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Rethinking Heiler's History of Religions

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Abstract: In this paper, I revisit Heiler's thought and activity about the History of Religions as a preparation for the cooperation of Religions. Friedrich Heiler (1892-1967) was a leading figure in the phenomenological school of religion and, along with Rudolf Otto and Gerardus van der Leeuw, among the foremost scholars of religion during the Weimar Republic era. He also played an important role in the International Association of the History of Religions (IAHR) after World War II. However, his scholarly achievements were criticized for being Christocentric and to exhibit a strongly theological nature. This paper finds that Heiler's interest in his major work, *Das Gebet* (1918), was later overtaken over by liturgical reforms of the German High Church Movement, in which he played a leading role, and that for Heiler, the History of Religions is linked with his own religious movements. Heiler's creation of the German Mass forms a milestone, and *Das Gebet* was its preface. Heiler's activities stalled during World War II and afterward. The IAHR Congress in Rome (1955) tended to be limited to the academic study of old religious phenomena, while the Tokyo Conference (1958) and the Marburg Conference (1960), however, tended to engage with contemporary religions in terms of practical concerns. In particular, East-West intercourse was an important theme. This was a continuation of the problematics of the Eranos Congress, held before World War II, where Heiler played an important role.

1. Introduction

Friedrich Heiler (1892-1967) was a German scholar of religion and a religious activist who was active from the period of the Weimar Republic to the 1960s. Heiler is generally considered a leading figure of the phenomenological school of religion and among the foremost religious scholars of the Weimar Republic, along with Rudolf Otto and Gerard Van der Leeuw, as well as being an important figure in the IAHR following WWII. At the same time, his achievements have been criticized for being strongly Christocentric and theological in nature. Here, I present an evaluation of Heiler differing from these conventional views.

2. Heiler as a religious scholar during the Weimar Republic

2.1. Heiler's life and present reputation

First, a brief introduction to Heiler's life is in order.¹ He was born in Munich, Germany, in 1892 to a

devout Catholic family. He studied at the University of Munich and was active for many years in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Marburg, but he was transferred to the University of Greifswald before the war and remained there for its duration. After retiring from Marburg, he worked as an adjunct professor at the University of Munich until his death in Munich in 1967.

Second, let us review Heiler's achievements as a religious scholar. He is considered to among the foremost scholars of religious studies, theologian, and religious activists during the period of the Weimar Republic. However, as a scholar of religions, he was criticized for his Christian theology, and as a theologian, he was not among the "regular" theologians of either Catholicism or Protestantism (here, the term "regular" means "institutionally regular"). In other words, similar to Delacine, Heiler remained a theologian who could not become a scholar of religions and a scholar of religions who could not become a theologian.

Heiler produced two major phenomenological works,² *Das Gebet (Prayer)* (1918)³ and *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion (Manifestations and Essence of Religion)* (1961)⁴. *Das Gebet*, which he published in 1918, at the age of 26, was expanded and published in a fifth edition in 1923, indicating its contemporary popularity. Another major work in religious studies, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion*, was published in 1961, when Heiler was 69 years old. Heiler was a scholar with a long life, but it is also characteristic that his major academic works were published in his youth and in his later years.

What were Heiler's activities during the 1920s? First, he entered into disputes with the Roman Catholic Church (especially with the Jesuits). He also devoted his energies to the controversy regarding the Indian missionary Sunder Singh, a topic that cannot be discussed in with the necessary degree of detail in this paper.⁵ He also played a leading role in the German High Church Movement (while he was not the founder of this movement, he played a leading role in it and took it up with such enthusiasm that it could be mistakenly assumed that he did initiate it), an activity that sought to go beyond the existing church system. During this period, Heiler's main forum for publication was *Hochkirche*, a journal published by the German High Church Movement (this journal was later renamed *Eine heilige Kirche*).

