

## Spanish educational evaluation under the Ancient Régime: a review of practices, institutions, and figures

*La evaluación educativa española en el Antiguo Régimen: Una revisión de prácticas, instituciones y figuras*

*A avaliação educativa espanhola no Antigo Regime: Uma análise de práticas, instituições e figuras*

西班牙古代政体下的教育评估：实践、机构与人物的综述

التقويم التربوي الإسباني في النظام القديم: مراجعة للممارسات، والمؤسسات، والشخصيات البارزة

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This historiographic review of the literature glosses and systematizes the field of Spanish educational evaluation throughout the Ancient Régime, from the mid-sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century. In this respect, the evaluative considerations inferred are characterized related to common praxis, figures of the diverse educational agents involved, as well as institutions where such practices were undertaken. **Method:** The qualitative synthesis methodology used is the historiographic review working with secondary documentary sources subjected to textual analysis. **Results:** The evaluative practices inquired refer to the act of *vexamen*, the representation, the judgment of residence and the evaluative rules proper to the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum*. Special figures involved in evaluation focus are described on the *lectionist* and the *(a)miga* [female friend], the examiners [*veedores* or *visitadores*], and the evaluative vision of *arbitristas* [arbiters], *novatores* [novators] and illustrators. The educational institutions on which evaluative aspects are discussed are the Hermandad de San Casiano in relation to the access to the primary teaching profession, the studies of Grammar and the Spanish university of the time with its various evaluative milestones. **Conclusions:** A series of final evaluative considerations are inferred as characterizations of this period in its transition to an educational evaluation in contemporary Spain.

**Keywords:** Historiography, literary review, educational evaluation, Spain, Ancien Regime, evaluative practices, teacher evaluation, institutional evaluation.

### Resumen

**Objetivos:** Esta revisión historiográfica de la literatura glosa y sistematiza el campo de la evaluación educativa española a lo largo durante el Antiguo Régimen, desde mediados del siglo XVI a principios del siglo XIX. Al respecto, se caracterizan las consideraciones evaluativas inferidas en prácticas comunes, figuras de los diversos agentes educativos implicados, así como instituciones donde se acometen tales prácticas. **Método:** La metodología de síntesis cualitativa utilizada es la revisión historiográfica a partir de fuentes documentales secundarias sometidas a análisis textual. **Resultados:** Las prácticas evaluativas indagadas se refieren al acto de *vejamen*, la representación, el juicio de residencia y las reglas evaluativas propias de la *Ratio Studiorum* jesuítica. Agentes especiales implicadas en la evaluación se centran en el *leccionista* y la *(a)miga*, los examinadores, *veedores* o *visitadores* y *arbitristas*, *novatores* e *ilustrados* con su visión evaluativa. Las instituciones educativas sobre las que se comentan aspectos evaluativos son la Hermandad de San Casiano en su relación con el acceso al ejercicio del magisterio, los estudios de Gramática y la universidad española del momento con sus diversos hitos valorativos. **Conclusiones:** Una serie de consideraciones evaluativas finales se infieren a modo de caracterizaciones de este periodo en su tránsito a la evaluación educativa en una España, ya contemporánea.

**Palabras clave:** Historiografía, revisión literaria, evaluación de la educación, España, Antiguo Régimen, prácticas evaluativas, evaluación del profesor, evaluación de instituciones.

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## Resumo

**Objetivos:** Esta análise historiográfica da literatura enquadra e sistematiza o campo da avaliação educativa espanhola ao longo do Antigo Regime, desde meados do século XVI até ao início do século XIX. Neste sentido, são caracterizadas as considerações avaliativas inferidas em práticas comuns, figuras dos diversos agentes educativos envolvidos, bem como instituições onde tais práticas são realizadas. **Método:** A metodologia de síntese qualitativa utilizada é a análise historiográfica baseada em fontes documentais secundárias submetidas a análise textual. **Resultados:** As práticas avaliativas investigadas referem-se ao ato de vexame, à representação, ao julgamento de residência e às regras avaliativas do Ratio Studiorum jesuítica. Agentes especiais envolvidos na avaliação centram-se no lecionista e na substância, nos examinadores, supervisores ou visitantes e árbitros, “novatores” e iluministas com a sua visão avaliativa. As instituições educativas sobre as quais se discutem aspetos avaliativos são a Hermandad de San Casiano na sua relação com o acesso à profissão docente, os estudos de Gramática e a universidade espanhola da época com os seus diferentes marcos avaliativos. **Conclusões:** Uma série de considerações avaliativas finais são inferidas através de caracterizações deste período na sua transição para a avaliação educativa numa Espanha já contemporânea.

**Palavras-chave:** Historiografia, análise literária, avaliação da educação, Espanha, Antigo Regime, práticas avaliativas, avaliação do professor, avaliação de instituições.

## 摘要

**目的：**本研究通过文献史学综述，对西班牙古代政体（自16世纪中叶至19世纪初）教育评估领域的发展进行了梳理与系统化。在此过程中，重点描述了该时期常见评估实践、参与评估的各类教育主体以及实施这些实践的相关教育机构。**方法：**本研究采用定性综述方法，依据次级文献资料，结合文本分析，进行历史文献回顾。**结果：**所考察的评估实践包括“辱考”仪式、学术展示、离任审查，以及耶稣会《学习纲要》（Ratio Studiorum）中的评估规范。参与评估的特殊主体涵盖讲师、助理、考官、巡视员、政策顾问、改革者及启蒙学者等。评估涉及的教育机构主要包括圣卡西亚诺兄弟会（其与教师资格相关）、语学校，以及不同时期具有代表性的西班牙大学。结论：本研究总结了该历史时期教育评估的一系列特征，为理解西班牙由古代向现代教育评估体系转型提供了重要史学参考。

