



The School and Its Many Pasts

II: Official and Public Memories of School

edited by Juri Meda and Roberto Sani



These volumes contain the official proceedings of the International Conference «The School and Its Many Pasts. School Memories between Social Perception and Collective Representation» (Macerata, 12-15 December 2022), organized by the University of Macerata in partnership with the Catholic University of Sacred Heart of Milan, the University of Florence and the University Roma Tre.

These volumes have been published with the contribution of the University of Macerata, the Catholic University of Sacred Heart of Milan, the University of Florence and the University Roma Tre in the framework of the PRIN research project «School Memories between Social Perception and Collective Representation (Italy, 1861-2001)» (n. prot.: 2017STEF2S).

www.memoriascolastica.it

Indexing keywords:

Storia dell'educazione, memoria collettiva, memoria individuale, memoria pubblica, public history, scuola.

History of education, collective memory, individual memory, official memory, public history, school.

Historia de la educación, memoria colectiva, memoria individual, memoria pública, historia pública, escuela.

História da educação, memória coletiva, memória individual, memória pública, história pública, escola.

Histoire de l'éducation, mémoire collective, mémoire individuelle, mémoire publique, histoire publique, école.

4-volumes box set: isbn 978-88-6056-898-4

vol. 2: isbn 978-88-6056-901-1

First edition: March 2024

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Introduction

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Premise

These volumes collect the contributions presented at the international conference “The School and Its Many Pasts. School Memories between Social Perception and Collective Representation”, held in Macerata from December 12 to December 15, 2022. This conference is the result of a long process of international research and comes as the conclusion – the most relevant and ambitious step – of the Research Project of National Relevance (PRIN) entitled “School Memories between Social Perception and Collective Representation (Italy, 1861-2001)”, which started in Italy in 2019 and was co-financed by the Ministry of Education, University and Research.

A research project that in these years has benefited from the collaboration and the scientific contribution of more than fifty scholars and young researchers from fourteen Italian universities. A research project that has already produced extremely relevant results, which will be presented – together with others – in these volumes.

We are convinced, however, that the presence at that conference of over 150 speakers from as many as 25 countries and three different continents allowed us to make a real qualitative leap in the in-depth analysis of the object of our research and to give it a truly comparative reading, capable of taking into account a series of contexts and scenarios not limited to a national or even European perspective, but truly open to a global one.

1. *The premises of the research project*

Our research project develops in the path previously traced by the international conference “School Memories. New Trends in Historical Research into Education: Heuristic Perspectives and Methodological Issues” (Seville, 22-23 September 2015), which was organized by the University of Seville in collaboration with the *Centro di documentazione e ricerca sulla storia del libro scolastico e della letteratura per l'infanzia* of the University of Macerata (Italy), the University of Murcia (Spain) and the *Centro Internacional de la Cultura Escolar* of Berlanga de Duero (Spain).

In fact, a significant representative of historians of education coming from all over the world already gathered in that occasion in order to elaborate the epistemological foundations of the historiographical reflection on school memory and elaborated a

first systematic reflection on the topic, defining some general theoretical coordinates, and providing methodological criteria and suggesting possible contaminations with anthropology of education and sociology of cultural processes.

2. The research project

On the basis of these coordinates, our research project focuses on school memory, which is understood as an individual, collective and public practice of recalling a common school past.

School memory is an interpretative category, which has recently been introduced in the historiographical reflection of the historical-educational field at an international level, both in the countries of the Iberian-American area and in the Anglo-Saxon world. This category has also enjoyed prominence in Italy, largely thanks to the studies carried out by the scholars who have adhered to this project in the last five years.

On the basis of new types of sources and a necessarily interdisciplinary methodological approach, the research units who collaborate in the project investigated both the models of school, teaching, learning and school attendance emerging from individual memories and the representation of these models that has been proposed by the world of information and communication and the cultural industry. This research endeavour has conducted from 2019 to this day despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nonetheless, an attempt was made to focus on how school and teaching memory was elaborated in the context of official representations and public commemorations promoted by local and national institutions on the basis of a specific “policy of memory”, or rather a “public use of the past” aimed at acquiring consensus and strengthening the feeling of belonging to a specific community.

The first results of the investigations carried out in these years by the research units involved in the project have been published in about a hundred monographs, essays and articles on magazine and within qualified collections of sources, which are accessible online and are intended for a wider audience than only educational historians.

But further and even more organic and thorough results had been officially introduced during the international conference “The School and Its Many Pasts”, which obtained sponsorships by the International Standing Conference for the History of Education (ISCHE) and by eight among the most prominent national scientific societies in history of education. The international conference held in Macerata in December 2022 allowed to promote a broad methodological and historiographical confrontation on problems concerning the study of school memory and – at the same time – to start an organic reflection on the same topic in a comparative key.

3. *A new idea of scientific communication*

It was immediately clear that this project would require to spread research results not only through the traditional channels of scientific discussion but also through more innovative ones, based on the digitization of contents, aimed at reaching a wider audience than just the specialized one.

Other elements have subsequently confirmed that this was the correct perspective to frame the research project and the spreading of its results.

The first one of these elements within the PRIN 2017 announcement was the inclusion of a specific article which provided that research units involved in the project had to guarantee free and online access (at least in green access modality) to the results obtained and the research contents, object of peer-reviewed scientific publications within the project.

This is a fundamental fact, which is not possible to ignore, as it forced those who took part in the project to wonder what were the most appropriate ways to comply with this fulfilment in an intelligent way, creating an organic plan of digital and open publication for research contents rather than dividing and publishing them within tools already available, although not necessarily connoted from a scientific point of view.

However, the constraints imposed by the announcement were not the only elements which led us towards one *modus operandi* over another.

Over the last few years, the academic world has, in fact, developed a newfound awareness of the fact that the effective social impact of new know-how produced by scientific research is possible only through the adoption of a new paradigm of mediation that brings the public role of the intellectual back into the discussion.

This new paradigm is embodied by Public Scientific Communication, which – unlike internal communication among members of the scientific community – is the type of communication which occurs between experts and non-experts, between creators and users of knowledge, and it consists of a high-quality scientific dissemination, which is able to mediate the contents of knowledge to a general audience.

This attempts to contrast the dangerous degenerations of a scientific pseudo-dissemination, which has conquered the top of trending topics in social networks and has infiltrated the social fabric in recent years, spreading fake news, misconceptions and stereotypes, and increasing individual skepticism towards science.

The extensive spreading of the increasingly pervasive means of mass communication implies that scientific research results must be effectively communicated through television, radio, world wide web and social media, for which – however – it is necessary to use very different techniques from the ones used in scientific publications. Techniques that can catch and keep the attention of audiences who would otherwise be addressed by so many scammers and charlatans who perfectly master these very same modalities of communications but devote them to the spreading of poor or – even worse – harmful contents.

Besides, the public nature of the funds granted at a national and/or community level to support academic research implies the need for them to be used to produce goods

of public utility, such as knowledge, which is not the exclusive prerogative of either the scientific community who generates it or the publishing houses who disseminate it but belongs to the community as a whole and serves the function of guaranteeing its social development and cultural progress.

4. *Mnemosine software and databases on the forms of school memory*

To these aims, in the first two years of the research project we worked on the design and the implementation of the *Mnemosine* software for cataloguing the forms of memory described in the eight databases developed in collaboration with the Italian company Elicos s.r.l., which assisted and significantly implemented our project from a technological point of view.

The *Mnemosine* software, which we appropriately patented, was used to implement the eight databases that are the heart of this research project. On the one hand, this was done because they collect a considerable amount of data (900 catalogue records and 700 biographical records have been loaded into the website up to this date) made to be searchable and comparable, showing possible interactions among different forms of school memory, whether they are individual or collective. Furthermore, this contributed to effectively disseminate the research results carried out within the project to a public of non-experts, who are difficult to be reached.

Each database has been published by a university press with a Creative Commons license and is provided with an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). The code configures them as online digital serials in all respects, attested by a refereeing committee made up of well-known experts, who are able to ensure the peer review procedure of the contents published within them.

Moreover, each catalogue record was provided for a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), allowing their unique network identification through the association of their respective metadata.

This made it possible to create real electronic repertories for the publication of research results carried out in open access mode, in accordance with what PRIN 2017 announcement stated concerning the funding of our research.

In this respect, the website www.memoriascolastica.it and the eight scientific databases contained in it became a real research infrastructure. They are able to provide the scientific community of reference with resources and services (scientific data collections, computer systems, communication networks, etc.) in order to carry out research activities and to promote innovation. But they have purpose beyond research initiatives, for example in the context of public education, and to provide teachers with training and updating resources.

For this reason – in anticipation of the closure of the research project in August 2023 – the coordinators of the research units unanimously resolved to sign a framework agreement that guarantees the continuity of this research infrastructure, regulating its

co-ownership, controlling the distribution of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance and management costs and establishing the guidelines to be followed for the permanent updating of the eight existing databases. This extends to the possibility of participating in further national and EU funding announcements in collaboration with individual foreign scholars and research groups, who are interested in working on the same topics in a comparative perspective at an international level.

The letter of intent leading to the signing of this framework agreement was signed by the coordinators of research units during the plenary session on December 15, 2022.

The valuable opportunity for discussion and debate at the highest level on school memory represented by the international conference “The School and Its Many Pasts” offered to all of us the opportunity to enrich our reflection on the theme, to establish valuable synergies and further forms of research collaboration and to give an authentically international breath to the in-depth study of a field of investigation – the one related to school memory – that still has many stimulations and suggestions to offer to the historians of school and education.

Introduction to the Study of School Memory

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In his introduction to these volumes, Roberto Sani framed them within the research project “School Memories between Social Perception and Collective Representation (Italy, 1861-2001)”, presenting its key features. In this introduction, moreover, I will try to frame them instead within a historiographical process developed over the past twenty years, which offered a significant contribution to the redefinition of the heuristic horizon of the history of education.

The taking into account of school memory as a historical object by the historiography of education matured during the first decade of the 21st century, driven by a deep renewal of the epistemological foundations and heuristic goals of this field of study, as well as the growing attention paid by generalist historians to the policies of memory and public use of the past made in modern and contemporary times¹.

In a seminal work published in 2000, António Nóvoa – who concluded the international conference “The School and Its Many Pasts” with his keynote address – indicated the possibility of using images to study the evolution of the public image of teachers between the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries². Nóvoa noted in this regard:

In underlining the idea of public images, I intend to understand the game of social mirrors that marks the teaching profession in an epoch of strong social beliefs and convictions on the idea of school as a central institution for progress and citizenship. Here the conflict between opposing images of teachers and the relationships they provoke both inside and outside the profession becomes more obvious³.

The statement of Nóvoa contributed to widening the heuristic spectrum of our discipline, as it invited historians of education not to analyze the school of the past only “from within” (that is, how the school really was or at least how it represented itself), but also “from outside” (that is, how it was perceived by a given social group or society as a whole), in order to get a more general view of this historical phenomenon.

Nóvoa – it is true – intended to demonstrate the heuristic potential of visual sources, but his discourse could be extended to a wider and more composite set of sources.

¹ E. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger (edd.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983; P. Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*, Paris, Gallimard, 1984-1992; R. Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis*, London, Cornell University Press, 1993.

² A. Nóvoa, *Ways of Saying, Ways of Seeing: Public Images of Teachers (19th-20th Century)*. «Paedagogica Historica», XXXVI, n. 1, 2000, pp. 20-52.

³ Nóvoa, *Ways of Saying, Ways of Seeing*, cit., p. 16.

The school was therefore not only an institution and a place of teaching practice and educational experimentation, but also became a category of collective imaginary, whose imaginative representations did not necessarily correspond to how the school really was in a given period, but rather reflected the perception of it within a given social group or society as a whole.

Nóvoa also came to notice how the historical relevance of images was testified «by this traffic between individual and collective beliefs, social and cultural representations, memoirs and imagination»⁴.

It is this complex traffic that defines the social meaning of the school, which transcends the literal one, the result of a cognitive definition that attributes to an expression the mental image of the features of the denoted object, formed in the consciousness of the speakers on the basis of their perceptual and cultural experiences. What, then, is school? On the basis of which criteria is school experience classified by each of us and which abstract idea derives from it? Only on the basis of information of educational nature or on the basis of more complex elaborations? Paraphrasing Philippe Ariès, is there a *sentiment de l'école*⁵, that is the attribution of a specific social meaning to the school, understood not as an institution but as a cultural elaboration? How has it evolved over time?

A push in this direction was already given by Dominique Julia, when in 1995 he put the «school culture» at the center of the historical-educational debate, defining its forms and structures⁶. The debate that followed, in fact, produced a quickly evolving within the international scientific community of history of education.

That same year Marc Depaepe and Frank Simon – taking up an expression already used by sociologist Colin Lacey in 1970⁷ – indicated the «black box of schooling» as goal of the historical research in education, focusing attention on the classrooms as places of «evaporated educational relations» from which it was essential to recover every single trace of the educational practices – orthodox or revolutionary, licit or illicit – that had been held there⁸. Consequently, more and more historians of education began to study the school memory as a useful device to explore the content of this “black box”, since – being founded on an empirical school culture – it was able to testify what had really happened within the classrooms. This especially with regard to issues – such as corporal punishment, prohibited teaching practices and other educational taboos – not documented in the official reports, although historically attested. Hence, the flourishing of historical studies in education that widely used diaries, memoirs and autobiographies, as well as oral sources.

⁴ Nóvoa, *Ways of Saying, Ways of Seeing*, cit., p. 15.

⁵ On this historiographical category, see P. Ariès, *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, Paris, Plon, 1960.

⁶ D. Julia, *La culture scolaire comme objet historique*, in A. Nóvoa, M. Depaepe, E.W. Johannigmeier (edd.), *The Colonial Experience in Education: Historical Issues and Perspectives*, Ghent, Universiteit Gent, 1995, pp. 353-382.

⁷ C. Lacey, *Hightown Grammar: the school as a social system*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1970.

⁸ M. Depaepe, F. Simon, *Is there any place for the history of “education” in the “history of education”? A plea for the history of everyday reality in and outside schools*, «Paedagogica Historica», XXXI, n. 1, 1995, pp. 9-16.

In the following years, the Spanish and French scientific communities were the protagonists of the troubled historiographical process that led to devote more and more attention to school memories, thanks – for example – to the seminal studies of Agustín Escolano, Antonio Viñao and Pierre Caspard⁹.

The use of individual memories as sources for the history of education slowly increased in some scholars the awareness that there was a collective dimension of school memory that could itself become the object of historical research, according to the interpretative categories proposed by Nóvoa.

The memory of the past school, thus, ceased to be only a tool of historical reconstruction and became its object. New interesting researches were started, such as those promoted by the American scholars Pamela Bolotin Joseph and Gail E. Burnaford, that in their pioneering work investigated the evolution of the “public image of the school” and the social perception of the teaching profession, that is the archetypes that pervade society and determine the public status of education¹⁰.

In some way, it is possible to affirm that there are three main types of school: the “legal school”, codified by laws, programs and educational theories; the “real school”, shaped by the real educational practices carried out in the classroom and the material living conditions within the school; and the “ideal school”, shaped by common sense, imagined and represented by the cultural industry and subject to the distortions of individual remembering and collective memory.

Not surprisingly – during the International Symposium “School Memories. New Trends in Historical Research into Education: Heuristic Perspectives and Methodological Issues”, organized in Seville in 2015 with Antonio Viñao and Cristina Yanes – we defined the school memory as the individual, collective and public practice of remembering a common school past, indispensable to give us back the overall cultural dimension of this historical phenomenon, and we tried to study the modes of symbolic representation of school, schooling and teachers over time¹¹.

If personal memories can be studied individually or compared as sources, collective memory can instead be studied only as a process, since it consists in a social reconstruction of the past, which derives from the fusion between the “lived school past” (of which those who remember were actors) and the “imagined school past” (of which often those who remember were listeners, readers and spectators, namely cultural consumers)¹². In

⁹ See A. Escolano, *Memoria de la educación y cultura de la escuela*, in J.M. Hernández Díaz, A. Escolano (edd.), *La memoria y el deseo: cultura de la escuela y educación deseada*, Valencia, Tirant lo Blanch, 2002, pp. 19-42; A. Viñao, *La memoria escolar: restos y huellas, recuerdos y olvidos*, «Annali di Storia dell’Educazione e delle Istituzioni Scolastiche», n. 12, 2005, pp. 19-33.; P. Caspard, *L’historiographie de l’éducation dans un contexte mémoriel. Réflexion sur quelques évolutions problématiques*, «Histoire de l’Éducation», n. 121, 2009, pp. 67-82.

¹⁰ J.P. Bolotin, G.E. Burnaford (edd.), *Images of Schoolteachers in America*, Mahwah, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001.

¹¹ J. Meda, A. Viñao, *School Memory: Historiographical Balance and Heuristics Perspectives*, in C. Yanes-Cabrera, J. Meda, A. Viñao (edd.), *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, Cham, Springer, 2017, pp. 1-9.

¹² On this concept and the risks associated with its use in historiography: C. Shaw, M. Chase (edd.), *The Imagined Past. History and Nostalgia*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1989.

this sense, collective memory descends genetically from the collective imaginary, whose symbolic materials can derive as much from the cultural heritage of a given community as from the new elaborations promoted by the cultural or information industry.

The study of this type of memory allows, in particular, to define the way in which today's people, social groups and public bodies look at it and interpret or re-interpret it. In this sense, school memory is not only of interest as a gateway to the school's past but also as a tool to understand what they know or believe they know about the school of the past and how much what they know corresponds to reality or is influenced by prejudices and stereotypes deeply rooted in common sense.

These volumes aim to address these complex issues and broaden the perspective from which the schooling phenomenon is analyzed in its historical dimension, thanks to the large number of contributions here collected, that will help us to better understand the school and its many pasts.

School Memories and Travelling Iconic Images of Education in the Nineteenth Century

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Introduction: from Print Collection to Image-Based Research

I would like to begin by talking about a project that has occupied much of our adult lives, a project that opened a world of possibilities that we could not even begin to suspect, as well as providing us with some of our greatest intellectual satisfactions in recent years. I speak in the plural because I am referring to a joint project with my husband, Sjaak Braster, a project that is as old as our marriage. In July 1992 we went to Vienna for our honeymoon, and there we discovered that we could buy engravings of educational subjects. We were especially drawn to those depicting the insides of schools, classrooms where we could see the interaction between teachers and students, and iconographic representations of teaching methods that we had only ever read about. During that week we ate very little, spending most of our scarce money on four school prints, one of them being from the *Orbis Pictus* by Comenius. Thus began our collection, which has grown to include several hundred images of schools from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, from all over the world¹.

For many years we collected school prints for two main reasons: to decorate the mostly empty walls of our houses and, in my case, to liven up the classes I taught in History of Education, where I attempted to follow the Pestalozzian ideal of teaching by images, showing the evolution of teaching and of the school in an intuitive way. Beyond these decorative and pedagogical functions, it had not occurred to us that the prints themselves could somehow be the object of historiographical interest². But an academic

¹ S. Braster, *Exhibiting Teachers' Hands: Storytelling Based on a Private Collection of Engravings*, in F. Herman, S. Braster, M.M. del Pozo Andrés (edd.), *Exhibiting the Past. Public Histories of Education*, Oldenbourg, De Gruyter, 2022, pp. 317-320.

² We have started to sense the possibilities that the gravures could offer to the historians of education in 2002, while analysing the images of secondary schools published in a Spanish illustrated journal, also a rich and very neglected iconographical source. M.M. del Pozo Andrés, S. Braster, *Understanding Images of Secondary Education (Spain, Second Half of the 19th century)*. Paper Presented in the 24th Session of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education, ISCHE XXIV, Paris, 10-13 July, 2002, and M.M. del Pozo Andrés, *La Imagen de la Mujer en la Educación Contemporánea*, in T. Marín Eced, M.M. del Pozo Andrés (edd.), *Las mujeres en la construcción del mundo contemporáneo*, Cuenca, Diputación de Cuenca, 2002, pp. 241-301. Later on, we have tried the study of single school images, both paintings and engravings, one of which was exceptionally part of our collection. S. Braster, *The People, The Poor and the Oppressed: The Concept of Popular*

event, in which Juri Meda would be closely involved, would turn our understanding of the collection upside down. The year was 2015, and together with Cristina Yanes and Antonio Viñao, he was organizing a symposium in Seville on *School Memories* as a historical object. The idea was to open new theoretical and methodological paths into a subject of growing interest among historians of education. Juri urged us to do something different, to make this symposium really stand out. On December 31st, 2014, just the day on the deadline for presenting proposals, we had the idea of using our collection of prints as a primary source for exploring the relationship between images and the collective memory. Among the first questions we asked ourselves were the following: Why can we find countless versions of some educational prints published in the nineteenth century? Could their popularity owe to the fact that for certain generations these images brought back memories of their school years? Or was it an attempt to construct a collective memory that transcended time and space?

In this very first work on the topic, we defined the concept of «iconic images of education», by describing the indicators that determine the reception, distribution, and impact of these images. We established five characteristics: 1) «they have been reproduced many times»; 2) «these are reproductions not only of the works in their original form, but also of their many variations»; 3) «they can evoke emotions»; 4) «they have a symbolic meaning that for most observers is immediately obvious», but that «can change over time and ultimately depends upon the context in which the image is framed»; and 5) they «refer to archetypes, have the potential to be archetypes themselves and thus represent more than what is being displayed», making the invisible visible³.

While we have yet to find the answers to many of these previous questions, we have developed a research methodology which we could define as «the biography of an image»⁴. It involves analysing, with the traditional biographical/iconographic method, some of the more singular prints, those which we have good reason to believe enjoyed exceptional popularity, circulation and impact. Upon selecting a print, we proceed to search for the symbolic meaning of the image, to understand its cultural connotations and significance, to reconstruct its underlying messages and its history by tracing the different versions and copies that were made of it as well as testimonies from the time. With this approach we try to establish and understand how the iconic character of certain images of education was constructed.

The third concept for understanding the relationship between educational engravings and collective memory is that of the «travelling images, circulating in time and space around the globe». Art historians have demonstrated the existence of travelling artworks images between the East and the West, which was the result of the circulation of copies of engravings and etching illustrations in printed books. Thus, some eighteenth-century

Education through Time, «Paedagogica Historica», vol. 47, n. 1-2, 2011, pp. 1-14.

³ M.M. del Pozo Andrés, S. Braster, *Exploring New Ways of Studying School Memories: The Engraving as a Blind Spot of the History of Education*, in C. Yanes-Cabrera, J. Meda, A. Viñao (edd.), *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, Cham, Springer, 2017, p. 12.

⁴ M.M. del Pozo Andrés, *The undisciplined child: the image of the rebellious childhood in an age of educational disciplining (1809-1840)*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. 13, n. 1, 2018, pp. 71-72.

Japanese pictorial schools underwent a «process of appropriation of Western visual culture», while some «Japanese woodblock prints reached nineteenth-century Europe», and influenced artists such as van Gogh, Gauguin, Monet, or Degas. We speak of «a complete and circular trajectory of travelling images». The interest of art historians nowadays is focused on finding out «through which specific travelling images, this influence can most clearly be seen»⁵. We can transfer this discussion to the history of education, as we have already begun to explore some «travelling images» of school scenes from the nineteenth century⁶. The composition, the school landscape, the teachers and students gestures, the depicted scenes, the arrangement of objects, the perspective and so on can be thought of as the result of a global circulation of images and their mutual influence. The big open question is the same that worries the art historians, namely, to find the specific «travelling images» that most clearly show this influence.

1. *Social and Cultural Use of Engravings before/during the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*

When you enter into the world of old prints, you are joining a club of passionate enthusiasts of what is considered, quite wrongly, a «lesser» art form. People tend to forget that, as the great art historian and print collector Leo Steinberg wrote, for 600 years gravures contributed to raising «the level of critical visual awareness», serving to visually educate countless generations across geographical boundaries and social classes. During the Renaissance and the following centuries, gravures were «the circulating lifeblood» of pictorial and iconographical ideas – the vehicle through which artists communicated with one another», in the words of Steinberg⁷. Because the crucial idea behind the importance of engravings lies in the word *circulation*, in the fact that because of their physical properties they were easy to transport and could cross borders. Printed images have always travelled from one place to another, reaching countries and cities far from their place of origin. In fact, starting in the Renaissance, artists generally became known not through their original works, but from reproductive engravings. In the words of Alberto Milano, another art historian who was also an avid print collector, «Europe was a common market where images were widely understood, copied, and sold from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century»⁸.

⁵ K. Abe, *Travelling Images in the Global Context: A Case Study of the Short-Lived 18th century Akita Ranga Painting School in Japan*, «Artl@s Bulletin», vol. 10, n. 1, 2021, pp. 44-45.

⁶ M.M. del Pozo Andrés, S. Braster, *An image travelling across Europe. The transformation of «The school in an uproar» into «Le désordre dans l'école» (1809-1850)*, in H. Amsing, N. Bakker, M. van Essen, S. Parlevliet (edd.), *Images of education. Cultuuroverdracht in historisch perspectief*, Groningen, Uitgeverij Passage, 2018, pp. 84-97.

⁷ L. Steinberg, *What I Like About Prints*, «Art in Print», vol. 7, n. 5, 2018, pp. 3, 10, 17, 18.

⁸ A. Milano, *Change of Use, Change of Public, Change of Meaning: Printed Images Travelling Through Europe*, in E. Stead (ed.), *Reading Books and Prints as Cultural Objects. New Directions in Book History*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 139.

The second key word for understanding the importance of engravings is *mass production*. Owing to their reproductive possibilities, engravings became the most democratic aesthetic object in the history of art; they reached all of the social classes, finding their way into «the homes of the poor and the rich, the ruler and the ruled»⁹. At the same time, they circulated and spread about, prints were reproduced with much cheaper materials and techniques, meaning they could be sold for a broad range of prices and reach very different buyers from the originally targeted audience. The consumers of these mass production engravings had neither the access nor possibility of seeing the original work of art, but they could experience it through household objects such as calendars, handkerchiefs, table games or prints for daily consumption. As the British pre-Raphaelite art critic Frederic George Stephens remarked in 1860: «Where the picture cannot go, the engravings penetrate»¹⁰.

We lovers of old engravings have an ongoing battle with the legendary essay written by Walter Benjamin in 1935, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Benjamin asserts categorically that photography broke with the past, due to its being a technique that allowed for «the process of pictorial reproduction», and that this changed society's visual culture. Benjamin laments the loss of what he calls the «aura», that is, the uniqueness and authenticity of the original work in the face of the mechanically produced photograph. He then delves into the classic nineteenth-century dispute regarding the artistic value of painting versus photography¹¹. But what Benjamin failed to take into consideration was that when people at the end of the nineteenth century began to acquire photographs of Old Master paintings, they «were not substituting these photographs for original paintings, but for the engraved copies and chromolithographs that had previously represented them»¹². Only a few lucky individuals had actually seen the original works; the versions that most people had seen and admired were the prints of these works that were circulating. The engravers served as the translators and interpreters of the original works, and a good engraver could turn a mediocre work of art into something of great demand, or, to the contrary, convert a masterpiece into something banal. In fact, a painter's reputation depended not on the success of his original works but on the number of them that were rendered into engravings and the popularity that these enjoyed among the general public¹³.

Consequently, the origin of the «age of mechanical reproduction», to use Walter Benjamin's expression, actually predates by far the popularization of photography, and should be established at around the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. The primary cause for this revolution was the unprecedented boom in the print

⁹ F. Eichenberg, *The Art of the Print: Masterpieces, History, Techniques*, New York, Harry N. Abrahams, Inc. Publishers, 1976, p. 4.

¹⁰ Quoted in R. Verhoogt, *Art Reproduction and the Nation: National Perspectives in an International Art Market*, in J.D. Baetens, D. Lyna (edd.), *Art Crossing Borders. The Internationalisation of the Art Market in the Age of Nation States, 1750-1914*, Leiden, Brill, 2019, p. 322.

¹¹ W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, in H. Arendt (ed.), *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, New York, Schocken, 1968, pp. 217-251.

¹² Steinberg, *What I Like About Prints*, cit., p. 25.

¹³ R.K. Engen, *Victorian Engravings*, ed. by H. Beck, London, Academy Editions, 1975, p. 10.

market resulting from the appearance of new engraving techniques such as steel, intaglio, mezzotint, lithography, chromolithography, ..., allowing for thousands of copies to be made of a single image. From a steel plate, for example, up to 30.000 impressions could be made. The cheapest versions of such prints – together with pirated copies – could number in the millions and find their way into any kind of home. People of the middle classes, in addition to becoming massive consumers of what were known as «demi-fine» engravings, began to cultivate a taste that differed from that of the aristocracy. In Victorian England, for example, they did not tend to acquire prints based on Old Master paintings, preferring instead gravures dealing with family subjects and homely scenes of common life created by living artists. Their appetite was for images that stimulated and brought back their own memories, that captured on paper the images they retained in their minds. Painters were quick to adapt to the public's taste and to depict subjects with immediate popular appeal.

This revolution in the print market meant that all social classes suddenly had much easier access to images and could observe a far greater number of scenes than any previous generation. The nineteenth century lived in a sort of what it has been called the «frenzy of the visible»¹⁴. At this moment, the popularity and increased demand for engravings «evolved from a newly urban culture which tried to grasp and classify its experience of world through vision»¹⁵. In the history of visual communication «the nineteenth century was therefore characterized by a hitherto unprecedented production of reproductions, in terms of both quantity and quality»¹⁶, till the point that it has been affirmed «that more prints were produced during the nineteenth century than in all the precedent centuries put together»¹⁷. The engravings market was benefiting from the first consumer boom that struck the globe, even it has been strongly affirmed «that no one in the future should doubt that the first of the world's consumer societies had unmistakably emerged by 1800»¹⁸. And the symbol of this new society was the shop with great glass windows, to which the passers-by, astonished by the images that were offered before their eyes, leaned out.

Many engravings were sold in the elegant stores of the big cities, in shops with huge display windows showing to potential buyers their most recent and striking prints. The shop windows with the latest engravings, lithographs, and etchings, were called «the poor men's galleries», and «were part of the fascinating visual culture of the nineteenth century»¹⁹. It was in this elegant stores – like the Ackermann's Repository of Arts in

¹⁴ Quoted in G. Beegan, *The Mechanization of the Image: Facsimile, Photography, and Fragmentation in Nineteenth-Century Wood Engraving*, «Journal of Design History», vol. 8, n. 4, 1995, p. 257.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

¹⁶ R. Verhoogt, *Art in Reproduction. Nineteenth-Century Prints after Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Josef Israëls and Ary Scheffer*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2007, p. 15.

¹⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁸ N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society. The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England*, London, Europa Publications Limited, 1982, p. 13.

¹⁹ R.M. Verhoogt, *Free Access to the History of Art: Art Reproduction and the appropriation of the History of Art in the nineteenth-century culture*, in L. Jensen, J. Leerssen, M. Mathijsen (edd.), *Free Access to the Past. Romanticism, Cultural Heritage and the Nation*, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2010, p. 149.



Fig. 1. Travelling print seller showing his commodities to the village children (Nationaal Onderwijsmuseum, Dordrecht)



Fig. 2. Print peddler showing his goods. Published in the cover of the 2^{me} collection de Chansonnettes, Bruxelles, Meynne, c. 1832 (Private collection M.M. del Pozo and S. Braster)

London, with its exclusive tea room²⁰ – that the aristocracy and bourgeoisie acquired their gravures from among the luxury works and «fine art», pieces which, when displayed in their houses, would bring greater social recognition to their owners. But the so-called «cheap prints» or «popular prints»²¹ – produced for the masses – were sold and circulated on a broad scale, in good part by travelling salesmen who went from town to town with their merchandise stashed in boxes, baskets and even in their umbrellas. Some had fixed stalls in marketplaces and local fairs and would display their prints on the walls, the ground or inside their booths; others went from door to door in the towns and villages, showing the villagers the latest acquisitions to arrive from the city (Figures 1 and 2).

In front of the engravings shop windows, it was a gathering of all the social classes. In 1889, the Dutch writer Johan Gram described the spectacle of observing the passers-by looking at the window of a print shop in The Hague:

Everyone that passes by, be they an important magistrate, a fashionable lady or a blushing maid-servant with her basket, stops here to look at all the news, and it is very amusing to slip between them and to listen to the sober or witty comments²².

²⁰ V. Furió, *La imagen del artista. Grabados antiguos sobre el mundo del arte*, Barcelona, Universitat de Barcelona, 2016, p. 88.

²¹ A. Griffiths, *The Dissemination of Popular Prints*, «Print Quarterly», vol. 32, n. 1, 2015, pp. 98-101.

²² Quoted in Verhoogt, *Free Access to the History of Art*, cit., p. 149.

Studies on visual culture have analysed the phenomenon of the print-shop window, which can be seen as a mediating panel between subject-observers and a collection of prints on display. The collection offers a cultural repertoire of images from a world that is foreign to that of the observers, whose ability to interpret the images will depend on their own cultural capital. In other words, these engravings serve to educate, but in order to be understood, the observer needs to have some prior cultural information. One of the most powerful depictions of the interaction arising between observers and prints can be seen in the famous work by MacDuff titled *Shaftesbury, or Lost and Found*, which was reproduced in prints in 1864. The scene shows two children, one a barefoot London street urchin, the other an older child in a London Shoe Black Brigade uniform. The older child has put down his shoe-shining materials and is explaining the prints in a shop window to his young companion. At first glance, we seem to be seeing a representation of the difficulties that the lower classes had in understanding such prints, or even in being able to read the captions. But a closer look shows us that the older boy is pointing at a central portrait among the prints. This figure turns out to be the reformist Anthony Ashley Cooper (1801-1885), 7th Earl of Shaftesbury, co-founder of the London Shoe Black Brigade and founder of the London Ragged School Union. Through these institutions, Shaftesbury rescued and provided homes, education and work to children who were living on the street (Figure 3). The image can therefore be seen as having at least two symbolic meanings. The first of these is the depiction of engravings as powerful tools for the education and acculturation of society's lower classes²³. The other meaning stems from the juxtaposition of "lost" and "found"; the "lost" child still lives on the street, with neither shoes nor education; the "found" child was lucky enough to have been found by Shaftesbury and educated in the

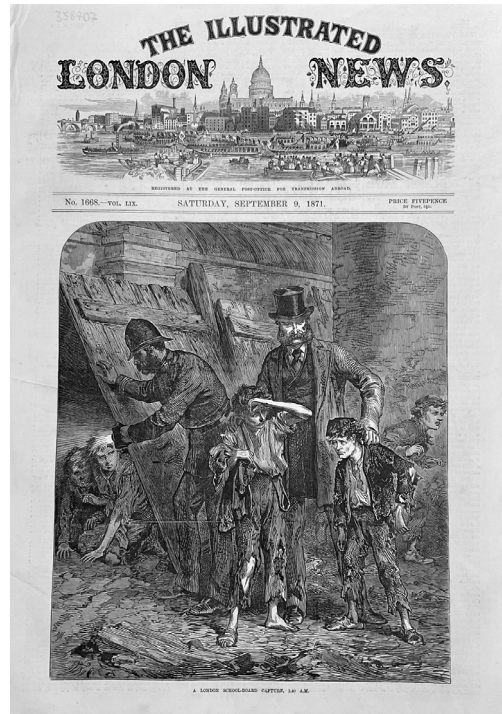


Fig. 3. *A London School-Board Capture, 2.40 a.m.*, engraving taken from «The Illustrated London News», vol. LIX, 9 September 1871, p. 1. The engraving portrays the London Brigade at the moment of capturing homeless children for bringing them to the Ragged Schools (Private collection M.M. del Pozo and S. Braster)

²³ M. Tedeschi, "Where the Picture Cannot Go, the Engravings Penetrate": *Prints and the Victorian Art Market*, «Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies», vol. 31, n. 1, 2005, pp. 9-10.

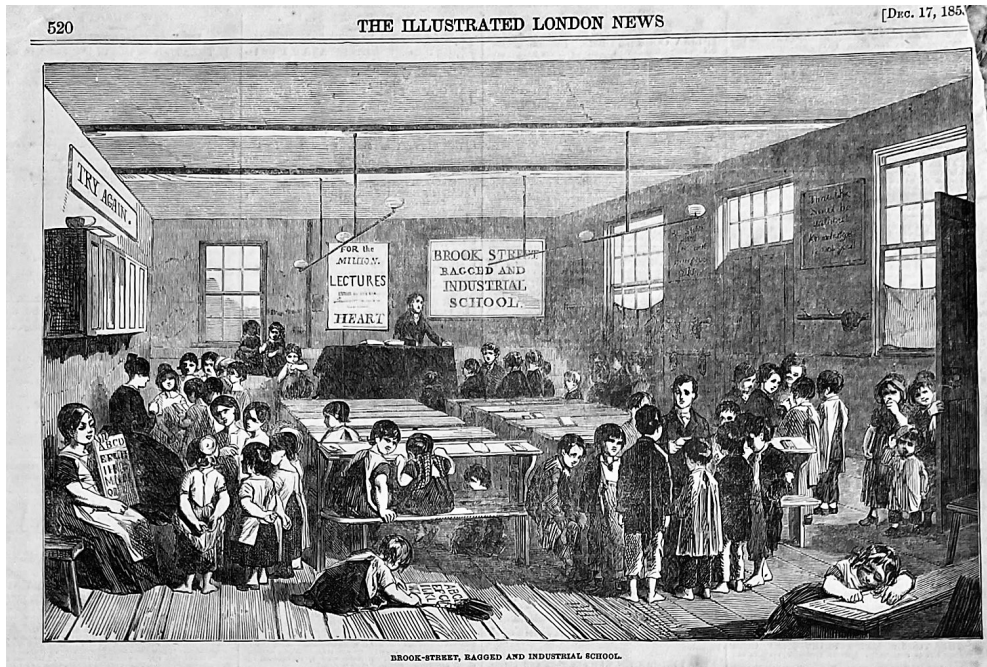


Fig. 4. *Brook-Street Ragged and Industrial School*, «The Illustrated London News», 17 December 1853, p. 520 (Private collection M.M. del Pozo and S. Braster)

Ragged School (Figure 4). Having become integrated into society, he is now able to share his cultural conventions with his less fortunate friend.

Between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the manner of conserving and exhibiting engravings also changed. Traditionally they had been handled by experts, or *connaisseurs*, who assembled specialized, technical collections of Old Master prints (Figure 5). They conserved them in portfolios and albums which were only shown on rare occasions, and usually to other experts, but in the nineteenth century they opened their collections more and more to the public with the aim of contributing to the formation of a «well founded national taste»²⁴.

But starting in the mid-eighteenth century, prints began to be used – with the appropriate frames – as decorative furniture in the houses of the bourgeoisie and the middle classes. Prints also made their way into the homes of the working class at this time, where they were more likely to be displayed unframed and unadorned, nailed or tacked to the walls (Figure 6). The inventories of the possessions of British gentlemen, carried out on the occasion of their death or of bankruptcy, show us that engravings tended to be hung in «rooms used for socializing, in particular in the dining room, which was

²⁴ M. Cerón, *Collecting Prints by Giulio Bonasone in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain*, «Print Quarterly», vol. 31, n. 2, 2014, p. 166.



Fig. 5. *Les amateurs d'estampes*, drawing by Honoré Daumier, Paris, Éditions Fouqueux, n.d. (but after 1837) (Nationaal Onderwijsmuseum, Dordrecht)



Fig. 6. House of a poor family (c. 1840) with a religious print hanging in the wall. J. Amades, J. Corominas, P. Vila, *Imatgeria popular catalana. El soldats i altres papers de rengles*, Barcelona, Orbis, 1936, vol. I, p. 54 (Joan Boadas Library)

generally the preserve of men». In the eighteenth century there was a clearly masculine tendency to exhibit prints in the walls, which showed a close association between the engravings and the heads of families, because in general they represented «the family and friends' networks of the householder and his political affiliations and ambitions», but also spoke about his «intellectual and cultural claims [...] as man of letters, familiar with science, literature, music or theatre»²⁵. The new collectors of the nineteenth century, on the contrary, were much more interested in engravings of familiar subjects, with homely scenes of daily life or of their journeys, with a narrative of moral character. Their aim while framing and hanging these reproductive prints on the walls of their homes was subtly different from that in the past century, because «it is intended to serve as a reminder, a souvenir, and to rival the book as a source of knowledge»²⁶. By the end of the century we witness a phenomenon of «domestication of art, which had been large accomplished by the permeation of engravings in every English parlour». As the American painter James Abbott McNeill Whistler had bitterly noted in 1885, «homes have been invaded, their walls covered with paper»²⁷.

²⁵ S. Nenadic, *Print Collecting and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, «History», vol. 82, n. 266, 1997, pp. 216 and 218.

²⁶ E. Gombrich, *The Uses of Images. Studies in the Social Function of Art and Visual Communication*, London, Phaidon, 1999, p. 129.

²⁷ Quoted in M. Tedeshi, *Whistler and the English Print Market*, «Print Quarterly», vol. 14, n. 1, 1997, p. 34.

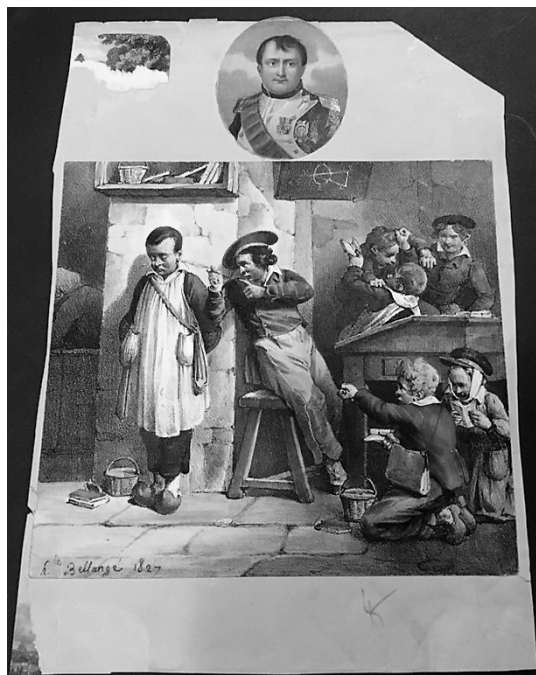


Fig. 7. Cheap prints glued to cheap paper, that once were part of a scrapbook-album (Private collection M.M. del Pozo and S. Braster)

at family gatherings. And while it is true that most of the albums that have reached us today belonged to ladies of the aristocracy, in many print shops we can still find cheap prints glued onto silk paper, which leads me to suspect that this was a common practice among the lower classes (Figure 7).

2. Memories of Nineteenth-century Schools: Case Studies

We have now established the importance of engravings in the construction of a visual culture over several generations as well as their prevalence and popularity among people from every social class and geographic origin. This leads us to see educational prints as more than simple artistic objects that represent – more or less faithfully – school life at a given time; they also constitute the physical object that preserves the memory of

Men and women begin at the end of the eighteenth century the practice of putting together albums, which could include texts, pictures, engravings and lithographs. Albums can be thought of as collections of souvenirs that had a special significance for these women and men, constituting an individual memory of sorts, the artifact that protected their autobiographical memories. Organized as *collages* of literary and artistic creations, press cuttings, drawings, and portraits, they also included lithograph prints by European and North American illustrators which often had been cut out of illustrated journals²⁸. Such a gathering of pieces made an album «a virtual portable museum» and a «practical form[s] of memory»²⁹. Women and men found pleasure in collecting and preserving such reproductions and in showing them to friends on private occasions, especially

²⁸ V. Miseres, *Sociabilidad femenina y archivo: lectura de tres álbumes de mujeres en el siglo XIX colombiano*, «Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura», vol. 49, n. 1, 2022, p. 88.

²⁹ B. Leca, *Before Photography: The Album and the French Graphic Tradition in the Early Nineteenth Century*, «Studies in the History of Art», vol. 77, 2011, pp. 33-34.

the school of our predecessors, the icon that encapsulates in the most direct way the classroom atmosphere, the graphic translation of the images retained in their heads, the depiction on paper of a certain memory from their school days. And I believe that this school memories took on the character of a collective memory as a result of the popularity and circulation of a particular engraving and the way in which this particular engraving was received by the public, a public that could very likely change the original message, depending on the school memories that they themselves harboured.

Our discovery of the first engraving that symbolized the school memory of the nineteenth century came about as the result of an inductive process. In our search of old prints this was the image that we came across most often, in a variety of formats and versions and in several European and American countries. We decided to study it from a biographical perspective, that is, to reconstruct the history of the image. This is where the surprises began³⁰.

The original work which our engravings were based upon was a watercolour that was first exhibited in London in the Spring of 1809. Its author, Henry James Richter, was a minor painter who specialized in choosing subjects from daily life that appealed to people's sentiments and were easy to relate to for common people. The work's original title was *Picture of Youth*. And while the connoisseurs did not think much of the artistic merits of the watercolour, they were quite moved by its subject, some proclaiming it to be so evocative that they would never forget it. The scene shows a classroom in «a country school», where the teacher is absent and the pupils are up to all kinds of mischief; the precise instant depicted is that of the unexpected return of the teacher, who catches the students making a complete mockery of him and his teaching. It would be obvious to any observer that they were witnessing the moment just before a severe punishment was about to be inflicted upon the group.

The first observers were moved by this work because it conjured up memories of their school days and awakened school memories. I believe that this was possible because Richter did not paint some anonymous rural school. Rather, he was representing some of his own school memories from St. Martin's Library School and the Soho Academy, the two London centres where he had been educated between 1778 and 1787³¹. In several memoirs written by artists and actors who attended these same schools at the time we find references to similar incidents. These include students parodying and drawing caricatures of their teachers – an activity which, according to his own son, Richter was quite good at – as well as some of the comic school scenes appearing in the picture. Such recollections were shared by several generations of English gentlemen, which helps to explain the work's immediate success, which took the form of continued requests for its reproduction in engravings. While the original work itself has been lost, oil copies still appear occasionally in auction houses. This in itself gives some measure of its popularity,

³⁰ A more extended version of this reconstruction can be found in Pozo Andrés, Braster, *Exploring New Ways of Studying School Memories*, cit., pp. 12-24.

³¹ Pozo Andrés, *The undisciplined child*, cit., pp. 85-91.



Fig. 8. *A Picture of Youth or The School in an Uproar*, engraving taken from *Illustrations of the Works of Henry Richter: First Series*, London, Rudolph Ackermann, 1822 (Private collection M.M. del Pozo and S. Braster)

as it shows that anonymous artists found it worthwhile to copy the subject because there was a demand for this particular school scene.

Aware of its popularity, Henry Richter finally had his work engraved in 1822 and titled it *A Picture of Youth, or The School in an Uproar*. But he did not actually reproduce the whole picture. Instead, he prepared a portfolio with four engravings – drawn by him on stone – that enlarged, with a zoom technique, parts of the original watercolour. This was accompanied by a cover showing, in the size of a small vignette, an engraved copy of the original watercolour, this being the oldest remaining image of the work (Figure 8). The choice of a portfolio format tells us that these engravings were meant for a public consisting of art critics, *connoisseurs* and persons of considerable culture. Each scene was laden with images appreciable only to a certain kind of influential Londoners of the time. These «secret» allusions ranged from the Masonic symbols carved on the classroom benches – which may well have symbolized the well-known Masonic connections of the Soho Academy – to the crusty old spelling-book by Thomas Dilworth, which countless generations of Brits and North Americans had used to learn grammar; from the references to the Greek philosopher Zeno of Elea to the mention of Goggins in the hangman game, an allusion to the Irishman Thomas Goggins, who had been executed that same year in Cork by this very method.

Despite their being intended for a cultured public, at least two of the five engravings from this portfolio were widely pirated and published as «cheap prints» in the 1830s, with



Fig. 9. *The Village School in an Uproar*, engraving by Charles Turner after painting by Henry Richter, 1825 (Private collection M.M. del Pozo and S. Braster)

no mention of the original work or of the author³². Captions indicated the new meaning being attributed to the images: «the angry schoolmaster» and «the idle scholar», two social archetypes which, in their oversimplification, were easily recognizable to anyone who had attended any type of school. And yet, the illustrated sector of society, in the voice of its art critics, requested insistently an engraving «of the whole», that is, of the complete watercolour, not just parts of it; it was the complete image of the school – they claimed – that «has lived in our memory», from when they first saw it in 1809. The reason for this vivid impression was that the subject was «intimately connected with our early associations»³³, in other words, it evoked their first school memories.

Ritcher put off the conversion of his watercolour into a reproductive engraving for many years because he was not its legal owner, he was not in possession of the copyright, and he had no say over its fate. This led him, in April of 1823, to paint and exhibit a new watercolour titled *A Picture of Youth; or, the School in an Uproar, a second picture on the subject*, presenting it as an exact copy of the original and made «for the express purpose of its being engraved»³⁴. By the hand of an elite engraver, Charles Turner, the first mezzotint engraving of Richter's watercolour appeared in April of 1825, with a title – that would become definitive – *The Village School in an Uproar* (Figure 9). Art critics

³² *Ibid.*, p. 78.

³³ *Fine Arts*, «The London Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences & c», n. 285, 6 July 1822, p. 425.

³⁴ *The Nineteenth Exhibition of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours*, «The European Magazine and London Review», n. 83, June 1823, p. 539.



Fig. 10. *The Royal Academy*, print made by George Cruikshank, published in «The Comic Almanack», May 1844 (British Museum, n. 1978, U.2671)

were quick to praise his excellence as a «translator» of the original work, due to the way he reproduced perfectly the expressions and movements of the characters as well as their underlying emotions. However, Turner not only erased all of the iconographic elements that helped to give a historical context to the picture; he also depersonalized it, eliminating the symbols linking it to the author's biography. In doing this, Turner was ensuring the atemporal nature of the image, enabling its reproduction in different times and settings. Turner was also striving for an intellectual democratization, turning something that was only truly comprehensible to the educated British elite into an object that was relatable to a much broader audience.

The engraving was an instant success, and the British press of the 1830s raved about how *The Village School in an Uproar* was one of the most popular modern prints ever. A first edition likely consisted of some 1500 prints, but many further impressions were made with the same plates. It continued to appear in print publishers' catalogues until at least 1864, and we find the press regularly welcoming it as a «new print». Its use was eminently decorative, hanging on the walls of many a British gentleman's home, where it tended to be displayed in the more private rooms, those reserved for family and close friends. Thousands of people acquired this print for the enjoyment of contemplating the school scene. Other, more caricaturesque versions were also made, in which Richter's

name disappeared, and noticeable changes were made in the characters depicted in order to better connect with the events that were entertaining the public at the time, such as, for example, the education of the Prince of Wales and future King Edward VII, who in 1844 was only three years old (Figure 10)³⁵. And these audiences were wide-ranging indeed, with the image reproduced on puzzles and even on pocket handkerchiefs. From 1853, and at least until 1907, it also made its way into the theatre, where it was presented as a *tableau vivant*, recreating the famous picture *The Village School in an Uproar*. Spectators must have had a good laugh seeing the pictures' characters in flesh and blood. These data lead me to conclude that, when nineteenth century Britons evoked the concept of a school, the image that popped into their heads was most likely Richter's composition or one of its many variations and transformations.

The print's impact was felt well beyond the borders of Great Britain. In 1825 it travelled to France³⁶. At approximately the same time that Turner's mezzotint engraving was published in London, an aquatint engraving titled *Le Vacarme dans l'École*, based on Richter's work, was published in Paris by the engraver Jean Pierre Marie Jazet. Here too it was a resounding success; before the year was out several other versions were published. There was even a sequel; the French painter Charles-Nicolas Lemercier immortalized the moment right after that shown in *The Village School in an Uproar*, the instant that every observer held in their imagination, when the teacher starts unleashing his fury on the pupils. Between 1829 and 1831 the image reached the shores of the United States, where it circulated through the so-called «annuals» which were very popular as Christmas presents. There it seems to have evoked similar sentiments as in the United Kingdom: «We can look at this scene over and over» – says one anonymous columnist – «no explanation is necessary; the whole story is before us»³⁷. And sure enough, one consequence of the engraving's success in North America was a series of stories written about the future life of the picture's figures, character studies based on their behaviour in the scene. In 1876 a German publisher specialized in cheap prints, the Scholz House of Mainz, released a mass-produced lithography on very cheap paper aimed at the working-class public. The title attached to it was *Der Dorfschullehrer* (The Village Schoolteacher) (Figure 11). The multilingual caption – in German, French, Italian and Spanish – is a clear indication of the image's travelling character.

³⁵ The Figure 10 served as illustration of a very long and humoristic poem about the qualities, abilities and knowledge required by the future tutor of the Prince of Wales. *Who shall educate the prince of Wales?*, in A.S. Thackeray, G.A. Beckett, The Brothers Mayhew, «The Comic Almanack, and Ephemeris in Jest and Earnest, containing Merry Tales, Humorous Poetry, Quips, and Oddities», April 1844, pp. 16-17. The possible tutor needed to have a kind of «first rate» encyclopedic knowledge of all the subjects and be able to teach his illustrious student really very fast, «at railroad speed». The poem anticipated the rigorous educational program designed by his parents and supervised by several tutors that the Prince of Wales started at the age of seven years old.

³⁶ See the travel of the image to France and its sequels in Pozo Andrés, Braster, *An image travelling across Europe*, pp. 84-97. Reproductions of these works in pp. 91, 93, 94, 95.

³⁷ *The Annuals*, «Illinois Monthly Magazine», January 1831, p. 177.



Fig. 11. *Der Dorfschullehrer*, in *Vom Christ-Kind*, Mainz, bei Jos. Scholz, 1876 (Private collection M.M. del Pozo and S. Braster)

There is no way that in Mediterranean countries people would have identified this scene with a rural school. In Spain at least, no school memory could be evoked by such an image. But some of the many copies of the engraving *The Village School in an Uproar* did arrive in Spain and ultimately influenced artistic representations of the school. In 1871, what we could consider the Spanish version of the English engraving was published³⁸. The author's inspiration in the original scene seems evident in the scene of the child chasing after an apple, of another sitting on a bench horsy-style, and yet another pupil drawing a caricature of his teacher behind his back. But the author spanishize the classroom by including typically Spanish children's games; by including a blackboard and teacher's desk as symbols of authority; by showing a rebellious child dancing on top of this desk and wearing a paper cap – possibly a burlesque version of the English dunce-cap; and by the writing on the blackboard, an iconotext of sorts, of the first letters of the alphabet, making clear that the students in this school barely knew the most basic rudiments of the alphabet (Figure 12).

³⁸ I. Gil-Díez Usandizaga, *La imagen del maestro español, entre el miedo y la parodia (1876-1931)*, «El Futuro del Pasado», n. 13, 2022, p. 370.



Fig. 12. *La Escuela*, drawing by José Giménez, published in «Los Niños», vol. 4, n. 9, September 1871, p. 136 (Hemeroteca Digital, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid)

The print *The Village School in an Uproar* exuded masculinity, in both the activities shown and in the characters' body language. This leads us to ask ourselves, Are there not feminine versions of the *School in an Uproar*, ones showing scenes of chaos in girls' schools? The answer is yes, there are indeed paintings of this kind. These were meant to be companion prints to the masculine version. The decorating conventions and aesthetics of the times dictated that in well-to-do homes, paintings and prints should be hung in pairs, creating a kind of dialogue with two contrasting depictions of one same theme. The image of chaos in a girls' school can therefore be seen as simply fulfilling the need to accompany the boys' scene, which was the truly important one. In this case, art was imitating reality.

The first artist to paint one of these scenes was Henry Richter himself, and he only did so because Turner's engraving of *The Village School in an Uproar* was about to be published and he needed an accompaniment to help boost its sales. So, in 1825 he presented a watercolour destined to be associated with the original work. He titled it *The Village School in Repose*, and, when the pair of paintings was exhibited together for the first time, art critics said that the second picture was «not quite so brilliant in its colouring»³⁹.

³⁹ *The Northern Society*, «Leeds Intelligencer», n. 3699, 26 May 1825, p. 3.



Fig. 13. *The Village School in Repose*, engraving by John P. Quilley after painting by Henry Richter, 1825 (Private collection M.M. del Pozo and S. Braster)

Anyway a reproductive print was soon made of it (Figure 13), though the engraver of the new print was not nearly as famous as Turner and his work was considered «a failure», but extensive sales were expected «among those who possess the print with which it is meant to be associated, and which was one of the most popular of modern publications»⁴⁰.

The scene shows a girls' school – not really rural at all – where, while the teacher is having a catnap – her *siesta* [sic]⁴¹ –, the girls are engaged in all kinds of mischief. But they do so silently, so as to not wake their instructress. Here lies the contrast between these two works, the wild, frenetic scene of the boys opposed to Richter's depiction of the quiet and calm of the girls' classroom. Yet this engraving does not seem to have connected with the school memories of men or women. Art critics were of the opinion that Richter had carried out an exercise not of memory but of imagination, and their commentaries show that they were lacking the mental references to understand what they were seeing. One objected that the schoolmistress was not looking like an instructor, but «the bustling mother of a large family»⁴². Where some of them saw «sweet spirited girls»⁴³, other described them as «rude, but merry-hearted tomboys»⁴⁴, that is, girls who were

⁴⁰ *The School in Repose; engraved in mezzotinto by J. Arnold from a drawing by H. Richter*, «The New Monthly Magazine», 1st May 1832, p. 210.

⁴¹ *Society of Painters in Water Colours*, «La Belle Assemblée: or Court and fashionable magazine», May 1825, p. 225.

⁴² *Painters in Water Colours*, «The New Times», n. 8343, 25 April 1825, p. 3.

⁴³ *Society of Painters in Water Colours*, cit., p. 225.

⁴⁴ *The School in Repose*, cit., p. 210.

decidedly *unfeminine*. Others saw a group of very same-looking youth, with no clearly defined personality⁴⁵. Richter had rendered a feminine version of the cocky adolescent from the boys' school, which would seem to mean that she was adopting a provocative attitude towards the napping teacher, that was considered unpleasant by some art critics, while others interpreted her corporal language as an imitation of a dance teacher⁴⁶. And, interesting enough, when both watercolours were exhibited together, probably for the last time, in the South Kensington Museum, and as late as 1875, the art critic found that «in the boys' school the enjoyment of the young imps in the absence of the pedagogue is deliciously natural», and that all the scene was still looking very real; while in the girls' school it was difficult to believe that «now-a-days» the schoolmistress was sleeping, the feminine schools at the moment «are too full of learning and “competitive exams”»⁴⁷.

The engraving *The Village School in Repose* was deemed a failure, although it seemed to satisfy the need for which it was drawn: that of accompanying the famous, successful *The Village School in an Uproar*. While we have no evidence that the picture made it abroad, we do have evidence to the contrary; French publishers came up with their own versions of feminine school mayhem. Late in 1825 Philibert Louis Debucourt drew a somewhat free but recognizable rendition of Richter's work along with its inevitable feminine counterpart, which he called *La Récréation*. Here we see numerous young girls playing all kinds of pranks, undaunted by the fact that their teacher is ready to let loose with her birch. And in 1847 the French publisher Jean Dopter produced a pair of cheap prints meant for mass-consumption by the lower classes. The male print, titled *Le désordre dans l'école des garçons*, repeats the central narrative theme of *The Village School in an Uproar*, that is, the unexpected return of the teacher. It also contains two other secondary themes from the original: the two children drawing a caricature and the fight going on between two other classmates. The most notable difference is the French engravers' incorporation of scenes that are considerably more violent than anything in Richter's work, including the torturing of animals and the handling of arms. The corresponding feminine work, titled *Le désordre dans l'école des filles*, is much gentler. While the teacher naps in the classroom, some of the girls continue with their work, others play with animals and others, the most «rebellious» ones, practice some dance steps and seem to be ready to tickle the teacher with a feather.

The fundamental difference between the masculine and feminine representations of classroom chaos is that in the case of the boys the teacher is absent, while in the girls' classroom she is present, though asleep. This limits the girls' freedom and their chance to do greater mischief in the class. It would seem that the artists, all men, were afraid to explore the potential for feminine transgression, and the art critics were feeling uncomfortable in front of such behavior and preferred to ignore it.

⁴⁵ *Society of Painters in Water-Colours*, in *The Annual Register, or, a view of the history, politics, and literature of the year 1825*, London, Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1826, p. 55.

⁴⁶ *Fine Arts. Opening of the Water-Colour Exhibition*, «Weekly Fleming's Express», n. 105, 1st May 1825, p. 4.

⁴⁷ *Winchester Art Loan Exhibition*, «The Hampshire Advertiser County Newspaper», 23 June 1875, p. 4.



Fig. 14. *En ausencia de la maestra*, wood engraving by M. Weber after painting by Emanuel Spitzer, 1891 (Private collection M.M. del Pozo and S. Braster)

Only at the end of the nineteenth century do we come across an image that would become an icon of the female school – though admittedly this was determined by men as well. The origin was an oil painting by the Austrian painter Emanuel Spitzer (1844-1919), a work that must have been very popular indeed, as evidenced by the fact that copies and replicas by different Austrian authors – as Rudolf Geyling (1838-1904) or Heinrich August Mansfeld (1816-1901) – are still circulating today. But the painting became known by means of its publication in the illustrated press, appearing in various magazines in different countries between 1888 and 1891 (Figure 14). The scene is from a girls' secondary school, possibly a boarding school; the teacher is absent, and we only know that she is about to return because one of the girls is screaming. The students are engaged in all kinds of pranks that we had previously only ever found in depictions of boys, including the transgressive use of educational objects and the caricaturesque drawings of male and female teachers in the blackboard. The American and German versions of the print were titled in a similar way: *The teacher is coming* (1891) and *Die Lehrerin kommt* (1888), whereas in the illustrated Dutch journal «De Katholieke Illustratie», of a Catholic tendency, the caption reads *De eerwaarde moeder komt* (1889) – *The Reverend Mother is coming* –, affirming the school's religious nature.

The Spanish version was titled slightly different as *En ausencia de la maestra* (1891) – «In the absence of the teacher» –, but the strongest difference with the other national

versions lied in the way in which the scene was commented. In the accompanying article the painting was interpreted as an allegory of the youth, explaining how the young girls, compared with cocoons and chrysalis, were in the process of transforming in beautiful flowers and colourful butterflies, a process that was described with a language full of sexual connotations⁴⁸. It is impossible for the image to evoke any kind of school memories in nineteenth-century Spanish society, as there were hardly any boarding schools for girls and hardly any teenage girls went to secondary school.

However, the approach was very different in the articles published in other countries. The common message coming from these journals is the evocative power of the image, which connects to school memories of men as well as women. The Dutch anonymous writer communicated directly with their female readers:

This amusing scene does not need an elaborate explanation; all our readers and especially our female readers will recognize it at the first glance as an image from the happy days of youth. Do you still remember, female readers, from the days when you were a rascal of twelve or thirteen years old sitting on the desks of the boarding school, the exuberant fun when the sister for a moment lifted her heels? What a spectacle that was! It was as if the schoolroom had to be torn down⁴⁹.

In the North American version it was asserted, literally, that it did not matter if it was a boys' or a girls' school, although «girls are a little the worst of the two», «the enjoyment of fun, in the absence of the teacher, seems implanted in boy-and-girl-human-nature», it was a deeply held memory for *any* student *anywhere*, and therefore any man or woman could relate to this scene, «for we've all been there»⁵⁰.

Conclusions

We began our research of school engravings moved by a curiosity to discover the reasons that made certain prints so popular, even when they were not the most esthetically accomplished or the most pedagogically interesting. I am convinced now that some specific, particular engravings came to constitute a global phenomenon over the course of the nineteenth century, and that this only occurred with prints showing chaos and disarray in the classroom when the teacher was absent. The children's mayhem and mischief in these depictions is accompanied by the thrill of those precious moments of freedom.

At the beginning of this chapter, I established as archetypal «travelling images» those that succeeded in connecting the East and the West, that built bridges between Western

⁴⁸ *En ausencia de la maestra*, «La Ilustración Hispano-Americana», vol. 12, n. 579, 6 December 1891, p. 753.

⁴⁹ *De eerwaarde moeder komt*, «De Katholieke Illustratie», vol. 23, n. 50, 1889/90, pp. 396-397.

⁵⁰ *Triple Triumphs: Photogravures From the Original Paintings: The teacher is coming, Plam Sunday, A Trot*, Philadelphia, Gebbie & Co. Publishers, 1891, in History Colorado Online Collection (last access: 1st July 2023).



Fig. 15. Japanese version of *The school in an uproar*. Engraving from the first half of the 19th century (Private collection M.M. del Pozo and S. Braster)

and Eastern culture and allowed the circulation of symbols, conventions and messages that influenced the global art world of the nineteenth century. What I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter is that also in the «travelling images» on the school there was an influence and exchange of codes and representations. The British artist Henry Richter pioneered in 1809 an image of a chaotic school which he called «the school in an uproar» and which circulated widely throughout the nineteenth century in different versions and media. Not only was this image reproduced many times, but it also served as a source of inspiration for other artists in Europe and the United States, who depicted the same subject and copied some of its symbols, which shows me that they were familiar with the original work or with one of its many variations. And the work must also have reached Japan, as we have found prints by Japanese artists that reproduce the same symbols and codes to represent the chaos of a school in the absence of the teacher (Figure 15).

The occupation by the students of the space of authority of the teachers, the use of educational objects in a transgressive manner, and the visible presence of the missing teacher symbolised by a caricature created by a young artist, are three of the elements that appear in all the Western engravings and in Japanese engravings as well. These same elements also would appear in the most popular «travelling images» of chaotic girls' schools at the end of the nineteenth century.

This chapter has proven that in the nineteenth century there were some educational images extremely popular and widespread. Every time it is more obvious that these prints were so popular because they connected with the school memories of many men and women around the world, they made people remember the moments in their youth when they were perfectly happy. The challenge for the future is to discover in which extent these images have contributed to build a nineteenth-century narrative about schooling, or a story told and imagined, that is rather different than the official history of schooling, based on discipline and order. And going a step further, we need to explore what was the role of these stories in constructing a collective memory that crossed borders and nations, and that eventually became the social memory of the school.

SECTION *Official and Public Memories of School*

The International University Games of 1933. The Fascist Regime and the Issue of Commemorative Stamps as a Memory Policy for a “Glorious” Italian University Tradition

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From 1st to 10th September, 1933, Turin hosted the International University Games whose organisation for Italy was entrusted to the Fascist University Groups (better known as GUF – Gruppi Universitari Fascisti)¹. Ten years earlier, Paris had hosted the first World Student Games, which were organized under the aegis of the *Confédération Internationale des Étudiants* in May. The Turin edition of the World University Games was the seventh one in the summer version – the second one in Italy, after the one in Rome, combined with the winter one held in Cortina in 1928 – and it was actually divided into two stages: the summer games in Turin were preceded from the winter ones, held in Bardonecchia from January 29th to February 3rd².

The enhancement and the celebration of this event by Fascism, like many others coming after each other during the 1930s, was part of that process implemented by the regime to also artificially “build” a great precise image of Italian Universities through the organization of a series of official representations and/or public commemorations promoted by the ministry in the wake of a specific memory policy³.

¹ About GUF, please see M.C. Giuntella, *I Gruppi Universitari Fascisti nel primo decennio del regime*, «Il movimento di liberazione in Italia», vol. 107, n. 2, April-June 1972, pp. 4-38; A. Grandi, *I Giovani di Mussolini: fascisti convinti, fascisti pentiti, antifascisti*, Milano, Baldini & Castoldi, 2001; L. La Rovere, *Storia dei Guf. Organizzazione, politica e miti della gioventù universitaria fascista, 1919-1943*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2003; H.A. Cavallera, *La formazione della gioventù italiana durante il ventennio fascista*, 2 vols., Lecce, Pensa MultiMedia, 2006; S. Duranti, *Lo spirito gregario. I gruppi universitari fascisti fra politica e propaganda (1930-1940)*, Roma, Donzelli, 2008; E. Signori, *Tra Minerva e Marte: Università e guerra in epoca fascista*, in P. Del Negro, *Le Università e le guerre dal Medioevo alla seconda guerra mondiale*, Bologna, Clueb, 2011, pp. 153-172.

² On this regard, see P. Dessì, P.P. Zannoni (edd.), *Gli studenti dell'Università di Bologna dal fascismo alla liberazione. Aula Magna dell'Università di Bologna, 21 aprile 2010*, Bologna, Clueb, 2010, pp. 26-27.

³ On this subject, see in particular C. Yanes-Cabrera, J. Meda, A. Viñao (edd.), *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, Cham, Springer, 2017; M. Brunelli, J. Meda, L. Pomante (edd.), *Memories and Public Celebrations of Education in Contemporary Times*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XIV, n. 1 (special issue), pp. 9-394.

Especially thanks to Achille Starace, Giovanni Battista Giuriati's successor at the PNF (Partito Nazionale Fascista) secretariat and a GUF secretary⁴, the university events, which were often linked to sports events as they were able to involve and to animate «Fascist young and courageous men», became the ideal opportunity to recover and to enhance the Italian university traditions, above all the medieval or early Renaissance ones⁵, in order to make them an essential key element in the work of strengthening a national identity.

That «cult of the origins», which ended up being officiated in all the venues and in particular also during the most significant student celebrations and demonstrations, found a concrete application in such precise public situations. However, Fascism did not simply intend to limit to an aseptic commemoration of the past, but to effectively recover that past with its «legendary traditions», in order to seek in them the foundations of that «cultural and civil primacy» of the nation, which constituted the starting point of an age of splendour, such as the one which was started up by Mussolini's regime. Therefore, no collective Fascist manifestation could avoid this inspiring *ratio*.

After all, as recent historiography has well highlighted⁶, parades, public celebrations, organized mass meetings and, more generally, many «spectacular» commemorations organized by the regime ended up developing a real «Fascist liturgy»⁷ whose main purpose was to mould «the new man»⁸ thanks to the fusion between Fascist symbols and rituals and the pre-existing national ones. It is also well known that Fascists boasted several times that they had renewed what was called «mass aesthetics» with their collective rites. As well analysed by Emilio Gentile in his appreciated work *Il culto del littorio*, Fascist celebrations, a precious vehicle of indoctrination for people, could be considered «great choral celebrations» while

‘before Fascism, public demonstrations were extremely unaesthetic. [...] When our processions wind across the streets, pass under the arches, form squares at the foot of bell towers and towers in the squares,

⁴ In the rich bibliography devoted to Achille Starace, PNF secretary from 7 December 1931 to 31 October 1939, please see the works by S. Setta, *Achille Starace*, in F. Cordova, *Uomini e volti del fascismo*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1980, pp. 445-472, C. Galeotti, *Achille Starace e il vademecum dello stile fascista*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2000 and A. Spinosa, *Starace: l'uomo che inventò lo stile fascista*, Milano, Oscar Mondadori, 2003.

⁵ On this subject, see S. Cavazza, *Piccole patrie. Feste popolari tra regione e nazione durante il fascismo*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1997, pp. 171-244.

⁶ On this subject, especially see the works by Emilio Gentile, such as: E. Gentile, *Fascism as Political Religion*, «Journal of Contemporary History», vol. 25, n. 2, April 1990, pp. 229-251; Id., *Il culto del littorio: la sacralizzazione della politica nell'Italia fascista*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1993; Id., *Le religioni della politica: fra democrazie e totalitarismi*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2001.

⁷ See L. Klinkhammer, *Il fascismo italiano tra religione di Stato e liturgia politica*, in V. Ferrone, *La Chiesa cattolica e il totalitarismo. VIII giornata Luigi Firpo, Atti del Convegno Torino, 25-26 ottobre 2001*, Firenze, L.S. Olschki, 2004, pp. 185-203 (quotation on p. 185).

⁸ About the subject of the fusion between the Fascist symbols and rituals and the pre-existing national ones, see R. Suzzi Valli, *Riti del Ventennale*, «Storia contemporanea», vol. XXIV, n. 6, December 1993 and Ead., *Jugendfeiern im faschistischen Italien. Die Leva Fascista*, in S. Behrenbeck, A. Nützenadel, *Inszenierungen des Nationalstaats: Politische Feiern in Italien und Deutschland seit 1860/71*, Köln, SH-Verlag, 2000. Instead, about the concept of a «new man», see L. La Rovere, *Rifare gli italiani: l'esperimento di creazione dell'«uomo nuovo» nel regime fascista*, «Annali di storia dell'educazione e delle istituzioni scolastiche», vol. 9, 2002, pp. 51-77.

they are worthy of our cities, and their beauty increases the beauty of stones and marble', giving people 'brotherly love for civic holidays, which is then love for city, tradition and, therefore, homeland'⁹.

At every anniversary celebrated or every collective holiday, the regime used to emphasize the difference in style and spirit with respect to the rites in the liberal age, which were characterized by their «aboulic patriotism» and the «crowd's terror with a commemorative ceremony addressed to the past». On the contrary,

the scenario of the Fascist rites was composed of squares full of applauding people, men, women and children of all the classes, who celebrate the Fascist glory and its leader in unison, in a mystical exaltation. [...] Fascism claimed to have redeemed the crowd by changing them into a *liturgical mass*, who took part in the celebrations of the regime's rites with joy and faith¹⁰.

Thus, even the Turin University Games and the related and connected Italian university historical Carousel, which had the task of introducing the event and, above all, recovering and celebrating the memory of a renowned cultural past¹¹, ended up becoming targeted propaganda tools, which were used by the regime to the achievement of the objectives mentioned above.

In fact, beyond its purely sporting value, the celebrated event was part of that university operation of «invention of tradition»¹² promoted by Mussolini and blindly implemented by the Fascist ruling class throughout the twenty years¹³ with the aim to recover the Italian «glorious» academic traditions, whether they were true or presumed. In fact, the Duce intended to restore and to enhance the ancient value of Italian universities, underlining their primary vital function as a centre for irradiating culture and a mine for

⁹ See Gentile, *Il culto del littorio: la sacralizzazione della politica nell'Italia fascista*, cit., p. 161.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 161-162.

¹¹ About the Italian university historical Carousel organized in Turin, please see the extensive discussion reported in L. Pomante, *L'Università italiana nel Novecento. Nuovi itinerari storiografici e inediti percorsi di ricerca*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2020, pp. 39-47.

¹² As we know, the reference is obviously to the category of the «invention of tradition» elaborated by Eric Hobsbawm in Hobsbawm, Ranger (edd.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983. Instead, according to a more recent contribution by Roberto Sani, the merit of having applied the historiographical category of the «invention of tradition» should be attributed no longer only to political organizations and state apparatuses in the strict sense, «but also to those social and cultural institutions, which were more invested by the deep and radical changes underway and struggling with the consequent need for a new and more solid legitimation of their role and their prerogatives and functions». And among these social and cultural institutions there were also universities and higher education institutions with regard not only to the ancient colleges of English universities struggling with the changes, which were produced by the industrial revolution in cultural and scientific fields and Hobsbawm mentions, but also very old and new universities, which arose in Germany and France during the nineteenth century, as well as that particular type of «minor universities» widespread in Italy, to which Sani himself turns his particular attention. On this regard, please see R. Sani, *The invention of tradition in the minor Universities of united Italy. The case of the thirteenth-century origins of the Studium Maceratense*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. VII, n. 1, pp. 485-504. Finally, about this subject, please also see the interesting work by D. Bidussa, *A proposito della "invenzione della tradizione"*, «Studi storici», vol. LIV, n. 3, July-September 2013, pp. 591-609.

¹³ Please see Pomante, *L'Università italiana nel Novecento. Nuovi itinerari storiografici e inediti percorsi di ricerca*, cit., pp. 19-53.

the new Fascist ruling class in the hoped and definitive realization of that ideal of «state university», which had been always dreamt, but never concretely realized in previous decades¹⁴.

However, in order to be able to fully implement this plan, a specific apologetic celebration of university «glorious traditions» was necessary. Hence, Fascism invented a mythological tradition, which especially aimed at artfully introducing University as a typically Italian “creation” in a phase when the country was about to be considered the cradle of culture and intellectual development par excellence, underlining the birth of the first university venues in Italy in the late Middle Ages but, however, concealing the real coeval existence of many other prestigious European universities¹⁵. This invention represented the tool which would have allowed the regime to identify a mythical original event destined to mark a clear discontinuity in national history from which to date the “rebirth” of Italian people¹⁶ and was an obligatory step to create a Fascist tradition, which represented «not only a system of ritualized procedures aimed at a symbolic use of mass politics, but [also] a pedagogy for Mussolini’s new Italian people»¹⁷. So, Mussolini more concretely started up a process of ideological reconstruction for a national identity, which was clearly and mainly founded on the recovery of past and tradition.

¹⁴ About Italian University in the first fifty years after unification and the main university policies implemented by the ruling class of that time, please see in particular: F. De Vivo, G. Genovesi, *Cento anni di università. L’istruzione superiore in Italia dall’Unità ai nostri giorni. Atti del III Convegno nazionale CIRSE. Padova, 9-10 novembre 1984*, Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1986; T. Tomasi, L. Bellatalla, *L’Università italiana nell’età liberale (1861-1923)*, Napoli, Liguori, 1988; G.P. Brizzi, *L’Università italiana fra età moderna e contemporanea. Aspetti e momenti*, Bologna, Clueb, 1991; S. Polenghi, *La politica universitaria italiana nell’età della Destra storica (1848-1876)*, Brescia, La Scuola, 1993; A. La Penna, *Modello tedesco e modello francese nel dibattito sull’università italiana*, in S. Soldani, G. Turi, *Fare gli italiani. Scuola e cultura nell’Italia contemporanea I. La nascita dello Stato nazionale*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1993, pp. 171-212; I. Porciani, *L’Università tra Otto e Novecento: i modelli europei e il caso italiano*, Napoli, Jovene, 1994; F. Colao, *La libertà di insegnamento e l’autonomia nell’università liberale. Norme e progetti per l’istruzione superiore in Italia (1848-1923)*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1995; I. Porciani, M. Moretti, *La creazione del sistema universitario nella nuova Italia*, in G.P. Brizzi, P. Del Negro, A. Romano, *Storia delle Università in Italia*, 3 vols., Messina, Sicania, 2007, Vol. III, pp. 323-379; F. Pruneri, A. Bianchi, *School Reforms and University Transformations and Their Function in Italy from the Eighteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries*, «History of Education», vol. 39, n. 1, 2010, pp. 115-136; A. Ferraresi, E. Signori, *Le Università e l’Unità d’Italia (1848-1870)*, Bologna, Clueb, 2012.

¹⁵ In fact, as it is well known, if it is true that some of the most important Italian universities, such as the universities of Bologna, Padua and Naples (Federico II), can trace their founding date back to the period between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries, in the Middle Ages, it is equally undeniable that equally prestigious universities, such as the universities of Oxford, Paris, Cambridge and Salamanca, just to name a few, also saw the light in other European countries in the same period of time. About the medieval origins of Italian and European universities, please see the works by J. Verger, *Le università nel medioevo*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1982; G.P. Brizzi, J. Verger, *Le università dell’Europa*, 6 vols., Cinisello Balsamo, Silvana Editoriale, 1990-1995 (in particular Vol. I: *La nascita delle università*); A. Romano, *Università in Europa. Le istituzioni universitarie dal Medio Evo ai nostri giorni: struttura, organizzazione, funzionamento. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Milazzo, 28 settembre-2 ottobre*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 1995.

¹⁶ About this subject, please see C. Tullio-Altan, *Ethnos e civiltà. Identità etniche e valori democratici*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1995 and R. De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista*, 6 vols., Torino, Einaudi, 1966-1970, Vol. I, t. II: *L’organizzazione dello Stato fascista*, pp. 372-377.

¹⁷ See La Rovere, *Storia dei Guf. Organizzazione, politica e miti della gioventù universitaria fascista, 1919-1943*, cit., p. 185.



Figs. 1-4. The four celebratory stamps of the International University Games in Turin (1933)

In order to adequately celebrate the Turin sporting and university event and to underline its role as an important political window-dressing for the country on the international scenario of which to leave «lasting memory» to posterity, the regime also resorted to philately, which had been never involved in the celebration of sporting events so far¹⁸. In fact, the creation of a special series of four stamps with the same iconography, but with different colours (brown, red, purple and blue) and, therefore, with different costs (0.10, 0.20, 0.50 and 1.25 lire) was planned for the Turin Games¹⁹. The series was authorized by Royal Decree no. 945 of July 13th, 1933, and was issued on August 16th; it was on sale until September 15th and remained in circulation for four months until December 31st²⁰. Made by the State Mint and Polygraphic Institute (in the Security Printing Works) with a certain care of carving, the four stamps (24x40mm) were printed with the photocalcographic system on paper with crown watermark. The drawing (21x37 mm) reproduced in them was composed:

of the monolith in Mussolini's Forum with the inscription 'Dux Mussolini' from the ground up and the statue of a football player. At the top there are the words 'Poste Italiane' and the State Coat of Arms, in the middle the indication of the value and at the bottom the caption 'Giochi Universitari Internazionali Torino 1933-XI' in a Roman plaque²¹.

¹⁸ A new sought-after series devoted to the world of sport was released the following year on the occasion of the II World Football Championship, which was played in Italy from 27 May to 10 June 1934, and was won by Italy. It consisted of nine stamps: five ordinary mail stamps and four air mail stamps. Furthermore, for the first time a stamp was designed by a woman, Liana Ferri, who drew some stamps of this series.

¹⁹ About these stamps, please see: F. Filanci, *Il Novellario. Enciclopedia della Posta in Italia*. Vol. III: *Un Ventennio in Posta (1921-1943)*, 6 vols., Milano, CIF editore, 2016, Vol. III, pp. 210-211.

²⁰ Royal Decree no. 945 of 13 July 1933, *Emissione di speciali francobolli in occasione dei Giochi Universitari Internazionali che avranno luogo a Torino*, «Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia», vol. 74, n. 180, 4 August 1933, pp. 3556-3557.

²¹ Royal Decree no. 1531 of 26 October 1933, *Descrizione tecnica dei francobolli commemorativi dei Giochi Universitari Internazionali di Torino*, «Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia», vol. 74, n. 275, 28 November

As rightly observed by Federico Zeri, the series, which was designed by Amedeo Pesci, represented

a very open example of propaganda exploitation: although the games took place in Turin, the (unique) design [strangely] depicted Mussolini's Forum in Rome with the monolith and the marble statue of a *Football Player*, a work by Bernardo Morescalchi²².

Therefore, the event takes place in Turin, but everything in the design speaks about Rome, the *Caput Mundi* with its renewed splendour, where there is Mussolini's Forum with the statue of a football player, a work by Morescalchi, and the monolith with the reference to the Duce²³. Therefore, the primary purpose of the stamps was to celebrate the greatness of Fascism even at risk of overshadowing the intrinsic sporting value of the Turin event, which was acquiring absolute relevance, especially if included in that course of recovery and exaltation of Italian university traditions to which Fascist hierarchies had turned their attention «with wisdom» since the first years of government.

The ideological *ratio*, which inspired the creation and the issue of the four celebratory stamps, was obviously the same one which led Fascism in the articulated planning of the University Games and the related University historical Carousel for whose organization nothing was left to chance in order to be able to achieve the desired objectives in the best possible way.

In fact, on June 7th, 1933, a circular signed by the Minister of Public Education, Francesco Ercole²⁴, had warned Italian university rectors that the International University Games, to which «the intervention of the representative teams from the most important foreign universities» was ensured, would be held in the Piedmontese city during the first half of September. In order to make the official opening ceremony more solemn, it established that there were «Italian university gonfalons, which were escorted by Italian university young people including the Fascist University Groups» with the aim of bringing back the Italian «illustrious university tradition»²⁵. On June 20th, 1933, various local GUF secretariats were informed by the national secretariat that all the venues would have taken part in the inaugural ceremony not only with the gonfalon, but also with a representative of heralds, trumpeters and drummers in perfect medieval clothes, in order to «faithfully reproduce our ancient glorious university customs»²⁶.

1933, p. 5383.

²² F. Zeri, *I francobolli italiani. Grafica e ideologica dalle origini al 1948*, Genova, Il Melangolo, 1993.

²³ Please see F. Giuliani, *I dentelli attorno all'Università*, «L'Arte del francobollo», vol. 80, May 2018, pp. 23-25.

²⁴ About Francesco Ercole, a full professor of History of Italian Law and Minister of Public Education from July 20th, 1932 to January 24th, 1935, please see the biographical profile drawn up by L. Lo Bianco, *Ercole, Francesco*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1993, vol. 43, pp. 132-134, to which to also refer for other bibliographical references.

²⁵ Archivio Università degli Studi di Parma (henceforth, AUP), year 1933, folder 1173, dossier 1, *Circolare del 7 giugno 1933*, n. 9693. *Giocchi universitari internazionali di Torino*.

²⁶ Archivio di Stato di Macerata (henceforth, ASMC), Circolari, years 1921-1935, folder 700, dossier 1933, *Circolare del 20 giugno 1933. Ai segretari dei Gruppi Universitari Fascisti*.

With a subsequent detailed circular dated July 7th, Starace, who was notoriously very careful to external organization of parades and mass public events²⁷, provided the local GUF secretariats and, for information, «the Minister of Public Education, the magnificent rectors and podestas of the cities where universities were located» with further details about the desired correct development of the event and, above all, indications regarding the function and the ideological value, which the regime intended to attribute to it. First of all, as it was the custom of the best medieval ceremonies²⁸, he specified that the representatives of each university had to be composed of a well-defined number of figures, which had to be the same for each venue and specifically composed of «a drummer, four trumpeters with banderols, two standard-bearers with flags in the colours of the city, two men of arms, a major page with the University Gonfalon, who was supported by two valets and, at the end, a variable number of pages». In this way, «while the representatives of young students from all over the world will be gathered in the field of the great «Mussolini» Stadium, Italian university Gonfalons will go by on the track in order to give an augural and welcoming greeting to competitors».

In his circular, Starace underlined that the «glorious millenary university Gonfalons» would precisely have recalled «what a beacon of light Italy was, even in the darkest times», while «new University Gonfalons, which were created by Fascism», would have testified «how much the Italy of the Duce has done even in this field for ten years». All those who were directly or indirectly involved in the event in any case should have contributed to give the demonstration that majesty and that interest, which the regime wished, and, above all, to ensure the perfect realization of the process of recovering the «immortal Italian university traditions»²⁹.

In confirmation of the considerable importance that the regime attributed to the celebration, all the GUFs, who were scattered throughout the national territory, received even more precise and detailed instructions about the rituals and the actions, which the representatives in medieval costumes should have performed in the inaugural ceremony of the Games, with a PNF directive on August 11th, 1933³⁰. In Starace's intentions, the «Italian University Historical Carousel», included in the context of the first day of an international event of this magnitude, should also have achieved that long-desired perfect mixture of medieval and Fascist elements, besides assuming the form of an effective propaganda tool for the regime, as well as a useful means to affirm a precise sense of a

²⁷ About this aspect, please see the interesting journalistic report by C. Galas, *Gli uomini di Mussolini: Achille Starace*, available on the web at <http://www.televignole.it/gli-uomini-mussolini-4-achille-starace/> (last access: 08.01.2022).

²⁸ About the structure and the organization of festivals and ceremonies in the Middle Ages, please see J. Verdon, *Feste e giochi nel Medioevo*, it. transl. by Marina Karam, Milano, Baldini Castoldi Dalai, 2004.

²⁹ AUP, year 1933, folder 1173, dossier 1, *Circolare del 7 luglio 1933*, n. 18. *Achille Starace ai segretari dei Gruppi Universitari Fascisti di Bari, Bologna, Cagliari, Camerino, Catania, Ferrara, Firenze, Genova, Macerata, Messina, Milano, Modena, Napoli, Padova, Palermo, Parma, Pavia, Perugia, Pisa, Roma, Sassari, Siena, Torino, Trieste, Urbino, Venezia; e per conoscenza a S.E. il Ministro dell'Educazione Nazionale, ai Magnifici Rettori delle Regie Università e ai signori Podestà delle città sedi di Università.*

³⁰ AUP, year 1933, folder 1173, dossier 1, *Direttiva dell'11 agosto 1933 dei Gruppi Universitari Fascisti. Carosello storico delle Università fasciste.*

shared national identity. In fact, it was a real rite, which was celebrated on the occasion of a sporting event in this case, an excellent example of how the regime did not limit the orchestration of mass liturgy only to political rites, but it appropriated all the spheres of collective life, bending them to their own purposes and integrating them into a «cult of Fascism»³¹. Along the track in «Mussolini» Stadium, where «the spirit of a new Italy» would have been in the air in the presence of a «stunning and euphoric crowd», as it was typical of the Fascist events of that time³², GUF pennants and athletic teams in black shirts would also have taken turns together with university representatives in medieval costumes, who were led by the representatives of the University of Rome; standard-bearers would have been escorted by their secretary in «regulatory uniform» and, after having declaimed the Oath of Office, «music [would have struck up] Giovinezza, while the games with the flags [would have been] resumed by all the standard-bearers»³³.

Therefore, in this circumstance, the Fascist attempt to recover Italian university traditions, which was started up by Mussolini in the early 1920s, as we have seen, seemed to have reached its peak. Actually, the historical continuity between medieval and Fascist universities, which was supposed by Starace, turned out not to almost exist, at least with reference to the «Historical Carousel». In fact, the preparation of the «millenary university» Gonfalon was more simply a real operation of «invention of tradition» for many universities rather than an intervention for recovering tradition. In fact, as pointed out by Ennio Lazzarini, few venues could really boast a historic Gonfalon to «be brought up again and re-proposed for the occasion»; therefore, most of them were instantly created or even “invented”, very often taking the University Seal or only some of its parts as the main decorative element of the Gonfalon³⁴. However, Starace’s requests ended up pushing academic leaders not to skimp any even significant economic efforts in many universities at all, in order to be able to satisfy the requests of the regime in the best possible way³⁵.

Despite this, the Turin event met the desired echo and was greeted by the entire public opinion and, above all, the press of that time, who was close to the regime, with great emphasis and almost unanimous approval³⁶. In particular, «Il Popolo d’Italia», a

³¹ Please see Gentile, *Il culto del littorio: la sacralizzazione della politica nell’Italia fascista*, cit., p. 50 and pp. 141-142.

³² Please see Suzzi Valli, *Riti del Ventennale*, cit., pp. 1027-1031.

³³ AUP, year 1933, folder 1173, dossier 1, *Direttiva dell’11 agosto 1933 dei Gruppi Universitari Fascisti. Carosello storico delle Università fasciste*.

³⁴ Please see E. Lazzarini, *Università italiane. Stemmi, sigilli, medaglie*, Alessandria, Edizioni dell’Orso, 2002, pp. 32-33.

³⁵ On this regard, please refer to Pomante, *L’Università italiana nel Novecento. Nuovi itinerari storiografici e inediti percorsi di ricerca*, cit., pp. 43-45.

³⁶ About the event, please also see the materials preserved in *Istituto Luce* Archive, in particular “Cinegiornali”, series “Giornale Luce September 1933”, *Trionfo di giovinezza allo Stadio Mussolini di Torino. Ai giochi mondiali goliardici hanno partecipato i rappresentanti di 32 nazioni*, and “Cinegiornali”, series “Giornale Luce September 1933”, *Una rassegna mondiale della gioventù goliardica. I giochi internazionali universitari a Torino* and Documentari, series *Giornale Luce September 1933, Giochi mondiali universitari /Torino Anno XI* (<http://fondoluce.archivioluce.com/LuceUnesco/ricerca/avanzata/esito.html?temi=Giochi%20mondiali%20universitari>; last access: 08.01. 2022).

political newspaper, which was founded by Benito Mussolini in 1914 and later become the unofficial organ of the PNF and the government³⁷, almost daily devoted detailed and enthusiastic articles both to the preparatory and organizational phase of the Games and their development³⁸. The tones used to introduce the event and, above all, to celebrate the «Historical Carousel», which was considered to be an «almost epochal moment» for Italian university history, were obviously highly encomiastic. On September 3rd, on the eve of the inaugural ceremony, which would have been held the next day, «Il Popolo d'Italia» wrote:

Tomorrow we are having the inaugural ceremony of the games for which there is a great attention. [...] The big ceremony is taking place at the Stadium at 3pm. [...] The Carousel will be a great show. It will faithfully reproduce our ancient university customs with trumpeters, pages and men of arms. All the university gonfalons have arrived with spare valets and GUF secretaries. [...] After the ceremony at the Mussolini Stadium, Hon. Starace is visiting the National University Life Exhibition. This is a remarkable and useful initiative of the Turin GUF [...]. All the very interesting documentation about student life with particular regard to war, Fascism and our noble university traditions has been collected in numerous rooms³⁹.

Two days later, Arturo Pianca, a correspondent of the newspaper in the Piedmontese capital city⁴⁰, let further grow the encomiastic dimension of the descriptions supported by the pompous rhetoric, which was typical of Fascism in those years, by introducing readers with an extensive report about the opening day of the Games:

This Sunday in Turin will remain indelible in the eyes and the hearts of the students coming from all over the world and taking part in the International University Games as representatives of the best physical and intellectual part of 32 countries. With the intent of honouring guests, they witnessed a great Fascist day during which all the people shouted their Faith to the Chief thanks to whom Italy, which is a master of civilization today, recalls people from all over the countries under its blazing sun. [...] At the end of the polychrome grouping of teams, the tolls of the Olympic bell were heard and, at that moment, we saw the characteristic groups of student trumpeters from Italian universities, who were preparing to parade in ancient costumes for the historical Carousel, going up two large platforms [...]. The entrance of medieval uniforms had a great choreographic effect and the public

³⁷ «Il Popolo d'Italia» was a political newspaper founded in 1914 by Benito Mussolini, who edited it up to the march to Rome. From the positions of revolutionary interventionism on, the newspaper followed its editor's political evolution. Although it was always inspired by Mussolini, it was edited by his brother Arnaldo after Fascists took power and by his son Vito on his death (1931). From 1922, it became a PNF organ and suspended its publications only on 25 July 1943.

³⁸ Please see in particular the following articles: *L'organizzazione a Torino dei Giochi universitari internazionali*, «Il Popolo d'Italia», vol. 11, August 13th, 1933, p. 9; *Il saluto del "Guf" torinese*, «Il Popolo d'Italia», vol. 11, 31 August 1933, p. 8; *La partecipazione del G.U.F. dell'Urbe al carosello storico di Torino*, «Il Popolo d'Italia», vol. 11, 1st September 1933, p. 10; *La cerimonia inaugurale*, «Il Popolo d'Italia», vol. 11, 3 September 1933, p. 8; A. Pianca, *Olimpiadi universitarie solennemente inaugurate dal Segretario del Partito nello Stadio Mussolini di Torino alla presenza di una folla immensa*, «Il Popolo d'Italia», vol. 11, 5 September 1933, pp. 9-10; *La mostra goliardica di Torino*, «Il Popolo d'Italia», vol. 11, 6 September 1933, p. 8.

³⁹ See *La cerimonia inaugurale*, cit.

⁴⁰ About Arturo Pianca, who was born in Mantua in 1903, a journalist, an editor of «Il Popolo d'Italia» from 1923 to 1943, a head clerk at ANSA Agency from 1945, please see G. Vaccaro, *Panorama biografico degli italiani d'oggi*, 2 vols., Roma, A. Curcio, 1956, Vol. II, p. 1200.

started applauding among continuous acclamations of wonder. [...] At some point, we saw two ranks of graceful pages appearing and carrying long bundles of laurel and university gonfalons immediately appeared with their magnificent escorts behind them. Opening on both sides of the field, the historical procession drew up in a semicircle around the athletes and the solemn inauguration ceremony took place in this superb setting, which was almost unreal.

And more:

When Y.E. Starace came back in the stands, the picturesque parade of the historical Carousel began. The procession was opened by the representatives of the University of Rome to signify the sovereignty of the city in all the fields of human activity. So, all the other universities followed by order of foundation. Each representative was preceded by a page carrying an emblem with the year of foundation, drummers and trumpeters came behind them and launched greeting notes, once arrived in front of the Party Secretary, while standard-bearers rotated their ensigns according to the ancient custom of jousts: the university gonfalon was escorted by men of arms followed by scholars and students. The characteristic styles aroused the exclamations of admiration from the public, many costumes were original and taken from museums and private collections, others had been faithfully reproduced and everything appeared to be neat down to the smallest detail. [...] So, Bologna, which is the oldest Italian university founded in 1088, Padua (1222), Naples (1224), Perugia (1266), Florence (1321), Pisa (1343), Siena (1357), Pavia (1361), Ferrara (1391), Turin (1404), Catania (1444), Urbino (1506) and gradually all the others up to the last ones established by the Fascist government, namely Bari, Trieste and Milan, paraded⁴¹.

