

**Schoolbook circulation in the local press (1840-1940):  
O Paiz, Publicador Maranhense, and Pacotilha <sup>1 2 3</sup>**

***Circulação do livro escolar na imprensa local (1840-1940):  
O Paiz, Publicador Maranhense e Pacotilha***

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**Abstract**

This article analyzes the records of schoolbooks in the newspapers Publicador Maranhense (1842-1885), O Paiz (1863-1889), and Pacotilha (1880-1939), aiming to understand their influence in Maranhão education through the press. Cultural History theoretical- methodological assumptions are used to identify the school works and their materiality, the subjects involved in production control, the camouflages used as appropriation tactics, and the different conceptions, contents, and variations according to the contextual conditions. We conclude that schoolbooks had a prominent place in the press at the time, publicizing the local productions adopted nationally due to their quality or the authors' influence in the province.

**Keywords:** schoolbook, Maranhão education, school material culture

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## **Resumo**

*Neste artigo, analisam-se os registros sobre livros escolares nos jornais *Publicador Maranhense* (1842-1885), *O Paiz* (1863-1889) e *Pacotilha* (1880-1939), objetivando-se compreender a influência que tiveram na instrução maranhense via imprensa. Identificam-se as obras escolares e sua materialidade, os sujeitos envolvidos no controle da produção e as camuflagens em uso como táticas de apropriação, para além das diferentes concepções, conteúdos e variações, conforme as condições contextuais à luz dos pressupostos teórico-metodológicos da história cultural. Conclui-se que os livros escolares no período ocuparam lugar de destaque na imprensa, divulgando-se a produção local que foi adotada em nível nacional, seja pela qualidade exigida, seja pela influência de seus autores na província.*

**Palavras-chave:** *livro escolar, instrução maranhense, cultura material escolar*

## **Introduction**

The schoolbook is not only a support to register knowledge and practice; it is also a cultural object that carries values, costumes, and the authorized discourse of a certain group in a time/space. It is the subject of intense discussions, different conceptions, and opinions, largely publicized in the newspapers during the Empire and the Republic. In this sense, the periodic press from Maranhão is essential not only as a way of communication but also due to its extensive production<sup>4</sup>. The press helps us to understand the role of this artifact of school material culture in education through the announcements and articles published, especially when considering the school form of socialization and the gradual autonomy of the pedagogical relationship in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Transformations in the interaction between teachers and students, provoked by the change from the individual teaching method to the simultaneous one, demanded new objects, among them, the schoolbook. Hence, we can perceive the path of this material by following the intentions of the discourses portrayed in *O Paiz* (1863-1889), *Publicador Maranhense* (1842-1885), and *Pacotilha* (1880-1939).

The schoolbook, as a poor cousin of literature or a product of little cultural prestige, did not even appear in writers' biographies, nor was much referenced in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 300 newspapers were published in Maranhão during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Velázquez Castellanos, 2017, p. 397)

century, as it was considered a minor work, though with noble parentage (Batista & Galvão, 2009; Bittencourt, 2008; Corrêa, 2006; Lajolo & Zilberman, 1996). Since the gradual increase of places in public education, with the Brazilian nationalization project, and after the creation of the Maranhão General Inspectorate of Public Instruction in 1841, the schoolbook slowly became the center of book production (Bittencourt, 2008). It stood out in the school market, increasing production, circulation, and use. They were channels to publicize anonymous and well-known authors that transformed their styles, conceiving new ways of interacting with a specific public, and gaining recognition in local teaching spaces and local press (Velázquez Castellanos, 2017; Costa, 2013; Soares, 2017). This scenario justifies the timing of the researched sources considering the amount of schoolbooks in the Empire and the passage to the Republic. On the other hand, market strategies can explain “in part, why erudite authors, in a significant number, used school literature to disseminate [their] works” (Bittencourt, 2008, p. 83). A logic that helps us understand the prevalence of foreign schoolbooks in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the gradual coexistence of national and local texts that established the meaning of being Brazilian and from Maranhão. However, even if international literature was a model for Brazilian and regional production until the 1860s, the subsequent and increasing Brazilianization of schoolbooks gave specific contours to the national and local production, showing their singularity/diversity and stopping being a modeled production (Velázquez Castellanos, 2023; Lajolo & Zilberman, 1996).

In this perspective, we used Cultural History theoretical-methodological assumptions from three inseparable axes to analyze newspaper records about schoolbooks, the dynamics established, and their proposed ends. In *the history of the object in its materiality* (the first analytical axis), it is essential to examine how the records appear to understand how and why the books were approached at *O Paiz* (commercial content), at *Publicador Maranhense* (related to provincial management), and *Pacotilha* (government opposition). It also analyzes the message structure to identify similarities/differences, following the nature of school artifacts beyond the frequency they appear in the written material. It points out schoolbook movements by considering their circulation, use and/or veto, and the device itself. The newspaper is a material support that enables dissemination and commentaries. Inquiring about these aspects based on the records analyzed, on their location in the support topography, on the form, and on the content transmitted signals permanences, intermittencies, and 'silences' in the press, which unveils reeditions and the disappearance of titles, works, and authors.

In the *history of practices in their differences* (the second axis), we question what different subjects do when the same object is imposed on them (Bourdieu, 2007). In this case, schoolbook as school artifacts point us towards the singularities of practices; schoolbooks have power relations considered here as a background, following De Certeau's (2012) polemological model. These imposition strategies have the power to create norms about it, establishing a "calculation (or manipulation) of power relations" (p. 3). Furthermore, the appropriation tactics from those wanting to bypass impositions creatively alter the prescriptions and mark the differences of practices in the artifact use. A game of competition and disputes that, according to the socialization school form, is a "unit of particular historical configuration, emerged in certain social formations, in a given time [together with] other transformations" (Vincent *et al.*, 2001, p.10) which imposed themselves when faced by reforms of several types and magnitudes.

