

Royal novels

The presence of fictional works in the library of the Brazilian imperial family

Romances reais: la presencia de obras de ficción en la biblioteca de la familia imperial brasileira / Os romances da realeza: a presença de obras ficcionais na biblioteca da família imperial brasileira

Larissa de Assumpção

PhD in Literary Theory and History,
State University of Campinas
(Unicamp), Brazil.

larissadeassumpcao@gmail.com

Marcia Azevedo de Abreu

PhD in Literary Theory and History.
Full Professor in Brazilian Literature
at the State University of Campinas
(Unicamp), Brazil.

marcia.a.abreu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the presence of fictional narratives in the library of the Brazilian imperial family. It is noted that most of the books were printed in Europe and that books and authors in the library were also available to common readers in Rio de Janeiro, which promotes the knowledge about the circulation of novels in the 19th century and their readership.

Keywords: library; Brazilian imperial family; novel; circulation.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza la presencia de obras de ficción en prosa en la biblioteca de la familia imperial de Brasil. Se constata que la mayoría de los libros fueron impresos en Europa y que los autores y títulos de la colección también estaban disponibles para los lectores de Río de Janeiro, lo que avanza el conocimiento sobre la circulación de novelas en el siglo XIX y sobre su público lector.

Palabras clave: biblioteca; familia imperial brasileira; novela; circulación.

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa a presença de obras de prosa de ficção na biblioteca da família imperial do Brasil. Constata-se que a maior parte dos livros foi impressa na Europa e que os autores e títulos do acervo também estavam disponíveis para os leitores cariocas, o que avança o conhecimento sobre a circulação de romances no século XIX e sobre seu público leitor.

Palavras-chave: biblioteca; família imperial brasileira; romance; circulação.

The Brazilian imperial library was set up in 1808, when the book collection of the Portuguese royal family was installed in the São Cristóvão Palace in Rio de Janeiro. Over the years, this was the residence of the court of King John VI and, later, of the families of the emperors Pedro I and Pedro II, who also contributed to expanding the collection. In 1891, after the Proclamation of the Republic, Pedro II – who was in Versailles at the time – wrote a letter to the attorney José da Silva Costa with the aim of defining what to do with some belongings and personal objects left in Brazil, including an immense collection of books.¹ In the document, the former emperor requested that the works be sent to different institutions: the Brazilian Historic and Geographic Institute – “to be included in the respective library, and these books should be placed in a special site named after Dona Thereza Christina Maria” – the National Library – which should also place them “in a special site and with the same name” – and the Museum of Rio de Janeiro – the destination of works and objects related to natural sciences and mineralogy (Actas..., 1891, p. 223). Following this division, 7,048 books were sent to the Brazilian Historic and Geographic Institute and 352 to the National Museum Library (Dantas, 2007, p. 157). Most of the collection, consisting of 24,270 books, went to the National Library Foundation, where it remains until today as a part of the Dona Thereza Christina Maria Collection.

Although there is not much information about the formation of this collection, one may assume that its composition was associated with the image that monarchs wished to convey and that represented their social and cultural power (Petrucci, 1999; Chartier; Martin, 1989; Schwarcz, 2002), without necessarily being related to the reading tastes and interests of the owners – the works may have been acquired because they were rare or special; offered by foreign delegations as part of the diplomatic representation; or even donated by the actual writers or publishers, interested in obtaining the patronage of members of the imperial family and the emperor himself. Even if all the books had been obtained by the family, it would not be possible to infer that, just because it is a private library, its catalog would provide information about the literary preferences of its owners (Abreu, 2013).

In any case, it is particularly interesting to see that the library contained works of prose fiction,² a genre of little prestige and rarely associated with readers of the literate

1 The document is mentioned in the 1891 edition of *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* (Actas...1891, p. 223).

2 In the 19th century, the terminology used to designate these works was unstable and they could be referred to as novel, novella, tale, legend, fable or story (Abreu, 2021). In this article, to avoid the confusion generated by the lack of stability in designations, we will use the term novel to refer to the set of works of prose fiction.

elite.³ Although literacy in 19th-century Brazil was restricted, recent research has shown that works of prose fiction were widespread across the country.⁴ People from different social backgrounds and levels of education had access to them through serial novels published in newspapers, books kept in reading rooms and public libraries or the various booksellers and auctioneers that operated at the time.⁵ Novels were not appreciated by literary critics for reaching a vast readership, addressing situations that were deemed immoral and being publicized in a way that was considered new (Abreu et al., n.d.).

