The MuSEd of Roma Tre between past and present. With unpublished writings by Giuseppe Lombardo Radice and Mauro Laeng

Lorenzo Cantatore
Department of Education
University of Roma Tre (Italy)
lorenzo.cantatore@uniroma3.it

ABSTRACT: The English word *heritage* can be translated in Italian in two different and, especially in our case, converging ways: *patrimonio* (*patrimony*) and *eredità* (*inheritance*). What are our museums of school, education, didactics if not collections of documents (in the broadest sense possible) that have come to us from the past and that are, often unwillingly, a non-secondary part of our heritage of cultural heritage? But we must also reflect on the fact that these museum sites collect cultural assets that bear witness to how, before us, in specific periods, circumstances and places, from generation to generation, the various legacies of the past, both material and immaterial, have been preserved and handed down: knowledge, beliefs, cultures, learning methods, exceptional objects, objects of daily use, etc. We are therefore moving in the field of the management of *inheritance of a heritage*, of a patrimony that mainly consists of instruments and devices that, from time to time, have been conceived and used to better preserve and transmit the cultural heritage of the past. In the case of the writer, the word *heritage* has an even greater moral and cultural weight because it refers to the direction of MuSEd, the Museum of School and Education «Mauro Laeng» of the University of Roma Tre, that is what we can now consider as the oldest Italian museum dedicated to this field of cultural heritage. This contribution is organized in four main sections, in which the fundamental stages of the history of the Museum up to the present day are retraced, with the contribution of unpublished documents relating to the years of the direction of Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice (1936-1938) and the re-founding by Mauro Laeng (1986).

EET/TEE KEYWORDS: Heritage education; Museum; Giuseppe Lombardo Radice; Mauro Laeng; XIXth-XXth Centuries.
1. From Ruggero Bonghi to Luigi Credaro

Wanting to trace a brief history of MuSED, I will immediately say that this is a very fascinating subject, yet articulated and characterized by moments of vivid flowering alternating with periods of tragic abandonment. Surely it is necessary to start from the container. In fact, today, MuSED occupies seven large rooms located on the first floor of the university building of Roma Tre in Piazza della Repubblica 10. The building, which stands on the area previously affected, in the imperial age, by the Baths of Diocletian, over the centuries has hosted, among other things, the Pontifical granaries and a female orphanage. However, from the end of the nineteenth century, in Rome, almost par excellence, that building is simply called «il Magistero» for having been the seat of the second Istituto Superiore di Magistero Femminile italiano, Italian Teacher Training College for Women (after that of Florence). In fact, already in 1882, the Institute had found a stable location there, where, among others, famous intellectuals such as Giovanni Prati, Luigi Pirandello, Manfredi Porena, Ugo Fleres would teach. It was a pedagogical experiment as clumsy and slow as it was innovative and audacious, which finally opened the doors of university education to women, future secondary school teachers. The building, moreover, is located in the heart of the district that was born with the relocation in Rome of the Capital of the Kingdom of Italy: Piedmontese urban planning, a topography with monumental views, a toponymy all oriented towards patriotism and to the significant stages of the Risorgimento (Garibaldi’s Thousand, Palestro, Marsala, Volturino, September XX, the Independence, etc.)¹.

Those large volumetric dimensions still retain a strong identity role for our Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione (Department of Education and Training Science), which still occupies them and which, at the time, has inherited the legacy of the old Faculty of the Magistero of La Sapienza, built from the ashes of the previous College, in 1935. Therefore, in this place, which can perse be made into a museum, since about four years ago (after a thirty-year stay at the branch in via del Castro Pretorio 20) our Museum has now found a stable location. In turn, it collects the legacy of the Museo d’Istruzione e d’Educazione (Museum of Education and Training Sciences) founded with the six articles of the Royal Decree of 15 November 1874, by the then Minister of Education, the Neapolitan scholar Ruggero Bonghi, in agreement with Gaspare Finali, Minister of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce. In the fact-finding mission he carried out at the Universal Exhibition in Vienna in 1873 (whose motto was Kultur und Erziehung, culture and education), Bonghi had recorded with regret

the Italian underdevelopment in the field of pedagogical theory and practice, the poverty of our cultural and institutional debate around the school, of every order and degree, the poor preparation of teachers, the desolating misery of Italian scholastic-educational structures and infrastructures, the urgent need to establish bridges with other more advanced countries, to create in other words, what we would today call a documentation centre focusing on the foreign pedagogical, scholastic and educational stimuli with which Italian teachers could be put in contact through original documents (monographs, magazines, regulations, didactic materials) and through the method of comparison.

Bonghi’s idea was therefore to: «fondare in Roma un museo sul modello dell’Esposizione permanente del materiale d’insegnamento che era stato istituito dal Consiglio municipale di Vienna con decisione del 30 luglio 1872»\(^2\).

In the rest of Europe, as early as the 1850s, some major cities had made an effort in this direction. The museum-pedagogy link and the increasing focus on the material culture of school, education and training had found fertile ground in London (1856), St Petersburg (1864), Vienna (1872) and even Toronto (1856). The truth is that this cultural urgency was considered even in Torino Capitale, as is testified, at the same time, by the foundation of the Regio Museo Industriale (Royal Industrial Museum, 1862), which echoed the Universal Exhibition in London that same year\(^3\). Thus, in the decades in which the industrialized and educated bourgeois civilization matured the need to show itself using the tool of the universal exhibition, understood as an extraordinary promotional, communicative and, ultimately, pedagogical event, even for Bonghi, who acts with a rare timeliness in the Italian matters of public education, the idea of the exhibition as a place-method of information and formation acquires the sense of an avant-garde cultural action, based on a rigorous and widespread use of the comparative method.

We are probably faced with «one of the most important scientific, pedagogic, political and cultural initiatives undertaken by the liberal post-unitarian ruling class to renovate and modernize the scholastic system and, therefore, make the Italians»\(^4\). By calling this space a «museum» dedicated to the knowledge and study of theories, tools and problems of contemporary pedagogy and school, Bonghi wanted to express the sense of the material construction of a thoughtful and selective collection of materials, the need for public display and, above all, the perception of dealing with rapidly evolving content, so that the critical

---

\(^2\) G. Tauro, *Della necessità di ricostruire in Italia il Museo d’Istruzione e di Educazione*, Turin, Paravia, 1903, p. 5: «to found in Rome a museum on the model of the permanent Exhibition of teaching materials that had been established by the city Council of Vienna with a decision of July 30 1872». From here on, the English translations of the documents which, in respect of their originality, are published in the text in Italian will be given in the footnotes.

\(^3\) *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

perspective based on comparison would soon have to be applied not only in the synchronic-diatopic sense but also in the diachronic direction. Naturally, the underlying objective, that is the dream of creating a class of teachers who were always up-to-date, curious about novelties and eager to experiment, called into question the knowledge and study of a complex of pedagogical documents of various kinds, material and immaterial: ideas and objects, theories and practices, with particular attention paid to spaces, furnishings, things, or that material culture of the school which, in Italy, was not yet developed and which was undoubtedly one of the basic ideas of positivism. This can be seen from some passages of the Bonghi report, an introduction to the decree establishing the Museum. It is a fundamental text, within which the very idea of a pedagogical museum matured:

Il Museo di istruzione e di educazione deve essere un istituto inteso a raccogliere, a comparare costantemente tutti gli oggetti che sono adatti a far parte d’una esposizione universale. Esso deve, per mo’ d’esempio, riunire le piante delle migliori scuole che si costruiscono negli Stati civili di Europa e di America [...] e diffonderne in ciascuna parte del paese una notizia esatta [...]. Questo medesimo deve essere fatto per la mobilia, per gli utensili, per i mezzi d’insegnamento, per i libri. L’istituto, insomma, ha ad essere così ordinato da riuscire appropiato insieme a raccogliere, e ad intendere ciò che raccoglie. Ed esso stesso deve aver modo ed attitudine di giudicare il frutto delle scuole del paese comparativamente, così tra esse come d’anno in anno.