The third analytical axis that incorporates the two previous ones scrutinizes three crucial aspects: 1) the formation or social/cultural configurations established in a balance of tensions among authors, typographers, and newspaper writers in the production and circulation of schoolbooks considering legislators and their norms and, at the same time, depending on the consumers to which the announcements, criticisms, and news are addressed; 2) the changes in the psychic structures or in how to think the schoolbook reflect different conceptions/approaches, according to the content proposed, to perceive the modifications and innovations depending on the teaching programs and legal devices via reforms during the Empire and the beginning of the Republic; and finally, 3) the conceptual frameworks established at the time pointed out what should or not be allowed in the works to discuss the several perceptions, considering the production, forms, and organization of schoolbooks, following the criteria and paths of approval, analyzed here in their historical variations.

The article is organized in three parts. The first presents the schoolbook that appear in the Maranhão press and discusses how each newspaper approaches them, the relevance of this support, and the emphasis given depending on each editorial proposal. The second focuses on the titles/authors, considering the editions and recommendation uses, evaluations, and criticisms. In the third part, we investigate the specific characteristics that establish the works' adequacy or inadequacy for teaching, analyzing to what extent each book/production distances/approximates from the demanded criteria. This work can contribute to national and local studies on the history of education in Brazil and Maranhão and schoolbook history. The analyses point out a significant production of Maranhão schoolbooks and a close relationship

between teachers/authors and the local press, as well as the adoption/circulation of new works, according to the press, in other provinces or outside the country, and new titles, authors, editions identified, which were not still not recorded in local studies <sup>5</sup>.

## Schoolbooks in Maranhão press

In Brazil, the emergency and progressive use of texts produced for the school started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century boosted by the cultural impact caused by the arrival of the royal family and spread through the press. In this period, the discussions about instruction intensified and mobilized several social spheres. Schools assumed the responsibility of implementing order and social discipline, seeing that education was a pathway to shape the country's unit (Teixeira, 2008). On the other hand, depending on the dissemination objectives, the newspapers published a series of texts about books, readings, and public/private instruction in different forms. According to the first axis of cultural history in the sources, identifying such forms results in different registers: a) criticisms, b) dissemination messages, c) announcements, and d) reports and opinions. In this direction, the ways these texts were published in the press point out the intentions of their production and the sale strategies beyond the acceptability, circulation, and use of these works in the teaching spaces because this artifact is "inscribed in a market logic of production and circulation, carrying knowledge considered legitimate to be taught in school, which expresses a power relation" (Peres & Ramil, 2018, p. 36).

The announcements, for example, were predominantly used to disseminate the published schoolbooks from Maranhão in the newspapers, mainly aiming to diffuse, show, or offer different services and products. Regarding the frequency of this dissemination, also conceived in our first analytical axis, we notice that some subjects stand out. Mathematics has 146 references, and Grammar has 53. There were 49 references to reading, 22 to Geography, 10 to Moral, and 2 to History. The number of publications per subject may be due to the larger number of issues or because they were written by more famous authors from Maranhão. Other possibilities are that they were printed in important local typographies or that their content was considered vital to be learned by public elementary and secondary students.

<sup>5</sup> See Costa (2013); Soares (2017); Velázquez Castellanos (2017); Velázquez Castellanos, Castro, Souza (2023a); Velázquez Castellanos, (2023b)

Another aspect of the first axis of cultural history is the structure of the announcements. It was quite flexible and could take just a few lines or half a page, depending on the intention. They were mostly small texts of few lines, objectively written so that all readers, regardless of their reading level, could understand. In other cases, more important information were highlighted in boldface, italics, or using a larger font. These messages explained what was offered, the price, where to find the book, and/or how to purchase it. The book *Metrologia do Povo* (1882/2<sup>nd</sup> edition), by João Miguel da Cruz, was announced 92 times in 1882 at *Publicador Maranhense* and 45 times in 1895 at *Pacotilha*, being the most publicized book in the analyzed newspapers. This publication frequency might be explained by the relationships the author established as one of the main teaching authorities in the city of São Bento and his national recognition. It can also be seen as a way to be noticed in the capital, considering that *Metrologia Moderna ou Exposição Circunstanciada do Sistema Métrico Decimal* (1863/1<sup>st</sup> edition), by Antonio Coqueiro, was a consolidated competitor and a cheaper alternative for the students, mainly in elementary education.

Another analytical component to be considered is the device itself. For instance, we identified that the publications in *O Paiz* (1863-1889) about schoolbooks, be them announcements or articles, were more frequent in the first two years of the paper, apparently due to the personal interests of editor Belarmino de Mattos from the typography *Progresso* and the owner Themistocles Aranha (teacher at Liceu Maranhense and principal/founder of *Colégio São João Batista*). They were vital to discuss and disseminate the Maranhão production of schoolbooks, mainly from teachers/authors. This recurrence meaningfully decreased when the editor left.

Another element to observe is that the structure of the book announcements used by the typography *Progresso* differed from others regarding the page size, the use of typographic highlights, and the frequency. In this sense, if the newspapers gave more visibility to several works; on the other hand, they privileged those that were dear to who held the cultural devices for their dissemination, as there was a significant difference between referencing a title/author in the bottom of the page or publishing countless announcements and articles taking up a significant space in the newspaper. Besides the various elements and information disseminated, this visibility led the reader towards a certain interpretation of the object represented. As Pesavento (2012) points out,

... [they have] the symbolic power to say and to create a belief about the world, have the control of social life...this group will impose their way of seeing the world, establishing classifications and divisions, and proposing values and norms, which guide taste and perception, defining limits, and authorizing behaviors and social roles. (p. 42)

The power of representation affected credibility and social participation. Therefore, it was not enough to publicize the book. The book needed to stand out, bringing elements beyond the work that helped convince the reader, frequently reminding them about the existence of this object by frequently repeating these messages. This suggests that all representations of schoolbooks in the early years of *O Paiz* (1863-1889) were based on the commercial relationship between the typography and the newspaper because this situation does not take place in other moments or in the other two newspapers regarding the structure of the announcements and their frequency.

