



ReIReS

Research Infrastructure
on Religious Studies



“The presence and the quality of the religious history in the school texts for the high school and in the most important texts of general history edited in the last three decades”

Workshop 7.1

Rome, 10-11 January 2019



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Research Infrastructures on Religious Studies (ReIReS)

ReIReS is a starting community of twelve European institutions that are building a unique and highly qualified infrastructure on religious studies. ReIReS brings knowledge into the field of religious pluralism in Europe, thus contributing to a stable society. It explains and implements the idea of “Knowledge Creates Understanding”.

1. Introduction

Historical religious studies represent a growing research field which requires new methodological and epistemological crucial issues. Scholars are becoming aware of a proper interdisciplinary approach to develop deeper and more innovative historical religious studies. The required enlargement of the sources challenges the capability to be acquainted with different methodologies concerning different subjects and fields. ReIReS answers to this needs through the digital access to the widest range of expertise, sources, resources and facilities of the domain of historical religious studies. In order to use this new tools and skills properly, it is necessary firstly, to define the features of this new research methodology and secondly, to reconsider in a coherent framework the epistemological innovations that come from ReIReS activities and results in a coherent framework.

2. ReIReS WP7

The workshop in Rome, 10th-11th January 2019, is part of ReIReS WP7 and represents its first task (T7.1). WP7 provides an appropriate Joint Research Activity (JRA2), whose aim is to consider the impact of the integrated system services that ReIReS offers to scholars and their use on the domain of historical religious studies. JRA2 “History of Religious Studies in the Age of Big-Data: Developing New Methodologies” shows how relevant is the dissemination of a proper and correct knowledge of religious history to understand the long-term development of the cultural pillars of the current European framework, and to transfer the knowledge from academia to a larger audience.



Roma, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche

3. Workshop WP 7.1 “The presence and the quality of the religious history in the school texts for the high school and in the most important texts of general history edited in the last three decades”

The workshop aims to analyze the state-of-the-art of the relation between the development of historical religious studies and the educational programs in Europe. With the Rome workshop we would like to focus on the relevance that education has in the construction of a common European cultural space.

The workshop aspires to analyze the state-of-the-art of the relation between the development of historical religious studies and the education programs in Europe. The aim is to examine how far the new and innovative progress in understanding of religious history, which comes from the possibilities granted by RelReS, could have an impact in reframing the education programs and enriching education as a process of knowledge transferred from academia to a larger audience.



The workshop focuses on the relevance that education has in the construction of a common framework and on the relevance of a correct knowledge of European religious history to better understand the long-term development of the cultural pillars of contemporary Europe. A careful attention to religious history in educational programs is a necessary basis for a full understanding of the plurality and variety of European culture and for the assumption of this variety as a common cultural background. For this reason, the dissemination of a proper knowledge of European religious history in schoolbooks could promote the long-term development of the current European framework.



History schoolbooks (early 1990s)

4. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR)

The National Research Council (CNR) is the largest public research institution in Italy, the only one under the Research Ministry performing multidisciplinary activities with its 102

research institutes. CNR's mission is to perform research in its own Institutes, to promote innovation and competitiveness of the national industrial system, to promote the internationalization of the national research system, to provide technologies and solutions to emerging public and private needs, to advise Government and other public bodies, and to contribute to the qualification of human resources. The CNR activity consists of basic and applied research, of doctoral and post-doctoral training and in the transfer of knowledge. The CNR promotes a dialogue between physical, natural and human sciences in a unitary and non-reductive vision of knowledge.

In the CNR's research world, the main resource is the available knowledge, which means people, with their skills, commitment and ideas. This capital comprises more than 8.000 employees, of whom more than half are researchers and technologists. Some of the 4.000 young researchers are engaged in postgraduate studies and research training at Cnr within the organization's top-priority areas of interest. A significant contribution even comes from Universities and private firms researchers, who take part in Cnr's research activities.

The CNR has 7 departments: the Department of Human and Social Sciences, Cultural Heritage coordinates the activities of 20 Institutes working on three scientific fields: Human Sciences, Law, Social Sciences.

In the field of human studies, the CNR deals with the complex of human and social sciences and of tangible and intangible cultural heritage (SSH/CH).