Bonghi reflects above all on the necessity/utility of conducting inspections in the schools of the Kingdom (a means which, together with international exhibitions, was among the most used in the educational policies of those decades) which would translate into an objective tool for analysis, reflection, evaluation and improvement. From the vibrant words of the Minister it emerges all that tension towards knowledge which, among those intellectuals who are most passionate about public education affairs, always accompanied the enthusiasm and concern for the strenuous conquest of compulsory schooling:

L’istituto insomma deve aver compiuta notizia di ciò che si usa e nel paese proprio e negli altrui; e su questa compiuta notizia fondare l’ispezione delle scuole nazionali e la scelta.

5 Tauro himself (Della necessità di ricostruire in Italia il Museo d’Istruzione e di Educazione, cit., p. 27) underlines how in Italy «sia del tutto trascurata per ignoranza e incuria e non per mancanza di mezzi»: «It is completely neglected because of ignorance and negligence and not for shortage of financial resources».

6 Ibid., pp. 6-7: «The Museo di istruzione e di educazione must be an institute intended to the collection and constant comparison of all the objects that can appropriately be part of a universal exhibition. It must, for example, gather the maps of the best schools that are built in the civil states of Europe and America [...] and spread in each part of the country an exact news [...] This same thing must be done for the furnishings, the tools, the teaching instruments, for the books. The institute must, in conclusion, be organized so to be adapt both to collect and understand what it collects. And it must have itself the attitude to judge the outcomes of the schools of the country comparatively, between them and also year after year». 
In the years of its foundation and its first growth, the Museum was distributed in spaces of great symbolic, cultural and political value, that is, within the Collegio Romano, the former stronghold of the Jesuit educators in Rome, whose property had just been expropriated by the newborn Kingdom of Italy, so that Rome, capital since 1871, could place there its secular citadel of studies and science. In that location found their space also the first *liceo classico* (classical high school) in Rome, dedicated to the archaeologist-patriot «Ennio Quirino Visconti», consul in the Roman Republic of 1798-1799, as well as the National Central Library, named after the father of the Country, Vittorio Emanuele II.

It was, therefore, as Nicola Siciliani de Cumis has well defined it, an «institutional place, specific and new, of the experience of educability of those, scholars, professors, teachers, students, citizens, who would frequent it to make a good use of it»⁸. Among the rooms, it was easy to meet Bonghi himself, who was struggling with the cataloguing of materials (crates on crates) brought from Vienna: «il en parle con amore» an illustrious French visitor will notice⁹.

The first direction was entrusted to the geographer Giuseppe Dalla Vedova (1875-1877), convinced that «La buona scuola la fanno non tanto i buoni regolamenti, quanto i buoni maestri»¹⁰ and that it was therefore necessary to increase the places and the instruments of training and updating. In the same year, Dalla Vedova founded the «Giornale del Museo» (Journal of the Museum) (which would last only one year, twelve issues) and established a full program of educational conferences held in the same premises of the Collegio Romano.

---

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7: «The institute must therefore have complete informations on what is used in its country and in others; and on this complete information establish the inspection of the national schools and the choice of which objects to send to the international exhibitions. Since they don't have other than a little benefit from the inspections, apart from the advices of who visits them with a vivacious mind, after a progressive and continuous experience; and the international exhibitions become a confused pile of objects if they are sent more than exclusively those objects which, from a comparison with other similar objects, have appeared to be able to produce a more continuous and immediate profit».


¹⁰ G. Dalla Vedova, *Discorso inaugurale del Regio Museo d'Istruzione e d'Educazione*, 19 giugno 1875, in *ibid.*, p. 225: «A good school is made of good teachers more than of good regulations». 
When the direction passes to the philosopher Antonio Labriola (1877-1891), the Museum has «quattro grandi sale aperte al pubblico, dove ognuno ha la comodità di vedere e studiare quanto via via viene imaginato di meglio dalle nazioni più colte per rendere più gradito e più profittevole l'insegnamento»\textsuperscript{11}.

However, its stay in the Collegio Romano lasted only until 1881, when, by decree of 13 February signed by Minister Guido Baccelli, the Museum was transferred to the premises of the University of Rome, between the old Sapienza (on the ground floor) and the nearby Palazzo Giustiniani (in Via della Dogana Vecchia, where it remained until 1925\textsuperscript{12}), to be annexed to the chair of Pedagogy, becoming in fact a University museum. At this moment, the first dispersion of the bibliographic patrimony is noted, part of which was transferred to the Biblioteca Nazionale (National Library) so that a special section could be set up, something that would never happen. The parliamentary question by Bonghi, who accused Baccelli of ‘killing his’ museum, was of no use:

«Annesso all’Università non solo vennero snaturate le funzioni del museo, ma esso perdette ogni importanza e visse una vita magra e stentata per qualche anno»\textsuperscript{13}. In the meantime, similar university museums were founded in Palermo (1880, directed by Emanuele Latino) and Naples (1887, directed by Andrea Angiulli). Actually, the annexation to the university, instead of promoting and enhancing the role of these museums, started the dismantling that, inexorable, came with the decree of September 11, 1891, signed by the minister Pasquale Villari. It was at this moment that our Museum underwent its first serious haemorrhage, with the consequent dispersion of part of its bibliographic and object-related heritage. Here are some passages from the Villari report, which precedes the decree of suppression, from which the economic and cultural reasons for the operation emerge and which also reveal the basic misunderstanding, that is, the seeming contradiction between the study of pedagogy at University and the practical training of teachers (outside University) that would continue to divide scholars in the field for a long time. In these positions relating to the location and function of the museum, it already resounds the sore point of university education of teachers, in particular of primary and community school teachers. A theme destined to travel through the twentieth century, along a tortuous path of intellectual and legislative speculation and always uphill.

\footnotesize
11 A. Gabelli, Relazione statistica sulla istruzione pubblica e privata in Italia, compilata da documenti ufficiali per l’Esposizione di Parigi, Rome, 1878, in ibid., p. 238: «Four big rooms open to the public, where everyone has the ease to see and study the best of what is progressively imagined by the most cultured nations to make the teaching more appreciated and fruitful». Still by A. Sanzo see also L’opera pedagogico-museale di Antonio Labriola: carte d’archivio e prospettive euristiche, Rome, Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2012.
12 Letter by Mario Bernabei to Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice, Arezzo 3 giugno 1936, MuSEd, Archivio Lombardo-Radice, Corrispondenza varia, cartella B.
13 Tauri, Della necessità di ricostruire in Italia il Museo d’Istruzione e di Educazione, cit., p. 17: «Not only were the functions of the museum distorted when it was annexed to the University, but it also lost all its importance and lived a poor and difficult life for a few years».
I Musei pedagogici fondati in varie città di Europa, riuscirono assai utili alla istruzione elementare, soprattutto agli insegnanti ed ai direttori così delle scuole del popolo, come delle normali. Ma nelle università essi non hanno la sede appropriata, perché ivi s’insegnano i principii, i metodi e la storia della scienza, non la pratica dell’insegnamento elementare. E quando pure alcuna volta gli studenti universitari possano utilmente esaminare alcuni oggetti dei Musei pedagogici, non vi ha difficoltà niente di farlo ovunque questi oggetti si trovino raccolti. Il creare Musei pedagogici nelle Università porta la necessità di spese che, se sono comparativamente tenui, diverrebbero sempre maggiori, tanto per i materiali come pel personale che andrebbero aumentando. Oltre di che la pedagogia è una materia obbligatoria in tutte le facoltà di lettere, e quindi non solo i Musei recentemente istituiti in tre sole università, si andrebbero ingrandendo, ma equità e giustizia vorrebbero che altri simili se ne istituissero presso tutte le facoltà di filosofia e lettere del Regno. Se essi fossero davvero un sussidio necessario allo studio della pedagogia nelle Università, la soppressione non verrebbe certo giustificata dalla economia. Ma così non è, come dimostra l’esempio delle altre nazioni che istituirono i Musei a vantaggio dell’istruzione elementare e non li posero dentro le università che sono la sede naturale dell’istruzione superiore e scientifica. […] Mi propongo poi di adoperare il materiale dei soppressi Musei a beneficio dell’istruzione popolare, conservando nelle biblioteche universitarie solo quei libri, atlanti, carte geografiche che per il loro carattere più elevato e scientifico non sarebbero adatti alla scuola elementare\(^\text{14}\).