1 Bleeker, Claas Jouco, "In memoriam Friedrich Heiler", *Numen*, XIV. 3 (1967), p.161-162. Goldammer, Kurt, "Der Beitrag Friedrich Heilers zur Methodologie der Religionswissenschaft", *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, Nr. 2 (1967), S. 84-94. Ders., "Die Frühentwicklung der allgemeinen Religionswissenschaft und die Anfänge einer Theologie der Religionen: Friedrich Heilers Beitrag zur Methodik der Religionsgeschichte und der Religionswissenschaft und zur (Religions-theologie)", *Saeculum* 18 (1967), S. 181-198. Ders., "Ein Leben für die Erforschung der Religion. Friedrich Heiler und sein Beitrag zur Aufgabenstellung und Methodik der Religionswissenschaft", Heiler, Anne Marie (Hrsg.), *Inter confessions. Beiträge zur Förderung des interkonfessionellen und interreligiösen Gesprächs. Friedrich Heiler zum Gedächtnis aus Anlaß seines 80. Geburtstages am 30.1.1972*. N. G. Elwart Verlag, Marburg, 1972 (Marburger Theologische Studien 10), S. 1-16. Scimmel, Annemarie, "Friedrich Heiler zu seinem 75. Geburtstag am 30.1.1967", *Numen*, XIII 3 (1966), S. 161-163. Waardenburg, Jacques, "Friedrich Heiler und die Religionsphänomenologie: eine kritische Würdigung", *Marburger Universitätsreden* 18 (1992), S. 21-25. Pye, Michael, "Friedrich Heiler (1892-1967)", Michaels, Axel (Hrsg.) *Klassiker der Religionswissenschaft. Von Friedrich Schleiermacher bis Mircea Eliade*. C. H. Beck, München, 1997. S. 277-289.

2 Cf. Bleeker, Claas Jouco, Die Bedeutung der religionsgeschichtlichen und religionsphänomenologischen Forschung Friedrich Heilers. *Numen*, XXV, 1978, S. 2-16.

3 Heiler, Friedrich, *Das Gebet. Eine religionsgeschichtliche und religionspsychologische Untersuchung*. Reinhardt, München 1918 (5. Aufl. 1923).

4 Heiler, Friedrich, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion*. W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 1961.

5 Cf., Biehl, Michael, *Der Fall Sadhu Sundar Singh: Theologie zwischen der Kulturen*. Peter Lang, Frankfurt a. M 1990.

During World War II, Heiler's activities were greatly restricted. In terms of affiliations, the abovementioned transfer to Greifswald in 1934-35 and the change of affiliation to the Philosophy Department in the Marburg University after World War II are considered demotions.

Following the war, he was active in the IAHR and other organizations and played an important role in the Tokyo Congress of 1958 and the Marburg Congress of 1960. He also emphasized the practical role that religious studies played (in terms of cooperation and collaboration among religions) and published many articles on these themes. During his later years (and following his death), Heiler's phenomenology of religion was subjected to severe criticism by Kurt Rudolf⁶ and others.

2.2. The conventional understanding of German religious studies during the Weimar Republic

Here, let us place Heiler's religious achievements in the context of the history of the time. The conventional understanding of German religious studies during the Weimar Republic runs as follows. In 1917, Rudolf Otto's *Das Heilige (The Sacred)* was published, followed in 1918, by Heiler's *Das Gebet*. In 1920, a chair of comparative religious history was established in the Department of Evangelical Theology at the University of Marburg, and Heiler was appointed to it as an assistant professor. This suggests that this formed a period of the development and formation of the study of religion. Furthermore, in relation to the phenomenological study of religion, both Otto and Heiler positively acknowledged the existence of other religions than Christianity, but they also believed that behind visible religious phenomena there existed something that could be called the Essence (or nucleus) of religions, and they were concerned to clarify that Essence. Thus, it has been suggested that from the end of the 1910s to the 1920s, the comparative phenomenological study of religion was being formed both institutionally and practically.

However, Otto was a systematic evangelical theologian, and he was aware of this. He was also facing the dialectical theology movement, which was emerging at this time, as the influence of liberal evangelicalism was weakening. Incidentally, in 1921, Rudolf Bultmann was appointed full professor of New Testament studies at the Faculty of Evangelical Theology of the University of Marburg.

Unlike Otto, Heiler was of Catholic origin and once, during his youth, dreamed of becoming a Catholic priest. While the priests and theologians who opposed the Pope-centered movement of the Roman Catholic Church were excluded from the public sphere as modernists, Heiler was able to face down the Roman Catholic Church, especially the Jesuits.⁷

Although they belonged to the same theological department at the University of Marburg and are considered to have played a formative role in the development of religious studies, they were faced different enemies. This does not mean that Heiler was Otto's enemy; in fact, he was a positive inheritor of Otto's doctrine.⁸ However, while they shared some things, they were looking in different directions.