Website: <https://www.cnr.it/en>



Roma, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Conference Room

5. Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea (CNR ISEM)

ISEM-CNR has been conducting research activity in the field of Mediterranean history and culture from the Middle Ages to the contemporary age for over thirty years. The main areas of interest are historical memory, culture, identity and territory; study, enhancement and promotion of cultural heritage; study, critical edition and digital treatment of documentary, literary and cartographic sources; human and cultures migrations.

The ISEM, part of the CNR Department of Human and Social Sciences, Cultural Heritage, has three offices: the head office in Cagliari and two branches in Milan and Rome. At ISEM work 27 people among researchers and technical and administrative employees. The Institute manages an online Journal in open access, *RiMe. Rivista dell'Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea* and an online Book Series *Europa e Mediterraneo. Storia e immagini di una comunità internazionale*.

Websites:

CNR ISEM: <http://www.isem.cnr.it/>

RiMe: <http://www.rime.cnr.it/>

Europa e Mediterraneo:

<http://www.isem.cnr.it/index.php?page=pubblicazioni&id=1&lang=en>



Cagliari, Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea, 'A. Boscolo' Room (Ph.: Luigi Serra)

6. Workshop WP 7.1 Location

Rome, **CNR Headquarter**, Piazzale Aldo Moro 7

Bisogno Room, located at the first floor of CNR Headquarter.



Roma, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Bisogno Room

7. Participants

The Rome workshop involves internal and external experts in education in Europe and especially in religious history:

- **Massimo Inguscio**, President of CNR
- **Alberto Melloni**, FSCIRE Bologna, Project Coordinator of ReIReS
- **Marcello Verga**, Director of CNR ISEM, ReIReS WP7 leader
- **Francesca Cadeddu**, FSCIRE Bologna, ReIReS WP9 leader
- **Maria Chiara Giorda**, Roma Tre University
- **Isabelle Saint-Martin**, École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE), Paris
- **Hermann Selderhuis**, Theologische Universiteit Apeldoorn (TUA)
- **Michele Rabà**, CNR ISEM, Milano
- **Stavros Zoumboulakis**, Director of Nea Hestia, Athens

- **Denis Pelletier**, École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE), Paris
- **Vito Lorè**, Roma Tre University
- **Federica Candido**, Roma Tre University
- **Carla Noce**, Roma Tre University
- **Liliana Simeonova**, Institute of Balkan Studies & Center for Thracology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia
- **Bojidar Andonov**, Theological Faculty, Sofia University St. Klement of Ohrid
- **Aurora Savelli**, CNR ISEM Roma
- **Silvia Costa**, European Parliament, Education and Culture Commission
- **Gilberto Corbellini**, Director of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Cultural Heritage (CNR-DSU)
- **Karla Boersma**, Director of Operations Refo500, RelReS WP8 leader.



Roma, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Marconi Room



8. Workshop program

Day 1: Thursday, January 10th, 2019

2.00 pm - 2.30 pm, *Welcome and Introduction*

2.30 pm

- Alberto Melloni (FSCIRE), *The challenge of religious illiteracy in Europe*
- Marcello Verga (CNR ISEM), *Unesco writes the history of the World. From the History of Mankind to the History of Humanity*

4.00 pm, *Coffee break*

4.20 pm

- Francesca Cadeddu (FSCIRE), *The "Web-Portal of Religions". Presentation of the FSCIRE project for improving religious literacy in the schools*
- Maria Chiara Giorda (Roma Tre University), *Religious diversity and radicalism in Italian History Textbooks*
- Isabell Saint-Martin (EPHE), *Teaching about Religion in France*

Discussion

Day 2: Friday, January 11th, 2019

9.30 am

- Hermann Selderhuis (TUA), *Making Religion Attractive. Example from Dutch schoolbooks*
- Michele Rabà (CNR-ISEM), *Il fatto religioso tra società e politica nella manualistica italiana di storia moderna e contemporanea*
- Stavros Zoumboulakis, *La religion dans les manuels scolaires grecques: du catechisme Orthodoxe a une approche existentielle*

11.00 am, Coffee Break

11.20 am

- Denis Pelletier (EPHE), *Religious history of France and public debate: the “eternal return” of a polemic issue*
- Vito Lorè, Federica Candido, Carla Noce (Roma Tre University), *Cristianesimi scomparsi nei manuali scolastici. Un caso di studio sui licei classici di Roma.*

