



## **“Una impronta di italianità”: the textbooks for Italian ethnic schools in Brazil between liberalism and fascism<sup>1</sup>**

“Una impronta di italianità”: os livros didáticos para escolas étnicas italianas no Brasil entre liberalismo e fascismo

“Una impronta di italianità”: los libros didácticos para escuelas étnicas italianas en Brasil entre el liberalismo y el fascismo

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article intends to investigate the historical process of the policies of production of school books adopted by Italy's ruling classes for schools abroad. It offers a contribution to understanding the dynamics and complex action that have characterized and followed the development of schooling and of cultural and formative processes, above all those regarding identity, of Italian settlers in Brazil, from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 1930s. Textbooks have been, since the very beginning of the Italian unification experience, a fundamental tool for the ruling classes that aimed to modernize and especially to homogenize and standardize teaching in a national sense. Along the following decades, the production and circulation of textbooks has increased significantly and so did the development of school publications. The issue also gained great importance when Italian governments promoted a new policy of colonial expansion and mass emigration abroad. After approving a law through which the Crispi government implemented, in 1889, the system of Italian colonial subsidized schools, a problem took place, concerning which textbooks should be introduced in the countries that received Italian immigrants and which characteristics such books should have. This article emphasizes the process of continuity and discontinuity of these policies and of the production of textbooks introduced in Italian schools abroad and in Brazil, specifically until the rise of fascism, to promote different ideas of an Italian identity.

**Key-words:** Italian colonial schools abroad; Public policies for school books; Ethnicity; National identity and education; Migration and education in Brazil.

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## RESUMO

Este artigo pretende investigar o processo histórico das políticas de produção dos livros escolares adotadas pela classe dirigente italiana para as escolas no exterior a fim de oferecer uma contribuição para o entendimento das dinâmicas e complexas ações que têm caracterizado e acompanhado o desenvolvimento da escolarização e dos processos culturais e formativos, sobretudo identitários, dos colonos italianos no Brasil, entre a segunda metade do século XIX e a fim dos anos 30, do século XX. Os livros didáticos foram, desde o começo da experiência da unificação italiana, um instrumento fundamental para as classes dirigentes italianas que tinham por finalidade modernizar e, sobretudo, homogeneizar e uniformizar o ensino nas escolas em sentido nacional. No curso das décadas seguintes, a produção e a circulação dos livros didáticos aumentaram significativamente também em relação ao desenvolvimento das publicações escolares. A questão assumiu uma grande importância também quando os governos italianos promoveram uma nova política de expansão colonial e de emigração de massa para o exterior. Após a aprovação da lei com a qual o governo Crispi, no ano 1889, instituiu o sistema das escolas italianas coloniais e subsidiadas, se colocou o problema de quais livros didáticos introduzir nos países que recebiam emigrantes italianos e quais características os mesmos deveriam ter. O artigo enfatiza o processo de continuidade e descontinuidade das políticas e da produção de livros didáticos introduzidos nas escolas italianas no exterior e no Brasil, em específico até a ascensão do fascismo para fomentar diferentes ideias de italianidade.

**Palavras-chave:** Escolas italianas coloniais no exterior; Política pública do livro escolar; Etnia, identidade nacional e educação.

## RESUMEN

Este trabajo se pretende profundizar en el desarrollo de las políticas del libro escolar establecidas por la clase dirigente para las escuelas italianas en el exterior entre la segunda mitad del siglo XIX y la década treinta del siglo XX. El artículo quiere ofrecer una contribución para reconstruir las dinámicas complejas que han caracterizado y acompañado el desarrollo de la escolarización y de los procesos culturales y formativos, sobre todo identitarios, de los colonos italianos en Brasil en el propio período. Los libros didáticos fueron, desde el comienzo de la experiencia de la unificación italiana, un instrumento fundamental para las clases dirigentes italianas que tenían por finalidad modernizar y, sobre todo, homogeneizar y uniformizar la enseñanza en las escuelas en sentido nacional. En el curso de las décadas siguientes, producción y circulación de los libros didáticos aumentaron significativamente también en relación al desarrollo de las publicaciones escolares. La cuestión asumió una gran importancia también cuando los gobiernos italianos promovieron una nueva política de expansión colonial y de emigración masiva hacia el exterior. Desde el momento posterior a la aprobación de la ley con la que el gobierno Crispi, en el año 1889, instituyó el sistema de las escuelas italianas coloniales y subsidiadas, se planteó el problema de qué libros didáticos introducir en los países de colonización y cuáles características debían tener. El artículo enfoca la evolución y la discontinuidad de las políticas y de la producción de los libros didáticos introducidos en las escuelas italianas en el exterior y en el Brasil en el específico hasta el fascismo para fomentar las diferentes ideas de italianidad.