Nathan Södelblom was a significant factor in why the two were considered a set, and he acted as a bridge between the two.⁹ Heiler's decision to give up his dream of becoming a priest and to turn to

6 Rudolph, Kurt. *Das Problem der Autonomie und Integrität der Religionswissenschaft. Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 27, 1973, pp.105-131.

7 Heiler, Friedrich, *Im Ringen um die Kirche (Gesammelte Aufsätze und Vorträge, Band 2)*. Reinhardt, München 1931, et. al.

8 Heiler, Friedrich, *Die Bedeutung Rudolf Ottos für die vergleichende Religionsgeschichte, Forell-Frick-Heiler, Religionswissenschaft in neuer Sicht*. N. G. Elwert, Marburg 1951, S.13-26.

religious studies was greatly influenced by Södelblom; at the same time, the triad formed by Södelblom's friendship with Otto and Heiler has been regarded as a distinguishing mark of the formation of the phenomenology of religion.

This assessment of German religious studies during the Weimar Republic was formed after World War II. Gustav Mensing called the religious studies of this period "the religious studies of understanding,"¹⁰ and Reiner Flasche criticized this movement as having "prophet syndrome,"¹¹ because many figures in it were religious activists as well as scholars. As noted, Rudolf criticized the Christian theological of the group, calling it "pseudo theology."¹²

However, these criticisms were motivated by the group's aim to establish the autonomy and independence of religious studies while taking an opposing view against Christian theology. Rudolf (including Lanczkowski, Breker, Waldenburg) criticized Heiler and others' Christian theological tendencies, but once he identified *Das Gebet* and *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion* as representative works in Heiler's religious studies, he criticized them as Christian theological. In this critique of Heiler's works religious studies scholars who foregrounded the autonomy and independence of religious studies and confronting Christian theology themselves (such as Rudolf and others) were trying to secure their own academic identity by this means. In addition, the autonomy and independence of the Department of the History of Religion (e.g., in terms of personnel rights), which existed inside the Faculty of Theology, was a necessary attitude for the establishment of a separate identity, beyond the standpoint of a disciplinary historical perspective.

However, this view, i.e., the view that considers the two works that are mentioned above as representative works of Heiler, the religious scholar, while at the same time criticizing Heiler's religious achievements as theological, adopts a historical reconstruction. It is necessary to identify what was happening in the period between Heiler's two major works. In addition, now that it is difficult to establish a descriptive and objective study of religion with Christian theology as its counterpoint, it is necessary to trace the process of its creation not only from this critical point of view but also from an academic-historic perspective. This paper further examines Heiler's religious studies and religious activities from this perspective.

3. Heiler's History of Religions

3.1. Heiler's prewar activities

3.1.1. Heiler's reaction to *The Essence of Catholicism*

In 1919, at the invitation of Söderblom, Heiler visited Sweden and published *Das Wesen des Katholizismus* (*The Essence of Catholicism*) (1919, hereafter *Essence*),¹³ a compilation of lectures that he

9 Misner, Paul (Hrsg.), *Friedrich von Hügel - Nathan Söderblom - Friedrich Heiler: Briefwechsel 1909-1931*. Bonifatius Druckerei, Paderborn, 1981, et. al.

10 Mensching, Gustav, *Gesichte der Religionswissenschaft*. Universitätsverlag, Bonn 1948

11 Flasche, Reiner, *Religionsmodelle und Erkenntnisprinzipien der Religionswissenschaft in der Weimarer Zeit*. Cancik, Hubert (Hrsg.), *Religions- und Geistesgeschichte der Weimarer Republik*. Patmos Verlag, Düsseldorf 1982, S.261-276

12 Rudolph, Kurt, loc. cit.

13 Heiler, Friedrich, *Das Wesen des Katholizismus.: sechs Vorträge, gehalten im Herbst 1919 in Schweden*. Reinhardt, München 1920.

gave there. During this visit, Heiler participated in a sacramental service conducted by Söderblom, which led to a conversion to evangelicalism. However, as discussed below, there were those who questioned this “conversion.” We will review this collection of lectures, responses to them, and Heiler’s own response to the responses.

