

## Notes for a Typology of Monotheism<sup>1</sup>

Alessandro Bausani *Translated by Julio Savi*

### Abstract

*Alessandro Bausani was an Italian Baha'i, philologist and scholar at the University of Rome. A small but important part of his literary production was concerned with studies of the Babi-Baha'i Faith. He produced two well regarded papers on the origins and relations between various monotheisms in which he situates the Babi-Baha'i movement vis a vis other great religious systems. The first article was published in Italian as Bausani, Alessandro (1957). Note per una tipologia del monoteismo. Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni (Rome) 28: 67–88. That article is translated here because of its relevance to Baha'i Studies. See also the companion article: Alessandro Bausani (1963). Can Monotheism Be Taught?: Further Considerations on the Typology of Monotheism. Numen (Leiden) 10: 167–201.*

### Keywords

monotheism  
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Pettazzoni will always have the undisputed merit of having historically approached and solved the issue of the exact definition and genesis of monotheism. His ideas in this regard are so familiar to scholars<sup>2</sup> that it is useless for me to summarize them here. And yet it is appropriate to remember that the issue of the origin of the concept of a 'great God' or Supreme Being should be kept separate from that of the origin of 'monotheism' itself: according to Pettazzoni the former arises primarily from a mythical apperception of heaven,<sup>3</sup> the latter through the polemical and revolutionarily anti-polytheistic action of a Prophet, an historical founder. In this sense, monotheism is, according to Pettazzoni, an extremely rare phenomenon in the history of religion; indeed, he seemingly considered it as unique, since he limited it to the Israelite monotheism and upheld the possibility that the only form of non-Semitic monotheism, that is Zoroastrian monotheism, was born under the Jewish influence.<sup>4</sup>

My argumentation could start from these passages by Pettazzoni:<sup>5</sup>

Christian monotheism is initially a prolongation of Jewish monotheism; *later on it had its own development ... (added emphasis) ...* The founders of the great monotheistic religions did not reveal their respective gods out of nothing, but – *except Jesus, who was born in a monotheistic milieu* – they exalted gods, who in previous polytheisms had already been supreme gods, to the rank of absolutely unique gods ...

Now, I think that the above mentioned concept by Pettazzoni can be deepened in a typological and historical perspective, considering, on the one hand, beside the three quoted religions, also a fourth monotheistic

religion, which can be studied in particularly favourable conditions, since it was born in the last century [Editor's note, nineteenth century], that is Bābī-Bahā'ism; on the other, the most recent hypotheses of religious science on that unusual type of monotheism, which I would call a 'failed monotheism,' that is Iranian monotheism.<sup>6</sup>

Pettazzoni also offers a starting point in his above quoted text, when he remarks that actually Christianity, born in the context of a monotheistic religion, meets only in part his definition (or, better, it meets his definition *only subsequently*, with its diffusion in the pagan Greek-Roman world and with its struggle against its idolatry). Christianity is, therefore, a rather *sui generis* monotheism. The same thing could be said about Bābī-Bahā'ism, whose genesis, in a historical perspective, occurred in analogous conditions: that is, it was born in the context of a pre-existent monotheistic religion, Islam.<sup>7</sup>

Beside this broad similarity between these two monotheisms, which we will from now on call 'secondary monotheisms,' there are deeper similarities related to the modalities of their historical origin. *Firstly*, both of them appear as the fulfilment of an 'eschatological expectation' typical of certain milieus of both these primary monotheisms. *Secondly*, both of them appear in spiritual areas of primary monotheisms, in which, under the influence of other cultures (Hellenistic-neo-Platonic culture in the case of Judaism just prior to Christ, Iranian Manichean-Gnostic culture in the case of Shiite Iran), a special form of monotheistic religiosity especially propitious for the birth of a 'secondary monotheism' arose. *Thirdly*, in both of them the idea of God was psychologically, if not theoretically, subordinated to the idea of the Founder, who is, in one of those two religions, the Son of God and God himself, in the other one a 'Manifestation of God' (*mazhar-i ilāhī*), and not a simple 'prophet', like in primary monotheisms.<sup>8</sup> *Fourthly*, both secondary monotheisms emphasize, between the two great sets of divine attributes (*ḡalal-ḡamal*, glory-grace, might-love, *tremendum-fascinans*, etc.), those of love-loving-kindness-*fascinans*, rather than those of *tremenda majestas*. *Fifthly*, in both secondary monotheisms the martyrdoms and the sorrows of both the Founder and his followers take on a vital importance, in sharp contrast with what occurs in primary monotheisms. These martyrdoms and sorrows go as far as taking on a redemptive value in Christianity and a more generically purifying and redeeming importance in Bābī-Bahā'ism. *Sixthly*, both secondary monotheisms establish sacred institutions (the Charismatic Church in Christianity, the 'Administrative Order,' a Redeeming Ark, *safīna hamrā*,<sup>9</sup> in Bahā'ism), which are substantially different from the idea of the 'people of God' of primary monotheisms.

To this concise introductory list, we will add a number of further considerations.

a) As it is well known, the eschatological expectation of a Saviour-Person that will come, in Judaism and in Islam, is ascribed by many to Iranian influences. This idea seems indeed extraneous to the absolute theistic religious system of Semitic monotheism, whereas it is more coherently explained in a cyclic system, like the Mazdean one. Interesting Mazdean texts associate the primordial heroes with those of the end (*fraškart*); Yam (Yima, Gamšid), a 'cultural hero', the founder of human civilization, builds his underground *var* for eschatological purposes for the future; Kai Kāūs is both a primordial

hero and the hero that assists in the fulfilment of the ultimate apokatastasis, etc.; the ultimate 'saviours' are of the same seed as the same initial prophet-saviour Zarathustra (cf. *Dāristan i Dēnik*, 2:10-48-30); like him, they are called 'apostles.' Therefore, the founder himself takes on, in Widengren's words, an eschatological 'cyclic aspect'<sup>10</sup> This concept, introduced into religions which consider time as *linear*<sup>11</sup>, took on a slightly different shade, since it does not imply a return to the beginning, but a new world, 'new heavens, and a new earth'<sup>12</sup>. The figure of the Founder-Prophet is, in primary monotheisms, quite different from the eventual coming saviour (Messiah, *Mahdī*), and believing in him is not after all so important. On the contrary, the founders of secondary monotheisms are in the singular position of being considered as the *fulfillers* of the eschatological promise *in their own person*, and of having been both (Jesus and the Bāb) killed and defeated: thence their bi-partition. The slain Christ will return in glory in a later and truer end of the world (but also the end of the world signaled by his first coming is a true one<sup>13</sup>); the Bāb announces the coming 'He Whom God will make manifest' (*man yūzhiruhu 'llāh*), who according to the Bahā'īs came soon after him (whence the weak eschatological emphasis of Bahā'ism as compared to that, very strong, of Bābism). Since the Iranian cycle fits in the progressive linearity of Time typical of primary monotheisms, the interesting possibility arises of a spiral multiplication of the cycle, versus the pure cyclicality of Gnosis and the 'straight line' of Judaism and Islam.<sup>14</sup>

