

# Foreword

This special issue of *Varia Historia* focuses on the history of the Americas, with articles on various subjects but especially those related to the cultural and political dimensions of historical knowledge and the relationship between these two elements. Taken as a whole, these articles range widely in time and space: from the southernmost regions of South America to the United States, and from the sixteenth to the twenty-first centuries. Alongside texts treating themes that are directly related to the history of specific countries, this issue also presents articles that analyze political and cultural circuits and connections between different countries and among different social spaces.

This issue shows the growth in Brazil in the diversity and depth of studies on Spanish America and the United States, in addition to emphasizing Brazilian scholars' ever-increasing dialogue with historiography related to the Americas being produced in other countries in Europe and the Americas.

Because of the thematic, spatial, and temporal diversity of this special issue, we have chosen to present the articles in chronological order.

The dossier begins with an article by Serge Gruzinski entitled *Istanbul and Mexico*. Professor Gruzinski spent June, 2007 in Belo Horizonte as a research fellow at the Institute for Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies (IEAT) at the UFMG. On this occasion, he gave various lectures, including one that dealt with the theme of the article he has published in this issue. Once again, Gruzinski has written an essay echoing his vast and rich historiographical production in which he discusses the idea of "connected histories", in accordance with the idea put forward by the Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam. In this article, the author analyzes two extremely interesting sources that connect Mexico City and Istanbul between the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. Gruzinski shows that there was a reciprocal interest between New Spain and Turkey in a period during which, *a priori*, we would not otherwise consider the possibility that intellectual connections between the "New World" and the Ottoman Empire would exist. By studying these sources, the author hopes to examine theoretical and methodological problems that "arise when comparing two sources that have been ignored by traditional historiography".

In an article entitled *The Oath ceremony in New Spain: proclamations to Ferdinand in 1747 and 1808*, Víctor Mínguez assesses the public ceremonies of pledging allegiance to the Spanish monarchy in New Spain (present-day Mexico). These celebrations marked the collective demonstration of allegiance to the governing dynasty and to the recently crowned king. Even though they were absent physically, the monarchs were symbolically materialized in the vice-royalties through art. The author shows how images, words, and sounds were deftly combined to serve these efficient propaganda spectacles for the Spanish monarchy in its colonies. In his article, Mínguez compares the ceremonies pledging allegiance to Fernando VI in 1747 to that of Fernando VII in 1808, toward the end of the colonial period. The author argues that despite the distinctive moments of the Spanish monarchical order in which these ceremonies were celebrated, the pledges maintained their efficacy, even in the period of intense crisis surrounding 1808, “when the political situation of the Spanish monarchy was unsustainable”.

Fabiana de Souza Fredrigo’s article entitled *The wars of independence, social practices, and the elite code in nineteenth-century America: readings from Bolívar’s correspondence*, reveals the contributions of Simón Bolívar himself in the construction of myths surrounding his character. The construction of the Bolívar myth began with texts written by the leader of the wars of independence himself. For this reason, analyzing Bolívar’s correspondence makes particularly good sense, since it was through these letters that the leader’s image came to take form for posterity. In her text, the author analyzes the vast epistolary corpus – over 2800 letters – of Simón Bolívar produced between the years of 1799 and 1830, demonstrating in the process the links between letter writing, memory, and historiography.

In an article entitled *Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda between Cuba and Spain: travel narratives and questions of ambivalence surrounding national identity*, Stella Maris Scatena Franco analyses a series of travel narratives by the writer Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (1814-1873), who was born in Cuba but lived many years in Spain. The article shows the author’s discursive ambivalence in relation to her national identity. A writer between two worlds – the Cuban/Antillean world and the Spanish/European world – Avellaneda as revealed by Stella Franco found herself in the middle of a debate on the island of Cuba about the question of fighting for independence. The author also analyzes the political and literary debates around her personality, in the nineteenth century as well as more recently. In the case of these latter debates, an analysis that attempts to understand the place and possible peculiarities of woman’s writing comes to the fore.

The article by Mary Junqueira entitled *Science, techniques, and U.S. naval expeditions toward Latin America (1838-1901)* also analyzes nineteenth-century travel narratives (as well as reports), but it does so in a radically different vein than Stella Franco. Based on an inventory of expeditions to

Latin America undertaken by the U.S. Navy toward Latin America between 1838 and 1901, the author analyzes the objectives and meaning of these dozen missions. Mary Junqueira shows that in the period before the Civil War, the navy's interest was directed principally toward South America and the Pacific, and she reveals the North American interest in "knowing, mapping, and learning about possible commercial opportunities" in the territories visited from the decade of the 1830s on. In the case of Central American voyages during the post Civil War period, the fundamental goal was to look for the most appropriate place to build an inter-oceanic canal, an ambitious undertaking that was concluded in 1914 with the construction of the Panama Canal under the United States' exclusive control.

