

Archives and Education: the construction of educational memory

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ABSTRACT:

School archives cause a profound concern regarding the safe-keeping and preservation of documents which are fundamental tools for the history of a school and for the construction of educational memory. Their importance has come to be recognized and has led to considering their preservation, conditions of installations, the correct organization of the documents and access to the information therein. The school archives are a repository of sources of information directly related to the functioning of educational institutions, which confers upon them a growing importance in the new paths of research in education. This places these institutions in a centralised position as regards understanding educational phenomena and the socialisation processes of the younger generations. In this paper we intend to reflect about: the role of school archives in educational institutions; the documents, their nature and the potentials for research in education; school archives from an interdisciplinary perspective; the archives, school culture and the construction of educational memory.

KEYWORDS:

School Culture, Archive, Historical Sources, Memory.

THE PLACE OF SCHOOL ARCHIVES IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Archives and their documents have acquired a growing importance in the field of the history of education. They contain information which allows the introduction of a uniformity in the analyses carried out on the various discourses produced by the educational performers — teachers, pupils, employees, local and national authorities all have sundry roles within the school expressed in diverse ways. The archive, having a solid nucleus of information on the school, corresponds to a homogenous whole and occupies a central position of reference in the cosmos of information sources which can be used to reconstruct the itinerary of the scholastic institution. The junction established from among the data obtained through analysis of the documents from a school archive, enables the close relationship among the sundry information (also obtained from documental fonts outside the school) to be attained, revealing a high index of internal coherence and logic in the archival sources and the central role of the documents in the understanding of the organization and functioning of the institution producing them (Mogarro, 2001a, pp. 43-44).

But this understanding can only be established through research processes. In the case of school archives, we work with documents which, in the main, are stored in the silence of these self-same archives and remain (and probably will continue to remain) there until a researcher evaluates their rel-

evance for the research process into the problems already expounded (Mogarro, 2001a, p. 38). If it is true that the historian invents his sources, combining and interlocking them for the purpose of study and inserting them into the historic reality (and educational, which is what interests us here) in which they were produced and used, in the case of school archives we have sources of information which are traditionally sacred (filed documents) although they are also traditionally considered of minor importance in the realm of history and, because of this, are relegated to second place (being scholastic and, therefore, revealing educational processes). This state of things is gradually being modified, with a growing consciousness towards the aspects of daily life and the “ordinary activities” of the school, two of the new items from a considerable amount of historiographic research.

The new methods of analysis and historico-educational development force a new way of looking at the documents in the scholastic archives and a theoretico-methodological opening that consolidates the stimulating information therein. The foundation of these archives is mainly paper documents organized into books, dossiers and loose sheets produced by educational protagonists and by the institution itself within the ambit of its activities and at a rate that we can consider almost daily.

The importance of the archive in the scholastic institution has accompanied the assertion of this same institution like a microcosm with forms and specific methods of organization and functioning.

Schools are complex structures, specific universes, where many of the characteristics and contradictions in the educational system are condensed. At the same time, they have their own identity, full of history, making it possible to construct, systematize and rewrite the itinerary of the life of an institution (and the people connected to it), in its multidimensional aspects, the archives taking on a fundamental role in the building up of a scholastic memory and in the historical identity of a school.

In the specific case of the Portuguese situation, in most schools the essentials of their archives are dispersed throughout different locations such as attics, basements, stairwells and other hidden and disused places with not even the minimum conditions necessary for storing archive documents. In general, the respective offices and administrative services mix documents of varied origins and uses: a) current documents — still regularly used, (usually) organized and readily available; b) documents which are occasionally needed — teachers' and students' records from which copies certified by the institution are requested and relatively easily found; c) obsolete documents — in this phase of their life-cycle, the documents are usually kept in places which do not guarantee the necessary conditions for their safeguard and preservation, piled up in a disorganized heap of papers of very different origins.