b) The religious Dead Sea scrolls<sup>15</sup> and the modern discoveries demonstrating that the religious type, which we will, for the sake of convenience, call 'gnosis,' is much more widespread than we used to think<sup>16</sup> in Judaism, as well as in the rich harvest of data on Gnostic-Manichean trends in the 'heretical' Islam<sup>17</sup> show that a new religious *Weltanschauung* arose in the areas of these two great primary monotheisms, for centuries, in recurring crises, beginning from the Arabic conquest, especially in certain times, that is, the days immediately before Christ in Judaism, and areas, that is the Eastern, Iranian zone of the Caliphal Empire in Islam. This religious *Weltanschauung* was characterized by a singular process – that I would call 'inverse mythologization.' As to Christianity, the existence of a mythologizing trend in certain pre-Christian milieus was acutely highlighted by Drews and his school, albeit at the service of an historically wrong thesis, that Jesus of Nazareth did not actually exist. In my opinion, this thesis, despite its various mistakes, is partly confirmed by recent studies.<sup>18</sup> In the demythologized prophetic-Mosaic religion, which breaks the naturalistic evolutionary process of the mythological development with a preaching of the Divine Unity (in this regard, the Arabic term *tauḥīd*, 'to make one,' 'to say one' is especially meaningful) concentrating all the Sacred in the One God (and not only One, but also 'single,' *fard*, in addition to *wāḥid*, using the technical terms typical of the most perfect monotheism, the Islamic one), both a natural tendency and external influences act to re-build a new mythology; but this mythology cannot arise from below, in a naturalistic way. The One God himself begins, from the top, to pullulate, to ferment: his attributes become as if personified in angels, Powers, Logos, etc.<sup>19</sup> As to Islam, whoever is somehow familiar with the Ismaili-Gnostic texts of the *guluww*<sup>20</sup> is struck by the repetition, throughout the whole history of these sects, of a leitmotiv that could be exemplified through such a sentence as:

‘Such and such is the Acting Intellect.’<sup>21</sup> It is not an objectification of natural forces, or cosmic powers. It is a kind of objectification of abstract ideas, of psychological or moral attributes of the personal God of theism (which goes as far as their personification, and then identification, with this or that historical personage). This typical process is unrelated to both Hellenic and pure monotheistic culture, whereas it is typical of the development of Iranian religiosity. In my opinion, one of the many singular features of the history of the Mazdean religion is a development that proceeds in the opposite direction, when compared to the development imagined by the euhemeristic theory: that is, in the most *ancient* stage of this religion (in the *Gāthās*) the divine attributes (*Ameshaspenta*) seem moral *concepts* in their most abstract condition, whereas later on they acquire a more precise angelic character and become more and more personified. Aside from the *Ameshaspenta*, also other personages – that in the Avesta had a more clearly mythological aspect (like *Yima*, *Thraetaona*, *Keresaspa*, etc.) – are perceived, as early as in Pahlavi Sassanid texts, as undoubtedly more ‘euhemerized,’ historicized and personified ‘Sovereigns’ than in ancient times.<sup>22</sup> Zarathustra himself (on whose historical existence a number of scholars have cast doubts) is called an ‘earthly God’ in *Vispered* II, 4, 6; his switch from a metaphysical world to the ‘incarnated world’ (*axv i astōmand*) seems evident in passages from the *Dēnkart* (for example VII, III, 31). Besides, in the Avesta Ahura Mazda himself also has a corporeal aspect (see Darmesteter, *Le Zend Avesta*, Paris, 1892, vol. I. 7).<sup>23</sup> As Corbin suggests, in the Mazdean religiosity, we could speak of an ‘angelic tendency,’ versus the pure theistic tendency of prophetic monotheism and the naturalistic-mythological tendency typical of such religiosities as the Indian one. Therefore the rise, in the religious milieu of Iranian Islam, of a person who claims to be the ‘manifestation’ of this or that Koranic verse, of the divine word, of the ‘Letters’ of the name of God, etc. is not a new phenomenon; on the contrary, it was prepared by remarkable experiences. The Bāb (and later on and even more than him, Bahā’u’llāh) differs from the mere founder of a sect because he declares his definitive departure from Islam, proclaiming himself the bearer of a new prophetic book and the founder of a real new monotheistic religion.

c) The idea of a transcendent God, in whom all the Sacred was concentrated in the primary monotheisms, splits downward, therefore, with the Christ (or the *Bāb and Bahā*). The idea *per Christum ad Deum* is present in these secondary monotheisms since their earliest times, although it takes this form later on. Christ is the only way, the only mirror to meet the person of God, higher and higher and inaccessible in primary monotheisms. In the texts of the secondary Bābī-Bahā’ī monotheism there are passages of great interest, from which one can deduce that all the terms denoting ‘God,’ for example, in the Koran, are always referring to His visible Manifestation, as the only viable way to give a meaning in front of men to those, otherwise absurd, terms and expressions. And thus, for example, in the ‘Book of Certitude’ (*Īqān*) the locution ‘attainment unto the divine presence,’ often mentioned in the Koran, is translated in concrete terms as ‘attaining the presence of the Bāb and accepting his doctrine’; or, in the seemingly mystic work by Bahā’u’llāh ‘The Seven Valleys,’ the Koranic verse 18:110 ‘by whichever name ye will invoke Him (God): He hath most excellent names’ is intended as referring to the various names or epithets of the *Manifestation*

of God, that is Muhammad, actually the only visible and concrete form of God for his age.<sup>24</sup> The theological speculation has specified, in Christianity (both because the concept of 'son of God' induced them to also consider the father as a person, and for the particular success of the concept of Holy Spirit) a 'Trinity;' on the other hand, in the Iranian-Gnostic heresies of Islam and in Bābī-Bahā'ism the concept that the only 'personality' of the Divine, strictly speaking, is his intermediary, or better manifestation (*Mazhar*), has been emphasized.<sup>25</sup> Manifestation and not incarnation: therefore the sacredness of the person of the founder is here intended, unlike in Christianity, as that of a 'purest mirror,' rather than of a 'son.' God, in his essence, remains in his absolute transcendence: the only way toward the vision of him is that of his *Mazhar*. However, beside any theological subtlety, the experience of a certain contact between God and man in the Founder remains as a common feature.

