

Sacred Cause, Divine Republic: A History of Nationhood, Religion, and War in Nineteenth-Century Paraguay, 1850-1870

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History.

Chapel Hill

2011

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ABSTRACT

MICHAEL KENNETH HUNER: *Sacred Cause, Divine Republic: A History of Nationhood, Religion, and War in Nineteenth-Century Paraguay, 1850-1870.*
“Under the direction of Professor John Charles Chasteen.”

Nineteenth-century Paraguay was a provincial backwater of the shattered Spanish colonial empire, a country that had forged its independence under the rule of autocrats, a country where most people spoke Guaraní, a vernacular of indigenous origins. From 1864 to 1870, Paraguay went to war with the Triple Alliance of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. The conflict left Paraguay occupied by foreign armies and devastated with over half its population lost. This dissertation explores a history of state formation, religion, and war in the country before and during this catastrophic time. In particular, the dissertation reflects on how colonial religion helped to produce formative experiences of modern nationhood and citizenship. Conventional interpretations of Latin American history still generally regard the consolidation of nation-states as a starkly secular development. This study questions that formulation and considers how clergy and institutional practices of the Church actually articulated early expressions of nationhood. The dissertation follows how years before the conflict the ruling autocratic regime in the country revived the provincial church and its traditional moral order as recovered vestiges of Spanish imperial sovereignty and reassembled them within a framework of postcolonial republican rule. The sort of pious submission once demanded of royal subjects increasingly defined the rights and duties of republican citizenship. Divine-right mandates and popular sovereignty merged as the ideological foundation of political authority. Moreover fulfilling the sacred obligations of the

patriarchal family surged as the primary manifestation of civic virtue. The conflation of values old and new made modern ideas of the republic profoundly, and often painfully, familiar in the everyday lives of Paraguayans. This dissertation thus contends that postcolonial Paraguayans—mostly illiterate, Guaraní-speaking peasants—confronted in their lives a peculiar strain of republican nationalism steeped in religion and articulated in their own language. And, it argues, this engagement pushed them to struggle to extraordinary lengths during the war. The sources utilized range from sermons and local government correspondence, to judicial records of ecclesiastical divorce and suicide, as well as Guaraní-language propaganda produced by the state during the war.

To Leti and the boys, and Mom and Dad.

And to the memories of Eldor Huner, Margaret Huner, and Barbara Laplante.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My graduate career was one of many years, and I have incurred many debts of gratitude along the way.

The Department of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provided fundamental financial support and priceless teaching opportunities to make for a successful run. The Institute for the Study of the Americas (formerly ILAS) at UNC-CH has also been a backbone of financial support over the years. Numerous Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships (from the US Department of Education, facilitated through ISA) made dissertation research and language-study trips to Asunción, Paraguay possible, as did support from the UNC-CH Graduate School. An Institute for International Education Fulbright Fellowship allowed me to be introduced to the world of Paraguay and explore its archives for the first time.

A host of family and friends in Paraguay made the years that I have spent there some of the best times of my life. Dr. Ignacio Telesca offered his friendship, help, insight, and countless hours of intriguing conversation over *tereré* and beer while there. A wonderful scholar and person, he has been an invaluable friend and intellectual guide. Other scholars in Paraguay whose help I value include: Margarita Durán, Ramon Rolandi, Ana María Arguello, Milda Rivarola, Juan Bautista Rivarola, Adelina Pussineri. The staff at the Archivo Nacional de Asunción always welcomed me with warmth and offered guidance during my

long hours researching there. I recognize especially the help of archivists Darío Solís and the late, great Aníbal Solís. The staff at the Biblioteca Nacional de Asunción were also exceedingly gracious helping a yanqui in their midst. Rosa María Aurelia Marecos de Cáceres facilitated with kindness my morning hours working in the Archivo de la Arquidiócesis de Asunción. Profesor Juan Alberto Cáceres, taught me Guaraní at IDELGUAP, Universidad Evangélica in Asunción. His patience and encouragement for a stiff-tongued North American were remarkable. I thereby learned more Guaraní and subtleties of Paraguayan life from numerous in-laws and close friends. Their love and assistance also need recognition. I thank Francisco, Sonia, Evelyn, Tota, Humberto, Juan Carlos, Humberto Luis, Piti, as well as the entire López family, “Lechu,” “Tere,” and the rest of *los perros*. The Battionis were the first to open their home to a naïve North American graduate in Paraguay, and they remain at the heart of my ever-expanding Paraguayan family.

Friends from graduate school gave me so much, in terms of intellectual development and relationships that have enriched my life. William Acree was always there for me and remains so. I also cherish the friendships of Devyn Spence-Benson, Patrick O’Neil and Gina Difino, Joshua Nadel, David Carlson, Laura Premack, Greg Kaliss, William Wisser, Jeff Richey, Kathryn French-Fuller, Lissi Lotz, Reena Goldthree, Enver Casimir, Philip Stetzel, Mike Smith, and numerous others.

Karen Racine first inspired me to study Latin American history at Valparaiso University. It altered my life forever. At Valparaiso Colleen Seguin, Alan Bloom, and Charles Schaeffer also offered their inspiration and mentorship. Thomas Whigham got me started in the world of Paraguayan history. I would not be where I am without his help offered with such generosity years ago. His words, work, and writing remain an inspiration. The teaching and

advice of Jocelyn Olcott, John French, Kathryn Burns, and Louis Pérez during my graduate career at UNC-CH proved formative for my thinking and approach to history and research. Chris Lee taught me most I know about Africa and much about the life of a young scholar that awaits me. John Chasteen has proven the consummate advisor, writing guide, and friend. He is my academic “Dad.”

I come from a large family, and it is impossible to list all who have left a revered imprint on my life and offered endless support. I recognize my grandparents, Roger and Carrie Macke, whose examples of love are paramount. My brothers Matthew, Monroe, and Mitchell have been there to buy beers, supply laughs, and forward their affection. My parents, Ken and Kim Huner, have made everything possible and asked for nothing in return. I dedicate this dissertation, in part, to them.

Leticia Sánchez, somewhat unwittingly, decided to join me on this journey. It was much more than both of us implicitly bargained for or expected. We have had two beautiful children along the way, Tiago and Juan. Our journey now continues to unknown destinations, and I can never pay back what all three have given me so far. A mere dedication of a dissertation is cheap recompense.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Archival Sources

AAA: Archivo de la Arquidiócesis de Asunción

ANA: Archivo Nacional de Asunción

SH: Sección Historia

SCJ: Sección Civil y Judicial

SNE: Sección Nueva Encuadernación

CRB: Colección Río Branco

BNA: Biblioteca Nacional de Asunción

CO-PGB: Colección O’Leary-Papeles de Gregorio Benítez

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation explores the history of a somewhat remote place and time: Paraguay during the mid-nineteenth-century. Paraguay had been a colonial backwater of the Río de la Plata region of South America, a hinterland of hinterlands, so to speak, engulfed in frontier, with a small rural population. Situated upriver from Argentina, along the Paraná-Paraguay river system, the landlocked country had endured the rule of autocrats since its independence in 1811. It was a land of widely separated villages and subsistence living. Most everyone in the country continued to work the land, to speak a vernacular of indigenous origin, Guaraní, and to see the world much as their parents and grandparents had. Yet this marginal, forgotten place soon became the site of a terrible modern war.

From 1864 to 1870, the Paraguayan state went to war with the Triple Alliance of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. The war constituted the largest inter-state conflict in the Americas during the nineteenth century. For Paraguay, in particular, the war proved a catastrophe. After protracted trench warfare fought mostly on its soil, Brazilian armies overran its territory and occupied its capital. The conflict concluded with the battlefield assassination of the Paraguayan president, Francisco Solano López, and over half of the country's prewar population of about half a million also perished.¹ The Paraguayan state had righteously

¹The full extent of Paraguay's loss of population is a subject of some debate. Thomas Whigham and Barbara Potthast, "The Paraguayan Rosetta Stone: New Insights into the Demographics of the Paraguayan War, 1864-1870," *Latin American Research Review* 34, no. 1 (1999): 174-87 is the most accurate estimation. Vera Blinn Reber contends the casualty numbers were much lower than suggested by Whigham and Potthast. See her "Comment on 'The Rosetta Stone,'" *Latin American Research Review* 37, no. 3 (2002): 129-35, and Whigham

exhorted the population to murderous self-sacrifice during the struggle. Catholic priests, speaking in Guaraní, declared that patriots “who love their nation and die for it, go straight to heaven.” Traitors and turncoats, in turn, were to go to hell. Clergy even used a native term to refer to this divinely ordained nation, *ñane retã*.² Amidst all the momentous death and suffering in this remote place, intriguing dynamics involving religion and modern nationhood were at work.

Scholars typically understand nations to be modern, secular products. Nationalism, the theory goes, began to replace the old cultural system of religion—a transformation whereby devout subjects of far-flung empires became citizens of secular states and divine-right mandates gave way to popular sovereignty.³ In particular, historians of Latin America have generally depicted the Catholic Church and its clergy to be the principal opponents of this political modernity, which allegedly came late to the region circa 1870. The narrative of the Mexican Reform figures prominently here.⁴ Recent works, however, have begun to question this formulation, showing how sermons and religious ritual articulated some of the earliest

and Potthast’s consequent response in the same volume “Refining the Numbers: A Response to Reber and Kleinpenning,” 143-48.

² “Ñane retã,” *Cacique Lambaré*, (Asunción), 24 July 1867.

³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991) is the mainstay of the “modernist school,” which also includes the works of Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, and Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983). Historian of Latin America, François Xavier Guerra, identifies the ideological shift from the sovereignty of divine-right monarchy to popular sovereignty as the hallmark of political modernity, *Modernidad e independencia*. (Madrid: Editorial Mapfre, 1992).

⁴ See textbook renditions of the Mexican Reform, for example, Lawrence A. Clayton and Michael L. Coniff, *A History of Modern Latin America* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999). Also see Austen Ivereigh’s commentary, “Introduction: The Politics of Religion in an Age of Revival,” *The Politics of Religion in an Age of Revival: Studies in Nineteenth-Century Europe and Latin America* ed. Austen Ivereigh (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London, 2000), 3.

expressions of nationhood in places such as the Yucatán, Guatemala, and Buenos Aires.⁵

Other interpretations have considered the religious basis of national political communities in formation elsewhere.⁶ These latter works suggest the incidence of a curious time of political paradox in which people seemed to live simultaneously as subjects of religious realms and citizens of modern republics. My dissertation explores this time of paradox in nineteenth-century Paraguay both before and during its epic conflict. In so doing it further ponders a pressing historical question: how might religious tradition have molded experiences of modern nationhood and citizenship in Latin America?⁷

Prior to the Triple Alliance War, the ruling López family in Paraguay had assumed the wisdom of Spanish colonial statecraft in questions of religion and nation building. They had consolidated power over the provincial church and rebuilt its institutional apparatus for political and social control. Clergy became explicit agents of the state, and other local officials joined them in enforcing a Catholic morality revitalized by the López regimes for

⁵See, for example, Terry Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men: Religion and Popular Cultures in Southeast Mexico, 1800-1876* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 203-232; Roberto Di Steffano, *El púlpito y la plaza: Clero, sociedad, y política de la monarquía católica a la república rosista*. (Buenos Aires: Siglo veintiuno, 2004); Douglass Sullivan-González *Piety, Power, and Politics: Religion and Nation Formation in Guatemala, 1821-1871* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998); Brian F. Connaughton, *Clerical Ideology in a Revolutionary Age: The Guadalajara Church and the Idea of the Mexican Nation (1788-1853)* tr. Mark Alan Healey (Boulder, Col.: University Press of Colorado, 2003).

⁶Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). For the case of North America during the U.S. Civil War, see Peter Parish, *The North and the Nation in the Era of the Civil War* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003); Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988).

⁷Theoretical critiques of the “modernist” school of nationalism have contributed to my formulation here, Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998). Anthony Marx likewise sees modern nationalism developing in early modern European kingdoms’ increasing engagements to cull the loyalty of their subject populaces, usefully departing from the notion that developed nationalisms can emerge independent of statehood and processes of state formation, *Faith in Nation*, 3-27. John Chasteen emphasizes the postcolonial Latin American experience and perspective (also applied to postcolonial Africa) that independent states emerged well before their corresponding nationalisms, see his “Introduction: Beyond Imagined Communities,” in *Beyond Imagined Communities* ed. Sara Castro-Klarén and John Charles Chasteen (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003), ix-xxv.

life in an independent republic. This dissertation examines the socio-political dynamics of state formation in Paraguay, circa 1850-70. It contends that everyday people in postcolonial Paraguay, although mostly illiterate peasants and speaking only Guaraní, confronted a reality of modern republican nationhood steeped in religion and articulated in their own language. Given, however, the reinforced traditions of religion and morality in the statecraft of the López regimes, and the rhythm of rural lives proceeding much as they had for decades or even centuries before, what aspects of social and political experiences in nineteenth-century Paraguay made them particularly consistent with those of modern nationhood? If “modern” implies serious engagement with liberal ideas and practices of republicanism and citizenship, most conventional interpretations of nineteenth-century Paraguay fail to even consider the question. The standard historical understanding today is that the country was a “republic” in name only, dominated by despotic regimes.

Even so, recent historical literature on the war itself has made evident that Paraguayans did bear the brunt of a total conflict with widespread, rippling implications for the sort of modern nationhood developing across South America at the time. And most authors concede that Paraguayans made a striking display of social and political cohesion in their prolonged resistance to foreign invasion during the war, almost fighting to the last man—a cohesion which, perhaps, could only be described as “national.”⁸ On the level of popular historical memory, the alleged nationalist devotion of Paraguayans has largely attracted rancorous contention. At stake has been the political utility of the image of Francisco Solano López, the

⁸Thomas Whigham, *The Paraguayan War: Causes and Early Conduct* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002). Other recent narratives of the war include: Chris Leuchars, *To the Bitter End: Paraguay and the War of the Triple Alliance* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002) and Francisco Doratioto, *Maldita guerra: Nova história da Guerra do Paraguai* (Sao Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002). The edited volume *I Die with My Country: Perspectives on the Paraguayan War*, ed. Hendrik Kraay and Thomas Whigham (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004) provides a comprehensive look at the conflict’s region-wide impact. See especially Whigham’s selection, “The Paraguayan War: A Catalyst for Nationalism in South America,” 179-98.

Paraguayan president during the war, as either tyrant or hero. The history of loyal patriots valiantly following their soon-to-be-martyred president competes with narratives depicting either submissive peons cowed by terror and fear or fanatics provoked by the imperial ambition of a wild-eyed dictator. Explaining Paraguayan nationalism during the War of the Triple Alliance has largely taken the form of caricature.⁹ These caricatures have generally served the interests of subsequent political and social movements in the country. Much of twentieth-century nationalism in Paraguay coalesced around a heroic memory of the war, one from which the long-lasting Stroessner regime reaped huge political and cultural capital.¹⁰ And, needless to say, such caricature has obscured historical insight into the nature of Paraguayan experiences of nationhood at the time.

More careful scholarly approaches to the question, in contrast, typically emphasize the deep social roots of apparent cohesion during the conflict. They suggest that, with both colonial and indigenous sources, cohesion was molded over centuries by geographic

⁹Chroniclers and propagandists of the conflict set the framework of these historical understandings. See, for example, John Thompson, *The War in Paraguay* (London: 1869); Juan Crisóstomo Centurión, *Memorias o reminiscencias sobre la Guerra del Paraguay* 4 vols. (Asunción, El Lector); Manuel García, *Paraguay and the Alliance Against the Tyrant Francisco Solano López*. (New York: Hallet and Breen, 1869). Thomas Whigham and Hendrick Kraay provide an excellent overview of the historiography of the war and note how historical works from nationalist histories rescuing the image of Francisco Solano López to present-day interpretations continue to reproduce the propaganda polemics of the conflict, "Introduction," *I Die with My Country: Perspectives on the Paraguayan War*, ed. Hendrik Kraay and Thomas Whigham (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 15-19. For example of this historical literature, both hagiographic and derisive of Francisco Solano Lopez, see Cecilio Baez, *La tiranía en el Paraguay* (Intercontinental Editora); Hector Francisco Decoud *Los emigrados paraguayos en la guerra de la Triple Alianza* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Argentinos, 1930); Juan E. O'Leary *Nuestra Epopeya* (Asunción: La Mundial, 1919) and *Libro de los heroes* (Asunción: La Mundial 1922); Arturo Bray, *Solano López, soldado de la gloria y del infortunio* (Asunción: Ediciones Nizza, 1958); Julio César Chaves, *El Presidente López* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Depalma, 1968); Natalicio González *La guerra del Paraguay: Imperialismo y nacionalismo en el Plata* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudestada, 1968); Leon Pomer, *Guerra del Paraguay, Gran negocio!* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Caldén, 1968); James Saeger, *Francisco Solano López and the Ruination of Paraguay: Honor and Egocentrism* (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield, 2007).

¹⁰Doratioto also provides an overview of the constructed myth of Francisco Solano López as nationalist hero, *Maldita Guerra*, 79-96. Luc Capdevila provides the most complete discussion of this constructed myth as it developed over the course of the twentieth century, *Une guerre totale Paraguay, 1864-1870* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007).

isolation, a homogenizing social and racial mixture, and a common linguistic identity centered in spoken Guaraní. These latter interpretations are important to consider. But they tend to shy away from considering the influences of anything to be labeled as “modern” and instead prefer to focus on factors of long duration—those seemingly entrenched ethnic or even “tribal” characteristics forming over time, like sedimentary rock, a firm sense of collective identity.¹¹ Such interpretations are still somewhat tangled in a nationalist myth of Hispanic-Guaraní mestizo identity with its alleged origins in the Spanish conquest of the territory, a founding myth which took hold over the course of the twentieth century along with a heroic memory of the war.¹² Anachronistically, they impose the expectations of present-day ethnic and linguistic nationalism on a past in which sentiments, as will be shown, were either barely formed or never even present.

Matters of race and language did have their hand in shaping how inhabitants of nineteenth-century Paraguay understood themselves socially and politically, but they played out in ways much different than those typically understood. Let us consider the role of these factors for a moment. Among the great ironies of the famed “mestizo society” beloved by

¹¹John Hoyt Williams, “Race, Threat, and Geography: The Paraguayan Experience of Nationalism,” *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 1, no. 2 (1974): 173-91. Whigham seems to affirm William’s general analysis, “The Paraguayan War: A Catalyst for Nationalism in South America,” *I Die with My Country*, 179-98, as does Barbara Potthast in, “Protagonists, Victims and Heroes: Paraguayan Women during the ‘Great War,’” *I Die with My Country*, 44-60, and “Residentas, destinadas y otras heroínas: El nacionalismo paraguayo y el rol de las mujeres en la Guerra de la Triple Alianza,” *Mujeres y naciones en América Latina* ed. Barbara Potthast and Eugenia Scarzanella (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2001), 77-92, and Capdevila, *Une guerre totale*, 95-116. Moreover, those works addressing the Paraguayan state’s promotion of Guaraní during the war tend to see it as a transcendental act of a long forming ethnic-linguistic nationalism, see Roberto Romero, *Protagonismo histórico del idioma guaraní* (Asunción: Arte Final, 1998); Sara Delicia Villagra-Batoux, *El guaraní paraguayo: de la oralidad a la lengua literaria*, trans. Anahí García (Asunción: Expolibro, 2002); Herib Caballero Campos y Cayetano Ferreira Segovia, “El periodismo de Guerra en el Paraguay, (1864-1870),” *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos* 6 (November 2006).

¹²Potthast complicates this myth in her analysis of the colonial period but seems to reaffirm it for the early postcolonial period of state formation during the nineteenth century, “El mestizaje del Paraguay como identidad nacional y mito nacionalista,” *El espacio interior de América del Sur: Geografía, historia, política, cultura*, eds. Barbara Potthast, Karl Kohut, Gerd Kohlhepp (Madrid: 1999), 346-359.

Paraguayan nationalist lore and current historical interpretation is the evident persistence of perceived racial differences in both thought and practice.¹³ Far from believing themselves mestizo, mid-nineteenth-century Paraguayans increasingly reinforced their identification with “white” society. Colonial precedents were instrumental in this regard. From early on, the Spanish Crown granted “Spanish” status to the children of European conquerors born to indigenous women. The maneuver recognized the practical necessity of expanding the legal fiction of whiteness given the dearth of pure Spaniards to man this outpost of Christian civilization on the colonial frontier. Granting claims of whiteness followed the logic of colonial domination, bringing along the imposed categories of racial and religious inferiority, “Indian” and “black,” to satisfy the labor demands of the local “white” elite and justify Spanish royal authority. Throughout the colonial period inhabitants did plenty to confuse the logic of such categories, mixing heavily—indigenous with Africans, white creoles with indigenous, black creoles with white creoles—to produce the often-cited *mestizaje*, which was not totally a myth. Yet the contemporary inhabitants of Paraguay continued to make claims of pure lineage and to employ racial categories such as *blanco*, *indio*, *pardo*. In fact, few nineteenth-century Paraguayans identified as *mestizo*. Furthermore, an ever-widening sector of the population, a growing peasant class not confined to Indian pueblos was declaring itself “Spanish” regardless of physical appearances, ancestry, or the fact that they spoke only Guaraní. During the late eighteenth century the expulsion of the Jesuits, the general assault on the integrity of Indian pueblos, and the exhausting demands of tribute

¹³For example of this nationalist literature, see Manuel Domínguez, *El alma de la raza* (Asunción: C. Zamphíropoulos, 1918); Natalicio González, *Proceso y formación de la cultura paraguaya* (Asunción: Editorial Guaranía, 1948).

payment convinced many “indios” and “pardos” to claim whiteness, which remained the hallmark of affiliation with Christian civilization and the Catholic empire of Spain.¹⁴

The irony that claims to whiteness were made in a language of indigenous origin suggests how Guaraní itself, as used in mainstream Paraguayan society, was the product of Spanish colonialism and not a touchstone of collective identity rooted in time immemorial.

Paraguayan Guaraní had emerged from various indigenous oral forms to become the common vernacular of a colonial territory. Everyone from blacks, to Christianized Indians, to those with legal claims of Spanish descent shared Guaraní as their primary spoken language. It was the maternal tongue of elite and commoner alike, serving as the idiom of home and village, the universal language in which to tell jokes, to argue with spouses, to make love. It had taken shape under the impact of conquest, with its expressions and usage reflecting the socio-political experience of Spanish colonialism on the fringe of a massive empire. Spanish remained the written language of church and state. Yet Guaraní in various contexts also came to be written and institutionally sanctioned by the colonial regime. Moreover, a widening incorporation of Spanish words and syntax allowed spoken Guaraní to domesticate a host of European concepts, most prominently those tied to the cultural complex of the Catholic religion. Everything from Spanish monarchism, to patriarchy, to racial hierarchy came in tow and developed expression in Paraguayan Guaraní.¹⁵ These factors, more than a primordial

¹⁴Ignacio Telesca, *Tras los expulsos: Cambios demográficos y territoriales en el Paraguay después de la expulsión de los jesuitas* (Asunción: CEADUC, 2009), 197-206.

¹⁵Bartomeu Meliá, *La lengua guaraní en el Paraguay colonial* (Asunción: CEPAG, 2003). Also see, Barbara Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule in the Rio de la Plata* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). Indigenous languages throughout the Spanish Empire became colonial institutions of the state and church. James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992). Matthew Restall, *The Maya World: Yucatec Culture and Society, 1550-1850* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997). For added discussion of the complicated relationship of spoken and written forms of Guaraní and Paraguayan historical social and political identities, see Wolf Lustig, “Mba’eichapa oiko la guaraní? Guaraní y jopora en el Paraguay,” *Revista Ñemity*, n. 33,

ethnic-linguistic identity, had formed the deeply entrenched social perspectives of nineteenth-century Paraguay.

How did they contribute to the development of modern Paraguayan nationhood? A full answer to that question is the task of this entire dissertation. We can begin, however, with the conventional assertion that early independent Paraguay was a republic in name only, and observe how insistently Paraguayans in authority at the time promoted the republican idea. Upon assuming power in 1840, Carlos Antonio López, the father of Francisco, deliberately fomented more trappings of republican government than his predecessor, with a charade of legislative assemblies, a constitution granting immense powers to the executive, and semi-regular elections to rubber-stamp his rule. Speeches from Carlos Antonio López proclaimed the slogan “Republic or Death” to congresses gathered in the legislative chamber. Others reiterated his promise to inspire “republican virtues” in the Paraguayan people.¹⁶ Once, when casually receiving a foreign guest in his office, López (who was wearing only underwear) explained his lack of etiquette by jesting “We are all republicans.”¹⁷ The more formal Francisco Solano López, who always appeared in pants, further propagated republican imagery. He commissioned construction in the capital, including the presidential palace, with

and “*Chácore purahéi*—canciones de guerra. Literatura popular en guaraní e identidad nacional en el Paraguay,” *El espacio interior de América del Sur: Geografía, historia, política, cultura*, eds. Barbara Potthast, Karl Kohut, Gerd Kohlhepp (Madrid: 1999); Gabriela Zuccolillo, “Lengua y nación: el rol de las élites morales en la oficialización del guaraní (Paraguay 1992),” *Suplemento Antropológico* 37, no. 2 (December 2002): 9-308.

¹⁶For the typical republican language of the Paraguayan government, one can look to state newspapers and correspondence. The documents refer to Paraguay as “the Republic” and Paraguayans departing and arriving on riverboats as “citizens.” See, for example, *El Paraguayo Independiente* (Asunción), 7 June 1845, 14 June 1845. “Los ríos interiores” *El Semanario* (Asunción), 20 December 1862; “Marítima” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 9 May 1863; “Deberes para con la patria,” *El Semanario* (Asunción), 12 March 1864. Carlos Antonio López, *Mensajes de Carlos Antonio López* (Asunción: Fundación Cultural Republicana, 1987), 79-84, 117.

¹⁷Ildefonso Bermejo, *Republicas americanas: episodios de la vida privada, política y social en la República del Paraguay* (Asunción: Librería y Papelería Nacional, 1908), 16. John Hoyt Williams also cites this incident, *The Rise and Fall of the Paraguayan Republic, 1800-1870* (Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, 1979), 107.

architectural motifs harking back to the republics of Greece and Rome.¹⁸ Tricolor flags and sashes, boat masts, silverware, and uniform coat buttons prominently carried the national seal with the words “The Republic of Paraguay.”¹⁹ This discursive republicanism was not without its contradictions, both practical and symbolic. For instance, the same president also had an elaborate, jeweled crown made in Europe, presumably to wear on his head, although there is no record of his wearing it. Overall, the López regimes invested heavily in the daily reproduction of republican symbols and discourse. But did such symbols, discourses, and practice have much impact beyond the circles of power? Was it just window dressing deployed by the elite, or even, “make believe” for them as well?

The idea cannot be dismissed out of hand, but this dissertation takes a different approach. It ponders whether modern political ideas and practices might have spread within the thick field of traditional perspectives and experiences, much like the smoke of a brush fire hanging in an already dense, humid atmosphere. It observes how vestiges of colonial rule under the López regimes in postcolonial Paraguay—most notably the Church and its traditional moral and legal order—were reassembled for everyday inhabitants within a framework of republicanism, the pace of this development quickening with the onset of patriotic war. It explores how, even before the conflict, the pious submission once demanded of royal subjects increasingly defined the duties of republican citizenship. Divine-right mandates and popular sovereignty merged as the ideological foundation of political power. Fulfilling the sacred obligations of the patriarchal family became a primary manifestation of civic virtue.

¹⁸The building stands to this day and continues to serve as the ceremonial presidential house of government. It is known as the Palace of the López. For photographs of the building from the time period see the fantastic collection of Miguel Angel Cuartolo, *Soldados de la memoria: Imágenes y hombres de la guerra del Paraguay* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2000), 70-71.

¹⁹An impressive collection of such items are currently on display at the Ministry of Defense in Asunción. Museo del Ministerio de Defensa, Salon del Mariscal López.

This conflation of values made modern ideas of the republic profoundly, and often painfully, familiar in the everyday lives of Paraguayans.²⁰ Matters of nationhood arose in household disputes and lovers' quarrels, brewed within the personal rivalries and petty stakes of local politics, and spilled from village gossip and rumor in the countryside. Underlying sentiments concerning racial hierarchy and servitude in Paraguayan society lent further significance to questions of republic and nation. And this everyday experience with the republic found dynamic expression in the vernacular Guaraní.

A wider historiographical discussion developing around themes of subaltern politics and state formation in nineteenth-century Latin America informs these arguments. Much of this scholarship regards popular actors—from Mexico, to Colombia, to Argentina—as participants in the making of independent national states who deployed the discourse of citizenship and republicanism. It contends that popular actors actively appropriated these terms in campaign pronouncements, newspapers, courtrooms, and, most critically, on the battlefield to press their political and material interests.²¹ While such works have recovered strains of popular liberalism, this dissertation employs their analytical framework to a decidedly conservative regime, exploring consent and contestation both before and during a heady time of war. It thus depicts a much more complicated political process than is usually

²⁰In a provocative essay, Guido Rodríguez Alcalá first explored this tension-laden mix of liberal and traditional political forms and practice under the López regimes as a powerful source of the country's subsequent autocratic political culture, see *Ideología autoritaria* (Asunción: RP Ediciones, 1987).

²¹See, for example: Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). Sarah C. Chambers, *From Subjects to Citizens: Honor, Gender, and Politics in Arequipa, Peru 1780-1854* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999). Peter Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Foundation of Mexico's National State: Guerrero, 1800-1857* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) and *The Time of Liberty: Popular Political Culture in Oaxaca, 1750-1850* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005). James E. Sanders, *Contentious Republicans: Popular Politics, Race, and Class in Nineteenth-Century Colombia*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). Michael T. Ducey, *A Nation of Villages; Riot and Rebellion in the Mexican Huasteca, 1750-1850* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004).

portrayed for nineteenth-century Paraguay. Significant doubts still linger as to the capacity of common folk in nineteenth-century Latin America to assimilate postcolonial political orders beyond the concerns of mundane survival, village life, and traditional structures of power.²² Examining the contributions of institutional religiosity to popular political engagement under even conservative postcolonial regimes may assuage these doubts, or even turn some of them on their heads. This study also suggests that serious examination needs to be given to the early postcolonial antecedents of more robust twentieth-century Latin American nationalisms also stirred by religious elements, whereby, for example, popular currents on the right condoned or acquiesced to murders and torture in alleged defense of God, family, and country, and some on the left took inspiration in visions of Jesus Christ as a socialist revolutionary.²³ Scholars often fail to fully appreciate how much these elements were bound up in the region's early experiences with political modernity. This dissertation thus shows how religious tradition contributed to formative experiences of political modernity in the region, harnessing the divine to the cause of independent republics and nations.²⁴ Ordinary people in Latin America had long accepted the Catholic God's sanction of monarchy. After

²²See, most prominently, Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-21* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001). Terry Rugeley for the Yucatán in *Rebellion Now and Forever: Mayas, Hispanics, and Caste War Violence in Yucatán* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009) and Whigham for South America in "The Paraguayan War: A Catalyst for Nationalism in South America," express similar reservations.

²³Greg Grandin in *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), ch. 3; Frank Graziano, *Divine Violence: Spectacle, Psychosexuality, and Radical Christianity in the Argentine Dirty War* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992); Michael A. Burdick, *For God and Fatherland: Religion and Politics in Argentina* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); Roberto Bosca, *La iglesia nacional peronista: Factor religioso y poder político* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericano, 1997); David Tombs, *Latin American Liberation Theology* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002).

²⁴Other crucial, recent works to advance this line of analysis include: Ricardo Salvatore, *Wandering Paysanos: State Order and Subaltern Experience in Buenos Aires During the Rosas Era* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 361-93; Matthew D. O'Hara, *A Flock Divided: Race, Religion, and Politics, 1749-1857* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), ch. 6; Guardino, *The Time of Liberty*, ch. 5; Pamela Voekel, *Alone Before God: The Religious Origins of Modernity in Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

independence, they had the novel, or shall we say “modern,” experience of seeing Him and his celestial ranks called down to patronize republics.

This dissertation relates such a history of nationhood and war for nineteenth-century Paraguay and will be instructive for understanding developments occurring throughout Latin America at a time when the social and political landscape was still so closely joined with religion. The social and political context of Paraguay during the years prior to the conflict, circa 1850-64, provides the setting for the first three chapters. The story begins with a look at how Paraguayans experienced political community in a frontier society. The first chapter introduces *ñane retã*, the Guaraní term for this community and country, still fundamentally considered a religious realm and founded on patriarchal authority. Official correspondence of local state officials provides its evidentiary base and allows us to see political developments occurring far from the direct control of an autocratic ruler in the capital. To project its authority, the regime of Carlos Antonio López made rebuilding the institutional life of an official church a central part of building a republic and nation. The second chapter uses ecclesiastical records, and such materials as judicial accounts of suicide cases, to address this process of moral and spiritual state formation. But Paraguayans had long practiced skirting the moral codes of church and state, and the new patriotic priests continued to have their vices as well. The third chapter then explores how age-old contentions over rights and duties in the patriarchal family, as they played out in domestic disputes and village gossip, allowed the state to reinforce its notions of citizenship and liberty in a republic.

Chapters four and five trace the advent and experience of total war, drawing again on official correspondence and judicial records, as well as the reports of informants and, crucially, the Paraguayan state’s newspaper propaganda produced in Guaraní during the

conflict. During the 1860s, Francisco Solano López, upon assuming state power after the death of his father, mustered the moral coercion of a divine-right republicanism to quiet dissent while mobilizing for war. The consolidated church-state apparatus was the engine of this effort. Paraguayan priests spoke Guaraní from the pulpits, intensifying claims of divine sanction for the president's election. Later, they contributed to wartime newspapers in the vernacular as the church apparatus of the regime became a cog of modern state machinery at war. The outcome of the story hinges on how ordinary Paraguayans confronted this moral coercion so freighted with the biddings of God and Country.²⁵

A short tale found in the pages of a Paraguayan wartime newspaper suggests how this moral coercion was expected to infiltrate daily life. It was written as fiction to inspire patriotic consent, though presumably while making its readers and listeners laugh, depicting two old women gossiping over maté in a nameless Paraguayan village. Notably, their conversation was printed in Guaraní. The two women first talk excitedly about the parish priest's sermon heard that morning in mass, which "said many good things," reminding them of the obligation to pledge loyalty to the *ñane retã* and its sovereign. The two then turn to a discussion of village gossip. They shake their heads at the lack of patriotic fervor of one neighbor and criticize the wife of a decorated soldier, who seems to be cheating on her

²⁵Theoretical frameworks addressing both the workings of cultural and political hegemony and the capacity of subaltern resistance inform my analysis here. See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) 108-35; T.J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (June 1985): 567-93; Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent, "Popular Culture and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico," *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 3-23; Mallon, "The Promise and Dilemma of Subaltern Studies: Perspectives from Latin American History," *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (December 1994): 1491-1515; James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Scott's discussion of the public transcript, and the subaltern response to it, is particularly useful. Guardino's application of the concept of the public transcript as a site of contestation at the heart of popular political culture informs my own deployment of it, *The Time of Liberty*.

husband.²⁶ Their fictional conversation incorporates the concerns of nationhood into the mundane happenings and gossip of village life, suggesting that moral transgressions double as sins against the *ñane retã*. The concept of *ñane retã* seemed to carry expectations of loyalty and sacrifice, much like that of a modern nation. Today, this term is used among native Guaraní speakers in conversation, polka lyrics, web blogs, and even liquor labels as a synonym for *patria*, republic, and nation. Its application in 1860s wartime propaganda, suggests that the term's popular resonance had been building for decades already. The notion of *ñane retã* will therefore help us see how Paraguayans confronted modern nationhood at mid nineteenth century, even on the margins of this frontier society.

²⁶“Una visita,” *Cabichuí*, (Paso Pucú) 4 July 1867.

CHAPTER 1:

ÑANE RETÃ

Two incidents from the Paraguayan countryside, well before the war, begin our history and suggest that attachments to ideas of *ñane retã* had been building among all sorts of Paraguayans, authorities and common folk alike. Along the lush hillsides near the village of Caapucú, just north of the Tebicuary River, which once divided the colony from the old Jesuit lands to the south, a slave and a free black articulated their own familiarity with the expression, though hardly in a patriotic spirit. The episode involving the slave, a middle-aged man by the name of Blas, took place at a cockfight held underneath a shade tree along the base of a hill on a warm Sunday afternoon in September 1850. It was a typical diversion where drinking was heavy and loose talk common. Blas himself was drunk and speaking his mind. He mixed there with men who claimed to be white and honorable, engaging them as peers and as fellow gamblers. He had entered the risks and dealings as any other man, perhaps bringing along cash and bartered materials procured through the sale of goods and labor not owed his owner. On that Sunday afternoon he was angry.

The gamers chatted in Guaraní around the cockfight ring and card games nearby. With coins jingling in his fingers, Blas ventured some commentary on current economic conditions:

. . . ã tacho, ã añã tachoke, ko tacho omongorre guive ñande retãme, ndiporivei comercio ko añara'y monda ogoberna guive ñande retã este gobierno agagua . . .

“ . . . these fat jugs, these fat demon jugs. Ever since that fat jug has been running our country there’s been no more business. Ever since that thief, son of the devil has been governing our country, this current government . . .”

With the courage of liquor and the comfort of his surroundings, Blas had reproached the Paraguayan president, Carlos Antonio López for business gone sour. The insult *tacho*, meaning “fat jug,” was explicit ridicule of the president’s overwhelming girth, his most defining physical feature, well known throughout the countryside. And Blas’s initial use of the plural in this regard suggests that he imagined the Paraguayan government to include a whole collection of such fat bosses running things, badly. And he extended the derision to the diabolical by calling López *añara’y*, “son of the devil,” a common slur that depicted its object, the president no less, as a religious and social outcast.

His fellow gamers, though, were determined not to let the slave get away with his brazen speech. One had even encouraged the others to get tough and “throw the *pardo* out of there.” Blas had retorted “why don’t you throw me out of here, if you consider yourself so brave,” adding, “but if you do, I’ll have your guts on the end of my knife.” He then had apparently drawn a dagger before slinking away from the gathering. Days later another witness reported the incident to the local militia sergeant and had Blas arrested. The case eventually reached the desk of the president himself, and upon reading extensive testimony implicating the slave, Carlos Antonio López ruled that the “perverse mulatto named Blas” receive 150 lashes and imprisonment with forced labor in Asunción for the undetermined future. Blas suffered the whipping, then another sixty lashes some two months later when he maintained that illness prevented him from working. In any case, the local judge who initially presided over testimony of the incident had taken the extraordinary measure to have the seditious remarks of Blas, or at least how three accusers remembered them, recorded in Guaraní. The usual

legal protocol was to have testimony in the vernacular transcribed into Spanish, the traditional language of the state.

The utterances reveal a striking political consciousness articulated in this creole vernacular by a black slave, who presumably had little politically at stake in Paraguayan society. For apparent business woes, Blas blamed the regime ruling the country, not his gambling companions, nor his owner, nor rival peddlers. In doing so, he voiced inclusion in a political community captured in the Guaraní phrase, *ñande retã*. The term approximating a broad sense of “our country,” “our patria,” inclusive of all those standing in earshot of the slave, had also invoked explicit association with a state. Blas considered that *ñande retã* was something to be “run” and “governed,” using in this regard Guaraní-adapted versions of Spanish root verbs. He rebuked the “son of the devil” in charge yet nonetheless recognized that *ñande retã* was necessarily a political dominion and that he and his companions, for better or for worse, shared its fate.¹

The other incident occurred two years previous, in 1848. Here the free black Claudio Guerreros encountered a young man along a country road and spoke to him about “big news” in “our Republic.” Guerreros proceeded to tell the passerby that a large band of enemies wearing red shirts had appeared in the frontier lands of the Chaco and were ready to cross the river into Paraguayan territory. He proclaimed the development quite newsworthy because the band of enemies had apparently come at the invitation of *ñande ruvichaguasu*, “our great superior,” referring again to the president Carlos Antonio López. He had suggested to the young man, speaking in Guaraní, *oĩ morãuje vendido ñane retã*, implying that perhaps the

¹The documentation of the case features three separate recorded testimonies of Blas’s words in Guaraní that differed slightly. The one cited above is from the first stated witness of the scene. The Guaraní expressions of Spanish root verbs were *omongorre* and *ogoberna*, Proceso al esclavo Blas por proferir palabras insultantes contra el Presidente, Caapucu, 1850, ANA-SCJ vol. 1392, n.1, foja 1-8.

president had “sold out our country.” Thus, Guerreros had spread seditious rumor with the same expression of political community in the creole vernacular, using the derivative term *ñane retã*.² Later upon facing questioning about his comments from a local judge, Guerreros confessed to repeating such “big news” to the young man and even detailed for the written record the exact words in Guaraní that he employed to describe the president’s alleged treason. Significantly enough, a notary had earlier transcribed the utterance of *ñane retã* in the rumor to mean “our Republic.” Upon learning the rumor themselves, local officials had inferred that the term spoke about nothing less than their own sense of political community. After the confession, Guerreros soon stood tied to a post in the central plaza of Caapucu enduring the jolts of sixty lashes on his back. The local judge was administering the whipping, ordered by Carlos Antonio López as punishment for sedition.³

Ironically, the lashes suffered by Guerreros and Blas inflicted with state-sanctioned torment the very subtext underlying both the exciting rumor told anxiously to a young passerby on a road and the brazen dissent boasted with drunken courage at a cockfight. Both expressed with the term *ñande retã* an intrinsic belonging to a political community. They recognized a common sovereign upon ridiculing and accusing him of undermining their community. He was a traitor and a sell-out to a mysterious band of red-shirted enemies across the river. He was a diabolical fat man. Yet, as if in deference, they did not call him by name, and Guerreros openly referred to him with the reverent title *ñande ruvichaguasu*, “our great superior.” Even the brazen Blas, once sober, pleaded with reverence that he had “no

²The difference between *ñande retã* and *ñane retã* lies with how the Guaraní speaker carries the nasalized sound.

³Proceso al pardo Claudio Guerreros por injuria al Superior Gobierno, Caapucu, 1848, ANA-SCJ vol. 1749, n. 20, foja 139-57.

reason to speak such words against the person of His Excellency.” Even so, the tension was clear between their anger at their ruler and their sense of political community.

The manifested tension alarmed those in authority. They too spoke Guaraní most naturally and responded to the idea of *ñane retã* as that which collected their own sense of political community. And suggestions that the constituted political authority of *ñane retã* was consorting with enemies along the frontier, or was the very offspring of the devil, were troubling indeed for men of their experience. Such accusations whispered reasons to break the bonds between ruler and political community, between the president and his subjects and fellow citizens. Such accusations also provided an opportunity, a chance to make an example of Blas and Guerreros, so to reinforce bonds between rulers and subjects and to show the latter their proper place in the polity. It was a moment to demonstrate the boundless paternal love of the sovereign . . . with punishment. Carlos Antonio López recognized as much when he ordered their floggings. As hands clenched the posts to which they were bound, welts forming, blood dripping, whips snapping flesh, the blows reminded Blas the slave and Guerreros the free black of their inclusion in the republic.

Even those voicing dissent had familiarity with belonging to a common political dominion, captured in the phrase *ñane retã*. And the rumor and loose talk of Blas and Guerreros proved disruptive precisely because of how they resonated with widespread understandings of Paraguay as a political community, that is, with everything fundamental that the expression *ñane retã* conjured up. We begin to ponder, then, the basic contours of such familiar understandings and experiences with *ñane retã* in mid-nineteenth-century Paraguay, at a time when the López regime was further consolidating its power within the framework of an independent republic. In many ways, the experiences indicate how little

times had changed since a Spanish king ruled the territory from afar. In the mid-nineteenth century, independent Paraguay was still a backwater, where the frontier continued to engulf its society. For centuries the territory had featured a mere pocket of creole settlement among vast expanses controlled by unconquered indigenous groups and peoples. “Christian civilization” was one of many competing societies in the countryside, and its survival remained a matter of some doubt. Boundaries of all sorts were permeable and gray in this environment with a noticeable flow of people shifting agilely back and forth. The wilderness beyond the frontier encroached and receded as a source of both dread and opportunity. It was a place of pervasive danger and intriguing strangers: “Indians,” red-shirted enemies, and others. The frontier ethos permeated the conduct of daily life. It shaped patterns of commerce and labor as well as fights in the home, fiestas in the village, and rumors in the countryside. It conditioned the very construction of postcolonial state power.⁴

Such pervasive wilderness thus continued to shape how Paraguayans, on a fundamental level, understood themselves politically and socially. They never lost their basic identification with a Christian civilization and its ordained sovereign to underline the boundaries and reinforce the order allegedly separating them from it all. Contradistinction with infidels and savages supplied at least some comfort of paternal order and sanctuary from the encroaching confusion of the wilderness beyond. Living in this frontier society, Paraguayans experienced their political community, their *ñane retã*, as a religious realm

⁴General works on the mid-to-late colonial period in Paraguay emphasize the proximity of the frontier, particularly the extensive interactions sustained by inhabitants of the province with unconquered indigenous groups—a social reality, they point out, which extended well into the nineteenth century. See, for example, Edberto Oscar Acevedo, *La intendencia del Paraguay en el virreinato del Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Ciudad Argentina, 1996); Branislava Susnik, *Los aborígenes del Paraguay: Etnohistoria de los guaraníes, época colonial* (Asunción: Museo etnográfico Andres Barbero, 1979); Jerry W. Cooney, *Economía y sociedad en la intendencia del Paraguay* (Asunción: Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociológicos, 1990); Thomas Whigham *The Politics of the River Trade: Tradition and Development in the Upper Plata, 1780-1870* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991); Telesca, *Tras los expulsos*, 209-14.

anchored in patriarchal authority. Once consistent with being part of the Catholic empire of Spain and vassals of its paternal king, such experiences persisted under an independent republic and its autocratic president.

Frontier Society

Social dynamics consistent with the engulfing wilderness still predominated in much of the Paraguayan countryside decades after political independence. Throughout the colonial period, the untamed forests controlled by unconquered indigenous groups dwarfed the settlements loyal to the Spanish king. During the first two hundred fifty years of European presence, the unconquered groups had, in fact, rolled Spanish settlement back to a small stretch of territory between the Paraguay and Parana rivers. The process of conquest was long unfinished business. For some areas, particularly in the northern reaches of the Paraguay River basin, it was a losing prospect until well into the eighteenth century. Only late in the eighteenth century did settlers tied to the Spanish colony of Paraguay gain strongholds in these northern reaches, founding the towns of Concepción and San Pedro, spurred on by the growing regional demand for arable land and yerba mate—the main export of the territory. But for over two hundred years free indigenous groups had been winning the wars of conquest there, and they continued to exercise their influence after independence.⁵ Meanwhile, the territory west of the Paraguay River, known as the Chaco, remained an

⁵On the “re-conquest” of the northern reaches during the mid-to-late eighteenth-century due to expanding yerba exploitation, and the still pervasive presence and influence of free indigenous groups, see Susnik, *Una vision socio-antropológica del Paraguay del siglo XVIII*, (Asunción: Museo Etnográfico Andrés Barbero, 1990-91), 9-16, 36-38, 60-72; Whigham, *Politics of River Trade*, 117-20; Cooney, “North to the Yerbales: Exploitation of the Paraguayan Frontier, 1776-1810,” *Contested Ground: Comparative Frontiers on the Northern and Southern Edges of the Spanish Empire*, eds. Donna J. Guy and Thomas E. Sheridan (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 135-49. About the re-conquest of the northern reaches and the founding of the southern river pueblo of Pilar, Telesca importantly highlights the push to expand arable and cattle-ranching lands by a growing latifundista elite in the colony after the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767, *Tras los expulsos*, 215-56.

almost impenetrable domain of aggressive, semi-nomadic peoples, often derisively referred to as the “Guaicurú.”⁶ Moreover, other free indigenous groups maintained their own domains among the forests and hillsides of territory allegedly claimed by the expanding creole society and independent Paraguayan state. The wilderness continued to encroach on independent Paraguay, remaining disruptive for pretensions of rule and formative for basic patterns of social and political identity.⁷

Encroaching Wilderness

Religious identity was a persistent, well-worn marker of social and political loyalties. Since the original days of the conquest centuries before, conversion to Christianity proved the fundamental act of subordination to the Spanish king. It distinguished Spanish colonial society from those of the untamed forests beyond. And such distinctions still seemed a pressing matter in the nineteenth-century Paraguayan countryside under the rule of Carlos Antonio López. Local state authorities bellowed the expression “Indian infidels,” as had their colonial forebears, to refer to the free indigenous presence and distinguish them from the faithful of creole society, non-Indian and Indian alike. Others resorted to just “infidel” or

⁶Saeger, *The Chaco Mission Frontier: The Guayacuran Experience* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000). The “Guayacuru” had long become a stock figure of derision in Paraguayan society, synonym for “savage.” See examples below.

⁷The rich historical literature on the borderlands and frontiers of the colonial Americas has provided the basis for this analytical formulation. It turns on the idea of the resistant and even expanding domains of free indigenous groups over large stretches of territory claimed by European colonial powers and later independent states, as well as on the notion of common spheres of interaction among colonial societies and these groups. See, for example, Hal Langfur, *Forbidden Lands: Colonial Identity, Frontier Violence, and the Persistence of Brazil’s Eastern Indians, 1750-1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Cynthia Radding, *Landscapes of Power and Identity: Comparative Histories in the Sonoran Desert and the Forests of Amazonia from Colony to Republic* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Eric Langer, “The Eastern Andean Frontier (Bolivia and Argentina) and Latin American Frontiers: Comparative Contexts (19th and 20th centuries),” *The Americas* 59, no. 1 (July 2002): 33-63. For North America, see Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001).

“savage” to refer to unconquered indigenous clans.⁸ These epithets suggested the inherently superior and fundamentally Christian nature of “civilization.” They also implied the traditional sense of conversion as a civilizing act, the acceptance of a social order as well as of a faith. Local officials pinned their hopes on the Christian inclinations of leaders of free indigenous clans.⁹

The long-sustained efforts of “spiritual conquest” along the frontier had continued under the auspices of a provincial church under the control of an independent state. The state newspaper in Asunción celebrated as late as the 1860s the conversion of forty six “savage Guayanaes Indians” as the converts, recognizing “the benefits and laudable acts the Supreme Government offers its subjects, and thus abandoning their savage life, come today to enjoy the honor of pertaining to its dominion.”¹⁰ Free indigenous people themselves contributed to this discourse. Consider an incident from Concepción in 1853 when a commission of a Chaco indigenous tribe arrived to conduct their regular trade in wax, cotton, and feathers with residents of the pueblo. The military commandant there informed them that the trade must be suspended in retribution for reported attacks by Chaco Indians on settlements closer to Asunción. The group obeyed but pleaded that “they never thought to harm the *cristianos*”

⁸Carlos Antonio López typically preferred the latter term, see his response to Casimiro Uriarte, 6 January 1851, Asunción, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 356-57. Also, for “infidel,” see Informe de Venacio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 11 November 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409 n.1, foja 468-474. “Infidel” and “savage” were typical expressions used during the re-conquest campaigns of the late eighteenth century in the territory, see Telesca, *Tras los expulsos*, 237.

⁹Above cited works (notes 6-7) also point to the long, uneven process of “spiritual conquest” in the Americas, especially within frontier, borderland regions, and outline the socializing aim of Catholic-Christian conversion. Also see Ganson, *Guaraní Under Spanish*, ch. 1 & 2, for the radical transformations of Guaraní indigenous societies with the reduction projects headed by the Jesuits in the area of Paraguay.

¹⁰“Correspondencia del interior: Santa Rosa,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 30 April 1864.

and in fact “professed much affection for the Supreme Government of the Republic.”¹¹ They identified those of Paraguayan society primarily in religious terms, as Christians. Indeed whenever free indigenous groups captured deserters from Paraguayan society and sought to return them for a reward, they frequently indicated to local officials that they had a *cristiano* to offer.¹²

Such language most likely reflected distinctions being made within the vernacular Guaraní itself. The incorporated Spanish term *cristiano* served as a basic designation of personhood in creole society. Mainstream Paraguayan Guaraní also bore the trace of colonial-era dichotomies with its word *karai*, connoting Christian baptism and Spanish descent, having as its antithesis *ava*, the Indian savage. Paraguayan settlers affirmed their inclusion as *karai*, and thus their affiliation with Hispanic-Christian society, even while speaking their everyday language of indigenous origin. The distinction made in the vernacular even bore a racial connotation of “whiteness.”¹³ In a land still bound up by the religious and social dynamics of a lurking, unconverted wilderness, the fiction of whiteness, as begun and expanded in colonial times, endured as the hallmark of affiliation with Christian civilization. Fictions of “Indian-ness” and “blackness,” properly Christianized, also remained embedded in the social imagination of Paraguayans. Whiteness was meaningless without the implicit contrast of subordinate racial types. Former reductions of Indian pueblos

¹¹Informe de oficial militar de Concepción a Carlos Antonio López, 15 October 1853, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n.1, foja 810-811.

¹²For example see Informe de Eugenio López a Carlos Antonio López, 11 February 1858, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n. 1 II, foja 1063.

¹³For a reference to these distinctions solidifying over the course of the 16th and 17th centuries with persistent indigenous resistance against colonial-creole settlements in the province, see, again, Susnik, *Los aborígenes*, 117-118, 173-80. For historical meanings of *ava* and *karai*, see Antonio Guasch, *Diccionario Castellano-Guaraní, Guaraní-Castellano, Sintáctico, Fraseológico, Ideológico* (Madrid: 1961) 513, 570. The racial connotation of *karai* was accordingly tied to its multiple meanings of “baptized,” “Don,” “Señor,” and “Spaniard.”

and even frontier colonies of free blacks were still considered bulwarks against the incursions of wilderness peoples or Brazilian frontiersmen.¹⁴

Ambiguities abounded. It was common for recently baptized indigenous people to backslide.¹⁵ The wilderness still occasionally reclaimed space and people from “civilization.” There was the typical case from Concepción of the old “Ca’igua” Indian Cepindo who allegedly “had come voluntarily from the forests” to work for years under the charge of his patron, Constantino Benítez. Yet when Benítez died in 1858, Cepindo returned to the forests with his wife and was nowhere to be found.¹⁶ It was common in the northern reaches of Paraguay to contract the labor of free indigenous people, if for only fleeting periods before they “returned to their tribes.”¹⁷ Moreover, for those born into Paraguayan society, the wilderness always proved a potential refuge. Escaped slaves made frequent attempts to flee to the forests and incorporate themselves into the kinship societies of indigenous groups, some finding success, others being captured and returned for a ransom. In the northern frontier village of Salvador, local officials encountered fugitive slaves with regularity.¹⁸

¹⁴Susnik notes the prevalence of racial labels and distinctions of hierarchy within late 18th-century Paraguayan society, *Una vision socio-antropológica del Paraguay del siglo XVIII*, 99-100. Telesca, however, has done the most to bring this aspect of late colonial social life to light, *Tras los expulsos*, 161-97. We further explore the prevalence and implications of caste labels and hierarchies for mid-nineteenth-century Paraguayan society in Chapter 2.

¹⁵See Orden del Obispo López sobre neofitas Payagua, Ita 1854, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López. Also for similar tendencies among reduced indigenous clans in Eastern Bolivia, see Radding, “Forging Cultures of Resistance on Two Colonial Frontiers: Northwestern Mexico and Eastern Bolivia,” *New World Orders: Violence, Sanction, and Authority in the Colonial Americas*, eds. John Smolenski and Thomas J. Humphrey (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 167-68.

¹⁶Informe de Eugenio Lopez a CAL, 1 May 1858, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n. 1, foja 1072.

¹⁷Informe del comandante Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 18 July 1863, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1300-1302.

¹⁸Informe de Cornelio Zarate, 15 October 1849, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n. 1, foja 733. For such encounters in Salvador, see Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 30 October 1851, ANA-SH 409, n. 1, foja 411-13. Some of the escaped slaves came from Brazilian territory, sometimes

Vagrants and troublemakers, military deserters and exhausted workers in the yerba fields, often executed similar defections, spending weeks, or perhaps years, among groups in the forest, at times preferring death before capture. One deserter from interior pueblo of Villa Rica, a free black named “Juandé” Mata Carballo, was thought to have lived for years with an indigenous group. He even had lived with wife and child among his adopted kinsman before they turned him and his family over. In another instance, the gambler and horse thief Antonio Recalde in 1861 tried to leave his past in San Pedro behind and join the Cayguyaní peoples living in the hillsides near his villa. Months later, when sighted and cornered by a work gang in the yerba fields, Recalde drew his knife and attacked before a bullet killed him.¹⁹

The proclaimed boundaries between Christian civilization and the savagery beyond were permeable and unstable at best. Folk tales told of dreadful, hairy humanoids descending from hillsides to kidnap children and young women. Other stories spoke of the forests taking back Christianized Indians and converting them into man-eating jaguars.²⁰ The landscape itself in a frontier village such as Salvador in the northern reaches bore the marks of the uneven,

traveling with indigenous concubines, see Informe de Candia, 7 June 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n.1, foja 444-49.

¹⁹For a typical report of desertion by a military recruit, see Informe de Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, 30 March 1861, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1238. For the case of Recalde, see Informe de Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, 27 February 1861, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1227-28. And “Juandé”: Informe del oficial Jose Carmelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, 5 September 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 547-548.

²⁰The mythological figure of “Pombero,” prevalent still today in Paraguay, has its origins in the colonial period, corresponding perhaps to indigenous allies of Portuguese slave raiders, see Dionsio M. González Torres, *Folklore del Paraguay* (Asunción: Servilibro, 2003), 78. Susnik notes the myth of the trans-morphing figure of *ava-jaguarete* (Indian-tiger) taking hold in the creolized context of 17th-century colonial Paraguay, *Los aborígenes*, 167. The anthropologist Capucine Boidin Caravias documents the intriguing survival of the *ava-jaguarete* myth in the pueblos of Misiones, Paraguay—a version used in popular historical memory to explain the depopulation and resurgent wilderness overtaking settlements after the Triple Alliance War—*Guerre et Métissage au Paraguay: Deux compagnies rurales de San Ignacio Guasú (Misiones 2001-1767)* Thèse de doctorat de Sociologie, Université Paris X Nanterre, 2004, 305-29.

tenuous footing of Christian civilization. The north was still the site of frequent attacks by free indigenous groups. The central plaza of Paraguayan villages announced a focus of order, but its church was small and generally in disrepair, the priest's house a piece of thatchwork. Beyond the more prominent structures lining the plaza, thatch and adobe houses grew steadily more scattered and interspersed with woods. Roads and footpaths became more winding, reflecting, if not following, the twists and turns of cattle trails. Fields of subsistence agriculture, called *kokue* in Guaraní, necessarily occupied small clearings off such paths surrounded by the tangled green of forests. This landscape was common throughout much of the Paraguayan countryside.²¹ The *monte* in Spanish, the *ka'aguy* in Guaraní, was usually just a step or two away. Thus, the everyday setting of "civilization" hardly communicated a sense of permanence and revealed substantial overlap with the wilderness beyond.

The basic commodity of the Paraguayan economy, yerba mate, was extracted from the overlap, the "contested ground" between creole society and indigenous groups. Yerba was not yet cultivated but gathered from the wild in a process that the idiom of the times related to mining. The Paraguayan state maintained a colonial-style monopoly over the export of yerba, which had an established regional market. The state claimed ownership over all yerba growing in the country and farmed out licenses (called *beneficios*) to private contractors in designated areas. Major yerba groves surrounded the interior town of Villa Rica as well as the old Jesuit mission communities, which were the traditional sources for the trade. The biggest traders now sought to extract from the even richer forests of the northern reaches, the

²¹For the typical rustic character of Paraguayan settlements and houses in the countryside, see Kleinpenning, *Paraguay 1515-1870: A Thematic Geography of Its Development* vol. 1 (Madrid: Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2003), 495-99, 974; Acevedo, *La intendencia del Paraguay*, 221. Foreign travelers visiting the territory during the nineteenth century noted this character of Paraguayan rural life in their writings. See, for example, Charles Blachford Mansfield, *Paraguay, Brazil, and the Plate: Letters Written in 1852-1853* (Cambridge: MacMillan and Co., 1856). Indeed even the capital Asunción retained a strong rustic feel with dusty streets and livestock grazing between houses. Terry Rugeley notes a similar proximity of the *monte* in the physical and cultural lives of nineteenth-century Maya peasants in the Yucatan, see *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, ch. 1.

hillsides surrounding San Pedro and Concepción. These traders commanded labor forces of dozens, or even hundreds, of workers. The work of extraction was arduous, taking workers away from their homes for months at a time. They spent most of such time in wilderness encampments “mining” the yerba—collecting, drying, and packing it for transport downriver—in areas still inhabited and frequented by un-pacified forest peoples. Attacks were frequent. Yet so were other types of engagement with indigenous clans, including plenty of barter and even parties. The yerba fields, then, were headwaters of cascading frontier interactions.²²

Violence was a constant feature of these interactions, however. As agents of state enterprise, local military commanders launched regular armed expeditions into the forests to explore for new yerba sources, often only to turn back at the threat of ambush by hostile indigenous groups. And such ambushes regularly visited disruption and death upon established encampments. Laboring peons were wounded by arrows, and encampments lost supplies and yerba.²³ Military commanders, overseers, and *beneficiadores* kept an ear to the ground. One sure sign of impending attack was the desertion of peons possessing advance notice of it. The authorities constantly reissued standing decrees that ordered their laborers to fight to the death and never desert, under the penalty of execution. The recurring

²²Whigham provides the fullest discussion and analysis of the yerba trade from the late colonial period to the state monopoly of the López regimes, detailing methods of extraction and export, see *Politics of River Trade*, 110-30. Kleinpenning also provides an overview of the profitable state yerba monopoly under the López regimes, *Paraguay 1515-1870: A Thematic Geography*, vol. 1, 874-76. For a primary account of the extraction and refining process in the yerba encampments, see Thomas J. Page, *La Plata, the Argentine Confederation, and Paraguay* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859). Susnik also describes the labor in the yerba fields during the late eighteenth-century, *Una vision socio-antropológica del Paraguay del siglo XVIII*, 78-80. Langer emphasizes the multiplicity of frontier interactions, including the dependence of creole settlements on free indigenous labor, “The Eastern Andean Frontier.”

²³Informe de Juan Francisco Villasboa a Carlos Antonio López, 5 July 1852, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n. 1 II, foja 765-66; Informe de Cornelio Zarate a Carlos Antonio López, 23 February 1853, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n. 1 II, foja 734-35; Informe de Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 4 July 1863, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1297-99.

pronouncements were nonetheless indication of frequently unenforceable demands, as workers still fled to save their skins.²⁴ Attacks were small scale and fleeting enough to destroy entire encampments only rarely. Yet they communicated the intention of free indigenous groups to exert some dominion over the forests of yerba exploitation. Such groups were known to make direct demands to overseers and beneficiadores for “protection” payments of refined yerba. Many bosses probably paid it, although quietly, to ensure a peaceful operation.²⁵

Free indigenous people did as much conversing and commiserating with yerba harvesters as fighting with them. Indigenous decisions about how to engage the creole presence in their midst were pragmatic and ad hoc. When hostilities seemed imminent, they might make an about-face and approach officials in the yerba encampments with entreaties of peace, crosses in hand. They often preferred to deal directly with yerba bosses in the forest encampments, to work out tacit agreements, bartering goods and labor. They also approached the yerba workers, making friendships, perhaps with encouragements to defect or advanced notice of coming attacks.²⁶ Workers, overseers, and even bosses shared many customs with free indigenous clans, especially with the more creolized *indios monteses* who had maintained

²⁴Informe de Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, 13 September 1860, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH Vol. 368, n. 1 (II), foja 1120-21; Circular del comandante Eugenio López a los pueblos de la jurisdicción de Concepción, 30 July 1860, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1182-83.

²⁵See the incident described in the Informe de Francisco Pereyra a Carlos Antonio López, 30 June 1858, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 709, whereby the overseer refused to pay a “tax” demanded by a free indigenous band. Susnik describes the regular bellicosity of *indios monteses* to exert control of yerba fields throughout the colonial period, *Los aborígenes*, 183-84.

