

"THE BEGINNING, THE MIDDLE, AND THE BEGINNING": trajectories of the Dictionary of authoress (authors) of primers and reading books in Brazil (19th century)

"O começo, o meio e o começo": trajetórias do
Dicionário de autoras(es) de cartilhas e livros de leitura no Brasil (século XIX)

"El principio, el medio y el principio": trayectorias del
Diccionario de autores de cartillas y libros de lectura em Brasil (siglo XIX)

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Abstract: This article proposes to discuss aspects of an inter-institutional research project, which resulted in the production of the *Dictionary of authoress (authors) of primers and reading books in Brazil (19th century)*, published in 2023 by Editora Cegraf UFG. We aim to problematize the use of biography in the history of education, debating the methodological paths taken in the constitution of the biographical entries recorded in this work. In socializing the paths taken to develop the *Dictionary*, we present data that explains the results and gaps in the research, with the aim of ensuring the dissemination of the trajectories of an extensive project, with the difficulties inherent in a production that involved eighty researchers from various regions of Brazil and Portugal.

Keywords: biographical dictionary; History of Education; 19th century.

Resumo: Este artigo propõe debater aspectos de uma pesquisa interinstitucional, que resultou na produção do *Dicionário de autoras(es) de cartilhas e livros de leitura no Brasil (século XIX)*, publicado em 2023 pela Editora Cegraf UFG. Objetivamos problematizar o uso da biografia na História da Educação, debatendo os caminhos metodológicos percorridos na constituição dos verbetes biográficos registrados nessa obra. Ao socializar os percursos para o desenvolvimento do *Dicionário*, apresentamos dados que explicitam os resultados e as lacunas da pesquisa, pretendendo garantir a divulgação das trajetórias de um projeto extenso, com as dificuldades próprias de uma produção que envolveu oitenta pesquisadoras(es) de várias regiões do Brasil e de Portugal.

Palavras-chave: dicionário biográfico; História da Educação; século XIX.

Resumen: Este artículo propone discutir aspectos de una investigación interinstitucional, que resultó en la producción del *Diccionario de autor(es) de cartillas y libros de lectura en Brasil (siglo XIX)*, publicado en 2023 por la Editora Cegraf de la UFG. Nuestro objetivo es problematizar el uso de la biografía en la Historia de la Educación, debatiendo los caminos metodológicos seguidos en la creación de los registros biográficos registrados en este trabajo. Al socializar los caminos para la elaboración del Diccionario, presentamos datos que explican los resultados y vacíos de la investigación, pretendiendo garantizar la difusión de las trayectorias de un proyecto extenso, con las dificultades inherentes a una producción que involucró a ochenta investigadores de diversas regiones de Brasil y Portugal.

Palabras clave: diccionario biográfico; Historia de la Educación; siglo XIX.

INTRODUCTION

"O começo, o meio e o começo" (The beginning, the middle, and the beginning)¹, an excerpt from the poetry of Nêgo Bispo, a Brazilian quilombola thinker who died on December 3, 2023, is an invitation to think about the objectives of this article, which sets out to problematize the use of biography in the History of Education, presenting the production trajectory of *Dictionary of authoress (authors) of primers and reading books in Brazil (19th century)* published in September 2023 by Editora Cegraf UFG³. Far from the linearity of a European historiographical tradition, a view opposed by Bispo, we propose to disseminate the ideas that led us to conceive this research project, to deal with its principles, development, and other beginnings that can be developed from it.

By problematizing the paths taken in the research, we intend, in this work, to publicize the aspects related to a scientific network of sociability that has dedicated itself to writing the stories of women and men, authors of pedagogical and school-use printed materials in the History of Brazilian Education. The organization of this project was only possible thanks to the countless investigations carried out into the 19th century in Brazil, a time of ambiguities typical of history. This period was not a gap in educational historiography but was made up of productions, ideas, and proposals that provided the means to support the continuity of thinking about education and ways of teaching in Brazil.

This *dictionary* started in 2019, organized over four years by four teachers and involving eighty researchers from various regions of the country and Portugal, and

¹ This is an excerpt from a poem written in 2018 by quilombo thinker Antônio Bispo dos Santos, or Nêgo Bispo (1959-2023), dedicated to the people of the Maré Favela Complex.

² In the *Dictionary*, most of the biographical subjects are men. Therefore, we justify the use of "authoress" in the title, in which the feminine comes first, because the initial hypothesis was that there were no female authors of primers and reading books in the 1800s, but these women were identified and biographed, and even though they are a minority compared to men, the aim was to break a logic of writing in which the masculine comes first. However, these women were identified and biographed, and even though they are a minority compared to men, the aim was to break away from a logic of writing in which the male is presented first, as well as highlighting the life stories and professional trajectories of women at a time when they rarely occupied the educational, social, political and publishing scene.