In Portugal, the importance of school archives has become manifest in projects developed in recent years originating in reference publications (Nóvoa & Santa-Clara, 2003; Ramos do Ó, 2003; Magalhães, 2001). This process is similar to the movement consolidated in the Brazilian panorama of research in this area, significant examples of works on educational institutions and their archives, published by Moraes and Alves (2002), Vidal and Zaia (2002) and Vidal and Moraes (2004), and also the publication of important documents relating to feminine presence in education in São Paulo in the second half of the 80s, by Maria Lúcia Hilsdorf (1999), who effected a study of the sources in the state archives and of the S. Paulo University. The contents of this work refer to the need to put into perspective school archives and their liaison with other archives of a more general character (national, central, ministerial, etc.), but also integrate

documents of an educational nature and whose importance must interlock with the historical periods in which they were produced and with the conditions then existing in educational systems.

In the Portuguese case, the preoccupation with the preservation and evaluation of the historical patrimony is consensual, although those responsible do not act accordingly or make much needed urgent decisions. The study carried out in 1996, under the coordination of António Nóvoa, showed that the state of conservation of documents in the archives of Portuguese secondary schools could, on the whole, be considered reasonable. 72.3% of the institutions under consideration at this level of appreciation fell into this category, 11.5% good, 10.3% bad and 5.7% were in the category of “no information” (Nóvoa, 1997, p. 71). Nevertheless,

“The reasonable state of conservation of the documents could... be questioned in the short term, as the capacity for storage in most schools is lessening... This situation is tending to worsen rapidly as the storage capacity of new documents is nil in about half of the schools and greatly reduced in the rest... The fact, therefore, shows a situation at saturation point and the total breakdown in the capacity of most schools to conserve their archives. In the very short term, the two negative phenomena usual in these circumstances could be aggravated: the heedless elimination or the disorganized up-keep” (p. 74).

A situation which has not changed in recent years except in the secondary schools where there has been a systematic intervention in the organization of their archives within the scope of research projects (Nóvoa & Santa-Clara, 2003). When thinking about the measures to adopt in the future, it must be kept in mind that, in many cases, school archives have occupied diverse physical places, because they have been successively transferred throughout the history of the scholastic institute to which they belong; also, during these transferences the initial logical organization may have been lost. Today, we are usually presented with the documentation kept by chance and which shows the lack of organization of the archives caused by changes of location throughout time (but could also originate from the beginning, depending on the situations).

Therefore, it is necessary to gather all existing documentation, make an inventory and organize the archives according to technical and scientific criteria. To this end, there have been developments in the field of projects related to educational institutions and in which the archival perspective and the related technical preoccupations have assumed a significant dimension (Vieira, 2003; Zaia, 2004), since they constitute the preliminary indispensable work to accomplish scientific research and pedagogic activities. There is a long way to go in order to save and preserve documents containing valuable information on the history of the school and for the study of the school culture, being a principal of present-day heritage.

THE DOCUMENTS AND THEIR POTENTIAL FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

The documents in the archives (handwritten and typed, in the more recent cases) reflect the life of the institution which produced them. However, the information furnished by these documents has to be cross-checked with details found from other sources, shown in various aids and in diverse forms. Many of these sources of information are found outside the respective school (and, consequently, outside its archive), being an integral part of a universe which, today, is multiple and complex. This universe encompasses the more traditional and venerated sources of information, as well as those which have recently won their place in this context, integrating both internal and external sources. Many of the documents are characterised by their materiality and bases, others by the jargon with which the educational protagonists expressed themselves in their discourses. When these materials are localized, a documental geography of the school can be established.