Even the Italian University high hierarchies did not miss the opportunity to pay the right tribute to the Turin Games and the intrinsic value, which the regime had intended to attribute to them. The inauguration of the new academic year 1933-1934 represented the ideal official occasion to “celebrate” with emphasis the attention paid by the Duce and his hierarchs to University and, not less, the Fascist project of recovering the «noble» Italian university traditions and strengthening a national identity, which also passed through the organization of events, such as the Piedmontese one, as we have seen. In this sense, the words spoken by the deputy pro-rector of the small university in the Marches, Prof. Paolo Greco, a refined jurist and an esteemed lawyer of that time⁴², in the lecture hall at the Royal University of Macerata on November 11th, 1933 rise to a real “shared manifesto” of the academic thought of that time⁴³:

The past academic year marked a fervent reawakening of Italian university life everywhere. It can be said to be the year when Italian University was definitively ranked among the most active and precious forces of the Fascist Revolution. [...] Among its various aspects, this rebirth of university life, which

⁴¹ Pianca, *Olimpiadi universitarie solennemente inaugurate dal Segretario del Partito nello Stadio Mussolini di Torino alla presenza di una folla immensa*, cit.

⁴² About Paolo Greco, a Professor of Commercial Law, a deputy pro-rector at the Royal University of Macerata from 1st November 1932 to 30 November 1933 and subsequently a rector at the «Bocconi» University of Milan from 1938 to 1945, please see L. Pomante, *L'Università di Macerata nell'Italia unita (1861-1966). Un secolo di storia dell'ateneo maceratese attraverso le relazioni inaugurali dei rettori e altre fonti archivistiche e a stampa*, Macerata, Eum, 2012, pp. 569-570.

⁴³ About the thought and the behaviour of the rectors of those years in the face of Fascism, please see some interesting cues reported in G. Cianferotti, *Le leggi razziali e i rettori delle Università italiane (con una vicenda senese)*, «Le Carte e la Storia. Rivista di storia delle istituzioni», vol. 6, n. 2, pp. 15-28.

took place under the high auspices of the Duce and the impulse of the Minister Ercole and the Party Secretary Achille Starace, had three programmatic cornerstones: increasing the scientific and didactic university industriousness with the call of all the university people, professors and disciples, to a more intense and active fulfilment of their duties; promoting and spreading in the militia, gyms and sports fields physical activity, which does not already reflect or excite only the brute force of human matter, but it reawakens and restores all the young people's energies with a Hellenic conception, which is rooted in the spirit of the Latin race, preparing it for the arduous trials of life; finally, fully re-entrusting to Italian Universities that function of radiating our civilization, which they historically carried out to spread the ideas of the Roman empire and law in the world once, the lights of humanism and science, which was renewed by Leonardo's intuitions and Galileo's observations, later, new regulatory principles of state and civil society, which are expressed by the reconstructive genius of the Duce and Fascism, today.

In this "mission" Fascism also intended to carry out the University Games of September 1933 as a «superb show of physical strength and compact unity of our national soul»⁴⁴; indeed, they had undoubtedly played a leading role, which was appropriately celebrated and made everlasting in the common memory by the issue of a special series of four stamps.

⁴⁴ See *Inaugurazione dell'Anno Accademico 1933-1934. Relazione del Pro-Rettore Prof. Paolo Greco letta nella cerimonia inaugurale dell'11 novembre 1933*, in Pomante, *L'Università di Macerata nell'Italia unita (1861-1966). Un secolo di storia dell'ateneo maceratese attraverso le relazioni inaugurali dei rettori e altre fonti archivistiche e a stampa*, cit. pp. 579-585.

“Educational Italianness”. National Stereotypes and Pedagogical Localism in the Centenary Celebrations of Italian and Foreign Educationalists between the 19th and 20th Centuries

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Introduction

In 1885 in his *La scuola pedagogica nazionale*¹ Antonino Parato – basing himself on the «moral and civil primacy of the Italians» theorised more than forty years earlier by Vincenzo Gioberti² – defended the centuries-old Italian educational tradition, in polemic with the proponents of the positivist pedagogy, whose works were very often based on the educational theories elaborated by foreign thinkers.

In the essays collected in the first part of the volume and consisting of a series of biographies of well-known Italian educationalist, Parato endeavoured to demonstrate how since ancient times Italian culture had created its own original educational tradition, which – as Giorgio Chiosso has already noted – would have been «fine-tuned in its main principles as early as the humanistic culture of the 15th century, [...] gradually developed in a popular sense through the contributions of personalities such as Borromeo, Calasanzio and Miani [and] finally matured in the 19th century with the reflections and indications of Rosmini, [...] Aporti, Lambruschini, Capponi, Gioberti and Tommaseo»³.

Parato was a leading exponent of that Catholic spiritualism that was convinced that it was precisely in the continuity between Classical culture and Christian culture initially conceived by Francesco Petrarca and later shared by other thinkers of the early Italian Humanism that underlay the cultural substratum in which this tradition had been shaped. This in opposition to modern German educational theories, which arising from welding

¹ A. Parato, *La scuola pedagogica nazionale*, Torino, Botta, 1885.

² V. Gioberti, *Del primato morale e civile degli italiani*, Brusselle, dalle stampe di Meline, Cans e Compagnia, 1843.

³ G. Chiosso, *Profilo storico della pedagogia cristiana in Italia: XIX e XX secolo*, Brescia, La Scuola, 2001, p. 63.

between late German Humanism – aimed at a profound renewal of the Church through the recovery of the Christian doctrine of the origins – and the Protestant Reformation.

In those years, Catholic spiritualism was engaged in a heated controversy with the flourishing positivist pedagogy, bearer of the instances of German scientific pedagogy, to which it contrasted – as Roberto Sani already noted in 2001 – «a pedagogical perspective firmly anchored to Christian principles and in line with the addresses of the national educational tradition»⁴.

From a spiritualist perspective, therefore, we can state that the rediscovery of this glorious tradition appeared more functional to the defence of the theoretical framework of the pedagogical thought it bore, rather than consequent to the need to generate a deeper historical knowledge of the educational past of the country, which nevertheless drew a strong impulse from it.

The clash between the spiritualist and positivist educational matrix can also be found within the public celebrations of the centenaries of the birth and death of some great Italian and foreign educationalists, which were promoted in the last two decades of the 19th century and which undoubtedly constituted yet another opportunity to affirm the concept of “educational Italianness”.

In that context, in fact, newly-born Italy – in search of illustrious antecedents and its own cultural traditions – undertook to define the uncertain boundaries of its national identity also in the field of education. So what were the characteristics of such “educational Italianness”? Using speeches pronounced during official celebrations, texts of celebratory epigraphs, commemorative pamphlets and other unpublished sources, we will attempt to dissect this concept, highlighting how it was not always substantiated by scientific evidences but rather by cultural stereotypes and nationalistic metaphors, which had a strong hold on public opinion and filtered very quickly into the common sense.

1. *The Centenary Celebrations of Ferrante Aporti and Friedrich Fröbel: Memory between Chauvinist Tensions and Local Skirmishes*

In 1882, the *Comitato centrale italiano per le onoranze a Friedrich Fröbel* (Italian Central Committee for the Honouring of Friedrich Fröbel) was established on the occasion of the centenary of his birth, chaired by Gabriele Luigi Pecile, who coordinated the numerous initiatives promoted almost everywhere on a national level to commemorate the German pedagogue and founder of the *Kindergarten*⁵, in preparation for the international celebrations in Dresden on 21 April of the same year. The Committee soon found itself defending the Froebelian approach against the accusation that it was «contrary to

⁴ R. Sani, *I periodici scolastici dell'intransigentismo cattolico (1879-1904)*, in L. Pazzaglia, R. Sani (edd.), *Scuola e società nell'Italia unita: dalla Legge Casati al Centro-sinistra*, Brescia, Editrice La Scuola, 2001, pp. 127-169 (in particular, p. 151).

⁵ Cf. A.P. Gualdi Piolti, *Nel centenario di Federico Froebel*, Bologna, Società tipografica Azzoguidi, 1882; M. Gonzenbach, *Pel Centenario di Froebel*, Palermo, Tipografia dello Statuto, 1882.

religious sentiment»⁶ and not suitable for «Italian childhood». The latter prejudice is clearly exposed in the speech given by the lawyer Enrico Sandoni on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the Modena Kindergarden, in which the speaker relates how some claim that «Fröbel's ideas, yes, they are beautiful, they are rosy but, it is said, they are better suited to the children of blond Germany», because: «There you will easily see patient children, devoting whole hours to folding and weaving, thoughtful and attentive about plants and flowers. But our child has a livelier temperament, the midday sun warms him, his feelings are warmer, his intelligence is earlier...»⁷.

Sandoni then wondered whether indeed – given that the climatic conditions in the countries where that educational method was applied were different – someone felt entitled to question its validity in general⁸. He observed: «Fröbel's glory will not be diminished when the great work he began in Germany is treasured in order to shape it according to the needs of the Italian children»⁹.

While defending Froebelian approach, however, Sandoni emphasised that he had called the German educationalist a «powerful proponent» of modern educational reform, as «the truth and effectiveness of the system that took name from him had already been

⁶ See in this regard the speech given by Gabriele Luigi Pecile in the Senate session of 17 December 1887 («Atti Parlamentari»). See also «I Problemi della Pedagogia», n. 16, 1970, p. 993.

⁷ The same motivation, which evidently had to have a certain circulation at the time, is also found in another article: «If one then wanted to say that Aporti's system is national, because it does not force children to do methodical work like Fröbel's one, which therefore seems more suited to the patient German genius, then one would have to know whether Italianness means a lack of scientific method and critical thinking» («La Nuova Scuola Italiana», 1927, p. 636). Similarly, during a speech in the Rome City Council, councilor Francesco Vitelleschi had stated in this regard: «Every people has its own special genius, which is differently developed in educational methods. The Northern peoples of who have slow though solid and effective development are disposed to seriousness that tends to rigidity, while the Southern ones are as warm as they are early in development. Hence the difference in educational methods. While the Germans replace the slowness of their children's development with a method that involves the frequent repetition of the same concept and temper its rigidity with the habit of various games, in the Italians – on the other hand – the frequent repetition of an idea is unnecessary considering their precocity and the levity of character would almost be encouraged by the variety of childish games» (*Atti del Consiglio Comunale di Roma dell'anno 1886*, Roma, Tipografia Cecchini, 1886, p. 397).

⁸ Actually, fortunately, the differences between Aporti's and Froebel's kindergardens were also identified through more solid arguments, such as Aporti's lack of awareness of the child's spontaneity, while Froebel considered «the free activity of the child as a natural means of its development» and that according to which Aporti had promoted his kindergardens moved to pity at seeing the children of the working classes abandoned and exposed to vice, while Froebel had been «moved to compassion for the way in which young minds were oppressed» (F. Cicchitti-Suriani, *La scienza dell'educazione nelle scuole e nelle riviste italiane*, «Rivista italiana di filosofia», vol. VI, n. 2, luglio-agosto 1891, pp. 3-51; in particular, p. 13). A definition of what is historically meant by «Italian educational method» was recently provided by Fulvio De Giorgi (F. De Giorgi, *I cattolici e l'infanzia a scuola. Il "metodo italiano"*, «Rivista di storia del cristianesimo», vol. IX, n. 1, 2012, pp. 71-88; Id., *Il metodo italiano nell'educazione contemporanea: Rosmini, Bosco, Montessori, Milani*, Brescia, Scholé, 2023), who indicated its main features in the emancipatory tension of the educational commitment – according to a dialectic of freedom/liberation, in reference to the human dignity offended in many contexts – and the attention to the person, integrally considered in all its dimensions (including the religious one), whose full potential needs to be developed, also by stimulating his free creativity.

⁹ *Federico Fröbel e l'educazione dei fanciulli: discorso dell'avv. Enrico Sandoni*, Zanichelli, Bologna, 1883, pp. 23-24.

glimpsed as far back as 1400 by an Italian, by that Vittorino da Feltre whom Italy called: THE school master, [...] of whom prof. Contrucci¹⁰ wrote: SOLEMN EDUCATOR / FOR WISE ORDERS / THAT THEN THE FOREIGNERS / USURPED WITH OUR OTHER PRIDES / AND THAT ITALY FORGOT¹¹. And this I remember, not in order to diminish the value of Fröbel's work, but because I believe it is the duty of every good Italian to always claim the glories of his homeland, very lightly and too often forgotten»¹².

If it was «the duty of every good Italian to always claim the glories of his homeland», in 1891 the Committee for the 1st centenary of Ferrante Aporti's birth was set up and based in Mantua. Scipione Furga Gornini, director of the kindergarden of San Martino dell'Argine, was appointed president. He was supported by the honorary president Giuseppe Sacchi, president of the kindergardens of Milan. It is interesting to emphasise the «Mantuanity» of this initiative, to which we will return, as evidenced by the letter sent in June of the same year by the Mayor of Mantua to the Aportian Committee, in which he announced his willingness to contribute 50 liras to the honours and added that he counted that «the commemoration that will take place in San Martino dell'Argine will be worthy of the Man that the Province of Mantua is proud to count among its most important citizens»¹³. On 15 November 1891 – in fact – the Committee organised a ceremony in San Martino dell'Argine during which there was to be «the inauguration of the commemorative plaque placed by the honourable Municipality of San Martino dell'Argine on the house where Ferrante Aporti was born», followed by a commemorative speech by Francesco Saverio De Dominicis – a leading exponent of Italian positivist pedagogy – from the University of Pavia and finally the award ceremony for the teaching competition for kindergardens of the province of Mantua.

The polemics between supporters of Fröbel and Aporti – fostered by the celebrations – flared up again, somehow turning into – according to Angiolo Gambaro – a «struggle between those [the Aportians] who do not want to break away from traditions and deny the national spirit and those [the Fröbelians] who want to modernise and take the good wherever it is, considering it superior and indifferent to any distinction of nation and race»¹⁴. This in a context in which by now – as Fulvio De Giorgi noted – «the real frontier for a complete victory of Frobelism lay in the conquest of the *asili di carità* (charity kindergardens) and free kindergardens for the children of the lower classes, which were part of the public charitable institutions, stronghold of Aportism because of the lower

¹⁰ He is the well-known Tuscan epigrapher Pietro Contrucci.

¹¹ The full text of the epigraph is reproduced in: *Opere edite e inedite del prof. Pietro Contrucci*, Pistoia, Tipografia Cino, 1841, p. 86 (Epigraph n° XIV). Before the part of the epigraph reproduced here, it is written: «INGEGNO E SALDO VOLERE / DEL POVERO TUGURIO / CONDUSSERO AL SOMMO DELLA SAPIENZA / VITTORINO DA FELTRE / PRIMO IN EUROPA» (Ingenuity and firm will / of the poor hovel / led to the summit of wisdom / Vittorino da Feltre / first in Europe).

¹² *Federico Fröbel e l'educazione dei fanciulli: discorso dell'avv. Enrico Sandoni*, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1883, pp. 4-5.

¹³ *Per Ferrante Aporti*, «Il Risveglio Educativo», vol. VII, n. 36, 14 June 1891, p. 157.

¹⁴ A. Gambaro, *Ferrante Aporti e la pedagogia italiana dell'800*, in A. Gambaro (ed.), *Ferrante Aporti nel primo centenario della morte*, Brescia, Centro didattico nazionale per la scuola materna, 1962, pp. 93-105 (in particular, p. 104).

costs this method entailed»¹⁵ and which the Catholic Church intended as a fundamental instrument of moral and religious penetration among Italian youth.

Pietro Nigra – school inspector in Castiglione delle Stiviere – was central to this dispute. In 1890, in order to support the Committee's activities, he had founded the bimonthly bulletin «Il primo centenario della nascita di Ferrante Aporti»¹⁶, in which there were frequent articles by Antonino Parato and Giuseppe Sacchi – fervent supporters of Aporti's method – and a lively polemic with Adolfo Pick¹⁷ devoted to the "fröbelization" of all Italian kindergardens. As Clara Castagnoli has observed, in this bulletin «the validity of the Aportian method and its Italian character is repeatedly affirmed and compared to the Froebelian approach, whose "self-proclaimed supporters" "with disdain and slander would like to banish for replacing it with the arbitrary and irrational institutions and reforms of Aportian mysticism"»¹⁸.

The controversy spread. Lucillo Ambruzzi published an article on the journal «La Scuola Nazionale» in which he invited Italian educators to imitate the German *Kaiser* Wilhelm II, who had declared that he wanted to banish «everything smelled foreign» from German schools¹⁹.

A few weeks later Nigra took up the topic again in the same journal in a polemical article, in which he resumed the controversy with Pick and asked – after demonstrating how even in Germany Froebelian approach was not adopted everywhere and therefore contesting its definition as the «German national method» – how Italian educators could be accused «of making an out-of-place nationalism, a misunderstood love of homeland»²⁰ if they refused to adopt this foreign method. Nigra then added:

Those who study the history of Italian pedagogy without preconceived ideas, and with a wide-ranging and dispassionate mind, know very well how it was Aporti who gave the first and strongest impulse here in Italy to the re-establishment of the national method of education. They also know how this truly Italian method, gradually enriched by the studies and experiences of other distinguished educationalists, can today give a sure guarantee that it will one day reach its maximum perfection through the constant progress of science and educational ideas. Italy indeed possesses so much virtue and so much strength that it can do it on its own, without going begging in others' houses²¹.

¹⁵ F. De Giorgi, *Il tramonto dell'aportismo dal compimento dell'Unità d'Italia alla fine del secolo*, in M. Ferrari, M.L. Betri, C. Sideri (edd.), *Ferrante Aporti tra Chiesa, Stato e società civile. Questioni e influenze di lungo periodo*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2015, pp. 366-383 (in particular, p. 382).

¹⁶ Not to be confused with the «Bollettino del Comitato pel Primo Centenario» (Bulletin of the Committee for the First Centenary), published in Mantua first by Eredi Segna and then by Tipografia Mondovì between April 1891 and July 1892 and edited by Scipione Furga Gornini, which did not enter into educational disquisitions nor took sides in the diatribes that arose in those years between Aporti's and Fröbel's supporters, but limited itself to honouring the memory of the famous educationalist.

¹⁷ Founder in 1868 of the first Froebelian kindergarden in Venice and editor of the journal «L'Educazione dei Bambini» (The Education of Children).

¹⁸ C. Castagnoli, G. Ciaramelli (edd.), *Un secolo di stampa periodica mantovana: 1797-1897*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2002, p. 210.

¹⁹ L. Ambruzzi, *In tedescheria*, «La Scuola Nazionale», vol. II, n. 12, 24 December 1890, pp. 178-179.

²⁰ P. Nigra, *I giardinetti frobeliani e l'on. Gabelli*, «La Scuola Nazionale», vol. II, n. 16, 21 January 1891, pp. 243-245 (in particular, p. 244).

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

Nigra concluded by saying that Italy was already rich in «pedagogical glory» and should certainly not «beg outside its borders» and proposed rather to work «towards the perfection of the national method restored by Aporti»²².

Nigra's violent attack had to provoke the reaction of the Cremonese educationalist Pietro Pasquali, a follower of Fröbel, who published another polemical article in the journal of the positivist pedagogy, in which he stated that «fighting a system because it was devised beyond the Alps, and fighting it in the name of nationality and patriotism» was puerile and that it did not matter «whether Fröbel was born in Germany», but «whether, and to what extent, his method can be applied by us». Pasquali then asked:

In what does the prosperity of the nation consist? And how can the school cooperate in the prosperity and honour of the nation? Perhaps by excluding the pedagogues coming from beyond the Alps? [...] This crusade against foreign ideas is opposed to progress; it is absurd, ignoble, useless, vain, presumptuous, impossible, because the assimilation of thought was always inevitable²³.

But animosities did not only arise between the supporters of the Italian Aporti and those of the Thuringian Fröbel. The “pedagogical chauvinism” descended into heated parochialism, on the basis of which the “small pedagogical homelands” ended up competing – in the best municipalistic tradition – for the origins of certain illustrious thinkers and educationalists, as if the environmental aspects and geographical context could not be disregarded to explain their greatness²⁴.

That same year, indeed, a Cremonese Committee for the honouring of Ferrante Aporti on the occasion of the centenary of his birth, chaired by Luigi Ratti, was also set up, thanks to the contribution granted by the Provincial Deputation of Cremona to the Commission for charity kindergardens of the city. The Cremonese Committee promoted a series of initiatives in the city where Aporti had set up his first charity kindergarden, including an official ceremony held on 20 September 1891 in which the well-known Cremonese educationalist Costantino Soldi delivered a speech²⁵. However, its role in the centenary celebrations was less important than the one played by the Mantuan Committee, contrary to what was to happen in 1927 on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the foundation of first Aportian kindergarden, which saw the fascist

²² *Ibid.*, p. 245.

²³ P. Pasquali, *Muraglie della china*, «Il Risveglio Educativo», vol. VII, n. 21, I March 1891, p. 163.

²⁴ That said, it should be recalled that the celebrations were not limited to the two cities in Lombardy that contended for the illustrious educationalist. On 20 November 1891, the Turin Kindergarden Society organised a commemoration of Aporti, at which Antonino Parato spoke: *Ferrante Aporti: commemorazione letta da Antonio Parato nel primo centenario della nascita del fondatore degli asili italiani celebrato per cura della società degli asili infantili nel locale della Palestra ginnastica in Torino: 20 novembre 1891*, San Marino, Tipografia Subalpina, [1891]. A copy of the booklet is housed in: Archivio di Stato di Cremona, fond. «Comune di Cremona», series «Carteggio (1868-1946)», Category n. 32 «Oggetti vari», Cassetta n. 89, 1811 «Comitato per le onoranze a Ferrante Aporti».

²⁵ C. Soldi, *Ferrante Aporti e gli asili infantili: discorso letto per il centenario della nascita di Ferrante Aporti, solennemente celebratosi in Cremona il 20 settembre 1891*, Cremona, Tip. Interessi Cremonesi, 1891.

Cremona²⁶ – his adoptive homeland – finally take centre stage, while Mantua and San Martino dell'Argine remained on the sidelines.

Esterofilia (foreignophilia) and *esterofobia* (foreignophobia) thus alternated fiercely throughout these centenary celebrations, which revealed to be strongly influenced by feelings of identity and belonging that had nothing to do with the validity or otherwise of the educational theories expressed by the various thinkers and depended heavily on the collective imaginary developed over time within what we have already defined as "small pedagogical homelands", rather than on actual historical reality²⁷.

2. *The Contested Memory of Niccolò Tommaseo's "Dalmatian Italianness"*

Chauvinism and parochialism, however, were not the only sentiments that animated the public celebrations held in the late 19th century to commemorate great Italian and foreign educationalists. There were also cases in which distinct communities, even those far apart geographically, instead of competing for the commemoration of a personality, were able to twin together to promote shared celebrations. This is the case of the eminent linguist Niccolò Tommaseo, Minister of Education in the Provisional Government of the Republic of Venice in 1848-1849, native of the Dalmatian town of Šibenik in Croatia²⁸. Five years after his death, on 2 June 1878, a monument dedicated to him was unveiled in Settignano, made up of a plinth on which rested a marble statue by sculptor Leopoldo Costoli²⁹.

²⁶ In the 1920s and 1930s, Cremona played a central role in Italian political life due to the presence of Roberto Farinacci, one of the most prominent political figures of the Fascist regime.

²⁷ On these issues, in particular, see A. Arisi Rota, M. Ferrari, M. Morandi (edd.), *Patrioti si diventa. Luoghi e linguaggi di pedagogia patriottica nell'Italia unita*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2009.

²⁸ It should be recalled that Niccolò Tommaseo was not the only educationalist to be subjected to a process of Italianisation during his commemorative celebrations, as in the case of Enrico Pestalozzi, whose Italianness Luigi Credaro proved, reconstructing the passage of a branch of the Pestalozzi family from Chiavenna to Zurich through acute glottological inductions and historical investigations (L. Credaro, *L'italianità della stirpe di Enrico Pestalozzi*, «Rivista Pedagogica», vol. XIX, n. 2, February 1926, pp. 177-191).

²⁹ On this ceremony, in particular, see *Settignano e il monumento a Niccolò Tommaseo*, «L'Illustrazione Italiana», vol. V, 23, 9 June 1878, p. 411; G. Poletto, *Inaugurandosi un monumento a Niccolò Tommaseo in Settignano il giorno 2 giugno 1878*, Bergamo, Tipografia Pagnoncelli, 1878; C. Beltrami, *I monumenti che hanno fatto gli Italiani*, in C. Beltrami, G.C.F. Villa (edd.), *Scolpire gli eroi. La scultura al servizio della memoria*, Cinisello Balsamo, Silvana Editoriale, 2011, pp. 14-45 (in particolare, pp. 21-23). The history of this monument has been reconstructed in detail in: J. Meda, *Monumento a Niccolò Tommaseo a Settignano (1878)*, «Banca dati delle memorie pubbliche della scuola», vol. II, DOI: 10.53218/2051, published on 30.12.2022 (<https://www.memoriascolastica.it/memoria-pubblica/memorie-pubbliche/monumento-niccolo-tommaseo-settignano-1878>; last access: 17.06.2023).



Fig. 1. Photo postcard *Settignano – Monumento a Niccolò Tommaseo*³², n.d. (private collection of Juri Meda)

On that occasion, Temistocle Pampaloni – Mayor of Fiesole – stated:

This grave³⁰ and this monument make him part of our family; they unite him to us with an indissoluble, eternal bond; his memory, his genius, his glory now belong to us. And we are rightly proud of this, since great and virtuous men even from their graves benefit us, even when they are extinct, they radiate splendid light on all that surrounds them. Thus Settignano is honoured by the glory of that divine genius; for him this humble land will be remembered even by distant peoples; for him it will be celebrated by history; for him all those who hold in their kind hearts affection will make a pious pilgrimage³¹.

On the same occasion, on the facade of the Settignano church, in the square where the monument had been erected, the compatriots of the illustrious Dalmatian thinker and educationalist wanted to place a plaque, whose epigraph was dictated by Vincenzo Miagostovich³³: «THIS PLAQUE / ŠIBENIK / HOME TOWN OF NICCOLÒ TOMMASEO / PLACED ON 2 JUNE 1878 / AS A REMINDER / OF EVERLASTING AFFECTION / TO ITS GREAT CITIZEN / AND OF TRUE GRATITUDE / TO THE PEOPLE WHO VENERATE HIS MEMORY».

³⁰ Reference is made here to the graves of Niccolò Tommaseo and his wife Diamante Tommaseo, located in a chapel in the cemetery of Settignano. The epigraph on his tombstone, dictated by Augusto Conti, reads: «OF NICCOLÒ TOMMASEO / BORN 1802 IN ŠIBENIK / DIED 1874 IN FLORENCE / THE NAME IS ENOUGH / FOR THEM TO REMEMBER / HOW MUCH THEY OWE HIM / MAGNANIMOUS CITIZEN AND WRITER / IMMORTAL GRATITUDE». In the following years, the grave actually became a pilgrimage destination for admirers of Tommaseo (cf. P. Mazzoleni, *Una visita alla tomba di N. Tommaseo*, Zara, Tip. S. Artale, 1912).

³¹ XXXI maggio MDCCCXCVI. *Niccolò Tommaseo e il suo monumento in Sebenico*, Sebenico, Editore Paolo Mazzoleni, 1897, pp. 256-257.

³² On the use of postcards during the 20th century to commemorate illustrious compatriots, enhance local cultural heritage and promote feelings of belonging, also with reference to the world of school and education, see the interesting contribution of M. Brunelli, “Minor Educators”? *Traces of the Public Memory of the School, between the Official History of Education and the Community’s History. The Case of Emidio Consorti (1841-1913)*, *infra*. More generally, on the celebratory and propagandistic function of postcards also in the educational context, see A. Viñao Frago, M.J. Martínez Ruiz-Funes, P.L. Moreno Martínez, *Tarjeta postal ilustrada y educación (España, siglos XIX-XX)*, Murcia, Editum, 2016.

³³ Miagostovich published incognito a detailed account of Settignano’s celebrations in Zadar’s newspaper «Il Dalmata», entitled: *Monumento in Settignano a Niccolò Tommaseo*, published in two issues («Il Dalmata», n. 42, 25 May 1878; «Il Dalmata», n. 47, 12 June 1878).



Fig. 2. Engraving *Settignano. Inaugurazione del Monumento a Niccolò Tommaseo* by Francesco Canedi based on a drawing by Odoardo Borrani; taken from: «L'illustrazione Italiana», vol. V, n. 25, 23 June 1878, p. 408 (private collection of Juri Meda)

The shared celebration of the “Great Dalmatian” ended with the sending of a parchment by the Municipality of Florence to the Municipality of Šibenik, to thank it for its heartfelt participation in the public honours, on which was written:

To Šibenik, which honours its Niccolò Tommaseo, the City where he lived his last years as a blind seer and where his remains lie; the homeland of Dante and of the national idiom, grateful to the illustrious Dalmatian, who, as an artist and philosopher, lovingly studied the Poet’s thought and collected the treasures of the Italian language, sends fraternal greetings in the communion of cherished memories³⁴.

Celebrations continued in the following years. On 22 March 1882 – on the 80th anniversary of his birth – a monument to Tommaseo by the sculptor Francesco Barzaghi was unveiled in Campo Santo Stefano in Venice.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

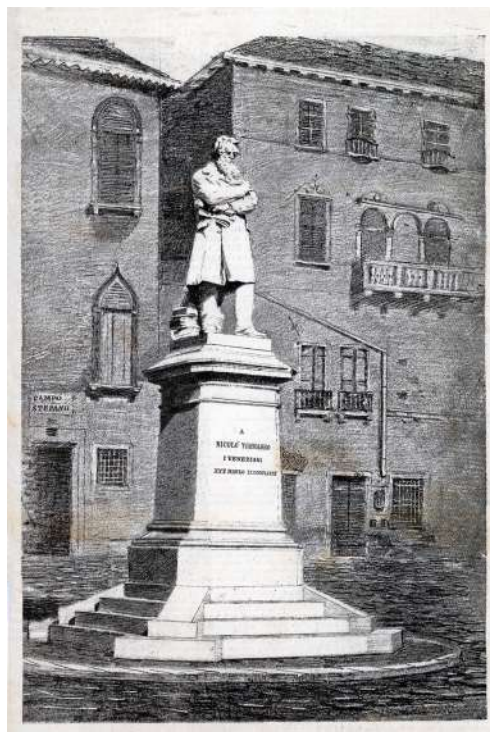


Fig. 3. Drawing *Venezia – Il monumento a Niccolò Tommaseo (di Barzaghi) inaugurato il 22 marzo* by Emilio Longoni based on a photograph by Paolo Salviati; taken from: «*Illustrazione Italiana*», vol. IX, n. 17, 23 April 1882, p. 1 (private collection of Juri Meda)

On 17 March 1890, a plaque was placed on the house where Tommaseo was born in Šibenik. Finally, on 31 May 1896, the bronze monument by the sculptor Ettore Ximenes was unveiled in his home town³⁵.

On that occasion – as further confirmation of the «communion of cherished memories» already witnessed during the celebrations in Settignano – the *Società Veneziana per l'Industria delle Conterie* (Venetian Society for the Glass Industry) sent the Municipality of Šibenik an artistically executed frame of coloured glass dots, in which – framed by the winged lion of Saint Mark and other friezes – was written:

Of strong wit endowed / Niccolò Tommaseo / honoured / his native Dalmatia / and his new homeland Italy. / He was a man of letters, a poet, a philosopher / who linked his name to history. / Šibenik / with great solemnity / inaugurates a splendid monument / to his worthy son / and of the happy event / to the town hall of the pleasant city / the glassworker's society / of Venice / offers in memory³⁶.

The «communion of cherished memories» – inspired by the historical feelings of brotherhood towards the Dalmatian populations, considered culturally Italian, which found confirmation in the figure of the illustrious thinker who had then elected Florence and Settignano as his adoptive homeland – ceased with the First World War and the Italian Regency of Carnaro. In 1925, in fact, speaking of Tommaseo's «Dalmatian Italianness», the historian of literature Isidoro Del Lungo³⁷ during his speech at the congress organised by the *Associazione Magistrale "Nicolò Tommaseo"* («Nicolò Tommaseo» Teachers' Association) in Zara, held «under the sign of the most unrestrained nationalism and exaggerated exaltation

³⁵ The complex realisation process of the Tommaseo monument in Šibenik is reconstructed in detail in: C. Beltrami, *I monumenti che hanno fatto gli italiani*, in Beltrami, Villa (edd.), *Scolpire gli eroi*, cit., pp. 21-23. On the celebrations held in his home town in 1896, see also *XXXI Maggio MDCCCXCVI. Niccolò Tommaseo e il suo monumento in Sebenico*, Sebenico, Paolo Mazzoleni, 1897.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

³⁷ In 1924 Isidoro Del Lungo dictated the epigraph that the *Pro Dalmatia* Society in Florence, the Dante Alighieri Society and the Folk High School in Settignano engraved on a plaque that was added to the monument in Settignano on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his death.

of fascism»³⁸, stated:

The reality of an intact Dalmatia, which Niccolò Tommaseo would once again invoke from God, but greeting in the new fortunes of the great Latin homeland the Dalmatian Italianness, not only of language, tradition and bloodline, but also of participation – blessed by God – in the life and future of the unified Nation³⁹.

Tommaseo ceased to be a symbol of Adriatic brotherhood and was artificially elevated to an emblem of "Dalmatian Italianness".

Tommaseo's shared Italian-Dalmatian memory ceased to exist at the end of Second World War, when the Adriatic Question entered its most dramatic phase. As the Croatian historian Boško Knežić has effectively reconstructed, in February 1945, the poet Vladimir Nazor – president of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, which joined the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945 – delivered a speech at the foot of the monument inaugurated in Šibenik in 1896, in which he stated:

The only Italian optant⁴⁰ I can see in Šibenik is behind me. Now man of bronze, cold and hardened, cultured and endowed with various talents, who, however, did not fully share the feelings of the people from which he arose⁴¹.

The monument was demolished a few days later. The commemorative plaque placed on 1890 on Tommaseo's house of birth suffered the same sad fate. In order to confirm the



Fig. 4. Photo postcard *Sebenico – Monumento a Niccolò Tommaseo (dello scultore Ettore Ximenes)*, n.d. (private collection of Juri Meda)

³⁸ A. Dessardo, *L'Associazione Magistrale "Niccolò Tommaseo". Storia di maestri cattolici, 1906-1930*, Roma, Ave, 2018, p. 211.

³⁹ *L'italianità dalmatica di Niccolò Tommaseo. Discorso di Isidoro Del Lungo per il Congresso della Niccolò Tommaseo a Zara*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1925, p. 30.

⁴⁰ Between 1945 and 1946, thousands of Italians fled the cities of Istria and Dalmatia to escape Yugoslavian persecution and seek refuge in Italy. In 1947, the Italians who remained within the Yugoslavian borders were offered the option between Slavic and Italian citizenship. Those who opted for Italian citizenship (i.e. Italian optant) were immediately expelled from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

⁴¹ B. Knežić, *La lapide e il monumento di Niccolò Tommaseo in Sebenico: storia di un'ingiustizia*, «Opinioni», n. 3, June 2019, pp. 28-30; by the same author, see also Id., *"Da Sebenico un figlio vindice nel bronzo ascolta..."*. *Nikola Tommaseo: od književnog uzora do političke ikone*, Zagreb-Zadar, Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada – Sveučilište u Zadru, 2019.

ancient «communion of cherished memories» – swept suddenly away by the rushing wind of history – a hand of the Šibenik bronze statue, the only part of the monument that survived demolition, was stolen and consigned to the Dalmatian School of Saints George and Tryphon in Venice, where it is still exhibited today⁴². The Dalmatian monument, the “twin” of those in Settignano and Venice, has thus become – in spite of itself – a relic with a strong symbolic value, the testimony of a deep wound dug into the memory of the Dalmatian population, which has not even spared the statue dedicated to an intellectual and man of letters, turned over time into an emblem of an “intolerable cultural otherness”.

Conclusions

The public honours paid to an educator or pedagogue on the occasion of the centenary of his birth or death, as well as any other anniversary, serves to immortalise his memory, and – achieving this result – inevitably ends up destoricising him, abstracting him from his time in order to project him into the present and show him to a local or national community, so that they may remember him for what he did, identify themselves with his greatness and draw lessons for their own time⁴³. The centenary celebrations, therefore, lead to the actualisation of the teaching experience of a great teacher or of the educational theories of a great educationalist. Besides celebrating a figure from the past for his/her extraordinariness by publicly remembering him/her, they also lead one to ask – concretely – how to reproduce that educational experience and how to apply those educational theories in the present time.

We know that memory is not history. According to the definition formulated by Maurice Halbwachs, indeed, memory is a reconstruction of the past using data provided by the present⁴⁴. It does not study past events by placing them in their historical context, but rather tends to relate them to the present, to make them examples, providing (often distorting) reading keys to show their topicality and reproducibility.

The centenary commemorations analysed here therefore had two direct consequences: on the one hand, the appropriation of the figure celebrated in order to consolidate the identity of a given community, firmly anchoring it to a more or less extensive place (municipality, province, region or nation); on the other, the actualisation of his/her message, aimed at its projection into the present with the risk, however, of exposing it to considerable distortions and instrumentalisation.

⁴² Knežić, *La lapide e il monumento di Niccolò Tommaseo in Sebenico*, cit., p. 29. This hand is also reproduced in the volume Beltrami, Villa (edd.), *Scolpire gli eroi*, cit., p. 109.

⁴³ More in general, on this topic, see V. Minuto, *Monumental memory of school in post-unitarian Italy*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», XVI, n. 1, 2021, pp. 213-255.

⁴⁴ Cf. M. Halbwachs, *La memoria collettiva*, Milano, Unicopli, 1996, p. 119 (original edition: *La mémoire collective*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1950). More generally, on Halbwachs and his theories, see G. Truc, *Memory of places and places of memory: for a Halbwachsian socio-ethnography of collective memory*, «International Social Science Journal», vol. 62, n. 203-204, 2012, pp. 147-159.

School Architecture as Public School Memory: the Portuguese Case of “Plano dos Centenários”

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1. Plano dos Centenários as school architecture

After 16 years of Republic, having succeeded seven parliaments, eight presidents and thirty-nine Government leaders, Portugal experienced what *Estado Novo* would call a National Revolution. It began in Braga, in 1926, and gave place to a military dictatorship. The new regime presents itself as a most necessary change, in which the idea of revolution perpetuates a project of national resurrection. Its repercussions in primary education are inevitable, as Sampaio points out: «the passage from a democracy to an authoritarian regime inevitably rebounds in orientations on primary education»¹.

The lack of appropriated buildings for good teaching practices², allied to Portugal's illiteracy rate of 60%³, forced the regime to adopt an innovative plan: the general plan of building new Primary Schools. This plan, a for-project⁴ published as the “For-Project Memory of the General Plan of Regional Primary Schools Types to be Built” (from the architect Guilherme Andrade⁵), would give place to *Plano dos Centenários*⁶ (PC), which was a school network of aesthetically unique buildings in the world. Duarte Pacheco, Minister of Public Works and Communication, was the project manager at a national

¹ J. Sampaio, *O ensino primário: 1911-1969. Contribuição monográfica*, Lisboa, Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência, 1976, vol. II, p. 5.

² J. Silva Fêreira, *O Plano dos Centenários: as escolas primárias (1941-1956)*, Master in History of Contemporary Art (Supervisor: Margarida Brito Alves), Lisboa, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, a.a. 2013; P. Tereno, *Grupos escolares construídos ao abrigo do Plano dos Centenários em Lisboa: 1944-1961*, «Sistema de Informação para o Património Arquitectónico», 2016, Last updated: n.d., http://www.monumentos.gov.pt/site/app_pagesuser/SIPAINventory.aspx?id=0e28f969-9077-4e14-9370-8059272e8f3f (last access: 05.02.2022).

³ J. Pintassilgo, *Analfabetismo e educação popular*, «Público», 31 August 2010, Last updated: 31.08.2010, <https://www.publico.pt/2010/08/31/jornal/analfabetismo-e-educacao-popular-19905476> (last access: 19.08.2020).

⁴ Ministério da Educação, *Muitos Anos de Escolas. Vol. II: Anos 40-Anos 70*, Lisboa, ME/DGEE, 1996; A. Santos Gama, *O Plano dos Centenários*, Dissertação de Mestrado em Arquitectura Departamento de Engenharia (Supervisor: Ana Maria Tavares Ferreira Martins), Covilhã, Universidade da Beira Interior, a.a. 2016.

⁵ F. Beja, J. Serra, E. Machás, I. Saldanha, *Muitos Anos de Escolas. Edifícios para o Ensino Infantil e Primário anos 40-anos 70*, Lisboa, DGEE, 1985, Vol. 2, pp. 317-325; Fêreira, cit.; Tereno, cit.

⁶ Law n. 1983 of 27 December 1940.

scale; the project was named after the third centenary celebrations of the Restoration of Independence and after the eighth centenary of Portugal's foundation, celebrated in 1940 and 1943. In order to accomplish this plan, an organization was created: the Delegation for the Construction Works of Primary Schools. The Regime's leader, António Salazar, intended to teach Portuguese people to read, but mostly to educate them according to the values defended by the new regime, at the same time that he perceived the fact that «school buildings produce a major political impact»⁷. These new constructions would reflect an image of national organization and harmony, as a result of the development of a regime's unique architecture that aimed to break up with the modern architectonic legacy of the previous Republicans.

By demarking itself from modernist lines, *Estado Novo's* architecture, known as *Português Suave*, adopts the state power language: the rhetoric of the monumental, extolling national values in a true ode to archaizing traditionalism, propaganda vehicle par excellence⁸. School buildings didn't escape from that aura, although they are not monumental by themselves. However, monumentality was reflected in the extension of the network that was built and in the tradition of regional cultures. In this way peculiar school architecture was born, one that obeyed to the «regionalization of raw-material application and construction techniques, by allying them with state of the art building processes, with thorough study of solar use and other local characteristics. All projects settled on the repetition of the same functional blueprint»⁹. According to Gama¹⁰, along the 1930's, the type-building construction of the for-project had several interruptions, breakthroughs and setbacks: there was constant restructuring; according to Fêteira¹¹ not only were there budget issues, but also the fact that these buildings were regarded as «unfit to the new school reorganization». Despite these adversities, the architectural typology remained after. Starting in 1944, it kept the regionalization of buildings, although «uniformity traces between different types of buildings are much more manifest». The forecast was the creation of 11.458 classrooms in 6.809 school buildings throughout the country¹².

The network of school buildings with PC architectonic typology is different from building to building only in subtle details related to every region. It must be referred that until the beginning of the XXI century these schools were kept fully operational – this fact allowed a direct association to materialize between education and the characteristics

⁷ P. Pereira Pimenta, *A escola portuguesa. Do "Plano dos Centenários" à construção da rede escolar no distrito de Vila Real*, Dissertação de Mestrado em Educação, Área de Especialização História da Educação e Pedagogia (Supervisor: Alberto Filipe Ribeiro de Abreu Araújo), Braga, Instituto de Educação e Psicologia da Universidade do Minho, a.a. 2006, p. 41.

⁸ I. Bessa, *Arquitetura e memória do Estado Novo ao 25 de Abril: o Liceu Júlio Henriques / João III / José Falcão de Coimbra*, «Revista de História das Ideias», vol. 16, 1994, pp. 135-159.

⁹ Tereno, cit.

¹⁰ Santos Gama, cit.

¹¹ Silva Fêteira, cit., pp. 63-64.

¹² Repositório Digital da História da Educação, *Apresentação*, Last updated: n.d., <http://193.137.22.223/pt/patrimonio-educativo/museu-virtual/exposicoes/os-edificios-escolares-do-plano-dos-centenarios/apresentacao/> (last access: 05.02.2022).

of a physical space for successive generations of the Portuguese population. Such association occurs in the memories of those who attended these school buildings during the dictatorship, as well as those that until today attend them (despite the closure¹³ of more than 13.000 primary schools between 1961 and 2020, many are still functioning).

This school-building memory can be reinforced by any PC building, in any part of the country, by those who attended it and by those who did not. Because this school network has buildings with common architectural lines and specific characteristics, it has become scholastic heritage imbued in collective memory, at the same time that it has become memory by itself.

2. Plano dos Centenários' School: *memorial and patrimonial-building*

Starting from the dictum «a great building, despite its founder goal, is always and in many ways a history book»¹⁴, we perceive that architecture and memory form a metaphysic paradigm, where space and time become one. From this fusion patrimonial buildings with collective stories emerge.

According to Ricoeur¹⁵, there is a narrow parallelism between architecture and narrativity, when he claims that architecture is to space what story is to time. In buildings, however, there is a double constructive and continuous act: the physical and the historical. The physical is based on matter and space – they harbour the construction. The historical is more complex, and develops along two lines: one is temporal, relating with the physical manifestation of the building; the other develops afterwards, and is based on the act of inhabiting: on the life stories related with the construction itself. Therefore, the more a building is inhabited, the larger the history that it can tell.

In the PC case, the thousands of children that attended and still attend these schools took and take part in the historical construction of buildings that in their physical and historical wholeness express human temporality¹⁶. By expressing this human temporality, PC schools report the absent of what once was: they report memories. It must be stressed that these school buildings, by the time they were designed, already aimed to appeal to a nostalgic feeling: «it urged them to be wrapped in memory paper, and memory was called “rustic” (the people's roots) and “joanine” [after king João V] (the roots of power,

¹³ Pordata: Base de Dados Portugal Contemporâneo, *Estabelecimentos nos ensinos pré-escolar, básico e secundário público: total e por nível de ensino: Quantas escolas públicas há no pré-escolar, básico ou secundário?*, Last updated: 01.07.2021, <https://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Estabelecimentos+nos+ensinos+pr%C3%A9+escolar++b%C3%A9sico+e+secund%C3%A1rio+p%C3%Ablico+total+e+por+n%C3%Advel+de+ensino-1241-9829> (last access: 01.02.2022).

¹⁴ Herculano (cit. in Bessa, *Arquitetura e memória do Estado Novo ao 25 de Abril*, cit., p. 156).

¹⁵ P. Ricoeur, *Architecture et narrativité*, «Études Ricoeuriennes», vol. 7, n. 2, 2016, pp. 20-30.

¹⁶ E. Calvi, *Projecto y relato: la arquitectura como narración*, «Arquitectonics: Mind, Land & Society», n. 3, 2003, pp. 53-69.

the supreme empire), or, even better, both)»¹⁷. According to Teixeira¹⁸, memories are experiences of the most importance: as starting point memories, they perpetuate places with references to a consecutive return to the past, carrying a variety of feelings that are documented and expressed in stories and reports, in dreams and perceptions.

Thus, we may consider PC schools as mnemonic architecture: they preserve the general memory of the group of buildings in every person in particular. Due to the architectonic characteristics, any of these school buildings will wake in the viewer the same feeling, for they «are schools whose image and name are associated to tradition, keeping its past culture in its existence and image today»¹⁹.

In general, school buildings have always been special places, wrapped in specific rites that give them a sacred configuration: before them students appear as devotees on a daily pilgrimage. Teixeira²⁰ refers to school as a moment of thorough apprenticeship, since youth itself gives relevance to all elements that are then used: standards and values, dress codes, plays, experiences, even the everyday school path, among other things that make sense in social interactions. This is a micro-universe that allows its inhabitants to live a strong psycho-active and sensorial experience²¹, through which individuality can grow²². In its whole, school builds each student; but each student builds historically school in general, and the building in particular. Since all these buildings have the same configuration, this building type will emerge in each individual's memory regardless of the exact location. This shows that «school as a memory place is symbolic and material at the same time»²³.

In this way, we consider the school network buildings that belong to PC as school memory buildings: memory-buildings that became a network of memory places, not in a memorial sense (as the ones that are preserved as a reflection of traumatic moments and/or related to violation of human rights), but in a narrative sense, being a material testimony of education and history of education in Portugal.

According to Silva²⁴, PC schools are linked to tradition by keeping past culture in its own physical reality, but also in the image that they actually have. Once again we

¹⁷ N. Portas, *A evolução da arquitectura moderna em Portugal*, «História da Arquitectura Moderna», Lisboa, Arcádia, 1973-78, vol. 2, chapter 7 (cit. in Bessa, *Arquitectura e memória do Estado Novo ao 25 de Abril*, cit., p. 143).

¹⁸ M. Teixeira, *A escola como lugar de memória*, in *Anais do XXVIII Simpósio Nacional de História «Lugares dos historiadores: velhos e novos desafios» (Florianópolis, 27-31 July 2015)*, Florianópolis, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 2015 Last updated: 2015, http://www.snh2015.anpuh.org/resources/anais/39/1428380432_ARQUIVO_AESCOLACOMOLUGARDEMEMORIA-MariaLucia.pdf (last access: 21.02.2022).

¹⁹ F. Silva, *Primary school architecture in Portugal: A case study* (cit. in C. Monteiro, *Arquitetura escolar: o valor patrimonial como procura de identidade na reabilitação*, Master in Architecture (Supervisor: André Miguel Guimarães dos Santos), Porto, Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, a.a. 2020, p. 69).

²⁰ Teixeira, cit., n.p.

²¹ O. Lazzarotti, *Habiter la condition géographique*, Paris, Éditions Belin, 2006.

²² M. Lussault, *Mettre l'expérience extrascolaire en lien avec la pratique scolaire*, «Diversité», n. 191, 2018, pp. 13- 17.

²³ Teixeira, cit., n.p.

²⁴ M. Dallari Bucci, *Arquitetura da Memória: a construção de uma rede de lugares de memória a ditadura militar na cidade de São Paulo*, Trabalho final de Graduação (Supervisor: Renato Cymbalista). São Paulo,

perceive that these are memory-buildings that reflect and report the past, rooting deep in people's collective memory. Santos²⁵ states that «memory, according to Rousseau, is acknowledgement. Is through collective memory that social groups conform, acquiring their individuality and an image of the space occupied by them»²⁶. We perceive a cultural link between architecture and memory reflected in the collective with heritage echoes. Specifically in the PC buildings: these edifications present a particular form of heritage; they reflect different teaching conceptions²⁷ and form a reference of national collective memory.

3. Memory preservation

Emigration in the 1960's and 1970's in Portugal reduced its population, leading to profound demographic changes. An aging population left many communities without children. This decrease brought the closure of many primary schools in the 1990's, and even more at the beginning of the new millennia, especially in the center of the mainland.

Cordeiro, Gama and Barros²⁸ refer to an unbalance between supply and demand, which would have led to a major paradox: «too few students, too many schools in low density regions». Many villages didn't have enough children to make even ten classes of students, which brought to the closure of many schools. Between 2001/2002 and 2005/2006, 370 primary schools were shut down in the district of Guarda²⁹. In 2012, Portugal closed 3 720 school units³⁰, but since 1961 the number of closures totals more than 13.000³¹. Thousands of buildings were deactivated: no longer having a scholastic use, they ended up in the custody of town halls.

Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de São Paulo, a.a. 2015; L. Kharoubi, *Architecture comme Mémoire et Emotion*, Master in Architecture (Supervisor: Christoffel Boghaert), Louvain, Faculté d'architecture, ingénierie architecturale, urbanisme de l'Université Catholique de Louvain, a.a. 2020; V. Riou, *L'architecture du souvenir et l'immatériel-mémorial des lieux*, Last updated: n.d., <https://dpearea.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/v-riou.pdf> (last access: 15.01.2022).

²⁵ J. Silva, *Primary school architecture in Portugal: A case study*, s.l., OECD, 2008 Last updated: n.d., <https://www.oecd.org/portugal/40802346.pdf> (last access: 01.02.2022).

²⁶ N. Marques dos Santos, *Arquitetura e memória. O palheiro como objeto de identidade territorial*, Master in Architecture (Supervisor: Susana Luísa Mexia Lobo), Coimbra, Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia da Universidade de Coimbra, a.a. 2016, p. 117.

²⁷ Repositório Digital da História da Educação, *Apresentação*, Last updated: n.d., <http://193.137.22.223/pt/patrimonio-educativo/museu-virtual/exposicoes/os-edificios-escolares-do-plano-dos-centenarios/apresentacao/> (last access: 05.02.2022).

²⁸ A. Cordeiro, R. Gama, C. Barros, *Reorganização de rede escolar em territórios de baixa densidade em Portugal. Construção de uma matriz de análise*, 2016, Faro, Universidade do Algarve, p. 4.

²⁹ Ordem dos Arquitectos, *Vendem-se escolas*, Last updated: n.d., <https://arquitectos.pt/?no=202015347:012007> (last access: 10.02.2022).

³⁰ *Fecharam 3720 escolas básicas desde 2005*, «TVI Notícias», 24 July 2012, Last updated: 24.07.2012, <https://tvi.iol.pt/noticias/sociedade/tecnologia/fecharam-3720-escolas-basicas-desde-2005> (last access: 9.02.2022).

³¹ Pordata: Base de Dados Portugal Contemporâneo, cit.

In an attempt to seek some kind of social benefit in this heritage, since these school buildings lost their primary use, today they welcome local associations and services oriented to the aged³². Portuguese regions that lost a great number of these schools now instead have Institutions for the elder. There are several reports of this kind of transformation in different places, such as Chaves³³, Montalegre³⁴, Braga³⁵, Barcelos³⁶, Caldas da Rainha³⁷, among others. Another way to monetize these buildings came by public auctions, which lead to different uses, such as social housing, restaurants³⁸, even private homes³⁹ and mortuary houses⁴⁰. Despite these assorted approaches and different objectives, they all share the same goal: to recover the past.

There is a will to rehabilitate and preserve the PC network of school buildings, because there is also a desire to preserve memories, in order to avoid any withering of their identitarian stories. Most closures have happened in the countryside, and that has increased the interest in maintaining these primary schools, since their buildings could be considered the soul of these rural places. We must stress that PC school buildings, in a time when life in most villages withers, are a kind of physical memory of former happy days, when children bustle, whereas nowadays silence seems to thrive. Once deactivated, these structures decay, and memories fade away with them, for according to António Mendes «the closure of any school in the countryside contributes to the destruction of a

³² Ordem dos Arquitectos, *Vendem-se escolas*, cit.

³³ *Chaves: escolas encerradas transformadas em equipamentos para idosos*. «Público», 22 August 2006, Last updated: 22.08.2006, <https://www.publico.pt/2006/08/22/local/noticia/chaves-escolas-encerradas-transformadas-em-equipamentos-para-idosos-1267965> (last access: 08.02.2022).

³⁴ *Antiga escola primária de Padornelos transformada em centro de dia*, «Jornal de Notícias», 17 August 2011, Last updated: 17/08/2011, <https://www.jn.pt/local/noticias/vila-real/montalegre/antiga-escola-primaria-de-padornelos-transformada-em-centro-de-dia-1953469.html> (last access: 08.02.2022).

³⁵ *Antiga escola primária transformada em lar de idosos em Amares*, «O Minho», 17 June 2016, Last updated: 17.06.2016, <https://ominho.pt/antiga-escola-primaria-transformada-em-lar-de-idosos-em-amares/> (last access: 10.02.2022).

³⁶ *Escola primária transformada em “lar inovador” para idosos em Mesão Frio*, «Diário de Notícias», 1st June 2017 Last updated: 01.07.2017, <https://www.dn.pt/lusa/escola-primaria-transformada-em-lar-inovador-para-idosos-em-mesao-frio-8524259.html> (last access: 10.02.2022).

³⁷ *Antiga escola primária de Salir de Matos transformada em centro de dia*, «Jornal das Caldas», 4 May 2021, Last updated: 04.05.2011, <https://jornaldascaldas.pt/2021/05/04/antiga-escola-primaria-de-salir-de-matos-transformada-em-centro-de-dia/> (last access: 08.02.2022).

³⁸ *Escolas transformadas em restaurantes e museus*, «Diário de Notícias», 10 October 2009, Last updated: 10.10.2009, <https://www.dn.pt/dossiers/politica/eleicoes-autarquicas-2009/noticias/escolas-transformadas-em-restaurantes-e-museus-1386398.html> (last access: 10.02.2022); *Elvas: antiga escola primária de Vila Fernando transformada em turismo rural*, «O Digital», 31 May 2021, Last updated: 31.05.2021, <https://odigital.sapo.pt/elvas-antiga-escola-primaria-de-vila-fernando-transformada-em-turismo-rural/> (last access: 08.02.2022); J. Mourão Carvalho, *Escolas desativadas. Os espaços novos que dão vida às aldeias*, «Jornal N», 8 September 2021, Last updated: 08.09.2021, https://ionline.sapo.pt/artigo/745800/escolas-desativadas-os-espacos-novos-que-dao-vida-as-aldeias?secao=Portugal_i (last access: 08.02.2022).

³⁹ A autora deste artigo adquiriu um edifício da rede de escolas do CP para residência própria.

⁴⁰ V. Alevato, *Vila de Rei: antiga escola primária será transformada em casa mortuária*, «Mediatejo.net», 27 February 2017, Last updated: 27.02.2017 <https://www.mediatejo.net/vila-de-rei-antiga-escola-primaria-sera-transformada-em-casa-mortuaria/> (last access: 08.02.2022); Diana fm, *Antiga escola de Arraiolos transformada em casa mortuária*, Last updated: 20.05.2020, <https://www.dianafm.com/antiga-escola-de-arraiolos-transformada-em-casa-mortuaria/> (last access: 08.02.2022).

nation's cultural identity»⁴¹. Reichert, Oliveira and Franzen⁴² refer that identity crystallizes through social relationships and through the feeling of belonging that each individual builds in his social environment. Regarding that, PC schools that have been recovered reinforce this identitarian relationship of belonging locally and nationally: throughout the country there is a feeling that these schools must be maintained. Other than cultural identity preservation, it is important to preserve historical buildings⁴³. As the mayor of Salvaterra de Magos stresses, when he refers to the recovery of a primary school in his country, saying that «it is a centenary building that is important to preserve»⁴⁴. At the same time, Sousel's mayor stresses that «it is urgent to give some dignity to this space, in the village's core, for it has been inactive since the construction of the new School Center»⁴⁵.

Having been born during a dictatorship regime, and having grown in number through decades, the buildings of the PC school network were inhabited by thousands of children. These children lived their school routine, and this routine impregnated them of memories. The very configuration of school buildings helped to cement these memories. Due to this, after the closure of thousands of schools, there was a need to preserve the buildings. We found that identity, heritage and dignity are values that drive the will to recover, rehabilitate, maintain and preserve a collective memory that is stamped in the model blueprint of these schools: «an intervention in built heritage [can] physically bring memories and past traditions»⁴⁶. Rehabilitation in school buildings from the past that dignify the present aims to project themselves into the future as teaching memorials, while their architecture stimulates identity and belonging throughout PC's school network.

⁴¹ *Escola dá vida a aldeia*, «Correio da Manhã», 21 June 2004, Last updated: 21.07.2004, <https://www.cmjournal.pt/portugal/detalhe/escola-da-vida-a-aldeia> (Last access: 08.02.2022).

⁴² B. Reichert, P. Oliveira, D. Franzen, *Arquitetura, memória e identidade: interfaces do património edificado no extremo-oeste catarinense*, «Revista Grifos», n. 43, 2017, pp. 157-190.

⁴³ F. Matias Cristóvão, *Reabilitar o passado para reutilizar no futuro: proposta de intervenção numa antiga escola primária*, Dissertação de Mestrado em Arquitectura, Departamento de Engenharia (Supervisor: Jorge Manuel da Silva Carlos). Covilhã, Universidade da Beira Interior, a.a. 2016.

⁴⁴ Câmara Municipal de Salvaterra de Magos, *Reabilitação da antiga escola primária "O Século" em Salvaterra de Magos*, Last updated: n/d, <https://www.cm-salvaterrademagos.pt/informacoes/noticias/item/3983-reabilitacao-da-antiga-escola-primaria-o-seculo-em-salvaterra-de-magos> (last access: 11.02.2022), p. 2.

⁴⁵ *Sousel: Câmara Municipal vai reabilitar antiga Escola Padre Joaquim Maria Fernandes*, «Diário Campanário», 3 March 2020, Last updated: 03.03.2020 <https://www.radiocampanario.com/ultimas/regional/sousel-camara-municipal-vai-reabilitar-antiga-escola-padre-joaquim-maria-fernandes> (last access: 11.02.2022).

⁴⁶ F. Matias Cristóvão, *Reabilitar o passado para reutilizar no futuro: proposta de intervenção numa antiga escola primária*, Dissertação de Mestrado em Arquitectura, Departamento de Engenharia (Supervisor: Jorge Manuel da Silva Carlos), Covilhã, Universidade da Beira Interior, a.a. 2016, p. 2.

Memory and Celebration of the “Heroic Youth”. The Youth Organisations of the Mussolini Regime, School and the Creation of the “New Fascist Man”

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1. *The youth organizations of fascism and the totalitarian socialization of the new generations*

For the totalitarian regimes that emerged in Europe between the two world wars, the matter of the ideological and political education of young people, of their placement in suitable mass organizations designed to «temper their body and spirit» in light of the inspiring principles of the totalitarian ideology, and of their mobilization to support the regime itself was destined to take on special relevance¹.

A somewhat exemplary case, in this respect, is the fascist regime that was established in Italy in the aftermath of the march on Rome of 28 October 1922 and that was destined to remain in power for around twenty years, until 25 July 1943². With specific regard to the Mussolini regime, in fact, some scholars have talked about a sort of «identity relationship that fascism maintained with the notion of youth», which, far from representing a mere age category, was considered to be an «expression of the positive absolute» and the synthesis of «a vast range of civic, moral and aesthetic values at the same time». This led to the fascist regime's political choice to make young people «the focus of its own action and the central point of its organizational system»³.

¹ See A. Klönne, *Jugend im Dritten Reich. Die Hitlerjugend und ihre Gegner*, Dusseldorf-Köln, Diederichs, 1982; D. Caroli, *Ideali, ideologie e modelli formativi. Il movimento dei pionieri in URSS, 1922-1939*, Milano, Unicopli, 2015². With specific reference to Italian fascism see R. De Felice, *Mussolini il duce. Gli anni del consenso, 1929-1936*, Torino, Einaudi, 1974, p. 235 ff.

² On the origins and development of the fascist regime in Italy there is a considerable amount of studies and research. We will just recall here: R. De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista. Vol. 1: La conquista del potere, 1921-1925*, Torino, Einaudi, 1966; Id., *Mussolini il fascista. Vol.2: L'organizzazione dello Stato fascista, 1925-1929*, Torino, Einaudi, 1968; Id., *Mussolini il duce. Vol. 1: Gli anni del consenso, 1929-1936*, Torino, Einaudi, 1974; Id., *Mussolini il duce. Vol. 2: Lo Stato totalitario, 1936-1940*, Torino, Einaudi, 1981; P.G. Zunino, *L'ideologia del fascismo. Miti, credenze e valori nella stabilizzazione del regime*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1985; E. Gentile, *Storia del Partito Fascista*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1989; Id., *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista (1918-1925)*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1996; Id., *La via italiana al totalitarismo. Il partito e lo Stato nel regime fascista*, Roma, Carocci, 2001.

³ L. Malvano, *Il mito della giovinezza attraverso l'immagine: il fascismo italiano*, in G. Levi, J.C. Schmitt (edd.), *Storia dei giovani. Vol. 2: L'età contemporanea*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2000, pp. 311-314.

It is no surprise that, with reference to fascism, a sort of «youth ideology»⁴ emerged which was based on the conviction that Italian youth itself, having survived the trenches of the First World War, created and was the authentic protagonist of the birth of the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* – the political movement founded in Milan by Benito Mussolini on 23 March 1919 – and of the real national revolution – culminated with the March on Rome of 28 October 1922 – which led to the dissolution of the liberal, bourgeois «old Italy» and to the creation of the totalitarian fascist state⁵.

In view of these considerations, it is easy to explain the emphasis with which fascism, right from the beginning, took charge on the one hand of operating a sort of totalitarian socialization of the younger generations through the mobilization and placement in the regime's mass youth organizations, and on the other to promote the emergence of a new political class based on a systematic program of political and ideological education designed to imbue the new Italian youth with the fascist spirit.

To this end, already as of January 1920 the first youth organization of the Mussolini movement had been formed. It was the Student Avant-garde of Italian fascist combat bands which – after the extension of its membership only to students but also to “young people in the factories and in the fields” – the following year assumed the more comprehensive title of *Avanguardia Giovanile Fascista* (Fascist Youth Avant-garde)⁶. During the same year 1920, the University Fascist Groups were officially formed, bringing together university students who, since 1919, had been joining the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* first and, later, the National Fascist Party⁷.

In the period immediately after fascism obtained power, in particular after its transformation into a totalitarian regime (1925), the matter of the placement and the ideological and political training of young people took on a special urgency and was made the subject of a series of systematic interventions⁸. With the Law No. 2247 of 3rd April 1926, first of all, the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* was set up for the aid and the physical and moral education of young people, bringing together young people of both sexes between 8 and 17 years old⁹. Subsequently, for the purposes of completing the process

⁴ See M.A. Ledeen, *Italian fascism and youth*, «The Journal of Contemporary History», vol. IV, n. 3, 1969, pp. 137-154.

⁵ L. La Rovere, «Rifare gli italiani: l'esperimento di creazione dell'«uomo nuovo» nel regime fascista», «Annali di storia dell'educazione e delle istituzioni scolastiche», n. 9, 2002, p. 53.

⁶ See P. Nello, *L'avanguardia studentesco alle origini del fascismo*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1978.

⁷ See B. Garzarelli, *Un aspetto della politica totalitaria del PNF: i Gruppi universitari fascisti*, «Studi storici», vol. 38, n. 4, 1997, pp. 1121-1161; L. La Rovere, *Storia dei Guf. Organizzazione, politica e miti della gioventù universitaria fascista, 1919-1943*, Torino, Bollati-Boringhieri, 2003.

⁸ See, in this regard, the lively debate on young people and the problem of the formation of a new authentically fascist ruling class held since 1927 on the columns of «Critica Fascista», the magazine directed by Giuseppe Bottai, and the speech by Benito Mussolini *Punti fermi sui giovani*, published in the same magazine on 1st February 1930. See P. Nello, *Mussolini e Bottai: due modi diversi di concepire l'educazione fascista dei giovani*, «Storia Contemporanea», vol. VIII, n. 2, 1977, pp. 335-366; L. Passerini, *La giovinezza metafora del cambiamento sociale. Due dibattiti sui giovani nell'Italia fascista e negli Stati Uniti degli anni Cinquanta*, in Levi, Schmitt (edd.), *Storia dei giovani*, cit., pp. 386-421.

⁹ See N. Zapponi, *Il partito della gioventù. Le organizzazioni giovanili del fascismo, 1926-1943*, «Storia Contemporanea», July-October 1982, pp. 569-633; C. Betti, *L'Opera nazionale balilla e l'educazione fascista*,

of orientation of the Italian youth in the regime's organizations, on 8 October 1930 the *Fasci Giovanili di Combattimento*, designed to welcome boys and girls between the ages of 18 and 21, were established¹⁰.

A further and more effective intervention on this front occurred in the second half of the 1930s, following the conclusion of the war in Ethiopia and the proclamation of the Empire. With the Royal Decree of 27th October 1937, Benito Mussolini established the *Gioventù Italiana del Littorio*, the «unitary and totalitarian organization of the youth forces of the fascist regime», which «responded directly to the Secretary of the National Fascist Party», into which both the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* and the *Fasci giovanili di Combattimento*¹¹ merged. Among the designated aims of the *Gioventù Italiana del Littorio* were in particular «the spiritual, sporting and pre-military preparation» of the Italian youth and the «teaching of physical education in elementary and junior high schools»¹².

Starting especially from the second half of the 1920s, in parallel with the development of organizational and institutional aspects and the launching of initiatives for the diffusion and establishment of fascist youth organizations through the peninsula, the Mussolini regime undertook to anchor such training offer to a veritable *mystique of duty and heroism* to be promoted through specific publications directed to the Italian youth. The aim of such publications was to instill in the new generations the «fascist spirit» destined to turn them into «new Italians», that is to «redo not the appearances of the human life, but its content, the man, the character, the faith»¹³.

2. *The origins of the «pedagogy of the fascist exemplarity»: the cult of the origins and the mystique of duty and heroism*

As already mentioned, the dissemination among the ranks of the Italian youth of an educational perspective inspired by a sort of “mystique of duty and heroism” was entrusted to a series of publications destined to circulate both in school rooms – in the form of «additional readings» together with schoolbooks – and in the local premises of

Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1984.

¹⁰ See R. De Felice, *Mussolini il duce. Vol. 2: Lo Stato totalitario, 1936-1940*, Torino, Einaudi, 1981, pp. 126-135. For further interesting documentation, see A. Starace, *Fasci giovanili di combattimento*, Milano, Mondadori, 1933.

¹¹ See Zapponi, *Il partito della gioventù. Le organizzazioni giovanili del fascismo, 1926-1943*, cit., pp. 569-633. For an extensive documentation, also see A. Starace, *Gioventù italiana del Littorio*, Milano, Mondadori, 1939.

¹² R.D.L. 27 ottobre 1937, n. 1839 – *Istituzione della Gioventù italiana del Littorio*, «Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia», XVI, n. 267, 12 November 1937, parte prima, pp. 4057-4059. Cf. E. Gentile, *Il culto del littorio. La sacralizzazione della politica nell'Italia fascista*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1993, p. 159.

¹³ P. Piovani, *Funzione educativa del Fascismo*, «Politica nuova», 1-5 November 1941. See also G. Pini, *I giovanissimi*, «Il Popolo d'Italia», 5 February 1927. For an authoritative confirmation of what is being said, see B. Mussolini, *Messaggio per l'anno IX (27 ottobre 1930)*, in Id., *Opera Omnia*, edited by E. e D. Susmel, Firenze, La Fenice, 1951-1980, 36 vols., XXIV, p. 283.

the youth organizations of the regime – as tools of «moral and political education» of the members.

It is the case, first of all, of texts such as *Giovinazza* (1922), *I vincitori continui. Per una traccia ideale dell'Avanguardismo fascista* (1926) and *Balilla* (1927) by Asvero Gravelli¹⁴, one among the first and most committed leaders of the student groups within the National Fascist Party and, from 1923, secretary of the *Fascist Youth Avant-garde*. His works were destined to begin this peculiar line of publications and to inspire a great deal of the following literary production of the same kind¹⁵.

It is also the case of publications such as *La storia e l'opera del fascismo* (1931) by Luigi Pratesi, *Giovinazza eroica* (1931) by Giuseppe Di Sandro¹⁶, and of the booklets *Vita fascista. Per i Balilla e le Piccole Italiane* (1932, 2 voll.) and *Vita fascista. Per le Avanguardie, per i Giovani e le Giovani Italiane* (1933) by Piero Domenichelli, promoter and director of the well known series «Quaderni di propaganda fascista per i giovani e per il popolo» by the Florentine publisher Bemporad¹⁷. Other examples are Giuseppe Sangiorgi's *Balilla* (1934) and the homonymous text given to the press in the same year 1934 by Pietro Camporilli, with which the Roman publisher Ardita inaugurated the collection of books for the fascist youth «Collana di monografie sull'ardimento italiano in ogni tempo. Gioventù eroica»¹⁸.

Finally, there are also later publications belonging to the same thread like *Giovinazza in marcia* (1937) by Ottorino Paraninfo and *Giovinazza Eroica* (1938) by Renzo Bianchi¹⁹.

There is a series of booklets distinct from the official publications of the Central Presidency and the Provincial Committees of the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* and, later, of the *Gioventù Italiana del Littorio* (statutes, regulations, collections of fascist hymns and chants, brochures and manuals of physical and premilitary education, etc.), which were generally issued by teachers, journalists and party officials directly involved in the activities of youth organizations. They are written with a plain language and are of modest typographical and editorial style but nonetheless rich of illustrations in black and white and in color, and their low cost was meant to encourage a wider distribution, which is testified by their frequent reissues and reprints.

The aim of such educational publications was to perpetuate in the younger generations «the memory of those who managed to increase the power and the glory

¹⁴ A. Gravelli, *Giovinazza. Opuscolo di propaganda fascista*, Roma, Direzione del P.N.F., 1922; Id., *I vincitori continui. Per una traccia ideale dell'Avanguardismo fascista*, Roma, Editrice Libreria del Littorio, 1925 (2^a ediz. 1926); Id., *Balilla*, presentazione di S.E. Benito Mussolini, Milano, Edizioni Alba, 1927.

¹⁵ See M. Canali, Gravelli, Asvero, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960-2009, 73 vols., vol. 58, 2002 (available online at: www.treccani.it).

¹⁶ L. Pratesi, *La storia e l'opera del fascismo. Corso di cultura fascista per la nuova gioventù italiana*, Livorno, Tip. Benvenuti e Cavaciocchi, 1931; G. Di Sandro, *Giovinazza eroica*, Milano, Liber Editrice, 1931.

¹⁷ P. Domenichelli, *Vita Fascista. Per i Balilla e le Piccole Italiane*, Firenze, Bemporad, 1932, 2 vols.; Id., *Vita Fascista. Per le Avanguardie, per i Giovani e le Giovani Italiane*, Firenze, Bemporad, 1933.

¹⁸ G. Sangiorgi, *Balilla. Asterischi dedicati all'educazione della gioventù italiana*, Bari, Tip. Giuseppe Favia, 1934; P. Caporilli, *Balilla*, Roma, Ardita, 1934.

¹⁹ O. Paraninfo, *Giovinazza in marcia. Appunti di cultura fascista*, Milano, Optima, 1937; R. Bianchi, *Giovinazza Eroica*, Roma Gioventù Italiana del Littorio, 1938.

of the Homeland»²⁰. In other words, their purpose was to instill in the young people of the youth organizations of the regime the «intimately fascist» spirit and the warlike virtues of the generation «tempered by the fire of the battles on the Karst» and of the «glorious maniples of the Black Shirts» that had saved Italy from the «Bolshevik fury» in the immediate post-war period:

We must create – said Mussolini in this regard in October 1926 –; we of this age and this generation, it is up to us, I tell you, to make the face of the homeland physically and spiritually unrecognizable in ten years. In ten years, comrades, Italy will be unrecognizable! We will have transformed it, we will have made something else of it. [...] We will create the new Italian, an Italian that will not resemble that of yesterday. These are the generations of those who made the war and are therefore intimately fascist. Then will come the generations of those whom we educate today and create in our image and likeness: the legions of the *balilla* and the *avant-gardists*²¹.

These instructions were the inspiration behind the first and most significant of the booklets dedicated to the Italian youth mentioned above: *Balilla* by Asvero Gravelli – published in Milan in 1927 with an authoritative presentation written by Mussolini himself –, which was to actually be the real ‘manifesto’ of the education focused on the *mystique of duty and heroism*.

From the very beginning, Gravelli stated the aim of his text: it was to make «the hope and the dream to give a unified and fascist name to all the Italian youth» come true, to promote «the fascist spirit in young people, giving them ideal guidance»:

The generation that faces life today – he wrote –, is the generation of the sun, and instinctively aimed at courageous actions. It is necessary to prepare the Homeland for her people of the future, her heroic people, to mark her destiny; to give her a clear sense of existence, and pride, loyalty, disinterest, courage, tenacity, probity as the custom of the new Italian wants. Young people are the heralds of a will for conquest and victory. [...] Fascism will teach them to meet every glorious work with the one cry: «Further beyond! Further beyond!»²².

Therefore, it was necessary «to create and arouse in young people the heroic passion, [...] to imprint in the hearts of children the educational norms based on hierarchy and discipline»:

Fascist children – as the author went on – must grow in the school of honesty, rectitude, boldness and with a faith capable of eternalizing the Fascist era. [...] Young people are the driving force of Fascism and their spirit is pervaded by a deep mysticism that knows only duties²³.

This work of formation of consciences, however, could not be achieved through the proposal of the old and now worn-out rhetorical formulas of traditional pedagogy, even

²⁰ A. Starace, *Fasci giovanili di combattimento*, Milano, Mondadori, 1933, p. 27.

²¹ B. Mussolini, *Al popolo di Reggio Emilia (30 ottobre 1926)*, in Id., *Opera Omnia*, edited by E. e D. Susmel, cit., vol. XXII (1926), p. 246.

²² Gravelli, *Balilla*, cit., pp. 9-10.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

less by referring to empty and inconsistent models of behavior inspired by bourgeois individualism.

In order to instill in the young generations «the need to believe, to fight for an ideal, even if it costed them to sacrifice completely»²⁴, it was necessary to educate them to «the myth of Mussolini [...] model of the virile, moral and physical qualities of the fascist man» and, at the same time, point out for them the cult of the origins through «the epic transfiguration of the memory of war and squadristism»²⁵.

Hence the exaltation of the «war» and the reference to the «sublime and melancholic sense of dying» that should have inspired the fascist youth and nourished their heroism and passion for great ventures:

War – said Asvero Gravelli –, the spirit of war, the echo of it [...] in the soul of many adolescents, the images of Glory lit in their Hearts, the desire to be something, to do something, and the pride of a heroic feat from an instinctive mystical sense of their young life and incited by the example of fallen peers [...], the need to express [their] energy through strong and violent actions²⁶.

But also the constant reference to the «myth of Mussolini» and his role as «guide and supreme leader of the Fascist Revolution»:

Benito Mussolini – as we read in *Balilla* –. His Name and his story already resonate as legendary. He was followed by men and children, a small handful at first, then, through heroism and sacrifice, a cohort and a legion, finally a people, a redeemed people who sang and knew how to die because they wanted to win. So many children fell like this, facing the sun, among the wheat spikes, or in the ambushes! Because only the young know how to die!²⁷.

In the rest of the treatise, Asvero Gravelli stressed the specific virtues that should have inspired the children in the youth organizations of the regime on several occasions:

Child, you rise to a school of heroism and shape your soul, you base your life on many sacrifices. [...] You must prove yourself worthy to wear the fascist uniform: you must feel the pride of being better than others. The Black Shirt means daring, and the courage that is given by the honesty and purity of the soul must be your first virtue. [...] The beauty and joy of feeling Italian and fascist must shine in you. You are the man of tomorrow and the Homeland will be entrusted to your heart and its greatness will be your victory. [...] You must be the new Italian. [...] The new generations have the sacred duty to guard jealously the legacy of virtue and heroism inherited from our great ones and to be at the forefront of every movement that leads us to a superior greatness of our Italy²⁸.

At the same time, the author highlighted the «heroic spirit» and the «common ideals» that should have bound indissolubly the new generation of Balilla and Avant-gardists «to the Martyrs of Fascism fallen in the radiance of their youth»:

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁵ La Rovere, «*Rifare gli italiani*»: *l'esperimento di creazione dell'«uomo nuovo» nel regime fascista*, cit., p. 62.

²⁶ Gravelli, *Balilla*, cit., pp. 10-11.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-31.

Your Saints – wrote Gravelli to the young fascists, quoting Mussolini – are Balilla and Mameli, the adolescents Curtatone and Montanara, Oberdan and Rismondo, and the countless others that from the '15 to the '18 left the classrooms for the trenches, went to the assault shouting: *Long Live Italy!* And today they rest in small, forgotten cemeteries. Italian youth of all the schools and all the worksites, let the Homeland not miss her radiant future: let the 20th Century see Rome, center of the Latin civilization, ruler of the Mediterranean, as the beacon of light for all the peoples²⁹.

The need «for a serious spiritual orientation for young people» and for an education of the consciences inspired by the *mystique of duty and heroism* necessarily implied a reference to the example «of the Fallen and the Martyrs of the Fascist Faith», whose deeds, specifically narrated and made the object of a real cult, should have inspired the thoughts and choices of the children and the young men of the regime.

It is not surprising that, especially since 1926 – year of the foundation of the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* – the *pedagogy of the fascist exemplarity* advocated in *Balilla* by Asvero Gravelli has found a systematic and growing reception in the varied educational publications for the youth referenced above.

To avoid unnecessary repetition, we will now examine the work that can in all respects be considered most representative of this *pedagogy of the fascist model*, namely the already mentioned volumes on *Vita Fascista* for the new recruits in the youth organizations of Mussolini by Piero Domenichelli, printed between 1932 and 1933 by Florentine publisher Bemporad.

The two booklets *Vita Fascista. Per i Balilla e le Piccole Italiane* were a collection of tales of war and heroism («Racconti per i Balilla»), and of biographical profiles of the heroes and the martyrs of the First World War and the fascism of the origins («Giovinezza eroica dell'Italia guerriera» and «Martiri della Rivoluzione Fascista»), whose purposes were to build a Balilla «of few words, of cold courage, of tenacious industriousness, of blind discipline»; a young Italian «unrecognizable for the Italians of yesterday, as wished by the Duce»³⁰.

Among the countless «heroic young boys» of the Great War narrated by Piero Domenichelli we find first of all Vittorio Montiglio, whose biography of «fighter and martyr of the Italian and fascist cause» allowed the author to establish a direct connection and a close link between the generation that had fought in the trenches of the First World War and the one that had become the protagonist of the fascist revolution culminated with the march on Rome of 28th October 1922:

The figure of the young hero Vittorio Montiglio has something legendary [...] He had two brothers at the front [in the Great War], two heroes decorated several times, and burned with the desire to reach them for his own honor [...], he was just fourteen years old. [...] His war life is a succession of heroic acts and serene disregard for danger. [...] The war was over for everyone, except for Vittorio Montiglio. The March on Ronchi and the period of Fiume came. He fled to Fiume and became a legionnaire. He took part in the whole D'Annunzio venture. [...] On 8th September 1924, while he was traveling to the Aviation Camp of Ghedi, he was attacked by some communists who were terribly annoyed by

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³⁰ Domenichelli, *Vita Fascista. Per i Balilla e le Piccole Italiane*, cit., I, p. 29.

his heroism and his great love of the Homeland, and he was badly wounded. [...] The young hero, decorated with a gold medal at seventeen, is the living symbol of the fiery youth who fought the war, of those child soldiers who with their passion gave Italy the greatest victory against Powers prepared and armed to the teeth³¹.

The narration of «indomitable courage», of «heroic deeds», and of the glorification of the choice to sacrifice «for the good and glory of the homeland» was also the focus of the rapid biographical profiles of children and young people such as *Il Caporalino* of Pieve Tesino, in the Valsugana valley, «the eleven-year-old boy who wore the glorious uniform of the Italian soldier» and gave his life for his homeland «like a true soldier»³²; or the very young squadrista *Antonio Strucchi*, «who died in the ambush of Casale, slaughtered by the Bolsheviks»³³.

More articulated and rich in details was the narration of the deeds of the two heroic children *David Marcello* and *Aldo Sette*, whose unconditioned dedication to the Italian cause had made them martyrs. The first one, *David Marcello*:

Inspired by the ardor and the boldness of the Italian soldiers, he felt as strong and bold as they were and asked to fight. [...] so David Marcello became soldier and was able to fulfill his duty until the sacrifice of his life. *An example of heroism to Italian children, who will learn from him the firmness and the courage to fight against all the difficulties of life for the good and the glory of the Homeland*³⁴.

Whereas the other one, *Aldo Sette*:

He was seventeen years old and was one of the Avant-gardists of the Fascio di Greco Milanese. It was the sad period of 1921 when the communist madness completely dominated the spirit of the people. In Milan, the ruthless struggle against the fighters and those who still loved the Homeland was stronger than elsewhere. [...] In the afternoon of 20th March 1921, a small group of fascists from Greco Milanese who took part in the commemorative ceremony of the Five Days of Milan were returning home singing, accompanied by militants from Milan who wanted to escort their companions. [...] The young fascists were largely unarmed, and the opponents, aware of this, came upon them and began to beat them. The young Aldo Sette was the only one who remained on the spot, standing straight, he defended himself by throwing rocks at his assailants, who were firing everywhere. To the young hero who, with his hair in the wind and his gaze firm and serene, was defending Italy with stones from the disturbance of the red madness, the comrades shouted: – Sette, pull back, they are going to kill you! – Never again! – answered the boy. – Come forth, my companions! Long live Italy – and he threw a stone as last defense. A rifle shot to the head left him dying. After a few minutes, Aldo Sette died³⁵.

The third volume of *Vita Fascista. Per le Avanguardie, per i Giovani e le Giovani Italiane*, printed in 1933 by Piero Domenichelli and mainly addressed to older boys, had a different angle compared to the first two volumes. It included a large collection of texts signed by journalists, writers and prominent members of the National Fascist Party, and

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-110.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 117-119.

³³ *Ibid.*, 138-139.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 133-135.

a series of Mussolini's speeches and anecdotes related to heroic episodes and significant events of the First World War and the origins of fascism. Their purpose was to recover the memory of the Italian youth that had sacrificed on the battlefields and to recall the «sacred duty» that united the young heroes of yesterday to the new generations of fascists, who were training in the youth organizations of the regime – veritable «gymnasiums for bravery» – to take up their legacy by taking in the «mystique of extreme sacrifice for the Homeland» that had animated and guided their «fathers and elder brothers»³⁶.

It is no coincidence that, alongside the interventions and contributions of personalities such as Paolo Orano, Margherita Sarfatti, Nazareno Padellaro, Arnaldo Mussolini, Tommaso Marinetti, Italo Balbo, and Orio Vergani, in the third and last volume of *Vita Fascista* by Domenichelli there was a wide section entitled «I nostri Martiri» celebrating the memory of the young Black Shirts fallen during the revolution that led to the victory of Fascism in Italy:

And you, the avant-gardists of today – the author wrote –, the young fascists who are getting ready with meditation and awareness and with the outward exultation of the gatherings [...], to follow up in the ranks of the militia. [You] have the duty to look for the names of our heroes and martyrs, the countless names that must join the few ones that are remembered here; and [to look for] the deeds of each one of them for the ideal book to draw from as well as from the purest and most sacred sources of the Revolution and of the Fascist Homeland, of the Fascist Life to which we are tied by bonds of blood that will never break. Gather them, ideally, our martyrs, in the luminous vision of your eyes, in the incessant and total re-enactment, in a Sublime Legion, which was the truth of the Avant-gardism from which the one of today, which is yours, derives, carries out, moves forward³⁷.

And in what was in all respects a sort of *martyrology of fascist youth*, Domenichelli's text proposed to the reader a dozen profiles of «young heroes of Mussolini», whose deeds were recalled according to the classical canons of the *pedagogy of the fascist exemplarity* already widely applied by the author in the two other volumes of *Vita Fascista. Per i Balilla e le Piccole Italiane*.

Thus, in recalling the «sacrifice» of *Federico Florio*, the young avant-gardist «who died on 17th January 1922, hit by a communist revolver», it was emphasized how he «being just a young man revealed himself to be a Hero with an ardent soul, a vigorous spirit, a very noble heart. Indomitable and desperate fighter». And the reader was urged to imitate «the sublime beauty of his bold deeds» to «honor Italy highly»³⁸.

Likewise, in celebrating some of the «most radiant and purest martyrs» of the heroic «days of the '21, dear to the nostalgic memory of the squadristo», the multitude of «undefeated heroes» was honored: for «the victory of the blessed Cause», «contemptuous of the danger and careless of the enemy». They had not hesitated to go towards the extreme sacrifice and to make of death «a sign to scornfully carry on their chest». Among them was *Luigi Platania*, and it was exactly the bravery of his endeavors, his total «consecration» to the «Cause of the Homeland», his being an «enthusiastic and heroic

³⁶ Domenichelli, *Vita Fascista. Per le Avanguardie, per i Giovani e le Giovani Italiane*, cit., pp. 7-8.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

fascist», that made the ex-fighter and squadrista «fallen on the field of glory» an authentic model and standard for the youth of Mussolini: «The life of Luigi Platania is sacred – wrote the author, moved –, sacred to the Homeland, sacred to Fascism!»³⁹.

Similar tones, even though in the face of sometimes very different events and experiences, can be found also in the other profiles of the «young heroes and martyrs of the Fascist Revolution» proposed in the third and last volume of *Vita Fascista*.

The wide section of the work of Piero Domenichelli dedicated to the celebration of «I nostri Martiri», that is to say the presentation of the exploits of some of the young squadristi who stood out for their «heroism and disregard for danger» and who had «given their lives in extreme sacrifice for the homeland» during the «Revolution of the Black Shirts», ended with a collection of speeches by Benito Mussolini. The speeches effectively proposed the key orientations that inspired fascism in regard to the education of the young Italians in the youth organizations of the regime. At the same time, it reiterated the choice to feed such education to an actual *mystique of duty and heroism*:

Young generations belong entirely to us and there are no exceptions to this very firm fundamental rule. They must be raised with the spirit proper to the fascist discipline and it is, therefore, necessary that they diligently and regularly attend the institutions set up for them by the Regime. [...] This masculine and warlike education is necessary in Italy because for many centuries the military virtues of the people could not stand out. The war fought from 1915 to 1918 is the first one, since the wars during the Roman Empire, that has been fought and won by the Italian people.

Moreover:

There must be the Italians of Fascism, as distinctive as the Italians of the Renaissance and the Italians of the latinity. Only by creating a lifestyle, a way of living, we will be able to remain in the pages of history and not only in the chronicle. And what is this way of life? Courage, first of all; the fearlessness, the love for the risk, [...] always being ready to dare both in the individual and the collective life, to abhor anything that is sedentary; [...] the pride of being Italian at every hour of the day, the work discipline, the respect for the authority [...] The movement I created will keep carrying on, long after me. Who are the Balilla? They are the fascists of tomorrow. The future of Italy is safe in their hands. Even though Italy is not entirely fascist today, it will be so, when the young of today become adults⁴⁰.

3. *The turning point of the early Thirties: the birth of the myth of the «Heroic youth» grown up «in the shade of the Littorio»*

It was in the early Thirties that the strategy pursued until then on the ideological and political education of the new generations within the youth organizations of the regime was destined to experience a real breakthrough.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-80.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 105-109.

In 1932, the text *Giovinazza eroica*, edited by the Central Presidency of the *Opera Nazionale Balilla*, was published in order «to remove it from the ephemeral life of newspapers and preserve it as a noble example of masculine education». It collected the memory of «the actions of today». In total, there were around 161 «heroic facts» having as protagonists 181 among Balilla and Avant-gardists, to whom it is necessary to add another 60 names of «young fascists» who distinguished themselves during great catastrophes (landslides, floods, etc.) for their «heroic sacrifice» and their commitment towards the community⁴¹.

The ultimate purpose of the publication, repeatedly reissued until the fall of fascism⁴², was to make manifest, «regardless of any official recognition», the «heroic value of the gestures, that the Presidency of the Opera pointed to the admiration and the example of all the young Black Shirts».

In other words, the choice to bring to the attention of the Italian youth in the organizations of the regime «this long theory of names and facts, the Golden Register of the Opera Nazionale Balilla» had a dual purpose: on the one hand, to reiterate «that the newest generations of the Littorio had not taken the Name only from the heroic Genoese young boy, nor the robe only from the daring squadristo of the first hour»; on the other hand – and this is certainly the most relevant aspect –, to prove how an institution such as the Opera Nazionale Balilla, which from its origins (1926) had made «the bravery and disregard of danger its own educational norm», had already fully succeeded in the immense and colossal task of transfusing «in our young people those virtues of the Latin race, which, dormant for some time, have found in the pure and vivifying atmosphere of Fascism a new bloom and new life»⁴³.

In this regard, if the already mentioned works of Asvero Gravelli and Piero Domenichelli, like those of the many other writers placed in the so-called line of the *pedagogy of the Fascist exemplarity*, had the purpose of instilling in the youth of the regime the «fascist spirit» and the «warrior virtues» of the generation «tempered by the fire of the battles on the Karst» and the «glorious and heroic maniples of the Black Shirts» that had brought to completion «the Fascist Revolution», the new publication – with the meaningful title *Giovinazza eroica* – intended to represent a sort of implicit confirmation of the effective success of the Mussolini project to create in the Balilla and the Avant-gardists «the new integrally fascist Italian». At the same time, it aimed at ensuring that the Italian youth «shaped in the image and likeness of the Duce» by the youth organizations of the regime would provide a model and a reference point for generations to come.

Therefore, the volume *Giovinazza eroica* was placed at the crossroads between the celebration of the «Italian virtues», too long set aside and now finally placed by fascism at the base of the ideological formation of the Italian youth, and the exaltation of the

⁴¹ Opera Nazionale Balilla, *Giovinazza Eroica*, Roma, Presidenza Centrale dell'O.N.B., 1932, pp. 3-4.

⁴² The Central Presidency of the Opera Nazionale Balilla also printed two other editions of the work that had been updated and enriched with further examples, respectively in 1934 and 1937. Later, the General Command of the Gioventù Italiana del Littorio took charge of the new editions that came out in 1940 and 1942.

⁴³ Opera Nazionale Balilla, *Giovinazza Eroica*, cit., pp. 3-4.

characteristics and qualities of the «new Italian» grown «in the shadow of the Littorio» and constantly guided by the example of the Duce and his reprimand to «live dangerously». The volume was supplied free of charge to all the members of the male branches of the Opera Nazionale Balilla and made the subject of reading and collective reflection not only in the classrooms (generally as an additional teaching aid to be added to the Single State Text in primary and public schools)⁴⁴, but also during the meetings and the local gatherings of the fascist youth organization. In essence, it was a collection of short narratives of episodes of civil heroism, of tales of protection of fascist institutions and defense of the established order and the social coexistence that had as protagonists Balilla and Avant-gardists of different ages, social status and geographical origin. Their generalities and data relating to their militancy in the youth organizations of the regime were provided, as well as a full-length or half-length photograph, mainly in uniform or, in rare cases, with at least the badge of the Opera Nazionale Balilla, which intended to highlight the «bold and daring spirit» and the «martial traits» of the children and young people who became protagonists of the «heroic enterprises».

Through the analysis of the synthetic but precise accounts of the «episodes of heroism» reported in the publication, the analysis of the language used and the study of the type of «virtuous facts» selected to be exalted and celebrated, it is possible to highlight how the myth of the «heroic youth», forged by the youth organizations of the regime according to the principles of Mussolini's ideology (virile education, boldness, love of sacrifice, disregard for danger, etc.) is a fundamental chapter of the most comprehensive project of building the new fascist man. Namely, this was an attempt to promote – through the memory and celebration of the «heroic youth» through the school and associationism – a civil and political education of the young Italian generations entirely inspired by Mussolini's ideal.

Focused, as already mentioned, on acts of civil heroism, on the protection of fascist institutions and on the defense of social coexistence and of the established order, the episodes narrated in the pages of *Gioventù eroica* concern, first of all, the rescue of people in danger of drowning, the extinguishing of large fires or the intervention in favor of the victims of major tragedies and natural disasters.

Thus, the thirteen-year-old Giuseppe Airaghi from S. Stefano Ticino (Milan), Balilla belonging to the 161st Legion, had been awarded the bronze medal of civil value for having jumped «with generous enthusiasm in the deep waters of a canal to the rescue of a little girl, who after falling accidentally, carried by the current, was about to drown» and «having reached her, he managed with considerable effort to rescue her»⁴⁵.

Similar recognition was given to the young Ambrogio Brivio from Maderno (Brescia), Balilla of the 44th Legion, who «on the morning of 8 September VI [1928], seeing a

⁴⁴ See A. Ascenzi, R. Sani, *Il libro per la scuola nel ventennio fascista. La normativa sui libri di testo dalla riforma Gentile alla fine della seconda guerra mondiale (1923-1945)*, Macerata, Alfabetica Edizioni, 2009, pp. 135-136.

⁴⁵ Opera Nazionale Balilla, *Gioinezza Eroica*, cit., p. 5.

six-year-old boy fall into the water, contemptuous of the danger he was facing, he threw himself completely dressed into the water and managed to rescue him»⁴⁶.

Remarkable «courage» and «disregard for danger» were also shown by Oliviero Cattarini, Trieste, Avant-gardist of the 298th Legion, who «in the night of 17 August VI [1928] in the Port of New York, with grave danger and in extremely difficult conditions, saved the life of a woman, Assunta Esposito, honoring the Italian name abroad with his gesture, his value and his modesty»⁴⁷.

There were also rescue episodes that saw the heroic rescuer succumb to the fury of the waters and the sudden loss of forces, as in the case of the thirteen-year-old Pierino Bertiglia from Brusaschetto (Alexandria), Balilla of the 382nd Legion, who, «shining example of courage and contempt for danger», after diving into the Cervo stream to rescue «a companion who accidentally fell where the water was deep», caught by «a sudden sickness, immediately fell to the bottom and miserably perished victim of his generous soul»⁴⁸.

Also for what concerned the fires, very frequent especially in the small rural villages, Balilla and Avant-gardists stood out for their commitment and for the courage with which they faced the flames and came to the aid of the people. As is the case of the very young *Romeo Alessio*, originally from Calanna (Reggio Calabria), Balilla belonging to the 231st Legion, who «on the occasion of a very violent fire that destroyed three houses in his village, despising every danger, participated with courageous enthusiasm in the work of extinguishing the flames and saving», earning the applause and admiration of everyone present and of the «Soldiers of the M.V.S.N. [Voluntary National Security Militia]», who had arrived to bring rescue⁴⁹.

