



**Schoolbooks for the italian elementary school on two sides of the Atlantic: the study of *Libro d'appunti* by Giovanni Soli (between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century)<sup>1</sup>**

Livros escolares para a escola elementar italiana nos dois lados do Atlântico: o estudo do *Libro d'appunti* de Giovanni Soli (entre o final do século XIX e início do século XX)

Libros escolares para la escuela primaria italiana a dos lados del Atlántico: el estudio de *Libro d'appunti* de Giovanni Soli (entre finales del siglo XIX y principios del siglo XX)

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**Abstract**

Between the last decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, several Italian schools were created in the city of São Paulo, maintained by the students' families and relying on subsidies in books, materials and money sent by the Italian government. This article aims to understand educational policies, production, circulation and distribution of textbooks for the Italian peninsula and for Italian schools abroad, considering those sent as a subsidy that circulated in Brazil in the early years of the 20th century. Anchored in the contributions of the History of Education and Cultural History and having documental analysis as the adopted procedure, this text takes as a privileged source Giovanni Soli's *Libro d'appunti*, as reports on schools in São Paulo, as well as laws, correspondence, reports from consuls, official letters, dispatches, ministerial circulars and the yearbook of Italian schools. Books are considered cultural artifacts that are located in the articulation between the prescriptions imposed by the official programs and the professors' speeches.

**Keywords:** Schoolbooks. Italian schooling. Italian immigration in São Paulo.

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## Resumo

Entre as últimas décadas do século XIX e início do XX foram criadas várias escolas italianas na cidade de São Paulo, mantidas pelas famílias dos alunos e contando com os subsídios em livros, materiais e dinheiro enviados pelo governo italiano. Este artigo tem como objetivo compreender as políticas educacionais, a produção, a circulação e a distribuição de livros escolares para a península e escolas italianas no exterior, contemplando os enviados como subsídio que circularam no Brasil nos primeiros anos do século XX. Ancorado nas contribuições da História da Educação e na História Cultural e tendo a análise documental como procedimento adotado, o presente texto toma como fonte privilegiada o *Libro d'appunti* de Giovanni Soli, além de relatórios sobre as escolas em São Paulo, além de leis, correspondências, relatórios de cônsules, ofícios, despachos, circulares ministeriais e anuário das escolas italianas. Os livros são considerados artefatos culturais que se situam na articulação entre as prescrições impostas pelos programas oficiais e os discursos singulares dos professores.

**Palavras-chave:** Livros escolares. Escolarização italiana. Imigração italiana em São Paulo.

## Resumen

Entre las últimas décadas del siglo XIX y principios del XX, se crearon varias escuelas italianas en la ciudad de São Paulo, mantenidas por las familias de los estudiantes y contando con subsidios en libros, materiales y dinero enviado por el gobierno italiano. Este artículo tiene como objetivo comprender las políticas educativas, producción, circulación y distribución de libros de texto para la península y las escuelas italianas en el exterior, considerando los enviados como un subsidio que circuló en Brasil en los primeros años del siglo XX. Basado en los aportes de la Historia de la Educación y la Historia Cultural y teniendo como procedimiento adoptado el análisis documental, este texto toma como fuente privilegiada el *Libro d'appunti* de Giovanni Soli, además de los informes sobre las escuelas de São Paulo, así como las leyes, la correspondencia, los informes. de cônsules, despachos, despachos, circulares ministeriales y anuario de las escuelas italianas. El objetivo es investigar los libros como artefactos culturales que se ubican en la articulación entre las prescripciones impuestas por los programas oficiales y los discursos singulares de los docentes.

**Palabras clave:** Libros escolares. Escolarización italiana. Inmigración italiana en São Paulo.

## Introduction

Between the final decades of the 19th century and 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 descendants (BARAUSSE 2015, 2016, 2021; LUCHESE, 2014, 2017; PANIZZOLO, 2016, 2018 a, 2018 b, 2019). Syllabaries, books on reading, religion, arithmetic, national history, geography, songs, literary excerpts, among others that followed the curriculum in force in Italy, crossed the Atlantic to be adopted in Italian schools in São Paulo.

The intention of this article is to understand the educational policies, production, circulation and distribution of schoolbooks for the peninsula and Italian schools abroad between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a focus of analysis, the *Libro d'appunti per gli alunni di terza, note di lingua, storia, geografia, diritti e doveri, aritmetica e nozioni varie* (Notebook for third year students; notes on language, history, geography, rights and duties, arithmetic and various notions) by Giovanni Soli, published in Italy, authorized to be adopted in schools in different regions of Italy and sent to Brazil, specifically to São Paulo.

Anchored in the references of Cultural History and History of Education and mobilizing the conceptual *corpus*, especially by Chartier (1994, 1996, 1998, 2004) about production and representation, the procedures, instruments, sources and directions of analysis were defined. The documental analysis takes as a privileged source, in addition to the *Libro d'appunti*, the reports of consuls, offices, dispatches, ministerial circulars and the yearbook of Italian schools.

The syllabary, the textbook, the schoolbook, the reading book (terminology that changes over time and due to the material structure itself) are understood as privileged sources for the History of Education because they are situated at the intersection between the imposed prescriptions by official programs and the unique discourses of teachers (CHOPPIN, 2002). In this sense, schoolbooks can be taken as cultural artifacts that produce sense and meaning, as cultural tools that establish links and conexions between mental structures and social figurations, or in Elias' words (1994) between psychogenesis and sociogenesis.

Chartier (2004) also contributes to the understanding of the process of symbolic production of a civilizing project, which takes place through the edition and circulation of books, and which favors, through reading, a set of dispositions aimed at imitation and learning from a corporate matrix. In this sense, books contain the elementary knowledge of reading, counting and writing, as well as the standards of conduct to be followed by children.

In this way, the question is what are the policies adopted by the Italian government for sending subsidies to Italian schools? What are the selection criteria adopted for the selection of books to be sent, as subsidies to the elementary school? And specifically with regard to *Libro d'appunti*, what is its structure, its contents and how does it operate between emigrants and Italy?

The text is organized into four sections: the first seeks to understand the educational policies for Italian schools abroad; in the second, subsidies sent to Italian schools in São Paulo, with emphasis on schoolbooks; the third focuses on the production and circulation of Giovanni Soli's books on both sides of the Atlantic; in the fourth, a study is undertaken on the materiality and contents of the book studied, with a view to knowing the educational proposal, as well as the values prescribed therein.

## Educational policies for Italian schools abroad

The theme of the functions, purposes and operating norms of Italian schools abroad was in accordance with Salvetti (2014), present in political-educational discussions since the first post-unification decades, and to understand the motivations of the Italian State to create and maintain ties with Italian schools abroad, it is necessary to consider the project of building a strong State and a foreign policy that would demonstrate such power. In an article entitled *Scuole italiane all'estero: libro de leitura para as escolas italianas no Brasil*, Panizzolo (2019a) began an approach to the legal systems of the Italian peninsula that sought to establish operating and inspection standards for Italian schools abroad.

The first legislation referring to Italian schools abroad, according to Floriani (1974) was that of the Minister of Foreign Relations Durando, in 1862, which authorized the creation of a college in Alexandria, Egypt. In subsequent years, schools were created in Tunisia and Constantinople (1863), in Smyrna and Samos (1864), in Athens (1865), in Galatz and Sarajevo (1866) and in Thessalonica (1868) which were organized in two models, in public schools entirely financed by the Italian government, and in private confessional or secular schools, commonly linked to Italian associations abroad, which could receive subsidies from the Italian government, as long as they respect the programs and teaching methods and are subject to the control of the Consuls and inspections ministerial.

Since the 1870s, with the takeover of Rome by the Italian State, and the “consequent lack of recognition of the Italian liberal State by the church” (SALVETTI, 2014, p.59) to benefit from the government subsidy, schools of religious missions in Abroad, in addition to accepting government programs, manuals and inspections, they should have lay teachers on their staff with proof of qualifications.