**Palabras clave:** Escuelas italianas coloniales en el exterior; Política pública del libro escolar; Etnia, identidad nacional y educación; emigración y educación en Brasil

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## Introduction

Throughout the history of Italian education, research on the cultural and formative process concerning Italian communities abroad has remained isolated. Up to nowadays, the studies that have been carried out offered a synthetic view on the issue, following some fundamental lines: the ideological-political axis, the legislation and, partly, the quantitative axis of Italian schools abroad. In what concerns the specific reality of Brazil, some investigations conducted by Brazilian scholars, regarding the role played by ethnicities and social movements along the history of education, begin to put in evidence the most significant dynamics of the school institutions and the schooling processes of Italians in Brazilian regions, above all in the territories where the first Italian settlers have arrived, like the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Even fewer are the studies about the schools' cultures, their teaching praxis, schooling processes and identity formation, which are part of the analyses that the historiography of international education suggests investigating – with studies like the ones by Julia, Novoa, Viñao Frago, Escolano Benito and Sani.

In order to analyse the history of the policies for school books, we went to several sources. On the one hand, we have used data and documents produced for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from the file collection – *Arquivo Escolas* – that conserves letters and documents about the work of different commissions and titles of books distributed in subsidized or governmental schools. These documents have been crossed with other reports, like public announcements or writings by consuls or consular agents, that show the complex reality of school in Brazil. The files sources were also crossed with other rules and regulations established by Italian governments between 1861 and 1943, regarding Italian schools abroad, and published in the bulletin by the MAE (Ministry for Business Abroad). Finally, the teacher's journals and pedagogy magazines are valuable too and offer many clues for the debate.

## The policy of textbooks in post-unification Italy

In the day after the constitution of Unification, the goals of increasing the level of literacy and schooling of the Italian people, which was necessary to build a national identity, ended up motivating the liberal ruling class. (Morandini, 2003) In this context, textbooks turned into a fundamental tool within a more complex strategy, of giving life to an efficient public system of schooling and education. (Porciani, 1982, 1983; Chiosso, 2000)

The control over reading books and school manuals represented a tool with particular significance in the scenery of school and education policies in the first governments after Unification. The government of a united Italy – just like the ones of the pre-unification Piemonte – assigned this important task to the closest institutional organizations, the Ministry of Public Instruction and the Superior Council of Public Instruction (from now on, CSPI). Not by chance, the 10<sup>th</sup> article of Casati Law, the “Founding Charter” of school order, predicted that the CSPI examined and subjected to the minister's approval the books and treaties destined to public schools.

The goal of the ministers who guided Public Instruction for the first ten years after Unification was to assure a unitary and uniform feature for reading books used at the schools for each level and grade. It must be noted that with the Casati Law, the way was progressively opening for establishing the adoption of a single text for elementary schools – which already happened, up to that moment, in the Kingdom of Sardinia. Very early indeed, in the ministerial environments and amongst the liberal ruling class, an idea had matured, that greater freedom regarding the use of books happened in more

efficient ways in the new national context, characterized by the presence of several local traditions. As Giovanni Antonio Rayneri, in 1865, recalled, when reporting about the state of public instruction in what concerned elementary and normal instruction:

A great book for some schools addressed to a certain people, or so to say, to the teachers of several natures and of diverse cultures, will not attain so much or, at least, will not be declared as such, it will arouse claims from other peoples, that means, from other teachers who sympathize with other authors. (Consiglio Superiore, 1865, p. 543) [our translation]

From the very beginning of the introduction of the Casati school system, however, the preventive inspection of textbooks has faced correlated difficulties. Firstly, there was no public will to verify those books systematically. At the same time, legislation was ambiguous and left interpretation gaps regarding organizational limits of the institutions to which the task was assigned. Finally, there were the growing interests of the scholar publishing houses and of the editorial market. (Porciani, 1982, 1983) Very soon, a real competence conflict took place, with the minister of Public Instruction and his advisory board (the CSPI) on one side, and the decentralized members (the provincial school counsellors) on the other. The school administration reform in 1867, by minister Michele Coppino, assigned to decentralized administration members, that means, the provincial school counsellors, the task of preparing lists of school books authorized to be used in classrooms. This way, there was a double evaluation channel, as the CSPI did not lose their prerogatives, which had been confirmed, and gave the task of examining textbooks to their annual commission, composed by five elected members.