²⁶Informe de Francisco Isidrio Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, 18 August 1860, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n. 1 II, foja 1112; Informe de Eugenio López a Carlos Antonio López, 3 October 1859, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n. 1, foja 1098; Informe de Jose Caramelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, 18 August 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 542-43; Informe de Eugenio López a Carlos Antonio López, 19 July 1860, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n. 1 II, foja 1106-07.

interaction with Paraguayan society for centuries. They all spoke the lingua franca, creolized Guaraní, and partook in gatherings sipping yerba mate from a gourd. Consider how this common social terrain of the yerba fields facilitated movements between groups and societies—when a peon with a Guaraní surname, Torribio Porandorí, abandoned his encampment near Concepción for the refuge of indigenous acquaintances nearby, or when an indio montés hispanically named Saturnino Gacete accepted work as overseer of a creole work detail near Villa Rica. The physical and cultural distance to cross was often short in the forests of yerba exploitation.²⁷

The forests themselves were sources of labor for yerba exploiters and bosses. They had long relied on free indigenous clans to meet demand for workers. A usual tactic was to negotiate with individual chieftains who had begun small trade and barter with Paraguayan settlers and contract them to work and perhaps bring the labor of dependents for periods, however short. If influential enough, the chieftans could also secure relative tranquility and gather intelligence about potential attacks from other groups. So contracting their labor served to cultivate, and in some respects domesticate, necessary indigenous allies. During the early 1860s, a leader named Utá, along with chieftains of related groups, had sustained dealings with local authorities and helped to provide willing peons and somewhat peaceful conditions for the yerbales around Concepción and San Pedro. Utá himself went to work with a companion in the fields of the yerba firm of Antonio María Villa for a time. Others of his

²⁷For Guaraní as the lingua franca of the yerbales, see Informe de Jose Caramelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, 29 September 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 553-554. For the crossover of Porandorí and Gacete, see Informe de Eugenio López a Carlos Antonio López, 19 July 1860, Correspondencia de Concepción and Informe de Jose Caramelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, 15 September 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 551-52; Informe de Francisco Pereyra a Carlos Antonio López, 30 June 1858, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, respectively.

people also regularly contracted their labor as domestic peons with residents near settled villages and hamlets—to the delight of the military commandant in Concepción.²⁸

Frontier concerns readily extended to the central plazas of established pueblos, and all the way to the house of government in the capital Asunción. In Salvador, local officials were frequently occupied with frontier interactions, precisely positioned as the northern village was on the overlap of tenuous creole settlement and intruding wilds. Yet retinues of indigenous clans also walked the streets of more prominent districts of commerce and production—Concepción, San Pedro, Villa Rica, and Pilar in the south. They came for regular trade with townsfolk, arriving in river ports by canoe, or, more furtively, they sought supplies from generous inhabitants living on the outskirts of towns. Having a peon from the forests to help tend to animals, fields, and home was a common, if temporary, arrangement for townspeople.²⁹ Indigenous emissaries also arrived with diplomatic commissions, received with appropriate pomp by military commanders and town officials, to negotiate potential terms of cooperation. At times they received audience with the president of the republic himself, who was always attentive to interactions with free indigenous peoples as reported by subordinate officials in the interior, because so much state wealth depended on the frontier.³⁰

Commerce with clans of the forests was also important at the local level. Residents in Salvador conducted a regular arms and livestock exchange with particular groups. In

²⁸Informe de Francisco Isidro Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 18 July 1863, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH Vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1300-02; Informe de Francisco Isidro Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, 27 March 1861, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1235-36.

²⁹Informe de Pantaleon Balmaceda a Carlos Antonio López, 13 September 1854, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1, foja 1818-19; Informe de Jose Caramelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, 5 September 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 547-48; Informe de Jose Caramelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, 10 September 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 549-50.

³⁰Informe de Francisco Isidro Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 18 July 1863, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH.

Concepción, a similar trade in animals developed during the late 1850s with “savages of the Chaco” from across the Paraguay River. These groups also hawked forest products, typically cotton textiles, animal skins, feathers, palm beddings and fans, and especially beeswax for making candles, when they visited the river port of Concepción for days at time.

Townpeople paid them with the scant surplus they might have stored for sale or barter—such as an extra calf or tobacco grown alongside their manioc and maize.³¹ The trade provided residents goods not as easily, or as cheaply, acquired from other sources further away. In Villa Rica during the early 1850s, the military commandant even directed the exchange of steel, purchased from local smiths, for tools—machetes, axes, and knives—with a nearby montés clan, the Ca’iguá. The group apparently manufactured the tools and bartered them for more steel and other materials.³²

Local officials insisted on the advantages of such general commerce in their correspondence with Asunción, often downplaying any potential threat. Military commandants in Concepción frequently related their peaceful engagements with area groups, securing trade and labor. A commandant in Salvador, Venancio Candia, detailed one particular encounter from August 1853. Having ordered a small commission of residents to travel by canoe some leagues upriver to check on the condition of a thousand cut palm branches stored at a state outpost, they returned with news of meeting ten Indians, “all known acquaintances of the individual residents,” who were hunting deer and other animals. The indigenous invited them to join the hunt. Unsurprised by the nonchalance of the meeting,

³¹Informe de Francisco Isidro Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 1 July 1863, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1291-95; Informe del oficial militar de Concepción a Carlos Antonio López, 15 October 1853, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH.

³²Informe de Salvador Figueredo a Carlos Antonio López, 9 February 1852, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 619; Informe de Figueredo, 30 June 1852, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 632-33; Informe de Figueredo, 30 December 1852; ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 646.

Candia nonetheless sent soldiers to investigate. The soldiers confirmed that the Indians were familiar and friendly and subsequently helped them to re-cross the river in their canoe of samuhú. In his report to the president about the incident, Candia wrote that the group “was something useful to the village, exchanging horses for services done, fulfilling needs of the state and those of residents.”³³

The free indigenous groups omnipresent in the Paraguayan countryside were testaments of resistance to the long process of conquest but not specimens of an ancient past. Their societies had evolved alongside the European presence and were, in part, the social and cultural products of colonialism. This was especially the case with the indios monteses, the descendants of typically Guaraní-speaking peoples living east of the Paraguay River who had fled or abandoned the settled life of *reducciones* established by Spanish missionaries to subjugate them. Groups of other linguistic stocks in eastern Paraguay, such as the Aché, had also proved resistant in this way. Even so, the impact of European infiltration likely had accelerated the already dynamic, fluid patterns of social organization, cultural identity, and linguistic practice among all these peoples. Initially, the horrors of imported pestilence had perhaps contributed the most to this acceleration. Pre-Colombian regional networks among different semi-nomadic peoples had melted away as whole groups disintegrated, succumbing to disease. Survivors in the forests re-organized, perhaps into smaller, tighter kinship clans. They nonetheless checked European colonial settlement and, in the mid-nineteenth century,

³³Informe de Eugenio López a Carlos Antonio López, 28 September 1859, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n. 1, foja 1097; Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 10 August 1853, Correspondencia de Salvador, vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 508-11.

still retained dominion over significant expanses of the territory formally claimed by post-colonial states.³⁴

Free indigenous people did not use their territory to avoid interaction with creole settlers, however. They captured fugitive criminals, deserters, and escaped slaves there and ransomed their captives for a variety of material goods, ponchos and shirts being common articles of exchange. European-style clothing, besides being useful, had prestige value for indigenous leaders. Machetes, axes, mirrors, and crafted lumber were also in demand, providing reason to capture deserters and cooperate with Paraguayan authorities against more hostile clans, because these were hardly monolithic groups.³⁵ They had enemies amongst each other, and Paraguayan authorities often fanned the flames of their animosities, just as the Indians played off the mutual mistrust of Paraguayans and Brazilians. Free clans numbered in the dozens. Even if regularly on the move, they identified with a particular place and organized around a particular cacique. The title of “cacique” for chieftains was borrowed from the Spanish (who

³⁴Susnik describes the resilient presence and influence of indios monteses on colonial Paraguayan society, see, again, *Los aborígenes*, 180-90, and *Una visión socio-antropológica del Paraguay del siglo XVIII*, 24-27, 34-35. Some montés bands reflected the heavy creolization of runaway slave societies, even adopting Spanish forms of government and settlement. Another group, the Payagua served as merchants and middlemen in the internal river trade of the territory. Langfur describes the fluidity and rapid reconfiguration of ethnic affiliation among free indigenous groups in the eastern Brazilian sertão with the European colonial presence, see *Forbidden Lands*, ch. 6, as does Radding for eastern Bolivia, *Landscapes of Power and Identity*, ch. 1. Richter describes the same for eastern North America, *Facing East from Indian Country*, ch. 1.

³⁵On the exchange of deserters for textiles and other material items, see, for example, Informe de Cornelio Zarate, 15 October 1849; Informe de Eugenio López a Carlos Antonio López, 11 February 1858, Correspondencia de Concepción; Informe de Francisco Isidro Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, 2 October 1860, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n.1, foja 1129-30. Also see Informe de José Carmelo Talavera, 9 October 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 555, for the exchange of material goods for military cooperation from monteses. Radding notes the value of textiles among indigenous bands of eastern Bolivia, “Forging Cultures of Resistance,” 166. Richter describes the influx of European material goods and their cultural value for the indigenous of eastern North America, *Facing East from Indian Country*, ch. 2.

had acquired it from indigenous people in the Caribbean), but Paraguay's indios monteses seemed to use it among themselves in the same way that they also adopted Hispanic names.³⁶

Common spheres of interaction among free indigenous groups and creole Paraguayan settlements suggested breaches of sovereignty in the very heart of terrain claimed by the Paraguayan state. The often aggressive tactics of local state officials against particular clans were reflective of this reality. During the early 1850s around Villa Rica, for example, militia officers pursued presidential orders to capture nearby caciques to force negotiations with them. The imposed terms granted release and the promise of material rewards for attacking and punishing those indigenous groups and individuals who threatened Paraguayan settlers and nearby yerba fields.³⁷ The measures nonetheless indicated how dependent state officials remained on indigenous clients to exact some control over territory. The noted practice of rewarding clans for the capture and return of fugitives also demonstrated clear limits of state control. The Paraguayan countryside featured a constant flow of illicit movement by its inhabitants. Vagrants and workers frequently roamed without valid internal passports—the necessary passes issued and signed by local state officials for anyone traveling outside their

³⁶For further example of the divided loyalties of surrounding indigenous groups, typical of borderland regions, see the incident near Concepción whereupon the Paraguayan ally Cacique Utá informed local yerba bosses of forays made into nearby forests by a frontier Brazilian force composed of "Indians and blacks," Informe de Francisco Isidro Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, 27 March 1861, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1235-36. Mark Meuwese discusses the co-dependence of colonial powers and indigenous bands for such a borderland region in northeastern Brazil during the 17th century, see "The Murder of Jacob Rabe: Contesting Dutch Colonial Authority in the Borderlands of Northeastern Brazil," *New World Orders*, 133-56. In the same volume, Radding further notes the somewhat complex hierarchy of caciques within indigenous clans, "Forging Cultures of Resistance," 165-68, 172-74. Similar structures seemed to be the case for indigenous clans in Paraguay, who often identified with particular montes or hillsides, see, for example, Informe de José Carmelo Talavera, 10 September 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica. Circumstantial evidence suggests the Hispanized term "cacique" had long been incorporated into the mainstream use of Paraguayan Guaraní in the territory, as persists today.

³⁷Informe de José Carmelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, 29 September 1850; Informe de Salvador Figueredo a Carlos Antonio López, 15 July 1851, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 594-95.

home village.³⁸ Pretensions of imposing authority ironically hinged then, in part, on cooperation from the wilderness, and as this cooperation proved inconsistent, so too did the social and political order.

Religious Realm, Patriarchal Authority

In the face of encroaching wilderness, representatives of the Paraguayan state clung to customs projecting their place in a religious realm with an established patriarchal order, such as the customs that once projected fealty to a Catholic king in Spain. Whatever the *modus vivendi*, “infidels” and “savages” still communicated a sense of the lurking social and religious disorder of unconverted peoples. With familiar colonial dichotomies of frontier life still prevalent, *ñane retã* had remained the dwelling of both *karai* and *cristianos*. Old ways of thinking were sanctioned in festivals of village life reinvigorated in the Paraguayan countryside under the López regimes. There the overlap of religious and political community, as well as the anchor of patriarchal authority, was made manifest within the *ñane retã*.

The rhythm of the liturgical calendar had long allowed for the regular celebration of religious feasts days throughout the Latin American countryside. These included major holidays of Christian rite—Christmas, Holy Week—as well as the commemorations of patron saints with both local and Atlantic-wide significance. Mass and religious processions were at the center of such events, which also featured feasts, bullfights, illuminations,

³⁸Susnik, as noted, describes the widespread transience of the Paraguayan peasantry, particularly among men who left homes for months at time often seeking work in the yerba fields. Kleinpenning also notes the high level of vagrancy in the nineteenth-century Paraguayan countryside, *Paraguay 1515-1870: A Thematic Geography*, vol. 1, 805-11. For further examples of desertions by soldiers, see Informe de Francisco Isidro Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 25 September 1863, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1306-07; Informe de Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, 28 August 1860, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n. 1, foja 1115-16. Frequent circulars were issued by military commandants seeking the capture of deserters and escaped convicts, see, for example, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1255, 56-57. See also the discussion of internal passports below.

fireworks, and, of course, dancing and drinking. The attendant crowds and orchestrated excitement contrasted with the tedious routines of rural existence. In the past, Spanish colonial practice had also called for this excitement in masses, processions, and bullfights to celebrate dates of dual religious and political importance, such as royal birthdays or the arrival of a newly appointed colonial governor or bishop.³⁹ Such patterns of theocratic tradition continued in the village festivals of independent Paraguay. And particularly for those many places straddling the frontier, they served to announce communion with the patria, the *ñane retã*, along with unambiguous separation from the wilderness beyond.

Undoubtedly the most curious official fiestas of the López state was that of December 25, Christmas Day. Upon consolidating his rule in the early 1840s, the regime of Carlos Antonio López had arranged with acumen the celebration of Paraguayan national independence to coincide with the Christmas celebration. The initial idea, in fact, was to commemorate public oaths sworn by all citizens to defend the political independence of the country, still a precarious matter at the time. Making independence day the same as Christmas was a deliberate maneuver to conflate the significance of the two.⁴⁰ Within a few short years, local

³⁹Eric Van Young, "Conclusion: The State as Vampire—Hegemonic Projects, Public Ritual, and Popular Culture in Mexico, 1600-1990," *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular Culture in Mexico* edited William Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1994), 343-74. Alejandro Cañeque, *The King's Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico* (New York: Routledge, 2004). José María Salvador, *Efímeras efemérides: Fiestas cívicas y arte efímero en la Venezuela de los siglos XVII-XIX* (Caracas: Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, 2001), 35-84. For the heavy Catholic-informed religiosity of nineteenth-century Mexican peasants, see Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, 111-142, and Paul J. Vanderwood, *The Power of God Against the Guns of the Government: Religious Upheaval in Mexico at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

⁴⁰Upon assuming power early in the 1840s, Carlos Antonio López arranged a ceremonial oath to be taken by citizens to defend the independence of Paraguay. The oath formally took place on 25 November, however he orchestrated the anniversary celebration of the oath for 25 December. The holiday came to serve as one of Paraguay's independence-day celebrations. For the importance of independence-day celebrations in nineteenth-century Spanish American republics, see Rebecca Earle, "'Padres de la Patria' and the Ancestral Past: Commemorations of Independence in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34, no. 4 (November, 2002): 775-805. For the political role of village festivals in nineteenth-century

authorities in villages throughout the countryside had endorsed the conflation by organizing increasingly more elaborate Christmas fiestas that rejoiced “the anniversary of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the solemn oath of National Independence.”⁴¹

Already by the late 1840s, officials in Villa Rica were sponsoring such patriotic demonstrations with much pomp and embellishment. Typically the festivities were drawn out over two to three days, beginning on the 24th at noon with a ceremonial raising of the national flag in the central plaza. Cannon salutes and music accompanied the ceremony, and the flag pole carried impressive emblem such as, in 1848, a pyramid decorated with the national arms, triumphal arches of green palms and flowers, and a “cap of Liberty.” On the morning of the 25th that year, another ceremonial flag raising also featured the placement of the written act of the oath of national independence at the top of the pyramid. Of course, the flag raisings were only the start of merry-making each day. As indicated, bullfights were commonplace, as were games on horseback. On the eve of Christmas, musical serenades moving from house to house joined bursts of flame and sounds of fireworks. And in 1848 it was the pyramid in the central plaza that blazed with golden letters spelling “Viva la República del Paraguay! Independencia o Muerte!” The Christmas day celebrations centered on morning processions and mass with a patriotic sermon. Midday feasts with speeches and public renditions of patriotic songs followed. Then in the evenings official dances concluded the festivities, held in the main room of the militia commandant’s headquarters and typically

France, see Maurice Agulhon, *The Republic in the Village: The People of the Var from the French Revolution to the Second Republic* trans. Janet Lloyd (London: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 86-92.

⁴¹Taken from the testimony of Diego Maidana relating the circumstances of the suicide of his domestic worker, José Dolores Contrera, Causa del suicidio de José Dolores Contrera, Santiago, December 1863, ANA-NE vol. 1636.

lasting into the early morning hours of the next day. Fine decorations, the printed Act of Independence, and a portrait of the president adorned the room.⁴²

More celebrations of dual political-religious significance called for similar pomp. The saint's day of Carlos Antonio López, known in Guaraní as his *santoara*—on November 6, fiesta of San Carlos—was another such annual event which officials in Villa Rica declared “memorable for all the inhabitants of the Republic.” The *santoara* of his first-born son, Francisco Solano López, was celebrated officially, too, as he rose in importance.⁴³ Again, such celebrations reflected the Spanish royal tradition of combining religious reverence for a Catholic saint with that for governing authority. The occasional national congresses that formally elected the president to power were also reasons for fiestas and mass in even remote villages. One sanctioned election by a national congress in 1854, for example, prompted local officials in prominent districts of the countryside to orchestrate such events, with resident priests saying celebratory mass for the “the Republic and the supreme government that presides over it, as well as for the happy conclusion and sage deliberation of the Sovereign Congress.”⁴⁴ These acts had begun to incorporate modern rites of elections and congresses into the long-entrenched, religious-based rituals of rule.

⁴² Informe de Miguel Jose Rojas a Carlos Antonio López, 31 December 1848, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n.1, foja 483-85; Informe de José Carmelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, 30 December 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 566-67; Informe de Salvador Figueredo a Carlos Antonio López, 27 December 1851, ANA-SH vol. 404, n.1, foja 615-18.

⁴³ Informe de José Carmelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, 9 November 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 557-58. For other reports of November 6 and December 25 celebrations, see Informe de Justo Godoy, Arroyos, 31 dDecember 1854, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 39-40; Informe de Nicolás Gaucete, Itapé, 30 December 1854, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 52; Informe de José Ramon Bogado, November 1850, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1, foja 1677; Informe de Pantaleon Balmaceda, 28 December 1853, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n.1, foja 1809-10. For early celebrations of 24 July, see Informe de Hermógenes Cabral, 25 July 1855, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1, foja 1839.

⁴⁴ Informe de Francisco Pereyra a Carlos Antonio López, 29 March 1854, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 673.

As in colonial times, rituals of rule were a primary means of political communication with the populace at large, signaling inclusion in a religious realm, and accordingly subordination to a sovereign, to even the casual inhabitant looking for a little excitement and a good time. Congregating people into village plazas for flag raisings and mass served to further define the order of the political community being acclaimed. In the afternoon bullfights and contests on horseback set in makeshift rings and bleachers nearby, clowns dressed as Guaikurú Indians often entertained the crowds, telling jokes, doing tricks, and sharpening ideas of belonging by contrast with the savage Other.⁴⁵ This was not the same kingdom proclaimed by their Spanish forbears, but traditional appeals to God and sovereign still grounded such displays in age-old claims. Thus the commandant of Villa Rica made the public declaration on Christmas of 1851: “Beloved fellow citizens, we beg of Divine Providence to concede a long life for our Señor and president, and to conserve without harm our Republic and national Independence.” The prayers articulated the pueblo’s sentiments, he added, as “faithful republicans and loyal vassals” of the president himself.⁴⁶

The expression “faithful republicans and loyal vassals” captured the tension, left conspicuously unresolved, of traditional practices and language consecrating modern political forms. Crucial to the formulation were respects once paid to Spanish monarchs now expected to be offered to the elected president of a republic. The English traveler Charles Mansfield observed a group of Paraguayans carrying the portrait of Carlos Antonio López in

⁴⁵For the presence of clowns dressed as Guaicurú Indians in the civic-religious village fiestas, see Informe Miguel José Rojas, 31 December 1848, *ibid*; Informe de Vicente Duarte a Francisco Solano López, 14 October 1863, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 II, foja 1967-68.

⁴⁶Informe de Salvador Figueredo a Carlos Antonio López, 27 December 1851, Correspondencia de Villa Rica.

a procession through the streets of Asunción, just as once done for Spanish kings.⁴⁷ He later mocked the irony that Paraguay “calls itself a Republic, but is a society governed by the despotic will of one very fat old man.”⁴⁸ If anything, however, the irony suggested how patriarchal bonds, reflective of colonial times, remained fundamental to how Paraguayans were expected to identify with the *ñane retã*, and their separation from the wilderness beyond.

Patriarchal authority, symbolized by the president’s portrait, held sway in the countryside. This patriarchy, broadly defined, entailed the divine sanction of the rule of fathers, an ideology that for centuries was employed to order kingdoms as well as homes across the Western world. Spain had made it a fundamental ruling basis for its monarchy and empire. Rather than arbitrary rule though, the ideal Christian patriarchy implicated a reciprocal set of duties and obligations imposed on fathers and subordinates alike. Fathers commanded the obedience of wives, children, and servants. Yet they had the obligation to provide, as well—specifically food, shelter, instruction in the faith. Subordinates owed patriarchs loyalty and service, while they could demand a mutual share of love and fidelity in return. Crucially, for wives and daughters, the loyalty owed the patriarch turned on their sexual fidelity and chastity, respectively. The mutual fulfillment of such duties and obligations bolstered claims of public honor and provided the model relationship between rulers and subjects. God allegedly sanctioned monarchs as the fathers and religious

⁴⁷Mansfield, *Paraguay*, 396. For other reports of adorned presidential portraits see “Noticias generales: Concepción,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 24 October 1863; “Correspondencia del interior,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 6 August 1864; “Correspondencia del interior: Pilar” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 30 July 1864. Salvador notes the colonial practice of carrying royal portraits through city streets during civic celebrations in Venezuela. See Salvador, *Efímeras efemérides* 88-91.

⁴⁸Mansfield, *Paraguay*, 389.

caretakers of their kingdoms. Their subjects were to be their pious children and servants. Households could become morality plays for the maintenance of political and social order.⁴⁹

The affective bonds according political legitimacy in Spanish America still rested on patriarchal foundations well after independence, and the postcolonial López regime in Paraguay had taken measures to reinforce them. Civic-religious celebrations mandated in the countryside cultivated for the president the role of the patron and caretaker of the republic. His “faithful republicans and loyal vassals” prayed for him. The reverent Guaraní title *ñande ruvicha guasu*, “our supreme senor,” once reserved for distant kings, was now used for the president. It is important to appreciate how far down the social hierarchy patriarchal attachments with the ruler were forming. The free black Claudio Guerreros used the term *ñande ruvicha guasu* (if perhaps sarcastically) when spreading his seditious rumor about Carlos Antonio López. In October 1851, the commandant of Salvador, Venancio Candia, reported a similar expression with the arrest of an escaped mulatto slave José Matias Obando who had wandered into town shirtless and without a required passport. After some questioning, Obando admitted that he had abandoned his master in Lambaré (near Asunción) upon receiving a sharp verbal rebuke from him for apparently stealing some corn. Obando then asserted to Candia that he knew president López “never mistreated anyone like that not

⁴⁹On the ideological basis of Spanish monarchical rule in the New World, see Colin MacLachlan, *Spain's Empire in the New World: The Role of Ideas in Institutional and Social Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). The multiple, overlapping patterns of patriarchy in colonial Latin American societies and subsequently in postcolonial Latin American states persists as crucial focus of study for understanding the intersections between social experience and political authority, particularly as they concern gender. See, for example, Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); Steve Stern, *The Secret History of Gender: Men, Women, and Power in Late Colonial Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Chambers, *From Subjects to Citizens*; Jeffery M. Shumway, *The Case of Ugly Suitor: And Other Histories of Love, Gender, and Nation in Buenos Aires, 1776-1870* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005). Heidi Tinsman provides an excellent overview of this literature in “A Paradigm of Our Own: Joan Scott in Latin American History,” *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 4 (December 2008), 1357-74. We explore these themes in more detail in Chapter 3.

even his own slaves over a matter so inconsequential.”⁵⁰ As a slave, he had appealed to the ideal of a master-patriarch, whom he called his “Supreme Señor,” to protest mistreatment by his own master and justify his escape.

The exercise of patriarchal state power extended beyond official rituals to the daily administration of justice and labor. As chief executive of the government, Carlos Antonio López reserved supreme judicial authority to himself. He reviewed and issued final rulings on all criminal cases reaching the high court, judicial pronouncements being a daily task of his. López clearly acted on colonial precedent here. In the fashion of a viceroy or other Spanish governor, López understood the imposition of justice as essential to his role as governing patriarch. López also named local magistrates and militia and army commanders as representatives of his encompassing authority in the countryside. With a corresponding network of militia sergeants and *celadores*, these officials policed their villages and administered local judicial cases, both criminal and civil. They were also charged, as part of the imposition of paternal justice from above, with the enforcement of “public morality”. They were to persecute intruders, vagrants, and thieves as well as eliminate from their jurisdictions scandalous affairs of unmarried couples living together and other “bad pastimes of the sexes.” The enforcement of this morality, however, ran up against social reality, because extramarital unions were ubiquitous.⁵¹

⁵⁰Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 30 October 1851, Correspondencia de Salvador.

⁵¹For specific reports revealing the inconsistent enforcement of this morality and its confrontation with conventional social mores, see Informe del juez Francisco Antonio Doldan, 30 March 1856, Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 320, n. 22; Informe de juez Celidonio Hermosa, 30 June 1854, Curupaty, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 103. Barbara Potthast highlights this tension and documents the high incidence of illegitimate births and extramarital unions for nineteenth-century Paraguay, see *‘Paraíso de Mahoma’ o ‘País de las mujeres’? El rol de la familia en la sociedad paraguaya del siglo XIX* (Asunción: Instituto Cultural Paraguayo-Alemán, 1996), 167-79.

The state concerned itself with everyday domestic matters, and not only sexual ones. The president and his representatives in the countryside controlled the working lives of large segments of the population. Soldiers were put to work on state ranches and public construction projects. Civilian laborers, too, were subject to periodic drafts for public works, often termed “patriotic service.” Large numbers of peons and state-owned slaves worked on government ranches, and laborers in private-contracted yerba fields were regulated by presidential decrees.⁵² Local officials enforced the decrees, policing work gangs and pursuing deserters.⁵³ For the Paraguayan state also clung to the colonial fantasy of restraining the movements of inhabitants with internal passports. A woman selling fruits and meat in the market of a neighboring town needed a pass, as did a merchant traveling with workers on a wagon train or a peon intending to labor for several months in the yerba fields. The passports cost money for paper and official stamps, so the incentive to avoid them was strong. Local officials were prone to look the other way if the papers of their own workers or those of influential friends were not all in order.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, enforcement, however selective,

⁵²Milda Rivarola describes the wide-range of coercive labor commanded by the state, including the bulk of enslaved people of African descent in the country who typically worked government *estancias*, *Vagos, pobres, y soldados: La domesticación estatal del trabajo en el Paraguay del Siglo XIX* (Asunción: Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociológicos, 1994), 87-100. Williams describes the slave labor on state-owned *estancias* in greater detail, “Black Labor and State Ranches: The Tabapy experience in Paraguay,” *The Journal of Negro History*, 56, no. 4 (1977): 378-89. For an inquiry regarding the breadth of labor and resources that could be commandeered by local officials, see Informe del comandante de Hiati a Carlos Antonio López, 7 June 1852, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 627-28.

⁵³Local officials helped police the labor forces of private yerba *beneficios*, see, for example, Informe de Francisco Isidro Resquin, 2 October 1860, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 368, n. 1 II, foja 1129-30; Circular de juez, 23 August 1860, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n.1, foja 1184; Nota del Comandante Hermenegildo Quiñonez al comandante de Concepcion, 5 June 1857, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1, foja 149.

⁵⁴See examples of internal passports in ANA-SH vol. 328 (microfilm, University of Texas at Austin). A local crackdown in 1860-61 on yerba workers with expired or no passports in the district of Concepción suggests the high incidence of informal labor arrangements among the yerba contractors there, see Informe de Francisco Isidro Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, 1 January 1861, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1218. A cottage industry of counterfeit passports seemed to emerge in response, as cases of people caught carrying false passports were common, see, for example, Consulta judicial del juez de Jesús, 1850,

corresponded to a paternal regime looking to control the movement of people, and thus their labor, in a sparsely populated environment.

Moreover, this paternal regime also commanded the forced labor of convicts. Time served in the country's principal jail in Asunción meant time served working, clearing roads and cleaning plazas, often with shackles on one's feet. Judicial sentences from López frequently condemned prisoners to years toiling away in the state's iron foundry in Ybycui, which functioned primarily with convict labor.⁵⁵ On the village level, appointed judges and militia officers confined small offenders to local public works for months at a time or, most likely, assigned them to nearby beneficiaries. The latter practice made local officials suppliers of unpaid domestic service. Cattle rustlers and horse thieves, for example, were sentenced to serve as peons after a whipping. Vagrants, knife-fighters, brawlers, and "immoral" women, if rounded up, were also sent to labor for local "patrons." Any woman arrested for a crime was placed with patrons, rather than sent to jail, while her case was decided. Orphans too were handed to caretakers who sought to exploit their labor.⁵⁶ Justices and militia commanders spun webs of patronage in that manner, benefiting family, friends,

ANA-SH vol. 295, n. 10; Proceso contra el pardo esclavo Manuel de Jesús por fuga, vagancia y flasificación de pasaportes, 1853, ANA-SCJ vol. 1566, n. 4, foja 54-77.

⁵⁵Whigham, "The Iron Works of Ybycui: Paraguayan Industrial Development in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *The Americas*, 35, n. 2 (October 1978): 201-18.

⁵⁶Informe de juez Francisco Amarilla, 31 March 1856, Ita, ANA-SH vol. 320, n. 21, fojas 1-2, 6-8; Informe de juez Miguel Argaña, 30 December 1854, Limpio, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 2-3; Informe de juez Juan de Rosa Mendoza, 31 December 1854, Altos, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 12; Informe de juez Pastor Ramirez, 31 December 1854, Caazapa, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 44-45; Informe de juez Braulio Gímenez, 30 June 1854, Itacurubi, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 139; Informe de juez Luciano Baez, 30 December 1854, Itagua, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 185; Informe de juez Juan de Rosa Mendoza, 30 June 1854, Altos, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 248.

neighbors, and village notables with work assignments of months or even years—a critical medium of local political power, as we shall see.⁵⁷

All this was reminiscent of colonial arrangements. Slaves labored for the Paraguayan state, and encomienda-like arrangements persisted for people labeled as “Indians.”⁵⁸ Blacks and Indians still owed their labor to masters, theoretically, in return for paternal protection and instruction in the faith. In fact, these premises continued to inform the labor arrangements of a substantial underclass of dependent workers throughout the Paraguayan countryside. While some were slaves, most were ostensibly free individuals, known interchangeably in Spanish as *peones*, *conchavados*, *agregados*, *sirvientes*, *criados*. These dependent workers were a common feature among Paraguayan households, on sizeable estates and large yerba camps, but also on small farms and in modest homes, frequently toiling alongside both slave companions and their patrons. They often contracted their labor out to patrons independently. Sometimes wage payments were part of the deal, other times no. In any case, patrons assumed paternal authority over all dependent laborers, and state sanction of this authority was always close at hand.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Nota de Baltazar Bogado al comandante de Concepción, 26 January 1862, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n.1, foja 614-15; Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 3 June 1851, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH.

⁵⁸Accordingly, nineteenth-century Paraguay was a society with slaves (rather than a slave society) whereby the practice functioned within a spectrum of dependent labor. Slaves often worked and lived alongside owners and other dependent laborers. They had opportunities to procure wealth, as well as often providing for their own sustenance. For the most sophisticated treatment on the topic, see Telesca, “Afrodescendientes: esclavos y libres,” *Historia del Paraguay*, 337-55. Other works on Paraguayan slavery include Ana María Arguello, *El rol de los esclavos negros en el Paraguay* (Asunción: Centro Editorial Paraguayo S. R. L., 1999) and Alfredo Boccia, *Esclavitud en el Paraguay: Vida cotidiana del esclavo en las Indias Meridionales* (Asunción: Servilibro, 2004). On the long-lasting institution of encomienda in Paraguay, surviving de jure until the 18th century, see Saeger, “Survival and Abolition: The Eighteenth-Century Paraguayan Encomienda,” *The Americas* 38, no. 1 (July 1981): 59-85.

⁵⁹See here the case of Barbara Ortiz in Sumario sobre el suicidio de Barbara Ortiz, 1865, San Juan Bautista, ANA-SCJ vol. 1509, n. 6, foja 120-34. Tellingly, domestic servants and slaves were listed as part of a patron’s household in state censuses conducted by parish priests, see Williams, “Observations on the Paraguayan Census of 1846,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 52, no. 3 (1976): 424-37. Perhaps the most common Spanish

The logic of patriarchal servitude was integral to everyday life and language. The single Guaraní expression *tembiguái*, in fact, encompassed the contracted field hand, the bonded house servant, and the purchased slave. All were potentially *tembiguái* of masters who understood themselves in the role of benevolent paternal figures, fulfilling patriarchal obligations for their servants and workers.⁶⁰ And they did their best to impose this logic of servitude on all those who served them, though they were not always successful. In 1853, near the town of Piraju, Petrona Zelada recalled the chilling words of her slave Plácida after the discovery of Plácida's corpse hanging by the neck from a tree alongside a riverbed after she wandered into the woods alone with a length of rope. Witness testified that Zelada and her husband had treated Plácida well, "keeping her well dressed and loving her like a daughter," in proper patriarchal form. Therefore, Zelada expressed puzzlement at Plácida's supposedly insolent response to reprimands, which usually involved a beating. Once Zelada had slapped her slave twice across the face for some perceived slight, only to hear her retort: "For me it's nothing to lose my soul, since you would also lose your money." Plácida had followed through, a few days later, with what was essentially a threat of suicide.⁶¹

Still, the discourse of patriarchy was not without its influence. Petrona Zelada perhaps sincerely believed that she loved Plácida like a daughter, particularly while she slapped her around, "correcting" her. Similarly, Fortunato Medina in 1849 stressed his affection as adoptive father for the young teenage pardo, José del Rosario. In his villa of Carapegua,

term to describe such labor arrangements, *conchavarse*--meaning literally "to make a pact or arrangement"--nonetheless carried the crucial connotation of agreeing to subordinate oneself to the charge of a patron. A derogatory connotation of the term persists today, with Guaraní equivalents—*ojejokuai*, *ojemombiguai*.

⁶⁰For the spectrum of meanings of *tembiguái*, see Montoya, *Diccionario* 767. For a contemporary depiction of its everyday use to refer to a domestic servant, see "Una visita," *Cabichuí*, (Paso Pucú) 4 July 1867, (cited in the introduction).

⁶¹Sumario sobre el suicidio de la esclava Plácida, 1853, Piraju, ANA-SCJ vol. 1807, n. 2, foja 1-13.

Medina apparently had raised the orphaned José from an early age. Medina and his wife had no sons of their own, so much of the household labor fell on José. Thus, Medina was distraught and outraged when the local judge removed and placed José with another prominent resident (and perhaps friend of the justice) “to govern him as a patron.” Medina had invited the trouble, however, reporting to the official that José had stolen eleven reales from him to bet on a card game. Medina wanted the judge, as “common father,” to arrest the boy, administer the flogging that Medina was not prepared to do himself, and recover the lost money. The justice meted out twenty-five sharp lashes on José’s back in the town plaza, but also gathered reports that Medina and his wife had previously encouraged José’s gambling, advancing him money and sharing in the winnings, even hosting some card games. He also determined that Medina’s “domestic” seemed to be completely ignorant of the “rudiments of the Christian religion” and therefore placed José under the charge of a new patron for three months “to subjugate him to work and teach him the mysteries and principals of religion.” Evidently, the justice, as well as other townsfolk, regarded the relationship of Medina and José as just that of a patron and his black domestic worker, a bond to be invalidated by the failure to fulfill patriarchal duty and provide proper instruction in the faith. Meanwhile Medina petitioned to recover custody of a “son” for whom his family allegedly professed “great affection.” For his part, José had perhaps felt just like a slave. He eventually returned to the “protection” of Medina on condition that he be paid two pesos monthly.⁶²

However great their affection, patrons saw beatings as a fundamental social prerogative to control subordinate charges. One man even defended his allegedly “moderate punishment” of his dependent as exercising the same authority “that state overseers have over peons of

⁶²Recurso de Fortunato Medina por recuperar su hijo adoptivo castigado por el juez comisionado de Carapegua, 1849, Carapegua, ANA-SCJ vol. 1749, n. 23, foja 182-89.

their charge.”⁶³ Whipping was a standard form of punishment for criminals, as well as domestic subordinates—wives, children, servants. The López regime granted this entitlement to state officials in the countryside, who, as noted, made regular and often enthusiastic, use of floggings. Overseers on state ranches frequently took a whip to castigate peons and slaves for perceived infringements, as did the bosses of work gangs in the yerba encampments of both government and private venture. Horse thieves, cattle rustlers, drunken brawlers, and other perpetrators faced similar punishment from militia commandants and local judges throughout the countryside, if caught.⁶⁴ In 1849 reports emerged from the old Indian pueblo of Belén saying that the local commandant threatened floggings force women to spin cotton for his business.⁶⁵

Flogging was used to redeem wayward dependents and bring them back to the fold. Let us consider again the case of the free black deserter “Juandé,” turned over with his companion and child to Paraguayan authorities in 1850 after years spent living with a free indigenous group near Villa Rica. Juandé subsequently took one hundred lashes on his back bound to a post in the central plaza of Villa Rica, while his indigenous wife suffered fifty on her legs. The child taken away to be subjugated to labor under the charge of a local patron.⁶⁶ The president himself had ordered the punishments to reassert, in a sense, the social order

⁶³Queja de Pedro Lizardo Orue contra el comandante de Villa Franca, 1853, Villa Franca, ANA-SCJ vol. 1749, n. 21, foja 158-71.

⁶⁴For examples of local state officials punishing delinquents with floggings, see Informe de José de Carmen Urbieto, 31 December 1854, Ypane, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 23; Informe de Justo Godoy, 31 December 1854, Arroyos, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 39-40; Informe de José de la Cruz Amarilla, 30 June 1854, Atyra, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 150; Informe de José de la Cruz Céspedes, 30 December 1854, Laureles, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 223; Informe de Juan Pablo Gorostiaga, 30 June 1854, Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 260.

⁶⁵Queja contra el gefe de urbanos de Belen José Antonio Rojas, 1849, ANA-SCJ vol. 1749, n. 3, foja 12-17.

⁶⁶Informe del oficial Jose Carmelo Talavera a Carlos Antonio López, 5 September 1850, Correspondencia de Villa Rica.

and dominion of the patria over those who dared to seek sanctuary in the wilderness.

Conversely, in a 1862 household dispute over the burden of labor endured by an illegitimate son near Carapegua, a mother pleaded in terror as her adult son waved a horsewhip. He desisted with the words: “I am no Guaicuru savage.”⁶⁷ For a son to whip his mother reversed the civilized order of things.

Subjugation of miscreants to the patriarchal and religious order was the state’s response to all manner of infiltrations and encroachments of its authority. When during the early 1860s officials in Concepcion engaged in negotiations with caciques of nearby forests, which included the influential Cacique Uta, the local commandant implored them to encourage their kinsmen to continue to exchange their labor for goods and perhaps eventually settle around the neighboring hamlet of Horqueta. The president, he explained, would “like it very much that [you] come and live near the population of these parts, because [you] too are soldiers of the patria and without reason have always departed into the forests.” Uta and his companions apparently responded that they were indeed “ready to serve the patria,” particularly in guarding against Brazilian-led infiltrations and seizing deserters, and that they also “would tell their people to come make agreements with patrons in the settlements of this Villa.”⁶⁸ Having the indigenous work as peons and domestics was to invite them to further incorporate into the fold of the patria and enjoy “the benefits and laudable acts that the Supreme Government offers its subjects.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷Sumario sobre el suicidio de Felipe Gómez, 1862, Carapegua, ANA-SCJ vol. 1794, n. 1, foja 1-17.

⁶⁸Informe de Francisco Isidro Resquin, 18 March 1863, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1277-80.

⁶⁹“Correspondencia del interior: Santa Rosa,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 30 April 1864, as cited above.

The Example of Salvador

The events of small and distant places were sites where contests over state sovereignty endured. Historians have long located the political history of nineteenth-century Paraguay exclusively in the actions of powerful despots who allegedly dominated the monolithic whole of Paraguayan society from Asunción.⁷⁰ Few have considered the limitations of their power or the internal rifts within Paraguayan society.⁷¹ Yet like colonial governors before them, autocrats like Carlos Antonio López depended on a diffuse network of subordinate officials in the towns and villages of the Paraguayan countryside to project the power of the state over a frontier society. This projection often hinged on patronage, patriarchy, and other traditional structures of power mustered by local clients on the ground. López, for his part, did cast a distant net of patriarchal authority, but he necessarily allowed local subordinates to establish their own fields of influence.⁷² And it was in the far-flung villages and on the margins of this

⁷⁰Predominant historiographical currents have cast the perspective of nineteenth-century Paraguayan society as wholly dominated by the personalities of its dictators, and have made their stock caricatures of these personalities their principal lens to explain the society. That is, in the usual depiction, the society was nothing more than an outgrowth of the dominant personality in charge. As noted in the introduction, many such depictions often have just reproduced the propaganda polemics of the time period. See, again, Whigham and Kraay, "Introduction," *I Die with My Country: Perspectives on the Paraguayan War*, 15-19. For a rich analysis of the changing historical depictions of Paraguay under Dr. Francia, see Jerry W. Cooney, "The Many Faces of El Supremo: Historians, History, and Dr. Francia," *History Compass*, 2, no. 1 (December 2005). See note 9 in the introduction for examples of the divisive historical memory of the López regimes. Both positions nonetheless reinforce the idea of the society ruled and dominated as a monolithic whole by the Lopez regimes. Even more recent scholarly treatments, however careful in their research and analytical nuance, assume the portrayal of powerful dictators imposing their will on the countryside, see Barbara Potthast, 'Paraíso de Mahoma', 75-78, and, most egregiously, Saeger, *Francisco Solano López and the Ruination of Paraguay*.

⁷¹Important works of late have begun to explore these interpretative possibilities. See, for the period of Dr. Francia, Nidia R. Areces, *Estado y frontera en el Paraguay: Concepción durante el gobierno del Dr. Francia* (Asunción: Universidad Católica, Biblioteca de Estudios Paraguayos-vol. 68, 2007). Capdevilla ponders the intriguing question of how violent repression in Paraguay, late in the Triple Alliance War, was the product of pre-war social and political divisions within the country, *Une guerre totale*, 95-105.

⁷²Alejandro Cañeque outlines the indirect and informal characteristics of colonial rule in New Spain given the lack of strong institutionalized bureaucratic structures. Extended networks of more informal patron-client ties were necessary to project political will, from viceroys to officials in the provinces on down, *The King's Living Image*, 11-45, 158-74. The same held true, on a smaller scale, in late-colonial Paraguay, with authorities in Asunción dependent on the projected authority of local militia commanders. See Susnik, *Una vision socio-*

frontier society where affective bonds with the *ñane retã*, as a republic and nation, were formed or lost. Such a place was the village of Salvador.

Salvador was the northern-most reach of Paraguayan settlement, caught in the midst of the enveloping wilderness. In Salvador, central state authority was as diffuse as the hint of burning wood in the air. It was a rough place with a lawless reputation, lying dozens of kilometers upriver from the more prominent district of Concepción.⁷³ With Brazilians to the north and free indigenous groups all around, principally the Paraguay River connected the town to the more secure settlements in and around Concepción. Salvador was the ultimate frontier town in a frontier society, occupying the long contested overlap of indigenous domains and creole presence.

Struggles for power and influence in Salvador during the early 1850s indicate that local state authority and resources were hotly contested amid a host of rivals.⁷⁴ At the time, these struggles revolved around the figure of Casimiro Uriarte—an aspiring caudillo in town who craved both official and informal power. Military command, judicial decrees, elective representation, and the control of the influential medium of writing all proved crucial to his quest for sanction from above. Other measures—gossip, a favor given, a favor withheld, a flogging—helped him to demonstrate for those in town who was really in charge, whatever

antropológica del Paraguay del siglo XVIII, 93. Dr. Francia also continued to depend on such mechanisms of rule, especially in northern frontier reaches, see Areces, *Estado y frontera*, 355-406.

⁷³On the lawless reputation of Salvador among inhabitants of Concepción, see the letter of Solano Recalde to the local militia commandment reproduced in Informe del comandante militar de Salvador, 10 March 1860, Correspondencia del Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n.1 (II), foja 610-11.

⁷⁴The conflictive character described here for local politics in Salvador during the 1850s reflects that of the province during the colonial period with frequent indigenous and creole rebellions in the countryside and intrigue in the capital, see Susnik *Los aborígenes*, 173-80, 204-8. The province was the site of two major comunero revolts during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For the latter see, Adalberto López, *The Colonial History of Paraguay: The Revolt of the Comuneros* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005) and Telesca, *Tras los expulos*, 79-96.

the claims of others.⁷⁵ A justice, an aging priest, an incontinent schoolteacher, and an indigenous chieftain all played a part in the village's miniature power struggles that showed the haze of nationhood inhaled with the urgency of more immediate local concerns. Let us observe them.

The Workings of Local Political Power

Casimiro Uriarte had invested his ambitions in Salvador. He was originally from Concepción though, the northern entrepôt of the lucrative yerba mate trade. Uriarte maintained a house and estancia there, and his daughter continued to live there with his slaves and servants. But wealthy Concepción was crowded with rivals to Uriarte's ambitions, men who controlled larger estancias and access to yerba fields and cultivated closer relations with the powerful López family in Asunción. Therefore, sometime before 1849, Uriarte had secured appointment from Carlos Antonio López as the commandant of Salvador. That same year, he had represented Salvador in the national congress that unanimously re-elected López as president of the republic. Loyal service and voting carried the promise of further presidential favor.⁷⁶ In the meantime, Uriarte also enjoyed the implicit concession to build his power and influence in Salvador.⁷⁷

⁷⁵For the importance of the informal and emotive basis of authority in caudillo regimes, see Chasteen, *Heroes on Horseback: A Life and Times of the Last Gaucho Caudillos* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

⁷⁶Informe de Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 9 May 1849, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 294.

⁷⁷On the resurgent importance of the northern yerba trade during the mid-1800s, after the death of Dr. Francia, see Whigham, *The Politics of River Trade*, 124-29. In one extensive communication to the president, Uriarte described incidents involving his home and ranch in Concepción as well as the growing animosity with rivals there, see Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 3 June 1851, Salvador, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n.1, foja 374-76 (cited above). This document is also analyzed in more detail below. Livestock tithe collection records from 1857 in Concepción reveal the somewhat substantial livestock holdings of Uriarte, see ANA-NE vol. 3044 (also cited below).

Salvador brought risks as well as rewards. During the early nineteenth century the gains of creole settlement in the northern reaches were precarious. The political complications of independence had brought a precipitous decline in the yerba trade, and the deteriorating economy further stunted the town's prospects. The first autocratic ruler of independent Paraguay, Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, had ordered the original settlement of Salvador under the premise of forming an added bulwark of "civilization" on the threatened northern frontier. He made it a settlement exclusively of free blacks, created on the same communal basis as colonial-era Indian pueblos. Dozens of black residents of the old Dominican cattle estancia of Tavapy moved northward with the promise of land and supplies. The free black colony of Tevego, as the village was first known, did not last, however. It dissolved several years later under the constant pressures of attacks, internal dissension, and want.⁷⁸ Upon assuming control of the Paraguayan state during the 1840s (after Francia's death), Carlos Antonio López re-founded the town as Villa del Divino Salvador, again as a frontier bulwark, though now with the promise of a resurging yerba trade in the north. Substantial numbers of free blacks returned, yet people of other caste backgrounds were allowed to live there also. In fact, López preferred to make it a destination of internal exile for convicted criminals.⁷⁹

⁷⁸John Hoyt Williams, "Tevegó on Paraguayan Frontier: A Chapter in the Black History of the Americas," *The Journal of Negro History* 56, no. 4 (October 1971): 272-83.

⁷⁹The practice of banishing criminals to labor under patrons in frontier outposts like Salvador persisted and perhaps even expanded during the López tenure, see Alfredo Viola, *Cárceles y otras penas: Época de Carlos Antonio López* (Asunción: Servilibro, 2004), 108-12. Williams also mentions the pueblo of Tevego served such a function under Dr. Francia, "Tevego on the Paraguayan Frontier," 279. The local official Venancio Candia mentioned in one correspondence residents maintaining communal land plots, presumably holdovers from the Tevego years, see Informe de Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 19 July 1851, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 384-87.

Salvador remained only secondarily tied to yerba exploitation. Laborers from the village regularly traveled south to work the yerba fields around Concepción and San Pedro, either clandestinely or with the sanction of a required internal passport.⁸⁰ Even so, Salvador had few exploited yerba fields in its environs and few, if any, yerba merchants and producers. External commerce there centered mostly on the extraction of building materials—timber, stones, palm branches, and bamboo stalks—from forests and creek beds, usually sent downriver to Concepción, the capital, or elsewhere.⁸¹ Cattle ranching was also present, given the proclivity to use cows and oxen as vanguards of the frontier.⁸² Livestock proved valuable for trade with free indigenous groups living in the nearby forests. Typically, the state managed the largest herds and ranches in the area, with animals numbering in the thousands. A growing collection of modest ranchers held smaller herds of livestock of usually 20-30 animals.⁸³

Most people in Salvador, though, survived on the subsistence of small plots, cultivating corn, manioc, sugar cane, fruits, and perhaps a little tobacco. Poor men occasionally contracted their labor to work the fields and herds of more prominent residents, if not

⁸⁰ Informe de Resquin a Carlos Antonio López, 10 October 1860, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1188-89.

⁸¹ Informe de Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 10 November 1853, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 526-27; Pasaportes de Salvador a Concepción, ANA-SH, vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 625-39; Nota de Bogado al juez de paz de Concepción, 4 July 1863, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 623-24. Whigham describes the state monopoly trade in timber, *Politics of River Trade*, 184-93, and Cooney the late colonial antecedents, see *Economía y la sociedad*, 145-70.

⁸² Areces describes the importance of cattle ranching for expanding creole control around Concepcion in *Estado y frontera*, 219-85. Erick Langer describes similar practices for the Chaco frontier, “The Eastern Andean Frontier.”

⁸³ Military commandants periodically did counts of the livestock herds controlled on state estancias, see Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 8 July 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 451-56; Informe de José Daniel Chuna, 19 August 1854, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 579-80. For typical cattle holdings of inhabitants, see livestock tithe collection records for Salvador from 1857, ANA-NE vol. 3044. The overwhelming majority of estancia holders (which numbered 39 in 1857, most likely less than 10% of the total resident population) held less than fifty total heads each.

traveling south for the seasonal yerba collections. They also had to post regular militia duty, manning dangerous pickets among forests as far north as the Río Apá. Meanwhile women tended to the household garden plots, while larger fields often fell victim to inattention, pests, and heavy rains. Labor was always in short supply.⁸⁴ As one local leader commented, besides the challenges of environment and manpower, residents lived in fear of massacres “committed by the savages.”⁸⁵

Casimiro Uriarte perceived opportunity in such poverty and danger. In Concepción, he occupied the fringes of the local economic elite. In a society where livestock holdings were a standard measurement of wealth, his riches paled in comparison to those of rivals.⁸⁶ With hundreds of cattle, however, he was a veritable giant in Salvador. Moreover, he could extend his holdings around the frontier town, which he indeed began to do. His authority as commandant also provided him access to the resources of the nearby state-owned estancia and its livestock for personal advantage.⁸⁷ In fact, his position provided for more such

⁸⁴Susnik describes the transient underclass of non-landowning peasants, by far a plurality of the population by the late eighteenth century, who survived via subsistence as tenants or squatters. She also notes the many travails of subsistence cultivation involving Indian attacks, droughts, and infestation, as well as the onerous demands of militia duty on men, see *Una visión socio-antropológica del Paraguay del siglo XVIII*, 18-20, 89-94, 111-12. Barbara Potthast highlights the fundamental contribution of women to subsistence agricultural production in the countryside, see “Entre lo invisible y lo pintoresco: Las mujeres paraguayas en la economía campesina (siglo XIX),” *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* n. 40 (2003): 203-20. Jan M. G. Kleinpenning also highlights these aspects of the rural economy, see *Paraguay 1515-1870: A Thematic Geography of Its Development* vol. 1, 972-78. Complaints from local military commandants in Salvador were frequent regarding insect plagues and the shortage of labor, indicating the lack of manpower to sustain both picket duty and agriculture expansion, see Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 10 November 1853, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH v. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 528-31; Informe de Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 19 July 1851, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n.1, foja 390; Informe de José Daniel Chuna, 5 May 1855, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 606.

⁸⁵Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 26 March 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n.1, foja 429-30.

⁸⁶See, again, livestock tithe collection records from Concepción, ANA-NE vol. 3044.

⁸⁷For an overview on the development of state estancias in independent Paraguay, see Whigham, *The Politics of River Trade*, 160-63.

informal benefits in this regard. His claim on the local administration of justice allowed for the distribution of labor and punishment in ways beneficial to him, both materially and socially. So too did his position as militia commander. Convicts could be ushered to labor on his estancia, on his mere orders. Men serving militia duty could be put to work building a larger house for, say, a prominent local friend promising loyalty. He even had the right to draft the labor of residents for “public” projects, though this had to be done carefully.⁸⁸ It was also at his discretion to administer floggings against troublemakers. This measure had punitive value for cattle rustlers, excessive gamblers and drinkers, and the like. It also had theatrical value for establishing the informal basis of local power—that is, for showing who was boss. As we have begun to see, the lash carried the weight of patriarchal domination. When sometime in 1851 the young parda woman Ramona Romero ran afoul of Uriarte’s rumored lover in Salvador, he called her into his headquarters, forced her to lie stretched across the floor, and whipped her twenty-five times in the presence of a gathered audience. He cared nothing that Romero was several months pregnant.⁸⁹ His friends, clients, and lovers were not to be harassed.

He pursued other informal measures to show that he was the boss in town. Others in Salvador could potentially undercut him, such as the local magistrate, Venancio Candia. Unlike Uriarte, Candia was a longtime resident of Salvador and ingratiated with its inhabitants. Many were blacks of some property, and Candia harbored toward them few pretensions of superiority. He too was a humble rancher, maintaining some sixty cattle, most

⁸⁸See Susnik, *Una vision socio-antropológica del Paraguay del siglo XVIII*, 93-95. For an example of a local official defending against charges that he used his command of public work drafts for his familial benefit, see Informe del gefe de policia de Santa Rosa, Vicente Ferrer Gauto, a Carlos Antonio López, 12 July 1854, Santa Rosa, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 159-61.

⁸⁹Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 25 January 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador ANA-SH vol. 409 n. 1, foja 422-24.

of which he had inherited from his wife in marriage. He shared ambitions to make gains in wealth and influence locally.⁹⁰ His position as judge afforded him these aspirations as another administrator of justice in the town. He decided judgments on minor criminal and civil cases not directly involving militia soldiers or church officials, and indeed was an authority people expected to settle disputes of both public and domestic nature. He had the police function of pursuing intruders, vagrants, and thieves, as well as enforcing “public morality.” As was typical of men of his position, he carefully selected what and whom to punish in this regard. But his authority necessarily overlapped with that of Casimiro Uriarte. There were no clear separating lines of jurisdiction.

Uriarte seemed to consider Candia a man he could dominate, whether through cajolery or aggression. During his prolonged absences from Salvador to attend to business in Concepción or elsewhere, Uriarte often left the militia command under the charge of Candia. Candia knew the responsibilities of attending to the constant potential of attack on frontier outposts, the regular traffic of reports and orders to collect and send, as well as the administration of state resources—the estancia, the cattle, the oxen, the horses, the carts and wagons. In June 1849 when Uriarte was away in Asunción serving in the congress that formally acclaimed Carlos Antonio López again as president, it fell to Candia to proclaim the reelection to the residents of Salvador. He did so with due decorum, gathering what he could of the townsfolk, reading the official announcement Spanish and explaining it in Guaraní. He then ordered the national flag to be raised to the ringing of bells and firing of volleys while the local priest, Venancio Toubé, promised to say a thanksgiving mass for the event the

⁹⁰Candia later demonstrated willingness to defend “honorable pardos” in Salvador, see Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 8 July 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 451-56 (cited above); Candia described his livestock property in one petition to the president to purchase a tract of land near Salvador, May 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-NE vol. 409, n.1, foja 437-40.

following day.⁹¹ It was an important moment of political ritual, and Candia believed that he effectively fulfilled this and other superior orders whenever Uriarte was away. Yet upon returning to Salvador, Uriarte spread rumors to corrode the credibility of Candia and imply that he, and not the judge, was still the real authority in town.⁹²

Uriarte employed similar means to contend with the village priest, Toubé, who could also claim considerable local authority. It was no secret in town that Toubé perhaps did as much drinking as preaching. He entreated parishioners to supply him with jugs of sugar-cane liquor often smuggled into town from ports downriver. Word had it that he also got drunk on the stores of communion wine when alcohol was in short supply. Toubé was from an aging generation of independence-era priests. He had spent the bulk of his career serving various rural parishes during the time of Dr. Francia—a time of neglect for the Paraguayan Church and its clergy. Aspirations were more limited then, and priests settled with what resources they could build with tithes and local influence. Distance and neglect had afforded clergy some more freedom to pursue certain vices. Drink and women were usual pursuits in this regard. The Guaraní last name of Toubé, and his likely dark skin, suggested limited potential to rise in the ecclesiastical hierarchy anyway. Though Toubé had already proved particularly troublesome when while serving as the priest of the village of Terecaný in the 1820s, he aroused public outcry and faced sanction for maintaining affairs with married women and challenging authority after bouts of drinking.⁹³

⁹¹Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 7 June 1849, Correspondencia del Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 295.

⁹²Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 11 November 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409 n.1, foja 468-474. This document is discussed in more detail below.

⁹³See Sumarios sobre los excesos practicados por Teniente Cura Venancio Toubé, 1821-25, ANA-SCJ vol. 1636, n. 1, foja 1-43. Carlos Heyn-Schupp *Iglesia y estado en el Paraguay durante el gobierno del Carlos Antonio López, 1841-1862, Estudio jurido-canónico* (Asunción: Biblioteca de estudios paraguayos, 1982),

Toubé's assignment to the parish of Salvador, after Carlos Antonio López had come to power, seemed a continuity of the neglect suffered by the village in years past. The local chapel was a meager structure and easily overflowed with people, leaving gathered parishioners exposed to heat and rain. It boasted few religious accoutrements, as the commandant headquarters supplied only the basics of candles and cloth. Moreover, the clerical residence was only a small thatched house, offering little protection from the elements, particularly the oppressive heat for seven months of the year. In his advancing age, Toubé had lost patience with such conditions. He claimed to suffer from various ailments, including urinary problems. Sometime in 1849 he approached Uriarte with the request to oblige local parishioners to build him a new residence. He knew Uriarte was one authority in town who could compel such a project, and the commandant had indicated willingness to expand the chapel. Yet Uriarte refrained from fulfilling the priest's request directly. He understood that Toubé was hardly destitute, as the cleric controlled land and livestock and employed peons to help work his fields. Uriarte instead instructed Toubé to request the construction of the house from his parishioners straight from the pulpit. The priest did so and a year later was still waiting for the building to begin. With bitter words, Toubé complained about the alleged ingratitude of people that he claimed to serve night and day. Meanwhile the lack of compelling authority of an old, hard-drinking cleric was indicated by his dilapidated house.⁹⁴

23,147. For details on Francia's domination of the Paraguayan Church and its subsequent institutional decay, see Williams, "Dictatorship and the Church: Dr. Francia in Paraguay," *Journal of Church and State* 15, no. 3 (Fall 1973): 421-36.

⁹⁴On the poor material conditions of the parish church, see Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 4 January 1849, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 277-78; Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 7 June 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n.1, foja 444-49. On priest Toubé's request for the construction of a new residence, see Solicitud de Venancio Toubé a Carlos Antonio López, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 314. On Toubé's

Still Uriarte was hesitant to discount Toubé completely. He had heard the refrains warning about the dangers of openly challenging men of the cloth, and Toubé was a man who still carried out his duties, saying regular mass, celebrating religious and political holidays.⁹⁵ Uriarte had commented that, as a “person of character,” the priest still never lacked for someone to serve him a drink, if not build him a house. Toubé was also one to launch savage verbal assaults in public, especially when enlivened with alcohol. To curry some favor, Uriarte tolerated his drinking and kept quiet from reporting it to the president in Asunción. Word nonetheless eventually got back to López, and on his orders, in April 1850, Uriarte publically reprimanded Toubé “for his scandalous and incessant drunkenness” before two witnesses in the commandant’s headquarters. He then gathered the residents of Salvador together to announce a new prohibition on cane liquor entering the village. Such displays were often for more show than effect, as even Uriarte noted the probability of alcohol contraband still getting in and reaching the curate’s lips.⁹⁶ And Toubé had faced such public humiliation before. In a country with a shortage of priests, his position was fairly secure in an otherwise distasteful post. Moreover, around Salvador at least, he had another significant advantage. He was one of few in town who mastered the power of writing.

Toubé could pen missives and appeals directly to the president and ecclesiastical officials in the capital. He did so on his own behalf, often vindictively. In June 1849, he had written President López to denounce the veteran priest of Concepción, Juan Miguel Mendoza, with

relative land and livestock holdings and employment of peons in Salvador, see Informe de Candia, 19 July 1851; Solicitud de Toubé a Carlos Antonio López, 12 August 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 458.

⁹⁵For example, see Informe de Venancio Candia, 12 February 1853, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n.1 (II), foja 486-88.

⁹⁶On Toubé’s drinking and subsequent reprimand, see Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 19 April 1850, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 312-13.

the charge that his colleague had maintained an illicit affair with a nun since the year 1816, having fathered eight children with her, and that they continued to live together under the same roof. In writing the denunciation, he claimed to “proceed not with malice” but only to look out for “the spiritual well-being of those souls,” though there was every reason to be jealous of Mendoza’s more prominent parish. Later, in May 1850, not long after his public reprimand, he wrote again complaining of his parishioners’ apathy for building his new residence and pleading that the president order its construction. Toubé got little satisfaction for his pains. The judge Candia nonetheless later referred to Toubé’s control of the written word as his “knowing how to make paper” and considered it intimidating.⁹⁷ In a social world of spoken Guaraní and limited literacy, writing knowledge of the traditional language of state, Spanish, afforded the ability not only to appeal to higher authorities, both God and sovereign, but also to fix legal truth.⁹⁸ Neither Candia nor Uriarte had the same control of this medium. They were more comfortable just speaking in Guaraní and not writing anything at all. They, in turn, depended on the services of a scribe, the local school teacher, Buenaventura Carmona, to “make” their paper.

“Making paper” was an unavoidable task for designated authorities like Candia and Uriarte. Any official judicial proceedings they conducted required the ratification of ink and paper. So did the keeping of accounts. The commandant Uriarte primarily needed it, also, for his regular communications with the president, to report incidents in the village and along the frontier and present his actions in the best of light. The president was often scathing in his

⁹⁷Denuncia de Venancio Toubé a Carlos Antonio López, 30 June 1849, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 296; Solicitud de Toubé, 8 May 1850; Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 18 November 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 II, foja 475-76.

⁹⁸Kathryn Burns, “Notaries, Truth, and Consequences,” *The American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (April 2005): 350-79.

written orders to subordinates in the countryside, calling them “barbarians” and complaining of their “criminal” carelessness.⁹⁹ Uriarte turned to the schoolteacher Carmona to write eloquent depictions of his alleged sacrifice and patriotic loyalty. In one instance, Uriarte’s written pledge to donate his own store of palm branches for the service of the state spilled into a discussion of international politics and praise for the sagacity and rule of Carlos Antonio López, all from the pen of Carmona. The writing of Carmona provided Uriarte an official voice that linked his authority to that of the president in Asunción and the fate of the nation at large.¹⁰⁰ It allowed Uriarte to maintain the delicate balance between paying respect to a distant political patron and protecting his authority on the ground in Salvador.

Matters closer to the village always remained precarious. Uriarte had the means to negotiate power over the likes of Candia and Father Toubé. Yet rivals not so far off in Concepción still were capable of frustrating his ambitions. In addition, he encountered more immediate threats in the nearby forests, just beyond the scattered homes and ranches that surrounded the central plaza of Salvador. As military commandant of Salvador, Uriarte did plenty of military commanding. “Portuguese and Indian infidels,” as he termed them, inflicted regular attacks. With command of some thirty regular soldiers, along with those residents pulled onto militia duty, he often spent days, if not weeks, in the bush charting new outposts or leading punitive expeditions. He planned ambushes against hostile indigenous groups rumored to be camping at certain locations—freely exploiting indigenous fighting

⁹⁹Carlos Antonio López a Casimiro Uriarte, 6 January 1851, Asuncion, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 356-57.

