

## CATHOLIC ENLIGHTENMENT FOR CHILDREN. TEACHING RELIGION TO CHILDREN IN THE HABSBURG EMPIRE FROM JOSEPH II TO THE RESTORATION

*Ilustración católica para niños. La enseñanza de la religión a los niños en el Imperio de los Habsburgo de José II a la Restauración*

Simonetta Polenghi\*

Fecha de recepción: 21/11/2015 • Fecha de aceptación: 09/02/2016

**Abstract.** *During Joseph II's reign a deep cultural shift took place within the intellectual and religious establishment, with the acceptance of philosophical and pedagogical ideas that bore a distinctive Enlightenment and Protestant stamp.*

*This cultural shift was applied to the teaching of religion by some relevant figures of the episcopal and pedagogical elites (J. A. Gall, F.M. Vierthaler, F. de Paula Gaheis, J. M. Leonhard). New handbooks and textbooks of the catechism were written which introduced new dialogic methods, more narrative, and borrowed Rochow's typology of moral short stories. The content of Bishop Gall's books was heavily rationalistic, whereas subsequent texts tried to balance reason and faith. Vierthaler, Gaheis, and Leonhard used a language that was more suitable for children and closer to the New Testament, with the use of parables and short stories. The so-called Socratic method was used in different ways by these authors.*

*In the age of the Restoration, in spite of the process of school confessionalization, the heritage of the spirit of Enlightenment was still present, since by law the pedagogy taught in the Empire's academic chairs and teacher training courses was the one defined by Milde, which bore a Kantian imprint, and stressed the importance of developing inner moral law in pupils. Leonhard was a follower of Milde, and his catechism, eventually approved for elementary schools for decades, bore this stamp.*

*So at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries a new way of teaching religion was introduced, debated and contested in*

---

\* Department of Education. Faculty of Educational Sciences. Catholic University of the Sacred Heart. Largo Gemelli, 1, 20123 Milano. Italy. [simonetta.polenghi@unicatt.it](mailto:simonetta.polenghi@unicatt.it)

*Habsburg Catholic territories. Rousseau's and Salzmann's theories were discussed; rationalism and faith, natural religion and revelation were confronted. In the end more attention was devoted to child psychology and language. The cultural fracture caused by Josephinism became less severe: orthodoxy was restored, but new pedagogical ideas actually entered the teaching of religion.*

**Keywords:** *History of education. History of religious education. Habsburg Empire. Enlightenment. Restoration.*

**Resumen.** Durante el reinado de José II un profundo cambio cultural tuvo lugar entre los grupos dominantes en los campos intelectual y religioso con la aceptación de ideas filosóficas y pedagógicas que llevaban un distintivo sello ilustrado y protestante.

Este cambio cultural fue aplicado a la enseñanza de la religión por algunas figuras relevantes de las élites episcopales y pedagógicas (J. A. Gall, F. M. Vierthaler, F. de Paula Gaheis, J. M. Leonhard). Se escribieron nuevos manuales y libros de texto del catecismo que introducían nuevos métodos dialógicos, mayor narrativa y que tomaban prestada la tipología de los cuentos morales de Rochow. El contenido de los libros del obispo Gall era fuertemente racionalista, mientras que los textos posteriores intentaban equilibrar razón y fe. Vierthaler, Gaheis, y Leonhard usaron un lenguaje más apropiado para los niños y más cercano al Nuevo Testamento, con el uso de parábolas y cuentos. El denominado método socrático fue usado de diferentes maneras por estos autores.

En la época de la Restauración, a pesar del proceso de confesionalización de la escuela, la herencia del espíritu de la Ilustración permaneció presente, pues por ley la pedagogía que se enseñaba en las cátedras académicas y en los cursos de formación del magisterio del Imperio fue la definida por Milde, que tenía una impronta kantiana y que subrayaba la importancia de desarrollar la ley moral interna en los alumnos. Leonhard fue un seguidor de Milde y su catecismo, aprobado para las escuelas elementales durante décadas, llevaba su sello.

Así, a finales del siglo XVIII y a principios del XIX una nueva manera de enseñar la religión fue introducida, debatida y contestada en los territorios católicos de los Habsburgo. Se discutieron las teorías de Rousseau y Salzmann; se confrontaron el racionalismo y la fe, la religión natural y la revelación. Al final se prestó más atención a la psicología y al lenguaje del niño. La fractura cultural provocada por el josefinismo se hizo menos severa: se restauró la ortodoxia, pero nuevas ideas pedagógicas penetraron de hecho en la enseñanza de la religión.

**Palabras clave:** Historia de la educación. Historia de la educación religiosa. Imperio de los Habsburgo. Ilustración. Restauración.

## INTRODUCTION

In the age of the Enlightenment, Catholicism came under strong attack from philosophical and pedagogical ideas. In the Austria of Maria Theresa, anti-Jesuit feelings were widespread among intellectuals, while rationalistic and naturalistic theories from France and from Germany gained ground. But it was during Joseph's reign (1780-90) that a deeper cultural shift took place in a key part of the intellectual and religious establishment, when the *katholische Aufklärung*, already in evidence since Charles VI's reign, rapidly developed with the Emperor's ecclesiastical policy. The *katholische Aufklärung*, which came from Ludovico Antonio's idea of a «regulated devotion», and from Febronian and Jansenist theology, led to the acceptance of philosophical and pedagogical ideas that bore a clear Enlightenment and Protestant stamp.<sup>1</sup> Already several of Maria Theresa's advisers were Protestant converts or had studied in Protestant Universities. Insistence on rationalism, on individual freedom, on the natural foundations of religion, on the priority of ethics over dogmatics led to the recognition of religious tolerance (*Toleranzpatent* 1781), but also to the intrusion of the State into the Church's affairs.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See at least Eleonore Zlabinger, *Ludovico Antonio Muratori und Österreich* (Innsbruck: Universität-Osterr. Kommissionsbuchhandlung, 1970) and Gerald Grimm, «Die pädagogischen und bildungspolitischen Konklusionen von Ludovico Antonio Muratoris Konzeption eines "cattolicesimo illuminato" und deren Bedeutung für die österreichischen Schulreformen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung», in *Religion und Erziehung in Aufklärungsphilosophie und Aufklärungszeit*, eds. Fritz-Peter Hager, Dieter Jedan (Bochum: D. Winkler, 1995), 15-29.

<sup>2</sup> Ferdinand Maaß, *Der Josephinismus* (Wien: Herold, 1951-1957, voll. I-V); Josef Wodka, *Kirche in Österreich. Wegweiser durch ihre Geschichte* (Wien: Herder, 1959), 298-311; Eduard Winter, *Der Josefismus. Die Geschichte des österreichischen Reform-Katholizismus 1740-1848* (Berlin: Rütten & Löning, 1962); Peter Hersche, *Der Spätjansenismus in Österreich* (Wien: Verl. der Österr. Akad. der Wiss., 1977); Elisabeth Kovács (ed.), *Katholische Aufklärung und Josephinismus* (Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1979); Hans Klüeting (ed.), *Katholische Aufklärung – Aufklärung im katholischen Deutschland* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1993); Helmut Reinalter (ed.), *Josephinismus als aufgeklärter Absolutismus* (Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau, 2008); Timothy C. W. Blanning, *Joseph II and enlightened despotism* (London: Longman Group, 1970); Timothy C. W. Blanning, *Joseph II* (London, New York: Longman, 1995); Helmut Reinalter, «Josephinismus als aufgeklärter Absolutismus – ein Forschungsproblem? Gesellschaftlicher Strukturwandel und thesianisch-josephinische Reformen», in *Josephinismus – ein Bilanz/Échecs et réussites du Joséphisme*, eds. Wolfgang Schmale, Renate Zedinger, Jean Mondot (Bochum: Winkler, 2008), 19-33; Jeffrey D. Burson, Ulrich L. Lehner (eds), *Enlightenment and Catholicism in Europe: A Transnational History* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014); Harm Klüeting, «The Catholic Enlightenment in Austria or the Habsburg Lands», in *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe*, ed. Ulrich L. Lehner and Michael Printy (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010), 127-164; Rainer Bendel, Norbert Spannenberger (eds), *Katholische Aufklärung und Josephinismus. Rezeptionsformen in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa* (Köln u.a.: Böhlau, 2015).

Joseph wanted to reform the Church, but he did so as a lay monarch. He banned the papal bulls *Unigenitus*, which condemned Jansenism, and *In coena Domini*, which asserted the pope's right to depose lay rulers; he also suppressed contemplative orders, monasteries and religious brotherhoods, founded new dioceses and parishes; dismantled baroque piety, changed the liturgy, forbade burials within churches and prescribed funeral rules which were meant to be economic and hygienic, but which removed all signs of piety (the corpse had to be sewn in a linen sack, put in a wooden coffin, transported during the night, with no mourner accompanying, to cemeteries well beyond the suburbs of cities, and thrown into mass graves, without the coffin, which then had to be re-used). Many of these rules aroused so much discontent, that his successor Leopold II (1790-92) had to suspend them (Joseph himself was forced to permit single-use coffins again in 1785, for fear of a popular uprising, as well as having to soften some regulations about traditional forms of piety).<sup>3</sup> Whereas the movement to «reform Catholicism» had started long before Joseph, with Joseph's ecclesiastical policy the lines between Catholic reform and heresy seemed to the Church establishment to become more blurred. Already by 1781, a year after Maria Theresa's death, there was talk of the Emperor's possible excommunication. The fear of a schism prompted Pius VI to take the dramatic decision to travel to Vienna. Nonetheless, if the papal visit in 1782 aroused the people's enthusiasm, it did little to alter Joseph's views.<sup>4</sup>

A key element of his reform was the creation of general seminaries for the education of the clergy, run by the State. His brother Leopold closed these down, re-opening episcopal ones.<sup>5</sup> However, seminarians had to attend lessons in pedagogy and catechetics at a *Normalschule* or *Hauptschule* and the majority of seminarians still studied theology at the University of Vienna, where the professors were Josephinists. They reduced Catholic religion to ethics (*Sittenlehre*), and minimized the transcendent dimension, highlighting the pedagogical aspect of

<sup>3</sup> Peter Šoltés, «Eingriffe des Josephinismus in religiöse Festivitäten der katholischen Kirche», in *Katholische Aufklärung und Josephinismus*, eds. Bendel, Spannenger, 181.

<sup>4</sup> Derek Beales, *Joseph II. Against the World, 1780-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 215-237, 315-332.

<sup>5</sup> Winter, *Der Josefismus*, 134-162.

pastoral and catechetics teaching<sup>6</sup>. As Grand Duke of Tuscany, Leopold himself had backed the Febronian attempt of reform against papal supremacy.<sup>7</sup> Febronian and Jansenist ideas were still present at the turn of the century.

