

A cartography of the Castilho method in the Maranhão press (1851 - 1920) based on the Brazilian digital newspaper archive¹

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Abstract: This study has the objective to chart the use of the Castilho Method in Maranhão, map news about the method from 1851 to 1920, identify Maranhão periodicals that contain records of the method and to describe the strategies used to locate the digital libraries and mapped news items. The methodology used in this research is descriptive and exploratory in nature, with a qualitative-quantitative approach, carried out using the following procedures: a) Survey and bibliographic study of works related to the Castilho method and its importance for research in the history of education; b) Mapping of state and national digital libraries; c) Systematic search for newspapers and periodicals that address the Castilho method in Maranhão in these collections; d) Description of the news found in these periodicals; e) Creation of a table to gather the information collected; f) Mapping of the mapped data. As a result, 22 news items about the Castilho Method were retrieved, published in 10 Maranhão periodicals, including *Publicador Maranhense*, *Pacotilha*, *Diário do Maranhão*, *O Paiz*, *Diário de S. Luiz*, *O Observador*, *O Globo*, *A Nova Epocha*, *A Imprensa* and *Correio D'Annuncios*. Therefore, the data collected shows a sequence of publications, explaining that there was a flow of opinions involving the method of reading and writing, and the analysis of their occurrences is relevant for research into the History of Education.

Keywords: Castilho method; Maranhão press; digital libraries; history of education.

1 Introduction

In the 19th century, Brazilian education underwent a period of change, reflecting the construction of the country's identity. In this context, guidelines for public instruction were crucial, with content focused on consolidating moral and cultural values. Among the pedagogical innovations introduced, the adoption of new teaching methods stood out, including the Castilho Method, developed by the Portuguese poet António Feliciano de Castilho (1800-1875), who "sought to break with a teaching method he considered old" and created a methodical school in which "immobility, patience, boredom, tiredness, waiting and delay would not find space" (Albuquerque, 2023, p. 74).

The Castilho Method, created in Portugal, was developed as a rapid learning process focused on reading and writing (Castro, 2025). Its introduction in the Brazilian

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provinces occurred within a context of organizing public instruction through the adoption of effective teaching methods in a scenario of expanding education in the country. In this context, Castilho advocated for an education capable of regenerating society and individuals, and denying access to it would be to falsify divine law. and to profane the masterpiece of the Creator” (Castilho, 1853, p. 14).

The dissemination of this method did not occur only within the classroom; but also through newspapers and magazines, courses, lectures, and other movements of the Pedagogical Campaign (Castelo Branco, 1977), so that its proposal and guidelines could reach teachers and educational institutions. In this sense, and in particular, the study of the Castilho method through the press becomes a relevant means for understanding the circulation process, the educational ideas it projects, and its foundations, both in Portugal and in Brazil. A large part of these publications were found stored in digital newspaper archives, in the “sections dedicated to the conservation, organization, and consultation of thematic materials” (Giordano, 2016, p. 101).

In this environment, these collections are frequently used sources in research in the field of the history of education. However, the Castilho method, especially in the territory of Maranhão, is still limited, not differing from other national contexts, even where there was greater adoption and dissemination, such as Rio de Janeiro, Pernambuco and Bahia (Castro; Boto, 2025). Thus, the central question of this study is to understand to what extent the articles published in the press about the use of the Castilho Method in Maranhão can contribute to the understanding of its circulation in the period 1851-1920?

This article is part of a set of investigative activities developed by the Center for Studies and Documentation in History and Reading Practices in Maranhão (NEDHEL), centered on the research project "The circulation and adoption of the Portuguese Castilho method in Portugal and Brazil in the 19th century²" which involved the survey of periodicals with the respective occurrences about the method. This step could only be carried out after mapping state and national digital newspaper archives, which allowed us to understand the relevance of this topic in academia, as well as highlighting the relationship between the preservation of educational memory and access to knowledge provided by these digital documentary sources.

² Project developed with financial support from CNPq.

Given this scenario, this article aims to map the use of the Castilho Method in Maranhão in the time frame between 1851 and 1920, by identifying Maranhão periodicals that contain records about the Castilho method, and describing the strategies used to locate digital newspaper archives and mapped news items. To this end, we adopted the following methodological procedures: a) bibliographic survey and study of works related to the Castilho method and its importance for research in the history of education; b) mapping of state and national digital newspaper archives; c) systematic search for newspapers and periodicals that address it in Maranhão in these collections; d) description of the news items found in these periodicals; e) strategies employed in mapping the news items.

The use of specific procedures for news retrieval allows for greater efficiency and precision in the search for relevant information, especially that related to the history of education. Search strategies in newspaper archives emerge as an important means of bringing historical sources closer to researchers.

Through these newspaper archives, it was possible to access news articles that mention Castilho and his reading method. Beforehand, however, it was necessary to map the newspaper archives to be used, considering that the search was for news from a specific state. Many state newspaper archives preserve documents that are part of the local memory, which makes this prior mapping essential.

The search for newspaper archives that provided Maranhão periodicals with news about Castilho was carried out using Google, using quotation marks to ensure the search for exact expressions. The terms used included: "Maranhão newspaper archive", "newspaper archive of Maranhão", "newspaper archive" and "Maranhão", in addition to the use of Boolean operators, such as in "newspaper archive AND Maranhão". As a result, two main newspaper archives were identified: the Benedito Leite Public Library and the Brazilian Digital Newspaper Archive (National Library Foundation).