The result of the closure and abandonment can be read in a chronicle of a decade later, where it is reported about collections «ammucchiad ad infracidirsi nelle umide cantine» of the University and of books that «rimangono materia inerte nei chiusi locali, dove né il sole, né il pensiero penetrano»\(^\text{15}\).

When he arrived in Rome on the chair of Pedagogy, Luigi Credaro founded in 1904 the specialization course for the licensees of the normal schools, that is, the Scuola di Pedagogia (School of Pedagogy), to which he annexed in 1906

\(^{14}\text{Ibid.},\ pp.\ 18-19: \text{The Pedagogical Museums, founded in various European cities, were very useful for primary education, especially for teachers and directors of schools of the people, as well as normal schools. But in universities they do not find their appropriate place, because there they teach the principles, methods and history of science, not the practice of primary teaching. And when eventually university students would usefully examine certain objects of the Pedagogical Museums, there is no difficulty in doing so wherever these objects are collected. The creation of Pedagogical Museums in Universities brings with it the need for expenses which, if comparatively small, would gradually become greater, both in terms of materials and personnel, which would increase. In addition to the fact that pedagogy is a compulsory subject in all the faculties of humanities, and therefore not only the Museums recently established in only three universities, would be enlarged, but equity and justice would want similar ones to be established in all the faculties of humanities of the Kingdom. If they really were a necessary subsidy for the study of pedagogy in universities, their suppression would certainly not be justified by the economy. But this is not the case, as the example of the other nations which established the Museums for the benefit of primary education shows, and did not place them within the universities which are the natural seat of higher and scientific education. I propose then to use the material of the suppressed Museums for the benefit of popular education, preserving in the university libraries only those books, atlases, maps that, because of their higher and more scientific character, would not be suitable for primary school».}

\(^{15}\text{Ibid., p. 20: \text{"piled up getting soggy in the damp cellars [...] they remain inert matter in the closed premises, where neither the sun nor thought penetrates".}}\)
the Museo d’Istruzione e di Educazione (Museum of Education) which, in line with his theoretical, methodological and political orientations, was renamed (Museo Pedagogico (Pedagogical Museum) and continued to operate for about fifteen years: «Accanto alla biblioteca è un ricco museo pedagogico, fornito di collezioni pregevolissime di animali imbalsamati, di minerali, di strumenti di fisica e chimica, di rilievi del corpo umano ecc. Anch’esso è stato riordinato da maestri. Notevole è l’importanza che i maestri-coadiutori del prof. Credaro hanno in tutto il meccanismo dell’Istituto pedagogico; fra breve anzi sarà istituito un Consiglio composto del Credaro stesso, del maestro dirigente il museo e di quelli che attendono alla biblioteca per studiare insieme i miglioramenti da introdurre in questi interessantissimi rami della scuola»\textsuperscript{16}. But when, in 1923, Giovanni Gentile suppressed the pedagogical schools, the Museum also suffered a new decline. We have evidence of this in an unpublished letter from Mario Bernabei, former assistant of Credaro at the Museum, to Lombardo-Radice: «L’Amministrazione Universitaria sa bene in quale stato il Museo si trovasse, dopo un primo frettoloso trasloco da Palazzo Giustiniani nel 1925, durante 10 anni di incuria, considerato un impiccio da tutti, perché non più rispondente come materiale né all’uso né alla teoria della pedagogia odierna»\textsuperscript{17}. It was therefore probably at the time of this dismantling that the museum heritage (until then preserved in Palazzo Giustiniani) was transferred to Palazzo Carpegna, seat of the Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia (Faculty of Humanities), in via degli Staderari 19, where, in the «Yearly Report of the Ministry of National Education» of 1935, it is registered as Museo Pedagogico and adjoining library, director Luigi Credaro and assistants Valeria Benetti Brunelli and Mario Bernabei.

\textsuperscript{16} Una nuova istituzione italiana, «L’Illustrazione italiana», 21 July 1907, now in L. Credaro, La scuola pedagogica di Roma (1904-1923), «Rivista pedagogica», vol. XXVII, n. 5, 1935, p. 556: «Next to the library there is a rich pedagogical museum, equipped with valuable collections of stuffed animals, minerals, physics and chemistry instruments, reliefs of the human body, etc. It too has been reorganised by teachers. The importance that the teachers-coadjutors of Prof. Credaro have in the whole mechanism of the Pedagogical Institute is remarkable; in the near future a Board will be established composed of Credaro himself, the teacher director of the museum and those who attend the library to study together the improvements to be introduced in these very interesting branches of the school». On Credaro and the years of the «scuola pedagogica» cf. the accurate reconstruction by A. Barausse, I maestri all’università: la Scuola pedagogica di Roma (1904-1923), Perugia, Morlacchi, 2005. See also M.A. D’Arcangeli, L’impegno necessario. Filosofia Politica Educazione in Luigi Credaro (1860-1914), Rome, Anicia, 2004; M.A. D’Arcangeli, A. Sanzo (edd.), Le scienze umane in Italia tra Otto e Novecento. Pedagogia, psicologia, sociologia e filosofia, Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2017.

\textsuperscript{17} Letter by M. Bernabei to G. Lombardo-Radice: «The University Administration knows well in which state the Museum was, after a hasty first move from Palazzo Giustiniani in 1925, during 10 years of neglect, considered a burden by all, because its material no longer responded to the use nor to the theory of contemporary pedagogy». 
2. The «museum-archive» of Lombardo-Radice

With the 1935-1936, also for the transfer of the Roman University to the new university city in the Tiburtino district, the question of the Pedagogical Museum needs to be addressed again with a certain urgency. It was Giuseppe Lombardo Radice who, between 1936 and 1938, worked so that this institution might rise again from the ashes, but in a new guise, above all with the aim of establishing the extraordinary pedagogical laboratory that he called «archivio didattico» (didactic archive) and of which we still have significant traces today. So, just as the old Istituto Superiore di Magistero (Teacher Training College, where Lombardo Radice had arrived as a professor of Pedagogy in 1923) gave birth to the Facoltà di Magistero (Faculty of Teacher Training, the first dean was the philologist Manfredi Porena) and, within it, the Istituto di Pedagogia (Pedagogy College), Lombardo-Radice adopted the idea of recovering from the Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia what remained of the old Museum of Bonghi-Labriola-Credaro (the latter, among other things, had left the teaching of Pedagogy to Letters in 1935) claiming, in one of the rare tributes to the elderly colleague-antagonist, to have «accepted from the distinguished pedagogue Hon. Senator Luigi Credaro, the honour of continuing the Pedagogical Museum and [of having] undertaken to do so with historical criteria, for the benefit of a future history of educational and teaching activity, and of the current and already fervent studies of didactic criticism».

From the headquarters in Via delle Terme di Diocleziano 10 (today's Piazza della Repubblica 10), Lombardo-Radice declares, in an unpublished letter to Porena, to accept with enthusiasm the responsibility of the Museo Pedagogico «per dargli nuovo indirizzo in rapporto alla storia della didattica e alle esperienze educative del mondo moderno». This involved a complex operation of sorting and discarding materials that were not useful for the «nuovo indirizzo» (new direction), with the participation of Mario Bernabei, the former assistant of the Museum of Credaro, editor-in-chief of his «Rivista pedagogica» (Pedagogical Review), who in those days took up his post at the Scuola Normale (Normal School) of Arezzo, leaving Lombardo-Radice in serious organizational difficulties. Soon Bernabei’s place would be occupied by

18 [G. Lombardo-Radice], Norme per i collaboratori volontari, per costituire le “raccolte” destinate al “Museo-archivio didattico”, s.n.t., [1936], p. 7. Some of the documents published in this paragraph have been partly quoted by L. Picco, Al Magistero di Roma, «Riforma della scuola», vol. XIV, nn. 8-9, 1968, pp. 51-60.