In 1867, with the start of the experience of a historical left, minister Coppino wished to continue the choices of his predecessor, Ruggiero Bonghi, and resumed the orientation of assigning the textbooks examination to the CSPI. In the early 1880s, the situation regarding school handbooks and books used in Italian schools seemed deeply changed regarding the scenery of the twenty years prior to the Unification stage. As Pasquale Villari observed, there was a “great book speculation all over Italy” [our translation] by some scholar publishers from the North, who had openly taken advantage of the objective fragility of editorial companies from the Center-South and Islands, as well as the suffocating conditions that marked the book market, starting a direct speculation, carried out in each province. That was a quite alarming phenomenon, in the opinion of this Southern historian, as it laid bare the lacks and ambiguities of a regulation that allowed too much interpretation and indeed assured “broad and unlimited freedom in the use of textbooks.” [our translation] It ended up inducing some of the provincial school counsellors, in their regions, to carry out a “purely formal surveillance.” [our translation] That prevented reaching one of the goals of the national ruling class from the early 1870s, that means, the creation of a real unitary school system and a “national instruction”, conducted “with some general rules and standard pedagogical guidelines.” (Note from April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1880) [our translation]

Facing the dissatisfaction with the results, those in charge of educational policies have then changed the guidelines. Between 1881 and 1883, minister Baccelli first reformed the CSPI and after, implemented a Central Commission to whom he gave a “double function of defining the criteria necessary for the choice of textbooks and to make a list of the ones approved.” (Ministerial Decree of August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1881) [our translation] The goals for which the Central Commission was implemented were to assure a greater standardization of the books adopted in Italian school and to break up with a generalized

practice of changing them without a real reason, which represented a real nuisance for so many families. With this choice, however, the minister was operating a true and proper centralization of the system, which, up to that moment, had systematically implied, in the decision-making process, the provincial school counsellors and the teachers of middle school. The development of school book policies was favoured between the late 1880s and the early 1890s, in the beginning of the Crispi government and of minister Boselli of Public Instruction. They aimed to organize the “entanglement” and asked decentralized members of the school administration, the provincial school counsellors, to recollect lists of books used in schools. (Barausse, 2008, p. 48).

### **The textbooks for the Italian schools abroad between 1888 and 1916**

It was in this period that the idea of producing books for the Italians schools abroad gained force. Within a more complex scenery of the Crispi project, oriented towards a strong State and a potent foreign policy (Levra, 1992; Duggan, 2000), they also addressed the inauguration of a new emigration policy and the reorganization of Italian schools abroad. The Crispian nationalism understood emigration as an expansionist force for Italy and for trading relations. (Salveti, 2002) The reorganization of schools was placed in the general framework of national and civil instruction, supporting patriotic values and the construction of a collective imagination based on the worship of the homeland. The presence of educational institutions abroad gained different contours in different countries of the migratory flows. The goals established by the new reorganization law were pursued through distinguishing governmental schools and schools that were subsidized with funding from the Ministry, assigned and managed by consular authorities. (Floriani, 1974) Precisely because they were oriented towards “stimulating national educational and patriotic feelings” (As escolas italianas nas colônias da América, 1889-1890, p. 207) [our translation], schools were subject to governmental programs, that were adequated according to territorial circumstances. The use of textbooks was again the centre of attentions. The Ministry of Foreign Relations, in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Instruction, defined a list of books that could be used in the schools.

The yearbooks published between the late 1880s and the early 1890s indeed allow to recover some relevant clues about the editorial production consider proper for Italian schools abroad. At this stage of our research, it was possible to compare the publication of a first list, for the school year of 1888-1889, divided into technical and high schools, for which there were 19 titles indicated; elementary male and female schools and evening schools, for which there were, in a complex way, 83 titles. (Ministero, Annuario 1889) [our translation] As we limit our analysis to the sphere of elementary schools, we can find that the production of books reflected, partly, the reform of programs, which we know was published in 1888 and followed by ‘general educations’ written by Aristide Gabelli, in order to favour the modernization of the didactic complex at schools, through a more systematic introduction of positivism. (Riforma, 1888) So, for the elementary schools, they indicated syllabary and complements, like the one by Giuseppe Toti (1887 and 1889) or the one by Florence inspector Emilia Costetti Biagi (1876; 1889); edited since before the reform, but based on more innovative methods to support the learning of writing and reading at the same time, through a graded, phonic and illustrated system, introduced since the 1870s. (Barausse, 2014) The readings of Pietro Dazzi were very used in the first ten years after

Unification. Highlights are the texts that were more according to the new programs, like the reading book by the director of one of the greatest and most read magazines for teachers, Gabriele Gabrielli, author of 'I primi affetti' (1888); or the ones by Maria Viani Visconti (1887) and by Ida Baccini (1887). (Ministero, Annuario, 1889, p. 189-190) For teaching history, geography and civic education, in the superior elementary classes (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades), authors indicated in the yearbooks referred to tests by Giovanni Merighi (1888, 55 ed.) or by Camilo Randazzo (1884 and 1886), Luigi Vugliano (1886), Silvio Pacini (1889), Pietro Valle (1888). For grammar, the only names indicated are the ones of Raffaello Fornaciari and Giovanni Colombini, and for mathematics, the traditional A. and C. (1888) and the text by Maria Grillo Orlandini (1889) for female classes. To complement, there were tests of domestic administration or drawing, with books by Ilario Tarchiani (1872) or Giuseppe Boidi for female schools. (Ministero, Annuario, 1889, p. 189-190)