With regard to school policy, Joseph dismissed Ignaz Felbiger, architect of the school reform of 1774, which had prescribed compulsory schooling for both boys and girls aged 6-12 and had introduced the Normal method of teaching, which Felbiger had taken from Berlin's pietists Hecker and Hähn. Whereas the traditional way of teaching in elementary schools was individual, the Normal method was whole class instruction, with the teacher explaining or reading to the entire class at the same time. Tools like the blackboard and new books were necessary, as well as the precondition that pupils had the same level of knowledge. A strong emphasis was put on a rational way of teaching and on a mnemonic device to remember faiths' contents, grammar and moral rules (*Tabellar- und Literal Methode*). Felbiger applied the Normal method to the teaching of religion, too.<sup>8</sup>

Catechism was taught in elementary schools, where most teachers were priests. During Maria Theresa's reign, Enlightenment ideas had already started to enter into catechisms: in Austria and Bohemia the most widespread until 1777 was the *Katechismus für drei Schulen* (1750) by the Jesuit Ignaz Parhamer, who had already stressed the importance

<sup>6</sup> Helmut Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens, Erziehung und Unterricht auf dem Boden Österreichs* (Wien: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1982-1988, voll. 6), III, 188; William D. Bowman, *Priest and Parish in Vienna. 1780 to 1880* (Boston: Humanity Press, 1999), 104.

<sup>7</sup> Filippo Sani, *Collegi, seminari e conservatori nella Toscana di Pietro Leopoldo. Tra progetto pedagogico e governo della società* (Brescia: La Scuola, 2001); see also Carlo Fantappiè, «Giurisdizionalismo e politica scolastica nel Settecento: la soppressione della Compagnia di Gesù in Toscana», in *Studi in memoria di Italo Mancini*, ed. Gustavo Pansini (Napoli: ESI, 1999), 207-237.

<sup>8</sup> Ulrich Krömer, *Johann Ignaz von Felbiger. Leben und Werk* (Freiburg: Herder, 1966); Josef Stanzel, *Die Schulaufsicht im Reformwerk des Johann Ignaz von Felbiger (1724-1788): Schule, Kirche und Staat in Recht und Praxis des aufgeklärten Absolutismus* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1976); particularly on the teaching of religion: Winfried Romberg, *Johann Ignaz von Felbiger und Kardinal Johann Heinrich von Franckenberg. Wege der religiösen Reform im 18. Jahrhundert* (Sigmarinen: Jan Thorbecke, 1999). James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the eighteenth-century origins of compulsory schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 91-105, 200-240. On Pietistic influence see also Werner Simon, «Benedikt Strauch (1724-1803) – Reform der Schule und Reform der Katechese in Schlesien in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts», in *Katholische Aufklärung und Josephinismus*, eds. Bendel, Spannenberger, 267-295.

of actually understanding the texts and not just memorising them.<sup>9</sup> The abbot Felbiger, who had already written the new school books, wrote a catechism, which met with opposition from Cardinal Christoph Anton Migazzi, archbishop of Vienna, who criticized his encouragement to read directly from the Bible as well as his usage of the Lutheran version of the Psalms. Thousands of people in the Monarchy were closet Protestants (*Geheimprotestant*), who pretended to be Catholic, especially in Bohemia, Moravia, Carinthia, Styria but also in Austria. They were suspected of disloyalty, Maria Theresa having fought two wars against Protestant Prussia. Traditionally, Catholicism was one of the main unifying bonds of the Habsburg Monarchy, so in spite of the acceptance of a more tolerant religious attitude, Maria Theresa did not share Joseph's more open views.<sup>10</sup>

Already accused of Protestantism for his school reform, Felbiger had to defend himself. He had modelled his catechism on Fleury's one, with increasing levels of difficulty. His catechism was rejected by the Roman Inquisition.<sup>11</sup> Maria Theresa, who always backed Felbiger, then personally chaired a commission, in which both Migazzi and Felbiger sat, which rapidly produced the *Einheitskatechismus* (Standard catechism), to be used in all schools and from 1781 throughout the entire Monarchy.<sup>12</sup>

The issue was singularly relevant and involved pedagogical aspects and teaching methods as well as philosophical ideas. Various catechisms were used for religious instruction in the churches of the Habsburg dioceses, however, the same school catechism had to be used everywhere.<sup>13</sup> The purpose of this article is neither to go through the school catechisms

<sup>9</sup> Johannes Hofinger, *Geschichte des Katechismus in Österreich von Canisius bis zur Gegenwart* (Innsbruck, Leipzig: F. Rauch, 1937), 16-18, 21; Simonetta Polenghi, «"Militia est vita hominis". "Die militärische" Erziehung des Jesuitenpaters Ignaz Parhamer im Zeitalter Maria Theresias», *History of Education & Children's Literature*, 4 (1), (2009), 43-45.

<sup>10</sup> Blanning, *Joseph II*, 34; Charles H. O'Brien, «Ideas of Religious Toleration at the Time of Joseph II. A Study of the Enlightenment among Catholics in Austria», in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 59 (7), 1(1969), 12-29.

<sup>11</sup> Hofinger, *Geschichte des Katechismus*, 65-98.

<sup>12</sup> Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the eighteenth-century origins*, 222-224.

<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless there were differences also in school catechisms. When in 1786 Vienna imposed the school catechism in Lombardy, the Lombard bishops criticized and revised them. Eventually Kaunitz accepted these versions, considering them defective, but infinitively better than Bellarmino's catechism. Paola Vismara Chiappa, «*Il buon Cristiano*». *Dibattiti e contese sul catechismo nella Lombardia di fine Settecento* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1984), 103-110.



nor to examine them from a theological point of view. The aim of this paper is to present how this question was addressed and to what extent new pedagogical ideas were accepted in the texts and handbooks for catechists, and/or were imposed as compulsory texts for future school catechists. Written by priests and educationalists, these texts had a profound impact on the Empire and were recognized as prominent at the time, as well as in the historiography. Analysing this should allow us to check if and how, after decades of debate, the Enlightenment ideas (particularly the pedagogical ones) were present in the manuals about the teaching of religion in the Restoration age in the Habsburg Empire, when centralization of school manuals and textbooks became completely effective.

## THE SOCRATIC METHOD

Socrates was a key figure in the Enlightenment: his logical criticism, his irony, his reasoning in religious matters, his moral rectitude and his death all made him a «lay Christ», a «pagan Saint», a master of virtue, the symbol of the man who was able to think in an autonomous way. Christian F. Gellert was called the «European Socrates». Johann Christoph Gottsched compared Christian Wolff to Socrates for the hostility he had to face in the religious domain.<sup>14</sup> Philanthropists like Ernst Christian Trapp, Johann Bernhard Basedow, Friedrich Eberhard von Rochow, Joachim August Campe, Johann Stuve and Augustin Hermann Niemeyer used rationalistic catechetics, named «Socratic didactics». In 1780 the Philanthropist Christian Gotthilf Salzmann published a successful book on how to teach religion to children where he presented the Socratic dialogue as the correct way to do this.<sup>15</sup> Socratic didactics stressed the use of reason over memory and hence opposed not only traditional teaching, but also the «Normal method».<sup>16</sup> The Philanthropists rejected

<sup>14</sup> Benno Böhm, *Sokrates im achtzehnten Jahrhundert. Studien zum Wendegange des modernen Persönlichkeitsbewußtseins* (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz Verlag, 1966, 1.° ed. Leipzig 1929), considers Socratism in philosophy, not in pedagogy.

<sup>15</sup> Christian Gotthilf Salzmann, *Über die wirksamsten Mittel, Kinder die Religion beyzubringen* (Leipzig: Crusius, 1780). This book had many subsequent editions, initially in 1780, then 1787, 1789, 1806, 1809.

<sup>16</sup> See Martin Schian, *Die Sokratik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Religionsunterrichts* (Breslau: Dulfer, 1900). Above all see Patrick Bühler, *Negative Pädagogik: Sokrates und die Geschichte des Lernens* (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2012).

the Socratic method *sokratisieren* in favour of the *katechisieren*, defining the first as a method that goes from simple and unknown to complex concepts. The word *Mäeutik* (Maieutics) was introduced into the German language in the second half of the eighteenth century, as a Greek word. By Maieutics, the Philanthropists and the philosophers of the Enlightenment such as Kant or Lessing meant the positive aspect of Socratism: they did not aim to develop the negative, critical, sceptical irony of Socrates, which could lead to radical doubt. Instead their aim was to teach how to put questions properly, in order to make pupils reflect, using their own intellect. Catechetics became synonymous with *Sokratik* and *Erotematik* (the art of putting questions).<sup>17</sup>

In Joseph's decade, Felbiger's «Normal Method» was replaced by the Socratic pedagogy, throughout Austria, Salzburg and Bavaria. The *Tabellar- und Literal Methode* was dropped. The influence of the German pedagogy of Philanthropism grew. Both school textbooks and children and juvenile's literature bore the stamp of Enlightenment culture, where ethics was separated from religion.<sup>18</sup>

The Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Migazzi, opposed this tendency in vain. He had once been an advocate of the *katholische Aufklärung*, but then turned completely against it, when he saw how Joseph's policy was abandoning Rome. In 1789 Joseph II ignored Migazzi's protests against Campe's and Salzmann's books, refusing to censor them, as did Leopold II a year later.<sup>19</sup> Under Joseph, the catalogue of prohibited books was reduced from 5,000 to 900.<sup>20</sup>

Enlightened Catholics and Febronian bishops, who supported religious reform, were inclined to see some good in Protestantism.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Bühler, *Negative Pädagogik*, 27, 32, 42-53, 95-133.

<sup>18</sup> Ernst Seibert, *Jugendliteratur im Übergang vom Josephinismus zur Restauration* (Wien, Köln, Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1987), 50 ss; Christa Kersting, *Die Genese der Pädagogik im 18. Jahrhundert. Campes «Allgemeine Revision» im Kontext der neuzeitlichen Wissenschaften* (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1992); Hanno Schmitt, *Vernunft und Menschlichkeit. Studien zur philanthropischen Erziehungsbewegung* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2007), 103-116.

<sup>19</sup> Seibert, *Jugendliteratur im Übergang vom Josephinismus zur Restauration*, 26, 196.

<sup>20</sup> O'Brien, «Ideas of religious Toleration», 36.

<sup>21</sup> O'Brien, «Ideas of religious Toleration», 40-44.



## The rationalistic Socratic method of J. A. Gall in Joseph's age

Joseph Anton Gall (1748-1807) was one of the most convinced exponents of the educational Josephinian theories. Born in Baden, in the free Empire town Weil der Stad into a middle class family, he studied with the Jesuits in Augsburg and in Heidelberg. He then went to Vienna, where he learned the Normal method, working closely with Felbiger and becoming a catechist in Vienna's *Normalschule*. However, he came to disagree with Felbiger's methods. Influenced by Basedow, Gall criticized Felbiger's focus on memorization. At Gottfried van Swieten's suggestion, Joseph II appointed him Chief Inspector of Schools in Felbiger's place in 1784 and Bishop of Linz in 1788 (in spite of the fact that Gall was from humble origins). School reform was closely linked to religious policy.<sup>22</sup> Gall backed Joseph's Church policy, was in favour of the closure of monasteries and was hostile to baroque piety. With Leopold Ernst, Count of Firmian, and Hieronymus Joseph Franz de Paula, Count of Colloredo, bishops of Passau and Salzburg, Gall was one of the three bishop leaders of the Austrian *katholische Aufklärung* in Joseph's age.<sup>23</sup> But so strong was the influence of rationalism and Protestantism on his thought, that his theological adherence to Catholicism is questionable.<sup>24</sup> Reading his writings makes one doubt the correctness of the term *katholische Aufklärung* instead of *christliche Aufklärung* when referring to his works.