d) Browne (in *A year among the Persians*, Cambridge, 1927, p.444, see also p.330ff) proves that the Bābīs, with whom he came in touch and had very interesting religious discussions, were aware of the fact that in their religion the attributes of *ḡamal* were stressed more than those of *ḡalal*, and saw in this a resemblance with the previous Christian monotheism, and perceived in the history of the prophetic cycles a sort of wide breath whereby the attributes of the *tremendum* were emphasized in certain dispensations (the Mosaic and the Muhammadic ones), while those of the *fascinans* were stressed in others (the Christian and the Bābī ones). The reason are wholly comprehensible, when one considers how important was, in those two secondary monotheisms, the Founder as a model of the divinity; and their founders (Christ and the Bāb) were both persecuted to an ignominious death without any rebellion by them: therefore they necessarily were 'not powerful' in the perspective of human power.<sup>26</sup>

e) As to the issue of pain and suffering, the position of these two secondary monotheisms is especially meaningful; prophets have been killed in primary monotheisms as well: 'from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar' (Matt. 23:35). The Prophetic books of the Old Testament describe the pains and afflictions of the prophets, and the Koran, in its stories of the prophets, confirms persecution as a recurring feature in the lives of the great Revealers, including Muhammad himself. But it always is a pain inflicted by adversaries, against whom the prophets somehow struggled. It is not God who wants his prophets to suffer, it is the wicked ones that make them suffer. In a passage (20:2) whose interpretation is much-discussed, God says in the Koran to his prophet: 'Not to sadden thee have we sent down this Koran to thee.' On the contrary, in secondary monotheisms the ancient idea of the god that dies, typical of certain paganisms (Attis, Adonis, Osiris etc.), resurfaces in a different form. One of the reasons is that, since these monotheisms arose from existing monotheisms and did not struggle against polytheism, the prophets are not killed by pagans, but by persons who, for better or worse, are the representatives of the One God, the people of God. We need but to add the greater sacred intensity of the person of the Founder to the concrete historical experience whereby he is killed 'at the hand of the priests,' and we will have, *in nuce*, all the elements of the theological idea of the 'sacrificed son of God,' which

is especially developed in Christianity. Naturally, external influences enter into this experience: the areas where the archetype of the 'God who dies' is diffused are so wide, that one cannot deny its contact with those theologies. In the Muslim milieu it is well known that the closest figure to the type of 'the God who dies and redeems' is the person of Ḥusain, who is particularly worshipped in Persia.<sup>27</sup> The Bāb has always claimed that he was a repetition of Ḥusain<sup>28</sup> who voluntarily sacrificed himself to save his community.

The dramatic commemorations of Ḥusain's sacrifice themselves have an almost sacramental redemptive value: whosoever, during those commemorations, mourns for Ḥusain is saved from his sins!<sup>29</sup> (cf. the Mass). The idea is so alien to such a 'pure' primary monotheism as Islam, that these commemorations have been widely studied to trace their origins. As strange as it may seem, the hypothesis of an ancient Iranian foundation in this devotion so deeply rooted in modern Persia seems unlikely: in the remnants of the texts of the ancient Iranian religion, myths of a rescuing or saving death of the Hero or of the God are not so conspicuous. It should be noted, however, that we can identify, in a few texts, traces of the elimination of a primal Hero (*Gayōmart*, see for example *Mēnōkē Xrat*, XXVII, 1) from whose slayed body, in the beginning, all men are born and who, at the end (see *Bundahišn*, 30, 7–9), shows up again as the first among the resurrected ones, to contribute among the others to the ultimate redemption.<sup>30</sup> In the Iranian zone there is another less vague, less mythological-archaic, and more euhemerized legend, that of Siyāvuš. The ancient Iranian hero Siyāvuš also is 'wrongly' killed by his relatives (Afrāsiyāb), who put to death their own blood, and the historian Naršahī, who lived in the tenth century when the remnants of the ancient religion were still quite alive in a number of peripheral areas of the Iranian territory, bears witness to the existence of commemorative songs or dirges for him sung by the 'Magians' in Bukhara, where the hero was especially worshipped; these songs and ceremonies, which had a special sacred meaning, were called 'Siyāvuš's vengeance' (*kīn-i Siyāvuš*).<sup>31</sup> Tolstov<sup>32</sup> maintains that Siyāvuš is a Central Asian ancient divinity, of an agrarian type, whose remote origins can be traced to the West (Phrygia, perhaps), linked with the legends of Attis, Adonis and the like,<sup>33</sup> that later on faded into the background at the hands of Zoroastrians. Despite all this, the issue of the historical origins of Ḥusain's worship and of the cult of pain in Persia is far from being easily solvable: since the frail pre-Islamic 'Iranian' traces are not enough to explain it, we should accept a closer and more comprehensible influence of Christianity and Manichaeism and of their substantially pessimistic ideologies. An examination of all the common features of Jesus's and the Bāb's rescuing deaths, through Ḥusain, may carry us too far away. We will only mention that those Passions also resemble one another in a typical feature: the earthquake and the perturbation of nature at the death of the Holy Man.<sup>34</sup>

f) It is well-known that the Mosaic religion is essentially a national religion, and it also is well-known that, at the same time, in the days immediately before Jesus Christ, proselytizing trends were present (as exaggerated as they may have been by certain forms of the present liberal Judaism) in the Jewish world, trends that were especially alive in the Philonian milieus of the diaspora, but were also present, according to what the Gospel says, among the Palestinian Pharisees (Matt. XXIII, 15). Islam, the second great primary

monotheism, is, in its earliest times, a universal religion (the expression ‘a warning to all creatures’ referring to the preaching of Muhammad recurs in quite early Koranic Suras, 68:52; 81:27); however, when the Prophet becomes aware of the fact that his specific message is different from that of the other monotheistic messages, the idea appears of a preaching for the Arabic nation (4:41; 6:156-7; 13:30 etc.). Islam, is, essentially, albeit in a quite different form than Judaism, a non-missionary, ‘national’ monotheism; despite T. W. Arnold’s efforts to demonstrate the opposite,<sup>35</sup> the concept of belonging to the ‘sacred nation’ (*umma*), although it is not related to that of belonging to a ‘race,’ is more similar to the Jewish concept of the ‘people of God’ than to the Christian idea of ‘Church.’ True, the bond that unites the members of the Nation is no more a blood tie (although a number of texts ascribe an almost sacred importance to the Arabic people), but a bond of adherence to the new faith-state founded by the Prophet; however, Islam was not a missionary religion, in the strictest sense of the word, and the Prophet never tried, at least in the beginning, to convince Christians and Jews, peoples of another ‘sacred nation’, to be converted.<sup>36</sup> Islamization should occur, and as a matter of fact mostly occurred, in an impersonal way, through a political (be it forced or not, here it does not matter) submission to the sacred Islamic nation. Missionarism in its strictest sense arose in the Iranian-Gnostic heretical communities (Manichaeism influences) that led up to a secondary monotheism, and became especially wide and well-known in the Ismailism of the famous ‘assassins.’ The figure of the *dā’ī* (‘one who raises the call to truth,’ the Missionary) is very important also in their hierarchies and moreover has a metaphysical foundation (the ‘transcendent missionary,’ etc.). The *dā’ī* preaches a salvific Truth which can be summarized in the following proposition: ‘this person is the imam’<sup>37</sup>, in the same way as the Christian missionary preaches the truth that Χριστός ὁ Κύριος (Christos o Kurios, the Christ is the Lord).<sup>38</sup> This kind of preached truth creates a ‘church’ rather than a ‘people of God.’ Here we have the model of a more restricted community (and actually at the beginning both Christianity and Bābīsm were considered as ‘sects’ of Judaism and Islam respectively), which considers itself as a metaphysically absolute truth and at the same time demands adherence as a call to safety. The Manichaeism influences on these trends are known and generally accepted: and a typical feature of Manichaeism – versus the more closed nationalist Mazdeism (where the *anērān*, the ‘non-Iranian’ is identified with the satanic) – is the character of a redeeming community or church with universalistic missionary tendencies. As Widengren maintains, the concept of *dēn*, ‘church,’ has almost the features of a macrocosmic incarnation of the Christ-Vahman-Messenger, with whom the various *dēn*, ‘individual consciences,’ would be connected by participation.<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, the Bābī-Bahā’ī religion, born in this milieu, like Christianity was born in a Gnostic-oriented-Jewish milieu, has an interesting perception of its contrast with an Islam, conceived as a ‘nation-religion.’ In a passage by Bahā’u’llāh<sup>40</sup> Islam is described as the representative of a narrow conception of religious community as ‘country,’ versus the universalism of a *da’wa* (‘missio [mission]’) centred around the ‘recognition of the Manifestation’<sup>41</sup>: ‘In Islam they say: ‘Love of one’s country is an element of the Faith of God’<sup>42</sup>, but I say: “It is not his to boast who loveth his country, but it is his who loveth the world”.’ As paradoxical as it may