Discussion

1.00 pm, Lunch Break

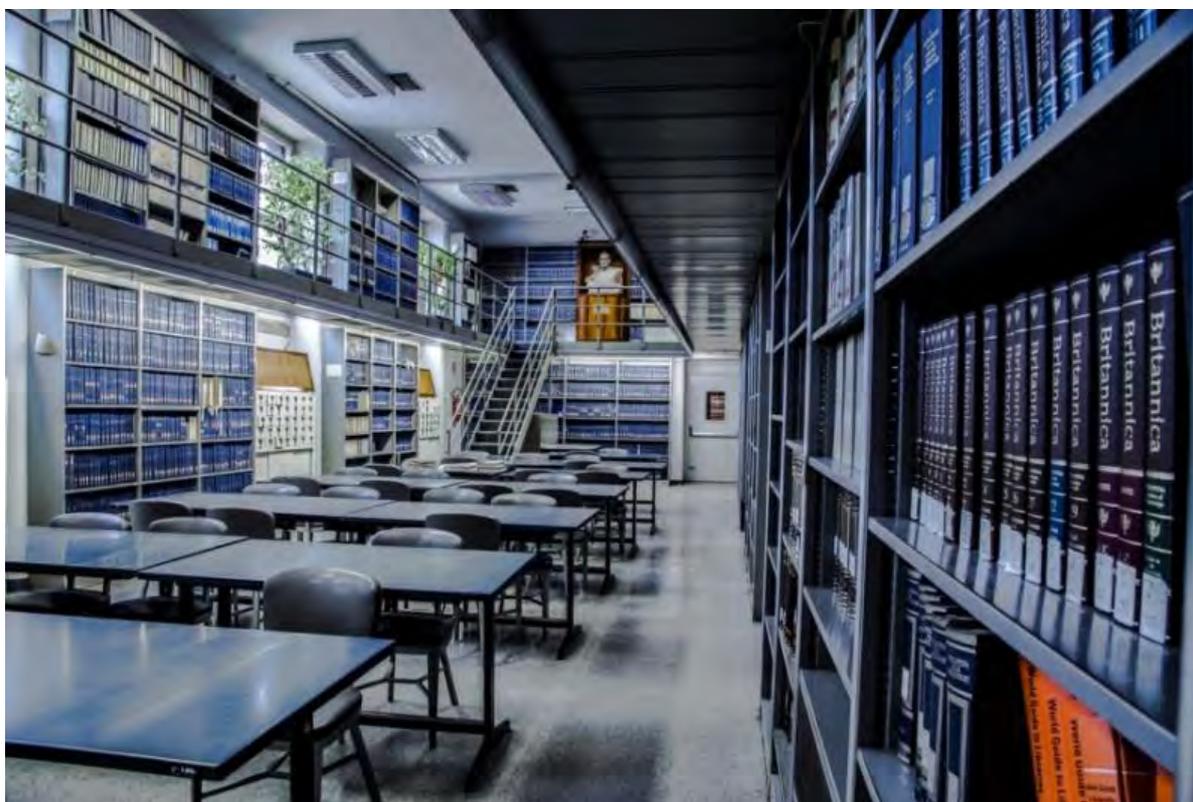
2.30 pm

- Liliana Simeonova (Institute of Balkan Studies & Center for Thracology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), *Academic Purges and Reforms in the Academy in Relation to the Studies in Church History in the Early Stages of Communism in Bulgaria*
- Borjidar Andonov, (Theological Faculty, Sofia University St. Klement of Ohrid), *Von der Politischen Freiheit zur Religioesen Freiheit - Wiedermulassung des Religionsunterrichts in den staatlichen Schulen Bulgariens*
- Aurora Savelli (CNR-ISEM), *Risorse on line per la storia religiosa: uno sguardo sui musei nazionali di storia e sull'House of European History*

4.30 pm, Coffee break

5 pm, Round table

Silvia Costa – Gilberto Corbellini – Alberto Melloni – Marcello Verga – Karla Boersma



Roma, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 'G.Marconi' Library

9. Abstracts

ALBERTO MELLONI (FSCIRE)

