



Scuole italiane all'estero: reading books for italian schools in Brazil (São Paulo/sp- 1911-1931)¹

Scuole italiane all'estero: livros de leitura para as escolas italianas no Brasil
(São Paulo/SP- 1911-1931)

Scuole italiane all'estero: libros de lectura para las escuelas italianas en Brasil
(São Paulo / SP- 1911-1931)

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ABSTRACT

This article proposal is to think about history of education highlighting the research on Italian nationalist politics and educational proposals brought to Brazil. Its goal is to investigate the values in those books in order to promote the Italian identity and the attachment to the mother nation on the Italian and Italian's children students who were part of an immigrant group living in São Caetano's colony. To do so the reading book *Piccolo Mondo*, for boys and girls of the fourth class in the elementary school created by the *Società di Mutuo Soccorso Principe di Napoli*, was investigated. This paper belongs to the *Annales School* perspective that opened new interpretative frontiers, enlarged the documental sources and investigation horizons, among which the studies of material culture is highlighted. By constituting the culture of the school, the reading books do not integrate this culture in an arbitrary way; contrariwise, they are used and organized purposefully as carriers of the broader social culture dimension.

Keywords: School books; reading books; Italian immigrants; Ethnical schools; Elementary school.

¹ This text comes from the research *O processo escolar entre imigrantes italianos e seus descendentes: a escola italiana em São Paulo (fins do século XIX e início do século XX)* [The schooling process among Italian immigrants and their descendants: the Italian school in São Paulo (late 19th and early 20th centuries)], Funded by São Paulo Research Foundation – FAPESP, file 2018/15168-8. English version by Ana Santos Maia. E-mail: anasantosmaia1983@gmail.com

RESUMO

A proposta deste texto é pensar a história da educação privilegiando a investigação acerca da política nacionalista italiana e das propostas educacionais que para cá foram trazidas. Tem como objetivo investigar os valores veiculados e prescritos para o fomento da italianidade e dos laços com a pátria-mãe nos estudantes, crianças italianas e filhas de italianos, pertencentes ao grupo de imigrantes italianos que se fixou no núcleo colonial de São Caetano- SP, para tanto toma como fonte privilegiada a edição de 1910 do livro de leitura *Piccolo Mondo* destinado à quarta classe para o ensino de meninos e de meninas da escola elementar criada pela *Società di Mutuo Soccorso Principe di Napoli*. Este trabalho se insere em uma perspectiva amplamente difundida pela *Escola dos Annales* que possibilitou a abertura de novas fronteiras interpretativas, a ampliação das fontes documentais e o alargamento de horizontes investigativos, dentre os quais se destaca os estudos da cultura material. Os livros de leitura ao constituírem a cultura da escola, não integram essa cultura de modo arbitrário, pelo contrário, são organizados e utilizados com intencionalidade, como portadores de uma dimensão da cultura social mais ampla.

Palavras-chave: Livros escolares; Livros de leitura; Imigrantes italianos; Escolas étnicas; Escola Elementar.

RESUMEN

La propuesta de este texto es pensar la historia de la educación privilegiando la investigación acerca de la política nacionalista italiana y de las propuestas educativas que para aquí fueron traídas. Se trata de investigar los valores vehiculados y prescritos para el fomento de la italianidad y de los lazos con la patria madre en los estudiantes, niños italianos e hijas de italianos pertenecientes al grupo de inmigrantes italianos que se fijó en el núcleo colonial de São Caetano- SP, para tanto toma como fuente privilegiada la edición de 1910 del libro de lectura *Piccolo Mondo* destinado a la cuarta clase para la enseñanza de niños y niñas de la escuela elemental creada por la *Società di Mutuo Soccorso Principe di Napoli*. Este trabajo se inserta en una perspectiva ampliamente difundida por la Escuela de los Annales que posibilitó la apertura de nuevas fronteras interpretativas, la ampliación de las fuentes documentales y la ampliación de horizontes investigativos, entre los cuales se destacan los estudios de la cultura material. Los libros de lectura, al constituir la cultura de la escuela, no integran esa cultura de modo arbitrario, por lo contrario, son organizados y utilizados con intencionalidad, como portadores de una dimensión de la cultura social más amplia.

Palabras-clave: Libros escolares; Libros de lectura; Inmigrantes italianos; Escuelas étnicas; Escuela elemental.

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Parole di Mussolini

Dovunque è un italiano là è il tricolore, là è la Patria, là è la difesa del Governo per questi italiani (BAGAGLI, 1933, p. 108).²

Introduction

De Nardi, Dal'Mas, Veronesi, Perrella, Biagi, Braido, Buso, Zambotto, Garbelotti are the last names of some of the 76 children, boys and girls, who studied in 1923 at the school maintained by the *Società di Mutuo Soccorso Principe di Napoli* and who, in addition to the classic *Cuore*, by *Edmondo de Amicis*³ have learned the lessons in the *Libro di letture Piccolo Mondo*.

Such books are likely to have integrated the set of textbooks produced in Italy and sent for free to *le scuole italiane all'estero*, that means, the Italian schools abroad, a denomination adopted by the Italian government to approach ethnical schools.

From the late 19th century to the first three decades of the 20th century, it is possible to find evidence of the distribution and circulation of Italian books among immigrants and their descendents. (LUCHESE, 2014; PANIZZOLO, 2016) Following the school program that was current in Italy, books of reading, religion, arithmetics, national history, geography, songs and literature excerpts, among others, have crossed the ocean to be distributed to students of the Italian ethnical schools.