**关键词：**史学、文献综述、教育评估、西班牙、古代政体、评估实践、教师评估、机构评估。

## ملخص

الأهداف: تهدف هذه المراجعة الاستعراضية التاريخية للأدبيات إلى توضيح وتنسيق مجال التقييم التربوي الإسباني خلال فترة النظام القديم، وذلك من منتصف القرن السادس عشر حتى أوائل القرن التاسع عشر. وفي هذا السياق، يتم تحديد السمات التقييمية المستنبطة من الممارسات التربوية الشائعة، ومن الشخصيات التربوية المختلفة المعنية، فضلاً عن المؤسسات التي تمت فيها تلك الممارسات. المنهج: تم اعتماد منهجية تركيب نوعي من خلال مراجعة استعراضية تاريخية استناداً إلى مصادر وثائقية ثانوية خضعت للتحليل النصي. النتائج: تشير الممارسات التقييمية التي تم تحليلها إلى طقس اليسوعي. أما الشخصيات الخاصة Ratio Studiorum "الفيخامن" (التهكم)، والتمثيل، والحكم على الإقامة، والقواعد التقييمية الخاصة بمنهاج المشاركة في عمليات التقييم، فتشمل "الملقن" و"الصدق(ة)"، والممتحنين، والمراقبين أو الزوار، وكذلك واضعي المذكرات الإصلاحية، والمجددين، والمستنيرين بأفكارهم التقييمية. أما المؤسسات التعليمية التي تناولت الدراسة أبعاداً تقييمية متعلقة بها، فتشمل أخوية القديس كاسيانو في علاقتها بالولوج إلى ممارسة مهنة التدريس، ودراسات النحو، والجامعة الإسبانية في ذلك الحين بما تضمنته من محطات تقييمية متعددة. الاستنتاجات: تُستخلص مجموعة من الاعتبارات التقييمية النهائية التي تُعد بمثابة سمات مميزة لهذه المرحلة التاريخية في مسارها نحو تقييم تربوي في إسبانيا الحديثة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التأريخ التربوي؛ المراجعة الأدبية؛ تقييم العملية التعليمية؛ إسبانيا؛ النظام القديم؛ الممارسات التقييمية؛ تقييم أداء المدرسين؛ تقييم المؤسسات التعليمية

## Introduction: Historical and contextual framework

The proliferation of mediocre quotations in English in any text of educational sciences, for the slightest evolutive realization and justification, is disappointing to the point of boredom. Meanwhile, a whole rich Spanish research tradition with more substance and consistency is ignored by those who exalt other countries' contributions as "better". It is very difficult to overcome the insidious belief, like a black legend, about the disrepute of Spanish science, education, and culture, which many accept uncritically.

A *damnatio* would have fallen on the historical memory of Spanish intellectuals unable to accept serenely and judiciously the reality of the past, reducing it to clichés: the Inquisition, the lack of freedom, widespread misery, and institutional violence. I intend to remain indulgent towards the past and not to fall into presentism, but neither do I claim that that time was a paradise, given acute conflicts and horrible calamities such as the bubonic plague in 1649 in Spain and especially in Seville (Domínguez Ortiz, 2006).

In this study we speak of educational evaluation as defined by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1975/2024), although somewhat modified by Fernández Cano and Vallejo (2006, p. 5): the systematic judgment of the merit or worth of something [any educational achievement, program, center, or research] or someone [any educational agent or personnel] according to certain commonly accepted standards or criteria. But here we speak of Spanish educational evaluation within a well-delimited historical period: the Spanish Ancien Régime, which almost coincides with the Modern Age (Artola & Mateos, 1986; Salesianos-Mérida, 2019). The period of Spain's Ancien Régime spans from the mid-sixteenth century, with the administration of Philip II, which consolidated the idea of Spain as a modern state, until the beginning of the nineteenth century with the advent of the Liberal State. In education, the turning point was the Law of Instruction of the Marquis of Someruelos (Government of Spain,

1838). There are essentially four well-differentiated periods: the middle of the sixteenth century, still dominated by the idea of empire; the seventeenth century, where euphoria was overtaken by political, military, and economic crisis; the eighteenth century, or the bureaucratization; and the beginning of the nineteenth century, characterized by the Napoleonic depletion and the frustrated liberal hope of not consolidating a powerful bourgeoisie. These characterizations reflect concepts developed by Sánchez Albornoz (1956).

The practices, institutions, and evaluative agents in the Spanish Ancien Régime began to be questioned, and in a certain way evaluated, as early as the *arbitristas* [arbiters], and until the end of the 18th century (i.e., Jovellanos, 2012; Polt, 2004). With the arrival of liberalism, the models of the Ancien Régime gradually gave way to counterparts imported mainly from the Napoleonic, bourgeois, and French systems (for the field of education, see Delgado Criado, 1994; Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1979).

The context for this study is the Spain of the Ancien Régime, and more specifically the Kingdom of Castile, including Hispanic America and, more specifically, the cities of Andalusia and Madrid-Corte.

## Historiographic review: The theoretical-methodological framework

As a qualitative synthesis methodology, literary review has a notable predicament in educational research and evaluation. Its uses are quite diverse and range from the simple review of literature on a topic such as teaching practices (Martínez Rizo, 2012) to the systematization of cognitive development programs (Serrano & Tormo, 2000) or the delimitation of lines of research in school ICTs (Area, 2000). But the modalities of the review are not exhausted in the topics considered but in disciplinary variants, since each discipline has instituted its own practices and patterns. Thus, in medicine, a review is intended to be systematic (see PRISMA Statement, Page et al., 2021), although this is also appropriate in

education (Formento Torres et al., 2023), and in the field of history it becomes historiographic (Hernández Sandoica, 2004).

This study is, therefore, a historiographic review, working with secondary sources, but carried out within the field of educational evaluation, circumscribed to a spatial context (Spain) in a well-defined time period (the Ancien Régime) and in a topic such as educational evaluation. As a study of revisionary and evaluative synthesis, it uses qualitative methodology in the search for cases or agents, institutional entities, and evaluative practices as inferred categories. Criticism of its sources, internal (credibility) and external (veracity), is expected according to the wisdom and probity of other scholars. Another threat to the validity of any review is that it may be diluted by unconnected evidence, although, ultimately, the reader will have to judge. Ensuring that what is written (sources) becomes a text (which the reader now reads) is an exercise in hermeneutics, elementary (but not irrelevant) and self-understanding, at least for the inferrer, the writer, and hopefully the reader. Following Ricoeur (2001, p. 33), none of the subjectivities—here those of three agents (author, reviewer-inferer, and reader)—takes precedence.