³ The Dictionary is published in e-book format and can be accessed on the Editora Cegraf UFG website. It is important to mention that we received funding from the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Goiás. Even though it's in e-book format, it's worth noting the materiality of this material, which features a terracotta-colored cover, gold fillet outlines, and period fonts in the title and authors. There is a careful preface by Professor Elomar Tambara (UFPEl), followed by a presentation that uses the metaphor of making bread with the construction of a human dictionary. The entries then follow the alphabetical order of the names of the biographers, accompanied by their dates of birth and death, spread over 950 pages, which also include an afterword and a presentation of the authoress and authors who wrote the entries. Work available at the link:

https://files.cercomp.ufg.br/weby/up/688/o/dicionário_de_autoras_e_cartilhas_de_leituras.pdf.

consists of seventy-three biographical entries about authoress and authors of primers and other books for the initial teaching of reading and writing that circulated in schools and other spaces in 19th century Brazil. The intention was to promote and make visible the biographies of 19th-century people who were involved in the production of school materials printed in non-homogeneous places, who sewed together pages of books to tell us about methods, practices, contents, and “school liturgies”⁴ to teach reading and writing.

It should be noted that, until the mid-19th century, Brazilian children were not familiar with the graduated series of reading books. The Constitution of the Empire, the Criminal Code, the Gospels, the Catechisms, the Treasures, the Parnassus, and the Anthologies were practically all the schools had at their disposal for teaching reading. In the absence of books, teachers used a set of handwritten texts, such as family letters, notary documents, old papers, etc.

Undoubtedly, when examining the content of school texts throughout the 19th century, one finds different orientations. Initially, reading for primary schools was religious, which, according to Tambara (2003), was due to the legal-institutional orientation of the political system of the Brazilian Empire associated with Catholic religious doctrine.

The executive power sought to model, both in the primary education regulations and in the textbooks, mechanisms to control the reading process in schools, subjecting them to doctrinal censorship, proposing a system that sought to link the acts of reading and writing to the Catholic faith and obedience to the state.

The last decades of the 19th century saw the intensification and consolidation of a proposal to teach reading, marked by the duality of Catholic religious and secular liberal orientations in children's school texts, as well as discussions based on new structural elements. In the last decades of the 19th century, there was the intensification and consolidation of a proposal to teach reading, marked by the duality of Catholic religious and secular liberal orientations in children's school texts, as well as discussions based on new structural elements that sought to move school reading away from routine procedures based on common sense, to bring it closer to new attitudes and behaviors characteristic of the scientific method.

With this in mind, this article is organized into three sub-items, which are discussed in sequence: the recognition of previous research on the subject, other published dictionaries that narrate private histories, the risks of the single history, the choices, and the cut-outs; in the sequence, we present the scientific responsibilities in the organization of an investigation in the History of Education, the paths

⁴ Boto (2014) proposes the idea that school life takes place on the social chessboard like a liturgy, revealing ceremonies, feelings, values, knowledge, and internal protocols. It is, therefore, possible to reconstruct and identify the liturgies of everyday life through utensils such as notebooks, photographs, uniforms, grade books, medals, fountain pens, blotters, report cards, blackboards, textbooks, and desks, among others.

interrupted by the *Covid-19* pandemic, the continuities, the composition of collective writings; finally, we explain the results, the gaps and other movements that were part of the construction of the *Dictionary*.

We hope that this text will contribute to other initiatives to produce collective materials that will help us understand the wide-ranging and complex process of using biographies in the history of Brazilian education. We hope that this text will contribute to other initiatives to produce collective materials, which will help us to understand the wide-ranging and complex process of using biography in the History of Brazilian Education, considering that behind didactic productions, educational achievements, among others, there is the participation of different people, and about their lives, there is much to be investigated.

WHAT CAME BEFORE: NARRATING LIVES AND AVOIDING THE "PEDAGOGY OF EXAMPLE"

In recent decades, the production and circulation of dictionaries containing various themes and entries has occupied a significant and relevant space in the history of Brazilian education. When thinking about the project of the *Dictionary of Authoress (Authors) of Primers and Reading Books in Brazil (19th century)*, we consulted some specific 19th century dictionaries as references, such as the *Diccionario bibliographico brasileiro* (Blake, 1883) and the *Diccionario bibliographico portuguez* (Silva, 1883). .century, such as the *Diccionario bibliographico brasileiro* (Blake, 1883) and the *Diccionario bibliographico portuguez* (Silva, 1858), as well as more recent ones, such as the *Dicionário de educadores no Brasil: from the colony to the present day* (Fávero & Britto, 2002); the *Dicionário de educadores e educadoras em Goiás – séculos XVIII ao XXI* (Valdez, 2017); the *Dicionário mulheres do Brasil: de 1500 até a atualidade biográfico e ilustrado* (Schumacher & Brazil, 2000); the *Dicionário crítico da literatura infantil/juvenil brasileira* (Coelho, 1984), among others. We also used as a reference fundamental works on the history of books and literacy, such as Pfromm Netto et al. (1974), Tambara (2003), and Mortatti (2000). These materials discuss the constructions and uses of various school writings, their meanings, perspectives, and objectives based on one historicity.

Although the books mentioned did not specifically focus on biographies of people who produced schoolbooks, they served as models for methodologically structuring the proposal for the *Dictionary* in question. We don't intend to do a study of these works here, and we warn you that, in the consultation exercise, the intention was to recognize them and inspire us to produce a book. This book would bring together biographical entries on trajectories that had in common with the writing of books for school use to teach reading and writing. On this point, Abreu (1998) pointed out that producing a

biographical dictionary is organizing a body of knowledge with a considerable amount of information made available to people in the academy and beyond.