As cultural artifact that produces sense and meaning, the textbook, school book, reading book or school handbook (terminology varies depending on the period and on the book structure) is, according to Choppin (2002), a privileged source for the History of Education, for it lies in the articulation between the prescriptions imposed by official programs and the individual discourses of teachers. In this sense, reading books can be taken as cultural tools that establish links and bonds between mental structures and social figurations, or, as Elias (1994) puts it, between psychogenesis and sociogenesis.

In this text, the interest of investigation is centred in the study of the *Libro di letture Piccolo Mondo, letture per le scuole elementar*, by Fanny Romagnoli and Silvia Albertoni, a book produced in Italy and published by Bemporad Publishing House, that must be highlighted for its longevity, as its last edition dates from 2011.

The proposal of this text is to think about the History of Education, emphasizing the investigation about the Italian nationalist policies and the educational proposals that were brought here. Its goal is to investigate the values conveyed and prescribed to promote the Italian identity and the bond with the motherland in students, children from Italy or with Italian parents, that belong to a group of immigrants who settled in a colony of São Caetano, SP, Brazil.

Based on references of Cultural History and using the analysis of documents as method, its privileged sources are the book *Piccolo Mondo*, reports about the schools in São Paulo and legal orders about the schools abroad and about the production and adoption of books.

² Mussolini's words. "Wherever an Italian is, there is the *tricolor*, there is the Mother Land, there is the defense of the Government by these Italians." [our translation]

³ *Cuore*, by Edmondo de Amicis was published in Italy in 1886 and arrived in Brazil with translations by Ramalho Ortigao, Miguel Novais and Joao Ribeiro. In addition to translations, it was taken as a source of inspiration by Julia Lopes de Almeida, Joao Lopes Neto, Coelho Neto, Viriato Correa, Jose Scaramelli, Romao Puiggari and Arnaldo de Oliveira Barreto. It has circulated in Italian ethnical schools, to teach the Italian language, but mostly for the characteristics highlighted by Ascenzi, Sani (2005, p. 15), above all the sense of acceptance of social inequality and injustice, for the ideal of a brotherhood of different social classes in the name of an ethical-spiritual principle of belonging to the same nation, for the ethics of duty and labour, for the worship to the familiar and civic values and traditions, and for carrying elements of a true laic religion of the homeland.

The text is organized in three parts: in this first one, we search to understand the Italian policy for schools abroad; in the second one, focus turns to Brazil, precisely to the state of São Paulo, the colony of São Caetano and specifically the School of the *Società di Mutuo Soccorso Principe di Napoli*, in order to locate, in the midst of a tangle, what Duby (1993, p.28) described as “debris of writings that pour from the depth of the ages, as remains of a complete wreck” [our translation], aiming at a first approximation with the school process among Italian immigrants and their children in São Paulo. In the third part, we carry out a study about the materiality of the piece being studied, seeking to know and unveil the educational proposal and the values prescribed in it.

Parte prima: Le scuole italiane all'estero⁴

The theme of Italian schools abroad, their functions, goals and operational rules was present, according to Salvetti (2014), in the discussions on educational policies from the first decades after unification and, in order to understand the motivations of the Italian State for creating and keeping bonds with Italian schools abroad, it is necessary to consider the project of building a strong State and a foreign policy that allowed to see such power. The epigraph of this text, from 1933, can be taken as an example of how this nationalist, expansionist project, of an Italy that was present beyond its territory and whose emigrated people should consider as their homecountry. For that, it was imperious to know and preserve the language, to keep alive national symbols, historical figures, monuments and landscapes, in order to keep the attachment between the emigrated and the Motherland. The environment chosen to carry such project on was the school, as it was necessary to invent the Italian and their sense of Italian identity, to convert them into “tools” of cultural influence and commercial penetration.

The first law concerning Italian schools abroad, according to Floriani (1974), dates from 1862, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Durando, authorizing the creation of a school in Alexandria, Egypt. In the following years, schools were created in Tunisia and Constantinople (1863), Smyrna and Samos (1864), Athens (1865), Galati and Sarajevo (1866) and Thessaloniki (1868). They were organized in two ways: as public schools, totally funded by Italian government; and in private schools, secular or religious, usually linked to Italian associations abroad, which received subventions from the Italian government, as long as they respected the programs and teaching methods and were subordinated to control by consuls and to ministerial inspections.

On December 8th, 1889, through the Royal Decree number 6566, Francesco Crispi, both head of government and Minister of Foreign Affairs, approved the order for Royal Italian Schools in the Mediterranean Basin and the Italian schools abroad. According to Crispi conceptions, emigration represented a potential power of the nation, in addition to indicating the “conditions to contribute for the development of foreign trade, therefore, of Italian exports, especially to the Americas.” (SALVETTI, 2014, p. 58) [our translation]

It should be noted that from 1870 on, with the Capture of Rome by the Italian State and the “consequent lack of recognition of the Italian liberal State by the church” (SALVETTI, 2014, p.59) [our translation], in order to receive government subvention, schools of religious missions abroad, in addition to accepting governmental programs, handbooks and inspections, should have secular teachers with verified degrees.

⁴ First part: Italian schools abroad.

The increase of the number of Italian schools abroad after the Crispi Reform, in 1889, caused the increase of government investments, although such subventions were still insufficient to effectively bear the schools adequate operation.