19 Letter by G. Lombardo Radice a M. Porena, Head of the Faculty of Magistero, Rome, 28 February 1936, MuSEd, Archivio Lombardo-Radice, Corrispondenza varia, Presidenza: «to give a new direction to it in relation with the history of didactics and of the educational experiences of the modern world». I'm grateful to the colleague and friend prof. Giovanni Pietro Maragoni for having facilitated the discovery of unpublished documents concerning the life of the Museum in the Lombardo Radice Archive.
the philosopher Giorgio Fano, especially called to Rome from Trieste. But let’s read carefully Lombardo-Radice’s letter to Porena:

[…] io mi trovo ad avere nei locali provvisori del Museo Pedagogico una quantità di materiali trasportati dalla vecchia sede universitaria, ammucchiati sia in scaffali che per terra; oggetti di cui non ho ricevuto alcuna consegna, che il prof. Bernabei, giusta l’incarico datogli dall’Università, doveva riordinare, scartando l’inutile e proseguendo nella iniziata distribuzione degli oggetti di competenza degli altri Istituti, per costituire il nuovo inventario e farne regolare consegna.

Nell’attesa io non sono rimasto in ozzo, ed ho avviato la nuova sezione del Museo, cioè quello che sarà l’archivio didattico nazionale, con una cinquantina di raccolte, da me donate, di vari documenti di attività didattica e con depositi che mi vado procurando da Enti che si occupano di problemi educativi (materiali ed apparecchi di esercitazione dei moderni metodi).

Poca cosa, per ora, ma che già mi consente di far svolgere interessanti esercizi ad un gruppo di circa trenta studenti del secondo biennio.

Per questo primo avviamento dell’archivio didattico, io mi sono impegnato, in seguito agli accordi orali con la S. V. III.ma, ad un acquisto importante: una eccellente macchina da scrivere Olivetti del modello più recente, che ho potuto avere con la fortissima riduzione di più che il 40%. La macchina è in deposito presso il Museo ed è già in uso, come di intesa, anche per lavori della Facoltà. Ho inoltre disposto per la legatura delle raccolte da me donate e per l’acquisto di un certo numero di custodie (cartelle e scatole).

Senza la macchina non è possibile svolgere il lavoro di propaganda e di sollecitazione per ottenere l’invio dei materiali desiderati dalle scuole italiane ed estere: senza le rilegature e le custodie non potevo affidare le raccolte agli studenti per le loro esercitazioni.

La S.V. III.ma mi ha riferito che la Direzione Amministrativa della nostra Università non solo non ha nulla da obbiettare alle spese fatte ma ha assicurato che avrebbe trovato modo di pagarle subito e darmi possibilità per nuove spese, anche prima della ufficiale assegnazione dei fondi, del resto imminente.

Gratissimo di ciò io continuerò, il meglio che potrò, a dare incremento alla nuova sezione del Museo, pur declinando ogni responsabilità per il vecchio materiale, del quale non ho modo nemmeno di prendere visione, nonché di ricevere consegna, per l’assenza dell’assistente.

Prego la S. V. III.ma di volere con il più vivo impegno pregare il Magnifico Rettore di far dare il definitivo assetto al Museo pedagogico sia per il personale che per i mezzi.

Qualora non sia possibile il comando richiesto per i prof. Bernabei io posso proporre quale prestatore d’opera con funzioni d’assistente il prof. Giorgio Fano fornito di laurea in filosofia e che ha conseguito nel mese passato la libera docenza. […]

Quanto ai mezzi prego di farmi assegnare la somma più larga possibile per la gestione annuale e una somma in via straordinaria per il riassetto del vecchio materiale e l’impianto e sviluppo della nuova sezione. Faccio considerare che sarà fra l’altro necessaria la costruzione di vari mobili.

In fiduciosa attesa, con viva gratitudine […]

20 «[...] I find myself having in the temporary rooms of the Pedagogical Museum a quantity of material transported from the old university premises, piled up both on the shelves and on the ground; objects of which I have not received any delivery, which Professor Bernabei, according to the mandate given to him by the University, had to reorder, discarding the useless and continuing in the initial distribution of those objects of competence of the other Institutes, to make up the new inventory and regularly deliver it. In the meantime I have not been idle, and I have started the new section of the Museum, that is what will be the national didactic archive, with about fifty
The letter to Porena is a document of extraordinary interest because, beyond the administrative and organizational questions, and the economic difficulties (the celebrated conquest of the typewriter is striking, the same one that we still have in our Department of Education and Training Sciences), the «nuovo indirizzo» (new direction) of the Museum is clearly outlined, based on direct contact with the living documents of the school, those teachers and schoolchildren's notebooks that constitute the basis of Lombardo-Radice's teaching, study and pedagogical research and its didactic practice, through the exercises of its students.

Above all, the layout of a «lavoro di propaganda e di sollecitazione» (work of propaganda and solicitation) that characterizes this phase of the Museum's life is remarkable. Lombardo-Radice, with his assistants and students, has set up an outstanding structure that constantly keeps open the communication channels with the world of education, pedagogy and the publishing world connected to those, both in Italy and abroad. A close correspondence with teachers, didactic directors, inspectors, publishers, magazine and library managers testifies the pioneering spirit of this capillary work, at the centre of which the school notebook, precious container of the graphic and linguistic experience of the child and irrefutable proof of the teacher's magisterium, conquers for the first time an absolute documentary authority, provided that it

collections, donated by me, of various documents of didactic activity and with deposits that I am obtaining from organizations that deal with educational problems (materials and equipment for the exercise of modern methods). A little thing, for now, but that already allows me to make a group of about thirty students of the second biennium carry out interesting exercises.

For this first start-up of the educational archive, I have committed to an important purchase following the oral agreements with Your Excellency: an excellent Olivetti typewriter of the most recent model, which I was able to have with the very strong reduction of more than 40%. The machine is in storage at the Museum and is already in use, as agreed, also for works of the Faculty. I have also arranged for the binding of the collections I donated and for the purchase of a certain number of cases (folders and boxes). Without the typewriter it is not possible to carry out the work of propaganda and solicitation to obtain the desired materials from Italian and foreign schools: without the bindings and the cases I could not entrust the collections to the students for their exercises. Your Excellency has told me that the Administrative Direction of our University not only has nothing to object to the expenses made but has assured me that it would find a way to pay them immediately and give me the opportunity for new expenses, even before the official allocation of funds, which is also imminent. I am very grateful for this and I will continue, as best I can, to increase the new section of the Museum, even though I decline all responsibility for the old material, which I have no way to examine, nor to receive the delivery, due to the absence of the assistant. I kindly ask Your Excellency to request the Rector Magnus, with the greatest determination possible, to have the Museo Pedagogico set up definitively, both for what concerns the staff and for the means. If the command required for Prof. Bernabei is not possible, I can propose Prof. Giorgio Fano, who has a degree in philosophy and qualified as a university teacher in the past month, as a service provider with the function of assistant. [...] Concerning the means, please let me allocate the largest possible sum for the annual management and an extraordinary sum for the reorganization of the old material and the plant and development of the new section. I would like to point out that, among other things, the construction of various pieces of furniture will be necessary. In confident expectation, with deep gratitude [...]». 
is not a matter of «raccolte di carattere generico» but which have «l'impronta inconfondibile o di una tradizione locale, o di una singolare personalità di educatore; o siano, in genere, caratteristiche per un indirizzo metodico che meriti di essere conosciuto»

By incorporating the old Museum, Lombardo-Radice could finally institutionalize the work that for years he has been doing alongside the teachers as a university professor, lecturer and director of the magazine «L'Educazione nazionale» (founded in 1919 and ceased in 1933), a work of observation and commentary on the documents of the school that is at the origin of some of his most innovative and touching studies, such as, for example, those collected in Athena fanciulla (1926). To enrich 'his' Museum-Archive, Lombardo-Radice drew up a circular letter that he adapted to the individual recipients to encourage them to send materials:

Le scrivo ufficialmente in nome del nuovo ‘ARCHIVIO DIDATTICO’ presso la Facoltà di Magistero di questa Università per avere la Sua preziosa collaborazione.

È mio intento di raccogliere dei significativi ‘documenti per la storia della scuola in Italia’.

