



‘And lead us not into temptation’: religious reading books from the fascist government to italian schools in Brazil (1920s and 1930s of the XX century)¹

‘E não nos deixeis cair em tentação’: livros de leitura religiosa do governo fascista para as escolas italianas no Brasil (anos 20 e 30 do século XX)

‘Y no nos dejes caer en tentación’: libros de lectura religiosa del gobierno fascista para las escuelas italianas en Brasil (años 20 y 30 del siglo XX)

Terciane Ângela Luchese
Universidade de Caxias do Sul (Brasil)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6608-9728>
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/7640634913198342>
taluches@ucs.br

ABSTRACT

The present text analyzes the production, circulation, and strategies of (con)formation put in play by the two volumes of the book *Letture di Religione*, distributed free to students of Italian schools in Brazil. The presence of these schools in the country was considerable, and in 1908, there were 13,657 students attending 264 institutions, of which 13 were Catholic. The consular network was responsible for receiving and distributing school supplies (predominantly books) and financial subsidies from Italy to Brazil. With Fascism, organization and attention to schools intensified. Anchored in Cultural History references, the empirical corpus consists of school books, legislative measures, newspapers, and consular reports; historical documentary analysis was the methodological procedure. Understanding the knowledge produced and disseminated by the use of these books as propagators of the fascist and Catholic ideology in Italian schools abroad and the symbolic meanings that these objects acquired in the school context is a theme of relevance for the History of Education.

KEYWORDS: School books; Italian schools in Brazil; Religious education.

¹ English version by Lloyd John Friedrich. E-mail: lloydfriedrich@hotmail.com.

RESUMO

O presente texto analisa produção, circulação e estratégias de (con)formação postos em jogo pelos dois volumes do livro *Letture di Religione*, distribuídos gratuitamente aos alunos das escolas italianas do Brasil. A presença dessas escolas no país foi considerável e em 1908, contabilizava-se 13.657 alunos que frequentavam 264 instituições, sendo 13 católicas. A rede consular responsabilizava-se pela recepção e distribuição de materiais escolares (predominantemente livros) e subsídios financeiros da Itália para o Brasil. Com o Fascismo, intensificou-se a organização e a atenção às escolas. Ancorada nos referenciais da História Cultural, o *corpus empírico* é formado por livros escolares, legislações, jornais e relatórios consulares, sendo a análise documental histórica o procedimento metodológico. Compreender os saberes produzidos e difundidos pelo uso dos referidos livros como propagadores do ideal fascista e católico nas escolas italianas do exterior e os sentidos simbólicos que esses objetos adquiriram no universo escolar é tema de relevância para a História da Educação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Livros escolares; Escolas Italianas no Brasil; Ensino religioso.

RESUMEN

El presente texto analiza producción, circulación y estrategias de (con)formación puestas en juego por los dos volúmenes del libro *Letture di Religione*, distribuidos gratuitamente a los alumnos de las escuelas italianas de Brasil. La presencia de esas escuelas en el país fue considerable y en 1908, se contabilizaba 13657 alumnos que frecuentaban 264 instituciones, siendo 13 católicas. La red consular se responsabilizaba por la recepción y distribución de materiales escolares (predominantemente libros) y subsídios financieros de Italia para Brasil. Con el Fascismo, se intensificó la organización y la atención a las escuelas. Anclado en las referencias de la Historia Cultural, el *corpus empírico* está formado por libros escolares, legislaciones, periódicos e informes consulares, siendo el procedimiento metodológico análisis documental histórico. Comprender los saberes producidos y difundidos por el uso de los referidos libros como propagadores del ideal fascista y católico en las escuelas italianas del exterior y los sentidos simbólicos que esos objetos adquirieron en el universo escolar es tema relevante para la Historia de la Educación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Libros escolares; Escuelas Italianas en Brasil; Educación religiosa.

Initial considerations

In February 1934, the student Nicolino Murino signed the first page of his book entitled *Letture di Religione (Readings on Religion)*. Nicolino was a 3rd grade student in the Instituto Manzoni² in São Paulo. The common notations of Nicolino³ and the book survived for decades and arrived at the present time bearing investigative possibilities for the field of History of Education. The present text is a result of the study “History of school cultures in Italian schools on Brazilian soil (1875 - 1945)”, funded by the CNPq. The aim of this extract is to analyze production, circulation, and strategies of (con)formation put in play by two volumes of the book *Letture di Religione*, distributed free to students in Italian schools in Brazil.

The two volumes of *Letture di Religione* are part of a set of textbooks produced and sent free for distribution to students of “Italian schools abroad”, as ethnic schools were called in the fascist period. Books for reading, arithmetic, geography, homeland history, songs, literature, and others were sent. In this text, the investigative view centers on analysis of the two volumes of *Letture de Religione*, works written and compiled by Giuseppe Fanciulli, an important Italian author for children’s and youth literature at that time. The first volume is directed to the second and third grades, while the second is directed to the fourth and fifth grades.

Anchored in Cultural History references, the empirical corpus is composed of textbooks, legislative measures, and consular reports; documentary analysis is the methodological procedure that directs the investigative view. The text was organized in three sections. The first contextualizes Italian schools abroad, with a focus on the case of Brazil, and their relation to fascism and the Catholic Church. The second presents a brief biography of the author of the books under analysis. The third focuses on production, the material aspects of the works, and their circulation in Italian schools in Brazil.

² The Instituto Alexandre Manzoni was located on the street Rua José Paulino, no. 101, Bom Retiro district, and was under the direction of professor Antônio Pratola. In the 1930s, attached to the institute, the Escola de Comércio Tiradentes (Tiradentes Business School) was in operation. A note to the newspaper *Correio Paulistano* of 8 Jan. 1930, on p. 7, reads as follows: “For the day courses of the Instituto Alexandre Manzoni, regular classes began yesterday. Nighttime preparatory courses will begin on the 13th of this month. In the Escola de Comércio Tiradentes, classes will re-open next February 3. Enrollment is open for day courses and for the diverse business classes. School enrollment cards, together with the written tests applied every two months from the previous year, will be delivered to students of the Instituto Manzoni on the 8th and 9th of this month.” (CORREIO PAULISTANO, 8 Jan 1930, p. 7). In 1936, the *Correio Paulistano* (8 Aug. 1936, p. 4) reports that “The Instituto Manzoni, one of the oldest teaching establishments of the capital, offers the best students of elementary studies prizes of books, recognition awards, etc. every two months as a form of encouragement.” The Instituto Manzoni was an “Italian” school, but it passed through processes to adapt to the legal requirements of nationalization policies, negotiating curriculum and school organization issues. It is noteworthy that in December 1927, the Italian consul, Dr. Barbarisi, attended the final exams and was satisfied with the results and student progress (CORREIO PAULISTANO, 24 Dec. 1927, p. 16). However, on 24 Dec. 1937, final exams were inspected by professor Casimiro Ferreira da Rocha (CORREIO PAULISTANO, 24 Dec. 1936, p. 12). It should also be highlighted that in a visit to São Paulo, the Italian ambassador Victor Cerutti visited the Instituto Mazoni on 3 Dec. 1930 (Jornal A Gazeta, 3 Dec. 1930, p. 12). There are records of praise regarding the work of the school director, an immigrant from Italy, Antônio Pratola.

