

Bremen conference 2007

EASR President's Report

Dear colleagues,

I would like to express my thanks to Prof. Gritt Klinkhammer and to Dr. Wanda Alberts for their care in organising this Conference. I would also like to express my personal and heartfelt thanks to the President, Prof. Hubert Seiwert and all the colleagues of the Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionswissenschaft (DVRW,) for their hard work in organising this important meeting in Bremen, as a forum for discussion of the fundamental problems and methods of our discipline. It confirms the need and usefulness of the dialogue between scholars and different research methods for the development of historical-religious studies.

The activity performed by the EASR during its few but fruitful years of life, from its foundation in the epoch-making year of 2000, is the clear demonstration of how true this is, and at the same time confirms the need for scholars working in our field of research to be aware of a constantly-open channel of communication, as an important means of verification for the results of their research. During the last year, as can be seen from the report by the Secretary, Prof. Kim Knott, our Society has continued to follow its established path, especially in terms of the organisational commitment of the Secretary, who I would like to thank on behalf of all our Colleagues.

I would like to add a personal consideration. Our project began life at the meeting in Krakow, in which "the founding mothers and fathers" formulated the project of establishing a European Association for the Study of Religions. Now, this project has been successfully brought to fruition. The journey has been an intense experience, not only academically, but also on a human level, shared with many Colleagues and friends. Right from the beginning, and then in the subsequent meetings in Cambridge and Santander, I was shown extraordinary trust, being honoured with the Presidency of our association, certainly also as an acknowledgement of the contribution of Italian scholarship to the progress of our studies, especially in the figures of Raffaele Pettazzoni and Ugo Bianchi, both onetime Presidents of the IAHR (the former was also a co-founder).

As I pass the torch to the new President whose election will take place during this meeting, I would like to express my thanks to all those, colleagues and friends, who conferred this honour upon me. I am particularly grateful to that small group of colleagues who took part in the Meeting in Krakow organised with exceptional care and enthusiasm by Halina Grzymala-Mosciszinska, where a fortunate intuition led us to 'imagine' and build solid foundations for the project of a Society which can now claim to be fully realised. Lastly I would like to give my best wishes to the colleagues appointed to the new Executive Committee and in particular to Maya Burger who, appointed to take my place in the prestigious post of President, will successfully continue to show that particular 'feminine touch' that the EASR desired to assume right from the beginning.

It also gives me great pleasure to announce that the Italian Society for the History of

Religions has offered to take on the task of organising the annual Congress of the EASR in 2009, a year that marks the fiftieth year's celebration of the death of Raffaele Pettazzoni , the 'founder' of historico-religious research in Italy, whose contribution to research needs no introduction here.

The Congress - which will be dedicated to the theme of "Religion in the History of European Culture" - is also intended to pay homage to the personality of this great scholar. For my part, I have proposed to take on the task of dealing with the organisation of works at my University, in Messina. I hope that the Committee and the General Assembly accept my proposal and that I can thus welcome you to Sicily in September 2009.

Giulia Sfameni Gasparro