraists.⁹ Since the same M. Pesce published a bibliography of the Italian Hebraists in 1981,¹⁰ the task of reviewing publications in this field has become considerably easier. I will simply cite here, in alphabetical order, the authors mentioned by Pesce; for further details, his bibliography, as well as G. Romano's *Bibliografia Italo-Ebraica*, are recommended: S. Boesch Gajano, B. Chiesa, L. Cirillo, V. Colorni, C. Kraus Reggiani,

⁶ Cf. G. Gnoli, *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland: A Study on the Origins of Mazdeism and Related Problems* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1980) (see my review in *Aevum*, forthcoming); "Ašavan, Contributo allo studio del libro di Ardā Virāz," in *Iranica* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1979), pp. 387–452; "Sol Persice Mithra," in *Mysteria Mithrae*, ed. U. Bianchi (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979), pp. 725–40 (on this whole volume, printed in September 1979, see my long review in *Aevum* 55 [1981]: 169–73). By G. Gnoli, see also "Viaggio estatico e visione nella tradizione zoroastriana. Questioni comparative sull'Ascensione d'Isaia," in the proceedings of the Giornate di Studio sull'Ascensione di Isaia (Rome, 1981), ed. Mauro Pesce (Brescia: Paideia, in press). This volume contains several contributions by the members of the Istituto per le Scienze Religiose di Bologna, under supervision of Mauro Pesce, and, besides, contributions by U. Bianchi, C. Leonardi, M. Simonetti, and I. P. Culiari.

⁷ See A. Bausani, "Modernismo e 'eresie' nell'Islam contemporaneo," in Suppl. no. 2 to *AION* 35 (1975): 9–23.

⁸ Their bibliographies are included in the booklet, "Associazione per lo Sviluppo delle Scienze Religiose in Italia. Istituto per le Scienze Religiose. Relazione conclusiva per il quadriennio 1977–78/1980–81" (Bologna, s.a.).

⁹ On the New Testament and the primitive church, see M. Pesce, *Paolo e gli arconti a Corinto. Storia della ricerca (1888-1975) ed esegesi di 1 Cor. 2,6.8* (Brescia: Paideia, 1977); see also an impressive bibliography in *ibid.*, pp. 18–19; and see his *Dio senza mediatori. Una tradizione teologica dal giudaismo al cristianesimo* (Brescia: Paideia, 1979). On the Italian Hebraists, see M. Pesce, "Fondazione della 'Associazione italiana per lo studio del giudaismo,'" in *Rivista biblica italiana* 28 (1980): 221–23 and in *Rassegna mensile di Israel* 46 (1980): 86–87.

¹⁰ M. Pesce, "Bibliografia dei giudaisti italiani," *Henoch* 3 (1981): 221–55.

F. Luciani, M. Luzzati, A. Luzzatto, L. Mortara Ottolenghi, G. Moscati Steindler, A. Neppi Modona, E. Norelli, F. Parente, M. Perani, M. Pesce, D. Piattelli, A. Pinter, A. Poma, G.-L. Prato, A. Ravenna, L. Rosso Ubigli, P. Sacchi, G. Segalla, R. Segre Berengo, G. Sermonetta, A. Serra, L. Sestieri Scazzocchio, S. J. Sierra, S. Simonsohn, G. Tamani, A. Toaff, A. Tosato, E. Trevisani Semi, L. Troiani, P. Visentin, A. Vivian. I would add the name of F. Michelini Tocci, mentioned in my previous survey.¹¹

Another branch of oriental studies which I failed to mention is Coptology, in which Tito Orlandi occupies an outstanding international position. From 1978 to the present, he and his student G. Mantovani (with the occasional aid of A. Shisha-Halevy) published a very important and exhaustive review of Coptic studies published worldwide.¹² This survey is well known to specialists in Coptic literature and art, as well as to scholars in Gnosticism.

Among the questions put to me by some Italian scholars who had read my review article, "History of Religions in Italy," there were also three about methodology which require a short answer here. The first question was why I had not stressed the methodological differences between the various Italian "schools" in the history of religions (the school of the late A. Brelich in Rome, the school of U. Bianchi, the school of F. Bolgiani, etc.). Such an emphasis, as important as it might seem to Italian readers, is much less significant for an American reader, who needs, above all, bibliographical information. Nevertheless, some generic differences between directions in the Italian history of religions have not been neglected altogether—for example, between the "cultural" approach of G. Piccaluga or D. Sabbatucci (the latter being an Italian pioneer in political anthropology), the Marxist approach of E. De Martino's disciples (although De Martino himself had been rather a historicist of the school of Croce than a Marxist), or the "typological" approach of U. Bianchi (not completely devoid of historico-cultural features).

The second question concerned the relation between history of religions and history of Christianity in Italy, the former being much less developed and influential than the latter. Historical reasons for that are too obvious to need further explanation. However, my intention was to review only studies in history of religions, not studies in history of Christianity, for which my competence is very limited.

¹¹ One further article by Michelini Tocci has come to my attention: "Simboli di trasformazione cabalistici ed alchemici nell'*zš mešarēf*," *AION* 41 (1981): 41–81.

¹² "Studi copti. Rassegna a cura di T. Orlandi e G. Mantovani," *Vetera Christianorum* 15 (1978): 117–35, 393–404; 16 (1979): 111–30, 287–309; 17 (1980): 131–52, 383–404; 18 (1981): 207–31.

The third question was of a merely pragmatic kind, namely, why “seniors” and “juniors” had been put together, giving the impression that all the studies I cited were of equal importance. I think that is not the case, but my intention was to draw a merely informative, not an axiological, list of works on subjects.

I hope that this postscript has largely fulfilled the purpose of completing and improving the data and the framework furnished by my previous survey. It is my opinion that perfection is beyond human reach, and an impersonal review like this one cannot meet everyone’s expectations. The limits and risks of an attempt of this kind should be obvious to anyone.

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