³ Nicolino Murino was a student of the Instituto Manzoni and then also of the Escola de Comércio Tiradentes, and he appeared as having been approved in the first year of preliminary studies in the 1936 academic year, as reported by the *Correio Paulistano* (CORREIO PAULISTANO, 1 Jan. 1937, p. 17).

1 – Italian schools abroad, Fascism and the Church

In previous texts, I have affirmed that the schooling process among immigrants that left the Italian peninsula and established themselves in Brazil between the end of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century experienced ethnic schools in the different states in which they resided (Luchese 2012, 2014, 2015). In general, we can say that immigrants sought out public schools, but because of the difficulties faced by the Brazilian government itself in offering schools in sufficient number and conditions for these population contingents, they themselves opened ethnic schools. Thus, “in different spaces, in a plurality of conditions, in a broad process of negotiation, tension, and dispute, which was also contingent on diverse provincial legislation, [...] they produced and were produced by educational practices that were markedly ethnic” (LUCHESE, 2014, p. 17). In the states of Espírito Santo, Pernambuco, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul, records are found of ethnic schools opened in rural areas, many of them community schools, and also ethnic schools maintained by mutual assistance associations, in general in urban areas. Furthermore, parochial and private schools were opened with ethnic features. According to data presented by Parlagrecco in 1906, shown in the following table, there were 171 Italian schools that served more than ten thousand students, a relatively small number compared to the number of immigrant children and youth and descendants, yet a number that cannot be ignored.

Table 1 – Italian schools in Brazil – 1905 – 1906

State	Italian schools	Total students
Pernambuco	1	35
Rio de Janeiro	3	316
Espírito Santo	4	200
Minas Gerais	4	277
Paraná	7	526
São Paulo	92	6,131
Rio Grande do Sul	28	1,941
Santa Catarina	32	1,519
Total	171	10,945

Source: FANFULLA, 1906, p. 800 – 802.

A few year later, in 1908 for example, students numbered 13,657, who attended 264 Italian schools, 13 of them Catholic (MINISTERO, 1908). From 1870 on, Italian schools abroad were under the responsibility of the Italian Foreign Ministry. Therefore, the consular network was responsible for systematically sending reports that revealed the conditions of Italian schools in various countries with the presence of emigrants. Consuls were also responsible for receiving and distributing schools materials (especially books) and financial subsidies, which, with oscillations, were sent to various countries that relied on Italian schools.

When Italian Fascism began, the organization and attention to Italian schools abroad intensified. Specific legislation regarding selection and production of books and teaching material to be distributed free to students became frequent. A single didactic-curricular organizational structure and requirements regarding teachers and their skills were standardized. The books that had been sent and distributed in the consulates since the end of the nineteenth century increased in volume and qualification. As Salvetti (2009) highlights, the main Fascist action in relation to subsidized Italian schools was sending new textbooks permeated with fascist ideology. The two volumes of *Letture di Religione* written by Giuseppe Fanciulli are approved and produced in this context.

The approval, production, sending, and circulation of religious reading books to Italian schools abroad was not a common event prior to Fascism. They were a product derived from a coming together of the Catholic Church and the Fascist State. This is not to generalize by considering that all those who were members of the Catholic Church adhered to fascism or vice-versa, but to consider that “Catholics initially received fascism relatively well; they were enthusiastic about it at the time of the Lateran Treaty and lost a bit of their enchantment when the totalitarian and racist aspects and the alliance with Nazi Germany arose” as Bertonha states (2001, p. 354). Fascism represented discipline, order, and social justice. It is fitting to recall that the cordiality of Pope Pius XI toward Mussolini and fascism facilitated the agreement established in 1929, the Lateran Accords. Catholicism and fascism, which were contrary to liberalism and communist expansion, joined together, but that did not occur in a simple and unequivocal manner. The recognition of the Catholic religion as the religion of the Italian State made the Church and its schools, newspapers, and parishes available to fascism. This was not a uniform process, but the conservatism of many Catholics abetted their coming together. As Mussolini himself indicated, Catholicism could be used for Italian expansion, that is to say, fascist expansion. Upon analyzing the relationship between fascism and Catholicism, Giron stated:

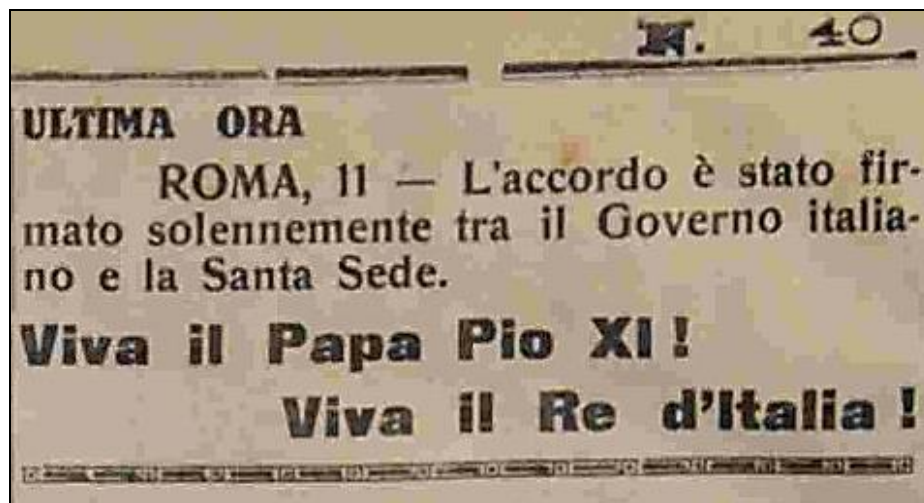
[...] there was an exchange between Fascism and the papacy; the Church received the favors of recognition of a State within the Italian State, and the Italian State received the consent of the Church City-State regarding the regime in power. This exchange favored the Church, which could remodel its financial empire, while Mussolini could make use of the Church organizational machine, both in the parishes and in the publishing sector and means of communication. (GIRON, 1994, p. 75)

The negotiation that put an end to the “Roman Question” recognized the principle of full power and sovereign jurisdiction of the Supreme Pontiff over the territory of the Vatican. In addition, the Italian State made compensation with a sum of money for the old provinces and goods lost by the Catholic Church in Italian unification. Moreover, a concordat was established that regulated relations between the Church and the State. For its part, the Holy See manifested that the Roman Question was definitively resolved and it recognized the Kingdom of Italy in its formation and constitution. As Cannistraro and Rosoli (1979) affirm, the Church and the Italian State made reciprocal concessions.

