

Issues about annotating meals in (Portuguese) literature

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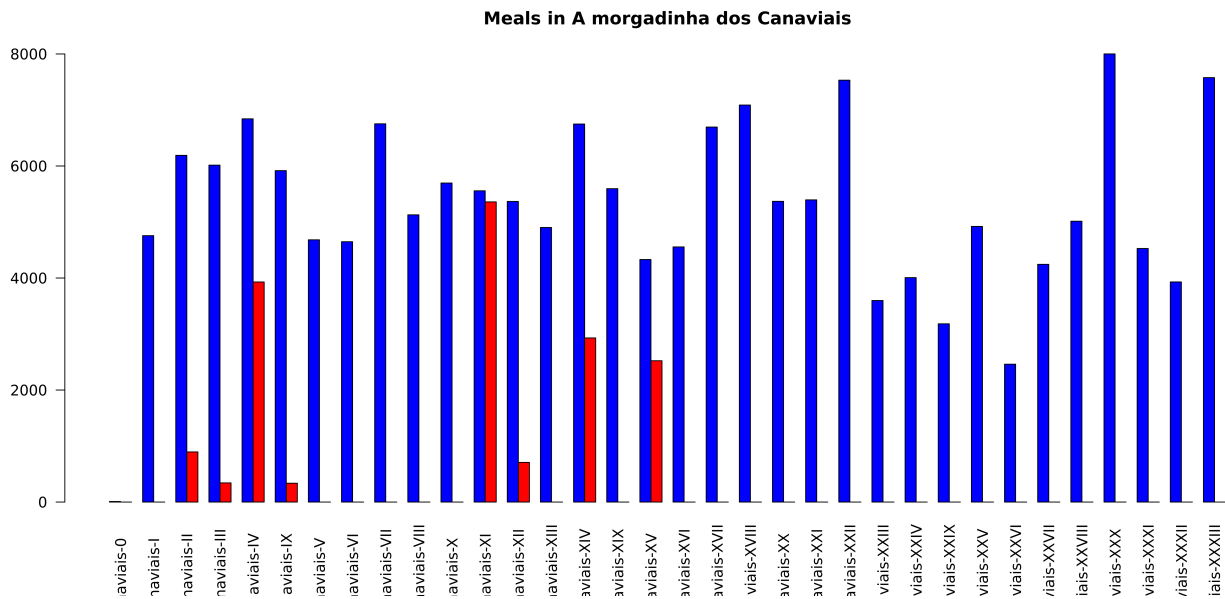


## Preliminary investigation about meals in five novels

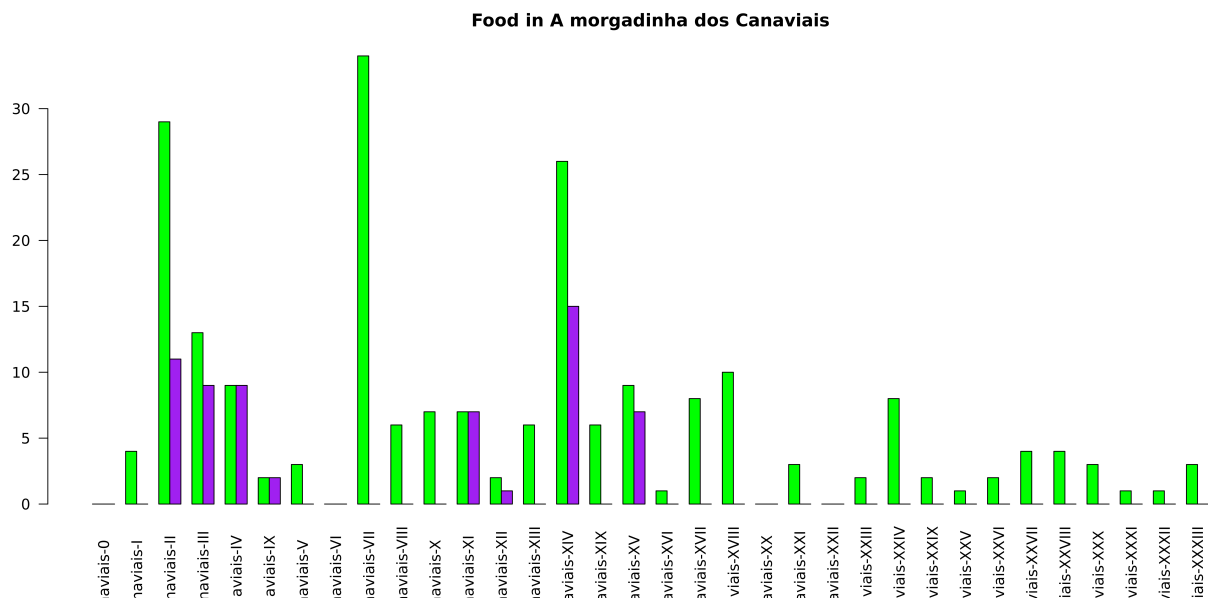
- Portuguese canonical novels and novellas in 1800 and 1900s (4 by Júlio Dinis and 1 by Eça de Queirós)
- The food episodes (meals or food preparation) were manually identified by close reading, and marked as structural attributes
- The works were annotated with food and drink related information (but not yet revised)
- Preliminary quantitative descriptions were produced with CQP and R
- Detailed classification of the meals/episodes was attempted



