INTRODUCTION

We are so used to leafing through a book in the course of reading a text that we are hardly aware of its materiality. The manner in which the book is constructed, the way the sheets come together, the sequence of the pages, the existence of numbering, how sewn bound books are organized or how the sheets are attached to the spine, rarely attract the attention of the average reader. In the past, what we would now call a book had quite different characteristics.

To organize the written material and ensure that the page order was correct, authors used pointers to help identify them. These pointers enabled the book to be edited and facilitated reading at a time when printing didn't exist as we know it today. The *catchword* was exactly that letter or an abbreviation of a word, or even a whole word, which was placed at the bottom of the page and repeated at the beginning of the next page.

The study of texts in Portuguese, in manuscript and print form, from the 16th to the 19th century, reveals variety in terms of the structure of catchwords, some predominant types, and that the frequency of its use maintains a certain regularity over time.

We therefore found relevance in scaling the general definition from an exhaustive survey of occurrences in a previously selected *corpus*. The texts chosen, if they do not account for each of the periods studied, are intended to provide examples that begin to outline a framework that can be expanded later.

Starting with an approach based on Codicology and Material Bibliography, we will briefly review the revolution brought about by the invention of the printed press, deal with the structure of the codex and the printed book and place the catchwords in that context. Then we will present the tabulation of the catchwords identified in the *corpus* of printed texts and manuscripts from the 16th to the 19th century. From the description of the catchwords in handwritten and printed documents and their contextualization in the codicological and bibliographic sciences, we will present the occurrences of catchwords in tables to give a schematic view of their use in the works studied.

The criteria for the classification of catchwords are, in order, the text studied, the date and type of catchword. This study is intended to present a descriptive examination of the use of the catchword that will specify the framework outlined by the general concept, seeking to establish a typology within the *corpus* studied. We believe that this characterization of the catchwords can help understand the changes to them over time.

In addition, it is important to establish if there are variations in the use of the catchwords between manuscript and printed texts within the same century. However, we must emphasize that this comparison and the conclusions reached are restricted to a very limited set of texts, whose criterion of choice will be explained later. Therefore, what is affirmed in relation to this *corpus* may not necessarily be valid for other texts.

One of the identified functions of the catchword is to indicate the sequence of the folios, to facilitate the raising, that is, the ordering of book folding according to the sequence of pages, and to advance the reading. Paging, as we call it today, was indicated by an abbreviation placed, almost always, under the page. In this study, the texts analyzed do not therefore form more than isolated points in a much wider context. What we seek to achieve here is to systematize the material to which we have had access, without of course, wanting to exhaust the subject.

Initially it was thought that as time progressed the occurrence of catchwords in any given text would become less common, that is, the older the document, the more catchwords it would have, and the more recent the document the fewer it would have. However, this assertion does not apply. In medieval times, catchwords were often used in manuscripts only at the end of the book, indicating a

low frequency of use. Subsequently, mainly in printed texts, they are used on all pages. McKerrow observes that:

> In medieval MSS. it was not uncommon for the scribe to add at the end of each section the first word of the next as a guide to the binder in arranging the sections correctly. Such catchwords thus served somewhat the same purpose as signatures in printed books. As used, however, in the latter, catchwords ordinarily appear at the foot of every page and are probably to be considered mainly as guides to the printer in imposing the pages. (McKERROW, 1927, p. 82)

However, specifically in the case of manuscripts, it is true that the more we step back in time, the more catchwords we see, and as time progresses there are fewer catchwords found. We corroborated this statement from visiting archives and documentary collections, where we were able to consult a vast collection of manuscripts and printed matter[1]:

This study is presented in the following order: first, we will deal with catchwords in manuscripts and printed books. Then, we will complete a characterization of the *corpus*, composed of printed texts and manuscripts from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century.

Subsequently, we will present the classification and the connection of the catchwords identified in the *corpus*, the analysis of what was observed, and we will present our partial results. Finally, we will finish with the presentation and description of the general results.

This publication is derived from a master's thesis, defended at the University of São Paulo in 2007, and was initially intended for philologists and researchers in the academic field. We hope that this study, now published, will give researchers, bibliophiles and lovers of reading and books in general a better understanding of each theme.

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[1] We researched in a variety of archives and consulted a diverse range of documents. In the Arquivo da Cúria Metropolitana de São Paulo we consulted *pastorals, edicts* and *orders* from the period 1853-1859 – citation 4-2-27, *Autos de ereções e patrimônio de capelas* from the period 1746-1864 – citation 1-2-8, *Livro de registros de testamentos* from the period 1746-1877 – citation 4-1-40 and many others. In the Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo we consulted the *Livro de registros de testamentos* from the period 1760-1815 – citation C00456, dozens of inventories and wills (citations C600 through C612 – C7890, C9879, etc.). In addition, the Arquivo Histórico da Cidade de São Paulo, the Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, Seção de Obras Raras da Faculdade de Filosofia Letras e Ciências Humanas, the Museu Paulista and Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro are other archives where we researched.