The signing of the Lateran Treaty and the end of the Roman Question was intensely commemorated among the immigrants and their descendants in Brazil. The pages of newspapers hint at its importance and provide a glimpse of the festivities celebrating the agreement. The negotiations had been followed by several periodicals, especially those published by religious congregations in Brazil. For example, *La Staffetta*

*Riograndense*⁴, only two days after the signing, already published a note celebrating the treaty, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Note spreading news of the signing of the Lateran Treaty



Source: *La Staffetta Riograndense* newspaper, 13 Feb. 1929, p. 2.

In the following edition, the joy of the news of the end of the Roman Question was highlighted on the first page, fully transcribing the text of the treaty in Italian and its main effects. Figure 2 shows the first page headlines.

Figure 2 – Front page of the *La Staffetta Riograndense* newspaper



Source: *La Staffetta Riograndense* newspaper, 20 Feb. 1929, p. 1.

The identification of many clerics with fascism⁵ was related to the struggle against communism and liberalism; many of them had adhered to or admired fascism even before the end of the Roman Question. In regard to the Italian Colony Region of RS, Giron states that:

⁴ *La Staffetta Riograndense* – weekly Catholic newspaper of the Italian colony. Offices and administration in Garibaldi, RS. Manager: José Lorenzi. Regarding this newspaper, see Valduga (2007).

⁵ See Cannistraro and Rosoli (1979), Sale (2011), Gaudio (1995), and Sani (2004) for the relationship between the school, Church, and Fascism in Italy.

Even before 1929, when the Lateran Treaty was signed, the influence of Fascist Italy was felt among the clergy. In 1923, D. Pedro Rota, superior of the Salesians, brings good news from “Young Italy”. In 1924, Dr. Celeste Gobatto is elected to the Administration of Caxias, which makes the clergy rejoice: a true Fascist assumes the government of Caxias. (GIRON, 1994, p. 88)

In the interpretation of the same author, the Catholic Church in the Italian Colony Region of Rio Grande do Sul was essential in political organization and in organization of the immigrants and “was the institution that most promoted fascism”. (GIRON, 1994, p. 87). The Diocese of Caxias in Rio Grande do Sul was created through dialogue of representatives of the community (especially Celeste Gobatto) and of priests of the colonial region with the Vatican and was, above all, the desire of Archbishop of Porto Alegre, D. João Becker, himself, as Giron analyzes (pp. 87-93). However, Rio Grande do Sul was no exception. Cardinal D. Sebastião Leme of Rio de Janeiro exhibited esteem for Italy and for Il Duce on various occasions, as did the Archbishop of Porto Alegre, D. João Becker (BERTONHA, 2001).

For the Italian immigrants and their descendants, especially those that lived in more distant rural areas, the clergy was one of the most powerful bearers and disseminators of fascist ideas. In addition, it should be considered, as Valduga (2007, p. 157) states, that fascism modeled itself as the “bastion of morality and hard work and prides itself on the activity of its children abroad, the highest example of the value of its people”. Furthermore,

Exaggerated patriotism was a new and gratifying sentiment; the disadvantaged immigrants out of their country found a greater meaning in their work recognized by their country. The immigrants were transformed from unknown members of a colony to the symbol of useful and productive labor. Italy opened its arms to its long forgotten children, and they recognized it as their country and recognized themselves as Italians. (GIRON, 1994, p. 109)

Trento (1989), Giron (1994), and Bertonha (2001) agree that adherence to fascism occurred in a much broader way among the middle class and bourgeoisie. For the vast majority, as mentioned by Trento (1989), admiration for Il Duce may have been greater than understanding of fascism as a project and political-ideological action, since Mussolini represented a discourse and a practice of valuing emigrants from “greater Italy”, which “had no inconsiderable weight in its function as propaganda” (TRENTO, 1989, p. 304). Thus, Italian nationalism, as a feeling of identification, the basis for formation of identity, was frequently understood as equivalent to fascism.

Sending of leaflets and books, film exhibitions, conferences, festivities, the founding of the Italian-Brazilian Institute of High Culture in Brazil, and funding trips of Brazilian journalists to come to know the “deeds of Fascist Italy” are some of the cultural propagators listed by Bertonha (2001) in spreading fascism. In addition, putting on Italian works in Italian in important theaters such as the Municipal Theater of São Paulo, in spite of the lack of prestigious Italian tour companies, is notable. Trento (1989) reports the case of Ruggiero Ruggieri in 1929. Another cultural aim was the creation of the publishing company Sociedade Editora Latina by Rubbiani and Stevanoni, directed toward publishing in Italian or Portuguese or both (Trento, 1989). For Bertonha “in regard to Brazil, Italian documentation reveals a relatively low interest of Fascism in disseminating its works and its doctrine among Brazilians” (2001, p. 272),

especially in relation to the 1920s. For the same author, in the 1930s, “this situation changed substantially, and the effort of disseminating fascism grow in a notable manner” (BERTONHA, 2001, p. 274). The Sociedade Dante Alighieri should have emerged as the leader of fascist propaganda, but in 1937 it had only 150 registered members in the city of São Paulo, and for Trento (1989, p. 299) “not even in the past had it ever left great vestiges of itself”.

There was propaganda of fascism for immigrants and descendants, especially by Italians who immigrated after the First World War, who together with the consuls, led the founding of newspapers⁶, the organization of festivities and celebrations, radio programs, the *fascios*⁷, the *dopolavoro*⁸, the opening (or reorganization) of schools, the offering of language and Italian culture courses, and theater shows and musicals, in short, the entire structure that, as Trento states, sought to raise consciousness of belonging to “Italians abroad”

In addition to the attempt to maintain Italianism alive and to infuse an ideology in the children of Italians, the efforts of the mother-country in the period between the two World Wars were directed toward ensuring a greater intellectual presence capable of influencing local culture, whether through broader dissemination of Italian production or through sending university professors or even creating the schools themselves. (TRENTO, 1989, p. 299)

Many ceremonies and collective activities had the presence of Brazilian supporters since “with rare exception, the Brazilian political class was quite indulgent in relation to the regime” (TRENTO, 1989, p. 305).

A look at the production and circulation of books sent to Brazil for the purpose of disseminating and forming an ideal of “Italians abroad” and of educating them for the work and the religiosity that were the watchword of Italianism, now directly related to fascism, leads to observation of the author of two works focused on in this text: Giuseppe Fanciulli.