The item “Subvention to Italian schools abroad” went from 270.000 *lire* in 1886-87 to 1,033,710 in 1890-91. From this increase, however, very little went to the charities and mutual support societies that maintained Italian schools abroad: the subsidized schools actually continued to receive miserable amounts for the conspicuous requirements. (SALVETTI, 2014, p. 61) [our translation]

Although the major concentration of schools was still in Africa and Europe, even though immigration was scarce there, there was an increase in Latin America as well, especially in Argentina and Brazil. However, the first ones received higher subventions than the latter, that ironically received much more immigrants.

In what concerns São Paulo, it is possible to notice an increase, though data are sparse and often contradictory. According to Parlagrecco, in 1906 in São Paulo there were 92 Italian schools working. (FANFULLA, 1906, p. 800) Professor Arturo Magnocavallo⁵, who came to São Paulo to visit Italian schools and institutes to carry out preparatory studies for the foundation of a high school institute, wrote, in an important report⁶ that sent to the Central Council of the *Dante Alighieri Society*, that in 1907 he visited 54 Italian schools in the city of São Paulo. According to data presented by Trento (2009), in 1908, 80 Italian schools were operating in the city, which represents a significant increase. The number of Italian schools continued to grow. According to the *Anuário do Ensino do Estado de São Paulo [São Paulo State Teaching Year Directory]* (1909), there were 85 Italian schools in the capital in 1909, and it got to 91 schools in 1910. (SÃO PAULO, 1910) Pepe (1916), based on data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the school year of 1913-14, states that there were 42 Italian schools in the capital of São Paulo state. A quite higher number was located by Trento (2009), who indicated 121 schools in 1913. After that, the author finds a wave of schools closing, with 46 still working in 1924 and only 25 in 1930.

The option of subsidizing the instruction of Italians abroad with state resources aroused much criticism and resistance, above all amongst the labour movement, which seems to have two main reasons. The first one is probably related to the non-comprehension of the extent of the emigration phenomenon, and the second, to the critical situation of public teaching in Italy, which, despite the laws for compulsory education, that were in force since 1859 with the Casati Law, reiterated in 1877 by Coppino Law, presented alarming rates of school dropout and illiteracy:

⁵ Arturo Magnocavallo: graduated in Languages in the Milan Scientific-Literary Academy, he had started a career as a History and Geography teacher at the Licata Royal Technical School. He was then a promising vice-secretary at the Ministry of Public Instruction. For more on Magnocavallo, see: DELL’AIRA, A. *Longo estudo, grande amor: história do Instituto Medio Italo-Brasiliano Dante Alighieri de São Paulo*. São Paulo: Annablume, 2011.

⁶ The report is composed of four parts and appendix. The first part, with the title “Italian primary schools and Brazilian primary schools in the city and in the state of São Paulo – Proposals and solutions” [our translation] is published in Dell’Aira, 2011.

We do not know why our government keeps maintaining such schools [Italian ones abroad] – wrote socialist Mariani in 1888, almost as if they did not know where to put the money, almost as if there was not enough ignorance and illiteracy to solve at home, acting as if we were rich in countries where there is absolutely no need for our support, nor for our subventions. (SALVETTI, 2014, p. 58) [our translation]

Crispi Law was replaced by Tittoni Law in 1910. It established religious teaching as facultative in extra class hours; reiterated subvention to religious schools that agreed to go through governmental inspections; kept public schools in the Mediterranean Basin and subsidized schools in the Americas; and also determined that as long as the principles of patriotic education for Italians and preservation of the language were observed, schools could adapt to the needs of the countries where they were located.

With the new Law, the contributions to subsidized schools continued to be derisive and their survival still depended on financial aid from the Mutual Support Societies, as Minister Tittoni himself manifests:

To these Mutual Support Societies in South America – defended Minister Tittoni – I must show all gratitude from the Italian Government. Indeed, they are the ones that founded and maintain most of our schools, and our subventions, spread over such a wide area, instead of a real and efficient contribution to expenses, must be seen as moral support and encouragement. (TITTONI *apud* SALVETTI, 2014, p. 71) [our translation]

In 1923, the Gentile Reform made significant changes in the legal order of Italian school. In what concerns Italian schools abroad, it kept the “predominance of state schools in the Mediterranean Basin and in Europe over the schools overseas, subsidized – and conditioned – especially by sending teaching books with a fascist mark.” (SALVETTI, 2014, p. 72) [our translation] Also, it instituted the pronouncement of the solemn professional vow, in which teachers promised to educate their students to love the Homeland and show devotion to the king and to Italian institutions.

In 1924, new programs were established and guidelines were set for Italian schools abroad, prioritizing the diffusion of Italian language and culture and of the nationalist feeling, through the propagation of the ‘great realizations’ of fascism, considered as an important strategy to strengthen the bonds between Italians abroad (no longer emigrants) and the Motherland, and between Italy and the host countries. With the Royal Decree number 628 in 1927, another fascist initiative for Italians abroad was the implementation of an Interministerial Committee for the expansion of Italian culture in host countries. Also, in 1929, the General Direction for Italians Abroad and Schools was created.