The sources consulted are rather old, which indicates that the topic of the Ancien Régime has been little considered in recent years. The eminent scholar Antonio Domínguez Ortiz (1909–2003) worked on it devotedly until he became the foremost authority on the subject. Moreover, we are dealing with a humanistic subject, not a scientific or technological one for which more updated references are usually cited.

The rationale of this study is to obtain accurate information and knowledge about the origins of the disciplinary field of educational evaluation in the Spanish context by providing a review of institutions, praxis, and agents rarely considered. This approach reminds us of Aristotle's argument in *Metaphysics*: we understand a subject better when we see it grow from its origins. Specifically, Aristotle (2014, p. 12) said, "seeking first to understand

the causes of the entities that surround us...in the search for their causes, they advanced to that one." It would seem that this topic of educational evaluation started in the twentieth century with authors such as Alfred Binet and Ralph W. Tyler, ignoring a notable Spanish tradition of achievements, although not of disciplinary systematizations, which this work attempts.

I follow the phenomenological approaches of Ricoeur (2003; 2005), in which to recognize is, above all, to identify an object, a place, a person, an institution, or a human group and the relational implication of their past with the present, even the personal, since it would be daring to project them unthinkingly into the future, in search of clarity provided by the rigor of the data and the illumination of a certain hermeneutics, given by context. Ricoeur's theoretical references recall the earlier work of Suárez (1918), with a treatise on laws, having the State as guarantor (according to Ricoeur) and God (according to Suárez).

This compilation offers a sketch of evaluative facets manifested in certain institutions, praxis, and agents from the field of education within a specific spatiotemporal context: Spain during the Ancien Régime. However, it does not pretend to be exhaustive, since some evaluative practices and agents, such as those involved in obtaining a degree of doctor, have been extensively described and written even in travelers' books (Slidell Mackenzie, 1836). Also, para-evaluative studies on women's education in this period abound (e.g., Capel Martínez, 2007; González Barrero, 2017), emphasizing secular discrimination against women. Likewise, the exuberant development of schools founded by the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) in Spain and Hispanic America throughout that period has been well investigated even within regions, including the Balearic Islands (Ferrer Florez, 2008), Galicia (Rivera Vázquez, 1989), the Basque Country (Malaxechevarría, 1926), Andalusia (Soto Artuñedo, 2003), Valencia (Borrás i Feliu, 1973), and Castile (Fernández Martín, 1998), and others. Because these topics have been sufficiently explored, it is not necessary to comment extensively on them or

to include the abundant relevant bibliography. Here, the focus is on lesser-known evaluative facets.

### **Going further into the methodological facet**

And without wishing to fall into parallelism with pro-positivist methodologies, any historiographic review is a review of the literature on a topic that has already occurred, which is also usually called literary; obviously qualitative. The basic unit of information is the historical document, here mainly articles, chapters and books, publications. The documents integrated in the search for a holistic interpretation of a phenomenon, manifestable in facts already past and narrated by others, are selected by means of an intentional sampling; that would be the size of the sample: almost one hundred bibliographical references, which are previously cited in the composite text, extracting from them the most relevant and representative considerations of the past being investigated, according to the personal criteria of the integrator/reviewer/historian.

Carr (1981), in his *What is HISTORY?* provides well-founded methodological

reflections, and thus manifests this orientation as a procedure:

Reading, reflecting and reporting go together. Reading is guided, directed, fertilized by writing: the more I write, the more I know what I am looking for, the better I understand the meaning and relevance of what I find. (pp. 38).

The representativeness of the factual evidence presented is borrowed from the secondary sources (documents) with which we operate, although we must rely on the principle of authority of expert informants of the stature of Antonio Domínguez Ortiz or Julio Ruiz Berrio.

The analytical procedures of a historiographical review are based on interpretation and textual integration but warned of what Carr (1981) called “too many examples of extravagant interpretation that ignored the most elementary facts” (p. 37). The paradox of historical study then is the pretended objectivity of the facts narrated on evaluative matters, always inevitably interpretative, but, as a recursive process, all study is inexorably evaluative.

Table 1 below summarizes the methodological development of this study.



Table 1. Methodological development of the study in progress

Design	Historiographic review: tertiary study of qualitative synthesis.
Problem	Historical analysis of the phenomenon of evaluation in Spain during the Ancien Régime.
Unit of information	Secondary sources: published documents (articles, chapters and books).
Sampling technique	Intentional sampling of available literature.
Sample size	8 documents. Books: 37; Articles: 32; Chapters and proceedings: 13; Others (official reports, archive notes and theses): 16.
Validity of the information	External critique (veracity) and internal critique (accuracy) assumed of probity and sapience of the authors of the documents to be integrated.
Data analysis technique	Textual analysis: reading, understanding and interpretation of documents, selection of evidence/facts, concretization of cases, establishment of categories (agents, praxis and institutions) and composition of narrative reports.
Bias control	Possible adaptation of the author/reviewer to the procedure. Potential entropy in transit: fact, primary source and review.
Generalization of findings	Significance for the use and credibility of the report for the reader.

## Findings

### Evaluative practices

Understood as practical applications of how to evaluate or achieve concrete evaluative realizations where something is judged.

#### *The act of vexation*

The act of vexation came from other European universities, from the models of Paris and Bologna, moved to Salamanca, and from there radiated to other Spanish and Latin American universities (Eguiguren<sup>1</sup>, 1949; Layna Ranza, 1991; Madroñal Durán, 1994).

A vexation was a speech or composition of jocular content that was presented in the universities and academies of the Ancien Régime against those who took part in certain degrees or contests (RAE, 2023, 3rd meaning). Vexations were written in prose and/or verse. The task of composing a vexation usually fell on most junior doctors. As one of the various solemn acts that preceded achieving the degree of doctor, *dar vejamen* [to give vexation] is *leerle la cartilla* [to read the syllabary] to the doctoral student (Eguiguren, 1949) to expose

his defects and thereby humble him. It should be remembered that obtaining a doctorate was preceded by a sophisticated and dazzling ritual and was also quite expensive, unlike obtaining other university degrees, such as the bachelor's degree.

A variant of the vexation was the *gallo* [cock] and its author, also so named, according to the authoritative opinion of Covarrubias (de la Fuente & Condón, 1885, pp. 520-521).

