

Textbooks and Citizenship in modern and contemporary Europe

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Paolo Bianchini, Roberto Sani

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Paolo Bianchini & Roberto Sani (eds)



TEXTBOOKS AND CITIZENSHIP IN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

PETER LANG

PAOLO BIANCHINI
ROBERTO SANI

The history of education between “invented archives” and actual research

The essays in this book are focused on the production and the use of textbooks in different countries and different periods of European history.¹ By indicating some particularly important moments in the evolution of textbooks, they allow a better understanding of the educational history and of some other related topics: the history of school subjects mainly reconstructed through the contents offered to students at various levels of education; the educational and cultural policies that the states have continued through and what is still one of the most powerful means of training and orientation of public opinion: the school.

The common source to all the essays collected here is the educational publishing. All authors have analyzed books, authors, publishers,

1 All the essays in this book were originally published in the website <www.historyonline.eu>, dedicated to the history of education, teaching and formation in Europe. The website, now abandoned, was created thanks to funds from the Lifelong Learning Programme for 2008–2009 in partnership with six European countries – France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, and Spain – and a candidate country, Turkey. The project was to create what the American historian Roy Rosenzweig has called an “invented archive”, including data from digital library and documents, but also samples of their use from historians. See R. Rosenzweig, *The Road to Xanadu: Public and Private Pathways on the History Web*, “Journal of American History”, 88, 2, 2001, p. 560 <<http://chnm.gmu.edu/resources/essays/roadtoxanadu.php>>. See also G. Bandini-P. Bianchini, *Fare storia in rete*, Carocci, Firenze, 2007; S. A. Brennan-T. Mills Kelly, *Why Collecting History Online is Web 1.5*, March 2009, in <<http://chnm.gmu.edu/essays-on-history-new-media/essays/?essayid=47>>; D. J. Cohen, *From Babel to Knowledge: Data Mining Large Digital Collections*, in “D-Lib Magazine”, Vol. 12, Number 3 (March, 2006), pp. 6–19, now also at: <<http://chnm.gmu.edu/essays-on-history-new-media/essays/?essayid=40>>.

users of manuals in limited contexts and moments in the history of education in different countries, in the attempt to study it through the real materials used daily in classes and not simply on teaching methods and pedagogical theories.

There are of course references to other documents, such as laws, regulations and educational programs and even iconography, useful elements for the studied context. As a matter of fact, for its own nature, the history of school and education in general lies at the crossroads of different sources and historiographical interests: to reconstruct its phases it is certainly useful to have textbooks, programs, laws, and images, but it is also needed to know the training of teachers and the scientific debate on contemporary disciplines. Moreover, these issues may be approached through a qualitative or quantitative analysis.

In this sense, the book offers a broad overview of the different possibilities of investigation that textbooks represent, as they deal with different sources and heuristic methods. Some authors focus on the progressive definition of the contents of a single subject, through a qualitative analysis of several manuals, supported by the use of other sources. This approach allows us to know in depth subjects familiar to everyone, not just for historians, and perhaps because of it, not often studied in their evolution in the curriculum.

This is the case of the Modern Greek literature textbooks studied by Lambros Varelas during the Metaxas dictatorship in Greece, which shows the apparent effort to use neutral textbooks with no political or ideological purposes in order to strengthen the power of the ruling government and to disseminate its principles.

The same idea is followed by Giorgio Chiosso, who describes the evolution of textbooks in the primary and secondary Italian schools after the Unification of Italy, showing how textbooks have been used by the political and intellectual élites to forge Italian young people in loving and appreciating the new “unified country”.

In this book, there are also scholars, such as Gianfranco Bandini and Paolo Bianchini, who study the textbooks from a quantitative perspective, by experimenting new research instruments for the history of education. In both cases, we are dealing with research and historiographical

methods at their experimental level, which, however, show the concrete potentials offered by the computer programs that are easily applicable to subjects such as history. Bandini has interpreted data from geography textbooks used in Italian schools from 1874 to 1875 with a Geographic Information System (GIS), which allows a very refined research of data with historical and geographical information. By using geography as an object and research instrument at the same time, through GIS he analyses the strategies of adapting manuals by the instructors, showing how a textbook success was based upon its ability of addressing the teachers' patriotic feelings.

Bianchini, instead, has used the software for the “Automatic Lexical and Text treatment of Content Analysis” (TALTAC) for a series of textbooks. This software, based on lexicology, has been used to analyze the contents of textbooks' titles published in Piedmont during the Restoration period. His essay focuses on the relationship between pedagogy and politics while using manuals as research instruments, in connection with the events and the protagonists of the historical time in order to underline the political and cultural strategies of the Kingdom of Sardinia.