- Legal texts and documents originating from the central authority;
- Official statistics;
- Technical reports written by inspectors, rectors and school directors;
- Rules, circulars, norms and other texts generated by the scholastic institution and internal circulation, but which may also be documents which

ensure the flow of communication between the tutelage policy-making organism and the school itself;

- Administrative and pedagogic documents which make up a large part of the pile of archives of each educational institution;
- External publications — books, newspaper and magazine articles etc. They are scientific, pedagogic and cultural works, poetry, which very often appear in the local and teaching press, written by the institution's teachers, who also published books, expressing their professional culture in these various ways;
- School equipment, furniture and various other objects;
- Didactic material found in the school and, in many cases, also from that amassed outside the institution;
- Pupils' school work which, in general, are private property and reveal the significance given to the school and the educational processes during its lifetime; Photographs and other documents of iconographic nature;
- Oral testimonies of teachers, pupils, functionaries and others with functions in the educational system, in the school and in the community.

In its entirety, these sources of information mean that the researcher must be particularly heedful of the educational and cultural contexts in which they were produced and of the selection to which they were successively submitted by the generations of social protagonists who tutored, occupying different levels of decision-making power regarding them and their preservation or destruction. As a consequence, these documents constitute multiple productions which reflect the multidimensional and complex scholastic and training realities, and also the diversity and plurality of the means of intervention of the educational agents.

Establishing a specific outline in this universe of sources of information for the history of education and also of the school, the documents integrated in the school archives can be put into a particular perspective. The place they occupy retains the wealth of their documents and the range of themes and problems which are possible to research in a significant approximation of daily school life and pedagogical practices. The analysis of the depth of the documents of scholastic archives of institutions which

ensured the training at different levels of education (Mogarro, 2001a, 2003a, 2005; Mogarro & Crespo, 2001), enabled the establishment of a relationship

between documents of diverse character and the investigations that these permitted, a relationship which is developed in the following diagram.

DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH FROM ARCHIVED DOCUMENTS

Documents	Possible investigations
1. Records of the School Council Diverse Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress among teachers: debates, conflicts, coordination strategies, internal reflection regarding the institution, positions taken individually • Pedagogical and curricula options • Ways of tackling disciplinary problems among pupils • Internal orientation of the life of the school • Extra-curricula activities, etc.
2. Teachers' dossiers Teachers' records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characterization and evolution of the teaching staff of the scholastic institution: geographical origin, academic and professional training, professional itinerary and evaluation, years connected with the institution
3. Pupils' dossiers and enrolments Pupils' records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profiles of pupils who attended the school throughout the years: geographical origin, interaction with the community and the region, age on entering and leaving the institution, quantitative relationship of genders, study of the training of the local, social and economic elite, etc.
4. Term Books and Registers of Scholastic Progress Registers of Examination Judges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the results obtained by the pupils and establishment of rates of success/failure
5. Internal Regulations Directives Notices and Convocations School Council Registers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the school's daily life, values, norms and rules, disciplinary matters, extra-curricula activities • Knowledge of the teacher's work (via institutional and private registers of people who consent to it) and the relationships (complicity and/or conflict) among teachers
6. Lists of teachers, pupils and classes Division of classes and timetables Documents regarding post-graduate training, evaluation and other curricula items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characterization work planning and pedagogical organization of the scholastic institution Identification of internal supervision of educators and educational affairs, such as organization of scholastic time and space • Analysis of the institutional interpretation relating to study plans, disciplinary instructions and those of school practices, to try and understand the significance the school attributed to its training activities
7. Pamphlets Brochures Invitations Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of parties, shows, exhibitions, demonstrations and other very varied events on the school calendar
8. Collections of correspondence sent and received Circulars originating from the central services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characterization of the institutional relationships with the tutelage organisms and evaluation of the degree of autonomy of the scholastic institutions granted by the central authority