Royal Decree n° 6,566, of December 8, 1889, by Francesco Crispi, head of government and at the same time Minister of Foreign Affairs, approved the ordering of the Royal Italian Schools for the Mediterranean Basin and Italian schools abroad. Among the main characteristics of this order are the direct interference of the government in elementary schools with regard to teachers, regulations and programs; the possibility of converting government schools (maintained by the government) into subsidized schools; the creation of a general inspection sector together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and central directorates based abroad; and makes it possible to grant flat-rate subsidies to religious and secular Italian schools, provided that they adopt the programs and textbooks indicated by the government and accept the supervision of Italian school authorities (FLORIANI, 1974, p. 13-14).

According to Crispi's conception, emigration had the potential to strengthen the nation, in addition to presenting the “conditions to contribute to the development of foreign trade and, therefore, of Italian exports, mainly to the Americas” (SALVETTI, 2014, p. 58). The increase in the number of Italian schools abroad after the Crispi Reform therefore led to an increase in government investments destined for them, even though such subsidies remained insufficient to effectively cover the proper functioning of the schools:

The item “Subsidies to Italian schools abroad” went from 270 thousand lire in 1886-1887 to 1,033,710 in 1890-1891. Of this increase, however, very little went to the benevolent and mutual aid societies that maintained the Italian schools abroad: the subsidized schools, in fact, continued to receive always miserable sums in relation to their conspicuous demands (*Ibid*, p. 61).

The option of subsidizing the education of Italians abroad with state resources provoked much criticism and resistance, especially in the midst of the labor movement, apparently for two reasons. The first is probably due to the lack of understanding of the magnitude of the phenomenon of emigration, and the second reason is due to the critical situation of public education in Italy, which despite the mandatory school laws, in force since 1859 with the Casati Law, reiterated in 1877 by the *Coppino Law*, had alarming rates of school dropout and illiteracy. Floriani (1974) transcribes an excerpt from Mario Mariani's publication in which he stated:

It is not known why our Government continues to maintain such schools [Italian abroad] almost as if it did not know where to put the money, almost as if there was not enough ignorance and illiteracy at home to provide, without wanting to act like the rich with countries that do not have no need of either our aid, nor our subsidies. What service Italian schools provide or can provide in America is one of the many things Italian taxpayers could never know etc., while your children struggle sadly between intellectual and moral misery and die victims of pellagra and hunger ... (FLORIANI, 1974, p. 25-26).<sup>2</sup>

*Crispi Law* was replaced by the *Blanc Law* of 1894 which reiterates the possibility of obtaining subsidies in books, school materials and money, by non-governmental schools, that are private, secular or confessional, associative, etc. However, among several additions, those that impacted schools abroad refer to the diffusion of the national language and culture, the education and instruction of Italians abroad, through the foundation and maintenance of governmental institutes, but also through subsidies to non-governmental school institutions; and the greater concentration of power over schools in the hands of the consul, consular agents and the *Deputazione scolastiche*, a commission formed by local notables.

The *Tittoni Law* of 1910 establishes optional religious education outside of school hours, reiterates the funding for denominational schools that are subject to governmental inspections, maintains public schools in the Mediterranean Basin and subsidized schools in the Americas, and also determines that as long as they are respected the principles of a patriotic education for Italians and the conservation of the language, the schools could adapt to the needs of the countries where they were installed.

With the new Law, the contribution to subsidized schools remained negligible, and the financial support of the Mutual Relief Societies remained necessary for survival, as expressed by Minister Tittoni himself:

To these Mutual Relief Societies in South America - defended Minister Tittoni - I owe all the gratitude of the Italian Government. In fact, they are the ones who founded and maintain most of our schools; and ours subsidies, spread over such a vast area, rather than being a real contribution and cost-effective, should only be regarded as a moral contribution and an encouragement (TITTONI apud SALVETTI, 2014, p. 71).

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<sup>2</sup> Non si sa perchè il nostro Governo continui a mantenere tal scuole non sapesse dove mettere il denaro, quasi non vi fosse abbastanza ignoranza e analfabetismo in casa da provvedere, senza voler fare il gran signore con paesi che non hanno bisogno alcuno nè nostri aiuti, nè dei nostri sussidi. Che servizio rendono o possono render le scuole italiane in America, è una delle tante cose che i contribuenti italiani non hanno mai potuto sapere... Il popolo italiano, in quasi due quinti analfabeta, paga per educare argentini, orientali, brasiliani, cileni, ecc., mentre i loro figli lottano tristemente tra miseria intellettuale e morale e muoiono vittime della pellagra e della fame... (FLORIANI, 1974, p.25-26).

With the *Tittoni Law*, Italian schools abroad are assigned two important functions, the first, to offer education and instruction to emigrants, to preserve the national spirit, and secondly, they must spread the Italian language and culture to foreigners, increasing that it forms the prestige of Italy, at the same time favoring commercial relations.

Despite the laws, the greatest concentration of schools continued in Africa and Europe, even though immigration there was scarce. There was an increase in Latin America, especially in Argentina and Brazil, however, the former received more significant subsidies than the latter, which ironically received numerically much higher immigration. With regard specifically to São Paulo, it is possible to detect an increase in schools, although the data are sparse and often contradictory. According to the consular and ministerial reports that show the date of creation of the schools, in 1887 there was only one Italian school, in 1893 there were 12; in 1901 it was 43; in 1906 there were 60 schools, however, when all schools are taken into account, even those without information on the date of creation, the number reaches 156 schools by 1910 (REGIO CONSOLATO GENERALE D'ITALIA IN SAN PAOLO, 1907; MINISTERO DEGLI AFFARI ESTERI, 1905).

Information also varies in publications about schools. According to Parlagrecco, in 1906, 92 Italian schools were operating in São Paulo (FANFULLA, 1906, p. 800). According to data presented by Trento (2009) in the city of São Paulo in 1908, 80 Italian schools were operating. According to the *Teaching Yearbook of São Paulo State* (1909), there were 85 Italian schools in operation in the capital in 1909, reaching 91 schools in 1910 (SÃO PAULO, 1910). Pepe (1916) based on data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the 1913-1914 school year states that there were 42 Italian schools in the state capital of São Paulo. A much higher number was found by Trento (2009) which indicates 121 schools for the year 1913.

### **Subsidies sent to Italian schools in São Paulo**

The Italian schools in São Paulo, created by the private sector, were maintained throughout their existence, under certain conditions, by resources from the Brazilian government, by donations from the *Dante Alighieri Society* and by scarce subsidies sent by the Italian government.

Regarding the Brazilian government subsidy, the policy adopted by the Rodrigues Alves government stands out, which established the possibility of sending books and school materials to private schools that request it, provided that they register the school with the General Directorate of Public Instruction, for through the completion of a specific declaration; the presentation of the list containing the name of the students, with the indication of the condition of gratuity, if applicable; presentation of the list of materials previously supplied with their respective supply dates; information about the physical conditions of the building and its functioning; information about Portuguese language classes, geography and history of Brazil (PEPE, 1916).

The 1910 budget “allocated a sum of 445:900\$000 for subvention to 38 preliminary education establishments in the Capital and in several locations in the interior” (SÃO PAULO, 1909, p.119). Among the subsidized establishments were asylums, night classes and elementary schools, however, no Italian schools. It should be noted that the government also helped the non-subsidized “providing many furniture and didactic school material” (*Ibid*, p.119), in addition to “some material that facilitates the teaching of the Portuguese language to their teachers, as well as that of geography and homeland history.” (*Ibid*, p. 119). Perhaps Italian schools have benefited from this condition.

Another possibility of subsidy came from the *Dante Alighieri Society* in the form of materials distributed to Italian schools. Pepe (1916) reports the distribution of notebooks, maps, atlases, and more than 4000 *liras* on furniture, according to the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*:

After becoming aware of several internal practices, the council decided to have it distributed, free of charge, to students in the schools of this capital, a sufficient number of blank notebooks, bearing on the cover the portrait of Dante and some data on the ends that the society advocates [...] The Council also established the creation of a school committee of twelve members, who will be appointed, in an equal number of four, by the federation of Italian schools and the Magistral Union, who will be invited to nominate their respective representatives. The commission should help and coordinate Dante's action for the improvement of Italian schools. Then the council decided to continue its support in favor of night schools, already existing or to be established, and to sponsor the holding of public conferences on the occasion of patriotic anniversaries or memorable dates (O ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO, July 31, 1909, p. 4).