Of these, only the Brazilian Digital Newspaper Archive offers more refined filters, such as searching by location, periodical title, period or specific terms in the content of the publications. For this reason, it was the main tool used in the research, allowing the selection of the state (Maranhão) and the use of terms such as "Methodo Castilho".

After selecting the newspaper archive, the search for news in Maranhão periodicals began. For efficient retrieval of information about the Castilho Method, a list with controlled vocabulary was compiled, containing descriptors related to the topic. This is because the method could be referred to in various ways in newspapers. The descriptors used included: “methodo de leitura repente” (sudden reading method), “methodo Castilho” (Castilho method), “leitura repente” (sudden reading), “Antonio Feliciano de Castilho” (Antonio Feliciano de Castilho), “methodo de ensino de leitura repente” (sudden reading teaching method), “methodo portuguez Castilho” (Castilho Portuguese method), “methodo portuguez de leitura” (Portuguese reading method), “methodo portuguez” (Portuguese method), “Mnemônica de Castilho” (Castilho's Mnemonic) and “Tratado da Mnemônica” (Treatise on Mnemonics).

As a result, 20 news articles about the Castilho Method were retrieved, published in 10 periodicals from Maranhão, as shown below.

Table 1 - Occurrences by periodical

PERIODICAL	NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES FOUND
Pacotilha	2
Publicador Maranhense	6
Diário do Maranhão	4
Diario de S. Luiz	1
O Observador	2
O Paiz	1
O Globo	1
A Nova Epocha: Folha Política, e Industrial	1
A imprensa	1
Correio D'annuncios: E Semanario Commercial do Maranhão	1

Source: Prepared by the author (2025)

Based on the information retrieved, the data was organized into a descriptive table that facilitated the location of the news items. This table included elements such as: access link, descriptors used in the search, source consulted, journal title, place of publication, information about the occurrences (quantity, year, page and article title), image (screenshot) of the news item and the respective analysis, as shown below.

Figure 1 - Descriptive spreadsheet for occurrences

MARANHÃO: location of circulation of the method										
LINK	DESCRIPTORS	SOURCE USED	INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERIODICAL		INFORMATION ABOUT THE INCIDENTS				IMAGE (PRINT)	ANALYSIS
			TITLE	PLACE OF PUBLICATION	AMOUNT	YEAR	PAGE	ARTICLE TITLE		

Source: Prepared by the author (2025)

Regarding news analysis, this plays a fundamental role, as it constitutes the main resource for identifying clues and evidence about the use and circulation of the Castilho method in Maranhão. It is, therefore, an essential element for the elaboration of the cartography. The study is structured in three main sections. The second addresses aspects related to digital newspaper archives as sources for historical-educational research. The third section presents a brief biography of António Feliciano de Castilho, highlighting his trajectory and the creation of the method. Finally, the fourth section presents the cartography of news items related to the Castilho method in the Maranhão press, accompanied by an analysis of the periodicals that mention the method. This stage aims to map the occurrences spatially and temporally, allowing for a more precise visualization of the circulation and impact of the method in the educational context of Maranhão.

2 Digital newspaper archives as a source for research in the History of education

The advancement of digital technologies and the increasing digitization of historical collections have transformed the ways of accessing and researching the past, allowing researchers in the History of Education to explore rare documents without the physical limitations imposed by traditional archives and libraries. In this context, digital newspaper archives have become indispensable sources for the study of education, especially with regard to the circulation of pedagogical ideas and educational practices over time.

According to Medeiros, Melo, and Nascimento (2016, p. 8), digital newspaper archives contain “[...] newspapers and magazines, in such a way that they present a certain technical organization that facilitates the process of searching for and retrieving information.” In other words, they are spaces in electronic media that bring together

digitized newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals, allowing remote consultation of publications that would often be inaccessible or restricted to physical collections (Pereira, 2022).

For Soares and Sá (2015, no page number): “[...] newspaper archives are taken to the digital medium, with the aim of not only contributing to the preservation of printed documents, but mainly to facilitate access to information regardless of geographical and temporal barriers.” Thus, they offer advanced search resources by keywords, dates, and places of publication, facilitating the location of specific information on topics such as educational legislation, pedagogical debates, educational reforms, and the adoption of teaching methods, such as the Castilho Method. Although they have limitations, the text search capabilities of digital newspaper archives expand opportunities for historical research, enabling access to previously inaccessible information (Almeida, 2012).

The importance of these digital newspaper archives for research in the History of Education lies in the fact that historical periodicals were privileged spaces for discussion and dissemination of educational proposals. Pedagogical journals, bulletins from educational institutions, ministerial reports, and even widely circulated periodicals frequently addressed issues related to education, serving as primary sources for understanding educational policies and pedagogical conceptions of each era.

Similarly, in the field of History of Education, periodicals are recognized as a relevant resource, as they offer researchers support for interpreting social interactions, discussions, and political and intellectual initiatives that influenced education in different historical and geographical contexts. Furthermore, given its vast collection, advanced technology, and efficient search mechanisms, the Digital Newspaper Library stands out as an essential repository, especially for its accessibility and the various research tools it offers (Azevedo; Pessoa; Neta, 2019).