The challenge of religious illiteracy in Europe

In the last twenty years, the issue of religious illiteracy and its relationship to legal systems, historical events and the construction of memory in western countries has garnered the attention of scholars and policy-makers. An analysis of the state of art highlights the attempt to understand (and a path to counteract) the lack of critical awareness of histories, laws, theologies, doctrines, creeds and cultures that make up the religious and spiritual landscape of Europe and North America. Studies on these issues have produced

knowledge as well as works and policies from which two parallel tendencies have emerged: one intent on Religious Education, that is, what gives structure and content to the spaces chosen for the acquisition of awareness concerning religions and creeds, and the other focused on religious alphabetization and the production of knowledge, meaning the acquisition of knowledge about religions and systems of belief as an inter and transdisciplinary issue. This paper will present the outcomes of the book “Religious Literacy, Law and History”, edited by Alberto Melloni and Francesca Cadeddu, forthcoming with Routledge. This volume sets out to move beyond the case studies and pave the way for research that reflects on history, legal structures, systems of thought and the challenges of European religious pluralism as such. The work takes place within a Europe conceived of as a cultural space anchored to the countries of the European Union, but at times, the context also extends into the outlying areas of the Mediterranean, the Balkans, the Middle East, Asia and North America. The book is an attempt to stimulate politicians, teachers and other interested parties to grasp the true value of knowledge as the only tool for facing the complexity of what we define as ‘religion in the public space’ and to answer the questions that naturally arise when discussing such issues, like ‘Are religions violent?’ or ‘Why do we have to teach them at school?’ For this, each author was invited to analyze critically the causes of religious illiteracy from the specific point of view of their own discipline or profession and to set aside momentarily the search for its solutions in order to give space to the reasons that have generated and nourished it.

MARCELLO VERGA (CNR ISEM)

Unesco writes the history of the World. From the History of Mankind to the History of Humanity

I propose to study the intellectual context in which the two major UNESCO’s Histories were produced: the first, *History of Mankind*, edited from 1963; the second, *History of Humanity*, edited from 1994. The focus is on the relevance of the religions in their narratives.

I analyse the essays and the debates published in the *Cahiers d’histoire mondiale* (1953) as the context for preparatory discussions for the idea of a UNESCO *History* and the different approaches adopted in the both UNESCO’s Histories. I aim at tracing the debate



which had marked the fate of the two Histories and discussing the historiographical lines which stood at the basis of their preparation. Furthermore, this report intends to deal with two others issues. The first regards the “pacifist use” of history, which is an argument linked – for instance – to the debates on schoolbooks begun in the 1920 and 1930. The second question concerns the motivations that, between 1947 and 1996, led UNESCO, (but the same can be said about the Council of Europe, even if to a small scale) to promote the *History of Mankind* and the *History of Humanity*, which needed to legitimise its political action.

These issues open up investigation on the ways and the reasons of writing an “official” history and on the historiographical culture of historians who were promoting and cooperating with the UNESCO.

FRANCESCA CAEDDU (FSCIRE)

The “Web-Portal of Religions”. Presentation of the FSCIRE project for improving religious literacy in the schools

Fighting Religious Illiteracy with Knowledge. Presentation of Pars, Portale di formazione e informazione per il contrasto dell’analfabetismo religioso.

Within the national project “The Educating City: teaching and learning processes in cross-media ecosystem” (PON 2007-2013), the research group coordinated by Prof. Alberto Melloni from the Department of Education and Human Sciences at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, together with the Foundation for Religious Sciences John XXIII from Bologna have created Portale di formazione e informazione per il contrasto dell’analfabetismo religioso (Education and Information Portal to Contrast Religious Illiteracy, PARS – www.pars-edu.it).

PARS is an unprecedented tool on the Italian landscape. It is a platform that has been created for the collection, use, and sharing of materials related to religious issues. PARS adopts a bottom-up approach to religious literacy: its intention is to provide the public with a set of digital resources and tools for self-understanding on religious matters.

In this day and age, the issue of religious pluralism and cultural dialogue are essential parts of public debate and necessary for building an inclusive society aimed at reducing the

social costs of inequality in favor of the benefits of reciprocal understanding and cooperation.