And finally, the most awaited subsidy, as it is considered an expression of the motherland's concern and care for its citizens, the subsidy coming from the Italian government. Condition for the Italian government subsidy was to accept the supervision of the royal consul general, and thus receive an aid in cash or in books and materials sent to the Consulate or acquired in São Paulo with funds made available by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Even so, the subsidy sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs often took a long time to arrive, as can be read in the letter sent by the Consul: "But we are now in the middle of March 1904 and still nothing is known about the material and I have not yet received a reply to my report of December 14, 1903!"<sup>3</sup> (DISPACCIO, 1904).

Teachers eagerly awaited him, even asking insistently through letters addressed to the Consul, as can be seen in the examples below, sent by the owners of schools *Vittorio Alfieri and Dio and Patria* respectively:

In order not to have the great pain, of perhaps having to close the school, we turn to beg Your Excellency to come to your aid, granting in a extraordinary, a subsidy to the Scuola Vittorio Alfieri (FRANCESCHINI, letter, 1 November 1899).<sup>4</sup>

Thus making sacrifices and which are each day aggravated by the relentless competition of foreign schools well curated and welcomed by their government; under the absolute forgetfulness of the homeland authorities and the absolute lack of grants or subsidies that could also be accepted, encouraging the professor's mission, which is difficult at all, but for many reasons, much more thorny and dangerous here, the signatories cannot fail to submit to the kindness of the Italian Government their conviction that, in addition to being unsatisfactory and very precarious, they cannot old age that awaits them is assured..."<sup>5</sup> (DALL'ACQUA, oficio, 28/04/1901).

<sup>3</sup> Ma ormai siamo alla metà di marzo 1904 e non si sa ancor nulla di detto materiale ne ho ancora ricevuta risposta al mio rapporto del 14 dicembre 1903!

<sup>4</sup> "Per non averi il grande dolore dividersi forse a dover chiudere la scuola, rivolgono la piu calda preghiera all'Ecc Vostra perchè voglia venir loro in aiuto, concedendo in via straordinaria, un sussidio alla detta scuola Vittorio Alfieri" (Cesare e Anna Franceschini, 1 novembre 1899).

<sup>5</sup> "Facendo dunque dei sacrifici compiuti e che tuttogiorno si aggravano per la concorrenza spietata delle scuole straniere ben curate e sorvenute dai loro governo; facendo dell'assoluto oblio delle patrie autorità e della mancanza assoluta di sovvenzione o sussidi che potessero nonche acculare, incoraggiare la missione del maestro, da per tutto difficile, ma qui per molteplici cause assai più spinosa e pericolosa, i sottoscritti non possono non sottoporre alla

In the midst of these various letters from teachers crying out for financial aid, there is a document indicating that in the 1891 financial year two schools received a subsidy. *The Scuola Semper Avanti Savoia* (from Francesco Pedatella) received L500<sup>6</sup>, and the *Scuola Regina Margherita* (from the Magrini sisters) received L300. A year later, in the financial year 1892-1893, these schools received the subsidy again, being for the *Scuola Sempre Avanti Savoia* L500, and for the *Scuola Regina Margherita* (the Magrini sisters), a little less, L250 (DISPACCIO, 7/03/ 1893; DISPACCIO 09/30/1891).

After a few years, in a 1903 report, the secretary Sebastiano Navasquez presents the situation of the schools, the performance of the Deputazione Scolastica through the creation of procedures such as the school visit form, the division of the schools to be visited into zones, as well as the names of the Deputazione members responsible for each of them; a summary table of the visits carried out, the areas to be visited and the list of school materials for the year 1903.

The list consists of books by five authors, all published in Italy and sent to Brazil. The first author is Marcello Zaglia, who appears on the list with six books indicated:

- a) Sillabario di Mario e Lisa per l'insegnamento simultaneo della lettura e della scrittura compilato con la collaborazione della signora Rita Tessarin, published in Rome by the Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, in 1896, costing 15 cents.
- b) Il Primo libro di Mario. Letture per la prima classe maschile a compimento del Sillabario, compilate per le scuole elementari maschili con la collaborazione della signora Rita Tessarin, published in Rome by the Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, in 1896, costing 25 cent.
- c) Il Primo libro di Lisa. Letture per la prima classe femminile a compimento del Sillabario, compilate per le scuole elementari maschili con la collaborazione della signora Rita Tessarin, published in Rome by the Dante Alighieri Publishing Company, in 1896, costing 25 cent.
- d) Il Secondo libro di Mario. Letture per la seconda classe maschile compiled according to the current government programs with the collaboration of a talented educator - 4 reorganized and corrected edition, published in Rome by the Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, in 1898, at the price of 60 cent.
- e) Il Secondo libro di Lisa. Letture per la seconda classe femminile compiled according to the current government programs with the collaboration of a talented educator - 4 reorganized and corrected edition, published in Rome by the Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, in 1898, at the price of 60 cent.
- f) Nozione di Grammatica.

The second author is Giovanni Soli with a graded series with eight books, in addition to seven other books nominated:

- a) Cominciamo la vita! Libro di lettura per la seconda classe elementare maschile, with the occasions for the development of the government program November 29, 1894. With illustrations by the painters L. Edel- O. Ballerio- G. Grotta, published in Milano, Enrico Trevisini editore, 1898, 60 cent.

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benignità del Governo italiano la loro convizione che oltre a essere asprissima, e affatto precaria non essendone assicurati la vecchiaia che si prepara loro assai..."

<sup>6</sup> The word lira will be abbreviated with L.



- b) *Cominciamo la vita! Libro di lettura per la seconda classe elementare femminile, with the occasions for the development of the government program November 29, 1894. With illustrations by the painters L. Edel- O. Ballerio- G. Grotta, published in Milano, Enrico Trevisini editore, 1898, 60 cent.*
- c) *Cominciamo la vita! Libro di lettura per la terza classe elementare maschile, with the occasions for the development of the government program November 29, 1894. Com illustrations by the painters L. Edel- O. Ballerio- G. Grotta, published in Milano, Enrico Trevisini editore, 1898, 90 cent.*
- d) *Cominciamo la vita! Libro di lettura per la terza classe elementare femminile, with the occasions for the development of the government program November 29, 1894. With illustrations by the painters L. Edel- O. Ballerio- G. Grotta, published in Milano, Enrico Trevisini editore, 1898, 90 cent.*
- e) *Cominciamo la vita! Libro di lettura per la quarta classe elementare maschile, with the occasions for the development of the government program November 29, 1894. With illustrations by the painters L. Edel- O. Ballerio- G. Grotta, published in Milano, Enrico Trevisini editore, 1898, 1,30.*
- f) *Cominciamo la vita! Libro di lettura per la quarta classe elementare femminile, with the occasions for the development of the government program November 29, 1894. With illustrations by the painters L. Edel- O. Ballerio- G. Grotta, published in Milano, Enrico Trevisini editore, 1898, 1,30.*
- g) *Cominciamo la vita! Libro di lettura per la quinta classe elementare maschile, with the occasions for the development of the government program November 29, 1894. With illustrations by the painters L. Edel- O. Ballerio- G. Grotta, published in Milano, Enrico Trevisini editore, 1898, 1,40.*
- h) *Cominciamo la vita! Libro di lettura per la quinta classe elementare femminile, with the occasions for the development of the government program November 29, 1894. With illustrations by the painters L. Edel- O. Ballerio- G. Grotta, published in Milano, Enrico Trevisini editore, 1898, 1,40.*
- i) *I Racconti della Patria. Narrazione storiche educative per la IV classe elementare. Compiled in accordance with the ministerial programs on November 29, 1894. Edition illustrated by O. Ballerio. Published in Rome/ Milano, E. Trevisini, 1895, 40 cent.*
- j) *I Racconti della Patria. Narrazione storiche educative per la V classe elementare. Compiled in accordance with ministerial programs on November 29, 1894. Published in Rome/ Milano, Editore E. Trevisini, 1900, 50 cent.*
- k) *I diritti e doveri del cittadino italiano per la III classe elementare. Published in Rome/ Milano, Editore E. Trevesini.*
- l) *I diritti e doveri del cittadino italiano per la IV classe elementare. Published in Rome/ Milano, Editore E. Trevesini.*
- m) *I diritti e doveri del cittadino italiano per la V classe elementare. Publicado em Roma/ Milano, Editore E. Trevesini.*