In other essays, the manuals are considered as a mean to understand the impact of the reforms on the school system and the didactic in general in a specific country. This is the case of Ebubekir Ceylan's research, as he used the analysis of history textbooks to map the fundamental phases of the school system and education in general in Turkey during the XIX and XX century.

Roberto Sani's, Juri Meda's, Anna Ascenzi's and Marta Brunelli's essay have the same objective while following the opposite path: by studying the laws and the regulations of the textbooks, they offer a new and original perspective on the school policy and on education in general during Fascism, by showing the effects on the educational publishing world at that time.

Other essays are focused on the contributions that manuals have provided to the national identity. Ana Maria Badanelli Rubio's, Kira Mahmud Angulo's and Miguel Somoza's research focuses on those female and male roles that were portrayed in the textbooks during Franco's

dictatorship in Spain. The contents and the images analyzed in the essay highlight such a stereotyped ideal of a male and female figure to appear natural if not genetic even if in reality they were the results of definite ideological and political choices.

On the other hand, Doina-Olga Ștefănescu and Alexandra Florea's article compares the textbooks written during Ceausescu's regime with those published after it, in regards to the interpretation of Romania's history. The resulting stories are so different among them as to affect the young students with different ideas of country and nation. Knowing that history is not neutral, the Romanian manuals show how historiography can heavily affect the identity of the single individual and the national one.

In this book, there are essays focused on several research methods and tools, together with essays on different periods and places in Europe, from Italy to Spain, Greece, Romania and Turkey: this last case is very interesting from the point of view of the European history of education for its diversified proposed perspective.

The heuristic approach of the essays in this book doesn't allow a complete reconstruction of the history of the school system in the different countries or of a single school subject. However, by analyzing the subject's contents and the manuals, this book contributes to examine in depth the subject in general together with its peculiar changes during the years.

It is also important to underline that the manuals' history can highlight the relevant changes that occurred in curricula, besides those that occurred in the publishing sector in Europe and in the surrounding countries. In this specific area, the manuals contribute to understand the critical moments, the continuity and the permanent aspects in the subjects and in the national and European culture, which is a very old history, so for this reason it is not always easy to rebuild it with all its inner features.

As it is well known, didactic and politics influenced the school contents: we cannot dismiss, in fact, that the school subjects follow peculiar logic connected to the single individual formation but also the citizen one. For this reason, there has always been a gerarchy of the subjects

in school which, however, has been changing. This is indicative of an understanding of the students’ educational needs, seen as the future citizens. As a result, it cannot be considered neutral for the presence or the absence in the curricula of specific historical contents.

It is for this reason that all the essays investigate an important issue, i.e. the evolution of citizenship and the citizen concept in the modern and contemporary Europe. Grammar, history, geography, language and literature have been the instruments through which the students have gradually received the cultural basis of the Western civilization, but they have also contributed to create the public opinion of the different countries.

Good and honest citizens, brave soldiers, smart entrepreneurs and managers have formed themselves in schools, by studying the deeds of the national army, their State frontiers and colonial policies. Acknowledging the importance of school and education in the building up of a national identity, besides the diffusion and success of ideologies and political trends, since the XIX century, all the governments have used, in a more or less successful way, education, textbooks and school manuals as instruments of self promotion, censorship, control and to foster the public opinion and the future electing class.

It is important to acknowledge the above point, especially considering the historical period we are living in, where even if we are careful in not disseminating among the younger generations ideas of hate and prejudice, this is still not sufficient to form good citizens.

Paradoxically, what distinguishes the modern manuals from the old ones is the absence of a definite model of a citizen and of a man. We have been successful in eliminating – even if not totally – from the curricula and the textbooks, the references to superior genre, race, class, but we are still unable to form the 21st century man, able to live in a globalised world in peace and with great opportunities, respectful of itself and the environment in order to leave a better place for the future generation. We have been able to erase the mistakes from the past, but we have not replaced them with new content and real alternatives.

PAOLO BIANCHINI
University of Turin

Didactics and Politics. The Birth of School Subjects in Pre-Unification Piedmont (1814–1839)

Abstract

The text will show how books for schools and education produced in Piedmont during the Restoration were affected not only by the educational strategies and educational reforms adopted by the Kingdom of Savoy, but even more so by the political choices of the State. The Savoy example may be used to assess how not only pedagogy, but also one of its highly technical branches, didactics, has political origins and intentions. For this reason, the analysis will not only concern schools and teaching practices, although it will use textbooks as the main way of assessing its arguments, but it will try to put them in context with the events and characters of the time, in order to identify links to the political and cultural strategies of the Kingdom of Sardinia.