¹⁰⁰Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 19 April 1851, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 367-70.

tactics—only to encounter camps already abandoned and burned.¹⁰¹ It was creole fantasy to pretend to project much control over the untamed forests where attack and escape by free indigenous groups proved so easy, and Uriarte was one to recognize the reality of the situation. To protect and extend his authority around Salvador, he also sought liaisons with such groups in the forests. He needed Indian allies.

Commerce was one regular means to engage free indigenous groups. Over the course of 1849 Uriarte further developed trade with a group that in exchange for cattle supplied firearms and horses, items in short supply in the village. He conducted exchanges on behalf of the state in such commerce, acquiring in one instance three firearms for each head of cattle and, in another, three horses for a young calf. At the same time he also negotiated acquisitions for himself and bought guns and other supplies for his estancia. Residents, too, engaged in this trade and gathered to meet the “Indian infidels” on the outskirts of the village to work out their own deals.¹⁰² The trade met material demands while building certain tactical alliances, and Uriarte came to rely in this regard on bonds established with one indigenous chieftain, Cacique Rubio.

Rubio was the leader of a clan of perhaps dozens of kin who guarded the autonomy of the forests but nonetheless perceived advantages in regular engagement with creole society. The Spanish name by which Uriarte knew him suggested the syncretic, creolized character of his tribe. He and kinsmen were frequent visitors to Salvador, where they probably hawked goods

¹⁰¹Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 29 January 1849, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 282-84; Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 14 April 1849, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 289-91; Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 23 January 1850, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 303-04; Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 30 June 1850, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 317-18; Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 12 November 1850, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 343-47.

¹⁰²Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 14 February 1849, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 287-88.

while dealing with the commandant in his headquarters. Rubio was liberal with information about the whereabouts of other free indigenous clans in these encounters. Uriarte, in turn, used the meetings to cement loyalties and, in January 1849, advanced a request from Cacique Rubio to the president for a pair of trousers and a dress coat for the chieftain's personal use. Rubio understood the prestige to be gained from fine textiles among his people, and Uriarte sought the cultivation of a personal client. The commandant conveyed to the president his belief that Rubio was "inclined to Religion." Apparently, whenever there was mass said while he was in the Villa, Rubio attended, standing at the door of the church and imitating the movements of the congregants.¹⁰³

Ñane Retã as Republic and Nation

Amid the intrigue of local politics, which touched even the concerns of households, a sense of republic and nationhood was growing. Despite his machinations to extend and sustain his influence in Salvador, by mid-1851 Uriarte was soon to stumble. Animosity sowed with powerful rivals years earlier in Concepción were coming back to haunt him. In particular, he believed that Saturnino Bedoya and Blas Martinez were out to get him by seeking to dishonor his daughter, who still lived at his home in the main northern district. The enmity of Bedoya and Martinez was clearly disturbing, as the two were perhaps the most wealthy and influential men of Concepción. Martinez was the principal yerba exploiter and trader of the district. Bedoya too worked in the yerba trade as a merchant but, most importantly, had married into the ruling López family becoming son-in-law of the president.

¹⁰³Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 3 May 1849, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 292-93; Informe de Uriarte, 4 January 1849.

Both men owned substantial holdings of cattle and other livestock.¹⁰⁴ Bedoya, in particular, seemed to have the president's ear.

Uriarte had long considered Bedoya a do-nothing and playboy, and insults traded years before allegedly had Bedoya seeking revenge through his ally Martinez, who was to seduce Uriarte's daughter before her marriage to another man. Uriarte believed that Bedoya used his influence to keep him occupied on frontier expeditions while the seduction proceeded. An altercation between the men had Bedoya threatening to denounce his rival before the president and Uriarte turning to his scribe in Salvador, the schoolteacher Carmona, to produce a letter of protest. Uriarte knew how to employ gossip as a political weapon. The letter denounced the predations of Bedoya and Martinez and repeated rumors of Bedoya's boasts to friends that, despite being married, he continued his "scandalous life, pursuing the mulatas of the Villa." It cited the known scandal in the house of the one mulato Cosme Melgarejo and the public beating of another, Trinidad Cabañas. Repeating such gossip of Concepción worked to undermine the reputation of Bedoya while Uriarte (by means of Carmona's text) declared to the president: "I am from my earliest years a loyal, patriotic servant and lover of my patria, unlike him who makes incessant excuses not to serve." Bedoya and Martinez were "men who have not lent one service to their country," and the letter boldly advised that they be made to labor in public works or serve as troops in a frontier outpost. It finished with renewed boasts that Uriarte was the one "invested in service to my patria, defending against the savages, and moving this Pueblo [Salvador] forward,

¹⁰⁴ Again, see the 1857 livestock tithe collection records from Concepción, ANA-NE vol. 3044. Blas Martínez appears frequently in the correspondence records of Concepción as a principal yerba producer in the district, see, for example, Informe de Francisco Isidro Resquin, 10 October 1860, Correspondencia de Concepción. Bedoya later served as Hacienda Minister under Francisco Solano López and became perilously involved in internal political intrigue during the war, see General Isidoro Resquin's postwar memoir, *Datos históricos de la Guerra del Paraguay contra la Triple Alianza* (Asunción: 1875), 102.

while they were making every effort to discredit my home and remove the regime that has governed it.”¹⁰⁵ In addition to boasts of defense against wilderness infidels, Uriarte’s patriotism involved the integrity of his patriarchal domestic “regime.”

The influence of his rivals seemed to trump Uriarte’s efforts, though. In the letter, he had announced his intention to return to Concepción “to fix the disorders ” before traveling to Asunción to speak personally with Carlos Antonio López. But that same month, in June 1851, he was relieved of his post in Salvador, and, bitterly for Uriarte, the president named Venancio Candia as his replacement.¹⁰⁶

Uriarte, however, was not easily cowed. He maintained clients in Salvador as well as ranching and labor interests. For example, two men who had been convicts exiled to Salvador now worked on his estancia and served as his dependent *tembiguái*. Uriarte was interested in keeping such perks of authority, and to undermine Candia, he relied on the old priest Toubé to monitor the new commandant’s behavior. Candia now managed the lion’s share of local resources, which included over a thousand heads of state-owned cattle, five hundred oxen, and an assortment of carts and wagons, as well as the lands of the nearby state estancia, which yielded bamboo and palm branches used for building materials throughout the country. The labor of soldiers and militiamen was also at Candia’s disposal. As was customary, Candia allowed that certain estancia owners continue to use state-owned livestock and lent state-owned wagons for the transport of agricultural goods to “poor residents” who would otherwise have exchanged their labor for the service. He allowed one friend and client, the prominent free black José Barulio Franco, to employ state-owned oxen and wagons to

¹⁰⁵The preceding description of events and statements is taken from Uriarte’s letter to the president, cited above, Informe de Casimiro Uriarte a Carlos Antonio López, 3 June 1851, Correspondencia de Salvador.

¹⁰⁶Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 28 June 1851, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 381-82.

transport bamboo and palm branches to Asunción. As Candia extended his patronage, then he also connected his clients to the *ñane retã*.¹⁰⁷

He especially courted the loyalty of the schoolteacher, Buenaventura Carmona, who needed a generous patron. Carmona was poor, often had to plead for his pay as schoolteacher, and suffered increasingly from a condition of urinary incontinence. In July 1851, Candia sponsored (though Carmona penned) a petition to the president for a full set of new clothes, including poncho and sombrero, for the schoolteacher. The letter praised the efforts of Carmona to bring “education and progress” to the village’s youth despite the neglect of the ungrateful peasants who sent their ignorant boys to the school. He imparted a triumvirate of civic principles anchored in patriarchal and religious values, to wit: “obedience to parents and superiors, devotion to the Supreme Being and religion, and respect for Your Excellency and the Patria.” Carmona was the selfless champion of this virtue in Salvador, “reducing his students, with the force of severity, to a good morality and order.” He even had served as a lay official “indoctrinating parishioners during feast day celebrations” when there was no resident priest in the parish.¹⁰⁸

Carmona repaid Candia by lending his eloquence to the new commandant’s correspondence with the president. Carmona wrote Candia’s boasts that as commandant he insured that “thieves, killers, and others of grave defects” sent upriver in internal exile became “well-behaved, settled, subjugated, and devout” as soon as they set foot in Salvador. Carmona composed quasi-literary patriotic commentaries on international political developments reported by the state newspaper, whose issues arrived regularly in the mail

¹⁰⁷Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 8 July 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n.1, foja 451-56.

¹⁰⁸Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 19 July 1851, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH.

from Asunción. In one instance from January 1852, he depicted Candia's patriotic call for the enemy Argentine dictator Rosas, who refused to recognize Paraguayan independence, "to suffer the agony of a slow fire," being burnt at the stake, for "his bloody deeds, bad faith, lack of religion, and terrible impostures against our Republic, our current Supreme Government, and all Americans." Carmona described Candia announcing patriotic glad tidings in Guaraní, sounding the church bell in the plaza, ordering official celebration with a flag raising, gun salutes, and, of course, mass to be held in the parish church.¹⁰⁹ Later in September, the two men collaborated on their most ambitious appeal to the president, requesting that he concede, in the name of the "Divine Savior of the world, entitled patron of this Villa," the construction of a new parish church "fit for the adoration of such a divine master." The petition claimed the collective support of the townsfolk, who were willing to donate labor, as well as "rocks, bricks, roofing, wood, and other materials" for a construction would "accumulate doubly immense sums of glory and honor to the Patria and important services to God."¹¹⁰ All that they asked was the appointment of a master carpenter to direct the efforts. The proposal, crafted by Carmona, reflected Candia's ambition to command the labor and cooperation needed for the vast project and collect, as a kind of surcharge, a bit of the service, honor, and glory paid to God and Country.

Yet by June 1852, Father Toubé had been writing his own patriotic communications intended to undercut the authority of the new commandant. They involved "oxen of the

¹⁰⁹Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 31 July 1851, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 391; Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 5 January 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 421-22; Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 19 August 1851, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 396-98. Also informe de Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 28 June 1851, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH.

¹¹⁰Solicitud de Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 10 September 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 462-63.

Patria,” as well as state-owned wagons and oxcarts put through the excessive rigor of long travel and rough, muddy paths. Those lent to the free black José Franco, it was alleged, were returned in ruin. “The Patria needs them here,” Toubé wrote to the president and charged that their abuse “hurt the Patria when other residents [had to] offer their oxen and wagons” for the work of the local government. Toubé was apparently one who volunteered animals and oxcarts to the injured Patria.¹¹¹ Candia reacted with outrage at the accusations and defended, in his rejoinder to Asunción, the “honorable pardo residents” of Salvador, and specifically the “honorable citizen” Franco.¹¹² And Candia had further complaints. On a number of occasions, once even in Candia’s home, Father Toubé had insulted the commandant with a typical battery of “violent words.” Not content to let things stand, the priest soon produced another anti-Candia letter to the president, this time on behalf of a woman with known ties to Uriarte, and the local crisis of authority continued to brew.

Various other townspeople took sides. Ramona Romero, the young black woman whipped by Uriarte while pregnant, approached Candia in January 1852 requesting a passport to travel to Asunción to make a formal complaint against the ex-commandant. Candia granted the passport and even issued a letter to the president confirming the incident and passing along gossip of Uriarte’s alleged illicit affairs in town.¹¹³ Later that year the two convict laborers on Uriarte’s estancia made Candia aware of their irregular situation, and the

¹¹¹Informe del cura Venacio Toubé a Carlos Antonio López, 5 June 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 443; Informe de Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 10 November 1853, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH.

¹¹²Informe de Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 8 July 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH.

¹¹³Informe de Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 25 January 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH.

commandant moved to assist them as well, intimating to Uriarte that they would be removed from his service.¹¹⁴

Uriarte rose to the challenge. Arriving in town, he marched into the commandant's headquarters with an air of "supreme judge" and, in Candia's telling, presumed to "take account and charge of my entire administration." He then threatened Candia that he would go to the capital to see the president, who would supposedly welcome him warmly, saying "Don Casimiro Uriarte, from where do you come?" to which he would reply "From Salvador where I have seen nothing but immorality, injustice, and bad things going on."

Several days later, when Candia was meeting with Cacique Rubio, who had come from the forests with his entourage to conduct their usual exchanges with inhabitants of the village, Uriarte appeared again. Finding the chieftain there, Uriarte greeted his old client with affection and offered him some honey as a present. Cacique Rubio went with Uriarte to where he was staying and conversed with him for over an hour before going to Candia's residence for a meal. Candia had left, saying he had work to do, and Rubio proceeded to tell the commandant's wife about all the terrible things Uriarte had to say about her husband. These were the normal slanders—that Candia was flaccid and cowardly, that nobody like him—but also that, due to Candia's poverty, the cacique's people could expect little patronage from him. The insinuation was that Cacique Rubio and his people should "rise up" against Candia and the village.

With preparations underway to celebrate the president's *santoara*, the intimidation of Candia showed its bite on the evening of November 1. Uriarte had left town, but he sent a trusted retainer in his stead, a man who arrived on horseback, furtively, without passport and

¹¹⁴This and most of the remaining description of events and statements are taken from Candia's long letter to the president to the effect, *Informe de Candia a Carlos Antonio López*, 11 November 1852, *Correspondencia de Salvador*, ANA-SH.

with a scarf over his face: Donato. Later described as “mulatto and defiant,” Donato was Uriarte’s manservant from Concepción. In Salvador, he hid in the house of another client of Uriarte and planned an assault on Candia’s compliant scribe, Carmona. Word seemed to have spread of Carmona’s more difficult bouts with incontinence lately. That evening, as the teacher walked along his usual route from the small school house toward Candia’s residence and headquarters, Donato jumped from the shadows. He grabbed Carmona by the hair, pulled his head back, and drenched him with animal urine. Only when Donato released his hair could Carmona scream in terror and call for help. Inquiries revealed the perpetrator’s whereabouts in the house of Uriarte’s friend, and Candia sent soldiers to the house that night. Donato emerged from the house on horseback, spurned the soldiers sent to arrest him, and galloped away into the night.

Conclusions

The narrative of the events in Salvador illustrates the central contentions of this chapter. The spectacle made of the incontinent schoolteacher doused in urine invited a long, hard cackle at vulnerability exposed and brought a minor crisis of state sovereignty. It had converted a crucial medium of authority—the writing hand and official voice of the local commandant—into an object of humiliation. The perpetrator’s defiant escape ridiculed the local authority of the state, leaving the prankster to roam the countryside with impunity. Imagine the mad frustration of Candia when his missives to officials in Concepcion calling for legal action on the matter met only evasive replies.¹¹⁵ Uriarte knew the uneven, moving landscape of power well, and his overtures to Cacique Rubio had exposed Candia’s weak hold over an important chieftain from the wilderness.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

The inconsistencies of projected rule, so manifest in the urine-soaked Carmona and the persistent threats from “infidels,” were endemic in the Paraguayan countryside. Aggressive contests for local power and influence occurred beneath a gloss of uniform, autocratic control extending from Asunción. Distance and wilderness encroaching over contested ground disrupted links to political centers. Order hinged on the authority mustered on the ground by local officials and powerbrokers, and state resources and connections became bones of contention among rival local players and their clients. The minor power struggle in Salvador provides a vivid example.

That small drama also shows the importance of links between national and local power. Its denouement is instructive. Carmona soon left town, disgraced and humiliated, still looking for justice. Candia remained without the eloquence of his letters and felt increasingly under siege, lamenting his own ignorance, unable to properly “make any paper.” His correspondence (perhaps now written by his own hand) describing the recent incidents seemed to lack, in his view, formal coherence. So enfeebled, he failed to produce as desired a list of official charges against his rivals. And, so emboldened, Father Toubé further intimidated with his own pen. Festivities proceeded as planned on November 6 for the santoara of Carlos Antonio López. Candia held the usual diversion in the commandant’s headquarters, attended by officials and notable residents, trying to muster again his command of state authority. But when Father Toubé boasted to one congregant that a letter of his authorship incriminating the conduct of the commandant “was already on its way to His Excellency,” Candia could only suffer in quiet outrage.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 18 November 1852, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH.

The anchor of patriarchal authority in state and society proved fundamental to local power and influence. Local powerbrokers resorted to their own distributions of patronage and exercised command of coerced labor undergirded by the long-held social conventions of patriarchal obligation. They made frequent employment of the lash. And they competed for the sanction a distant patriarch from “above.” Demonstrable connections to superstructures of authority and community were critical, in this frontier society, to bolster local power and reinforce the separation from the wilderness. Much remained in the mid-nineteenth century as it had been under colonial rule.

However, appeals to the sovereign patriarch, the *ñande ruvichaguasu* in Asunción—now addressed not a colonial governor or distant king, but the elected president of a republic. The overarching structure of power was simultaneously more fragile and more accessible. Uriarte, for example, had been a congressional representative and could imagine himself in an audience with the president. As a “faithful republican and loyal vassal,” he sought a direct personal endorsement from the patriarchal patron above. There was a persistent, unresolved tension in projecting traditional patriarchal and religious authority within modern political forms. And within the force field of that tension, local powerbrokers were serving as primary vessels of nationhood on the ground, and the new meaning of *ñane retã*, as republic and nation, was gathering resonance for many involved—as correspondence written, protection afforded, official fiestas celebrated, patronage bestowed, authority endorsed.

The *ñane retã* endured as a realm of Christian civilization, as the preserve of karai and cristianos, in contradistinction to the infidels of the wilderness. And it made a difference that on an institutional level, as a medium upon which appeals to higher authorities were made, the *ñane retã* corresponded to its own ecclesiastical jurisdiction, one over which the president

himself claimed the patronage once exercised by Iberian sovereigns. Therefore, the priest Toubé made appeals to the president and ecclesiastical superiors in Asunción (and not to others elsewhere) and articulated his concerns in the terms of patria. The church to be built in Salvador likewise was to strengthen both God *and* Country. The new institutional embodiments of that link are the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2:

CHURCH AND STATE FORMATION

The church-state union had been the marrow of the Spanish empire for centuries. The conquest and colonization of New World peoples had proceeded under the justification of religious conversion, winning souls for the Catholic Church under the auspices of the Crown. The church subsequently contributed to hegemonic rule in a far-flung empire, stretched thin over mountain ranges, forests, and seas. State jurisdictions and authorities corresponded to those of the church, so that every viceroyalty, province, and village was entwined with its respective archbishopric, diocese, and parish. Fundamental to this arrangement was the royal patronage the Spanish crown had over the church in its New World imperial realm. The monarchy held ultimate authority to set ecclesiastical divisions and, most importantly, appoint all church officials. The bond hardly precluded disputes on the ground between state and ecclesiastical authorities; on the contrary, bitter contests for power developed as the result of such interlocking and overlapping jurisdictions. Indeed, during colonial times, it was not unknown for high church officials to temporarily assume the posts of viceroys and governors. Compounding this knot of material co-dependence was the fundamental role of religious institutions in the education of colonial elites and in the production and circulation

of wealth. Even in the juridical sphere, the basic codes of canonical law molded those of civil law throughout the empire.¹

Decades after the collapse and disintegration of the Spanish empire in the Americas, the regime of Carlos Antonio López was striving to re-assemble pieces of imperial sovereignty for the spatial projection of postcolonial rule in Paraguay.² The rites, expressions, and practices of communal attachment with a religious realm anchored in patriarchal authority, as described in the previous chapter, were integral to power and state-making on the frontier. Upon taking power in the early 1840s, the regime had applied colonial wisdom in matters of church and state. It began to rebuild the institutional apparatus of the provincial church, left to decay by its predecessor. It sought to fashion a robust national diocese staffed with native-born clergy to underpin the temporal power of the state. This chapter explores that effort in detail, pondering its centrality to the state and nation building of the López regimes and considering its impact on the everyday lives of inhabitants in the country. In many ways, the process reconfigured critical elements of colonial power—the church and its divine moral order—and fitted them into the framework of an independent republic.

¹Textbooks provide the clearest overview of the church-state union in colonial Spanish America. See Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), ch. 2, on the church's role in the production of hegemony for colonial rule. Mark Burkholder and Lyman Johnson detail the confluence of ecclesiastical and civil jurisdictions that proved so formative for the consolidation of post-colonial states, *Colonial Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,), ch. 3. John Lloyd Mecham, in his classic work, outlines the Spanish crown's assertion of the *patronato real* in its New World holdings. For more specific studies on the role of the church and religion in the Spanish conquest and colonialism in the Americas, see, for example, Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders of New Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966); Kenneth Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies: Colonial Andean Religion and Extermination, 1640-1750* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); William B. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in 18th-century Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Rafael Gómez Hoyos, *La iglesia de América en las leyes de Indias* (Madrid: 1961); Kathryn Burns, *Colonial Habits: Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

²Jeremy Adelman advances this interpretative point to consider how postcolonial Latin American states employed aspects of imperial sovereignty to consolidate their rule, see, especially, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) ch. 7 & 9, and "An Age of Imperial Revolutions," *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 2 (April 2008): 319-40.

Suicide and Taxes

Consolidating control over ecclesiastical jurisdictions that corresponded to the territories of new independent states had proven urgent for questions of sovereignty in postcolonial Latin America.³ In Paraguay, the independence-era regime of Dr. Francia set important groundwork here and, following Bourbon colonial impulses, initially forged state domination over the institutional infrastructure of the provincial church. He forcibly secularized the clergy of all religious orders in the territory, banning the institutions, and, crucially, seizing their extensive holdings in land and slaves. These seizures formed the basis of the network of state-owned estancias throughout the country still prevalent (in fact, it had been further expanded) decades later. The Francia government had assumed administration of most church finances, paying clergy from state coffers and limiting parish priests' personal accumulation of land and wealth. Parish benefices, for example, were largely eliminated. Yet Francia had muscled control of the provincial diocese only to oversee its rot and neglect. He severed diplomatic contact with the Vatican, closed the Asunción seminary, and without regret watched the collection of foreign priests, mostly Spaniards and Italians, who had dominated the local church during the late colonial period, grow old and die. There were few new ordinations, and dissident priests were thrown in jail. By the time of Francia's death in 1840, just fifty some clergy, many infirm and sickly, served the spiritual needs of eighty-three parishes in the territory.⁴ The subsequent regime of Carlos Antonio López had begun an

³For this crucial point, see Rugeley *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, ch. 8.

⁴Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado* 23,147; Williams, "Dictatorship and the Church: Dr. Franca in Paraguay." Jerry Cooney describes specifically the ouster of religious orders under the Francia regime, see "The Destruction of the Religious Orders in Paraguay, 1810-1824," *The Americas* 36, no. 2 (October 1979): 177-98. Kleinpenning mentions how the regime assumed the orders' holdings in land and slaves, *Paraguay: A Thematic Geography, 1515-1870*, vol. 1, 787.

institutional revival of the regional church. Bourbon impulses were still manifest in the effort, because the new government proceeded without relinquishing the principle of state domination.⁵ The effort meshed with a general push to expand the reach of the state over all, in a broad campaign of modernization. One expression of the trend was the reconstitution of a church-based tax, the *diezmo*.

It was most likely just by chance, however, that Pedro Idoyaga was talking about taxes when he tried to cut his own throat on the evening of May 16, 1854. Pedro was known in his town of Villeta to suffer from dementia, and other residents had often seen him muttering to himself around the pueblo. He and his compadre, Don Fortunato Franco, had just returned with their wives from Asunción, having sought medicinal assistance there for Pedro's condition. They were staying in Franco's house for the night and had eaten dinner when the incident occurred. Franco, relaxing, lit a cigar, passed it to Pedro, and started conversation about payment of the diezmo. Turning his head briefly to spit, Franco turned back to find Pedro slicing himself. He and others in the house pulled the knife out of Pedro's hands, but not before blood spilled from an already significant wound. Expectations were that Pedro might die. His wife wept. Franco alerted the local justice, who lived nearby.

Suicide had been made a crime in Paraguay under the regime of Carlos Antonio López. If Pedro died, he faced a burial without ecclesiastical rites, outside the confines of the local cemetery. If he survived, criminal prosecution and punishment were perhaps his fate. The matter fell to the jurisdiction of the local justice to investigate and determine. As it happened, Pedro recovered from his wound, and testimony taken by the judge confirmed that he

⁵Heyn Schup, *Iglesia y estado* and Cooney, "La reconstrucción de la iglesia paraguaya, 1841-1850," *El Paraguay bajo los López: algunos ensayos de historia social y política*, eds. Jerry Cooney and Thomas Whigham, (Asunción: Centro Paraguayo de Estudios Sociológicos, 1994), provide overview of the López regime's domination and revival of the provincial church.

suffered from a mental disorder. Certifiable insanity was the one thing that could (and did) save him from becoming a post-mortem spiritual outcast or performing several years of forced labor.⁶ Paying the religious tithe, on the other hand, would continue to be his obligation, and that of all living Paraguayans, as it was now required by the state.

Both the tithe and suicide were church matters over which the state had assumed greater control in the years since the death of Dr. Francia. State jurisdiction over both registered—on intimate and economic levels—implications beyond a temporal order, and into a spiritual one. We will examine in this regard how the reinstitution of the colonial-era diezmo, once imposed by the church, became part of what could be called a “spiritual economy” under state administration.⁷ Still collected in the name of the church, the measure accomplished an increasing extraction of wealth from the countryside, wealth based on the labor of peasants and fomented by speculative agricultural markets. This wealth went straight to state-controlled coffers. Only from there were funds allotted to churches and priests.

But of suicide and taxes, the first is less probable and certainly more dramatic. Government intervention in cases of suicide also illustrates Paraguay’s peculiar process of church and state formation in the middle of the nineteenth century. Let us begin by addressing how, for those who succeeded in killing themselves, civil authorities determined the form and place of their burials, effectively ruling on the destinies of souls.

Suicide

⁶Sumario sobre el intento de suicidio de Pedro Ydoyaga, Villeta, 1854, ANA-SCJ vol. 1490, n. 5, foja 75-94. For a summary overview of the regulation of suicide cases and their punishments under the regime of Carlos Antonio López, see Viola, *Cárceles y otras penas*, 119-126.

⁷See the idea of “spiritual economy” as originally developed by Kathryn Burns for the overlapping spiritual and economic roles of Cusco convents in colonial Peru, see *Colonial Habits*, especially ch. 4 & 5.

Suicide was commonplace in the countryside of nineteenth-century Paraguay.⁸ The reasons to kill oneself were both varied and mysterious, often impossible for us to know. Even so, judicial investigation of suicide cases in nineteenth-century Paraguay often documented certain pressures tormenting minds. Depression and mental illness, for example, were evident influences, even in an agrarian society such as Paraguay. Other pressures involving general patterns of violence consistent with the enforcement of patriarchal authority also prompted people in Paraguay to end their days. Specifically, floggings and other physical punishments could break people's spirits and extinguish the will to live.⁹

Consider a few exemplary cases. José Dolores Contreras was just sixteen years old in December 1863, a "free Indian" domestic who had lived and worked his entire life in the house of his godfather and "patron," near the pueblo of Santiago. His mother, who had been a servant in the same house, had died when he was still an infant. On Christmas Eve, when the boy was slow to respond to some order, his patron whipped him. That night he hanged himself in the woods nearby. Similarly, in January 1860, Juan, a slave from Asunción, had also wandered into woods bordering the house of his master to hang himself from a tree limb

⁸Classic interpretation of suicide as a social phenomenon posits it as principally a consequence of modern urban life due to the breakup of traditional social relations, see Howard I. Kushner, "Suicide, Gender, and Fear of Modernity in Nineteenth-century Medical and Social Thought," *Journal of Social History* 25, no. 3 (Spring 1993): 461-90. Historical scholarship on suicide in Europe during the Middle Ages as well in the plantation slave societies of the Americas effectively counters this claim. See, for example, Alexander Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages* vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) and Manuel Barcia Paz, *Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance on Western Cuban Plantations, 1808-1848* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), ch. 4. Louis Pérez documents the long historical continuity of suicide in Cuban society as a socio-political trend in *To Die in Cuba: Suicide and Society* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). The decree of the López regime to police and document cases of suicide in Paraguay nonetheless demonstrated modernizing tendencies seen also in Europe. For another such example and excellent overview of historical studies on suicide in Europe, see Susan K. Morrissey, *Suicide and the Body Politic in Imperial Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-16, 77-105.

⁹Elsewhere, in Imperial Russia, the state itself recognized this potential and occasionally prosecuted serf owners for excessive physical punishments that allegedly prompted the suicides of their serfs, see Morrissey, *Suicide and the Body Politic*, ch.5.

with a leather strap. He still wore on his back the welts from a brief whipping with a braided branch. His owner later admitted to have lashed him three times with the instrument, for allegedly trying to steal money, and conceded that the punishment most likely prompted Juan to kill himself. Indeed, contemporaries commonly acknowledged that a flogging might have such an effect.¹⁰

Suicide was recognized by subordinates and superiors alike as a desperate social tactic within patriarchal regimes, a defiance of last resort.¹¹ People had learned, and sometimes practiced, methods of suicide as a show of resistance. Blas Figueredo even demonstrated his own preferred means to a friend before going through with it. In 1852, he had run afoul of local justice in San Cosme for cattle rustling. As punishment, he was placed under the charge of Antonio Solís, who had an estancia with numerous peons. After Solís beat him for carelessness, Blas went to the house of a friend, María Silva, to confide his pain. He told her that, had his knife been handy, he would have killed Solís, then himself. Blas next wrapped his belt around his neck, saying “that was how he was going to hang himself in the woods.” María pleaded that, “for God and the Virgin,” he not do it, and, when he left, she tried alerting the local authorities and his father, but to no avail. The following morning a search party found the lifeless body dangling.¹²

¹⁰Causa de suicidio del indio libre José Dolores Contreras, Santiago, December 1863, ANA-SNE vol. 1636; Sumario del suicidio del esclavo-liberto Juan, Trinidad (Asunción), 1860, ANA-SCJ vol. 1487, n. 3, foja 25-29. For another example, see Viola, *Cárceles y otras penas*, 120-21.

¹¹Pérez principally discusses suicide among workers and slaves on Cuban sugar plantations as a form of resistance against domination, *To Die in Cuba*, ch. 1, as does Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection*. Morrissey considers it more as a historical lens to read the negotiation within patriarchal power relations, *Suicide and the Body Politic*, 129.

¹²Sumario sobre el suicidio de Blás Figueredo, San Cosme, 1852, ANA-SCJ vol. 1647, n. 4, fojas 36-25.

Hanging oneself in the monte was a common, learned gesture of social defiance in the Paraguayan countryside.¹³ So was cutting one's own throat. One young woman from Emboscada tried the latter tactic in 1856 after her step-grandfather gave her a whipping—following the example of her mother who had committed suicide.¹⁴ Some individuals undertook simulations of these customary suicide measures without ever intending to actually kill themselves. The adolescent Fernando Segovia, from Lambare, was so outraged with a punishment ordered by his mother, for having lost a piece of meat in a cooking fire, that in July 1858 he simulated suicide by tying a knot would not slip. Fernando had hoped his mother would find him hanging, but some passerby heard his crying and cut him down. In another case, Toribia Añasco feigned slitting her throat in October 1854. She did so in the act of fleeing her house in Asunción, having grabbed a knife as her stepfather gave chase to give her a beating. Both Fernando and Toribia resorted to customary methods. And their of simulacra served as protests against, and mediums of escape from, physical punishment.¹⁵

¹³In the 1858 case of attempted suicide by the india Rafaela Funes, in her testimony Funes explicitly described the search for an appropriate tree branch in the monte from which to hang, as well as removing her poncho before the act, *Proceso a Rafaela Funes por intento de suicidio y a su marido José Domingo Ñanduti*, San Ignacio, 1858-60, ANA-SCJ vol. 1648, n. 2, fojas 1-42. For the removal of clothes and religious pendants, see, for example, *Proceso a Magdalena y Patricia López por el suicidio de Benedicto López*, San Lorenzo, 1856, ANA-SCJ vol. 1430, n.5, fojas 90-92; *Sumario sobre el suicidio del indio Carlos Gamarra*, Villa del Rosario, 1865, ANA-SCJ vol. 1752, n. 1, fojas 2-10; *Sumario sobre el suicidio del soldado Ramon Galeano*, Pilar, 1849-50, ANA-SCJ vol. 1837, n. 4, fojas 1-18. Everyday lengths were typically used to hang oneself in the monte, see *Sumario sobre el suicidio de Juana Inés Blanco*, Santa María, 1858, ANA-SCJ vol. 1466, n. 3, fojas 64-72; *Sumario sobre el suicidio del esclavo Máximo Santa Cruz*, Caacupe, 1866, ANA-SCJ vol. 1488, n. 1, fojas 1-17; *Sumario sobre el suicidio del esclavo Blas Antionio*, Caapucu, 1851, ANA-SCJ vol. 1619, n. 10, fojas 123-30.

¹⁴*Proceso a Francisco Jara y Josefa Jara por castigo del primero a la segunda e intento de suicidio de esta*, Emboscada, 1856, ANA-SCJ vol. 1703, n. 11, fojas 149-66. For more cases of suicide by throat-cutting, see *Sumario sobre el suicidio del pardo Nicolas*, Lambare, 1866, ANA-SCJ vol. 1624 (II) n. 3, foja 1-7; *Sumario sobre el suicidio del José María Aleman*, Villleta, 1860, ANA-SCJ vol. 1552, n. 1, foja 1-11.

¹⁵*Proceso a Fernando Segovia por intento de suicidio*, Lambare, 1858, ANA-SCJ vol. 1661, n. 1, fojas 1-24; *Sumario sobre el intento de suicidio de Toribia Añasco*, San Roque (Asunción), ANA-SCJ vol. 1427, n. 2, fojas 53-86.

We can also recall the suicidal slave Plácida, who told her mistress upon being slapped: “For me it is nothing to lose my soul, since you would also lose your money.”¹⁶

The angry words of Plácida conceded that a soul was at stake. And precisely such stakes—as well as concern with suicidal resistance to patriarchal authority—attracted the juridical attention of the state. A presidential decree from the 1840s that regulated suicide cases, placing them under the jurisdiction of local justices of the peace, confirmed its status as a crime, a legally-recognized offense to God. The decree was tied to new government regulation of cemeteries. Following a region-wide trend, the regime of Carlos Antonio López ordered the construction of new public cemeteries, gradually abolishing—for evident reasons of public health—the colonial practice of burying corpses inside churches. The effort began in the capital early in the 1840s and spread to the parishes of the countryside. By the end of the decade, over a hundred new public cemeteries had been established. Yet despite their public quality, with much of their maintenance covered by state expenses and labor, the cemeteries were still designated sacred ground. They were now places of proper religious burial, where the remains of faithful parishioners were laid to rest.¹⁷ The legal protocol of suicide cases, therefore, concerned whether the deceased could be admitted to the sacred precincts of public cemeteries. And, typically, obstinate perpetrators of the crime were not to receive any sanctuary.

¹⁶See reference in Chapter 1, Sumario sobre el suicidio de la esclava Placida, 1853, Piraju, ANA-SCJ vol. 1807, n. 2, foja 1-13.

¹⁷On the regulation of cemeteries, see Juan F. Pérez Acosta, *Carlos Antonio López “Obrero máximo”: Labor administrativa y constructiva* (Asunción: Editorial Guaraní, 1948), 586-87, and Cooney, “La reconstrucción de la iglesia paraguaya,” 56. Parish churches still collected on ecclesiastical burial fees (between 1-2 pesos). They also paid from their ledgers expenses for sacistrans of cemeteries, see, for example, Informes de mayordomos de iglesia, Villa Occidental, Paraguarí, and Capiata in ANA-SNE vol. 1696, as well as the 1857 ledger for burial payments for the parish of Laureles in ANA-SNE vol. 3161. Per the latter document, annual parish income from burial tithes could reach over 300 pesos, a large percentage of which came from the burial of dead infants and children.

The protocol was as follows. Local magistrates, accompanied by a doctor and notary, were to carefully examine the bodies of suspected suicides where found. In so doing, they manifested aspects of a modern forensic investigation, documenting positions of corpses and wounds and ruling out the possibility of homicide. The magistrate then was to have the corpse buried on the site of its discovery, especially those found in the woods, marking the place with a wooden cross driven into the ground while further deliberations were made.¹⁸ The evidence for these deliberations came from official testimony taken from close relatives and friends of the deceased, explicitly questioned for the possible motives. If the victim had allegedly suffered from mental afflictions, the statements provided the necessary documented proof of this exception that could grant ecclesiastical burial to the victim. It was here that interrogations touched on questions of personal religiosity.

For suicide victims widely known to have dementia, questioning often proceeded to determine if the person was also a good Christian. Documenting so supplied further justification for the possibility of church burial. In one case, family and neighbors of Benigna Ortellado, who killed herself, not only confirmed her dementia but also that “she was very Christian, and known for her good conduct.” In June 1864 near the pueblo of Ita, Rosa Isabel Veron made running from her house and slitting her throat the last act of her long deranged mind, or so family members attested. Her son also asserted that she “always maintained a virtuous life and Christian ways, daily saying the rosary and making confession whenever she had the chance.” Her sister too, who had cared for her, indicated that Rosa “passed the

¹⁸In the suicide case of Antonio Esteche, detailed instructions were given on how to properly inspect and determine a suicide by hanging, see *Sumario del suicidio de Antonio Esteche*, Yabebiri, 1855, ANA-SCJ vol. 1430, n. 1, foja 5-6. For the procedural inspection and burial of suicides by throat-cutting, see, for example, *Suicidio de Vicente Benítez*, Acahay, 1856, ANA-SCJ vol. 1442, n. 7, fojas 118-127; *Sumario sobre el suicidio de Valentín Centurion*, Paraguari, 1864, ANA-SCJ vol. 1756, n. 5, foja 209-16. For further example of procedural burial of suicide by hanging in the monte, see *Denuncia sobre el suicidio de Vicente Ibarrola*, Luque, 1865, ANA-SCJ vol. 1590, n. 3, foja 26-27.

night praying and confessed often.” A nephew affirmed that she “heard mass whenever she could and confessed constantly.” All three noted that she had confessed twice just before her suicide.¹⁹ Emerging from such testimony were publically-acknowledged standards of good Christian behavior, for which local justices, in part, became the arbiters. In particular, they often wanted to corroborate that the victim, if demented, still fulfilled the precepts and sacraments of the church—going to mass, seeking confession, praying the rosary. Rosa Catalina Yegros from Itagua hanged herself in her home in November 1858. Testimony indicated that she too had agonized in recent months with “churnings of the head.” And when the local judge also asked around about her morality, one close neighbor avowed her “frequenting the church on festive days” and praying “the rosary in her house with her mother.” Another neighbor added that she “fulfilled her duty to the church annually, [and was] subordinate and obedient to the orders of her mother.”²⁰ Rosa’s subjugation, as daughter, constituted clear additional evidence of her pious virtue. Intimately tied to the virtue of fulfilling church sacraments was the fulfillment of patriarchal duty. In the 1860 suicide of another man from Villeta known to have suffered from mental afflictions, the local magistrate asked his wife specifically if her husband “observed exactly the points of our holy religion, or instead was a careless and vice-ridden man that failed in his duties as good husband, not attending to the assistance of his house.” She answered that her husband was indeed a faithful man, “frequenting the ordained sacraments” and “daily teaching his children

¹⁹Sumario sobre el suicidio de Benigna Ortellado, Santa María, 1850, ANA-SCJ vol. 1619, n. 7, foja 76-92; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Rosa Isabel Veron, Ita, 1864-65, ANA-SCJ vol. 1590, n. 1, foja 1-8.

²⁰Proceso sobre el suicidio de Rosa Catalina Yegros, Itagua, 1858, ANA-SCJ vol. 1624 (II) n. 18, foja 122-33.

the holy fear of God.” He also “never left his house unless necessary.” She even asserted that her husband had long “knelt in prayer” the night before his suicide.²¹

Local justices also made inquiries into the piety of victims whose burial with religious rites seemed much more in doubt. It was never made clear why Vicente Brítez, for example, hanged himself in the woods in 1861. His children and neighbors contended, when prompted, that he “never failed in his duties as a Christian, always providing a good example to his family.” In May 1865, the restless domestic servant, Barbara Ortiz hanged herself from a ceiling beam in the house of her new patroness, where a local official had recently assigned her to work. The investigating official reported that she had evidently removed her rosary before doing so. Witnesses from the house, including the patroness, claimed that she “conserved good morals and the Christian religion, for having seen her always submissive to Brígida Rejala, in whose house she stayed as an *agregada*.” Another former patron also vouched that she fulfilled “the precepts of the church,” again “having seen her always obedient and compliant with his orders during the time he had her under his dominion.” One other former patroness, however, was not so pleased, calling her a “tad insolent and little obedient.” In any case, the final ruling cited, beyond any evidence of dementia, the removal “from her neck the rosary that she had as a sign of her Christianity” to deny her “all right of compassion and clemency from our Holy Mother, the Church.” Vicente Brítez, too, failed to receive this grace.²² Upon assuming the jurisdiction to decide on the “compassion and clemency” of the church, state officials, for the most part, sought only to verify what they

²¹Sumario sobre el suicidio del José María Aleman, 1860, ANA-SCJ, foja 2-3, 4-5.

²²Sumario sobre el suicidio de Vicente Britez, Ita, 1861, ANA-SCJ vol. 1457, n. 2, foja 23-30; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Barbara Ortiz, 1865, ANA-SCJ, foja 122-28, 134.

already conceived as acts of defiance against the linked patriarchal authority heaven and earth.

Other cases were much more clear-cut. Lino G3mez was a mild-mannered carpenter working in Villa de Rosario who hanged himself in his residence in late August 1857. Acquaintances had rarely seen him at mass, and the local justice, after collecting evidence, denied him ecclesiastical burial. Near the same pueblo, the indio Carlos Gamarra was a convict laborer on a state estancia where he hanged himself in November 1865. His companions had regarded him as an “insolent man,” often whipped by the overseer for various offenses. Moreover, they testified that he was “careless and negligent in the acts of religion,” never praying, never crossing himself. If perhaps he did pray, “it was when the overseer gathered all the peons to pray the rosary.” This record of insolence, further substantiated by the very act of suicide, made for a quick ruling by the local tribunal that also deemed his remains unworthy of ecclesiastical grace.²³ Most of the local tribunal judgments arrived at the determination to deny such grace. If the dead were still unburied when incriminating rulings came down, sometimes local justices had meager, unmarked graves dug for them outside cemetery walls. Otherwise, the bodies of the condemned remained buried where they had died, most frequently in the woods. Some were lucky enough, by legal oversight, to keep the cross that had been placed provisionally on the grave. Frequently, however, the justices remembered, with a notarized act, to pluck those religious markers from the ground.²⁴

²³Sumario sobre el suicidio de Lino G3mez, Villa del Rosario, 1857, ANA-SNE vol. 2755, n. 44-47; Sumario sobre el suicidio del indio Carlos Gamarra, 1865, ANA-SCJ.

²⁴For examples of suicide burials in profane areas beyond cemetery walls, see Sumario sobre el suicidio de Lino G3mez, 1857; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Salvador Garay, San Juan Bautista, 1859, ANA-SCJ vol. 1487, n. 2, fojas 15-24 ; Informe de Daniel Chuna a Carlos Antonio L3pez, 2 September 1854, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 II, foja 582-83 on the suicide of Castor Caballo. Murray describes how

Occasionally though, judgments did grant the clemency of burial in public cemeteries, especially to pious individuals determined to have suffered from dementia. Remains then had to be exhumed from their provisional graves and parish priests notified to perform the burial rites, sometimes months or even years after the death.²⁵ The judgments of suicide cases were manifesting projections of state authority for spells beyond the grave.

The Tithe

A less grave but more pervasive invasion of ecclesiastical terrain was state administration of the diezmo. This relic of the colonial past corresponded to the required offering of a tenth of parishioners' harvested fruits owed to the church. For ten rows of planted manioc, for example, a faithful parishioner rendered one harvested row. Under the López regimes, tithe payment was made a much more integral and regular part of peasants' annual lives, patterned as they were on growing cycles. It potentially came three times a year, for both the summer and winter harvests (the former always more diverse and plentiful), once annually for any relatively substantial holdings of livestock. And every household, however modest in size their fields of subsistence, was subject to collection. Formerly, the tax had gone to diocesan coffers.²⁶ Early in the 1840s, the regime of Carlos Antonio López revived and reorganized

profane burials for suicides in Europe during the Middle Ages were intended to demonstrate expulsion from both social community and Christian salvation. He also notes how suicides were often given profane burial along the boundaries of woods and wilderness, see Murray *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, vol. 2, 41-51. Pérez briefly notes the punishment doled out on bodies of slave suicides in nineteenth-century Cuba, *To Die in Cuba*, 42-45. For the removal of crosses, see, for example, Sumario sobre el suicidio de Rufino Meza, peon de la chacra del presidente, Norte de la Recoleta (Asunción), 1854, ANA-SCJ vol. 1608, n. 8, foja 122-28; Sumario del suicidio del esclavo-liberto Juan, 1860, foja 29; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Vicente Britez, 1861, foja 24-29.

²⁵See, for example, Sumario sobre el suicidio del José María Aleman, 1860, foja 8-9; Sumario sobre el suicidio de Rosa Isabel Veron, 1864-65, ANA-SCJ, foja 8.

²⁶Telesca briefly describes the incidence of the tithe in the province of Paraguay during the late colonial period, *Tras los expulsos*, 64-71. For the persistence of tithe collection under the regime of Dr. Francia, see Cuenta de

the tithe, making its collection a business of government, and now diezmo contributions poured into the state treasury.²⁷ Even so, the religious premise of the tithe remained. It was still considered a duty of parishioners, part of the institutional revival of the provincial church underway.

The tax system of the López regimes in Paraguay differed enormously from that of present-day industrialized societies. Most of government-controlled revenue came from impost duties and trade monopolies, in particular from the monopoly on the exportation of yerba mate. State collection of the diezmo followed the colonial patterns of indirect governance, relying on tax-farming. Individual merchants made bids on contracts to oversee the collection in particular districts, paying the treasury a stipulated amount and keeping the rest for themselves.²⁸ It was a potentially lucrative business, at least as it functioned under the López regimes. Public auctions farmed out the state-sanctioned collection duties and fomented, in turn, a lively speculative market in domestic harvests and husbandry, one which grew exponentially after the 1840s, multiplying returns on expected yields of foodstuffs and animals. This market was what effectively converted maize, manioc, beans, tobacco, watermelons, as well as livestock, into monetized assets.

diezmos, 1829-30, ANA-SNE vol. 3171. David Brading describes the exaction of tithes in the diocese of Michoacán, Mexico during the late colonial period. He indicates that such colonial-era church tithes were typically collected and administered on the diocesan level directly by church officials, with much of the proceeds stopping to support the bishop and canons. He also discusses the diversification of church revenue sources (rents, fees, and endowments being others) and points out that some areas in Spanish America were more dependent on tithes than others, see *Church and State in Bourbon Mexico: The Diocese of Michoacán, 1749-1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 211-20.

²⁷Cooney, “La reconstrucción de la iglesia paraguaya,” 57-58.

²⁸On the growing sophistication of the late colonial tax regime in Mexico, see Carlos Marichal, *Bankruptcy of Empire: Mexican Silver and the Wars Between Spain, Britain, and France*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), ch. 2 & 4. Brading indicates though that church authorities in Michoacán began resorting to the auction of tithe collection rights in 1787, thereby departing from the previously more direct assessment and collection practices by diocesan officials, *Church and State in Bourbon Mexico*, 218.

The auctions, conducted by the state treasurer, occurred three times a year in Asunción. For the expected summer crop, the treasury took bids to collect the tithe in November. The winter harvest auction was usually in April or May, that for the tithe on livestock holdings, in May or June. For each auction, the government set minimum price estimates in pesos for the expected output of specific districts and started the bidding at that amount. Merchants advanced notarized offers at least a peso above this original price for the collection rights on those areas. The districts themselves coincided with zones of production (numbering about twenty total for the entire territory, depending on the class of tithe) with some areas consistently more productive than others. The oldest region of colonial settlement along the Paraguay River basin, the traditional parishes of the country clustered around the capital stretching eastward toward Villa Rica, was evidently still the anchor of cultivation for basic staples. The district surrounding Villa Rica itself proved a veritable breadbasket. So did the district immediately south of Asunción, encompassing the outlying towns of San Lorenzo and Villeta as well as the old Indian pueblos of Yaguarón, Guarambare, Ypane, and Ita. Outlying areas in the north, including Concepción and Salvador, in the south near Pilar, and those of the old Jesuit mission reductions—were decidedly poorer in crop production. On the other hand, these areas became explosively productive in the raising of livestock, some contending with the output of the traditionally strong ranching district around Carapegua. The fertile district around Villa Rica, on the other hand, yielded consistently few holdings of cattle, horses, and sheep.²⁹

²⁹As compiled from records of the auctions on the summer tithe, *Almoneda de diezmo del verano*: November 1853, ANA-SNE vol. 3155; November 1854, ANA-SNE vol. 3159; November 1855, November 1856, ANA-SNE vol. 3172; November 1857, ANA-SNE vol. 2163; November 1858, ANA-SNE vol. 1567; November 1859, ANA-SNE vol. 3189; November 1860, ANA-SNE vol. 2218; November 1861, ANA-SNE vol. 2225; November 1862, ANA-SNE vol. 2249. For that of the auction on the livestock tithe, see *Almoneda de diezmo de cuatrotea*: June 1851, ANA-SNE vol. 2696; May 1853, ANA-SNE vol. 2721; June 1854, ANA-SNE vol. 3161;

The tithe developed into a regular source of business for the mercantile elite, which undertook substantial risk when bidding on expected yields of crops and animals. Their final payments to the treasury did not come until at least a year after their successful bids on collection rights. In the meantime, crops could be lost to drought, whole portions of herds corrupted by disease. Regardless of such losses, merchants still owed the state the price bid for the tithe collection rights on a district. And, at times, they did come up short from their earnings on the tithe. Occasionally, even the most productive districts (safer investments) did not repay their higher speculated prices. In these cases, the investing merchant or a partner had to make up the difference in pesos, usually with a payment to the government in yerba mate.³⁰ The merchants involved thus had to be men of means, often with resources and interests in other business—ranching, tobacco, yerba—to ameliorate potential losses. By standard practice and state preference, they also joined with guaranteeing partners, who took part of the profit and compensated losses to the state if the bidding merchant could not. Frequently, the guarantor for a bid on one district was the bidding merchant on another in a given auction. For example, Blas Martínez, the principal yerba trader and old rival of Casimiro Uriarte in Concepción, regularly entered the auctions as both bidder and guaranteeing partner, particularly in the livestock tithe market. So too did his friend and ally Saturnino Bedoya, the son-in-law of the president, sometimes as Bedoya's partner. Members of the ruling López family were often involved, as were major yerba exporters like the

June 1855, ANA-SNE vol. 3172; May 1856, ANA-SNE vol. 3171; June 1859, ANA-SNE vol. 1583; June 1860, ANA-SNE vol. 2220; June 1862, ANA-SNE vol. 3251.

³⁰See specifically the 1854 auction on the summer harvest. In two districts, Villa Rica and Pilar, the buyers failed to meet the final bid amount upon the time of payment in November 1855. In Villa Rica, the buyer, Blas Martínez, covered the loss with a yerba payment, whereby the financing partner did so for Pilar, ANA-SNE vol. 3599. Other examples of such payments to cover diezmo tithe losses are found in the diezmo ledger, 1852-55, Cuaderno del la caja de diezmos, ANA-SNE vol. 2997. In one case in 1853, the buyer for the San Lorenzo district asked for more time to collect payment.

Saguier family, with commercial ties to Buenos Aires. Foreign merchants residing in the country entered the auctions too, including Brazilians, Argentines, even a Pole.³¹ Not all participants were such major dealers, yet most necessarily cultivated connections with established wealth.³²

The bidding merchants were generally not making the treks and conducting the household-to-household collection of the tithe. They were middle men who contracted portions of their collection duties to local retailers within a particular district. These retailers did the actual collection of payment, which was often in kind rather than coin, traveling to each house and field with oxcart and wagon, haggling with contributors, accumulating goods and contributions of currency, then moving the goods to town markets or selling them to other households or state-owned stores.³³ The business had a clear distributive function, which was another source of profit for the retailers involved in it.

³¹See lists of buyers and financing partners in the sources listed above in note 42. Members of other prominent Paraguayan families involved in the diezmo trade included Machain, Soler, Jovellanos, and Decoud. The Brazilian merchant Luis Homen (who also served as the Brazilian consulate in Villa Rica) participated as did the Pole Luis Miskowski.

³²Mercantile practices from the late colonial period are instructive here. Aldeman describes the importance of kinship networks among South American merchant elites during the late colonial period, particularly for the extension of credit, *Revolution and Sovereignty*. Also see Susan Socolow, *The Merchants of Buenos Aires: Family and Commerce* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978). For the specific case of late colonial Paraguay, see Cooney, *Economía y sociedad en la intendencia del Paraguay*, ch. 1.

³³These details emerge in an 1859 “tax evasion” case from San Fernando. In one instance, a contributor describes paying ten watermelons to a woman who had reportedly bought them from a contracting retailer, see Expediente de recurso de Luis Valdovinos sobre recaudación de diezmos de frutos de la frontera que no pagaban puntualmente de 1 año 1859, ANA-SCJ vol. 1915, n. 3, foja 1-10, also discussed below. Juan Bautista Rivarola cites a government decree acknowledging retailer rights and commissions on surplus collections, see *El régimen jurídico de la tierra: Época del Dr. Francia y de los López* (Asunción: 2004), 155-56. Local authorities conducting the collection on un-auctioned districts also took commissions on revenues of staples or animals sold. Brading indicates that contracted collectors in late-colonial Michoacán earned 8 percent commission on money revenues, *Church and State in Bourbon Mexico*, 218.

The attraction of those potential profits occasionally resulted in bidding wars and revealed considerable agricultural prosperity.³⁴ In the summer auction of November 1853, the district of Itagua had an initial asking price of 850 pesos (that of Villa Rica, on the high end, was 2960 pesos) and garnered a final bid amounting to almost twice the original asking price. Frequently, however, a district commanded a bid just above the original estimate, as did Itagua in the summer auction of 1854.³⁵ Occasionally, when yields or prices seemed dubious, a district did not receive a bid at all. Then the duty of the tithe collection fell to local commandants, who tried selling the contributions for at least the minimum amount.³⁶ The November auction for the summer harvest produced steady returns, however, and between 1853 and 1862 rising speculation in that auction indicated growing confidence in good harvests. During that period, the government's total expected earnings on the auction leapt from over 17,000 pesos to over 60,000 pesos. By 1857, the district of Villa Rica was raking in final bids of over 11,000 pesos on the auction. The small district of Pilar, priced at 395 pesos in 1853, was to command a minimum bid just above 2200 in 1862. The summer auction as a whole saw fluctuating surplus gains from 2600 to 11,000 pesos over expected earnings between 1853 and 1856. In the two years following, these gains spiked to fantastic levels, over two to 2.3 times above basic earnings, surpassing 33,000 and 45,000 pesos in 1857 and 1858, respectively. The surpluses remained above 20,000 pesos annually for the next four years. In 1853, the auction collected for the state treasury over 19,000 pesos. In 1862, the government earnings on the summer harvest tithe surpassed 92,000 pesos, a record

³⁴For example of such bidding wars, see the exchange of notarized bids for the district of Luque in the 1858 auction on the summer harvest tithe, ANA-SNE vol. 1567, as cited above.

³⁵See Almonedas de diezmo del verano, ANA-SNE vols. 3155 and 3159, as cited above.

³⁶See, for example, Recaudación del diezmo de frutos, Villa del Rosario, October 1853, ANA-SNE vol. 3260; Recaudación del diezmo de cuatropea, Pilar, 1855, ANA-SNE vol. 3173.

amount.³⁷ The returns of the much smaller winter auction also trended upward in the period.³⁸

The annual auctions on the livestock tithe sustained less consistent returns, for the state and dealers alike, over the same decade. It even lagged some years, with numerous districts failing to receive a sufficient bid from brokers above the estimated price. In 1851, final earnings for the state were 3000 pesos below those projected in the auction. There were fewer areas of production and fewer contributors overall for the livestock tithe, which pertained in general only to holdings of ten or more cattle, horses, or sheep. Most residents of the territory did not have that many animals of any one kind, and in fact the vast majority owned fewer than fifty head of livestock. Those more well-to-do, on the other hand, often had holdings numbering in the hundreds or even thousands, revealing the concentration of wealth in the countryside.³⁹ Perhaps due to the frequency of disease among animals, bidders for collection of the diezmo on livestock were cautious, but their doubts largely dissipated by the latter half of the 1850s as increasing yields escalated speculation and multiplied state proceeds. In May 1856, the livestock tithe auction produced earnings of around 25,000 pesos. In June 1859, these proceeds had soared to a peak of over 70,000 pesos and high earnings continued through 1862.⁴⁰

³⁷See the compilation of totals on the auctions for the summer harvest tithe, 1853-62, as cited above in note 32. It is important to note that subsequent payments were made by bidding merchants roughly half in specie and half in paper money.

³⁸For earnings for specific years 1857-58 on the winter harvest tithe, see ANA-SNE vols. 2771, 3182.

³⁹See, for examples, the 1857 livestock tithe rolls for Villa Rica, Caapucu, Paraguari, Concepcion, and Villa del Rosario (where the López family also contributed to the tithe from their estancias) in ANA-SNE vol. 3044. Records for later years and other pueblos are also found in ANA-SNE vol. 3055, ANA-SNE vol. 3053, ANA-SNE vol. 3245.

⁴⁰See the compilation of totals for the livestock tithe auctions as cited in note 32. Compare these earnings from those expected a decade earlier, which did not reach 7,000 total pesos, as cited in Juan Bautista Rivarola, *El régimen jurídico de la tierra*, 170.

These were astronomical sums for the average peasant laborer, whose integration into a cash economy remained partial at best. A woman managing a modest household, for example, might see only fractions of a peso come her way each week. Most subsistence farmers could only pay in kind, with their manioc, maize, beans, tobacco, or rice.⁴¹ Yet their accumulated payments generated the tens of thousands of pesos circulating from retailers, to brokers, to the state treasury, funding the mercantile and political elite of the country. And payment of this wealth extracted from the red soil of Paraguay was the spiritual obligation of all parishioners, as the López regimes reminded them in a stream of decrees and publications.

A primary-school textbook of the early 1860s addressed, among other civil-religious obligations, the duty to contribute the tithe. This standard, state-printed text was a curious reproduction of a late-colonial political catechism written in 1784 by the bishop of the Argentine province of Tucumán, José Antonio de San Alberto, with slight amendments to address the realities of independent Paraguay. This phenomenon was not too unusual. Governments throughout nineteenth-century Spanish America continued to disseminate political and religious catechisms of colonial tradition, both old and new, as time-trusted, educative tools inculcating sanctioned belief and virtue by rote. Carlos Antonio López updated and issued one in 1855.⁴² The reworked catechism of 1784 was issued by the

⁴¹A tax roll for the summer harvest tithe from 1843 provides example of the differentiated payments—cash and staples—with the majority contributing from their harvests and the more well-to-do typically paying the tithe in money, see *Cuenta de los diezmos de frutos de invierno y cuatropea del partido de Limpio correspondientes al año 1843*, ANA-SNE vol. 3136. Whigham describes the partial, if growing, monetized economy of the late-colonial Paraguayan countryside, *The Politics of River Trade*, 18. Indeed, if popular pawning and gambling habits are any indication, people regularly advanced horses as well as ponchos and other valuables to both acquire and accumulate capital, if even just for a few coin pesos to place on a bet. See the specific cases: *Causa judicial contra el esclavo Ciriaco por robo*, Quiquío, 1866-67, ANA-SNE vol. 1720, foja 1-13; *Proceso contra José Francisco Toledo por vago y ladron*, 1853, ANA-SCJ vol. 1566, n. 2, foja 21-40.

⁴²*Catecismo político y social* (1855) as reprinted in *Cuadernos Republicanos* (Asunción), no. 12 (1976): 175-80. For other examples of post-independence political catechisms in Latin America, see the case of Chile as documented in Ricardo Donoso, *El catecismo político cristiano* (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Universitaria,

government of his son, Francisco Solano. A revised portion of it reminded school children that just about everyone in Paraguay was subject to the tithe and that not to pay in full was a sin. The text did conceal that the proceeds went to the national treasury, and yet, quoting San Ambrocio, it specified that to evade the tax made Paraguayans “subject to all the threats of God against those who do not pay diezmos,” resulting in “poverty, pestilence, and death,” as well as, ultimately, damnation.⁴³

Despite such grave implications, some parishioners searched for ways to effectively hide their earnings. A suit filed by prominent diezmo broker Luis Valdovinos in 1859 against several recalcitrant residents of San Lorenzo de la Frontera gives an idea of various evasion tactics. Many people resorted to the common practice called, in Guaraní, *oñembotavy*, “playing stupid.” Two residents claimed that they were ignorant of the requirement to tithe on chickens and did not mention them to the collector because he did not ask. Another said that he was unaware of what he exactly owed because, coming from an old Indian pueblo, he was unaccustomed to paying the tithe altogether. Others asserted that they had lost nearly all their crop to weather or thieves—while caught hiding piles of watermelons in the house, for example, or failing to report manioc cultivated on sharecropped land. One man protested that he had left his maize tithe in the field and that it was the collector’s fault not to have gotten it. Valdovinos himself reported the more subtle ingenuity of those who claimed deductions for

1943), and Walter Hanisch Espindola, *El catecismo politico-cristiano: Las ideas y la epoca, 1810* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Andres Bello, 1970).

⁴³ *Catecismo de San Alberto: Adaptado para las escuelas del Paraguay*, Gobierno de Francisco Solano López, ed. Margarita Durán Estragó (Asunción: Intercontinental editor, 2005), 60-67. For additional defense of the diezmo law by the Paraguayan state, which emphasized its promotion of religion, see “Ley de diezmos,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 30 January 1864. Importantly, Brading notes that the Spanish crown had received by sixteenth-century papal grant legal jurisdiction over tithe collection in its New World territories. However, by common practice, collection and administration of the tithe was delegated to ecclesiastical officials in the dioceses. Only by the late eighteenth-century did the crown try to assert jurisdiction over the direct collection and administration of the tithe, see *Church and State in Bourbon Mexico*, 214-15. The López regime seemed to be asserting these same rights over tithe collection, as it did with the patronato real.

seeds and tools.⁴⁴ Evading the full brunt of the tithe seems to have been fairly common. Still, the threat of damnation had some effect. In Villa Rica, pangs of conscience compelled one parishioner to admit to his priest in the confessional that he had deliberately failed to pay on a livestock tithe, having hid some of his holdings. Repentant, he anonymously forwarded to the local commandant a peso and two reales to cover his debt to God and the state.⁴⁵

God and the state both profited handsomely. Actual expenditures on the salaries of clergy and the maintenance and construction of churches seldom surpassed fifty percent of total proceeds each year. In particular, the specie and bills pouring into the state treasury from the thriving business of the diezmo trade mostly just accumulated there. By 1855, per the statement on the books, the diezmo account had over 100,000 pesos in specie alone, along with another 80,000 plus in paper money.⁴⁶ On occasion, Carlos Antonio López decreed that the collected yields of whole districts go to replenish state stores and estancias. This particularly became the case at times with the livestock tithe. In 1857, the president declared that the livestock tithe for the entire country that year was to go to restock the herds of government ranches. Local commandants seared the brand of the state estancia, “the mark of the patria,” onto the animals to be taken in the tithe, leaving them under the care of the contributor, to be collected later that year.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Expediente de recurso de Luis Valdovinos, 1859, foja 1-10.

⁴⁵The diezmo ledger specifically noted this contribution from 23 July 1852, Cuaderno del la caja de diezmos, ANA-SNE vol. 2997. Juan Bautista Rivarola cites one official decree suggesting that complaints of tithe evasion were perhaps somewhat common, *El régimen jurídico de la tierra*, 173.

⁴⁶ Expenditures and proceeds as compiled from the diezmo ledger, 1852-55, Cuaderno del la caja de diezmos, ANA-SNE vol. 2997.

⁴⁷ANA-SNE vol. 3044.

Along with the adjudication of suicide, this extraction and accumulation of wealth from the countryside had state authority tread further, with tangible resonance, onto the spiritual lives of parishioners in the territory. The regime of Carlos Antonio López was undertaking the institutional revival of the provincial church while also extending state control over an ecclesiastical apparatus. The reconstituted levy of the diezmo tithe was financing the project, to which we now turn more directly.

Making a National Church

Strictly from the perspective of statecraft, the church had long proved an essential apparatus of rule in Spanish America, one that the López regime was striving to appropriate. To properly fashion this apparatus, though, the regime necessarily invested in the brick-and-mortar building of ecclesiastical infrastructure and the making of a native-born clergy, as well as the refashioning of the diocesan hierarchy and governance with Vatican recognition. The consolidation of an ecclesiastical domain to mirror the nation and underpin the state was not a superfluous concern. It was crucial for a state managing a frontier society, whose political independence remained a tenuous matter, enabling it to channel the religiosity of the Paraguayan people toward the end of nationhood.