Conosco l'opera Sua sono sicuro che potrà avere per Suo mezzo una ottime raccolta di elementi da presentare agli studiosi universitari del Corso di Pedagogia e del Corso per la Vigilanza scolastica, riguardanti l'opera svolta nel Suo circolo didattico.

La raccolta, che potrebbe comprendere 2-4 volumi di quaderni, prenderebbe il nome di [...] Insieme ai quaderni degli alunni dovrebbero essere rilegate alcune pagine di chiarimenti del Direttore Didattico. Per uniformità colle altre nostre raccolte gli volumi dovrebbero essere rilegati in tela cruda. Il mio Istituto contribuirebbe alla spesa per la rilegatura in ragione di L. 4-6 per volume. Ove il volume non si potesse costituire il materiale dovrebbe essere adunato in iscatole della stessa apparenza dei volumi.

Confido nella Sua cordiale accettazione e in attesa di sue notizie ben distintamente La riverisco.

IL DIRETTORE
Del Museo pedagogico e dell'Archivio didattico
Prof. Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice
Ordinario di Pedagogia

---

21 Photocopy of a letter by G. Lombardo-Radice to Felice Rimondini, Provveditore agli Studi di Venezia, Rome, 12 June 1936, MuSEd, Archivio Lombardo-Radice, Various Correspondence, Relations with the publishers: «collections of a generic nature [but which have] the unmistakable mark of either a local tradition, or a singular personality of an educator; or are, in general, characteristics of a methodical approach that deserves to be known». I already partly addressed these in Giuseppe Lombardo Radice: per un’idea del quaderno scolastico come fonte artistico-letteraria, in J. Meda, D. Montino, R. Sani (edd.), School Exercise Book: a Complex Source for a History of the Approach to Schooling and Education in the 19th and 20th Centuries, 2 vols., Florence, Polistampa, 2010, Vol. II, pp. 1325-1338.

22 MuSEd, Archivio Lombardo-Radice, Corrispondenza varia, Rapporti con editori: «I am writing officially in the name of the new 'ARCHIVIO DIDATTICO' at the Faculty of the Magistero of this University to have your precious collaboration. It is my intention to collect some significant «documents for the history of the school in Italy». Knowing Your work I am sure that I will have by your means an excellent collection of elements to present to university scholars of the Course of Pedagogy and the Course for School Supervision, concerning the work done in Your educational circle.

The collection, which could include 2 to 4 volumes of notebooks, would be named [...]. Together
In this new course, therefore, the Museum cannot be called in any other way than Museo e Archivio Didattico (Museum and Didactic Archive). The idea of the museum and that of the archive converge towards a concept of didactics that is not born from abstract ideas, established a priori, but from concrete life experiences. The written document and the ‘pedagogical’ object are the proofs of these experiences that, within the museum-archives, have a new opportunity to narrate education and training and, above all, to generate experience in young university students who face the world of school.

Between 1936 and 1938, Lombardo-Radice’s studies and academic commitment, following the birth of the Facoltà di Magistero and the foundation of the Istituto di Pedagogia (which, also in the light of the administrative documentation, correspondence and the letterhead itself, often coincides with the Museo-Archivio Didattico) were aimed at building a strictly university-related dignity around the old Istituto Superiore di Magistero. The cultural, civil and educational awareness of working in the university and accompanying many young people to their degree requires the pedagogist from Catania to build a rigorous institutional structure, highly selective in terms of both staff and students. The fulcrum of this process of ennoblement of pedagogical studies and of the university institution where they are carried out is precisely the Museo-Archivio Didattico, in all its components: the actual archive, the library, the permanent exhibition of objects, books and documents, the editing of the bibliography and catalogues. In the spaces of Via delle Terme, whose furnishings are monitored in detail by Lombardo-Radice himself, the students of the Magistero can finally find a highly specialized institute, where the partition and the organization of work cooperate in the functioning of a perfect school of thought and research.

with the pupils’ notebooks, a few pages of clarification by the Director of Studies should be bound. For the sake of consistency with our other collections, the volumes should be bound in raw canvas. My Institute would contribute to the cost of binding at the rate of L. 4-6 per volume. In case it shouldn’t be possible to assemble the volume, the material would have to be grouped in boxes of the same appearance of the volumes. I trust in Your cordial acceptance and look forward to your news, my respects and best regards. THE DIRECTOR of the Museo pedagogico and of the Archivio didattico. Prof. Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice. Full Professor of Pedagogy.

On the strong sense of responsibility of Lombardo-Radice towards his position as a university professor, probably enhanced after the transformation of the Istituto di Magistero into Facoltà, read the following handwritten note, dating 3 May 1937: «Io non posso dare l’accessit a una tesi di cui non so assolutamente nulla, non avendo visto né uno schema, né una bibliografia, né appunti che potessero accreditare il proposito dello studente e non avendo mai parlato con lo studente dell’argomento scelto. Nota bene che si tratta non di un diploma di vigilanza scolastica ma di una laurea filosofica; e sarebbe cosa gravissima stabilire il precedente che si possa presentarsi alle lauree con tale ignorance del proprio dovere di studente» (letter to Guerra, MuSEd, Archivio Lombardo-Radice, Corrispondenza varia, Cartella G): «I cannot give the accessit to a thesis of which I know absolutely nothing, having seen neither a scheme, nor a bibliography, nor notes that could confirm the intention of the student and having never spoken with the student about the chosen topic. Note well that this is not a diploma in vigilanza scolastica (school supervision) but a philosophical degree, and it would be very serious to establish the precedent that you can come
As already mentioned, in addition to the archival and museum dimension, Lombardo-Radice develops a bibliography specializing in pedagogy and history of educational institutions «con lo scopo di abituare gli studenti ad un metodo scientifico di ricerca, e di preparare dei temi per le future dissertazioni di laurea». On this point, the Director does not spare any effort to give his company an international scope. This can also be seen from a letter to Enrico Burich, in those years assigned at the Petrarch-Haus in Cologne, of 5 March 1937:

Caro Rico,
forse ti ho spiegato a Roma quale sia attualmente il mio lavoro nell'Istituto di Pedagogia. Voglio chiedere la mia vita facendo un po' il furiere della pedagogia, poiché le condizioni di salute non mi permettono più di fare il capitano. E cioè ho impiantato un grande schedario destinato a raccogliere il più grande numero possibile di schede bibliografiche concernenti in qualsiasi modo l'educazione, le dottrine pedagogiche e la loro storia, non escludendo la psicologia dei fanciulli normali e anormali, e prendendo in speciale considerazione anche l'aspetto giuridico amministrativo della organizzazione scolastica. Vi sarà compresa una parte che a stretto rigore è letteraria, ma che forma oggetto di mio particolare interesse nell'insegnamento: la letteratura popolare e la letteratura per l'infanzia nonché la letteratura di popolo (folclorica) che possa essere utilizzata a fini educativi. Gli spogli bibliografici in schede si riferiranno non soltanto all'Italia ma ad ogni paese colto, nell'ambito delle lingue fondamentali della cultura occidentale: Italiano, Francese, Spagnolo, Inglese, Tedesco. [...] Per il momento a titolo di prova mi limiterò a due argomenti: a) istituti prescolastici (Kindergarten) e di educazione della prima infanzia; b) letteratura per la prima infanzia (Kinderreime und Koselieder) e libri di sole illustrazioni per la prima infanzia nonché raccolte di musiche e canzoni infantili [...]25.

to the degree with such ignorance of your duty as a student».

24 G. Lombardo-Radice, *Relazione sull'attività didattica e scientifica svolta dal Museo Archivio Didattico della Facoltà di Magistero*, *ibid.*: «with the aim of accustoming students to a scientific method of research, and to prepare some themes for future degree dissertations».