seem, the reason of this 'missionary universalism' of secondary monotheisms is precisely their typical concentration of the divine, of 'Truth' and of 'Salvation' in the person of the Founder: whoever says 'Christ is the Lord' or 'Seyyed 'Alī Mohammad from Shīrāz is the Mahdī and the Qā'im' or 'Bahā'u'llāh is the Manifestation of God' is regenerated by this same belief and becomes a part of the universal community of the true believers; but one needs to convince others of these confessions-propositions in order to save them, whereas, obviously in the case of Judaism, a national religion (and in a lesser degree, obviously, in the case Islam as well), since the anti-polytheistic profession of faith is, especially, the formula 'there is no god but God,' it is not very important to convince individuals who, accepting this general confession, arrive to it through different prophets (mouth-pieces of God, and nothing else). In these secondary monotheisms, parallel to the concentration of the Divine in the person of the Martyr-Founder and because of an obvious internal logic, two further sacralizations occur: the sacralization of the 'near ones' to the Founder (his Mother, in the case of Christianity, his descendants in the flesh in Bābī-Bahā'ism and, preliminarily in Shiite Islam, the *ahl al-bait*, the Prophet's family); and, especially, the sacralization of the Head of the redeeming Community, he himself a spiritual or carnal descendant of the Founder.

Also in Manichaeism (cf. Widengren, op.cit., p.41) there is an intimate union between Manvahmed-Vohuman (the transcendent apostle of light historicized in Mani) and the 'head of the church' (*dēn-sarār*), 'Vohuman's good son.' In Bābī-Bahā'ism the 'Guardian' (*valī-e amri'llāh*), a descendant of the Founder in the flesh as well, is quite different from the head of a primary-monotheistic community (or better 'people'), like the Caliph, in the same way as the Catholic Pope is quite different from an Israeli Judge or King. In whatever time history may say that it was born, the Papacy is an internal logical product of such a secondary monotheism as Christianity, in the same way as the institution of the Guardian in the Bahā'ī religion or, in certain sects that failed to become totally emancipated from their mother religion, the 'Head' of certain extreme Shiite communities, or the head of the Manichaean church. The Missionary Church, the Founder's mystical body,<sup>43</sup> with its sacred head, is a more universal – although eventually smaller when outwardly seen (but ... 'my kingdom is not of this world')<sup>44</sup> – organism than those which were created by primary monotheisms, and which almost totally identify themselves with a more earthly 'state.'

Summing up this quick typological review – in which my method was especially inspired by Pettazzoni's statement in his above mentioned *Saggio* : 'Any typology is necessarily abstract. But one thing is that which establishes static morphological features, another thing that which catches dynamic developmental analogies' – it seems quite evident that, in a theoretical perspective, all the various aspects of 'secondary' monotheism come from that interesting phenomenon which we have called, with a paradoxical, but expressive, term, 'fermentation of the God' of primary monotheism. In the One God of the rigid prophetic monotheism, *logos*, angelical substances, hypostases, transcendent individuals, which can be represented and as a matter of fact are represented<sup>45</sup> in this or that historical personage, begin at a certain point to appear, in a more and more distinct form. This phenomenon should, obviously, be kept apart – and it

is important to remark it – from the well-known historical phenomenon of the permanence, in monotheistic religions, of deities or religious concepts typical of the previous naturalistic ‘paganism:’ in the Iranian milieu, for example, one should keep the phenomenon whereby such gods of the pre-Zoroastrian naturalistic-mythological Pantheon, as Mithra, Anāhitā etc. survive, in certain modes and despite the monotheistic reformation, in the religious conscience of the people, apart from the phenomenon whereby a number of Archangelic attributes, envisioned by the religious genius of the Founder, such as ‘Good Thought’ (*Vohu Manah*) or ‘Holy Meekness’ (*Spenta Armaiti*), develop in the way we saw and become real personal entities or even living persons.<sup>46</sup>

Which are the historical reasons of this ‘fermentation’ of the God of primary monotheisms that in the course of time implies the birth of secondary monotheisms? The reason is not, like in the former ones, the revolutionary initiative of struggling against polytheism taken by a Founder who loudly utters the name of the One God and adds ‘beside Thee there is no one,’ and is wholly bent on desacralizing nature (See note 5, p.225), so that he may avoid any relapse (which history however has demonstrated to be unavoidable) into ‘pagan’ naturalism. Now that monotheisms have been established and that, rightly or wrongly, there is no danger of a re-paganization, the need to struggle against the multiplicity of the centres of the Sacred (which no one fears may be naturalized) relax, so to say, and the transcendent God is pluralistically vitalized. This process may also occur in the absence of external influences,<sup>47</sup> but as a matter of fact these influences are present, and quite clear. I mean that body of religious ideas, hardly described by a homogeneous definition, which – a mixture of Hellenic, neo-Platonic-oriented paganism, Babylonian,<sup>48</sup> Iranian, Egyptian ideas – prevailed in the area of the Near East just before the birth of the Christian secondary monotheism. These ideas, quite faithfully handed down by the Ismaili esoteric tradition and by the Islamic philosophers of the *ishrāq* (‘Illumination’), in the Islamic cultural area which has been a precious living Middle Age almost to our days, lived on in Persia in the nineteenth century when the Bābī-Bahā’ism was born there. These trends, Christianity that was already born in those days and perhaps Indian ideas, influenced the birth of a ‘failed’ secondary monotheism from that great, albeit ‘failed’ itself, primary monotheism<sup>49</sup> that was Mazdeism, I mean Manichaeism, in which many features typologically emblematic of secondary monotheism, as well as many mythical remnants that prevent us to typologically put it among monotheisms, may be identified. Manichaeism itself influenced later on, as a further partly secondary-monotheistic element, both the development of Christianity and the whole history of Gnostic Muslim heresies.<sup>50</sup> However, to consider, as one could feel tempted to do, Christianity on the one hand and Bābī-Bahā’ism on the other as ‘particular instances of gnosis’ would be a simplistic conclusion.<sup>51</sup> Syncretistic gnosis, which is largely pagan-naturalistic and, in its most ancient forms, unaware of pure monotheism and of the demythologizing work of its founders, is so strictly bound to myth that it cannot be confused with secondary monotheisms, although they were undoubtedly influenced by it. Confusing them would be tantamount to misunderstanding the essential difference between a naturalistic mythologization from ‘below’ and the ‘intellectualistic-theological’ mythologization ‘from the top.’