While 93% of young Italians use the Internet daily and 92.1% of students (circa. 9 million) use a computer, only 16% make use of digital resources and content at school (source: Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico, Agenda Digitale Italiana). In the context of school and of lifelong learning, novel practices of access to and management of knowledge and teaching represent unique opportunities to stimulate education and learning on matters such as religious pluralism in a more dynamic and interactive way through the enhancement of technologies at our disposal (social networks, apps, the web).

PARS aims to facilitate the understanding of the fabric of contemporary religion and religious illiteracy. It proposes core notions – historical, theological, doctrinal, scriptural, ritual, social, community and experiential – that make up different religious and spiritual traditions. These notions are useful for the understanding of the complexity of religious identity and the intersections among religion, history and culture.

Within PARS, a system has been created that allows users to manage information, evaluate sources, moderate activities, and combine resources all in a coherent manner. PARS selects from content that is available online, creates new content, and brings everything together to facilitate learning and literacy. It also allows for the saving and sharing of resources through social networks and other web-based assets. In this way, the gathering of knowledge and education can enjoy the benefits of broader resources: texts, videos and stories contribute to the creation of new content and to the conservation of the historical memory of events, stories and traditions.

Selection of content according to type (self-training kits, glossary entries, encyclopedia entries, infographics, publications and news), which responds to different needs and cognitive abilities, allows for content to be enjoyed by students, professors, and a wider audience as each user is stimulated to participate in the growth of knowledge of their own culture and those of others.



MARIA CHIARA GIORDA (Roma Tre University)

Religious diversity and radicalism in Italian History Textbooks

Textbooks are a means through which students have their first impact with many fields of knowledge. Despite the growing consumption of mass media contents, when it comes to religions, textbooks remain one of the most important sources about this subject (Procacci 2005).

Indeed school textbooks reflect to a large extent the social cultural and political imaginaries that are dominant in a particular national context in a given moment in time. Therefore, considering textbooks as repositories of a social collective memory, we can deduce from them a great deal of information about the categories through which a society perceives itself and constructs the “outsiders” and about the evolution of these categories. Particularly, textbooks can become also a tool to pass down and to strengthen values that are fundamental to build a national identity, reacting to a community’s past.

The topic of diversity is a “hot” issue within the field of Religious Studies and in the last few years the concept of “radicalism” has become a pivotal in the study of sociological effects of religions. This study is an analysis of how religious diversity and religious radicalism is tackled in history textbooks used in Italian secondary schools.

Rebuilding the drafting of manuals, means the study of who, how, why and for whom they are written, published and circulated. The paper takes into account the profiles of the authors of the manuals, their training and the publishing houses, but also, even if in the background, the programs that were structured and presented in the course of decades, and this, in various waves of renewal and reform of the school. The aim is to analyze if and how in textbooks the approach towards which diversity and radicalism and their reciprocal relationship emerges and compare it to the central public place political, juridical and educational Institutions have given to these issues in Europe and Italy.

ISABELLE SAINT-MARTIN (EPHE)

Teaching about Religion in France

Discussing the French situation of teachers' training related to religious issues could be at first sight considered as a surprising topic thanks to the lesser importance traditionally given to these questions in the French curricula. However, the situation has evolved in the aftermath of an official salient report, the Régis Debray's Report (2002). The first part of the paper will remind the objectives and guiding principles given by the report, discuss their implementation in the school system, and provide a general overview of teaching about religion in France. Secondly, the place of teachers' training on these questions will be approached first before their recruitment, and afterwards through initial and continuous training sessions (with a focus on the latter side). Thirdly, a peculiar attention will be given to the post-January attacks context, with the announcements made by the ministry of Education to reinforce teaching about secular principles and about religions.

HERMAN SELDERHUIS (TUA)

Making Religion Attractive. Examples from Dutch Schoolbooks

The educational situation in the Netherlands is characterized by the distinction between public and special education. `Special´ refersto schools with a religious background and educationl argely based on a religious conviction. Public schools officially have no religious background. This counts for primary as well as for secondary education. While the structure of primary education in the Netherlands is straightforward, the structure of the Dutch secondary education system often seems confusing be cause of the multiple pathsand graduation ages in high school. For long ´religion´ was only a topic on these special schools but over the last decade public schools pay more attention to the various religions and special schools pay more attention too the religious convictions than their own. In my presentation I want to show the recent developments in the field of religious education and the questions that arise from these development. The first part consists of an introduction to the historical background and the present situation of public and special education. In the second part we will see how things in his regard have changed and what role society,



politics, church and school play in this regards. The next section is a presentation of materials used for religious education and these are materials made by educational organisations, schools and governmental organisations. The final part of my paper will be on the challenges this topic is facing at the moment and what positive contribution a research infrastructure like ReIReS can have on these.