25 Letter by G. Lombardo-Radice to E. Burich, from Rome, 5 March 1937, MuSEd, *Archivio Lombardo-Radice*, Corrispondenza varia, Cartella B: «Dear Rico, Perhaps I have explained to you in Rome what my work in the Istituto Pedagogia currently is. I want to end my life by being a bit of a pedagogical paymaster, because my health conditions do not allow me to be a captain anymore. That is to say, I have set up a large file designed to collect as many as possible of the bibliographic files concerning in any way education, pedagogical doctrines and their history, not excluding the psychology of normal and abnormal children, and also taking into special consideration the legal and administrative aspect of the school organization. It will include a part which is strictly literary, but which is the subject of my particular interest in teaching: popular literature and children's literature as well as folk literature which can be used for educational purposes. The bibliographic sheets will refer not only to Italy but also to every cultured country, within the fundamental languages of Western culture: Italian, French, Spanish, English and German. [...] For the moment, as a test, I would like to limit to two topics: a) pre-school institutions (Kindergarten) and early childhood education; b) early childhood literature (Kinderreime und Koselieder) and books made only of illustrations for the early childhood as well as collections of music and children's songs [...]». 
In the construction of this specialized library, besides the general works and the most up-to-date publications in the field of education and history, there are also texts of popular literature and children’s literature, a field to which Lombardo-Radice, who has always been a passionate explorer of the ‘simple’ forms of the literary experience, pays particular attention. In a reply to the publisher Paravia, dated 27 May 1936, he thanked him for sending volumes to the Museum and explicitly spoke of a permanent bibliographic exhibition, something quite different from the library. It is precisely within the Museum that one can conceive of an approach to the book as an object of study not only from a textual point of view, but also from a material and visual point of view:

Vi ripetiamo i nostri ringraziamenti più vivi per i bei libri mandati in dono al nostro Museo Pedagogico e ci permettiamo farvi notare che sarebbe utilissimo ai nostri fini se potessimo avere una raccolta, possibilmente intera, di ‘Leggende e poeti narrati ai fanciulli’ come pure dei volumetti ‘Gli esploratori’. Come Vi abbiamo detto i libri raccolti nella nostra ‘esposizione permanente’ sono oggetto di studio per gli studenti di questa Facoltà, e riteniamo che sia pure nell’interesse della Vostra Casa che Collezioni di eminente carattere educativo come le suddette, non abbiano a mancarvi.26

Other papers from the same months found in the Lombardo-Radice Archive repeatedly speak of a ‘permanent exhibition of books for young people’, a sign that the lombardian Museum was also open to this sector of the publishing production, which in the thirties had undergone a significant increase, recording great progress especially in terms of graphics and illustrations. The contemporary book for children becomes an object to be exhibited and studied scientifically, fundamental to enrich the cultural baggage of future professors, teachers of teachers: «how could one think – wrote Iclea Picco in a moving celebration of the work conducted by her Master for the Didactic Museum-Archive – to let them ignore the vast literature for children, when they know that they will have to ‘choose’ and ‘suggest’ to others? It is necessary, therefore, that they be the first to ‘know’, that they develop a taste, a critical spirit»27.

The sudden death of Lombardo-Radice, in August 1938, left colleagues and students dismayed, a large family that tried to carry on his teaching, from the most specific daily tasks. His directives remain on the tables of the Museum,

26 Letter by G. Lombardo-Radice to the publishing house Paravia from Turin, ibid.: «We renew our heartfelt thank-you for the beautiful books sent as a gift to our Museo Pedagogico and we would like to point out that it would be very useful for our purposes if we could have a collection, possibly complete, of ‘Leggende e poeti narrati ai fanciulli’ as well as the volumes ‘Gli esploratori’. As we have told you, the books collected in our «permanent exhibition» are the object of study for the students of this Faculty, and we believe that it is also in the interest of your House that collections of eminent educational character such as the above, have not to be missing».

exposed to everyone’s reading, to encourage, first of all, that relentless sense of public institutions and that humility applied to the intellectual work that had always been his own human and professional characteristics, both as an intellectual and as a citizen:

It is not obligatory for anyone to participate in the activities of this Institute. But those who accept to provide their services should know from the beginning that no work is unworthy of the scholar, when it is necessary. Everything is work and identically valuable for all. From the Professor of Pedagogy, who directs the Institute, to the assistants, collaborators, former students and now professors and school officials, to the internal students, to the newly enrolled students, – here we all are – at once – scholars, archivists, writers and, if necessary, also bellboys for our Institute.

Who accepts and love the Institute in this way, will work there with joy and will find understanding and help; who does not understand and does not appreciate the necessity and dignity of the various works, even the most humble, required for the good functioning of the Institute, is not, here in, welcome, even if he or she may have many good talents and beautiful qualities recognized and praised in private and in public by us.\(^{28}\)

3. *Il «museo storico» di Mauro Laeng*

The sudden death of Lombardo Radice inaugurated a new long period of oblivion, during which the Museum lost the momentum it had regained in the brief *lombardian* period. The intellectual commitment of Luigi Volpicelli was not worth much. Although he was an authoritative director of the Institute of Pedagogy and continued to enhance the increase in documents initiated by his predecessor, in fact he neglected the archival-museum dimension conceived and pursued with such scrupulous by Lombardo-Radice.

We have to get to the 1980s to see yet another resurrection of our museum, which took place thanks to the enthusiasm of Mauro Laeng, a generalist pedagogue passionate about new technologies but also seduced by the history of didactics and education, and convinced that «qualsiasi discorso sulle ‘nuove’ tecniche della comunicazione richiede qualche parola sulla ‘novità’ che ad esse viene attribuita. Si tratta di novità non assoluta, ma relativa, cioè una volta di più di novità ‘storica’, vale a dire che presuppone il corso antecedente dell’esperienza passata e su di essa costruisce»\(^{29}\). It was Laeng who traced, recovered and revived (in new premises, at the headquarters in via del Castro


\(^{29}\) M. Laeng, *Emozione, immagine, parola nella comunicazione educativa*, in Id., *Antologia pedagogica 3. Dal Risorgimento ai nostri giorni*, Brescia, La Scuola, 1995, p. 517: «any discourse on the ‘new’ techniques of communication requires a few words on the ‘novelty’ that is attributed to them. It is not an absolute novelty, but a relative one, once more a ‘historical’ novelty, which means that it presupposes the previous course of past experience and builds on it». 
Pretorio 20) some of the materials that had been dispersed over the previous decades and promoted new acquisitions for what he renamed the Museo storico della Didattica (Historical Museum of Didactics), so called partly out of the desire of the central administration of La Sapienza, partly in tune with his lifelong passion for didactics, its methods, techniques and instruments. In the wake of the French annalistic lesson, of the expansion of the concept of historical source and of the rebirth of historical-educational studies that also took place in Italy in the early 1980s, Laeng returned with great conviction to the idea that it was necessary to offer to experts in educational sciences (but also to the public of non-specialists) a historical type of support to knowledge, based also on a direct contact with documentary materiality. The institutional breadth and cultural and scientific scope of the Laeng project can be deduced from an unprecedented relationship that marks one of the first stages of the museum’s reconstruction. Here the mission, which is mainly historical-documentary, is already well defined, as it is the systematic nature of communication with the world outside, both to provide opportunities for a patrimonial enrichment and to extend the types of public. We will notice the indecision on the denomination (with an undeniable confusion between content and container in the choice of the denomination by the Board of Directors of La Sapienza) and the primitive orientation on a wording that, only recently, we have recovered in part:


A maggior ragione queste considerazioni dovrebbero valere per il nostro museo, che è didattico per i contenuti oltre che per la forma; ma al di là della ovvietà di questa osservazione, sono anche per noi di grande rilevanza tutte le funzioni indicate. È indubbiamente prematuro delineare le caratteristiche del futuro museo disponendo di elementi troppo esigui per un piano completo. [...] Il Museo dell’Educazione e della Scuola dovrebbe assolvere almeno questi compiti:

- Assicurare la raccolta, classificazione, descrizione e commento di documenti, libri, periodici, oggetti relativi alla storia dell’educazione, della scuola e delle istituzioni educative. Esiste al riguardo una letteratura abbastanza ricca sull’argomento, e l’Istituto e poi il Dipartimento
hanno avuto cattedre d’insegnamento ad hoc nel passato e nel presente. Va aggiunto che le biblioteche universitarie pertinenti già posseggono discreti fondi a questo riguardo, che andranno esplorati con assoluta preuzenza. Sarà comunque inevitabile che almeno nei primi tempi tale raccolta debba essere effettuata attraverso segnalazioni (anche da sollecitare), sopralluoghi, visite, contatti epistolari e personali con specialisti, librari, antiquari, con uno spiccato carattere di convenienza e di opportunità. Tale aspetto occasionale (quale è quello che si sta tentando con tutta modestia attualmente mediante alcune acquisizioni effettuate su fondi a disposizione di una cattedra) è per altro nettamente insufficiente. Al di là di un approccio empirico (che conserverà in seguito una funzione solamente sussidiaria) va pertanto affrontato un piano più organico e sistemático di indagine mirata alla ricerca di ‘pezzi forti’ di una documentazione di base, non troppo lacunosa o discontinua.