## Note

For reasons of completeness we mention that, as it is well known, other monotheistic or monotheistic-like forms of religion arose in the context of different cultures and religions, especially in India, from the contact between Islam and Hinduism. The fruits of these results are of two kinds: an Hinduized Islam on the one hand, a monotheistic-oriented Hinduism on the other. For a more complete treatment of this subject the reader may refer to any manual of History of Religions, with one remark. These attempts (the ephemeral ‘divine religion,’ a personal creation of the Moghul Emperor Akbar, d. 1605, which had a little more than few hundreds followers of doubtful sincerity in his court, and a pleasant, but failed attempt to continue it by the unlucky Prince Dara Sikōh, killed in 1659 is of the former type;<sup>52</sup> the philosophical-schools-sects of the followers of Kabīr, from Dādu and, the most important among them, Sikhism<sup>53</sup> are of the later type) cannot be included in our typology (otherwise it would become an abstract, ahistorical comparative nonsense) mainly for a reason that seemingly eluded the same authors of those syncretism’s, that is, a misunderstanding between the one, but personal and transcendent ‘God’ of Islam, and the one but *impersonal* ‘Divine’ of the Hindu *Weltanschauung*, a reason whereby these monotheisms (which, except Sikhism, were limited to restricted circles) are pseudo-monotheisms. The same Sikhism, this interesting religion that has become a people, does not escape the above mentioned misunderstanding, besides, as all the authors agree, not long after its formation and, especially, after its struggle with Islam, it has gradually been more and more reabsorbed into Hinduism.

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## Contributor details

Alessandro Bausani was a professor of Persian Literature at the University of Naples and Oriental Studies at the University of Rome, specialising in literature especially poetry and religion and in a multiplicity of national languages. His magnum opus is considered to be *Storia della Letteratura Persiana*. His contributions to Baha’i Studies come largely from his book *Persia Religiosa da Zaratustra a Baha’ullah* (1959), translated in 2000 as *Religion in Iran. From Zoroaster to Bahá’u’lláh* and a number of articles in scholarly journals and encyclopedias such as *Oriente Moderno*, *Numen*, *World Order*, *Encyclopedia Iranica* and the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, and his essays were published posthumously in the volume *Saggi sulla Fede Bahá’í* (‘Essays on the Bahá’í Faith’, Rome, 1991).

Julio Savi studied medicine in Bologna and Florence and has practiced gynecology in Bologna. He has published numerous articles essays and translations on the Baha’i Faith as well as several notable books: *The Eternal Quest for God : An Introduction to the Divine Philosophy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá* (Oxford:1989), *Towards the Summit of Reality : An Introduction to the Study of Bahá’u’lláh’s Seven Valleys and Four Valleys* (Oxford,

2008) and most recently *Unsheathing the Sword of Wisdom: Reflections on Human Rights and Terrorism* (Oxford, 2011). He also writes and publishes poetry.

E-mail: julio.savi@gmail.com

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## Endnotes

1. Translated and published with permission of the Dipartimento di Storia, Culture, Religioni, Sapienza Università di Roma, Marianna Ferrara, Editorial Office SMSR, personal communication 24 March 2016.
2. See primarily, beside his old essay, *Dio, formazione e sviluppo del monoteismo* [God, the Birth and Development of Monotheism], Bologna, 1922, several papers collected in *Saggi di Storia delle Religioni e Mitologia* [Essays on History of Religions and Mythology], Rome, 1946 and his recent *Onniscienza di Dio* [The Omniscience of God] (Turin, 1955).
3. Another important possibility, especially as to the Great Creator Gods, is a mythical projection of the shaman, who has the power to create through his mere thought. See R. Pettazzoni, *Mythes des origines et mythes de la création*, in C. J. Bleeker, G. W. J. Drewes and K. A. H. Hidding (eds) *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference of the History of Religions*, (1950), Amsterdam, 1951, pp. 67–78.
4. Cf. *La religione di Zarathustra*, Bologna, 1920, 79ff. The idea that Zarathustra was a disciple of Jewish prophets is ancient and was popular in the Islamic world. The historian Tabarī (I, 681, 6–12) quotes a tradition whereby Zarathustra was a disciple of a poorly identified Jewish prophet whose name was Sīmī; in other quite ancient Iranian Islamic traditions he is identified with Abraham (cf. documents in Mohammad Mo'in, *Mazdayasnā va ta'sir-e ān dar adabiyāt-e fārsī*. 'Il mazdeismo e la sua influenza sulla letteratura persiana [Mazdaism and Its Influence on Persian Literature], Teheran, 1326 (1948), 87ff).
5. See 'Monoteismo e Politeismo' in Pettazzoni, *Saggi*, pp. 36 and 38.
6. Other quite interesting failed monotheisms, which could be usefully studied all together in a number of perspectives despite their great geographical and cultural differences, are especially Akhenaton's reformation (Egypt, fourteenth century B.C.) and the religion-philosophy of Mēh-ti (Micius, China, fifth-fourth century B.C.). In both cases the attempt to concentrate all the sacred in a single point which is somehow external to and transcendent in respect to the world has implied analogous results: the temporary efflorescence of an unprejudicedly secular and naturalistic art in Egypt, the rise of ideas of logic and technique in China. Pettazzoni has often maintained (see quoted works) that Akhenaton's attempt is not a real monotheism, since it does not imply the 'exclusion of all the other gods.' Note, however, the following passage from the famous hymn to Aten: *p<sup>3</sup> ntr w', nn ky hr hw. f.* 'O god, beside whom there is no other god' (I am quoting Kruse's text and translation, *Archetypus Psalmi 104* (105), in *Verbum Domini*, XXIX, 1, 1951, 36). To the one God the one founder-revelator corresponds: 'there is no one that knows Thee beside Thy son ... [thus] reveal Thine advice and power to him...' (ibid. 38).
7. As to the Bābī-Bahā'ī religion, see especially the various works by the English orientalist E. G. [Edward Granville] Browne, one of the major specialists in this field. A quite detailed bibliography can be found in Rudolf Jockel, *Die Glaubenslehren der Bahā'ī Religion*, Darmstadt, 1951.
8. As I often had the opportunity to note in my contacts, in Eastern countries, with Bahā'īs and Muslims, nothing outrages the latter ones more than the idea of 'praying to Bahā'u'llāh,' which may sometimes be found in Bahā'ī texts; an idea which is perfectly normal for a Christian as to the Christ.
9. Literally, 'crimson ark'. It is a recurring expression in the Bahā'ī texts, where it denotes the 'Sacred Community'. The red colour (the Muslim mystic Rūmī, d. 1273, said that it was 'the best of colours') specifically refers to the blood of the martyrs.
10. Widengren, *The Great Vohu Manah and the Apostle of God*, Uppsala 1945, p. 65.