In 1783-84 Gall published in Vienna (significantly under a pseudonym) his most famous work, in three volumes: *Sokrates unter den Christen*

<sup>22</sup> Hans Klueting, Kaunitz, *die Kirche und der Josephinismus. Protestantisches landesherrliches Kirchenregiment, rationaler Territorialismus und theresianisch-josephinisches Staatskirchentum*, in *Staatskanzler Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz-Rietberg, 1711-1794: neue Perspektiven zu Politik und Kultur der europäischen Aufklärung*, eds. Grete Klingenstein, Franz A. J. Szabo (Graz: Schnider, 1996), 189-196; Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the eighteenth-century origins*, 60-105.

<sup>23</sup> Siegfried Rudolf Pichl, *Joseph Anton Gall. Josephiner auf dem Bischofsthul Bischofsstuh* (Frankfurt a.M.u.a.: Peter Lang, 2007). From Constant Wurzbach's *Biographische Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich* (Wien: Zamarski, 1856-1891) onwards historians indicated 1780 as the year when Gall replaced Felbiger. Thanks to the archival documents consulted, Pichl shifts the date to 1784 (Pichl, *Joseph Anton Gall*, 220, footnote 28), as does Ernst Wangermann, *Aufklärung und staatsbürgerliche Erziehung. Gottfried van Swieten als Reformator des österreichischen Unterrichtswesens 1781-1791* (München: Oldenbourg, 1978), 63.

<sup>24</sup> The influence of Enlightenment and Protestant culture grew stronger in Joseph's decade, whereas before Febronian and Jansenistic arguments were more used, Norbert Jung, «Die katholische Aufklärung – eine Hinführung», in *Katholische Aufklärung und Josephinismus*, eds. Bendel, Spannenberger, 32-33.

*in der Person eines Dorfpfarrers* (*Socrates among the Christians as a country parson*).<sup>25</sup> Here he applied in a very clear and simple way the key concepts of Josephinian religiosity. Still anchored in Felbiger's *katechisieren*, his didactics developed the Socratic method (*sokratische-erotematische Methode*) which, as mentioned above, aimed at stimulating reason more than memory, using a dialogic form. The title of the book already indicates Gall's intention. Socrates, emblem of the Enlightenment pedagogy, lay critic of pagan religion, master of the art of questioning was embodied in a parson, who brought the Light to country people, as the Greek philosopher brought the Light of the Truth to the pagans. In his introduction, Gall made a comparison between Catholic peasants' devotion and pagan beliefs. Not without irony, he wished he could be spared drinking hemlock so that he would be able to carry on explaining his ideas in public.<sup>26</sup> The fact that Gall used a pseudonym shows that in 1783 he had to be careful of criticism (he was indeed accused of being a Freemason), but with the Emperor's backing he would soon be appointed Chief Inspector of Schools and then even bishop.

Gall's ideas were radical, but he cunningly put them in such a way that they seemed undeniable, for they were based on simple and logical reasoning. The book *Sokrates unter den Christen in der Person eines Dorfpfarrers* is constructed as a series of dialogues between the Socratic parson and children, ignorant women, ex-nuns, poor people etc. The parson's way of reasoning was apparently maieutic, but he used simple reasoning to lead people to accept what he thought. In this way, Gall dismantled many traditional expressions of popular piety.

The first two dialogues, for instance, belittled Marian devotion: why pray with the Rosary, which has ten avemarias every paternoster, when God is superior to the Madonna and the paternoster is actually the only prayer that Jesus taught us? It is always better to pray directly to God, rather than to ask for Mary's intercession. To the little girl who replies that it is easier for her to pray to Mary, for she reminds her of her mother, who is sweet and manages to obtain special concessions for her from her father, the Socratic parson coldly replies that God is loving too. Praying in

<sup>25</sup> Johann Leopold Stangl [pseudonym of J. A. Gall], *Sokrates unter den Christen in der Person eines Dorfpfarrers* (Wien: Ghelen Buchhandlung, vol. I 1783, vol. II-III 1784).

<sup>26</sup> Stangl [Gall], *Sokrates unter den Christen*, I, 3-4.

front of statues was compared by him to foolishly worshipping a graven image, as pagans did. To children who prayed in front of a statue of Jesus, the Socratic parson easily proved that it was only a wooden statue, stressing the philosophical difference between a being and a being's image and making the children feel foolish. In another dialogue, an old woman prays in front of a statue of the infant Jesus, because she thinks his face is so loving and sweet that it encourages praying. The Socratic parson dismisses her attitude with his rationalistic logic. He reminds her that Jesus was a grown man, died when 33 years old and then rose again from the dead. Jesus now sits in heaven as an adult, so we must pray to him as he is, just as she addresses her 30 year old son as an adult and not as child any more.<sup>27</sup>

Devotion to the infant Jesus was fairly widespread in the seventeenth century, especially in convents and in Berulle's Oratoire and was the sign of a warm, innermost piety as well as of a respect for childhood.<sup>28</sup> But Gall objected that the images did not stimulate the intellect and made God a tangible being, as in the pagan world. Gall's position was clearly anti-Jesuitic, and was far from the stimulation of the senses provoked by Ignatius' *Exercitia spiritualia*.

In another dialogue, Gall explained to a peasant that Calvinists and Lutherans were not wicked: their mistake did not originate from an evil heart, but from the fact that they were born into a Protestant family and environment, just as Catholic children learned their faith naturally from their parents, teachers, and parish priest.<sup>29</sup> Gall is very skilful in making the reader identify himself with a Protestant. His reasoning shows the cultural atmosphere that led to the *Toleranz patent*, but the logical consequence of the dialogue is actually the equivalence of denominations.

Gall also strongly contested papal primacy and in his second volume vehemently opposed monasteries and congregations, which are not mentioned in the Gospels. Contemplative activity and mysticism were

<sup>27</sup> Stangl [Gall], *Sokrates unter den Christen*, I, 25-29.

<sup>28</sup> Jacques Lebrun, «La dévotion à l'Enfant Jésus au xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle», in *Histoire de l'enfance en Occident, De l'Antiquité au xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle*, eds. Egle Becchi, Dominique Julia (Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 1998), 402-431; Sandra La Rocca, *L'enfant Jésus: Histoire et anthropologie d'une dévotion dans l'occident chrétien. De l'Enfant Jésus au petit Jésus* (Toulouse: Presses Univ. du Mirail, 2007).

<sup>29</sup> Stangl [Gall], *Sokrates unter den Christen*, I, 113-151.

misunderstood by Gall. The typical Enlightenment utilitarianism here met Protestant polemic and sided wholly with Joseph's policy of suppression. In the third volume, Gall came out in favour of priests' marriage, on the ground that the Apostles were married and celibacy is not mentioned in the Gospels, using arguments popular in Protestant theology.<sup>30</sup>

Cardinal Migazzi's opposition was entirely predictable. He was opposed to the excesses of baroque piety, a devotee of Muratori and one of the first supporters of the *katholische Aufklärung*. But he came to fear the effects of a reformed Catholicism that used Protestant arguments and caused bewilderment in the simple faith of uncultivated believers, so Migazzi became a fierce opponent of Joseph's policy.<sup>31</sup> More than being a «regulated» one, this devotion was dominated by a strong rationalism, that aroused doubts in the reader's faith; that refused mysticism; that did not understand the sense of Franciscan or Ignatian's spirituality; that reduced praying to a mere intellectual exercise, arid and far from the hearts of believers, especially children and the illiterate, who were used to visual representations. The criticism of baroque piety was conducted by Gall in a rationalistic way, which presented to simple people logical reasoning, which, correct as it might be, failed to move the heart. Denying the intercession of Mary and the saints, moreover, was a negation of a theological point of the Catholic faith.<sup>32</sup> The effects of the Emperor's religious tolerance were frightening for the Cardinal and for the Pope: the *Toleranzpatent* had encouraged clandestine Protestants to declare themselves and Catholics to change their religious allegiance. The number of Protestants in the Empire doubled rapidly in the Eighties.<sup>33</sup>

As regards pedagogy, Gall accused Felbiger's *Normal methode* of being too mechanical and memory-dependent. Thus, he contested the *Tabellar- und Literal Methode*, which was a pillar of Felbiger's didactics

<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, when bishop, Gall did not allow a priest who asked to get married to be reduced to the laity: Pichl, *Joseph Anton Gall*, 48.

<sup>31</sup> Blanning, *Joseph II*, 45; Hersche, *Der Spätjansenismus in Österreich*, 66-69.

<sup>32</sup> On popular piety and the success of the warm devotion advocated by St. Alfonso Maria de Liguori, who took into account the simple and emotional piety of illiterates, Mario Rosa, *Settecento religioso. Politica della ragione e religione del cuore* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1999), 125-127, but see the entire book on the matter of Enlightened devotion.

<sup>33</sup> Blanning, *Joseph II*, 74.

and instead gave great prominence to moral short stories, introduced into school texts by the Prussian Philanthropist von Rochow with his *Kinderbuch*. Soon after his appointment as Chief Inspector of Normal Schools, Gall asked for all Felbiger's textbooks to be replaced, but the *Studienhofkommission* refused, objecting that this operation would cost too much. The *Studienhofkommission* did not entirely accept the reform that Gall was pursuing as Chief Inspector and in 1786 abolished Felbiger's *Tabellar —und Literal Methode*, but at the same time established that a memory— based didactic method had to be maintained, especially for religious subjects.<sup>34</sup>

Gall then published a primer, a reading book and a little book on ethics that was modelled on Campe's *Sittenbüchlein*. Gall in fact depended explicitly on Philanthropism, from Villaume to Campe<sup>35</sup>. Gall's maieutic was heavily rationalistic and stressed the importance of the function of the intellect in knowledge, diminishing the role of memory. However, if the technical nature of the Normal method undoubtedly carried the risk of every day teaching becoming an arid mnemonic mechanical process Felbiger's pedagogy did not assign primacy to memory either: the aim of memorizing was to discover the Truth, not simply to fill the organ of recollection. The memory allowed access to the essence of one's being, in accordance with Augustine's philosophy. The will had then to complete the moral process. The memory indicated the representation of beings, that the intellect had to link through logic and mathematical language. The difference between Felbiger and Gall's pedagogy did not lie in diverse conceptions of intellect, but in a different notion of memory and of will. Felbiger took from Plato and Augustine both the positive view of memory, as a real channel of knowledge and way to God, and the pessimistic opinion on will, corrupted by the original sin. By contrast, Gall followed the rationalism of the Enlightenment and of Philanthropic pedagogy, reducing memory to a purely mechanical role and instead adopting an optimistic conception of the will, which adhered to the good, once recognized through the intellect, as Socrates thought.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens*, III, 46.

<sup>35</sup> Anton Weiß, *Geschichte der österreichischen Volksschule* (Graz: Styria, 1904), II, 773-775.

<sup>36</sup> Simonetta Polenghi, «La pedagogia di Felbiger e il metodo normale», *Annali di storia della educazione e delle istituzioni scolastiche*, 8 (2001): 245-268.