<p>9. Reports (usually annual)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the image the school created regarding its activity and functioning from the perspective of the institution's board • Acquaintance with and analyses of the categories used in these documents
<p>10. Summary Books School Material (books, inventories, etc.) Inventory and files of the School Library</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematization of the historical aspects of the curriculum and of the scholastic subjects and pedagogical relations, allowing the • Understanding of the daily life in the classroom and the nature of the educational procedures developed therein • Identification of the tendencies that marked the development of learning and the cultural and pedagogical models in the school
<p>11. Pupils' Work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the mechanisms on which the teaching-learning process is based and the significance of the output demanded within the various school subjects • Understanding from the pupils' point of view (a perspective only very recently given importance), of the developments and profound changes undergone in the field of education • Valuation of this type of information source which has rarely been kept in the institutional school's own archives and which has awakened a fresh interest in the new paths of research in education
<p>12. Documents relating to financial administration and accounts of the School Documents relating to auxiliary personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the management and the criteria applied to the schools' budget, alluding to questions of economy in education
<p>13. Newspapers and magazines of the scholastic institution Course Books and Finalists' Books Other publications of teachers and pupils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the discourses (individual and group) of teachers and pupils from the analysis of these publications, in which the authors express their views of the world, the profession and the school • Assembling these works, which are also rarely kept in the institution's archives
<p>14. Photographs and Pictures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation and analysis of a wide variety of iconographic documents of/about the school, to enable the understanding of the wealth of the facilities, the environment, objects and people. This documentation also is rarely kept in the respective scholastic institution's archives.

The relationship between the documents and the research arising from them is not uniform and exclusive. The diagram above is to highlight the importance and wealth of the archive documents for studies into the educational institution, school culture, the curriculum, presenting the potentiality of each type of document. However, the necessary cross-referencing of the information cannot be forgotten. The documents' contributions are fundamental to a vast universe of themes and problems — the flexibility and agility that the researcher imprints on the process of research is based on the completeness of the documentation under analysis

and on the capacity to use its complexity to trace new paths in its research and in the problematic realities of education. The cross-referencing of contents is, in this sense, a fundamental operation. Therefore, the diagram furnishes important indications, but does not have a prescribed or rigid nature and does not reduce a set of themes and problems to a single type of document. These documents enable the understanding of the educational reality in which they were produced, but can be read from various points of view. They express, in their substance and content, the wealth of the production contexts — isolated, they are fragments of the past,

the historian having the responsibility to confer validity, coherence, logic and unity in the necessary establishment of relationships with other documents and assets.

SCHOOL ARCHIVES FROM AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE

In the context of the diversity of the sources of information, school archives embody the fundamental reference since their documents constitute by their specific nature the “hard nucleus” of the research process and guarantee an added solidity and validity to the conclusions at the end of the research.

The archive documents are the most traditional as a basis for the writing of history, but the new paths of research in education do not allow them to confer this place of centralization, of original reference, by the consistency of their information and the certainty transmitted to the researchers. The new sources of information express the preoccupation with the voices of the social and educational protagonists (favouring the oral witnesses and the logical narratives of a personal nature) or with the materialism associated with the practices (like the movable objects which are part of the museological assets of the schools), but the configuration of the historical and institutional identity has to go through the archives, being the repository of the “bookkeeping” process of the school. In each institution, the school archive guarantees the unity, coherence and consistency that the individual memories about the school or isolated objects it produces and uses cannot in themselves confer the memory and identity which has become fundamental to construct today.

Once more, we emphasise the need to cross-check and link the information of every type of document with other documents pertinent to the study being made. In this way, the dialogue between the various sources of information (the various documents) can be established in a complementary and articulate perspective. This approach, made on the documents of an archive themselves and also on various types of documents (to compare the data gleaned from the school archives with official statistics, with regard to the number of teachers or

pupils in an institution, for example), is applicable the specific archives because, as mentioned before, other fonts may have documents relating to the educational themes under research and which complement the data gleaned from the school archive. Certainly the Ministry of Education’s archives contain an enormous amount of documents about different schools and these documents are not found, most probably, among those kept by the institution. The National Archives of *Torre do Tombo* also have in their depths documents fundamental to the understanding of education in Portugal.