2- Giuseppe Fanciulli: the author and his works

Montino (2009), in his study on Fanciulli, states that he was a rapidly forgotten author. Yet, he was an author that dedicated himself intensely to children’s and youth literature in “serene and sweet” tones, who produced a vast work committed “to a nationalist ideology to which had had unreservedly offered his pen, later linking himself to fascism” and, by means of this attachment, coming to be part of the set of intellectuals that “magnified the regime and Il Duce, and that, beyond the ideology, adhered to the conservative idea of mother-country that nationalism had fortified as a result of the Great War” (MONTINO, 2009, p. IX). In the specific case of Fanciulli, his Catholic faith permeated most of his activities, whether as writer or journalist. As Montino (2009) recognizes, mother-country and faith were central foundations of his intellectual thought.

⁶ As an example, the consul of Porto Alegre, Mario Carli, founded the newspaper *La Nuova Italia*, and the immigrant ward and agronomist Adolfo Randazo founded the *Il Giornale dell’Agricoltore* in Caxias.

⁷ *Fasci all’estero* – groups that led the organization of propaganda and dissemination of fascist ideology in Italian communities abroad, in an attempt to coopt them. They also developed assistance and cultural activities and ceremonies defending Italianism and fascism.

⁸ *Dopolavoro all’estero* were associations directed to workers, which outside Italy turned into a “very effective means of drawing Italians abroad to fascism by means of recreation, sports, and culture” (BERTONHA, 2001, p. 46).

Giuseppe Gaetano Giulio Fanciulli⁹ was born on March 8, 1881, in Florence (Firenze). His parents were Giovanni and Enrichetta Guidotti. He lost his mother at seven years of age and remained under the care of his two aunts. He graduated from the Regio Istituto di Studi Superiori Pratici e di Perfezionamento with a degree in Philosophy in 1906, when he was 25. In the same year, he earned a Law degree. In 1909, he obtained a teaching certificate from the Università Popolare Di Firenze. As a scholar of Psychology, in 1929 he obtained professorship in Psychology from the Università Di Firenze and also from Milan (Montino, 2009). He published articles and works with themes connected with emotional life in childhood. He began his professional career as a journalist in 1906 and, in different newspapers and under several functions (correspondent, copywriter, director, collaborator...), he was linked to journalistic activity throughout his life. His experience in the *Giornalino della Domenica*, directed by Luigi Bertelli (known as Vamba), was decisive. For Montino (2009), Fanciulli's journalistic work regarding childhood was what led him to children's literature.

Giancane (1994) considers the combined works of Fanciulli, with more than 150 books, one of the largest contributions to Italian children's literature. In a similar direction, Montino (2009, p. XIV) evaluates that Fanciulli was "one of the most widely known and penetrating voices of the pedagogical vocation of literature for children in the first half of the 1900s". The combined works of Fanciulli were created around the values of nation, of collaboration between social classes, of paternalism, of good feelings, and of an urban and bourgeois view of the world (MONTINO, 2009). The modernity of Fanciulli was in the various fronts he also mobilized for action, as he published books, wrote for newspapers and theater, and participated in radio programs. Montino (2009, p. XV) states that the "vast pedagogical works were placed at the service of a certain idea of Italianism, and, even more so, a certain 1900s need to educate the masses and to instill discipline from the time of childhood, in which children's and youth literature was one of the most powerful and effective devices." In relation to his intense production, I present some book covers of Fanciulli:

Figure 3 – Some covers of books published by Fanciulli in the fascist period



Source: Reproduced by the author of this study from the collection of the Centro de Documentazione e Storia dello Libro Scolastico e della Letteratura per l'Infanzia, UniMC.

⁹ A biographical note regarding Giuseppe Fanciulli can also be found in the *Enciclopédia Treccani*, available at: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-fanciulli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-fanciulli_(Dizionario-Biografico)/), accessed on 18 Dec. 2017.

To cite an example, Fanciulli in *Glorie d'Italia* (1929) writes a book dedicated to youth in which he tells the history of Italy, with several moments of building up patriotism. A brief presentation is written by Piero Parini, a fervent Fascist, who at the time of publication of this book was the Secretário dos Fascios all Estero, after that, assumes the Direzione Generale degli Italiani all'Estero. For Parini, Fanciulli's book "tells the millennial history and exalts the men who rose to honor with their famous companies, their weapons, science, adventurous courage, fine arts, and the indomitable religious faith" and concludes in affirming that "Italy will live eternally and will yet be dominant" (PARINI, in FANCIULLI, 1929, s/p). *Glorie d'Italia* was illustrated with wood block printing by Marini Melis¹⁰.

The second cover, from the book *I nostri ragazzi* was published in 1937 and develops a set of considerations and guidelines in relation to childhood development, the importance of care and the educational process. The third cover emblazons the book *Fedeltà*, a novel for boys, which was illustrated by Roberto Lemmi¹¹. However, the works of Fanciulli were extensive. In a catalog of 1935 of the Bemporad Publishing Company, *Edizioni per la Gioventù*, the works of Fanciulli from this publisher occupy 3 pages, as shown in the figure that follows:

Figure 4 – Pages of the catalog of the Bemporad Publishing Company with works of Fanciulli, 1935



Source: reproduced by the author of this study from BEMPORAD, 1935, p. 6, 7, and 8.

In his intense and extensive production, Fanciulli used pseudonyms such as Chichibio, but was known as Maestro Sapone. He published and had various books of history, reading, and tests for high schools, as well as the books that are analyzed here

¹⁰ Felice Marini Melis was born on December 18, 1871 in Cagliari, son of the middle class city dwellers, Enrico Melis and Annunziata Marini. He finished art studies in Rome in 1902. In 1906, he married Ersilia Meloni. He opened an art school and pursued an intense and recognized career as a painter and illustrator. He died in Cagliari on April 30, 1953. See more at: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/felice-melis-marini_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/felice-melis-marini_(Dizionario-Biografico)); accessed on 24 Jan. 2018.

¹¹ The illustrator Roberto Lemmi was born in Florence in 1901 and died, also in Florence, in 1971. He attended the Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze and developed a recognized career as a passionate naturalist. He developed numerous works for companies and publishers, among others. See more at: <https://www.cacciando.com/lettere-e-foto/letteratura/libri-d-arte-art/item/1688-roberto-lemmi.html>; accessed on 24 Jan 2018.

for religious teaching, approved by the book evaluation commissions for Italian schools in Italy and abroad. Fanciulli was married to Marialù Cadeddu and died on August 16, 1951, at 70 years of age, in Castelveccania, the province of Varese.