Nation and Diocese

The making of a national church began, most definitively, with the refashioning of its hierarchy and governance on regime terms. In practice, Carlos Antonio López preferred a subordinate body of diocesan authorities that allowed him to dictate many matters himself. He had inherited from his predecessor, Dr. Francia, de facto power to wield much of this

influence already. What he did not inherit was a competent and compliant body of diocesan authority with sanction from the papacy. And without this, he lacked a church apparatus with appropriate legitimacy, in his own eyes as well as those of others, at home and abroad. Francia had severed relations with the Vatican, and López re-opened these relations as a fundamental measure to revive the diocese.⁴⁸

It is important to appreciate how the López regime held to the old juridical fiction of two separate, if conjoined, jurisdictions of church and state. It gladly assumed the wisdom of the Spanish empire, asserting its civil authority as only a protector and patron of the Catholic Church in its territory and declaring the Catholic faith a state religion. The López state also consequently claimed as imperial inheritance the *patronato real*, the old right of the Spanish crown to appoint all church officials and clergy throughout the realm. Papal recognition of such claims promised to substantiate the premise that the regime only aspired, in the words of the textbook mentioned previously, to “unite its temporal authority with that of the spiritual, and have both walk in harmony for the good of the Church and the Patria.”⁴⁹

The Vatican never officially granted the *patronato real* to the López government or most other independent states in Latin America, which made similar claims.⁵⁰ Suspensions among papal officials about the domineering intentions of the López family persisted throughout its time in power. Nevertheless, when in the early 1840s the López government reestablished diplomatic correspondence with the Vatican and petitioned the Pope for the recognition of several clerical nominees, this and other amended requests received papal approval. Despite

⁴⁸Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado*, 24-25.

⁴⁹As asserted in the *Catecismo de San Alberto*, 32-37. Also see Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado*, 72-73, 81-92.

⁵⁰Specific agreements for a limited patronato were established between the Vatican and some post-colonial Spanish American regimes, such as in Ecuador and Guatemala, which proved compliant to papal demands for respect of church autonomy and wealth, see Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America*, 174-83.

reservations, Rome seemed anxious to re-establish contact and influence with a Catholic province previously gone astray. Then in 1844, López advanced a petition to the Vatican to sanction his nominated appointees for the head and auxiliary bishoprics of the diocese and again obtained approval. The nominated and later consecrated head bishop of the territory, in fact, was the president's own brother, Basilio López. Clerical ambition did run in the family. Basilio, along with another brother of the president, had formerly been Franciscan friars but were forcibly secularized as parish priests under Francia. Carlos himself had studied and later taught in the local seminary, before its closure, while pursuing a legal education. The precepts of canon law had supplied his most basic notions of jurisprudence and the proper conduct of political rule. He saw the value of a healthy and closely-aligned church apparatus in the country and almost instinctively sought to keep positions of its authority in the family. This show of nepotism, widely practiced by the regime anyway, was also something of an innovation. Never before could a native-born cleric have expected to receive such a high post of ecclesiastical authority in the province. Colonial custom had always reserved the diocesan hierarchy for foreigners. A Guaraní-speaking former Franciscan friar was thus catapulted to govern the Paraguayan diocese. Basilio was commonly called "Bishop of the Republic."⁵¹

Foreign observers often considered him a patsy. One visiting emissary from the Vatican depicted Basilio as a virtual prisoner of his brother's will. Another commentator, a Spanish publicist and playwright, Ildefonso Bermejo, who worked closely with the regime during the late 1850s, later described him as a semi-senile old man who passed hours playing guitar and

⁵¹Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado*, 27-51, 118-35. Significantly, the bishops were allowed to declare their loyalty to the pope as well as the state.

singing.⁵² Even as caricatures, these depictions confirmed the image of a bishop subordinate to the dictates of his brother, the president. Frequently Basilio just repeated as ecclesiastical mandates civil decrees already issued by Carlos. In fact, the president meddled all the time in the basic administration of church matters: where to assign a priest, where to build a church, and how to divide the jurisdiction of different parishes. They were all duties exercised as part of the presumption of state patronage, decidedly not left to the care of Basilio. Following presidential orders (and republican sensibilities), Basilio agreed not to wear the traditional mitre of his office nor compel people to bow in reverence as he passed through the streets. Carlos did not want any confusion as to which brother was in control. Basilio further complied to moderate the pomp and excess of exclusively church functions.⁵³

Still, Basilio along with his consecrated auxiliary Marco Antonio Maíz, were fulfilling important matters of governance for the territory as a whole. They helped to revive the juridical arm of the church, upon which the state still depended. The church regulated the documentation and arbitration of the fundamental rites and passages of life among parishioners—birth and baptism, marriage and death—and it kept the corresponding archives. The revived church reconstituted an ecclesiastical court adjudicating marriage disputes, for which Basilio served as the supreme magistrate. His office inspected church facilities and guided proper religious observance in official visits to parishes in the countryside. It carried out the sacrament of confirmation for hundreds of parishioners at a time in these visits. It issued from Asunción instructions in pastoral letters on official prayers and sermons to be pronounced from the pulpit in every parish of the diocese. And critically

⁵²José Ignacio Víctor Eyzaguirre, *Los intereses católicos en América* (Paris: Librería de Garnier Hermanos, 1859), 212-16; Bermejo, *Republicas americanas*.

⁵³Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado*, 78-79, 93-94, 101-05.

in this judicial role, Basilio also provided canonical ratification consecrating new priests for the diocese.⁵⁴

The “Bishop of the Republic” mounted legal and administrative scaffolding of immense usefulness to the regime. The refortification of ecclesiastical governance in the diocese had proceeded with the reform of civil governance in general that Carlos Antonio López had undertaken. Carlos had consolidated control of the Paraguayan state after the death of Dr. Francia in 1840, serving first as one of two interim consuls, then by 1844 orchestrating his ascension to the office of constitutional president, whereas his predecessor had ruled by fiat under the title of Supreme Dictator. Initially more a matter of style than of substance, the reform nonetheless seriously aspired to more republican government. A legislative assembly in 1842 had taken initial steps to officially re-declare the independence of the republic as well as proclaim a tricolor national flag and seals replete with Enlightenment symbolism. López’s rise to the presidency in 1844 was declared by a legislative assembly (carefully guided by López) and came with a constitution reserving for the executive autocratic powers while also requiring the formation of national congresses every five years to approve presidential mandate and, in effect, re-elect him to power. It was this constitution of 1844 that also had declared the presidential right of patronage over the “national church” and had him swear before congress upon his election “to protect the Apostle Roman Catholic Religion as the only one of the state.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado*, 136-37, 198-200. Potthast cites parish registers for statistics on birth and marriage and logs of marriage impediment cases as well, see ‘*Paraíso de Mahoma*’ o ‘*País de las mujeres*’, 85-89, 167-74, 198-202, 406-7. For specific example of the latter see volumes for years 1852-53, AAA, Impedimentos Matrimoniales. Parish registers were subsequently inspected during a bishop’s visits, see Visitas pastorales a las parroquias de la Capital y la campaña por Obispo López, 1850, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López. For example of a parish register with hand-copied archive of pastoral letters, see Libro parroquial de Caapucu, Borrador de cartas pastorales, 1852-64, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López.

The mutual institutional fortification of diocese and republic proceeded to develop in other prominent ways. López had subsequently created government ministries of treasury and war to help administer the state, filling their posts with trusted clients and family. The treasury ministry oversaw the auctions and collections of the diezmo financing the diocesan church (and fattening state coffers), as we have seen. López organized local governance in the countryside with the appointed military commandants and justices whose districts largely corresponded to individual church parishes. He acquired a printing press and published manifestos and the first-ever state newspapers, blessed in official mass and often read from the pulpit, but also sent abroad.⁵⁶ He sent out diplomatic emissaries and correspondence seeking official recognition of Paraguayan independence from neighbors and North Atlantic powers alike, just as he had reopened ties to the Vatican. During the 1840s and early 1850s, Brazil, Great Britain, the United States, and even Argentina, whose leaders for decades had considered Paraguay only a breakaway province, conceded diplomatic recognition.

In 1853, the president sent his son Francisco Solano to Europe in the first direct diplomatic mission from Paraguay to the continent, principally with the charge to further develop commercial and political ties with powers France and England. Over eight thousand pesos worth of gold extracted from the diezmo account helped to finance the mission. The younger López was to travel to the Vatican for an audience with the Pope, carrying another

⁵⁵As cited in the *Catecismo de San Alberto*, 32-33. Williams describes the political-administrative overhaul of the López regime, *The Rise and Fall of the Paraguayan Republic*, 101-38; as does Whigham, *The Politics of River Trade*, 52-63. Heinz Peters specifically discusses the liberal-republican formalities of the 1844 constitution as well as those of early political treatises written by Carlos Antonio López, which also proclaims the state defender of the church and Paraguay as a “Christian republic,” see *El sistema educativo paraguayo desde 1811 hasta 1865* (Asunción: Instituto Cultural Paraguayo-Aleman, 1996), 102-09.

⁵⁶The first state newspaper was largely written and edited by Carlos Antonio López and directed toward securing recognition of Paraguayan political independence, *Paraguay Independiente* (Asunción), first published in 1845. On the religious sanction of Paraguayan state presses as well as their role in the projection of a sense of modern nationhood to the world, see my unpublished paper “Youth on the Edge of the Storm: Liberalism and Paraguay Before the Triple Alliance War, 1858-1864.”

petition to confirm the state nominee for the new auxiliary bishop of the diocese, Gregorio Urbietta. In Rome, Francisco Solano endured the diplomatic rebuff of never receiving the audience and conducting his exchanges with a papal secretary. The secretary did accept the petition, however, and it was approved months later with a corresponding papal bull.⁵⁷ The government of Carlos Antonio López was enjoying de facto patronage over its diocesan church, helping to build the overall institutional strength and recognition of the republic itself.⁵⁸

Even so, the institutional decay of the Francia years (continuing from late colonial times) had taken its toll and its evidence of abandon persisted well into the 1850s. Inhabitants saw the crumbling, literally, in the parish churches. The meager temple in Salvador, for example, was not unique in its structural limitations. Its problems at least were presumably the consequence of hasty construction for a recently re-founded parish. A pastoral visit by Bishop López in 1850 to the more established parishes surrounding the capital reported various other churches that made congregants suffer for their small dimensions, lack of shelter from sun and rain, and dust lifted from the floor clinging to clothes, hair, and skin. Some churches also lacked adequate bells, so necessary to call for prayers and mass, marking people's knowledge of the time of day. Pieces of broken and ill-formed religious images sometimes littered altars and shrines. A couple of parishes had yet to establish adequate public cemeteries, one of which was overflowing, with cadavers of poor folk buried one on top of another and "emitting an unbearable stink." Similarly, in 1848, the caretaker of the

⁵⁷For specifics on the securing of diplomatic recognition of European powers as well as the 1853-54 diplomatic trip to Europe and the Vatican by Francisco Solano López, see Peter Schmitt, *Paraguay y Europa 1811-1870*, trans. Frank M. Samson (Asunción: 1990), 33-70. For the 500 gold ounces packed for the trip, see year 1853, Cuaderno de la caja de diezmos, ANA-SNE vol. 2997.

⁵⁸Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado*, 98-99.

parish church of Villa Rica reported problems of such disrepair that the president ordered the it temporarily closed.⁵⁹ Clergy also remained scarce.

People had fallen into customs that violated official norms of proper religious conduct. In pastoral letters Bishop López complained repeatedly of persistent ignorance among parishioners concerning basic precepts of Catholic faith. Illegitimate births and informal unions had grown as common as mosquitoes and mangos in the summertime.⁶⁰ Even those seeking the legitimating rites of marriage often still did so under problematic circumstances. It was common for a man looking to marry to have had previous sexual encounters with a sister, a cousin, or an aunt of his intended spouse, considered impediments to marriage under canon law.⁶¹ In 1845 the president decreed an end to Holy Friday processions that paraded and moved a figurine of the crucified Christ in exaggerated ways, allegedly dramatizing his agony on the cross, along with sounds of hammers and screams produced by the parishioners who followed. In his pastoral visit of 1850, Bishop López had taken note in several churches of “very indecent and inappropriate images that provoked more laughter than devotion.” He ordered them removed. In 1860 he admonished church musicians who strummed festive melodies during funeral services or gathered in the temple after mass for impromptu music

⁵⁹See entries for the visited parishes of Lambaré, San Lorenzo, Capiata, Villeta, Villa de Oliva, San José de Arroyos, and Ajos, *Visitas pastorales a las parroquias de la Capital y la campaña por Obispo López*, 1850, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López. For report of the disrepair of the Villa Rica parish church, see *Informe del Mayordomo de la Iglesia Francisco Antonio Doldan y el comandante Miguel Jose Rojas a CAL*, November 1848, *Correspondencia de Villa Rica*, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 471-73.

⁶⁰See, for example, Carta pastoral, 12 October 1853, Libro parroquial de Caapucu, Borrador de cartas pastorales, 1852-64, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López; Carta pastoral, 21 February 1851, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Decretos, Carpeta: Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López. Also see Acosta, *Carlos Antonio López*, 612-15. Potthast details the persistent high percentage of illegitimate births in the countryside in her statistical compilations of birth records of specific pueblos, ‘*Paraíso de Mahoma*’ o ‘*País de las mujeres*’, 366-67.

⁶¹1852, AAA, *Impedimentos Matrimoniales*.

parties. He also prohibited, most likely in vain, constant coming and going during the celebration of mass itself.⁶²

Some deviations from sanctioned piety, however, were more serious. An incident in 1854 indicated that residents of the old Indian pueblo of Atyra went about stealing consecrated hosts from the sanctuaries of nearby parish churches for “superstitious and sacrilegious uses.” Both president and bishop signaled their disgust at the practice and called for priests to keep the sacramental host under closer care.⁶³ Nonetheless, in 1851 it was even Bishop López who had initially consented to a request from a parishioner of nearby Tobatí, also an old Indian pueblo, to receive ecclesiastical burial rites while still alive and apparently in good health. The petitioner seemed to have some influence with the bishop and presumably the priest would be available when he actually died. He claimed that the measure had precedent in the countryside, but the president, who found the notion ridiculous, overruled his brother, nullified the request, and banned it from ever receiving official consideration again

Many Catholic folkways (and customs of indigenous origin as well) continued vigorously with or without church guidance. Faithful prayers of the rosary said each evening, the observance of feast days, the devotion to the Virgin, the personal veneration of saints and their images in makeshift shrines in homes, along the side of roads, or even deep in the woods—all were well-worn religious habits. Strings of rosary beads and crucifixes regularly circulated as objects of precious (and monetary) value. Religious lay brotherhoods also had

⁶²Acosta, *Carlos Antonio López*, 630-31. See entries for Caraguatay and Altos, *Visitas pastorales a las parroquias de la Capital y la campaña por Obispo López*, 1850, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López. Carta pastoral, 6 August 1860, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Obispo Juan Gregorio Urbieto.

⁶³Carta pastoral, 28 June 1854, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López.

survived from colonial times.⁶⁴ All were signs of the resilient popular religiosity that the López regime hoped to appropriate, discipline, and channel through the construction of a national church.

Building Churches, Building Railroads, and Praying for the Nation

Reconstruction of church buildings served this purpose prominently. It directed religious reverence toward the spatial focus of state power, the plaza of every town and village. Parish churches not only hosted acts of communal worship but also housed the images which were objects of so much popular devotion. The regime commissioned the reconstruction of the main cathedral in Asunción as its first major building project of the diocesan revival. Begun in 1843, even before Carlos Antonio López's formal ascendance to a presidency, it was finished in 1848, a commanding presence on the main plaza of the capital, lateral to the house of government where López conducted the affairs of state. These two buildings sprouted out of a mostly bare landscape descending toward the river, and no other structures nearby were nearly as tall or large. Only the bell towers of churches uphill from the river overtopped them in Asunción.⁶⁵ And with the completion of the cathedral, the regime commenced improvements on those churches. Building began on a substantial church for the parish immediately bordering that of the cathedral, San Roque. Officials also gathered

⁶⁴Edward Wright-Rios highlights the often divergent currents of popular and institutional religiosity, *Revolutions in Mexican Catholicism: Reform and Revelation in Oaxaca, 1887-1934* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009). On the strong currents of popular religiosity that survived the institutional upheaval and destruction of the Triple Alliance War, see Telesca, *Pueblo, curas y Vaticano: La reorganización de la Iglesia paraguaya después de la Guerra contra la Triple Alianza, 1870-1880* (Asunción: Fondec, 2007), 55-59. Glimpses of this independent popular religiosity—praying of the rosary, observance of religious feast days—emerge in the testimony of judicial cases. See, for example, Proceso a Magdalena y Patricia López por el suicidio de Benedicto López, San Lorenzo, 1856, ANA-SCJ vol. 1430, n.5, fojas 90-92 (cited above); Proceso contra Juan de la Cruz Ortigoza por herir a su mujer y otras personas, 1853, ANA-SCJ vol. 1553, n. 1, foja 4-17.

⁶⁵Acosta, *Carlos Antonio López*, 573-78.

materials and workers for a large project in neighboring San Lorenzo. Then, just on the northern outskirts of the capital, near the country home of the president, work also started on a grand temple for the recently consolidated parish of Trinidad. The regime soon initiated other construction and renovation projects in parishes of the countryside as well.⁶⁶

These diezmo-financed building projects centered the renovation of diocese and republic in the immediate environs of Asunción, circulating currency to brick makers, carpenters, masons, artisans, and painters. They were visibly *national* projects. Soldiers and convicts did much of the heavy lifting. Both the main cathedral and the church of Trinidad carried the national seal—with stars, laurels, and letterings—on their front arches. Inside that of the Trinidad, the ceiling above the principal altar showed an alegorical Liberty lifting her sword, surrounded by the new tricolor national flag.⁶⁷ The regime recorded its patronage of the diocesan church—and thus affirmed the spiritual permanence of the republic—on the walls of its most prominent temples built in the capital. The clergy officiating within them led prayers for the health of the president, his family, and the republic as a whole.

This movement of men and material joined the general bustle of the modernizing capital, particularly after 1852, when river trade and international commerce significantly expanded. There was a heavy traffic of oxcarts delivering bricks, lumber, and sustenance for workers—manioc and beef—as well as the mobilized labor itself of soldiers, convicts, drafted peons, and state slaves. The government was also constructing many other new facilities for its use—jails, armories, barracks, docks, and port buildings. In the port, the buzz of saws and the pounding of hammers signaled the construction of boats and canoes to move the goods of

⁶⁶As compiled from the diezmo ledger, 1852-55, Cuaderno del la caja de diezmos, ANA-SNE vol. 2997.

⁶⁷Ricardo Pavetti, *La integración nacional del Paraguay (1750-1850)* (Asunción: Biblioteca de Estudios Paraguayos-Volumen 69, 2008), 445-49.

accelerating commerce. A new iron foundry of the state in Ybycuí cast metal frames for the assembly in the port of more substantial crafts, and eventually material for steamships with new machinery coming in from Europe. The increasing wealth of the López family, with their overwhelming stake in state resources and trade, had the president and his sons raising elaborate residences along the streets just above the main plaza. Later in the decade the regime also commissioned, with an Italian architect, the construction of a lavish presidential palace in neoclassical style. British technicians and steam-rail technology even allowed the state to begin laying one of the first railroad lines in the entire continent. Many of the finished structures carried republican iconography.⁶⁸

The rising splendor of churches, state residences, and steam technology helped to condense the reality of diocese and republic in conjoined revival for many living and passing through the orbit of the capital each day. The regime still had the task of reproducing, in varying degrees, a physical semblance of the revival in country villages, sites of crumbling churches and encroaching wilderness, as we have seen. Local officials assembled their public work gangs to clean town plazas, build new houses of government, and clear new roads. They were also drafting labor and requisitioning materials and animals for the construction and renovation of parish churches supplemented by resources provided from Asunción. These temples were to recover their own prominent places in the main town plazas. By the early 1850s, several such projects, major overhauls and small improvements alike, had commenced in Carajao, Guarambare, Arroyos, Carapegua, Quindy, and Villeta. More sturdy church edifices in other pueblos received new furnishings, musical instruments, religious

⁶⁸See Acosta, *Carlos Antonio López*, 116-286; Whigham, *The Politics of River Trade*, 63-74; Williams, *The Rise and Fall*, 177-88.

ornaments, and bells, likewise supplied from the government.⁶⁹ In Villa Rica, building also began on a new central church to replace its failing structure. The government also moved to create new parish districts and construct temples for dependent hamlets surrounding Villa Rica, in Mbocayaty and Yataity, with the local commandant surveying the location for the construction and marking the boundaries of the new parish by creeks and hillsides.⁷⁰ By the mid-1850s, the president had also finally sanctioned the construction of a new temple in the northern village of Salvador, as originally requested by the besieged ex-commandant Venancio Candia.⁷¹

The countryside, too, was bustling. By the end of the decade, the north saw more of the occasional traffic of steamships from Asunción passing alongside on the Paraguay River, moving men and goods along with other river crafts of the yerba trade. Much of the activity was associated with Paraguay's growing army. A major garrison was forming at Concepción, where area recruits for the regular army were sent to train. Major army encampments were growing in the southwest near Pilar and in the southeast near Encarnación. The state railroad soon reached past the outskirts of the capital, beginning its wind around the inland lake of Ypacarai and toward Villa Rica, bound to forge new parishes from hamlets where it stationed. The railroad was principally to serve the increasing military mobilization of the countryside underway. Likewise, just a few kilometers south of Pilar, near the confluence of the Paraguay and Parana rivers, the regime had constructed a military fortress, at a sharp bend in the waterway where lied the riverside pueblo of Humaita, to guard the principal

⁶⁹See, again, the diezmo ledger, 1852-55, Cuaderno del la caja de diezmos, ANA-SNE vol. 2997. President López frequently noted new church constructions and renovations in his addresses to congressional assemblies, see Acosta, *Carlos Antonio López*, 582-86.

⁷⁰ Various letters, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 675-78.

⁷¹Informe de Daniel Chuna a Carlos Antonio López, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 564.

passage into the territory of the republic. Bulwarks and cannons now overlooked the bend. And just within the fortified walls, there too arose the construction of a new parish church. The inauguration of the fortress and church was a major state ceremony attended by the president and his leading son, Francisco Solano, who was now the Minister of War. Bishop Urbietta too was present to officiate the central mass of the festivities consecrating the compound, which featured the ordination of a handful of new priests for the republic.⁷² Robust armies, railroads, and steamboats all made for cherished emblems of Progress and Civilization of the day, evidence of a modern liberal republic on the rise.

Education was another cherished emblem of liberal progress. The state advanced resources to build and maintain public school houses. Militia commandants and justices then appointed local schoolteachers and oversaw their progress with semi-regular reports sent to Asunción. The schools being established were nearly all for primary education, to teach rudiments of reading and writing, and some arithmetic, and only to boys. The patriarchal state saw no need to educate girls. Still, the regime professed the ideal of providing a public and free primary education for young boys where it could muster resources, paying teachers modest salaries from the state treasury. It also expected the inhabitants of interior districts to supplement the sustenance and pay of the teachers. Many schoolteachers still languished in material poverty. Rural parents were reluctant to contribute the supplements and often pulled their sons from school when their labor was needed at home. The system was inconsistent and typically more well established in and around Asunción, where many private primary schools were also emerging.⁷³

⁷²Whigham, *The Paraguayan War*, 180-89. For the ordination of priests at the Humaita consecration, see files for Francisco Hermogenes Flores, Juan Bautista Cespedes, and Policarpo Paez in AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro 1861-1862.

Where they functioned, however, public schools taught basic doctrines of Catholic faith. Crucifixes usually hung at the front of classrooms before rows of benches and tables. To practice writing, students copied Spanish phrases repeating pious morals of obedience to parents and authorities. Some of their textbooks were revised catechisms, as we have seen, and schoolteachers had the charge to impose on students a sort of patriarchal triumvirate of civic-religious virtue: “To have them know and follow the devotion owed to the Supreme Being and religion, the respect owed to Your Excellency and the Patria, and the obedience to parents and superiors.”⁷⁴

This official piety was also much rehearsed in public prayers. Both clergy and civil authorities offered prayers at fiestas and bailes and many other sorts of public events, solemn and gay.⁷⁵ The collective act of prayer for the sake of rulers and the republic bore particular power to foment feelings of nationhood. A barefoot mother or a male laborer, regardless of their literacy, could join in public prayers. Just the congregated presence of people during these official prayers seemed an endorsement of collective identity. When in January 1850, Bishop López announced in a letter his intention to make an official *visita* to parishes of the capital and surrounding pueblos of the interior, mentioned above, he detailed to clergy how to prepare parishioners to receive the sacrament of confirmation but also asked them to have parishioners pray for the “happiness and conservation of the Republic and for the wisdom of

⁷³As cited in chapter 1. Peters provides the most detailed description and analysis of the Paraguayan education system during the López years, emphasizing its religious bearings, *El sistema educativo paraguayo*, 122-36.

⁷⁴For example of religious texts reproduced in school writing exercises, see *Varios consejos de los sacerdotes a los fieles, dados en el partido de Atyra*, 1856, ANA-SNE vol. 2748.

⁷⁵Explicit instructions in this regard were given by Bishop Urbieta, see Carta pastoral, 6 May 1863, Libro parroquial de Caapucu, Borrador de cartas pastorales, 1852-64, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López. For earlier examples of prayers said for president and republic during civic celebrations, see *Varios informes jueces de paz a Carlos Antonio López*, ANA-SH vol. 312, n. 8, foja 34, 39-40, 52, 59.

the Excellency Señor President of the Republic.” On the stops of this official visita, Bishop López performed the confirmations while indeed reminding the gathered hundreds of “the sacred cause of our Independence” sustained by the regime.⁷⁶ Pastoral letters issued from the bishopric to the parish priests of the diocese consistently instructed the doctrinal mission to preach the obligation of parishioners to pray for the national government as well as for them to remember their oath “to conserve and defend the independence, sovereignty, and integrity of the Republic.” Their admonitions drew on the centuries-old ecclesiastical wisdom declaring the duty of Christians to submit in obedience to their governing authorities as a foundation of Christian societies. Only now Bishop López had declared such submission was “the lone way that we will be truly free and independent.”⁷⁷ Whenever this independence was seemingly threatened by possible war with neighboring countries, he decreed prayer for the republic’s armies and sermons on love of country and “obedience to the Supreme Chief.”

Bishop López preached much on these themes. He announced that those that “honor the character of Christians and value themselves as true citizens” would accordingly cultivate “this beautiful virtue of obedience that maintains them submissive to God and superiors,” thereby preserving “true religion and love of the patria.”⁷⁸ Good Christians and good citizens were becoming synonymous. An instructional letter from Bishop Maiz had plainly stated this idea a few years earlier: “It is certain that any good Christian is also a good citizen.” He explained further: “The sentiments of a good Christian are those that inspire love of patria,

⁷⁶Carta pastoral, 10 January 1850, Libro parroquial de Piraju, Borrador de cartas pastorales, 1850-61, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López.

⁷⁷As cited in Acosta, *Carlos Antonio López*, 618-19. Also see the discussion in Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado*, 76.

⁷⁸Cartas pastorales, 22 febrero 1855 y 26 May 1857, Libro parroquial de Caapucu, Borrador de cartas pastorales, 1852-64, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López.

which can be understood as nothing more than the ensemble of our altars, our leaders, our laws, our property, our families, and our very lives.”⁷⁹ The nation and republic under formation was consolidating on the basis of a spiritual order touching the lives of parishioners and citizens.

Making a National Clergy

A national church likewise needed clergy who were “sons of the Republic.”⁸⁰ The López regimes began in the 1840s to educate, train, and ordain dozens of native-born Paraguayans, turning parishes of the territory over to a whole new generation of young clerics, paid agents of state rule, by far most of whom only knew life in an independent country. These clerical sons of the Republic created a so-called *presbiterio ciudadano*, a citizen clergy. No more would priests come from Europe or other parts of the Americas as was common during colonial times.

The regime had initially justified its desire for mostly native sons to fill the ranks of a citizen clergy on practical grounds. It had claimed in an 1842 letter to the Vatican that only those who spoke Guaraní could minister to Indian pueblos or to the recently converted.⁸¹ President López indicated his intention to promote Guaraní as a language of clerical instruction. Bishop López was doing the same in pastoral letters sent to the clergy of the countryside, urging them to explain to parishioners “the articles and symbols of our holy

⁷⁹Cited in Acosta, *Carlos Antonio López*, 545-46.

⁸⁰For the expression *hijos de la república* in reference to building a native-born clergy in the diocese, see Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado*, 138.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 150.

Catholic faith” in the “ language of the country.”⁸² Schoolchildren, in some places, even carried with them Christian catechisms *written* in Guaraní.

The creolized language of the countryside was the common medium for regular parishioners to learn the precepts of faith. Upon addressing the sacrament of communion, Paraguayan catechisms asked “Mba’e *jarecevi jacomulgaramo*” (“What do we receive when we commune?”) and “Mba’epa oime *Hosti*ape Pa’i *oconsagrarire*” (What is in the Host after the priest blesses it?) employing Guaraní versions of the expressions of Spanish origin— *recibir* (receive), *comulgar* (commune), *consagrar* (bless). The answer to both questions was: “Ñandejara *JesuCristorete* ha’e huguy marangatu” (“The body of our Lord Jesus Christ and his holy blood”). When another lesson reviewed why “Our Lord” became *karai* (man), the corresponding response expressed the old Catholic belief that he died on the cross out of love “ñandelibra haguã mba’epochy retãgui” (“to liberate us from hell”).⁸³ The citizen clergy employed such hybrid constructions in prayers for republic and rulers and also in sermons exhorting submission to government authority. They used the term *ñane retã* refer to the republic and the obligations it involved.

The Guaraní-speaking sons of the republic were expected to be leading examples of civic piety themselves, of course. This expectation, reflected in the ecclesiastical protocol of ordination, broached questions of individual conduct and piety but also inherited familial honor. And following customary Iberian practices regulating entrance into corporate institutions, public reputation was still determining the honorable pedigrees of candidates for

⁸²Carta pastoral, 12 October 1853, Libro parroquial de Caapucu, Borrador de cartas pastorales, 1852-64, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López; Carta pastoral, 21 February 1851, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Decretos, Carpeta: Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López (cited above).

⁸³Intriguingly, a Brazilian medical officer allegedly found the catechism in a school booklet, dated 30 May 1851, during the campaigns of the Triple Alliance War and eventually passed the document to the scholar Antonio Joaquim de Macedo Soares who had it reproduced in the article “Um manuscrito guarany,” *Revista Trimensal do Instituto Historico, Geographico e Ethnographico do Brasil* 43, no. 1 (1880): 165-89.

the Paraguayan clergy. In this colonial tradition, bloodlines and piety remained wholly conflated qualities, considered intrinsic, but resolved by prevailing opinion among friends and neighbors. These matters would be carefully scrutinized before a candidate's ordination.⁸⁴

Before any potential cleric could apply for his orders, however, he needed an education beyond the basics of reading and writing. In 1840s, the regime founded the *Academia Literaria* with the explicit charge to train future clergy.⁸⁵ Aspirants typically studied two to four years and had to pass numerous public exams along the way. The president himself oversaw both the annual appointment of examiners and the curriculum, which was weighted heavily toward Spanish rhetoric and grammar, as well as practice in translation from Latin to Spanish. "Elements of religion" filled out the curriculum. The best and brightest students received public applause from examiners and approval to move onto the priesthood.⁸⁶ Not all aspirants studied in the Academia, though. Some received private instruction under the tutelage of established clergy or sought approval of studies done in another institution.⁸⁷ One

⁸⁴These bureaucratic formulas stemmed from 15th-16th century Spanish legal practices controlling entrance into corporate bodies and institutions—everything from clergy, to the office of the inquisition, to trade guilds—and were eventually transferred to the Spanish crown's New World holdings. Their practice contributed significantly to burgeoning notions of race in the ordering of empire. See María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), and the discussion below for their continuing racial implications for nineteenth-century Paraguay.

⁸⁵Peters notes that the bulk of secondary educational institutions established in and around the capital post-1840 were oriented toward the training of priests, including, of course, the principal secondary institution of the state, the Academia Literaria, *El sistema educativo paraguayo*, 124-26. See also Acosta, *Carlos Antonio López*, 515-18.

⁸⁶The record of ordination files for priests briefly list the curriculum and exams passed as well honors received, see, for example, José Roman Gonzalez and Manuel Antonio Adorno, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1845-1849; Sebastian Ramon Venegas, Juan Evangelista Barrios, José María Patiño, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1849-1852; José Gregorio Moreno and Juan Vicente Benítez, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1856. The curriculum included books 1-4 of Antonio de Nebrija, the 15th-16th century Spanish lexicographer.

⁸⁷See, for example, the files Bartolome Aguirre and Gregorio Santander, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1845-1849; Juan Vicente Torres, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1849-1852.

way or another, students were expected to acquire mastery of the written word in Spanish and Latin, a crucial element of the clergy's social prestige.

With the completion of studies, aspirants made written petitions to the bishop for acceptance into the priesthood, accompanied by notarized documentation of baptism, confirmation, and education. These formulaic statements affirmed intentions to "serve the Patria" as well as to "serve God."⁸⁸ Candidates were expected to be "loyal to the holy cause of our liberty and the independence of our Republic as well as obedient to the Supreme Leader that presides over us and all other governing authorities dependent on him."⁸⁹ In 1853 a petitioner explained his desire for ordination so as "to better serve God for the reform of life and custom and to work for the spiritual well-being of my compatriots, lending my services to my Patria."⁹⁰ The statements of faithful citizenship in a republic combined with affirmations of inherited social and familial honor born of Spanish colonial tradition.

To ascertain the good moral standing and reputation of candidates the bishop solicited corroborating testimony. Typically, the sitting priest of the candidate's native parish took declarations from three prominent residents who knew the aspirant and his family. These statements too were formulaic, and hardly anyone testifying spoke against a candidate. Even the later infamous José María del Rosario Vargas, when he solicited for his office in 1845, had found three acquaintances in his home town of Luque to vouch for his moral standing and patriotic loyalty. Bishop López abruptly denied the petition, though, upon hearing of

⁸⁸See the file for Nuñez as well as those of Francisco Candido Hermosilla, Juan Francisco Regis Vasquez, José Leon Gavilan, and others for further example, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1856.

⁸⁹These statements were typically found in the public testimony ratifying the good moral standing of candidates during the late 1840s, see the files in AAA, Libros de Orden Sacro, 1845-1849, 1849-1852.

⁹⁰Pedro Pablo Azuaga, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1853. Again, the other files of this volume contain similar statements.

“continuous drunkenness and profane songs on the guitar” that Vargas apparently carried on for most nights in his residence.⁹¹ For all candidates, public testimony had to affirm the good reputation of the family as a whole, concerning whom there was to be no public memory of heresy or blasphemy, with particular emphasis on the petitioner’s legitimate birth.⁹²

Indices of illegitimate births were high in Paraguay, and illegitimacy had long been associated with labels of caste inferiority—*indio*, *pardo*, and *mulato*.⁹³ Aspirants to the clergy accordingly needed testimony affirming that their families were *cristianos viejos*, *limpios*, *ortodoxos* “without mix of strange race” or “strange blood,” in terms of the old Iberian concept of *limpieza de sangre*. Despite the well-known complexity of Paraguayan gene pools, witnesses typically understood the candidate and his family to be *blancos de linaje* and *noble generación* (“white lineage” and “noble generation”) and proclaimed them so.⁹⁴

The affirmations were more than just an unthinking formality inherited from times past. Evidence from the late colonial period suggests that many whose families were once burdened with labels of inferior caste—namely, *indio* and *pardo*—were advancing contentions of whiteness. By the time of political independence in 1811, a majority of Paraguayans called themselves *blancos*, and even more did so in coming decades, particularly after the abolition of Indian pueblos in 1848.⁹⁵ That measure did nothing to erase

⁹¹José María del Rosario Vargas, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1845-1849.

⁹²See the full complement of ordination record files for the continuity of such public questioning and testimony, AAA, Libros de Orden Sacro, 1845-49, 1849-1852, 1853, 1856, 1857-1866, 1861-1862, 1862-1865, 1865-1883.

⁹³For the confluence of hierarchal social values of race, honor, and legitimacy in colonial Spanish America, see Ann Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets: Gender, Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

⁹⁴See specifically in this regard Juan Evangelista Barrios, Geronimo Dolores Ortiz, José María Velasquez, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1849-1852; Santiago Esteban Narvaez, Manuel Ezequiel Galiano, Pedro Leon Caballero, Manuel Antonio Corvalan, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1853.

⁹⁵Telesca, *Tras los expulsos*, 161-97.

caste labels from official proceedings, however, not to mention common parlance. Claims of whiteness could be hard to maintain, as we shall later see. Many former residents from Indian pueblos had Guaraní surnames.⁹⁶ And government notaries still used the terms *blanco*, *indio*, *pardo*, *mulato*, and *negro* in all sorts of official documents.⁹⁷

Blackness remained an especially stigmatizing concept, one that transcended both physical appearance and the importance of African descent in the country's demography. The continued sanction of slavery by the Paraguayan state contributed to this preoccupation. So did the customary practice of organizing free black companies in local militias. And while the López regime had decreed the eventual abolition of slavery in the territory, and the majority of those labeled *pardo* in the country were indeed free blacks, the specter of bondage still informed their status. The Guaraní word *kamba* gave common voice to the linked stigmas of blackness and bondage. Used alternately for slur or endearment, the term served to indicate the status of *pardo*, *mulato*, or slave, or even just to describe a dark complexion.⁹⁸ The presence of the term *kamba* in Guaraní surnames suggests that some

⁹⁶They were typically termed *originarios* of particular old Indian pueblos, see Lista de milicias de Atyra, 1857, ANA-SNE vol. 3238.

⁹⁷This was particularly the case for marriage proceedings, as demonstrated in petitions to absolve marriage impediments, see, for example, files from 1852, AAA, Impedimentos Matrimoniales. Cooney too emphasizes this point in his discussion of marriage disensos, "Desigualdades, disensos, y los españoles americanos de Paraguay, 1776-1845," paper presented at the Segundas Jornadas Internacionales de Historia del Paraguay, Montevideo, 14 June 2010. Caste references however filtered into most mundane notary and legal records of the time, including army recruitment lists—see, for example, Informe de lista de los soldados de al tropa del guarnición de Pilar, regimiento n. 19, Manuel Nuñez, 8 April 1865, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 (II), foja 2094-2101.

⁹⁸See my discussion of the mysterious origins of the term in the context of its later use as a politically and racially charged pejorative against Brazilian soldiers during the Triple Alliance War, Huner "Toikove Ñane Retã!", Republican Nationalism at the Battlefield Crossings of Print and Speech in Wartime Paraguay, 1867-1868," in *Building Nineteenth-century Latin America: Re-rooted Cultures, Identities, and Nations*, ed. William G. Acree and Juan Carlos González Espitia (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009), 85-86. We will return to a discussion of the term *kamba* and its employment during the war in Chapter 5.

families no longer legally considered black still had to acknowledge their African descent.⁹⁹ Declarations of whiteness on behalf of clerical aspirants were often posed against the notion of blood stains from blacks, mulattos, or another “race of lower sphere.”¹⁰⁰ Nonetheless, English traveler Charles Mansfield believed that he spotted a “mulatto man” saying mass in an Asuncion cathedral in the 1850s.¹⁰¹

The observation hints how much reputations of whiteness in the country depended on the eyes of beholders.¹⁰² And one could say, paraphrasing the Brazilian expression, that patriotism (like money) whitened. By the early half of the 1860s, statements explicitly affirming the reputation of candidates and their families as “good citizens and addicts to the public cause, submissive and obedient to national institutions and the supreme authority of the Republic” prominently accompanied traditional avowals of whiteness, honor, and legitimacy in the testimony of friends and neighbors.¹⁰³

Upon receiving final approval of their solicitations, candidates had their consecration performed by the bishops of the republic, typically in the main Cathedral of Asunción with the presence of state authorities. Interestingly, ordinations also occurred on such occasions (and in such places) as the dedication of the fortress of Humaíta. By the mid 1850s, over fifty

⁹⁹See again Lista de milicias de Atyra, 1857, ANA-SNE vol. 3238. Examples include “Cambai” and “Cambay.” Also see the listings of kamba surnames in León Cadogan, *Mil apellidos guaranties: Aporte para el estudio de la onomástica paraguaya* (Asunción: Editorial Tiempo de Historia, 2005), 47. Importantly, the reinforcing connotations of blackness and slavery are noted in the historical formulations of kamba surnames.

¹⁰⁰See, for specific examples, José María Nuñez, Rufina Jara, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1856.

¹⁰¹Mansfield, *Paraguay*, 370-71.

¹⁰²Martínez makes the crucial point that in the Spanish legal tradition as practiced in the Americas, evident racial mixture and public notions of pure lineage were not, ironically, mutually exclusive, see *Genealogical Fictions*.

¹⁰³See the ordination files in AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1862-65.

new “citizen clergy” had been ordained under the regime of Carlos Antonio López.¹⁰⁴ Only the occasional militia officer and local notable were also addressed ceremonially as “citizen” in this fashion, along with president—often referred to as “the great citizen.”¹⁰⁵

The more than sixty new clerics ordained between 1845 and 1860 hailed from a wide range of pueblos in the traditional areas of creole settlement along the Paraguay River basin, although none came from the far north. Nearly a third came from the capital Asunción itself, and most had lived in relative proximity to the center of political power.¹⁰⁶ Several were even natives of traditional Indian pueblos and had Guaraní surnames. The protocol to declare the *limpieza de sangre* of these aspirants thus took on a more careful tone, but it had colonial precedent and emphasized their families were part of the old nobility of the pueblo.¹⁰⁷ The continued incorporation of such clerics of explicit indigenous heritage, whatever their everyday pretensions of whiteness or nobility, underscores that the citizen clergy often had upbringings not far removed from the folkways of their peasant parishioners.

The local influence of this first generation was considerable. José Inocente Gauto, for example, was born and raised in Villa Rica and old enough to have memories when people still pledged their loyalty to a Spanish king and had to wait until in his mid-forties to fulfill his priestly ambitions. He was assigned to his native parish upon his ordination in 1846 and served there for the next two decades. The much younger Jaime Antonio Corvalan spent over

¹⁰⁴Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado*, 148-50.

¹⁰⁵See, for example, the 1852 diezmo de cuatropea tax roll for Caapucu, ANA-SNE vol. 3152.

¹⁰⁶As compiled from the ordination files in AAA, Libros de Orden Sacro, 1845-49, 1849-1852, 1853, 1856, 1857-1866.

¹⁰⁷See specifically the files José de la Cruz Yaguarete, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1845-49; Juan Pedro Manigá, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1849-1852; José Donato Avahay, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1857-1866. For the constructed “purity” of Indian lineages in Spanish colonial legal tradition, see Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*.

fifteen years working in the pueblo and surrounding parishes of Caapucu after his ordination in 1848. Manuel Antonio Palacios, also ordained in 1848, entrenched himself over the next fourteen years as parish priest of the river port town of Villeta, just south of the capital. Born and raised in nearby Luque, he had powerful contacts in Asunción, including the son of the president.¹⁰⁸

In sum, the rising new clergy of Paraguay were a politicized bunch. The overwhelming majority of the clerics ordained under the López regimes were born after 1820 and formed part of the first postcolonial generation coming of age. They only knew life in an independent republic. They depended for their salaries and for the construction and maintenance of their churches on a state treasury, albeit one funded by tithing parishioners. They dutifully followed pastoral instruction to lead prayers for the republic and its sovereign and refrained from offering church burial to people whose deaths the state ruled suicide. Their politicization was inherited from their predecessors of the independence era, but it was reinforced by the López government's state-making, and it was crucial to the state's spiritual underpinnings. Still, it was only one dimension of their lives and not necessarily the biggest one. The *presbítero ciudadano* was also, even mostly, *pa'i*, the common Guaraní term for priest and sage. He was a contender for local influence, a man with weaknesses of the flesh, still likely partake of drink and even have a lover, and, of course, a pastor of his flock, often beleaguered, isolated, and obliged to serve two or three parishes at once. His daily life revealed the complexities and paradoxes of authority in the countryside of the new *ñane retã*, as we shall see.

¹⁰⁸Silvio Gaona, *El clero en la Guerra del 70*, (Asunción, n.d.), 28-33, 66.

CHAPTER 3

PRIESTS AND PARISHIONERS, HOUSEHOLD AND STATE

Young padre Jaime Antonio Corvalan had been serving several hillside parishes just north of the Tebicuary River for nearly three years by the early months of 1851. He resided primarily in Caapucu and made occasional visits to the smaller pueblo of Quiquio, a tiresome journey of several leagues by oxcart. In Quiquio, he learned of the long broken marriage of Cayetano Villar and Juana Inez Ibañez who had parted ways some twenty-five years earlier “without sentence nor knowledge of a competent judge.” Informal separations—like informal unions—were common in the countryside, and for years priests mostly just let them pass. But the regime of Carlos Antonio López had recently made all parish priests “conciliatory ecclesiastical judges,” and one of their duties was the adjudication of marriage disputes.¹ Declaring the irregular situation of Villar and Ibañez “injurious to the public morality and tranquility of the Republic,” Coravalan applied his moral suasion to their reconciliation, which he managed to achieve, at least for a while.²

The López state-building project included the re-affirmation of a Catholic moral order still bound to the standards of colonial times. Both ecclesiastical and political authorities were to see to the proper fulfillment of patriarchal arrangements within the households of

¹For discussion of the decree, see Heyn-Scupp, *Iglesia y estado*, 151, 196-200. On the traditional judicial role of secular clergy in colonial Latin America, see Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, ch. 7.

²Quiquio, 30 September 1851, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1844-1852.

their districts. Yet long-standing social mores among both authorities and common people ran against the norms of a dominant Catholic morality. This chapter considers the attempt of the Paraguayan state and its church apparatus to muster moral hegemony in the face of that contradiction. Important scholarship has demonstrated the largely selective enforcement of public morality by local civil authorities under the López regimes, as well as the continued high incidence of extramarital unions and illegitimate births. This scholarship also leaves the impression that a formal Catholic morality was a somewhat alien imposition in nineteenth-century Paraguay.³ But the affirmation of a Catholic moral order accorded with old, familiar ways of exercising power in homes and marriages. The state was now seeking to build upon that traditional framework to inculcate compelling notions of civic virtue and republican citizenship.⁴ As Father Corvalan had announced in 1851 to his parishioners Villar and Ibañez, something of the “tranquility of the Republic,” as well as their souls, was allegedly at stake in the repair of their marriage. Achieving that tranquility was not always so easy, however, nor was the new citizen clergy moral pillars themselves, as we confirm by beginning our examination of local church-and-state formation with another glance at the village of Salvador.

³Potthast characterizes the sanction of public morality under the regime of Carlos Antonio López as a campaign to discipline according to “Christian-European” norms a society that otherwise practiced more relaxed Hispanic-Guaraní customs of cohabitation and polygamous-like sexual relations, and asserts, in turn, that this effort largely failed. She nonetheless also treats popular concerns over public morale and scandal, sexual fidelity, and female honor and suggests communities and individuals had alternate measures of permissibility in these questions, *‘Paraíso de Mahoma’ o ‘País de las mujeres,’* see specifically, 79-88, 167-79. I contend, however, that this sanction of public morality largely served to reinforce traditional patriarchal forms of exercising power regardless of its capacity to dictate moral probity. That is, we should also consider the tendency for individuals in a society to exact one thing as moral and do another.

⁴This argument extends from recent studies addressing questions of honor, gender, and mundane household relations and their implications for constructions of nationhood, citizenship, and political culture in postcolonial nineteenth-century Spanish American republics. See specifically Chambers, *From Subjects to Citizens*; Shumway, *The Case of the Ugly Suitor*; Guardino, *The Time of Liberty*, ch. 2. For the contingency of gendered citizenship claims in twentieth-century Mexico, see Jocelyn Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Post-revolutionary Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

Magistrates of the Sacred and the State

Father Venacio Toubé, who died in early 1854, was not the last hard-drinking priest to serve the frontier parish of the Villa del Divino Salvador. His eventual successor in the post, Felipe Santiago Cariay, also enjoyed sugar-cane liquor, known as *guaripola* in Guaraní. He openly admitted a penchant for taking swigs from his jug during the day. His detractors considered him a perpetual drunk. Cariay (his last name was Guaraní) formed part of the new generation of native-born priests who had undertaken the priesthood with the diocesan revival. He accepted the assignment to hot, isolated Salvador not long after receiving his orders in 1852. The post inspired one to drink, but it also offered scope for the exercise of local power, which Cariay enjoyed. He reminded the other officials in town of his status as “their father and pastor of souls.” They had sworn common oath “to defend and sustain the holy cause of our national sovereignty and independence.” Only a few years after the incidents between Candia and Uriarte, another scuffle for local power in Salvador allows us to further see the nature of clerical influence in the countryside during the process of state formation underway.⁵

Father Cariay embraced his role to safeguard public morality and state interest. In April 1859, he wielded his pen in appeal to the president to allegedly defend a marriage as well as the pride of a compliant magistrate in town. He wrote two letters incriminating the actions of the leading military officers in the pueblo, calling them “cruel, decapitated heads” and detailing their supposed abuses of power. Indeed, he had long observed that the local commandant, José Gabriel Cardoso, made typical use of his control of state resources for

⁵Discussion of this case as follows is taken from *Disputa en Salvador*, 1859, ANA-SH vol. 328, n. 1-26 (microfilm, University of Texas at Austin).

personal advantage. In one instance, Cardoso had lent state oxen to a profiteer from Concepción in exchange for salt and yerba. Six had died, and the remaining oxen came back worn and tired. The commandant had also ordered the slaughter of state cattle for what were seemingly personal feasts and parties. He also kept a concubine for whom he had his soldiers put to work to build a thatch house. Cariay believed that materials designated for the construction of a new church had gone to the building of that hut, as well. But these were practices perhaps to be overlooked. The priest might have overlooked all this, because he liked the informal perks of authority himself, and also kept lovers.

Cardoso and his immediate subordinate's actions became outrages only when they insulted and injured Father Cariay. Once when Cariay had approached Cardoso's subordinate in the street about the arrest of his choir master whom the priest needed that day to sing in mass, the officer had refused to release the man or provide a satisfactory explanation for the arrest. Cariay fumed at the public rebuff. Then came the matter of a military flutist and his intended marriage. Cariay claimed that the flutist had come before him declaring his intention to marry Eusebia Brite, so to legitimize a child of theirs. The man had requested that Cariay protect his intended, a poor orphan, during his absence on military duty. The local magistrate obliged the priest with a ruling entrusting Eusebia to her sister, which also kept her conveniently close to the curate—with whom some said she was sleeping. Commandant Cardoso reacted by sending Eusebia to labor as a domestic on the local state estancia, triggering Cariay's indignant letter of protest.⁶

⁶Details of the above description are compiled from a series of letters and depositions as filed in the Salvador case, ANA-SH vol. 328. See specifically Felipe Santiago Cariay a Carlos Antonio López, Salvador, 10 April 1859 (2 cartas); Declaración de José María Alarcon, Salvador, 10 April 1859; Declaración de José Gabriel Cardoso, Asunción, 29 June, 22, 23 July 1859; Declaración de Alarcon, Asunción, 18, 22 July 1859; Declaración de Cariay, Asunción, 22, 23 July 1859.

Such resentment continued to stir among pueblo officials with an incident that occurred months later. The curate had taken under his protection two boys, to “educate them” in his domestic service. One of the boys was the son of Espíritu Rojas, a parda who lived in a humble bamboo-and-thatch structure a half league outside the pueblo and, as a single mother with other children to feed, had apparently conceded her son to the service of the priest. Cariay also took an interest in Rojas herself. According to her later testimony, the priest denied her request for confession and communion because she spurned his advances.

So things stood on the evening of 19 June when Cariay had taken his usual drinks from the caña jug and set out on a hunt with his two young charges, he carrying a carbine and they the ammunition. They were headed for a field some three to four leagues distance from the pueblo. It was near dark when they passed the house of Espíritu Rojas, and Cariay followed his impulse to turn off the dirt path, walk to the door, and call for her loudly. He had heard a rumor that she had another lover staying with her, a man named Atanacio Ovelar. Cariay later claimed that he had meant only to rehabilitate Rojas by “removing her from that bad life.” He barged in, commanded that she light a candle, and failed to find Ovelar. Then, according to Rojas, he flew into a rage, insulted and swore at her, shoved her across the room, and pointed his gun at her daughter cowering in the corner. He ordered the boys to pass him a bullet, but they refused, and he stormed out into the night.⁷

The misbehavior proved his undoing. Three days later Rojas denounced the intrusion to Cariay’s enemy, the commandant, with the corroborating testimony of a relative and retired militia sergeant who had witnessed it all from the kitchen. A report was sent to Asunción for presidential review. The magistrate, commandant, and curate were all called to the capital

⁷From the Salvador case, ANA-SH vol. 328, see specifically Baltazar Bogado a Carlos Antonio López, Salvador, 22 June 1859, and Declaración de Cariay, Asunción, 22 July 1859.

and, following many mutual accusations, all were eventually relieved of their posts. Clearly, the new citizen clergy had many familiar shortcomings. Cariay's misuse of his authority is instructive, however, because it allows us to see the leverage that a village curate could exercise.

For starters, priests wielded pervasive influence, religious and otherwise. In the confessional, they had the power to absolve sins. They alone could consecrate the host and dispense communion. They blessed rosaries, images, and figurines often brought to them in devotion. They instructed parishioners concerning the dogmas of the faith and also concerning the "system of our political liberty and National Independence."⁸ As ministers of a national church, their spiritual functions meshed with political and, importantly, juridical ones. When they performed the rites of baptism, marriage, and burial, they documented them in parish registers that served as the basis of civil record in the territory. The terminology of residence, inhabitance, legitimacy, and caste taken from these entries informed the general notary practices of the state's entire legal apparatus. The term *natural de la República* (literally, "native of the Republic"), for example, were a standard civil reference for subjects of the postcolonial realm, as were affirmations of baptism and Christian faith upon giving testimony in legal proceedings. Moreover, the regime charged clergy with conducting censuses for their parishes. A parish-by-parish census was done for the entire territory in 1846, with more carried out for selected parishes in subsequent years. With each such proceeding, priests mapped the inhabitants of their districts into socially ideal patriarchal arrangements, properly listing dependents—wives, children, slaves, and servants—under

⁸See instructions for the ordained priest Blas Ignacio Duarte, 20 October 1852, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López.

their corresponding household heads.⁹ Furthermore, they provided the government annual reports of children born to slaves in their parishes, called *libertos*, so to track the gradual manumission of this offspring as decreed by the regime.¹⁰

Ministering the sacrament of marriage though occupied much of the legal and spiritual business of the parish priest in any *pueblo*. Particularly noteworthy, given popular inclinations for informal cohabitation, was the careful attention to judicial and patriarchal protocol observed in petitions to marry. First, for any proposed marriage, priests often went to hear supplicants declare their intentions in the presence of parents, confirming parental permission. This traditional convention corresponded to late colonial legal developments throughout Spanish America, which bestowed primarily to fathers (and secondarily mothers and other family members) new authority to dictate the marriage choices of their children. Relatives' legal right to protest unions of unequal caste was entertained by the president in formal petitions. The need for formal declarations of patriarchal permission contributed to the sometimes heavy-handed meddling of parents in the betrothals of their children.¹¹ Incidents of children promised in marriage against their will did occur, leading to scenes of

⁹As documented in Williams, "Observations on the Paraguayan Census of 1846." For additional examples from later years see Ita, 1850; Mbujapei, 1850; San Juan Nepomuceno, 1850; Laureles, 1859 in ANA-SNE vol. 3321; and Yabebiri, 1859; Lambare, 1862 in ANA-SNE vol. 3322.

¹⁰See, for example, the various censuses of *libertos* in ANA-SNE vol. 961.

¹¹Patricia Seed demonstrates the reinforcement of paternal authority in marriage choices as a crucial late colonial legal and political development, see *To Love, Honor, and Obey*, 5-8, 131-33. Jeffrey Shumway examines the subsequent gender and racial ramifications of this development in post-colonial Buenos Aires province, *The Case of the Ugly Suitor*, ch. 4 & 5. For late colonial and early national racial *disenso* cases in Paraguay tied to the patriarchal prerogative in marriage choice, see Cooney, "Desigualdades, disensos, y los españoles americanos de Paraguay, 1776-1845."

daughters ushered weeping to the church.¹² Parish priests were also to determine if those so betrothed faced impediments in canon law, threatening “a fatal state of condemnation.”¹³

In 1851, parish priests acquired new prominence in the settlement of marital discord, as we have seen.¹⁴ And parishioners did come to resolve such disputes. Married parishioners clapped at the curate’s door with stories of beatings and adultery, estranged wives and deadbeat husbands. On occasion a woman might arrive with the sting of her husband’s cattle whip still reverberating across her back. Or else a local police watchman might send a hapless couple to the priest with report of their mutual adulteries.¹⁵ Only with approval of the parish priest could people petition the tribunal in Asunción for divorce. But the primary charge of frontline citizen clergy in such cases was to douse the fires of marital discord. Regardless of a husband’s homicidal fury, or the destitution resulting from his gambling and abandonment, or news of a wife’s young lover—parish priests almost always advised (and typically secured) a reconciliation. They often took the reconciled spouses’ confessions so the absolved couple could truly start afresh, conserving “the peace and good harmony that interests the tranquility of the Republic.”¹⁶

Curates penned petitions and dispensed penance and pardon to confessants on a fairly ample livelihood supplied by the state treasury. They enjoyed the receipt of fifty pesos every

¹²Demanda de divorcio y nulidad de matrimonio promovido por Felicidad Vera contra Juan Manuel Lovera, Asunción, 1857, ANA-SCJ vol. 1915, n. 8, foja 1-18.

¹³As quoted in the pastoral letter lamenting the frequent consecration of marriages with impediments in the countryside, see Carta pastoral, 21 February 1851, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Decretos, Carpeta: Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López.

¹⁴See, for example, Demanda de Saturnino Roa contra Candida Ocampos, 1863-64, Demandas de divorcio, Libro 1858-74, foja 31-38.

¹⁵Villa Rica, 31 March 1857, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1856-59; Concepción, 31 March 1852, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1844-52.

¹⁶Caacupe, 30 September 1851, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1844-52.

three months—half in silver coins, the other half in bills—as well as twenty five pesos in credit from the state stores.¹⁷ A well-placed parish priest, such as Manuel Palacios in Villeta, could have a larder brimming with corn flour, wheat flour, honey, lard, sugar, chipas, meat, and dozens of cheeses.¹⁸ They got additional income from various fees, such as those charged for supplemental masses celebrated for the souls of the deceased and those paid by village notables for the greater commemoration of civic fiestas.¹⁹ They also charged occasional notarial fees for ecclesiastical legal proceedings. Parish priests could get an unpaid peon to tend to their garden plots, perhaps growing some tobacco for sale along with staples like maize and manioc. They commonly had a milk cow, an ox and cart, and in some instances, a herd of livestock.²⁰ Their prestige and solvency might allow them to, say, secure a loan and open a tavern or store in partnership with a parishioner.²¹ They sometimes owned ornate rosaries or wore fine pectoral crosses. They further cultivated their ritual and magisterial aura in the parish churches built or restored by the labor of public works and the capital of state coffers. Curates handled gold and silver communion chalices, sat in painted chairs, and cared for other valuables with the help of a state-appointed mayordomo. The

¹⁷See, for example, payment receipts to parish priests from 1853, as held in ANA-SNE vol. 2724. Interestingly, parish priests from the interior often had to charge relatives or friends to receive their payments from the government treasury in Asunción.

¹⁸Such foodstuffs and other items were stolen from Palacios' personal stores by one Juan de la Cruz Medina, *Proceso contra Juan de la Cruz Medina por robo en casa del Presbiterio Manuel Antonio Palacios, Villeta, 1857-58*, ANA-SCJ vol. 1504, n. 18, foja 153-64.

¹⁹See, for example, the hefty sums earned by the curate Juan de M. Ortellado for dozens of masses said for the soul of Carlos Antonio López in the oratory of Olivares as reported in July 1865, in ANA-SNE vol. 3270. For references to masses paid by families and individuals celebrating patriotic fiestas, see *Carta a Francisco Solano López*, 25 October 1862, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (I), foja 182-84.

²⁰See the example of Father Venancio Toubé as described in Chapter 1. Father Geronimo Dolores Ortiz also had moderate cattle holdings in Paraguari, as documented in the pueblo's 1857 diezmo rolls, ANA-SNE vol. 3044.

²¹Expediente formado contra la conducta del Cura de Ybitimi, Pedro Pablo Azuaga, 1866, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, foja 1-9.

mayordomo likewise kept the accounts which included significant ingresses from the fees on ecclesiastical burial rites performed by the priests. These monies covered the day-to-day expenses of the church for wine, hosts, candles, and maintenance.²² Priests could use them to pay sacristans and other assistants, who dusted and swept the church, trimmed cemetery overgrowth, and lit candles and led prayers. In some instances, the parish church itself owned a slave who attended to its upkeep and grounds but also, of course, served at the behest of the priest.²³

Parishioners continued to seek out the sacramental and magisterial offices of parish priests supported by such largesse. They needed burial rites for the countless children that did not survive the first years of life, given the high rate of infant mortality. For patron saint feast days and other celebrations of folk devotions, they longed for a priest to officiate mass and processions. The unexpected absences of priests in such functions, due to sickness, distance, or mere spite, became sources of resentment. In one instance in the pueblo of Ajos, a priest, who had charge of another parish as well, left the village the day before he was to officiate at the celebration of the so-called Virgin of Tacuacora. This and other slights had the local commandant writing to the president to lament the abandonment of the village's "faithful and obedient population."²⁴ In such instances, parishioners desired the proximity of priests to confess themselves as well. Confession, particularly, was a visible expression of devotion that functioned as a public gauge of a person's piety and good reputation, and it

²²See, again, Informes de mayordomos de iglesia, Villa Occidental, Paraguarí, and Capiata in ANA-SNE vol. 1696, as well as the 1857 ledger for burial payments for the parish of Laureles in ANA-SNE vol. 3161. The indications are that mayordomos played a crucial role in the day-to-day administration of a parish church and its sacramental services particularly in the absence of a priest.

²³Sumario sobre el suicidio del negro Joaquim Miranda, Ybitimi, 1853-54, ANA-SCJ vol. 1455, n. 7, foja 124-27.

²⁴Caso contra Pedro Nolasco Aquino, ANA-SH vol. 330 (microfilm, University of Texas at Austin).

depended on the priest's presence and favorable disposition. And some priests reserved the privilege of exercising judgmental ire when sitting behind the wooden screen and hearing the litany of sins. People could recall outbursts of anger in the confessionals with parishioners thrown out and denied pardon.²⁵

Patterns of sexual relations in the countryside often burdened people with impediments to marry under canon law, and the priest was needed to unravel them. Premarital sex—or “illicit friendship” as it was termed in the legal jargon—created a need for confession and penance before the pair could marry. More seriously, country folk also tended to pursue amorous adventures with several members of the same family.²⁶ Men might boast to friends about their sexual conquests of various sisters or a mother and her daughters.²⁷ But women too were known to lie down over a poncho or slip into a hammock with different brothers.²⁸ Dispensation from the bishopric was often required to remove that sort of impediment. The parish priest would have to notarize the petition, take official statements, and send the appeal to Asunción for a ruling. The number of petitions for the pardon of marriage impediments surged significantly in the years of the diocesan revival under the López regimes.²⁹ When

²⁵One woman related in legal testimony that such incidents were commonplace and recommended that one just return at a later time, *Sumario sobre el suicidio de Barbara Ortiz*, 1865, foja 122-28. Taylor notes the calculated granting of absolution by colonial Mexican priests in the confessional upon securing political consent and compliance from parishioners, *Magistrates of the Sacred*, 166.

²⁶See, for example, the cases of Felipe Antonio Neyra, Carapegua, August 1852; Gregorio Nuñez, Itagua, April 1853; Felipe Antonio Ortellado, Pilar, March 1852; Casimiro Ortiz, Ita, June 1852; Juan Esteban Oviedo, Asunción, September 1852 in AAA, *Impedimentos Matrimoniales*, Libro 1852.

²⁷*Demanda de divorcio de Doña Victoriana de Jesús Barbosa contra Don Pedro Juan Bogarin*, 1858-61, AAA, *Demandas de Divorcio*, Libro 1858-74, foja 35-43.

²⁸See specifically the case of Juan Vicente Orán y María Clara González, Piribebuy, April 1852, AAA, *Impedimentos Matrimoniales*, Libro 1852. Also see the case of Gregoria Avalos who was caught by her husband in bed with his brother, *Sumaria información sobre el suicidio de Gregoria Avalos*, Valenzuela, 1850, ANA-SCJ vol. 1524, n. 1, fojas 9-18.