- n) *Libro d'appunti per gli alunni di III classe elementare- Note di lingua italiana, storia, geografia, diritti e doveri, Aritmetica e Nozione Varie Libro d'appunti per gli alunni di III classe elementare- - Publisher Luigi Trevesini.*
- o) *Grammatica Italiana, conosci la tua lingua- nozioni Italian Grammar, - Publisher Luigi Trevesini.*

The third author is Giuseppe Toti with three nominees:

- a) *Intelligenza e cuore. Letture educative ad uso delle scuole elementari maschili secondo i vigenti programma ufficiali - 4<sup>a</sup> class. Published in Milano/ Palermo, by Remo Sandron editore, 1900, 1,20 cent.*
- b) *Intelligenza e cuore. Letture educative ad uso delle scuole elementari femminili secondo i vigenti programma ufficiali - 4<sup>a</sup> class. Published in Milano/ Palermo, by Remo Sandron editore, 1900, 1,20 cent.*
- c) *Intelligenza e cuore. Letture educative ad uso delle scuole elementari maschili secondo i vigenti programma ufficiali -5<sup>a</sup> class. Published in Milano/ Palermo, por Remo Sandron editore, 1900, 1,20 cent.*

The fourth author is Paolo Vecchia with a book aimed at the professors:

- a) *Educational Pedagogy for masters of higher level - Publisher G.B. Paravia.*

The fifth and final author nominated is Angelo De Gubernatis with one book nominated:

- a) *La Patria Nostra. Libro di Lettura per le classe elementar superiori. Published in Rome by the Società Editrice Dante Alighieri, in 1898, at the price of 1,50 cent. (RELATORIO DEL SEGRETARIO SEBASTIANO NAVASQUEZ, 1903).*

Approval of books was carried out in Italy and made public by means of a Ministerial Circular, the one that precedes the list published in São Paulo is that of September 24, 1900<sup>7</sup>, n° 75 about textbooks for elementary schools. It says that among the books listed above by Zaglia, the first five were approved and the last book is not among those approved. As for Soli's books, with the exception of the last five books, all the others were approved. All books by Toti and De Gubernatis were approved. Vecchia's work is not among those approved.

The books arrived in the same year of 1903 and were distributed between the Consulates of São Paulo and the vice-consulates of Santos, Campinas, São Carlos do Pinhal, Ribeirão Preto to be sent to schools. Table 1 presents the data referring to São Paulo city:

<sup>7</sup> Circolare Ministeriale 24 settembre 1900, n75- Libri di texto per le scuole elementar.

**Table 1** - Schoolbooks distributed in 1903.

Name of the book	Sillabario (3000)	Grammatica Italiana (920)	Libro d'appunti (500)	I Racconti della Patria (370)	I diritti e i doveri III (48) IV (150) V (112)	Intelligenza e cuore IV (650) V (250)	Pedagogia Educativa (200)
Name of the school							
Dante Alighieri (Luigi Basile)	25	0	5	2	III - 0 IV - 1 V - 0	0	1
Scuola Italiana (Tereza Sarti)	50	0	1	1	III - 0 IV - 1 V - 0	0	1
Scuola Italiana (Maria R. Chiozzi)	50	0	1	2	III - 0 IV - 0 V - 1	0	0
N/I (Domenica Guiliani)	15	0	0	1	III - 0 IV - 1 V - 0	0	1
Regina Margherita (Emilia e Alda Magrini)	200	10	20	30	III - 1 IV - 1 V - 1	0	2
L' Educatore Italiano (Luigi Lievori.)	20	0	20	20	III - 1 IV - 1 V - 1	IV - 20 V - 10	2

**Source:** Table created by the author from the DISPACIO, 1903

As can be seen in table 1, the number of books distributed fell far short of the needs of the Italian school community, excluding most schools, and providing a paltry number of copies for those contemplated.

For the financing exercise of 1904-1905 four schools were benefited with money support. They got L500 the *Scuola Dio e Patria* (of Elvira and Cipriano Dall'Acqua), the *Scuola Regina Margherita* (das irmãs Magrini) e a *Scuola Principe di Piemonte* (de Emma e Luigi Lievore); and of L200 a *Scuola Immacolata* (de Alfonsina Ardinghi). (DISPACCIO 6/01/1906).

Among so many documents requesting subsidy, there is one of them dated in 1904, sent to Consul Gherardo Pio di Savoia by secretary Sebastiano Navasquez, in which he presents the Opinion issued by Deputazione Scolastica composed of prominent Italians who lived in São Paulo: Giuseppe Matarazzo (industrial), Edoardo Loschi (engineer), Enrico Secchi (industrial), Enrico Misasi (stock exchange agent), G. Battista Garolfi (engineer and professor), Gaetano Pepe (trader), Edoardo Barra (banker), Girolamo De Rossi (representative of the Consulate). In this document, 55 schools were analyzed and the Opinion is to grant a financial subsidy of L100, books, notebooks and 6 murals for Scuola Umberto I (by Blandina Versolato Bresolini); financial allowance of L100 for Scuola Dio and Popolo (by Giovanni Cardo); books and notebooks for 41 schools; re-visit 7 schools as they were unsatisfactory; and the subsidy was denied for 5 schools, considered terrible. The document does not mention the criteria adopted (DISPACCIO DEL SEGRETARIO SEBASTIANO NAVASQUEZ DEL 1 MARZO 1904).

In 1905 the subsidy was distributed to six schools. The *Scuola Regina Margherita* (which belonged to the Magrini sisters), the *Scuola Dio e Patria* (of Elvira and Cipriano Dall'Acqua) and the *Scuola Principe di Piemonte* (of Emma and Luigi Lievore) got L500

each; the Scuola Immacolata (of Alfonsina Ardinghi) L 300; the Scuola Giuseppe Garibaldi (of Vincenzo Robertiello) L200; and the Scuola Orazio Coclite (of Filippo Cerri) L100 (MINISTERO DEGLI AFFARI ESTERI, 1905).

A year later, a new document was published presenting criteria for the distribution of subsidies. It was actually a study, a proposition and not effectively allocation of resources. According to the *Mapa document with the notes for the subsidy*, from 1906, the following are criteria to be adopted:

- a) Be a licensed teacher - if the degree is lower than 150 points; higher grade 300 points;
- b) Conduct of the teacher - consider if there is no involvement in scandals in the press and in polemics. Value of 400 points;
- c) Year of foundation - from 1 year to three: 50 points; 3 years: 100 points; 4 years:120 points; 5 years: 140 points; 6 years: 160 points; 7 years: 180 points; 8 years and older: 200 points;
- d) Number of students - up to 25 students: 50; from 26 to 50 students:100; from 51 to 75 students: 150; from 76 to 100 students: 200; from 101 to 125 students: 250; from 126 to 150 students: 300; e) Hygiene of the place;
- f) No interruption of working;
- g) Professor's general judgment (REGIO CONSOLATO GENERALE D'ITALIA IN SAN PAOLO, 1906).

Still in 1906, the subsidy was distributed almost entirely in compliance with the proposed guidelines. According to the stipulated criteria, 4 schools obtained between 1750 and 1650 points, and received L500; of the 10 schools that obtained between 1600 and 1400 points, only 6 received L300; of the 25 schools that scored between 1300 and 1050 points, 22 received L200; and among the 15 schools that were below 1050 with the subsidy opinion denied, 2 received L100.

The adoption of these criteria received much criticism, including from Gaetano Pepe, a member of the *Deputazione Scolastica* who participated in evaluation commissions in 1904. In his book entitled *La scuola italiana in San Paolo del Brasile*, published in 1916, he argues that it is inappropriate to link the subsidy to the number of students and teachers in schools:

In the Yearbook published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 1913-1914, there are 6376 boys and 2451 girls. But, considering that the data from such official publications are provided by the teachers themselves, it is of course, it is necessary to take into account increases, some out of self-love and a desire for greater subsidy<sup>8</sup> (PEPE, 1916, p.65-6).