MICHELE RABÀ (CNR ISEM)

The Religious fact between Society and Politics in the Italian Modern and Contemporary History textbooks

By confronting some of the most significant among the texts edited between 1998 and 2018, this contribution analyzes the attitude of the Italian modern and contemporary history textbooks toward the religious fact (theological thought, beliefs, rituals, rules, eschatological expectations), considered above all through its bonds with long term political, social and cultural phenomena.

In this bonds is set up the base for the religious fact's resilience in modernity: in the inalienable urgency, to which religious fact answers, to attribute planning and superior aims to individual and collective human experience; in the legitimacy that religious fact provides both to the principle of authority and to the opposition to the sovereign arbitrariness by the most diverse 'counter-powers'; in the authority conferred by its own language to the moral regeneration efforts (pretended or sincere) along contemporary history; in the aggregating or sometimes disruptive effect generated by religious allegiance in a global context marked by the political and military competition between powers, by the colonization processes and by subsequent decolonization.

Given this undeniable resilience, the effort to restore the religious fact in its historical role appears to be an essential step in the development of a credible answer to the questions posed by current events: the coexistence of different religious attitudes and confessions of faith in a single social context has been – and can still be – a factor of cohesion or weakness for the community? Is there a linkage – and if so, to what extent and how can we mark it – between the deep discomfort of individuals and groups marginalized by decision-making at local and global level and the fundamentalist wave we are witnessing?

Have the age-old competition between 'Christianity' and Islam, the age of imperialism, that of totalitarianism, the Cold War and decolonization left unresolved issues in relations between sovereign States and, within these, between majority religious communities and minorities? What forms has taken in the past – and which ones can take in the present – the linkage between religious allegiance and political participation? Is there a gap between the prescriptions and the statements of principle by religious authorities – or by institutionalized groups claiming to represent the whole of the faithful or to interpret their needs – and the religious fact's consequences in social and political life? On these issues, this contribution intends to provide some considerations, intended as partial results of a research in progress.

STAVROS ZOUMBOULAKIS (Nea Hestia)

Religion in the Greek textbooks: from Orthodox catechism to an existential approach

Religious studies are required in the Greek school starting from the third year of primary school until the end of high school (ten years). There's no choice between a religious studies class and, for example, ethic class.

The religious courses in the Greek school are focused on Orthodoxy in every aspects (doctrine, history and worship). In the last years, after long discussions, the spirit and the method of religious teaching are changing. The textbooks left the catechetical and religious approach for a more existential approach (religion like reality experienced). The report will show the actual situation of religious teaching and religion's presence in the Greek school and also the public discussion of last thirty years about these issues.

DENIS PELLETIER (EPHE)

Religious history of France and public debate: the "eternal return" of a polemic issue

It is well known that Religious History has always been a controversial topic in France, due to ancient polemics about laicity, secularism and relationship between Church and State. By the end of the twentieth century, the conditions of these discussions about religion and politics have changed, due to the emergence of Islam as second French religious



confession, and to the resulting conflictual religious pluralization. My contribution focuses on this evolution during the last two decades. Given that the last great synthesis in Religious history of France and History of Christianity date back the 1980's and the 1990's, I will address two issues: 1/ how did it become difficult to propose a consensual version of this history, and what are the subsequent French polemics in recent years? 2/ What consequences arise from such debates in French public education and public space?