The expression “to give or carry vexation” went beyond university classrooms to become a common expression used by eminent literati. Spanish golden literature on this practice abounds. Thus, Lope de Vega (1929, p. 222b) writes a burlesque passage in the comedy *El alcalde mayor* [The Main Mayor]. Góngora (1921, pp. 11-16), when giving vexation to a doctoral student, accuses him of graduating only due to the influence of a relative. He also mocks the student’s physical appearance: short stature, deformed feet, crossed eyes [an allusion to Quevedo], and so on. Of course, he did not omit the possible moral failings of the vexed person: pride, corruption through the purchase of a title, pseudo-culture, ignorance of Latin, lack of talent, rudeness, and even

crypto-Judaism and possible sodomy. The paradoxical aspect of vexation, unthinkable today, is that the most neophyte doctor became a judge with the power to evaluate colleagues and influence their own and others' assignments to important university positions, even as professors, since the title of doctor was not obligatory to access this academic rank.

### ***The representation***

The representation was a report on a problematic situation, which an expert issued to a superior entity, usually the omnipotent Council of Castile (Fayard, 1982), on an institution, exposing its problematic state and proposing solutions; in short, making an evaluation of an institution (i. e. educational center). It is worth mentioning the representation of Antonio de Bilbao (1790) informing the Council of Castile on the state of the foundlings and denouncing the miserable conditions suffered by the country's *inclusas* [children's homes or foundling hospitals]; on this report or representation see Domínguez Ortiz (1983) and de la Fuente Galán (1997). Jovellanos (1859) had already issued his speech on the healthiness of the hospices in the form of a representation read at the *Sociedad Económica* [Economic Society] of Seville in 1777.

As a consequence of that representation elaborated by de Bilbao, the Council of Castile, then, promotes a survey among the ecclesiastical authorities on the state of the existing foundling homes in their dioceses, in which problems are exposed, which Bilbao already denounced, such as the lack of nursemaids to breastfeed due to scarce payment to these, scarcity of incomes of the *inclusas* [children's homes] and random transfer of the newborns from the towns to the cities where the *inclusa* [children's home] was located. The high mortality rates of up to 80 % of the children collected and the pitiful situation due to the pauperization of these *inclusas* [children's homes] are astonishing. After the survey, the Council of Castile appointed Pedro Joaquín de Murcia as Visitor, who was sent with another representation, this one already published (de Murcia, 1798).

For bibliography on the situation of abandoned children at the end of the 18th century, the horror<sup>2</sup> that had been reached, see de la Fuente Galán (1997); and in general, the many deficits in assistance and education (Palacio Lis and Ruiz Rodrigo, 1996).

### ***The residency trial***

The residence trial was a legal formula of Castilian and Indian law, which was based on the fact that, once the activity of any official employee was finished, it was reviewed in its various actions and the charges that had arisen were dealt with. The official could not leave the place where he had held the post, nor occupy another, as long as this file was not finished. In general, the person responsible for the prosecution, called the judge of residence, was the substitute individual already proposed to assume the same job, or in his absence, the president of the local audience. The sanctions varied, but mostly consisted of fines, even if they could lead to banishment.

In the administration of the Indies, the trial of residence was of great importance, and reached all types of officials, from viceroys and presidents of the Audiencia, governors, to mayors and bailiffs and academic positions such as rectors of universities and colleges (Smietniansky, 2007; Vallejo García-Hevia, 2008). Any authority that terminates its employment is subjected to a trial of residence; that is, the authority evaluated cannot move from its destination while the inquiry about its performance lasts. But already in the 18th century, these trials were sometimes carried out when the person being tried had returned to Spain. Even viceroys had to undergo a residency trial before the successor took possession of the same position. Controversial was the trial, finally favorable, to the powerful viceroy of Peru, Manuel de Amat y Junyent in 1773, for a complaint, among others, filed by Juan José Aguirre, physician and neighbor of Lima, regarding the provision of a vacant chair of medicine at the University of Lima (Archivo Histórico Nacional, 1777, pieces 122, 123).

In this sometimes-lengthy case, which could last up to six months, the level of compliance with the instructions received during the entire exercise was examined,

scrutinizing the activity, and compiling abundant reports from the multiple declarants and people concerned. The final judgment was concise and public; at the end of this, if the evaluation was positive, the authority could be promoted to a higher level of employment. On the other hand, if he had committed slips or infractions, he could be penalized with a fine or even worse with a lifetime veto to obtain any other position (Marina Jalvo, 2006, p. 31-32).

### ***Evaluative Rules in the Jesuit Ratio Studiorum***

Two primordial documents, the *Constitutions* and the *Ratio Studiorum* (System of Studies) shape the thought and action derived from that singular human group, which is the Society of Jesus (Nagy, 1963). The *Ratio Studiorum*, published in 1599, established a whole educational system that was reworked in successive general congregations with novelties and modifications, many of them of an eminent evaluative character. And if it has been called a pedagogical monument, it is even more of an evaluative monument, although this last consideration has gone somewhat unnoticed.

The Ratio is structured in evaluative rules and sub-rules scattered throughout the document, but they were not mere normative texts, but were put into practice in Jesuit schools from the end of the 16th century to the present day, with the interregnum of the suppression of the order (1773-1814); see Domínguez Ortiz (2005). We can say then that it is a matter of evaluation in action. Rule 19 is especially dedicated to the examinations in the degrees of Philosophy and Theology, and they were characterized by their abundance, rigor and completeness not only for the postulants but also for external students. The evaluative instrument was the written examination previously announced as opposed to the oral examination, more of a medieval tradition; this was a novelty at a time when paper was scarce and expensive. Such exams were corrected by four external examiners, preferably different from the teachers of the students who had been taught. The grading of each student was done by secret ballot, judged and written in a book intended for that purpose. Now we are talking

about an evaluative report. The exam for promotion from Philosophy to Theology was especially hard. And singular was the examination of Metaphysics, because it was public and disputed between examinee student and examiners.

