

UDC 37:069:087.5(450Torino)

1.08 Published Scientific Conference Contribution

Received: 16. 2. 2017

Francesca Mogavero\*

**MUSLI: an integrated museum from school to children's books in Torino***MUSLI: povezovalen muzej od šole do otroških knjig v Torinu***Izvleček**

Fundacija Tancredi di Barolo je v palači Barolo ustanovila Muzej šolstva in otroške literature. Leta 2008 se je začel nov muzejski projekt, ki se je posvečal zgodovini otroške literature in tako dopolnil razstavo o zgodovini šolstva. Nov muzej imenovan MUSLI (Museo della Scuola e del Libro per l'Infanzia - Muzej šolstva in otroške literature) je bil dokončan v času praznovanja 150. obletnice združitve Italije in odprt 23. novembra 2011. Vsebina muzeja je povezana s šolskim muzejem zahvaljujoč zgodovinski tiskarni Eredi Botta. Teme o knjigah so bile vedno prisotne v šolskem muzeju. Slednji še posebej raziskuje knjigo Edmonda De Amicis z naslovom Srce (Cuore) in primerja preteklo in sodobno šolo in literaturo. Pod znamko »MUSLI: muzej za vse« se je začel projekt, ki naj bi širši javnosti omogočal uživanje v dediščini, spodbujal dostopnost vedenja o zbirkah MUSLI in muzejski didaktiki.

**Abstract**

The Tancredi di Barolo Foundation established the Museum of School and Children's Literature in Palazzo Barolo (Turin, Italy). In 2008 started the new Museum itinerary project, dedicated to Children's Literature's history, to complete the exposition about school's history. The new Museum itinerary, branded MUSLI (Museo della Scuola e del Libro per l'Infanzia - Museum of School and Children's Literature), was completed during the 150th Italy Unification celebrations and was inaugurated on 23rd of November 2011. The new Museum itinerary is linked to the School Museum itinerary thanks to the Eredi Botta Historical Typography. Indeed, the book theme has always been present in the School Museum itinerary, which particularly investigates the book Cuore written by Edmondo De Amicis, comparing past and present school and literature. Under the banner "MUSLI: a Museum for everyone" a project has started with the purpose to grant an ever wider public the enjoyment of our patrimony, promoting an accessible knowledge of MUSLI collections and museum didactics.

**Ključne besede:** šolski muzej, otroška literatura, MUSLI, Torino, Italija**Key words:** School museum, Children Literature, MUSLI, Turin, Italy  
15<sup>th</sup> Symposium on School Life, part 21. Visit us / obiščite nas - Sistory:  
<http://hdl.handle.net/11686/37668>

\* Francesca Mogavero, MUSLI (Museo della Scuola e del Libro per l' Infanzia - Museum of School and Children's Literature), MA, Didactics Coordinator, Torino, Italy;  
e-mail: [didattica@fondazionetancredidibarolo.com](mailto:didattica@fondazionetancredidibarolo.com)

A popular African proverb says: “A whole village is necessary to grow up a child”<sup>1</sup>. The tradition of every community, the experience and the studies underline that the educative dynamics is also a transmission of theories and practices from a generation to another, a continuous process involving every social sphere (and others too); so, modifying a little the terms, the result does not change: it is necessary a net, some connections, some links,<sup>2</sup> to educate a person. I would like to concentrate my speech precisely on the term “link”, a very fitting concept for the cultural reality I am part of.

The Foundation Tancredi di Barolo – MUSLI expresses its ability to create connections and its nationwide and Europe-wide uniqueness in its “tripartite soul” of Study Centre (Library, Archive and “Salgari Room”), School Museum Itinerary and Children’s Book Museum Itinerary: these three aspects are different for staging and features, but strictly linked, inseparable. Furthermore, like Fabiana Loparco underlines in her most recent article,<sup>3</sup> MUSLI shows its “connective nature” from its origins, making coexist in its inside the two types of “School Museum” identified by Juri Meda<sup>4</sup> – the Museum as research and conservation of historical sources centre, and the Museum as a striking, nostalgic and delightful place of the memory. Therefore, the MUSLI is a place of exploration and discovery, in which the expert and the visitor can relate with each other, becoming the “new experimenters”, getting in touch with the collections and the locations, thanks to an innovative fruition concept and the precious contribution of multimedia.