Cecília Azevedo also takes North American history as the subject of her article, entitled *Loving with open eyes: Emma Goldman and political dissent in the United States*. Emma Goldman was a militant anarchist, pacifist, and feminist in the United States between the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. The author recovers the life history of Emma Goldman by placing her within a broader tradition of dissent in the United States. Cecília Azevedo contextualizes the trajectory of Goldman with respect to the most important political debates taking place in North America during the period, as well as analyzing how Goldman's memory and her legacy were recuperated in the 1960s and even more recently against the backdrop of the growing opposition to U.S. intervention in, respectively, Vietnam and Iraq. Cecília Azevedo shows how the debate over the place of Emma Goldman in the United States, as a Lithuanian from a Jewish family who chose exile as a way of becoming free from the persecutions of the tsarist regime, was related to the political and ideological disputes around North American national identity and its founding myths.

In an article entitled *On Argentine disillusionment*, Andrés Kozel deals with a highly contemporary theme in Argentine political debate as it unfolded in the first half of the twentieth century: discussion of the supposed "Argentine failure". The author discusses the bibliography that treats this theme and analyzes the works of five Argentine intellectuals who endorsed this idea of "failure": Lucas Ayarragaray, Leopoldo Lugones, Benjamín Vilafañe, Ezequiel Martínez Estrada and Julio Irazusta. By contextualizing the production of these five authors, Kozel shows how the idea that Argentina had "failed" came to occupy the place originally held (hegemonically) by the idea of an "Argentine greatness", an idea hailed by the author as the "Argentine illusion".

Gabriela Pellegrino Soares's article entitled *New axes of editorial production in Castilian: the role of Spanish civil war exiles in Argentina and Mexico* is yet another example of research that attempts to emphasize cultural circulation and connected histories. The author analyzes the impact of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) on editorial production in Argentina and

Mexico in the last years of the 1930s. The focus of her essay emphasizes the contributions of Spanish exiles in increasing the Argentine and Mexican editorial industry.

The final three articles deal with more recent periods in Latin American history. Priscila Antunes and Patricia Funes analyze the systems of intelligence gathering of South America's most recent military dictatorships, in Chile and Argentina respectively. For his part, Waldo Ansaldi analyzes the Argentine political situation in recent years.

In her article *The Chilean intelligence service in the Pinochet government*, Priscila Antunes begins with a historical look at information services and intelligence gathering communities in the Western world, after which she examines in greater detail the Chilean case during the military dictatorship led by General Augusto Pinochet. The author analyzes the internal structures of the Chilean intelligence community and emphasizes its central role in the mechanisms of control and repression during the Chilean military dictatorship (1973-1989).

The article by Patricia Funes, *'Engineers of the soul': reports from the Argentine military dictatorship's intelligence services on Latin American popular song, essays, and the social sciences*, looks at reports from Argentine intelligence services, especially those held in the archive of the now-defunct Intelligence Offices of the Police Department of the Province of Buenos Aires (DIPBA). Her focus is on Latin American artistic and intellectual production during the Argentine military dictatorship (1976-1983). The author mostly analyzes the reports directed toward controlling and censoring the production of popular songs, essays and written works by social scientists (books, articles, and magazines). Patricia Funes begins with "the hypothesis that the idea of 'Latin America' *a priori* connoted something that was 'subversive', 'communist', and 'revolutionary'". As such, all cultural productions that set out to discuss and think about Latin America were in principle placed under suspicion. The author argues that the forces of these repressive mechanisms contributed toward the distancing of the social sciences from Latin America, with repercussions up to the present day. And she believes that it is likely that something similar may have happened in other countries of the region that were subject to a dictatorial military rule.

Patricia Funes's reflections on the final period of Argentine dictatorship allow us to think of the trajectory of Brazilian intellectual production related to Latin America. If the 1960s represented a period in which the growth of interest in and the artistic and intellectual production about Latin America, including an interest in Brazil's role on the continent, was unquestionably on the rise (due at least in part to the impact of the political and cultural impact of the Cuban Revolution), it is also clear that the repression inflicted by the military regime by these same artists and intellectuals and the censure of

their cultural production had more long-lasting effects than is usually recognized to be the case.

In his essay, Waldo Ansaldi analyzes recent Argentine political history, emphasizing the most recent years from December, 2001 onwards. In his article entitled '*Tanto andar a los mandobles para terminar a los besuqueos': on the re-legitimacy of Argentine politicians*', Ansaldi discusses the crisis of legitimacy of the Argentine political parties and their politicians in 2001 and their "relegitimacy" in the elections of 2003. The article is an excellent example of a history written about the present day and a combined analysis at the intersection of history and political science.

This special issue ends with a section dedicated to recently published books, including a review by Sílvia Cezar Miskulin of Gabriela Pellegrino Soares's *Semear horizontes: uma história da formação de leitores na Argentina e no Brasil, 1915-1954* (*Cultivating horizons: a history of the formation of readers in Argentina and Brazil*) and a review by Adriane A. Vidal Costa of the collection of essays edited by Marcela Croce entitled *Polémicas intelectuales en América Latina: del "meridiano intelectual" al caso Padilla (1927-1971)* (*Polemical intellectual debates in Latin America: from the "meridiano intelectual" to the Padilla case (1927-1971)*).

With this special issue of *Varia Historia*, we hope to have contributed toward spreading interest about the History of the Americas in Brazil, and also to have produced a more significant exchange with researchers from other countries. A collective thank you to all of the authors for providing us with such wonderful texts.

Belo Horizonte, Winter 2007

**KÁTIA GERAB BAGGIO**  
(editor)

Departamento de História/UFMG  
kgbaggio@fafich.ufmg.br