Its use in historical research also allows for a systematic and comparative analysis of different regions and periods. With access to periodicals from various parts of Brazil, it becomes possible to map the diffusion of pedagogical ideas, identify regional resistances and assimilations, and understand how certain educational discourses were constructed and modified over time. In the case of the Castilho Method, for example, it is possible to identify when and where it was mentioned and in what contexts it was adopted.

Under such circumstances, another relevant aspect is the contribution of digital newspaper archives to the preservation of educational memory. Many of the pedagogical newspapers and magazines from the 19th and early 20th centuries are documents that are difficult to access in their original format, either due to the fragility of the paper or the geographical dispersion of the copies. The digitization of these materials ensures their preservation and expands accessibility to researchers and those interested in the history of education, democratizing knowledge and encouraging new studies on the subject (Silva; Castro; Mendes, 2024).

This thought aligns with that of Chartier (2002, p. 29) when he expresses that

[...] as readers, as citizens, as heirs of the past, we must therefore demand that digitization operations do not cause the disappearance of the original objects and that the possibility of access to the texts as they were printed and read in their time is always maintained.

However, despite the advantages, its use also presents methodological and technical challenges. The quality of digitizations can vary, with illegible or poorly indexed texts, which hinders the efficient retrieval of information. In addition, the absence of certain titles or temporal gaps in the collection of digitized periodicals can limit the scope of the research, requiring the researcher to supplement their investigation with other documentary sources (Silva; Castro; Castellanos, 2021).

Despite these limitations, they represent an indispensable tool for researchers in different fields of knowledge. By enabling remote and streamlined access to a vast set of documents, they broaden the possibilities for research and contribute to the formation of a more comprehensive overview of the transformations and continuities in the educational field. In this way, their use not only facilitates academic research; but also strengthens efforts to preserve and disseminate historical-educational heritage.

3 Antônio Feliciano de Castilho: an educator poet

The idea of education as a civilizing tool for the population gained increasing traction in 19th-century Brazil, following the beginning of the Empire and the idealization of national development. It was imperative that, for the country's progress, the people be minimally educated (reading, writing, and arithmetic) to enable the governability of that society. Furthermore, discussions regarding the need for education

were not new, "[...] it was permeated by the liberal ideals of building a public spirit and forming the Nation-State in light of what was supposed to be the civilizing path of the West" (Boto; Albuquerque, 2018, p. 18). Therefore, through these discussions and based on the need to develop such conditions, methods of instruction that could aid in the much-desired development were becoming popularized.

Among the instructional methods that circulated in Imperial Brazil, the Sudden Reading Method, or Castilho Method, created by António Feliciano de Castilho, aimed to teach reading and writing more quickly through an intuitive and synthetic approach, where the population could learn more quickly by presenting words first as a whole, associating letters with figures based on sound. In addition, the method was "[...] regulated by the frequency of singing, clapping and marching for the decomposition of the spoken word and for aural reading [...]" (Albuquerque, 2022, p. 2); resources that were used for faster learning linked to repetition, vocalization and memory.

The method of António Feliciano de Castilho originated on the island of São Miguel, in the Azores, where he resided from 1847 to 1849. He promoted various activities, such as organizing industrial exhibitions and opening schools for the less fortunate population, focusing on making learning to read and write faster and more enjoyable. These actions resulted in his first "educational position" on December 20, 1847, when he was appointed Commissioner of Studies of Ponta Delgada. This contributed to the Portuguese method becoming the benchmark for education in the area at the time (Castro; Boto, 2025), as he opened schools with the support of members of the local community and Luís Felipe Leite.

We emphasize that during the period in which Castilho implemented the method, there were in "Porta Delgada, a normal school of mutual instruction and a school of simultaneous instruction for boys and a class for girls" (Comandulli, 2012, p. 26); a small number to serve a "population in 1849 of 97,330 inhabitants" (Comandulli, 2012, p. 26), in which illiteracy predominated – a common situation in Portugal in the 19th century. For Castilho, this was the backwardness of the Island, which lived off agricultural production and fishing, whose population did not have the means to improve these activities due to the absence of reading and writing, a situation revealed by the author in *Happiness through Agriculture* (1849). According to Castro and Boto (2025, p. 8)

[...] this work marks the genesis of his thinking on primary popular instruction and converges with the creation of his method. For him, agriculture, instruction and education materialized in the binomial wealth/power; indicative of a "happy civilization." In the first case, with a view to creating rural schools, students would learn to plant, harvest, store, and benefit from products and the love of work; in the second, through reading "of all the arts, the one that costs the least and yields the most," everyone could understand the meaning of life and morality.

Castilho, with the aim of contributing to reversing the "[...] situation of inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the Portuguese school" (Boto, p. 51), proposes a teaching method that, in an accelerated but pleasant way for teachers and students, could meet the literacy needs of the inhabitants of the Azores and, in general, of Portugal.