These dissemination messages indicated school uses and highlighted the author's intellectual capabilities, the contents approached, and the teaching benefits: "we, thus, recommend *Livro dos Meninos* to all parents and teachers, hoping that, by understanding its usefulness, they will make an effort to execute it with dedication, following the precepts of the intelligent and illustrious author" (O Paiz, 1864, p. 2). However, some books surpass the school environment and are recognized by the whole population, considering the moral and religious values that intended to hegemonize, as "parallel to the work with children, the need to act with the parents is needed to 'educate them'" [authors' highlight] (Vincent *et al.*, 2001, p. 42).

On the other hand, among other things, *Publicador Maranhense* (1842-1885) proposed to disseminate governmental actions. About the schoolbooks, the subjects dealt with the contents demanded, following the approval or disapproval reports written by the bodies of provincial power, which were under the responsibility of *Congregação dos Professores do Liceu Maranhense* [Teacher Congregation of Maranhão Liceu]. According to its Statutes (1838), the artifacts of school material culture would be controlled by the Public Instruction Inspector after its creation in 1841, though it was only institutionalized after 1844. Among his attributions, the inspector needed to review and correct primary education schoolbooks, even make possible substitutions, and had the control over the approval or veto process that, after the creation of the new Regulation for Public Instruction in 1874, would be in charge of the Public Instruction Council (Castro, 2009).



These reports pointed out positive and negative aspects of each work, among them printing mistakes, disagreements between concepts and approaches used, content discrepancies, according to the program reforms via legal devices, limitations in the explanations and applications, and even the excess and/or gaps left by the authors and editors. For instance, in the evaluation of *Rudimentos de Geografia* (1863/1<sup>st</sup> edition) by Antonio Rego, when “in the third part the author agglomerates the names of islands, peninsulas, capes, etc., that could be reduced to a better teaching and students' learning” (Publicador Maranhense, 1862, p. 2).

However, one year later, evaluation reports of the same work considered that “the small flaws [were] inevitable in works of this nature, mainly in their first editions, published twice in haste due to an urgent need” (Publicador Maranhense, 1863, p. 2). Mistakes that did not compromise understanding because, at the time of publication, there was no similar work so efficiently approaching geography and history aspects, especially of Maranhão. This is one of the main advantages highlighted because “regarding Brazil and mainly Maranhão, Dr. Rego shows diligence and care with his objective at hand” (Publicador Maranhense, 1863, p. 2). Mismatched evaluations that depended not only on the content proposed and ways to show/divide the subjects, according to understanding levels, but also on the authors' position in the social spaces, marked by the political, ideological, religious, social, and cultural bias of their trajectory, which seems to define the differentiation of these practices.

*Publicador Maranhense* also stressed the importance of some themes. For example, the book *Metrologia moderna ou exposição circunstanciada do sistema métrico decimal* (1863/1<sup>st</sup> edition) by João Antonio Coqueiro, stood out mainly due to two issues – usefulness and the purpose: the adoption of an official system to standardize weights and measures in all Brazilian provinces and the fact that it was one of the preparatory materials needed to enroll in an Imperial academy. In this case, the evaluation report was a recommendation, as its “adoption would make, from now on, the classes of geometry and commercial bookkeeping necessary for the Lyceo in this city; and also in the high public schools” (Publicador Maranhense, 1863, p. 2).

Here, the schoolbook is related to a fundamental concept, the pedagogical practices that are “enacted to organize/potentialize/interpret the intentions of an educational project” (Franco, 2016, p. 536) — actions enacted consciously and participatively in the classroom, associated to the pedagogical process. For instance, regarding the books used for primary and secondary levels, it would be “up to the teacher to deal with what is at the students’ intelligence



level, considering the development demanded by the subject” (Publicador Maranhense, 1863, p. 1), books were guiding manuals to transmit contents.

*Pacotilha* (1880-1939) presents the lowest number of schoolbook references among the analyzed newspapers. The articles do not approach the schoolbooks themselves. These artifacts appeared in the news about school objects and depended on the curricula of the schools that used them, highlighting the methodological innovations proposed by the authors, considering the originality and contribution to the nation’s progress or completely disagreeing with it.

The dissemination and indications of schoolbook consumption did not happen only due to the quality of the material but also its content, innovative methodological procedures, and impression. Furthermore, this process included the roles played by the authors in the social fabric or the power relationships established (Velázquez Castellanos, 2012). As personalities involved in the teaching universe, who assumed different positions, they allowed the introduction of school productions in the public system. They used these spaces to promote their works, as did Antônio Marques Rodrigues, because “the social place occupied by the author was decisive in the distribution process of the book [;] mainly[,] when working as an inspector of Public Instruction” (Costa, 2013, p. 10). Works such as *Postillas de Grammatica geral Applicada á lingua portugueza pela analyse dos clássicos* (1863/1<sup>st</sup> edition), *Grammatica Portugueza acomodada aos princípios gerais das palavras* (1878/3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Sotero dos Reis, and *Metrologia moderna ou exposição circunstanciada do sistema métrico decimal* (1863/1<sup>st</sup> edition) by João Antonio Coqueiro, would always stand out in the newspapers, more frequently mentioned than any other works.