The Foundation Tancredi di Barolo was born in 2002 thanks to the rich collection – consisting in that year of 8.500 books, games, illustrations and teaching materials – made available by Marilena and Pompeo Vagliani, and the concession of rooms and services in Palazzo Barolo, in Turin, by Opera Barolo. Thanks to the contribution of the Public Authority and the involvement of the University of Turin, the Study Centre, the International Library of Children’s Literature (which today counts 12.000 volumes, school books, books of pleasant reading, reference books and periodicals from 1678 to the Sixties, in addition to thematic sections

---

1 Cecilia De Carli (a cura di), *Educare attraverso l’arte. Ricerca, formazione, casi studio*, Edizioni Gabriele Mazzotta, Milano, 2007, p. 15.

2 I have analyzed the connections between education, Art and urban reality in my Master Thesis (Master in Management, Marketing and Multimedia for Cultural Heritage and Activities – 2nd level – Polytechnic of Turin and COREP), entitled “Creativity Network: opportunities of approach to Contemporary Art for children and young people between 3 and 14 years old”, 2012.

3 Fabiana Loparco, *The MUSLI «Museo della Scuola e del Libro per l’Infanzia»* (“The School and the Children’s Book Museum”) of the Foundation Tancredi di Barolo in Turin. An institution at the forefront of the preservation and enhancement of educational and scholastic heritage, «History of Education & Children’s Literature», vol. VIII, n. 1, 2013, University of Macerata, pp. 795-818.

4 Juri Meda, *Musei della scuola e dell’educazione. Ipotesi progettuale per una sistematizzazione delle iniziative di raccolta, conservazione e valorizzazione dei beni culturali delle scuole*, «History of Education & Children’s Literature», vol. V, n. 2, 2010, University of Macerata, pp. 489-501.



*MUSLI - Museum of School and Children's Literature in Palazzo Barolo (Torino, Italy) <http://www.operabarolo.it/it/p-60/palazzo-barolo/museo-della-scuola-e-del-libro-per-infanzia-musli> (accessed 15.10.2019)*

dedicated to music and science, great historical figures, authors, publishing houses and book series of Children's Literature), the Archive (which collects exercise-books, diaries, posters, school report cards, diplomas, essays, educational tools, educational games and other scholastic materials, sections dedicated to authors and illustrators for childhood, photographs, advertising etc.), the "Salgari Room" (which conserves original Italian editions and "historical" translations of the novels by Emilio Salgari and original tables) and the Museum have been started.

The Foundation has got an Administration Council – composed by the Founders, Vagliani family and Opera Barolo, University of Turin and the Councilors for the Culture of the City, the Province and the Region – and a Scientific Committee, which elaborates programs and initiatives, and guarantees their scientific principles and promotion, in collaboration with the Council and the President Pompeo Vagliani. The Foundation aims to be a support for school, offering assistance for thesis, researches and stages, organizing exhibitions, conferences, meetings, readings, creating multimedia, working as a referee in projects to recover, safeguard and value numerous funds related to scholastic and publishing history in Turin and Piedmont. Its structure is based on volunteers and a prudent management of available resources, because of the progressive decrease of public and private fundings.

The MUSLI is a direct emanation of the Foundation Tancredi di Barolo. Its School Museum Itinerary, located in the most ancient wing of Palazzo Barolo,

originally destined to the servants (dormitory, pantry, laundry), is an engaging journey in the school of the nineteenth and twentieth century, in which the visitor, between striking locations and original objects, becomes a student of the past and the absolute protagonist of the visit.

The four floors of the exposition – from “The classroom typical of Cuore period” to “The early twentieth century classroom”, passing by the funny vision of the school, the noble floor, “The children’s bedroom, the room dedicated to the (fun) teaching of mathematics and science, “The Mutual Teaching Hall” and “The nursery school room” – represent the metaphorical growing and learning process of the child and the historical evolution of the school, from the early experiences of primary education started by the Marquis Tancredi in Palazzo Barolo (and remembering the Marquises is already a first, essential, link with the building in which the Museum is located, and with the city and the school history).

The itinerary’s aim is to put, in an active way, by direct experience and dramatization and identification activities, the public and the school of the past close, encouraging, at the same time, a critical reading of the present, by the comparison and the value of the tokens, materials and experiences of the pedagogical tradition of Turin and Piedmont. As proof of the interconnections between the different parts of the MUSLI, it is required to underline that the children’s book theme is all along integrated in the School Museum Itinerary, which deepens, in particular, Cuore by Edmondo De Amicis, book that highlights the Turin’s role in education.