At the beginning of the book *Der Katholizismus (the Catholicism)* (1923),¹⁴ published four years after *Essence*, a summary is provided to the responses to *Essence* (characterizing book reviews and quotations from such reviews). Heiler explains that *the Catholicism* was written in the wake left by *Essence*. In the lectures included in *Essence*, Heiler discusses the ecumenical Christian philosophy of *Evangelische Katholizität* (Evangelical Catholicism), which, while appreciating the religiosity and spirituality of Catholicism, criticizes Roman Catholicism’s church system and, in this respect, praises the freedom of evangelicalism. Heiler’s *Catholicism* is a work of a reflection and a critique of the Roman Catholic system. At the beginning of this work, Heiler collects a number of reviews referring to *Essence*, grouping them into Catholic reviews, evangelical reviews, and the laymen’s reviews, organizing and analyzing their views, and drawing the following conclusion (without going into details). Many people say, Heiler has not yet escaped from his nostalgia for Catholicism (although he claims to have converted to evangelicalism), and his understanding is one-sided, and therefore does not overcome the gap between Catholicism and evangelicalism.

No similar collection, classification, organization, and analysis of the reviews of Heiler’s works was done for *Das Gebet* (although a large number of clippings of reviews have been preserved in *Heiler Archiv* in the Bibliothek of the Marburg University). He never published a novel theory of prayer that incorporated the responses he received to *Das Gebet*. For this reason, it is noteworthy that Heiler continued and developed the work of *Essence* into *Catholicism*. Why was there no continuation or development of the work shown in *Das Gebet*?

I believe that the theory of prayer in *Das Gebet* was not developed into a study but rather into practical activity. That is, Heiler’s interest in prayer continued, but it was not as a research topic, but rather tended toward worship and liturgical reform, as well as the creation of new worship and liturgy, and the German High Church Movement was the site for this. This was also a practical response to the criticism of *Essence* (the theoretical response was the publication of the work *Catholicism*). In other words, *Evangelische Katholizität* (Evangelical Catholicism) was realized (in part, if not in whole) in terms of the new worship and liturgy.

Thus, it is possible to find consistency in Heiler’s activities. In other words, his religious and theological writings, his religious activities, and religious movement were connected in Heiler’s mind, and this attitude can be seen in his commitment to the IAHR (see below).

3.1.2. The German high church movement and the creation of the Heiler Messe

Heiler’s personal religious conflict (his “conversion” from Catholicism to evangelicalism), the conclusions reached in *Das Gebet*, and his response to the criticism of *Essence* were combined in his religious activities in the 1920s. In particular, Heiler created his own mass within the context of the German High Church Movement,¹⁵ in which he was deeply involved. The liturgical and worship services

14 Heiler, Friedrich, *Der Katholizismus. Seine Idee und seine Erscheinung*. Reinhardt, München 1923.

of his mass were based on the patterns of evangelical worship, although they preserved some Catholic elements.

3.1.3. The German High Church Movement

Here, a brief description of the German High Church Movement is needed. The term *Hochkirche*/high church originated in England at the beginning of the 18th century, where it referred to the characteristics of the evangelical church that has existed in the Anglican Church since the Reformation. This ecclesiastical character is theologically and ecclesiastically distinct from those of Puritanism and Roman Catholicism. While advocating for an Anglicanism that would be independent of the Roman Catholic Church, the High Churchmen sought to defend the system of bishops and the conservative doctrine of the sacraments, a tendency that became highly influential in the 19th century in the form of the Oxford Movement.

Mirroring high church in England, a similar movement emerged among German Lutherans in the 20th century. The trigger for this was a paper entitled “*Stimuli et Clavi (Spieß und Nägel)*” (Spear and Nail), published in 1917 by Heinrich Hansen (1861-1940), a pastor in Schleswig-Holstein.¹⁶ In this article, Hansen criticized the territorial church that he was associated with and called for “repentance and a return to the catholicity prescribed by the gospel.” Hansen founded the *Hochkirchliche Vereinigung* (High Church League) in 1918.