As well as Socratic dialogue, Gall also used another narrative model to make the evangelical message simpler and clearer: the parables. In 1794 he published an anonymous work on religious parables for children and adults, in three volumes (*Parabeln*).<sup>37</sup> However, Gall's parables had very evident and simplistic allegorical meanings (the father portrayed God, his children the men; the rich lord represented God and his peasants the men, and so on). He wrote that this kind of prose was an effective way of teaching, since it reminded the user directly of Christ, whilst also stimulating curiosity and being easy to remember.<sup>38</sup> But rather than being short parables, like those told by Christ, they were short stories, followed by moral explanations. Gall's aim, as he explicitly declared, was to make people adore and serve God, avoiding superstition and using images and ceremonies in a rational way. The book was successful. In 1794, the Piarist priest Franz Innozenz Lang, member of the *Studien-Revisions-Hofkommission* (the body that replaced the *Studienhofkommission* for a few years) praised it and it was reprinted in 1797 and 1820.<sup>39</sup> In 1812 Andreas Reichenberger, influential Josephinist professor of pastoral theology at the University of Vienna, also praised these three volumes.<sup>40</sup> But on 16th February 1822 the *Studienhofkommission* forbade the use of these volumes as school prizes: their rationalism had been superseded, as we shall see.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, the Socratic method spread in Salzburg and in Bavaria, where Bernhard von Galura, canon of the Cathedral of Freiburg im Breisgau and later Bishop of Brixen, adopted the Socratic catechetical to explain the sacrament of the Eucharist.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Parabeln oder Gleichnißreden für Junge und Alte* (Wien: Verlagsgewölbe der deutschen Schulanstalt St. Anna, 1794, voll. 3). This work was ascribed to Gall by Anton Klein, *Geschichte des Christenthums in Österreich und Steiermark seit der ersten Einführung desselben in diese Länder bis auf gegenwärtige Zeit* (Wien: Mechitaristen-Congregations Buchhandlung, 1840-42), VII (1842), 282.

<sup>38</sup> *Parabeln oder Gleichnißreden*, I, 5.

<sup>39</sup> *Katechetisches Journal*, Göttingen, 3 (1794): 582-583.

<sup>40</sup> Andreas Reichenberger, *Pastoral-Anweisung zum akademischen Gebrauche* (Wien: Wimmer, 1.° ed. 1812, 2.° ed. 1823), I, 200.

<sup>41</sup> Johann Ludwig Ehrenreich von Barth-Barthenheim, *Beyträge zur politischen Gesetzkunde im österreichischen Kaiserstaate* (Wien: Wallishause, 1823), III, 263.

<sup>42</sup> Bernhard Galura, *Grundsätze der wahren (d.i. sokratischen) Katechisiermethode* (Augsburg: 1796); Johann Hofmeier, *Seelsorge und Seelsorger. Eine Untersuchung zur Pastoraltheologie Johann Michael Sailers* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1967), 50-51; Pietro Braido, *Lineamenti di storia della catechesi e dei catechismi. Dal «tempo delle riforme» all'età degli imperialismi (1440-1870)*, (Torino: Elle Di Ci, 1991), 300-309, 354-56.



## Franz Michael Vierthaler and the revision of Socratism

During Joseph's reign and later, some teachers taught a natural and moralistic religion, in which the differences between the Catholic and Protestant faiths faded. In 1790 several bishops lamented this to Leopold II.<sup>43</sup> The first important change to the Socratic method came from Franz Michael Vierthaler (1758-1827). Born in Bavaria into a humble family, he studied under the Jesuits and at Salzburg University. In Salzburg he was appointed School Director and head of the *Normalschule* by the bishop. In 1791 Vierthaler published the *Elemente der Methodik und Pädagogik*<sup>44</sup> (*Elements of Didactics and Pedagogy*), a textbook for trainee teachers, which went to four editions, the last revised one in 1810. He taught pedagogy in the seminary and published the *Geist der Sokratik* (*The Socratic Spirit*), a successful book that had three editions: 1793, 1798, 1810.<sup>45</sup> He also taught at the university. When Salzburg became part of the Habsburg territories in 1806, he was appointed Director of the Orphanage of Vienna. He ameliorated the life and the educational system of the pupils and made the Orphanage a model one.<sup>46</sup>

Vierthaler belonged to the Enlightenment culture too, but managed to maintain a solid link to Catholic pedagogy. He had a very good knowledge of Greek and Latin literature, which allowed him to rewrite the Socratic pedagogy. He quoted not only Plato and Xenophon, but many Greek writers (such as Homer and Plutarch) and Latin authors (especially Cicero, Horace, Quintilian). He knew Rousseau and Filangieri, and many educationalists in the German language: Basedow, Salzmann, Campe, Resewitz, Rochow, Villaume, Gellert, Weisse, Felbiger, J. M. Sailer, Kant, and Pestalozzi. Vierthaler went back to the essence of the Socratic method and claimed that nobody really applied it. The so-called Socratic method

<sup>43</sup> O'Brien, «Ideas of religious Toleration», 34.

<sup>44</sup> Published in Franz M. Vierthaler, *Ausgewählte pädagogische Schriften*, ed. Leopold Glöckl (Freiburg i. Breisgau: Herder Verlag, 1893).

<sup>45</sup> See the comparison made by Heinrich Rothbucher, *Franz Michael Vierthalers «Geist der Sokratik». Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der «sokratischen Methode»* (Salzburg: Inaugural-Diss. der Phil.Fakultät, 1966), in appendix. The 1810 edition was identical to the second one.

<sup>46</sup> Leopold Glöckl, «Introduction» in Vierthaler, *Ausgewählte pädagogische Schriften*, 1-24; Ferdinand Prillinger, «Franz Michael Vierthaler. Zum 200. Geburtstag», *Erziehung und Unterricht*, 9 (1958): 543-548 and more widely Matthias Laireiter (ed.), *Franz Michael Vierthaler. Festschrift zum 200. Geburtstag am 25. September 1958* (Salzburg: Etzendorfer, 1958). See also Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens*, III, 210-211, 213-214.

was just a string of questions on difficult matters, that expected children to give too complex answers. In the *Geist der Sokratik* he accused the existing catechisms of using an obscure and dry language, unsuited to children.<sup>47</sup> Questions were arid riddles (the Philanthropists used riddles in teaching),<sup>48</sup> but children should enjoy lessons. Raising objections should be a means of entertaining children in an enjoyable way and children should use their own words in answering questions.<sup>49</sup>

The Socratic method of the time, he pointed out, was a mnemotechnic, whereas Socrates' real one was a psychological tool: Socrates made people use their reason, helping them to find the truth by themselves and not through an external authority. Posing questions did not mean being Socratic: it was necessary to learn how to ask questions properly, so that young people would answer in their own words. Objecting and contesting should have the aim of making young people think but also of enjoying the process of learning logically. Children should like this activity, taking pleasure in their capacity to answer objections. The maieutic method was not boring; on the contrary, it stimulated a meta-knowledge: «Guessing is an exquisite joy for children, and nothing stimulates thinking so much, as the awareness of being able to think».<sup>50</sup>

Besides, Socrates not only used maieutics, but also *sermo continuus*, as well as allegories, analogies and fables. Vierthaler recommended the use of short stories, fables, poems and sayings, in order to stimulate children's heads and hearts. Contrary to Salzmann, he believed that not only the parables and the Gospels, but also certain stories from the Old

<sup>47</sup> Franz M. Vierthaler, *Geist der Sokratik. Ein Versuch* (Salzburg: Mayr, 1793). See Karl Wolf, «F. M. Vierthalers "Geist der Sokratik" und die gegenwärtige Pädagogik», in *Schule in Verantwortung. Festschrift zum 90. Geburtstag von Hofrat Dr. Franz Hörburger*, ed. Matthias Laireiter (Salzburg: Veröffentlichungen des Pädagogischen Institutes Salzburg, 1972), 26-34, which depends on Karl Wolf, «F. M. Vierthalers "Geist der Sokratik"», in *Philosophie der Toleranz. Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Konstantin Radakovic* (Graz: Leykam, 1959), 74-85; above all see the two dissertations: Rothbucher, Franz, *Michael Vierthalers "Geist der Sokratik"*; Wilhelm Beranek, *Die psychologischen und bildungstheoretischen Grundlagen der Didaktik Vierthalers* (Wien: Phil.Diss., 1970). See also Leopold Lentner, *Katechetik und Religionsunterricht in Österreich* (Innsbruck u.a.: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1955), I, *Katechetik als Universitätsdisziplin in der Zeit der Aufklärung*, 203-218, which is however too critical towards Vierthaler, accusing him of rationalism and dependence from the platonic dialogue.

<sup>48</sup> Reinhard Stach, *Schulreform der Aufklärung. Zur Geschichte des Philanthropismus* (Heinsberg: Dieck, 1984), 21-22.

<sup>49</sup> Vierthaler, *Geist der Sokratik*, 150-151.

<sup>50</sup> Vierthaler, *Geist der Sokratik*, 51.

Testament were particularly suitable for teaching religion to children. Fables, «more ancient than history», also contain a wisdom which goes straight to the heart and form a narrative canon beloved by children, who talk to animals and give life to inanimate objects. In this, Vierthaler refuted Salzmann and Rousseau, who denied fables any educational value, and accepted the traditional pedagogy, which was rooted in the Classical Age.<sup>51</sup> In addition to fables, he recommended short poems, for children love rhymes, and proverbs. But since proverbs are frequently not ethically sound, it is necessary to teach them in a critical way.<sup>52</sup>

The Socratic method had to be adapted to pupils' different ages and characters: the didactics had to be used in a flexible way.<sup>53</sup> The Normal method was also too mechanical for him. The primary educational aim was the development of morality, and religious education was the educational medium. Purely subjects teaching, which did not provide pupils with ethical and religious values, would produce arrogant boys, full of themselves. In opposition to Rousseau's thinking, Vierthaler claimed religious education should not be delayed until the pupil was 15/16 years old, that is to say when he had acquired full control of his logical faculties, but had to begin at birth. The Christian truth is comprehensible to children too, because it speaks to the heart as well as to the intellect. Indeed, Jesus himself used different speech registers according to his audience and spoke to children and the illiterate. Parables and episodes of Christ's life are particularly good for children's minds, which can grasp the abstraction only if it is shown in hard facts and material objects.<sup>54</sup>

Vierthaler's conception was halfway between Enlightenment and Catholicism: he saw religion in a utilitarian way, as a medium and not as the superior aim of education, but he refused a rationalistic teaching of religion, especially in *Elemente der Methodik und Pädagogik* (1810), where, in spite of the fact that he defined Anton Gall as «one of the worthiest Austrian bishops»,<sup>55</sup> he explained that children do not have

<sup>51</sup> Rothbucher, *Franz Michael Vierthalers «Geist der Sokratik»*, 77.

<sup>52</sup> Vierthaler, *Geist der Sokratik*, 177-212.

<sup>53</sup> Beranek, *Die psychologischen und bildungstheoretischen*, 140-150.

<sup>54</sup> Vierthaler, *Geist der Sokratik*, 82-83; Vierthaler, «Elemente der Methodik und Pädagogik», in *Ausgewählte pädagogische Schriften*, 151-155.