It's important to reflect on the choice of names for the material because, when we read other dictionaries, we can identify a significant number of people considered important because of the spaces they occupied and their achievements in different areas of society. We believe that the people who are biographed should be recognized in political and social contexts and compositions, overcoming misrepresentations and omissions, but highlighting other names who contributed is fundamental to extracting different subjects from anonymity. Of course, some names are well known, but as Le Goff (2013) said, “famous” men and women are symbols and revealers of a time and an era. Even so, it is worth highlighting the effort to uncover fresh stories, preferably those that are plural, disturbing, and rare.

The use of biographical dictionaries to consult and produce other writings has provoked us to reflect on the value of a historiographical biographical production that is characterized as a source by bringing to the public knowledge not only concerning its specific objects but also about other people. Regarding materials in dictionary format that circulate in the field of education, it is worth pointing out that, far from exhausting the subject, we can find other works that deal with topics in this area. According to Valdez and Alves (2019, p. 06, our translation),

Taken as unreliable materials, dictionaries, or compilations that bring together human entries have been, if not rejected for a while, criticized for presenting unique and unquestionable stories. However, biographies compiled from this perspective have been reconsidered, especially since the 1990s, because they were written by academic specialists. There is a large amount of material of this kind, and when we looked at the websites of publishing houses, large bookstores, and bookstores, we noticed that the production of people's dictionaries, with limited or extensive entries, has taken on a considerable proportion.

Dictionaries can offer various clues about the history of education and here, in particular, the history of the authors of school printed materials because, despite the time and place, these are groups that acted in the construction of knowledge, of knowledge that circulated and was transmitted through the pages of their works. We know that the exercises and relationships throughout the history of education are neither homogeneous nor harmonious. In this respect, it is worth noting that in our studies on this subject, we have come across a marked lack of data on the trajectories of women and men writers. Much of it is veiled because of the praise of their works.

This is where we want to bring you the stories of lives that we missed out on in our research experiences on the history of printed matter. When we searched for data

on the authoress and authors of school textbooks, we realized that many of those responsible for producing textbooks may have had their careers cut short in the history of education. In other words, their works circulated, taught, and became known while their lives were almost ignored.

We can cite as examples some of what we found when we wrote our theses on 19th-century characters. Rocha (2019) highlighted Antonio Pinheiro de Aguiar, author of the book *Bacadafá ou methodo de leitura abreviada*, a work referenced as a national production from the 1850s, which consisted of a series of stories about four indigenous people who formed a family. According to this researcher, Pinheiro de Aguiar has gone unnoticed in many studies on schoolbooks written and published in Imperial Brazil, and little is known about his personal trajectory.

The second example is João Köpke, a significant educator of his generation who put into circulation, in the press and in the schools where he worked, a pedagogy considered modern and republican. His series of reading books was defined as a reference for concrete, scientific teaching under the intuitive methodology, characterized by the lessons of things, with serial, graduated, and simultaneous classes, joining out-of-class activities, popular evening conferences, and the analytical teaching of reading. Panizzolo (2006, p. 23, our translation) stated that Köpke, "[...] although much quoted, was presented with little definition as if overshadowed by the people around him or by his circumstances".

Abilio Cesar Borges, the Baron of Macahubas, was the author of one of the first series of reading books published in Brazil. Despite his intense self-advertising, the data on the life of this doctor/educator dissolves within his works and writings. According to Valdez (2006), his series of reading books circulated throughout the provinces of the Empire, as he distributed them free of charge to publicize them. Abilio was awarded the title of Baron by the Brazilian Empire for his services to education, and, in addition to being an author, he was the owner and director of private schools in Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and Minas Gerais.

In the *Dictionary*, the trajectories of Borges, Köpke, and Pinheiro de Aguiar join those of other people who have part of their stories recorded in the context of the production of books and primers for teaching reading and writing in the History of Brazilian Education. Just like the examples cited, others have had their biographies forgotten and often erased from history for various reasons. Gathering biographies makes it possible to broaden access to knowledge, as revealing the trajectories of these groups can give them visibility and recognition for the social and political positions they have occupied. It is possible to problematize their actions, confrontations, and disputes in the publishing market, in the relationships established with the state, and in the advertising strategies for adoption, circulation, and maintenance in the market. In addition to other clues that provide access to knowledge about the history of printed materials in Brazilian education.

We took great care to ensure that the entries that constituted the *Dictionary of authoress (authors) of primers and reading books in Brazil (19th century)* avoided the usual exaltations and elevations to laudatory and eulogistic pantheons that make individual stories unique and without confrontation. We prioritize plural stories, in which the times and places occupied indicate the specificities of projections or non-projections. In this regard, Valdez and Alves (2019, p. 17, our translation) noted:

The recent movement that has placed biography at the center of scientific production in the field of history is guided by the rigor of the scientific method, which does not aim to exalt subjects but rather seeks to present them in their historical context, problematizing them in social and political circles. Thus, we do not prioritize illustrious male subjects in the social-historical context, and we apprehend plural stories of men and women who lived in different times and places.