In a more localised dimension, documents regarding education may be found in organisms and associations in the neighbourhood of the school. Municipal archives contain information relating to the scholastic institutions and the development of the educational system, making it possible, by analysing them, to reconstruct the dynamics of relationship between the schools and the enveloping community and the role the teachers played in the local society, for example. Another significant aspect and one which enables the cross-checking of data is that of the periodicals (newspapers and magazines), both local and regional which, regularly throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, published articles of an educational nature, expressing in this way the importance that the model school assumed in contemporary society. These publications are an important source of information, the data of which can be correlated with the documents of the school archives.

In a more intimate record of private life, the private archives of old pupils and teachers contain “booty” of the most varied material, usually produced by the owners of the archives themselves. The conservation of these documents during a lifetime and the emotion with which they are revisited by the trustees/producers, reveals the importance people gave to the scholastic and training processes in their life stories, as well as careers, as in the case of teachers. These assets integrate scholastic material and work, photographs, publications, end products resulting from the activities of the teaching staff, documents which are not normally found in the archives of the scholastic institutions. This is why they complement, in a particularly fortunate way, the school archives where these pupils

and teachers lived through phases of their training and in exercising their profession, making them irreplaceable today to paint a richer, more complete and objective picture of education, especially in the Portuguese case.

The growing attention given by historians of education to school archives stems from an attitude of plural dialogue in which the question of the sources of information emerges as a priority in the theoretic-methodology of the history of education and cultural history. It has become urgent to localize, systematize, organize and divulge these sources, questioning them and validating them so that they can sustain the new themes and objectives of study included in the scientific field of the history of education: the students, in their individuality (such as the renewed attention imparted in infancy), the teachers and professional staff, the training of teachers, the scholastic institutions, informal education, questions of gender, minority public schools, the daily life of schools, pedagogic knowledge, the circulation and appropriation of cultural models and the ways they are propagated. These themes presuppose the use of adequate approaches and the reinforcement of interdisciplinary relations that historians of education have started to develop. Today, they have a huge range of methodological instruments at their disposal for their research and studies.

The problem of the paradigms of modern science and the relationship of previously dominant theoretic models, has freed the research processes from the constraints which limited their flexibility with regard to the subject under study. Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out that theories have not lost their importance, only the influence exercised over the research and investigation processes. The plurality and diversity of the scientific approaches, with their conceptual, methodological and instrumental perspectives, lead to interdisciplinary reconciliations and intersections, motivated by this previous strategy of flexibility relative to the subject under study and by the need to understand, through the most suitable means and strategies, the logic and internal rationale of the educational phenomena.

Two current methodologies have to be affirmed as bearers of significant potential for the new paths

of the history of education: the ethnomethodological models and the instruments of the new cultural history. The former highlight the role of the individuals in the building of social relations, shifting the importance of the structures to the importance of the concept of network of the communities to which they belong and of the unique strategies. Allied to the anthropological and sociological perspectives, they facilitate comprehension of the educational protagonists and life experiences, raising the value of the micro level of historical analysis. Thus the ways in which individuals create the social world can be reconstructed, developing strategies of alliance and confrontation, networks of solidarity or attitudes of conflict. In this sense, historical analysis seeks the subjectivity inherent in social relations and the awareness and strategies developed by communities, groups and individuals (Chartier, 1994), adapting itself to educative contexts in a particularly assertive way. In this way, an exclusively macro point of view favouring the power and control mechanisms, is overcome.

Between these two levels of analysis (micro and macro), another has become relevant: the meso approaches, which fall upon the educational institutions, the universe of the productions of archive documents, as has been stressed. The meso approach favours relations with the macro level of the policy decisions (of which the legal texts constitute the support arrangements) and integrate the micro dimension, including the perspectives that the educational protagonists, especially the teachers, present regarding their institution, their profession and social practices. The historians of education have only recently become occupied with the archaeological material of the school, keeping in mind the reticence of the history of teaching and overcoming the forgetfulness of intra-history of the school and the distinction itself of the educational institutions.