Fascism searched in associations, newspapers and at schools, according to Bertonha (2001), for “ideological socialization of children and young people as a way to create a ‘new man’” (p.141) [our translation], in addition to try to recover the emigrants’ children. Schools received special attention from fascists, even though, during the liberal period, the Italian school network abroad has always deserved “special care by the Rome government (...) as it was considered basic to maintain Italian identity and the ties of Italians’ children born abroad with Italy.” (p. 48) [our translation]

Next, this text focus on presenting one of the Italian schools created in Brazil in the early 20th century, under the legal order mentioned above and that probably received meager subventions sent by the Italian government.

Parte seconda: La Scuola Principe di Napoli in Brasile⁷

The Colony of Sao Caetano was founded in 1877, in a recently acquired Farm with the same name, that used to belong to the Sao Bento Abbey. In July 1877, while Venetian emigrants recruited by Brazilian government were already travelling in the steamship “Europa”, the deed of Sao Caetano Farm was officially transferred from the Sao Bento Order to the Imperial Government. (MARTINS, 1992)

These immigrants are part of a much larger contingent of emigrants that left from the Italian Peninsula to Brazil, most of them to Sao Paulo. There are many reasons for what became known as the Great Italian Emigration that occurred between the milestone-dates of Italian unification (1861) and the end of World War I (1918), with peaks by the end of the 70s and becoming a mass phenomenon between 1887 and 1902. Trento (1988, 2009) and Cenni (2003) point misery as the main reason.

Taxes over property and assets, in addition to high fees over grain grinding aggravated the misery in which peasants already lived. The life of workers was marked by quite precarious conditions of survival.

In these conditions, according to Alvim (2000), Italian emigration was an important phenomenon for socioeconomic balance, as it relieved the pressure and reclamations on cities and the yet infant industry, but also because expats sent money to their relatives and that minimally contributed, in a certain way, to keep away or postpone a social rebellion.

Venetians who disembarked from the “Europa” steamship in the port city of Santos and were taken to the *Immigrants Inn*⁸ in Sao Paulo before being taken to the Sao Caetano Colony had probably faced difficult economic conditions like the ones described above, having left their land when they had perhaps no resources for surviving.⁹

They would have been brought from Sao Paulo to Sao Caetano through the railroad of *Sao Paulo Railway Company*, however, as Mimesse states (2013), even though this railroad crossed the lands of the Colony, “there was still no station for people to disembark, forcing them to jump off a moving train with their little children and their belongings.” (p. 24) [our translation] Novaes (1991), nonetheless, describes another situation:

In the afternoon of July 28th, 1887, around 4 o’clock, the driver of the then São Paulo Railway, Casemiro Alonso, stopped the small locomotive next to the curve now known as Matarazzo. Casemiro, leaning on the window of the locomotive, observed that group of men, women and children, who left, with some difficulty, the two wagons that formed the train, abashed with their luggage and with having to watch out for the restless children. (p. 1) [our translation]

⁷ Second part: The *Prince of Naples* School in Brazil.

⁸According to Paiva & Moura (2008), the Immigrants Inn served for reception, screening and referral. Besides food and accommodation services, there was medical-sanitary control, registry and orientation regarding jobs. “The permanence of immigrants and national workers was conditioned by job offers, by the existence of medical-sanitary problems and by transport availability. According to the Inn files, the average time of permanence was one week.” (p. 30) [our translation]

⁹ Martins (1992) presents the immigrants that arrived at the Sao Caetano Colony as “poor peasants, landless peasants, coming from one of the poorest regions in Italy at the time, Veneto” (p. 29) [our translation], and victims of economic exploitation, territorial expropriation and precarious life conditions in their homecountry.

That, however, would have been just one of the many difficulties they have faced. According to Martins (1992) and Mimesse (2013), the first years of the Colony were marked by a fight for survival; construction of houses; planting in the land; grass preparation; reivindication of that which Brazilian government had committed to, like providing food and payment of daily fees; in addition to the unceasing struggle for life, threatened by illness and death and above all by child mortality.¹⁰

According to Martins (1992), at the Sao Caetano Colony, chosen by the elites as a laboratory for the introduction of free work, still during slavery, in Sao Paulo state and in Brazil, immigrants found illness, death and land grabbing, but also demonstrations of solidarity. For the author, Catholic religion and Italian identity were unifying elements, that created a sense of charity and community and thus, outlined an identity for immigrants: catholic and Italian. However, these two identities did not coexist so peacefully at the time, for the Italian *Risorgimento* placed State and Church in conflicting and hostile bases.

The conflict, however, was between the State and the Pope and that transcended local life. Neither the Italian State, nor the Catholic Church made themselves continuously or effectively present at the Sao Caetano Colony. In the colony's daily life, Italian immigrants, who were mostly born before the Italian national unity, did not notice such conflicts.

The second generation of immigrants that arrived coming from Mantua, between 1878 and 1892, in addition to illness and death, found even more adverse conditions. Differently of the first wave, these ones did not receive lots of land in the Colony and consequently, did not receive any funds from the government for the first six months of settlement. Immerse in so many difficulties, immigrants created the *Società di Mutuo Soccorso Principe di Napoli*, guided by secular principles of solidarity from the Italian *Risorgimento* revolution. According to Martins (1992), there were many reasons that motivated its creation:

The lack of land for new families that were arriving or forming, the viniculture crisis caused by plagues in the grapevines and the economic agitation of inflation, produced by the fictitious boom of the so-called Entanglement, from 1890 to 1892. (p. 194) [our translation]

The *Società di Mutuo Soccorso Principe di Napoli*¹¹, founded in 1892, was created in the middle and as consequence of several economic, social and cultural changes that impacted Italian immigrants and led to the creation of several mutual support associations, in many places.¹² Its Statute defined:

¹⁰ Child mortality in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was caused by yellow fever, malaria, typhoid fever, variola and whooping cough, but also by the lack of medical assistance, in addition to malnutrition. For more about that, see: VERONA, F. Vida e morte dos operários de Schio em São Paulo: uma leitura dos Registros Obituários do Cemitério do Brás, de 1893 a 1895. In: CARNEIRO, M. L. T. et alii (orgs). *História do trabalho e histórias da imigração*. São Paulo: EDUSP/FAPESP, 2010, p. 267- 298.