Using a script, we instructed the biographers invited to the project to write entries from a historical perspective, avoiding memorializing or laudatory writing about each author. The aim was to gather stories covering the plurality of names and lives of women and men who, in their trade of publishing printed matter, constituted educational knowledge. In this sense, Dias (2023) points out that the intellectual project of biography within the field of the History of Education is consolidated as an exercise capable of offering and sharing knowledge not yet seen in other formats of writing history.

At the end of each entry, in addition to the bibliographical references, there are the sources consulted, which, although varied, are documents such as various printed materials (newspapers, magazines, periodicals, bulletins, almanacs, reports, etc.); schoolbooks by the authoress (authors); dictionaries from the period, especially the *Diccionario bibliographico brasileiro* (Blake, 1883).

Looking back at the past requires care and patience because the educational phenomena in which people participated are neither predictable nor endowed with doctrines and ready-made truths, just as time is neither linear nor progressively moving toward the future. That's why it's important not to detach life stories from the political, social, and cultural context of the period and space being investigated.

Regarding the aspect of individual or biographical history, we cannot ignore the fact that, for a long time, this was one model that constituted the history of education itself. It was common to find biographies that served as a source for writing history of idealized subjects, driven by the missionary character of education, overlaid with salvationists attitudes. In this way, authors, teachers, intellectuals, and others presented as great thinkers in education (preferably white men) were almost religiously elevated as benchmarks of selflessness, dedication, and examples to be followed.

The biographies we are referring to, which were common until the 1980s, present data that almost exclusively privileges memory over history, since these people's contributions to education create the sense of a single, coherent past. Although a good portion of them can offer relevant data for the History of Education, many, especially as they are tributes, should be carefully examined and scrutinized in the context of political, economic, social, and cultural factors, enabling an analysis that goes beyond praising expressions.

This is not to dismiss the use of memory in the writing of history. Memory, according to Le Goff (2003), as the property of preserving certain information, primarily refers to a set of psychic functions through which man can update past impressions or information or which he represents as past. Thus, in the representation of individual trajectories, there may be an attempt to reconstruct a set of memories intending to recognize a subject in isolation, as expressed by Carino (1999, p. 17, emphasis added, our translation) when referring to the "pedagogy of example":

It's worth noting that biography, as the art of narrating lives, although it works with each life in its particularities, extracts certain typical characteristics from each of them. This typology will serve as a "pedagogy of example". Taken as an example, imitated, followed, forming part of a "model" of conduct determined by the spirit of the time, they will serve education.

Given the excerpt, we reflect that the biographical action has been established in many History of Education writings as a kind of repository of educational examples, selecting actions and reactions of the person biographed, as an indisputable model to be followed, above all by exalting experiences.

However, the idea of the "pedagogy of example" needs to be rethought because it is important, in biographical writing, to consider the concern of not limiting oneself to the reconstruction of individual history. However, the idea of "pedagogy by example" needs to be rethought because it is essential in biographical writing to consider the concern not to limit oneself to the reconstruction of individual history but to seek to problematize the biographed and the surrounding community, a task that is not easy if we think about the confrontations and ambiguities of writing an individual history, as we have already pointed out.

Loriga (2011, p. 13, our translation), when discussing the loss of plurality in the writing of history, warned of what characterizes history or accounts without a subject: "They deal with powers, nations, peoples, alliances, interest groups, but very rarely with human beings." In scientific research, historiography is indispensable for understanding the biographical process, as it includes research, documentation, interpretation, and narrative resources. For this reason, biographies undoubtedly

show us important traces, allowing us to formulate other questions to explore the limits and possibilities of the life and practice of the biographed.

Regarding biographies of men and women men and women in the *Dictionary of Authoress (Authors) of Primers and Reading Books in Brazil (19th century)*, we emphasized the need for a wide-ranging view that allowed us to recognize people in their nuances determined by the time and space in which they worked. As Malcolm (1995) pointed out, biography is a way of making someone's life “everybody's business”. However, the academic apparatus given to biographies seems to escape pure *voyeurism* because, as Schmidt (2014, p. 140, emphasis added, our translation) pointed out,

[...] as we know, there are no important facts in themselves, which need to be revealed “no matter what”, but rather facts that become historical if they help us answer our research problems. Thus, from the perspective of academic historical research, the sexual practices of a given character are not in themselves material to be included in a biography, only if we are asking, for example, about the moral standards of the groups in which he participated.

Schmidt (2017) attests that biography, in its literal sense, is linked to the very emergence of history as a form of knowledge of the world and, based on this premise, obviously, moving through the biographies of different authoress (authors can help to broaden the view of the history of childhood, literacy, and the teaching of reading and writing, from various aspects. Thus, the time frame of the *Dictionary* in question is justified by the fact that the first eminently Brazilian school printed materials, such as reading books, graded series, syllabaries, ABC charts, primers, and others, date back to the 19th century and expanded during the 20th century.