We are not yet able to document if the list of books published in the 1889 yearbook resulted from a work of review by the Central Inspection of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during that summer, but we did find some clues in the historical diplomatic file. The need to adequate school programs to those sent to the schools that were displaced in the national territory had induced the MAE to implement a special commission, which would have met in August 1889. The concern of those in charge of the control body of MAE was not to produce relevant changes but to avoid the activism of the editorial world and make adequations to what was prescribed. For this reason, the central inspection ran to communicate to the subsecretary to "make as few changes as possible to the handbooks already adopted last year and avoid communications, commissions or contact with booksellers and editors, to avoid useless expenses." (Note from July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1889) [our translation]

In 1892, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs searched to promote a process of partial review of school books. In light of the conducted experiences, which had revealed that "the textbooks adopted in a colonial school not always respond to the needs and to the special character of another one even when both are of the same degree." [our translation], they sent to the colonial schools of the Mediterranean Basin an invitation to start a more attentive examination of the books being used. Directors and teachers were particularly asked to evaluate the books' suitability, according to the following criteria:

- a) Whether the book is of easy and clear exposition of the content and adequate or not, to the state of intelligence and cognitions that the students who go to these colonial classes in which books are adopted are supposed to have; b) Whether the book attains the students' goals, giving them attitude and special conditions necessary for the country where they live; c) Whether the book, in what concerns local habits, form of government and religious conditions, does not contain anything that may offend or unplease the students' families, the populations in general or local authorities, to which, whether by a debt for hospitality or for the own interest of the school, the most delicate reservations are owed. (Informative Circular from March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1892) [our translation]

The demand for rethinking the book production and the lack of control (Barausse, 2008, p. 65 and following) led the minister to require the review and publication of new lists of textbooks. The first one was published in the 1897 yearbook. (Ministero, Annuario, 1897, p. 73-67) A second list came in 1889, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs in charge of it. (Ministero, Elenco, 1899) This one was much more complete and organic compared to the previous years indications. The Ministry provided a list of books for male elementary schools, female elementary schools, evening schools, complementary schools, technical-commerce and commerce schools, middle and high schools. Quantitatively, the number of texts was certainly lower than the one predicted for schools in the national territory. As for male and female elementary schools, the texts indicated were, respectively, eighty-eight and seventy-five titles. This production was then integrated with the one for the evening schools, which had 14 titles. Most of them were reading books: for male and female elementary schools there were, respectively, 50 and 34 books, by 39 and 34 authors. For evening schools, the list contained 7 reading titles. Nonetheless, there were also titles for teaching calligraphy, from second grade on; grammar; arithmetic; geography; history of the homeland; French from the fourth grade on; drawing for the fifth grade. (Ministero, Elenco, 1899) Lists published in yearbooks of the two following years presented a quantitative increase. The titles indicated for elementary schools totalled 108 and 109 products, by the same number of 81 authors. (Elenco, 1899-1900; Elenco 1900-1901) The book production reflected, just in part, the requests that came from applying the new programs published by Minister Baccelli in 1894 and from the evaluations by the commissions from the Ministry of Public Instruction between 1894 and 1897. (Tabacchi, 2013) Both the first and the second lists included texts that were indicated seven years before, with new ones that met the requirement of the new programs.

For the first elementary grades, along with the names of Pietro Dazzi and Gabriele Gabrielli, highlights were the syllabaries and their complements, written by Siro Corti and Pietro Cavazzutti (1895) for both male and female schools, published by the Milanese editor Vallardi; as well as the one by Augusto Alfani (1897, 8<sup>a</sup>). For the third grade, the reading book *Il Frugolino*, written by the head of provincial administration of the Rome Studies School, Carlo Tegon (1897), was indicated, as well as the books *Lecture* by Ida Baccini (1894). For the fourth and fifth grades, together with Fornaciari's *Nova Grammaticchetta* (1897) and the ones by Luigi Ferrari (1891, 2), Cesare Mariani (1896) and Luigi Morandi and G. Cappuccini (1895), they prescribed the use of Collodi's *Minuzzulo*. The author also appeared amongst indications for fifth grade with *Il Giannettino*, together with the book *Cuore*, by De Amicis. The poetic anthology by Camilo Randazzo completed the reading list. As for teaching history and geography, in addition to the reading books by Bacci and Gotti, under the title of *Le Glorie della Patria* (1897), Pietro Valle's text was indicated. (Ministero, Annuario, 1897, p 63-66; Ministero, Elenco, 1899) The reading of Giuseppe Castelli (1896 and 1897), as well as Giacomo Veniali (1898), Francesco Paolo Scaglione and Filipponi (1899) and Mestica (1898), which were part of the new edition of the volume by Corti and Cavazzuti (1897); and also Augusto Alfani (1898), Tegon (1898) and Dazzi (1898) were indicated for the same class. Reading and writing were complemented by calligraphy tests, that had references in the classic methods of Boscary and Cobianchi. There were rich indications in what concerned the readings on history and geography. Indeed, in addition to Bacci and Gotti's reading book, there were also the ones by Francesco Bertolini (1896),