The examination procedure was well regulated with rules, which today seem obvious to us, but which at that time were novel and were well regulated, since it is indicated that “come prepared with the books and other things necessary for the written examination, so that you do not need to ask anything from others while writing”. Examination with reference material, it is now said. Warnings to the examiners abound: to be careful with those who sit together; before leaving the class during the exam, not taking it out, handing in the written material; or about the examinee's discretionary time, as long as he/she does not leave the class or extend it beyond sunset.

Numerical scores from 1 to 6 are required in the catalog of pupils so that “the greatest possible number of grades of pupils can be distinguished, namely, the best, the good, the average, the doubtful, those who must continue [repeating the course] and those who must be rejected”.

Interesting is the well-defined figure of the Prefect of Studies, a sort of modern-day head of studies, and those of the rest of the teaching staff according to the subject they teach, whether Rhetoric, Mathematics, Philosophy, Morals, Cases of Conscience, Scholastic Theology, Sacred Scripture, Hebrew, Humanities or Latin Grammar. The prefect is charged with seeing to it that the teachers complete the subjects. He is charged with the responsibility of “examining those [students] who arrive again more or less in this way”. Initial evaluative exploration.

The criteria for promotion or repetition are enunciated, although “in four years the whole course of theology must be completed”. They are especially categorical with the inept and rude, since “if someone does not seem in any way suitable to do the degree, do not yield to any plea .... that it is not convenient to promote them..., so that their parents or those in charge,



warned with all delicacy, do not occupy a place”.

The list of evaluative terms is extensive; in particular: to leave to the judgment of, to give judgment of, the judgments of the examiners, to the judgment of the teacher. Evaluation as judging was already defined at the beginning of this paper. Other evaluative terms also abound, such as: surpass, promotion, promote, admit, exclude, merit, demerit, award or approval.

### **Institutions**

The following is a commentary on the evaluative achievements carried out within the institutions of that time: the Brotherhood of St. Cassian, facilitator of access to the exercise of primary education, the studies of Grammar and the university of the time with its various evaluative manifestations.

#### ***The Brotherhood of St. Cassian [Hermandad de San Casiano] and access to the teaching profession***

The types of schools and teachers in the Ancien Régime are very varied, but in the middle of the 16th century (1642) an elite of teachers from Madrid, who later generalized to other localities, decided to control access to teaching by grouping around the Brotherhood of San Cassian [*Hermandad de San Casiano*] to ensure a minimum quality in each case, as well as the social prestige of the profession, providing at the same time certain protection and security; although there were already antecedents of guilds and consideration of teaching by the authorities from earlier times (Domínguez Lázaro, 1983).

The Brotherhood of San Cassian marks a historical milestone by associating teachers and indicating the requirements to join it, and in its hands was almost completely the Spanish primary education during the Ancien Régime, since the official legislation given by the successive Ordinances, which in the Bourbon period became provisions or decrees, was nothing more than a reproduction of the agreements taken by it.

Such Brotherhood lasted as such until 1780 when it was transformed by Royal

Provision into the *Colegio Académico del Noble Arte de Primeras Letras* [Academic College of the Noble Art of First Letters], in an attempt to modernize the training of teachers within the enlightened project but that, after the pompous name and the very regulated and laudable declarations, added little to the guidelines of the Brotherhood, being suppressed such college in times of Charles IV in 1791 to constitute the *Real Academia de las Primera Educación* [Royal Academy of Primary Education] with its attached Regulations. However, the now Royal Academy, with the new articles of the Royal Decree of 1791, brought a relevant novelty: to be a public teacher training center, an outline of the future normal schools (Ávila Fernandez, 1986; Luzuriaga Medina, 1916). The regulation proposed a chair for the instruction of interns, lectionists [*leccionistas*] and other fellows who dedicate themselves to the teaching of first letters, spoke of the fact that “the science of education [a novel expression] must be learned in fundamentals and solidity”, and characterized the public schools of Madrid, as normal, as subject to the norm emanating from said royal decree (Luzuriaga Medina, 1916, pp. 280-281).

The function of the Brotherhood was primarily evaluative, by examining teachers, a function entrusted by the Council of Castile and legal for all of Spain. The literature on this topic is abundant (Llopis and Carrasco Maurín, 1983, p. 150; Delgado Criado, 1993; de la Fuente & Condón, 1885, p. 608; Marcos Montero, 1954; Ruiz Berrio, 2004a; Sánchez de la Campa, 1874). In the monumental work of documentary compilation by Lorenzo Luzuriaga Medina (1916) we can find (p. 25) the criteria for evaluating petitioners for approval as teachers in the successive ordinances in this regard. In its evaluative dimension, it is relevant to indicate the criteria for access to such Brotherhood, or also sometimes called confraternity, such as:

-To be twenty years old, attaching a birth certificate.

-Payment of examination fees, variable amount, ranging from twelve *reales de vellón*

[vellon reals] (about 42 euros today) to twenty *reales*.

- To have the ability and sufficiency after the exam to read with printed texts, handwritten texts and paleography. To be able to write mastering diverse calligraphies, types of letters and orthography. Notions of Arithmetic by knowing “the five rules of counting” and other rules. The requirements were expanded over time and according to the type of teacher, from simply writing numbers with Arabic notation and the most elementary calculus rules of the XVI century, to demanding rules of three, discounts, fractions, integers, square and cubic roots (Luzuriaga, 1916).

The levels of examinations varied according to the type of teacher to be hired, depending on the town in which he [not she] aspired to work: court, city or town. A pattern that lasted in a certain way in the corps of National Teachers until well into the twentieth century, when the Ten-thousandth Examination was held to gain access to a position in towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants.

- Confirmation of three witnesses who testify to the cleanliness of blood by not having Jewish or Moorish ancestors or those punished by the Holy Office<sup>3</sup>. That is to say, certificate of old Christianity and certification of good customs according to ecclesiastical license, issued by the *Santo Oficio* [Inquisitorial Holy Office] or other institutions. Criterion, which in a certain way was recovered in the time of Franco's autarchy until the last quarter of the 20th century, since I (the undersigned as an applicant) had to attach such a certificate signed by the parish priest of his town for his first enrollment in the *Escuela Normal* [Teacher College] of Granada in 1969.

- Master the Christian doctrine according to the Catechism of Martínez de Ripalda (1957) and the mysteries of the Catholic faith according to the authentic testimony of the Ordinary, meaning bishop, or the parish priest to whom he delegated.

