

## Carlo Ginzburg

**Former Professor at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa and former Franklin D. Murphy Professor of Italian Renaissance Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles**

### **2010 Balzan Prize for European History (1400-1700)**

*For the exceptional combination of imagination, scholarly precision and literary skill with which he has recovered and illuminated the beliefs of ordinary people in Early-modern Europe.*

**Institution Administering Research Funds:** Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa

**Adviser for the Balzan General Prize Committee:** Quentin Skinner and Salvatore Veca

### **A Comparative Approach to Religions**

#### **A Historical Perspective - from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries**

Carlo Ginzburg has dedicated the second half of his Balzan Prize to a three year research programme where he intends to scrutinize the emergence of a comparative approach to religions. This will initially involve two young scholars.

The Research Project will go back to the 1500s, exploring the emergence of a comparative approach to religions, focusing on the connection between antiquarianism and early ethnology, in the framework of European colonial expansion. It is envisaged that a series of analytical studies will emanate from this research.

The initial phase of the project is constituted by a number of works by Carlo Ginzburg which have just been or are shortly to be published: *Machiavelli e gli antiquari*; *Ancora sui riti cinesi: documenti vecchi e nuovi*; *Provincializing the World: Europeans, Indians, Jews (1704)*. Researchers will also take account of the questions raised in the following works: *A New Science. The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason*, Guy Stroumsa, Harvard University Press, 2010; *Ancient History and the Antiquarian*, Arnaldo Momigliano, Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute, 1950; *Prospettiva 1967 della storia greca*, Arnaldo Momigliano, Rivista Storica Italiana 80, 1969.

Positions for two researchers were advertised by the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. The winners were awarded a scholarship of one year duration. Two workshops and an international conference will also be organized. It is expected that the papers from the international conference will later be published.

### **Next Stage**

A workshop will take place at the Scuola Normale, Pisa, in the Spring of 2013. The papers submitted by the participants will be circulated in advance. They will focus on *Cérémonies et coutûmes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde* (Amsterdam 1723 ff.): the multivolume, gigantic comparative effort which in recent years has been studied by a number of scholars (Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob and Wijnand Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*; Bernard Picart and the *First Global Vision of Religion*, by various authors). The seminar will focus on the vocabulary used by Jean Frederic Bernard, the editor, in a series of unsigned contributions, as well as by the authors of some of the essays included in the *Cérémonies*. Crucial words like “religion”, “coutûme”, “rite”, “conformité” will be submitted to a close scrutiny, aiming to explore their consistency, nuances and historical implications. The workshop will analyze the long term impact of the *Cérémonies* vocabulary on the history of religions as a discipline.

### **Researchers:**

Lucio Biasiori  
Giovanni Tarantino

### **Publications:**

- Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Machiavelli e gli antiquari’ in *L’Europa divisa e i nuovi mondi. Per Adriano Prosperi, Vol. II*, Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2011, pp. 3-8.
- Carlo Ginzburg, *Provincializing the World: Europeans, Indians, Jews (1704)* in “Postcolonial Studies”, Volume 14, Issue 2, 2011, pp. 135-150.