²⁹Potthast, *'Paraíso de Mahoma' o 'País de las mujeres,'* 363-65. The author also charts the still substantial percentages of married households in particular pueblos and their environs, see p. 373.

orders for penance came down from the bishop to absolve an impediment—typically calling for a given number of prayers to the Virgin—the parish priest oversaw the penance.³⁰

Parishioners also used the magisterial office of the priest for leverage in small disputes. For example, women who had been wronged with broken promises of matrimony occasionally went to the parish priest to wrench compensation, ranging from four to twenty pesos, from their ex-lovers.³¹ Similarly, Jacinto Benítez whipped his wife into confessing her affair with a young militia sergeant, then he took her to Father Manuel Antonio Adorno to repeat the confession, demanding a divorce if the young perpetrator were not expelled from the pueblo. Such an order properly corresponded to the civil magistrate, who refused to give it. Adorno seemed willing to do so, although reluctantly, to save the marriage, until Benítez was finally pacified by a payment from the militiaman's father."³²

Sacred Ideals, Casual Practice

The exercise of the ministry by parish priests in general tended to be expeditious and informal. The example of Father Cariay in Salvador indicates that the generation of clergy coming of age under the diocesan revival retained an air of informality in general. In particular, they often lacked a sense of severity in the practice of ritual. Well into the 1850s and beyond, pastoral letters from the bishopric carped about the hurried celebration of masses in the countryside, with priests failing to exhibit proper preparation and veneration. They

³⁰In this regard also see the impediment petitions as filed in the Libros de Juzgado Eclesiastico, AAA, 1853-55, 1856-64.

³¹Itagua, 30 September 1851 (2 casos), Concepción, 31 March 1852, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1844-52; Itagua, 30 September 1853; Capiata, 30 June 1854; Itagua, 30 September 1854, Concepción, 31 March 1852, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1853-55.

³³Carta pastoral, 7 May 1852, Libro parroquial de Caapucu, Borrador de cartas pastorales, 1852-64, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López; Carta pastoral, 6 August 1860, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Juan Gregorio Urbieta.

described distracted clerics chatting as they put on vestments without prayer or reflection, then rushing to have bells rung and candles lit while barely stopping to cross themselves before the sacramental host. A confused tangle of gestures and words typified masses raced through in under fifteen minutes.³³ The dark-skinned man observed saying mass in Asunción by the English traveler Mansfield allegedly gurgled through the liturgy barefoot, wearing a green poncho. Mansfield also marveled at the “solemnity with which [the priest] spat from time to time on the pavement.” A Spanish resident lampooned country clerics who hung urinals from church columns as receptacles for holy water.³⁴ One 1861 pastoral letter from Bishop Urbietta lamented that the burial ceremonies for poor folk proceeded in “such a defective manner” that rather than prepare the deceased for redemption, “it appears that what is desired is to pile them away.” Complaints also arose about offensive remarks made from the pulpit during sermons, particularly among curates recently ordained. Father Palacios in Villeta and a host of other young priests suffered reprimand for apparently contemptuous interpretations of doctrine spoken in 1851.³⁵ A Vatican emissary who visited the diocese later that decade considered the provincial clergy as a whole still seriously undereducated in both Church doctrine and ritual.³⁶

This same emissary acknowledged the persistent shortage of clergy to fill the parishes and meet the spiritual demands of the countryside. Despite the dozens of new ordinations in the diocese, most priests served two or more parishes and so were frequently on the move

³³Carta pastoral, 7 May 1852, Libro parroquial de Caapucu, Borrador de cartas pastorales, 1852-64, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López; Carta pastoral, 6 August 1860, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Juan Gregorio Urbietta.

³⁴Mansfield, *Paraguay* 370-71; Bermejo, *Republicas americanas*, 101.

³⁵Acosta, *Carlos Antonio López*, 635-37.

³⁶Eyzaguirre, *Los intereses católicos*, 212-216.

between established pueblos and more ephemeral settlements with oratories of palm and thatch. In his 1850 pastoral visits Bishop López counseled priests to appoint lay persons to lead prayers in their absence. Often the local judge or militia officer of a pueblo was expected to do that.³⁷ Bishop López also advised on occasion that priests delegate auxiliaries to perform baptisms to keep the uninitiated from inventing their own ceremonies, particularly for dying infants.³⁸ In 1861, the office of the bishop ordered priests to say at least two masses every Sunday and feast day.³⁹ Curates made pacts with nearby colleagues to stand in for each other during absences or assist each other in the celebration of patron-saint feast days. Where to reside was a thorny question for priests assigned to several parishes. Travel by oxcart invited exposure to rain or blistering sun as well as biting flies and muddy roads. The parsonage of one parish might have had a leaky roof, another perhaps offered greater opportunities to collect fees on masses, and so on.⁴⁰

Maintaining the tranquility and morality of the republic in such circumstances also involved the expedient handling of a magisterial pen. Parish priests' reports of martial dispute settlements almost never entailed official written declarations or testimony taken from the interested parties. Rather the curate made summary notation of the arguments advanced by the couple in quarrel, as well as the determined resolution. Most reports were

³⁷See entries for the visited parishes of Barrero Grande, Tobati, Atyra, Altos, and Limpio, *Visitas pastorales a las parroquias de la Captial y la campaña por Obispo López, 1850*, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López.

³⁸Arroyos, Informe del cura Pedro Nolasco Aquino, 29 December 1857, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1856-59.

³⁹Carta pastoral, 2 September 1861, Libro parroquial de Caapucu, Borrador de cartas pastorales, 1852-64, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López.

⁴⁰For such details on mundane clerical work in the countryside, see V. Centurión a Carlos Antonio López, Ajos, 22 March 1860; Cura Pedro Nolasco Aquino a V. Centurión, Carajao, 22 July 1860 in *Caso contra Pedro Nolasco Aquino*, ANA-SH vol. 330 (microfilm, University of Texas at Austin); and *Expediente contra Francisco Suárez Galeano, cura Manuel Vicente Moreno y mayordomo Juan Bautista Fleitas por celebración de matrimonio nulo*, Valenzuela, 1854, AAA, Demandas de divorcio, Libro 1854.

formulaic and short on details. The more detailed ones give an idea of proceedings cobbled together from the fluid crossfire of accusations and demands, shouting and cajoling, in Guaraní, with the priest raising his voice to pontificate as *pa'i*. Every three months parish priests had the obligation to report on cases in their tribunals to the bishopric and the state. Sometimes curates neglected to send a report at all. The overwhelming majority of the time they simply reported no cases to have come before their courts.⁴¹ The routine parish reports of “nothing to report” give an impression of consummate morality and tranquility, akin to local civil justices regularly informing Asunción that their pueblos lived free of vagrants, thieves, and scandalous cohabitations.⁴² But when people came clamoring and the presiding priest exercised his magisterial authority, not always did he have things written down.

Curates were evidently prepared, for example, to forgive the sexual improprieties of some people, important or otherwise, to expedite marriages without filing for a dispensation to clear impediments.⁴³ Moreover, if a parishioner came to them denouncing the marital misconduct of a town notable or even public authority, the exercise of discretion proved paramount. Tomasa Garayo in Villa Rica, to take an exemplary case, made a habit of calling priests to her home and appealing to other public officials, over the course of the 1840s, to inform them of the outrages of her husband, José Miguel Careaga. Garayo had suffered for years the humiliation of his absence from home while he maintained a lover with whom he had as many as ten children. The clergy who had served the parish acknowledged Careaga's

⁴¹As compiled from AAA, Juzgado Eclesiástico, Libros 1844-52; 1853-55; 1856-59; 1856-64. Initially over the first two years after the decree authorizing priests as local ecclesiastical magistrates, more than a dozen cases were officially reported—with still the large majority of reports indicating no cases to have been heard (136 reports total). Yet in subsequent years reported cases became increasingly rare, approximately 4-8 cases out of some 270 reports every 3-4 years.

⁴²Potthast, '*Paraíso de Mahoma*' o '*País de las mujeres*,' 88.

⁴³Carta pastoral, 21 February 1851, AAA; also see Expediente contra Francisco Suárez Galeano, 1854, AAA.

illicit affair and abandonment of conjugal obligations, but they were hesitant to press a public case against him, a local office holder, for offenses considered commonplace if excessive. So they sympathized with his irate wife but counseled patience, even when Careaga requested the couple's legitimate son be the godfather of yet another love child. Once Careaga himself advanced the peculiar solution before a civil magistrate that his wife take a whip and lash him up to a dozen times to satisfy her anger.⁴⁴ Such informal solutions, however strange or violent, had their appeal for ecclesiastical magistrates as well.

Voluminous divorce litigation from the 1850s documenting the heated wrangles between Lorenza Vargas and Tadeo Ayala before Father Manuel Palacios in Villeta provides an idea of what often went unreported by presiding parish magistrates. It therefore merits extended consideration.

Lorenza Vargas was another woman who refused to suffer silently the outrages of her husband. She had good reason to believe that he sustained a long-time affair with another woman in town. He was gone for days at a time and often returned drunk ready to smack her around at any word of protest. Her brothers detested him and feared that he might disrupt a coming partition of their parents' inheritance. They encouraged the demand for divorce that she brought before Father Palacios in 1852 with her husband Ayala and two witnesses also in attendance. Palacios did not regard Ayala as a common drunk and adulterer, however. Instead, Ayala was esteemed as a slave owner and village folk doctor whose clientele was wealthy and influential. He had livestock and a silver-trimmed saddle to ride his collection of

⁴⁴Discussion of the case is drawn from *Demanda de divorcio de Tomasa Garayo contra José Miguel Careaga*, 1850-51, AAA, *Demandas de divorcio*, Libro 1850, foja 1-69.

horses. Palacios was inclined to reconcile him with Vargas as quickly and quietly as possible.⁴⁵

He therefore admonished Vargas to continue to suffer her situation “with the intent to serve God.” She vacillated, then tried to bargain for her own informal settlement, indicating that she would desist from the divorce if Ayala at least agreed not to attend the partition of her inheritance. She threatened to come back with more witnesses of her husband’s marital offenses. Palacios dared her to do so with depositions supplied on officially stamped paper in hand, but when she then offered her black maidservant as witness, both Palacios and Ayala howled in disgust. The priest declared that the freedwoman faced fifty lashes if she tried to testify, adding that any other witness that Vargas might present “should incur the same punishment.” But Palacios put none of this in his report that month. It all emerged later, in the testimony of others.⁴⁶ At the time, he filed the typical report that no cases had come before his court. Only the insistence of Vargas to take her demand to the ecclesiastical tribunal in Asunción prompted the accounts of hearings that Palacios preferred to handle on the local, spoken, and informal level.⁴⁷

This was not an isolated case. Residing in the rural hamlet of San Pedro de Bobi, Victoriano Coronil in September 1859 considered that he and his wife, Macedonia Corvalan, “had lived publically and privately as Christians and good spouses without anyone having minimum cause to reproach us.” Coronil perhaps did not fully appreciate the rancor of his wife or the influence of his in-laws. He was surprised when the parish priest, Pedro Pablo

⁴⁵Demanda de María Lorenza Vargas contra Luis Tadeo Ayala, 1852-59, AAA, Demandas de divorcio, Libros 1851-52, 1854, 1855-58, foja 1-142.

⁴⁶Ibid., see specifically foja 56-64 for Vargas’ account of the initial hearing before Palacios.

⁴⁷Villeta, 31 December 1852, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1844-52.

Rodríguez, called him, his wife, and their parents to the church for a hearing one Sunday to announce the annulment of his marriage, declaring that “they were now completely single and free to marry again with whomever else they wanted.” Supposedly the father added: “I will even celebrate the marriage.” Coronil thought that he smelled liquor on Father Rodríguez, but as it turned out the priest was acting at the behest of Corvalan and her parents, who alleged that the matrimony was convened in sin by impediment, because Coronil had slept with her cousin before the marriage. Father Rodríguez eventually reported the village rumor that Coronil had frequented the house of the cousin in the past, then boasted of his iniquitous nuptials. But that was only later, following a written protest by Coronil.⁴⁸ Similarly, a year earlier Father Leonardo Molina of Luque confirmed having verbally dismissed the annulment petition of a woman without ever composing the formal written act that she insisted upon. He believed that the denial fulfilled his primary duty to settle the discords between parishioners.⁴⁹

Palacios, Rodríguez, and Molina only followed a common impulse of their ministerial office. As religious magistrates of the state, the parish priests of the reviving Paraguayan diocese were prone to arbitrate by fiat to conserve their local autonomy and do favors for friends and influential people. As ministers of sacraments, they often apportioned the celebration of rites increasingly demanded by their flock according to expedience, convenience, and personal whim. Pragmatic, improvised measures were the common ways of doing ministry. And they resorted to such informal, casual tacks to thereupon wield their

⁴⁸Causa de nulidad de matrimonio entre Macedonia Corvalan y Victoriano Coronil, 1859-61, AAA, Demandas de divorcio, Libro 1858-74, foja 1-57.

⁴⁹Demanda de Concepción Romero contra José Rocendo Recalde, 1858, AAA, Demandas de divorcio, Libro 1858-74, foja 1-12. For other examples in this vein, see Demanda de Saturnino Roa contra Candida Ocampos, 1863-64; Demanda de Celedonia Samudio contra Juan José Medina, 1858-63, AAA, Demandas de divorcio, Libro 1855-58, foja 6-7.

spiritual authority and arbitrate their very command of public sanctimony as magistrates of the sacred and the state. The interactions of priests and parishioners under the López regimes thus show that a dominant morality could be often transgressed yet still viable as a mechanism of social and political coercion. Parishioners had their illicit affairs, gambled away meager possessions, and joined their local curate for sips of cane liquor and riffs on the harp. Husbands abandoned their spouses for months at time and whipped them silly. Women bore the illegitimate children of numerous fathers. Nonetheless, people also sustained intense spiritual devotions and continued to see the importance of church sacraments, particularly that of marriage. They still thirsted for official sanctification that only clergy could provide, whatever their personal habits.

Sometimes sanctimony came in a deluge. It came in one instance from the pulpit during mass when the young priest of the prominent northern pueblo of San Pedro, José del Carmen Arzamendia, just before the joint celebrations of Christmas and independence in 1861, fulminated with crucifix in hand against the inappropriate dress of a distinguished woman seated in the pews.⁵⁰ It came when another curate in 1857 had the body of a still-born infant disinterred from the public cemetery because, he had learned, it had not received proper baptism. (The priest later received congratulations from the bishop as a “true pastor of souls.”)⁵¹ However irregular and inconsistent, such blasts of moral coercion were part of the everyday fabric of social and political power.

Household and State

⁵⁰Decreto sobre procedimientos del cura de San Pedro José del Carmen Arzamendia, 10 February 1861, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Obispo Juan Gregorio Urbieto.

⁵¹Arroyos, Informe del cura Pedro Nolasco Aquino, 29 December 1857, AAA.

Priests wielded their authority in a moral order shaped by household patriarchy. Patriarchy defined everyday virtues and transgressions and shaped the basic expectations for the domestic behavior. Patriarchal standards could make or break public reputations, bolster or ruin claims on Christian piety. They defined rights and duties in the society at large. But patriarchy operated within the requirements and contingencies of daily experience. Women remonstrated against the gambling of their husbands particularly when they were not winning. Men hit their wives out of jealousy, but also to keep them working in fields and preparing food. Children did the bidding of parents by toiling in the harvest of manioc roots and chasing stray cattle in swampy pastures. Masters provided clothes for a servant or slave that they believed showed the bonds of paternal care. These instances of daily life informed the expressed virtues of subordination, obedience, fealty, and, importantly, reciprocal love—within a patriarchal household by which parishioners judged and compelled the actions of others. Control of labor and service remained paramount in such concerns. So did the violent exercise of domination.

Virtues in the Home

Paraguayan men, like stern patriarchs the world over, frequently resorted to beating spouses and lovers as well as children, enforcing fidelity and obedience by exercising their right to punish.⁵² And they were inclined to use the lash for their punishments, an inclination reflected, as we have seen, in the punitive judicial practice of the state. Whips for horses and other livestock were common enough items in rural households, hanging from

⁵²For discussion of the customary resort to wife beating as patriarchal right in nineteenth-century Peru, see Sarah Chambers, “‘To the Company of a Man Like My Husband, No Law Can Compel Me’: The Limits of Sanctions against Wife Beating in Arequipa, Peru, 1780-1850,” *Journal of Women’s History* 11, no.1 (Spring 1999): 31-52.

pegs on the walls or slung over ceiling beams, which made for quick access in the heat of discontent. In their absence, leather straps to tie firewood or a braided branch served the purposes of a flogging nearly as well.

Men inflicted corporal punishment methodically, not necessarily in anger. They bound victims' hands above their heads using doors or beams, just as convicts were tied to posts for their lashings. Some men preferred to take their partners to the woods to do the job there, binding them to tree branches or just pinning them to the ground. They stripped women naked to castigate the flesh of backs, buttocks, and legs. The cracks of their whips resounded with clarity for distances around, awaking relatives in the night or drawing the dark sarcasm of neighbors to comment "that someone is riding a tired horse."⁵³ Suspicions of adultery, or delusional bouts of jealousy, inspired the floggings, which became a means to force confessions of infidelity, mimicking judicial torture.⁵⁴ In one case, a husband called for the arrest of a man he suspected of adultery with his wife, whom he refrained from turning over to local authorities. He was satisfied with having whipped her in his house, declaring himself her judge.⁵⁵

⁵³For such details, see *Proceso a Felipe Quintana por maltratar a su mujer*, San Cosme, 1850, ANA-SCJ vol. 1616, n. 2, foja 22-48; *Proceso contra el esclavo Carlos Mencia por castigos dado a su mujer*, Estancia del estado Tavapy, 1850, ANA-SCJ vol. 1392, n. 5, foja 63-70; *Proceso contra José Mariano Valenzuela por haber maltratado a una mujer*, Yuty, 1855-57, ANA-SCJ vol. 1505, n. 1, foja 1-59; *Sumaria información sobre el suicidio de Gregoria Avalos*, Valenzuela, 1850-51, ANA-SCJ vol. 1524, n. 1, foja 1-50; *Proceso a Rafaela Funes por intento de suicidio y a su marido José Domingo Ñandutí*, San Ignacio, 1858-60, ANA-SCJ vol. 1648, n. 2, foja 1-42; *Proceso a Roque Elizeche por maltrato a su mujer*, Quindy, 1850, ANA-SCJ vol. 1611, n. 5, foja 1-28; *Proceso a Francisco Jara y Josefa Jara*, 1856, ANA-SCJ.

⁵⁴*Querella de Pedro Antonio Canteros contra Manuel Paredes*, Paraguari, 1853, ANA-SCJ vol. 1749, n. 22, foja 173-80; *Querella entre Jacinto Benítez y su mujer Silveria Gonzalez*, 1852, ANA-SCJ, foja 1-9; *Proceso al pardo Manuel Fabio por maltratos y golpes a su mujer*, Carapegua, 1855, ANA-SCJ vol. 1755, n. 3, foja 132-86.

⁵⁵*Proceso a Dorotea Fariña y Buenaventura López por adulterio*, Barrero Grande, 1853, ANA-SCJ vol. 1761, n. 2, foja 1-61.

A wife's adultery was, above all, an act of insubordination, and subordinating women was an ongoing patriarchal battle. Many married women in the countryside rejected a role of domestic passivity. Insubordinate women launched verbal assaults, taking husbands to task for money lost or for lovers maintained on the side. Such challenges prompted the common explanation that a woman's arrogance justified her whipping. Uppity women's propensity to leave the house without permission or to insist on living apart on their own terms also frequently provoked punitive violence.⁵⁶ José Domingo Ñandutí was merely frank when in 1858 he confirmed to a local magistrate in San Ignacio that he had whipped his wife "because she had not obeyed him in what he ordered for the service of his house."⁵⁷

The everyday terms of spousal fidelity and subordination were thus significantly bound up in domestic labor and service. Men measured the realization of these values in the cooking and serving of food as well as their attention to other needs, such as the washing of clothes and care in sickness. As historians have noted for other parts of Spanish America at the time, foodstuffs and their preparation packed especially symbolic weight in this regard.⁵⁸ For example, the clay-oven-baked bread made of manioc and corn flour, called *chipa*—a staple on Paraguayan tables still today—frequently figured in outbursts of marital discord. In one instance from Villa Rica, a man cracking a tension-laden joke to his wife that she did not share with him a small *chipa* sent as a gift by a neighbor led to thrown dinner plates and

⁵⁶See, for examples, Piribebuy, 13 August 1851; San Pedro, 31 December 1851; Caacupe, 23 October 1852, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1844-52; Asunción, 31 March 1859, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1856-59.

⁵⁷Proceso a Rafaela Funes por intento de suicidio y a su marido José Domingo Ñandutí, San Ignacio, 1858-60, ANA-SCJ vol. 1648, n. 2, foja 1-42. See also San Pedro, 31 December 1852, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1844-52.

⁵⁸Chambers highlights the importance of food as part of the reciprocal patriarchal pact in nineteenth-century Arequipa, Peru, "with the man providing and the women cooking it" in "'To the Company of Man Like My Husband,'" 35-37. For the importance of washing of clothes in the Paraguayan context, see Demanda de Santurnino Roa contra Candida Ocampos, 1863-64, AAA, Libro de divorcio, 1858-74, foja 9-13.

exchanged blows involving a lash, a cooking iron, and, in the woman's version, a vow in Guaraní to kill her—*Tajuca mandi katu*.⁵⁹ Tomasa Garayo, who was so understandably insulted by her husband's desire to make her son godfather of his love child, remembered with equal bitterness the Holy Friday when he scornfully tossed a chipa onto her chest. She decided to ask for a divorce because of a later incident that also involved food. After years of extended absence, it seems, her husband Careaga fell ill and returned home seeking her assistance. She reluctantly gave it until one day he complained that she seemed more devoted to her *patrones* than to him. Apparently, Garayo prepared meals for neighbors as a source of extra income. She was "no prostitute" to have *patrones*, she bristled, and went to the judge soon thereafter.⁶⁰

Women's agricultural labor, crucial to household subsistence, was another litmus test of their subordination to domestic patriarchy. Along with the preparation and service of food, or the washing of clothes, work in the *chacra* constituted a basic expectation of women in matrimony. A man's "keeping a woman in his fields" suggested concubinage. It is telling that in an 1857 magisterial proceeding a man asserted his extraordinarily good treatment of his wife by saying "he did not even make her work in the fields." The wife had tried hiding away money from the sale of their tobacco harvest, so not to lose it to his gambling. His response was the lash.⁶¹ Similarly, Baltazar Silvero secured a magisterial ruling in 1852 to recover his spouse after she had abandoned him (and his fields) saying that he had a concubine. With the

⁵⁹Demanda de Elias Davalos contra María Máxima Bayo, 1850-57, AAA, Libro de divorcio, 1852-57, foja 55-64.

⁶⁰Demanda de Tomasa Garayo contra José Miguel Careaga, 1850-51, AAA, foja 3-9, 23-25.

⁶¹Villa Rica, 31 March 1857, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1856-59.

concession that the suspected concubine be made to leave, she agreed to be “subordinate to her husband” and labor again in his fields.⁶²

Women of independent means provoked their husbands’ outrage precisely because of their autonomy. The extraordinary case of María Mercedes Meza, who owned wealth rivaling that of her well-to-do husband, is instructive in this regard. Meza had a cattle-holding and sugar-producing estancia that she had brought to her marriage with Pedro Mártir Benítez.⁶³ Only a few months after her wedding to Benítez, she had returned to administer her own estate and lived there for the next eight years. On occasion she re-joined her husband, at his entreaty, only to leave again. Benítez was vexed that he had to borrow both livestock and capital from her that she expected him to pay back. She was increasingly indisposed to lend to him (she said) when he failed to make restitution and neighbors gossiped of his amorous relations with a slave woman. But Meza was not averse to accepting gestures of his material support (he said), such as a piece of jewelry and extra peons to help on her estate. Moreover, she sometimes appropriated it without asking, as in the case of a wagon of manioc sprouts taken from his estate while he was gone. Worst of all, in his view, she challenged him with words and blows when he tried to whip her and their daughter. Meza’s insubordination convinced the helpless husband to demand a divorce in 1855.⁶⁴

⁶²Villa Rica, 31 March 1852, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1844-52; also see Piribebuy, 30 September 1852, in the same volume for a similar example.

⁶³The incidence of single women, presumably mostly widows, with substantial wealth in livestock holdings was hardly unknown. A few could claim some of the largest holdings in their districts, see 1857 livestock diezmo contribution listings for San Pedro, Altos, Acaay, Quindy, and Caapucu in ANA-SNE vol. 3044.

⁶⁴Demanda de divorcio de Pedro Martir Benítez contra María Mercedes Meza, 1855-57, AAA, Libros de divorcio, Libro 1855-58, foja 1-55.

The husband's duty to provide was basic to the patriarchal pact of marriage. Women's accusations of adultery, for example, typically came with grievances concerning the diversion of money and other resources to the husband's lovers. Even rich María Mercedes Meza complained about a "dowry" given to the suspected slave lover of her husband when he manumitted her.⁶⁵ Women of more modest means likewise harangued their husbands for gifts of a few pesos offered to concubines. Tomasa Garayo detailed for the ecclesiastical tribunal how her husband Careaga had advanced to his concubine "goods for her maintenance in luxury" while denying sustenance to her and their "blessed, legitimate children" and thereby likewise denying "duty, honor, nature, and Religion."⁶⁶ Women with gambling husbands remonstrated over the loss of household wealth, particularly if it included money earned from their own labor or heirlooms, rosaries, iron pots, scarves, and dresses that they had brought to the marriage. The frequent absence of husbands irritated them especially, as is understandable, when they had to beg food from neighbors.⁶⁷

Men consequently kept careful account of their material contributions to the upkeep of their spouses and children. One husband who was gone for months at a time could count the dozens of his pesos that his wife had spent in his absence.⁶⁸ In another case, a man departed from his house with a list in mind of things—chairs, an ox, some clay, and so on—that his

⁶⁵Ibid., foja 9-14.

⁶⁶Villa Rica, 31 March 1857, Juzgado Eclesiastico; Demanda de Tomasa Garayo contra José Miguel Careaga, 1850-51, AAA, foja 51-54.

⁶⁷See these details in San Pedro, 31 December 1858, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1844-52; Demanda de Simeona Abezada contra Pedro Doncel, 1852-54, AAA, Libros de divorcio, Libro 1852-57, foja 6-7; Demanda de divorcio de Saturnino Roa contra Candida Ocampos, 1863-64, AAA, foja, 1-6, 13-23, 31-38; Demanda de Dorotea Fariña contra Juan Miguel Almada, 1855-59, AAA, Libros de divorcio, Libro 1852-57, foja 1-12; Demanda de Modesta Sosa contra Roque María Elizeche, 1853-55, AAA, Libros de divorcio, Libro 1851-52, foja 1-42.

⁶⁸Demanda de divorcio de Petrona Berdoy contra Marcos Troche, 1858-60, AAA, Libros de divorcio, Libro 1855-58, foja 8-15.

spouse could sell to buy provisions. One even rationalized his heavy gambling as a means to win what he failed to provide for at home.⁶⁹ Contributions of food and clothes typically figured among the gestures of men recalling their fulfillment of patriarchal duty.⁷⁰ Men of moderate means, in particular, made sure to detail their contracting of a domestic servant or two to help their wives with cooking and clothes washing as another expression of their patriarchal care. One woman alleged marital neglect to ecclesiastical authorities by citing the lack of a servant.⁷¹ The presence of a servant woman could also be an irritant, however, bringing jealousy and accusations of adultery. Thus María Máxima Bayo pointedly refused to occupy a woman that her husband had contracted to help her, and she underlined her point by calling for help from her father's servants instead.⁷²

Domestic servitude and labor informed women's sense of dignity in marriage, and men's as well. During the course of his spouse's divorce litigation against him in 1860, Juan José Medina recalled telling her once to go find a new place to live "because she had no will to serve him."⁷³ Pedro Juan Bogarin of Yabebiri was known to bring lovers into his home for weeks at a time and make his legitimate wife, Victoriana, serve them. An acquaintance described his visit to their house for a meal one day during which Bogarin became disgusted with the plate of food served to him and remarked to his wife that he had a mind to bring one

⁶⁹Demanda de Simeona Abezada contra Pedro Doncel, 1852-54, AAA, foja 4-5; Demanda de Modesta Sosa contra Roque María Elizeche, 1853-55, AAA, foja 4-5.

⁷⁰Demanda de divorcio de Celedonia Samudio contra Juan José Medina, 1858-63, AAA, foja 10-13; Demanda de Dorotea Fariña contra Juan Manuel Almada, 1855-59, AAA, foja 4; Querella de Pedro Antonio Canteros contra Manuel Paredes, 1853, ANA-SCJ, foja 176-80.

⁷¹Demanda de Simeona Abezada contra Pedro Doncel, 1852-54, AAA, foja 25-27.

⁷²Demanda de Elias Davalos contra María Maxima Bayo, 1850-57, AAA, foja 17-21. Also see Villa Rica, 31 March 1857, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico.

⁷³Demanda de Celedonia Samudio contra Juan José Medina, 1858-63, AAA, foja 10-13.

of his lovers to cook for him. When Victoriana said fine, he could bring her, he bolted up from the table and proceeded to punch her several times. In another incident, Bogarin whipped Victoriana for muttering her repulsion when ordered to serve a different lover who had spent the night. Eventually she complained to an ecclesiastical magistrate in Asunción, that the recalcitrant husband had brought one Juliana Castillo “to live in his very house, as if she was his proper woman, while making [me] serve her like a *criada* of his concubine.”⁷⁴ Another woman expressed analogous sentiments to her husband when she pleaded, during a contentious meal that he “treat her not like a slave, but as his companion and wife.”⁷⁵

Her plaintive request not to be treated as a servant was a common refrain, echoed in many of the cases already discussed.⁷⁶ Thus Tomasa Garayo asked to be treated as “a companion not a slave” and Lorenza Vargas said that she had agree not “to be a slave, but a companion, following the holy phrase of the Church.” Mercedes Meza was recalling a lashing once received from her husband when she too repeated for the tribunals the priestly injunction made to her husband at the altar: “A companion I give you, not a servant; love her as Christ loved his Church.”⁷⁷ The phrase had currency among lawyers defending women specifically against excessive punishments and adulterous abandonment as well as among

⁷⁴Demanda de divorcio de Victoriana de Jesús Barbosa contra Pedro Juan Bogarín, 1858-62, AAA, Libros de divorcio, Libro 1858-74, foja 1-43.

⁷⁵Demanda de Simeona Abezada contra Pedro Doncel, 1852-54, AAA, foja 25-27.

⁷⁶Both Potthast and Chambers make reference to women using this refrain to claim matrimonial rights during ecclesiastic divorce cases. Chambers assumes in her case that the woman somehow misconstrued the advice of the priest at the matrimonial altar. See, respectively, *Paraíso de Mahoma’ o ‘País de las mujeres,’* 153, and “‘To the Company of Man Like My Husband.’” Yet the refrain seemed to have both legal and popular currency, as documented above. Olcott cites in her work a version of the refrain as even produced in National Revolutionary Party propaganda directed to women after the Cristero Rebellion in post-revolutionary Mexico, *Revolutionary Women in Post-revolutionary Mexico*, 42.

⁷⁷See, respectively, Demanda de Tomasa Garayo contra José Miguel Careaga, 1850-51, AAA, foja 6-9, 51-54; Demanda de María Lorenza Vargas contra Tadeo Ayala, 1852-59, AAA, Libro 1851-52, foja 35-44, 56-64; Demanda de Pedro Martir Benítez contra María Mercedes Meza, 1855-57, AAA, foja 9-14.

ecclesiastical magistrates ruling in their favor.⁷⁸ It conceded the wife's submission and labor, but not her servitude. A wife was not her husband's *tembiguái*.

The proper order of the patriarchal household was the subject of much gossip in the Paraguayan countryside. Women faced speculation about their sexual propriety in the gossip, most especially married women who traveled independently about or went to a party without their husbands, although such free movement was hardly out of the ordinary.⁷⁹ Poor women who enjoyed caña and card playing at boisterous gatherings were certain targets, and the unmarried daughter who bore a child brought notoriety to her family, no matter how common her misstep.⁸⁰ People took note of men's reputations as well. The charge of being a shiftily vagrant or cattle rustler proved particularly sticky. Along with notorious inclinations to gamble, such charges pointed at married men's failure to provide properly for their family. Neighbors and acquaintances lent ears to news about the extramarital affairs of married men, as well. Again, no matter how common the practice, its moral complications did not go unnoticed.⁸¹ Neither did the proper patriarchal conduct of fathers who stayed at home and taught their children to fear God.⁸² Reputations were constantly in play. The local police sentry believed Benedicto López "a true family father who governed his family precisely as

⁷⁸Demanda de Celedonia Samudio contra Juan José Medina, 1858-63, AAA, foja 22-31; Demanda de Petrona Berdoy contra Marcos Troche, 1858-60, AAA, foja 5-7; Demanda de Modesta Sosa contra Roque Elizeche, 1853-55, AAA, foja 43-47.

⁷⁹As Tomasa Garayo stood accused by the accomplices of her husband, Demanda de Tomasa Garayo contra José Miguel Careaga, 1850-51, AAA, foja 26-35.

⁸⁰Demanda de Pedro Martir Benítez contra María Mercedes Meza, 1855-57, AAA, foja 2-5, 15-18.

⁸¹Demanda de Gregorio Riveros contra María Genes, 1852-53, AAA, foja 112-17. Some men were inclined to perceive accusations of their adultery and promiscuity as assaults on their honor, see Piribebuy, 31 December 1856, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1856-59; Causa de Geronima Sarate y José Jorge Benítez contra Julian Benítez, 1 May 1851, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 101.

⁸²Sumario sobre el suicidio de José María Aleman, 1860, ANA-SCJ.

one should.” Still, others in the village grumbled that López monitored the morality of other households more closely than his own. They spoke about the sexual promiscuity of his daughters and suspected that López had his own sins to hide.⁸³

Public reputation could be tyrannical. Benedicto López committed suicide after his daughters denounced him to local officials for raping them. In 1861, Isabel Cristaldo of San Juan Bautista tried to hang herself from a ceiling beam after her brother-in-law accused her of adultery before her husband and two other men. She had demanded that her husband sue his brother to restore her good reputation. He had preferred to put off the ordeal until after planting season while Isabel, tormented by gossip, tied a noose for herself.⁸⁴ When another woman told her husband of gossip that she had slept with her step-father, his anguish at the shameful rumor (as well as suspicion that it might be true) had him yanking her around by the hair and bouncing her head against a wall.⁸⁵

Appearances meant a very great deal, and not just among the well to do. In divorce litigation, claims to good reputation were a standard argument, particularly of women and their legal representatives. Tomasa Garayo procured declarations from prominent neighbors that “she had always preserved herself with honor and good comportment.” Likewise, in 1861 counsel for the much poorer Celedonia Samudio solicited affirmations from townsfolk of Villa Rica that vouched for her as “faithful and obedient to her spouse and dedicated to the attentions of her home.” In another case from 1855, the parish priest of Quindy inquired about the moral reputations of the consorts Modesta Sosa and Roque Elizeche in the village.

⁸³Proceso a Magdalena y Patricia López por el suicidio de Benedicto López, 1856, ANA-SCJ, foja 90-109.

⁸⁴Sumario sobre el intento de suicidio de Isabel Cristaldo, San Juan Bautista, 1861, ANA-SCJ vol. 1507, n. 5, foja 143-49.

⁸⁵Demanda de Concepción Romero contra José Rocendo Recalde, 1858, AAA, foja 1-5.

The general view, he reported, was that Sosa, although quite poor, acted in an “irreprehensible way for her good ways and moral customs, compliant in everything.” Roque, in contrast, was regarded as a deliriously jealous good-for-nothing.⁸⁶ The contrast with their misbehaving husbands underscored these women’s public virtues.

A patriarchal yardstick was fundamental to the measurement of household reputations and Christian piety. Clerical magistrates admonished married couples to be “responsible before God” and “live in peace and union as true married Christians.” They called on a man to comport himself as “a true husband, and father of a family.” They charged a woman to be obedient to her husband “in all that is necessary to conserve the conjugal peace and union in which two consorts should live.”⁸⁷ Civil officials counseled citizens to good behavior “under the eyes of God.” All understood the household to be a foundation of the entire social, spiritual, and political order. Therefore Tomasa Garayo turned down her adulterous husband’s invitation to flog him privately and pressed ahead to get a public airing of his misdeeds. “All of Villa Rica in mass will pronounce against him,” she insisted, “and will make a single clarion call whose formidable sound will be heard in the distant corners of this vast Republic.”⁸⁸

Family, Republic, and Citizenship

⁸⁶See, respectively, Demanda de Tomasa Garayo contra José Miguel Careaga, 1850-51, foja 19-22; Demanda de Celedonia Samudio contra Juan José Medina, 1858-63, foja 32-39; Demanda de Modesta Sosa contra Roque Elizeche, 1855-57, foja 38-42.

⁸⁷San Pedro, 31 December 1852, San Estanislao, 13 October 1851, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1844-52; Tobati, 31 March 1854, AAA, Juzgado Eclesiastico, Libro 1853-55.

⁸⁸Demanda de Tomasa Garayo contra José Miguel Careaga, 1850-51, AAA, foja 6-9.

Republican virtues, she believed, were mostly just domestic virtues writ large. Indeed, we shall see that when Paraguayans applied the virtues and judgments of patriarchal morality in their gossip and domestic quarrels, they also were layering familiar experiences and sentiments onto compelling notions of what made for good Christians and good citizens in such a republic.

Official discourse encouraged that idea. The treatises and decrees and decrees produced by the regime of Carlos Antonio López regularly reinforced parallels between patriarchal family, Christian piety, and republican nationhood. Upon consolidating power López had declared his intent to fortify a “Christian republic.”⁸⁹ In his 1855 political catechism written for instruction in primary schools, the president then explicitly defined “patria” as “the great family in whose bosom we were born.” The “sentiment of patria,” students learned, was “like that of the family, pure, disinterested, and noble.” The catechism endorsed Catholicism as the official religion “to conserve the good customs and make virtuous the individuals that comprise the Republic.” The virtue of the People was crucial, the catechism affirmed, because Paraguay was a republic based on popular sovereignty, not a monarchy with supreme and perpetual power. Republican liberty was an attribute of a citizen who fulfilled his destiny as “a spiritual being, a material being, a member of a family, and a member of society.”⁹⁰

The catechism rehashed the sentiments of *ñane retã* conjoined to modern ideas of republican nationhood. A play titled *A Loyal Paraguayan*, written by a government-contracted Spanish publicist and presented in 1858 to open a newly-constructed theater in

⁸⁹Peters, *El sistema educativo paraguayo*, 106-09.

⁹⁰*Catecismo político y social* (1855) as reprinted in *Cuadernos Republicanos* (Asunción), n. 12 (1976): 175-80. Also see discussion of the text in Peters, *El sistema educativo paraguayo*, 110-12.

Asunción dramatized similar ideas. The author Ildefonso Bermejo was the same man who derided the repurposing of urinals in Paraguayan churches, yet he was a faithful client of the López regime contracted to educate and publish on behalf of the government as part of its modernizing project. His students were elite Paraguayan youth destined for state service, including some who would later finish their state-sponsored education in Europe. Bermejo also edited the state newspaper for a while and even a literary journal. His verse drama composed to inaugurate the regime's new theater was to "open the doors of Paraguayan dramatic literature."⁹¹ It portrayed the customs of the countryside and, like other post-colonial romantic writing, presented family and household as a principal metaphor and model of nationhood.⁹²

Nativist allusions and sympathies filled the depiction. The drama opens with a scene of merry-making on a rural estate, as peons and tenants dance and sing a local air to the sound of a harp, a popular instrument of the countryside, for the entertainment of the landowner and his wife. The lyrics of the song extol the seductive looks, pale feet, and embroidered frocks of Paraguayan girls. The principal characters are drinking yerba mate. Later, the wife of the estate owner defends her rustic dress, a *typói*, against the playful mocking of a foreign visitor, countering with the lines "I can consequently/ adopt, as you say/ the customs of my country/ without lacking in decency." This foreigner, from the Argentine province of Santa Fe, is the villain of the piece, a character who assumes "fine and civilized" airs and "always

⁹¹Ildefonso Antonio Bermejo, *Un paraguayo leal: Drama en dos actos y en verso* (Asunción: Talleres Nacionales de H. Kraus, 1898).

⁹²Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Fernando Unzueta, "Scenes of Reading: Imagining Nations/Romancing History," *Beyond Imagined Communities*, 115-60.

speaks of Europe.” In another scene, two tenant peasants of the estate employ Guaraní to outwit the villain’s strictly Spanish-speaking accomplice.⁹³

The hero of the drama—the “loyal Paraguayan”—is the overseer of the estate, Eustaquio. He was for much of his life the slave of the owner’s family, manumitted for his unrelenting loyalty and service. An early scene has him recounting to the owner, Eduardo, the extensive holdings and plantings of the estate—over seven thousand head of cattle and fields filled with ripening maize, manioc, onions, beans, and lettuces, as well as a line of orange trees planted along a creek—all carefully tended and administered by Eustaquio while Eduardo spends much of his time away in the capital. Eustaquio later must rescue much of this wealth.

At stake, however, is Eduardo’s marriage with his wife, Elisa. The villain, Nicandro, wants to destroy the marriage and the couple’s wellbeing to avenge Elisa’s repulse of his own advances years before. Nicandro feigns friendship with Eduardo to gain his trust and an invitation to the estate, then launches his machinations to the muffled horror of Elisa. She confides in Eustaquio, telling him the true designs of her former suitor, which she learned from his missives promising revenge. The loyal Eustaquio must fend off Nicandro and save the honor and integrity of his patrons’ marriage through many trial and tribulations.⁹⁴

Audiences could relate to the dramatic tension of this endangered marriage, which includes the threat of public disgrace and wifely insubordination, the disastrous loss of patrimony at the gaming table, and other elements familiar from parish archives.⁹⁵ Along with nativist imagery and conspiring foreigners, tension over the fulfillment of patriarchal

⁹³Bermejo, *Un paraguayo leal*, 7-10, 27, 55-56.

⁹⁴*Ibid*, 13-49.

⁹⁵*Ibid*, 48-49, 58-62.

obligations emerges in the play as a drama of nationhood at large. The consensual values evoked by the play involve not only prominent men but also the subordinates of a household, with the enduring loyalty of wife and servant eventually serving to restore the virtue of all.

The play became something of a patriotic standard following its 1858 debut, with towns of the interior staging it during religious-civic fiestas in subsequent years.⁹⁶ Its portrayal of the moral travails of local elites and patrons could apparently capture the attention of wide audiences. Those travails had a way of inspiring other creative writings closer to the level of raw experience. During the early months of 1858, in fact, one or more anonymous authors taunted authorities in the pueblo of Acaay with written satirical libels posted outside the residences of village notables and lower-ranking militia officers. The inflammatory postings, a sort of traditional graffiti known as *pasquines*, featured the crude style of a barely literate hand and phrases with syntax of evident Guaraní origin. They committed to writing the loose talk circulating about the alleged concubines of militia sergeants and other sexual improprieties occurring in the homes of somewhat prominent residents. One officer was said to be scandalizing a rural quarter by “eating” his lover day and night—an expression of sexual connotation in the Spanish vernacular. This “consumption” prompted another poster to imitate the style of a notarized petition calling for a higher authority “to cure the scandalous union of his district “because we are without confession or mass.” Another poster then announced, in the style of an Argentine newspaper, a scandal in the family of Don Juan de la Cruz Aguilera, whose son-in-law was said to be “enjoying” one of his unmarried daughters. Some postings incorporated the heading of official correspondance: “Viva la

⁹⁶Informe de Eugenio López, 3 August 1864, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 (II), foja 2064-66.

República del Paraguay.” One announced the intent to report the “vile” proceedings of a militia sergeant to his priest, who would then no doubt pass word to the president himself.⁹⁷

Common folk sought to bring their own household dramas to attention of high state and religious authority. In 1853, the pardo Juan de la Cruz Ortigoza of Villeta had become so furious at his wife’s refusal to leave her work at his in-laws’ still that he drew a knife and went on a rampage, stabbing his wife and other relatives. He then fled through a sugar cane field and a day later ended up in the plaza before the governmental palace in Asunción, seeking a presidential audience—“not knowing,” he subsequently claimed, “a better authority to whom he could [confess].” Accounts of his wife’s insubordination—her sharp words and the violent push that provoked the rampage—as well as her apparent infidelities and his recourse to beating her at times, were likely to accompany this confession.⁹⁸ Likewise, in 1850 Roque Elizeche escaped from his imprisonment in Quindy and traveled to the capital, reaching the outer corridors of the palace, to speak with the president about his arrest for the excessive whipping of his wife in the woods. Turned away, he went searching for Bishop López who was conducting his pastoral visit through the hillside towns surrounding Asunción.⁹⁹

Attempts to bring everyday familial grievances and scandals to the attention of the president illustrate the intimate relationships to political power imagined among the populace. On minor scale, people reported the infidelities of their spouses to local police sentries and magistrates, and final stages of such cases did sometimes reach the president for

⁹⁷Proceso a Domiciano Villareal y Juan Silvestre Ayala por libelos infamatorios contra las autoridades de Acahay, 1858, ANA-SCJ vol. 1822, n. 1, foja 9-11, 16.

⁹⁸Proceso contra Juan de la Cruz Ortigoza por herir a su mujer y otras personas, 1853, ANA-SCJ, foja 1-42.

⁹⁹Proceso a Roque Elizeche por maltrato a su mujer, Quindy, 1850, ANA-SCJ vol. 1611, n. 5, foja 1-28.

his deliberation.¹⁰⁰ On occasion, Carlos Antonio López also lent his ear to rumors of familial impropriety and ordered formal hearings into the matters. He did so in 1849 upon learning the gossip that a village notable from Yacanguasú was sexually propositioning his step-daughters and called him to Asunción to answer the charges directly before a minister of the government.¹⁰¹ With the figure of the president understood, and occasionally felt, to be so close, individuals also could plausibly envision their intimate disputes as matters of political concern. For example, the domestic worker Concepción Estigarribia grabbed the attention of Asunción authorities, and even that of López, in September 1850 by inventing the story that two soldiers were planning the ultimate treasonous act. Called to testify before the government secretary, she related her alleged encounter that the soldiers were griping to two mulatas about their low pay and about the prospect that the president was about to bring a group of foreigners to the capital who, unaccountably, they feared would end up killing them. “It would be better,” they supposedly boasted, “that we should now just kill [the president].”¹⁰² The story was a lie. Concepción had maintained an affair with one of the soldiers while she provided him food and laundry, and burned with jealousy that his amorous attentions had turned elsewhere, toward one of the mulatas.

Paraguayans adeptly involved state authorities in private disputes by giving them an ideological spin. In 1864 Francisca Sanabria brought attention to the violently abusive ways of her husband by having local officials in the old Indian pueblo of Santa María informed of

¹⁰⁰See, for examples, Querella de Pedro Antonio Canteros contra Manuel Paredes, Paraguari, 1853, ANA-SCJ vol. 1749, n. 22, foja 173-80; Denuncia del soldado Juan de la Cruz Chaparro contra el ex-comisionado de Quiquío por abuso de autoridad, 1849, ANA-SCJ vol. 1749, n. 6, foja 34-42.

¹⁰¹Interpelación a Desiderio Espinola por mal compartamiento familiar, Yacanguasu, 1849, ANA-SCJ vol. 1749, n. 2, foja 5-9.

¹⁰²Proceso a Ramon Velazquez y Vicente Sosa, soldados denunciados por queja contra el gobierno, Asunción, 1850, ANA-SCJ vol. 1837, n. 21, foja 1-3.

his heretical religious devotion. It featured a spectacular-looking image painted red and white, with large ears or horns. Sanabria's husband called the image "San Katu," regularly lit candles to it, and believed it helped gamblers. The wife's tactic worked perhaps too well, because the case was sent to the president.¹⁰³ Attributing to enemies seditious remarks against the president and his family was fairly common.¹⁰⁴ Gambling companions' disputed debts might lead one to accuse another of political dissent.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Celidonia Baez's constant quarrels with her step-children led her to accuse one of a "scandalous and corrupted life" and another of sedition in the most trivial sort of quarrel. Celidonia viewed the president as her personal protector, giving her step children's insubordination overtones of *lèse majesté*.¹⁰⁶

The familial and the political seemed inextricably entwined. The legal counsel in a 1851 divorce case contrived a reputation of marital insubordination and adultery for a woman from Asunción largely because of her contempt for state officials. María Mercedes Meza and her husband drew the opprobrium of a ruling ecclesiastical judge for their arbitrary separation, which he regarded as offensive "to our holy national laws and our legitimate authorities."¹⁰⁷ María Gómez found her husband Juan, who had once stabbed her, entirely reformed and inclined to treat her with "proper affection" once he began "lending his services to the

¹⁰³Proceso a Ezequiel Benítez por hechicería, Santa María, 1864-67, ANA-SCJ vol. 1525, n. 4, foja 92-110.

¹⁰⁴ For example, Proceso contra Felipe Aveiro por proferir palabras ofensivas contra el Presidente, Ybitmi, 1853, ANA-SCJ vol. 1416, n. 14, foja 210-21.

¹⁰⁵Denuncia contra Manuel Antonio Velazquez por proferir palabras injuriosas contra el gobierno, Itagua, 1855, ANA-SCJ vol. 1624 (II) n. 13, foja 73-84.

¹⁰⁶Proceso contra Francisco Tiburcio Ferreira por hablar con desprecio de las autoridades de la República, Pilar, 1862, ANA-SCJ vol. 1572, n. 4, foja 62-82.

¹⁰⁷Demanda de divorcio de María Rafaela Oliva contra José del Pilar Flor, 1850-51, AAA, Demandas de divorcio, Libro 1850, foja 51-54; Demanda de Pedro Martir Benítez contra María Mercedes Meza, 1855-57, AAA, foja 46-55.

Patria” as a military recruit.¹⁰⁸ During the decade-long divorce litigation pressed by his wife, Tadeo Ayala did admit once being found in the house of his suspected lover in the village, but he claimed that his visit was on the orders of the woman’s brother, a militia sergeant “to fulfill the orders of the patria that command us to obey our superiors.”¹⁰⁹ Tomasa Garayo’s the incorrigible José Miguel Careaga, defended himself with testimony concerning the fulfillment of his duties as a husband and “a good citizen.”¹¹⁰

In sum, old values and familiar experiences were mixing with new meanings for life in an independent republic. The reinforced, traditional metaphors of state and family lent a political valence to household affairs and personal relations, as did the promotion of an officially-sanctioned public morality in general. The commonplace expressions of Christian virtue, as daily judged in village gossip, informed the terms of post-colonial republicanism as articulated by the state. Tomasa Garayo wanted her husband’s adultery broadcast to “the distant corners of this vast Republic.” Fulfillment of patriarchal duties and obligations was associated with political virtue, turning the family travails of *A Loyal Paraguayan* into a drama of nationhood. When Carlos Antonio López equated the proper realization of republican liberty with the fulfillment of duty “as a spiritual being, a material being, a member of a family, and a member of society,” he was invoking familiar expectations of rights and obligations in everyday patriarchal arrangements.

The state’s rhetoric of citizenship and liberty made the connection incessantly. In 1861, Bishop Juan Gregorio Urbietta reiterated the call for priests to foment “good Christians and

¹⁰⁸Demanda de María Petrona Gomez contra Juan de la Cruz Ortigoza, 1857-61, AAA, Demandas de divorcio, Libro 1852-57, foja 1-11.

¹⁰⁹Demanda de Lorenza Vargas contra Tadeo Ayala, 1852-59, AAA, foja 65-71.

¹¹⁰Demanda de Tomasa Garayo contra José Miguel Careaga, 1850-51, AAA, foja 26-35.

good citizens” among their parishioners and suggested that doing so would keep Paraguay stable, in contrast to neighboring countries whose political anarchy was beginning to appear threatening.¹¹¹ Two years later, the regime of Francisco Solano López commissioned the re-issue of the religious-political catechism of San Alberto under the title of “Instruction concerning the Most Principal Obligations of a True Citizen,” harping again on the values of familial respect, obedience, and fidelity.¹¹² They were values repackaged from the resonant context of daily life, values that men invoked to whip their wives and enforce their labor in homes and fields, values that women invoked to demand a modicum of dignity as their husbands’ companions, not their slaves.

Local state officials, parish priests, and common parishioners shared a cherished rationale for the exercise of power. Parish priests manned the distant posts of an expanding church-state apparatus and knew how to channel its command of legal and spiritual authority to personal, as well as public, advantage. The regime at large increasingly brought such moral force and reverence to bear, and the population seemed to responsive to it. Consider, in this regard, the reported boasting of one prominent resident of the port town of Villeta in response to a European guest who compared Paraguay unfavorably with the “riches, enlightenment, and liberty of Buenos Aires.” The insulted host retorted that “Paraguayans were the truly free and enlightened, because they lived in good order under the shadow of a public morality vigilantly sustained by the Supreme Government.” As a result, “they did not experience robberies, murders, and other classes of disorder that dishonor society.”¹¹³ He

¹¹¹Carta pastoral, 29 October 1861, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Obispo Juan Gregorio Urbieto.

¹¹²*Catecismo de San Alberto*, 40-60.

eventually ran the European out of his house with a sword. It is not merely coincidental, no doubt, that the year was 1864.

By that time, Paraguayan nerves had frayed with speculation about war with neighboring states. Moreover, much of the leadership from the old independence generation had been dying off. Bishop López had come to a senile end to his days in 1859, and his brother President López followed in September 1862. His eldest son Francisco had gladly accepted appointment as vice-president on his father's deathbed. Rumbblings of doubt and dissent at the dynastic succession were not quite drowned out by the murmur of masses for the late president's soul.

The late president had been dead and buried for several months when Father José del Carmen Arzamendia in San Pedro learned of ghostly tales that left him troubled. Since assuming charge of the prominent northern parish four years earlier, the priest had become a controversial figure in the villa, not hesitating to employ the pulpit to take sides in this contentious town, and provoking the indignation of the local well-to-do, who sometimes took complaints to the bishop.¹¹⁴ But his parishioners also revered him enough to bring to his attention grave concerns of political import. Don Epifanio Corvalan had approached the priest in June 1863 with rumors that he had heard from a mulata woman just returned from the capital, unsettling stories of an unsettled presidential soul. Corvalan apparently recounted them in some detail.

The first story told of the preparations surrounding the funeral for Carlos Antonio López in the cathedral of Asunción. The doors of the church had been opened on two consecutive

¹¹³Informe de Manuel Gomez a Francisco Solano López, Villeta, 19 September 1864, ANA-SH vol. 412, n. 2.

¹¹⁴San Pedro, 1862-63, ANA-SNE vol. 961; Decreto sobre procedimientos del cura de San Pedro, José del Carmen Arzamendia, al cura de la Villa del Rosario, Facundo Gill, Asunción, 10 February 1861, AAA, Archivo de la Iglesia, Carpeta: Obispo Gregorio Urbieto.

nights for people to pay their respects. On the second night an apparition of the late president had appeared with a great retinue, terrifying mourners. This was only prelude, however, to a second, more horrible vision, “a horrible beast with enormous horns like those of a buck” that had materialized from the presidential tomb, then disappeared in a cloud of smoke. Disturbed, Father Arzamendia immediately called upon the mulata woman, Vicencia Haedo, to who said she had heard them in Asunción from a domestic slave in the house of one Doña Ana Haedo. The priest believed that political dissidents were spreading the rumors, and he took them seriously enough to write to the new president, Francisco Solano López, about them.¹¹⁵

The common folk of Paraguay perhaps had reasons to believe tales of horned beasts and the unsettled ghost of a dead president, inverting the presumptions of so many prayers and masses that had deemed his rule a heavenly mandate.¹¹⁶ And their beliefs mattered. The potential damnation of the late president’s soul threatened a minor crisis of state sovereignty. The regime had subsumed the religious infrastructure of colonial rule into new ideas of republican nationhood partly at its peril. But if the Paraguayan state seemed still founded, in part, on an idea of divine right, it also promoted the idea of popular sovereignty. It is to that idea that we now turn.

¹¹⁵Informe del cura José Carmen Arzamendia a Francisco Solano López, San Pedro, 18 June 1863, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH, vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 202.

¹¹⁶On the politically subversive potential of ghost stories, see S.A. Smith, “Talking Toads and Chinless Ghosts: The Politics of ‘Superstitious’ Rumors in the People’s Republic of China, 1961-1965,” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 2 (April 2006), 406-27. On the subversive quality of rumor in general, see Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*, ch. 6 & 7. Guardino also effectively employs analysis of rumor to examine popular political culture, *The Time of Liberty*. For colonial Africa, see Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

CHAPTER 4

DIVINE-RIGHT REPUBLICANISM

Congresses, elections, and constitutions were the mechanisms of popular sovereignty adopted throughout Latin America at the time of independence. In Paraguay they had gathered an added level of formal pageantry under the autocratic López family.¹ The efficacy of that pageantry has often been questioned, and it is true that in Paraguay the formalities of republican rule always mattered more symbolically than instrumentally, as the theatrics of power. Still, congresses and elections always had the potential to become sites of real contestation, as we shall see.

The death of Carlos Antonio López became an occasion for that contestation, embodied in rumors of an unholy presidential ghost and murmurs among local and national elites aspiring to greater change than that promised by the succession of Francisco Solano López in 1862. The new government mustered the church-state apparatus to proclaim that the new president represented both the will of the People and the will of God. This chapter contends that the new López regime refined the emblematic performance of such modern republicanism as a form of moral persuasion in mobilizing the country for war. A new bishop at the president's side helped to lead the charge. Prayers for salvation of a dead president's

¹As with much of the rest of Spanish America, electoral juntas had developed early consequential significance in Paraguay during the independence period even before formal rejection of Spanish colonial rule, see Cooney, *El fin de la colonial: Paraguay, 1810-1811* (Asunción: Intercontinental Editora, 2010).

soul became prayers for the divine-sanction of a new president's rule and, eventually, prayers for victory in a republican war against the Empire of Brazil and her allies.

Congresses and Elections

The prominent villa of San Pedro, a principal district for yerba production and trade, was home to merchant families who asserted themselves as arbiters of state rule in the Paraguayan north. The wilderness remained pervasive and encroaching in the north, as we have seen, and mysteries and disruptions in the workings of power still abounded. Peons could change names and personal stories easily on the frontier, and indigenous chieftains loomed in the woods with kind entreaties and unspoken threats. Individuals of the local yerba-mining elite contended for influence over state offices to secure labor, protection, and prestige. They likewise bristled against ambitious rival officials who tried to trim their privileges and autonomy.²

When news arrived of the death of old Carlos Antonio López in 1862, the local elite began to take account of their prospects. Some immediately signaled their collaboration with the dead president's son, who was already advancing claim on the executive office. Others seemed disposed to listen to alternatives. In fact, four men of the San Pedro elite—José Tomás Ocampos, Ramon Milesi, Bernardo Valiente, and Ignacio Sosa—were in Asunción when the convocation of a congress to elect a new president was announced. As Sosa

²Informe de las causas civiles y criminales, Ignacio Sosa, 2 April 1856; Nota de Ignacio Sosa, 8 June 1856; Notas del comandante Hermenegildo Quiñonez, 5 & 16 June 1857; Informe de Gregorio Mareque a Francisco Solano López, 16 December 1858; Nota de Mareque, 23 February 1859; Nota de Félix Barbosa, 13 May 1862, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (I), fojas 136, 139, 143, 149, 151, 159, 164-65, 178.

recalled some years later, all four desired the honor to be members of the congress.³ They hurried back San Pedro for the proceedings to elect its representatives.

Legislative assemblies were rare enough in nineteenth-century Paraguay to build considerable anticipation, all the more so when they were to choose a new president. But why, with political options so constrained and results largely orchestrated, did congresses and elections matter at all? Indeed the four men of San Pedro pining to represent their district were likely inclined to see acting president Francisco Solano López confirmed in power in the congress of 1862. Nonetheless, even the most state-managed elections in nineteenth-century Latin America still served as displays of political influence and power, helping to set pecking orders both on local and national levels. There was plenty of competition over those pecking orders, and it sometimes precipitated cataclysmic political fragmentation.⁴ More fundamentally, the irregular congresses and elections under the López regimes in Paraguay constituted important mediums for the projection of rule. They were exercise in the forms, if not the substance, of republicanism for many involved, and their ritualization further reinforced the interlocking imagery of church and state. Standards of active political citizenship acquired social importance on such occasions, and constitutional formalities figured in political conversations of middling elites. In fact, one congressional deputy from

³Informe de Ignacio Sosa, Asunción, 23 February 1865, ANA-SH vol. 343 (microfilm, University of Texas at Austin).

⁴Richard Graham, *Patronage and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Guerra, *Modernidad e independencia*, 177-227; Hilda Sabato, *The Many and the Few: Political Participation in Republican Buenos Aires* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 55-112. Also see numerous selections by Antonio Annino, José Carlos Chiriamonte, Sabato, Guerra and other authors in the volumes: *Elections Before Democracy: The History of Elections in Europe and Latin America*, ed. Eduardo Posada-Carbo (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), *Historia de las elecciones en iberoamerica, siglo XIX*, ed. Antonio Annino (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1995), *Ciudadanía política y formación de las naciones: Perspectivas históricas de América Latina*, ed. Hilda Sabato (Mexico: El Colegio de Mexico, 1999). James Alderfer Wood, "The Burden of Citizenship: Artisans, Elections, and the Fuero Militar in Santiago de Chile, 1822-1851," *The Americas* 58, no. 3 (January 2002): 443-69. For the cataclysmic consequences of postcolonial local elections in the Yucatán, see Rugeley, *Rebellion Now and Forever*.

the northern reaches arrived in Asunción in 1862 with a suggestion—and possibly some votes—to alter the very charter of the republic before ever electing a president.

Elections and Local Politics

The prospect of congresses and elections significantly impacted the workings of local politics in the countryside. The anticipation surrounding the congress of 1862, for example, was increasingly palpable for the likes of Ignacio Sosa and José Tomás Ocampos upon returning to their villa of San Pedro. Sosa recalled how his friend and ally in town, Pedro Recalde, received them and commented about his desire to be elected congressional deputy, “to see a thing as significant as had ever taken place.”⁵ Several local elites were pinning ambitions on the results of the local electoral assembly. The proceedings were to be the first of two tiers whereby elected deputies would vote for the assembly in Asunción to choose the new head magistrate. Fifty local notables, men of position and property, were to gather in the parish church of San Pedro to determine who among them would be the three representatives of the district. Larger districts such as Villa Rica would see gatherings of a hundred or more to choose to six deputies. Local electoral juntas met in their parish churches, under the eyes of the God, where commandants were to lead the proceedings and priests were on hand to advise and perhaps advocate their own election as deputies. In these local exercises of republicanism, clear signs of the divine will were to accompany the alleged expression of the popular will. The voting was to take place by acclamation.⁶ But in San Pedro, as elsewhere,

⁵Informe de Ignacio Sosa, 23 February 1865, ANA-SH.

dealings and jockeying were developing beforehand, as potential electors announced their honorable wishes to serve and stated their preferences for candidates. Sosa, Ocampos, and Recalde were making common cause as unified slate. Factions were forming. There was little sign of unanimity.⁷

Unanimity was definitely a virtue in the republican ethos of early Spanish American states. The unanimity of consensual legislatures and uncontested elections was believed to be the highest expression of an orderly body politic and, ironically, of a democratic will. It went hand-in-hand with the presumption of divine guidance and sanction for electoral proceedings and likewise served the autocratic tendencies among leaders the region over.⁸ Local powerbrokers of the Paraguayan countryside likewise sought to exploit the public façade that all were united. Just before the proceedings in San Pedro, as Sosa later recalled, he and numerous voters met first near the church in the house of Francisco Espinoza. The host then approached Sosa and inquired whom he believed should be chosen as the district's representatives. Sosa replied offering the names of friends and clients and, meeting some resistance, feigned innocence and remarked that he did not know of "a partisan division." They all had the same president in mind, he quipped.⁹ Sosa spoke in terms of unanimity even as he promoted his particular faction.

Who had the honor of travelling to Asunción was of material importance to these men. Sosa had apparently secured a seat as deputy in the previous congress of 1857, not

⁶Instructions for 1862 elections, ANA-SNE vol. 3055; Actas de votos en Villa Rica y Asunción, February 1865, ANA-SH vol. 343 (microfilm, University of Texas at Austin).

⁷Informe a Francisco Solano López, 30 November 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400 n. 1 (II), foja 320-24.

⁸Myers, *Orden y virtud*, 100-6; Guerra, *Modernidad e independencia*, 177-227.

⁹Informe de Sosa, 23 February 1865, ANA-SH.

coincidentally during the time when he also served as the local civil magistrate. Like Ocampos he was a yerba merchant who had been in Asunción on business when the convocation of the new congress was announced. Merchants such as he enjoyed the credit and paid the taxes to lease government yerba fields and made their capital selling the extracted yerba back to the state monopoly. They had always relied on the state-sanctioned mechanisms of social control to help provide for their labor force, and holding public office facilitated such pursuits.¹⁰ Public office blunted the maneuverings of rival officials. It also bolstered their frequent position as intermediaries negotiating with the caciques of free indigenous groups that laid claim to the yerba-growing wilds. Ocampos accordingly wanted his turn in authority as well. As we have already seen in the Villa de Salvador, the machinations of such local caudillos allowed the López regime to realize the reproduction and projection of state power in pueblos of the countryside and beyond into the wilds. Civil magistrates and militia commanders commonly used the leverage of office to get seats on electoral juntas.¹¹ Priests often sat on electoral juntas, as well. Gaining election as deputies in a national congress testified to the local sway of such men in their continuous self-interested negotiations with Asunción. In sum, elections and congresses contributed to the crucial webs of political patronage by which the state extended its power across the countryside.