On the other hand, the new cultural and intellectual history has assumed a growing importance in the scientific field of history and the history of education. The theoretic and methodological instruments enable suitable approach to the new themes, contributing towards the understanding of the discourses produced by the educational protagonists within the social space they occupy.

The generation of the *linguistic turn* is the origin of a change, which proposes a shift of the historians' concentration on the external aspect of the educational processes to the internal work of the school and the contextual approach for the textual analysis of the discursive practices. The language and the texts occupy a central place in this new historiographic perspective and the works of Michel Foucault and Roger Chartier, among others, have contributed decisively towards its assertion.

The texts and discourses do not hide any reality but are complete in themselves, while modes of expression of language and mental structures, systems of construction of this reality, which prescribe as much as describe, are material products of mediation between personal and social realities. In this sense, historical research is not centred only in the materiality of the facts, but also in the discursive community which interprets them and registers them in a determined time and space. The attention of the scientists focuses on the experience and forms that this constitutes in the discursive practices of the educational protagonists (directors, teachers, pupils), who interpret and reinterpret their world, attributing a sense of their scholastic and professional experiences and registering their ideas in the archived documents which have come into our hands.

The texts and documents are historical events and products, relating with their various production and reception contexts in a complex way, at the same time containing essential elements for the reconstruction of the contexts in which they were elaborated, divulged, (re)adapted and used. The question of the primary sources of information and the school archives becomes urgent within this theoretic-methodological scene.

We are at a frontier, a cross-roads of new perspectives in the history of education, cultural history, social history and also the sciences of education. We are witnessing a renewal of theoretic questions and a re-creation of fields of research, sources of information, research practices and methodological trapings in which the historiographic perspective is affirmed by the old approaches of an essentially sociological origin. The affirmation of a history which demands a critical cultural thinking establishes an agenda of dialogue between the preoccupations of

the present and the realities of the past, in an effort of understanding in which the latter are questioned to reach the intelligibility of present times.

THE ARCHIVES, SCHOOL CULTURE AND THE CREATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL MEMORY

In the interior of complex structures, such as schools, the people determine the relationships of power and communication, transmit and grasp a culture and are, in their turn, creators of cultures. Thus, a specific universe is represented, which throughout time, has left us documents and witnesses so that we can understand and grasp institutional life. Consequently, renewed attention is given the internal work of production of a scholastic culture which has its own peculiarities and cannot be seen as merely a protraction of the cultures in conflict in society, despite being related to them.

In this perspective, the function of the archive is integrated in the process of knowledge and understanding of the scholastic culture. The essence of archives is made up of specific documents, produced daily in the context of administrative and pedagogical practices; they are products of the systematic "bookkeeping" of the school and reveal the social relationships which, essentially, were developed by the educational protagonists.

The scholastic institution is made up of its own peculiar culture and historically consolidated, as it is also the producer of the features/documents of this culture. These documents in their diversity and variety represent the educational heritage of each school — the physical space (building and surroundings) materializes this universe, the archival, museological and bibliographical assets integrate the documents, bearers of valuable information which bring us, from both the past and the present, aspects of school life making it possible to write the itinerary of the institution. Within the realm of investigation processes, the analysis of these documents and the comparison established between the different information in its entirety enables us to check past aims and also understand the constitution/ consolidation of the school culture within the web of relationships which this establishes with other cultures present in society (Chartier, 1988, 1994).

A broad and far-reaching concept, the scholastic culture presents a deep and fundamentally historic nature. The perspective of the school as the producer of a specific and original culture has, in recent years, come to occupy the attention of educational historians who emphasize the virtualities of this concept, considering it a powerful analytic instrument of educational realities in its collectanea of viewpoints (Julia, 1995, 2000; Chervel, 1998; Viñao Frago, 1998, 2001; Ruiz Berrio, 2000; Escolano Benito & Hernández Díaz, 2002). It is not up to this article to establish the differences which its perspectives present, but only to emphasize the importance of this concept and the converging aspects of the various approaches.

