

Torleif R. Hamre

Histories for a New Nation: Visions of the National Past in
Argentine Secondary School Textbooks (1861–1912)

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Table of contents

Preface and acknowledgments	4
I. Introduction.....	7
1. A brief presentation of the subject	8
2. Earlier research in the field	23
2.1 International research on history textbooks	23
2.2 Textbook studies in Latin America	30
2.3 Textbook studies in Argentina	32
3. The approach: Theoretical and methodological considerations.....	46
4. The sources.....	57
5. Nineteenth Century Argentina: A summary of the historical background.....	61
Colonial antecedents: The Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata.....	61
1816-1829: Unitarians and federalists in the disunited River Plate provinces	63
1829-1852: Rosas and the Argentine Confederation	66
1852-1880: “National Organization” – the foundation of a nation-state	69
II 1861-1880.....	72
6. The genesis of Argentine history as a school subject.....	73
6.1 Introduction	73
6.2 The development of the Argentine secondary school until 1880 - a brief outline	73
6.3 Argentine history as a secondary school subject before 1880	78
7. Which nation? History textbooks in the Plata region before 1861	82
8. Luis L. Domínguez and the textbook monument of independence.....	85
9. The historical approach of Liberal Catholicism: The lectures of José Manuel Estrada..	95
10. Towards a new era: Bright future, bright past in the <i>Lecciones</i> by Lucio V. López ...	115
1861–1880: Concluding remarks	121
III. 1880–1912.....	123
11. National history under the Conservative order (1880–1912): Educational policies, the school subject and Argentine history writing.....	124
11.1 Introduction	124
11.2 Educational expansion and educational policies	128
11.3 The new key role of national history in the schools.....	141

11.4 The development of national history writing	153
11.5 Concluding remarks	162
12. Domínguez replaced: Fregeiro's textbooks.....	164
13. The perspective of the Littoral: Benigno T. Martínez.....	185
14. The passionate storyteller: Vicente Fidel López's manual	192
15. The success story historians loved to hate: the "Grossos"	208
16. Vicente Gambón: an ecclesiastical perspective on Argentine history	226
17. Levene's <i>Lecciones</i> : the "New School" history popularized.....	238
Conclusions	278
Sources	289
A. Unpublished sources.....	289
B. Published sources: textbooks and sources for educational history.....	289
Bibliography.....	292

Preface and acknowledgments

The present PhD thesis has a long history. Way too long: It started with a phone call from the University of Bergen in 1993, encouraging me to elaborate a project on Latin American history textbooks. A few years earlier, I had written a MA thesis on Spanish textbooks. Now, twenty years later, the mission is accomplished, in the form of a study of Argentine history texts for the secondary school through the first half century's development of the genre. I have only myself to blame for the unreasonable delay of a dissertation that should have been handed in many years ago. For personal and professional reasons, this was not possible. On the credit side, the time and efforts invested in the project, whose results are condensed on the following pages, have rendered a most rewarding experience, personally and professionally.

For one thing, I got to know Argentina, a great country in every way. In the historical period concerned here, it was situated at the crossroads of complex influences, in the midst of a process of dynamic changes on many levels. The questions that arose when I was trying to come to grips with that reality also felt relevant faced with more recent historical developments in many parts of the world, academically and politically. When I started out in the 1990s, there was a renewed interest in topics regarding nations, nationalism and national identity. In a broader sense, identity issues have continued to attract an enormous interest, including, as a partial aspect, the role of historical cultures and the usages of history in the formation of identities. In the general public debates, such topics are often connected to concerns about immigration and integration in our pluralist societies in an age of globalization. Preoccupations of a similar kind were also very much present in Argentina a hundred years ago, with debates reflecting worries about an impending disintegration of the national community. In effect, many things would indeed go wrong in Argentina in the years that followed, but in other ways and for different reasons than those put forward by the early twentieth century nationalists. For good and for bad, to me this historical experience might provide a healthy lesson when met with present-day dystopian visions of the conflictive developments of our European societies. However, this far-reaching perspective, though adding nerve to my own commitment, is by no means integrated into the present work, which on the whole has been kept to the historiographical course initially marked out when I began, as will be explained in the introductory chapter.

Most of the research ground work was done, and the better part of a first draft of the dissertation was written, in the years 1994–1998, when I was a scholar at the University of Oslo. This also included three research travels to Argentina. In the following years, my efforts to complete the study were irregular due to other pressing tasks. However, I have never quite lost touch with the project and have improved the opportunities offered to resume the work. Hopefully, the fruit is mature, rather than overripe.

Naturally, given the long duration of the project, I owe thanks to a large number of people who contributed in one way or another along the way. Unfortunately, it is impossible here to mention each and every one to whom I am indebted, whose comments and suggestions inspired and led me on. I am truly grateful to all, and apologize for the omissions.

First, I wish to thank Birger Angvik, Miguel Angel Quesada Pacheco and Jon Askeland from what is now the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Bergen for suggesting the idea to me and encouraging me to formulate the initial project. A four-year scholarship from the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Oslo provided the essential financial support, while the Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History of the same faculty offered a work-place as well as a stimulating academic environment. I am grateful for the PhD (at that time, the corresponding “Dr.Art”) training programme and the courses and seminars organized by coordinators Leif Ahnström and Knut Kjeldstadli on both a faculty and a department level. All the mutual readings, commentaries and discussions with fellow PhD students, with contributions from the academic staff, constituted a most valuable learning experience.

I owe thanks to my supervisor during those years, Finn Fuglestad, who gave valuable guidance in the form of critical encouragement through the process, and whom I regret to have disappointed by not bringing the work to a conclusion on anything resembling a schedule. On the other hand, I am equally grateful to Jorunn Bjørgum, who put me back on track with her friendly insistence several years later.

To the initial funding was later added two scholarships from “Nansenfondet og dermed forbundne fond” and “Thorleif Dahls legat for historisk forskning”, respectively. Two fruitful visits to the Georg-Eckert-Institut für internationale Schulbuchforschung in Brunswick, Germany, were made possible by grants from the Georg-Eckert-Institut as well as from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst. At Brunswick I found essential specialized literature as well as some real Argentine textbooks with which to begin. Not least,

I received valuable guidance from Michael Riekenberg, himself an experienced researcher in the same field.

During my visits to Argentina, I received assistance from many people – in universities, libraries, archives, colleges, antiquarian bookshops, etc., many of whom provided help way beyond the call of duty. At the Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana “Dr. Emilio Ravignani” of the University of Buenos Aires, historians José Carlos Chiamonte, María Victoria Grillo and Fernando J. Devoto provided initial advice. Further suggestions were added in an inspiring meeting with Gonzalo de Amézola at the University of La Plata. Susana María Aruani at the University of Cuyo, Mendoza, also kindly received me facilitating useful information. Interviews with veterans of Argentine educational history deepened my insights, not least regarding certain disputed topics: Jorge María Ramallo, Juan Carlos Zuretti and Néstor Tomás Auza. With gratitude I remember the librarians of the Biblioteca Nacional, the Archivo General de la Nación, several secondary school libraries, and, not least, Mario Tesler at the Biblioteca Nacional del Maestro, who provided me with stacks of materials on educational and textbook history, along with his personal advice. Warm thanks also to Marcelo D. Boeri and his family, who on several occasions gave me a hearty and hospitable welcome in Buenos Aires.

From the same period I am indebted to anthropologist Eduardo Archetti, who enriched my conception of the historiographical subject bringing in ideas from various adjacent fields of knowledge, as always attentive and committed when discussing a new project. My conversations, in Oslo and in Buenos Aires, with this remarkable pioneer in Latin American studies remain a dear memory in the shadow of Archetti’s premature death in 2005.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to the one that bore with her in some respects slow husband through all the years: to Inga, for patience, support and love.

I. Introduction

1. A brief presentation of the subject

The present dissertation deals with textbooks in Argentine history for the secondary school in the years stretching from 1861 to 1912, that is from the appearance of the first actual textbook on the subject until the publication of a particularly important text that would exercise a strong influence for several decades to come. These years were at the same time formative in the development of an Argentine nation-state, a process that took place while Argentine society underwent profound and rapid changes. The emergence of a history textbook tradition may be understood as a response to these developments, and the question to be asked is what kind of visions of the national past were formulated, what kind of histories were told to the new generations of a young nation in order to help them attach to the land.

History is a field of learning that has always been characterized by its close relationship with the general public, who, though the media may change, are apparently always avid for narratives of the past. This means on the one hand, that historians are seldom allowed to keep their subject to themselves – the more important historical issues, at least, will transcend the bounds of scholarly control. In the area of history, everyone has a common right. On the other hand, however, this also means that scholars are confronted with the constant creative challenge of disseminating their knowledge in popular forms.

The largest market for popularized history is undoubtedly to be found in schools. Broadly, this has been the case for the last hundred years or even longer, at least in countries with a fairly well developed education system. The relationship between academic history and the history taught in the classroom or imparted through school textbooks is complex and varies a great deal over time and between different countries. Yet more often than not, a historian who happens to leaf through a worn copy of a set book that has passed through the hands of an anonymous succession of youths, will find that there is a considerable distance between the history presented to the pupil and the historian's own understanding of his or her branch of knowledge.

It is not only the inevitable time lag that causes the disparity between the textbooks and the research front. History as a school subject serves the purpose of transmitting a field of learning in an accessible form, but it also has other functions, often of an edifying or legitimizing nature, which are usually also important – sometimes far more important. History might, by way of example, be instrumental in encouraging democratic attitudes, peaceable dispositions towards neighbouring countries, racial pride, class-consciousness, loyalty towards the royal house, or the constitution, or the Party.

Among the values promoted through the teaching of history, one probably stands above all others: *patriotism*. There are exceptions: In several Latin-American countries for a long time during the nineteenth century, universal – that is European – history was given priority to the detriment of national history. In some European countries today, recent programmes might emphasize, say, international solidarity or the development of a European identity in order to subdue excessive nationalism. But from a global and historical perspective it seems clear that the institutional development of history has been associated with the development of the nation-state – both at the academic level, in the educational systems and in establishments of popular enlightenment, such as museums. Schools are often considered one of the key factors in modern nation building. As the consciousness of a common past is usually (if not always) a core element in the configuration of a national identity, the importance of history as a school subject, and the plurality of interests implied in the shaping of it, should be obvious. Accordingly, these instrumental uses of history are likely to be more fundamental in the teaching of *national* history than in other branches of the subject, even if the same issues are highly relevant in the presentation of the rest of the world, in the images of the Other.

If we descend from these generalities and turn to a real textbook, a couple of passages from an Argentine primary school classic may suffice to illustrate some of the points above and others to follow. The quotation is from the preface to an Argentine history text written by Alfredo B. Grosso. Together with a more extensive version for secondary schools, this book was an immense editorial success (though certainly not the historians' favourite!), with an infinite number of editions over more than half a century:

Muchos escolares, hijos de padres extranjeros, repitieron tantas veces en sus casas aquellas ponderaciones, que los buenos padres se entusiasmaron también y se entregaron a la lectura del precioso libro. Y apenas terminado de leer, solicitaron la ciudadanía argentina. Por eso le hemos llamado gran patriota al señor Grosso. Porque el hizo aumentar con su libro el número de los argentinos. Y por cierto que todos dijeron a su vez: -¡Qué linda es la Historia Argentina!

...

Varias generaciones de escolares han venido utilizando esas páginas para su ilustración. Pero pasan los años y el libro se necesita siempre. Más de medio siglo así. -*Déme un Grosso... -Déme un Grosso... Déme un Grosso...* Con estas palabras piden los niños el libro, a cada comienzo de año, en las librerías. Y el empleado, sonriendo satisfecho, le da a cada niño o a cada niña su *Grosso*. Y el alumno se lo lleva contento, ...¹

¹Alfredo B. Grosso, *Nociones de historia argentina*, Edition number not indicated (1st ed. 1893) (Buenos Aires: Editorial Kapelusz, 1959), xi-xii. The preface cited was written by Arturo Capdevila and carried the title "Ese gran patriota que se llama don Alfredo B. Grosso". The first editions of both the primary and the secondary school versions (the *Grosso chico* and the *Grosso grande*) appeared in 1893, and were continually re-edited until the early 1960s, although their use had by then declined. Grosso's texts will be analysed in Chapter 15.

These lines, in their sincere naïveté, both reveal and exemplify the extent to which the teaching of national history was intended to serve patriotic or nationalist ends. The cheerful complacency permeating the text, along with the apparently inclusive nature of the national community envisaged, might perhaps, also suggest to the reader a rather benign and “civic” variant of nationalism (as opposed to more aggressive, militant, and ethnically exclusive ones).

A more universal feature – indeed central to the subject – is distinctly exposed in the idealized reader’s response: The *emotional* appeal of the patriotic discourse is essential, whereas the importance assigned to the intellectual understanding of the country’s past (not mentioned in this particular case) might vary. The presentation of the national history is, of course, in most cases required to be “true” (in the sense of being compatible with the predominant conception of historical truth within a given society). But it should also be *beautiful*, in order to facilitate the emotional adherence to the historically determined, national community. National *sentiment* is just as important as national consciousness. As the theorist of nationalism, Benedict Anderson, pointed out, “the *attachment* that peoples feel for the inventions of their imaginations” can hardly be overvalued.² And the basic (if unfortunately not the only) feeling is *love*:

In an age when it is so common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals (particularly in Europe?) to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its

²Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso Editions, 1983, 129ff (for this and the following two citations). Other works by theorists of nationalism that were consulted when entering the present field of study: for another kind of “modernist” approach than Anderson’s: Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983); for an “ethnicist” (by no means “primordialist”) approach: Anthony D Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991); for yet an alternative to modernist theory (nations as creators of, rather than the product of, modernity): Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1992). However, though intellectually stimulating as a reflective background, these works were for the most part of a limited direct value for the purpose of my own work, whose ambition is not to engage in the general discussion of the nature and emergence of nations, nationalisms and national identities, but rather to explore a modest parcel of the development of one specific national, historical culture. On the other hand, the *textbooks’* concepts of the nation, explicit and implicit, were of course most significant and will be discussed consecutively in the following analysis chapters.

Benedict Anderson’s theory rapidly became a favourite in Latin-American studies of nationalism, perhaps more so because developments in the Americas played a key part in his work, whereas North and (in particular) South America received little attention in most other general theories. Not uncommonly, Anderson was accompanied by Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm, whereas for instance Anthony D. Smith or Liah Greenfeld rarely figured in the bibliographies. This meant that the conclusions reached by the circle of modernist theorists, across their internal differences, e.g. regarding the (very) late emergence of the nation, were often presented as next to “commonsensical” and uncontested truths. Unfortunately, Hobsbawm’s and Anderson’s success concepts of “invented traditions” and “imagined communities”, respectively, might occasionally be banalized and misconstrued in the sense of dealing with “false” identities.

affinities with racism, it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love.

Through a vocabulary of kinship, home, and landscape, all embedded in history, a basic sense of *natural* belonging is created that has a profound appeal. It expresses what Anderson called “the beauty of *gemeinschaft*”.

The most striking element in the quotation from Grosso is probably the assertion that this history textbook had actually furthered the naturalization of immigrants. Seldom can a school manual claim to serve nation building in such a literal sense! This allegation, which obviously should not be accepted at face value, nevertheless leads us to the very specific Argentine context surrounding the text: The liberal Creole élites of the nineteenth century had desired and fostered European immigration as a device to populate, “civilize,” and develop their own country. However, the massive presence of foreigners following the waves of mass immigration from the 1870s onwards brought about a change in attitudes. To many members of the native élite groups, the new cosmopolitan society that resulted from this process posed both a social and a national threat. The newcomers – some of whom were adherents to “dangerous”, anarchist or socialist doctrines – included potentially subversive elements that might challenge the political and economic power of the *criollo* establishment. Besides, the “Tower of Babel” created, especially in Buenos Aires, understandably led to fears that the linguistic unity and cultural identity of the nation was at stake. The vertiginous speed, for so it was felt, of the modernizing transformation processes – economically, socially and culturally – strongly increased feelings of anxiety and insecurity. One of the responses to this situation was the development of a strategy for “patriotic education”, in which the school subjects of Spanish language and national history were given key positions.

Editorial boasting is not the only evidence of the influence of this textbook. In 1971, the magazine *Gente* stated that Grosso’s texts had been decisive in moulding millions of Argentines’ view of the national past: “... los Grossos ‘chico’ y ‘grande’ rigieron la enseñanza primaria y media argentina durante casi medio siglo ... Para millones de argentinos, el pretérito de su tierra fueron esas páginas, esas conclusiones.”³

Such claims may be grossly exaggerated. Grosso was far from alone on the textbook market. A more far-reaching and universal argument is that the textbook is only one of the

³ "Este es Grosso, el de la historia", in *Gente*, 6.5.1971. Another testimony to the widespread use of Grosso's textbooks (significant in its exaggeration, as the author claimed that *all* Argentine schoolchildren of the time had studied with the *grossos*) was found in Eduardo Giménez, *Aquel Ramos Mejía de Antaño: Historia de la ciudad y sus habitantes* (published by the author, 1995), Chapter X, Part 4, web edition used here: <http://www.magicaweb.com/ramosmejia/> (visited June 11, 2013).

tools used in the teaching of history, and history as a school subject is only one among several agents in the shaping of people's historical consciousness. Anyway, even with such reservations, the textbook genre (not only the particular one quoted) remains most important as a gateway to the study of "the use and abuse of history" in school (to borrow Marc Ferro's phrase⁴).

The impressive duration indicated (more than half a century) might seem amazing for a textbook. Nonetheless, the case is not exceptional in Argentina. Other classics were also able to defend their position, through revised editions, over several decades. This is all the more intriguing as the political system in Argentina has been far from stable through the greater part of the contemporary period, and the teaching of national history rarely avoids implications of a politically controversial nature: Argentina far from being an exception. Even so, governmental changes apparently did not have much impact on the contents of the subject as far as the textbooks were concerned, at least until the years of the first Peronist regime (and even then, probably to a much lesser degree than has often been assumed⁵). One might object that the period stretching from approximately 1880 to 1930 *was* characterized by a higher degree of political stability than the preceding and subsequent periods, and by a liberal cultural climate that would grant the historical institutions (including those within the educational system) a considerable degree of autonomy. Why, then, under the impression of the profound economic, social, and cultural changes that were actually reshaping their country, did authors not themselves reorient their historical work, ask new questions, and focus on new topics?

Several questions arise: Is the explanation of the relatively strong continuity of the textbook tradition to be found in a more or less autonomous tradition within further and higher education in general, and in the academic institutions of history in particular? Alternatively, is it to be found in the intellectual authority radiating from the early models established by certain prestigious historians or textbook-writers? Did historians and authors of manuals alike take refuge in topics and periods that were apparently less interwoven with the heated issues of the day, keeping to the colonial period and the first decades of independence? Was the relative constancy of the history textbooks, especially towards the middle of the 20th Century and after, partly due to a rupture of the previous relationship between academic

⁴ Marc Ferro, *The use and abuse of history, or: How the past is taught* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984). (To be pedantic, the expression is rather the English translator's, as the French original carried a different title: *Comment on raconte l'histoire aux enfants à travers le monde entier*.)

⁵ See further comments on this point below in Chapter 2.3.

history and the school subject? These and similar questions are brought to mind when we approach the subject with the preconception of a rather homogeneous and uniform tradition.

But continuity does not imply consensus. The harmonious enthusiasm reported in the quoted textbook is misleading. Grosso's interpretation of the national past was the subject of vivid controversies, and more: To some people it was anathema:

Era un buen hijo de genoveses que jamás entendió la Argentina. Sus libros, con fuentes repudiablemente parciales, sin ningún asentamiento, fueron nefastos en la medida en que atacaron mentes infantiles, absolutamente desprevenidas. Pero no hay mal que dure cien años: Grosso apenas alcanzó la mitad. Gracias a Dios.⁶

In reality, the widespread dissatisfaction was not only directed against Grosso. In the eyes of many Argentines and for a long period, history as a school subject, together with its textbooks (some of which were written by the most distinguished Argentine historians of the time, such as Ricardo Levene), was monopolized by what was called "liberal" or "official" history. This referred to Argentine history as conceived by the "cosmopolitan" and "liberal" (both terms laden with negative connotations in this peculiar political context) ruling elites of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In opposition to this tradition, alternative oppositional interpretations, which eventually developed into the historiographical movement known as "revisionism" (*revisionismo*) arose. Though its roots went back to the nineteenth century, the development of this current of historical thought was sparked off by the economic and political crises of the 1930s, which meant the decline of liberalism and the rise of nationalism in its various shades and had an increasing influence in the following decades, reaching a climax in the 1970s. For our limited purpose, the main tenets of revisionism may be simplified as follows:

1. A revaluation of the colonial period, of the Hispanic legacy in general, and of all things considered *criollo* as opposed to European
2. For the early independent period, the adoption of a federalist (or rather confederalist), anti-unitarian point of view, the rehabilitation of the provincial *caudillos* as truly popular leaders and in particular, of the federal strongman Juan Manuel de Rosas
3. For the entire contemporary period, the assumption of an anti-imperialist stand directed first and foremost against the British.

⁶Nicanor de Elía Cavanagh, at that time (1971) leader of the Movimiento Juventud Federal, in the issue of *Gente* cited above.

Thus, national sovereignty and Creole identity became the key values guiding the revisionist reconstruction of Argentina's past. This did not so much mean that they wanted to emphasize other periods or other themes: They merely reversed the sympathies.⁷

The advance of revisionism, naturally enough, entailed harsh criticism of the history taught in schools. Thus Ernesto Palacio in one of the classic texts of the *revisionismo* of the 1930s, *La historia falsificada*, wrote:

La historia argentina, *telle qu'on la parle*, no conserva ningún elemento estimulante, ninguna enseñanza actual. Los argumentos heredados para exaltar a unos y condenar a otros han perdido toda eficacia. Nada nos dicen frente a los problemas urgentes que la actualidad nos plantea./ Historia convencional, escrita para servir propósitos políticos ya perimidos, huele a cosa muerta para la inteligencia de las nuevas generaciones.⁸

The controversy between revisionism and “liberal” history has been the best-known and most long-lasting debate in Argentine historiography. Its significance reached far beyond the academic and educational spheres, the historical matters at issue being transferred to the political battleground (where for example, Perón's government was branded as “the second tyranny” – Rosas's regime being the first – or, conversely, Rosas and Perón were presented as brothers-in-arms fighting off imperialist threats). The antagonistic, entrenched character of the debate would probably have been surmounted long ago by a younger generation of historians, had it not been for new political issues stemming from the ever-increasing identification between Peronism and historical revisionism, in recent years expressed in controversial initiatives under the presidency of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Paradoxically,

⁷On the historical revisionism in Argentina, see Tulio Halperín Donghi, *El revisionismo histórico argentino* (Mexico/Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores, 1970) and *Ensayos de historiografía* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones El Cielo por Asalto, 1996), 107–126; Diana Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nationalisme de déracinés: L'Argentine pays malade de sa mémoire* (Toulouse: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1992) and “El revisionismo de los años 20 y 30: Rosistas y revisionistas: ¿los rivales de la historia académica?”, in *La Junta de Historia y Numismática Americana y el movimiento historiográfico en la Argentina (1893–1938)* (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1995/1996), vol. 1, 295–315; Mikael Riekenberg, “Die Revisionismusedebatte in Argentinien 1880-1905: Eine Reinterpretation”, *Periplus 1993: Jahrbuch für außereuropäische Geschichte* 3, (1993): 109–120; Alejandro Cattaruzza, “Algunas reflexiones sobre el revisionismo histórico”, in Fernando J. Devoto, ed., *La historiografía argentina en el siglo XX*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1993), 113–139; Maristella Svampa, *El dilema argentino: Civilización o barbarie: De Sarmiento al revisionismo peronista* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones El Cielo por Asalto, 1994), in particular 171–189; Ana María Barletta and Gonzalo de Amézola, “Repatriación: Modelo para armar: Tres fechas en la repatriación de los restos de Juan Manuel de Rosas (1934-1974-1989)”, in *Mitos, altares y fantasmas: Aspectos ideológicos en la historia del nacionalismo argentino* (La Plata: Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación, Serie Estudios e Investigaciones, No. 12, 1992), 7–61.

⁸Ernesto, Palacio, *La Historia Falsificada*, edition number not indicated (1st ed. 1939) (Buenos Aires: Editorial A. Peña Lillo, 1960), 39.

revisionismo has come close to appear as the new “official history” while retaining the rhetoric and self-image of an anti-*oficial* “counter-history”.⁹

This is only the specific Argentine expression of a universal phenomenon: The memory of the community’s past contributes to constitute the community’s identity – in this case, the *argentinidad* – and, by deduction, has a bearing on the definition of the national interest at present (and, not least, of what is *not* accepted as national). The legitimizing potential of history often makes it a matter of vital importance to individuals or groups struggling for positions within the national context. Historical debates with political overtones, including arguments over the texts used in the schools, are therefore commonplace.

But just as all history is not the history of conflicting interests, the interpretation of national history is not exclusively a battlefield. Nations may develop historical narratives that attain a high degree of national consensus, thereby constituting national “myths” held in reverence by all major segments of society, often materialized in public monuments and in rituals in which most citizens take part. History may be a means to unite, to strengthen the solidarity within a community, as it may also be used to deepen divisions. It has often been maintained that in Argentina the latter use of the national history has predominated, to the detriment of the former. Instead of becoming rallying points across social and political divisions, “national” symbols and the historical arguments related to them continued to serve

⁹ The reinforced revisionist orientation has been evident in activities regarding and in the wake of the 2010 bicentenary of the May revolution. For example, through a presidential decree of 17 November 2011, a new historical institute named after the federalist leader Manuel Dorrego was established for the explicit purpose of promoting a revisionist understanding of the country’s past, in particular giving prominence to a detailed list of personalities supposed to have been neglected by the predominant historiographical tradition (though several of those mentioned, not least Dorrego, were in fact acclaimed already by many of the old textbooks to be analysed on the following pages) : El Instituto Nacional de Revisionismo Histórico Argentino e Iberoamericano Manuel Dorrego. See the web site of the institute (which also reproduces the foundational decree): <http://institutonacionalmanueldorrego.com/> (visited 3 July 2013). This met with a declaration of protest signed by a large number of Argentine historians, criticizing the biased nature of the project and rejecting the allegation that the historical topics in question had in fact been ignored in Argentine history writing. The signers concluded that the governmental initiative tended towards the establishment of a new, uniform “official history”. “Argentina: historia oficial: La declaración de los historiadores”, published on the web blog: <http://es.hypotheses.org/49> (visited 3 July 2013). Historical revisionism also played a significant, though somewhat different, part under the presidency of Carlos Saúl Menem (1989–1999), who initiated his first term in office in 1989 with the solemn repatriation from England of the mortal remains of Juan Manuel de Rosas (leading part in the revisionist vision of Argentine history). The act coincided with Menem’s controversial decree of pardon regarding crimes committed under the military dictatorship of 1976–1983, and was inevitably interpreted in connection with it. 16 years earlier, in 1973, the repatriation had been legally prepared amidst enthusiastic debates in yet another, very different political situation following the return and third election of Perón. See Barletta and de Amézola, “Repatriación”, in *Mitos, altares y fantasmas*, 1992. Also on the development of late revisionism in this period, cautiously assessing its actual influence: María Elena García Moral: “El *revisionismo* en los 80 y 90: ¿el anquilosamiento o la convalecencia de *una* historia militante?”; Julio Stortini: “Rosas a consideración: historia y memoria durante el menemismo”; both in Fernando J. Devoto, ed., *Historiadores, ensayistas y gran público: la historiografía argentina, 1990–2010*, Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2010, 79–96 and 97–115, respectively.

as weapons in the internal power struggle. In accordance with this view, Diana Quattrocchi-Woisson gave her work on Argentine revisionism the disheartening subtitle: “L’Argentine, pays malade de sa mémoire”.¹⁰ Likewise, though in a somewhat different context, Nicolas Shumway described the different Argentine “guiding fictions” as a “mythology of exclusion”:

... the peculiarly divisive mind-set created by the country’s nineteenth-century intellectuals who first framed the idea of Argentina. This ideological legacy is in some sense a mythology of exclusion rather than a unifying national ideal, a recipe for divisiveness rather than consensual [sic] pluralism. This failure to create an ideological framework for union helped produce what novelist Ernesto Sábato has called ‘a society of opposers’ as interested in humiliating each other as in developing a viable nation united through consensus and compromise.¹¹

Be that as it may, the dualist visions of the nation frequently circulated in the political and historiographical trenches, and also present in the approaches of many research-based studies (the above-mentioned work itself might be said to constitute an example), are at least incomplete and often misleading. There have been not two, but many “Argentinas”, and the conflicts between them can hardly be described as the “same” throughout the independent period, or the twentieth century for that matter. There were constant, however changing, controversies over the guiding values that defined Argentine society and the Argentine nation in its past, present and desired future, not least throughout the period concerned here.¹²

This might seem a trivial, even superfluous statement. But although a more nuanced picture is usually presented in recent works on political or intellectual history, whenever the subject of classroom history is brought up, the simplified image of the kind of history taught, insisting on the prolonged monopoly of an unalterable, uniform “liberal official” history, tends to reappear. The following example, from an article by Eduardo José Míguez, is quite representative, I think, of the general opinion on this issue:

¹⁰ Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nationalisme de déracinés*, 1992.

¹¹ Nicolas Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1991), x–xi.

¹² Thus according to historians Lilia Ana Bertoni and Luciano de Privitellio: “Este período [1852–1943] se caracterizó por el constante proceso de definición y redefinición de la sociedad misma, de sus valores y sus rumbos, así como de las reglas de la competencia política y del marco en el que se encuadraban ... A fines del siglo XIX, las polémicas y los enfrentamientos mostraron que casi todas las cuestiones que definían la sociedad y la nación estaban en discusión y que existían idearios políticos muy distintos, proyectos diferentes de país y modelos sociales contrastantes.” Lilia Ana Bertoni and Luciano de Privitellio, ed., *Conflictos en democracia: la vida política argentina entre dos siglos* (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2009), 10–11 and 15. Yet another approach was presented in a penetrating study of the dichotomous nature of Argentine political-historical discourse over a very long timespan, exploring the legacy of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento’s famous figure of “civilization or barbarism” (in *Facundo*, 1845) while insisting on the transformations and changing significations of that dichotomy: Svampa, *El dilema argentino*.

En los cincuenta años siguientes a la crisis [de 1930], entonces, la arena ideológica – incluyendo al Estado y sus instituciones – se transformó en un intenso campo de batalla entre distintos proyectos ... Pero precisamente la intensidad e indefinición de la lucha, junto a una poderosa inercia, parecieron *preservar la continuidad del dominio liberal sobre los programas de la institución escolar. En efecto, éstos no sufrieron cambios sustanciales en la orientación ideológica que los dominaba* – ni, en realidad, en casi ningún otro sentido – durante ese largo período.

...

En el campo de la historia esta interpretación parece encontrar sustento. A partir de 1930, diversas variantes nacionalistas fueron construyendo lo que se dió en llamar la *versión “revisionista”* – “dependentista”, en su variante de izquierda – de la historia Argentina, y para la década del 1970, como señalara Tulio Halperin Donghi, parecería haber establecido un cierto dominio sobre la opinión pública (el “sentido común”, o la “doxa”). Este dominio, sin embargo, *nunca fue suficientemente efectivo como para poder extenderse al ámbito escolar.*¹³

The liberal hegemony in the schools is claimed to have persisted even during the period when it was challenged in most other areas of society (approximately 1930 to the end of the last dictatorship in 1983), because no single alternative current was ever strong enough to supplant it, and because of inertia. This widespread opinion is undoubtedly founded in the memories of many people and might be substantiated to a considerable extent by documentary evidence, such as textbooks. I have already referred to the remarkable durability of some of the most used texts. Still, there is reason to suspect that this view is all too simplified.

As regards the late twentieth century, historians Gonzalo de Amézola and Ana María Barletta from the University of La Plata showed how, from the 1960s onwards, important revisionist elements entered into the textbooks, to a greater or lesser degree, even if this development apparently was not fully perceived by the public at large. In particular, it was not recognized by representatives of revisionist positions themselves, who still claimed that their

¹³Eduardo José Míguez, “Reflexiones sobre la enseñanza de la Historia y el uso de fuentes en la escuela media en Argentina”, *Propuesta Educativa* 4, No. 7 (October 1992), 16 (cf. also 19), (italics added). This view was shared by Cecilia Braslavsky, “La didáctica de la historia en dos continentes”, *Propuesta Educativa* 2, No. 2, (1990), 85: “... en la Argentina la inmensa mayoría de los libros de texto seguirían respondiendo al modelo liberal, pudiendo ser éste un indicador de una falta de dedicación de esfuerzos de los historiadores más dinámicos a la renovación de los recursos para la enseñanza de la historia”. Similarly, but referring to the period prior to 1930, even Tulio Halperin Donghi, who emphasized the multiplicity of perspectives and points of view within the so-called “canonical version” of Argentine history, attacked by the revisionists of the 1930s, nevertheless made an exception for school textbooks. Admittedly, the comment referred only to primary schools, but on the other hand Halperin did not indicate that the secondary level materials might be different. Thus in Halperin Donghi, *El revisionismo histórico argentino*, 20: “... esa versión canónica ... cuya existencia es indudable cuando se examinan los textos históricos usados en las escuelas elementales ...”. On the other hand, Cecilia Braslavsky, when dealing with the history content in primary school texts from the *early* period, presented a much more complex picture than in the passage quoted above, describing the coexistence of several diverging approaches and tendencies: “Der Gebrauch der Geschichte im argentinischen Erziehungswesen (unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Lehrbücher für den Primarbereich), 1853-1930”, in Mikael Riekenberg, ed., *Politik und Geschichte in Argentinien und Guatemala (19./20. Jahrhundert)* (Frankfurt/Main: Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung, Schriftenreihe des Georg-Eckert-Instituts, Band 80, 1994), 155–178; Cecilia Braslavsky, “Los usos de la historia en los libros de texto para las escuelas primarias argentinas (1853-1916)”, in H. R. Cucuzza, ed., *Historia de la Educación en Debate* (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila Editores, 1996), 54–90.

views constituted a kind of counter-history excluded from the realm of “official” classroom history.¹⁴ Another research team, led by historian Luis Alberto Romero, concluded on the other hand that school history was only slightly influenced by revisionist history writing and maintained the thesis of a solid and uniform vision of the Argentine past in textbooks from the 1950s until well into the 1980s, when a break-down of the model inherited from the early twentieth century would begin.¹⁵

So what about the early period, the assumed heyday of “liberal” history? This stretched from the very foundation of an Argentine historiography, with its academic as well as its popularized and didactic expressions, in the second half of the nineteenth century until it was seriously challenged in the new, conflictive cultural climate of the 1930s. Less research has been carried out with regards to the teaching of history, especially on the secondary level, during this considerable period, as compared with the attention paid to materials of a more recent date (something which, on the other hand, seems quite natural, as the bulk of Argentine textbook research has had the praiseworthy, reformatory purpose of evaluating texts in actual use, thereby contributing to the improvement of standards). As a result, the image of the rule of “official” history remains more or less the same: usually rather disparagingly conceived of as a socially, geographically, and thematically narrow understanding of the national past, restricted by the limited perspective of the ruling élites, basically uniform and stereotyped, and increasingly obsolete in its methods and approaches as both the science of history and Argentine society developed, while classroom history allegedly did not.

But then the question also remains: Is this a fair judgment? To what extent is the commonplace image accurate? I have already suggested that élite attitudes towards what might be styled the “national project” – the kind of Argentine society envisaged and the conception of a national identity connected to it – changed during this modernizing period; first, in the years to be dealt with on the following pages, under the impressions of mass immigration and new social and political conflicts, later under the stress of an economic crisis of global dimensions and the shattering of the basic optimism with which Argentina had been imbued in its golden age (as it would nostalgically be referred to). Moreover, these alterations were not only gradual. They were also anything but uniform, as they affected different groups

¹⁴Gonzalo de Amézola and Ana María Barletta, “¡Mueran los salvajes secundarios! El debate historia oficial-revisionismo en los textos de la escuela media”, *Serie Pedagógica* 1, (1994), 125–141.

¹⁵ Luis Alberto Romero, ed., *La Argentina en la escuela: La idea de nación en los textos escolares*, with contributions by Luciano de Privitello, Silvina Quintero, Luis Alberto Romero and Hilda Sabato (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores Argentina, 2007). The project dealt with textbooks in history, geography and civics, the part on history being carried out by Luciano de Privitello. More on this below, chapter 2.2 and 2.3.

and different individuals in varying ways and degrees and at varying times. Groups and individuals in turn, responded to the profound changes in different ways. All this is known from studies of important aspects of the cultural history of the period (some will be briefly commented on below). But trivial as the preceding statement might seem, it appears necessary to reiterate it here as one of my points of departure. In the midst of this dynamic process, is the idea of a homogenous and unalterable interpretation of the national past as transmitted through the textbooks a credible, let alone probable, hypothesis? Theoretically, this could have been possible anyway if there had been a high degree of state control over, and interference with, the production, selection, and use of the history textbooks. But this seems not to have been the case in Argentina in this period, at least not in the secondary school, even if the elaboration of programmes for the subject, the appointment of approval committees and other ministerial initiatives, obviously had an important bearing on the alternatives left open to the individual textbook writers and editors. But is it not likely that even the most “official” (whatever that may mean) vision of Argentina’s past *must* have changed materially in the course of this long period? We know for sure that the attitude towards and the relative importance assigned to the subject changed substantially around the turn of the century. One of the most eloquent expressions of the new attitude was Ricardo Rojas’s report to the Ministry of Justice and Education in 1909, the famous *La Restauración Nacionalista*, where the teaching of national history was considered a cornerstone in the urgent formation of a national consciousness, and, congruently, patriotism was made the supreme aim of the school subject:

Así la conciencia de nacionalidad en los individuos debe formarse: por la conciencia de su territorio y la solidaridad cívica, que son la *cenestesia colectiva*, y por la conciencia de una tradición continua y de una lengua común, que la perpetúa, lo cual es la *memoria colectiva*. Pueblo en que estos conocimientos fallan, es pueblo en que la conciencia patriótica existe debilitada o deformada. He aquí el fin de la Historia: contribuir á formar esa conciencia por los elementos de tradición que á ambas las constituyen. En tal sentido, el fin de la Historia en la enseñanza es el patriotismo, el cual, así definido, es muy diverso de la patriotería ó el fetichismo de los héroes militares. La historia propia y el estudio de la lengua del país darían la conciencia del pasado tradicional, ó sea del “yo colectivo”; ...¹⁶

Rojas’s views were admittedly controversial. They were nevertheless influential. Moreover, the ideas expressed in the book reflected widespread concerns, from which neither educational authorities nor textbook writers could escape. Is it not likely, then, that when the subject of Argentine history took a new and leading part in the pedagogical discourse, the

¹⁶Ricardo Rojas, *La Restauración Nacionalista: Informe sobre educación* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Justicia e Instrucción Pública, 1909), 42–43.

contents of the subject must also inevitably have changed in some way? And similarly, though outside the scope of this study, would not later developments, particularly in the 1930s, in all probability have left their mark on the texts of those times as well, in some way or another?

The Argentine sociologist Carlos Escudé proposed a thesis, which in many ways contrasted sharply with the predominant view as presented above. From the first decade of the twentieth century, an anti-liberal, militant, and authoritarian nationalism would have gained control over the education system (at least within primary education), and this hegemony would have survived through all the subsequent political shifts (with fatal consequences for Argentina's political culture).¹⁷ Admittedly, Escudé's analysis was not based on any materials belonging to the subject of history. In any case his conclusions may seem too far-reaching, and the picture drawn as simplistic as the other "commonsensical" tale of the permanent "liberal hegemony".

Furthermore we might ask: Is it probable that textbook writers of diverse origins and positions – professional historians, school teachers, clergymen, officers, and so on – with different religious and political inclinations, should present a uniform, monolithic vision of their country's past? Should we not look for nuances, perhaps even fundamental differentiating traits, in the various texts at each given stage?

This is not to dismiss the importance of similarities and continuity in the Argentine textbook tradition. They may even prove to have been the prevailing characteristics, after all. But as a starting point, a certain amount of scepticism towards the facile labels frequently used to categorize the Argentine didactics of history in earlier times seems to me a healthy measure of precaution. In any case, a thorough study of the relevant textbooks themselves is imperative in order to be able to draw any conclusions at all on the issue.

The prime purpose of my analysis of Argentine history textbooks is not to estimate the qualities and reveal the deficiencies of texts of the past, to judge if they were good or bad, as if they were to be considered for actual use, although elements of such assessments may be integrated as accessory means to understand the significance of a text. Nor is the central point here to find out to what extent each manual gives a "correct" presentation of Argentine history, in the sense of providing reliable and adequate information in accordance with our

¹⁷Carlos Escudé, *El fracaso del proyecto argentino: Educación e ideología* (Buenos Aires: Instituto Torcuato di Tella/Editorial Tesis, 1990); cf. also *Patología del nacionalismo: El caso argentino* (Buenos Aires: Instituto Torcuato di Tella/Editorial Tesis, 1987).

knowledge of the same history, even if it is next to impossible to avoid some comments on this level in certain instances.

To me, the chief interest of the manuals lies in the way in which they formulated global interpretations of the national past, transmitting specific visions of the Argentine reality as it appeared embedded in history, at a time when the nation-state had only just been consolidated and that very same national reality was undergoing rapid transformations. The half-century stretching approximately between 1880 and 1930 would constitute the core period during which the most intense developments took place, resulting, however, a bit too extensive for the kind of analysis intended here. Furthermore, in the course of my investigation I found that the most significant models and points of departure were established in the good three decades prior to the outbreak of World War I, with the publication of Ricardo Levene's *Lecciones de Historia Argentina* in 1912 as a true milestone naturally concluding this first stage of textbook development¹⁸. In addition it seems suitable to add the previous, "foundational" period, beginning with the first important manual for the secondary school published in 1861 (coinciding with the political unification of the profoundly divided country).

The development of the school subject of Argentine history and of the textbooks intended to serve it depended on several factors. Two of the most important were the emergence of an Argentine historiography, progressively institutionalized and professionalized, on the one hand, and on the other hand the massive expansion of the education system and the educational policies connected to it. Both expressed, and at the same time contributed to, the nation-building process in Argentina. I hope that I will be able to reach an understanding of how the history textbook developed in relation to both

¹⁸ Editions consulted in my study: Ricardo Levene, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*, vol. 1, 5th ed. (1st ed. 1912) (Buenos Aires: J. Lajouane & Cía. - Editores, 1920); *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*, vol. 2, 16th ed. (1st ed. 1912) (Buenos Aires: J. Lajouane & Cía. - Editores, 1937).

The selection of 1912 as the concluding point in a study of educational history is not an obvious choice. The year of 1916 has been the traditional subdividing point in most periodizations of Argentine history, mainly for political reasons: The ascent to power of the Radicals led by Hipólito Yrigoyen following the 1912 Sáenz Peña law that democratized the electoral system, implied the break-down of the conservative order that had been consolidated in 1880. But in the educational area, there was a high degree of continuity, before and after 1916. Changes occurred throughout and beyond the period studied, but they were for the most part gradual. In sum: It is hard to find alternative division marks when remaining within the confines of my own field. Carlos Escudé (*El fracaso del proyecto argentino*, 1990) proposed 1908 as the crucial divide, as that was the year José María Ramos Mejía was appointed director of the Consejo Nacional de Educación, launching a programme of "patriotic education". However, the impact of this event was most immediately felt in the primary school – in the context I am discussing the choice is far from obvious. As regards the history textbooks themselves, no new text of importance was published in 1916, whereas one of the most influential books on the subject ever published in Argentina appeared in 1912, as mentioned above. Accordingly, I found it appropriate to conclude the present analysis with that text as the final element.

historiographical and educational history, while at each stage grasping the essential characteristics of the kind of historical consciousness of the national past that was transmitted through the principal texts. But this framework does not suffice to comprehend the meaning of the attempts made to assert an Argentine identity founded in historical narratives. Neither schools nor history books make sense in a vacuum. The main aspects of the general development of Argentine society in this period, and in particular the broader cultural and intellectual history of the time, constitute a context to which I must repeatedly return in order to explain the findings in my own material, without, however, discussing the major issues of this larger history in their own right.

To sum up, the primary concern of this work is to examine how history as a school subject contributed to the formation and development of a global vision of the historically determined Argentine nation (and nation-state), of its origins, character, and legitimate place among the nations of the world – all of this as it was manifestly expressed in the history textbooks at each stage, and in their development over the period examined. The authors of those manuals confronted a difficult task, striving to give constancy and coherence to a rapidly changing reality by attaching it to a historical narrative. So do I; to understand the specific nature of those texts both separately, each in their context, and through the intertextual patterns they developed and displayed in combination, has proved a considerable challenge.

In order to attain my goal, I depend heavily on a considerable body of existent works on various topics relevant to my own research. The following chapter will deal with some of these points of departure. Thereafter I will elaborate my own approach to the subject in a more thorough manner, discussing the theoretical and methodological problems involved.

2. Earlier research in the field

2.1 International research on history textbooks

For several decades, scholars from all over the world have cultivated the field of textbook research, producing an overwhelming number of publications as varied with regard to the topics addressed as to their disciplinary and methodological approaches and theoretical foundations. Indeed, even the *metaliterature* evaluating actual textbook research or discussing the theories and methods applied in it has become rather voluminous.¹⁹ To attempt a general survey of this vast bibliography would grossly exceed the reasonable limits of this work. It even appears impossible to refer to, let alone discuss, the major contributions to the study of *history* textbooks. Here I will merely outline some general tendencies and mention a few examples of the multifarious international research before considering more closely publications dealing with Latin-American, and in particular, Argentine texts.

From the outset, the bulk of the works on educational texts have had a utilitarian, usually reformatory, purpose.²⁰ They have intended to evaluate books in actual use, be it in order to provide information for their potential users (students, teachers, parents, educational authorities), promote improvements (often including the researcher's own recommendations), or reveal the nature of the history taught in the schools to the general public as part of a broader programme of critical research, in particular with regards to analysis of ideology. In particular, for several decades the struggle to further international understanding and, conversely, to reveal and oppose elements producing or reproducing prejudice or outright enmity, constituted the very core and spine of textbook criticism and research, and is still an important and valuable part of it. Movements of this kind followed in the wake of the First and – more vigorously and efficiently – the Second World Wars. Governmental agencies, as well as scholars and educationists, engaged in these efforts: Bilateral textbook revision

¹⁹See for example, K. Peter Fritzsche, ed., *Schulbücher auf dem Prüfstand: Perspektiven der Schulbuchforschung und Schulbuchbeurteilung in Europa* (Frankfurt/Main: Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung, Schriftenreihe des Georg-Eckert-Instituts, Band 75, 1992); Egil Børre Johnsen, *Textbooks in the Kaleidoscope: A Critical Survey of Literature and Research on Educational Texts* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1993).

²⁰This is evidenced not only in the quantitative predominance of such studies, but also in normative statements by textbook research theoreticians, as in the following assertion by Egil Børre Johnsen (*Textbooks in the Kaleidoscope*, 347–348): "The crucial point would be one of *simultaneity*: Textbook research must become less of an "after the event"-activity and more of an integrated part of the development and use of textbooks ... The textbook should represent both a research object and a research result."

committees were some of their practical expressions. Though the best known cases are European, the earliest example was the Argentine-Brazilian convention of 1933.²¹

International textbook revision was from the beginning, the main field of work at the single most important and best known institute entirely dedicated to the study of educational texts: The Georg-Eckert-Institut für Internationale Schulbuchforschung in Brunswick, Germany. Founded in 1951 as the Internationale Institut für Schulbuchverbesserung, it has been a prime mover (both in the strong German *Schulbuchforschung* tradition and in other countries as well) through its own research and prolific publishing (including the review *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*), through organizing a large number of international conferences, and also by constantly receiving guest researchers from all over the world. The shifts of emphasis in the research at this centre over the last decades are therefore significant as indicators of widespread tendencies.²²

The most universal trend is probably the widening of the scope of textbook research, thematically and methodically, beyond the customary evaluation of textbooks based on content analysis. K. Peter Fritzsche formulated the relationship between this tradition and newer approaches rhetorically as the possible opposition between “textbook evaluation” (*Schulbuchbeurteilung*) and “textbook research” (*Schulbuchforschung*).²³ Rather than dichotomizing, though, it seems more fitting to speak of a growing multiplicity of approaches, in which any claim to methodological unity is futile, as Fritzsche readily admitted.²⁴

²¹"Convenio entre la República Argentina y la República de los Estados Unidos del Brasil para la revisión de los textos de enseñanza de historia y geografía firmado por los ministros de relaciones exteriores Carlos Saavedra Lamas y A. de Mello Franco", dated October 10th, 1933. This and other related documents, including the ensuing recommendations from the respective national revision committees, are found in a publication by the Ministerio de Justicia e Instrucción Pública: *Comisión Revisora de Textos de Historia y Geografía Americanas* (Buenos Aires: 1936). The objective, stated in Article I in the convention, is representative of this kind of agreement: Both parties undertake to revise their textbooks, removing topics that might create aversions to "any American people": "El Gobierno de la República Argentina y el Gobierno de la República de los Estados Unidos del Brasil, harán que se proceda a una revisión de los textos adoptados para la enseñanza de la Historia Nacional en sus respectivos países, depurándolos de aquellos tópicos que sirvan para excitar en el ánimo desprevenido de la juventud, la aversión hacia cualquier pueblo americano." The wider context was, of course, the traditional rivalry between the two countries, dating from colonial times and often fuelled by historical arguments. This agreement also served as a model for later, similar agreements between Argentina and other neighbouring countries, cf. below Chapter 17 regarding Ricardo Levenes's role in this.

²² The statement above is not intended to belittle the significance of other specialized centres of textbook research. Institutes, university departments, researcher networks, etc., of this kind exist in various countries. In Germany alone, there have been several centres in addition to the Georg-Eckert-Institut, for example, the Institut für Schulbuchforschung in Duisburg (closed in 1990).

²³ K. Peter Fritzsche: "Schulbuchforschung und Schulbuchbeurteilung im Disput", in Fritzsche, ed., *Schulbücher auf dem Prüfstand*, 9–22.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11: "Ein zentrales Feld der Schulbuchforschung sind Schulbuchanalysen; man kann sie aus sehr unterschiedlichen Interessen heraus vornehmen: aus Interesse der Zeitgeistforschung, der Ideologie- und Vorurteilkritik, der Lernpsychologie oder der Völkerverständigung; deshalb ist auch nicht mit einer

Peter Weinbrenner from the University of Bielefeld, another major centre of investigation in this field, distinguished three main kinds of textbook research with regard to their *objective*: First, *process-oriented* research, which studies the text “from the cradle to the grave”: production and development, approval, introduction in the school, use and finally rejection and removal from actual use. Secondly, *product-oriented* research, which examines the text as a teaching aid and as a means of communication, usually focusing on content, with regard to the perspectives of scientific theory, design, the specific science or branch of knowledge (e.g. history), the subject-matter didactics and the science of education. Finally, he referred to *effect-oriented* (*wirkungsorientierte*) research, which analyses the text as a factor of socialization in various kinds of *reception* studies. The vast majority of actual textbook studies carried out belong to the second category.²⁵

But even within the traditional field of content analysis, the register of possible aspects on which any text or group of texts might be studied, is so extensive that any given research project almost unavoidably must be content to undertake a *partial* analysis. However, this may be more or less complex or simple according to the specific aims and ambitions in each case.²⁶ The guiding interests motivating such studies may be of a pedagogical nature – the textbook viewed and evaluated from an educational point of view, with due attention to the educational context for which it is in fact produced. Alternatively, the predominant motivations may be extramural: Scholars of particular branches of knowledge, representatives of economic or social interest groups, advocates of minority groups, or of political or religious beliefs, and so on, might all want to ascertain to what extent their own interests are taken care of in the schools, and to that end, textbooks are analysed, often with less regard for their didactic qualities and the learning process they are intended to serve as one among several

einheitlichen Methode zu rechnen ... Anzumerken bleibt, daß sich Schulbuchforschung natürlich nicht in Schulbuchanalysen erschöpft ..., und daß die anderen Bereiche von Schulbuchforschung nochmal eine Erweiterung des einsetzbaren Methodenrepertoires nach sich ziehen." Fritzsche quoted Wolfgang Marienfeld on the same point.

²⁵Peter Weinbrenner: "Grundlagen und Methodenprobleme sozialwissenschaftlicher Schulbuchforschung", in Fritzsche, ed., *Schulbücher auf dem Prüfstand*, 33–54 (in particular 34–38). Weinbrenner also presented the scheme in another article: "Methodologies of textbook analysis used to date", in Hilary Bourdillon, ed., *History and Social Studies - Methodologies of Textbook Analysis: Report of the Educational Research Workshop held in Braunschweig (Germany) 11-14 September 1990* (Amsterdam/Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger, 1992), 21–34. Egil Børre Johnsen, *Textbooks in the Kaleidoscope*, p. 28, used a rather similar categorization, distinguishing between investigations in: "1. Ideology in textbooks./2. The use of textbooks./3. The development of textbooks" (corresponding with Weinbrenner's number 2, 3 and 1, respectively). As to the first category, "ideology" was here used in a very wide sense (or as a heading covering other kinds of analyses as well), referring to "what is written between the covers", although Johnsen subsequently made a distinction between "historical" and "ideological" investigations in his own survey.

²⁶Cf. Peter Weinbrenner in Fritzsche, ed., *Schulbücher auf dem Prüfstand*, 36: a graphic chart of dimensions and categories within product-oriented textbook research indicates the complexity involved.

teaching aids. The first-mentioned approach is perhaps the one that most properly corresponds to what is generally, or ideally, understood by textbook research. Nevertheless, the non-pedagogical projects, although deficient from a classroom perspective, are, in my view, just as legitimate. The school is a public concern, and the examination of its contents cannot possibly be regarded as a matter reserved for educationists.

In any case, content analyses typically focus on one or several aspects of the textbooks, varying from, say, the underlying pedagogic or scientific paradigms; the readability of the texts; the use of primary sources; the illustrations; the periodization; the place assigned to a particular “hyphen-history” (social history, women’s history, etc.); the presentation of a certain period or event (antiquity, the Spanish Civil War, the Holocaust, etc.); or of a specific social, racial, or ethnic group; a cultural or geographical area (the working class, the Jews, a neighbouring country, the Middle East etc.). For our limited purpose here, there is no need to add further items to the list or to heap up references.²⁷ This multiplicity of objectives and approaches is only the logical consequence of the complex and ambiguous nature of the textbook as a cultural product. In the words of the Norwegian textbook researcher (and textbook writer) Egil Børre Johnsen:

A textbook is neither just subject content, nor pedagogy, nor literature, nor information, nor morals nor politics. It is the freebooter of public information, operating in the gray zone between community and home, science and propaganda, special subject and general education, adult and child.²⁸

As indicated above, thematic diversity has its counterpart in a pronounced methodological heterogeneity within textbook research. Simplifying things, it is commonplace to distinguish

²⁷See for example, Johnsen, *Textbooks in the Kaleidoscope*, for a more systematic categorization and a host of references to different case studies (works published in English, German, French, and the Scandinavian languages). To exemplify with one topic only, which in some sense might draw nearer the subject of this dissertation: The presentation of Latin America in the textbooks of specific European countries was analysed in Gudmund Stang, “América Latina en el espejo del sistema educacional noruego, 1814-1977”, *Estudios Latinoamericanos* 1980, No. 6, 295–332; Bodo von Borries: “Zwischen universalhistorischem Anspruch und eurozentrischer Praxis. Lateinamerika in Geschichtsbüchern der Bundesrepublik Deutschland”, in Mikael Riekenberg, ed., *Lateinamerika: Geschichtsunterricht, Geschichtslehrbücher, Geschichtsbewußtsein* (Frankfurt: Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung, Schriftenreihe des Georg-Eckert-Instituts, Band 66, 1990), 157–169; Michael Riekenberg: “Das Bild Lateinamerikas in deutschen Geschichtslehrbüchern”, in Uta George and Mark Arenhövel, ed., *Lateinamerika: Kontinent vor dem Morgengrauen: Nachdenken über ein schwieriges Verhältnis Lateinamerika und Deutschland* (Münster: Unrast Verlag, 1992), 13–26; Luis Alberto Romero, “América Latina desde los textos germanos: una melodía de dos notas y muchos silencios”, *Propuesta Educativa* 4, No. 7, (1992), 21–26; Silvina Gvirtz, “Das Bild des anderen in argentinischen und englischen Geschichtslehrbüchern: Eine Geschichte des Verschweigens und der Aggressivität”, *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 13, No. 4, (1991): 385–395.; and surely in other works as well.

²⁸Johnsen, *Textbooks in the Kaleidoscope*, 330. Cf. Alain Choppin, “L’histoire des manuels scolaires: une approche globale”, *Histoire de l’Education* 1980, No. 9, 1–25.

between two main directions: the hermeneutic or descriptive-analytical methods rooted in the humanistic, source-centred tradition, on the one hand, and on the other the quantitative methods associated with the social sciences and sociology in particular. However, in actual practice most textbook researchers combine quantitative and qualitative methods in one way or another. Indeed, it is increasingly common to underline the qualitative elements inherent in any project, even in the ones that most exclusively set out to gather and measure quantifiable data such as space, frequency, etc. Such elements are manifest from the very outset in the establishment of objectives and categories. Moreover, in recent years there seems to have been a relative shift in emphasis towards more qualitative analyses, in accordance with a general trend within the social sciences. Another common tendency is seen in the attempts – across disciplinary boundaries – to apply concepts and approaches borrowed from linguistic or literary theory. In any case, theoretical and methodological eclecticism generally remains a characteristic of textbook research.²⁹

In fact, some of the best known works on textbooks through the years have been rather impressionistic essays, usually oriented towards the criticism of ideologies, in which the authors wander freely in the textual universe of schoolbooks (along with other sources to popularized history), adducing passages from here and there without establishing transparent criteria of selection and representativeness, and sometimes even without defining a clear-cut corpus. In so doing, they may in return formulate a global interpretation of the phenomenon and convey valuable insights along the way. The most famous case is probably Marc Ferro's *Comment on raconte l'histoire aux enfants à travers le monde entier*. An earlier, much debated work along somewhat similar lines was Herbert Tingsten's *Gud och Fosterlandet* (God and the Fatherland). Though confined to a national context, Marisa Bonazzi and

²⁹With regards to textbook research methodology, the schematic dualism indicated above is sometimes replaced by a triple division. Thus, Egil Børre Johnsen, adopting a categorization originally presented by Wolfgang Marienfeld, distinguished between 1) "the hermeneutic or descriptive-analytical method", 2) "quantitative analysis of content" and 3) the "qualitative method", understood as the advanced "synthesis" of the first two, working with sophisticated categorization systems in order to "quantify qualitative elements". Johnsen, *Textbooks in the Kaleidoscope*, 139–150; also in his article "Are we looking for it in the same way? Some remarks on the problem of ideological investigation of textbooks and methodological approaches", in Fritzsche, ed., *Schulbücher auf dem Prüfstand*, 79–96. See also Peter Weinbrenner's remarks on "qualitative" versus "quantitative", "empirical" versus "interpretative", "explicit" versus "implicit", etc., in textbook analysis, in Bourdillon, ed., *Methodologies of Textbook Analysis*, 30–32; and in his contribution to Fritzsche, ed., *Schulbücher auf dem Prüfstand*, 48–51. The categorization of methodologies may differ, but there seems to be a general consensus on the need to combine methods, as stated by Peter Meyers (quoted here by K. Peter Fritzsche in Fritzsche, ed., *Schulbücher auf dem Prüfstand*, 12): "Die genannten Verfahrensweisen, die deskriptiv-analytische Methode, die quantitative, die qualitative und die ideologiekritische Methode bringen meist nur in der Kombination zufriedenstellende Ergebnisse. In jedem Fall sollten Schulbuchanalytiker hermeneutisch und quantifizierend arbeiten."

Umberto Eco's "unmasking" of Italian primary school readers, and Frances FitzGerald's critical survey of history textbooks in the USA may also be placed in this category.³⁰ This kind of approach can hardly do justice to any specific text or group of texts, as the individual texts are not analysed systematically and are often treated and quoted out of context. On the other hand, these works have had the merit of raising debates (within and outside of academia), outlining perspectives, and stimulating further, critical research.

The greater part of works dealing with textbooks is concerned with these texts within a contemporary perspective. Most of them analyse books in actual use, and even when older texts are considered, it is often primarily as a historical background for the main part of the research, focusing on our own times, or as comparative materials in order to better assess developmental trends of today. History textbooks have certainly been the object of numerous studies, but only a minor portion of these works are *historical* investigations, in the sense that they approach history textbooks of earlier times basically as sources to the understanding of determined aspects of that past, that is, as documents of their own periods. In fact, historical works on readers seem to be somewhat more frequent. The historiographical approach, in which the history textbook is studied as a specific form of history writing in its own right, or through its relationship to the academic discipline, has not been very common. Nor has the use of history textbooks as one of several means of access to the historical consciousness of a given society at a given time, as one among other expressions of the historical culture in a broad sense. A little more attention has been given to the role of such texts in the history of nationalism and nation building. Also, history textbooks have been studied in the perspective of educational history, be it in the light of pedagogical paradigms, educational policies, the history of the subject (the relation between textbooks and curricula, the history of subject-matter didactics, etc.) or otherwise. Though all of these approaches are represented in the literature – taken together, they undoubtedly amount to quite a few historical investigations – they nevertheless take up relatively little space within the vast bibliography on textbooks.³¹

³⁰ Ferro, *The use and abuse of history*; Herbert Tingsten, *Gud och Fosterlandet: Studier i hundra års skolpropaganda* (Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag, 1969); Marisa Bonazzi and Umberto Eco, *Las verdades que mienten: Un análisis de la ideología represiva de los textos para niños* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1974); Frances FitzGerald, *America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century* (Boston/Toronto: Atlantic Monthly Press/Little, Brown and Company, 1979). A brief discussion of these works (with the exception of Bonazzi/Eco) is found in Johnsen, *Textbooks in the Kaleidoscope*, 98, 102–103, and in particular 363–366.

³¹ See Johnsen, *Textbooks in the Kaleidoscope*, 31–63. With regard to some specific forms of historical research (34–35): "There is a remarkable lack of comprehensive, independent historical analyses of individual titles or authorships." As for genre histories, this "is a rare phenomenon, limited in most countries to the history of readers". In none of the consulted investigations had the author of the cited survey found any discussion of "the

The main reason for this state of affairs is probably the critical reforming and utilitarian orientation that has guided most of this research, as indicated above. In addition, the textbook is generally not a prestigious genre, its low status being particularly notorious in academic circles. Accordingly, the sole motivation for paying attention to it is often that it is actually *used*, and in fact, used a lot. When the textbook is no longer in use, that interest evaporates quickly, unlike what happens to works of fiction or scientific texts. Apparently, there is nothing as thoroughly obsolete as an outdated textbook. This very fact may, in turn, contribute to the creation of practical source problems of various kinds.

In many countries, it has been difficult to carry out scholarly, ambitious, historical research because reliable bibliographic tools are usually not readily at hand. One of the most thorough and comprehensive textbook investigation projects ever carried out therefore concentrated on this essential groundwork: the French “Emanuelle” database elaborated at the Parisian Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique under the direction of the great pioneer in French textbook research, Alain Choppin. This data bank was supposed to cover every textbook published in France, on all subjects, from the 1789 revolution onward. An additional database registered works *on* textbooks.³² As other countries, inspired by the French example, acquire similar instruments, they will greatly facilitate the task of many a textbook researcher and make the investigations stand on more solid ground. From a starting point in 1992, the Spanish equivalent to *Emanuelle*, the *Proyecto MANES*, developed with the explicit objective of including Portuguese and Latin American countries as well, and several Argentine universities initiated collaboration projects from the late 1990s onwards. However, when I carried out my essential research ground work, no such tools were as yet available.³³

question of textbooks' potential for supplementing other sources and developing general historical perspectives". Ibid., 47.

³²Alain Choppin: "L'histoire des manuels scolaires: un bilan bibliométrique de la recherche française" in Choppin ed., "Manuel scolaires, États et sociétés. XIXe - XXe siècles", Special issue of *Histoire de l'Éducation* 1993, No. 58, 165–185. For a brief description of the "Emanuelle" project: Johnsen, *Textbooks in the Kaleidoscope*, 358–359. Today, the result of this comprehensive work is available on the internet – for a presentation by Alain Choppin and further bibliographic references: http://www.inrp.fr/she/choppin_emmanuelle.htm (visited 13 June, 2013).

³³El Centro de Investigación MANES. Web site: <http://www.uned.es/manesvirtual/ProyectoManes/proyecto.htm> (visited 17 February, 2014).

2.2 Textbook studies in Latin America

In the different republics of Latin America, both textbook research and textbook debates have taken on specific characteristics in accordance with the varying national conditions and traditions.³⁴ In Mexico, for instance, the active role of the state in producing and imposing obligatory official textbooks occasioned heated controversies,³⁵ very different from the ones that took place in countries such as Argentina where the textbook has largely been a private enterprise, subject to keen competition between authors and publishers, as well as to the intervention of public authorities in the form of approval procedures.

There are only a few comparative studies and other works that facilitate comparison by covering several Latin American countries. Naturally enough, such works – as yet mainly in the form of anthologies of monographic articles – may convey perspectives of a particular interest to researchers dedicated to the study of a specific, national textbook tradition.

An early publication of the kind compiled semantic-ideological analyses of primary school textbooks, especially readers. It was carried out independently by teams of Peruvian, Venezuelan, and Argentine researchers in the first half of the 1970s. Their work aimed at revealing what was considered the oppressive ideology underlying those texts, thus linking textbook criticism with an emancipatory, political programme of a neo-Marxist orientation (as explained both in the introduction and in the argument preceding the case articles in “Against the textbook” by the Italian, Giorgi Bini).³⁶ These investigations – both with regard to the

³⁴ Besides Argentina and Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela appear to be the countries that have received most attention concerning textbook analysis, at least in the works that I have been able to consult (I certainly do not pretend to have covered the whole area). The German researcher Hans-Joachim König dealt with several aspects of history textbooks, historiography, and nation building in Colombia in articles relevant indeed to the subject of this dissertation: in Riekenberg, *Lateinamerika*, 101–116; “Geschichte im Prozeß der Nationbildung Kolumbiens: Geschichtsverständnis zwischen nationaler Verherrlichung und kritischer Reflexion”, *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 17, No. 2, (1995), 201–230. Other works on Colombia include Germán Colmares's contribution to Riekenberg, *Lateinamerika*, 91–100; Javier Ocampo López, “Identidad de la Realidad Nacional Colombiana e Hispanoamericana: A través de los Textos de Historia de la Escuela Primaria en Colombia”, *Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades* 71, No. 746, (1984), 671–719; Antonio Cagua Prada, “Sin historia patria no existe la nacionalidad”, *Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades* 75, No. 763, (1988), 1031–1044. Articles on Venezuelan textbooks: Nikita Harwich Vallenilla's and Nikolaus Werz's contributions to Riekenberg *Lateinamerika*, 59–73 and 75–90, respectively; Margarita López Maya, “Das Bild Europas in venezolanischen Schulgeschichtsbüchern”, *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 13, No. 4, (1991), 369–384; Pedro Enrique Calzadilla and Zalena Salazar Valencia, “Das Bild der Sklaverei und der schwarzen Bevölkerung in venezolanischen Schulgeschichtsbüchern”, *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 17, No. 2 (1995), 179–186.

³⁵ Verena Radkau García, “Auf der Suche nach der Nation: Die Debatte um die staatlichen Geschichtsbücher in Mexiko”, *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 15, No. 1, (1993), 75–84; Asiain, Aurelio, “Historias ejemplares”, *Vuelta*, No. 191 (October 1992), 30–34; Octavio Paz, “Los libros de texto en su contexto”, *Vuelta*, No. 191 (October 1992), 31–33.

³⁶Giorgio Bini, Mercedes Calero, Guillermo Luque, Jesús Díaz, Carola Márquez et al., *Los libros de texto en América Latina* (Mexico D.F.: Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1977).

approach and to the kind of materials selected for analysis – had many successors. Argentine representatives of the tradition will be mentioned below.

A more explicitly comparative and thematically focused anthology was produced on the occasion of the Columbus quincentenary. A series of articles queried the presentation of the indigenous American cultures and of the European discoveries and colonization throughout the world, categorizing the countries studied according to their predominant approaches to these issues, as manifested in a selection of their respective, contemporary schoolbooks. Given the extremely synthesizing mode of presentation, the authors did not so much present a thorough text analysis as they formulated global characterizations of voluminous corpora of texts, evaluating and explaining what they considered their main tendencies in a free and subjective manner, in which the textual citations served more as illustrations than as documentation.³⁷ This did not, however, diminish their value as suggestive, tentative hypotheses. As for the Latin-American countries, the differences with regard to an indigenous versus a European perspective between predominantly “Indian” societies (e.g. Peru), multiethnic societies (e.g. Panama, Colombia, Venezuela) and “European” societies (Argentina, Uruguay, Chile) were underlined. However, common traits were also detected, in particular a tendency towards a less condemning, more conciliatory attitude towards the former colonial powers. Mexico stood out as the carrier of a more pronounced anti-colonial (if not anti-Spanish) textbook discourse. Here, as to some degree in the second group listed above, the accentuation of a *mestizo* identity was a salient feature.

The most comprehensive project hitherto was the product of the collaborative efforts of the German Georg-Eckert-Institut and the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) in Buenos Aires, resulting in no less than three German-Argentine conferences between 1989 and 1993, in which researchers from several Latin-American countries, along with the Germans, presented case studies on history textbooks and the teaching of history from a variety of angles. Some of the contributions were published in an anthology edited by Michael Riekenberg,³⁸ while others appeared subsequently in different reviews. These events

³⁷Javier Pérez Siller, ed. *La “decouverte” de l’Amerique? Les regards sur l’autre à travers les manuels scolaires du monde* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1992).

³⁸Riekenberg, ed., *Lateinamerika* (with articles addressing textbook issues in Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, and Germany as well as articles with a comparative or synthesized approach). As an extension of this cooperation, though not as directly connected to the conferences, it is natural to mention another anthology edited by Riekenberg, in which the political uses of history, in textbooks as well as in other contexts, in Argentina and Guatemala were addressed: Mikael Riekenberg, ed., *Politik und Geschichte*. References to articles on Argentine textbooks that were not included in the aforementioned books are given below. Reports on the

even served to spark off other research projects beyond the framework of the conferences, at least in Argentina. One of them was a bilateral Argentine-Chilean project with a point of departure classic in textbook research: the study of the image of the neighbouring nation, with regards to possible improvements. However, the output on the Argentine side referred just as much to the Argentine self-image transmitted through the textbooks.³⁹ Other comparative, bilateral studies included an article by Liliana M. Brezzo on Paraguayan and Argentine textbooks.⁴⁰

2.3 Textbook studies in Argentina

There are a considerable number of works that deal with Argentine textbooks, but most of them are rather short articles with a limited scope. This means that many issues have been touched upon, but there are few in-depth studies, at least among the published works. Most of the research, here as in other countries, has concentrated on books in actual use at the time of the investigations; while there have been relatively few historical projects. Within the group of works that deal with textbooks of the past, most have analysed primary school texts, whereas there have been fewer studies of secondary level history textbooks for the same periods. Some of these previous studies, however, are quite relevant to my own work and have constituted valuable points of reference on certain aspects.⁴¹

three conferences were published in the following issues of *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* (Frankfurt): 13, No. 4 (1991), 445–447; 14, No. 3 (1992), 333–335; 15, No. 4 (1993), 481–482.

³⁹ Romero, ed., *La Argentina en la escuela*. The book did not include the comparative aspects of the original project. Cf. below, chapter 2.3. Curiously, there was no mention here of the pioneering, historical antecedents to this initiative in the form of bilateral textbook revision agreements and commissions in the 1930s, referred to above.

⁴⁰ Liliana M. Brezzo, “El Paraguay y la Argentina en los textos escolares: Una perspectiva bilateral de las representaciones del otro”, *Entrepassados* 2001, No. 20/21, 163–194 (on Paraguay in selected Argentine textbooks: 181–186).

⁴¹ The following survey may not be exhaustive, although my original intention was to provide comprehensive coverage of *history* textbook research (not all kinds of textbook studies). The bibliographical part of the research was not easy, for several reasons. These included the lack of comprehensive catalogues/databases, especially with regard to review articles; the incomplete nature of the Argentine National Library, which by no means had registered, let alone collected, all publications of the republic; and the rather fragmented system of the university libraries. Hopefully and probably the situation has ameliorated since I carried out my ground research in the 1990’s, thanks to computerization and systematic textbook database projects, cf. the *Proyecto MANES* referred to above. These difficulties were partly overcome thanks to helpful assistance from experienced librarians and researchers. But the almost haphazard manner in which I came across certain works that were not mentioned in any of the bibliographies consulted, makes me suspect that there might still be more out there, in particular within the rich flora of reviews published by the provincial universities, as well as in the form of unpublished theses, seminar papers, et cetera. If I have omitted any important contribution to this field of study, despite my efforts to the contrary, this is of course regrettable. A bibliographical survey on history textbook research in Argentina until 2000 was published in 2001 by Palmira Dobaño Fernández, Mariana Lewkowicz, Román Mussi and Martha Rodríguez: “Los libros de texto como objeto de estudio: un balance de la producción académica

Several authors had already addressed the issue in the period focused on in this study. The increasing, general interest in the national history elicited writings on history as a subject, on didactic and curricular questions, and on the textbooks. Most of what was written did not amount to actual text *analyses*, but took the form of favourable or (more often) unfavourable, evaluative comments. In addition, there is also biographic and bibliographic literature, especially as some of the textbook authors were well-known personalities, as historians, writers, or in other fields, although the textbook part of their production is usually treated rather peripherally in such works. However, one book stands out as particularly interesting. Rómulo Carbia, a historian of great account in his time, published the first thorough study of Argentine historiography in 1939. In this work, a separate chapter was dedicated to the development of history textbooks, chronologically structured. True, most titles were merely listed with a global characterization. However, the overall perspective was highly critical. Most textbooks, according to Carbia, only served to train the students' memory. Furthermore, he held that the least adequate books were the ones most widely diffused. More interesting, however – and rather unusual in historiographical literature, I think – was the way in which Carbia included some textbooks in his general inquiry into the history of Argentine history writing. In particular some of the earliest texts were attributed a far from trifling influence in that respect.⁴²

In fact, less attention was given to the history textbooks in the following decades. The 1940s, '50s and '60s saw scarcely a handful of scattered publications, the most important being a little book on the teaching of history in Argentina written by Leoncio Gianello and

1983–2000”, in Martha Rodríguez and Palmira Dobaño Fernández, ed., *Los libros de texto como objeto de estudio: Una apreciación desde la historia* (Buenos Aires: Editorial La Colmena, 2001), 11–32. Almost all the works referred to in this article were also included in my own research and are mentioned here, with a few exceptions regarding studies of contemporary texts

⁴²Rómulo D. Carbia, *Historia crítica de la historiografía argentina* (La Plata: Biblioteca Humanidades vol. 22, Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación, Universidad de La Plata, 1939), the chapter dealing specifically with textbooks on 301–320. References to other passages regarding individual texts will be given consecutively following the progress of my own analysis. The textbook authors treated most thoroughly by Carbia – and whose texts he regarded as most pertinent to the general, historiographical development – were Luis L. Domínguez, José Manuel Estrada, Lucio Vicente López, Vicente Fidel López, and Clemente L. Fregeiro. A shorter version of Carbia's historiographical work was published in 1925. Rómulo Carbia had also published an article on (or rather against) the Argentine history textbooks entitled "Los malos textos escolares: Cómo se enseña historia a los niños" (*Nosotros* 12, No. 110 (1918), 254–262), which, unfortunately, I was unable to obtain. His concern found even more practical expressions: He published his own history book for the primary school: *Lecciones de historia argentina* (Buenos Aires: 1917), while at the same time engaging in an ambitious, collective work intended for the secondary level (which was not completed, however, beyond the appearance of the first volume in 1917). It was not possible for me to consult any of the last-mentioned works.

published in 1951.⁴³ This study aimed at situating the place assigned to history within the education system as it existed at the time (and with prospects for the future), taking into account didactic guidelines, curricula and syllabuses, as well as textbooks, without actually analysing them. It also briefly sketched out the historical background, presented as the story of continuous progress. A minor article by María Elena Vela on the presentation of Robespierre in Argentine universal history textbooks was published in France in 1959.⁴⁴ Far more relevant in our context was a lengthy article by the historian Ernesto J. A. Maeder published in 1961 on the centenary of the publication of the first important Argentine history textbook for the secondary school, the *Historia Argentina* by Luis L. Domínguez.⁴⁵ Maeder, apart from providing valuable biographic and bibliographic information, analysed Domínguez's manual from a strictly historiographical point of view, in the tradition of Carbia, and, in consequence, without assessing the work qua *textbook* destined for the school.

In the 1970s and 1980s, some research was carried out along the lines of the critique of ideology mentioned above. The materials used in these investigations were textbooks for the primary school, above all readers. Thus, a research team in 1973 published an analysis of readers used in the province of Buenos Aires. Their objective was to uncover the ideology implicit in the texts by correlating three thematic categories (“nature”, “work”, “history”) with four “discursive modalities” (“description”, “narrative”, “anecdote”, “exemplifying forms”, i.e., fables, etc.). As for the historical category, they concluded that the isolated incident, explained in terms of heroic virtue or mere coincidence or miracle, prevailed in the text, and that the social contradictions which, according to the authors, “generate” history, were thus denied.⁴⁶ A different kind of ideological research on primary readers, carried out from a gender perspective, was presented in the 1980s by the sociologist Catalina Wainerman and others, and by Wainerman and Rebeca Barck de Raijman.⁴⁷ In the first case, Wainerman

⁴³Leoncio Gianello, *La enseñanza de la historia en la Argentina* (Mexico, D.F.: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 1951).

⁴⁴María Elena, Vela, “Robespierre vu d’Argentine”, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* 31, No. 2, (1959), 157–159.

⁴⁵Ernesto J. A. Maeder, “La obra histórica de Luis L. Domínguez”, *Nordeste*, No. 3 (December 1961), 113–166.

⁴⁶Ana María Nethol, Dardo Arbide, Marta Crivos and Stella Ferrarini: “El libro de lectura de la escuela primaria en Argentina”, reproduced in Bini et al., *Los libros de texto*, 127–180 (originally published in the review *Comunicación y cultura* in 1973). Cecilia Braslavsky (in Riekenberg ed., *Lateinamerika*, 46 and 57) referred to an article that I have not consulted from the same period, which dealt with ideological elements in textbooks under the Peronist regime 1946–1955: Julia M. Silber, “El objetivo nacionalista de la educación y la incorporación de la enseñanza religiosa durante el período peronista”, *Revista de Ciencias de la Educación* 1972, No. 7 (1972).

⁴⁷Catalina Wainerman, Elizabeth Jelin and María del Carmen Feijoó, *Del deber ser y el hacer de las mujeres: Dos estudios de caso en Argentina* (Mexico, D.F.: El Colegio de México – PISPAL, 1983); Catalina Wainerman

analysed the presentation of women's participation in working life, as found in readers used during the first Peronist regime (1946–1955), as well as in other, non-educational kinds of material from the same period. In the second, the authors, on a broader basis, traced sexist tendencies in readers from the beginning of the twentieth century until the most recent times (and, not surprisingly, they found a lot). None of these works, however, dealt with *history* textbooks.

However, in the late 1970s some research was carried out at the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo in Mendoza by the historians Martha Páramo de Isleño and Florencia Ferreira de Cassone focusing on history manuals for the secondary school. In this case, the didactic approach, within which a perspective concerned with the patriotic and national identity objectives of the teaching of history was given a privileged site, was predominant. Tests that revealed poor results in terms of historical knowledge in selected groups of students led to a questioning of the current state of the subject, which included an analysis of some of the texts most widely used at the time. The authors deplored, in particular, the relative neglect of the most recent history of Argentina (among their findings was the circumstance that less than 10% of the space in manuals that treated the contemporary history of Argentina was dedicated to the post-1880 period).⁴⁸

Taken together, what had been published on Argentine history textbooks until well into the 1980s amounted to very little. However, it must be kept in mind that for many years, universities and other centres of research lived under exceptional circumstances. The intervention of the universities following general Onganía's *coup d'état* in 1966, the extreme politicization of the campuses in the early 1970s (which, seemingly, might turn the writing of scholarly, academic works into a questionable waste of energies), and, above all, the traumatizing effects of the military *Proceso* from 1976 – these events seriously affected the

and Rebeca Barck de Rajjman, *Sexismo en los Libros de Lectura de la Escuela Primaria* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del IDES (Instituto de Desarrollo Económico y Social), 1987).

⁴⁸Florencia Ferreira de Cassone, "Enseñanza de la historia argentina contemporánea en el nivel medio" (Mendoza: Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras (unpublished dissertation), 1976); Martha Páramo de Isleño and Florencia Ferreira de Cassone, "Diagnóstico de la enseñanza de la historia argentina a partir de un cuestionario base", *Cuadernos del Centro Investigaciones Cuyo* 1978, No. 7, 81–112. As to the nationalist tendency, the following statement appears as if echoing Ricardo Rojas and other advocates of "patriotic education" from the beginning of the century: "Y ocurre entonces que [el joven] se adhiere, de una manera apasionada y a veces fanática a esquemas ideológicos contrarios a nuestro ser nacional". Ferreira de Cassone, "Enseñanza de la historia argentina", 1976, 28–29. However, as these lines – obviously by involuntary coincidence – were written precisely in the sinister moment when thousands of young Argentines labelled in similar terms were (or were about to be) brutally slain, they leave the reader with a most uneasy feeling in retrospect.

stability and opportunities for research of the entire academic community.⁴⁹ The picture is of course simplified – a lot of good research was evidently carried out all the time, in Argentina as well as by exiled Argentines. Indeed, it is way beyond my competence and pretensions to assess these developments globally. Only this: That no aspect of Argentine intellectual history in this period – not even the very modest parcel constituted by textbook research – can be approached without taking into account this general, political background.

By far the greatest part of the research in this field has been done during approximately the last twenty years. The aforementioned German-Argentine textbook conferences – and, generally, the continued collaboration with the Georg-Eckert-Institut – were an important source of inspiration in this work, though other, more or less simultaneous projects were carried out independently. Researchers with different disciplinary points of departure – pedagogy, history, sociology, linguistics – have all used textbook materials in their own manner and for varying purposes.

A heterodox, highly suggestive, and equally provocative contribution came from Carlos Escudé, who turned to the study of educational history in search of explanations for Argentina's decline or "failure", as he (and so many others) perceived it, not least in matters of foreign policy, his speciality. First, he analysed geography textbooks, for the primary as well as for the secondary level, from 1879 to 1986. His concern was with territorial nationalism (the presentation of the Falklands/Malvinas and other litigious territories, the notions of "lost territories" in the nineteenth century, etc.), the excessive development of which, culminating in the disastrous war of 1982, he described as counter-productive and even "pathological".⁵⁰ He claimed to have discovered one of the principal causes of the "disease" in the contents of primary education. This led him to an investigation of educational policy, centring his analysis on the "patriotic education" fomented by the Consejo Nacional de Educación, which governed the federal sector of primary education. His particular focus

⁴⁹Cf. Tulio Halperín Donghi, "Un cuarto de siglo de historiografía argentina (1960-1985)", *Desarrollo Económico* 25, No. 100 (January–March 1986), 487–520, 487 and 502ff.; likewise, the experiences expressed by several of the historians interviewed in Roy Hora and Javier Trimboli, *Pensar la Argentina: Los historiadores hablan de historia y política* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones El Cielo por Asalto, 1994).

⁵⁰Escudé, *Patología* (the part dedicated to textbook analysis on 111–159). For an article version on the same subject in English: Carlos Escudé, "Argentine Territorial Nationalism", *Journal of Latin American Studies* 20, (May 1988), 139–165. Escudé's thesis in this regard had earlier been presented in a study of Argentine geography textbooks from 1879 to 1986. Carlos Escudé, "Contenido nacionalista de la enseñanza de la geografía en la República Argentina", 1879–1986, *Ideas en Ciencias Sociales* 1986, No. 9: 3–43. On the acknowledgement page of the first-mentioned publication Escudé referred to complementary research on history textbooks carried out by former students under his guidance and to be continued by one of them, but I have not been able to trace the eventual outcome of those investigations.

was on the policies formulated in the period from 1908 onward as expressed in the official review for the primary school, the *Monitor de la Educación Común* from 1900 to 1950.⁵¹ He concluded that an extreme authoritarian nationalism had replaced the liberal tendencies that existed earlier, that it largely persisted through all the subsequent political changes, and that as a result, Argentine culture was permeated with anti-liberal and authoritarian attitudes. Although Escudé convincingly established that such tendencies were generally present in the materials selected for analysis, the generalizing conclusions he drew from the findings invited objections. First, the dualist division of the educational establishment at the turn of the century into “true liberals” (the good guys), on the one hand, and “authoritarian nationalists” (the bad guys, disguised as liberals), on the other, might seem too simplistic. Secondly, it seems far from unproblematic to extend the conclusions based on findings in *one* single source (though no one has doubted the significance of the *Monitor*) to the whole educational system (and practically the entire population).

Escudé’s thesis was not rejected, but certainly modified, in a research project carried out by Cecilia Braslavsky, as part of a broader programme of investigations in Argentine education. Braslavsky examined the uses of national history in about a hundred primary school textbooks from 1853 to 1930 (readers as well as history and civics texts).⁵² Inspired by Moses Finley’s concept of historical myths, she formulated two basic myths that according to her findings ran through the great majority of textbooks: First, the myth of national origin, consecrating the 1810/1816 events and evidenced among other things in the spatial priorities, which she found had remained practically unaltered throughout the period. Second, was the myth of continuous progress, which would be definitely established only after 1916 and which implied an insistence on individual virtues, industriousness, etc., in pursuit of the ever-increasing national prosperity. More notable, perhaps, was her claim that the corpus examined – apart from the common features already mentioned – presented a plurality of historical approaches, categorized according to different models of “uses of history”, in particular before 1916. In the following period, this heterogeneity to some extent gave way to a more

⁵¹Escudé, *El fracaso*.

⁵²Cecilia Braslavsky: "Der Gebrauch der Geschichte im argentinischen Erziehungswesen (unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Lehrbücher für den Primarbereich) 1853-1930", in Riekenberg ed., *Politik und Geschichte*, 155–178; Braslavsky, “Los usos de la historia”. In another article (in Riekenberg ed., *Lateinamerika*, 45–57), Braslavsky considered the balance of Argentine textbook research to that time, and inserted the study of contemporary textbooks in an educational context. A brief and rather superficial analysis of eight history textbooks for the secondary school was included, apparently abstracted from a work by Hilda Lanza: *La imagen de América Latina en los libros de texto de historia del Ciclo Básico de Contenidos Mínimos* (Buenos Aires: FLACSO (serie documentos e informes de investigación), 1988).

uniform, nationalist model, but a “mixed” model that integrated different uses previously found separately in different texts, and even then maintaining a certain degree of diversity. Hence, Braslavsky maintained that the contents of primary instruction *alone* could not explain a general disposition toward authoritarianism.

Other researchers have investigated more specific aspects of the historical contents of primary school textbooks.⁵³ A semantic-ideological analysis of five history textbooks from 1952 to 1978, concerning their presentation of the European discoveries, conquest, and the colonial period, was presented by Martha Amuchástegui in 1987, emphasizing, among other things, the stereotyped description of the Amerindians and the lack of substantial changes in the historical discourse over the period studied.⁵⁴ From a somewhat similar perspective, Honoria Zelaya de Nader and María Suayter de Iñigo studied the presence – or, according to their findings, rather the absence – of immigrants in readers from the first four decades of the century.⁵⁵ An original, linguistic approach was applied by Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux in the study of one particular text, one of the first history textbooks that appeared in Argentina.⁵⁶ As part of a broader, political-ideological investigation of the first Peronist regime (1946–1955), Mariano Plotkin analysed 35 readers regarding the politicization of their contents.⁵⁷ Finally, Emiliano Endrek presented a study of the teaching of history on the elementary level in the period from 1900–1939, related to various contemporary sources, including textbooks.⁵⁸ The textbooks themselves were not analysed however, but were referred to via comments in the

⁵³In the last-mentioned article in the preceding note, Cecilia Braslavsky referred to the following unpublished works on primary school textbooks, none of which I have been able to consult: A. Entel: “La imagen de los procesos sociales en los libros de lectura (1930-1982)” (Buenos Aires: FLACSO, 1984) (dissertation); S. Gvirtz and G. Diker: “Análisis de la interpretación que se le daba a la temática social y particularmente a la historia en los libros de texto de escolaridad primaria entre 1890 y 1930” (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, cátedra de Historia de la Educación Argentina, 1985) (monograph); M.A.S. de Iñigo Lindow: “Presencia de la inmigración en los libros de lectura: 1900-1940” (Buenos Aires: Jornadas de Cátedras de Historia de la Educación, 1989) (paper); D. Roldán: “Historia y moral en el discurso escolar” (Buenos Aires: 1989) (report).

⁵⁴Martha Amuchástegui, “El discurso de la historia argentina en los textos de primaria”, *Cuadernos de Historia Regional* 3, No. 9 (August 1987), 9–33.

⁵⁵Honoria Zelaya de Nader and María Suayter de Iñigo, “La inmigración en los libros de lectura: 1900-1940”, *Propuesta Educativa* 2, No. 2 (May 1990), 96–99. The materials examined were said to include about a hundred readers from the province of Tucumán. However, there were only references to eight texts. This four-pages article may perhaps be the summary of a more comprehensive investigation.

⁵⁶Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux, “Reformulación y modelo pedagógico en el ‘Compendio de la historia de las Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata’, de Juana Manso”, *Signo & Seña: Revista del Instituto de Lingüística de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras* 1992, No. 1, 131–150. More on this article below, Chapter 6.

⁵⁷Mariano Plotkin, *Mañana es San Perón: Propaganda, rituales políticos y educación en el régimen peronista (1946-1955)* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 1994), the chapter dealing with the textbooks on 171–208.

⁵⁸Emiliano Endrek: “La enseñanza de la historia argentina y americana. 1. Nivel primario”, in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 353–370.

contemporary bibliography. Indeed, what this article above all evidenced was the considerable interest in the issue manifest in the early twentieth century.

In turning to history books for the secondary school, a contribution of particular interest was a series of articles written by Ana María Barletta and Gonzalo de Amézola. One examined the relationship between the subject “history” as experienced in the college versus the experience at the university, including an analysis of the (sometimes obscure) modes of historical explanation found in the textbooks.⁵⁹ In another, the historians from the university of La Plata showed how elements of “liberal” and “revisionist” interpretations of Argentine history had been integrated in 19 textbooks of relatively recent date, documenting that revisionist views, contrary to what most people believe, entered the textbooks to a considerable extent, above all from about 1970 onward.⁶⁰ Finally, de Amézola studied the historical contents of the civics textbooks (the subject-matter was then called *cultura ciudadana*) that appeared in the final years of the first Peronist regime (1946–1955). He established that whereas the history textbooks proper generally followed a traditional course without major alterations under Perón (even if certain changes had been underway already in the previous period), the new civics manuals were informed by a neatly revisionist interpretation.⁶¹ The curious result was that, via the two different subjects, two incompatible historical discourses were sustained simultaneously, both with the approval of the educational authorities.

A varied group of articles exist, which treat different partial aspects of contemporary college textbooks.⁶² Susana Aruani from the Universidad de Cuyo analysed the presentation of American history (as compared with Argentine and European) in six manuals, reaching the

⁵⁹Ana María Barletta and Gonzalo de Amézola, “Esquizohistoria e historiofrenia: Del secundario a la carrera de Historia y vuelta al secundario”, *Entrepasados: Revista de Historia* 2, No. 2, (1992), 89–102.

⁶⁰Amézola and Barletta, “¡Mueran los salvajes secundarios!”. Their conclusions in this regard differed somewhat, at least in emphasis, from the ones found in Romero, ed., *La Argentina en la escuela*, referred to below. The last-mentioned work gave no reference to the earlier studies published by Amézola and Barletta.

⁶¹Gonzalo de Amézola, “El pasado servicial: Elementos revisionistas en los textos de Cultura ciudadana (1952-1955)”, *Clio & Asociados: La Historia Enseñada* 1996, No. 1, 43–57.

