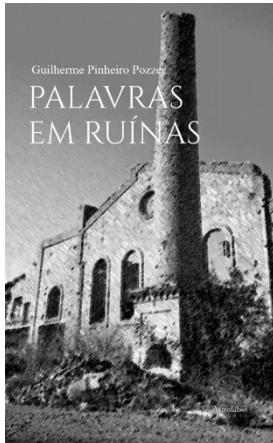


Palavras em Ruínas.

By GUILHERME PINHEIRO POZZER. 130 pp., well illustrated. Lisbon, Portugal: Astrolábio Edições, 2022. €12.00 (PB), €5.00 (Ebook). ISBN-978-989-37-4398-0

<https://www.atlanticbookshop.pt/ficcao/palavras-em-ruinas>



Guilherme Pinheiro Pozzer was born in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, in 1980. He has a master's degree in history from the University of Campinas (Unicamp) in São Paulo, Brazil. Still, it was in Portugal and Spain, at the University of Minho in Braga and the University of Seville, respectively, where, in 2021, he completed his PhD, also in history.

The subject of his PhD dissertation was the phenomenon of deindustrialisation, both from the perspective of the material reinterpretation of manufacturing infrastructures and from the human perspective of its social and cultural impacts. In particular, by recovering the memory of labour (and unemployment) from those directly involved. In addition to the material analysis of industrial structures, interviews and direct contact with former workers are one of the fundamental methodological premises of Pozzer's research as an intermediary between the ruins and human memory.

He currently lives and works in Germany, at the Ruhr University in Bochum, continuing his research on deindustrialisation.

The background to Pozzer's PhD project was a cotton mill located in a small village, Riba d'Ave, in Northern Portugal. Founded in 1896, the mill remained active until 2005. As a central element in the lives of hundreds of local families for over a century, the shutdown of the mill led to a social collapse that is still very much present in the village, whose most visible symbolic element is the abandoned ruins of the old mill. It is these ruins and the memories collected around them that provide the context for *Palavras em Ruínas* (Words in Ruins).

This book resulted from Pozzer's scientific research, but it is not an academic work. It is a work of art that reuses (a term so often applied to the idea of industrial ruin) the researcher's experience in a literary approach. The text is presented in the form of 33 fragments, Baudelairian glimpses, between poetry and prose, of the stories of labour memory, as an exercise of homage to the workers, to their memory, and to the memory of those who came before them and those who come after them. Each of the texts takes us, sometimes with the peremptory rawness of reality, other times with the metaphor of words, into the world of the injusticed women, men and children who, before the current ruins, made the material that came to be *the factory that was as if it were, but also no longer was*.

From a more conceptual perspective, *Palavras em Ruínas* can be interpreted within the framework of Tim Edensor's ruinology, which states that ruins, particularly industrial ruins, *invoke a need to tell stories about it*.¹ A need that complements Pozzer's academic side as a researcher. We can consider it a combination approach between the creative need and the need to save the record of the memories that make up the result of the author's fieldwork, when he studied the cotton mill in Riba d'Ave. This recovery of workers' memories from literary incursions can also be seen in another disciplinary framework, that of documentary archaeology. Namely in the sense of recovering oral history, but also in the sense of integrating different documentary and material sources in pursuit of what Laurie A. Wilkie has rightly referred to as *meaningful narratives about the past*.²

These meaningful narratives are therefore the material that makes up *Palavras em Ruínas*, something that lies between the creation and recording of memory, the human side of labour and industry and its interpretation inspired by the fascination of the ruins.

1 *Industrial Ruins: Spaces, Aesthetics and Materiality*. By T. Edensor. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005. ISBN 9781845200763

2 *Documentary archaeology*. By L. A. Wilkie, in *The Cambridge Companion to Historical Archaeology*, ed. By D. Hicks and M. C. Beaudry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. ISBN 9780521853750

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