The aims of this movement were as follows: 1) succession (emphasizing the timeless connection with the early church in terms of doctrine, confession, liturgy, and church organization), 2) ecumenism (aiming to overcome the division between the Eastern and Western churches through the awareness of a single holy, universal Christian church that is not limited to any particular Christian religious community, such as a national church or the Church of Rome), 3) substantiality (to overcome the division between the East and West with the awareness that there is no single holy and universal church, but there is a single, universal Christian church), and 4) substantiality (the ecclesiality envisioned by the high church is manifested as a real church), all of which are summarized under the term “catholicity.”

This movement was aimed toward the Catholicization of the evangelical church, specifically calling for the reintroduction of full communion, the Holy Office, the veneration of saints, the confessional system, and so on.

However, while the movement demanded this institutional framework, in reality, it did not seek to create a specific religious community but rather was a loosely associated group putting forth these ideals.

An important part of this movement was the reform of worship and liturgy. It was an important issue for this movement to create a worship service and liturgy in the evangelical church featuring Catholic characteristics, and the Heiler Messe was an attempt to respond to this. In 1929, Heiler founded the High Church Brethren of St. John the Evangelist-Catholic Communion (the Evangelical-Catholic Communion), and in 1931, he published the “Instructions for the Communion Service of the Evangelical-Catholic Communion,” which came to be called the Heiler Messe.¹⁷

15 Langfeldt, Jan, *Die hochkirchliche Bewegung in Deutschland und die Eucharistiefeyer der Evangelisch-katholischen Eucharistischen Gemeinschaft von 1931*, Grin Publishing, München, 2007.

16 Hansen, Heinrich, *Stimuli et Clavi - Spieß und Nägel. Virzig Jahre Hochkirchliche Bewegung in Deutschland und in Nachbarländern. Sonderheft der Zeitschrift “Eine heilige Kirche” II, 1957/58, 126f.*

To note the main points, to achieve ecumenical worship, the mystery of the sacramental rites (including communion) that had disappeared in evangelicalism (but that existed under Luther) was restored, and evangelical methods, such as the use of the mother tongue of the congregation (the German-language mass) were adopted. This tendency was characterized by the use of other various evangelical methods, i.e., the broad involvement of the congregation, the use of evangelical hymns, and so on. The results can be seen as a sublimation of the ideas of evangelical Catholicism as presented in the analysis of *Das Gebet* and *Essence*.

3.1.4. Summary of Heiler's prewar activities

I suggested the possibility of positioning *Das Gebet* not as a work of religious studies (as people in later years would consider it), but as an introduction to the worship and liturgical reforms of the High Church Movement in which Heiler was deeply involved and its religious perspective of *Evangelische Katholizität*. Heiler suggested that the book could be positioned as a preface, so to speak, to worship and liturgical reform of the High Church Movement. Later scholars have categorized Heiler's works as scholarly (*wissenschaftlich*) or theological based on the assumption of the existence of religious studies as opposed to theology (in relation to the two), but this distinction is not what Heiler himself intended, as can be seen in a view of his activities taken as a whole. Both his book *Das Gebet* and his activities in the German High Church Movement are consistent in terms of their pursuit of the ideal of *Das Gebet*. In addition, these activities were succeeded by his postwar activities.

3.2. During and after World War II

3.2.1. Period of inactivity before, during, and shortly after World War II

In 1940, the journal *Hochkirche* was banned, not because of any articles critical of the Nazi regime, but because of Heiler's own international friendships (he was accused of being involved with the Russian Orthodox Church and the Church of England).

In 1941, he published one book, "*The Ancient Church and Papal Centrism*,"¹⁸ and this was the last publication of any kind from him until 1946. This makes it evident that his activities during the war were extremely restricted.

In 1947, he published *Der Vater des katholischen Modernismus - Arfred Loisy (1857-1940) (Alfred Loisy, Father of Catholic Modernism)*,¹⁹ and no other publications have been found from this year. This book is both a biography of Alfred Loisy, the "Father of Catholic Modernism" and a commentary on his works. This work forms a supplement to Heiler's text that appeared in the journal *Eine heilige Kirche* before the war. It is clear that Heiler's work was stagnant for several years after the war. However, the fact that the first books he published after the war (although the exact date when they were written is unknown) were related to Catholic modernism shows that his interest in the state of the Christian church

17 Heiler, Friedrich, Eucharistiefeier der Evangelisch-katholischen Eucharistischen Gemeinschaft, *Hochkirche* 13, 1931, S. 145-162.