Analyzing the presence of novels in this library may help review current ideas about the popular objective of fiction and learn about titles and authors that were present among members of the monarchy. The analysis of the languages in which the books were written and the places where they were published may also contribute evidence about the functioning of the book market and the circulation of novels in Brazil in the 19th century.

The presence of novels in the imperial family library

The study of the 24,270 books that are part of the Dona Thereza Christina Maria Collection revealed the presence of novels, albeit timidly: 2.7% belong to the genre, accounting for 665 titles. Although this is not significant in terms of numbers, it can provide a sample of the novels with which the family possibly had contact, whether purchased or received as gifts. In addition, analyses of documents and letters written by the imperial family show that this small amount of fiction was part of their daily lives, as the books were constantly lent, sent as gifts or read aloud at family gatherings, in addition to being discussed in many letters exchanged between its members (Assumpção; Abreu, 2021; Assumpção, 2021).

The analysis of data related to the publications of these books, their authors, and the most common titles sheds light on the ownership of novels by members of the imperial family and confirms interpretations of the circulation of these books in the 19th century.

3 Although the bad reputation of prose fiction was mitigated throughout the 19th century, it took long to be fully accepted. Antonio Candido recalls that “it was the militant critics of the 19th century that recognized the genre of novel and addressed it properly; but in schools, *my generation* still taught outdated rhetoric and poetics, which *did not include it in the list of genres or even mention it*, although the novelists were addressed by teachers and included in anthologies” (Candido, 1989, p. 72, emphasis added). The discredit of the genre is also seen in the fact that it only became part of the French school curriculum in 1923 and was absent from French classrooms throughout the entire 19th century (Augusti, 2010).

4 The presence of prose fiction in Brazil was examined through the study of diaries, bookseller catalogues, library and reading room collections, advertisements. See Ramicelli (2016); Augusti (2016, 2014); Souza (2014); Sales (2013); Silva (2011); Rodrigues (2008), Barbosa (2014); Silva et al. (2007).

5 On the circulation and reception of novels in the 19th century, see Abreu (2016).

Publication date of the books in the Collection

Of the 665 fiction prose books present in the library, 623 contain information about the date of their publication. This makes it possible to determine how recent they were and conjecture whether they were incorporated into the library during the period in which the imperial family lived in Rio de Janeiro or brought by the time they arrived in Brazil.

The collection contains titles published for the first time in the 16th century, such as *Giulietta e Romeo*, an Italian narrative written in 1530 by Luigi da Porto and which would become one of William Shakespeare's inspirations for writing *Romeo and Juliet* (Salernitano et al., 2000). Other old works are *Galatea*, originally published in 1585, and *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, written in 1605, both by Miguel de Cervantes. Despite the antiquity of the works, the editions present in the collection are much more recent: *Giulietta e Romeo*, published in 1875, in Milan; *Galatea*, in 1860, in Spanish, in Madrid; and *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, in three editions in Spanish (1859, 1860, 1863) and one in German (undated). The library also contained old editions, such as *Les aventures de Télémaque*, by Fénelon, which was first published in 1699, but is present in a French edition from 1773 – the oldest book among the fictional narratives preserved in the collection. The presence of old works in the collection, acquired in newer editions or translations, is not a particularity of the imperial family library, since studies of other collections and bookseller catalogs reveal that readers' interest remained constant for long periods (Modenez, 2011).

On the other hand, there were also works of contemporary publication, the most recent being a French translation of a novel by Tolstoy: *Le prince Nekhlioudov*, released in Paris in 1889. Other contemporary editions by the same author are also present: *À la recherche du bonheur*, from 1886, and *Anna Karenina*, from 1885. According to Bruno Gomide (2011), the translation and dissemination of Russian novels in Europe occurred after the publication of essays-manifests written by Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé, who defended them as a proposal to “rectify” the deviations and excesses of scientism in French literature at the time, especially represented in the works of Flaubert and Zola. Published from 1883 onwards in the prestigious *Revue des Deux Mondes* – one of the journals commonly read by the imperial family –⁶ the texts may have drawn the attention of members of the family to Tolstoy's books, leading to the acquisition of the newly published books in French.