Similar acts of courage and self-sacrifice had characterized other young people such as Nicolò Mangiaracina from Palermo, Avant-gardist of the 183rd Legion, or like the Milanese Sandro Manzoni, Virginio Tagliabue and Alfredo Geffert, who also belonged to the 158th Legion, who, among the mountains of Madesimo in Valle Spluga (in province of Sondrio), «with courage and contempt for danger», had worked «in the arduous work of extinguishing a fire that developed in one of the houses in the village»⁵⁰.

Actually, the «episodes of youthful heroism» and the situations of «grave danger» in which Balilla and Avant-gardists had proved themselves enough to acquire merits and awards for Civic Valor were numerous. The fourteen-year-old war orphan Secondo Ugo Castellucci, Avant-gardist of the 101st Legion in Forlì, for example, was given a public commendation for having come to the aid of an injured man during a very serious car accident who was «about to be crushed by the rear wheels of a heavy truck» and for having «rescued him [...] with serious personal risk», putting his own life in danger⁵¹.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Finally, a large group of Balilla and Neapolitan Avant-gardists of the 167th Legion had received an official commendation «for having distinguished themselves in the valiant work of rescue given on the occasion of the great landslide that occurred in Via Arenella» in Naples, during which the young fascists had not hesitated to risk, with «true disregard for danger», their very lives⁵².

Alongside the numerous cases of civil heroism, particular attention was paid, in the pages of *Giovinezza eroica*, to the episodes related to the fight against crime and the repression of subversive activities carried out by the «enemies of the Homeland». Particularly risky, on this side, were the feats carried out by many other young fascists, as in the case of the fifteen-year-old Antonio De Lorenzo, from Praia d'Arienta (Catanzaro), Avant-gardist of the 67th Legion, who «on 13th September VI [1927], with courage and disregard for the danger, leaped in pursuit of a dangerous criminal armed with a revolver who was captured after a bitter fight»⁵³.

Likewise, Corrado Pacini, hailing from Monsummano (Pistoia), Avant-gardist of the 212th Legion, «[after] witnessing the act of violence that took place on 6th May VI [1927] in the hamlet of Monsummano Alto, in which the Black Shirt Beretti Vittorio found his death, with noble intent he launched himself unarmed in pursuit of the murderer Palamidessi Armando, regardless that, in the meanwhile, the latter stopped and shot him with repeated gunshots»⁵⁴.

The same heroism had guided the actions of Cirillo Tempini, from Edolo (Brescia), Avant-gardist of the 44th Legion, who had «courageously assisted the Financial Guard Scaletti Emilio of the Edolo brigade who was struggling with five rebel rascals», who later turned out to be dangerous subversives who were preparing attacks in the area⁵⁵.

A well-deserved reward for civil valor, finally, had been won by the Avant-gardists of the 31st Legion Michele Seneca and Pellegrino Leonardis, both originally from Molinara (Benevento), who, with «absolute disregard for danger», «on 6th October VI [1927] met six rascals armed with rifles and weapons. They confronted and disarmed them, driving them back to the barracks and thus facilitating the work of purging of the RR. CC. [Reali Carabinieri]»⁵⁶.

In this case as well there had been «the young fascist martyrs» who, in showing themselves among «the most daring followers of the commandment of the Duce 'live dangerously'», had paid with their lives the choice to «fulfill their duty all the way»⁵⁷.

The publication in the early Thirties of the booklet *Giovinezza eroica* (1932) aimed, as was already mentioned, at providing vivid evidence of the full and substantial success of Mussolini's project to turn the Balilla and the Avant-gardists into «the new Italian[s], entirely fascist». It was also destined to arouse a sort of redefinition of the theoretical

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 177-178.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-91.

cornerstones of that «pedagogy of fascist exemplarity» which had found in the «mystique of duty and heroism» its primary reference and its most organic and incisive dimension.

It is certainly true that the call to heroism and self-denial of the generation that «sacrificed herself for the Homeland in the trenches of the Great War» and «of the young Black Shirts who had given their blood tribute to the Fascist Revolution» would have continued to inspire the educational work of the youth organizations of the regime. It is equally true, though, that this work would have found a further and even more incisive reference point in the sudden awareness that the children of the *Opera Nazionale Balilla*, who grew up «in the shadow of the Littorio», constituted at the same time the complete expression of the «new wholly fascist Italian» and the true model and reference point for the generations to come of the peninsula.

School Jubilees as an Opportunity for the Implementation of New Instruments of Memory Building: the Case of the 150 Years of *Scuola Magistrale* in Locarno (Switzerland)

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Introduction

This paper is being written while preparations for the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the School for teacher education in Canton Ticino¹, Switzerland (in Italian: *Scuola magistrale*, opened in November 1873) are underway. In the paper's second part I will try to read this anniversary as a Public history experience, using some parts of the *Manifesto della Public History of Education*² as an interpretative framework. Since the anniversary and the main events have been realized in autumn 2023, this paper differs from the version presented at Macerata. I am deeply grateful to my Italian colleagues for the interesting discussions during the Congress and for different suggestions I received for the project.

As we know, national school systems have deeply changed from what they were in the 19th century – when they used to be an integral part of public administration in the context of nation-building projects – to what they have become in the second half of the 20th Century, i.e. a part of complex multileveled education systems. The evolution may explain why in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, school jubilees have been very important in multilinguistic and multicultural Switzerland. This is particularly apparent in the last quarter of 19th century, when aggressive nationalism in neighboring countries became a threat to the Confederation's independence, as well as in the period around World War II, when commemoration was also a form of national education and “teaching into democracy”. However, it must also be considered that in

¹ The school's Italian name is *Dipartimento formazione e apprendimento della Scuola universitaria della Svizzera italiana* (DFA-SUPSI), the official website is www.supsi.ch/dfa (last access: 25.03.2023).

² The Manifesto's version we cite is that of September 2022, findable here: <https://aiph.hypotheses.org/il-gruppo-di-lavoro-sulla-public-history-of-education> (last access: 25.03.2023).



Fig. 1. Exhibition for the 100 years of the Cantonal Education Society (1938)

federalist Switzerland, a “federation of teaching states”³, commemorations have always been focused on cantonal histories in a process of local and cantonal identity-building.

For these reasons we can easily find, in the history of Italian-speaking Switzerland, initiatives remembering the foundation of Schools and Education societies. A booklet for the 50th anniversary of the Cantonal School of Commerce (a school for commercial employees), published in 1945, quotes:

Since the proposals were immediately accepted by the cantonal education board, the initiatives were quickly prepared, concerning: I. the preparation of a commemorating exhibition; II. an exhibition about didactics and schooling; III. the public commemoration on 22-23 September 1945⁴.

In 1938, the foundation of Ticino’s Educational Society (*Società Demopedeutica*) was also commemorated with an exhibition that stressed the role of Ticino’s “father of public education” and Federal Councilor Stefano Franscini (Figure 1).

As these examples show, educational jubilees or commemorations of persons (teachers, headmasters) usually take one of the following forms:

- Exhibitions, commemorative plaques, or monuments (Figure 2)
- Public events such as conferences and congresses
- Commemorative books

³ R. Hofstetter, *La Suisse et l’enseignement aux XIXe-XXe siècles. Le prototype d’une «fédération d’États enseignants»?*, «Histoire de l’éducation», n. 134, 2012, pp. 59-80.

⁴ *Il cinquantenario della Scuola cantonale di commercio, relazione sul biennio 1943-1944 e 1944-1945*, p. 5 (our translation). The document can be downloaded here: <https://fondo-gianini.supsi.ch/444/> (last access: 25.03.2023).

In rare circumstances, we find initiatives diverging from the main path and pursuing charitable objectives aimed at the development or improvement of schools. A good example is what happened in 1902 in the village of Tesserete, where in occasion of the 50th anniversary of the upper primary school new benches were purchased by a committee of teachers and citizens⁵.

However, while preparing this paper we have uncovered that in the second half of the 20th century anniversaries did not appear so important in all moments of history. For example, the 100th anniversary of the School for Teacher education at Locarno in 1973 was not at all celebrated, neither was there a public debate about the centenary. We could not find any information in newspapers, pedagogical reviews etc. (year 1973), and when interviewing alumni, they confirmed their ignorance of the anniversary.

1. *Point of departure: a dividing history, forgotten stories*

The institution that will be celebrated in November 2023 is thus the Cantonal Teacher Education School founded in 1873. This school was sometimes called *Scuola magistrale* and sometimes *Scuola Normale*, in line with the Swiss and European tradition of teacher education⁶. Until 1878 the school was located in the village of Pollegio, it was then relocated to Locarno where it has remained since then, causing a high impact on the local society and culture. Until 1942, it was a vocational post-elementary school (ISCED 3), it then evolved into a higher secondary school with vocational goals (ISCED 3) partly similar to the Italian *Istituto Magistrale* (with male and female sections). It



Fig. 2. Epitaph in the cloister of San Francesco Monastery, now DFA-SUPSI (Locarno)

⁵ O. Monti, *Osservazioni sulle visite alle scuole del Locarnese da parte di alcuni studenti della Normale Maschile di Locarno*, in W. Sahlfeld, Y. Cook, R. Falcade, O. Monti, F. Targhetta, *Leggere vecchi quaderni scolastici. Un'introduzione con letture di quaderni di allievi e maestri (1880-1920)*, Locarno, DFA-SUPSI, 2023, pp. 29-38, <https://www.supsi.ch/it/web/dfa/leggere-vecchi-quaderni-scolastici>.

⁶ L. Criblez, *Das Lehrerseminar. Zur Entwicklung eines Lehrerbildungskonzeptes*, in L. Criblez, R. Hofstetter (edd.), *La formation des enseignant(e)s primaires. Histoire et réformes actuelles. Die Ausbildung von PrimarlehrerInnen. Geschichte und aktuelle Reformen*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2000, pp. 299-338; H.-U. Grunder, *Scuole magistrali*, in *Dizionario Storico della Svizzera*, Last update: 09.08.2012, <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/it/articles/028711/2012-08-09/> (last access: 28.08.2023).

must be mentioned that over this period it was the only upper secondary school in the region of Locarno (Ticino's only grammar school was in Lugano, and the Commercial upper secondary school for commercial employees was in Bellinzona), with the result that many young people attended the school but did not necessarily want to work as teachers. Students still lived (until 1986) as free pensionaries in the cloister of the ancient monastery that housed the school. Tensions due to what was perceived as poor curricular and institutional framework exploded in 1968 when Switzerland's first student rebellion began in Locarno⁷. In 1986 the *Scuola magistrale* became a post-secondary vocational school (ISCED 5) to be attended by students with a grammar school diploma.

The last important change was the transformation into a University of Teacher Education (ISCED 6) in 2002. It is highly symbolic that the name was changed in that moment, from *Scuola magistrale* to *Alta scuola pedagogica*⁸, a fact that was acknowledged but not accepted by the school's faculty. Many teachers left the school at that moment. The integration of the University of Teacher Education into the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI) was decided by the cantonal government with the aim of a better integration into the Swiss universities landscape⁹ and higher performances in research and development.

This brief historical recount may explain why, even before launching the first celebratory initiatives, it was known that there was not a consensual interpretation of Locarno Teacher school's recent history. The following problems were especially known:

- the controversies about the curricular reforms at the end of 20th century with the end of the post-secondary not academic Teacher school (ISCED 5) and the opening of the Teachers University (ISCED 6) in 2002 has never been really accepted by many of the teaching staff, with the result of strong conflicts between the rector and the faculty. Those conflicts are still fresh in the memory of many faculty members;
- the controversies about the integration into SUPSI as a result of a political decision was rejected by other faculty members who left the school in that moment.

This meant that it had to be determined if and how to make the Jubilee a dialogue between different points of view without reopening recent conflicts. The question was political, ethic, and scientific, and we thought Public History could be a way to manage these elements. The Italian Public History manifesto could help to achieve this goal:

It is essential for Public Historians to consider the public, whether specialized or not, both as privileged interlocutors and as potential protagonists of original research practices, contributing to the restitution

⁷ F. Fiero, *La scuola siamo noi. Aula 20 tra passato e futuro*, Locarno, DFA-SUPSI, 2018.

⁸ The question may become clearer if we remember the French and German terms: *Scuola magistrale* = *École normale* = *Lehrerseminar*, *Alta scuola pedagogica* = *Haute école pédagogique* = *Pädagogische Hochschule*. The German word *Hochschule* clearly means University, and the word *Seminar* was also used for the schools of the clergy education. On the other hand, the French words *École normale* and *Haute école* clearly belong to a terminological tradition introduced in France by Napoleon, and mean the first a secondary vocational school for teacher education and the latter a specialized university (e.g. for engineers or architects).

⁹ <https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/organisation/bodies/chamber-of-universities-of-teacher-education/member> (last access: 03.24.2023).

of a central role to historians and history in the interpretation of contemporary society¹⁰.

It was also known that new forms and means of communication could not be ignored, such as audio, video and other multimedia content, websites, social networks and social media. That's why the whole project is realized as a collaboration between the professor of history of education (Wolfgang Sahlfeld), the school's librarians and the communication service. Integrating the different points of view in the process is very helpful. We also wanted the process to be a participatory project, not entirely realized by the project steering committee.

2. *A process-oriented approach*

From the very beginning, the idea was to realize more than one event, in order to “walk together” on the path to November 2023 (month when the anniversary occurs). The result of this process is, while we are writing this paper (March 2023), the following:

- since September 2022, a monthly article about events or persons in the history of DFA-SUPSI is published by the professor of history of education in the internal bulletin;
- the project's website (<https://150magistrale.supsi.ch/>) is online since February 2023;
- an exhibition with books and exercise books from the archive of DFA-SUPSI (from 8 February to 17 February 2023) was organized in the same week when the website was launched;
- in May 2023 we published a textbook addressed to the school's students entitled *How to Read an Exercise Book*, with analysis of historical exercise books coming from the DFA-SUPSI archive, as a contribution to the historical research about teacher education and the practice of teaching;
- in June 2023 a class of students who attended the Scuola magistrale from 1969 to 1973 remembered the anniversary of their primary teacher diploma, and they did it in a meeting with Prof. Wolfgang Sahlfeld and with the head of our primary teacher Bachelor curriculum, Francesca Antonini;
- a public event, open to all interested persons, was organized for 15 November 2023. This event should be open to everybody and very interactive, with workshops about the history of teacher education, meetings between our students and alumni, public debates about the future of teacher education etc.;
- an international seminary about the history of teacher education in Switzerland was organized for 24 November 2023;
- other events will follow in the year 2023-2024 (150 years after the school's first year 1873-1874), as for example a seminary about Ivo Monighetti's experiences in psychology and written language acquisition.

¹⁰ *Manifesto della Public History italiana*, <https://aiph.hypotheses.org/3193> (last access: 03.24.2023).

3. *New discoveries due to the process-oriented approach*

Although we were conscious that records and memory are not the same for everybody in our community, we were surprised by some facts that were uncovered after launching the project's website and calling for testimonies:

- in 1969 a second Teacher education school had opened in the city of Lugano, eventually becoming completely autonomous in 1977. This second Teacher education school was closed already in 1985 due to the opening of new upper secondary schools (which made useless the second school) and the Teacher education's first academic upgrading from ISCED 3 to ISCED 5. Many faculty members of the Lugano school perceive their experience as a forgotten one and now ask us to reconstitute it in more depth;
- in the period 1985-2000, important studies about children's acquisition of reading and writing skills had been realized by the school's director at the time, the psychologist Ivo Monighetti (1938-2008). This important chapter of our history has been almost completely forgotten, although several faculty members took part in these experiences.

The contacts with those "unforeseen stakeholders" of our history led to some misunderstandings. We learned from those experiences that is very important to share the aims and the methodological decisions of the project with the public, as it is very well said in the Italian Manifesto:

Public Historians strive to ensure that the results and the methodologies of historiographical research are known by a wider public and experiment with practices of communication and research that can also lead to new and original developments in historical knowledge through interaction with the public¹¹.

Another interesting effect of our process-based approach is that we can re-discover forgotten facts and people of our history during the processes. A good example is what happened when we constructed the website's timeline and searched information about all headmasters. During the archive research, we discovered that no picture exists, and only one document remains, about the first head teacher of the female section of the *Scuola magistrale*, Martina Martinoni. However, she seems to have been an important innovator in Swiss pedagogy, a follower of Tuiskon Ziller's method she had learnt about in the Canton of Grisons. Before this research, we had always believed that transfers of pedagogic ideas between Grisons and Ticino had not been possible¹², but this has been, as we now see very clearly, an error due to the fact that we had not considered Martina Martinoni's role in the female Teacher education school at Locarno, where she taught Ziller's method for at least twenty years to all female teachers of Canton Ticino. It must be said that we found only one archive source (in a booklet about women in Ticino from

¹¹ *Manifesto della Public History italiana*, cit.

¹² Cf. W. Sahlfeld, *Federalismo: motore di innovazioni e transfert pedagogici? Il caso della svizzera*, «Annali di storia dell'educazione e delle istituzioni scolastiche», n. 23, 2016, pp. 19-21; Id., *Pädagogische Kulturtransfers Italien-Tessin (1894-1936)*, «Rivista svizzera di scienze dell'educazione», n. 1, 2018, pp. 49-66.

1928) and that even the archives for Women's studies in Lugano¹³ have not published a notice about her. We published this discovery in the DFA-SUPSI internal bulletin, and different individuals reacted to it enquiring why women are, in current recounts of "traditional" history of education, less considered than their male colleagues.

4. *Is our Jubilee inspired by the principles of Public History?*

In the following chapter, we will try to discuss our initiatives using the *Manifesto della Public History of Education*¹⁴ as a framework for a critical analysis. The first interesting point I would like to stress is the question of "social needs".

2) *Public History [...] moves from social needs and tries to create forms of co-construction of knowledge, leaving the traditional idea of vulgarization, dissemination, and transmission of historical knowledge.*

Only when thinking about the real meaning of "social needs", we discovered the importance of this point. For example, we were very surprised about the exhibition's success: among the visitors many elderly persons told us they had come to see it because they had been students of the school.

It was only when we launched the idea of a seminar about Monighetti's book *La lettera e il senso* (published in 1994)¹⁵ to be held in the spring of 2024, that several colleagues began to tell about their experience as collaborators of Monighetti. Our wish is that the seminar may become a real opportunity to formalize and record their memories, allowing students to discover an important part of their school's recent history.

5) *Public History in educational and caregiving professions may be used as a powerful instrument for vocational training, for initial training as well as for lifelong learning.*

We have always been sure that the history of education can be a tool of "professional empowerment" for young teachers. In 2020, we coordinated the publishing of a publication aimed at providing students with a theoretical introduction into research in history of education and some examples of good practices, which could be helpful for those who wanted to write a Bachelor or Master thesis on the subject¹⁶. The textbook seems to be a really helpful tool for students who have never applied a historical approach to school and education related topics. As previously mentioned, in the year of the anniversary we will publish a second similar volume, focused on the use of historical school exercise books as a source for studies in the history of education. A theoretical

¹³ <https://www.archividonneticino.ch/> (last access: 03.24.2023).

¹⁴ *Manifesto della Public History of Education*, cit.

¹⁵ I. Monighetti, *La lettera e il senso: un approccio interattivo all'apprendimento della lettura e della scrittura*, Scandicci, La Nuova Italia, 1994.

¹⁶ <https://www.supsi.ch/dfa/pubblicazioni/quaderni-didattici/storia-scuola/formare-e-formarsi-con-la-storia-dell-educazione> (last access 03.24.2023).

introduction about school exercise books as a source has been written by prof. Fabio Targhetta (University of Macerata). As an example of good practice, an interdisciplinary research about mathematic exercise books written by an expert for didactic of matematic and a historian of education will also be included. This contribution is based on exercise books written by students and teachers of the *Scuola magistrale* (end of 19th century) found in the school's archive. Another contribution focuses on exercise books of a student of the *Scuola magistrale* dating back to 1916-1920.

7) Schools, museums, libraries and local authorities are the natural partners of Public History initiatives.

From our point of view, one of the most powerful resources of the whole project is the collaboration of the school's librarians (since 2016). They take part in an interdisciplinary team for research, conservation and digitalization of sources for the history of education¹⁷. This is particularly helpful in a University for teacher education deprived of a school museum (they are instead very frequent in Italian universities). On the other hand, DFA-SUPSI is a small institution and without the librarians, research in history of education would not have a sufficient critical mass. The advantage of involving the librarians in the project is also another one: they have very good contacts to other archives and libraries, and interested parties (for example those who could donate us old exercise books) trust them more easily than they would a university professor (for example when bringing us old exercise books from their family's heritage). This brings us to another interesting point of the *Manifesto della public history of education*, the question of contact with the public.

6) The activities of Public History will prefer the direct contact with the concerned persons, but they will also develop the use of communication and information technologies, based on the idea of glocalism and social empowerment. From the technological point of view, this means that Open source resources and Open access policies should be chosen.

Concerning the question of Open access policies and Open resources, we could base our project on several existing infrastructures of the laboratory for history of education (coordinated by Wolfgang Sahlfeld). For example, on the website's timeline the user can directly access digitized versions of relevant historical documents, this is possible because these assets have been digitized, stocked in a repository¹⁸ and published in an Open access mode across the laboratory's website for sources and documents about Swiss history of education¹⁹.

¹⁷ <https://www.supsi.ch/dfa/ricerca/laboratori/rccd> (last access: 03.24.2023).

¹⁸ <https://fondo-gianini.supsi.ch/> (last access: 03.24.2023).

¹⁹ <https://storiascuola.supsi.ch/fonti-2/> (last access: 03.24.2023).

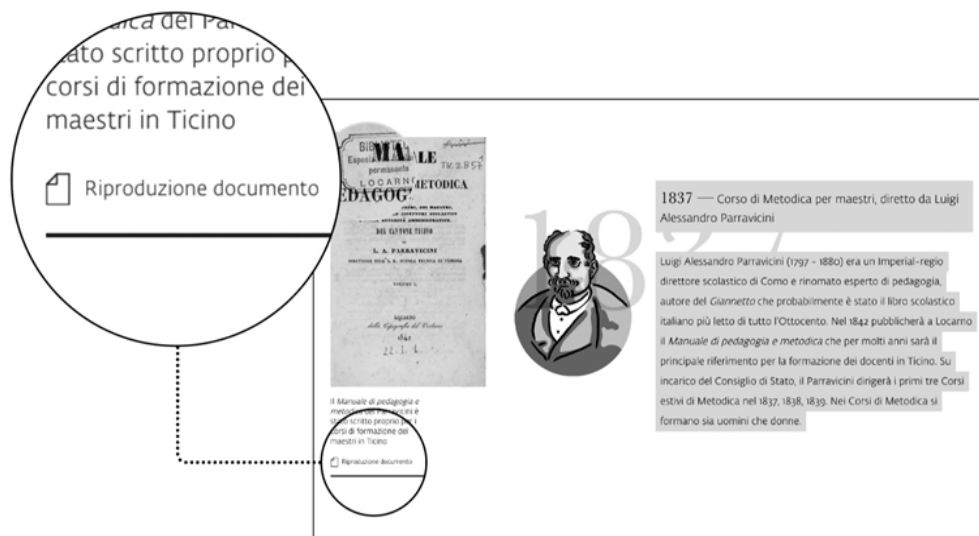


Fig. 3. detail from the website's timeline (<https://150magistrale.supsi.ch/mostra-150-anni/>). Thanks to Adamo Citraro (DFA-SUPSI communication service) for the graphic elaboration

Once the website was finished, a section inviting members of the public to contribute their personal accounts was added²⁰. Among the reactions to this initiative, we found particularly interesting that several ex-teachers of the Lugano Teacher education school (as previously mentioned) wanted to contribute their accounts, which had not really been our focus so far. In June 2023, I met the already mentioned group of alumni who attended the *Scuola magistrale* from 1969 to 1973, and in November they participated in the public event by contributing their memories and life experience (most of them have been primary school teachers for many decades). These are only some of many examples I could bring about the importance of personal contact and involvement of actors.

Conclusions

I hope that this contribution, focused on a local academic jubilee, can be useful for the debate about public memory of school. I do not think I discovered something

²⁰ <https://150magistrale.supsi.ch/racontaci-la-tua-storia/> (last access: 03.24.2023).

completely new to valorize school memory, but I hope that our experience, based on “learning by doing” and the use of a theoretical framework such as the *Manifesto della Public History of Education* will help to bring about significant ways to share memories and to create a shared understanding of the past while involving the local community in the experience.

The Public Representation of Schools in Philately

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Introduction

This paper could have been titled *Ipotesi di una sconfitta* (Hypothesis of a Defeat), borrowing the title of the acclaimed 2017 novel by Giorgio Falco for Einaudi. I had been carelessly drawn to the subject of philately by a feeling of nostalgia towards adolescence and those fleeting passions, as all-encompassing as often as they were ephemeral: I had inherited from an uncle a modest collection of stamps, of no value, but nevertheless rich. Those coloured rectangles from many different countries of the world had led me to consume geographical atlases and the famous *De Agostini Atlas Calendars*, so packed with statistics, data and cartographic information. However, it would be better not to confuse sentiment and historiographical rigour, and it is one thing to have personal memories, and quite another to conduct historical research on public memory.

When I was confronted with this issue, the first things I asked myself – as is always the case when it comes to undertaking research of a historical nature – were, as usual: what are my research hypotheses? How do I intend to interrogate the main sources of this work, namely stamps? Where the latter is of course directly related to the former. These are not idle questions; rather, let this incipit of mine not be idle, for it is intended to bear witness to the difficulties I encountered when faced with a subject that was entirely new to me and for which I could find little supporting bibliography to suggest possible avenues of research.

I therefore initially turned my attention to the effects of the representation of schools and education in philately from the point of view of public memory, but – I must confess – I soon came to very meagre conclusions. On the one hand this is due to the objective difficulty in assessing the importance not so much that a stamp may have had as an object in itself in public memory, but a specific theme reproduced in some (admittedly few) stamp series. In short, even in the face of quantitative data on the number of specimens produced, I would have had to proceed along a path fraught with fragile conjecture, precisely because it was so difficult to verify. How to assess the impact that a handful of stamps issued in the space of half a century had in the public memory? It seemed to me a vain undertaking, as well as decidedly pretentious.

So I changed my perspective: I was to no longer try to determine the effect actually achieved, but the effect the commissioner had wished to achieve. Therefore, not the end

result, but the expected result. Because the fact that issuing a commemorative stamp was not a neutral operation, but on the contrary that repercussions were expected, especially on the collective imagination, was always very clear to the commissioner.

1. *When stamps celebrate power*

To give a concrete example, consider the stamp issued on 3 May 1991 dedicated to the “Azuni” High School in Sassari¹. It was part of the fourth issue of the *Scuole d'Italia* series, which had started three years earlier with a postage stamp dedicated to the “Ennio Quirino Visconti” High School in Rome². The institute has 19th century origins and since 1865 has been named after Domenico Alberto Azuni, a distinguished specialist in commercial and maritime law³. Now, while it is true that the order of issue of the stamps in the *Scuole d'Italia* series need not necessarily follow a hierarchical order of the national resonance of the institute being celebrated, it is equally true that it is interesting to understand – or at least to hypothesise – the reasons that prompted the Postal and Telecommunications Administration to make a selection among all the Italian schools of ancient lineage and to assign a certain ranking in the order of issue. In that case, why was this Sassari high school included in this very small circle? Certainly for its prestige, for having been a point of reference for the city and regional ruling class, as the then headmaster, Giuseppe Bazzoni, and the then mayor of the city, Francesco Borghetto⁴ wrote in the «Bollettino illustrativo». And reading the list of illustrious students, names that have left their mark on the national cultural and political world immediately leap to the eye, from Salvatore Satta (who is cited as a ‘storyteller’, forgetting an entire career as a great jurist, but deciding to value an enduring career as a writer due to the posthumous publication of his masterpiece, *Il giorno del giudizio* (*The Day of Judgment*), and here too there is food for thought) to Antonio Segni, Palmiro Togliatti, Enrico Berlinguer. And Francesco Cossiga. That Francesco Cossiga – who in 1991 was the President of the Italian Republic. Now, even without being too mischievous, a question arises spontaneously: was it, in the intentions of the commissioner, that the school be celebrated in this case, or was it also a bit for the president? In this case, the elaborate machine of public memory was set in motion not so much to perpetuate power as to pay homage to the existing

¹ Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Decree of 7 June 1991, «Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana», vol. CXXXIII, n. 4, 7 January 1992, p. 10; F. Filanci, *Il novellario. Enciclatologo della posta in Italia: francobolli, interi postali, bolli-franchi, storia, servizi bollature & relative valutazioni*, vol. 5: *La prima Repubblica in Posta, 1949-1993*, Milano, Cif/unificato, 2018, p. 324.

² *Ibid.*, p. 303. Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Decree of 4 March 1988, «Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana», a. CXXX, No. 23, 28 January 1989, p. 7.

³ F. Liotta, *Azuni, Domenico Alberto*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1962, vol. 4, pp. 751-752.

⁴ Post and Telecommunications Administration, *Emissione di un francobollo ordinario appartenente alla serie tematica “Scuole d'Italia” dedicato al Ginnasio Liceo D.A. Azuni di Sassari*, «Bollettino illustrativo», n. 11, 3 May 1991, p. 2.

elites and to guarantee the ruling classes' immortality. As Bauman has written, «the lives of rulers “transcend mere everydayness”. Their biographies become history»⁵. And this power to orient the judgments of posterity from the traces of history is ensured for the ruling classes by their role and control of the mechanisms with which they can intervene in public memory, glorifying certain names and/or episodes, dropping the veil of silence on others that may be inconvenient or divisive. In this sense, Mario Isnenghi teaches us that «absences, historical gaps, are as valid as choices as presences»⁶.

Similar considerations can be made about the stamp dedicated in 1999 to the Scuola Superiore Normale in Pisa, attended, as also reported in the «*Bollettino illustrativo*», by the then President of the Republic Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, as well as former President Giovanni Gronchi.

These stamps are part of the *Scuole d'Italia* series (later renamed *Scuole e università*) which started in 1988 with an issue celebrating the “Visconti” High School in Rome. It was, as explained in the «*Bollettino illustrativo*» by the President of the *Accademia dei Lincei* Francesco Gabrieli, himself a former student of Visconti, the «first Italian secondary school in Rome, with a chronological primacy that soon extended to the didactic and moral field, and still endures today». An important investiture, for an institute – the first secular one in the capital, no longer just of Christianity – that represented the scholastic venue favoured by the Roman upper middle class and by the «new allogenic elements (read: coming from Piedmont and Lombardy) that assimilated into it».

The following year, 1989, it was the turn of the “Giuseppe Parini” High School in Milan, alongside the stamp of the University of Pisa⁷. This was an important novelty for Italian collectors: for the first time, in fact, a thematic serial featured two different graphics⁸. In this case, too, the choice fell on a prestigious institute, frequented by the city's upper middle class – the school was close to the editorial office of the «*Corriere della Sera*» – which made the headlines in 1966 for the famous case of the school newspaper «*La Zanzara*», which made a significant contribution to the change of social customs in post-miracle Italy, an episode also mentioned in the «*Bollettino illustrativo*» in the text edited by the then headmaster, Giorgio Porrotto, and the head of the school's historical archive, Mariacarla Motta.

But what are these «*Bollettini*» that I have mentioned several times? Numismatic enthusiasts will certainly be familiar with them. They are sheets published to comment on the issue of a stamp. In the first part, all data are given analytically, from the colours to the watermarks, the print run, the ministerial decree, the name of the designer, the value, the series to which it belongs, etc. The second part, on the other hand, and the one that is most interesting for our purposes, reproduces in lengthy texts, signed by illustrious

⁵ Z. Bauman, *Il teatro dell'immortalità. Mortalità, immortalità e altre strategie di vita*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1995, p. 82.

⁶ M. Isnenghi, *Alle origini del 18 aprile*, in M. Gervasoni (ed.), *Mappe dell'immaginario. Per una storia culturale del contemporaneo*, Milano, Unicopli, 1999, p. 173.

⁷ Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Decree of 11 November 1999, «*Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana*», vol. CXL, n. 284, 3 December 1999, p. 56.

⁸ Filanci, *Il novellario*, cit., p. 309.

personalities – from the Minister of Education to eminent figures from the world of culture and pedagogy up to and including the headmasters of celebrated schools – the official reasons that inspired the production of the stamp. Through analysis of the excerpts it is possible to grasp, reading between the lines, the gap between history and memories and the political nature of the choices or certain biographical reinterpretations. These texts, moreover, respond to a specific grammar, codified over decades of publications by the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications: a short piece of writing with an eminently hagiographic slant, aimed at magnifying, without excessive critical investigation, the figure of the commemorated or honoured institution, with a not always rigorous attention to historical reality – I am speaking of objective data, not interpretative theses – and a tendency to draw a veil of impartial approval. In the case of schools, moreover, the impression is that, on the whole, the intention was to celebrate, with the institution, the educational tradition of that specific city and, by extension, of the whole of Italy.

With the third issue, November 1990, we go to southern Italy and find the University of Catania and the “Bernardino Telesio” Classical High School in Cosenza⁹. In this case, the «Bollettino» is of great interest because it reveals part of the motivation behind Telesio’s candidature. Its headmaster, Giuseppe Ciacco, in describing the area of the city where the institute is located, wrote of the need to initiate a work of recovery and revitalisation of the old town centre, calling it an initiative of pressure and stimulus to which, in his opinion, the commemorative postage stamp could have made a valuable contribution¹⁰. In short, a socially useful outcome of an action, that of public memory, usually aimed at strengthening a sense of identity. In this case, we can speak of strengthening the sense of belonging to a community with the aim of producing concrete effects on the very urban fabric of that community.

2. *Which school do they want to celebrate?*

But let us return to the choice of the commemorated schools. The institutes chosen to be celebrated in the *Scuole d’Italia* series share two significant characteristics: firstly, high schools (and in one case a high school for science) of ancient lineage were chosen, confirming the pre-eminence historically assigned in our country to humanistic studies. Secondly, and I would say closely related to the first point, the status of elite schools, attended by the upper middle class and destined to train the future ruling class. In short, the public memory, if we are to refer to the issuance of commemorative stamps with a school theme, in the intentions of the commissioner must be cemented around very precise identity symbols: not the school of all, the popular one, but the one attended by a

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 322. Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Decree of 20 November 1990, «Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana», vol. CXXXII, n. 118, 22 May 1991, pp. 6-7.

¹⁰ Post and Telecommunications Administration, *Emissione di due francobolli ordinari appartenenti alla serie tematica “Scuole d’Italia” dedicati all’Università degli Studi di Catania e al Liceo Bernardino Telesio di Cosenza*, «Bollettino illustrativo», n. 21, 5 November 1990, p. 3.

specific social class. Institutes with their own tradition, often pre-dating the unification of Italy, with their own internal rituals, state-run but exclusive high schools, to use a trendy term. It seems to me the perfect snapshot of a school, the Italian one, for a long time elitist and selective.

I have so far spoken of high schools or universities which, however prestigious or linked to illustrious students, do not represent a singularity on the national scene. However, the case of the Nunziatella Military School in Naples¹¹ and the State Institute of Art in Urbino¹² is different. Both are two unica: respectively one of the oldest military training institutes, not only in Italy, and the other, founded in 1861, was transformed in 1924 into the first and only National Institute for Book Decoration and Illustration.

The norm of high schools with an excellent student body and ancient lineage had thus been broken, but only to celebrate unique schools, also exclusive in their own way and, in any case, destined to train excellences. Excellences to be promoted and entrusted to public memory because they are able to play a pedagogical role and to set an example.

Instead, the postage stamp issued on 15 October 1955 to celebrate the centenary of vocational education in Italy, which was intended to coincide with the centenary celebration of the “Girolamo e Margherita Montani” Industrial Technical Institute in Fermo, which took place on 14 and 15 October and was attended, among others, by the then President of the Republic Giovanni Gronchi, falls into another category, that of the invention of tradition¹³. The choice, without in any way detracting from the Marches institute, was entirely arbitrary and did not take into account older school experiences that had arisen in areas with greater industrial vocation (I am thinking, to give just one example, of the San Carlo Industrial Technical Schools in Turin, founded in 1848). It was Mario Pantaleo, Director General for Technical Education at the Ministry of Public Education from 1948 to 1958, who wrote the «Bollettino illustrativo»¹⁴, defining the Fermo institute as «the most effective example and model for the realisation and consolidation of other initiatives that were being undertaken at that time in the field of professional education»¹⁵. In this case it is a double bind – the attribution of a primordial role to the Fermo school and the postponement of the centenary by a year, given that it had been founded in 1854 – probably determined by the need, once the theme of vocational education had been established, to find a concrete element to anchor the celebrations to, so as to give substance to a concept (vocational education, to be precise)

¹¹ Post and Telecommunications Administration, *Emissione di un francobollo celebrativo della Scuola militare Nunziatella, nel 2° centenario della fondazione*, «Bollettino illustrativo», n. 17, 14 November 1987. See also Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Decree of 15 October 1987, «Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana», vol. CXXIX, n. 211, 8 September 1988, p. 10.

¹² Post and Telecommunications Administration, *Emissione di due francobolli ordinari appartenenti alla serie tematica “Scuole e Università” dedicati all’Istituto Statale d’arte di Urbino e alla Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa*, «Bollettino illustrativo», n. 34, 27 November 1999.

¹³ E.J. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger (edd.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Torino, Einaudi, 1987.

¹⁴ See the biographical entry in G. Chiosso, R. Sani (edd.), *DBE. Dizionario Biografico dell’Educazione 1800-2000*, Milan, Editrice Bibliografica, 2013, vol. II, pp. 277-278.

¹⁵ Post and Telecommunications Administration, *Emissione di un francobollo commemorativo del centenario dell’istruzione professionale in Italia*, «Bollettino illustrativo», n. 12, 15 October 1955, p. 3.

that would otherwise be abstract. The impression is that in this case they wanted to look for the occasion and a real reference to be fixed in the public memory.

Even the postage stamp for the “Cavour” Scientific High School in Rome, issued in 2001¹⁶, in the search for reasons to support its eminence on the national scene, contains a historical forgery: in the «Bollettino», the then school headmaster Gian Giuseppe Contessa described the Cavour as the «first scientific high school to be founded in Rome and perhaps in Italy»¹⁷. Now, since the first teaching was started in the 1926-27 school year, it is not really possible that it was the first scientific high school in Italy, having been established by Giovanni Gentile in 1923, the year in which the Nievo Scientific High School in Padua was founded, to mention just one case.

3. *Memory manipulation*

Another example of the invention of tradition applied to philately is the one featuring Vittorino da Feltre. Issued on 10 May 1978, on the occasion of the sixth centenary of his birth, the stamp depicts Rambaldoni in profile, wearing a banded cap on his head¹⁸. His legacy was outlined in the «Bollettino» by Mario Pedini, the Christian Democrat Minister of Education, who referred to the ethical-religious foundation of the Feltre pedagogue’s educational *magisterium*:

a man of culture, educator of young people, a pedagogue, strongly committed to realising the principles of the unity of culture at the school he established, which has since remained exemplary, Vittorino infused young people – patricians, nobles and poor commoners who attended it – with the stimuli that came to him from a Christian outlook on life, exercised through continuous inner conquest and expressed in faith and deeds¹⁹.

The attribution of an Italian pedagogical supremacy, identified in the figure of Vittorino da Feltre, had a way of expressing itself, as Valentino Minuto has well identified in his research²⁰, not only in philately, but in monuments, epigraphs and commemorative speeches, all aimed at reaffirming Italian superiority in the art of pedagogy.

¹⁶ Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Decree of 20 September 2001, «Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana», vol. CXLII, n. 263, 12 November 2001, pp. 28-29.

¹⁷ *Il libro dei francobolli d'Italia. Valori postali 2001*, Roma, Poste Italiane, 2001, pp. 82-85.

¹⁸ Filanci, *Il novellario*, cit., p. 219.

¹⁹ Post and Telecommunications Administration, *Emissione di sei francobolli ordinari appartenenti alla serie ordinaria “uomini illustri”*, «Bollettino illustrativo», n.n., 10 May 1978, pp. 2-3. See also Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Decree of 27 April 1978, «Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana», vol. CXIX, n. 355, 21 December 1978, pp. 9143-9144 and Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Decree of 28 June 1978, «Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana», vol. CXX, n. 58, 28 February 1979, p. 1904.

²⁰ I refer to the doctoral thesis by V. Minuto, *Memoria e potere. I monumenti a personalità della scuola dall'Unità agli anni '70 del Novecento*, Università degli Studi di Macerata, PhD course in Education, Cultural Heritage and Territories, 35th cycle, a.y. 2022-2023, and in particular section 3.1 entitled *Vittorino da Feltre. Il monumento al Principe degli educatori* (Vittorino da Feltre. The monument to the Prince of Educators), pp. 88-119.

This Christian-based interpretation provided by Minister Pedini to the Vittorino da Feltre postage stamp arrived in 1978, at the height of the season of historic compromise (indeed, issued the day after Aldo Moro's body was found). In this regard, it is good to remember how public memory of personalities from the past, even the rather distant past, changes according to alterations in power structures, as Halbwachs recalls:

the image of a dead person is never fixed. As it sinks into the past, it changes, as certain features fade and others re-emerge, depending on the point of view from which one looks at it, that is, depending on the new conditions in which one finds oneself when turning towards it²¹.

Another school-themed stamp stands out for its religious references, the one issued on 2 May 1992 to mark the third centenary of the foundation of the *Istituto Maestre Pie Filippini*²². The vignette reproduces two distinct episodes from the life of St Lucia Filippini, taken from the decoration of the altar of the saint's crypt in Montefiascone, in the province of Viterbo. In the first, Lucia is seen taking her vows and receiving a large crucifix from the hands of a high prelate. In the scene depicted immediately below, on the other hand, the nun is shown giving a lesson, with a book on her knees, to a small group of six girls. The impression one gets is that of a consequentiality between the two events: first Lucia receives Christ's message and then she becomes His spokeswoman. It is no coincidence that the portrait drafted in the «Bollettino» by Sister Renata Tariciotti, Superior General of the *Istituto Maestre Pie Filippini*, closes with the words that the foundress used to say: «I for my sake would like to multiply myself in every corner of the earth, to be able to shout from everywhere, and say to all peoples: Love God, love God!»²³. The interpretation given of Filippini is therefore interesting: an educator who fought for the advancement of women through «instruction and education for work», at a time when women «lived on the margins of society, often the victim of rampant misconduct». This work to improve women's status was expressed in the training of girls of an «awareness of their own dignity and their role as bride and mother. The School, with its educational purposes, aimed at the restoration of the family and thus of society». A vision that is anachronistic at the end of the second millennium and that seems to have remained unscathed by the revolution of customs that has taken place in Italy since the 1960s.

This stamp, the only one to celebrate a private and Catholic school, is therefore linked to a world that is now outdated, but at the same time it is the forerunner of a trend, brought to its climax by late twentieth-century neo-liberalism, aimed at rediscovering the role of non-state schools, and especially religious schools. We are in the handover period between the seventh Andreotti government and the Amato government; it was shortly

²¹ M. Halbwachs, *La memoria collettiva*, Milano, Unicopli, 2001, p. 148.

²² Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Decree of 17 June 1992, «Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana», vol. CXXXIII, n. 300, 22 December 1992, p. 4.

²³ Post and Telecommunications Administration, *Emissione di un francobollo celebrativo del 3° anniversario della fondazione dell'Istituto delle Maestrie Pie Filippine*, «Bollettino illustrativo», n. 9, 2 May 1992, p. 2.

to be the Berlusconi government that took up these stirrings and brought them to their peak.

Right at the height of Berlusconi I, in November 1994, the stamp dedicated to Giovanni Gentile was issued, on the 50th anniversary of his death²⁴. The Minister of Posts and Telecommunications was Giuseppe Tatarella, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers and exponent of the National Alliance-MSI – a party, for the benefit of my foreign colleagues, which was the direct heir of the fascist one. In the climate of mainstreaming the (post)fascist fringe, both politically and culturally, the choice of Gentile is not so much interesting as are the words used in the «Bollettino illustrativo» by Vincenzo Cappelletti, vice president and scientific director of the Italian Encyclopaedia. Gentile's deep merits in the cultural sphere, his scientific output, the prestigious positions he held, and the «tragic death» that put an end to a life «that had given itself the criterion and style of supreme choices and the risks they humanly entail»²⁵ were all listed, in practice listing his adherence to fascism as a supreme and risky choice. The latter was prompted – the only explicit concession to fascism in the long text – by Gentile's interpretation of fascism as «the continuation of the resurgent right and the promise of a return to a strong and responsible statehood». Words that only a few years earlier would have seemed difficult for the political and cultural world to agree with and that were part of the successful revisionist trend that was gaining strength in those very years.

The closing is emblematic in this regard:

The speculative height of Gentile, his conviction of a vital relationship between culture and society, the creative fecundity of his work and the extreme and sacrificial symbol of his death, are looked upon with reverent respect by those who hope and prepare today for a definitive fulfilment of the Risorgimento, in the arrival of the Italian tradition and the country in all its present, creative reality, in its consolidated freedom and in the fervour of its civil dialectics²⁶.

Another example of a sugar-coated interpretation of the past comes from the «Bollettino» illustrating the postage stamp²⁷ issued in August 1970 to mark the centenary of Maria Montessori's birth²⁸. Maria De Unterrichter Jervolino, president of the Opera Nazionale Montessori, did not spend a single word on the fascist and Italian ostracism of Montessori and her method, preferring to refer generically to «contrasts and difficulties

²⁴ Italian Post Office, Decree of 23 March 1995, «Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana», vol. CXXXVI, n. 108, 11 May 1995, pp. 38-39.

²⁵ Post and Telecommunications Administration, *Emissione di un francobollo commemorativo di Giovanni Gentile, nel 50° anniversario della morte*, «Bollettino illustrativo», n. 30, 21 November 1994, p. 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Decree of 16 September 1970, «Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica italiana», vol. CXII, n. 64, 12 March 1971, pp. 1504-1505.

²⁸ For an iconographic overview of all philatelic initiatives in the world dedicated to Maria Montessori I refer to G. Nuti, F. Bertolino, M. Filippa, *Una microstoria iconografica di Maria Montessori a 150 anni dalla nascita: figurine, monete, francobolli...*, «MeTis. Mondi educativi, temi, indagini, suggestioni», vol. 11, n. 1, 2021, pp. 113-140 and F. Bertolino, M. Filippa, G. Nuti, *L'immagine di Maria Montessori nel mondo filatelico: sguardi pedagogici*, in P. Trabalzi (ed.), *Sensi immaginazione intelletto in Maria Montessori. Dimensione estetica ed espressione di sé*, Roma, Fefe, 2020, pp. 189-209.

[also in the pedagogical sphere, of course], criticism and fanaticism», without tying them to the national context. The closing, in this sense, is somewhat paradoxical, when she reports her death in Holland and the condolences of the entire Italian political world: «by now a citizen of the world»²⁹ and, precisely for this reason, one of «the most eminent women in the history of Italy», as if there were a consequential link between the choice of exile and becoming one of the most important women in Italy³⁰. The choice of the vignette to illustrate the stamp is also very curious: on the left is the figure of the pedagogue from the Marche region, while in the background is a group of children who, led by a teacher, perform «gymnastic movements of the Montessori pedagogical system» outdoors, even though the rendering is that of a small group of children sitting on the ground with their knees crossed and arms outstretched. In short, in the face of the wealth of Montessori materials and their recognisability, the choice of outdoor exercises seems to me to be unacceptable, if for no other reason than the difficulty, to those who are not familiar with the subject, of attributing them to Maria Montessori.

To conclude this brief report, it seems to me that we can speak of a common thread, of a common tendency that binds all the philatelic production with an analysed school-celebrative theme (therefore up to the year 2001), that is, the evident manipulation of the past also through revisionist interpretations, or rewriting of history, with celebratory purposes and exalting the entire country through the figure of illustrious personalities or historical schools, thanks to a mechanism that aimed to link the formation of a common feeling to the entrenchment of the national past in shining symbols.

²⁹ Post and Telecommunications Administration, *Emissione di un francobollo commemorativo di Maria Montessori nel centenario della nascita* (Issue of a postage stamp celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Maria Montessori), «Bollettino illustrativo», n.n., 31 August 1970, p. 2.

³⁰ The note in the *Bollettino* also contains an inaccuracy when it attributes to Maria Montessori the title of the first woman to graduate in medicine in Italy.

Ambrosian School Memories. Milan City Council's Construction of Its Own Glorious Educational Tradition from the Italian Unification through the Aftermath of World War II

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Introduction

During a sitting of Milan City Council on 11 March 1954, at which the budgetary forecast for 1954 was up for discussion, then-Councillor for Education, Lino Montagna shared a report of the Council's interventions in the field of education, including measures aimed at addressing the serious impact of the recent world war on local schools¹. The data showed that the schools infrastructure situation was still problematic². Nevertheless, the Councillor pointed out, with legitimate pride, that major efforts had already been made on this front, as well as at the economic level more generally, by the various Councils that had been in office since Liberation³. In presenting his report, he introduced a nuance that

¹ Cf. *Cronache del Consiglio Comunale. Bilancio di previsione per l'anno 1954*, «Città di Milano», vol. 71, n. 4, April 1954, pp. 151-182.

² *Ibid.*, p. 170, p. 180. By the end of the war, 1,602 classrooms out of 2,052 had been destroyed or seriously damaged (Comune di Milano, *9 anni di amministrazione democratica, 1951-1959*, Quaderni della «Città di Milano», 1960, p. 202). In 1954, Montagna noted that in some primary schools it was still necessary to schedule two shifts due to a lack of space, although the repair of the damaged buildings had been completed. Given that no schools had been newly built or extended since before the war, the number of classrooms had now become insufficient. This was also because many were in use as shelters for the homeless and war refugees. The Council finally managed to resolve this issue by constructing new school buildings beginning in the mid-1950s. On the renovation and design of school buildings in this period, see I. Giustina, *L'architettura pubblica nella città: cultura, istruzione, assistenza*, in G. Rumi, A.C. Buratti, A. Cova (edd.), *Milano ricostruisce 1945-1954*, Milano, Cariplo, 1990, pp. 257-288. It should be noted that the situation in Milan was in line with an equally critical situation at the national level: Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, *La scuola italiana dal 1946 al 1953*, Roma, Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1953, pp. 131-133, p. 266.

³ For further historical background on Milan between the final stages of the Second World War and the post-war period, see at least Rumi, Buratti, Cova (edd.), *Milano ricostruisce 1945-1954*, cit.; *Storia di Milano*, Vol. XVIII: *Il Novecento*, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1995 (especially the essays by M. Tesoro, M. Punzo, A.M. Chiesi, A. Martinelli).

was not necessarily to be expected: a prominent local Christian Democrat, who would continue to be associated with the management of the city's educational affairs for many years thereafter⁴, Montagna invoked «the glorious past traditions of Milan's elementary schools» and, recalling that responsibility for primary education had been transferred from municipal authorities to the central state in 1933, he appealed for the «full and complete» handing back of the elementary schools to the City Council⁵.

The City Council had already expressed its desire to take back responsibility for primary education in 1950, under the mayorship of Antonio Greppi, an authoritative and esteemed exponent of local reformist socialism⁶. It seems strange, while the city was grappling with the many and serious challenges involved in reconstruction and undergoing a transformation that would make it an engine of economic recovery and industrialization, as well as a magnet for migratory flows from Southern Italy, that the councillors should have been insisting upon this point. Their appeal seemed to take the schools debate back in time, to the beginning of the 20th century and the height of the deliberations surrounding the nationalization of elementary schools, which became a reality with the Daneo-Credaro Law of 1911⁷. Undoubtedly, their position was driven by the desire of the city and its political leaders to distance themselves as far as possible from a measure deployed by the fascist regime to centralize education in the hands of the state, and to recover the independence that Milan, like the other provincial and district capitals, had enjoyed until the early 1930s; just as it was surely motivated in part by a parochialist attitude. However, it was also rooted in a more complex phenomenon, which was touched upon by Montagna in his speech, when he referred to the glorious past of Milan's schools: the Councillor meant to invoke a cultural tradition that had been progressively built up by the City Council since Unification, in parallel with a tireless commitment to investing in education.

Now, recent theoretical work has pointed up the ongoing heuristic salience and value of the local dimension of historical educational inquiry: specifically, it is by investigating the local dimension that we can assess how national education policies were received in practice, thereby transcending the «external» perspective offered by the history of institutions⁸. This essay applies such an approach to the study of memory, examining how local school memories were constructed and became stratified over time, contributing

⁴ Cf. F. Chiappa (ed.), *Lino Montagna e la sua Milano*, Milano, Associazione per l'Abbazia di Mirasole, 1998. Montagna was a member of an Executive Council that remained in office from 1951 to 1956, comprised Christian Democrats, Republicans, and Social Democrats, with the external support of liberal councillors, and was led by the social democrat Virgilio Ferrari.

⁵ *Cronache del Consiglio Comunale. Bilancio di previsione per l'anno 1954*, cit., p. 169.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 176. On 19 June 1950, the Council unanimously ratified a motion calling for the city's elementary schools to be handed back to the municipal authorities, characterized as «determined to resume a moral and civic tradition that [had earned] the city so much prestige and recognition»: *Attività del Consiglio comunale nei mesi di maggio-giugno 1950*, «Città di Milano», vol. 67, n. 7-8, July-August 1950, p. 147.

⁷ Cf. C. Betti, *La prodiga mano dello Stato. Genesi e contenuto della legge Daneo-Credaro (1911)*, Firenze, Centro Editoriale Toscano, 1998.

⁸ A. Barausse, C. Ghizzoni, J. Meda (edd.), «Il campanile scolastico». *Ripensando la dimensione locale nella ricerca storico-educativa*, special issue of «Rivista di storia dell'educazione», 1/2018.

in their turn to the building up of national school memories. In relation to the school policies implemented by Milan City Council from 1861 onwards, a topic that has already been studied in part⁹, this study homes in on the image of these measures that was put forth by the Council itself, from Unification to the period following the Second World War. It documents the efforts of the local authority to publicize the objectively impressive results achieved thanks to its educational policies, and to represent Milan as a city that was actively engaged in the education sector. This is a preliminary investigation, in which it is possible to analyse only some junctures in this lengthy historical period and only a selection of the rich sources available (such as articles in periodical publications by the Council, records of debates during Council meetings, booklets brought out by the Council on education topics, and various Councils' reports of their work).

1. *In the aftermath of Unification*

The political and intellectual elites of Milan viewed the Unification of Italy with a certain degree of ambivalence: while the members of the Milanese leadership class had strongly supported the cause of the Risorgimento movement, they were concerned about the city's downgrading from the capital of a large region to a city like any other within the newly established Kingdom of Italy¹⁰. This explains the references to education projects undertaken by Turin City Council in documents from the early post-Unification period, especially in the reports of the *Commissione civica degli Studi* (Civic Commission on Education), a body that had been set up to implement the goals assigned to local authorities under the Casati Law¹¹. In comparing itself to Turin, Milan was displaying its determination to carve out a new national role for itself, not second to that of Turin, including in the field of education¹². In other words, the Milanese ruling class was doing its utmost not only to build, but also to gain recognition for, a school system designed to surpass both the shortcomings of the Hapsburg system, though retaining its strengths¹³,

⁹ There is no shortage of studies on the history of schooling in Milan and the City Council's role in this history (and many of these are cited in later footnotes), but there is no single work that offers a comprehensive overview of the topic. Nevertheless, the following essays remain valuable works of reference: L. Mapelli, G.B. Curami, *Milano. Istruzione comunale*, in A. Martinazzoli, L. Credaro (edd.), *Dizionario illustrato di pedagogia*, Milano, Vallardi, s.d., Vol. II, pp. 697-711; C.A. Mor, *Istruzione elementare pubblica in Milano. Cenni storici e statistici. A cura della Commissione ordinatrice del VI Congresso dell'U.M.N. 11-12-13 settembre 1906*. Milano. *Omaggio ai congressisti*, Milano, Pallestrini & C., 1906.

¹⁰ Cf. M. Meriggi, *Lo "Stato di Milano" nell'Italia unita: miti e strategie politiche di una società civile (1860-1945)*, in D. Bigazzi, M. Meriggi (edd.), *Storia d'Italia. Le regioni dall'Unità a oggi. La Lombardia*, Torino, Einaudi, 2000, pp. 5-49; E. Colombo, *Come si governava Milano. Politiche pubbliche nel secondo Ottocento*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2005.

¹¹ Cf. G. Ghizzoni, *Scuola e lavoro a Milano fra Unità e fascismo. Le civiche Scuole serali e festive superiori (1861-1926)*, Lecce-Rovato (BS), Pensa Multimedia, 2014, pp. 27-31.

¹² In this regard, in addition to the work cited in the previous note, see L. Finocchi, *Edilizia scolastica a Milano dal 1860 al 1885*, «Storia urbana», n. 6, 1978, pp. 88-129.

¹³ Further background on this topic may be found in works by S. Polenghi, including her edited volume:

and the limitations of the system then being put in place for the new Kingdom of Italy. The latter system was viewed as inadequate for the socio-economic and cultural needs of the nation – and especially for those of the Lombardy region – by many illustrious Milanese intellectuals, including Carlo Tenca, Mauro Macchi, Ignazio Cantù and Giuseppe Sacchi¹⁴.

Milan's emphasis on education was evident from the years immediately following Unification. An emblematic example was the distribution of prizes to students at municipal schools on *Constitution Day* (Festa dello Statuto), a holiday introduced in 1861 and set on the first Sunday in June¹⁵. Famously, the most high-profile event of the day was the opening military parade. However, the Constitution Day legislation also provided for the occasion to be marked by school prize-giving ceremonies. This was clearly intended to draw attention to the role of schools, complementary to that of the army, in constructing national identity. As I have documented elsewhere¹⁶, in 1862, Milan City Council decided that Constitution Day prizes should be given out to deserving students enrolled on post-primary courses at the city's municipal night schools. These courses had been introduced by the Council the year prior, although they were not provided for under the terms of the Casati Law. The courses targeted young people who had completed their elementary school studies and were obliged to go to work, but who nevertheless wished to further their education and enhance their future employment prospects.

The ceremony took a ritual form that remained unvaried over the years. In the presence of the highest city and school authorities, initially at the Town Hall and later in selected schools, the event began with a speech by either a Council representative or a teacher. It was no coincidence that the post-primary night school students were initially singled out to receive the Constitution Day prizes, while the distribution of awards to elementary school students took place at other times of the year. By making this distinction, the Council set out to encourage youths and adults who, at undoubted personal sacrifice, had decided to resume their education. It is clear from the speeches delivered on these occasions that the prizes were also intended to enhance these student-workers' sense of belonging to the newly established nation and to instil in them a love for the country which, by investing in their education, was proving its concern for them. A similar bond was meant to be forged between the students and the local authority, which was caring for their future as scrupulously as a parent.

Through the ritual of the award ceremony, the speeches given, and the participation of the students and their parents together with authorities and teachers, the Council was

La scuola degli Asburgo. Pedagogia e formazione degli insegnanti tra il Danubio e il Po (1773-1918), Torino, SEI, 2012.

¹⁴ Cf. M.C. Morandini, *Scuola e nazione. Maestri e istruzione popolare nella costruzione dello Stato italiano (1848-1861)*, Milano, Vita e Pensiero, 2003, pp. 331-340.

¹⁵ Cf. I. Porciani, *La festa della nazione. Rappresentazione dello Stato e spazi sociali nell'Italia Unita*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1997.

¹⁶ C. Ghizzoni, *Building the Nation. Schools and Constitution Day in Milan in the aftermath of Italian Unification*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. X, n. 2, 2015, pp. 23-45.

attempting to reinforce the unity of local school communities¹⁷, offer a positive image of the local school system to the citizenry, nurture a sense of national identity and, finally, celebrate its own role in education provision. In short, the Council's commitment to education was combined with an emphasis on developing symbolic devices and rituals that leveraged schooling to generate a sense of belonging to the city and to its educational communities¹⁸.

2. Milanese schools on display: from the Exhibitions of the late 19th century to the Dizionario Illustrato di Pedagogia

During the same historical period, Milan, like other leading Italian cities, strove to “show off” the positive outcomes it had attained in the field of education, at a range of Exhibitions (including universal, national, and especially education fairs). Only recently has Italian historical-educational research focused on how education was displayed at the 19th- and 20th-century Exhibitions¹⁹, a line of inquiry that got underway earlier in other countries²⁰. These events represent a valuable source that can help us to reconstruct not only the material dimensions of schools – the aspect most investigated to date within Italian scholarship – or their evolution from the infrastructural or educational- methodological points of view, with respect to the broader patterns of scientific, technological, and

¹⁷ On this theme, see the essays collected in C. Yanes-Cabrera, J. Meda, A. Viñao (edd.), *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, Cham, Springer, 2017 and in the special issue J. Meda, L. Pomante, M. Brunelli (edd.), *Memories and Public Celebrations of Education in Contemporary Times*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XIV, n. 1, 2019.

¹⁸ Cf. B. Bracco, *Tendenze educative e istanze politiche della classe dirigente milanese: i luoghi dell'identità nazionale nella toponomastica del capoluogo lombardo dall'Unità alla Grande Guerra*, in L. Cavazzoli, C.G. Lacaita (edd.), *Riforme e istituzioni fra Otto e Novecento*, Manduria, Lacaita, 2002, p. 404, who, in reference to the organization of urban spaces, place naming and the occupation of symbolic spaces, emphasized the «awareness of their pedagogical role» displayed by successive City Councils in Milan during the first decades following Unification.

¹⁹ The salience of this theme is drawn out in J. Meda, *Mezzi di educazione di massa. Saggi di storia della cultura materiale della scuola tra XIX e XX secolo*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2016, pp. 156-158, and is treated even more extensively in these subsequent studies: A. Barausse, *Mostre didattiche, musei pedagogici e musei scolastici in Italia dall'Unità all'ascesa del fascismo. Nation building tra processi di scolarizzazione, modernizzazione delle pratiche didattiche e relazioni transnazionali*, in A. Barausse, T. de Freitas Ermel, V. Viola (edd.), *Prospettive incrociate sul patrimonio storico-educativo*, Lecce-Rovato (BS), Pensa Multimedia, 2020, pp. 109-150; M.C. Morandini, *All'insegna dell'innovazione: la scuola all'Esposizione generale di Torino del 1884*, «Pedagogia oggi», vol. XIX, n. 1, 2021, pp. 116-123; F.D. Pizzigoni, *Tracce di patrimonio. Fonti per lo studio della materialità scolastica nell'Italia del secondo Ottocento*, Lecce, Pensa Multimedia, 2022, pp. 142-227.

²⁰ The following studies were the first to investigate this theme, while further background may be found in works cited in the previous footnote: M. del Mar del Pozo Andrés, *Presencia de la pedagogía española en las exposiciones universales del XIX*, «Historia de la Educación», n. 2, 1983, pp. 165-172; M. Lawn (ed.), *Modelling the Future. Exhibitions and the Materiality of Education*, Oxford, Symposium Books, 2009; K. Dittrich, *Experts Going Transnational: Education at World Exhibitions during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century*, PhD Thesis, University of Portsmouth 2010, 2 vols.; A. Escolano Benito, *La educación en las Exposiciones Universales*, «Cuestiones Pedagógicas», n. 21, 2011/2012, pp. 149-170.

artistic progress within which they were showcased. Rather, analysis of education exhibits (in terms of their organization, the layout of spaces, or patterns of prize-giving) also sheds light on the image of schooling that they were intended to transmit and on the actors who contributed, through their presence and through the contents of their displays, to disseminating this image and thus to generating collective school memories.

Milan City Council enthusiastically accepted the invitation of the Ministry of Public Education to send documentation on its schools to the Paris International Exhibition of 1867²¹. «Patria e Famiglia», the press organ of the Milanese Pedagogical Society, directed by Giuseppe Sacchi, described the material dispatched to the World Fair in the following terms: there were the reports of the Civic Studies Commission, «a series of magnificent albums» containing «the best essays» produced by the elementary school students, copies of the schoolbooks then in use, «the splendid photographic images of Italy's chief artistic masterpieces [customarily] given as school prizes», and «drawings of new school buildings and gymnasiums illustrating the health-related improvements made to [the city's] schools». To the great disappointment of the Italians and of the journal's editorial staff, none of this material was actually put on display at the Fair. Rather, it was thrown «haphazardly» under tables, to make room «for a musty collection of wild pines from the Apennines». The disconcertment of the authoritative publication was not assuaged by the bronze medal given «like the last relic that slipped off a banqueting table» to the Milanese drawing schools, nor by the medals of honour awarded to the Milanese institutes for the blind and deaf-mutes as well as to the Pedagogical Society itself²².

The Society went about compensating for the mortifying treatment of the Milanese and Italian exhibitors in France through its participation in the fifth National Education Congress in Genoa in 1868, which included Italy's first ever education fair²³. A significant number of the 517 exhibitors at this event were from Milan, representing the city's civil society, publishing, and schools network. Milan's contribution to advances in education, as showcased in Genoa, won the recognition of the Jury: out of 79 medals of honour awarded, Milanese institutions received 27. Of these, four were awarded to municipal schools and one to Milan City Council itself for «the outstanding organization of its primary schools»²⁴.

The following year, at the Exhibition held in parallel with the Turin education congress, Milan, as one of the participating cities, obtained further recognition of its efforts to provide education to the working classes, again receiving a medal for its contribution to advances in elementary schooling²⁵. It is beyond the scope of this essay to comprehensively

²¹ Cf. *La pedagogia italiana innanzi all'Esposizione universale del 1867*, «Patria e Famiglia» (henceforth PeF), vol. VI, 1866, pp. 428-439; *Gli istituti educativi d'Italia all'Esposizione universale di Parigi*, *ibid.*, vol. VII, 1867, pp. 97-99; *Gli istituti educativi d'Italia all'Esposizione universale di Parigi*, *ibid.*, vol. VII, 1867, pp. 129-130.

²² *Milano all'esposizione didattica di Genova. Relazione pubblicata a nome della Società Pedagogica Italiana*, *ibid.*, vol. IX, 1869, pp. 3-21 (citation on pp. 3-4).

²³ Cf. G. Sacchi, *L'Esposizione pedagogica a Parigi Lettera I^a*, *ibid.*, vol. VII, 1867, pp. 187-190.

²⁴ *Milano all'esposizione didattica di Genova. Relazione pubblicata a nome della Società Pedagogica Italiana*, *cit.*, p. 6.

²⁵ Cf. F. Palladino, *Medaglia Premio VI Congresso pedagogico italiano-Comune di Milano (1869)*, «Banca

review the participation of Milan and its schools in subsequent Exhibitions, including educational ones. However, one further Exhibition worth highlighting is the Universal Exhibition held in Vienna in 1873, where unlike in Paris, Milan performed more than satisfactorily. At this event, one of its best schools was awarded, namely the Secondary School for Girls, which in 1869, had been held up by the Ministry of Public Education as a model to be followed by all local authorities. The Jury awarded this institution with the Progress Medal for compositions in Italian and two honourable mentions for drawing and needlework²⁶.

The National Exhibition of Arts and Industries held in Milan in 1881 served to further confirm the image of education that the city wished to project, in this case by virtue of the positivist and entrepreneurial culture that drove the event. Milan was no longer competing so much with nearby Turin, but rather with the foreign cities that had hosted the international Exhibitions (first and foremost Paris and London). Through this Exhibition, Milan consolidated its image as the «moral capital», «perhaps the most powerful identity-related myth expressed by Italy's bourgeois industrialist class»²⁷, and sought to be recognized as a model of efficiency and enterprise, in contrast with Rome, the «legal capital».

The Milanese intellectual class and bourgeoisie set out a new path for the forthcoming industrialization, which – in light of lessons learnt from other countries where a capitalist economy had been established for longer – could resolve the social conflict generated by the industrial development model. This pathway attempted to combine a strong «work ethic» with «municipal welfare» for the poorest classes. Thus, it has been observed that: «Milan may be defined as a “moral capital” insofar as promotion of the individual is accompanied by the efforts of an exemplary local authority that sees to the needs of the entire community»²⁸. Welfare, charity, and education were the «urban sectors» where the inevitable social inequalities could be remedied²⁹. This project informed the organization and layout of the Milanese exhibition. Of the fair's eleven sections, one was entirely dedicated to *Education, technical instruction, welfare, and charity*; the Hall assigned to

dati delle onorificenze conferite a esponenti e istituzioni del mondo della scuola e dell'educazione», DOI: 10.53219/1856, published on 05.06.2022 (<https://www.memoriascolastica.it/memoria-pubblica/onorificenze/medaglia-premio-vi-congresso-pedagogico-italiano-comune-di-milano>; last access: 23.08.2023).

²⁶ Cf. *Nel XXV anniversario della fondazione della Scuola Superiore Femminile di Milano 1861-1886*, Milano, Bernardoni, 1886, p. 25. On this school, which would later be named after Manzoni, see at least M. Fugazza, *L'istruzione secondaria a Milano e l'inchiesta Scialoja*, in C.G. Lacaia, M. Fugazza (edd.), *L'istruzione secondaria nell'Italia unita*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2013, pp. 235-257.

²⁷ S. Onger, *Le esposizioni di arti e industrie*, https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/le-esposizioni-di-arti-e-industrie_%28Il-Contributo-italiano-alla-storia-del-Pensiero:-Tecnica%29/ (last access: 15.02.2023); cf. also E. Decleva, *L'Esposizione del 1881 e le origini del mito di Milano*, in *Dallo Stato di Milano alla Lombardia contemporanea*, Milano, Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1980, pp. 181-211; I.M.P. Barzaghi, *Milano 1881: tanto lusso e tanta folla. Rappresentazione della modernità e modernizzazione popolare*, Cinisello Balsamo (MI), Silvana Editoriale, 2009; G. Rosa, *Il mito della capitale morale. Identità, speranze e contraddizioni della Milano moderna*, Milano, Bur, 2015.

²⁸ G. Rosa, *Il mito della capitale morale. Letteratura e pubblicistica a Milano fra Otto e Novecento*, Milano, Edizioni di Comunità, 1982, pp. 106-107.

²⁹ Rosa, *Il mito della capitale morale. Identità, speranze e contraddizioni della Milano moderna*, cit., pp. 119-120.

the exhibiting schools and welfare agencies was located near the Work Gallery and the Machine Room³⁰. This layout would have led visitors to immediately and vividly grasp the contiguity and complementarity of the cornerstones in the myth surrounding Milan.

Analysis of the exhibitors at the Milan Fair suggests that this agenda was only partially successful, however. First, educational methodology was not initially included among the categories of exhibit³¹, given that the event had originally been conceived as exclusively industrial in nature. Second, the teaching aids on display showed Italy to be lagging other countries and were out of step with contemporary trends in Italian education, which in reality were more dynamic than the Milanese exhibits suggested. Nevertheless, examination of the 1881 Exhibition in relation to its portrayal of ongoing progress prompts a somewhat different judgement concerning the image of schools and education that it conveyed. For example, we can draw valuable insights from a series of the works that were published in parallel with the exhibition, and which offer a snapshot of various aspects of city life: namely, *Mediolanum*, a work in four volumes published by Vallardi³², *Milano 1881*, brought out by Ottino³³, and *Milano e i suoi dintorni*, issued by Civelli³⁴. Specifically, *Mediolanum* included an extensive essay on education by Benedetto Prina, a secondary school teacher, poet, and history expert, and one on schools for working-class students by Pietro Ravasio, also a teacher and author of history textbooks³⁵. The two pieces described the school system in Milan following a layout that was shared by all the essays in the four volumes: first a historical reconstruction, beginning with classical antiquity (because, as Prina pointed out, if historical background is lacking, it is impossible to grasp the peculiarities of social institutions and interpret their purpose); next, statistical data on developments in education; and finally, a presentation of the state of the art. Both authors repeatedly praised the enterprising spirit of Milanese society and of Milan City Council and its school system. However, in keeping with the ethos of the 1881 Exhibition and the positivist culture underpinning it, «the rhetoric of words was [counterbalanced] by the solidity of figures»³⁶. And so, Prina quantified the municipal elementary schools, the funding allocated to elementary education by the City Council, the number of pupils and teachers, and the delivery of teacher training.

This cultural outlook, with its emphasis on figures and outcomes, including in the domain of education, was not abandoned following the Exhibition, but drove further and lasting efforts on the part of the City Council. Beginning in the 1884-1885 school year, the Council published a «Yearbook» on the municipal schools³⁷. From a simple list of the

³⁰ Cf. *Guida del visitatore alla Esposizione Industriale Italiana del 1881 in Milano*, Milano, Sonzogno, 1881, p. 111.

³¹ Cf. Pizzigoni, *Tracce di patrimonio*, cit., pp. 156-179.

³² *Mediolanum*, Milano, Vallardi, 1881.

³³ *Milano 1881*, Milano, Giuseppe Ottino, 1881.

³⁴ *Milano e i suoi dintorni*, Milano, G. Civelli, 1881.

³⁵ B. Prina, *L'istruzione in Milano*, in *Mediolanum*, cit., Vol. II, pp. 328-358; P. Ravasio, *Scuole popolari*, *ibid.*, pp. 373-386.

³⁶ Rosa, *Il mito della capitale morale. Identità, speranze e contraddizioni della Milano moderna*, cit., p. 53.

³⁷ The following are the different titles under which the yearbook was published over the years: «Scuole comunali di Milano. Personale docente» (from 1884-85 to 1887-88); «Scuole comunali di Milano. Docenti»

elementary schools, with their locations, the names of the teachers, and the number of their pupils, the publication gradually evolved into a thick volume, which continue to be produced until 1933, with information on the public education department, the number of pupils, the number and names of the school inspectors, headteachers, teaching staff, and the services offered by individual schools (meals, showers, hot water, etc.).

In keeping with the approach that had flanked the 1881 Exhibition, the industriousness of the City Council was not only documented in terms of figures and organizational charts, but also by articles published in another periodical produced by the Council itself, namely «Città di Milano», which ran from 1891 until the 1970s³⁸. Many informative articles appeared in this journal over time: there were both quantitative and qualitative analyses, with a focus on leading projects, figures, and events in the life of Milanese schools, including in past years and centuries. While the contributors sought to trace the roots of the city's educational tradition to periods that long preceded Italian Unification, they also invited the reader to envisage the future and the goals to be pursued to further improve education in the city.

The City Council's drive – from Unification, and then, increasingly effectively, from the 1880s onwards – to generate a shared identity around the city's school system and to gain recognition for it outside of the local context – in short, to «invent» a tradition – won a key national-level endorsement thanks to the publication, in the period spanning the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, of the famous education encyclopedia *Dizionario Illustrato della Pedagogia*, edited by Luigi Credaro and Antonio Martinazzoli and published by Vallardi. Specifically, the second volume of this work contains an entry entitled: *Milan. Municipal education*, edited by Leonida Mapelli and Giovanni Battista Curami. The *Dizionario* devoted no other entries to Italian cities and the editors' reasons for featuring Milan alone are laid out in the opening lines of the entry in question:

Given that we cannot offer an account of the peculiar features of municipal education in all, or even in the largest cities, some of which boast most glorious ancient and modern traditions, we wish to at least mention Milan, the moral capital of Italy, whose wealth, industriousness, and enterprise have borne exemplary fruit in all periods. And we mainly cover education for the working classes, which was and is, the special responsibility of the municipal authorities. As we draw closer to the present day, the tendency towards uniformity, which is a consequence of the increasing influence of the central government, is making the different cities more similar to one another. It follows that the reader, based on our description of Milan, will be able by analogy to also formulate a rough idea of the current dynamics and trends shaping education for the working classes in the other cities of the Kingdom³⁹.

Milan was therefore presented as a city that combined ancient traditions with modern efficiency and as an ideal model not because it was to be emulated, but because

(from 1888-89 to 1903-04); Comune di Milano – Riparto Istruzione «Annuario» (from 1904-05 to 1925-26); Comune di Milano – Ripartizione dell'educazione «Annuario» (from 1929-30 to 1932-33).

³⁸ Cf. Comune di Milano, «Città di Milano. Bollettino municipale mensile di cronaca amministrativa e statistica» (1891-1927); the monthly bulletin then continued to be published under the title «Milano» (1928-1943) and from 1947 was brought out as «Città di Milano. Rassegna mensile del comune e bollettino di statistica».

³⁹ Mapelli, Curami, *Milano. Istruzione comunale*, cit., p. 697.

it illustrated how education was developing or would shortly develop in other Italian cities. Standardization was underway by virtue of national education policies and of modernization process induced by developments in educational theory, which were being disseminated throughout Italy thanks to the work of education journals and specialised publishing houses, a sector in which Milan was then one of the leading powerhouses⁴⁰.

The Milanese school system described in the authoritative *Dizionario* was the same as that portrayed at the time of the 1881 Exhibition. Curami explicitly stated that he had drawn extensively on the previously cited essay by Prina in *Mediolanum*. It should be remarked that Curami's piece, minus some passages celebrating the local authority and prejudicially hostile towards the Habsburg policies in place during the Restoration period, remains a broad and well-documented overview, with the additional merit of being backed up by detailed statistical summaries of the state of Milanese schools across the second half of the 19th century.

3. *The continuation of the "tradition" in the Twentieth century*

It is beyond our scope here to offer a detail analysis of the first two decades of the twentieth century. Suffice it to say that, during this period, Milan confirmed its status as an international player by hosting the Universal Exhibition of 1906⁴¹, while the City Council, led by a diverse range of political coalitions (from the popular councils of Giuseppe Mussi and Giovanni Battista Barinetti to the moderate-Catholic council of Ettore Ponti to the socialist councils of Emilio Caldara and Angelo Filippetti between 1914 and 1922⁴²), continued to reinforce and improve the school network, striving to ensure that its positive attainments were known both within and outside the city.

Hobsbawm observed that processes of «invention of tradition», in this case of educational tradition, and the defence of invented tradition, typically come more clearly to the fore at times of change⁴³, as we saw in Milan following Unification and at the early stages of industrialization. And these dynamics recurred later, at further key junctures. For example, when the municipal authority lost its autonomy in the educational sphere by virtue of the Royal Decree of 1 July 1933, which centralized control over elementary schools in the hands of the State, completing the process of nationalizing primary

⁴⁰ Cf. G. Chiosso, *Giornali e giornalisti per la scuola nel secondo Ottocento*, in Id. (ed.), *I periodici scolastici nell'Italia del secondo Ottocento*, Brescia, La Scuola, 1992, pp. 7-44; E. Marazzi, *Libri per diventare italiani. L'editoria per la scuola a Milano nel secondo Ottocento*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2014.

⁴¹ Cf. P. Audenino, M.L. Betri, A. Gigli Marchetti, C.G. Lacaita (edd.), *Milano e l'esposizione internazionale del 1906. La rappresentazione della modernità*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2008.

⁴² It is beyond the scope of this essay to review the literature on the governance of Milan in the historical period under study. Regarding education, cf. I. Giustina, *Scuole, teatri, ospedali. I luoghi della promozione dell'uomo*, in G. Rumi, A.C. Buratti, A. Cova (edd.), *Milano nell'Italia liberale 1898-1922*, Milano, Cariplo, 1993, pp. 237-265.

⁴³ Cf. E.J. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger (edd.), *L'invenzione della tradizione*, Torino, Einaudi, 1987 (I ed. *The invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, University Press, 1983), especially p. 7.

education that had been initiated in 1911. In 1934, the Council signed an agreement with the central state for the following five-year period, relating to the “Caterina da Siena” and “Rosa Govone” vocational schools for girls and a series of other elementary and vocational schools applying innovative methods or serving special educational needs⁴⁴: the “Rinnovata” School run based on the Pizzigoni method, the “Umberto di Savoia” and “Duca degli Abruzzi” open-air schools, the “Giulio Tarra” school for students with impaired hearing and speech, the “Zaccaria Treves” school for the mentally abnormal, and the “Sofia Carmine Speroni” School for the “lame, mutilated, and rickety”⁴⁵. The agreement specified which items of expenditure would be covered by the municipal authority to enable these schools, which stood out on the Italian education scene due to their specific aims and methods, to function as effectively as in the past. A few years later, in 1937, the Municipality also published dedicated monographs, with rich photographic illustrations, with the aim of documenting the history of these schools and the uniqueness of their educational offerings⁴⁶.

In the same period, the Council also printed a photograph album on the “Umberto di Savoia”⁴⁷ open-air school, again with a view to publicizing, but also to pictorially celebrating, the modernity and educational approach of this institution. The open-air school was originally the brainchild of the socialist Council led by Caldara (1914-1920). It was first opened on an experimental basis in the summer of 1918. After the fascists rose to power, they immediately grasped the educational value of the open-air format and invested in the school to ensure that its architectural structure and layout could be preserved over the following years. Undoubtedly, the multipronged effort by the City Council to play up its achievements in the field of education, as we have just briefly reviewed, also served the propagandistic ends of the fascist regime. Nevertheless, the fact that this effort was made precisely when the municipal authority had lost its autonomy in the domain of primary schooling suggests that it was in continuity with the policies of

⁴⁴ This law (cf. Articles 27-34) provided for the stipulation of special agreements between the State and local authorities concerning the functioning of special schools: R.D. 1st July 1933, n. 786, «Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia», Parte prima, 13 July 1933, n. 161, pp. 3153-3159.

⁴⁵ *Convenzione tra il Ministero della Educazione Nazionale ed il Comune di Milano, per l'applicazione del R.D. 1° luglio 1933, n. 786, relativamente alle Scuole Speciali*, in Archivio Civico del Comune di Milano, fond «Storico», series «Beneficenza pubblica», folder 7, file 4.

⁴⁶ Comune di Milano, *Monografia della regia scuola speciale già comunale “Caterina da Siena”*, Milano, Stucchi, 1937; Id., *Monografia della regia scuola speciale già comunale “Rosa Govone”*, Milano, Stucchi, 1937; Id., *Monografia della regia scuola speciale già comunale “Rinnovata”*, Milano, Stucchi, 1937; Id., *Monografia della regia scuola speciale già comunale “Umberto di Savoia” (Scuola all'aperto)*, Milano, Stucchi, 1937; Id., *Monografia della regia scuola speciale già comunale “Giulio Tarra” per sordomuti e logopatici*, Milano, Stucchi, 1937; Id., *Monografia della regia scuola speciale già comunale “Zaccaria Treves” per l'assistenza medico-pedagogica dei fanciulli anormali psichici*, Milano, Stucchi, 1937; Id., *Monografia della regia scuola speciale già comunale “Gaetano Negri” per rachitici, storpi e mutilati*, Milano, Stucchi, 1937.

⁴⁷ Cf. Comune di Milano, *Scuola all'aperto “Umberto di Savoia” per alunni gracili*, [Milano], n.d. [while this document is undated it is certainly from the 1930s], in Archive of the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research (INDIRE) in Florence, fond «Fototeca storica». On this Milanese institution, cf. C. Ghizzoni, *La scuola a Milano durante la Grande Guerra*, «Archivio Storico Lombardo», 2005-2006, pp. 307-358 (especially pp. 320-322); *La Scuola del Sole. Cent'anni del Trotter a Milano tra sperimentazione educativa e impegno sociale*, Milano, La Città del Sole-Amici del parco Trotter ODV, 2022.

the previous decades. Once more, the Council's aim was to consolidate and perpetuate the Milanese educational tradition, by keeping public attention focused upon it.

It is therefore not surprising that, as reflected in the words of Councillor Montagna at the earlier-cited Council meeting of 1954, the defence of this tradition should again have been resumed after the war, when, despite the diligent efforts of the Council to aid in the reconstruction of the city's schools, the Ministry appeared deaf to its request for greater decision power in relation to primary education. Notably, on that occasion, as at other previous and subsequent sittings of the Council, the demand for autonomy was also supported by representatives of different political forces including the opposition, who, while critical of the Council in office, were convinced that the municipal authority should be in charge of education⁴⁸; this position was often backed up by data concerning concrete measures, such as the experimental timetables launched in some primary schools to meet the needs of working parents, new forms of welfare, investment in school buildings, and the implementation of innovative teaching-learning methods under the banner of activist pedagogy.

These frequent calls throughout the early 1950s for greater autonomy for municipal authorities in the primary education sector would go unheeded, as we know. Nevertheless, Milan's efforts in this field and the «glorious tradition» evoked by Councillor Montagna in 1954 would once again earn recognition outside of the local area and, this time, from the highest authority of the Italian state. In 1955, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Public Education, the President of the Republic awarded the gold medal for outstanding achievement in culture and education to the Municipality of Milan⁴⁹. This prestigious award served to acknowledge the city's contribution to advances in education and schooling and to further nurture the «glorious tradition» that it had painstakingly built up over the course of a century.

⁴⁸ In addition to the earlier-mentioned Council Meeting of 19 June 1950, other budget debates in 1954 and 1955 included motions on autonomy in the field of education, as recorded in: *Cronache del Consiglio Comunale. Bilancio di previsione per l'anno 1954*, cit.; *Cronache del Consiglio Comunale. Bilancio di previsione per l'anno 1955*, «Città di Milano», vol. 72, n. 5, May 1955, pp. 304-328 and n. 6, June 1955, pp. 373-388.

⁴⁹ L'Assessore all'Educazione, *La medaglia d'oro dei benemeriti della cultura al Comune di Milano*, «Città di Milano», vol. 72, n. 11, November 1955, pp. 615-617.

Representations of Disability in the Great Turin Exhibitions at the Turn of the Twentieth Century (1884-1911)

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The article examines three exhibitions: the first held in 1884, the only date that does not coincide with a special event in Italian history; the second in 1898, fifty years after the coming into effect of the *Statuto Albertino*; and the third in 1911, which was staged in Rome as well as Turin, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy¹.

The multiple sources consulted include: the official documentation produced by the organizing committee (programmes and circulars, catalogues and lists of exhibitors, newsletters and periodic updates, records of prizegivings)²; press coverage and articles in specialized journals; material held at Turin institutes for the disabled that participated in one or more of the exhibitions.

This theme has not previously been investigated within history of education research. The aim of the paper is to address the resulting gap in the literature by offering a chronological and comparative account based on the analysis of a set of novel sources.

1. *A rich and diverse participation*

The catalogues of the three different editions of the Exhibition show that disability featured in these events as a richly composite theme, not only in terms of the different types of disabilities represented, but also in terms of the plurality of perspectives and angles brought to bear upon them: alongside educational institutes for deaf-mutes, the blind, rickety, and mentally retarded, the exhibitors included private individuals, inventors of methods and tools for the study of various disciplines, societies set up by the disabled themselves, and local associations and bodies that ran projects for persons with disabilities as part of a broader charitable-welfare programme. By way of example,

¹ On this topic, see U. Levra, R. Rocca (edd.), *Le Esposizioni torinesi 1805-1911 specchio del progresso e macchina del consenso*, Torino, Archivio storico della Città di Torino, 2003.

² Some of these documentary sources may be consulted online. Cf. <https://www.museotorino.it/site/media/books> (last access: 06.02.2023)

the machines for teaching Braille presented by a teacher, Antonietta, from the Casa di Bologna, which were awarded the silver medal for the education section in the 1884 Exhibition, fell under the heading of “disability exhibit”³; as did the Society for Mutual Aid among the Deaf-Mutes of Lombardy⁴, or the Ligurian Committee for the Education of the People and the Teaching League of Verona, which provided education to rickety children⁵. Disabled pupils also took part in fringe events organized around the exhibition: the international gymnastics competition for schools held in parallel with the 1911 Turin Exhibition is a representative example⁶.

Due to space constraints, and for the purposes of this essay, I restrict my analysis to the participation of institutions for the care and education of disabled persons. A look at the available data enables us to quantify the presence of such bodies at the exhibitions. In 1884, 20 institutes for the disabled took part in the event: an almost equal number of these were devoted to care of the deaf and the blind, respectively (10 versus 8), with a far smaller number dedicated to rickety children (just two). The absence of any reference to the mentally retarded is not surprising: institutions for this group only began to appear in Italy during the 1890s. The overall number of institutes for the disabled at the 1898 edition was slightly higher: 23, with the participation, for the first time, of the institute for phrasthanics directed by Gonelli Cioni, which we shall return to later, and a disproportionately high number of schools for the deaf and dumb (13 compared to six for the blind and three for the rickety). This preponderance is presumably explained by Italy’s longer tradition of education for the deaf.

Fewer institutes for the disabled took part in the 1911 exhibition compared to the two earlier editions: a mere 15 altogether, comprising five institutions for the deaf, six for the blind, three for rickety children, and only one for the mentally retarded⁷. This fall-off seems even more marked if we consider that six of the participating institutes were based in Turin itself. It was likely due to the international character of the 1911 event, which was logistically more extensive and with a far more diverse range of exhibitors than either the 1884 or 1898 fairs⁸, and thus less suited to promoting the work of Italian

³ L’Esposizione generale italiana in Torino nel 1884. *Catalogo ufficiale. Divisione II. Didattica*, Torino, UTET, 1884, p. 57 and *Premi conferiti agli espositori secondo le deliberazioni della Giuria. Torino 1884*, Torino, Stamperia Reale, 1884, p. 46.

⁴ L’Esposizione generale italiana in Torino nel 1884. *Catalogo ufficiale. Divisione IV. Previdenza ed assistenza pubblica*, Torino, UTET, 1884, p. 133.

⁵ L’Esposizione generale italiana in Torino nel 1884. *Catalogo ufficiale. Divisione II. Didattica*, cit., pp. 67-68 and *Premi conferiti agli espositori secondo le deliberazioni della Giuria. Torino 1884*, cit., p. 54.

⁶ This gymnastics competition, organized by the Italian Federation in conjunction with the Office in charge of coordinating all the European gymnastics federations, was held in Turin on 11-14 May 1911. Many educational institutions for persons with disabilities took part in the event, winning prizes and accolades. The weekly magazine «La domenica del sordomuto» reported on the participation of «Forza e Parola», a team representing the deafmutes of Bologna, who won gold and silver medals in several different events.

⁷ The fifteenth institution was a School for the Dumb and Deafmutes based in Paotinfou (Tchéli) in China. Cf. *Catalogo ufficiale dell’Esposizione internazionale di Torino 1911*, 3 Vols., Torino, Fratelli Pozzo, 1911, pp. 36, 761 and 1096.

⁸ Special issue F. Evangelisti, A. Pes (edd.), *Le Esposizioni: propaganda e costruzione identitaria*, «Diacronie», vol. 18, n. 2, 2014.

institutions for the disabled. The Turin institutes were the only ones to participate in all three exhibitions, largely because they were locally based: these were the Institute for the Blind, the Royal Institute for the Deaf and Dumb, and the Prinotti Institute, which was also for the deaf⁹. With regard to geographical location more generally, the participating institutes came predominantly from Northern Italy (64%) rather than from the centre (21%) or south (14%) of the country. This breakdown is in line with the distribution of such institutions, which were concentrated in northern areas where private benefactors and municipalities/provinces were more likely to have the resources to finance them by sponsoring free places¹⁰.

The material exhibited was extremely varied: from documentary outlines of the origins, history, and administrative and educational systems of individual institutes (statutes, regulations, budgets, statistics, monographs, photographs, curricula) to displays of the students' handwriting and drawing. There was no shortage of handicraft produced by the pupils themselves: while in the case of deaf students, the products on display were typically the output of their shoemaking, dressmaking, and woodworking activities, in the case of blind students they were more likely to take the form of rush weaving and wickerwork. Sometimes demonstrations were held so that some of the disabled could show off their manual skills to visitors. The institutions also made a significant contribution to the festivities organized as part of the exhibitions: for example, the Milan Institute for the Blind offered a series of concerts at the 1884 edition¹¹.

2. *The civil society perspective*

The circulars sent by the organizing committee to the political and schools authorities, as well as the descriptions of the various sections of the exhibitions to be found in the catalogues, reflect a tendency to situate the contribution of educational institutes for the disabled in one of two domains: education and private or public welfare. In relation to the 1884 and 1898 editions, the documentary sources contain explicit references to educational works for the blind, deaf and dumb, and rickety in terms of school buildings and furnishings on the one hand, but on the other hand, also in terms of methods and textbooks, including in Braille, for reading, writing, geography, music and vocational learning. While the materials from the 1911 exhibition no longer explicitly describe

⁹ The Royal Institute for Deafmutes had been set up in 1838, thanks to funding from the monarchy among other sources, while the Royal Institute for the Blind, whose founding was driven by the Turin city councillor with responsibility for public education, Ernesto Riccardi di Netro, had been inaugurated in 1879. The work of the priest, don Lorenzo Prinotti, encompassed a series of projects for the deaf (from an educational institute for poor women deafmutes, to a parish-based spiritual and recreational centre, a kindergarten, and a free service assisting the deaf and dumb with finding employment and handling workplace issues).

¹⁰ R. Sani, *L'educazione dei sordomuti in Italia prima e dopo l'Unità. Itinerari, esperienze, discussioni*, in Id., *L'educazione dei sordomuti nell'Italia dell'800. Istituzioni, metodi, proposte formative*, Torino, SEI, 2008, p. 25.

¹¹ On the concerts that took place on 18-19 May 1884, cf. «Gazzetta Piemontese», vol. XVIII, n. 135, (15 May) 1884, p. 2 and n. 138, (18 May) 1884, p. 1.

institutions for the disabled in these terms, the criteria for assigning awards and honours make it clear that they continued to be included under multiple categories of vocational training. Thus, the Prinotti Institute for poor deaf-mutes in Turin received a prize for both the “industrial education” category and the “special and advanced training schools” category, while the Vittorio Emanuele Institute for blind children in Florence won a gold medal in the category «works furthering industrial, commercial and agricultural education by the government, provinces, city and town councils, companies and other public and charitable bodies»¹².

This difference between editions may be explained, at least in part, by evolving perspectives on the presence and significance of the schools-education sector at this kind of event. Tellingly, the title of the education section went from *Mostra Didattica* (Education Exhibition) in 1884 to «Vocational education and teaching. Schools-advanced training workshops and laboratories» in 1911, with an explicit shift to focusing on schools whose goal was to «prepare the youth among the common people for economic struggles and success in the workplace and to provide industry with an educated and expert workforce with the capacity for self-improvement and for improving its work tools and methods»¹³.

Institutions for the disabled could also apply to exhibit in the social security and public welfare section¹⁴, which was first introduced at the 1884 Exhibition in response to a positivist climate that held science to be an instrument of progress, including in terms of improving society. Further evidence for this outlook is provided by a questionnaire that was distributed to the exhibitors with a view to systematically collecting data on the state of welfare in Italy, in keeping with a new approach which, as the expression of a secular philanthropy, was destined to replace the charitable works of Catholic organizations. This approach is expressed by Daneo in his report on the exhibition:

A dispassionate examination [...] of Italy's charitable works and institutions might prompt changes, even radical changes, to many of them, and likely a logical and coordinated general reorganization of all of them, and – eradicating the humiliating almsgiving approach that still prevails in very many them – might find, among the rich resources of public welfare, immense scope for salvation from the miseries that still afflict a considerable proportion of Italian communities and areas. Spontaneous, slow, and gradual transformation is already actively underway. The display panels of the exhibiting institutes [...] and the many recent amendments to their statutes and regulations proved the extent and dynamic nature of the – previous and ongoing – accomplishments of the winds of revolution in this field, which once seemed so conservative¹⁵.

¹² Esposizione internazionale delle industrie e del lavoro, *Elenco generale ufficiale delle premiazioni. Torino 1911*, Torino, Momo, 1912, pp. 2-3.

¹³ Esposizione internazionale dell'industria e del lavoro, *Relazione della Giuria. Torino 1911*, Torino, Officine grafiche STEN, 1915, Vol. I, p. 301.

¹⁴ At some of the exhibitions, the students' productions were put on display in the regional pavilions. For example, at the 1898 exhibition, the work of pupils at schools for the disabled in Cagliari – the main city in Sardinia – were showcased in the Sardinian pavilion. On the participation of the Cagliari Institute for Deafmutes at the 1898 event, cf. A.I. Argiolas, *I sordomuti di Cagliari all'Esposizione di Torino. Relazione sull'Istituto pei Sordomuti della Città di Cagliari presentata al Comitato provinciale per l'Esposizione di Torino*, Cagliari, Tip. Muscas, 1898.

¹⁵ E. Daneo, *Esposizione italiana in Torino 1884. Relazione generale*, Torino, Stamperia Reale G.B. Paravia

In the pavilion devoted to societal problems, institutions for the deaf and dumb, blind, rickety, and mentally retarded were included among the other educational and care institutions for children and youth.

Although institutions for the disabled were given the opportunity to choose between two different sections of the exhibition, it is equally the case that – as they were conceptualized and perceived by the organizers – their «natural venue, in light of their charitable character and aims»¹⁶, was thought to be the welfare pavilion.

This interpretation was in line with the view of the contemporary Italian political class, whose members tended to see institutes for the disabled as solely charitable works and, therefore, as falling under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior. Not surprisingly therefore, proposals to extend compulsory education to deaf and blind children, which had been brought repeatedly before Parliament since the 1870s, had never been acted upon¹⁷. Furthermore, some of the main promoters of the Turin Exhibitions were also authoritative national leaders: first and foremost, Tommaso Villa (1832-1915), a parliamentarian with the Historic Left who served as President of the Chamber of Deputies and several times as government minister¹⁸.