3 – *Lecture di Religione*: production and circulation

Royal Decree no. 737 of March 11, 1923, established the guidelines for adoption of textbooks in elementary and popular schools, both public and private in Italy. The General Director of Elementary Instruction, Giuseppe Lombardo Radice, and teachers, ministerial employees, and men “of culture” composed the selection commissions that in June 1923 presented the first lists of approved books (ASCENZI and SANI, 2005). For the 1924-25 school year, the titles *Gente Nostra*, *Creature*, and *Como sono Felice* of Giuseppe Fanciulli were recommended for school libraries and also for distribution to students of Italian schools as prizes. Besides these books, the two volumes of *Lecture di Religione*, written and compiled by Giuseppe Fanciulli, were approved. However, it should be noted that the editions analyzed in this study are of 1932 and 1935, and their covers are shown in Figure 5.

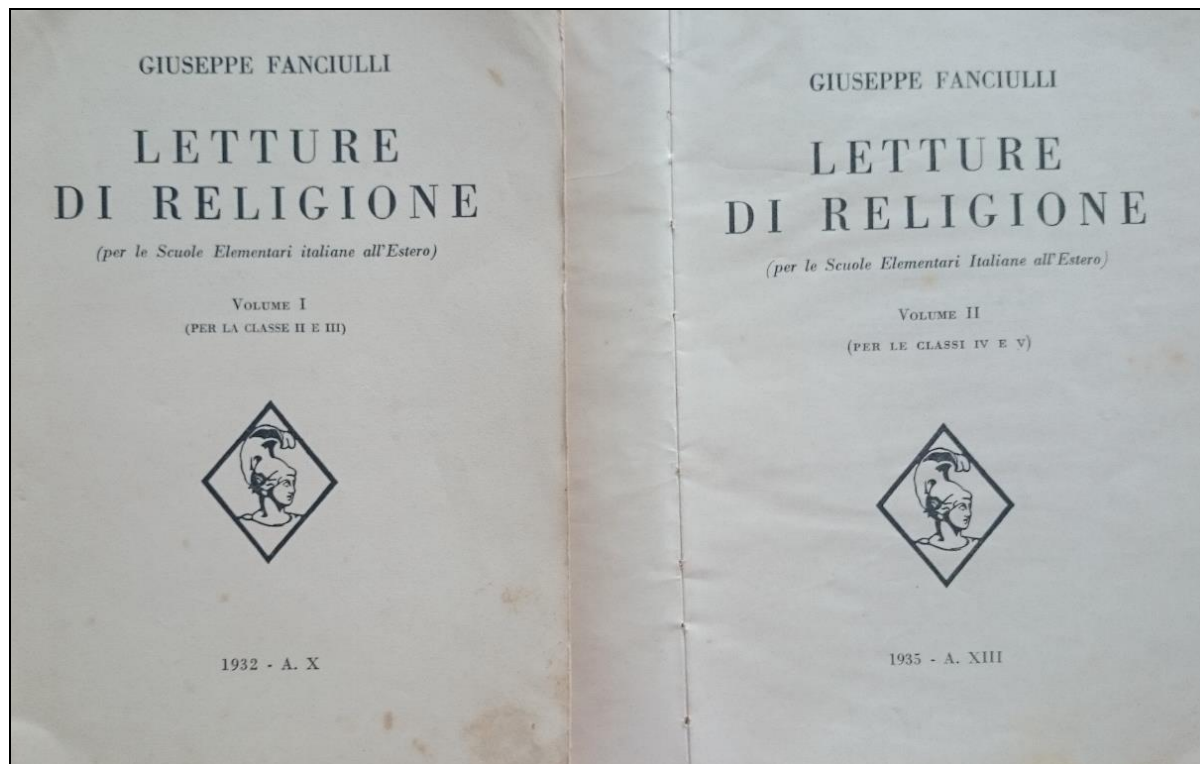
Figure 5 – Covers of the books *Lecture di Religione*



Source: personal collection of the author of this study.

The covers are the same. The two works of *Letture di Religione* had full pages illustrated by Beryl Tumiati¹². The inside covers are likewise the same, changing only the identification of the volumes and the grades to which they were directed, as can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6 – Inside cover of the books *Letture di Religione*

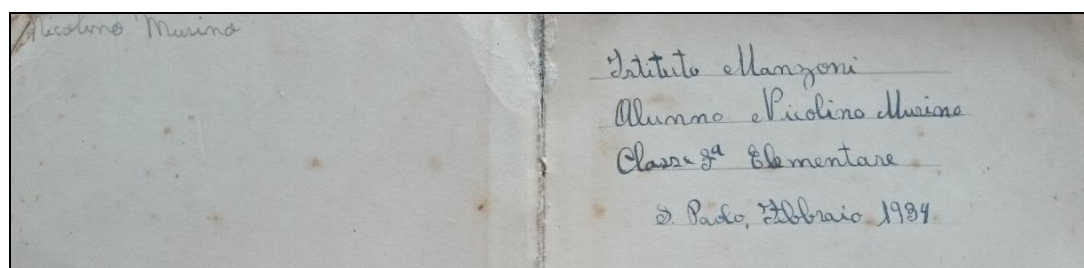


Source: Personal collection of the author of this study.

Note that the depiction on the inside cover of both books represents the helmets used by Roman centurions. The recurring argument is that the fascist “new Italy” is the resumption of the great Roman Empire, of which all Italians are heirs.

Of the books analyzed, the first, directed to the 2nd and 3rd grade, belonged to Nicolino Murino, a student of the Instituto Manzoni of São Paulo, as shown in Figure 7. There is no signature in the second volume directed to the 4th and 5th grade.

Figure 7 – Inner signature – *Letture di Religione*



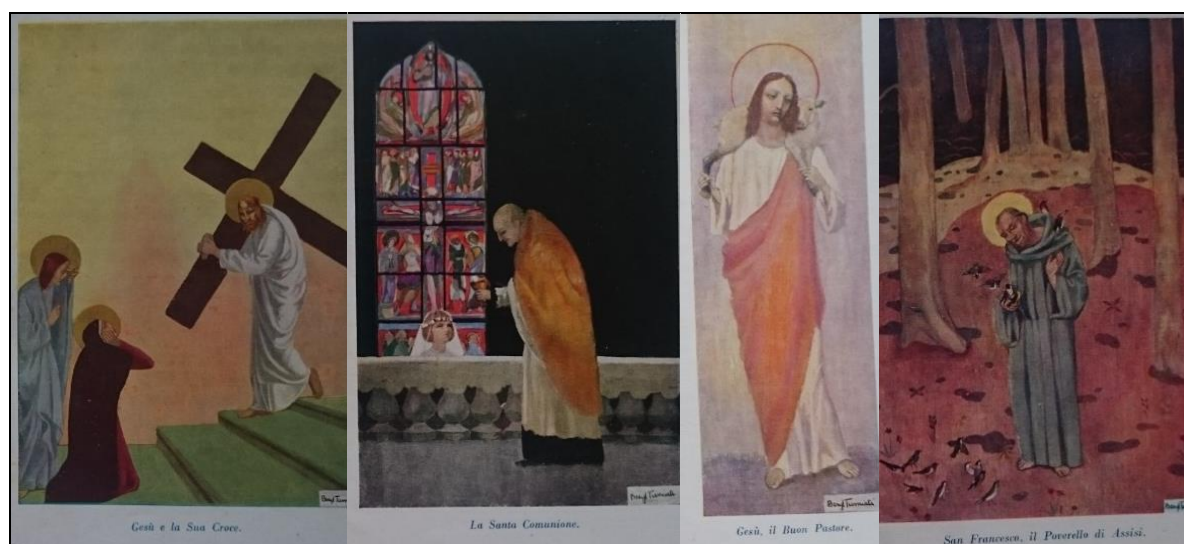
Source: Personal collection of the author of this study.