In general, the books preserved in the imperial library were relatively recent as 97% of the editions are from the 19th century. There is no noticeable

6 The reading of *Revue des Deux Mondes* by members of the imperial family could be observed in their personal correspondence, which is part of the collection of the Imperial Museum of Petrópolis (Ibram/MinC). Grão-Pará Archive, documents AGP XXXIX-1 e AGP XLI-3.

concentration of books produced in any specific decade, but one notes a greater volume in the 1820s (15.8%) and, later, in the 1870s and 1880s (both representing 12.8%),⁷ indicating that the works were possibly incorporated into the collection when the family was already living in Brazil. The time span is much broader if we consider the date when the works were first published: 0.4% of the total was written in the 16th century; 2.4% in the 17th; and 13.5% in the 18th.⁸ Most works were written in the 19th century (76.4%), notably in the 1820s (8.6%) and 1870s (10.5%).⁹

It can be seen, therefore, that the collection is much more recent from the point of view of editions than from the point of view of the composition of the works, which suggests, on the one hand, a certain stability in the interest of readers, who continue to read some titles for centuries, and, on the other, the vigorousness of the publishing market, which constantly produced new editions, making old novels accessible and keeping them in circulation.

These data change the perception that books lose relevance after they are first published, being surpassed by new aesthetic approaches. This perception is fostered by conventional literary history, which focuses on the production of works (rather than their reading and social presence) and analyzes them in first-edition chronological order, establishing literary periods according to those dates and associating them with changes in aesthetic trends (Abreu, 2012; 2014).

The languages of the novels in the Collection

Despite the fact that most of the novels were published after the transfer of the Portuguese court to Brazil, Portuguese is not one of the prominent languages in the collection of fictional works. On the contrary, there is a predominance of French, which accounts for almost 60% of the editions, followed by German (13%), Italian (10%) and English (7%). Portuguese appears in fifth, with almost the same number of titles as English (47 and 44 books, respectively).¹⁰

7 Detailing the numbers, it is observed that 0.3% of the works in the collection were published in the 1770s, 0.8% in the 1780s, 1.6% in the 1790s, 3.4% in the 1800s, 13.6% in the 1810s, 15.8% in the 1820s, 6.9% in the 1830s, 8.9% in the 1840s, 14.6% in the 1850s, 8% in the 1860s, 12.8% in the 1870s and 12.8% in the 1880.

8 The first edition of 419 titles were identified.

9 In detail, the figures are as follows: 0.2% were first published in the 1530s, 0.2% in the 1580s, 0.9% in the 1600s, 0.9% in the 1610s, 0.2% in the 1620s, 0.2% in the 1660s, 0.2% in the 1690s, 0.9% in the 1710s, 0.5% in the 1720s, 0.2% in the 1730s, 1.2% in the 1740s, 0.5% in the 1750s, 2.6% in the 1760s, 3.8% in the 1780s, 3.8% in the 1790s, 0.7% in the 1800s, 10.2% in the 1810s, 15% in the 1820s, 8.6% in the 1830s, 8.6% in the 1840s, 8.8% in the 1850s, 6.9% in the 1860s, 10.5% in the 1870s and 7.1% in the 1880s.

10 Specifically, the collection has 397 titles in French, 84 in German, 70 in Italian, 47 in English, 44 in Portuguese, 24 in Spanish and one in Latin.

Although the Brazilian imperial family had Portugal as its origin, with contributions from Spain (in the case of Queen Carlota Joaquina), the Austrian Empire (Empress Leopoldina) and the Kingdom of Naples (Empress Teresa Cristina), with regard to ownership of novels, its most important reference point was the French language, which was expected at the time. As is known, French was the *lingua franca* of the international elites and France was the center of the publishing world, prominent in both creating and publishing novels (Casanova, 2002). Members of the elites often used French to communicate and regularly read publications in that language. Therefore, it is no wonder that more than half of the works of fiction in the library were published in French.