<sup>55</sup> Vierthaler, «Elemente der Methodik und Pädagogik», 35.

adults' logic, hence it is not necessary to prove religious concepts to them: it is enough if they believe in them for they will reflect on them later on. The assurances and examples of the people they love (parents, relatives, teachers) are better than long and difficult explanations. The God of Reason is the philosophers' God; he is not the Father: children do not understand the first, but surely know how a loving father behaves. Moreover, children may understand certain truths better than adults. In these passages eventually Vierthaler leaves rationalism behind and partially contradicts what he wrote in the *Geist der Sokratik*. Children are not so much impressed by logical reasoning, but by examples. Here he opposes Kant and the gap between ethics and metaphysics, between morality and religion: Christianity is in fact both.<sup>56</sup>

But how to teach Christian truths to small children? A child's catechism must be written in such a way as to be liked and understood by its young readers. A catechism written for children of different ages and suitable for children's minds still did not exist, in spite of Felbiger's attempts, although some Austrian theologians had started moving in the right direction. The desire to be clear and the concern to be orthodox produced catechisms that were correct, but unsuitable for young minds. It would be better to stick to the Gospels, reproducing Christ's words, rather than using men's formulas. Religion does not concern just memory and reason, it involves the heart too.<sup>57</sup>

From an Enlightenment and Philanthropic background, Vierthaler then moved towards neo-Hellenism and the Catholicism of the new century. In the 1810 edition of the *Elemente der Methodik und Pädagogik* he quoted Frint and Leonhard; in the 1824 edition of the *Entwurf der Schulerziehungskunde* he quoted Milde.<sup>58</sup> Tackling the classic question, whether the State had to educate the man or the citizen, he answered that the State had to educate both, assigning priority however to the *Bildung*: humanity should not be sacrificed on the altar of the State. Faced with a conflict between the State and humanity, the second should prevail.<sup>59</sup> This limitation of the power of the State was far from

<sup>56</sup> Vierthaler, «Elemente der Methodik und Pädagogik», 153-156.

<sup>57</sup> Vierthaler, «Elemente der Methodik und Pädagogik», 158-161.

<sup>58</sup> Vierthaler, «Entwurf der Schulerziehungskunde», in *Ausgewählte pädagogische Schriften*, 172.

<sup>59</sup> Vierthaler, «Entwurf der Schulerziehungskunde», 172-173.

Josephinism and shows the influence of von Humboldt. In spite of his substantial adherence to Catholicism, Vierthaler was hit by criticism from Cardinal Migazzi: in 1794 the Archbishop of Vienna, referring to Vierthaler among others, objected that the Socratic method was clearly derived from Protestantism, was unsuitable to children's minds, did not use memory enough and was opposed by right-thinking parents.<sup>60</sup>

Vierthaler's pedagogy was more profound than Felbiger's in some respects, and more orthodox and effective than Gall's. He was highly respected in Austria and Bavaria, where his *Geist der Sokratik* was used in the seminaries. The same ideas were put forward by the Bavarian theologian and educationalist Johann Michael Sailer (1751-1832), who became bishop of Regensburg in his final years, who appreciated Pestalozzi. Contrary to Rousseau and Basedow's views, Johann Michael Sailer said it is necessary to teach religion to children from birth, reading them the Gospel and educating their heart first and using the pedagogy of *exempla*.<sup>61</sup>

Another relevant educationalist was Franz de Paula Gaheis (1763-1809).<sup>62</sup> Ex-Piarist, teacher and director of *Hauptschule*, in 1797 he wrote the *Handbuch einer praktischen Methodik für Schullehre, Gehülffen und Schul-Candidaten*, (*Handbook of didactic and pedagogy for teachers, assistants and trainee teachers*), a book that marked his separation from Felbiger and his adherence to the Socratic pedagogy. This book had four editions in ten years and was the main textbook for elementary school teachers' preparation, up to 1817.

<sup>60</sup> Elmar Lechner, «Pädagogische Lehrveranstaltungen als Veranstaltung des Staates. Die Verwissenschaftlichung und Verfachlichung der Pädagogik als Symptom und Instrument der Modernisierung des Bildungssystems in Österreich in den Jahrzehnten um 1800», in *Bildung, Staat, Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert. Mobilisierung und Disziplinierung*, ed. Karl Ernst Jeismann (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1989), 54.

<sup>61</sup> Hofmeier, *Seelsorge und Seelsorger*; Braido, *Lineamenti di storia della catechesi e dei catechismi*, 350-54.

<sup>62</sup> See And Thurnwald, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Pädagogik in Deutsch-Österreich* (Wien: Verl. K. Gräser, 1882), 39-70; Heinrich Güttenberger, *Franz de Paula Gaheis (1763-1809). Leben und Schaffen eines österreichischen Volksschulpädagogen im Spiegel der Kulturgeschichte und der Zeitpädagogik* (Wien [u.a.]: Österr. Bundesverl., 1927); Rudolf Gönner, *Die österreichische Lehrerbildung von der Normalschule bis zur Pädagogischen Akademie* (Wien: Österr. Bundesverl. für Unterricht, Wiss. und Kunst, 1967), 88-90; Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens*, III, 211-212, 214-215; Renate Seebauer, *Lehrerbildung in Porträts. Von der Normalschule bis zur Gegenwart* (Wien, Berlin: Lit, 2011), 45-54.

Gaheis was influenced by German Philanthropism (Basedow, Campe, Rochow and Salzmann), by Kejetan Weiller and the Bavarian Enlightenment, but also by Kant and Pestalozzi. Socratic didactics should aim at stimulating pupils' interests. Education should respect the child's nature and develop not only his intellect, but all his faculties, as Pestalozzi had pointed out. In the 1809 edition of his *Handbuch* Gaheis dedicated a full chapter to Pestalozzi, who was not widely known in Austria at that time.<sup>63</sup> He described *Lienhard und Gertrud* as a book that he could not recommend highly enough.<sup>64</sup> In spite of the pedagogical value of his *Handbuch* and the success it achieved (it was widely used in Bavaria, and in Austria it remained the key text for trainee teachers up to 1817), this book never enjoyed official recognition from the *Studienhofkommission* and was never imposed as an official text for trainee teachers, because Gaheis considered religion to be just one of the subjects that children should be taught and only the short tenth chapter of the *Handbuch* was dedicated to catechism.

## THE AUSTRIAN CATHOLIC PEDAGOGY: V. E. MILDE AND HIS FOLLOWERS

In the age of Francis II/I, after the French Revolution, three cultural trends competed in Vienna: the Josephinists, who retained a significant position in the Universities of Vienna and Prague; the Roman Catholic wing, originally led by the ex-Jesuit Nicolas Josef Albert Dießbach, and subsequently by Fr. Klemens Maria Hofbauer; and the Austrian Catholic wing, which rejected theological rationalism but approved jurisdictionalism. Milde, Frint, Leonhard belonged to this last faction, which enjoyed the Emperor Francis' support.<sup>65</sup> In Francis' long reign

<sup>63</sup> Cfr. Franz Gaheis, *Handbuch der Lehrkunst für den ersten Unterricht in deutschen Schulen* (Wien: Doll, 1809, 4.° ed.), 284-296, the edition I could consult. Pestalozzi indicated in the visual intuition (*Anschauung*) the foundation of knowledge and therefore of teaching: «Ich habe den höchsten obersten Grundsatz des Unterrichts in der Anerkennung der Anschauung als dem absoluten Fundament aller Erkenntnis», Johann H. Pestalozzi, *Wie Gertrud ihre Kinder lehrt. Gesammelte Werke* (Zürich: Rascher, 1949), 237.

<sup>64</sup> Gaheis, *Handbuch der Lehrkunst*, 292.

<sup>65</sup> Eduard Winter, *Tausend Jahre Geisteskampf im Sudetenraum* (München: Aufstieg Verlag, 1955, 2.° ed.), 320. But see also Eduard Winter, *Romantismus. Restoration und Frühliberalismus in Österreichischen Vormärz* (Wien: Europa Verlag, 1968). On Hofbauer, canonized in 1909 and proclaimed patron of Vienna with St. Leopold in 1914, see at least Kornelius Fleischmann, *Klemens Maria Hofbauer. Sein Leben und seine Zeit* (Graz [u.a.]: Verl. Styria, 1988).



(1792-1835) historians have distinguished two periods: a first phase of late Josephinism, up to circa 1820, and a second phase of overcoming Josephinism, and of Restoration. Francis had breathed an anticlerical atmosphere in Florence and in Vienna. K. L. von Metternich, Foreign Minister from 1809 and Chancellor from 1821, was not against Josephinism.<sup>66</sup> However, during the meeting between Pius VII and Francis I in Rome in 1819, the Pope demonstrated to the Emperor how many Austrian theologians were not exactly following the Vatican guidelines and Francis then distanced himself from Josephinism.

As for the debate about teaching methods, on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1803, the Councillor of State Martin Lorenz, responsible for schooling, accepted Vierthaler's ideas and maintained that the *sokratische Methode* was being wrongly used in the last two years of the *Hauptschule*:

the method of finding by oneself (Socratic) is based on the principles of syllogistics: two sentences are presented to the pupil, who has to find a third one, putting them in a relationship. This exercise requires more logic than a child has and leads children to obscurity.<sup>67</sup>

Lorenz was a Josephinian priest, but he was influenced by Augustin Gruber, leading catechist of the Vienna *Normalschule* and future bishop of Salzburg, who fought against the rationalism of the *Sokratische Methode*<sup>68</sup>. Lorenz worked at the new law about schooling, which was issued only in 1805, due to the delay caused by the Napoleonic war, and which prescribed that the teaching method should educate in a harmonious way all the faculties of the soul («übereinstimmende Bildung aller Seelekkräfte»). With this law, the *Politische Schulverfassung*, the Socratic method was officially dropped.<sup>69</sup> A new method had to be shaped: a Chair of Education had to be established at the University, in order to provide a uniform educational theory and method for the Empire. This was Milde's task.

<sup>66</sup> Wodka, *Kirche in Österreich*, 314-315.

<sup>67</sup> «Studienhofkommission», cart. 17 A, Österreichisches Allgemeines-Verwaltungs Archiv (AVA), Wien, cited by Gönner, *Die österreichische Lehrerbildung*, 289.

<sup>68</sup> Gönner, *Die österreichische Lehrerbildung*, 289.

<sup>69</sup> Gönner, *Die österreichische Lehrerbildung*, 289.

## V. E. Milde's pedagogy

Born in Moravia, Vincenz Eduard Milde (1777-1853) studied in the Seminary of Vienna, reformed first by Joseph II and then Leopold II.<sup>70</sup> The future priests lived in the seminary but studied at the University of Vienna, still imbued by Josephinism. Milde studied Oriental languages and Old Testament with the Moravian Johann Jahn, whose interpretation of the Bible raised Cardinal Migazzi's protests with two of his books being condemned by the Vatican. The Benedictine monk of Melk Anton Reyberger, professor of Moral Theology and a follower of Kant, also exerted his influence on Milde. History of the Church was taught by Mathias Dannenmayer, already professor in Friburg, whose ideas were antipapal and pro-Protestant and who claimed the clergy should be subject to the Emperor rather than to the Pope. In spite of Cardinal Migazzi's protests, he retained his chair, even after Joseph II's death. His book on the history of the Church was on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. Andreas Reichenberger had the chair of Pastoral Theology. He too was a Josephinist and reduced Catholic religion to ethics.<sup>71</sup>

At the end of the eighteenth century Vienna was imbued with German culture: Klopstock, Gellert, Gessner, Lessing, Lavater, Jakobi, Mendelssohn and Goethe were all well known. In pedagogy, Rochow, Campe, Resewitz, Villaume and Salzmann were widely recognised authors, read also in educational institutes. Rousseau was familiar. Reyberger and Milde had a full mastery of this literature.<sup>72</sup> Milde was ordained priest in 1810. He had shown his educational capabilities as a catechist in the *Normalschule* of St. Anna, in *Realschulen*, and in a girls' boarding school. In 1805 he was appointed Court Chaplain and in this office, held during the difficult

<sup>70</sup> Hildegard Holstiege, *Die Pädagogik Vincenz Eduard Mildes 1777-1853* (Wien: Wiener Domverlag, 1971). A short biography in Elisabeth Kovács, «Milde, V.E.», in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 17 (1994): 506-508, <http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118733923.html> (accessed November 5, 2015). The analytic biography in Holstiege, *Die Pädagogik Vincenz Eduard Mildes*, and in Karl Wotke, *Vincenz Eduard Milde als Pädagoge und sein Verhältnis zu den geistigen Strömungen seiner Zeit* (Wien: Braumüller, 1902). Still fundamental is Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens*, III, 212-218.