Made up of a set of theories, knowledge, ideas and principles, norms, rules, rituals, routines, habits and practices, school culture in its broader meaning also refers to the ways of doing and thinking, of the behaviours, consolidated throughout time and which are presented as traditions, regularities and rules, but with intentional insinuations, which are shared by the educational protagonists in the bosom of the institutions. The characteristic features of school culture (continuity, persistence, institutionalization and relative autonomy) enable the creation of results which give the configuration of an independent culture. This culture is made up of a substratum formed throughout time of layers more interwoven than overlapping, which makes it important to separate and analyse. The archive has an important function in this historiographic process of investigation into school culture.

Basically made up of written documents, the archive occupies a central place which arises from the direct relationship of the school with the universe of written culture. The writing in itself has an important central position in the daily life of the school (in administration, in pedagogic relationships, in the building of knowledge, in social relations) being present throughout the whole life of the institution. The archive reflects this intimate relationship in the material of the documents and in a more consistent and logical way than the other acquisitions, thus holding the central place in the life and history of the school.

In the final years of the 20th century, a significant interest in the school and its past arose both in

Portugal and Brazil. The new approaches that the researchers into the history of education directed towards the heritage and history of the school also put the educational protagonists' memories in first place and projects of research and intervention on these themes were developed. In its turn, a significant combination of initiatives, with very diverse objectives, stressed the wider dimension of this interest, rooting itself in a social search of identity and recuperation of the memory around the school. The identification of this profound movement contributed to the need to evaluate and recuperate the documents the school had been producing about itself, daily, of the regular activity with which it wove its own history.

The initiatives mentioned were led by people and institutions preoccupied with this question and we can trace the evolution of this movement, centralising attention on a specific example. In Portalegre, the educational community gave light to this interest with the realization, between 1998 and 2001, of meetings, exhibitions and publications about educational heritage and school culture (Mogarro, 2001b, 2001c), also effecting its promotion in international, national and regional congresses and meetings (Mogarro, 2003a, 2002; Mogarro & Crespo, 2001). A second phase was begun in 2002, with a process of reflection on the work carried out and which led to the elaboration and implementation of a research and intervention project designated "Rede de Museus Escolares de Portalegre (REMEP)" (Network of Scholastic Museums of Portalegre) (Mogarro, 2003b). This project, however, was not limited to the material objects which integrated the educational heritage of a scholastic institution; it assumed a wider perspective in its field, conceiving the various assets (archival, museological and bibliographic) in an articulate way, although always safeguarding the technical characteristics derived from the nature of the documents of each of these assets and the respective backups.

The designation of this project is also understood to recognize the importance of the material objects which are linked to the clarity they confer on past events and social phenomena. With them, the ordinary citizen and the population in general are reminded of their childhood and youth, the stories of their lives, the memories, their past up to

the present day. The success these initiatives have brought together with the communities constitutes a determining factor for the attention and support that the local entities (such as some town councils) have shown, exhibitions and the creation of scholastic museums. This success is also an important indicator to take into account in the organization of the scientific work on these themes which refer to the establishment of partnerships, the adoption of attitudes and methods and the promotion of accomplishments and objectives.

With a formation of a Network of Scholastic Museums in Portalegre^a, it is hoped to contribute towards the construction and consolidation of an educational memory and, in this way, of an identity. In this sense, it is important to strengthen the link of the schools and their historical itineraries in a perspective of appraisal of the institutional paths and school culture, promoting the population's relationship with its scholastic past and creating a sense of belonging to a collective entity.

The same project aims to strengthen the relationship between the school and the community, taking as a reference this element common to (almost) everyone — the school, the memory of school and childhood, and also the material objects which raise these memories.