- Two years of teaching experience as an intern under the tutelage of an active member of the Brotherhood of St. Cassian, who could

succeed him in case of death or retirement of the incumbent.

- Two reports of life and customs issued by the municipal authorities and by the parish priest, as delegated by the ordinary bishop.

These successive municipal ordinances were ultimately approved at the civil level, by the Council of Castile, and at the religious level, by the Archbishop of Toledo, in the case of Madrid, or the respective episcopal vicariate (Martínez Navarro, 1982). For each locality where the Brotherhood was established, the procedure followed was that the members of the Brotherhood sent them to the municipal authority, town council or chapter, and the latter sent them to the Council of Castile for approval, thus guaranteeing the secrecy of the report. These ordinances regulated the organization, functioning, obligations, regulation of access to new teachers, requirements for the establishment of new schools and admission of students, privileges, economic management and punitive charges; see in this regard the works of Ventajas Dote (2007) for the case of the approval of the Brotherhood in Malaga; for the case of Jerez (García Romero and Vega Géan, 2010), Seville (Aguilar Piñal, 1973) and Granada (Calero Palacios, 1994).

But the great privilege of the Brotherhood of San Cassian was the monopolistic control of teaching by limiting the number of schools and to ensure the salaries of the brothers, excluding intrusiveness and incompetents. The Brotherhood articulated privileges that the Bourbon administration was extending (Marcos Montero, 1954). Nevertheless, the Royal Order of the highly criticized king Charles IV of February 11, 1804, tried to limit the “fatal consequences that result from reducing the exercise of certain arts or teachings to a small number of individuals” (Marcos Montero, 1954, p. 501).

Belonging to the Brotherhood provided certain privileges, such as exemptions and pre-eminences, prerogatives already enjoyed by the university professors of the liberal arts, being able to carry arms, not being recruited in levies, conscription and raffles, exemption in council charges and public offices, differential

treatment in trials by not being imprisoned for civil but only for criminal causes, with the prison being their own house, priority for the children of teachers in the entrance exam. This privilege lasted until the 70's of the XX century, when there was a special quota for the children of teachers in the entrance examinations to the teaching corps.

The guildism of the Brotherhood of Saint Cassian [*Hermandad de San Casiano*] would be a remote antecedent of the current teaching unions or professional college, although the former had somewhat more autonomy and scope than the latter.

### **Grammar schools**

Grammar schools, also called humanities colleges, grammar chairs or Latin studies, were a kind of secondary education center established in towns of certain administrative or economic importance, focused mainly on the learning of Latin and other humanities, as a means of access to universities or to ecclesiastical careers. They were governed by a teacher, called preceptor, although he could also be called *bachiller* [bachelor], *dómine*<sup>4</sup> [Latin teacher] or *lector* [lecturer].

These centers did not have a defined or professional status, acting more as a filter for higher studies and were sponsored by the municipalities, by testamentary mandates of particular individuals or by the church in the form of foundations. Access to the position of preceptor was by direct appointment and sometimes by selection of opponents (Bartolomé Martínez, 1987, 1995; Faubell Zapata, 1986; Rebordinos Hernando, 2018).

The evaluative facet in this institution used to be centered in the selection process of the preceptor and in the concession of grants for poor students, for advantageous students but with scarce economic resources, although the enjoyment of such studies was paid for, by the student's father.

There were two types of preceptors: university graduates, with a bachelor's degree in Art or Philosophy with priority from the universities of Salamanca, Valladolid or Alcalá, and with the condition of clerics of minor order for the chair of majors, and on the

other side the so-called interns, repeaters or auxiliaries, not necessarily clerics, for the chair of minors. Both used to lead a difficult existence due to low emoluments, in dispute with the titular preceptor, since low salaries were endemic for all teachers of one or the other figure (Lorenzo Pinar, 1997, pp. 29, 45; Martín García, 2007). There was an attempt at guildization in the manner of the *Hermandad de San Casiano* [Brotherhood of St. Cassian], founding the *Real Academia Latina Matritense* [Royal Matritense Latin Academy] in 1755, but the available reports (Delgado, 1993, pp. 812-821) present them with a poor social image and a weak teaching capability.

The selection of preceptors, which was rarely done, was centered on the defense of the curriculum vitae of the proposer, proof of baptism and the certificate of cleanliness of blood. In some occasional cases a public examination, both oral and written, was held before accessing the job (Bartolomé Martínez, 1987, 1995; Faubell Zapata, 1986), to evaluate the command of Latin and grammar, with an examining committee set up for this purpose by the municipal board of trustees in charge of the study. Teachers worked under contract with the municipal council, which prescribed working conditions, tasks and emoluments, as well as subjects to be taught, books and teaching materials to be used and inspection of the teacher's performance (Vázquez, 2004, pp. 328-343). Dismissals were not usual and if they were, it was mainly in cases of intrusiveness. Disagreements between the preceptor and council over salary, *casa-habitación* [housing]<sup>5</sup> and annex studio building were quite frequent.

Nevertheless, with the limitations indicated, the proliferation of such centers was exorbitant to the point that a Pragmatic of February 10, 1623, known as Law 34 (Gobierno de España, 1975), prohibited the foundation of these institutions in those towns where there was no *corregidor* [royal-appointed mayor). Their definitive disappearance was around 1838 with the arrival of the liberal disentailments.

### **University evaluations: the written examination**

University evaluations conformed to the scholastic teaching method, brought up to date and renewed in its fullness at the University of Paris, of *lectio, quaestio and disputatio*, which had been born in the first intellectual renaissance of the Middle Ages and in which teacher and student established a bond of mutual aid. Its remote antecedent could well be Quintilian's *praelectio* and later adopted to some degree by the Jesuits in their *Ratio Studiorum* as the teaching method to be used.

Any possible evaluation was based on an oral discourse, since the written exam, advocated by the *Ratio Studiorum*, and erroneously considered a bourgeois conquest of the French Revolution, was gradually extended to other countries. The aim of the written exam was to maximize objectivity in the evaluation of students. Two centuries later, these written exams were also used in French universities and were presented as a triumph of the Revolution over the evaluative prejudices of the professors, who favored members of the nobility and the clergy in the access to public positions. The written exam leaves a clear record of the student's knowledge, like a notarial record, to avoid the bias of bad evaluative practice by the hearing evaluator (Fernández-Cano y Vallejo, 2025).