Onorata Mercanti Grossi (1894) and Giovanni Soli (1895), with the geography text by Pietro Valle (1895). Readings were complemented by texts on arithmetic and drawing, in the volumes by Bordiga (1895), Frattini (1898), Pincherle (1894) and Palazzi, as well as the ones for learning French. (Novelli, 1896)

The changes in the guidelines of the national policies for school books also conditioned the choices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After the decisions by Orlando, the Minister of Public Instruction, to end the experience of centralized commissions for the evaluation and review of text books for the ten previous years, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the General Inspection, faced the problem of “how to get to a total compilation” of the list of textbooks. (Promemoria of October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1905) [our translation] Documents, however, do not confirm the existence of a new list of books. The definition of guidelines concerning textbooks became more complex in the following years. On the one hand, they took advantage of the initiatives of the ministries of Public Instruction and Foreign Affairs and on the other hand, of the ones of the Ministry of Colonies, inaugurated in 1912 to assure the production of books to be adopted in the schools directly managed by the government in the Mediterranean Basin, in countries under direct colonial control, like Tripolitania and Cyrenaica and finally in subsidized schools overseas. Special commissions were required to approve books to be used in the colonies, books “that, in addition to the accordance to the dictates of pedagogical technique, would be written with special attention to the way of thinking of the students in colonial schools, especially the indigenous, responding to the organic needs of the colonial environment.” (Contini, 1932, p. 148) [our translation] Nevertheless, the military endeavours and the reorganization of school services in the colonies did not allow the commission to function before 1921. During that time, the choice individually made in the institutes by the teachers was tolerated, without any control by Italy’s central administration.

### **From the end of World War I to the rise of fascism**

Right after the end of World War I, there was a strong comeback to the programs and debates about the role of Italian schools abroad in promoting the national language and culture. In this context, supporting the progress of the presence of Italian schools abroad, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has recovered an active role, through the General Direction of Italian Schools Abroad. From 1920 on, with guidance by scholar *Ciro Trabalza*, it has favoured the redefinition of program of action with a particular view on schools and cultural institutions in the Americas. (Barausse, 2015) In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1921, a Special Commission was inaugurated and started to approve some handbooks. (ASMAE, 1922, Contini, 1932, p. 148) In the Ministry of Colonies, the Special Commission for examining handbooks was re-inaugurated by the Decree of April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1921. The first commission had five components: in addition to the president, the professor of the University of Rome *Cesare De Lollis*, members were *Francesco Piola* and *Riccardo Truffi* and also the central inspectors from the Ministry of Public Instruction, *Roberto Gruppioni*, didactic vice-director of the Rome community schools, and *Giovanni Ferri*, royal professor of the Rome Technical Institute. *De Lollis* was chosen as president because *Trabalza* appreciated his competences in modern literature, especially French literature, “that has special importance in the middle institutes and in elementary schools for Italians abroad”. (Letter *Trabalza*, 1922) [our translation]

In February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1922, when the commission had not yet finished their work, the General Direction published the list of books approved and not approved for elementary schools. The director invited the heads of consular headquarters to “privately” communicate the note to school directors, for them not to start their lists and use those only if some teachers insisted in adopting books that were not approved by the commission. The list contained twenty-five titles of syllabaries, first readings and other books; four titles of grammar and a handbook of moral education; six titles of history and geography; nine handbooks of arithmetic and geometry. (Lista, 1921) We do not know the reasons for such choice. The Commission works did not have, then, a significant continuity, due, above all, to some changes in its composition. (Barausse, 2015) After one and a half year of work, De Lollis communicated he could not indeed continue his work as president and quit. At first, a new professor of the University of Rome, the Italianist Vitorio Rossi, was invited to replace him, but did not take the position. In substitution, Trabalza nominated Pietro Fedele. The choice for this Modern History professor considered scientific merits, but also his “vivid patriotic feeling”, as written by hand by Trabalza in a Decree. Also, he had credibility and legitimacy and interacted more easily with the Ministry.