More surprising is the number of titles in German and Italian, probably due to the origin and background of the members of the court. For example, Empress Leopoldina, the wife of Pedro I, belonged to the Habsburg dynasty and spoke German as her mother tongue. Her early education included also the study of French, Italian and Latin (Oberacker, 1973). Study and reading were regular activities in the daily life of the empress, who resided in São Cristóvão Palace between 1817 and 1826. She often asked the Marquis of Marialva to send her books on literature, botany and history recently released in Europe (Kann; Lima, 2006). It is likely, therefore, that she contributed to the presence of books in German – her mother tongue – in the library.

Pedro II, her son, also studied different languages when growing up and, like other nobles of the period, learned, “with diligence, living and dead languages, and spoke English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Provençal” (Quintanilha, 2006, p. 11). His wife, Empress Thereza Christina, who arrived in Brazil in 1842, was born in the Kingdom of Naples, and therefore frequently communicated in Italian, besides having knowledge of French and Portuguese (Avella, 2014). Princesses Isabel and Leopoldina, daughters of Teresa Cristina and Pedro II, were also given a broad education, which included the study of French, Italian and German (Aguar, 2012). The letters exchanged between Pedro II’s relatives reveal that they read novels in languages other than Portuguese. An interesting case is the reading of *Ivanhoe*, a book originally written in English and present in the library in French, the language in which it was read by Princess Isabel. In letters to her father, she comments on the novel and writes the names of all the characters as they appear in the French edition. Furthermore, when mentioning the lack of verisimilitude of Athelstan’s “resurrection,” she cites one of the footnotes (which alludes to the fact of several critics having complained about the unlikelihood of the passage), present only in the French edition of Scott’s complete works, published in 1835 (Assumpção, 2021).

Although they were able to read in several languages, they did not always select works in their original language for the collection, which contains several translations. For instance, none of the books by the Scotsman Walter Scott appear in the library in English, but rather in translations into German (such as *Legende von Montrose und seinen Gefährten*, translation of *A Legend of Montrose*) and French (for example, *La jolie fille de Perth*, translation of *The Fair Maid of Perth*).

The diverse background of the family members, as well as the education provided to those who were born in Brazil, may partly explain the large number of works in foreign languages in the collection. But the variety of languages also confirms the existence of an international circulation of novels, a common phenomenon in the 19th century (Abreu, 2016). Narratives in several languages, coming from different nations, were found not only in elite libraries but also in public institutions and reading rooms in Brazil and abroad. This confirms the vigor of the 19th century book trade and, once again, suggests that the picture drawn by conventional historiography, by limiting its field of observation to the writing of national works of literature, overlooks elements that are important to understand the presence of novels in cultural life of the 19th century.

Place of publication of the works of prose fiction

The international scope of the circulation of novels becomes even clearer when one observes the cities where the books in the imperial family library were published.

Considering that the predominant language in the collection is French, it is no wonder that Paris is the city where 54% of them were published. Nor is it surprising that there are twenty books in French published in Brussels, “the homeland of counterfeiting in the first half of the 19th century,” in the words of Nelson Schapochnik (2010, p. 598).¹¹ More interesting is to note that the other books were published in 24 different places: Milan (27 titles), London (25), Dresden (24), Leipzig (22), Rio de Janeiro (16), Madrid, Zwickau and Florence (13), Vienna (9), Lisbon (8), Berlin (6), New York, Buenos Aires and Naples (5), Turin and Porto (4), Rome, Philadelphia, Bologna, Bahia and Amsterdam (3), Tours, Montdidier and Toulouse (1).¹²

Even more remarkable is the fact that not all books published in Paris are in French. This city is the place of origin of the Spanish edition of *Novelas*

¹¹ See also Schapochnik (2016).

¹² Data based on the 597 novels whose place of publication was indicated in the imperial family library catalog.

ejemplares, by Cervantes, published in 1838; three works in Italian (by Giovanni Rosini, Cesare Cantú and Tommaso Grossi, published between 1840 and 1846); seven books in English (by Laurence Sterne, Oliver Goldsmith, William Makepeace Thackeray and Maria Edgeworth, published between 1836 and 1873); and two novels in Portuguese (an 1819 edition of *Verdadeira história dos sucessos de Armindo e Florisa*, by Filinto Elísio, and *A morte moral*, by Antonio Deodoro de Pascual, published in 1864). There are even more curious cases, such as *The Pilot: A Tale of the Sea*, by the American author Fenimore Cooper, present in the imperial library in a translation into Portuguese by the Bahia-born Caetano Lopes de Moura, published in Paris in four volumes.