In order to boost his pedagogical movement, Castilho created the Society of Letters and Arts of São Miguel on September 9, 1948. As the idealizer, he was the main driving force and inspiring figure for a group of people such as Anna Carlota Vidal de Castilho, Anna Eulália and Emília Ferin, Felipe de Quental, Francisco Lambert, José Torres Ernesto do Canto, Luís Felipe Leite, among others who would carry out the ideas and activities; a society that joined others created by Castilho such as Primavera and Arcádia Lusitana:

It is certain that Castilho already knew how this type of group related to poetry worked, after all he had already been part of the Society of Friends of Letters and Arts, organized by his father, Dr. José Feliciano de Castilho, as well as frequenting the literary salons of the Marquise of Alorna and Francisca Passolo (Comandulli, 2012, p. 26).

From this perspective, he combined art and literature with economics, involving authors, producers, merchants, and consumers of agricultural products from São Miguel, as well as religious figures, teachers, and journalists. In this way, the Society became a center of cultural creation and education, aiming for general development. Instruction, in particular, was essentially an ambitious educational reform project, establishing rural primary schools and publishing books and creating teaching materials (for example, from Mississippi, glass paper, etc.). To this end, Castilho promoted literary salons, teacher training, and actions aimed at gaining credibility and resources to open schools using his method. However, the salons were the Society's main platform, held in two formats: one open to all people interested in arts, poetry, and education; the other restricted to intellectuals and religious figures. In this way,

Castilho, this "outsider," sowed the "germ of civilization" in São Miguel, as Torres (1849, p. 2) states.

To realize these ideas, the Society's most ambitious project was the construction of a building, the "Solar da Letras e Artes" (Manor of Letters and Arts), which would house schools, libraries, a theater, as well as a music conservatory and museum, etc. To raise funds for its construction, various fundraising events were held, including industry and agricultural exhibitions, lotteries, etc. To obtain the land, Castilho went to Lisbon. However, the realization of Castilho's "dream" faced political dispute between the supporters of the "Chartists" and the "Septemberists" (Torres, 1849, p. 2).

Regarding his trip to Lisbon, Castilho describes that:

When, to request from the government the approval of this same society, and from parliament a little land, and more that would put down roots, it seemed convenient for me to go to Lisbon, and I went, I did not only take away memories of my wife and children: all of São Miguel [...]. Upon returning, the days seemed never to end, and the dreams of the nights were all populated with innumerable and cordial embraces, questions and answers from good friends, domestic caresses, flourishing schools, industrial halls, the music of work, all the poetry of hope [...] São Miguel, within a few years, will be visited from everywhere with admiration and enchantment [...]. (Revista Popular, 1849, p. 135).

Castilho and members of Society, in order to give vent to the undertaking, resorts to "public charity" for "that work of utility [...] and of a thousand advantages" (Castilho, 1853, p. 5), for the "outcasts of fortune, to teach them letters, morals, hygiene, mechanical trades, household economy, and a thousand other things" (Castilho, 1853, p. 6). To that end, he suggests that all people of "good heart" should travel the Island, "from village to village, from door to door, begging to the sound [...] of the "little song of Charity"³, in whose chorus he says:

With God, and rise up, friends,
Singing of Charity
Beggars of beggars,
Men of Humanity.
Let us knock on the door
Of good men (Castilho, 1853, p.12)

In *Poetic-Musical Striations*⁴ (1853), Castilho states that the song fulfilled its objectives of sensitizing the society of São Miguel to rise up for "that work of public

³ Music by Arthur Frederico Reinharth.

⁴ This publication, a collaboration with musician Francisco Nogueira dos Santos Pinto (whose full name is not identified in the work), presents poems and hymns with musical scores focused on themes such

benefit” (Castilho, 1853, p. 60), to “receive the outcasts of fortune, to teach them letters, morals, hygiene, mechanical trades, household economy and a thousand other things” (p. 61).

On January 27, 1849, Castilho and other members of the Society published its statutes in *O Correio Micaelense*. In 42 articles, this document presents its purpose, sections, the admission of members, among other aspects related to the dynamics and functioning of the institution. In the first section, it states that its aim was "to popularize instruction and promote industry, never losing sight of the improvement of morals" (*Correio Micaelense*, 1849, p. 487). In articles seven through eleven, it presents the sections, in which the presence of teachers in the development of activities is evident. Despite the lengthy quotation, it is important to record this in order to understand the role of teachers in the artistic, cultural, and educational activities of the Society and how Castilho conceived and defended a broad public education centered on various aspects beyond reading and writing.

- Article 7 The Society consists of different sections: Scientific and Literary, - Arts of Design - Philharmonic - Theatrical - Mechanical - Protective;
- Article 8 The Scientific and Literary section comprises professors or practitioners of Sciences, Mathematics, Physics, Law, Theology, and professors or practitioners of History, Rational and Moral Philosophy, Eloquence, Poetry, Linguistics, Reading and Calligraphy.
- Article 9 The Arts of Design Section⁵ comprises professors or practitioners of all kinds of drawing properly speaking, painting, sculpture, architecture, engraving, lithography and typography.
- Article 10 The Philharmonic Section comprises all professors or practitioners of musical, vocal and instrumental art.
- Article 11 The Theatrical Section comprises professors or practitioners of the performing arts, Opera, Drama in all its varieties, Mime and Dance.
- Article 12 The Mechanics Section is composed of all teachers and practitioners of various trades and professions.
- Article 13 The Protection Section is composed of members who, while not obliged to hold any position in the Society, are nevertheless willing to demonstrate their support by providing assistance of any kind (*O Correio Micaelense*, 1849, p. 487).

as work, agriculture, education, etc. This work was an attempt by Castilho to create more popular poetry that applied moral and educational values.