¹² More information on this illustrator was not found, only that he illustrated other works of Fanciulli – *Creature* (1918) and *I Grandi Navigatori Italiani* (1931). He also participated in the Mostra Sarda from May to June 1917 in benefit of the Sardinian orphans, together with other important Italian illustrators of the early 1900s.

Analysis of the material aspects of the books shows a significant change in regard to the paper, the illustrations, and the use of colors of Italian textbooks produced in the 1920s and 1930s compared to the books sent by the government to the Italian schools at the end of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century. Superior quality paper, use of colors, and beautiful illustrations (more frequently present and in bold graphics for the time), a result of high investment, can be seen in the books. As stated by Galfré (2005, p. 27) “[...] the purpose of the government – according to official communication – is to give the book not only Fascist raiment, but also the Fascist soul”. The books bore an educational proposal linked to the fascist ideology that did not fail to consider and construct the relationship between country (fascist), moral conduct, religion, and family.

Volume I of the book *Lecture di Religione* has 111 pages. Of these, 40 are directed to the second grade and 52 pages to the third grade. The second grade part works with themes related to creation of the world, the Ten Commandments, the sacraments, prayers such as the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, and Creed, some poems, parables told from the Bible, and simple questions along with responses. Illustrations occupy full pages and are more frequent. Short poems and songs are present. In a similar fashion, the part directed to the third grade begins by explaining who God is, who the angels are, moments from Jesus’ life, his childhood, youth, and adult age, highlighting the miracles, his attention to children, and his death and resurrection. Among the diverse illustrations by Beryl Tumiatì, many of a full page in color, are the ones represented in the figure that follows.

Figure 8 – Illustrations by Beryl Tumiatì



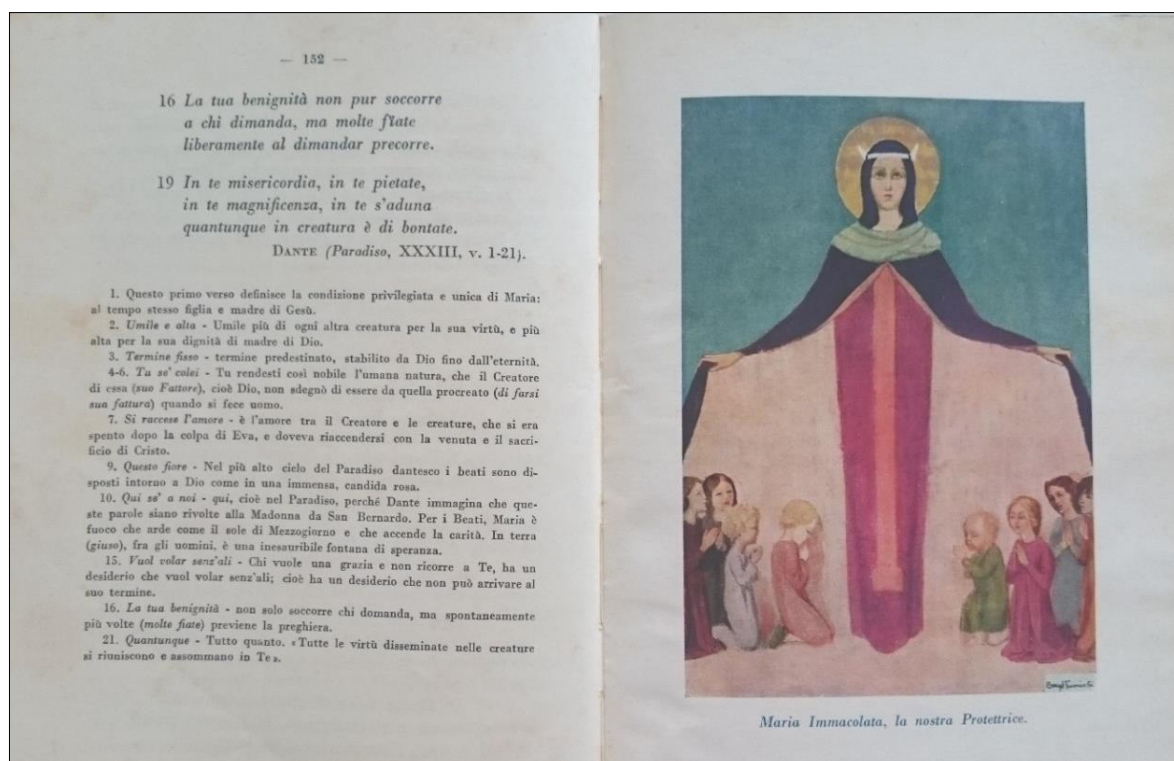
Source: Personal collection of the author of this study.

The themes are taken up in brief texts, with short, direct sentences. There are short poems and questions followed by answers, like that exhibited in the *Catechismo della Dottrina Cristiana*. As shown already in the beginning pages of both volumes written by Fanciulli, “the questions and answers in bold and cursive print at the end of some chapters are given in the *Catechismo della Dottrina Cristiana*, published by order of His Holiness Pope Pius X” (FANCIULLI, 1932, p. 8).

Volume II of the book *Lecture di Religione* has 159 pages, 42 of which are directed to the fourth grade and 98 to the fifth grade. In this volume, the amount of text is greater, and even the size of the font used is reduced. Another difference from the previous volume is that now small passages from Italian authors are inserted. For example, from page 17 to 18, we have the poem “God sees and knows all”, from the Italian historian Cesare Cantù. Other Italians such as Alessandro Manzoni, Contardo Ferrini, Saint Augustine, and Dante Alighieri have small passages or poems transcribed.