The continuous reference between school and children’s book allows a permanent and natural comparison between literature of the past and of the present, imaginary and real school. After all, in the Children’s Book Museum Itinerary the connections with the school are various too, as we will see shortly. The project of the Museum itinerary dedicated to the children’s book’s history has been started in 2008, on the occasion of the exhibition *Serenant et illuminant* for the 100th anniversary of the publishing house SEI. The new pole, branded MUSLI (The School and the Children’s Book Museum), was completed during 150th Italy Unification celebrations and was inaugurated on 23rd November 2011.

The exposition, located in the rooms at the ground floor and in the ancient basements made available by Opera Barolo, values the rich international historical fund stored at the Foundation’s Archive and Library (and it is significant to remember that what appears in front of the eyes of the visitors is just the 1 per thousand of the material possessed by the Foundation). It is the most important unit dedicated to illustration and children’s and scholastic literature’s history on the territory open to the public.

The link between this itinerary and the one already consolidated is represented by Eredi Botta Publishing Typography, the third typographic industry of Turin in the nineteenth century, which also printed scholastic and reading books, housed in Palazzo Barolo between 1869 and 1903, and celebrated at the basement of the Children’s Book Museum Itinerary; a further connection with the School



*MUSLI - Museum of School and Children's Literature in Palazzo Barolo (Torino, Italy) <http://www.operabarolo.it/it/p-60/palazzo-barolo/museo-della-scuola-e-del-libro-per-infanzia-musli> (accessed 15.10.2019)*

Museum Itinerary is the recreation of the typography in the classroom, according to the Freinet method, and the exposition of school newspapers; optically, in the end, the bond between school's history and book's history is symbolized by the ancient school desks, which in these rooms are destined to showcases, in an absolutely reversible way, showing the signs engraved by the students in the course of time too.

The illustration, as artistic and educational work, where the child can also become protagonist and creator, is one of the leading themes of the set-up, and a fundamental element of the children's book: the first room of the Children's Book Museum Itinerary is in fact dedicated to the permanent exposition of the original tables of SEI's Archive and a selection of original drawings possessed by the Foundation's Archive. In the multifunctional space called "Fantastic Library" the role of Turin in the publishing for the childhood is highlighted and, through temporary exhibitions, the principal publishers for the childhood of Piedmont are remembered; a specific showcase is reserved to the "birthdays" of significant Italian and foreign editions and to the anniversaries of characters, authors and illustrators.

In the "Children's Corner" – from the name of a famous and loved radio broadcast, lead in Turin, from 1929, by the eclectic Giuseppe Eugenio Chiorino – the interaction and the mutual influence (and, so, another link) between children's book and media is highlighted. The Didactics Room allows to translate in practice, never forgetting the playful aspect, the ideas suggested by the itinerary.

The "Golden Staircase" – entitled to the most famous book series edited in Turin by UTET in the Thirties – underlines the importance of book series in the Children's literature's history, and leads to the basement, dedicated to the book industry and a precious exposition of animated books. In the innovative Children's Book Museum Itinerary, the use of multimedia and advanced techniques for the fruition of the images – think about the Sensitive Wall and to the

“Flip through the Book” – makes an interesting contrast with the School Museum Itinerary, conceived as a total immersion in the past (but, in this case too, always looking to the present and to the possibilities offered by technology): numerous PCs, video projectors, an interactive multimedia board and well-advanced devices permit to enjoy, in an original and interactive mode, the exposed tokens, to build a personal itinerary, to listen to animated readings, pieces from the Pinocchio of the Durium, the history of SEI publishing and the Zia Mariù’s “Rural Libraries”, and to connect to the Manzi Center, which the Foundation has established an useful collaboration with (and here the link is concretely represented by the mouse click!).<sup>5</sup>