Most books in Portuguese were published in Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro or Bahia, rather than in Portugal, which had a larger and older publishing industry. Sixteen titles were published in the empire's capital, only two of which are translations (*Les mystères du peuple* and *Aventures de trois russes et trois anglais dans l'Afrique Australe*). The same occurs with the works published in Porto, in which three of the four titles were originally written in Portuguese. The pattern is not repeated with the eight novels published in Lisbon, which are predominantly translations (with the exception of two titles: *Ruy de Miranda*, by Ayres Pinto de Souza de Mendonça e Menezes, of 1849, and *Mario*, by Antonio Silva Gaio, of 1868).

In "Narrativas que viajam: os romances em português editados em Paris" [Travelling Narratives: Novels in Portuguese Published in Paris], Paulo Motta Oliveira (2016) notes the existence of several fiction narratives in Portuguese published in France throughout the 19th century and associates this phenomenon with the fact that the publishing market of the time was international. The imperial family library collection confirms this finding and expands its scope by providing further evidence that not only the publishing of novels but also their circulation was transnational, a fact also highlighted by Franco Moretti's study on the presence of novels in French and English libraries (Moretti, 2003).

Thus, whether from the point of view of the languages in which they were published or from the perspective of their places of publication, the novels had a strong international dimension, connecting the most diverse countries and languages.

If the constitution of collections in several languages was a common fact in the 19th century, the imperial library took this trend to the extreme, with Portuguese being the minority language in the collection even though it was assembled in the period in which the imperial family resided in Brazil. It remains to ascertain the nationality of the authors of the collection's works.

The authors of the books in the Collection

Among the most relevant authors in the library, there is a predominance of Europeans, especially French, English and German. Once again, the importance of France and England is no surprise, given that those countries were the birthplace of the modern novel and prominent publishing centers. What draws attention, however, is the fact that the author with the largest number of titles in the library is Carl Franz van der Velde, a writer currently unknown, even in his homeland. Very popular in Europe in the 19th century for his historical novels (Schuster, 1982), he authored the largest number of works: 24 novels, published between 1819 and 1826. According to Osman Durrani and Julian Preece (2001), van der Velde's success in Germany was due to the fashion of the historical novel, which would also explain the large number of titles by Carolina Pichler, another German author of successful historical novels, of which six are part of the collection. All of van der Velde's novels in the library were in German, although there were a few translations into Portuguese.¹³ Those by Carolina Pichler were also in German, with the exception of one book translated into French.¹⁴ The presence of this author in the collection is even more significant when one notes that one of the books is entitled *Sämtliche Werke*, i.e., her complete works in German, in a 16-volume edition, most of them containing works of fiction.

The interest in historical novels also appears in some books by the British writer Maria Edgeworth, since, of the seven novels of her authorship in the collection, two are historical: *Tomorrow* and *Leonora*. She was a prolific author who wrote children's books and various novels between 1800 and 1848. The success of her books reached Walter Scott, who, in a paratext of *Waverley*, wrote that *Castle Rackrent*, Edgeworth's novel released in 1800, was a source of inspiration for his work (Franciscon, 2018, p. 54-55).

Walter Scott, the great name of historical novels and one of the most popular 19th-century writers, could not be missing from the library, which has 19 of his books. Interestingly, none of them are in English: 16 are translated into German and three into French. French translations of English novels were quite common in Brazil in the 19th century (Vasconcelos, n.d.). However, there

13 The novel *Die Gesandtschaftsreise nach China*, by Carl Franz van der Velde, was translated into Portuguese as *A embaixada à China* and published in Lisbon in 1837; *Prinz Friedrich*, translated as *Theodoro*, also came out in Lisbon in 1847. A translation of the novel *Der Flibustier*, first published serially in *Dresdner Abend-Zeitung* magazine, was published over five editions of the women's magazine *Novo Correio de Modas* in 1852.

