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A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

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One of the dividends of *Don Bosco '88* was the rich bounty of publications on the life and times of Don Bosco. It was also revealing to see that some books and periodical articles were authored by laymen and laywomen. Unfortunately, none of these publications have yet seen the light of the English language. More unfortunate was the fact that nothing original of substance has been published on Don Bosco during the centennial year by English-speaking authors. Below, in a condensed bibliographical essay, are presented some publications that may be considered among the best to stem from *Don Bosco '88*. Others in the same class will be reviewed in future issues of the *Journal*.

Here we present to our readers five collections or anthologies of essays and papers, written or delivered on various occasions over the past few years. Almost without exception, they are studies of high quality, in many instances authored by scholars who have distinguished themselves in Salesian Studies. It is instructive just to know what questions are being addressed and by whom. And this is what I shall try to indicate in capsule outlines in the summaries and comments that follow .

I. *Don Bosco nella storia della cultura popolare*, ed. Francesco Traniello (Collana Il Popolo Cristiano). Torino: SEI, 1987. [392 pages.]

This anthology contains essays by:

[1] Luciano Pazzaglia, on the origin and character of the workshops at the Oratory of Valdocco, and their development into a program of vocational education (the trade school)—a very informative paper [p. 13-80].

[2] Francesco Traniello, on Don Bosco's *History of Italy*--its general character and particular educational slants [p. 81-112].

[3] Paolo Zolli, on Don Bosco's concern for, and use of, the Italian language [p. 113-142].

[4] Germano Proverbio, on the status of the high school at Valdocco and on the program and method of instruction in the Latin language, with informative notes on extracurricular and publishing activity in the field [p. 143-186].

[5] Maria Teresa Trebiliani, on how Don Bosco conceived and proposed Mary as a model for young people--with a reference to the schools of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians [p. 187-208].

[6] Giuseppe Tuninetti, on how Don Bosco was reported and judged in the contemporary press, both friendly and hostile [p. 209-252].

[7] Stefano Pivato, on the cultural milieu of the common people in Don Bosco's times; Don Bosco's and the Salesians' response and contributions to that culture [p. 253-288].

[8] Gianfausto Rosoli, on Don Bosco's and the Salesians' concern and work on behalf of Italian immigrants, and on the model worked out for the situation in Buenos Aires--with brief references to Brazil and the United States.

[9] Piero Bairati, on Don Bosco's response to the social conditions in his day, and on the model with which the Salesian Society continued that response through the years--seen as relevant for our modern industrial culture [331-358].

[10] Pietro Stella, on the transcendent character of Don Bosco's canonization, as well as on the contingent nationalistic aspects of the celebrations held at the time--reflecting the Italian situation during the Fascist regime [p. 359-382].¹

II. *Don Bosco nella Chiesa a servizio dell'umanità: Studi e testimonianze* (Istituto Storico Salesiano - Roma, Studi - 5), ed. Pietro Braidò. Roma: LAS, 1987. [430 pages.]

Although no divisions appear in the text, the studies and essays of this outstanding anthology are grouped around two main themes: (1) the nature and inspiration of Don Bosco's apostolate on behalf of youth, from its original conception in oratory work to a full scale educational project.; (2) Don Bosco's personal commitment and activity in the Church and for the Church. These two main clusters are followed by additional concluding papers.

¹ For a fuller discussion, see Pietro Stella, *Don Bosco nella storia della religiosità cattolica*, Vol. III: *La Canonizzazione (1888-1934)* (Pubblicazioni del Centro Studi Don Bosco, Studi storici - 5). Roma: LAS, 1988, esp. p. 235-268.

[11] Of the four papers in group (1), the most outstanding is Pietro Braidò's critical edition (with extensive introduction and commentary) of two unpublished documents from the years 1854 and 1862, in which Don Bosco gives a summary history of his work and the ideas behind it [p. 13-81].²

[12] Another valuable paper in the same group is by Giorgio Chiosso, on Don Bosco's Oratory in the context of the new interest in education in Piedmont in the 1830s and 1840s [p. 83-116].

[13, 14] The other two papers are by Silvio Tramontin, on the Venice *Patronati* (oratories) as compared to Don Bosco's oratories [117-132]; and by Danilo Veneroso, on the artisan program as a test of Don Bosco's educational method [133-142].