VITO LORÈ, FEDERICA CANDIDO, CARLA NOCE (Roma Tre University)

Christianities lost in textbooks. The case of the classical high schools in Rome

The paper aims to verify the impact of some relevant findings within the field of Religious Studies on the most used history textbooks in Italian secondary school. Since the selected subjects regard Christianity in Antiquity and Late Antiquity, the sampled textbooks will be the most adopted biennium volumes during the last scholastic year in the classical high schools in Rome. The analysis will concern the following topics:

The birth of Christianity from the matrix of Judaism. According to some representatives of the most recent scholarship only sometime around the fourth century we can begin to speak of Judaism and Christianity as fully formed and separated entities and identities. If it is true that this position has been criticized by many scholars there is, however, a general consensus about the importance of considering the separation between Judaism and Christianity as the result of a long lasting process, which can vary significantly from region to region, and about the necessity of distinguishing between the literary sources- which aim to create separated identities and boundaries- and “ the folks ... which dwelt in the interstices of the texts” (Boyarin 2004).

The gradual construction of a hierarchical ecclesiastical organization, with particular attention to the Papal Primacy. Once again, we have to deal with long term processes, which had been developed throughout the first millennium. The Papal Primacy, in fact, is an ideological construction, whose origins can be detected in the fourth century, when the Roman Church started to represent itself as superior to the others, because it had been founded by two Apostles, Peter and Paul. But we can speak of a real Primacy of the Roman See only from the Medieval Age.

Christianities. The most recent criticism prefers to speak of “Christianities”, in order to underline the manifold developments of ancient and Late Antique Christianity, including doctrines and practices. Actually, it has been proposed an historical reconstruction, which does not exclude neither groups or individuals regarded as heretics by the official Church nor texts and documents which were labelled heretical or non-canonical.

The research aims at verifying whether the selected topics are detectable within the sampled textbooks; determining whether they play a role within the selected textbooks and what is that role they play; evaluating to what extent they reflect the contemporary academic debate; trying to understand what role they play in the educational system of biennium.

LILIANA SIMEONOVA (Institute of Balkan Studies & Center for Thracology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)

Academic Purges and Reforms in the Academy in Relation to the Studies in Church History in the Early Stages of Communism in Bulgaria

For the past thirty years, a new area of study has been developing in modern Bulgarian historiography. It deals with the problem of how history – including history of the Church – was being studied by Bulgarian scholars in the early stages of Communism and how it was taught in Bulgarian schools and universities. In relation to that, studies on a number of related topics have been published: e.g., how the purges in the Academia affected the lives and careers of professors and scholars who were considered “bourgeois elements” or even “fascists” by the new regime in the 1940s and early '50s; what impact the setting of historiography on “Marxist rails” had on the study and teaching of history, including ecclesiastical history; last but not least, what impact on society the limiting of education in theology and church history had.

The present paper deals with the problems related to the teaching of church history in the Bulgarian institutions of higher education in the 1950s, that is, in the period that followed the purges in the Academia. The paper will also touch upon the vicissitudes in the fates of several outstanding scholars in church history in that time period.



As a starting point, one should take into account the following facts pertaining to the academic purges and reforms in Bulgaria in the mid- to late 1940s and early '50s.

With the support of the occupational Red Army, on 9 Sept. 1944 a coup took place in the nation's capital, Sofia, bringing the communists to power. The events that followed encouraged the "anti-fascist forces" in Bulgaria to take action against everybody whom they viewed as a "fascist".

On 12 Oct. 1944, some faculty members of the History-and-Philology Dept. at Sofia University drafted a report that was sent to the University Committee of the Fatherland Front (FF). In it, they urged the university to immediately purge itself of all the "hostile elements" in its ranks, pointing the finger at some of their fellow professors whom they regarded as being "fascists" or, to say the least, "bourgeois elements".

On 3 Nov. 1944, the Ministry of Education issued an ordinance, according to which the schools, the teachers' institutes as well as Sofia University ought to get rid of those teachers and professors who had actively supported "the old regime" and propagated its ideas. Similar measures were taken three years later in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, which too needed to get purged of "elements that were hostile with regard to the new regime". In 1950, the Sofia Orthodox Seminary "St. John of Rila" (i.e., the theological high school) was exiled to the monastery of Tcherepish in the mountains, some 90 km to the north-east of Sofia. A year later, in 1951 the Parliament passed a law according to which the Faculty of Theology was to be removed from Sofia University: it became an Academy of Theology (i.e., an institution of higher education ranking lower than a university).