14 Her novel *Falkenberg* was translated into Portuguese as *Falkenberg ou o tio* and published in Lisbon in 1844.

is little information about German translations of Walter Scott's books in the country (Vasconcelos, 2008). Their presence in the library is perhaps related to a preference for reading in that language by some members of the imperial family or, more specifically, by the Empress Leopoldina, who frequently ordered books and objects from Austria (Kann; Lima, 2006).

According to Louis Maigron, Scott "was more than a success, he was a craze" and reached audiences from different social levels: "from dressmakers to duchesses, from simple people to intellectuals, everyone was fascinated by Scott" (Maigron, 1912 apud Vasconcelos, 2008, p. 357). The presence of his novels in the imperial family library and in public libraries and reading rooms (Vasconcelos, 2008) seems to confirm this assessment, showing that, also in Brazil, both the general public and the elite engaged in the "craze" of reading the Scotsman's novels.¹⁵

Something similar, but on a smaller scale, happened with Carl Franz van der Velde. Although he is not among the most common authors in Brazilian libraries, reading rooms and bookstores, it cannot be said that he was completely unknown. For example, two of his books were available in the Fluminense Library, whose catalogue, published in 1866, contains *A embaixada à China* (*Die Gesandtschaftsreise nach China*), published in Lisbon in 1837, and *Theodoro* (*Prinz Friedrich*), released in Lisbon in 1847 (Catálogo..., 1866, p. 162, 181). The novel *Theodoro* was also advertised by Garnier bookstore in *Diário do Rio de Janeiro* newspaper (1854, p. 3) and this title, alongside *A embaixada à China*, appears in the 1858 catalog of the Royal Portuguese Reading Room (Catálogo..., 1858, p. 250, 271). Moreover, a translation of the novel *Der Flibustier*, first published serially in the German-language *Dresdner Abend-Zeitung*, was published over five editions in 1852 in the women's magazine *Novo Correio de Modas* (Assumpção, 2022, p. 356-358).

The same can be said about Maria Edgeworth, whose novels were present in various public institutions, such as the Rio-Grandense Library (Ramicelli, 2016, p. 102), and were sold in bookstores in Rio de Janeiro, especially her children's books. *Moral Tales*, for example, was advertised for sale among other "English books" in *Jornal do Commercio* (1870, p. 7), and her *Popular Tales* were available in Portuguese for visitors to the Portuguese Reading Room in Rio de Janeiro (Catálogo..., 1913, p. 112).

Some of the most successful French-speaking authors also have works in the library. This is the case of Eugène Sue, who contributes with 12 titles, including

¹⁵ The imperial family not only had works by Scott in the library, but read and discussed some of his novels in letters exchanged between them (Assumpção, 2021).

three different editions of his famous *Les mystères de Paris* and a Portuguese edition published in Rio de Janeiro in 1851. First published as a serial novel in *Journal des Débats* between June 1842 and October 1843, it was translated and sold almost simultaneously in several European countries in more than 19 languages (Schapochnik, 2010). In Brazil, a Portuguese translation was published in serial form in *Jornal do Commercio* between 1844 and 1845, and later in book form, which enabled it to reach a wide range of different audiences.

Another French author who stands out as much as Sue is Alphonse Karr, who also has 12 novels in the library, all in their original language, with the oldest edition dating from 1856, *Contes et nouvelles*, and the most recent from 1887, *Le pot aux roses*. The titles preserved in the library do not exhaust the family's contact with his works, since one of the titles noted in the document "Emperor's expenses with books"¹⁶ was not incorporated into the collection: *Le règne des champignons*, purchased in 1886 from Garnier bookshop. Thus, this not only additionally suggests that Karr may have been one of the authors preferred by the family of Pedro II, but also that the set of works we are analyzing is only part of what the imperial family would have read.

Alphonse Karr was a prominent author in France¹⁷ but less popular in Brazil, which does not mean, however, that his books were not available to local audiences. Suffice it to note, for example, that *Jornal do Commercio* published the translation of his novel *Pour ne pas être treize*, in 1842 (Santana Júnior, 2016, p. 854), and that *Novo Correio de Modas* released *La main du diable* in 1853 (Donegá, 2013, p. 254).