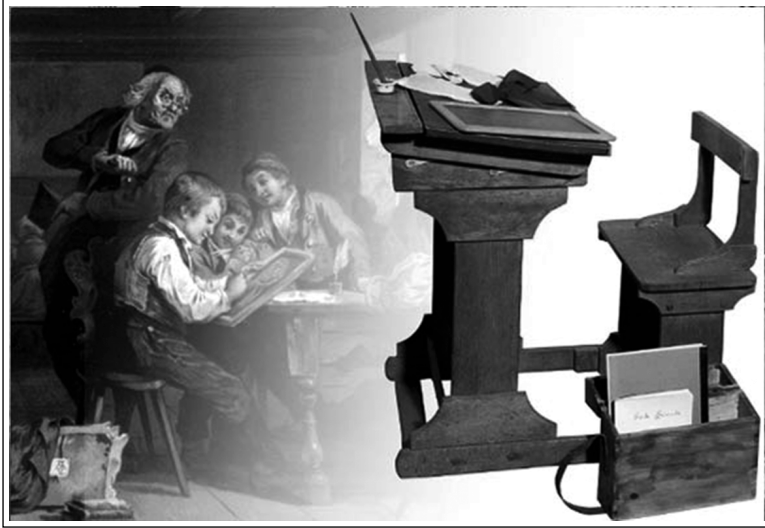
So far we have analyzed the internal links, that series of mutual and continuous exchanges between objects, themes and contents, which made our institution unique and rich. However, the connections go also and above all over the rooms, at regional level and not only; the Foundation Tancredi di Barolo – MUSLI, in fact, is in permanent and one-to-one correspondence with the outside: first, it gets in touch with its visitors – the school and the general public – to build together exciting activities and ad hoc projects, according to the scholastic programs, the interest and the age of the audience; it opens its doors to scholars, researchers and students; it discusses with media, the other museums, publishing houses, libraries, Universities and Institutional Authorities to realize exhibitions, publications and activities.

Our last events, on the occasion of the Foundation’s 10th anniversary celebrations and the cultural exhibition “The Books’ May” (in collaboration with the Library of the Regional Council of Piedmont) are a proof of the ideas and offers exchanges which exist between our institution and the other realities, allowing a stimulating enrichment and an useful convergence of know-how and experiences.

“A world of fables. Two hundred years of the first edition of the *Kinder und Hausmärchen* by Grimm Brothers (1812-2012)”, “Christmas’ Fantasies. Fests, characters, songs and games in the children’s books between nineteenth and twentieth century (event on the occasion of the exhibition “Royal Christmas”, promoted by Palazzo Reale of Turin, Castello di Racconigi, Castello di Aglié e MUSLI), “Meeting with Roberto Innocenti at the MUSLI”, “Boots and mittens. On the tracks of the cat (and the kitty) in the children’s book’s history”, “Visions of the future: Jules Verne and the others” (exhibition of books, posters, periodicals, objects, games, realized by Piero Gondolo della Riva and Pompeo Vagliani on the occasion of the General Assembly of the Société Jules Verne’s of Paris of 2013) and “Sailing with Salgari” are just some examples.

---

5 For a more detailed description of the itineraries, the collections and the sections, see Pompeo Vagliani, *Il Viaggio Incantato. Guida al Museo della Scuola e del Libro per l’Infanzia di Palazzo Barolo*, CLS Arti Grafiche, Carmagnola (To), 2011.



*MUSLI - Museum of School and Children's Literature in Palazzo Barolo (Torino, Italy) <http://www.operabarolo.it/it/p-60/palazzo-barolo/museo-della-scuola-e-del-libro-per-infanzia-musli> (accessed 15.10.2019)*

Among the new projects, we remember the recent conferments of the Tancredi Vigliardi Paravia fund – composed by documents, furniture, pictures, books, photographs – and the SEI's illustrations, which new didactics activities, exhibitions and set-ups are going to be projected on, and "Classroom Memories", a "cross media" project (here is another case of link and mix) in collaboration with RAI Radio 3 and DocAbout Association, which consists in a research in the scholastic archives and the collect of scholastic tokens from the Second Postwar to the Seventies, by the interviews taken to the families by students of a selection of primary schools of Turin, with the purpose to realize a series of radio broadcasts and a multimedia platform about school's history. Because of its relationship-wise nature, the Foundation Tancredi di Barolo – MUSLI's preminent aim is to reach an ever larger user base; so, particular attention is reserved to the accessibility, according to the itineraries' characteristics.

Under the banner "MUSLI: a Museum for everyone" a project has started with the purpose to grant an ever wider public the enjoyment of our patrimony, promoting an accessible knowledge of the collections and Museum Didactics. The School Museum Itinerary, by virtue of the almost total absence of showcases and prohibitions, offers a total sensorial experience, allows the visitor to touch the majority of the exposed objects, to explore the rooms according to his personal time and interest, to sit on the ancient school desks and to enjoy the atmosphere of the past.