During the Empire, there was no educational project worthy of this term (Velázquez Castellanos, 2022a). The schoolbook should align with the proposal established by the power instances, considering what was understood by public instruction. The aim was to support the pedagogical practice and the transmission of objectified knowledge, which materialized the school form of socialization that started to be established (Vincent *et al.*, 2001). This process was faced by the submission to impersonal rules, time control, division of the program into subjects, the autonomization of the pedagogical relationship, and the transition from the individual method to the simultaneous one. To do so, a series of school objects were needed for such an action, such as blackboards, schoolbooks, and posters, among other artifacts conceived as school material culture (Velázquez Castellanos, 2020; Faria Filho, 2007).

Therefore, there is an increasing production of schoolbooks to answer the interests of power agencies, identifying several titles disseminated in the local press<sup>6</sup> Hence, we can ask: How were these representations built in different newspapers from the relationships established and the practices seen between and through subjects? How would authors' social positions affect the number of works? Why do some books stand out more than others in the press and in teaching?

## The newspaper as an astute messenger: means of schoolbooks circulation

Maranhão press was one of the main vehicles to disseminate written printed material in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to *O Paiz* (1883), “the newspaper, as the most astute and quick messenger of thought manifestation, and a pioneer of the idea of public service” (p.1), would inform society about the production, distribution, and circulation of literary, school, religious, and other types of texts. When identifying schoolbooks from Maranhão authors, one can perceive the plurality and the significant number of printed texts announced in the newspapers, as shown in the table below.

**Table 1**

*Schoolbooks that circulated in Maranhão<sup>7</sup> (Publicador maranhense (1842-1995), O Paiz (1863-1889) and Pacotilha (1980-1939))*

Nº	TITLE	AUTHOR / L.	POSITION	USE
1	Grammatica elementar da língua Portuguesa (1866/ 9 <sup>th</sup> edition)	Felippe Benicio de O. Condurú/ MA	Teacher	Primary instruction <i>Liceu do Para</i>
2	Livro do povo (1863/ 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition)	Antonio Marques Rodrigues/MA	Teacher – Teaching Inspector	Primary instruction (MA/ BA/PE)
3	Rudimentos de geografia (1862/1 <sup>st</sup> edition)	Antonio Rego/MA	Medical doctor	Primary instruction Colégio Sant’Anna
4	Livro dos meninos (1864/1 <sup>st</sup> edition)			Primary instruction Instituto de Humanidades

<sup>6</sup> We identified 32 works produced by Maranhão authors targeting education between 1860 and 1920, which can be found in Santos’s (2022) dissertation and 37 in Velázquez Castellanos (2017).

<sup>7</sup> The choice of schoolbooks agrees with the permanences, intermittences, silences, and reappearance of sources, which point out their use, considering the frequency and adaptability levels to teaching, according to the changes in the teaching programs through reforms and legal devices. The data of the productions/editions was not a determinant factor.

5	Tratado de Arithmetica (1897/2 <sup>nd</sup> edition)	João Antonio Coqueiro/MA	Teacher at Liceu Maranhense	Liceu Maranhense /Colégio Pedro II
6	Metrologia moderna ou exposição circunstanciada do systema métrico decimal (1863/ 1 <sup>st</sup> edition)			Primary instruction (MA/PE) Colégio de Pedro II
7	Prática das novas medidas (1886/1 <sup>st</sup> edition)			Primary instruction
8	Curso elementar de matemática vol. I (1869/1 <sup>st</sup> edition)			Indicated for primary and industrial instruction, besides Colégio Pedro II
9	Compendio de gramatica philosophica (1863/5 <sup>th</sup> edition)	Padre Antônio da Costa Duarte/ SI <sup>8</sup>	Teacher at Liceu	Liceu / public instruction
10	Postillas de Grammatica geral Applicada á lingua portugueza pela analyse dos clássicos (1863/1 <sup>st</sup> edition)	Francisco Sotero dos reis/ MA	Teacher/ Principal at Liceu Teaching Instructor	Public Instruction Colégio Sant'Anna Liceu Maranhense
11	Grammatica Portugueza acomodada aos princípios gerais das palavras (1878/3 <sup>rd</sup> )			
12	Resumo de Grammatica da língua portugueza (1865/1 <sup>st</sup> edition)	Pedro de Souza Guimarães/ SI	Director of Instituto de Humanidades	Instituto de Humanidades
13	Resumo da História do Brasil (1879/1 <sup>st</sup> edition)	João Antonio Tinoco de Sandes Junior/ SI	--	--
14	Resumo de álgebra (1886/1 <sup>st</sup> edition)	Jose Augusto Correa/ MA	--	--
15	Metrologia do povo (1882/2 <sup>nd</sup> edition)	João Miguel da Cruz/ MA	Teacher	Public instruction
16	Nova cartilha portugueza (1918/1 <sup>st</sup> edition)	Odolfo Aires de Medeiros/ MA	--	--
17	Alfabeto phonetico –auricular (1881/1 <sup>st</sup> edition)	Roberto A. Moreira / MA	--	--

Despite its vital importance to education, the content of works such as *Metrologia moderna ou exposição circunstanciada do systema métrico decimal* (1863/1<sup>st</sup> edition) by João Antonio Coqueiro, presented some mistakes according to the evaluation committee. For example, in the decimal numbers, the "author does not work with the periodic decimals which [gave] birth to the

<sup>8</sup> No information until now.

conversion into decimals, of some ordinary fractions" (Publicador Maranhense, 1863, p. 2), as well as some printing mistakes, when exchanging some numbers that, according to the reviewers, little compromised the work. The same situation occurred in *Rudimentos de Geografia* (1862/1<sup>st</sup> edition) by Antonio Rego, in which the concepts of political geography and Protestantism were questioned. Such a mistake was meaningful, as the official religion to be disseminated was Catholicism (Publicador Maranhense, 1862). The re-edition was the author/editor's opportunity to correct mistakes, update contents, or solve printing mistakes pointed out in the official reports. Tactics that manipulated and altered several forms of impositions (Certeau, 2012), authors/editors' inventiveness for alternatives to the established prescriptions and rules, which would guarantee a new production.