Others popular French writers are Émile Erckmann and Alexandre Chatrian, two brothers who wrote their works together under the name of Erckmann-Chatrian. The imperial family had ten of their novels in the library, all written in French and published in Paris. Throughout their life they published more than sixty titles, containing short stories, novels and plays, which described life in French towns and cities and encouraged patriotism, for which they were praised by authors such as Flaubert and Zola (Przybós, 2009). Equally prominent in the library are works by Benjamin Disraeli, a relatively successful British writer at the time who is present in the collection with ten titles, eight of which are in English and two in French.

¹⁶ This document belongs to the Grão-Pará Archive, from the collection of the Imperial Museum of Petrópolis (Ibram/MinC).

¹⁷ According to Júlio Modenez (2011), Karr's novels stand out in Michel Lévy's catalogs published between 1860 and 1875.

These authors had few or no translations into Portuguese, but they were also available to a wide audience. For example, visitors to the Portuguese Reading Room in Rio de Janeiro had access to 13 novels by Erckmann-Chatrian, all in French, and three novels by Benjamin Disraeli, in English (Catálogo..., 1858).

The imperial library also contains works by successful women writers, such as Felicité de Genlis, who appears with 12 of her novels, and Madame Augustus Craven, with seven, all in French. According to Martine Reid (2011), Felicité de Genlis was a popular author and made a lot of money from her books. Her success was not restricted to France, since, according to Taís Franciscan (2016, p. 101), she was among the most advertised novelists in *The Times* newspaper from 1800 to 1820, with 25 works.

In addition to Maria Edgeworth, already mentioned, the British writer Ann Radcliffe also stands out with eight novels, all present in the imperial library in French. Her books were not restricted to nobles, as they could be enjoyed by numerous visitors that frequented the Portuguese Reading Room in Rio de Janeiro or the Rio-Grandense Library, as shown by studies by Alexandro Paixão (2016) and Maria Eulália Ramicelli (2016).

The library also had other successful writers, some in several editions. For example, there are three editions of *Historie de Gil Blas de Santillane*, by Alain René Lesage, published in French in 1788, 1838 and 1864. This novel was among the most shipped to Brazil in the colonial period (Abreu, 2002, p. 132), one of the most requested titles in the National Library between 1833 and 1840 (Rocha, 2011, p. 75) and one of the most advertised in *Jornal do Commercio* between 1810 and 1843 (Mançano, 2010, p. 277). The collection also contained books similar to those that were among the most requested by readers at the National and Public Library of Rio de Janeiro between 1833 and 1856 (Rocha, 2011), such as *Les mille et une nuits*, by Galland, in an edition published in 1881 by the Librairie des Bibliophiles in Paris. There are also three novels by Fenimore Cooper, one of the most cited authors in book auction advertisements in the 19th century (Tognolo, 2018, p. 117-118): *The Spy* (translation published in Lisbon in 1840), *The Pilot: A Tale of the Sea* (Portuguese translation released in Paris in 1838) and *The Last of the Mohicans* (translated by Caetano Lopes de Moura and also published in Paris, in 1858). The catalog also featured an 1860 edition of *Les travailleurs de la mer* by Victor Hugo, a prominent author among those most present in book auction advertisements at the time.

Novels by Portuguese authors were also part of the collection, albeit with few titles. Prominent among them is Alexandre Herculano, with two books in the collection. Surprisingly, both are in Spanish translations: *Eurico el presbítero*

(translation from 1875) and *El monje del cister* (from 1877). This shows that even among languages of lesser importance in the 19th-century publishing market, such as Portuguese and Spanish, works were translated and circulated in several languages. Also present were Luís de Magalhães, with *O brasileiro Soares*, published in Porto in 1886; Aires Pinto de Sousa de Mendonça e Meneses, with the historical novel *Ruy de Miranda*, published in Lisbon in 1849; and João Vaz, with an 1868 edition of *Villa Nova de Gaia*. The library also contained two books by Júlio Diniz, an author whose works are mentioned by Pedro II and Princess Isabel in their correspondence (Assumpção; Abreu, 2021). They are: *Uma família inglesa: cenas da vida do Porto* (1870 edition) and *Serões da província* (1870 edition), both published in Porto.