The public schools (and youth in general) also constitute a preoccupation with projects of this nature, aiming to promote a training rooted in the evolution of the educational system, the institutions and the teaching-training processes, in a perspective of continuity which provides references to the present innovations. The pupils have already been involved in activities of this nature and the themes of educational heritage and school culture should be incorporated in the educational practices, in curricular subjects and in work developed by the pupils, especially at the level of the classroom or clubs regarding the history of the school (Vidal & Zaia, 2002). In these activities it is fundamental to use the documents of the school itself, in a direct relationship between present and past to which it is subjacent. But once more, the central place of the archive acquires visibility and pertinence.

The sustainable development of these projects implies a programme of cultural activities, various events and publications to recuperate the educa-

tional memory, stimulating cultural reality and present teaching methods. In this context, the realization of exhibitions and educational and cultural examples, whether temporary or permanent, gains a new purpose, with museological and archival bases of the institutes and others obtained on loan. Even in local accomplishments, these projects should undertake permanent communication with other areas. Their objectives should also aim at creating conditions for research in the cultural and educational fields, in the history and memories (constitution of a data base and documental resources, elaboration of related projects, realization of conferences and meetings referred to before), in such a way as to encourage the study and the diffusion of new knowledge, both locally as well as nationally. On the other hand, the integration of this theme should be motivated with national research projects and projects of international cooperation, especially between Portugal and Brazil.

In Europe, the move towards preservation and valuation of educational heritage has gained a growing relevance in the scientific fields of education and history. Linking lines of investigation in this area with initiatives of great depths which clarify the history of the school and the heritage of education in various countries, there have arisen in the last few years publications whose authors belong to the scientific communities of history and education and are simultaneously linked to the creation, revitalization and direction of educational museums of international prestige. In France, a collective work of reference about national educational heritage (Bidon; Compère & Gaulupeau, 1999) is linked with the action developed by the *Musée National de l'Éducation* (Rouen), which belongs to the *INRP — Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique*. In Spain, the books appearing on this theme (already indicated) are included in a move which led to the creation of the *Mupegia — Museo Pedagógico de Galicia*, as well as other initiatives arising in the country in the realm of museology of education and childhood. In Great Britain, the more theoretic studies on school material (Lawn & Grosvenor, 2005) correspond in several initiatives of the same genre.

Returning to the specific question of school archives, we must again emphasize the place of reference which they occupy in the joint accumulation

of scholastic records. The task of recuperating, preserving, studying and divulging the educational heritage, especially the school archives, has acquired a new sense of urgency, which makes it nec-

essary to define orientations and give consistency to the move which today makes sense, as much at the social level as the scientific regarding the school, its history and memory.

ENDNOTES

1. The “Rede de Museus Escolares de Portalegre” (Network of Scholastic Museums of Portalegre) was instituted with the signing of a protocol between the founding institutions, regulation which derived from the position of each one in the educational system at a local level: the schools are the trustees of the respective historical backgrounds, other organisms govern these same schools or develop research and intervention projects within this ambit. The protocol was signed by the Municipal Council of Portalegre, the Regional Board of Education of the Alentejo (DREA), the Mouzinho da Silveira Secondary School, the S. Lourenço Secondary School, the Group of Schools n.º. 1 and n.º. 2, Portalegre, the Polytechnic Institute of Portalegre and the School of Further Education. The formation of this network enables the project to take root institutionally and socially, involving the autonomous government, the schools and the educational decision-makers at a local and regional level.

The Network of Scholastic Museums of Portalegre is made up of Scholastic nuclei which work together according to the up-to-date conceptions which defend the fact that the past and its material witnesses belong to the community heirs of the producers of these same materials. In this way, the nuclei in the Mouzinho da Silveira Secondary School (the old Lyceum), the Secondary School of S. Lourenço (old technical school) were constituted and the constitution of a nucleus in the primary school is being studied, starting from the teams which are developing work in the two School Groups in Portalegre; the viability of other nuclei is also being analysed, such as the old *Escola do Magistério Primário*, now extinct, whose archives are kept by the local Polytechnic Institute. These nuclei are made up of teams of teachers of the schools themselves, who propose to extract and organize the respective assets and develop activities based on their documents particularly involving the pupils of each institution.

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