⁶²One article is not mentioned in the following main text, because it had no reference to any actual textbook: Miguel Angel Santagada, “El conocimiento de la sociedad en los manuales de historia”, *Signo & Señal: Revista del Instituto de Lingüística de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras* 1992, No. 1, 153–164. It might be added here, however, as it contained a theoretical discussion of textbooks (whether they convey knowledge that makes possible a comprehension of and participation in the social reality or not), and because the author gave advance notice of a treatise on textbooks and metahistory (which I was not able to trace, however). Neither have I been able to consult two works by Silvia Finocchio, referred to by Cecilia Braslavsky in Riekenberg, ed., *Lateinamerika*, 75: “Una reflexión para los historiadores: qué llega de nuestra producción a la escuela media” (Buenos Aires: 1989) (unpublished manuscript); “Programas y textos en la historia de cuatro asignaturas de la escuela media”, *Propuesta Educativa* 1989, No. 1.

overall conclusion that, apart from considerable differences between the texts, they generally managed to integrate the history of the rest of Latin America in dealing with the colonial period, but not in the parts dedicated to contemporary history.⁶³ Hans-Joachim König examined whether the economic and social factors of Argentine development in the late nineteenth century were adequately presented in six textbooks, and reached the hardly surprising conclusion that, with one exception, they were not.⁶⁴ (At the same time, König documented the rather shocking one-sidedness that continued to colour the treatment in the manuals of the wars with the Amerindians of the same period.) In the same direction, Hilda Sabato deplored the absence of any coherent presentation of economic history in six textbooks consulted, as well as the presence of an “amorphous”, neutral mass of information without an interpretative framework or a guiding perspective.⁶⁵ Still within the economic dimension, the German historian Nikolaus Werz tried to assess the way seven Argentine history and civics textbooks presented the relations between industrialized and developing countries.⁶⁶ He found that Argentina’s relations with other countries (mainly Great Britain and the USA) were interpreted in bilateral terms, not from a North-South perspective, and that Argentina was not presented as a Third World country (results contrasting with his previous readings in Venezuelan, Brazilian, and German textbooks). Silvina Gvirtz compared the images of Great Britain in Argentine texts with the presentation of Argentina in corresponding British manuals in a study that, among other things, stated that the Argentine texts tended to treat the other country mainly in relation to political history, whereas the British mentioned Argentina in the context of commerce and economic history.⁶⁷ Eduardo

⁶³Susana Aruani, “América en los textos históricos argentinos” (Warsaw: paper presented to the VI Congress of the FIALC in Warsaw 22.-27.7. 1993). Susana Aruani also touched on history textbooks (two, to be precise: one old and one new) in a small article written with Nieves Mignani, in which they compared semantically the concepts used to interpret the European discovery of America: Susana Aruani and Nieves Mignani, “Los conceptos históricos: Método de explicación”, *Educación Cuyo* 1994, No. 4, 241–249.

⁶⁴Hans-Joachim König, “Los factores del desarrollo económico y social en Argentina y su presentación en los libros de texto”, *Propuesta Educativa* 4, No. 7, (1992), 5–10.

⁶⁵Hilda Sabato, “Del sin-sentido a la interpretación: notas sobre la presentación de la Historia económica en los textos escolares”, *Propuesta Educativa* 4, No. 7, (1992), 11–14.

⁶⁶Nikolaus Werz, “La presentación de las relaciones entre países industrializados y sociedades en desarrollo en los libros de texto argentinos”, *Propuesta Educativa* 5, No. 8, (1993), 5–12. Nikolaus Werz also reviewed a new textbook, which, according to the author, brought a renewal of Argentine textbook production: “Historia 3. Edición Santillana, Buenos Aires 1990”, *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 13, No. 4, (1991), 441–443. Something of a curiosity, the review of an Argentine schoolbook, in German, in a German review!

⁶⁷Gvirtz, “Das Bild des anderen”. Also in the field of British-Argentine relations, a comparative study of British and Argentine presentations of the Malvinas/Falklands War in different categories of popularized history, including a few textbooks, was carried out by the Norwegian historian André Johansen: “Las Malvinas son argentinas: Falklandskrigen og patriotismen: En historiografisk analyse av argentinske fremstillinger av krigen” (Trondheim: Norges Teknisk-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet, 2007) (unpublished dissertation).

José Míguez, on the basis of an ideological-historiographical analysis of history as a school subject, in which he maintained the prevalent thesis of a continued “liberal” hegemony in contrast to what had happened in the rest of Argentine society, discussed the use of historical sources in the textbook, so far a badly exploited pedagogical tool, according to the author.⁶⁸ An uncommon approach, focusing on the different factors that condition the *production* and *distribution* of textbooks in Argentina, was taken by Edgardo Ossanna, stressing in particular the tensions between the ideal of scientific rigour and political-ideological demands.⁶⁹ An important point made here was the cleavage between academic history and textbook production, the two having been better connected at an earlier historical stage.

In the search for *historical* investigations in secondary school history textbooks, I found, within the field of universal history, an article by Carmen Pelosi on the image of the French revolution in seven Argentine texts from 1912 to 1930 (some of which were translations of French manuals).⁷⁰ As for the teaching of *Argentine* history in the first four decades of the present century, Jorge María Ramallo compiled a survey that included references to a substantial number of textbooks, along with curricular documents and contemporary methodological literature.⁷¹ Although he did not actually analyse any of the textbooks, Ramallo quoted evaluative statements of the time in some of the most important cases.

The historiographer Fernando J. Devoto, who has published prolifically on several aspects of the development of Argentine history writing as well as on the history of immigration, combined these two perspectives in an important article on history textbooks from 1912 to 1974.⁷² His point of departure was the Creole, nationalist revival after the turn of the century, which implied that the study of the national history was assigned a central function in creating and fortifying a national identity. With the avail of the republican

⁶⁸Míguez, “Reflexiones sobre la enseñanza de la Historia”.

⁶⁹Edgardo Ossanna, “Los libros de texto para la enseñanza de la Historia: entre la científicidad y las demandas político-ideológicas”, *Propuesta Educativa* 5, No. 8, (1993), 29–35. The article also included a brief description of the historical development of Argentine history textbooks. *Ibid.*, 31–33. This part, however, contained a number of inaccuracies: It appeared as if neither the subject of Argentine history, nor textbooks for its instruction had existed before 1884, and the texts written by Domínguez and López (thick volumes of several hundred pages each) were dismissed as mere “summaries” (cf. my presentation of the issue in the following chapters). However, there was also an interesting comparison between different editions of Levene's influential textbook.

⁷⁰Carmen Pelosi, “La imagen de la revolución francesa en los manuales de enseñanza secundaria (1912–1930)”, *Revista de Historia de América* 1990, No. 109, 5–18.

⁷¹Jorge María Ramallo, “Enseñanza de la historia argentina y americana. 2. Nivel secundario”, in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 371–386.

⁷²Fernando J.Devoto, “Idea de nación, inmigración y ‘cuestión social’ en la historiografía académica y en los libros de texto de Argentina (1912–1974)”, *Estudios Sociales* 1992, No. 3, 9–30..

authorities, then, both the academic institutions of history and Argentine history as a school subject developed rapidly. The interaction between the two was emphasized in Devoto's article. Hence, he dedicated most attention to those textbooks whose authors were at the same time prestigious historians, and who often devoted much energy to various forms of popularization, whereas Grosso's texts, for instance, were not included in the analysis. The content analysis itself established that only a negligible (and in the classroom, perhaps, actually neglected) part of each text dealt with the post-1862 period, and that immigration and topics from social history were practically ignored. Devoto hinted that the heavy concentration on the cult of the heroes from the *Independencia* might have been functional in relation to the nation-building purpose. However, the same tendency continued throughout the period studied. Some texts, influenced by revisionist views, might evaluate certain events or personalities in different ways, but the basic priorities regarding themes and historical periods would remain the same. Devoto's own explanations were basically historiographical: The authority of the models established by prominent historians/textbook writers like Levene would be long-lived, and even more so as later authors were not themselves leading historians of their time. The relative autonomy of this tradition seemed to make even the question of curricular changes a matter of secondary importance for a long time.

A broader textbook research project complemented Devoto's study in the sense that it documented the continued predominance of a basic model for understanding the national past, the one that had been transmitted by leading historians of the so-called "new school" in the early twentieth century, in history textbooks from the last half of the twentieth century. As Devoto had done, the research team led by Luis Alberto Romero pointed to the successful impact of the early models, the following rupture between academic history and textbook production, as well as to the conservative nature of educational institutions, favouring continuity. They found certain nuances between the texts with regards to the inclusion of revisionist elements into a basically traditional version of Argentina's history, but chose to focus on what they described as a uniform and "commonsensical" image of the nation and its history. If anything, their findings indicated a reinforced nationalist orientation, especially in the growing insistence on a territorial perspective. Major changes were, however, registered from the 1980s, following the development of democracy.⁷³

⁷³ Romero, ed., *La Argentina en la escuela*. This book only recaptured parts of the original research project, which started out as a bilateral, comparative project shared between a Chilean and Argentine team. On the Argentine side, a conference was held in 1998, and a series of papers and articles were produced. The book enumerated 22 articles, as well as a report produced by the Instituto "Ravignani" of the University of Buenos

For the years prior to the period studied by Devoto, a significant contribution has come from the German historian Michael Riekenberg. His main project was to analyse the development of a national, historical consciousness in the Plate region from 1810 to 1916.⁷⁴ This work was based on a variety of sources, representing different categories of historical discourse on the nation. History textbooks were therefore but one of the sources used. This meant on the one hand that the textbook part of Riekenberg's analysis was not in itself comprehensive, nor was each text analysed in a very systematic manner, but on the other hand, it did contain valuable – though not necessarily indisputable – global interpretations of important textbooks and groups of textbooks. According to Riekenberg, the emergence of Argentine history writing, as eventually of history textbook-writing, was conditioned by the political rivalries following the downfall of Rosas in 1852 and the pragmatic necessities of coming to grips with a seemingly chaotic past in a way that made sense in the process of constructing a new, republican state. From the 1880s, the stress on “state patriotism” and social control became more important. As for the textbook contents, Riekenberg too pointed to the 1810 revolution and the years of the independence wars with their heroes as the shared focus of attention in most texts. However, he underlined the diversity found in the material. In the first decades of textbook development, there was no single, “official” version of the national past. Two other historians who researched the history of the concept of the nation in Argentina, José Carlos Chiaramonte and Pablo Buchbinder, also touched upon the history textbooks in the nineteenth century in an article which, however, primarily aimed at

Aires. Ibid., 14–16. I have only consulted the book, which summarized the results regarding the concept of the Argentine nation in textbooks on the subjects of history, geography and civics. Cf. above, chapters 1 and 2.2. Partial aspects of this study were also presented in Luciano de Privitellio, Silvina Quintero Palacio and Luis Alberto Romero: “La identidad nacional en los manuales de historia y civismo entre 1960 y la reforma educativa”, in Rodríguez and Dobaño Fernández, ed., *Los libros de texto*, 33–54. (Results from this project as well as from the earlier work by Carlos Escudé also served as starting points for another study carried out by researchers connected to the team from the Universidad Nacional de la Pampa referred to below, this time investigating through oral history how the “school creation of the Malvinas” had contributed to shape people's experiences of and responses to the Malvinas/Falklands war in 1982. Cristina Marí, Jorge Saab and Carlos Suárez, with contributions from Lidia Giufra, Marina Gerszenszteig et al., “Trás su manto de neblina...’ las Islas Malvinas como creación escolar”, *Revista de Teoría y Didáctica de las Ciencias Sociales* 2000, No. 5: 25–59.)

⁷⁴Mikael Riekenberg, *Nationbildung: Sozialer Wandel und Geschichtsbewußtsein am Río de la Plata (1810-1916)* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert Verlag, 1995), the section dealing with textbooks on 142–152. Riekenberg also treated some of the same issues in a comparative analysis in which the Argentine case was contrasted with Guatemala, describing the political uses of history in the two countries. This work did not, however, include any analysis of textbooks. Riekenberg, ed., *Politik und Geschichte*, 11–154. An earlier, thematic article dealt with the presentation of the *caudillismo* phenomenon in the textbooks of various Latin American countries, including a few Argentine manuals. Riekenberg, ed., *Lateinamerika*, 127–142.

determining the influence of constitutional historians in the prevailing image of how the Argentine state and nation had originated.⁷⁵

A project more directly related to my own was carried out by a team of historians from the Universidad Nacional de La Pampa. Interestingly, their research programme focused on history texts for the secondary level from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The published output of this work that has been available to me was a contribution to an anthology of articles on history textbooks, all written from a historian's point of view. Here three of the textbook authors who are also included in my own corpus were situated in the context of historiography and educational history: Clemente L. Fregeiro, Vicente Fidel López and Ricardo Levene. (López's textbook had also been treated separately in two previous, monographic articles by historians from the same team.) However, apart from a case study of the presentation in two of the texts of the Uruguayan leader Gervasio Artigas, there was no in-depth analysis of the contents. Still, the general approach bore similarities to the present study. The authors insisted that the textbooks of this early period were subject to a vivid public concern and were considered more interesting from a historiographical point of view than later textbooks. These textbooks laid the foundations for what would, decades later, condense in an "official history", but in themselves they presented a plurality of interpretations of the past.⁷⁶

Thus far, our synopsis of Argentine textbook research has produced a considerable number of titles. But if we limit our attention to historical investigations in history textbooks for the secondary school, it is by now clear that not too much has been published, in particular concerning the early period. Three or four analyses – short, but suggestive – deal directly with

⁷⁵José Carlos Chiaramonte and Pablo Buchbinder, "Provincias, caudillos, nación y la historiografía constitucionalista argentina, 1853–1930", *Anuario del IEHS* [Instituto de Estudios Histórico-Sociales] 7, (1992), 93–120. Some of the views regarding textbooks presented in this article will be discussed in connection with my own analysis.

⁷⁶Jorge Saab, Carlos A. Suárez, José Maristany and Laura Sánchez: "De Fregeiro a Levene: Apuntes para una historia de los manuales de historia", in Rodríguez and Dobaño Fernández, ed., *Los libros de texto*, 55–87. I became aware of this project only recently, and, accordingly, the similarity of some overall perspectives and conclusions has been reached through independent work on both sides. Specific observations regarding the texts by Fregeiro, V. F. López and Levene are commented below in Chapters 12, 14 and 17, respectively. The readings of López in particular by these authors were also published in the following two articles, both referred to below in Chapter 14: Jorge M. Saab and Carlos A. Suárez, "La invención de López: El 'Manual de la Historia Argentina' de Vicente Fidel López", *Clio & Asociados* 3, (1998), 60–74; Laura Sánchez and José Maristany, "La 'novela' de Artigas en el Manual de la Historia Argentina de Vicente Fidel López", *Quinto Sol* 2000, No. 4, 141–158. Other articles in the anthology edited by Rodríguez and Dobaño Fernández, apart from those mentioned above, include a contribution by Ariel Guance on the presentation of the Middle Ages in textbooks; a comparative analysis of contemporary Argentine and Uruguayan textbooks by Mariana Lewkowicz and Román Mussi; and a study by Sarah A. Robert of gender-related changes in the production of history textbooks, also focusing recent developments.

materials that will also be included in my own inquiry and provide perspectives relevant to my own work.

On the other hand, there is a considerable bibliography in adjacent fields from which I have benefited in this study: works on educational history, historiography, cultural history, nationalism. It makes better sense, though, to refer to them wherever their use has been pertinent than to put the reader's patience to the test by making yet another list at this stage.

3. The approach: Theoretical and methodological considerations

The present work is about textbooks. Everybody knows what a textbook is. However, as explained above, in reality we deal with a complex and far from unambiguous phenomenon, hence it is not all that easy to give a satisfactory definition of it. Pragmatically, and without universal pretensions, I define the concept as follows: A textbook is a published book on a specific subject-matter written to serve the teaching and learning of that subject at the primary or secondary educational levels, and intended to be used by both teachers and students. Given the variety of existent teaching aids, there might be numerous borderline cases. However, regarding the period concerned, and for the corpus established for my analysis, this definition does not pose major problems. Only one of the selected texts, analysed in some detail (for reasons that will be given in due course), may be considered a doubtful case in certain regards, at least from a formal point of view.⁷⁷

It might be said that this study of textbooks is perhaps not primarily a piece of “textbook research” (or *Schulbuchforschung*). It is not my purpose to contribute to the improvement of textbooks. Nor is the supreme objective to understand teaching and learning processes, or the school system to which these texts belong. The educational context will certainly be present, as I will frequently resort to the history of education throughout the work. But the general approach is not concerned with pedagogy or didactics. Had that been the case, the outcome presented on the following pages would have turned out to be quite unsatisfactory.

I raise the textbook issue from a historiographical point of view, using this notion in a broad sense. I read the history textbooks as one among several expressions of the historical consciousness and the historical culture of a given society within a delimited, historical time span. To be more specific, it is the cultivation of and consciousness of the *national* history that constitute the object of my study, to the extent that these concerns were coined in the form of coherent narratives of the country’s and the nation’s past. In this case not the narratives produced by “higher” scholarly or academic history – an area which is much better researched in advance (historiography in the narrower sense) – but rather what most people would regard as “minor” history writing, but which possesses the asset of having reached the widest audience, namely, the histories produced for consumption in the schools. Now this is

⁷⁷José Manuel Estrada, *Lecciones sobre la Historia de la República Argentina*, 2 vols., 3rd ed. (1st ed. 1868) (Buenos Aires: Editorial Científica y Literaria Argentina, 1925).

in itself a comprehensive subject, which can hardly be analysed in minute detail within the limits of a single work (or the attempt to do it would result in a bewildering mass of particularities). In order to be manageable, the research could then be focused by selecting a certain topic – an event, a sub-period, a thematic aspect, a key concept – whose presentation in the texts would subsequently be filtered through a detailed grid of preset categories. I applied such a procedure in earlier research on Spanish textbooks from the Franco era.⁷⁸ Here, however, I have preferred another, in many ways more vulnerable and subjective approach: To try to grasp the overall, global interpretations or interpretative handles – fashioning what might be styled the predominant visions of the *patria* – used by the different authors as they formulated distinct versions of the national history. In spite of all the methodological weaknesses inherent in such a hermeneutic-descriptive approach, it will hopefully enable me to better assess the history textbook production as an expression of – and contribution to – the making of a national, historical culture, developed by and along with the nation-state in question. The development of textbook history must be viewed in the light of the ongoing nation-building process. As a basis for a meaningful interpretation of the textbooks, it will therefore be necessary to read them in relation to the general history of Argentine society in the period concerned, in particular with regard to its political, ideological and cultural aspects. They should also be read in relation to the educational policy that conditioned the development of history as a subject, and in relation to historiographical history: the making of Argentine history writing at large. Thus presented, several aspects of the project require further clarification.

First, it is necessary to assess more precisely the possibilities and limits of textbooks as a source for the understanding of national history within an epoch. It should be emphasized that textbook contents and teaching contents are not synonymous. There is for instance, the variable of the teacher's intervention: prioritizing materials within the texts, interpreting and perhaps criticizing the texts, adding other content to what is presented in the texts, and so on. The further back we go in time, the more difficult it is to identify and evaluate this factor. Especially in more recent times, following more democratic and participatory pedagogical ideals, the students might also intervene with the same effects. Even more removed from the textbook contents – and of equally difficult access in a historical investigation – is the actual learning of history: What knowledge and which visions of the national past did the students in

⁷⁸Torleif R. Hamre, "Historielærebøker i Spania under Franco: Framstillinga av den 2. Republikken og Borgerkrigen" (Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo, 1988), unpublished dissertation.

reality internalize, having followed their courses in Argentine history? Then there are all the extramural factors that intervene in the making of a historical consciousness: oral traditions, historical contents in the current political discourse, in books of fiction, in magazines and newspapers, eventually in films and radio broadcasts, et cetera – not to mention all the media that appeared in later times. Some people even read scholarly history books and articles.

Hence, the source value of the textbook itself is relative. Nevertheless, it has its pros. Compared with other educational sources, it is of a material and enduring nature and therefore relatively accessible (along with curricula, other legal or bureaucratic documents, methodological handbooks and other printed materials). The textbook generally has some kind of official status – whether outright in the form of being an officially approved text, or indirectly to the extent that teachers, students, and parents bestow such a status upon it, by virtue of tradition or otherwise. In Argentina, in the period studied, both mechanisms are relevant (though the workings of the approval system are sometimes difficult to trace). More often than not, the textbook is imposed on all students in a given class; consequently it is in some sense elevated above individual choices, likes, and dislikes. Textbooks are often printed in large numbers, with several reprints and editions, and may be used by even more people, often over a period of many years (though this obviously has to be considered in each case, some textbooks turn out to be commercial failures that hardly reach any classroom at all). Last, but not least, the textbook remains an important pedagogical tool in the teaching of most theoretical subjects. In earlier times this applied even more – in the period examined here, it was *the* basic teaching aid – from which follows that textbooks are a particularly useful and adequate source in *historical* investigations. As Bernd Schönemann stated (referring to materials used in a study of German history textbooks from approximately the same time, that is after the foundation of the unified *Reich*):

Wer genauere Aufschlüsse über die Intentionalität vergangenen Geschichtsunterrichts gewinnen will, der muß sein Augenmerk in erster Linie auf die Geschichtslehrbücher richten, denn sie waren damals die konkurrenzlosen Leitmedien des Unterrichts und erreichten bei relativ geringer Distanz zur Unterrichtspraxis einen relativ hohen Grad an Differenziertheit in der Darstellung von Geschichte. Ihr Quellenwert ist auch deshalb beträchtlich, weil wir es bei ihnen noch mit Produkten einer vorcurricularen Didaktik zu tun haben: der direkte Schluß von den Lehrbuchinhalten auf die Unterrichtsziele, der sich bei der Untersuchung moderner Arbeitsbücher gewissermaßen von selbst verbietet, ist daher methodisch durchaus zulässig - einer der seltenen Fälle, in denen es heutzutage noch angebracht sein dürfte, einen Mangel an Lernzielorientierung als Vorteil zu empfinden.⁷⁹

⁷⁹Bernd Schönemann, "Nationale Identität als Aufgabe des Geschichtsunterrichts nach der Reichsgründung", *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 11, (1989), 107–127.

Had the sole aim of this study been to examine the uses of history for nation-building purposes, textbooks for the primary school would probably have constituted the optimal source. They affected by far the greatest number of people, and their contents could most easily and freely be arranged due to a relatively higher degree of dissociation from academic history writing, which to some extent, is restrained by scholarly requirements. At the same time, this last point is one of the reasons I decided to focus on textbooks for the secondary school. My approach is historiographical: I want to insert the schoolbook history into the larger history of Argentine history writing, tracing among other things the relationship between academic and school history. This is more feasible working with secondary college texts, with their fuller and more complex presentation.⁸⁰ Furthermore, they more explicitly convey real *interpretations* of the national past, including arguments of a genetic and explanatory nature, whereas such features generally are more implicit in the elementary texts (and have to be reconstructed, for instance by pointing to frequencies of certain topics and images). It might also be adduced that even if only a minor part of the population attended secondary school, that portion included the more powerful and influential strata of society, whose concepts of the nation and its past, with projections for the future, are obviously not unimportant. Finally, there is a pragmatic argument: Secondary school textbooks from the period concerned have been less researched than the ones for the elementary level, as mentioned in the previous section.

In any case, the emergence of Argentine history as a school subject, textbooks included, in the last decades of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries, must be understood in the context of the multiple endeavours aimed at shaping, formulating and strengthening a specific, Argentine national identity at that time. On the one hand, these efforts reflected a global trend – this was indeed the age of nationalism – with strong European models.⁸¹ On the other, there were strong internal factors, especially from about 1880 onward, favouring such an orientation: the edification of a nation-state with increasingly

⁸⁰For similar reasons I have not included the texts on Argentine history written in foreign languages (Italian, English, French, and others) for use in the schools of various immigrant communities, although these sources might be interesting enough in themselves from other perspectives. See Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 316–317.

⁸¹General works on nationalism consulted: Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 1983; Anthony D Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991); Greenfeld, *Nationalism*; Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. On the relative relevance of Anderson's theory with regards to Spanish American cases, see for example: Anthony McFarlane, "Identity, Enlightenment And Political Dissent in Late Colonial Spanish America", *Transactions of The Royal Historical Society* 8, 6th Series, (1998), 309–335; Torleif R. Hamre, "Nasjonsoppfatning og nasjonsbygging i La Plata-området i det 19. århundre". *Historie: populærhistorisk magasin* 8, No. 1, (1998): 70–79. Cf. also the various articles by José Carlos Chiaramonte listed in the bibliography.

centralized powers, economic growth, urbanization, and other processes of economic and social change, which also implied increased levels of social conflict. Above all, was the next to omnipresent phenomenon of mass immigration. To put it simply, Argentine society underwent rapid changes and became increasingly complex and heterogeneous, something which created preoccupations and led many people to search for elements of coalescence and integration. The attempts to formulate a collective identity embedded in history were one expression of that reality, but for the very same reason that was not an easy enterprise. Many aspects of this process have been studied in a wide range of works that, without addressing the textbook issue, provided useful insights and perspectives that helped me situate my own project in a broader context. These include works dealing with political and ideological history;⁸² with the relationship between immigration and nationalism or national identity (integration, assimilation versus multicultural diversity, creolization, etc.);⁸³ as well as with the history of literature (“high” and “low”) and other specific fields of cultural performance.⁸⁴

Even if, to a considerable extent, I interpreted each of the most important history textbooks as an individual project – an uncommon approach in textbook research – this is admittedly far more problematic within this genre than when dealing with, say, scientific texts or works of fiction. Though any text is contextually and historically conditioned and is thus the outcome of more than the sheer creativity of the author (or the author and the publisher), the impact of external determinants, in particular of a legislative and institutional nature, is likely to be much stronger in the case of textbooks. The textbook author (as well as the

⁸²Among others: David Rock, *Argentina 1516–1987* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd. Publishers, 1987); Leslie Bethell, ed., *Argentina Since Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Natalio R. Botana, *El orden conservador: La política argentina entre 1880 y 1916*, 4th ed. (1st ed. 1977) (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1994); Tulio Halperin Donghi, *Argentina en el callejón* (Buenos Aires: Compañía Editora Espasa Calpe Argentina/Ariel, 1995) and *Una nación para el desierto argentino* (Buenos Aires: Editores de América Latina, 1997); Bertoni and de Privitellio, ed., *Conflictos en democracia*; Svampa, *El dilema argentino*; Oscar Terán, *En busca de la ideología argentina* (Buenos Aires: Catálogos Editora, 1986).

⁸³Carl Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism: Argentina and Chile, 1890-1914* (Austin/London: University of Texas Press, 1970); Eduardo Archetti, “Nationalisme, football et polo: Tradition et créolisation dans la construction de l’Argentine moderne” *Terrain* 1995, No. 25, 73–90 and “Hibridación, diversidad y generalización en el mundo ideológico del fútbol y el polo”, *Prismas: Revista de historia intelectual* 1, No. 1, (1997), 53–76; Fernando J. Devoto, “¿Inventando a los italianos? Imágenes de los primeros inmigrantes en Buenos Aires (1810-1880)”, *Anuario del IEHS* [Instituto de Estudios Historico Sociales] 7, (1992), 121–135; J. C. M. Ogelsby, “Who Are We?: the Search for a National Identity in Argentina, Australia and Canada, 1870–1950”, in D. C. M. Platt and Guido di Tella, *Argentina, Australia and Canada: Studies in Comparative Development 1870-1965* (Oxford: St Anthony’s College/The MacMillan Press, 1985), 110–122.

⁸⁴Adolfo Prieto, *El discurso criollista en la formación de la Argentina moderna* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1988); María Rosa Lojo, *La “barbarie” en la narrativa argentina (siglo XIX)* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Corregidor, 1994); Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina*; Svampa, *El dilema argentino*; Beatriz Sarlo, *Una modernidad periférica: Buenos Aires 1920 y 1930* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Visión, 1988); Doris Sommer: “Irresistible romance: the foundational fictions of Latin America”, in Homi K.Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London/New York: Routledge, 1990), 71–98; several articles in *La Junta*, vol. 2.

publishing firm) must adapt his or her product to the didactic purpose it is intended to serve, to the expectations of teachers, students, and parents, to the prescribed curriculum and the syllabus of the subject-matter, and, more often than not, to the requirements and preferences of some kind of authorizing body. The textbook is a servant of the existing education system and a subordinate to laws and bureaucratic dispositions, and these conditions determine its content just as much as the mind and hand that actually write the text. In short, the history of education cannot be left out of account.⁸⁵ Even so, there remains a margin of individual choice; though in a varying measure, the author enjoys some amount of liberty in modelling the text. Whether the view of the textbook as an individual enterprise is an important perspective in the analysis can only be decided in each case, taking into account the particular country, the period, and the corpus selected. When dealing with the history textbooks of Francoism in Spain, for instance, this kind of approach seemed irrelevant, given the heavy and homogeneous political instrumentation manifest in the texts *en bloc*.⁸⁶ When studying the foundation of the Argentine textbook tradition, however, this way of presenting the issue appears to me as a more reasonable possibility.

The textbooks of that period were obviously based on readings in Argentine history. Textbook authors related their work to a historical production of a relatively recent date, if not necessarily to the very latest versions available from the hands of the historians. Argentine history writing and Argentine history as a school subject developed simultaneously – in fact, they both responded to strong cognate incentives in the period concerned. Hence, it seems

⁸⁵Some of the works on educational history consulted: Juan Carlos Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad en la Argentina (1880-1945)*, 2nd ed. (1st ed. 1986), (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Solar, 1993); Manuel Horacio Solari, *Historia de la educación argentina*, 14th reprint (1st ed. 1949) (Buenos Aires/Barcelona/Mexico D.F.: Editorial Paidós, 1995); Ethel M Manganiello, *Historia de la educación argentina: Periodización generacional*, 4th ed. (1st ed. 1980) (Buenos Aires: Librería del Colegio, 1987); Escudé, *El fracaso*; John E. Hodge, “The Formation of the Argentine Public Primary and Secondary School System”, *Americas* 44, No. 1, (1987), 45–65; Luis Jorge Zanotti, *Su Obra Fundamental*, Vol. 2 (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigaciones Educativas, 1993); Tulio Halperín Donghi, *Historia de la Universidad de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1962); Carlos Leonardo Vicente Newland, “Buenos Aires no es Pampa: La educación elemental porteña 1820-1860” (Leiden: Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, 1992) (unpublished thesis); Jorge María Ramallo, *El Colegio y la Universidad de Buenos Aires en la época de Rosas* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Braga, 1992); Mark D. Szuchman, “En busca del respeto, educación y formación cívica en la Buenos Aires del siglo XIX”, *Cuadernos de Historia Regional* 4, No. 12, (1988), 5–24. With regard to the relationship between education and nationalism or national identity in particular: Lilia Ana Bertoni, “Construir la nacionalidad: Héroes, estatuas y fiestas patrias, 1887-1891”, *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana “Dr. E. Ravignani”*, 3rd series, No. 5 (1st semester 1992), 77–111; “Soldados, gimnastas y escolares: La escuela y la formación de la nacionalidad a fines del siglo XIX” *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana “Dr. E. Ravignani”*, 3rd series, No. 13 (1st semester 1996), 35–57; “Nacionalidad o cosmopolitismo: La cuestión de las escuelas de las colectividades extranjeras a fines del siglo XIX”, *Anuario del IEHS [Instituto de Estudios Histórico Sociales]* 11, (1996), 179–199.

⁸⁶Hamre, ”Historielærebøger i Spania under Franco”.

logical to understand the latter in the light of the former. On the other hand, the two were not the same, and the elements of connection or dissociation between textbook history and academic history varied among the authors. Some books were written by teachers, who might be more or less up to date with regard to the ultimate developments of the discipline. However, some of the most important textbooks of the period were in fact written by leading historians (something that would not be the case to the same degree in later years, from the 1940s onward). There is every reason to view the history of textbooks in the context of Argentine historiography, with its shifts and controversies.⁸⁷

These considerations have determined the structure of the dissertation: First, I will outline the institutional framework that makes possible a reading of the texts in their societal context, in particular with regard to the educational and historiographical developments, before proceeding to the textbook analysis. The texts will then principally be treated in chronological order, with relatively more attention to those considered most important, either because there are indications that their use was widespread and prolonged, or because they presented innovative features. This implies a certain degree of subjectivity on my part – however, the priorities are not arbitrary, and the reasons underlying them will be stated in each case. The decision to analyse each textbook (in some prolific cases, each authorship) separately has been taken mainly in order to facilitate the comprehension of the global or overall vision of the national past that characterizes each of them. This approach also helps to catch the variety and the degree of diversity within the body of textbooks at each stage, and to catch it not only in the form of anonymous variations within general patterns. This has appeared to me as a particularly fruitful handle for the early period dealt with here. Later on, both the consolidation of a textbook tradition and the rapid expansion of a lucrative market would increasingly encourage publications that were, in the main, imitations, or which slavishly elaborated each and every item listed in the syllabus without conveying a distinct conception of the subject. Accordingly, had the study been carried further, it might have proved more adequate to comment on certain groups of texts collectively.

Part II, Chapters 6-9, deals with the origins of the Argentine history textbook between 1861 and 1880. First, the establishment of the institutional conditions for its emergence will be presented, then the very few manuals produced in that period will be analysed. The period

⁸⁷Numerous historiographical works will be referred to throughout the dissertation. Titles that specifically deal with the relationship between history writing and the notions of nation/nationalism/national identity, may in particular be found in the references to works by Michael Riekenberg, José Carlos Chiaramonte, Pablo Buchbinder, Fernando Devoto, and Diana Quattrocchi-Woisson.

stretching from 1880 to 1912, in most respects *the* essential period for the purpose of this study, will be dealt with in part III: Chapter 10 regarding the institutional framework, and Chapters 11-16, analysing the texts proper.

There is admittedly a real danger inherent in the chosen method: The presentation might turn out to be a series of disconnected, miniature monographs. This will be counteracted partly by comparative considerations and cross-references along the way, and partly by collating the analyses in the concluding section of each part.

Another relevant objection is that my approach might leave the analysis at the mercy of the textbooks to an alarming degree. It is not a good thing to be governed by the sources. Moreover, interpretations determined by the premises set by each text make comparisons among the texts difficult. But in reality, even if I try to assess the specific character of each textbook, the basic questions asked do not arise from those texts – they mainly result from the troubles experienced in the mind of a foreign historian from another age trying to come to grips with an evasive reality. Hence, the questions asked and the issues raised share a common point of departure, even if the hermeneutic interaction with each text produces a result that may not be symmetrical with all the other readings presented. The textbooks themselves represent attempts made more or less simultaneously (within each sub-period), conditioned by not too dissimilar social and cultural premises, to reconstruct representations of a shared – if equally evasive and even inaccessible – reality, namely the Argentine past. Enough points of reference should be left to render feasible a meaningful collation between the different interpretations, even when they are established separately.

The problem of subjectivity remains. A subjective agent conceives, filters, organizes, and evaluates the contents of each textbook in the present dissertation. The result is obviously not indisputable – and may, in fact, be disputed at every step thanks to a dense referential apparatus. One might ask if it would not have been better to lower (not eliminate) the degree of subjectivity by using different methods, in particular by applying quantitative analyses more frequently and by organizing the findings according to a more rigid and detailed categorical grid. The problem is in part practical: The textbook material of the period consists of tens of thousands of pages, and each text usually of several hundred pages. In order to base the study on such procedures, it would only be practicable to carry out rather narrow research, strictly delimiting the thematic or chronological object to be studied within the texts (by way of example “causal explanations of the Independence”, or “the image of Rosas”). Though such partial analyses may prove interesting in themselves, they are nevertheless not the most

apt to answer what appears to me to be the essential question: How did the textbook authors proceed in order to give the young generations of the new nation a coherent and meaningful story of “their” past with which they might identify? This is a major question, but one that is difficult to handle through presentation of a neat analysis that appears “scientific” and “objective”. The dilemma was thus expressed by Egil Børre Johnsen:

Liberal, open categorization usually combines an interdisciplinary perspective and a broad outlook with corresponding limitations on verifiability and scientific character. The more narrow the categorization, the greater the reliability – and the greater the corresponding reduction in perspective.⁸⁸

These apologetic reflections are not intended to dismiss the relevance of the objection, which has already been admitted. I would only adduce that subjectivity is present in any piece of text analysis – as indeed in every work of humanistic research. Although this element might seem comparatively high in studies like the present, at least it is not concealed. Most importantly, the findings on which my conclusions are based will be documented as thoroughly as possible. Accordingly, the interpretations should, in principle, be verifiable.

What can we expect to find? An anticipated pre-interpretation of the materials might run as follows: The Argentine history textbook for the secondary school might, at the outset, take as models several different versions of the nation’s past. Though certain historical works were particularly influential and certain concepts and topics predominated, there existed no single, homogeneous, “official” history. This relative plurality of origins is likely to be reflected in some measure in the textbooks of the early period. Even so, several common traits may probably be identified. A strong emphasis on political history is virtually inevitable, given the general characteristics of the historical discipline at the time. More specifically, the events surrounding the 1810 revolution and the following struggle for independence would expectedly be given a prominent place in practically all the texts.

Most of the common features to be found in the textbook discourse at each stage should be explained by the combined influences exercised by contemporary political, ideological, educational, and historiographical factors. Most important of all is the circumstance that the national, historical syntheses were created in a simultaneous process along with the nation. But that contemporary reality was often experienced as so labile and over-complex (due to the effects of mass immigration, and rapid economic and social

⁸⁸Johnsen, *Textbooks in the Kaleidoscope*, 341–342. Johnsen also cited Lise Tøgeby on the same point (142): "The problem is that the more objective and quantitative the description of the content, the less interesting it becomes. Quantitative content analyses frequently produce reliable, but trivial results."

transformation, etc.), that the most attractive alternative appeared to be to resort to an older Argentina, creating a sense of unity by projecting the national community backwards. That the favourite choice would then be *Independencia*, was only to be expected, both from a nation-building perspective (the origins of national sovereignty), from a pedagogic-edifying perspective (the truly “heroic” and hence exemplary stage of Argentine history), and from a storyteller’s perspective (the grand epic). But the historians’ and textbook authors’ narratives also came to include the political conflicts and the civil wars of the early independent period among their prioritized topics, thus moving to more shaky ground with contemporary, potentially conflict-generating implications. The textbook histories themselves could not help becoming politically and historiographically controversial, and their authors had no way of escaping the antagonisms of their own times.

As a consequence, then, the image of the “official” and “liberal” history imparted in the school arose, mainly as the objective of attacks, as it was perceived to be unilateral, narrow-minded, obsolete, and either classist or lacking in patriotic zeal. Resentment at the textbooks imposed on schoolchildren was (and is – this is a next to universal phenomenon) understandable, unavoidable, and probably healthy as the sign of a vigilant and critical, public opinion. Nevertheless, I sincerely believe that the diversity of the early moment, when no “orthodoxy” had yet been established, would in some sense be continued, or at least would not disappear outright. Even when, roughly in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the textbook tradition was consolidated, and a prestigious, history writing “establishment” took office (in a literal sense creating and occupying the posts dealing with Argentine history) simultaneously. Not only do I expect to find significant individual differences between the texts at each stage. The global tendencies within the textbooks viewed collectively are also likely to have changed over the time. The force of tradition might have been strong – as, indeed, is the notorious impact of inertia. However, the textbook authors were probably not all insensitive to the substantial changes in what might be called the cultural climate of Argentine society that occurred during the period studied – for instance, in the form of new conceptions of the Argentine identity under the impact of mass immigration, or the kind of preoccupations that would later give rise to “revisionist” interpretations of the national history.

To assess if and to what extent a unified model of historical interpretation with regard to the Argentine past was established in the textbooks, to describe the main characteristics of

the model or the models presented, and to identify the variety existent at each stage and the changes produced over the time, that is the purpose of the present study.

4. The sources

History textbooks for the secondary school constitute the basic primary sources upon which this investigation is based. For the analysis proper, a total of 12 manuals were used (21 if we count the different editions studied), written by nine authors.⁸⁹ To be completely exhaustive, all textbooks for this level published in the period examined should have been included in the corpus. However, this analysis is based on a selection of texts. First, because it is delimited to the books I was able to obtain when the research groundwork was carried out in the 1990s. Second, because I excluded a few texts from the corpus in order to make the in-depth analysis I wanted to pursue manageable and, also, to avoid too many redundancies. Nevertheless, the resultant selection should be broad, varied and representative enough to serve the purpose.

Most of the researchers who have carried out historical investigations on textbooks complain about the problems involved in obtaining the texts. Experiences from other countries indicate that this is by no means a specifically Argentine problem. Among other things, it has to do with the low prestige attached to outdated textbooks by the public, as well as by the academic community. Due to their relatively elementary level, they are not usually to be found in university and other scientific libraries. In college libraries, they are readily disposed of for space-saving reasons or in order not to confuse the students, who, naturally enough are thought to be better off with more up to date books. In public libraries they might disappear for the same reasons, and also for another: While the manuals are still in actual use, they are often so intensively consulted that they are rapidly worn out (or, in many instances, it is apparently too tempting not to return them). As explained in an earlier section, reliable bibliographic information may also be difficult to find.

Despite such limitations, I do not doubt that the materials analysed are *reasonably* comprehensive and representative enough to permit general conclusions. The books that are most difficult to come by are, in general, also texts that had a relatively limited circulation. They are usually books with only one edition (and no reprints) and written by relatively less well-known authors. As far as I know, the most important titles – supposed to be important by virtue of repeated new editions and reprints and/or the significance of the authors – are all

⁸⁹The figures do not include the few texts for the primary school that for specific reasons are also referred to in the dissertation. A work published in two volumes – a common practice – is counted here as one textbook. The analysis chapters will include textbooks by the following authors, cf. the source register as well as references in the corresponding chapters: Luis. L. Domínguez (Chapter 8), José Manuel Estrada (Chapter 9), Lucio V. López (Chapter 10), Clemente L. Fregeiro (Chapter 12), Benigno T. Martínez (Chapter 13), Vicente Fidel López (Chapter 14), Alfredo B. Grosso (Chapter 15), Vicente Gambón (Chapter 16) and Ricardo Levene (Chapter 17).

included. The instances of texts referred to in the literature, or indexed in library catalogues, but which, nevertheless, have proved impossible to actually find, will all be stated for each pertinent sub-period, along with the few books I have deliberately excluded.

Theoretically, it might have been possible to use more sophisticated criteria of selection. For example, if all the publishers' statistics had been available, the number of copies printed of each book (all impressions added) would be a useful indicator to estimate the quantitative importance of the texts. This is perhaps possible in some instances, for example, when dealing with large publishing houses of long standing that still exist. In many cases, however, the efforts to hunt for such data would most probably be in vain. In any event, it would involve time-consuming investigations. For my purpose the more approximate indicators mentioned seemed sufficient. The same criteria – indications of wide-spread use in the form of repeated editions and impressions, as well as contemporary or later statements regarding the books, and, finally, even my own subjective evaluations of the historiographical significance of certain texts – have also determined the degree of importance attached to each text, as expressed in the relative space dedicated to its analysis. Accordingly, on the account of an intended and in my view justified asymmetry, there will for example only be short chapters on the rather short-lived texts by Benigno T. Martínez or Lucio V. López, whereas the final chapter on Ricardo Levene's textbook by far will exceed the space dedicated to any of the others. It was simply more important, more lasting in its use and influence, and it summed up and combined so many of the elements found in the books written by Levene's predecessors.

In order to obtain a fairly broad selection of texts, it is necessary to look for them in several different places. Many of the textbooks used were found in the Biblioteca Nacional or in the Biblioteca Nacional de Maestros (a pedagogical library under the Ministry of Education), both in Buenos Aires. A substantial number of texts were consulted in the Argentine section in the library of the Georg-Eckert-Institut für internationale Schulbuchforschung in Brunswick. Repeated searches through the second-hand bookshops of Buenos Aires also produced quite a few textbooks. Others were provided by the libraries of the Colegio Nacional Buenos Aires, the Colegio del Salvador in the same city, and the Editorial Angel Estrada, as well as by the Biblioteca Nacional del Congreso (Buenos Aires) and the Biblioteca San Martín (Mendoza). Finally, a few textbooks were kindly placed at my disposal from private book collections. The search produced a considerable collection of

textbooks, many of which were eventually excluded from the analysis, however, following a more precise delimitation of the period covered by the investigation.

Next to the textbooks, the most important sources for the teaching of history are the official guidelines that regulated the instruction of the subject and also, to a considerable extent, the textbook production. The curricula (*planes de estudio*) gave each mode of education its general structure, distributing the subjects to be taught each year, specifying the number of periods per week, and briefly indicating the pertinent sub-discipline or part of the subject (formulated, for example, as “contemporary history, Argentine and American”).

Subsequently, these plans were elaborated in syllabuses (*programas*), which listed in a more or less detailed manner the topics to be included. Other relevant administrative sources – most of them take the form of ministerial decrees or circulars – are the ones concerned with textbook approval and textbook revision, those dealing with the professional requirements of history teachers, regulations of commemorative, patriotic acts, et cetera. Such documents may be found in the bulletins published by the ministry (though not for the entire period examined, the secondary level had no equivalent to the *Monitor* for the primary school), and also, as separate publications in the form of booklets.

Partly due to a certain degree of administrative discontinuity as to the forms of announcement and publication, it was not always easy to trace these documents. I found that the most efficient gateway to a greater part of the sources was the ministerial documentation centre, the Centro Nacional de Información Documental Educativa, in Buenos Aires. Much of the material used was consulted there. However, when I intended to complete this part of the research in 1997, the documentation centre, as well as the Biblioteca de Maestro, was temporarily closed down because of renovation works in the beautiful cream-gateau-house in Pizzurno where it is located. The original decrees of the Ministerio de Justicia e Instrucción Pública are stored at the Archivo General de la Nación in Buenos Aires. Even if a couple of years are lacking, they have proved useful, not least because they include the various *planes de estudio* (unfortunately not the *programas*). For the nineteenth century, a very handy aid has been a detailed report put out by the Ministry of Education in 1903 as background material for a proposed reform initiative, and which reproduced the basic documentation.⁹⁰ Generally,

⁹⁰*Antecedentes sobre enseñanza secundaria y normal en la República Argentina: Presentados al H. Congreso de la Nación, en Noviembre de 1903, y con cuyo estudio previo, se han dictado los decretos de Enero 17 y 28 de éste mismo año, reorganizando la instrucción secundaria y normal* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Justicia é Instrucción Pública, 1903).

combining the sources, I have been able to consult the most important documents. Unfortunately, there are a few exceptions, for instance regarding certain syllabuses. To remedy this defect, I have sometimes been obliged to resort to information found in the secondary bibliography, for instance in contemporary treatises on the didactics of history. A few textbooks also included the syllabus as an appendix.

For contemporary views on the subject of history at each stage, there exists a body of articles and books that express the concerns of the time from different perspectives, including educational policy, national identity, scholarly history writing, and didactics. Several of these works were consulted.

It might be objected that the use of legislative and other official documents has not been more exhaustive. The main explanation is the extensive character of the textbook analysis itself, something that, for reasons of time and space has limited the extent to which I have included other kinds of source materials in my analysis. In fact, several other possible sources have been omitted altogether. These include newspapers, where issues pertinent to the matter in hand were sometimes debated, speeches referred to, et cetera; records and files of colleges and publishers; various sources concerning the biographies of textbook authors; and the list could be extended. However, this is a study of the contents of textbooks. If the attention dedicated to other sources has been relatively economical, it nevertheless suffices, I believe, to elucidate the main subject: the historical presentations found in the texts.

5. Nineteenth Century Argentina: A summary of the historical background

The following account is intended to provide the reader unacquainted with the history of Argentina with an introductory outline of the main events and developments of the country's history before 1880, in order to make the numerous contextual references throughout the dissertation a little less bewildering. (Those who are familiar with the matter may comfortably skip directly to Chapter 6.) In other words, it is about the history dealt with in the textbooks to be analysed in subsequent chapters. This précis is intentionally biased towards political history – not in honour of a traditional order of priorities, but in recognition of the importance attached to that field of history in the texts. The précis thus concentrates on contents that inevitably will be reflected in my own work because they were essential in the textbooks.⁹¹

Colonial antecedents: The Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata

During the greater part of the colonial era, the actual territory of the Republic of Argentina formed a rather peripheral part of the Viceroyalty of Peru. The few and scattered Spanish settlements only attracted a reduced number of colonists, principally due to two major problems: the lack of precious metals and the shortage of native manpower. Although all the regions were in fact inhabited by indigenous peoples of various ethnic groups, population was sparse in comparison with the great Andean and Meso-American centres of civilization. The simpler and more flexible social organization of the nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples also made them more difficult to subjugate and to control than the subjects of the more complex and rigid political units. (The north-western parts had admittedly been conquered by the Incaic empire at the summit of its power.) In fact, the Amerindians remained masters of more than half the territory well into the independent period.

A long and strenuous trade route connected the small towns of the interior with the mining centres of Upper Peru. The garrison town of Buenos Aires principally served a military purpose in warding off Portuguese expansionist attempts from Brazil, but also became a smuggling harbour, trading silver from Postosí for a variety of import commodities in defiance of the Spanish monopolist policies.

⁹¹For the general history of Argentina, see for example, Rock, *Argentina 1516–1987*; Bethell (ed.), *Argentina Since Independence*; or José Luis Romero's brief, but classic *Breve historia de la Argentina*, 4th ed. (1st ed. 1965), (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica de Argentina, 1997). For the history of the last century: Luis Alberto Romero, *Breve historia contemporánea de la Argentina: 1916–2010*, 3rd ed. (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2012).

Geopolitical motives, primarily related to the Spanish-Portuguese rivalries, also lay behind the creation of a new Viceroyalty, the *Virreinato del Río de la Plata*, in 1776. This covered roughly the actual territories of the republics of Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia, with Buenos Aires as its capital, thus conferring a new significance on this Atlantic possession. The initiative was one of a series of reforms carried out by the Spanish Bourbon kings, in particular by Charles III (1759–1788). The new colonial policies endeavoured to strengthen the Spanish empire vis-à-vis other powers, revitalize the commercial relations between the mother country and her overseas dependencies, and reshape the colonial administration in order to make it more efficient, thus increasing tax revenues. The reforms were at least in part successful, but they could by no means avert the developments that eventually crushed the empire.

The new bureaucratic efficiency itself aroused resentments among all those who had benefited from the lax administration of past days, especially in matters of taxation. Representatives of the Creole (*criollo*) élites also frowned on the economic and political privileges enjoyed by the Spanish-born (*los peninsulares*). However, serious as these conflicts of interest occasionally were, they did not lead to a widespread desire for independence. True, the ideas of the Enlightenment were disseminated in influential Creole circles, and the French and North American revolutions made profound impressions. But these influences usually found moderate, reformist expressions, eschewing the more radical or revolutionary views in Spanish America (where the local élites were careful not to undermine their own privileged social position), as was the case in Spain.

External factors were therefore decisive when revolutionary movements were let loose across the subcontinent in 1810. The course of the Napoleonic wars in Europe had first led to the rupture of Spain's maritime relations due to British naval supremacy. The abortive British invasions of Buenos Aires and Montevideo in 1806 and 1807, repelled by the improvised local militias of Buenos Aires once the Viceroy had proven incapable of defending the cities, both weakened royal authority and enhanced *criollo* pride throughout the region. Subsequently, Napoleon's invasion of Spain (1808) drastically altered the situation. When the Spanish central junta of defence was dissolved after the French capture of Seville in 1810, the rather aristocratic municipal assembly – the *Cabildo* – of Buenos Aires, summoned to confront the political crisis and under the constant pressure of patriotic agitation, on the 25th of May declared the deposition of the viceroy and assumed autonomous authority in the absence of the Spanish king. The rebels admittedly refrained from declaring independence

and pledged loyalty to King Ferdinand VII (whose abdication Napoleon had enforced). Even so, this declaration (and others to follow, as the movement was extended to other centres of the colony) put an end to the Viceroyalty, and for all practical purposes, to colonial rule. Furthermore, the core area of the Plate region was never recaptured by the royalist forces in the course of the long-lasting armed struggles following the 1810 upheavals. The political polarization produced by these wars soon led to full separation from Spain through the declaration of independence of 1816.

1816-1829: Unitarians and federalists in the disunited River Plate provinces

The 1816 Congress in Tucumán, which cut the last formal ties to the Spanish throne, at the same time constituted a political unit called the *United Provinces of the Río de la Plata*. The plural form is highly significant: The Viceroyalty had been held together by a colonial bureaucracy that revolution had swept away, leaving a political vacuum, or rather, a labile situation characterized by a multiplicity of powers and rivalling sovereignties. There was poor communication between the provinces and the economic and social ties between them were weak. The revolution and wars of independence had strengthened the sense of belonging to an American or Spanish American community, which, on the other hand, proved impossible to translate into practical political realities. This Creole, Pan-American identity coexisted with strong local identities – the city, the province – that provided *functional* and not merely symbolic communities. No unified “nation” or “people” existed, and even when attempts were made to construct broader units, the lack of a singular term is suggestive: What existed were *pueblos* and *provincias*. The new states – and, eventually, the new nations – could hypothetically arise from each of those units or from the union between several provinces, whether in the form of a loose confederation or in the form of a federal or unified republic. The territorial outcome of the state-building process was by no means obvious at the time of independence.

The state established in 1816 was therefore more a programme, a project, than a political reality. First, no single unit could conceivably pose as the heir to *all* the former viceregal domains. Paraguay had already set its independent course at the beginning of the independence wars (1811); Bolivia (Upper Peru) would do so at their close (1825), while Uruguay (the *Banda Oriental*) would eventually be established as a buffer state to settle the old Spanish-Portuguese dispute inherited by Buenos Aires and Brazil (1828).

As to the remainder – the future Argentine Republic – political opinion within the ranks of the “patriots” was sharply divided from the May revolution onwards. A conservative, traditionalist current led by Cornelio Saavedra was opposed to a more radical “Jacobin” current initially led by Mariano Moreno. The different factions developed into two distinct “parties” (the “federalists”, *los federales*, and the “unitarians”, *los unitarios*), which took the leading parts in the violent internal conflicts during and after the independence wars. The federalists were zealous champions of provincial autonomy and resented the economic and political supremacy of Buenos Aires, while defending the traditional position of the Catholic Church and the religious orders. In constitutional matters, they tended towards confederate views, conceiving the provinces as sovereign units. The unitarians, regarding the sovereignty as indivisible, favoured a strong central government at the expense of the wilful local leaders, the *caudillos*, who had risen to power during the independence turmoil. In the eyes of the enlightened élite, especially of the capital, the *caudillos* both represented the obscure and backwards colonial legacy and were dreaded as demagogues who appealed to and manipulated the even more ignorant “masses”. The elitist contempt for, and fear of, the lower classes often inclined the *unitario* liberals towards political alternatives just as authoritarian as the ones sought by their opponents. These attitudes sometimes found racist expressions: Representatives of the Creole élite saw themselves as the outpost of white, European civilization on a barbarian continent inhabited by more or less inferior races.

The picture drawn above is oversimplified of course. First, the federal party had many adherents in Buenos Aires as well; the conflict between the capital and the provinces was never the only issue at stake. Secondly, each party contained groups with differing interests and views. Federalism might, for instance, embody the aristocratic views and interests of the great landowners, whereas, on the other hand, radical federal leaders might endeavour to strengthen their popular following through redistributive measures.

All things considered, it is probably advisable not to focus unilaterally on the political-ideological dimension of the conflict. Under the confused and variable relations of power prevailing in the aftermath of emancipation, a wide range of sectional, local, or even individual interests fought to gain positions. People with the economic and/or military capacity to secure influential friendships and a large following of dependent clients, might rise to almost absolute rule within their area. This was the basis of *caudillismo*, in the Plate region as in other parts of Latin America. The *caudillos* fought for their personal interests, but

also for their local community and “their” people. In addition, they might join a political party and subscribe to a political programme.

In the decade following 1810, the unitarians for the most part had the upper hand in Buenos Aires, while the balance of power varied in the other provinces. The paradigmatic expression of *unitario* government was the liberal, progressive, anticlerical, and centralist republic in power in Buenos Aires from 1821 to 1827, above all associated with the name of its most prominent leader Bernardino Rivadavia. But the 1820s were primarily characterized by the increasing predominance of federalism in most provinces. The belief that the entire country could be subjected to a centralized government had been thoroughly shaken by the so-called “anarchy” of 1820, which momentarily even swept away the central authorities of Buenos Aires. In the following years each of the provinces, at least the stronger ones, tended to build and fortify themselves as sovereign units, as kind of “proto-nations”, with their own constitutions and independent institutions. Interprovincial relations – alliances and enmities – were mostly of a diplomatic nature.

In 1827, even the province of Buenos Aires was conquered by the federalists through the election of the moderate Manuel Dorrego as governor. The destitution and subsequent execution of Dorrego in the following year by a unitarian faction led by General Juan Lavalle (infuriated by the treaty of peace with Brazil), indeed turned out to be a Pyrrhic victory. By paving the way for Juan Manuel de Rosas’s rise to power, these events dealt the deathblow to Argentine unitarianism, at least in its “classic” edition.

By 1829, when, for the first time, Rosas was elected governor of Buenos Aires with extraordinary powers, two decades of external and internal strife had passed without any of the many constitutional projects launched having been remotely able to obtain the degree of consensus necessary in order to lay out the constitutional foundations for the construction of a viable Argentine state. On the other hand, the River Plate provinces had successfully defended their independence against the royalist armies determined to re-establish colonial rule, with temporary retreats only in the northern provinces of Salta and Jujuy, but no further (if, with a certain degree of anachronism, one confines oneself to the actual territory of the republic). The military achievements of the “patriots” are all the more remarkable against the sombre political background described above and if one considers the notoriously precarious financial situation of all the revolutionary authorities. Moreover, Argentine arms contributed decisively to the emancipation of all the southern part of South America through the far-famed victories of general José de San Martín’s Andean army in Chile and Peru. From

Suipacha to Maipú, from the fierce resistance of the caudillo of Salta Martín Güemes and his gaucho army to general Manuel Belgrano's flying the white and blue, an interminable and suggestive series of battle sites, names, and events radiated heroism and pride. They constituted a fountain from which edifying narratives could eventually be constructed when, in the full course of time, a nation emerged to celebrate and reconfirm itself. This was the stuff of which a masculine, patriotic epic could be made. Where else could it be found, in the recent history of Argentina?

1829-1852: Rosas and the Argentine Confederation

Nearly a quarter of a century of Argentine history is, by tradition, inseparable from the name of Juan Manuel de Rosas (1793-1877), by far the most controversial figure in Argentine historiography. A rich *estanciero* (big rancher) and officer from the province of Buenos Aires, his military and diplomatic apprenticeship had taken place above all in the frontier land where settlers and indigenous tribes recurrently clashed. Having served the previous governors of Buenos Aires, he fell out with Rivadavia, joined the federal party and led the forces that defeated Lavalle after the coup against Dorrego.

The formal political position held by Rosas during his career was the seemingly limited office of governor of his native province (1829–1832 and 1835–1852). He also took care of foreign affairs on behalf of all the provinces, but these powers had to be periodically delegated to him by the other governors, all of whom represented principally sovereign political units. Though the regime declared its commitment to federalism on every occasion, no federal institutions were established. The larger, Argentine unit was called the *Confederación Argentina*, which implied an interprovincial pact, but without any further constitutional basis.⁹² The point of departure was the *Pacto Federal* or *Pacto del Litoral* made in 1831 between the littoral provinces of Buenos Aires, Entre Ríos, Santa Fe, and Corrientes in opposition to the league of unitarian-led provinces, the *Liga del Interior*, organized by General José María Paz in the previous year. The latter formation rapidly disappeared after a series of military defeats, and all the provinces were integrated into the Confederation. The

⁹²The original Federal Pact (1831) had admittedly included more ambitious proposals: a Representative Commission to deal with common affairs, and the determination to summon a constituent assembly. But the latter never materialized, due to Rosas's resistance, while the essential powers of the federal Commission were delegated to Rosas.

elaboration of a national constitution was not dismissed as unnecessary, but it was postponed indefinitely.

The real power relations were in fact quite different. No one doubted that Rosas was the strongman of the entire country, who never hesitated to intervene in the affairs of other provinces in order to prevent opposition groups from taking power. Rosas found devout allies in several provincial caudillos, but he also turned to violent means to enforce cooperation when that was considered necessary. His later apologists have argued that in this informal way, Rosas in reality prepared the ground for national unification.

In his own province, Rosas always governed with dictatorial powers – with “*poderes supremos y absolutos*”, conferred on him by the legislature. When he was offered the renewal of his governorship *without* such powers in 1832, he declined and instead dedicated his energies to a vast and merciless military campaign against the Amerindians, securing and extending the frontier (1833–1834). Meanwhile, the successive governors – Juan Ramón Balcarce, Juan José Viamonte, and, provisionally, Manuel Vicente Maza – were subjected to hostile pressure from Rosas’s followers, causing their respective resignations. On Rosas’s triumphant return to Buenos Aires, he was given the title of “Restorer of the Laws”. The assassination in 1835 of his sole potential rival, the northern, federal caudillo Juan Facundo Quiroga, optimized conditions for Rosas’s return to absolute power, which was also confirmed by a plebiscite that same year.

The personality cult surrounding the governor and the imposed rituals of professed loyalty towards the regime and its ideology exemplified by the obligatory use of the federal scarlet ribbon, the *divisa punzó*, were followed by the ruthless repression of any signs of political opposition. In particular, during Rosas’s second governorship, and most intensely in the years from 1839 to 1842, this repression amounted to a reign of terror, exercised both on the governor’s direct orders and by the independent actions of the political support organization commonly known as the *Mazorca*. A large number of dissidents, including a host of distinguished intellectuals (and not only from what had been the unitarian camp) went into exile in those years. This aspect of the regime has always constituted the primary point of attack in *antirrosista* history writing, while his defenders have pointed to the repressive and intolerant methods not uncommonly employed by the opposite party as well.

In any case, Rosas’s power did not only rest upon such oppressive resorts. His regime was backed by the Catholic Church, and it apparently enjoyed widespread popular support. Most consistently, Rosas’s government was identified with the interests of the stock-raisers

and meat exporters of the province of Buenos Aires, an increasingly predominant sector of the economy in which the governor himself was a prosperous entrepreneur. The order imposed under the *pax rosista* made possible a sustained, if slow, economic growth. But Buenos Aires continued to monopolize customs revenues and refused to accede to the free navigation of the great rivers demanded by the other littoral provinces, thus hampering their development and creating a potentially dangerous focus of discontent and opposition.

Rosas also had to deal with several external conflicts: with Argentina's neighbouring countries and with the "neo-imperial" powers of France and Great Britain, whose interventions twice entailed the blockade of Buenos Aires (in 1838–1840 by the French only, and in 1845–1848 by both powers). To his admirers, this circumstance made Rosas stand as the firm defender of national sovereignty against imperialist onslaughts. This interpretation applied whether with regard to protectionist elements in his economic policy (which on the whole was rather pragmatic and not subject either to free-trade or protectionist doctrines), or in view of his military achievements, as in the case of the emblematic battle of the Vuelta de Obligado in 1845. Paradoxically, the latter was an Argentine defeat, but one in which a superior French-British naval force trying to thrust open the access to the Paraná River, met with a heroically stubborn resistance. Notwithstanding these conflicts, and despite the British occupation of the Malvinas/Falkland Islands in 1833, Rosas maintained fairly good relations with the British for long periods.

Rosas managed to quell several uprisings in which armies organized by exiled opposition groups as well as rebellious provinces participated. At the same time, both the *rosistas* and their opponents took part in the protracted Uruguayan civil war. In all this, one of Rosas's most important allies was the governor of Entre Ríos and de facto leader of the entire Mesopotamian region, General Justo José de Urquiza. When Urquiza, disgruntled with Rosas and with *porteño* supremacy, finally changed sides and raised the standard of rebellion in 1851 in the name of the overripe task of national organization, this was the decisive step towards the dictator's downfall. Urquiza secured an alliance with Brazil and with Uruguay, lifting the siege of Montevideo and putting out of action his former associates in that country, and organized an army of all *antirrosista* forces under his own command. This army vanquished Rosas's forces in the battle of Caseros outside Buenos Aires in 1852, whereupon the governor resigned and fled to an English exile that would last as long as had his reign of power.

1852-1880: “National Organization” – the foundation of a nation-state

The overthrow of Rosas did not mean the return of unitarianism. The constituent labour, patronized by Urquiza and inspired by the ideas formulated by Juan Bautista Alberdi, among others, had carried a federal orientation from the beginning, but at the same time established strong central powers, particularly in the shape of presidential rule and through the device of federal intervention. The constitution, elaborated in Santa Fe in 1853, with later amendments still in force, was modelled on the constitution of the USA, with a sidelong glance to the experience of the conservative Republic of Chile. In the following year, Urquiza became the first president of the Confederación Argentina (1854–1860), with the national government seated in Paraná (Entre Ríos).

By then, however, Argentina had already, once again, become a divided country. The province of Buenos Aires, zealous of its autonomy, withdrew from the nascent confederation in 1852, established itself as a free state and adopted its own constitution in 1854. But even if the political establishment of Buenos Aires had its strong separatist wing, the view that eventually predominated was that the leading province formed part of the Argentine nation and should in due course be reintegrated, but on its own conditions. This was the opinion of Bartolomé Mitre, the province’s war minister and last governor of the free state (1860). After the battle of Cepeda in 1859, in which Urquiza routed the forces commanded by Mitre, negotiations between the two rival authorities led to the agreement that Buenos Aires would join the Confederation under the slightly reformed 1853 constitution. This was also the final outcome of the conflict, but only after new hostilities had broken out. This time Buenos Aires emerged victorious (the battle of Pavón, 1861). Disagreements within the Confederate leadership, between Urquiza and the new president, Santiago Derqui (1860–1861), contributed to make Mitre the conqueror. As such, he was elected the first president of the united Republic of Argentina in 1862.

The subsequent organization of the institutional foundations of the new nation-state that took place in the following two decades was presided over by three presidents: Mitre (1862–1868), Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1868–1874) and Nicolás Avellaneda (1874–1880). The apparent stability and constitutional regularity of this succession of presidencies conceal a much more agitated and perilous state of affairs: numerous revolts by provincial

caudillos (though they were all defeated), and even by national politicians unwilling to accept electoral defeats (Mitre in 1874), and, not least, the long-lasting and sanguinary war (1865–1870) waged between the Triple Alliance (Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay) and Paraguay, who lost.

Besides, two central issues had yet to be solved. One was the perennial conflict on the Pampas between the independent indigenous peoples and the expansive white settlements, reminiscent of the simultaneous conflicts of the North American prairies. The outcome was also similar: The Amerindians were driven away – or, to a considerable extent, eradicated – in a successful campaign led by General Julio A. Roca and concluded in 1879. The survivors, if not absorbed into the rural workforce, were confined to marginal lands. Shortly afterwards, in 1884, a similar and equally decisive campaign was carried out to the north, in the Chaco region. The state was now able to exercise effective control over all the territories of the republic, and vast regions in the interior and in Patagonia were subsequently opened to colonization.

The question of the federal capital presented another difficult problem that had been central to the political conflicts throughout the postcolonial era. The issue was not so much whether the seat of the federal government should be permanently located in the city of Buenos Aires (as had been provisionally decided after reunification). Rather, it was whether the city should be separated from the province as a federal district or should continue as the head of the single most important province, maintaining the degree of autonomy granted by the federal constitution, while at the same time serving as the national capital. Autonomism remained strong in Buenos Aires, and enjoyed a margin of action that was denied similar tendencies in the other provinces. In this way, Buenos Aires now emerged as the stronghold of “orthodox” federalism as opposed to the increasing power of central government. But even if the privileged position of Buenos Aires was continually reinforced as the city became the main focus of the incipient mass immigration and the new economic growth based on the expansion of the world market, local political ambitions did not in the end succeed either in assuming political hegemony or in defending autonomy. When the *porteño* leaders rose in arms to ward off the federalization of the capital city in 1880, they were thoroughly defeated. The growing central power of the nation-state was an irreversible tendency. This federal state had now become the project of all the provincial élites.

The transformation of the prevailing political priorities was related, in part, to an economic development that, though not as spectacular as it would become in the following

period, at least brought on important changes in areas that had, or obtained, reasonably good access to the markets. The first Argentine railway was inaugurated in the province of Buenos Aires in 1857. Several lines were built in the 1860s and '70s in the densely populated parts of the Pampa, centring on Buenos Aires, and from Rosario to Córdoba, while some more far-reaching projects were also begun that would only reach the more remote towns of the interior in the 1880s or later. The construction and running of the railways in themselves represented an important economic activity. They greatly extended the possible range of commercial agriculture and cattle breeding, they facilitated the settlement of new waves of immigrants, and they linked people and places here as elsewhere. In short, the railways efficiently promoted interprovincial integration and the integration of Argentina into the world economy. The industrialized countries presented a growing demand for the goods Argentina could deliver, not only the traditional salted meat, hides, and leather, but also fats, and, first and foremost in this period, wool. Soon new means of transport and conservation were invented that would revolutionize the country's export economy. In 1876, the first ship constructed to carry frozen beef, the French *Le Frigorifique*, put in at the harbour of Buenos Aires. In the railways, in the business of the *frigoríficos*, and in a wide range of other activities, British expertise and capital played a key role. The close economic relations with Great Britain would eventually be described in terms of dependency and become the object of bitter controversies – but only much later.

In 1869, the first national census revealed a population of slightly above 1,7 million, about three times the estimate for 1810, but less than a fourth of what it would become forty-five years later. The vast majority still lived in the countryside, and for the most part in the regions that had been settled in colonial times. In the 1870s some tens of thousands of immigrants poured into the country each year, indeed a substantial number, but one that would rise considerably in the decades to follow. Argentina was still very much a virgin country, a land to become, the would-be realm of great expectations. The constituent fathers of the 1850s had foreseen a vast colonizing movement sustained by immigration that would tie the country together and create the foundation on which a modern state could rest and a nation could develop. All of this came true (though not in exactly the way envisioned by ideologues like Alberdi and Sarmiento, as the vast majority of immigrants did not come from the industrialized countries of north-western Europe), but in the years before 1880, only the hesitant beginning was made.

II 1861-1880

6. The genesis of Argentine history as a school subject

6.1 Introduction

As indicated in the introductory chapter, 1880 in many ways seems to be a suitable point of departure for inquiry into the history of textbooks in the Republic. The political consolidation of the unified state under the liberal-conservative order inaugurated an era that saw the rapid expansion of the educational system, the development of a national historiography on an academic level, and, most important of all for our purpose, the publication of several textbooks designed and written explicitly to meet the demands of the ever growing number of students and teachers of Argentine history in the secondary (as well as the primary) school. Subsequent chapters will deal more thoroughly with these developments.

Each of these phenomena had its antecedents in earlier republican periods. As regards the secondary schools, the *colegios* had their roots in colonial times, although the independence wars cut off traditions, and later establishments often led a precarious and disconnected existence due to civil strife and other difficulties. The inclusion of history as a specific subject to be studied apart from the classical languages and literatures and from religion and morals, is a typical feature of the nineteenth century; the creation of *national* history as a separate sub-discipline occurred even later, in the second half of the century, and only gradually gathered prestige and priority. As would be expected, the same applies to historical *research* (in the widest sense of the word) in the field of Argentine history. It is, therefore, only natural that *school history-textbooks* appeared late. Although manuals, which included national historical topics, can be traced throughout the whole century, the first genuine representative of the genre, a text of considerable importance, was published in 1861.⁹³ In the following two decades, a few other texts were produced. On the following pages, I will discuss each of the elements mentioned above in some detail.

6.2 The development of the Argentine secondary school until 1880 - a brief outline

In principle, the enlightened elites of the Hispanic American revolutions held optimistic views regarding the possibilities of education as a vehicle both for material progress in accordance

⁹³Luis L. Domínguez, *Historia Argentina: 1492-1820* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Orden, 1861).

with utilitarian views⁹⁴ and for the development of a politically responsible and patriotic citizenry. However, in practice the educational efforts made during the first decades were severely conditioned and limited by the independence wars, the prolonged civil wars, and the general lack of political stability. Budget priorities were inevitably given to military necessities rather than to the educational sector, and continuous development of the school system was made difficult both by the precarious financial situation and by recurrent political changes. In the Argentine case, the decay of educational establishments under the long-lasting, conservative dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas is usually referred to as an additional explanatory factor, although this assertion (as with almost any regarding the *rosista* period) has not passed unchallenged.⁹⁵ There is little doubt, however, that the educational system at all levels remained rudimentary throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

In the period of the so-called “national organization” (*la Organización Nacional*, 1852-1880), some of the foundations were laid for the development of the modern Argentine school system, whose rapid expansion nevertheless took place above all in the following decades. Many of the earlier difficulties continued for a long time, in the first place partly due to the split between Buenos Aires and the rest of the country. Nevertheless, the very same rivalry between the Confederation and the leading single province in the articulation of a legitimate, basic framework on which the new nation-state could be established, led to educational efforts both from Urquiza’s Paraná government and from separatist Buenos Aires, where Domingo Faustino Sarmiento was put in charge of education from 1856 to 1862. The latter, from the outset considered the primary school as the strategic factor not only in national educational development, but also in the whole process of “civilizing” and modernizing Argentina. Sarmiento consequently took initiatives both in the elaboration of textbooks and in

⁹⁴According to Juan Carlos Tedesco, in *Educación y sociedad*, the modern educational debate in Argentina was inaugurated with Manuel Belgrano's *Memoria sobre los medios generales para el fomento de la agricultura, la industria y el comercio* in 1796, in which he among other things proposed the creation of an agricultural school. Well known are the initiatives of Bernardino Rivadavia in the 1820s, also along utilitarian lines, which included attempts to create both a college for the natural sciences and a school of agriculture. See also Solari, *Historia de la educación argentina*, 25ff; Gianello, *La enseñanza de la historia*, 9ff.

⁹⁵An interesting study, though limited to the primary level and to establishments in Buenos Aires in the years 1820–1860, is found in Newland, “Buenos Aires no es Pampa”. Carlos Leonardo Vicente Newland showed how lines of continuity were probably stronger than had usually been assumed if the combined activities of public and private schools were considered, the former gaining ground during the unitarian regime of the 1820s and again with Sarmiento and his adherents after 1852, while the latter prevailed under Rosas, who eliminated public financing of schools in the budgets from 1838 onwards (for this subperiod in particular, see pp 14–59). Also on *rosismo* and education: Halperín, *Historia de la Universidad*, 48ff; Solari, *Historia de la educación argentina*, 65–111 (strongly *antirrosista*); Gianello, *La enseñanza de la historia*, 13. For a revisionist perspective, see Ramallo, *El Colegio y la Universidad*. A study on early 19th century educational initiatives in Buenos Aires considered as a means of social discipline, often resisted by the society in which they were attempted, is found in Szuchman, “En busca del respeto”.

the foundation of a pedagogical review for this level: *Anales de la Educación Común* (1858). As Michael Riekenberg pointed out, a continuous debate on educational questions was now established and accompanied the professionalizing tendency of the sector.⁹⁶

The intellectuals of the *antirrosista* opposition had made a pragmatically and rationally oriented popular education a cornerstone in their liberal programme (cf., Sarmiento's *Educación Popular* from 1849). Through the agency of the schoolmaster, traditional, retrogressive, "colonial" or "barbarian" ways, values and attitudes (on which the anti-liberal *caudillos* were supposed to thrive) would eventually give way to modern, "European" and "civilized" ones, which in turn would favour liberal, constitutional development and economic progress and modernization. This is broadly true even if, as Juan Carlos Tedesco emphasized, Juan Bautista Alberdi – as opposed to Sarmiento – believed immigrants, railways, and laws ("*la educación de las cosas* ") to be far more efficient agents of social change than schools.⁹⁷ But despite the programmes and sincere intentions, the expansion of the public school remained slow until 1880, and only a small minority of the children of school age were reached by it (allegedly 20% in the *city* of Buenos Aires in 1869, 5% in the *province* of Buenos Aires in 1865) while some of the poor provinces of the interior hardly had any public schools at all. La Rioja, for example, was reported to have none in 1863. According to the first national census in 1869, the illiteracy rate was then about 80%.⁹⁸

In the colonial era, the main establishments at all levels of education had been run by the religious orders, primarily by the Jesuits. The University of Córdoba, founded by them in 1622 (and later continued by the Franciscans), remained the only one within the actual Argentine territory throughout the Hispanic period.⁹⁹ Since 1687, it had its own preparatory establishment on the secondary level in the important Colegio de Monserrat, which continued into the independent period. Still, the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 left an educational void that only slowly and painstakingly was filled. In Buenos Aires the secondary establishment known as the Colegio de San Carlos (the Academia Real de San Carlos) was created in 1773, and, although decaying, also continued to function into the nineteenth century through its

⁹⁶Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 138.

⁹⁷Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 26–35. See also Halperín, *Una nación para el desierto argentino*, 39–47, and Solari, *Historia de la educación argentina*, 112–138.

⁹⁸All figures from Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 140.

⁹⁹The University of Chuquisaca in Upper Peru (now Sucre, Bolivia) was the other university of the Viceroyalty and attracted students from all the provinces. *Rioplatense* students also went to the University of Santiago de Chile.

successors and under different names, though in a rather disrupted manner. It would become a dependency of the University of Buenos Aires, which was finally founded in 1821.¹⁰⁰

In the 1850s, within the domain of the Confederation there were two public colleges that taught the classic *bachillerato* subjects that prepared for university studies: The old Colegio de Monserrat in Córdoba and the Colegio de Concepción del Uruguay (Entre Ríos) originally founded by Urquiza in 1849. The latter, for some years, became the most prestigious college in Argentina, attracting outstanding professors (many of them French) and students from all over the country.¹⁰¹ In the state of Buenos Aires, on the other hand, the University was in charge of “preparatory” as well as higher education, and no independent secondary school was established in this decade. The establishment of a college of education was decreed in 1852, but the attempt failed. The private Escuela Normal de mujeres (under the Sociedad de Beneficiencia, for women only) functioned from 1853. The influx of immigrant teachers was one factor that restrained the development of Argentine teachers’ colleges.¹⁰²

During the presidency of Bartolomé Mitre (1862-1868), more attention appears to have been given to the secondary school system than to the primary level. In 1863, Mitre decreed the establishment of the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires, whose certificates, once the initial reluctance had been overcome, would give immediate access to higher courses of study at the university faculties. This in turn became the model of a series of *colegios*

¹⁰⁰Having been abandoned during the British invasions, the Colegio de San Carlos was reestablished as the Colegio de la Unión del Sur in 1817/18, and after the establishment of the University of Buenos Aires in 1821, Rivadavia turned it into the Colegio de Ciencias Morales. Later (1829), it became the Colegio de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, but was closed as a boarding school in 1830. In any case, the University continued to teach the preparatory subjects. Under Rosas, the secondary school was first returned to the hands of the re-established Jesuits (Colegio de Buenos Aires, 1837–1841), then, after the rupture between Rosas and the Society of Jesus, continued as the Colegio Republicano Federal de Buenos Aires (1843–1851). The presentation in this paragraph, as in the following, is mainly based on the following works: *Antecedentes*; Halperín, *Historia de la Universidad*; Ramallo, *El Colegio y la Universidad*; Solari, *Historia de la educación argentina*; and Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*.

¹⁰¹Cf. *Antecedentes*, 49: “... sin disputa la casa de estudios secundarios más perfecta que tenía la República”. The French rector Alberto Larroque, with his progressive educational ideas, strongly influenced the development of this college in its “golden age” (1854–1864). See also Gianello, *La enseñanza de la historia*, 14; Solari, *Historia de la educación argentina*, 123– 128.

¹⁰²See *Antecedentes*, 85ff. According to this presentation, Sarmiento's lack of enthusiasm for new public – especially male or coeducational – colleges of education at this early stage was based only partly on the immigrant argument. It was also partly based on his belief in the superior abilities of female teachers at the primary level to make school a pleasant extension of the maternal care of the home, and the Escuela Normal de mujeres already existed, as mentioned above. The meagre results of the Escuela Normal de Preceptores de Buenos Aires (for men) established in 1865, which was reported to have produced only seven teachers in its six years of existence, might to some extent confirm this scepticism. In Corrientes, an Escuela Normal de Varones was established in 1859. Otherwise, this educational sector (with regards to both its male and female branches) seems to have been neglected throughout the Republic until the close of the 1860s.

nacionales created in the provinces from 1865 onwards. The Paraguayan war from 1865 to 1870 imposed financial restraints and disruptions on the development of these institutions.¹⁰³ As we have seen, the university itself also had a tradition of imparting the instruction that prepared for the baccalaureate. For some time this created a situation of rivalry between the old and new institutions, which was eventually resolved in favour of the national colleges.¹⁰⁴ The function of these establishments was clearly political, and they were seemingly not connected with the economic development of the country in any way resembling the earlier, utilitarian educational ideas.¹⁰⁵ Through a continued, classical-humanistic curriculum directed towards the university, they provided the sons of the elite families of all the provinces with opportunities to prepare themselves for command posts in the new state (and thus eventually merge into a truly *national* elite with a national identity instead of a cluster of different elite groups with marked provincial identities).¹⁰⁶

When Sarmiento gained the national presidency in 1868, renewed attention was paid to the elementary level. Several *escuelas normales* (colleges of education), were now created to qualify teachers for the expanding primary school, making amends for the earlier

¹⁰³According to *Antecedentes*, 51–154, the following *colegios nacionales* were created after the one in Buenos Aires: Five were established in 1865 (by decrees of 1864) in Mendoza, San Juan (based on a college founded by Sarmiento – as governor of his native province – in 1862), Tucumán (with interrupted antecedents from 1854–57 and 1858–61), Salta (based on the Colegio San José from 1862), and Catamarca (where a religious college had existed since 1850). Also by a decree of 1864, the Colegio Nacional del Uruguay (Entre Ríos) was given the same curriculum as the national college of Buenos Aires, as were the five previously mentioned establishments. (The Colegio de Monserrat in Córdoba, on the other hand, got a new curriculum of its own in 1864 that was not identical with the *porteño* model, thus emphasizing its independent tradition.) But in practice, this apparent uniformity of the curricula seems to have been modified by de facto adaptations to local conditions and traditions (still according to *Antecedentes*). Under Sarmiento's presidency, new Colegios Nacionales were established in San Luis (1868), Jujuy (1869), Santiago del Estero (1869), and Corrientes (1869, with interrupted antecedents in the Colegio Argentino from 1853, closed in 1865 due to the Paraguayan war). With the Colegio Nacional de Rosario (1874), each province had its own *colegio nacional*. For a brief survey of this development, see Hodge, “The Formation of the Argentine Public Primary and Secondary School System”. John E. Hodge pointed out the contrast between the high standards of the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires (“one of the finest secondary schools in the world”) and the initial shortcomings of the new *colegios nacionales* in the poor provinces of the interior. See also Solari, *Historia de la educación argentina*, 139–158.

¹⁰⁴See Halperin, *Historia de la Universidad*, 67ff, on these developments seen from the university's point of view. The energetic rector of the University of Buenos Aires, Juan María Gutiérrez, took pains to improve the preparatory instruction in order to meet the competition. In 1868, the university faculties were obliged to admit students with *Colegio Nacional* qualifications without further entrance examinations. In 1883, the Facultad de Humanidades of the University of Buenos Aires closed down the teaching of the preparatory courses. *Antecedentes*, 34–35. But by then the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires had been made a dependency of that very same university faculty, following the nationalization of the (formerly provincial) University of Buenos Aires in 1881, a direct consequence of the 1880 federalization of the capital city. Halperin, *Historia de la Universidad*, 90.

¹⁰⁵Cf. Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 36ff.

¹⁰⁶Cf. Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 140–141.

negligence in this field.¹⁰⁷ In this way an educational sector was created whose importance – through the various activities of the college teachers as well as through their pupils, the would-be *maestros* and *maestras* of generations of Argentines to come – will be discussed below. This also meant a diversification of the secondary level, and the degree and mode of coordination between the *colegios nacionales* and the *escuelas normales* (as to the curriculum) would change several times over the years.

In the 1870s, some attempts were also made to establish technical colleges in the fields of agriculture and mining. The repeated failure of such sincere efforts, not to speak of the very belated development of establishments for industrial training, reveals both elite attitudes towards education and characteristics of the kind of economic development Argentina was about to experience. As Tedesco pointed out: Immigrants would provide the necessary number of skilled workers and engineers. The extensive methods of the dominant agricultural and stock breeding sectors did not as yet require formal, specialized training and the secondary school was still to prepare the Argentine well-to-do youth for political posts and for the traditional liberal professions of law and medicine.¹⁰⁸

6.3 Argentine history as a secondary school subject before 1880

In many countries in the nineteenth century, the development of both academic history and of history as a subject taught at all educational levels seems to have been closely related to the development of the nation-state, of national identities, and of nationalist ideologies. In Argentina, however, the ruling elites before 1880 apparently did not consider history a key subject in their educational programmes – not for the purpose of nation-building, nor as a vehicle of political legitimation of specific regimes, nor as an instrument of social discipline. Over the next decades, this would change radically, most of all because of changes brought by

¹⁰⁷This educational institution undoubtedly had its breakthrough at this moment, even if it is not entirely correct to assert that it was a completely new creation of 1869, as Riekenberg indicated (*Nationbildung*, 141). Antecedents in Buenos Aires and in Corrientes are listed above. The following new establishments are reported in the *Antecedentes*, 1903, 85–107 and 129–165: In 1869, branches of the teachers colleges were established in the *colegios nacionales* of Uruguay and Corrientes. The Escuela Normal de Paraná was founded in 1870, and later (1877) was made a national superior school for the training of inspectors, college of education lecturers, etc. It has been referred to as the *Alma Mater* of Argentine *normalismo*. Zanotti, *Su Obra Fundamental*, 469. See also Gianello, *La enseñanza de la historia*, 27–28; Solari, *Historia de la educación argentina*, 155–158. By that time, an *escuela normal* had also been erected in Tucumán. In Buenos Aires, two *escuelas normales* were established in 1874 (for male and female pupils respectively).

¹⁰⁸Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 36ff.

reactions to mass immigration and to class-based social and political conflicts, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

In the first half of the century, historical topics were taught primarily through Spanish readers, in connection with religion or with text studies in the classical languages and through edifying, exemplary tales in moral (and political-moral) catechisms.¹⁰⁹ That is, history served as an auxiliary discipline long before it was established as a school subject in its own right, so far in accordance with the universal tendency. But even later, in the period of “national organization”, when there were debates over, and a growing public interest in Argentine history, this seems not to have had an immediate impact on the school curriculum. Mitre, who was one of the main founders of Argentine history writing, did not however stress the importance of this subject in his educational policies. Nor did Sarmiento. The structure and contents of secondary education gave rise to a long series of proposals, plans, and debates. However, even if many changes affecting the subject of history were introduced along the road, it was apparently not an important issue in any of the central discussions until the end of the century (as compared for example, to the extensive arguments for and against Latin and Greek, scientific subjects, or modern languages).¹¹⁰

However, history had been introduced as a specific subject and was included in the curriculum of all the *colegios nacionales* and *escuelas normales* established in this period.¹¹¹ For a long time, however, the history that was taught remained first and foremost *universal*, that is European history, even if national as well as American history was also listed in the

¹⁰⁹Cf. Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 142–144 on these texts.

¹¹⁰This is perhaps the most striking tendency with regards to the subject of history throughout the nine hundred pages of the *Antecedentes*, which covers the debates on and reforms in secondary education until 1903.

¹¹¹History was also taught at some of the earlier colleges. *Antecedentes*, 5–107, gives the following information: Already during the Independence war, history seems to have been included as a subject at the college established by the initiative of San Martín in Mendoza (1818). At the University of Córdoba, “elementary history” was reported to be imparted in the upper classes of the preparatory courses from 1857 onwards, with imprecise indications that it had also been taught in the 1820s and the early 1850s. History formed no part in the curriculum of the preparatory courses of the University of Buenos Aires (with its college when it existed) before or under Rosas. The “plan de estudios” of 1865 listed history as one of the subjects to be taught in the first three out of six classes. The failed *escuela normal* project of 1852 in Buenos Aires would have included history, the instruction plan even specifying *national* history. In the Colegio del Uruguay, according to the curriculum established in 1855, history was only taught (by the famous French educator Alejo Peyret) along with geography, in an elementary class of “geografía física con algunos conocimientos de la historia” (in the syllabus abbreviated as “geography”). Anyway, later it appears that history classes were taught as part of the literary course of that establishment. In Corrientes, history seems to have been included in the curriculum of the Escuela Normal de Varones (1859), and at the Colegio Argentino it was listed as a subject in the “Reglamento” of 1860 as well as during its short-lived, re-established existence from 1863–65: Most noteworthy here is the specific inclusion of *American and Argentine history* along with universal history. At the Colegio San Miguel de Tucumán, history appears to have been a subject in its short period of function from 1858 to 1861. For the other pre-1863 colleges I have no information on this point.

plans from 1863 onwards.¹¹² Even at earlier stages, when Argentine history was usually not put down as a separate subject in the syllabus, it might well have been taught additionally, to a varying degree, within the framework of general history. Still there is no doubt that a relatively low priority was given to the teaching of national history.

In the following years, then, through the frequent and often confusing changes in programmes and curricula,¹¹³ two marked tendencies stand out: First, history gained weight – measured in periods per week – as compared with other subjects. Secondly, Argentine or Argentine and American history grew in relative importance as compared with universal (in practice European) history until the lessons taught in the former sub-discipline outnumbered the latter in 1884. These two main lines of development are clearly shown from the following table, which I have borrowed from Juan Carlos Tedesco:¹¹⁴

¹¹²Riekenberg informed erroneously that at the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires Argentine history was not established as a separate subject until 1869 (*Nationbildung*, 141): "Ein eigenständiges Fach für argentinische Geschichte und staatsbürgerliche Erziehung wurde am *Colegio Nacional* in Buenos Aires erstmals durch ein Dekret der Regierung vom 23. Februar 1869 geschaffen." It is true that the subject of "historia argentina e instrucción cívica" received a new and vigorous impulse in 1869 through the appointment of José Manuel Estrada. But already the provisional plan of 1863 had indicated for the first year of study: "1º Historia y geografía de América y de la República". (By comparison, the history courses of the following four classes were all dedicated to universal/European history.) As mentioned earlier, the series of new *colegios nacionales* established in other provinces were from the outset given the same curriculum as the Buenos Aires model, although local de facto adaptations were normal. In the internal (apparently unauthorized) curriculum of the Buenos Aires college from 1867, national history was distributed between the first and the last years (European history in the three courses in between) as follows: "1º Historia y geografía (argentina y sagrada) ... 5º Historia y Constitución argentina". The Escuela Normal de Preceptores de Buenos Aires from 1865 prescribed Argentine history for the first, and universal history for the second, year of study. In the Colegio de Monserrat (Córdoba) general (European) history was imparted in the first three classes, while the fourth had "Historia de América y República Argentina; Resumen de la Historia Universal y filosófica", according to the *plan de estudio* of 1864. How all these plans were implemented in practice is of course another question. All the data given here are taken from *Antecedentes*, 85–134.

¹¹³As noted above, even if a certain uniformity of the curricula of the *colegios nacionales* was intended from the outset, local implementation was apparently flexible. As to the other establishments of further education, including the *escuelas normales*, each was generally given an individual curriculum. Only in 1886 was a common *plan de estudio* decreed for the colleges of education, giving a certain unity to this sector. Moreover, none of the plans were allowed to work for very long: The *colegio nacional* syllabus, for instance, was revised in 1870, 1874, 1876, 1879, 1884, 1886, 1888, 1891, 1893, 1898, 1900, 1901 (twice) and 1902! All data from *Antecedentes*. No wonder the affected educationists often tore their hair out in frustration! To give a detailed account of the references to history in all these plans would be both tedious and unserviceable in my context – an outline of the main tendencies must suffice.

¹¹⁴Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 119 (also referred to in Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 141 n2). If we compare Tedesco's table with the data presented in *Antecedentes*, certain variations appear, without, however, altering the general tendencies pointed out. *Antecedentes*, 155–157, 173–176, 215–218, 274–275, 341–344 and 391–393:

	Argentine/American history	General history
1874	4	7
1876	4	12
1879	5	12,5
1884	8	8
1888	12	6

Periods per week (all classes combined) dedicated to Argentine and American versus universal history in the curricula (planes de estudio) of the **colegios nacionales** (1874-1893):

	Argentine/American history	General history
1874	4	8
1876	3	12
1879	5	12
1884	7,30	6,30
1888	12	6
1891	9,30	5
1893	8.30	4

The apparent decline in the total number of history periods in the 1890s is only relative, as it was due to a general reduction of periods that affected the whole curriculum. In 1891, the national college went from a six-year to a five-year curriculum (the last class being replaced by a preparatory course at each university faculty).¹¹⁵ Anyway, the increased priority given to the history of the *patria*, until it finally gained a privileged position, is unambiguous. This is highly indicative of the profound changes initiated rather timidly in the 1870s, but whose full development belongs to the following period.

As for the last two years (1891 and 1893), comparison is difficult because *Antecedentes* only gives combined figures for history, geography and civics regarding these plans.

¹¹⁵Cf. *Antecedentes*, 391-393.