In any case, the participation of educational institutions for the disabled in the exhibitions was highly valued by the committees with responsibility for organizing the exhibitions. In both 1884 and 1898, almost all the institutes listed in the official catalogue received an award of some kind, whether a certificate of honour, a medal (gold, silver, or bronze), or honourable mention. In 1911, the proportion of institutions to receive prizes decreased but remained significant, at around 50%. Numerous institutes even received multiple awards at the same edition: for example, in 1898, the Genoa Institute for Deaf-mutes won three silver medals in three separate categories (education, graphic arts and related industries, and public welfare)¹⁹.

The reasons given for awarding these prizes provide us with insight into the meaning and value attributed to institutions for the disabled and to their role in providing for socio-economic needs in their local areas. Many and various were the merits highlighted by the juries called to assess their work. First, the adjudicators emphasized the ground-breaking nature of some of the institutes, which were to be emulated both in Italy and beyond. The adjudication sheet in support of an award given to the director of the Institute for Phrenasthenics in Vercurago, a town in the province of Lecco, conveyed this sentiment as follows:

e C., 1886, Vol. I, p. 118.

¹⁶ *Assistenza Pubblica. Circolare d'invito ad esporre*, «Bollettino ufficiale. Esposizione generale italiana. Torino 1898», n. 13, (25 July) 1897, p. 3.

¹⁷ On the evolving legislation on education for the deaf and dumb, cf. Sani, *L'educazione dei sordomuti in Italia prima e dopo l'Unità*, cit., pp. 30-37.

¹⁸ Cf. S. Montaldo, *Patria e affari. Tommaso Villa e la costruzione del consenso tra unità e grande guerra*, Torino, Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento italiano, 1999.

¹⁹ Cf. *Esposizione d'arte sacra antica e moderna, Premi conferiti agli espositori secondo le deliberazioni della giuria. Torino 1898*, Torino, Fratelli Pozzo, 1898, pp. 36, 92 and 187.

Cav. [Sir] Gonelli Cioni has won a battle: he has managed to secure acceptance for the setting up of schools for phrenasthenics and to prove that these are necessary.

In Italy, there were already institutes for the blind, for the deaf and dumb, for petty delinquents or youths in need of reform, and even for the insane; there was absolutely no form of asylum for idiots, for the feeble-minded.

He has filled this gap, he has offered practical evidence of how phrenasthenics may be educated, and of what improvement may be expected of them; he has rescued many unhappy people from being ridiculed on the streets. His merit is special and most great²⁰.

The adjudication sheets also focused on the excellent/good/fair outcomes attained in the teaching of school subjects and of manual skills, which were attested to by the depth, quality, and variety of the students' work, and which reflected the deployment of the most recent teaching practices (for example, the use of the oral method in the education of deaf-mutes). This explains the awards to organizations that made a particular contribution to the dissemination of new methodologies via the publication of specialized journals: from «L'educazione dei sordomuti» (The education of deaf-mutes) brought out by the Pendola Institute of Siena (gold medal winner) to «Rassegna di pedagogia e d'igiene per l'educazione dei sordomuti e la profilassi dei sordomutismi» (Review of pedagogy and hygiene for the education of deaf-mutes and the prevention of hearing and speech impairments), published by Prof. Ernesto Scuri, director of the Institute of Naples (silver medal recipient)²¹.

Much was made of the social contribution of projects that, in addition to filling gaps in the charity system and enabling the inclusion of disabled individuals in the employment sector, also offered welfare services to the community: just as the Prinotti Institute in Turin housed poor deaf women «who due to a lack of education and old age are in need of a place of refuge»²² and set them up with jobs through its employment service, so the Genoa Institute for the blind took in older men who had lost their sight on the battlefield, and Turin's Institute for the Rickety offered free medical examinations and advice to the community at large.

Praise was also lavished on the skilful administration of the institutes as well as on the considerable energy and resources invested by private individuals in setting up and maintaining them, in accordance with the policy agenda of the liberal state which – due to cultural factors, political considerations, and budgetary constraints – typically delegated to civil society the task of providing support for disadvantaged groups²³.

Some of the language used reveals a “do-gooder”, pitying kind of attitude: from

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²¹ For a more in-depth treatment of these two journals, cf. L. Gobbi, *Tommaso Pendola e la rivista «Dell'educazione dei sordomuti in Italia» (1872-1884)*, Tesi di Laurea, Facoltà di Magistero, Milano, Università Cattolica del S. Cuore, a.a. 1994-1995; R. Sani, *Rassegna di pedagogia e igiene per l'educazione dei sordomuti e la profilassi dei sordomutismi*, in G. Chiosso (ed.), *La stampa pedagogica e scolastica in Italia (1820-1943)*, Brescia, La Scuola, 1997, p. 531.

²² *Premi conferiti agli espositori secondo le deliberazioni della Giuria. Torino 1884*, cit., p. 197.

²³ On the policies of the liberal state in the welfare sector, cf. F. Della Peruta, *Le opere pie dall'Unità alla legge Crispi*, in *Problemi istituzionali e riforme nell'età crispiana*, Roma, Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano, 1992, pp. 195-250.

“unhappy” rickety children to “poor” deaf-mutes to “unfortunate” blind people before whom “the soul is naturally moved”. Similar feelings are described in the article *La mostra didattica* (The education exhibition), which appeared in one of the official publications on the 1884 exhibition. The anonymous author tells of the compassion that he experienced, while visiting the «sorrowful work-themed gallery», at the sight of blind people reading rapidly in Braille from a slate, writing and counting “with special tools”, weaving mats, doing crochet, and knitting; he asks himself whether it is right to «almost make their infirmity into a spectacle» for an increasingly large audience²⁴. This sentiment, mixed with wonder and amazement, tugs at the heartstrings:

Who – the writer asks – could walk by these objects, which have been produced by such diverse groups of the underprivileged and derelict, without feeling moved? [...] It seems virtually impossible that some of these works were produced by those whose minds are not assisted by their eyes²⁵.

A similar reaction may be observed on the part of the general public, as for example, in commentaries published in the newspaper «Gazzetta Piemontese» on the two earlier-mentioned concerts given by the students of the Milan Institute for the Blind at the 1884 Exhibition. An article by the Turin music critic, Giuseppe Ippolito Franchi-Verney di Valletta, is particularly emblematic. Franchi-Verney masterfully describes the quick succession of inner emotions experienced by the audience, from their arrival in the concert hall to the performance of the various pieces on the concert programme:

Among those who entered the concert hall on Sunday, how many truly expected an artistic result from this experiment with the blind? Only a tiny few, I am ready to wager – says the critic – and it may well be that none of the listeners could swear in conscience that they had not been prompted to attend by a sentiment of commiseration. [...] All those who had come with the sincere but modest intention of acting on their feelings of charity towards the unfortunate found themselves, by mid-concert, confronted with a truly artistic event: the tearful, melancholic mood shifted to a joyful, I would almost say glorious one, and a thousand palms clapped enthusiastically for a group of poor unhappy outcasts, who were now leading them to experience new, most sweet emotions²⁶.

The critic himself cannot conceal his excitement and wonder at the skill and level of excellence attained by the blind performers: from the orchestra that proved its ability to play music of all kinds, to the choir, which he defines as «absolutely the most perfect» he had heard in the course of his career. A performance that was all the more astonishing in light of the singers’ physical imperfections, such as the «weakening of the vocal cords» and «weakness of the chest» that are caused by blindness.

²⁴ Naturally, Turin’s own Institute for the Blind was present at the Exhibition, offering a demonstration of the art of Braille printing. Cf. *I ciechi all’Esposizione*, «Gazzetta Piemontese», vol. XVIII, n. 166, (17 June) 1884, p. 2.

²⁵ A.A., *La mostra didattica*, «Torino e l’Esposizione italiana del 1884. Cronaca illustrata», n. 30, 1884, p. 235.

²⁶ G.I. Franchi-Verney della Valletta, *Concerti dei ciechi milanesi*, «Gazzetta Piemontese», vol. XVIII, n. 141, e (21 May) 1884, p. 2.

3. *Self-representation*

All the exhibitors at the great fairs, including educational institutions for persons with disabilities, were required to mark on the application form the sector of the exhibition in which they intended to take part. This was a meaningful choice that reflected how exhibitors perceived their own identity and role, including in relation to the specific context of the event. Scrutiny of the official catalogues of the three editions suggests that the educational institutes for the disabled were more inclined to position themselves in the field of welfare: there were 27 applications for this sector compared to 20 for the education sector. In the absence of further information, we may assume that each institute opted for the category that best matched its own aims and characteristics or the type of material that it planned to exhibit. The display of large numbers of artifacts produced in the vocational workshops suggests a keenness to point up the institute's positive impact, in terms of fostering the social integration of their students by helping them to learn a trade. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that the main overall purpose of the exhibitions was to showcase the degree of well-being and economic development achieved by the Italian nation, including – by 1911 – in comparison with other European countries.

The pattern of self-categorization just outlined was likely further influenced by the aforementioned tendency of the political leadership to view educational institutions for the disabled as purely charitable organizations, again, in keeping with the sentimental, “do-gooder” approach that typically characterized attitudes towards persons in this category. Finally, it should be emphasized that registering for the event as charitable institutes meant paying lower participation fees.

The data prompt still further observations relating to the different types of disability. For example, only among the institutions for the deaf do we find cases of dual participation (both education and welfare sections). This is not surprising considering that in relation to deafness in particular, from the 1870s onwards, specialized journals and conference motions had been at the forefront of a systematic and sustained campaign for recognition of deaf persons' right to education and of the educational value of interventions for the hearing-impaired. Nor is it surprising that almost all the institutions for rickety children applied to exhibit in the welfare section: these organizations were clearly more healthcare-oriented than the others. Even the Turin institute, which had been founded in 1872 with a view to offering an effective combination of education and medical treatment, subsequently underwent a process of progressive medicalization during the 1880s²⁷.

Also worthy of note is the – minimal – impact of the great exhibitions in specialist journals with a focus on education for the disabled. Only in their respective, variously titled, news columns, where they habitually reported on key current events with implications for the disabled, did they briefly touch upon the participation and awarding

²⁷ On the background to, and history of, this project, cf. M.C. Morandini, *Tra educazione e assistenza: la scuola speciale per ragazzi rachitici di Torino*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. 7, n. 2, 2012, pp. 241-257.

of the institutes at the various editions of the Turin fair. The reasons for this were made clear by Giovanni Battista Anfossi in an article published in 1884 in «Dell'educazione dei sordomuti» (On the education of the deaf and dumb):

I will not neglect – he says – to let the teachers of the deaf and dumb know what our great Turin Exhibition has gained from the various institutes. And I will gladly fulfil this task, both to serve these institutes the praise that they deserve and also to better publicize the rich life that underpins the flourishing of our Italian institutes²⁸.

In several cases, the details provided to the journals' readers had been drawn from local press coverage, as though to emphasize the positive consequences for local communities of the awards received by the institutes at national/international events. Emblematic of these news stories was the write-up in «La Nazione» of Florence on the conferring, in 1898, of a gold medal upon the Tommaso Pendola Institute of Siena and of silver medals upon Vittorio Banchi and Giulio Ferreri, who were head and deputy head of this institute, respectively:

The honours won at the Turin Exhibition are of special importance because they reveal the scientific merit of the director and teachers at our Institute, given that the R. Istituto Pendola did not send work produced by its students [...], choosing instead to exhibit key educational and scientific publications by its heads and teachers [...], and the monthly journal «L'educazione dei sordomuti» (The education of deaf-mutes). It is the great merit of this periodical [...] to have demonstrated the superiority of spoken language over signing²⁹.

This kind of self-referential logic was less evident in popular magazines whose readers were benefactors, the disabled, and their families: indeed, the illustrated periodical «Giulio Tarra», as well as «La Domenica del Sordomuto», offered more general information about the exhibitions, concerning, for example, the total number of visitors and the prize-giving ceremonies³⁰.

The Turin institutes of education for the disabled have conserved “traces” of their participation in the 1888, 1894, and 1911 Exhibitions. It is evident from the documentary sources that part of the original material has been lost. A prime example is the missing status of gilded bronze facsimiles of the 1898 medals commissioned by the Institute for the Deaf and Dumb for affixation to the diplomas issued by the Exhibition jury³¹. Nevertheless, this institute is the only one which, currently still in operation in the local area albeit under a different name and organized differently to the past, holds a substantial

²⁸ G.B. Anfossi, *L'Esposizione nazionale italiana*, «Dell'educazione dei sordomuti», vol. XIII, n. 4, 1884, p. 80.

²⁹ *Il R. Istituto Pendola pei Sordo-muti in Siena premiato all'Esposizione di Torino*, «La Nazione», vol. XL, n. 282, (9 October) 1898, p. 1.

³⁰ In 1911, the weekly magazine «La Domenica del Sordomuto» covered the king's visits to the Exhibition in a couple of short articles. Cf. n. 38 (17 September), p. 303 and n. 42 (15 October), p. 334.

³¹ Cf. Minutes of the meeting of 11 March 1899 (n. 669), in Archivio dell'Istituto dei sordi di Torino (Archives of the Turin Institute for the Deaf, henceforth ARIST), series «Verbali delle adunanze», m. 22, f. 1, pp. 2-3. The material concerning the Exhibitions includes posters featuring rubber labels and pictures of various kinds of medals.

archive that includes the collected minutes of the institute's board meetings as well as a set of files catalogued under the heading *Conferences, Lotteries, Exhibitions, Competitions*. On the one hand, the archived minutes, letters, and forms offer detailed information on the complexities involved in registering for the exhibitions³²; on the other hand, they provide us with insight into the image that the institute set out to present to visitors. A first key emphasis was on retracing and showing off the historic memory of the institution, via the preparation of a monograph³³ and the production of pictures of the building.

A large advertisement placed in the official 1911 catalogue, which cost the institute 35 lire (indeed, four lines of text per exhibitor were free of charge, after which each line cost one lira), allows us to deduce the type of information that was intended to constitute the institute's "calling card" and to illustrate the effectiveness and quality of the education it provided to its students: from a description of the workshops offered (tailoring, shoemaking, and carpentry in the male section; sewing and embroidery in the female section) to a long list of medals and awards received³⁴. The will to persuade visitors of the positive outcomes attained on both the educational and medical fronts is also reflected in the reports of the board of directors of the Turin institute for rickety children. The 1898 report, which contains a list of the documents and artefacts presented at that year's exhibition, not only cites statistics and examples of the students' work, but also refers to clay casts modelling both the deformed limbs of pupils selected for treatment and their straightened and healed limbs following intervention³⁵.

I have not set out, in this brief presentation, to offer an exhaustive account of the topic in hand, but rather to offer a starting point for a new and promising line of inquiry aimed at reconstructing the strategies and initiatives deployed to spark communication, dialogue, and exchange between the sphere of disability on the one hand and political leaders and civil society on the other.

³² For further details, cf. *Concorso Esposizione Torino 1898*, in ARIST, *Conferenze, lotterie, Esposizioni, concorsi*, m. 24, f. 4/2.

³³ This was the same monograph that had already been presented at the Milan Exhibition of 1881 with the addition of a letter outlining the main changes that had taken place in the intervening period in the moral, intellectual and financial running of the Institute.

³⁴ *R. Istituto Sordomuti*, in *Catalogo ufficiale dell'Esposizione internazionale di Torino 1911*, cit., p. 702, n. 2426. Cf. *Esposizione Internazionale di Torino pel 1911*, in ARIST, *Conferenze, lotterie, Esposizioni, concorsi*, m. 24, f. 4/3.

³⁵ *Relazione morale* (8 June 1899) in Istituto per rachitici Regina Maria Adelaide in Torino, *Verbale, Relazioni. Revisione dello Statuto organico. Cariche sociali. Elenco dei soci onorari*, Torino, Tip. Eredi Botta, 1899, p. 10.

Procession to the “Honorable Son”: Memory and Representations in the Funeral Rites of Felipe Tiago Gomes (Brasília/DF and Picuí/PB – Brazil, 1996/2011)

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Introduction

Certainly, acts of commemoration should not be limited to religious and patriotic celebrations; praise and funeral pomp are also celebrations; I would say that they developed in the time of relatives and friends, halfway between private memory and social memory [...] Every time we pronounce or write the phrase: “in memory of...”, we inscribe the names of those we bring to memory in the great book of co-memory, which in turn is inscribed in the greater time¹.

Thinking about the death of an individual as an object of History was a new exercise for the authors of this text. In this writing, we opted to condense theoretical and methodological aspects of the studies we had developed so far and make a discussion based on tensioning elements of life, death and sensibilities. Thus, the object of this study is the death rituals of a character strongly linked to the field of education in Brazil: Felipe Tiago Gomes. This individual was the subject of a broader research, which was based on the perspective of historical biography² to take the life of such a character as an object of analysis.

In that study, different nuances of the existence and trajectory of Felipe Tiago were addressed, however, no attention was paid to the outcome of these. In the epigraph at the head of the paper, Ricoeur³ emphasizes that «praises and funeral pomp are also celebrations» and concludes his idea by exposing that when we use the phrase «in memory

¹ P. Ricoeur, *A memória, a história e o esquecimento*, Campinas, Editora da Unicamp, 2007, p. 60 (translated from the Portuguese version).

² F. Dosse, *O desafio biográfico: escrever uma vida*, São Paulo, Universidade de São Paulo, 2015.

³ Ricoeur, *A memória, a história e o esquecimento*, cit.

of...», we register the names of subjects in the memory of a wider time. Inspired by this philosopher's assertions, the objectives of this article are to investigate the procedures adopted in relation to the conduct of the funeral of Felipe Tiago Gomes, scrutinize the forms of appropriation and representation in relation to the honored person, identify and analyze the feelings and sensitivities manifested during the funerals. Funeral ceremonies performed for the character and, finally, discuss the contribution of these ceremonies to the mythmaking of the character.

1. "Don Quixote of Brazilian education": Felipe Tiago Gomes and the National Community Schools Campaign

Felipe Tiago Gomes was the founder of the educational sponsor *Campanha Nacional de Escolas da Comunidade* (National Community Schools Campaign), an institution that has been active since 1943 and is responsible for different educational establishments in Brazil. Having become aware of a Latin American educational movement, Felipe decides to promote something similar among law school students who accept the idea and begin to devise ways to put it into practice. Thus, the Poor Gymnastics Campaign (CGP) was created, which aimed to assist those who did not have the opportunity to attend school, especially at the junior high level. Over the years, the institution expanded and gained new contours, being named the *Campanha Nacional de Escolas da Comunidade* (CNEC).

In addition to the adoption of a supposedly non-political and non-partisan position, Felipe's devotion to Saint Francis of Assisi⁴ contributed to the construction of representations that configure him as a kind of saint or even a martyr of education. As a devotee of this saint, Felipe renounced material goods and the accumulation of income and possessions. Throughout his career at the CNEC, he obtained as little as possible for himself, having in his name only what was necessary to live. He did not even have money in reserve for health expenses, a fact that was always remembered and mentioned by those who lived with him. More than once, Felipe had to undergo heart surgeries, which were funded by friends and members of the CNEC, since he had nothing in store for himself. Due to his advancing age, Felipe starts to accumulate some savings, however, these are used to cover Campaign expenses, such as compensation for teachers and employees, when the sponsor goes through a serious crisis, in the mid-1990s. The weakening of the institution during this period is pointed out as one of the causes of the deterioration in the health of the founder, who faces situations of anguish and discouragement with the directions of the maintainer.

But despite his health limitations, his... the precariousness of his health, the professor did not give up being present in all the facts, establishing guidelines, defining strategies and seeking ways to achieve

⁴ Saint Francis of Assisi was a friar of the Catholic Church, founder of the *Regra dos Frades Menores*, a mendicant order characterized by vows of poverty and material abnegation.

this, which has always been his greatest battle and which I believe, which all Brazilians believe, was the most striking example of... acceptance of challenges little understood, except rhetorically in this country that transforms this challenge into a magnificent work, this campaign that spreads throughout Brazilian society has generated public men, citizens of the greatest magnitude, based on this dream, this... that is Don Quixote of Brazilian education⁵.

In September 1996, Felipe Tiago died due to heart complications. His departure took place in the midst of the financial crisis of the sponsor, which, at that moment, ran the risk of no longer being able to maintain itself. Felipe was always too close to one of his sisters, Maria Gomes, who accompanied him during most of his career, being considered a mainstay for the man who lived in the midst of travel and negotiations. Both did not consolidate affective relationships with spouses, nor did they have children. Maria was in poor health, a situation that worried him and which is also pointed out as one of the factors for his weakening and illness. However, he ends up passing away before his sister, and the latter arrives to accompany his funeral ceremony, but dies quickly, just a few weeks after her brother's burial.

2. *The finitude of life as an object of history: theoretical and methodological discussions*

The theoretical contributions that support the discussion proposed in this text are linked to Cultural History, a field of History that allows themes such as death, the rituals and practices involved in it, to be objects of research. On this aspect, Ariès⁶ states that it is surprising that "the sciences of man" have been so discreet about death, an inherent aspect of human existence whose treatment varies according to the socio-historical context, as pointed out by the books of the mentioned author⁷. Ariès's studies on death and what it awakens in human beings contemplate perspectives and practices adopted and developed in the West, especially in Western Europe, from antiquity to contemporary times, so that the relationship of other societies and context are not addressed by the author. We emphasize this, because the writing presented here is based on this perspective regarding the finitude of life, its rites, feelings and sensations, but we understand that they are not the only manifestations regarding death developed by human beings.

The farewell to life is apprehended in different ways by human beings, and this moment is seen in a very singular and subjective way. Death, as well as other stages of life, awakens human sensitivity, through feelings, emotions and sensations particular to each one who says goodbye, such as sadness, longing, fear, faith, loneliness, gratitude, among others. These feelings are expressed through the body and the senses, either by crying or smiling, by the feeling of cold or heat, or by looking into the distance and silence, or by

⁵ P. Gustosa, *Despedida*. Brasília/DF, Daniel Vídeo-Produções, 1996 (original VHS; edited by Sebastião Garcia de Sousa; recording time: 3h52; translated from the Portuguese version).

⁶ P. Ariès, *História da morte no Ocidente*, Rio de Janeiro, Nova Fronteira, 2017.

⁷ P. Ariès, *O homem diante da morte*, São Paulo, UNESP, 2014; Id., *História da morte no Ocidente*, cit.

screaming, lamenting or words of remembrance involving the deceased. They are distinct and diversified behaviors, however, that explain the way which each person faces death.

On this subject, Pesavento and Langué⁸ explain that sensations and emotions are ways in which sensibilities are manifested in our daily lives. This occurs when our senses encounter reality and are affected physically or psychically. Although death is a physical phenomenon, which causes the disruption of the life of a being in relation to others, it ends up psychically affecting those who continue in life, which allows the emergence of different emotions and their different forms of manifestation. Thus, one of the ways of dealing with the pain of loss can be to conduct increased ceremonies, posthumous tributes or the production of material objects that seek to immortalize the memory of the lost person. These actions end up having a double meaning, that of honoring those who left and that of satisfying those who remain.

Regarding the practices of death rituals, Elias⁹ points out that there is a “social convention” that standardizes the behavior of people in funeral acts, both in gestures and in words and expressions to be said. These adopted behaviors were created in order to help people to pass more easily through this moment of finitude of life and overcome the loss of someone with whom they lived. However, there are contradictions in the use of these expressions, especially by the younger population, as they understand this behavior as old and outdated, often not expressing the real feelings and emotions that human beings wish to express on these more delicate occasions.

In order to analyze the processions of the “honorable son”, we will resort to specific concepts of cultural history, such as practices and rituals, problematizing the ways in which society relates to death. We understand that these practices and rituals are carriers and producers of representations, mythologizing, sensibilities and feelings in relation to death, building a memory of the being who says goodbye to life. In Figure 1, we present a scheme with the concepts and theorists that underlie this research.

For the construction of the empirical collection, we resorted to documents mobilized in previous research on the character and the educational supporter founded by him. Thus, the materials mentioned in items *a* and *c* of Figure 2 already belonged to the personal archive of one of the authors of the text, so they were resumed, read and cataloged according to the cut presented here. The empirical material mentioned in line *b* consists of the audiovisual reproduction of stages of the funeral of Felipe Tiago, which took place in 1996. The material, now archived in digital media, was originally produced on VHS on the initiative of the deceased’s family, which, as it seems, hired a production company to capture images and testimonies during the rite. Thus, the referred material is around 3 hours and 50 minutes long, where photographs of the deceased in ceremonials and Campaign schools are interspersed, family moments and testimonials from friends, CNEC members and family.

⁸ S. Pesavento, F. Langué (edd.). *Sensibilidades na história: memórias singulares e identidades sociais*, Porto Alegre, UFRGS, 2007.

⁹ N. Elias. *A solidão dos moribundos*, Rio de Janeiro, Jorge Zahar, 2001.

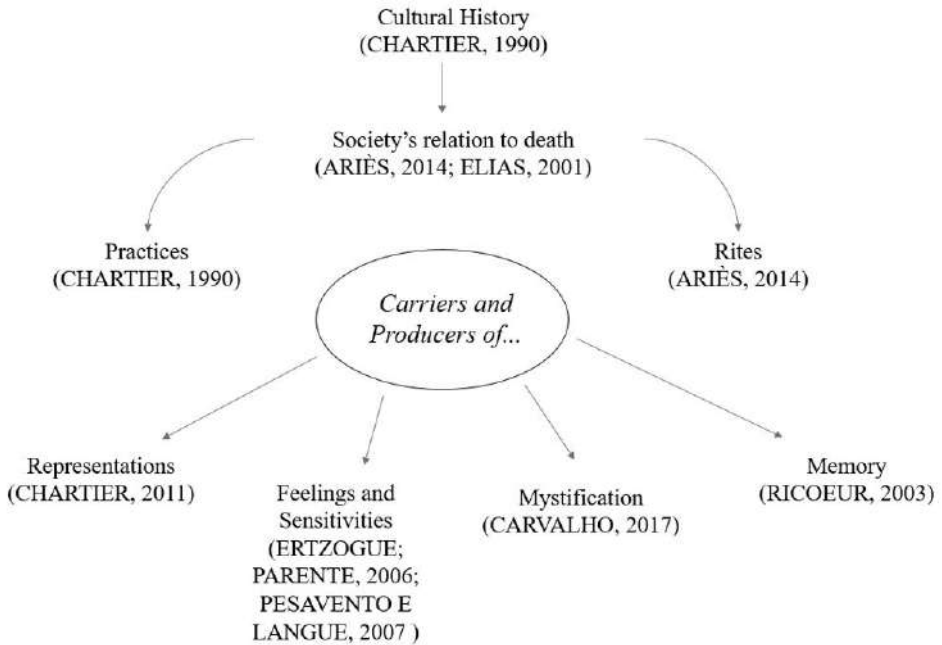


Fig. 1. Theoretical scheme

Document	Localization	Tipology	Characteristics
a) Book: "A Campanha: Felipe Tiago Gomes".	Distributed in cenequista schools.	Institutional book.	Work organized on demand by journalist Gisele Macedo, allusive to CNEC's 75th anniversary.
b) Video produced when Felipe Tiago died in 1996.	Material provided by Felipe's family.	Audiovisual material.	Professional audiovisual production. It presents the funeral rites of Felipe Tiago, as well as testimonials from friends, family and CNEC members.
c) Photographs.	Obtained in different spaces and repositories.	Imagical content.	Selection of photographs and images referring to the two funeral rites performed for Felipe Tiago Gomes, the one from 1996, on the occasion of his death, and the one from 2010, when his remains were transferred to his hometown. This collection is composed of 15 images.

Fig. 2. Table with the list of investigated documents

The recording presents the testimonies collected at the funeral itself, some of them having been uttered in the presence of the coffin with the body of the deceased, all of these were transcribed, totaling a document with 27 pages. The pronounced content does not seem to have been prepared in advance, but rather spontaneously. We highlight this because, certainly, this influences the way the dead person is remembered, as well as the feelings manifested in relation to him, since, as Pesavento and Langue¹⁰ pointed out, our sensitivity is touched upon and feelings and emotions are manifested, from the reality we face. In this case, we noticed that the interviewees were immersed in their emotions that were incited by the entire context that the moment encompassed, and their reports were full of nostalgia, longing, gratitude and praise for the deeds of the deceased, a practice highlighted by Ariès¹¹.

As for the photographs mentioned in line *c*, they were collected in previous research to produce data on the character in question. Some of them were captured during a visit to the memorial organized in honor of Felipe Tiago in the city of Picuí/PB, while the others were gathered on internet sites.

After discussing the theoretical and methodological references that underlie our writing and presenting the systematized empirical evidence, we move on to the analysis of the Felipe Tiago rituals conducted in Brasília/DF, 1996, and Picuí/PB, 2010.

3. *Procession to the "honorable son": the funeral rituals for Felipe Tiago Gomes Rite of 1996 – Brasília/DF*

Felipe, who had suffered from heart problems for years, died of a heart attack on 21 September 1996, after a period of hospitalization. As Ariès¹² points out, the 20th century and its increments caused the treatment of diseases and illnesses to leave the domestic environment, for the space of asepsis, hygiene and hospital discipline. In this case, Felipe's hospitalization and its outcome occurred after a period of structural changes and financial problems that led the sponsor to a serious crisis, a fact that may have been an aggravating factor for his health. In addition, the health of his sister Maria Gomes also worried him, and such concerns were added, as his nephew recalls:

[...] I mean, he was worried about that situation, the other day I went back, I even offered him the help he needed, he wanted to urinate and the nurse, that protocol, I went there and, as his nephew, I had a freedom, you know, I helped him because he was diabetic and, but then unfortunately he died on the Saturday that there was one, a great recognition of every ceneicist in Brazil. Brasília even stopped at his funeral because I already had a certain knowledge, both the police and military police scouts in Brasília, when a car with a fireman, the same thing we did for the transfer from Campina Grande to Picuí¹³.

¹⁰ Pesavento, Langue (edd.), *Sensibilidades na história: memórias singulares e identidades sociais*, cit.

¹¹ Ariès, *O homem diante da morte*, cit.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ V.S. de Maria, *Interview*; interviewer: Ariane dos Reis Duarte; Brasília/DF; July 2017; recording time: 1^h45 (translated from the Portuguese version).

An interesting aspect to be highlighted in this narrative is the fact that the commotion experienced in Brasília, the country's capital, was not exactly spontaneous. The death of the founder of CNEC did not arouse the consternation of the people and their demonstration in the streets. The funeral procession through the city, pulled by a fire engine, is possible through the nephew's contacts, who mobilizes them in favor of holding a ceremony that he considered worthy of his uncle's greatness. With that, we want to emphasize that the commotion surrounding Felipe's death, although intense, does not transcend his circle of family members and CNEC members. Although the sponsor has a national scope, the character in question is not someone popularly known, not even when mentioning those who worked in favor of education in the country. There is no space for such questions to be discussed in this text, however, it is important to mention that there is, in his funeral procession, an attempt to produce a commotion that transcends the ceneclist circle.

Although there was an effort for the figure of Felipe to be propagated on the day of his funeral in the city of Brasília and to encourage emotion in the wider public, his rite of passage had a more intimate connotation and was carried by emotions translated into gestures, actions and words as we had the opportunity to observe in the video recording made at the time. The facial and body expressions in front of each other and beside the coffin, the chants and prayers performed by the participants, as well as the testimonies of those who accompanied him for many years in life, express the sensibilities of those present, reproduced by the feelings and emotions of goodbye.

Oliveira *et alli*¹⁴ draws attention to the fact that structures of feeling do not affect all people in the same social circle in the same way. We understand this statement, since feelings are a subjective order and, therefore, of each individual. Although sadness was present among the deceased's friends, family members and colleagues in the Ceneclist network, words of gratitude, faith and hope permeated the narratives of those present: «[...] we are all very sorry, but as spiritualists that we are, we know that the seed has to die in order to produce more fruit, Felipe is a new seed that is born today»¹⁵; «[...] God could solve everything, and God solved it in the best possible way, transforming it into the seed [...]; the seed that will certainly bear fruit»¹⁶. The words of hope, in the form of a seed left by Felipe Tiago to Brazilian education, are also found in the testimony of Marcos Maciel¹⁷ (September 1996), a former student of the ceneclist network and, at the time, vice-president of the Federative Republic of Brazil:

¹⁴ M.A.T. de Oliveira, L.C.B. Oscar, J. Gregório, G.H.G. Lacerda, *Referenciais teórico-metodológico nas pesquisas em história da educação: para uma história das relações entre sensibilidades, tempo livre e formação*, in K. Braghini, K. Munakata, M.A.T. de Oliveira (edd.), *Diálogos sobre a educação dos sentidos e das sensibilidades*, Curitiba, Editora da UFPR, 2017.

¹⁵ C. Augusto, *Despedida*. Brasília/DF, Daniel Vídeo-Produções, 1996 (original VHS; edited by Sebastião Garcia de Sousa; recording time: 3h52; translated from the Portuguese version).

¹⁶ L. Vieira. *Despedida, Despedida*. Brasília/DF, Daniel Vídeo-Produções, 1996 (original VHS; edited by Sebastião Garcia de Sousa; recording time: 3h52; translated from the Portuguese version).

¹⁷ Brazilian politician, Vice President of the Republic between 1995-2003, when he was affiliated with the extinct Liberal Front Party (PFL). Like other political personalities in Brazil, he was a student of the sponsor founded by Felipe Tiago.

That's why I leave here in this moment of pain, in this moment of sadness with the passing of Professor Felipe Tiago Gomes, I want to leave at that moment, also my certainty, that his journey will not be interrupted, and certainly wherever he is and will be in good place, faith in God, he will certainly be able to verify that the seed he left planted here, [will continue] to germinate, thus bearing much fruit, so that we can build more social justice in our country, through education¹⁸.

It is possible to see that the consternation caused by Felipe's departure gives rise to the desire that his existence continues to influence posterity, so that his life does not end with his death. This attempt to make Felipe present even after his death will gain more specific contours when his nephew decides to transport the remains of his uncles, Felipe and Maria Gomes, to the family's homeland. One of the factors that motivated him to take the decision to take his "honorable son" back to Picuí was precisely the fact that he did not allow his uncle to be forgotten by the city that had helped him so much. In this way, he works to get his uncles removed from the Campo da Esperança cemetery in Brasília/DF, where he was lying with his sister in a wing destined for the authorities (Figure 3). Thus, in the following section, we will analyze the rites developed in this second ceremonial.

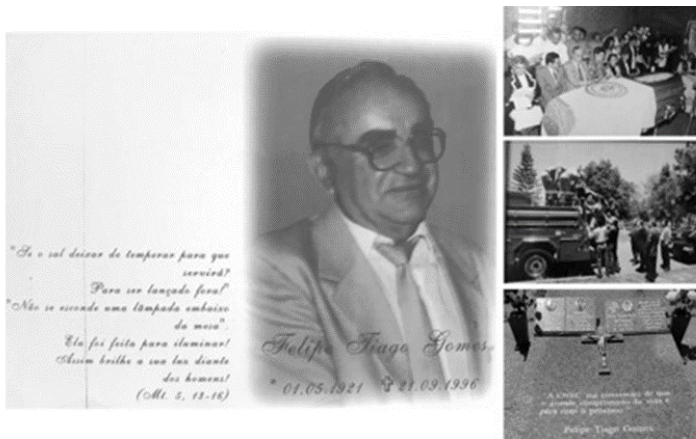


Fig. 3. Tributes to Felipe Tiago in Brasília/DF, 1996 (private collection of the author)

¹⁸ M. Maciel, *Despedida, Despedida*. Brasília/DF, Daniel Vídeo-Produções, 1996 (original VHS; edited by Sebastião Garcia de Sousa; recording time: 3h52; translated from the Portuguese version).

4. Rite of 2011 – Picuí/PB

In 2010, Mr. Valdemiro Severiano manages to implement one of his ideas to honor his uncle, the creation of a memorial in the house where the Gomes family lived. This venture was organized and financed by his nephew, who took it upon himself to honor and keep his uncle's memory alive. Following these steps, the then mayor of Picuí, a former CNEC employee, mobilized public power to build a statue on a promontory overlooking the city (Figure 4). The following year, in order to mobilize the local population around his uncle's memory, Dr. Miro organizes a referendum to assess the residents's wishes regarding the transport of the remains of Felipe and Maria Gomes to their homeland. With this, a meticulous effort is evident so that Felipe's life is constantly remembered, as the plebiscite does not arise from a spontaneous demand from the countrymen of that character. However, the representations about the event construct it in a different way, as we can see in the excerpt from Macedo's¹⁹ paper about the transfer.

[...] in a surprising vote, more than 99% of those who participated in the election voted 'yes'. At the will of the people, on 15 January 2011, in the presence of authorities, residents, relatives and ceneclist collaborators, a historic ceremony was held to receive the mortal remains of the two famous sons of Picuí.

[...] Arriving in the city, the convoy was received by a warm audience, to the sound of Filarmônica Coronel Antonio Xavier, which presented the Brazilian National Anthem, sung in chapel by all those present.

The caravan continued to Memorial Dr. Felipe Tiago Gomes, on *Avenida 24 de Novembro*, where several tributes were paid, and the remains were taken to the pedestal of his statue, installed at the top of the city of Picuí, after the pronouncement of the authorities and famous ceneclists²⁰.



Fig. 4. Tributes to Felipe Tiago in Picuí/PB, 2010 (private collection of the author)

¹⁹ G. Macedo, *A campanha: Felipe Tiago Gomes*, Uberaba, CNEC Edigraf, 2018.

²⁰ Macedo, *A campanha: Felipe Tiago Gomes*, cit., p. 191 (translated from the Portuguese version).

The above excerpt allows us to perceive the meticulousness with which the second funeral ceremony was organized. The procession began with the disembarkation of the funerary urns at the city's airport from Campina Grande, which is 120 km from Picuí, which were traveled in a fire truck, so that not only the people of Picuí were mobilized with the ceremony, as a transfer of this type certainly does not go unnoticed on the streets. Here, in addition to the attempt to keep the memory of Felipe Tiago alive, it is possible to observe the feeling of the nephew, positioned on the right in the first photo of figure 4, for the deceased uncle who shows gratitude and nostalgia. This figure also makes it possible to understand how the city received the procession of the Gomes brothers, as well as the position of the memorial statue that received the remains of both. The funerary urns were taken to the statue, where, after a celebration, the mortal remains were left. In the days before the ritual, the local press invited countrymen to receive the «most honorable countryman»²¹.

After the ceremony, the urns used to transport the remains became part of the memorial collection organized in honor of Felipe Tiago. Thus, even an accessory used on a temporary and punctual basis became part of the apparatus of praising the “honorable son”.

Conclusions

This study had, among other objectives, to investigate the procedures adopted in relation to the funerals of Felipe Tiago Gomes, founder of CNEC – Campanha Nacional de Escolas da Comunidade. Despite having established a large network of schools and being diligently active in the area of education, Felipe was not known outside his educational circle. In this environment, he received great prestige, being represented and nominated by colleagues as a teacher, educator and pedagogue, activities that he never conducted. His death provoked a strong commotion in the cenecist community, which mobilized in order to build and maintain a memory around the character. In view of this, two funeral celebrations were dedicated to Felipe Tiago, one on the occasion of his death, in September 1996, in the city of Brasília/DF, and another one in 2010, when his remains were transferred to the character's birthplace, Picuí/PB, located in the northeast.

In the ritual conducted in Brasília, the family was organized to hire a film crew to record scenes from the ritual, as well as testimonies from people about their relationship with the deceased, as well as aspects of his life and work. The analysis of the narratives enabled us to identify the syncretism that permeates religious practices in Brazil. Furthermore, the testimonies provided revealed the feelings and emotions expressed by the sensitivity of each one who had the opportunity to follow the trajectory of Felipe Tiago at the CNEC. The research related to the funeral ceremonials for Felipe Tiago also allowed us to investigate other practices carried out in order to create this *post mortem*

²¹ Based on information from the blog «Picuí é notícia», available on 03.07.2023.

memory of the character, such as the procession with the mortal remains in a fire truck through the city in both rituals, the tributes carried out through of flowers and wreaths, memory of mourning, applause, prayers and songs dedicated to the deceased, the walk organized by family members and CNEC members with banners and sayings in gratitude to its founder. In the city of Picuí, particularly, there is also an organization of the local population to receive their "illustrious son", a kind of public adoration of the deceased, with the construction of a large monument, in order to make him a mythical being of local education.

In this way, we understand that such practices demonstrate an effort by this community of memory to keep the character present in the imagination of his countrymen and the CNEC educational circle. In addition, it is possible to observe rites and practices that refer to the religious syncretism existing in Brazil, where, among other manifestations, public characters are worshiped and honored with an almost religious devotion, becoming a kind of martyr of their segment.

Metamorphosis of School Memory: the Case of Adelfo Grosso between Individual, Collective and Public Memory

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Introduction

Today, school memory studies have been consolidated both nationally and internationally, as witnessed at the conference held in Seville in 2015 and more recently in Macerata in 2022, the result of a Project of Relevant National Interest entitled “School Memories between Social Perception and Collective Representation (Italy, 1861-2001)”¹ which investigated and catalogued the various forms of school memory – individual, collective and public – in an online portal². Generally, the study of public memory has already demonstrated how street and building names are assigned by the ruling classes, who select personalities deemed as exemplary models for the community, consistently with their vision of the world, for naming streets, plaques and buildings³. The public memory of schools also falls within this field of study, describing the representation

¹ International Symposium “School Memories. New Trends in Historical Research into Education Heuristic Perspectives and Methodological Issues”, Seville 22-23 September 2015, which was followed by the publication of the book of abstracts and of the book edited by C. Janes-Cabrera, J. Meda, A. Viñao (edd.), *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, Springer, 2017. This contribution elaborates, also in the title, the report presented at the International Conference “The School and its Many Pasts” organized in Macerata (12-15 December 2022).

² <https://www.memoriascolastica.it/> (last access: 29.12.2022).

³ M. Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1950; J. Le Goff (ed.), *La nuova storia*, Torino, Einaudi, 1977, pp. 347-399; P. Nora (ed.), *Entre Mémoire et Histoire*, in Id., *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. I, Paris, Gallimard, 1984; P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989; B. Tobia, *Una patria per gli italiani. Spazi, itinerari, monumenti nell'Italia unita (1870-1900)*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1991; M. Isnenghi, (ed.), *I luoghi della memoria. Simboli e miti dell'Italia unita*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1996; Id., *La storia nelle vie e nelle piazze*, in M. Petrantoni (ed.), *Memorie nel bronzo e nel marmo. Monumenti celebrativi e targhe nelle piazze e nelle vie di Milano*, Milano, Federico Motta Editore, 1997, pp. 39-49; J. Assmann, *La memoria culturale. Scrittura, ricordo e identità politica nelle grandi civiltà antiche*, Torino, Einaudi, 1997; A. Huyssen, *Present Pasts. Urban palimpsests and the politics of memory*, Stanford, Stanford University, 2003; J. Assmann, *Cultural memory and early civilization. Writing, remembrance, and political imagination*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011; A. M. Banti, *Sublime madre nostra. La nazione italiana dal Risorgimento al fascismo*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2011; C. Mancuso, *Miti del Risorgimento a Palermo. Spazi urbani e simbologie patriottiche (1860-1911)*, «Mediterranea Ricerche storiche», n. 11, 2007, pp. 545-576; U. Fabietti, V. Matera, *Memorie e identità. Simboli e strategie del ricordo*, Milano, Meltemi, 2018.

and idea of school and education promoted by the ruling classes and consecrated in an inscription on the wall⁴. So what therefore is the subject of a memory expressed on a plaque or the name of a school or a road? The reasons often appear in the wording of the inscription, but this is also the point of arrival of a much longer process that may last years or even decades before reaching the public memory, which therefore represents the peak of cultural intentionality that transforms the individual and collective emotional impact of the news of a death into a publicly visible, perpetual memory written on the walls. It is therefore interesting to dig into the archaeology of school memory, reconstructing the path, figures and reasons of a possible passage from the individual to the collective and public memory of the school, in order to understand the metamorphoses of the subject of that memory. To this end, we will look at the case of Adelfo Grosso, director of the male Normal School in Bologna after Unification, who remains in the perpetual memory of the city's public spaces on a stone plaque, while a classroom, park and three schools were named after him following a long and intense process of construction of the school memory, today destined for oblivion.

1. *A stone plaque for Adelfo Grosso: but who was he?*

Adelfo Grosso was born on 24 February 1831 in Pinerolo, in the province of Turin, where he taught in the upper primary schools, was head and teacher at the technical school, and was appointed *maestro di Lettere italiane* (teacher of Italian literature) by the Minister Quintino Sella without having to sit the state exam⁵. When the need arose

⁴ P. Cunningham, *Making Use of the Past: Memory, History and Education*, «History of Education Society Bulletin», vol. 66, 2000, pp. 68-70; M. D'Ascenzo, *Creating Places of Public Memory through the Naming of School Buildings. A Case Study of Urban School Spaces in Bologna in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, «El Futuro del Pasado», vol. 7, 2016, pp. 441-458; A. Ascenzi, R. Sani, «Oscuri martiri, eroi del dovere». *Memoria e celebrazione del maestro elementare attraverso i necrologi pubblicati sulle riviste didattiche e magistrali nel primo secolo dell'Italia unita (1861-1961)*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2016; M. D'Ascenzo, *Collective and public memory on the walls. School naming as a resource in history of education*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XII, n. 1, 2017, pp. 633-657; Janes-Cabrera, Meda, Viñao (edd.), *School Memories*, cit.; M. Brunelli, J. Meda, L. Pomante (edd.), *Memories and Public Celebrations of Education in Contemporary Times* (special issue), «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XIV, n. 1, 2019; J. Meda, *The "Sites of School Memory" in Italy between memory and oblivion: a first approach*, *ibid.*, pp. 25-47; C. Venturelli, *A stone on the wall. Collective and public memory of an eclectic primary teacher*, *ibid.*, pp. 223-237; D'Ascenzo, *Remembering teachers and headmasters. Funeral memories as source in history of education between nation building and collective memory*, *ibid.*, pp. 279-294; V. Minuto, *L'educazione al patrimonio monumentale della scuola*, in A. Ascenzi, C. Covato, G. Zago (edd.), *Il patrimonio storico-educativo come risorsa per il rinnovamento della didattica scolastica e universitaria: esperienze e prospettive. Atti del II Congresso Nazionale della Società italiana per lo studio del Patrimonio Storico-Educativo (Padova, 7-8 ottobre 2021)*, Macerata, eum, 2021, pp. 151-168; Id., *Monumental memory of school in post-unitarian Italy*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XVI, n. 1, 2021, pp. 213-255; Id., *Memorie di scuola a Campo Verano. I monumenti funebri a Erminia Fuà Fusinato e a Carlo Belviglieri*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XVI, n. 2, 2021, pp. 527-553.

⁵ On Adelfo Grosso, see M. D'Ascenzo, *La scuola elementare in età liberale. Il caso Bologna 1859-1911*, Bologna, Clueb, 1997, pp. 100-102; F. Fabbri, *L'insegnamento di agricoltura nella Scuola normale maschile di*

to open the male Normal School to train primary school teachers in Bologna, at the initiative of the Province of Bologna soon after Unification, Minister Sella proposed to appoint Grosso as director, describing his characteristics

he is currently director and professor at the Administrative Technical School in Pinerolo; for his doctrine and commitment, the High Council of the Ministry granted him a teaching diploma for Italian literature, history, geography without having to sit the exam; for several years he taught in some upper primary schools, where he gained that experience of the best educational disciplines that constitute the main quality of those who have to manage an educational establishment, throughout his career he has constantly demonstrated his upright character and common sense, as well as his courteous ways⁶.

And so, Adelfo Grosso came to Bologna and managed the male Normal School until 1888, overseeing the organisation, coordinating the teaching staff and expanding the range of subjects. His cultural actions extended beyond the school, participating in local civil society, in educational debates and initiatives, defending the Piedmont school policies for which he clearly represented the standard bearer in the city. Indeed, during the discussion on the contents of the primary school reform in Bologna proposed by the mayor Gioacchino Napoleone Pepoli (1867-1868), he publicly intervened in writing, referring to the need for a formal and substantial application of the Casati Law, thus in favour of absolutely free schooling for the whole primary school, which had been challenged by Pepoli's proposal. Adelfo Grosso, who from 1862 also exchanged letters with the poet and teacher Giosuè Carducci, whom he affectionately referred to as «dear Carducci»⁷, promoted a number of educational and cultural initiatives in the city, particularly from 1870. For instance, in the years when gymnastics was being introduced into schools, Grosso adopted physical education in the male Normal School even before it became mandatory by law in 1878. He appointed Emilio Baumann, one of the main exponents of gymnastics in Italy, who taught an experimental course in the primary schools and other secondary institutes in Bologna⁸. From 1872 to 1875, Grosso was vice-chairman and later chairman of the "Virtus" gymnastics society founded by Baumann, offering a significant contribution to the organisation of the V Italian Gymnastics Congress held in

Bologna 1866-1888, in M. Tozzi Fontana, G. Dragoni (edd.), *Interpretare l'innovazione*, Bologna, Il Nove, 1997, pp. 252-267; F. Delneri, *Educare gli educatori. La Scuola normale maschile provinciale di Bologna e i suoi luoghi*, «Strenna Storica Bolognese», 2009, pp. 175-199; M. D'Ascenzo, *Alle origini delle attività sportive in Italia: la ginnastica "razionale" di Emilio Baumann (1860-1884)*, in R. Farnè (ed.), *Sport e infanzia. Un'esperienza formativa tra gioco e impegno*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2010, pp. 194-215; F. Fabbri, *Diventare maestri: la Scuola Normale maschile di Bologna*, in M. D'Ascenzo (ed.), *Tutti a scuola? L'istruzione elementare nella pianura bolognese tra Otto e Novecento*, Bologna, Clueb, 2013, pp. 55-70; M. D'Ascenzo, *Grosso Adelfo*, in G. Chiosso, R. Sani (edd.), *Dizionario Biografico dell'Educazione DBE* (thereafter: *DBE*), Milano, Editrice Bibliografica, 2013, vol. I, p. 692.

⁶ Historical Archive of the Metropolitan City of Bologna, General Archive of the Province of Bologna, Year 1861, Title 23, Folder 248, Letter from Minister Quintino Sella dated 15 April 1861.

⁷ Casa Carducci, Correspondence, Box LXII, File 45 "Adelfo Grosso", Letter dated 4 November 1862.

⁸ D'Ascenzo, *Alle origini delle attività sportive nella scuola italiana: la ginnastica razionale di Emilio Baumann (1860-1884)*, cit.

the city in 1874⁹. He also collaborated with the Municipality of Bologna to recruit and train teachers, and with the local Teachers' Society, helped to revise the curricula and text books used in the primary schools. Grosso took part in the cultural and scholastic life of the city with a passion, also refusing the prestigious appointment as director and general inspector of all the primary schools in Turin in 1869¹⁰, in order to remain in the city where he had built his career and many strong friendships, also after he was widowed¹¹. He was popular among colleagues and students alike. In 1871, for his birthday, they had organised a small two-act performance in his honour; written by vice-headmaster Luigi Savorini with music by his colleague Federico Parisini, the text was published by the students with an emblematic dedication of their fondness, gratitude and esteem

To the illustrious professor
CAV. ADELFO GROSSO
Director of the Normal School
of the province of Bologna
for his honesty and zeal towards good
he is second to none
and on XXIV February MDCCCLXXI
the anniversary of his birth
his college students
as a sign
of gratitude, affection and esteem
indelible
have published this at their own expense
and wish to dedicate it to him¹².

He was clearly very popular in his position at the Normal School among both colleagues and students, with whom he continued to correspond even after they had finished their studies and begun to teach in the schools, as emerges from the archive documents. This was a type of activity that went way beyond his institutional tasks but bears witness to the paternal and fraternal care Grosso expressed in his way of being director, evidently recognised by his students also after his death.

⁹ M. Negroni, "Virtus" *Società di educazione fisica in Bologna* *Notizie storiche* MDXXXLXXI-MCMXXXI, s.l., s.n., n.d. (but 1931), pp. 18-42.

¹⁰ *Grosso Prof. Cav. Adelfo vs. Province of Bologna*, Bologna, Stabilimento Tipografico Zamorani e Albertazzi, 1890, p. 3.

¹¹ Casa Carducci, Correspondence, Box LXII, File 45 "Adelfo Grosso", cit., Obituary of his wife Maria Repetto who died on 26 December 1876.

¹² *Una burla farsetta in due atti di Luigi Savorini musicata dal maestro Federico Parisini da rappresentare nel Convitto Normale maschile della Provincia di Bologna il carnevale del 1871*, Bologna, Tip. Mareggiani all'insegna di Dante, 1871.

2. *Adelfo Grosso, between individual memory and collective memory*

Adelfo Grosso died in Bologna on 21 January 1892. Two days later, on the evening of his funeral, Gustavo Guazzaloca, former student of the Normal School and teacher in the city for some time, as well as a key member of the Teachers' Society in the province of Bologna¹³, gave a commemorative speech also in the name of other ex-students and friends, which was then published at their expense for the memorial service a month after his death. He spoke in the first person, driven by the «profound emotion afflicting me in this saddest moment alongside this coffin [for] the supreme farewell to our dear and beloved teacher»¹⁴. Guazzaloca described Grosso as being from a «remarkable Piedmont family»¹⁵ and coming to Bologna thirty years before «in the flower of his youth»¹⁶, called by the Ministry of Public Education to manage the Normal School «with the noble aim of procuring teachers for our municipalities, conforming to the needs of these new times»¹⁷ and, precisely thanks to «his burning zeal and most special talents, led the school [...] reputed to be one of the best in Italy»¹⁸. Guazzaloca then turned to his ex-colleagues and students remembering Grosso's moral and intellectual qualities

oh companions, let us bow reverently to his memory, to the memory of a man of simple customs, an honest gentleman with no hypocrisy, an upright and honouring citizen, a learned teacher of fluent, committed eloquence, an active and diligent director with no wrath¹⁹

along with the «moderation of affections and the generosity of sentiments»²⁰ and what we may today define as empathy towards their inexperienced and frightened students

and that exceptionally exquisite, delicate and never diminishing feeling that, by nature, he was dispensed with, and was particularly manifested in us, poor unexpert youths hungry for the knowledge required to continue our studies in the Normal Schools, most of them coming from the peak of the high mountains and the far ends of the Province. To overcome our lacking culture, he doubled his efforts and incessantly surrounded us with the most fervent care, a patient and loving brother who strove to incite them and help them in their first, arduous studies²¹.

¹³ Gustavo Guazzaloca (1847-1919) was vice-chairman of the Emilia Teaching Federation in 1894, promoter of new educational curricula for the city's primary schools, the female professional schools and the Secular Sunday school initiated by Luigi Bombicci, as well as author of texts on school hygiene and propaganda against alcoholism. Cf. M. D'Ascenzo, *Guazzaloca Gustavo*, in *DBE*, cit., vol. I, p. 697; S.A., *In memoria di un educatore, Raduno di vecchi insegnanti ed antichi scolari della Scuola Normale Maschile di Bologna*, «Il pensiero dei maestri», vol. IV, n. 6, 15 June 1922, p. 3.

¹⁴ *Omaggio alla memoria del cavaliere e professore Adelfo Grosso nel trigesimo della sua morte. Discorso improvvisato dal maestro Gustavo Guazzaloca la sera del 23 gennaio 1892 ai funerali del professore cavaliere Adelfo Grosso in nome degli insegnanti usciti dalla scuola normale e pubblicato per cura di amici e di allievi del defunto*, Bologna, Stabilimento Tip. Zamorani e Albertazzi, 1892, p. 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Guazzaloca remembered Grosso's efforts to ignite the students' enthusiasm towards a career, that however was painted in its most negative aspects, due to its meagre satisfactions

a career, strewn with infinite trials and tribulations, that offers only light, sterile compensation for the untiring efforts, the forced excitement, which attacks and weakens the strongest fibres, wears down and destroys the most vigorous energies²².

The former student briefly described the director's physical appearance, his solemn gait, his high forehead, his smile, his deep blue eyes intent on comprehending the soul of his students, severe yet understanding towards them, little more than adolescents. Then he clarified the pedagogic and educational foundation that exhorted them to discern well between the real and presumed innovations of the time, and to solidly base their own pedagogy on the «glorious tradition of Italian schools that produced great teachers: Romagnosi, Rosmini, Gioberti, Capponi, Aporti, Rayneri and many other illustrious writers and pedagogists»²³. For these reasons, Guazzaloca recalled the diffidence towards the new forms of «education science» of the positivism for which Grosso was attacked as a

stick-in-the-mud by foolish scribblers, as the Sicilians well defined them, who, stealing with a vengeance here and there, citing several languages and knowing none of them, manipulating curricula with neither head nor tail, spend their lives stuffing books and booklets and memorials with clumsily styled, insignificant and empty ideas swollen with words²⁴.

Moreover, Guazzaloca talked of Grosso's work in local society as a battle against the Pepoli's proposed school reform of 1867 «which would have irreparably ruined our primary schools»²⁵, the presidency of the Gymnastics Society and the civil employees' club. The former student was sure that «the love of your disciples will never die, that sweet memory of the venerated teacher will never fade»²⁶, that teacher then defined as «an untainted, fearless knight, an honourable gentleman of the good old days»²⁷, hoping that beyond the grave he would meet with Enrico Sassoli who had strongly supported the male Normal School and with «your dear idealism that was Father Girard»²⁸, defined as the inspiration behind Adelfo Grosso's cultural and pedagogic action. The individual memory added up, progressively overlapping the collective memory linked to common youth, a profound emotion shared by all, while the language used tells of a very strong bond with «our dear, beloved teacher»²⁹, «patient and loving brother»³⁰ consigned to memory like a soldier wearing a laurel wreath and wrapped in the flag

²² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

farewell friend; farewell brother; our affection and grief follow you; go, into the kingdom of death like a wounded soldier, crowned in laurel, wrapped in the flag in the name of which you fought long and bravely for your whole life³¹.

3. *Adelfo Grosso from individual and collective memory to public memory*

In the following years, the traces of the memory of Adelfo Grosso were lost, both in the archives and in the bibliographies, at least as far as the current state of research finds. Only thirty years after Grosso's death, in April 1922 an article in a local teaching journal referred to a "Gathering of former students of our male Normal School", at the *Casa del Maestro* (Teacher's Society House), «who organised a lovely ceremony»³². Behind the initiative was no longer Guazzaloca, who had since passed away, but another and younger former student of Adelfo Grosso's, Ettore Mattiuzzi, at that time director of the local primary schools and author of school texts. The gathering was an opportunity for meeting with friends united by a «cordial fellowship of old classmates»³³ from which the desire emerged to «re-establish a male Normal School in Bologna, for which there is a strong need»³⁴, as it had been closed in 1888, transferring the men's Normal School to Forlimpopoli, further away in Romagna.

It was precisely Mattiuzzi, along with the teacher Edmondo Chelli and the more famous Ernesto Cappelletti, one of Grosso's former students and at that time the central director of the municipal primary schools³⁵, again on behalf of a "Gathering of former students of the Normal School", submitting an application on 3 May 1922 to the Municipal Education Department for a rectangular stone plaque, in Verona marble, to commemorate Adelfo Grosso, affixed in via Santo Stefano 116³⁶, the last site of the male Normal School in Bologna³⁷. The proposed epigraph was dictated by Giuseppe Lippardini, local poet and professor, then lightly amended with the agreement of the author, as declared by the former students themselves in a subsequent note dated 8 May 1922³⁸.

It is interesting to analyse the final text of the epigraph carved into the marble stone at the former site of the male Normal School. While in Guazzaloca's speech of 1892 the

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³² S. A., *Riunione di ex allievi della Scuola Normale maschile*, «Il pensiero dei maestri», vol. IV, n. 4, 15 April 1922, p. 3. The "Casa del Maestro" (note the capital M) was in De' Foscherari street in Bologna.

³³ D'Ascenzo, *Mattiuzzi Ettore*, in *DBE*, cit., vol. II, p. 137.

³⁴ S. A., *Riunione di ex allievi della Scuola Normale maschile*, cit.

³⁵ M. D'Ascenzo, *Cappelletti Ernesto*, in *DBE*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 269-270.

³⁶ Historical Archive of the Municipality of Bologna, Administrative papers, Year 1924, Folder 918, Title V, Sect. 3 Municipal buildings, Sect. 1 Buildings, File "Plaque to Adelfo Grosso", Letter dated 4 May 1922.

³⁷ Delneri, *Educare gli educatori. La Scuola normale maschile provinciale di Bologna e i suoi luoghi*, cit.

³⁸ Historical Archive of the Municipality of Bologna, Administrative papers, Year 1924, cit. On the stone plaque see M. D'Ascenzo, *Lapide ad Adelfo Grosso e agli insegnanti della Scuola Normale Maschile di Bologna (1922)*, «Banca dati delle memorie pubbliche della scuola», DOI: 10.53218/1906, published on 30.08.2022 (last access: 23.08.2023).

protagonist was Adelfo Grosso, described physically, in his humanity and culture and in the role he played in the city, here the subjects of the stone were both Grosso and his patrons, i.e., the former students. The wording of the epigraph is clearly divided into three parts, joined by the memory of Adelfo Grosso whose name lies at the centre in larger characters than the rest of the text

HERE STOOD THE FIRST MALE NORMAL SCHOOL
 THAT THE PROVINCE OF BOLOGNA MAGNIFICENTLY ESTABLISHED
 AND MAINTAINED FROM THE YEAR MDCCCLX TO THE YEAR MDCCCLXXXVIII.
 THE FORMER STUDENTS, IN MEMORY OF THE BELOVED TEACHERS
 LED BY ADELFO GROSSO FROM PINEROLO,
 A GREAT MIND AND PATERNAL HEART, LAID THIS MEMORY
 AS A CELEBRATION OF THE HUMBLE, DAILY HEROISM
 OF THE ITALIAN SCHOOL AND ITS TEACHERS.
 YEAR MCMXXII³⁹.

The first three lines remembered the site of the male Normal School established by the province of Bologna, which ran from 1860 to 1888: therefore *in primis* the place and promoter of the school, that is, the Province of Bologna.

The next three lines remembered the former students as the promoters of the stone itself in memory of their teachers («the former students in memory of the beloved teachers») and their head, the director Adelfo Grosso, with information on his origins and moral and intellectual characteristics, “great mind” (high, supreme) and “paternal heart” (with the love of a father).

The third part gave the last reason for the plaque, «the celebration of the humble, daily heroism of the Italian school and its teachers», the daily fatigue of the teaching profession, defined as heroic.

The stone therefore firstly celebrated the place, then the former students as patrons, the teachers of the school and their director, finally emphasising the difficulties of teaching as indeed a heroic task. It seemed almost a cry of pain, a public, evidently shared confirmation of the tough condition of the teacher, a condition not sufficiently appreciated by the community, as in fact had been reported in the pages of the teaching periodicals and trade associations for decades. Here, in this epigraph, the former students defined Grosso as the “head”, using a language befitting the time of war and the political debate that followed, marked by profound animosity that then led to the rise of Mussolini.

The plaque was unveiled on 4 June 1922. The speed with which the stone was proposed, laid and inaugurated – less than one month – is quite amazing. Probably the idea had already been taken on board some time before, the collective consensus was unanimous and moreover, among the promoters was also Cappelletti, a former student of Grosso and at that time the central director of the city’s primary schools, who had helped to complete all the authorisations needed in the municipal administration. The unveiling of the plaque was accompanied by a public ceremony organised by the former students,

³⁹ The first text read as follows: “Wise and beloved teachers” rather than beloved teachers; most beloved mind rather than “great mind”.

who gathered «to manifest their fellowship and remember their director, Adelfo Grosso and their teachers»⁴⁰. The inauguration was quite complex, and also strange. Many students came also from various parts of Italy, as well as the municipal and state civil authorities, including the Prefectural Commissioner Vittorio Ferrero and the Director of Education, with the support of the *Cassa di Risparmio* and the Province of Bologna. Around 70 former students gathered that morning in front of the “Carducci” primary school in Via Dante, then walked the short distance to the home of the poet Giosuè Carducci, welcomed by Albano Sorbelli, director of the museum, in front of which they laid a laurel wreath as a tribute. From there, the group moved to Via Santo Stefano 116, in front of the site of the former Normal School, received by Prof. Di Tizio, and then returned to the “Carducci” School, where in the hall, adorned with plants and tricolour trophies, the former students welcomed the authorities. Short speeches were made by Mattiuzzi, Lipparini, the former student Enrico Fornioni, now director of the primary schools in Piacenza⁴¹ – who talked of his time at Grosso’s Normal School – and finally Francesco Bonatto, educational director of Bologna, representing the Municipality of Pinerolo from where he, like Grosso, came⁴². Precisely while they were at the “Carducci” School, the stone plaque was unveiled in Via Santo Stefano, a spatial leap of around 300 metres

in the meantime, the memorial stone on the wall beneath the arches was unveiled, and a postcard bearing a portrait of Prof. Grosso was distributed⁴³

quite an unusual fact and told in just three lines, preceded on the other hand by the great emphasis on a kind of feast of schools and teaching, with almost goliardic tones (toasts, lunch in a restaurant, etc.) which evidently had the function of a collective school memory aiming to re-establish a male Normal School in the city of Bologna «because Bologna, the centre of education, cannot and must not be lacking in a seedbed for primary school teachers»⁴⁴.

The focus of the story of the inauguration of the plaque was no longer Adelfo Grosso in person but rather the desire to strengthen the identity of the students around their teacher and restore a new male Normal School to the city. The intensity of the individual and collective memory of the first few days following the death of Grosso, to whom little space was devoted in the article, appeared faded. The passing time, thirty years, had soothed the pain, the stone celebrated the former teacher but in fact celebrated the whole teaching profession with all its difficulties. This is confirmed by another later public event, when once again Mattiuzzi, commemorating Vittorio Savorini, former teacher at the male Normal School in Bologna who later moved to become headmaster in Teramo,

⁴⁰ S. A., *Raduno di vecchi insegnanti ed antichi scolari della Scuola Normale Maschile di Bologna*, «Il pensiero dei maestri», vol. IV, n. 6, 15 June 1922, p. 3.

⁴¹ D’Ascenzo, S. Spadea, *Fornioni Enrico*, in *DBE*, cit., vol. 1, p. 570.

⁴² D’Ascenzo, *Bonatto Francesco*, in *DBE*, vol. 1, cit., p. 584.

⁴³ S. A., *Raduno di vecchi insegnanti ed antichi scolari della Scuola Normale Maschile di Bologna*, cit.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

remembered precisely that inauguration ceremony for the plaque named after Adelfo Grosso

the former students of the former Normal School, around 35 years after the school had closed [...] gathered together by their colleagues from Bologna, came from all over Italy and, respectful and moved, laid a stone outside that glorious school so that it and its teachers could be rightly remembered⁴⁵.

A few months later, on 27 November 1922, a group of former students wrote to the Prefectural Commissioner asking to name a school after Adelfo Grosso and

choose the school (to be named after the worthy Educator) in an important place in the country (Corticella, S. Viola etc.) to remind how He, with such special love and rare wisdom, trained the rural schoolteachers⁴⁶.

On 5 February 1923, the Prefectural Commissioner Vittorio Ferrero issued a decree stating that the new school in Via Libia would be named after Adelfo Grosso, considering the road to be part of the rural area. The new municipal council, led by the Mayor Umberto Puppini, revoked the previous prefectural decree because – as reported by the former students – Via Libia was not a rural area – and approved the naming of the primary school in the rural area of Arcoveggio, in the former Villa Ronzani bought from Cavalier Alessandro Ronzani by the council, after Adelfo Grosso. It was 18 April 1924.

Conclusions

From these findings, Adelfo Grosso was the subject of school memory for a long time, more than thirty years after his death, considered a kind of “guiding star”, a bright light that slowly faded and today has waned completely, fallen into the oblivion of local and national school memory and history, despite the traces of public memory on the city walls: in fact, the school in former Villa Ronzani is still named after him, and today is a nursery and preschool, with a classroom at the front named “Adelfo Grosso” standing in the park of the same name: the primary school was moved to a new and more suitable site in the mid-70s, keeping the same name.

The school memory of Grosso remained vivid at least as long as his former students were alive, gathered around a kind of archetypal figure of the educator, father and brother and a model of virtue, before whom they defined themselves “former students”, “companions” and “classmates”. It is not surprising, as memory is linked to people, it survives time only when written and/or impressed on the walls. What appears relevant from this case study

⁴⁵ R. Istituto Tecnico “Comi” di Teramo, *Vittorio Savorini commemorato dai suoi alunni e dalla sua Scuola nel VI anniversario dalla morte*, Teramo, Tipografia Cioschi, 1932, p. 24.

⁴⁶ Historical Archive of the Municipality of Bologna, Decrees of the Prefectural Commissioner, 5 February 1923. It was not possible to recover the letter of 27 November 1922 due to incomplete documentation.

is the passage of the forms of memory from individual and collective to public. In this case, there was a sort of metamorphosis of the memory over the thirty years between his death, the plaque and the naming of the first school. While Guazzaloca's commemoration in 1892 was full of references to Grosso's physical appearance, educational and professional talents and to the former student's state of mind, with a brief mention of the difficulties of the teaching profession, in 1922 the figure of the director was less evident, faded between the celebration of the place of the male Normal School, the community of teachers and former students in their everyday heroism. Perhaps the time that had passed since Grosso's death progressively weakened the emotion of remembrance and his memory, in favour of a plurality of figures including the patrons who, celebrating the founder, also celebrated themselves, in a kind of highly identitarian collective ritual, hanging on the nostalgia of youth and the subtle denunciation of the teaching category, crushed between the "duty to be" and the harsh reality of everyday school work, as denounced elsewhere in school journals and political and social battles from the late 19th century. The memory of Grosso became hazier, while the central issue became the social criticism of the teachers' condition because, as indicated by Halbwachs

remembrance is in very large measure a reconstruction of the past achieved with data borrowed from the present, a reconstruction prepared, furthermore, by reconstructions of earlier periods wherein past images had already been altered⁴⁷.

In the passage of the school memory of Grosso from individual to collective and finally to public, therefore, the subject of the memory slowly changed: the person remembered is no longer only Adelfo Grosso but the patrons, i.e., the teachers, who are described as hanging between an ideal "duty to be" and the hard, tiring, everyday heroism. It is in this way that studying the collective and public memory of school offers further elements for understanding the representation of schools and their teachers, bringing a profession hanging between promised honours and allotted burdens back to the fore.

⁴⁷ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, cit., p. 69.

A Monument in Memory of the Teachers

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Introduction

During the Austro-Hungarian period, a large number of teachers came to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) from other parts of the Monarchy. Namely, BiH did not have institutionalized education until the arrival of Austria-Hungary, and there was not a sufficient number of professional teaching staff. It took time to train local staff, and the new government wanted to establish a state school as soon as possible. In order to succeed, the experts in the field of education and schooling were needed. Very soon the proven staff from the Monarchy, mostly from Croatia, arrived in BiH and started to work on the organization of the school system. Teachers from the Monarchy and their educational activities soon became the mainstay of the new government in achieving its educational goals. They went to remote areas, convincing parents about the usefulness of education for their children but also for themselves. They became the main advisers for agriculture, household and health. They were often the only one literate in the village, and the villagers turned to them for advice and help. In the cities, teachers were the initiators of journals, correspondents, organizers of exhibitions, book presentations, conducting various sections, within the educational and cultural societies of the time. Teachers were backbones of the social community at the time, although often their role and commitment in society was understood without special forms of reward. There was also discrimination against civil servants and their salaries, and teachers decided to organize into associations to help them exercise their rights. These associations were a kind of union with funds to help the widows and orphans of deceased teachers. They also struggled to improve their working and living status and often wrote about it in the pedagogical journals that were established at the time, «Školski vjesnik» and «Učiteljska zora». These journals, while maintaining its focus on educational issues, gave also a great place to a reflection on the educational and school practice, especially the government's attitude towards the teaching profession¹. Thus, in journals, one can find how much aid was sent to the family of the deceased teacher, how much aid the state allocates for these purposes, etc. Obituaries about teachers were published in these journals, as well. They mentioned teachers' dedicated work, pedagogical activity and contribution to the entire

¹ S. Šušnjara, *The Position of Teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. VIII, n. 1, 2013, pp. 97-102.

community. «... the *obituaries* particularly emphasized the civil and patriotic virtues of the disappeared teachers and their role in the promotion of a national identity and of the love for the country among the younger generation»². There is also a noticeable difference in highlighting the virtues of late teachers. Female teachers were dedicated workers with a maternal sense of upbringing and justice, while male teachers were active in social roles and carriers of awareness of the importance of education.

However, the male commemorations underline energy, vigour, intelligence, educational worthiness, patriotism, while the female ones highlight the virtues of a profession still focused on the maternal dimension, which required silent and humble industriousness inspired by the ethics of sacrifice for the school, the family and the country. These two different narrative registers confirm the historical construction of the male and female teaching identity, perpetuating long-term gender stereotypes³.

This is also evident in the obituary published by the magazine «Učiteljska zora» on the occasion of the death of teacher Ela Kranjčević, which mentions her gentle nature and motherly approach to students, while her husband was primarily mentioned as a great poet, teacher and a dedicated editor of the magazine *Nada*. At the beginning of the obituary, her personal information and the schools where she taught are listed, followed by her quality as a teacher and the activities she carried out for the common good. At the end of the text, however, the following is highlighted: «In the memory of the great Croatian poet Silvio Strahimir Kranjčević, the figure of his wife will always stand worthy, not only as his friend, but also as an exemplary worker in the educational field of Bosnia and Herzegovina»⁴. On the other hand, the obituary that his contemporaries addressed to him is revealing

He started working as a teacher at trade schools, those institutes, which were supposed to provide general education to older youth of the bourgeois and peasant classes. An ideal task, and Silvije understood and carried it out ideally. But a new, broader field of activity opened up to his mental strength through his school work, when he became a teacher of future teachers, those first torchbearers of national education, through his employment at the teacher's school. Then Silvije does not separate himself from the teaching profession, because there he carries out his educational mission beneficially. And as a poet, he raised a whole generation of young, enthusiastic successors⁵.

² A. Ascenzi, R. Sani, *Between rhetoric celebration and social marginalization. The teachers' and headmasters' memory and celebration through the obituaries published in the school and teachers' magazines in the first century after the unification (1861- 1961). 2nd part*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XI, n. 2, 2016, pp. 121-150.

³ M. D'Ascenzo, *Remembering teachers and headmasters. Funeral memories as source in history of education between nation building and collective memory*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XIV, n. 1, 2019, pp. 279-294.

⁴ «Učiteljska zora», 1911, p. 111.

⁵ <http://www.sskranjcevic.hr/zivotopis.ASP?PisID=1&odGodine=1908¤tPage=1221> (last access: 10.02.2023).

Although his wife died two years after him, the monument reads: «Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević and his wife Ela». She was not given space to write her maiden name or full name.

Therefore, I would like to present in this paper, the life and work of these two prominent individuals who indisputably testify to the consciousness of the people of that time and their gratitude for the effort and commitment they gave to Bosnia and Herzegovina that was not their home country. The writer and educator Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević, who arrived in BiH from Croatia and found his life companion there, teacher Gabrijela Kašaj who was born in Slovenia, will be presented in this paper. As it was not the custom to erect tombstones in BiH at the time of their activities, the memory of these two people represents a certain phenomenon and the application of practices that are only later established and become common. Public memorials to individuals linked with education were rare and this was a reason to investigate it properly.

While the obituaries in teaching journals enlighten the collective teaching memory built “from inside”, other sources show the social representation of the teacher identity, for example the commemorations of teaching staff in public and/or official speeches given by the authorities, sometimes during the unveiling of name stones or the inauguration of school buildings named after school staff⁶.

The identity of the teacher was therefore also determined by the manner in which the last tribute was paid to him. And this showed how important and valued the teacher's profession was in a certain community. Usually, the memory of a certain teacher remained written in the collective memory and thus reminded those who remain of the values and messages of the teacher's vocation. With their lives, they witnessed dedication and courage, as evidenced by generations of students whom they motivated and through their own example led to the responsibility of life. «The elementary school teachers did not just increase their status through increased education, or by being active in Parliament, or by taking a large number of courses in their spare time. Their increased status was also detectable in the way in which they remembered their past, erected monuments and buried their leaders»⁷.

The function of cultural memories is the legalization of the current social order. Connerton points out that «the participants of any social order must accept a common memory in advance»⁸. Therefore, the memory of the past conditions their experience of the present. Without collective memory there is no culture and without it there is no identity. The cultural memory of a nation is the result of a collective sifting of facts to create a story that society retells in order to preserve its memory⁹.

⁶ D'Ascenzo, *Remembering teachers and headmasters*, cit., p. 290.

⁷ J. Landahl, A. Ullman, *The politics of immortality: the funeral of an education minister and teacher unionist*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XIV, n. 1, 2019, pp. 261-278 (in particular, p. 273).

⁸ P. Connerton, *How societies remember*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 3.

⁹ R. Dreher, *Oduprite se laži*, Split, Verbum, 2022, p. 124.

1. *Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević and Gabrijela Kašaj*

Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević, a poet and teacher who marked the Bosnian-Herzegovinian area with his work, was born in Senj, Croatia, on February 17, 1865. After graduating, he was sent from the Senj Seminary to Rome, where he was to prepare for the priesthood. However, after eight months, he realized that there was no call to the priesthood and returned to Zagreb, enrolling in a teacher's course. He was trained as a teacher in civic schools in 1886, and was able to teach Croatian and German, as well as geography and history. For a time, he worked as a free trainee at the Senj elementary school. After that, he moved to Bosnia, where he was appointed teacher of the trade school in Mostar, then moved to Livno, later to Bijeljina and finally to Sarajevo to the Teachers' School, in 1894¹⁰. Jergović describes Kranjčević as a national teacher who cared for the poor:

... a good and honest Croat in the Austrian service, who, however, prefers the locals, whatever their religion, than the Swabians. He had a beautiful, proud moustache, which gave him the appearance of a bun, and the Sarajevo's people would be wary of such as soon as they could, but they gladly accepted him into their company, as long as there was peace and tranquillity. Although, Kranjčević was not overly sociable. Such, it was said, were the people in his neighbourhood. Mindful and polite, but watch their own business¹¹.

Gabriela Ela Kašaj, was born in Slovenija on November 20, 1876, in the family of border captain Franjo Kašaj who was transferred to Sarajevo. Her father Franjo spoke French and his daughters, Ella and Slava, learned this language following their father's instructions. Thanks to her knowledge of the French language, in 1897 Ela met the Croatian poet Kranjčević, who was attending her private lessons in French with a friend, Milaković. This resulted first in the engagement from which the scrapbook has been preserved and then in the wedding in the Sarajevo Cathedral, 1898 on his 33rd birthday. Their best man at the wedding was a colleague and friend, Josip Milaković. Four years later, their daughter Ivana Višnja (1904-1983) was born¹².

Immediately after the wedding, he published his best collection of poems "Izabrane pjesme" and in 1902 he also published "Trzaje". Around 1903, he began to get sick, so he underwent three operations for bladder stones. Almost a quarter of Kranjčević's monthly salary went to his problems with the bladder or kidney stones. «Pharmacies with doctors have eaten up my beautiful summer house», noted the poet¹³. After unsuccessful treatment in Sarajevo, at the end of 1906 he moved to Vienna¹⁴. Namely, he had to pay for all the expensive health care services in the Vienna hospital himself, where, according to the doctor there, he arrived too late and after he was stunned by the doctors in Sarajevo. Of his 433 kroner salary, 112 kroner went to his medical expenses. His wife Ela translated

¹⁰ *Kronologija života. Ljetopis Silvija Str. Kranjčevića*, «Hrvatski Narodni Godišnjak 1999», 1998, pp. 41-42

¹¹ <https://www.jergovic.com/ajfelov-most/don-serafim-kod-kranjcevicevih/> (last access: 10.02.2023).

¹² <https://www.biografija.com/silvije-strahimir-kranjcevic/> (last access: 10.02.2023).

¹³ <https://www.jutarnji.hr/naslovnica/velika-iskrena-ljubav-u-sjeni-teske-bolesti-4005885> (last access: 10.02.2023).

¹⁴ <http://www.sskranjcevic.hr/djela.ASP?PisID=1&KatID=124> (last access: 10.02.2023).



Fig. 1. S.S.Kranjčević



Fig. 2. Ella Kranjčević



Fig. 3. S.S. Kranjčević and Ela Kranjčević

from French and sewed at home for little Višnja, so that they could survive from day to day¹⁵. While in Vienna, his friend Meštrović, a world's famous artist, made a portrait of him. The bronze ebb of that portrait in high relief is today in the Museum of Literature and Theatre Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁶. While he was undergoing treatment, he exchanged letters with his wife. Those letters testify to sincere love that the force of the disease turned into a painful story of separation, search and hope¹⁷. Eight months of severe illness did not help and he returned to Sarajevo, where his agony soon began. He died in 1908 in Sarajevo and was buried in the cemetery of St. Joseph¹⁸. For him, Jergović writes:

During his life, he was the one of thousands who came to other place of the Monarchy, and he was an imperial and royal official, with whom the people of Sarajevo were not impressed more or less than any

¹⁵ <https://www.jutarnji.hr/naslovnica/velika-iskrena-ljubav-u-sjeni-teske-bolesti-4005885> (last access: 10.02.2023).

¹⁶ S. Mutapčić, *Grobnica Silvija Strahimira Kranjčevića u Sarajevu*, «Hrvatski narodni godišnjak 2006», n. 53, 2005, pp. 206-216.

¹⁷ More than 200 of the poet's and almost all of his wife's letters – about 250 – originate from the years of the poet's illness (1902-1908), which ended in his premature death. A total of 567 letters of the two spouses were collected and published in the book *Skriveni svijet of Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević: Elina and Silvijeve pisma: 1897-1908*, by the author Miščin Danijel. See more: <https://www.jutarnji.hr/naslovnica/velika-iskrena-ljubav-u-sjeni-teske-bolesti-4005885> (last access: 10.02.2023).

¹⁸ I. Potocki, *O životu Silvija Strahimira Kranjčevića*, «Hrvatski narodni godišnjak 2008», n. 55, 2007, pp. 53-57.

other official. And as the only great honour commemorated by Kranjčević, the memory of his funeral remains, one of the most significant that Sarajevo remembered in the twentieth century...¹⁹.

After caring for her husband, whose illness lasted for a long time, Ella did not even manage to recover from grief, but she had to travel to Zlatar to take care of her sick mother. After her mother's death, she began to get sick herself. She went to the Goerbersdorf Spa, but the disease progressed and she died of lung disease in Zagreb in 1911. As the custom dictated, the wife was to be buried next to her husband, and her body was transferred to Sarajevo, where she was buried in the same tomb where Kranjčević lay²⁰.

2. *Being a teacher in BiH*

«Teachers' professional pride stemming from doing important cultural and national work, which would actually be visible years later through their students' results, but which is otherwise, in general, less noticeable, encouraged teachers to erect memorials to deceased colleagues who left their mark in history...»²¹. It was only at the funerals of the teachers that their true value and difficult life and work path was revealed, and it was an opportunity for those responsible to get acquainted with the hardships that these valuable individuals encountered. Their teaching role did not end with leaving the classroom or school. No, they were constantly under public scrutiny and their behaviour could be the target of criticism or condemnation. When the teacher Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević fell ill, the whole of Sarajevo talked about it. He was considered by the public view as member of the special category of the "honest citizen" who was carrying out his high task as a poet and educator, therefore he had produced a «benefit for the whole country, thus becoming "worthy" of "being commemorated"...»²².

As an already well-known poet, Kranjčević came to Sarajevo in 1894, where he began working as the editor of the literary magazine «Nada», published by the Provincial Government of BiH. At the time when he was absent, he was replaced in this position by his colleague teacher and friend Josip Milaković, who also wrote and was happy to associate with writers of the time. Kranjčević's wife stated that many poets and writers had to thank Kranjčević for the quality reworking of their works in terms of content and form in order to be published in «Nada». «It was hard work for him, but he worked»²³. When this magazine stopped publishing, Kranjčević was temporarily appointed school

¹⁹ <https://www.jergovic.com/subotnja-matineja/silvije-strahimir-kranjcevic-bez-ikoga-svoga/> (last access: 10.02.2023).

²⁰ <http://www.sskranjcevic.hr/djela.ASP?PisID=1&KatID=124> (last access: 10.02.2023).

²¹ B. Šuštar, *Faded Memories Carved in Stone: Teachers' Gravestones as a Form of Collective Memory of Education in Slovenia in the 19th and Early 20th Century*, in: C. Yanes-Cabrera, J. Meda, A. Viñao (edd.), *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, Cham, Springer, 2017, p. 178.

²² Ascenzi, Sani, *Between rhetoric celebration and social marginalization*, cit., p. 101.

²³ E. Kašaj *Moj Silvije*, «Hrvatski narodni godišnjak 2008», n. 55, 2007, p. 61.

supervisor for the city of Sarajevo in 1904. However, Archbishop Stadler filed a written protest against the appointment and threatened to keep the doors of confessional schools closed due to earlier disputes with Kranjčević. The government and the ministry accepted the protest and withdrew their appointments. After five months during which he did not hold any service, Kranjčević was appointed professor and headmaster of the Trade school in Sarajevo, in 1905.

Trade schools were conceived as institutions for exclusively professional economic education, but they, in the words of Ljuboje Dlustuš, government commissioner and advisor for education, from the very beginning became «nurseries of a conscious and enlightened middle class», and this is the first and most important condition for the progress of one country, «to the alert national consciousness and persistent commitment of the people for their interests and the interests of the country»²⁴. Thus, in practice, these schools became general education schools. Pedagogues, teachers and professors from Croatia who served in BiH made a significant contribution to promote education, starting with the aforementioned advisor Dlustuš and ending with Kranjčević's friends Nikola Maraković and Josip Milaković. Ljuboje Dlustuš also wrote that: «It goes without saying that our Silvije quickly found a suitable place in such a framework, and that he understood his task in that place from the very beginning»²⁵. That job occupied him so much that he did not have a moment to devote to other jobs. He himself wrote scripts for teaching geography and history so that students could better understand and adopt the material. As a director, he loved students, helped them at every opportunity, defended them and mitigated harsh punishments. How many times did he say: «These are children, they cannot be demanded the same as adults, and if they are restless, it means life, health»²⁶. As a teacher and editor of *Nada*, Kranjčević worked responsively. In 1905 he was elected a full member of the Croatian Pedagogical and Literary Association in Zagreb²⁷.

Gabriela Ela Kranjčević was a teacher at a Muslim elementary school for girls but also taught French at female high school²⁸. She was known as a gentle and calm person. It is evident from the documents that she tried to provide the girls in that school with quality education and good working conditions. Thus, she asked the Government to provide them with more adequate space for work, because the existing, private house in which the school is located did not have enough space for work. She even made a sketch of what the school space in the house should look like that could meet the required standards²⁹.

²⁴ D. Jelčić, *Kranjčević u Bosni i Hercegovini. Dvadeset i dvije godine: 1886-1908*, «Hrvatska revija», n. 1, 2016 <https://www.matica.hr/hr/480/mladi-kranjcevic-i-pravastvo-25640/> (last access: 10.02.2023).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ E. Kašaj, *Moj Silvije*, «Hrvatski Narodni Godišnjak 1999», 1998, p. 38.

²⁷ *Kronologija života. Ljetopis Silvija Str. Kranjčevića*, 1998, p. 43.

²⁸ <http://www.sskranjcevic.hr/djela.ASP?PisID=1&KatID=124> (last access: 10.02.2023).

²⁹ Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Dopis Zemaljskoj vladi u Sarajevu, Uprava ženske muslimanske škole, 1906.

3. *Relation to monumental heritage*

The occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina the former Ottoman province to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1878 enabled the sudden penetration of the achievements of the Western European civilization circle. One of them was the fine arts. Unlike most European countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina has not had a tradition of erecting sculpturally designed memorials in public space. After centuries of Ottoman rule, this country received its first public monuments, busts, figural reliefs and statues only with the establishment of a new social and political order, in the time of Austro-Hungary. Institutionalized commemorative practices resulting in the construction of monuments have become part of the new administration's interest. In addition to dynastic and war monuments, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, under Austro-Hungary, the erection of monuments in honour of famous people began for the first time. The civil class, which in other areas during the 19th century initiated the construction of such memorials, is just beginning to form in Bosnia and Herzegovina, mostly thanks to the immigrant population. Due to the lack of local artists, but also due to the requirements of the client, the Catholic Church, the ruling structures of cultural societies and a small civic elite, the work of art is most often entrusted to foreign authors. Commemorative practices most often resulted in memorials that on the one hand served to preserve the memory of individuals and events, and on the other hand to affirm the values of those social strata that raised them³⁰.

Figural sculpture was an almost indispensable element on monuments because with the help of depictions of historical figures, and then allegorical content and personifications, it should clearly indicate the models and ideals of emerging nation states and growing civil strata, and ruling dynasties that seek to maintain the image of the power of their empires³¹.

Among the few domestic initiatives supported by the Provincial Government was the construction of a monument to Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević, a teacher and poet. It is significant not only because it was successfully achieved but also because it was of a 'civil' character, and was aimed at worshiping the "domestic" personality³². It was encouraged by educational and cultural circles who wanted to pay tribute to their deceased colleague, and it was realized with the help of voluntary contributions collected both in the country and abroad. «At the same time, they had to increase the prestige and authority of the category within the public opinion and the ruling classes of the country»³³. Thus, their initiative resulted in a monument that is one of the most representative works of secession

³⁰ A. Baotić-Rustanbegović, *Skulptura u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme austrougarske uprave 1878-1918*. Doctoral Thesis, Department of Architecture (Supervisor: Irena Kraševac), Zagreb, Filozofski Fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2018, p. 188.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 266-270.

³³ Ascenzi, Sani, *Between rhetoric celebration and social marginalization*, cit., pp. 97-117.

in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and whose construction was entrusted to one of the then most important Croatian sculptors, Rudolf Valdec³⁴.

4. *Initiative for the construction of monuments and collection of donations*

As written sources show, the idea of building a monument to Kranjčević came to light only a few days after his death. On October 31, 1908, Kranjčević's comrades, writers and educators met at the Croatian Club, where they agreed to perpetuate the memory of him in a most honourable manner³⁵. Tugomir Alaupović, professor in Sarajevo (1904-1910), headmaster of the Great Gymnasium in Tuzla (1910), advisor in the department of education and supervisor of secondary schools in BiH (1913-1915), Osman Nuri Hadžić, professor and writer, Josip Milaković, teacher both the poet and Milan Prelog, a professor at the grammar school in Sarajevo, formed a committee for the construction of the monument, and took on the task of collecting donations for the raising memorial stones on the grave. At the beginning, the response was weak, some alms came to them from Ljubljana and Prague, while few donations arrived from Croatia. After the public invitation was sent again in 1910, 1.000 crowns were collected and the realization of the monument began. The committee for the construction of the monument accepted the proposal of the sculptor Rudolf Valdec, who conceived the sculpture of the "restrained genius". The friendly relations between Valdec and Kranjčević determined the choice of shapes and symbols for this tomb³⁶. As Kranjčević's wife Ela also died in the meantime, it was agreed with Valdec that a joint memorial would be built, on which the names of both spouses would be inscribed. Along with the construction of the monument, the collection of money for its construction continued. In October 1911, the committee again called on the public to contribute because it was necessary to raise more than 5.000 crowns, for which the construction of a monument was agreed with Valdec. Since the sculptor was a friend of Kranjčević, he did not collect his royalties, but the money raised was used to cover the costs of purchasing materials, making and erecting monuments. Despite the engagement of special commissioners in larger cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Dalmatia, the collected contributions were not enough, so part of the costs was left to the Writers' Association in Zagreb, and other Croatian cultural societies and various institutes were appealed. Although the monument was scheduled to be completed by October 29, 1912, when the anniversary of Kranjčević's death would be marked, this did not happen. The monument was completed and delivered to Sarajevo at the end of 1912, and its ceremonial unveiling was postponed to next year. The monument was erected on the Koševo cemetery during the Christmas holidays «so that the newspapers did not even

³⁴ Baotić-Rustanbegović, *Skulptura u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme austrougarske uprave 1878-1918*, cit., pp. 266-270.

³⁵ J. Milaković, *Kranjčevićev spomenik*, «Napredak: hrvatski narodni kalendar», n. 8, 1914, p. 117.

³⁶ Mutapčić, *Grobnica Silvija Strahimira Kranjčevića u Sarajevu*, cit., pp. 206-216.

know about it», and it was «shielded with boards» until August 1913³⁷. The committee feared that for the monument, since it was over, no one would want to make any more contributions and in addition to seven and a half thousand crowns, as much as it cost at the time, money of 1.500 crowns had to be raised for its delivery to Sarajevo³⁸. Due to all the above, teacher Milaković personally visited cities and institutions in Croatia from which he collected the necessary amount, and the Committee was forced to seek help from the Provincial Government³⁹.

5. *Contribution of the Provincial Government and unveiling of monuments*

Recalling Kranjčević's service and the role he played in creating cultural opportunities in the country under Austro-Hungarian rule, the committee asked the government to co-finance the construction of the monument, and 1.500 crowns was donated for the monument to the late poet⁴⁰. «The memory of male teachers appears focused clearly on the contents of their civil, cultural and educational works»⁴¹. The ceremonial unveiling of Kranjčević's monument was finally held on September 28, 1913, not on the anniversary of the poet's death, but on the opening day of the *Hrvatsko Kulturno Društvo (HKD) Napredak* palace⁴². The reason for moving the ceremony was of a practical nature. Namely, on the occasion of the opening of *Napredak* palace, «various Croatian corporations» had already gathered in Sarajevo, and «the time was more appropriate» for the unveiling ceremony of the monument. In addition, the monument was handed over to *HKD Napredak* for safekeeping on that occasion⁴³. In addition to representatives of Croatian associations, the ceremony was also attended by government officials, writers, workers and schoolchildren. There were certainly individuals and institutes that contributed financially to the construction of the monument, and only the sculptor Valdec, who was on a trip to the United States, was missing from the ceremony⁴⁴. Already during the ceremony, it was pointed out in the press that the monument is «a symbolic beautiful work of art which makes a strong impression»⁴⁵. The memorial was unveiled by

³⁷ Milaković, *Kranjčevićev spomenik*, cit., pp. 117-125.

³⁸ Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, fond «Zemaljske vlade za Bosnu i Hercegovinu», 1913, k. 231, š. 93-100/2 – Odbor za podignuće Kranjčevićeva spomenika; *Zemaljska vlada za Kranjčevićev spomenik*, «Sarajevski List», n. 135, 15 June 1913, p. 2.

³⁹ Milaković, *Kranjčevićev spomenik*, cit., pp. 117-125.

⁴⁰ Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, fond «Zemaljske vlade za Bosnu i Hercegovinu», 1913, k. 231, š. 93-100/2 – Odbor za podignuće Kranjčevićeva spomenika; *Zemaljska vlada za Kranjčevićev spomenik*, «Sarajevski List», n. 135, 15 June 1913, p. 2.

⁴¹ D'Ascenzo, *Remembering teachers and headmasters*, cit., p. 287.

⁴² Otkriće Kranjčevićevog spomenika, «Sarajevski list», n. 206, 29 September 1913, p. 3.

⁴³ Otkriće spomenika pjesnika Kranjčevića, «Napredak: hrvatski narodni kalendar», n. 8, 1914, p. 124.

⁴⁴ A. Adamec, *Rudolf Valdec*, Zagreb-Samobor, A.G. Matoš, 2001, p. 84.

⁴⁵ *Otkriće Kranjčevićevog spomenika*, «Sarajevski List», n. 206, 29 September 1913, p. 3.



Fig. 4. «Restrained genius», relief from the tombstone of Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević, 1911-1912, 82 x 163 x 37 cm., Brač marble and bronze (Cemetery of St. Josip, Koševo, Sarajevo)

government adviser Dr. Tugomir Alaupović⁴⁶. On that occasion, he pointed out «Let the whispered genius from the poet's grave always remember the eternal struggles between blood and spirit, heaven and earth, light and darkness, so that their energetic and young wings never stick to hell on earth, taken out of the reach of reality and life»⁴⁷. Such speeches could be considered «as sources useful for building historical-educational knowledge, not only for their reconstruction of biographies but also for the social, political and cultural consideration of school staff in a precise historical moment and, in the long term, the evolution of the social image of teachers»⁴⁸.