A broader view of the evaluative facets in Spanish universities in the Modern Age can be traced in Kagan et al. (1981) and in Rodríguez-San Pedro and Polo-Rodríguez (2009). Tracing through historical university statutes could also provide some evidence. The records of the university cloisters of this period are replete with references to applications for admission to the bachelor's, licentiate and doctoral degrees and to the manner in which such degrees were attained and celebrated. In all of them there was a common denominator: the rigorous mastery of a Latin that was well structured, difficult and obscure, but which ultimately blurred boundaries and encouraged the improvement of political relations and customs. Slidell Mackenzie (1836, Chap. VI) describes exhaustively the ceremony of the degree of doctor at the University of Salamanca late in the nineteenth century, in the final of the Ancient Regime, and after the death of Spanish King Ferdinand VII in 1833.

Other relevant evaluations were the final exams for the application for the degrees: the presentation of the first *lectio* [reading], with a few days of preparation with the help of the mentor professor; and of the second *lectio*, in which the student showed off his aptitudes, sometimes with an hourglass counting the hour and a half of dissertation. The subsequent *disputatio* [discussion], a continuation of the *lectio*, with arguments and counter-arguments between the candidate and the professors. But the evaluative practices were not limited only to obtaining degrees. Another was the election by the faculty each year of the presidents of the conferences from among the students who excelled in the exams and set the best example of life; a figure somewhat similar to today's departmental collaboration granted student. They presided over two lectures each week, explained daily to their classmates, questioned the lessons in the refectory, and held two sabbatine events in the University or in the college chapel (Calero, 1978, p. 193).

### ***Other academic evaluative cases***

The medieval *disputatio* as a teaching method entailed an evaluative consideration since every debate had its winner and loser as a tacit and inferred evaluative consequence among the listeners (Weijers, 2002).

The election of the university rector was made on a teacher, usually religious, and if possible a learned, prudent and virtuous collegiate (Calero, 1978). Every university member should be in a continuous process of self-evaluation pending the theoretical foundations of ecclesiastical censorship, of knowing its problems and its casuistry.

Another university evaluative case was associated with a specific genre of books: that of *los prácticos* [practitioners] (Alonso, 2012, p. 19). They constituted a whole genre aimed at the training of jurists with a high concern for unraveling in detail the casuistry and the consequences of the issues presented by sibylline traps (Fernández Cano, 2002). Thus, evaluative examinations were instituted to be passed in order to obtain a degree in canons by means of a practical exercise as an evaluative derivation of the *modus parisiensis* [Parisian method]. Related books were the so-called



*Modos de pasar en derechos* [Ways of graduating in law] (Beck Varela, 2018), a kind of guides to orient towards the academic career, including reading and reference books<sup>6</sup> and advice on study, in transits such as passing<sup>7</sup> from bachelor to licentiate to obtain the *licentia docendi* [license to teach] and to transit from one chair or cathedra to another, especially in studies of Canons and Law.

Such texts had a strong pedagogical, and therefore evaluative, but also symbolic character to consolidate the collective of agents in the legal field (graduates, doctors and professors) endowed with extensive privileges. They advised on how to pass the few evaluative milestones, specifically the examination of “twenty-four hour points” and other transit rituals for graduation controlled by the professors, who also received emoluments paid by the examinee. However, obtaining the degree of doctor, apart from being a very onerous act of protocol, had few practical consequences as it was only an honorary title, which was not even required for access to a professorship/cathedra (Rodríguez Marín and Segura Heras, 2010). Nevertheless, the facades of the cathedrals still conserve vestiges of riddle (*almagre*) with the names of the doctors and their corresponding “cheers/victors”, a use that some university centers still maintain, such as the Faculty of Geography and History of the University of Salamanca.

Final consideration should be made regarding the evaluation of the university of the Ancien Régime. The readings on the subject for this long period offer a highly negative consideration of the university (Ávila Fernandez, 1986; de la Fuente, 1885; Derozier, 1981; García Barberin, 1915). A progressive fall in enrollment, scant consideration of science, primacy of erudition over practical knowledge, lack of creativity, teaching laziness and academic parasitism are attributed to it (Fernández Cano, 2023).

## Agents-Figures

Special people who lived in the Ancien Régime, related to educational evaluation are

commented on, from the modest lectionist and the *(a)miga* [female friend] through the *veedores* or *visitadores* [examiners], to the evaluative vision of *arbitristas* [arbiters], *novatores* [novators], and illustrators. The term *figura* [figure] is used in recognition of the work of Antonio Domínguez Ortiz (1973), who in his book *Hechos y figuras del siglo XVIII español* [Facts and figures of the Spanish 18th century] commented on specific individuals. In this study, the term figure does not refer to a personified figure but to a categorized one.

All these generic figures share the scarce research attention they have received from the educational approach and even less from the evaluative one.

### *The lectionist and the (a)miga [female friend]: evaluating the minors*

The lectionist was the aspiring teacher, practicing as an *ayo* [governor] or private teacher who, without owning a school, taught for a stipend and competed with the official teachers. The ordinances ordered that the lectionists were examined in reading, writing and arithmetic (the classic accounts), to acquire the due license of the Brotherhood of Saint Cassian and to be able to practice after having been approved by this brotherhood passing a slight examination, under penalty of incurring in a rigorous crime with penal process. Likewise, they were required to read documents and types of letters, plus theory and methods in these arts (Ávila Fernandez, 1986; Domínguez Lazaro, 1983).

The lectionist also went to the student's home to teach; as what we now call “giving private lessons”. The figure would later reappear in what in Andalusia was called *maestros de cortijo* [farmhouse teachers], teachers purged by the Franco regime and who chose to use this means of earning a living.