<sup>71</sup> Bowman, *Priest and Parish in Vienna. 1780 to 1880*, 116-120; Erik Adam, «Merkwürdigkeiten. Die Erziehungsphilosophie Vincenz Eduard Mildes im Kontext zeitgenössischer Strömungen», in eds. Ines Maria Breinbauer, Gerald Grimm, Martin Jäggle, *Milde revisited. Vincenz Eduard Mildes pädagogisches Wirken aus der Sicht der modernen Erziehungswissenschaft* (Wien: Lit Verlag, 2006), 38-41.

<sup>72</sup> Wotke, *Vincenz Eduard Milde als Pädagoge*, 68-71.

period of the Napoleonic wars, he gained the Emperor's esteem, leading to his appointment as the first Chair of Education of the Habsburg Empire, in the University of Vienna in 1806, at the young age of 28. In 1810 however, due to fragile health, he had to give up the chair and leave the Court, retiring to a small parish in Low Austria.

He published his academic lessons in the two volumes of the *Lehrbuch der allgemeinen Erziehungskunde zum Gebrauch der öffentlichen Vorlesungen* (*Textbook of general pedagogy for use in public lessons*) (1811-13), which from 1814 were to be used as the sole official text in all the chairs of the Empire up until 1848. In 1814 he went to Krems, where was appointed Inspector of the district's Elementary Schools and director of the Superior Institute of Philosophy. In 1823 Francis I appointed him Bishop of Leitmeritz (Litoměřice) in Bohemia and in 1832 Archbishop of Vienna, in spite of his humble origins. Milde dedicated constant care to the education of the clergy. He was known as a brilliant educator, so much so that it was said that no bishop in Vienna had ever had the same ability to deal with children. In 1848 he did not back the revolution and helped the government to keep order, reminding the clergy to stay out of politics. He warned against the dangers of the freedom of the press and remained faithful to the Habsburg Monarchy and was hence criticized as conservative. His Josephinian education and the favour he had enjoyed from Francis were influential in defining his political view. He died in 1855 and is buried in St. Stephen's Cathedral.<sup>73</sup>

For a long time forgotten by the historiography, Milde has been enjoying a reappraisal in the last twenty years, so much so that he has come to be considered the greatest Austrian educationalist of the nineteenth century.<sup>74</sup> His pedagogical system is wide and solid, based on a

<sup>73</sup> Franz Loidl, *Geschichte des Erzbistums Wien* (Wien, München: Herold, 1983), 222-232.

<sup>74</sup> Wolfgang Brezinka, «Die Geschichte des Faches Pädagogik an den österreichischen Universitäten von 1805 bis 1970», *Paedagogica Historica*, 2 (1995): 408-410; Wolfgang Brezinka, «Geschichte des Faches Pädagogik an der Universität Wien von 1805 bis 1956», *Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, 15 (1995): 67 ss; Wolfgang Brezinka, *Pädagogik in Österreich. Die Geschichte des Faches an den Universitäten vom 18. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), I, 233-248; Breinbauer, Grimm, Jäggle (eds.), *Milde revisited. A complete reconstruction of Mildes' reception in Gerald Grimm*, «Vincenz Eduard Milde – ein vergessener Pädagoge? Zur Milde-Rezeption im deutschen Sprachraum am Beispiel der allgemeinen Darstellung zur Geschichte der Pädagogik vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart», in *Milde revisited*, eds. Breinbauer, Grimm, Jäggle, 15-34.

deep knowledge of pedagogical, philosophical, psychological and medical literature of the time. Heir to Josephinism but far from Gall's excesses, he presented a scientific and modern pedagogy, oriented towards ethics and strongly influenced by Kant. Milde respected Rousseau, but was more a follower of Kant. The human being has an inner moral law that comes from nature and from reason. Nature comes from God but is studied by science. Human attitudes are God's gifts. Anatomy and physiology show that the brain controls the body, but the body is connected to a spiritual force: the soul gives life, movement and aim to the body. Leibniz's and Aristotle's ontologies were at the root of his anthropology. Culture and nature were connected. Education had to respect nature, not to force it. This respect came from the recognition of God's wisdom as creator. Comenius, Rousseau, the Philanthropists and Pestalozzi were the educationalists he drew upon in this respect. The highest aim was the *Selbstbildung*, an idea that came from Kant. The pupil had to develop the ability to learn by himself. A method which relied solely on mnemonics was therefore of no use. Too many teachers believed they had to give their pupils knowledge: instead, they had to make them think. The faculty of memory was nonetheless very important, but it had to be developed in harmony with the other faculties. The memory is «indispensable for every operation of thinking. Reasoning depends partially on knowing and this depends on the culture of the memory». But one had to distinguish between a «mechanical memory», linked to impressions, and a memory connected to logical reflection.<sup>75</sup>

Reason had to be stimulated gradually: contrary to the pedagogy of the Enlightenment, Milde criticized those who tried to make a child be rational before his time, hence not respecting his nature. Stimulating the intellectual faculty precociously only had the effect of filling the child's mind with empty formulas, not really understood by him. A deep knowledge can only be reached through a gradual and slow process. Memory and reason were important, but so were emotions, feelings, impulses and the will. Milde mastered the psychological literature of the time, the anticartesian movement of the second half of the eighteenth century, Herder, Karl Philipp Moritz and Friedrich August Carus,

<sup>75</sup> Vincenz Eduard Milde, *Trattato di educazione generale: adattato all'uso di pubbliche lezioni* (Milano: IRS, 1827), 150-151.

professor of Philosophy in Leipzig.<sup>76</sup> In spite of his interest in psychology, he had scant regard for Herbart, but instead esteemed Pestalozzi.<sup>77</sup> The core of education was the learning of moral values, a process that involved memory, intellect and will. The pupil had to come to autonomous reasoning, hence to the independent capacity to distinguish good from evil and to address the will towards the good. The pupil should not obey external orders; he should learn to impose moral imperatives on himself.

As for the teaching of religion, Milde's position was balanced between the Enlightenment and Romanticism: heart and intellect both had to be involved. Religion was not just a question of feeling and emotion, as was said in the age of Romanticism, but it was not a purely natural religion either.<sup>78</sup> In religious matters his pedagogy was tolerant: in this respect, he was a child of Josephinism and the Enlightenment. His pedagogical theory did not allow Catholicism as a revealed truth, but proceeded from a spiritualist anthropology to a scientific approach, that used medicine, psychology and ethics, but not theology.<sup>79</sup> Milde, who knew French, admired Rousseau, but also criticized him and Salzmann for their delay in teaching religion to children and for doing it in a purely rational way.

Knowing begins with believing. Religion must be taught gradually, in accordance with the child's capacity for understanding. «A naturalist has a clearer idea of God's wisdom and an astronomer has a clearer idea of God's power than a peasant has. But is the peasant's idea of God less effective for morality than those of the naturalist and the astronomer?». Also children as well as ignorant people could receive a good religious education. «[...] Rousseau himself claimed that girls' religious education had to start earlier [than boys']. Does he not contradict his own rule?». <sup>80</sup> A religious education, not limited to a few notions, had therefore to be provided from when a child was small. Avoiding it and waiting until the

<sup>76</sup> Wotke, *Vincenz Eduard Milde als Pädagoge*, 112-125.

<sup>77</sup> Gönner, *Die österreichische Lehrerbildung*, 105. Milde knew Herbart's, *Allgemeine Pädagogik*.

<sup>78</sup> Lentner, *Katechetik und Religionsunterricht in Österreich*, I, 286-301.

<sup>79</sup> Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens*, III, 217. And Thurnwald, *Vincenz Eduard Milde als Pädagoge* (Wien, C. Gräser, 1877), 7, underlines that Milde's pedagogy was totally lacking confessional tones. Wurzbach, *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*, XVIII, 306, claims Milde can be defined as Josephinist, if one means by that that Milde was tolerant and believed in the separation (not subordination) of Church and State.

<sup>80</sup> Milde, *Trattato di educazione generale: adattato all'uso di pubbliche lezioni*, 342.

child became an adolescent or an adult, in order to respect his freedom and let him choose freely whether to believe or not, was an illusory liberty, that led to religious indifference. The best way was to teach religious ideas which moved children's hearts: «we do not forget what we love».<sup>81</sup> Much more effective than memorising formulas and precepts or than rational reasoning is example (of parents, educationalists and great men). Also religious rites had to be modified, in order to make them age-appropriate for children.<sup>82</sup>

Milde did not write a new catechism, but gave recommendations about the didactics, which were important for religious education too. He respected Felbiger, but considered him outdated. Like Niemeyer, Milde thought the teacher-led lesson, being close to a lecture, was only good for adults and well educated persons. For children, the erotematic or dialogic method was more appropriate<sup>83</sup>. But how to ask questions? The old mnemonic *kathechisieren* with written questions and answers to learn by heart was superseded, as was the rationalism of Gall's Socratic method, thanks to Vierthaler's work. The dialogic method should be founded on the observation of children and should respect their spontaneity. Lessons should start with concrete things and then shift to abstract ones, should present examples first, then the rule, in a synthetic and inductive way.

## J. Frint and the education of the clergy

Jakob Frint (1766-1834), a close friend of Milde and the founder of a new institute in Vienna for the education of priests, the *Frintaneum*, was influenced by the Enlightenment too, but distanced himself from it. Born in Kamnitz (Česká Kamenice) in Bohemia, Frint studied in Graz and Leibach. He wanted to become a priest, but refused to enter into one of Joseph II's seminaries. In Vienna he was a follower of Dießbach. In 1792 he entered the new seminary of St. Stephen, opened by Cardinal Migazzi. Two years later, Milde entered the same seminary and soon befriended him. Frint was appointed Court Chaplain in 1801 and in 1804 in Vienna became Professor of Religious Science, a new subject introduced by the

<sup>81</sup> Milde, *Trattato di educazione generale: adattato all'uso di pubbliche lezioni*, 346.

<sup>82</sup> Milde, *Trattato di educazione generale: adattato all'uso di pubbliche lezioni*, 338-349.

<sup>83</sup> Milde, *Trattato di educazione generale: adattato all'uso di pubbliche lezioni*, 235-238.