¹¹ About that, see the chapter *O mútuo Socorro no nascimento da classe trabalhadora* [Mutual support in the birth of the working class] [our translation] in Martins (1992).

¹² For more on that, see Biondi (2011), who found, between 1878 and 1924, the existence of 44 mutualist societies in Sao Paulo and the peripheral urban centres of Santo Amaro, Sao Bernardo and Sao Caetano.

Art. 1. – Si è costituita in San Gaetano una Società di Mutuo Soccorso col nome di “Principe di Napoli”, il cui scopo è l’unione, l’istruzione, La moralità ed il mutuo soccorso fra gli italiani. Il simbolo è la bandiera nazionale e col moto ‘Principe di Napoli’. (SOCIETÀ DI MUTUO SOCCORSO PRINCIPE DI NAPOLI, 1922, p. 3)¹³

The *Società* had very well-defined functions, mainly regarding medical assistance, such as paying a subvention to the ill, some amount for hospital expenses, paying for medical appointments, for medicines and accompanying the ill, which was done by the partners, in shifts. Besides that, the society committed to pay for funeral expenses for partners whose family could not afford it.

In its headquarters, the *Società* hosted a *Scuola Italo Brasiliana* (Italo-Brazilian School), about which very little is known. Permeated by silences and fragments, the documents located do not tell us about its foundation, curricular structure, organization of time and space, methods or school culture. Amidst traces, we find clues that it was founded between 1911 and 1923. Up to 1911, there is nothing in the *Società* Minutes about a school. The Minutes from 1911 to 1929 have disappeared! That indicates that files have often been kept inappropriately. In 1923, there is a photograph that shows the existence of the school. In the Minute of September 9th, 1931, there is deliberation to “officialise to Teacher Cunha to be kind and leave our Social Headquarters, as he is not punctual with payments.”

Figura 1- Scuola Principi di Napoli.



Fonte: Fundação Pró-Memória de São Caetano.

¹³ Art. 1. – It is constituted, in Sao Caetano, a society for mutual support, under the name “Principe di Napoli”, aiming at union, instruction, morality and mutual support amongst Italians. Its symbol is the national flag with the motive “Principe di Napoli.” (Sociedade de Mútuco Socorro Príncipe de Nápoles, 1922, p. 3) [our translation]

Such situation makes us think about the conditions of Italian schools at the time. Professor Arturo Magnocavallo, after visiting elementary schools in the city of Sao Paulo in 1907, produced a report for the Central Council of the *Società "Dante Alighieri"* in Rome, in which he indicates the state of the schools as "miserable". He continues: "Only in the city of Sao Paulo, there are today around seventy Italian primary schools. They are many, but how many of them deserve the name school? How many are able to respond to the lowest requirements of the colony?" (*apud* DELL'AIRA, 2011, p. 333) [our translation] He also states that there are actually not seventy schools, but seventy people who are in charge, often without any vocation or training for that.

The situation presented about Sao Paulo schools allows us to question if it was similar to the one of the *Società de Mutuo Soccorso Principe di Napoli*. Would it be one teacher or a school with several teachers? What was the training of this teacher? We know very little about him. His name was Giovanni Cardo. About that, Novaes (1991) describes a visit of the director of the Sao Caetano school to the School of the Prince of Naples Society school.

Our teacher made all the students stand up and sing the Brazilian National Anthem and dozens of vibrant voices have filled the large classroom. When the anthem finished, our master, filled with satisfaction and pride, turned to teacher Perrenoud, head up, with his chin thrown forward, like he stated: here, national Brazilian symbols are also worshiped, even though the school is Italian! (p. 3) [our translation]

Teacher Giovanni Cardo, just like many at the time, used a stick¹⁴, but how was the curricular structure of this school? It seems like, other than Italian, Portuguese was taught, as well as national symbols. Was there Italian and Brazilian History and Geography in the curriculum? Was the method intuitive like the one propagated in Conferences and press, that was being implemented in the model-schools and school groups in Brazil?

The only photograph found of the Schools dates from 1923¹⁵ and on it, the name of the teacher noted is Giancarlo Carda. The class is composed of boys and girls. Were they in the same class? Did classes happen in a co-education regime? All children are wearing uniform. Was it subsidized by the *Società*? Were the immigrant families already settled and prospering, which allowed to keep children at school, far from work and with conditions of affording for it? About the teacher's salary, who paid for it? Was there subvention from Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs? Did families pay for teacher Cardo's salary themselves? These questions remain unanswered.

Nonetheless, it is possible to work with the hypothesis that the *Principe di Napoli School* had benefited from the contributions for the instruction of Italian children, if not with money, with teaching materials. Next, one of these materials, received by the *Principe di Napoli School*, will be presented: the reading book *Piccolo Mondo*.