In regard to content, in the fourth grade are the morning and evening prayers, the Ten Commandments, Bible stories, and texts for First Communion. The fifth grade begins with the study of the liturgy and Mass rituals. After that, the sacraments of Baptism, the Eucharist, Confirmation, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction are highlighted. Finally, biographies of the “great Italian saints” are presented, including Saint Benedict, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Saint Catharine of Siena, Saint Clara, and many others, such as Saint Aloysius Gonzaga (the patron saint of young students), Dom Bosco, and Saint Charles Borromeo. To finish his book, Fanciulli presents “A Madonna” – Immaculate Mary. The text begins by presenting the miracle, also referring to Italy, of “Nostra Signora di Gonare” of Sardinia, who saved the crew and the prince from a storm. Fanciulli wrote “Mary helped the sailors, and all of us are sailors on the sea of life; both coming and going on this journey, we find pleasant days of abundance and others of great torment and difficulty” (1934, p. 149). He urged all to plead and to thank, in good times and bad, so as to rely on the intercession of Mary. A small passage from the *Divine Comedy*, along with the interpretation of Fanciulli, and of the illustration shown in the following figure conclude this part.

Figure 9 – Image of Immaculate Mary – The Madonna

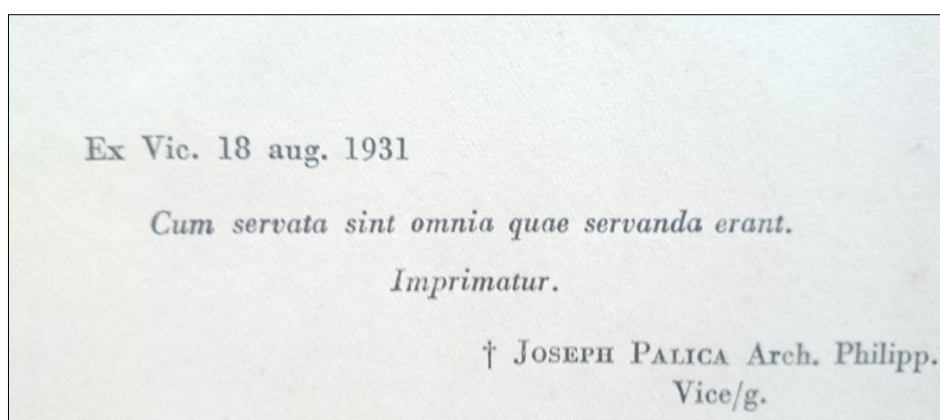


Source: personal collection of the author of this study.

Thus, *Letture di Religione* presents pages filled with religious orientation, stories, and other texts that highlight respect for authority, the central role of work, and preservation of the family and of traditions. Lessons on morality and on which actions were desirable often appear: “Many men are good: they pray to God, love justice, perform charity, and prepare themselves to one day receive their eternal reward” (FANCIULLI, 1932, p. 54). This award “is called Paradise and punishment is Hell” (FANCIULLI, 1932, p. 30). Thus, children and youth were instructed to assume a posture of faith, professing moral values, praying, and “avoiding all temptations” (idem, p. 104).

It is noteworthy that both volumes contain the “imprimatur”, granted in August 1931 by Archbishop Joseph Palica¹³ (1869 – 1936). “*Cum servata sint omnia quae servanda erant*” (FANCIULLI, 1932, p. 111), i.e., observing all things that should be observed. Record of this was maintained in production of the book and is shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10 – License for printing the books *Letture di Religione*



Source: personal collection of the author of this study.

The publication of Giuseppe Fanciulli, *Letture di Religione*, was doubled approved – by the Fascist State and by the Catholic Church – to be sent to Italian schools abroad. Finally, it is noteworthy that the books were printed in the A. Mondadori printing company in Verona, just as so many other works published by the Fascist Italian State (see more in Galfré, 2005). Charnitzky (1996) states that a general feature of the texts was “continuous politicization of the themes, through interweaving of religious and political content, culminating in the representation of Mussolini, also disseminated in numerous non-scholastic publications, as sent by God to save Italy” (CHARNITZKY, 1996, p. 406). In the case of Fanciulli’s books analyzed here, manners of being and acting are propagated not only by biblical passages and prayers, but also by a selection of texts from names important for the history of Italy who wrote about this connection between country and Catholicism. The stories of the lives of the saints presented are also not at all at random, but exemplary. They are connected with this nationalist perspective of constitution of the “new” Italian, respecting hierarchies and cultivating values and responsibilities.

¹³ Joseph Palica or Giuseppe Palica was born on October 8, 1869 in Rome. On December 18, 1892, he was ordained a priest in Rome, and there remained. On April 25, 1917, he was named titular Archbishop of the Greek city of Philippi. He died at 67 years of age, on December 16, 1936. See: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bpalica.html>; accessed on 7 Feb. 2016.

Final considerations

“Paradise is the award of the Christian life” (Fanciulli, 1935, p. 153) and “as the most beautiful award”, it may only be obtained by those who are faithful, devoted to the good of their family and their neighbor, “ready to serve their country with all their might”, enthused by the beauty of nature and of art, and obedient to their duties. They are able to resist temptations and follow instituted norms. A Christian who lived out “these rules would be the best child, the best brother, the best soldier, the best citizen” (Fanciulli, 1935, p. 154). This was what was expected of an Italian abroad – with a dual devotion to Catholicism and to fascism. However, appropriation of the content of books may have been diverse, as Chartier alerts in affirming that “[...] each reader, based on his/her own references, individual and social, historical or existential, provides a more or less unique sense, that is more or less shared, to the texts that are appropriated” (CHARTIER, 2009, p. 20).

The works analyzed were distributed in Brazil by consulates and consular agents. They were used in the ethnic schools for a short interval of time, since most of these schools were closed in 1938. Nevertheless, that does not mean they were put aside. Through the themes they worked with, they remained in families and were read by children and youth under the guidance of parents, and even some priests. The complexity of the dynamics and historical processes experienced at that time between Italy and Brazil cannot be fully explored in one article. Yet, the books examined allow recognition that they are part of a literate childhood culture that seeks to (con)form identity processes of “Italians abroad”, ordaining a view of the world, a place in the social fabric, and manners of behavior and of being and becoming in the world.

Furthermore, the author of the works, as Montino (2009) indicates, produces his own reading of that historical time in the relation between faith and nationalism. Montino wrote of “Fanciulli’s faith, a faith that is not conventional but a profound choice of life, since one cannot diminish the spirituality of a good man”, because living at that historical time, Fanciulli interpreted “a certain type of Catholicism [...] that was national and also nationalist [...] that does not fear war as an instrument of patriotic affirmation and of transmission of civility” (MONTINO, 2009, p. 212).

Understanding the knowledge produced and disseminated by the use of didactic material linked to the fascist ideal and to the Italian governmental policies directed to supplying specific materials to Italian schools abroad, together with the question of the uses and symbolic sense that these objects acquired in the sphere of the school, is a relevant theme for the History of Education. The presence of teachers sent by the Italian government, the sending of school material, especially textbooks, and the propagation of fascist speech in the environment of ethnic schools was a reality. Nevertheless, ensuing reactions were not exclusively of the Brazilian government from measures of nationalization of education in the 1930s. In the Italian-Brazilian communities themselves, compatibility with Il Duce and the fascist regime was not uniform.