The author comments on the subterfuges adopted by the school owners, who increased the number of students and teachers in the schools, as a way of obtaining a better score, and thus, more financial and material resources: “a teacher has every interest in raising the umpteenth power your student body and make your colleagues look like your wife, your children, your maid, if you have one, and maybe some compadre<sup>9</sup> (Ibid, p.65-6). Such

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<sup>8</sup> Nell Anuario pubblicato dal Ministero degli Affari Esteri per il 1913-1914, figurano 6.376 giovanetti e 2.451 giovanette. Ma, se si pensa che i dati di tali pubblicazioni ufficiali son forniti dagli stessi maestri, è chiaro che bisogna tener conto facili aumenti, suggeriti un po' dall'amor próprio ed un po' da desiderio di sussidi maggiori.

<sup>9</sup> Ed è naturale che un maestro abbia tutto l'interesse di elevare all'ennesima potenza la sua scolaresca e faccia passare per suoi colleghi la moglie, i figli, la serva, se l'ha, e magari qualche compare.”

deviations were, according to Pepe (1916), caused on the one hand by the Consul's own negligence, in distributing without inspection, and on the other hand, by the abuse of teachers, for giving false information.

Pepe (1916) harshly criticized the way of processing the division of the subsidy adopted by the consul and the amount distributed, which was more similar to alms, exemplifying that for a school with 50 students, the subsidy would be 260 lire, which would not even pay half-month rent. According to the author, the division should be proportional, in order to respect the physical conditions of the schools and the didactic-pedagogical merits of the teachers.

Aware of the situation and the many criticisms, in 1907 the Consul wrote a document to the Minister of Foreign Affairs justifying the measures he had taken in order to better meet the demands of Italian schools:

I have limited the distribution to the three lower classes only, as it is materially impossible to meet the needs of the two upper classes, and also because it seems to me that, given the nature of our schools, and the very relative ability of most teachers, it is better to tend to help and improve lower elementary education that is enough to fight illiteracy, instead of wasting our strength to have upper elementary classes incomplete and deficient who would add little or nothing to the level of education achieved at the lower level<sup>10</sup> (DISPACCIO, 3/04/ 1907).

After this political-pedagogical decision to concentrate scarce resources on lower elementary<sup>11</sup>, above all, as a strategy to combat illiteracy, this same year the distribution of books had its spectrum increased, from 6 schools in the previous year, to 51. The books distributed were reduced in variety, but significantly increased in quantity. 1,904 copies of the *Sillabario di Mario e Lisa* were distributed to schools in the city of São Paulo; 1,904 copies of *Il Primo libro di Mario and Il Primo libro di Lisa*; 1,003 copies of *Cominciamo la vita! Libro di lettura per la seconda classe*; 849 exemplares do *Cominciamo la vita! Libro di lettura per la terza classe* *Cominciamo la vita!* Book of reading for the second class; 849 copies of *Cominciamo la vita! Libro di lettura per la terza classe*. Three more books were added to the list of books published in 1906<sup>12</sup> and 1,878 copies of *Raccontini per la prima classe*, 1,308 copies of *Lezioncine d'aritmetica* and 846 copies of the *Mannualetto per la terza classe* were distributed.

### **The production and circulation of Giovanni Soli's books on both sides of the Atlantic**

In the work *Dizionario biografico dell' Educazione 1800-2000* organized by Giorgio Chiosso and Roberto Sani (2013) there are entries dedicated to teachers, principals, public administrators and authors of schoolbooks. Among them, the one by Luisa Lombardi (2013) about Giovanni Soli. According to the author, Soli was born on July 29, 1864 in Vignola, and died on December 10, 1917 in the city of Pavullo, both cities in the Modena region of Emilia Romagna (Italy). He attended secondary school and the Normal School in Reggio Emilia. At

<sup>10</sup> Ho limitato la distribuzione alle sole tre classi inferiori essendo materialmente impossibile il far fronte alle esigenze delle due classi superiori, ed anche perchè parmi che, data l'indole di queste nostre scuole, e l'abilità molto relativa della maggior parte degli insegnanti, convenga piuttosto tendere ad aiutare e migliorare l'insegnamento elementare inferiore che basta a combattere l'analfabetismo, anzichè sperperare le nostre forze per avere delle incomplete e deficienti classi elementari superiori che poco o nulla aggiungerebbero al grado d'istruzione raggiunto nelle inferiori.

<sup>11</sup> The teaching offered in Italian schools was called an elementary course organized into two sections, the lower one comprising the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades, and the upper one consisting of the 4th and 5th grades.

<sup>12</sup> Information on these books is incomplete, with no data on the authors, publishing houses and year of publication.

the University of Bologna, he took the qualification to teach Italian language in high school. He taught at elementary school in Modena and at technical school in the cities of Nizza Monferrato, Legnago, Mantova and Modena. In 1911 in Pavullo he created and directed the technical school and the forestry institute. He also held administrative positions, such as that of “deputato di vigilanza nelle scuole elementari” (p. 527) in the capital Modena, which would be the equivalent of a school inspector; he was a member of the Virgilian Academy<sup>13</sup>; he developed activities together with the “università popolare” of Modena, which was an association for social promotion whose purposes were aimed at the cultural and training field, in a broader sense, non-school; he was president of the “*Società Magistrale*” of the region of Modena, the equivalent of an association of teachers; he also held the position of education advisor for the city of Modena.

In addition to teaching and performing various administrative functions, Soli dedicated himself to the writing of various schoolbooks for elementary and secondary schools, such as reading books, geography, rights and duties, Italian language, historical stories published by the house Trevisini from Milano. He dedicated himself to the editorship of the magazine for teachers “*Il Pensiero educativo*”; he published texts for parents, *Come educare i nostri figlioli* (How to educate our little children), *Del principio di autorità nella Scuola e nella famiglia* (On the principles of authority in school and in the family); and pedagogical texts, *Malinconie pedagogiche* (Pedagogical Melancholy), *Svecchiamo il metodo!* (Let's modernize the method!). He also wrote poetry for children in his reading books, didactic periodicals, in two specific works, *Musa fanciullesca* (Children's Muse) and *Versi pei ragazzi* (Verses for boys) and under the pseudonym of Livio Falconieri, *Pochi versi* (Few verses) and *Voci Buone* (Good Voices).

With regard to books intended for the schooling of children, Soli's production was approved to be adopted in schools on the Italian peninsula and in Italian schools abroad. Barausse (2008) in his work *Il libro per la scuola dall'Unità al fascismo; la normativa sui libri di testo dalla legge Casati alla Riforma Gentile -1861-1922* (The book for the school from Unification to fascism; the normative on text books from the Casati Law to the Gentile Reform 1861-1922) offers a wide and detailed repertoire of ministerial circulars and lists of approved books. It contains *Ministerial Circular no. 74, of September 3, 1898*, which approved the series *Cominciamo la vita!* (We started life!) for the second, third, fourth and fifth years, with books intended for the female and male classes, and the book *I Racconti della Patria* (The stories of the Fatherland) for the fourth and fifth year. *Ministerial Circular no. 68 of October 3, 1899* reiterates the previous approval and *Ministerial Circular n. 75 of September 24, 1900* reiterates the two previous circulars, with the addition of the work *Torniamo ai campi! Letture per le scuole rural* (We're back in the fields! Readings for the rural school!) for the second and third year for boys and girls.

The books were also approved and indicated, through Ministerial Circular n. 18 of March 1, 1905 for specific adoptions in certain provinces, as seen in table 2:

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<sup>13</sup> The Virgilian Academy was created on March 4, 1768 by Empress Maria Tereza of Austria. Its headquarters are in the Palace of the Virgiliana National Academy, in Mantova-Italy. The main objectives of the Academy are the production of original studies in the various areas of knowledge, the deepening of knowledge about Virgil and his works, as well as the history of Mantova, through the promotion of scientific investigation and cultural dissemination.