By following and pondering the contradictions inherent in history, we emphasize that the entries that constitute the *Dictionary*, considering the variations in theoretical options, consider the subjectivity of the writing of those who wrote them and are historical, since they deal with lives that are neither unique nor exclusive, but which can make up galleries of educational practices from different subjects, places, and perspectives. When we look at the subtitle of this item, considering what came before to narrate lives can help us deconstruct and break away from the much-crystallized “pedagogy of example” that focuses on the individual as a model for the collective.

SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION AND RESPONSIBILITY: PATHS FOLLOWED AND INTERRUPTED

After problematizing the historical nature of materials such as dictionaries, the risks of writing about individual trajectories, and considerations about biographies in history, we propose to bring up or collectivize aspects of the ordering and methodological organization defined and applied in the initial planning of the project considering such an exercise as central to a scientific investigation. In this movement, even though we did a project planning the process, it is worth noting that on the way, we came across the *Covid-19* pandemic marking the first steps in the execution of the investigation. During the first two years, thoughts and goals were confronted with fears, losses, isolation, pain, neglect by the state, and various insecurities.

In January 2020, we inaugurated something that a few months later would become the only option in academic work, whether in teaching, research or extension: remote meetings. In our case, it was the only alternative available because we live far away, in Goiás, Minas Gerais, and São Paulo. So, we brainstormed ideas for writing the project without impositions because as the months went by and the number of deaths grew, it was impossible to ignore everything that was happening in the world and in the country. In our defense of Brazilian science and research, we chose not to disregard the abandonment, renunciation, and despair that especially besieged the Brazilian population. Giving time was necessary and, within our possibilities and those of the group, we considered interruptions and delays inevitable, aware that time would not stand still.

The first step was a long debate about the names that would make up the *Dictionary*, emphasizing that, in principle, the time frame would cover the 19th and 20th centuries, as we felt, empirically, that we would not find many authors from that period to be biographed. Century that we wouldn't find numerous authors from that period to be biographed. However, as is the case with most research, when we carried out an extensive and thorough consultation process on the subject on the platform of the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD), in the Catalog of Theses and Dissertations (CAPES), as well as in other publications already noted, we came across numerous people who fit the project's objectives. So, we decided to organize two volumes: Volume I: 19th Century and then Volume II: 20th Century.

It is also worth noting the importance of consulting the Brazilian Digital Hemeroteca, a portal for periodicals that is part of the National Library, a public space, that provides an enormous service for research, maintenance, and writing about the history and memory of education. In times of pandemic, isolation, and closed archives, this digital repository has been key to keeping the proposal on the agenda.

We express the importance of this digital space and many others, in favor of the growth of an open and plural science at the service of all people and inherent to the

particular and collective appreciation of each researcher. As Dias (2018) pointed out, the bibliographic survey, for us, is directly linked to the quality of a research project because, besides expanding knowledge on a given topic, it provides examples of the elements that make up a research project, such as the problem, hypotheses, objectives, methodology, etc. Therefore, supplying yourself with theoretical conditions through this action are an act that requires scientific responsibility since it is not only a question of the productions of others but also represents the fundamental basis for carrying out research, guiding it, and updating it in the light of the discussions present in the field studied. It is characterized as a mapping to gather references on one or more specific topics. In the search carried out between March and June 2020, priority was given to uncovering the authoress (authors) of books and primers for teaching reading and writing, using a combination of keywords such as author; authoress; reading book; primer; 19th century; teaching reading; teaching writing; literacy; history of education; biography; biographical history.

We then organized a table with representative data for each biographed: name; places and dates of birth and death (when identified); prints produced; production clippings; academic works that have used women writers as the object of their research.

The last item is theses, dissertations, scientific articles, and course completion papers. We insist on the importance of sharing, valuing, and recognizing work produced in Brazil. Based on this consultation, we drew up an illustrated survey with images of the authoress (authors)' books and booklets. Subsequently, we listed the names and contacts of researchers from all over the country and abroad who were specialists in the writers listed and sent out letters inviting them to take part in the *Dictionary* by writing one or more entries. It is worth highlighting the lack of research and references on many authors who were cited in the theses and dissertations inventoried in the literature review stage, a fact that reiterates the need for further research to reveal hidden histories.

Regarding the selection of the biographers, we would like to clarify that two scenarios were prioritized: firstly, researchers in the fields of biographical history, history of education, and/or history of literacy, as well as intellectuals who had previously written about a particular biographer who was part of the project. To produce the entries, we organized a script sent in advance to each person invited, respecting their methodological concept, with data to guide the preparation of scientific writing, reiterating the importance of historical analysis of confrontations and problematization of sources. We understand that having clippings is, above all, indispensable, given the number of sources that can be collected and used, and that these clippings are essential in the perception and selection of facts, people, and things. In putting together the biographical entries, besides a historical biographical proposal, the aim was also to present, in a collective effort, knowledge gathered in a kind of reference source for further research.

When we set out to present the methodological precaution of a human dictionary, we intended to offer data on people who were not exclusively writers of schoolbooks because, in this period, there was no such exclusivity as there was in the 20th century. The authoress (authors) worked in various professions, such as teachers and other positions in schools, colleges and others, public office holders, doctors, lawyers, and other trades, amid acceptance and rejection. Explaining the methodology proposed and implemented goes beyond an inflexible conception that is commonly defended in academic works because the idea is to encourage other paths in the constitution of biographical writings that contribute to the dissemination of knowledge of national history.