⁵ Professors: Antônio Joaquim Peixoto Sequeira (topographic drawing); Joao Guilherme Rendall (English), Caetano Antônio de Mello (geography)

From then on, Castilho's teaching method was slowly incorporated by the Society of Friends and began to serve the poorest population, including boys and girls, young people and adults. He believed that, through the teaching of reading and writing, the population could achieve personal, economic and social success (Castro; Boto; Castellanos, 2024). From this perspective, the educator-poet

[...] sought through instruction and civilization to develop a method considered by him to be effective in shedding light on the population through a redemptive pedagogy. By calling the school of his time "old" and marked by the tedium of memorialist practices, Castilho announced ruptures and innovative characteristics and defended the active and pragmatic principle [...] (Albuquerque, 2022, p. 2).

He then published the first edition of the method in 1850, which he called *Leitura Repentina* (Sudden Reading), and in other editions it would be modified to *Método Castilho* (Castilho Method) (second and third editions), until it reached the name *Método Portuguez-Castilho* (Portuguese-Castilho Method) (fourth and fifth editions). These works consolidated

[...] Castilho's Pedagogical Campaign, initiated in São Miguel, served the interests of the liberal movement, known as Regeneration or Fontism (1851-1876), which aimed to align Portugal with the rest of Europe in terms of technological and social development – roads, bridges, ports, etc. – and to reconcile the interests of the upper bourgeoisie with those of the rural and middle bourgeoisie (Castro, 2025, p. 4).

Therefore, it found both supporters and critics of its method. Among the criticisms were that it was a possible copy of Lemare's method, that the teaching practices adopted were outdated in Portugal, as well as the use of figures to represent letters, among other criticisms expressed by teachers, educational and literary associations (Castro; Boto, 2024). Even so, the method was adopted in schools throughout the mainland and islands, such as Madeira and Ponta Delgada. This movement by Castilho expanded from 1853 onwards when he assumed the position of Commissioner of Instruction by the Portuguese Method (his second position related to education).

It was during this conflict in Portugal that Castilho came to Brazil in 1855, with the aim of disseminating his teaching method through a course given in Rio de Janeiro to representatives from various provinces of Brazil and lectures given to members of the Brazilian court and society in general. This event was a consequence of the reforms

and incentives that the Brazilian empire carried out to achieve the nation's progress through education.

However:

The expansion of the Method found fertile ground in Bahia and Pernambuco [...]. While the Castilho Method gained acceptance in the Province of Bahia, it was in Pernambuco where the ideas circulated most widely in the press and in the opening of schools (night schools, regimental schools, private and public schools), starting with the creation of the Central School of the Castilho Method by Professor Francisco de Freitas Gambôa. This School became a reference point for the application of the method in other northern provinces, such as Ceará (Sobral) and Rio Grande do Norte (Apodi) [...]. (Castro, 2025, p. 20).

A common strategy adopted by Castilho was writing articles for widely circulated newspapers, such as the *Jornal do Comércio* in Rio de Janeiro, discussing the Method and its advantages for regenerating Portuguese and Brazilians, especially the most materially disadvantaged population. These articles were replicated in periodicals from various Brazilian provinces, such as Maranhão. This is the central focus of this article, which aimed to map the news about Castilho's teaching proposal.

4 The Castilho Method and the Maranhão Press: a cartography

Examining the circulation of the Castilho Method in the Maranhão press allows us to identify not only the presence of the method in the province's educational field, but also the resistance and discursive shifts that marked its trajectory in the 19th century. Far from being a simple technical adoption, the introduction of the method must be understood as part of a broader historical process of dispute over the hegemony of literacy models and the formation of primary education in the Empire of Brazil.

The Maranhão press, as both a source and object of analysis, is here seen as a privileged space for the dissemination of pedagogical ideas and debates that permeated the literate elites of the province. Throughout the decades from 1850 to 1890, newspapers such as *Publicador Maranhense* (1842), *Pacotilha* (1880), *Diário do Maranhão* (1855), *O Paiz* (1863), *Diário de S. Luiz* (1920), *O Observador* (1847), *O Globo* (1910), *A Nova Epocha* (1856), *A Imprensa* (1870) and *Correio D'Annuncios* (1876) recorded mentions of the Castilho Method, sometimes in the form of commercial advertisements and as a matter of legislative discussion, sometimes as an object of criticism from readers and professors.

In 1852, the first mentions of the Castilho method are observed in the Maranhão press, emerging amid discussions about its authorship, attributed by some to Pierre-Alexandre Lemare. Despite accusations regarding the legitimacy of the proposal, many news reports claimed that Castilho's method was based on Lemare's work. Among these reports is one from the newspaper *O Observador* (1852), which states:

It is natural that you are already familiar with the primer he composed for teaching reading, based on the method of Lamare, but adapting it to the Portuguese language and perfecting it considerably. Through this method, which he called "sudden reading," prodigious effects have been achieved on that island [São Miguel] (*O Observador*, 1852, p. 4, emphasis added).