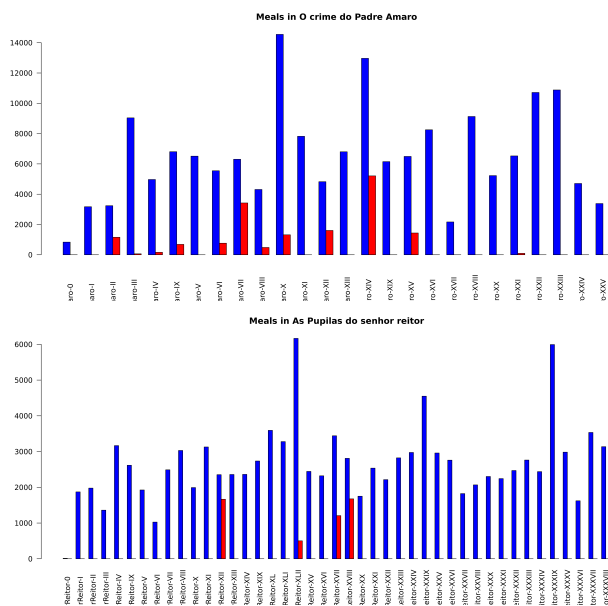
# Presence of meals in texts, by chapter



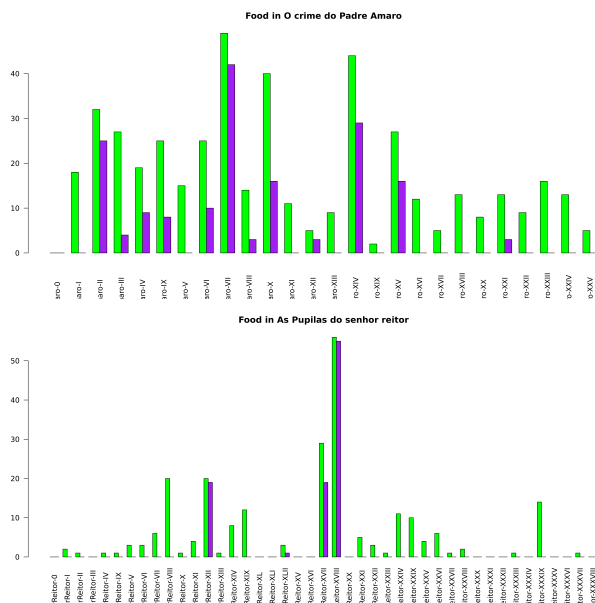
# Presence of food and drink words in texts, by chapter



# Presence of meals in texts, by chapter, all together



# Presence of food and drink words in texts, by chapter, all together



## Qualitative study: purpose of the meal

- 1 First meal that H. gets in his aunt's home in a village in the countryside, where he delights in the food, and where he (and we) get to know his aut and servant, and observe the different attitudes towards H.'s illness. Participants: one who eats, plus two who watch him eating. Time of the day: evening. *ceia*
- 2 Second meal that H. gets in his aunt's home: early breakfast, again good food and a lot of talk, improvement in H.'s well-being. Participants: the same 3 with the same roles. Time of the day: 7 o'clock. *almoço*
- 3 Meeting of H. and M. She is feeding two young children and goes on while talking to H. Participants: the two children, and M. and H. who help/observe. Her being at ease in a very feminine occupation while also showing she is cultured influences H. very positively. Time of the day: 11h15? *lunch*

## Qualitative study: purpose of the meal (2)

- 4 Breakfast at dawn in the mountains, brought by servants. Participants: H., M., C. and A. Nothing very relevant happens during the meal, but afterwards comes a new character. The purpose may be to describe a nice picnic (how people have fun in the country). Time of the day: six o'clock? *almoço*
- 4' (non-meal) The situation in a house where she is a church-goer and he is a drunkard, and where a 12-year old child (godchild) tries to prepare a soup, while her (travelling salesman) father arrives. The purpose is to present all these characters, and also to show the problem of excessive religiosity. Nobody eats, but in principle it is the supper of the couple that is being discussed and prepared. *jantar*
- 5 Description of a bar (winehouse): the people, the talks, a way to let the reader know several other relevant characters and the way they talk and think. The purpose is to explain the political ambiance in those days. Time of the day: late afternoon (*um resto de tarde*)

## Qualitative study: purpose of the meal (3)

- 6 Christmas supper/dinner. The purpose is to describe Christmas in the country side, also Portuguese traditions. But for the plot there is an important information that is disclosed during dinner, and which has serious consequences. Participants: the whole family of M. and C., and H. and aunt. Time of the day: evening. *consoada*
- 7 Christmas supper in the house of V. Just two people, V. and A. A sad occasion, and the disclosure of the impossible love of A. for M. Participants: A. and V. Time of the day: evening. *consoada*

## Can one generalize the purpose of meals?

- Through casual talk during the meal we get to know the characters. Meals are social occasions. If you want enough talk, you can't do it on foot.
- Sometimes they are meant to describe life in a society, both in special days (like Christmas) or in special occasions (like picnics), or to describe the "usual" things one does while eating or drinking (like in the bar)
- Maybe they also help to uncover the socio-economic level of the characters