**Table 2** - Approval of Giovanni Soli's books for the Italian provinces

		Genova	Venezia	Ascoli Piceno	Siracusa	Pisa	Potenza	Caserta	Reggio Calabria	Como	Parma	Firenze	Cuneo	Ancona	Catânia	Cremona	Lecce	Chieti	Pesaro-Urbino
Sillabario		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Compimento		X				X	X	X							X		X		
Cominciamo	2 <sup>a</sup>	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
	3 <sup>a</sup>	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
	4 <sup>a</sup>	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
	5 <sup>a</sup>	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
I racconti	3 <sup>a</sup>	X	X		X			X			X				X			X	X
	4 <sup>a</sup>	X		X	X	X		X			X				X			X	X
	5 <sup>a</sup>	X	X	X	X	X		X			X				X			X	X
Libro d'appunti	3 <sup>a</sup>	X	X	X	X	X		X	X						X		X		
Conosce tua lingua	4 <sup>a</sup>		X	X	X											X		X	
	5 <sup>a</sup>		X	X	X								X			X		X	X
I doveri / diritti	3 <sup>a</sup>					X												X	
	4 <sup>a</sup>					X													
	5 <sup>a</sup>					X													
Lingua nostra	2 <sup>a</sup>	X	X		X														
	3 <sup>a</sup>	X	X	X	X						X								
	4 <sup>a</sup>	X			X								X						
	5 <sup>a</sup>				X														
	6 <sup>a</sup>				X														

Source: Table constructed by the author from Barause (2008).

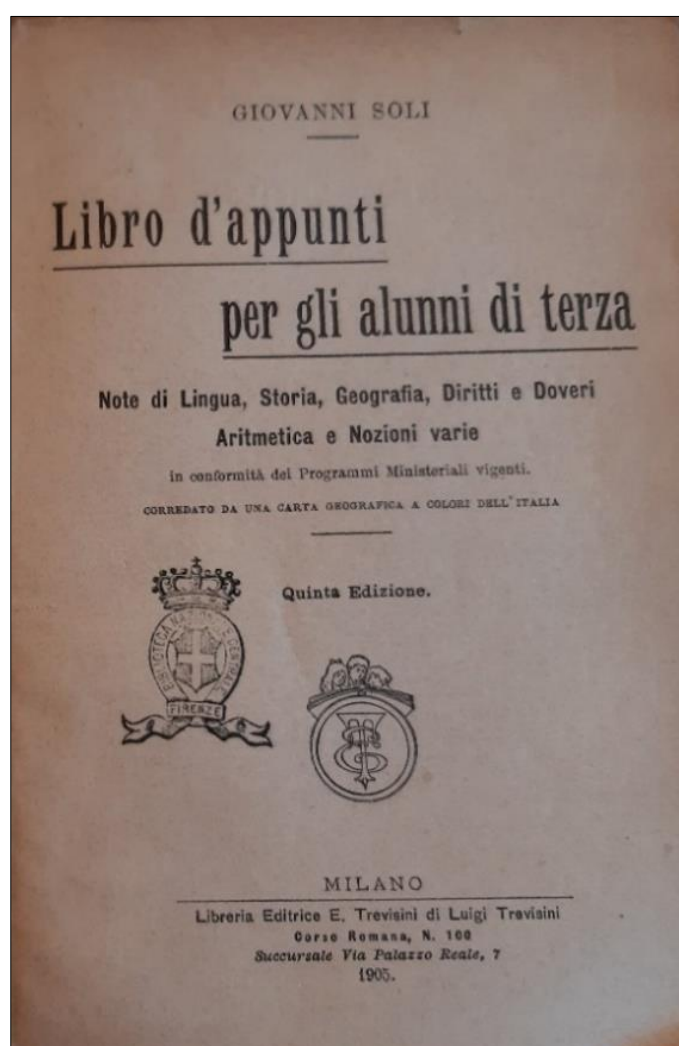
**‘Libro d’appunti per gli alunni di terza’: and notes on language, history, geography, rights and duties, arithmetic and various notions**

The *Libro d'appunti per gli alunni di terza; note di Lingua, Storia, Geografia, Diritti e Doveri, Aritmetica e nozioni varie* (Notebook for third year students; notes on language, history, geography, rights and duties, arithmetic and various notions) taken as the object of

study in this article is from 1905, a fifth edition of the work. Structured differently from the author's other works, without specific indication whether for boys or girls, it comprises 99 pages spread over 6 chapters or sections. The book has no images with the exception of a map of Italy at the end of the work.

The cover (see figure 1) contains the name of the author Giovanni Soli, the title '*Libro d'appunti per gli alunni di terza; note di lingua, storia, geografia, diritti e doveri, aritmetica and nozioni varie*'; the information that the publication complies with the current ministerial program, a requirement imposed on publishing houses by ministerial circulars; below the symbol of the publishing house, the '*Libreria Editrice E. Trevisini*', owned by Luigi Trevisini, located in Milan; and the year of publication, 1905. The title page then reiterates all the same elements:

**Figure 1** - Cover of Libro d'appunti



**Source:** SOLI, 1905, cover

Entitled *Due parole* (Two words), the editor's presentation and recommendation imposes a critique of Italian education, with regard to memory, which would have been abandoned by the school and its teachers, and proposes that the *Book of Notes* is a return to what learned and stored in memory:



Let what is not understood be memorized, today nobody expects more; but maybe wrong to ask that well-understood and well-learned notions be then entrusted to memory, to consolidate themselves better and better in the mind? We don't believe it. It seems to us that a booklet in which they are exposed is very useful for the student to always keep alive in his mind the little he has learned, because from time to time he can thus return to the things he has learned memorized<sup>14</sup> (TREVISINI *In SOLI*, 1905, p. 2).

The editor presents Giovanni Soli as the consecrated author of so many other works published by the same publisher and widespread in Italian schools. And finally, he presents the objective thought for the work, of saving the teacher from dictating the points to the students, who often after copying with errors, memorize them.

This initial introduction by the editor is important for deciphering the book. As stated by Chartier (1998) "The book has always aimed to establish an order; whether it was the order of its deciphering, the order within which it must be understood, or even the order desired by the authority that ordered it or allowed its publication" (p.8). This order is quite evident in the editor's words, whether in the criticism he makes of a certain teaching mode or method in which memorization is abandoned, or in the proposition of using the book. Instead of dictation, it indicates practices of memorization of contents or part of them, which implies defining (or at least trying to do so) the pedagogical conduct of teachers, who would no longer perform dictations, because the texts would already be found, but they would dedicate a daily time to propose the continued study of such texts, with the objective of fixing them in the memory of the students.

The editor's order also reaches the students, who would have in these texts the fundamental knowledge to be incorporated into their hearts (which is usually said to know by heart, that is, *de cuore*, which translated is heart) and consequently kept in their memories. These Editor's Two Words operate as a recommendation on how to read and appropriate the book, what Chartier (1996) called a panoply of narratives that would function as "a machinery [that] shall [sic] produce obligatory effects, guaranty" (p. 96). And last, but not least, the editor accredits Soli, presenting him as the author of many other works, whose relevance is noted for its adoption in schools. This gives authority to the author.

Returning to the structure of the book, on its back cover, the publisher publishes works of its publication, with emphasis on the books by Giovanni Soli himself, *I racconti della Patria* (The Tales of the Fatherland), *Cominciamo la vita!* (Let's start life!) and *Conosci tua lingua* (Know your language), indicating the target audience and the cost of each of the publications.