[15, 16] Group (2), consists also of four papers. It features the very substantial study by Jesús Borrego, on Don Bosco's missionary strategy for Patagonia [p. 143-202]; and the equally massive essay by Francesco Motto, on Don Bosco's involvement in negotiations to fill vacant episcopal sees in the years 1858-1878 [p. 251-358]. Borrego and Motto are scholars of the *Istituto Storico Salesiano*.

[17, 18] The two remaining papers in the group are by Franco Molinari, on Don Bosco's *History of the Church* and its basic slants [p. 203-237]; and by Mario Belardinelli, on Don Bosco activity with respect to the First Vatican Council [p. 239-250].

[19, 20] There follow essays by Giuseppe Costa, on Don Bosco and young people's literature in the nineteenth century [p. 329-353]; and by Silvano Sarti, on the real value of currency in Don Bosco's time [p. 355-372].

[21] The final paper of the collection is by Pietro Stella—a very handy résumé of recent literature and research on Don Bosco [p. 373-396]. This essay contains a brief summary and evaluation of how Don Bosco is treated in non-Salesian and secular historical literature [p. 273-279]; it is followed by a survey of Salesian research, with some attention given to specific sensitive questions [p. 279-396].

III. *Don Bosco Fondatore della Famiglia Salesiana: Atti del Simposio, Roma-Salesianum (22-26 gennaio 1989)* (Dicastero per la Famiglia Salesiana), ed. Mario Midali. Roma: Editrice SDB, [no date]. [440 pages.]

² For a separate edition, with additional material, cf. Pietro Braidò, *Don Bosco per i giovani: L'«Oratorio», una «Congregazione degli Oratori»*. Documenti (Piccola Biblioteca dell'Istituto Storico Salesiano, 9). Roma: LAS, 1988. It may be noted that critical editions and studies issuing from the *Istituto Storico Salesiano* are first published in *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane*.

This anthology is organized in six sections: (1) General Aspects; (2) Don Bosco Founder of the Salesian Society; (3) Don Bosco Founder of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians; (4) Don Bosco Founder of the Salesian Cooperators; (5) Don Bosco and Other Members of the Salesian Family; (6) Relevance of the Founding of Salesian Institutions in Church and Society Today.

[22, 23, 24] The three general papers of Section (1) are by Mario Midali, on various approaches to, or possible ways of looking at a founder [p. 27-80]; Sergio Cuevas León, on the Founder as presented in official documents of the Salesian Family [p. 81-112]; Francis Desramaut, on the character and personal development of Don Bosco as Founder.

[25] The even more substantial Section (2) on the founding of the Salesian Society, contains four papers, the most comprehensive of which is by Ramón Alberdi, on the history of the founding of the Salesian Society from its origins to the approval of its Constitutions--a valuable survey in that it draws on recently edited documentation,³ and addresses all significant critical questions [p.149-196].

[26, 27, 28] Other papers in this section (all very informative) are by Cosimo Semeraro, on the principles and procedures adopted by the Roman chanceries in approving nineteenth-century religious congregations [p. 197-223]; by Francesco Motto, in part parallel to the two above, but more specifically on the exchanges between Don Bosco and the Roman chanceries [p. 225-246]; and by Giuseppe Tuninetti, on the relationships (happy or otherwise) between Don Bosco and the Turin Archbishops in the founding [p. 247-278].

[29, 30] The two essays in Section (3) are by María Esther Posada, on Don Bosco as founder of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, dealing with the origin of the idea and the history of the founding [p. 281-303]; and by Anita Deleidi, on the historical relationship between Don Bosco and Mary Mazzarello in the founding [p. 305-321].

[31] The single paper in Section (4) is by Francis Desramaut, on the founding of the Salesian Cooperators. It addresses the critical question of the origin of the idea, traces its development, and delineates the character of the institution through successive documentation [p. 325-357].

[32] In the single, very informative paper of Section (5), Joseph Aubry surveys the numerous "peripheral" groups that belong to the Salesian Family, and discusses not only the criteria of their "belonging", but also how the special character and charism of each group relates to Don Bosco [p. 361-388].

³ Cf. note 2 above and text relating thereto.