It is important to note that Carlos Antonio López consolidated his regime on the backing of a series of national assemblies during the early 1840s. The death of the ruling autocrat Dr. Francia in 1840 had left an appreciable vacuum of power that soon a junta of military officers

¹⁰See citations in note 5 above, as well as Whigham, *The Politics of River Trade*. For the prominent participation of Ocampos in the local yerba trade, see Informes de Hernengildo Quiñonez a Carlos Antonio López, 6 February, 22 March 1854, 21 May 1855, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (I), fojas 121-22, 128-29.

¹¹Bermejo, *Republicas americanas*, 140.

sought to ameliorate with an experienced man of letters to administer matters of state and maintain social order. Called forth in this role by the junta, López orchestrated the convocation of congressional assemblies in both 1841 and 1842. They nominated, then confirmed him as consul ruling in conjunction with the leading officer of the Asunción barracks. López was the featured speaker at both gatherings. In 1844, another congress elected him president for ten years. Historians have regarded these assemblies as largely rubber-stamp affairs under the careful management of López. They hardly seemed centers of extensive legislative deliberation and debate, and commentators have noted the intimidating presence of barrack soldiers in the Asunción central plaza where they worked. The representatives have been characterized as country bumpkins anxious to finish their duties and go home. But they were also numerous, considering the small Paraguayan population: five hundred deputies in 1841, four hundred in 1842, three hundred in 1844. Historical accounts suggest, too, that fairly open local electoral juntas nominated these notables as their titular representatives.¹² Some of them could have proven fractious if not craftily managed. Many returned to their pueblos with patronage in exchange for their loyalty.

López recognized both the legitimating function and fractious potential of these congresses. To control them, he proceeded to limit their size, their frequency and who could occupy their seats. The 1844 constitution stipulated congresses only once every five years, with a formal reelection of the president every ten years. Already by 1842 López compelled the assembly to ratify its reduction to three hundred members and restrict those nominated as deputies to men of property. The 1844 congress further reduced the size of subsequent

¹²Williams, *Rise and Fall of the Paraguayan Republic*, 101-13; Whigham, *The Paraguayan War*, 66; Bermejo, *Republicas americanas*, 155-57. On previous congressional assemblies under Dr. Francia, see Richard Alan White, *Paraguay's Autonomous Revolution* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), ch. 4 & 5.

assemblies to two hundred deputies.¹³ In 1854, López requested another reduction (toward one hundred deputies) and pushed consideration of a law that further constrained participation in the local electoral juntas. In his speech to the assembly of that reelected him president in that year, he opined with all the gravity of an old statesman: “The experience of all nations in which the representative system reigns, both in Europe and in America, has demonstrated the grave evils and inconveniences that universal suffrage brings.”¹⁴ Limiting participation in elections and congresses to an increasingly exclusive class of notables and property holders served to concentrate the local circles of power upon which the regime depended and to which it distributed the perks of patronage. The infrequency of such gatherings further minimized the unexpected.

The López regime needed congresses occasionally, however. With a completely straight face, the president advanced the claim that Paraguay maintained a “representative system.” And with every congress, he made a show of requesting approval by the body to continue his mandate. In the congress of 1849, López detailed the decrees and activities of his government for the assembly’s approval. He still had five years remaining on his legal term of office but nonetheless resorted to the theatrical gesture of offering his resignation. The assembly performed its part and unanimously voted to reject the offer. López later welcomed his formal reelection in the congress of 1854 but requested a term of only three years for reasons of declining health. His recovery led him to convoke another congress to reelect him to the presidency in 1857, which it obligingly did for another period of seven years, refusing his

¹³Milda Rivarola, *Vagos, pobres y soldados*, 82-83; Heinz Peters, *El sistema educativo*, 102-3.

¹⁴*Mensajes de Carlos Antonio López*, (Asunción: Fundación cultural republicana, 1987) 157-60, 164-65. In this regard, López rationalized the need for a strong executive power to allegedly restrain excessive liberties among a people not prepared to responsibly exercise them while guiding the country toward its political maturity and realization of “true liberty.”

repeatedly proffered resignation.¹⁵ In other words, López demonstrated an abiding desire for the orchestrated affirmation of popular sovereignty.

As suggested, their very infrequency made congresses anticipated and celebrated events. Ildefonso Bermejo reported on the 1857 legislative gathering for the state newspaper. In a memoir, he recalled the rustic countrymen of dark complexion arriving, presumably by oxcart and river craft. On the day of the session, they amassed with a buzz in the main plaza, for the principal house of government was their meeting place. The palace and plaza were alive with the sort of activity only seen once every few years. According to Bermejo, a number of deputies accustomed to peasant habits of going everywhere barefoot could hardly squeeze their feet into shoes for the affair. He found the session remarkably short of serious deliberation, as the deputies seemed to approve of presidential decrees reflexively, by acclaim in Guaraní: *iporãite*—"it is good." He related seeing one deputy speak out of turn upon misunderstanding the Spanish of the president's formal address—with López pausing to call him a "a dumb brute."¹⁶ Other accounts suggest a rowdy sort of engagement, at least in 1857, with numerous deputies clamoring to stand and speak at once, particularly with the uproar at López's repeated insistence on renouncing his re-election. Substantive debate ensued, and typically, it seems, deputies seized the opportunity to pronounce a few words on the assembly floor.¹⁷ The presidential speeches before the congresses constituted a main attraction, with detailed litanies of foreign affairs and domestic improvements. The presidential rhetoric invited deputies to mull over constitutional questions such as the virtues

¹⁵Ibid., 130, 169-70; Bermejo, *Republicas americanas*, 163-67.

¹⁶Bermejo, *Republicas americanas*, 153-57.

¹⁷See reference in Informe de Sosa, ANA-SH, 23 February 1865, as well as the account of the 1857 congress in "Congreso Nacional," *El eco paraguayo* (Asunción) 19 March 1857, and Efraim Cardozo, *Hace Cien Años: Crónicas de la Guerra de 1864-1870*, vol. 1 (Asunción: Ediciones Emasa, 1967), 122-49.

of restricting the suffrage and whether or not the assembly might evolve eventually into a bicameral body.¹⁸ And, as special political events, the pretense of such legislative exchanges was immortalized in print. The state press published the speeches, and the state newspaper took record of the ratifying congressional acts. The congresses had been turned to satisfying old appetites for public rituals of rule, replete with concluding festivities—masses, prayers, fireworks, and fiestas done in Asunción and repeated in pueblos throughout the countryside to commemorate the divine guidance over the deliberations.¹⁹

The national congresses were thus formative exercises in republicanism. Deputies soaked in streams of republican discourse during presidential speeches and were prone echo it in the standard patriotic pronouncements of local civic fiestas. Expressions such as “Republic or Death,” “sovereign congress,” “republican association,” “illustrious citizen,” and “national independence” sounded mysterious, and powerful even, particularly for people only tenuously acquainted with Spanish.²⁰ Moreover, hard-bitten men of influence in the countryside could appreciate increasing restrictions on suffrage as terms of citizenship were framed in familiar expressions of social honor and hierarchy. Property became crucial in the elaboration of citizenship, but so did claims to piety, patriotism, and honorable reputation, which depended on the public acknowledgement.²¹ No wonder that parish priests, whatever their property holdings, often enjoyed the status of electors, and no wonder that village elites

¹⁸See citation in note 17 above.

¹⁹“Congreso Nacional,” *El eco paraguayo*. Also see discussion of this point in chapter 1.

²⁰For example of the elevated republican rhetoric of patriotic speeches by local authorities celebrating the anniversary of Francisco Solano López’s election to the presidency, see the anonymous speech from October 1864 in ANA-SNE vol. 3266; Nota, 16 October 1863, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 (II), foja 1971. Also recall the discourse reproduced for semi-literate local officials by the school teacher Carmona in Salvador during the early 1850s, as documented in Chapter 1.

²¹Instructions for 1862 elections, ANA-SNE vol. 3055; Actas de votos en Villa Rica y Asunción, February 1865, ANA-SH (microfilm, University of Texas at Austin).

embraced the elections so enthusiastically. The overall result of the electoral process was to further consolidate existing hierarchies and circles of local power.

Potential electors and deputies accordingly took their function quite seriously. In the build-up to the congress of 1857 because Carlos Antonio López had emphasized the alleged toll of the presidency on his health perhaps too much, speculation ran rampant about the constitutional possibilities of electing his son Francisco Solano. An aspiring deputy from Caraguatay recalled that while visiting the Villa del Rosario (where the López family held large estancias) he had debated this question with Francisco's overshadowed brother Benigno. The latter had demurred at the thought of his sibling as president, suggesting the constitutional impediments of a military man taking power. His companion retorted at length that a qualified man should not be kept from heading the republic. Benigno remarked disarmingly that his companion was quite the political philosopher.²² Such talk had less to do with qualifications and political philosophy than with traditional sentiments of personal ambition and client loyalty. And this rhetoric extended into the uproar of the actual session, as deputies advanced proposals to elect Francisco Solano president in place of his father. The younger López, it seems, was using the congressional session to test the waters.²³

A Somewhat Contested Congress

Local electoral juntas extended discussions of constitutional matters and exercises in republicanism to the countryside. And the juntas could carry their own fractious consequences, particularly in the uncertain days of October 1862. The 1862 junta in San

²²Confesion y pedido de clemencia del juez Manuel María Rivarola a Francisco Solano López, 1864, ANA-SH vol. 331, n. 27, foja 1-10.

²³"Congreso Nacional," *El eco paraguayo*.

Pedro, as we have begun to describe, was illustrative in these regards, and detailed accounts of its proceedings provide a glimpse into the workings of local electoral meetings that year.²⁴ Men had been insinuating their ambitions and probing for the support of loosely-bound factions under the cover of pretended unanimity. General agreement on deputies was not evident, nor was it really clear that anyone so nominated would go to Asunción to vote for Francisco Solano López. The fifty men who were to select the three representatives of San Pedro entered the church and took their seats in the pews surrounded by candles and saints images. The commandant Pedro Vicente Ibañez went to the pulpit and, with everyone settled, began the protocol of explaining the procedures. According to one informant, before Ibañez was even finished speaking, Pedro Recalde jolted up from his pew and called for the nomination of José Tomas Ocampos. Ocampos accepted and immediately turned to nominate Ignacio Sosa, who also assented. There seemed a general concurrence in the selections. But not to be out maneuvered, Francisco Espinoza then took the floor and called for the election of the current magistrate Félix Barbosa. Apparently, he had expected that Sosa was about to nominate his own friend Recalde instead.

This local republican exercise in unanimity and faith now took on undercurrents of contention. Sosa called attention to Barbosa's ill health—his deafness and recent bout of dysentery—and suggested that the junta might consider another candidate. Gregorio Mareque, an old rival of Sosa's, stood to challenge the objection and called for Barbosa to go to the congress in "whatever state," with a resounding concurrence from the gathered junta. Sosa accused Mareque of misinterpreting his intentions and trying discredit him. The two

²⁴These accounts come from, as cited above,; Informe de Ignacio Sosa, Asunción, 23 February 1865, ANA-SH (microfilm, University of Texas at Austin); Informe a Francisco Solano López, 30 November 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400 n. 1 (II), foja 320-24. The latter, it is crucial to indicate, was produced by an apparent rival of Sosa and Ocampos in San Pedro.

exchanged glares, but Sosa backdowned, declining to argue “out of respect for the holy confines and the grave matter under consideration.”²⁵ At another point, the auxiliary cleric of the parish, Feliciano Elizeche, announced that the entire proceedings were out of order and advised that they be redone, voting on one candidate at a time. Father Arzamendia, also present, signaled his apparent agreement. The junta then proceeded to reconfirm the same three men, with each one waiting outside separately under the awnings of the church corridors while the act was formalized by acclaim and on paper with the signatures of all fifty-so electors. But after leaving the church, Ocampos told Sosa that Arzamendia, Elizeche, Espinoza, Mareque had been conspiring against them. Conversely, among their rivals the perception was that Ocampos and Sosa had done their own conspiring.

The 1862 electoral junta of San Pedro had revived embers of internal pueblo rivalry. Ocampos and Sosa, in particular, later sought to translate their stature as elected deputies of the congress into growing recognition that they were the main bosses of the district, with a blowback of growing indignation from those who long remembered their machinations during the junta.²⁶ Their rivals had secured nomination for a candidate of their own in proceedings that commenced in a spat of disorder and escaped the control of the presiding commandant. Participants had aggressively announced their nominations and bellowed their objections out of turn. The San Pedro elite had wagered their interests in the republican exercise and took it seriously. Something of consequence was at stake. Accordingly, in the national congress both Ocampos and Barbosa also proved willing to entertain constitutional alternatives and see exactly where political winds would blow. Already contemplating such

²⁵Both accounts describe this incident, though the cited expression comes from Ignacio Sosa, 23 February 1865, ANA-SH.

²⁶See Informe a Francisco Solano López, 30 November 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro. On this account, also see Informe de Damasio Sosa referente a los sucesos de San Pedro, January 1865, ANA-SNE vol. 2819.

alternatives was a deputy from Concepción, Ramón Miltos, who had emerged from the republican exercise of his junta planning to propose constitutional reform. The proposal manifested an ardent republicanism with reverberations bound to extend beyond the exercises of 1862.

Over a year later, amongst the overgrowth of his secluded estancia on the Aquidaban River in the northern reaches, Ramon Miltos clearly stated his views. He had been exiled there for reasons not completely clear to him, but he had his suspicions that influential men in Concepción had taken advantage of his eventual downfall. He confessed those suspicions when another man exiled from Asunción, traveling under guard, stopped for provisions and new horses at Miltos's estate. The two outcasts struck up conversation. They did not know each other, but the exiled traveler mentioned how he once heard from the magistrate of Yuty that a certain Miltos "had spoken in the congress, but fared badly." Miltos could not contain himself, according to the traveler. "It was I who spoke in the congress," he responded and marveled that "even in Yuty people heard about it." Following along with the party on horseback as they continued their journey, he told the story. In the congress, Miltos had petitioned to have the body consider drafting a more formal constitution. He considered the existing laws insufficient to guarantee the rights and interests of the citizenry. Many more laws were needed, he explained.²⁷ Republican constitutionalism had become his idiom of dissent, and he had gone to the assembly determined to infuse it with independent legislative force.

Miltos had lobbied the San Pedro delegation, among others, in the hours leading up to the congress in mid October 1862. The central blocks of the capital were abuzz with the

²⁷Informe de José Zacarías Mendoza; Informe de Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 25 January 1864, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, fojas 1272-73, 1311-13.

gathering delegates as moustaches were trimmed and dress clothing prepared. Miltos found Sosa and Ocampos in their place of lodging, the meeting place of numerous delegations coming from the interior, the Club Nacional. Miltos announced his proposal, and Ocampos indicated that he would support it if the rest of the members did the same. But Sosa demurred, saying “the object of the Sovereign Congress was only to elect a president.”²⁸ Sosa also recorded an encounter with Benigno López while playing cards the previous night in the club. Benigno had entreated Sosa and others to remember the spirit of an old law that forbade clergy and military officers from assuming the presidency. He was disgusted when Sosa insisted that he intended to vote for Francisco Solano (who was a general) anyway. Ramon Milesi, who was not a delegate, had in fact come to Asunción to help Benigno López push for a more assertive assembly. Various delegates were also said to be composing provocative speeches. Moreover, Francisco Solano Lopez had his own interlocutors pressuring delegates. Barbosa, for example, lent his ear to Milesi but also had boasted to other members that he stood alone among his delegation in supporting Francisco Solano. Ocampos, too, was feeling the pressure and evidently wanted to wait and see.²⁹

The lack of rubber-stamp unity continued during the actual session, in which the idiom of constitutional republicanism was sustained by all involved. In the end, few sensed much support for alternatives to electing Francisco Solano López. Ramon Miltos was one the few who stood up challenge the prevailing order. He wanted a law requiring congressional approval of the use of public funds and suggested that the current assembly examine the accounts of the late president. Defenders of the regime raised constitutional objections,

²⁸Informe de Ignacio Sosa, 23 February 1865, ANA-SH.

²⁹Informe de Ignacio Sosa, 23 February 1865, ANA-SH. Also see, Informe de Damasio Sosa, January 1865, ANA-SNE; Confesion y pedido de clemencia del juez Manuel María Rivarola a Francisco Solano López, 1864, ANA-SH.

mostly saliently that the current congress was only empowered to elect a new president. One speaker contended that the assembly's decree to build a monument to Carlos Antonio López was approval enough of the deceased president's administration. Miltos's proposed changes would cast "deplorable hate" upon the tomb of the "citizen who presided over the destiny of the Republic for so many years and with such merit—sentiments that do not honor the Sr. deputy." In the end, the assembly elected Francisco Solano López as president with virtual unanimity.³⁰

Contentious sentiments and republican expressions continued to reverberate beyond the assembly itself, however. They still had detractors murmuring while fiestas and serenatas passed through the Asunción streets in the nighttime hours after the sessions. Drunks challenged opposing partisans with swords. The chief police sentry, working for Francisco Solano López, continued interrogations into who was talking to whom.³¹ As word of the election reached pueblos in the interior, gatherings of other dissenters, including some priests, withdrew behind closed doors and lamented that the López family would destroy them all. They also insisted on the need to convene a new congress.³²

Local authorities in the interior received news of the election with calculated fanfare and religious ceremony. At the very least, they called residents into central plazas to make a public announcement of the development in Guaraní. In the small village of Mbocayaty, the

³⁰Borrador de un discurso leído en el congreso, 1862, ANA-SH vol. 331, n. 28, foja 1-2. Also see Williams, *Rise and Fall of the Paraguayan Republic*, 195-96, for his account of the 1862 congress. Williams as well as other historians typically follow the account provided by Centurión in *Memorias o reminiscencias históricas sobre la Guerra del Paraguay*, vol. 1, 170-71, who also reported the spoken protest and subsequent arrest of the deputy Jose María Varela. But Centurión was in Europe at the time of the congress and mistakenly suggests that Father Fidel Maíz was also arrested for his meddling to undermine the election of Francisco Solano López.

³¹Informe de Ignacio Sosa, 23 February 1865, ANA-SH.

³²Bobi incident, 1862, ANA-SH vol. 330 (microfilm, University of Texas at Austin).

militia chief had another mass said for the soul of Carlos Antonio López.³³ In San Pedro, after issuing the announcement, the military commandant, officials, and clerics collaborated to hold a large, extended celebration the ensuing week. Numerous masses were ordered, with prominent residents contributing fees for the officiating priests. The curate of a nearby village, Francisco Solano Espinoza, was asked to come assist. Heavy rains just before the three-day festivities had the organizers doubting Espinoza could make the twenty-league trip, but he braved the muddy roads with “good will and patriotism” in time to help perform the string of religious services. The typical dances and games further enlivened the festivities. The authorities then composed a formal pledge of allegiance to the new president with much hyperbole about “the sovereign people,” “citizens endowed with the best qualities,” “the benevolent hands of Your Excellency,” and “the high destiny of the republic.”³⁴

Sosa and Ocampos returned to San Pedro to enjoy the rewards of patronage for their votes in support of the new president. In November 1863, Ocampos became the new civil magistrate of San Pedro.³⁵ Ramon Miltos, on the other hand, returned to a cold reception in Concepción, where he was treated like leper and then actually declared one. His friends kept their distance, and a few months after the election the local military commandant issued the order for his exile with the pretext, confirmed by a local medic, that Miltos suffered from

³³Informe de Felipe Chamoro a Francisco Solano López, 21 October 1862, ANA-SH vol. 391 (II) n. 15, foja 6.

³⁴Informe de las autoridades a Francisco Solano López, 25 October 1862, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400 n. 1 (II), foja 182-84.

³⁵Informe de José Tomás Ocampos a Francisco Solano López, 22 November 1863, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400 n. 1 (II), foja 225.

leprosy.³⁶ Sent away to his estancia on the edge of the wilderness, he could not contaminate the town with what was often considered an outward manifestation of sin.

Electoral exercises in national congresses and local juntas were part of a theatrical charade, obviously, but they were also more than that. They had real political consequences. The middling elite the Paraguayan countryside took these matters seriously because they wagered political fortunes on them. Election to a national congress complimented the holding of public office, enhancing the stature of local notables who sought continued support from the ultimate political patron in Asunción. As we have seen in previous chapters, tangible benefits in the control of labor, resources, and judicial-moral authority were frequently at stake. And while often orchestrated to express the ideal of unanimity, electoral juntas could also turn contentious. The rivalries, grudges, and jealousy of village politics burned more intensely as a result, but they had to be negotiated using a formal republican discourse and practice that made the notion of popular sovereignty meaningful, at least for those involved. And, importantly, this republican discourse was displayed and corroborated in public rituals that drew popular resonance from their connection to the divine.

Exactng Consent

The influence of the divine made all the difference. Upon assembling old pieces of imperial sovereignty within the framework of a republic, the López regimes held to the enticing idea that the Catholic deity bestowed their authority to rule. This idea, of course, constituted the ideological bulwark of early-modern imperial monarchy throughout much of the Atlantic world. And its application to the notion and practice of popular sovereignty

³⁶Orden de Isidrio Resquin a Teniente Zacarias Mendoza, 12 February 1863; Informe de Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 25 January 1864, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1273, 1311-1313.

concocted a compelling ideological cocktail for the imposition of modern nationhood. Francisco Solano López, in particular, faced a potential vacuum of power with the death of his father and moved to ever more explicitly consecrate his election as reflecting the will of God. He soon demanded oaths of sworn loyalty to his government and the republic as a fundamental act of citizenship and pious obedience. Much more than just political theater though, the republicanism of the new regime was a coercive moral complex. The younger López entrusted the revived church-state apparatus to exercise the capacity of this divine-right republicanism to exact political consent, as a matter of religious faith, and later to steel hearts for war.

An intensifying flurry of loyalty oaths, sermons, civic-religious festivals, and prayers for the republic and its sovereigns, dead and living, marked the political activities of parish priests in the countryside after Francisco Solano López's assumption of power. Often citizen clergy were speaking Guaraní from the pulpit in these functions. In 1863, President López named his friend and client, Manuel Antonio Palacios, as the youthful auxiliary bishop to breathe zeal into these political-pastoral efforts. Palacios did so particularly in 1863-64 during a series of pastoral visits to pueblos throughout the territory—in which he rubbed elbows with local elites and spoke Guaraní from the pulpit himself—as the pace of military recruitment and mobilization in the countryside also intensified. The preaching of impassioned clerics proved a crucial part of the mobilizing campaign. Sanctimony hung thick over their exhortations to loyalty, obedience, and love for the “elected” sovereign. Local notables joined in, if only to bury rivals and press their interests. In so doing, they further promoted ideas of republicanism and citizenship as moral commitments.

Divine-right Republicanism Refined

The death of the president and the election of 1862 had revealed undercurrents of discontent against the power of the López family. Outside the country, as well, opposition to the regime burgeoned throughout the 1850s. Paraguayan merchant families residing in Buenos Aires and their Argentine allies had grown more uncomfortable with the regime's commercial monopolies on Upper Plata trade. One by one, former commercial and political collaborators fell out and began to publish protests in Buenos Aires. They typically adopted the rhetoric of the century's surging liberalism and deemed the López clan tyrants ruling outside the pale of civilization.³⁷ Dissidence was also expressed occasionally within the country itself during the elder López's rule, as we have seen, though mostly behind latched doors or on secluded dirt pathways, accusing the president and his family of hoarding the riches of the country or selling it out to a pack of foreigners.³⁸ One informant remembered that when old López died some local notables celebrated in their homes with harps and guitars, neglecting to ring the church bells in mourning. Others contemplated adventurous legislative possibilities in the absence of the old autocrat who had commanded much respect and fear.³⁹

It was still in doubt how much respect and fear the younger López could then command as president, as stories about the troubled ghost of his father began to emerge among

³⁷Juan B. Gill Aguinaga, *La asociación paraguaya en la Guerra de la Triple Alianza* (Buenos Aires: Edición del Autor, 1959), 23-26.

³⁸Proceso al esclavo Blas por proferir palabras insultantes contra el Presidente, Caapucu, 1850, ANA-SCJ; Proceso al pardo Claudio Guerreros por injuria al Superior Gobierno, Caapucu, 1848, ANA-SCJ; Proceso contra Felipe Aveiro por proferir palabras ofensivas contra el Presidente, Ybitmi, 1853, ANA-SCJ; Denuncia contra Manuel Antonio Velazquez por proferir palabras injuriosas contra el gobierno, Itagua, 1855, ANA-SCJ.

³⁹Bobi incident, 1862, ANA-SH; Confesion y pedido de clemencia del juez Manuel María Rivarola a Francisco Solano López, 1864, ANA-SH.

common folk who eagerly lent their ears to such forbidden tales. The number of influential dissidents taking up exile in Buenos Aires also grew with the young general's assumption of power.⁴⁰ Moreover, in June 1863, several months after the election of the Francisco Solano López, the spiritual economy of the tithe, particularly in the cattle trade, revealed symptoms of a market downturn and lack of confidence among the merchant elite.⁴¹

Amidst a cloud of uncertainty about what inhabitants truly believed, the new regime soon enacted rites to confirm the allegiance of men's souls. President López issued a decree in November 1862 calling on local juntas to swear formal loyalty oaths to the new government and the pointedly unamended laws of the republic. Voting electors throughout the territory again gathered in their respective parish churches to recite their oaths and sign pledges of loyalty before the parish priest.⁴² One participant referred to such acts as paying López the "tribute of due vassalage as citizens."⁴³ The regime tightened its screws to have even the reluctant fulfill this outward gesture of loyalty, but doubts lingered. In San Pedro, for example, upon the conclusion of the ceremony, it was reportedly the elector Don Luis Jara, who, lingering in the covered walkways around the church, jested to the priest Arzamendia that he did not swear his oath. Arzamendia did not take the remark lightly and responded with righteous indignation: "We Christians do not look upon these formal acts as joking matters." He pronounced it "necessary that the pueblo cordially demonstrate its patriotism

⁴⁰See, for example, the prominent merchant and yerba trader, Carlos Saguier. Per his letters exchanged with the Paraguayan diplomatic officer, Gregorio Benítez, during the war, the falling-out with Francisco Solano López was both familial and personal, BNA, CO-PGB. Also see, Héctor Francisco Decoud, *Los emigrados paraguayos en la Guerra de la triple alianza*, (Buenos Aires: Talleres gráficos argentinos, L. J. Rosso, 1930).

⁴¹Almoneda de diezmo de cuatropea, June 1863, ANA-SNE vol. 1657.

⁴²For dissemination and procedure of the decree, see Circular del juez de paz Rozendo Carisimo, 13 November 1862, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1265.

⁴³Confesion y pedido de clemencia del juez Manuel María Rivarola a Francisco Solano López, 1864, ANA-SH.

and fidelity, not to be taken as suspect and selfish.” Jara scoffed that all had “a bad reputation, being residents of San Pedro.” The priest assured him that the number of “restless and disobedient” around town. Fortunately, most were “evidently honorable and faithful to God and their superiors.” Jara remained unconvinced.⁴⁴

To remove doubts and discipline wavering “vassals,” the López regime depended on the church-state apparatus, but not all clergy were willing to muster the passion and indignation of Arzamendia for the exercise. Rumors ran that some clerics had expressed their own flashes of dissent.⁴⁵ The still unfulfilled vacancy in the diocesan leadership, incurred with the death of the Bishop Basilio López, gave Solano López the opportunity to place a personal client in position to further discipline the institutional machinery of the national church. A handful of influential clerics had set their ambitions on the post of auxiliary bishop because (given that the current head bishop, Juan Gregorio Urbieto, was advanced in age) the appointment promised a quick succession to lead the entire diocese. The deacon of the Asunción cathedral, as well as high magistrates of the ecclesiastical tribunal, likely had their pretensions. The rector of the theological seminary, Father Fidel Maíz, certainly did. One of the most learned clerics in the country, Maíz had been close to the elder López, protected despite his well-known outspokenness. Significantly, Maíz had performed last rites for the dying Carlos, as well as the official mass for his funeral. But he had frictions with the favored son Francisco Solano. And in late November 1862, just as individual pueblos were enacting their oaths and votes of loyalty to the regime, the young president preferred to

⁴⁴Informe del cura José Carmen Arzamendia a Francisco Solano López, 24 November 1862, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400 n. 1 (I), foja 185-86.

⁴⁵Bobi incident, 1862, ANA-SH. Also see Informe de Isidrio Ayala a Francisco Solano López, 25 December 1863, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH, vol. 397 n. 1 (II), foja 1999, in reference to the arrested “*anti-patriotico*” priest Pedro Leon Caballero on apparent charges of sedition.

nominate an old classmate and confidant, Manuel Palacios, as the new auxiliary bishop of the Paraguayan diocese. Sending the formal petition for his appointment to Rome, and López had Palacios take up his office immediately. Confirmation from the papacy allowed for his elaborate consecration in the capital several months later.⁴⁶

By all indications, Palacios understood and relished his role as a crucial political operator of the new president and regime. He maintained constant communication with the president—by correspondence when traveling, but, most frequently face-to-face in meetings, formal or otherwise, within the salons of the presidential residences or in the sacristy of the Asunción Cathedral. Other government ministers also exchanged correspondence with Bishop Palacios and kept him abreast of state affairs. He loved the pomp of high church-and-state ceremony that instilled spectators with “the sacred duties of a good citizen and faithful subject.”⁴⁷ Bishop Palacios began to reassume the more elaborate dress and entourage of colonial times. He was a fixture at the banquets and parties of the López family and other high political elites, which he thoroughly enjoyed. Father Maíz would later remember with repugnance the personal machinations of Palacios, drinking wine and delivering moral admonishment all at once. Palacios, however, was riding the coattails of patronage to a pinnacle unthinkable for him just a few decades previously.⁴⁸ He brought a political energy that the aging and sickly head bishop, Urbieta, lacked. The first pastoral letter issued by the bishopric during his tenure, in May 1863, further standardized the religious protocol of civic

⁴⁶Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado*; Fídel Maíz, *Etapas de mi vida: Contestación a las imposturas de Juan Silvano Godoy* (Asunción: Imprent La Mundial, 1919), 11-14.

⁴⁷Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios a Francisco Solano López, Carapegua, 15 February, 1864, ANA-SNE vol. 2806. For further example of this correspondence and hints at matters left for private conversation between bishop and president, see Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios a Francisco Solano López, Pilar, 23 November 1863, ANA-CRB vol. 2296, I-30, 11, 139; José Berges a Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios, Asunción, February 1864, ANA-CRB vol. 2496, I-30, 27, 132.

⁴⁸Maíz, *Etapas de mi vida*, 11-14. Also see discussion below for Palacios' indulgence of pomp and fiesta.

fiestas whereby masses and sermons of clergy were to “inculcate ideas of order, obedience, submission, respect, and intimate adhesion to the Supreme Government of the Republic.”⁴⁹

Accordingly, patriotic fiestas and commemorations, whether festive or solemn, intensified in frequency and elaboration under the new regime and its young bishop. After celebrations for the October 1862 election, for instance, parish priests and local officials of the countryside turned to the Independence Day commemorations of December 25, extending both the veneration of the late president (almost as if he were a candidate for sainthood) and the adoration of the new one.⁵⁰ In 1863 and 1864, state ceremonies increasingly interrupted the monotony of rural life. Local authorities ramped up the revelry for the president’s birthday, his *santoara* (on July 24), for the anniversary of his election on October 16, and for Christmas-Independence Day as a trinity of patriotic fiestas. They joined celebrations of Holy Week, Corpus Christi, and patron saints with both religious and political significance as fixtures of the liturgical year. Additional obligatory observances included those for other independence celebrations in May, October, and November, as well as commemorative masses on the anniversary of death of the elder López. In addition, many one-time events, such as the visit of the president or the bishop to an interior pueblo, also inspired local officials to hold mass and throw a party. In the winter of 1864, they likewise celebrated the arrival of military officers in numerous towns to recruit more contingents of young men into

⁴⁹Carta pastoral de Juan Gregorio Urbieto, 6 May 1863, AAA, Archivo de la iglesia, Carpeta: Decretos, Circulares y Cartas del Obispo López.

⁵⁰See, for example, Informe de Pedro Vicente Ibañez a Francisco Solano López, 26 December 1862, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (I), foja 187-89; Informe de Hermogenes Cabral a Francisco Solano López, 27 December 1862, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 (II), foja 1878-80.

the growing national army. With more such rites and celebrations integrated into the rhythm of the year, many rural people experienced the quickening pace of political developments.⁵¹

Civic celebrations—with their accompanying flag-raising, dances, serenades, fireworks, bullfights, cannon salvos, competitions on horseback, and ringing of church bells—attracted crowds of enthusiastic patriots. Afternoon bullfights brought the side-splitting antics of costumed clowns and ersatz Guaikurú Indians, along with the delight of a hard-fighting bull in the improvised ring. Guitarists and harpists provided official merriment, and people drank and danced into the early morning hours.⁵² Men chewing on cigars and women in straw hats and shawls strolled in the plaza and filled the wooden bleachers draped with the colors of the Paraguayan flag. The national colors were ubiquitous in bouquets of flowers, in banners hanging from palm trees, in bunting on specially-erected arches, and in decorations on altars with portraits of the president.⁵³ Spectacular decorative flourishes included imitative constructions of Greek palisades, pyramids with liberty caps, and fiery letterings that

⁵¹For a first-hand account of the extended duration and increasing frequency of religious-civic fiestas during 1863-64, see Centurión, *Memorias o reminiscencias históricas sobre la Guerra del Paraguay*, v. 1, 201-7.

⁵²“Correspondencia del interior: Aregua,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 6 August 1864; “Función en la Villeta,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 8 August 1863. For descriptions of serenades, see “Correspondencia del interior: Pilar,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 31 October 1863; “Correspondencia del interior: Santa Rosa,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 16 July 1864; “Noticias generales: Rosario,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 24 October 1863. “Función en Aregua,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 8 August 1863; “Correspondencia del interior: Villa Rica,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 6 August 1864. For the deep Iberian tradition of bullfighting in Spanish American civic festivals, see Salvador *Efímeras efemérides* 88-91. Also see, Informe de Vicente Duarte a Francisco Solano López, 14 October 1863, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 (II), foja 1963-64; Informe de Felipe Chamorro y José Inocencio Gauto a Francisco Solano López, 27 December 1863, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH vol. 391, n. 15 (II), foja 20-21.

⁵³“Correspondencia del interior: Aregua,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 30 April 1864; “Correspondencia del interior: Humaita,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 6 August 1864. Village correspondents offered frequent descriptions of regimented flag-raising ceremonies. See, for example, “Correspondencia del interior: Pilar,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 31 October 1863; “Correspondencia del interior: Villa Rica,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 6 August 1864; “Correspondencia del interior: Santa Rosa,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 30 April 1864; “Noticias generales: Villa de Pilar,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 24 October 1863.

announced vivas for the republic.⁵⁴ There were parade-like processions, public readings of loyalty oaths, and patriotic hymns sung by schoolchildren.⁵⁵ The local elites who organized and financed the celebrations held their more exclusive banquets and dances in private homes and the commandant's headquarters, separate from the popular diversions outdoors. Here the notables made a show of successive toasts and speeches. The pronouncements of leading men discordantly mixed praise for the president as a progressive republican leading the country toward the heights of liberal civilization with calls for complete subordination to his patriarchal authority.⁵⁶ Women also took the floor and spoke, reminding audiences that they, too, "partake of the nation, have a family, and are protected by the laws." They, too, had a stake in the glory of the country and publically supported the "worthy magistrate" who protected "its sovereignty and independence."⁵⁷

Again, Catholic mass, by protocol, figured as the focal event for nearly all such fiestas and gathered together participants—authorities, elites, soldiers, villagers, men and women alike—in the parish church. Local elites were often sponsoring numerous religious ceremonies over the course of multi-day celebrations.⁵⁸ And with them, many parish priests,

⁵⁴Informe de Vicente Duarte a Francisco Solano Lopez, 17 October 1863, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 (II), foja 1974-75. Also see in this regard the discussion of civic-religious holidays in Chapter 1.

⁵⁵ "Correspondencia del interior: Villa Rica," *El Semanario* (Asunción) 19 December 1863; "Correspondencia del interior: Aregua" *El Semanario* (Asunción) 6 August 1864.

⁵⁶See, for example, "Correspondencia del interior: Humaita," *El Semanario* (Asunción) 6 August 1864; "Correspondencia del interior: Villa Rica," *El Semanario* (Asunción) 6 August 1864; "Noticias generales: Villa de Pilar," *El Semanario* (Asunción) 24 October 1863; "Correspondencia del interior: Pilar," *El Semanario* (Asunción) 30 January 1864. Also, Informe de Pedro Vicente Ibañez a Francisco Solano López, 28 December 1863, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n.1 (II), foja 233-34.

⁵⁷"Correspondencia del interior: Villa Rica," *El Semanario* (Asunción) 23 January 1864; "Correspondencia del interior: Santa Rosa," *El Semanario* (Asunción) 23 July 1864; "Función en Aregua," *El Semanario* (Asunción) 8 August 1863.

⁵⁸For a description of the typical ceremonial mass in Paraguayan villages, see "Correspondencia del interior: Villa Rica" *El Semanario* (Asunción) 19 December 1863.

by sermon and prayer, were following the doctrinal mission of the new young bishop and escalating the concoction of the moral-political pressures. Those clerics, so dutiful and impassioned, included the new vicar of Villa Rica, Juan Evangelista Barrios, as well as his predecessor there, José Inocencio Gauto, then designated to the nearby parish of Yataity, also Blas Duarte of Santa Rosa, Francisco Flores of Pilar, Martín Servín of Caapucu, the military chaplain Gaspar Jaquez of Concepción, and Francisco Solano Espinoza who served its neighboring hamlets, also the new cura of Salvador, Francisco Javier Belaustigui, and, of course, José Carmen Arzamendia of San Pedro, and dozens more—all clergy of the post-independence generation having come of age indoctrinated in a national church.⁵⁹ Whatever their vices and shortcomings in ritual practice and knowledge, most of these men well understood their vested institutional interests and dependence on the consecrated patron of the state. Their ritual language conflated patriarchal values with political ones, elected authority with divine power, citizenship with vassalage, and spiritual obligation with civic duty.

The fire from the pulpit assaulted all doubt. Sermons gravitated on cue to reinforce classic themes of Christian submission to constituted patriarchal-political authority as a fundamental manifestation of civic duty in a republic. In May 1864, for example, Father Duarte in Santa Rosa “exhorted subordination and obedience to the Laws and Supreme Leader of the Nation” in the state newspaper. And later that July, he traveled to surrounding hamlets and villages “inculcating in the pious hearts of each town the Holy Doctrine of the Church as well as the holy duties that each citizen has contracted with the nation, including

⁵⁹Clergy as referenced in description of celebrations cited above and in the discussion below. Ordination records, discussed in Chapter 3, indicate that by 1864 over 60 priests had received their orders and were working in the parishes of the territory under the López regimes. On this latter point, also see Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado*.

the respect, obedience, and gratitude due the Illustrious Magistrate.”⁶⁰ The military chaplain Gaspar Jaquez likewise had admonished a packed church in Concepción in October 1863 to honor their “obligations of love of country, as well as respect and obedience to the Laws and the National Government.” In December of that year Father Barrios in Villa Rica alluded to those patriotic obligations in a festival sermon, which, reportedly, “poured into the hearts of parishioners the balm of the purest doctrines, reminding them of the duties of a Christian and Citizen.”⁶¹ Previously in July he had been preaching in the nearby parish of Mbocayaty about the “submission, love, and obedience owed to the Supreme Chief of the Republic and other civic duties.”⁶²

On it went. The reprinted catechism of San Alberto was soon reminding pupils of the citizen’s obligation to pray for the sovereign leader of the state.⁶³ The worship masses of the patriotic fiestas were then conducting such orations to God for the good of the republic and the life and happiness of Francisco Solano López. Rumors of his father’s troubled ghost were countered by eulogies recounting the civic virtues and governing accomplishments of the deceased president, as well as offering “their prayers to Heaven for the eternal prize of the soul of that dignified and unforgettable Citizen.” The San Alberto catechism specified that

⁶⁰“Correspondencia del interior: Santa Rosa,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 16 July 1864; “Correspondencia del interior: Santa Rosa,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 23 July 1864.

⁶¹ “Noticias generales: Concepción,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 24 October 1863; “Correspondencia del interior: Villa Rica,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 23 January 1863. Pastoral letters from Bishop Palacios likewise emphasized “submission, obedience, and defense of the constituted government.” See Heyn-Schupp, *Iglesia y estado*, 76. For report of a similar sermón given by the chaplain Jaquez, see Informe de Isidrio Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 1 March 1864, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1324-27.

⁶²Informe de Felipe Chamorro a Francisco Solano López, 30 July 1863, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH vol. 391, n. 15 (II), foja 9. Also see in this vein, Informe de Felipe Chamorro a Francisco Solano López, 27 December 1863, 16 March 1864, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH vol. 391, n. 15 (II), foja 20-22.

⁶³*Catecismo de San Alberto*, 49-51.

“vassals” were “obligated to pray for the life of the Sovereign even after death.”⁶⁴

Processions with full funeral military guard marched to churches for commemorative mass, with gold letterings spelling the name of the elder López on the replica of a coffin before the altar.⁶⁵ As the elder Father Gauto explained with a sermon in September 1863 for such an event in the parish of Mbocayaty, ensuring the salvation of the late president implied recognition of the current one “as the Sovereign and Supreme Government placed by God in his throne with all the temporal powers.” Parishioners were to “love, venerate, respect, and obey him, fulfilling with loyalty all his Superior Orders and Laws,” so to “live in peace and union, and love one another.”⁶⁶

Following in his father’s footsteps, the younger López and his regime were reiterating the colonial pretensions on celestial power and divine-right rule. The sermons at patriotic fiestas attributed miraculous agency to Francisco Solano, as if he were a saint. The saint for who he was named was a late sixteenth-and-early-seventeenth-century Spanish Franciscan missionary in South America whose evangelism among indigenous groups had brought him from Peru, to Tucuman, and to the early settlements of Paraguay, giving his saint’s day a certain nativist glamour. In 1864, one Paraguayan cleric was proclaiming from the pulpit that the president’s *santoara* was the holiest of the year.⁶⁷ The figurines and painted images of the saint were produced for this official celebration and paraded in processions around villages

⁶⁴Informe de Isidro Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 11 September 1864, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1351-52.

⁶⁵Informe de Vicente Duarte a Francisco Solano Lopez, 12 September 1863, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397 n. 1 (II), foja 1963-64.

⁶⁶Informe de Felipe Chamorro y José Inocencio Gauto a Francisco Solano López, 12 September 1863, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH vol. 391, n. 15 (II), foja 10-11.

⁶⁷“Correspondencia del interior: Humaita,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) August 1864. José María Salvador notes that it was custom in Venezuela to celebrate namesake saint’s day of Simon Bolivar as a national holiday. See Salvador, *Efímeras efemérides*, 142.

before being taken into the church for mass. Surrounded by such images in the renovated church of Villa Rica for the July 1864 fiestas, Father Barrios explained in the miracles of San Francisco Solano along with the “love, obedience, and loyalty due the Supreme head of the Republic.” He explained further that “all power comes from God, and that the authority to govern the People is not a mere human invention but the true intervention of the authority and power of God.” He then frankly laid out the principles of divine-right rule: “God chose one man to place at the head of all other men. It also has been destined that some be vassals. . . Here then is born the obligation to honor one’s political superior as the instrument of Divine Providence and the medium of all His blessings.”⁶⁸

But the rhetorical and ceremonial expressions of republicanism were not forgotten in such formulations. Francisco Solano López emerged as “the great citizen that is called by Providence and the will of the Paraguayan people to head the Republic.” Prayers continued to thank “Divine Providence” for “inspiring the National Representation of Congress to elect this distinguished citizen as Supreme Leader of the Magistrate of the Nation.”⁶⁹ Elections, concurred the catechism/civics textbook of San Alberto, was what the “Republic of Paraguay admits and uses to place a citizen as Supreme Magistrate.”⁷⁰

During the flurry of civic fiestas under Francisco Solano López, many patriotic sermons were being given in Guaraní.⁷¹ The use of the Guaraní vernacular was approved Bishop

⁶⁸“Correspondencia del interior: Villa Rica,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 6 August 1864.

⁶⁹ Ibid.; “Sección de remitidos: Caraguatay,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 8 August 1863; “Noticias generales: Itá,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 24 October 1863.

⁷⁰*Catecismo de San Alberto*, 18-19.

⁷¹See, for example, “Correspondencia del interior: Santa Rosa,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 30 April 1864; “Correspondencia del interior: Humaita,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 6 August 1864; “Correspondencia del interior: Santa Rosa,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 23 January 1864.

Palacios, who had the tendency to break into Guaraní during his own homilies.⁷² Speaking in Guaraní from the pulpit had its evident popular reach. In Guaraní, one could dwell on *ñane retã* as the conceptual heart of all such lessons on love, obedience, republic, and nationhood. The evidence from the later wartime state propaganda printed in Guaraní suggests that clerics used *ñane retã* to refer to patria, nation, and republic, reinforcing all the connotations of a religious realm anchored in the patriarchal authority of state and society. They were prone to call the new president alternately *ñande ruvichaguasu*, “our great superior,” *ñande karaiguasu*, “our great lord,” and *ñande ru*, “our father,” and hold *Tupã* (God), *ñane retã*, and *ñande ruvichaguasu* as the pillars of importance in the faith of parishioners.⁷³ Crucially, however, they could also speak about the election of López declaring *enterobe jaipotagui, javota va’ekue hese* (“We all voted for him because it was our will”), while also affirming *upe arape ñambuaje ñande Jara volunta* (“on that day we fulfilled the will of Our Lord, Our God”).⁷⁴ They could then apply the resonant terms of patriarchal love whereby López was *ko ñande ru jahayhueteva*, “our father who we love so much,” who, in turn, provided his love and protection to faithful vassals.⁷⁵ The medium of Guaraní itself helped to sustain the projection of republicanism as religious patriarchy.

Visitas, Mobilization, and the Republican Moral Complex

⁷²“Noticias Generales: Luque,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 30 April 1864.

⁷³ See “Ñande retã,” as well as “Tory Guazu,” “Ñande retã defendehape” in *Cacique Lambaré*, (Asunción), 24 July 1867 for such formulations. Also see “Misa de gracia,” *Cacique Lambaré*, (Asunción), 10 November 1867.

⁷⁴“16 de Octubre,” *Cacique Lambaré*, (Asunción), 24 October 1867; “16 de Octubre,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 16 October 1867.

⁷⁵“25 de Diciembre,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 26 December 1867.

Pushing this divine-right republicanism, Bishop Palacios took the moral force of his own pastoral eminence into the countryside. In the weeks shortly after his official consecration in August 1863, he initiated a pastoral visit to pueblos throughout the territory on presidential instructions. This *visita* was to have all the ecclesiastical pomp of colonial times and its special objective was to appropriate bodies for the state. The state had often drafted the labor of inhabitants and their livestock on the grounds of “patriotic” obligation. Yet the new regime was now sustaining a centralized military mobilization of relatively massive proportions, and now it needed to draft men.

Encouraged by a general prosperity the younger López was accelerating the buildup started by his father. Agricultural production was rising, as we have seen, and so were imports. The regime was expanding its agricultural export base in tobacco and cotton—particularly the latter, because of opportunities created by the outbreak of the US Civil War—to supply North Atlantic markets.⁷⁶ A rail line had been extended further eastward from the capital toward Villa Rica, connecting the major army encampment at Cerro León to a principle zone of agricultural supply. The iron foundry in Ybycui meanwhile continued to turn out the makings of armaments and steamships, and the technology to install telegraph lines for military communication had been imported by the government. The López regime likewise sought to purchase increasing amounts of armaments on the international exchange: rifles and artillery, even a British-made ironclad. It inquired into a foreign loan from British financial houses to expand this purchasing power even more.⁷⁷ More foreign technicians and materials, mainly from England, arrived to assist in the industrial projects, joined by a cadre

⁷⁶For details on the tobacco trade, see Whigham, *Politics of River Trade*, 134-151. For the López regime’s cotton aspirations, see Whigham, “El oro blanco del Paraguay: Un episodio de la hisotria del algodón, 1860-1870,” *Historia Paraguaya* vol. 39 (1999) and Kleinpenning, *Paraguay 1515-1870*, vol. 2, 993-1110.

⁷⁷Schmidt, *Paraguay y Europa*, 128-29.

of young Paraguayans who had been trained in the rail yards and factories of Liverpool and Manchester. The state newspaper soon was boasting that the country upheld a model of progress and stability for all the Americas.⁷⁸

The government's military conscription congregated men in the tens of thousands. These were the bodies that provided the labor for the ever-more ambitious projects of the state— industrial and agricultural, as well as military. Not every recruit was issued a rifle. Most, however, carried picks and machetes, pushed plows, dug ditches, or laid steel rails. They were ushered into encampments at points around the country—at Humaita/Pilar and Encarnación in the south, Concepción in the north, and Cerro León just a few dozen kilometers outside of Asunción.⁷⁹ One commentary in the state newspaper announced with satisfaction that the conscription concentrated on “that class of men who were on the verge of losing everything.” Fortunately, soldiering made them useful and help them “understand their obligations to the country and their fellow citizens.”⁸⁰ Another, equally smug, commentary approved of recruits’ planting fields of maize and manioc rather than “tanning their bellies in the sun or gathering around a table to play cards.”⁸¹ The national army was enlisting men anywhere from 15 to 78 years old; many were married with families, but the most were single and in their twenties.⁸²

⁷⁸Kleinpenning, *Paraguay 1515-1870*, v. 2, 1015-16, 1308-20, 1407-15. Also see Whigham, *Politics of River Trade*. For details on technical students sent to Europe and the patriotic boasts of the lettered youth in the state newspaper, see my unpublished paper “Youth on the Edge of the Storm: Liberalism and Paraguay before the Triple Alliance War, 1858-1864”

⁷⁹Whigham, *The Paraguayan War*, 184-89.

⁸⁰“Correspondencia del interior: Concepcion,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 23 April 1864.

⁸¹“Correspondencia del interior: San Pedro,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 19 September 1863.

⁸²Lista de tropas, Guarnición de Pilar, 8 April 1865, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 (II), foja 2094-2101.

Mass mobilization was not without problems. Soldiers deserted to seek out lovers or just to escape a work regime that had them beaten for breaking the head off an axe.⁸³ One middling officer commanding an outpost along the northern frontier supposedly even tried to convince his subordinates that a better life awaited them in Brazil, imploring all to desert with him, before they refused and decided to kill him.⁸⁴ Reports from isolated areas were already indicating a labor drain on agricultural production with increasing enlistments during the 1850s. With the massive recruitments of the 1860s, more men left the fields, and women followed them to provide the informal support structure needed for such mobilization, particularly food preparation. Thus, large scale conscription was reorienting the focus of subsistence production and disrupting local economies.⁸⁵ The new congregations of people also concocted environments rife for the spread of disease. Chills, sweats, and fever affected hundreds, and killed dozens of soldiers at a time.⁸⁶

⁸³For reports of desertions from the encampment at Concepción, see Informes de Isidrio Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 25 September 1863; 11 febrero 1864; 31 March 1864, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1306-07, 1322-23, 1328; Circulares de Vicente Lombardo, 6 January 1865; 26 April 1865, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n.1, foja 1405, 1418. Also see specific judicial cases, Proceso al soldado Cornelio González por desertor, 1864, Concepción, ANA-SCJ vol. 1715, n. 1; Proceso al soldado Toribio Saldivar por desertor, 1864, Concepción, ANA-SCJ vol. 1715, n. 5; Proceso al Cabo Miguel Areco por desertor, 1862, Concepción, ANA-SCJ vol. 1715, n. 6. For Humaita and Pilar, see Informe de Alejandro Hermosa a Francisco Solano López, 28 January 1863, Correspondencia de Humaita, ANA-SH vol. 376, n. 2, foja 134-36; Informe de Hermongenes Cabral a Francisco Solano López, 31 January 1863, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 (I), foja 1888-91; Informe de Vicente Duarte a Francisco Solano López, 14 October 1863, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 (II), foja 1969.

⁸⁴Informes de Isidrio Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 17 June 1864; 21 June 1864, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1337-39, 1341-42.

⁸⁵Informe de Venancio Candia a Carlos Antonio López, 10 November 1853, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 528-31. On the increasing import of foodstuffs that could have been produced in Paraguay during the 1860s due to increased promotion of tobacco and cotton production and other disruptions in subsistence production, see Kleinpenning, *Paraguay 1515-1870*, v. 2, 1407-08.

⁸⁶Informes de Isidro Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 11 February 1864; 1 April 1864, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1322-23, 1329-33.

The visitas of Bishop Palacios brought moral succor and intimidation to this, for many, discomfiting press of modernity. His first formal trip took him to his native pueblo, Luque, a day's jaunt south of the capital, for the October 1863 festival celebrating the anniversary of the president's election. He helped celebrate mass, gave a sermon, and led a procession before also pronouncing a toast (which emphasized "the proper fulfillment of duties of each citizen") at the banquet.⁸⁷ The following month he prepared for a longer trip south to Pilar and the military encampments surrounding the river fortress of Humaitá. Here he traveled on the escort of a naval riverboat from Asunción with an entourage that numbered perhaps over a hundred. This group included a team of assisting clerics as well as a healthy complement of manservants and porters.⁸⁸ Their arrival brought the commotion that announced the coming of a high ecclesiastical authority. The commandant of Pilar ordered a handful of calves and dozens of sheep put to the slaughter to supply the succession of banquets feting the bishop and his entourage over the course of a week-long stay.⁸⁹ Bishop Palacios again conducted church ceremonies and plowed rhetorical fields "to produce the desired fruit of Christian patriotism and constant adhesion" to the person of Francisco Solano López. For four consecutive days, the legions of recruits rested from their labors sowing maize and beans and baking mud bricks and roof tiles to go hear mass each morning.⁹⁰

⁸⁷"Luque," *El Semanario* (Asunción) 31 October 1863.

⁸⁸Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios a Francisco Solano López, Pilar, 23 November 1863, ANA-CRB vol. 2296, I-30, 11, 139.

⁸⁹Informes de Vicente Duarte a Francisco Solano López, 28 November 1863, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 (II), foja 1985-88.

⁹⁰Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios a Francisco Solano López, Pilar, 23 November 1863, ANA-CRB; Informe de Vicente Duarte a Francisco Solano López, 21 November 1863, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 (II), foja 1983.

In February 1864, Palacios and his entourage proceeded to other villages and pueblos among the surrounding hills. The bishop traveled this leg by carriage, with a train of oxcarts pulling luggage, ornaments, and handlers. His arrivals in villages could assume a parade-like aspect, crowds welcoming him with cheers, pressing into the road as his carriage passed. Men unhitched the horses and pulled his carriage themselves. Cannon salvos were sometimes fired from the plazas. Palacios later compared such fanfare to the entrance of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem.⁹¹ He usually lodged in the house of the local commandant or at the militia headquarters and, beyond the protocol of masses, banquets, official toasts, and dances, also met on the side with local authorities to settle internal disputes and lecture against perceived political sins. He received in return countless gifts of bread, chipas, and yerba—and had them distributed among soldiers to demonstrate his largesse. He also went to visit troops when staying near an encampment and called them together for impromptu sermons that encouraged their persistence in service with blessings from the “God of Armies.” He appealed constantly for more recruits. Through Itagua, Piraju, Yaguaron, and Carapegua, Palacios confirmed over a thousand young parishioners, then pronouncing sermons, often in Guaraní, which touted the “necessity and importance of military service,” a path of glory “for God and Patria.” In Carapegua, the devotion of the pueblo impressed him so—clamoring for his pastoral services and blessings over the course of days—that he wrote the president to declare that “this district will give to Your Excellency more young solders than any other partido, for the service of the Patria.”⁹²

⁹¹For these descriptions, see Carmelo Talavera, “Seccion de Remitidos” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 12 March 1864; Informe de Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios a Francisco Solano López, 12 November 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 306-10.

⁹²Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios a Francisco Solano López, Carapegua, 15 February, 1864, ANA-SNE vol. 2806; Informe de Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios a Francisco Solano López, 12 November 1864,

Bishop Palacios extended this leg of his visita into Villa Rica with the full compliment of triumphant processions, cannon salvos, series of masses and sermons, and fiestas that lasted into the early morning hours. He continued on to other pueblos into March and April.⁹³ Recruiting officers followed in his wake. Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Estigarribia came to Villa Rica with a commission of officials sometime in June 1864. On the day of enlistment, a village band played while all available men and “able Citizens” formed ranks in the central plaza. Estigarribia and his lieutenants looked them over and drafted a thousand of them. Some of those selected reportedly made a show of patriotic enthusiasm, howling their delight or even dancing their way, as the band played, from the ranks of candidates to the ranks of chosen recruits. The enlisted then marched to the parish church where Father Barrios said mass and rehearsed the season’s incessant themes: “Catholic duties” of loyalty to the sovereign and the nation; a vision of the Republic as “one large family, at whose head is the government, the common father, who has an intimate connection with his fellow citizens . . . like the union between a father and son”; and the president/patriarch as “the instrument of Providence and the channel of all divine blessings.”⁹⁴ He told the recruits pointedly that their patriotic obligations included the willingness to lay down their lives. The music played again as the enlisted started their march down the road to the encampments.⁹⁵ Some of the recruits had second thoughts though, it seems, during the march of leagues upon leagues to reach

Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH; Informe de Isidrio Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 24 October 1864, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1362-65.

⁹³Informe de Diego Alvarenga a Francisco Solano López, 5 March 1864, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 751; Informe de José Mariano López, Domingo Antonio Gómez, Roque Jacinto Ramírez a Francisco Solano López, 4 March 1864, Correspondencia de Hiati, ANA-SH vol. 376, n. 5, foja 5.

⁹⁴“Correspondencia del interior: Villa Rica,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 9 July 1864.

⁹⁵For example, see “Correspondencia del interior: Santa Rosa” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 23 July 1864; “Correspondencia del interior: Santiago” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 16 July 1864. The recruits of Villeta even produced a declaration of patriotism, “Sección de remitidos,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 9 April 1864.

their encampment. Many began to fall out, exhausted, and refused to budge. In the patriotic telling printed by newspaper, a more stalwart recruit made a speech to the laggards, reminding them that “service to country is the first duty of every citizen,” which compelled them to pick up and march again.⁹⁶

In the heated climate created by all the patriotic rhetoric, failures of patriotic will could be used against personal enemies, particularly given the tendency of common folk to accuse each other of treasonous words and other political crimes. One villager could accuse another, for example, of neglecting to shout patriotic vivas during the serenades of civic fiestas.⁹⁷ Middling and prominent figures stumbled into more serious incriminations. Casimiro Uriarte, the former commandant of Salvador, faced arrest in Concepción for sedition in April 1863, as perhaps he expressed some reservations about the new regime, and someone made him pay. In Pilar, just before the visit of Bishop Palacios in November, the residing parish priest faced destitution from his post for his own unpatriotic statements and actions. One man attending a banquet during the bishop’s visit there was later also arrested by a presiding military officer for having said something disagreeable to two priests during their patriotic toast.⁹⁸ Bishop Palacios likewise had seized the chance to sink Father Fidel Maíz when earlier that year grand rumors emerged of his seditious remarks and alleged conspiring against the new regime. A formal criminal trial saw seminarians and other priests pressed to testify against their former instructor. Meanwhile Palacios convened an extraordinary ecclesiastical tribunal to try Maíz for heresy because of the discovery of books by French thinkers and a portrait of

⁹⁶“Correspondencia del interior: Villa Rica,” *El Semanario* (Asunción) 9 July 1864.

⁹⁷Juzgado de Itá, 28 March 1864, ANA-SH vol. 330 (microfilm, University of Texas at Austin).

⁹⁸Informe de Isidrio Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 25 April 1863, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1282; Informe de Isidrio Ayala a Francisco Solano López, 25 December 1863, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397 n. 1 (II), foja 1999; Informe de Vicente Duarte a Francisco Solano López, 28 November 1863, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397 n. 1 (II), foja 1987-88.

Martin Luther among his personal belongings. In inquisitorial tones, the bishop scoffed that Maíz was “growing fat like a pig” during his ordeal instead of repenting for sins against the “patria and its government.”⁹⁹

Paraguayan nerves were being frayed by a crescendo of international saber-rattling. During his pastoral visits to the countryside, Bishop Palacios received reports from the Foreign Minister, José Berges, about developments in nearby Uruguay.¹⁰⁰ A prolonged insurgency there threatened to bring Brazilian military intervention, and powerbrokers in Buenos Aires seemed prepared to acquiesce. The prevailing sentiment was that Brazilian intervention in Uruguay would threaten Paraguay, which would have to defend its “sister republic.” Berges and others interpreted a Brazilian threat to Uruguay as part of a larger monarchic offensive against American republics, tied, most prominently, to events in Mexico, where French intervention had recently place the Emperor Maximilian on a newly created throne.¹⁰¹ Brazil, after all, was an empire as well. Regime ideologues argued that Paraguay should defend American republicanism, along with its strategic interest in maintaining Uruguayan autonomy. In August 1864 the López regime issued its protest to Rio de Janeiro promising reprisal for any Brazilian invasion of Uruguay. A host of patriotic declarations from both pueblos and individual citizens in Paraguay pledging the dedication of

⁹⁹Obispo Juan Gregorio Urbieto a Francisco Solano López, 7 December 1862, Asunción, ANA-SH vol. 333, n. 2; Proceso contra los presbíteros Fidel Maíz, José del Carmen Moreno, Aniceto Benítez, 1863, ANA-SNE vol. 1636; Maíz, *Etapas de mi vida*, 11-16, 28-30.

¹⁰⁰José Berges a Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios, Asunción, February 1864, ANA-CRB vol. 2496, I-30, 27, 132.

¹⁰¹José Berges a Richard Mullooney, Asunción, 6 December 1863, ANA-CRB I-22, 11, 1 n. 243; José Berges a Candido Bareiro, Asunción, 6 June 1864, ANA-CRB I-22, 11, 1 n. 350. Subsequent letters reinforced this rhetoric, José Berges a Richard Mullooney, Asunción, 6 November 1864, ANA-CRB I-22, 11, 1 n. 447; José Berges a Candido Bareiro, Asunción, 6 November 1864, ANA-CRB I-22, 11, 1 n. 450. Also see leading articles in *El Semanario* (Asunción), 13 February 1864; 9 July 1864.

service and the sacrifice of property, to defend the “sacred rights” of the republic, followed.¹⁰²

But economic doubts loomed closer to home as well. In May 1864, the spiritual economy of the tithe, having already shown signs of weakness, witnessed a significant market collapse, first in the livestock tithe, and later in November for the summer harvest. State revenues on the auctions promised to fall between fifty-five and seventy-five thousand pesos short of projected amounts.¹⁰³ Few dared to bid on collection rights for a return on animals and harvests that seemed increasingly precarious. Incidentally, Bishop Palacios directed the final leg of his pastoral visitations to the northern reaches, source of much wealth and uncertainty for the regime, precisely when the prospect of hostilities was coming to a head in October and November of 1864.

In this final leg of his tour, Palacios and his retinue traveled on state naval steamer to Concepción, arriving in time to participate in masses commemorating the anniversary of Francisco Solano López’s election. After a sermon, the main topic of which readers can well imagine, the bishop visited the barracks and enjoyed three days more of masses, banquets, and dances before making a side trip to Salvador. Back in November, he hammered again at patriotic themes that seemed to be taking on a hint of paranoia: “Even in our secret conversations among family members, we should guard loyalty, because God is the knower of hearts and will punish with infallible justice those who fail these duties.” In a farewell speech at Concepción’s military headquarters, the bishop blasted the likes of Ramon Miltos,

¹⁰²See, for example, Pedro Recalde a Pedro Vicente Ibañez, 16 September 1864; José Tomás Ocampos a Pedro Vicente Ibañez, 16 September 1864; protesta patriótica de estudiantes escolares, 16 September 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 291-94; Correspondencia de Luque, September 1864, ANA-SNE vol. 1739.

¹⁰³Almoneda de diezmo de cuatropea, May 1864, ANA-SNE vol. 2321; Almoneda de diezmo de verano, November 1864, ANA-SNE vol. 3172.

with his “twisted intention to reform the fundamental laws of the Republic.”¹⁰⁴ The current magistrate of Concepción, who had come under the bishop’s suspicion, invited him to a banquet in honor of the president and offered him a gift of fine yerba mate. Palacios refused both and waxed metaphorical: the yerba that he liked was “love for [the president] and the Patria, and this was lacking and barely found in Concepción.”¹⁰⁵

The last stop on this political-pastoral tour was San Pedro, and as the bishop’s steamer approached local notables there were in a stew. The electoral junta of 1862 had left scars of resentment. Specifically, the yerba baron José Tomás Ocampos had used his election to expand his influence in local affairs, receiving appointment as civil magistrate to the vexation of certain rivals. Yet the junta, as well as Ocampos’ own politicking, helped to forge new mediums of civic engagement, principally around the organization for the celebration of religious patriotic fiestas. The result, in San Pedro, was the formation in mid-1864 of the “Society of San Pedro.”