A book highly publicized in the newspapers was *Metrologia do povo* (1882/2<sup>nd</sup> edition), by teacher João Miguel da Cruz from the city of São Bento, in 1882 it had 92 announcements in *Publicador Maranhense* (1842-1885). In 1898, after 17 years of its first publication, it was still publicized in *Pacotilha* (1880-1939). A schoolbook with good evaluations precisely due to its language and the methods that, when comparing old measurements with modern ones, facilitated the understanding of people with no previous arithmetical knowledge; " a practical method of reducing all the measurements of the decimal system to the old one, and how to reduce prices in the goods measured by one and by another" (O Paiz, 1881, p. 3). In *O Paiz* (1863-1889) and *Publicador Maranhense* (1842-1885), *Postillas de grammatica geral applicada á lingua portugueza pela analyse dos clássicos* (1863/1<sup>st</sup> edition) by Sotero dos Reis was one of the most publicized book. Such dissemination is probably due to its notoriety in teaching/press. These *postillas* were the result of his notes in the classes of Latin Grammar (Mello, 2009), "where the difficulties, idioms, and beauties of the language [were] explored, delineated, and exposed to the light of science, with a clear and sharp view, admired under a higher reason" (O Paiz, 1883, p.1).

In opposition, *Resumo de Álgebra* (1886/1<sup>st</sup> edition), by teacher José Augusto Correia, appeared only in a small note in *Publicador Maranhense* in 1886, with no more features<sup>9</sup>, though its content and the quality of the impression was well-evaluated. The *Nova Cartilha Portuguesa* (1918/1<sup>st</sup> edition), by Odolfo Aires de Medeiros, also received little attention in the press, which can be related to its innovative proposals for adults' literacy. This practice stops us from

<sup>9</sup> José Augusto Corrêa (1854 - 1919) was a philologist and writer who worked at *Pacotilha* since 1915 and an examiner-teacher in Colégio União de Nossa Senhora do Rosário in 1874 (Soares, 2017).

affirming that its use was as discrete in teaching as it was in the newspaper because it raised many questions, amongst which: a) the financial resources available to pay for the announcements; b) the relationships between authors, editors, and press that could favor the dissemination of a title, work and/or author; c) the social position of the writers and their work in sociability spaces, as in the case of teacher João Miguel da Cruz e Sotero dos Reis (nationally known), which can justify, in a certain measure, the works' fame.

Therefore, we seek to unveil such relationships using the second axis of cultural history, which seeks to differentiate the practices. Inequalities are projected in the tension between imposition strategies via legal devices and authors' appropriation of tactics that create inventiveness by transgressing such rules. The "admissions and uses of schoolbooks depended...from the places they occupied as subjects in the social fabric (political, economic, cultural, and institutional) and the relationships established by them in the spaces of power" (Velázquez Castellanos, 2017).

The books written by Dr. Antonio Rego, *Livro dos Meninos* (1864/1<sup>st</sup> edition) and *Rudimentos de Geografia* (1863/1<sup>st</sup> edition), were part of an elementary course created by him, together with Dr. Pedro Nunes Leal, for primary instruction. They were used in the *Instituto de Humanidades*. The first was published in only one edition, and the second with the highest number of editions, as, at the time of its publication, there were no similar works that approached, so efficiently, the aspects of Geography and History, especially of Maranhão (Publicador Maranhense, 1863, p. 2). The books *Metrologia do povo* (1882/ 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.), by João Miguel da Cruz, and *Livro do Povo* (1863/ 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), by Antonio Marques Rodrigues, were also well-evaluated and composed part of the teaching program of several schools. The latter claimed it "could be read during childhood, youth, virility, and old age" (Publicador Maranhense 1863, p. 2). Among their roles, the school and the Church acted as disseminators of moral values and behaviors; they were places to develop an individual or collective body (Certeau, 1982). Thus, the relationship between these institutions in the 1800s established itself, among other objectives, as a way to form new generations following the precepts of the Catholic faith. Therefore, school was a fundamental space due to its shaping capacity, and the schoolbook was an artifact of school material culture that was conceived, edited, and clear to be read, considering this web of relationships mainly in primary education.

According to Velázquez Castellanos (2022b), *O Livro dos Meninos* (1864) was approved for elementary schools to teach early reading, reaching approximately six thousand issues. However, according to the dissemination in the newspapers and studies on the topic, it was allegedly a mere imitation of *Livro do Povo* (1863/2<sup>nd</sup> edition) by Antonio Marques Rodrigues, which was the first book from Maranhão to teach reading (Bittencourt, 2008; Costa, 2013; Hallewell, 2012). A simple mistake! We consider *O Livro dos Meninos* by countryman Antonio Rego, the first Maranhão book thought, written, and circulated aiming literacy, considering the structure of the work and its contents: 1) it approaches the alphabet in different characters; 2) shows the syllables in Roman letters and handwritten; 3) instead of lists with first names, it shows a complete vocabulary of words in the language, from monosyllabic to nine-syllable words. Divided into two volumes, the book was idealized and conceived not only for the boys to become familiar with the "pronunciation and orthography" of Portuguese terms but also with "the meanings of some of them, which teachers should repeatedly explain, [beyond] exercises of reading and memory" (O Paiz, 1864, Ano II, n. 34, p. 3).