Emperor. The same subject was taught in Prague by Bernhard Bolzano. During the proceedings against Bolzano, Frint attacked the philosopher-mathematician, who was accused of rationalism.<sup>84</sup> In 1822 Frint became the Father Confessor of Francis I and in 1827 was made Bishop of St. Pölten. Due to his great influence on generations of priests in the Habsburg Monarchy, he has been described as “the Austrian Sailer”, an analogy to Johann Michael Sailer, bishop of Regensburg.<sup>85</sup>

Frint dedicated much energy to the education of the clergy. He distinguished three kinds of priest: the learned, who were university professors; the well-cultivated, who operated in cities; and those living in countryside parishes. Only the first needed to be educated in the most complex and profound philosophical and psychological matters. For the others, pedagogy and dialogic didactics were more useful. The Socratic catechetics, though, were not easy to use, since they required great ability, to be used properly. Rational truths of natural religion do not necessarily help in teaching revealed religion.<sup>86</sup> In 1812 he founded the review *Theologische Zeitschriften*, where he defined the Enlightenment as the «new epidemic» that had been spreading among the clergy. He refused the catechetics which he considered pseudo-Catholic, and which in a Socratic way taught a religion that was actually natural, deistic, Protestant, and hence in contradiction of Catholicism. Opposed to Gall, he aimed to bring Austrian catechetics back to a position of orthodoxy.<sup>87</sup> Frint also opposed Idealism, which transformed catechetics into a pure religion of reason.

On the contrary, Frint believed one had to move children's hearts. The rational explanation of the Revelation was to come later: the main aim was to make children distinguish between good and evil. This was actually the same moral aim as the Enlightenment, but the medium to realize it was different: the heart instead of reason. Or rather: the heart and reason, for Frint underlined that Catholicism was not against reason,

<sup>84</sup> Eduard Hosp, *Zwischen Aufklärung und katholischer Reform. Jakob Frint. Bischof von St. Pölten. Gründer des Frintaneums in Wien* (Wien, München: Herold, 1962), 112-147. Eduard Winter, *Bernard Bolzano. Ein Lebensbild* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann, 1969), 52-71.

<sup>85</sup> Hosp, *Zwischen Aufklärung und katholischer Reform*, 5.

<sup>86</sup> Lentner, *Katechetik und Religionsunterricht in Österreich*, I, 304-305.

<sup>87</sup> Lentner, *Katechetik und Religionsunterricht in Österreich*, I, 306-307; Hosp, *Zwischen Aufklärung und katholischer Reform*, 68-69.

but was above it, and Catholic Enlightenment, he admitted, had brought achievements that it would be anti-historic to refuse.<sup>88</sup> Teaching religion just by obliging children to learn formulas by heart was not the right way. Along with Augustin Gruber, Archbishop of Salzburg, J. M. Leonhard, Archbishop of St. Pölten, and Bernhard Galura, Archbishop of Brixen, Frint criticized and overcame the Socratic method and the rationalism of the catechetics. They agreed in assigning an important role to memory and the heart in the teaching of religion to children: the aim of the catechism is not to demonstrate natural religions, but to teach the Holy Scriptures and the Revelation, and therefore a moral Christian life.<sup>89</sup>

In accordance with the Emperor and in keeping with the views of the Bavarian Sailer, in 1816 Frint, as mentioned above, opened the *Augustineum* (or *Frintaneum*) in Vienna, a new super-national institute for the education of young secular priests coming from all the territories of the Empire, chosen by the bishops for their excellence. The aim was to educate an élite of priests of rigorous morality, great intelligence and clear pastoral capabilities: the reform of the clergy was the first step to reforming the people. His references for this were St. Charles Borromeo, cardinal Bérulle, St. Vincent de Paul and the seminary of St. Sulpice.<sup>90</sup>

### Johann Michael Leonhard: how to teach catechism

Johann Michael Leonhard (1782-1863), a follower of Milde and friend of Frint, was the one who actually renewed the teaching of catechism with his book *Theoretisch-praktische Anleitung zum Katechisieren* (*Theoretical and practical guide to catechism teaching*) (1819). This was also translated into Latin in 1820, approved by the *Studienhofkommission* and imposed as the prescribed text for all trainee catechists of the Empire in 1821. In the same year his book *Practisches Handbuch zur Erklärung der in*

<sup>88</sup> Lentner, *Katechetik und Religionsunterricht in Österreich*, I, 308-309, 311-313.

<sup>89</sup> Hosp, *Zwischen Aufklärung und katholischer Reform*, 89-91.

<sup>90</sup> Walter Goldenits, *Das höhere Priester-Bildungsinstitut für Weltpriester zum hl. Augustin in Wien oder «Das Frintaneum» bzw. «Das Augustineum»* (Wien: Univ. Diss., 1969); Karl Heinz Frankl, «Das Frintaneum – Konturen einer Institution», in *Das Priesterkolleg St. Augustin «Frintaneum» in Wien 1816 bis 1918. Kirchliche Elite-Bildung für den Donau-Alpen-Adria-Raum*, eds. Karl Heinz Frankl, Rupert Klieber (Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau, 2008), 37-43. The Frintaneum operated until the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918; Hosp, *Zwischen Aufklärung und katholischer Reform*, 69-80.

den k.k. österr. Staaten vorgeschriebenen Katechismen oder Angewandte Katechetik was recommended by the Emperor for the education of future catechists, and indeed went through many editions.<sup>91</sup> Leonhard published other books on religious education as well as the school catechism for the youngest class. His works were translated into Italian, Hungarian, Czech and Slovak. His school catechisms replaced the *Einheitskatechismus* and he became the landmark author for decades. In 1812 he had been appointed Court Chaplain; in 1816 Director Spiritualis of the *Frintaneum*. In 1817 he was nominated Chief School Inspector of Austrian elementary schools, an office which he held up to 1835, when he was appointed Bishop of St. Pölten.<sup>92</sup>

Like Milde, Leonhard favoured a didactic method which drew upon elements from both the *katechisieren* and the *sokratisieren*. He, too, focused the catechetical method on the function of the question, but he firmly anchored the teaching of religion in the Holy Scriptures. The aim was neither just to memorize faith contents nor to develop only reasoning capacities. Educating the will was the most important aim. The right method aimed at a harmonious development of the human faculties, as Milde had shown. He used the didactics of intuition (*Anschauung*), which he recommended, following Comenius and Pestalozzi,<sup>93</sup> and in accordance with the pedagogy of Joseph Peitl, another follower of Milde, who was the director of the *Normalschule* of Vienna and whose *Methodenbuch* was imposed as a compulsory text for all trainee teachers of the Empire, in 1821.

Leonhard opened his *Theoretisch-praktische Anleitung zum Kathechisieren* with an introduction, where he distinguished between two teaching methods: the transmission method (*mitteilende*) and the development one (*entwickelnde*). The first is used in subjects like history or positive religion, where the teacher has to provide pupils with information; the second draws ideas from the pupil's own mind

<sup>91</sup> (Wien: Überreuter, 1820). The book was reprinted in 1822, 1826, 1832, 1845.

<sup>92</sup> Wurzbach, *Biographische Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*, XV, 4-8. Not at ease with this role, he left the office in St. Pölten and accepted the more modest function of bishop in the Army and bishop of Diocletianopolis, in Palestine, and lived in Vienna. As a sign of recognition the Emperor appointed him Privy Councillor (*Geheimrat*) and conferred on him the honour of the Iron Crown 1<sup>st</sup> class.

<sup>93</sup> Gönner, *Die österreichische Lehrerbildung*, 97-98.

and experience, making the child think. The development method keeps the children's attention and is to be used as much as possible, but is always to be used in conjunction with the transmission method. A good catechist must be able to use both methods, switching from one to the other, remembering that children's intellect is still fragile. His aims are to teach religious truths, convincing pupils and educating their will, so that they will become moral people. Catechetics is very different from learned theology or homiletics. Learned theology uses complete concepts, which would be too difficult for children. Indeed, teaching religion to children is a difficult task, much more so than is normally thought. Lessons must be easy and not boring, and the attention of the pupils must be carefully awakened and kept alive. As for the contents of catechism, Leonhard rightly pointed out that whereas in the past teachers insisted on Christian doctrine, which had to be learned by heart, leaving children passive, now the opposite mistake was being made: teachers preached on morality, leaving aside revealed truths. The aim of catechistic lessons is to provide a religious and moral education. Where possible, it is a good thing to use a logical demonstration, for it encourages a child to tend to the good. The intellect is a gift from God, so it is right to make use of it when teaching religion, provided the teacher does not go beyond the capacity of children's minds. Jesus adapted his speeches to match the audience's capacity for understanding, too and so did the Apostles: «Infants need just milk, they would not appreciate a more nutritious dinner».<sup>94</sup> Leonhard was referring to St. Paul: «I fed you milk, not solid food, because you were unable to take it» (1. Cor. 3,2).

Questions like the link between body and soul, or all the scholastic questions such as how much Adam knew, or how could he know how to speak, should be left out. Children should not be confused with questions with no definite answer. It is then important to teach in a gradual way, from the known to the unknown, from direct experience and intuition (*Anschauung*) to abstract concepts, using analogies and showing relationships. The first truths to teach are original sin, God's attributes, nature, and then Christ. Many believed catechism should begin with natural religion, followed by the revealed one. Leonhard refuted this

<sup>94</sup> Johann Michael Leonhard, *Theoretisch-praktische Anleitung zum Katechisieren als Leitfaden zu den katechetischen Vorlesungen und zur eigenen Bildung für katholische Religionslehrer* (Wien: K. K. Schulbücher-Verschleiß, 1819), 1-16.

point, on the grounds that revealed religion moved the heart much more than a merely logical demonstration. In this way, he rejected Socratic rationalism. Leonhard underlined that children can easily understand the rationality of revealed truths, since they are already present in their minds, and just need to be clarified. Here Leonhard follows a Platonic approach. Since the teacher should adapt his lessons to his pupils' minds, it is very important to divide the classes, in order to form homogeneous groups of children, with the same needs and interests, hence taking into account the age and intellectual abilities of the pupils. Leonhard applies one of the best principles of Milde, which anticipated progressive education.<sup>95</sup>

The second part of the book dedicated a chapter of 71 pages to the education of the intellect, a chapter of 26 pages to the education of the will, and then, significantly, a very short one of 4 pages to the memory. Leonhard had already pointed out that with the old mnemonic catechetics on one side, and the rationalistic one on the other, the truth lay in the middle and that man is a rational being, yet one with a heart.<sup>96</sup> However, a simple count of the pages he devoted to the three human faculties gives a clear indication of the role the intellect had acquired. Leonhard used a terminology that resembles Kant's, speaking of analytical and empirical judgments, of three main types of representations: external and interior intuitions, concepts of the intellect and ideas of reason. Reason is «the only faculty, which does not depend on the senses, it is the highest, pure spiritual power in men».<sup>97</sup> He provided many examples, and stressed that knowledge comes from the senses, and acquires a unity through the intellect, so it is pointless to insist on concepts children cannot trace back to their own experience. Where that is impossible, the teacher must use an image, for instance a picture of the Ark of the Covenant, or of the Temple of Jerusalem. When a new idea is introduced, it is important to compare it with ones already known (for instance, the Temple of Jerusalem must be compared with our churches). The influence of Comenius is clearly present in these pages. However, Leonhard goes on for many pages, describing how to deal with abstract concepts, in a very detailed way,

<sup>95</sup> Leonhard, *Theoretisch-praktische Anleitung zum Katechisieren*, 32-37.