In this context, even with accusations of plagiarism and criticism—the latter coming from primary school teachers—Castilho's sudden reading method was recognized as effective and highly praised at the time. An example of this was reported in the newspaper *O Globo* (1852), indicating that “our illustrious compatriot A. F. de Castilho concluded the reading and writing course using his new method [...] He was congratulated by the ministers and in general by all the attendees, as a result of the brilliant results he obtained.” This mention, in addition to communicating the success of his pedagogical approach, suggests that his method had already gained notoriety and approval in fluent circles.

Another article in the newspaper *O Observador* (1852) evidences this by reporting that “[...] our first lyric poet, and excellent prose writer A. F. de Castilho: the services he rendered in this branch of instruction and in others on the Island of San Miguel are known in Portugal and outside this country,” reinforcing his reputation, not only in literature, but also in the area of instruction.

In 1853, the legitimacy of the method still remained. In the pages of *O Publicador Maranhense*, for example, it enthusiastically reported Antônio Feliciano de Castilho's trip to Madrid to present his new reading method. Even before it was officially announced, the method was already in circulation: teachers were hired to learn it, which reveals both its prestige with the Portuguese authorities and its projection on the youth in various regions of Portugal and Brazil.

[...] Mr. A. F. de Castilho is still here [Lisbon], despite having been invited to go to Madrid to found the new reading method there. Yesterday, however, the minister of the kingdom presented a bill so that this distinguished writer may be appointed inspector of instruction of the new method, with an annual salary

of 1:100\$ rd. entering the pension he already enjoys [...] (Exterior, 1853, p. 2, emphasis added)

Already in the periodical *Diário de S. Luiz* (1920), a testimony by Professor Antônio Ibirapitanga in 1855, published in the *Correio Mercantil da Bahia*, is reported, about the precocious demonstration of the “powerful intellectual force” of Ruy Barbosa, a 5-year-old boy, in which Ibirapitanga attributes part of this success to the Castilho method of teaching grammar. This suggests that the method may have been influential in the early education of Ruy Barbosa (1849-1923), a multifaceted intellectual and central figure in the transition to the Republic in Brazil, also being one of the founders of the Brazilian Academy of Letters.

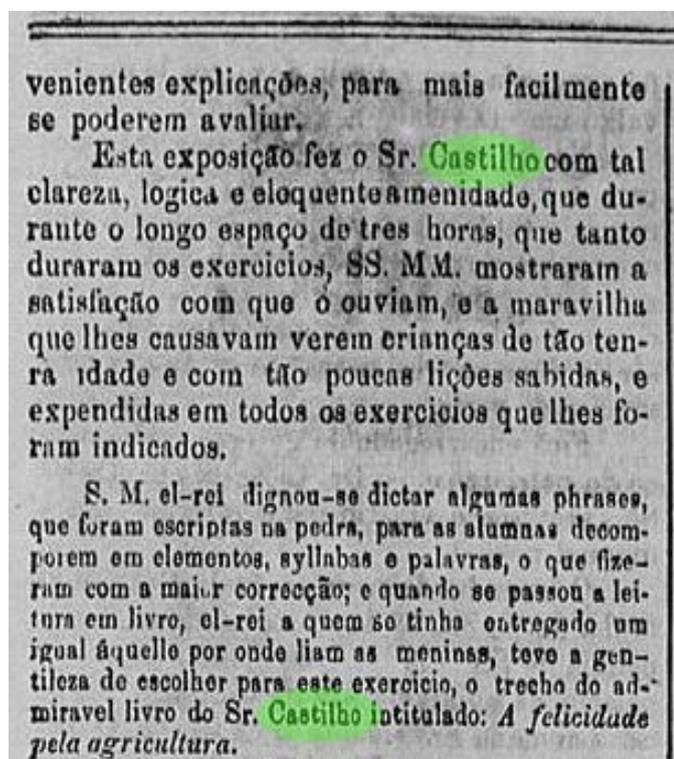
Also in 1856, the same newspaper celebrates him as a “master of Portuguese poetry” and recognizes the revolutionary effects of his teaching method. These records reveal the role of the press in establishing Castilho's authority as an intellectual and educator within the Portuguese-Brazilian sphere.

However, from the second half of the century onwards, signs of tension become more evident. In 1859, the Legislative Assembly of Maranhão authorized the sending of teachers to other provinces to learn about the method, which reveals not only its political importance, but also the recognition that its application required mediation and adaptation. Also in that year, a letter published in the newspaper denounced the dubious nature of the method, pointing out that its success only occurred when applied by Castilho himself, thus suggesting that its prestige did not reside in the pedagogical effectiveness of the proposal, but in the figure of the author.

In 1865, an article previously published in the *Diário de Pernambuco* was published in the newspaper *Publicador Maranhense*, which contained correspondence dated July 13, 1859, with news from Lisbon. Antônio Feliciano de Castilho is cited as a member of the public instruction commission, and his method is highlighted in an announcement about the queen's visit, accompanied by her lady-in-waiting, chamberlain, and assistant, to the "Association for the Promotion of Popular Education," to attend the reading exercises that were being taught using the Castilho Method at the school. There was apparent excitement due to the visit, and the queen was received by the teachers and all the students of the institution. Castilho, who was present, presented the method and accompanied the visitor, who was quite satisfied with what she saw in each of the exercises.