On the other hand, though it was one of the most prominent works during the second half of the 1800s, the *Livro do Povo* (1863/2<sup>nd</sup> edition) by Antonio Marques Rodrigues was conceived, produced, and adopted in schools for teaching reading in primary instruction. According to its nature and content, the book aimed to be used by readers under formation with basic abilities of reading, writing, and counting and not specifically illiterate students learning the first steps of reading and writing. Abílio Cesar Borges (the Baron of Macaúbas), when describing the characteristics needed for a work to be considered a reading book, pointed out the several criteria followed by the Marques Rodrigues's work, even if not for literacy purposes: the style, the use of short paragraphs that facilitated the reading and learning of readers under formation, the use of images that helped understand the texts, the language with words known by the children, and with appropriated subjects, following students' cognitive maturity and intelligence, as opposed to the use of fables and texts with figurative meanings that confused children's reasoning (Velázquez Castellanos, 2017).

Other initiatives regarding early literacy can be seen in *Alfabeto Fonético-Auricular* (1881/1<sup>st</sup> edition), by elementary teacher Roberto A. Moreira, and in *Nova qartilha portuguesa* (1918/1<sup>st</sup> edition), by teacher Odolfo Aires de Medeiros. As new ways for early literacy started to be explored, two other literacy proposals materialized into schoolbooks. In the first work, Moreira presents a fast and efficient literacy plan organized by an eclectic method, divided into



five parts, with 33 lessons (Pacotilha, 1881), as students took years of training to read. In the second, Medeiros opts for some innovations, such as banning from “the alphabet...the intruders – *k*, *w*, [and] *y*, which were never letters from our language” (Pacotilha, 1918, p. 2). The newspaper defends this proposal considering it a necessary work that challenged standards, going against what was imposed by the rules. Finally, the tensions between early literacy teaching by syllables or wording were brought to light. According to Moreira, in the later strategy, the student would start “reading words and phrases from the first lesson; what was also useful to correct certain mistakes of pronunciation and reading” (Pacotilha, 1876, p. 4).

However, though the differences between *Livro dos Meninos* (1864), by Antonio Rego and *Livro do Povo*, by Marques Rodrigues, were evident, considering their conception, ends, content selection and division, readers' reading level and profile, the newspaper articles constantly sought to compare them when announcing that “one more useful book- as the *Livro do Povo*, so useful for elementary teaching, has Dr. A Rego recently published to teach children the first letters” (O Paiz, 1864, p. 2). Such a situation could be partially justified when considering that Dr. Marques Rodrigues's work was already known, adopted, and distributed in several schools in Maranhão and other provinces like Pará, Piauí, Ceará, Pernambuco, *Município Neutro*<sup>10</sup>, and Portugal (Velázquez Castellanos, 2017). This comparison seems to be a tactic from the local press to approve, indicate, distribute, and consume this new work in schools.

Nevertheless, on the one hand, comparing seemed a favorite press tactic to seek approval, indication, and use of this last production; on the other hand, the differentiation of practices when disseminating the announcements portrays issues related to preferences, status, and power. Though it was familiar to the school and non-school audience, the *Livro do Povo* was published in a small space with no typographic highlight, and the pages were confusing with many other products and services. Contrariwise, the *Livro dos Meninos* occupied the top part of the 4<sup>th</sup> page of the newspaper dedicated to the announcements and advertisements, standing out in size, letter type, and decorations. There was a commercial logic to privilege the book from Typography Progresso and sell it, as *Livro do Povo* (1863/2<sup>nd</sup> edition) was printed in the competitive typography from Mr. Frias.

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<sup>10</sup> Translation note: This administrative unit was created during the Empire, corresponding to the city of Rio de Janeiro.



About *Gramatica Portuguesa acomodada aos princípios gerais das palavras* (1871/1<sup>st</sup> edition), by Ribeiro Guimarães, in 1878 its third edition started to be printed by Magalhaes e Cia. On this occasion, the work was carefully revised and corrected. The issues were printed in golden percaline to differentiate them from previous impressions, used in several provinces such as Pernambuco, Bahia, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro, besides Maranhão, and its first edition was sold out (Publicador Maranhense, 1871). The *Compêndio da Gramática Philosophica da Língua Portuguesa* (1853/3<sup>rd</sup> edição), by Father Antonio da Costa Duarte (teacher at Liceu Maranhense), had Ramos de Almeida as the responsible printer. Velázquez Castellanos (2017, p. 314), considers it “the first *Gramática Brasileira da Língua Portuguesa* published in the country, and not the *Gramática do gaúcho Antônio Pereira Coruja*”, published in 1835, because its first edition is from 1828. The Liceu Congregation considered the 5<sup>th</sup> edition released in 1863 as “one of the best, because its review was done by a competent person, who made a great effort, removing several serious mistakes” (Publicador Maranhense, 1863, p. 4), chosen to be used in the institution and the secondary classes of the schools in the province.

*Grammatica elementar da Língua Portuguesa* (1866/9<sup>th</sup> edition), by Condurú, targeted childhood and was approved to be used in the schools of the province “being recommended by its clearness, impression, and correction of some rules” (Publicador Maranhense, 1866, p. 3). *Resumo de gramatica da lingua portugueza* (1865/1<sup>st</sup> edition), by Pedro Souza Guimarães (French teacher in Liceu Maranhense), on the other hand, was approved by the president of the province Ambrozio Leitão da Cunha (1865), to be used in the literacy school of the capital, even though this book was not frequently talked about in the local press. The former, printed by the typography *Progresso* by Belarmino de Matos<sup>11</sup>, released its 10<sup>th</sup> edition in 1868, highlighting in its announcements its broad acceptance by teachers in the provinces of Maranhão and Pará, considering its usefulness and recommendation. The latter, on the contrary, was heavily criticized because

...the work does not improve what [exists] in the...compendia already used [considering] however, if with its outdated and common teaching, this compendium can fill the objective the author [envisioned]. In any case, the compedium deserve[d] to be approved. (Publicador Maranhense, 1865, p. 2)

<sup>11</sup> Recognized by the quality of his materials.