<sup>96</sup> Leonhard, *Theoretisch-praktische Anleitung zum Katechisieren*, 41.

<sup>97</sup> Leonhard, *Theoretisch-praktische Anleitung zum Katechisieren*, 50-51.

more appropriate for the teaching of philosophy, than for the religious education of children.<sup>98</sup>

He then describes examples, parables, proverbs and short biblical stories that can be used, and how the catechist must ask questions, in order to keep the children's attention and to help them understand the content. The catechist should meet children's doubts and bias with love and patience. But the most difficult job for him is to educate the pupils' will. He must always ask his pupils questions such as: what would God/your parents/other good men think of you? Is what you are doing good? He should use moral short stories about childhood and train his pupils to judge and comment on moral/immoral deeds. Every moral rule is more likely to be remembered, the more it moves the heart, and the more clearly it is explained.<sup>99</sup>

Leonhard then spends many pages on language and its importance: to make a lesson enjoyable and interesting, and to engage the heart, the tone and the modulation of voice play a role, but other rules must also be observed. The catechist must be careful to avoid using words that the children do not really understand, and to explain the different meanings a word may have. He has to know the way children think and speak, to be able to make himself understood by them. Indeed, too many catechists talk to children as they do to adults. But, as Fleury said, to use a learned language with children is like talking to them in Latin or Greek: they will not understand and will just learn empty formulas by heart. The teacher must adapt his way of talking to the minds of children, he must observe children, talk to them out of school and read what they write. Once he can talk as children do, he can gradually bring children to understand the language of the Church.<sup>100</sup>

These pages on language represent the conclusion of a long debate that started with the criticism of the fanciful and florid language of baroque homiletics, begun by the Archbishop of Vienna Johann Joseph Trautson, who in 1752 sent out a pastoral letter in which he condemned the baroque sermons and their redundant rhetoric and bombastic

<sup>98</sup> Leonhard, *Theoretisch-praktische Anleitung zum Katechisieren*, 66-78.

<sup>99</sup> Leonhard, *Theoretisch-praktische Anleitung zum Katechisieren*, 125-153.

<sup>100</sup> Leonhard, *Theoretisch-praktische Anleitung zum Katechisieren*, 153-176.



language.<sup>101</sup> The renewal of homiletics and catechisms brought about by the Enlightenment and by Muratori's «regulated devotion» reach their culmination with these passages of Leonhard, which overcome the dry rationalism of Gall, whilst maintaining the attempts to purify the language of the catechism which the Jesuit Ignaz Parhamer and Abbot Felbiger had already pursued in Maria Theresa's age.<sup>102</sup> The pedagogical attention to children's minds and their way of thinking reach its high point here.

Leonhard's analysis of language and of questions is detailed and is heir to Felbiger's Normal method: it recalls Felbiger's recommendations about how to construct a question, but his approach is placed in a wider pedagogical framework, that of Milde. It is in fact very close to Joseph Peitl's description of method and of the correct way to put questions in his *Methodenbuch*.<sup>103</sup> The last chapter, dedicated to the qualities of the catechist, is also heir to Felbiger's *Methodenbuch* and his description of the desired qualities in a teacher. However, it surpasses Felbiger's approach, thanks to the influence of Milde and Vierthaler. The key virtue of the catechist is love: he must truly love his pupils and be very patient. Peitl said the same of the teacher. The catechist (as the teacher) must be a moral example, otherwise he will fail in his task. If children do not love him, they will not learn willingly; if they hate him, they will hate religion. He must know psychology, to be able to deal with children, so he must keep reading and studying psychology and pedagogics. Jesus must be his

<sup>101</sup> Peter Hersche, *Der aufgeklärte Reformkatholizismus in Österreich: Hirtenbrief d. Erzbischofs von Wien, Johann Joseph Graf Trautson 1752, Hirtenbrief d. Bischofs von Laibach, Johann Karl Graf Herberstein 1782, Hirtenbrief d. Erzbischofs von Salzburg, Hieronymus Graf Colloredo 1782* (Bern: Lang, 1976). On baroque devotion in Austria see: Anna Coreth, *Pietas austriaca. Ursprung und Entwicklung barocker Frömmigkeit in Österreich* (Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1959); Jean Schillinger, *Abraham a Sancta Clara. Pastorale et discours politique dans l'Autriche du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Berne: Lang, 1993). On the renewal of the eighteenth century pastoral, see Jean Delumeau, *Le péché et la peur: la culpabilisation en Occident (XIII<sup>e</sup> - XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*. (Paris: Fayard, 1983); Louis Châtellier, *L'Europe des dévots* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987); Louis Châtellier, *La religion des pauvres. Les missions rurales en Europe et la formation du catholicisme moderne XVII<sup>e</sup> - XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Aubier, 1993).

<sup>102</sup> Johannes Hofinger, *Geschichte des Katechismus in Österreich von Canisius bis zur Gegenwart* (Innsbruck, Leipzig: F. Rauch, 1937), 16-18, 21, 99-277; Ulrich Krömer, *Johann Ignaz von Felbiger. Leben und Werk* (Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 1966), 161-240; see also Braido, *Lineamenti di storia della catechesi e dei catechismi*, 273-76; 310-21; Polenghi, «*Militia est vita hominis*», 41-68.

<sup>103</sup> Joseph Peitl, *Methodenbuch oder Anleitung zur zweckmäßigen Führung des Lehramtes für Lehrer in Trivial- und Hauptschulen* (Wien: Verlagsgewölbe d.k.k. Schulbücher-Verschleißes, 1823, 1.<sup>o</sup> ed. 1820), 26-35.

model; Jesus who said: «Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these» (Mt. 19,14; Mk. 10,14; Lk. 18,16). Leonhard went on to provide a description of a child which echoed Rousseau and Pestalozzi, and certainly not St. Augustine, as Felbiger did: «children are particularly capable of understanding and gifted in following Jesus' doctrine, for their intellect is not infected with prejudices and mistakes and their heart is still pure from bad inclinations and passions»<sup>104</sup>.

As stated previously, this book was the prescribed text for all trainee catechists in the Empire, and the *Practisches Handbuch* had four editions. Milde's textbook was compulsory in the Chairs of Education in all the Universities and high schools (*Lyzeen*) of the Monarchy; his followers Peitl and Leonhard were authors of the textbooks prescribed for elementary teacher training and for trainee catechists in all Habsburg territories. This article has shed light on textbooks for catechists and one should then examine the school catechisms. Nonetheless, given the fact that in the Habsburg Monarchy the school system was centralized and uniform; that school books and catechisms were imposed by the State; that the preparation of future teachers and catechists was strictly checked, the study of the manuals approved by the State provides significant evidence of how religion was to be taught – if not of how it really was always taught.

To carry on this research, it would be necessary to examine the effective implementation of Leonhard's method. The recent historiography has proven the effectiveness of Milde and Peitl's pedagogical ideas on teacher training in the Habsburg territories. In the case of Leonhard, the position of bishops has also to be taken into account. In the Kingdom of Lombardy and Venetia, for example, the *Theoretisch-praktische Anleitung* and the *Practisches Handbuch* were introduced with years of delay (the *Handbuch* in 1841), since the bishops did not agree on the correctness of the translation, or on the novelty of the method: the Bishop of Brescia, for instance, insisted in 1819 that children still learn by heart (being very young and ignorant, they had to stick to simple concepts); the Chief Inspector of Lombardy elementary school Father Palamede Carpani, who approved Milde and Peitl's pedagogy, backed Leonhard, pointing out in

<sup>104</sup> Peitl, *Methodenbuch*, 217.

1822 that Italian catechists still made children learn by heart, rather than stimulating them to understand through rational deductions.<sup>105</sup> So, the school catechisms were actually changed, but the pedagogical question about how they were taught in various territories of the Monarchy still has to be addressed.

## CONCLUSION

At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries a new way of teaching religion was introduced, debated and contested in Habsburg Catholic territories. Rousseau and Salzmann's theories were discussed; rationalism and faith, natural religion and revelation were confronted. In the end more attention was devoted to child psychology and language. The cultural fracture caused by Josephinism became less severe: orthodoxy was restored, but new pedagogical ideas entered the teaching of religion, which were more respectful of children's development and their ways of thinking.

It is not therefore correct to define the Austrian Restoration age simply as reactionary or conservative in the history of education as well as in that of schooling, for in officially taught pedagogy, the spirit of Enlightenment was still present, although in a milder form.<sup>106</sup> The reading of short Biblical stories was retained from Protestant education, whereas Gall's sharp criticism against simple popular devotion was dropped. After the clash produced by the Josephinian approach, the orthodoxy of the content of the catechism was restored. The discussion on method was closely connected with the debate on general didactics, but since the subject to teach was religion, the question of the role of memory, heart and intellect was crucial. With Vierthaler and especially Milde, the Socratic rationalistic stamp decreased. As Leonhard wrote, thanks also to the reception of Pestalozzi, teaching religion engaged the intellect as well as the memory and heart, in a much more balanced way.

<sup>105</sup> The long correspondence in the Twenties and Thirties and the reports in State Archive, Milan, Fondo studi, p.m., 611. Simonetta Polenghi (ed.),

<sup>106</sup> Simonetta Polenghi, «Elementary school teachers in Milan during the Restoration (1814-59): innovations and improvements in teacher training», in *History of Education & Children's Literature*, 8 (1), (2013): 147-166, and Simonetta Polenghi, «La Formazione dei maestri nella Lombardia austriaca», in *La scuola degli Asburgo. Pedagogia e formazione degli insegnanti tra il Danubio e il Po (1773-1918)*, ed. Simonetta Polenghi (Torino: SEI, 2012), pp.45-89.

The importance of understanding children's mind sets and language; the acceptance of some pedagogical and didactic principles of non-Catholic educationalists such as Comenius, Rousseau, Kant, the Philanthropists and Pestalozzi; and the desire for effective religious teaching improved (at least) the official instructions for the teaching of religion in the Habsburg Empire in the early nineteenth centuries. ■

### **Note on the author:**

SIMONETTA POLENGHI is Full Professor of History of Education, Head of the Department of Education in the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan. 2013-2017 Deputy Vice-president of SIPED (Italian Pedagogical Society). Appointed National evaluator in the Italian Research Quality Evaluation 2011-14, for History of Education and Pedagogy (2015- 2016). Member of the Executive Board of the international Journal *History of Education & Children's Literature*. Member of the referee and scientific board of various series and scientific magazines, among which *Historia Scholastica* (Prag) and *Teaching Innovations* (Belgrade).

She has published four volumes, edited eight and published more than 90 essays and articles on history of university, history of childhood, history of schooling, history of special education in the modern age and in contemporary history. Awarded with two national prizes (1984 and 1993), she received a grant by the Austrian Academy of Sciences in 2008 and 2009. Awarded in 2011 with the *Cross of honour for arts and sciences* by the President of the Austrian Republic, for her studies on Habsburgic pedagogy and schooling. Key note speaker at the XIII National Hungarian Congress of Education, Eger, 7-9 Nov.2013. Awarded with the Comenius Medal from national Pedagogical Museum and Library J. A. Comenius of Prag in 2015.