The book is organized into six sections or chapters, grammar, history, notions of geography, notions of duties and rights, notions of arithmetic and finally, miscellaneous notions. The first section, the grammar section, is organized into 18 sub-items that present small texts containing basic grammar notions; guidelines on the pronunciation and writing of words; accentuation and punctuation; explanations about nouns, their gender and number; adjectives, pronouns, adverbs and prepositions; verbs and their tenses, conjugations and moods, with emphasis on the verb to be and exist, in addition to examples of verb conjugation. At the beginning of the session, the author states that "every good citizen has a duty to learn the national language, that is, the one spoken by educated people and which can be read

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<sup>14</sup> Che si mandi a memoria ciò che non si capisce, oggi nessuno pretende più; ma è forse male chiede che le nozioni bene intese e bene apprese siano poi affidate alla memoria, per consolidarsi sempre meglio nella mente? Non crediamo. Ci pare che un libretto in cui siano esposte molto utile allo scolaro per tener sempre vivi nel suo pensiero quel poco che è venuto imparando, perchè di tanto in tanto egli può così ritornare sulle cose mandate a memoria (TREVISINI *in SOLI*, 1905, p. 2).

printed in books”<sup>15</sup> (TREVISINI *In SOLI*, 1905, p. 3). The verbs chosen by the author to exemplify the verb tenses and moods deserve to be highlighted. For teaching the verb to be, the obedient complement: I am obedient, I was obedient, we were obedient, etc.; to teach the verb to have, the complement of love of study: I will have love of study, we had love of study, I have love of study, etc.; for the teaching of irregular verbs, the choices are also not fortuitous, so one fears God and flees from evil in the indicative, subjunctive and imperative moods, in all persons and verb tenses, as shown in figure 2.

**Figure 2** - Examples of conjugation of the verb avere (to have)

— 19 —

**CONIUGAZIONE DEL VERBO "AVERE",**  
**Modo indicativo.**

<b>Presente</b>	<b>Imperfetto</b>
Io ho amore allo studio	Io aveva amore allo studio
tu hai amore allo studio	tu avevi amore allo studio
egli (ella) ha amore allo studio	egli (ella) aveva amore allo studio
noi abbiamo amore allo studio	noi avevamo amore allo studio
voi avete amore allo studio	voi avevate amore allo studio
essi (esse) hanno amore, ecc.	essi (esse) avevano amore, ecc.
<b>Passato prossimo</b>	<b>Passato remoto</b>
Io ho avuto amore allo studio	Io ebbi amore allo studio
tu hai avuto amore allo studio	tu avesti amore allo studio
egli (ella) ha avuto amore, ecc.	egli (ella) ebbe amore allo studio
noi abbiamo avuto amore, ecc.	noi avemmo amore allo studio
voi avete avuto amore allo studio	voi aveste amore allo studio
essi (esse) hanno avuto, ecc.	essi (esse) ebbero amore, ecc.
<b>Futuro semplice</b>	<b>Futuro anteriore</b>
Io avrò amore allo studio	Io avrò avuto amore allo studio
tu avrai amore allo studio	tu avrai avuto amore allo studio
egli (ella) avrà amore allo studio	egli (ella) avrà avuto amore, ecc.
noi avremo amore allo studio	noi avremo avuto amore, ecc.
voi avrete amore allo studio	voi avrete avuto amore allo studio
essi (esse) avranno amore, ecc.	essi (esse) avranno avuto, ecc.

**Modo imperativo.**

**Presente**  
(Manca la prima persona).

Abbi tu amore allo studio  
abbia egli (ella) amore allo studio  
abbiamo noi amore allo studio  
abbiate voi amore allo studio  
abbiano coloro amore allo studio.

Source: SOLI, 1905, p. 19

The Grammar section allows us to understand how a reality is constructed and thought from the social representations determined by the interests of the groups that create them and which, therefore, are not neutral, on the contrary, they are driven 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 the perception and appreciation schemes from which they classify, judge and act” (p. 104). Soli does not hesitate, on the contrary, she clearly expresses the expectations placed on children, that they are obedient, fear God, flee evil, love to study, know, speak and write the Italian language correctly, so that they become good citizens, while implying that not knowing

<sup>15</sup> Ogni buon cittadino ha il dovere d’imparare la lingua nazionale, cioè quella che è parlata dalle persone istruite, e che si legge stampata nei libri (TREVISINI *In SOLI*, 1905, p. 3).

the Italian language, or knowing one other than Italian, probably the dialect would be characteristic of an uneducated person, without education.

The second section is devoted to notions of Italian history. Over 13 pages, the author narrates episodes considered important for the transition from an Italy that lived in slavery to the *Risorgimento Nazionale* (National Resurgence). Slavery is explained by the fact that many regions were under the yoke of foreign princes, which imposed on the people the condition of subjects, slaves and not citizens. The *Risorgimento* would be the passage from slavery to freedom, and it was possible, above all for four reasons: conspiracies, insurrections, wars for independence and plebiscites.

The conspiracies were organized around secret societies formed by “patriots, that is, by people who loved their homeland”<sup>16</sup> (SOLI, 1905, p. 28), among the companies, two stood out, *Carbonari* and *Giovinne Italia*. In the sequence, it presents some patriots, such as Michele Morelli, Giuseppe Silvati, Santorre di Santarosa, Federico Confalonieri, Ciro Menotti, Andrea Vochieri, Attilio Bandiera, Emilio Bandiera, and the most illustrious of them, Giuseppe Mazzini, all men who fought to make Italy free. The insurrections are those of Palermo, Milano and Venezia, presented by the author as uprisings in which the population rebelled against Austrian tyranny trying to establish an Italian government.

After the insurrections, Soli (1905) presents the various wars for independence, highlighting the campaign of 1848, 1849 and 1859 and its great heroes Carlo Alberto, Vittorio Emanuele II, Camilo Cavour. After the regions were liberated from their foreign domains, “however, the populations lacked a government, and they were invited to choose it through a vote”<sup>17</sup> (p. 35), a process called plebiscite.

In this section, Giuseppe Garibaldi, presented as a hero, deserves a special place, as well as King Vittorio Emanuele II and King Vittorio Emanuele III, both presented as kind, fulfilling their duties towards their country and loved by the Italian people. An example is the development experienced by Italy under the reign of Vittorio Emanuele II: “... during the reign of Vittorio Emanuele II, many schools were opened in Italy, railways were built, factories emerged; industry and commerce developed in a short time, and the nation became industrious and wealthy”<sup>18</sup> (p. 38).

Throughout the section, the descriptions of so many Italian patriots and national heroes play the role of unifying the country, through the construction of an idealized image, of a representation with a view to bringing together different spaces and, above all, uniting the people of different regions. of the peninsula, around the same currency, flag, law and language, a dream pursued by the *Risorgimento*. Considering that “reading is not just an abstract operation of intellection; it is the engagement of the body, inscription in a space, a relationship with oneself and with others” (CHARTIER, 1998, p. 16-7), in this section Soli (1905) elected the *Risorgimento* as a unifying link for Italians on the peninsula and beyond.

The third section of the book is dedicated to the notions of Geography. The author organizes the text around two themes, one quite general about celestial bodies, their shapes, magnitude; earth movements, cardinal points, topographical maps; and a second theme, focused on Italy, its geographical features, such as mountains, seas, rivers, lakes, gulfs, islands, channels, volcanoes, etc.; its borders; the political-administrative organization in regions; natural, animal and mineral products, industry and commerce. On the last two pages of the book there is a colored map of Italy (figure 3), which was probably used to facilitate the understanding of the themes of this section.

<sup>16</sup> Patriotti, cioè da persone che amavano la patria” (SOLI, 1905, p. 28).

<sup>17</sup> “mancava, tuttavia alle loro popolazioni un governo; ed esse furono invitate a sceglierlo per mezzo de voto” (p.35).

<sup>18</sup> durante il regno di Vittorio Emanuele II si aprirono in Italia moltissime scuole, si costruirono strade ferrate, sorsero opifici; l’industria ed il commercio si svilupparono in poco tempo, e la nazione si fece labriosa e ricca (p. 38).

Figure 3 - Map of Italy



Source: SOLI, 1905, p. 98-9

In this section, the author takes up the issue of foreign presence in national territory, and states that “Italy is not completely free from foreign domination. Some of its parts still depend today on other governments”<sup>19</sup> (SOLI, 1905, p.50). The foreign domain is therefore presented as an impediment to full freedom throughout the national territory. In that same section, in 4 lines Soli (1905) mentions the Italian possession in Africa, Colonia Eritrea and the Costa del Benadir, without, however, ever mentioning the words dominion and freedom: “Italy has some pieces of land in Africa which bear the name of Colonia Eritrea, and a long stretch of coastline on the Indian Ocean, which is called Costa del Benadir”<sup>20</sup> (p. 51).