The Children's Book Museum Itinerary, more open to technology, is equipped with emplacements with large touch screens adjustable in height, by

which it is possible to enjoy the materials, properly translated in a tactile way , in an alternative and complete mode, to reproduce the animations of leverage books, to listen to music and fables. In addition, ancient and modern supports and tactile books, an A3 format table, in black and Braille, giving a general idea of the two itineraries, maps in relief of the single floors, produced with Minolta method, are available; other facilities and new programs are now in elaboration and will be active from the next school year, while a research about the disabled child in the children's literature between nineteenth and twentieth century has been already completed, on the occasion of the exhibition "Forbidden not browse", realized by Area Onlus in 2012.

A lot has been already done, but very much could be furthermore realized: this is the reason why all our staff is constantly updated, not only through internal meetings, but also thanks to lessons and in-depth courses organized on the territory, as, for example, the course "Museum operators and disability", promoted by the Foundation CRT, the Foundation Paideia and the Foundation Feyles, and the course "Seeing with the hands to know art", offered by U.N.I.Vo.C. – Italian National Union of Volunteers Pro Blind People.

An important comparison moment took place on 1st December 2012, on the occasion of the Open Day realized in collaboration with the institutions that are helping us in our formation: an afternoon for the families with disabled children (and not only), full of proposals (pop-up books to browse and experience, the Braille printing, the creation of a little Pinocchio from a clothes peg...), considerable advices and emotion. The MUSLI is an enchanted, fascinated and striking journey... And everyone can and must be captured by its magic!

## Bibliography

- Cecilia De Carli (a cura di), *Educare attraverso l'arte. Ricerca, formazione, casi studio*, Edizioni Gabriele Mazzotta, Milano, 2007.
- Juri Meda, *Musei della scuola e dell'educazione. Ipotesi progettuale per una sistematizzazione delle iniziative di raccolta, conservazione e valorizzazione dei beni culturali delle scuole*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. V, n. 2, 2010, University of Macerata, pp. 489-501.
- Pompeo Vagliani, *Il Viaggio Incantato. Guida al Museo della Scuola e del Libro per l'Infanzia di Palazzo Barolo*, CLS Arti Grafiche, Carmagnola (To), 2011.
- Francesca Mogavero, *Creativity Network: opportunities of approach to Contemporary Art for children and young people between 3 and 14 years old*. (Master in Management, Marketing and Multimedia for Cultural Heritage and Activities – 2nd level – Politechnic of Turin and COREP), 2012.
- Fabiana Loparco, *The MUSLI «Museo della Scuola e del Libro per l'Infanzia» ('The School and the Children's Book Museum') of the Foundation Tancredi di Barolo in Turin. An institution at the forefront of the preservation and enhancement of educational and scholastic heritage*, «History of Education & Children's Literature», vol. VIII, n. 1, 2013, University of Macerata, pp. 795-818.



## Summary

### **MUSLI: an integrated museum from school to children's books in Torino**

**Francesca Mogavero**

---

The Tancredi di Barolo Foundation, created in 2002 by Pompeo Vagliani, established the Museum of School and Children's Literature in Palazzo Barolo (Turin, Italy). In 2008 started the new Museum itinerary project, dedicated to Children's Literature's history, to complete the exposition about school's history. The new Museum itinerary, branded MUSLI (Museo Scuola Libro Infanzia - Museum of School and Children's Literature), was completed during the 150th Italy Unification celebrations and was inaugurated on 23rd of November 2011.

The exposition valorizes the rich international historical fund, composed by 12 thousands items (books, original drawings, toys and games from XVIII to half XX centuries) and stored at Foundation's archive and library. It is the most important centre dedicated to illustration and children's and scholastic literature's history on the territory open to the public.

The new Museum itinerary is linked to the School Museum itinerary thanks to the presence in Palazzo Barolo, from 1869 to 1903, of the Eredi Botta Historical Typography, the third most important typographic factory of Turin in XIX century, that printed scholastic texts and reading books too; the recalling of Freinet scholastic typography and the exposition of school newspapers make another connection to School Museum itinerary.

Indeed, the book theme has been always present in the School Museum itinerary, which particularly investigates the book *Cuore* written by Edmondo De Amicis, comparing past and present school (and literature), reality and imagination, persistently and in a captivating way. In the Book Museum itinerary the disability is particularly minded: under the banner "MUSLI: a Museum for everyone" a project has started with the purpose to grant an ever wider public the enjoyment of our patrimony, promoting an accessible knowledge of MUSLI collections and museum didactics.