11. See in this regard the interesting remarks by Cullmann (*Christ et le temps*, Neuchâtel, 1947) about the concept of time in Judaism. As to Islam, see my, The concept of Time in the religious philosophy of Muhammad Iqbāl, *Die Welt des Islams*, 3, 3-4, 158–186. The idea of a cyclic time deeply differentiates Zoroastrian mysticism from those of Judaism and Islam; historical research should, in my opinion, bear in mind certain shades of religious experience, which would be wrongly considered as verbiages and theological subtleties (See also H. C. Puech, *La Gnose et le Temps* [Gnosis and Time], in *Eranos Jahrbuch*, XX (1951), Zurich, 1952, 57ff, in which the issue is put into focus.
12. The Koran even seems in a number of passages (for example 39:74) to identify the eschatological paradise with a future conquest of the earth (our earth). See my comment upon Koran 2:248; 39:23; 20:15 in *Studi Orientalistici in onore di G. Levi della Vida*, Rome, 1956 (vol. I, p.41ff).
13. Several difficulties, with which neo-testamentary scholars are quite familiar, on the issue of Jesus's eschatological speeches and of the Parousia, would be solved, in my opinion, if we could prove – and perhaps we have the elements to do so – that Jesus had a cyclical progressive conception of divine Revelation. His coming and his death, which crowned his (future) work, are themselves the 'end of the word' (of a cosmic era); however, later on, there will be a further end of the following era with a later coming. Such an exegesis is quite common in the Gnostic-oriented heresies of Islam and it also is the official Bābī-Bahā'ī exegesis (the Comforter, who will say that which Jesus did not deem timely to say in his preaching, is not, in their opinion, the Holy Spirit, but the future prophet of the new cycle).
14. Many Islamists ascribe the fundamental Koranic concept of 'succeeding revelations' to Manichean influences. Widengren has recently made important terminological contributions to this thesis (See *Muhammad the Apostle of God and His ascension*, Uppsala, 1955). In my opinion, the various concurrences and eventual borrowed technical terms should not, however, lead us to forget the essentially different spiritual approach to the concept of time in Islam – which is virtually identical to that of Judaism – and in the Manichean-Gnostic world. The personal, erratic and arbitrary God of primary monotheisms could be a sufficient basis for the birth of the idea of succeeding revelations, which is somehow a Biblical idea, even without any Manichean influence.
15. For an excellent, up-to-date report see Sabatino Moscati, *I manoscritti ebraici del deserto di Giuda*, Rome, 1955.
16. See G. Quispel, *Gnosis als Weltreligion*, Zürich, 1950.
17. A particularly acute scholar of these trends is Corbin, untiring editor and translator of little known texts of Ismailism and of the 'metaphysics of light' in the *Bibliothèque Iranienne* of Teheran and elsewhere.
18. Arthur Drews, *The Christ Myth* (I use the English translation of the German edition, London, 1910). As insufficient as his documentation is, Drews has the merit of highlighting him whom he calls 'the pre-Christian Jesus,' an image formed by complex hybrids of Iranian, Hellenistic-Philonian, and Essene influences. He confuses the real naturalistic mythologism with what we call mythologization from the top, typical of secondary monotheisms. But his idea that Jesus was *god* before he was born (although he says that he was not born at all!) solves many of those contradictions in which 'liberal' criticism gets and will get entangled. Recent studies (for example the revaluation of the antiquity of John's Gospel, the Dead Sea scrolls, etc.) confirm, anyway, that certain points of his thesis are correct.
19. We cannot exclude, in my opinion, that the mysterious personage, whom one of the Dead Sea scrolls (the commentary upon Habakkuk) calls 'Master of Justice' persecuted by the 'impious priest,' and about whom historians discuss so much in their attempts to identify him (See Moscati, *Manoscritti ebraici*, 30ff), is a hypostasis of Jahveh's servant, that is a transcendent personage. This hypothesis would not be a contrast to the 'mythologizing from the top' tone of those texts.
20. This term of Muslim heresiography, which literally means 'exaggeration,' usually generically denotes the most extreme heretic sects and mainly hints at an 'exaggeration' of the concentration of the Divine in founders-men or saints. The typical *gālī* ('one who exaggerates') is whoever is prone to call this or that personage a 'manifestation' or 'incarnation' of divine hypostases.
21. For example, according to the Noṣairīs, 'Alī is the 'Divine Meaning' (*Ma'ana*), Muhammad is the *Ism* ('Transcendent Name'), Salman (a Persian freedman of the prophet who

assisted his previous master in his military enterprises) is 'the Door of divine science' (*Bāb*). In Ibn Arabī's mystical philosophy, the 'Universal Soul', a rather naturalistic-cosmic ideological concept, is identified with the Perfect Man (*al-insan al-kāmil*, the Jewish *adam qadmōn*). This fact explains the switch: transcendent concepts – 'perfect (still semi-transcendent) man' – this or that particularly holy man. Widengren (op.cit.) shows an analogous switch for the Iranian *Vohu Manah*, but, I think, he misunderstands the original abstract-moralistic character (which precisely characterizes this switch). In Bābism even the letters of the divine supreme name descend upon, or become reflected in this or that man: The Bāb had invested his eighteen 'apostles' with the title of *hurūfāt-i Hayy*, 'the letters of the Living,' whereas he himself was the personification or 'manifestation' (as we shall see, it is not correct to say 'incarnation') of the Point of the Sacred Letter B, and he is mainly known among his followers as the 'Primal Point' (*Nuqṭa-i- Ūlā*). Obviously, these developments, which occur at the end of a long historical chain going back to the Jewish Kabbalah and even earlier through the Islamic Ḥurūfism, have nothing to do with a real 'mythology.'