In the research process, we found that a substantial number of names were located solely because they produced printed materials, as there is a scientific and historiographical movement dedicated to studying schoolbooks, often distancing itself from those responsible for their production. In the history of literacy, for example, it is easy to identify works that analyze the content, literacy methods, material culture, illustration, adoption, and circulation of the material, among other possibilities. With this in mind, we emphasize the investigative priority of historical biographical studies without losing sight of the productions of the biographical subjects, highlighting the confrontations faced by people who dedicated themselves to writing works for the initial teaching of reading and writing.

COLLECTIVE WRITING: RESULTS, GAPS AND PROMISES

After four years, at the end of the production of the *Dictionary of Authoress (Authors) of Primers and Reading Books in Brazil (19th century)*, we found ourselves with a feeling of unfinished business, like every final feeling in a research project, but also of great satisfaction at bringing to light seventy-three stories of 19th-century lives written by the hands of eighty researchers from different regions of Brazil and Portugal. We are also pleased to have brought to light seventy-three stories of 19th-century lives, written by the hands of eighty researchers from different regions of Brazil and Portugal⁵. In addition to the satisfaction recorded and experienced, we can see the absences and the promises to include names in other productions that need time to be investigated because of the closure and publication of the *Dictionary*, and

⁵ Sixty-one female researchers and nineteen male researchers took part. Of this total, seventy-eight live in Brazil (nine in the North, six in the Northeast, twenty-two in the Center-West, thirty-two in the Southeast, and nine in the South) and two in Portugal. The guests linked to Portuguese institutions were included based on their research into their respective biographees.

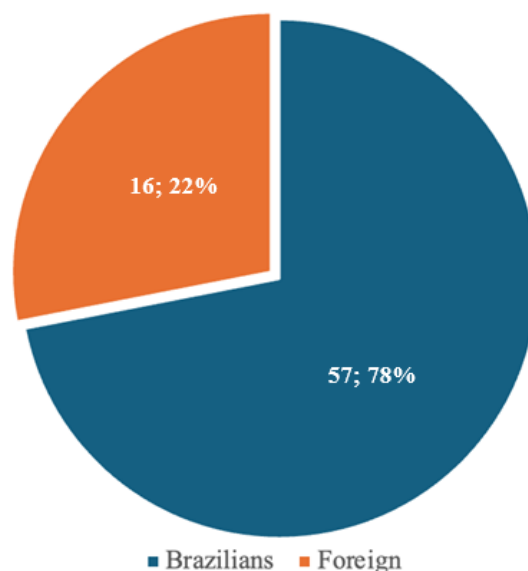
we confirmed that it was impossible to include more than a dozen writers⁶, either because people who had been invited dropped out or because we only identified this absence at the end of the production of the work.

Recording the names that have not been biographed is important to remember that scientific historical work is also made up of gaps, which at the same time impose themselves as possibilities for future writing. We also understand that the sources available are scarce when it comes to the stories of women, black people, and indigenous peoples, but we must remember that it is in their (almost) absence that we find the greatest need to record history.

Here, we will explain some propositions and problematizations around biographical characters, especially regarding the origins of time and space. We justify the absence of a chart recording the date of publication of the printed material, mainly because of the difficulty of locating these years reliably. What we can say is that most of the printed matter, around 90%, was published in the second half of the 19th century, especially in the 1970s and 1980s.

About national and regional specificities, i.e., the origins and geographical spaces in which the group of biographers circulated, whether they were born nationally or internationally, or circulated within Brazil, we can see the concentrations in graphs 1, 2, and 3 below.

Graph 1 Nationality of the biographed



Source: The authors.

⁶ These are the writers Carlos Augusto Soares Brazil, Francisco Ferreira de Vilhena Alves, Francisco de Paulo Mascarenhas Junior, João Emilio de Moura Valente, João da Matta Araújo, João de José de Povoas Pinheiro, João Theodoro Araponga, José Maria Velho da Silva, José Martiniano de Souza, José Orosimbo Pinto Monteiro, Luiz Alfredo Baena, Pedro Victor Renault, Tancredo Leite do Amaral. In the course of writing this article and after closing the *Dictionary*, we found other names that need further investigation to make up the list.

It can be seen that around 78% of the names biographed are of authors born in Brazil, in different provinces, with the remainder made up of people born in America (Uruguay) and Europe (Portugal, Spain, and Germany, known at the time as Prussia). Table 1 below shows the national origin of the foreign group:

Table 1 Foreign biographed

Names	Origin
Abílio Manuel Guerra Junqueiro	Portugal
Adelina Amélia Lopes Vieira	Portugal
António Feliciano de Castilho	Portugal
Antonio Maria Barker	Portugal
Augusto Emílio Zaluar	Portugal
Francisco de Paula Soares	Uruguay
Francisco Silveira D'Avila Pimentel	Portugal
Francisco Ferreira da Roza	Portugal
Frederico Carlos Adão Hoefer	Germany [Prussia]
João de Deus de Nogueira Ramos	Portugal
João Vicente Martins	Portugal
José Ramos Paz	Portugal
Miguel Maria Jardim	Portugal
Pedro Wenceslau de Brito Aranha	Portugal
Romão Puiggari	Spain
Vicente Rodrigues da Costa Soares	Portugal

Source: The authors.