As Milaković states, “restrained genius” was actually a symbol of the poet himself «in the eternal struggle with life and the world»⁴⁹. Allegedly, Valdec imagined him that way, inspired by Kranjčević's poems. Reading them «he felt something that gasped and held his breath, something that he wanted to reveal stronger and stronger and take off what was holding him back, folding his wings, pinning his head, handcuffs»⁵⁰. In addition to the “restrained genius”, Kranjčević's tombstone was supposed to have «relief figures of the poet and his wife»⁵¹. They were supposed to stand under the commemorative inscription, and for their production they were waiting for Valdec's return from the United States⁵². Probably due to the outbreak of war, they were never realized, and the idea of horticulturally enriching Kranjčević's grave site was also not realized. Regardless of this

⁴⁶ Mutapčić, *Grobnica Silvija Strahimira Kranjčevića u Sarajevu*, cit., pp. 206-216.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁴⁸ D'Ascenzo, *Remembering teachers and headmasters*, cit., p. 280.

⁴⁹ Milaković, *Kranjčevićev spomenik*, cit., pp. 117-125.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

fact, the monument is a complete work of art and a masterpiece of «symbolic and poetic content»⁵³. Kranjčević's monument is exceptional in the context of artistic circumstances in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The monument is a representative work of art “in the open” and it is also one of the few memorials where the sculpture moves away from academic expression⁵⁴. The commemorations of teacher in public and official speeches given by the authorities during the unveiling of name stones correspond in a certain way to the social representation of the teacher identity. Public commemorations not only provide information on professional biographies but also underline the social relevance of some teachers who remain in the collective teaching memory. «These speeches can also be considered as sources useful for building historical-educational knowledge, not only for their reconstruction of biographies but also for the social, political and cultural consideration of school staff in a precise historical moment and, in the long term, the evolution of the social image of teachers»⁵⁵.

As we have seen from the above, the *Hrvatsko kulturno društvo Napredak* was in charge of maintaining the monument, and it did so until 1947, when the activities of this Society were banned in the new state of Yugoslavia. After 1990, *Napredak* resumed cultural and educational activities. Thus, this society took steps to restore the monument that was in rather poor condition and a lot of steps and actions had to be taken in order for its renovation to be carried out successfully. Thus, on November 1, 2006, together with the City of Sarajevo, a reopening of the monument in Sarajevo was held. The exemplary Cardinal Vinko Puljić blessed the tomb. Members of *HKD Napredak* and other admirers of Kranjčević maintained this grave and every year for All Saints came to light candles and pray for the poet's soul. The same day the monument is reopened, the poet's bust, built by sculptor Vojin Bakić in the 1970s, was returned and placed in the park across the BiH Presidency building⁵⁶.

Conclusion

From all that has been said, it is evident that the Austro-Hungarian era was revealing in every respect and that new cultural and artistic shifts were being established in the areas that belonged to it. The educational staff occupied an important place in the promotion of schooling and literacy. Teachers were the bearers of all activities that were important for everyday life and the promotion of culture. They also wrote textbooks, books, verses. They supported each other in these endeavours

⁵³ A. Adamec, *Na temu: Sputani genije, spomenik Kranjčeviću Rudolfa Valdeca – remek-djelo secesije*, «Odjek», n. 1, 1983, pp. 15-20.

⁵⁴ Baotić-Rustanbegović, *Skulptura u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme austrougarske uprave 1878-1918*, cit., p. 275.

⁵⁵ D'Ascenzo, *Remembering teachers and headmasters*, cit., p. 280.

⁵⁶ <https://www.sarajevo.ba/hr/article/1608/zvanicno-obiljezen-zavrsetak-restauracije-nadgrobnog-spomnika-silvija-strahimira-kranjcevic> (last access: 10.02.2023).

and empowered each other on this difficult path, which often did not bring any material benefits except spiritual ones. They were not only the popular educators but they were also very much involved and committed in the ethical and civil growth of their students. It is obvious that teachers were the initiators of important humanitarian actions, and in this case, they made many efforts to keep the memory of the poet and teacher Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević. His wife was buried with him, but her abbreviated name was only mentioned in the function of his wife and not a teacher and educator, who herself wrote and remained remembered among her students and colleagues. The monument, which was erected and renovated, testifies to a time, customs and visions, and experts agree that it is a true work of art of «symbolic and poetic content»⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ Adamec, *Na temu: Sputani genije, spomenik Kranjčeviću Rudolfa Valdeca – remek-djelo secesije*, cit., pp. 15-20.

Obituaries to Teachers on the Pages of Periodicals of the 20th Century

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Introduction

Obituaries are an extremely interesting and original source of educational history that has recently attracted the attention of researchers from different countries. For example, the topic of academic obituaries is covered in the articles by Bruce Macfarlane and Roy Y. Chan *The last judgement: exploring intellectual leadership in higher education through academic obituaries*¹ and Julian Hamann “*Let us salute one of our kind*”. *How academic obituaries consecrate research biographies*². In a thorough work *Oscuri martiri, eroi del dovere: memoria e celebrazione del maestro elementare attraverso i necrologi pubblicati sulle riviste didattiche e magistral nel primo secolo dell'Italia unita (1861-1961)* Anna Ascenzi and Roberto Sani, by examining the obituaries, reconstruct the evolution of the image of the teacher at different historical stages and in the light of different ideological, political and cultural contexts³. In Ukraine, in connection with the processes of decommunization and decolonization of Ukrainian humanities, in recent years, researchers of the history of education have been paying more attention to the peculiarities of the development of national schooling in different periods of Ukrainian history. One of the sources that allow us to look at the processes of the past from a new perspective is obituaries for educators in pedagogical journals.

The purpose of this article is to present statistical, factual, and bibliographic information about obituaries of Ukrainian educators on the pages of periodicals of the 20th century; to analyze obituaries published in Ukrainian Soviet pedagogical journals of the 1920s-1980s.

The first stage of any scientific research is the source research heuristic. This is the name given to this stage by the French luminaries of source studies Charles Victor Langlois, and Charles Seignobos in the late 19th century in their classic work *Introduction to the Study of*

¹ B. Macfarlane, R.Y. Chan, *The last judgement: exploring intellectual leadership in higher education through academic obituaries*, «Studies in Higher Education», vol. 39, n. 2, 2014, pp. 294-306.

² J. Haman, «*Let us salute one of our kind*». *How academic obituaries consecrate research biographies*, «Poetics», vol. 56, n. 3, 2016, pp. 1-14.

³ A. Ascenzi & R. Sani, *Oscuri martiri, eroi del dovere: memoria e celebrazione del maestro elementare attraverso i necrologi pubblicati sulle riviste didattiche e magistral nel primo secolo dell'Italia unita (1861-1961)*, Milano: Franco Angeli, 2016.

History (1898), the first chapter of which is entitled *Searching for Documents (Heuristics)*⁴. Critical analysis and interpretation of sources on a particular research problem are preceded by the question of their existence, quantity, and place of storage. The obituaries we will analyze below were published in 20th-century pedagogical journals stored in the Pedagogical Museum of Ukraine (Kyiv).

1. Results and discussion

In 2014, the Pedagogical Museum of Ukraine launched the publishing series «Pedagogical Re-publications» with the aim to popularize and update little-known or forgotten works of Ukrainian educators of the past and thematic selections of materials on a certain problem. In 2022, the ninth edition of this series was published – the book *In memoriam: nekrolohy na storinkakh ukrainskykh pedahohichnykh chasopysiv kintsia XIX – pochatku XX st. (za materialamy fondiv Pedahohichnoho muzeiu Ukrainy)*⁵. In the following, when quoting obituaries, we will refer to this edition.

The obituaries in the book are organized into six sections. We present them in the form of a table. The titles of Ukrainian pedagogical journals are given in English after the slash /.

Table 1. Systematized information on obituaries published in Ukrainian pedagogical journals from the late 19th to the early 21st century

Section title	Journals in which obituaries were published	Number of obituaries
Obituaries in periodicals of the late 19 th and early 20 th centuries	Biblioteka dlia molodizhy / Library for Youth (Chernivtsi, 1885–1914), Literaturno-naukovyi visnyk / Literary and Scientific Herald (Lviv, 1898–1932), Svitlo / Light (Kyiv, 1910–1914), Uchytelske slovo / Teacher's Word (Lviv, 1912–1939)	17
Obituaries in the periodicals of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921	Vilna ukrainska shkola / Free Ukrainian School (Kyiv, 1917–1920), Prosvitnianyn-kooperator / Educator-Cooperator (Romny, 1919–1920)	15
Obituaries in publications of the western region of Ukraine in the 1930s	Ridna shkola / Native School (Lviv, 1932–1939), Ukrainska shkola / Ukrainian School (Lviv, 1925–1934, 1938–1939, 1942–1944) Shliakh vykhovannia i navchannia / The Way of Education and Training (Lviv, 1927–1939)	16

⁴ C.V. Langlois, C. Seignobos, *Introduction aux études historiques*, Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1898.

⁵ O. Mikhno (ed.), *In memoriam: nekrolohy na storinkakh ukrainskykh pedahohichnykh chasopysiv kintsia XIX – pochatku XX st. (za materialamy fondiv Pedahohichnoho muzeiu Ukrainy)*, Vinnytsia, FOP Kushnir Yu.V., 2022.

Obituaries in Ukrainian Soviet periodicals of the 1920s-1980s	Literatura v shkoli / Literature at School (Kyiv, 1951–1963), Pochatkova shkola / Primary School (Kyiv, 1969 – present), Ukrainska mova v shkoli / Ukrainian Language at School (Kyiv, 1951–1963), Ukrainska mova i literatura v shkoli / Ukrainian Language and Literature at School (Kyiv, 1963–1994), Doshkilne vykhovannia / Preschool Education (Kyiv, 1951 – present), Shliakh osvity / The Way of Education (Kharkiv, 1922–1930, since 1931 – Komunistychna osvita / Communist Education, since 1945 – Kyiv, Radianska shkola / Soviet School)	35
Obituaries in publications of the Ukrainian diaspora in the 1980s-2010s	Vidhuknitsia / Respond (Toronto, Canada, 1988 – present), Ridna shkola / Native School (New York, USA, 1964 – present)	24
Obituaries in publications of the period of restoration of independence of Ukraine (since 1991)	Pedahohika i psykholohiia / Pedagogy and Psychology (Kyiv, 1993–2019), Postmetodyka / Postmethodology (Poltava, 1993 – present), Fizychnе vykhovannia v shkoli / Physical Education at School (Kyiv, 1996–2012), Dzvin / The Bell (Lviv, 1990 – present)	5

We chose the section *Obituaries in Ukrainian Soviet Periodicals of the 1920s-1980s* for detailed analysis because it is the largest in terms of time (70 years) and quantity (8 pedagogical journals and 35 obituaries). In order to trace the trends in the writing and publication of obituaries for Ukrainian teachers in the Soviet era, we used a historical and chronological approach. Based on the periodization proposed by Orest Subtelny in his book *Ukraine: A History*⁶ we have identified 5 periods, the names of which accurately characterize the socio-political situation in Ukraine in the 1920s-1980s and help us understand the context in which Ukrainian education and pedagogical science developed. Let us briefly characterize each period and the obituaries published at that time.

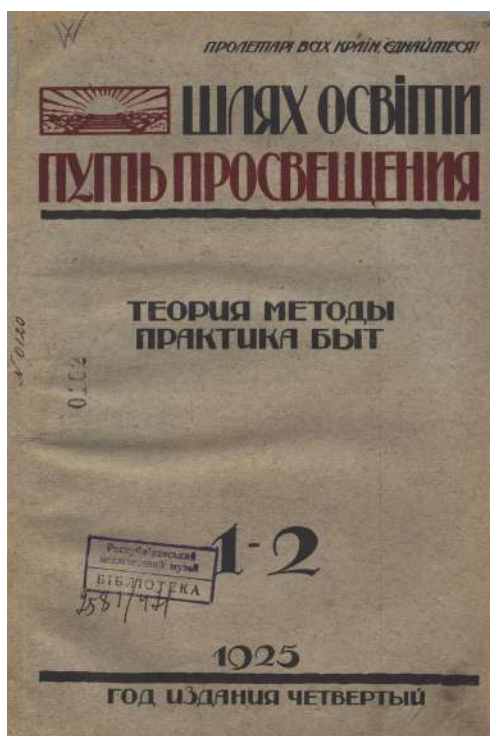


Fig. 1. The cover of the journal «Shliakh osvity», n. 1-2, 1925 (Pedagogical Museum of Ukraine, Kyiv)

⁶ O. Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2009.

1.1 1920s. Soviet Ukraine: The Innovative Twenties

In the 1920s, the Ukrainian school and pedagogical science were actively developing in line with European trends. Obituaries for teachers were published in the leading pedagogical journal «Shlyakh Osvity», which was published in Kharkiv in 1922, first in Russian, then in Ukrainian and Russian in 1925, and in Ukrainian in 1927. Four out of seven obituaries presented here are written in Russian and three in Ukrainian. The obituaries are dedicated to both well-known educators Mykola Sumtsov (1854-1922) and Kostiantyn Lebedyntsev (1878-1925), and ordinary teachers Vasyl Romanovskiy (1865-1922), Tikhon Kotov (1895-1923), Valerii Fesenko (1870-1925), and others. The texts of the obituaries are extremely detailed and contain descriptions of the main stages of the deceased's life and a detailed assessment of his teaching activities. All obituaries of this period have authors, though sometimes they are signed with cryptonyms. For example, in the obituary of V. Fesenko, M. Holubenko provides a detailed description of the deceased's life and work, which is concretized with interesting facts: «French, German, English, Italian were accessible to him, Scandinavian languages, Polish and Czech were also languages he used»⁷, «he had a huge library, more than 2500 volumes, which he collected at his own expense»⁸, «the main work of V.M. Fesenko and the main legacy left is a mathematics classroom» with «the accessories and the numerous of photographs and many drawings that illustrate the history of mathematics in one way or another»⁹.

1.2 1930s. Soviet Ukraine: The Traumatic Thirties

An extremely difficult period in the history of Ukraine (at that time, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic or Ukrainian SSR), when the leadership of the Soviet Union, led by Stalin, deliberately organized the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine, the genocide of the Ukrainian people and mass political repression to establish totalitarianism in the USSR. The victims of the Holodomor and repression were many teachers, who were and remain an important socio-professional group in Ukrainian society. Since teachers shaped the worldview of the average citizen, they have always experienced distrust and sometimes hostility from the Soviet regime¹⁰. Today, it is impossible to estimate the number of teachers repressed in Ukraine. According to Yevhen Stryzhak, more than 20,000 teachers and higher school professors were repressed or politically persecuted in Ukraine in the 1930s¹¹. However, this data are not complete, and the figures are approximate.

⁷ Mikhno, *In memoriam*, cit., p. 158.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161.

¹⁰ M.V. Bryvko, *Politychni peresliduvannia y represii proty vchyteliv Ukrainy v 1920–1930-ky rokakh*, «Osvita ta Pedahohichna Nauka», vol. 177, n. 2, 2021, pp. 56-74.

¹¹ Y. Stryzhak, *Represii 1930-ky rr. ta yikhni naslidky dlia kadrovoho zabezpechennia serednoi i vyshchoi shkoly USRR*, Cherkasy, Vertykal, 2007, p. 60.

In the context of the above, obituaries in pedagogical journals of the 1930s were almost never published. We managed to find only two obituaries in journal «Komunistychna osvita»: one for the head of the Kyiv Commission for Juvenile Offenders, Yevhenia Ginzburg (?-1933), and the other for the Russian teacher Maria Pronina (1893-1936), reprinted from the Pravda newspaper (Moscow). The texts of both obituaries are very brief and uninformative, but strike with communist rhetoric: there is no mention of her date of birth in Ye. Ginzburg's obituary, but it is noted that she «always stubbornly fought for a clear Marxist-Leninist ideology»¹², and M. Pronina is called «an enthusiast of socialist construction», «a faithful assistant to the party and the Soviet government» and «a Stalinist educator»¹³. The tendency to fill a teacher's obituary with phrases about his devotion to the Communist Party and the Soviet system instead of a true description of his life and work would dominate Soviet pedagogical journals until the collapse of the USSR. It is worth noting that during the 1930s, six editors-in-chief of the journal «Komunistychna osvita» changed. Three of the six editors-in-chief were repressed: Oleksandr Polotskyi (1886-1938), Hryhorii Bodanskyi (1900-1937), and Israel Hait (1894-1938) were shot. Of course, no obituaries were published for these educators killed by the Communists.

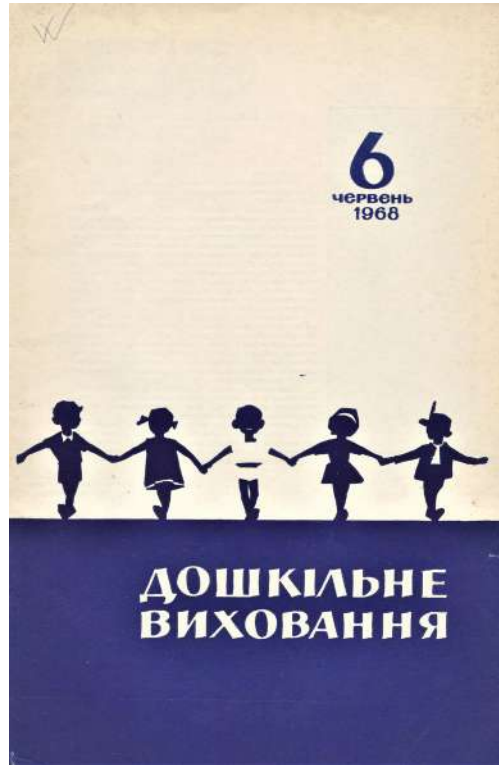


Fig. 2. The cover of the journal «Doshkilne vykhovannia», n. 6, 1968 (Pedagogical Museum of Ukraine, Kyiv)

1.3 1940s. Ukraine during the Second World War, Reconstruction and Retrenchment

From 1941 to 1945, pedagogical journals were not published in Ukraine. Starting from 1945, the leading pedagogical journal «Radianska Shkola» published five obituaries of famous scholars and teachers. This is a new trend: from that time on, pedagogical journals did not publish obituaries for ordinary teachers. The published obituaries were

¹² Mikhno, *In memoriam*, cit., p. 165.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.

devoted for well-known Ukrainian educators: mathematician Kostiantyn Khlebnikov, psychologist Petro Rubinstein (1887-1945), literary critics Oleksandr Doroshkevych (1889-1946) and Serhii Rodzevych (1888-1942), and President of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR Oleksandr Bohomolets (1881-1946). The obituary texts are small, 1-2 pages long, briefly describe the biography of the deceased and include a mandatory paragraph about his or her activities during the war. During this period, the final phrase appears in the texts, which in various variations will be constantly used in Soviet obituaries. In the obituary for O. Bohomolets, this template phrase reads as follows: «The bright image of the outstanding scientist-patriot and statesman of our country, Oleksandr Oleksandrovych Bohomolets, will forever live in the memory of the Soviet people»¹⁴.

1.4 1950s and 1960s. *The Thaw*

This period is characterized by a certain revival in the cultural life of the USSR, including in the field of education. Several new pedagogical journals appeared. They published 14 obituaries for Ukrainian educators, mostly scientists: educational historian Mykola Dadenkov (1885-1955), philologists Mykola Hrunskyi (1872-1951), Ilya Kyrychenko (1889-1955), Yevhen Tychyna (1895-1955), pedagogical scientists Sava Chavdarov (1892-1962), Oleksii Rusko (1906-1964), and others. The texts of obituaries of this period are quite large in length, ranging from 2 to 4 pages, and are built on the same template: each stage of the deceased's life and work is characterized from an ideological perspective. For example, in the obituary of Ilya Kyrychenko we read: «The life of Ilya Nikitovich is typical of many Soviet scientists»¹⁵. «All his scientific work was conducted under Soviet rule. He belonged to that new type of researchers who, through their scientific work, are directly involved in the practice of socialist construction»¹⁶. The use of such verbal rhetoric was a requirement of the time, but at the same time, the obituaries contain a fairly complete biography of the deceased and a positive assessment of his or her creative heritage. In general, the language of obituaries is as neutral as possible; sincere statements are rare and therefore perceived as an exception: «An irreconcilable enemy of easy success, cheap effect, narcissism, self-confidence, and indifference, he was a model of modesty, tireless creative activity, passion, and possessed a rare ability to listen to the voices of his young students and friends»¹⁷. Another feature of obituaries of this period is the absence of authors: obituaries are either unsigned or signed with the impersonal construction «Group of Comrades»¹⁸.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 198, 201, 212.

1.5 1970s and 1980s. Stagnation and Attempts at Reform

As Ukrainian educational historian Olha Sukhomlynska aptly puts it, «during this period, the emasculation and devastation of the Soviet canon, its rhetorical content, and divergence from reality were most evident»¹⁹. So, a common phenomenon of Soviet reality in the 1970s was a double morality, and Ukrainian schools paid great attention to the ideological orientation of education, to the education of a «Soviet person»²⁰. In the 1970s, the Soviet school was a social institution fully regulated and controlled by the Communist Party and the state. The task was to form a person according to a standard, a general pattern of certain behavior, worldview, and political views. During this period, the role of the school in the formation of a citizen in Soviet society was one of the priorities of state policy, not inferior to family upbringing, and in most cases even exceeding its importance. The ideological component

in education in the 1970s was very significant, but compared to the previous periods of the 1930s and 1960s, it was already purely declarative. After all, they were talking about the communist future, but the actual reality was different. That is why obituaries of teachers from this last period of the USSR's existence are extremely brief (1 page) and describe not their contribution to the development of schooling and pedagogical science, but their devotion to Soviet ideals. Each of the seven obituaries of this period necessarily characterizes the teacher as a «communist teacher», «a principled communist», «a fiery patriot of the socialist homeland», «a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union since 1940», «ardent communist», «member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union», «a loyal son of the Communist Party»²¹. Obituaries have no authors or are signed by a large group of people, which was a characteristic feature of the Soviet period of the 1970s and 1980s: V. Sukhomlynsky's obituary was signed by 24 people, A.

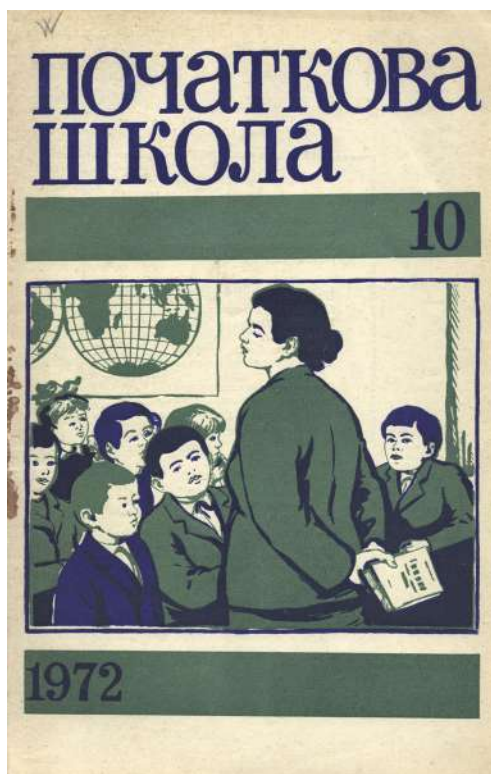


Fig. 3. The cover of the journal «Pochatkova shkola», n. 10, 1972, (Pedagogical Museum of Ukraine, Kyiv)

¹⁹ O. Sukhomlynska, *Radianska pedahohika yak ideolohiia. Sproba istorychnoi rekonstruktsii*, «Shkilnyi Svit», n. 4, 2015, p. 20.

²⁰ O. Mikhno, *Fenomen pedahohichnoi kharakterystyky uchnia: vid Ushynskoho do Sukhomlynskoho*, Vinnytsia, FOP Kushnir Yu. V., 2020, p. 298.

²¹ Mikhno, *In memoriam*, cit., pp. 219, 221, 222, 224, 228, 230, 233.



Fig. 4. Obituary for Vasyl Sukhomlynskyi (1918-1970). Journal «Radianska shkola», n. 10, 1970, p. 109. (Pedagogical Museum of Ukraine, Kyiv)

Soviet pedagogical journals of the 1920s-1980s. If the teacher did not quite meet this criterion but made a significant contribution to the development of pedagogical science and schooling, it was written about it in the obituary as follows: «raised his ideological and political level», «systematically worked to improve his or her ideological and theoretical level»²².

Thus, the obituaries of teachers of the Soviet period are extremely ideologized and full of Soviet rhetoric. Therefore, the question arises: how can we use these obituaries today, are they a relevant source for the history of education? Currently, Ukrainian humanities, in particular the history of education, is undergoing active processes of decolonization and decommunization, catalyzed by the Russian-Ukrainian war that began in 2014 and Russia's full-scale invasion of sovereign Ukraine on 24 February 2022. In the process of decolonization, Ukrainian scholars are seeking to reconsider the Soviet period of

Holovko's one was signed by 48, and O. Kornichuk's by 92 people.

The ideologization of schooling and pedagogical science in Ukraine during the Soviet period can be illustrated by the use of vocabulary specific to an obituary for an educator. We have calculated that words such as «teacher» and «teacher's» were used 40 times, «education» 62 times, «students» 15 times, and «memory» 29 times in 35 obituaries from the 1920s to the 1980s. At the same time, the word «Soviet» was used 102 times, «party» 25 times, «Soviet government» 19 times, «Lenin» 23 times, «socialism» 23 times, «socialist» 23 times, and «communist» 24 times.

All Ukrainian educators of that time, whose obituaries were published in Soviet pedagogical journals, acted within the strictly regulated framework of the Soviet totalitarian regime, and scholars of education wrote and published their works guided by Marxist-Leninist methodology. It can be argued that it was the teacher's devotion to the communist ideology that was a condition for the publication of an obituary in Ukrainian

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 183, 196.

Ukraine's history, to find out what is valuable from that period and what should be rejected and condemned.

Here is an example of such a reconsideration based on a decolonial approach, using the text of an obituary for the Ukrainian educator Vasyl Sukhomlynskyi (1918-1970). The short obituary (1 page) contains the obligatory information for that time: he was born into a poor peasant family, participated in the Great Patriotic War (the name of the Soviet-German war of 1941-1945, which was used in the USSR and is now used in Russia), wrote more than thirty books, his work was highly appreciated by the party and government, and was awarded two Orders of Lenin, the Order of the Red Star, and numerous medals²³. At the same time, the obituary does not say that Sukhomlynskyi was a child writer and wrote more than 1500 fiction miniatures (fairy tales and stories) for children, which are «a concentrated expression of both his artistic perception of the world and his pedagogical ideas»²⁴, nor does it mention his main book, *I Give My Heart to Children*, which was first published in Berlin in 1968²⁵, earlier than in the USSR, which was a precedent in Soviet times. The book was immediately published in the USSR the following year, 1969. The obituary also does not mention such works by Sukhomlynskyi as *Believe in Human* (1960), *The Spiritual World of the Pupil* (1961), and *Human is Unique* (1962), the very titles of which distance their author from official Soviet pedagogy, which was engaged in the construction of the «Soviet person». For Sukhomlynskyi, respect for the child, and unconditional support for childhood was a pedagogical truth that contradicted the trends in education at the time. Currently, the heritage of V. Sukhomlynskyi is being studied by scholars (in the period 1991-2021, thirty-two theses on his heritage were defended in Ukraine) and used by modern Ukrainian teachers in their pedagogical work. The reason for this is that although Sukhomlynskyi lived during the Soviet period and accepted the Soviet identity as the official identity of the time, he remained in the history of Ukrainian education because of the fact that his Ukrainian identity outweighed the Soviet one. That is, it was his Ukrainian, not Soviet, identity that gave him the opportunity to generate and embody the ideas of humanism, spirituality, and family education in his pedagogical work, relying on the culture of the Ukrainian nation, where «historical memory and an expressive cultural component (artistic, literary, musical) are always present»²⁶.

As we can see, the decolonial approach allows us to get rid of the mono-identity doctrine. Can we consider only Soviet identity to be important for teachers of the Soviet period? Obviously, no, we cannot. However, we cannot mechanically “drag” every teacher of the Soviet era from one identity to another, from Soviet identity to Ukrainian identity. But we can definitely emphasize the presence of Ukrainian identity in many teachers of the Soviet period. That is, we can add the identity that was not accepted in Soviet times,

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 218-219.

²⁴ O. Sukhomlynska, *Deiaki aspekty evoliutsii spryiniattia tvorchosti V. Sukhomlynskoho: doroha dovzhynoiu v 40 rokiv*, «Istoryko-pedahohichnyi almanakh», n. 1, 2012, p. 62.

²⁵ W. Suchomlinski, *Mein herz gehört den Kindern*, Berlin, Volk und Wissen, 1968.

²⁶ O. Sukhomlynska, *V. Sukhomlynskyi pro patriotyzm: teksty i konteksty*, «Pedahohichnyi poshuk», n. 4, 2016, p. 7.

including in obituaries, and, taking into account the Ukrainian identity, try to look at the heritage of the Soviet-era teacher from a new perspective and evaluate this heritage from new methodological positions.

Conclusion

After analyzing thirty-five obituaries for Ukrainian educators published in eight pedagogical journals in the 1920s-1980s, we came to the following conclusions:

- obituaries of famous educators and ordinary teachers of the 1920s are the most informative: they fully describe the life of the deceased and contain a reasonable assessment of his or her pedagogical heritage;

- in the 1930s, obituaries for educators were almost never published, which we explain by the formation of a totalitarian regime in the USSR, which was established by means of political repression and the Holodomor of 1932-1933 organized in Ukraine, a genocide of the Ukrainian people that led to huge human losses, including among educators;

- since the 1940s, the texts of obituaries have been less and less reflecting the individuality of the educator, and are written according to the standard scheme «born – studied – a member of the of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union – author of such works – list of soviet awards»;

- obituaries for ordinary teachers gradually disappeared from pedagogical journals; since the 1950s, they have been exclusively obituaries of famous scholars, professors, and writers;

- the ideologization of Soviet education in the years 1930-1980 is reflected not only in the content but also in the language of obituaries, which are filled with Soviet rhetoric;

- some obituaries have authors, some – without authorship or signed with cryptonyms or impersonal constructions such as «editorial board», «group of comrades». There are obituaries signed by a large group of people;

- obituaries prove that education in Ukraine in the 1920s-1980s was Ukrainian Soviet education, which was gradually becoming less Ukrainian and more Soviet;

- the application of the decolonial approach to the analysis of obituary texts makes it possible to objectively assess the contribution of a Soviet-era educator to the development of Ukrainian education and schooling.

In the future, obituaries of Soviet-era teachers can be used to analyze changes in pedagogical theory and practice in the years 1920-1980 and in biographical studies based on a decolonial approach. Another interesting area for further research is the comparison of obituaries for Ukrainian educators of the 1920s-1980s published in Ukraine and abroad, in particular in the publications of the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States and Canada.

Medals, Diplomas and Lifetime Allowances. Honours as a Form of Promotion for a Public Policy of School Memory

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Introduction

The awarding of honours as distinctive marks to acknowledge merit in the field of education and learning is a practice that was introduced in Italy in the second half of the 19th century and became widespread via many different channels. First, through the national award systems of honors, then by means of the merits awarded at events designed to involve individuals, associations and entities interested in the process of development of the school and educational system in its different articulations. Such practices nurture that cultural process that contributes, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to the construction, invention and consolidation of the school's public memory upon which the historiography of education has focused recently¹. The political and pedagogical functions of honors² acquire a distinctive meaning in relation to the different historical periods and ideological, political and cultural settings in which they were conferred, involve multiple parties, define *lieux de mémoire* and produce objects such as insignia or distinctive marks that reveal their symbolic meaning embedded in everyday practice. Merits are awarded not only by institutional entities such as monarchies, presidencies of the republic, ministries,

¹ We refer to those investigations, which – stimulated by studies on the policies of memory by historians such as Hobsbawm, Nora and Terdiman, or on the cultural forms of memory by anthropologists such as Connerton – have identified various forms and “places of school memory”. The investigations that have begun to explore this area of research include those reported in the following volumes C. Yanes Cabrera, J. Meda, A. Viñao (edd.), *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, Cham, Springer, 2017; J. Meda, *The «Sites of School Memory» in Italy between memory and oblivion: a first approach*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XIV, n. 1, 2019, pp. 25-47; R. Sani, A. Ascenzi, *Oscuri martiri eroi del dovere. Memoria e celebrazione del maestro elementare attraverso i necrologi pubblicati sulle riviste didattiche e magistrali nel primo secolo dell'Italia unita (1861-1961)*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2016. For a more comprehensive bibliography of the studies that have developed over the past few years, see the references in <https://www.memoriascolastica.it/le-nostre-pubblicazioni> (last access: 13.03.2023)

² On the general subject of honors, see E. D'Aquino, *La fonte degli onori*, Roma, Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1995. On those referring to education in the forty post-unification years, see A. Barausse, «*Ricambiare l'amore che portano all'educazione...*». *Public memory and awards of honour of public education in Italy from the Unification to the end of the 19th Century (1861-1898)*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. 1, XIV, 2019, pp. 185-206.

municipalities, but also by associations and educational institutions. The spaces of public award and recognition during the second half of the nineteenth century increased in number: so, in addition to the celebratory moments occasioned by the conferral of merits by the Ministry, we can record those held on occasion of local and national educational exhibitions; national and local pedagogical congresses, magisterial congresses, celebratory commemorations for the founding of institutes of education or universities, celebratory commemorations of educators. The heuristic value for school historiography derived from the historical analysis of the conferral of honors and distinctive awards is relevant both when viewed from the perspective of identifying the specific policies and practices on which the merits are based, and with respect to the symbolic and material study of the decorations that accompanied the conferral of merits. From the limited research to date, it is possible to hypothesize that honors practices and policies have been oriented to support the development of basic schooling processes through the practices of merit and emulation. But also to promote the professionalization of faculty and school officers through the symbolic power of the decoration/distinctive mark. Honors acquire the meaning of a «tool for constructing the identity of benevolent groups and institutions», as already pointed out by Sani and Ascenzi in analyzing another type of sources that lends itself to similar considerations: the obituaries³. Another aspect related to the awarding of honors is to build/invent a school tradition especially in secondary institutions, art academies and universities; one further, but not least, aspect to be investigated is the use and function played by honors and distinctive marks in conveying the propaganda of nationalist values and ideology during the fascist regime.

The awarding of honors is associated with the distribution of insignia consisting of medals, parchments, diplomas and money prizes, and the decorations have become increasingly important to the extent that they have nurtured an initially handcrafted and later industrial network for their production. It has been observed that the distinctive mark itself, especially the medal, represents a particularly suggestive path for historical research:

The historical research that can be conducted through the medal awarding is undoubtedly quite fascinating, as the medal constitutes a reliable document that preserves in its durable material the places, times, and motivations of a historical event, but it can also convey the image of a character or place, and the symbolism that reflects the thought of the times⁴.

Such considerations may have their value even if we limit the investigation to the decorations in schools and educational settings.

³ A. Ascenzi, R. Sani, «*Oscuri martiri, eroi del dovere*». *Memoria e celebrazione del maestro elementare attraverso i necrologi pubblicati sulle riviste didattiche e magistrali*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2016.

⁴ *150 anni di medaglie Johnson 1836-1986*, Milano, Stabilimento S. Johnson, 1986, p. 37.

1. *The «meritorious» in the field of education and learning. The ministerial honors between methodological issues and heuristic potentials*

The conferral of medals and awards such as public honors in the field of public education originated with the birth of the national school system. The school historical investigation has the opportunity to draw on a rather broad spectrum of sources to reconstruct the complex picture of the honors conferred in the field of education and learning. In the case of honors promoted by the Italian state through ministerial institutions, we must, first, venture into the identification and, then, the analysis of the normative sources that established a specific honor. Laws, decrees, circulars as necessary tools to focus on the origin of the honors and their characteristics. Looking at the production of regulations, we have to observe a certain evolution, which, however, involves several ministries. Early research revealed the definitely important role played by the Ministry of Education, which, starting in 1865, through a specific circular established the awarding of a prize in money and the honor of bearing the decoration of the Order of Ss. Maurice and Lazarus. This was followed in 1866 by a new circular in which Minister Berti instituted the annual award of a silver and a bronze medal alongside with the distribution of book prizes to teachers who were particularly noted for «spreading good teaching among the people»⁵. The subject of honors awarding returned to the heart of school policy in the early 1890s when Minister Boselli wanted to revive the institute of merit conferral in connection with the push to renovate the role of the school, considered by the Crispi government to be indispensable for promoting national identity and supporting nationalist instances⁶. As part of a more comprehensive review of planned interventions in the distribution of subsidies to primary and popular education in favor of municipalities, it was resolved to grant «gratifications to particularly meritorious teachers of primary education». The minister instituted special medals and diplomas of merit in favor of the «most distinguished teachers and people who had shown in special way to favor education and learning»⁷. The school historical research, however, has yet to return a more in-depth insight related to the directions taken by policymakers with regard to awarding honors to school personnel. It is worth mentioning that the teaching staff of secondary schools and universities, as well as the officers of the central or peripheral school administration, were awarded chivalric honors more and more frequently, specifically the different ranks of the Crown of Italy, an honor established in 1868⁸. The issue revamped furtherly at the turn of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the educational system was the subject of special attention from the political class that found itself at the head of the ministries in charge for educational matters. It was between 1894 and 1899 that the Ministry of Education developed a series of measures designed to introduce the granting of life allowances.

⁵ With regard to these measures cf. Barausse, «*Ricambiare l'amore che portano all'educazione...*», cit., p. 189.

⁶ Cf. C. Duggan, *Creare la nazione. Vita di Francesco Crispi*, Roma-Bari, Laterza 2000.

⁷ Royal Decree n. 63 of 29 January 1891 («*Gazzetta Ufficiale*», n. 54, 6 March 1891). See Barausse, «*Ricambiare l'amore che portano all'educazione...*», cit., p. 197.

⁸ Royal Decree n. 4251 of 20 February 1868 (*Collezione celerifera delle Leggi, Decreti, istruzioni e Circolari dell'anno 1868 ed anteriori*, Firenze, Presso gli Editori, 1868, pp. 321-322).



Fig. 1. *Medaglia ai benemeriti della educazione popolare* (1891), obverse and reverse (<https://www.memoriascolastica.it/memoria-pubblica/onorificenze/medaglia-di-bronzo-i-benemeriti-della-popolare-istruzione-1891>; last access: 10.02.202

In 1894 Minister Baccelli established four pensions to meritorious elementary teachers from resources allocated to the Mauritian order fund⁹; this measure was supplemented by that of spring 1895, intended to extend the benefit of merit allowances to female elementary school teachers who were precluded from accessing the honors provided for the Mauritian order of chivalry, which were reserved exclusively for men¹⁰.

Meanwhile, in a further decree, the minister arranged for permission to «publicly display the sign of honor» received, that is, the medal that was supposed to display on one side the effigy of the king, and on the other an oak wreath with the words «to the well-deserving of popular education»¹¹. New life allowances were, then, established by Royal Decree 22 January 1899. The increasing presence of women in the elementary teaching staff and, more generally, the process of professionalization of the teaching staff contributed to create new specific conditions for the awarding of merits. So, at the beginning of the new century, a further extension of regulatory interventions to broaden the forms of conferring honors and rewarding school personnel was witnessed. The Minister of Public Education Nasi, in fact, issued in 1902 a provision by which he extended the access to merit allowances to well-deserving school managers and female school managers who

⁹ Royal Decree 30 December 1894 «Withdrawal from the Mauritian Order fund for four pensions to meritorious elementary school teachers» (*Collezione celerifera delle Leggi, Decreti, istruzioni e Circolari dell'anno 1895 ed anteriori*, Rome, Stamperia Reale, 1895, p. 255).

¹⁰ Royal Decree n. 84 of 24 March 1895 (*Collezione celerifera delle Leggi, Decreti, istruzioni e Circolari dell'anno 1895 ed anteriori*, Rome, Stamperia Reale, 1895, p. 569).

¹¹ Royal Decree n. 358 of 2 June 1895 (*Collezione celerifera delle Leggi, Decreti, istruzioni e Circolari dell'anno 1895 ed anteriori*, Rome, Stamperia Reale, 1895, p. 856).

had been in service for at least 35 years¹². Alongside the existing merits, a special honor was established in order to emphasize the values of fidelity and consistency expressed by teachers and female teachers, namely, the special gold medal for the VIII lustrums of elementary teaching, that is, 40 years of uninterrupted service¹³. The institution of merits was suspended when the Parliament decided to abolish, from the 1903-04 financial budget, the fund allocated for the purchase of medals, so as to allocate resources to the development of evening and festive schools, instead. It was Minister Orlando who had to intervene in 1904 to restore the system of merit awards for elementary education by rationalizing it and replacing it with the previous one by Royal Decree n. 633. The provision on the one hand intended to rectify the increase of requests, which had posed problems for the financial sustainability of the system¹⁴. On the other hand, it sought to provide for a reform of the system that would guarantee the recognition of honors to the various professional categories that were contributing to the development of basic education, by establishing diplomas of merit and life allowances for both teachers and female teachers, for elementary school directors, for teachers of kindergartens and nursery schools¹⁵. At the same time, it perfected the awarding of a special tribute bestowed by the State, the diploma and gold medal, to «modest teachers who had reached the culmination of their careers»¹⁶. These provisions would also be incorporated and systematized by the new regulations presented by Minister Rava in 1908. But the conferring of honors would not have involved only public education. As early as 1902, in fact, the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Trade would also intervene to institute the conferral of merits on those teachers who had distinguished themselves for the development of industrial secondary schools of applied art in industry, design and business¹⁷. The birth in 1911 of the Ministry of Colonies would lead to the establishment of the diploma and medal to the meritorious in the field of education in colonial territories¹⁸. That the first fifteen years

¹² Royal Decree n. 79 of February 27, 1902 («Gazzetta Ufficiale», n. 72, 27 March 1902, p. 1328).

¹³ Royal Decree n. 80, 27 February 1902 («Gazzetta Ufficiale», n. 72, 27 March 1902, p. 1329).

¹⁴ Expenditures on merit checks, especially of retired teachers, far exceeded the expectations of the PI leadership who had mistakenly relied on the 40-year requirement as a factor in curbing applications. However, the high number of applications (400 in 1902 alone) forced the PI leadership to review the situation.

¹⁵ The decree provided for the awarding of three types of diplomas of merit-graded Class I, Class II and Class III and the granting of merit checks and pensions for teachers and managers. Gold, silver and bronze medals were to be awarded for the diploma, and the maximum number of diplomas that could be awarded varied in relation to the number of inhabitants of the province. Thus it was possible to award no more than one 1-class, two 2-class and four 3-class diplomas each year for teachers in a province that did not reach or exceed five hundred thousand inhabitants. Where the population was smaller it was provided that teachers would be awarded one 1-class diploma every two years, one 2-class diploma and two 3-class diplomas every year. Royal Decree n. 633 by which diplomas of merit were granted to persons who lent themselves for the benefit of primary education and infant education («Gazzetta Ufficiale», n. 293, 17 December 1904, pp. 5981-5983).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Royal Decree for conferring medals and honorable mentions of merit for industrial and commercial training n. 112 of 3 April 1902 (*Official Collection of Laws and Decrees of the Kingdom of Italy*, vol. II, Roma, Stamperia Reale, 1902, pp. 1311-1313).

¹⁸ The diploma with medal was awarded annually to «inspecting, management and teaching staff of public Colonial schools of all types and grades, in recognition of particularly diligent and effective work in favor of education in the Colonies» based on the provisions of Royal Decree n. 1386 of 19 August 1932 («Gazzetta



Fig. 2. *Medaglia per gli otto lustri d'insegnamento elementare* (1902), obverse and reverse (Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, now in: <https://www.memoriascolastica.it/memoria-pubblica/onorificenze/medaglia-doro-di-benemerita-otto-lustri-dinsegnamento-elementare>; last access: 10.02.2023)

of the twentieth century were a fertile time for the broadening of the spectrum of honors for the school world is also testified by the attempts to introduce honors awarded from other ministry authorities, or to change the system already in use. In this regard, it would be worth investigating the attempts initiated by Minister Tittoni in 1906, in conjunction with the Directorate General of Italian Schools Abroad, to establish an honorific award to those who had distinguished themselves in Italian schools abroad¹⁹. Just interesting seem to be the minister's interventions, in 1909, to revise the regulations for awarding only medals, rather than diplomas, considering them a more appropriate way to encourage the culture of countering illiteracy²⁰.

Ufficiale», n. 254, 3 November 1932).

¹⁹ Among the Cabinet papers of Minister Tittoni is a subfile *My studies and project* (which later remained unfinished) to award teachers abroad with medals of merit from which it can be seen that the possibility of establishing a medal of merit to be awarded to teachers of schools abroad or to individuals who had acquired special merits was planned from the beginning of the century. At that time the proposal, submitted to and approved by Under-Secretary Alfredo Baccelli, was then blocked by Minister Prinetti. In December 1906 the proposal came up again to Minister Tittoni on the basis of a report first then a draft prepared by the inspectorate on December 11 and December 20, 1906, respectively. See the Inspector General's Report of 11 December 1906 in Historical Archive of the Italian Foreign Ministry in Rome, series «Archivio di Gabinetto del Ministro Tittoni (1906-1909)», folder 5, dossier «Schools Abroad», sub-dossier «Studi miei e progetto (rimasti poi sospeso) per conferire ai maestri all'estero medaglie di benemerita».

²⁰ Central Archive of the State in Rome, fond «Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione», series «Direzione generale istruzione primaria e popolare» (henceforth: ACS, MPI, DGIPP), 1897-1910, folder 258, dossier PG,



Fig. 3. *Medaglia ai benemeriti della scuola nelle colonie* (1932), obverse and reverse (Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, now in: <https://www.memoriascolastica.it/memoria-pubblica/onorificenze/diploma-di-ii-classe-con-medaglia-ai-benemeriti-della-scuola-nelle>; last access: 10.02.2023)

The medals, diplomas, and money prizes show us the changes that have taken place in the definition of strategies for promoting public school memory by political elites over the long period of national history. The archival sources, rather than the normative ones, allow us to know better the profiles of those who, whether institutions or individuals, were subject to evaluation by the local education authorities with the aim of being nominated for the awarding of merits. The first surveys testify the evolution of the public representation of school personnel and, over the first forty years, the moments of discontinuity in the promotion of the teaching model functional to the nationalisation process and the development of primary education. In particular, the rewarded and emphasised qualities of meritorious teachers were those of hard work, dedication and consistency over time, long professional practice and activities in rural contexts, the mediating role with local communities, the contribution to educational expenses by private individuals or municipalities²¹. The analysis of the archival record also sheds some light on the changes introduced during the first decades of the twentieth century aimed at supporting, along with the civilizing process operated by the school staff, the professionalization of the teaching staff by acknowledging the possession of greater pedagogical skills and culture in relation with the standards of pedagogical modernization brought by the Herbartism²².

No less important is the in-depth study that school history research must conduct, then, in relation to the legislative and regulatory production promoted during the twenty-

sf. Planned reform of the General Regulations in the part concerning Diplomas of Merit (this reform had no further effect).

²¹ Barausse, «*Ricambiare l'amore che portano all'educazione...*», cit., *passim*.

²² See, in this sense, the reasons contained in the proposals for conferment preserved in the numerous envelopes in the series DGIPP (ACS, MPI).

year fascist period. In this context, we are faced with a process of fascistization even with regard to honors and symbols. The first surveys attest, in fact, an interesting evolution of the merit awarding system, which involved not only teachers of all grades, directors of kindergartens or elementary schools, but also those who worked in supplementary educational institutions, especially in the ONB, the OND or the GIL, even abroad and in the colonies. However, the process of fascistization of honors conferring was followed by changes in the symbolism of the distinctive signs, which – of course – acquired an identitarian meaning even with the aim of exercising greater control²³. The increase in awards conferral and in the production of diplomas, medals or merit stars during the Twenty-year period followed, however, only partially the direction aimed towards enhancing the progressive politicization and loyalty of school and management personnel to the regime²⁴. The next step, recorded in the years of republican Italy, is no less relevant for a deeper understanding of the dynamics related to the awarding of honors. In fact, following the provisions that were issued in the early 1950s, it was planned that diplomas and medals would be awarded to the meritorious of culture²⁵.

2. *Making memory with medals: “Tribute medals, commemorative medals, award medals”*

The awarding of honours is associated with the distribution of insignia consisting of medals, parchments, diplomas, money prizes, and the decorations follow a classification derived from the very nature of the honour. So, as noted by numismatic scholars, alongside official medals, i.e. those awards, both military and civil, that were conferred and distributed by the authorities of a state, a province, a municipality or an institution, we find ‘unofficial’ medals that are often the result of the public initiative of organisations, schools or professional associations, as well as private individuals²⁶. These also include those of a school and educational nature. The awarding of distinctive marks to recall merit in the field of education and learning was a practice that had been introduced and widespread in connection with events intended to attract individuals and associations involved in the development process of the school system in its various articulations. This was the case, for example, of events promoted to recall and publicise the progress in the industrial field such as the Universal Expositions, namely, those exhibitions promoted

²³ With regard to the school and educational honors instituted during the regime, their chronological sequence and the evaluations of the commissions in charge of conferring them, see the essay by A. Barausse, *Le onorificenze scolastiche agli «apostoli dei tempi nuovi»*. *Memoria scolastica pubblica e rappresentazione del personale scolastico durante il fascismo. Parte prima*, «History of Education and Children’s Literature», vol. XVIII, n. 1, 2023, pp. 277-291 and Id., *Memoria scolastica pubblica e rappresentazione del personale scolastico durante il fascismo. Parte seconda*, «History of Education and Children’s Literature», vol. XVIII, n. 2, 2023, pp. 125-147.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ The new honor was established by Law n. 1093 of 16 November 1950, and the awarding was regulated by Presidential Decree n. 4553 of 18 December 1952.

²⁶ Cf. A. Brambilla, *Le medaglie italiane negli ultimi 200 anni*, Milano, s.n., 2012 (2nd ed.), vol. 1: 1784-1900, pp. III.

from the mid-nineteenth century in London in 1851, that from the 1960s onwards also began to include a section dedicated to education and teaching, in order to highlight those entrepreneurial subjects, such as publishers, involved in the production of items intended to modernise education²⁷. At such events, publishing companies or producers of educational material could gain public recognition through the awarding of a medal. The collections of medals preserved today give us many examples such as the prize medal that was coined at the International Exhibition held in Milan in 1906 to reward the best exhibitors at the Educational Exhibition²⁸. A similar process was introduced at educational exhibitions promoted at local, provincial, municipal or national level. The request expressed by the Prefect of Bergamo to Minister Correnti to include the awarding of prizes in money and medals at the Provincial Educational and Fine Arts Exhibition held in September 1870, and to compete with the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce in the awarding of merits, was not an isolated one²⁹. But the practice of awarding medals affected the school and the pedagogical movement more directly during the second half of the 19th century on the occasions of conferences or celebrations that saw the participation of parties more directly involved in the processes of schooling, who had proved to be more sensitive to the prospects of innovation suggested by the pedagogical movement during its development. The national pedagogical congress held in Genoa in 1868 introduced of the practice of awarding gold, silver or bronze medals to those individuals, educational institutions, business entities, who had presented an original and useful product for the development of the educational system according to the perspectives advocated by the Ministry of Public Education, or the representatives of the pedagogical movement³⁰. It is not possible here to count the many awards granted at the ten national pedagogical congresses held between 1861 and 1880, but the proceedings of the meetings indicate in detail the type of award granted for the production of didactic materials rather than educational writings or textbooks or works of various kinds

²⁷ Not much research has been done on universal exhibitions in Italy. See F. Targhetta, "Uno sguardo all'Europa". *Modelli scolastici, viaggi pedagogici ed importazioni didattiche nei primi cinquant'anni di scuola italiana*, in M. Chiaranda (ed.), *Storia comparata dell'educazione. Problemi ed esperienze tra Otto e Novecento*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2010, pp. 155-176. In the Anglo-Saxon area, an interesting work has been edited by M. Lawn (ed.), *Modelling the future: exhibitions and materiality of education*, Oxford, Symposium Books, 2009; in the Latin American area, a pioneering study is that published in Brazil by M. Kuhlmann Jr., *As Grandes Festas Didáticas. A Educação Brasileira e as Exposições Pedagógicas Internacionais (1862-1922)*, São Paulo, Edusf, 1996.

²⁸ The medal included in the obverse the effigy of the King facing left and in the reverse, in a circle, a reference to the Ministry of Education and, in a second circle, to the Milan International Exposition with a field in the center with the indication to the Educational Exhibition, and a blank space for the insertion of the name of the awardee.

²⁹ In this particular case, two gold medals were produced and awarded to Professor Antonio Tiraboschi for his Bergamasque-Italian dictionary and to the presidency of the provincial school board for the collection of provisions and circulars. ACS, MPL, series «Direzione Generale Antichità e Belle Arti», sub-series «Esposizioni, congressi, mostre e conferenze», 1860-1894», folder 1, dossier «Bergamo. Esposizione Provinciale 1870».

³⁰ *Atti del quinto Congresso pedagogico italiano tenuto in Genova nel settembre del 1868*, Genova, Città di Genova, 1868 (cited in A. Barausse, *Mostre didattiche, musei pedagogici e musei scolastici in Italia dall'Unità all'ascesa del fascismo. "Nation building" tra processi di scolarizzazione, modernizzazione delle pratiche didattiche e relazioni transnazionali*, in Id., T. de Freitas Ermel, V. Viola, *Prospettive incrociate sul patrimonio storico-educativo*, Lecce, PensaMultimedia, 2020, p. 113).



Fig. 4. *Medaglia omaggio per il VI Congresso Pedagogico di Torino* (1869), obverse and reverse (<https://www.memoriascolastica.it/memoria-pubblica/onorificenze/medaglia-premio-vi-congresso-pedagogico-italia-no-comune-di-milano>; last access: 10.02.2023)

displayed in the educational exhibitions that accompanied the congress. The numismatic collections of the city museums of Milan preserve, for example, the medal awarded to the municipality of Milan for merits related to the development of elementary education in the context of the educational exhibition that was organised in parallel with the 6th Italian Pedagogical Congress held in Turin in 1869³¹.

Thus, the practice also gradually spread to the magistral congresses, local or national, which from the 1880s onwards, became more and more frequent³². The practice extended – as documented by the many tribute medals or award medals, most of which have yet to be identified and catalogued – to celebratory events commissioned by local authorities for the establishment of kindergartens, school and educational institutions or for celebrations connected to the foundations of universities, or those paying tribute to personalities who worked both locally and nationally in the fields of education, as well as university lecturers, councillors or ministers. Various examples and specimens of such “marks of honour”, which represent a variation on national awards, can be found in the conservation sites. For example, on the occasion of the inauguration of the kindergarten named after the Milanese patriot Maurizio Quadrio on 1st July 1886, a medal was coined that is now kept in the Milan civic collection. To celebrate fifty years of work in the field of kindergartens in Milan, a medal in honour of Giuseppe Sacchi was also manufactured

³¹ See R. Martini, *Catalogo delle medaglie delle civiche raccolte numismatiche. V: Secoli XVIII-XIX. 4: Regno d'Italia (1861-1900)*, Milano, Comune di Milano, 1999, p. 28 and tav. XIV, n. 2968.

³² See for example the medals minted on the occasion of the national pedagogical congresses in Naples in 1871 and Venice in 1872, kept in the Civic Collections in Milan (*Ibid.*, pp. 35-36, n. 2997 and n. 2998).



Fig. 5. *Medaglia omaggio per l'inaugurazione dell'Asilo infantile "Maurizio Quadrio" (1886), obverse and reverse* (<https://www.memoriascolastica.it/memoria-pubblica/onorificenze/medaglia-omaggio-asilo-infantile-maurizio-quadrio>; last access: 10.02.2023)



Fig. 6. *Medaglia omaggio alla Festa degli Alberi del Ministero dell'Istruzione (n.d.), obverse and reverse* (Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato)

in 1886³³. But there are many areas of educational nature that were the occasion for celebratory moments that produced memories. Among the many examples, it is enough to mention one of the various celebrations of the Festival of Trees, probably the one held in Rome in the early 20th century, for which a medal was engraved on commission from

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 112, n. 3329.

the Ministry of Education with an allegorical composition of the Festival of Trees based on a design by the artist Duilio Cambellotti³⁴.

Just as frequent, in medal collections and catalogues, were the tribute medals awarded to university or secondary school professors whose years of teaching or directing the institutions where they practised their profession were commemorated, such as the medal awarded in 1898 to Carlo Uttini for fifty years of teaching or the one created in 1935 in honour of Luigi Credaro on the occasion of his retirement³⁵. To celebrate Luigi Comaschi's dedication to the development of public education, the municipality of Bergamo produced a medal in 1881 as a tribute to its councillor³⁶. The honorary medals made for the ministerial offices of Carlo Matteucci, Cesare Correnti or Pasquale Stanislao Mancini are just some of the many specimens that only a systematic study could bring to light³⁷.

Moreover, the awarding of medals represented an increasingly widespread practice to accompany aspects of 'everyday school life': insignia or distinctive signs destined to qualify, through rituals and celebrations, significant moments in the life of schools along with sports competitions or festivals and exhibitions. These include the awarding of prizes to primary and secondary school pupils. Prize medals, together with prize books, gradually became one of the many instruments employed in education to stimulate the achievement of school success, the so called "pedagogy of the prize"³⁸. This is a long-term strategy that we find not only in the course of everyday school life in the second half of the 19th century but also in that of the 20th century; a phenomenon that finds its way into the most significant literature such as De Amicis' *Cuore*³⁹ and is accompanied by a specific production whose more or less standardised specimens are reproduced in the catalogues disseminated by school publishers⁴⁰. Rarely, and more out of numismatic interests, have we paused to analyse this type of merit in the school context intended to support schooling practices. These award medals, therefore, were already present in pre-unitary practices, but became more and more frequently part of the "toolkit" used by schools to educate through the practice of emulation by using a sign of distinction. A practice that, according to some testimonies, was intended to impose itself on the use of parchments⁴¹ and that, at times, was destined to stir up controversy when, in some

³⁴ The mint specimen is kept at the Museo della Zecca di Roma Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato.

³⁵ <https://numismatica-italiana.lamoneta.it/moneta/W-ME67A/279> (last access: 02.03.2022).

³⁶ <https://www.memoriascolastica.it/memoria-pubblica/onorificenze/medaglia-omaggio-luigi-comaschi-1881> (last access: 03.03.2023).

³⁷ Martini, *Catalogo delle medaglie delle civiche raccolte numismatiche*, cit., p. 8, n. 2892, p. 59, n. 3095 and p. 105, n. 3299.

³⁸ On the "pedagogy of the prize" see E. Marazzi, *Libri per diventare italiani. L'editoria per la scuola a Milano nel secondo Ottocento*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2014, pp. 215 ff.; on "prize books" G. Chiosso, *Libri di scuola e mercato editoriale*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2013, pp. 141-146.

³⁹ See, for example, the chapter on 4 February *Una medaglia ben data*.

⁴⁰ See, for example, the medals and certificates of merit proposed in the *Catalogo del materiale scolastico per gli asili infantili e le scuole elementari*, Firenze, Bemporad e Figlio, 1916, pp. 91-94.

⁴¹ «It would be appropriate to abolish, in schools, those little nods of lithographed paper called diplomas of honor. I know that when I was attending elementary school and gymnasium, together with many of my fellow students, now for one excuse and now for another I had to voluntarily give up the medals I deserved; but do

cases, the distribution of prize books exclusively began to be preferred to the awarding of medals. This is testified by what happened in Genoa, as reported by the local newspaper «Il Secolo XIX»:

This year we have an old novelty, the awarding of books and not the usual medals. The usefulness of the book is indisputable, but medals were more welcomed by the awardees and their parents. The medal is more suitable as an award, because it has no political or religious character. Can the same be said of prize books? Did they make a choice to please atheists and religious, radicals and moderates? At the Office of Public Education they struggled to find special books suitable for prizes and couldn't find any: I am told they bought some books, stockpiles for real [...] ⁴².

The distribution of medals became part of an increasingly widespread ritual within the schools made up of ceremonies, recitations, and preparations that, in some cases, also aroused resistance, as when, in Genoa, were recalled the long hours of rehearsals for the clothes to be worn, the parades through the streets of the city of little girls “with their hair closed in countless paper cornets” that seemed to clash with the educational aims of the schools themselves ⁴³.

3. *The “memory factories”*

The analysis of the material sources represented by the various symbolic objects, emblems, distinctive signs that make up and express the school memory is not secondary. And there are several levels of analysis that can refer not only to the material characteristics of the decoration but also to the symbolic ones possessed by the emblems, often the result of the creativity of engravers or sculptors. Moreover, the development of honours is also linked to other assumptions, including that of the subjects that materially produced the signs of distinction functional to the representation of public merit. There were several “memory factories”, i.e. the subjects that commissioned or produced the decorations: the state, through the mints, entrepreneurial subjects, in particular publishing companies.

Among the factors, which are certainly not secondary, that explain the growth in the spread of the practice of honours/merit in schools, private colleges, academies and universities, is the presence of a more significant number of production entities in the country. These are mints or artisan or entrepreneurial societies that feed the circuit of the production and circulation of medals. Where the person commissioning the production of the medal was a state entity, as in the case of ministries, then we are faced with the fundamental presence of the mints. At the beginning of the unification experience we are faced with the spread of mints that in the pre-unification context exercised the function of

not believe that any of us had any pleasure in it» (S. Paglieri, *Le medaglie di Ferrea*, Genova, Istituto grafico S. Basile, 1983, p. 25).

⁴² *Ibid.*; but see also *Libri e medaglie*, «L'Unione dei maestri elementari», vol. XXIII, n. 44, 1 September 1892, p. 357.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

producing coins and medals. Significant was the role of the mints in Turin, Florence and, later, Rome, which, after the closure of the pre-unification mints in 1892, was destined to become the only State mint, also with regard to the honours produced for schools. The state mints through their engravers took charge of the production of the medals that accompanied the awarding of medals to the meritorious of popular education. Completely missing is the research in the field of school and educational history on the role played by these institutions in supporting the Italian public administration in the production of medals on the topics of education and learning. Nor are there any analyses that have shed light on the role played by engravers. I am thinking, for example, about the profile of Giuseppe Ferraris whose initials appear on the medal produced by the Turin mint in 1870⁴⁴. Or that of Filippo Speranza, from Viterbo, who learned the art of engraving from Paolo Mercuri in Rome; he first entered the engraving studio of the papal mint and, after the conversion of the Rome mint into the Royal Mint of the Kingdom of Italy, soon became the chief engraver of the Roman mint and one of the few, if not the only, engraver to put his name on the coins of Kings Umberto I and Vittorio Emanuele III. His name is clearly visible on some specimens of medals awarded to the meritorious of popular education. On the other hand, we cannot ignore the role of other producers either. In the medal industry during the first post-unification decades, in addition to the mints, private artisan or proto-industrial companies were also involved. Between the second half of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century, it was precisely the growth in demand for medals intended for reward, tribute or celebratory forms, generated by the development of various educational institutions, that encouraged the commitment of proto-industrial or industrial enterprises.

In the second half of the 19th century, a number of local experiences gained strength in response to commissions from schools, universities and academies. In the capital of Liguria, an initial impulse towards engraving medals with a school subject was given by Giuseppe De Giovanni, whose workshop produced the medal of the Liguria Committee for Popular Education, that of the Debarbieri boarding school and the Arzeno Commercial Boarding School. However, among the particularly important initiatives that can be mentioned here as possible further investigations into school-educational medals are those promoted in Genoa and Milan by Pietro Ferrea and Johnson. Pietro Ferrea, who trained at the Liguria Academy of Fine Arts in Genoa in 1861, mainly learnt engraving for industrial purposes. But the engraver from Liguria succeeded in conquering the market for prize medals to be distributed in schools, which gradually replaced parchments⁴⁵.

The market for the “daily” medal posed different requirements than those that had to be specifically designed: for the award medals, a generic coinage combined with a calibrated variation of the inscription was sufficient. Generally, the obverse depicted the social emblem of the institution while the reverse specified the occasion of the award. Ferrea managed to secure a commission from the municipality of Genoa to produce award medals for primary school pupils. In 1891, the small firm was awarded the supply

⁴⁴ Martini, *Catalogo delle medaglie e delle Civiche raccolte numismatiche*, tav. XV.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

of medals after the temporary suspension of what were considered to be substitutes for medals such as books. The early twentieth century saw a new phase of expansion and spread of the medal market, whose importance as an artistic object increased, aided, moreover, by the introduction of new machinery and techniques such as the pantograph. Ferrea in Genoa secured commissions for the prizes awarded to the pupils of the civic schools. In 1900, 468 medals were distributed to schoolchildren and 811 to schoolgirls: a supply destined to ensure good work for the factory together with the production of award medals to public schools or tribute or celebratory medals that also involved teachers, such as the one commissioned for gym teacher Sartori about to emigrate to Buenos Aires⁴⁶.

Gradually, however, Ferrea had to face competition from Stefano Johnson of Milan. Established in the 1830s on the initiative of Giacomo Johnson as a workshop where stamped metal buttons and coats of arms were made, later under the direction of his son Stefano it was further developed into a medal manufacturer and at the same time changed its company name to «Stefano Johnson – Medal Factory». In the post-unification decades, the production of medals continued to encounter the favour of a diverse public, made up of associations, public and private organisations, religious orders and members of the Milanese nobility. But in the course of the 80s, the company underwent further consolidation, transformation and technological modernisation, and increasingly met the demand for medals from the world of school and education⁴⁷. On this side, we see the involvement of engravers who played a significant role in the production of a specific medal series aimed at school memory and awards. For Johnson, for example, artists such as Putinati, Manfredini and Broggi produced engravings for the Accademia delle Belle Arti and Scuola Brenzoni in Verona, for the Royal Institute of Fine Arts in Venice in 1887 or for that of Milan in 1893. Broggi, on the other hand, produced engravings for the Carini Prize of the University of Brescia. But the celebratory centenaries of universities or the foundation of new institutes represent an equally rich opportunity to produce medals. Examples include the medals produced to mark the 4th centenary of the University of Brescia in 1902, the 5th of the University of Turin celebrated in 1905, the 1st centenary of the University of Palermo in 1906 or the foundation of the Italian university in Trieste in 1903. These medals are characterised, in terms of style, by the presence of allegories in classical style or the reproduction of ancient seals and coats of arms⁴⁸.

Furthermore, the question arises as to the extent to which these companies were subjected to competition from the school-publishing companies, which, in the second half of the 19th century, began to produce, as part of the teaching aids, the award medals

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴⁷ V. Johnson, *Una famiglia di artigiani medaglisti*, Milano, Stabilimento Stefano Johnson, Alfieri & Lacroix, 1966.

⁴⁸ An interesting sampling of this type of medal is offered to us by the catalog produced on the occasion of 150 years of medals produced by the Johnson company *150 anni di medaglie Johnson, 1836-1986*, Milano, Stabilimento Stefano Johnson, 1986, pp. 103-104.

and certificates or diplomas of merit, albeit in a standardised form, as documented in the publishing catalogues⁴⁹.

A more systematic investigation of the medal collections held not only in the archives of companies such as Johnson, but in the various museums, would allow us to identify the different types of decorations. Significant examples are the collections of the *Museo della Zecca dello Stato*, the medal collections in Palazzo Massimo in Rome, in Palazzo Rosso in Genoa, and in the Museo Correr in Venice, the numismatic Cabinet and medal collection in Milan, the medal collection in the Galilei Museum in Florence. A deeper study of the specimens collected in the catalogues produced to date by both companies and museums⁵⁰ could recompose the picture of a medallic production on school and educational themes that is totally absent from school-historical analysis and enrich our knowledge of a very complex phenomenon, that of school memory.

⁴⁹ See the already mentioned *Catalogo del materiale scolastico per gli asili infantili e le scuole elementari*, cit., pp. 91-94; or the *Catalogo del materiale scolastico per gli asili infantili e le scuole elementari per l'anno scolastico 1911-1912*, Torino, G.B. Paravia & C., 1911, pp. 81-84.

⁵⁰ Examples include catalogs produced by Johnson for the industrial sector such as the *Catalogo delle medaglie e delle civiche raccolte numismatiche*, cit., passim.

“Minor Educators”? Traces of the Public Memory of the School, between the Official History of Education and the Community’s History. The Case of Emidio Consorti (1841-1913)

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Introduction

The contribution is in the strand of studies known as the public memory of the school on which historical-educational research in recent years has opened innovative research lines. The main research question this study seeks to answer is: how did the public memory of educators, especially those whom official historiography has often considered “minor figures”, contribute to the construction of the identity of a school community and, more generally, of a local community? To this end, we will analyse how many and what forms the public celebration of Emidio Consorti (1841-1913) took within the community of Ripatransone (in the Marche Region), in which the educator was born and carried out his educational work. Before this question can be answered, the methodological framework and the working tools used in the research must be defined.

To this extent, it is appropriate to illustrate the concept of public memory of the school as elaborated in the three-year research project PRIN (Project of Relevant National Interest) entitled “School Memories between Social Perception and Collective Representation (Italy, 1861-2001)”¹. Guided by the University of Macerata and supported by other Italian universities (Florence, Bologna, Cagliari, Molise and Basilicata), this project led to the creation of three online databases intended for the census of the different traces and testimonies that convey the memory of the school². To achieve this objective, a series of interpretive categories, methodological tools and digital repositories have been identified, fine-tuned, and implemented during the mentioned project. The author of this paper, as

¹ R. Sani, J. Meda, “*School Memories between Social Perception and Collective Representation*”. *An innovative and internationally oriented research project*, «History of Education & Children’s Literature», vol. 17, n. 1, 2022, pp. 9-26.

² See the web portal *Memoria Scolastica*: <https://www.memoriascolastica.it/memoria-pubblica/memorie-pubbliche> (last access: 10.03.2023).

member of the research unit of Macerata University, has specifically contributed to the creation of the *Banca dati delle memorie pubbliche della scuola* (Database of the Public Memories of School). In this database have been gathered and catalogued objects – such as plaques, tombstones, statues, monuments, as well as postage stamps or coins etc. – which commemorate events, places, and figures of the history of Italian schools. It is therefore useful to recall the methodological framework and concepts underlying the very definition of school memory, specifically the subcategory addressed in this paper: the public memory of the school.

1. *The school memory: features and specificities of a new research field*

The research on school memories conveyed by oral sources, or expressed through ego-documents such as autobiographies, memoirs, diaries etc.³ is an area that historians and educational historians have explored extensively. On the contrary, the collective and public memory of the school have long remained considered a historiographical unimportant object. In recent years, this trend has been reversed and studies and research have multiplied. An important turning point was the international symposium “School Memories. New Trends in Historical Research into Education: Heuristic Perspectives and Methodological Issues” held in Seville on 22-23 September 2015. On that occasion, an in-depth debate was launched, and many scholars explored different aspects of the school memory as a concept⁴. From then on, it was possible to fine-tune the theoretical coordinates for investigating the school memory as a whole concept, that can be defined a set of modes and forms that commemoration of the school’s past can take. School memories are, in fact, the fruit of an experience that is commonly shared by people and through generations, especially in societies with widespread schooling⁵. Precisely because of this shared experience, an old schoolbag, a Bakelite inkwell, or a vintage school desk can be easily recognised as part of our past, or from the childhood memories that have been passed on to us by our parents, grandparents, friends etc. By virtue of this cultural sharing of a common past, already in a 2014 article I defined school objects as *powerful social objects*⁶ (a category I borrowed from the museological work and research

³ For a first classification see A. Viñao Frago, *La memoria escolar: restos y huellas, recuerdos y olvidos*, «Annali di Storia dell’Educazione e delle Istituzioni Scolastiche», n. 12, 2005, pp. 19-33.

⁴ C. Yanes, J. Meda, A. Viñao (edd.), *School Memories: New Trends in the History of Education*, Cham, Springer, 2017.

⁵ A. Viñao Frago, *La historia material e inmaterial de la escuela: memoria, patrimonio y educación*, «Educação», vol. 35, n. 1, January-April 2012, pp. 7-17, <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=84823352002> (last access: 11.02.2013). See of the same autor *La historia material y Memoria, patrimonio y educación*, «Educatio siglo XXI», vol. 28, n. 2, 2010, pp. 17-42.

⁶ M. Brunelli, *Las fotografías escolares como objetos sociales: Primeras reflexiones sobre el uso educativo y social del patrimonio en el museo de la escuela*, in A.M. Badanelli Rubio, M. Poveda Sanz, C. Rodríguez Guerrero (edd.), *Pedagogía museística: prácticas, usos didácticos e investigación del patrimonio educativo. Actas de las VI Jornadas Científicas de la SEPHE*, Madrid, Universidad Complutense de Madrid – Facultad de Educación, pp. 203-217.

carried out by Nina Simon)⁷, which just in the museum environment are able to exert their natural power to catalyse people’s attention, to elicit personal reminiscences of the school past and to spontaneously bring individuals (even strangers) to share their past experiences. Although this is the most tangible and vivid expression of the memory of school experience, nevertheless many other collective and public expression exist, and equally capable of shaping an intangible school heritage which is shared and kept alive by entire communities.

2. *The three facets of the Memory of the School*

Based on these premises, the international community of educational historians has come to identify three possible dimensions – distinct but complementary and often interconnected – in which school memory can take shape. These three dimensions can be defined as follows.

The *Individual School Memory* is intended as the individual practice of self-representation of oneself and one’s school past. This self-representation can be offered by alumni as well as former teachers or school administrators by means of oral or written testimonies. Ego-documents are a crucial source that can integrate or even explain information offered by other traditional sources. The *Collective memory of the school* is the collective practice of remembering and (re)building the educational past. This practice is carried out by the cultural industry – i.e. by literature, film⁸, music, etc. – which not infrequently builds a stereotypical image of the school based on the idealisation of the past, or stemming from the stratification of personal memories of entire generations, or finally arising from the (re)interpretation of the past produced by the cultural tools and codes available in that moment. As such, this representation may change over time and even alter our knowledge of the past, but it nonetheless contributes to forming our collective imagery. Finally, the *Public memory of the school* can be meant as a *public practice* of the school’s memory, and constitutes the least explored and most recent field of historical-educational research. As such, it has been one of the most innovative focuses of the PRIN’s activities. But what is the working definition of “public memory of the school” developed and used for the purpose of this research?

⁷ N. Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, Santa Cruz-CA, Museum 2.0, 2010.

⁸ See the essays collected in P. Alfieri (ed.), *Immagini dei nostri maestri. Memorie di scuola nel cinema e nella televisione dell’Italia repubblicana*, Roma, Armando, 2019.

3. *Toward a working definition of public memory of the school*

In 2019, the journal «History of Education & Children's Literature» published a monographic section in the first issue of the volume XIV (June 2019), which was entitled *Memories and public celebrations of education in contemporary times*. In the presentation of the section, we proposed a tentative definition of the public memory of the school intended as a:

multiplicity of forms which were elaborated, in the context of the official representations and public commemorations promoted by local and national public institutions, on the basis of a precise «politics of memory» or «public use of the past» designed to harness consensus and reinforce feelings of belonging to a specific community⁹.

With the aim to correctly identify and study all the traces and sources linked to these representations, it was necessary to reflect contextually both on the forms that these manifestations can take and on the occasions and purposes that generated and nurtured them. Regarding the occasions on which the memory of the school was publicly celebrated and represented, and with what specific aims, it is possible to identify the following:

- ceremonies in honour of individual figures both from the world of education (pupils and educators, administrators, school managers as well as funders, patrons and benefactors of educational institutions) and from the world of pedagogy (pedagogists, ministers of education or great authors of children's literature, etc.), who deemed significant both for the educational community as well as for the wider community (from the local community to the national community). The occasions and purposes of such ceremonies mainly refer to public funeral ceremonies promoted by relatives, friends, colleagues or authorities¹⁰; celebration of birth or death anniversaries; naming of streets, squares and/or school buildings¹¹;
- public ceremonies and/or anniversaries for important events, awards or recurrences relating to public education, such as: ceremonies or anniversaries of the foundation of a specific educational institution; centenaries and anniversaries relating to the enactment of fundamental laws, institutions of orders and/or degrees of education, university jublations; the awarding of honours and the awarding of medals and diplomas of merit and memory to individuals as well as to municipal, school or association institutions;

⁹ M. Brunelli, J. Meda, L. Pomante, *Memories and public celebrations of education in contemporary times*. Presentation, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XIV, n. 1, 2019, pp. 11-21.

¹⁰ A. Ascenzi, R. Sani, *Between rhetorical celebration and social marginalisation. The teachers' and headmasters' memory and celebration through the obituaries published in the school and teachers' magazines in the first century after the unification (1861-1961)*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XI, n. 1, 2016, pp. 97-117 and vol. XI, n. 2, 2016, pp. 121-150.

¹¹ On the study of toponymy, in particular, see M. D'Ascenzo, *Collective and public memory on the walls. School naming as a resource in the history of education*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XII, n. 1, 2017, pp. 633-657; Ead., *Creating places of public memory through the naming of school buildings. A case study of urban school spaces in Bologna in the 19th and 20th centuries*, «El Futuro del Pasado», n. 7, 2016, pp. 441-458.

– realisation of museums and/or musealization of symbolic places: other occasions and ways through which the public representation and/or celebration of the world of the school take place are the realisation of museums specifically dedicated to the representation of the history of the school, or to the celebration of figures linked to the world of the school. In particular, the musealisation of schools (recognised as the fulcrum of the community's history) and other symbolic places (as in the case of Montessori's birthplace in Chiaravalle)¹² is a crucial step that leads to a series of additional initiatives, events, and commemorative activities. These activities can help strengthen public memory, which over time takes on new forms and modalities.

Such a thorough elaboration of the concept and subcategories of school memory, and in particular of the public memory of the school, has made it possible to identify new material sources which – in addition to and alongside the traditional sources – today allow us to explore new perspectives on the school history, as we shall see later in the article.

4. *New sources: the forms of public memory of the school*

The work carried out during the PRIN project, which led to the identification, analysis and careful reflection on the occasions and purposes with which the school was publicly celebrated and represented, made it possible, in parallel, to identify the *forms* in which these public representations were in fact substantiated.

In fact, these representations took the form of a wide range of traces, which for us constitute to all intents and purposes historical sources of documentary, printed, iconographic, material, and finally, of monumental¹³ nature, that can be identified in the following typologies:

1. *commemorative plaques and plaques*: in honour of individual personalities from the school world or on the occasion of particular events (e.g. founding of schools, awarding of prizes) or specific anniversaries relating to the history of the school;
2. *statues, portraits, busts and half-busts, or commemorative monuments* (the latter characterised by the presence of architectural elements);
3. *coins and banknotes*, but also *postage stamps, medals* and numismatic series celebrating and commemorating individual personalities from the world of education and schooling or special anniversaries;

¹² For an in-depth study of the symbolic places of education see J. Meda, *I «luoghi della memoria scolastica» in Italia tra memoria e oblio: un primo approccio*, in A. Ascenzi, C. Covato, J. Meda (edd.), *La pratica educativa. Storia, memoria e patrimonio*, Macerata, Eum, 2020, pp. 293-314.

¹³ On the monumental heritage, I refer to the methodological and propaedeutic essay on the mentioned PRIN project by V. Minuto: *Monumental memory of school in post-unitarian Italy*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XV, n. 1, 2021, pp. 213-255.

4. *printed obituaries, funeral orations, commemorative pamphlets* printed by committees for honouring deceased teachers, *epitaphs* (burial inscriptions) and *funerary monuments* in monumental cemeteries, or *cenotaphs* (funerary monuments but without the mortal remains) and other testimonies related to the funeral ceremony;

5. *honours, certificates of merit and award medals*¹⁴, *for merit or in memory* dedicated to individuals as well as to educational institutions.

These different practices of public celebration of the school history can each be used separately for every single figure, as is usually the case. But in the case of outstanding personalities, it can happen that these different forms are all used together to celebrate and commemorate (even at different historical moments, in the past or also in recent times) the same figure. This is what has happened in the case of Maria Montessori whose fame and cultural legacy continue to be celebrated to this day, in Italy and abroad, in many and different forms such as statues, plaques, portraits and busts, coins or medals or postage stamps¹⁵. Regardless of the wealth of forms that celebration and commemoration has taken it is nevertheless a fact that the most recurring testimonies to public school memory in the area are the stone heritage, mostly consisting of epigraphs (more or less enriched by decorative, architectural or figurative elements such as portraits, busts, etc.). This extensive and widespread heritage, however, refers not so much to nationally known figures but rather – as in most cases – to teachers and educators considered “minor” by official historiography, but who played a significant role in the history of places, territories and their school communities.

Thus we come back to the initial research question: how have these public memories of individual educators conditioned, or still condition today, the formation of a community's identity, and not only of the school community but also of the wider community of the local area? With this aim, we carried out an exploratory investigation that examined a local educator from the Marche region, the teacher Emidio Consorti (1841-1913).

5. *Emidio Consorti and official historiography*

Emidio Consorti is the typical figure of the teacher of a small center who, by virtue of his personal qualities, initiative, and intuition, manages to emerge from the province and rise to national and international prominence in his era¹⁶. The Marche educator was

¹⁴ A. Barausse, “*Ricambiare l'amore che portano all'educazione...*”. *Public memory and awards of honour of the Public Education in Italy from the Unification to the end of XIX Century (1861-1898)*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. XIV, n. 1, pp. 185-205.

¹⁵ In this regard, cf. the interesting research by M. Filippa, F. Bertolino, *Il collezionismo al servizio della ricerca. L'immagine ed il pensiero di Maria Montessori nei memorabilia popolari*, which was presented during the international conference “The School and its Many Pasts: School Memories between Social Perception and Collective Representation” (Macerata, 13-15 December 2022).

¹⁶ On the figure and work of Emidio Consorti see C. Cellini, *Emidio Consorti e la scuola di lavoro manuale a Ripatransone*, Rocca S. Casciano, L. Cappelli, 1894; G. Castelli, *L'istruzione nella provincia di Ascoli Piceno*

born, in fact, on 14 December 1841 in Ripatransone, a small center in the province of Ascoli Piceno, in the rural hinterland of the Marche region. After qualifying as a teacher, at the age of 23 Emidio Consorti was called in 1864 to teach in the Ripatransone primary school. In the years from 1874 to 1895, he served as didactic director for all the schools in the municipality, until he obtained the formal qualification of Director in 1898. In his double role, Emidio Consorti had the opportunity to experiment the «educational manual work» he conceived and fine-tuned in the decade 1878-1887. Thanks to his experiments, Consorti set up a *Museo scolastico-pedagogico* made up of all the artifacts produced by his pupils and the teachers involved during the training sessions in primary schools. Such a collection was already perfectly complete and well organised in 1884, when it was presented at the Italian General Exhibition in Turin together with the popular circulating library («Biblioteca popolare circolante») set up by Consorti himself¹⁷; but it was precisely that «valuable *Museo Pedagogico*» that won the admiration of contemporaries to the point of earning the Bronze Medal decreed by the Jury of the Turin exhibition¹⁸.

By virtue of his achievements, in 1887 Consorti was called to join the delegation of teachers sent by Education Minister Michele Coppino to the Nääs school¹⁹ founded in Sweden in 1872 by August Abrahamson and developed by his nephew Otto Salomon. Here Consorti attended the summer course for teachers, where he learned the basics and teaching techniques of *Slojd*. In his pedagogical lectures, however, Consorti makes it clear that the foundations of his own method (which differs from the Swedish method) had already been developed by him during his years as a primary school teacher. In this regard, Consorti claims that «At the school in Ripatransone, I had always applied the

dai tempi più antichi ai giorni nostri, Ascoli Piceno, L. Cardi, 1899; G. Napoletani, *Gli uomini rappresentativi delle Marche. Il prof. cav. Emidio Consorti*, «Rivista marchigiana illustrata», n. 2, 1907, p. 72; R. Mariani, *Fatti e figure nella storia della istruzione elementare in provincia di Ascoli Piceno*, Ascoli Piceno, Società tipografica, 1926; *Ripatransone in memoria di Emidio Consorti*, «I Diritti della scuola», vol. XXXII, n. 38, 23 August 1931, p. 599; *Onoranze centenarie a Emidio Consorti*, «Le Cronache Scolastiche. Rassegna quindicinale dell'istruzione media», vol. XXVII, n. 7, December 1941, p. 53; I. Picco, *Il lavoro nella scuola*, Roma, Faro, 1949; G. Galeazzi, *Emidio Consorti e il lavoro manuale educativo*, «Pedagogia e Vita», n. 6, 1981, pp. 611-622; *Emidio Consorti*, in *Enciclopedia pedagogica*, directed by M. Laeng, Brescia, La Scuola, 1989, Vol. 2: *Cabrini-Duss*, columns 3157-3158; M.C. Moro, *La figura pedagogica di Emidio Consorti e il lavoro manuale educativo*, Degree Thesis, University of Trieste, Academic Year 1994-1995; E. Diletti, *Notizie biografiche*, in E. Diletti, G. Galeazzi, W. Michelangeli (edd.), *Il lavoro manuale educativo. Il sistema pedagogico. Le conferenze*, Ripatransone, Amministrazione Comunale, 1997, pp. 53-62; *Consorti, Emidio*, in A. Giannetti, F. Regi, S. Virgili, *Personaggi Piceni*, Vol. II, Fermo, A. Livi, 2009 (*ad vocem*); M. Brunelli, *Consorti, Emidio*, in G. Chiosso, R. Sani (edd.), *Dizionario Biografico dell'Educazione 1800-2000 online*, Milano, Editrice Bibliografica, 2013, pp. 384-385.

¹⁷ See the *Catalogo Ufficiale delle Divisioni II e III. Didattica e produzioni scientifiche. Esposizione generale Italiana in Torino, 1884* (Torino, Unione Tip. Editrice Torinese, 1884), where the Consorti's museum is mentioned within the *Categoria 7 (Statuti, Regolamenti e notizie relative alle Istituzioni promotrici dell'istruzione, sorte per iniziativa di cittadini e di corpi morali)*, p. 65.

¹⁸ Reported in the magazine «La Scuola Elementare Marchigiana», vol. II, 1884, p. 344.

¹⁹ Cf. P. Villari, *Il lavoro manuale nelle scuole elementari*, Roma, Tipografia Sininberghi, 1888; G. Castelli, *Relazione a S.E. il Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione sull'ordinamento del lavoro educativo nelle scuole elementari*, «Bollettino Ufficiale del Ministero dell'Istruzione Pubblica», Supplement of 26 January 1899, pp. 163-269; G. Gabrielli, *Notizie sulla spedizione di Nääs per il lavoro manuale*, «I Problemi della pedagogia», n. 4, 1957, pp. 390-398.

principle of plurality [*scil.*: the use of multiple forms of schoolwork: Froebelian work, drawing, clay, wire work, cardboard, and woodwork]. I had already sensed that principle by myself since 1878, and I then applied it in all its forms as far back as 1881»²⁰. A statement, the latter one, which is confirmed by the prize received in Turin in 1884. In view of the growing interest in his method, in 1889 Consorti opened in Ripatransone a teacher training course together with the first national congress on the method. Since then, the «autumn courses» experienced growing success to the point that in 1899 in Ripatransone as many as 329 elementary school teachers and preschool educators arrived from all over Italy. By virtue of Consorti's success, in 1894 the Ministry authorised the establishment in Ripatransone of the «Luigi Mercantini» Normal School, which was equipped with a special section devoted to the educational manual work. These courses ran continuously until 1914, after Consorti's death on 19 February 1913. Although at the time the Ripatransone teacher played a significant role on a national and international level, Emidio Consorti is today still considered a minor figure by official pedagogical and didactic historiography. And this is in contrast with the awards he received at the educational exhibitions of the time, the mentions in journals and monographs of the time, and the fact that – also after that many similar courses on educational manual work sprang up all over Italy – Ripatransone always remained the driving force behind this didactic methodology²¹. This is not the place to examine the impact of Consorti's work on the teaching and pedagogical reflection of the time, both at national and international level. Instead, we will analyse Consorti's legacy and representation in the public and collective memory of «his» community.

6. *Emidio Consorti in the public/collective memory of the Ripatransone community*

Thanks to the theoretical and methodological reflection developed during the PRIN project, we now have clear criteria of classification, as well as protocols of description of the traces of the public memory of the school. Such tools allow us to identify, classify and interpret the ways in which Consorti has been the object of public (or collective) celebration/commemoration, both in the past and in more recent times. An initial classification has allowed us to identify the following forms of public commemoration and celebration, most of which are currently included in the *Database of the Public Memory of the School*: 1) Public commemoration: a marble memorial plaque with bronze bust and bas-relief, was affixed by the city authorities in 1925 on the occasion of celebrations for the fallen soldiers of the Great War (Figure 1)²²; 2) Public commemoration through toponymy: a

²⁰ E. Consorti, *Conferenza «La mano: organo prodigioso dell'umana attività». Forme di lavoro manuale educativo: unità o varietà?*, in Diletti, Galeazzi, Michelangeli (edd.), *Emidio Consorti. Il lavoro manuale educativo. Il sistema pedagogico. Le conferenze*, cit., pp. 307-317, in part. p. 312.

²¹ For an in-depth analysis see M. Brunelli, *Alle origini del museo scolastico. Storia di un dispositivo didattico al servizio della scuola primaria e popolare tra Otto e Novecento*, Macerata, eum, 2020, pp. 49-55.

²² M. Brunelli, *Lapide con busto in bronzo di Emidio Consorti a Ripatransone (1925)*, in R. Sani, J.

town street was named after Consorti around the years 1925-1927; 3) Public centenary celebration of birth: a commemorative plaque was placed on the teacher's birth house in 1942²³; 4) Public celebration by the school community: naming of the secondary school "Emidio Consorti" in Ripatransone.

To these forms of public celebration/commemoration we can add further initiatives, events, and ways in which the Ripatransone community has publicly honoured the figure of Consorti. In particular, in 1993 a study conference in honour of Emidio Consorti was held, followed by the publishing of Consorti's writings (his handbook for educators *Sistema pedagogico del lavoro manuale educativo*, and his lecture notes *Conferenze sul lavoro manuale educativo*) printed at the expense of the municipality in 1997²⁴; in 1999, the Emidio Consorti Prize was established, awarded to the most deserving secondary school pupils and teachers (section: Master of Italy Prize); in 2013, the centenary of Consorti's death was celebrated with cultural events, conferences and historical commemorations dedicated²⁵; in 2014 The *Museum of Peasant and Artisan Civilisation* in Ripatransone (established in 1990) was refurbished and equipped with a section specifically dedicated to the *School of educational manual work* set up in 1889 by Emidio Consorti²⁶.



Fig. 1. Marble memorial plaque with bronze bust of Emidio Consorti and bas-relief, in Ripatransone (1925). Photo-credits: Diana Cocco (Comuni-italiani.it). Source: www.memoria.scolastica.it

Meda (edd.), *Banca dati delle memorie pubbliche della scuola*, Vol. 2, Macerata, eum, 2022, <https://www.memoriascolastica.it/memoria-pubblica/memorie-pubbliche/lapide-con-busto-bronzo-di-emidio-consorti-ripatransone-1925> (last access: 13.03.2023).

²³ M. Brunelli, *Lapide a Emidio Consorti a Ripatransone (1942)*, in Sani, Meda (edd.), *Banca dati delle memorie pubbliche della scuola*, Vol. 2, cit., <https://www.memoriascolastica.it/memoria-pubblica/memorie-pubbliche/lapide-emidio-consorti-ripatransone-1942> (last access: 13.03.2023).

²⁴ Cf. Diletti, Galeazzi, Michelangeli (edd.), *Emidio Consorti. Il lavoro manuale educativo. Il sistema pedagogico. Le conferenze*, cit.

²⁵ R. Spinozzi, *1913-2013: death centenary*, «Il Mascalzone.it», February 2013 https://www.ilmascalzone.it/archivio_storico/2013/02/il-belvedere-del-piceno-rende-omaggio-al-pedagogista-emidio-consorti/ (last access: 08.09.2022).

²⁶ The museum collections dates to 1990 and are the fruit of private donations. The first exhibition was arranged in the premises below the Ildebrando Malavolta school and was then moved in 2014 to its current location, the Ex Cantine Cardarelli, covering an area of 502 square metres. The demo-ethno-anthropological *Museum of Rural and Artisan Civilisation* in Ripatransone contains the section *School and Toys*, presenting the reconstruction of a multi-classroom dating back to the years 1940-1950s, and the section *The school of manual-*



Fig. 2. *A greeting from Ripatransone*. Travelled postcard, unreadable date but around 1908; printed by Quirino Capriotti in Ripatransone (private collection of Marta Brunelli)

7. *Other forms of public and/or collective memory*

In addition to these traces, the application of the same classification criteria and interpretive tools developed and tested during the *School Memories* project has allowed me to identify further forms of public and collective commemoration of the Consorti figure that need additional investigation and, probably, should be included within the mentioned database of the Public Memory of the School. I refer to some celebratory postcards issued during the years when the Consorti's school was in operation. On the antiques market and in some private collections, in fact, I have come across some examples of postcards depicting different subjects but all celebrating the figure of Emidio Consorti and his work as an educator of national importance and, at the same time, as an honourable member of the community. In two *Greetings from Ripatransone* postcards, the educator's portrait stands out in the foreground and being flanked by the photographs of the most significant buildings of Ripatransone: in the

first case, the façade of the Town hall (postcard printed in Rome, by A. Focchi Editore, Via Principe Umberto, 58; untravelled postcard, s.d. but ca. 1900-1913, private collection); in the second case, the postcard depicts the main entrance of the *Royal School of Educational Manual Work* being surmounted by the portrait of the «Direttore Prof. Cav. Uff. Emidio Consorti» surrounded by a laurel wreath symbolising wisdom and glory (Figure 2).

8. *The many and different traces of the public and collective memory of the school: the case of Emidio Consorti*

In the other two cases the postcards make direct reference to the autumn teacher training courses held by the Ripatransone School and to which teachers and educators came from all over Italy and even abroad, and precisely they refer to the 1909 course

educational work, exhibiting original artifacts from the Consorti's school such as models and geometric cut-out works, as well as cardboard, wire, plaster and wood artifacts.



Fig. 3. *A greeting from Ripatransone*. Postcard representing the facade of the Town hall with the portrait of Emidio Consorti. Untravelled postcard, without date but ca. 1900-1913 (private collection)

(Figure 4) and, even before, to the 1900 course. The latter ones is a souvenir-postcard celebrating the *12th Course of educational manual work in Ripatransone*, which took place in the months of July-September 1900: the illustration represent a female figure (in a typical Art Nouveau style) holding a quill pen in the right hand, and a scroll with the motto «Ars et Labor» in the left; the entire scene is framed by laurel branches and dominated by the coat of arms of the Municipality of Ripatransone (private collection).

The spread and distribution of these postcards need further investigation: some postcards lack significant typographical data whilst others refer, in one case, to a publisher in Rome (A. Fiocchi) and probably contracted by a local client from Ripatransone; and to the local printer Quirino Capriotti from Ripatransone, in the other case. By now we may assume that the probable promoters of such a production must have been the municipality of Ripatransone, or the Direction of the school, or even local printers and, finally, local photographers. In fact, we know that the group-image of the teachers of the 1909 reproduced in the postcard in Figure 4 comes from a photographic shot by photographer G. Domizi on the 21st annual course: in the centre stands out Prof. Emidio Consorti surrounded by professors and educators enrolled in the autumn course of that year²⁷.

²⁷ One copy of the original photograph is kept by the Historical Archive of Potenza Picena (see S. Ciasca, P. Onofri, *Nel 1913 moriva il prof. Emidio Consorti di Ripatransone, fondatore in Italia del lavoro manuale*



Fig. 4. Postcard dated 1909. The photograph depicts a group of student teachers from the autumn courses in Ripatransone portrayed on the steps of the municipal palace (private collection)

Regarding the reasons and purposes of these objects, both the public entities (the municipality or the school) and private individuals (local printers and photographers) had different but overlapping interests in creating and printing the mentioned postcards. The intent with which these souvenir postcards were produced is, in fact, not purely celebratory but above all commercial: according to the information of the time, the Consorti's school was a strong presence in the local and national collective imagination and as such attracted aspiring students from all over Italy. From this perspective, the annual courses represented an economic engine capable of driving an important induced activity created by the arrival and prolonged stay of so many people, elementary school teachers and preschool educators, both public and private, as well as pedagogues, trainers and observers who were staying in Ripatransone for some weeks. Coming not only from

educativo, legato alla città di Potenza Picena per il suo migliore allievo, il prof. Umberto Boccabianca, 8 aprile 2022, I santesi-Weblog, <https://isantesi.wordpress.com/2022/04/08/nel-1913-moriva-il-prof-emidio-consorti-di-ripatransone-fondatore-in-italia-del-lavoro-manuale-educativo-legato-alla-citta-di-potenza-picena-per-il-suo-migliore-allievo-il-prof-umberto-boccabianca/>, last access: 09.11.2022).