The queen even chose one of Antônio Feliciano de Castilho's works for one of the activities, entitled "Happiness through Agriculture." Furthermore, the announcement describes that the method was praised by the queen, who enthusiastically watched the activities. An excerpt from the news can be seen below:

Figure 2 - Article from the newspaper "Publicador Maranhense"



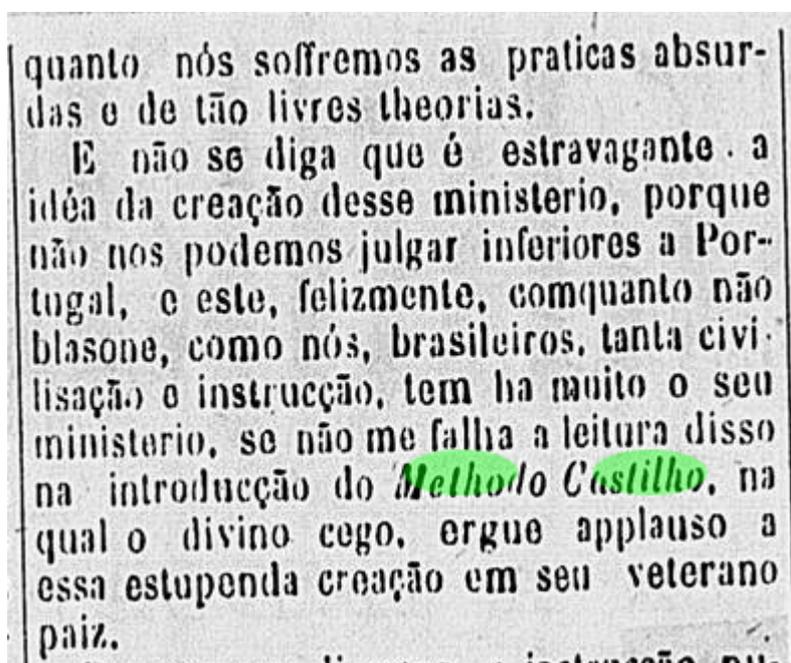
Source: Maranhense Publisher (1865)

Criticism of the method intensified in 1868, when a student from Maranhão who visited schools in Rio de Janeiro stated that the method was not well received at the Court. His account reveals not only the failure of the proposal on national soil, but also questions its authorship, suggesting that it was, in fact, an originally French method, appropriated and adapted by Castilho, as already mentioned in another article previously.

As for Castilho's method, I can only tell you that it was very unsuccessful here, and that there is not a single establishment that has adopted it [...] the trials carried out by the author took place at the central school, and I went to one. I could see or hear nothing because the rooms were packed with people [...]. In short, Castilho's method was not well received at court and failed. They say that this method is not even Castilho's, it is a Frenchman's (Publicador Maranhense, 1868, p. 2).

In a news article dated January 5, 1877, from the *Diário do Maranhão* newspaper, the creation of a public primary school teaching profession in the province, specifically in Maranhão, is discussed. It referred to the need for training and staffing of primary school teachers in the province.

Figure 3 - Article from the newspaper “*Diário do Maranhão*”



Source: *Diário do Maranhão* (1855)

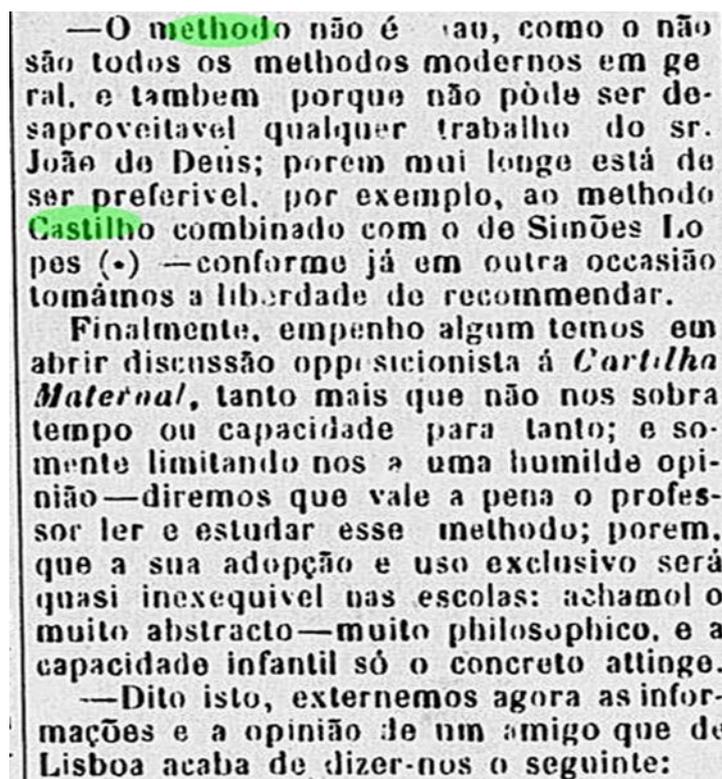
Furthermore, in the correspondence section sent to the aforementioned periodical, written on September 24, 1878 by Roberto Moreira, the new method for reading is highlighted. After having an article accepted for publication in the newspaper, where he recommends Simões Lopes' course for teaching reading and writing, he writes again to report on a new Maternal Primer by João de Deus, which had been distributed in public schools in Lisbon. He announces that he has ordered the primer for Rio de Janeiro and Lisbon and is awaiting its arrival. He writes about a new method based on the sounds of words and believes that it may be a variant of the Castilho and Lopes method, assuming that it is better coordinated. Moreover, he reaffirms that, while the aforementioned primer does not arrive, he will continue to prefer the Simões Lopes method.