22. This same process of descent from heaven on earth seems also to concern the evil transcendent hypostases. Thus the term *dēv* (originally 'god' and later on 'demon,' as it is well known) also means – because of that mysterious process of 'visualization of the forms (*kālbad*) of the demons' which is mentioned in the Pahlavi texts – 'a man who worships the *dēvs* (cf. also Yasna IX, 15: 'Thou hast knocked down all the *daēvas*, O Zarathustra, that formerly wandered on earth disguised as men'). Typical are the 'demons of Māzanderān,' who swing between a time in which they are mythical beings who 'struggle in the atmosphere' (cf. G. Messina, *Il libro apocalittico persiano Ayalkār i Zamāspik*, Rome, 1939, 94-5), and a euhemerized time when they are evil men (ibid. 106). As to the thought of the late post-Islamic time, it is well expressed by the following Ferdowsi's verse: 'see, thou, the *dīvs*, as evil human beings (*tū mar dīv-rā mardum-i bad šinās*).
23. Ibid. p.86, Darmesteter mentions the phenomenon of 'euhemerization' (as he calls it) of Iranian legends (for example the dragon Dalāk, with snakes coming out from his shoulders, later on becomes an evil man, who had an abscess on his shoulders!), but he does not seem to catch its deeper general meaning.
24. See Bahā'u'llāh, *Kitāb-i Īqān*, Italian translation, 'Il Libro della Certezza,' Rome, 1955, 181, id. *Haft Vādī (Hidden Words)*, trad. it. *Le Sette Valli e le Quattro Valli (The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys)*, Rome, 1946, 8]. This approach to the issue of God may in a measure be found as early as in the extreme *šī'a*.
25. This position is similar to that of Serveto who is often mentioned together with the Socino-like Unitarians, but who represents a type of Christocentric Unitarianism, quite different from and, perhaps, at heart, closer to the primitive Christianity than the 'liberal' Unitarianism.
26. The Christian documents on this issue are well known. As to the Bābīs, we quote from the *Īqān*, the above mentioned work by Bahā'u'llāh going back to his Bābī days (it. trans. cit. p.122ff):
  - 'This sovereignty [of the Promised One], however, is not the sovereignty which the minds of men have falsely imagined . . . Were sovereignty to mean earthly sovereignty and worldly dominion, were it to imply the subjection and external allegiance of all the peoples and kindreds of the earth – whereby His loved ones should be exalted and be made to live in peace, and His enemies be abased and tormented – such form of sovereignty would not be true of God Himself' (pp. 106 and 124).
  - But the abasement of the Servant of God comes to be the source of a subtler power which becomes revealed in the future, in the same way as, according to Paul, whoever forgives draws 'coals of fire on his [persecutor's] head' (Rom. 12:20).
27. Son of 'Alī and Fātima and therefore grandson of the Prophet, killed after a heroic resistance together with a small group of followers in the battle of Karbalā (Mesopotamia) in 680 A.D. by the predominant followers of the Umayyad Caliph Yazīd. Shortly after his 'martyrdom,' his repented traitors began to go as pilgrims to his tomb, to mourn and sing expiatory hymns (Tabarī, II, 547). Gradually a special kind of funeral lamentation for him developed, which reached its apogee at the end of the eighteenth century, with real theatre mystery plays. We knew only a score of them, but recently Cerulli has brought from Persia, and deposited in the Vatican Library, more than 900 librettos of these mystery plays commonly called *ta'ziyè* ('dirge').
28. A number of statements by the Bāb drew his adversaries to make the accusation, which has always been rejected by the original Bābī sources, that they believed in reincarnation



(*tanāsuh-i arvāḥ*). In reality, their idea is different. Their idea is that states, typological combinations of qualities of personages of previous prophetic cycles, arise again and become recombined in later cycles, as if new actors re-played an ancient drama (Cf. Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, Cambridge, 1918, p. 330).

29. We quote from an unpublished *ta'ziyè* (this example could be multiplied at will): 'O great Lord, for the honour of Ḥusain, forgive the sins of Ḥusain's friends. Suffer not that the hands of us, who mention Thy name, O God, may let loose the hem of Ḥusain's sacred robe, and to those who have formed this mourning assembly for Ḥusain, grant what they need, in the two worlds.' According to Tabarī (II, 547), the prayers and the wails of the repented ones conveyed very early the idea of Ḥusain being sacrificed as a *waṣṭīla*, 'an intermediary' between the sinners and God (or the prophet).
30. See J. Duchesne-Guillemin, L'homme dans la religion iranienne in *Anthropologie Religieuse*, C. J. Bleeker, ed., Leiden, 1955, pp. 98–99, 105.
31. Narsahī, *Ta'riḥ Buḥārā* in Schaefer, *Chrestomathie Persane* Vol. 1, 38 and 46ff.
32. Tolstov, *Pos sledam drevne-horezmijskoj civilizacii* ('On the trail of the civilization of the ancient Xvārizm'), Moscow-Leningrad, 1948, pp. 84–5.
33. There is a very interesting testimony of a Chinese traveller in Central Asia in the seventh century, who writes that Samarkand's men said that 'the divine son' died at the seventh month and that his bones were lost. When this month began the servants of God wore black clothes, beat themselves and mourned and women and men scattered there to look after his body: at the seventh day the feast ended. (N. Ja. Bičurin, *Sobranie svedenij o narodah obitavših v Srednj Azii v drevnie vremena*, Vol. II, Mosca-Leningrad, 1950, p. 296).
34. The passages of the Gospel are well-known. For Ḥusain the world stopped, the sun became as yellow as saffron, stars fell down, the horizon was red for six months, and only later people could see every day the red colour at dawn and sunset (Cf. the myth of Adonis, Suyutī, op. cit., in Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, II, 331). In the case of the Bāb, the phenomenon is historicized: at the time when he was shot in Tabriz (9 July 1850) a storm upset the town, a whirl of dust darkened the sun, obscurity reigned in the town from midday to evening. (Cf. *The Dawn Breakers. Nabil's Narrative of the early days of the Bahā'ī Revelation*, translated from the original Persian by Shoghi Effendī, New York, 1932, p. 515).
35. In his fine book, which is still useful for the abundant information it offers, *The Preaching of Islam*, Westminster, 1896.
36. Missionarism is only typical of modernistic trends and communities, which borrowed many things in this regard from Christianity (See Pareja, Bausani, Hertling, *Islamologia*, Rome, 1951, 484, 588). It is noteworthy that one of the most acute modernists, Mohammad Iqbal (d. 1938), criticizes in one of his poems the idea of the Islamic missionary propaganda in Christian Europe, in the name of a 'theocratic-national' conception of Islam, which is substantially faithful to the original spirit of Muhammad's faith (The above mentioned passage, which is important in order to understand certain modern attitudes of the Muslims, may be read in its French translation in Muhammad Iqbal, *Message de l'Orient*, trans. Eva Meyerovitch et M. Achema, Paris, 1956, p. 129).
37. The *Imām* is the living fount of religious authority, the only one who can say 'I am the Truth' cf. analogous statements by the Christ versus the less vitalistic concept of Truth in primary monotheisms, (a concept that is quite different from that of philosophy). As to the issue of truth-*imām* in Ismailism, see the recent work by G. S. Hodgson, *The Order of the Assassins*. Gravenhage, 1955, 52ff.
38. I agree with Cullmann (*Le prime confessioni di fede cristiane*, Italian translation, Rome, 1948) which shows, through quite convincing arguments, that this is substantially the gist of the primal Christian preaching.
39. Widengren, *The great Vohu Manah* . . . 40ff. I do not think that this combination, even in Nyberg [Henrik Samuel Nyberg (1889–1974), was a Swedish scholar competent in both Semitic and Iranian studies], is satisfactory as an explanation of *dēn-soul*.
40. In the 'Tablet to the World' and *passim* in other of his writings (cf. the anthology *Bahā'ī World Faith*, Wilmette, 1943 175 [Editor's Note see now *Bahā'u'llāh*, Lawh-i-Dunya, *Tablets of Bahā'u'llāh Revealed after the Kitāb-i-Aqdas*, Haifa, Bahā'ī World Centre, 1978, 81ff].
41. In the *Aqdas*, a fundamental Bahā'ī sacred book, the 'recognition of the divine Manifestation' in the specific person of Bahā'u'llāh is viewed as primary, and is put before good deeds, which take their value from that recognition (See *al-Aqdas*, Bombay 1314 H. 2;