In una prima bozza d’ipotesi si era supposto che centri di organizzazione del materiale potessero essere alcune sezioni (1. Libri e periodici; 2. Iconografia, grafica, stampa e disegni; 3. Oggetti e sussidi, attrezzature, apparecchi a uso didattico, serie sistematiche di ‘materiali’ impiegati in vari modi; 4. Ludoteca e oggetti attinenti all’educazione extrascolastica, teatro infantile, ecc.; 5. Mediateca per gli audiovisivi e i mezzi tecnologici). Tale classificazione corrisponde al punto stato del tutto iniziale, con le sue direzioni d’interesse e le sue potenziali competenze da assegnare a diversi esperti. Ma non dovrebbe interferire con la distribuzione ‘topografica’ propriamente ‘museale’.

Soltanto a titolo largamente orientativo si suppone che si dovrebbero accoppare (in armadi chiusi per la conservazione, e in armadi a vetri e bacheche per la presentazione) i materiali in alcune sale espressamente ‘dedicate’. Per esempio:

- documenti e oggetti relativi alla storia dell’educazione antica;
- documenti e oggetti relativi alla storia dell’educazione medievale e umanistico-rinascimentale;
- documenti e oggetti relativi alla storia dell’educazione nei periodi della riforma e controriforma, dell’illuminismo e delle rivoluzioni;
- documenti e oggetti relativi alla storia dell’educazione negli Stati italiani pre-unitari;
- documenti e oggetti relativi al primo periodo unitario, dalla legge Casati alla Prima Guerra mondiale;
- documenti e oggetti del periodo fascista;
- documenti e oggetti della educazione e scuola dopo la Seconda Guerra mondiale.

In alternativa, se la partizione cronologica non risultasse praticabile per scarsità di contenuti, si potrebbero realizzare accoppiamenti più compatitati; per il periodo più recente sarebbe forse preferibile una classificazione diversa e più ‘qualitativa’, come:

- La scuola positivistica;
- L’idealismo e la pedagogia attivistica;
- La scuola italiana per l’infanzia: F. Aporti, il Froebelismo, M. Montessori e le sorelle Agazzi;
- L’educazione speciale per gli handicappati;
- Le nuove tecnologie didattiche.

b) Consentire lo studio e la ricerca a docenti e studenti dell’università e a studiosi e cultori italiani ed esteri. Per questo scopo il museo dovrebbe essere dotato di servizi e infrastrutture non inferiori a quelli di una biblioteca universitaria, con schedari, possibilità di informatizzazione, lettori di microfilm e microfiches, fotocopiatrice di qualità con ingrandimento/riduzione, ecc., e almeno tre unità di personale (due tecnici e un ausiliario).
Occorre anche prevedere una sala di studio e consultazione, dotata pure di lavagna luminosa, proiettore di diapositive sincronizzate, lettore di videocassette con televisore a colori fornito di televideo, e almeno un personal computer tipo Macintosh o IBM-like.

c) Offrire al più largo pubblico degli Insegnanti e delle scuole e alla cittadinanza l’occasione di documentarsi sulla educazione e sulla scuola. Per questo le sale dovranno essere disposte non come meri contenitori, ma anche come supporti di presentazione museale dei pezzi più significativi, accompagnati da didascalie, pannelli e quant’altro può servire alla spiegazione autosufficiente.

A questo scopo, oltre alla presentazione stabile, giorveranno anche saltuariamente esposizioni ‘tematiche’ per le quali il museo potrà utilizzare le proprie raccolte e far convergere anche altre risorse esterne (per esempio delle raccolte archivistiche, bibliografiche e iconografiche di Roma e di altre città, non escluse raccolte estere). Eventuali cataloghi conserveranno il beneficio delle esposizioni anche al di là della loro occasione effimera 30.

30 M. Laeng, Lineamenti progettualli per un Museo dell’Educazione e della Scuola (Museo Storico della Didattica) presso il Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione – Facoltà di Magistero – Università La Sapienza – Roma, MusEdu, Direzione, fasc. Nomina Direttore – Rapporti con le Autorità accademiche – Gruppo LAVORO MUSEI – Dépliant e opuscoli: «Following the May 7, 1986 approval by the Board of Directors on a previous resolution of the Academic Senate, the new ‘Museo storico della didattica’ (or, as we prefer to say, ‘Museo dell’Educazione e della Scuola’) is ‘de jure’ established and enters at least formally among the current museums of the University. […] Ours is therefore the fifteenth museum of the Roman university, even if to some extent it is to be considered as the rebirth or revival of a previous Museum of the school, to which A. Labirola and L. Credaro had given contributions, and previous archives and collections edited by G. Lombardo Radice and L. Volpicelli (museum and collections had meanwhile been dispersed and their assets had flowed into the Biblioteca Alessandrina, Biblioteca dell’Istituto di Pedagogia and other locations, as we are ascertaining). According to what Salvatore Puglisi illustrates in a chapter of the book edited by Claudio Gori Giorgi in La quesione universitaria, ed. La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1985, the Roman university museums were born essentially from collections promoted by teachers at the service of their teaching: therefore they are all more or less ‘didactic’ museums (and in this reference framework the name adopted also in our regard by the Board of Directors is explained). However, many of them have become increasingly important also for the purposes of study and research, and finally for the benefit of the wider public of the city. These considerations should be all the more valid for our museum, which is didactic in terms of content as well as form; but beyond the obvious nature of this observation, all the functions indicated are also of great importance to us. It is undoubtedly too early to outline the characteristics of the future museum by having too few elements for a complete plan. […] The Museo dell’Educazione e della Scuola should at least carry out these tasks:

a) To ensure the collection, classification, description and commentary of documents, books, periodicals, objects related to the history of education, school and educational institutions. There is a fairly rich literature on the subject, and the Institute and then the Department have had ad hoc professorships in the past and present. It should be added that the relevant university libraries already have discreet funds in this regard, which shall be explored with absolute precedence. However, it will be inevitable that at least in the early stages this collection should be made through reports (also to be solicited), inspections, visits, correspondence and personal contacts with specialists, booksellers, antique dealers, with a marked character of convenience and opportunity. This occasional aspect (which is what is currently being attempted in all modesty through some acquisitions made with the funds available to a chair) it is also clearly insufficient. Beyond an empirical approach (which would later retain only a subsidiary function), a more organic and systematic plan of investigation should therefore be tackled, aimed at finding ‘strong points’ in a basic documentation that is not too incomplete or discontinuous. In a first draft of the hypothesis it was assumed that some sections could be the centers of organization of the
On the basis of this scheme, flexible and, at the same time, well-structured both from the point of view of content and historical classification of the subject and as regards the preparation and consideration of the needs of the public (in all its typological extension), the Museum has begun to live again, despite many difficulties and shortages of human and economic resources.

material (1. Books and periodicals; 2. Iconography, graphics, prints and drawings; 3. Objects and aids, equipment, devices for educational use, systematic series of ‘materials’ used in a variety of methods; 4. Playroom and objects related to extracurricular education, children’s theater, etc. 5. Media library for audiovisual and technological media) This classification corresponds to the present state of the art, with its directions of interest and its potential competences to be assigned to different experts. But it should not interfere with a ‘topographic’ distribution, which is properly ‘museum-like’. For guidance only, it is assumed that materials should be grouped together (in closed cabinets for storage, and in glass cabinets and showcases for display) in some expressly ‘dedicated’ rooms. For example:

- documents and objects related to the history of ancient education;
- documents and objects related to the history of Medieval and Humanistic-Renaissance education;
- documents and objects related to the history of education during the periods of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the Enlightenment and the Revolutions;
- documents and objects related to the history of education in the pre-united Italian states;
- documents and objects relating to the first unitary period, from the Casati law to the First World War;
- documents and objects from the fascist period;
- documents and objects from education and school after the Second World War.