Going through the titles authorized in the informative circular for Italian schools abroad we can record more elements of discontinuity than of continuity, regarding the definition and circulation of school books. Indeed, in the lists published from the late 1800s to the early 1900s, we find the names of Siro Corti and Pietro Cavazzutti and those related to small volumes for the several elementary classes by Mestica Galamini, amongst which there is *Tarra*, linked to the tradition immediately pre- and post-Unification. Just apparently new, though, was the presence of titles that belonged to a pre-war production. The school books indicated in the list were indeed mostly attached to the years of the Giolittian politics experience, especially in what concerns changes of the programs with Herbatian inspiration in 1905. Some were reedited in the end of World War I, but conceived and produced prior to it, like the ones by Libero Ausoni (1905; 1920), Giuseppe Celli (1920), and those made by teachers, advertisers and newspapers editors, reputed directors of teachers associations and in some cases, not only Ciarlantini and Capodivacca (1905), Giovan Battista Curami (1905), Irlandi and Nolleti (1906), Guido Antonio Marcati, Alfredo Plata and Luigi Arnaud (1914) were indicated. During or just after the World War I were produced the readings by Leopoldina Zanotti (1915), Saverio Fino and Felice Mattana (1916), Virgilio Brocchi and Andrea Gustarelli (1920), Emilia Formiggini Santamaria, Marcellina Cappelli Baiocco (1920); or readings produced especially to extol the myth of those dead in combat, like C.L. Guelfi's; or books that were specifically made for the Italian schools abroad, like the one by Giovanni Di Giusto and Francesco Pasciuti (1921).

Alongside with books for teaching to write and read, for grammar, texts were presented by Capodivacca, Adalgisa Costa, Giuseppe Poli and C. Perniciaro (1914), to which a grammar of Portuguese for Italian schools created by Carlo Parlagreco (1919) was added. For teaching moral education and history and geography, the list included very few titles, just six, including those by very well-known figures of the Italian editorial market. Together with geographer Giuseppe Ruggero, author of volumes produced since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and with subsequent editions adapted to the 1905 program, there is the name of Eugenio Comba, author of an Atlas text, quite known

during the early 1900s. These texts came along with Lessons of Geography and History for the superior elementary school classes created by some teachers from Turin municipal schools. The one by Giovanni Rossi, *Racconti illustrati di storia patria* [*Tales of the Homeland History*], firstly published after the 1905 programs, were revisited in a new edition in 1916, resuming and simplifying the courses of middle school for elementary school. There were also books by famous writers like Olga Visentini who, after a few years, were also approved by the commission chaired by Giuseppe Lombardo Radice. (SANI e ASCENZI, 2008, pp. 131-132) Another one was Luigi Di San Giusto's, a short book produced in 1915, in the context of a great campaign for civil mobilization to explain the reasons for Italy to enter the war to children, which, therefore, reflected the nationalist environment after the war. (Barausse, 2015)

Besides the availability of a higher number of titles, the production does not seem to have met the needs of Italian students living abroad. As written in a long memoir by director Alemanni, who was in charge in the Ministry in the late 1920s, those texts must be "something more and different." Besides educating, they should also prepare that Italian citizen living abroad, that means, it should adapt to local needs. Those citizens had, in many cases, turned into nationals of their host countries, at the same time as they kept strongly attached to their roots and homeland and feeling it in their hearts. They should extol Italy in the presence of strangers, loving and serving it in faithful thoughts and deeds. (Relator Alemanni, 1923)

In that time, to require the production of more adequate books for Italian schools abroad and in colonial territories, ministerial authorities and commissions referred to specific measures like public calls by the Ministry of Public Instruction. The first procedure was a public call for a book of history of the homeland, to be adopted in elementary schools and in open courses abroad, followed by a reading, and then, there was a call for handbooks for elementary schools in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.

The first one carried an intention of favouring the production of a book that, on the one side, followed the dispositions of governmental programs for teaching history in elementary schools and on the other, stimulated, from early childhood, a national feeling. A patriotic text, able to

give precise idea of what the world owes to Italy: not a depository of erudition, but abundance of information; not an entanglement of names and dates, but assurance of chronological orientation; not an accumulation of concepts, but a wide comprehension of the multiple and complex elements of historical life; not emphasis, but a flame of passion and faith, able to stimulate, in the minds of readers, the pride to be and to feel Italian. (Barausse, 2008, p. 1331) [our translation]

The second public call, in December 1921, offered a prize for promoting the writing of a reading book to be used in elementary schools abroad. This work, to be carried out in five volumes, should correspond to the programs predicted for the schools in the Kingdom, adapted to particular conditions to motivate indigenous students that attended to Italian schools. The text would not only handle different habits and behaviours of males and females, but also the different environments, "especially for the Mediterranean regions and the Americas", detailing, above all,

the contribution of our great and humble workers for the development and improvement of civility in the world, for all themes and all places, so that Italian children living in varied and distant countries, are stimulated for the national feeling and a strong faith in the greatness of the homeland. (Barausse, 2008, p. 1332) [our translation]