[33] In Section (6), in a concluding paper, Egidio Viganò (on the basis of the history of foundings, and of Don Bosco's founding in particular) reflects on how the various aspects of the Salesian charism are inserted and may be relevant in Church and society today [p. 391-428].

IV. [A] *Don Bosco nella storia: Atti del 1° Congresso Internazionale di Studi su Don Bosco (Università Pontificia Salesiana - Roma, 16-20 gennaio 1989)* (Publicazioni del Centro Studi Don Bosco, Studi storici - 10), ed. Mario Midali. Roma: LAS, 1990. [572 pages.]

[B] *Don Bosco en la historia: Actas del Primer Congreso Internacional de Estudios sobre San Juan Bosco (Universidad Pontificia Salesiana - Roma, 16-20 enero 1989)* (Publicaciones del Centro Studi Don Bosco, Studi storici - 11), ed. José Manuel Prellezo García. Roma: LAS; Madrid: Editorial CCS, 1990. [568 pages.]

[C] The *English edition* of the above proceedings is not yet available.⁴

The papers (classed either as *reports* or as *presentations* to the Congress) are collected under six headings: (1) Don Bosco in Historical Writings (4 papers); (2) Don Bosco in Church and Society (10 papers); (3) Don Bosco and Education (8 papers); (4) Don Bosco and the Culture of the Common People (5 papers); (5) Various Unsolicited Presentations (varying in number according to language groups); (6) Closing Section (3 papers).

The essays are scholarly and informative, and singling any of them out as especially meritorious will largely depend on the reader's personal interest or point of view.

[34] Section (1) opens with a brief survey by Pietro Stella of recent research on Don Bosco (chiefly in Salesian circles) [p. 21-36].

[35, 36, 37] This paper is followed by a substantial article by Francis Desramaut, on the historical method that guided the compilation of the *Biographical Memoirs* [p. 37-65]; a report by Francesco Motto, on the project for a critical edition of Don Bosco's letters [p. 67-80]; and a report by Raffaele Farina, on the Central Salesian Archives [p. 81-89].

[38, 39] Section (2) contains ten essays, and two of these seem especially valuable: one, on Don Bosco's ecclesiology, by Juan María Laboa [p. 107-134]; the second, on Don Bosco's spirituality, its roots and its character, by Massimo Marocchi [p. 157-176].

[39-47] Other presentations are: on Don Bosco and the Church, especially in France, by Émile Poulat [p. 93-106]; on Don Bosco and

⁴ Page references are to the Italian edition.

Archbishop Lawrence Gastaldi, by Giuseppe Tuninetti [p. 135-142]; on Don Bosco's *History of the Church* and its character, by Franco Molinari; [p. 143-156]; on Don Bosco and Catholic associations in Spain, by Ramón Alberdi [p. 177-204]; on Don Bosco and Mary Mazzarello, by Anita Deleidi [p. 205-216]; on Don Bosco and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, by María Esther Posada [p. 217-230]; on Don Bosco and his action in society, by Giuseppe Bracco [p. 231-236]; on Don Bosco's attitude and action with regard to work and workers, by Silvio Tramontin [p. 237-258].

[48-52] The first five of eight essays in Section (3) would constitute a comprehensive treatise on Don Bosco as an educator: Don Bosco's option for young people, by Luciano Pazzaglia [p. 259-288]; Don Bosco's oratories as educational undertakings, by Giorgio Chiosso [p. 297-314]; Don Bosco and liberal arts education (the school), by Bruno Bellerate [p. 315-330]; Don Bosco and vocational education (the workshop and the trade school), by José Manuel Prellezo [p. 331-354].

[53-55] Further essays in this section deal with Don Bosco's educational method in school and beyond, by Cesare Scurati [p. 355-370]; Don Bosco and the sacraments, by Jacques Schepens [p. 371-392]; Don Bosco and vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, by Fausto Jiménez [p. 393-410].

[56-59] Essays in Section (4) deal with: Don Bosco's place in, and contribution to the culture of the common people, by Francesco Traniello [p. 411-426]; Don Bosco and the educational theater, by Stefano Pivato [p. 427-438]; Don Bosco and the press, by Francesco Malgeri [p. 439-448]; Don Bosco and music, by Giulio Sforza [p. 449-452].