Most of them came from Portugal, but we can still see that many of the people on this list, despite not having been born in the Brazilian Empire, lived a good part of their lives on Brazilian soil. This is the case of Adelina Amélia Lopes Vieira, Romão Puiggari, Augusto Emílio Zaluar, João Vicente Martins, and others who were born in

other countries and came to Brazil as children or young people, staying until they died, and some even became naturalized Brazilians. Others, such as João de Deus and Antônio Castilho, were in Brazil to give courses and promote their works, with occasional visits.

The presence of foreign authors in the *Dictionary* leads us to reflect on school materials coming from abroad to be inserted into the Brazilian education system of the period. These materials were considered models for teaching reading and writing, as they came from places, mainly European countries, recognized as civilized and modern. For this reason, their adoption in educational spaces was made official and indicated through the educational legislation of the period.

Even though they came from other countries, these authors produced works for the teaching of reading and writing within a scenario of affirmation of the construction of the Brazilian national identity. It is well known that the history of Brazilian education has suffered from the imposition and educational influences of international names, but despite this, there was a strenuous attempt to nationalize school printed materials, given that most authors were Brazilian.

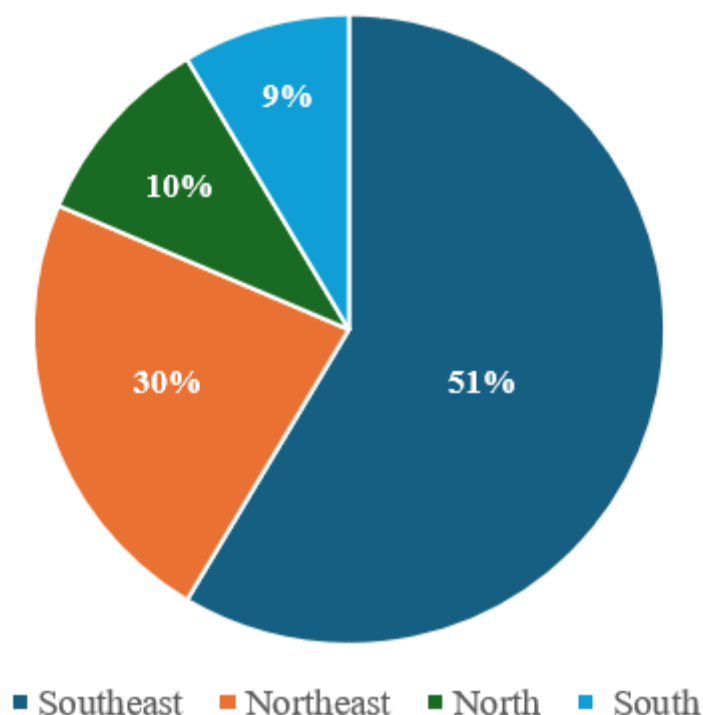
This situation reiterates the importance of looking at printed materials not only as methodological aids but also as projects for building education, a country, and a citizen based on the appropriation of proposals and the circulation of ideas on both sides of the ocean. Following the speeches produced by people born in another social, economic, historical, and geographical space were adopted in the national territory in school forms, ways of teaching that were far removed from the reality of a slave-owning and agrarian country, with most of the population illiterate.

Regarding the organization of authorships by region, it is worth noting that we are using different divisions from those that existed during the Brazilian Empire when the country was organized by provinces and not by regions, as it is today. We used the latest layout of the country drawn up by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in 1970, which includes the North, Northeast, Midwest, Southeast, and South regions. Although the borders of the provinces include historical and geographical proximities after the 1970s, the boundaries were constantly changing both within Imperial Brazil and on its borders with other neighboring countries. The division was driven by political, economic, and social reasons and, above all, by the Empire's attempt to organize and control the provinces. We justify this sort of “anachronism” so as not to dwell on the complex regional division of the 19th century, which unfolded for much of the 20th century.

We have insistently tried to include authors from all regions of Brazil, a plural, large, and not at all homogeneous country, and despite the differences in nomenclature, the states correspond to the place they occupied in the 19th century. The intention was to extend and understand Brazil beyond the regions that are mistakenly considered advanced or backward. Regarding the origin, or regional

circulation, of the biographed people, in the national figure, we highlight a profusion of authors coming from the Southeast region, amounting to 51%, followed by the Northeast region with 30%, as can be seen in the graph below.

Graph 2 – Regional origin of the biographed — Brazil



Source: The authors.