¹⁴ In the iconographic collection of Sao Caetano's Pro-Memoria Foundation, the following description is found: "Director was Teacher Giancarlo Cardo and his daughter Maria Cardo was the secretary. The handbook for the advanced students was *Il Cuoro* (sic), edited in Italian. Pedro (Pierim) Matielo took the quince sticks to the teacher but was the first one to have them used on him, as a punishment for misbehaving." (File 3917- A1 V5 P261)

¹⁵ Photograph is found in Sao Caetano's Municipal History Museum.

Parte Terza: *Piccolo Mondo, letture per le scuole elementari*¹⁶

In Italy, from 1880 on, several pedagogical conferences were organized by the Ministry of Instruction, to discuss teaching books, which, in 1871, were more than two thousand, a number that would double in ten years. In 1890, the Minister of Public Instruction, Paolo Boselli, stated that the situation of publishing for schools is a “vera anarchia” and that he wished to “mettere in ordine l’arruffata matassa”, which can be translated as organize that entanglement of publications. (CHIOSSO, 2007, p.8)

Between 1888 and 1916, as Barausse (2016) elucidates, there was a period of interest and attention to the production of books destined to Italian schools abroad, which is materialized in a list of books authorized to be used, published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Instruction.

One of these many books produced in Italy for the Italian schools abroad is *Piccolo Mondo, letture per le scuole elementari*, for both male and female schools, composed of 7 books: syllabary; complement to syllabary; first reading book; second reading book; third reading book; fourth reading book; and fifth reading book, all by authors Fanny Romagnoli, a teacher, member of the Bologna’s Teachers Society, and Silvia Albertoni. It was published by the important Fiorentino publishing house Bemporad, which alongside with Mondadori Publishing House, had the highest number of books approved by the Ministry. (GALFRÉ, 2005)

Piccolo Mondo had also been approved to be adopted at the schools in the Italian Peninsula. According to Barausse (2008), the Ministry Circular number 75 on September 24th, 1900, approved the complement to syllabary book, highlighting its illustrations. The books were also indicated to specific provinces, like Pisa, for which they approved the syllabary and the second, third, fourth and fifth reading books. (p. 559)

Although there is still no information on the number of editions, the copy located with the *Società* documents and that is the object of study in this article, dates from 1910 and refers to the volume indicated for teaching fourth grade boys and girls.

The book, with a small format (10 cm of width and 17 cm high), is composed of 311 pages, over which 156 short stories and poems are distributed and of which more than one third is illustrated. Texts are mostly produced by the authors, but there are excerpts taken from other Italian authors. *Piccolo Mondo*’s central core is the Rosati family: the father, Mister Rosati, railway engineer; the mother, Mrs. Clotilde, an educated woman who provides education to her children; and the three children, Alberto, 13; Isabella, 11; and Giorgio, 9. Stories develop around the family, relationships between father, mother and children; and in the scope of socialization that its members take part on, the school and the circle of friends. A smaller part of the texts can be considered as single, not linked to the universe described above.

Piccolo Mondo shows concerns with scientific teaching and the appreciation of Natural Sciences. In the short stories, we find themes such as hygiene, health, children and adult deaths, nutrition, medicines, vaccines and plants. An example is the story of Giacinta, a girl presented as having modest conditions, but miserable appearance:

Anche la persona della Giacinta lasciava molto a desiderare per la pulizia: il visetto, che sarebbe stato molto bellino, sfigurava tra una selva di capelli mal pettinati, incolti; e il candore della pelle era velato di sudiciume; le mani poi parevano quelle di uno spazzacamino, e le unghie portavano um lutto perpetuo! (ROMAGNOLI, ALBERTONI, 1910, p. 12).¹⁷

¹⁶ Third part: *Piccolo Mondo, reading for the elementary schools*

¹⁷ Even Giacinta’s figure looked poor regarding cleasing: her little face, that could be very pretty, was disfigured in a forest of messy hair; the whiteness of her skin was marked by dirt; her hands looked like the ones

Through descriptive texts that aim to provide the reader with basic notions, nature is presented harmoniously organized and classified, with an eminently practical functioning. Some examples are the tales about big and small elements of the vegetable world, specific types of plants and also the plants of gardens and woods.

There are short stories regarding Geography, so that the authors continue to teach Natural Sciences, through contents that approach several environment aspects. Texts provide little readers with some simple notions, especially about water and its different forms. Rain is presented as sometimes mild and relaxing, sometimes as frightening, with lightnings and thunders and causing floods and disasters:

Per tutto i segni della burrasca, da tutte le parti il racconto più o meno malinconico di quella notte, secondo che aveva più o meno ofeso il raccontatore. Ai Bagni, campi divorati dalla Lima, case, edifizii, piazze, muraglie, passeggi smozzicati e guastati. I luoghi di delizie, che pochi giorni innanzi formicolavano di tutta la quint'essenza del mondo elegante, ingombrati adesso di rena, di rottami e di ceppi voltolati dalla corrente. (ROMAGNOLI, ALBERTONI, 1910, p. 188).¹⁸

Teachers are also taught to respect and value the seasons of the year and their respective weather and temperatures, in addition to the different types of relief and the land cultivation. In what concerns the contents that privilege man, *Piccolo Mondo* describes human experiences such as hunt, fishing, agricultural and industrial work and inventions such as the train and the ship.