18 Heiler, Friedrich, *Die katholische Kirche des Ostens und Westens, II, 1: Altkirche Autonomie und päpstlicher Zentralismus*. Ernst Reinhardt, München, 1941.

19 Heiler, Friedrich, *Der Vater des katholischen Modernismus - Arfred Loisy (1857-1940)*. Ernst-Reinhardt-Bücherreihe. Erasmus-Verlag, München 1947.

was consistent from the prewar period to the postwar period.

In 1948, *Oekumenische Einheit*, a journal putting forward High Church Movement began to be published again, and Heiler's activities resumed. In 1949, a collection of sermons delivered in churches and chapels in Marburg between 1943 and 1948, *Mysterium Caritas*,²⁰ was published. This collection indicates that the High Church Movement continued to be active in churches even during the period of enforced inactivity. In addition, after 1949, Heiler became as active as a writer as he had been before the war, or even more so.

3.2.2. IAHR and Heiler

Thus, we have reviewed Heiler's activities during and following the war (or, more precisely, the situation in which his activities were suspended). However, so far as the activities of the IAHR are concerned, the first postwar conference was held in Amsterdam in 1950, although no document written by Heiler concerning this conference is extant. Heiler's involvement in the IAHR began following the Rome Congress in 1955, and he played an important role in the Tokyo Congress in 1958 and the Marburg Congress in 1960. Below we review Heiler's reports on the Rome and Tokyo congresses.

3.2.3. Report on the 1955 IAHR Congress in Rome²¹

Heiler's report from Rome 1955 is rather lengthy. The majority of the contents, however, are literally reports, given without comment or criticism, along with record-like descriptions of who gave what kind of presentation at the various conference sessions.

The first part of the report gives the following. First, it outlined the history of the IAHR: the rise of the History of Religions in the late 19th century led to the founding of the Journal of the History of Religions and the organization of international conferences. The first conference was held in Paris in 1900. It was followed by others in Basel (1904), Oxford (1908), Leiden (1912), Lund (1920), Brussels (1935), and Amsterdam (1950). An international conference on the History of Religions, prepared by the Executive Committee of the 8th Meeting of the International Association for the History of Religions, was held in Rome from April 17 to 23, 1958. The society president, Raffaello Petazzoni, was an Italian, professor emeritus of the Department of History of Religions at the National University of Rome. Rome was particularly suitable for holding such a conference, as reminders of a large part of the history of Western religions are clearly visible there, both in terms of the encounter between ancient Rome and the Eastern rites and in terms of the development of Christianity from its beginnings to the present. However, it was not easy to obtain the necessary state support for this conference. Understandably, certain influential Catholics did not welcome a denominationally neutral conference on religious matters to occur before the Pope. However, Petazzoni overcame such difficulties and convinced the Italian authorities to promote and contribute to the conference, but, as in the case of other international conferences held in Rome, such as those on philosophy, astronomy, and gynecology, the participants were not received by the Pope.

20 Heiler, Friedrich., *Mysterium Caritatis. Predigten fuer das Kirchenjahr. Ernst-Reinhardt-Bücherreihe. J. & S. Federmann-Verlag, München 1949.*

21 Heiler, Friedrich, VIII. Internationaler Kongress für Religionsgeschichte in Rom, 17.-23.4.1955, *ThLZ* 80 (1955), 683-696.

Following this, in Heiler's text, was an account of the keynote speech by Pettazzoni, a breakdown of the conference participants, a report (without commentary) on the presenters for each section, and a report on the activities of the German section.

In his keynote address, Pettazzoni stated that, the conference is purely academic and nondenominational in nature. Thus, the participants belonged to various religions and churches or to none of them. However, although they had different beliefs, they shared the belief that religion could and must be the subject of academic assessment. (with agreement that, e.g., the original purpose of religion is to save mankind, etc.). Then, Heiler asserts the necessity of expanding the concept of religion and describes this conference on the History of Religions "a great experiment in liberalism."