Alternatively, if the chronological partition were not practicable due to a lack of content, more compact groupings could be made; for the most recent period, a different and more “qualitative” classification would perhaps be preferable, such as:

- Positivist school;
- Idealism and experiential education;
- The Italian nursery school: F. Aporti, Froebelism, M. Montessori and the Agazzi sisters;
- Special education for the handicapped;
- New educational technologies.

b) To allow professors and students of the university and of Italian and foreign scholars and connoisseurs to study and research. For this purpose, the museum should be equipped with services and facilities not inferior to those of a university library, with files, computerization facilities, readers of microfilm and microfiches, a high quality photocopier with enlargement/reduction, etc., and at least three members of staff (two technicians and an auxiliary). There should also be a study and consultation room with overhead projector, synchronized slide projector, a videotape player with a color television equipped with teletext, and at least one personal computer such as Macintosh or IBM-like.

c) To offer the general public of teachers and schools and citizens the opportunity to learn about education and school. For this reason, the rooms must be arranged not only as mere containers, but also as a support for the presentation of the most significant pieces of the museum, accompanied by captions, panels and anything else that may serve to provide a self-sufficient explanation. To this end. In addition to the permanent presentation, there will also be occasional ‘thematic’ exhibitions for which the museum will be able to use its own collections and bring together other external resources (for example, the archival, bibliographic and iconographic collections of Rome and other cities, not excluding foreign collections). Any possible catalogs will preserve the benefit of the exhibitions even beyond their ephemeral occasion.»
When Mauro Laeng stopped teaching and left the management of the Museum, in the academic year 1996-1997, the previous museum heritage, books, papers and objects which had been recovered from past museum seasons or purchased on the antique market, had been enriched with two important funds: The Archives of the Ente Nazionale Scuole per i Contadini dell’Agro Romano (with six wooden boards and two ceramic panels by Duilio Cambellotti) and the Archives of Giuseppe Lombardo Radice, donated by the Catanese pedagogue’s children to the old Istituto di Pedagogia which entered the Museum for the initiative of Iclea Picco, the last pupil of the Sicilian pedagogue, who in 1986 left teaching.

In the Laeng years, the Museum became, in fact, above all a place of study, historical-educational research and enhancement of the so-called material history of education. However, due to the unavailability of suitable premises, the ambition to become a place open to citizens and a continuous dialogue with university didactics was missing. Following in the footsteps of Laeng, the next three directors (Bruno Bellerate 1997-2002, Carmela Covato 2002-2014, Carlo Felice Casula 2014-2018) have also promoted the most up-to-date and effective forms of the cataloguing of materials and, above all, the online publication of the library’s catalogue, objects and documents of the Ente Scuole per i Contadini. At the same time, thanks to the tireless collaboration of a passionate scholar such as Giovanna Alatri and an expert such as Francesca Gagliardo, the Museum curated a series of exhibitions outside its headquarters, together with the City of Rome, publishing the catalogs: A come Alfabeto, Z come Zanzara: analfabetismo e malaria nella campagna romana at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni (1998), Trucci Trucci cavalucci: infanzia a Roma fra Otto e Novecento, at Villa Torlonia-Casina delle Civette (2001), A passo di marcia: l’infanzia a Roma tra le due guerre at the Museo di Roma in Trastevere (2004).

With Carmela Covato, whose historiographic method is characterized by a remarkable openness to the new frontiers of historical-educational studies, the Museum has begun to regularly be the spoken about in national and international conferences dedicated to the topics that find extensive documentation in it: the material history of education, the history of gender education, the school notebook as a polyvalent historical source, auteur libraries, etc.

In the same years (2003-2004), the entire school library and the didactic instruments of the scientific laboratories of the Istituto Santa Maria in Aquiero in Piazza Capranica, an ancient institution for the reception and education of orphans, inspired by the doctrine of Sant'Ignazio di Loyola, were acquired.

At this point, the consistency of the museum heritage was definitively characterized by three types of documentation: objects (the museum itself), library (about 20,000 volumes, including periodicals), archive. Each of these three categories is, of course, characterized by its own subcategories.

4. MuSEd today

In recent years, under the direction of Casula, the Museum has been given a name very close to that originally conceived by Leang, which is Museo della Scuola e dell'Educazione. MuSEd (Museum of School and Education). This name, on the one hand, recovers the original diction (Museo d'Istruzione e di Educazione), on the other hand it expands and integrates the areas of the history of school and education, bringing together documents and materials from different educational contexts (formal, institutional, public, private, informal, family-run). Today's MuSEd would like: a) to correspond to the indication of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), according to which a museum is «a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment»; b) to satisfy the practice of the so-called Third Mission, that is, «the set of activities with which Universities enter into direct interaction with society, complementing the traditional missions of teaching (first mission, which is based on interaction with students) and research (second mission, mainly in interaction with the scientific or peer communities).»

As for the enrichment of the heritage, the current management is carrying out a tenacious information campaign to encourage donations of documentary material, both by citizens who have played an important role in the history of school and education in our country, both by witnesses who are isolated from the point of view of the biography but significant as producers (or heirs of producers) of historical sources (correspondence, diaries, notebooks, textbooks, reading books, collections of periodicals, diplomas and reports, etc.).

Recently, the archives and libraries of Mario Alighiero Manacorda, Marcello Argilli, Albino Bernardini and Teresa Vergalli have been acquired.

These three new archival collections will allow scholars and students to start new research on different perspectives in Italian scholastic-educational history, ranging from Marxist political-educational thought (Manacorda) to children’s literature (Argilli) to the history of school in the areas of the urban periphery (Bernardini and Vergalli). It is clear that the link with the territory, over the years, has become a fundamental feature of the Museum, also as a result of the birth of similar museums in other areas of the peninsula and the increasingly sophisticated debate on problems and issues of conservation of the cultural heritage of school and education.\textsuperscript{34} It is self-evident that Rome and Lazio, both from the point of view of the documentary contents already owned and those that, in the future, will become part of it, are the fundamental objective of the work of collecting materials, museum exhibitions and promoting research.

In the meantime, MuSEd has become the seat of the Luigi Malerba Award for Picture Book, the only Italian award exclusively dedicated to this genre of literature for children and young people. This allows the Museum to collect a large number of publications relating to this sector every year, and thus to consolidate and update the already rich library of children’s literature. The Malerba Prize, which is awarded every year as part of the Bologna Children’s Book Fair, brings the Museum to the forefront of the contemporary debate on children’s books.

From the point of view of the premises and structures, the size of the rooms regained in Piazza della Repubblica, has allowed us to organize a conference room and an exhibition hall (currently under construction) designed according to museographic criteria intended for an audience that will be made up of more than just specialists. Inside this room, which we informally call wunderkammer, it will be possible to see the most important ‘pieces’ of MuSEd and enjoy a didactic path that illustrates its meaning and historical-educational value. In recent months we have dedicated a monographic issue of the magazine «Il Pepeverde»\textsuperscript{35} to the most important funds of MuSEd, which temporarily satisfies the need to have an updated guide.

Once gained the opportunity to welcome and communicate adequately (even virtually, through a restyling of the currently obsolete website) with our university students, with schools, with teachers and, hopefully, with citizens who are curious to embark on a journey in the history of education in what is the oldest Italian museum dedicated to these issues, and the only one in Rome,


then it will be possible to think that the goal has been reached. Now, in fact, it is urgent to build a «social existence» for MuSEd because: «if its didactic function is not set up, the museographic problem is reduced to a vain question of furnishing the museum. It would not make sense to carry out a didactic activity [...] if this didactic activity were not to be translated into a more animated cultural and social life of the museum»\textsuperscript{36}.