Russian translation, Tumanskij, *Kitabe Akdes, Memoires de l'Academie Imperiale des Sciences de St Petersburg*, St. Petersburg, 1899,1). [Editor's Note see now *Bahā'u'llāh, The Kitāb-i-Aqdas*, Haifa, Bahā'ī World Centre, 1992, p. 19].

42. An apocryphal *ḥadīth* ascribed to Muhammad.
43. That's why the immediate collaborators of the Bahā'ī Guardian are called 'Hands of the Cause of God' (*ayādī-i amrī'llāh*).
44. Cf. Bahā'u'llāh: 'I do not wish any earthly power. The hearts of men are my kingdom'. See also useful information in Pettazzoni, *Religioni Nazionali, Supernazionali e Misteriche* in the above quoted *Saggi*, 166–7, which prescinds however from our distinction between primary and secondary monotheisms. C. Clemen, 'Missionary Activity in the non-Christian Religions', *Journal of Religion* (Chicago), 10:1, 1930, p. 107 also is interesting as to the concept of 'mission'.
45. I use on purpose the word 'represented' rather than 'incarnated,' because 'incarnation' has a specific theological and typological value, which cannot and should not be lightly used. For example, almost all Gnostic-oriented Islamic sects strongly reject the concept of *ḥulūl* ('incarnation,' literally, 'descent' of the divine essence in a Man) as to their Founders, and yet authoritative scholars – perhaps wrongly considering these distinctions, which are significant for whomever has a true religious experience, as theological trifles – insist in using the term 'incarnation'. (Cf. as to extreme Shiism, Widengren, *Muhammad*, 43 and 45; and as to Bābī-Bahā'ism, Nallino himself in his article *Bāhā'ī* in the 'Enciclopedia Italiana'). This criticism should be also extended to those who – like for example Bousquet, in his, very interesting, paper on the origins of Islam ('Observations sociologiques sur les origines de l'Islam', *Studia Islamica*, 2, 1954, pp. 61–87) – in the name of a quite abstract sociological typology, strings the founders of Islam, of Christianity, of Mormonism, of *Christian Science* etc. all together on the same plane.
46. The fact that *Spenta Armaiti* is the 'archangel of the Earth' has nothing to do with the formation of a purely naturalistic chthonic divinity. The direction of the formation of the former is so to say from the top downwards, that of the latter one (a 'Great Mother' of the various 'paganisms') comes from below. In my opinion, a greater clarification of these two different processes of mythologization may also be useful while studying the historical developments of Christianity and Islam. In the latter one, for example, one could, more clearly than what has been done up to now, distinguish between the cult of the saints, partly born from surviving pagan practices (in Sindh *Khidr*, perhaps the remnant of an ancient vegetation Deity, is worshipped as a saint and identified with the river Indus) and the cult of the *imāms* and related personages in extreme sects, a phenomenon, the latter one, of opposite mythologization and typologically and historically different from the previous one, despite their psychologically common features. Other cases of 'mythologization from the top' are present for example in certain Islamic legends, the 'personification' of the Koran, and in certain Jewish traditions, the personification of the 'Sabbath'.
47. For example, also concepts that are quite evident in the Koran, especially that of the wholly inconstant arbitrariness of the Koranic God, who is *one* in his person, but totally plural in his *deeds* and 'second thoughts' (the idea of *bada'*, that God can at a certain point repent and change his mind, since he can do anything, as well as the same anthropomorphic-like concept of the Koran personal God, who can be wholly fulfilled only when he becomes a visible person on earth, the *Imām* or the 'manifestation', that are typical of the *šī'a*) contribute to the Shiite fermentation of the Islamic primary monotheism.
48. The works of many specialists demonstrate the remarkable importance of the Mesopotamic element in this Gnostic-oriented syncretism, as well as in the mystery religions. See for example H. Zimmer, *Babylonische Vorstufen der Vorderasiatischen Mysterienreligionen*, *Zeitschriften der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 76:1, 1922, pp. 36–54, and G. Widengren, *Mesopotamian elements in Manichaeism*, Uppsala, 1946.
49. I think that we cannot simply insert Zoroastrianism into the series of typical monotheisms, as Pettazzoni definitely, even recently, does in the preface of his often quoted *Saggi* ('... the historical monotheistic religions, which are Yahwism, *Mazdaism*, Christianity and Islam,' *ibid.*, p.IX). In my opinion the four typical monotheisms are Yahwism and Islam (both of them primary monotheisms), Christianity and Bābī-Bahā'ism (both of them secondary monotheisms). In *Mazdaism*, as we actually and historically know it, the pre-monotheistic naturalistic-mythical remnants are many indeed, despite the undoubted historical work of a revolutionary founder. If we study Zoroastrianism and compare our studies with those of the other primary monotheisms, we come under the impression that

Zoroastrianism is a 'failed' primary monotheism, in the same way as Manichaeism may be typologically defined a 'failed' *secondary* monotheism.

50. The importance of the struggle against Manichaeism in Islam is conspicuous, and, as in any other struggle, also external influences are remarkable. See M. Guidi, *La lotta fra l'Islam e il Manicheismo*, Rome, 1927.
51. As Drews did for Christianity (*Die Entstehung des Christentums aus dem Gnostizismus*, Jena, 1924) and various scholars for Bābī-Bahā'ism, which, according to a number of scholars, is a 'gnostic sect' of Islam.
52. As to the interesting, but equivocal, attempt of Dārā Sikōh, see the work of its founder *Mağma' al-Bahrain*, ed. and trans. Maḥfūz al-Ḥaqq, Calcutta, 1929, and Cl. Huart, L. Massignon, *Les entretiens de Lahore [entre le prince impérial Dārā Shikūh et l'ascète hindou Baba La' l Dās]*, *Journal Asiatique*, Oct-Dec, 1926 (209), 285 and L. Massignon- A.M. Kassim, *Un essai de bloc islamo-hindou au XVII siècle*, *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 63:1, 1926, pp. 1–14.
53. The important work of MacAuliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, 6 vols. 1909 remains fundamental to the study of Sikhism.