The sources point out the lack of a book that encompassed the history of Maranhão and Brazil, “encompassing all the facts, since its development, until the end of the Paraguay war, to be understood by children” (O Paiz, 1879, p. 4). In History, this situation started to be solved with the publication of *Resumo de História do Brasil* (1879/1<sup>st</sup> edition) by João Antonio Tinoco de Saandes Junior, a public teacher in the capital. The work was approved by the Council of Public Instruction and used in schools; its main qualities were “its clear and simple language in children's intelligence level, [having as] an advantage to be cheaper than other works of this genre used nowadays” (O Paiz, 1879, p. 4).

During the early years of the First Republic, the issue of national language and history, from the Portuguese discovery to the Empire, were also sensitive themes and objects of divergence, considering that not everyone supported the republican ideas and continued defending the monarchy. Thus, the intellectual environment in 1910 was marked by two different positions: those defending the republican sovereignty, which believed that the Empire was responsible for Brazil's underdevelopment, and those advocating the imperial rule, seeking to preserve the Portuguese language and heritage (Oliveira, 1990). The schoolbooks also reflected these conceptual frameworks because when writing them, the authors needed to assume a position in this scenario: a period of political and social transition, in which changes in the ways of thinking the passage from Empire to Republic focused on the value of national culture and the overcome of Portuguese legacy. Some criticisms towards *Nova quartilha*, by Odolfo de Medeiros (1918/1<sup>st</sup> edition) had ideological disputes as a background, besides the didactic-methodological aspects

## **Maranhão school production in the newspapers: indication and use**

The newspapers were responsible for registering, publicizing, and revealing several elements and evaluations about the schoolbooks from Maranhão authors or from those produced in the province, which materialized themselves into opinions, criticisms, and evaluations presented and recorded by different subjects, such as journalists, instruction agents, province presidents, inspectors and teachers, clients-readers, and even anonymous people. Therefore, it was possible to perceive the conceptual frameworks that guided books' characteristics, concepts, values, and ideas preached at the time and that were considered

adequate to be taught. Criteria such as morality, appropriate language to the target audience, and the usefulness of the contents were highlighted. These criteria were especially true for primary education, which encompassed the subjects of moral and religious instruction, reading and writing, the essential notions of grammar, and the system of weights and measures of the province (Castro, 2009). In this context, the book should be a "fountain of religion, morality, respect, usefulness, and fruitful education" (Publicador Maranhense, 1862, p 2).

The first conceptual framework perceived in the papers relates to modernity, closely connected to issues of the moral economy of teaching, connected to students' classification, which required the re-elaboration of ethical criteria in how to organize the several environments that composed the school space and keep such values preserved. This classification also touched on economic issues, as investments were needed to attend to such a dynamic. In the elementary teaching books, the main element valued by the newspapers was the moralization of childhood, whose aim was to imbed in children the moral values for social life. Thus:

...above all, schools need to be real centers of Christianity; it is not enough for the teacher to be illustrious, and teach: one also needs to know how to inoculate in one's students the mysterious sweetness of Religion, - this cornerstone in which the main pillars of society must lay. (O Paiz, 1887, p. 1)

Books that did not approach moral values in the conceptual frameworks of the time would condemn the moral formation of new generations. The Church's conception about what could be read "is forged around the reading of sacred texts, the reading of spiritual meditation that patiently seeks to take from the divine word something that shows one's intelligence, fortifies one's will and enlarges the heart" (Chartier, 2003, p. 39). The reading books of Maranhão authors were especially inspired by this perspective. The publications always highlighted the texts and biblical lessons that composed it. From the 256 pages of *Livro do Povo* (1863/2.<sup>nd</sup> edition), 134 were dedicated to the gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John (Costa, 2013).

Another conceptual framework refers to the use of language as a criterion, the records should "always be at the reach of students' intelligence, what is the most important in books with this end" (Publicador Maranhense, 1862, p. 2). Aiming to facilitate the understanding of the proposed contents and exercises, language objectiveness and simplicity were the main issues, as children supposedly had weak intelligence. The method employed by the author, another

fundamental element, should be clear, correct, practical, and instructive. Its usefulness depended on these questions because they were related to the book's organization, i.e., how the contents were displayed and worked, generally approaching them in an increasing level of complexity.

In this sense, some books stand out by the author's method of exposing the contents, such as *Metrologia moderna ou exposição circunstanciada do systema métrico decimal* (1863/1<sup>st</sup> edition), by João Antonio Coqueiro; the *Postillas de Grammatica geral Applicada á lingua portugueza pela analyse dos clássicos* (1863/1<sup>st</sup> edition), by Francisco Sotero dos Reis; the *Metrologia do povo* (1882/2<sup>nd</sup> edition), by João Miguel da Cruz and the *Alphabeto phonético-auricular* (1918/1<sup>st</sup> edition), by Roberto Moreira. The language used at *Livro do Povo* (1863/2<sup>nd</sup> edition), by Antonio Marques Rodrigues, and the *Livro dos Meninos* (1862/1<sup>st</sup> edition), by Antonio Rego, stand out, while the *Rudimentos de Geografia* (1862/1<sup>st</sup> edition) presented more complex singularities because even if "...the language [was] pure, it would not always be at the reach of students' intelligence" (Publicador Maranhense, 1862, p. 2). However, it was recommended for teaching. This decision can be related to the need for texts that deal with the local and national reality.