In an article published in 1878, located in the section that deals strictly with the Primary Education and Instruction Course, located on Rua do Sol, in São Luís, the Castilho Method is mentioned during the explanation of the teaching system used in

the classes. The teaching method applied by the course is combined with Simões Lopes' method for teaching, being described as simultaneous or, if necessary, individual and mutual.

Also in the same newspaper, in a news item entitled "Maternal Primer," the method is cited in comparison to the Maternal Primer, a publication that had been circulating for some time. In the text, the Castilho Method, combined with that of Simões Lopes, is indicated as preferable to João de Deus' primer.

Figure 4 - Occurrence in the newspaper "Diário do Maranhão"



—O **methodo** não é mau, como o não são todos os **methodos** modernos em geral, e também porque não pôde ser desaproveitavel qualquer trabalho do sr. João de Deus; porem mui longe está de ser preferivel, por exemplo, ao **methodo** **Castilho** combinado com o de Simões Lopes (*) —conforme já em outra occasião tomámos a liberdade de recommendar.

Finalmente, empenho algum temos em abrir discussão opposicionista á *Cartilha Maternal*, tanto mais que não nos sobra tempo ou capacidade para tanto; e somente limitando nos a uma humilde opinião—diremos que vale a pena o professor ler e estudar esse **methodo**; porem, que a sua adopção e uso exclusivo será quasi inexequivel nas escolas: achamol o muito abstracto—muito philosophico, e a capacidade infantil só o concreto attinge.

—Dito isto, externemos agora as informações e a opinião de um amigo que de Lisboa acaba de dizer-nos o seguinte:

Source: Diário do Maranhão (1855)

In the "Sciences, Letters and Arts" section of issue 39 of 1878, in O Paiz, in an article with an illegible title, Vieira de Castro writes in homage to Antônio Feliciano de Castilho, revering his memory in a literary essay. In the same section, João de Deus, author of the Cartilha Maternal (Mother's Primer), writes about the process of its elaboration, describing his line of thought in creating the material and making comparisons with the method of Antônio Feliciano de Castilho, whom he calls during the text the father of the primer.

Therefore, it is through this cartography that it is possible to perceive the circulation, discussions, criticisms and contributions of the Castilho method to the

education of Maranhão during that period. By visualizing these discussions in the Maranhão press and identifying the discussions of the Castilho Method in the local educational scenario.

5 Final Considerations

Newspaper materials are documents that permeate societies and portray contexts, news, announcements and other events, being impartial or biased, throughout the history of the press. From this perspective, the History of Education is present in many printed materials in Brazil, presenting changes, opinions, and news, and is an essential source for the development of research in the field. Newspapers are part of this group and are fundamental sources for understanding the impact, reaction, and dissemination of education and reading methods over the years.

From this perspective, making these documents available in digital environments where they can be consulted by users from any location is fundamental to democratizing access to information and enables the development of new research that uses these materials as a source or object of study. The National Digital Library (BNDigital), where the digital collection of the National Library is deposited, also presents several newspaper sources through the Digital Newspaper Library of the National Library (BN), enabling access to newspapers from different locations and historical excerpts.

The Castilho method, created in Portugal in the 19th century, achieved wide dissemination in Brazil through the press, which allows the researcher to trace the indications of its applicability, its advantages, and the criticisms attributed by educators, parents, and government members. The press allows us to investigate the daily life of cities, their businesses, the movements of advances and setbacks resulting from social dynamics, relating them to educational aspects. Possibilities for using these sources are expanded from public access through digital newspaper libraries.

This text is part of a series of actions developed by the Center for Studies and Documentation in the History of Education and Reading Practices (NEDHEL) with the aim of investigating the educational trajectory of António Feliciano de Castilho through the teaching method he created in the Azores and subsequently projected to the territories of Portugal and, later, to Brazil. To this end, Brazilian and Portuguese

newspaper archives have been a great ally in the data collection process for research on this topic.

In Brazil, Castilho rose to prominence as an educator following his visit to Rio de Janeiro in 1853, where he taught courses to teachers from various provinces. These teachers would then act as disseminators of his pedagogical proposal, especially in Pernambuco and Bahia, and its influence would resonate in many other locations through newspapers circulating in each of them. In this way, the method gained national recognition – both in terms of praise and criticism. In Maranhão, classrooms centered on his method were not opened, unlike in Ceará, Rio Grande do Sul, Rio Grande do Norte, and other states. However, news articles highlighting the application, advantages, and criticisms of the author and his educational works appear in Maranhão newspapers at different times.

It is important to highlight the strategies for retrieving material from these sources, which are a means by which researchers from various fields of knowledge can draw upon in their research. Therefore, the technical knowledge of Library Science and Archival Science related to information retrieval was fundamental in the process of categorizing and classifying news published in various newspapers from Maranhão. Thus, the strategies adopted can serve as indicators for research focused on sources stored in Brazilian newspaper archives.

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