Even more surprising is the fact that there are only 14 Brazilian novels in the collection, all written by non-canonical authors who are fairly unknown nowadays, with the exception of Machado de Assis, who appears with an 1884 edition of his book *Histórias sem data*. The collection had works by José Higino Sodré Pereira da Nóbrega, with *Os salteadores punidos: romance brasileiro* (1851), João Manuel Pereira da Silva, with *Jeronimo Corte Real* (1865), Antônio Luís von Hoonholtz, with *A corveta Diana: romance marítimo original brasileiro* (in an edition published in Manaus in 1873), J. Tito, with *Mimi: romance brasileiro* (1873), Teotônio Meireles, with *O padre Esmerati: romance militar* (1876 edition), D. J. da Fonseca, with an edition of *Amor e morte: episódio contemporâneo* (1876), Pedro Ribeiro Viana, with *O roubo de um diamante* (1881), Jorge Domingues, with *Viagens imaginárias aos mundos habitados e inabitados* (published in Rio de Janeiro in 1886), M. A. da Silva Júnior, with *Angelina de Nazareth: romance original brasileiro* (1886) and Antônio Vaz Pinto Coelho da Cunha, with an undated edition of *Coração de ferro: romance do tempo colonial*. There are also a few Brazilian women novelists in the collection. The imperial family owned two 1881 editions of *Livro de Antonico: contos brasileiros*, by Gabriela de Jesus Ferreira França, and an 1886 edition of the book *Contos infantis em verso e prosa*, by Júlia Lopes and Adelina Lopes Vieira.

Despite the diversity of titles and authors, the low number of works in Portuguese in the collection reinforces the idea that the list of books preserved in the imperial library does not do justice to the number of publications with which the family may have had contact, as one would hardly suppose that an emperor so interested in literature and committed to asserting the country's nationality through literature had not read other Brazilian novelists who took active part in this process, such as José de Alencar. The information contained

in the document “Emperor’s expenses with books” confirms that impression,¹⁸ as it records payment on December 31, 1872 for the purchase of two recent works by José de Alencar – *O tronco do ipê* and *A pata da gazela* – which were not listed among the books donated by the family to compose the Dona Thereza Christina Maria collection.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that the books in the imperial library were not necessarily read or bought by family members, and even though they certainly read more works of fiction than those it contains, the analysis of the collection makes it possible to confirm some findings of previous research – on the transnational circulation of novels and the limitations of traditional literary history – and advance knowledge about reading audiences.

Two elements deserve special consideration: the existence of books read by both the elite and the general public and the inclination to read in their mother language.

Data on the most outstanding novels and novelists in the imperial library show that books from different styles and periods coexisted and could be purchased at the same time: the collection contains historical novels, works originally published in serialized form, popular authors, translations into several languages and titles many times republished. The collection makes it possible to grasp how the imperial family, as well as other readers at the time, formed their own reading repertoire, which may or may not have included authors who would later be canonized.

Even more interesting is the observation that nobles, such as members of the imperial family, shared reading tastes with common people who frequented public libraries and reading rooms. Residents of Rio de Janeiro could purchase novels included in the imperial collection from local booksellers or at auctions, but this was not always necessary, since many were found in establishments open to the public, such as the National Library or the Portuguese Reading Room.

Although the imperial library had important similarities with collections intended for wider audiences, it differs from others for including many works in German and Italian, languages that were not commonly present in advertisements published in newspapers (Mançano, 2010; Abreu; Tognolo, 2015) or in

¹⁸ Document of the Grão-Pará Archive, from the collection of the Imperial Museum of Petrópolis (Ibaram/MinC).

bookseller catalogs (Modenez, 2011) and public libraries (Bessone, 1999; Rocha, 2011; Paixão, 2016). Their relevant presence in the collection may be related to individual preferences and the background of family members, born and educated in different parts of Europe. The numerous novels in German and Italian offer evidence that the mother tongue is an important element in reading practices, even among highly educated people such as members of the imperial family. However, enjoyment of reading in the mother tongue should not be confused with nationalism, since it is not just about reading national authors and works, given the great number of translations of authors of different nationalities into German and Italian.

It is possible to conclude that the reading of some books was shared by people from different origins, cultural backgrounds, professions and social classes, in different languages and editions. Therefore, it does not seem appropriate to think of the literature of a given country separately from that of others. Literary production, like the development of nationalities, happened jointly rather than individually, and the primary sources of the 19th century allow us to find evidence about how this process came about.

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