Regarding the usefulness of contents, the choice of subjects worked in each book is also an important element to acquire practical knowledge that can be applied at work, as can be seen at *Metrologia moderna ou exposição circunstanciada do systema métrico decimal* (1863/1<sup>st</sup> edition), which, among other things, presented tables with weights and measures "needed to be used in life and the many interesting applications for the commerce and the industry" (O Paiz, 1863, p. 3). Reading, writing, calculating, and arithmetic notions were vital elements to work, as affirmed by the Inspector of Public Instruction Luiz Antonio Vieira da Silva (1853) in the report for the president of the province, Eduardo Olímpio Machado (1852-1854): "men's occupations, your Excellency, in the well-organized societies, is divided into three main branches, which are: manual works; industries; and sciences" (Maranhão, 1853, no page).

The aim of early literacy schools was to generalize the access to elementary knowledge, mainly among the less privileged groups, as instruction "appears as a vast endeavor that could be called of public policy, ... it refers to reaching submission, obedience, or a new form of subjection [through] the rules that establish school order" (Vincent *et al.*, 2001, p. 14). The economically underprivileged population was not expected, nor intended, to be admitted in the secondary and higher education, as "the school for the poor, even [...] the white and free people, should not surpass literacy" (Faria Filho, 2007, p. 136). Manual labor was reserved for them, so

there was no need to deepen school knowledge, excluding from this basic education the free, freed, or enslaved black people, at least until the teaching regulation from 1874 (Velázquez Castellanos, 2017).

The impression quality of schoolbooks was frequently highlighted by newspapers and used as an argument to indicate their use in school. For example, the *Grammatica elementar* (1868/1<sup>st</sup> edition), by Conduru, which was “printed in the typographical shop of Mr. B. de Mattos. This 9<sup>th</sup> edition was recommended for its clearness, impression, and correction of some rules” (Publicador Maranhense, 1868, p. 3). Besides this, book approval was also an element commonly advertised in the articles and announcements for the recommendations of adoption and use as a way to show readers that the content was in agreement with the ideals of the time and the prescriptions established in the law, attending the impositions of the provincial government, and the Church which alternated and/or clashed, in a constant relation of strength and power. According to Velázquez Castellanos (2017), questions such as the level and the type of relations between authors, typographers, and editors with power instances, the theoretical-methodological precepts that ground the books, the affinities with the teaching programs, and the political and ideological interests also interfered in the acceptance of school works, as well as the divergences and convergences between the conceptions of the authors and the committees.

Therefore, the articles that disseminate and indicate a new work or new edition in the papers can be understood as tactics by the authors, editors, and typographers who are faced with the strategies imposed by regulation bodies. They are full of messages intending to convince those interested in their efficiency for teaching, detailing the books' content, exercises, and their adequacy to the language and intelligence of the target audience. They are messages with essential information that point towards a good formation and indicate which schools were using said works.

## **Final remarks**

The intentions of the subjects involved in the newspapers' publications determined how the message would be disseminated, seeking the acceptability of these subjects and the best-selling strategies. The most frequent titles were from influential authors who occupied privileged positions in the province administration due to their professional and academic trajectory, which

impacted the circulation and consumption of artifacts within and outside the province and the relationships established according to where they lived. The books from those with closer relationships stood out on the newspaper pages.

Through the press, powerful groups sought to impose their interests, dictating how these artifacts were disseminated in society, pointing out the book as a result of a social dynamic, conceptions of teaching and worldviews, following their viewpoint. For the producers, it meant contributing to the local society and from other provinces, granting them recognition and prestige, seeking to attend to these expectations, or contraposing them in some other way.

The impositions, the norms, and the evaluations to which the authors and printers were submitted to produce the schoolbook, perceived in the newspaper messages, reveal the tension between what was imposed and what was supposed to be communicated when creating a material, resulting from divergences between conceptual frameworks grounded on teaching conceptions that authors did not always share. Therefore, considering that such conceptions changed, from the transformations in the psychic structures or in how to think schoolbook content, we observe a conflict between these social groups that tried to impose their ideas and values, disseminating them to the new generations through an object dear to instruction due to its reach, the schoolbook.

Mathematics and Grammar held the highest number of titles and issues. The number of artifacts related to Geography and History is much smaller. The sources point out that there was a lack of materials about themes related to the national and local reality. Works talked little about Brazilian and Maranhão aspects due to the European influence in the teaching spaces, emerged from imported and/or translated schoolbooks.

In the case of literature/reading books, the need for children's moralization through content about morals, religions, and civility imposed by the Church/provincial power is evident. The division between books for early reading and writing and works to teach reading to readers with minimal abilities is clear, demystifying the place of *Livro do Povo*, by Antonio Marques Rodrigues, as the only reading book of Maranhão at the time, when presenting the *Livro dos Meninos* by Antonio Rego, as a literacy proposal. On the other hand, the change in the pedagogical relationship due to the method of simultaneous teaching, as opposed to the individual method, transformed teacher-student interaction and demanded its automatization. In this sense, the schoolbook became indispensable when providing indirectly the same content

to several students at the same time, as well as helping consolidate such relationships and their respective practices in the basis of school form socialization.

The books approached here were part of the teaching program of several institutions within and outside the province becoming a fundamental element in school grammar and contributing to the organization of school, systematized and objective contents, produced and targeting specific teaching levels and subjects, which worked as a guide for teachers' pedagogical practice in a conscious and participative manner in the school environment and depending on the level of students' understanding and children's maturity.

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