The Society of San Pedro had hues of an old religious *cofradía* along with the organization and practices of a modern civic club. It gathered the participation of prominent residents, generally those with the sufficient property, reputation, and the right to vote. The members paid twenty-five pesos for admittance and committed themselves to pay eight reales in monthly dues. Meanwhile the group appointed officers and established a club house for its meetings, at which it ruminated and then voted on the activities to be undertaken, with priests on hand to provide moral guidance.¹⁰⁶ The group had already taken part in efforts of local

¹⁰⁴Informe de Isidrio Resquin a Francisco Solano López, 24 October 1864; 17 November 1864, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1362-65, 1368-70.

¹⁰⁵Informe de Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios a Francisco Solano López, 12 November 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH.

authorities and elites to raise money and collect foodstuffs. It had organized celebratory masses and banquets, and it had worked on the elaborate decorations of the festivals. Institutionalizing these expressions of civic and patriotic engagement had become another way to play politics with the public performance of unity behind a ruling regime. Previously, for example, Ocampos had published a list of the names of expected contributors for the 1863 Independence Day—largely, it would appear, to shame his local adversary Francisco Espinoza, who had initially refused to donate “even a half *real*.” Espinoza had tried later to contribute as much eight pesos (sixty-four *reales*) after an ambulatory patriotic serenata for the festival had failed to stop to sing in front of his house as usual.¹⁰⁷ Similar stunts ensued with the formation of the Society to organize the celebration of the president’s birthday on July 24 the following year. On that occasion, grandstanding over the apportionment of flour and sugar led to a shouting altercation between members of leading families, including the wife of the militia commandant, with Ocampos again at the center of things. One of those also involved, Bernardo Valiente, then called a meeting of the Society, supposedly to propose a new measure for the celebrations just days away. He used the opportunity to publically read a scathing criticism of the pueblo’s civil authorities, particularly against the commandant and Ocampos, as magistrate. Debate and shouting erupted. Ocampos wanted Valiente arrested for sedition and demanded that his inflammatory text be confiscated as evidence. Father Arzamendia took the floor, counseling peace and union in respect for the July 24 celebration, and insisted that the paper should be torn up and the matter forgotten. The group accepted his

¹⁰⁶Francisco Valiente a Pedro Ibañez, 13 July 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 270; Informe a Francisco Solano López, 30 November 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH.

¹⁰⁷Informe de José Tomas Ocampos a Francisco Solano López, 30 December 1863, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 236-38. For a glossy description of the actual celebration, see Informe de Pedro Ibañez y José Tomas Ocampos a Francisco Solano López, 28 December 1863, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 233-34.

recommendations, but after the meeting Ocampos was nonetheless seen bent over the floor picking up the pieces of torn paper.¹⁰⁸ The Society, a form of civic engagement new to the Paraguayan countryside, mostly perpetuated the bickering of the electoral junta and fueled the fires of local politics, but it also furthered the regime's emphasis on patriotic loyalty and unanimity.

The Society of San Pedro executed its maximal performance of patriotic unity for the president's birthday that year. The sermons, speeches, bullfights, collective declarations, and dances occurred with noted opulence, amidst persistent threats of arrests and lawsuits among the organizers, as well as another denunciation of local authorities composed by the Valientes for publication in the state newspaper.¹⁰⁹ Likewise, it was the Society that took up the financing and preparations for the visita of Bishop Palacios in November. Ocampos campaigned to have the bishop lodge in his house with support of old allies, Pedro Recalde and Ignacio Sosa. The assembly of the Society decided otherwise. The bishop, it decided, should stay in the house rented by the Society, so that all could share in the honor. Resentment had remained palpable among those who perceived that Ocampos and Sosa were using the resources of the Society for their personal benefit under the umbrella of patriotism.¹¹⁰

The righteous posturing only continued with the arrival of the bishop on November 11 to an elegant performance of patriotic and ecclesiastic fervor, featuring the typical assortment of

¹⁰⁸Informes a Francisco Solano López, 30 July 1864; 4 August 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 273-75, 280-84.

¹⁰⁹Informes al gobierno, 4 August 1864; 6 August 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 278-79, 285-87; Protesta patriótica, 24 July 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 271-72; "Correspondencia del interior: San Pedro," *El Semanario* (Asunción) 30 July 1864.

¹¹⁰Informe a Francisco Solano López, 30 November 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH.

activities. Palacios could taste the division in the ranks though, and as at Concepción, he had his suspicions about the sincerity of loyalties despite it all.¹¹¹ He decided to stay for nearly three weeks, during which news arrived that war with Brazil was indeed to be waged. A handful of prominent residents, including Pedro Recalde, traveled to Asunción to pledge their enlistment in the army directly to the president. Ocampos, ever so concerned about his own patriotic reputation, wrote President López with laments that he could not enlist due to his weighty public charge. He took the opportunity to praise the pastoral work of the bishop who “did not rest, sowing among us evangelical doctrine and patriotic sentiments, making us see and understand the obligation that sacred duty imposes on us for the precise fulfillment of our country’s laws, and for the subordination, respect, and love for the Supreme Magistrate of the Republic.”¹¹² The bishop had gathered the local authorities and members of the Society in the parish church for a special meeting to command their unity as “first citizens,” solidly behind the president’s decision to send the “sons of the Republic” off to war. Shortly thereafter, the commandant of San Pedro received from the president his dismissal from office with orders to report to Asunción to respond to political charges brought by someone—probably through the bishop.¹¹³

The advent of war brought a crescendo of patriotic fervor—a public transcript aspiring to trample all hidden ones.¹¹⁴ Private misgivings were carefully concealed by exaggerated

¹¹¹Informe de Pedro Ibañez al gobierno, 11 November 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 305; Informe de Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios a Francisco Solano López, 12 November 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH.

¹¹²Informes de Pedro Ibañez, José Tomas Ocampos a Francisco Solano López, 26 November 1864; 27 November 1864, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 314-16.

¹¹³Informes a Francisco Solano López, 29 November 1864; 20 January 1865, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 317-19, n. 1 (II), foja 317-19, 331.

¹¹⁴Scott, *Hidden Transcripts*.

posturing that fed the regime's coercive moral complex. Local actors further energized the state's projection of religious nationalism even as they exploited it to persecute rivals and pursue their own interests. The pressures to produce formal expressions of political conformity, as well as conscious conviction, were pushing farther down the social hierarchy of the countryside. In the face of uncertainty and dissension surrounding his election, Francisco Solano López had successfully applied the church-state apparatus built by his father to exact consent for Paraguay's involvement in what was to prove a truly horrendous conflict.

Conclusions: Voting and Praying for Republican War

Other historians have described the conscription and military mobilization efforts overtaking the Paraguayan countryside as well as growing repressive tendencies of the Paraguayan state in the lead up to the War of the Triple Alliance.¹¹⁵ What has remained largely unacknowledged, however, are the substantial roles a church-state apparatus and republican rhetoric and performance played in these developments. It is necessary to appreciate how the regime's patriotic and religious fervor, intensively-orchestrated across the countryside, prepared the Paraguayan populace for the conflict. When Paraguayan forces marched north and launched their invasion and occupation of the ill-defended Brazilian province of Matto Grosso in December 1864, Catholic masses were the principal forum in rural towns and villages for celebrating the victory and issuing prayers for the salvation of the soldiers' souls lost in the campaign. Masses likewise announced and celebrated the even more general presidential call to arms in June 1865, as the government decided to declare

¹¹⁵Whigham, *The Paraguayan War*, 180-89; Williams, *Rise and Fall of the Paraguayan Republic*, 195-206; Lechuers, *To the Bitter End*; Arcedes, "De la independencia a la Guerra de la Triple Alianza," *Historia del Paraguay*, ed. Ignacio Telesca, (Asunción: Taurus, 2010), 149-97; Saeger, *Francisco Solano López*.

war also on Argentina, and Paraguayan armies invaded southward.¹¹⁶ Moreover, as we have seen, activities organized by and for the church had prepared for the expanding conscription of men into the national army. The unrelenting cycle of civic-religious festivals with their masses, sermons, and banquets continued as hostilities commenced. Numerous parish priests also entered the growing army ranks as chaplains. Pulpit and ecclesiastical ceremony remained primary mediums of mass communication and political mobilization.

So did the rhetoric and symbolic enactment of republicanism. The conflict itself was framed by the Paraguayan government as a war waged by republicans against monarchists. Denunciations of Brazilian imperial ambitions registered in the patriotic exclamations of the Paraguayan countryside, while prominent sentiments of antipathy against Argentina (another republic, after all) turned on perceptions of the iniquitous betrayal of “true liberty” in Buenos Aires.¹¹⁷ A prevailing current among lettered officials of the Paraguayan state was to portray their country’s cause as a defense of American republicanism in general against the expansionist machinations of Old World monarchies, with Mexico as a persuasive example of such machinations. That was the gist of Paraguayan propaganda that justified the invasion of Argentine provinces in mid-1865. Paraguayan forces were allegedly making common cause with the Argentine people against a traitorous Buenos Aires government now beholden to the interests of monarchic Brazil.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶Informe de las autoridades de Horqueta a Francisco Solano López, 11 January 1865, ANA-SNE vol. 3074, n. 162; Informe de José María Franco y José María Hermosa al Ministro del Gobierno, 12 June 1865, Correspondencia de Union, ANA-SH, vol. 412, n. 1, foja 14.

¹¹⁷Informe de Felipe Chamorro y Cura José Inocencio Gauto a Francisco Solano López, 23 January 1865, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH vol. 391, n. 15 (II), foja 23; Informe de Manuel Gómez a Francisco Solano López, Villeta, 19 September 1864, ANA-SH vol. 412, n. 2.

¹¹⁸A proclamation of pro-Paraguayan provisional government in the province of Corrientes is reprinted in Dardo Ramírez Braschi, *La guerra de la triple alianza a través de los periodicos correntinos* (Corrientes: Amerindia Ediciones, 2000), 67-68.

The regime of Francisco Solano López had held to republican formalities to even thereby sanction the escalation of hostilities. In March 1865, López called for the assembly of an extraordinary national congress to vote on official declarations of war against the monarchy of Brazil and the central government of Argentina. Local officials again followed the well-run protocol of gathering the eligible voters in parish churches to choose from among them their congressional deputies. However internal politicking and rivalries played out in these meetings, though, the juntas were now disciplined to elect clear partisans of the regime.¹¹⁹ Even so, the 1865 congressional assembly in Asuncion proved another drawn-out and lively event. Sessions carried on for days in the main governmental palace and, as usual, numerous deputies clamored for the chance to speak. A genuine sense of a deliberative and consequential undertaking was again present, as the president opened the congress with a speech formally requesting their approval for the declarations of war, then stepped away to observe the debate. Full-throated calls for belligerence were the most prominent among the deputies taking the floor, but others emphasized the need for caution, particularly with the decision to wage a war against Argentina, too. Bishop Manuel Palacios assumed the role of chief parliamentarian and advocate for the regime in the congress. He brought his eminence to give at least two speeches before the body, presenting the punishment of traditional enemies in Brazil and Buenos Aires as something of a sacred duty. The republican exercises culminated with a unanimous vote for war.¹²⁰ Those observers who were wondering about

¹¹⁹Actas de votos en Villa Rica y Asunción, February 1865, ANA-SH vol. 343 (microfilm, University of Texas at Austin).

¹²⁰Efraim Cardozo, *Hace Cien Años*, vol. 1, 122-49.

the wisdom of their republic's ambitious belligerent enterprise kept very still about their doubts.¹²¹

The church-state apparatus pushed the belligerent momentum forward. Manuel Palacios had just assumed the full leadership of the diocese with the death of Bishop Urbieta in January 1865. Meanwhile the congress in March had also commissioned the president as field marshal of the nation's army, and López decided to exercise military command from the fortress of Humaita. Bishop Palacios announced his decision to accompany the president, and in June he issued his first pastoral letter, a mammoth exposition on divine-right republicanism and, in sum, a frank ecclesiastical endorsement for war with Brazil and Argentina as a "holy crusade." It was the official call-to-arms of the diocesan church, citing bulls, catechisms, and biblical verses, larded with the familiar formulas of civic, religious, and patriotic obligation familiar from countless sermons reaching back to the 1850s. "The noble character of the Paraguayan people" was contrasted unsurprisingly to Brazilian and Argentine aggressiveness.

Argentines and Brazilians might speak of Liberty, explained the Bishop of the Republic, but theirs was a perverse sort of liberty that threatened traditional hierarchies and the submission due to constituted sovereigns. Palacios decried it as the "liberty of sin and death," which "ruins morality, disorders society, tyrannizes good men, destroys peoples, and raises subversion against religion and God." Paraguay, in contrast, cultivated the "true liberty of a Republic and a realm." It was the "sweet liberty that by divine blessing we Paraguayans enjoy . . . to be governed by a government that is Catholic, just, pious, and a lover of its

¹²¹Centurion, *Memorias o reminiscencias históricas sobre la Guerra del Paraguay*, vol. 1, 231-35.

subjects, one that governs them more like a father than an overlord.”¹²² Palacios was constructing the coming war as a defense of sacred liberty against quasi-satanic enemies.

Guaraní was becoming a principal medium for the expression for this nationalist and *sui generis* wartime republicanism. Following protocol, the pastoral letter was copied to all parishes of the diocese, with attached instructions to parish priests specifying that its content be communicated to their congregations by sermons in Guaraní. On subsequent Sundays and festivals throughout June and July 1865, parish priests all over Paraguay reported that they had explained the bishop’s call to holy war in the “native language,” the “language of the patria.” In Guaraní, reported various clergy, they extolled “the Holy Cause of Liberty,” excoriated “the satanic power of Brazil,” and praised the national army that was going forth to defend “the sanctity of our holy Christian religion.”¹²³ As Paraguayan armies marched southward to champion divine-right republicanism, and hostilities began in earnest, the moral burdens of war would test the commitment of people on the home front, as well.

¹²²Carta pastoral de Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios, Asunción, 3 June 1865, AAA, Libro: Cartas Pastorales, Manuel Antonio Palacios, 1865-66.

¹²³Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

SACRED CAUSE, REPUBLICAN WAR

Documented instances of civilians wavering in their commitment to war provide insight into how the press of modern nationhood jolted, and often destroyed, individual lives. Consider the experience of Pedro Quiñonez in September 1865. He was an aged man by that time, a retired militia sergeant who believed that he had left his military duties behind. When the advent of war mandated his recall into service, he remained at his home in the old Indian pueblo of Tobatí, tending to his fields. But he also had to attend the orders of his local commander, whether it be overseeing a work detail or counting crops sown in the district. He had typically done his duty and seemed to command respect in his community. Relatives, neighbors, and local authorities regarded him as a good Christian. Then early one morning, after taking some mate and doing a bit of work, he wandered into a nearby wood and hanged himself from a *ñuatĩ* tree. He also sliced his throat, and blood covered his neck and chest when a search party discovered the suspended corpse on the afternoon of the following day. His rosary tangled on his body and his knife lay cast aside on the ground along with his poncho and sombrero.¹

Relatives and neighbors had found Quiñonez pensive and sad in the weeks and days leading up to his suicide, as they later testified to the local magistrate. His sister-in-law as well as a fellow neighbor had noticed specifically that he became quite agitated upon

¹Sumario sobre el suicidio del sargento retirado Pedro Quiñonez, 1865, ANA-SCJ vol. 1729, n. 2, foja 43-59.

receiving his recall orders. He told his wife “that in his old age he could not offer the proper fulfillment of his obligations to his Superior.” The local magistrate was not sympathetic, however, and deplored the old man’s “cowardice.” He acknowledged the sergeant’s piety but windily condemned his refusal to “lend his services to the Patria in the Holy Cause,” preferring “a notorious, criminal death.” His ruling dictated that the body of Quiñonez was to remain buried below the tree where it was found, no burial rites and no marker.² The old man’s suicide was not only sinful. It was treasonous.

The *ñane retã* had embarked on a belligerent enterprise that would explode into a conflagration of unforeseen proportions and touch the lives of all Paraguayans. The Empire of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay (a client state following Brazilian intervention there), made a formal military alliance in 1865, committing themselves not only to repulse Paraguay’s preemptive invasion of their territories but also to destroy the government of Francisco Solano López. The ensuing fight took place mostly on Paraguayan soil, and it was long and bloody. In the madness of war, Paraguayan civilians had to confront the encompassing moral and material demands of the state made on spiritual grounds. Most involved men conscripted in the army and fighting in trenches, but also, increasingly, they involved women working in fields, managing homes, and assisting in camps.

This chapter will first examine how the state channeled nearly all expressions of institutional religiosity toward the “sacred cause” of what became, in the face of foreign invasion, total war. Clergy contributed to the radical extension of politicized Guaraní from its conventional dissemination from the pulpit to the dynamic medium of print propaganda. In 1867, wartime propaganda newspapers, produced and distributed on the battlefield and in the capital, began publishing prose and song in the language. And here, the common expressions

²Ibid., foja 49-59.

of a native-tongue were amplifying the projection of a divine-right republicanism among everyday Paraguayans. The lettered proponents of the regime, both in the country and abroad, embraced ever more stridently the conviction in a “sacred cause” to fight a republican war on behalf of a continent. In this regard, the figure of monarchic, slaveocratic Brazil, as the primary ideological enemy of Paraguay, provided a foil against which to contrast the republican *ñane retã*. As one correspondent to the state newspaper put it, “The slave of a monarchy can never conquer the citizen of a free republic.”³

The republicanism fused onto the reflex of popular insult and emotion. We shall then see how the Guaraní-language propaganda of the state began to deploy less high-flown images of race and servitude along with its references to Christian and patriotic duty. Much of this patriotic rhetoric in the vernacular, in fact, was oriented toward sustaining the appropriation of the labor and wealth of women—crucial to sustaining the war effort as a whole in the later years of the conflict. Meanwhile, as the death of Pedro Quiñonez suggests, the moral weights of modern nationhood invaded all aspects of life, straining the social relations among friends, families, and neighbors in the countryside, even setting the terms resistance against the regime.

Sacred Cause

The circumstances of war only compounded the projection of republican nationhood and sovereignty onto a spiritual domain. In April 1865, as Paraguayan armies invaded southward

³Natalicio Talavera, *La guerra del Paraguay: Correspondencias publicadas en el Semanario* (Asunción: Ediciones Nizza, 1958), 128. For this rhetoric as advanced in the Paraguayan propaganda campaigns in Europe and the United States, see, for example, Gregorio Benítez a Carlos Saguier, Paris, 7 August 1866; Benítez a Juan Bautista Alberdi, Paris, 22 October 1866; Benítez a Alberdi, Paris, 26 November 1869, BNA-CO, PGB. See, also, Milda Rivarola, *La polémica francesa sobre la guerra grande* (Asunción: Editorial Histórica, 1988), 13-103.

into Argentine and Brazilian territories, the succession of patriotic sermons, masses, and prayers continued apace. In subsequent months, when Paraguayan forces were repulsed and the allied powers began their own protracted invasion of Paraguayan territory, the state's ecclesiastical apparatus focused almost totally on sustaining popular conformity and mobilizing energies to defend the patria and the ruling regime. By mid-1866, the conflict had settled into the stalemate of trench warfare in the southeastern swamplands of the country, while privations, hardships, and disease were taking their toll on the Paraguayan army and the population at large.⁴ Faced by the prospect of defeat and annihilation, the government's Guaraní-language discourse stressed the sacred, imperishable nature of the *ñane retã*.

Church and State at War

As an established medium of patriotic and military mobilization, the ecclesiastical apparatus of the Paraguayan state moved easily onto a war footing. Clergy throughout the countryside continued to conduct the ceremonies and say the prayers that now ever more increasingly channeled formal expressions of religiosity through the prism of nationhood, toward the "sacred cause." Numerous ordained clergy obligingly marched and prayed with the soldiers as chaplains.⁵ Where clergy remained behind in their parishes, they worked harder than ever at orchestrations of popular patriotism. In satellite pueblos of Villa Rica, Yatayty and Mbocayaty, for example, the elder, veteran priest José Inocencio Gauto dutifully preached the tenor of Bishop Palacios' pastoral letter from the pulpit in Guaraní on

⁴For the origins and early military developments of the war, see Whigham, *The Paraguayan War*; Dorotioto, *Maldita Guerra*, 23-194; Chris Leuchars, *To the Bitter End*, 155-68; Charles Kolinski, *Independence or Death!*, 137-42; Thompson, *The War in Paraguay*, 196-243, provide description and overview of the tactical military situation by 1866-67.

⁵Gaona, *El clero en la Guerra del 70*, 8-25.

13 July 1865. News of reported victories on the battlefield accordingly became occasions for the thanksgiving masses and more preaching, as well as banquets and parties.⁶ Back in May, Gauto and the local commandant also had organized a commemorative celebration of the revolution that had secured the de facto independence of Paraguay from Argentina over a half century earlier, a time from which Gauto still had childhood memories, memories made more poignant, no doubt, under the circumstances of another conflict with a government in Buenos Aires.⁷

Such acts had the air of popular festivity and excitement that had surrounded feast day and civic-religious celebrations from before the war. In those early months of the conflict, ceremonial flag raisings, ringing of church bells, fireworks, vespers, and illuminations in Yatayty and Mbocayaty continued to rouse inhabitants for patriotic functions. Bands of music players, guitarists and harpists, led nighttime serenades through the crossroads of the towns, stopping before houses of nearby residents to sing their songs and holding impromptu dances that could last into early morning hours, as was commonplace before. The jugs of cane liquor loosened merrymakers' tongues for vivas to the republic, the president, and the army. Militia officers and other principal parishioners continued to patronize more formal dances and banquets on these occasions, and Father Gauto seemed to enjoy hosting the meals.⁸ Processions of patron-saint images and figurines of the Christ marched around the churches and into the streets of the pueblos during the patriotic celebrations. In Mbocayaty,

⁶Carta pastoral de Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios, Asunción, 3 June 1865, AAA, Libro: Cartas Pastorales, Manuel Antonio Palacios, 1865-66; Informes de Felipe Chamorro y Inocencio Gauto, 23 January, 17 June, 27 July 1865, 29 July 1866, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH vol. 391, n. 15 (II), foja 23, 25-26, 28-29, 33.

⁷Informe de Felipe Chamorro y Inocencio Gauto, 15 May 1865, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH vol. 391 (II), n. 15, foja 24.

⁸Informes de Felipe Chamorro y Inocencio Gauto, 17 June, 27 July 1865, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH.

clouds of incense smoke billowed out from the church sanctuary, where the Eucharist was held. Prayers for the souls of fallen soldiers and the success of the army added a more somber note.⁹ Father Gauto spoke now more often of “the duties and maxims of patriotism for the people of both sexes,” because with the war grinding on and more men called away to fight, women constituted an ever-increasing proportion of those filling the pews.¹⁰

The religious services and celebrations in Yatayty and Mboacayaty during the first years of the war reflected the patterns of sustained festivities in other pueblos, as well. In nearby Villa Rica, news of battlefield victories, reported in the state newspaper, *El Semanario*, was read aloud and explained in Guaraní to inhabitants gathered at the headquarters of the local commandant, followed by the predictable festivities.¹¹ The one real battlefield victory by Paraguayan forces in the war, at Curupayty in September 1866, prompted revelry to match.¹² In other satellite pueblos, such as Union and Hiati, the *santoara* of the president and other patriotic feast days got the standard attention in that year.¹³ The village of Salvador likewise kept up religious-patriotic functions even into the latter months of 1868.¹⁴ Many popular diversions kept their appeal during the war. A Guaraní-language letter printed in one of the

⁹Informes de Felipe Chamorro y Inocencio Gauto, 1 August 1865, 1 August 1866, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH vol. 391 (II), n. 15, foja 30-31, 34-35.

¹⁰Informes de Felipe Chamorro y Inocencio Gauto, 15 May 1865, 29 July 1866, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH.

¹¹Informe de Ramon Marecos, 28 February, 31 July 1866; informe de Felipe Chamorro y Inocencio Gauto, 2 July 1866, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 781, 791, 795.

¹²Celebrations of the typical patriotic-religious holidays continued in Villa Rica as well, see Informes, 19 October, 6 August, 19 October 1866, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 796-98.

¹³Informes de José María Franco y José María Hermosa, 12 October 1865, 31 July 1866, Correspondencia de Union, ANA-SH vol. 412, n. 1, foja 20, 31; Informes de Juan Isidrio Insaurralde, August 1865, 31 July 1866, Correspondencia de Hiati, ANA-SH vol. 376, n. 3, foja 10-11, 15-16.

¹⁴Informe de Rafael Ruydias, 8 September 1868, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 697-98.

wartime newspapers, for example, depicted the July 1867 festivities marking the birthday of *ñande rubicha guazu Carai Mariscal López*, as the president was called. The killing of a bull in the typical bullfights of village festivals could be compared to Paraguayan soldiers preparing to slay the Brazilian beast.¹⁵ Still, formal acts of religiosity remained paramount in these patriotic expressions. In Concepción, news of alleged battlefield victories in 1866 inspired contributions for masses of thanksgiving as well as a special service given for those “valiant soldiers of the Patria.” In March 1867, news of the death of the eminent Paraguayan general, José Díaz, reached the pueblo and stirred officials and the parish priest to hold a requiem that had the gathered parishioners praying for the soul of “the virtuous citizen that had fallen gloriously under the national flag.”¹⁶

The acts and rhetoric of collective religiosity saturated wartime patriotism. Official prayers proclaimed that the “sacred Independence” of the republic was at stake. Continuous petitions to the divine were needed so that the Lord would help the president *ñande rubicha* and his army. Proper thanks had to be sent heavenward for battlefield victories.¹⁷ Women, in particular, asserted their patriotism by sponsoring masses for the health of the president and the national army. Priests denounced the invasion of foreign armies who “profaned the sacred ground of the patria.”¹⁸ Religious discourse filled documents that villages sent to the government in Asunción affirming their loyalty to the president and “the God of Armies.”

¹⁵“Cacique Lambare pegua cuatia ñe’ẽ,” *Cacique Lambare* (Asunción), 22 August 1867. Also see in this regard description of the extensive festivities and religious services celebrating 24 July in occupied Corumbá, Matto Grosso, Brazil, in 1866, General Isidrio Resquin, *Datos históricos de la Guerra del Paraguay contra la Triple Alianza*, 29-33.

¹⁶Informes, 2 August 1866, 3 March 1867, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1465, 1484.

¹⁷“Misa de gracia,” *Cacique Lambare* (Asunción) 10 November 1867.

¹⁸ Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, Caapucu, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695, I-30, 28, 23; Informes de Felipe Chamorro y Inocencio Gauto, 1 August 1866, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH.

Clergy and other lettered officials obviously penned the florid prose, but they spoke with a collective voice that few villagers dared question.¹⁹ The patriotic protest from Salvador in April 1866 affirm the village's collective resolve "to conquer or die," followed by dozens (not hundreds) of names. Other protests of loyalty composed by local officials in villages throughout the country echoed the same sentiments and language.²⁰

Clergy and leading parishioners also resorted to mobilizing the passions and devotions for patron saints, Marian images, and Christ figures around the republic's "sacred cause." Saints' images populated patriotic functions, the president's namesake especially. San Francisco Solano had begun to garner elaborate devotions before the war which continued during the conflict with embellishments and processions of his image developed by clergy and lay people alike, with explicit appeals for his intercession on behalf of the president and the success of the Paraguayan army.²¹ In Mbocayaty, the priest combined the festivities for the president's *santoara* with Corpus Christi, while in Yataty, Father Gauto combined the presidential *santoara* with the feast of the patroness of the parish church, Nuestra Señora la Virgen del Rosario.²² In San Pedro, it was prominent local women who commissioned a second round of nine masses for the president's *santoara*, following a first round of nine masses, also in honor of the president, in which one local matron after another took turns to decorating the altar and dedicating the mass to her favorite saint. These saints, with their

¹⁹Protesta patriótica, 14 May 1866, Correspondencia de Union, ANA-SH vol. 412, n. 1, foja 28-29.

²⁰Protesta patriótica, 30 April 1866, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1, foja 669-70; Informe de Felix Domingo Barbosa y Francisco Espinoza, 30 April 1866, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 357-59.

²¹Informes, 28 July 1865; 28 July 1866, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 771-72, 792-93; Informe de Chamorro y Gauto, 29 July 1866, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH.

²²Informes de Felipe Chamorro y Inocencio Gauto, 1 August 1865, 1 August 1866, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty.

images and figurines exalted in lateral altars, included San Roque, San José, and Santa Rita—“the advocate of the impossible”—to whom the services devoted prayers on behalf of the president and the success of the Paraguayan army. The final mass was the most impressive of all, dedicated, as it was, to Nuestra Señora de Asunción “by whose powerful intercession the Most High was asked for the prolonged life of the Supreme Chief and the joyous success of the present arduous endeavor of the country.”²³

During the war, Nuestra Señora de Asunción, long a favored devotion among leading families in the capital and throughout the countryside, received heightened promotion in masses, processions, sermons, and newspaper features for her feast day on 15 August, sometimes in warlike depictions, as protectress of the *ñane retã*.²⁴ Speaking of her affectionately in Guaraní as *Tupasy* (mother of God) the popular wartime press could attribute to her intercession, as it did in 1867, the success of artillery bombardments on her day and declare *Tupa Sy d' Asunción ohechauca ñandebe oma'eha ñande rehe, ha'e oïha ñande ndibe guarinihape*, “the Señora of Asunción demonstrates that she watches over us and is with us in the fighting.” Moreover, it was claimed with biblical bombast that she had given to the president his fiery sword to slay the satanic enemies of the patria.²⁵ Another organically popular devotion, that of San Blas, considered by many communities as mutual patron saint of pueblo and republic, was also enlisted in service and prayer as spiritual intercessor of the nation's sacred cause, specifically by the Guaraní-language press. Likewise, in the same medium, Santa Rosa of Lima was associated with the original

²³Informe de Felix Domingo Barbosa y Francisco Espinoza, 16 August 1865, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 347-48.

²⁴“La virgen de la Asunción, patrona de la República,” *El Centinela* (Asunción), 15 August 1867.

²⁵“Tory, Tory, Tory,” *Cacique Lambare* (Asunción), 22 August 1867.

Paraguayan government protest against Brazil, on 30 August 1864, her day on the Catholic calendar. Santa Rosa was celebrated as the patroness of the entire continent, and because Paraguay was championing republicanism, the form of government proper to the Americas, her pro-Paraguayan sympathies in the war were a foregone conclusion.²⁶ These devotions, however orchestrated, conjured among parishioners nativist sentiments and collective religious identities with gendered appeal and deep historical resonances. The Paraguayan national church was becoming a cog of state machinery at war.

In February 1866, Bishop Palacios issued from the warfront at Paso de la Patria, in the southern stretches of the country, another pastoral letter to the diocese encouraging the constancy of clergy in their ministerial efforts “to save the Patria or succumb with it,” with an accompanying request from the president for a new contingent of men for the “sacred” war effort. Parish priests in the countryside were again to do their part in the conscription of more men into military service, blasting intimidation from the pulpit. And in coordination with local commandants and magistrates, they were now helping draft those advanced in age or just adolescent. Accordingly, in the letter, Palacios emphasized that this ministry was to also fortify the patriotic will of the elderly, women, and even children.²⁷ Newspapers depicted old women talking in Guaraní over mate about the “many good things” heard in the sermons of parish priests that commanded their loyalty to “*ñane retã* and *ñande rubicha* during this war” and had them dreaming of driving a lance through the bodies of enemy soldiers, all as ideals of piety.²⁸

²⁶“San Blas,” *Cacique Lambare* (Asunción), 27 February 1868; “30 de Agosto,” *Cacique Lambare* (Asunción), 5 September 1867.

²⁷Carta pastoral de Manuel Antonio Palacios, Paso de la Patria, 23 February 1866, AAA, Cartas Pastorales, Obsipo Manuel Antonio Palacios, 1865-66.

Bishop and clergy were integral and visible parts of the national army itself. Bishop Palacios was a constant companion of the field marshal-president in his headquarters in the south of Paraguay and issued directives for the church from there, as well as participating in military decisions. Other important clerics assumed leadership positions within the ranks and consulted with commanders on the battlefield. Numerous lower clergy serving as chaplains performed the sacraments for the everyday rank and file—confession, mass, communion, and, of course, the last rites for the sick and dying in the hospitals and trenches. This included the one-time cleric of Salvador, Santiago Cariay, who in February 1868 wrote an officer in Asunción describing his pastoral efforts among the troops, maintaining discipline and preaching “the obligation to stridently defend the holy rights of our beloved patria and the honor of our very dignified Marshal-President of the Republic.” Chaplains moved about the trenches to bless squadrons of soldiers and said prayers there in preparation for anticipated combat and attacks.²⁹

The ecclesiastical constructions marked the landscape of war in southern Paraguay. Makeshift chapels and oratories and more permanent churches dotted the main Paraguayan encampments surrounding Paso Pucú and Humaita during the long entrenched stalemate of 1866-68. Small constructions called *bultos*, wooden boxes cobbled together to house saint’s images, were lodged in the corners of trenches. Soldiers not only prayed there but also touched the images to secure their personal safety. The bell towers of the Humaitá church

²⁸“Una visita,” *Cabichuí*, (Paso Pucú), 4 July 1867; “Lambaré ohendu peteĩ guagui onomongeta ramo peteĩ soldadomí ndibe,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 22 August 1867.

²⁹See the first-hand soldier accounts of Father Blas Duarte’s battlefield and leadership role in the siege of Uruguayana, *Declaraciones de soldados rendidos en Uruguayana*, Paso de la Patria, 1866, ANA-SCJ vol. 1797, n. 1, foja 1-9, 12-20; Felipe Santiago Cariay al comandante general de armas, *Campamento en Campichuelo*, 1 February 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4602, I-30, 16, 28. In contrast, Miguel Angel De Marco describes the comparatively rudimentary ecclesiastical apparatus that accompanied Argentine forces on the allied side, *La Guerra del Paraguay* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1998), 225-42.

stood above all else among the imposing riverside fortifications there and drew constant fire from the artillery guns of Brazilian ironclad warships. Masses proceeded there nonetheless. In Paso Pucú, the provisional chapel was surrounded by a cluster of tents, huts, and ranchos with grid-like streets and spans of telegraph wires. The result was something like a town pieced together over months along a grove of orange trees, with the gray mud of the area supplying the plaster of walls and the roar of howling monkeys in the morning contributing to the uneasiness in the air. Movement of people and goods was fluid and constant, with soldiers and ox carts trampling about the pathways and roads and a steady influx of women from the nearby pueblos of Pilar and San Juan Bautista coming to attend family members and friends of friends.³⁰ The settlement had a printing press to issue its battlefront newspaper, as well as cadres of officials ready to conduct and, crucially, record tribunals of war for deserters and dissenters. Clergy assisted with all such endeavors, including the taking of final confession from those sentenced to the firing squad. Bishop Palacios also conducted the ordination of new priests in the encampments, particularly in Paso Pucú. Some of the young men he ordained had barely finished with their studies in the capital. There they were given special dispensations to enter the priesthood before turning twenty-five and then ushered to the front for examination, mass, and the ordination ceremony in the makeshift chapel where shells exploded overhead.³¹ Priests were in greater demand than ever in wartime Paraguay.

As primary communicators in the service of the state, they were integral to the dissemination of wartime propaganda. Father Fidel Maíz, for example, having endured

³⁰Centurión, *Memorias o reminiscencias históricas sobre la Guerra del Paraguay*, vol. 2, 120-23, 248-49. For another description of the “villages” at Paso Pucú and the female camp followers that tended them, see George Thompson, *The War in Paraguay*, 155, 206.

³¹For the battlefront ordinations see the files: Francisco Pablo Aguilera, Olegario Borja, Eustaquio Estigarribia, and Igancio Acosta, AAA, Libro de Orden Sacro, 1865-83. For the judicial protocol of warfront trials against desertors and suspected spies, see José María Curugua, *desertor y espía pasado por armas*, Paso Pucú, 1867, ANA-SCJ, vol. 1797, n. 4.

imprisonment since 1863 for his flirtations with sedition, gained his release in 1866 and subsequently remained at the front in Paso Pucú to contribute to the production *Cabichuí*, the frontline newspaper published there, among his other priestly duties.³² *Cabichuí* was a mouthpiece of popular and satirical tone, which included Spanish-language articles, wood-cut illustrations, and Guaraní-language ballads to be put to music and song in the trenches. The publication, issued nearly twice-a-week from mid-1867 and into 1868, constituted a striking ventriloquism of popular voices for official ends. Priest were especially useful for this function because of their experience preaching patriotic sermons in Guaraní. Maíz, now a full-throated partisan of the regime, wrote prose, jokes, and songs for the newspaper along with a cohort of other young lettered officials. The content of *Cabichuí* was read and sung aloud among officers and soldiers, with lyrics ridiculing the stink of panicky enemy troops urinating and defecating on themselves and the images of Brazilians frying in hell.

Like the appropriation of popular saints' devotions, the paper appropriated elements of popular culture to communicate its wartime propaganda more effectively to the common people. The Guaraní-language wartime propaganda traded in the jokes, songs, and vulgar boasts that everyday people brought with them to the armed struggle. It captured details of life at war—the chards of exploding shells and material, the dash of enemies into a trench, the thrust of a lance through flesh, the sweat of working under moonlight in a planted field, the smell of death.

Meanwhile, the established state newspaper in Asunción was busy reporting on and reprinting more sermons of priests in local churches for their dissemination, if in the conventional written medium of Spanish. Moreover, in July 1867, the priest Francisco

³²Maíz, *Etapas de mi vida*, 21-24. Maíz professed to the president that he had renewed, redemptive patriotic inspiration after reading the bible.

Solano Espinosa, who once served in the surrounding hamlets of Concepción, launched another propaganda newspaper in the capital to be published completely in the vernacular of Guaraní, titled *Cacique Lambaré*. Often the articles of this organ read like sermons pronounced from the pulpit. Like *Cabichuí* it couched its message in the form of popular tales, sometimes crass in their relation, as well as ballads inviting the accompaniment of guitar and harp. This unprecedented use of Guaraní in the print media was intended not so much to reach Guaraní readers, who were fewer than readers of Spanish, as to facilitate the word-of-mouth repetition and circulation of wartime propaganda.³³

Providence, Nationhood, and Mythic-religious Heroes

The message to be heard and repeated in Guaraní was a familiar one. Sermon, story, and song used the term *ñane retã* as the native, organizing concept for republic and nation, with all the old connotations of a religious realm anchored in the patriarchal authority of state and society. Furthermore, as we shall examine below, the propaganda increasingly identified the patriarchal figure of the sovereign, *ñande rubichaguasu*, President López, with the life and existence of the *ñane retã* itself. The gendered semantics of the vernacular depicted dutiful sons and daughters of the patria paying obligatory tribute to the dual patriarchs of *ñane retã* and sovereign alike, out of love and for protection.³⁴ Contradistinction with savages of the

³³I develop the theme of the wartime newspapers transcending permeable barriers between print and speech in Huner, “Toikove Ñane Retã.” Aníbal Orué Pozzo emphasizes the mutually reinforcing influences of the spoken and written word in Guaraní, *Oralidad y escritura en Paraguay: Comunicación, antropología, e historia* (Asunción: Arandurã Editorial, 2002). For an overview of the wartime Paraguayan press, see Víctor Simón Bovier, “El periodismo combatiente del Paraguay durante la Guerra de la Triple Alianza,” *Historia Paraguaya* 12 (1967-68): 47-87. For a more recent interpretive review, see Heríb Caballero Campos and Cayetano Ferreira Segovia, “El periodismo de Guerra en el Paraguay, (1864-1870),” *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos* 6 (2006).

³⁴“25 de Diciembre,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 26 December 1867; “24 de Julio,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 24 July 1867; “Gloria y jubilo del 16 de Octubre,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 17 October 1867. The often used expression

frontier—now conflated with depictions of diabolical foreign armies invading sacred soil—reinforced the old sense of a Christian community, under assault by unbelievers.³⁵

Nationalism was turning into the primary focus of Christian faith and works. “After God,” proposed the Guaraní-language periodical *Cacique Lambare*, “the greatest things are *ñande Reta* and *ñande rubichagasu*.” Another message spoke of the Catholic God “wanting to lift *ñane retã* to the heavens like a brilliant, shining star.” Acts of patriotism were acts of piety, bringing divine blessings to a people.³⁶ The defense of the nation was also divinely sanctioned: *ohayhuva iPatria, omanova hese, oho derecho ybape, pero el otracionaba ohone anaretame*, “those that love their Patria, and die for it, go straight to heaven; those that betray it will go to hell.”³⁷ Prayers in mass reminded parishioners that fallen soldiers, “at the moment of their expiration likely received the reward of their works,” and prayers in the Guaraní-language publications were pronounced on behalf of *ñande reta defendehape*, “the defenders of the nation.”³⁸ The thousands braving death were compelled to imagine the consequence of nationhood beyond the grave.

Wartime stories and sermons turned to the creation of mythic-religious heroes. Like saintly objections of devotion, these figures could project a sense of national sovereignty and destiny deep back into time immemorial and into a supernatural domain. The title-character

tetã ra’y “sons of the patria” explicitly indicates that the “tetã” was masculine, incorporating the word used by fathers to refer to sons. Women use the separate expression *memby* to refer to their children.

³⁵“Cacique Lambare ha’e Ño Tadeo,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 8 August 1867. Also see discussion below.

³⁶See “Ñande retã,” as well as “Tory Guazu,” “Ñande retã defendehape” in *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 July 1867 for such formulations. Also see “Vencer o morir,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 10 November 1867; “Ocara ygua,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 12 December 1867; *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 8 August 1867.

³⁷“Misa de gracia,” *Cacique Lambare* (Asunción), 10 November 1867; “Ñande retã,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 July 1867.

³⁸Informe de Chamorro y Inocencio Gauto, 17 June 1865, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH vol. 391, n. 15 (II), foja 25-26.

of the newspaper, *Cacique Lambaré*, seemed the most radical concoction in this vein. The title was a clear allusion to the indigenous past, a celebration of nativism and mestizaje in the making, underscoring the wartime emergence of Guaraní as the patriotic national language.³⁹ Lambaré was the historic indigenous chieftain of local Guaraní peoples who initially fought and later made peace with the original Spanish conquerors and founders of Asunción in the sixteenth century. Popular memory of both his resistance and ultimate subordination was focused on the hill (visible from most quarters of the capital) that bore his name. The newspaper indulged in this memory and depicted his figurative resurrection from that hillside to salute the soldiers and the president of Paraguay in their Guaraní mother tongue. Lambaré recalled that he, too, defended *ñane retã* while resisting the *karai* from Spain and the savage Guaicuru. The timely resurrection of Lambaré anchored Paraguay's imperiled national existence in a primordial, anti-colonial past. "I am your ancestor," Lambaré proclaimed to Paraguayans of the beleaguered present.⁴⁰

The Lambaré elaborated in the wartime press resembled the patchwork of a colonial racial archetype with prevailing contemporary resonance. He spoke the creolized Guaraní vernacular with its many Hispanicisms. Moreover, while the character of Lambaré symbolized a combative native resistance to invaders, depictions of him most commemorated his decision to be baptized and "live among the Christians." The Spanish invaders of

³⁹See, in this regard, "El 'Cacique Lambaré,'" *El Centinela* (Asunción), 1 August 1867.

⁴⁰"Lambaré he'i," *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 July 1867. The work of Rebecca Earle, however, highlights that the celebration of "indianesque nationalism," especially among lettered creole elites, had clear precedent from during the independence wars in Argentina, Peru, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, done often to depict Spanish colonialism as a period of illegitimate usurpation and slavery and to project a national existence onto a pre-colonial, indigenous past. Even specific indigenous figures who had fought Spanish domination were extolled, and past indigenous peoples were celebrated as ancestors. See *The Return of the Native: Indians and Myth-making in Spanish America, 1810-1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), ch. 1 & 2. As Earle points out, this seems a clear manifestation of the "invention of tradition," as developed by Hobsbawm and Gellner.

yesteryear had at least brought the “banner of the holy cross,” while in the present the enemy invaded under “the banner of death and chains.” With the Spanish conquest, *Ñandejara*, “our Lord,” had accordingly saved and “liberated” Lambaré from error, so that his people could realize the prospects of “progress, civilization, and liberty.” The patriotic Lambaré of the 1860s had gone to heaven, content to see his descent “mixed with Spanish blood” and “living as *karai*”—Christians and white, in the prevailing connotation of the term. The chieftain had now returned from the dead promising intercession with God so that “Paraguay will live free of servitude.”⁴¹ The tentative appeals to indigenous pride, and even racial mixture, doubled back to affirm elements of old colonial sovereignty, spiritual conquest and dominion, as well as pure racial-religious archetypes.⁴² It all served to underscore the providential nature and spiritual destiny of the historic land and people of the *ñane retã*.

The resurrected Lambaré character went straight to work with blessings for the republic and a litany of praises for the current president. Who better than one mythic hero and savior to endorse another? “I heard from my grave,” the Cacique announced, “about the sage one that is now the great chief of *ñande reta*.” “I did many good things,” said the old hero, but the new one’s deeds were truly great. Francisco Solano López appeared clearly as the salvation of the *ñane retã*. Not by accident had the character and eponymous newspaper first appeared on 24 July, the presidential *santoara*, the day that had “brought Karai López, lifting *ore retã* [our patria] into the heavens.”⁴³ Saint’s day celebrations, prayers for the sovereign, and

⁴¹“Toicobe *ñande retã*,” and “Lambaré he’i,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 July 1867; “Cabichuí,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 22 August 1867.

⁴²Such ambiguity had precedent in the “indianesque nationalism” of independence-era creole elites as well, see Earle, *Return of the Native*, 40-43.

⁴³“Toicobe *ñande retã*,” “Julio 24,” “Lambaré he’i,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 July 1867.

deferential patriarchal language in Guaraní perfectly paralleled the Spanish-language versions.

Wartime hyperbole in both languages reached celestial heights. In the Guaraní especially, sermons and articles upheld *Tupã*, *ñane retã*, and *ñande ruvichaguasu* (God, our country, and our great superior) as a second holy trinity to be adored by patriotic Paraguayans.⁴⁴ Who could imagine the providential destiny of the *ñane retã* without Francisco Solano López at its head? His disappearance would imply the destruction of the patria in both political and religious terms. The president had been providentially appointed, prepared since boyhood to assume the task of leading the republic, and descriptions of him had evident messianic overtones. He was the leading soldier defending the country against enemies who had rejected the law of God and looked to enslave it. His awesome spiritual force alone portended the destruction of the invaders, often graphically imagined.⁴⁵ He spoke with the mouth of an angel. Dutiful subjects kissed his hands and feet.⁴⁶ Formulaic praise in Guaraní called him alternately “our father,” “our savior,” “our consolation,” “our hope,” “our life,” and “our liberty.” Citizen-subjects were helpfully portrayed praying to the divine and the Virgin for him. God spoke to him directly.⁴⁷

This discourse was reproducing the traditional terms of patriarchal, divine-right rule, only on amplified scale in a war for survival and still mixed with affirmations of republican faith.

⁴⁴“Ñande retã,” “Tory Guazu,” “Ñande retã defendehape,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 July 1867; “Vencer o morir,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 10 November 1867.

⁴⁵“12 Octubre,” “16 Octubre,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 October 1867; “Mariscal López,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 10 November 1867; “30 de Agosto,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 5 September 1867.

⁴⁶“25 de Diciembre,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 26 December 1867; “24 de Julio,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 24 July 1867; “Gloria y júbilo del 16 de Octubre,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 17 October 1867.

⁴⁷“16 Octubre,” *Cacique Lambaré*, 24 October 1867; “Mariscal López,” “Tomano mandi imitã rehebe,” *Cacique Lambaré*, 10 November 1867; “Tupasy función,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 22 August 1867.

One message in 1867 commemorating the anniversary of the last presidential election extolled it as the day *nambuaje ñande Jara volunta naproclamavo Presidente upe ha'e oseñalava ñandevé*, “we fulfilled the will of our Lord proclaiming President the one that [God] signaled to us,” a striking conflation of popular sovereignty and divine right. Guaraní song lyrics (not repeated what was song, but trying to shape it) confirmed that López had carried the unanimous vote of the people on that day.⁴⁸ “On that day heaven itself opened the eyes of our countrymen to seat Karai López on the presidential chair,” another piece offered, “for as our universal father, he must know how to love us.”⁴⁹

While excessive, the López cult was not exactly superfluous. In the circumstances of war, the legitimacy of the government was under assault. The allied invaders had proclaimed Francisco Solano López a tyrant, and his overthrow was one of explicit objectives of the alliance. The allies used Paraguayan spies to spread whispers of sedition to encourage doubt about López’s leadership.⁵⁰ Meanwhile the doubts articulated among Paraguayans before the war had not gone away. The frenetic wartime praise of López responded to old doubts and preempted new ones.⁵¹ With the prospect of conquest and destruction, both personal and collective, the near-messianic cult of the president continued to exact consent from Paraguayans by promising that the fate of the nation was in God’s hands and warning that salvation depended on their obedience to the president.

⁴⁸“16 Octubre,” *Cacique Lambaré*, 24 October 1867; “16 de Octubre,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 16 October 1867.

⁴⁹“Cuatia ñe’ẽ Cacique Lambaré pegua,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 October 1867.

⁵⁰See the testimony of Facundo Cabral and Castor Ansoasteguí in *Declaraciones de soldados rendidos en Uruguayana, Paso de la Patria, 1866*, ANA-SCJ, foja 21-38, 62-68. Also see, *Informe de Ramon Marecos*, 10 March 1866, *Correspondencia de Villa Rica*, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 784-85.

⁵¹On the role of nineteenth-century caudillos filling a vacuum of patriarchal political power left in the wake of imperial collapse and their reliance on lettered handlers to help build their followings, see Chasteen, *Heroes on Horseback*; Ariel de la Fuente, *Children of Facundo: Caudillo and Gaucho Insurgency during the Argentine State-formation Process (La Rioja, 1853-1870)* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Salvatore, *Wandering Paysanos*; Myers, *Orden y virtud*.

Taxes and Suicide in War

Such exactions of obedience and faith had compounding material implications as well. The appropriation of bodies and labor for the state were intensifying, and so were coerced appropriations of wealth. The exercise of state administration and authority over the spiritual economy of the tithe was precedent for local officials to requisition much household agricultural production and labor for the “sacred cause.” The contract market for tithe collection previously sustained by merchants and retailers had completely collapsed since late 1864. Local commandants and magistrates now collected the tithe and channeled produce, goods, and animals directly to the government and its armies. Already in mid-1865 local authorities in numerous pueblos were remitting leather sacks of corn, beans, rice, and manioc flour from tithe contributions to the main army encampment at Cerro León.⁵² Collected foodstuffs and cattle from summer harvests and livestock holdings in the heartland and the northern reaches subsequently contributed to supply the warfront in the south. Officials in Salvador, for instance, responded to orders from the government in July 1867 to expedite the collection of most of the winter harvest tithe for transport to Asunción. The orders also specified that they were to retain the gathered cotton to have undergarments sewn for soldiers.⁵³ In late 1868, with Paraguayan defensive lines having collapsed in the south, officials in the heartland pueblos of Villa del Rosario, Ypane, Quindy, Carajao, and Caacupe were scrambling to send produce they had collected to a new provisional capital in Luque.⁵⁴

⁵²Informe de recaudación de diezmos, Guarambare, April 1865, ANA-SNE vol. 2819; Informe de recaudación de diezmos, Santa Rosa, August 1865, ANA-SNE vol. 2830; Informes de recaudación de diezmos, Ita (October 1865), San Estansilao (June 1865), Ajos (April 1865), ANA-SNE vol. 3192.

⁵³Informe, 15 July 1867, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 692.

Problems of transport due to muddy roads, shallow rivers, and sickly oxen, as well as inconsistent collection itself, often complicated these deliveries.⁵⁵ Suspended though was the formal upkeep of separate tithe coffers for the church. The republic was now requiring the everything for the war effort.

The state intensified its requisition of labor and domestic wealth from inhabitants on the expanding premises of pious work and religious offerings. Local labor drafts for work on state fields and plantations complemented the production from tithe contributions in this regard. Militia commandants and magistrates maintained extensive counts of all fields planted by residents in their districts, with the prospect of requisitioning their harvests.⁵⁶ By July 1866, local authorities in the countryside, on orders from Asunción, had gathered residents of pueblos to encourage more agricultural work, by moonlight if necessary. Officials in Villa Rica admonished families “that in all parts of the world it was necessary to work to live,” and all the more so, obviously, in wartime. In Concepción, the commandant and magistrate gathered people in the plaza to hear that message as well.⁵⁷ Reports of the thousands of crop rows planted in individual pueblos in successive months suggest the heavy

⁵⁴Informes de recaudación de diezmos, Caraguatay (October 1868), Carapegua (November 1868), Caacupe (October 1868), Carajao (November 1868), Quindi (October 1868), Ypane (October 1868), Villa del Rosario (October 1868), ANA-SNE vol. 2893.

⁵⁵Cooney details specifically the transportation problems that plagued the domestic agricultural production to sustain the war effort, “Economy and Manpower: Paraguay at War,” *I Die with My Country*, 23-43. For further example, see Informes, 7 December; 15 December 1866, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 683, 685.

⁵⁶Informe, 8 September 1868, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 697-98; Informe, 3 August 1868, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1489; Informe, 31 July 1868, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 394.

⁵⁷Informe, 30 July 1866, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n. 1, foja 794; Informe, 31 July 1866, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1464.

moral pressures applied to realize this labor. At the same time, however, local authorities warned of droughts and pests that foretold limited yields and growing frustrations.⁵⁸

Parish priests participated in the effort to stimulate production.⁵⁹ One prominent depiction of folk piety in the wartime press was the image of an elder campesino working day and night to cultivate his crops, avoiding idle gossip in the fields and resting only to attend mass on Sunday to pray for the ñane retã and the president. Such dedication fulfilled the mutual commands of God and “sovereign,” specified one such depiction in *Cacique Lambaré*, and provided claims to virtue and patriotism.⁶⁰ Calls for patriotic field work (in addition to the sewing of undergarments, chiripás, and ponchos for soldiers) were sometimes directed toward women, as well.⁶¹

Women had been contributing much to the war effort since its inception. The first months had brought pledges of wealth that included women of means promising portions of their dowries for the republic. Internal household pressures seemed manifest here, with husbands likely coercing pledges as measures of familial honor. Sometimes local authorities solicited women’s money contributions directly, going to their doors for patriotic donations, as in Pilar during January 1865.⁶² In such efforts, officials and leading residents of various pueblos organized notably large subscription campaigns, often done nominally for families of fallen

⁵⁸Informes, 30 September 1867; July 1868, Correspondencia de Villa Rica, ANA-SH vol. 404, n.1, foja 811, 815.

⁵⁹Carta pastoral del Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios, Paso de la Patria, 23 February 1866, AAA; Informe de Francisco Espinosa al comandante de Concepción, 15 November 1866, Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 377.

⁶⁰“Cacique Lambaré ha’e Ño Tadeo,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 8 August 1867.

⁶¹Informe, 20 March 1866, Correspondencia de Mbocayaty, ANA-SH vol. 391 n. 15 (II), foja 36-37.

⁶²Protesta patriótica de Damaso Sosa (17 September 1864), Protesta patriótica de José Miguel Milesi (18 September 1864), Correspondencia de San Pedro, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 296-98; Informe, 18 January 1865, Correspondencia de Pilar, ANA-SH vol. 397, n. 1 (II), foja 2092.

soldiers as well as for hospitals for the wounded. The old Indian pueblo of Altos saw over five hundred residents, including some fifty women, submit at least a coin or two toward the support of wartime orphans and widows in February 1865. Over four hundred contributors contributed just one real, reflective of the modest cash holdings of most people. The subscription raised 110 pesos total. Meanwhile, the parish priest, magistrate, and militia officers—those carrying the title of “citizen” in the contribution rolls—had donated up to five pesos and thereby increasing public pressure for all right-thinking parishioners to make an offering.⁶³

The Spanish empire had had a long history of patriotic exactions in time of imperial war, whereby parish priests in even remote villages collected cash offerings as well as contributions in kind in the name of God and king. These measures had only grown in frequency during the war-torn decades of the late colonial period.⁶⁴ They thus supplied an influential precedent for the exaction of similar patriotic donations for a republic that had preserved so many of the old ways of governing. By February 1867, in the pueblos of San Juan Bautista and Tacuarí, not far from the battlefronts, leading male residents and authorities were advancing contributions from twenty-five pesos to forty pesos for a subscription for army hospitals. The priest in Tacuari, for his part, managed to pledge sixteen pesos toward the effort. The collections gathered nearly seven hundred pesos between the two pueblos, and the overwhelming majority of contributors in each village were women.

⁶³Donaciones para viudas y huérfanos, Altos, 1865, ANA-SNE vol. 3192. Also see, Informe de las autoridades de Horqueta, 11 January 1865, ANA-SNE vol. 3074, n. 162.

⁶⁴Marichal, *Bankruptcy of Empire*, ch. 3 & 4.

Women of means made sizeable offerings, from fifteen to forty pesos, while the humble could spare only one or two *reales* for the cause.⁶⁵

As the war advanced, women were bearing exactions that drew on increasingly intimate sources of domestic wealth and religiosity. In March and April 1867, authorities in the pueblos were forming commissions to elicit women's donation of their valued keepsakes and jewelry. By design, these campaigns played out as dramatic gestures of female patriotism, promoted in the wartime press. They were also frequently familial affairs. Notaries recorded receipt of each donation with names of contributors under the heading: "Offering of the daughters of the patria to the Supreme Chief of the Republic, for the heroic defense of the national cause." Often mothers, daughters, and sisters contributed together. Sometimes the notary forged a signature of a donating matron, to simulate her foray into the public sphere. The receipts detailed the wedding bands, rings, chains, and bracelets given, as well as the weight in precious metals, gold and silver, each piece had. Local officials evidently had their commercial balances on hand to weigh each submission as women entered the churches and commandant headquarters to make their offerings. Dozens of households participated in prominent pueblos like San Pedro. Women of elite families made sure to contribute collections of ten to fifteen items. Most contributors, though, managed just one or two valuables, including one poor woman who offered some gold dust that "did not weigh anything." In another case, two slaves donated a collection of jewelry under the name of their female owner. Such exactions were again registering their pervasive social reach. But the majority of rich and poor alike were also giving, most prominently in these submissions, cherished religious pendants—their rosaries and crosses. It is crucial to recall here the

⁶⁵Donaciones para las hospitals de sangre, Tacuarai y San Juan Bautista, 1867, ANA-SNE vol. 1739.

commercial value, and inherent worth in metal, these keepsakes could hold in a household, especially even during a time of war. Rosaries, in particular, could be quite large—to be hoisted over a shoulder—studded with valuable stones, and bearing a weighty crucifix of gold. Crosses were often cast in silver. Even a worn metal cross placed on the donation table with calloused hands and dirty fingernails could constitute a significant sacrifice for the republic and its “sacred cause.”⁶⁶ The regime accumulated the donated treasures, tangible signs of its moral authority. Some were melted down to make a commemorative sword for the president.

The state could not afford to let go of any manifestation of its moral authority, apparently. Indeed, it is curious that during war government officials still concerned themselves with adjudicating cases of suicide. Less surprising is the continued incidence of suicide during this time. Reversals of fortune in a precarious time—a dead horse, a broken arm, a chronic illness that did not go away—seemed to convince already disrupted individuals to take their lives. Magistrates upheld the protocol of interrogations into the piety and religious convictions of victims, burials in profane areas, and consultations with curates.⁶⁷ In one striking instance, an old sick man, Ramón Troche, who had hanged himself from a tree in the eastern pueblo of San Estansilao in April 1868, was buried where he was found, with a cross marking the spot, but the attending judge had questions about how to

⁶⁶See, for example, *Recibos de donaciones de alhajas por las hijas de la patria*, San Pedro, 1867, ANA-SNE vol. 1740; and similar for Villa Occidental, ANA-SNE vol. 2427. On the commercial value of religious keepsakes, icons, and pendants, even during war, see *Causa judicial contra el esclavo Ciriaco por robo*, Quiquío, 1866-67, ANA-SNE vol. 1720; *Proceso a la esclava Magdalena por robo de la Iglesia de Encarnación*, Asunción, 1867, ANA-SCJ vol. 1525, n. 5, foja 128-203.

⁶⁷See, for example, *Sumario sobre el suicidio del esclavo Maximo Santa Cruz*, Caacupe, 1866, ANA-SCJ vol. 1488, n. 1, foja 1-17; *Sumario sobre el suicidio del pardo Nicolas*, Lambare, 1866, ANA-SCJ vol. 1624 (II), n. 3, foja 1-7; *Sumario sobre el suicidio de Catalina Ibarra*, Concepción, 1867, ANA-SCJ vol. 1752, n. 14, foja 185-89; *Sumario sobre el suicidio de Juan Andrés Araujo*, Acahay, 1868, ANA-SCJ vol. 1752, n. 13, foja 179-83; *Sumario sobre el suicidio de Martina Miranda*, Itape, 1867, ANA-SCJ vol. 1752, n. 12, foja 173-78.

proceed. The dossier of the case made its way to the provisional capital, Luque, where, amazingly, given the crumbling of the republic around his ears, Vice President Francisco Sánchez took the time to review it personally. As allied armies advanced in his direction, Sánchez addressed the procedural issues and sent the case back to San Estansilao. With the vice-presidential stipulations in hand, the magistrate confirmed the ruling of a profane burial and, in late October 1868, when families had already begun to flee the area, he completed the paperwork with a notarized act before witnesses and removed the cross that marked the grave.⁶⁸ In the far north, magistrates were taking record of suicides in their districts only weeks before allied armies occupied Asunción.⁶⁹

How to explain such an institutional commitment? Suicide, we must recall, was viewed as resistance to the state. The magistrate of Tobatí made that clear in condemning the treasonous suicide of the old militia sergeant, Pedro Quiñonez. Similarly, in 1867, the attending judge in Itá interrogated neighbors as to whether another man who hanged himself had “any contrary sentiment toward the good of the Patria or the Supreme Government.” And if suicide was resistance, it could not be tolerated, less so in 1868 than ever before, in fact, with the state now desperate for the commitment of bodies and souls. The bodies of suicides could not be imprisoned or executed, unfortunately, but punishment could at least be inflicted on the suicide’s soul.⁷⁰

Republican War

⁶⁸Sumario sobre el suicidio de Ramon Troche, San Estansilao, 1868, ANA-SCJ vol. 1509, n. 4, foja 77-94.

⁶⁹Informe del suicidio de María Belen Nuñez, Horqueta, 1868, ANA-SCJ vol. 1752, n. 21, foja 290-91.

⁷⁰Sumario sobre el suicidio de Mauricio Candia, Ita, 1867, ANA-SCJ vol. 1752, n. 6, foja 78-85.

Another seeming contradiction: on the level of regime discourse, the war itself had turned increasingly into a republican exercise. Like its commitment to punishing suicide, the tenacious the regime's insistence on the republican character of its "sacred cause" is telling, indeed.

