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### **Some Notes on Digital History, Made in Brazil**

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How has Digital History been developed in Brazil? I would like to present some considerations about the Brazilian panorama. Briefly, I propose the analysis from (1) key texts, (2) the papers presented at events, (3) the framework of research conducted at universities and (4) the initiatives of teachers in Basic Education.

Finally, I hope to indicate what, at least today, marks something specific in the Digital History made in Brazil.

The idea outlined above is made more complex by the fact that probably when it comes to Digital History in Brazil, it is not Universities, that induce innovation in the use of digital resources in Education. Neither is the Ministry of Education nor our publishing market. In Brazil, the changes are coming directly from the classroom: Basic Education teachers are the ones who are best using the Internet to retell, research and present History to their students and the non-specialized public.

One of the symptoms of this situation is the fact that our best-known history research manuals have avoided in-depth approaches to the subject. There has been very little advancement. If we take some of the most respected Brazilian manuals chronologically, we will find almost nothing about computers, new information technologies or Internet.

In “Os Métodos da História” (*The History Methods*) by Ciro Flamarion Cardoso and Hétor Pérez Brignoli (released in 1983) we see an enthusiasm for using computers and research tools. However, this initial enthusiasm did not result in computers becoming a common tool of Brazilian historians in a deep level. Nowadays, this scarcity persists.

The two volumes of “Domínios da História”, also organized by Ciro Cardoso, but this time in partnership with Ronaldo Vainfas, very little space was dedicated to the digital realm. In the first book of 1997, we can elucidate this in Luciano Figueiredo's (1997) text by the fact that, at that time, the Internet and access to personal computers were still a recent experience, taking in consideration that the network was just beginning to be used by Brazilian researchers. However, the same cannot be said of volume two, released fifteen years later. There, the only chapter aim at the subject, written by Célia Tavares (2012), reflects on computer science and its relationship with the production and dissemination of historical knowledge, but it is limited to mentions of authors who approached the web occasionally, leaving aside more recent, articulate and thorough investigations.

What do these works have in common?

Firstly, they were organized by nationally renowned historians, supported by traditional Brazilian universities. (2) Secondly, they are mandatory references in projects and exams for access to masters and doctorates in Brazil. (3) Thirdly, they were published by prestigious publishers, the last two published on the Elsevier label. (4) And, finally, they did not signal developments in diffusion or reflect on the use of history and digital resources in basic education.

It is important to mention some initiatives. In 2011, the book “Escritos sobre História e Internet” indicated the need to foster, expand and systematize studies around Digital History. Two other texts, published as dictionary entries, complete the group of publications. The first of them dealt with “cyberwars”, while the second directly addressed the relationship between History Teaching and Digital History. In the entry titled “New Technologies”, Anita Lucchesi and Dilton Maynard point out some itineraries. I believe that Pedro Teles da Silveira's work, finished in 2019, deserves mention for the effort to find a specificity for digital sources.

However, such publications, especially entries, only strive to demarcate the terrain of Digital History. They have inserted this heading in reference works. This is probably a positive sign. But it is a scenario marked by considerable limitations. Maynard's text was published in 2011 by a publisher of limited reach and is no longer in print, while Lucchesi's entry was not published until 2019.

It appears that we are experiencing a curious paradox. This is because although most Brazilian historians use the Internet, e-mail, mailing lists, official websites, desktop publishing systems, and social media dissemination, they do not usually engage in reflections on digital resources.

Incidentally, the National Association of History Teachers, - acronym ANPUH - the largest and oldest association of Brazilian historians, does not yet have a text, manifesto or any other publication that explains the theme. If we look closely, we can say that the movements are still basically defensive. This is what happens when one of its regional sections (Rio Grande do Sul) runs a campaign whose slogan is "What your teacher knows, doesn't fit into Google". The campaign, which aims to protect the teacher, ends up identifying the wrong opponent: Google.

It is also symptomatic that the ANPUH, which has two academic journals, has reserved what little space it has for texts that orbit digital history for the journal intended for public of teachers, not researchers. Still within the same association, let's now look at an overview of the national symposiums promoted by the group in the last decade.

Organized by ANPUH every 2 years, the National History Symposium brings together thousands of teachers, students and researchers, in the main event among Brazilian historians. But what we had in the last symposiums? We will briefly analyze the frequency of the subject in symposiums or scientific communications in the last decade, using papers addressing terms such as "digital", "internet" and "digitalization". We have had, in chronological order, the following symposiums: 2011 (São Paulo), 2013 (Rio Grande do Norte), 2015 (Santa Catarina), 2017 (Distrito Federal) and 2019 (Pernambuco).

What do we find? In 2011, the event had 130 panels, but nothing related to Digital History. On that occasion, movies, literature, comics and death appeared as a research subject. But not the Digital. However, it's possible to identify 7 individual papers around the theme.