The late 1940s and early '50s are also known as "the years of debate": the new, Marxist ideology was being introduced into scholarship and higher education, especially in the humanities and social sciences. This had a tremendous impact on the teaching of history (including history of the Church) as well as on the lives and careers of well-known scholars and university professors.

BOJIDAR ANDONOV (Theological Faculty, Sofia University St. Klement of Ohrid)

From Political to Religious Freedom (renewing the RE in Bulgarian public schools)

In school year 2003/4 the Ministry of Education introduced religious education as an obligatory elective subject in the state schools. According to informal information of the Commission of Religion of the Ministry of Education approximately 40% of the pupils attend religion teaching lessons so far as teachers in religion are available. Because of lack of staff, for the moment it is still not possible to offer religious education to all schools.

Where do the most urgent tasks of religious pedagogy in Bulgaria lie in now?

Before the prohibition of the religious teaching (1947) the Orthodox Church used to define the contents of the religious instruction. The questions and the answers that came out of the Orthodox Catechism stayed constant over the history, only a question remained open – the one concerning the methods, after which the contents could be delivered to the students. As a reasonable consequence of the renewed introducing of religious teaching 1997 in the schools, now a new accent was put at the Faculty of Theology – to create the subject religious pedagogy. Even if religious questions and contents of instruction subsisted considerably, it should not be left to the choice of every single theologian to find those methods which would make him able to deliver religious instruction. Besides, religious pedagogy contains not only methods, but also didactics. It becomes eminently important for the religious-pedagogical situation in Bulgaria to stress on that fact, taking in consideration the described tradition. As didactics was primarily understood as a question of choosing contents, didactics was of no importance either for the catholic, evangelistic, or orthodox traditions, since the contents were stable. However, if didactics is understood, first of all within the framework of the general school education, as a reply to the question: “Why is a main point important for the students? What qualifications and competence could and might students obtain for today and the future?”, so also a religious tradition, which for a long time has been showing itself not concerned of the question of the contents, must devote itself now to this discipline. Very much work on persuasion, co-operation and discussion shall be needed to construct religious pedagogy of this significance in Bulgaria. Therefore, for a convincing and successful carrying out of religious teaching in Bulgarian schools, newly designed religion books are urgently required.



The instructions in the manuals issued in the years 1997 and '98 have hardly new contents and structures regarding tradition. The basic understanding of contents and methods of the religious teaching seems to be unchanged. The reason is hidden in the fact that by now, church historians, Old and New Testament or Moral theologians draw texts for religion books on their respective subject fields without any didactic posing of problems. This is a pure deductive didactic understanding. Still a teaching of religion correctly understood from a didactic point of view would mean, to deliver religious contents in the field of vision of the students, to introduce it in a way that they comprehend it, implement it and rearrange it.

Steps have to be made on this basis with the purpose to reflect also in the school books didactically. The merely partial release from the strong commitment with single theological subjects and a revision of the schematic contents are also related to such steps. First of all, the books have to be constructed as a groundwork that gives the ability for varied, detached and creative forms of teaching. The latter can make steps without overstepping the Bulgarian Orthodox tradition.

Because of specific conditions in Bulgaria no satisfactory textbook on the teaching of religion in schools has been produced so far. That is why I shall dwell the existing tool and comment not its shortcomings which on its turn may be useful, too.

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Online resources for the history of religion: a look at national history museums and at the House of European History

History museums have been influenced by developments in contemporary museology, opening up to new forms of interaction with their local communities. This is true also in the case of European national history museums, with their growing focus on communicating with the public both through the social media and through their own websites. My paper focuses on this latter aspect.

Images, texts and virtual exhibitions are as many ways of depicting and of narrating a nation's history with the aim of attracting new visitors in what, for many of them, will be their very first contact with an institute of education tasked with building knowledge and

identity in a manner capable of triggering enthusiasm and emotion. People often decide to organise a visit to a museum after viewing its website, for example after considering whether the museum offers appropriate spaces and tours devised for children.

Analysing a selection of national museums and the House of European History, we will be asking ourselves questions regarding the presence of the history of religion in these narratives on the web. What themes do they develop? On what periods do they focus? How does "religion" fit into the idea of the construction of a nation, of our common European house, that we aim to convey? In the context of the RelReS project, it appears to be of some importance that we reflect on museums of history as venues for providing and building narratives designed for ever broader audiences.