7. Which nation? History textbooks in the Plata region before 1861

As mentioned above, history textbooks as such hardly appeared before the second half of the nineteenth century. Historical topics might be found scattered around in textbooks dedicated to literature and reading, languages, religion, and morals. History books written for the larger public would surely have been used as reference literature by teachers and students – for a long time the most important in terms of Argentine history were probably the works of Gregorio Funes (*deán Funes*).¹¹⁶ Of particular interest are the books written explicitly with a view to a younger readership. Some of the literature of memoirs, written by participants from the *Independencia* period and the civil wars, falls into this category.¹¹⁷

Riekenberg underlined the variety of political identifications and conceptualizations of the nation expressed in the early history books, which reflected the conflicted and slow emergence of an Argentine nation-state. As an example, he showed how *porteño*¹¹⁸ localism as late as 1861 could delimit the extent of the fatherland in the following way: “Ilustre Buenos Aires: voy á cantar tus glorias..., patria amada”.¹¹⁹

In the early 1860s, shortly before and after Pavón, the first manuals written specifically to serve as texts in the school subject of Argentine history appeared. Textbooks for the primary school were published at approximately the same time as the first Argentine history book for the secondary level. The latter will be treated in some detail in the following chapter, while the former fall outside the main scope of this investigation. However, the simultaneous origins of the two text traditions point to the same essential conditions: the emergence of an Argentine historiography and a growing public interest in themes of the national past, both connected to the conflictive processes of the *Organización Nacional*, and to the educational programmes connected with these processes and the efforts to implement them. Thus, in 1862 two competing texts for the primary school appeared, both of which were

¹¹⁶The most important seem to have been *deán Funes*'s *Ensayo de la Historia civil del Paraguay, Buenos Aires y Tucumán*, 3 vols., written in 1816–17 and re-edited in 1856 (2 vols.), and a history of the Independence period, later enlarged and continued by A. Zinny under the following title: *Historia de las Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata 1816 á 1818, continuada hasta el fusilamiento del gobernador Dorrego en 1828 por A. Zinny*, 1875.

¹¹⁷Riekenberg cited Tomás Iriarte, *Glorias argentinas: Recuerdos históricos 1818–1825, dedicado a la juventud argentina* (Buenos Aires: 1858), as well as the afore-mentioned works by the dean Funes. Riekenberg, *Nationabildung*, 144. Though valuable sources for the study of the development of a national historical consciousness, it seems to me somewhat improper to treat and analyse such books as if they were regular textbooks, as Riekenberg did.

¹¹⁸From or regarding the city of Buenos Aires.

¹¹⁹Riekenberg, *Nationabildung*, 144. The book quoted by Riekenberg was Edelmiro de Casas Redruello, *Glorias de Buenos Aires desde su fundación hasta 1810: Dedicadas a la juventud argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1861).

to be re-edited several times: *La historia argentina al alcance de los niños* by Juan María Gutiérrez, and the *Compendio de la historia de las Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata* by Juana Manso de Noronha. Gutiérrez, having served Urquiza in the 1850s, was nevertheless attracted to Buenos Aires by Mitre and had been appointed rector of the university in 1861, while Juana Manso was the controversial headmistress of a recently established coeducational school in Buenos Aires and also editor of the *Anales de la Educación Común* (in both cases appointed by Sarmiento, who admired her progressive ideas on education).¹²⁰ An intrepid feminist and champion of public and popular education, Juana Manso when performing as a history textbook writer, appeared to have been a devout follower of Mitre, elected president of the Republic that very same year. Her manual was mainly based on his Belgrano biography (although complemented by Funes), and it reproduced Mitre's personal approval of the book, which reasonably enough, was dedicated to him in return.¹²¹ In some sense, thus, this pioneer of the primary school textbook might exemplify the genre's original identification with, and loyalty towards, the victors of the emerging "national order", and thereby confirm the

¹²⁰Biographic data from Vicente Osvaldo Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario biográfico argentino (1750-1930)*, 7 vols. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Elche, 1968/1985), vols. 3 1971 and 4 1975; Héctor Nicolás Santomauro, *Juana Manso y las luchas por la educación pública en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Corregidor, 1994).

¹²¹The relation between Mitre's Belgrano biography (first published in 1857, with a second edition in 1859) and Juana Manso's *Compendio* was treated in an interesting, though very restricted, analysis by Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux, in which she revealed the modifications imposed when Manso "reformulated" Mitre's text in order to adapt it to her didactic ends. Narvaja de Arnoux, "Reformulación y modelo pedagógico". To sum up her conclusions, the narrative sections of the two books were parallel, whereas Mitre's passages of theoretical or metahistorical reflections and of a politically argumentative nature, in Manso were replaced by authoritative value judgments, and by emotional, patriotic oratory. Narvaja explained this tendency by referring to the very different recipient audiences imagined by the two authors: In Mitre's case, the thinking and politically responsible political elite; in the case of Juana Manso, the pupils as obedient and attentive spectators, sensitive to the emotional patriotic appeal, but whose task was not to reflect upon or judge historical issues. The latter textual elements were also conceived as associated with the role of history in the patriotic, commemorative acts of the school, while the more factual and sober narrative parts corresponded to the discourse of the ordinary history class. Although suggestive as an interpretative handle, the historical relevance on this last point is weakened to the extent that patriotic acts did not appear to have had the importance in schools in the early 1860s – certainly not as institutionalized and regularized acts – that they would assume later on, especially from the late 1880s and early '90s onwards. Cf. Bertoni, "Construir la nacionalidad". Riekenberg made an interesting observation as to the development of the concept of nation in Juana Manso's text: In the first edition of 1862 the "seeds of the Nation" were to be found in colonial times, whereas the concept of nation was replaced by that of "the people" (*el Pueblo*) in a later edition (1881). Riekenberg saw in this change a tendency to emphasize the role of Mitre as the *organizador nacional*. That might be the case or not – too lofty deductions should not be drawn from this sole example. Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 145–146. See also Cecilia Braslavsky: "Der Gebrauch der Geschichte", in Riekenberg, ed., *Politik und Geschichte*, 155–178 (on Manso 160–162). Though Manso de Noronha's text was written for the primary school, I have found two references to it as a possible tool on the secondary level also: Amédée Jaques (in a plan from 1865, a project that never materialized) proposed to use it in the first class at the Colegio Nacional: "La parte de historia que toca á este año, es la historia del Descubrimiento de América y de la República Argentina hasta 1810. El profesor la dicta, ayudándose con el compendio de Doña Juana Manso de Noronha." See *Antecedentes*, 909. Héctor N. Santomauro stated that Manso's text had been approved by the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires, but found no documentary evidence indicating that it had actually been used in that establishment. Santomauro, *Juana Manso*, 80–81.

commonplace image of the rule of “official” history in the classroom. It would seem more questionable, however, to argue along similar lines regarding Gutiérrez, who on several occasions had given proof of his independent spirit.¹²²

¹²² Throughout his adult life Juan María Gutiérrez cultivated his close friendship with Juan Bautista Alberdi, and, like Alberdi, had provided strong support for Urquiza and the cause of the Confederation, opposing Mitre and other *porteño* leaders. As a historian, Gutiérrez distinguished himself as a pioneer in the field of cultural history, according to Rómulo D. Carbia, *Los historiadores argentinos menores: Su clasificación crítica* (Buenos Aires: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Publicaciones del Instituto de investigaciones históricas, No. XVII, 1923), 20–21.

8. Luis L. Domínguez and the textbook monument of independence

Throughout the world, the cultivation of a memorable common past has constituted an important element in nation-building – through recurrent references in public discourse of every description from political manifestoes to the names of streets, through patriotic monuments, through mass manifestations such as on national days, through the fomentation of academic institutions dedicated to the reconstruction (or construction) of a national heritage, and through its transmission to the general public, e.g., by the creation of national museums or the teaching of national history in the schools. The rather belated Argentine development, at least on a large scale, of many of these expressions of a national historical consciousness in the last decades of the nineteenth century will be commented on below. Already at this stage, however, it seems proper to underline the fact that from the very beginning the obvious themes selected for these patriotic manifestations of various kinds were the May Revolution and the following struggle for independence, the commemorative homage being dedicated to *Mayo* itself or, above all, to the main heroes, *los próceres*, of that crucial second decade of the century.

No wonder, then, that when an Argentine history textbook was written for the sons of the young and laboriously unified country – unification still being far from complete – the same events, though confined to a narrowly restricted period of time, had to become the very core and spine of the narrative. This also applied to the early development of Argentine history writing and research in general, something which to a considerable degree directed and reinforced this tendency in the writing of textbooks. The foundation of a specific history textbook tradition coincided in time with a renewed, politically conditioned public interest in Argentine history, as Michael Riekenberg pointed out.¹²³

This periodic and thematic concentration is the most striking single characteristic of the *Historia Argentina 1492–1820*, published by Luis L. Domínguez in 1861,¹²⁴ as it was to

¹²³Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 139: "Andererseits war die Funktion dieser Bücher selbst politisch, d.h. sie griffen die politisch motivierten Geschichtsdeutungen, wie sie innerhalb des bonaerensischen Liberalismus oder aber im Umfeld der Konföderationsregierung hervorgebracht wurden, auf und entwarfen daraus eine 'nationale' Geschichtsbetrachtung, die einen Anspruch auf Verbindlichkeit erhob. Insofern war die zeitliche Übereinstimmung zwischen dem Anfang der Schulbuchhistoriographie und dem starken Interesse an der Geschichte, das um 1857/58 in der politischen Öffentlichkeit einsetzte, nicht zufällig." The particular importance of Bartolomé Mitre's *Historia de Belgrano y la Independencia Argentina* at this foundational stage of Argentine history writing has already been suggested (1st and 2nd editions in 1857 and 1859; 3rd, eruditely elaborated, in 1876–77; 4th and definitive edition in 1887). His and others' contributions were vividly debated. See Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 161ff; Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina*, 188–213.

¹²⁴Domínguez, *Historia Argentina*, 1861.

be in so many later manuals. But in other respects, too, Domínguez's book exemplifies tendencies that would be continued for a long period, as will be pointed out. The 1861 edition was rather successful. By 1862, a second, revised edition had already been published, and others followed in the same decade. Altogether, there were five editions of the text.¹²⁵ Later authors of textbooks also sometimes referred to Domínguez as one of their most important forerunners, and the importance of this text has been underlined in several studies of the subject.¹²⁶ Not only was it the predominant textbook in the secondary school from the early 1860s to the late 1870s; in this initial phase it appears to have been rather influential in the realm of erudite history writing as well.¹²⁷

¹²⁵Luis L. Domínguez, *Historia Argentina*, 2nd ed. ("Edición económica, corregida y aumentada. (Epoca colonial)") (Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Orden, 1862). There is much confusion as to the different editions. The most convincing bibliographic account is found in Maeder, "La obra histórica", 132–137, which documented the following editions: 1861, 1862 (two different editions), 1868 and 1870. Most authors mention four editions only (some only three). Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 2, 1969, for instance, stated that four editions were published "hasta 1820", the latter date being an obvious misprint. Domínguez himself contributed to the confusion by naming the various editions the "1st", "economic", "2nd", "3rd" and "4th", respectively.

¹²⁶Amédée Jaques, rector of the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires, in an extensive project proposed in 1865 as a plan to reform the Argentine secondary school, suggested that in all *colegios nacionales* the library should include three copies of the text, and as a textbook for the *pupils* he recommended the *Compendio de la Historia Argentina* by the same author. I suppose this referred to a simplified version of the same text, but I have not been able to trace any other reference to it. Alternative texts for this subject were not mentioned. (This plan was never implemented, in part because of the outbreak of the Paraguayan war, but it indicates the importance of Domínguez's manual.) See *Antecedentes*, 839–909, especially 864–868 ("Anexo III"). Lucio V. López noted that the main reason he had to write a new text was that Domínguez's text had long been out of print, and he repeatedly referred to Domínguez in his own manual: L. V. López, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Carlos Casavalle, Editor, 1878), 3. Joaquín V. González gave the following evaluation in his introduction to the first edition of Ricardo Levene's important textbook (1912, here quoted from Levene, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*, 1920, vii): "... por muchos años dominó en absoluto la escena el resumen del doctor Luis L. Domínguez, que, entre los primeros después de la era de la libertad, daba las formas docentes al relato de conjunto de las dos grandes épocas de la vida de la nación." Cf. Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 2, 1969, on Domínguez's textbook: "... su obra literaria más seria y duradera ... popular por excelencia en la República ... Fue modelo de exactitud y claridad para su época". Ernesto Maeder cited several praising judgements from contemporaries such as Juan María Gutiérrez, Sarmiento, Mitre, and Paul Groussac, among others (and only one more critical, from Vicente G. Quesada), and he summed up the importance of the book as follows: "La más acabada de todas las obras de Domínguez es, sin duda, su *Historia Argentina*. Recibida con elogios comentarios en la época de su aparición, mantuvo su utilidad y prestigio durante muchos años, debido a su bien elaborado plan y la seriedad y cuidado de su realización. Sólo cuando la investigación histórica se perfeccionó en nuestro país, hubo ocasión para su reemplazo por otras obras enriquecidas por documentación antes desconocida, y la aplicación de una crítica mucho más rigurosa. Pero para ese momento, la *Historia Argentina* de Luis L. Domínguez había cumplido su misión y podía desaparecer con honroso decoro. Había servido de texto, y de buen texto de historia nacional a toda una época." Maeder, "La obra histórica", 132.

¹²⁷Thus according to Maeder: "Pese a esta limitación a una esfera casi escolar, la obra inició un ancho surco en un terreno apenas roturado, en el que aún guardaba plena vigencia la crónica del Deán Funes ... Pero indudablemente, su influencia se dejó sentir entre los historiadores de su generación, que sin excepción aprovecharon el inmenso material elaborado y sistematizado por Domínguez." Maeder, "La obra histórica", 113–114. See also the favourable evaluation in Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 131–133, 302–303 and 311. According to Rómulo Carbia (131), "Fué entonces cuando, por primera vez entre nosotros, se trató de conocer a fondo lo que había sido la época colonial, reflejada en los libros coetáneos a ella, en los que la expusieron sobre base erudita, y en los que editaron papeles reveladores de su proceso."

Apart from this contribution to the didactics of history, Luis L. Domínguez (1819–1898) did not make his career either as a historian or as an educator. From 1852 onwards he had added important political tasks in his native province of Buenos Aires to the journalistic practice initiated in his Montevidean exile in the days of Rosas. Later he would perform as politician, senior civil servant, and confidential diplomat on the national level.¹²⁸ When he wrote his history of Argentina, at a crucial time for the political development of the Republic, we may reasonably assume that he did so with the primary intention of explaining the origins of the Republic, thus stimulating the formation of a common national consciousness historically based in a foundational narrative. Of course, the formative elements that had given contemporary Argentina its shape could hardly be reduced to the tale of a few years of *criollo* struggle against Spanish rule. Nevertheless, other themes and periods could not have been considered even remotely as interesting or suitable for the purpose of the book, as a rough quantitative content analysis clearly shows:

Of the total 504 pages, 200 (39,6%) deal with the discoveries and the colonial period (up to 1810), while the decade beginning with the May revolution alone occupies 304 pages (60,3%). Analysis of the detailed distribution of the colonial period further underlines the quantitative lopsidedness: The relatively short era of the Viceroyalty of La Plata (1776–1810) takes 90 pages (17,9% of the book), and, even more significantly, the account of the British invasions and the ultimate moment of Spanish overrule (1806–1810) covers the impressive number of 53 pages (10,5% of the total)! Admittedly, the closing lines of the book announced the future publication of a second book that would treat the post-1820 period.¹²⁹ However, this intention never materialized.

How should we explain that 14 years of history (1806–1820) were considered deserving of more than 70% of a general introduction to the history of the nation? The question is all the more important as the tradition founded by Domínguez in this respect would last for practically a century (surely with varying percentages and the inclusion of later periods, as well as a new concern for the colonial period, but essentially with the same priorities given to *la Independencia* and its immediate sequels). I will analyse later variants of this phenomenon in the following chapters, but as an anticipated synthesized approach might widen the relevance of our observation of this particular text, it seems appropriate at this stage to refer to a study of history textbooks from the twentieth century (1912–1974) carried out by

¹²⁸Biographic data from Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 2, 1969; Maeder, “La obra histórica”, 116–125.

¹²⁹Domínguez, *Historia Argentina*, 1861, 502–503.

Fernando J. Devoto, in which he pointed to the continued periodical bias of the manuals: *Within* contemporary history (as the colonial period eventually was taught in separate courses with its own manuals), as late as the 1960s, about 80–85% of the pages were devoted to the half century between *Mayo* and the battle of Pavón.¹³⁰

Several factors seem to coincide in this initial tendency. First, the indigenous past could hardly have been a central theme within national history in this period, simply because the Amerindians, far from being included in the concept of an Argentine nation, were, on the contrary, considered a serious threat and an obstacle to the further expansion and development of “white” Argentina. (The fact that only the north-western periphery of the territory had formed part – and no central part – of one of the great empires admired by Europeans further reinforced this attitude. “Argentine Indians” had essentially been, and remained, “barbarians” in the eyes of nineteenth century champions of civilization.) But if the roots were European, why then pay relatively little attention to the colonial era? First of all, the hostility towards Spain and the Spanish heritage brought by the exasperated conflicts of the Independence period were still fresh in memory at the middle of the century (though Domínguez was rather moderate in this respect).¹³¹ Furthermore, the concept of the nation as presented in the vast majority of the textbooks of the “liberal” tradition, Domínguez’s being no exception, seems to have been predominantly based on sovereignty and citizenship, and thus focused on juridical-constitutional and territorial aspects, as opposed to more “organic” concepts based on ethnicity, vernacular, folklore, and so on. Consequently, the Argentine nation was in some sense first brought into existence by and through the May revolution: The colony was the nation’s *prehistory*.¹³² As to the later contemporary periods, they would understandably be conceived of as highly controversial, characterized by the sharp internal conflicts that in the 1860s still aroused passions and prevented reconciliation and unification. In short, they were not edifying in a patriotic sense. Other didactical considerations also favoured the revolutionary period: Political and military events were undoubtedly the main subject of history, and which other material could, in the same captive way as the emancipation movements, lend itself to the epic narrative which structured most history books of the time?

¹³⁰Devoto, “Idea de nación”.

¹³¹Cf. Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 148–149.

¹³²José Carlos and Pablo Buchbinder examined the positions with regards to the formation of the Argentine nation found in the early, constitutionalist history writing, as well as in five textbooks. In the case of Domínguez’s textbook, they did not find any clear position at all. In some other cases, they underlined the tendency towards an *early* dating of the emergence of the nation, in an approach that differs somewhat from my own. Chiaramonte and Buchbinder, “Provincias, caudillos, nación”, 101. See my comments below on their readings of Estrada and Fregeiro (Chapters 9 and 12, respectively).

Finally, *la Independencia* was the main subject of the most important contemporary, research-based works of history: Domínguez himself cited Mitre's Belgrano biography as one of his main sources (as was *dean* Funes for the colonial period – significantly enough, Domínguez commented that his work had been excessively oriented towards the early period).¹³³

One main problem was the conflictive and contradictory nature of the independence movement itself: The divisive party tendencies were present from the very beginning, something which might somewhat reduce the period's exemplary value if the prime task of the new generations was to overcome those divisions. Nevertheless, Domínguez by no means tried to conceal or belittle the violent factional struggles. But the second edition of the book, published in 1862, as well as all the later editions, surprisingly enough stopped short of the *Independencia* period (covering the British invasions).¹³⁴ Michael Riekenberg hinted that the radical change in the later edition was due to the continued controversial nature of the internal conflicts of the early years of the Republic.¹³⁵ Ernesto Maeder, on the other hand, who dedicated an article to Domínguez's textbook on its centenary in 1961, registered the narrowing of the period covered but neither discussed the motives behind it nor the didactic implications. (Maeder's study focused exclusively on the presentation of *colonial* history in the text, and assessed solely the erudite, not the didactic, aspects of the work. This means that the bulk of the first edition – central to my own analysis – was not reviewed and that the changes introduced in the later editions were unreservedly praised, as their expanding footnote apparatus manifested the source-critical awareness of the author.)¹³⁶ Nevertheless, from Maeder's description of Domínguez's continued revision of his text, a credible if perhaps trivial explanation, different from Riekenberg's, might be drawn. Luis Domínguez apparently was a meticulous and thorough amateur historian, who depended on his spare time to work on his history book. He felt that he must first reach a satisfactory version of the colonial part, before he could set to revising the part covering the independent period. Other tasks prevented him from accomplishing the latter purpose. There is little reason to suppose a political auto-censorship in this case: The *Independencia* period was by no means taboo, and Domínguez's treatment of it was far from heterodox.

Another striking feature of Domínguez's manual, which would also characterize several generations of textbooks to come, was the marked predominance of a Buenos Aires

¹³³Domínguez, *Historia Argentina*, 1861, v–vi.

¹³⁴Domínguez, *Historia Argentina*, 1862. For the contents of the later editions, see Maeder, "La obra histórica".

¹³⁵Riekenber, *Nationbildung*, 145.

¹³⁶Maeder, "La obra histórica". For a general commentary on Maeder's article, see above Chapter 2.3.

perspective on Argentine history, to such a degree in this early text that capital and *patria* often seemed to be practically synonymous. *Porteño* by birth, Domínguez himself had been elected deputy to the provincial assembly of 1852 that rejected the federal San Nicolás agreement, cleaving the nation. Towards the end of the decade, he had been involved in negotiating initiatives between the two Argentine governments. The conflict between the capital and the provinces continued to be the main political issue of the day – reminding one that later in that same year of 1861, Buenos Aires victoriously concluded its struggle with the Confederation as a result of the battle of Pavón.¹³⁷ Luis Domínguez must inevitably have written his textbook under the strong influence of this overriding conflict, and the book clearly shows the extent to which his was the *porteño* view.

Political events and developments in Buenos Aires in the crucial period of 1806–1820 are presented with a wealth of detail, whereas occurrences in the provinces are referred to mostly when they interfere with *porteño* interests or high politics, seldom in their own right. In the independence wars, the sons of Buenos Aires take the revolutionary arms everywhere, while the contributions from the provinces matter less – for instance in Uruguay, where the heroic part first and foremost corresponds to “los patricios de Buenos Aires”,¹³⁸ while Artigas is harshly judged as an unreliable ally if not as an outright enemy of order.¹³⁹ On the political stage, provincial claims, as opposed to *porteño* hegemony, are overtly dismissed as unjust in a text that is otherwise pretty much sober and reserved with regard to value judgements. Participation of the provincial delegates in the governing Junta of 1810 was an “absurda pretensión”,¹⁴⁰ and the blow against the *saavedrista* faction in 1811 merits the following approval: “Así terminó el Gobierno débil y anómalo creado el 18 de Diciembre de 1810, por el voto inconsiderado de los Diputados de las Provincias”.¹⁴¹

In the factional struggles between the emerging *unitario* and *federal* parties, Domínguez, albeit showing a general dislike for extremes and excesses on both sides, nevertheless – and not surprisingly – broadly embraced the basic views of unitarianism, as

¹³⁷The prologue of the book is dated June 1861. The battle of Pavón took place on the 17th of September.

¹³⁸Domínguez, *Historia Argentina*, 1861, 250.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, some examples on 318, 332, 334, 343–344, 413ff. The followers of Artigas are stigmatized as dregs (*las chusmas*, 333) and labelled as anarchists (*anarquistas*, 343), while the *caudillo* himself is motivated by selfish ambition (344): “...la anarquía promovida por Artigas en nombre del principio federativo, bajo cuya sombra se ocultaba una desenfadada ambición de mando absoluto.” Even so, disgust occasionally seems to mingle with fascination and admiration for the rough and manly life and ways of the Creole *caudillo*, as was often the case when liberals of the late nineteenth century approached the phenomenon of *caudillismo* (for Domínguez and the case of Artigas, see the biographic sketch on 413ff).

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 336.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, 264.

opposed to the “disintegrating principle” (*principio disolvente*) of federalism.¹⁴² Reflecting on the downfall of the last *Director* (Rondeau, in 1820), the author summed up the characteristics of the two parties in the following statements, in which the combined elitist, unitarian and *porteño* preferences appear in an unusually explicit form:

Uno de ellos [de los partidos], representante de la tradicion, queria que bajo el gobierno independiente, la unidad nacional se conservase. Este partido apareció el 25 de Mayo, cuando la mejor y mas sana parte del vecindario de la Capital, ocupó el gobierno que hasta entonces habian ejercido los Vireyes. / El otro representaba la democracia pura, y la pretension de las Intendencias del Vireinato, de colocarse en condiciones de igualdad con la Intendencia donde estaba la Capital. ... Pero el peligro no hubiera sido temible, sino hubiese sucedido que las ciudades subalternas, entraron tambien en la pretension de hacerse Provincias, y muy poco despues, Estados, aun cuando careciesen de poblacion y de recursos para mantener la autonomia á que aspiraban. / ... El uno, quería que la nacion fuese un todo homogéneo; el otro, que se compusiera de fragmentos unidos por un lazo mas ó menos fuerte y durable. El primero aspiraba á que la Capital fuese el brazo derecho de un gigante; el segundo se contentaba con que fuese la cabeza de un pigmeo. ... Contra “la mejor y mas sana parte,” del 25 de Mayo, que estaba por el principio centralista, se levantaron caudillos ambiciosos, que explotaron las pasiones de “la parte mayor y menos sana”; esto es, de la multitud, que habia salido de manos del sistema colonial, escasa de virtudes y sumida en una deplorable ignorancia.¹⁴³

This obvious inclination, however, did not prevent Domínguez from censuring the impracticability of certain unitarian projects, like the Constitution of 1819. Even in this context, however, one of the most important matters for Domínguez seems to have been the defence of *porteño* honour (he argued that the majority of those who had written and voted for the legal text were provincials). Similar apologetic assertions, which in their emotional commitment go beyond the simple “perspective of the capital”, can be found in other passages of the text as well, sometimes polemically formulated against unnamed opponents.¹⁴⁴ This should obviously be explained by the tense political climate in which the text was written, marked above all by the polarization between the Confederation and Buenos Aires.

The 1861 *Historia Argentina* thus, clearly outlined the prototype of a national history textbook, written from the limited *porteño* point of view, which would be vehemently attacked by later generations of “anti-officialist” critics. The obvious biases of the book

¹⁴²Ibid., 382 (with reference to the “revolution” of April 1815). Domínguez's inclination towards unitarianism went back to his formative years of exile in Montevideo, when he was strongly influenced by his close friend, the unitarian Florencio Varela, to whom Domínguez was also related by marriage, and whose biography he later wrote. After Varela was assassinated in 1848, Domínguez took care of the posthumous editions of his writings. See Maeder, “La obra histórica” (on Domínguez’s political development in Montevideo, 119: “paulatina identificación con el pensamiento mas netamente unitario”).

¹⁴³Domínguez, *Historia Argentina*, 1861, 500–501.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 482–484. On xv–xvi is another case regarding the role played by Buenos Aires in the formation of San Martín's Andean Army, “un punto interesante de nuestra historia, que el espíritu de partido ha intentado oscurecer”.

should not, however, be allowed to overshadow other appreciable and innovative aspects of the book in the history of manuals in Argentina. Domínguez revealed a clear consciousness of the specificity of the textbook-writer's task: The objective was popularization – the transmission of a general view of the national past in a form that was accessible and comprehensible to the inexperienced layman, namely, the student:

La tarea que yo me he impuesto, es enteramente diversa á la que con tanto aplauso han desempeñado mis antecesores. Ni he tratado de engolfar al lector en el exámen de un pasado estéril, ni tengo la intencion de hacer una estensa relacion de los sucesos mas recientes./ Me he propuesto llenar una necesidad generalmente sentida, presentando, en cortas proporciones, el cuadro general de nuestra historia, de manera que pueda ser comprendido, en su conjunto, y en sus mas interesantes pormenores, con un moderado esfuerzo de atencion.¹⁴⁵

At the same time, he evidently felt strongly committed to scholarly requirements (as conceived at the time): The historian should show the relations of cause and effect that constituted the implacable logic of historical development, an obligation that strongly restrained the possibility of simplification:

Todo es lójico en la vida de los pueblos; aun sus mismas inconsecuencias; -y para que esta verdad aparezca comprobada por sí misma, es indispensable que en la narracion no falte una sola de las premisas, cuya ausencia pudiera interrumpir la cadena invisible que conduce desde la causa primera, hasta su última consecuencia.¹⁴⁶

Whether it is possible to fulfil such a claim in a textbook (or in any book), or whether it is possible to reconcile the two different demands mentioned above (the didactic and the scientific), are questions that Domínguez does not raise. Nevertheless, the richness of detail and the massive extent of the text in the parts that concern the main focus of the book, might both indicate that the pedagogic ideals of simplicity must, to a considerable degree, have yielded to the assumed requirements of scholarship (even if these features of the text naturally must have been much less obvious to contemporaries than to a modern reader familiar with the later development of manuals). One might even add that the result is a relatively handy manual only because of the rather narrow nineteenth century concept of the proper subject of history. On the other hand, any textbook inevitably, is a series of compromises between such conflicting demands, and Domínguez's indubitable efforts to handle his dilemma is shown for instance, in his apology for limiting the use of documental quotations and footnotes.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵Ibid., vi.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., vii.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., viii. This aspect of the text would change, however, in the later and more "erudite" editions, as shown in Maeder, "La obra histórica".

Broadly, Domínguez structured his text from a comprehensive view of his country's past, subordinating details to this overall interpretation. The development of Argentina was conceived in biological metaphors of growth and maturity: The colonial experience represented the nation's childhood, whose history was nothing but "una ramificación de la historia de la madre patria".¹⁴⁸ From the outset, the perspective was that of the Spanish conquerors and colonists, while the indigenous peoples definitely represented the barbarian other. The most important issue at stake in this *prelude* to the genuine Argentine history was the accumulation of riches to be *inherited* by the would-be nation, above all, the *territory*. Consequently, "lo más importante de la historia política del país en aquel tiempo, es la cuestión de límites entre las coronas de España y Portugal, ..."149.

As the hour of emancipation approached, the viewpoint shifted as the Creoles – the American "people", *el Pueblo* – "matured":¹⁵⁰ "Entonces suena para el Pueblo, como para todo hombre que llega á su virilidad, el momento de la emancipación".¹⁵¹ *La Independencia* was a series of trials of manhood through which a formerly underage people converted itself into an adult, independent nation: "... encontraremos al pueblo vigorizando en la lucha el cuerpo y el espíritu, es decir: haciéndose mas numeroso y mas rico, mas intelijente, mas

¹⁴⁸Dominguez, *Historia Argentina*, 1861, x.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., ix-x. Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 146, presented Domínguez's interpretation of the colonial period from a somewhat different perspective: The military conflicts between Portugal and Spain were, according to this reading, outright nation-building elements. Correspondingly, he underlined the references to the role of Jesuits and Spanish civil servants in the early development of Creole consciousness. Though I do not deny that a relative appreciation of certain aspects of colonial development might be found in the text, the view of the nation as a product primarily of the independence struggle and the preceding era's status as national "prehistory" nevertheless seems to be far more predominant characteristics. Rómulo Carbia (*Historia crítica*) and Ernesto Maeder ("La obra histórica") both emphasized the novelty of Domínguez's approach to colonial history. The fact that Domínguez did not work on the original, unpublished documents of the period, limited the range of his source-critical capacity, but he carefully utilized all the *published* materials at hand.

¹⁵⁰"Pueblo" is here and elsewhere in this textbook (e.g., on 403) used with approximately the same reference as "nation". This, compared with the earlier, more restricted use of the notion (with reference to the single city or province) that had obliged the plural form (los pueblos) when applied to the inhabitants of all Argentina or the whole River Plate region (the former Viceroyalty). For a discussion of the history of the concepts of *nación* and *pueblo* in nineteenth century Argentina, see Mikael Riekenberg, "El concepto de la nación en la región del Plata (1810-1831)", *Entrepassados: Revista de Historia* 3, No. 4-5, (1993), 89–102; Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*; José Carlos Chiaramonte, "Formas de identidad en el Río de la Plata luego de 1810", *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana "Dr. Emilio Ravignani"*, 3rd series, No. 1 (1st semester 1989), 71–92; José Carlos Chiaramonte, "Acerca del origen del estado en el Río de la Plata". *Anuario del IEHS [Instituto de Estudios Histórico-Sociales]* 10, (1995), 27–50; Nora Souto and Fabio Wasserman: "Nación", in Noemí Goldman, ed., *Lenguaje y revolución: Conceptos políticos claves en el Río de la Plata, 1780–1850* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros, 2008), 83–98. Other articles in the last-mentioned anthology are also relevant, all departing from the perspective of conceptual history, e.g. dealing with the concepts of "ciudadano/vecino", "constitución", "patria", "pueblo/pueblos" and "unidad/federación".

¹⁵¹Dominguez, *Historia Argentina*, 1861, viii.

industrioso y mas civilizado”.¹⁵² Accordingly, the following process of disintegration was optimistically diagnosed as a serious, but curable illness in an already viable organism: “... el principio disolvente quedaba inoculado en el cuerpo social; pero la fuerza social de que estaba dotado este, debia reaccionar buscando la plenitud de su vida en la integridad de su ser”.¹⁵³

As the act of emancipation is what *makes* a free nation according to this conception, here we find the crucial event always to be remembered as the rallying point of all Argentines (something that was not easily found in 1861!). To that end, history textbooks were written for the schools, just as national monuments were erected for the public.

¹⁵²Ibid., viii.

¹⁵³Ibid., 502.

9. The historical approach of Liberal Catholicism: The lectures of José Manuel Estrada

SEÑORES:/Vamos a ver nacer una sociedad y estudiar el curso de su vida con un doble anhelo, el de la ciencia y el del amor.¹⁵⁴

These were the opening lines of the first of a series of lectures on Argentine History held in the Escuela Normal in Buenos Aires in 1868 (an earlier version of the same lectures had been given in 1866) and published that same year in the *Revista Argentina*. The young author/lecturer – and editor of the review – was José Manuel Estrada (1842–1894), who by that time taught philosophy at the Colegio Nacional of the capital and the following year would be appointed teacher in Argentine history and civics (*instrucción cívica*) at the same important school. Estrada, though largely an autodidact without any university degree, would later become rector of the college (1876–1888). From 1875, he also held a chair in constitutional law at the University of Buenos Aires. His political commitment as a militant Catholic, however, campaigning through the *Asociación Católica* against the secularizing politics of President Roca and his Minister of Justice and Education, Eduardo Wilde, in the 1880s, brought on his dismissal in 1884.¹⁵⁵

Strictly speaking, the *Lecciones sobre la historia de la República Argentina* is not really a textbook in a narrow sense, though it has been treated as such.¹⁵⁶ Unlike so many history textbooks that carry the term *lecciones* in their title, this *was* the published edition of a series of lecture manuscripts and nothing else, with as many of the traits and rhetorical resorts of that oral genre faithfully retained as could be transmitted in the written form, that is without the physical presence, the voice, and the vivid gesture of the orator. Recurrent features throughout the work are terms of address, such as the *señores* cited above or the use of the second person plural in personal pronouns and verbs (the *vosotros* and the corresponding verb forms), along with temporal references like *esta noche*.

¹⁵⁴Estrada, *Lecciones*, 1925, vol. 1, 1. All the following references and citations are from this two-volume, third edition of the book, which reproduced the text unaltered except for a slight orthographic modernization ("Argentina" for "Arjentina", etc.).

¹⁵⁵Biographic data from Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 2, 1969); Héctor José Tanzi, *José Manuel Estrada (1842–1894): Apóstol laico del catolicismo* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Braga, 1994); Juan M. Garro, *José Manuel Estrada: Noticia Biográfica* (Buenos Aires: 1942); Manuel Augusto Cárdenas, *Los ideales de José Manuel Estrada* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1979); Wright/Nekholm, *Diccionario Histórico Argentino; Antecedentes*, 134; Carlos Ibarguren's introduction to Estrada, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, v-xiii. On some important details (e.g., the date of Estrada's appointment at the Colegio Nacional, or whether the lectures were held there instead of at the Escuela Normal), the consulted works are contradictory.

¹⁵⁶In Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 145–146. The text was situated more precisely on 159–160.

Estrada's prose bears no resemblance to the fact-laden and event-oriented narrative of Domínguez and his many successors. His approach to history was one of synthesis. He favoured the essayistic, reflective discussion of the great lines of development or the main political and economic institutions, avoiding detail.¹⁵⁷ History presented most of all, the rich collection of examples that might illustrate and support the author's views on contemporary society, and, conversely, his religious-political-economic creed constituted, as will soon be demonstrated, the supreme criterion according to which historical phenomena from any period were judged.

The literary style predominant in the *Lecciones*, is charged with the wide range of rhetoric means available to the eloquent orator, the romantic prose embroidered by the frequent use of poetic resorts such as metaphors, reiterations, and contrasts, along with Estrada's predilection for the aphoristic maxim as well as for the exalted exclamation. All of this further removes the text from the characteristics of the traditional textbook genre.¹⁵⁸

And, in fact, it probably did not serve as a textbook in the traditional sense, something that is also indicated by the reduced number of editions and impressions (second edition in 1896, third edition – the one used here – in 1925). Why, then, dwell at length on his lectures in this study?

Several factors contribute to justify the inclusion of Estrada in our inquiry into the genesis of the Argentine history textbook. First, his lectures indicate how the national past was taught from the outset (just when Argentine history had been established as a discipline

¹⁵⁷This general approach is made explicit in the author's preface (Estrada, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, xv): "Por consiguiente, he prescindido de todo detalle y de toda investigación de segundo orden, necesarios para escribir la historia, pero nocivos si se trata de enseñar su filosofía compendiosamente y con claridad, como conviene a todos los trabajos destinados a la cátedra." (Italics added.)

¹⁵⁸A few small samples: "Algo más, señores. No quiero que digáis, que me detengo más de lo que debo en generalidades y abstracciones. ¿Queréis pruebas de mi opinión? ¿Queréis datos concretos? Y bien: recordad a Méjico, al Perú; la civilización azteca, la civilización inca. ¿Queréis más aún? Estudiad los muiscas de la Nueva Granada ..." (Ibid., vol. 1, 53). On Buenos Aires: "Partió de su alma el grito de esperanza de 1822, y la santa Jerusalem depuró su conciencia y desvastó la ruda corteza de la colonia y de las guerras. ¡Ah!, señores. entre el principio y su aplicación medió el delirio; y uno de los más funestos y crasos extravíos políticos que recuerda la historia, derribó la deidad; el frenesí sobrevino y cayó el altar, luego el templo, y más tarde, Jerusalem transformado en Babilonia, prestaba fuerza y asiento a la más hedionda abominación y a la más brutal tiranía ... ¡Ah! si todavía respiramos el aire que meció la cuna de Belgrano! Los que somos jóvenes tenemos grandes cosas que presenciar. Los que ven declinar ya el sol de su existencia ¡pobres mártires! proscriptos ayer y desgraciados siempre, pueden morir en paz al halago de dulces esperanzas... Buenos Aires será un santuario". Ibid., vol. 1, 279–281. Passages with similar literary characteristics abound throughout the work. Overtly fictional elements are also occasionally included, for example, in the description of Manuel Dorrego's intimate thoughts and feelings immediately before he was executed (ibid., vol. 2, 370), or in the final vision of Rosas in his solitary exile, being haunted at night by the ghostlike images of the victims of his terror: "Allá al fondo de sus negros horizontes la magia de la conciencia le alterna cuadros de luz fosforescente, que vienen y van, vacilan y se estampan perseverantes y siempre nuevos: un viejo... es Maza: un niño... Montenegro... una mujer, Camila... Dios lo perdone!" Ibid., vol. 2, 459.

apart in the curriculum) by a man who obtained important posts in the educational system and whose oratory was influential at the university and the secondary level, as well in the broader public sphere. The lectures themselves aroused considerable interest in the *porteño* élite. Indeed, they were open to and attended by the public in addition to the pupils of the college of education. In those years of “national organization”, the demand for national history, most of which was still virgin territory, grew rapidly, and led to the formulation of different coherent presentations of Argentina’s past. Estrada’s lectures were one of these, among the first, and there is reason to believe they had a certain influence, though on the other hand it seems improbable from the evidence that his interpretation served as a model for the majority of textbook writers in the following decades.¹⁵⁹ More likely, they would serve as reference books for teachers and students, and more so considering the scarcity of texts available at this stage. With these limitations in mind, there are differentiating traits in his understanding of the country’s past that should be emphasized. The following passages intend to serve that purpose.

The analysis is deliberately restricted to the manner in which Estrada’s interpretation of Argentine history was presented in the *Lecciones*, his single most important written contribution to Argentine history didactics. This is important to have in mind because readings of Estrada based on a broader selection of his writings provide a somewhat different picture, and rightly so, as Estrada eventually modified some of his views over the years.¹⁶⁰

Later historiographers, in particular Rómulo D. Carbia, gave little credit to Estrada as a historian, insisting that his “philosophizing” approach was superficial and lacked a serious, scholarly foundation. His lectures had admittedly been admired by a wide contemporary audience, but their significance was purely literary.¹⁶¹ Be that as it may, Carbia never

¹⁵⁹ Héctor José Tanzi attributed a more far-reaching influence to the *Lecciones* than I have dared to assume, in the field of textbook-writing as well as in historical research: “... la novedad del tema tuvo poderosa influencia en la literatura histórica escolar; su orientación y método fue seguido cerca de un siglo e incluso encaminó la investigación científica del pasado de muchos historiadores”. Tanzi, *José Manuel Estrada*, 24.

¹⁶⁰ See in particular Cárdenas, *Los ideales*, and Tanzi, *José Manuel Estrada*. Both approached Estrada’s work from an ecclesiastical point of view, and both applauded Estrada’s development towards politically less radical – or less liberal – positions, in a period when the defence of the Catholic Church against anticlerical, secularizing politics had become his main concern. At that point, the label “liberal Catholicism” used here would seem less appropriate. Also, it seems that Estrada eventually reached a more positive evaluation of Spain and the colonial heritage than the one presented in the *Lecciones*. His global understanding of Argentine history would accordingly appear as less distant from the hispanicist view presented in the Jesuit Vicente Gambón’s textbooks (cf. Chapter 16 below) than shown in this study. However, when dealing with the *Lecciones*, Cárdenas’s and Tanzi’s readings correspond well with my own (see in particular the summaries in Cárdenas, *Los ideales*, 117–123 and 155–169).

¹⁶¹ Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 112–114 and, in particular, 139–145. Cf. the following statements: “Su Historia, así, no pasaría de una historia en adjetivos, a la que prestó admirable vehículo su pomposidad oratoria que él

assessed Estrada's lectures as a *didactic* contribution to the formation of an Argentine historical consciousness. From that perspective, Estrada cannot easily be dismissed as irrelevant.

As in Domínguez's earlier textbook, though with some important modifications, there is in the *Lecciones* a strong quantitative concentration of the materials, the central years of the *Independencia* struggle towering above any other period. In short, the periodical distribution is as follows:

From the 846-page total, 342 pages (40,4%) are dedicated to the colonial era (including European/Spanish antecedents), while 59,6% (504 pages) treat contemporary history (1810 to 1852, from *Mayo* to Caseros). This is almost exactly the same distribution as found in Domínguez, as is the relative priority given to the Viceroyalty (1776–1810) within the colonial period: 18% (152 pages) of the total with 5,7% (48 pages) on the British invasions and their sequels (1806–1809) alone. Within the contemporary era, however, the difference is rather important: Though the 1810–1819 decade stands out as singularly extensive (29,8% of the total work, 252 pages), the following ten years (1820 to the first election of Rosas as governor of Buenos Aires in 1829)¹⁶² also constitute a bulky part: 20,3% (172 pages). Even more noteworthy, the account is carried further until the downfall of Rosas in 1852, still a fairly recent event in 1868. Eighty pages (9,5%) deal with the period politically characterized by *rosismo* (1829–1852). Broadly speaking, the distribution of periods does not seem unreasonable for the time, given the overall predominance of political history. (A quite different problem arises when textbooks of much later times continued, to a greater or lesser degree, to stop short of the first half century of independence, as will be observed on several occasions in the following chapters.) Even so, our rough, quantitative analysis suffices to indicate the obvious focus of the *Lecciones*: Independence struggle/revolution and its immediate background.

This choice of priorities was made very explicit in the work: Estrada's objective was to "explain the Argentine revolution".¹⁶³ This was also stated as the sole purpose of the

manejaba a maravilla"; "Sus conferencias, por eso, carecen de significación seria, desde el punto de vista historiográfico, aunque la tengan para el literario". Carbia claimed that François Guizot and other "guizotnianos" (including Macaulay, Ozanam, Quinet and Laboulaye) had provided the models for Estrada's incursion into the field of history.

¹⁶²This period subdivision is not congruent with Estrada's own (the years 1827–1835 make up one chapter), but is used here to facilitate comparison with other works.

¹⁶³Estrada, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, xv. Similarly *ibid.*, vol. 1, 70–72.

considerable attention give to the colonial period, which was otherwise an “ungrateful and sterile study”.¹⁶⁴

One might say that the three hundred years of Spanish rule were not so much examined and presented as an historical period, as they were brought to trial and judged severely as an agglomeration of evils. The main focus was always moral-juridical (as were the concepts central to the analysis), centring on the legal aspects of the economic and political institutions. Judgement was passed according to a certain set of values considered universally valid, in the centre of which stood *freedom* perceived as *individual* liberty, and legal and moral *equality*, both founded in religious truth. *Economic liberalism* and *democratic, republican, and decentralized political institutions* were conceived of as the necessary derivations of those values, while other forms of economic and political organization were illegitimate, irrespective of historical circumstance.¹⁶⁵

The harsh sentence consequently passed upon Spain is hardly surprising. Indeed, the anti-Spanish attitude was in tune with other contemporaries, as we have seen in the case of Domínguez – apologetic arguments seemingly still underlying the polemic tone.¹⁶⁶ The interesting observation to make in Estrada’s version is that the decay of the Spanish empire was situated not so much in the seventeenth century as in what was elsewhere generally presented as its splendid moment: the very unification process of the peninsula, the growing power of the monarchs, the overseas expansion. These were viewed as so many abuses and signs of political and moral *decadencia*: “Las libertades españolas terminan, donde comienzan la nacionalidad española y su prestigio exterior”. Conversely, Estrada accentuated the greater freedom enjoyed earlier under the Aragonese-Catalan federation.¹⁶⁷ From this point of departure, Estrada exposed his basic political tenets: democracy and federalism, including a pronounced antimilitarism and a sceptical attitude towards nationalism.¹⁶⁸ All of this must be understood in the context of the internal conflicts following Argentine independence and far

¹⁶⁴Ibid., vol. 1, xv: “Fuera de estos objetos, la historia colonial es un estudio ingrato y estéril, así del punto de vista de la ciencia como del arte literario”.

¹⁶⁵For example, in this very typical statement: “la monarquía es una forma social ilegítima”. Ibid., vol. 1, 17.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., for example vol. 1, 28–29.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., vol. 1, 18–23. The union of the Iberian kingdoms is styled “unidad liberticida” (18).

¹⁶⁸Ibid., vol. 1, 8: “... Se garante tanto más la moralidad del gobierno, cuanto menos se concentra la administración y el régimen interior de los pueblos”; vol. 1, 15: “El pueblo es uno. Una es la naturaleza humana. Una es la libertad. Buscar la diversidad en el derecho y concentrar el gobierno, es violar dos veces los principios racionales de la política”; vol. 1, 19, even more radically: “... que en los grandes días de paz, de libertad y de justicia, pronunciados en el Evangelio, se olvidará la importancia de este símbolo subyugador que llamamos las banderas. Nos basta un gobierno: el municipio. Nos basta una ley: la moral”; vol. 1, 25: “La libertad huye de las naciones cuando estas se convierten en campamentos militares”; vol. 1, 295: “Amo poco la gloria militar”.

from concluded in the 1860s, Estrada brandishing his double-edged sword equally against unitarianism and against aristocratic traditionalism.

While in general Columbus and the first explorers were treated benevolently, the attitude and behaviour of the conquerors and colonists towards the indigenous peoples in the River Plate region were vehemently denounced on the basis of two principles: anti-racism (implicitly opposing the firm beliefs of influential contemporaries) and the view that conquest is never a legitimate means of appropriation.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, the racial antagonism inherited from the period of the conquest was deplored as the cause of the actual, persistent conflict between white Argentines and the remaining free Amerindians.¹⁷⁰

The colonial society was studied in its political-administrative as well as its economic institutions, in both cases through the letter of the laws, with little concern for the many diverging practices. Thus, the absolutist powers of the crown and its agents were strongly accentuated and severely condemned as incompatible with freedom and equality. The economic policies were judged as pernicious, based on the universal validity of nineteenth century economic liberalism, expressed in lengthy confessions to the “new science” (*la nueva ciencia*). Finally, the lack of educational initiatives and the inadequacy, according to modern standards, of the religious schools that were established, were emphatically repudiated in a way that revealed Estrada’s firm belief in the civilizing, democratizing and developmental potential of education, very much in the spirit of Sarmiento.¹⁷¹ Indeed, the combined misery of these basic elements was the *leitmotiv* of the lectures dedicated to the colony: “La sociedad argentina se fundaba, por consiguiente, sobre una absoluta y múltiple negación de la libertad. ... nuestra vieja historia es un inmenso remordimiento ... No hay sobre la cuna de la patria ni flores ni cantares de amor”.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹Ibid., vol. 1, 50: “¿En qué arrogante sinrazón funda entonces la raza europea su pretendida superioridad?”; vol. 1, 77: “... nada conozco más abiertamente opuesto al espíritu del Evangelio que el absolutismo y la conquista ... Todo pueblo conquistador se prostituye”; similarly vol. 1, 102–103.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., for example, vol. 1, 85–86, 88, and 93.

¹⁷¹Ibid., vol. 1, 155–189. On the political-administrative aspect, vol. 1, 167: “... ni el más pálido reflejo de libertad”; vol. 1, 168: “... del error propagado en la madre patria acerca del derecho divino de los reyes dimana, en abstracto y en concreto, la fisiología extravagante de la legislación, que amarraba entonces los pueblos nacientes al destino de una nación decrepita, que caía en el absolutismo, no a la manera que otras sociedades, por vitalidad y progreso, sino por la inercia de las fuerzas populares”. On the economic aspect: vol. 1, 174ff; also vol. 1, 148ff. Dogmatic statements abound, for example: “La propiedad es la forma natural de la sociedad.” Vol. 1, 137. On educational matters: vol. 1, 183ff, concluding on 189: “Así está en el pecado colonial el secreto de nuestras convulsiones populares. Así está en la educación del pueblo, el único remedio y el único resorte conversador de la democracia.”

¹⁷²Ibid., vol. 1, 105–106.

The only extenuating circumstance in this sombre picture was the spiritual contribution of the pacific missionaries, especially of the Jesuits in their phase of establishment. Even if this might be an indication of Estrada's Catholic orientation, praise soon gave way to a very critical evaluation of the organization of the Guaraní missions ("la República guaraní"), again with reference to the principles of individualism and liberalism.¹⁷³

Although characteristics of the earlier colonial period were important to Estrada because they helped to explain certain contemporary problems, the crucial period for the study of the genesis of the Argentine revolution, and even of the Argentine nation, was undoubtedly the stretch between the establishment of the Viceroyalty of La Plata in 1776 and the *Mayo* events in 1810, as indicated above in the quantitative analysis:

Es la hora suprema del viejo régimen. Su apogeo se confunde con el génesis de la independencia y libertad del Río de la Plata, y su destrucción determina la edad viril, en que la savia popular, dejando de ser distraída por influencias opresoras, se reconcentra en la personalidad nacional, que de él recibió su tradición más viva y sus resortes orgánicos.¹⁷⁴

Again we find the biological metaphor also used by Domínguez: The subject is the Argentine people or nation in its youth, whose self-consciousness and eventual rebellion was aroused and provoked by the renewed strength of paternal (colonial) rule in its last phase, but who nevertheless received its formative experiences in those determinative years of minority. Through the series of events that culminated in May 1810, the "people" proved to have reached the age of "manhood" (*virilidad*).¹⁷⁵

In Estrada, we occasionally encounter signs of a more organic concept of the nation than was found in Domínguez. The colonial period not only determined the would-be external borders. It framed a social organization; it imprinted mentalities, beliefs, patterns of thought and of behaviour, human types like the gaucho. All of this was mostly negatively evaluated,

¹⁷³Ibid., vol. 1, 109–154, especially 116ff. Examples of the initial appraisal: "En medio de los horrores de la conquista apareció como ráfaga de celestial caridad el espíritu de San Francisco Solano. Bajo humilde apariencia, encerraba un temple de héroe, el celo del propagandista de la verdad evangélica, única que podía nutrir los espíritus y dar sólidos principios a la sociedad colonial." (vol 1, 120–121); "Allí donde los ejércitos cayeron exterminados, triunfa el apóstol con su palabra ardiente" (vol. 1, p. 126). The condemnation of the later development: "... la constitución jesuítica era un delirio y un absurdo" (vol 1, 137); "Pretendían apoyar en el Evangelio la negación de la propiedad, y no titubeo en afirmar que nada más antievangélico que el comunismo" (vol. 1, 138–139). Even so, the later expulsion of the Jesuits and the destruction of the missions were both just as severely denounced: "... apenas registrará la historia acto más brutal y escandaloso de tiranía." Vol. 1, 151. This last event was of course relevant for the difficult issue of church-state relations, as it touched the freedom and integrity of the church and of its institutions. This was an emerging field of conflict, in which Estrada himself would become strongly engaged.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., vol. 1, 191.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., for example, vol. 1, 224, 240 and 315.

but was nevertheless, constituent of the national identity, if only in an indirect and preparatory sense.¹⁷⁶ In a simpler way, Creole identity was seen as spontaneously growing out of the attachment to the soil, to the fruit of one's labour, and out of reverence for the land of the forefathers and of the future generations – the kind of patriotism that is not tied to the modern nation-state: “Además, el día en que un hombre ha estado esperando una cosecha en el suelo en que sembró una semilla, y ha sepultado allí sus padres y ha visto nacer sus hijos, llama a ese pedazo de tierra su patria.”¹⁷⁷

If passages such as the ones cited, on the one hand indicate an organic element in Estrada's interpretation of national identity, on the other hand it is very difficult to find traces of a *Volksgeist*-romantic concept of the nation. On the contrary, even in Estrada, the predominant strand of thought seems to be the one that focuses on the sovereign citizenry as the origin and foundation of a specific nationality. Hence, the decisive and constituent role of the “Argentine revolution” that began with *Mayo*, was therefore, logically enough, made *the* theme of the lectures: Through the May events “the Argentine nationality appeared/came into being” (*surgía la nacionalidad argentina*).¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶Ibid., for example, vol.1, 202–203: “... constituir [el trono] el molde en que la nacionalidad argentina había de fundirse, mezclando sus elementos vitales y sus inspiraciones adquiridas, a los hábitos y tradiciones criadas por su ejercicio normal y prolongado”. Estrada's view of the *gaucho* was rather ambiguous, though clearly less condemning than in the case of Domínguez (see my discussion in the concluding passages on Estrada below).

¹⁷⁷Ibid., vol. 1, 3–4.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., vol. 1, 367. This vision of the nation as a novel creation to be developed from the revolutionary events is also indicated in another instance where the Argentine “nation” of 1811 is reduced to “aquella nacionalidad apenas viable” (vol. 2, 51). Of course, statements like these might be read with attention to the *early* dating of the emergence of an Argentine nation/nationality (1810/1816 as opposed to 1853–1880), rather than to the fact that it is presented as a *creation* made possible by political events, as in my interpretation. The other approach may be found, for example, in Chiaramonte and Buchbinder, “Provincias, caudillos, nación”, where Estrada was presented first and foremost as a spokesman of the view that the nation was pre-existent, before the provinces and before the written constitution and the creation of the nation-state (following a line from the historians Mitre and López). Their analysis of Estrada was based on his three-volume textbook in constitutional law (published posthumously in 1901), and not on his history *lecciones*. Of course, Estrada's concept of the nation might not be identical in the two different texts. However, the section on Estrada was followed by another section on five history textbooks for the secondary school (the ones written by Domínguez, Manso (which was really a textbook for the primary school), Martínez, Fregeiro, and López). The point made by Chiaramonte and Buchbinder here was the same as in Estrada's case: If any position was revealed with regards to the origins of the nation (e.g., in the texts of Domínguez and Manso, this is hard to establish), it was the *early* dating of its emergence. Yet, most of the quotations point to the revolutionary decade, with *antecedents* in the last years of the vice-royalty, and *not to earlier* dates or vague “beginnings of time”. I wish to point out this distinction. Notwithstanding this difference, I regard both interpretations as valid – only the focus is different. See also my comments above on Domínguez, and, in particular, below in Chapter 12 on Fregeiro. For a parallel discussion regarding a much more recent corpus of texts: In their analysis of textbooks from the late twentieth century, the team lead by Luis Alberto Romero (Luciano de Privitello researching the history textbooks) insisted on the concept of the “pre-existent nation” as being predominant. I find it difficult to decide whether this is also mostly a question of interpretation, or whether the concept of the nation had really changed substantially in this regard over the time. Romero, ed., *La Argentina en la escuela*, 48.

The active, if unintentional role designated to the viceregal administration in unifying the diverse peoples of the Plata region and developing an embryonic national consciousness was pointed out in a way somewhat reminiscent of Benedict Anderson's insistence on the role of Creole functionaries in preparing the nationalist movements in America. (The considerable attention – unusual in nineteenth century history textbooks – given to the role of the first newspapers in creating a collective consciousness and articulating public opinion also brings to mind the same theory.) The *virreinato* established the communication and administrative *framework* within which a common sense of identity could develop. In Estrada, however, this sense of community emerges most of all as the unintended product of the reactions towards and *against* those authorities, and the most important issue at stake was the *economic* question (an aspect strangely absent in Anderson's theory). Political suppression (*el despotismo*) is relevant, but according to the author not as decisive as the *criollo* discontent aroused by the crown's economic policies (*el despojo*). The explanatory primacy of the economic factor is a recurrent feature of Estrada's work, even if the general approach is more constitutional-judicial.¹⁷⁹

Estrada's approach to the independence movement itself differed strikingly from what we have encountered so far. The most influential contemporary work on the subject was Mitre's *Historia de Belgrano y de la independencia Argentina*, published in its first and second editions a decade earlier. Mitre's heavy hand in the emergence of a historiography on *Mayo* and the *Independencia* was already visible in other works as well, for instance as editor

¹⁷⁹Estrada, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 191–221; vol. 1, 193–194: "la diversidad de origen de los pueblos del Plata" (before the Viceroyalty – note the plural form here as in the following citation); vol. 2, 55: "... del principio de la nacionalidad argentina, quiero decir, de la unión de todos los pueblos que la forman". On the effects of the colonial reforms: vol. 1, 196–197: "... uniformar la suerte y la vida de los pueblos, destituídos hasta entonces de cohesión y homogeneidad ... Traer las rentas públicas a la unidad, reconcentrar de esta manera la vida de las provincias, vinculándolas por medio del interés y el impuesto ..."; vol. 1, 199–200: "Si por algún medio pueden las leyes engendrar cierta solidaridad en una nación rudimentaria, no cabe duda que es, poniendo resueltamente la mano en su compleción económica, en lo que afecta la fibra de los pueblos de una manera inmediata ..."; vol. 1, 271: "El problema económico ... [constituía] el origen lógico de la iniciación revolucionaria del pueblo, Summing up, vol. 1, 213: "... la idea primitiva de la nacionalidad argentina fué congénita a la unidad de sus provincias, determinada por la centralización rentenística". On the newspapers: vol. 1, 254ff.; vol. 2, 2–3. The parts of Anderson's theory that appear most relevant in this context were described in Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 50–65. Even if I have tried to point out what seem to me to be the central elements in Estrada's "theory" concerning the nation, the multiplicity of approaches should be stressed as a characteristic feature of the text. For instance, we also find the nation defined and constituted by the *love* for the *patria*, an emotional and creative commitment of divine-popular origin, as in the following passage directed against myopic localism: "La patria mide donde alcanzan los fulgores del rayo divino, que incendia las almas, como lámparas de un dios familiar e invisible, pero que suscita amor. La patria viene del cielo. Cuando él arroja por un solo rostro de iluminación creatiz, grupos, familias y razas, les constituye una patria en todo el horizonte que abraza la inspiración. Sabéis la intuición generadora del pueblo. Señaladme su frontera ...". Estrada, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 349.

of an anthology of short biographies of great Argentines.¹⁸⁰ Estrada did not defy the immense authority of Mitre in an explicit way – on the contrary, he inserted a few courteous references to the work of the historian-president.¹⁸¹ But the polemic mode of his presentation of the theme cannot but be interpreted as being directed against Mitre and his followers, mainly because his primary argument was against an elitist view of the Argentine revolution, which presented it as the work of a few great men: “la legión sagrada de 1810, a la cual se ha complacido la idolatría patriótica en atribuir toda la gloria de los nobles y hermosos días de la revolución nacional”. To the author, this was a “funesto error histórico”. Against this interpretation, he elevated “the people” (*el pueblo*) as the real protagonist of the events, at the same time stressing the native roots of the revolution and the long ripening period: “... que fué la revolución argentina un producto de la fuerza universal del pueblo, en sus antecedentes así como en su explosión ...”¹⁸²

One problem is that Estrada, like all the nineteenth century authors studied here, never gives any unambiguous definition of the notion of “the people” (*el pueblo*) nor of the notion of “the nation” (*la nación*). As was indicated earlier the conceptual understanding of both might vary considerably. But there are strong indications that Estrada’s use of the word *pueblo* has a socially wide and inclusive, if geographically very imprecise, meaning. It refers to all the lower layers of society: the “masses”, whether in the town or country, but excludes the “élite”. Geographically, it might refer to “La Plata”, “Argentina” or “America”, depending on the context. The democratic, anti-elitist tendency is often strongly emphasized:

Pero el pueblo criollo, la masa, el *guarango* del alto, el *compadrito* de las orillas, arrastrado por oscuros caudillos de barrio, ni estaba al lado de los españoles, ni participaba de las elaboraciones y de los sueños de Belgrano, de Vieytes y sus compañeros. El peligro lo armó y lo constituyó héroe. ... Las intrigas de gabinete no engendran las revoluciones, y de la nuestra particularmente, sé decir que no conviene buscar su explicación [sic] en la historia de la aristocracia pensadora ni en las impresiones sucesivas del colegio patricio, sino en la historia del pueblo: - del pobre pueblo ignorante, atrasado,

¹⁸⁰Bartolomé Mitre, *Galería de celebridades argentinas: Biografías de los personajes más notables del Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: 1857). A very critical study, bordering on mockery, of this work appeared in Shumway, *The invention of Argentina*, 188–213. For the *Historia de Belgrano*, see e.g. the final notes to Chapter 7 above.

¹⁸¹Estrada, *Lecciones*, for example vol. 2, 333.

¹⁸²*Ibid.*, vol. 1, 224. Cf. vol. 2, 148 (cited below). The motif is varied and reinforced in several instances, for example, referring to the rejection of the British invasions (vol. 1, 304–305): “... la salvación del pueblo por el pueblo ... la vocación liberal del hombre argentino, y que comprueban que ha sido la muchedumbre y no apóstol ni caudillo alguno el agente impersonal de la democracia ...”; vol. 1, 326 (with reference to *Mayo*): “El pueblo en masa, verdadera potencia no menos real por ser negada ...”; vol. 1, 344: “La fuerza era el pueblo y estaba en su nido colonial, durmiendo hasta su hora: ...”; vol. 2, 23 (cited below); vol. 2, 65: “[el] vencedor de Mayo, el pueblo”. See also the next quotation in the main text. On the internal roots of independence, vol. 1, 343: “La libertad argentina es planta indígena de nuestro suelo.”

envilecido por el despotismo, y de cuya frente se ha arrebatado la aureola que hoy día no ha conseguido reivindicar sino a medias.¹⁸³

Neither did Estrada confirm the *mitrista* idea of the enlightened vanguard of the revolution acting in harmonious, immediate accordance with the general will of the people. On the contrary, there was divergence and conflict as to the means and the goals: “Eran la aristocracia y la democracia criolla; eran los revolucionarios y el pueblo ... La emancipación era el dogma de los apóstoles; la democracia era el hecho que el pueblo consumaba”.¹⁸⁴ The final outcome of the revolution was the combined result of confluent and adverse influences of diverse origin, thus it belonged to no particular party or “name”: “No, no es la obra de un partido: es la obra de un pueblo, el engendro de un estado social y de una época histórica.”¹⁸⁵

The preceding observations should perhaps lead us to a reformulation of the central theme of the *Lecciones*: It is not so much the *independence* of the Argentine *nation* as it is the *freedom* of the Argentine *people*.¹⁸⁶ But Estrada’s insistence on the protagonism of *el pueblo* does not allow us to align him with earlier Jacobin radicalism nor with the later *criollista* tendencies of varying shades that emerged as reactions to elitist and cosmopolitan liberalism, not even with its Catholic variants. Truly, Estrada’s philosophy was radically liberal, as it was democratic, as it was profoundly Catholic. But in his efforts to reconcile these elements, he estranged himself from the main opposing ideologies of the generations to come, in the same way as did the French Catholic-liberal writers who were probably his main source of inspiration at this early stage: Ozanam, Lacordaire, Montalembert and the most radical of this group, Felicité Lamennais.¹⁸⁷ The latter seems closely related to Estrada in his exaltation of

¹⁸³Ibid., vol. 1, 335–337. See also vol. 2, 102–103.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., vol. 1, 335 and 337.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., vol. 1, 386. The theme is varied here and repeated emphatically in a passage that concludes in the following exclamation (vol. 1, 387): “¿Sabéis por qué la gloria de mayo es mi gloria y la vuestra? ¿por qué fué la de nuestros padres y será la de nuestros hijos? Porque no hay nombre que profane su sacrosanto anónimo, ni caudillo ni partido que reivindiquen sus laureles.” See also vol. 2, 70–71 (in referring to aristocratic tendencies): “... era el patriciado entrándose furtivamente por *las puertas de la revolución que eran los atrios de la democracia*”. (Italics added.)

¹⁸⁶This only to indicate the superior conception in Estrada's historical thought – of course both notions, and others related to them, cover most important themes in the lectures, occasionally presented as being on the same footing as twin concepts. Thus, “independence” and “democracy” are defined as the two goals of the revolution, incarnated by San Martín and Moreno respectively (vol. 2, 1). Consistently, the Tucumán Congress of 1816 is considered successful in having accomplished one of its two main tasks (the declaration of independence), but a failure with regards to the other: to legislate in accordance with the allegedly popular and democratic character of the Argentine revolution (vol. 2, 163–164). In passing, Estrada criticized the growing contemporary cult towards all things connected with the *Independencia* (vol. 2, 148): “Ante el espíritu irreflexivo que adora ciegamente los hombres y las cosas de la independencia, el congreso ha pasado como una asamblea de semidioses.”

¹⁸⁷Carlos Ibarguren in his introduction to the second edition of Estrada, *ibid.*, vol. 1, vii–viii (though without reference to Lamennais); Tanzi, *José Manuel Estrada*, 61ff. Later on, Estrada would detach himself from the

the transcendent historic role of the “people” as the agent of the material and spiritual progress of mankind that at the same time expresses God’s will and constitutes the inevitable course of history. All of this is expressed in a language biblical in style and imagery, a kind of discourse that tends to assimilate salvation and liberation in a manner reminiscent of the twentieth century’s theology of liberation, despite the individualism of the former writers.¹⁸⁸ However, I have not found any evidence that Estrada actually read Lamennais, while Ozanam and Montalembert seem to have been important points of departure.¹⁸⁹

The described tendencies also determined the presentation of the years of the independence wars. One salient feature was the sparse attention Estrada gave to purely military history, eschewing the customary detailed accounts of battle formations and similar topics. The main campaigns were briefly referred to, and the most important victories won by the revolutionary arms were admittedly hailed, while their defeats were deplored. The provincial contributions were stressed in explicit dissociation from assumed *porteño* conceit on this point (as we have already observed, Domínguez might serve as an example).¹⁹⁰

Estrada’s main concern lay with the internal political development, centring on two axes of conflict: aristocratic versus democratic, and centralizing versus decentralizing tendencies. In both cases Estrada censured the former and sympathized with the latter

radical ideas of the French and Belgian liberal Catholics that had “seduced” him in his youth (quoted from Tanzi): “... me sedujo durante algún tiempo el espíritu, bien intencionado pero paradójico, de los que en Bélgica y en Francia se llamaron, antes del Concilio Vaticano, católicos liberales. Doy gracias a Dios que me abrió los ojos y disipó de mi alma estas ilusiones ...”. Tanzi, *José Manuel Estrada*, 69.

¹⁸⁸Examples of how Estrada expressed this line of thought: Estrada, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 322 (after the defeat of the British invaders): “Las viejas generaciones que suspiraron por su día se regocijan en el hielo de la tumba. La luz ha surgido del sangriento sacrificio. El pueblo vió que era buena. Y fué la tarde y la mañana un día”; vol. 1, 345: “... la epopeya popular, que estamos estudiando, y que impregna nuestra historia y empapa nuestras almas con la divina savia, sangre de su vida y bálsamo de su memoria”; vol. 1, 347: “La ley de las emancipaciones tenía que cumplirse”; vol. 2, 51: “La historia sin el sentimiento de la Providencia pierde su poesía y el diapason de las epopeyas...”. For a thorough study of the concept of *le peuple* in Lamennais and its crucial place in his philosophy, see Inga Margit Sveen, “Lamennais et le peuple” (Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo, 1991) (unpublished dissertation). Michael Riekenberg had a somewhat different approach to these aspects of Estrada’s philosophy of history: The “divine idea”, the developmental “laws” of history (conceived through positivist concepts) and finally the realm of human action constituted three different “levels” in the hierarchy of the historical process (Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 159–160). This reading is compatible with my own interpretation, but one might comment that the conceptual clarity of the scheme is due to Riekenberg and not to Estrada, and also that it is somewhat misleading to describe Estrada’s view of society and of history as basically “hierarchical”.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Tanzi, *José Manuel Estrada*, 61–70. Both were introduced in Argentina by Félix Frías. As for Frédéric Ozanam, his line of social action through the charitable work of the Société de Saint Vincent de Paul seems to have appeared as particularly attractive to Estrada, who supported the establishment and works of the society in Argentina, according to Tanzi.

¹⁹⁰Estrada, *Lecciones*, for example vol. 2, 9: “Yo pregunto con qué elementos si no era con las masas provincianas, luchaba Güemes ...”. See also vol. 2, 27, 41, 46 and 185: “Era Martín Güemes en aquellos momentos de conflicto la personalidad marcial más genuina de las muchedumbres argentinas. Solo, con su arrogancia de hombre libre y el coraje de sus gauchos, era la fuerza primitiva de la patria, que sin conciencia de las formas, realizaba ... la esencia de la revolución de mayo.”.

elements, in accordance with his political creed and with his understanding of the nature of the revolution:

La expedición a las provincias llevaba bajo su bandera al gaucho y al compadrito, quiero decir que el soldado de la revolución era el pueblo, este es, la masa, las muchedumbres ... La revolución era por consiguiente democrática en su esencia, lo era en su destino, y pretender realizarla prescindiendo de la fuerza social que la virilizaba, equivalía a aspirar al objeto sin querer atropellar por el camino.¹⁹¹

In analysing the political factions gradually evolving into distinguishable “parties” with more or less coherent ideologies, Estrada seems to be drawn between his own firmly established ideals and the politics of the possible, given the historical conditions of the moment. The unitarian project was dismissed for principal as well as for pragmatic reasons, although unitarianism at its best was praised for its progressive, reformist initiatives as well as for its good intentions.¹⁹² Being an avowed federalist, Estrada was reluctant, for a number of reasons, to use that term in describing the many *caudillo*-led, anti-centralist, and generally localist movements in the countryside. The first reason was that the “peasant revolution” (*la revolución campesina*) lacked an articulate political programme. Secondly, because Estrada was not willing to align the “barbarian” *caudillos*, motivated by personal ambition, with his own political ideal, and finally, because the anarchy resulting from their interventions had nothing to do with the author’s conception of a federate constitution. Even so, Estrada saw the upheavals led by these forces as a necessary popular reaction to the “reactionary” aristocratic (occasionally monarchist) and centralizing tendencies of the political establishment. In a rather deterministic fashion, the ensuing civil wars were considered an unavoidable, however regrettable, republican purgatory from which the nation might at last be redeemed through the emergence of a true, mature, and conciliatory federal union.¹⁹³ Faced with this somewhat

¹⁹¹Ibid., vol. 2, 23. See also vol. 2, 9, 22ff, 47, 53ff, 59ff, 70ff, 76, 94 and 100–112.

¹⁹²Ibid., vol. 2, see 23f, 59–66, 70–71, 76, 94, 100–112, 173, 190, 192ff, 199–204, 212–213, 238ff, 261ff, 289–293, 307–320 (314: “No se hacían cargo [los unitarios] de que la constitución no entrañaría vitalidad, sino en cuanto satisficiera los instintos de los pueblos y pudiera apoyarse en elementos vivos.”; 317: “Yo no soy unitario en mi país ni fuera de mi país ... yo rechazo la teoría de los gobiernos fuertes”), 340–348 (341 on Rivadavia: “... amor fanático, sin el cual no sería el prototipo del elemento civilizador; amor fanático empero, condenado a estrellarlo, mientras soñaba contra la fuerza viva, a que se negó a incorporar entre sus medios de acción”; 348: “La unidad está proscripta de las fórmulas probables de la democracia argentina. Su ensayo fué ruinoso ...”), 377.

¹⁹³Ibid., see vpol. 2, 73–74, 100–112 (110: “El predominio de los teorizadores habría traído el centralismo, combinación tan quimérica como ruinoso. El de los montoneros habría traído una democracia brutal, sin norte, sin fuerzas reguladoras, que prostituyera su símbolo y entronizara la barbarie. Su alianza era imposible, ... La guerra civil era un fenómeno fatal.”; 111: “Dadas las condiciones ... el país no podía regenerarse, sino por la guerra civil.”), 119–120, 135, 138–141 (141: “... la confederación y la unidad eran igualmente ruinosas, y la federación mixta de tipo norteamericana, que es hoy nuestra forma de gobierno, era entonces imposible. La guerra civil era irremediable.”), 173, 175, 210ff, 217–218, 221, 228, 235ff, 242–248 (246: “Fué necesario para lograrlo [la democracia] la revolución bárbara de 1820”), 250–251, 256–258, 305–306, 317, 320–324, 347,

disheartening conclusion, Estrada insisted on the colonial heritage as the basic explanation: the Spanish original sin.¹⁹⁴

The moderate federalism led by Manuel Dorrego in the 1820s appeared as the political alternative with the strongest affinity for Estrada's own creed and temper. The execution of Dorrego in 1828 cut short a viable, sensible, political alternative: a kind of synthesis of, as well as mediation between, the polarized parties fighting each other tooth and nail.¹⁹⁵ However, above federalism in the hierarchy of political values stood the ideal of democracy. Accordingly, unitarians like Moreno, and later Rivadavia, might be hailed in the same breath as federalist Dorrego, and in a mood of conciliatory complacency, Estrada might conclude that his own generation and the present constitution were heirs to the most valuable elements in both the former antagonistic movements.¹⁹⁶

The importance of *caudillismo* in the first half-century of Argentine independence was a highlighted subject in Estrada's lectures. As contemporary liberals usually did, he approached that host of rural leaders with a basic feeling of abhorrence, not being completely able to resist, however, the fascination aroused by the mythical aura radiating from the most

351ff, 362–363 ("... movimiento popular es la historia de las sociedades libres. ¿Que transáis con la barbarie?... ¡cómo no, si la barbarie es el pueblo!..."), 368–375.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., see vol. 2, 104–105, 111, 246 ("¿Es culpa nuestra, por ventura, haber sido colonos de España?"), 305–306 ("[los caudillos] no son sino la degradación colonial hecha carne y sistema"), 362 ("Sobre el pueblo argentino pesaba un hecho indestructible: la colonización española. Este hecho lo condenaba a no entender la libertad, a tropezar buscándola, a ensangrentarse para conseguirla.").

¹⁹⁵Ibid., see 197, 228–229 ("Manuel Dorrego era franca y sinceramente liberal."), 320–324 (rehabilitating Dorrego by carefully distinguishing him from Rosas, thus: "restablecer en sus proporciones morales aquella gran figura descolorida por la sangre de la guerra civil que siguió a su muerte", 321), 351–353, 363, 368–375 (372–373: "... ¿qué era Dorrego ... sino la precoz encarnación del principio humano, argentino y fructífero, inoculado hoy día en la turbulenta revolución que lo devoró?"); 374–375: "Si personificáramos las cosas, podríamos decir: entre Lavalle y Rosas, entre Quiroga y Paz, estaba Dorrego. Muerto Dorrego, Paz y Lavalle quedaron solos a luchar contra Rosas y Facundo."

¹⁹⁶Ibid., see vol. 2, 23–24, 59–66, 72–73, 141, 247 ("Los gauchos rompieron la muralla. Por esa brecha penetró Dorrego: por esa brecha penetró Rivadavia. la democracia había vencido."), 261ff, 286–294 (though criticizing Rivadavia's anticlerical and centralizing tendencies: "Rivadavia es la más alta personificación del progreso en la historia argentina", 292), 318–324 (319: "ved allí la gran necesidad argentina, cuyo medio legal de satisfacción no es otro, sino el sistema federal que afortunadamente la rige [la República Argentina]"), 348 ("Esta generación es el alma del unitario encarnada en el argentino; es el argentino federal hoy como Dorrego, porque aquellos dos grandes centros de movimiento y de luz, encerraban lo esencial en la solución histórica de la democracia."), 372–373, 458 ("una unión fecunda ... iniciada por Dorrego, bautizado con su martirio, y sellada con la batalla de Caseros y la constitución federal de las Provincias Unidas"). The following passage roughly outlines Estrada's basic analysis of the political dialectics of his country and summarizes his own tenets: "Partido unitario, tesis, teoría en acción, arrogante y orgulloso de su apostolado civilizador: faz archi-lógica del urbanismo: Rivadavia. Caudillaje, antítesis: fuerza nacional, barbarie colonial y pastora elevada a potencia por la revolución, cuya esencia era la soberanía del pueblo: localismo desenvuelto a su calor: faz gaucha en el dualismo hispano-americano: Bustos, Facundo. Partido federal: punto de avenimiento: creación intermedia y original: europeo en su espíritu social, argentino en sus aplicaciones políticas: influenciado por la doctrina norteamericana, se confunde con el unitario por la tendencia civilizadora, con el indígena por el sentido práctico y democrático: profetiza la solución: verde aun, es el fruto más genuino de la revolución, que necesitó treinta años de luto y un largo riego de sangre para madurar: Dorrego." Ibid., vol. 2, 323–324.

legendary among them (cf. Domínguez to the same respect). More interesting than his feelings, though, is his interpretation of the historical significance of the caudillo. First, the caudillo was understood through his relationships of interdependency with his followers, that is to say the mainly rural and mainly poor groups of a composite nature, which Estrada simplified as the peasant “masses”, usually under the term *gauchos*. The main point was the assumed affinity between leader and followers, even if the caudillo might be a local tyrant and even if he, according to our lecturer, was generally more ambitious and cruel than his rather innocent, if ignorant and “barbarian”, rank and file adherents. In interpreting the popular will, the caudillo expressed a kind of primitive democracy, even if it was for purely selfish motives, and directed the popular forces in a destructive sense. Furthermore, the *caudillaje* exploited social structures and mentalities inherited from the Spanish colony, while the explosion of these centrifugal forces was a trueborn offspring of the revolution and ensuing wars. The political elites should have endeavoured to compromise with these elements, “civilizing” them along the way, instead of ignoring or confronting them. The point is simple, even trivial: Liberty without “the people” is an absurdity, and “the people” is a given reality, not a matter of choice. In this discussion, Estrada represented a line of thought with wide and long-lasting repercussions in textbooks, as well as in Argentine historiography in general.¹⁹⁷ Inextricably associated with this discussion is Estrada’s view of the *gaucho*. In short, it was at least as ambiguous as his attitude towards the caudillos. The topic will be briefly addressed in my concluding remarks on Estrada.

In all these matters, Estrada’s reading of Argentine history was subjective and politically committed, but at the same time, inclusive, profound, and complex. Not so when Juan Manuel Rosas was brought to the centre of the stage, that is to say, in the final act of the national drama staged in the *Lecciones*. In Rosas and his regime, Estrada saw only the tyrant: ambitious, cruel and autocratic beyond all bounds. All things related to Rosas seemed to be of a wicked nature, even apparently attractive or neutral qualities such as his physical appearance. Rosas was evil incarnate, he was a *born* tyrant,¹⁹⁸ even if his ascent to power was

¹⁹⁷Ibid., see vol 2, 9–10, 41, 46, 73, 100ff (100: “Todos los caudillos tienen afinidades con las pasiones que encabezan, pero todos los superan con la formidable medida de la perfidia y la ambición.”; 101: “Si me preguntáis qué pienso de los caudillos, os responderé, que no pienso nada: me contento con aborrecerlos!”), 113–123, 139–141 (against confederalism on 141: “Esa confederación griega, quería decir López en Santa Fe, Ramírez en Entre Ríos y Caparros en La Rioja ...”), 173, 185, 217ff, 242ff, 256–258 (on Facundo Quiroga), 301–306 (305: “Los caudillos no son susceptibles de aislarse del fenómeno social en que aparecen. No son monstruos que envía el infierno: son monstruos engendrados por las sociedades.”; see also 323–324, 351 (“... manifestaban [los caudillos] al exterior la sangre colonial circulante en las arterias del pueblo ...”), 362.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., vol. 2, 445: “tirano desde el vientre de su madre”.

the product of the fatigue and the “degenerate” state of Argentine society caused by the civil wars. As a general tendency, this would be a common feature of liberal historiography, in textbooks and elsewhere (the chapter heading “La tiranía de Rosas” used here was to become commonplace for a long time), but the very vehemence in Estrada’s emotionally charged attacks on *rosismo* and its protagonist is hardly equalled.¹⁹⁹ The explanation should be sought partly in the closeness in time of the dictatorship (even if Estrada himself was a child of barely ten when Rosas fled the country in 1852), partly in Estrada’s strong liberal conviction, and partly in genre-related reasons (cf., my introductory comments on the nature of the *Lecciones*). The work of Rosa’s administration was hardly mentioned nor was his economic policy discussed. Two topics dominated the presentation: the terror (“Todo era terror”)²⁰⁰ and the power struggle between Rosas and the opposition. The interventions of foreign powers were admitted to be dubious from the point of view of international law and their insincere motivation, but they were nevertheless defended, given the nature of the regime (except when Paraguay or Brazil was concerned),²⁰¹ thus depriving Rosas of his status as the champion of national sovereignty. To the federalist Estrada, it was most important to show that Rosas’s adherence to the federal cause was nothing but hypocrisy, and his government was thus described as “unitarian”, “personal”, and “barbarian”.²⁰² His downfall rendered possible the

¹⁹⁹The only textbook that matches Estrada in this respect, is the one written by Vicente Fidel López, to be analysed in Chapter 14. See Vicente Fidel López, *Manual de la Historia Argentina* (Buenos Aires: C. Casavalle, Editor, 1896), 380–535.

²⁰⁰Estrada, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 443.

²⁰¹Estrada's professed scepticism towards territorial nationalism evaporated whenever Argentina's archenemies, Brazil and Paraguay, were mentioned. In the latter case, we must bear in mind that the lectures were given in the midst of the sanguinary Paraguayan war of the Triple Alliance. The harsh treatment of that neighbouring republic in Estrada's text might indirectly legitimate the Argentine participation in the war. See *ibid.*, vol. 2, 33–36, 45–46, 176ff, 346 (“A excepción de la del Paraguay [de 1844], no conozco ninguna constitución mala.”), 353–354, 355, 422–423. On the other hand, this is admittedly a minor subject, which is dealt with only briefly and sporadically in the *Lecciones*. Otherwise, Estrada took a particular interest in the colonial history of Paraguay, publishing works on the subject both before and after the *Lecciones*.

²⁰²*Ibid.*, vol. 2, 457. Rosas is dealt with on the following pages (vol. 2): 215 (“... Rosas y Carrera, los dos hombres que menos han creído en la federación”), 302–305 (303: “al verle [a Rosas] creeríais que el arte diabólico se agotó para encarnarse en él”), 320–321, 364–365, 378 (“la brutalidad colonial y pastora hecha carne en Juan Manuel Rosas”), 389–401 (for the years 1829–1835), 403–459 (for the years 1835–1852). Estrada repeatedly emphasized his view that Rosas's was a *personal* dictatorship, and that, even when he depended on popular support in order to reach power, he did so only in a parasitical fashion: His policies were not really class-based, and repression struck the people as well as the upper classes. See for example, 430: “Pero Rosas, desertor de la sociabilidad urbana, su cuna, a la sociabilidad gaucha y pastora, su elemento por hábito y elección, no representaba, hablando en rigor, la superposición de las campañas a las ciudades, de la fuerza primitiva sobre la fuerza civilizada. Rosas no era engendro del gauchaje en sus facies normales. Era el hijo de la revolución campesina, a la cual se incorporó identificándose con su agente ... pero dominándolo ...”; 436: “Rompe [Rosas] las fibras de las montoneras, sacrificando a puñal o veneno los caudillos que lo levantaron”. An interesting detail is Estrada's condemnation of Rosas's campaign against the Amerindians (between his two periods as governor of Buenos Aires): “empresa ruinosa”, “farsaica expedición” (393). Later on, as we shall see, even strongly

dawn of a new era of freedom against which the abysmal wretchedness of the preceding period was stretched out as a contrasting black backcloth. In this way, without addressing the years following Caseros as a subject apart, Estrada's lectures indeed served the purpose of legitimating the contemporary state of order in the Argentina of 1868, above all in constitutional matters.

The epic structure of this Argentine history was also edifying in a wider perspective, leading the peoples of the would-be nation progressively from the dark age of colonial suppression, through the heroism of revolution and independence struggle as well as the aberrations of civil wars and tyranny, into the new age of liberty and democracy. The acrid lessons taught during the vicissitudes of the wandering had been necessary. In Estrada's universe, history makes sense. It is not only the historian who makes it sensible through interpretation; it has its own inner meaning, it strives towards universal goals led by the providential laws of nature and working through all freedom-seeking peoples. According to Estrada, Argentine history is only one manifestation of this immense and profoundly meaningful process:

La revolución es obra de todos: viene de la acción universal de los hombres y los pueblos y hace invencibles [sic] en el porvenir de la patria, a la democracia, esperanza suya y del hombre porque es la ley de la naturaleza apropiada a la organización de las sociedades.²⁰³

A historian in the twenty-first century, fostered in an age of scepticism and mistrust of "grand narratives", cannot but feel a sting of envy when confronted with the grand and all-embracing nineteenth century faith in the constant progress of human civilization.

Estrada has occasionally been referred to as a precursor of the so-called revisionism in Argentine historiography. Thus Michael Riekenberg's appreciation in the following passage:

Die Argumentation Estradas stellte damit eine Verschiebung der Perspektive dar, unter der die Geschichte der Region nach 1810 gemeinhin betrachtet wurde, weil nunmehr die ländlichen Gebiete und die darin lebenden, unteren Bevölkerungsgruppen an Stelle der Stadt und ihrer Eliten als die eigentlichen Bewegkräfte der nationalen Entwicklung sowie als das herkunftsmilieu bzw. als die Träger nationaler Werte erschienen. Indem die Nation als *gaucha* definiert wurde, hinterfragte Estrada das politisch-historische Selbstverständnis der bonaerensischen Führungsgruppen. Insofern begegnen wir in dem Geschichtsbild Estradas einer frühen Form des sogenannten Geschichtsrevisionismus.²⁰⁴

antirrosista textbook writers would often praise this venture, most probably because of its affinity with Roca's famous *Conquista del Desierto* in the late 1870s.

²⁰³Ibid., vol. 2, 248.

²⁰⁴Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 146.

My own analysis on the preceding pages might substantiate this interpretation to some extent. Nevertheless, on closer examination it is untenable without several modifications. First, the *gaucho* was admittedly seen as a major constituent element of the nation by virtue of his undeniable historical presence, something that had an important bearing on Estrada's conception of the national identity. But the text did not lend itself to any *criollista* cult of the gaucho as a positive figure of identification.²⁰⁵

Secondly, it is doubtful whether Estrada can really be said to shift the focus towards the countryside and the provinces, as opposed to Buenos Aires. To be more precise: He did so in a programmatic and theoretical fashion, but generally, throughout the course of his lectures (with some exceptions) he maintained the Buenos Aires perspective on the empirical level. In explaining the origins of the revolutionary movement – the main subject – Estrada explicitly dismissed both the “barbarian” countryside and the towns of the interior and the littoral, stressing solely the importance of the capital.²⁰⁶ Although in many instances, we may also find severe attacks on *porteño* haughtiness.²⁰⁷ Estrada's main concern on this point was quite different. In explicit disagreement with Alberdi and others, he rejected the thesis claiming that the dichotomy between Buenos Aires and the provinces constituted the basic conflict underlying the Republic's troublesome history. Just as the root of the evil was the common heritage of the colonial structures, so were shame and glory in contemporary developments

²⁰⁵Estrada's attitude towards the *gaucho* was fundamentally ambiguous. The figure of the gaucho undoubtedly constitutes an important and recurring theme in the *Lecciones*. On the one hand, the gaucho was considered the national prototype, and an icon of the indispensable patriotic virtue of manliness: “Ungido paladín de la revolución porque la revolución era nacional y la nación era gaucha en su elemento más abundante y varonil ...” Estrada, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 10. On the other hand, he was not a national *ideal*, he was a national *reality*, a rather lamentable part of the barbarian heritage of the colonial period: “... el gaucho es el conquistador desterrado”. Ibid., vol. 1, 182. Although admiration as usual (already observed in the case of Domínguez) mingled with disgust in the various descriptions of the gaucho (e.g., vol. 1, 182: “Hay arranque caballeresco en su bárbara altivez”), the general conclusion was negative: “... tal era el gaucho de la colonia y de la revolución, y lo es hoy día el gaucho republicano *para nuestra desgracia y nuestra vergüenza*”. (Italics added.) Ibid., vol. 1, 276–277. By now, Estrada's main point should be familiar: The *gauchos* (the term being used in a wide and rather imprecise sense) were “barbarians”, but nevertheless they were the people, and they were the ranks of the armies of the emerging nation. Therefore, there could have been no revolution without them, as there would be no democracy and no national development. See also on this topic: Ibid., vol. 2, 22ff, 46, 73–74, 100–123 (103: “Evoco el recuerdo de las más encumbradas glorias de mi país, y veo allí al gaucho, héroe y triunfador por la libertad”; 105: “España nos dió el gaucho enviciado en sus desventuras. El gaucho vino a la revolución y tenía forzosamente que venir, porque la revolución era democrática, y él, mayoría inmensa y verdadera fuerza nacional, era el nuevo soberano proclamado el 25 de mayo ...”; 109: “[Los gauchos] Eran además la fuerza viva, porque eran la nación.”), 173, 204–207 (a romantic, poetic description of the gaucho), 218, 235ff, 242–243, 247, 323–324, 347, 362.

²⁰⁶Ibid., vol. 1, 276ff (including a scornful description of Córdoba and Paraná).

²⁰⁷Ibid., for example vol. 1, 372–373. See also the following pages in vol. 2: 70–73 (“el egoísmo urbano” defined as “una enfermedad de raza”, 73), 101–102 (“No, señores: no todo el pueblo estaba encerrado en las mezquinas y envanecidas ciudades de nuestro suelo”), 106 (“... ni en 1810 ni en 1868 sabemos en Buenos Aires cómo se vive en Jujuy”), 241, 293, 349–350.

evenly distributed. For instance could both aristocratic and democratic, centralist and federalist as well as localist tendencies be found throughout the country, the capital being no exception. Implicitly, Argentines of the new national order might therefore start afresh as equals in sin as well as in virtue.²⁰⁸

The anti-elitist tendency, on the other hand, is thoroughly confirmed, as is Estrada's anti-centralist commitment to federalism in constitutional matters. The part of Estrada's work that deals with the origins of independence and with the *Mayo* events is probably the one which most easily might lend itself to a reading of him as a forerunner of later revisionist positions.