Paraguayan animosity toward Brazil went back centuries, and the ideologues of the López regime had updated that old animosity by contrasting the Paraguayan republic, land of liberty, against the Brazilian Empire, land of monarchy and slavery. The inconsistencies are obvious, since Paraguayans also held slaves, but never mind. In some ways, the Paraguayan vision was persuasive, because it recycled elements of anti-colonial, anti-monarchic rhetoric heard throughout Spanish America since the wars of independence. The post-colonial generations of Spanish America, elite and popular classes alike, understood republics to be the proper form of government for the New World.⁷¹ The López regime thus sought to align its cause with contemporary struggles elsewhere in the hemisphere—the resistance to the French intervention in Mexico, the Northern cause in the U.S. Civil War, and the beginning of pro-independence insurgency in Cuba. When the South American conflict turned decidedly against Paraguay, resistance against foreign invasion was an important cause

⁷¹For the defining republicanism among Spanish American creole elites during the independence wars in South America and the threat perceived in monarchical Brazil, Thomas Millington, *Colombia's Military and Brazil's Monarchy: Undermining the Republican Foundations of South American Independence* (Westport, Conn. Greenwood Press, 1996). For incidence of popular resonance of this anti-monarchial, anti-Brazilian stance, see Radding, *Landscapes of Power and Identity*, 283-84. On the somewhat fluid nature of popular royalism and republicanism during the independence wars, see Méndez, *The Plebian Republic*. Prominent manifestations of anti-imperial, anti-European republicanism from mid-century emerge, of course, in Mexico during the Reform wars and the French imperial invasion, see Brian Hammet, *Juárez* (London: Longman, 1994), 166-75. For anti-Brazilian folk republicanism in the Argentine provinces during the Triple Alliance War, see Ariel de la Fuente, "Federalism and Opposition to the Paraguayan War in the Argentine Interior: La Rioja, 1865-67," *I Die with My Country*, 140-53. For a contemporary formulation of a geo-political, American-based republicanism by a lettered Chilean elite, see, J. V. Lastarria, *La América* (Gante: Imprenta de Eug. Vanderhaeghan, 1867) .

internally, but anti-imperial, republican discourse remained the regime's primary bid for international support.⁷²

Forget Argentines and Uruguayans. Brazilians were fiends—slavish savages who made republican blood boil. Gregorio Benítez, the main Paraguayan diplomatic agent in Europe, for example, even in his personal letters, basked in the righteousness of the “republican cause,” the “democratic cause,” the “beautiful (even Holy) American cause” of Paraguay while embroiled against “the slavocratic empire of South America.”⁷³ Within Paraguay newspapers used both words and pictures to construct the image of republican soldiers of the patria versus servile Brazilian monarchists.⁷⁴ The Paraguayan state had long been exhorting people to fulfill the patriarchal obligations of “a good Christian and good citizen,” as we have seen. These calls of citizenship and liberty were now colored by wartime vitriol. Brazil supplied the bulk of troops for the allied forces prosecuting the war, and the majority of those now invading the country were of African descent. A common epithet described these invaders: *kamba*, the old Guaraní slur for a black slave. The wartime newspapers of the regime directed the prevailing racialized tension and derision of servitude in Paraguayan society against all Brazilians. Jeers of *kamba*—made often, in particular, by women who were more politically engaged because of wartime exactions, sermons, and sacrifice—

⁷²I develop these themes in Huner, “Saving Republics: General Martin Thomas McMahon, the Paraguayan War, and the Fate of the Americas,” *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America*, (electronic journal), 7, no. 3 (March 2010).

⁷³Gregorio Benítez a Carlos Saguier, Paris, 7 August 1866; Benítez a Alberdi, Paris, 22 October 1866; Benítez a Alberdi, Paris, 26 November 1869, BNA-CO, PGB.

⁷⁴See, for example, “Libertad o muerte,” *El Centinela* (Asunción), 8 August 1867; “Glosa,” *El Centinela* (Asunción), 15 August 1867; “Situación de la triple alianza,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 9 September 1867; “Venta de la republicas del Plata,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 3 June 1867; “La guerra de la triple alianza contra el Paraguay,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 10 June 1867. See the lithograph in this same number which illustrates the republican rhetoric in the newspaper. Other poignant lithographs depicting republican themes in *Cabichuí* include: 15 July 1867; 24 July 1867; 16 December 1867; 5 August 1867.

became common patriotic invective. The press of moral coercion remained strong and pervasive in this strain of republicanism, so based in obligations to God and family, even toward the bitter end of the conflict.

Kamba and Ñande Liberta

Racialized invective heated wartime republican passions. The regime concentrated propagandistic ire on the empire of Brazil as the republic's primary ideological enemy, given its monarchy, but also because of its association with slavery and blackness. Again, Gregorio Benítez, as example, allegedly despised the widespread slavery still practiced in Brazil, but his disgust projected derogatory blackness onto the entire country. He called the Brazilians the "black imperialists," the "black empire," and the "empire of the blacks," occasionally applying the racist term *macaco* (monkey). He often employed the mocking titles of "slavecratic empire" and "slavecrats."⁷⁵ The Brazilian military campaign, he told a colleague, had "for its primary objective the servile subjugation of the peoples of the Plata to the pretensions of the Empire of blacks that scandalizes the American continent."⁷⁶ In his eyes, the fight against "black imperialists" gave Paraguayan soldiers their clearest claim to the title "republican and free."⁷⁷ The linked pejoratives of imperial monarchy, slavery, and blackness for Brazil, in opposition to alleged freedom of Paraguay, informed the propaganda battles that Benítez helped to sustain on behalf of the regime in the political and economic centers of

⁷⁵See, for example, Benítez a Carlos Saguier, Paris, 7 August 1866; Benítez a Juan Bautista Alberdi, Paris, 6 August 1866; Benítez a Alberdi, Paris, 28 November 1866; Benítez a Franciso Solano López, Paris, 24 December 1866; Benítez a Alberdi, Paris, 17 September 1868; Benítez a Martin McMahon, Paris, 11 November 1869, BNA-CO, PGB.

⁷⁶Benítez a Don S. de Santa Cruz, Paris, 6 August 1868, BNA-CO, PGB.

⁷⁷Benítez a Alberdi, Paris, 19 November 1867, BNA-CO, PGB.

the North Atlantic—London, Paris, Brussels, New York, and Washington.⁷⁸ Moreover, these pejoratives gained currency from pulpit and newspaper in the countryside and near the trenches in Paraguay itself.

Men and women near the front heard to calls to defend their *ñane retã* against foreign invaders characterized entirely, with the derogatory word *kamba*, as servile black soldiers of imperial monarchy. The crass term *kamba* served as the most common name for the whole allied army, in obvious reference to the largely Brazilian soldiers of color that filled its ranks. And it was precisely in contrast with the despised black and servile character of *kamba* that the prose and verse in printed Guaraní was also crafting calls to defend *ñande liberta*, the naturalized expression for “our liberty.” Here the official rhetoric touting the Paraguayan soldier as the “citizen of a free republic” defending against the “slave of a monarchy” was incorporated into the wartime experience of Paraguayans.⁷⁹ Mobilizing the racialized metaphor of slavery to construct a sense of freedom echoed discourse prevalent throughout the Atlantic world.

Yet beyond just recognizing rhetorical devices, it is crucial to further understand how such expressions of republic and liberty, as articulated in the vernacular, remained anchored in familiar questions of personal dignity and the everyday exercise of power. The slur *kamba*, in particular, conjured up a steady undercurrent of racialized tension present internally to

⁷⁸See, here, the wartime, pro-Paraguayan writings of the Argentine intellectual Juan Bautista Alberdi, who worked closely with Benítez, *Los intereses argentinos en la guerra del Paraguay con el Brasil* (Paris, 1865) and “El imperio Brasil ante la democracia de América,” *Obras Selectas de Juan Bautista Alberdi* ed. Joaquín V. González, v. 6 (Buenos Aires, 1920), 369-427. For a list and description of these polemics, see Ricardo Miguel Zuccherino, *Juan Bautista Alberdi* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Depalma, 1987) 183-195. For a discussion of Alberdi’s activities and philosophy during the war, see Mayer *Alberdi y su tiempo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universal de Buenos Aires, 1963), 675-764.

⁷⁹Huner, “*Toikove Ñane Retã!*,” and “Cantando la república: la movilización escrita del habla popular en las trincheras del Paraguay, 1867-1868,” *Paginas de guarda*, Buenos Aires, (November 2007):115-32.

Paraguayan society. And to appreciate the force of the racial epithet we must view how this undercurrent played out in situations from before the war. We have discussed the persistence of caste hierarchy in the social imagination of Paraguayans, particularly with the growing claims on whiteness by the bulk of the population and the prevailing importance of such claims in the formation of a national clergy. These contentions reinforced affiliation with a Christian realm, in contrast with the notion of a savage wilderness beyond, as well as against the perceived stains of social blackness. Vulgar terms for blackness and Indian-ness accordingly persisted, with *kamba*, especially, and so did accompanying legal designations. Not everyone could escape those designations *pardo*, *mulato*, *negro*, or *indio*, whether in official documents or in the daily usage of friends and neighbors. But the strictures of rigid categorization had long since given way to a discernible flux, and negotiating that flux created undercurrents of social tension, not among well-defined groups, but rather, among individuals. Such tension was personal and situational rather than systematic and general. Those clearly labeled “black” and “Indian” faced it often in sudden moments of sharp rebuke and physical punishment, or more diffusely in legal disputes.⁸⁰ People of dark complexions were sometimes termed “hispanicized blacks,” signaling at once their color and certain cultural attributes, such dress, that bolstered pretensions to higher status.⁸¹ These tensions weighed heavily on those claiming whiteness, because their pretensions could be imperiled by public insults alleging stained lineage and dishonorable behavior.

So much rode on reputation among neighbors, peers, and authorities. The domestic laborer Miguel Vicente Vera from the village of Piraju, for instance, had declared himself

⁸⁰See the 1859 disenso case, Causa de Marcos Presentado contra el pretense matrimonio de José Villalva y María Rosa Presentado, ANA-SNE vol. 2188.

⁸¹For examples, see Borrador de la correspondencia de Eugenio López, 25 August 1858, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1138, and as discussed in Telesca, *Tras los expulsos*, 182-92.

“white by lineage,” but his status seems to have been far from secure. In 1863, he had worked along with a slave, a free pardo, and a Frenchman in the house of their common patron Don Juan Manuel Pedroso. One Sunday afternoon in July, Vera and his free pardo companion, Bernardino Frasquerí, were downing drinks of caña in a nearby pulquería. Bernardino got considerably drunk and, going to the house of his patron, proceeded to attack him in a dispute over money. Vera went to the assistance of his patron, attempting to subdue his friend. The Frenchman lent a hand, tying and gagging, Bernardino. Fearing for the life of his pardo friend, Vera defended him. Authorities arrested both Bernardino and Vera, and in the subsequent legal testimony of all involved, Vera was called *pardo*, *negro*, and perhaps *kamba*.⁸² Vera could not escape these public imputations of blackness despite his claim on whiteness.

Similar flux and uneasiness had accompanied contentions over whiteness in the old Indian pueblos, suppressed in legal definition by the late 1840s. Some residents of Ypane during the early 1850s had been comfortable in their assumed status of superiority among others whose origins and surnames otherwise raised doubts. Desiderio Fleitas, a leading musician in the chorus of the local parish, seemed fairly confident in that regard. One Sunday afternoon in January 1853, Fleitas returned to his house to rest after participating in the celebration of mass. An impromptu gathering of relatives and acquaintances formed on the premises and began making noise. Someone was playing a harp. Others started up a game of cards. Jokes were exchanged, and the laughter increased the racket. Among the group were old residents of the pueblo who, along with Fleitas, now presumed a sense of whiteness, if tentatively so, while there also was a one Caró Aracú, whose reputation for insolence and

⁸²Causa judicial contra el pardo libre Bernardino Frasquerí por atacar y amenazar muerte al D. Juan Manuel Pedroso, Piraju, 1863-65, ANA-SNE vol. 1646, foja 1-32.

anger made him plainly an *indio* in his neighbors' eyes. The disturbance of the gathering had irritated Felitas. He rose from bed, prepared a maté, and stepped outside full of rancor. He snarled words that tarred all the noisemakers with the same brush and, as his son-in-law later testified, failed to recognize the presence of white people in the group. He apparently had yelled, among other things: "Get up you old Indians and get out of here, or else I'll have to whip you." Everyone went quiet, except Caró, who challenged Fleitas's right to change "the colors" of his companions. Fleitas slung his hot mate gourd at Caró, who drew a knife and stabbed Felitas before fleeing.⁸³

The slur of Fleitas had dashed in an instant the pretensions of whiteness among peers. Caró, without such pretensions, reacted even more to use of *indio* as a term of opprobium. He seems to have been a desperate individual. On the run, with blood on his hands, he fled to the nearby woods and happened upon two women whom he assaulted sexually. A search party caught him in the act.⁸⁴

These two stories illustrate the tensions that wartime propagandists sought to project outward against a racialized invading "horde" a few years afterward. The racial invective was mutual. Paraguayans in the conflict often learned that the invading enemy referred to them as savage *indios*. Captured Paraguayan soldiers who had escaped enemy lines related how allied forces considered them "worse than the Indians of the pampas" and emphasized their own civilizing mission in the war. Paraguayan rhetoric about the sacred cause of a Christian republic did take some pressure off pretensions of collective whiteness.⁸⁵ The patriotic

⁸³Causa judicial contra Carlos Aracú sobre heridas inferidas con cuchillo a Desiderio Fleitas y violación de dos mujeres, Ypane, 1853, ANA-SNE vol. 1642, foja 1-13, 27-28.

⁸⁴Ibid., foja 14-57.

celebration of Cacique Lambaré, the ancestral Indian chieftain redeemed by his conversion, was significant in that regard. But internal tensions were allayed mostly by projecting them against the enemy, allowing recognized *indios* like Caró, as well as *pardos* like Bernardino, and even, perhaps, some slaves who had been impressed into the Paraguayan army—to make claims of personal dignity and more fully enter the fold of a Catholic republic by fighting despised *kamba* invaders.

The racial ridicule in the Guaraní wartime press reveals how reflexively it came to authors and listeners alike. The verses composed for song, especially, applied the mockery with enormous relish. They repeatedly decried the filth and stink of the *kamba* and resorted to animalistic depictions of them, typically as howler monkeys—the roaring *karaja* of the nearby forests—but also as swine and other livestock. The songs scorned the bright, glowing eyes protruding from *kamba* heads. Bugs allegedly infested their bodies.⁸⁶ They were starving and naked and stuck in the mud, reduced to eating toads, crocodiles, and sucking leather and emitting a rancid smell, as other satirical pieces put it.⁸⁷ Even vultures refused to eat dead *kamba* bodies from the stench and disease. The *kamba* constantly defecated and

⁸⁵Declaraciones de soldados rendidos en Uruguayana, Paso de la Patria, 1866, ANA-SCJ, foja 21-38. For an explicit presumption of collective whiteness for Paraguayans, see “El artículo negro,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 16 June 1867.

⁸⁶*Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 13 May 1867; “Etopeya macacuna,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 9 December 1867; “Pobres Negros,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 5 December 1867; “El ‘Cabichuí,’” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 17 June 1867; “3 de Octubre” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú); “Gratulación a ‘Cabichuí,’” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 16 May 1867; “Caxias y su ahijado,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 19 setpiembre 1867; “El ‘Cabichuí’ a ‘Lambaré,’” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 23 December 1867; “Caxias y sus negros,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 2 January 1868; “Festejo a los macacos,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 9 January 1868; “Cierva,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 24 February 1868; “Huy veve,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción) 24 July 1867; “Curupaytype Lambaré aco mburahéi,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción) 22 August 1867; “Mburahéi osẽ ba’e ybytyrusu gui,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción) 5 September 1867.

⁸⁷“Lambaré ñemongueta cue jobá he’yi cuéra ndibe,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 5 September 1867; “Cuatia veve ha ne mo’ãtarey hára ñu gui ouba,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción) 26 September 1867.

pissed on themselves from fear, the verses roared.⁸⁸ One article in *Cacique Lambaré* seemed to laugh with the promise to tear open wide *kamba revikua* “kamba assholes” with stingers, bayonets, and arrows.⁸⁹ Song and prose also took exceptional delight in imagining the exercise of violence against kamba. “While blood flows through our veins,” a lyric pronounced, “we shall keep on killing the kamba.”⁹⁰ More verses lauded battlefields littered with kamba corpses and described the supposed massacre of some four hundred kamba in one fight as the sowing of fields that promised a bountiful harvest.⁹¹ Typically, in such depictions, the devil appeared to carry the dead kamba off to hell.

The insults aligned the invaders with diabolic forces. Verse and prose aggregated the affronts against the enemy with charges like *aña kamba*, *aña memby*, *tembiguái aña* and *aña rembiguái*, stressing evil origins and servitude to the devil.⁹² These were the sort of aspersions known to sting like hot spurs from a fire in Paraguay, and lyrics poured forth descriptions of godless invaders who never prayed and decrying that *los kamba ky’a Tupame ma ojapo guerra*, “the dirty blacks had made war on God,” upon desecrating churches in the countryside. Again, the kamba were going to hell to receive their “universal judgment” from

⁸⁸“Huy veve: Ñorairo guazu,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 5 septiembre 1867; “La triple alianza cantada por un soldado en la Guardia Bomba,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 20 May 1867; “De Chichi al ‘Cabichuí,’” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 3 June 1867.

⁸⁹“Los kamba,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 July 1867; “Mburahéi osẽ ba’e ybytyrusu gui,” *Cacique Lambaré*.

⁹⁰“Toicobe ñane Retã, Lambaré mburhéi tory,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 October 1867. Also see in this regard, “Jatayba,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 10 November 1867.

⁹¹“Caba-aguara al Cabichuí,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 26 September 1867; “Lo de siempre,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 9 September 1867; “Bien van los negros,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 19 December 1867; “Los sembrados de nuestra caballería,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 30 December 1867.

⁹²See, for example, “Refriega de los macacos,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 15 August 1867; “Ataque de los rabilargos,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 22 July 1867; “Los globos,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 15 July 1867; “Etopeya macacuna,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 9 December 1867; “Al Caba aguara,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 30 September 1867; “Gloria y júbilo del 16 de Octubre,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 17 October 1867; “Lambaré ñemongueta cue jobá he’ýi cuéra ndibe,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 5 September 1867.

the Christian God.⁹³ Articles spoken as sermons likewise denounced the armed aggression of the Brazilian empire as demonstration of its rejection of the law of God.⁹⁴ “From the bellows of hell,” another song went, “came, *upe aña Monarca kue*, that devil zombie monarch to stain the world.”⁹⁵ Such depictions compared Pedro II, the Brazilian emperor, to the biblical king Herod, for sending forces to conquer the Paraguayan republic and its messiah-like president—and Bartolome Mitre and Venancio Flores, the leaders of Argentina and Uruguay respectively, to Judas, for selling out their republics to a monarchy.⁹⁶ The slur *kamba* had always carried a connotation of distance from God in the old caste logic of Spanish colonialism. Extending this logic, it now supplied a notion of condemned servants of Satan, expression of a rejection of the divine, comparable only to Jews, Arabs, and, most concretely, savage *indios* of the wilderness, in classic contrast to the alleged salvation of Christian civilization enjoyed by the republic of Paragauy.⁹⁷

Diabolical forces of dark invaders were threatening *ñande liberta*, “our liberty,” a liberty understood as collective spiritual salvation won through Christ as a Catholic pueblo. One sermon-like piece in Guaraní attested that upon defending the law of God against the sins of

⁹³“A los negros,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 25 November 1867; “Impiedad y castigo de los negros,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 14 October 1867; “Como andan los negros,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 14 November 1867.

⁹⁴“Peru mokoi ha’e hemiguái cuéra,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 October 1867; “Tembiapo cue porã,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 10 November 1867.

⁹⁵“La triple alianza y su merecido,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 15 September 1867.

⁹⁶“Tomano mandi imitã rehebe,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 10 November 1867; “Noticia porã,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 8 August 1867; “Al Galgui-Manchego,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 23 September 1867; “Caba-aguara al Cabichuí,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 26 September 1867.

⁹⁷“Tembiapo cue porã,” *Cacique Lambaré*, (Asunción), 10 November 1867; “Peru mokói ha’e hembiguái cuéra,” *Cacique Lambaré*, (Asunción), 24 October 1867; “Póra,” *Cacique Lambaré*, (Asunción), 5 September 1867; “Tory, tory, tory,” *Cacique Lambaré*, (Asunción), 22 August 1867; “Cuñava pe,” *Cacique Lambaré*, (Asunción), 12 December 1867.

Brazil, Paraguay was “defending its liberty and the liberty of all Americans.”⁹⁸ Another elaborated that those “who die for their nation, on earth will have the civic crown placed on their head, the sash of patriotism, and they will rise to heaven for having gloriously fulfilled their duty.”⁹⁹ The prospect of enslavement to an evil empire made vivid the spiritual threat reiterated ceaselessly from the pulpit since well before the conflict. The subsequent allied invasion of the homeland made the conflict about liberty of a more fundamental and visceral kind, a physical and spiritual threat to the *ñane retã*.

A physical threat to the *ñane retã* evoked the patriarchal authority that was supposed to defend it from harm. President López, the commander in chief, *ñande ru*, “our father,” was the very manifestation of this national independence.¹⁰⁰ President by popular election *and* divine mandate, he might be, yet the compulsion to follow him remained grounded in patriarchy. Moreover, the threat posed by the invading *kamba* had particularly dire implications in the patriarchal mindset: the ignominy of enslavement and servitude as conjured in the term *tembiguái*.

Sermons and verse repeatedly paired the words *tembiguái* and *kamba* in referring to the servile character of the enemy. The pairing evoked the links between practices of slavery and racial caste that were fused in the vernacular of Paraguayans. Still, the expression *tembiguái*, we must recall, also referred to a whole assortment of dependent-labor arrangements common to households in the Paraguayan countryside, from the single domestic slave to help in the home, to orphans and other unattached individuals destined to work as domestic

⁹⁸“Temiapo cue porã,” *Cacique Lambaré*.

⁹⁹“30 de agosto,” *Cacique Lambaré*, (Asunción), 5 September 1867.

¹⁰⁰“Julio 24,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 July 1867; “12 de Octubre,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 October 1867. “Sable de oro,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 12 December 1867. Also see discussion of the wartime hagiography of Francisco Solano López above.

servants, to hired field hands helping to tend cattle and crops. Quite simply, as Guaraní sermons and song stressed, the invading allied forces and the *kamba* threatened to make conquered Paraguayans into their household servants and slaves, a status that was vividly immediate and intimately abhorred. Articles stated explicitly that the enemy connived to “subjugate their labor.”¹⁰¹ The threat was not an idle or abstract one. Captured Paraguayans who had escaped allied lines returned with stories of fellow captives being sent to work as domestics and field hands, in the “station of servants, or better said, as slaves,” in the houses and estancias of allied officers.¹⁰² Thus, as reiterated in one article, the allied enemies pretended to remove the president and their wealth but also offered the cynical “liberty” to make the Paraguayans *hembiguái*, “their servants,” that is, to carry off who they wanted as *koty tembiguáirã*, “for house slaves.”¹⁰³ Other pieces further described the menace of sons stolen from their families and wives carried off as slaves to cook in the houses of Buenos Aires.¹⁰⁴ In the wartime press, common soldiers’ were depicted reacting to this latter prospect with shouts of “never shall they take our women,” and “we prefer to die a thousand deaths than to let those dirty *kamba* mess with our women.” Patriarchal control and protection was, of course, a deep, prevailing ideal of domestic and social order, tied in powerfully and evocative ways to the *ñane retã*.

¹⁰¹“30 de Agosto,” “De tanto querer opyta ijkere rehebe,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 5 September 1867; “Cuña carai cuéra,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 28 November 1867; “Cuñava pe,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 12 December 1867.

¹⁰²Declaraciones de soldados rendidos en Uruguayana, Paso de la Patria, 1866, ANA-SCJ, foja 16-38, 79-94.

¹⁰³*Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 8 August 1867.

¹⁰⁴“Aña ogueraha,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 8 August 1867; “Lambaré remiendu cue porã,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 28 November 1867.

The threat to *ñande liberta* was, in sum, a usurpation of patriarchal authority from both home and republic, a unutterable disgrace of being made into *kamba rembiguái*, “slaves of black slaves”—the very antithesis of a free Christian citizen.¹⁰⁵

Companions--Citizens and Free--Not Slaves

The specter of such subjugation reverberated with multiplying concerns over power and dignity in the home. It could muster a vivid sense of humiliation and invoke precise feelings of anguish and revulsion. Many knew these sort of disgraces first hand, had seen them done, if not felt or administered the indignities themselves. The threat recalled the crack and ardor of whiplashes across flesh, whose pain and humiliation—as we have seen—was sometimes enough to make individuals want to end it all.

As the fortunes of war turned decisively against Paraguay, mobilizing the commitment of women to the “sacred cause” was an ever-more pressing concern of the state. Women had remained crucial to the informal support structure of the army, with mothers, sisters, daughters, nieces, and cousins of soldiers, as well as other camp followers, staying for long stretches on the battle front to help prepare food and supply other material and medical needs to troops. Camp followers along the trenches even reportedly organized themselves into military-style units with appointed officers and helped to transport ammunition and war materials and carry off the wounded from battles. In the countryside, local officials lent explicit attention to facilitating the contributions of women to supply food and clothes for soldiers “on the field of honor,” and often did so with a discourse of patriotic motherhood.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵“La lectura del ‘Cabichuí,’ *Cabichuí* (Pasu Pucú), 8 August 1867. For the expression *kamba rembiguái*, see “Francisca Cabrera,” *Cabichuí* (Pasu Pucú), 12 August 1867.

These solicitations followed from more implicit recognition that women were increasingly supplying patriotic donations and work in the fields on behalf of the war effort. The solicited contributions of jewelry, keepsakes, and religious pendants and rosaries to the patria and its president then only underscored, in tangible form, the recognized importance of their commitment and conviction. With so many men gone from the countryside, by 1867-68 women had become the principal remaining source of both precious wealth and, fundamentally, agricultural production.

The ideological apparatus of the state had accordingly increased the symbolic importance of Paraguayan women's patriotism in the wartime rituals and propaganda. The propaganda organs *Cacique Lambaré* and *El Centinela* featured songs and articles in Spanish and Guaraní that spoke directly to women constituents.¹⁰⁷ And the acts and words of patriotism included, as other authors have demonstrated, formal proclamations of women as *conciudadanas*, that is, "co-citizens." Paralleling developments on the front, women in Asunción and elsewhere also organized battalions and made formal appeals to ask government officials permission to take up arms in defense of the country.¹⁰⁸ The appeals and demonstrations of women's patriotism and citizenship had a clear militant flavor. Prose

¹⁰⁶Nota de Justo Pastor Ortiz al juez de Concepción, 6 May 1866, Correspondencia de Salvador, ANA-SH vol. 409, n. 1 (II), foja 673; Protesta levantada por el juez de paz, Liverato Rojas, 14 August 1865, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1429; Informe, 27 February 1866, ANA-SH vol. 400, n. 1 (II), foja 350-51.

¹⁰⁷See, for example, "Condecoración pyahu," *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 26 September 1867; "Cuña carai cuéra," *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 28 November 1867; "La muger," *El Centinela* (Asunción), 18 July 1867; "La ofrenda del bello sexo," *El Centinela* (Asunción), 12 September 1867.

¹⁰⁸For fuller discussions of Paraguayan women's contributions during the war, see Barbara Potthast, "Protagonists, Victims, and Heroes: Paraguayan Women during the 'Great War,'" *I Die with My Country*, 44-60, and "Residentas, destinadas y otras heroínas: El nacionalismo paraguayo y el rol de las mujeres en la Guerra de la Triple Alianza," *Mujeres y naciones en América Latina*, 77-92; Barbara Ganson, "Following Their Children into Battle: Women at War in Paraguay, 1864-70," *The Americas* 46, no. 3 (January 1990): 335-71. On women's agricultural production sustaining the war effort, see Cooney, "Economy and Manpower: Paraguay at War," *I Die with My Country*, 23-43.

and verse in the Guaraní-language propaganda especially enjoyed toying with the idea of Paraguayan women soldiers inflicting violence on the enemy, as in the account of an old *tía* fantasizing about impaling *kamba* with a lance or verses singing gleefully about women lopping off *kamba* heads.¹⁰⁹ Appropriated voices of militant women boasted that they would fight like men alongside brothers and husbands in the trenches and, in one case, promised to carry “cooking pans” into battle and “send those little, smelly *kamba* . . . to all die in the mud from infestation, nudity, and hunger.”¹¹⁰ They dramatically threatened, in the regime’s propagandistic imagination, to defy *even the orders of the president* (a desperate resolution, indeed!) if he tried to keep them out of combat.

The ventriloquized voices of militant women in the wartime press nonetheless articulated their citizenship primarily in more traditional terms. As one article in Guaraní allegedly had them say to their male kin on the battlefield: “Consider us not just women, but daughters of Paraguay.” Other articles continuously stressed their position as the mothers, sisters, and daughters of the fighting Paraguayan soldiers wanting to also to take up the defense of their country. The traditional language of patriarchal kinship communicated the basis of their political inclusion and citizenship, sealed with their fulfillment of duty to feed and clothe the army, as well as their donations of wealth and their determination to fight.¹¹¹ Obligations to family and household spilled over into patriotic ones in such depictions. Another piece impersonated a woman writing a letter in Guaraní to her husband on the battlefield, explaining that only extreme love of country, *ñande retã rayhuhape*, could induce her to

¹⁰⁹“Lambaré ohendu peteĩ guagui onomongeta ramo peteĩ soldadomi ndibe,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 22 August 1867; “Lambaré mburahéi cuña cuérape,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 26 September 1867.

¹¹⁰“Lambaré remiendu cue porã,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 28 November 1867.

¹¹¹“Patriotismo rembiapo,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 26 September 1867; “Nemotĩ enemigo cuérape guarã,” *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 28 November 1867.

remove her wedding ring from her finger and donate it to *ñande ruvichaguasu*, President López. She then also boasted of her labor in bountiful planted fields to support the army.¹¹² Other articles made similar boasts of women's plowing, planting, and reaping harvests while even, playfully, comparing them to men in their energy for work and the way they wore pants, chiripá, shirt, and straw hats on their heads. Meanwhile, priests had also been charged with praying that women "be filled with a virile spirit" in their work on behalf of the nation.¹¹³

The ventriloquized voices of women in wartime propaganda spoke explicitly about their resolve to resist enslavement by kamba invaders. In one depiction of their collective sentiments upon donating their jewels and keepsakes to the patria, women say (in Guaraní) to Francisco Solano López:

These are all our precious jewels; employ them so that *ñane retã* will be defended. We do not need them anymore; we only want the liberty of *ñane retã*; we do not want jewels if we have to live as slaves. We'll live naked to remain free. Permit only that we shall be dressed in our flag...¹¹⁴

In 1867, formal appeal from women of the pueblo of Itagua to take up arms in defense of "liberty" announced "our desire to combat alongside our brothers against the vile slaves of the ambitious Emperor Pedro until victory or death" and promised to die on the battlefield before ever consenting to the "black slavery that our ambitious enemies bring us." Similarly, one militant woman had allegedly steeled herself and her children to fight and die before ever

¹¹²"Contestación a la carta de Mateo," *El Centinela* (Asunción), 9 May 1867.

¹¹³"Cacique Lambaré pegua cuatia ñe'ẽ," *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 22 August 1867; "Cuatia ñe'ẽ □ Cacique Lambaré pegua," *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 24 October 1867; "Aipo bloqueo," *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 5 September 1867; Carta pastoral del Obispo Manuel Antonio Palacios, Paso de la Patria, 23 February 1866, AAA.

¹¹⁴"Patriotismo rembiapo," *Cacique Lambaré* (Asunción), 26 September 1867.

submitting to become, in her words, *kamba rembiguái*, “slaves of black slaves.”¹¹⁵ The metaphor of slavery and servitude had long registered its salience. In divorce petitions, we must recall, women often demanded the dignity and rights of “*companions, not slaves*” in marriage. The Paraguayan state—but never the despised *kamba*—could appropriate women’s contributions of wealth and labor, but only with the purported dignity, rights, and freedom as that they enjoyed as *conciudadanas* in the republic. Women were thus confronting in the struggle to sustain the patriarchal and religious sovereignty of the *ñane retã* a burden of republican liberty conflated with their own moral entitlements to Christian dignity in homes and marriages.

Doubts and Crucibles

The Paraguayan defensive lines were collapsing by early 1868, and in the countryside largely women were left left to navigate the moral crucibles of nationhood. The allied advance now obligated their abandonment of homes and villages. Local officials were even dictating how they should cut their planted manioc roots, to preserve and replant those worth saving amidst growing scarcity and starvation.¹¹⁶ People uprooted first from the districts surrounding Pilar and the old Jesuit mission communities, and later from the capital, hastily resettled further north and east to continue their work. Meanwhile women lives increasingly seemed critical sites of political contention where the sovereignty of the republic and the corresponding burdens of citizenship and liberty were playing out. In fact, local authorities

¹¹⁵Hijas de Itagua pidiendo armas para pelear en la guerra, no date, ANA-SNE vol. 3266; “Francisca Cabrera,” *Cabichuí* (Pasu Pucú), 12 August 1867.

¹¹⁶Causas políticas, Pabla González, Luque, 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4685, I-30, 24, 46.

late into the war were prepared to arrest scores of women on questions of sedition—often from accusations produced by other women.¹¹⁷

Women were registering acts of defiance in the tension between overlapping duties to household and state. Patriotic exactions of wealth and labor rankled as women sought to conserve livestock, food, and work for the benefit of homes. Accordingly in April 1867, in Itaugua, Felicia Estigarribia answered the call at her door from the subordinate of a local militia sergeant, whom people knew as “Chalo,” with her head full of spite and irony. The subordinate brought orders from the officer requiring Felicia’s oxen for “public assistance,” and she offered only her desire to see “the end of Chalo.” She spent the next year in detention, likely working, and later transferred to the provisional capital of Luque, for her remarks. Another woman in Carapegua in 1868 also toiled while in the local jail for having voiced similar complaints about authorities’ repeated requisitions to work in the fields and elsewhere for the war effort.¹¹⁸ Other women hid husbands and assisted lovers who were army deserters, and sometimes bandits, in their homes and likewise faced arrest for such complicating acts of devotion to men in their lives.¹¹⁹ But the impulse to have the help of a man in the home was evident. Wise tales printed in the Guaraní-language wartime press warned of unscrupulous wives seeking out the accompaniment of lovers while husbands were away in the army, or even those young women that waited with alleged delight the arrival of

¹¹⁷Potthast documents these cases as evidence of a substantial undercurrent of dissent among women against the regime of Francisco Solano López, especially late in the war, ‘*Paraíso de Mahoma*’ o ‘*País de las mujeres*’, 275-78. I explore many of them in further detail below. Resttled women that followed the retreat of Paraguayan defensive lines were known as *residentas*.

¹¹⁸Causas políticas, Felicia Estigarribia, Luque, 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4685; Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, Carapegua, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695, I-30, 28, 23.

¹¹⁹Lista de las presas arrestadas pertenecientes al cuartel de policia, ANA-CRB vol. 4678, I-30, 14, 117; Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, Itacurubi, Yuty, Barrero Grande, San José de los Arroyos, San Estanislao, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695.

enemy soldiers, as scandalous failures of faithful citizenship.¹²⁰ In another incident, a young woman in Caapucu refused to dance with a Paraguayan soldier at a local patriotic ball, because he was dirty, and endured arrest for her seeming unpatriotic act that might just have reflected her preference for a man of apparently higher social status. Women were also continuing to manifest concerns over household reputation and their social honor during the height of war, which sometimes might have conflicted with patriotic duty.¹²¹ Meanwhile, in various personal disputes and exchanges, it also proved possible to construe the words of mothers expressing concern for the hunger and disease faced by conscripted sons in the encampments, as well as frustration for those who had died and were no longer around to help in the home, as subversive sentiments implicating the failure of the state in its assumption of patriarchal dominion.¹²² In this regard, the loss of three sons to conscription in the national army for the war had also devastated Felicia Gómez, who had lived a quiet life raising them with her husband in Tavapy before the conflict. Her husband later claimed that he tried to console her about their absence recommending that she “maintain complete conformity” in offering sons for service to the patria. But the sadness was too much for her. In March 1868 she ambled deep into the woods near her home and hanged herself from a tree branch with the leather cord that she typically used to tie her dress around her waist.¹²³

¹²⁰“Una visita,” *Cabichuí* (Paso Pucú), 4 July 1867; “Lambaré ohendu peteĩ guagui onomongeta ramo peteĩ soldadomí ndíbe,” *Cacique Lambaré*, 22 August 1867.

¹²¹Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, CaaPucú, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695; Sumario sobre el suicidio de María González, Villa de San Isidro, 1868, ANA-SCJ vol. 1509, n. 7, foja 135-39; Proceso a Encarnación Penayos por intento de suicidio, Acahay, 1868, ANA-SCJ vol. 1752, n. 20, foja 284-89.

¹²²Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, Acahay, Yhacaguazu, Villa Rica, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695. Also see in this regard, Sumario sobre la actitud de Mercedes González, Quindy, 1866, ANA-SCJ vol. 1851, n. 5.

¹²³Sumario sobre el suicidio de Felicia Gómez, Tavapy, 1868, ANA-SCJ vol. 1409, n. 3, foja 79-83.

Some women tried to manipulate the pressures on them by making accusations against other women. Jealousy over the affections of a man or contention over household wealth and material items were reasons enough to fabricate charges of seditious talk against rivals. Sometime in 1868, in the provisional capital of Luque, Dorotea Olmedo refused to lend her jeweled bracelets to two female acquaintances who requested the adornments. While in town, she later made the mistake of also commenting to them about the potential fate of two old men, apparently serving as soldiers, that they had observed marching across the main plaza. In petty vengeance, her companions denounced her before a local judge, saying that Olmedo had sarcastically laughed that the *kamba* would swallow the old men whole. Olmedo's possession of jewels not given away in patriotic donation provoked envy. Around the same time, Valentina, a black slave, accused Mercedes Servin before a magistrate of remarking to some other women in the same plaza of Luque that the "enemies have us surrounded, the Marshal President was not going to win the war, and best that he just surrender to the enemies." The charge was likely an invention stemming from multiple motives. Valentina was in fact in the uncomfortable predicament of serving as a slave for a Brazilian mistress still residing in the country, and was perhaps trying to prove her loyalty to country, while also competing with Servin for the heart of a Paraguayan soldier.¹²⁴ Finally, in the iron-foundry pueblo of Ybycui, Gregoria Contreras believed that she was languishing in jail, many leagues away from her home, due to the greed and false accusations of her sister-in-law. Originally arrested in her hometown of Santa María in the Misiones region, she had just returned from the fortifications of Humaita after having learned there of the death of her husband in battle. She had supposedly been granted a written disposition from the president himself that she alone was to inherit the property of her spouse, and viewed the moderate

¹²⁴Causas políticas, Dorotea Olmedo, Mercedes Servin, Luque, 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4685.

inheritance as her due recompense. But her also widowed sister-in-law also wanted a share of the property and, to get around the presidential order, accused Gregoria of gossiping that Francisco Solano López got soldiers drunk on *caña* to fight.¹²⁵

Such accusations, however false and self-interested, show that interactions among women had become politically charged. In another instance, it was the subversive kitchen gossip of the president being killed in battle and his foreign mistress governing in his place that led to arrests of those involved. Just hearing the news brought by a woman returned from the front and spread to others in conversation about the fate of conscripted husbands invited treasonous implications as well.¹²⁶ So did cracking jokes. Sometime in 1868 three women gathered in the home of Antonia Arguello in Caazapa and talk had turned to news of wounded soldiers, including the son of a local man, being granted discharge from the army by the president due to the loss of limbs. According to testimony later taken, Antonia then quipped that she would like to get her husband back even if in “pieces,” and although worthless, “I would have him here at least for the respect of my house and maintain him at my expense.” Her friend had jested in response “what worth would it be to you to have a person missing parts and incomplete,” which had everyone laughing. But two of the women present repeated the joke to a neighbor. The neighbor pressured with threats to have the women denounce Antonia before the local authorities. Scared about their own vulnerability, as poor and recently resettled from Misiones, they complied and even embroidered Antonia’s words. They claimed that she said, referring to the president, “why would we want useless

¹²⁵Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, Ybycui, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695.

¹²⁶Causas políticas, Saturnina Bargas, Luque, 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4685; Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, Quiquío, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695.

men made lame by that son of the devil? Better if he had them killed.”¹²⁷ The incident, as documented by local officials, suggests tensions rife in patriarchal households without men.

Gossip, rumor, and accusations spread by women were viewed by the authorities as matters of grave concern. In Arroyos y Esteros, one woman, according to the local magistrate, had walked the village paths disseminating “false news and alarming expressions prejudicial to good order and common tranquility,” and he had her detained. Other magistrates manifested their alarm when they heard of women speaking rumors about the president having been captured or abandoning the country and also moved to arrest the interlocutors. In Yhacaguazu, a woman largely regarded as crazy nonetheless raised a disturbance in the village when she pronounced the ruling regime a “government of the devil” that was only gathering up men in the army to have them killed.¹²⁸ Already in early 1867, in Concepción, alleged lovers of the local commandant were reportedly behind a “certain revolution” in the district, feeding him gossip and accusations against subordinate officials of surrounding hamlets to have them deposed. One notable considered it the source of corrosive intrigue in the “very heart of families” that undermined the “the holy national cause.”¹²⁹

Meanwhile, parish priests were too listening. Word of a woman dismissing the public veneration paid to portraits of the president during a patriotic festival—by saying that it was not worth the worship paid to a saint or Virgin—prompted the cleric of Caapucu to pass the accusation to the local magistrate. In the provisional capital of Luque, two priests learned of

¹²⁷Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, Caazapa, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695.

¹²⁸Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, Arroyos y Esteros, Ajos, Valenzuela, Mbocayaty, Yhacaguazu, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695.

¹²⁹Informes de Juan Gómez Pedrueza, 12, 25 January 1867, Correspondencia de Concepción, ANA-SH vol. 369, n. 1, foja 1475-77.

a disturbing rumor among women working in the fields, wherein the president himself had been arrested for treason. The priests wondered whether foreigners were sowing seditious talk among women in order to prepare a “revolution.”¹³⁰

Dissent was clearly mounting. Even women who, for whatever reason, falsely invented accusations of treason and sedition against rivals evidenced a familiarity with prevailing currents of political dissent. Everyone could, however tacitly, recognize the failings of patriarchal and religious authority as the regime fell apart. Gossip subverted the boasts of military prowess and battlefield victories, as reported in state propaganda and sermons, with rumors of near defeat and military failure, and depictions of Paraguayan soldiers being swallowed up and slaughtered by the kamba, needing *caña* just to go on fighting. The propaganda boasting of nudity, hunger, and disease in enemy ranks must have sounded similar to what women were hearing about in the Paraguayan encampments and trenches where their conscripted sons and husbands were dying in droves. Some began to whisper that López was in communion with the devil. The term *aña ra’y*, satanic progeny, was sometimes applied to López, as certain accusations hinted. Two women moreover occupied the jail in Carapegua in 1868 for outright declaring Francisco Solano López a demon.¹³¹

The ruling patriarch of the republic became the chief target of the subversive imagination. Rumors that imagined the capture of Francisco Solano López by the enemy or his leaving of the country for Bolivia, for example, suggested the betrayal of his patriarchal duty to protect the nation. One story elaborated in the fields and country paths surrounding the provisional capital of Luque even detailed a dramatic meeting in the fortifications of Humaita among the

¹³⁰Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, Itá, Caapucú, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695; Causas políticas, Francisca Caballero, Luque, 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4685.

¹³¹Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, Carapegua, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695.

president, his subordinate commander and brother-in-law Vicente Barrios, and Bishop Palacios. Barrios supposedly had stormed out of the meeting and instructed the guard standing outside the room to shoot anyone else who left, because the president had confessed his plan to abandon the country and was under arrest for treason.¹³² Insinuations of political treason and patriarchal betrayal likewise extended to the widespread distaste for the president's Irish mistress, Elisa Lynch, referred to as the "Madame," who now most prominently stood at his side. She had come to the country with López from Europe over ten years previously, had bore him children, and accumulated much wealth and property in the country on her own right—all, however, without a formal marriage. The potential here for criticism in sanctimonious Paraguay can well be imagined.¹³³ Suspicions ran that the jewels donated by women for the sacred cause were going to the personal collection of the Madame and that her greed pushed her to accumulate ever more.¹³⁴ One woman arrested near Luque in February 1868 had said to friends and relatives in her home, that because of Lynch "many of our people have been killed."¹³⁵ Dozens, and soon hundreds, of civilians, civil and military officials, and even clerics, both Paraguayans and foreigners, were being detained as the regime became more repressive, and Lynch was thought to insist on their executions. In Carapegua a slave woman and her daughter invited arrest when they declared that the president "intends to finish with the Paraguayan nation and replace it with the nationality of the Madame."¹³⁶

¹³²Causas políticas, Francisca Caballero, Luque, 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4685.

¹³³Pothast, '*Paraíso de Mahoma*' o '*País de las mujeres*', 219-28.

¹³⁴Decoud, *La massacre de Concepción*, as documented in *Residentas, destinadas, y traidoras* ed. Guido Rodríguez Alcalá (Asunción: Servilibro, 2007), 209-24.

¹³⁵Causas políticas, Buenaventura Candia, Luque, 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4685.

These strains of dissent and defiance elaborate for us the burdens of citizenship confronted on such intimate levels with the growing desperation of the war. The tensions produced from within the overlapping demands to God, family, and state could have individuals running the spectrum from devotion to defiance in their relation to the regime, but all nonetheless were reacting to the moral complex of the republic that could still be imagined larger than the figure of Francisco Solano López himself, however closely tied to his person. The experience of women in the countryside thus indicates how the press of republican nationhood came smashing down upon social relations among families and neighbors and everyday concerns over power, virtue, and dignity at this time of imminent national collapse. To the extent then that the whispers, jokes, and rumors of women contained the marks of faithful citizenship, and perhaps the fate of the republic, we might briefly appreciate here, to come full circle, how the very soldiers continuing to fight the war had been confronting the moral crucibles of nationhood in similar ways, with corresponding doubts and failures of conviction.

Troops along the front lines had long endured the work and punishment of a soldier's life amid want and carnage. Desertion became increasingly tempting as the conflict proceeded, despite the risks of the firing squad if caught.¹³⁷ In one striking case, an enterprising deserter in 1867, reminded of the virtue of fulfilling patriotic obligations by his soldier-father, never strayed far from the front lines around the fortifications of Humaita, returning often to his mother's home nearby, and managed with a crafty web of lies to form a work party of fellow soldiers to tend the cattle of a neighbor, all on claims that he had orders from a commanding

¹³⁶Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, Carapegua, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695.

¹³⁷Relación del soldado paraguayo José María Curugua, desertor y espía, pasado por armas, Paso Pucú, 1867, ANA-SCJ vol. 1797, n. 4, foja 211-31; Relaciones de desertores, 1867, ANA-SNE vol. 743.

general to do so. The neighbor was a young woman, left alone with a family estancia in the war. The deserting soldier, Anastacio Baez, pined for her affections and kept up the operation for weeks, meanwhile promoting himself to corporal, then sergeant, by sewing corresponding colored bands of the ranks onto his sleeve. He was also rustling the cattle of other residents and subsequently was caught in his ruse, and later put to death. But the actual work he did, if to avoid the fighting and pursue a woman, was to also sustain the pretense, mostly for his mother, as well as for his father and brothers serving on the front line, that he remained in good patriotic service.¹³⁸ The overlapping moral pressures of family, patriarchy, God, and republic were as robust as the tensions laden within.

Paraguayan soldiers navigated these pressures in other remarkable ways. Consider the thousands who were captured in Uruguayana, upon the surrender of the main Paraguayan offensive column in the southward invasion of Argentina and Brazil in 1865, and subsequently incorporated into the allied ranks marching north to invade Paraguay. Reports suggested that scores of these Paraguayans were then deserting into the countryside of the northern Argentine province of Corrientes at the most convenient opportunity, perhaps many content to stake out a new life there, free from the services of any army. Still others agreed to furtively leave the allied ranks by being hired to work as peons on the estancias of Brazilian and Argentine officers. Meanwhile dozens, if not hundreds, of these men were doing what they could—sneaking through woods, building rafts, swimming through currents—to cross the Parana River into Paraguay to rejoin the armies defending the republic. Small contingents of those working in the homes and estancias of southern Brazil and northern Argentina contrived ways to make the long treks back to their homeland, too. The returning Paraguayan

¹³⁸Declaraciones del reo Anastacio Baez, soldado desertor, Paso Pucú, 1867, ANA-SCJ vol. 1797, n. 5, foja 232-58.

soldiers told government interrogators of the pressing desire among the bulk of their companions to go back to “their country,” “their patria,” “their native soil.” They expressed how they did not want to fire upon “countrymen,” “brothers,” and “their flag.” They wanted “to pass on again to their country and not fight with it.” They attested to Brazilians working them like “slaves” and Argentines calling them “savages.” They were determined not “to serve against their country and government to whom they had sworn to defend and sustain.” Basic impulses and emotions here were fused to political content. The simple desire to return home among soldiers was, upon speaking to government interrogators, enmeshed with moral burdens of faithful citizenship. Even those who had first sought better horizons working for patrons in foreign lands could encounter familiar hardships of rough treatment and frustrations with people speaking unintelligible tongues that had them, however vaguely, longing for a community of people left behind, identified most readily as those who spoke to them in Guaraní.¹³⁹

In May 1868, the corporal of a rearguard contingent of soldiers, Damaso Jara, contemplated with his men the real possibility of enemy forces, the dreaded *kamba*, overrunning the country. Some considered fleeing into the blistering Chaco wilderness at the prospect. Jara claimed that he would take to the hillsides of Acaay—hills that he knew well. But his subordinates and another commander strained to hear otherwise from a man that inspired their grudges and dislike. They signed a joint testimony alleging that Jara had broadcast the government’s military defeat while mocking the boasts of victory by state newspapers, seemingly so detached from reality, and finally declared his intention to take to the hills to await enemy forces and side with them. The doubts and fears that the entire squadron likely shared, and which seemed to inform the accusations, were channeled to make

¹³⁹Declaraciones de soldados rendidos en Uruguayana, Paso de la Patria, 1866, ANA-SCJ, foja 1-156.

Jara an exemplary failure of faithful citizenship in the crucible of nationhood. Jara was convicted, and a firing squad executed him later that month after a chaplain took his final confession.¹⁴⁰

Conclusions

Most fundamentally, the doubts and fears spilling from questions of patriotism traversed those of religious faith. To understand the coercive force and moral pull of the Paraguayan state and its militant republicanism in this moment of total war we must understand this dynamic. The regime of Francisco Solano López had turned the institutional ecclesiastical apparatus of the Paraguayan government, reconstructed over decades by his father, into a primary medium of popular mobilization and modern state machinery at war. Clerics had sounded the initial calls for “good Christians” and “good citizens” to fulfill their patriarchal obligations and join the swelling ranks of the national army to defend *ñane retã*, while also pledging loyalty and religious devotion to the regime. In the violence and desperation of the conflict, their sermons and writings in Guaraní, broadcast in state newspapers, were further infusing a resonant sense of citizenship and liberty with sentiments of caste, servitude, common dignity, and spiritual salvation, all sharply felt and contrasted in the collective language of their parishioners against the crystallized image of blackness and savagery of the invaders. Parish priests conducted the religious services, prayers, festivals, and devotions to saints that channeled the bulk of popular patriotic expression in the countryside. Chaplains, chapels, and high church officials, including Bishop Palacios, had a pronounced presence on the warfront that did the same. The war—to preserve the sovereignty of the republic, to

¹⁴⁰Proceso al cabo Domaso Sosa por comentarios hecho sobre cierta publicación del Gobierno, 1868, ANA-SCJ vol. 1715, n. 9, foja 229-35.

defend a leader, to save republican America—was held a sacred cause. It was the divine-right republicanism of the regime culminating in this manner as a coercive moral persuasion, bloated with sanctimony, that compelled parishioners, men and women, to confront nationhood and citizenship in ways that had a consuming impact on their moral and material lives—in the tilling of fields, in the offering of a rosary, in the accusation against a neighbor, in the impaling of a dark-skinned enemy soldier, in prayer, in mass, in suicide. The force and pull of it all showed in people's eagerness to appropriate the repressive tendencies of this hegemonic complex to settle personal scores even as tangible signs of the republic's existence were melting away.

But even dauntless citizen clergy had crises of faith in the last desperate years of the conflict. In the northern villa of San Pedro, the once stalwart padre José Carmen del Arzamendia began to manifest some doubts during the grueling year of 1867.¹⁴¹ Other clerics in outlying parishes hinted at certain wavering of convictions too, as did some of those serving as chaplains along the front lines. Even Bishop Palacios was raising presidential suspicions in this regard. The death, loss, and want were too much to not begin to question the presumption of divine favor.

In early 1868, with defensive lines collapsing in the south and remaining Paraguayan forces in full retreat, the López regime turned on itself. The president had become convinced of a widespread conspiracy within his government, the Paraguayan elite in general, and the resident foreign community. In the makeshift encampment at San Fernando, nominal judicial commissions were formed, and arrests, trials, torture, and executions proceeded apace. The number of accused reached into the hundreds and included such prominent collaborators of

¹⁴¹The testimony of Arzamendia before a commission of the provisional Paraguayan government in Asunción after his capture by allied forces appears in Cecilio Báez, *La tiranía en el Paraguay*, 218-20.

the regime as the former Foreign Minister, José Berges, as well as the president's brothers-in-law Saturnino Bedoya and Vicente Barrios. His own brother, Benigno López, once aspirant to the presidential chair, also, perhaps not unexpectedly, was purged.¹⁴²

So were over two dozen clergy. The arrests of priests came in waves, and some of the first were the esteemed head cleric of the Asunción Cathedral, Eugenio Bogado, and Bishop Manuel Antonio Palacios himself. Later other highly-regarded clerics were still carrying out functions in their parishes when arrest orders from the president came. The padre Juan Evangelista Barrios, a passionate exhorter for the regime, was arrested while serving as chaplain, Father Jayme Antonio Corvalan in his parish of San Juan Nepumeceno. In the provisional capital of Luque, at the height of the 1868 celebration of the president's *santoara* on July 24, the padre José Ramon Ferriol was even preparing mass and a patriotic sermon when leading officials replaced the image of San Francisco Solano on the altar with a portrait of Solano López. Ferriol refused to commence the service, believing the presidential cult had finally crossed the line into sacrilege, and he was detained as well.¹⁴³ The arrested clergy joined the other prisoners kept in rudimentary pens around the main encampment and were herded into oxcarts or forced to march when the army had to move. Food, already scarce, was often not spared for mere prisoners. Disease, already rampant, took its toll. In San Fernando, the nominal trials and judicial commissions resorted to whippings, rustic spine-bending braces, and smashing fingers with hammers to force confessions and extract names leading to subsequent arrests. By August, in San Fernando, firing squads were executing convicted priests along with other prisoners found guilty of treason. Later, ammunition

¹⁴²Doratioto, *Maldita Guerra*, 339-49.

¹⁴³Gaona, *El clero en la Guerra del 70*. Also see, Informes sobre los presos en los partidos de la República, San Juan Nepumeceno, May 1868, ANA-CRB vol. 4695.

became scarce and soldiers drove their lances through the bodies of prisoners deemed not worthy of a bullet.

Much of this repression is attributed to the compounding delusions of a despot at wits end. But he still required legal and ecclesiastical structures, along with underlings who fulfilled their own petty ambitions and settled their own scores in the process.¹⁴⁴ In the judicial commissions overseeing the trials, priests joined military officers and other lettered officials as primary magistrates taking the confessions of the condemned and dictating the righteousness of death sentences. The likes of Justo Roman, the ranking vicar in Asunción and second to the Bishop, and Francisco Solano Espinoza, the one-time editor of *Cacique Lambare*, served as judges on the tribunals and prosecuted fellow clergy who had perhaps once outranked or outshone them. In so doing, they also could take temporary comfort and retain moral authority so that proceedings were not yet turned against them. Ironically, it was Father Fidel Maíz, the former convicted dissident, who helped to lead the entire proceedings as judge. He now had the president's ear and was assuming de-facto leadership of what remained of the national church following the downfall of his personal enemy and past persecutor, the Bishop Palacios—realizing an old career aspiration in nonetheless bloody circumstances. He personally oversaw the trial and forced confession of the defamed prelate. We can only imagine his satisfaction at subsequently seeing Palacios reduced to sackcloth, chained to an oxcart that bumped along with a retreating army, waiting, praying, pleading for salvation, and preparing his soul for the inevitable.

¹⁴⁴Father Maíz, in fact, defended his participation in the tribunals as one faithfully following the legal protocol of the time, *Etapas de mi vida*. See Juan Silvano Godoi, *El fusilamiento del Obispo Palacios y los tribunals de sangre de San Fernando* (Asunción: El Lector), 121-45, for the formal legal documentation that the tribunals produced.

CONCLUSION

A firing squad put Bishop Manuel Antonio Palacios to death on 27 December 1868 at the encampment of Pikysry, amidst the celebration of Christian nativity and national independence within Paraguayan lines. The collection of people—a smattering of men, the elderly, women, and children—constituting the dwindling forces under López must have tried make the most of the festivities in view of the general retreat, hunger, and disease. The execution of the prelate, however, must have also had its disorienting effect. Bishop López died with over a dozen other accused traitors, and word of his execution, as the allies learned of it, produced reverberations of outrage reaching back to Rome. The allied leadership, upon discovering the half-buried corpses and mutilated bodies of “traitors” left behind by the retreating Paraguayan army, became ever more convinced of the righteousness of their alleged campaign to depose a tyrant and free a people. The remaining partisans of the López regime, in turn, clung desperately to the premise that God was still on their side.

An ecclesiastical tribunal formed by the ranking priests Fidel Maíz and Justo Roman had tried Bishop Palacios on nominal grounds of canon law. The proceedings provided the formal (and fictional) pretext of a self-governing church body acting to remove its head before his execution. With theatrical indignation, the court documented a confession of guilt by Palacios, secured with torture, to his complicity in a supposed plot to overthrow López. Their written ruling, which stretched on for pages and did all it could to muster legal and divine

sanction for the proceedings, contained perhaps the most exaggerated expressions of the divine-right republicanism that had taken hold as a hegemonic complex of moral coercion. Clergy, in its final assessment, were fundamentally “citizens” and servants of a state whose essential duty was “to give the example of fidelity and submission to the Government, whose very authority comes from God.” The terrible crime of Bishop Palacios was to foment rebellion precisely when he most owed his allegiance “to the heroic efforts of the Government and all the People to sustain our holy and precious liberty.” In alleged unison with the entire clerical body of the diocese, and upon invoking the injunction of the Apostle Paul to submit to constituted political authority, the ecclesiastical judges proclaimed “We are Paraguayan citizens!” Citizenship brought obligations both spiritual and civic in nature: “For the Christian in the truths of faith, as for the citizen in the truths of Patria, there is nothing more than one voice, one feeling, a single conformity . . . to obey with love.” Clergy were to understand that salvation could not be won unless they fulfilled duties to the “Patria and the Government.” Betrayal of the president consequently reached levels of “sacrilege,” “blasphemy,” and violated the “obligations of love, fidelity, and gratitude for the great social family.” President López, in all consideration, was the “father and life of the Patria,” the “legitimate and supreme Chief of the Nation,” and the “Christ of the Paraguayan People.”¹

The historic tensions between religious and state power that had marked the political societies of the Western world for centuries here, in nineteenth-century Paraguay, melted away into a creed that invested all the ancient aura and authority of imperial Christianity, its ministers, and its god into the social and ideological category of nationhood. A faithful Christian made a good citizen, by definition, and spiritual salvation depended on patriotic

¹As reprinted in *Catecismo de San Alberto*, ed. Margarita Durán Estragó, and Godoi, *El fusilamiento de Obsipo Palacios*, 73-95.

submission. Priests provided the lessons of civic virtue. And an elected president, chosen by the divine, could be his people's father and messiah. He could command the undying love and fidelity expected from a collective social body and Christian family.

It is noteworthy in this latter regard that among the fifteen accused traitors executed with Bishop Palacios, five were women (two being sisters of the president). Dozens of more women perished in this way as the war moved toward its torturous close. It was another sublime expression of their political inclusion and citizenship in the republic. The patriarchal family was a primary metaphor of the republic and primary site of religious and civic virtue. Women in their movements, words, and consciences were expected to maintain un-faltering commitments of obedience and love, as mothers and daughters, to the patria and its patriarch. The women who could not keep up with the retreating Paraguayan army were reportedly impaled with lances or had their throats cut, so they would give nothing away to the oncoming *kamba*.

To the district of Concepción, in the northern reaches, President López had also sent in mid-1868 a commission of soldiers and two priests to suppress what was rumored to be a conspiracy among remaining local officials and leading families to capitulate to Brazilian forces there. The resentment against a district that had once elected a deputy to contest López's assumption of supreme presidential authority remained evidently palpable. The commission stopped at several surrounding pueblos to gather the members of leading families, now mostly women though, to expropriate their jewels and wealth not donated to the sacred cause and to execute them. Improvised confessionals were built in the central plazas where priests heard the weeping and pleading of accused women, demanding that they

confess their sins against the patria and tell where household valuables were hidden, before the soldiers stripped them naked and lanced them through.²

The war lurched on this way until Francisco Solano López finally met his end on a battlefield in the northeastern forests of the country in March 1870. The experiences of nationhood that his family and persona had helped to construct left few of his country's inhabitants untouched. In fact, most of them were dead.

Unlike most historical treatments of these experiences, however, this dissertation has established that everyday Paraguayans, men and women, were not responding primarily to some ethnic, indigenous, or unspoken collective warrior impulse formed over the centuries. Rather they were confronting strains of political modernity infused with religious devotion and expressed in words that they felt and breathed. Confrontations with modern nationhood required ongoing construction. The sovereignty of a postcolonial national state and its relevance in peoples' lives were never givens in an unstable frontier society.

The construction of republican nationhood had gained a peculiar intensity over the final two and a half decades before the war. In the 1840s, when the regime of Carlos Antonio López was first consolidating its power, it sought a more robust and modernized state along with the institutional revival of the provincial church and thereby engaged its population in processes of state formation that further pushed the authority and expression of the republic's existence onto spiritual grounds. The regime's appropriation of the church's authority under the aegis of postcolonial state power proved the clearest manifestation of mobilizing the remains of old Spanish imperial sovereignty into the framework of an independent republic. Paraguayan peasants were thus encountering reinforced expressions and practices of their

²Decoud, *La massacre de Concepción*, as documented in *Residentas, destinadas, y traidoras* ed. Guido Rodríguez Alcalá (Asunción: Servilibro, 2007), 209-24.

ñane retã, their basic sense of political community, as a religious polity bound to the patriarchal authority of state and society. The sovereignty of a republic, in fact, was touching the spiritual and material lives of inhabitants, but the power of the state and its leader were not all-consuming. The projection of rule across a frontier society remained inconsistent and often depended on the muster of both formal and informal tools of power by middling rural elites and a new generation of native-born clergy serving the diocese. Authorities and commoners alike continued to enjoy their vices, violating elements of the religious moral order allegedly undergirding the social and political order. They applied the dominant moral codes, however, for the exercise of power in homes, marriages, and parishes. Such was the social groundwork upon which the state used to build resonant and compelling notions of citizenship. The irregular, restrained exercise of congresses and elections lent these ideas some substance. Meanwhile a native clergy was in place, as agents of the state—who shared the social mores of their parishioners, knew their foibles, and spoke their language—to supply compelling blasts of suasion from the pulpit, in Guaraní, extolling the virtues of republican citizenship as Christian obedience to constituted authority. And this was divine-right republicanism which the regime of Francisco Solano López applied to exact popular consent, further militarize the countryside, and persecute a devastating war.

Other postcolonial states in nineteenth-century Latin America—such as Ecuador, Guatemala, Venezuela, and even Mexico—experimented with fomenting religious-based nationalisms. We should ponder, then, their imprint even during strident moments of state-led secular nation-building that took hold throughout much of the region post-1870, as some scholars have begun to do. Moreover, the more robust and inclusive Latin American nationalisms that subsequently emerged post-1930 were prone to appropriating currents of

popular religiosity. Autocratic nationalist states, particularly those in South America, were also prone to using national churches to help build popular adhesion as well as exercise repression. The incidence of sanctimonious state violence turned inward in Paraguay during the Triple Alliance War, via torture and execution, thus presaged in some ways ongoing, darker encounters with modernity when late twentieth-century dictatorial regimes unleashed waves of violence against their own populations—often justified as a defense of God and patria against the threat of communism. Meanwhile, politicized religion also provided an important tool of resistance against such repression.

In present-day Paraguay, as in other Latin American countries, Catholics continue to pray for the nation and its leaders via the intercession of patron saints. In 2008, after sixty-years of single-party rule, a former Catholic bishop, imbued with the politics of liberation theology, assumed the presidency in Paraguay in the first peaceful transfer of power in the country's history. The impact of colonial religious tradition on the experiences of modern nationhood in Paraguay and elsewhere in Latin America is an abiding, reinforcing one as well.

The history of nationhood, religion, and war related in this dissertation has relevance for the Western experience at large. In the entrance of a Lutheran church in rural Michigan, congregants can still find a pamphlet titled, *Active Christian Citizenship*. It details obligations of Christian citizens in the United States to obey constituted political authority, even in moments of repression, as well as pray for leaders, and generally recognize that all governments are still instituted by God. It also promotes, however, a participatory citizenship of voting and speaking out, and it invokes the democratic creed of a country living under a government “of the people, for the people, and by the people.”³ The unresolved tensions of another sort of divine-right republicanism again provide for a salient expression of modern

³*Active Christian Citizenship: Motivated by Love* (Lutheran Hour Ministries).

nationhood, this in the case of everyday lives of twenty-first century North Americans.

Indeed, modern nationalism, in its multitude of forms in time and place since the earliest manifestations of the late eighteenth century, has often thrived on, rather than erased, the power and contradictions of religion.

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SH: Sección Historia

SCJ: Sección Civil y Judicial

SNE: Sección Encuadernación

CRB: Colección Río Branco

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AAA: Archivo de la Arquidiócesis de Asunción

Archivo de la Iglesia

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BNA: Biblioteca Nacional de Asunción

CO-PGB: Colección O'Leary-Papeles de Gregorio Benítez

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