Italy but also from abroad (as known from the contemporary testimonies and confirmed by the presence of the term “postcard” translated into fourteen languages, from German to Russian), these guests – true pioneers of an *ante litteram* Educational Tourism – were patently the first customers interested in buying a postcard to send to their friends, loved ones or colleagues as well as to keep as a souvenir of their study-travel. At the same time, these postcards functioned as an excellent vehicle for commercial propaganda aimed at publicising the school and its innovative teaching methodologies: travelling within and beyond national borders, these images helped to further promote the role of the school founded by Consorti in Ripatransone, increase its fame and importance and, finally, attract more and more teachers and educators²⁸.

9. *New forms of collective memory: school memory 3.0*

I would like to conclude this review on the sources and forms of school’s public and collective memory by referring to the panorama offered by the Web regarding the figure of Emidio Consorti and his educational and cultural legacy. Today the Ripan educator is, in fact, also present on the web where there are various channels and tools that contribute to celebrating his memory and commemorating his figure on recurring anniversaries. An initial survey of the web reveals some interesting online resources dedicated to Emidio Consorti. Firstly, the weblog “I Santesi”²⁹, named after the ancient name of the community of Potenza Picena, defines itself as a «Blog of news and historical characters from ancient Monte Santo to present-day Potenza Picena». In recent years the blog has dedicated and continues dedicating articles and posts on the figure of Emidio Consorti (Figure 5) as well as to one of Consorti’s closest collaborators, Umberto Boccabianca who came from Potenza Picena. Secondly, the presence of videos on YouTube channels of local history lovers is particularly interesting for the aim of this research. A case in point is the video *Ripatransone in 1901. Beautiful period photos*: posted on 13 November 2020 by Vincenzo Travaglini on his YouTube channel, the video presents – between min. 2.45 and min. 3.17 – a series of historical photographs depicting the male and female students who attended lessons at Emidio Consorti’s school in the early 20th century (Figure 7). Finally, I would like to mention two FB accounts: the first one is *The Habitual Tourist*, edited by

²⁸ On the celebratory, propagandistic, and advertising functions of postcards of educational/school subject, we refer to the volume edited by A. Viñao Frago, M.J. Martínez Ruiz-Funes, P.L. Moreno Martínez: *Tarjeta postal ilustrada y educación (España, siglos XIX-XX)*, Murcia, Editum, 2016. See also the virtual exhibition *Tarjeta postal ilustrada y educación (España, siglos XIX-XX)* that – promoted by the Centro de Estudios sobre la Memoria Educativa (CEME) and first set up at the Facultad de Educación de la Universidad de Murcia (December 13-23, 2016), and then at the Centro cultural “Ramón Alonso Luzzy” in Cartagena (February 16-March 31, 2017) – is currently accessible through the Museo Virtual de Historia de la Educación (MUVHE) of the Universidad de Murcia, <https://www.um.es/muvhe/exposicion/tarjeta-postal-ilustrada-y-educacion/#panel-0> (last access: 11.03.2023).

²⁹ *The Santesi Weblog. Rinascita culturale ed impegno civile*, <https://isantesi.wordpress.com/> (last access: 11.03.2023).

Personaggi Avvenimenti Il paese Edizioni

I SANTESI WEBLOG
Rinascita culturale ed impegno civile

Feeds: Articoli Commenti

« Le cartoline di Potenza Picena della fine degli anni Cinquanta del Novecento nelle edizioni di Delvio Giulietti di Porto Civitanova »

Porto Potenza Picena, tante storie per una storia »

Nel 1913 moriva il prof. Emidio Consorti di Ripatransone, fondatore in Italia del lavoro manuale educativo, legato alla città di Potenza Picena per il suo migliore allievo, il prof. Umberto Boccabianca

9 aprile 2022 di Onofri Paolo

A cura di Simona Ciasca e Paolo Onofri

Portenza Picena ricorda il prof. Emidio Consorti in occasione dei centonove anni dalla sua morte, avvenuta a Ripatransone il 19/02/1913. Nato a Ripatransone il giorno 14/12/1841, fondatore in Italia del lavoro manuale educativo, ebbe nel prof. Umberto Boccabianca il suo migliore allievo. Il prof. Boccabianca da Ripatransone era venuto a Potenza Picena ad

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NOTIZIE SPORTIVE
POTENZA PICENA

Hockey Potenza Picena agli "United World Games": Tartabini e Casciotti salutano gli atleti in partenza 18 giugno 2022 *Notizie*

Sportive Potenza Picena e Marche RIVIERABANCA RIMINI ALLA GARA DUE CEDE CONTRO FAENZA 18 giugno 2022

Fig. 5. Article commemorating the anniversary of Emidio Consorti's death. From the Weblog "I Santesi".

the cultural association of the same name (based in Castignano, AP)³⁰ and the second is *Visit Ripatransone* (and related website) edited by the Ripatransone Tourist Office (Figure 6)³¹. Both these accounts/websites are aimed at promoting tourism in the surrounding areas and both the promoters – a cultural association on the one hand, and the tourist office of a local administration on the other – deemed it necessary to dedicate one or more pages to the figure of the pedagogue from Ripatransone.

These few, early examples help to understand how the presence of Emidio Consorti constitutes an inseparable element of the history and identity of the communities of this area, which do not miss an opportunity to celebrate an anniversary or to remind tourists of the location of the pedagogue's birthplace or to point out the presence of Consorti's educational collections in the *Museum of Rural and Artisan Civilisation* in Ripatransone.

³⁰ *The Habitual Tourist*, <https://www.facebook.com/HabitualTourist/> e <http://www.habitualtourist.com/> (last access: 11.03.2023).

³¹ *Visit Ripatransone*, https://www.facebook.com/visitripatransone/?locale=it_IT (last access: 11.03.2023).

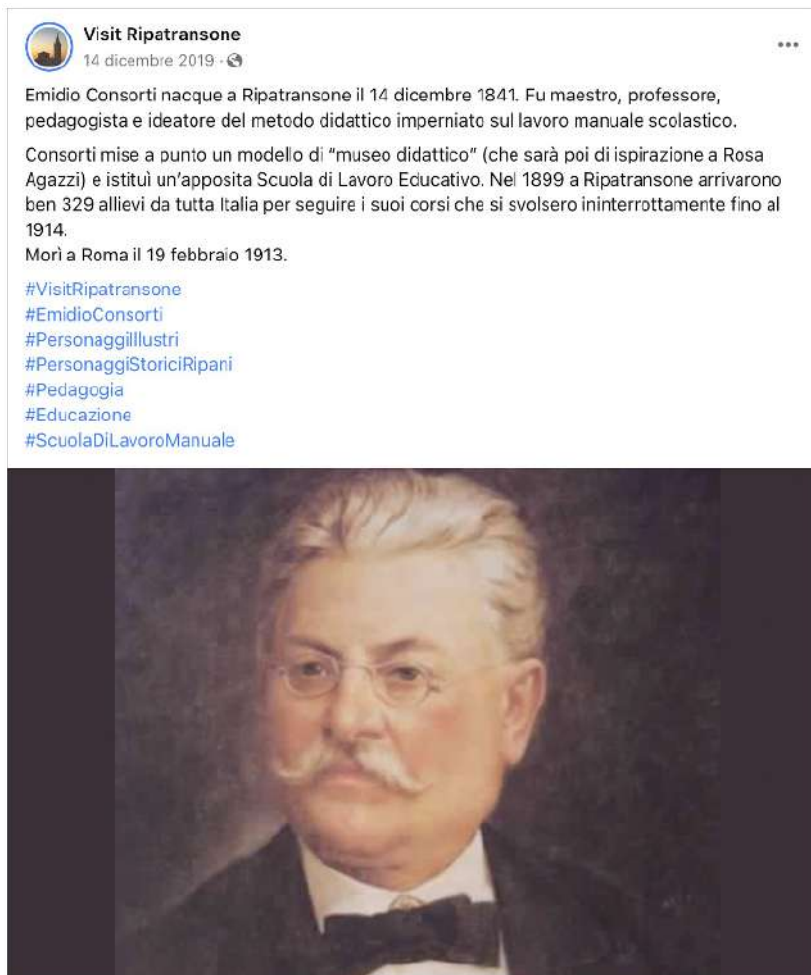


Fig. 6. Post on Emidio Consorti from the FB account "Visit Ripatransone".

The collective and public celebration of the figure of the Marches educator thus takes on new forms and languages, even in the context of Web 3.0.

Conclusions

The PRIN research has provided the first, fundamental tools needed to identify and interpret the traces of school, public and collective memory not only relating to the renowned figures of school history and pedagogy, but also and above all to many so-called



Fig. 7. *Ripatransone in 1901*. Video posted on Vincenzo Travagliini's YouTube Channel (13 November 2020). At min. 2.45 appear historical photographs of teachers attending the autumn courses of Emidio Consorti.

'minor' educators. The latter, in fact, find themselves in a paradoxical situation: on the one hand, they are considered to be less relevant by the official historiography and, on the other hand, they are the real recipients of the majority of the monumental heritage on our territory.

The study of these traces – plaques, epigraphs, slabs, statues, busts, monuments, etc. – has given different outcomes and completely opposite results: some times, these sources are only a discoloured echo of figures whose memory has slowly but inevitably faded in the collective memory; other times, on the contrary, they have allowed us to come across personalities whose memory is still strong and rooted in the territories where they lived, worked and left a vivid legacy – as is the case with Emidio Consorti. But in all instances, researching, analysing, and describing these sources of the public and collective school memory have helped us to focus on and better understand the dynamics and ways in which communities have kept intact or totally severed the ties that bind them to the most significant figures of their own past. But it is above all the persistence of such threads, which testifies to how strong the sense of identity can be nurtured by the school past

in a community, whether it is a small community confined to a local sphere or a larger community, even extended to a national sphere.

Based on the findings, it is possible to state how important it is studying the evidence of the public memory of the school on two distinct levels: on a first, "horizontal" (or quantitative) level, i.e. by identifying how many and which school-related figures have been commemorated and celebrated locally and nationally; and on a second, "vertical" (or qualitative) level, aimed at carrying out an in-depth analysis of each individual educator in order to understand how many and which commemoration/celebration initiatives have been implemented, for what purpose and with what timing (only in the past, or also in the present).

Based on these initial research findings, the figure of Emidio Consorti has remained alive in Ripatransone and, although considered a minor educator in official educational historiography, the rootedness of this figure in the collective imagination of the home community is still able to testify how significant was the role he played between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Actually, the gap between official historiography and the actual role that so-called 'minor' educators have played in the history of the school (and local communities) seems to correspond to the same gap existing between the official school history and the public memory of the school. In the light of these considerations, it is hoped that the development and study of the database of the public memories of school can also open up a new perspective on these "minor" figures³², and allow to keep on exploring the value of the (plural) histories of the school as it was concretely lived, acted and developed by teachers and educators whose memory is still firm and alive in the territories and communities.

³² A. Barausse, C. Ghizzoni, J. Meda, «*Il campanile scolastico*». *Ripensando la dimensione locale nella ricerca storico-educativa*, «Rivista di storia dell'educazione», vol. V, n.1, 2018, pp. 7-14.

Meritorious Experts of Physical Education: the Obituaries of the Gymnasiarchs in the Liberal Age

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1. *Research aims: methodological premise*

This work will adopt the methodology outlined by Sani and Ascenzi in «*Oscuri martiri, eroi del dovere*», where the authors traced back

the evolution of the model of the gymnastics teacher and school officers through different historical periods and different ideological, cultural and political scenarios, researching in depth [...] the role of education and school in the process of national identity building, and the promotion of the values of citizenship throughout the centuries-long phase of united Italy¹.

The use of obituaries as a privileged source² in education-history studies was pointed out by Chiosso and Sani. In 2009 they explained the reasons for using the obituaries in the project underlying the publication of the «Biographical Dictionary of Education 1800-2000». In this work, obituaries were the fifth type of source used to compile biographical entries³. The paper applies the heuristic identified by Sani and Ascenzi, who took inspiration from the recent historiographical paradigm of the School Memories emerging in the Spanish literature⁴. This approach was discussed at Seville's International

¹ A. Ascenzi, R. Sani, «*Oscuri martiri, eroi del dovere*». *Memoria e celebrazione del maestro elementare attraverso i necrologi pubblicati sulle riviste didattiche e magistrali nel primo secolo dell'Italia unita (1861-1961)*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2016, p. 9.

² See G. Zazzara, *Poetiche del lutto, politiche della memoria. Epitaffi di storia tra biografia e autobiografia*, in M. Isnenghi et alii (edd.), *Le rotte dell'io: itinerari individuali e collettivi nelle svolte della storia d'Italia*, Napoli, Scriptaweb, 2008, pp. 297-325.

³ See G. Chiosso, R. Sani, *Conservare la memoria. Per un dizionario biografico dell'educazione*, «History of Education & Children's Literature» (henceforth HECL), vol. 4. n. 2, 2009, p. 464.

⁴ See A. Escolano Benito, *Memoria de la Educación y Cultura de la Escuela*, «Revista de Estudios y Experiencias en Educación», n. 3, 2003, pp. 11-25; A. Viñao, *La historia material e inmaterial de la escuela: memoria, patrimonio y educación*, «Educação», vol. 35, n. 1, 2012, pp. 7-17; C. Yanes Cabrera, *El patrimonio educativo intangible: un recurso emergente en la museología educativa*, «Cadernos de história da educação», n. 2, 2007, pp. 71-85; J. Meda, A. Viñao, *School Memory: Historiographical Balance and Heuristics Perspectives*, in C. Yanes Cabrera, J. Meda, A. Viñao (edd.), *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, Cham, Springer, 2017, pp. 1-10.

Symposium on School Memory in 2015⁵. Sani and Ascenzi pointed out that obituaries can be a significant source of school memory as far as this memory is bound to «a collective and/or public recollection practice of the school past, its protagonists and practices, through the medium of the press, where the dimension of individual and collective memories are all but one»⁶. The obituaries published in the didactics journals highlight the collective didactics' memory from the inside⁷, showing «the evolution that characterised the model of a teacher»⁸ in Italy, both in schools and universities⁹.

The present paper contributes to a better understanding of the official memory of the first generation of the so-called gymnasiarchs, as Gregorio Valle defined them in his famous Parliamentary intervention in 1902. According to Valle, the first generation of gymnasiarchs included «old apostles saved by death, full of holy youth enthusiasm, whose eyes are still filled with the vision of that great ideal repeated over and over again: *let us make the Italians, let us make their character, let us make the citizen-soldier*»¹⁰. In particular, focusing on the period between the secession of the Federation of Italian Gymnastics Societies (henceforth FIGS) from the Italian Gymnastics Federation (henceforth IGF) in 1874 and the reconciliation in 1887¹¹, the analysis would privilege recurrent elements in the obituaries. Indeed, there is evidence of efforts to reunite a fragmented gymnastics movement that had been put at the margin of the education debate of the time and other opposite tendencies aiming at radicalising the conflict between Obermann's Turin School and Baumann's Bologna School¹². Thus, the paper recollects the profile of the leading gymnasiarchs as teachers during the challenging period of institutionalisation of gymnastics in Italian schools¹³. The study of obituaries – «proper celebrations of those lay civilisation missionaries»¹⁴ – helps scholars correctly frame their biographies within

⁵ See J. Meda, R. Sani, *Il Simposio internazionale su «La Memoria Escolar. Nuevas tendencias en la investigación histórico-educativa: perspectivas heurísticas y cuestiones metodológicas»* (Siviglia, 22-23 settembre 2015), «HECL», vol. 11, n. 1, 2016, pp. 603-609.

⁶ E. Scaglia, *I necrologi dei maestri elementari italiani: da "Spoon River" a fonti inedite per la storia della scuola e dell'educazione*, «HECL», vol. 13, n. 1, 2018, p. 600.

⁷ See M. D'Ascenzo, *Remembering teachers and headmasters. Funeral memories as source in history of education between nation building and collective memory*, «HECL», vol. 14, n. 1, 2019, p. 280.

⁸ A. Ascenzi, E. Patrizi, *Per una storia dell'esperienza magistrale in Italia tra Otto e Novecento: il caso della maestra elementare marchigiana Maria Riccini (1892-1975) tra nuove fonti e nuove metodologie di indagine*, «HECL», vol. 13, n. 2, 2018, p. 423.

⁹ See L. Pomante, *Professors' obituaries. A valuable source for studying the history of university and higher education*, «HECL», vol. 15, n. 2, 2020, pp. 353-388.

¹⁰ G. Bonetta, *Corpo e nazione. L'educazione ginnastica, igienica e sessuale nell'Italia liberale*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 1990, p. 217.

¹¹ See D.F.A. Elia, *Per la libertà e la grandezza della patria: la nascita della federazione nazionale ginnastica nel 1887*, in C. Crivellari (ed.), *Paradigmi della pedagogia*, Lecce, Pensa MultiMedia, 2018, pp. 199-218.

¹² See D.F.A. Elia, *L'insegnamento della ginnastica al di là del campanile: genesi e sviluppo delle associazioni nazionali fra gli insegnanti di ginnastica nell'Ottocento*, «Rivista di storia dell'educazione», n. 1, 2018, pp. 385-405.

¹³ See P. Alfieri, *Le origini della ginnastica nella scuola elementare italiana. Normativa e didattica di una nuova disciplina*, Lecce, Pensa Multimedia, 2017, pp. 19-20.

¹⁴ F. Targhetta, *Il romanzo d'un maestro di Edmondo De Amicis: le ragioni della sua recente riscoperta*, «HECL», vol. 11, n. 2, 2016, p. 460.

a broader context of identity-building¹⁵. A thoughtful work of contextualisation can «give new and deeper meanings to the choices and actions of individual teachers and strengthen, at the same time, their feeling of belonging to the category»¹⁶.

2. *The obituaries of pioneers: the Risorgimento and Gymnastics*

Thanks to the scrutiny of the specialised national magazines, the author singled out 94 death notes published between 1869 and 1918. Among these notes, however, only 47 expressed condolences for gymnastics teachers, the others referred to members of the societies¹⁷ and their relatives¹⁸. This work adopted a diachronic interpretation that identified three different phases when coeval historical events had a crucial impact on the obituaries. As a result, the research revealed a community seemingly united but lacerated by conflicts arising from adopting different gymnastics teaching methods¹⁹. The echoes of the Risorgimento²⁰ characterised the first phase (1861-1903). For instance, in February 1885, the obituary of Antonio Vincenzi from Finale Emilia recalled that the teacher «was extraneous to party struggles. He effectively served the country in the fields of independence and freedom, and later in the more modest, but not less worthwhile, battlegrounds of education and instruction, being committed to them with the zeal of an apostle»²¹. The obituary of Ernesto Ricardi di Netro, president of the Royal Gymnastics Society of Turin, pointed out the efforts he made in favour of national unity:

he was a valiant soldier who fought fervently in the Italian Independence Wars and earned several medals for military valour. He founded and fruitful cooperated in the development of several education and philanthropic institutions; he was an indefatigable promoter of gymnastics education in schools, a member of the Parliament and a skilled manager²².

¹⁵ See M. Perry, «*Red Ellen Wilkinson: her ideas, movements and world*», Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2014.

¹⁶ Ascenzi, Sani, «*Oscuri martiri, eroi del dovere*», cit., p. 89.

¹⁷ E.g. the obituary of Antonio Orsolato, who died in Capua at the age of 20, described him with the following words: «artillery reserve officer; strong fibre [...] brilliant brain – goodhearted, and infinitely beloved by his friends that he cheered up during meetings with his pleasant manners» (C. Saibante, *Necrologio*, «Periodico della Società Ginnastica Educativa di Padova», vol. 1, n. 3, 1875, p. 1).

¹⁸ As a matter of fact, there were short obituaries dedicated to the relatives of the associations' members: see the review contained in «*Bollettino Mensile della Società Ginnastica Milanese "Forza e Coraggio"*», vol. 11, n. 106-107-108, 1894-1895, p. 16.

¹⁹ See G. Bonetta, *Nelle palestre del regno. Le vicende della ginnastica educativa nell'Italia postunitaria*, «Lancillotto e Nausica», vol. 39, n. 1, 2009, pp. 16-25.

²⁰ See S. Pivato, *Far ginnastica e far nazioni*, in A. Noto, L. Rossi (edd.), *Coroginnica: saggi sulla ginnastica, lo sport e la cultura del corpo, 1861-1991*, Roma, La Meridiana, 1992, pp. 32-43.

²¹ I. Agnini, *Necrologio*, «La Ginnastica. Organo ufficiale dell'Associazione italiana dei Maestri di Ginnastica (henceforth AIMG) e della Federazione delle Società Ginnastiche Italiane (henceforth FSGI)», vol. 19, n. 2, 1885, p. 4.

²² C., *Necrologio*, «L'Istituto. Foglio settimanale illustrato d'Istruzione e di Educazione», vol. 40, n. 15, p. 240.

Obituaries of this first phase also show references to the Colonial Wars²³. For example, the obituary of Giovanni Maurer, a member of the Milanese Gymnastics Society «Forza e Coraggio» who passed away in 1893, mentioned his engagement in favour of the survivors of the fights in Ethiopia: «When the unfortunate events of Dogali and Saati took place, [Maurer] gave the presidency a gold medal so that, in the name of «Forza e Coraggio», it would be offered to the bravest survivor of those battles»²⁴. Ironically, the obituaries of the first gymnasiarch, Rodolfo Obermann²⁵ were not affected by the chaotic situation arisen on the day after the secession of 1874²⁶. Indeed, Obermann was praised for contributing «to widespread Gymnastics in Italy»²⁷. The obituary published in «La Ginnastica» celebrated Obermann with greater emphasis. This magazine represented the official press institution of the IGF before the secession. The editors entrusted Francesco Ravano²⁸, who would later join the secessionist flank, with the task of writing the memorial note: his obituary stands out as one of the rare cases where the authorship is known. Ravano wrote:

just today, at this moment, a black-bordered mourning paper, delivered by mail from Turin, notifies us of the painful loss that Italy, the Gymnasiarchs, family and friends suffered, the loss of the distinguished inaugurator of the Modern Gymnastics among us, the wise master, the tender husband and beloved father, of the dear and jovial friend. Cav. Giovanni Rodolfo Obermann is not here anymore, nature deprived us of one of its rare creations! To better admire him or for a new training? Our intimate sorrow averts us to answer, our tears coming from our hearts will give voice to this question. – To your enduring memory, every gymnast shall print in their heart your name, and your short pilgrimage will make ripe fruits grow, for so beautiful and generous your example was²⁹.

Other elements emerge from the obituary of Cesare Caveglia³⁰. It underlined the need to stop the ongoing secession: «Italian gymnasts shall follow his example and steadfast, unanimous and united, they shall work according to the imprints he left and the dictates of Obermann»³¹.

²³ See G. Finaldi, *Esperienza e memoria di Dogali*, in M. Isnenghi, S. Levis Sullam (edd.), *Le tre Italie: dalla presa di Roma alla settimana rossa (1870-1914)*, Torino, UTET, 2009, pp. 395-400.

²⁴ *Giovanni Maurer*, «Bollettino Mensile della Società Ginnastica Milanese “Forza e Coraggio”», vol. 9, n. 86-87, 1893, p. 8.

²⁵ See A. Magnanini, *Obermann Rodolfo*, in R. Sani, G. Chiosso (edd.), *Dizionario Biografico dell'Educazione 1800-2000*, (henceforth *DBE*), Editrice Bibliografica, Milano, 2013, vol. II, pp. 249-250.

²⁶ See P. Ferrara, *L'Italia in Palestra. Storia, documenti e immagini della ginnastica dal 1833 al 1973*, Roma, La Meridiana, 1992, pp. 98-101.

²⁷ *Necrologie*, «Il Progresso Educativo», vol. 1, n. 7, 1869, p. 288.

²⁸ In the obituary published on the FIGS magazine, Ravano was celebrated as «an authentic apostle of Physical Education; one of those who worked not thinking about their own profit but devoted to the sublime, human ideal: the training of a healthy, strong, brave youth, [which can be] useful to themselves and to the Country» (D. Marchetti, *Francesco Ravano*, «L'Educazione Fisio-Psichica» (henceforth *EFS*), vol. 12, n. 6, 1930, p. 87).

²⁹ F. Ravano, *Necrologi*, «La Ginnastica. Bollettino della Federazione Ginnastica Italiana (henceforth *FGI*)», vol. III, n. 10, 1869, p. 4.

³⁰ See Red., *Caveglia Cesare*, in Sani, Chiosso (edd.), *DBE*, cit., vol. I, p. 315.

³¹ *Necrologio*, «Periodico della Società Ginnastica Educativa di Padova», vol. II, n. 7, 1876, p. 4.

The obituaries singled out during this first historical phase mainly refer to Italian gymnasiarchs. The valuable exception is the first page of «La Ginnastica» devoted to the memory of the German Augusto Ravenstein, one of the organisers of the international conference in Frankfurt am Main in 1880³². This obituary gave evidence of the chaotic situation of contemporary Italian gymnastics. Inner opposing factions weakened the movement: the German gymnasiarch was remembered as «an impartial friend of all Italian gymnasts [...] [and] a fervent supporter of the merging of the two federations»³³. There were also scantier death notices lacking those elements aimed at building an education community of teachers. These cases mainly concern teachers who died at a younger age³⁴ and focused on their ardour in teaching gymnastics rather than other issues³⁵.

3. *Obituaries in Giolitti's Age: Gymnastics at the service of the ideal of the soldier-citizen*

The passing of the first generation of gymnasiarchs which occurred during the nineteenth century and continued in the first two decades of the twentieth century, repurposed, even in Giolitti's age, a series of representations already analysed. These representations expressed the ideal of gymnastics at the service of the nation-building process³⁶. The obituary of Gregorio Draghicchio provides an example. Published by Romano Guerra³⁷ in the IGF Bulletin, it emphasised that Draghicchio was an Italian living in unredeemed territories:

from that faraway strip of land of Istria, in that tiny harbour bathed by the blue Adriatic Sea, the Gymnastics Society performed its first solemn act, enrolling in our Federation, to demonstrate a feeling of belonging, affection and bonds to the Italian family. And Gregorio Draghicchio, a real patriot by

³² See D.F.A. Elia, *Il Congresso internazionale di ginnastica di Francoforte (1880) nelle relazioni curate da Sebastiano Fenzi*, «Annali di Storia dell'Educazione», vol. 26, 2019, pp. 241-253.

³³ *Augusto Ravenstein*, «La Ginnastica. Organo ufficiale dell'AIMG e della FSGI», vol. 15, n. 9, 1881, p. 1.

³⁴ It is worth mentioning the example of Mansueto Segalini's obituary, who died when he was 26 years old: «He united in himself the qualities of a distinguished teacher and the skills of a remarkable gymnast. [...] Beloved by all members, he carried out with clever zeal the charge of assistant coach of the Società ginnastica milanese, which he coached several times» («La Ginnastica. Organo ufficiale dell'AIMG e della FSGI», vol. 15, n. 9, 1881, p. 4).

³⁵ «In his salad days, being 27, he [Curzio Malatesta] was stolen from his dear gymnastics studies [...] grieving for the emptiness left behind by the dead colleague among the youngest passionate lovers of gymnastics, we put a flower on his fresh grave, sure to interpret the feelings of all kind and generous souls» (*Necrologio*, «La Ginnastica. Organo ufficiale dell'AIMG e della FSGI», vol. 16, n. 12, p. 4).

³⁶ Remembering the General Nicola Heusch (1837-1902), Guerra observed that his contribution had been crucial to organise a gymnastics competition on the 25th anniversary of Rome's annexation to the Kingdom of Italy. The competition turned out to be «a revelation for the public and politicians, who suddenly realised that a Gymnastics Federation existed in Italy, and it was a lively power that could have granted great benefits to the country» (R. Guerra, *Il generale Nicola Heusch*, «Bollettino della FGI», vol. 14, n. 10, 1902, p. 74).

³⁷ See D.F.A. Elia, *Romano Guerra*, in Sani, Chiosso (edd.), *DBE*, cit., vol. I, p. 698.

nature, might have rejoiced at the warming words of our vice president M.P. Sanarelli when he greeted in the name of Italy the flag of the Società Parentina³⁸.

The teachers that passed away in this phase still represented the pioneering model of the “apostle of gymnastics”³⁹. They gained early military training, therefore aimed at «serving their home country and educating Italian youth in the gyms»⁴⁰. The obituary written for Senator Gabriele Pecile (1826-1902) proved to be the occasion to argue about the existence of opposing methodological orientations regarding the teaching of gymnastics:

he never spoke against any idea or any method, and witnessed long discussions he limited himself to exclaiming with his good-natured air of him: *It's all good, all of you are somehow right; what matters is that gymnastics is performed one way or another*. And his opinion revealed a piece of wisdom impossible to deny. As a matter of fact, if physical education in Italy did not develop was not due to the adoption of one method rather than a different one, but to the far more severe and painful fact that had never been thoughtfully implemented, notwithstanding the method⁴¹.

The death of Giuseppe Pezzarossa (1851-1911) is a relevant case study⁴². Despite the end of the nineteenth-century secession, the obituaries published on Pezzarossa's death are an excellent example of how his passing was faced differently based on the still recognisable areas of conservatives and innovators in the gymnastics field. The official obituary, published in the *Gymnastics Federation Bulletin*⁴³, contrasts with the one that appeared in the *Association of Gymnastics Teachers* magazine. Baumann's followers⁴⁴ limited themselves to mentioning the death of the Apulian teacher⁴⁵. On the opposite, the bulletin of the National Institute for the increase of Physical Education (henceforth NIPE) stressed the event and underlined the merits of Pezzarossa as a teacher and entrepreneur.

³⁸ R. Guerra, *Gregorio Draghicchio*, «Bollettino della Federazione Ginnastica Nazionale (henceforth FGN)», vol. 14, n. 6-7, 1902, p. 33.

³⁹ This statement, quoted by Dyreson, fits cav. Alfredo Mengozzi – deceased in 1907 – «that was not only full of noble qualities but also one of the most distinguished supporters and apostles of physical education for the youth» (*Necrologie*, «Il Ginnasta. Organo Ufficiale della FGI», vol. 19, n. 1-2-3, 1907, p. 20). See M. Dyreson, *Mapping Sport History and the History of Sport in Europe*, «Journal of Sport History», vol. 38, n. 3, 2011, p. 401.

⁴⁰ *Necrologio – Cav. Giuseppe Benedetti*, «Il Ginnasta. Organo Ufficiale della FGI», vol. 23, n. 12, 1911, p. 165.

⁴¹ R. Guerra, *Gabriele Pecile*, «Il Ginnasta. Organo Ufficiale della FGI», vol. 14, n. 17, p. 97.

⁴² See D.F.A. Elia, *Storia della ginnastica nell'Italia meridionale: l'opera di Giuseppe Pezzarossa (1851-1911) in Terra di Bari*, Progedit, Bari, 2013.

⁴³ «He never missed one single meeting with us, he gathered the likableness and affection of all components of the great federation family because of his goodness, and fine brain. All the pieces of equipment for the next federation competition are the last evidence of his smart work» (*Necrologio – Cav. Prof. Gaetano [sic] Pezzarossa*, «Il Ginnasta. Organo Ufficiale della FGI», vol. 23, n. 3, 1911, p. 47).

⁴⁴ See D.F.A. Elia, *Una fonte storica per lo studio della figura dell'insegnante di ginnastica: «L'Educazione Fisio-Psichica» (1911-1914)*, «Nuovo Bollettino CIRSE», vol. 8, n. 2, 2013, pp. 95-102.

⁴⁵ «With deep sorrow we were informed of the death of our dear and valiant colleagues Camparini Enrico of Reggio Emilia, Longhi Giuseppe of Alessandria, Pezzarossa Giuseppe of Bari» (*Necrologi*, «EFS», vol. 1, n. 5, 1911, p. 4).

Recalling that Pezzarossa had been a representative of the Central Committee of Bari's section, the obituary states: «may the Institute's heartfelt condolences reach the family of the meritorious man of physical education, the brilliant inventor of gymnastics equipment, and the valiant teacher»⁴⁶. Giuseppe Oberti died the same year, and his obituary once again celebrated the apostolic nature of the gymnastics teacher education mission, which he directed to Genoa's youth. The Ligurian town, which «for over forty-five years boasted of having him among the best school educators [...] he was always a trustful pioneer in each and every noble charitable and patriotic initiative», desired to celebrate him together with the gymnasts «who valued him as the indefatigable apostle strengthening in the young the noble principles of humanity and national grandeur»⁴⁷.

Giovanni Battista Bizzarri instead belonged to the opposite faction: in his obituary, written by Giovanni Orsolato, a reformer himself, the author ignored the events that may recall the readers the split within the gymnastics movement. On the contrary, he remarked the efforts made in favour of physical education:

[Bizzarri] led the first society of gymnastics teachers, he was the editor-in-chief of the first newspaper *La Ginnastica*; he was among those selected to take part in the commission that in 1881 [1880, Author's Note] attended the world gymnastics celebration in Frankfurt, and at his own expenses, together with the beloved Cajol, Draghicchio and the writer of this note, he embarked on an educational tour that led us to visit the greatest German gymnasiums, including those in Stuttgart directed by Dr Jäger, who named him the Jahn of Italy. What a precious collection of dear and sacred patriotic and gymnastic memoirs he kept in his house, and how delighted he was to show them to his visitors!⁴⁸

Writing in memory of Angelo Mosso⁴⁹, who passed away on 24th April 1910, although recognising his efforts for the reform of gymnastics, Giuseppe Monti⁵⁰ did not spare him from criticising

which [his theories] were of little pedagogical and psychological value. Those who knew the school well could not blindly accept the innovations advocated by Mosso, and easily found their flaws. There's no denying the fact that many valuable and good things were done when the books of Mosso circulated widely. Many people fail to recognise that the revamp observed today in national physical education and the enhancement of its teachers are mainly due to the work of the great physiologist of Turin⁵¹.

Some other controversies emerged in Mosso's obituary by Romano Guerra, which he published in the NIPE bulletin. The author illustrated the critical issues related to Mosso's project to change the responsibility of the administration of physical education «from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of War; a proper education heresy that

⁴⁶ *Necrologio*, «L'Educazione Fisica. Bollettino dell'Istituto Nazionale per l'incremento dell'Educazione Fisica (henceforth INIEF)», vol. IV, n. 9, 1911, p. 144.

⁴⁷ La Direzione, *Giuseppe Oberti è morto*, «Il Ginnasta. Organo Ufficiale della FGI», vol. 23, n. 10-11, 1911, p. 47.

⁴⁸ G. Orsolato, *Necrologio. Gio. Battista Bizzarri*, «Il Ginnasta. Organo Ufficiale della FGI», vol. 16, n. 4, 1904, p. 111.

⁴⁹ See G. Chiosso, *Mosso Angelo*, in Chiosso, Sani (edd.), *DBE*, cit., vol. II, pp. 212-213.

⁵⁰ See D.F.A. Elia, *Monti Giuseppe*, *ibid.* pp. 197-198.

⁵¹ G. Monti, *Angelo Mosso*, «Il Ginnasta. Organo Ufficiale della FGI», vol. 22, n. 11-12, 1910, p. 219.

demonstrated, to what extent lately, the noble educational theories of the great master had been changed and led astray»⁵². In addition, being Mosso a reformist, he was criticised by Guerra «to entrust the physical exercise to an outer institution»⁵³.

4. *The Great War: the accomplishment of the civilising and revitalising mission of gymnastics*

During the First World War, the first generation of gymnasiarchs counted renowned deceases⁵⁴. In 1916, Pietro Gallo died⁵⁵ and the following year, Emilio Baumann did too⁵⁶. They were considered the principal supporters of the reformist area. Those teachers, together with other colleagues such as Arnaldo Cibirin from Venice, belonged to «that group of precursors, who taught during those difficult times characterised by a sentiment of hostility and indifference of the educated and uneducated public, and were rewarded not higher than labourers. Still, those men had the faith; the necessary perseverance to win a fierce battle, and so they did. The young shall never forget them»⁵⁷. At the death of Gallo, the official bulletin of IGF celebrated his engagement in armed nation building⁵⁸, and he was especially appreciated for his far-sighted vision, given the coeval war needs:

now the splendid fruits of the selfless work of those men will be harvested; now that the war revealed the truth, successors can get back to the past work with a broader breadth; their action is the reason to exist for our Federation that aims at moulding physical education the way He wanted it. He was among the glorious founders of our Institute that considered gymnastics a part of a renovation programme, a firm necessity for any further national development⁵⁹.

⁵² R. Guerra, *Necrologio – Angelo Mosso*, «L'Educazione Fisica. Bollettino dell'INIEF», vol. IV, n. 6, 1910, p. 95.

⁵³ D.F.A. Elia (ed.), *Palestre e stadi. Storia dell'educazione motoria in Italia*, Milano, Mondadori Università, 2020, p. 136.

⁵⁴ It's worth noting that Senator Francesco Todaro also died in this period (1839-1918), who had been President of the FGI between 1898 and 1909 (see *Necrologio – Francesco Todaro*, «Il Ginnasta. Organo Ufficiale della FGI», vol. 30, n. 11, 1918, pp. 157-162).

⁵⁵ See S. Dorigo, *Gallo Pietro*, in Chiosso, Sani (edd.), *DBE*, cit., vol. I, p. 610. See also D.F.A. Elia, *Per una promozione dei mezzi di educazione di massa nella ginnastica: l'opera di Pietro Gallo (1841-1916)*, «HECL», vol. XII, n. 1, pp. 507-525 and G. Crovato, A. Rizzardini, *Costantino Reyer e Pietro Gallo. Le origini degli sport moderni a Venezia*, Venezia, Marsilio, 2017.

⁵⁶ See D.F.A. Elia, *The Italian way to gymnastics: Emilio Baumann's "psycho-kinetic theory"*, «HECL», vol. 10, n. 2, 2015, pp. 277-296 and P. Alfieri, «A qual fine vero e proprio debba rispondere la ginnastica nelle scuole». *Emilio Baumann e la manualistica ad uso dei maestri elementari all'indomani della legge De Sanctis*, «HECL», vol. 8, n. 2, pp. 195-220.

⁵⁷ *Necrologio – Arnaldo Cibirin*, «Il Ginnasta. Organo Ufficiale della FGI», vol. 30, n. 6, 1918, p. 79.

⁵⁸ The success of this model is due to «his ability to promote the nation-in-arm ("*Nation in Waffen*")», thanks to the general conscription that abolished birth and class privileges and involved all young men defending the home country observing their sacred duty». G. Conti, "*Fare gli italiani. Esercito permanente e "nazione armata" nell'Italia liberale*", Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2012, p. 7.

⁵⁹ *Il Ginnasta, Necrologio – Pietro Gallo*, «Il Ginnasta. Organo Ufficiale della FGI», vol. 29, n. 4, 1917, p. 57.

On the other hand, in the obituary written for Baumann's death, the contrasting visions, featuring the debate between his mentor's – Obermann – conservative methodology and the reformist one of his pupils from Bologna, were sublimed in the name of a kind of patriotism consolidated by war events.

now that the most terrible of wars urged our Country to give the utmost proof, to show how much there is of good and solid in the lineage, the mind goes to these precursors of the Italian Arcadia that half a century ago operated for a more human education, more vigorous, worthier of free men⁶⁰.

Conclusions

Although the investigation involved a plurality of printed papers published in the historical period taken into consideration, the number of obituaries found is not entirely satisfactory to define the traits of the elaboration of the memory of the first class of gymnastics teachers. Their task was to educate the working class and rural masses through the strict observance of the specific features of the gymnastics programmes of 1878⁶¹, namely «order, discipline, precision and conciseness of command, prompt and total obedience»⁶². In addition, they were expected to provide a model for an authoritative but friendly guide for their pupils⁶³. A short comparison of the data collected in the Central State Archives for Normal Schools, dating back to the end of the school year 1885/1886, allowed to identify 69 gymnastics teachers⁶⁴: a higher number than that emerging from the data collected in the obituaries during the whole Liberal Age. The current state of the research shows the existence of a memory of the teaching community of gymnasiarchs, built on the evaluation of the patriotic nature⁶⁵ of their educational work for the *nation-building* process. This memory tends to reverse the epistemological statute of a discipline considered weak⁶⁶ operating in a national context that made the affirmation of gymnastics difficult due to the poor importance given to the teachers of this discipline⁶⁷.

⁶⁰ Il Ginnasta, *Necrologio – Emilio Baumann*, «Il Ginnasta. Organo Ufficiale della FGI», vol. 29, n. 10, 1917, p. 160.

⁶¹ Elia (ed.), *Palestre e stadi*, cit., pp. 61-67.

⁶² M. Ferrari, M. Morandi, *I programmi scolastici di 'educazione fisica' in Italia. Una lettura storico-pedagogica*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2015, p. 97.

⁶³ M. Ferrari, *I 'programmi' italiani di educazione fisica: contesti e attori*, in M. Morandi (ed.), *Corpo, educazione fisica, sport. Questioni pedagogiche*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2016, p. 87.

⁶⁴ See *Scuole Normali. Notizie estratte dai cenni ricavati dalle autorità scolastiche sugli insegnanti di ginnastica, anno scolastico 1885-1886*, 1886, in Central State Archives, Ministry of Public Instruction (1784-1982), Libraries and General Affairs Division (1860-1898), General Archives (1860-1989), Gymnastics and Shooting Sports 1861-1894, folder 51, dossier 135.

⁶⁵ See M. Krüger, A.R. Hofmann, *The Development of Physical-Education Institutions in Europe: A Short Introduction*, «The International Journal of the History of Sport», n. 6, 2015, p. 737.

⁶⁶ M. Zedda, *L'educazione fisica: spunti epistemologici*, in Morandi (ed.), *Corpo, educazione fisica, sport*, cit., p. 46.

⁶⁷ See Dyreson, *Mapping Sport History*, cit., p. 401.

The pamphlets, published after the death of the masters or on celebrative anniversaries⁶⁸, must be considered precious documents to widen the ways to transfer the memories related to great renowned personalities such as Ricardi di Netro⁶⁹, Draghicchio⁷⁰, Obermann⁷¹, Baumann⁷², Mosso⁷³. However, these sources are not particularly useful in providing information about an “anonymous” mass of teachers. Further research may benefit from the consultation of local magazines to fill in the gaps in the documentation identified in national ones. So it may be possible to gain a better understanding of the local processes of the implementation of physical education and «local and regional specificities that marked the building of the Nation soon after its Unification»⁷⁴.

⁶⁸ On the twentieth anniversary of Baumann's death, his obituary was an opportunity to argue against liberal governments. They were accused of hindering the development of gymnastics and so that of the nation: «A total chaos in our role as teachers of Physical Education! We had to fight against widespread indifference, the dislike here in embryo and there manifest against our noble duty, the deaf hostility of the schools, we, forced to work in deteriorated gyms, with ridiculously low financial resources. Authority? Hierarchies? Sleeping and ignorant» (B. Preve, *XX Anniversario della morte di Emilio Baumann*, «L'EFP», 2nd series, vol. 15, n. 10, 1937, p. 147).

⁶⁹ See D. Chiaves, *Ernesto Ricardi di Netro: discorso commemorativo pronunciato dal senatore Desiderato Chiaves il 24 maggio 1894, festeggiandosi dalla Società Ginnastica Torinese in cinquantesimo anniversario della propria fondazione coll'intervento di S.A.R. il Duca di Genova*, Torino, Tip. L. Roux & C., 1894.

⁷⁰ See A. Gentile, *Gregorio Draghicchio: ginnasiarca e patriota di Parenzo*, Trieste, s.n., 1950.

⁷¹ See G. Botta, *Cenni biografici del cav. Rodolfo Obermann*, Torino, Tip. Letteraria, 1869.

⁷² See E. Feliziani, *Emilio Baumann e la sua opera. Contributo alla Storia della Ginnastica Italiana*, Como, Tip. Coop. Comense “A. Bari”, 1921.

⁷³ See A. Visentini, *In memoria degli ex-convittori Angelo Mosso, senatore del Regno, e dei caduti in Libia (1911-1912) tenente colonnello Camillo Solaro, tenente Ezio Ponso, sergente Emilio Scrivano: Orazione commemorativa, letta nel convitto civico di Cuneo in occasione dello scoprimento della lapide-ricordo*, Cuneo, Tip. G. Marengo, 1913.

⁷⁴ M. D'Ascenzo, *La storia della scuola tra storia locale e storia generale*, in H. A. Cavallera (ed.), *La ricerca storico-educativa oggi. Un programma di ricerca*, Lecce, Pensa Multimedia, 2013, vol. 1, p. 282.

SECTION *The “Sites of School Memory”*

How Can History of Education Research Improve the Valorisation of the Educational Heritage in Museums and Vice Versa?

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A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country to which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of utopias.

(Oscar Wilde, *The Soul of Man under Socialism*, 1891)

1. *Starting from the background of school and education museums*

In carrying out the research projects of the University of Latvia in which I have been involved since my retirement, I have during the past few years delved a little more into the international literature on school museums. Coupled with a quarter-century of experience as an advisor to the Municipal Museum of Education in Ypres, which closed its doors in 2016, this led to several publications, in which the question from the title of the present contribution often came up indirectly². Rather than blindly repeating all that is discussed there, I prefer to take a different path with this short paper, and focus on some of the recent events that happened to me in the confrontation with the heritage world in my home base Flanders. Of course, this does not prevent me from continuing to take the same stand on methodological, theoretical and historiographic issues, like, for example, the intrinsic value of the historical study and valorisation of the educational past, and – as a consequence – to oppose the pursuit of constantly making it more socially or pedagogically relevant, even though this international trend is easy to understand, but in my opinion fully unnecessary.

¹ This article is part of Iveta Kestere's project "Integrating cultural object-based learning into university studies: the case of history of education".

² M. Depaepe, *Über den Bildungswert von Schulmuseen*, in D. Balcke et alii (edd.), *Bildungsmedien im wissenschaftlichen Diskurs. Festschrift für Eva Matthes zum 60. Geburtstag*, Bad Heilbrunn, Klinkhardt, 2022, pp. 369-378; Id., *The fragile boundary between "education" and "educationalization": some personal reflections on the often exaggerated educational aspirations of museums*, «Historia y Memoria de la Educación», n. 15, 2022, pp. 389-419.

Of course, it is possible that my thinking in this regard has been strongly influenced by a number of negative experiences, including abroad, where, in contrast to the situation in Flanders, school museums shot up like mushrooms at the end of the 20th century. For instance, I visited a few of them in central Europe where a museum employee or volunteer – usually a retired teacher – played so-called “historical education” (i.e. playing “the school of yesteryear”) with children, but also with pensioners. Usually to the great delight of both groups who know how to indulge themselves in this way, but also and above all to the frustration of myself, who, as a historical researcher, wants to act as a guardian of the temporal order. Because – it has to be said – such amateurish role-playing games not only produce a grotesque (and thus highly distorted) picture of the history of education, they also pile up one anachronism after another. In Belgium, I myself have not yet seen these practices to make school histories more appealing, perhaps because there are hardly any specialized education museums left after the closure of Ypres. Nonetheless, I know that they exist and are promoted within the context of “living history”, for example in the “school of the time” at the Bokrijk Open Air Museum, about which I will talk later in this paper. But of course that kind of frustration is not directly the main point of criticism in relation to the handling of pedagogical heritage in Flanders and Belgium. Much more problematic is its general neglect³. There is not much government interest in preserving and making accessible the cultural-historical heritage left by schools and other educational institutions even though I myself and my colleagues in our research group have regularly managed to raise some money for educational history research projects over the past decades⁴. Yet these were often negligible amounts compared to what highly acclaimed empirical educational research managed to rake in – apparently in search of a superior “evidence-based” (and thus more “useful” and “relevant”) form of educational knowledge, which, mainly following the English and Dutch examples, has further marginalised (and even abolished) the discipline of the “history of education” in the curriculum of teacher education and in the academic study of educational sciences. And this while the interest in educational history from the angle of cultural historians in Flanders (and by extension throughout Belgium for that matter) cannot be called overwhelming either. On the contrary, both in their research and in most of their theoretical, methodological, historiographical writings, references to the history of education literature (mostly produced by historical researchers trained as pedagogues) seem to be studiously avoided, even though they would be appropriate. Take, for instance, the critical discussion on the (un)necessity of a canon for “history education” in Flemish secondary schools⁵. In

³ Id., *Au bas de la liste des priorités? Quelques réflexions personnelles sur le traitement du patrimoine scolaire en Belgique*, in *Première rencontre francophone des musées de l'école. Actes*, Rouen, Musée National de l'Éducation – Munané, 2018, pp. 65-75.

⁴ K. Catteuw, M. Depaep, F. Simon, *Forschungsprojekt “Pädagogisches Gedächtnis Flanderns”, «Internationale Schulbuchforschung / International Textbook Research. Zeitschrift des Georg-Eckert-Instituts für internationale Schulbuchforschung»*, vol. 20, n. 3, 1998, pp. 313- 325; M. Depaep, M. Leon, *Une ‘lutte’ sans fin avec des ‘boîtes’? 45 ans de collection, de conservation, d’inventarisation et de valorisation des manuels scolaires au sein du Centre d’Histoire de l’Éducation de la KU Leuven*, in M. Berré et alii (edd.), *Les manuels scolaires dans l’histoire de l’éducation: un enjeu patrimonial et scientifique*, Mons, CIPA, 2013, pp. 35- 51.

⁵ J. Tollebeek, M. Boone, K. van Nieuwenhuyse, *Een canon voor Vlaanderen. Motieven en bezwaren*,

that context, however, the justified criticism by leading cultural historians of the far too politicised background of the demand for such an instrument of control could very well be complemented by ideas on the “educationalization” of society, which have emerged in Flemish pedagogical historiography (and have also been followed internationally, but this aside)⁶. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same applies to the heritage sector. Educational historical research is usually not or hardly addressed there, even for setting up exhibitions in all kinds of museums and workshops, tangential to educational history⁷.

Great was therefore my surprise when in 2021 I was invited by FARO, the support centre for the cultural heritage sector in Flanders, to help shape their annual “heritage day”, which in 2022 would be dedicated to the history of the school⁸. This resulted in a preparatory lecture, which although the Covid pandemic could not, as planned, be realised at a central meeting in Malines, but took place via life-stream from my own office. By Flemish standards, there were quite a few heritage workers who, at least according to the organisers, had followed my digital lecture with me. Nevertheless, for the organisation of that particular “heritage day” itself, which went ahead on Sunday 24 April 2022, I received only one request to speak somewhere, namely from the culture department of the city of Ostend. To which I therefore gladly complied. And recently I was also asked to help furnish a rebuilt, old little school in the Open Air Museum Bokrijk in Limburg in the way the classroom must have looked around 1900... and less than a month ago I was even allowed to go and explain in Garderen in the Netherlands before the “Association for the Promotion of the Study of Pedagogy” how important the substantive contribution of the great thinkers and founding fathers has been...

Is something really turning for the better then? And, after all the “ahistorical” display of power by the leading utilitarian ideology, are people finally becoming aware again that the “historical” dimension in human life cannot be ignored, and if they do want to fudge it, interest in it surfaces uninvited every time? I hope so, but realism – which, in addition to hope, was as much as an important handle for my history of education research – unfortunately forces me to conclude, that this does not at all eliminate the chances of discolouration and distortion of the pedagogical past. Quite the contrary, in fact. Let me first and foremost elaborate on this with some personal, undoubtedly (too?) critical comments on the signs of a possible turnaround that have just been identified, before ending with a more hopeful (but perhaps utopian?) message. In particular, what a collaboration between the heritage sector and research in history of education might ideally look like...

Brussel, Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, 2022.

⁶ P. Smeyers, M. Depaepe (edd.), *Educational Research: The Educationalisation of Social Problems*, Dordrecht, Springer, 2008; D.F. Labaree, *The winning ways of a losing strategy: educationalizing social problems in the United States*, «Educational Theory», vol. 58, n. 5, 2008, pp. 447-460.

⁷ M. Depaepe, F. Simon, *Educação e património cultural na Bélgica: investigação consistente espera pro iniciativas museológicas*, in M.J. Mogarro (ed.), *Educação e Património Cultural: Escolas, Objetos e Práticas*, Lisboa, Edições Colibri, 2015, pp. 73-92.

⁸ R. Daenen, H. Van Genechten, M. Van Meerhaeghe (edd.), *Inspiratiebrochure Erfgoeddag maakt School op zondag 24 april én van maandag 25 tot vrijdag 29 april 2022*, Brussel, Faro, 2021.

2. *Some recent experiences on the public “consumption” of educational history*

As I already have mentioned, as an educational historian, I was allowed to give a lecture in Ostend on the occasion of Heritage Day, alongside other invited guests – including more popular educationalists who comment on events in the world of education almost daily in the media. The lecture took place two times, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. The theme was, in line with my earlier presentation for the heritage specialists of FARO, the relationship between educational history and school heritage – albeit that for this broader public in Ostend, I first of all wanted to talk about the history of education in Belgium (and that mainly on the basis of the development of primary schools in the past three centuries). Unlike the reportedly well-attended FARO-presentation, no more than a handful of ladies turned up twice in Ostend. Not so surprising, I thought to myself. After all, leaving aside the possible competition with better-known speakers on topical issues, who comes to listen to a scientific presentation in fine weather by the sea on a Sunday afternoon? Surely not Joe Public... and certainly not when there is also a live cycling race on television: the classic Liège-Bastogne-Liège, which would then also be won by Belgium’s greatest cycling promise Remco Evenepoel, the later world champion of 2022! But quantity, fortunately for me, does not yet say much about quality, even if the number of participants is often very decisive in the evaluation of cultural events these days – a mindset I will come back to later. Suffice it to point out here, that in my on-the-spot exposition I referred to the historical roots of the “modernist terror” of utilitarian ideology⁹, because such “enlightenment ideas” can be just as decisive for an ahistorical treatment of the (pedagogical) past, from which one wants to draw “lessons” for the present, both fittingly and more inappropriately, as well as for its neglect¹⁰. At the same time, I also tried to explain “scientifically” that I was not at all surprised by the gender-specific composition of my audience, because the absence of men had really not only to do with the broadcast of the cycling race, but illustrated once again how much education has become a matter for women over time.

Already during the 20th Century I have conducted fundamental research on the phenomenon of feminisation, also internationally¹¹. But to what extent is anyone still interested in that? A question that, by extension, may be asked of all educational-historical research and that obviously also has implications for how cultural-historical school heritage is concretely addressed. For that reason, I became painfully aware that the “old” (?) playground games and/or “educational” (?) activities such as the knitting in the central hall of the former Albert School – an otherwise excellent site for exploring the school past in its “natural” environment – had more appeal than an undoubtedly “less fun” looking

⁹ P. Smeyers, M. Depaepe (edd.), *Educational Research: Why “What works” Doesn’t Work*, Dordrecht, Springer, 2006.

¹⁰ M. Depaepe, *Qualities of Irrelevance? History of Education in the Training of Teachers*, in J.E. Larsen (ed.), *Knowledge, Politics and the History of Education*, Münster, LIT-Verlag, 2012, pp. 39-53.

¹¹ M. Depaepe, H. Lauwers, F. Simon, *The Feminization of the Teaching Profession in Belgium in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, in R. Cortina, S. San Roman (edd.), *Women and Teaching. Global Perspectives on the Feminization of a Profession*, New York, Palgrave, 2006, pp. 155-183.

talk entitled “educational history and school heritage”. Yet one of the ladies came to thank me afterwards. Would she have understood, or was it out of sheer politeness, I wondered? Had I not been too difficult again? Doubt all around, then. But I was and am certainly not inclined to succumb to simplistic representations of the complex historical past of education. Nor to far-reaching “didacticisations” and/or “elementarisations”. Not only because the rich, complex and mostly paradoxical contents of the history (of education) are thus narrowed down to “subject matter”, but also because any simplification and reduction of such contents constitutes a mockery of respect for the intellectual capacities of the audience. Taking a “test” after a lecture is, in my opinion, therefore completely absurd, as much as the quantitative evaluation of the speaker by the audience, moreover. Such practices not only detract from any intrinsic interest, but also misunderstand the real nature of the forming effects of the education process (which go, for that matter, far beyond the short-term thinking of the mainstream learning psychology and technology). Which of course does not prevent such views from leading a tough life in our society.

I also recognised them, for example, in the preparation of the Dutch congress on the “founding fathers of pedagogy”. The speakers’ texts had to be in beforehand, so that a “textbook”, aimed at possible use in pedagogical courses of colleges, could be offered to the participants on the spot. After all, textbooks sell well. The instructions to the authors therefore left little to the imagination in this regard. The texts concerning the major figures in pedagogy – mine was, as expected, again counter-intuitive, as it contained another theoretical-methodological critique of the often context-less handling of such figures in function of contemporary political and pedagogical needs – had to be edited according to a clear pedagogical-didactical format. Whereby some recommendations, at least to me, came across as downright pedantic, possibly even infantilising, which, incidentally, was reinforced by the use of bold in the text. I quote (in my own translation, admittedly),

preferably keep the title short and to the point. Make sure it appeals. After the author’s name and title follows the Dutch summary of no more than 150 words. Then, in the introduction, clearly indicate the central topic. The middle section is consistent in structure. Research data, practical experiences and literature data support the argument. The conclusion and/or discussion section reflects on the main findings [...] To make the volume even more accessible for teaching, it would be nice if you could add 3-5 questions for students at the end of the chapter¹².

One really does not need discourse analysis to grasp what I mean. But let me dwell further on the experiences in the congress itself. I still hear the President say at the opening session that we must continue to take advantage of knowledge “from” the past. Verily a punishing statement on the part of the higher education institutions responsible for the pedagogical training of educators and teachers, which, especially in the Netherlands, “historical pedagogy” for all sorts of reasons – some more understandable than others – have led the subject to its doom in the shortest time. But perhaps it is precisely in the use of this preposition that lies the key to the difference with the handling of the educational

¹² Communicated to me by an e-mail of 30 April 2021.

past as I have advocated in my work? In my view, it is not a question of employing the knowledge “from” the past, but rather the study “of” that past, because of intrinsic rather than extrinsic motives¹³. Which was therefore also the message I wanted to convey on the spot. What we need is not so much a quasi-universally applicable history of the “big ideas” of the founding fathers of pedagogy, but rather a “working history” (*Wirkungsgeschichte* as it is called in German) of those ideas, with which all kinds of acrobatics have been played out in the course of history, in order to make them fit the straitjacket of political-pedagogical views of the prevailing time or regime anyway...

However, the congress publication self-evidently exudes the same principles as those taken in preparation, albeit no longer as explicitly expressed in the introduction¹⁴. Nevertheless, there is no question of a more “historicising” (rather than educationalising) handling of the educational past. The introductory chapter, in line with the chairman’s words, narrows the legacy of thinkers almost exclusively to its contribution in the “theory” of pedagogy, which is, of course, legitimate¹⁵, but loses the point of view of history – all the more so since the questions at the end of each chapter respond, as might be expected, to the presentist use of history. For instance, at the end of an otherwise very readable contribution on Comenius, one literally asks how aspiring teachers would like to shape Comenius’s pedagogy of exploration today¹⁶.

Yet there are certainly also hopeful signs such as the effective willingness to understand what I had to say, which was evident from the multiple positive responses that I have got on the conference itself. Moreover, I feel that now – compared to more than 30 years ago – pedagogues and educationalists can stand up to the criticisms of educational innovations exposed by “historical” research better than they used to. Nevertheless, I also had to note numerous educationalising influences (even without awareness of the use of their historical background) at that same conference. Which raises the question of whether people understood the message we wanted to deliver. The simple fact that in the final text of the conference book – for which we did not even receive a proof copy – the German noun *Bildung* used by me was not even written correctly¹⁷ leaves little to the imagination on the matter. But the fact that people are willing to listen, without therefore a priori abandoning the quest for relevance or for entertainment and/or for relevance in consuming the pedagogical heritage or school patrimony, marks certainly a good trend. This was, moreover, also the case at the meeting of the scientific committee in Bokrijk

¹³ Depaep, *The Ten Commandments of Good Practices in History of Education Research*, «Zeitschrift für Pädagogische Historiographie», vol. 41, n. 1, 2010, pp. 31-34.

¹⁴ S. Nijenhuis, L. Houweling, L. Wolbert, *Het belang van pedagogische theorie voor het reflecteren op de praktijk – maar hoe dan?!*, in W. de Jong et alii (edd.), *Grondleggers van de pedagogie(k). Grote denkers over opvoeden: stemmen uit het verleden en hun weerklank in het heden en de toekomst*, Amsterdam, Uitgeverij SWP, 2022, pp. 10-21.

¹⁵ M. Depaep, *Philosophy and History of Education: Time to bridge the gap?*, «Educational Philosophy and Theory», vol. 39, n. 1, 2007, pp. 28-43.

¹⁶ J. Exalto, *Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670) en de pedagogiek van de exploratie*, in de Jong et alii (edd.), *Grondleggers van de pedagogie(k)*, cit., p. 35.

¹⁷ M. Depaep, *‘Van oude mensen...’ Over ‘de dingen’ die in de geschiedenis van opvoeding en onderwijs toch niet zo gemakkelijk voorbij gaan...*, in *ibid.*, pp. 205-206.

(on the 12 October 2022), at which both the managers of the open air museum and the heritage workers involved showed a clear will to organise the new historical village with (the one-classroom) school in 1900 on a scientific basis, and to examine, on the basis of the available literature, which school furniture, which wall charts, which school desks, which textbooks, which books in the school library deserve a place there. And even though they continue to maintain the idea of “living history” (i.e. playing the school at work) in the museum¹⁸, it is first and foremost by gaining insight into the everyday life in the classroom of the time that they are trying to develop and shape these “experiential” activities. Which thus effectively raises the question of how research and heritage can mutually help each other.

3. *What would a win-win operation between heritage and research ideally look like?*

In most cases, unfortunately usually in a one-sided way, the historical education literature looks at this relationship from the point of view of research, sometimes even with the admonishing finger pointing upwards... Without wishing to take part in this, I have pointed out in several contributions how much cooperation with scientific expertise could result in better nuanced background texts of exhibited objects, and that not only in scientifically substantiated catalogues, but also in the construction of the exhibitions themselves¹⁹. Because the choice of those objects is decisive for the possible dialogue the visitor can enter into with the museum, the exhibition and/or the heritage space. And for the short- and long-term educational effects that, in my view, cannot really be planned in advance, but rather will depend on the individual encounter and its subjective processing. For avoiding exaggerated expectations in that area, some knowledge of history of education background literature seems to me equally indispensable, albeit perhaps more on a methodological level than really on the substantive. But at least the latter will also help to give in to the temptations of presentism, a-historicity and the instrumentalisation of the past in function of all kinds of ideological, political, theoretical and/or practical positions of any kind. The fact is that we have ended up in a very hodiecentrist society, staring not only at the here and now, but also with the utilitarian ideology dominating our use of time. Simply, without purpose, letting things come to us is considered, even in “free time”, as foolishness or a waste of time. This is why museum builders always want to bring something relevant, something attractive, something “instructive” – all the more so since their existence depends on the power of numbers, i.e. the number of visitors and entrance fees – without, however, considering the fact that this exaggerated craving for utilitarianism can actually destroy the chances of *Bildung*. Because in my

¹⁸ <https://bokrijk.be/nl/uitstappen-voor-scholen-en-jeugdgroepen> (last access 15.11.2022).

¹⁹ M. Depaepe, F. Simon, *It's All About Interpretation: Discourses at Work in Education Museums. The Case of Ypres*, in P. Smeyers, M. Depaepe (edd.), *Educational Research: Discourses of Change and Change of Discourse*, [Cham], Springer, 2016, pp. 207-222.

view, this presupposes precisely the opportunity for subjective reflection, contemplation and awareness in a non-premeditated and non-imposed situation. With this, the pre-programmed educational objectives may look much less spectacular, but in this way they nevertheless offer opportunities for more in-depth learning experiences with longer lasting effects²⁰.

In the context of this paper, it seems to me much more important to dwell on the inverse relationship, especially the possible contribution of the heritage sector to research. This is not addressed in too many writings. And yet it can undoubtedly help fill a gap in the literature. For traditionally, much energy has been devoted to the macro aspects of the history of education: educational politics and policy, for example, because many sources, official and otherwise, have been preserved for this as well: educational legislation and parliamentary reports on it, curricula, educational programmes, school regulations, inspection reports, and so on. For a proper understanding of educational history, however, the research into what took place on the shop floor in everyday reality is even more essential: the micro-histories, as it were, of pedagogical and didactic actions in individual schools and classes, and of how these were experienced by teachers and pupils at the time. This is due not only to the fact that education historians at our academic institutions are a rather rare breed, but also to the fact that few relevant sources exist for such studies. What is preserved in education archives usually refers to the macro processes of policy discussed above and, moreover, is almost always strongly normatively coloured, which requires strong interpretative techniques for the researchers' question of ordinariness²¹. Upbringing and education are anyway focused on what "should" or "had to" and not on what "is" or "has been": curricula, learning objectives, school regulations, and even class diaries, lesson preparations, and the like preserved from earlier times give mainly an idea about what was expected from pupils in terms of knowledge, skills, morality (religiously framed or not) and behaviour rather than what actually happened in education... The latter often remains a kind of "black box"²², which is very difficult to shed light on from school archives.

The existing school histories – which received an enormous boost at the end of the last century as a result of the rapidly succeeding anniversaries of institutions established in Flanders around the time of the first school conflict between Catholics and Non-Catholics (i.e. "radical liberals") – are therefore not very useful for the knowledge of the actual educational process and its perception²³. Most of them therefore focus on the expansion of the institution in question, its buildings, policy, finances, changing

²⁰ M. Depaepe, *Paedagogica Historica, Quo Vadis? An epilogue on the ambivalences and paradoxes of doing educational history*, «Paedagogica Historica», vol. 58, n. 6, 2022, pp. 974-985.

²¹ M. Depaepe, F. Simon, *Sources in the Making of Histories of Education: proofs, arguments, and other reasonings from the historian's workplace*, in P. Smeyers, M. Depaepe (edd.), *Educational Research: Proofs, Arguments, and Other Reasonings*, Dordrecht, Springer, 2009, pp. 23-39.

²² J. Braster, M. del Mar del Pozo Andrés, I. Grosvenor (edd.), *The Black Box of Schooling. A Cultural History of the Classroom*, Brussels, Peter Lang, 2011.

²³ M. Depaepe et alii, *Order in Progress. Everyday Educational Practice in Primary Schools: Belgium, 1880-1970*, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2000.

directors, and so on, and can therefore be situated on the “meso” (between macro and micro) rather than on the micro level in terms of educational history. Occasionally, we do get a glimpse of “micro” situations, via (obviously always subjectively coloured) ego documents such as letters, diaries, and other testimonies, including oral ones. That “oral history” can help here, at least for the most recent period, goes without saying. The existing heritage platforms therefore seem to me to be an excellent opportunity to call on the older generations of the population, to put some things on paper on the matter, in the sense of: «put on paper your salient classroom events, enduring frustrations, as well as positive effects of classroom events, or make sure they are recorded verbally, before it is too late!»²⁴.

At the same time, I would link to this same call the continuing demand for the collection of artefacts of educational history, no matter how difficult the triage and tracking of incoming material may be. Old textbooks, school and class photographs, school notebooks with notes, essays, homework and all sorts of other documentation on school and outside-school educational activities are best not thrown away. After all, it is on the basis of these silent witnesses of school running in the past that knowledge about it and its interpretation can take finer forms. Because subjective experiences can not only vary greatly but, as everyone knows, they are also – willingly or unwillingly – subject to blurring, discolouration and a posteriori interpretations and legitimisations in the context of self-constructed life stories. This is precisely why it is necessary to constantly confront orally acquired source material afterwards with data that come “directly” from the period studied. To carry out this “test” with historical reality, heritage workers seem to me to be well placed because through their handling of similar material they have acquired sufficient heuristics to interpret it.

But of course their possible contribution does not end there. They can also help optimise hypotheses and theoretical constructs (such as the famous “grammar of schooling”) in terms of content as a team – something I have always defended from an interdisciplinary point of view as well within educational historical research²⁵. And that as full partners of the team. Mutatis mutandis, of course, the same applies when designing and outlining permanent collections and temporary exhibitions; through their experience, they may know best which objects best evoke subjective memories in visitors – memories that, in turn, could be recorded in one way or another, if visitors are explicitly invited to do so (in the guestbook, for instance). But processing them also requires the necessary heuristic techniques and content background.

Simply lumping everything together and contemporary discussions, such as those about possible level decline – a complaint that is moreover constantly present in educational history sources! – focusing on the duality between the virtue of tradition and the frivolity of the new (with an associated “fun pedagogy”) is certainly not without risk

²⁴ Id., *Onze onderwijsgeschiedenis*, in Daenen *et alii* (edd.), *Inspiratiebrochure Erfgoeddag maakt School op zondag 24 april én van maandag 25 tot vrijdag 29 april 2022*, cit., p. 55.

²⁵ Id. *et alii*, ‘Menschen in Welten’ – *Ordnungsstrukturen des Pädagogischen auf dem Weg zwischen Haus und Schule*, «Zeitschrift für Pädagogik», n. 52, 2007, pp. 96-109.

of unsubtle, ahistorical conclusions²⁶. The complexity of history is difficult to understand if one approaches it solely as a straw man for one's own, great right. It seems to me much more appropriate to do this by adopting an open-minded attitude towards the educational heritage and the surprises it has in store. And in making these experiences available, heritage practitioners undoubtedly have an important role to play. Preferably in teamwork, where there should be no hierarchical juxtapositions between theorists and practitioners, where input from different disciplines, including heritage practice, can lead to a satisfactory synthesis.

Utopian? Yes indeed, but perhaps we should still keep trying to achieve something of that ideal situation. Oscar Wilde often taken out of context witticisms²⁷, at the beginning of the article, may help with that – all the more so because I can still see them daily on my campus. As a remnant of an exhibition on a better world, they have remained there. And when I was in charge of the rectorship of the campus, I often drew courage and perseverance from them. The best proof, then, that encountering well selected artefacts from the past can still trigger something in individual experience...

²⁶ Id., *How should history of education be written? Some reflections about the nature of the discipline from the perspective of the reception of our work*, «Studies in Philosophy and Education», vol. 23, n. 5, 2004, pp. 333-345.

²⁷ For the full text see, e.g., <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/wilde-oscar/soul-man/> (last access: 16.11.2022).

Between School Memory and Historical-Educational Heritage: the Library of the “Giacomo Leopardi” National Boarding School in Macerata*

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Introduction

Among the latest frontiers of historical research in education we can certainly include two fields of studies that are proving to be quite fruitful and harbingers of further developments, relating to school memory and historical-educational heritage¹. Two areas of investigation that have their specific coordinates, but which in our opinion also show numerous points of contact that deserve to be highlighted. Hence our desire to approach a multifaceted study object with a high heuristic potential such as school libraries of historical value, to try to bring these two perspectives of investigation into dialogue².

As far as the Italian context is concerned, an organic legislative framework on school libraries has never existed and in part still does not exist, and although their history has long been intertwined, almost to the point of confusion, with that of popular libraries, note that the first normative references date back to the founding law of the Italian national school system, the Casati Law of 1859. At the beginning of the 20th century, the first provisions on the establishment and functioning of school and class libraries were introduced, even

* The article is the result of close collaboration between the authors. However, it should be noted that Anna Ascenzi is responsible for writing the *Introduction* and the *Conclusions*, while Elisabetta Patrizi is responsible for writing paragraphs 2 and 3.

¹ On the latest addresses relating to the field of studies on school memory see C. Yanes-Cabrera, J. Meda, A. Viñao (edd.), *School memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, Cham, Springer, 2017 e J. Meda, L. Pomante, M. Brunelli (edd.), *Memories and Public Celebrations of Education in Contemporary Times*, «History of Education & Children’s Literature», vol. XIV, n. 1, 2019. On the developments of studies on historical-educational heritage, please refer to the two volumes of the proceedings of the first two congresses of the Società Italiana per lo studio del Patrimonio Storico-Educativo (SIPSE): A. Ascenzi, C. Covato, J. Meda (edd.), *La pratica educativa. Storia, memoria, patrimonio*, Macerata, EUM, 2020; A. Ascenzi, C. Covato, G. Zago (edd.), *Il patrimonio storico-educativo come risorsa per il rinnovamento della didattica scolastica e universitaria: esperienze e prospettive*, Macerata, eum, 2021.

² With the expression “school libraries of historical value” we mean libraries with a book heritage acquired during a certain historical period and therefore worthy of specific attention from the point of view of the history of education.

if much was left to the free initiative of teachers, pupils and local authorities, against a backdrop of a lack of state funding³. Despite the fact that several circulars were issued during the Fascist period, which had the aim of placing school libraries under government control, culminating in the establishment of the National Authority for Popular and School Libraries (ENBPS) in 1932, in general it never arrived at «particularly significant measures that allow us to glimpse the effective development of school libraries» within an organic project⁴. Changes were only made after the Second World War and, in particular after the delegated decrees of 1974. Despite the lights and shadows of many initiatives promoted even in recent times, school libraries as a whole have finally begun to be conceived and valued as educational resources that are capable of profitably stimulating the growth of students and supporting the professional development of teachers.

The tortuous, and in some ways troubled, story of school libraries in Italy often hides pages of great interest – above all if one focuses on school libraries founded centuries ago, i.e. endowed with a significant historical content both from a quantitative and qualitative point of view – which deserves to be explored both as a place of individual and collective memory, a repository of precise educational canons applied to a specific educational reality, and as a cultural asset for the school to be conserved, protected but also to be valued because it is part of a community's identity. This dual interpretative key which – as far as we know is completely new in terms of historical-educational research – had already been highlighted in the memorandum between the Ministry of Education, University and Research and the Ministry of Environmental Heritage and Cultural Activities on 23 October 2000, where it was stated that:

the cultural asset constitutes an active element of the country's cultural growth and, in particular, libraries represent the place of historical memory, as well as being an infrastructure for accessing information and knowledge as a support for education, research, training and the dissemination of culture and, as such, complementary to the basic purposes of schools of all levels⁵.

Convinced of the fact that school libraries present themselves as one of the most suitable fields of investigation for exploring the strong link between school memory and historical-educational heritage, we aim to test their potential by examining a specific case study, that of the “Giacomo Leopardi” boarding school library in Macerata, which has peculiar characteristics in terms of history, consistency and relevance of the heritage preserved therein.

³ A brief overview of the normative references relating to Italian school libraries is in A. Ascenzi, E. Patrizi, *The school library as an educational device. The case of the Giacomo Leopardi National Boarding School Library in Macerata*, in A. Debè, S. Polenghi (edd.), *Histories of Educational Technologies. Cultural and Social Dimensions of Pedagogical Objects. Book of Abstract*, Lecce, Pensa Multimedia, 2022, p. 405. For further information on this subject, see E. Colombo, A. Rosetti, *La biblioteca nella scuola*, Roma, La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1986, pp. 13-33; M. Fiore, *La storia delle biblioteche scolastiche italiane dall'unità ai nostri giorni. Analisi storico-normativa delle leggi e delle iniziative sulle biblioteche scolastiche italiane*, Verona, Zettadue, 2005; D. Lombello, *Dalle «bibliotechine di classe» alla biblioteca scolastica nella rete nazionale*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. I, n. 2, 2006, pp. 249-281.

⁴ Lombello, *Dalle «bibliotechine di classe» alla biblioteca scolastica*, cit., p. 269.

⁵ https://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/news/2000/prot_intesa_mbc.shtml (last access: 24.01.2023).

1. The “Giacomo Leopardi” boarding school library in Macerata

The library of the “Giacomo Leopardi” boarding school in Macerata was officially established in 1915, even though a first nucleus of volumes for the use of the students and teachers of the school had already been set up in the boarding school’s early years, whose origins date back to the very early post-unification period (1862). We stand before a library of great value, which has an important history behind it, as it belongs to a prestigious, ancient and still existing institution. This history is reflected in the volumes kept in the library, which allow you to travel through different eras, from the post-unification period to the post-WWII period⁶.

Currently, the school’s library is housed in the Center for Documentation and Research on the History of School Books and Children’s Literature (CESCO), following a loan for use contract entered into between Macerata University and the boarding school in 2008. It is of a significant size, which corresponds to almost 2000 books, making a total of 1319 works and 27 periodical publications⁷. These data are obtained from examining the library inventory. This document was drawn up, presumably, during the Fascist period and then updated over time, until after the post-WWII period. It contains only a small amount of essential information: inventory number, author, title and reference shelf (marked with a letter of the alphabet)⁸.

⁶ The “Giacomo Leopardi” boarding school in Macerata, initially established under the provincial government, was nationalized in 1886. In the first period of activity, the institute housed students between the ages of 6 and 12, but soon opened its doors to students from the secondary school, who became the privileged users of the boarding school. We find confirmation of the fact that the institute began to acquire books right away from the analysis of the stamps affixed to the volumes, many of which have the wording “Provincial Boarding school in Macerata”. For a first approach to the historical history of this institute, see A. Avesani, *Le scuole pubbliche nel medioevo e nella età moderna*, in *Storia di Macerata*, Macerata, Grafica Maceratese, 1988, vol. III, pp. 3-76. On the foundation of the boarding schools in Italy and on their first period of activity, see P. Pavesio, *I convitti nazionali dalle origini ai nostri giorni. Cenni storici con note e appendici*, Avellino, Tipografia Tulumiero, 1885, in partc. parte IV. For an update on the current situation of boarding schools in Italy, see the Dossier by UIL (Italian Labor Union) in 2008 https://uilsuola.it/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/dossier_convitti_testo.pdf (last access: 02.02.2023).

⁷ In general, there are few journals preserved in the Macerata library, however they are striking in their great diversity. They range from popular science journals (e.g. «La Natura. Rivista delle scienze e delle loro applicazioni alle industrie e alle arti» edited by Paolo Mantegazza and published by Treves) to travel (such as the monthly journals promoted by Touring Club Italiano «Le vie d’Italia» and «Le vie del mondo»), history topic («Atti e memorie» edited by R. Deputazione di storia patria per le Marche) and those devoted to teachers (eg. «Rivista dell’Istruzione», published by Maggioli, and «Scuola e insegnanti», published by B.M. italiana). There is only one journal intended for the young boys, i.e. «Ranch», of which only one issue remains (n.1 of 1st year, 1951). The presence of the first issue of the first year (1875) of the «Giornale del museo d’istruzione e di educazione» is remarkable.

⁸ The inventory presents a large division. There is a first part ordered alphabetically based on the author’s surname, which corresponds to the oldest and most substantial nucleus of the library (1171 inventory numbers), and there is a more recent and less substantial second part (825 inventory numbers), which appears organized on the basis of the order of acquisition and which would seem to have been left out of the first reorganization of the library (this part mostly contains twentieth-century texts, but there are also texts published previously, which perhaps remained out of the first reorganization of the library).

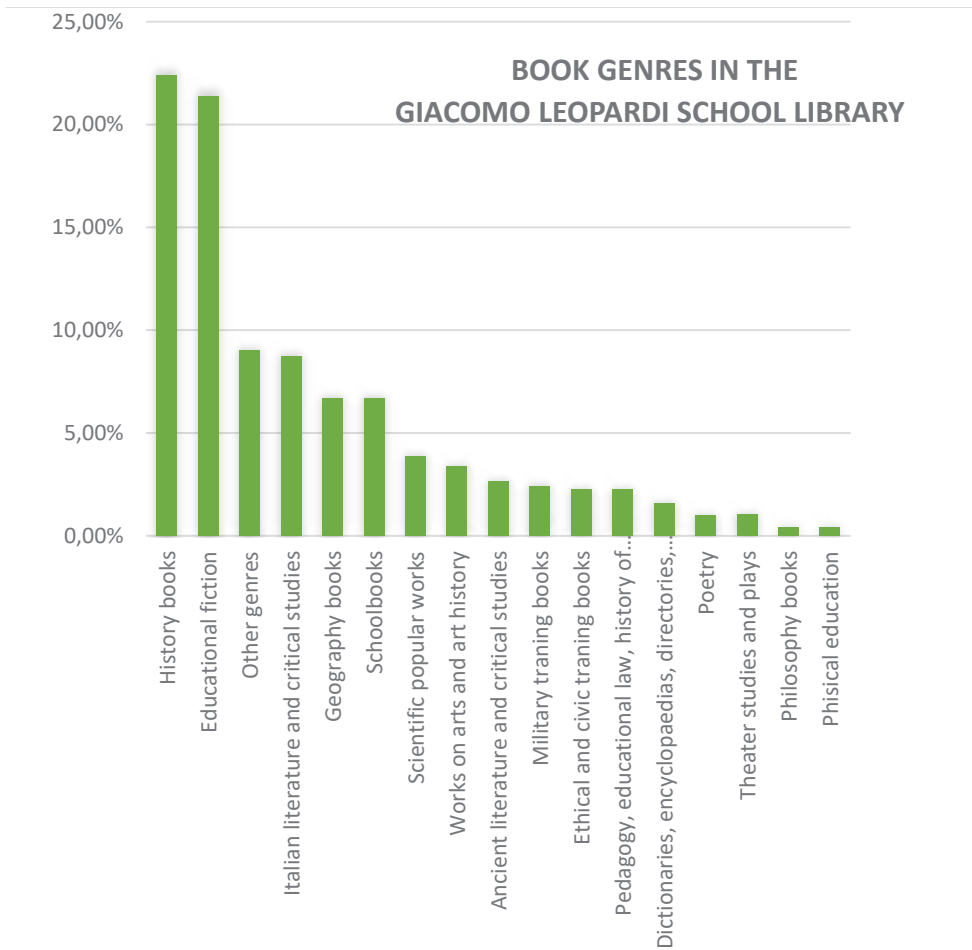


Fig. 1. Table about the book genres in the “Giacomo Leopardi” School Library

We proceeded to create a catalog of all the inventory units in the library, to further and clarify this initial picture. This work has allowed us to take hold of every single volume in the boarding school’s old repository and to appreciate its particularities, in many cases. Cataloging was followed by an analysis, which we conducted taking into account some specific elements: the title, to evaluate the literary genres represented in the library; the author, to understand the type of authors most present; the typographical data, to reconstruct the varying relevance of the publishers and the “chronological extent/connotation” of the library; finally, the extra-textual elements (ownership notes, dedications, student annotations, etc.), to understand the specific history of the specimens and intercept information on its readers and on the approach to the text.

The analysis of the titles returns the image of a library designed mainly for students (a particular aspect of all school libraries)⁹ and in the second instance as a support to teaching work (Figure 1).

The most represented works are those of a historical nature, above all texts dedicated to characters and episodes of the Risorgimento period, biographies, documentary and epistolary collections of illustrious characters such as Cavour, Vittorio Emanuele II and Garibaldi, which cover 22.39% of the works in the Macerata library. This is followed by works attributable to children's and youth literature, a category in which we can also include texts intended for the education of the people, published above all in the 19th century and to a lesser extent in the first half of the 20th century, periods in which – as is known – the boundary between literature aimed at young readers and that for the adult public appears rather fluid¹⁰. The presence of the most important works in the history of Italian literature which, together with critical studies, is also interesting and represent almost 9% of the library's content. The geographical works also stand out, covering almost 7% of the library and range from travel narratives to treatises with a more rigorous scientific approach, many of which are dedicated to Abyssinia. An almost similar percentage can also be found of textbooks, mostly intended for secondary school and dedicated to humanities subjects (history of Italian literature, anthologies, history textbooks). Works on art and art history, as well as popular scientific works, especially concerning animal biology, physics and astronomical geography, amount to around 4%. There are various sectors of the library representing between 2% and 3%: the great classics of Greek and Latin literature and related critical studies, publications for military training (which reveal the military imprint of the boarding school which remained in vogue until the first half of 20th century), educational literature for the development of character (behavioral treatises and etiquette in particular) and texts on pedagogical and historical-pedagogical topics (concerning the history of children's literature and school legislation). There are also smaller amount of several works, still significant as a reflection of a library aimed at contemplating many educational dimensions, such as theatrical works, those on religious subjects (hagiographies, biblical commentaries, etc.) and those focused on physical education. These types of texts clearly reflect the traces of an educational project aimed at enhancing, on the one hand, the religious education of the boarders, through morning and evening prayers, Sunday catechism and mass on holidays and, on the other, also attentive to physical exercise and theatrical performances included in normal teaching activity and also among the recreational initiatives offered to students in extra-curricular hours¹¹.

From the analysis of the titles, the presence of numerous collections also emerges, even quite prestigious ones. In fact, there are 115 of them, making a total of 308 works. Among the most relevant we can mention: *L'edizione nazionale degli scritti di Giuseppe*

⁹ Lombello, *Dalle «bibliotechine di classe» alla biblioteca scolastica*, cit., p. 268.

¹⁰ Cf. A. Ascenzi, R. Sani, *Storia e antologia della letteratura per l'infanzia nell'Italia dell'Ottocento*, vol. I, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2017.

¹¹ Cf. *Regolamento del Convitto provinciale di Macerata*, Macerata, Tipografia Cortesi, 1865.

Mazzini (Imola, Cooperativa tipografico-editrice Paolo Galeati, 1901-1961), *L'arte per tutti* (Bergamo, Istituto nazionale LUCE – Istituto italiano d'arti grafiche, 1930), *L'opera del genio italiano* (Roma, Libreria dello Stato, 1932-1951), *Commentari dell'impero* (Roma, Unione Editoriale Italiana, 1937-1939) and the *Collezione di capolavori stranieri tradotti per la gioventù italiana* dell'editore fiorentino Bemporad (1929-1936)¹².

The presence of major works, the result of impressive publishing initiatives, is also significant. Among those with a historical subject (the most numerous), we can name: the *Storia universale illustrata* edited by Wilhelm Oncken (Napoli-Milano, Vallardi-Società Editrice Libreria, 1831-1910), of which 47 out of 50 volumes are preserved; the *Storia universale* by Cesare Cantù (Torino, Unione Tipografica Editrice, 1884-1890), the *Storia del consolato e dell'impero* by Marie-Joseph-Louis-Adolphe Thiers (Firenze, Fontana e Le Monnier, 1845-1864) and the *Storia della monarchia piemontese* by Ercole Ricotti (Firenze, Barbera, 1861-1869), all owned in full. The *Nuovo dizionario geografico universale* (Venezia, Antonelli, 1827-1836), of which 12 out of 19 volumes are preserved, and the *Nuova geografia universale* by Élisée Reclus (Napoli-Milano, Vallardi-Società Editrice Libreria, 1884-1904), fully owned, stand out among the works with a geographical subject. Encyclopedic works, such as *Lexicon Vallardi. Enciclopedia universale illustrata* (Milano, Vallardi, 188?-1907), are also included, as well as great literary works that are an absolute must. These include: *I secoli della letteratura italiana dopo il Risorgimento* by Gianbattista Corniani (Torino, Pomba, 1854-1856) and *Opere* by Niccolò Macchiavelli (Palermo, Fratelli Pedone Lauriel, 1819), of which all volumes are preserved; *Opere* by Pietro Giordani (Milano, Borroni e Scotti, 1854-1862), of which 12 volumes out of 14 volumes are preserved; *Opere edite e postume* by Ugo Foscolo (Firenze, Le Monnier, 1850-1859), of which 7 volumes out of 11 are preserved and *Ricordi e scritti* by Aurelio Saffi (Firenze, Barbera, 1878-1905), received almost entirely (14 volumes out of 15 owned).

In terms of authors, the Convitto “G. Leopardi” library confirms the profile of a book collection primarily aimed at students. In fact, there are two most frequently found authors, each with 12 titles: one is an internationally renowned author of fairy tales, Hans Christin Andersen and the other is one of the best known exponents of popular science literature, Louis Figuier. Following them, with 11 titles, are two authorities of the Italian 19th century cultural panorama, Cesare Cantù, present in the Macerata library above all as an author of historical essays, and Edmondo De Amicis, valued in particular as the author of travel reports¹³. In third position, with 9 texts, we find the father of the Italian language, Dante Alighieri, and after him an exponent of historical writing and one of

¹² The Macerata Library owns: 89 volumes out of 97 of the *L'Edizione nazionale degli scritti di Giuseppe Mazzini*, 42 volumes of the collection *L'arte per tutti*, 19 volumes of *L'opera del genio italiano*, 17 volumes of the *Commentari dell'impero* and 10 volumes of the *Collezione di capolavori stranieri tradotti per la gioventù italiana*.

¹³ For an analysis of the travel works by De Amicis preserved in “G. Leopardi” library, see A. Ascenzi, E. Patrizi, «*Lector in fabula*». *Las obras de viaje de Edmondo De Amicis a través de los ojos de los estudiantes*, in E. Ortiz García (coord.), J.A. González de la Torre, J.M. Sáiz Gómez, L.M. Naya Garmendia, P. Dávila Balsera (edd.), *Nuevas miradas sobre el patrimonio histórico-educativo: audiencias, narrativas y objetos educativos. X Jornadas SEPHE (Santander, 22-24 de marzo de 2023)*, Polanco, Centro de Recursos, Interpretación y Estudios de la Escuela, 2023, pp. 424-448.

Italian literature from the late 19th century, namely Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi and Giovanni Pascoli. In a subsequent position, with 7 books, one of the best-known writers of US literature, Mark Twain. Following him, with 6 and 5 works respectively, we find heterogeneous groups of authors, which are a reflection of the different faces of the library, from the historical one with Massimo D'Azeglio and Ernesto Masi to the pedagogical one with Maria Montessori, moving on to the literary one with Carlo Goldoni, Giacomo Leopardi and Luigi Capuana, without forgetting children's literature and self-help literature represented by Charles Dickens and Samuel Simes respectively. There is no lack of other areas, such as Latin literature represented by Cicero, colonial literature through the works of Arnaldo Cipolla, scientific fiction by Camille Flammarion, even an author like Niccolò Tommaseo with his dictionary of aesthetics *Dizionario d'estetica* (3rd edition, Milano, Fortunato Perelli, 1860) and the *Dizionario dei sinonimi della lingua italiana* (7th edition, Milano, Vallardi, 1884). Finally, if we examine the authors present in the library with 4, 3 and 2 titles, we find confirmation of the two predominant strands, namely that of historical works and that of children's and youth literature (Figure 2).

The presence of foreign authors, 228 in total, is also interesting. A number certainly lower than the Italian authors (593), but still significant, with respect to which we can detect a majority of French-speaking authors (75) and a significant presence of German-speaking (45) and English-speaking (44) authors. In terms of works in a foreign language, however, there are only 25 and they are all in French, in line with the importance assigned by the Italian school to the French language and culture until relatively recent times.

If we move on to examine the publishers represented in the Macerata library, it is not surprising to find the prominent position occupied by Treves, who is by far the most present publisher, thanks to the versatility of its editorial offer and the absolute leading role occupied by this publisher in the context of the «renewal of Italian publishing in the second half of the 19th century», together with other Milanese publishers, such as Sonzogno and Hoepli, also present in the Macerata library, albeit in smaller percentages¹⁴.

Although with a notable gap, second place in the ranking of publishers of the volumes found in the library of "G. Leopardi" boarding school is occupied by the Istituto d'arti grafiche of Bergamo, known in the field of publications of art books and art history. Long-standing publishers active in the field of education and school publishing such as Zanichelli, Vallardi, Barbera, Le Monnier, Bemporad and Paravia also have a very respectable position¹⁵, as well as early 20th century publishers very active in the school sector, such as S.E.I (Società Editrice Internazionale) of Turin, and in the field of children's and young people's literature such as Barion Edizioni (later Casa per Edizioni Popolari) of Sesto S. Giovanni (Milan)¹⁶. In any case, the lion's share goes to publishers in the Milan

¹⁴ G. Chiosso (edd.), *Teseo. Tipografi e editori scolastico-educativi dell'Ottocento*, Milano, Editrice Bibliografica, 2003, p. 597 (quotation) and pp. 597-600 (for the sheet on Treves by R. Sani).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-47 (sheet on Barbera by G. Di Bello), 65-68 (sheet on Bemporad by F. Bacchetti), 318-323 (sheet on Le Monnier by C. Betti), 614-620 (sheet on Vallardi by F. Caringi and M.C. Morandini), 641-647 (sheet on Zanichelli by M. D'Ascenzo) and 423-430 (sheet on Paravia by G. Chiosso).

¹⁶ G. Chiosso (ed.), *Teseo '900. Editori scolastico-educativi del primo Novecento*, Milano, Editrice Bibliografica, 2008, pp. 53-55 (sheet on Barion by L. Lombardi) and 493-500 (sheet on S.E.I by F. Targhetta).

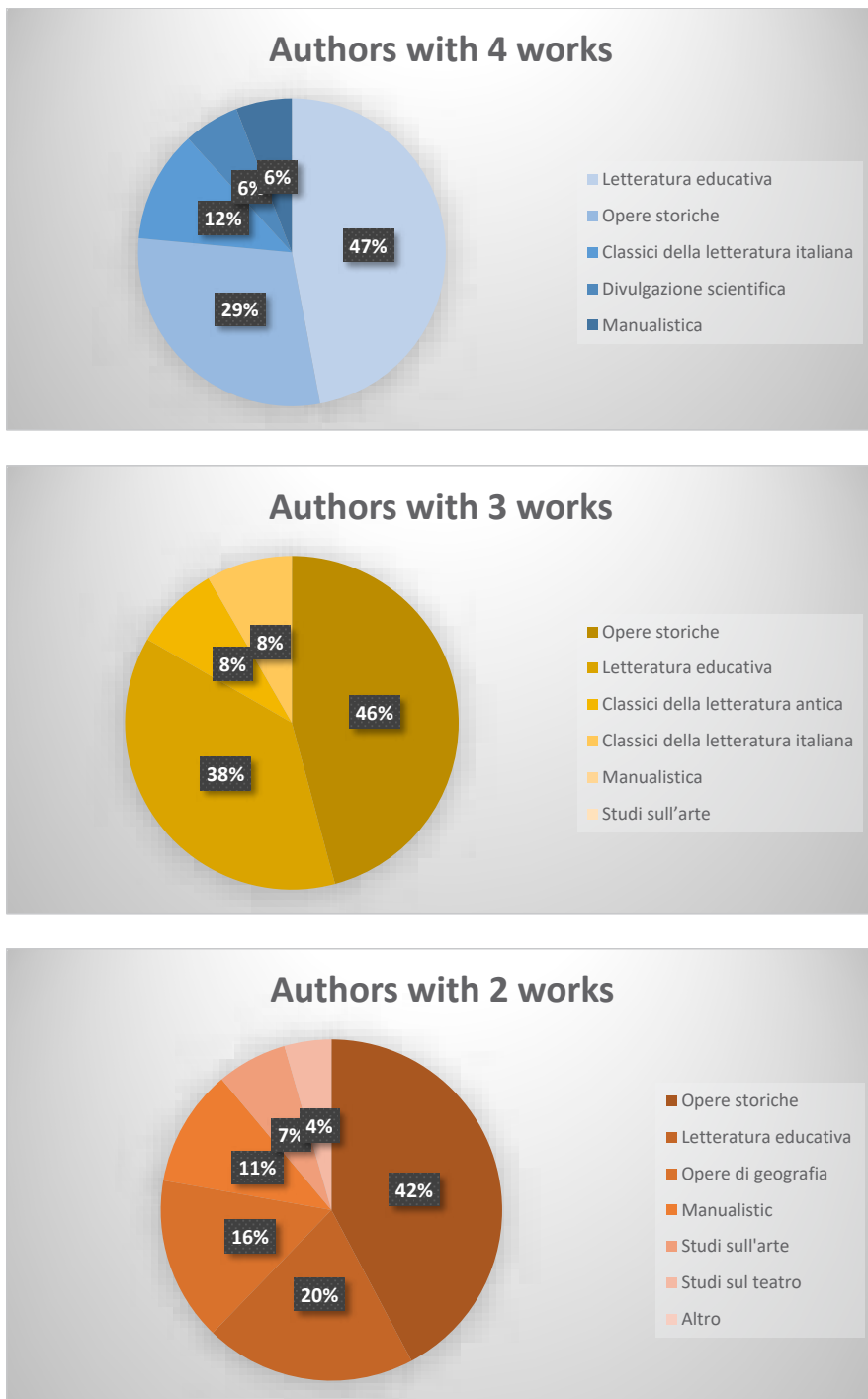


Fig. 2. Tables about the authors with 2, 3 and 4 works housed in the "Giacomo Leopardi" School Library

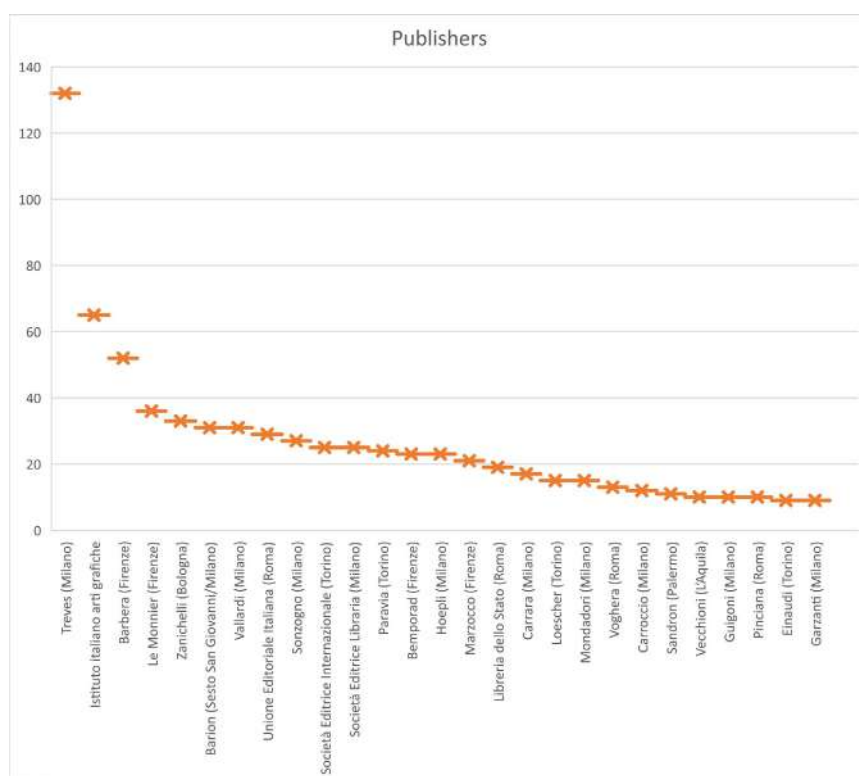


Fig. 3. Table about the publishers of the books housed in the “Giacomo Leopardi” School Library

area, followed by editors in Florence and Turin, which are in fact the cities with the greatest editorial density on the Italian scene (Figure 3).