Against the "revisionist" reading of Estrada, one might point out his hostility towards Spain and the Hispanic heritage, his dogmatic economic liberalism, and last but not least, the vehement *antirrosismo* that stands out as one of the most striking features of his lectures. Perhaps the image of Estrada as an "anti-officialist" historian is too much influenced by his later oppositional role in the decade of *roquismo*. The young, acclaimed lecturer and would-be rector of the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires certainly formed part of the academic establishment of the capital. Much more than an exponent of any self-styled "counter-history", Estrada should be read as an example of the plurality existent *within* "official" history in the infancy of Argentine historiography.²⁰⁹

Apart from being a dissenting counterpart to Mitre and others, Estrada's vision of the national genesis might appear in the historical context of the late 1860s as a viable construction, an interpretation fitted for the advancement of national reconciliation, even if it was not formulated in the kind of narrative that could easily be turned into actual textbook

²⁰⁸Ibid., see vol. 2, 110–111 ("El origen del mal está en nuestra civilización y en antecedentes coloniales que han sido comunes a toda la nación."), 142–145, 239ff ("Pero el localismo existía en todas las provincias, sin excepción, y al revés, siempre que sus estadistas se congregaban, representando a los pueblos y encarnando la unión política de la nacionalidad tendieron a centralizar, fuera que reformaran liberalmente, fuera que se plegaran a la fuerza de inercia del partido conservador o monarquista. ... No ha sido Buenos Aires, repito, el turiferario del centralismo primitivo."), 349–350.

²⁰⁹An additional argument is Estrada's view of immigration policies, in which he not only advocated free and massive immigration, but also flatly rejected any *criollo* fear for the loss of national identity. Of course, this was only on the eve of the "flood", and Estrada's cosmopolitan liberalism was quite in tune with predominant elite attitudes at the time – long before the effects of real mass immigration brought on a wide-spread Creole, nationalist reaction, as will be observed in the following chapters. Even so, it is noteworthy how Estrada's defence of free immigration is devoid of any of the traces of racism not uncommonly underlying immigration proposals – on the contrary, Estrada's anti-racism is explicit here as elsewhere, as noted above. See op.cit., vol. 2, 273–275 (273–274: "Entre las preocupaciones resistentes a toda razón, señalemos una que se incrusta en la vanidad de los pueblos y perpetúa los rencores entre los hombres: 'el genio nacional!' Confieso, señores, que no lo entiendo. ... El hombre de Rusia y del Mogol, el cafre como el francés, y el asiático como el americano, tienen inteligencia, sentimiento y fuerzas: desenvolvedlas por medio de la educación y de la ley moral, y todos los hombres serán iguales.").

contents. As it turned out, however, other approaches would prove more influential in the following developments of Argentine history writing and textbook production than the ones suggested by Estrada.

10. Towards a new era: Bright future, bright past in the *Lecciones* by Lucio V. López

Not until the late 1870s did new manuals on the subject appear to renew the rather modest textual achievements of the previous decade. In 1877 and 1878, two textbooks in Argentine history were published, written by Clemente Leoncio Fregeiro and Lucio Vicente López, respectively.²¹⁰ Each in its own way seems to inaugurate the following period of rapid expansion of the history textbook production – as of the textbook market, as of the whole educational system, as of popular and academic history works of every kind – as much or more as they belong to the “preparatory” stage studied in this chapter.

Clemente L. Fregeiro was for many years an influential history textbook writer, history teacher and educational administrator, and a historian. Both his anonymously published *Compendio de la Historia Argentina* and the later, more extensive, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*²¹¹ were to be reedited several times. As the greater part of his didactic work corresponds to the following period, his texts will be analysed together in Chapter 12.

The manual written by Lucio Vicente López (1848–1894), on the other hand, did not have a prolonged impact. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the 1878 edition remained the only one. The text itself has the appearance of an unfinished project: The opening lecture sketches a panoramic vision of the country’s history stretching from the Hispanic discoveries until 1852, and announces a treatment of the national history including the contemporary “organic periods”.²¹² The following chapters of the book, however, totalling 424 pages, never reach beyond the inauguration of Viceroy Vértiz (1778).²¹³

²¹⁰[Clemente Leoncio Fregeiro], *Compendio de la Historia Argentina: Desde el descubrimiento del nuevo mundo hasta el presente* (Buenos Aires: Igon Hermanos, Libreros-Editores, 1877); L. V. López, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Carlos Casavalle, Editor, 1878).

²¹¹C. L. Fregeiro, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*, vol. 1, 4th ed. (1st ed. 1886) (Buenos Aires: Librería Rivadavia de G. Mendeský, Editor, 1892); C. L. Fregeiro, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*, vol. 2, 3rd ed. (1st ed. 1886) (Buenos Aires: Librería Rivadavia de G. Mendeský, Editor, 1892); C. L. Fregeiro, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*, vol. 2, 10th ed. (1st ed. 1886) (Buenos Aires: Librería “Rivadavia” de G. Mendeský é Hijo, 1913).

²¹²L. V. López, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*, 1878, 5–18.

²¹³The only copy I have been able to consult (in the *Biblioteca Nacional*) seems incomplete in the sense that the last sentence is unfinished and there is no index – in addition to the strange choice of the year 1777 as the closing date of the period presented. But if anything is missing, it must have disappeared before binding (no pages seem to have been removed). Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 4, 1975, also confirmed the abrupt termination of the work: “... sus *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*, que comprendía el período de la dominación hispánica hasta el Virrey Vértiz”. Similarly in Bernardo González Arrili, *Tiempo pasado: Semblanzas de escritores argentinos* (Buenos Aires: Academia Argentina de Letras, 1974), 92: “Las *Lecciones de historia argentina* quedaron inconclusas.”

Indeed, Lucio López's incursion into the didactics of history was only a relatively brief episode in the life of a man otherwise inclined towards other fields of knowledge and activity (law, journalism, politics – not to forget the novel *La gran aldea* with which, above all, his name is associated by posterity).²¹⁴ Even if his history textbook was by no means epoch-making, it gains interest from the fact that the author was the son of the great historian Vicente Fidel López, rival and opponent to Mitre in this founding stage of Argentine historiography. The very fact that the son was not primarily a historian makes it likely, at least not improbable, that, to some extent, he relied on his father's work, extensive knowledge, and clear-cut views when performing in the field of history.²¹⁵ Besides, as an Argentine history *textbook* writer, he in fact anticipated his in other respects more important father, who with his extensive production on historical topics nevertheless did not condense his vast work into a manual destined for the *colegio* public until more than a decade later.²¹⁶ (The last-mentioned text will be dealt with in Chapter 14.) The texts of both might be studied as related representatives of a historiographic tradition somewhat dissociated from the *mitrista*, but even so generally considered “mainstream”.

Rómulo D. Carbia situated Lucio V. López in an intermediate position between Estrada and a later generation of historians that would reassess the colonial period and, in general, address every aspect of Argentine history with more thorough, source-critical methods. Being described as Estrada's most important successor in his general approach to the subject, López Junior nevertheless merited Carbia's approval with reference to a higher degree of erudition and a less prejudiced attitude towards the Spanish heritage, according to this historiographer. Extending his favourable predisposition, Carbia also assigned a considerable influence to Lucio V. López's book regarded as a secondary school textbook, and his view would later be reproduced by others.²¹⁷ As indicated above, I think there is good reason to reduce the claim to more modest proportions.

²¹⁴Biographic data from Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 4, 1975; González Arrili, *Tiempo pasado*, 85–96; Ricardo Piccirilli, *Los López: Una dinastía intelectual: Ensayo histórico literario: 1810–1852* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1972), 157–185.

²¹⁵ Ricardo Piccirilli, however, insisted that Lucio V. López followed his own criterion and only on certain specific points sought his father's advice when preparing his lectures. Piccirilli, *Los López*, 163 and 184.

²¹⁶V.F.López, *Manual*, 1937 (used here: the original edition from 1889-90, according to Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 4, 1975).

²¹⁷ Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 145–148, 301–302 and 312 (where Carbia claimed that L.V. López's *Lecciones* was much used as a secondary school textbook until 1886, an assumption reproduced by Jorge María Ramallo in *La Junta de Historia*, vol. 2, 379). Ricardo Piccirilli described Lucio Vicente López as an able and inspired history teacher at the university, but not as a researcher dedicated to the laborious study of primary sources. Piccirilli, *Los López*, 163.

The 1878 *Lecciones de Historia Argentina* is really the published version of a series of lectures on Argentine history that Lucio V. López gave at the *Facultad de Humanidades* of the University of Buenos Aires in that same year, the author/lecturer having received the chair in Argentine history the previous year, and might accordingly, on the face of it, be conceived of as a text destined mainly for the tertiary level (which is not the subject of this study). At this stage, however, the university was still upholding its own secondary studies.²¹⁸ In any case, the relatively close connections between the university and the *colegio nacional* at that time, along with the scarcity of handy texts available, makes it possible that the book might also have been used and referred to in the latter institution (with the reservation that it does not seem to have been too successful at any level). A summary commentary therefore seems appropriate.

Not only the title, but also the mode and touch of Lucio V. López's approach to the subject resemble the lectures of José Manuel Estrada. To López too the value of history lay in the moral analysis of the different periods, and the liberal idea of progress underlying the presentation implied moral and spiritual, just as much as economic and political, achievements. Indeed, López undertook to provide a cultural and even intellectual history, without giving preference to the heroizing political-military narratives.²¹⁹ Unfortunately, we are prevented in this case from measuring the impact of these principles in relation to the contemporary period.

In other respects, López's vision of the national past differed strikingly from that of Estrada in a way that properly belonged to the nascent state of a new era. The most explicit manifestation was the new appreciation of the colonial period. An implicit premise was a new understanding of the contemporary significance of Argentina. As indicated above, the Hispanic period constituted *the* subject of the book – and without the heavy concentration on

²¹⁸In 1877 a new six-year *bachillerato* curriculum took effect at the Facultad de Humanidades of the University of Buenos Aires, according to which, history (or history and geography) was to be taught at all levels, with American and Argentine history in the penultimate (fifth) class. It appears probable to me that López's lectures were imparted in this context. (This instruction on the secondary level at the university only lasted until 1883, as mentioned earlier.) See *Antecedentes*, 34–35.

²¹⁹These points of resemblances as to form and content abound from the opening lines: "SEÑORES: Vamos a estudiar la historia de la patria, desde el descubrimiento hasta la conquista, desde la colonia hasta la revolucion, desde la independencia hasta los períodos orgánicos. No nos limitaremos á remontar el curso de los acontecimientos siguiendo las corrientes de la crónica. Nos detendremos en el análisis moral de las épocas ... Vamos á estudiar nuestros progresos morales y políticos, á observar un estado social embrionario que asoma para seguirlo en su desarrollo y ver como se complementa en el presente y como continúa complementándose en el futuro. No nos limitaremos á hacer la historia de los héroes, de las guerras y de las batallas. Estudiaremos tambien la historia de la intelijencia argentina desde su infancia hasta los años recientes, para averiguar como este pueblo que ha nacido de la guerra ha nacido tambien del pensamiento." L. V. López, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*, 5.

its last stage, the Viceroyalty, as had been the case with both Domínguez and Estrada. Now, the exclusion of more recent periods in itself might be due to accidental circumstances, as we have seen (the author never got that far). But even a brief qualitative analysis confirms the shift towards a much more positive evaluation of the colonial heritage.²²⁰ The imperial grandeur of Spain was made an object of admiration. The brutality of the *Conquista* was admittedly condemned, but the *colonia* was now presented as the constructive contrast to, more than as the equally deplorable prolongation of, the destructive stage of conquest. The fertility and agricultural potential of the Plate region were favourably compared with the apparent wealth of the colonial mining centres, as a direct prelude to the advantageous position and prospects of contemporary Argentina:

Las colonias argentinas no despertaron como otras colonias americanas la codicia insaciable de los conquistadores. Hernan Cortés y Pizarro deslumbraron las córtes de los reyes de España con los grandes tesoros de Méjico y del Perú. Irala y Juan de Garay prepararon una tierra noble para la industria y para el trabajo. Aquellos, agotaron las entrañas auríferas de dos grandes imperios: estos, fomentaron el suelo con las sementeras, propagaron las crias de los ganados y las lanzaron á las estensas praderas argentinas en las que una naturaleza próbida, cumplió con ellas la ley eterna del desarrollo y de la multiplicacion.

...

... la República Argentina, al mismo tiempo que opera su organizacion política y su desarrollo intelectual, opera tambien la transformacion completa de su estado económico bajo las sábias reglas de la libertad de comercio. Hemos de ver como este pueblo abre á la inmigracion sus grandes y fecundos senos, como la riqueza pública y la riqueza privada toman un incremento notable, y como la industria, la agricultura y la ganadería, desparramando sus producciones por todos los pueblos de la tierra, dan á nuestro país un digno lugar entre las naciones civilizadas del mundo.²²¹

This complacent self-image of a country already on board the train of rapid growth and expansion constituted López's point of departure, and strongly coloured his optimistic – even triumphal – vision of the national past, which despite temporary setbacks was most of all the tale of past glory preparing for present and future glories. This approach would hardly have seemed probable only a few years earlier.

Domínguez had simply wanted to erect a common spiritual monument for the youth of a profoundly divided Argentina through the narration of the heroic May revolution and independence struggle. Estrada, like López, concluded with a legitimizing praise of the present state of affairs, but only after painstaking efforts to explain the historical circumstances that had *prevented*, not favoured, the emergence of such a lucky order. His determinative starting point had been the barely concluded half century of internecine wars, “tyranny”, and cultural underdevelopment, and he had grudgingly returned to the colonial

²²⁰The following points were already all stated explicitly in the opening lecture. *Ibid.*, 5–18. On the *Conquista*, see also 54ff.

²²¹*Ibid.*, 7–8.

heritage in order to make it answer for that continued misery. Lucio Vicente López, in the optimistic mood of national self-confidence proper to a later moment, set out to tell a success story.

The rehabilitation of the Hispanic past could just as well spring from an opposite point of view, as would indeed be the case in several instances: from the reaction *against* cosmopolitan liberalism, secularization, “Anglo-Saxon” materialism, and the apparent cultural threat posed by heterogeneous mass immigration. But in López’s text there are no oppositional or nostalgic strands. The line is drawn from past to present in conformal harmony: The thriving colonies fostered a “people” (*pueblo*, still not a “nation”) who developed industrious as well as military and cultural skills in a process clearly described as formative of the nation-to-come. The splendid moment of this development was the years of the Viceroyalty. Whereas Estrada had depicted the emergence of an embryonic national community in reaction *against* the viceregal administration with its renewed oppressive and centralizing capacity, in López, viceregal and Creole efforts pulled together, eventually developing a society that was mature enough for independence.²²² Similarly, the May revolution and independence were the work of a “generation”, specifically, a generation of young sons of the Buenos Aires elites. The stress was certainly not on conflict, at least not conflicts within this group. The following political divisions were briefly mentioned (with a distinct *porteño* and unitarian bias), as were the “medieval” anarchy of 1820, and the terrible “night” of Rosas’s reign, but López did not dwell on these negative moments – in contrast, Rivadavia was applauded at length.²²³ Since nineteenth century events were only treated in a

²²²Ibid., 8–9: “Los pueblos del Río de la Plata nacieron y crecieron por el trabajo del hombre. Fueron verdaderas colonias las que se fundaron en las márgenes de sus grandes ríos. Una raza fuerte y viril habiase formado en sus territorios y á ella le estaba guardado la gloria de consumir una de las revoluciones mas grandes de las edades presentes. / Elevados espíritus y notables hechos, concurrieron á dar nombre á los argentinos en todo el siglo pasado. El Vireynato del Río de la Plata, creado bajo los auspicios de un rey esclarecido, habia realizado hechos y empresas que llamaron la atencion de la Metrópoli: los argentinos concurren con su esfuerzo á varios de las [sic] sucesos notables que tienen lugar en América ... /Era este un pueblo que no habia permanecido inerte bajo la vida colonial. Habia combatido y habia vencido, y así es que cuando se sintió fuerte para asumir por sí mismo una personalidad propia, contó con los elementos activos que su vida guerrera le habia preparado.” The theme is repeated and elaborated on 9–13.

²²³Ibid., 14–18 on the nineteenth century. The Buenos Aires perspective is shown not only in the space occupied by events and developments in the capital and the corresponding neglect of the rest of the country, but also in statements imbued with local patriotism, for example, 14: “Aquella generacion de adolescentes llevó a cabo una de las mas grandes revoluciones modernas. Fué una ciudad, señores, sin que esto importe estimular mezquinos intereses de localismo, la que agitó un mundo. Solo á Buenos Aires le estaba deparado en los tiempos modernos realizar las grandes epopeyas de las ciudades griegas. Devorada mas tarde por la guerra civil, por los rencores de bando, por las ambiciones de los émulos, se rasga el pecho, derrama sus recursos, pero lucha con una tenacidad homérica por la idea de la independencia, y no olvida un momento que ella es la ejecutora del programa de Mayo. Nuestros guerreros conducen sus huestes triunfantes por el continente, sus poetas, como los poetas de la Revolucion Francesa, cantan sus hazañas y sus victorias y levantan el pensamiento y la cultura intelectual de la

sketchy fashion in the opening lecture, we should be cautious in drawing categorical conclusions for this period. The point to be made is that a consistent, harmonizing attitude, focusing on the idea of continuous progress, permeated the global interpretation of Argentina's history in this text.

patria." In this respect, as in the *unitario* inclination, López was in tune with Domínguez, but certainly not with Estrada. Another difference was the slightly anticlerical tendency to be found in López, for example, defending Lutheranism (54) and the anticlerical measures of Charles III (11) and later of Rivadavia (17). For example: "El sábio Cárlos III promueve cuanto medio liberal existe para levantar á la España de la *postración católica* en que yace desde la época gangrenada de Cárlos el Hechizado. Es la sávia francesa la que se inocular en Madrid y corre hasta Buenos Aires." (Italics added.) Ibid., 11.

1861–1880: Concluding remarks

Despite the pioneering work of Domínguez and the singular didactic intervention of Estrada, no prolific, secondary level, Argentine history textbook tradition was established in the 1860s and '70s. Strictly speaking, the former remained the only widespread manual written specifically for upper school students until Fregeiro published his *Compendio*²²⁴. Argentine history was introduced and gradually gained ground in the syllabuses of the new *colegios nacionales* as well as in the *escuela normal*. But the rapid expansion of these institutions, creating an ever-increasing market for new publications on the subject, did not occur until the following decades. Neither had national (and nationalist) developments yet urged the country's leading historians to popularize their work as contributions to the patriotic education of the masses, at least not on a wide front. By 1880, though, the time was ripening for a plurality of expressions of these emerging tendencies. As we shall see, they would indeed affect the school textbooks.

A comparison of the few relevant texts analysed in this chapter certainly indicate important affinities among them. They all shared the European-minded, liberal ideology with its optimistic belief in material and spiritual progress, fomented by free-trade, immigration, and education, which was predominant in the Argentine elites of the time. Furthermore, they all tended to confirm and legitimize the social and political establishment governing Argentina in the period of “national organization”. The edifying epics of the May revolution and the independence wars constituted the centre of gravity in the texts (except in the case of

²²⁴ A few others existed, however. I have consulted three that were not included, eventually, in the corpus analysed here, due to their limited use and influence, and because they seemed to add little in terms of original contributions to the genre's development (admittedly a subjective judgement on my part): Lorenzo Jordana, *Curso Elemental de Historia Argentina*, 3rd ed. (1st ed. 1861). Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Porvenir, 1865; D. Antonio Luna, *Compendio de Historia de América*, Concepción del Uruguay: Imprenta de “El Vapor”, 1874; Agustín Pressinger, *Lecciones de Historia Nacional*, Buenos Aires: Casa editora: Imprenta Ostwald, 1880. Each were explicitly written for the students of the single college where the author taught, and the scarcity of posterior traces of these texts, both in terms of references and actual copies, might indicate that this was in fact their only readership, and only so for a very limited period. Still, certain circumstances regarding the texts might speak in favour of a closer study. Lorenzo Jordana's text was written “specifically for the pupils of the Colegio de la América del Sud” and consisted of a rather flat reeling off events from the discoveries until the contemporary post-Caseros political order, presented in the catechismal form of questions and answers. The author had earlier served as the first headmaster of the pioneering Colegio del Uruguay founded in 1849 by Urquiza in Concepción del Uruguay, Entre Ríos. Antonio Luna's manual from the following decade was in fact written for the students of the latter college and might be read as an expression of the tradition of that prestigious pedagogical institution. The subject being the history of *América*, Argentine history only made up one chapter of the book and was presented on the same formula as the other American republics, however long enough (50 pages) as to provide possible materials for historiographical analysis. Finally, Agustín Pressinger's book contained the author's lectures in Argentine history at the Colegio Militar de la Nación, and explicitly claimed to pay particular attention to the historical role of the military.

Lucio V. López), whereas the colonial period and particularly the most recent, contemporary events appeared as much less central, the former being assigned an “auxiliary” part. The Buenos Aires perspective on Argentine history, though far from unquestioned, nevertheless tended to dominate. So far, one might state that they all expressed “official” history, something which seems, on the other hand, a rather obvious and commonplace observation.

This does not imply that the didactics of Argentine history at its initial stage revealed a monolithic and homogenous interpretation model. On the contrary, there was a considerable variety of views on minor as well as more fundamental issues, especially when Estrada’s lectures are drawn into the comparison. The relative weight of the detailed narration of political and military events, as opposed to a more synthesized approach, combined with problem-oriented moral and political discussions varied. The factual and sober, “scientific”-like account, loaded with empirical data, interchanged with the more engaged, subjective, literary prose. The attention dedicated to the independent period, and the focuses and biases revealed when contemporary conflicts were dealt with, differed considerably. There was room for elitist and democratic, unitarian as well as federalist sympathies, Catholic as well as secular views – though extremes were generally avoided as all the texts intended to serve a conciliatory, nation-building purpose. The notion of the nation, generally not too well defined, tended to be political-juridical, centring on the criteria of territorial sovereignty and citizenship (thus the logical pre-eminence of the *Independencia*) and avoiding an ethnic approach, though shades of a more “organic” concept might also be traced in varying degrees. Only later, when the actual “national character” changed rapidly due to profound transformation processes, would nuances of this kind appear as a matter of importance.

III. 1880–1912

11. National history under the Conservative order (1880–1912): Educational policies, the school subject and Argentine history writing

11.1 Introduction

There is a general opinion that 1880 marks a watershed in the history of Argentina. Though any periodization probably entails much of the arbitrary, the importance of the *ochenta* seems to be one of the less controversial issues in Argentine history writing. The political order established under President Julio A. Roca and his successors, combined with the demographic and economic ascent based on mass immigration and agro-exports, undoubtedly also set the stage for a rapid expansion of the education system, simultaneously made possible and necessary by the new situation. That the same conditions also affected the production of textbooks seems more than probable – even obvious in its quantitative aspects – though viewed from a historiographical perspective the relationship to this general context might appear as more indirect and ambiguous.²²⁵

The decisive war that finally crushed the indigenous resistance to white Argentine expansion in 1879 had consolidated the effective territorial basis of the new nation-state. The federalization of the capital in the following year – imposed against the armed revolt stirred by the autonomist leaders of Buenos Aires – put an end to a conflict as old as independence: the thorny issue of the political status of the capital and leading city within the republic. The event expressed and further enhanced two marked tendencies: On the one hand, it revealed the growing power of the national government at the expense of the provincial autonomies. On the other, this did *not* mean that Buenos Aires, having literally conquered the Confederation in 1861, established a lasting political hegemony, even if the economic and demographic predominance of the capital never ceased to grow. Instead, a political equilibrium was reached in which the ruling élites of the provinces both ceded sovereignty to the central power, and, at the same time, got a balanced share in it, its leaders gradually merging into a national

²²⁵General surveys of the period in Bethell, ed., *Argentina Since Independence*, the contributions by Roberto Cortés Conde, Ezequiel Gallo and David Rock on 47–138; Rock, *Argentina 1516-1987*, 152–192 (Rock admittedly departed from the conventional periodization described, dedicating two chapters to the sub-periods of 1852–1890 and 1890–1930, respectively). For the political history and the political system in particular, see Botana, *El orden conservador*, 1994; Bertoni and de Privitellio, ed., *Conflictos en democracia*. On immigration and its relation to nationalism: Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism*, 1970. A penetrating summary of the later part of the period concerned, centring on the centenary of the revolution in 1910 and depicting the optimistic moods of an Argentina on board the train of rapid development as well as the contradictions of all the new anxieties aroused by those very same, rapid changes, is found in a fine booklet by Fernando J. Devoto, *El país del primer centenario: Cuando todo parecía posible*, Buenos Aires: Capital intelectual, 2010.

governing class. By now, the expansion and integration of the economy and of the means of communication had made national politics a matter of vital concern, even to the formerly rather self-sufficient provincial units. Although the federal system prescribed by the constitution was undermined for one thing by the central government's frequent and elastic resort to federal intervention in the internal affairs of the provinces, politicians from the entire country participated in the political processes at all levels. National and provincial politics were to a considerable extent interwoven in mutual dependency, not least through the electoral apparatus.

In practice, political power was reserved for a minority of notables who, at the same time, concentrated wealth and economic power, and were generally referred to as the *oligarchy* by contemporary and later critics. Although the republic envisaged by the founding fathers of the nation was liberal and inclusive with regard to the basic *civil* rights (economic freedom, religious freedom, freedom of opinion and expression, etc.), it functioned in a rather exclusive and authoritarian way with regard to effective *political* rights. Indirect elections to a strong presidency (through electoral colleges), and to a largely conservative upper chamber, the Senate (by the provincial assemblies), were constitutional means to mediate and restrict participation in the decision-making process. In addition came all the informal devices: The de facto power of clientelism and nepotism, the ability of presidents, senators, and governors to influence the election of their own successors, the notorious resort to electoral fraud, distorting a system formally based on universal male suffrage – procedures much closer to the *caciquismo* of the Spanish Restoration monarchy than to the spirit of a democratic republic. Besides, voter turnout remained low, political indifference was widespread, and a growing share of the population consisted of foreign nationals devoid of political rights in Argentina.

However, this did not mean that the system was arbitrary or merely personal. Elections, for instance, were scrupulously held at the prescribed intervals, and the ban on immediate re-elections (for presidents and governors) remained unaltered. Although Roca amassed much power, he did not turn himself into an Argentine Porfirio Díaz. There was, on the whole, a generalized respect for the constitutional forms and institutions, if not for the constitutional spirit.

Furthermore, the governing élite was not a homogeneous, monolithic bloc. The stability of the system depended on the ability of competing factions to negotiate and compromise, and on their willingness to play by the rules. If not, conflicts might escalate beyond control and generate open revolts, coup attempts, and so forth, as sometimes

happened. There was always a vivid public debate on political and other issues, protected by freedom of expression, in which the members of the governing class as well as people who were excluded from the formal channels of political influence participated. The degree of political stability achieved in Argentina during the reign of a conservative oligarchy that, while zealously defending the established social hierarchy and political privilege, professed a liberal credo on economic issues and fostered mass education, did not, however, imply harmonious concord nor political submissiveness.

Indeed, the political order was progressively undermined by the very dynamics of the liberal model it had created. If Roca (president 1880–1886 and 1898–1904) and his adherents successfully established a strong, centralized rule in the 1880s, the following decades saw the proliferation of oppositional groups – reformist or revolutionary – who exercised an increasing influence on public opinion. The Radical movement channelled the discontent of the politically excluded sectors of society. Along with disenchanted federal republicans of the old guard, they centred their attacks on the monopolization of political power and on the moral decay and fraudulent manipulation of the republican institutions. The failed “revolution” of 1890 expressed this kind of protest in a way that momentarily shook the governing establishment. The presence of more radical groups – socialists, anarchists – came to represent even more disturbing alternatives. Eventually, reformist ideas gathered terrain within the governing élite itself. President Roque Sáenz Peña (1910–1914), with the avail of the Congress, introduced the franchise reform of 1912 that finally made universal male suffrage effective by establishing the secret and obligatory vote and by basing the electoral roll on the military conscription register. This was done in the confidence that democratization would broaden the support for continued Conservative rule. Such expectations were mercilessly crushed by the Radical landslide in the presidential elections of 1916.

Demographically, the period following 1880 is unique, as the country experienced the most extensive mass immigration in the history of Latin America. Most of the ancestors of the majority of today’s Argentines arrived in the country in the decades closing the nineteenth and beginning the twentieth centuries. Between 1869 and 1914, the population grew from a little above 1,7 to near 7,9 million inhabitants. About 6 million immigrants entered the country during that time, and more than the half stayed. On the eve of the First World War,

roughly one third of the population (and half the population of the capital) had been born abroad.²²⁶

At the same time, the economy progressed by leaps and bounds, mainly on the basis of the increasing export of meat and cereals, added to the wool. The railways spun their web throughout the pampas and the interior. The first stage in the industrialization process began. Foreign, above all British, expertise and capital played a key role in all of this. The cities, in particular Buenos Aires, expanded dramatically, and with them grew the middle and working classes, both of which became increasingly politically articulate, defying the power of the old élite. The primary school was rapidly developed, and even if it took many years before it reached *all* children of school age, Argentina at an early date had a more literate population than most Latin American (and several European) countries. A growing number of papers, magazines, and books with a broadening circulation provided the basis of public opinion.

These traits might all seem trivial and familiar, as they are aspects of the modernization process of western societies known from the experiences of many countries. But combined with the rapid demographic changes and the plurality of cultural backgrounds brought by the immigrant flood, it appears clear that Argentine society faced an exceptionally radical transformation. These changes could not but react upon the understanding of “the national”, of the *argentinidad*.

One of the consequences was a gradual change of attitudes in considerable parts of the traditional élite: The massive European presence, formerly idealized and unconditionally desired, now in the eyes of many came to represent a formidable social and cultural threat to the traditional values of Creole society. It was felt that both the respect for the social hierarchy and linguistic unity was at stake. Although the liberal immigration policy – its basic principle even inscribed in the constitution – was never seriously questioned, a Creole nationalist reaction found a variety of expressions in the cultural field. One of them was a boom in gauchesque literature, not least in versions that found a strong popular response, just as the gaucho virtually disappeared as a distinct and comprehensive social category due to the transformation of the Argentine countryside.²²⁷ Another was the programme of “patriotic education” destined to assimilate (“argentinize”) immigrant children (teach them to speak Spanish, hail the national symbols, and admire and worship the heroes of the *patria*, in particular the *próceres* of the independence struggle), a topic to which we shall soon return.

²²⁶All figures from Bethell, *Argentina Since Independence*.

²²⁷ Cf. Prieto, *El discurso criollista*.

This line of action was anticipated in the last two decades of the nineteenth century by the rather successful efforts to revitalize the celebration of patriotic anniversaries, such as the national days of the 25th of May and the 9th of July, the *fiestas patrióticas*, as a conscious counterweight to the massively attended patriotic festivities of the Italian and other immigrant communities. The construction of a series of monuments dedicated to the memory of the heroes of the *Independencia* points in the same direction.²²⁸

11.2 Educational expansion and educational policies

The most striking characteristic of the educational history of Argentina in the period initiated in 1880 is undoubtedly the quantitative growth of the entire system, in particular of the public school. At the primary level the following table (borrowed from Juan Carlos Tedesco) shows the growth in the total population of school age, the number of children who attended school and their relative part of the total over the last half of the nineteenth century²²⁹:

²²⁸See Bertoni, "Construir la nacionalidad", 1992. Her article dealt above all with the development of the *fiestas patrióticas* in the years of 1887–1891. To Lilia Ana Bertoni, 1889 marked the watershed in this development. She stressed the participation of the schools and of the educational authorities in these events and the rapid institutionalization of patriotic acts in the schools, earlier mostly left to the individual initiatives of teachers and headmasters. The many initiatives in the same years to the construction of patriotic monuments, such as statues of the *próceres*, are also documented. See also Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 152–155 on this development in a long-term perspective. Riekenberg distinguished three phases in the development of patriotic monuments (*Denkmäler*): 1) The first half century from 1810, which saw only three monuments (including the May pyramid in Buenos Aires, erected in 1811); 2) the next 50 years (until 1910, approximately), when a series of monuments dedicated to individual heroes from the *Independencia* was constructed – the prototype of Argentine national monuments; and finally 3) from the 1910 centenary of the May revolution onwards, when a tendency to celebrate institutional developments emerged (e.g., in *El monumento a los dos Congresos*, 1908–14). Although to me Lilia Ana Bertoni's article appears convincing in its main arguments, the clear-cut opposition presented between patriotic sentiments towards Argentina versus the immigrants' countries of origin should perhaps be nuanced. Bertoni apparently saw national identifications as mutually exclusive: The use of, for example, foreign flags was *in itself* evidence of a lesser degree of adherence to the new *patria*: "La profusión de banderas extranjeras en las celebraciones era un termómetro de la adhesión de vastos sectores de la población a sus viejas patrias; a la vez, por contraste, marcaba los límites de la adhesión a esta patria." Bertoni, "Construir la nacionalidad", 102. Although this assumption might seem probable, it is not, however, self-evident: One identity might co-exist with another. Cf. also Lilia Ana Bertoni, "Nacionalidad o cosmopolitismo: La cuestión de las escuelas de las colectividades extranjeras a fines del siglo XIX", *Anuario del IEHS* 11, (1996), 179–199. Here the question was addressed with regards to the debate on private schools run by immigrant, in particular Italian, communities.

²²⁹Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 134. There is every reason to regard these and other statistical data presented in this section as approximate only (in this case in particular regarding the year 1850).

Population of primary school age and school attendance (1850-1895)

	1850	1869	1883	1895
Population of school age	183.000	403.876	507.769	877.810
Number of schoolchildren	11.903	82.679	145.660	246.132
Attendance as a percentage of total	6,5%	20,4%	28,6%	28%

In spite of temporary setbacks in some areas, the rates of school attendance grew substantially, particularly in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, even if the growth was uneven. The expansion of primary schools did not suffice to cope with the vertiginous growth of the total population of school age. For some years, many children, in particular among the poorer immigrants and in rural areas, did not attend school. A case study for the province of Mendoza showed that while only 50,6% of the children of school age attended school in 1914, the rate for immigrant children was slightly lower than the average (45%).²³⁰ The most serious obstacle to the advancement of schooling was probably the very high rate of children leaving school prematurely.²³¹ Faced with such formidable problems, the efforts made within primary education in this period nonetheless produced tangible results, as is shown in the development of literacy rates: According to the three national censuses of 1869, 1895, and 1914 they rose from 22% to 46% and finally to 65%, respectively.²³²

As for the secondary level, the growth of the *escuelas normales* correlated with the expansion of the primary schools: At least 39 were established before the turn of the century,²³³ and 46 new ones were created between 1900 and 1915.²³⁴ The number of students rose from 463 in 1888 to 1600 in 1895²³⁵. Between 1900 and 1915, they comprised approximately 35–40% of all secondary school students. The *colegios nacionales* also

²³⁰Susana Aruani, Francisco Pérez, José Luis Ghiorlando and Leticia Godoy, “La acción educativa en relación con la inmigración masiva: El caso de Mendoza”, *Educación Cuyo* 1991/1992, No. 2, 7–35.

²³¹According to Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 137–138, the proportion of withdrawals added together for all six classes in the schools coming under the Consejo Nacional de Educación was 98% for the years 1886–1891, and 97% for 1893–1898, the highest number of drop-outs always to be found in the first grade and diminishing for each subsequent class. This means that most children were in fact initially reached by the primary school, but only a tiny proportion even came near completing the programme.

²³²Wright and Nekholm, *Diccionario Histórico Argentino*, 1990, entry “Educación”.

²³³Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 150–151, gave the number of 38, but his list was incomplete. (In 1874 two, not one, *escuelas normales* were established in Buenos Aires, one for each sex. If Tedesco's data were correct, no college of education for female students would have existed in Buenos Aires before 1895, something that was obviously not the case. In addition, some of the initiatives prior to 1870 seem to have been a bit more important than Tedesco assumed, cf. Chapter 6.2 above.) Twenty-four of the *escuelas normales* were created in the 1880s, the decade that experienced by far the most intense development of this branch of secondary education before the new boom in the years prior to World War I.

²³⁴*Ibid.*, 210.

²³⁵*Ibid.*, 152.

experienced a substantial, though somewhat slower growth: Between 1880 and 1900, five new colleges were established,²³⁶ to which another 14 were added between 1900 and 1915. Nearly one half of the secondary students matriculated in these colleges in the 1900–1915 period.²³⁷ On the other hand, the development of secondary establishments with a commercial or industrial orientation was late and slow. The first three *escuelas comerciales*, as well as one industrial college, were created in the 1890s. Between 1900 and 1915, six new commercial and three industrial schools were established. In addition, three more vocationally and practically oriented technical schools (*escuelas de artes y oficios*) were founded, a kind of establishment that would become much more important in the following period, as well as 16 schools offering vocational training for women (*escuelas profesionales de mujeres*). The two last-mentioned modes of education differed sharply from the ones treated previously, all of which had a much more theoretically oriented curriculum.²³⁸ Premature withdrawal remained a most serious problem in the secondary school, though it did not reach the extreme levels observed in the primary school. Tedesco calculated a national dropout average of 68% for the *colegios nacionales* in the 1886–1891 period (with added desertion in all classes before final examinations), while approximately half the *escuela normal* students dropped out in the period from 1888 to 1890.²³⁹

The universities also presented a growing number of matriculated students. Before the turn of the century, the combined student population of the national universities of Buenos Aires and Córdoba went from 862 in 1883 to 2928 in 1898. The majority of those still matriculated in the medical faculty (50% in 1883, 54% in 1898) and in the faculty of law (30% and 34% for the same years), while the relative proportion studying mathematics and the natural sciences fell from 20% to 11%.²⁴⁰ The *Facultad de Filosofía y Letras* was only established in 1896 at the University of Buenos Aires, offering a complete study in arts (as opposed to the mere preparatory courses that had been imparted in the old *Facultad de Humanidades*). The establishment of a national university in La Plata in 1905 (based on a

²³⁶According to Tedesco, *ibid.*, 68: The *colegios nacionales* of La Plata (1887), Paraná (1889) and three in Buenos Aires: North (1892), South (1892), and West (1898).

²³⁷*Ibid.*, 212 (as for the correspondent figures for the *escuela normal* given above). The percentages are approximate, as different statistical sources of the period give diverging information.

²³⁸*Ibid.*, 80 and 179: Two *escuelas comerciales* were established in Buenos Aires for male (1890) and female (1897) students respectively, and one in Rosario (1896), while the *Escuela Industrial de la Nación* was opened in 1898. For the 1900–1915 establishments: *ibid.*, p. 210.

²³⁹*Ibid.*, 138–139 and 159. As for the teachers' colleges, Tedesco only gave the percentage for each type of establishment separately, dropout levels varying from 43,8% in the coeducational colleges to 60,6% in the colleges for men.

²⁴⁰All figures from Tedesco, *ibid.*, 55.

provincial one opened in 1897), with the reform-oriented Joaquín V. González at its head from 1906, represented a considerable reorientation of university studies, focusing among other things educational science, research training, international collaboration and university extension. In 1914, the University of Tucumán opened (also with provincial antecedents dating from 1875), and in 1921 it was nationalized. A provincial university, which existed in Santa Fe from 1889, was turned into the *Universidad Nacional del Litoral* in 1919.²⁴¹

The continued traditional orientation of the universities (with the exception of the one in La Plata), involving a heavy concentration on the professional studies of law and medicine, points to one salient characteristic of Argentine educational history in this period: its relative autonomy vis-à-vis economic development. Though the expansion of education was largely financed by the spectacular growth in the country's agro-export economy, it was apparently not caused by this development nor designed to meet the demands of economic change. To the extent that skilled workers, engineers, and other professionals were required at this stage of economic development in Argentina, immigrants could usually meet the demand when the country's own education system proved insufficient. This is the central point in Juan Carlos Tedesco's Gramsci-inspired analysis of the relationship between education and society in Argentina: Political motivations were more fundamental than economic ones in the shaping of educational policies, and the education system was, broadly speaking, fashioned to serve political functions. Since the beginning of the post-rosist "national organization", the "education of the masses" at the primary level had been considered essential to achieve political stability. Within this line of thought, various authors have noticed a shift in emphasis from a belief in primary education as a means of removing traditionalist and "obscurantist" obstacles to liberal democracy (characteristic of Sarmiento's generation), to a more conservative focus on social control. The latter corresponded to *roquismo* and, more generally, to the *generación del 80*, with an increasing concern for the question of how to integrate and "nationalize" the immigrants.²⁴²

²⁴¹Data from Gianello, *La enseñanza*, 1951, 21; Wright and Nekholm, *Diccionario Histórico Argentino*, 1990.

²⁴²See for example, Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 132–133; Bertoni, "Construir la nacionalidad"; Bertoni, "Soldados, gimnastas y escolares"; Bertoni, "Nacionalidad o cosmopolitismo". Cf. Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 139: "Stand die staatliche Schulpolitik in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren unter dem Eindruck der gesellschaftlichen Modernisierungserwartungen und moralisierender Belehrungen, so verschob sich dieses Bild neuerlich in den frühen achtziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts. Die Administration Roca betrachtete die Schule wieder stärker im staatspatriotischen oder nationalerzieherischen Sinn, wobei deutlich der Ordnungsbegriff überwog. Die Ausbildung staatsbürgerlicher Fähigkeiten zielte nicht darauf ab, ein in politischer Hinsicht innovatives Verhaltenspotential hervorzubringen . . . , sondern beabsichtigte nunmehr die Einfügung der Heranwachsenden in das bestehende politisch-soziale System, um dadurch zu dessen Stabilisierung beizutragen."

As for the secondary school, the continued encyclopaedic-humanist orientation and the lack of diversification of the curricula in the *colegios nacionales* underlines the same tendency. According to Tedesco, between 1870 and 1893 the relative proportion of hours per week dedicated to the classical humanist subjects varied from 33,3% (1874) to 54,3% (1891), scientific subjects from 29,3% (1891) to 38% (1879), modern languages from 14% (1888) to 24% (1870 and 1874), and finally practical subjects from 0% (1891) to 9% (1870)²⁴³. These colleges not only prepared students for the university and thus for the limited set of professional careers described above; secondary and higher education had also become the prerequisite to political and administrative posts and to political power.²⁴⁴ The *escuelas normales*, whose main task it was to produce primary school teachers, were quite a different case, and for a long time they did not give access to the upper levels of the education system. On the whole, other intentions to diversify secondary education were frustrated until the final creation of some commercial and industrial colleges, as mentioned above. Several initiatives to reform the contents of the traditional college along pragmatic-utilitarian lines had even less success.

Tedesco, among others, noted the apparent paradox that while such modernizing projects were sometimes launched by conservative representatives of the central government (but in general turned down in Congress), the Radical opposition usually defended the traditional, generally formative nature of secondary education. Tedesco's own explanation was that, especially from 1890 onwards, the expansion of this all-round further education in the eyes of some "oligarchic" politicians created a dangerous political pressure as it fostered the political ambitions of too many. To some extent, such aspirations could be diverted by the creation of more technical branches of education. The opposition, on the other hand, saw in these proposals an anti-democratic attempt to monopolize and restrict the access to politically influential positions. The theory might perhaps prove too simplistic, but it is by no means unfounded. In 1916, on the eve of the downfall of the Conservative regime, its last Minister of Education, Saavedra Lamas, presented a reform that limited the compulsory primary school to four years. It also introduced a new middle school (*escuela intermedia*) with broad access and

²⁴³Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 70. Tedesco claimed (71) that from 1876 onwards, the humanist subjects grew in importance compared with the scientific subjects, but I find it hard to see any clear tendency in that direction from the data he presented. The three main groups of subjects all experienced relative vicissitudes, but always maintained an all-round whole in which the classical-humanist element defended its strong position in the very extensive list of subjects. On the other hand, as Tedesco observed, the practical subjects – never central to the curriculum anyway – tended to disappear in the 1890s.

²⁴⁴Tedesco referred to a study by Darío Cantón, according to which, in 1889, 96% and 95% of the Congress deputies and senators, respectively, carried a juridical or medical degree. *Ibid.*, 74.

a three-year curriculum oriented towards practical subjects. At the same time, access to the baccalaureate (and thereby to the university) was restricted. Significantly, the new Radical government withdrew the project, annulling the establishment of the middle school and restoring the previous curricula.²⁴⁵

Unlike the primary school (1884) and the university (1885), no general law was ever passed structuring secondary education in all its ramifications. But this does not mean that less attention was paid to this level than to the two other sectors. The debates regarding secondary schools (which often ended with the political defeat of reform proposals) expressed public concern with the issue. Yet more suggestive were the budget priorities. In the 1882–1898 period, the *colegios nacionales* and the *escuelas normales* received annually from 37% to 53% of the total educational budget of the Ministerio de Justicia, Instrucción Pública y Culto, as compared with the 25–40% allotted to the primary school, the 12–18% for the university and the 4–18% that went to other establishments (including special schools and the secondary colleges of commerce and industry). The distribution is even more conspicuous bearing in mind the very limited number of students in the secondary colleges vis-à-vis the vast population of primary school age. This disparity became the target of bitter criticism from Sarmiento and later advocates of popular education. There might have been various reasons for this order of priorities, but it seems reasonable to emphasize the strategic role intended for the secondary school in the shaping of a national, political élite for the young Argentine republic.²⁴⁶

Be that as it may, we must bear in mind that at least one of the main branches of the secondary school was also directly connected with the educational activity on the primary level: the *escuelas normales*, colleges of education.²⁴⁷ Their significance is far from exhausted by the mere reference to their quantitative growth, as shown above. The Argentine

²⁴⁵Ibid., in particular 63–88 and 173ff.

²⁴⁶Data from Tedesco, *ibid.*, 142–148. When considering the situation of the primary school, the description above might be somewhat unfair if we do not add that this sector, according to the Constitution, was the responsibility of the provinces, not the federal authorities. But everyone realized the necessity of substantial federal subsidies in order to advance schooling, especially in some of the poor provinces of the interior. In 1884, the share of the provincial budgets of education that was financed by national subsidies varied respectively, from 21,7% and 27,9% in Córdoba and Buenos Aires to 83,1% and 100% in Santiago del Estero and La Rioja. Tedesco, *ibid.* The circumstance that the latter province historically had been the focus of caudillo-led uprisings is hardly casual. In the twentieth century, following the *ley Lainez* of 1905, the federal initiative on the primary level took a more direct form in the creation of national primary schools under the Consejo Nacional de Educación, as a supplement to the provincial schools. These schools, though offering only four years of instruction, came to comprise a considerable part of the primary sector in many provinces.

²⁴⁷On this issue, see Luis Jorge Zanotti: *El normalismo*, originally published by Ediciones Jericó in 1960 (here from Zanotti, *Su Obra Fundamental*, vol. 2, 465–516); Solari, *Historia de la educación argentina*, 180ff.

normalismo embodied a robust tradition of pedagogical thought and practice. Moreover, it produced an army of educationists imbued with a strong *esprit de corps*. The students – many of whom had themselves been pupils in the practice schools attached to the colleges – were often recruited from the lower or lower-middle classes (in contrast to the typical *colegio nacional* student), and the majority studied with public scholarships. Women constituted the greatest number of them.²⁴⁸ The *maestros* and *maestras* that emerged from these colleges, as the lecturers who taught there, as the teachers and students of the superior *escuelas normales de profesoras*, all tended to develop affectionate bonds to the *normal* institution, and, we might say, to the pedagogic movement of which they formed part.

This movement has usually been associated with a positivist pedagogical approach, and with educational secularism, *laicismo*. The same philosophy and secular principles informed the educational policy of the governments in this period, whereby *normalismo* came to be completely identified with “official” pedagogy. Accordingly, this identification made it the target of oppositional criticism of various kinds, for example, from the advocates of religious education, or, in time, from progressive educationists who disdained the methods of “traditional” pedagogy, as it would be commonly (and disparagingly) referred to. At this early stage, however, the public school can hardly be said to be “traditional” in the sense of reproducing the ways and values of traditional Argentine society. On the contrary, it expressed the central government’s efforts to *change* that society according to a programme of unification and modernization, though at the same time endeavouring to safeguard the basic relations of the existing social order.

With regard to pedagogy, positivism meant a strictly rationalist and scientific (or “scientific”) approach to the didactic challenges. Much attention was paid to the psychological theories – of learning and of the child and its evolution – in vogue at the time. In the old tradition from Johann Friedrich Herbart and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, the central importance of interest as a motivational force in every aspect of the learning process was

²⁴⁸According to Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 1993, 155, the percentage of *escuela normal* students with educational grants was 67,5% in 1884 and 79,5% in 1886. In the interior, where there were relatively less opportunities in terms of profitable and prestigious careers, it appears that a somewhat higher proportion of the *normalista* students came from the upper social classes, as compared with the situation in Buenos Aires and the littoral. Between 1880 and 1895, the relative percentage of students who attended male colleges of education in Argentina varied from 23% (1895) to 33,5% (1890), compared with the 46% (1890) to 59% (1885) in colleges for women and the 16,5% (1885) to 19,5% (1880) in mixed establishments (*ibid.*, 157). In order to maintain the female predominance, viewed as desirable by the authorities, it was decided in 1892 that male *escuela normal* students could not receive grants. *Ibid.*, 53. The predominance of women was to become long-lasting and indeed reinforced over the time. Between 1930 and 1955, the percentage of female college of education students varied from 85% to 87% (*ibid.*, 258). See also Zanotti, *Su Obra Fundamental*, vol. 2, 486–487.

stressed, as was the division of the process into various formal steps (implemented in the different parts of a lesson). The main concern was with the “method”, the professional hallmark of the *normalista*. According to many observers, this tendency might degenerate into rigid formalism and excessive tutelage, *directivismo*. Both the pupils *and* their teachers had always to be guided in detail as to the correct procedure in order to reach the goals set by the educational authorities. The *supreme* goal was nothing less than the *progress* of reason and of civilization, and the correspondent decline of “barbarism”, and in the spirit of Sarmiento, progress always began with the ABC. Furthermore, the school was to be the instrument to disseminate the republican values of national unity, citizenry, the principles of the constitution and, increasingly, the ideal of the Argentine nationality. It has often been emphasized how a biological “organic” conception of society, focusing on factors such as race and heritage, could lead the positivists to a near fatalist understanding of social selection and division in general, and, in our particular case, of the educational potential of the children and the possibilities of selective streaming. Yet the didactic efforts always aimed at “compensating” for the “deficiencies” caused by the social background of the pupils and regarded as inevitably inherent in their mental ballast.

Critics, such as the Krausist Carlos Vergara, might denounce the authoritarian character of positivist pedagogy and of the “traditional” school. But the democratic opposition – Radicals and Socialists – largely trusted that pedagogy and that school as a means to social and political advancement. They did not fight the existing education system: They fought to accelerate the expansion of it. A relatively uniform, public primary school offered opportunities, not in equal measure and still not to everyone, but nevertheless real opportunities to a large and increasing part of the population of all social classes. To many teachers of humble origins, the conviction that the public school was the key to social and cultural advancement had been confirmed by their own personal experience, by their own biography. As Juan Carlos Tedesco asserted, undemocratic pedagogical relations *within* the traditional school might not necessarily have prevented it from performing a relatively democratic function in society.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 279–284 (261–284 for a fuller discussion of positivist vs. other pedagogical currents in Argentina in this period, in particular regarding the ideas formulated by Carlos Vergara). On positivism and *normalismo*: Zanotti, *Su Obra Fundamental*, vol. 2, in particular 484–499; Soler, *El positivismo argentino*, 180–217. For a general introduction to Argentine positivism, see Soler, *ibid.* Ricaurte Soler emphasized the specificity of Latin American positivism (within which the Argentines were influential), as compared with positivism in Europe. (The incidence of positivist thought in pedagogy, or in history writing, was not treated here.) For an interesting case study of a *maestra* and headmistress of poor immigrant origins and

In Argentina, the state took the leading part in the development of education. Not only did the public schools predominate over the private at all levels; the educational authorities also exerted an increasing influence on the private schools that existed. Moreover, the statism in educational matters was based on a rather broad consensus, which in practice, if not in principle, was accepted even by Catholic activists.

This does not imply, however, that there was a general agreement on *how* the government ought to carry out its educational precedence. The first important conflict in the 1880s, the period under discussion here, formed part of the Argentine *Kulturkampf* between liberals and Catholics, triggered off by President Roca's secularizing initiatives. In the field of education, the most heated debate turned on the issue of religious instruction in the public school. Despite the fierce opposition of militant Catholics, in 1884 such instruction was prohibited within the regular school day in all public schools by the famous *ley 1420*, which spelled out the general regulations for the primary school. The laic orientation of the government's educational policy (largely continued by all the succeeding presidents until 1943) did not, in spite of everything, amount to any anti-religious or anti-Catholic stand – on the contrary, it appeared to be compatible with a rather benevolent attitude. After all, from a legal point of view and within the context of religious liberty the constitution secured a relatively privileged position for the Catholic Church in Argentina. Apparently, the liberals sought not so much to diminish the spiritual and moral influence of the Church in society as to safeguard and strengthen the authority of the central government *over* the Church (thus the active use of the government's patronage in the nominations to ecclesiastical appointments – the *patronato* – which constituted another major subject of dispute). However, in the question of religious instruction in the public schools, as in other areas where laic policies were established (e.g., regarding the national register, marriages, and cemeteries), an additional argument carried weight in the liberal camp: the imperative regard for immigrants from Protestant countries, whose entry was not to be discouraged. In the early 1890s, this conflict had its sequel when some clerics tried, without much success, to prevent Catholic parents from sending their children to Protestant schools or even to public schools staffed with

instances of her pedagogical practice, expressed in robust adaptations of the guiding ideas of *normalismo* and patriotic education, in a primary school in a working-class suburb of Buenos Aires in 1921: Beatriz Sarlo, "Cabezas rapadas y cintas argentinas", *Prismas. Revista de historia intelectual* 1, No. 1, (1997): 187–191 (commentaries and debate 192–200).

Protestant teachers, resorting to the strongest means of church discipline: denial of the Eucharist.²⁵⁰

But in the debates preceding the *ley 1420*, the contending parties had also agreed on several fundamental principles. For instance, primary education should remain free and compulsory. Furthermore, the public schools were not to be governed autonomously by locally elected boards (a US-inspired system of the kind had been tried out in the province of Buenos Aires), but through a centralized organization controlled by the state, with a National Council of Education at its apex. The same inclination towards extensive governmental powers in the field of education would mark the regulation of the other parts of the educational apparatus as well. University professors, for instance, were appointed by the executive without open competition (*concurso*) and could accordingly be dismissed by the same authorities, as happened with José Manuel Estrada in 1884.

The available data do not permit us to establish the exact quantitative relation between public and private schools, but they do indicate the general tendencies. At the primary level, the public sector had the preponderance of the pupils, and the percentage of children who attended private schools declined over the period concerned. Within the very heterogeneous private sector, religious schools only comprised about a quarter of the establishments in 1883. Most of the schools were run by the different immigrant communities, and accordingly, private schooling was most important in areas of dense immigration.²⁵¹ As for the secondary level, the statistics are less adequate; still, it appears clear that the predominance of public establishments was even more pronounced there, in particular outside the federal capital. In addition, the students from private colleges presented themselves for final examinations in the corresponding public colleges. Within the private secondary school (as compared with the primary), the Church retained a relatively stronger presence vis-à-vis other private institutions. But several secondary schools were also established by foreign communities, in particular by the British and the French.²⁵²

²⁵⁰On educational statism and the Church-State conflicts regarding education in these years (including the debate over the *ley 1420*), see among others Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 89–105 and 121–131; Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 156–163.

²⁵¹See Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 106–120. Tedesco gave the following data, based on the school censuses published by the Consejo Nacional de Educación: The percentage of the primary school children who attended public schools rose from 55% to 76% in Buenos Aires between 1870 and 1909; in the provinces of the littoral, it was 67% in 1870, dropped to 61,5% in 1883 and climbed to 74% in 1909; in the remaining provinces (which, broadly speaking, received a lesser portion of the immigrants than the two former regions) the percentage was high and stable: It went from 85% in 1870 to 86% in 1909.

²⁵²*Ibid.* The statistical information on the private secondary schools was in fact, obtained indirectly from the examination registers of the public *colegios*. Uncertain as these sources might be, they indicated the insignificant

The educational influence of immigrants was not, however, restricted to private establishments. At all levels, foreign teachers constituted a considerable portion of the teaching staff in the public schools.²⁵³ The didactic materials used were also in large measure of foreign origin. Of particular importance were Spanish translations of French textbooks in various subjects (including universal history, but never Argentine history).

The creation of numerous private immigrant schools gave rise to considerable concern among Creole educationists, who feared that the ethnic criterion underlying these establishments counteracted the efforts to develop a national (Argentine) consciousness. Initially, these preoccupations were formulated referring to universal pedagogical ideals (e.g., when Sarmiento in 1881 commented on an Italian pedagogic congress held in Buenos Aires²⁵⁴). Later, criticism would assume more nationalist shades, in tune with the upswing in Creole nationalism around the turn of the century. The paradigmatic – and most eloquent – expression of this strand of educational thought was to be found in Ricardo Rojas's *La restauración nacionalista*, written as a report to the Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction and published in 1909. His work had another objective: To analyse how national history was taught in some leading European countries (where Rojas had travelled with a scholarship from the ministry), and to propose how this subject ought to be taught in Argentine public schools. Rojas also described what he perceived as an insufficient national spirit in the existing school system, and in passing, launched a general attack against the private sector. According to Rojas, almost all the private schools (including the ones run by the Catholic orders) served foreign or antinational interests: "... *la Escuela privada ha sido en nuestro país uno de sus factores activos de disolución nacional.*" In several newspapers harsh criticism had recently been directed against certain Jewish schools. Rojas adopted this view, though he toned down its implicit (or even explicit) anti-Semitic tendency by extending it to the schools run by other communities as well (in the Italian, German, and British cases detecting imperialist aspirations), in addition to private schools of a political (anarchist) or religious nature. In consequence, the state had to react by monopolizing primary education, even at the

role of private secondary schools outside Buenos Aires, and, for the capital, the relative importance of the religious Colegio San José and Colegio del Salvador.

²⁵³According to Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 120, who unfortunately did not give the source of the information nor indicate which year the data referred to, 28,3% in the primary school, 33% in the *colegios nacionales* and 37,5% in the *escuelas normales*.

²⁵⁴Cited in Tedesco, *Educación y sociedad*, 116: "Confesamos ingenuamente que no comprendemos lo que significa educar *italianamente* a un niño. ... ¿Educamos nosotros *argentidamente*? No; educamos como el norteamericano Mann, el alemán Froebel y el italiano Pestalozzi nos han enseñado que debe educarse a los niños. *Les hacemos aprender de manera racional todo aquello que hoy se enseña en las escuelas bien organizadas del mundo entero*". Cf. also on this issue: Bertoni, "Nacionalidad o cosmopolitismo".

cost of violating the constitutional principle of freedom of education: “En las condiciones actuales de nuestro país necesitamos sostener, como doctrina argentina, que la enseñanza general es una función política y que por consiguiente le pertenece al Estado; ...”.²⁵⁵

However, if the public school did, in fact, manage to dominate the primary level to an increasing extent, this was not due to legal restrictions or bans on the private schools, as recommended by Ricardo Rojas and others, but rather the dynamic result of the expansionist efforts made within the public sector itself. This expansion was accompanied by the development of a vigorous body of school inspectors, whose actions, it is true, were carried to the private schools as well as the public (among other things to make sure that the minimum requirements regarding “national” subjects such as the Spanish language or Argentine history were complied with).

Not all of Rojas’s contentions and proposals were generally accepted, but the basic idea formulated in *La restauración nacionalista* not only met with widespread sympathy, but was itself an expression of concerns accumulated over many years and shared by an increasing number of Creole intellectuals and educationists.²⁵⁶ Mass immigration had in fact made the old preoccupations with interprovincial conflicts a matter of secondary importance. The idea now was to restructure the curriculum in order to make the school serve patriotic ends: The school would become the vehicle *par excellence* for the integration and “argentinization” of a heterogeneous population. But this required that the allegedly universal and cosmopolitan pedagogic orientation hitherto prevalent and intended to aid the *political* integration of the country must give way to a more overtly *nationalist* orientation designed to generate *cultural* assimilation. Of course, other factors contributed heavily to the real process of integration – not least the social aspirations and the adaptability shown by the immigrants themselves. But the belief in the efficiency of the school as an agent of social change, provided it was adequately and firmly directed by the central authorities, once more proved to be deep-rooted indeed. A series of initiatives was taken to strengthen the patriotic content and practices in the schools, in particular at the primary level, which taken together amounted to a

²⁵⁵Rojas, *La Restauración Nacionalista*, 1971, 131; the preceding citation on 123 (both from the chapter dealing with the private schools, 122–131). With reference to the debate on the Jewish schools: "... pero, en realidad, no hacían en sus escuelas los judíos con sus lenguas y su religión extraargentinas sino lo que hacen en las suyas, con su idioma y su imperialismo antiargentinos también, los italianos, los ingleses, los alemanes". The French were let off only because – still according to the author – the Argentines themselves had already made their country a "spiritual colony" of France, not least through the education system. *Ibid.*, 127. See also Svampa, *El dilema argentino*, 97–102 (a concise assessment of *La restauración nacionalista*); Bertoni, “Nacionalidad o cosmopolitismo”; Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism*, 132ff.

²⁵⁶Cf. Nora Pagano and Miguel Angel Galante in Devoto, ed., *La historiografía argentina en el siglo XX* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1993/1994), vol. 1, 63.

comprehensive programme of *educación patriótica*. The Consejo Nacional de Educación was a motivating power in this work. Its pedagogical review, *El Monitor de la Educación Común*, became one of the chief vehicles of the new ideas.²⁵⁷ (In fact, they were not all that new: We have seen above how the rise of patriotic initiatives within the realm of public education had already begun at the end of the 1880s and the beginning of the '90s, as in the celebrations of the *fiestas patrióticas*.)

To Ricardo Rojas and his fellow partisans, the key subjects through which the national identification could be developed and fortified were Spanish, national geography, and national history, in addition to civics (or “morals”). The teaching of the Spanish language and literature would both transmit the cultural heritage constituted by a literary canon and struggle to uphold the linguistic unity and “purity” of the nation. (The noticeable changes in colloquial, Argentine Spanish brought on by the influence of Italian and, to a lesser degree, other immigrant vernaculars were, not surprisingly, anathema to Creole teachers and intellectuals.) National geography was essential to raise the consciousness of the national territory, that is the physical home, the *Heimat* of the community, closely associated with the feminine qualities of the family home that, in turn, would invoke the manly virtues of fathers, husbands and sons: the *patriotic* virtues. This consciousness was also likened to the individual person’s awareness of the *body*. Lastly, national history – the collective equivalent to the memory of the individual mind – would develop the consciousness of a common past, an origin and a destiny, even in the minds of children who only by “adoption” were heirs to that past (and whose real ancestors formed part of completely different histories). This was *the* purpose of teaching national history, according to Rojas.²⁵⁸ But the subject already rested on a tradition that went back several decades, as we have seen. What happened to it in this period?

²⁵⁷Cf. Escudé, *El fracaso del proyecto argentino*. This work was entirely dedicated to the “patriotic education” project, and was based almost exclusively on the *Monitor* (examined from 1900 to 1950). Polemical, controversial in some of its conclusions, but documented and suggestive, Carlos Escudé’s book is most useful when dealing with this parcel of Argentine educational history. (Among other things, he referred to a long series of “patriotic” measures and statements in addition to those already mentioned, which for reasons of space, must be omitted here.)

²⁵⁸Cf. the quotation from Rojas’s book in Chapter 1. Other school subjects than the ones emphasized by Rojas might also appear as particularly interesting to zealous champions of educational nationalism, as was seen e.g. in recurrent endeavours to militarize physical education (largely rejected, at least on the primary level) – on this issue, see Bertoni, “Soldados, gimnastas y escolares”.

11.3 The new key role of national history in the schools

Two characteristics distinguish the development of history as a school subject in this period. First, its relative importance vis-à-vis other subjects, which had been growing since the 1870s, was consolidated. Secondly, within the subject of history, increased preference was given to Argentine history, at the expense of universal or European history. Thus, the teaching of history was conditioned by the increasingly nationalist orientation of the educational policies described above.

As for the primary school,²⁵⁹ notions of national history were imparted in all classes in relation to patriotic and commemorative acts of various kinds, and connected to the national symbols (the flag, the anthem, the icon of General San Martín, etc.). As noted above, such acts took on a growing importance throughout the period concerned, and they were encouraged and regulated by the central educational authorities (namely the Consejo Nacional de Educación). The prime concern here was the *emotional* aspect of the national historical consciousness.²⁶⁰ The *instructive* element was progressively reinforced in the regular history lessons from the third year upwards, following a cyclic method which meant that the major topics were repeated in elaborated forms each year, the emphasis shifting from a merely biographical approach to a broader narrative (theoretically to be followed by a more analytical stage). Within Argentine history, the political and military events related to the independence movement, the civil wars, and the national organization continued to make up most of the contents. The curricula might vary from province to province, but the programme applied in the capital (and also in the national schools throughout the republic established according to the *ley Láinez*) appears to have served as a model.²⁶¹ Evidence of the increased preoccupation with the contents and methodology of history as a subject is the considerable number of

²⁵⁹The teaching of history at the primary level in this period was treated in the following works: Emiliano Endrek's contribution in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 353–370 (mostly based on contemporary literature on the issue – discussions and proposals); Gianello, *La enseñanza*, (in the historical background sketches – the main focus was on the present (1951) state of affairs); Cecilia Braslavsky (analysing a large number of readers and textbooks in history and civic instruction with regards to the "uses of history"): "Der Gebrauch der Geschichte im argentinischen Erziehungswesen (unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Lehrbücher für den Primarbereich), 1853–1930", in Riekenberg, ed., *Politik und Geschichte*, 155–178; Braslavsky, "Los usos de la historia". See note below regarding the contemporary bibliography.

²⁶⁰A graphic example of the spirit and contents of those acts (as they were ideally envisaged), including model lessons and a comprehensive anthology of edifying texts: Román Vallescos, *Las Fiestas Patrias: Tratado de la preparación y ejecución de los actos cívicos en las escuelas de la República, arte de declamación y colección de trozos para recitar* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Solá y Franco, 3rd ed., 1907).

²⁶¹Emiliano Endrek noted this point after complaining about how difficult it was to trace the programmes (and the textbooks as well) that were actually used in the various provinces – a commonplace remark among researchers in this field. Endrek's contribution in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 353–370.

articles (not least in the official *Monitor de la Educación Común*) and even books published on the issue, especially after the turn of the century. Contemporary commentators often exposed critical views, calling for a less mnemonic and encyclopaedic approach, or demanding even more attention to the history of the *patria*.²⁶² These demands found an outstanding and influential supporter in the psychiatrist and intellectual, José María Ramos de Mejía, who occupied the presidency of the Consejo Nacional de Educación from 1908 to 1913.

The development of history in the secondary school in many ways showed tendencies similar to those described.²⁶³ Though the period was characterized by frequent changes in the curricula and hence presented an unstable and often bewildering picture, some basic features stood out and remained relatively unaltered: The solid position (as measured in periods per week and compared with other subjects) that history achieved in the 1880s was never really challenged. And the ascent of Argentine and American history (with the corresponding relative decline of European history) that culminated in the same decade, was, if not accelerated, at least not reversed either in the following years.²⁶⁴ Moreover, the importance and prestige of national history were enhanced by the increasingly predominating trends in the didactical discourse of the day.

In all the succeeding *planes de estudio* introduced in the *colegios nacionales* during this period, history was to be taught in all classes.²⁶⁵ According to the 1884 curriculum, Argentine colonial history (up to the British invasions) was studied in the first year (two periods per week), the history of the Argentine republic (from the invasions to “the present”) in the second (two periods), American colonial history in the fifth (three periods), and European and American contemporary history in the sixth (three periods), the remaining two courses being dedicated to European history (five periods combined). In 1886, the second-year course in national history was expanded to three periods per week. The modifications in the 1888 curriculum further strengthened the history subject in general and the position of

²⁶²Among others: Rojas, *La Restauración Nacionalista*.

²⁶³The following works dealt with history as a subject at the secondary level in the period concerned: Jorge María Ramallo's contribution in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 371–386 (mainly based on the contemporary bibliography addressing the issue); Gianello, *La enseñanza*; Devoto, “Idea de nación” (for the last years of the period).

²⁶⁴Cf. Chapter 6.3 above.

²⁶⁵The following information is based, first, on *Antecedentes*, 246ff, citing the following ministerial decrees: 23.2.1884, 9.10.1886, 11.1.1888, 14.3.1891, 25.1.1893, 18.4.1898, 27.2.1901, 5.8.1901, 8.8.1901, and 6.3.1902. Secondly, I refer to the following decrees in AGN, MJIP/DIP, *Decretos Originales*, files (*legajos*)19–33: 31.1.1900, 27.2.1901, 5.8.1901, 17.1.1903, 5.4.1906, 16.2.1912, 1.3.1916. (Unfortunately, the decrees from 1913 appeared to be missing in these files.)

Argentine history in particular. The first-year course was expanded to three periods per week, so was the fourth dedicated to European medieval and early modern history, and the two last courses in American and European/American history, respectively, both had the emphasizing formulation “in particular, Argentine” added to them. In 1891, the duration of the studies was reduced to five years, without altering the general orientation of the previous plans except from an intention to relate history, geography, and civics more closely. Argentine history and geography was to be studied in the first year (six periods), history and geography of America in the fourth (four periods) and history of “the nation” with civic instruction in the last course (four periods). The geography of the other continents and European history were to be studied in the second- and third-year courses (10 periods altogether). There was a slight setback with regard to Argentine/American history in the modified plan of 1893 (a reduction to three periods in the fourth-year course and the fifth defined as “contemporary, in particular Argentine, history” as opposed to the previously mere national history). In 1898 history was once more separated from geography and civics in the new curriculum, apparently without other major changes: The “history part” of the previous plan was now allocated three periods in each of the first three years, two in the fourth, and four in the fifth.

If we consider the basic outline within the particular field of interest with which I am concerned here, there was continuity through all the modifications of the curricula described above, although this might, to some extent, have been broken in the first years of the twentieth century by reform initiatives that implied more radical changes. In particular, President Roca’s young Minister of Education, Osvaldo Magnasco, took steps to change the orientation of the secondary level away from its function as merely preparatory to a university career, drastically reducing the theoretical and increasing the practical contents of the colleges’ curriculum. The 1901 plan thus, without weakening the relative position of history within the group of theoretical subjects, nevertheless reduced it to eight periods per week over four years. But the attempted reform failed due to its politically controversial implications, Magnasco resigned, and subsequent modifications more or less restored the previous situation, though the proliferation of short-lived plans in the following few years bore witness to a conspicuous lack of stability. In 1903 a proposal to divide the secondary studies into two cycles was launched (including history in all classes at both levels), establishing a basic, generally formative four-year cycle, with a senior cycle to be divided into branches corresponding to the university faculties. The attempt was as miscarried as the Magnasco plan had been. Joaquín V. González (in charge of education under President Quintana)

reintroduced the six-year curriculum in 1905. This was once more reduced to five in the modified plan of the following year. However, despite several heated debates and the many projects and modifications of the plans during the first decade of the twentieth century, history as a subject did not suffer major changes. In 1910 Argentine history was taught in the first and second years, American history in the third, and European and universal history in the last two courses.²⁶⁶ In 1912 the order was reversed in a six-year curriculum: European history in the first two courses, the Argentine republic in the third, America in the fourth, colonial America and Argentina in the fifth, and Argentina 1810–1910 in the sixth, along with the “history of human civilization and culture”.

However, a near-to definitive five-year curriculum was established with the 1913 plan, which would not be substantially modified until the late 1930s. In this arrangement, American and Argentine history were assigned to the third and fourth years, dealing with the colonial and independent periods, respectively, with European history in the first two years, and “human civilization and culture” in the fifth.²⁶⁷ A comprehensive reform initiative introduced by Saavedra Lamas in 1916 would not survive the downfall of the Conservative reign, hence the 1913 plan would become the curricular legacy from this period for several decades to come.

The other principal mode of secondary education, the *escuela normal*, had initially been less oriented towards historical studies, in particular national history. This was in spite of the fact that the leading positivist educationist, the Italian Pedro Scalabrini (who, from the 1870s, taught the subject, among others, at the pioneering Escuela Normal de Paraná) took a strong interest in Argentine history and culture.²⁶⁸ A new curriculum for this institution in 1880 strengthened the teaching of history, assigning the subject to all classes (with national history and civics only in the last course). But the different establishments continued to follow their particular plans until a unified curriculum for the colleges of education was finally introduced in 1886. According to this plan the elementary teachers college would comprise

²⁶⁶According to Ramallo in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 375.

²⁶⁷Regarding the 11.1.1913 curriculum: Gianello, *La enseñanza*, 20–21; Ramallo in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 377.

²⁶⁸The original four-year curriculum of the Escuela Normal de Paraná included history in only two (of three) terms in the second year and one in the third (dedicated to the study of the Argentine constitution). For this and the following data on the curricula of the colleges of education, see *Antecedentes*, 143ff; the essential decrees regarding the period concerned here dated: 19.1.1880, 24.1.1880 (decreeing a three-year plan with general history in the first two years with a total of eight periods per week, and national history in the third with only two), 28.2.1886, 31.12.1887, 31.1.1900, 27.2.1901, 8.8.1901. Also in AGN, MJIP/DIP, *Decretos Originales*, files 19–33, for the following decrees: 29.1.1900, 31.1.1900, 27.2.1901, 12.3.1902, 28.1.1903, 10.2.1904, and 27.2.1909.

four years in which European history was to be imparted in the first three courses (with a total of eight periods per week) and Argentine and American history in the fourth (with only two periods in the male colleges and three in the female). The senior two years of the *escuelas normales de profesores/profesoras* would include an additional two-period course in general history in the sixth year. Thus far, the minor place assigned to Argentine history differed strikingly from the tradition established in the *colegio nacional*.

However, this situation would not last. In 1887 already, the terms were inverted: In a three year curriculum the students of the *escuelas normales de maestros/maestras* would study Argentine colonial history in the first year (two periods per week), independent national history in the second (two periods), and general history in the third (three periods). The additional two-year course for *profesores* would include universal history in both classes (with three periods each), the last year “in particular of the Argentine Republic”. From now on Argentine history would enjoy at least the same solid position in the *normalista* branch as it did in the national colleges. True, it suffered from the same hesitancy and the same frequent shifts after 1900 as described above. These were marked by frustrated reform initiatives followed by provisional adaptations to the reluctant educational realities, of which the most noteworthy was perhaps the attempt to assimilate the curricula of the lower echelon of the *escuela normal* and the *colegio nacional* (thus, the 1900 and 1901 plans). However, differentiated plans were soon re-established. In a provisional plan introduced by Joaquín V. González in 1902, the nationalist reorientation of the subject reached a peak: Argentina until 1810 in the first year (two periods), Argentina in the colonial and contemporary periods in the second (three periods), “contemporary and American history” in the third (two periods), and “American, in particular Argentine” history in the fourth (two periods). The once predominating European history had now been relegated to a marginal position in the curriculum. According to the 1903 curriculum, Argentine history was to be studied in all four classes of the college of education for *maestros/maestras* (each with two periods per week), to which was added two courses in universal history in the third and fourth years (three periods each). (In 1904 the last-mentioned were expanded to four periods in a modified plan, leaving out national history in those classes.) The superior courses for *profesores* were now extended to three years and diversified (in order to provide the elementary teachers’ colleges with lecturers with a more specialized competence). Apart from educational history (always included in the *normalista* curricula), history at this higher level would belong to the arts branch (qualifying for the *profesor en letras* degree), with both universal (five periods) and

Argentine (three periods) history in all three classes. The considerable de facto disparity between urban and rural areas with regard to educational opportunities was institutionalized with the creation in 1909 of separate colleges educating rural teachers according to a reduced two-year curriculum. It included general geography and history in the first year (three periods per week), and the Argentine equivalents in the second (four periods). In 1911, finally, a curriculum for the four-year elementary *escuela normal* was introduced which would become the long-lasting companion to the 1913 plan for the baccalaureate colleges (with minor modifications this lasted until 1941).²⁶⁹ As was the case with the other branches of secondary education, the changes inaugurated in the educational reform of 1916 would never materialize.

History would also be integrated in the plans of the new commercial and industrial colleges, which were modestly developed in this period.²⁷⁰ For instance, the curriculum of 1912 for the five-year commercial course (for *peritos mercantiles*) would include ancient and medieval history in the first two years (each with three periods per week); and modern and contemporary, “principally Argentine” history, in the third and fourth year (two periods each). The four-year evening course for clerks and bookkeepers had Argentine history in the first year (two periods). The six-year curriculum of the same year for the *escuelas industriales* prescribed Argentine history for all in the first two years (colonial and independent, respectively, with two periods each).

The real changes in contents through all the different curricula briefly described above were not so great as to preclude a considerable degree of didactic continuity, as evidenced by the prolonged use of several textbooks with only slight adaptations. Nonetheless, the reforms, however superficial, reflected to some extent the growing concern with didactic questions related to history as a subject. Recurrent issues were, for instance, the question of whether the courses should be structured according to a chronological principle (as was done in most plans) or whether they should be sequenced retrospectively, beginning with the most recent history. Another concern was the related question of whether it was advisable to begin with universal/European history or whether, according to the pedagogical principle of beginning with the close and familiar, the students ought to begin with national history. Here the

²⁶⁹On the plan decreed on the 13.2.1911: Endrek in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 368. He stated that history was to be taught in all four classes, but did not specify the contents of each course. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find the complete version of this curriculum.

²⁷⁰The plans referred to here are found in the following ministerial decrees: AGN, MJIP/DIP, *Decretos Originales*, file 31, decrees of 10.2.1912 and 23.3.1912.

prevailing principle varied from one curriculum to the other, as might be deduced from the presentation above. In any case, increasingly, there seems to have been a generalized belief in the educational merits of history as a subject, not only in order to develop the knowledge and understanding of the human past and the development of society, but also to benefit the moral and civic virtues of young Argentines. History was the empirical companion to the subject of moral and civic instruction. Furthermore, on the secondary level, history was expected to further the analytical and political skills of the youth in dealing with the current issues of society (and thus, for one thing, moderate or avert the influence of socially “dangerous” and “demagogic” ideologies). Above all, in a heterogeneous and in many places largely immigrant population, history (with national geography, Spanish, and civics) was now assigned a key role in generating national cohesion, assimilating and “argentinizing” the newcomers, and in the development of an Argentine national identity. Not uncommonly, as in the case of Ricardo Rojas, and also as evidenced in some of the plans in question, this patriotism was accompanied by an idealistic Latin-Americanism, and increasingly also by a new Hispanism, gradually leaving behind the Hispanophobic heritage of the independence wars. But in the everyday classroom reality the formal juxtaposition of “Argentine and American” history appears to have yielded, to the detriment of the latter. Faced with the impossible task of going into every topic in the encyclopaedic syllabuses, the commanding preference owed to the *patria* was never questioned.²⁷¹

The preoccupations of the educational authorities, particularly after the turn of the century, were expressed in numerous initiatives which showed that the ministry and its dependencies were not content to regulate the teaching of history bureaucratically, but demanded an active and participatory role, consciously stimulating and directing the desired educational efforts in the field. For instance, several measures were aimed at raising the competence level of the history teachers, but this remained the butt of contemporary critics like Rojas.²⁷² For a long time, history posts had been commonly regarded as easily accessible (*cátedras fáciles*). The teacher would generally be a jurist, something which was partly

²⁷¹On the objectives of history as a subject as conceived in this period, see among others: Ramallo in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 371–386; Gianello, *La enseñanza*, 26ff; Rojas, *La Restauración Nacionalista*, 1971, for example, on 37 (arguing against Spencer): "... la historia no es *instructiva* a la manera de las ciencias naturales o de las matemáticas, pero es esencialmente *educativa*: educativa del carácter y de la inteligencia".

²⁷²On this issue, see Fernando J. Devoto's contribution in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 387–402 (on the teaching of history at the university level, and also with regards to the university's function as a producer of history teachers, along with rival institutions); Endrek in *La Junta*, 368 (on the historical formation of primary school teachers); Gianello, *La enseñanza*, 60; Rojas, *La Restauración Nacionalista*, 1971, 91 and 205ff. Regarding citizenship requirements: *Antecedentes*, 635 (decree of 17.2.1899). Other relevant decrees in AGN, MJIP/DIP, *Decretos Originales*, files 22–31: 17.1.1903, 28.1.1903, 30.4.1909, 14.1.1910, and 15.12.1911.

justified by the historical orientation of law studies in Argentina. Only gradually would candidates from the new arts faculties of the universities (Buenos Aires having the first in 1896), who had specialized in history, share to any substantial degree. Rival aspirants would graduate from the Instituto Nacional del Profesorado Secundario, created in 1904 as an autonomous establishment, as well as from the superior colleges of education. The increased history contents of the elementary *escuelas normales de maestros/maestras* and the higher *escuelas normales de profesores/profesoras* have already been noted. Both the general improvement of the history instruction of the teaching profession and the emergent tendency towards a specialized corps of history teachers, in embryo in this period, were encouraged by the Ministry of Education (though the regulations regarding competence requirements might be said to be somewhat inconsistent in this respect).²⁷³ An indication of the nationalist endeavours was the decision in 1899 (reiterated in 1909) to reserve the teaching of Argentine geography, history, and civics for Argentine citizens only. In 1911, the regulations were strengthened, adding a seniority requirement of at least ten years to the citizenship condition.

Another field of ministerial attention, though apparently neglected for long periods, was the regulation of textbook production and the authorization of textbooks. In 1896, a procedure was established, according to which ad hoc approval committees for each subject were subsequently nominated, as well as a permanent Junta Revisora de Textos. The committees included renowned personalities, among others Bartolomé Mitre in the history commission. The preamble of the decree ascertained that until then no system whatsoever had existed.²⁷⁴ The first list of approved texts was announced in 1898, banning the use of other books in national secondary schools.²⁷⁵ The private schools were another matter, though their

²⁷³ Thus, a ministerial decree of 17.1.1903 stated that the teacher in Argentine history and civics still ought to be a doctor from the law faculty, with an additional certified competence in pedagogy and Argentine history from the arts faculty, whereas the graduates from the arts faculty would be qualified to impart universal and American history. True, the criteria applied in reality in the appointments of history teachers might have differed considerably from formal official intentions, such as this peculiar division of work. However, Fernando J. Devoto informed that graduates from the arts faculty did not clearly take precedence over law graduates or *profesores normales* in appointments to history posts. Devoto in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 392. See also Halperín, *Historia de la Universidad*, 101.

²⁷⁴AGN, MJIP/DIP, *Decretos Originales*, file 17, decrees of 5.10.1896 and 24.12.1896. According to the first: "... no existe actualmente sistema alguno para la fección de textos para la enseñanza en los Colegios Nacionales y Escuelas Normales ... esta falta de orden, ocasiona que el estudio de ciertas materias en varios años sucesivos, se haga por métodos los mas opuestos ...".

²⁷⁵AGN, MJIP/DIP, *Decretos Originales*, file 18, decree of 28.1.1898. Within Argentine history, the approved texts were written by Vicente F. López, Clemento L. Fregeiro and Benigno T. Martínez, and these three will be included in the corpus analysed in the following chapters. Furthermore, the list included a text for the commercial college, which I have not been able to find (*Noticias sobre la Geografía é Historia Comercial de la República Argentina*, by Eleodoro Suárez). A list of recommended books of reference comprised works by Juan María Gutiérrez, Rafael Fragueiro and Joaquín V. González. Ramallo also mentioned the commission

textbooks too would have to conform to the official programmes in order to prepare their pupils for the public examination. Thereafter I have not been able to trace the continuation of this work – it might in fact have been interrupted or it might have been executed without ministerial announcement. When a Council of Secondary Education (Consejo de Educación Secundaria, Normal y Especial) was created in 1906, the authorization of textbooks was listed as one of its responsibilities, and authors were invited to submit texts every three years. I have not established whether this decision was complied with, or the material outcome of it.²⁷⁶

The patriotically motivated interest in the advancement of Argentine history was also shown in dispositions regarding the related subject of moral and civil instruction, whose contents comprised many topics from the national history.²⁷⁷ Along the same lines, we find the enthusiastic prescription of patriotic commemorations, the naming of schools after national heroes, initiatives to edit anthologies of primary sources to Argentine history, and so on.²⁷⁸ However, the ascent of educational nationalism did not entail a self-congratulatory stay-at-home attitude. By way of example, the ministry granted several travel scholarships to educationists with the commission to study specific aspects of the education system in other

established in 1896, but had not found evidence of its work: "... no hemos encontrado constancias de la labor cumplida por esta Comisión". Ramallo in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 380. The decree of 1898 cited here should clear up the question so far.

²⁷⁶AGN, MJIP/DIP, *Decretos Originales*, file 25, decree of 30.4.1906. A much later decree (file 39, 13.11.1922) maintained that this work was the responsibility of the Inspección General de Enseñanza Secundaria, Normal y Especial.

²⁷⁷See for example, AGN, MJIP/DIP, *Decretos Originales*, files 28–29, decrees of 7.9.1908, 15.4.1909 and 11.8.1909. The second decree established and reproduced the new syllabus of the subject of *moral cívica y política* (an unusual case, as the programmes elaborating the *planes de estudio* are usually not found among the ministerial decrees). The programme extensively exploited historical material, in particular of a biographic nature, for edifying purposes (such as "La virtud civil: *Rivadavia*. - La virtud militar: *San Martín*"). The Argentine constitution, not surprisingly a major theme in a civics programme, was characterized as nothing less than the wisest and most liberal in the world, "la mas sabia y liberal del mundo". In general, topics related to the nation and to patriotism took up much space in the syllabus. The decree of 7.9.1908 announced a competition of civics textbooks, in which the appointed commission would choose one text for the primary school and one for the secondary, both winners to be declared official texts each at its level (again an unusual procedure, as the schools normally would have an option between several authorized textbooks, e.g., in history). The grounds exposed were nationalist and political. As it turned out (decree of 11.8.1909), the jury decided not to proclaim a winner in the secondary class, as none of the submitted texts was judged as being up to standard. For the primary school, on the other hand, a catechism written by the well-known educationist Enrique de Vedia won the distinction, with the exhortation added that the pupils should learn it by heart! In fact, the entire manuscript was reproduced in the ministerial decree (another unique instance). The text, though without being structured chronologically, indulged in topics from Argentine history (e.g., with separate chapters on the 1810 revolution and the national assembly of 1813), severely condemning Rosas and fulsomely praising Mitre and, above all, Sarmiento. Argentina was furthermore boasted to be the only American nation without a single "savage Indian" ("¡Ni uno solo!"). In short, the work was saturated with a super-patriotic spirit, which was expected to be materialized in classroom practices, e.g., in the unisonous salute expected whenever San Martín's name was mentioned: "Al nombrar a 'San Martín' los alumnos y el maestro deberán ponerse de pié y haciendo la venia militar dirán, en voz natural: viva la Patria."

²⁷⁸Regarding the last point, see for example, AGN, MJIP/DIP, *Decretos Originales*, file 28, decree of 14.5.1908.

countries, as one of the means of evaluating and possibly ameliorating the Argentine system. In the field of history, this was the case with Ricardo Rojas's aforementioned journey to Europe, which concluded in the *Restauración Nacionalista* (1909).²⁷⁹

Thus, Rojas's call for a national "renaissance" within education was but the culmination of a broad movement, in which the official policy-makers took an active part. It is necessary to stress this point, as later sympathizers with his views, in particular those of revisionist affiliations, came close to presenting him as the solitary prophet in a cosmopolitan and indifferent desert. True, Rojas himself (in the preface to the second edition of his book in 1922) recalled the lack of interest in his work in an initial moment, followed by examples of harsh criticism, only to continue by describing it as one of his most stirring and long-lasting exits, once the silence was broken. And even if his "report" severely attacked the present state of affairs regarding the teaching of history and the alleged lack of a national, historical culture, he was able to cite, in support of his views, one minister of education after another, resolutions from teachers congresses, et cetera. Recent curricular developments were hailed as progressing in accordance with his own outlook. In retrospect, he also noted that the following years had seen the realization of many of his proposals, thanks to the collaboration of various social institutions. Though expressed in a polemic and deliberately provocative fashion, the ideas of *La Restauración Nacionalista* were by no means those of an outsider. Rojas was representative enough.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁹AGN, MJIP/DIP, *Decretos Originales*, file 27, decree of 15.6.1907. The purpose stated was of an explicitly self-critical nature: "... para libertarla [la enseñanza de la Historia] del criterio puramente mnemónico". Admittedly, Rojas himself claimed that the initiative was his own and not the government's, and that no one in the ministry even bothered to read the final report before he had it published as a book. Rojas, *La Restauración Nacionalista*, 1971, 14–15.

²⁸⁰The preface of 1922 was reproduced in the third edition. Rojas, *La Restauración Nacionalista*, 1971, 13–24. This last edition also presented an interesting example of the late revisionist treatment of the issue. The publisher (A. Peña Lillo) maintained in the blurb that Rojas's views were still as valid as they had been 60 years ago, and asserted the brave-loner-thesis, referring to the "terror intelectual que desencadena el hecho de asumir la defensa de los intereses de la Nación". The historian Fermín Chávez developed this point (though he also inserted Rojas in a broader contemporary movement) in his introduction (7–10), citing Rojas's reference to the first negative reactions mentioned above. But after all, Rojas had stated (13): "Entre mis obras, ésta es una de las que han alcanzado éxito más sostenido, ruidoso y extenso." In support of my interpretation, see also 18–24 (on the changes that occurred until 1922: "La prensa, la Universidad, la literatura, las artes, la política argentina sienten ahora la inquietud de los problemas aquí planteados. Los trabajos de renacimiento idealista que proyecté en las 'conclusiones' del libro han venido realizándose desde 1910, bajo los auspicios de diversas instituciones sociales ... muchas frases ... frases de simple valor polémico – hayan perdido su actualidad. Hoy no las escribiría, ..."); 108–121 and 140 (partly benevolently on several aspects of the more recent curricula); 142–144 (on the new nationalist surge among teachers, educational authorities, at the universities, etc.: "Los educadores argentinos vuelven hoy a proclamar el viejo anhelo nacionalista; ..."). True, all of this as opposed to formidable adverse forces such as "materialism" and "cosmopolitanism". Even so, I believe I am justified in maintaining that the revisionist vision in this case implied an improper adaptation of Rojas to fit the self-image of a certain "counter-history".

Rojas wanted the state to encourage the national identification and integration of immigrants and Creoles alike, and to develop the historical consciousness of Argentine society by means of a nationalist and “neohumanist” reorientation of the educational policy. The revitalized history subject would be the spearhead of this programme, but it would have to work together with the other humanist subjects – geography, Spanish, and “morals” – in a coordinated fashion, in which these disciplines would constitute an integrated whole. The instructive and analytical aspect of the subject would progressively increase in importance, from a secondary place in the early primary school to a dominant position at the university. In the secondary school, the contents should be structured around five thematic foci, all selected from a national identity perspective, and each constituting the core of a one-year course in the following order: First, the *Latin* heritage (doubly actualized by the massive Italian immigration) centring on ancient Rome. Second, was the *Spanish* affiliation, giving priority to the history of Spain within a course in medieval and early modern history of the European “nationalities”. Third, was the *American* community, treating the native pre-Columbian cultures, the European discoveries and the subsequent colonization. Fourth, was the *national* tradition, seeking its roots in the American colonial period and finally, fifth, contemporary history with the development of the *Argentine Republic*.²⁸¹ Thus, the proposed programme comprised a global vision of the nation and its history whose basic tenets were Hispanism (combined in this case with reverence towards the original indigenous cultures, an idea which was not generally accepted in Argentina), Pan-Americanism, and nationalism. Although topics from the history of other countries were also included, it was imperative for Rojas to limit their number and extent. He thought that the sense of international solidarity (Rojas was no xenophobe) would be better developed through a course in the history of philosophy than by encyclopaedic programmes in world history.

Rojas also engaged enthusiastically with the pedagogical and didactic aspects of the teaching of history, urging the production and use of teaching aids of all kind, including school museums and history workshops with ample collections of source material (in a wide sense: literary, folkloric, etc., along with the more traditional documental sources). The need for a revision and renewal of textbooks was stressed (among other things, in order to have texts in *all* courses written from an American/Argentine perspective, doing away with the translations of French manuals). In general, he believed the success of the project depended on a combined national effort to create a historical culture in Argentina, with a particular

²⁸¹Regarding the proposed syllabus, see *ibid.*, 155ff.

concern for areas such as the public archives, museums, the preservation of historical monuments (from buildings to place names), and history research and publication at the university level.