Regarding contents that privilege living in society, the authors present a report about the 1898 Expo, that happened in Turin, to explain the different human races: Caucasian, Aethiopian, Yellow, American and Malay. For that, they categorize¹⁹ human beings by highlighting observable physical traits in children, using adjectives such as beautiful, ugly, thick, straight, curly, and introducing for the readers a true hierarchy among human beings, as we can read below:

I bimbi di Terrasanta, gli Arabi e le fanciulle dell'alto Egitto, colla pelle quase Bianca, col profilo regolare, cogli occhi bellissimi, somigliavano molto al tipo europeo, appartenendo infatti anch'essi alla **razza caucasica**; invece Le piccole Galla ci presentavano il perfetto tipo della **razza negra** o **etiopica**: labra grosse, naso

of a chimney sweeper, and her nails were in perpetual mourning! (ROMAGNOLI, ALBERTONI, 1910, p. 12) [our translation]

¹⁸ Everywhere, the signs of a storm, from each part, the more or less melancholic story about that night, according to what each one had suffered. For the Bagnis, the fields devoured by slime, houses, buildings, squares, walls, streets, reduced to small destroyed pieces. The beautiful places, that a few days before seethed with the whole quintessence of the elegant world, now filled with sand, waste and tree trunks that came with the tide. (ROMAGNOLI, ALBERTONI, 1910, p. 188) [our translation]

¹⁹ According to Schwarcz (2002), from 1870 on, several theories, among which evolutionism and Darwinism, searched to produce, in their own way, a theory about race. So, if, on one side, monogenists defended a single origin for mankind and the possibility of "hierarchizing races and people according to their different mental and moral levels" (p.55) [our translation], on the other, polygenists, even though they believed in the "existence of common ancestors in prehistory, stated that different human species had separated long enough to configure different heritage and aptitude." (p.55) [our translation] Darwin's *On the origin of species* has risen several interpretations of the famous concepts of evolution and heredity, selection of the strongest ones and competition, which have been triggered in different ways by different groups to guide debates at the time, about issues on civilization and progress.

schacciato, capelli crespi e lanosi: erano brutine davvero [...]La **razza gialla** era rappresentata da ragazzetti cinesi; i piccoli avevano l'aria furba e non erano bruttissimi; ma i più grandicelli ispiravano poca simpatia, con quella pelle giallastra, tirata sugli zigomi sporgenti, con quegli occhi obliqui e di strana espressione, e quei capelli Neri e lisci, stretti in un lungo e sottile codine[...]Erano venuti all'Esposizione anche alcuni rappresentanti della **razza americana** o rosso-rame, che erano partiti dalla loro Terra del Fuoco, al sud dell'America Meridionale[...]Non vidi alcuna rappresentanza della **razza malese**, e non credo ce ne fosse. (ROMAGNOLI, ALBERTONI, 1910, p. 42-45)²⁰

Still in this same text, the homecountries of the children are presented as demi- or completely barbarians, however, they were saved by Italian missionaries, that released them from slavery or orphanage, “alcuni avrebbero potuto insegnare l'accento a molti bimbi nati e cresciuti sotto Il bel cielo d'Italia.” (ROMAGNOLI, ALBERTONI, 1910, p. 46)²¹

These texts about life in society allow to understand how a social reality is built and thought of from social representations determined by interests of the groups that create them, thus, they are not neutral, quite the opposite, they are conducted by strategies that aim to legitimize their discourses. Chartier (1994) defines them as a set of “collective representations that incorporate in individuals the divisions of the social world, and structure schemes of perception and appreciation from which they classify, judge and act.” (p. 104) [our translation]

The teaching of History, and especially the History of the Motherland, is highlighted in the pages of *Piccolo Mondo*, as it was probably considered by the intellectual elite who planned education in Italy as a fundamental subject for the recently unified nation and for the construction of the Italian people's patriotism and nationalism (inside and outside of Italy). It offers to the reader a trip around the country through descriptions and images of Italy's most important places and monuments: the *Del Farneto* in Bologna; channels and gondolas, the *Scala dei Giganti*, the *Bridge of Sighs*, the *Rialto Bridge*, the churches of *Our Lady of Deliverance*, of *San Giovanni and Paolo*, the *St. Mark's Basilica*, the *Watch Tower*, in Venice; the *Piazza dell'erbe* and the *Santa Maria in Organo Church* in Verona; the *Dome* dedicated to *San Ciriaco*, the *Saint Francis and Saint Augustine Church*, the streets and squares of Ancona; the *Via Nacional*, the *Via Roma*, the *Vesuvius* in Naples; the *Etna* in Catania; the *Roman Forum*, the *Arch of Titus*, the *Arch of Constantine*, the *Trajan's Forum*, the *St. Peter's Basilica*, the *St. Peter's Square* and the *Vatican*, the *Fontana dell'acqua Paola* in Rome etc.