[60] The last paper may not exactly belong in this section, but it is a most interesting one: on the originality of Don Bosco's missionary approach in Patagonia, by Jesús Borrego [p. 453-470].

[--] The contents of Section (5), various unsolicited presentations, vary with each language group.

[61-62] Following a brief introduction by Card. Antonio María Javierre Ortas, the two presentations in the concluding Section (6) are by Pietro Scoppola, on Don Bosco's modern quality [p. 531-540]; and Pietro Braidò, on the direction and goals of present research on Don Bosco--a fitting conclusion to a scholarly collection.

V. *Don Bosco e Brasilia: Profezia, realtà sociale e diritto* (Roma e America, Collana di studi giuridici latinoamericani, 3), ed. Cosimo Semeraro. Padova: CEDAM, 1990. [281 pages.]

This is in some ways an unusual collection, commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the inauguration of Brasilia, the Brazilian capital. It

is organized in two parts. Part I ("History and Prophecy") deals with Don Bosco's dreams and in particular with his second mission dream, and its supposed reference to Brasilia. Part II ("Social and Juridical Reality") deals with Don Bosco's and the Salesians' commitment to human and social development in Latin America, and with experiments and achievements in this field.

[63] To open Part I, a substantial essay by Cosimo Semeraro surveys the literature on Don Bosco's dreams from early biography to recent studies [p. 21-46].

[64, 65] This is followed by two essays dealing with dreams in Biblical and Christian history--one by Paolo Siniscalco, focusing on the typology of dream interpretation and use (divination, rationalism and prophecy) [p. 47-58]; the other by Morton Kelsey, focusing on dreams as religious experience [p. 59-83].⁵

[66] Arthur Lenti contributes a rather extensive study on Don Bosco's five "mission dreams", touching on preliminary critical questions, examining text and context, and attempting to evaluate the significance of these dreams, beyond their "predictive" elements [p. 85-130].⁶

[67, 68] Part I closes with two brief reflections on Don Bosco's second "mission dream", and its supposed reference to Brasilia, by José De Vasconcellos [p. 131-138] and by Edson Nery da Fonseca [p. 139-145] respectively.

Part II contains a number of valuable papers.

[69] First comes a pithy essay by Raffaele Farina, on the scientific contributions made by Salesian missions and missionaries [p. 149-168].

[70-73] There follow a number of essays clustered around the general theme of human development: Bruno Bellerate writes on Don Bosco's attitude toward native races and cultures [p. 169-180]; Gianfausto Rosoli, on Don Bosco's concern and the Society's work on behalf of immigrants in Latin America [p. 181-191]; Juan Shutka, on the experiment in socio-political and religious organization among the Shuar (Jívaros, Ecuador) [p. 193-217]; Tarcisio Bertone, on Don Bosco and human rights in Latin America, in the context of international conventions [p. 245-257].

⁵ This is an Italian translation of Morton Kelsey's essay, as published in *Dreams, Visions & Prophecies of Don Bosco*, ed. Eugene M. Brown. New Rochelle, N.Y.: Don Bosco Publications, 1986, p. ix-xl

⁶ This is a re-working of an article by Arthur Lenti, "Don Bosco's Mission Dreams in Context," *Indian Missiological Review* 10 (1988) 9-52.

[74] This last-mentioned essay is preceded by a study by Sergio Vinciguerra and Silvio Chiaberto, on Don Bosco and juvenile delinquents in the context of the practice of correctional juvenile institutions in his time.

[75, 76] This section ends with two shorter essays--one by Giorgio Lombardi, on Don Bosco and his attitude toward the State's constitutional order [p.259-265]; the other by Card. Rosalio J. Castillo Lara, on Don Bosco and his thought and practice in establishing rules and regulations [p. 267-278].

CONCLUSION

As we look at the variety of the topics and of the occasions of these papers, we realize that it was inevitable that there should be repetition, that experts should be called upon to write or speak in the area of their expertise on different occasions, and that previously published papers should occasionally be reprinted. In spite of this, the thematic range in the five collections presented above is truly impressive. And with almost no exception, these essays show not only the range but also the depth of on-going research on Don Bosco and his work. We owe a debt of gratitude to the editors and publishers of these handsome volumes for making available all these valuable contributions in the field of Salesian Studies.