As a whole, Rojas's system of patriotic history teaching was obviously never applied, at least not in a pure form. But it might be regarded as the most coherently elaborated version of a set of ideas regarding the didactics of history, frequently expressed in other contexts as well, and which indubitably, if piecemeal, was present in the ministerial decrees and curricula analysed above.²⁸²

In the period leading up to World War I there was a pronounced movement in favour of prioritizing national content in the Argentine education system. This tendency might be seen as the Argentine expression of a widespread phenomenon of the time. Rojas, for instance, constantly argued for this, referring to the nationalist orientations guiding the teaching of history in the main European countries. If old-established nations to an increasing degree "nationalized" their education, why should an emerging nation with so much more reason not do it? There were also specific domestic stimuli for this development. Above all, the rise of educational patriotism must be understood as the reaction to a situation marked by mass immigration, in a moment generally characterized by rapid social changes. The schools were expected to safeguard a certain degree of social stability, and, in particular, to favour the assimilation of immigrant children. In order to assure the cohesion of the national community, the historical consciousness and the sense of sharing in a specific Argentine, national identity had to be cultivated and mobilized throughout Argentine society, as it was seen. The study and construction or reconstruction of the national traditions and the history of the *patria* stood at the centre of these efforts. History as a school subject was evidently a main field of

²⁸²Ricardo Rojas is selected here in lieu of other verbose representatives of "patriotic education" because I regard his work as the most pertinent to our specific subject: the teaching of history in the secondary school. Carlos Escudé, on the other hand, explicitly disregarded Rojas, pleading that his *informe* was already well known, and concentrated on figures such as Carlos Octavio Bunge, Enrique de Vedia, and Ernesto Bavio, among others – who were undoubtedly influential. Escudé, *El fracaso*, 37. A malicious reader might add, however, that these writers, expressing a more extreme and exalted mode of nationalism, also fitted better in support of Escudé's thesis than the more nuanced and careful prose of Ricardo Rojas. In any case, it is downright misleading to describe Rojas (along with others who *do* deserve the label) as "militaristic" (*ibid.*, 52) and to indicate that Germany was a favourite model for Rojas, citing, on 49, his positive evaluation of the historical education in Germany without informing the reader that Rojas also had laudatory words for France, Great Britain, and Italy in that respect, and that he explicitly stated that Argentina ought probably not imitate the German model: "Tratándose del actual espíritu argentino ... las disciplinas alemanas difícilmente podrían adoptarse ... acaso nos conviniera, como ideal realizable, algo que participase de las disciplinas francesas y británicas a la vez". Rojas, *La Restauración Nacionalista*, 1971, 136. Cf. also the following statement: "En la Argentina por tradición laico y democrático, ha de ser [el nacionalismo] pacifista por solidaridad americana". Rojas, *La Restauración Nacionalista*, 1971, 47. To others, however, the German model appeared as highly attractive, cf. Bertoni, "Nacionalidad o cosmopolitismo".

attention, but it was far from being the only one. It formed part of an emergent national, historical culture with a variety of expressions. Of singular importance for the teaching of Argentine history was, naturally enough, the development of an increasingly professionalized Argentine history writing.

11.4 The development of national history writing

In fact, the rise of Argentine history as an increasingly favoured school subject, on the one hand, and on the other the expansion and development of national history writing, part of which would eventually establish itself as a prestigious academic discipline, were obviously more than merely simultaneous phenomena. They both depended on the growing appreciation of that branch of knowledge in the educated public, and particularly within the governing bodies that made the decisions and granted the investments without which neither school nor academic history could have developed the way they did. This esteem must be understood in terms of the new function assigned to history as the primary guardian (or even creator) of the national identity.²⁸³ Moreover, the two areas were closely interconnected, probably more so than in later periods, in that, in many cases the historians themselves would have some experience as college teachers. More important, leading historians paid attention to the school subject and dealt with didactic issues in their writings – and they wrote textbooks. Hence, the textbook development to be studied in the following chapters was to an essential degree conditioned by the general course of Argentine history writing. A few words on its main institutional and historiographical characteristics therefore seem appropriate.²⁸⁴

The establishment in Argentina of history writing as an intellectual field (or, with Michael Riekenberg, as a “discursive formation”) distinguishable from both literature and politics might be situated in the 1850s.²⁸⁵ This obviously does not mean that the writings on Argentine history would not continue to be thoroughly conditioned by contemporary politics. Nor does it mean that historians already constituted a specialized profession, something that would not occur until the beginning of the twentieth century. Throughout the nineteenth century, historical research and production were carried out by amateurs, typically by lawyers,

²⁸³Cf. Fernando J. Devoto in the preliminary essay of Devoto, ed., *La historiografía argentina en el siglo XX*, vol. 1, 14.

²⁸⁴Cf. Aurora Ravina in *La Junta de historia*, vol. 1, in particular 50 and 53.

²⁸⁵Cf. Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, in particular Chap. III, 63–91.

but also by physicians, officers, and so on, who often combined their historical interests with political careers and with journalist and literary activities. It does mean, however, that the cultivation of Argentine historical studies was recognized as a specific domain, that it occupied a considerable and growing space in public media, that the historical works presented an increasing consciousness with regard to their own, specifically historical, methodology, and, last but not least, that these concerns materialized in historiographical debates.²⁸⁶

Bartolomé Mitre is consensually, and with reason, singled out as the central figure at this formative stage. He was the initiator of the first historical association in Argentina, the Instituto Histórico-Geográfico del Río de la Plata, in 1854, and he laid down what might be styled the foundation stone of modern, national history writing: the *Historia de Belgrano y la Independencia Argentina* (elaborated in four editions from 1857 to 1887). This work incarnated at least two long-lasting tendencies: One, a biographical approach to the national history (Mitre's other major work would be the biography of General San Martín, first published in 1877),²⁸⁷ and, two, the revolution of 1810 and ensuing independence wars as the principal focus of attention, as *the* central event in any history of the *patria*. This vision of the national origins naturally carried a strong political potential with regard to the contemporary, political situation, in that the leaders of the national organization after the downfall of Rosas would emerge as the legitimate heirs to the revolutionary founding fathers, bridging the gap constituted by "anarchy" and *rosismo*. The historian Mitre thus paved the way for the inclusion of the statesman Mitre in the national pantheon, side by side with Belgrano, San Martín, and Rivadavia.²⁸⁸ From the very beginning, contemporary opponents – from Damacio Vélez Sarsfield to Vicente Fidel López – would engage in debates with Mitre, criticizing his views and questioning his methods. Issues at stake would be, among others, Mitre's Buenos Aires perspective versus the historical contributions of the other provinces, the protagonism of a few great men versus the broader social processes and the role performed by "the people", the alleged impartiality and exclusive basis in documental primary sources versus the incidence of "passion", the relevance of oral traditions, etc. Anyhow, in a way, Mitre had

²⁸⁶ On the importance of private libraries, archives and networks at this amateur founding stage of Argentine history writing (the second half of the 19th Century), when public institutions to this end were weak, see Pablo Buchbinder, "Vínculos privados, instituciones públicas y reglas profesionales en los orígenes de la historiografía argentina", *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana "Dr. Emilio Ravignani"*, 3rd series, No. 13 (1st semester 1996), 59–82.

²⁸⁷ Rómulo Carbia counted more than 300 biographies on Argentine historical persons, and strongly emphasized Mitre's influence on the later development of the genre. Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 200.

²⁸⁸ Cf. Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 79.

stated the premises of those debates. His work was the point of departure for partisans and adversaries alike. His most decisive and enduring contribution to the historiographical tradition of his country was probably his strong belief in the scrupulous and critical examination of the documental primary sources as the historian's prime duty, and the conviction that a true, objective reconstruction of the past was possible if only "all" sources were taken into consideration. How well this transplant of the German *Quellengedanke* was cultivated is another question, as is indeed (as always) the pretence to objectivity. Later and more professional practitioners of source-criticism, such as the historiographer Rómulo D. Carbia, would present objections, though generally starting from a basic, filial recognition.²⁸⁹ As an ideal, though, as a historiographical model, Mitre's principles for history writing would to a considerable extent impose themselves on and eventually displace or at least relegate to an inferior position, the more essayistic and philosophical approaches to historical studies not uncommonly favoured by his contemporaries (our lecturer Estrada from a previous chapter would be an example of the kind).²⁹⁰

The first steps towards an academic institutionalization of the history discipline would not be taken until well into the 1890s. Until then, there were no historical institutes at the universities, no chairs in history, no organized studies (above the preparatory level) and hence no honours degrees nor doctorates, no academies and no specialized reviews. There was a sustained, growing, and ramified production of works on history, much of which reached a far from insignificant public. Apart from the publication of books, cultural reviews (conceding ample space to articles on historical issues as well as other subjects) from the 1860s onwards were particularly important.²⁹¹ The newspaper columns were also readily accessible for the historians.

Although Mitre was a dominant figure, the historical milieu of the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first of our own was far from homogenous, presenting in fact a variety of approaches and differing views on central issues. It is therefore rather improper to

²⁸⁹Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 162–169. Rómulo Carbia, himself a prominent representative of the "new school" of Argentine historians (treated below), saw in Mitre the principal initiator of the erudite, source-critical history writing in Argentina to which his own group would consider itself heir. But within the chronological structure of a narrative of historiographical progress, Mitre would be the "primitive archetype", whereas the *nueva escuela* to which Carbia belonged, represented the highest stage of development.

²⁹⁰The representatives of this Voltairian tradition of history were classified – with very little sympathy – as *guizotianos* by Carbia, who stated that the French historian François Guizot had been the principal model for the series of "philosophizing" historians ranging from Estrada via the father and son López (the culmination of this school) to Mariano A. Pelliza. *Ibid.*, 139ff.

²⁹¹Cf., Néstor Tomás Auza's article on the historical culture in *la Junta*, vol. 2, 403–428. See also Riekenberg, *Nationbuilding*, 83.

speak of *one* historiographical tradition at that stage, in particular if it is labelled “official” history writing. Against Mitre and his followers stood the rival figure of Vicente Fidel López, who, especially in the 1880s and early ‘90s, produced a most prolific historical output, including the ten-volume *Historia de la República Argentina* (1883–1893), as well as a textbook to be analysed below. His work gained widespread appreciation at the time, perhaps not least due to the author’s literary capacity, though López’s endeavours to oppose Mitre’s source-critical methodology would hardly prove efficient, at least not in the longer term.²⁹² Numerous works on provincial or local history were published in this period, to some extent compensating for the excessive focus on Buenos Aires prevalent until then by introducing perspectives from the littoral and the interior.²⁹³ The well-established tradition of studies in constitutional history at the law faculties of the universities continued to produce considerable works, some of which presented views on the nation and on the state-province relationship that apparently differed from the ones prevailing among historians.²⁹⁴ A quite different approach was presented by positivist writers, who applied concepts from sociology and psychology in their interpretations of Argentine history. In so doing, they contributed to draw new attention first, towards the colonial period and second, towards the era of the caudillos and of Rosas, though generally without deviating from the negative evaluation of those

²⁹²Vicente Fidel López insisted that the historian's presentation of the historical data in a logical and natural, convincing narrative was the essential criterion, not the ability to amass documentary evidence. The famous debate, with Mitre's *Comprobaciones* and the opponent's *Refutación*, took place in 1881–1882. See Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 150–158 and 164; Piccirilli, *Los López*, 130–139.

²⁹³For a generally comprehensive inventory, see Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 186–199. Carbia, as always insisting on a hierarchical approach to historiography, regarded these works as “minor” history writing, however useful and even necessary, and lumped them together under the heading *crónicas regionales*.

²⁹⁴José Carlos Chiaramonte and Pablo Buchbinder, “Provincias, caudillos, nación y la historiografía constitucionalista argentina, 1853-1930”, *Anuario del IEHS* 7, (1992), 93–120. The authors examined the concept of the origins of the nation. Did the nation exist before the provinces (prefigured from colonial times) and before the organization of the nation-state, allegedly the predominant view? Alternatively, was the nation a creation of the pre-existing provinces (through the pacts that eventually led to the national organization after 1852), that is, the contractualist view? According to Chiaramonte and Buchbinder, both views had their adherents among the constitutionalists: The former was represented by José Manuel Estrada and his successors, among others, and the latter in particular by Joaquín V. González and the constitutionalist historians at the University of La Plata. This position usually implied a federalist stand and a defence of the provincial autonomies and of the provincial caudillos before 1852 as not having constituted any “anti-national” tendency. One problem with this study is that it only distinguishes between the ones who claimed the “early” existence of the nation (whether in the colonial era or in 1810/1816), on the one hand, and on the other those who set a “late” date for its appearance (concurrent with the nation-state, after 1852). This categorization might veil the fundamental differences within the first-mentioned group, between cultural and organic concepts of the nation (for instance in the romanticist tradition), tracing the nation way back into colonial times, and more political concepts, attaching nationhood to citizenship and sovereignty, whereby 1810/1816 might constitute the point of departure. See also my comment to this point above in Chapter 9, in the discussion of Estrada’s concept of the nation.

periods embedded in the historiographical tradition.²⁹⁵ On the other hand, a number of works appeared which implied a substantial revision of many of the traditional points of view, in particular regarding the historical part ascribed to Spain and the presentation of the civil wars and of *rosismo*. These authors might reasonably be considered forerunners of the Argentine *revisionismo histórico*, or even as constituting the initial stage of that historiographical movement. However, it is important to bear in mind that the “mainstream” current of Argentine history writing (against which the later revisionists would rebel) was also influenced by these writings and in fact came to adopt pretty similar positions on several aspects of the issues at stake.²⁹⁶

The transition of the historical studies in Argentina into more organized forms and eventually into a specialized, academic profession would be initiated, as already indicated, in the years around the turn of the century. In general, the institutional establishment of history at the universities would take place later in Latin America than in Europe, and in several countries, this lack of a footing at the university would encourage the establishment of independent academies of history, which exercised a predominant position within the field. As Fernando J. Devoto pointed out, the situation in Argentina would be situated somewhere between these two patterns: An influential academy would coexist with important centres of historical studies at the University of Buenos Aires first, and later also at the University of La Plata.²⁹⁷ To some extent, however, these institutions would concur in producing one single

²⁹⁵There was a solid tradition of "sociological thought" in Argentina, counting among others Sarmiento and Alberdi. However, the intellectuals alluded to here, inspired by Comtian philosophy and later sociological ideas, as well as by French psychology and biological theories, differed from their predecessors in their scientific pretensions. In this category may be included Francisco Ramos Mejía, José María Ramos Mejía, José Nicolás Matienzo, Lucas Ayarragaray, Carlos Octavio Bunge, and José Ingenieros without ignoring the considerable differences between these authors. See Soler, *El positivismo argentino*, 167–197; Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 149–150 and 243–274; Terán, “Positivismismo y nación en América Latina”, in *En busca de la ideología argentina*, 13–27; Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 174–182.

²⁹⁶The main representatives of the tendency were Manuel Bilbao (on Rosas), Adolfo Saldías (on Rosas), Ernesto Quesada (on Rosas), Juan Agustín García (on the colonial period), David Peña (on Juan Facundo Quiroga) and Juan Alvarez (on the civil wars). Even if any attempt to justify or even to explain without the customary condemnation the regime that was defeated at Caseros, was bound to provoke vociferous protests, most of these historians were respected members of the "historical establishment", occupying university posts, becoming academy members (all the aforementioned, with the exception of Manuel Bilbao, who belonged to a much earlier stage, were at some date incorporated into the *Junta* described below). An outstanding representative of so-called "official" history writing, such as Rómulo Carbia, not only expressed favourable opinions on Ernesto Quesada and David Peña (and some of the others), but even declared their basic concepts to be identical with the "modern" view (that is, the one held by Carbia and his colleagues). See Riekenberg, “Die Revisionismusdebatte”; Fernando Devoto in Devoto, ed., *La historiografía*, vol. 1, 9–10; Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 202–204, 218, 280–296.

²⁹⁷Fernando J. Devoto's contribution in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 387–402.

“corporation” of historians, as there was overlapping and numerous personal interconnections between them (several historians functioned concurrently at all the major centres).

Once again, an ageing Bartolomé Mitre was the prime mover, being the organizer and first chairman of the *Junta de historia y numismática americana*, established in 1893. The *numismáticos* from the outset constituted a milieu of singular importance, and by admitting new members among the most promising of the subsequent generations of historians, the *Junta* managed to uphold its strong position within Argentine history writing until it was transformed, under the leadership of Ricardo Levene, into the *Academia Nacional de la Historia* in 1938.²⁹⁸ In the centenary celebrations of the 1810 revolution and the 1816 declaration of independence, this institution, and the historians attached to it, performed a leading part, in close collaboration with the authorities of the Republic. From this time on, then, one might speak with some accuracy of a certain “official history-making” (while insisting at the same time on the heterogeneity of its expressions), and all the more so, since these celebratory acts tended to consecrate already well-established topoi in the national tradition.

These commemorations, occasioning a prolific publication of works on Argentine history, might be said to mark the heyday of the historically oriented, nationalist surge in considerable sections of the Argentine public.²⁹⁹

At the university, the first faculty of arts was created in Buenos Aires in 1896. In 1905, the history section was established as a separate department. A complete and very extensive programme of history studies now existed, though, as Devoto reminds us, the lecturers appointed would still to a large extent be “gentlemen-professors” rather than specialized historians. Gradually the curriculum was reoriented towards training the students

²⁹⁸The history of the *Junta* was treated thoroughly and with a multiplicity of approaches, relating it to practically all aspects of the historiographical development in Argentina, in *La Junta*.

²⁹⁹Cf. Rómulo Carbia's harsh retrospective comment on the *producción del centenario*: “Estamos ya a casi tres décadas de aquellos días en que casi no hubo argentino que, bajo la égida de una *Comisión del Centenario*, pudiente y dadivosa, no se embarcara en la empresa de editar un libro; y todavía sentimos los efectos de semejante flagelo intelectual.” Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 242. Less maliciously viewed, apart from historical works in a narrow sense, the 1910 centenary occasioned publications on historical topics in a variety of genres, including literary works such as Rubén Darío's poem *Canto a la Argentina*, and historical essays such as Joaquín V. González's *El juicio del siglo*. On the centenary celebrations from various perspectives: Devoto, *El país del primer centenario*. Case studies regarding specific texts and other cultural expressions of the centenary, viewed from the optics of discourse analysis, were found in several articles in an anthology published on the occasion of the bicentenary: Graciana Vázquez Villanueva, ed., *Memorias del Bicentenario: discursos e ideologías*, Buenos Aires: Editorial de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras – Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2010, 41–156 for the section on the centenary). On the centenary in relation with urban development and social conflicts in Buenos Aires: Lidia González, Sandra Condoleo and Marcos Zangrandi: “Buenos Aires festeja el Centenario: Periferias, conflictos y esplendores de una ciudad en construcción”, in Margarita Gutman and Rita Molinos, eds., *Construir bicentenarios latinoamericanos en la era de la globalización*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Infinito, 2012, 349–366.

to become historians (as well as history teachers), with the elaboration of monographic treatises being included among their tasks. Researchers from the Sección de Historia, which would later (1921) become the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, also undertook to compile and publish essential source material. At the new and less traditional University of La Plata, development would take another course, and, in fact, the most intense part of it with regard to history began somewhat later, in the early 1920s. Meanwhile, history would occupy a minor position within the Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales (where an arts section was created in 1909), and later (from 1915) at the Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación, consolidating the priority given to the training of teachers rather than researchers at La Plata at the time.³⁰⁰

Notwithstanding the incipient institutional detachment of history at the university, the law faculties would remain for some time at least equally important as centres of historical studies, and the majority of historians would still have a juridical degree instead of a specialized historical training as their point of departure. This was true of almost all the members of the new generation of historians commonly known as the “new school”, the *Nueva Escuela Histórica Argentina*, who, roughly speaking, would have their breakthrough in the second decade of our century, and who would rise to a near hegemonic position at the centres of academic history in the 1920s. This group counted among its most prominent members Ricardo Levene, Emilio Ravignani, Diego Luis Molinari, and Rómulo D. Carbia. The *Nueva Escuela* is often referred to as the first generation of *professional* historians in Argentina. This is true in the sense that they were generally full-time historians holding history posts (and not as in the nineteenth century leading politicians, generals, or whatever). Furthermore, they (or the most distinguished among them) greatly exceeded their predecessors both in historical erudition and in the skills evidenced in the empirical, source-critical groundwork. On the other hand, they had not themselves received a specialized training as historians³⁰¹ yet they presided over the institutionalization of history from which a professionalized discipline would spring, or to phrase it more simply: Thanks to their efforts, their disciples and successors could claim to be professional historians in the fuller sense of the term. According to Fernando J. Devoto: “... más que la primera generación de

³⁰⁰Devoto in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 387–402; and in Devoto, ed., *La historiografía*, vol. 1. See also Halperín, *Historia de la Universidad*, 101–102.

³⁰¹According to Fernando Devoto, Rómulo Carbia, who had a doctor's degree in history from the university of Seville, was the exception. Devoto, ed., *La historiografía*, vol.1, 13.

profesionales, fue la que creó la historiografía profesional en la Argentina, en cuyos confortables espacios se instaló”.³⁰²

The “new school” label does not allow us to infer that the rupture with the historiographical past was the most salient feature of the new generation of historians, nor that they all subscribed to the same methodological tenets (though at least at the outset they generally declared themselves adherents to source-criticism as codified by Ernst Bernheim)³⁰³ or shared in the same thematic predilections. As to the first point, a considerable degree of continuity with the work of Mitre’s generation is undisputable. To suggest a few links: First, attention was to a considerable extent devoted to the same issues regarding the first decades of independence. Second, both groups shared the empiricist devotion to the scrutiny of documental primary sources and the aspirations to objectivity on that basis. Third, they were both inclined to condensate and present the historical materials in the form of grand, lineal narratives imbued with the concept of national progress and seen as conveying the essentials of a national character. Although the new historians were not exactly identified with the political power in the way Mitre (in particular) had been, they were nevertheless characterized not only by a basically liberal view, but also by a certain amount of political conformity, or flexibility, which enabled them to maintain excellent relations with the conservative authorities as well as with the radical governments after 1916. (True, there were important political differences within the group that in time would also prove relevant to their academic trajectories in the 1920s and above all in the ‘30s.) On the other hand, they differed from earlier generations of historians in that they showed a much more detached view of the conflicts of the nineteenth century. This was possible not only because of the greater distance in time and because they had not themselves participated in any of the events to be studied, but also because none of the new leading historians came from the traditional families that had ruled the country for generations as well as constituting “intellectual dynasties” (like the López family).³⁰⁴ In fact, most of them had surnames revealing immigrant antecedents of a rather recent date.³⁰⁵

Though the *Nueva Escuela* continued to elaborate the themes already explored by their predecessors, the scope of historical research was also considerably widened. In particular, a

³⁰²Ibid. On the *Nueva Escuela Histórica*, see also the article by Nora Pagano and Miguel Angel Galante in the same vol., 45–78; Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 178–180.

³⁰³Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 178.

³⁰⁴Cf. Piccirilli, *Los López*.

³⁰⁵Fernando J. Devoto in Devoto, ed., *La historiografía*, vol.1, 12.

new interest in and appreciation of the colonial period now emerged, which ideologically might be related to the Hispanist revival, but whose achievements anyway were based on laborious archival studies. Investigations in the history of the various provinces received a new impetus and would, at least in the longer term, lead to modified and more complex conceptions of the national history. Various fields of cultural and institutional history were approached, transgressing the traditional domains of political and constitutional history: folklore, literature, the press, the church, eventually even historiography, to mention some disparate areas. A certain influence from sociology was traceable (in Levene, for instance), though the historical approaches of positivist sociologists and psychologists around the turn of the century were not developed further by the “new school” historians, who, broadly speaking, stuck to the philological paradigms of the historiographical tradition rather than follow the course of the new social sciences.³⁰⁶

The differences within the *Nueva Escuela* would become more visible in the following decades – historiographical differences as well as antagonisms due to institutional or personal competition. The classic case would be the rivalries between the *Junta* and the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, and between their leading personalities: Levene and Ravnani, respectively.³⁰⁷ For the time being however, the emergence of a new, energetic, self-conscious, and very productive group of young historians is the relevant feature. Their activities would be immediately perceptible in the realm of school history too.

Finally, two dimensions of the development of history writing should be mentioned, though they cannot be elaborated here. First, the activity carried out by the historians was stimulated and conditioned by the incipient organization of basic institutions such as the historical archives, general and specialized libraries, museums, and so on, all of which required and got the attention of the political authorities, though not necessarily to the degree that impatient observers might have wanted. Second, academic history was but one of the aspects of the historical culture displayed in Argentina. The recurrence of topics from the national past in for example, cultural reviews, popular magazines, newspapers, literature, theatre, film (in time), and visual arts, evidenced a considerable interest in Argentine

³⁰⁶Cf. Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 149–150, where all the early representatives of “sociological history” (Sarmiento, the brothers Ramos Mejía, Ayarragaray, Ingenieros) were flatly dismissed from the realm of “real” history writing. The view was further developed in the chapter dedicated to the *ensayistas*, in the sections dealing with the sociologists (247–263) and the “scientifists” (264–274).

³⁰⁷Pagano/Galante in Devoto, ed., *La historiografía*, vol.1, 45–78.

history.³⁰⁸ In spite of, or because of, the rapid changes in Argentine society, and the increasingly mixed origins of its members, there seems to have existed a rather widespread belief that a sense of continuity and (old or new) common identity could be found, or at least attempted, by relating to the country's past.

11.5 Concluding remarks

The secondary schools for which the texts that will be analysed in the following chapters were written basically conserved their elitist character throughout the period considered here, educating only an exclusive – if admittedly increasing – minority of Argentina's youth. This is particularly true of the *colegios nacionales*, whereas the colleges of education recruited students from broader social strata. Taken together, the secondary school nevertheless received the privileged attention of the authorities, and the sector consumed a quite disproportionate share of the educational budget. Its two main branches, each in its own manner, strongly influenced the shaping of the country: One, forming its future leaders, the other, preparing the prime educators of future generations.

Within the educational apparatus, and in particular in the secondary colleges, the subject of history achieved a prominent position in the 1880s – a position that would persist, and even be extended to include the other modes of education as well. At the same time, the priorities within the subject shifted in order to increase the attention dedicated to Argentine history (and, though to a lesser degree, American history) and to diminish the relative space occupied by the previously privileged European history. This process was directed by the ministerial authorities, but before the turn of the century without the questions related to the teaching of history being central to the debates regarding didactics and educational policies. In the first two decades of the present century, however, history as a subject would increasingly become the object of the authorities' attention, to which was added the preoccupations expressed by sections of the public. In other words, the formal position held by the subject in the curricula was now followed by discussions of the didactics of history, focusing on the major “what-how-and-why”-questions. There was a general tendency to ascribe comprehensive educative functions to the subject: moral, civic, and patriotic just as

³⁰⁸Nestor Tomás Auza's article in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 403–428; in the same volume, the contributions by Pedro Luis Barcia (on history and literature), 273–286; Ramón Gutiérrez, Rodrigo Gutiérrez Viñuales and Elisa Radovanovic (on history and the visual arts), 429–450; María Sáenz Quesada (on the historical novel), 451–462; Claudio España (on history in the cinema), 463–482.

much as the merely instructive. Above all, the nationalist orientation was pronounced: the desire not only to strengthen the contents of Argentine history, but also thereby to make the teaching of history serve the social and national integration of a heterogeneous population.

Mass immigration, social conflicts with a politically threatening potential, and the rapid transformation of Argentine society – these factors constitute the general context within which the historically oriented, nationalist surge must obviously be interpreted. However, the particular course taken by the development of a national historical consciousness and an Argentine historical culture (both not in one, but in a plurality of shapes) also rested on presuppositions that were more autonomous. For the understanding of Argentine history as it was transmitted in the classroom ambience, which is our specific concern here, there were three crucial and interdependent conditions. These were the institutional premises set by the government and its agencies, the evolution of historical studies and history writing in a broad sense, and finally the pre-existence of didactic traditions within the field of Argentine history, including a certain textbook tradition – admittedly feeble, but not totally insignificant. The last-mentioned element was treated in the previous chapters, while the present has been dedicated to the other two. Relating in different ways to all these factors, then, new texts for the secondary school were produced moulding new versions of the national synthesis. It is time to go at them.

12. Domínguez replaced: Fregeiro's textbooks

Textbooks by six authors will be studied in separate chapters on the following pages. These texts were all significant contributions to the development of the history textbook genre in Argentina, each in its own way. There were others, but none of them seems to have been widely used.³⁰⁹

In the late 1870s an anonymously published *Compendio de la Historia Argentina* appeared, which undoubtedly responded to the needs of the day as they were felt in the colleges.³¹⁰ Domínguez's textbook had not been re-edited since 1870 (and even then only the

³⁰⁹In particular from around the turn of the century onwards, there was a noticeable growth in the publication of new textbooks rivalling in an expanding market. Contemporary historiographer Rómulo D. Carbia contemptuously dismissed most of them as serving "no other purpose than exposing history according to the programmes of the subject-matter" ("no tuvo otro objetivo que exponer la historia de acuerdo con los programas de la asignatura"), (the author's italics). Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 314–315. For my part, I have consulted works by three authors that were eventually excluded for the purpose of this study: Juan G. Beltrán, *Compendio de Historia Argentina*, "New ed." (1st ed. unknown), Buenos Aires: Angel Estrada y Cía. – Editores, 1908, and *Compendio de Historia Argentina*. 21st ed. (1st ed. unknown), Buenos Aires: Angel Estrada y Cía. – Editores, undated; Martín García Mérou, *Historia de la República Argentina*, 2 vols., Buenos Aires: Angel Estrada y Cía. – Editores, 1899; Mariano de Vedia y Mitre, *Compendio de Historia Argentina 1810–1910*, 2nd ed. (1st ed. 1911), Buenos Aires: Librería é Imprenta Europea de M. A. Rosas, Casa Editora, 1916. All of them seemed to add less than the ones chosen for analysis, in terms of representing new contributions to the development of the history textbook genre at this stage. Beltrán's *Compendio* admittedly appeared in many reeditions (or perhaps in reality reimpressions; at least the two cited seemed more or less identical), but provided only an event-oriented summary condensing, it seemed, the contents of earlier textbooks. Diplomat and literary writer García Merou, on the contrary, produced a detailed narrative through an extensive two-volume manual; however, it too appeared to a considerable extent as a patchwork of paraphrases from earlier texts, with a historiographical profile difficult to define; and its usage appeared not to have lasted for long. If anything, this manual might serve as evidence of the continued influence of the *Lecciones* published by Estrada and Lucio V. López, respectively, reaching beyond their actual use as textbooks; cf. analyses above. The text by de Vedia y Mitre, a lawyer and intellectual of the traditional *porteño* élite, appeared almost simultaneously with the last manual to be studied below, Ricardo Levene's; however, in spite of certain attractive elements, such as a richer profuseness in illustrations, it did not seem able to compete. The author continued to defend historiographical positions represented in this dissertation by other, earlier textbook writers, positions that differed sharply from Levene's (cf. Chapter 17 below); in fact, they were closer to Vicente F. López (see below, Chapter 14), with whom de Vedia y Mitre shared the strong pro-unitario and antirrosista tendencies, for example. This shows how Levene's version of Argentine history, even if presented here as the most influential textbook model created at this stage, still remained but one among others.

I have also found references to the following textbooks, without being able to trace any actual copy of the texts: Juan García Aldeguer, *Historia argentina* (Madrid: 1886, 2 vols.); Pedro S. Alcacer, *Compendio de Historia Argentina* (Rosario: 1888, 2 vols.); Pedro Isbert: *Apuntes de historia argentina* (Buenos Aires: 1894); Adolfo P. Carranza: *Resumen de la historia argentina* (Buenos Aires: 1894, 2 vols.); Alberto Estrada: *Compendio de historia argentina* (Buenos Aires: 1905); Carlos Octavio Bunge: *Historia Argentina*. In none of these cases (all mentioned in Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 310–316) have I found a reference to more than one edition. Some other titles occasionally appear in the secondary bibliography, but as far as I have been able to ascertain, in reality they refer to texts for the primary level (and are accordingly omitted here). For the earliest period, this circumstance is admittedly not always easy to establish.

³¹⁰[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877. Vicente Osvaldo Cutolo dated the first edition to 1876, but I have not found any edition prior to the one of 1877, nor any indications that this was the second edition. Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 3. On this point Cutolo probably followed Carbia's dating (*Historia crítica*, 134–135 and 307), and so did Jorge María Ramallo (in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 379), as well as Jorge Saab, Carlos A. Suárez, José

part covering the colonial era), and no other text existed that could really supplant it.³¹¹ The compendium was therefore readily adopted, its success being reconfirmed through a total of ten editions until 1919.³¹² The author was a young teacher named Clemente Leoncio Fregeiro. In the following decade, when he had already earned himself a certain name as an educationist and a historian, he published a more extensive, two-volume textbook (this time revealing the authorial identity): *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*,³¹³ based on the classes he gave at the Colegio Nacional Buenos Aires, where he had been appointed in 1884. This manual would also have ten editions.³¹⁴ Another didactic work by Fregeiro, though not a textbook, was an anthology of miniature biographies of famous Argentine men.³¹⁵

Born in the republic of Uruguay, Clemente Fregeiro (1853–1923) moved with his family to Buenos Aires for political reasons in 1865. While his entire career would unfold in

Maristany and Laura Sánchez (in “De Fregeiro a Levene: Apuntes para una historia de los manuales de historia”, in Rodríguez and Dobaño Fernández, ed., *Los libros de texto*, 57). More important, however – and to increase the bibliographic confusion – we may register that Carbia in another connection (*Historia crítica*, 312) mentioned the anonymously published *Compendio* of 1877 without attributing the authorship to Fregeiro (or to anyone else). It might seem, then, as if two different *Compendios* by different authors were published anonymously in 1876 and 1877, respectively. In that case, I would have misplaced one of the texts to be analysed in what follows. However, the assumption that the 1877 text was written by Fregeiro seems to be an established tradition. As such, it was, by way of example, registered in the Biblioteca Nacional, and one of the copies conserved there even carried a handwritten dedication signed C. L. Fregeiro. The last-mentioned alternative, for which I have settled, is further strengthened when this text is collated with the *Lecciones* published later by Fregeiro. The textual concurrences are so numerous that there can be no doubt that the *Lecciones* was indeed based on the 1877 *Compendio*. There remains one curious problem, however: The *Compendio* is divided into four “books”. At the end of the penultimate chapter of book three (203), the author takes his leave, declaring the work to be concluded! This is obviously an instance of slapdash editing work. In addition, it might be possible that the publishers had someone else write the last part of the book. This theory is strengthened when we observe that the textual similarities between the *Compendio* and the *Lecciones* suddenly disappear in the final book four, dealing with the post-1830 events. My guess is that this last part of the *Compendio* was in fact not written by Fregeiro.

³¹¹In 1873, Antonio Zinny had published a somewhat “updated” version of Gregorio Funes’s old treatise, under the title: *Historia de las Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata (1816 a 1818) por el Deán Funes, continuada hasta el fusilamiento del gobernador Dorrego en 1828 por A. Zinny* (Buenos Aires). Without being a real textbook in Argentine history, this book nevertheless appears to have been used to some extent in the schools in default of an adequate text. Cf. Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 311–312.

³¹²It should be added here that the publishers originally pronounced the text to be destined for the primary level ([Fregeiro], *Compendio*, v). But there is too much about the book – the style, the lexicon, the degree of erudition in the presentation – that would make it seem quite inadequate for primary school children, even in the higher classes (and even if we admit that textbooks that *were* used in the elementary school might in fact also have been badly adapted to the age of the pupils). Rómulo Carbia made the same observation, and concluded, reasonably, I think, that the *Compendio* should be classified as a textbook for the secondary school: “... su destino propio era el aula secundaria. Y así ocurrió en efecto”. Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 312.

³¹³Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1913. As stated by the author, the 1892 edition used here was but an unrevised reimpression of the text of the first edition (1886 for both parts). Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 5.

³¹⁴The biographic and bibliographic information on Fregeiro is mainly taken from Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 3; Carbia, *Historia crítica*; *La Junta*.

³¹⁵C. L. Fregeiro, *Vidas de argentinos ilustres*, 3rd ed. (Buenos Aires: Pedro Igón y Cía., Editores, 1894). Some of the biographies included were based, to a considerable extent, on materials from the mentioned textbooks.

Argentina, the historian Fregeiro would engage with topics from the history of both countries – from the European discovery of the Río de la Plata to the war with Brazil in the 1820s and other events of the independent period. Of particular interest was his endeavour to reconstruct a picture of the Uruguayan caudillo, José Gervasio Artigas that differed from the deprecatory tradition prevalent in Argentina (though the greater part of this work remained unpublished until his death). He held various teaching posts at secondary as well as university establishments. He was, for instance, among the first staff members of the Sección de Historia organized in the faculty of arts at the University of Buenos Aires in 1905, and also served in high administrative positions within the education system (as inspector and for many years as the principal of a superior college of education). Fregeiro was an active and respected member of the Junta de Historia y Numismática Americana. As a historian, he was generally recognized as an unusually thorough and erudite scholar, if perhaps not so much as an innovator of the discipline.³¹⁶

Both texts, the *Compendio* and the *Lecciones*, were generally well received by Fregeiro's contemporaries, though the publication of the latter book ignited a prolonged dispute with Vicente Fidel López.³¹⁷ Bartolomé Mitre, historiographically representing the old guard, reviewed both parts of the *Lecciones* benevolently, praise which Fregeiro (or the publishers) could not refrain from reproducing on the opening pages of subsequent editions.³¹⁸ Towards the end of the period concerned, Joaquín V. González, in an introductory essay to the first edition of Ricardo Levene's even more successful manual, gave prominence to Fregeiro's "good book" as one of no more than three precursors worthy of particular

³¹⁶Rómulo D. Carbia regarded him as completing the "first stage" of the development of the "erudite school" within Argentine history writing (as opposed to "philosophizing" history-writers in a line drawn from José Manuel Estrada to Vicente Fidel López). In the view of Carbia, Fregeiro continued and surpassed Luis L. Domínguez's source-critical approach. Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 134–135. Ricardo Levene described Fregeiro as an "espíritu crítico e historiador erudito" (cited by Noemí Girbal de Blacha in *La Junta*, vol. 1, 113). According to Vicente Osvaldo Cutolo, Fregeiro possessed the second largest historical library in South America in his time (next to Mitre's). Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 3.

³¹⁷Cf. Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 3. The debate took place between 1888 and 1890, Fregeiro publishing his contributions in the newspaper *La Patria*, López in *El Nacional*. See also Jorge Saab, Carlos A. Suárez, José Maristany and Laura Sánchez: "De Fregeiro a Levene: Apuntes para una historia de los manuales de historia", in Rodríguez and Dobaño Fernández, ed., *Los libros de texto*, 65–66.

³¹⁸Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 5–7 (regarding the first volume: "Esta, como todas las obras históricas del Sr. Fregeiro, lleva el sello de la investigación concienzuda de la verdad buscada en los documentos auténticos, con buena crítica, método apropiado y claridad de exposición y de estilo."); Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 5–6 (regarding the second volume). It might be added, however, that the greater part of Mitre's review, proudly cited by Fregeiro, reveals itself, to a considerable extent, more as an echo of Fregeiro's own preface than as a fresh comment on the work by the prestigious senior historian.

mention (along with Luis L. Domínguez and Vicente Fidel López). He emphasized, as did most commentators, the authentic mark of the investigator perceptible in the text.³¹⁹

Both the *Compendio* and the *Lecciones* followed the model established from the very beginning in Argentine history textbooks in that they gave the early independent period, most particularly the second decade of the nineteenth century, a privileged position. As with Domínguez and Estrada, revolution and independence struggle remained the central themes in Fregeiro's story about the Argentine nation. At the same time, a superficial quantitative analysis of his texts reveals two reviving tendencies: First, there was an increased interest in colonial history, and within this field, in the *early* period, avoiding the concentration on the last stage – the history of the Viceroyalty of La Plata – that was found in the manuals of the 1860s. (On this point Fregeiro coincided with Lucio Vicente López's manual of 1878, analysed above, which was published shortly after the *Compendio*.) Secondly, within the contemporary period, the account was carried almost up to the present (the moment of its publication), in an obvious ambition to be up to date that was never nearly as manifest in previous textbooks. This feature is significant even if, admittedly, the presentation gets progressively sketchier for the most recent times. The concrete, periodical distribution of the materials is as follows:

The *Compendio* comprises 234 text pages, of which roughly half (122 pages or 52,1%) is dedicated to the discoveries, the conquest, and the colonial era, while the other half (112 pages or 47,9%) covers the period from 1810 to 1875. The discoveries and conquests (1492 to 1584) take up 46 pages (19,7% of the total), whereas the history of the established colonies (1584 to 1810) occupies more space: 74 pages (31,6%). It is noteworthy, however, that within this last section, the Viceroyalty (1776–1810) takes no more than 28 pages. This distribution is a strong indicator that the presentation of the Hispanic period was no longer construed entirely from the perspective of the independence revolution. As for the history of the postcolonial era, the element of continuity is far more salient. The revolutionary decade from 1810 to 1820 expands over 81 pages (34,6% of the total, or 72,3% of the space dedicated to the contemporary period!), as compared with the mere 7 pages assigned to the following

³¹⁹Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, vii (González's introduction dated 1912, year of the 1st ed.): "De este nuevo período nació el buen libro del señor Clemente L. Fregeiro, quien, ocupado de estudios directos sobre algunos puntos especiales ... pudo hacer sentir en su obra escolar la impresión inconfundible de la investigación directa sobre el material histórico ...". As for the earlier *Compendio*, Vicente Osvaldo Cutolo claimed: "En su época fue uno de los mejores textos que se hayan escrito sobre la materia, siendo utilizado con provecho por varias generaciones de estudiantes." Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 3.

decade, 13 pages to the years associated with Rosas (1829–1852), and finally 11 pages to the most recent events (1852–1875).

The two volumes (393 text pages) of the *Lecciones* broadly follow the same distribution of materials. The fact that the histories of the colonial and the independent periods were now laid out separately in different books (this would henceforth be the general rule) carries, however, a certain significance. This may seem a rather superficial and formal matter, caused by curricular rather than historiographical circumstances: The two periods were taught in different year courses. Nevertheless, it might be said that the division helped constitute the colonial period as an autonomous object of study, and not just a preparatory stage that had to be done away with in order to get to the real thing: *Mayo* and its sequels.³²⁰ The two parts are relatively equal in size: 204 and 189 pages, respectively. The divide is the British invasions of 1806–7, instead of the more usual events of May 1810. This difference does not seem too important: All authors considered the invasions important in explaining the origins of the revolution, and, conversely, Fregeiro paid just as much attention to 1810 as others did. If we, in order to facilitate comparison, adjust the distribution, the pre–1810 period takes 219 pages (55,7%), and the period from 1810 to 1885, 174 pages (44,3%). Compared with the *Compendio*, the *Lecciones* presents a further shift towards the early period of conquest and colonization (1492 to 1580): 104 pages (26,5% of both volumes), almost the same as the 107 pages (27,2%) devoted to the 1580–1810 time-span. The event-oriented history of the Viceroyalty is presented on 38 pages (9,7% of the total compared with 12,0% in the *Compendio*), leaving more space for the institutional aspects of colonial history. Another significant novelty is an introductory chapter dedicated to the historical discipline (history as a “science” and an “art”),³²¹ reflecting perhaps the growing professional self-consciousness of Argentine historians (by one of them). Curricular explanations of the issue do not, I think, invalidate the observation, as the developments of the school subject – manifest in the syllabuses, among other things – and of the discipline of Argentine history writing were closely related phenomena in this period, as shown in the previous chapter. An analysis of the part covering the contemporary period produces a pattern similar to the one found in the *Compendio*, though with a slight relative increase in contents dealing with the years after

³²⁰The two-volume book version of José Manuel Estrada's lectures from 1868, analysed above in Chapter 2, followed the same division. Estrada, *Lecciones*, 1925. But this was not a textbook in a strict sense. The didactic expression of Estrada's Argentine history was the continuous series of lectures themselves, in which the colonial era – approached with disgust – served an auxiliary purpose, even if it took up much space and time.

³²¹Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 15–22.

1820. The insuperable 1810–1820 decade still covers 104 pages (26,5% of the total, 59,8% of the part devoted to the period from 1810 to 1895); the section dedicated to the 1820s has expanded to 35 pages (8,9% of the total); the *rosismo* part shows a relative decline (14 pages, 3,6%); and the post-1852 period increases somewhat to 21 pages (5,3%), and is updated to the time of the first edition in 1886, but not to the date of the 1892 editions used here. So far, it is difficult to draw conclusions from these data alone. The more recent history is still confined to a rather marginal position, and only a qualitative analysis may reveal if there has been any substantial changes (for instance, possibly, with regard to the view of the political conflicts of the 1820s).³²²

The presentation of the discoveries, conquest, and colonial era, not surprisingly, was still written from the European perspective, as was the case in earlier texts. However, unlike the manuals of the 1860s, we now find an overall positive evaluation of the entire period. In this respect, Fregeiro went further than the contemporary text by Lucio V. López, who opposed the destructive phase of conquest to the constructive period of colonization. In Fregeiro's books, there was no such opposition. The predecessors' condemnations of the Spanish colonial policies in general and the conquerors' conduct in particular had here given way to an explicitly Hispanicist ideology, by which the entire colonial enterprise was rehabilitated.³²³ The basic argument was that, regardless of its pros and cons, the Spanish work in the Americas constituted the de facto foundation of "our actual civilization"³²⁴ and it would therefore, be senseless to renounce and decry it. Furthermore, this civilization was regarded as superior to the more or less "barbarian" pre-colonial cultures, so that, at least in the long run, the spread of the former to the detriment of the latter must be considered an indisputable, progressive historical gain.

³²²The relative distribution of contents within the contemporary period did not alter much with later editions. In the tenth edition, the second part of the *Lecciones* is expanded to 242 text pages. Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1913. (The new materials include a series of portraits of leading generals and politicians.) The increase is distributed over all the sub-periods, broadly maintaining the relative proportion of each. Considering only the post-1810 period, a comparison with Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, shows only the following slight changes (which, however, continue the slow move in the same direction as indicated above): The relative space allotted to the decade beginning with the 1810 revolution is reduced by 4,6% to 55,2%; the subsequent sections all increase their relative shares with an added 1,6% to the 1820s; 1,0% to the years under Rosas; and 1,6% to the chapters dealing with the post-1852 period. This last part continues until approximately 1910, but only a little more than three pages deal with the three decades after 1880, and the entire 1852–1910 sub-period (six tenths of the independent period) still covers no more than 13,6% of the pages dedicated to the century post-1810 (compared to the 85,9% devoted to the stretch between 1810 and 1852).

³²³The *conquistadores* were "hombres dotados de cualidades verdaderamente extraordinarias", and the conquest itself was "un hecho que hace honor al pueblo español por la fortaleza de alma y por el valor heroico desplegado". Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 129.

³²⁴*Ibid.*, 196.

This attitude is, naturally enough, most easily detectable in the passages that deal with the relations between the Spanish and the indigenous peoples. Certainly, the author did not deny that injustices and abuses were committed against the Native Americans – there were “excesos y crueldades sin número y sin medida”³²⁵ – but they were not seen as essential to the global understanding of the colonization. What they revealed were merely the human defects and mistakes of certain individual Spaniards. This points to a general characteristic in Fregeiro’s historical explanations: The disposition to focus primarily on the personality of individual participants. The “semi-private” character of the Spanish conquest seems to fit particularly well with this tendency.³²⁶

Fregeiro’s biased position was manifest in the numerous references to violent conflicts between the conquerors and the conquered: Riotous Indians invariably caused trouble, whereupon vigorous and ruthless Spaniards luckily managed to restore order and tranquillity.³²⁷ On the Charrúas, in what is actually the territory of Uruguay, Fregeiro presented a peculiar, historical-moral “equation”: The killing of the discoverer Solís and some of his crew in 1516 was “balanced” against the fact that the Charrúas themselves were exterminated more than 300 years later, “in an identical tramp”.³²⁸

The pro-conquest tendency seems even in some sense to have been reinforced between 1877 and 1886. At least this is apparently the conclusion to be drawn from the shifts in the view of the Jesuitical Guarani missions and their conflicts with the Creole colonists of Paraguay.³²⁹ In general, Fregeiro’s judgement of the missions was moderately critical, focusing, as Estrada had done, on their “communism” and on the excessive paternalism that reduced the Guaranis to an eternal state of minority. Fregeiro, unlike Estrada, even assumed that the Guaranis would have fared better in the “grand social community” of the regular colony.³³⁰ The position of the Amerindians within this colonial society was not an issue

³²⁵Ibid., 130.

³²⁶Ibid., 129–130.

³²⁷Ibid., 86 (when the Guaranis rebelled in 1539, Irala “logró sofocar el movimiento y restablecer la paz y la tranquilidad”); 97 (on the new Guarani uprising in 1545, which “pudo ser contenido, después de un horroroso combate en el que perecieron más de 2000 indios, gracias al valor y buen tino de Irala”); 123–124. Similarly, in [Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 19: “En 1539 tuvo lugar un alzamiento general de los salvajes que fué sofocado felizmente, restableciéndose la tranquilidad de la colonia”; 25; 34–35; 45–47; 75–77.

³²⁸Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 72–73 (“en una celada idéntica”). However, when dealing with Solís, Fregeiro also showed his source-critical capacity (in an area where he himself had carried out primary research): Fregeiro called into question the chronicler Herrera’s account that the unfortunate Solís and his men had been eaten by the natives. Ibid., 53; [Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 8.

³²⁹[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 69–72 and 82–89; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 145–152 and 169–177.

³³⁰Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 151.

discussed further in Fregeiro's texts, apart from a statement that the situation of the Indians under the *encomienda* system (mentioned as if it continued to exist unaltered throughout the period) was fairly good in this region of Spanish America.³³¹ In his efforts to refute the "black legend", Fregeiro often came close to replacing it with a "white legend". However, when the *Compendio* treated the violent confrontations, which occurred between the Creole community in Paraguay and the missions during the rebellion of the *comuneros* of Asunción, the sympathy was not with the Creole rebels, but rather with the governor of Buenos Aires, Zabala, who crushed the revolt, and rescued the missions. The presentation in the *Lecciones* followed the earlier text closely, but the alterations introduced completely reversed the sympathies: Zabala's intervention was now severely criticized. The most interesting thing here is that Fregeiro used the occasion to insert a general praise of the "manly spirit of the secular colonization", as opposed to the "sterile work of the spiritual conquest".³³²

La conquista realizada por los soldados, la única fructífera, á pesar de los grandes abusos que los conquistadores cometieron, fué abatida en el Paraguay por la mano de un soldado armada por los miembros de la Compañía de Jesús. ... Zabala se mostraba de este modo, más celoso de los intereses de los jesuitas, que de la prosperidad del Rey; más interesado en la obra estéril de la conquista espiritual, que en la labor fecunda, por sus resultados presentes y futuros, de los Irala, Garay y y [sic] Antequera, representantes genuinos de la civilización moderna.

The strong language employed is all the more conspicuous, as the prose in Fregeiro's textbooks is usually rather factual and sober. It seems reasonable at this point to refer to contemporary developments in Argentina. First, the *Lecciones* appeared in a decade when church-state relations were a heated political issue. With this background, it is significant that our historian presented an account that could certainly not be accused of harbouring clerical sympathies. Secondly, and more importantly, between the publication of the two textbooks, "white" Argentina had carried out the most thorough and devastating military campaign of the nineteenth century against the Amerindians, the so-called *Conquista del desierto*. This campaign was triumphantly concluded by general Roca (president of the Republic when Fregeiro wrote his text). I do not claim that the changes in Fregeiro's texts were *caused* by these events. I have no access to the author's motives for bolstering the idea of military conquest more emphatically than he had done before. However, the conception of the Indians in the Argentine society of the time was obviously strongly influenced by the persistence of the military conflict, of the struggle over the land, which had been intensified in this period.

³³¹Ibid., 170–171.

³³²Ibid., 175–177 (177 for "el espíritu varonil de la colonización laica").

Our reading of Fregeiro's *Lecciones* shows how well Argentine history writing could fit in with the prevailing opinion on this point.

Another instance is found in the description of the Tupac Amaru uprising (1780).³³³ Both the *Compendio* and the *Lecciones* explained, and to some extent justified, the rebellion by referring to the bad treatment and harsh exploitation of the indigenous manpower by their Spanish masters. Both texts also underlined the equally ferocious nature of the rebellion and of the Spanish repression. But whereas the *Compendio* had contented itself with stating that the Indian defeat was inevitable given the enemy's superiority in arms and "the force of a superior civilization", the *Lecciones* more explicitly praised the outcome as having impeded "the triumph of barbarism", rescuing "our" Spanish civilization.³³⁴ The Hispanicist ideology was manifest in an increasingly combatant and outspoken mode.

The exclusively European perspective was interrupted by a separate chapter dedicated to a description of the native cultures that existed at the time of the conquest.³³⁵ This novel feature would thereafter become commonplace in textbooks on the colonial period. However, this potentially more inclusive perspective was not integrated into the event-oriented narrative that followed. It seems principally, to reflect a curiosity inspired by an incipient ethnography, which was detached from the historical analysis proper. No attempt was made – either here or in other parts of the book – to discuss the consequences of the Spanish conquest for the various indigenous cultures. The chapter itself consists of a classification of the indigenous peoples according to the stereotypical, dichotomous scale ranging from "barbarians" (nomadic and without agriculture) to "admirable civilizations" (the Incas), with the "relative civilization" of the Guaranis in between.

It should be added, however, that Fregeiro was no spokesman for the kind of racism founded in biological theories. The early racial mixture between Spanish men and Guaraní women, for instance, was by no means negatively evaluated.³³⁶ His prejudices about superiority were strictly cultural. In the period concerned, this was no trivial distinction.

The presentation of the colonial period was still rather narrowly restricted to the political (including the military) and the administrative aspects of history. Attention was divided between the narration of territorial conquest, conflicts with the Indians and the

³³³[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 100–104; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 194–196.

³³⁴Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 196: "Como fácilmente se comprende, el triunfo de los indios habría sido el triunfo de la barbarie. Al sucumbir ésta, se salvó nuestra actual civilización, que es española, y no india, por su origen."

³³⁵Ibid., 71–79.

³³⁶Ibid., 74, 87 and 210.

Portuguese, as well as civil strife among the Spanish, on one hand, and the description of the main institutions of colonial administration, on the other. Especially in the *Compendio*, there are several statements that explicitly indicate that this *is* what history is about, for instance in the sense that in periods of tranquillity, “nothing happened” that was of interest to the historian.³³⁷ As a result, parts of the text tended towards a kind of annalistic history writing that would seem somewhat anachronistic in this period, again, particularly in the *Compendio*. Economic history was only touched upon occasionally and in passing. The same goes for cultural history.³³⁸ The social structure of colonial society – for instance regarding the complex relations between ethnicity, race, and social hierarchy – was not an issue. Most indicative in this respect is the contention that this Spanish colony was essentially democratic, even classless.³³⁹ Not only did such an allegation reveal a purely formalistic concept of social division. It implied that only the white, male, Spanish-Creole élite elements of that society were worthy of consideration in this context. Later on, however, the egalitarian myth would grow in importance, as will be shown below in particular regarding Levene’s texts.

Only in the parts of these textbooks that dealt with the last stage of colonial rule, the history of the Viceroyalty of La Plata, do we find a shift in emphasis towards an insistence on the elements of conflict between the interests of the Creoles on the one side and the crown and the Spanish-born on the other.³⁴⁰ This shift clearly pointed towards the following account of the independence movement, which necessarily had to be explained and hailed. The passage might present problems, given the strongly pro-Spanish point of departure. The British invasions (1806 and 1807), rejected by the Creole militias, were given a prominent and decisive position here, as in so many other texts.³⁴¹ These events clearly helped shape the patriotic self-confidence on which the later emancipatory movement would depend.

³³⁷Cf. [Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 74: “Durante las administraciones de ... no ocurrió nada de notable, siendo alterada solo la tranquilidad de la colonia por las reyertas de ...”; as for the administrations of the governors of Buenos Aires until 1674, “presentan escaso interés histórico”; 75 (where the history of the provinces of Cuyo “se reduce simplemente á la lucha encarnizada que sostuvieron con los indígenas, y á las desavenencias entre sus vecinos y las autoridades”); 88–89; 105. Even the *Lecciones* had similar statements, see Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 155.

³³⁸An exception is found in lesson No. XXIII in the *Lecciones*, entirely dedicated to demographic, economic, and cultural history. Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 209–218.

³³⁹Ibid., 211: “... como en esta colonia de España no existían clases sociales, sino por el contrario un marcado espíritu democrático”. The idea of the democratic nature of Creole colonial society would prove vigorous, and was later made a cornerstone in Ricardo Levene’s narrative, cf. below, Chapter 17.

³⁴⁰Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 191–192: “La colonia no era gobernada con el propósito de hacer felices á sus habitantes, sino de enriquecerse al Rey y á la metrópoli.”

³⁴¹[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 110–116; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 199–208; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 9 and 13–14. One may note, however, that the attention paid to the British invasions was not guided by anti-British attitudes. There were no explicit condemnations of the British intrusions, no allusions to “piracy”

At this point, we may observe how Fregeiro defined the importance of the colonial period with regard to the emergence of an Argentine nation. As in the other texts analysed so far, there was no claim here that the national community had existed from colonial times: “En este año [1807] no existía aún pueblo argentino.”³⁴² For Fregeiro, 1807 marked the starting point of the nation-building process, beginning with the new self-consciousness of a “people”. But this new people – and, with time, “nation”, with a “national sentiment” – was made out of materials shaped in colonial times. The “character” of the would-be nation was a product of the Spanish colony. As Domínguez before him, Fregeiro resorted to the organic metaphor of the individual human life cycle, in which the colonial era represented “youth” – the underage, but decisively formative years.³⁴³ The insistence on the long-term perspective in the conditioning of the material and mental shape of the specific nationality made the colonial period stand out as particularly interesting. But this did not mean that Fregeiro deviated from his predecessors’ essentially political definition of the nation, centred on the concepts of sovereignty, citizenship, and constitution – hence the precedence of the May revolution in Fregeiro’s story about the fatherland, as in the others.

Even if the emergence of a new Creole consciousness with aspirations to self-government was situated in the aftermath of the British invasions, the revolution of 1810 was the event regarded as having produced a genuine, national programme. The *programmatic*

etc. On the contrary, the British were described in relatively respectful terms, even explicitly in some instances as upright and gentlemanly people (e.g., Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 206, on “el caballeresco general Auchmuty”, cf. also [Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 116). The positive effects of the British trade in the wake of the invasions were underlined. Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 213. The language used here contrasted sharply with the descriptions of the Portuguese in *their* territorial conflicts with the Spanish in the River Plate region, where qualificatory terms like “usurpaciones”, “por violencia”, “plan diabólico”, “violaciones”, etc., abounded. [Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 78. 83, 92, 148; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 159–167. The tendency is further evidenced by the fact that the British occupation of the Falklands/Malvinas in 1833 was not mentioned in any of the two textbooks, in spite of Fregeiro’s manifest interest in territorial issues. Hispanism, at least at this stage, was not incompatible with a benevolent attitude to the British. Like most Argentine liberals of his time, Fregeiro put his trust in the blessings of the liberalist economic policies that informed the Argentine agro-export model. In that respect, Britain served as the embodiment of an ideal, and at the same time played a material key role in the Argentine economy. Of course, later on all of this would be made the object of bitter controversies, most intensely from the 1930s onwards when denunciations of British imperialism would make up an important part of the revisionist stock-in-trade. At this point however, Fregeiro’s attitude was quite representative (and broadly in tune with my findings in other contemporary textbooks). The same is true of the anti-Portuguese tendency, though we might guess that in Fregeiro’s case his Uruguayan background contributed to make the issue particularly relevant. Indeed, later in his life he would research and publish on the war with Brazil in the 1820s.

³⁴²Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 9. The author continued (*ibid.*): “... tan memorable fecha [1807], la que marca en la historia, el nacimiento de un pueblo dotado de la conciencia de su razón de existir, ...”.

³⁴³Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 131. Cf. also: “La historia del coloniaje ofrece mucho interés, á pesar de ser una época tranquila y en la que poco abundan los sucesos extraordinarios, porque es durante ella que se han formado los pueblos que ahora componen la República Argentina, y se crearon paulatinamente los sentimientos que, desarrollados más tarde, constituyen al presente la base en que reposa el sentimiento nacional.” *Ibid.*, 130–131.

value of the declaration of autonomy was strongly emphasized in Fregeiro's text. The "two objectives of *Mayo*" were repeatedly resorted to as a guiding idea when the author interpreted the political developments of the subsequent period. They represented, first, the independence vis-à-vis external powers, the sovereignty of a national territory, and, secondly, the creation of a nation-state through a democratic, national constitution and a government elected by the people.³⁴⁴ One problem is that Fregeiro never gave a clear definition either of the "people" or of "democracy". The terms do not appear to require the right to political participation of the entire adult (or adult male) population, but it is not possible to assess just how restricted such participation might be and still be regarded as "democratic".³⁴⁵ The emphasis on popular participation in a broad, inclusive sense was not nearly as strong as was the case with Estrada, but at least it seems clear that both of these goals had to be achieved before the nation, in the full sense, could become a reality. Thus, it remained the *aspiration* of the peoples of Argentina for a long time. The years of 1853, 1862, and 1880 were the essential milestones in the nation-building process with regard to the "second objective" of the May revolution. Again, the political-civic conception of the nation, with a strong component of voluntarism and contractualism, structured the author's overall interpretation of "the national" in the country's history. Today, Fregeiro – as his contemporaries in general – might nevertheless be accused of making anachronistic projections of their late nineteenth century conceptions of the nation-state and the nation (associated with the "nationality") when they interpreted the texts of the revolutionary period from the hindsight perspective of the Argentine Republic.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 202; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 10–11, 34 ("La revolución argentina tuvo su cuna, pues, en la ciudad de Buenos Aires ... y fué *propósito* claro y definido de sus más grandes hombres, *crear una nación* dándole por asiento el territorio de ese mismo virreinato, y por fundamento de su existencia el *derecho de los habitantes* de sus ciudades y villas para *formar una nueva asociación política*" (italics added)), 63–64, 141–143, 171, 181 (in 1852, the provinces were separated as if they were sovereign nations, but "todas deseaban formar una sola nación, lo que más anhelaban era constituir ésta definitivamente"), 192, 197 ("La República Argentina ha quedado constituida, definitivamente después de la capitalización de Buenos Aires, y resuelto así el segundo fin de la Revolución de Mayo"), 198.

³⁴⁵For example, the *cabildo abierto* of the 22nd of May 1810 in Buenos Aires was called an "asamblea popular", even when the selective nature of the assembly was specified, and the author reproduced, apparently with approval, the phrase from the acts of the assembly that it represented "la parte sana del vecindario de Buenos Aires". Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 32–33; similarly [Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 126.

³⁴⁶As noted in Chapter 2, the issue was discussed in several works by José Carlos Chiaramonte and others. See among others Chiaramonte and Buchbinder, "Provincias"; Chiaramonte, "Formas de identidad"; Chiaramonte, "Acerca del origen"; Chiaramonte, "La formación"; Wasserman, "La *generación de 1837*"; Nora Souto and Fabio Wasserman in Goldman, ed., *Lenguaje y revolución*, 83–98 (on the development of the usages of the concept of the nation until 1850); Riekenberg, "El concepto de la nación"; Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*. Chiaramonte explained how the term "nation" at the time of the independence was more or less synonymous with the term "state", with reference to a political community united by common laws, a common territory, and a common government – that is, without being associated with the largely culturally defined notion of the "nationality". Chiaramonte, "La formación". He and others (e.g., Wasserman, "La *generación de 1837*") argued

The military course of the independence wars was given much attention. There was, as expected, a heroizing tendency in the description of the actions of the “patriots”, and, conversely, the royalists were defamed, or at least presented as an obvious enemy. The latter were only occasionally referred to as *realistas*, far more often as *los españoles*, or even, adopting the disparaging terminology of the revolutionaries, as *los godos*, “the Goths”. Thus, the element of civil war inherent in the independence war was toned down, even when it appeared that, at least in one instance, a majority of “Spaniards” turned out to be Creole.³⁴⁷ At this point, Fregeiro’s Hispanicist creed must yield to the exaltation of the national (Creole) glory. But this is only what we should expect to find. After all, this part of Argentine history constituted from the outset the very core of any version of the myth of national origin. We are, so to say, on sacred ground. And, in the main, Fregeiro’s narrative does not appear as excessively triumphalist. At least, the author did not gloss over the defeats suffered by the revolutionaries. On the contrary, he flatly pointed out instances of sheer cowardice or serious

that the latter, Romanticist concept (with its inherent anachronisms when projected to the first decades of the nineteenth century) predominated from the outset in Argentine history writing. Chiamonte and Pablo Buchbinder also included a few history textbooks for the secondary school in their discussion of the view of national origins, stressing how they tended to give an *early* date for the emergence of an Argentine nation (usually about 1810). Chiamonte and Buchbinder, “Provincias”. Fregeiro was included on the list (102). I think these authors made a good point in showing how the historiographical tradition tended to “antedate” the emergence of an “Argentine national identity”, and how it was not able to capture the ambiguity and plurality of rival identities in the early period or the changes that occurred in the usages of the key concepts. On the other hand, I think that one important distinction was lost here, when the historians and textbook-writers – because of their early dating of the nation – were presented simply as exponents of the Romanticist concept of the nation introduced in Argentina from the 1830s onwards. It is significant that they situated the beginning of the nation at the time of the independence revolution *rather than* in colonial times or in a foggy, mythical “beginning of time”. Cf. Fabio Wasserman (“La *generación de 1837*”, 8) on the Romanticists' view of the nation as a “sujeto de un proceso transhistórico de brumosos orígenes”. The establishment of the nation as a complete reality was placed in the 1853–1880 period, coinciding with, and depending on, the organization of a nation-state. That is why I have stressed the political concept of the nation, and the strong contractualist and voluntarist elements, in Fregeiro's and other textbook writers' presentation of what *they themselves* conceived of as the *construction* of the nation, as *opposed to* a basically cultural concept (the nation as a culturally homogeneous and culturally delimited community, united by a common history and shared traditions). And this, it seems to me, might attenuate the degree of anachronism in their dealings with the issue of the nation in the pre-Romanticist, revolutionary period. Mikael Riekenberg, who carefully distinguished nuances in the different concepts of the nation, underlined, like the aforementioned critics of the historiographical tradition, the progressive spread of the Romanticist view after 1830/1840 (though in a variety of expressions). Riekenberg, “El concepto de la nación”; Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*. My point is certainly not to deny the impact of Romanticism. The very importance conceded to the researching, writing, and teaching of Argentine history, and the will thereby to contribute to the strengthening of the national consciousness and the national sentiment, were both connected with the heritage of Romanticist nationalism. Still, I will insist more than any of the others have done, on the continued strength of a kind of nationalism whose political-civic emphasis remained stronger than the cultural-“essentialist” emphasis, though various approaches coexisted, often within the same text. Regarding Chiamonte and Buchbinder’s readings of Domínguez and Estrada, see notes above to Chapters 8 and 9, respectively. A summary of Chiamonte’s main points of view supported by studies in the history of political key concepts carried out by Nora Souto and others is found in the booklet: José Carlos Chiamonte and Nora Souto, *De la ciudad a la nación: organización política en la Argentina*, Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual, 2010.

³⁴⁷Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, 1892, vol. 2, 70.

mistakes, even when made by officers who indisputably belonged to the gallery of national heroes, like Belgrano³⁴⁸. He also readily admitted cases of bravery and military skill in the enemy camp.³⁴⁹

In general, Fregeiro dealt with the *próceres* of the independence struggle in a rather moderate manner – with due respect, but not uncritically – and without letting any of them feature too largely in the picture. There was, however, a tendency in the *Lecciones* as compared with the *Compendio*, to pay more attention to and to reinforce the praise of Belgrano and, above all, San Martín – sharing in the growing cult especially of the latter personality. In the *Compendio*, we find mixed evaluations of Belgrano's achievements on the battlefield as well as of his political performance.³⁵⁰ This is true for the *Lecciones* also, where Belgrano was explicitly commended more for his civil merits than for his military feats.³⁵¹ Here, however, the author expanded much more on the topic of the national flag associated with Belgrano's name, depicting his efficient use of it in dramatic moments and thereby vivifying its mythical aura.³⁵² There is no doubt, however, that the real superhero of the story was General San Martín. His prominent position was unquestionable already in the *Compendio*, though there he was also openly criticized, along with Belgrano and others, for his monarchist sympathies.³⁵³ In the later textbook, San Martín was disentangled from the ignoble wrangles of internal politics. His extraordinary virtues were even more exalted, and the campaigns he led were presented in a more detailed and vivid narrative.³⁵⁴ At moments, passages of lyrical description were inserted into the action-packed epic. In the following

³⁴⁸[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 133–135, 140–141, 163–165, 186–187; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 38–39, 71–72, 94–95.

³⁴⁹See for example, Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 117–121 (on Colonel José Ordóñez's resistance to the revolutionary army in Chile, described with adjectives like "valiente y entendido", "valeroso" and "heróico").

³⁵⁰[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 123–124, 133–135, 154–158, 163–165, 177 (where Belgrano was considered a minor politician in comparison with Mariano Moreno: "Vieytes, Peña y Belgrano no pasaban de hombres llenos de patriotismo y capaces de sacrificarse por la felicidad del país; pero ninguno tenía el genio atrevido de Moreno, ni era capaz de concebir y mirar en el porvenir, con la fijeza y claridad de aquel infortunado ciudadano."), 179, 193.

³⁵¹Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 48–49: "... descuella [Belgrano] por sus eminentes virtudes cívicas, más que por sus hazañas militares ...".

³⁵²Ibid., 49–50, 53, 73.

³⁵³[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 153, 157 (on monarchism, quoted below), 160–161, 165–166, 193 (on the monarchist projects, again), 196–198 (on the liberation of Chile).

³⁵⁴Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 67–70, 73–74, 106–111 (on the liberation of Chile; the details included the irrelevant circumstance that in the Andes, "en invierno, la nieve cubre los caminos", even though San Martín's Andean army crossed the *cordillera* in January–February – such effects helped enhance the heroic character of the expedition, attributing it with the adverb "gloriosamente" even before it had engaged in any battle), 117–122 (on the liberation of Chile, continued), 123, 129, 131–138 (on San Martín's performance in Peru, and a global assessment of his importance).

lines an emotional identification is created between the insurgent army, the rising sun, the mighty view of the Andean peaks, and the just cause of the freedom of the New World, all converging in the image of the dawn on the shores of Peru where San Martín and his men have just landed (near Pisco): “Cuando el sol, levantándose majestuosamente sobre el horizonte, pudo dorar las cimas de los Andes, 4000 soldados argentinos y chilenos le esperaban para saludarlo alborozados en nombre de la libertad del nuevo mundo.”³⁵⁵

In Fregeiro, and this would become a universal feature in Argentine textbooks, as we shall observe, San Martín was presented as having double exemplary value: He was, of course, the emblematic hero-general (as in all the statues to his honour that embellish public plazas throughout the Republic: mounted, his sabre raised high, as if eternally leading his men onwards). However, he was also presented just as much as the incarnation of (male) civic virtues: the man who served his *patria* without selfish ambitions, who refrained from political power although his prestige and military command might have facilitated his access to it. Above all, he was not stained with the bloodshed of the civil wars. For instance, Fregeiro emphasized how he disobeyed orders to engage in the fratricidal struggle, remaining with his army in Chile and serving only the emancipatory cause.³⁵⁶ In these ways, the figure of “the saint of the sword” was made the supreme icon representing “The Patriotic Man”. Textbooks like Fregeiro’s made an important contribution to this secular “canonization”.

The *political* conflicts of the same period were treated in ways that resemble earlier textbooks to a considerable degree, but which, nevertheless, situated Fregeiro in a position distinct from that of both Dominguez and Estrada. As Estrada had done, Fregeiro criticized the elitist tendencies within unitarianism, in particular when dealing with the various monarchical projects. The criticism was expressed most severely in the *Compendio*, in terms

³⁵⁵Ibid., 134.

³⁵⁶Ibid., 129 and 133 (the context was the conflict between the province of Santa Fe and the *Directorio* in Buenos Aires in 1919; San Martín's firm stand was counterpoised with the obedience of Belgrano, who *did* take his troops against Santa Fe). On San Martín as the embodiment of civic virtues, *ibid.*, 111: “San Martín no es sólo un capitán ilustrado, sino también un ciudadano eminente ... Ganar batallas puede ser prueba de talento, de genio; pero no servirse de tan altos dones para dominar, sino para libertar pueblos, es propio sólo de las almas nobles”; 137–138, where the following quotation from the general was reproduced (the occasion was San Martín's resignation from his post as *Protector del Perú*): “La presencia de un militar afortunado, por más desprendimiento que tenga, es temible á los Estados que de nuevo se constituyen ...”. This last citation *might* in fact be read against President-General Roca, in office at the time of the first edition. But I do not think we are allowed to assume that this additional meaning was intended by the author, in particular because the textbook elsewhere appears to be quite in conformity with contemporary politics – wholly identified with the established political order.

very reminiscent of those of Estrada.³⁵⁷ In the *Lecciones*, the evaluation of these tendencies remained negative, but here the author carefully underlined that the leaders who represented them, were nevertheless moved by patriotic motives, as were their opponents. The latter textbook evidenced a manifest effort to integrate the main political protagonists of all camps into the gallery of patriotic *próceres*.³⁵⁸ Thus, the image was drawn of an essentially patriotic *generation* of 1810 (a sketchy version of the same view was observed above in the case of Lucio V. López). The shift was pretty clear, even if the full picture was more nuanced due to Fregeiro's individualistic approach: The participants were individually evaluated more in terms of their personal capacities and specific performance than as representatives of determined interests, ideologies, parties, and so on. One may guess that the author's historical studies led him to revise the presentation of several personalities in a favourable or unfavourable direction between 1877 and 1886, but it is not easy to draw general conclusions from such changes.³⁵⁹

Both textbooks, however, were unquestionably written from a pro-federalist point of view – contrasting sharply with the predominant perspective in Domínguez's book. The author's political preference was made explicit in several instances.³⁶⁰ For instance, Fregeiro took pains to argue that Mariano Moreno had “really” been an adherent of federalism and only the extreme and precarious conditions of the revolutionary moment had urged him to advocate measures that seemed contrary to that ideology. The point was all the more important as Moreno was one of the supreme heroes in Fregeiro's story, almost at the level of San Martín, as his political complement. And just as San Martín could remain unblemished because he withdrew from power, so could Moreno as a result of his early and sudden death just after resigning from his post in the revolutionary *Junta* of Buenos Aires. This

³⁵⁷[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 123-125, 157 (“Las ideas de monarquía que abrigaron San Martín, Belgrano, Rivadavia y otros muchos patriotas distinguidos, provenían de ese menosprecio hacia las multitudes y sus caudillos, de esa intemperancia de opiniones que rechazaba su influencia del gobierno cuando eran el elemento nacional y constituían la inmensa mayoría del país, el país mismo en una palabra.”), 178–179, 181, 193, 194–195, 200, 208.

³⁵⁸Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 62–63, 113–114, 115–116 (where the author in a footnote urged the teacher not to “incurrir en la vulgaridad de imputar crímenes donde no hubo sino patriotismo, más o menos previsor, más o menos acertadas vistas, en unos que en otros”), 125ff, 139–144, 155.

³⁵⁹To mention one example only: The efforts of the French naval officer, Santiago Liniers, in the defence against the British invasions (for which he rose to become the penultimate viceroy of La Plata) were favourably evaluated in the *Compendio*. [Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 110–116. In the *Lecciones*, several negative characterizations formed part of the presentation. Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 207–208, referring to “El inepto Liniers”, etc.; cf. also Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 18–19.

³⁶⁰[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 157, 174ff, 178ff, 191–192, 194, 201–202; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 84ff, 104–106, 113–116, 128–129, 139–144, 155.

circumstance lent him an unmistakable aura of martyrdom, even if his death was of natural causes.³⁶¹

Like Estrada, Fregeiro readily showed his federalist colours. But Fregeiro went much further than Estrada in his attempt to reassess the historical importance of the provincial *caudillos*. For instance, to Fregeiro, the year 1820 was not the disastrous year of the “anarchy”, but rather the year of a productive political crisis from which an essentially healthy process took place. The breakdown of the unitarian state and the development of the provincial autonomies were seen here not as a sign of disintegration, but as a preliminary stage in the nation-building process. So far, Fregeiro was in tune with the view of early “proto-revisionists”.³⁶² At the same time, the author gave prominence to the *gauchos* who followed the caudillos and made up their armies, paying tribute to the growing cult of the gaucho as the privileged carrier of an Argentine national identity.³⁶³

Fregeiro’s “rehabilitation” of the caudillos focused on two of them: Martín Güemes (not a particularly controversial choice)³⁶⁴ and – far more disputed and hence more interesting – *don* José Gervasio Artigas, as the famous leader from the Banda Oriental was respectfully referred to by Fregeiro.³⁶⁵ For a long time Artigas would still be an issue among Argentine historians: In 1913, the Junta de Historia y Numismática Americana – of which Fregeiro was a member – even discussed a proposal for a resolution repudiating the attempts to clear his name. Finally, the Junta decided not to pronounce judgement on such a controversial matter.³⁶⁶ In both works studied here, the Uruguayan caudillo was presented with frank

³⁶¹[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 136–138, 174–177; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 10, 57–60, 192. Both texts gave a detailed account of Mariano Moreno's death, reproducing in italics the lapidary last words: "*Viva mi patria aunque yo perezca*". (Both also noted that Moreno died at the age of 33 – that is, like Christ our Saviour – whereby a casual coincidence might be charged, perhaps unconsciously, with implicit meaning.) On Moreno as the embodiment of the May revolution and of federal republicanism in Argentina, observe for example, the following comment referring to as late a date as 1862: "En 1862 quedaron definitivamente triunfantes las ideas de Mariano Moreno, el primer apóstol de la federación argentina, y el primer pensador de la revolución de Mayo. /Así se resolvió el segundo fin de esta misma revolución ...". Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 192.

³⁶²[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 156–157, 179–181, 194 ("El *caudillaje* no fué una enfermedad, ni un vicio de nuestra organización social; era una condición esencial del estado de la civilización argentina"), 200–202 (the constitution of 1853 as a "sanción tácita de las tendencias políticas del caudillaje"); Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 51–52 ("el pueblo y sus valerosos caudillos"), 115, 122–123, 128–129, 139–144 ("Nosotros creemos que en 1820 lo que se realizó fué la destrucción del régimen colonial"; "1820 es año de *crisis*, pero no de *caos*").

³⁶³[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 156–157 (in formulations close to those found in Estrada, but without the ambivalence observed there: "... ese menosprecio hacia las multitudes y sus caudillos ... esa intemperancia de opiniones que rechazaba su influencia del gobierno cuando eran el elemento nacional y constituían la inmensa mayoría del país, el país mismo en una palabra" (*our italics*)), 194; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 51–52.

³⁶⁴[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 188; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 75, 96, 123.

³⁶⁵[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 141; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 39–40.

³⁶⁶Aurora Ravina: "Nuevos proyectos, nuevos miembros, nuevos tiempos. Enrique Peña (1911–1915) y José Marcó del Pont-Antonio Dellepiane (1915–1919)", in *La Junta*, vol. 1, 80–82.

sympathy. The author stressed Artigas's "respectable" origins and relationships, along with his popular appeal. His opposition to the governments of Buenos Aires was presented as fully comprehensible.³⁶⁷

Fregeiro's positive evaluation of Artigas fitted well with his general sympathy with the federal cause. But his particular concern for the leader of the *orientales* may also naturally be connected with the author's own attachment to his native land. A double Argentine-Uruguayan patriotism runs through these textbooks and gives them a distinct character. Restrained, but unmistakable expressions of Fregeiro's Uruguayan sentiment may be found scattered around in the texts.³⁶⁸ Within the realm of Argentina "proper", however, Fregeiro continued the tendency, manifest in the earlier textbooks analysed above, of making the narrative revolve around events that took place in Buenos Aires. But even if Buenos Aires remained the centre of gravity with regard to the structure and the relative distribution of contents in the textbook, it does not follow that the text showed a pro-*porteño* bias when dealing with interprovincial conflicts.³⁶⁹ In this respect, Fregeiro's position differed markedly from what we found in Domínguez's case.

Fregeiro's partial reassessment of certain protagonists in Argentine history did not reach the figure of Juan Manuel de Rosas. The presentation of the strong-arm governor of Buenos Aires – and, by extension, of the period in Argentine history symbolized by his name – did not differ substantially from the hostile picture drawn in previous textbooks.³⁷⁰ As before, Rosas was *el tirano*, a tyrant who ruled by terror and was characterized mainly by his lust for power. The positive counterweight was found in the liberal opposition, who, still following the established pattern, received just as much attention as the governing regime itself. Within this general, conforming interpretation, some nuances may be detected, however. First, even if Rosas was viewed negatively, he was not denounced with the

³⁶⁷[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 141–142, 179–180, 194, 198; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 39–40, 84ff, 104, 115. A comparison between Fregeiro's and Vicente Fidel López's opposite judgements of Artigas was presented as a case study in Jorge Saab, Carlos A. Suárez, José Maristany and Laura Sánchez: "De Fregeiro a Levene: Apuntes para una historia de los manuales de historia", in Rodríguez and Dobaño Fernández, ed., *Los libros de texto*, 71–76. López's version will be discussed below in chapter 14.

³⁶⁸[Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 100, 207–208; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 167, 202, 206, 213–214 ("Buenos Aires era ... el verdadero emporio del comercio colonial ... Pero el verdadero puerto de Buenos Aires era Montevideo"), 217–218; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 39–40, 81, 122–123, 156–158, 173, 177.

³⁶⁹See for example, Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 113–114, 128–129, 182.

³⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 163–180. (The section on Rosas in the *Compendio*: [Fregeiro], *Compendio*, 1877, 211–224. But, as I have explained above, I seriously doubt that the last chapter of the *Compendio* (including the pages on Rosas) was written by Fregeiro, and I have chosen not to use it as a basis for this part of the analysis. In the *Compendio*, there are, inter alia, justifications of the French/British blockades, and the federalism of the caudillos is described in depreciatory terms: "La monomanía constitucional del caudillaje" (214). In these and other ways, this section of the text seems alien to the spirit of Fregeiro.)

vehemence expressed in Estrada's lectures. According to Fregeiro, Rosas had a great political talent, which *might* have been used to achieve the desired constitutional organization of Argentina, but he failed to fulfil this historical mission, so to speak. Secondly, the interventions of foreign powers against Rosas were regarded as counter-productive and at odds with the real interests of the cause of the opposition. The apologetic arguments on this point had all disappeared. Thirdly, the political divisions between the oppositional exiles, otherwise largely passed over, were explained in some detail.

The presentation of the period of "national organization," begun at Rosas's downfall in 1852, was characterized by an increasing identification with the established order. As for the split between the Argentine Confederation and the free state of Buenos Aires in the 1850s, both parties were described in respectful terms, though Fregeiro's sympathy clearly lay with Urquiza.³⁷¹ With the reunification and the election of a national president in 1862, any attempt at maintaining a critical or even detached perspective in the textbook seems to have evaporated. The political system was idealized and was seen only in its formal and constitutional appearances: "El gobierno propio de la nueva nación se había formado, pues, por la libre y espontánea voluntad del pueblo ... es decir, por el pueblo argentino".³⁷² The war against Paraguay was wholly justified and presented with triumphalist overtones – as was the *Conquista del desierto*, the decisive campaign against the indigenous tribes led by Roca.³⁷³ In later editions, the conservative or semi-official stand adopted was reinforced by the short passages added on the various presidencies of the 1880s and '90s, all of which were praised, whereas the increasing opposition to the political establishment was either silenced or denounced.³⁷⁴

The political conformism evidenced in the presentation of contemporary events culminated in complacent praise of the general state of affairs in Argentina following the federalization of the capital city of Buenos Aires in 1880. The scope was now expanded to the demographic and economic aspects of society (largely absent throughout the greater part of

³⁷¹Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 181–190. Cf. also Fregeiro, *Vidas de argentinos ilustres*, 1894, in particular the biography of Urquiza, 161–179.

³⁷²Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 192.

³⁷³*Ibid.*, 192–193 and 195, respectively.

³⁷⁴Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1913, 244–248. On Roca, the text only informed that his administration was "pacífica y progresista". The revolutionary attempt in 1890 was not even mentioned – only the presidential change caused by it (but presented as if it were an ordinary event). There *was* mention, however, of a revolutionary movement in 1893, "que contribuyera á dificultar la acción oficial reformadora sin prestar, empero, ningún bien al país ...".

the text).³⁷⁵ The text concluded in a mode of unqualified optimism. Fregeiro's coherent and meaningful interpretation of Argentine history was linked directly to the vision of a bright future of continuous progress, based both on the established political system (the federal, democratic republic, as it was presented) and on the blessings of a liberal economy.³⁷⁶

Asegurados los dos fines de aquella [la Revolución de Mayo], no resta á los argentinos sino perpetuar la obra de los patriotas de Mayo de 1810; elevar la nueva nación á un alto grado de prosperidad con la buena administración de las rentas, y el fiel cumplimiento de los preceptos de la constitución nacional.

...
Cuando la república se haya elevado á un alto grado de poder y de riqueza, podremos comprender mejor que ahora la magnitud y la trascendencia de la obra acometida por los patriotas de 1810.

In Fregeiro's textbooks, as in the case of Lucio V. López studied earlier, the interpretation of the national history had as one of its points of departure (and as its point of conclusion) a contemporary experience characterized by growth and, just as important, by the expectation of future growth. This trait differentiated these texts from the pioneering didactical works of the 1860s. It is not paradoxical that this confidence in the bright prospects of Argentina was accompanied by a thorough interest in and a new appreciation of the older, colonial history of the region. These authors were not after past causes for present failures. A basic satisfaction with the present state of affairs blended well with a more benevolent attitude towards the past, even with the dependent, colonial past, which, moreover, was now a remote period. The emotional charge of the issue, still potentially relevant only recently, was rapidly waning. Spain was no enemy.

Fregeiro's ideological *hispanismo* – as manifested in the textbooks – was not a polemical stand *against* "Anglo-Saxon materialism" or similar bogeys. It did not appear as a reaction against the decay of old values or threats to an established order. Later appeals to the Spanish legacy would often be rooted in such concerns. At this point, and with these history-writers, this was still not the case. Likewise, Fregeiro's attempts to "rehabilitate" the caudillos differed from the later revisionist point of departure, though many of the arguments employed might be the same. Tulio Halperín Donghi described the revisionism of the 1930s as a basically "decadentist" vision of the past: The positive re-evaluation of figures and periods of the past sprung from a profound dissatisfaction with later developments and with the present

³⁷⁵Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 197–201; Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1913, 249–254 (with updated statistics, but beyond that no substantial changes).

³⁷⁶Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1892, 198–200.

order.³⁷⁷ As we have seen, this was certainly not Fregeiro's position. There was no "decadence" to denounce. Fregeiro constructed an Argentine history in which conquerors and colonists, revolutionary leaders and provincial caudillos were *reconciled* with the contemporary reality (specifically, with Argentina under the Liberal-Conservative post-1880 order), not opposed to it. On the other hand, this circumstance does not suffice to reduce Fregeiro's textbooks to mere exponents of "official" history writing. Fregeiro produced *his* version of Argentine history, and he left his mark on it.

³⁷⁷Tulio Halperín Donghi: "El revisionismo histórico argentino como visión decadentista de la historia nacional", in Halperín, *Ensayos de historiografía*, 107–126.

13. The perspective of the Littoral: Benigno T. Martínez

In the second lustrum of the 1880s, the principal rivals to Fregeiro's history textbooks seem to have been the ones written by the Galician immigrant to the province of Entre Ríos, Benigno Teijeiro³⁷⁸ Martínez (1846–1925).³⁷⁹ He wrote textbooks in history, geography, and even arithmetic, for the primary as well as for the secondary level. His most important history text for the secondary school was the two-volume *Curso elemental de Historia Argentina*, first published in 1885 and revised and re-edited several times (at least until 1896 or 1897, when the eighth edition appeared).³⁸⁰

A native of the Spanish province of Corunna, Benigno Teijeiro Martínez qualified as a land surveyor and engaged in radical politics (with the Federal Republicans) before he immigrated to South America in 1873. In 1875, he settled permanently in the Mesopotamian province of Entre Ríos. Working as an educationist (first in the primary school, thereafter in secondary colleges) and later as an archivist (at the head of the historical archives of Entre Ríos), from the outset he also became involved in a wide range of cultural activities and in provincial politics. His prolific publishing centred mainly on topics of education, literature, ethnography, and history, above all the history of Entre Ríos. He has been called the first “real” historian of that province, and is generally considered one of the main pioneers of Argentine regional history. His most important work was the *Historia de la Provincia de Entre Ríos*, with three volumes published between 1900 and 1919 (and two more left unpublished). In Benigno T. Martínez, the historiographers seem to coincide in

³⁷⁸In the reference literature, his paternal surname – abbreviated to *T.* in his publications – is variously spelled *Teijeiro* or *Tejeiro*. Without knowing for certain which is the most correct, I have chosen to use the spelling found in Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 7.

³⁷⁹Cf. Jorge María Ramallo in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 379–380, who stated that Lucio V. López's textbook (analysed here in Chapter 10) after 1886 could no longer compete with the works published by Fregeiro and Teijeiro Martínez.

³⁸⁰Benigno T. Martínez, *Curso Elemental de Historia Argentina*, 2 vols. (Buenos Aires: Igon Hermanos – Editores, 1885). Unfortunately, I have only had access to the second volume of this work, covering the 1810–1880 period. However, this last part includes a fairly detailed chronological summary of both volumes with page indications, something that at least allows for a rough quantitative analysis of the distribution of contents for the colonial period as well. As for the other history textbooks published by Teijeiro Martínez (none of which are used here), Beatriz Bosch gave the following titles in a historiographical survey of the Entre Ríos province (in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 74): *Compendio de Historia Argentina desde el descubrimiento del Nuevo Mundo hasta nuestros días* (Buenos Aires: 1879), apparently approved for use in (primary?) schools in the province of Entre Ríos; *Segundo Curso para estudios preparatorios* (Buenos Aires: 1885); *Introducción al curso de Historia Americana* (Concepción del Uruguay: 1885); *Nociones de Historia Argentina* (Buenos Aires: 1885), for the primary level. Regarding the 8th – and final? – edition of the *Curso elemental*: Beatriz Bosch in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 75 (dating it to 1897); Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 313 (dating it to 1896). Thus far, the bibliographic information indicates that Fregeiro's *Lecciones* (re-edited until 1913) would remain in use for a longer period than Teijeiro Martínez's *Curso elemental*.

acknowledging a serious and thoroughly source-critical historian, particularly with regard to his major work. More controversial was his specific attempt to take up the historical defence of the *entrerriano* caudillo, Francisco Ramírez, from the time of the independence and civil wars, polemicizing against Vicente Fidel López and others. Contemporary and later comments on his didactical works are generally favourable (though little has been written on this part).³⁸¹

The *Curso elemental* consisted of two very short manuals, in particular when compared with the thick volumes presented by Fregeiro as well as by earlier (and later) textbook authors. The second part, covering the 1810–1880 period, comprised no more than 99 pages in the main text, with an added summary of 27 pages. The first volume, dedicated to the colonial period, was slightly shorter.³⁸² This means that the entire course in Argentine history made up rather less than 200 pages. This brevity notwithstanding, the text was cast in an erudite fashion, with proper footnotes. In any case, the result was a relatively dry and “factual” account, with little room for reasoned, evaluative comments, reflections or discussions. Of course, the very brevity of the textbook might at the same time constitute a certain pedagogical advantage: This was one of the few texts that the teacher and students might really get through in the periods available for the subject, and still have time for the revision work (facilitated by the summaries – another pedagogical innovation here). With some of the other more extensive textbooks, one may seriously doubt whether the final chapters were usually studied at all, with obvious consequences for the actual teaching and learning of contemporary history. On the other hand, this kind of textbook renders relatively poor material for historiographical analysis.

Within these limits, the *Curso elemental* represented little new in comparison with what has already been found in the few previous and contemporary textbooks that existed. Its

³⁸¹Biographic and bibliographic information from the following works: Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 7; Beatriz Bosch's aforementioned article in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 71–90 (73–78 on Teijeiro Martínez); Facundo A. Arce, “El primer gran historiador de Entre Ríos: Don Benigno Teijeiro Martínez”, *Nuestra Historia: Revista de Historia de Occidente* 14, No. 28, (1981), 212–223; Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 190–191, 309, 312, 313. Of these, Facundo A. Arce's panegyric article only mentioned the textbooks in passing (and so did Jorge María Ramallo in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 379–380). Carbia gave a brief, but benevolent mention of the *Curso elemental*. Other researchers of Argentine history textbooks, like Michael Riekenberg, have not included Benigno T. Martínez on their list. As for the contemporary critics, the omnipresent Bartolomé Mitre reviewed the *Curso elemental* and recommended its use, as he also did in the case of Fregeiro, as we have seen. Like Fregeiro, Benigno T. Martínez had this “authoritative” praise reproduced, this time in an appendix to the textbook. Martínez, *Curso elemental*, vol. 2, 151. Mitre wrote: “Es un libro bien hecho, útil y aun necesario para la enseñanza.”