The fact that the IAHR Congress was held in Rome must have been of great significance to Heiler (who was at odds with the Roman Catholic Church but still had acknowledged nostalgia for Catholicism). According to Heiler's perception, the Rome Congress was purely academic in nature, incorporating the study of Western religions in its agenda (due to its location). In the introduction to Pettazzoni's keynote address, a point that may overlap with Heiler's interest is that religious scholars have a belief in the religion (*die Religion*).

3.2.4. Report on the 1958 IAHR Tokyo Conference²²

Let us continue with the report of the IAHR Tokyo Conference. This report was published in a local Marburg newspaper (*Oberhessische Presse*). Thus, it was not intended for specialists but for the general public. As noted in the title of the article, it describes both the Tokyo and the Rome conferences, and includes an introduction that contrasts the two events. For example, the following is given. In April 1955, many scholars from around the world gathered in Rome to exchange the results of their thoughtful studies concerning the religions of mankind. The focus of this event was on the phenomenon of divine kingship. This was the most important for the religions of the past, but today, we can find only a few remnants of it. Numerous religious monuments in and around Rome are also indicative of the past. In contrast with the Rome Congress, the Tokyo International Congress on the History of Religions was much more contemporary and relevant to real life, and its main topic referred to the historical relationship between Eastern and Western religions. This part of the article recognizes that the emphasis shifted from the former to the latter between the Rome and Tokyo congresses on the axis of the confrontation between scholarship and religion. In the following part of the report, Japanese scholars are introduced, and a report is given of the state of the conference. Not only the academic conference but also the UNESCO-sponsored symposium are mentioned. That is, "Following the purely academic presentations and discussions, a UNESCO-protected "symposium" was held to address current exchanges between the East and the West, both separately and as a whole. The author of this article [Heiler] spoke about the influence of Eastern religions on the Western intellectual world. In this way, the historical study has had an immediate effect on the mutual understanding between peoples and religions."²³ As can be seen in these statements, Heiler was aware of the practical role that his scholarly activities had. Thus, Heiler appreciated the practicality (in terms of the East-West exchange) of religious studies at the Tokyo

22 Heiler, Friedrich, Rom-Tokio-Marburg. 'Drei internationale Kongress für Religionsgeschichte', *Oberhessische Presse*, 11.10.1958.

23 Ibid.

Conference, and this was later carried over to the Marburg Conference. Incidentally, “East-meets-West” was the theme of the Elanos Conference, which Heiler had participated in²⁴. Heiler’s report ends, taking advantage of the audience of the local newspaper it was published in, with a request that Marburg locals cooperate in the coming Marburg Congress.

3.2.5. Summary of the IAHR Report and Postwar Activities

Heiler was involved in the postwar trend of the IAHR in Rome, Tokyo, and Marburg. This trend was, broadly speaking, a transition from academic conferences to practical activities. However, this did not mean that the research presentations themselves were more practical, but rather that Heiler appreciated their practical activities added to the research activities, finding the significance of the IAHR in them.

4. Conclusion

The following constitutes a summary of what has been discussed in this paper. If we take Heiler as a religious activist, consistency can be found in his prewar activities (such as the publication of *Das Gebet* (*Prayer*) and subsequent activities), especially in terms of his interest in worship and liturgical reform. It should also be noted that this practical interest carried over to the postwar IAHR Congress in Marburg. In particular, in terms of his postwar commitment to the IAHR, Heiler moved toward the practical issue of the East-West exchange.

Of course, differences exist between prewar and postwar activities. While his prewar activities were mainly concerned with issues internal to Christianity, Heiler’s postwar activities were more open beyond Christianity to other religions of the world. In this sense, the interest in East-West exchanges seen at the IAHR congresses in Tokyo and Marburg is noteworthy. While we have not been able to investigate the personal relationships to the individual researchers and religious leaders who were involved in these East-West exchanges, it is possible to conclude that they viewed the IAHR not as an academic organization but as a place for practical activities. This point is not fully discussed in this paper and will be the subject of future work.

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- Biehl, Michael, *Der Fall Sadhu Sundar Singh: Theologie zwischen der Kulturen*. Peter Lang, Frankfurt a. M 1990.
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