

*A Comparative Approach to Religions.
A Historical Perspective – from the Sixteenth
to the Eighteenth Centuries*

Carlo Ginzburg

2010 Balzan Prize for European History (1400-1700)

Balzan GPC Advisers: Quentin Skinner, Salvatore Veca

Main Researchers: Angela Ballone, Lucio Biasiori, Giovanni Tarantino

Affiliated Institution: Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa

Period: 2011-2017

Carlo Ginzburg is Former Professor at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa and Franklin D. Murphy Professor of Italian Renaissance Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Ginzburg dedicated the second half of his Balzan Prize to a research programme in which he intends to scrutinize the emergence of a comparative approach to religions. Two young scholars, Biasiori and Tarantino, were initially involved in a research project going back to the 1500s, exploring the emergence of a comparative approach to religions, and focusing on the connection between antiquarianism and early ethnology, in the framework of European colonial expansion. A series of analytical studies emanating from this research were planned. Ballone joined the project at a later stage.

The initial phase of the project consisted in several publications by Carlo Ginzburg (*Machiavelli e gli antiquari*; *Provincializing the World: Europeans, Indians, Jews (1704)*; *Ancora sui riti cinesi: documenti vecchi e nuovi*). Researchers also considered questions raised in the following works: Guy Stroumsa, *A New Science. The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason*, Harvard University Press, 2010; Arnaldo Momigliano, "Ancient History and the Antiquarian," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, 1950; Arnaldo Momigliano, "Prospettiva 1967 della storia greca," *Rivista Storica Italiana* 80 (1969).

Three one-year researcher's positions at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa were

awarded between 2011 and 2014. An international workshop, *Comparing Religions. A Historical Approach (16th-18th Centuries)*, was also organized by Ginzburg at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa from 10 to 11 June 2013. Another workshop, *Norms and Exceptions. A Comparative Approach to Casuistry*, was held in Florence from 11 to 13 December 2014. The proceedings of both workshops will later be published by Cambridge University Press.

Publications

- Ginzburg, Carlo. "Machiavelli e gli antiquari," in *L'Europa divisa e gli altri mondi. Per Adriano Prosperi*, vol. 2: 3–9. Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2011.
- Ginzburg, Carlo. "Provincializing the World: Europeans, Indians, Jews (1704)." *Postcolonial Studies*. Volume 14, Issue 2 (2011): 135-150.
- Tarantino, Giovanni. *Republicanism, Sinophilia and Historical Writing. Thomas Gordon (c. 1691-1750) and his 'History of England.'* Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.