³⁸²As mentioned above, I have not been able to consult this first part directly, but the information given in the “Resúmen cronológico de los dos cursos” indicates approximately 77 pages in the main text, followed by a resumé in a structure similar to the one found in the second part of the work. Martínez, *Curso elemental*, vol. 2, 1885, 106–132.

apparent success should, perhaps, more than anything be explained by the general shortage of didactic materials for the subject in this period. In some respects, Benigno T. Martínez's book might be said to reinforce some of the most typical tendencies in the history textbook tradition. For instance, while all the textbooks tended to focus primarily on political history, this text dealt *exclusively* with that area. Likewise, with regard to the quantitative distribution of contents according to historical periods, this is an "unusually typical" text:

For the colonial period, the relative shift from the last stage of colonial rule (the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata) towards the early phase of conquest and colonization is more explicit here than in any of the textbooks analysed previously. Approximately 50 pages on the last-mentioned subjects (up to 1580) make up about 65% of the first part of the course, compared with approximately 31 pages on the following 230 years of Spanish rule. As in the cases of Lucio V. López and Clemente Fregeiro discussed above, this tendency indicates that the presentation of the colonial period was no longer geared exclusively towards explaining the antecedents of the independence revolution.

As for the contemporary period, the contents of Benigno T. Martínez's textbook represent the most extreme concentration on the second decade of the nineteenth century encountered thus far (if one disregards Domínguez, who did not carry his account further). Eighty pages, that is 80,8% of the entire space dedicated to the independent period, cover those ten years, leaving 7 pages (7,1%) for the next decade (1820–1829), only 3 pages for the 23 years with Rosas (3,0%), and finally 9 pages (9.1%) for the years of "national organization" (1852–1880). As was the case with his contemporary Fregeiro, Benigno T. Martínez took care to bring his account up to date, or almost so: His story concluded with the "events" that took place in Buenos Aires in 1880 (so recent that they were taken for granted and not explained). Already, the federalization of the capital was established as marking or symbolizing the end of one historical era and the beginning of a new one. The concern with Rosas was fading: In particular for a man like Benigno T. Martínez, who had immigrated only recently and hence could not relate to any personal or familial experience from the years of *rosismo*, this was, it seems, only one among other things of the past. Sarmiento's presidency (1868–1874), for instance, takes up as much (or as little) space as does Rosas. But the really astounding thing to register here remains the fact that in the mid-1880s, in a full course of Argentine history, it might still appear as a reasonable choice of priorities to dedicate nearly half the contents (the two volumes considered together) to the political events of one single decade. The *Mayo* cult was certainly not on the wane.

In one respect, however, the *Curso elemental* departed from the prevailing tradition. In comparison with other textbooks, relatively more attention was given here to the provinces situated on the banks of the great rivers to the north of Buenos Aires, the *litoral* and, although in a lesser degree, to the provinces of the *interior*. At least at certain moments, this tendency was so manifest that we may speak of an Argentine history told from the perspective of the littoral. In particular, this was the case when the author dealt with the political developments from 1816 to 1821.³⁸³ In other instances, the *entrerriano* provincial patriotism shines discretely through in brief mentions,³⁸⁴ or we may detect traces of Benigno T. Martínez's specific interest in the caudillo Francisco Ramírez.³⁸⁵ But even if more space was given to elements of the history of this region, this does not mean that the author always sided with these provinces when dealing with their conflicts with Buenos Aires or with the central government, although he sometimes did. Most often, he attempted to avoid obviously tendentious statements. But at least in one case, a rebellion originated in his adopted home province was explicitly censured, and the repressive actions taken by the federal authorities accordingly justified (regarding the uprising led by López Jordán in 1870–1873, which began with the assassination of Urquiza).³⁸⁶ It is significant that this instance concerns the most recent period: Like Fregeiro, Benigno T. Martínez seems solidly identified with the new order that emerged after Caseros and after Pavón.

When treating the political conflicts of the early nineteenth century, Benigno T. Martínez, like Fregeiro, showed moderate, federalist sympathies, while at the same time striving to achieve a detached, even-handed presentation. Their approaches differed, however: Fregeiro sought to accentuate the patriotic ideals that guided protagonists from opposite camps, even when they fought each other tooth and nail, in an endeavour, it appears, to produce edifying lessons. Benigno T. Martínez, on the other hand, tended to emphasize the weaknesses and errors that, according to the author, led both unitarian leaders and at least some of the federalist caudillos astray. The general vision of the period is much more gloomy here:

³⁸³ Martínez, *Curso elemental*, vol. 2, 71–89. See also *ibid.*, 25, 33, 46–50, 58–59, 97 (where the point of view is with Urquiza, and the representatives of Buenos Aires are seen from the outside, as an obstacle: "Derrocado el Tirano se ofrecieron serias dificultades con los hombres de Buenos Aires.").

³⁸⁴See for example, *ibid.*, 26, 33, 46ff, 54, 58, 80 ("Entre Rios y Santa Fé quedaron, pues, en tranquila posesion de su autonomía.").

³⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 29 (in a context in which the mention of Ramírez appears as conspicuous, given the brevity of the text); 74–75; 88 (but note the ambiguity, or ambivalence, in the following statement: "Ramírez y Carreras, esos grandes agitadores habian muerto, no sin dejar disuelta la union y las Provincias entregadas á su propia suerte.").

³⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 101.

Desde la declaracion de nuestra independencia hasta la revolucion social del año XX, fuera de las victorias obtenidas por San Martin en el exterior, nuestro país ha tenido que deplorar una série de luchas civiles las mas de las veces desastrosas, ora provocadas por las ideas centralistas de los Gobiernos Generales, ora por los caudillos que sostenian una *federacion* que ellos entendian á su manera, traduciéndose en una autonomia absoluta de las Provincias quizá peligrosa en momentos tan angustiosos.³⁸⁷

The author's position was not always unambiguous. The legislative work of the Assembly of 1813 (on which Fregeiro had critical comments) was unconditionally praised.³⁸⁸ The unitarian constitution of 1826 (and, in general and as usual, Rivadavia) was first praised in high tones, whereupon that very same constitution was regarded as a hindrance (*un grave inconveniente*) to the attempts to reach a national, political solution, and provincial resistance to it is presented as understandable.³⁸⁹ Benigno T. Martínez maintained a relatively critical distance towards certain caudillos. Artigas, in particular, though far from condemned, was not described with the sympathy expressed by Fregeiro either.³⁹⁰ But in general, the caudillos were seen as a stabilizing, yet insufficient element in the early independent history of the country,³⁹¹ and the development of institutionalized, provincial autonomies in the 1820s was seen as a healthy step forwards. As in Fregeiro, this tendency was linked to the constitutional development from 1853 onward, an interpretation which helped solidify the identification with the present political order: "Es asi como los pueblos argentinos comenzaron á elevarse al rango de Estados constituidos bajo el régimen federal, dándole el carácter de hecho legal consolidado que hicieron respetar mas tarde."³⁹²

Though Benigno T. Martínez never discussed or defined his concept of the nation in the *Curso elemental*, elements like this clearly pointed towards a contractualist view.

³⁸⁷Ibid., 82–83. See also 20ff, 36ff, 59ff, 72.

³⁸⁸Ibid., 39–40; 57 ("la memorable Asamblea democrática de 1813"). Practically all the textbooks, including Fregeiro's, praised the various liberal measures taken by this Assembly. The only thing to remark here is that Benigno T. Martínez, a bit surprisingly for this author, failed to place the further development of it within the context of the power struggle between the political factions.

³⁸⁹Ibid., 89–91.

³⁹⁰Ibid., 25–31; 34; 52–54; 58; 59–60; 61; 64 ("Los errores de ese caudillo facilitaron la ocupacion militar de Montevideo por los portugueses ..."); 71ff.

³⁹¹Cf. *ibid.*, 25: "No bastaba que el gérmen del caudillaje comenzara á manifestarse en las regiones litorales, para detener un movimiento anárquico ...". Cf. also *ibid.*, 85 (the occasion was a Federalist seizure of power in Tucumán): "No tardaron en imitar ese movimiento democrático los demas Estados del interior que si ofrecian al Gobierno General y al Congreso acatamiento y respeto, no por eso dejaban de comprender que este ni aquel, tenian el derecho de imponer las autoridades locales so pretesto de una adhesion al *unitarismo*, que no tenia razon de ser, como no lo ha tenido mas tarde el bárbaro *federalismo* de Rosas."

³⁹²Ibid., 89. Cf. also *ibid.*, 97, on the Constitution of 1853: "con arreglo al Pacto litoral de 1831". This connection was not commonly established in the textbooks.

As for the remainder, there are few surprises to be found. As mentioned above, Rosas was treated in an extremely sketchy fashion. In a few lines and in unusually strong language for Benigno T. Martínez, there was the customary condemnation of the dictator and his “false federation”.³⁹³ (The characterizations used were only matched in this textbook by the exotic labels attached to the Paraguayan dictator, *Doctor Francia*.)³⁹⁴ Regarding the following and final period of “constitutional reorganization”, all the successive presidencies were given a sympathetic presentation. But here, as elsewhere in the textbook, Benigno T. Martínez was rather moderate in his praise of the various leaders. He generally respected the established gallery of heroes, but without lending himself to an excessive cult of personalities whether he was dealing with Mitre or San Martín.³⁹⁵ More than any others, he stressed the continuance of violent, civil conflicts even in the 1860s and ‘70s.³⁹⁶

For the most recent years, the narrative coherence dissolved in an annalistic list of disparate events (the death of a poet here, the centenary of the birth of San Martín there).³⁹⁷ The story ended without any clear, unifying or edifying vision of the nation’s present and future, like the one Fregeiro presented. Although we may perceive a basic faith in the laborious emergence and subsequent progress of an Argentine federal republic as the underlying premise of Benigno T. Martínez’s construction of a national history as well, the links between the interpretations of the past, the conceptions of the present, and the prospects for the future were not nearly as explicit here.

The *Curso elemental* was essentially a scant and conventional summary centred on the main events of Argentine political history – for the contemporary part mainly from the decade

³⁹³Ibid., 94–96. Some samples of the linguistic calibre employed: “el negro cuadro de la falsa federacion”; “la sombría noche de la Tiranía”; “sistema de oscurantismo”; “El terror y la hipocresía”; “mónstruo horrible”. We are reminded of the tone used in Estrada's lectures, with the important difference that the issue is a minor one in this textbook.

³⁹⁴Ibid., 32: “El calígula americano Dr. Francia del Paraguay”. (Before settling in Entre Ríos, Benigno T. Martínez had stayed for some time in Asunción. There he wrote a historical play about the dictator Francia, which was performed.) The other references to Paraguay in the textbook reflected the customary aversion: *ibid.*, 20 (“... aquel pueblo tan apartado del Océano como de la civilizacion de los pueblos que baña el Plata ... la tierra clásica de las tiranías”); 61 (“sus murallas chinas de la Dictadura”); 98–99.

³⁹⁵A few examples: The story of how Belgrano first ran up the white and blue flag was told in a manner which leaves the reader uncertain as to whether the acclaimed general chose the appropriate moment. *Ibid.*, 35–36. San Martín was certainly a great hero here as everywhere else. But it is interesting to observe how his great project (to destroy the royalist stronghold in Peru via the liberation of Chile) was presented: General Tomás Guido's part in conceiving the strategy was emphasized, while only a footnote stated that San Martín got “the same idea”. *Ibid.*, 65–66. This ranking order in the presentation was unheard of in the rest of the textbook material. As for the presidency of Mitre, one might detect a possible, most discreet reservation in the midst of the praise: “El General Mitre ha venido á continuar la obra de Rivadavia en la organizacion nacional y su Gobierno ha sido benéfico *en este sentido*” (*our italics*). *Ibid.*, 99.

³⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 98–99; 101–102.

³⁹⁷*Ibid.*, in particular 103–105.

of revolution and independence struggle. Within these narrow limits, the textbook revealed the scholar's caution in selecting and presenting his data, as well as an obvious effort to avoid excessive bias (with a few exceptions). Its most notable contribution to Argentine textbook history was obviously a result of Benigno T. Martínez's early commitment to regional history: The *Curso elemental* took a cautious, yet unmistakable step away from the Buenos Aires-centred writing of Argentina's history.

14. The passionate storyteller: Vicente Fidel López's manual

In his own times, Vicente Fidel López (1815–1903) was counted among the most prestigious historians in Argentina, surpassed only by Mitre.³⁹⁸ Though writing on various historical topics through several decades (including two historical romance novels), his major work centred on the early independent period and culminated in the ten-volume *Historia de la República Argentina. Su origen, su revolución y su desarrollo político hasta 1852*, published between 1883 and 1893. With Mitre, he engaged in the most famous Argentine historiographical debate of the nineteenth century.³⁹⁹

However, the reputation of the old master would not last. Indeed, the ascent of the self-confident historians of the “New School” meant the inexorable decline of the kind of history writing López had represented. Against the exclusive primacy of the written sources, subjected to critical examination, he had advocated the legitimate use of oral traditions and had emphasized the aesthetic dimension of the historian’s task: The important thing was not the erudite apparatus of irreproachable documentary references, but the ability to recapture the past in a convincingly coherent narrative. In an age when historians’ scientific pretensions grew steadily, his was a lost battle. Historiographers, such as Rómulo Carbia, would accuse López of lenient handling of the sources and point out countless inaccuracies and errors. They would also denounce the pronounced political bias manifest throughout his work, a retrospective partisanship which López himself never tried to conceal. Still, they might admit López’s literary ability and admire his capacity to “revivify” situations and personalities in vivid accounts. But the seductive, emotional power of his prose endangered the search for historical truth, according to Carbia: “... López cautiva, emocional y no deja pensar, y, por fuerza lógica, cuando se acepta su juicio, la única razón que nos determina a ello es una razón emocional”.⁴⁰⁰

When writing his version of Argentina’s contemporary history, López identified himself with the liberal political élite of Buenos Aires, from the May revolution until the rise of Rosas, and thereafter with the liberal opposition to *rosismo*. Historians of later generations

³⁹⁸The biographic and bibliographic information in the following passages mainly from: Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 4; Piccirilli, *Los López*; Carbia, *Historia crítica*; Carlos Ibarguren: “Vicente Fidel López. Su vida y su obra”, a speech from 1915 reproduced in an undated edition of Vicente F. López: *Manual de la Historia Argentina*.

³⁹⁹See above Chapter 11.4.

⁴⁰⁰Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 157. Rómulo Carbia dealt with V. F. López on 150–158, and, regarding his textbooks, on 313–314.

have seen in this approach not only its obvious limitations and weaknesses, but also elements of considerable value. Tulio Halperín Donghi commented that, while presenting an Argentine history “centred in the history of one municipality and of the group that governed that municipality”, the intimate familiarity with that particular milieu enabled Vicente Fidel López to write “the posthumous autobiography of a political class”, rich in penetrating observations.⁴⁰¹

López’s approach to history was to a considerable extent connected with his own biography and with his attachment to his family background. He was the only child of Vicente López y Planes, author of the national anthem and a prominent public figure in Buenos Aires from the days of the British invasions until 1852, through all the political shifts in between. Vicente Fidel’s first, classical education was thoroughly supervised by his father. While studying law at the University of Buenos Aires in the 1830s, he took part in the cultural activities of the young, liberal, and romanticist intellectuals of the so-called “Generation of 1837”. This affiliation paved the way for an oppositional political stand, and, unlike his father, Vicente Fidel went into exile in 1840, sharing the fate of so many companions. In Chile and Montevideo, he struggled to make a literary and academic career, and in the latter city, he also practiced as a lawyer and initiated himself as a historian. Curiously enough, almost half a century before he wrote a textbook on Argentine history, he published a *Manual de la Historia de Chile* (1845), which obtained official approval and was used for several years in the schools of the neighbouring republic. After the defeat of Rosas in 1852, López senior was appointed governor of Buenos Aires, and his son returned home to become his minister of education, embarking on a whole series of reform initiatives. They both fell from power very soon, however, because they unsuccessfully defended Urquiza’s federal project in the hostile legislative assembly of Buenos Aires. Vicente Fidel once more went abroad for some years.

The incident is in some sense illustrative. López never became as identified with the new Argentine order that appeared after Caseros as, for instance, his rival in the field of history writing, Bartolomé Mitre did. On the other hand, he could hardly be called an outsider. Although he tended not to be on the winning side in political matters (advocating,

⁴⁰¹Tulio Halperín Donghi: “Vicente Fidel López, historiador”, in Halperín, *Ensayos de historiografía*, 1996, 35–43; the passage quoted above on 41: “Porque en las limitaciones mismas de López puede hallarse a la vez su virtud más alta, mientras no se busque en su *Historia* lo que ya se sabe que no ha de encontrarse en ella: un relato eruditamente objetivo, un relato no centrado en la historia de un municipio y del grupo que gobernaba ese municipio. Porque no es ni historia objetiva ni, en el sentido más verdadero, historia nacional, puede ser lo que es: la póstuma autobiografía de una clase política.”

among other things, parliamentarianism and protectionism), he held high political and professional posts: rector of the University of Buenos Aires from 1868, congressman in the 1870s, minister of finance under President Carlos Pellegrini after the crisis in 1890. Principally however, he dedicated himself to historical studies and writings.⁴⁰²

Vicente Fidel López only made his contribution to the rapidly emerging field of history didactics late. In 1889–1890 he published a two-volume *Compendio de la historia argentina, adaptado a la enseñanza de los colegios nacionales*, accompanied by a guide to the study of the subject: *Reordenación metódica y anotación del texto de Historia Argentina que se sigue en los Colegios Nacionales* (1890). In 1896, his textbook was re-edited in a single volume under the title *Manual de la Historia Argentina*, to be analysed in what follows.⁴⁰³ In 1898, it was one of no more than three textbooks on Argentine history that received the first official authorization for use in the public secondary colleges of the republic (the other two were Fregeiro's and Teijeiro Martínez's textbooks).⁴⁰⁴ I have not been able to establish how many editions were made of the text. (The author himself would not revise it: Some time after the tragic death of his son, Lucio Vicente, killed in a duel in 1894, he withdrew from all professional and public activities.) Nor do I know to what extent the work was actually used as a textbook. Given the prestige of the author, however, it seems a reasonable guess that the *Manual* would at least be frequently resorted to for several years as a reference book in college libraries.⁴⁰⁵

With regard to the quantitative distribution of historical periods, the *Manual* presented certain atypical features compared with other textbooks of the time. First, López was not in tune with the new tendency to refocus the colonial – in particular the early colonial – period: Of a total of 536 pages in the small print 1937 edition,⁴⁰⁶ only 180 pages (33,6%) deal with

⁴⁰²Although in this area too, he championed some causes of unlikely success: In several writings, including a book published in French translation (*Les races aryennes du Pérou*, Paris: 1871), he argued that the indigenous peoples of Peru, and the *Quechua* language, were really of *Aryan* origin.

⁴⁰³Vicente Fidel López, *Manual de la Historia Argentina* (Buenos Aires: C. Casavalle, Editor, 1896). My analysis will mainly be based on the 1937 edition, which is practically identical with the one from 1896, except for minor, mainly orthographic, corrections: Vicente Fidel López, *Manual de la Historia Argentina*, edition number not indicated (1st ed. 1896) (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Argentinos, L. J. Rosso, 1937).

⁴⁰⁴AGN, MJIP/DIP, *Decretos Originales*, file 18, decree of 28.1.1898.

⁴⁰⁵Jorge M. Saab and Carlos M. Suárez claimed that López's *Manual* was a prolonged and influential success, in particular in the colleges of education (the *normalista* educational sector), lasting through the first half of the 20th century. Saab and Suárez, "La invención de López", 61 and 72. I have not been able to find editorial evidence of such a continued, wide-spread use – in contrast to the almost omnipresent traces of for example Grosso's or Levene's textbooks in their many editions, and I will accordingly be careful in drawing conclusions in this respect.

⁴⁰⁶The 1937 edition, used here, is extremely compact. This was an edition intended for the general public, and not destined for its original use as a textbook (it had long been completely outdated as such by that time). The

the pre-1810 period, compared with the 355 pages (66,2%) on the independent period. Furthermore, the later colonial history occupies more space than the initial part, just as in the earliest textbooks (70 pages, 38,9%, of the colonial part is on the discoveries and conquest up to 1580, compared with 110 pages, 61,1%, on the years from 1580 to 1810, of which the Viceregal period takes 32 pages). This distribution clearly contrasts with the order of priorities shown for instance in Fregeiro's textbooks. It also differs from the approach taken by his son Lucio Vicente in his earlier, unfinished textbook, which had pioneered the new assessment of the colonial heritage within the didactics of history.⁴⁰⁷ Obviously, Vicente Fidel López's own century constituted his major field of interest. Furthermore, within the independent period, the *Manual* is unique in the sense that the Rosas period (1829–1852) equals and even slightly surpasses the 1810–1820 decade in terms of the number of pages devoted to it: 156 pages (43,9% of the contemporary part) and 148 pages (41,7%), respectively. Even with Estrada, another author very much occupied with Rosas, this had not been the case. Together, the two periods constituted the axis around which López's history of Argentina was constructed. The *Mayo* decade embodied the decisive political experiences of the generation of his father, whereas the years under Rosas framed the formative experiences of his own generation. As for the remaining periods, the distribution is as follows: 40 pages (11,3% of the space dedicated to the 1810-1880 period) on the decade from 1820 to 1829, and finally the infinitesimal 11 pages (3,1%) on the 28 years following Caseros (1852–1880).

In its qualitative aspects too, López's textbook appeared distinctly opposite to certain new tendencies in history didactics, in particular as embodied by Fregeiro.⁴⁰⁸ To begin with the colonial period: The descriptions of the Spanish conquerors were mostly very negative, and the consequences of the conquest for the natives were presented as disastrous. This moral judgement of the principal actors, however, was not attached to a general anti-*Spanish* attitude. Indeed, one of the distinctive features of this textbook was that López, more than other textbook writers of his times, took pains to relate Argentine with European and in particular Spanish history. The passages inserted on Spain seem to be written with as much sympathy as dislike (amounting to admiration when dealing with the enlightened Bourbon

number of pages in the original 1896 edition was almost double the number in this edition, even though the text is practically identical in both cases.

⁴⁰⁷See Chapter 10.

⁴⁰⁸ López had launched a vehement, public attack against Fregeiro's successful history textbooks before he himself made his own contributions to the genre. Cf. Saab and Suárez, "La invención de López", 64–65.

Spain of the eighteenth century).⁴⁰⁹ Nor was there any real appreciation of the indigenous cultures. The Amerindians were viewed as savages, *salvajes*, but above all as the pitiful victims of the abusive conduct of the *conquistadores*.⁴¹⁰

A relative exception was made for the Guaranis, whose culture was described as more “advanced”, employing words of honour within the contemporary ideology of civilization such as “confederation”, “administrative and religious centre”, “provinces” and even “nation”. The Spanish conquest meant “painful slavery”, and with this background, the later Jesuit missions were seen, not as an ideal society, but indeed as a preferable alternative to the *encomienda*, which was condemned in strong words. All this in spite of the rationalist perspective López usually adopted in religious matters. Consequently, when dealing with the rebellion of the *comuneros*, his sympathy definitely lay with the Jesuits, and the intervention of governor Zabala against Antequera and the *comuneros* was seen as perfectly natural.⁴¹¹ On every point listed here, Fregeiro had taken a diametrically opposite stand, as we have already seen.⁴¹² Accordingly, the heroes of one narrative might become the scoundrels of the other. The governor of Paraguay, Domingo Martínez de Irala, may serve as an exquisite example here: Admired by Fregeiro, in the *Manual*, López presented him as a villain of the deepest dye. He was also explicitly likened to the political figures López hated most in his own century: *Doctor Francia* of Paraguay and, of course, Rosas.⁴¹³

Only two heroes stand out against this sombre background in López’s tale of the Spanish conquest: Garay, the founder of Buenos Aires (in the definitive, second foundation of

⁴⁰⁹V. F. López, *Manual*, 1937, 138–140, 145–149, 152–156.

⁴¹⁰Ibid., 44ff. for example, on Mendoza, 51: “Don Pedro de Mendoza era como los militares de su tiempo, una mezcla abominable de héroe y de bandido, sin escrúpulos ni la más pequeña dosis de sentido moral. Lo mismo eran los subalternos que trajo, Juan de Ayolas, Domingo Martínez de Irala ...”. The most vehement attacks were directed against Irala, as shown below.

⁴¹¹Ibid., 52ff (on the Guaraní civilization and the evil nature of the *encomienda*); 81 (for an instance of the author’s rationalist view of “las idolatrías católicas”); 90, 92–96 (on the Jesuit missions—adding a condescending comment on the Jesuits of his own time, though assigning them a possible function as teachers in the classical languages...); 141ff (on the *comuneros* – stating his views as pointed out above, but at the same time dismissing the wars with the Indians as issues historically unimportant to the “progreso de la sociabilidad colonial”, a curiously arrogant position which, however, demonstrated Lopez’s disparagement of the native element in the formation of the colonial culture(s), an attitude compatible with his moral condemnation of the suppression of the indigenous peoples); 149 (deploring the cession of mission territories to the Portuguese in 1750); 156–157 (ambivalent on the expulsion of the Jesuits).

⁴¹²See Chapter 10 above on Fregeiro.

⁴¹³V. F. López, *Manual*, 1937, 52–63 (p. 63: “... fué [Irala] un capitán perverso, corrompido y sanguinario, cuyo gobierno como dice Schmidel semejó en la tierra al gobierno de Satanás en el infierno. Exterminó los pacíficos indígenas de la noble raza guaraní y dejó yerma aquella populosa comarca, en toda la parte de ella que los Padres Jesuitas no salvaron y fertilizaron después a su modo”). Cf. Fregeiro’s opposite view: Fregeiro, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1892, 86 and 96–100. López (63) explicitly polemicized against “un aficionado reciente”, who from the context must probably be identified as Fregeiro.

1580), and Hernandarias, the first Creole governor of the region. Garay's name was unfortunately connected to the introduction of the *encomienda*, but in his case, this "parte desgraciada" was presented as an evil product of the time more than of the individual man (a kind of perspective which was never applied to Irala or the other villains of the narrative). Of course, Garay began the history of Buenos Aires and was basically important to López as the founding father of the community that constituted the essential subject of this textbook.⁴¹⁴

Already when dealing with the colonial period, the Buenos-Aires-centred perspective and the author's *porteño* pride were unabashedly exposed in various ways. From the outset, López unfavourably compared Asunción and Paraguay, as well as Tucumán and the interior, with Buenos Aires and its province, announcing and enhancing the latter city's predominant role in the independent period.⁴¹⁵ The contrast between the attention given to Buenos Aires and its *Gobernación*, on one hand, and the scant information provided on the interior – the *Gobernación de Tucumán* and the Cuyo region – on the other, is really astonishing. Merely nine pages covered Tucumán and the provinces of the interior, of which four in reality dealt with the background story of the conflicts in Peru, and the remainder dedicated as much attention to the bizarre whims of two abominable torturous governors as to the foundation and development of towns and cities. This means that the repopulation of Buenos Aires in 1580 alone, with a wealth of topographic details, approximately equalled the net space assigned to the colonial history of the interior.⁴¹⁶

The history of the pre-independent period also provided the author with opportunities to advance nationalist arguments directed against what would become Argentina's neighbouring countries: Paraguay (as mentioned above), Chile, and Bolivia. The references to contemporary frontier conflicts and ideas of territorial losses were made explicitly.⁴¹⁷ The last

⁴¹⁴V. F. López, *Manual*, 1937, 65–80 (on Garay); 92, 98 and 107–111 (on Hernandarias); 118: "Juan de Garay y Hernandarias brillan como Angeles y Benefactores sobre el bajo nivel de los hombres de su tiempo."

⁴¹⁵Ibid., 81 (on the colonists who moved from Paraguay to the new settlement of Santa Fe, recurring to the topos of the free spirit of the pampas: "... deseosos de salir del encierro paraguayo a cuyas puertas parecía estar siempre de guardia el esqueleto fatídico de Irala; para respirar los aires libres de las llanuras y de las anchas aguas del Plata en una ciudad nueva y libre de tantos y tan aborrecibles resabios, como los que conservaba en su seno y en sus hábitos el régimen constituido por aquel malvado"); 104–106 ("Marcha latente de Buenos Aires al predominio de la vida comercial en la sociabilidad Sud-americana"); 123 ("La gobernación de Buenos Aires fué siempre de un carácter mucho más templado y correcto que la del Paraguay y que la de las otras provincias"); 159 (on Buenos Aires as the capital of the new viceroyalty: "Buenos Aires por sus vigorosos elementos, había llegado a ser el centro comercial y político más importante de todas las colonias españolas del Sur ... la evolución progresiva había continuado su inevitable y rápido desarrollo; y ahora era indispensable sacarlo de toda dependencia local y elevarlo a virreinato").

⁴¹⁶Ibid., 77–80 (on the repopulation of Buenos Aires) and 112–120 (on Tucumán and the interior).

⁴¹⁷Ibid., 114–115 and 119–120 (on Chile and the Cuyo: "... el territorio de Cuyo que los gobernadores de Chile seguían usurpando"); 118 (on Bolivia and Tarija: "... está [Tarija] hoy incluida en la [provincia *sic*] de Bolivia,

stage of colonial rule was presented as preparatory to the Argentine nation to come. The Viceroyalty laid out an administrative structure that would serve as the basis for the new country.⁴¹⁸ Just as much emphasis was put on the establishment of cultural and educational institutions, in particular the Colegio de San Carlos, through which his father's "generation of patriots" ("una grande y noble familia de patriotas") had received their classical education.⁴¹⁹ The ground was then made ready for the process of genuinely national consciousness-raising, sparked off by the British invasions (and their rejection). Compared with earlier interpretations there was nothing new in this dating of the origins of the "proto-nation". The democratic nature of the process that would soon lead up to *Mayo* was asserted: "La masa se sentía PUEBLO, y el pueblo se sentía SOBERANO" (the author's capitals).⁴²⁰

López drew the picture of a colonial society, which was essentially harmonious, homogeneous, and thriving, on the verge of revolution and independence.⁴²¹ This is the only part of the text in which considerable attention was given not only to political, but also to economic, social, and demographic elements. The entire description was permeated with a basic optimism (and, one might add, in this respect father and son López were in accordance). In other instances of a similar nature, we have read this attitude as a reflection of the self-confident spirit of the new Argentina of the late nineteenth century. In the case of López, another approach might seem just as plausible: What López expressed here might be his

por usurpación perpetrada por Bolívar en 1825". Cf. also 403 on the Falklands/Malvinas question, an issue often passed over in the textbooks until then. For a short, general survey of territorial nationalism in the region and its use of historical arguments, see Escudé, "Argentine Territorial Nationalism", 1988.

⁴¹⁸V. F. López, *Manual*, 1937, 161ff.

⁴¹⁹Ibid., 162–163.

⁴²⁰Ibid., 176. Here López described the growth of a new Creole consciousness and solidarity, with aspirations of sovereignty. Later (193), the term "nation" was applied to the same situation. After the British invasions "los argentinos comenzaron a pensar que tenían ya medios y fuerzas con qué constituir una nación independiente ...". "Nation" might here be read merely as synonymous of "state" or "country". But on the same occasion López explained the new use of the word *argentinos* with reference to a *nationality*, proudly connecting its emergence with his father's poem "Triunfo argentino", celebrating the recent victories: "un epíteto de nacionalidad política y militar".

⁴²¹See in particular *ibid.*, 184–190. One of the audacious contentions put forward here was that the population ("race") of Argentina (unlike e.g., Peru) at that time was homogeneous, because all the different racial elements were allegedly assimilated into one Spanish culture/"race" (race used here as an exclusively cultural category). Even the Afro-Americans were (189) "asimilados al tipo argentino-nacional" (that is, before the existence of an Argentine nation has been established by the author!). This did not prevent López from revealing strong racial prejudice against the blacks of Buenos Aires (but then again the context was their role as supporters of Rosas, so that the abusive language appeared more than anything as a product of López's fierce *antirrosismo*): "salvajes", "asquerosa multitud", "todas las fieras" (footnote, 189). With regard to the economic development of the colony, the claims were no less bold: "Era, pues, grande el movimiento industrial interno" (185).

nostalgia for the lost Argentina/Buenos Aires of his father's generation, destroyed, in his eyes, by the caudillos and by Rosas and never really regained afterwards.⁴²²

Three marked tendencies stand out in López's presentation of the contemporary period. First, was his close identification with the "May generation", more closely defined as the liberally oriented élite of Buenos Aires that his own father had represented. Secondly, was an unusually violent aversion to the caudillos and their gaucho following, and, last, an equally strong denunciation of Rosas and his regime. Let us now study each of these traits in depth.

According to López, the revolutionary events that took place in the viceregal capital in 1810 constituted a new nation and a new *patria*, in accordance with what had been the *aspiration* of Creole patriots since the British invasions.⁴²³ As usual in the textbooks, the precise meaning of the concept of "nation" was not explained, but it seems clear that it was not only used as a synonym for "independent state". It also entailed the notion of an Argentine "nationality", as shown in López's comments on the new, self-conscious usage of the term *argentino*, with reference to a Creole nationality. The geographical and social extension of the object designated by the term had been, however, rather undefined in this early period, and it remained so in López's text. On one occasion, López employed the word "Argentine" in a peculiarly restricted manner, arrogantly reserving it for the specific socio-political segment of society with which he himself identified (in the concrete context referring to the enlightened, liberal opponents of Rosas): "the *Argentine class*" (italics added).⁴²⁴ The contention here is not that this is the typical usage of the word in the text. It is not. It is an exceptional instance, but still quite a revealing one: In two words we have a condensed linguistic formula, which renders plain the reductionist perspective with which López approached questions of the nation and the national interest.

As regards the political and military developments following the May events, López dealt both with the armed struggle against the royalist armies and with the internal political conflicts among the independentists, but the latter clearly constituted his focus of interest. Characterizations and evaluations of a large number of individual participants made up an important part of the text, revealing sympathies and antipathies that did not always follow party lines. Nevertheless, the author's personal political commitment set the tone on

⁴²²Cf. the implicit sarcasm, directed against contemporary Argentina, in the following statement – the occasion was the Creole victory over the British invaders: "Cuando un país no está mercantilizado, el patriotismo vence hasta lo imposible." Ibid., 174.

⁴²³Ibid., 193 and 208.

⁴²⁴Ibid., 516: "los sentimientos políticos de *la clase argentina*" (italics added).

practically every page. His position may well be styled “unitarian” in the sense that, from the outset, he sided with those who advocated a unified republic in which the political élite of Buenos Aires would naturally (in a literal sense: by virtue of natural superiority) assume the leadership at this early stage. Conversely, he censured the claims made by representatives of the other provinces.⁴²⁵ Even so, certain amplifications must be added. Unitarianism in Buenos Aires, in particular regarding the decade of the 1820s, is usually closely associated with the circle led by Bernardino Rivadavia – a political personality generally favourably viewed in the textbooks analysed so far. López, on the contrary, showed a strong dislike for Rivadavia, criticizing him at every opportunity.⁴²⁶ Among the liberal leaders he preferred other positive figures of identification, such as (with some reservations) Alvear, whom his father had served until his downfall in 1815, or Las Heras, whose reign in the province of Buenos Aires in the mid-twenties in the eyes of López came close to representing *the* golden moment of the history he was telling: “En ninguna otra época ha tenido la provincia de Buenos Aires una situación más próspera, más libre, más cómoda: una administración más correcta...”⁴²⁷

The author’s political bias did not necessarily imply a general anti-federalist attitude. Liberal and moderate representatives of federalism (in particular when showing urbane manners) did not arouse his animosity. Thus, he wrote with sympathy on Dorrego as well as on Balcarce and Viamonte.⁴²⁸

Ultimately, López’s most deeply rooted loyalty lay with the Buenos Aires that existed before Rosas. This delimited and retrospective patriotism found a variety of expressions, some of which reeked of unveiled chauvinism. For instance, when admitting that a “localist” spirit also developed in Buenos Aires, he argued that while the other provincial localisms always had been “antinational”, the one in the capital was a “national localism” *because* it aspired to rule on behalf of all!⁴²⁹ One cannot but wonder: How would statements like this be read in colleges in Entre Ríos or Córdoba, even with the distance of time from the 1890s?

⁴²⁵Ibid., for example, 215ff; 228–229 (“Así terminó la malhadada ambición de los Diputados provinciales ... prefirieron echarse en un sendero tortuoso, mantener una forma de gobierno anómala, arbitraria; y anarquizar las pasiones ...”); 249; 281; 299; 322ff; 334–335; 349; 361–362.

⁴²⁶Ibid., 229; 235; 238; 286–287; 361; 366; 374.

⁴²⁷Ibid., 363. On Alvear: 236ff; 255; 257; 262 (a critical remark); 271–272; 273ff; 345–346.

⁴²⁸Ibid., 246–247; 261; 272; 347; 350; 377–378; 395–401 (on Dorrego, Balcarce, Viamonte and the federalism in Buenos Aires).

⁴²⁹Ibid., 349: “el espíritu local de Buenos Aires podría llamarse desde entonces un ‘localismo nacional’, a diferencia del espíritu de las demás provincias que había sido siempre un ‘localismo antinacional’” – because the élite of Buenos Aires still (after the breakdown of the fragile union in the 1820s) considered their province to be the “entidad dirigente dueña del primer rango, y como punto representativo natural y tradicional de la vida común de los demás”. Cf. 385 on “el ciego criminal localismo de los provincianos, cultos e incultos”. See also

The disproportionate attention given to a socially and geographically narrow field made possible a personal tone in the narrative, which is quite unusual in a textbook. López wrote about the milieu in which he grew up and about the people who had made up the social circles of his own family. And he made a point of it. For example, on more than one occasion he adduced as his sources what his father – or some other unnamed, but trustworthy man – told him; or what Vicente Fidel had seen with his own eyes (and he must have been a penetrating observer); or he joked about being the only sibling of the national anthem.⁴³⁰ López weaved his family background and his own life into the history of the nation and with them, the loyalties, the enmities, the political partisanship, the undisguised subjectivity, the passion. This made him extremely vulnerable as a historian. This is probably also what makes the text attractive – though perhaps not so much as a textbook.

Throughout the text, López showed himself as constant in his aversions as in his affections. The principal villain of his national plot was, beyond doubt, the provincial caudillo:

Si el gauchaje y las chusmas litorales no hubieran estorbado el establecimiento del régimen nacional en 1819, el país se hubiera constituido entonces y sería hoy uno de los puntos más prósperos y poderosos del mundo civilizado. ... Todas sus desgracias y la decadencia en que ha vivido por medio siglo (de 1819 a 1865) provienen del alzamiento de los caudillos Artigas, Ramírez [sic] y Estanislao López.⁴³¹

To López, the caudillos were not only the major obstacle to the formation of a modern, Argentine nation-state. What was at stake were the very foundations on which his world rested, his civilized and urban society, based on hierarchical order and de facto privilege, but imbued with enlightened culture. At least this seems the most reasonable explanation of the unexampled vehemence unfolded over and over again when the author approached the subject. López's *Manual* represents by far the most extreme anti-caudillism found in the textbooks. In reality, even if it was a major theme in his book, he never attempted to analyse the phenomenon. He just attacked, storming and raging.

236ff (born in Corrientes and Misiones, respectively, San Martín and Alvear were both proudly presented as "hijos de la provincia de Buenos Aires" in accordance with the ancient administrative division); 267; 281; 307; 344; 355 (internal conflicts in La Rioja and Catamarca were dismissed as "rencillas sangrientas de aldea sin bandera ni fines políticos" – maybe so, but the author would never describe conflicts in the capital, however petty or personal their nature, in similar terms); 356ff; 361–362 (the Argentines as brothers fighting over the inheritance, Buenos Aires being the sensible big brother, and "por fortuna los lotes eran desiguales"); 396; 408–409 (again on provincial conflicts which did not involve Buenos Aires: "rencillas mezquinas", "miserable gresca", "insignificante incidente"); 428n1; 506 and 533–535 (Urquiza, with whom López sympathized, was presented as a *porteño*, born in Buenos Aires, notwithstanding his birth certificate and his own opinion in this matter: "se hacía pasar por entrerriano" – cf. Piccirilli, *Los López*, 141–142).

⁴³⁰V. F. López, *Manual*, 1937, 254–255. Cf. also for example, 417–419; 428; 464–465; 468; 494.

⁴³¹*Ibid.*, 545.

Of all the despicable caudillos verbally executed by López, José Gervasio Artigas (with Rosas) stood out as the chief object of hatred in the text. (In this, as in several other respects, López's textbook appears diametrically opposed to Fregeiro's.)⁴³² Artigas was brought to represent the entire category, and was depicted as a *gaucho malo* in gloomy colours: cruel, savage, obscurantist, sly, treacherous, greedy for power, demagogic, et cetera. The dehumanizing imagery deployed in these attacks reached a peak when López staged the final act in the drama of Artigas: Defeated by the *entrerriano* caudillo Ramírez, Artigas resorted to Paraguay and the Paraguayan dictator Francia, an exile from which he would never be allowed to return. But then in the textbook this was about three animals and appeared more as a zoological case than as an historical event:

El toro bravío [=Ramírez] le da allí la gran cornada [a Artigas] ... El yahuar [=Artigas] se atrinchera en Abalos, su límite entre la vida y la muerte. La otra fiera salta la trinchera y destripa al famoso "Jefe Supremo y Protector de los Pueblos Libres"... Allá va huyendo ahora a brincos desesperados; y se asila en el Paraguay donde una Gorgona moderna condena a los que la miran a no ver más la luz; pugilato de tres bestias feroces en resumen: ¡Artigas, Ramírez y Francia!⁴³³

According to López, the fight against the provincial caudillos must forcibly be the overriding concern for the liberal leaders. From this premise, he drew several conclusions that were not usually found in the textbooks. For instance, he approved all attempts to reach an alliance between Buenos Aires and Portugal and the Portuguese occupation of the Banda Oriental – because it meant a blow to Artigas.⁴³⁴ More conspicuously, López went right against the

⁴³²Cf. Chapter 12 above on Fregeiro.

⁴³³V. F. López, *Manual*, 1937, 348. Cf. also 213 ("... un gaucho malo, que apareció entonces y que, favorecido por el desorden social, alcanzó a tener uno de los nombres más notorios y siniestros del Río de la Plata: y que fué una de las grandes verguenzas, de las grandes manchas de nuestra historia, cuya filiación funesta aún no está del todo extinguida"; "un cachafaz de la peor clase", etc.); 223; 232–233; 234; 242–244 (criticizing later attempts to defend Artigas's case); 249–252 (particularly explicit!); 257–259; 267; 275 ("Allí [in Entre Ríos and Corrientes under the sway of Artigas] pereció completamente la sociedad humana"); 281–282; 284 ("las hordas del artiguismo aullando como lobos hambrientos"); 295; 300; 302; 307; 324 ("Los caudillejos provinciales que surgieron como la espuma que fermentaba de la inmundicia artiguista ..."); 326–327; 339; 344; 352ff; 371; 426–428; 545–546. A literary-historical approach to this textbook, centring on his "novel" about Artigas, was presented in Sánchez and Maristany, "La 'novela' de Artigas". The authors showed how the elements that made up López's image of the *caudillos* in general, and Artigas in particular, continued a well-established tradition, yet appeared as an original narrative. However, it seems to me that they to some extent exaggerated the scope and endurance of López's version, in claiming that similar views were to be found in other contemporary textbooks, and that the impact of López's book would last nearly half a century: "La obra de López por su difusión en el aparato escolar y su vigencia de casi medio siglo, ayudó de manera significativa a configurar una tradición ..." (144). Fregeiro before López and Levene after him presented very different views on Artigas and the caudillos, and editorial history suggests that their textbooks were more influential. López's "novelistic" tale of Artigas was also compared to the quite different one presented by Fregeiro by the same historians in another article: Jorge Saab, Carlos A. Suárez, José Maristany and Laura Sánchez: "De Fregeiro a Levene: Apuntes para una historia de los manuales de historia", in Rodríguez and Dobaño Fernández, ed., *Los libros de texto*, 71–76 (cf. above, chapter 12).

⁴³⁴V. F. López, *Manual*, 1937, 234, 284–285, 299–300, 301–302, 326–327, 332–333.

rising cult of General San Martín – a singular case in the reviewed textbook material. After praising – though moderately compared with many others – his achievements until the liberation of Chile, San Martín's continued action in Chile and, above all, the expedition to Peru, were most severely censured in strong and bitter language. Favouring foreign interests, these campaigns drained off resources that Buenos Aires should have employed in the interprovincial wars. Moreover, San Martín ought to have obeyed orders and returned home to take an active part in these wars, crushing the caudillos' power once and for all (in López's words: drowning all of them in the river Uruguay!).⁴³⁵ The hypothetical consequences of continued royalist supremacy in Peru and a possible reconquest of Chile were not discussed.

The author's contempt for the provincial caudillos was also extended to the gauchos who made up their armies, and occasionally – so it seems – to the population of the areas where they ruled in general, at least as respects the lower social classes. There is no trace whatsoever in López of the new cult of the figure of the gaucho as the carrier of a national identity. The gauchos, and the lower classes in general, rural and urban, represented primarily a threat to the established social order. They were often described through dehumanizing metaphors as “beasts”. This classist perspective was far from new, though it appeared in a more purely cultivated state than usual in this textbook.⁴³⁶ The new element in the *Manual* was the direct reference to the contemporary rise of revolutionary ideologies, socialism and anarchism, viewed as present dangers. Thus, the “anarchy” of 1820 (in this case the

⁴³⁵Ibid., 338: "Si el general San Martín hubiera querido obedecer a su gobierno, nunca jamás se había presentado una ocasión más favorable para salvar el orden público y el organismo nacional." It would then have been possible to "ahogar en el Uruguay, entre la frontera argentina y las tropas portuguesas ... todos los caudillos montoneros sin dejar uno solo capaz de caminar en dos pies". (Again: the contrast with Fregeiro's text could hardly have been sharper.) Also on San Martín: 236ff; 245; 255; 261; 278; 293; 296–298; 303–314 (303: "[San Martín] se había propuesto convertir en provecho de Chile los recursos económicos y militares de la República Argentina"; 307: "nada le importaba [a San Martín] que las hordas litorales, y aun el mismo Artigas, entrasen después a Buenos Aires" – still López expressed pride in the Argentine military achievements, polemicizing against Chileans who allegedly were trying to pocket Argentine glories, and he twice deplored the fact that, among other things, the Peruvian expedition flew Chilean flags; both in his censure and in his approval, then, López revealed anti-Chilean attitudes – the possible impact of the contemporary frontier dispute has been noted earlier, while unfortunate experiences during his early years of exile may not be all irrelevant either); 318–321 (318: "Si alguna vez lo tuvo, San Martín perdió el amor del suelo argentino, luego que consolidó su fortuna y su gloria en Chile."); 333; 337; 439.

⁴³⁶Ibid., 211; 266–267 (the population of the littoral and the Banda Oriental as made up of a barbarian mixture of Indians and gauchos: "las hordas litorales", "las hordas del gauchaje oriental y litoral", "el avispero de hombres incultos que bullía en las soledades agrestes de Corrientes, de Entre Ríos y de la Banda Oriental", "un enjambre de montoneras bravías ... sin más bandera que el saqueo y el desorden", etc.); 284; 334–335 ("todos los elementos anárquicos, bárbaros, violentos e indisciplinados que urgen en el seno de las masas inorgánicas de todos los países" – with a comparative reference to the Paris Commune); 344; 371 ("un conjunto de caudillejos locales de lo más atroz y depravado que puede engendrar la anarquía en un país de masas incultas y casi primitivas como eran entonces las regiones andinas"); 381; 389–390; 428.

hypothetical sack of Buenos Aires) provided the opportunity for a warning against democratic excesses:

Se esperaba por momentos un saqueo a manos de cinco mil bárbaros desnudos, hambrientos y excitados por las pasiones bestiales que en estos casos empujan los instintos destructores de la fiera humana, que como “multitud inorgánica” es la más insaciable de las fieras conocidas, cosa que debe tener presente la juventud, expuesta por exceso de liberalismo, a creer en las excelencias de las teorías democráticas que engendran las teorías subversivas del socialismo y del anarquismo contra las garantías del orden social.⁴³⁷

In one respect, the reign of Rosas followed the presentation of the caudillos in the text as a related sequence of evils. But in the history of Buenos Aires (and this is more than anything a history of Buenos Aires), the ascent of Rosas was viewed as a fatal point of rupture.

Rhetorically, the *antirrosista* chapters of the *Manual* appear to follow Estrada’s example. Estrada had been at least as vehement in his attacks, but López elaborated much more on the issue.⁴³⁸ As has been shown, the denunciation of Rosas as a brutal tyrant was commonplace in the textbooks. It was one of the points of agreement in texts that otherwise differed in many respects. What made López’s account singular here was that it dedicated more attention to this period than any of the earlier books had done. Again, his engagement with the subject seems to spring, in part at least, from his own personal and political biography, profoundly marked by his experiences as an oppositional exile, whereas his father had prudently sought to conform to the situation established by Rosas in Buenos Aires. (López carefully pointed out that many respectable citizens were attracted to the new governor from the outset.)⁴³⁹

Broadly, López’s presentation followed patterns already studied in other texts. The legal basis of Rosas’s position as a governor was pointed out, the true nature of his regime being described, however, as that of a personal dictatorship. It enjoyed a certain degree of popular support (“el caudillaje popular”),⁴⁴⁰ but chiefly, it rested on military victories, and maintained and exercised itself by resorting to military expedients and, progressively in the second period, by terror. In this way, Rosas’s brand of federalism was characterized as having developed in a unitarian and militaristic way. As his main opponent, General Paz was also described as presenting the alternative of a military dictatorship, the dichotomy between

⁴³⁷Ibid., 341–342.

⁴³⁸Ibid., 380–535 on the 1829–1852 period.

⁴³⁹Ibid., 389–390.

⁴⁴⁰Ibid., 380 (cf. 381 on Rosas in 1829: “en andas de una popularidad incuestionable, aunque plebeya y de baja esfera”).

the two old parties began to lose meaning in the 1830s.⁴⁴¹ This was not all new, but the view was expressed in a manner that might be interpreted as having a bearing on events that were more recent as well (we might for instance see an indirect reference to President Roca):

“todos los gobiernos que emergen de un triunfo militar llevan en sí este caracter ‘doblemente maligno’”.⁴⁴²

Rosas himself was described as a sly and intelligent, overambitious and cynical despot, still following an established tradition.⁴⁴³ On the other hand, López’s sympathy covered practically all those who opposed Rosas on various occasions, regardless of former political affiliations. First, he embraced the frustrated endeavours of the liberal federalists in 1833–1834.⁴⁴⁴ The author even approved of the late Facundo Quiroga in his last moment before the caudillo of the interior was assassinated in 1835, because his constituent initiative represented a grand, though lost, opportunity.⁴⁴⁵ (López dedicated 25 pages to the murder of Quiroga, arguing that Rosas must have connived at the conspiracy, though not claiming that he had actually ordered the crime. Compare this with the 11 pages that covered the entire period from 1852 to 1880!) Furthermore, all the attempts to organize military campaigns or stir revolts against Rosas were accounted for with an astonishing wealth of detail. Likewise, the role of the Argentine exiles was emphasized and exalted as singularly heroic (with López modestly refraining from bringing his own name forth here).⁴⁴⁶ Finally, a very positive presentation was given of Urquiza (and, at this stage, of the political development in the Mesopotamian provinces in general). Thus, López enthusiastically followed the advance of the “Great Army” until the victory at Caseros.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴¹Ibid., 383: "Por consiguiente, la denominación de 'federales' y 'unitarios' tendía a perder su sentido real, para convertirse en mero disfraz de cosas y de hechos substancialmente contradictorios." Cf. 386: "El partido federal estaba pues transformado en un despotismo esencialmente unitario y militar. La lucha quedaba trabada entre dos dictadores militares: la [sic] de Córdoba y la [sic] de Buenos Aires."

⁴⁴²Ibid., 380–381. My interpretation on this point does not seem unreasonable in the light of López's concluding remarks on 545–546 (quoted below).

⁴⁴³Ibid., 388 ("un malvado ambicioso e inclemente"); 406 ("... no había nacido con bastante elevación moral para pensar en cambiar los poderes monstruosos de caudillo omnipotente, temido y sanguinario que ya tenía en sus manos, por la gloria que podía haber ilustrado su nombre en la historia de su desgraciada patria."); 407 ("déspota patricio de rasgos imperiales", "Esta clase de hombres, una vez lanzados no retroceden ... caen sin abdicar."); 432–433 ("Rosas desapareció sin dejar una sola institución, una sola mejora en los diversos ramos que constituyen las tareas obligatorias del gobierno", "el despotismo de un loco atrabiliario que cae en la categoría de los poderes africanos").

⁴⁴⁴Ibid., 393, 395–401.

⁴⁴⁵Ibid., 406–431. Quiroga's performance on earlier occasions had been censured, cf. 370 and 392.

⁴⁴⁶Ibid., 443–535 (in addition to Rosas's conflicts with European powers, the military and political resistance to Rosas, from within or by the exiles, takes up practically all these pages).

⁴⁴⁷Ibid., 470ff, 506, 515, 527–530, 533–536, 546: "El pronunciamiento del general Urquiza contra el tirano, es el primer paso dado entre nosotros hacia el régimen federal 'constituido en unidad nacional'."

At that point, however, López's commitment seemed to evaporate. What followed was not savoured as the fruits of victory in the text. The political events from 1852 to 1880 were covered in a scant and detached resume on a few pages.⁴⁴⁸ One reason may be that this period had not formed part of his major historical work, and the final chapter here was perhaps added rather hastily in order to round off the textbook version. However, there may be more to it than that, though at this point it is difficult to exceed the category of speculative conjectures. As explained earlier, Vicente Fidel López might appear as somewhat less identified with the new political order of the Argentine Republic than some of the other textbook writers, even if he came to hold important posts within it.⁴⁴⁹ His own political career on coming home in 1852 had been an immediate failure, and even if his later public career was far from being unsuccessful, why would he set out to praise what to a considerable degree had been the work of his principal rival, Mitre?

Anyway, within these narrow limits, López provided an ordinary and, for this author, unusually unbiased outline of the main political developments in the three decades concerned. Sympathy with Urquiza's position in the conflict with Buenos Aires in the early 1850s shone discretely through (and, conversely, an indirect censure of the leaders of the capital who opposed the constituent work at Santa Fe). The presidencies of the 1860s and '70s were briefly referred to without either praise or blame – only Roca's successful campaign against the indigenous tribes merited an assenting nod.

However, when the author concluded his tale, reflecting on the federalization of his city of Buenos Aires in 1880 and on the vicissitudes of political practices, elements of ambivalence and outright scepticism vis-à-vis the present state of affairs were introduced, which left the ultimate conclusion suspended in mid-air:

Con la capitulación de la ciudad de Buenos Aires el orden político de la nación quedó integrado ... Pero por desgracia el organismo interno quedó afectado por el origen y caracteres violentos de la victoria armada que la había establecido con demasiado exclusivismo y presión militar.

...

La obra relativa de los hombres y de las generaciones que se sucedan en la serie de los tiempos, consistirá en perfeccionar la verdad y la vitalidad de las funciones administrativas y de los actos electorales, para ir desalojando poco a poco el personalismo injertado en las prácticas políticas por la tradición de las victorias militares y de las conquistas internas que han decidido hasta hoy del triunfo de los partidos y de las transmisiones del gobierno. Por desgracia, parece que aun estamos algo lejos de ese resultado.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁸Ibid., 536–546.

⁴⁴⁹ Cf. Comments along the same lines in Saab and Suárez, “La invención de López”, 71.

⁴⁵⁰V. F. López, *Manual*, 1937, 545–546.

Admittedly, even López added a passage on the natural riches and the bright economic prospects of the Republic. Even so, his history can hardly be seen as leading up to any clear vision of contemporary Argentina and its future. At most, he pointed to the challenging legacy of the 1853 constitution, whose principles were still a programme, as much as a given reality.

López's story of Argentina's past was not structured to meet edifying ends. It was a story of the past in honour of that past. From a socially and geographically limited perspective, the author focused on certain topics from the political history of the first half of the century to which he had been, and remained, emotionally committed. He did so in a deliberately subjective and unusually personal manner, which carried the account far from the conventions of the textbook genre. Although unfortunately I do not have data to support the view, I suspect that as a textbook López's history could hardly score the success one would otherwise have expected given the prestige of the author at the time. Still, López might fascinate as a storyteller recalling and revivifying with affection times inexorably gone. The following exclamation might exemplify the nostalgic mood in the text (on the recomposed revolutionary army after the defeat at Cancha-Rayada, Chile, March 1818): "¡Qué tiempos! ¡Qué hombres! ¿Dónde se han ido ¡por Dios!...; en qué manos ha caído el espíritu que los animaba?"⁴⁵¹

⁴⁵¹Ibid., 312. The literary nature and qualities that characterized López's prose even in his textbooks were emphasized in Jorge Saab, Carlos A. Suárez, José Maristany and Laura Sánchez: "De Fregeiro a Levene: Apuntes para una historia de los manuales de historia", in Rodríguez and Dobaño Fernández, ed.. *Los libros de texto*, in particular 68–69.

15. The success story historians loved to hate: the “Grossos”

In the introductory chapter of this work, one particular textbook was cited in order to take us the first steps into the universe of Argentine history didactics.⁴⁵² It was one of two history texts written by Alfredo Bartolomé Grosso (1867–1960), and whose singular importance, at least in quantitative terms, admits of no doubt: The *Nociones de historia nacional*, for the primary school, and the *Curso de historia nacional*, for the secondary level, were re-edited over and over again from their first appearance in 1893 until the early 1960s. I have not been able to establish the total number of editions of the *grosso chico* and the *grosso grande*, as the two textbooks were commonly nicknamed, but it must have been high indeed. According to one source, approximately 1,3 million copies were printed altogether, something that indicates a considerably higher number of readers or students.⁴⁵³

Two problems arise when we consider the editorial success of the *grossos*. First, why is it so difficult to come across early editions of texts that were printed in so large numbers and used so widely? Neither in libraries nor in antiquarian bookstores can one expect to find anything but relatively late editions, if any at all. For that reason, the analysis on the following pages is based on various editions, none of them being earlier than 1917⁴⁵⁴.

Secondly, why are the references to these texts – and to their author – so few and brief in the relevant bibliography? Works on history textbooks of the period may omit any

⁴⁵² Grosso, *Nociones*, 1959. See Chapter 1.

⁴⁵³ "Este es Grosso", *Gente*, 68. (The magazine also mentioned "some sources" giving figures as high as 2 million copies.) See also Eduardo Giménez, *Aquel Ramos Mejía de Antaño: Historia de la ciudad y sus habitantes*, web edition used here: <http://www.magicaweb.com/ramosmejia/> (visited June 11, 2013), Chapter X, Part 4. Grosso's textbooks themselves never provide us with the edition number on the colophon page – each edition is merely described as "new", "newly reformed and augmented", etc. In the postscript to the 1933 edition of the *grosso chico*, the author claimed that until then, the number of successive editions of the book "equalled its years of existence". Alfredo B. Grosso, *Nociones de historia argentina*, edition number not indicated (1st ed. 1893) (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Federico Rossi, 1933), 220. There is some confusion regarding the date of the first edition of the *grosso grande*, the *Curso*: Rómulo Carbia, without giving a precise date, placed it in the "after 1897" period: Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 309; Emiliano Endrenek dated it to 1898: Emiliano Endrek: "La enseñanza de la historia argentina y americana. 1. Nivel primario", in *La junta*, vol. 2, 370n47. However, I have chosen to trust the information provided for example on the colophon page of the 1961 edition: "PRIMERA EDICION: AÑO 1893". Alfredo B. Grosso, *Curso de Historia Nacional*, edition number not indicated (1st ed. 1893) (Buenos Aires: Editorial Crespillo, 1961). Grosso also wrote a third history textbook, on colonial history, entitled *Historia Argentina y Americana (época colonial)*, which I have not had the opportunity to consult (references in other textbooks, for example in Grosso, *Curso*, 1961).

⁴⁵⁴ The statement above expresses more than anything my personal experiences. Editions of the *grosso grande* used here: Alfredo B. Grosso, *Curso de Historia Nacional*, edition number not indicated (1st ed. 1893) (Buenos Aires: 1917); Alfredo B. Grosso, *Curso de Historia Nacional*, edition number not indicated (1st ed. 1893) (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Federico Rossi, 1932); Alfredo B. Grosso, *Curso de Historia Nacional*, edition number not indicated (1st ed. 1893) (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Federico Rossi é Hijo, 1936); Grosso, *Curso*, 1961.

reference to Grosso, or they may include a dry mention without any further comment, let alone analysis. Moreover, when we do find comments on the *grossos*, a closer examination may reveal them to be mere reproductions of critical remarks from Grosso's own contemporaries. Specifically, they tend to lean on the authority of the historiographer Rómulo D. Carbia.⁴⁵⁵

The answer to both questions might well be found here, in the early denunciation of Grosso's texts by representatives of academic history writing, a view that would later be more or less generalized as the prevailing public opinion on the matter. Perhaps because of their low prestige in "enlightened" circles, the *grossos* were apparently more easily removed from library shelves than other texts, and historiographers could pass them by in silence. However, to me this is an unacceptable approach if we take an interest in the didactic texts that were actually used in Argentine classrooms.

Rómulo Carbia's global evaluation of history textbooks of his time was presented above in the introduction.⁴⁵⁶ In his view, a few good and innovative textbooks had been published. However, most manuals – for the primary as well as for the secondary level – were considered bad: outdated, mnemonic catalogues of disconnected events, in the worst cases, poor in perspectives and full of errors. And, to the "new school" historian's distress, the bad coin tended to displace the good one. In an article on the issue, he could therefore launch his main attack against one of the most popular textbooks: the *grosso chico*.⁴⁵⁷

But if there were not more to Grosso's textbooks than this, the prolonged and unequalled success of these texts would remain next to inexplicable. In reality, when

⁴⁵⁵ Fernando Devoto, for example, did not include the *grossos* in his corpus. Devoto, "Idea de nación". In this case, the omission might to some extent be justified, as a main focus in this article was the relation between academic and didactic history writing. Alfredo Grosso was not an academic historian. Michael Riekenberg, in his thorough work on the development of a national, historical consciousness in Argentina, only gave a brief footnote reference, and did not inform that there were two different *grossos*. Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 147n6. Emiliano Endrek, in an evaluation of history textbooks used in the primary school, adopted and summarized Carbia's critical position. Endrek, "La enseñanza", in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 362–364. Significantly, Endrek also noted with astonishment how Alfredo Grosso was passed over in historical and biographical dictionaries: "Nos causó extrañeza que este célebre autor de textos escolares de historia argentina no aparezca en los diccionarios históricos y biográficos ..." Ibid., 370n47. In the same volume, Jorge María Ramallo, in his article on the teaching of history in the secondary school, gave a more favorable comment on Grosso's texts. Ramallo, "La enseñanza", in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 382–383. None of the works mentioned here undertook any actual *analysis* of the *grossos*. (See below for further comments on Carbia and Ramallo.)

⁴⁵⁶ See above Chapter 2.3.

⁴⁵⁷ For Carbia's assessment of Argentine history textbooks within a general historiographical context: Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 301–320 (the *grossos* mentioned on 309 among other bad, however widespread, texts). Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain Carbia's earlier article on the textbook issue: "Los malos textos escolares: Cómo se enseña historia a los niños", *Nosotros* 12, No. 110, (1918):, 254–262. A summary is found in the article by Emiliano Endrek mentioned above.

approaching the matter, ambivalence rather than mere rejection seems to be the predominating attitude among people who themselves studied with the *grossos*. An inquiry in the magazine *Gente* in 1971 brought forth a host of contradictory opinions, not least statements revealing mixed feelings.⁴⁵⁸ Another case might deepen our understanding of this. In 1996, Jorge María Ramallo published an article on the teaching of Argentine history in the early twentieth century, in which he dealt with Grosso's *Curso* among other didactic texts. Being a professed revisionist, one would expect Ramallo to join the customary denunciation of an "official" or "liberal" history book, all the more since the weak points pointed out by Carbia were commonly recognized. However, Ramallo took a different stand: Although he admitted that Grosso's texts were not highly esteemed by intellectuals, he pointed to their "extraordinary didactic value", citing favourable contemporary statements on the issue. Apparently, this attitude sprung not only from Ramallo's concern for the pedagogic qualities of textbooks, but even from his personal experience: Juvenile readings had left graphic impressions that could not be entirely swept away by intellectual, critical positions assumed later in life.⁴⁵⁹

After these glimpses into the reception history of the *grossos*, it is time to turn to the text itself – and, briefly, to its author.⁴⁶⁰

Alfredo Bartolomé Grosso was born in Mercedes, in the province of Corrientes, in 1867; two years after his parents had emigrated from Genoa. The family went back to Italy for a few years, but returned to settle permanently in Argentina: first in Mercedes, Buenos Aires, and thereafter in the capital. (However, Grosso's Genoese background and the fact that

⁴⁵⁸ "Este es Grosso", *Gente*. For some examples, see Chapter 1 above.

⁴⁵⁹ Ramallo, "La enseñanza", in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 371–386. Ramallo explicitly stated his revisionist sympathies in this article. Citing benevolent comments from Carbia on the revisionist tendency, as well as Ernesto Palacio's attack on the teaching of Argentine history at the time, Ramallo concluded that a patriotic renewal of history didactics must necessarily come from the revisionist school, seen as a current *within* the "new school": "Esta era la realidad de una enseñanza tediosa, que exigía imperativamente una renovación, que debía provenir necesariamente de la *nueva escuela*, sobre todo a través de su expresión *revisionista* que apuntaba decididamente a una revitalización del patriotismo" (374). However, Ramallo maintained the contention that revisionist views were "systematically persecuted" by educational authorities until 1943 and the rise of Peronism: "Frente a ella [la filosofía positivista] trataba de abrirse camino, dificultosamente, la corriente católica y nacionalista – específicamente revisionista en el campo historiográfico –, poniendo el acento en la reivindicación de la verdad histórica sin concesiones. Actitud que les costó a sus sostenedores la persecución sistemática por las autoridades escolares". *Ibid.*, 375; see also 383 and 386n62. The supposed connection between Ramallo's view of Grosso and his own schoolday experiences was confirmed by an interview on the 15.11.1995, in which he told me that Grosso had first aroused his interest in Argentine history, with particular mention of the attractive illustrations. Ramallo's later conversion to revisionism, in the late 1930s, made him react against the "positivist *normalismo*" of which the *grossos* were certainly an expression. Nevertheless, the respectful comments on Grosso in the mentioned article seem to bear witness to Ramallo's loyalty towards his "first love" within the field of history.

⁴⁶⁰ As mentioned above, it is difficult to find information on Alfredo B. Grosso in the usual biographic reference works. The following biographic data is mainly taken from the obituary "Alfredo Grosso", *La Nación*, Buenos Aires: 5.8.1960; the coverage in "Este es Grosso", *Gente*; the information provided by Emiliano Endrek in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 370n47.

he continued to use his Italian mother tongue in private could later be exploited in comments with nationalist overtones.⁴⁶¹) After finishing the superior teachers college, the *escuela normal de profesores*, in 1889, he would practice as a *profesor normal* at various secondary establishments until his retirement in 1928, teaching bookkeeping, accountancy and arithmetic. At the same time, he worked as a public accountant. In the field of history, he was a dedicated amateur, whose readings of Mitre, Domínguez and V. F. López provided him with the material he needed to become a textbook writer. Grosso's professional vocation was undoubtedly that of the conscientious teacher.

The first edition of the *Curso de historia nacional* totalled 125 pages.⁴⁶² Through countless revisions and augmentations, the book expanded, reaching a net total of 617 text pages in the last edition of 1961.⁴⁶³ However, a quantitative analysis of the relative distribution of contents on historical periods shows a remarkable structural stability throughout the long publication history of the textbook, as indicated by the following table:

Distribution of pages on historical periods in the 1917, 1936 and 1961 editions of Alfredo B. Grosso: *Curso de historia nacional*:

	Grosso 1917	Grosso 1936	Grosso 1961
Text pages (net total)	356	477	615
Colonial period (before 1810):	152 (≈42,7%)	204 (≈42,8%)	264 (≈42,9%)
Independent period (1810–):	204 (≈57,3%)	273 (≈57,2%)	351 (≈57,1%)
Within the colonial period (percentages of this particular part):			
Discoveries and conquest (until approx. 1580):	96 (≈63,2%)	114 (≈55,9%)	138 (≈52,3%)
Colonial society and viceregal period (approx. 1580–1810):	56 (≈36,8%)	90 (≈44,1%)	126 (≈47,7%)
Viceregal period alone (1776–1810):	25 (≈16,5%)	59 (≈29,0%)	88 (≈33,3%)
Within the independent period (percentages of this particular part):			
1810–1820:	107 (≈52,5%)	120 (≈44,0%)	135 (≈38,5%)
1820–1829:	27 (≈13,2%)	50 (≈18,3%)	54 (≈15,4%)
1829–1852:	32 (≈15,7%)	56 (≈20,5%)	55 (≈15,7%)
1852–:	39 (≈19,1%)	47 (≈17,2%)	107 (≈30,5%)
1880– alone:	9 (≈4,4%)	10 (3,7%)	52 (≈14,8%)

⁴⁶¹See "Este es Grosso", *Gente*, for some instances (in particular Nicanor de Elía Cavanagh's statements, partly quoted in Chapter 1 above).

⁴⁶² According to the information given in Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, colophon p.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

Except for a steady increase on all periods, there are few significant changes to be found here. The presentation of the early colonial period suffered a slight relative reduction in benefit of the viceregal period. However, the predominant feature regarding the colonial period remained the same: The discoveries and conquest, as well as the later political events leading up to the revolution of 1810, all bulked large in these texts, while the development of colonial society in between received relatively less attention. Regarding contemporary history, the percentage on the decade of revolution and independence was decreased slowly, remaining, nevertheless, by far the most voluminous part in every edition. In the edition of 1936, the sections on the 1820–1852 period expanded somewhat, but not enough to enable us to draw any conclusions (something that would otherwise be tempting, as this period was particularly central to the historiographical debates of the time). In the latest edition, the part dedicated to the most recent developments increased more than the others, but the result is not too impressive: Still in 1961, the ample century between Caseros and the presidency of Arturo Frondizi scarcely covered as much space as the decade of the 1820s alone. The two central issues of the *grosso grande* were, first, the Spanish exploration and conquest of the territory, and, second, the political events of the early nineteenth century. In this, it did not differ from its predecessors or contemporary textbook rivals.⁴⁶⁴

Grosso's presentation of the colonial period did not bring interpretative approaches or points of view that were not found in earlier textbooks. It is not easy to define any distinct, overall perspective that would characterize the text globally. Grosso's prose was generally detached, factual and rather dry, although a more vivid presence of the narrator might occasionally be found in references to curious details or anecdotes.⁴⁶⁵ However, it seems clear that Grosso continued the line of a more positive assessment of the colonial period and of the Spanish heritage begun in the late 1870s and '80s with Fregeiro, Lucio V. Lopez and Benigno T. Martínez. There is no trace here of the strong denunciation of the Spanish conquerors and colonists expressed by Estrada, in particular, and later by Vicente F. López. Grosso, like all textbook authors, admittedly mentioned the conquerors' abusive conduct towards the natives,

⁴⁶⁴ In addition to the quantitative analyses of other textbooks presented above and below, see Devoto, "Idea de nación".

⁴⁶⁵ Examples abound on the pages dedicated to Christopher Columbus: Grosso, *Curso*, 1932, 22–39 and 40–41. Columbus was a central figure in all textbooks that dealt with colonial history, but Grosso paid particularly close attention to the Genoese explorer: 14,5 pages in this edition. Whether his own family origin added anything to his enthusiasm, we cannot tell, but it might perhaps be a reasonable guess. In all the editions I have consulted, the title page was followed by a drawing of the Columbus monument erected in Buenos Aires by the Italian community there. The more peripheral details included a map of the port of Huelva, Spain (*ibid.*, 26), all kinds of minor incidents on the first voyage, and occasional "tabloid" statements like the following: "Pinzón murió pocos días después y se sospechó que sería de envidia y despecho." *Ibid.*, 34.

and he did not go to the lengths Fregeiro had done in his apologetic efforts, for example in rehabilitating the *encomenderos*. Like Fregeiro, Grosso inserted a separate chapter on the various ethnic groups living in the future Argentine territory at the time of conquest, underlining the “barbarian” nature of their cultures, with the usual partial exception made for the Northwest. Apart from an impressive list of tribal names, the student would find little and most superficial information here.⁴⁶⁶ And, again as usual, the rest of the text was written exclusively from the perspective of the colonists. The Amerindians appeared more than anything as a recurrent problem, as a disturbance and a threat to the survival and expansion of the colonial settlements. Implicitly, here as with Fregeiro, the underlying premise seems to be that the colonists represented civilization, to which the uncivilized natives must forcibly submit in the name of a universal law of historical progress, however deplorable the methods employed might be in some instances.⁴⁶⁷

A feature borrowed from Lopez’s *Manual* was a chapter describing colonial society in its last stage, with attention to demographic, social, economic and cultural aspects, which interrupted the otherwise predominantly political narrative. In the latest edition of the textbook, this section expanded to 32 pages, whereas in the earlier editions consulted, it modestly occupied twelve, thus having a limited impact on the global priorities in the presentation.⁴⁶⁸ Unlike López, on the other hand, Grosso avoided the excessive *porteño* bias, achieving a certain balance between the parts dedicated respectively to the colonization of Buenos Aires, the littoral and the interior.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 50–59. Cf. imprecise and almost pointless statements like the following: “Estas tribus hablaban lenguas más o menos diferentes” (53), while the reader would not be informed on basic issues as, for example, whether the Guaranis practiced agriculture.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 41–42 (“... que la esclavitud de las razas indígenas se llevara a un límite excesivo e inhumano”); 61; 71; 85–87 (on the *encomienda*: good intentions, but in practice “abusos incalificables”, “crueldades”, etc.); 107ff (much on “indiadas” and “desmanes” committed by the natives); 123–126 (on the utility of the missionaries – from a rationalist, secular point of view – in pacifying the natives: “... cuya acción era siempre útil y, en ocasiones, imprescindible para conseguir el sometimiento de tribus feroces”); 145–146 (“No fué fácil en todas las regiones del país, someter a los indios y convertirlos en elementos de progreso de las colonias”; with the introduction of the horse: “... se acentuó aún más su instinto de vida libre y salvaje como el bruto que montaban”). The most graphic synthesis of Grosso’s approach to the issue may be found in a drawing in the *grosso chico*: A group of Amerindians, all naked but for the feathers on their heads and across the loins, watch, astonished, the coming of a steaming train, with a laconic caption allusive to Sarmiento: “La civilización y la barbarie”. The very anachronism of the image (in a section dedicated to the discoveries) underlined the universal character of the statement. Alfredo B. Grosso, *Nociones de historia argentina*, edition number not indicated (1st ed. 1893) (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Federico Rossi, 1933), 16, illustration No. 5. The same primary school classic contained an unusually explicit justification of the violence used against the Native Americans by the conquerors and colonists. Ibid., 31.

⁴⁶⁸ Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 219–250 – cf. Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 155–166; Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 182–193.

The viceregal phase of colonial history was presented in its progressive and modernizing aspects, focusing on Bourbon reformatory legislation.⁴⁶⁹ On this background, however, the author had certain problems explaining the wave of revolts towards the end of the eighteenth century. The new laws were seen merely as enlightened and liberal, and hence, implicitly, as beneficial for everyone, not as expressions of an expansive State with new demands on its subjects, above all tax demands. Accordingly, the Tupac Amaru revolt, in particular, was seen as a reaction to local oppression and abuses that would not have taken place had the laws been abided.⁴⁷⁰

As usual in the pro-Spanish interpretations, the shift to identification with Creole patriotism directed against the *peninsulares* might present problems. In Grosso, the passage was rather smooth. On approaching revolution, the text presented the usual explanatory factors (in an unusually pedagogic presentation): The interest conflicts between Creoles and Spanish-born were presented in a sober manner, with nuances that were not commonly found in textbooks (for instance in explaining the differences between Buenos Aires and Montevideo).⁴⁷¹ The British invasions were treated in detail and following the conventional pattern.⁴⁷² They constituted the real turning point: the point of rupture with the colonial past and the starting point for the development of a politically articulate, Creole self-consciousness with a nation-building potential (though still only a latent possibility, and the concept used is that of the “people”, not “nation”⁴⁷³). The influence of the Enlightenment and the impact of the American and French revolutions on the intellectual vanguard of La Plata were emphasized, leaving the impression of a strong internal movement paving the ground for independence, although external, European events were obviously admitted as the immediate cause that triggered off the Spanish-American revolts. There was nothing new in any of this.

The political and military events beginning with the May revolution were told following a detailed, chronological structure – amassing names and battle sites, marching with armies along dotted lines on map after map, installing and removing interim governors by dozens – which could hardly have been all easy for a schoolboy or schoolgirl to come to grips

⁴⁶⁹ Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 179–266.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 186–187.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 190ff; a graphic comparison between Buenos Aires and Montevideo on 258.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, 193–218.

⁴⁷³ Cf. *ibid.*, 206: “El pueblo empezaba a tener conciencia de su derecho, a sentirse soberano.” When discussing the later period of Rosas, Grosso still used the plural form referring to the “peoples” who *desired* to constitute one Argentine nation. Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 319. As with many other key concepts, those of “nation”, “people”, et cetera were never defined or discussed, and the usage was not necessarily consistent.

with. In the *grosso chico*, the author had proved his abilities to simplify and visualize, but here it seems as if the main point was to show himself just as thorough and elaborate as his more erudite predecessors and rivals on the textbook market. Amidst all of this, we might still discern some basic views: To Grosso, as to everyone, revolution and independence wars were a principal source to national pride, and he paid due respect to the by now well-established gallery of *próceres* (with a predilection for Belgrano). In the conflict between unitarians and federalists, the text revealed a moderate, but unmistakable inclination towards the former party. Grosso placed himself solidly within the *anticaudillista* tradition, an aversion which was linked to a general contempt – classist as well as racist – for the uneducated and “barbarian”, popular classes, in particular of the countryside. The Amerindians represented “barbarism” in pure state. However, the really bad guy of the story was, once again, Rosas. Let us have a closer look at each of these traits.

Although the 1810 revolution was presented as an improvised reaction to the downfall of the Spanish *Junta Central*, and not as the product of a well-organized independence movement, Grosso insisted on full independence as the real purpose of the revolutionaries from the outset, in spite of their declarations of loyalty towards Ferdinand VII. According to the author, the Creole leadership was mentally, if not physically, prepared.⁴⁷⁴ Hence, the antirevolutionary stand of the *realistas* was viewed as a logical expression of the interests of the *peninsulares*. There was no defamation of the Spanish in Grosso’s text, though the sympathy clearly lay with the “patriots”, and even radical measures of repression like the execution of the hero from the time of the British invasions, Santiago Liniers, and other opponents of revolution were defended with reference to the precarious circumstances of the moment.⁴⁷⁵

The praise of the national heroes of independence, above all Belgrano and San Martín, followed a conventional pattern. We may note that Grosso did not join in Vicente Fidel López’s rebuke of San Martín for disobeying orders to take his arms against the littoral caudillos.⁴⁷⁶ If the text showed any specific profile at all regarding the *próceres*, it was in the

⁴⁷⁴Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 267–295 (282: "Aunque la Revolución, en su faz material, no había sido preparada ni se habían hecho trabajos par fecha determinada, el acontecimiento encontró, en el acto, suficiente apoyo en todas partes, porque las opiniones individuales estaban hechas y el ambiente general estaba formado."; 295 on independence as the objective of the revolution).

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 284ff and 289–290. When explaining the origin of the Argentine national anthem, Grosso added conciliatory information on the later recommendation not to sing certain parts of the song in order not to hurt Spanish national sentiment. *Ibid.*, 332–333.

⁴⁷⁶ On the contrary, Grosso explicitly defended San Martín's stand, quoting General Paz in that respect (*ibid.*, 396–397 and 411). Other positive references to San Martín in *ibid.*, 316; 225–227; 338–339; 356; 363; 382–389

degree to which Belgrano was given prominence. In particular, his role in creating and using the national flag was an issue even more elaborated here than in the case of Fregeiro, obviously because of the potential of its emotional, patriotic appeal.⁴⁷⁷

The description of the political conflict between centralists and federalists was not excessively biased to the extent found, in particular, in López's *Manual*.⁴⁷⁸ Nevertheless, a pro-unitarian tendency was easily detectable. The presentation of the early disputes between provincial delegates and *porteño* leaders (for example over the inclusion of the former in a *Junta grande*) began without any explicit authorial point of view.⁴⁷⁹ As the story continued, however, Grosso's attitude was progressively outlined both in the pattern of sympathies and antipathies towards individual participants and through general statements. Unitarian leaders like Alvear, Pueyrredón and Rivadavia were idealized, while people who criticized them were characterized as "agitators".⁴⁸⁰ Still, urban and moderate, federal leaders – Dorrego, Balcarce, Viamonte – were mentioned with respect, as in all the textbooks studied, and carefully distinguished from the federalism of the provincial caudillos.⁴⁸¹ There was no doubt,

(on the Andean expedition, with long quotations from Mitre); 410-418 (on the liberation of Peru, the famous summit with Bolívar and San Martín's final withdrawal, emphasizing the unselfish and noble attitude of the Argentine *prócer*). On this point, Grosso was evidently much closer to Mitre than to López.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 278-279; 292-294 (on Belgrano's expedition to Paraguay: The military defeat was only apparent, on second thoughts); 317-318; 327-335 (on the flag; illustration on 329: statue of Belgrano in heroic pose, mounted, flag in hand); 338-339; 364 (citing Mitre's praise of Belgrano, admittedly "in spite of his defeats"); 366-370 (on his role in plotting monarchical projects, apologetically arguing that Belgrano and Rivadavia, republicans by conviction, only sought a way out of a desperate situation – cf. similarly on San Martín 415); 403 (illustration of Belgrano on his deathbed: serene attitude, accompanied by friends). Cf. Fregeiro on Belgrano, see above Chapter 12.

⁴⁷⁸ Cf. the preceding chapter.

⁴⁷⁹ Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 298-299.

⁴⁸⁰ On Alvear: *ibid.*, 316; 345; 354-357 (on Alvear as *director*, admitting that he introduced a de facto dictatorship, but defending it on basis of the circumstances and concluding that the coup that overthrew him did no good: "no mejoró la situación política interna"); 366-370 (understandingly on the plan to offer La Plata to Great Britain). On Pueyrredón: *ibid.*, 306; 360 (the unitarian adherents of Pueyrredón were "la parte más sensata de la opinión"); 371 (Pueyrredón as *director*: "acertada la elección"); 373 (the federal agitation against Pueyrredón was not successful: "Afortunadamente, los principios conservadores prevalecieron en Buenos Aires"; Pueyrredón took office "ceñido con la aureola del primer gobernante nacional que hubiera tenido el país en el curso de siete años de revolución"); 382; 391ff. On Rivadavia: *ibid.*, 366-370 (on his diplomatic missions abroad, referring the monarchical projects with understanding given the circumstances and insisting on his republican conviction); 418-419 (his participation in the government of Martín Rodríguez, "uno de los más progresistas que tuvo el país"); 429-432 (on Rivadavia's own government, praising his reform initiatives, but indirectly admitting that he was responsible for triggering off new internal conflicts); 434; 442-444 (a balance on Rivadavia, including a drawing of the monument to his honor with the Mitrean "Al más grande hombre civil de la tierra de los argentinos", as well as Adolfo Saldías's eulogy). On federal opposition to the afore-mentioned leaders: *ibid.*, 360-361 (deploring the struggle between the parties in general – however, only the federals were labeled as *agitadores*); 372-373 ("el aislamiento provincial (que era lo que entonces se entendía por federalismo)"); 392; 398; 407.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 360 ("satisfacción general" when Balcarce was elected interim governor, although Grosso continued expressing his sympathy with his opponents, the adherents of Pueyrredón – see note above); 432-434 (just like the unitarians, the federal party wanted to "... vencer la anarquía y el caudillismo por medio de la cultura y de la

however, about the general conclusion. While Grosso referred to federalism in a factual way, with few evaluative elements (the key concept hardly being defined, let alone discussed, at all), the approach to unitarianism was outright positive:

Este partido que sostenía el **unitarismo**, creía necesario un gobierno central, fuerte y respetado, que contara con todos los elementos necesarios para llevar adelante, ante todo, la causa emancipadora dejando para después las cuestiones internas. Todos ellos eran republicanos por convicción, y si muchos apoyaban la idea **monarquista**, lo hacían únicamente porque veían peligrar la causa de la emancipación.⁴⁸²

According to Grosso, the backward state of the Argentine provinces made them as yet unfit for federalism. They might prove less governable for the central power than Rivadavia had pretended, but they were certainly not mature enough for autonomy either:

El ilustre Rivadavia, el gran estadista, se equivocó, quizá, al creer que era posible, entonces, someter a los caudillos y a las masas incultas que seguían inconscientemente a aquéllos; pero no lo estaban [sic] menos los que creían que con el federalismo de los mandones, adueñados de las provincias, era posible procurar a éstas los mismos bienes, desde que, en su mayoría, no contaban ni con los elementos intelectuales suficientes para organizar gobiernos capaces, ni con los medios económicos para sostenerlos.⁴⁸³

This passage is at the same time representative of the author's attitude towards the caudillos and the rural masses that followed them. As a historical phenomenon, the *caudillismo* was not really explained in the textbook, but the figure of the caudillo was described as a dictator risen from the military ranks, whose authority rested, first, on the repressive power of his regime, and, secondly, on his ability to attract the masses of rural poor, from whom the gaucho soldiers of his *montoneras* were recruited. These lower classes of the countryside were, in turn, characterized as "semi-barbarian", ignorant, lazy and easily fanaticized, with Grosso borrowing from Sarmiento a racist explanation for the miserable state of affairs (the partially

civilización" (quoting Luis V. Varela)); 445–450 (no explicit evaluation of Dorrego, but a condemnation of Lavalle's decision to execute him ("un gravísimo error") and the important conclusion that if Dorrego had been allowed to continue in office as governor of Buenos Aires, this would probably have prevented the rise of Rosas); Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 293ff (Balcarce as governor in 1833: "buen gobierno", "gobierno *decente*").⁴⁸²Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 392. Cf. the somewhat different tone in the presentation of the federals: "Combatía a Pueyrredón, al Congreso y al partido que los sostenía en la Capital, otro partido del que formaban parte algunos militares distinguidos como Dorrego, Balcarce, French, etc., algunas personas ilustradas, así como una numerosa masa popular. Este partido, **federalista**, quería que las diferentes provincias fueran autónomas y, por consiguiente, combatía la tendencia **unitaria** del Director y del Congreso. ... '**La Crónica Argentina**', desde cuyas columnas atacaban de una manera violenta al Director Pueyrredón, principalmente por motivos de la invasión portuguesa y por el proyecto de monarquía de que tanto se hablaba." Ibid. In this context, the expression "numerosa masa popular" did not necessarily carry positive connotations. The passage quoted was the closest a reader got to an *explanation* of what federalism was all about – the concept had by then been used several times without being defined.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 434.

indigenous origin of the population). Grosso did not participate in the gaucho cult in vogue at the time – a faint touch of admiration might admittedly be perceived in certain descriptions, for instance of the gaucho's equestrian skills, but less so here than in most texts.⁴⁸⁴

Artigas was presented as the prototype of a caudillo: sly, arrogant, cruel and greedy of power (no traces of Fregeiro's alternative view to be found here).⁴⁸⁵ In the same category one found Facundo Quiroga, and, to a lesser extent, Ramírez, Estanislao López, Bustos and others. Their role in Argentine history was viewed as basically negative, and the zenith of their power in the 1820's was a moment of "disorder" and "national dissolution", in which each caudillo ran his province capriciously as if it were his private *estancia*: "Así, aisladas las provincias y sin recursos, cayeron bajo el yugo de caudillos astutos, algunos semi-bárbaros, que las explotaban como cosa propia, algo comparable al manejo de una gran estancia de la época."⁴⁸⁶

Nevertheless, in one instance, Grosso rather inconsistently asserted that the caudillos did not really seek disintegration, and that all commonly shared the ideal of "national unity". It is not easy to see how the author could fit such a statement with others, preceding and following, describing and characterizing what those same leaders actually brought about.⁴⁸⁷

Only one caudillo (if we except Urquiza, who was not presented primarily as a caudillo) stood out as a positive opposite figure, as the honest *gaucho bueno* of the story: Güemes from Salta (no controversial choice: He was a hero in all the textbooks). Güemes was specifically praised *because* he contrasted with Artigas and refused to line up with the littoral caudillos.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 347–350 ("Los caudillos salían siempre de la clase militar, desde que sólo por la fuerza podían llegar al poder y sostenerse en él, y esa fuerza la encontraban en las masas semibárbaras de las campañas que los seguían a todas partes sumisas y fanatizadas."); 389–391; 407; 409; 432–434; Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 311–315 (quoting Sarmiento: "... pues las razas americanas viven en la ociosidad y se muestran incapaces, aún por medio de la compulsión, para dedicarse a un trabajo duro y seguido").

⁴⁸⁵ On Artigas: Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 302, 311–312, 341–342, 347–351, 354, 364 and 382–383. Although Grosso's stand was made clear, the language used was less violent than in the case of V. F. López (see the preceding chapter). Regarding Fregeiro's view, see chapter 12 above.

⁴⁸⁶ Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 407. Cf. *ibid.*, 409: "Este [1820] fué el año de la desorganización completa, en que desapareció la autoridad nacional, y cada una de las provincias quedó librada al capricho de sus caudillos". Tucumán under the caudillo Araoz was styled "la *ridícula* República de Araoz" (*ibid.*, italics added). Other *anticaudillista* references: *ibid.*, 350; 402–409 (under the chapter heading "LA ANARQUÍA"). On Quiroga: Grosso, *Curso* 1917, 292 and 299–300.

⁴⁸⁷ Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 401 (on the occasion of the Tratado de Pilar, 1820): "... los caudillos no buscaban la disolución nacional. Por el contrario se comprometieron a invitar a las provincias a reunir un congreso general con el propósito de constituir la unidad nacional"; 407: "... la unión nacional era un ideal común".

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 336; 363–365: "También Güemes tuvo sus ambiciones personales de predominio en la provincia de su nacimiento; pero supo anteponer a ellas el ideal de la patria grande y rechazar las insinuaciones de Artigas".

Juan Manuel Rosas's long-lasting regime, which was essentially a product of the civil wars of the 1820s, was a high-lighted subject in the *grosso grande*: 32 pages in the 1917 edition, 56 in 1936. Both in its structure and in its attitude, Grosso's presentation followed closely the approach taken by earlier authors who had made *rosismo* a major topic in their textbooks, in a line from Estrada to Vicente F. López. The main and practically the sole perspective was, again, that of Rosas the *tyrant*. The two relevant chapter headings read: "LA GESTACIÓN DE LA TIRANÍA DE ROSAS" and, simply, "LA TIRANÍA".⁴⁸⁹ The corresponding sections of the text contained for the most part variations of that theme.

Rudiments of a more complex view could only be found in the introduction on Rosas's biographic antecedents and career until he was first elected governor in 1829. This part was apparently based on Manuel Bilbao's once controversial biography; in the 1936 edition long quotations from that book even replaced Grosso's own words altogether.⁴⁹⁰ The picture presented was that of the stern, but just *estanciero*, with paternal care for his workers and, with time, militiamen, whom he furthermore surpassed in all skills. Here the authorial attitude did not seem unsympathetic, even if the description of Rosas the stockbreeder, absolute ruler of his ranches, evidently served to establish a model for his later approach to statecraft. At the same time, this tale provided a psychological explanation of Rosas's political strategy: A misfit in the urban high society, he could use his familiarity with the rural lower classes to build a power basis.⁴⁹¹ Last, but not least, Grosso, with his juvenile readers in mind, probably wanted to exploit the exotic appeal of the *gauchesco* anecdotes.

The intervention of Rosas and his private army of *colorados* in the crisis of 1820 was positively evaluated, a praise that was reinforced in later editions.⁴⁹² His ascent to power in 1829 was regarded as both legal and next to inevitable, given the prestige he had achieved at

⁴⁸⁹ Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 377 and 402. The 1917 edition only had the last-mentioned heading. Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 297.

⁴⁹⁰ Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 377–379. Identically in Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 456–458. Cf. Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 288–290.

⁴⁹¹ Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 379: "Desde entonces Rosas comprendió que mientras la ciudad dominase a la campaña, él no sería una figura espectral, y que el día en que la campaña dominase a la ciudad, sería el primero entre los primeros."

⁴⁹² Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 290 ("el héroe del día", "gran nombradía y prestigio"). Cf. Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 379–382: "La situación de paz y de prosperidad alcanzada en la provincia de Buenos Aires, después de un año de desórdenes y escándalos continuos, se debió, en gran parte, a la influencia y a la intervención de Rosas, y la opinión así lo reconocía".

that time within all social classes of his province.⁴⁹³ From that point onward, however, the conciliatory features evaporated from the text.