The third public call was to promote writing, above all, reading texts for the six elementary grades for Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, for which the ministry indicated criteria that expressed a more moderate nationalism, through a pedagogical approach intended to deal with local traditions and cultures. For example, authors were invited to avoid “all the traces of a confessional character and moral judgement, or those examples that [could] offend feelings and practices of Hebrews and Muslims”, as well as “demonstrations of patriotism that [might be] ineffective with non-Italian students”. They were also requested to illustrate stories with main characters that are not only Italian children “but sometimes indigenous ones too”, and to stimulate in the students “a mutual affection and respect, despite the profound differences of nationality, race, confession and habits.” (Barausse, 2008, p. 1335-1336) [our translation]

These actions, anyway, anticipated the changes of the cultural and pedagogical environment that, in the following year, led to the new proposal of ministerial initiatives, with the institution of a commission to review handbooks. The first one, chaired by Lombardo Radice, inaugurated a short but intense period that, through the work of the posterior commissions headed by Vidari, Giuliano, Romano and Melchiori, with the intention of particularizing the fascist school manual, would determine a significant change of scenery in the Italian school editorial market. (Ascenzi, Sani, 2009)

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1924, a new order was published, with programs that intended to condition the type of editorial products target to Italian schools abroad. They were thought of for the specific function of playing a fundamental role, in contexts marked by differences in language, religion and culture, still oriented towards the conditioning of nationalist accents in a moderate sense. (Oriani, 1926, p. 86) A fundamental role was assigned to reading books, to which programs gave very precise indications:

The choice of reading books for schools abroad is delicate like never before. The textbook must have broad references to life in our distant colonies, extol the feeling and love for the homeland, without offending other nationalities. It must show its beauty, the ancient and new monuments, the greatest forms of civilization and activities, thus acknowledging the most representative men and remembering the enormous effort in the recent national war. (Oriani, 1926, p. 93) [our translation]

The result of this first stage was different due to the production of texts oriented towards transmitting educational models founded in the pride of Italian cultural traditions and at once, in the capacity of being good citizens in several countries, including Brazil. The use and distribution of these books were considered by consular authorities as imperative and central for recovering and conserving the ethnical identity, in a moment when the prevailing trend in many countries, and in Brazil too, seemed to be “denationalization”. Books like the one by Francisco Pasciuti and Giovanni Di

Giusto, with the title *Cuore Lontano* (Distant Heart), edited by Mondadori in 1922 (Pasciuti, Di Giusto, 1922), or the one by Alarico Buonavaiuti, edited by Bemporad in 1925 (Buonavaiuti, 1925). Buonavaiuti's were promoted in the late 1920s, as it took three years for the first publications to be concluded. On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1925, six months after the commission's report was handed, Mussolini officially announced the negative result for Alarico Buonavaiuti's history book and the positive result for his five reading volumes. (Relatório Boselli, s.d. mas de 1924, ASMAE, AS, 1923-1928, b. 537)

### **From the second half of the 1920s to the late 1930s, to conclude**

Starting from the second half of the 1920s, the circulation of textbooks produced in Italy with a goal of corresponding more efficiently to the ideological propaganda and the national fascist/Mussolini's pedagogy was outlined, to ensure the training of new Italians abroad. (Gentile, 2002, La Rovere, 2002, pp. 51-58) The production of such texts was adapted to the strategy of the fascists in charge, oriented towards introducing, in the countries with a strong Italian presence, a massive propaganda to produce the "new Italian" fascism aimed at, to consolidate the role of schools as tools of support for the fascist foreign policies, always intending to obtain approval from immigrants to other initiatives such as trips and visits to Italy, organization of summer camps and placement of the youth. (Pretelli, 2010, p. 123-138)

The demand was warned in wide sectors of the fascist cultural and educative reality and also expressed in the bulletin by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1927, with a new call for a contest amongst Italian citizens living in Italy and abroad, to publish an educational book called "Mussolini's Italian". The initiative, promoted and financed by the general consul Labia and his wife, in memory of the "hateful parricide attack", aimed to ensure the writing of a text that contributed to "give and infuse, in this people, each class of habits and civil life notions and also patriotic, religious and humanitarian feelings, as the *Duce* himself may wish." (Telegram on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1926) Substantially, it was about writing a text that indicated the representation of the new creative spirit in the Italian people after the advent of fascism and that should be, as a whole, a guide to the young, to whom it would indicate the way to form tomorrow's complete and perfect Italians. This should be the book of the fascist spirit, ideal and life, and give Italians of each class a clear vision of what the new Italian should be, their characteristics, feelings and destinies. (Telegram on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1927)

Echoes of these first changes can be found in the volumes for the complete cycle of elementary schools, elaborated by Vera Gaiba, in collaboration with Francesco Lanza, produced between 1927 and 1928; and by Giuseppe Locatelli and Arturo Mondovì, published in 1928 by Mondadori. (Barausse, 2015)

