

Ernesto Buonaiuti (1881–1946), priest and historian of Christianity, joined the Eranos Conferences since their beginnings (1933) and gave a total of nine talks, published in the Eranos-Jahrbücher from 1933 up to 1940. Buonaiuti had been excommunicated and suspended a divinis by the Church because of his modernist positions. In 1926, he was forced to give up teaching the History of Christianity at the University of Rome. He definitely lost this position in 1931 because he, along with eleven other professors, refused to swear oaths of loyalty to Fascism. The Eranos Conferences gave people who had been forced out of university teaching positions politically the chance to appear on an international stage. So, as for many other scholars, Eranos was an important opportunity for Buonaiuti to have others listen to his voice within the framework of an open and unprejudiced international face-to-face as well as to test himself out only with the power of reason.

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IN PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY

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*Edited by
Adriano Fabris*



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The Eranos Conference of August 7–15, 1939 was dedicated to the topic, “The Symbolism of Rebirth in Religious Representations of Various Epochs and Places.” Ernesto Buonaiuti held a lecture entitled “Palingenesis, Immortality, and Resurrection in Primitive Christianity,” which was published in German in that year’s Eranos-Jahrbuch. This volume is presenting for the first time the 26 typescript pages with handwritten notes that he read in Italian at Eranos on August 12, 1939. His paper includes several topics that underpin successive reflections at Eranos about spiritual issues. There is a view of Christianity that is considered in its continuity with other religions and at the same time in its uniqueness and specificity. There is the comparison and contrast that he makes between the “institutional” dimension of Christianity and a life in religion that is more “liberal” and “authentic,” where the essence of Christianity can be found again. And there is the question of the meaning of historical research: Buonaiuti did not limit himself to erudite discourse; rather, he delves into the spiritual circumstances of the contemporary individual.