Rosas's administration was admittedly characterized as "good" in the beginning, but his "evil intentions" were soon revealed as the political persecutions began.⁴⁹⁴ Henceforth the repressive character of his regime was *the* central topic of the text. The repression – exemplified with a series of graphic instances – was described as arbitrary and cruel, and Grosso underlined that it was not only directed against the unitarians, but also against independent-minded federals. Rosas was also held responsible for the acts of violence committed by the *Mazorca* even in the cases when they were not executed on his direct orders.⁴⁹⁵ (In later editions some nuances were added regarding the social origin of that "society", and certain exaggerated statements on the repression were removed.⁴⁹⁶)

Another argument against Rosas, connected to the first, was class-based: Rosas's power rested on mob rule. (The adherence of "distinguished" personalities admitted to have existed in the beginning diminished progressively, especially from 1835 onwards.) The alleged affinity between Rosas and the lower classes of society, including the blacks of Buenos Aires, was adduced as an indication of the "barbarian" nature of his regime⁴⁹⁷.

The final and conclusive charge against Rosas was the by now familiar allegation that he failed to accomplish the national unification universally desired, having been in the position to do so: "Rosas hubiera podido consumir la obra de la unión nacional, tan anhelada

⁴⁹³ Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 290: "El prestigio de Rosas fué en aumento hasta que en 1829 representaba ya una fuerza que era necesario tener en cuenta, y, agregado esto a la popularidad de que gozaba, su ascensión al gobierno era inevitable."

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., in particular 290–300 (and sporadically throughout the chapter).

⁴⁹⁶ For instance, the following passage in the 1917 edition (ibid., 298) had been left out by 1936: "Las víctimas [de la Mazorca] eran asaltadas, aún en las calles más centrales de la ciudad, y degolladas en medio de las carcajadas de los asesinos. Los cadáveres permanecían en las calles hasta que eran recogidos en los carros destinados á levantar la basura." According to the 1917 text, not only were decent homes assaulted by *mazorqueros* for the sole reason of possessing a blue-patterned china set (blue being the emblematic color of the unitarians), and the porcelain smashed to pieces: Sometimes the women of those houses were flogged, or all the members of the household were murdered! Ibid., 298–299. In 1936, the excesses were limited: no lashes or executions in this particular case, only the smashing of china. Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 404–405. In 1917, the members of the Sociedad Restauradora were merely described as "bandidos, asesinos muchos de ellos". Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 298. In the 1936 edition, we find the additional information that in the beginning, there had been many "distinguished" members also – "muchas personas muy bien conceptuadas". Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 395–396 and 405.

⁴⁹⁷ Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 294–295; 298–299 (including a drawing of Rosas and his wife attending an African celebration, with drums and dancing that from the context were probably meant to be "savage-looking" – this specific item was removed from the later editions I have consulted); 311–315.

por los pueblos, y que había prometido en 1831, si al servicio de ella hubiese puesto el gran prestigio de que estaba rodeado cuando subió al poder por primera vez en 1829.”⁴⁹⁸

The *content* of Rosas’s policies, for example on economic matters, was, on the other hand, never an issue in Grosso’s textbooks – the reader was left with the abominable *forms* of his regime. As for the economic development in the period, there was only a brief and somewhat misleading mention of general stagnation.⁴⁹⁹

Rosas thus presented, Grosso turned to the *antirrosista* opposition and the various attempts at overthrowing the dictator, all of which were described with a wealth of details. The leaders of these revolts were progressively made the real protagonists and true heroes of the story, culminating triumphantly with Urquiza and his *Ejército Grande*.⁵⁰⁰ The involvement of foreign powers in these conflicts was mentioned, but not allowed to loom large. Grosso would not let Rosas stand as the defender of national sovereignty. (An exception was made in the 1930s for the battle of the Vuelta de Obligado, a significant example of how the mood of the time influenced even an old-fashioned, so-called “official” history-writer. At this point, conferment of national pride on that battle expressed the “commonsensical” view in Argentina.⁵⁰¹)

Only one clear exception was made from the general denunciation of Rosas’s actions after he came into power. It was a significant one, which underlined Grosso’s basic vision of Argentine history. Rosas’s campaign against the indigenous tribes during the governorship of Balcarce merited the author’s approval: briefly and discretely in 1917, explicitly and in an

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 319.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 299: "El comercio y las industrias no podían prosperar en circunstancias tales."

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 301–311 and 315–319. Summing up on 301: "La política de Rosas, arbitraria y tiránica, provocó una reacción general en todo el país, que acercó a los hombres bien intencionados de los partidos *unitario y federal* los que, dejando a un lado sus cuestiones pasadas, se uniformaron en un propósito común y único: *luchar hasta derribar al tirano*."

⁵⁰¹ An element of a "patriotic" approach to the Vuelta de Obligado incident was even found in the 1917 edition: The action taken by the British and French was presented in a way that made it appear as justified, but still Grosso underlined the "bravura" shown in the performance of the Argentine defence. Ibid., 310. In 1936, the eulogy was embroidered in a nationalist language: "El combate ... hizo honor a las armas argentinas, que defendieron en aquella oportunidad la soberanía nacional." Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 420. On the battle of Vuelta de Obligado itself: see chapter 5 above. There were other changes between 1917 and 1936 that also pointed in a more nationalist direction: The British occupation of the Malvinas/Falklands in 1833 was not an issue in the former edition, whereas it was treated in the latter. Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 397–398. The presentation was sober, but although Grosso avoided strong language, he maintained Argentina's claim to the islands as a "legitimate right". Another topic mentioned in 1936, but not in 1917, was the conflict between Argentina and Bolivia-Peru (1837–1839). Here the Bolivian president General Andrés de Santa Cruz was presented as the aggressor even when part of the aggression consisted in supporting armed unitarian groups against Rosas: "Este hombre [Santa Cruz] ambicionaba extender su dominación sobre los países vecinos y, con este fin, había llevado sus agresiones a Chile y pretendía hacer la misma cosa con la Confederación Argentina. ... Rosas, condecorador de la ayuda que Santa Cruz prestaba a aquéllos [los unitarios], *contra todo principio de neutralidad*, protestó en forma." Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 406–407 (italics added).

elaborated form in 1936, where General Roca's later praise of his predecessor's plan was reproduced, so that the two different campaigns were combined to make up one heroic epic. In this particular case, Rosas evidently represented civilization against "barbarism".⁵⁰²

The theme was followed up in the section dealing with the 1852–1880 period, where Grosso dwelled more on the wars with the Amerindians than any of his predecessors, faithfully sticking to the Sarmentian dichotomy.⁵⁰³ There was, admittedly, a certain admiration for the natives' practical skills and capacity of confronting a presumably superior enemy. But, basically, they constituted a terrifying barbarian threat, and the efforts to "wipe them out" for the benefit of "civilized man" were legitimated in praise of what in our times is known as ethnic cleansing.⁵⁰⁴ As late as in the last 1961 edition of the book, the racist perspective remained unaltered.

The considerable attention paid to these wars in this text might be motivated by the exotic and dramatic qualities of the topic, highly fitted for capturing the imagination of young students.⁵⁰⁵ Similar considerations might have led the author to focus another issue more intensely than any other text examined here: the Paraguayan war.⁵⁰⁶ The Paraguayan regime was, as usual, characterized as "tyrannical", but Grosso's main focus was on the self-defence aspect of Argentine participation in the war. After the independence wars and the struggle against Rosas, this was the third and last opportunity for conferring national pride upon deeds of arms, and its potential as such was exhausted.⁵⁰⁷ Neither the controversial protraction of the war long after the initial threat to Argentine territorial sovereignty had been warded off, nor its genocidal outcome for the Paraguayan population, was an issue here.

⁵⁰² In 1917, Grosso only spent nine lines on the issue. There was no explicit evaluation of the expedition, but from the context, the perspective and the reference to the results obtained we may indirectly infer that the author's attitude was positive, in spite of a critical remark on the "*pomposo* título de *Héroe del desierto*". Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 293 (italics added to the adjective). In 1936, the presentation covered two pages, and the praise was unconditional, concluding: "Rosas regresaba de su expedición con el prestigio de un triunfador, que le valió el título de 'Héroe del desierto'." The acid attribute had disappeared. Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 393–394.

⁵⁰³ Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 326–327 and 344–349; Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 439–442, 464 and 467–470; Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 525–527, 558–559, 561–564 and 566.

⁵⁰⁴ Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 347: "limpiar de salvajes toda la pampa", "desalojar a los bárbaros" – and thereby open the land for "el hombre civilizado".

⁵⁰⁵ Cf. "pulp fiction" descriptions like the following: "Estos [los salvajes], como era su costumbre, arremetían con un estrépito de gritos, verdaderamente aterrador a tal punto que hasta los mismos caballos de los cristianos temblaban. / Ya... ya... ya... yaa... yaaa... yaaaa... yaaaaa... tales eran los alaridos con que atronaban los aires, capaces de abatir los espíritus más templados." Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 464.

⁵⁰⁶ Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 331–342; Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 450–462; Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 544–556.

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. the following passage on the resistance militias organized in Corrientes, quoting general José I. Garmendia: "Esta masa nacional, es el nervio duro de la guerra, especie de buenos argentinos que han nacido para hacer flamear la independencia nacional a todos vientos." Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 334.

Apart from excelling in these two martial respects, Grosso's presentation of the period of "national organization" brought nothing new.⁵⁰⁸ Only the decade following Rosas's downfall was dealt with in detail (progressively more so in later editions), praising Urquiza, Alberdi and the constituent assembly of Santa Fe, while at the same time avoiding explicit criticism of their *porteño* adversaries in accordance with a by now fully conventional scheme. As a kind of complement, the federalization of the capital of the Republic in 1880 was thoroughly and even-handedly accounted for, thus evidencing the new historiographical status of that date as a milestone in recent history. Otherwise, the story turned sketchy and somewhat fragmentary from the presidency of Mitre onwards, held together by an overall positive and optimistic identification with the new order. For each presidency, signs of good administration and progress were pointed out – putting down a provincial caudillo here, opening a new railway line there – and though conflicts between the leading figures of power were mentioned, they were all seen as contributors to a common goal: a progressively integrated, civilized and prosperous Argentina. A few disconnected data on economic history were spread along the traditional structure of political history (in the 1930s admittedly adding the novelty of a separate section on the first national census of 1869).⁵⁰⁹

The same characterization is valid for the few pages added on post 1880 developments. Grosso evidently had the ambition of updating each new edition of his text providing some information on the most recent developments, but only by bringing brief, annalistic data on each presidency and concentrating almost exclusively on political history as presented from the point of view of the established central power.⁵¹⁰ At each stage, the rulers were described sympathetically, this political conformity being extended to the political situation in the 1930s (stressing the reigning *normalidad* in what critics elsewhere styled "the infamous decade"⁵¹¹). An interesting exception was made for president Juárez Celman (1886–1890). Grosso was the first textbook writer who made a topic of the failed revolutionary attempt of 1890, writing with sympathy on the Unión Cívica.⁵¹² In this and in his comments on the electoral reform of 1912⁵¹³, Grosso evidenced a basically liberal political conviction. The new labor movement, on the other hand, was only referred to indirectly in scandalized

⁵⁰⁸ Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 329–351; Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 447–471; Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 539–566.

⁵⁰⁹ Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 465–466.

⁵¹⁰ Grosso, *Curso*, 1917, 352–356; Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 472–479; Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 566–617. The latter edition, however, presented some peculiar traits that will be commented below.

⁵¹¹ Grosso, *Curso*, 1936, 479.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, p.474.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, p.477.

terms of social disturbances.⁵¹⁴ The great contemporary changes in Argentina's demographic, social and economic structures were not addressed in Grosso's text, not even in the late editions.

The only essential novelty in the last edition of 1961 was to be found in the spacious section dealing with Perón, his government and his downfall.⁵¹⁵ Though this edition does not properly belong to the period of textbook history studied here, a brief mention might shed some light on the author's basic vision of Argentine history. Not only was Peronism denounced – this was no surprise here. The remarkable thing to observe was an abrupt shift in the nature of the narrative, from a scant and factual “bookkeeper's” account continued well beyond the military coup of 1943, to sudden and vehement attacks on the “unsupportable” “tyranny”, followed by an extremely detailed, heroizing homage to the leaders of the self-styled *Revolución Libertadora* that ousted Perón.⁵¹⁶ The pertinent point in our context is the obvious parallel established, implicitly as well as explicitly, between Peronism and *rosismo* – and, hence, between their respective opponents.⁵¹⁷ In this way, contemporary events of the 20th century could be interpreted in the light of the previous century and vice versa, and at the same time a dramatic climax could be reached at the end of the book, something that had been lacking in earlier *grossos*. One might say that Perón in Grosso's textbook, in its last version, provided a role figure similar to Rosas's part in earlier texts from Estrada to Vicente F. López, representing the formidable Evil from which redemption could be proclaimed in the final act of the drama. However, by then the days when the *grossos* ruled classroom history were long gone.

When Grosso first conquered large parts of the Argentine textbook market, there had been no such strong case with which his tale might conclude. From a historiographical point of view, Grosso brought no new interpretative grips in his presentation. He synthesized and

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., p.478 (mentioning "convulsiones de carácter social" without explaining what they were all about). In 1961, with more explicit references, but still without explanations: "agitaciones obreras", "huelgas amenazadoras", "escenas trágicas de la semana de enero de 1919". Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 573. Cf. also *ibid.*, 613.

⁵¹⁵ Grosso, *Curso*, 1961, 575–586.

⁵¹⁶ In reality there was a sharp division in the text regarding the manner in which the period was approached. First, a matter-of-fact account outlined the succeeding political shifts from the coup in 1943 until Perón's second presidential period, sticking exclusively to formal, administrative aspects. *Ibid.*, 575–579. Thereafter (580–586), the condemnations of Perón set in and, simultaneously, the focus rapidly shifted to the opposition movement and, in turn, the new post-Peronist leadership (586–611).

⁵¹⁷ The approach was the same in both cases: focusing on repression, ignoring all other aspects of the politics actually carried out by the government, and, on the other hand, expanding on the political opposition, glorifying its leaders. More explicit comparisons appeared: "... no cabía sino la implantación de la *mazorca*". *Ibid.*, 582 (*italics added*). Also serving to establish parallels, passages were inserted on the belated celebrations of the centenaries of Urquiza's *pronunciamiento* and the Constitution of 1853 (595), as well as a lengthy section on "the return of Echeverría" (606–609, the formal occasion being the relocation of the monument in his honor).

imparted the fruits of his history readings following established models. But the *normalista* Grosso did so with the stronger regard for a pedagogical and attractive presentation in comparison to his predecessors and competitors – notably profusing in illustrations – that was, probably, the key to his success, regardless of deprecatory comments from historians.

16. Vicente Gambón: an ecclesiastical perspective on Argentine history

Even though the State took the leading role in the development of the Argentine educational system, there were always a considerable number of private establishments, including schools run by the Catholic Church. The most prominent among the clerical textbook writers in the period concerned was a Spanish Jesuit who taught at the Colegio del Salvador in Buenos Aires, Vicente Gambón (1857–1925). His books on Argentine history for the secondary school were published in numerous editions and appear to have been used in secular establishments also. Gambón's didactic work was acknowledged by contemporary historians for being conscientiously updated, incorporating results of the latest source-based historical research. In that respect, he was occasionally referred to as a forerunner of Ricardo Levene as a textbook writer.⁵¹⁸ Although Gambón's texts might not radically differ from models established earlier, they were characterized by a well-defined pro-Spanish and pro-ecclesiastical point of departure.

This position fitted well with Vicente Gambón's personal background.⁵¹⁹ Born and educated in Spain, he had already been consecrated to the Church when he settled in Buenos Aires in 1879 to become a teacher at the Colegio del Salvador. After further years of ecclesiastical studies in Spain (1887–1895), he returned to the same Jesuit college, where he taught various subjects, Argentine history being one of them, while at the same time initiating a prolific publishing career. This comprised treatises on Christian education and other religious matters, the review *Estudios* (from 1911) and manuals for various school subjects. In the late 1890's, he published his *Lecciones de historia argentina*, beginning with what would later become the second volume dedicated to the independent period, followed by a volume on colonial history, both being revised in subsequent editions.⁵²⁰ In 1905, a supplement

⁵¹⁸ Cf. Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 315.

⁵¹⁹ Biographic information from Cutolo, *Nuevo diccionario*, vol. 3.

⁵²⁰ I have not been able to establish the date of the first edition of the *Lecciones*. The 1907 edition is commonly referred to as if it were the original (e.g. in Carbia, *Historia crítica*, 315), but this was a revised edition, cf. the appearance of a *Suplemento* in 1905!. In an introduction to the first volume (on colonial history) dated 1907 and reproduced in later editions, Samuel A. Lafone Quevedo compared this to an earlier version from 1906. P. Vicente Gambón, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina: I. Período colonial*, vol. 1, 20th ed. (date of 1st ed. unknown) (Buenos Aires: Angel Estrada y Cía. - Editores, 20th ed., undated), ii. In the author's own preface, he stated that the volume on the colonial period was written to complement the book on the independent period, a text that had already been used for "several years". Gambón, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 5. The earliest edition of that book consulted here is the second edition from 1899. P. Vicente Gambón, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*, 2nd ed. (date of 1st ed. unknown) (Buenos Aires: Angel Estrada y Cía. - Editores, 1899). Hence, the first edition of the would-be second volume must have been published sometime between 1895 and 1898 (after Gambón had returned from Spain), and the added first volume some years later, but not later than 1906.

dealing with the latest decades was published separately (*Suplemento a las Lecciones de historia argentina*)⁵²¹, and later a shorter, one-volume version of the *Lecciones* was edited under the title *Compendio de historia argentina*.⁵²²

With regards to the quantitative distribution of materials, Gambón followed a pattern of priorities established by predecessors like Fregeiro. That is, in separate and more or less evenly sized volumes, the colonial and independent periods each had their centre of gravity: the former in the discoveries and conquests of the 16th century, the latter in the independence struggles of the second decade of the 19th century. Considerable space was allotted to the ensuing civil wars and the rise and fall of Rosas also, while the second half of the century received only the most superficial attention. In this respect, Gambón just maintained a tradition and stuck to the syllabus.⁵²³ However, the publication of the *Suplemento* indicated that the neglect of the more recent parts of history was now seen as a flaw. We might detect here a slowly emerging awareness of the ever-increasing gap between the actual Argentina the new generations lived in, and the one they learned about in history lessons.⁵²⁴

⁵²¹ P. Vicente Gambón, *Suplemento á las Lecciones de Historia Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Angel Estrada y Cía. – Editores, 1905).

⁵²² First edition possibly in 1913. Edition used here: P. Vicente Gambón, *Compendio de Historia Argentina*, 3rd ed. (1st ed. 1913?) (Buenos Aires: Angel Estrada y Cía. - Editores, undated).

⁵²³ As stated in the opening lines of the author's preface: "Al redactar las presentes LECCIONES DE HISTORIA ARGENTINA, sólo se ha tenido en cuenta el Programa oficial de la asignatura ...". Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, v. Quantification of the distribution of pages on historical periods in the *Lecciones* was a bit difficult because I had to bring on an equal footing two different editions of the two volumes, one in smaller type than the other and one with summaries at the end of each chapter. Furthermore, the first part of the "second" (in order of appearance, the first) volume, dealing with the years from 1806 to 1810, was reinserted with very few changes as the last part of the book on colonial history. With certain adjustments made, the *Lecciones* presented the following distribution of contents: 272 pages (45,8%) on colonial history, 322 pages (54,2%) on the independent period (1810 to 1880 in this case). Within the colonial period, space was spread over the subperiods as follows (percentages of this part only): Discoveries and conquests of the 16th century: 147 pages (54,0%); history of the established colonies until the May revolution: 125 pages (46%), of which only 38 pages (14,0%) covered the final viceregal era. The main focus was evidently on the Spanish enterprise of colonization. The asymmetric distribution within contemporary history was but the neat application of current templates: 168 pages (52, 2%) on 1810–1820, 77 pages (24,0%) on 1820–1829, 49 pages (15,2%) on 1829–1852 (Rosas), and, finally, a mere 27 pages (8,4%) to cover 1852–1880 – and nothing beyond that point. The *Compendio* (with 216 text pages) reproduced this structure in miniature, with one important alteration: The relative part dedicated to colonial history was reduced to 30,5% (65 pages).

⁵²⁴Gambón, *Suplemento*. The *Suplemento* was not presented as an independent text, but as a series of amplifications to the *Lecciones*, with constant references to the main text. The book consisted of 90 text pages, distributed as follows: 74 pages on political history from 1852 to 1880, 9 pages on the question of Argentina's frontiers with neighboring countries throughout the 19th century, and finally a 7 pages outline of the situation of the country in 1905. If the *Suplemento* had been included in the quantitative analysis, the relative proportion of contemporary subperiods would obviously appear as less lopsided. However, the two volumes of the *Lecciones* were in themselves very voluminous and would make heavy materials to get through during normal history courses, hence there is reason to be cautious as to the question whether the *Suplemento* was really much read at all.

Gambón's textbooks provided dense and heavy materials, for the most part detailed accounts of a course of events in which focus was always on the individual action. Periodization was confined to hyphen-connected, annual demarcations, without characterizations of the defined subperiods in their respective titles, and there were few attempts at synthesis (even if some of the few passages of the sort that we did find might prove all the more significant). Extensive footnotes appeared in many places, while there were no illustrations. In return lengthy quotations from historical works abounded. The only attempt at a specifically pedagogical adaptation found here were the summaries at the end of each chapter in the volume dedicated to colonial history. The semi-scholarly mode of presentation might be to the taste of some contemporary historians, like Carbia, but it would seem more uncertain how competitive such a pedagogical concept – fundamentally the one followed by Domínguez in the very first textbook – could be at a time when more accessible and profusely illustrated texts, like the *grossos*, gradually conquered the market.

The two most outstanding tendencies in Gambón's vision of Argentine history were stated as a programmatic declaration already in the author's preface: He showed his clerical perspective by underlining the great importance and positive contribution of the Jesuits in Latin American history, while at the same time stating, in an indirectly polemical form, that time was now due for a positive reassessment of Spain's historical role.⁵²⁵ A novelty in the pro-Hispanic argumentation was the reference to contemporary mass immigration from Spain.⁵²⁶ These two positions permeated the entire presentation of the colonial period, and both presented a clear contrast to Estrada's earlier version of a Catholic, national history writing, as shown in a previous chapter.

According to Gambón, the Spanish conquests and colonizing enterprise constituted a historical monument that compelled the most profound respect. He dismissed the very possibility that any other European power could have accomplished such an achievement in the period concerned.⁵²⁷ Certainly he admitted that abuses had been committed against the

⁵²⁵ Gambón: *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 6: "Suprimase por un momento con la imaginación á la Compañía de Jesús y será muy difícil explicar la civilización en toda la América española y portuguesa, y, de un modo especial, en los vastos territorios que constituyen el Virreinato del Río de la Plata"; with the distance of time, "... va apareciendo también en toda su grandeza el monumento colonial que levantó España en sus dominios". Resentments, understandable in the period following the struggles of independence, could no longer be justified: "Creemos, pues, definitivamente cerrado en la República Argentina el período de odios y recriminaciones para con la madre patria ... sería un acto incomprensible creer que la hija había de ennoblecerse salpicando de lodo la memoria de la madre". Gambón: *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 7.

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 16: "... ninguna nación europea, excepto España, era capaz de llevar á cabo la colonización del Nuevo Mundo" (substantiated in the entire footnote 16–22).

indigenous peoples, but they were due to individual, not systematical, errors for which Spain – in particular the Crown and the Church – could not be blamed.⁵²⁸ In this, Gambón followed the track that Fregeiro, in particular, had already broken. However, a new argument was added: Gambón pointed to the brutal conduct of contemporary imperialist powers in Africa, and argued that any comparison would render Spain in a morally advantageous position. The main cause for this difference, according to Gambón, was the regulative function of religion in early modern Spain, an element that later, secularized colonial powers had rejected in the name of “science”.⁵²⁹

The colonial politics of the Spanish Crown, the colonial laws, administration and politico-juridical institutions were all praised as next to ideal.⁵³⁰ Only the *encomienda* system was censured for the way in which it worked in practice.⁵³¹ Otherwise there was nothing in the text about the distance between official Spanish politics and legislation on one hand, and practical political realities in Spanish America on the other. Neither was the weakening of effective royal power in the colonies in the 17th Century a topic here.

Even more enthusiasm seemed to have inspired the author each time he approached the work of the Church and the missionaries. They, more than the force of the conquistadores, had eventually made possible the “pacification” and “civilization” – and, from a religious point of view, the “salvation” – of the Amerindians.⁵³² The natives were from the outset regarded as wild and barbarian, unhappy souls, lost in an uncivilized condition that in the most extreme passages were characterized as “animal”.⁵³³

The Jesuits were by far the most outstanding among the heroes of the Church, both by virtue of their civilizing work within the established colonies – not least through their educational establishments – and, above all, through the missions in indigenous

⁵²⁸ See e.g. *ibid.*, 79, 94ff, 105, 157–158, 161, 228ff and 253–254.

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*, 105 and 212n: “... la ciencia no enseña la caridad, la ciencia no proclama la fraternidad”.

⁵³⁰ While examples abound throughout the text, the most coherent exposition was found in *ibid.*, 207–214.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, 97 (“... la repartición de los indios en encomiendas ... fué causa de que los naturales viniesen á quedar en condición más penosa que la misma esclavitud”); 103–108; 176–180.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, 156–166, 175, 180–181 and 185–206; 185–186: “... era preciso que penetrasen en las guaridas de los salvajes las armas de la caridad evangélica, á las que voluntariamente se sometían los indios; era necesario que la conquista del soldado por medio de las armas cediese el paso á la conquista del misionero por medio de la predicación, del sacrificio, de la abnegación y del heroísmo”.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, 41–44, 46–50 (confirming the cannibalistic version of the murder of Solís and his men, attributing the incident to the Guaranis instead of the Charrúas), 73–74, 78–79, 156–165 and 185–206, cf. the coarse racism in the following statement, 202: “... una raza que salía ... del más abyecto salvajismo, sin nociones de familia ni de dignidad personal, sin más leyes que el instinto de la bestia y sin más aspiración que el logro de los impulsos más brutales”. The term *salvaje* is frequently used to designate the Amerindians throughout the text – as in most textbooks analysed here.

communities.⁵³⁴ On this point the Jesuit Gambón differed radically from the more secularly oriented Hispanicist Fregeiro, and also from Estrada.⁵³⁵ Much space was dedicated to the defence of the Jesuit Guarani missions, partly in the form of polemical refutations of accusations that had been raised against them. Likewise, the author censured all those who had attacked the Jesuits and their missionary societies, whether dealing with Creole *comuneros* from Paraguay and other colonists, Portuguese intruders from Brazil or Charles III – the only Spanish king to receive a depreciatory remark in these textbooks.⁵³⁶

Fundamentally, the real bogey here were the new liberal and anti-clerical currents of the 18th Century, the ideas of the Enlightenment (styled “el filosofismo”).⁵³⁷ Later, this line of criticism was followed up by harsh attacks on Freemasonry.⁵³⁸ Gambón proved himself to be a true representative of the traditionalist and anti-liberal, Catholic nationalism widespread at the time in the Spanish Church in which the author had been educated.

While the monopolist commercial policy towards the colonies was defended as a historical necessity⁵³⁹, the reforms that gradually did away with the old system in the last half of the 18th Century, liberalizing trade, were nevertheless praised as beneficial to the development of the Plate region.⁵⁴⁰ The establishment of the Viceroyalty and each of the viceroys were given a short, but entirely positive mention.⁵⁴¹ The exception was of course Sobremonte, who failed during the British invasion in 1806, but even here the essential point was how well the Spanish system functioned – Sobremonte was removed and replaced by the colonists’ candidate.⁵⁴²

The problem with the pro-Spanish position was always the transition from colonial history to the struggle for independence, which had to hold the centre of any national,

⁵³⁴ Ibid., 151, 160, 165–168, 185–206 (193: “un ejemplo de civilización único en la historia”), 228–233, 234–238 and 249.

⁵³⁵ See above, Chapters 9 and 12.

⁵³⁶ Gambón, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 176–180, 189–191, 222–238 (on the expulsion of the Company of Jesus, 235: “la ceguera de que es capaz el corazón humano cuando se apodera de él el espíritu del mal”; 237–238: “la imbecilidad de Carlos III”) and 249.

⁵³⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 234–235.; Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 104n1: “las falsas y funestas doctrinas del *Contrato Social* y de la *Declaración de los derechos del hombre*” – “God’s rights” were opposed to “human rights”; Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 228–230 (against “ministros regalistas y volterrianos de Carlos III”, including Floridablanca, “tan poca cosa en la Historia de España”).

⁵³⁸ E.g. Gambón, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 268 (on Argentines influenced by British Freemasons following the British invasions): “¡Siempre la masonería sacrificando hasta el sentimiento patrio de sus adeptos en beneficio de las ambiciones de la logia!”; Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 76–79n., 97ff, 167.

⁵³⁹ Gambón, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 212–213.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 251–253.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., 243ff.

⁵⁴² Ibid., 264–270.

historical narrative. Gambón's solution was first to introduce the elements of discord between Creoles and Spanish-born in the later years of colonial rule, while modifying and toning down their significance⁵⁴³, thereafter, when things came to a head, to present the conflicts in as factual a manner as possible, with few appraisive statements.⁵⁴⁴ When approaching the 25th of May and the mythical climax in the course of events, the description became increasingly thick, detailed and solemn. The *mayo* monument was honoured here as everywhere.⁵⁴⁵

In dealing with contemporary history, Gambón's textbooks did not differ from others with regard to the topics treated or the relative space they occupied in the presentation. Still, these texts had a distinctive character. The author's attitude towards historical persons and events were more detached than usual – in accordance with his historiographical declaration in the preface, where he pointed to the value of his viewpoint from the outside, insisting that the distance in time, the lack of family ties to any of the protagonists, as well as his foreign origin, all helped him write a more impartial and dispassionate history than his Argentine predecessors.⁵⁴⁶ In that respect, Vicente Gambón might be said to constitute the antithesis of Vicente F. López in the textbook corpus. The texts actually bore evidence to those programmatic intentions, except when questions regarding religion called for the author's attention. This does not mean, however, that subjective assessments were not found. On the contrary, they appeared practically everywhere, but for the most part in the form of particularizing statements, centring on individual participants and actions. Most important, perhaps, was the relatively modest presence of heroizing elements. Compared to other textbooks, there were fewer passages providing edifying examples of patriotic virtue liable to arouse enthusiasm. In this regard, Gambón showed some affinity to his compatriot and predecessor Benigno T. Martínez – and hardly to anyone else.

This was particularly manifest in the presentation of the independence wars. The descriptions of the main military events were thorough and generally factual and sober, with as much concern for the failures as for the successes on both sides, dealing even-handedly with “patriots” and *realistas*. By way of example, Gambón attempted a partial, retrospective rehabilitation of the Spanish general Goyeneche, an unmistakable bad guy in several Argentine accounts.⁵⁴⁷ In reality, the only *prócer* that kept the halo of a hero here was

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 271.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 271–288.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., 281–289, in particular 285–288.

⁵⁴⁶ Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, v–vii.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 39–43 and 69.

Belgrano, and his feats accordingly received most attention (for instance, on the battle of Tucumán, the text included an 11 pages, continuous quotation from Mitre's biography of Belgrano).⁵⁴⁸

The same approach was applied to the political development in the liberated provinces of La Plata, including Buenos Aires: The alternating powers and the changing conflicts and alliances were described in all their bewildering details (a veritable nightmare for pupils who were supposed to remember all⁵⁴⁹), but the reader was not invited to identify with any of the parties. Politics was generally described as petty-minded, characterized by the participants' greed for power and their limited horizon.⁵⁵⁰ The lack of a truly enlightened, public debate was emphasized as a factor of explanation.⁵⁵¹ Federalists or *unitarios*, provincial caudillos or the *porteño* elite – neither was embraced with sympathy.⁵⁵² The most consistent position seemed to be the rejection of the most centralist projects as being incompatible with political realities in Argentina.⁵⁵³

In this manner the text left the impression of being balanced and nuanced. At the same time the author's own views were often difficult to grasp, not least because the presentation in many places was a patchwork of quotations from Argentine historians, with a polyphonic result that at times appeared as contradictory. To some readers this might seem a sympathetic feature, but in a time when the teaching of history was increasingly defined as a cornerstone in a purposeful project of nationalist education, it might also be conceived as being rather too pessimistic and of little edifying value.

The most conspicuous example of Gambón's reservations about the customary hero-worship was found in the presentation of San Martín, characterized by profound ambivalence. On the one hand the author emphasized his military skill: By virtue of his campaigns in Chile and Peru he merited the epitaph "first man of the South American revolution".⁵⁵⁴ On the other hand Gambón reproduced the attacks launched against San Martín by Vicente F. López for

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., 84–94. See also 43, 67–69, 81ff and 103–106.

⁵⁴⁹ A staggering example in the "summary" of the year 1820. Ibid., 200–207.

⁵⁵⁰ E.g. *ibid.*, 63–65 (the conflicts at stake being described as "pequeñas intrigas, impacencias y egoismos").

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵⁵² Ibid., 48ff, 63ff, 97ff, 134, 141, 152–156, 162–163, 167–169, 198–199, 223ff, 235 and 243ff. See also the simplifying statement in Gambón, *Suplemento*, 8: "En el fondo, pues, la eterna cuestión entre federales y unitarios ... no era sino el antagonismo entre Buenos Aires y las provincias".

⁵⁵³ E.g. Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 65–66 and 235; Gambón, *Suplemento*, 17 (on the constituent work after the downfall of Rosas): "... el país no había tenido más ensayos serios de Constitución que las de 1819 y 1826 ... Ambas habían fracasado por sus alardes de *unitarismo*, tan contrario á los precedentes y aspiraciones de los pueblos ..." (Italics added).

⁵⁵⁴ Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 217: "San Martín es sin duda el primer hombre de la Revolución sudamericana."

his refusal to take part in the Argentine civil war⁵⁵⁵, and in the text, the presentation of San Martín was linked to an impetuous charge against Freemasonry in general and the Logia Lautaro (of which San Martín was a member) in particular, in a textual construction that must have appeared to the student as most contradictory and bewildering in its strange form of double communication.⁵⁵⁶

However, the attacks against Freemasonry were only the logical consequence of the essentially anti-liberal attitude that characterized the author (as well as the national Catholic environment that had formed him). The Enlightenment was seen as the source of many deplorable evils of the time: freethinking, Jacobinism, democratic radicalism, anticlericalism and, in general, moral decay. Representatives of such tendencies in Argentina, like Castelli or Monteagudo, were consequently criticized.⁵⁵⁷ Profound commitment irradiated from the text when matters of Church politics were approached. Thus, for obvious reasons the *unitario* leader Bernardino Rivadavia, with his secularizing reforms in the 1820s, was made one of the most negative characters in this story, and he was so practically wherever he was mentioned – unlike most textbooks, where he was usually presented with relative sympathy. (Strong resentment against Rivadavia was admittedly noted in the case of Vicente F. López also, but on a somewhat different basis.) Rivadavia was accused of having ruined Argentina’s “Christian constitution”.⁵⁵⁸

Sporadically, the subject reappeared on several occasions, for instance in connection with Sarmiento’s school policy and the establishment of the *escuelas normales* (with their

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., 178–183 (San Martín, with his disobedience, “dejó su país en brazos de la anarquía”, “dejó que sus compatriotas se despedazasen y consumiesen en los horrores de la guerra civil”, etc.). Cf. *ibid.*, 201.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., 75–89. A largely positive presentation of San Martín’s (and Alvear’s) background was found in the main text, while a lengthy footnote, occupying the greater part of 76–79, dealt with the Freemasons and the Logia Lautaro in explicit terms. They were attacked for being anti-patriotic (pointing to the British origin of the lodges, cf. Gambón, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 268, quoted above), anti-religious and “anti-republican”. On the Logia Lautaro: It was “despótico”, “antirrepublicano en su esencia”, and attempted to “bastardear la Revolución”. Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 79. See also Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 97ff (regarding the “dirección invisible” of the Freemasons in the Assembly of 1813) and 167. Favorable comments on San Martín on 101–103, 148, 169–173 (on the trans-Andean expedition – note, however, the relatively modest space dedicated to this topic, otherwise a favorite in textbooks) and 209ff.

⁵⁵⁷ Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 38–39, 63–65, 76–79n, 104n (against “las falsas y funestas doctrinas del *Contrato Social* y de la *Declaración de los derechos del hombre*”) and 182–183.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid., 65–66, 72, 74–75, 227–230 (polemic against “panegiristas de su obra ... de un espíritu sectario”; “... si Rivadavia no hubiese atacado á los derechos de la Iglesia, su nombre habría pasado á la historia entre el montón de las mediocridades. Pero Rivadavia, más que un hombre, ha sido una bandera, y los que la han levantado en alto no podían escasearle los encomios”) and 235–237 (“... el modo como Rivadavia suprimió la provincia de Buenos Aires es á todas luces ilegal y arbitrario”).

secular orientation), a phenomenon that merited an acid comment from Gambón, unlike all other textbook authors.⁵⁵⁹

However, the climax in the history of Church-State conflicts in Argentina, the “*Kulturkampf*” of the 1880s, was not dealt with directly in Gambón’s texts apart from a critical, if rather cryptic, remark on the ban on religious education in public schools.⁵⁶⁰ The silence on this point is indeed a striking feature, having in mind Gambón’s pronounced clericalism elsewhere, and it clearly shows how the author after all must have felt a certain need – or pressure – to adapt to, rather than challenge, the prevailing educational establishment. But in my point of view, Michael Riekenberg drew his conclusions too far when he, on the basis of such omissions, claimed that Gambón, along with other clerical history-writers, totally submitted to the so-called liberal interpretations of Argentine history.⁵⁶¹ The clerical overall perspective of the author was obvious enough to any reader; he did not have to attack Eduardo Wilde’s reforms of the 1880s – he could write on Rivadavia’s of the 1820s and still get the same point through.

Detachment also characterized the treatment of the Rosas period.⁵⁶² Gambón more than hinted that the violent condemnations found in earlier texts had been biased pleas that were not likely to stand the verdict of history.⁵⁶³ For his own part, he presented a positive evaluation of the part Rosas had played in the 1820s, in his first term of office as Governor, in the interim period when he conducted his campaign against the indigenous tribes, and even in the beginning of his second governing period, while Governor Balcarce here – an exceptional case in the textbook corpus – was criticized for having distanced himself from Rosas’s party to an exaggerated extent.⁵⁶⁴ A denunciation of the following reign of terror was admittedly found in Gambón’s text also, but at the same time it contained critical remarks directed against certain parts of the opposition, not least regarding their will to involve foreign powers

⁵⁵⁹ Gambón, *Suplemento*, 69–70: “La educación primaria recibió también gran impulso durante esta presidencia [la de Sarmiento], si bien en este punto se han derramado los elogios sin medida y con harta exageración. Las escuelas normales ... no han dado el resultado que de ellas se prometió la Nación al fundarlas ...”. Cf. *ibid.*, 58.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 92: “La *instrucción primaria ... laica* en lo que esta palabra ha venido a significar en el tecnicismo liberal; apenas si se tolera que el sacerdote penetre en las escuelas después de las horas oficiales. Este sistema está dando ya los frutos que se prometieron los que lo implantaron.” The author did not explain what kind of fruits laic education had produced, but they were certainly not to his taste.

⁵⁶¹ Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 149–150. (“Allerdings ist festzustellen, daß die Geschichtslehrbücher, die von Geistlichen geschrieben wurden, wie das des Jesuiten Vicente Gambón, kaum von den gängigen, liberalen Geschichtsdeutungen abwichen.”)

⁵⁶² Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 261–309; Gambón: *Compendio*, 3rd ed. (undated), 168–195.

⁵⁶³ Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 261: “... aún no se ha dicho la última palabra sobre este período histórico, ni sobre el nombre que lo simboliza se ha dado todavía un fallo definitivo”.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 272.

in attacks on Argentina.⁵⁶⁵ The presentation here might be said to point towards a kind of prudent “proto-revisionismo”.

If we include the *Suplemento* from 1905 in our analysis, Gambón was undoubtedly the textbook author that most thoroughly dealt with developments in Argentina in the 1850s after Caseros.⁵⁶⁶ As usual the author was basically critical towards most of the main participants, Urquiza being embraced, however, with more sympathy than the representatives of Buenos Aires localism.⁵⁶⁷ Mitre was characterized in a fairly nuanced manner as the embodiment, for good and bad, of the “porteño spirit”, and his efforts towards national reconciliation and unification after his triumph over the Confederation in 1861 merited Gambón’s approval.⁵⁶⁸ Little attention was given to Sarmiento, but he was shown in an unfavourable light through his participation, from behind the scenes, in the bloody disturbances in San Juan around 1860 that contributed to the breakdown of the policy of reconciliation between Buenos Aires and the Confederation.⁵⁶⁹ We have already seen how Gambón, against the trend, refused to applaud Sarmiento’s educational policy.

Gambón did not make much of the Paraguayan war either.⁵⁷⁰ Unlike Grosso, for example, he did not exploit the topic in heroizing accounts, and the war was not presented as a source of Argentine national honour. Admittedly, the reasons for Argentina’s initial participation in the war were presented as legitimate, but as the war dragged on, it “lost any interest to the Argentines”.⁵⁷¹ On the other hand, Gambón’s *Lecciones* was the first Argentine textbook to emphasize the Paraguayans’ determined and self-sacrificing will to defend their *patria* against a superior force.⁵⁷² Perhaps one might detect here a resonance of the author’s

⁵⁶⁵ E.g. in *ibid.*, 278, 280 and 294–295.

⁵⁶⁶ Gambón, *Suplemento*, 7–48. Cf. Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 311–325 and Gambón: *Compendio*, 3rd ed. (undated), 195–209.

⁵⁶⁷ The tendency was manifest in Gambón, *Suplemento*, e.g. 12–13, 29–30, 31, 38 and 43; less so in the *Lecciones*. Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 311–325.

⁵⁶⁸ Gambón, *Suplemento*, 33: “El general Mitre ha sido la encarnación perfecta del espíritu porteño; sus errores y sus aciertos los juzgará la historia, pero no puede negársele que en todos sus actos públicos no ha tenido más norma que la exaltación y los intereses rectamente entendidos de la provincia en la que vino á la vida”; *ibid.*, 51ff.

⁵⁶⁹ Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 323.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 331–337; Gambón, *Compendio*, 3rd ed. (undated), 212–214.

⁵⁷¹ Gambón, *Lecciones*, 1899, 336: By 1867 “... la guerra había perdido todo interés para los argentinos”.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, 331–332: “La defensa del Paraguay ... es digna de figurar en la historia al lado de las guerras más heroicas que en defensa de su independencia han sostenido en todos tiempos los pueblos.”

interest in the colonial history of Paraguay. Interesting – and new – was also a more critical view of the manner in which the last provincial, caudillo-led uprisings were quelled.⁵⁷³

As for the last great war with the remaining independent indigenous tribes, the final “conquest of the desert”, Gambón was, however, in keeping with all the other textbook authors in his one-eyed homage to the victory of “civilization”.⁵⁷⁴

The rest of the 19th century only received a most cursory treatment. One might have expected something more, once Gambón edited an additional volume on this period in 1905. The struggles aroused by the government’s cultural policy in the 1880s were barely mentioned in passing, and the violent political conflicts of the ‘90s were omitted altogether. A general conformism, however devoid of any enthusiasm, permeated the few lines dedicated to the last decades of the century. At this stage, Gambón obviously wanted to avoid any possible controversy.

The concluding panorama over Argentina’s contemporary situation, which made up the somewhat disconnected final chapter, was all praise and optimism on behalf of the future great power above all others in South America.⁵⁷⁵ In this chapter, economic, demographic and social issues were for the first time here dealt with extensively and systematically. Mass immigration was finally turned into a subject, and Gambón appeared as a spokesman for the new worried and self-defensive attitudes of Creole élite groups. The conditions offered to immigrants, in particular in the countryside, were idealized, while the author at the same time insisted that the immigrants might easily become “victims” of agitators from the new workers movement. In reality, according to the author, the conflict between work and capital had no *raison-d’être* in Argentina.⁵⁷⁶

In this manner, Gambón’s history of Argentina concluded in the mobilization of national Catholic Conservatism against disturbing tendencies in modern society, even if a basic, conventional satisfaction with the situation of the country remained as the bottom line.⁵⁷⁷ Nearly a hundred years after the revolution of independence, the hispanicist ideology

⁵⁷³ Gambón, *Suplemento*, 58–59 (“excesos de crueldad” on both sides) and 60 (the caudillo “el Chacho” Peñaloza was “cobardemente asesinado por fuerzas nacionales”).

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 76–78.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 88–94.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 89–90. According to the author, the immigrant might become a “factor incómodo de perturbación el día en que explotadores sin conciencia quieran llamarlos á dar cuerpo á las huelgas y agitaciones obreras, verdadera locura en un país en que no tiene, por ahora, razón de ser el conflicto entre el capital y el trabajo”.

⁵⁷⁷ This seems a reasonable conclusion to draw from the analysis made here. However, to complete our understanding of Gambón’s educational views, a booklet published in 1915 makes interesting reading: Vicente Gambón, *Los problemas de la enseñanza secundaria* (Buenos Aires: R. Herrando y Cía., impresores, 1915).

of an Aragonese Jesuit had become quite compatible with the self-consciousness of parts of the Creole élites. It was above all in the intersection between religion and politics that oppositional markers showed through. But Gambon's text also distinguished itself in the more detached view of the national gallery of heroes. Through his ambiguities and the contradictions embedded in the narrative method of quotations, Gambón might at times seem evasive and difficult to get hold of. But even this lack of straightforwardness was a quality that specifically characterized these texts – and which once more invalidated the picture of a uniform, “liberal” textbook version of Argentine history.

Originally the text had been published in his review *Estudios* as a series of “open letters” to the minister of Education. Here Gambón appeared first and foremost as the champion of *Latin* as the core subject in a classical, humanist secondary education that aimed at the formation of “a leading intellectual class ... called to rule the destinies of the country” – as opposed to an educational model conceived by the author as being dominated by the natural sciences, “encyclopedism”, “*memorismo*” and an exaggerated multiplicity of programmes with detailed sets of “questions”. Most noteworthy for our purpose, in this programmatic text Gambón – unlike for instance Ricardo Rojas – did not pay much attention to *history* as a school subject, nor was he particularly concerned with questions like the integration of immigrants, the formation of a national identity, etc.

17. Levene's *Lecciones*: the "New School" history popularized

Ricardo Levene (1885–1959) may well be considered the single most influential Argentine historian of the first half of the twentieth century, and his history textbook for the secondary school, the two-volume *Lecciones de historia argentina*, first published in 1912, was the most successful among the textbooks produced by the establishment of leading academic historians, decade after decade disputing editorial ground with its in some regards antagonistic rival: the *grossos*. At least more than twenty editions appeared, and it was apparently used as late as in the 1960s.⁵⁷⁸ William Spence Robertson, professor at the University of Illinois, even published an English translation of the work.⁵⁷⁹

When Ricardo Levene published his *Lecciones*, he was an ambitious young historian on the threshold of an illustrious career. Educated in law – still the most common background for Argentine historians at the time – at the University of Buenos Aires, he had taught at several establishments of secondary education, translated and adapted a French textbook in world history⁵⁸⁰, and published his first monographic history work.⁵⁸¹ He had also made his own initial contributions to the field of textbook writing: a little known text in world history

⁵⁷⁸ Editions consulted here: Ricardo Levene, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*, vol. 1, 5th ed. (1st ed. 1912) (Buenos Aires: J. Lajouane & Cía. – Editores, 1920); Ricardo Levene, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina*, vol. 2, 16th ed. (1st ed. 1912) (Buenos Aires: J. Lajouane & Cía. – Editores, 1937). Fernando Devoto – who did not consider Grosso's textbooks in this context – stated that Levene's was perhaps the most popular textbook in Argentine history for the secondary school, with 22 editions only until 1951, and claimed its continued use well into the 1960s. Devoto, "Idea de nación", 13, 16 and 18–19. The historiographer Rómulo D. Carbia, one of Levene's close associates and fellow "New School" historian, gave his textbook a brief, but most positive mention, claiming he had presented a "total" vision of Argentina's past, in particular by integrating juridical and economical aspects. In Levene's appreciation of the Spanish heritage, Carbia saw a line of continuation from Gambón's textbooks. Carbia; *Historia crítica*, 315. Jorge María Ramallo followed Carbia's point of view in his presentation of the text. Ramallo, "La enseñanza", in *La Junta*, vol. 2, 380–381. Atilio Cornejo wrote a panegyric praise of the *Lecciones*, followed by a rather detailed summary of the contents, in his "Ensayo sobre la obra de Ricardo Levene", in Ricardo Levene, *Obras de Ricardo Levene* (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de Historia, 1961), 129–182. Michael Riekenberg stated that Levene's *Lecciones* "bis in die fünfziger Jahre hinein zu einem der erfolgreichsten Schulbücher wurden", but, surprisingly enough, he did not deal with Levene in the chapter dedicated to Argentine history textbooks. Riekenberg, *Nationbildung*, 195. The team of history textbook researchers from the Universidad de La Pampa considered Ricardo Levene's *Lecciones* as the single most important point of departure for what would later – decades later – become the "canonized image" of Argentina's past. Jorge Saab, Carlos A. Suárez, José Maristany and Laura Sánchez: "De Fregeiro a Levene: Apuntes para una historia de los manuales de historia", in Rodríguez and Dobaño Fernández, ed., *Los libros de texto*, 80–87. Of the authors mentioned here, only Devoto and Saab et al. undertook an actual analysis, however partial, of the text.

⁵⁷⁹ *A History of Argentina* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1937). Robertson also reviewed Levene's textbook in the *American Historical Review*, and his view (favorable, though not uncritical) was reproduced by Levene from the 16th edition (1937) of the textbook onwards.

⁵⁸⁰ J. de Crozals, *Historia de la Civilización* (1905), 2 vols.

⁵⁸¹ *Los orígenes de la democracia argentina* (1911).

and a book on Argentine history for primary school children.⁵⁸² In the years to come, he would display a most prolific publishing activity both within the realm of academic history writing (approaching above all topics from the times of the independence struggles and economic history in the colonial period) and in the fields of history didactics and popular history. Levene belonged to the so-called “new school” of Argentine history, presented in a previous chapter⁵⁸³, and he planned and edited the most prestigious, collective product of the *nueva escuela*: the ten-volume *Historia de la Nación Argentina* (1936–1950).

Levene soon acquired a solid institutional basis for his work. Admitted as a member of the Junta de Historia y Numismática Americana in 1915, he soon showed himself as one of its most active and influential members and became president of the Junta in two periods (1927–1931 and 1934–1938), until he transformed it into the Academia Nacional de Historia, of which he remained president until his death in 1959.⁵⁸⁴ Simultaneously, he unfolded a multifarious university career, mainly centred on the innovative University of La Plata, in the first place (from 1913) under the wings of its respected rector, Joaquín V. González, who had also written an introduction to Levene’s textbook in 1912 (reproduced in all subsequent editions).⁵⁸⁵ Eventually, Levene became head of the Faculty of arts and educational science at La Plata, and twice held the rectorate of that university.

Levene created and worked through wide networks, national and international. Within the Argentine context this also implied close relations to the political and administrative authorities under changing political regimes, the one established through the military coup of 1930 and the subsequent Conservative governments of the 1930s far from being an exception. He was clever at obtaining public financial support for his enterprises. And like Mitre before him, Ricardo Levene seemed to be omnipresent – at practically all events in some way or another related to the business of Argentine history, for instance at official anniversaries, Levene was there delivering a speech. All of this contributed to create the image of Levene as *the* embodiment of what its opponents styled “official history”, a vague and elusive concept,

⁵⁸² *Apuntes de Historia de la Edad Media y de los Tiempos Modernos* (1904), and *La Historia Argentina en Cuadros para los Niños* (1910) – bibliographical references from Carlos Heras in Levene, *Obras*, 17 and 20, respectively. The former book seems to have had a short-lived existence and is rarely mentioned; Carlos Heras described it as “a forgotten book”, affirming, however, that it had been generally praised in the leading newspapers (*ibid.*). The latter, elementary text carried a prologue by Joaquín V. González, just as the *Lecciones*.

⁵⁸³ See Chapter 11.4 above.

⁵⁸⁴ On the *Junta* under Levene’s leadership, see Noemí Girbal de Blacha: “Renovación y proyección nacional e internacional de la Junta. Ricardo Levene (1927–1931/1934–1938) y la gestión Ramón J. Cárcano-Carlos Correa Luna (1931–1934)”, in *La Junta*, vol. 1, 123–167.

⁵⁸⁵ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, vii–xxii.

but probably more justified being used with reference to this period than to any other before or after. It was precisely against the hegemony of this history writing that a radically nationalist and anti-liberal counter-history rose to importance in the public historical debate of the 1930s. The ideal of the objective and neutral historian seemed to lead Levene and other “new school” historians to avoid certain topics with a politically controversial potential. Most conspicuously, the publication of the volume of the *Historia de la Nación Argentina* dealing with the period of Rosas was postponed until 1950.⁵⁸⁶ In return, “revisionists” whose alternative reconstruction of the national past parted from a basically critical view of contemporary Argentina, would dismiss their work as irrelevant.⁵⁸⁷

Under Perón, historical revisionism gradually gained ground while, accordingly, Levene’s position was weakened, despite his declarations of commitment to an “integral historical revisionism”. In 1952 the Academia Nacional de Historia was closed, and only reopened, still under the ageing Levene’s leadership, with the downfall of Peronism in 1955.⁵⁸⁸

Because the most vociferous criticism of the kind of history writing Levene represented came from nationalist groups, one might easily forget that Levene’s historiographical position also took the form of an essentially nationalist programme. It was his ambition – with his fellow historians – to create and develop a national historical culture in Argentina, and in so doing to strengthen people’s sense of a national Argentine identity and contribute to the national integration of a heterogeneous population. Hence his strong interest in the didactics of history, the teaching of history at all educational levels, works of

⁵⁸⁶ Cf. Diana Quattrocchi-Woisson: “El revisionismo de los años 20 y 30. Rosistas y revisionistas: ¿los rivales de la historia académica?” in *La Junta*, vol. 1, 295–315, in particular 308–309.

⁵⁸⁷ Thus Ernesto Palacio on “falsified history”, Ricardo Levene being branded as its main champion, in 1939: “Nada nos dicen [los argumentos heredados] frente a los problemas urgentes que la actualidad nos plantea./ Historia convencional, escrita para servir propósitos políticos ya perimidos, huele a cosa muerta para la inteligencia de las nuevas generaciones. ... la versión oficial, que pronto se solemnizará en una veintena de volúmenes bajo la dirección del doctor Ricardo Levene. Será sin duda un monumento; pero un monumento sepulcral que encerrará un cadáver. ... Impuesta [la versión oficial de nuestra historia] por Mitre y por López, tiene ahora por paladín al antes citado doctor Levene, lo que, en mi entender, es altamente significativo.” Palacio, *La Historia Falsificada*, 39–40. To Ernesto Palacio, the study of history recovered its meaning when anxiety over the present situation stimulated the approach, and its main outcome – the premiss being what was conceived as the total discredit of the liberal model – would be the exaltation of Rosas: “Es la angustia por nuestro destino inmediato lo que explica el actual renacimiento de los estudios históricos en nuestro país, con su consecuencia natural: la exaltación de Rosas.” *Ibid.*, 42.

⁵⁸⁸ Cf. Diana Quattrocchi-Woisson, “El revisionismo”, in *la Junta*, vol. 1, 309–310.

popularization, the organization of museums, the erection of historical monuments, the public celebration of anniversaries, etc.⁵⁸⁹

True, in the case of Levene nationalist ideas were combined with pan-Americanism and Latin Americanism. He eagerly encouraged inter-American projects of collaboration between historians and cultivated his own network throughout the continent, participated in bilateral commissions regarding the reform of history textbooks (most noteworthy the one resulting in the Argentine-Brazilian agreement of 1936)⁵⁹⁰ and, as a culmination of this commitment, in 1937 he presided over the second International Congress of American History held in Buenos Aires. It remains to examine whether this ideal was also reflected in his own textbook.

At first glance, Levene's textbook did not seem to differ much from others already studied above: two ponderous volumes, dense and academic in approach, dedicated to the colonial and independent period respectively, still with a fairly even distribution of materials, although gravitating towards the contemporary period, a tendency that would be reinforced over the years with updated editions.⁵⁹¹ A closer look at the structure given to the presentation of colonial history reveals a distinctive new characteristic: a considerable portion of the text (more than one third) was made up by thematic chapters about the colonial economy, the religious and cultural institutions, etc., thus escaping the frames given by a chronology determined by political history. So far this was in line with the author's claim that the object of his study was "the society ... and not the heroes".⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁹ Cf. the speeches and various occasional writings by Levene compiled and published under the significant title *La cultura histórica y el sentimiento de la nacionalidad*, 2nd ed. (1st ed. 1942) (Buenos Aires/Mexico: Espasa-Calpe Argentina, 1946). Cf. also Levene's ideas on the instrumental role of history in imbuing patriotism in a report he wrote as a young teacher at the Colegio Nacional Oeste in 1908, quoted by Ricardo Rojas in 1909: "... frente a la nueva tendencia de *dar carácter eminentemente patriótico a la enseñanza – reforma de grandes virtudes cuya urgencia se hace alarmante en las propias aulas de un cosmopolitismo complejo donde se observa la verdad hecha carne en tipos de ideales distintos o sin ideales – la enseñanza de la Historia Argentina y Americana podrá desenvolverse en toda su intensidad, visitando museos y estimulando la investigación personal del alumno en los archivos.*" Rojas, *La Restauración Nacionalista*, 1971, 115–116, n1.

⁵⁹⁰ See Chapter 2.1 above.

⁵⁹¹ A problem regarding the quantitative analysis relates to the use here of different editions for each volume: the 5th ed. (Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920) for the colonial period, the 16th ed. (Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937) for the independent period. By 1937, Levene had added some materials on developments up to that date, as he did for each edition. In consequence, the number of pages and the relative percentage of the total text dedicated to contemporary history kept growing, although not dramatically, as the figures for subperiods will indicate. Without adjustment for this circumstance, the total of 1033 text pages was distributed in the following manner: 396 pages (38,3 %) on colonial history before 1810, 637 pages (61,66 %) on the independent period (continued until 1936). In order to facilitate comparison with other textbooks, the final chapter of the first book dealing with the *Mayo* revolution has been included in the latter category.

⁵⁹² Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, xiv. The subdivision of colonial history ran as follows (percentages of this part only): 98 pages (24,7 %) on the discoveries and conquests until 1580, 85 pages (21,5 %) on the established

As for the post-1810 period, the single decade covering revolution and independence wars still stood head and shoulders above any other subperiod (covering slightly less than half the total within contemporary history). However, relatively more attention was now given to later developments, in particular to the years between 1852 and 1880, than in any previous textbook. Here also, thematic chapters, or passages within chapters breaking the linear chronology of the narrative, appear, but not to the same extent as in the the part dedicated to colonial history.⁵⁹³

A somewhat closer look reveals textbooks distinguished by certain didactic aids, all of which were proudly emphasized both in the author's prologue and in the introduction written by the prestigious writer and former rector of the University of La Plata, Joaquín V. González.⁵⁹⁴ One was the use of illustrations, another the insertion of historical maps. These were not entirely new elements – the *grossos* had introduced both, and clearly surpassed Levene with regards to attractive illustrations.⁵⁹⁵ A more original innovation was presented by the “synoptic outlines” (*cuadros sinópticos*), by which Levene rounded off some chapters, distinct from ordinary prose summaries in that they in a graphic form systematized points made through the chapter (causes, consequences, tendencies, etc., regarding a key phenomenon). This element pointed to Levene's ambition to present an analytical, and not merely narrative, text.⁵⁹⁶

There was, one the whole, a *scientific* pretension inherent in Levene's work that was more outspoken and self-confident than in any other textbook in my corpus, a quality loudly proclaimed in the introduction.⁵⁹⁷ It expressed itself more than anything in the dense footnote

colonies until 1776, 62 pages (15,7 %) on the Viceroyalty (most of which – 44 pages – dealt with the final stage opened by the British invasions), 151 pages (38,1 %) allotted to thematic chapters across chronological divisions, including a 16 pages introductory chapter on methodology – sources, archives, auxiliary sciences, etc.⁵⁹³ Despite the relative increase in elements that did not fit into the event-oriented, chronological structure, it is nevertheless easier to distribute contents following our established periodization with regards to the part covering the independent period, though in an approximate fashion, for the reasons stated (percentages of this part only): 277 pages (43,5 %) on the 1810–1820 decade, 65 pages (10,2 %) on 1820–1829, 120 pages (18,8 %) on the 23 years of *rosismo* 1829–1852, and, finally, 165 pages (25,9 %) on the last period stretching from 1852 to 1936 (in the 1937 edition used here), with 89 pages (14,0 %) on the years of “national organization” 1852–1880, and 76 pages (11,9 %) on the following years. An introductory chapter (10 pages or 1,6 %) discussed the history of the Republic and its periodization at large, to which might be added related pages elsewhere in the text.

⁵⁹⁴ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, xx–xxi and xxiv–xxv.

⁵⁹⁵ See Chapter 15 above.

⁵⁹⁶ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, 39, 67, 124, 374 and 425–426; Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937, 234, 262–263, 288 and 403–404.

⁵⁹⁷ Joaquín V. González elaborated on this issue throughout the introduction, insisting that whereas the imaginative, hero-centered and even legendary historical narrative might defend its place in the elementary school, the scientific, analytical approach is the appropriate on the secondary level. Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1,

apparatus; admittedly, this has been observed in several earlier texts also, but in Levene's case the notes in a more systematic and thorough fashion demonstrated the most distinctive feature of the *Lecciones*: the presentation and discussion of historical sources. More than anything, Levene endeavoured to write a strictly *source-based* history. The tone was set with the introductory chapter on the sources and methodology relevant to colonial history, followed up by narrative chapters in which not only the sources themselves, but also previous interpretations by other historians, were quoted extensively and discussed with regards to reliability.⁵⁹⁸ Most noteworthy, the *Lecciones* were accompanied by a two-volume collection of source materials, one for each part of the textbook.⁵⁹⁹ In this respect, Levene's contribution represented a truly pioneering work. A particular concern was given to the colonial period, something that was evidenced by the fact that the first volume of the *Lecciones* was revised several times over a few years following the first edition, for the moment leaving the second part unaltered, with an explicit reference to the rapidly expanding bulk of published source material from the early period, fruits of which Levene felt the need to assimilate into his own text continuously.⁶⁰⁰

In order to encircle the main theme in *rioplatense* colonial history, as it was interpreted by Ricardo Levene, we might borrow the title of his own first published, historical

1920, vii–xxv. Cf. the author's own preface, in which he also emphatically stated his claim to objectivity, to present "the naked truth": "Por sí misma, en toda su desnudez, la verdad contiene fecundas enseñanzas. En este sentido, la obra se ha propuesto ponerla en descubierto, libre de toda prevención el espíritu del autor./ Pero la verdad en la Historia, tiene el valor relativo que las pruebas y la investigación le conceden. Solamente así se logrará hacer de los hechos históricos, no meras expresiones ideológicas o subjetivas del escritor, sino realidades verificadas y comprobadas con el concurso de las ramas auxiliares de la Historia, que han cocluido por darle a ésta su verdadero carácter científico." Ibid., xxiii–xxv.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., 3–16 (on sources and methodology). Here Levene among other things inserted (in the main text!) an extensive inventory of colonial archive materials as they were organized in different categories in the Archivo General de la Nación. This seems way beyond what ordinary pupils might be expected to digest, and even Joaquín V. González, in the midst of his eulogy, made a remark that discretely indicated that the heavy, scientific load in the *Lecciones* might occasionally be just as much as the intended, juvenile reader could take (on the analysis of the colonial background for the revolution): "No puede irse más allá que lo hace el autor, – sin excederse de los necesarios límites de una obra didáctica elemental – en la exposición y definición de las influencias ambientes universales y más próximas, sobre la idea generatriz de la Revolución Argentina." Ibid., xviii. As for the quotations and discussions of sources, examples abound throughout the work, often refuting erroneous assertions in previous accounts, as in the following, quite representative instance: In 1526, the explorer Sebastián Caboto navegated up the river Paraná, and on his way founded the fort Sancti Spiritus, which was later assaulted and burnt down by the Guaranis. Levene first quoted the traditional legend, in which an Indian chief's ardent desire for the beautiful Spanish lady Lucía Miranda sparked off the event, then carefully tore it apart (aided by fellow historian M. Paul Groussac), dismissing the main characters as fictitious and the disaster to be caused by anger with the arrogant Spanish commander, not lust. Only the ordinary violence is left in the drama, while the sex is all gone. Ibid., 52.

⁵⁹⁹ *Lecturas Históricas Argentinas* (1913), cf. Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, iv and xxiv.

⁶⁰⁰ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, xxvii–xxxi (reproducing the prologue to the 1918 edition).

work: “The origins of Argentine democracy”.⁶⁰¹ That is, what Levene insisted on denominating “Creole democracy” constituted a guiding principle by which colonial history might to a considerable extent explain the coming of the independence revolution and the ensuing political turmoil, as well as certain basic traits of the future Argentine nation.

Levene saw the conquerors and colonists as carriers of a strong libertarian and independent spirit that was essentially a heritage of the Spanish “race” (the term *raza* being used widely, with varying and imprecise meanings, by Levene as by other writers of his time), a trait of character nourished by the Spanish communal tradition, embodied in the municipal institutions. This spirit made the colonists and their descendants, the *criollos*, indomitable, arrogant, unruly and reluctant to subordinate themselves to central authorities, whether representing the Crown or the Church. They were, however, capable of organizing their own local communities according to their needs, even if the same “inherent” wilfulness might also generate violent conflicts in the form of internal rivalries, and all the more so as the Spanish mentality was, at the same time, profoundly warlike, having developed under the sign of the *Reconquista* and other Iberian wars. Thirdly, Levene claimed that the Spanish colonists distinguished themselves as being hard-working, and even though industriousness was not usually referred to as a typically *Spanish* virtue, it was, on the other hand, commonplace to point to the fact that the lack of precious metals in combination with the relative scarcity of subduable native manpower, forced the colonists of this part of South America to dedicate themselves to productive work more than elsewhere, weakening aristocratic tendencies. In this respect, Levene followed a well-trodden path, but more insistently than others he combined these and other elements to sustain the thesis of a specifically Creole disposition to democracy (the term obviously being used in a very broad sense). The outcome was a colonial society that Levene described as basically egalitarian. In an apparently paradoxical way, then, it was the Spanish heritage that predestined the Creoles to emancipate themselves from Spanish rule when the appropriate moment arrived.⁶⁰²

⁶⁰¹ *Los orígenes de la democracia argentina* (1911).

⁶⁰² Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, 112–114 (under the heading “El espíritu de la colonización española”): “Con los hombres vino el espíritu de la raza, es decir, los hábitos y las creencias del pueblo español. ... se distingue por tres características: 1.º El espíritu guerrero ... 2.º El espíritu de organización municipal ... 3.º el espíritu de trabajo.” Levene concluded this analysis quoting a passage from Bartolomé Mitre’s *Historia de Belgrano*: “Todos estos elementos ... constituían una democracia rudimental, turbulenta por naturaleza y laboriosa por necesidad, con instintos de independencia individual y de libertad comunal, a la vez que con tendencia a la arbitrariedad...” Likewise in Chapter VIII, 115–126, describing various early Creole movements (“Los primeros movimientos democráticos de la Colonia del Plata”), asserting that they pointed towards emancipation as the “destiny” of the colony: “El espíritu de rebelión irá progresivamente acrecentándose durante los siglos XVII y XVIII, haciéndose cada vez más general e importante. Estos movimientos

In some ways Levene's approach may resemble José Manuel Estrada's vision of the freedom-seeking *people*, forged under colonial rule, who became the real protagonist of a revolution democratic in essence, however betrayed on many an occasion by elitist and selfish leaders. Estrada's pronounced anti-centralism, emphasizing the *municipio* as the fundamental democratic unit, adds to the affinity.⁶⁰³ However, the global evaluations of the colonial period could hardly have been more contradictory: Where Estrada had seen nothing but obscurantism and oppression exercised by a despotic regime that a people bled white finally managed to throw off, Levene not only viewed Spanish colonial rule, as expressed in the American laws and in the complex tissue of governing bodies and offices, with a basic approval; he stressed how the precarious life of the self-sustained colonial settlements *in practice* took its own course in a way that encouraged autonomy.⁶⁰⁴

Levene decidedly participated in the revaloration of Spain's historical role that had begun much earlier, variants of which have been studied above through textbooks by Clemente Leoncio Fregeiro and Vicente Gambón.⁶⁰⁵ In a programmatic way, the sombre picture drawn by previous, "Hispanophobic" historians was dismissed in the prologue, and further on, the conquest and colonization were styled "one of the purest glories of Spain".⁶⁰⁶

democráticos revelaron desde temprano que el destino de la Colonia era la emancipación. La democracia ama la libertad y aspira al gobierno propio, bueno o malo". Ibid., 125. In line with Levene's insistence on the aspirations of Creole autonomy, he emphasized the importance of the *cabildo* as a local governing body, while presenting different views on the relative importance of it. Ibid., 121 and 194–199.

⁶⁰³ See above Chapter 9.

⁶⁰⁴ In the following passage Levene depicts how the colonists, exposed to a wild nature and with the moderating mechanisms of social control of the Old World left behind, developed anarchic and self-willed tendencies, but however rude and violent their expressions, they sprung from an "instinctive" sense of popular sovereignty and liberty, thus constituting an "embryonic democracy" with "*de facto* liberties": "Está demás decir que no es en el sentido de las democracias modernas que usamos la expresión de democracia argentina durante la época colonial. Afirmamos, sí, que de la entraña del pueblo anónimo arranca una fuerza social y política que a trechos se exterioriza e ilumina el cuadro. Porque hay en nuestro pasado, en los primeros núcleos de constitución social, una democracia embrionaria, que no hace actos de soberanía, sino por espasmos violentos y que va engendrando lentamente una libertad de hecho. Las libertades de hecho son anteriores a las leyes escritas, y nada detiene el natural desenvolvimiento de las fuerzas históricas que llevan en sí mismas virtudes sustantivas. Eran poblaciones puestas en contacto con una naturaleza salvaje que aprendieron el desprecio a la ley en razón de su propio rigorismo, sin vinculación estable a la tierra, sin escuela, ausente la influencia moderadora de otros factores sociales, su carácter fué turbulento y anárquico, pero poseídas del genio instintivo de la soberanía popular y de la libertad." Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, 115–116, n1.

⁶⁰⁵ Chapters 12 and 16, respectively.

⁶⁰⁶ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, xxx (after referring to recent investigations that had brought new knowledge about the colonial period): "De ese conocimiento ha surgido una metrópoli, distinta de aquel fantasma, causante de nuestras desgracias y autora de nuestras taras – a quien había que dar la espalda y mirar de frente a otra parte – que en colores sombríos pintaron los historiadores hipanófobos." On the glory of conquest, 68:"La empresa fué grande, tanto que constituye por sí sola una de las glorias más puras de España." Admittedly, the main point here is that the enterprise was all the more admirable because it appeared as next to impossible, and Spain undertook it in a demonstration of sheer audacity despite lacking the proper conditions to do so: "...

Spanish rule was for the most part described in positive terms, though more often so with regards to its intentions rather than its effective consequences.⁶⁰⁷ In the chapter specifically dedicated to the form of government established, the Spanish Crown was praised for the manner in which it reduced absolutist and despotic tendencies by introducing a complex system of checks and balances between different institutions and higher civil servants, each with powers limited in scope and time.⁶⁰⁸ However, there are more nuances to Levene's picture of Spain than I have presented so far. The initial system of *adelantazgos*, for instance (conceding absolute powers to an *adelantado* who undertook the enterprise of conquest and colonization of a certain area at his own risk), was censured as having disastrous consequences everywhere⁶⁰⁹, and throughout the text, several individual representatives of the colonial power were criticized for abusing their powers. There is nothing remarkable in this – such reservations were made in all the pro-Hispanic texts; no one set out to defend *everything* related to Spanish colonial rule. Much more interesting in the case of Levene is the fact that even if he shared in the *hispanista* revival, he did so in a less insistent and polemical fashion than Fregeiro or Gambón had done. Vicente Fidel López, who on the whole had been far more negative in dealing with colonial rule, nevertheless dedicated considerable space, and not without sympathy, to the history of Spain in his textbook.⁶¹⁰ Levene did not. Possibly, the new, positive attitude towards Spain and the colonial heritage was now regarded as being so well-established that it was no longer necessary to argue strongly in favour of it. Furthermore, Levene's main concern did not lie with the Spaniards, but rather with their American-born descendants: *los criollos*.

Partly for the same reason, the indigenous peoples were not considered worthy of much attention either. In fact, Levene showed less concern for the Amerindians than any of the other textbook writers represented in my corpus. As for the first stage of the period, the consequences of the European conquest for the indigenous societies were simply not a

se lanzó en la obra de colonizar a América, porque era su dueña, y porque así se lo inspiraba el sentimiento audaz, generoso y temerario de la raza." Ibid., 69.

⁶⁰⁷ See *ibid.*, 26–28, where the politics of the Catholic Monarchs were praised – in a certain contradiction with Levene's later denunciation of the expulsion of the Jews and the Moors, *ibid.*, 69: "España se arrancó los brazos"; 112–114 (quotations above); 306 (on educational efforts).

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 181–199.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 73–74: "En toda América española, fué triste la historia de los Adelantados. ... todos los pueblos sufrieron las consecuencias del gobierno que ejercían."

⁶¹⁰ See Chapter 14 above.

question in this textbook.⁶¹¹ True, Levene mentioned several instances of conflicts between colonists and natives along the way, but less so than usual, and without exception viewed from the European perspective.⁶¹² We find, admittedly, the separate chapter, at this point standard, on the different aboriginal groups (“the peoples and races”) that inhabited the region at the time of the European arrival, classified according to their geographical distribution and described in terms of cultural “level” and degrees of “civilization”, all of this more or less similar to the corresponding chapters earlier found in textbooks by Fregeiro or Grosso⁶¹³. The most noteworthy novelty found in Levene’s text, as far as I can see, is the term *aborígenes*, surely adopted from anthropological literature and used more frequently here (along with *indígenas*) than alternative terms like *indios* or the coarsely depreciatory *salvajes*, which was found in abundance in most other texts, as I have shown. (In Levene’s text the latter word occurred, but only a few times.⁶¹⁴) However, this chapter is an isolated occurrence without reference to the rest of the book; we never get to know what happened afterwards to the Diaguitas, Guaycurues or Querandíes.⁶¹⁵ Only one chapter of 13 pages dealt in general terms with the regime imposed on the subjugated Amerindians, explaining the different forms of organization and institutions regulating enforced labor like the *encomienda* or the *mita*. Once more, the legislators’ good intentions were praised, while admitting that the colonial practice on the other hand was characterized by abuses and “brutal treatment”. However, the real focus

⁶¹¹ Most significantly in Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, 35–39 (subchapter entitled “Consecuencias científicas, económicas y políticas del descubrimiento”), where a series of short- and long-term consequences of the discoveries were systematized, but the only point made regarding the indigenous peoples was that the ethnographic science had been enriched by the appearance of a variety of new objects to be studied.

⁶¹² For a few examples, *ibid.*, 50–53, 70–71n1, 72 n1, 100 and 109–110: “Durante la serie de gobernadores que se sucedieron [sic] en el Tucumán eran continuas las luchas sangrientas que fué necesario sostener con los indios. La guerra fué el medio común de dominarlos.”

⁶¹³ See Chapters 12 and 15 above.

⁶¹⁴ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, 47, 51 and 52.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 56–67 (Chapter IV: “Los aborígenes del territorio argentino: su clasificación”). It should be added that Levene did not *copy* earlier texts on the same issue; on the contrary he endeavored continuously to incorporate new results from recent investigations. For instance, he inserted in the 1920 edition used here a rather lengthy discussion of a theory put forward by Juan B. Ambrosetti (and transmitted in an article published by Salvador Debenedetti in 1917, which was the source quoted by Levene), to which Levene added the support of Carlos Octavio Bunge: Both had claimed that the commonly accepted idea that the Incas had extended their rule to the north-western part of present Argentine territory was probably erroneous. *Ibid.*, 65–66, n1. One might understand why it seemed tempting to an Argentine patriot to embrace a theory that made the most developed pre-Columbian civilization exist within the boundaries of “Argentina” *independent* rather than a subject to “foreign” rule and cultural dominance. Likewise, Levene gave ample space to a presentation of the famous thesis defended by the Argentine researcher Florentino Ameghino, according to which man had originated in what would later become Argentina (or at least, that our human species existed in America prior to Europe), a thesis substantiated by arguments that Levene evidently found convincing. *Ibid.*, 7–9 and 36. It would be unfair and arrogant not to admit that this kind of original ancestry would have appeared as good news for the history-making of any emergent nation (cf. the 19th Century Norwegian theory of a separate immigration route to Scandinavia for the “Norwegian tribe”, as opposed to the ones used by the would-be Swedes and Danes).

of attention in this chapter was the Jesuit missions and their conflicts with the Creole communities.⁶¹⁶

We have already seen how different textbooks presented most contradictory views on the Guarani missions; how for instance Clemente Fregeiro – in particular in his later textbooks – sided with the Creole rebels against the missions, while the Jesuit Vicente Gambón took the opposite stand – both being pioneers of the pro-Hispanic turn, each in his own way. The earlier Estrada had handled a basic ambivalence striking a balance of mixed anger: He denounced the kind of government the Jesuits represented, on the one hand, and, on the other, with the same vehemence condemned the attacks on and final destruction of the Guarani missions⁶¹⁷. Ricardo Levene decidedly took Fregeiro’s stand, advocating the superiority of secular conquest as opposed to the Jesuits’ spiritual approach. He admitted the virtues of the latter’s “sentimental goodness” (*bondad sentimental*), in particular when contrasted with the brutality of the *encomenderos*, but he nevertheless concluded that it was unfit for real progress and for the vast, imperative enterprise of colonization carried out by a superior civilization. This was the supreme, historical criterion to which “sentimentality” must yield. Furthermore, he raised the customary liberal objection against the “communism” of the missions, the premiss being that any real progress is based on private property.⁶¹⁸

Levene’s secular brand of Hispanicism also meant that he went right against Gambón in his assessment of the Spanish king Charles III, his “enlightened” cabinet ministers (Aranda, Campomanes, Floridablanca), his liberal reforms and measures against the Jesuits. To Gambón they had all been anathema, while Levene considered them “the highest expressions of this new, revolutionary epoch”, along with other liberal representatives of the Enlightenment at European courts.⁶¹⁹

It seems reasonable to interpret Levene’s concentration on the *criollos*, and corresponding disinterest in the Amerindians, as part of his search for Argentina’s national roots in colonial times. And while the Creoles were seen as the core element in the future

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., 136–148 (Chapter X: “El gobierno de los indios”) –140–148 on the Jesuit missions.

⁶¹⁷ For the three authors mentioned, see above chapters 9, 12 and 16, respectively.

⁶¹⁸ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, 140–146. See also 134–135, where Bartolomé Mitre is quoted at length (he often is in Levene’s textbook) in support of the same view; and 179.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 177–179; under the portrait of Charles III (178): “Carlos III, el rey innovador por excelencia de España y las Indias”; From Pombal in Portugal to the Spanish ministers mentioned above, they were “las más altas expresiones de esta nueva época revolucionaria”. There are nuances, however, with regards to the expulsion of the Jesuits: Levene seemed to regard the measure as being necessary in Spain, whereas it was more doubtful whether the Company really constituted a threat to the power of the State in America: “Para España, la expulsión de los jesuitas era una cuestión de vida. En las Américas, los jesuitas no alcanzaron a poseer un poder político que los hiciera temibles.” Ibid., 179.

nation-building process, the indigenous societies simply had no place in this vision of an Argentine national community. The *criollo*, as a national “prototype”, was a product of the colonial society. True, in a biological sense Levene saw this human character as the result of a racial mixture which included the subjugated indigenous element, and he considered this fusion to be positive both because it helped create a “solidarian” rural community and because it created a human type invested with admirable qualities.⁶²⁰

Though Levene declared that he would not write a history of heroes, certain colonial personalities were given prominence as positive figures of identification. In one way or another, they all embodied what Levene called a spirit of “democracy” or Creole self-assertion. In fact, with two exceptions, they were all *criollos*. The first exception was the Spanish-born governor of Paraguay Domingo Martínez de Irala. Historiographically, Irala had been a controversial figure; so far we have seen him exalted by Fregeiro and condemned by Vicente Fidel López.⁶²¹ Ricardo Levene praised Irala as an outstanding administrator: First, because he managed to subdue the natives of the region; secondly, because he introduced the *encomienda*, an institution with a bad reputation in most texts, but defended here as “an advanced system of colonization”, one that admittedly “degenerated in practice”, a development for which Irala could not be blamed; thirdly, and most importantly in our

⁶²⁰ Ibid., 116: “En la Colonia del Plata, a diferencia de Méjico y del Perú, hubo necesidad de trabajar la tierra, que contenía en su seno la riqueza productora; y de esta necesidad de trabajo resultó la vinculación solidaria, la unión del conquistador español y del indígena vencido. Así se fusionaron las razas entre nosotros ... Desde la segunda mitad del siglo XVI, cuando las razas habían comenzado a fusionarse en el Plata, los “nacidos en la tierra” eran ya tipos característicos por su rebelión y el amor a la libertad.” In a chapter dedicated to the different elements that made up colonial society, Levene again underlined how European, indigenous and to a lesser, however significant extent African elements mixed in the River Plate region: “Se sabe que las razas indígena, negra y la blanca europea formaron la sociedad del Plata. ... Esta fusión de razas preparó el advenimiento “del nacido en la tierra”, criollo, mulato o mestizo, que formaron pronto la inmensa mayoría del país.” Ibid., 333ff. His point of departure was “racist” in the sense that he believed – as did most people at the time – that race was a category that helped explain not only physical, but mental – intellectual and emotional – properties in different human groups. However, he did not advocate the supremacy of any race (as he did with regards to “civilizations”), and he saw the outcome of the mixture in his own country as most successful. In contrast, other Argentine writers might emphasize the predominantly “white” nature of the population. (To what extent Levene’s vision of a harmonious, multiracial society expressed an idealized simplification, is quite another discussion.) A more overtly racist – and equally nationalist – version (a quotation from Paul Groussac) reproduced a similar tale of the prolific fusion that over three centuries of “selective enrichment” produced “the most beautiful American variant of the Latin race”: Subdued indigenous groups “... daban origen, por su mezcla gradual con ellas [las poblaciones cristianas], a esta casta criolla de la llanura argentina; robusta, erguida, vivaz, cuyo tipo morisco, depurado en cada generación por un nuevo aflujo de sangre europea, llegaría a ser en tres siglos de enriquecimiento selectivo, la más bella variedad americana de la raza latina.” Ibid., 72 n1.

⁶²¹ Chapters 12 and 14, respectively.

context, Irala introduced a *democratic* element in being *elected* governor by the local colonists (los *vecinos* de Asunción).⁶²²

Another prominent *peninsular* leader in Levene's account was Juan de Garay, founder of Santa Fe and second founder of Buenos Aires (the decisive foundation of 1580), a key event in Argentine history, accentuated here through a description rich in details and accompanied by no less than three illustrations, including one of the rare full page pictures of the book. With regards to both foundations, Levene underlined the fact that the vast majority of the new citizens were Creoles inclined to self-government and defence of their communal rights.⁶²³

One of the few early protagonists that was universally acclaimed in the textbooks, was Hernando Arias de Saavedra ("Hernandarias" in most texts, but not in Levene's), and Levene joined in the praise, distinguishing Arias as *the* Creole hero above all others, "the first patriot" (as Vicente Fidel López had entitled him) and the first American-born governor, three times governor of Buenos Aires (and the first time *elected* by the colonists, like Irala before him). Levene emphasized his efforts in organizing and developing the colony in every respect, including educational establishments, and his ability to "subdue the Indians by persuasion, without bloodshed"; Arias was remembered as something exceptional for the period: a great peacekeeper.⁶²⁴ From a much later stage of colonial rule, Juan José de Vértiz appeared as the Creole leader par excellence, the only *criollo* to become viceroy, and of course the best of them all: energetic, liberal and reform-oriented with a sound practical sense. In this case also, Levene was in accordance with the established tradition.⁶²⁵

⁶²² Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, 76, 82–84 and in particular 88–92. "La figura de Irala ha sido de las más grandes de la época colonial, por su genio activo y espíritu organizador. . . . Pero a la distancia de los siglos, su figura se agranda porque a Irala le debe la naciente colonia del Plata: 1.º, leyes sabias y justas para conseguir la sumisión de los indios, y 2.º, el sistema de las encomiendas aplicado en el Plata, que si en la práctica degeneró, era en principio un avanzado sistema de colonización. Irala es *el primer gobernante en cuya elección hayan intervenido popularmente los vecinos y el pueblo*. Antecedente que anotamos porque *nos ayudará a explicar después la lenta y gradual formación del espíritu democrático* en la Colonia del Plata." Ibid., 91 (italics added).

⁶²³ Ibid., 95–104; illustrations on 96 (statue of Garay), 97 (the city coat of arms given to Buenos Aires by Garay), and 102 (Garay solemnly declaring the foundation of Buenos Aires surrounded by his men). See 103 regarding the claim that the autonomist and Creole-democratic germ was present, in embryo, from the foundation: "Desde entonces . . . los criollos comenzaron a reclamar con altivez sus fueros comunales, revelando marcadas tendencias a gobernarse a sí mismos." A more subtle association to "democracy" was created by a comparison between Garay's city plan and the structure of ancient Greek cities (in a quotation from historian Ernesto Madero, *ibid.*): "... la traza se armoniza con la tradicional de las antiguas ciudades griegas situadas con un frente al mar ...".

⁶²⁴ Ibid., 125–135 (the quotation, borrowed from Ernesto Madero, on 130).

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 204–216.

Just as important as these prominent individuals in Levene's narrative were the *collective* expressions of Creole self-assertion, whether they took the form of local decision-making, local elections, protests against abuses from the Crown's civil servants, or outright rebellions. Levene systematized some of the more important under the label "democratic movements", the most conspicuous being the insurrections by the *comuneros* of Paraguay and Corrientes. According to Levene, Paraguay had from the beginning been "a turbulent municipal republic". The revolutionary upheavals (between 1721 and 1764) that began in Asunción and later flared up again in Corrientes, fuelled by a traditional-radical ideology based on the supreme authority of the *común*, the common interest of the local community, directed both against the viceroy and his representatives and against the Jesuits, were according to Levene "precursory of the emancipation of Spanish America".⁶²⁶

As we have seen, thematic chapters that cut across conventional chronological divisions made up a large portion of the volume dedicated to colonial history: at least 10 chapters with a total of 153 pages – more than in any previous textbook. The contents comprised laws and institutions of government, central and local; trade and economic life of the colony (for the first time in a textbook structured according to a periodization independent of the periodization of political history, and in general much more on this issue than in previous texts); public economic institutions, finances and taxation; judicial institutions; cultural history: religion, education at all levels, history of ideas, literature – and the press (from 1801, emphasized as a means to communicate otherwise separate provinces, cf. Anderson's theory on the role of Creole print men in early American nation-building); and, finally, "colonial society", dealing above all with the different groups that made up the population (races, social strata, town and countryside, the *gaucho*, women, charity, certain aspects of daily life, including bullfights and other kinds of entertainment, etc.). Fragments of this kind of information were found in other textbooks as well, but never in such a comprehensive and systematic manner. True, in some of these chapters the presentation took the form of lengthy and tedious enumerations of examples of a phenomenon in question, but on the whole Levene's approach first and foremost reveals a broader concept of history, or of the kind of history to be studied in the secondary school, than any previous textbook writer. His textbook – or at least the part that dealt with the colonial period – was the first that might

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 115–124 (on Creole movements in the early colonial period); 158–166 (on the *comunero* rebellions of the 18th Century – "dos significativas revoluciones ... que fueron precursoras de la emancipación de la América española" (166).

be said to have transcended the framework of traditional political history in considerable parts of the text.⁶²⁷

Levene, as others before him, attached much importance to the relatively short period of the Viceroyalty (1776–1810) as being constitutive of the Argentine society from which the independence revolution arose. With regards to the basic social and cultural characteristics of society, they were admittedly the product of more long-term developments, but in dealing with the economy, Levene insisted on the important changes brought by liberal reforms whose guiding principles were claimed to point to the period of national organization more than a half century later, following the down-fall of Rosas.⁶²⁸ As for the reforms that reshaped the whole structure of political administration, Levene interestingly presented the debate on whether the new *intendencias* really strengthened central rule, or whether they rather encouraged the autonomous development of the future provinces. This not only pointed towards the later conflict between federalism and unitarianism, as Levene explained; the question also had implications for the understanding of the order and nature of the formation of an Argentine nation and nation-state. Levene's own position was that the *intendencias* more than anything produced provincial structures and prepared for future provincial or regional autonomy. (The fact that the influences of local *cabildos* were at the same time substantially reduced did not alter this.) On this point, one might suggest that Levene implicitly – this was not a conclusion drawn by the author – approached a concept according to which the formation of nations in this part of South America would mean a protracted process that included a long intermediate stage dominated by province-building and the development of provincial identities.⁶²⁹ Other writers, like José Manuel Estrada, had presented the nation-building impact of the viceregal reforms in other terms: centralized rule and heavy taxation helped create a sense of Creole, possibly “proto-national” identity, in the

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 181–199 and 218–382, Chapters XIV and XVI–XXIV. On economic history in particular, 218–285 (divides in commercial history: 1662, 1713, 1796 and 1810). On newspapers, *ibid.*, 326–332. (However, Levene did not consider the press – which appeared late and had a limited range – “a revolutionary factor” in *rioplatense* society. Cf. the analysis in Chapter 9 above on José Manuel Estrada, who had also commented on the importance of newspapers, with my reference to relevant aspects of Anderson's theory). The chapter on “The colonial society” was found on 333–352. Examples of chapters that must have appeared to the students as dry and dull in their monotonous amassment of factual information (though this is of course a subjective assessment on my part), would be those dealing with the public finances and institutions, *ibid.*, 263ff.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 186–217; for an overall assessment of the period, see 190–192, beginning with the following statement: “El virreinato fué la época constitucional del Plata: el período de organización. Durante esta última etapa de la dominación española, se echaron las bases de las orientaciones económicas que fueron restableciéndose después de Caseros; ...”.

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 279–280. The question is related to the one addressed by José Carlos Chiamonte and Pablo Buchbinder, discussed above in relation to the textbooks by Domínguez, Estrada and Fregeiro (Chapters 8, 9 and 12, respectively). Their article did not deal with Levene's textbook. Chiamonte and Buchbinder, “Provincias”.

form of a reaction *against* the new forms of oppressive government, and through the ensuing revolution that nation came into being.⁶³⁰ Levene's interpretation is more complex. However, at the same time he stated that the Viceroyalty conditioned the shape of a future independent Argentina in another sense: It roughly outlined the external boundaries for the state to come. Levene insisted – and in this he was first among the textbook writers – that the immense territory included in the new *virreinato from the outset* tended towards a division into separate units, not one – and with time: several states. This was evidenced by signs of resistance towards Buenos Aires in particular from Upper Peru and the Banda Oriental. To Levene, these autonomous tendencies were as reasonable as had been Buenos Aires's resistance to Peruvian supremacy.⁶³¹

To Levene as to others, the Viceroyalty paved the way for independence not only through its achievements, but just as much through its failures, and, finally, through the circumstances that made it collapse and brought colonial rule to its end. The indigenous Tupac Amaru rebellion was described with sympathy, even if it in some sense was a sidetrack to the main course of events in the Creole community of the Plate region.⁶³² The growing conflict of economic interests between Creoles advocating free trade and the Spanish monopoly was a recurrent topic.⁶³³ The liberal reforms had encouraged the circulation not only of goods, but to a growing extent of knowledge and ideas; political and intellectual influences from abroad spread, whether they were permitted by the authorities or not, and contributed to prepare the revolutionary ground at least in certain Creole elite circles.⁶³⁴ However, the fatal blow to the whole framework of colonial relations was dealt by the British when they cut off Spain's maritime relations, devastating the colonial commerce, first, and thereby undermining the legitimacy of the political superstructure as well.⁶³⁵

In Levene's account, as in the other textbooks, the events that accelerated the independence movement took place from 1806 onwards, with the British invasions as the

⁶³⁰ See above Chapter 9.

⁶³¹ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, 191.

⁶³² *Ibid.*, 212–213.

⁶³³ See e.g. *ibid.*, Chapter XVI, 218–242, including a broad presentation of Mariano Moreno's "Representación de los hacendados".

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, Chapters XXII and XXIII, 305–332, in particular 320ff.