The small explanatory texts aimed at the knowledge of Geography offer third-year readers, in addition to general notions on the previously mentioned topics, the appreciation of the geography of Italy, especially in its physical aspects, but also in its human aspects, in what is cultivated, produced, industrialized and commercialized by compatriots, as a way to unify the people, through knowledge and appreciation of natural resources and human production, in the various regions of the peninsula.

The fourth section of the book is dedicated to the notions of duties and rights. Soli (1905) presents duty as “what must be done; it means, the obligation to do good and refrain from evil”<sup>21</sup> (p. 64). The text begins with the duties with the person, how to keep the body healthy, through cleaning and obeying the advice of doctors, teachers and parents. School

<sup>19</sup> L’Italia non è tutta quanta libera da dominazioni straniere. Alcune sue parti dipendono anche oggi da altri governi (p. 50).

<sup>20</sup> L’Italia possiede in Africa alcune plaghe di terreno che prendono il nome di Colonia Eritrea, e un lungo tratto di costa sull’ Oceano Indico, che ha nome Costa del Benadir (p. 51).

<sup>21</sup> Ciò che se deve fare; cioè l’obbligo di fare il bene e di astenersi dal male (p. 64).

occupies a relevant place, “the mind knows things by studying; studying is our duty”<sup>22</sup> (p. 54). So that no one misses this duty, in all cities, according to the author, there are schools. Then the duty to help others; the duty to love, obey, respect parents and help them when necessary; the duty to love, lovingly correct, help the brothers; duty to attend school, in addition to obeying and esteeming teachers; the duty to love and esteem friends; the duty to respect the freedom and morals of others; and finally, the duty to love God, and so not to blaspheme, steal, murder, and lie.

Soli (1905) continues the text by explaining the definitions and characteristics of cities, regions, state, government and homeland, defined as follows:

The homeland is the land where our parents were born and where we were born, where all the inhabitants speak the same language, where people have the same memories and the same hopes. Our homeland is Italy. The state does not represent only the interests of all citizens; but also the homeland<sup>23</sup> (p. 60).

For the homeland, the author teaches that it is necessary to obey the laws, respect the authorities, pay taxes and tributes and participate in the 'public thing'. It goes on to state that for every duty there corresponds a right, summarized in the equality of all before the law, in individual freedom, in the inviolability of the home, in freedom of thought, of manifestation and of religious worship, of meeting and associating, of ownership, participation in the electoral process and running for public office.

The author follows the same structure as the reading books of the time, such as *Piccolo Mondo*<sup>24</sup>, written by Romagnoli and Albertoni in Italy. It starts with the known, the familiar, that is, respect for one's own body, for parents, teachers, friends, for the country. From the small texts to be learned and memorized by the students, norms of social coexistence and rules of individual and collective behavior emerge, considered at the time the pillars of a 'modern' society. Instead of describing society, Soli (1905) intends to transform it, hence the insistence on building the image of obedient, hygienic, duty-fulfilling and God-fearing children.

The fifth section is intended for the notions of arithmetic with content on whole numbers, numeration, writing numbers, reading numbers, the four operations; fractional numbers, operations with decimals; decimal metric system; surface, volume, capacity, weight and value measurements. This section is accompanied by several tables of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, Pythagoras, among others. Quite specific to the knowledge of mathematics, it tries to offer knowledge of arithmetic, without adding elements that express values or behaviors to be adopted by the students.

The sixth and last section called varied notions is dedicated to the presentation of brief texts on different subjects, but which are related to human activity. In this sense, the division of time, minutes, hours, days, months, years, centuries and millennia are contemplated; instruments for measuring time, clocks, pendulums, calendars; human body and its hygienic care, its functions, nutrition, sense organs; the classification of the animal, plant and mineral world; the physical properties of bodies; physical phenomena, light, sound, electricity; human manifestations focused on the arts, industrial and commercial production.

<sup>22</sup> “La mente conosce le cose dallo studio. Lo studio è il nostro dovere” (p. 54).

<sup>23</sup> La patria è la terra dove nacquero i nostri genitori e dove siamo nati noi, dove si parla da tutti gli abitanti una stessa lingua, dove il popolo ha le stesse memorie e le stesse speranze. La nostra patria è l'Italia. Lo Stato non rappresenta solo gli interessi di tutti i cittadini; ma anche la patria (p.60).

<sup>24</sup> In this regard, consult PANIZZOLO, C. Reading books and the construction of the national identity of Italian children and their descendants (São Paulo at the beginning of the 20th century). 2019.

Through descriptive texts, the author presents scientific teaching and the appreciation of Natural Sciences. It seeks to provide students with basic notions, resorting to elements of Italian culture in the examples, for example, it recommends that the corn that makes the polenta be harvested at the right time to avoid pellagra, that the polenta be salted properly to avoid health problems, etc. Nature is presented harmoniously organized and classified, with an eminently practical functioning.

### Final considerations

In the publication *Il Brasile e gli italiani*, Carlo Parlagrecco (1906) states that the Italian schools in São Paulo, despite being numerous and very frequented, are not quantitatively sufficient for the number of immigrants who inhabit the locality. The author also highlights the commitment of the owners to keep them in operation, with almost no government support. On subsidies, he makes a strong criticism:

The Ministry of Foreign Relations is in the habit of sending, as a subsidy, to Italian schools abroad, school supplies without conditions of use, selected without didactic criteria, a real stubble of publications that, for the protection of the disastrous policy in charge of carrying out public administration, are always at the disposal of the Ministry of Public Instruction. This material, always obtained with great and often humiliating difficulty, has more than once made Brazilian citizens laugh, so careful with the progress of their primary school, and made them believe that our school is inferior to that of other European nations (p.799) <sup>25</sup>.

Parlagrecco's statement regarding the sending of 'stubble' does not hold up. The books that appear in the list of school materials of the Consulate of São Paulo, which were distributed as a subsidy to Italian schools, were recently published books. Consisting of a Ministerial Circular authorizing use in schools on the Peninsula, they were approved for adoption in various regions of Italy at the same time they were sent to Brazil, for distribution by the Consulate to schools in São Paulo. Although it is not yet known how this selection was made, what criteria were adopted, how was the relationship between the Ministry of Foreign Relations and publishing houses, it can be safely stated that the book adopted on this side of the Atlantic was the same authorized to be adopted on the other side of the Ocean.

The *Libro d'appunti* (Notes' book) together with the reading books, the educational historical narrations, the book on the rights and duties of the Italian citizen and the new grammar, composed the materials aimed at the schooling of children in the Italian peninsula, but also of those who immigrated and children of Italians, born in Brazil. With these books they studied in elementary schools and had access to reading, moral, civic, patriotic, natural science and history teachings. They learned to read by reading a certain pattern of behavior and they learned to love their country by reading short stories, biographical news and reading excerpts about important episodes in history that contributed to the formation of love for the

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<sup>25</sup> Il Ministero degli Esteri ha l'abitudine di mandare, a titolo di sussidio, alle scuole italiane all'estero un materiale scolastico inservibile, inadatto, messo insieme senza criterio didattico, un vero rifiuto di magazzini librari che per protezioni della, funesta inframmettenza politica incompetente degli organismo della pubblica amministrazione si trova sempre a disposizione del Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione. Questo materiale sempre ottenuto con grandi e qualche volta umiliante difficoltà, ha fatto il più di delle volte ridere i cittadini brasiliani, così premurosi del progresso delle loro scuole primarie, e ha fatto credere che la nostra scuola sia inferiore a quella delle altre nazioni d'Europea (p. 799).



country. It was up to these books the challenge of building in the newly unified Italy the idea of Homeland as the place where people identify themselves by origin, customs, language, flag and mainly, by the aggregating and unifying sense of the Motherland, which welcomes everyone, thus creating a common identity.

The books were intended to help the school to carry out and complete the important project assigned to it, after all, it was necessary to invent the Italian in the Peninsula and beyond, to create the feeling of Italianity, and for the emigrants, to convert them into 'instrument' of cultural influence and commercial penetration.

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