In terms of the years in which books were published, it should be noted that the oldest book dates back to the 17th century and is *Il Malmantile racquistato* by Perlone Zipoli (pseudonym of Lorenzo Lippi, Puccio Lamoni di Paolo Minucci), published in Venice at the printing house of Stefano Orlandini in 1748, while the most recent work dates back to the end of the 20th century and corresponds to the work in 5 volumes *Atti della Conferenza Nazionale sulla Scuola*, published in Palermo by Salvatore Sciascia in 1991-1992. There are only 4 works published in the 18th century found in the library of Macerata boarding school and the most conspicuous part of all the texts is printed in the 19th century and, although to a slightly lesser extent, in the early 20th century (Figure 4). The presence of a certain number of works, over one hundred, which are devoid of typographical data, as they lack paper covers and title pages is worth noting. These are works that we could define as “damaged by use”, mostly texts attributable to the sector of literature for children and young people, fiction books in general, evidently subject to intense reading by boarders.

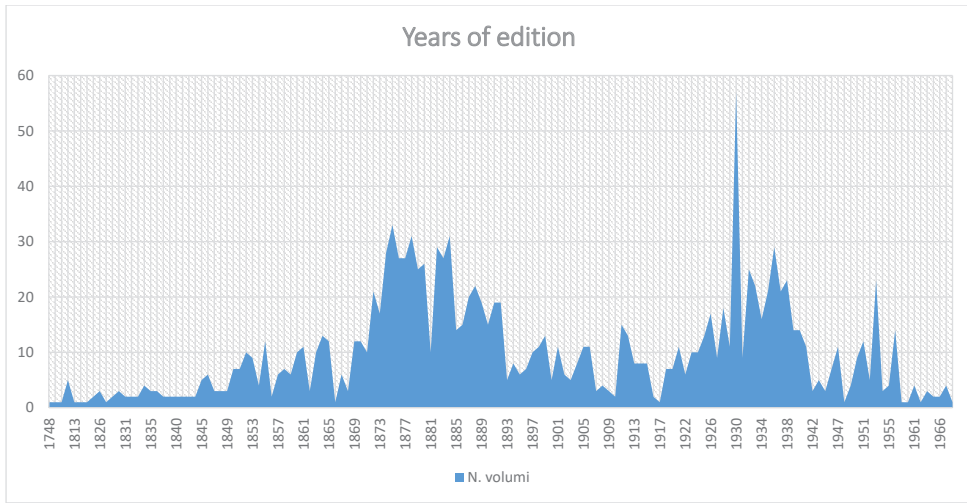


Fig. 4. Table about the years of edition of the books housed in the “Giacomo Leopardi” School Library

By examining the specimens in the “G. Leopardi” library we can also deduce data relating to book donations. The most important is the one left by the rector, probably of the boarding school, Francesco de H[...], who made a donation to the Macerata library on 27 December 1931 consisting of 40 volumes of general culture, many of which are untouched, testifying to the irrelevance of these texts to the library’s “practical purposes”¹⁷. There are another two important donations, more closely related to the mission of the library: the one by the literature professor Cipriano Ferreri, consisting of 20 volumes, mostly manuals, and all pertaining to the sphere of Italian literature, and one by the Latin professor Augusto Corradi, consisting of 6 volumes, mostly Latin classics commented by Corradi himself.

We have found two types of dedications. One consists of dedications left by parents of boarding pupils. Among these, the one that accompanies the two-volume work *Lettere di combattenti italiani nella grande guerra* by Antonio Monti (Roma, Edizioni Roma, 1935) is written by a father of two boarders as a tribute to the boarding school and in permanent memory of the excellent education provided for his sons:

Giuseppe de Gennaro

to Leopardi National boarding school in Macerata, where my sons Gian Francesco and Alessandro, boarders, during eight years of stay, they completed splendidly their classical studies, and learned what a very high duty love of Country is. – Capocalenda (Campobasso), 29 Oct. 1935. XIV.

¹⁷ Archival research has not yet produced a result on this figure. However, we hope to find other research paths that allow us to obtain information on this rector.

The dedication that appears on the guard page of the children's literature classic *Peter Pan* by James Matthew Barrie (Milano, Ed. Carroccio, 1951), is more intimate and direct in the simplicity of its content which reads: «To Paul so that he may be instructed in reading, 12/7/1953. The father».

Instead, the other type of dedications found in the books of the Macerata school library has the boys as protagonists. They are dedications of boarders to other boarders, left in memory of a very intense school and life experience. These are mostly a few words, short sentences, but nonetheless worthy of a certain interest as they often allow us to grasp aspects of the relational life of the students inside and outside the boarding school. Thus, in the book *I ragazzi della via Pal* by Molnár Ferencz (Firenze, Marzocco, 1953) we read: «To dear Emilio, this little reminder from his friends Ninni and Luca Chinni. Porto S. Giorgio 15.8.1954». While in the half-title of the volume of short stories *Tre stelle e un lume spento* by Amelia Tondini Melgari (alias Fiammetta Lombarda) is written: «To my dear friend Giuliana so that you always remember your classmate Pollig and learn to live according to the laws of God. With tenderness Ludovin Paola».

There are also several volumes, mostly reading texts, which reveal that they originally belonged to a class library, a clear testimony of the coexistence of two types of library, those intended for use in the classroom and the one of a general, more cultural nature, into the classroom libraries later converged. We also have volumes such as: *L'allegro terzetto* by Eleonora Torrossi (Firenze, Marzocco, 1948) which on the handcrafted dust jacket bears the indication «book from class library of middle school section A», or the book *Niko. Il piccolo Leone. Racconto per ragazzi* by Eugenio Fornasari (Roma, Società Apostolato, 1946), which on the front facing page bears the indication «I B», or the work *I Pigmei* by Nathaniel Hawthorne (Firenze, Marzocco, 1953), on whose dust jacket the writing «Class library book, I middle school, section A, National boarding school» is found.

Finally, we should also pay specific attention to all those extra-textual elements, which, for a large group of works – just over 400, above all reading books and in some cases also school manuals – allow us to appreciate notes made by different types of readers. In several cases we have very succinct annotations (name and surname, sometimes even a chronological indication), but in some cases we also have comments that often take the form of real reviews that leave room for cross-referenced comments between various generations of readers, from which personal opinions on the content of the work emerge. We are facing an unexplored field of investigation, as for the first time we have the possibility of applying the paradigm of juvenile writings¹⁸, explored with respect to school notebooks, in the volumes of a school library. In this way, we can place ourselves on the reader's side and penetrate the individual memory “deposited” by them in a place of collective school memory, deduce elements that allow us to penetrate that completely unique and personal space of interaction that each reader interweaves with the work, acquire aspects of the reader's psychology and his approach to the text¹⁹. These elements

¹⁸ On this topic, please refer to the essays included in the work that opened this line of research in Italy: E. Becchi, Q. Antonelli (edd.), *Scritture bambine: vesti infantili tra passato e presente*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1995.

¹⁹ Cf. U. Eco, *Lector in fabula. La cooperazione interpretativa nei testi narrativi*, Milano, Bompiani, 1979.



Fig. 5. Ink stains on a page of *La vita militare* by E. De Amicis (n.d.)

have an undoubted charm, but also a big heuristic potential, which allow another dimension of the school library – intended as a place of memory and as a cultural asset of the school – to be enhanced. This investigative perspective has enormous research potential and, in order to offer a small sample of the possibilities of this perspective, we will examine a text preserved in the “G. Leopardi” library, which appears largely annotated: *La vita militare* by Edmondo De Amicis.

2. «Military life is beautiful»: the extra-textual notes in a work by De Amicis

As we have anticipated, De Amicis is one of the most represented authors in the “G. Leopardi” library. One of the works by De Amicis preserved in the Macerata library is his first great publishing success: *La vita militare*²⁰. This «good book of popular educational

²⁰ On this best seller by De Amicis, see S. Jacomuzzi, «Cittadini forti ... soldati intrepidi». *Lepica del quotidiano e la pedagogia dei buoni sentimenti nella Vita militare*, in F. Contorbia (ed.), *Edmondo De Amicis. Atti del convegno nazionale di studi (Imperia, 30 aprile - 3 maggio 1981)*, Milano, Garzanti, 1985, pp. 41-54; M.

literature», as it is known, was written in the first decade post-unification and is the result of De Amicis' military journalistic activity, nourished by suggestions deriving from the close links with the Florentine salon held by Emilia Peruzzi Toscanelli²¹. The specimen of the work held in the boarding school library is very well used²². It has been trimmed and bound, therefore some readers' notes are not legible and there are no front guard page, preface, index, paper title page and also a significant part of the text (from p. 163 to p. 194, which corresponds to the beginning of the *Carmela* tale). In general, the pages are worn and, in many cases, damaged with ink stains (Figure 5). We do not have precise indications on the year of the edition, but it is certainly a copy of the work published before 1904²³, a date written in the oldest legible notation in the text, and after 1880, the year of the 3rd edition of work, in which De Amicis chose to remove some tales present in the first two editions.

The specimen examined by us is literally peppered with annotations of different types, which offer concrete evidence of the strong impact generated on the reading public by De Amicis' writing, already characterized in this first literary experience by a strong, enveloping and at the same time reassuring pedagogical *vis*, capable of establishing a direct line of communication with the text's users²⁴. There are several extra-textual notes that appear in the form of a simple signature, perhaps accompanied by a date, as in the case of the one left by Massimo Lanari, who three times says he read the book on 7 October 1929 («Lanari Massimo read 7-10-29»)²⁵. The annotations in the form of short comments, often anonymous, are equally well represented: «Nice, beautiful (book)»²⁶, «Military life is beautiful»²⁷, sometimes also with multiple signatures «Beautiful. Santuzzi Angelo, Barnabi Aldo, Properzi Benedetto, Mari Ninni, Fermo Permontagni»²⁸. For the most part they are short judgments with a positive sign, but among these – as was inevitable – there is also the negative annotation of those who say: «very ugly on my opinion»²⁹.

The presence of «cultured» notes, expressed in Latin («Hoc liber est multus pulcher»)³⁰, French («Ce livre est beau», «Ce livre est tres bel, Isaia Biribe, Macerata 5-3-1904»)³¹ or containing Latinisms («Letto da Barbanè Alio. Pulcherrimo»)³² is striking. Among these, an anonymous note in French stands out, as it reveals a genuine attachment to the

Dota, *La vita militare di Edmondo De Amicis: storia linguistico-editoriale di un best-seller postunitario*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2017, in particular chapter 2.

²¹ Cf. Dota, *La vita militare di Edmondo De Amicis*, cit., p. 243.

²² E. De Amicis, *La vita militare*, s.l., s.n., n.d.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁴ Jacomuzzi, «*Cittadini forti ... soldati intrepidi*», cit., pp. 13-14.

²⁵ De Amicis, *La vita militare*, cit., p. 60.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, inside side of the cover.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, inside side of the cover.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 19.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

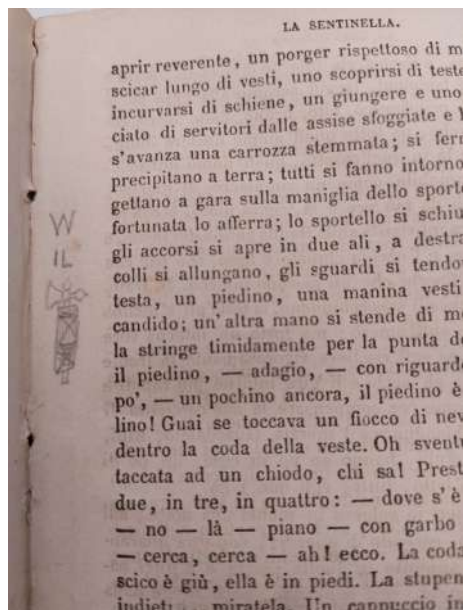


Fig. 6. Children writings praising fascism in *La vita militare* by E. De Amicis (n.d.)

mother country and to the family: «Je ne suis encore qu'un enfant mais j'aime de tout mon cher ma patrie»³³.

Playful annotations were also to be expected, which go well with the young age of the readers and from which the “comradely” atmosphere that accompanies the letter of the text shines through. They range from the classic «My name is me, your name is you, who is more of a donkey, me or you?», very frequent in the annotated copies preserved in the Macerata library, to extemporaneous comments, which translate the thoughts of a moment into words, without any filter: «Read by Manuele Mercurio. Maybe it's nice but who knows, when I read it I'll tell you the result. You see what I wrote is nonsense»³⁴. Other annotations interact directly with the text in order to elicit a smile. So, following the header of the story *Una sassata* (*Hit with a stone*) a reader adds: «in head, well done»³⁵.

In one case a sort of question and answer is sketched out between two readers, whereby where one student writes «Beautiful», another, with a touch of irreverence typical of young boys, adds «a little bit» in front of «Beautiful» and specifies «in my opinion this story (referring to the *Carmela* tale) is very bad, especially since De Amicis's novels are copied all from my grandfather. Pignà»³⁶. The frequent treasure hunt for a name was inevitable, («This book is beautiful, do you want to know my name? Go to page 9»), which in the case of this book seems interminable, there are so many cross-references between the pages, and in the end there is no solution, i.e. we do not get to discover the name of this bold rascal³⁷.

We also have readers who intervene in the text trying to integrate it, as happens in the inaugural tale *Una marcia d'estate* (*A summer march*), where at the point where De Amicis states «Good! And we went, and we went...», a reader adds «there towards the distant...» and further on in the passage where the author notes «Oh you see how that tail goes! Body of...», the same hand cannot avoid adding «body of a thousand whales»³⁸. But there are also interventions which provide indications for the readers who will follow. So, in the first page of the volume we read «*Carmela* is the most beautiful story», a judgment

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 19, 89, 29, 16, 14.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

that is confirmed later on by another reader with a personal affirmation of disarming spontaneity: «The most beautiful story in this book is *Carmela*. Read it and you will be happy!!!???? Unfortunately, it's true! I thought it was bad and instead I was amazed»³⁹. We can imagine that the surprise of this reader to discover the beauty of the tale lies in the fact that, as can already be inferred in some way from the title, it has nothing but a tenuous link to the military life that the work promises to sketch⁴⁰.

Other extra-textual interventions are symptomatic of the historical period in which they were written. Here in the heart of the text, we find a part of the anthem of the Italian popular party founded by Don Sturzo: «White flag, beautiful flag / you are the star, you are the star / white flag, star flag / you are the star of society / shield crusader will protect us»; which is followed by the unsettling comment of a reader, probably from the Fascist era, who recites: «verses by Don Sturzo that imbecile»⁴¹. The squadrist attitude typical of the Fascist period emerges preponderantly in other notes too, which follow the regime's slogan rhetoric, emphasized by the use of capital letters: «Hurray the DUCE, Hurray THE KING, Hurray ITALY», «The nerves in place, the KING cannot be touched», «Nerves in order, the Duce cannot be touched»⁴². In this context, the symbol par excellence of Fascism, the fasces, could not be left out, which appears three times in the volume, in one of which it is preceded by an abbreviated form of Hurray (W) (Figure 6)⁴³. But the comments resulting from the Fascism era do not stop there and in one specific case, the full force of an ideology descended from on high in a non-critical way, permeating minds and hearts, appears. Thus, in the tale *Una sassata* (*Hit with a stone*), where De Amicis describes the moment in which a sentry is hit by a stone on the forehead by a scoundrel who has sprung up from a “shapeless crowd” of cocky villagers intent on insulting and provoking the soldiers of the guardhouse, a reader angered by the story comments solemnly:

It used to be like this, but now... now that we are in 1928 and the March on Rome has taken place, led by Mussolini... now everything has changed and even the soldier, and perhaps most of all, is considered according to his merit!⁴⁴

The annotations that refer to the boarders and the reading practices adopted in the boarding school are particularly interesting. In the first pages of the work, a reader reveals that: «This book was seized and not returned to Leto Pietro»⁴⁵, while further on another states: «This book is very beautiful and my brother has it. Montesi Salvatore»⁴⁶. These notes, on the one hand, confirm that the books passed from hand to hand between boarders, who at times came from the same family, and on the other, reveal to us that in particular situations, these same books were confiscated by the educators, due to, we

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 46.

⁴⁰ Cf. Jacomuzzi, «*Cittadini forti ... soldati intrepidi*», cit., p. 49.

⁴¹ De Amicis, *La vita militare*, cit., p. 283.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 28, 60.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 231, 234, 239.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

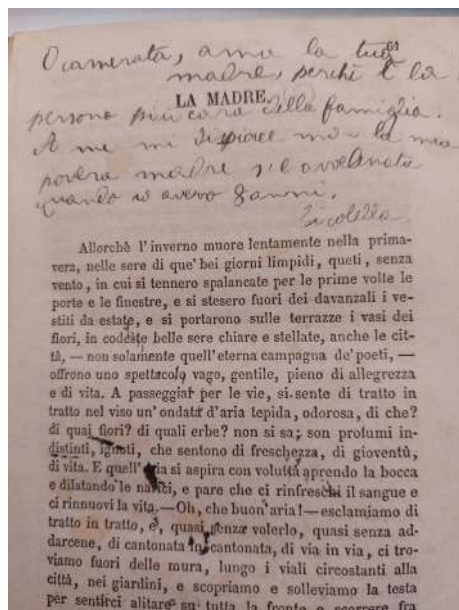


Fig. 7. Children writings in *La vita militare* by E. De Amicis (n.d.)

note, which he shares with his companions and future users of the book, delivering a profound message of care and attention towards dearest loved ones: «Oh comrade, love your mother, because she is the dearest person in the family. I'm sorry but my poor mother poisoned herself when I was 8 years old. Cicolella»⁴⁸ (Figure 7).

This represents one of the many surprises that can be discovered by leafing through the pages of annotated texts conserved in the “G. Leopardi” library in Macerata, from which the echoes of the voices that resounded through the classrooms, corridors and rooms of a long-lived educational institution often emerge, where generations and generations of students were welcomed, all animated by the hope of building a better future through education.

Conclusions

The story of the “Giacomo Leopardi” boarding school library in Macerata reconstructed here constitutes an exemplary case study, which allows us to highlight the multiple possibilities of analysis offered by a “polysemic” and versatile object of study such as school libraries. We started from the typological study, regarding literary genres,

imagine, valid reasons. Another student, alongside a frequent positive judgment on the text, name and the date on which he finished reading it, also tells us one more detail: «This book is very beautiful and this is assured by Bicolella Ferdinando born in Foggia on 2 November 1914, who finished reading the *Military Life* on 23-7-1927 in Fontespina»⁴⁷. The locality of Fontespina, in Civitanova Marche, appears, which is where the boarders used to spend the summer period in a villa lent to the boarding school. We often find this fact in the extra-textual notes left on specimens in the Macerata library, as proof of the fact that the warmer months included reading among the recreational activities.

However, the personal annotation that more than any other causes surprise due to the intensity of the emotions it arouses is the one that appears at the start of the tale *The Mother*. This word evidently evokes a painful memory in the reader signing the

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 442.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

then moving on to the authorial one, focusing on the most frequently found authors, reaching the analysis of typographical data, developing reflections regarding the years of edition and the publishers. We also examined donations and the indications related to class libraries inside the boarding school library. Finally, we concluded our analysis path with ideas and suggestions deriving from a completely new field of study in the historical-educational field, the extra-textual elements. We thus intended to show some of the various facets that characterize a school library, the ones that in our opinion are most significant and capable of restoring the image of a precious and unique place of memory, as it tells many stories, which we can read as part of a cultural heritage waiting to be revealed, understood and shared.

In this direction, historical analysis is assigned the essential task of stimulating processes of re-discovery and re-appropriation of that heritage, capable of promoting the perception of that school library as a cultural asset belonging to a community, not just a school one, but also civil, as it brings together different generations and helps to determine the identity of a place. And then, the school library becomes that “deposit” of school memories, where the personal experiences of those who attended that school are intertwined with the processes of transmission of cultural and educational canons, which the catalogs of that library allow to be reconstructed, thus revealing the complex web of individual and collective variables that a school institution welcomes and that a school library bring to light. As we have tried to demonstrate here, through the study of the books of a specific school library, one can make the leap that leads from the great scenarios of a national nature on school history to local realities. It is that passage that allows us to explore cross-sections of micro-history, from which it is possible to understand the ways in which educational practices have been translated into specific geographical and socio-cultural contexts, and more. As both a source and heritage, these “school books” in some cases allow the recovery of individual, collective and even public memories⁴⁹. In fact, we find ourselves faced with objects that shed glimpses of light on slices of real scholastic and non-scholastic life, concerning individuals, but which – through historical research – can become part of the heritage of a community. This heritage has a tangible side, made up of concrete physical objects, but also contains intangible elements of unparalleled value, textures of memories, sensations, experiences and personal opinions, which are waiting to be rediscovered and enhanced⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ In this case, we want to refer to the concept of school memory, which – as noted by Antonio Viñao and Juri Meda – can be declined in an individual form, which pertains to one’s scholastic experience and how it is reconstructed personally by the individual, and in an individual, collective and/or public form that implies a shared school background. We intend to refer to the latter meaning. Cf. J. Meda, A. Viñao, *School Memory. Historiographical Balance and Heuristic Perspectives*, in Yanes-Cabrera, Meda, Viñao (edd.), *School memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, cit., pp. 1-9.

⁵⁰ Cf. C. Yanes Cabrera, J.M. Somoza Rodríguez, *Museos escolares: el patrimonio material e inmaterial de la educación como conciencia crítica*, in A. Mayordomo Pérez, M. del Carmen Agulló Díaz, G. Garcia Frasquet (edd.), *El patrimoni histórico-educatiu valencià. V Jornades d’Història de l’Educació Valenciana (Gandia, 30 i 31 d’octubre de 2009)*, València, Universitat de València – Departamento de Educación Comparada e Historia de la Educación – Centre de Estudis i Investigacions Comarcals Alfons el Vell, 2011, pp. 97-111.

The Story of a School Too Good to Be a School: the *Collegio di Savoia* in Turin

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1. *The history of school building between architecture and pedagogy*

The history of school building has so far garnered little interest from educational historians. When they dealt with the history of a school building, they did so mainly to investigate the pedagogical and didactical theories that inspired its conception¹. Architecture historians, on the other hand, are rather focused on the architectural aspects, without caring too much to connect them with their educational purposes². Finally, the theme of the relationship between school building and urban planning, i.e. the policies aimed at choosing where a school can be built in a city, are quite neglected in the historical context. Indeed, studying the history of a school building means examining many variables belonging to very different fields of knowledge, including, for example, the ideological and political aims of the public or private body who decided to build the school, its pedagogical models, the laws that regulated the school building at the time, the teaching materials and the furnishings in use, the social and cultural needs of the population, the urban context in which the new building was to be located, etc. Research on the origin and evolution of school buildings therefore takes place at the crossroads between history, pedagogy and architecture and requires the methods and knowledge that come from all these disciplines.

The essay examines the history of the College of nobles of Turin, focusing on the architectural and urban aspects, and using it as a case study to reconstruct the beginnings of the scholastic policy of the Duchy of Savoy in the 17th century. It will therefore focus, on the one hand, on the educational purposes of this enterprise, and on the other hand on the material and representative functions that the grandiose school building has performed over the centuries.

¹ See as an example A. Viñao Frago, A.B. Escolano (edd.), *Curriculo, espaço e subjetividade. A arquitetura como programa*, Rio de Janeiro, DP&A, 1998; A.M. Chatelet, *L'architecture des écoles au XX siècle*, «Histoire de l'éducation», n. 102, 2004, pp. 7-37; P. Fossati, *L'edilizia per le scuole del popolo nell'Ottocento genovese*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. 9, n. 2, 2014, pp. 445-466.

² See as an example F. Leschiutta, *Linee evolutive dell'edilizia scolastica. Vicende, norme, tipi. 1949- 1974*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1975; M. Daprà, *La fondazione dell'edilizia scolastica in Italia*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1987; S. Borri (ed.), *Spazi educativi e architetture scolastiche: linee e indirizzi internazionali*, Firenze, INDIRE, 2016.

2. *The beginnings of Turin as capital of the Duchy of Savoy and the first Jesuit schools*

Turin retained the structure of the Roman encampment until it became capital of the Duchy of Savoy following the Peace of Cateau-Cambresis (1559). Then began the work of building the capital, with the consequent effort to represent the grandeur and the royal power. Emanuele Filiberto triumphantly entered the city in 1563 and immediately took care of fortifying the new seat of the monarchy by having the military citadel, one of the largest in Europe, built just outside the walls, without actually affecting the size of the city.

During the 17th century, Turin underwent two successive expansions: the first, begun in 1620, concerned the southern part of the city, with the creation of several blocks to the left and right of the Via Nuova (today Via Roma) designed by Ascanio Vittozzi in 1615 to connect the new Piazza Reale (today Piazza San Carlo) with Piazza Castello and the ducal palaces. The blocks of this extension were much larger than those of the Roman city, probably to give the opportunity to erect sumptuous palaces with courtyards, stables and gardens to the noble families. At the same time, in order to contain the ambitions and excesses of the nobles, the government imposed a uniform and symmetrical shape of the façades of the new buildings, characterized by the regularity of the blocks and the extremely ordered layout of the streets.

The second expansion, undertaken in 1673, started from the eastern part of the city and led it to expand towards the river, thanks to the opening of Via di Po, Piazza Carlina, the rear part of Piazza Castello and several blocks. In particular, piazza Carlina ended up joining the two expansions and assuming a prominent position in the city structure. The command area was made up of the buildings that, starting from the Royal Palace, ended with the *Palazzo della Zecca* (Palace of the Mint). It took on concrete and symbolic importance, since it hosted the representative and effective seats of Savoy power: the Royal Palace, the castle, the state secretariats, the archives, the Royal Academy, the theatre, the Mint, as well as the cathedral and the Church of San Lorenzo.

Since the opening of Contrada Nuova in 1615, «una nuova concezione compositiva, tendente a subordinare gli edifici singoli alla scala urbana dell'intervento» took hold³. When the great families of the Savoy elites, as well as the religious congregations, moved to the city, they were forced to adapt to the scenarios pre-established by the ruling dynasty and to build their palaces, churches, convents and shops according to government rules to make the facades uniform.

The Jesuits opened their first school in Turin immediately after the city's election as capital, in 1567, at the invitation of some aristocratic families, who had left a rich legacy of money for this purpose. The newly founded *Compagnia di San Paolo*, the one from which the bank of the same name would later be created, supported the initiative both financially and above all through its influential members. The foundation took place in a decidedly modest version, in the houses next to the church of San Benedetto, near the ancient Porta di Susa.

³ V. Comoli Mandracci, *Torino*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1983, p. 27.

A few years later the schools moved to the Albosco house, who had purposely bequeathed it to the Jesuits «fra il monastero di Santa Croce e la Cittadella»⁴. In 1574, on the death of another founder, Aleramo Beccuti, the college was moved to his house, in the street currently called via Monte di Pietà. The premises were larger and the new location was in close proximity to the university. In 1578, the Jesuits were given the permission to erect their own church too, attached to the boarding school but with an entrance from one of the main streets of the city in Via Dora Grossa (today's Via Garibaldi), named after the Holy Martyrs.

Meanwhile, the boarding school for external students was added to that for internal students, so that the number of pupils increased considerably: in 1578, the “Litterae Annuae” of the college report that «il Collegio dei convittori è cresciuto a 120 scolari e se fosse più capace in breve si raddoppierebbe»⁵. The report then added that «le nostre scuole non sono mai state più illustri per numero di scolari e per nobiltà di convittori. Fra questi ben 48 sono fregiati dei titoli o di marchese, o di conte, o di abate»⁶.

3. *The long planning phase of the Collegio and the disputes between the Jesuits of Rome and Turin*

The proposal to build a grandiose College of nobles in the center of the city of Turin dates back to 1679, during the regency of the duchess Maria Giovanna Battista di Savoia Nemours, in a phase of relaxation of the ducal authoritarian system, which until then had directed every aspect of state life, including town planning and construction. The project of the Jesuit school is contemporary with the construction of Palazzo Carignano, which rises almost opposite the college. This is another building not typically aligned to the Turin style, designed by the great architect Guarino Guarini for Emanuele Filiberto di Savoia-Carignano with a highly innovative intention in the urban context of the city.

The architectural historian Giuseppe Dardanello pointed out that

nel progetto per il collegio dei nobili il “nuovo” prese forma per contrasto con il disegno della città “regolare”. Per distinguersi dall’immagine urbana di uniforme continuità, Carlo Maurizio Vota puntò tutto sul salto di scala: nella massa dell’edificio, nella ricchezza dell’ornamentazione, e nell’accentuato rilievo del modellato delle facciate. All’architettura si richiedeva di esprimere un atteggiamento aggressivo, di preminenza, nei confronti dello spazio circostante. La mole del collegio sarebbe emersa imponente dalla maglia ortogonale, ma la sua esterna apparenza, la sua facciata di smisurata lunghezza,

⁴ E. Tesauro, *Istoria della Venerabile Compagnia della fede Cattolica sotto l’invocazione di S. Paolo*, Torino, Zappata, 1701, p. 41.

⁵ A. Monti, *La Compagnia di Gesù nel territorio della provincia torinese. Memorie storiche compilate in occasione del primo centenario della restaurazione di essa Compagnia*, Chieri, Gherardi, 1914-1920, vol. I: *Fondazioni antiche*, p. 177.

⁶ *Ibid.*

si sarebbe adeguata alla partitura rettilinea del tessuto urbano, rispettandone i rigorosi allineamenti prospettici⁷.

As a royal building, the new college was to be distinguished from the other buildings, which had to comply with the rigid Savoy building regulations. Moreover, in his intentions, the college was to be connected, by means of tunnels and overhead bridges between the buildings, to Palazzo Madama «come un corpo Maestoso et Augusto il quale stendendo un braccio per lungo tratto, all'Academia cavalleresca, e l'altro al Colleggio de Nobili, abbraccia felicemente le parti più belle della città»⁸.

The Jesuits were *de facto* invested by the regency with the monopoly of the capital's educational institutions, from the lower schools to some university faculties, as demonstrated by the fact that they were rewarded with the donation of an emblematic site in the centre of the city, aimed at sealing a clear alliance between the regency and the Society of Jesus. By obtaining to build their headquarters in the blocks between Piazza Castello and Piazza Reale, the disciples of Saint Ignatius were in fact competing with those of the Theatines and the Filippini, until then the only ones located in the neuralgic areas of the residences of the Savoy court and nobility. Moreover, while waiting for the work on the new building to be completed, the duchess allowed the Jesuits to teach in the previous residence of the French ambassadors, in the adjacent Piazza Reale. Although the project is commonly attributed to Guarino Guarini, it was in fact the work of the Jesuit Carlo Maurizio Vota, who certainly felt quite strongly the influence of the great court architect.

Vota's idea was to transfer all the Order's educational activities to the new building, housing both secondary and university teaching, as well as external students and professors, in order to «dar principio all'Educazione D'alquanti Nobili che servissero di lievito alla Massa»⁹.

The boarding school inaugurated its teaching activities in the provisional premises granted by the Regent at the end of 1679, announcing the opening with a printed *Informazione per chi vuole essere ammesso nel Reale Collegio di Savoia della Compagnia di Gesù*:

Stando sommamente a cuore di Madama reale i vantaggi della nobiltà, che è l'ornamento e il sostegno maggiore gli Stati, e non volendo tralasciare alcuno dei mezzi più valevoli a segnalare la sua Reggenza, ha ordinato in questa metropoli di Torino la fondazione di un regio collegio, detto di Savoia, sotto la cura dei Padri della Compagnia di Gesù, [...] ove saranno i nobili educati ed ammaestrati nelle lettere e nei buoni costumi. [...] D'ordine della medesima Reale Altezza si pubblica il presente invito,

⁷ G. Dardanello, *Il Collegio dei Nobili e la piazza del principe di Carignano (1675-1684)*, in G. Romano (ed.), *Torino 1675-1699. Strategie e conflitti del Barocco*, Torino, CRT, 1993, pp. 175-252, in particular pp. 178-179.

⁸ Archivio di Stato di Torino, Sezione Corte (AST, Corte), *Conventi soppressi, Gesuiti di Torino*, mazzo 450, 17 novembre 1678, padre Vota, *Progetto prontamente praticabile del Colleggio de Nobili Riferito per ordine di M.R.le*, (Vota, *Progetto prontamente praticabile*), c. 4r.

⁹ AST, Corte, Vota, *Progetto prontamente praticabile*, c. 1v.

non solamente ai cavalieri di questi Stati, ma ancora ai forestieri di qualunque nazione, che saranno indifferentemente accolti e protetti¹⁰.

The *Informazione* specified that the students would not receive lessons in riding and weapons, that they could not be taught by religious people, and that

distraggono soverchiamente dallo studio [...] riserbando ad apprendere con maggior profitto e vantaggio le accennate arti subito usciti dal collegio nella famosa Accademia ossia Cavallerizza Reale, che gloriosamente fiorisce in questa città, cogli auspici di Madama Reale, sotto eccellenti direttori e maestri in ogni genere, col concorso dei più qualificati signori forestieri¹¹.

In the new boarding school the curriculum provided by the *Ratio Studiorum* was activated, with the possibility for «i figliuoli più piccoli (i.e. under 9 years, Ed.) e non capaci delle scuole dei Padri» to be «ammaestrati nel medesimo collegio da un sacerdote secolare, in scuola separata dal comune degli altri, con maggior loro profitto, richiedendosi un'assistenza tutta intiera per essi soli»¹².

In the second half of the 17th century, the real and symbolic value of education was clear to everyone: a *Collegio dei nobili* would have attracted students and attention not only from Piedmont, but from all over Italy and Europe. The college was supposed to help bring glory to the royal family right from its name, *Reale Collegio di Savoia*. In the text that accompanied his drawings, Father Vota insisted precisely on the impact that the opening of a college like the one he was planning would have on the image of the Savoy:

Frà le magnanime imprese vevoli a segnalare le glorie della Reggenza, non meno che a eternarle nella Posterità delle Nazioni suddite e straniere, meritamente applicossi l'animo eccelso di M.R. sino dalli primi periodi del Governo, all'erezione d'un Reale Colleggio, da aprirsi alla gioventù Nobile Vassalla e forestiera¹³.

The example to which Father Vota explicitly referred to was that of the *Collegio dei nobili* of Parma which, thanks to the grandeur of the structures and the prestige of the teachers, had quickly entered the list of educational institutions attended by the scions of the noble families all over Europe¹⁴. Even before the building, the importance of the Jesuit boarding school was immediately suggested by the «unico» and «meraviglioso»¹⁵ site where it was to be built. The *Collegio* would, in fact, be erected between the «città vecchia, Nuova e Novissima»¹⁶ and very close to the nerve centre of the city, where the royal family

¹⁰ AST, Corte, Materie economiche, Istruzione pubblica, Collegio delle Province e Collegio dei Nobili, marzo 4 prima addizione, *Informazione per chi vuole essere ammesso nel Reale Collegio di Savoia della Compagnia di Gesù sotto la protezione di S.M.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ AST, Corte, Vota, *Progetto prontamente praticabile*, c. 1r.

¹⁴ See G.P. Brizzi, *Educare il principe, formare le élites: i gesuiti e Ranuccio I Farnese*, in G.P. Brizzi, A. D'Alessandro, A. Del Fante (edd.), *Università, Principe, Gesuiti. La politica farnesiana dell'istruzione a Parma e Piacenza (1545-1622)*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1980.

¹⁵ AST, Corte, Vota, *Progetto prontamente praticabile*, cc. 4v. e 3r.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, c. 2v.

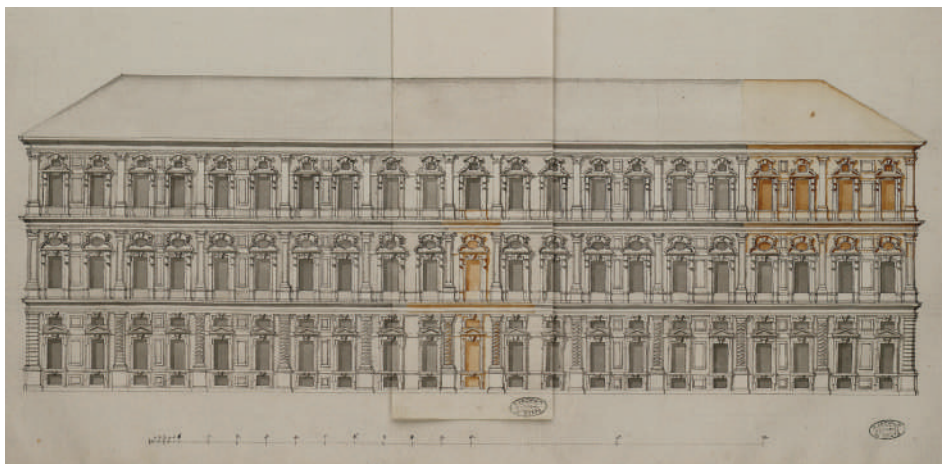


Fig. 1. Facade of the Royal College of Nobles, towards the Church of San Filippo, n.d. (State Archives of Turin, fond «Corte», series «Carte topografiche e disegni», Collegio dei Nobili, dossier 4)

resided and the government operated. After all, one of the fundamental elements of the enlargement plan commissioned by Carlo Emanuele II had been precisely to consolidate the ideological representation of power, using Piazza Castello and the ducal residences as the cornerstone of the three parts of the city. Moreover, being «equidistante dalle parti tutte della circonferenza»¹⁷ of the city walls, it would have been easily accessible both to pupils outside the boarding school and to professors, who would have also continued to teach in the schools attached to the old college. It was indeed an extraordinarily central location, as it was close to both the palaces of power and to those of the nobility, who had begun to build sumptuous residences in the spaces recently opened up by the expansion of the city.

Vota's project immediately obtained the political and economic support of the Regent, who promised to allocate all the necessary resources to the grandiose enterprise. However, it met the very strong opposition of the Roman Jesuits, who had the task of approving each new building of the Company. Gilles de Gottignes, the Roman reviewer who was commissioned to give an opinion on the project, as well as a series of formal and substantial criticisms, wondered why «si faccia una fabrica per il semenario tanto ampia e magnifica, e nulla di meno in tal modo ordinata, che a pena possa servire per 50 seminaristi»¹⁸.

One of the strongest disapprovals made by De Gottignes was that the Turin college would have been far more majestic than the Roman College. The *Collegio di Savoia* seemed

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, c. 4v.

¹⁸ Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), *Provincia Mediolanensis*, vol. 90, *Collegio Taurinensis-Vercellensis*, cc. 320r-324v, in particular 321r.

disproportionate to him, not only with respect to the resources that, however munificent, would have been provided by the queen, but also with respect to the «grandezza troppo eccedente il numero de scolari che vi possono concorrere»¹⁹, given that the population of Turin was not even remotely comparable to that of Rome. The boarding school in Turin would have been «sommamente disdicevole alla modestia e povertà religiosa»²⁰.

Therefore, a dispute arose between the Roman Jesuits, led by General Giovanni Paolo Oliva, and Father Vota, supported by the regent and the architect Michelangelo Garove, who would have later followed the construction site after the Jesuit's removal. The oppositions of the Roman general and reviewer were precisely due to the excessive majesty of the project, which was not at all in keeping with the austerity that Jesuit colleges and churches were supposed to inspire. For Vota, instead, it was a matter of making evident the royalty of the school and of its patron from the proportions of the building.

4. *The brief school history of the Collegio di Savoia and its pedagogical peculiarities*

The final project on which the *Collegio di Savoia* was built was decidedly more modest than the one initially drawn up by Vota, but it did not lose either the centrality of the school in Turin's urban layout or its proximity to the palaces of power. However, by the time the Duchy was back under the secure control of Vittorio Amedeo II, the conditions that had allowed the construction of such an unusual urban space for Turin were no longer in place. The nearby Palazzo Carignano was also built according to Guarini's design but was not completed. And of the Jesuit complex, only part of the noblemen's boarding school was erected, while neither the church nor the seminary were even started.

The exhausting negotiations, more than two years long, between the Roman company and the Savoy and Vota ended in fact with the victory of the latter, but also with the Jesuit architect's removal from Turin. Work started on 14 April 1679 under the direction of Garove, but it was soon realised that the objections of the Roman Jesuits were well-founded: the costs were excessive for anyone. Therefore, already in 1687 it was decided to concentrate the work on the school. Basically, the main east wing and two side wings of the original project were completed, where the activities of the school probably started as early as 1688. Despite the strong downsizing, the Jesuit college was still taller than all the buildings around it, including the royal Palazzo Carignano.

Beyond the majestic entrance there was a gallery facing the courtyard, and at the bottom of it a grand staircase from which it was possible to control what was happening in the vast and luminous corridors that crossed the entire building. The staircase actually marked two souls of the boarding school: the representative one, set on the three very high floors facing the street, and which housed the large classrooms and the school facilities,

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, c. 322v.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, c. 323r.

and the residential one, built cheaply, set on six floors hidden inside the building, where the boarders' rooms were located.

From a pedagogical point of view, the boarding school designed by Father Vota had some very original characteristics: not unlike what was happening outside the borders of the duchy, the schools built in Turin by the State between the 17th and 18th centuries were based on the medieval typological model of the convent and all had a "cloister" structure. They were therefore conceived as a space closed off from the rest of the city, suitable, as monasteries were, for reflection and study. Since his project, however, the *Collegio di Savoia* was inspired by a different model. No cloister and open access on what would become one of the city's main streets. It was indeed, in Father Vota's intentions, a different kind of school, certainly designed with representational purposes in mind, but also responding to different pedagogical needs than those that would later inspire the schools built by the government. Differently from other Jesuit school buildings where the courtyard represented one of the central places of school life, in the *Collegio di Savoia* it seems to have rather had practical functions. This is led to believe by the small size, the lack of flowerbeds and trees, the presence of a winch to lift the laundry to the upper floors and a secondary entrance. Breaktime used to take place preferably by means of walks in the town, outside the boarding school walls.

Even the organization of the interior spaces was original: the individual rooms, located on two floors, overlooked a large rectangular hall, illuminated by large windows. All bedrooms had doors to the hall and also shared a bathroom. In such hall, it is likely that lessons and tutoring were held for the boarders who were divided according to homogenous ages and similar curricula²¹.

This arrangement allowed for a more rational use of space: the services were mostly located at the ends of the galleries. On the ground floor, on the left, two chapels and the sacristy; on the right, the dining hall and the kitchen. On the noble floor, on the right, the theater and the stage, above which there were large rooms used for tailoring and storage. It is however probable that the failure to complete the entire college project deprived it of some spaces, such as an adequate library, the sick bay and other staff rooms.

5. The end of teaching activities and the transformation of the Collegio di Savoia into a museum centre

As early as 1710, given the high maintenance costs of the majestic building, parts of the palace were rented out. These were the wings facing the two streets and limiting the main façade. Towards Piazza Carignano there were also several shops, including a bakery, and there was an entrance, which still exists today, giving access to the rented flats. The

²¹ This organization of spaces has been defined "unità d'aggregazione" by L. Falco, R. Plantamura, S. Ranzato, *Le istituzioni per l'istruzione superiore in Torino dal XV al XVIII secolo: considerazioni urbanistiche e architettoniche. Il Collegio dei nobili*, «Bollettino storico-bibliografico subalpino», vol. 71, 1973, p. 163.

Collegio di San Filippo was housed on the noble floor for a few decades²², while other rooms, accessed directly from the main entrance of the palace, such as the hall where students could meet with family members and other guests, were later granted to the Stamperia Reale.

Also on the opposite side, on today's Via Maria Vittoria, there were several lodgings rented out to private individuals. It was in one of these that the Academy of Sciences was installed, a few years after the suppression of the Society of Jesus. This was the accommodation on the noble floor, which before 1784 was occupied by doctor Rejneri, the king's surgeon. In that year, having heard that the surgeon was looking for new accommodation, the founders of the Academy asked the king for permission to occupy the flat. They also asked for permission to carry out extensive renovation work on the premises, transforming what had been the theatre at the time of the boarding school into the magnificent hall where the academic meetings are still held today.

Since the Jesuits were suppressed in 1773 and had to leave the school, the building gradually but inexorably changed its function and use. The republican government set up in Turin by revolutionary France turned it into the local "Pritaneo nazionale", the ancestor of the Napoleonic "liceo", which was, however, short-lived. The closure of the Pritaneo effectively marked the end of the building's scholastic use, which from that moment onwards housed some important museum collections. Between 1802 and 1804, many rooms of the college were converted in order to house the Natural Science Museum. A few years later, the Finance archive was also moved there, but the most significant change came in 1824-5 with the placement of the holdings of the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, which at that time included only the funds of Bernardino Drovetti, in the premises of the school. This was a strategic choice on the part of the government, driven by a public opinion fascinated not only by the finds from Egypt, but especially by the discoveries that internationally renowned Egyptologists, such as Champollion, were making thanks to those sources. From then on, the building definitively lost its original scholastic vocation to clearly assume a museum function. To this end, in 1825 the court architect Giuseppe Maria Talucchi built a new wing intended precisely to house the Egyptian Museum, as well as a new entrance portal, more courtly and more suited to the building's new appearance.

In 1829, again in line with the new identity of the former school, the materials of the University Museum of Antiquities were transferred there. The collections grew to such an extent that in 1854 it was necessary to build a new wing inside the courtyard by the architect Luigi Federico Menabrea. In 1863-4, the Finance archive was transferred to a new location so the museum pole was able to host the works of art from the *Pinacoteca sabauda*.

Over the decades, the exhibits of the Ancient Egypt became more and more numerous and valuable. It was, therefore, necessary to move the other collections: already in 1876 the Museum of Natural Sciences, which had first entered the premises of the former school, was transferred elsewhere. A century later, in 1980, it was the turn of the Museum

²²NG.C. Craveri, *Guida de' Forestieri per la Real Città di Torino*, Torino, Rameletti, 1753, p. 87.

of Antiquities, which in the meantime had become the Archaeological Museum, and in 2014 the *Pinacoteca*, now called *Galleria Sabauda*, also left the building designed by Father Vota.

For the more than 800.000 visitors who admire its facades and cross its threshold every year, the original function of the building is absolutely not recognizable, but even the majority of Turin residents are unaware of the origins of what is now the Egyptian Museum. In a certain sense, the ruin of the *Collegio di Savoia* marked the victory of the building that had housed the boarding school, in the sense that it freed the majestic spaces from their original function and made them available for more courtly purposes and a wider use by the citizenship. Paradoxically, but also with a remarkable ability to understand the future, the Jesuits of Rome had criticized the project of the *Collegio di Savoia* precisely for its excessive majesty, which seemed inappropriate for a school, moreover in a medium-sized city. Father Vota had dreamed of a different school model, certainly designed for representation purposes, but open to citizens and not folded back to the central courtyard of medieval origin, as was the case for all the schools built by the government again in the following century: an idea probably too innovative and not always applicable for a school, but perfect for a museum.

Restoring Memories of an Old School in Museums and Open-Air Museums in Poland*

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Introduction

The memory of an old school may be recalled in various manners and presented in numerous places. In educational institutions and cultural institutions, we can create educational projects, reread school chronicles, present photo and document galleries in the form of school, museum and archival exhibitions or organize meetings with teachers, thus commemorating their work in various periods of activities of the institution. We can also collect classroom objects through preserved artefacts, which are often in attics of private houses, as well as search for documents and school equipment at online auctions. At the same time, this memory of an old school is restored outdoors and in the open air in the form of a reconstructed classroom, teachers' room and objects, which create the common school space and are often translocated and arranged around the school building. This image is complemented by the reconstructed teacher's apartment and principal's office, located in the vicinity of the classroom and with its interior and furnishings resembling the image given to the room in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The aim of this article is to show the role of reconstructed public facilities/rooms in restoring the memory of an old school. As regards the manner of presentation, the place and number of reconstructed schools, classrooms and teachers' apartments, this article emphasises open-air museums. However, in the context of the presented problem, it is worth noting, for example, the role of museums in collection and dissemination of their collections in the reconstructed school rooms and indicate examples of their occurrence. However, they do not constitute the mainstream of deliberations. Therefore, the presented problem in the proposed formula will certainly not exhaust the topic, merely contributing to further research in this field.

* The paper was written as based on conversations with employees of museums and open-air museums.

1. *Open-air museum in Poland*

The interest in folk culture, and, thus, in folk architecture in the territory of Poland, dates to the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Then the idea of developing regionalism was aimed at, among others, preservation and commemoration of regional traditions and culture¹. These activities resulted in development of regional and ethnographic museums were created in Poland, whereas the concept of accumulating rural architecture resources in an open area was implemented at the beginning of the 20th century. The first open-air museum was established in 1906 in Wdzydze Kiszewskie as the Museum – The Teodora and Izydor Gulgowski Kashubian Ethnographic Park on the border of two areas: the Kashubian Lake District and Bory Tucholskie². Another two oldest open-air museums, which started their activities in the interwar period include the Adam Chętnik Kurpiowski Open-Air Museum in Nowogród (established in 1927)³ and the Museum of Folk Architecture – Ethnographic Park in Olsztynek (established in 1909 as the Village Museum in Królewiec, and then relocated to Olsztynek in 1938–1942). It is worth mentioning that, in terms of its area of 95 hectares⁴, it is the largest ethnographic museum in Poland.

As a result of war activities during the Second World War, the ethnographic collections of the open-air museums accumulated over the years were almost destroyed or could not be recovered, which resulted in irretrievable loss⁵. Despite such huge losses, right after the war, the above-mentioned open-air museums in Wdzydze Kiszewskie, Nowogród and Olsztynek resumed their activities. Another period marked by a revival in establishment of open-air museums was in the 1950s. In that period such museums as the Museum – Orawa Ethnographic Park in Zubrzyca Górna (1955) and the Museum of Folk Architecture in Sanok (1958) were established. The heyday of open-air museums was as late as in the 1970s. In that period, due to urbanization of the countryside, the process of disappearance of historical objects of folk culture began, which, in turn, resulted in the need to protect the tangible and intangible heritage. Then, the existing open-air museums were extended, and exhibitions were supplemented with functional elements, tools and exhibits of everyday life. It was also then that the largest number of such facilities were built, currently totalling to 30⁶ in Poland. It is also worth mentioning that, apart from

¹ F. Midura, *Muzealnictwo skansenowskie w Polsce (stan obecny i perspektywy rozwoju)*, in F. Midura (ed.), *Muzea skansenowskie w Polsce*, Poznań, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Rolnicze i Leśne, 1979, p. 30.

² T. Sadkowski, *Katalog tradycyjnego budownictwa w Muzeum – Kaszubskim Parku Etnograficznym we Wdzydzach*, Wdzydze Kiszewskie, Drukarnia Księży Werbistów, 2018, p. 7.

³ B. Kunicki, *Park etnograficzny północno-wschodniego Mazowsza im. Adama Chętnika w Nowogrodzie*, in Midura (ed.), *Muzea skansenowskie w Polsce*, cit., p. 142.

⁴ *Początki muzeum – historia*, <https://muzeumolsztynek.pl/o-muzeum/historia/> (last access: 20.02.2023).

⁵ A. Spiss, *Muzea etnograficzne na wolnym powietrzu w Europie*, Warszawa, Ośrodek Dokumentacji Zabytków, 1984, p. 35.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37; J. Świąch, *Wprowadzenie*, in J. Sierackiewicz, J. Świąch (edd.), *Skanseny. Muzea na wolnym powietrzu w Polsce*, Olszanica, Wydawnictwo Bosz, 1999, pp. 8-9. To find out more about development of open-air museums in Poland, see J. Czajkowski, *Muzea na wolnym powietrzu w Europie*, Rzeszów–Sanok, Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1984, pp. 210-220.

the above-mentioned open-air museums, there are more than thirty so-called *in situ* folk architecture complexes, which are facilities that remained where they were created in their natural surroundings and landscape⁷.

2. *The context of surrounding areas*

In order to save and consolidate the above-mentioned tradition and, in particular, the immaterial tradition, both the material, spiritual and social culture of inhabitants of a given region is presented. Open-air museums play a great role in this respect, as, through exhibitions of wooden architecture, they not only visualize everyday lives of inhabitants of nearby towns, but, above all, through the number of exhibits, they present the richness and diversity of the cultural life of a given region. In reconstructed residential buildings (e.g. cottages, mansions), residential and farm buildings (e.g. stables, sheepfolds, pigsties), a mill, sawmill, craft plants (e.g. forges, dye houses, oil mills, potters, fulling mills) public buildings are erected, including an inn, fire station, church, which, depending on their location, indicate the cultural specificity of a given region. Considering all this, we are dealing with a variety of facilities and the exhibits gathered in one place create a compact complex of buildings typical of a given period. In this rich scenery, wooden architecture is presented as an example of residential, religious, economic and public buildings dating back to the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, which makes it possible to learn about the equipment and methods of producing various products. Additionally, the workshop of a home maker, host, craftsman or miller shows various types of activities of inhabitants of the region, their everyday life, customs and traditions as well as illustrates wider socio-cultural phenomena of the regional history with the use of original sources from the region.

Therefore, the above-mentioned facilities include one more public utility building that is inextricably linked with the cultural landscape, namely the school. At the same time, the method of its presentation should be distinguished from those displaying other objects of wooden architecture. Statistically, out of 30 open-air museums located in Poland⁸, more than half of them include a reconstructed school and/or a classroom and a teacher's apartment such as those found in Chorzów, Ciechanowiec (Winna Chroły), Wdzydze Kiszewskie, Nowy Sącz, Olsztynek, Zubrzyca Górna, Sierpc, Dziekanowice, Lublin, Kłóbka, Opole, Osiek nad Notecią, Sanok, Tokarnia, Wygiełzów, Wasilków and Maurzyce. It is worth mentioning the educational institution, which was relocated to

⁷ Świąch, *Wprowadzenie*, cit., p. 9.

⁸ The number of open-air museums in Poland was assumed as based on the literature on the subject: Sierczkiewicz, Świąch (edd.), *Skanseny*, cit.; *Muzea na wolnym powietrzu w Polsce*, «Biuletyn Stowarzyszenia Muzeów na Wolnym Powietrzu», n. 11, 2009, pp. 171-175; *Kalejdoskop muzealny: działalność muzeów na wolnym powietrzu w Polsce w latach 2016-2020*, «Biuletyn Stowarzyszenia Muzeów na Wolnym Powietrzu», n. 16, 2021, pp. 106-176.

the village of Winna Chroły, where school rooms were reconstructed in a wooden school building standing *in situ*⁹.

Selected open-air museums in Poland, in which classrooms and teachers' apartments may be found (prepared by Agnieszka Wieczorek based on the websites of open-air museums and her own observations):

- Chorzów, Muzeum “Górnośląski Park Etnograficzny w Chorzowie” (“The Ethnographic Park in Chorzów” Museum) – classroom, teacher’s apartment
- Ciechanowiec (Winna Chroły), Muzeum Rolnictwa im. ks. Krzysztofa Kluka w Ciechanowcu (The Priest Krzysztof Kluk Museum of Agriculture in Ciechanowiec) – classroom, teacher’s apartment
- Dziekanowice, Wielkopolski Park Etnograficzny w Dziekanowicach (Wielkopolska Ethnographic Park in Dziekanowice) – classroom
- Kłóbka, Kujawsko-Dobrzyński Park Etnograficzny w Kłóbce (The Ethnographic Park of the Kujawsko-Dobrzyński District in Kłóbka) – classroom, teacher’s apartment
- Lublin, Muzeum Wsi Lubelskiej w Lublinie (The Lublin Open Air Village Museum)¹⁰
- Maurzyce, Skansen Oddział Muzeum w Łowiczu (The Open-Air Museum, a Division of the Museum in Łowicz) – classroom, teacher’s apartment
- Nowy Sącz, Sądecki Park Etnograficzny w Nowym Sączu (The Sądecki Ethnographic Park) – classroom, teacher’s apartment
- Olsztynek, Muzeum Budownictwa Ludowego – Park Etnograficzny w Olsztyнку (Museum of Folk Architecture – Ethnographic Park) – classroom, teacher’s apartment
- Opole, Muzeum Wsi Opolskiej w Opolu (The Museum of Rural Life in Opole) – classroom, teacher’s apartment
- Osiek nad Notecią, Muzeum Kultury Ludowej w Osieku nad Notecią (The Museum of Folk Culture in Osiek nad Notecią) – classroom, teacher’s apartment
- Sanok, Muzeum Budownictwa Ludowego w Sanoku (The Museum of Folk Architecture in Sanok) – classroom, teacher’s apartment
- Sierpc, Muzeum Wsi Mazowieckiej w Sierpcu (The Museum of Rural Life in Sierpc) – classroom, teacher’s apartment
- Tokarnia, Muzeum Wsi Kieleckiej – Park Etnograficzny w Tokarni (The Kielce Countryside Museum – Ethnographic Park in Tokarnia) – classroom, teacher’s apartment
- Wasilków, Podlaskie Muzeum Kultury Ludowej w Wasilkowie (The Podlaskie Folklore Museum) – classroom
- Wdzydze Kiszewskie, Muzeum – Kaszubski Park Etnograficzny im. Teodory i Izydora Gulgowskich we Wdzydzach Kiszewskich (The Museum – The Teodora and Izidor Gulgowski Kashubian Ethnographic Park) – classroom, teacher’s apartment

⁹ *Szkola wiejska w Winnie Chroły – obiekt zamiejscowy*, <https://www.muzeumrolnictwa.pl/muzeum/wystawy-stale/szkola-wiejska-w-winnie-chroly-obiekt-zamiejscowy> (last access: 22.02.2023).

¹⁰ There is only a school building in Lublin.

- Wygiełzów, Muzeum – Nadwiślański Park Etnograficzny w Wygiełzowie (The Museum – The Vistula River Ethnographic Park in Wygiełzów) – classroom, teacher's apartment
- Zubrzyca Górna, Orawski Park Etnograficzny w Zubrzycy Górnej (The Museum – Orawa Ethnographic Park in Zubrzyca Górna) – classroom, teacher's apartment

Another way to restore the memory of the old school are classrooms displayed in museums as part of permanent or temporary exhibitions. Due to the nature of the institution and exhibits presented in the museums, the museums often offer a thematic exhibition, referring to the time space of the presented exhibits and constitute a part of the main exhibition. An example of this is the Museum of World War II in Gdańsk, where one of the two elements of the exhibition entitled "Podróż w czasie" (Travel in time) is a classroom with presented conditions, in which students studied during the Second World War¹¹. An extremely important role is played here by the historical context understood as the close surroundings of the presented place, contributing to better understanding of difficult conditions of living and studying during the occupation. Another example is the Polish Teachers' Museum in Piłazzków. Due to the conspiratorial congress of teachers held in the museum in 1905, a decision was made to display, apart from the exhibition concerning the history of the Polish teachers' union, school rooms found in the building, i.e. the classroom (Photograph 1) and the teacher's apartment dating back to the 30s of the 20th century. The National Museum of Przemyśl Land in Przemyśl, cooperating with the Museum of Folk Architecture in Sanok organized an exhibition of the classroom entitled "Dawna klasa" (An old classroom)¹². However, the exhibition is slightly different in nature. The decoration of the classroom from the times of the Partitions of Poland (1772-1918), the interwar period (1918-1939) and post-war period was enriched with offices equipped with teaching aids. The teaching aids include, among others, microscopes, reagents, anatomical gypsum models used in anatomy, botany, geography or physics classes.

As regards the above-mentioned open-air museums, reconstructions of rural schools began in the 1970s. The first school building was reconstructed in 1976-1977 in Wdzydze Kiszewskie, where the school was relocated from Więckowy, dating back from the time when it served as a rural elementary school, i.e. until 1887¹³. Most often, school buildings are reconstructed as based on facilities functioning as educational institutions in the second half of the 19th century and the 1920s and 1930s. One of the oldest buildings, in terms of its origin, is a school dating back to the second half of the 19th century, which had been relocated from Lipnica Wielka to the open-air museum in Zubrzyca Górna¹⁴.

¹¹ Muzeum II Wojny Światowej w Gdańsku, <https://muzeum1939.pl/wystawa-dla-dzieci-podroz-w-czasie/4354.html> (last access: 22.02.2023).

¹² B. Mocarska-Szwic, *Dawna klasa*, <https://mnzp.pl/dawna-klasa/> (last access: 22.02.2023).

¹³ Sadkowski, *Katalog tradycyjnego budownictwa w Muzeum*, cit., p. 364. The school building has a classroom, school corridor, a teacher's apartment (a room, kitchen and pantry) as well as a vestibule and a hall adjacent to the residential part.

¹⁴ *Muzeum Orawski Park Etnograficzny w Zubrzycy Górnej. Krótki przewodnik po skansenie*, Zubrzyca Górna, Wydawnictwo Oficyna Artystów SZTUKA Regional Art., 2008, p. 28.



Photo. 1. A classroom, the Polish Teachers' Museum in Pilaszków (the author of the photograph: Agnieszka Wiczorek)

School reconstructed recently include classrooms dating back to the 1930s and 1960s. It is also worth mentioning that in most open-air museums, they decided to relocate a school building operating in a given region, following previous demolition works. Therefore, in descriptions of objects found in an open-air museum, we often find such terms as a school (e.g. in Kłóbka)¹⁵ or a school farm (e.g. in Wdzydze Kiszewskie)¹⁶. In other cases, a classroom was reconstructed in one of the rooms of a middle-class peasant's farm from 1910 (including in Sierpc: a farm from the village of Ostrów) as modelled on 2-4 class schools dating back to the interwar period¹⁷. Considering the educational context, in order to make the exhibition more attractive, they also decided to reconstruct a teacher's apartment dating back to the interwar period in the same homestead. In the Folk Culture Museum in Osiek, they arranged a one-class school and a teacher's apartment inside a cottage (a cottage from Dźwierszno Wielkie dating back to the first half of the 19th century)¹⁸. It is similar with the furnishing of rooms. School items, teaching aids, class

¹⁵ Kłóbka: The Ethnographic Park of the Kujawsko-Dobrzyński District in Kłóbka.

¹⁶ Wdzydze Kiszewskie: The Museum – The Teodora and Izydor Gulgowski Kashubian Ethnographic Park.

¹⁷ Sierpc: The Museum of Rural Life in Sierpc.

¹⁸ Osiek nad Notecią: The Folk Culture Museum in Osiek, http://www.muzeum.pila.pl/wystawy.php?lang=pl&id_strony=76 (last access: 22.02.2023).

documentation (school journals, diplomas, photographs, school reports) presented in classrooms may date back to the same period as the school facility, but often a classroom is equipped with items from a later period the school's activities, e.g. dating back to the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s or from the surrounding institutions of the region and, in other cases, they were simply purchased or acquired for the purposes of the exhibition. Thus, the reconstructed school brings the memory of a teacher's, student's and principal's work on the one hand and, on the other hand, the spatial layout of the educational institution is exhibited, with functions of individual rooms divided into teaching and living.

3. *The spatial and historical context*

The main characters of the reconstructed schools include teachers, students and principals of the institution. And although we do not see them (although some exhibitions show their figures using the teacher's and students' mannequins), by the manner, in which the items were displayed, they undoubtedly create the atmosphere of a classroom, a teacher's apartment and a principal's office dating back to the second half of the 19th century, the 1920s and 30s and the post-war period of the last century. In chronological terms, we are dealing with facilities/rooms, which, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, were found in the area of three partitions, and during the Second World War were affected by the policy of the occupation authorities towards the education system.

The geopolitical changes had an impact on reconstruction of the above-mentioned school rooms dating back to various historical periods. Along with reconstruction of a classroom, it was possible to capture changes in the interior as regards teaching aids, textbooks, student accessories, furniture or clothes typical of a given historical period. Looking at the equipment of a classroom in various versions of a given historical period and the history of the region, we can see that the interior of rooms connected with a school has evolved. Apart from school items typical of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, such as a teacher's desk that was sometimes erected above the school floor, desks with a tilted desktop (with a characteristic recess for school supplies and a hole for an inkwell located in the middle of the upper part of the desk), sitting benches, an abacus, a pen case, ink pot, writing pens, nibs, bell, wooden satchels and black slate tablets for students, there are also kerosene lamps, maps, clocks and calligraphy boards. The central space of a classroom is occupied by a black board (the colour of which is green in reconstructions from later years) hanging on the wall or standing in the vicinity of the teachers' cathedral (Photograph 2). The classroom exposition is made even more attractive by school documents placed in glass windows. Depending on an exhibition, the documents include, among others, school certificates dating back to the 1920s, making it possible for us to learn about the assessment system in the field of behaviour, diligence and learning progress (including in Polish, geometry, natural science, drawings, handicrafts, singing), games and gymnastics, grade sheets and textbooks. The image is complemented by collections of writing materials such as inkwells and "Omnium" and



Photo. 2. A classroom, The Museum – The Teodora and Izydor Gulgowski Kashubian Ethnographic Park in Wdzydze Kiszewskie (the author of the photograph: Agnieszka Wieczorek)

“Demon” pencils from Stanisław Majewski’s factory, which were popular in the interwar period. It is worth adding that “Polonia 340” technical pencils won a gold medal at the world exhibition organized in Paris in 1937¹⁹.

Widening the field of view, we will discern that reconstructions are carriers of historical and regional knowledge. On the classroom wall dating back to the interwar period and above the teacher’s cathedral, there are reproductions of portraits of Marshal Józef Piłsudski and Ignacy Mościcki, the President of the Republic of Poland, in the vicinity of the cross and the state emblem, which constituted a permanent element of classroom equipment in schools dating back to the 1930s. Due to the political role played by the marshal in the Republic of Poland, the marshal’s image was usually presented in a uniform. Also in relation to the regional context, it is worth mentioning characteristic teaching aids, which constitute unique elements of equipment for a given community. In the classroom reconstructed in Wdzydze Kiszewskie we can see the Kashubian alphabet

¹⁹ *Historia fabryki ołówków St. Majewski w Pruszkowie 1889–1948*, Pruszków, Książnica Pruszkowska im. Henryka Sienkiewicza, 2016, p. 73.



Photo. 3. A teacher's apartment, the Ethnographic Park of the Kujawsko-Dobrzyński District in Kłóbka (the author of the photograph: Agnieszka Wiczorek)

(in the Kashubian language: Kaszëbsczé abecadło)²⁰ placed on the wall as well as textbooks in the Kashubian language.

Apart from the didactic function, we can also distinguish between an educational and hygienic space in the classroom. Classrooms were often equipped with a leather whip often found on a teacher's desk and used for punishing for even most minor offenses. Another types of punishment for students were, among others, standing in a corner, sitting on a dunce's stool or kneeling on pea bags. Additionally, the school took care of basic hygiene. A very important aspect of the exhibition in the open-air classroom is its presentation of a hygienic corner with a bowl placed on a cupboard and a water jug or bucket (e.g. in Wdzydze Kiszewskie, Sierpc). A towel used to hung next to it.

A teacher's apartment is a coexisting factor connected directly with the classroom. There we may find both very modestly furnished rooms (equipped with a bed, table, chairs, desk, wardrobe) as well as richly arranged lounges equipped with eclectic furniture such as a desk, a glass showcase with books, a table with chairs, a clock, a wardrobe and a turntable (e.g. in Wdzydze Kiszewskie, Kłóbka) (Photograph 3). On

²⁰ The Kashubian alphabet is a traditional Kashubian song (counting) being a part of the Kashubian folklore.



Photo. 4. A school principal's office, the Ethnographic Park of the Kujawsko-Dobrzyński District in Kłóbka (the author of the photograph: Agnieszka Wieczorek)

the table, covered with a tablecloth, there is a porcelain tea set and a mirror in a wooden frame (e.g. in *Wdzydze Kiszewskie*) hanging on the wall. The floor is covered with a carpet. There are white curtains hanging in the windows, which became popular in the 1920s. Such an interior design undoubtedly proves a teacher's sublime taste. It is worth mentioning that in the teacher's apartment dating back to the 1960s there is a TV set and in the reconstructed staff room there is a black telephone with a handle (*Winnia Chroły*)²¹.

Another coexisting factor is the kitchen, which may sometimes be found in front of the lounge. As in his case, the equipment is diversified, ranging from a modest room with a wooden bed, a chest of drawers, a hygienic corner and a stove to a more sophisticated interior, which is functionally furnished with decorative dishes hanging on the wall, a hygienic corner with a towel and soap, an iron, a kitchen, curtains in the windows and a kitchen table with chairs.

The third coexisting factor is the school principal's/administrator's office. However, this room is not often to be found in reconstructed school buildings. One of the open-air museums, which features this type of room is the museum in Kłóbka. The school principal's office is equipped with a desk, wardrobe, typewriter, clock and first aid kit (Photograph 4). On the wall in the central place there are portraits of Marshal Józef Piłsudski and Ignacy Mościcki, the President of the Republic of Poland around the state emblem.

It is also worth noting that the arrangement of school rooms is complemented by a garden and a utility room. In the case of the school in *Wdzydze Kiszewskie*, both these buildings were reconstructed. In the garden, which also had an educational function, the plants, vegetables and trees are modelled on those, which were grown during the school's operation (including apple trees, beans) and the utility room dating back to the end of the 19th century served as sanitary facilities. What is interesting, the facility relocated from Kaliska (in *Wdzydze Kiszewskie*) used to have toilets for children in the added eastern part of the building²² (Photograph 5).

²¹ *Szkola wiejska w Winnie Chroły – obiekt zamiejscowy* <https://www.muzeumrolnictwa.pl/muzeum/wystawy-stale/szkola-wiejska-w-winnie-chroly-obiekt-zamiejscowy> (last access: 22.02.2023).

²² Toilets for children in school outbuildings were constructed as ordered by the Prussian educational authorities at the beginning of the 20th century. Educational institutions had to apply to public administration authorities for construction of sanitary rooms and wells. The school outbuildings from Kaliska are composed of



Photo. 5. The school's outbuilding from Kaliska, the Teodora and Izydor Gulgowski Kashubian Ethnographic Park in Wdzydze Kiszewskie (the author of the photograph: Agnieszka Wiczorek)

Conclusions

It is undoubtable that reconstructions of school rooms carry an emotional charge. Regardless of their equipment, these places being back memories of school years in almost every visitor. The interior designs of original historical buildings make it possible to compare the remembered traces of the past with the present, placing the memory of the old school in the historical and architectural context. The arrangement of the school interior not only reflects the times, in which the school operated, thus giving it the atmosphere and spirit of the era, but it also contributes to the knowledge of the regional history, everyday lives of inhabitants and elements typical of construction of educational institutions in the 19th and 20th centuries.

two parts, namely the western part built at the end of the 19th century for animals and the eastern part added at the beginning of the 20th century to one of the gable ends, in which toilets for children could be found. In 1995, the school outbuildings were handed over to the Kashubian Ethnographic Park and then demolished. In 1996, the outbuildings were rebuilt in the premises of the Museum in Wdzydze Kiszewskie. More reading on this subject in: Sadkowski, *Katalog tradycyjnego budownictwa w Muzeum*, cit., pp. 369-371.

Corporate History in the Education Business*

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Introduction

Corporate history, the key focus of this study, have traditionally been analysed in the fields of economic and business history. Most authors coincide in defining a corporate history as a historical account of a private company, cultivated and spread by the latter¹. Some studies have shown that the components of this account and the mechanisms used to spread it tend to follow a repeated pattern, leading to claims that this is a genre all of its own². Some examples of the main components used by companies to weave a corporate history are: recognition of the company's founders; the establishment of important landmarks, ordered sequentially; and the acknowledgement of external collaborators who played a decisive role in the company's success³.

Corporate history might be inferred to have no association with the field of education, with the concept solely being limited to the business world. However, one type of school – religious schools – has tended to operate as a business, despite its educational function⁴. According to Antonio Viñao, numerous religious schools have designed and disseminated an institutional historical account of similar characteristics to that of a corporate history⁵. Despite this, compared with studies of non-educational organizations, few research studies in the field of educational history have explored this issue. Among the few examples that can be found, two particularly noteworthy ones are the study by Marjo Nieminen of anniversary books published for a Finnish school and the study by Alice Fucs of the means used to spread the corporate history of a private school in Rio de Janeiro⁶.

* This research was carried out within the framework of project (PID2020-113677GB-I00, funded by MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033).

¹ A. Sivula, *Corporate history culture and useful industrial past: A case study on history management in Finnish cotton company Porin Puuvilla Oy*, «Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore» vol. 57, 2014, pp. 29-54.

² A. Blombäck, O. Brunninge, *Corporate identity manifested through historical references*, «Corporate Communications: An International Journal», vol. 14, n. 4, 2009, pp. 404-419; A. Delahaye *et alii*, *The genre of corporate history*, «Journal of Organizational Change Management», vol. 22, 2009, pp. 27-48.

³ C. Booth *et alii*, *La memoria social en las organizaciones. Los métodos que las organizaciones usan para recordar el pasado*, «Revista Empresa y Humanismo», vol. 8, n. 2, 2005, pp. 95-131.

⁴ Doctoral thesis by S. Moll Bagur, *L'educació masculina en els col·legis religiosos de la Postguerra (1939-1945)*, Universitat de les Illes Balears (Supervisors: F. Comas Rubí, B. Sureda Garcia), a.y. 2021-2022.

⁵ A. Viñao, *Las autobiografías, memorias y diarios como fuente histórico-educativa: tipología y usos*, «Revista Teias», vol. 1, n. 1, 2000, pp. 1-26.

⁶ M. Nieminen, *From elite traditions to middle-class cultures: images of secondary education in the anniversary books of a Finnish girls' school, 1882-2007*, «Paedagogica Historica», vol. 52, n. 3, 2016, pp. 236-251; Master

The research study presented in this paper aspired to analyse the components of the corporate history disseminated by religious schools and the mechanisms used for this purpose. To do so, a decision was taken to use Sant Francesc de Sales School (Ciutadella, Minorca, the Balearic Islands) as a case study. This centre, run by the Salesians, illustrates some of the procedures used in strategies by religious schools to create and spread an account of their history. As for the chronological framework of the study, it focuses on the Spanish post-war period (1939-1945), a point in history characterized by a new totalitarian regime in Spain and a radical breakaway from the educational and religious policies of former democratic governments, which had impeded the activities of these schools⁷.

1. *Methodology*

The study in question, identified in accordance with the latest historiographical trends, takes a cross-cutting historical approach, since the aid of other branches of historical science and other social sciences were needed to achieve the intended goals. This can be noted in different methodological aspects of the research study, such as the selection and review of different sources. For instance, if the main goal of a study is to explore a social strategy directed at the systematic recollection of a certain history by a social group, then sociological aspects are necessarily involved; specifically, social studies of memory. According to leading authors in this field, to tackle this phenomenon, one key concept must be taken into account: realms of memory. Pierre Nora defines them as informative artefacts vested with a series of material, functional and symbolic meanings, aimed at transmitting a past to a group of people⁸. Majken Shultz and Tor Hernes focus on private organizations, classifying these “memory spaces” according to their format and highlighting the following types: text based (books, magazines, leaflets etc.), material (flags, paintings, objects etc.) and oral (myths, speeches, conversations etc.)⁹.

If these concepts are applied to Sant Francesc de Sales School, a series of organizational realms of memory can be identified that serve to glorify foundational myths, to establish the order of historical events, to pay tribute to benefactors, and to extoll the school’s most celebrated ex-students. These diverse realms of memory, with their numerous individual peculiarities, can be summarized into publications, public acts and rituals, a hidden curriculum, and institutional symbols.

To understand the role that they each played in the systematic dissemination of a corporate history, different historical sources must be consulted and analysed. A wide

Thesis by A. Fucs, *O papel da memória na (re)construção de identidade organizacional: o caso da escola Edem*, Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (Supervisor: A. de Sá Mello da Costa), a.y. 2018-1019.

⁷ E. Moradiellos García, *La España de Franco, 1939-1975: Política y Sociedad*, Madrid, Síntesis, 2000.

⁸ P. Nora, *Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire*, «Representations», vol. 28, 1989, pp. 7-24.

⁹ M. Schultz, T. Hernes, *A temporal perspective on organizational identity*, «Organization Science», vol. 24, n. 1, 2013, pp. 1-21.

variety of sources was used, including documentary ones, oral accounts and symbolic items, leading to the disclosure of different mnemonic mechanisms that had initially not been identified as such.

2. Informative artefacts for building a corporate history in the field of education

In this section, a study will be made of the nature, peculiarities and specific contributions of each of these artefacts in building and spreading the corporate history of Sant Francesc de Sales School. To facilitate this task, a classificatory analysis is made, where each of the realms of memory, organized under different headings, is treated as a unit of analysis.

2.1 Publications

In this study, publications are construed to mean the publicity or written means of communication that were designed and developed by religious congregations in the places where they settled. On many occasions, a religious order's different bodies, associations and institutions each had their own means of communication to publicize the work they carried out¹⁰. In this case study, a series of commemorative books, school magazines and parish magazines were identified as having been used to carry out these tasks. During the post-war, the chronological framework of this research study, one of the school's best-known corporate publications was distributed: the magazine «Nuestro Auxilio». This was a monthly institutional Salesian magazine, used to publicize any event directly or indirectly related to the Salesian school and it often featured articles and sections with details of the school's history.

For instance, the school's foundation and its development were one of the most recurrent themes. Several accounts of its creation were given to firmly establish the fact that the arrival of the first Salesian teachers to the island, in 1899, marked the first stone in the congregation's work in Ciutadella¹¹. It must also be noted that the Spanish Civil War heralded an important turning point. For the Salesians, the closure of the school and their persecution were traumatic events and, at certain moments, the war seemed to mark the end of the school and, possibly, the loss of their lives¹². The magazine therefore explains that, chronologically, the school's history can be divided into two stages: a first

¹⁰ S. Moll Bagur, B. Sureda Garcia, *The Generation of Social Capital and the Conformation of Identities in the Schools of the Spanish Postwar Period (1939-1945): Study of the Montesión School Magazine*, «Social and History Education», vol. 10, n. 3, 2021, pp. 238-261.

¹¹ See the example in «Nuestro Auxilio», n. 52, July-August 1943.

¹² See the example in «Nuestro Auxilio», n. 7, October 1939.

phase, lasting from the foundation of the school through to the Spanish Civil War, and a second stage that began at the end of the war. As for the evolution of the school, the magazine tried to impress upon readers the meteoric growth that the congregation and the school had undergone since the centre's foundation, illustrating it with photos and statistical tables¹³.

Myths associated with the school's foundation are another very common feature of the magazine. The school's intrinsic characteristics are systematically explained to be attributable to the combined influence of certain Salesian figureheads, in a metaphorical family-based hierarchy, with Mary Help of Christians (the mother), Saint John Bosco (the father), Dominic Savio (the son), Saint Francis de Sales (the protector) and Federico Pareja (the founder). Their life stories, specific episodes from their lives, and famous phrases are used as behavioural models for the whole educational community. One example is Dominic Savio, the child martyr and ex-Salesian student. He is upheld as a model for the students to follow, emphasizing virtues like his deep Catholic devotion, the way he put Christian ethics into practice, and his efforts to accomplish the tasks he was given¹⁴. The attribution of miraculous powers to different Salesian figureheads is another function of the magazine. In most issues, miracles associated with the foundational myths are described, normally recovery from serious illnesses, with the person in question making his or her gratitude public by giving a financial donation¹⁵. Another miracle attributed to a Salesian figurehead was the victory of the pro-Franco faction in the Spanish Civil War. According to the historical narrative established in different articles, Mary Help of Christians interceded by playing a decisive role in saving lives during the bombings and she contributed to the success of the insurrectionists, which the magazine attempts to demonstrate by giving various different specific examples¹⁶. Hence, according to the version given in the publication, Salesian devotion to the Virgin Mary was solely responsible for the victory, with the military leaders who were involved just playing a secondary role.

It is also interesting to analyse the role played by former students in the corporate history. The mental image largely built up as a result of the publication «Nuestro Auxilio» was that the school's ex-students were successful in different aspects of their lives. First, there was academic success, justified and demonstrated by the monthly publication of the progress made by ex-students in their respective university, military and ecclesiastical careers (admittance, passing exams, graduation, distinctions etc.)¹⁷. Second, there was financial prosperity, as different articles describe the headway they made at an employment and business level, citing examples of promotion and public selection exams, or the inauguration of commercial establishments¹⁸. Third, there was social and family success, with announcements of weddings and births, participation in associations, involvement

¹³ See the example in «Nuestro Auxilio», n. 30, September 1941.

¹⁴ See the example in «Nuestro Auxilio», n. 70, February 1945.

¹⁵ See the example in «Nuestro Auxilio», n. 71, March 1945.

¹⁶ See the example in «Nuestro Auxilio», n. 66, August 1944.

¹⁷ See the example in «Nuestro Auxilio», n. 51, June 1943.

¹⁸ See the example in «Nuestro Auxilio», n. 65, July 1944.

in public acts etc.¹⁹ Lastly, there was moral success, with repeated descriptions of their good works, regular attendance of religious acts, and altruistic Salesian educational activities²⁰.

Finally, mention must be made of the use of Salesian patrons in the historical narrative built up about the centre. These individuals – with their own status and personality within the school – were some of the most venerated figures by the school's management team, since they were the benefactors who had helped to found the school and to collaborate in the first extensions that were made. Normally, they were cited and upheld as models when their death was announced, although particular emphasis was also placed on their contributions when fund-raising campaigns were held for structural alterations to be made to the school facilities²¹.

2.2 Public acts

As with most religious schools, Sant Francesc de Sales School was «more than just a school»²². As a driving force in the town's cultural and social life, the Salesians were responsible for promoting a series of ceremonies, festivities and public acts there, which served, among other functions, to disseminate the school's corporate history. Due to the organizational complexity of these activities, altruistic voluntary work by many members of the Salesian educational community was involved, coordinated and organized through different “satellite” associations and bodies, including the ex-students' association (*Unión d'Antiguos Alumnos de Don Bosco*) and the students' association (*Agrupación Domingo Savio*)²³.

According to their regularity, these celebrations can be classified into yearly festivities, monthly commemorations, and acts of an extraordinary nature. In the first case, they were dedicated to celebrating the foundational myths associated with Mary Help of Christians, Saint John Bosco and Dominic Savio. The chosen dates of the celebrations were related to the lives of the worshipped figures, taking as a reference events like their birth or death, the miracles they had performed, apparitions etc. The festivities were used to hold numerous public acts such as processions, conferences, theatre plays, sports championships, literary competitions, hymn singing etc. The procession in honour of Mary Help of Christians was the most highly attended act, since many people from the town helped to organize and take part in it. The conferences held during the festivities to

¹⁹ See the example in «Nuestro Auxilio», n. 77, September 1945.

²⁰ See the example in «Nuestro Auxilio», n. 64, June 1944.

²¹ See the example in «Nuestro Auxilio», n. 65, September 1944.

²² S. Moll Bagur, B. Sureda Garcia, *Private Religious Schools for Boys in the Spanish Post Civil War Period: An Analysis through Triangulating Historical Sources*, «History of Education and Children's Literature», vol. 15, n. 2, 2020, pp. 29–48.

²³ G. Julià Seguí, *Pels seus fruits els coneixereu, un segle de la Unió d'Antics Alumnes Salesians de Ciutadella*, Ciutadella de Menorca, Ex Salesian Students' Association, 2012.

celebrate Saint John Bosco are also worthy of note. These talks, which were inaugurated by singing the hymn dedicated to the Italian saint, were given by important Salesian figures (ex-students, patrons, heads of the school etc.), typically on subjects related to the congregation and their vision of religion and society. The floral offering by the students to Dominic Savio's statue in the courtyard must also be mentioned. This solemn act was held at the start of a festive day involving literary competitions and different football matches²⁴.

Unlike the yearly festivities, the monthly commemorations were more restricted acts, with stronger religious and spiritual undertones. These rituals were held at the shrine adjoining the school, dedicated to the "mother" (Mary Help of Christians) and "father" (Saint John Bosco). Once a month, an ordinary mass was capitalized on to preach a sermon on the virtues of these important Salesian figureheads and the example they offered. In Saint John Bosco's case, his relics were exhibited for people to kiss before the ceremony ended²⁵.

During the post-war period, various extraordinary public acts were held to celebrate institutional anniversaries, alterations to the original building, and visits by important Salesians. On occasions, all three were merged in one single festivity. This is the case of the 1943 Golden Wedding, used to commemorate the first visit by a Salesian delegation to Ciutadella (1893) and to inaugurate extensions to the shrine. The programme of events also included the famous funeral procession of Federico Pareja – the school's founder, who died 10 years prior to the visit, at the age of 79 –, filing from the municipal cemetery to the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians with his coffin. Most of the said acts were attended by members of the school's educational community and numerous civil, ecclesiastical and Salesian authorities. Hence, the 50th anniversary was used to recall the origins of the school, to honour its founder and, through the inauguration of new facilities and inaugural speeches, to highlight the prosperous, fructiferous future that awaited the school²⁶.

2.3 *Institutional symbols*

Throughout the history of the Catholic Church, symbols and allegories have played a fundamental role in the development and dissemination of the narrative on which it is based²⁷. The Salesian school in Ciutadella took advantage of similar strategies and

²⁴ R. Cortés Casanovas, *Menorca, María Auxiliadora y la obra salesiana: 1899-1939*, Ciutadella de Menorca, Unió d'Antics Alumnes Salesians, 2007.

²⁵ The information has been taken from the programmes of festivities found in the family archives of Joan Bagur Franco and Alfredo Moll Tur.

²⁶ See the example in «Nuestro Auxilio», n. 53, September 1943.

²⁷ L. Réau, *Iconografía del Arte Cristiano. Iconografía de la Biblia–Antiguo Testamento*, Barcelona, Ediciones del Serbal, 2000.

mechanisms, successfully capitalizing on institutional symbols to disseminate its own narrative.

Numerous symbols were positioned throughout the school, transforming it into a veritable corporate museum. The ex-students who were interviewed have precise recollections of the different paintings, busts, sculptures, medallions and flags representative of the school's foundational myths that could be found in its classrooms, corridors and other rooms. Likewise, at the shrine, different references to Salesian figureheads could be seen on its altars and stained-glass windows and in its chapels and reliquaries²⁸. Not only were these visual messages present throughout the school. They also extended to the personal lives of members of the educational community, thanks to the design and distribution of what might be described as a collection of Salesian merchandising products, all with a distinctive identifying hallmark. One example is the small gold medal of Mary Help of Christians, Saint John Bosco or Dominic Savio, which most Salesian sympathizers wore around their necks. In their pockets, they also carried holy cards and small yearly calendars with images associated with the foundational myths. One of the most famous holy cards had a piece of Saint John Bosco's cassock inserted in it, which was thought to have mystical and curative powers according to the interviewed ex-students. Salesian images could also be found in private homes, with postcards of the school, monthly calendars dedicated to the order's leaders, and little statues of Mary Help of Christians being habitual. These statues of the Virgin Mary were either taken from house to house in portable shrines or, following the tradition of ex-students, given as a wedding present to preside the bed of the newlyweds²⁹.

Salesian names were another way of infusing everyday life at the school and in the town of Ciutadella with historical symbols associated with the education centre. From 1931, the school's big courtyard was named after its founder, Federico Pareja (*Patio Padre Pareja*), while the little one was dedicated to the child martyr Dominic Savio (*Patio Venerable Domingo Savio*). The ex-students' centre (*Don Bosco Centre*) and the church adjoining the school (*Mary Help of Christians Shrine*) were each named after "the father and mother" of the Salesians. The foundational myths spread beyond the school's walls, with these iconic figures lending their names to numerous streets and squares in the town. Examples include the streets next to the school (Mary Help of Christians Street and Don Bosco Street) and Federico Pareja Square, 200 metres from the school entrance. This demonstrates the connivance between the public authorities and management team of the school, who both firmly promoted the Salesian cause³⁰.

²⁸ Alfredo Moll Tur (ex-student), in conversation with the author, June 2020.

²⁹ Joan Bagur Franco (ex-student), in conversation with the author, May 2021.

³⁰ *Cincuenta años de labor salesiana en Ciutadella de Menorca (1899-1949)*, Ciutadella de Menorca, Impremta Al·lès, 1949.

2.4 *Hidden curriculum*

A hidden curriculum is construed to mean knowledge that is worked on implicitly in schools, and sometimes spread involuntarily, without it forming a specific part of the regulated curriculum³¹. According to the school's ex-students, the classroom was also used for the subliminal dissemination of the school's corporate history under the pretext of learning other input or skills.

One example is the compulsory reading matter for encouraging good reading habits. Biographies like those of Saint John Bosco or Dominic Savio were read by most of the students who passed through the Salesian school's classrooms, supposedly to improve their reading comprehension. The same also applied to drawing skills, which were often practised by drawing portraits of figures from the foundational myths³². Similarly, the students were introduced to drama and theatre by performing plays based on salient episodes from Saint John Bosco's life, with special emphasis on his dreams and his childhood³³.

It is also important to highlight the informal complementary explanations that, according to accounts, were common in class during most subjects, particularly when the teacher was a member of the religious order. The subjects that were being taught were often used to talk about the origins of the school, the growth that it had undergone, and the work that had been achieved there. It was also common for teachers from other regions to talk about the educational and social headway that had been made in their place of origin, contrasting the achieved goals with the situation prior to the congregation's arrival. Ex-students from the school were also used in such practices. The teachers continually upheld ex-students who had forged a noteworthy professional, military or ecclesiastical career as a role model and means of motivating students, with special emphasis on the first figures to forge a prominent career in each of these fields³⁴.

Lastly, mention must also be made of *Buenas noches* (Good Night), a kind of daily farewell by the school headmaster. When the day's classes were over, the students met in the school hall where the headmaster gave a speech with a moral message for them to reflect on. He talked about the lessons that could be drawn from the day, in addition to including some input on the school's corporate history³⁵. For instance, as encouragement for the school's young students, anecdotes relating to the school's foundational myths were told or some of its most celebrated ex-students and former patrons were recalled³⁶. This practice, invented by Saint John Bosco, created a link between the founder and the history of a congregation that continues to use this solemn evening ritual.

³¹ J. Torres Santomé, *El curriculum oculto*, Madrid, Ediciones Morata, 1991.

³² Joan Bagur Franco (ex-student), in conversation with the author, May 2021.

³³ Gabriel Julià Seguí (ex-student), in conversation with the author, July 2020.

³⁴ Alfredo Moll Tur (ex-student), in conversation with the author, June 2020.

³⁵ Gabriel Julià Seguí (ex-student), in conversation with the author, July 2020.

³⁶ Joan Bagur Franco (ex-student), in conversation with the author, May 2021.

Conclusions

From an analysis of the results of this research study, it can be concluded that corporate history is also related to the field of education; specifically, to private religious schools. Clear commercial rewards can be derived from this kind of corporate history, illustrated through numerous examples.

Firstly, foundational myths served to forge a collective identity and to encourage a sense of belonging to a school, uniting students, fostering a sense of loyalty and boosting the centre's clientele. Secondly, "triumphant" ex-students demonstrated the functional benefits and success of the educational services offered by the school, infusing it with added value and setting it apart from the rest. The different mechanisms used to disseminate the school's corporate history also helped to foster a positive corporate reputation, maximizing the growth achieved by the centre since its foundation. In our case study, the message that was conveyed was one of a booming enterprise (the Salesian congregation) and a thriving franchise (the school), with the constant expansion of its infrastructure and facilities. Lastly, by upholding ex-patrons and benefactors as role models, this helped to encourage donations and, by extension, additional finance when major alterations had to be made to the school buildings.

To sum up, from a study of the different mechanisms used by private religious schools to disseminate their message, aside from their obvious educational activities, these schools also engaged in important social and commercial activities which helped them to survive and to compete in the post-war educational market. By analysing the corporate history of religious schools, an insight can be gained into how their reputation as educational leaders was forged during the Franco regime, reinforced by a series of corporate strategies that have been examined in this paper.

Studying to Survive: the Representation of the Waldensian School through the Beckwith Museums

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At a distance of a few kilometers from each other in the three Piedmonts valleys called Val Pellice, Val Chisone and Val Germanasca there are five school museums (in Malzat, Pramollo, Angrogna, Rodoretto and Didiero). To add to these, one classroom has also been reconstructed and is located inside the Torre Pellice Museum. It is natural to ask why this concentration is so important. The answer is closely linked to the fact that, these Valleys about 50 km from Turin represent the territory in which people of Waldensian religion, after the persecution for having joined the Calvinist Reformation, with the peace of Cavour obtained from the Savoys in 1561 the right to live in the valleys and to profess their worship, albeit with restrictions¹. Almost three hundred years later, in 1848, with the letters patent signed by King Charles Albert of Savoy the Waldensian population living in these valleys obtained full rights, finally being able to leave the ghetto territory. It is evident – given this concentration of school museums – how the concept of school is perceived by the Waldensian together with a personal identity: in other words, education and the ability to read and write form an integral and fundamental part of the “Waldensian existence”.

To understand the motivation of such a close bond it is sufficient to refer to the very roots of the Waldensian religion and the history of the population: on the one hand one of the fundamental requirements of the religion's principles is the free reading and free analysis of the Sacred Scriptures and, consequently, only knowing how to read was possible to access the biblical text without the intervention of other people². On the

¹ About Waldensian's history: E. Comba e L. Santini, *Storia dei valdesi*, Torino, Claudiana, 1973; A. Armand-Hugon, *Storia dei Valesi 2. Dal Sinodo di Chanforan all'Emancipazione*, Torino, Claudiana, 1974; A. Molnar, *Storia dei Valdesi. Dalle origini all'adesione alla Riforma (1176-1532)*, Torino Claudiana Editrice, 1974; G. Tourn, *I Valdesi*, Torino, Claudiana, 1981; G. Tourn, *I valdesi: la singolare vicenda di un popolo-chiesa: 1170-1999*, Torino, Claudiana, 1999; M. Gilibert, A. Magaddino (edd.), *I Valdesi: cinque secoli di storia del popolo e delle valli*, Torino, Gilibert, 2009.