The aim of this article was to contribute to understanding the multiplicity of Brazilian schooling processes, considering their ethnic and cultural diversity through analysis of two religious teaching manuals produced and sent by the Italian government to Italian ethnic schools in Brazil.

REFERÊNCIAS

- ASCENZI, A.; SANI, R. *Il libro per la scuola tra idealismo e fascismo*. Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2005.
- BEMPORAD, Editora. *Edizioni per la Gioventù*. Catalogo da R. Bemporad. Florença: R. Bemporad, 1935.
- BERTONHA, J. F. *O fascismo e os imigrantes italianos no Brasil*. Porto Alegre: EDIPUCRS, 2001.
- CANNISTARO, P.V. e ROSOLI, G.. *Emigrazione, Chiesa e Fascismo*. Lo scioglimento dell'Opera Bonomelli (1922 – 1928). Roma: Edizioni Studium, 1979. <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/86.1.170>
- CHARNITZKY, J. *Fascismo e Scuola*. La política scolastica del Regime (1922 – 1943). Florença: La Nuova Italia, 1996.
- CHARTIER, R. Prefácio. In: CHARTIER, R. (org.). *Práticas da leitura*. 4ª ed. São Paulo: Estação Liberdade, 2009b, p. 20.
- CORREIO PAULISTANO. Diretor geral Flaminio Ferreira e gerente Edgard Nobre de Campos. Edição de 24/12/1927, p. 16.
- CORREIO PAULISTANO, dirigido por Abner Mourão e com gerência geral de Edgar Nobre de Campos. Publicado na quarta-feira, 08/01/1930, p. 07.
- CORREIO PAULISTANO, órgão do Partido Republicano Paulista. Redator-chefe José Carlos Pereira de Sousa, superintendente Antonio Hermann Dias Menezes. Ano LXXXII. Edição de 08/08/1936, nº 24.661, p.04.
- CORREIO PAULISTANO, órgão do Partido Republicano Paulista. Redator-chefe José Carlos Pereira de Sousa, superintendente Antonio Hermann Dias Menezes. Ano LXXXII. Edição de 24/12/1936, nº 24.779, p.12.
- CORREIO PAULISTANO, órgão do Partido Republicano Paulista. Redator-chefe José Carlos Pereira de Sousa, superintendente Antonio Hermann Dias Menezes. Ano LXXXIII. Edição de 01/01/1937, nº 24.785, p. 17.
- FANCIULLI, G.. *Lecture di religione*. Classe II e III (per le Scuole Elementari Italiane all'Estero). Vol I. Verona: A. Mondadori, 1932.
- FANCIULLI, G.. *Lecture di religione*. Classe IV e V (per le Scuole Elementari Italiane all'Estero). Vol II. Verona: A. Mondadori, 1935.
- FANCIULLI, G. *Glorie d'Italia: libro per la gioventu italiana sotto ogni cielo*. Prefazione di Piero Parini. Turim: Societa Editrice Internazionale, 1929.
- FANCIULLI, G. *Fedeltà: romanzo per i ragazzi*. Turim: G. B. Paravia & C., 1942.
- FANCIULLI, G. *I nostri ragazzi*. Milano: U. Hoepli, 1937.
- GALFRÉ, M.. *Il regime degli editori: libri, scuola e fascismo*. Roma – Bari, Italia: Laterza, 2005.

GAUDIO, A.. *Scuola, Chiesa e Fascismo*. La scuola cattolica in Italia durante il fascismo (1922 – 1943). Brescia: La Scuola, 1995. <https://doi.org/10.5944/hme.7.2018.19389>

GIANCANE, D.. *Giuseppe Franciulli maestro della letteratura per l'infanzia*. Una monografia. Bari: Levante Editori, 1994.

GIRON, L.S.. *As sombras do Littorio*. O fascismo no Rio Grande do Sul. Porto Alegre: Parlenda editora, 1994. <https://doi.org/10.15448/1980-864x.1994.1.29095>

JORNAL A GAZETA. Dirigido por Pedro da Motta Lima. Ano XXV. Edição de quarta-feira, 03/12/1930, nº 7.446, p.12.

JORNAL LA STAFFETTA RIOGRANDENSE – settimanale cattolico della colonia. Editado em Garibaldi/RS.

LUCHESE, T. Â.. *O processo escolar entre imigrantes no Rio Grande do Sul*. Caxias do Sul: EDUCS, 2015.

LUCHESE, T. Â. (org.). *História da Escola para imigrantes italianos e descendentes em terras brasileiras*. Caxias do Sul: EDUCS, 2014.

LUCHESE T. Â. Em busca da escola pública: tensionamentos, iniciativas e processo de escolarização na Região Colonial Italiana, Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. In: *Cadernos de História da Educação*. V. 11, nº 2, jul/dez. 2012, p. 667 – 679. Disponível em: <http://www.seer.ufu.br/index.php/che/article/view/21718/11927> acesso em 08/02/16. <https://doi.org/10.15448/1984-4301.2017.1.25075>

MINISTERO DEGLI AFFARI ESTERI. *Annuario delle scuole italiane all'estero: governative e sussidiate*. Roma: Tipografia del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 1908. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2608335>

MONTINO, D. *Le tre Italie di Giuseppe Faciulli*. Educazione e letteratura infantile nel primo Novecento. Torino, Italia: SEI Frontiere, 2009.

PARLAGRECO. C. Le Scuole Italiane. In: Fanfulla.. *Il Brasile e gli italiani*. Firenze: R. Bemporad & Figlio, 1906, p. 796 – 810.

SALE, G. *La Chiesa di Mussolini*. I rapporti tra fascismo e religione. Milano: Rizzoli, 2011.

SALVETTI, P. Le scuole italiane all'estero. In: Bevilacqua Piero; De Clementi, Andreina e Franzina, Emilio (orgs.). *Storia Dell'Emigrazione Italiana*. II Arrivi. Roma, Italia: Donzelli Editore, 2009. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1353294400014149>

SANI, R. *'La Civiltà Cattolica' e la politica italiana nel secondo dopoguerra (1945 – 1958)*. Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2004.

TRENTO, A. *Do outro lado do Atlântico: um século de imigração italiana no Brasil*. São Paulo: Nobel, 1989.

VALDUGA, G.. *Paz, Itália, Jesus*. Uma identidade para imigrantes italianos e seus descendentes: o papel do jornal Correio Riograndense (1930 – 1945). 205fl. Porto Alegre: PUC/RS, 2007. (Dissertação em História).