The first changes in editorial production combine with other significant changes, reflecting new strategies of the fascist political-administrative vertex from the changes in the administration of Italian schools abroad. In 1928, after the emigration Commissary was closed, they implemented the new General Direction of Italians and Italian Schools Abroad, headed by Piero Parini. Parini's figure is paradigmatic in the change of perspective: he was, indeed, the secretary of Italian fascists abroad. His designation was probably to assure greater loyalty to Mussolini's ministries and was followed by several measures to affect editorial production as well. Through the

nomination of Parini and the change of the structure destined to administrate, either Italians or schools abroad, they promoted, according to Pretelli, “a progressive evaluation of powers to manage the Italian identity abroad” and the progressive politicization of the world of emigration and of the school institutes outside of Italy. (Pretelli, 2010, p. 133) [our translation]

Considering that law from January 1929 that introduced a single State book for elementary schools, within the scope of the Ministry of National Education, as we know, a commission was implemented and, in a few months, wrote the texts for the first two grades of elementary school. At the same period, they implemented a commission, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to ensure the elaboration of new textbooks, assigning the task to a group of authors that was pre-selected by the Ministry. This group worked with “Fascistic speed”, as its president recalls, and approved a series of reading books for Italian schools abroad and in the colonies. However, the head of the general direction, appealing to the nation’s interests, found it better to propose the unification of the two commissions, creating a mixed one with the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MEN and MAE), to achieve the goal of complementing and adapting the texts for the elementary schools, like it had already been done in the schools in the Kingdom. The work to be done was not quite simple:

the adaptation will be quite easy in what concerns the *lato sensu* sciences (arithmetic, geometry), but more delicate and complex in the historical-moral subjects [...] These subjects have a formative characteristic and should be used in texts that are adapted to the special needs and to the organization of Italian schools abroad in a way that considers environmental conditions in which the actions of these schools develop, avoiding, above all, to bump into local political-religious sensibilities. It is indeed known, recently, that the national feeling in some States, especially in the Mediterranean Basin, has been exasperated, in a way that the activity of foreign schools develops amongst suspicions and difficulties of all kinds [...] a work of adaptation and, sometimes, of reformulation. (Report by P. Parini, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1930) [our translation]

Regarding the texts for high schools, Parini suggested to reconstitute the commission inaugurated on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1921, which, however, had not had many occasions to meet and had only approved a few texts, considered outdated, as fascism had already happened. For that, he indicated the opportunity of integrating the commission with three central inspectors for the high schools in the Ministry of National Education. (Ibidem)

In this context, some of the single text State books have appeared, to be used for teaching reading and writing, in several subjects in Italian schools abroad or in the colonies, a process that also became editorial, with the institution of a specific publishing house by the General Direction of Italians and Italian Schools Abroad. (Pretelli, 2010, p. 163-165) In some books, especially the reading ones and their subsidiaries, authors are more identifiable. Among those, there are the readings by Clementina Bagagli, the second grade reading books by Giuseppe Fanciulli, who has also written *Religion Readings (Lecture di Religione)*, the third grade reading by an

unidentified author, the reading book for the fourth grade compiled by Paolo Monelli, and the readings for the fifth grade, with the title *Sole d'Italia*. In 1937, a new reading book was edited, compiled by Milly Dandolo, along with the reedition of preceding reading books, including new editions of the volumes by Bagagli, of which the 1941 edition we could analyse. The authors of the texts for several subjects, instead, are more hardly identified, except the one written by teacher Dante Giromini for elementary school. He became the head of the Carrara Magisterial Institute in 1930 and compiled a grammar edited by the General Direction of Italians Abroad in 1935.

In addition to new texts indicated by the commission, in Brazil there were also specific monographies to develop contents of intransigent fascism. Among those, we can mention the text organized by the Direction of Italians abroad, under the title of *Quando il mondo era Roma (When the world was Rome)*, and the ones illustrated by Monelli in the volume *La tua Patria (Your Country)*, published by Mondadori, a publishing house that was very close to the regime. Also, the readings by Guerriero Bemporad, *Piccoli italiani nel mondo (Little Italians in the World)*, in which the direct references to fascism are even more direct. This texts highlights not only the characteristic of the new fascist man, fit into the nationalizing representation of Italy through an emphasis on the myth of Rome as having civilization and culture against barbarian people, but also the insistence about external danger and functional enemies of the formation of a hypernationalist mentality, accompanied by the exaltation of the dictator's profile as the saviour of the motherland. In this context, a book was published by Gioacchino Volpe, under the title *Fatti degli italiani e della Italia (Accomplishments of Italians and of Italy)*. These texts, a few years later, would be added to the Latin literature anthology for middle schools, directly managed by Piero Parini. (Barausse, 2015).

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