The choice to consider the case of pre-unified Piedmont was made for two reasons: the first is that in the two decades immediately after the Restoration there was a strong desire to reorganise the State in the Kingdom of Sardinia. This was necessary to fulfil the government's intention to make people forget the period of French occupation, which lasted from 1798 to 1814. Also a reactionary wave swept over the school and it underwent significant changes, even if deliberately disguised as a return to the past; the second reason is the weight that Savoy's scholastic model would have born on unified Italy, to which the organisational and cultural baggage of the Piedmont school was added in 1861.

Introduction – The lexicometric approach and the history of textbooks

The period under consideration in this essay covers the years 1814 to 1839. If the choice of the start date is rather obvious, since it coincides with the re-entry of the House of Savoy in her Kingdom, the final date has been chosen since, with the 1840s, a significant change began to take place in both public opinion and the Piedmont government relative to education and schools.¹ Indeed it was in 1839 that the Infant Schools Company became definitively operational and proceeded to play a fundamental role in the diffusion of a new way of understanding primary school education. No longer seen as merely offering assistance, it began to be conceived as a system that respected the cognitive modalities of pupils. The said Company played a considerable role in overcoming the resistance of conservatives and brought Ferranti Aporti to Turin, where he implemented the first method course for elementary school teachers.

The 1840s therefore represent the start of a new phase in the history of Piedmont's scholastic system, one that risks obscuring the work of previous decades, decades which had perhaps been less dynamic and successful but no less important, in this regard, in the history of Italian and Savoy school education.

The textbooks published in the 25 years between 1814 and 1839, catalogued in *Edisco*, the databank for Italian school manuals, come to a total of 394.² These volumes were certainly used in schools and the number excludes those that were not specifically aimed at students, such as some catechisms, which were perhaps also used in classes, but were not published specifically for a didactic use. The same holds for reading books relative to which it has not been possible to ascertain whether they were designed for teachers and/or students.

1 A first version of this essay was published in P. Bianchini (ed.), *Le origini delle materie. Discipline, programmi e manuali scolastici in Italia*, Torino, Sei, 2010.

2 <<http://piemonte.di.unito.it/edisco/Controller>>.

Certainly the sample that we have chosen is highly significant though it does not claim to exhaustively include all textbooks produced in Piedmont in the decades immediately following the Congress of Vienna.³

The books in question will be subject to three different types of analysis. The first will be quantitative in nature, seeking to explore the trend in manuals production in Piedmont in the first decades of the 19th century, with particular attention focusing on the most representative authors, the evolution of disciplines and those publishers who were most closely attuned to the education market, in the light of the influence exercised by contemporary political events and the reform of the education system.

The second analysis will use *TaLTaC*², software employed in the “Automatic lexical and textual treatment for Analysing the Contents of a collection of texts (corpus)”. This treatment is aimed “at describing and interpreting the contents and/or some properties” of a corpus by means of a “lexicometric approach”, applicable to all types of texts “expressed in a natural language, from documents to interviews, press summaries to messages, in accordance with the principles of textual statistics”.⁴ This second typology of analysis will be used to investigate the evolution of literature aimed at schools through an analysis of titles, specifically exploring references to subjects, users, types of school and, more generally, verifying the transformations we are aware of in that period via didactical and education language.

The last type of analysis will be quintessentially qualitative in character and will focus on a limited number of manuals, which stand out due to the originality of their subject matter, their target audience or the importance of their authors.

3 The survey focuses solely on texts produced in the Italian areas of the Kingdom of Sardinia, with the exclusion, therefore, of the area north of the Alps. In addition, manuals have not been considered that were printed by publishers resident in regions which came under Savoy control as a result of the Congress of Vienna e.g. the ancient Duchy of Genoa and part of Liguria.

4 <<http://www.taltac.it/it/index.shtml>>.

The context: the Savoy school after the Restoration

Before Victor Emmanuel I returned to Turin on 17 May 1814, the order had reached Prospero Balbo, who had held the office of Chancellor during the Napoleonic period to close the University. The sovereign's decision was aimed, in truth, more at sanctioning the end of the revolutionary and Napoleonic experience, and resetting the events of the fifteen previous years and marking a new year zero in the history of the Piedmont school. The new government, however, didn't take long to notice the fact that it would not have been too difficult bring the Savoy school back to its situation prior to 1798, and that, with the French gone again, there were very few subjects of the royal family who deserved to be punished for having worked with the invaders.