² For this reason the travelling preachers (known as *barba*, the Waldensian word for uncle) were trained from the Middle Ages in a *Schola* located in what is now the Pellice valley. As early as the sixteenth century, every church was obliged to have a sufficient number of schools in which to teach the basis of religion. The plague of 1630 caused the death of many Pastors and Teachers, so it was necessary to bring in French-speaking Swiss teachers and Swiss pastors, and the French language soon replaced Italian in official teaching. Despite peace



Fig. 1. Angrogna schoolmuseum (Historical Archive of the Waldensian Table in Torre Pellice)



Fig. 2. Beckwith classroom in Rodoretto's Museum (Historical Archive of the Waldensian Table in Torre Pellice)

other hand, the ability to communicate in writing through exchanges of letters was a necessity, a tool that allowed the people of these Piedmonts valleys to keep in touch with the various committees that had arisen abroad (Holland, England...) to also support economically the Waldensian population of this territory³. Given the fundamental importance of education in this cultural and religious context, it is significant to question what representation of the school is offered through these Waldensian School Museums. From the study of these museums, it is clear how the Waldensians chose to represent specifically their school of the nineteenth century. In fact, a unique phenomenon is seen and an out of the ordinary growth. These are the schools created by Charles Beckwith, a colonel sent by the Foreign Committees to support the Waldensians of the Piedmonts valleys who arrived in Torre Pellice in 1828 and immediately set to work to improve the school system (remember, however, that until the Letters Patent of 1848 the Waldensians could not attend the schools of the Kingdom of Savoy)⁴. There was in fact since 1700 a Waldensian school system in the valleys but they were lessons in dilapidated premises,

agreements, the persecutions suffered by the Waldensians in Piedmont during the seventeenth century did not interrupt the efforts made in the field of education, which the 1692 Synod reiterated as a primary necessity. This is reflected in the organization of the educational system into *Grandes écoles* in the main towns and *Petites écoles*, small neighborhood schools, scattered throughout the mountain villages. Cf.: G. Balesio, G. Ceriana Mayneri, S. Pasquet, «*Universités des chèvres*»: *l'istruzione primaria tra i Valdesi delle Valli Pellice, Chisone e Germanasca*, in M. Piseri (a cura di), *L'alfabeto in montagna. Scuola e alfabetismo nell'area alpina tra età moderna e XIX secolo*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2012, pp. 194-202; A. Armand-Hugon, G. Peyrot, *Origine e sviluppo degli Istituti Valdesi di Istruzione nelle valli del Pinerolese*, «*Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi*», n. 117, June 1965, pp. 9-17; M. Battistoni, *Il sistema scolastico valdese e la rinascita della Scuola Latina nel secolo XVIII*, «*Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi*», n. 191, 2002, pp. 27-63.

³ Interview given by Pastor Marchetti to the author on August 2019.

⁴ For a Beckwith biography: J.P. Meille, *Le Général Beckwith. Sa vie et ses travaux parmi les Vaudois du Piémont*, Lausanne, Bridel, 1872; D. Jahier, *Per una nuova biografia del Generale Carlo Beckwith*, «*Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire Vaudoise*» n. 38, 1917; J. Jalla, *Le Général Beckwith*, Torre Pellice, Società di Studi Valdesi, 1927; G. Ashdown, *The General with a Wooden Leg*, London, The Protestant Alliance, 1980; G. Giampiccoli, *J. Charles Beckwith. Il generale dei valdesi (1789-1862)*, Torino, Claudiana, 2012.

mostly stables, in which the pupils were given the basics of reading, sacred hymns and a small amount of mathematics. The operation promoted by Beckwith is all-rounded and widespread, starting from the belief that the school must be present in every small village, to allow everyone to attend without having to travel great distances. He then developed a specific school architecture, very simple, consisting of a single classroom (sometimes with the accommodation for the teacher above the premises) that replicates in every small village. The number of these schools grows at an impressive rate: in 1840 we have in the three valleys 89 new schools built and 13 restored; in 1846 the school buildings rise to 120 (and these neighborhood schools, as they were then called begin to be somehow identified with Colonel Beckwith himself, calling them *écoles du Colonel* (Colonel's schools); in the school year 1848-49 there are 169 schools with their own building; in 1898 Beckwith schools in the three valleys become 182⁵. These numbers appear even more significant when compared to the rest of the territory: for example, Piedmont – which already had a high literacy rate and had had before the Unification of Italy, with the Boncompagni Law gave great importance to education – there was 54.2% illiteracy⁶. On the contrary, in the small mountainous territory populated by the Waldensians, a scholastic statistic of the year 1848-1849 (year of the emancipation of the Waldensians) shows how out of a population of about 20,000 inhabitants, 4,779 went to school⁷. This is a quarter of the total population.

Returning to the consideration of the current Waldensian School Museums, it is of great interest to investigate whether and how they manage to represent, and consequently to convey to the public, this significant uniqueness of the local school. Visiting such museums shows how attention has been paid to showing some central points of the experience such as the diffusion of the school in every small village, the construction of a building designed specifically to accommodate the school, the classroom furniture that was regarded as essential by Beckwith and that saw him personally involved in the renovation (such as the stove, the blackboards but also the first teaching aids such as the globe or the abacus) the expositive fulcrum represented by the Bible in French⁸.



Fig. 3. Salsil's Museum in Didiero (Historical Archive of the Waldensian Table in Torre Pellice)

⁵ Cf. J. Coisson, *Monographie sur le developpement intellectuel dans nos Vallées pendant les dernières 50 années. Instruction primaire*, Torre Pellice, Typographie Besson, 1898.

⁶ C.G. Laicata, *Istruzione e sviluppo industriale in Italia 1859-1914*, Firenze, Giunti, 1973, p. 32.

⁷ Coisson, *Monographie sur le developpement intellectuel dans nos Vallées pendant les dernières 50 années*, cit., p. 47.

⁸ On the materials present in the school representations made within the Beckwith Museums see F.D. Pizzigoni, *The Beckwith school-museums as a place of memory*, «History of Education and Children's Literature»,

In reality, however, if we turn to other sources of study, such as the documentary funds of the Waldensian Archive of the Table and memories shared orally by former teachers or ex pupils of the Waldensian schools, we easily see that the history of the Waldensian school and its uniqueness are also constituted by many other aspects of great interest, both for the study of the local school and for considerations related to the relationship with the national school history. We will mention here only the main macro-themes, due to the lack of space, without going into the depth of which they deserve. Among the themes that emerge from the study of other sources and that do not seem to find full representation in the Beckwith Museums, are:

1. The specific subdivision of the Waldensian school system and the focus on all levels of education, both male and female.
2. The aspects of school life that characterised the “making of school” in this reality: multi-class, teaching methods, programs and schedules.
3. Teacher training.
4. The relationship between the rules and programmers of Waldensian and Ministerial schools at national level.
5. The history of Beckwith schools in the 20th century.

The schools opened by Beckwith, also called as we have seen *Colonel's school* or *neighborhood school*, coincided with *les petites écoles* (small schools) and corresponded indicatively to the first years of elementary school and were mixed, for boys and girls. To complete the elementary cycle, there were *les grandes écoles* (great schools), also called “parochial schools” that were based in the larger towns and not in the individual villages⁹. They were intended for pupils between the ages of ten and sixteen and there were 13 schools¹⁰. To allow the girls to continue their education, between the ages of 10 and 16 there were also the *écoles des filles* (girls' schools), in which they taught reading, arithmetic, grammar, sewing and other women's jobs. The offer of higher studies in the area was articulated and allowed the choice between the Latin School which was opened in the 1830s with courses in Latin and French, the College built in Torre Pellice from 1835 and the high school that opened in 1888, as well as courses to become teachers to which we will refer to later¹¹.

With regards to the subjects taught within the Beckwith elementary schools, the documents of the Archive show us how the Synod of 1848 had introduced the Italian language at school, along with that of French¹². In the neighborhood schools religion,

vol. XIV, n. 1, 2019, pp. 91-107.

⁹ This subdivision into *Petites écoles* and *Grandes écoles* had already been regulated by the chapter *De l'instruction publique* of Ecclesiastical Discipline adopted at the Synod of 1833: cf. G. Ballesio, G. Ceriana Mayneri, S. Pasquet, «*Universités des chèvres*»: *l'istruzione primaria tra i Valdesi delle Valli Pellice, Chisone e Germanasca*, in M. Piseri (ed.), *L'alfabeto in montagna. Scuola e alfabetismo nell'area alpina tra età moderna e XIX secolo*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2012, p. 194.

¹⁰ G. Ballesio, S. Rivoira, *Leggere, scrivere e cucire. L'istruzione femminile nelle Valli valdesi nell'Ottocento*, Torre Pellice, Claudiana, 2013.

¹¹ L. Micol, *Le scuole dei valdesi ieri e oggi*, Torre Pellice, Società degli Studi Valdesi, 1965.

¹² T.J. Pons (ed.), *Actes des synodes des Églises Vaudoises*, Torre Pellice, Società di Studi Valdesi, 1948, p. 229.

French, Italian, writing, singing and arithmetic were taught¹³. With the unification of Italy and the first national laws on education, the situation in the Waldensian Valleys seemed not to have changed substantially. In fact the local Municipalities were charged by the Casati Law to personally take care of the management of the schools willingly ceded this task to a reality already structured as the Waldensian: «Compromise solutions were therefore found and the Waldensian elementary schools were considered local council schools to avoid the break between the City and the Waldensian Church, with the risk that there were local and municipal teachers with very few pupils [...] on the contrary, the Catholic ones became private»¹⁴. The study programs were those of the state, but the French lessons and Waldensian religion remained as complementary courses. The issue of the division between male and female classes foreseen by the national law, which clashed with the mixed class organization of the Waldensian reality, created difficulties in adapting to national school legislation, in line with the foreign Protestant model. In 1875 a letter from Pastor Weitzcker of Torre Pellice addressed to the Minister of Education Ruggiero Bonghi stressed that the Waldensian school model was perfectly in line with the needs of the population and explained how the abolition of mixed schools, requested by the Prefecture of Turin, could not be applied: «evidently a population of the evangelical Christian religion (Protestant) had its own educational principles which had to be taken into account and, for example, could not blame it for being attached to the system of mixed school [...] It also needed a culture of its own and there would have had to be certain branches of teaching that in schools would demand more development than in schools of Catholic populations»¹⁵.

Another unique aspect of the Waldensian reality was the training of teachers: initially the management of the Waldensian schools was entrusted to each community Council that had to provide for the appointment of the titular teacher (called *régent*). The



Fig. 4. Certificate of eligibility for teaching in primary school issued by the *Tavola Valdese*, 1914 (Historical Archive of the Waldensian Table in Torre Pellice)

¹³ Cf. *Archivio del Concistoro di Torre Pellice* (Torre Pellice Consistory Archives), series «Instruction Primaire», 1873, Register 16.

¹⁴ Ballesio, Ceriana Mayneri, Pasquet, «*Universités des chèvres*»: l'istruzione primaria tra i Valdesi delle Valli Pellice, Chisone e Germanasca, cit., p. 186.

¹⁵ *Archivio comunale di Torre Pellice* (Torre Pellice Municipal Archives), category IX, folder 893.



Fig. 5. Martel's school in Angrogna (Waldensian Photographic Archive in Torre Pellice, fond «David Peyrot»)

Certificate of Eligibility was awarded directly by the Waldensian Table still in the late nineteenth century.

This aspect was in contrast with what was established at the national level, which referred to the Royal Decree of 24 June 1860 and in particular to an examination specifically regulated in Chapter XVIII to obtain the qualifications recognized for teaching. In fact, even the teachers appointed by the Table had their own specific training but provided by local institutions represented first by what was called the “General School for teacher training” created in 1827 in the hamlet of Pomaretto, and then from 1852 to 1883 from a course of study at the Waldensian College of Torre Pellice¹⁶.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, the problem of the training of Waldensian teachers emerged with greater force in the face of the risk of seeing them replaced by non Waldensian teachers. To resolve the situation in 1913 Beckwith opened a Normal School to ensure that the Waldensian teachers could achieve the correct degree achieved by national laws¹⁷. Another aspect not treated as a specific theme within the Museums of the Beckwith school, but of great interest is the history of these *écoles du colonel* during the twentieth century. Excluding the events linked to the progressive depopulation of the mountainous areas of the Valleys, which leads to a progressive closure of the “Beckwith school”, the history of *petites écoles* in the twentieth century sees the school building remaining the property of the Waldensian Church but teachers being paid by the State and sometimes by the City, becoming subsidised schools.

To study this situation we are helped by the archives of the Waldensian Table, through donations of notebooks and materials from the families of teachers, and the memorabilia

¹⁶ A. Mannucci, *Educazione e scuole protestante: dall'Unità all'età giolittiana*, Pian di San Bartolo, Luciano Manzuoli editore, 1898, pp. 64-65.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

of former teachers who still until the 1970s taught in the Beckwith schools. With respect to the first typology of twentieth century sources, we note in particular the collections of unpublished diaries by Eithen Bonnet and Enrico Gay referring to the 1950s, 60s and 70s (which were also used for the cards of the database of Diaries unpublished within the project “School Memory”¹⁸). These have the ability to vividly and comprehensively portray the life of this school organized in multi-classes, bringing out excellent planning, returning the annual income as well as the great organisational and teaching capacity of the teachers. Among the didactic choices, for example, diaries highlight the work in classes that are also grouped among different multi-classes, the use of lessons based on conversations that, starting from the same centre of interest, develop according to the age of the students. Compared to the training of teachers in recent years, the diaries report on the topics and modalities of the monthly updates that were held in Pinerolo through pedagogical conferences to which each teacher was called to actively participate by presenting theme-based reports. The school hours in the second half of the twentieth century were from 9 am to 12 am and from 2 pm to 4 pm, including Wednesday classes of Catholic religion and Saturday Waldensian religion. As of the setup of the classroom, it is from the inspectors comments in these diaries that help us understand that it was actually not very different from how it looked in the nineteenth century: «poor classroom, blackened walls [...] two unreadable maps due to being overused»¹⁹, «the furniture consists of benches of antiquated workmanship, in a very poor state of conservation»²⁰. Teachers brought personal materials from home to decorate the classroom and equip it with teaching aids, while parents contributed to the purchase of the indispensable new heater for the school²¹. There are also other sources, those drawn from the oral memories of former teachers of the Beckwith school²², that allow the full reconstruction of what the Beckwith school was really like in the twentieth century. As an example, the memoirs of Raimondo Genre, who began his activity as a teacher in 1951 at the age of 21, he gives us an idea of the reality of a Beckwith school with all the classes together, from the first year to the sixth. At the end of the afternoon lessons, the students stayed for the optional French course: the lessons were in Italian, but the local council gave the teachers a supplementary sum for the French lessons taught outside of their schedule. Since Beckwith schools were now attended by Waldensian and Catholic students, religious lessons were also held outside school hours. The memoirs of the teacher Genre continue retracing the reality of subsidised schools: «It was a school recognized by the State, it was

¹⁸ The Memoria Scolastica website was born as a design result of the PRIN “School Memories between Social Perception and Collective Representation (Italy, 1861-2001)” project and offers different databases related to the collective, individual and public memory linked to the school: www.memoriascolastica.it (last access: 08.02.2023).

¹⁹ Diary of Ethel Anna Bonnet, s.y. 1951-1952, in *Archivio storico della Tavola Valdese* (Historical Archives of the Waldensian Table) in Torre Pellice, fond «Bonnet».

²⁰ Diary of Ethel Anna Bonnet, s.y. 1956-1957, in *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Interviewed by the writer in relation to the project “*Memorie magistrali*” (Teachers’ memories) of INDIRE: P. Giorgi, F.D. Pizzigoni, *Memorie di scuola: percorsi dell’Archivio storico INDIRE*, Firenze, INDIRE, 2022.

head of a teaching direction of a larger school, but our opening period was shorter and at the end of the year there was the examination at the capital. As a salary I remember that I received a part from the State through the City (all year 75,000 lire) and the families had contributed collecting another 5,000 lire. The families also helped by bringing wood for the class stove and inviting us home whenever there was a family party». The memories of master Genre confirm the appearance of the Beckwith school remained unchanged over the years: «we had wooden benches and a single bench for each row. The chair was of the high ones, on a predella. There was the slate board and an abacus that in reality we did not use anymore».

Conclusions

Analysing the representation of the school promoted through the Waldensian school museums, it is possible to capture very clearly some specific aspects that the promoters of these museums intend to highlight. First of all, one can clearly comprehend the desire to emphasise the importance of education for the Waldensian community and the importance it has had in the history of this population. Unquestionably, the school is considered a symbol of an entire culture, that of the Waldensian community itself and recognized as one of the foundational values. Another aspect that the Waldensian museums succeed in highlighting well is the distinctive feature of the school in this specific area of the valleys, with its widespread distribution of school buildings and a high rate of attending citizens. Lastly, the figure of Beckwith is emphasised, whose fields of action with respect to the local school are well explained: the dedicated school building, the presence in all the villages and decent furniture more appropriate to the needs of the school. In the same way, however, it emerges that the representation of the school that the Waldensian Museums intend to convey coincides with that of the 19th century. That is, with the unique and particular phase stimulated by Beckwith. Many other aspects such as the themes we mentioned in the previous paragraph are not addressed or at least not in an evident way in these museums. We can certainly say that the Waldensian school museums offer a “representation” of the Waldensian school and not the real and complete history of the Waldensian school. This is a deliberate and considered choice on the part of the community, which clearly recognises in Beckwith its own school history. It is therefore to all intents and purposes a symbolic representation, a kind of synecdoche. It allows us to say that the Beckwith school museums can be regarded as part of that phenomenon recognised as “reconstruction of memory”²³. The school has come to assume a collective

²³ We refer here to the reflections developed from the International Conference “School Memories. New trends in Historical Research into Education: Heuristic Perspectives and Methodological Issues” (Seville, 22-23 September 2015) and from C. Yanes-Cabrera, J. Meda, A. Viñao Frago (edd.), *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, Cham, Springer, 2017, without neglecting the previous work: A. Viñao Frago, *La memoria escolar: restos y huellas, recuerdos y olvidos*, «Annali di Storia dell’Educazione e delle Istituzioni Scolastiche», n. 12, 2005, pp. 19-33.

value and, beyond how it really was, has taken on an important identity for the entire community of Waldensian religion of the Piedmonts Valleys²⁴.

It is therefore in all respects a significant ideal representation and for this reason, by force of things, partial. This is not, however, a pedagogical reconstruction. The exhibition proposed by the Waldensian museums is intended to convey an idea of school, its ideal value and a part of its history that has now taken on a value that goes beyond the merely instructive and didactic. But it is not intended to offer elements of in-depth knowledge of educational history or educational history. You have to be aware of this when visiting a museum of the Beckwith school, however on the other hand are perfectly aware of the very promoters of these representations: «Opening and showing a Beckwith school is a way to maintain our roots, our culture, our religion»²⁵, the chairman of the Waldensian Historical Places Committee stresses. If on the one hand, therefore, the study of the museums of the Beckwith school, in the light of other sources dedicated to the history of the local school, makes us confirm that it is necessary to remember that the museums of the school do not necessarily coincide with pedagogical museums²⁶, on the other hand they underline how the value of memory is capable of “building” (creating representations, selecting a part of history, identifying an ideal, etc.) and at the same time allows individuals or groups of individuals to “recognize” and to feel that we are part of a community, a phenomenon and its history. In other words, with the study of the museums of the Waldensian school we can say that memory, in this case especially school memory contributes to reconstruct history but it is not history.

²⁴ J. Meda, *The «Sites of School Memory» in Italy between Memory and Oblivion: a First Approach*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», XIV, n. 1, 2019, pp. 25-47. Cf. also: S. Ramos Zamora, *Debates on Memory and the History of Education in the 21st Century*, «HSE Social and Education History», vol. X, n. 1, 2021, pp. 22-46.

²⁵ Statements to the author given on 8 August 2018.

²⁶ Cf.: J.R. Berrio, *Pasado, presente i porvenir de los museos de educación*, in A. Escolano Benito, J.M. Hernández Díaz (edd.), *La memoria y el deseo. Cultura de la escuela y educación deseada*, Valencia, Tirant lo Blanch, 2002, pp. 43-65; J. Meda, *Musei della scuola e dell'educazione. Ipotesi progettuale per una sistematizzazione delle iniziative di raccolta, conservazione e valorizzazione dei beni culturali delle scuole*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. V, n. 2, 2010, pp. 489-501; M. Brunelli, *Alle origini del museo scolastico. Storia di un dispositivo didattico al servizio della scuola primaria e popolare tra Otto e Novecento*, Macerata, eum, 2020.

The Fame of the First Girls' High School in Paris: the Birth of a Co-Constructed Collective Memory

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Introduction

State secondary education for women appeared in France at the end of the 19th century. Until then the preserve of the congregations¹, the care of young bourgeois girls – future mothers and educators of the nation's elite – was the object of all the attention of public policy, although not without reluctance.

Indeed, as Jules Ferry, then Minister of Public Education and Fine Arts, said, «he who holds the woman, holds everything, firstly because he holds the child, then because he holds the husband»². Educating young girls from the ruling classes by providing them with a paid education, then, means ensuring «the reconstituted unity in the family»³ through equality of education. Moreover, it was also a question of guaranteeing these girls a republican education, in an anti-clerical logic of secularization of education, without revolutionizing its conceptions⁴. Thus, it took three years of debate in the Chamber of Deputies before the Camille Sée Law was passed on 21 December 1880. It would take another three years to see the birth of the first girls' *lycée* in the capital – the *Lycée Fénelon* – on 22 October 1883.

This dual creation raised a number of issues. Indeed, the State was involved in the dual logic of using the Parisian example to prove the validity of this progressive law to the City Council and the press, but also to attract the capital's bourgeois families. The question then arises as to how the legislative framework and the actors participate in

¹ R. Rogers, *Les bourgeoises au pensionnat: l'éducation féminine au XIX^e siècle*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007, p. 264: «The results of the survey of secondary education that he launched in 1864 – analyzed in the previous chapter – helped to confirm his impression that nuns dominated the education of girls».

² F. Mayeur, *L'enseignement secondaire des jeunes filles sous la Troisième République*, Paris, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1977, p. 31.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ F. Mayeur, *Garçons et filles du XIX^e au XX^e siècle: une éducation différente*, «Enfance», vol. 34, n. 1-2, 1981, p. 50: «If the State wants to succeed in its educational enterprise, it must reassure the public. The best way to do this is to offer a substitute as exact as possible for the world in which it is used to seeing girls evolve».

the construction of the identity of this school while taking into account the social and cultural environment during the mandate of the first director.

I propose here to observe first of all how the public authorities structurally built and organised the image of Fénelon even before it opened; and how, thanks to the central power but also thanks to the interaction of local actors, the reputation of the *Lycée Fénelon* made this establishment the figurehead of female secondary education.

1. *Building a reputation: a structural and organizational issue*

Faced with the immobility of the municipality, the State alone undertook the creation of the first Parisian girls' high school. We must not lose sight of the importance of what was at stake. The capital had a duty not only to innovate but also to serve as a model: «Paris could not remain behind fifty communes in France», wrote the newspaper «La République Française». If the statement is exaggerated, the fact remains that twelve *lycées* and colleges were opened between 1881 and 1902.

1.1 *A legislative framework for girls' education*

In order to administer these establishments, the Camille Sée law imposed a framework for future female secondary schools that was adapted to the social and moral aims of the time, thus distinguishing them from male secondary education. The legislative framework built up during these three years of legislation dealt with various aspects of girls' schooling.

Concerning the schooling regime, «at the idea of being the guardian of the innocence of future pupils, and of having to watch over the modesty of these young vestals, the Minister took fright»⁵. Indeed, apart from the financial aspect, it was agreed that the girl should remain, as far as possible, within her family. The harshness and promiscuity of the boarding school, already highly criticized for boys, are hardly compatible with the «fragile nature» of young girls. On the other hand, beyond the existence of boarding schools in girls' *lycées*, morality has also been the subject of many disputes. It was not so much the fact of teaching morals in school that posed a problem, but rather the content of the teaching.

⁵ F.W. Foerster, *L'école et le caractère: les problèmes moraux de la vie scolaire*, Paris, Fabert, 2003, p. 9.

Indeed, aware of the weight of the Church on the generations of young girls⁶, the State – through the creation of a secular and specific secondary education⁷ – sought to break with this heritage marked by an obsolete monarchic system. However, it was necessary «not to offend morals and to give the newcomer education its letters of nobility by showing its roots in a distant past, which was at once philosophical, political and pedagogical»⁸. By placing republican morality as the first teaching in its curricula, the Camille Sée law imposed a teaching system stripped of all religious references but which nevertheless allowed young girls to take optional courses. It was therefore necessary to construct this morality resolutely different from that inculcated in boys.

The main reason for the paradigm shift was the fact that at that time, public education included a good number of Protestant personalities. The instigator of the law on secondary education for girls was Jewish, the Protestant masters of secular pedagogy such as Buisson and Pécaut, then Inspector General in 1880, presided over the *École normale de Sèvres*⁹. Other illustrious Protestant personalities held strategic positions in the *Société* «for the study of secondary education issues» within the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Instruction publique* (Higher Council for Public Instruction), founded shortly before the birth of the Camille Sée law, and particularly in charge of its implementation. Thus, the *Société* lays the foundation for an independent morality: «the new school must propose, as its primary and supreme goal, the formation of character»¹⁰. This training also involved the establishment of a disciplinary straitjacket, similar to the male secondary schools of the time.

However, the notion of adolescence as we understand it today and its consequences¹¹ did not exist in those days. For the contemporaries, it was a passage from childhood to adulthood, from family life to public life, a notion that was then used exclusively for boys from the bourgeoisie. Bourgeois girls, on the other hand, were not included in these considerations because their education took place essentially in the family sphere, and therefore in private¹². Brought up by their mothers who played 'fully, in most cases,

⁶ Speech by J. Ferry, 10 April 1870: «He who holds the woman, holds everything, firstly because he holds the child, then because he holds the husband [...] the woman must belong to science or she must belong to the Church».

⁷ Indeed, morality in boys' *lycées* has existed since their creation, but it has taken on a completely different nature. Gréard, in the report annexed to the décret of 5 July 1890 (p. 594), speaks of it in these terms: «We have had many opportunities to observe this and we wish to proclaim it once and for all: the natural basis, the first guarantee of a moral education, is, in our eyes, a healthy and virile physical education [...] Good discipline and good morals are, for us, in close collaboration with good humor, hygiene and male exercises». Moral education is therefore essentially a matter of physical exercise.

⁸ Rogers, *Les bourgeoises au pensionnat*, cit., p. 269: «the most exceptional aspect of the program is the decision to replace the religious institution with moral instruction, although parents may request that girls attend religious classes».

⁹ P. Cabanel, *Histoire des protestants en France (XVI^e-XXI^e siècle)*, Paris, Fayard, 2012.

¹⁰ J. Ancelet-Hustache, *Lycéenne en 1905*, Paris, Aubier Montaigne, 1981, p. 28.

¹¹ A. Thiercé, *Histoire de l'adolescence: 1850-1914*, Paris, Belin, 1999. The concept of an «adolescent crisis» did not exist and as a result there was no specific framework: only repression could «constrain minds and govern hearts».

¹² G. Houbre, *Histoire des mères et filles*, Paris, de La Martinière, 2006, p. 77. The education of young girls from the bourgeoisie was carried out by their mothers, although they «most often went to a Catholic

the game of the social and cultural construction of the sexes¹³, they were taught to be «devoted, vigorous, fit to become excellent reproducers, mothers capable of fulfilling their destiny»¹⁴.

Thus, «one cannot, on the other hand, compare the discipline of boys and girls who are infinitely more sensitive than their brothers to purely moral sanctions»¹⁵. The «internal discipline»¹⁶ of girls' schools does not mention punishments considered repressive and abusive¹⁷ present in boys' schools, such as picketing, *pensums*, deprivation of recreation, restraint on walks and being put on the agenda. Moreover, the State did not initially envisage the creation of a post associated with discipline within the schools. Nevertheless, a strict school framework is imposed on the girls thanks to the internal regulations, a timetable regulated to the millimeter regulates their time and a staff that has just been qualified and hand-picked manages, trains and punishes. At their head, the headmistress who, unlike her male counterpart, is statutorily kept¹⁸ informed of everything, whether it be the pupils' absences (article 30), or «penalties and sanctions imposed by the teacher or by the repeating mistresses» (article 32). She acts in concert with the latter in drawing up the rules of procedure (article 49) and the roll of honour (article 33), facilitated by the fact that she is aware of the marks obtained because she comments on them each week in class (article 34). It is also in collaboration (hierarchical) that she participates in the passing examinations. The principal is officially involved in the life of the school, at the confluence of the missions of education and instruction.

This statutory overview has enabled us to analyze the way in which the initial structure of secondary education helps to guarantee a well thought-out, structuring and reassuring framework in order to silence its detractors and attract families. Let us then look at its implementation in the capital.

1.2 *An attractive local setting: the creation of the Lycée Fénelon*

The reputation of an establishment is built initially on the basis of the means implemented to contribute to the success of the objectives set by the law. Many choices were made regarding the birth of the first girls' high school in the capital.

congregation or lay boarding school».

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁵ «Bulletins de l'amicale générale des Provisseurs et Directrices des lycées français», Cahors, Coueslant, 1932, p. 23.

¹⁶ Arrêté du 28 juillet 1884.

¹⁷ «Bulletin administratif du Ministère de l'Instruction Publique», vol. 48, 1890, p. 424: «This discipline is bad, it is clumsy and narrow-minded. It sacrifices the whole future to the security of the present moment; it is satisfied with the apparent order it obtains and does not know or does not want to see the profound disorder it tolerates, still less that which it creates».

¹⁸ Arrêté du 28 juillet 1884.

Located in the «Sinaï of university education», the building – a former Villayer mansion – offered an exceptional location in this district of the sixth arrondissement of Paris where «the experience of the male high schools had enlightened him». Thus, it was obvious that the first girls' high school in Paris would be built in this highly renowned district. However, alongside the moral vitality part of the district was renowned for its places of depravity in the image of the Saint-Michel district. The choice of the «sad rue de l'Éperon»¹⁹ could not have been more strategic. As for the interior, it was austere, but in good taste. The architect of the large Parisian boys' high schools, Charles le Cœur, had made the necessary architectural modifications to make the premises functional while preserving the «attractive appearance of the classrooms and corridors»²⁰.

Thus, on 15 October 1883, the *lycée* welcomed 121 pupils from a certain bourgeois class. Indeed, in order to forge the image of the renowned establishment and to guarantee its quality, the first *lycée* in the capital had to adopt strategies locally in order to ensure a choice recruitment. Firstly, the training offer for girls was accessible from a very young age²¹ despite the status of a secondary school in order to compete with the congregations. In addition, the fees required for schooling were much higher than those of other girls' schools. For example, to be a simple day pupil at the *Lycée de Mâcon* cost sixty francs for primary classes compared to one hundred and fifty at Fénelon and ninety francs for secondary classes in Mâcon compared to two hundred francs for schooling in Paris, i.e. more than double.

In addition to the financial selection process, the school imposes a standard of excellence on young fénelonians. In addition to the financial selection process, the school imposed a high standard of excellence on the girls, with entrance examinations in both primary and secondary classes. In addition, a sixth year was created so that some girls could prepare for entry to the *École Normale de Sèvres* with, initially, a science-oriented class and then a literary section the following year. During the first ten years of its existence, Fénelon kept the preparation at Sèvres, having as its only competition the private college Sévigné. Finally, although the law did not provide for it, a boarding school was created outside of Paris in order to satisfy the wealthy families of the provinces²². Fénelon therefore welcomed young girls from bourgeois families in the Seine and the provinces, selected the best and perpetuated this requirement by preparing them for the teaching exam. Indeed, the *École Normale de Sèvres* – a women's teacher training college – opened its doors a few months after the Camille Sée Law and Fénelon became both a breeding ground and an

¹⁹ G. Laguerre, *Le Lycée Fénelon*, Paris, Lesot, 1960, p. 22.

²⁰ G. Dupont-Ferrier, *Du collège de Clermont au lycée Louis-Le-Grand: 1563-1920*, Paris, E. de Boccard, 1921, p. 226.

²¹ AdP, 1491W 163. Prospectus des «Violettes» p. 18: The three years of primary education «are directed towards preparing pupils for secondary school».

²² *Ibid.*, p. 1: «The aim of the *Lycée Fénelon* educational centre is to enable parents to send their daughters to one of the best schools in Paris, and at the same time to provide them with the healthy and invigorating life of the countryside [...] we therefore wish to give the girls entrusted to us a physical and moral education in keeping with the high intellectual education they receive at the *Lycée Fénelon* [...] to surround the pupils with the healthy atmosphere of family life, while accustoming them to a thoughtful and moral discipline».

employer from the outset, in a process of perpetuating a certain form of education, of excellence, which was to play a major role in building its reputation.

In order to manage this establishment, Miss Cécile Provost was chosen by the vice-rector of the Paris academy, Octave Gréard²³, as the first director of Fénelon. As one of the first female agrégées and with a wealth of teaching experience, she ran the school for over thirty years. In spite of all the missions mentioned above, she was perceived by the students as a «distinguished and reserved person, who ensured the organization of the school by a few general directives and obtained the good behavior of all by the simple example of her strict behavior»²⁴. The female teachers, who were single in the early years, also had a duty to set an example, especially as many of them lived on the premises. The school was then a place of strict, hermetic, even monastic life.

In addition to this moralizing exemplarity, moral lessons were given in secondary education. Thus, in the fourth year, the girls tackle notions such as the idea of duty, the role of feeling in morality, responsibility or virtue, with the addition of commented philosophical readings such as Aristotle on friendship and education or Nicole and his Treatise on the means of keeping peace with men. This notion was taken up again and extended the following year, on the «means of not hurting their fellow men by contradicting their opinions»²⁵, on the benefits of social life, solidarity between men, charity, benevolence and with the subject of the composition being a connection between theory and practice on the notion of goodness²⁶. Linking theory to practice demonstrates the scientific and utilitarian character of republican morality. Having acquired a certain form of maturity, the fifth-grade students are not mere spectators of a lecture, but actors in understanding the internal logic of the morality course. The readings are complemented by questions that guide the debate while giving the high school girls keys to understanding, thus enabling them to reuse – with their children or future students – a reflexive path specific to a proven and tested morality. Indeed, «there is no morality without sanction»²⁷. This organizational construction carried out by the agents made it possible to build an institutionalized school culture conducive to self-recruitment²⁸.

Many resources have been deployed to make the Fénelon High School a quality school. In addition to the austere framework provided by the school building, elite staff

²³ E. Levasseur, *Octave Gréard*, Versailles, Imprimeries Cerf, n.d. p. 28. In this work, the author discusses the way in which Octave Gréard invested himself in female secondary education, describing it as «one of Gréard's most lively and dearest concerns». Indeed, he chose its name, its location «close to the Sorbonne» and its director in order to accompany him in the administration of the first *lycée* in the capital for twenty years.

²⁴ Association des anciennes élèves du lycée Fénelon, *Livre d'or du centenaire de l'association des anciennes et anciens élèves du lycée Fénelon*, Niort, Dumas, 1996, p. 16.

²⁵ AdP, 704/73/1/54, Cahier de textes de 1906-1907.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, «After characterising goodness and briefly indicating its effects, you will draw a portrait of a truly good person».

²⁷ F. Mayeur, *L'éducation des filles: le modèle laïque*, in M. Perrot and G. Fraisse (edd.), *Histoire des femmes en Occident. Vol. IV: Le XIX^e siècle*, Paris, Plon, 1991, p. 300.

²⁸ Association des anciennes et des anciens élèves du lycée Fénelon, *Centenaire du lycée Fénelon*, Niort, Dumas, 1983, p. 15: «We have seen in this period of almost 24 years the children of the same family succeed one another without interruption at the *Lycée*. This is an unquestionable testimony to a discreet but sure success».

implemented the legislative framework by relying on human and financial resources in order to make this school the figurehead of girls' high schools in France. Once this reputation was created, what were the means to maintain it?

2. *Cultivating the reputation of the first girls' high school in Paris: the example of the Fénelon high school alumni association*

Although alumni associations are local initiatives, the public authorities have indicated their willingness²⁹ to see the development of an alumni network:

«I would like to take this opportunity to ask you to draw the attention of the Headmasters and Headmistresses of the secondary schools in your area to the usefulness of the former pupils' associations. These societies can lend us very valuable assistance, not only through the foundation of scholarships and prizes, but also through the patronage they exercise over pupils who are on the eve of leaving the *lycée*; they can, as one of their honorable predecessors observed, «intervene in the most useful way by giving these young people wise directions, by smoothing out for them the difficulties they encounter when entering the world, by facilitating their access to a career, in keeping with their vocation, their ability and their family position». My administration could therefore only strongly encourage the efforts which would be attempted by the local authorities to found alumni associations where none exist, or to extend the benefits and develop the means of action of those which are already functioning».

Mindful of the ministerial injunctions and conscious of the weight of this type of structure in the running of schools³⁰, the headmistress Cécile Provost decided to found the association of former pupils of the *lycée* thirteen years after the birth of Fénelon. The newsletters produced are an invaluable source of information on the way in which the school's operating and communication methods were thought out at the time.

2.1 *The Alumni Association*

«In 1896, a group of teachers elected by their colleagues and joined by a few former pupils formed, together with your Founder, the first Committee of our Association»³¹. At that time, this group was not simply an after-school activity, but an independent organization with its own mode of operation. The latter was composed of members,

²⁹ Circular letter of 21 April 1894: *Alumni Association*.

³⁰ S. Lembré, *La participation des anciens élèves aux politiques d'enseignement technique. Le cas du Nord de la France sous la Troisième République*, «Participations», n. 1, 2015, p. 196.

³¹ Association des anciennes élèves du lycée Fénelon, *25^{ème} anniversaire de l'association amicale des anciennes élèves du lycée Fénelon*, Cahors, Coueslant, 1921, p. 3.

classified according to their donations and their status in the organization (from founder, to benefactor, to honorary member). Members could also be students, again for a fee. In addition, in order to legitimize the seriousness of the enterprise in the eyes of the authorities and users, Octave Gréard was appointed honorary president. It should be noted that this same male figure enabled the association to obtain recognition as an Association of Public Utility³².

As far as the aims of the association are concerned, they are similar to the statutes of the boys' high schools, but they do not include the sphere of professional mutual aid:

Article 1^{er} – The purpose of the Association, known as the “Association of former students of the Lycée Fénelon”, founded in 1896, is to establish a common center of friendly relations between the former students of the *Lycée Fénelon*, and to provide material and moral assistance to those of its members who, without having any demerit, would be in need.

Here we find the same logic of selection that the *Lycée* operates. Indeed, in order to be a student at Fénelon, it is necessary to pay a certain sum. In order to become a member of the Association as well. Similarly, success and merit are valued at Fénelon. The Association also values the most deserving through prizes, scholarships or the emergency fund for members in need.

The activities offered by the association to the alumni are of different kinds and have evolved over time. Nevertheless, they are in line with the aims of the school. As early as 1902, conferences were organized by the association's steering committee so that former pupils would periodically receive «a charming and instructive talk», usually by the *lycée's* teachers. In order to disseminate the event as widely as possible, a monthly report is published in the association's bulletin. In this same bulletin, all information concerning the future of the former pupils is reported: births, deaths, marriages. Once a year, the moral situation of the association, the list of members and the statutes of the association are published; not forgetting the announcement of the *Lycée* festival and the Association festival, sources of funding. Thus, from its creation, the association had 160 members, mainly teachers. Indeed, «the students who have left the *Lycée* are not sufficiently eager to join the Association: our income is therefore affected»³³. As a result, an entire recruitment policy was put in place to win over former *Lycée* girls. A «propaganda committee» was set up to solicit as many female students as possible. The pupils of the 5th grade (the youngest eligible members) were invited to the conferences. In addition, the Alumnae Association helps with the organization of parties and the ball, and helps the girls to find a place in a foreign family.

Over the years, the number of members has increased and the activities have multiplied. Indeed, many activities animate the life of the school and contribute to perpetuate its influence. For example, there were certain works that «seemed worthy of

³² *Ibid.*, p. 4: «You were also greatly helped by the Honorary President, then at the head of the Association, Mr. Rector Gréard, who, struck by the achievements of the Association, which had been so recently created, and also by your organisation, asked that the dossier be submitted for careful examination».

³³ «Bulletin de l'association amicale des anciennes élèves du lycée Fénelon», May 1902, p. 2.

particular interest», such as the work of preserving tuberculosis, sewing workshops to make clothes for poor children, and collaboration with the «Oeuvre of the blind of war». These members are confronted with moral questions. In fact, by provoking reflection and action in order to enlighten and strengthen feelings, the (former) girls put into practice the sense of moral and virtuous life they learned during their studies.

Thus, a network woven by the association contributes to the prestige of the Fénelon high school. Former students and teachers enroll their daughters in the school. They tend to remain very attached to the school and to their headmistress, Cécile Provost, who helped to give a soul to the Fénelon school and to bring together in the same family all the *Féneloniennes*, students and teachers.

2.2 *The central role of Fénelon's first headmistress in the newsletters of the alumni association*

Formerly assistant teacher at the *École Normale Supérieure de Sèvres* and just agrégée (27 years, 9 years and 8 months of service), Cécile Provost was chosen by Octave Gréard to be head of Fénelon. She worked under his strong recommendations until the death of the vice rector in 1904. From the very first inspection reports, Provost's inspection reports are laudatory:

Intelligent, well-informed, distinguished principal. Loves her school and gives herself to it without counting the cost [...] and gives all her colleagues an example of activity and zeal [...] Judges her staff with insight and benevolence [...] pleases the families [...] seems to me to have all the qualities needed to ensure and develop the good reputation and prosperity of the school she has been invited to run³⁴.

In parallel to her work as head of Fénelon, she decided to create the association with a handful of teachers. Thus, she reigned for thirty years at the head of the school and worked within the Association until her death as founding president. Her attachment to the school was great. Fénelon was undoubtedly like a second family for her. This is reflected in her last speech in the newsletter of the Fénelon High School Alumnae Association. Indeed, the lexical field used is marked by maternal tenderness. The one that encompasses («my dear girls [...] my friends [...] my dear alumnae»), the one that guides («walking towards the future [...] growing success»), the one that brings together («a closer union of all») both in memory and for the future («when you come back [...] to bring your grandchildren [...] a thought of affection for the past»). This is how the future *Féneloniennes* were mainly recruited for years.

Thus, the Association's Bulletin became the forum of the school principal. Published quarterly, then monthly, almost every issue includes the first speech by the honorary president before that of the president or the treasurer, thus marking her pre-eminence. In this context, she comments on the life of the school and of the association, its events and

³⁴ AN, F/17/22241, General Inspection for the year 1894-1895.

its alumni, particularly in the event of death. She is also constantly congratulating the moral health of the school, highlighting the actions carried out and constantly soliciting new recruits. Her speech is that of a teacher who directed «this great House» that is Fénelon during the first thirty years of her life, in the evocation of a past that may have been toned down and certainly regretted:

In the strong bourgeoisie of our old France, our ancestors frequently kept a book, called the “book of reason”, in which were noted the events that interested the family group. They were accompanied by judgments and reflections, and from these books the soul of the family really emerged. With what tender respect the descendants had to reread these Annals of the past, we can easily imagine! What would be ours when we leaf through them in our turn... And we regret that life, so different today from what it was in the past, has only too rarely allowed traditions that are both so strong and so touching to survive.

But if the habit is almost completely lost in families, Societies like yours give us each year, in a series of reports, an enumeration of the decisions taken and the events that occurred, which together form a sort of “book of reason” for the Association. And this is one of the reasons why you should come in large numbers to the General Assemblies. On the contrary – and I deeply regret that your ranks are so thin at this meeting where we review the work and results of the year! At least read and reread these beautiful reports written with such a loyal pen, let your absent companions read them and, as we do ourselves, let yourselves be penetrated by the Soul of the Association³⁵.

This collective memory, represented by the newsletters, is to be crossed with the individual memories gathered in the visitors’ book published during the centenary of the Fénelon school. Here, the testimonies of former students, together with the class photos, constitute an additional marker of the school’s history. Provost is described here by a pupil who attended the school between 1907 and 1919 as a headmistress who «appeared rather majestic, rather distant; and [who] knew very little about us». Another pupil who went to school in 1912 «remembers her very precisely as a distinguished and reserved person, who ensured the organization of the school by a few general directives, and obtained good behavior from everyone simply by the example of her strict behavior». As Michelle Perrot said about her mother, «The *Lycée Fénelon* played an important role in my mother’s life [...] She took great pleasure in meeting up with her friends and forging new links with much younger “old-timers”. The Association was for her an irreplaceable place of meeting and friendship which she held dear».

Conclusion

The reputation of the *Lycée Fénelon* was built up at the same time as its memory, as the first high school for young girls in Paris. This success was the fruit of many efforts: that of the State, but also, and above all, of women and men who knew how to exploit

³⁵ «Bulletin de l’association des anciennes élèves du lycée Fénelon», May 1926, p. 6.

their room for manoeuvre to carry out their project: to make Fénelon the figurehead of female secondary education in France and internationally for many years.

It is primarily thanks to the will and determination of Octave Gréard³⁶ and Cécile Provost – a man and woman of power – that the prestige of the school was built. Gréard played a major role in providing the school with selection criteria favorable to good opinions, such as the name of the school, the choice of its location and the appointment of the headmistress, whom he accompanied in many of her undertakings.

It is also certainly in large part thanks to the first headmistress and founder of the alumnae association that a certain atmosphere, prompted by moral discipline and family duty, was spread for more than fifty years in and around Fénelon. Finally, it is certainly thanks to the teachers and staff who have accompanied all these generations of students.

It is also thanks to all these young girls who brought the school to life in various ways that the school «remained for a long time a place of excellence in women's secondary education»³⁷, as Françoise Mayeur recalled.

Today, a true living memory of the school, the alumni association still holds a meeting on Tuesday afternoons in the school, despite a certain decline. I had the pleasure of hearing them on a few Tuesdays reminiscing (and sometimes bickering) about the good and not so good moments of their schooling in their House.

³⁶ J.F. Condette, *Gréard Octave Valléry Clément*, in *Les recteurs d'académie en France de 1808 à 1940*, Paris, Institut national de recherche pédagogique, 2006, vol. II, pp. 204-206. After devoting a large part of his professional life to primary education, Octave Gréard turned down a position as Senator in order to continue his duties as Vice-Rector of the Paris academy.

³⁷ Association des anciennes et des anciens élèves du lycée Fénelon, *Centenaire du lycée Fénelon*, Dumas, Niort, 1983, p. 13.

Building the Local History Curriculum in Rural Portugal: between Local Developments and Global Understandings

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1. “School memories, reconstructed identities”: brief notes on a project

Primary sources mentioned in this paper result from a research project in the fields of History of Education and Policies for Education and Training: “Rescued memories, (Re)constructed Identities: Schooling experiences, heritage and local education dynamics” – MRIR (October 2019-September 2022, University of Lisbon). Based on qualitative research methodologies in the field of Historical Studies in Education¹, Project MRIR gathered and collected oral and written testimonies and other visual sources related to the history and memory of education in the region of PIS (sub-regions of Beira Baixa and Médio Tejo). Oral and visual sources are still being systematized for publication in the project’s Website², to support the design of a Local History Curriculum (LHC) and developed through a CTET Program³. Involved in the design and implementation of this experimental CTET Program are the CFAE Centro Educatís (sub-regions of Lezíria and Médio Tejo) and the CFAE Alto Tejo (sub-regions of Médio Tejo and Beira Baixa)⁴.

MRIR team sought to build a memory of education at the local level, identifying the material and immaterial heritage associated with education and teaching (buildings, iconography, biographies of pedagogues and teachers, ephemerides, school museums, local and regional press, school statistics, archeological sites). The project was also directed towards the production of a local history curriculum through the organization of a teacher training program involving local actors (citizens, specialists in local history, teachers, and researchers), institutional partners (universities, polytechnics, local development associations) and Centers for Teacher Education and Training (hereafter CFAES), within the geographic area of PIS.

When the pandemic hit Portugal, project MRIR’s team was conducting fieldwork in PIS, and planning the CTET Program to be certified by the national Continuing

¹ T. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Handbook of Historical Studies in Education: Debates, Tensions and Directions*, Singapore, Springer, 2020.

² <http://memorias.resgatadas.ie.ulisboa.pt/> (last access: 20.03.2023).

³ CTET stands for Continuous Teacher Education and Training program.

⁴ CFAE stands for *Centros de Formação da Associação de Escolas*.

Education Scientific-Pedagogical Council (CCPFC). The trial phase of the program pilot was already in place at Centro Educatís, associated with one of our project members. However, in between two nationwide lockdowns (March-May 2020 and January-March 2021), with the order of priorities continuously shifting, planning and implementation activities had to be constantly postponed, rethought, and rebuilt. Furthermore, since then, the CFAE and their Associated Schools have been overwhelmed with urgent priorities which left them with little room to attend Project MRIR's proposals. From September to December 2021, a series of informal conversations and formal negotiations between Project MRIR's team members and two CFAE's Directors led to the launching of an experimental version of the CTET Program at the CFAE of Alto Tejo, in collaboration with the School of Education of Castelo Branco.

MRIR project, which was the result of research carried out *with* the local community and *for* the local community, through historical and ethnographic research dynamics, aimed at producing historical content in the field of local educational heritage that may be used by stakeholders for instructional and civic purposes (municipalities, civic associations, schools, teachers, and families). Ultimately these materials, and the way in which they were organized as historical knowledge, sought to contribute to the rethinking of the Local Educational Project (hereafter PEL) impacting at the Educational School Project level (hereafter PES) and at the Curricular Class Plans level (hereafter PCT). The project's preliminary results have been made available on a web platform⁵ that disclosed an archive of Public Memory seeking to deepen the public's awareness of their local education history and heritage. The platform is organized according to the three axes of the project: Memory, Heritage, and Education.

Memory axis relates to the building of historical sources founded on the gathering, collection, systematization, and production of knowledge about schooling experiences, mainly through oral history methodologies⁶. Heritage axis deals with the identification of the historical educational heritage at the local cultural level, mainly through historical research and ethnographic fieldwork⁷. Education axis refers to the production of tangible materials (programs, curriculum, and thematic modules) associated with teaching and teacher' training in the field of local history. This project strand rest on community-

⁵ <http://memorias.resgatadas.ie.ulisboa.pt/> (last access: 20.03.2023).

⁶ K. Llewellyn, N. Ng-A-Fook (edd.), *Oral History and Education: Theories, Dilemmas and Practices*, London-Cham, Palgrave Macmillan/Springer, 2017.

⁷ M. Lawn, I. Grosvenor (edd.), *Materialities of Schooling: design, technology, objects, routines*, Oxford, Symposium Books, 2005; M. Lawn (ed.), *Modelling the future: Exhibitions and the Materiality of Education*, Oxford, Symposium Books, 2009; C. Yanes-Cabrera, J. Meda, A. Viao (edd.), *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, Cham, Springer, 2017.

based teacher participatory research methodologies⁸, the organization of “communities of practice”⁹ and “place-based curriculum strategies”¹⁰.

2. *The context*

The PIS region is classified as a “low-density territory”, a multi-criteria concept that considers population density, demography, settlement, physical characteristics of the territory, socio-economic characteristics and accessibility as the main indicators¹¹. The five municipalities that integrate the region of PIS (Oleiros, Proença-a-Nova, Sertã, Vila de Rei e Mação) all display low demographic density (including low level of interaction both between people and institutions), low institutional density (public institutions with little territorial dynamics), difficulty in using human resources (limited job offers), the limitations of local markets (not very competitive), difficulties in accessibility, low qualification levels of the active population and high school dropout rates¹².

In the last two decades, the contraction of the school population with the consequent reduction in the number of pupils has led to the reorganization of the school network, dictating the closure of schools, the migration of teachers and unemployment of auxiliary staff and the concentration of teaching in medium-sized establishments.

The closure of schools, particularly 1st cycle schools, which were more widespread in the rural landscape, led to further depopulation and often to the abandonment of villages. This phenomenon aggravated the educational disparities within the region (namely regarding the socio-economic profile of the pupils’ families, pupils with social support, educational level of the mothers, retention and drop-out).

Against all odds, PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS results of the five municipalities¹³ challenge the idea that poor school performance and learning inequalities can be explained by factors external to the school, such as the social and economic characteristics of the territories, and the socioeconomic profile of the families. Portugal’s participation in the

⁸ G.J. Pine, *Teacher Action Research: Building Knowledge Democracies*, Los Angeles, Sage, 2009.

⁹ E. Wenger, *Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning and Identity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998; E.C. Wenger, W. Snyder, *Communities of practice: the organizational frontier*, «Harvard Business Review», vol. 78, n. 1, 2000, pp. 139-144; E. Wenger, R. McDermott, W. Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, Boston, Harvard Business School Press, 2002.

¹⁰ D. Sobel, *Place-based education: connecting classrooms and communities*, Barrington, Orion Society, 2004; D. Shulsky, E. Hendrix, *Rooting the Literacies of Citizenship: Ideas that integrate social studies and language arts in the cultivation of a new global mindset*, in A. Crowe, A. Cuenca (edd.), *Rethinking Social Studies Teacher Education in the Twenty-First Century*, Cham, Springer, 2016, pp. 101-119.

¹¹ Interministerial Coordination Committee for Portugal 2020, Resolution n. 55/2015, pp. 1-2.

¹² J. Álvaro, *Educação em Territórios de Baixa Densidade: Ensino Profissional e Desenvolvimento, O Caso da Beira Interior Norte*, Tese de Mestrado em Ordenamento do Território e Desenvolvimento, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 2013, pp. 51-53; B.M. Mota, *A Problemática dos Territórios de Baixa Densidade*, Tese de Mestrado em Administração Pública, ISCTE, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, 2019, p. 24.

¹³ In education statistics, Oleiros and Proença-a-Nova are part of the sub-region Beira Baixa; Sertã, Vila de Rei and Mação are part of the sub-region Médio Tejo.

2018 edition of PISA seems to confirm the favourable position of Beira Baixa and Médio Tejo in the programme results in Literacy, Mathematics and Science. At the national level, Portugal came 24th in scientific literacy, 24th in reading and 22nd in mathematics, with 492 points in each domain, ranking above the OECD average in any of them. In the PIS region, the results obtained in reading performance by Beira Baixa (495 points) and Médio Tejo (501 points), place either of these regions above the national average. In scientific literacy, the Médio Tejo and Beira Baixa stood out again, in a positive way, reaching respectively 509 and 500 points, significantly above the national average (492). In mathematics, the performance of these two regions was 505 points (Médio Tejo) and 498 points (Beira Baixa), again scoring above the national average. Considering the context variables, these results challenge the most deterministic visions about the existence of predestined pathways¹⁴. Thus, it is clear that school performance can make a difference and those external factors can be downsized, or even compensated, by school networking, and cooperation between schools and municipal councils within the educational communities. Community solidarity, and the role of the municipalities during lockdown times (and after), give us an entry point to understand the advantages of proximity against the background of distanced, aging, and isolated territories.

3. *The Local History curriculum as a response to the flexible curricula management policy*

Education policy in Portugal in the last forty years developed around four main oxymorons: the ideal of decentralization (1980s), the concept of autonomy (1990s), the territorialization process (first decade 21st century), and the discourse on flexibility (second decade of the 21st century)¹⁵. These ideas have shaped the juridical discourse with cumulative and often contradictory guidelines about the educational system organization¹⁶. The Educational Act functioned as an instituting narrative of the decentralization of the education system (LBSE Act, 1986); the narrative of autonomy worked as a discourse aimed at strengthening the powers of the school (Decree-Law n° 43/89); the notion of territorialization legitimized the transfer of responsibilities from central to municipal levels (Decree-Law n° 30/2015); and the discourse on curricular flexibility transferred to the Principals, the School Board and to the teachers the

¹⁴ J. Cravinho, *As desigualdades de resultados entre regiões e escolas e o direito constitucional à igualdade de oportunidades*, in *Estado da Educação 2019*, Lisboa, Conselho Nacional de Educação, 2020, p. 540.

¹⁵ The 1986 Educational Act is, to this day, the backbone of Portuguese education policies. As a product of a particular set of political circumstances, in the aftermath of the 1974 revolution that overthrow 40 years of dictatorship, the document sought «to grant schools autonomy and to enfranchise the people's participation in the educational process», core principles aligned with the newly approved Portuguese Constitution (LBSE, Law n. 46 of 14 October 1986, Art. 3).

¹⁶ J. Barroso, *A emergência do local e os novos modos de regulação das políticas educativas*, «Educação, Temas e Problemas», n. 12-13, 2013, pp. 13-25; L. Lima, *Máquinas de administrar a educação: dominação digital e burocracia aumentada*, «Educação & Sociedade: Revista de Ciências de Educação», n. 42, 2021, <https://www.scielo.br/j/es/a/PyfCP4xcqHvTKm6M3TPsB4h/> (last access: 20.03.2023).

responsibility of managing the curriculum (Decree-Law nº 55/2018)¹⁷. Consequently, in recent decades, the management of education policies at local level has become the confused stage for public policies subject to “complex a multi-regulation” game. To understand it one must take in consideration a number of simultaneous complex processes: the reinforcement of transnational regulations (such as PISA, PIRLS, TIMMS, etc.), the hybridism of national regulation (the four oxymorons), the widening of intermediate regulation (granting municipalities new responsibilities in educational local governance), and the diversity of logics in the internal regulation of schools (the regulatory power of digital platforms and “flexible curriculum management” issues)¹⁸.

Despite these deconcentrating attempts, the Portuguese Education System remains until today highly centralized. A recent international report confirmed that Portugal has the highest portion of education responsibilities controlled by the central government, when compared to the OECD. As such, Portugal’s index of autonomy (measured by a combination of factors under PISA testing) rests below the OECD average by about 10% percentage points¹⁹.

We do not intend here to discuss levels of autonomy and school outcomes, which in any case are bound to a discussion²⁰. Rather we want to focus on the possibilities offered by the “decreeted” and the “hyper-regulated” autonomy margins and how municipalities, school clusters and communities may explore them to build innovative pedagogical local, school, and curricular educational projects. The concept of *curricular flexibility* is one of these possibilities, by circumventing this disciplinary rigidity, within and between areas of knowledge, betting on a transformation of the curriculum from within the educational institutions²¹. This is the case with the discipline of History “which in some cases has shifted from a sequentially organized set of contents to a problem-based approach that integrates reflections and procedures from Geography, Economics, Sociology, and Cultural Studies. While the chronological sequence is rarely abandoned, its themes tend to mobilize microhistories and global histories, gender perspectives, material cultures, and there is an increased presence of historiographic reflections on sources, archives, and narrative forms²². The other “possibility” that received an impetus during pandemic times has been the growing awareness of the importance of local educational projects defining

¹⁷ The amount of legislation subsidiary to each of these Decree-Laws cannot be summarized here amounting to thousands of pages of statutory regulations, most of them heavily criticized by their hybrid, contradictory or even misleading character.

¹⁸ Barroso, *A emergência do local e os novos modos de regulação das políticas educativas*, cit., p. 19.

¹⁹ S. Martins, L. Capucha, J. Sebastião, *School autonomy, organization, and performance in Europe: a comparative analysis for the period from 2000 to 2015*, Lisboa, CIES/ISCTE, 2019, pp. 126-127.

²⁰ E. Hanushek, S. Link, L. Woessmann, *Does school autonomy make sense everywhere? Panel estimates from PISA*, «Journal of Development Economics», n. 104, 2013, pp. 212-232.

²¹ Curricular Flexibility Decree – DR, 1st series, n. 129,6 July 2018, p. 2928.

²² I. Dussel, *The Shifting Boundaries of School Subjects in Contemporary Curriculum Reforms: Towards a post-disciplinary curriculum?*, «Zeitschrift für Pädagogik», n. 5, 2020, p. 683; I. Dussel, *La clase em pantuflas*, in I. Dussel, P. Ferrante, D. Pulfer (edd.), *Pensar la educación en tiempos de pandemia: entre la emergencia, el compromiso y la espera*, Buenos Aires, UNIPE – Editorial Universitaria, 2020, pp. 337-348.

a vision for education and a roadmap to improve long-term outcomes and equality for the community²³.

4. *Building a common education public space*

In Portugal, several authors have drawn attention to the need to find new forms of institutional regulation that are compatible with socio-community logics²⁴. António Nóvoa goes further, proposing the construction of a “common education public space”²⁵ based on the creation of new school environments and the composition of a pedagogy of encounter. The proposal involves a new contract between school and society, which inevitably implies new links between family, social and working times²⁶. This very same idea runs through *Reimagining our Futures Together* (ICFE/UNESCO, 2021) according to which «n a new social contract for education, curricula should grow out of the wealth of common knowledge and embrace ecological, intercultural and interdisciplinary learning that helps students access and produce knowledge while building their capacity to critique and apply it»²⁷. Teachers constitute a key player in the construction of this “education common space”:

1. through the building of educational moments inside and outside school premises, in cities and in family and local contexts, leading to the valorization of non-formal times and spaces;
2. by organizing instruction in a diversity of spaces, for work and study, individually or in groups;
3. by organizing diversified forms of grouping students, also according to the tasks to be carried out, giving rise to individualization processes that allow for the construction of differentiated school paths;
4. by replacing the “frontal pedagogy” by a pedagogy of work;
5. by organizing the curriculum in great themes and problems, valuing the convergence of the disciplines and the dynamics of investigation.

²³ International Commission on the Futures of Education, *Education in a Post-Covid world: nine ideas for public action*, Paris, UNESCO, 2020.

²⁴ J. Barroso, *Regulação e desregulação nas políticas educativas: tendências emergentes em estudos de educação comparada*, in J. Barroso (ed.), *A Escola Pública: Regulação, Desregulação, Privatização*, Porto, Asa, 2003, pp. 19-48; Id., *A transversalidade das regulações em educação. Modelo de análise para o estudo das políticas educativas em Portugal*, «Educação & Sociedade», vol. 39, n. 145, 2018, pp. 1075-1097.

²⁵ A. Nóvoa, *Debate Nacional sobre Educação*, Assembleia da República, 22 May 2006, <https://dne.cnedu.pt/dmdocuments/Confer%C3%Aancia%20de%20abertura-Ant%C3%B3nio%20N%C3%B3voa-AR%2022%20Maio.pdf> (last access: 20.03.2023); Id., *A escola e a cidadania: apontamentos incómodos*, in R. D’Espiney (ed.), *Espaços e sujeitos de cidadania*, Setúbal, Instituto das Comunidades Educativas, 2006; Id., *Educação 2021: Para uma história do futuro*, «Educação, Sociedade & Culturas», n. 41, 2014, pp. 171-185.

²⁶ A. Nóvoa, Y. Alvim, *Os professores depois da pandemia*, «Educação & Sociedade», vol. 42, 2021, pp. 1-16.

²⁷ International Commission on the Futures of Education, *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*, Paris, UNESCO, 2021, p. 64.

Accordingly, the “education common public space” is space in which the school has its place, but which is not a hegemonic, unique place in the education of children and young people²⁸. Within MRIR project, the Education axis aimed at building networks with local educational partners toward the construction of a local history curriculum for primary and secondary schools in the region of PIS. Our research project was developed within the specific site of teacher education programs, curriculums and professional learning models provided by Centros de Formação de Associação de Escolas (CFAE). CFAE’s are one of the most important entities regulating the continuing teacher development in Portugal. These entities, which intermediate between the central administration and the local level, integrate school clusters (groupings of schools) of the public, private and cooperative network belonging to a same geographical area. Through the organization of a teacher training course, we sought to interlink teachers belonging to different school clusters and isolated schools in these territories. Our aim was, firstly, to disclose the open web platform of the MRIR project; secondly, to encourage the development of collaborative practices and the building of *communities of practice* among the PIS schools; and thirdly, to encourage the building of a local history curriculum (PEL), that could impact both the educational school project level (PES) and at the curricular class plans level (PCT). This approach was intended for connecting core subjects with their historical local expression, thus linking a global citizenship to situated, place-based knowledge.

5. *Curricula Beyond the Classroom*

We know too well that the processes of learning history do not result only from the teaching opportunities offered in the classroom, but also from dispersed contexts of learning. The development of historiographical practices within the scope of *Public History* makes it possible to build a set of opportunities for communities, activating collective memory, rescuing historical heritage, and giving visibility to local culture²⁹. This process hinges on the fundamental notion of «educational public space»³⁰. Epistemologically, the process rests on the assumption that «responsibility for Education stems from shared deliberative processes among the several entities: universities, local government, associations, citizens»³¹. Thus, we sought to build a local history curriculum

²⁸ A. Nóvoa, *A metamorfose da escola*, «Revista Militar», vol. 72, n. 1, 2020, pp. 33-42.

²⁹ T. Cauvin, *Public History: A Textbook of Practice*, in J.B. Gardner, P. Hamilton (edd.), *Oxford Handbook of Public History*, New York/London, Routledge, 2017; Id., *The Rise of Public History: An International Perspective*, «História Crítica», n. 68, 2018, pp. 3-26; M. Houdek, K.R. Phillips, *Public Memory*, «Oxford Research Encyclopaedia», 25 January 2017, <https://oxfordre.com/communication/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-181?rskey=3291Or&result=6> (last access: 20.03.2023).

³⁰ A. Nóvoa, *O espaço público da educação: imagens, narrativas, dilemas*, in *Espaços de educação, tempos de formação*, Lisboa, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2002, pp. 237-263.

³¹ A. Nóvoa, *Professores: Imagens do futuro presente*, Lisboa, Educa, 2009.

through the enactment of “communities of practice”³². This approach was based on the establishment of a network of institutions and professionals that share a cultural identity, common learning environments and similar educational requirements³³. As such we have departed from the MRIR website project platform, both as Public History repository and as a pedagogical tool³⁴. By setting up a teacher training programme, the diverse partners who cosigned the project proposal, namely the training center *Centro de Formação de Associação de Escolas Alto Tejo*, the *Terra e Memória* Institute, the *Escola Superior de Educação de Castelo Branco*, were able to establish collaborative practices methodologies among the PIS schools and teachers, aimed at the creation of a local history curriculum that could work in post-pandemic hybrid-learning environment³⁵. The curricular offer comprises a set of themes related to the issues of memory and school patrimony, amplified with the theme of local archeological heritage. The production of pedagogical materials (syllabus and support modules for teacher training) was targeted at deepening local/global historical relations, and stress that curriculum and pedagogy are locally culture developments within global understandings³⁶.

In the middle of the pandemic emergency the organisation of a set of short-term training courses (AFCD) in the form of webinars was the possible overcoming strategy, trying to disseminate the work done so far by the MRIR project team in the Intermunicipal Communities of Beira Baixa and Médio Tejo, aimed at teachers integrated in the CFAE – Training Centres of local School Association. The Short Duration Courses organised by the Alto Tejo Schools Association Training Centre (CFAE), were entitled, respectively, “Citizenship, Education and Memory” and “Citizenship, Education and Local History”. The sessions focused on the development of curriculum proposals aimed at strengthening the links between history, heritage and education, with an emphasis on local heritage and the resources produced within the MRIR Project. This strategy also encouraged the involvement of communities and families in an intergenerational dialogue on the issues of education, teaching and schooling in rural areas. The methodology followed in the online sessions attempted:

- to contextualize the different experiences in each territory, the methodologies used, the different phases of project MRIR implementation and evaluation;

³² E. C. Wenger, W. Snyder, *Communities of practice: the organizational frontier*, «Harvard Business Review», vol. 78, n. 1, 2000, pp. 139-144.

³³ E. Wenger, R. McDermott, W. Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, Boston, Harvard Business School Press, 2002.

³⁴ C. Yanes-Cabrera, J. Meda, A. Viñao (edd.), *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, Cham, Springer, 2017.

³⁵ L. Stoll *et alli*, *Professional Learning Communities: A Review of the Literature*, «Journal of Educational Change», vol. 7, n. 4, 2006, pp. 221-258; R. Opertti, *Ten clues for rethinking the curriculum*, Genève, UNESCO / IBE, 2021.

³⁶ OECD, *Curriculum (Re)design. A series of thematic reports from the OECD Education 2030 Project*. Paris, OECD Publishing, 2020; International Commission on the Futures of Education, *Education in a Post-Covid world*, cit.

- to mobilize the teachers and headmasters for the relevance (and potential) of integrating heritage and local history into teacher training curricula, strongly based on the territory, schools and collective reflection on pedagogical work;
- to acknowledge the inspiring and transformative potential of initiatives of this nature (involving schools, CFAEs, academia, municipal museums, and the local community) for changing the processes of initial and continuous teacher training and curriculum management, diversifying the learning times and spaces of teachers and students.

The responses to the final evaluation questionnaire launched by the Alto Tejo CFAE showed the receptivity of the participants to the initiative and gave the project team an account of the projects that were being designed in the different local spaces, in view to the recreation and the production of knowledge. Several participants wrote:

The sharing of experiences is what make us improve practices and this training course served this purpose... The expectations I had when I signed up for the course have been entirely fulfilled [...] The sharing was excellent, clarifying and motivating, as they gave me encouragement to realize a project that has been dormant for a while [...] The training course was very important and aroused my curiosity to get me to know better our local heritage [...] ³⁷.

Conclusions

In the middle of the 19th century, a social contract of education was established based on an agreement that created the conditions for the emergence and consolidation of educational systems and schools. In post-pandemic times, education systems and schools are forced to rethink their organization and relationship with society, in a new cycle that, in the history of school and education, requires a new “social contract”³⁸.

Thinking about education as “common good” links us to the arguments developed by historian António Nóvoa around the concept of “public space of education”³⁹. This notion expands the space of school learning, involving society in a co-responsibility for a set of missions (education for citizenship, education for heritage, environmental education, media education, education for consumption, etc.), until now exclusively centered in the hands of the school institution and its teachers. Commitment to transform the present (and future) reality demands new questions, based on an understanding of the regime of

³⁷ C. Cruz, *Dimensões Locais do Espaço Público da Educação: (Re)pensar o currículo e a formação de professores*, in A. Madeira, H. Cabeleira, J. Magalhães (edd.), *Memórias Resgatadas, Identidades (Re)construídas: Experiências de Escolarização, Património e Dinâmicas Educativas Locais*, Lisboa, Colibri/IEUL, 2022, pp. 413-432.

³⁸ International Commission on the Futures of Education, *Reimagining our futures together*, cit.

³⁹ A. Nóvoa, *Tres tesis para una tercera visión: Repensando la formación docente*, «Profesorado: Revista de curriculum y formación del profesorado», vol. 23, n. 3, 2019, pp. 211-222; A. Nóvoa, Y. Alvim, *Nothing is new, but everything has changed: A viewpoint on the future school*, «Prospects», vol. 49, 2020, pp. 35-41; Nóvoa, Alvim, *Os professores depois da pandemia*, cit.

historicity in which we are immersed⁴⁰. It is from a history of problems – e.g., from how a particular reality historically became a problem – that we can build an alternative history, by approaching what Hayden White called the “practical past”, capable of organizing the reading of that past according to new intelligibility, overcoming nihilist presentism and connecting the daily experiences of subjects to an horizon of expectations⁴¹.

This is what the project “Rescued Memories, (Re)constructed Identities” has sought to achieve over the last four years, setting up a unique research experience by bringing together a network of actors, integrating higher education establishments, museums, schools, school association training centers, teachers, local researchers, municipalities and senior universities. We aimed at contributing to the construction of the “public space of education” through the public sharing of historical knowledge (Public history) and the intergenerational participation of the community (schools, teachers, municipalities, associations, and citizens) in the construction of a new meaning for educational practices, inside and outside the school. At the same time, the establishment of “communities of practice”, collaborative dynamics between teachers and schools, and the active participation of local communities in the construction of local educational projects became an essential step to allow “place-based projects” and the overflowing of curricula into new educational spaces.

Our brief contribution sought to clarify the conceptual assumptions and the development of the project in its theoretical and methodological underpinnings, and its choreography (Memory – Heritage – Education). We also wanted to make clear the contribution of the research, through the products generated and shared with the community, to the changing practices inside and outside educational organizations. MRIR project was developed in an interior region of Portugal involving five municipalities classified as low-density territories. In these territories, where all indicators seem to precipitate a negative representation of community existence, signs of a paradigm change in the functioning of schools at the local level emerge in counter-cycle. We have shown that ideas can translate into meaningful actions, transforming “predestined” outcomes and the sense of inevitability of global pressures upon small rural populations and school clusters.

⁴⁰ M. Sahlins, *Des îles dans l'Histoire*, Paris, Seuil, 1989; F. Hartog, *Regimes de historicidade: presentismo e experiências do tempo*, Belo Horizonte, Autêntica Editora, 2013.

⁴¹ H. White, *The practical past*, «Historien», n. 10, 2010, pp. 10-19; M. Certeau, L. Giard, P. Mayol, *A invenção do cotidiano: Morar, cozinhar*, Petrópolis-Rio de Janeiro, Vozes, 1997; R. Koselleck, *Futuro passado: Contribuição à semântica dos tempos históricos*, Rio de Janeiro, Contraponto, 2006.

Colegio Mayor Universitario “Casa do Brasil” (1962): a Place between Stories and Memories

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Introduction

The present study concentrates its attention on the history of the international movement of higher education students and professors, with an emphasis on non-formal education models, which are organized in student residences, and more specifically on the case of *Casa do Brasil*, located in Madrid/Spain. We understand these spaces in their educational dimensions as a phenomenon inherent in higher education, a *locus* for formation (education in its broadest sense), socialization, political and cultural organization¹. On the one hand, from our theoretical perspective, we consider institutional histories within a framework, which encompasses the internationalization of models, taking advantage of the convergence of tendencies in a celebratory fashion, and of their global quality as well. On the other hand, we question the overarching narratives of single causes, be they functional or symbolic, for their establishment and development².

On *Casa do Brasil*'s 60th anniversary (1962-2022), we approach the discussions brought up by Pierre Nora on the need to consecrate the *places of memory*, in an artificial way, that is, with some external effort. Places of memory «are born and live in the feeling that there is no spontaneous memory, that it is necessary to create archives, keep track of birthdays and anniversaries, recite dirges, notarizing minutes, because these are not natural operations»³. Also, Paul Ricoeur problematizes forgetting as the hermeneutics of the historical condition of human beings, playing its role, besides history and memory, in the representation of the past⁴.

This research also approaches the broadening notion of material and immaterial heritage, which triggers reflections in other fields, as the educational one⁵. This movement,

¹ T. Ermel, M. Hilterholz, *A história da residência estudantil em questão: espaços de assistência, formação e circulação sociocultural*, «Espacio, Tiempo y Educación», vol. 10, n. 1, 2023, pp. 1-6.

² E.V. Roldán, E. Fuchs, *Introduction: The Transnational in the History of Education*, in E.V. Roldán, E. Fuchs (edd.), *The Transnational in the History of Education. Concepts and Perspectives*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, pp. 1-47.

³ P. Nora, *Entre memória e história. O problema dos lugares*, «Projeto História», n. 10, 1993, p. 13 (our translation).

⁴ P. Ricoeur, *A memória, a história, o esquecimento*, Campinas, Editora da Universidade de Campinas, 2007.

⁵ In 2013, an important number of student residences which are part of the University of Coimbra Alta and Sofia was considered by the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) as

fundamental for the new perspectives on the history of education, recovers and values the memory of education in different times and spaces. As a transnational movement, it expresses the globalized forms of schooling and their common materiality. Therefore, «it expresses simultaneously specific, converging modalities to preserve the educational heritage and school culture, finding its counterparts in different countries»⁶. Nonetheless, they also attentively analyze the singularities of national education systems, assessing their global and regional tendencies.

From this standpoint, we analyze the projection and inauguration of *Casa do Brasil* in Madrid, with a focus on ceremonies and celebratory works. This research, in its historical-documentary quality, concentrates on the book by its Brazilian architect, published in the year of its opening (1962), on the book *Ato de Inauguração (1962-2001)*, on annual reports, and on the 50th anniversary commemoration book (2012), among other documents from the General Archive of the Complutense University of Madrid and from its institutional archive. We also highlight the potential of CAPES/Brazil's central archive for research on this topic.

1. *A brief history of Colegios Mayores in Spain*

University student residences in Spain have a century-old history, marked by the creation of the first European university and by both students' and professors' need for displacement/accommodation. It is known that the first Spanish *Colegio Mayor* was organized in the city of Bologna (Italy), to welcome students who pursued their studies at its University. Named *Colegio Mayor San Clemente*, it was founded by Cardinal Gil de Albornoz in 1367 and is still open to this day, now as *Real Colegio de España*. In Spanish territory, the foundation of the *Colegio Mayor San Bartolomé*, in 1401, in the city of Salamanca, has been the model for several *colegios* and, in particular, the so-called *Colegios Mayores*, which are known for their excellence, with their own constitutions and bylaws⁷.

One of the reform projects developed by the *Junta de Ampliación de Estudios* (JAE) was the creation of the *Residencia de Estudiantes de Madrid*, in 1910, as an attempt to renew the Spanish educational system, with a distinctive cultural, intellectual and scientific space⁸. In the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), and the extinction of

a World Heritage of Humanity.

⁶ M.J. Morgarro, A. Namora, *Educação e Patrimônio cultural: escolas, objetos e práticas, perspectivas multidisciplinares sobre a cultura material*, in M.J. Morgarro (ed.), *Educação e Patrimônio Cultural: escolas, objetos e práticas*, Edições Colibri, Instituto de Educação de Lisboa, 2015, p. 27 (our translation).

⁷ M.N. Rupérez, *El Colegio Mayor de San Bartolomé o de Anaya*, Salamanca, Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2003, p. 9.

⁸ PhD thesis Á. Ribagorda, *La Residencia de Estudiante. Pedagogía, cultura y proyecto social (1910-1939)*, Complutense University of Madrid – Department of Contemporary History (Supervisor: J.P. Fusi Aizpurua), 2010.

activities at this residence, there was an attempt to continue the project with the creation of the *Colegio Mayor Ximenez de Cisneros*, in the University City of Madrid in 1943.

As far as internationalization and higher education exchange are concerned, the political impetus directed at the increase in the number of university residences can also be seen in the creation of institutions for the welcoming of foreign students⁹. The first *colegios* in Spain to be organized to accommodate Hispanoamerican students were: *Colegio Mayor Casa de Santa María del Buen Aire*, founded in 1943 in Seville; *Colegio Mayor Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*, founded in 1947 in Madrid; and *Colegio Mayor Hernán Cortez*, founded in 1950, in Salamanca¹⁰. According to the model of the *Colegio Mayor Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*, there was the foundation, in the upcoming decades, of the following institutions: *Colegio Mayor Universitario Casa de Brasil* (1962), *Colegio Mayor Argentino Nuestra Señora de Luján* (1971) and *Colegio Mayor Universitario Colombiano Miguel Antonio Caro* (1971). The management of these three institutions was linked to their respective countries, represented in Spanish territory by the Embassies and respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs, as well as by the regulations and bylaws of the Complutense University of Madrid¹¹.

2. *Colegio Mayor Universitario “Casa do Brasil”*

Located at the University City of Madrid, which belongs to the University of Madrid¹², on the University Campus of Moncloa, the *Colegio Mayor Universitario Casa de Brasil* was built on a parcel of land donated by the Spanish government¹³. In the report of the first academic year (1962-1963), headmaster Joaquim da Costa Pinto Netto¹⁴ stresses

⁹ In 1935, the Colegio de España was founded in the Cité Universitaire de Paris.

¹⁰ The Instituto de Cultura Hispánica was founded in 1945, as an advisory agency to the Spanish *Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores* and as a tool to strengthen the relations with Iberoamerican countries. C. Lascaris, *Colegios Mayores*, Madrid, Ediciones de Cultura Hispánica, 1952.

¹¹ Ermel, Hilterholz, *A história da residência estudantil em questão*, cit.

¹² The current *Universidad Complutense de Madrid* adopted different names on different occasions throughout the 20th century. Between 1943 and 1970, it was named *Universidad de Madrid*. In 1970, it received its current name: *Universidad Complutense de Madrid*.

¹³ The official donation was made in Madrid on 21 November 1959 and put in place by decree n. 42.295A on 27 November 1959. An agreement was struck so that the construction of the building would be paid in exceeding coffee sacks by the Brazilian Coffee Institute. Cf. L. A. D’Escagnolle Filho, *Casa do Brasil. Madrid: Colegio Mayor Universitario Brasileño*, 1962 (Archives of *Casa do Brasil* in Madrid).

¹⁴ Joaquim José da Costa Pinto Netto (Salvador, BA, 1913-1996) was the first director of *Casa do Brasil* and worked in this position until 1973. He had a Social Sciences degree from the Faculty of Philosophy of Bahia (1943). He had been a teacher at *Ginásio da Bahia* (a junior school) and the *Instituto Normal da Bahia* (a teachers’ school). He moved to Rio de Janeiro, where he worked as a teacher, but also in commerce. A. Wildberger, *Biografia e descendência do Marechal de Campo Francisco Pereira de Aguiar: 1820-1903*. Salvador, s.n., 1957, p. 43. He was sent to Europe, along with Ambassador Manoel Emilio Pereira Guilhon, thanks to his connections with Anísio Teixeira and Péricles Madureira de Pinho, to help in the foundation of *Casa do Brasil*. Cf. R. Araújo, *Os tempos de uma casa. 50 anos da Casa do Brasil em Madrid*, Brasília, Distrito Federal, LabPam, 2012.

the incipient character of this institution, as the first foreign *colegio mayor* in Spanish territory¹⁵. Officially inaugurated on June 4, 1962, *Casa do Brasil* was linked to Brazil's return to democracy, a time when the national development project and higher education in Brazil and abroad were seen with optimism¹⁶. Before that, we must also highlight the creation of CAPES (Brazilian Federal Foundation for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education), the Brazilian agency for the advancement of higher education, in 1951, whose main goal was to invest in the training of higher education professors by means of scholarship grants in Brazil and abroad, while importantly working on the implementation of post-graduation courses¹⁷.

The building was designed by Brazilian architect Alfonso d'Escragnolle, and the construction was led by Spanish architect Fernando Moreno Barberá. According to Miguel Ángel Gil, when he analyzed the history of the design of Spanish university residences, *Casa do Brasil* «stands as a timeless block, congregation, save for the gardened terrace, the features of Le Corbusier's architecture, turning into a symbol of the Modern Spanish Architecture of our time»¹⁸. Speaking of his own project, Luís Afonso D'Escragnolle Filho praises its «external plasticity» and the fact that the building was aligned with the architectural ideas of its time thanks to its «simplicity, functional efficacy, extreme comfort and beauty». According to him, «the space has been shaped to meet the demands of the man who will spend a good deal of his life in it; making it more pleasant to his walks, more comfortable and quiet to his time of rest and his daily toil»¹⁹. The building and its premises were the central topic in the beginning of the activities, with an emphasis on a series of imperfections and deficiencies which were under the care of *Torregrosa Empresa Constructora* and, also, the changes in the display of originally projected spaces, such as the director's room and the reception, which were turned into a music room and a TV room, as well as the displacement of the space initially reserved for the library, which was then moved to the ground floor of Block B, and also the space in the central hall, where student meetings took place²⁰.

The opening ceremony was held at the Conference Hall and attended by Brazilian and Spanish diplomatic and official personnel, with a piano recital by Lia Salgado, wife to the former minister Clóvis Salgado. In the last months of 1962, there was an inaugural *missa capellán* and the chapel was blessed by Friar António do Carmo, followed by a lunch attended by Brazilian, Spanish and Portuguese authorities, besides residents of the Casa and other guests. The first statute of the *Casa do Brasil*, issued in 1963, reinforces the

¹⁵ Archives of *Casa do Brasil* in Madrid, Report on the Academic Term, 1963, p. 41.

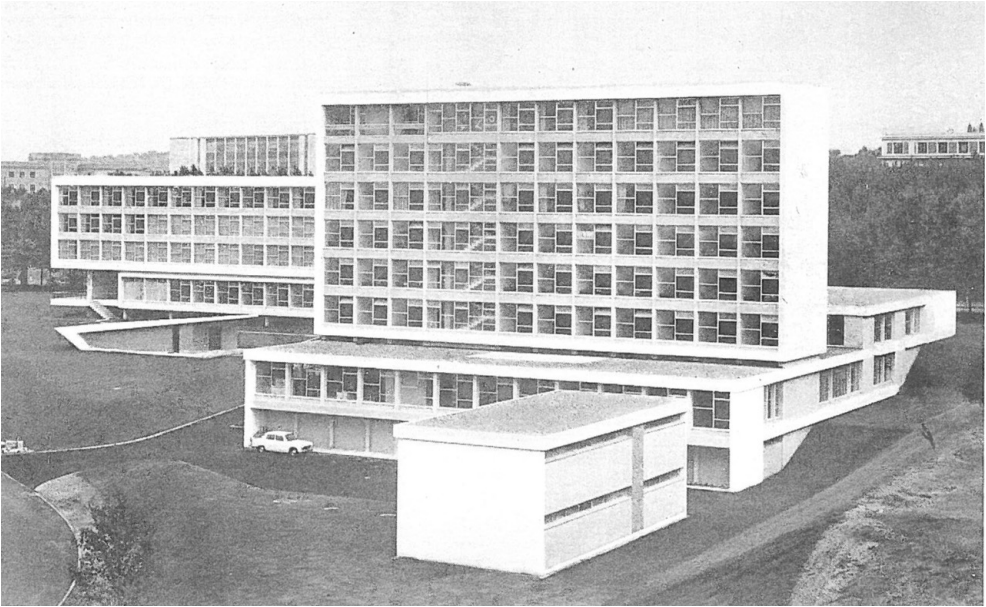
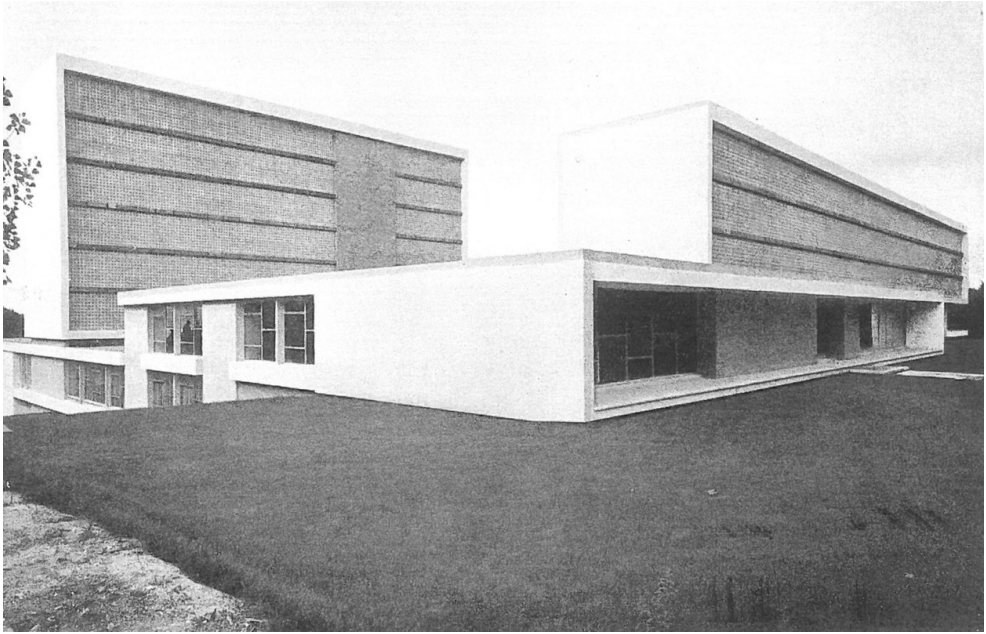
¹⁶ T. Ermel, J. Igelmo, *Os Colegios Mayores como espaços de modernização do Ensino Superior espanhol na década de 1960: o caso do Colegio Mayor Universitario Casa Do Brasil*, «Revista Brasileira de Educação», vol. 27, 2022, pp. 1-26.

¹⁷ C. Teive, *História da Educação*, São Paulo, Ática, 2007, p. 305.

¹⁸ PhD thesis M.Á. Gil, *Residencias universitarias: historia, arquitectura y ciudad*, Universidad Politécnica de Valencia – Departament of Architectural Composition (Supervisor: C. Jodá Such and M.T. Palomares Figueres), 2015, p. 512 (our translation).

¹⁹ D'Escragnolle Filho, *Casa do Brasil*, cit., p. 13 (our translation).

²⁰ Archives of *Casa do Brasil* in Madrid, Report on the Academic Year, 1963.



Figs. 1-2. Photographs of the building, n.d. (D'Escragnolle Filho. *Casa do Brasil. Colegio Mayor Universitario Brasileño*, cit., pp. 7 and 12)

idea of disseminating Brazil in Spain as well as that of a cultural – and spiritual – closeness between both countries.

In the book that records the happenings of the opening ceremony and the impressions of the attendees, one of the first messages states that the residence should go beyond being the lodgings for university students of all nationalities, but also be a place for disseminating Brazil in Spain, and also for «bringing the cultures of both countries ever closer together»²¹. Throughout its pages, the records made between 1962 and 2001 consist mostly of dozens of signatures and messages written by visitors – most of them illegible –, and some of the written by Brazilian, Spanish and Portuguese authorities. Moreover, there are some records of addresses for the start and end of academic years, especially from the 1980s and 1990s. One of the first addresses was written by the President of the University of Lisbon, Paulo Cunha, on 6 February 1963. Not only does he praise the foundation of *Casa do Brasil*, but he also points out to the need for building a Brazilian university residence in Lisbon:

It was my great pleasure to visit Brazil's *Colegio Maior* at the University of Madrid: a great pleasure mixed with some *invidia bona*. It is absolutely necessary that the noble Brazilian Nation build in Lisbon a house as beautiful and useful as this one!

I declare my best wishes for such a work, which deserves every title, to fully achieve its purpose of educating people and disseminating Lusiad culture, thus fulfilling its fair aspirations²².

In the following decades, there were messages signed by the Brazilian Ministry of Education and Culture, such as those by Luís Victor d'Assis Silva, representative of the project *Universidade Aberta*, from April 1975; by the Head of the Center for Biological Sciences (CCBI), of the Federal University of Alagoas (1976); by the President of the Autonomous University of Madrid and the Vice-President of the Complutense University of Madrid, in June 1980. As for messages that imply proximity to the Catholic Church, there are those signed by the Archbishops of São Paulo (1967), Curitiba (1975) and Maceió (undated) and by the Parish Priest of Brasília (undated). The same document contains records of group visits to attend a typical Brazilian lunch party, the *feijoada*, as the ones offered to the International Commission of Delegates for the conservation of Atlantic tuna, in 1974, with members from the United States, Portugal, Venezuela, Japan, Canada, Korea and Senegal and the one offered in the following year to VARIG employees. In the early 1980s, the records show the signatures of those who attended the Portuguese Language and Brazilian Literature Teachers' Conference, which took place from 18 to 20 September 1981.

Throughout its six-decade history, we can observe that some features have remained the same and some have changed, which may be noticed both in its managerial structure and in the profile of its residents. The second article of the 1963 statute regulates the

²¹ Archives of *Casa do Brasil* in Madrid, Book of records. *Ato de inauguração*, 4 July 1962, p. 1 (our translation).

²² Archives of *Casa do Brasil* in Madrid, Book of records, *Ato de inauguração*, 1963, unpagged (our translation).

Management Board and makes it clear that it is incumbent on the Ministry of Education and Culture of Brazil to appoint its director to the National Education Ministry of Spain. This practice has gone unchanged to this day, so that the directors are still Brazilian, appointed by Brazil. It has been possible to identify directors with different backgrounds, namely: a sociologist, two engineers, an Economics and Business Administration major, and a Law and History major²³. According to the book *Ato de Inauguração (1962-2001)*, on 31 October 1994, there was the nomination ceremony, «pro tempore», of the current director, Cassio Roberto de Almeida Romano, who succeeded Otaciano da Costa Nogueira Filho.

Annual reports were sent to CAPES/Brazil, with financial data, such as: expenses related to food, maintenance, workers' wages and monthly payments. They were written in different formats, some of them extensive and thorough, and others short and concise. Mostly, other data made up these memories, such as the residents' personal information (mainly nationality and gender) and those on cultural activities and courses held over that period. In 1990, according to Otaciano, *Casa do Brasil* stopped receiving financial resources from the Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs, relying entirely on the monthly payments made by the residents²⁴.

The connection with Brazil is explicit from the very first Bylaw, from 1963, in which it is stated that Brazilian residence solicitors should require their access via CAPES, and would be allowed to reside there for one year only, which could be extended to two or three years, depending on academic performance and other justifications. Thus, it is important to consider that a relevant part of the documents on Brazilian residents is in CAPES's central archives, in Brasília. These archives, which are still being put together, have recently found the files of Bendito José Barreto Fonseca, born in Campinas in 1934, a college professor and public prosecutor, who studied Law at Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, in 1957. He was one of the first Brazilian residents, and in 1964 he required a CAPES grant to pursue further studies in Constitutional Law and Philosophy of Law in Madrid. CAPES's central archives certainly contain significant documents on scholarship recipients who studied in Madrid and were lodged at *Casa do Brasil*.

Another key element in the history of *Casa do Brasil* is the organization of the archives of the *Padre Anchieta* Library, started in the first academic year. With constant efforts regarding the donation and purchase of works (journals or not), we can notice that in the first decade of the archives' existence, in 1965 it already contained 1.168 colored projection sheets, 689 of which on Brazilian culture topics – organized by residents especially with photographs taken of the Brazilian magazines *Manchete* and *O Cruzeiro* – and 479 on Spanish culture. They were forever asking Portuguese and Brazilian institutions for donations, and they also asked for the support of the Brazilian embassy in Madrid, its

²³ Araújo, *Os tempos de uma casa*, cit., pp. 86-87.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

biggest donor. Moreover, in 1970 a record library was created, with 35 records, 10 tape rolls and two thousand slides²⁵.

In 1969, two murals were painted in the hall of the building, by visual artist Dirso José de Oliveira. One of them represents the evolution of humankind, made on wood and acrylic, and the other one, drawn on wood with light-colored crayons, show folkloric aspects of the Brazilian Northeast. Also, *Casa do Brasil*, is home to several artworks donated by artists who resided or exhibited their work there, and a studio for artists (formerly a section of the TV room) functioned there in the academic year of 1965-1966²⁶.

The publishing of Ricardo Araújo's work *Os tempos de uma casa. 50 anos da Casa do Brasil em Madrid*, was a pioneering initiative regarding the history and memory of the residence. The book is a study that commemorates the 50th anniversary of *Casa do Brasil*, and a part of it is dedicated to the Brazilian and Spanish historical contexts between 1962 and 2012²⁷. In the section on the residence itself, the author displays the research he made in different archives, documentation centers, libraries and newspaper libraries, besides the institution's own files and records. Furthermore, he contacted former employees and residents, and systematized five decades of the history of the residence. More recently, Ermel and Igelmo have analyzed the context of modernization of Spanish higher education, highlighting the first decade of *Casa do Brasil's* activities and its role as an interlocutor in the Iberoamerican scenario²⁸. Thus, due to the lack of studies on the topic, carrying out systematic research on the residence is a demand that must be urgently met²⁹.

Conclusions

Reflecting on the history of the international transit movement of students and higher education professors, we consider *colegios mayores* to be a space of religious and political formation, but also one of socialization and university culture. With its century-old history, it is possible to observe that in the foundation period of *Casa do Brasil* in Madrid it was aligned with Franco's regime, but also with the influences of university internationalization and modernization. Furthermore, its design is a landmark in modern Brazilian architecture, and still stands as a reference in Madrid, even though it is little known by most Brazilians.

²⁵ General Archive of the Complutense University of Madrid, Report on the Academic Periods, 1970, pp. 16-17 and p. 30.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 16.

²⁷ Araújo, *Os tempos de uma casa*, cit.

²⁸ Ermel, Igelmo, *Os Colegios Mayores como espaços de modernização do Ensino Superior espanhol na década de 1960*, cit.

²⁹ We must make it clear that the research has been limited to looking up «Casa do Brasil» on the following databases: CAPES's theses and dissertations database/Brazil; PhD Theses – Teseo/Spain; Scielo; Dialnet; Google Scholar.

Casa do Brasil was founded to promote Brazilian culture and the Portuguese language in Spain and Europe, and still reserves a part of its vacancies for Brazilian students, teachers, researchers and artists. The closeness to Portuguese culture must also be regarded as a key part in the initial organization of this space, bearing in mind the unfulfilled expectations concerning the construction of a *Casa do Brasil* in Lisbon³⁰.

Starting with some external effort, we believe that one of the main features of this study was bringing up the potential of the history and memories of *Casa do Brasil*, in view of its institutional archive, aiming at promoting historical research at the institution, which should be regarded as a transnational historical-educational heritage. The annual reports and records are, indubitably, a major part of this archive, available at the General Archive of the Complutense University of Madrid. However, other documents, which may broaden the official discourse, which is often merely technical or informative, need to be organized and made available with a view to expanding the historical importance and visibility of the residence. Another point, which might be key in this movement consists of intergenerational experiences shared by the residents and creating memory archive in the residence.

As a non-formal university educational space, for decades *Casa do Brasil* has promoted countless activities that contribute to the formation, socialization and culture of the *colegios mayores* in Spain, as a landmark for the convergence of several countries, especially Iberoamerican ones. This space was, to a great extent, a place for welcoming Latin American residents in its first decade of history. That being said, *Casa do Brasil* has not only played a role in the history and memory of the early and further university formation of many students, educators, researchers and artists from Brazil, Spain and many other countries, but also a distinguished part the transnational history of higher education, and perhaps in the future it will also be a part of the historical-educational university heritage of both countries.

³⁰ *Casa do Brasil de Lisboa* (CBL), created in the early 1990s, is not a student residence, but an association that provides assistance to Brazilian migrants. For further information, check: C. Brum, *A Casa do Brasil de Lisboa: uma associação de acolhida*, «Interseções», vol. 23 n. 1, 2021, pp. 7-38.

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