In the next edition, in 2013, were 141 panels, and once again the theme didn't appear as a central idea in any. However, 6 papers by undergraduate and 3 by graduate students can be found. The National Symposium in 2015 had 119 panels, but only 6 papers deal with the issue.

Two years later, in 2017, we found finally an entire panel dedicated to history teaching and teaching materials, but still dedicated to "a variety of educational contexts: from printed books to digital technologies". As well as this there were about 10 works that about the theme. And 4 individual papers on the subject.

The 2019 edition, held last July, different from the previous one, did not present any symposium exclusively dedicated to the theme. However, the increase in papers is noticeable. No less than 11 papers were identified. But despite the advances, it is still a gap-filled scenario.

If the main congress of historians has been almost silent in the last decade, what can we find in the context of the Brazilian Postgraduate? Initially, it is necessary to consider that, with the exception of some cases (such as IBICIT's *Laboratório em Redes de Humanidades Digitais* – LAURD, [www.larhud.ibict.br](http://www.larhud.ibict.br)), there is still no experience of Digital History centers or departments in Brazilian universities. Even so, in graduate school, the situation seems to be improving. Although still incipient, the production of theses and dissertations that address the theme of Digital History has grown significantly in recent years. Only in 2014 it has overcome the average of 3 works per year (by 2013 we identified only 8 works). These are symptomatic numbers, which show the still marginal position of Digital History. After all, Brazil currently has 81 postgraduate programs in History, of which 45 are doctoral programs. There are also 14 professional master's programs, programs aimed primarily at qualifying teachers of Basic Education (2014).

For the “academic” programs, we identified between 2006 and 2018, 12 works in institutions in the Southeast, 4 in the Northeast and 3 in the Midwest. We did not identify research published in the Northern Region - at least, not in “academic” programs.

When the universe is made up of the 14 existing professional master's degrees, the perspective changes. Of course, we must consider that the experience of professional master's degrees has not completed even a decade in Brazil. Let's see what the numbers show.

Between 2016 and 2018, about 30 surveys were presented, making an average of 10 / year. Meanwhile, the diversity and timeliness of objects such as “Whatsapp”, “Netflix”, as well as the concentration on investing in Youtube and games is noticeable. Podcasts, Webquests, websites, and other resources are also studied, albeit to a lesser extent. Although the works are accompanied by academics, they are mostly the result of initiatives already existing among teachers in their daily classroom practices. The stimulus did not come from Academy, dealing with theory, but from the daily nightmare teachers face in dealing with compelling news that seduces students, steals class attention, and fits into their cell phones.

So, if we want to see some real uses and experiences using Digital History approaches, it's necessary to look at basic schools in Brazil. It is, in those places that Digital History is working. In thousands of schools, an ensemble of experiences has been carried out by teachers. A very rich group of social media appears as examples (good examples, by the

way) of Digital History practices. But it is still an unorganized activity. There is not an identifiable academic principle behind it.

### CONCLUSION

So how has the web been used? Apparently still timidly. Given the experiences listed, it can be said that there is still a long way to go. Brazilian universities and researchers will need time and resources to consolidate projects, subjects and study centers dedicated to the digital realm. In any case, it can be stated that:

(1) While in Europe, research centers demonstrate consolidation and undertake initiatives to serve teachers and undergraduate students - such as the Ranke 2.0 project from C2DH -, in Brazil the Basic Education classroom has been the primary space for experimentation <https://ranke2.uni.lu/>. If there is anything close to full-fledged Digital History labs in Brazil today, they are in school classrooms being powered mostly by *analog* teachers and digital native students.

2) While the leading association of Brazilian historians still performs defensive movements, non-academic, non-specialist historians are taking control of pedagogical innovations. And by giving up public debate and opting for closed circuits, academic historians have left Digital History adrift.

(3) So, what is going on? In Brazil, it seems that a kind of neoludism is still strong. Demonizing social networks, Wikipedia, Google and mobile phones, academics have left the gaps for these spaces to be occupied by historians with no connection to universities, and with no commitment to the classroom. What is the result of this? The undeniable growth of environments full of "Fake News" and revisionist arguments.

(4) Finally, we can say that Basic Education teachers offer the most promising examples of experimentation with the digital (thinkering, if you prefer). It is there, in a space often overlooked by the Academy, where we can find the most consistent cases of application of Digital History in Brazil. But these are not practical "historians" mentioned by J. Malerba, they are *licenced* professionals, though with no further ties to the Academy.

If this mismatch presented is not corrected as soon as possible, Without it, Brazil will continue to face the primacy of those who transform the network into a no man's land, and treat history as a tool for erasing memory.

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