⁶³⁵ "Al propio tiempo, produce durante la época del virreynato un fenómeno de descomposición y bancarrota política y rentenista, en tanto hacía camino la corriente de ideas revolucionarias". *Ibid.*, 191. More specifically on Spain's maritime collapse: "Esta interrupción de relaciones que se abre [desde 1796] entre la metrópoli y las colonias ... va creando en América incommovibles situaciones de hecho, a base de relaciones comerciales y políticas libres, que las colonias mantuvieron con otras potencias, en virtud de no poder ser atendidas por la metrópoli."

main starting point. However, Levene insisted that these incidents, sparked off by external factors, were of a secondary importance as compared to the long-term, internal causes that so to speak had predetermined the eventual emancipation of the colony. The varied expressions of the independent and strong willed spirit of the Creoles, with their recurrent protests and rebellions through the centuries, had all been exercises preparing them for a revolution that was, in essence, “a result of our democracy”: “Estas revoluciones y movimientos subversivos fueron robusteciéndose más y más, y durante los tres siglos de época colonial el espíritu de los criollos fué ejercitándose para la gran revolución de 1810. La revolución de 1810 es una resultante de nuestra democracia.”⁶³⁶

Even if Levene set out to study the colonial period in its own right, without the prejudices of earlier historians, he ended up conferring upon it an inner meaning that only made sense in retrospect: the “destiny” of the colony was to clear the way for independence. The secular historian who subscribed to the idea of progress as the guiding principle for any understanding of history, presented a global interpretation that was just as teleological as had been religious variants, for instance with Estrada, in which history revealed the fulfilment of God’s will on earth.⁶³⁷

The attribution of relative importance to “internal” versus “external” causes in explaining the origins of independence had long been a debated historiographical issue, and would continue to occupy historians for many years to come. Similar discussions are not uncommon, in particular in nation-states of a relatively recent origin, where the question may become emotionally charged as it has a bearing on the national self-respect.⁶³⁸ Internal explanations might sometimes also have the advantage of appearing as more “fundamental” (or “structural”), whereas international politico-military events could correspondingly be presented as more “superficial”. All the textbooks studied here, at least the more comprehensive among them, noted a wide range of domestic and foreign circumstances that made 1810 possible, and all of them gave particular prominence to the internal movement

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 123.

⁶³⁷ See Chapter 9 above.

⁶³⁸ E.g. in my own country Norway, where a series of historians from Henrik Wergeland to Kåre Lunden insisted on the explanatory precedence of an “inner” line of deep-rooted causes of our independence movement in 1814 (in explaining both independence and the rise of a national community), whereas others, like Jens Arup Seip, coined the phrase “freedom bestowed”, meaning that it was the fortunate biproduct of great-power politics towards the end of the Napoleonic Wars. I find the similarities to different interpretations of the Spanish American *Independencia* to be quite striking – including specific circumstances such as the impact of the British naval blockade, whereas regarding the previous, dependent period the stout-hearted Norwegian farmers played an approximately similar part in romantic narratives as the equally courageous Creoles, whose virtues were furthermore exalted through the figure of the gaucho in contemporary Argentine, national mythology.

within the set of explanatory factors – even Vicente Gambón, though perhaps less so than the others, partly for ideological reasons.⁶³⁹ On the other hand, no one appeared as categorically insistent as Ricardo Levene in this respect.

Levene claimed *any* profound revolution to be a “natural [sic] phenomenon” that presupposed a long period of slow preparation, and thus could not be improvised or imported. Accordingly, he rejected the claim that the British invasions had triggered off the independence movement – they had only helped speed up events, while the movement itself expressed a “pre-existent tendency” rooted in “the first days of colonization”. Likewise, revolution could not be the work of individual leaders or circles, who could only act as “agents” of profound and broad social forces. In other words, *Mayo* was the product of a *pueblo* that had been ripening for three centuries.⁶⁴⁰ In this respect, Estrada was probably much closer to Levene in his global assessment than Gambón and other textbook writers with whom Levene more often agreed in other matters, only Levene articulated the idea in the form of a much more clear-cut thesis.⁶⁴¹

The four chapters dedicated to the final developments in Buenos Aires leading to *Mayo* followed a traditional line and included the usual milestones and narrative peaks, beginning with the successful Creole resistance to the British invasions and reaching a climax in the agitated days of May, crowned with the declaration of the *Cabildo abierto* the 22th, the “people” subsequently knocking at the doors of the unwilling, pro-Spanish (restricted) *Cabildo*, finally enforcing the resignation of viceroy Cisneros and the establishment of the first autonomous *Junta gubernativa* the 25th. It should be added, however, that even if all of

⁶³⁹ See Chapter 16 above.

⁶⁴⁰ Levene 1920, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 383–385, where the author in a programmatic manner elaborated his thoughts on the issue: “Durante toda la época del virreynato, se observa una tendencia de la sociedad colonial que marcha hacia la emancipación. Una revolución histórica, que cambia fundamentalmente de gobierno, de principio y leyes, no se improvisa ni es la obra de un caudillo o de un grupo. En este sentido, una revolución histórica es un fenómeno natural que estalla en el preciso momento en que las condiciones sociales, económicas y políticas la determinan. Decimos que las causas que provocan un movimiento revolucionario, no se improvisan sino que hacen lenta y gradualmente su obra ... Es [una revolución ... como la de Mayo] por el contrario ‘un producto social’, es decir consecuencia lógica de causas más profundas – económicas y políticas, – de modo que los caudillos son órganos y agentes revolucionarios de un sentimiento general dominante en la sociedad. ... Se comete un error cuando se afirma que de las invasiones inglesas, arranca el movimiento emancipador de la Colonia del Plata, pues este movimiento tiene su origen en los primeros días de la colonización española ... y se define y se vigoriza durante el período virreinal. Las invasiones inglesas, como los sucesos que acaecieron por entonces en España, sólo aceleraron la tendencia preexistente de la emancipación.” See also *ibid.*, 414–426, with a discussion of the causes of independence, summed up as follows on 425–426: Internal: 1) Creole economic interests 2) political reactions against colonial rule and in favor of self-government 3) the experiences made during the British invasions; External: 1) the North-American revolution 2) The Great French revolution 3) the downfall of the Seville Junta in Spain.

⁶⁴¹ As for Estrada’s version, see Chapter 9 above.

this was by now familiar, Levene's version of the plot distinguished itself as being vivid, exciting, thorough yet well-proportioned with regards to the amount of concrete details, and with a well-drawn dramatic curve in the final act. The principal characters stood out as real heroes with whom the reader might easily identify. Ricardo Levene's text was usually rather factual and sober, or occasionally tended towards the rigid, programmatic and sometimes abstract, but these pages seem to convey more of an enthusiastic and inspired story-teller that let himself be carried away by the magnitude of the drama.⁶⁴²

An interesting feature in Levene's interpretation of the independent period, unseen in other texts, was his attempt to incorporate metareflections on the periodization into subperiods, indicating possible alternative approaches that might implicate other criteria for selecting divides than the traditional divisions based on the history of political events. Even if the author eventually chose to follow the familiar pattern in the *Lecciones*⁶⁴³, just by raising the question Levene clearly intended to inspire in his students a kind of awareness regarding the process of history-making that had not been the ambition of his predecessors.⁶⁴⁴

On the whole, the presentation of contemporary history was just as scientifically pretentious as the part covering the colonial era had been, with a massive footnote apparatus and an abundance of extensive source-critical discussions. To a considerable degree, the

⁶⁴² Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 1, 1920, Chapters XXV–XVIII, 353–426.

⁶⁴³ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937. The familiar pattern was also evident in the quantitative structure of the text; admittedly with relatively more space allotted to the late 19th and early 20th Centuries as compared to earlier texts – this might indicate a slight shift in emphasis, however it did not amount to much more than one would expect from a textbook published in 1937 (unfortunately the earliest edition I was able to find). The relative distribution of materials ran as follows (percentages within the part covering the independent period): 10 pages (1,6 %) on a global assessment of the contemporary period; 277 pages (42,5 %) on 1810–1820; 65 pages (10,2 %) on 1820–1829; 120 pages (18,8 %) on 1829–1852; 165 pages (25,9 %) on 1852–1936. Within the last subperiod, 89 pages (14,0 %) covered 1852–1880, while 76 pages (11,9 %) dealt with the last half century 1880–1936.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 7–16 and 611–613. As for the political history of independent Argentina, Levene initially divided it in two: the (external) emancipation 1810–1816, and the "national organization" from 1816 onwards. A further subdivision followed exactly the periods used here for the quantitative analyses of each textbook (1810–1820, 1820–1829, 1829–1852, 1852–1880, and 1880–). Levene also suggested a slightly different division into four "moments": 1) "revolution", from its roots in the viceregal period to the rise of Rosas; 2) "dictatorship", covering Rosas's reign; 3) "constitution", 1852–1880; 4) "democracy", 1880 to present. Other alternatives, based on different principles, were discussed towards the end of the textbook: 1) Sarmiento's observation that the most important political changes had allegedly taken place at the turn of every decade from 1810 onwards; 2) José Nicolás Matienzo's theory on political "generations", each of which had predominated for approximately three presidencies (18 years) following the 1862 election of Mitre; 3) a division into cycles of 30 years, proposed by Rodolfo Rivarola: 1791–1821: "independence"; 1821–1851: "aspirations for a constitution"; 1851–1880: "consolidation of the Republic"; 1880–1911: "aspirations for a representative form of government"; 4) 1911–, "popular suffrage". However, Levene insisted that such interpretative divisions carried no precise value other than serving as an aid to grasp the "horizon" and fundamental "collective preoccupations or ideas" dominating each generation. *Ibid.*, 613.

textbook writer's aspiration to didactic simplicity must have yielded to the demands of the historian's professional pride⁶⁴⁵.

The historian Levene showed himself particularly strong and independent in dealing with the first half of the 19th Century: the independence struggle and the civil wars, the caudillos and Rosas. Here one may find both original interpretations and nuanced and often well-documented assessments that distinguish the *Lecciones* from the other texts analysed so far, as will be shown below.

However, there is one important exception to this overall impression of Levene's independent historical judgment: On numerous occasions he leaned heavily upon the authority of Bartolomé Mitre, whom he recognized as the principal pioneer of Argentine history writing. Accordingly, Levene inserted a stunning amount of quotations in the textbook, some of which extended over several pages, to the extent that at times Mitre actually appears as Levene's co-author.⁶⁴⁶ Whether intentionally or not, by thus establishing the authority of the historian Mitre in the early parts of the book, Levene prepared for the exaltation of Mitre as a protagonist of Argentine history itself in later chapters, a point to which we shall return.

We have already noted how colonial history, even if Levene considered it to be of great interest in its own right and advocated an unprejudiced approach to it, in practice served the prime purpose of explaining the origins of the independence revolution and of the Argentine nation. This had been the basic concern in all the textbooks studied here, and understandably so, given the nature and justification of the school subject of *Argentine* history. The nation was the main issue. However, Levene's conception of the "nation", his definition of the concept, was – again as usual in the textbooks – barely addressed explicitly. Still, in his discussion of the coming into existence of the Argentine nation, he encircled it in a more thorough and systematic manner than any of the others. The author's insistence on the importance of the colonial heritage meant that the *contents* of what would constitute a

⁶⁴⁵Examples abound throughout the book, though not quite to the degree observed in the first volume; e.g. *ibid.*, 19–21, with notes (on the documentary evidence regarding the question of whether or not full independence was the true, concealed intention of the May revolutionaries in 1810); 88–89n2 (on the source-based debate regarding the correct date of San Martín's birth); 171–176n1 (note extending over six pages (!) on the documentary sources to the Guayaquil reunion between San Martín and Bolívar); 467–469n1 (note in three full pages on the origins of different articles of the 1853 constitution, taking for granted that the reader was in advance familiar with the contents of each clause as well as certain reference texts such as Alberdi's *Bases*, none of which were explained in Levene's text); 479–480n2 (historiographical assessment of Bartolomé Mitre); 605n1 (on interamerican collaboration projects in which Levene had participated regarding history textbooks).

⁶⁴⁶E.g. *ibid.*, 86–92, 94–96n1, 107, 120–121, 123–125, 135–136, 147–148, 150, 161, 191–192, 340–341n1. As mentioned above, a homage to the historian Mitre is found on 497–498n2.

specific, Argentine nation with its “national character” had deep, historical roots, without implying, however, that the nation itself existed prior to the independence revolution. Political emancipation was apparently viewed as the germ of the Argentine nation and of a corresponding national consciousness, both of which could only be developed within the citizenry of the new, independent political entity. Thus, Levene’s concept of the nation was basically political, even if he stressed the formative role of cultural continuity from the colonial period.

The word “nación”, with its derivatives “nacional”, “nacionalidad”, etc., might variously and sometimes ambiguously refer to the independent *state* or to the *community* that constituted the political basis of the new republic. In the compound expression “organización nacional” (a recurrent theme in 19th Century history), the former meaning was predominant, whereas the latter would be obvious in combinations like “el sentimiento de la nacionalidad”. When the author programmatically stated that the history of the independent period dealt with two basic issues, the external emancipation and the internal, “national organization”, the last part clearly referred to state building, but a closer look reveals that both meanings were present: key words were not only those related to government: “constitución”, “estadistas”, “gobierno”, etc., but also references to popular education and culture: “la educación del pueblo” and “la cultura del pueblo”.⁶⁴⁷ As for the external emancipation, Levene stressed the importance of *patriotism*, seen as a form of community consciousness that *preceded* “national sentiment” and would be instrumental in producing it once the political conditions for the development of a nation were sufficiently developed.⁶⁴⁸ In the Argentine case, revolution and independence wars – the second decade of the 19th Century – were the decisive factors according to Levene, hence he could speak of a “subsistent national sentiment” in the caudillo-led, autonomous provinces in the 1820s. In the same context, he explicitly stated that “in the beginning, national sentiment consisted in the sentiment of emancipation”, adding that it would soon be doubly expressed as “the sentiment of independence” and “the ideal of a common, democratic organization”.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 7–16, in particular 9.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁹ The context was a discussion of the so-called “anarchy” of 1820: “... subsistía, latente y poderoso, el sentimiento de la nacionalidad. ... El sentimiento de la nacionalidad consistía al comienzo en el sentimiento de la emancipación. ... Así, en medio de la catástrofe que disolvió la sociedad política en el año 20, subsistía el sentimiento de la nacionalidad, consistente en el sentimiento de la independencia y en el ideal de la común organización democrática.” *Ibid.*, 256–258.

Levene provided a relatively even-handed account of the various conflicting political groups and tendencies following the 1810 revolution. That did not prevent the author from presenting his own assessments, and pro-federal sympathies shone through in many instances.⁶⁵⁰ Here Levene reinforced a tendency initiated by Estrada and followed by Martínez and Fregeiro, whereas in particular Domínguez, Vicente Fidel López and Grosso had embraced the opposite, pro-unitarian position, each admittedly with certain reservations.⁶⁵¹

Levene's judgment of the political alternatives of the independent era was deduced from what he conceived as the logical consequences of essential characteristics of Argentine society's development from colonial times, carried on through the revolutionary upheaval. As shown above, Levene considered Argentine society to be the carrier of a "democratic", "autonomist" or even "anarchist" heritage, and, accordingly, the independence movement in this part of the Spanish empire had to incorporate and express those tendencies. Regarding the initial revolutionary moment, Levene claimed that the two main factions both expressed aspects of Creole tradition: The radical *porteño* nucleus that demanded strong central government – later a key element in unitarianism – in order to secure independence and enforce the new order on a reluctant, traditionalist society, continued a long line of Creole insurgents representing what Levene somewhat vaguely styled "turbulent democracy", "*democracia turbulenta*", indicating, we may assume, a particularly indomitable and self-assertive character and defiance of the established authority; on the other hand, the spokesmen against *porteño* hegemony and in favour of provincial autonomy and the inclusion of provincial representatives in the central government expressed, according to the author, the ancient inclination towards *federal* democracy, "*democracia federal*".⁶⁵² The rival *porteño*

⁶⁵⁰ Instances abound throughout the chapters that dealt with the two decades following the May revolution of 1810, chapters which made up more than half the textbook. Certain chapters focused particularly on the internal political divisions: Chapter IV, 44–73 discussed the ideological tendencies and rival political interests of the initial stage, whereas the following Chapters V and VI, 74–107, described how they materialized in the following course of political events, including an assessment of the constituent assembly of 1813 (95–102); Chapter XI, 193–210, dealt with the political conflicts during and in the wake of the Congress of Tucumán; Chapter XIV, 247–263, provided a summary of the divisions that led to the "anarchy" of 1820; Chapters XV–XVI, 264–299, and XIX, 318–328, explained the political developments in Buenos Aires in the 1820s, including evaluations of Rivadavia and the constituent assembly of 1824, as well as of Dorrego.

⁶⁵¹ See Chapters 9 (on Estrada), 12 (on Fregeiro), 13 (on Martínez), 8 (on Domínguez), 14 (on Vicente F. López) and 15 (on Grosso) above.

⁶⁵² Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937, 44: "Desde los primeros días de la Revolución se insinúan en la Junta gubernativa dos grandes tendencias políticas, que operarán como fuerzas históricas, a cuyos impulsos iniciales obedecerá la política posterior. Tales tendencias son: de *democracia turbulenta*, que hará necesaria la constitución de un gobierno fuerte para mantener el orden y asegurar la causa de la emancipación; y de *democracia federal*, en el sentido de que las provincias serán entidades autónomas, con derecho a tener

leaders Mariano Moreno and Cornelio Saavedra were both described with sympathy, as was *Dean Funes*, the Cordobese leader of the delegates sent to Buenos Aires from other provinces.⁶⁵³

Levene emphasized the progressive character of the Assembly of 1813. Even if it failed to draft a constitution, the sum of liberal laws passed amounted to a “solid organic work”.⁶⁵⁴ However, in the following years, the central leaders (“el núcleo directivo”), both in the Congress of Tucumán and in the governments of the succeeding “supreme directors”, failed to adapt their strategies to the historical-political realities of the country, according to the author, whereas several provincial leaders had a better grasp of those realities, whose political expression was a “de facto federalism”. Hence all the subsequent monarchical projects, as well as excessively centralist constitutional initiatives advanced by the unitarians, were necessarily stillborn.⁶⁵⁵ On the other hand, Levene described with sympathy the internal

representantes en el gobierno.” This quote (and the passages that follow) also contains some of the ambiguity in Levene’s use of the expression “turbulent democracy”: It points on one hand to an “anarchic” *situation* that could only be *controlled* by a strong government, on the other to the way in which the leaders of this political orientation themselves *represented* or channeled the pressure from the riotous “masses”, the “popular passion”, and to the political organization that would be the outcome of their line of action: “... [Rebellions throughout the colonial period had produced] un sentimiento común y predominante en la masa de la población, en el sentido de organizar una democracia turbulenta ... la pasión popular llegó a hacer del gobierno una poderosa máquina de guerra, pues se armaba de grandes poderes, porque la causa de la emancipación lo reclamaba”. *Ibid.*, 45. The specific policies adopted were determined by the precarious position of the Junta of Buenos Aires: Efficient war efforts were the prime objective to which any other concern must yield, something that would justify among other things the merciless repressive measures against counter-revolutionaries, including numerous summary executions.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, 50ff (on the two conflicting personalities of the first Junta: the visionary, energetic, impatient Moreno vs. the prudent, conservative, level-headed Saavedra), 57–65 (a most flattering portrait of Mariano Moreno, defined as an “organizer of democracy” and as the “polemicist” of the revolution – whereas Castelli was styled its “orator” and Belgrano its “publicist”), 65–66 (on Funes, his decree on the establishment of provincial *Juntas* being acknowledged as “el punto de partida de nuestro federalismo”), 71–73 (praising Saavedra and refuting *morenista* accusations against him).

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 95–102 (quote from 96). Levene included the 1813 Assembly in a list of five “great assemblies” that also counted the *Cabildo abierto* of May 22 1810 (abolition of Spanish rule), the *Congreso de Tucumán* of 1816 (declaration of independence), the *Congreso constituyente* of 1824 (constitutional project of 1826) and, finally, the decisive *Congreso constituyente* of Santa Fe 1853. *Ibid.* In addition to the liberal spirit of the legislation in 1813, Levene pointed out that in the province of Buenos Aires elections had, for the first time in Argentine history, followed the principle of universal (male) suffrage; furthermore, he emphasized the nation-building measures taken by the assembly: the removal of several Spanish and royal symbols and references from public use, the establishment of 25 May as a national holiday, and, not least, the adoption of the national anthem written by Vicente López y Planes (with one of the rare illustrations in the textbook and a facsimile of the first publication of the text). *Ibid.*, 97–100. However, Levene judged as a major error the rejection of the representatives sent to the Assembly from Uruguay. *Ibid.*, 100–102 and 115; see comments below on Levene’s sympathy for Artigas.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 108–113 on the monarchical plans of 1808, 1814–15 and 1816, presented with more details than usual. Levene explained these tendencies in a nuanced manner as well-intentioned attempts to save the revolution in an “afflictive situation”, yet concluded that they collided with “la realidad histórica, el sentimiento colectivo predominante, que era esencialmente democrático”. Again and again, Levene’s thesis of the “democratic instinct of Argentine society” subsistent from colonial times was brought forth, often, as here and in the following passages, in a dogmatic manner – Levene did not show evidence that popular sentiment was really all that anti-

political developments in the province of Buenos Aires in the 1820s and had praise for both its two most prominent leaders: the unitarian Bernardino Rivadavia and the federal Manuel Dorrego, with the difference that Rivadavia was seen as the doctrinaire idealist who legislated without proper concern for the immature state of the country, while Dorrego, though less gifted in statesmanship, had a more accurate conception of the historical moment. The conflicts regarding the Congress of 1824 and the attempted Constitution of 1826 were explained in a neutral manner.⁶⁵⁶

Levene's view on the *caudillos* was closely connected to his fundamental thesis on the historically determined, decentralized "Creole democracy". The caudillos raised the banner of democracy and federation as "faithful exponents of these instincts of the masses".⁶⁵⁷ His views on this point offered points of resemblance with Estrada and Fregeiro, and were clearly akin to moderate versions of historical *revisiónismo* (and diametrically opposed to Vicente Fidel López's diatribes against the caudillos).⁶⁵⁸

Even if Levene, as textbook authors before him, used the word "anarchy" to describe the political situation of the country around 1820, in this text, as opposed to the others, the notion is not unambiguously negative; in effect it might often be conceived as practically neutral: The term covered the actual, "inevitable" state of the country as well as the basically necessary and "democratic" political alternatives that rose to predominance at this stage. "Political" anarchy was seen as the exterior expression of the more profound "economic, moral and political anarchy" of the entire society.⁶⁵⁹ It was even seen as the logical

monarchic always and everywhere; this was repeatedly presented as an a priori truth. The same argument served to explain why La Plata was the only part of the Spanish empire that was never reconquered by the royalists during the independence wars: Resistance was bolstered by a kind of solidarity that was the product of a "spontaneously egalitarian society" without the sharp class and race distinctions that characterized other Spanish colonies. *Ibid.*, 128n1. As for the constitutional initiatives, in particular the unitarian project in 1819 was dismissed as undemocratic and unworkable: "... que si no era monárquica no era tampoco democrático, y no satisfacía, pues, las aspiraciones generales". *Ibid.*, 206.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 227–231 (on Dorrego and Martín Rodríguez as governors of the province in the crisis of 1820); 264–288 (on the government of Rodríguez, with a positive assessment of the actuation of minister Rivadavia, including his contested reforms in religious matters); 289–299 (on the Congress of 1824 and the election of Rivadavia as the first president of the Republic); 318–328 (on the government of Dorrego, with a condemnation – common in the textbooks – of general Lavalle's coup d'état and execution of Dorrego); 382, comparing Rivadavia and Dorrego: "Por encima de su época, Rivadavia era sobre todo un doctrinario que legislaba para un pueblo ya constituido, olvidando que esa era la obra previa: constituir el país. ... Dorrego, que si noe tenía la amplitud de vistas y vasto talento de estadista de su predecesor, poseía el concepto preciso de la realidad histórica de su pueblo y de su época."

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 340: "Los caudillos, fieles exponentes de estos instintos de las masas, levantaron la bandera de la democracia de la federación."

⁶⁵⁸ See Chapter 14 above regarding the caudillos in V.F. López's manual.

⁶⁴⁶ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937, 247: "... la anarquía política, es decir la anarquía del gobierno y de los partidos o facciones que se disputaban el poder, es solamente lo exterior y ostensible, y que en el fondo de la

continuation of the independence revolution: “The anarchy of 1820 is the May revolution on its way.”⁶⁶⁰

More than any of his predecessors, Levene insisted on the outright *nation-building* role of the caudillos in the 1820s, in that they destroyed the remaining colonial administrative structures (such as the *intendencias* and *cabildos*) and replaced them with new and more modern institutions (province administrations with legislative assemblies) in a process of provincial organization that implied the establishment of autonomous, but not separate political units. In order to achieve this, they must first destroy the political hegemony of Buenos Aires, styled a “dictatorial regime”. At the same time, the caudillo-led rebellion represented (once more) a popular, democratic reaction destined to put an end to the elitist, monarchical plans that had long been flourishing. (Admittedly, *porteño* leadership had been viewed as a temporary necessity in the previous decade due to war priorities, but had now turned intolerable.)⁶⁶¹ Levene’s textbook was the first to include information on the concrete constituent achievements of each province, outlining particular contributions (such as the declaration of religious liberty in the short-lived “May Charter” of San Juan), and insisting that all the basic documents referred to the larger nation and embodied federal or confederate aspirations, hence they were not separatist.⁶⁶² Moreover, the 1820 Treaty of Pilar (between the victorious Littoral caudillos and the defeated governor of Buenos Aires) was described as the potential corner stone of a national, federal project (even if this possibility did not materialize), the other interprovincial treaties that soon followed were viewed as carrying a similar orientation, while the later Federal Pact of 1831 between Rosas and the littoral provinces at least in principle amounted to a real constitution.⁶⁶³ Summing up, “the caudillos

época había una profunda anarquía económica, moral y política”. The subject was dealt with in Chapter XII 211–233, Chapter XIV 247–263, and in Chapter XXI, 339–354, which discussed the phenomenon of Argentine *caudillismo* at large in a more concise way than the previous textbooks studied. Estrada’s and Fregeiro’s positions regarding the caudillos are discussed above in Chapters 9 and 12, respectively.

⁶⁶⁰ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937, 258: “La anarquía de 1820 es la Revolución de Mayo en marcha.”

⁶⁶¹ See e.g. *ibid.*, 249, where the battle of Cepeda in February 1820 (in which the caudillos of the Littoral defeated the army of Buenos Aires) was interpreted as “el triunfo de las autonomías provinciales, del federalismo de hecho, en oposición al régimen dictatorial de Buenos Aires ... el triunfo del sentimiento y del instinto democrático de las masas, sobre la fórmula monárquica de gobierno propuesta por el núcleo directivo del país”; 256–257: “La anarquía de 1820 arrasó con las instituciones coloniales existentes y destruyó el gobierno nacional ... Pero subsistía, latente y poderoso, el sentimiento de la nacionalidad.”; 248: “En 1820 fueron destruidas dos grandes jerarquías políticas: las Intendencias, de cuyo seno nacen las Provincias, y los Cabildos que fueran cunas de las juntas de Representantes o Legislaturas.”; 249 (on the possible justification of *porteño* hegemony in the most critical moments of the independence wars).

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, 259–261.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, 218–220; 335 (“Según la opinión de los autores de derecho constitucional, el “pacto federal” es mucho más que un tratado de unión: es una constitución con sus principios fundamentales.”); 343ff (summary of the discussion and particular remarks on the late Quiroga’s national orientation).

were nationalists, that is they endeavoured to organize the nation, but on the basis of the provincial autonomies”.⁶⁶⁴

We have already seen how earlier textbook authors might draw sympathetic portraits of certain selected caudillos: everyone regarding Martín Güemes, hero of the independence war on the northern front, Benigno T. Martínez on Francisco Ramírez, strongman of the author’s adopted home province Entre Ríos, and Clemente Fregeiro on José Gervasio Artigas, hailed as a “founding father” in Fregeiro’s native country Uruguay, but most controversial in Argentina at the time. Levene also had praise for several individual caudillos: Güemes, Artigas, Estanislao López of Santa Fe, Ramírez (though not after his break with López) and others. He paid particular attention to the caudillos who took constituent initiatives on a national level, urging and sometimes actually organizing interprovincial conferences, even if their impact would be transitory. This issue had never been seriously addressed in previous textbooks. In particular, the author dwelled on López’s contributions to that effect, as well as on the constitutional reorientation of the formerly unruly northern caudillo Juan Facundo Quiroga in the 1830s, and several others were mentioned.⁶⁶⁵

The real super-heroes of Levene’s story about Argentina, however, were the ones that had always been exalted in the Mitre-inspired tradition, above all Belgrano and San Martín. On this point, Levene was in tune with the tendency observed in most of the textbooks (with certain reservations made for Vicente Fidel López and Vicente Gambón). But at least in quantitative terms, Levene reached an all-time peak by dedicating more space than any of his predecessors to the Sanmartinian epic – three chapters covering 61 pages dealt exclusively with the campaigns of Chile and Peru.⁶⁶⁶

The building bricks used in Levene’s monument to San Martín were essentially the ones found in the other textbooks (as they were all indebted to Mitre in this regard): the

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., 343: “Además, los caudillos eran nacionalistas, es decir, tendían a organizar la nación, pero sobre la base de las autonomías provinciales.”

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., 41–43 (in favour of Artigas, critical on Buenos Aires’s armistice with viceroy Elio, letting down the patriot rebels of Uruguay, a measure “contrario a la causa de Mayo”); 100–102 (against the rejection of the Uruguayan representatives to the Assembly of 1813 and praising the contents of Artigas’s instructions to them, seen – along with the mandate given to the delegates from Potosí – as the expression of a kind of independentist federalism much akin to Mariano Moreno’s ideas); 115 (against director Posadas’s decision to outlaw Artigas); 120–121 (on Güemes, with a portrait); 213–217 (on Ramírez and López against Buenos Aires); 259–261 (on provincial constitutions); 343–353 (on interprovincial or national initiatives, with portraits of Estanislao López and Juan Facundo Quiroga). Regarding the caudillos in Fregeiro’s and Martínez’s textbooks, see Chapters 12 and 13 above.

⁶⁶⁶ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937, Chapters VIII–X, 132–192; notes on San Martín’s background and first participation in the independence wars on 86–92; 103–104 on San Martín’s salvation in the skirmish of San Lorenzo; 106–107 on the relations between San Martín and Belgrano.

general's military achievements were praised in high tones, both for the skills displayed and for the immense range of their effects, even when he fought as few battles as possible: "... in reality, he did not give more than three master battles ... and with them he liberated three nations"⁶⁶⁷. San Martín was compared to Alexander the Great, Hannibal and Napoleon (the crossing of the Andes bringing to mind the crossings of the Alps), only the former's campaign was even more "transcendental", as it was not motivated by vengeance, greed or personal ambition, but (quoting Mitre) "had as its objective and motive the independence and liberty of a republican world".⁶⁶⁸ Only Simón Bolívar could bear comparison with San Martín in this respect. Levene took care not to engage in Venezuelan-Argentine historiographical rivalries over the significance of their respective heroes, emphasizing more than other textbook authors the equal importance of the Venezuelan *Libertador*, and in general taking more care to point out the contributions to the independence struggles of other Spanish-American peoples (of course including the Chilean participation in San Martín's campaigns). This is an example of how Levene sought to combine his fervent Argentine patriotism with Panamericanism or Latin-Americanism, advocating a kind of "politically correct" nationalism. Just as the May revolution in Buenos Aires, "municipal in its origin, was continental in its objectives", so was the 1810 revolution in Caracas, and both produced the two decisive "continental movements" that only through combined efforts accomplished their mission. The meeting in Guayaquil between San Martín and Bolívar received much attention in the *Lecciones*, the differences between the two being pointed out, the conclusion nevertheless being that the agreement reached left both *prohombres* equally great in American history.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid., 189: "... en realidad, no fueron más de tres las batallas fundamentales que dió en todas sus campañas de América y con ellas libertó a tres Naciones".

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid., 247: "... es más transcendental en el orden de los destinos humanos [la empresa de San Martín], porque tenía por objeto y por móvil la independencia y la libertad de un mundo republicano".

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 132–133: "La Revolución del 25 de Mayo de 1810, comunal en su origen, era continental por sus fines ... Solamente las revoluciones que estallaron casi al propio tiempo en Buenos Aires y Caracas, alcanzaron proyecciones continentales ... Esta aproximación de dos movimientos continentales, se personificó en la entrevista histórica de sus dos geniales representantes, San Martín y Bolívar."; 135–137 (on the Chilean revolution and the alliance and "indestructible friendship" between San Martín and Bernardo O'Higgins); 160–161 and 165–166 (on the Argentine-Chilean alliance and respective contributions to the expedition to Peru); 168–169 (on Peru's independence); 171–182 (!) on the Guayaquil meeting, with a lengthy discussion of the sources and references to the historians' debates on the issue, polemicizing against some of his colleagues, insisting that the overriding issue at stake was not the alternative forms of government, on which the two disagreed, but the way to conclude the liberation war in Peru, to which they found a successful formula; a portrait of Bolívar presented to San Martín in the meeting was reproduced on 172. On the significance of the two leaders in a larger perspective: "... mientras Bolívar encarna una aspiración de unificación del mundo americano, San Martín es el autor de la distribución del Continente Sud-Americano dentro de sus actuales fronteras nacionales". Ibid., 182.

The way in which San Martín stepped down at the Guayaquil meeting and left the command to Bolívar, as well as his subsequent abdication as “protector” of Peru and retirement from public life, served to exalt the other main quality in San Martín’s character, here as in earlier textbooks: the general’s personal modesty, his lack of private ambitions, his idealism and dedication to the cause of emancipation; in short: his civic virtues. San Martín’s refusal to take part in the Argentine civil wars, as well as his consistency in separating military from political power, added to the image. San Martín was the *soldier citizen*, “always the victor, not only in war, but over the human passions: ambition, vanity, command”. In his use of this recurrent topic, Levene essentially did not add anything new; he rather confirmed the already established, secular hagiography in a most insistent and elaborate manner. One might add that the patriotic icon thus interpreted was well suited to serve a democratic and anti-militaristic purpose in an Argentina where military intervention in the country’s political life was a factor, manifest or latent, which loomed large even in the relatively civil stage of Argentine political history in which the first editions of Levene’s *Lecciones* were published.⁶⁷⁰

Manuel Belgrano did not take up nearly as much space as San Martín in the narrative, but through a series of statements Levene nevertheless equalled the two heroes and let the former share in the glories of the latter, to the extent that as exemplary models of civil virtues such as courage, modesty and self-sacrifice, they practically merged into one and the same patriotic ideal.⁶⁷¹ The only reproach Levene expressed against Belgrano and San Martín was

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., e.g. 161–163 on San Martín’s “ingenious disobedience” when ordered to engage his army in the war against the Littoral caudillos: “La anarquía era un fenómeno político que estaba en la naturaleza del pueblo, y no sería por cierto un ejército el medio más adecuado para detener la potente fuerza y realidad de una evolución histórica. Y desobedeció la orden. Puede llamarse a esta decisión, la desobediencia genial de San Martín, pues de este modo pudo emprender la expedición libertadora del Perú, que aseguraría para siempre la emancipación de su patria.” – in San Martín’s own words on 188–189: “Suponiendo que la suerte de las armas me hubiese sido favorable en la guerra civil yo habría tenido que llorar la victoria con los mismos vencidos. Nó, el general San Martín jamás derramará la sangre de sus compatriotas y solo desenvainará la espada contra los enemigos de la independencia de América.”; likewise on 165n1, refuting accusations (as put forward by Vicente F. López in his *Manual*, though without bringing up López’s name) that San Martín had by now become “indifferent” to the destiny of his Argentine *patria*; 182–184, on San Martín’s abdication in Peru and retirement from public life – and from America, highlighting his proclamation on the former occasion: “Mi promesa para con los pueblos en que he hecho la guerra están cumplidas: hacer la independencia y dejar a sus vountades la elección de sus gobiernos. La presencia de un militar afortunado es temible a los Estados que de nuevo se constituyen”; 186–192, presenting a global assessment of San Martín’s virtues and historical significance: “siempre el vencedor, no sólo en la guerra, sino de las pasiones humanas: la ambición, la vanidad, el mando” (187); under his portrait (one of several illustrations regarding San Martín): “El soldado ciudadano que cuidó más su causa que su empleo” (186). The dying general’s decision to bequeath his sword to Juan Manuel Rosas was presented as his last patriotic gesture, in support not of Rosas’s internal political regime, but rather of his defence against imperialist attempts to humiliate Argentina. Ibid., 184.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., 34–37 (on Belgrano’s expedition to Paraguay – a military failure, but with fortunate long-term consequences in the shape of Paraguayan independence); 64; 77–81 (on the national flag introduced by

about their monarchical inclinations, but their attitude in this regard was presented rather as part of a collective fault, as the delusion of a whole political environment, as shown above.

In his assessment of Rosas, Levene presented a more nuanced picture than any of his predecessors (though with certain antecedents in the texts by Fregeiro and Gambón).⁶⁷² Rosas was certainly not portrayed with the kind of admiration that would later become the core of much revisionist literature; nevertheless, negative as well as positive qualities of his regime and of his “enigmatic” personality were outlined in a dispassionate manner (again, in contrast to the cases of Vicente Fidel López and José Manuel Estrada). On the downside, Levene as all the other textbook authors first and foremost condemned the violent repression under Rosas’s second governorship, and even if the author took care to point out that similar methods had been used by others, he insisted that Rosas alone had turned the terror into a systematic “form of government”. Secondly, Levene emphasized the “evident sterility” of the regime in terms of institutional development. Thirdly, even if Rosas defended the rural proletariat and also enjoyed widespread support among the urban poor, Levene claimed that his line of politics, in particular in economic matters, primarily aimed at serving the interests of the patrician proprietors, and of Buenos Aires to the detriment of the other provinces (something that would eventually cause his downfall).⁶⁷³

Belgrano); 83–86 (on Belgrano’s victory at the battle of Tucumán – even if it represented an act of disobedience on Belgrano’s behalf, his attitude saved the *patria*, cf. similar statements regarding San Martín quoted above); Belgrano’s portrait on 83 with the text: “Una de las glorias más puras de la Revolución. Belgrano representa la modestia y la sinceridad en la historia argentina.”; 104–107: Belgrano’s victory at Salta (praising him for donating his reward to the establishment of primary schools), his subsequent defeats in Upper Peru and the good relations between Belgrano and San Martín, who then relieved the former as commander of the northern army: “No existió entre estos dos hombres superiores ninguna pequeña rivalidad” (107), adding Mitre’s eulogy to both: “los dos hombres verdaderamente grandes de la revolución argentina y que merecen el título de fundadores de la independencia”; 225–227, providing an overall judgement of Belgrano on the occasion of his death: “Belgrano representa la virtud en nuestra historia, principalmente en estas dos puras manifestaciones del alma: la modestia y la sinceridad.”, quoting in his support Joaquín V. González’s combined praise of Belgrano and San Martín: “Creo que el conjunto de cualidades morales que formaban su carácter [de Belgrano] fué la fuerza más poderosa que salvó la Revolución argentina hasta que San Martín vino a imprimirle otra dirección y otros métodos. Y la más excelsa de aquellas cualidades, en lo cual *coinciden estos dos personajes, destinados a fundirse con el tiempo en un solo tipo moral*, fué la de su *absoluta consagración al bien público ...*”. (Italics added.)

⁶⁷² Ibid., 229, 325–328, Chapter XX, 329–338, 350–353, Chapters XXII–XXVII 355–448; on Rosas in the textbooks by Fregeiro and Gambón, see above Chapters 12 and 16, respectively.

⁶⁷³ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937, 330 (under his portrait): “El hombre, de alma enigmática, poseído de un sentimiento trágico”; 333, on the repression (“equalling” it to earlier crimes committed by unitarians): “... toda muerte o crimen inspirado por Rosas, merece la condenación de la historia. Del mismo modo que la posteridad ha calificado duramente el fusilamiento del coronel Dorrego, la historia ha dejado caer su reprobación sobre Rosas al comprobar que bajo el sistema de su gobierno no existían garantías para la libertad o la vida de las personas.”; 349–352 (leaving open the question whether Rosas really wanted a federal organization of the republic); 377–382 (on the terror, discussing its widespread use by others, concluding, however, that only Rosas “llegó a implantarlo como régimen de gobierno”); 384 (on the regime’s class basis): “... su misión [de la dictadura] consistirá desde el punto de vista económico, en asociarse con la clase propietaria y patricia para la

On the other hand, Rosas's initial public performances as well as his first years in government were presented rather favourably, as had been the case in some earlier textbooks; and even regarding later years, Rosas's foreign policies, challenging France and Britain, merited the author's approval. (The turning point would be Urquiza's ultimate and decisive rebellion, in alliance with foreign powers, against Rosas; at this point, Levene did not censure the intervention.) This anti-imperialist conception of Rosas would soon be situated at the core of revisionist – and, with time, main stream – presentations in a way reminiscent of Levene's text. Personal qualities in Rosas such as honesty and integrity were also emphasized on several occasions.⁶⁷⁴

More importantly, the individual importance – and, hence, responsibility – of Rosas was toned down in accordance with Levene's general approach to the march of history: Rosas was but the product of Argentine society at that time, a mirror of the environment that brought him to power. And that society, again, was shaped by its collective experiences: deeply rooted in the colonial past, yet shaken by revolution and wars.⁶⁷⁵

In the parts of the text that dealt with the first decades of independence, we have noted how Levene's assessments to a considerable extent relied on his own, independent criteria and carried the author's signature. However, evaluative statements might also be presented in the

defensa de sus bienes y garantía de la paz pública”; 386–387: “... Rosas representa por una parte la garantía de la paz para hacendados, propietarios, la clase comercial e intelectual y por otra, la defensa de los intereses de las clases trabajadoras, especialmente del campo”; 444–448 (final assessment of Rosas, emphasizing the already established pros and cons before rounding off): “Rosas no llegó a consolidar la paz. Es evidente, además, la esterilidad de este gobierno de 20 años, en orden a las creaciones institucionales.”

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., 229; 325–328 (on Rosas's services to the province of Buenos Aires before he was elected governor); 329–333 (early biography of Rosas, insisting on his respectable background and personal ability and moral character); 361 (on Rosas's first term of office): “La opinión pública y principales hombres civiles y militares acompañaron a Rosas ...”; 361–363 (approval of his war against the Indians, “la expedición al desierto”); 378–379 (nuanced on the nature of the Mazorca); 405–417 (on the international conflicts); 430–448 (on Urquiza's *pronunciamiento*); 447–448 (clearing Rosas of all charges regarding corruption or misconduct in economic matters).

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid., 333: “Veremos a su tiempo la parte de responsabilidad que le corresponde, y la que es preciso adjudicar y distribuir entre nuestro pasado histórico – de continuas revoluciones, de crisis violentas de los gobiernos, de transformación de los partidos políticos de principios en partidos personales – y la sociedad de la época, aquejada y conmovida por fenómenos de disolución moral y política.”; 377 (on the growing cult of Rosas in his second term of office): “El ambiente social se fué formando en el sentido de consolidar la dictadura.”; 386–387 (summary of the characteristics of *rosismo* under the heading “*Rosas es una resultante social*”). In the chapters regarding Rosas, Levene showed a stronger tendency than before to quote the judgements of other writers, both in favour of and against Rosas, see e.g. 337–338 (Juan B. Terán, favourably comparing the unitarian general Paz to Rosas); 363–364 (A. Saldías on Rosas as a hero of the wars with the indigenous tribes); 379–380 (Ernesto Quesada condemning the repressive methods, but claiming they were customary and practised by all men of power): “Esos medios reprobados ... estaban en la costumbre de la época, en la doctrina de los hombres pensadores nuestros: lo practicaron unos y otros, federales y unitarios, rosistas y emigrados, tiranos y tiranizados; todos fueron, por turno y según la casualidad lo permitía, víctimas y verdugos, verdugos y víctimas”; 381–382 (José M. Ramos Mejía on the importance of Rosas's early impressions of repressive terror during the independence war); 444–448 (quoting opinions on Rosas by seven different authors).

indirect form of uncommented quotations from other writers. When Levene continued his account beyond the downfall of Rosas, this increasingly became the preferred method; other writers were brought in to present their points of view, while the authorial voice more carefully stuck to seemingly neutral ground. In this manner, the author might shiftingly enhance the significance and qualities of antagonistic groups and personalities, each in their “best moments”, without taking an explicit stand. There were many exceptions to be found, but the overall tendency was quite clear. (However, the result was not the somewhat bewildering patchwork of often contradictory quotations observed above in Vicente Gambón’s textbook.)

We may observe this in the unbiased way in which Levene presented the conflict between separatist Buenos Aires and the Argentine Confederation led by Urquiza in the 1850s. True, regarding the initial moment, Levene would – in accordance with his retrospective political convictions – sympathize with Urquiza rather than with *porteño* resistance to the federal, national project. However, it was out of this conflict that Bartolomé Mitre rose to national leadership, and in Levene’s narrative Mitre was presented as the most prominent Argentine personality of the second half of the 19th Century. To facilitate the delicate passage of sympathies, the complicated political entanglements of the 1850s had to be dealt with in careful terms.⁶⁷⁶

First, the constituent assembly of Santa Fe and the Constitution of 1853 (with amendments, still in force) were praised in high tones as the culmination of Argentine statesmanship and political thought in the 19th Century, basically federalist yet integrating the best elements of the unitarian tradition into “one of the most liberal [constitutions] in the

⁶⁷⁶Ibid., 430–460 on Urquiza’s *pronunciamiento*, the battle of Caseros and the conflict with Buenos Aires; 461–490 on the Constituent Assembly of Santa Fe and Urquiza’s presidency. The author’s sympathy with Urquiza was evident throughout these pages, but was mainly transmitted in the form of quotations from others, as indicated. This method was demonstrated from the outset, with regards to the battle of Caseros (439–440), where a quotation from Sarmiento, praising Urquiza’s personal courage and decisive intervention in high tones, was juxtaposed with a passage from Mitre flatly stating that the uneven balance between the forces made the outcome of the battle completely predictable. Likewise, in dealing with the heated debates in the legislative assembly of Buenos Aires regarding the Agreement of San Nicolás, which had outlined the constituent process to come and temporarily conferred the executive powers upon Urquiza, Levene even-handedly reproduced the main arguments put forward from both sides. However, the author’s presentation was followed by a three-pages long quotation in the form of a vivid account in which Vicente Fidel López, in his defense of Urquiza and the federal project against Mitre, Vélez Sarsfield and a hostile *porteño* audience, stood out as the real hero of the day. Ibid., 450–456 on the *Jornadas de junio*. Other examples abound in the following chapters.

world”.⁶⁷⁷ The praise in itself had long been commonplace in the textbooks, but Levene paid more attention to the constitutional work than any of his predecessors.

Furthermore, Levene’s text more than any other pointed out the institutional and economic achievements of the Argentine Confederation under Urquiza’s presidency, for example in the fields of education, immigration and cultural life.⁶⁷⁸

When moving on to the development of the free state of Buenos Aires in the next chapter, developments there were described perhaps with less enthusiasm, however not without sympathy. In both parts of the divided Argentina, Levene identified “hawks” and “doves”, implicitly embracing the latter with more benevolence. As the conflict escalated, culminating in the battles of Cepeda (1859) and Pavón (1861), Levene described the events, pointing out causes and motives, without showing colours. After all, the struggle was embodied in the enmity between two leaders that had both been exalted as heroes by Levene. The author refrained from “degrading” any of them, hence the fragile neutrality of the narrative at this point.⁶⁷⁹

Although Mitre had been favourably viewed in earlier textbooks, it was Ricardo Levene who turned him into one of the major heroic figures of contemporary Argentine history, raising him to a level right next to the giants of the independence struggles, Belgrano and San Martín. This homage culminated in the chapter dedicated to Mitre’s own presidency (1862–68), in which not only his government was unconditionally praised – this had also been the case with the achievements of his predecessor and principal rival Urquiza. At this point, Levene turned the image of Mitre into an outright icon of civic and democratic virtue: “Mitre’s life should be regarded as a treatise of civic moral and should be written as a lesson

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid., 461–473 (the quoted phrase on 473). The individual members of the assembly were pointed out, as well as the basic principles guiding the constituent work. A full-page illustration reproduced Antonio Alice’s historical painting “Los Constituyentes de 1853”. Juan Bautista Alberdi was praised as the ideological “father” of the constitution through the influence of his book *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina*, commonly referred to simply as the *Bases*, and his portrait reproduced. Ibid., 464–467. A lengthy footnote (three pages covering 467–469) discussed all the articles of the Constitution and their constitutional sources of inspiration, without, however, explaining the *contents* of those clauses! To make any sense of this miniature dissertation, the young student would have to be unusually familiar with the constitutional texts referred to as well as with Alberdi’s *Bases* in advance. Again, pedagogical concerns were overrun by academic ambition.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid., 475–480. Levene also took care to show that Urquiza was never anti-Buenos Aires, emphasizing his conviction that the separation of the leading province would prove transitory as Buenos Aires and her “sister” provinces all needed each other within a national framework, quote: “La geografía, la historia, los pactos, vinculan a Buenos Aires al resto de la nación. Ni ella puede vivir sin sus hermanas ni sus hermanas sin ella.” Ibid., 473–475.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid., 481–490. See also 454–460 on political developments in Buenos Aires in the wake of the *Jornadas de junio* in 1852, referred to above.

of love for democracy”.⁶⁸⁰ Nuances to that assessment were not added to the presentation even when Levene on later occasions referred to acts by Mitre that might call for a discussion of the sort, for instance in the account of how Mitre staged an admittedly failed military coup d'état, having lost the presidential elections of 1874.⁶⁸¹

Mitre was not only hailed as the principal political figure of the second half of the 19th Century. Levene also proudly presented him as the founding father of Argentine history writing, and more precisely as the spiritual forefather of Levene's own generation of historians. We have already observed the prolific use of Mitre's historical works throughout Levene's own book. Still, it is worth noting that Levene was the first text book author to introduce Argentine historiography as a topic in its own right.⁶⁸²

The two following presidents of what had by now been established as the period of “national organization”, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Nicolás Avellaneda, were both favourably presented, however overshadowed by Mitre. In Sarmiento's case, his efforts in the field of education were pointed out.⁶⁸³ Otherwise, three predominating topics were addressed in the text regarding the 1860s and '70s: the Paraguayan war, the “Conquest of the desert” (the war on the Native Americans), and the issue of the capital of the Republic that ended with the federalization of the city of Buenos Aires in 1880.

Along with Grosso, Levene dedicated more space to the Paraguayan war (1864–1870) than others in this study.⁶⁸⁴ But Levene's presentation clearly differed from the former and his points of view had in fact more in common with the ones found in Vicente Gambón's text, even if the latter paid much less attention to the war. All textbooks that dealt with the issue at all, including Levene, defended Argentina's participation in the war as an act of legitimate self defence from the outset. But whereas Grosso, and Fregeiro before him, presented an entirely heroizing account devoid of any nuances, Levene, with Gambón (on the whole a bit more critical than Levene here), at least omitted the triumphalist overtones, regretted the

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., 491–500. The quotation from 500: “La vida de Mitre vale por un tratado de moral cívica y deberá escribirse como lección de amor a la democracia”. The juxtaposition with earlier heroes: Mitre is “el que continúa la tradición de nuestros mayores (Moreno, Belgrano, Rivadavia, San Martín)”. Ibid., 499. Under his portrait, Mitre was described as “Estadista, militar, historiador, periodista, bibliófilo y humanista. Organizador y pacificador de la nación y demócrata, que dirige y educa la conciencia popular”. Ibid., 494.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 527–529. The military uprising against the election of Nicolás Avellaneda was described in some detail, without any evaluative comment. More on Mitre on 514–518 (his “political testament” as an expression of “el instinto de la belleza moral en la política”), 550 and 564–565.

⁶⁸² Ibid., 497–498 on the historian Mitre. More on how Levene would draw attention to the achievements of himself and his contemporaries in the field of history below.

⁶⁸³ Ibid., 514–525 on Sarmiento's presidency 1868–74 (however, the first five pages still dealt with Mitre and his “political testament”); 526–537 on Avellaneda's presidency 1874–1880.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., 501–513 and 521–522.

prolongation of the war, and pointed to the “heroic resistance” of the Paraguayan people.⁶⁸⁵ Still, it remains a disappointing observation that even in a text published 70 years after the events, there was no mention of the dreadful consequences of the war for Paraguay, not least in terms of human losses that amounted to a demographic disaster. What Levene *did* discuss, even at some length, was the settlement after the war, more specifically the question of whether the victorious powers had the right to exploit their position in making territorial gains etc. Sarmiento’s Foreign Minister said no, Mitre (and Brazil) said yes – and had their way. Levene referred the arguments of both without taking a stand in any explicit manner. One has the feeling, however, that Levene might secretly sympathize with the former’s “la victoria no da derechos”, but refrained from any direct criticism of his hero Mitre. That would at least be in line with his view on all the other inter-American conflicts and diplomatic issues referred to in the text, a field of history that Levene took particular interest in (more on this below).

On the other hand, the wars with indigenous tribes that culminated in general Julio A. Roca’s vast campaign in 1879 were presented without any reservation as a pure triumph for civilization and progress; the partial extinction, partial marginalization of the Amerindians being a necessary price to pay – and one that did not call for much consideration. This was the case of every textbook in my corpus that dealt with these wars; in Levene (not in all the others) in consequent line with his one-sided approach to white-indigenous conflicts throughout both the colonial and the independent periods. The dry logic of his final conclusion is chilling to a present day reader: “This campaign also means the extinction of the savage Indian and thereby his elimination from the components of the racial mixture that takes shape in our country. Having disappeared this constant menace to civilization, the foreigner entered, determined to cultivate and populate Patagonia, united with the Argentines ...”⁶⁸⁶

President Avellaneda was equally praised for having resolved the thorny issue of the *cuestión capital* in 1880. Even if Carlos Tejedor, the oppositional presidential candidate and leader of the *porteño* armed insurrection against the federalization of their city (and against his rival to the presidency, general Roca), merited respectful mention in the text, Levene fully

⁶⁸⁵ For the Paraguayan war in the other textbooks, see above Chapters 12 (Fregeiro), 14 (V.F. López), 15 (Grosso) and 16 (Gambón).

⁶⁸⁶ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937, 529–531, quotation from 530: “Esta campaña significa también la extinción del indio salvaje y por lo tanto su eliminación entre los componentes de mezcla de razas que se forma en nuestro país. Desaparecida esta constante amenaza a la civilización, el extranjero entró decidido a cultivar y poblar la Patagonia, en unión con los argentinos, ...”. For the presentation of the “Conquest of the desert” in other textbooks, see above Chapters 12 (Fregeiro), 14 (V.F. López), 15 (Grosso) and 16 (Gambón).

approved of Avellaneda's line of action as having produced a balanced and permanent solution to what had been a constant source of conflict throughout the independent period. The fact that the political outcome would also carry the germs of certain developments that Levene might criticize in later chapters, did not alter this. After 1880, none of the political conflicts to come, however violent some of them were, would threaten the fundamental unity of the Republic.⁶⁸⁷

Furthermore, 1880 was singled out as a main watershed with regards to the country's economic and social history, with references to economic growth, international trade, the expansion of railways, urbanization, and, not least, mass immigration. In the years to follow, all of this would become the usual pinpoints for periodization in almost any book on Argentina's contemporary history, but none of the earlier textbooks had pointed out and summarized the concurrent changes in such an insistent manner, even when they too had indicated 1880 as a divide.⁶⁸⁸

Levene dedicated more space to the last part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries than any of the other textbook writers studied thus far, both in relative and absolute terms. (At least it appears so from the editions that were available to me. In this regard, it is a real source problem that I have not been able to consult the 1912 edition; for the second part of the *Lecciones*, I used the 1937 edition, which might presumably have enlarged the section on late nineteenth century history as compared to the 1912 version, and obviously did so regarding twentieth century events.)⁶⁸⁹ Furthermore, Levene clearly endeavoured to include the entire contemporary period as an object of historical study, incorporating the more recent subperiods into his global assessments and summaries, and aspiring to formulate their specific characteristics. Unlike some other texts that had also been updated by bringing

⁶⁸⁷ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937, 531–536. "La federalización de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, fué el punto de apoyo necesario para llegar al equilibrio político y consolidación de la organización nacional. ... Sin disputa la ley de capitalización ha sido el acontecimiento más importante en la historia política argentina de los últimos cincuenta años, ..." (534).

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, concluding on 535: "Así pues, lo político y lo económico influyeron a partir de 1880, para iniciar un nuevo período en la historia argentina". Among the other textbooks, Fregeiro's global assessment of 1880 and the following period probably comes closest to Levene's (see Chapter 12 above). But Fregeiro had no critical remarks on contemporary developments; Levene had, as we shall soon see. Vicente Fidel López, on the other hand, while not providing a broader perspective on contemporary history, did – as the only one in my corpus – connect the outcome of the conflict in 1880 directly to the following development of government authoritarianism and political malpractices, and regretted the militaristic character of a per se reasonable measure (the federalization of the capital) (Chapter 14).

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.* – the 1937 edition – 538–613 on the most recent, post-1880 period: 76 pages, 11,9 % of the total (within the independent period).

information on recent events, Levene's was not merely annalistic in this respect, even if he structured most of the final chapters in the conventional fashion following the presidencies.⁶⁹⁰

Regarding political history after 1880, Levene's text stood out from the others I have studied in adopting a critical view on the political practices of the regime – only Vicente Fidel López had made suggestions in the same direction earlier.⁶⁹¹ Corruption, electoral fraud, abuse of power and a steadily increasing concentration of powers were severely judged as notorious flaws of the system (with the reservation made earlier that my reading is not based on the 1912 original edition – it is very possible that this kind of criticism had been facilitated by the greater distance in time of later editions).⁶⁹² At this point, the textbook narrative hooked up with the author's personal experiences; in 1904–05, the young Levene had been a campaign activist in favour of former president Carlos Pellegrini, who in his later years championed political reforms destined to combat the current fraudulent practices.⁶⁹³ Oppositional groups, in particular the Radical movement, the UCR, were described with sympathy – including the attempted revolution in 1890 – and so were reformist attempts from within the Liberal-Conservative regime, culminating in Roque Sáenz Peña's electoral reform of 1912.⁶⁹⁴ (On the other hand, one may note that Levene in the 1937 edition, even if he

⁶⁹⁰ See in particular *ibid.*, 535–536 (changes in the post-1880 period); 593–597 (characteristics of contemporary Argentina); 608–610 (tendencies in political developments after 1853); 611–613 (alternative approaches to the periodization of Argentina's contemporary history). Fernando J. Devoto claimed that it was Ricardo Levene who established the practice of structuring contemporary history according to presidencies (the six-year terms of the presidents of the Republic), but here Levene stuck to an older textbook tradition; see for example above Chapters 12 on Fregeiro, 15 on Grosso. Devoto, "Idea de nación", 18.

⁶⁹¹ On V. F. López in this respect, see the last part of Chapter 14 above.

⁶⁹² Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937, 641 on the concentration of powers in the hands of the president, on the eve of the electoral campaign towards the end of Roca's first presidential period: "la presidencia absorbía y centralizaba todos los poderes de la democracia, de modo tal, que el éxito de los candidatos, no dependía de la lucha comicial de los partidos políticos, sino de la voluntad del presidente"; similarly 542–543, adding statements on the general spread of corruption in public administration ("una gran corrupción se extiende por toda la administración pública"), paradoxically compatible with important simultaneous progresses in civil law ("No faltaban pues leyes para los casos ordinarios de la vida social. Lo que faltaba era libertad política y dignidad cívica."); 551 on president Carlos Pellegrini, whose government on the whole merited approval, but who remained within the system of electoral fraud that he himself years later would campaign against: "... el error de Pellegrini fué el de combatir los efectos sin remover la causa, pues el factor determinante de las convulsiones políticas era la presión oficial en la designación de Presidente y por lo tanto, la falta de garantía en el sufragio popular"; 569–571, stating that election fraud had been the general rule from the 1820s until the 1912 electoral reform: "La sociedad argentina era democrática desde sus orígenes y no había hallado aún el sistema de hacer respetar la voluntad popular."

⁶⁹³ Cf. Carlos Heras biographical introduction "Ricardo Levene" in Levene, *Obras de Ricardo Levene*, 16–17 on young Levene's first and only participation in direct political activism.

⁶⁹⁴ Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937, 545ff, on the early *radicalismo* and the "revolution" of 1890; 552–554 (following up through the 1890s); 562–563 (more neutrally on UCR's attempted coup in 1905); 571–578, on Roque Sáenz Peña and the 1912 electoral reform (highly praised), as well as on the following electoral triumph of the Radicals and first presidency of Hipólito Yrigoyen: "... el Partido Radical tenía los caracteres fundamentales de constituir un partido nacional ... partido popular surgido con la libertad del sufragio de la ley

carried the account close to that date, refrained from making critical statements on what was *then* the contemporary political situation, with the Conservative governments of the 1930s. Essentially, then, Levene went about the challenge of dealing with *present* rulers in exactly the same way as textbook writers had done in the 1880s and '90s: that is, with the utmost caution. "Today's Argentina" was even styled "one of the countries in which the system of popular vote and representative institutions functions best". This was, admittedly, written in one of the poorest moments for democracy on the international scene.⁶⁹⁵)

However, even if the workings of the political system itself were depicted in gloomy colours, this did not prevent Levene from showing respect and even admiration for several of the leaders that were the chief administrators of that system, pointing out their personal qualities. While dealing with the presidencies of Julio A. Roca, Carlos Pellegrini, José Evaristo Uriburo⁶⁹⁶ and several others, Levene repeatedly emphasized the efficiency and progressive orientation of the governments and mentioned important achievements in many fields, from financial institutions to railways, education to diplomacy. The governing regime of the late nineteenth century appeared in essence as authoritarian, politically corrupt, yet as an able administrator of the Argentine modernization process. One of the exceptions would be Miguel Juárez Celman, who provoked the revolution of 1890.⁶⁹⁷

If only in a sketchy manner, Levene tried to reflect into his global vision of Argentina the profound transformation processes towards the turn of the century, pointing to (rather than explaining) the issues of economic growth and, although superficially, mass immigration. The

Sáenz Peña y partido genuinamente argentino, es decir amante de la tradición histórica y de los hombres representativos de la nacionalidad" – the latter quality probably underlined in implicit contrast to other, presumably less "national" ("internationalist"?) groups on the Left.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid., 575–592, the quotation from the following passage on 594: "Políticamente, su regimen federal evoluciona aceleradamente hacia la centralización, y aún hacia el personalismo en el gobierno, en virtud de las múltiples facultades del Presidente de la República, pero el sistema de la democracia libre y la pureza del sufragio, distinguen a la Argentina de hoy como uno de los países en el que mejor funciona el sistema de la voluntad popular y las instituciones representativas." As we have seen, Hipólito Yrigoyen's first presidency (1916–1922) was praised, and so was his UCR successor Marcelo T. Alvear (1922–1928). In the presentation of Yrigoyen's downfall early in his second term, sparked off by the crisis of 1929–30, there was a shift, whereby the military coup d'état of September 1930 was on the whole justified by Levene as being in line with general opinion (strangely, describing the country's financial crisis without explaining it in the context of the *international* crisis). However, the subsequent de facto military government led by general José F. Uriburu was criticized for its antidemocratic tendencies. But Levene had no critical remarks on the following Conservative governments of the 1930s, initiated by the presidency of general Agustín P. Justo, that is on the regime that remained in power at the time of the edition of the textbook used here (if we do not count that the government's repression of the UCR was briefly mentioned, without comment). Atilio Cornejo, who in other respects had nothing but praise for Levene and his *Lecciones*, in his only critical remark suggested that it would have been better to omit altogether the passages on the most recent events, as the conclusions made there would necessarily be "premature" (in his introductory essay in Levene, *Obras de Ricardo Levene*, 181–182).

⁶⁹⁶ Not to be confused with his nephew, general José Félix Uriburu, leader of the military coup d'état in 1930.

⁶⁹⁷ On Juárez Celman and the 1890 revolution, justified here, see Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937, 542–548.

bright optimism, with which several textbook writers from Lucio Vicente López onwards had concluded their accounts, still set the tone for Levene, even when certain shadows of insecurity were also present, notably in the late 1937 edition written under the impression of the world crisis (unlikely in the original 1912 edition). Also, Levene in acknowledging the magnitude and complexity of the ongoing transformation processes, expressed caution regarding global assessments of Argentina in the present.⁶⁹⁸

The new social conflicts that followed, and the rise of the labour movement, were mentioned briefly here and there, without being addressed in depth as a topic per se. In general, organizations that operated within a legal framework were described with sympathy (the Socialist Party), whereas those who confronted the authorities directly and used violent means were censured (the Anarchists). In the latter case, the presentation was systematically biased, as only instances of Anarchist violence were mentioned and never the repressive violence employed by the State.⁶⁹⁹

Ricardo Levene might well be styled a programmatic nationalist; from the outset he held that Argentine history could and should be used as an instrument to imbue the population of the Republic with national sentiment and pride, and as a building brick in the formation of a national culture that would further cohesion in an otherwise complex, conflictive and rapidly changing society. Nevertheless, as we have noted, Levene was also an eager panamericanist, and this continental orientation also shone through on many an occasion in the *Lecciones*. For instance, we have already seen how he considered the separation of independent Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia from what had been the Viceroyalty as perfectly natural and logical, and how he expressed sympathy with the Uruguayan leader Artigas in his conflicts with Buenos Aires. In the many interamerican conflicts in which Argentina had been involved throughout the independent period – with Brazil, Paraguay, Chile – Levene in general acknowledged the official Argentine claims and points of view, but he insisted more than anything on the peaceful outcome of such conflicts, and on the diplomatic efforts that led to agreements between the litigants. Nationalism and Latin Americanism coincided in many

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., in particular 593ff. Cf. 593: “No es fácil dibujar la fisonomía de Argentina de hoy. Debe tenerse presente, en primer término, la rapidez e incesantes cambios que se producen en su seno y los móviles caracteres de una sociedad poco densa que ocupa un extenso territorio y está formada por inmigraciones de distintas razas.” Argentina was still “uno de los países más ricos del globo”, despite the economic crisis. Ibid. The cultural and social concerns regarding the consequences of mass immigration, which had been essential in motivating the educational “argentinization” campaign to which Levene had dedicated his efforts, was not elaborated explicitly in the text, with the sole exception of the following passage: “Pero la enorme influencia de los extranjeros, ha creado un problema hacienda imperiosa su selección para eliminar enérgicamente el mal inmigrante o el inmigrante incapaz, siendo además necesaria la labor de argentinización del pueblo.” Ibid., 594.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 565, 567–568, 580.

instances where Levene emphasized Argentina's peacekeeping mission in Latin America and all kinds of collaboration agreements between Argentina and other countries, indeed a favourite topic with Levene.⁷⁰⁰

In this context, he gave prominence to cultural and scientific conferences and projects, including the ones that had taken place in the field of history with the author himself as one of the principal initiators. In passing, Levene's was the only history textbook that touched on the subject of textbook history, pointing out the importance of textbook revision in order to promote solidarity and prevent enmity between the Latin American peoples, the bilateral agreement between Argentina and Brazil of 1933 providing a model. Ricardo Levene was, of course, chairman of the corresponding Argentine revision commission.⁷⁰¹

It seems quite appropriate that Levene's textbook ended with a subchapter entitled "Interpretation of the history of Argentina", discussing different global approaches and periodizations.⁷⁰² The *Lecciones* was more than anything the didactic message of a devoted historian, written with self-confident authority and academic zeal. Even if the text was for the most part well written, in a plain language, it could hardly be considered easy of access to a common, young reader, due to the dense and elaborate, scholarly presentation of the materials. Its prolonged success would depend on the equally prolonged, elitist nature of the Argentine *colegio*. The most noteworthy pedagogical novelties consisted in the manner in which Levene insisted on the importance of working directly with the sources, encouraging the students to do so, as well as in the relatively open-minded, metahistorical discussions regarding the larger issues of history, the essential syntheses.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 33–43 (on the independence of Paraguay and Uruguay, and Artigas); 100–102 and 115 (Artigas); 300–317 (on the international situation in the 1820s, for the first time discussed in relation with the post-Napoleonic order in Europe; and the war with Brazil, without the anti-Brazilian statements found in certain earlier texts); 321 (Dorrego's peace treaty with Brazil, confirming Uruguayan independence in 1828, as "la verdadera gloria de este gobierno"); 405–408 (on the Falklands/Malvinas issue with Great Britain); 415–417 (on the territorial disputes with Chile); 501–513 and 521–522 (on the Paraguayan war, as discussed above – the presentation conforming with the Argentine patriotic tradition, however bringing references to Paraguayan historians as well); 556–560 (more on Chile, laudatory on the agreement of 1902: "La paz de Chile y Argentina ha sido uno de los acontecimientos más trascendentales en los anales diplomáticos de América"; Argentina as a pioneer in formulating principles for peace negotiations that would later be generally accepted in interamerican diplomacy); 590–591 (on the Argentine-Brazilian reciprocal presidential visits; emphasizing Argentina's pacifist foreign policy, an example being the 1936 peace agreement between Paraguay and Bolivia signed in Buenos Aires). (To me, Levene's construction of the image of Argentina as the great peace mediator of the Americas bears resemblances to Norway's image-building in recent decades as a peace mediator, as well, and as a "humanitarian great power".)

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 604–606. More on Levene's contribution to interamerican collaboration on textbook revision projects in Carlos Heras biographical introduction "Ricardo Levene" in Levene, *Obras de Ricardo Levene*, 79–85. The agreement with Brazil served as a model to later agreements between Argentina and Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia and Venezuela.

⁷⁰² Levene, *Lecciones*, vol. 2, 1937, 611–613.

Ricardo Levene's own global vision of Argentine history was, nevertheless, unambiguous and clear-cut, coined in explicit statements throughout the text. The key concept was "democracy", construed in a very broad sense. The subject of this history was the Creole community, with time radically enlarged by the assimilation of immigrants. This community carried an inherent drive towards independence and democracy, and to follow those guiding stars was the historical mission of the Argentine people. Historical pride was conferred upon the achievement of independence, whose epic made up the core of the narrative. However, the road towards democracy proved twisted and thorny, with countless setbacks. But even if this was described as an ongoing process, it was a process of progress and development, however painful and protracted for long periods. With time, with ever-increasing levels of civilization – another key notion here – the political order of Argentina would eventually be brought in tune with the "essential character" of the people, of the nation. A major break-through – and thereby a suitable point of closure – was the electoral reform of 1912, coincident with the first appearance of the book and enhanced in later editions. Adding to the optimistic conclusion, the national community had inherited from its colonial origins a spirit of diligence and industriousness, as well as a spacious country full of resources in which those virtues could be successfully applied. A future of continued material and spiritual progress might therefore be expected as a natural sequel to the history told. This required, however, a citizenry imbued with a sense of solidarity. Consciousness of a shared history was one important element in shaping that solidary and coherent community, to which end Levene wanted to contribute, among other activities as a textbook writer.

Levene's *Lecciones* did not put forward an essentially new interpretation of Argentine history. The basic views expressed could for the most part be found in earlier textbooks as well. It would be more accurate to say that Levene brought together and carried further different tendencies already evident in other texts studied above. Levene combined and adapted them to a coherent synthesis that would stand as a predominating model for textbook writers for several decades to come.

Conclusions

The analysis of history textbooks for the secondary school by nine authors, each presented in its own chapter, has constituted the core of this dissertation. The texts span from the very first manual of its kind in Argentina, published in 1861, to one of the most influential textbooks of the twentieth century, Levene's *Lecciones* from 1912. Though not entirely complete, the selection is nevertheless representative for the development of the genre in the period concerned, and the analysis has revealed a multifaceted textbook universe.

Distinct common features characterize all the books studied and the entire period. There was a remarkably strong concentration of contents on the independence revolution and the independence wars, that is on the decade of 1810–1820. This was not unnatural, as these events provided a national myth of origin as well as the materials out of which a heroic, epic narrative could be created as a basis for positive identification and pride. At the same time, this was politically safe ground for the most part, a non-controversial rallying point in an otherwise conflictive society in which other parts of history might have a divisive potential, and progressively so over the decades. Still, the extreme quantitative lopsidedness remains conspicuous and has been remarked in several previous textbook studies.

Pretty soon, considerable attention was also paid to the ensuing decade of civil wars as well as to the long period closely associated with the name of Juan Manuel de Rosas. Together they would typically form a runner-up in terms of space, behind the *independencia*. The latter subperiods made less safe waters because they would soon become historiographically controversial, and their possible edifying value was not obvious; nevertheless they constituted a necessary sequel because of the protracted nature of the constitutional and nation-building process in Argentina. Little priority was given to everything that happened in Argentina after 1852/1853 (after the downfall of Rosas and the Constitution of Santa Fe), and even less to post-1880 developments (the federalization of the capital city rapidly being established as the keystone of the “national organization”). Only in the latest textbook, by Levene, did we find rudiments of an attempt to historicize the last part of the nineteenth century as a period apart with its own characteristics. This means that the fundamental transformation processes – economic, social, demographic and cultural – that were so predominant in the text book authors' contemporary society (with the exception of

the first two studied here) were not dealt with, or practically not dealt with, in any of these texts. True, these were very recent developments from a historian's point of view; however, given the dynamic nature of Argentine society at this stage, this also means that the connections between the textbook contents and the students' present, living reality, with its pressing questions, were probably weaker than one might assume from the temporal distance alone.

Moving in the other direction, from the outset there was a strong, common tendency to see the colonial period first and foremost as a preparatory stage, formative of the future Argentine nation and leading up to independence. Though later textbooks paid more attention to the colonial period as an interesting object of study in its own right, this new appreciation often showed above all in programmatic statements, while in practice the auxiliary function of this part of the history for a long time continued to prevail, even in an outright teleological fashion. The focus of all the textbooks was the coming of the Argentine nation through revolution, independence and the efforts to constitute a common state.

The concept of the nation was usually not defined explicitly, let alone discussed, and it might carry various and ambiguous meanings, as shown above. The most predominant usages, however, revealed a political-civic conception of the nation, defined by sovereignty, independence, constitution (or the aspiration to a constitution) and a citizen-based community. In this regard, my interpretation differs from earlier views of the matter. Researchers referred to above have insisted on the *early* dating of the nation in the textbooks, that is around 1810–1816 rather than after the establishment of a unified republic in 1862, often without distinguishing the former position from a romantic and basically cultural understanding of the nation as of very ancient origins. Still, I have also emphasized the importance attached to cultural developments and to essential cultural characteristics in the manuals, often presented as the new nation's inheritance from the colonial era, creating a distinctive national character (without, however, *constituting* the nation). This heritage was used to explain strengths and weaknesses as they appeared in the independent period.

The chief acting subject in the history told was always the community created and developed first by the colonists, later by the Creoles, the *criollos*. For the independent period, this community included the immigrants and descendants of immigrants that were integrated into it; after all, at least regarding the later textbooks, they made up a majority of intended readers. This did not, however, imply that *their* history was the one to be told, cf. the neglect of the most recent history. In sharp contrast, the indigenous peoples had no part in the "We"

envisaged, neither regarding the colonial nor the contemporary period, not in any of the texts.

Common to all the textbooks was also the hegemonic position of political history, to the detriment of other areas of society. In the oldest books analysed, it literally consumed the entire text. This, however, is not a remarkable find and could hardly be regarded a specifically Argentine feature, considering wide-spread priorities within history writing in general at that time. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the perspective broadened timidly, certain topics from economic, social and cultural history being included within the overall political framework. Levene, in particular, took an unmistakable step in that direction.

Despite all the similarities, the differences observed between the texts are so many and so fundamental that one cannot possibly conclude that what existed was one single, “monolithic” and “official” history, at least not in the formative period of the genre studied here. On the contrary, every set of manuals within the selected corpus appears at least partially as an individual project, each with its own distinctive traits. Not only do I find different perspectives and priorities; there are also many conflictive points of view regarding major as well as minor questions. This is one of the main findings in my study. Even if a global assessment in the same direction was indicated earlier by Michael Riekenberg, as well as by the team of textbook researchers from the University of La Pampa referred to above⁷⁰³, it has never been documented as thoroughly and on such a wide basis as here. To me, this justifies the historiographical and hermeneutic-qualitative method as a particularly rewarding approach in this case, given the inherent qualities of the sources.

One important difference between the manuals has to do with the author’s position vis-à-vis the present, his fundamental attitude towards the Argentina of his own times. This is a perspective that has not been much accentuated in other studies, as far as I have noticed. Some of the oldest textbooks suggested a rather uncertain or even outright negative attitude towards developments in Argentina after the independence wars right up to the textbook’s present, to the extent that it was traceable thus far. To a considerable extent, history was used here to help explain why so many things went wrong in Argentina after the promising beginnings of *Mayo*. Estrada, who rounded off his final lecture with vivid images of the victims of Rosas’s terror, was an example, whereas the latest expression of a basic feeling of disappointment was found in Vicente Fidel López’s *Manual*.

⁷⁰³ See notes above, as well as the bibliography below, for references to works by Jorge Saab, Carlos A. Suárez, José Maristany and Laura Sánchez. Cf. also references to Cecilia Braslavsky’s study of primary school textbooks, pointing in a similar direction.

Later textbook writers, on the other hand, writing under the impressions of the rapid growth and modernization towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, would most often depart from a fundamental satisfaction with the present state of affairs: Argentina was one of the richest countries in the world, old conflicts had been overcome (and the new ones were not to be dealt with in history texts); future looked bright. This also acted on the interpretation of the older history; it was no longer held responsible for recent failures and disasters, but could rather show the long path forwards and upwards – setbacks admitted – whereby the present-day level had been reached. Lucio V. López's textbook was the first in which this position was presented in a clear-cut manner, and later authors, with the exception of Vicente Fidel López, would reinforce it. However, regarding the views on strictly political developments in the final decades of the nineteenth century (true, an issue of minor importance in all the textbooks), there were nuances: Implicitly, critical remarks regarding the secularizing reforms of the 1880s might be spotted in Gambón's texts, though formulated indirectly and cautiously. Criticism of a more explicit kind and on a wider front, censuring authoritarian tendencies emanating from the strong presidency, fraudulent elections, etc., was found in certain statements by Vicente F. López, and in an even more outspoken fashion with Levene. Admittedly, the latter author, writing on these topics in retrospect on a later date, obviously felt less inhibited by current political considerations in this regard.

The circumstance that history at this stage was written from a basic feeling of content with the contemporary reality as a starting point, also distinguishes it from much history writing in later periods, in particular from the 1930s onwards, when historians approached Argentina's history in the nineteenth century from the perspective of an oppositional stand vis-à-vis the present situation. This would become an essential premise not least for the so-called Argentine historical revisionism in its various shades, as Tulio Halperín Donghi and others have pointed out.

A fundamental issue that separated the textbooks studied was the general approach to the colonial era and to Spain as a colonial power, including the assessment of the Hispanic legacy in the independent era. To Estrada the colonial period was a dismal tale of sufferings right through, and harsh judgments were passed upon the Spanish imperial regime and its long-term effects. Fregeiro, Gambón and Levene, on the other hand, were outspoken representatives of the pro-Hispanic turn whereby both the colonial period in itself and its legacy to present-day Argentina were emphatically rehabilitated, explicitly polemicizing

against earlier, “Hispanophobic” representations. In a less programmatic fashion, the textbooks by Benigno T. Martínez, Lucio V. López and later on Grosso joined in the same reorientation. This would eventually become the predominant position towards the turn of the century (though it would still not be shared by Vicente F. López). As a kind of functional bonus, the pro-Spanish historical interpretation was presumably much better suited to provide points of identification to the huge and increasing mass of immigrant students from Spain. Gambón made explicit references to the latter circumstance, and this was also in tune with the general political sentiment of the day (cf. the debates on the national anthem that led to a decision to eliminate from public use the anti-Spanish stanzas in the original version from 1813).⁷⁰⁴

In certain respects, authors who were all friendly disposed towards Spain and the colonial period parted company. That was in particular the case regarding their view of the historical role of the Church. I have shown how these differences clearly showed in statements on the colonists’ attitudes and policies towards the Amerindians, most easily read in the differing descriptions presented of the Jesuitical missions and the conflicts surrounding them; in statements regarding the Enlightenment or the specific topic of the freemasonry; in the attitudes revealed in the texts towards controversial issues of religious policies, for instance on the occasion of Rivadavia’s reforms in Buenos Aires in the 1820s. The Spanish Jesuit Gambón stood as a thoroughbred representative of the clerical position, a stout defender of the central and positive role played by the Church in general and the Jesuits in particular, whereas Fregeiro and Levene just as unambiguously praised the pre-eminence of secular colonization, even in its violent expressions, as well as various secularizing measures of the independent period. With the two latter authors, this position was also logically connected to a more general, imperialist idea of the precedence of the “higher civilization” as a kind of History’s chosen tool, an idea that was also used to legitimate the wars of extermination waged against the remaining independent indigenous tribes in the late nineteenth century.

As stated above, all the texts paid homage to the independence revolution and the patriots of the independence wars. Nuances were found, however: Some authors insisted more on the protagonism of “the people” instead of the individual leaders – Estrada would be a clear instance of this position – while a majority of textbooks, and to an increasing degree,

⁷⁰⁴The pro-Spanish turn described here apparently had its parallel in US history textbooks from the early twentieth century, according to Frances FitzGerald: Under the impact of a heterogeneous mass immigration there was a reappraisal of the nation’s English roots that differed significantly from the presentations found in earlier, nineteenth century texts. FitzGerald, *America Revised*, 76–78.

would elaborate the cult of the great heroes of the independence struggles. Levene, in the end, would combine both approaches. In other words, we may find “text monuments” in the form of “May pyramids” as well as “statues of San Martín”.

Many dissimilarities were found in the evaluations of individual military and political participants. Heroes of one text might often reappear in less flattering representations in another. I have also documented how some textbooks toned down the cult of heroes in general, sometimes from the point of departure of a greater personal distance to the persons and events in question, as in the case of Gambón. However, most of the authors would partake in the ever-growing praise of the “superheroes” Belgrano and, above all, San Martín. This was in accordance with the *mitrista* tradition (Mitre’s two major works had dealt with San Martín and Belgrano, respectively), and it is not to wonder that the cult culminated with Ricardo Levene’s textbook, the author being one of Mitre’s disciples in the Argentine historiographical tradition. In Levene’s *Lecciones* the hagiographic myths of Belgrano and in particular San Martín were embroidered in a practically definite version. Interesting exceptions from this general tendency were found in the cases of Vicente F. López, who made direct attacks on San Martín’s reputation, and Gambón, who established a strange form of double communication (in the main text versus the footnotes) regarding San Martín.

As we have seen, the textbooks also differed in their views of the internal political conflicts during the independence wars and the following years. The differences were manifest in the representation of individual participants and situations all the way starting with the conflict between the revolutionary *junta* of Buenos Aires and the delegates from the other provinces in 1810; and they were manifest in more general evaluations of the rivalling “parties”, the *unitarios* versus the *federales*. On one hand, there were texts with a clear pro-*unitario* bias: Domínguez, Vicente F. López, Grosso; on the other, with a just as obvious pro-federal sympathy: Estrada, Fregeiro, and Levene. Finally, there were manuals that endeavoured to strike a balance, without showing colours. The general tendency would develop towards a basic pro-federal orientation while simultaneously giving credit to certain unitarian elements (for instance in recognitions of Rivadavia). In that way, it might be possible to conclude that “the best” from each of the two antagonists had found its expression in the 1853 constitution (in force). A related, harmonizing approach would consist in describing in positive terms the “generation” of 1810, friends and foes alike – Fregeiro would provide a case of this. A somewhat less benevolent variant would be to emphasize errors and weaknesses in all the participants, regardless of political camp, as Benigno T. Martínez did.

The attitudes evidenced towards the caudillos and the interprovincial conflicts would follow approximately the same divides. In this area also, there was room for differences in the assessments of individual caudillos, as documented above in several instances. A particularly striking example would be the antagonistic representations of José Gervasio Artigas in the books by Fregeiro and Vicente F. López, respectively. In general we may detect a line of development through the period studied: In the early texts very negative descriptions predominated, of the caudillos as well as of the autonomous aspirations of the provinces, both viewed as “barbarian” and dissolving forces, culminating in the sombre “anarchy” of the 1820s. Later manuals in general viewed the caudillos more favourably – admittedly with many qualifications – and came to regard the provincial emancipation from the hegemonic control exercised by Buenos Aires in part as a logical and necessary product of tendencies evident from colonial times as well as of the dynamics of the revolutionary course of events, in part as an outright positive, nation-building phenomenon – the provinces had to break down their colonial structures and develop their own constitutional processes before a federal state-building process could take place on a national or “Argentine” level. The latter idea was fashioned in the most clear-cut manner by Levene in the textbook corpus. Later, it would become a fundamental element in revisionist history writing.

Dealing with the same period, the textbooks in a varying measure brought descriptions of the *gaucho* as an iconic representative of the rural population. The image of the gaucho varied from the very negative descriptions by Vicente F. López to more sympathetic ones; nevertheless, in most books the topic of the gaucho as an embodiment of the national (or proto-national) character was not yet embroidered to a considerable degree.

The controversial figure of Juan Manuel de Rosas would once again divide the textbook authors. I have analysed in detail both the vehemently anti-*rosista* representations – Estrada, Vicente F. López and Grosso – and the more detached interpretations, which discussed pros and cons and – in particular in the case of Levene – ended out with a more or less even result at the bottom of the sum. In between we have observed how certain texts added the customary denunciation without paying too much attention to the topic either. What no textbook did in this period, however, was to award Rosas the heroic leading part in the national drama that later revisionist historians would give him. Only with Levene a partial element of this was found: He emphasized in an unconditionally positive way the “anti-imperialist” aspects of Rosas’s foreign policies, an appraisal that later on would become mainstream and even “commonsensical” and keep growing to exaggerated heights.

The so-called "national organization", conventionally labelling the period of 1852–1880, was everywhere presented in order to provide a positive link and an immediate background to the reader's present. (The exception would obviously be the very first manuals that were published in the midst of this process, and hence could not be expected to historicize it in the same way.) In general this period was seen as having accomplished the internal organization of the nation-state, the completion of a long and twisted constituent and unifying process begun for the first time in 1810, but aborted repeatedly along the way. It might, alternatively, have been made *the* foundational moment of the nation in another kind of narrative. It was not. These decades rounded off something that had started earlier, following an almost predestined course. The final leg obviously formed part of the story, a part that was politely applauded, but not *the* central part, which was reserved for revolution and independence. Only with Levene a shift was observed, through which a more thorough appreciation of this period set in, enhancing above all the historical importance of Mitre. The events of 1880 for the most part concluded this account of a purely political national development. The latest textbooks admittedly added miniature chapters on the most recent years, but in most cases they appeared as hangers-on that added little substance to the main story of the *patria*. (Again, very timid germs to something more might be spotted in Levene's *Lecciones*.)

Content analysis confirms that all the textbooks examined provided the college students who read them, with a story about how Argentina came into being as a sovereign state with external independence and its own internal constitution, comprising an Argentine nation within defined borders. And they got their own mythical heroes. There is reason to believe that this brand of patriotic education, combined with equivalents developed simultaneously for the primary school and through other public channels, was indeed successful in many ways. San Martín *did* become the great hero and the national founding father above all, also to the children of Galician small holders, Southern Italian peasants, and Syrian shopkeepers. But the students found very little to go on in these texts to help them interpret the rapid changes and basic developments of their own, contemporary Argentina. The *new* Argentina had to wait for its own history to be told.⁷⁰⁵

The textbook development studied in the present dissertation was closely connected to the gradual expansion of the secondary school and to the guiding lines emanating from

⁷⁰⁵ Cf. works by Fernando Devoto referred to above, in particular "Idea de nación".

educational policies that to an increasing extent favoured national school subjects, with Spanish language and Argentine history serving as spearheads. This gave powerful incentives to the textbook production, as well as directives for its development, in particular towards the end of the period studied. A textbook author like Ricardo Levene was prominently identified with the patriotic-educational movement around the turn of the century. As for the primary school, the expansion of the colleges of education was extremely important; in the material studied here, *el normalismo* found its expression above all through the popular *grossos*. However, most of the textbooks analysed had a more academic basis and purpose, something that had to do with the close connections between the university and the *colegio* throughout the period concerned.

In this context, the relations to the establishment of Argentine history as an academic discipline were also most important. This development took place precisely in the same period, leading up to the professionalization of the discipline and the institutionalization of history as an independent subject at the university. Several of the textbook authors I have dealt with here made significant contributions to the development of history research and studies in Argentina, with Ricardo Levene, again, as the most outstanding example. The textbooks they wrote were not mere functions of official programmes and syllabuses; they were the popularized syntheses by self-confident historians, transmitting their own approaches, priorities and preferences. This would change later on, when leading academic historians would take less interest in textbook-writing – and it had been a different case when the very first manuals were produced, at a time when history writing was still a field occupied by amateurs (diligent and able amateurs, many of them). This circumstance also meant that some of the most significant historiographical debates of the time found their way into the textbooks. Here we find as an example Vicente Fidel López with his alternative approach to history against the prevailing tradition from Mitre that would culminate with Levene. This, in turn, renders adequate the historiographical approach I have chosen.

Later generations would convey critical and often disparaging attitudes towards the history writing from the late nineteenth century. That would be the case of several *Nueva Escuela* historians who considered themselves professionally superiors to the earlier amateurs. It would definitely be true of the revisionists in the 1930s, who drew the lines from the “liberal” history writing they disliked in the present to its ancestors in the age of Mitre. And the same attitude would characterize several later works on historiography and statements regarding textbook history, as I have shown in the introductory chapters above. In

particular when referring to history as it was taught in the schools, the speech kept revolving around the concept of a one-sided “official” history. It seems to me that such a generalized judgment might appear as better founded when applied to textbooks from the decades that followed after the period I have examined, perhaps particularly from the 1930s onwards. Those manuals lie beyond the reach of this dissertation; however, there are more textbooks studies regarding this later period, works that I have referred to above.

My own overall conclusion fits better with Pablo Buchbinder’s assessment of the history writing of the period I have dealt with. It was rich in nuances and expressed different, often contradictory, *visions of the past*: “Sin embargo, esta misma historiografía incluía una variedad de matices y visiones del pasado contrapuestas que tanto los historiadores de la Nueva Escuela como los del revisionismo de los años treinta preferían a menudo soslayar.”⁷⁰⁶ I think I have brought convincing evidence that this was also true of the textbooks from the period and not only of academic texts in a narrow sense. This point had been suggested before, but hardly documented in depth in earlier works.

The texts that made up my material often feel fresh through the professional commitment radiating from them and, at their best, the nerve of the story, yet at the same time strangely detached viewed in the perspective of the mighty developments that took place in the contemporary Argentina that produced them and which were unfolding right outside the classroom windows. Still and in their own way, they acted on that very same contemporary reality through the elements of historical consciousness and views of society that they reproduced in successive sets of students. Precisely what sort of footprints they left is not the subject of this dissertation; that would be part of a totally different kind of textbook research and would, in general, be very difficult to verify dealing with manuals of this age. There is little reason to doubt, however, that they did have effects to some extent and in some ways, along with all the other agents that participated in the creation of a historical culture in Argentina, in particular from the turn of the century onwards.

Whether the history taught at school constituted any major factor in the continuous process of “argentinization” of the vast immigrant population seems more uncertain, even if it might be considered one element among others. The immigrants had their own, strong incentives to seek integration and thereby succeed more easily in their new home country. By and large, this did not mean that they cut off all bonds to their countries and cultures of origin, something that many of the “educational patriots” had wished for them to do. Even so, that

⁷⁰⁶ Buchbinder, “Vínculos privados”, 1996, 82.

did not necessarily diminish their “argentinidad”, their sense of sharing in the *argentinidad*; new and old elements of identification need not be mutually exclusive. The process of integration went along its own, “natural-cultural” path.

A more substantiated claim is that the textbook tradition developed during those fifty years created a standard, a model, for later producers of manuals, a model that would feature new texts even for the next half century. The last point made has not been examined further here, but has been put forward by other researchers, as mentioned above. In the previous chapter, we observed how Ricardo Levene’s *Lecciones* brought together various lines of development within this tradition in a solid cast work, thereby making a suitable point of conclusion for the present dissertation.

Argentina’s future would by no means become the uninterrupted success story envisioned by the textbook authors from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Crises would follow crises – economic, social, political (above all), and even military – and later generations would once more write histories of Argentina which first and foremost tried to explain why things had gone so terribly wrong, just as certain very early textbooks had done. But those crises would have other causes and deal with other issues than the overriding worries that had tormented Argentine, patriotic intellectuals around the past turn of the century, the men who had put the cultivation of Argentine history at the top of the educational and cultural, political agenda. Seen in the rear-view mirror, it was as usual, much harder to conceive and express even in approximate ways what the future might have in store for the national community. The historical narratives they created, even when departing from preoccupations with the present and the future, were of more value. Even today, the best parts of those stories make good reading.

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Note: The terms “edition” and “impression” are generally used as stated by the publisher on the colophon page. In certain cases, they might in fact be somewhat misleading, as mere reimpressions may have been presented as reeditions.

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