In any case, since he was borrowed to work for Napoleon, Balbo was removed, even if he laboriously managed to keep the Savoy school system almost unaltered and was sent away as Ambassador to the Court of Spain.

Victor Emmanuel I reorganised the Magistrate of the Reform, the ancestor of the Ministry of Education, putting the elderly Gioacchino Adami di Cavagliano at its head, who very quickly died and was replaced in the same year by Gian Carlo Brignole, who had no experience in the field, but who belonged to the *Amicizia cattolica* [Catholic Friendship] of Turin, a secret society, based on the model of the Jesuit Aa, who appeared in Piedmont at the end of 1700s and then spread throughout Europe, focussed on re-capturing the people, and the government for the Catholic religion. A considerable weight inside the Magistrate from the start was the censor Giambattista Viotti, who was also a member of the *Amicizia cattolica* and a great supporter of the Jesuits.

Among the other members of the Magistrate was the decisive and straightforward figure of Gian Francesco Galeani Napione, a man faithful to Savoy and a promoter in the past of some important cultural initiatives, as the author of *Dell'uso e dei pregi della lingua italiana* (1791), in which claimed the exclusive use of Italian in Piedmont, and then *Del modo di riordinare la regia Università degli studi* (1799), with which,

during the brief Austro-Russian occupation (1798–99), he had tried to guide the choice of the government in the educational field.

The few measures that the Savoy school system underwent between 1814 and the 1818, all eminently reactionary, had a purpose: in the first place, the *Constitutions for the University* of 1772 came into existence, including the *Istruzione per insegnare* by Goffredo Franzini, a sort of Rosetta stone for didactics, which contained the Piedmont rules that teachers were to adopt in their classes. Therefore, the *licée* was closed, a Napoleonic institution for excellence, which returned to being one of the two colleges of Turin, entrusted moreover to the Jesuits, who had lost the College of Nobles, which closed in 1773. Finally, elementary schools in Latin were legalised again, which were cast away by both the revolutionary and Napoleonic governments, both of which had tried to replace them with schools in the vernacular, accessible to children of all social classes.

The effects of the restrictive policy introduced by the restored Kingdom of Sardinia were felt in terms of the quantity and quality of manuals produced. A few years later, the Latinist Vallauri declared that “no province in Italy had books intended for use in schools that were as incorrect or badly printed as those in Piedmont”. His evaluation appears to be confirmed by an official report in 1831, which stated that the texts “for the Royal Schools” were “full of errors and appallingly printed, on extremely poor quality paper”.⁵

Between 1814 and 1817 only 18 of the 393 texts produced in the period under examination were printed (equal to only 4.5%). The Royal Printing Press published five, followed immediately by the printer Pietro Barbié of Carmagnola, whose presses printed a total of four scholastic texts, and by Giuseppe Pomba, who printed a further three works.⁶

5 Both citations are taken from E. Soave, *L'industria tipografica in Piemonte. Dall'inizio del XVIII secolo allo Statuto Albertino*, Torino, Gribaudo, 1976, pp. 44 and 135.

6 Many of the printers in the essay are mentioned in G. Chiosso (editor), *TESEO, Tipografi e editori scolastico-educativi dell'Ottocento*, Editrice Bibliografica, Milano, 2003. See this text for more detailed information concerning their overall history and production.

Barbié and Pomba had started their activity in the scholastic market back in the years prior to the French Revolution and had continued their involvement during the French period of occupation. It was therefore inevitable that they re-proposed manuals that were well known to the public and which had enjoyed considerable success. Moreover, the Royal Printing House's monopoly held only for books produced directly at the initiative of the Magistracy of Reform, a fact that permitted ample space for the involvement of printers interested in the formal and non formal education sector. And a significant number of publishers duly turned their attention, in some cases to an enormous degree, to the education market.

Indeed, between 1814 and 1839, the market share of the Royal Printing House fell significantly. Although it is true that during the period in question the Royal Printing House was the one publisher which, among all Piedmont printers, produced the largest number of books (70, equal to 17.8%), it is also true that, as we will see below, over the years the impact of the other printers grew dramatically. In other words, the texts made available to Piedmont teachers and pupils constantly increased, while the production levels of the Royal Printing House remained stable, with the latter therefore in effect losing large sections of the market.

The Restoration in didactics

There was also a return to the past in textbooks. Used books were immediately removed from the market, of which there had been two main types until that time:

1. Books produced in Piedmont during the brief revolutionary period, between 1798, when Savoy were forced to leave Turin for Sardinia, and 1803, when Napoleon imposed an organic law to standardise the schooling system and content on all the countries that comprised