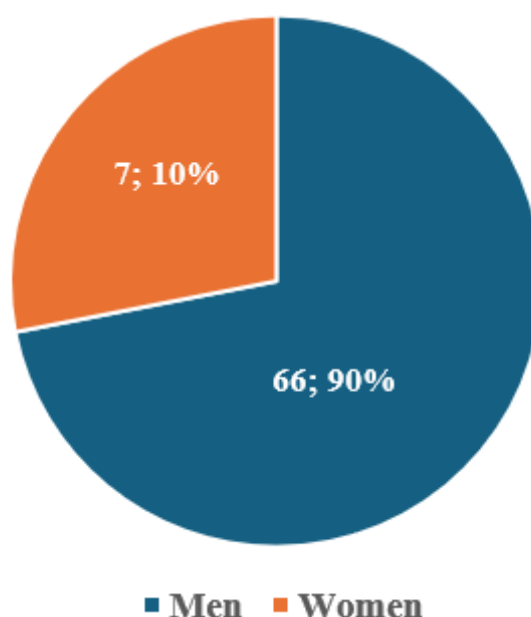
What we have now is a political and social movement that should be viewed with care and criticality. We are committed to searching for authors in all the provinces, but the gap that has been found clarifies that it is important to produce subsequent works that respond to this concern. We have considered studies located in different regional realities, avoiding, as has already been noted, concentrating on regions considered references, which, due to their historical profile, should not be extended to the rest of Brazil, as there is a risk of disregarding regional specificities.

The absence of authors in the then Central-West region, considering the provinces of Mato Grosso and Goiás, can be explained by the composition of the two regions, which had a different occupation process. This is because the exploitation of gold and the enslavement of indigenous peoples only took place in the 18th century, while in the other provinces, this process began in the 16th century. This is a circumstance that can be checked and compared with research on the subject, but when it comes to Goiás, our search for proof that there were local productions has been constant. We have been constantly searching for evidence that having local productions, especially within the research carried out by the History of Education Studies and Research Group at the Federal University of Goiás, a group that focuses

on local History of Education productions. We didn't find any clues to local authorship, as the adoption of these materials came from other parts of the country, as we found in the articles, dissertations, and theses we consulted.

In addition to the cut-off point of origin and space, it is worth mentioning the gender of the biographers. The result of this calculation did not surprise us, as the vast majority, 90%, are male and 10% female.

Graph 3 – Number of women and men biographed



Source: The authors.

The specified profusion testifies to a concern, the small percentage of women authors, mainly because, although instruction, especially primary education, which at the time was responsible for teaching reading and writing, was carried out by teachers, that is, by women, most teaching materials were produced by men.

Let's take the situation in São Paulo as an example. According to a survey of isolated schools in 1895, Felipe (2023) stated that there were thirty-one schools run by men and fifty-five run by women. When analyzing the rates of isolated schools run by male and female teachers between 1907 and 1919, the author also found that there was a constant numerical advantage in the number of female teachers over male teachers. Therefore, the low number of men compared to women in the teaching profession is proven.

Regarding the places that male writers have occupied, we can point to the diversity of trades, social classes, and political positions. We can say, in general terms, that few people were working in public primary education, and the vast majority were white men who lived in urban centers and were not poor. Unlike the authors, they

occupied public spaces that were considered relevant; some were doctors, occupants of positions in the national armed forces, lawyers, engineers, religious, journalists, and other professions that gave them prominence in the period.

These men and women not only produced materials for teaching reading and writing but were also writers of books related to other areas of knowledge, such as literature, administration, mathematics, geography, agriculture, etc. These works were printed by foreign and Brazilian printers/editors/bookshops. We also noticed that, initially, the printing was paid for by the authors themselves or by people linked to politics, public authorities, etc. A common aspect of these lives was the dissemination of the works through the opening of classrooms, courses, and exhibitions to test methodological proposals or even the publication in the press of advertisements or notes attesting to the efficiency of the methods and their differentials.

Finally, we observed that the narratives about the lives biographed in the *Dictionary* intersected at various moments in history, occupying the same spaces, disputing them, or allying to conquer them. As Tambara (2023, p. 13, our translation) explained, our wish is for these "[...] narratives to serve as a starting point for new, much more lively investigations".

FINAL REMARKS

The results presented here were organized to share a research process that resulted in available material, democratically, for consultations, as well as for the production of another research. The graphs and table here hint at the number of themes that can be expanded, taking different aspects of the authors and their works as a reference, such as region of origin, nationality, gender, methods, disputes, circulation, publishers, occupations, social class, etc.

The selection of biographees in the *Dictionary of Authoress (Authors) of Primers and Reading Books in Brazil (19th century)* had as its main filter the organization of a panorama of women and men who wrote school forms for the initial teaching of reading and writing in schools and other spaces in 19th century Brazil. The investigation meant that the lives of these people took precedence over their work. Furthermore, far from praising their achievements, the intention was to problematize their personal and professional trajectories, circumscribing the works published to different contexts and times.

We know that a biographical entry has its limits because of the very structure of the genre. It is clear that there are gaps in the entries, which is typical of historiography, and not even the length of their pages can expropriate them from the characteristic of biographical historical writing. From the outset, the aim was to

uncover these lives without worrying about exhausting sources and information about the writers.

The *Dictionary* texts were written mostly during the *Covid-19* pandemic, a devastating time when the country was under the thumb of a denialist government. We believe it is essential to make this point once again, since the participants in the research, the process of which has been explained here, demonstrated that there was a way of doing historiographical research at such an adverse time.

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