Along the stories, national heroes are also presented, in order to unify the country through the construction of an idealized image, a representation that aims to congregate

²⁰ The children of the Holy Land, the arabs and the girls in Upper Egypt, with their almost white skin, a regular profile, beautiful eyes, looked a lot like the European kind and as a matter of fact, they also belonged to the Caucasian race; while the little attractions were the perfect kind of the black or Aethiopian race: thick lips, flat nose, curly hair that looked like wool: they were indeed ugly [...] The yellow race was represented by Chinese boys, with an astute appearance and not very ugly, but the olders ones did not inspire much sympathy, with their yellowish skin stretched over protruding cheekbones, oblique eyes and a strange expression and those black straight hair tied in ponytails [...] Some representative of the American or red race coming from the Land of Fire in Southern South America came to the Expo [...] I did not see any representation of the Malay race and I think there wasn't any indeed. (ROMAGNOLI, ALBERTONI, 1910, p. 42-45) [our translation]

²¹ “some could teach the accent to many children born and raised under the beautiful sun of Italy.” (ROMAGNOLI, ALBERTONI, 1910, p. 46) [our translation]

several spaces and times and, above all, to unite the people of different regions of the peninsula, just like the *Risorgimento* dreamed. The description of virtues, as well as images, of King Umberto I, Queen Margherita, King Vittorio Emanuele III and Garibaldi are present in *Piccolo Mondo*.

The reading book was the only one used at Brazilian primary school, both for reading and for teaching Moral, Civility and History of the Homeland, and maybe the same happened in Italian schools in Brazil. One learned to read by reading a certain standard of conduct and one learned to love the homecountry by reading short stories, biographic notes and then excerpts about important historical episodes that contributed to form such love.

The reading book had the challenge of building, in a recently unified Italy, the idea of the Homeland as a place where people identify for their origin, habits, language and especially by the aggregating and unifying feeling of a Motherland, that welcomes everyone and thus creates a common identity. In this sense, the emigration theme, that was so present in the Italian social reality, was also present in *Piccolo Mondo*. Emigrants are introduced as those who were basically constrained to abandon their homecountry to pursue survival and work, to make a living in a foreign land: “essi hanno lasciato quanto di più caro avevano al mondo, il villaggio nativo, la casetta, i vecchi genitori, la chiesa, Il camposanto dove dormono tanti loro cari: tutto hanno lasciato; fra poco diranno addio anche all’Italia.” (ROMAGNOLI, ALBERTONI, 1910, p. 234)²²

Last but not least, *Piccolo Mondo* presents a civilization project. Authors dedicated quite some space to teach civility, searching, according to Revel (1999, p.178) “at the same time, to discipline souls through coercion over their bodies and to impose collectively to children a standard norm of social behaviour” [our translation], which is carried out by passing on values like kindness, charity, patience, work, respect for the elderly, as well as by holding children off of pride, attachment to material values, sloth, greed and other feelings.

The reading book pages are filled with children and adults who feel pleasure to do good to others and help the needy. The feeling of responsibility towards their belongings and the commitment to others are also promoted, that means, in addition to having good attitudes, children are expected to behave and have habits that are according with the significant values of the society in which they are living. Stories emphasize that knowledge, understanding and practice of good behaviours and virtues are necessary to live well or, as Revel (1999) puts it, the stories aim, above all, to mold children for the need of a general civility code.

The book can be seen in the light of what Elias (1994, p.168) asserts about the non-naturalness of attitudes that is imposed by society to children, so that, as natural as the tenderness and shame standards seems to adults and as much as “civilized control of instinctive cravings is accepted as natural, the more uncomprehensible it becomes for adults that children do not feel such tenderness and shame ‘by nature.’” This way, children are called to develop self-control and turn into automatic “the socially desirable behaviour, a matter of self-control, making it seem, in the individual’s mind, like a result of their free will” and thus being “of interest of their own health or human dignity.” (ELIAS, 1994, p. 153) [our translation]

From the short stories in *Piccolo Mondo* emerge rules for social living and standards for individual and collective conducts that were considered at the time as pillars

²² “they have left what they cared the most for in the world: their homeland, their house, their old parents, the church, the cemetery where their dear relatives live. They have left everything and soon they will also say goodbye to Italy.” (ROMAGNOLI, ALBERTONI, 1910, p. 234) [our translation]

of a “modern” society, so the authors intended to, instead of describing society, transform it. (CHOPPIN, 2002) In this sense, childhood and children are seen as idyllic, revealing an image that is more desired than true, of a child that is strong, studies hard, is adapted to the family environment, attends school, follows rules, is well-behaved and clean.

Final considerations

The Italian school maintained by *Prince of Naples Mutual Support Society* was importante to preserve the language, teach writing, worship Italy as the homeland of immigrants and their children and also to create a sense of belonging, of sharing habits and culture, an Italian identity, an *italianità*, supporting the formation of an Italian *piccolo mondo* within the Sao Caetano Colony, that had monuments, heroes, language and Italy as a homecountry.

This set of knowledge to be taught and of conducts to implement materializes by reading *Piccolo Mondo* so, studying it allows to understand the social concerns at the time, the ideological affiliations, and to apprehend educational practices for school, social and moral orders and the representations of society and of children. From its pages, emerges a project for both civilization and construction of Italian identity.

The reading book that was studied follows the programs of the Italian Ministry of Instruction, providing notions of hygiene, natural sciences, history, geography, in addition to dedicating nearly half of its pages to moralizing texts, which intend to inculcate moral conducts and values, to civilize the little ones.

To compose the scenery of Italian schools in Sao Paulo and in the colonies around, to bring up teachers, curricular proposals, furniture, pedagogic materials, books studies, that means, to study the school materiality in the context of the schooling of Italians and their descendents, still intrigues and evokes investigations which may help to reveal and understand what was said and done in primary school in Brazil between the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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