The *(a)miga* [female friend] would be another figure of informal education that exercised with her backs to the institutional system since the Hermandad de San Casiano had little or no interest in them. As a totally private activity, there were in all parts of Spain, and especially in Andalusia, women who

dedicated themselves to the very humane task of taking in and caring for the youngest children of both sexes while their mothers worked or went to the weekly market, although there were some (*a)migas* that received only older girls<sup>8</sup>. Thus, it is worth mentioning the case of the cave-school of the *Amiga* del Sacromonte neighborhood, which attracted the attention of D. Andrés Manjón in Granada. The knowledge to be imparted by such educators was very little: Christian doctrine, folk songs and domestic chores, after a report on life and customs issued by the municipal or ecclesiastical authorities, as well as an examination of doctrine by the ordinary bishop, although generally by the parish priest of the neighborhood or town to which he delegated.

These two figures deserve to be considered as pioneers of informal education but in somewhat on the fringes of official order. It would not be daring to describe them as one more of the marginalized of yesterday, as described in the work of Domínguez Ortiz (Rodríguez Bernal, 2003); they were in their way teachers.

### ***Overseers or visitors, and examiners***

The Brotherhood of St. Cassian instituted, among other figures, two of a highly evaluative nature: examiners and overseers or visitors. Both used to have a discretionary and episodic character without the official sense of today<sup>9</sup>. The court of examiners usually consisted of three members, which in the time of Charles III was expanded (Marcos Montero, 1954) to form a board composed of one or two commissioners of the City Council, two examiners and overseers of the *Colegio de Artes Nobles* [College of Noble Arts] or from the Brotherhood of San Casiano, depending on the period, and with the assistance of a notary public.

The examiners focused on the need to evaluate all those aspiring to open a school (aspiring teachers, ayos [governors] and lectionists), who had to pay a fee for examination rights. The overseers, also called porter-guards in some localities, in addition to acting as observers in the examinations, also tried to confirm the good performance in the

art of teaching the children in the towns and neighborhoods of their jurisdictions (de las Heras Santos, 1991). These two figures could well be antecedents to a certain extent of the teaching staff of the future normal schools (as examiners) that will be created in the middle of the 19th century and the *veedores* as school inspectors that reached their total normalization with the Moyano law until they obtained the financing of the State as civil servants (Ávila Fernández, 1986; Domínguez Lázaro, 1983; Ministerio de Cultura, 2024).

It was the Royal Council of Castile that instituted the figure of the teacher approver or examiner, delegating to the local authorities (justices, mayors and city burgomasters) to select the most suitable approver, and ultimately to the Brotherhood of Cassian, to choose, in general, among the most exemplary and senior teacher (dean or elder brother), from among the members of the brotherhood in each locality, to approve the new teachers of the art of writing and thus avoid the endemic intrusiveness. Visitors also came to the Hispanic universities, acting as proto-inspectors, after prior appointment by the town council and the monarch respectively, as a mechanism of institutional control, but with the power to change the internal organization and teachings that were imparted.

Visitors or overseers were the justices of those kingdoms who had to visit the schools and teachers once a year to check if they were teaching well and with due care, basically if the Christian doctrine was being prayed and to review the books that the students were reading. Even in some cases, and already at the end of the XVIII century, teachers were required to submit a self-memory explaining how they performed, their way of working with their pupils, as well as the subjects they taught (Martín García, 2007). This is a true antecedent of school inspection, although the regulations in this regard were somewhat lax, difficult to apply, poorly controlled and therefore limited in scope. A historical development of the evaluative figures, from the visitors to the current school inspection, is available in Montero Alcaide (2021).

In general, as Ruiz Berrio (2004b) observes, the involvement of national and local authorities in educational matters was limited to solving immediate problems raised by teachers. Already at the end of the Ancien Régime, around 1825, inspection boards and town inspectorates were created until the consolidation of the liberal model of school inspection as a professionalized institution. Such municipal boards had to attack the problem of illegal schools in the face of complaints from tenured teachers, who accused the intruder of having no training, a dangerous background and low social status (Martín García, 2007). This issue of intrusiveness reached the late twentieth century with the “night schools”, in which adolescent workers, already highly involved in the work, tried to acquire some knowledge taught by an outsider or by an official teacher in order to earn a bonus.

Internally, evaluations of the universities were also made through visitors, also called inspectors, overseers or observers (RAE, 2014), who issued a report or visit letter. The official visits were periodic, usually every year, and ordered to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction on which each university or major or minor university college depended. The visitation did not alter the legal norms of the institution but was used to audit the patterns of life of the academic community, its budgets, the proper observance of its constitutions and the way of administering university justice, revealing illegalities carried out by those in charge and formulating the necessary reforms. It was the formula used by the Spanish Crown to control its officials, including viceroys.

There was a special type of visit, without a predetermined time interval and by decision of the monarch, called “reform” or “reformation”. The commissioner to carry it out was called “reformador” [reformer] or “visitator” [overseer] and the report, that this one elaborated with its determinations of modification, “reforma” [reform]. The provisions proposed by these reforms, whether pecuniary, academic or administrative, were sent to the Council of Castile, which converted them into laws, mainly through royal decrees.

Municipal agents created during the reign of Carlos III as *síndico personero* [official procurator], *abogado de pobres* [lawyer for the poor] and *diputado del común* [common representative] had scarce relevance and relation with education, if any, to collect abandoned children (Domínguez Ortiz, 2005). The figure of the lawyer for the poor (public defender, as he/she is now called) of council and medieval origin, may have had some intervention in the many lawsuits between teachers belonging or not to the Brotherhood of San Cassian.

### ***The evaluative vision of the arbitristas [arbiters], novatores [novators] and ilustrados [illustrators]***

Throughout the Ancien Régime, these three figures<sup>10</sup> of thinkers and writers shared the belief in education as a regenerator of Spain's ills. The proclamation would continue in the following centuries; think of Joaquín Costa or the members of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* [Free Institution of Teaching], for whom education was to be the salvation of a Spain clinging to the nostalgia of its imperial past, and even maintained until well into the 20th century with the motto of Franco's regime, “through the Empire to God”.

One of the first arbitrists, Baltasar Álamos de Barrientos (1555-1640) already points out, according to Cabrera Trigo (2016), the role of education as a determinant of the character of the rulers, something in line with the education of princes; but which he extends to the education of the people, which he assumes will lead to a social transformation in the face of the evidence with which the decadence of Spain is shown.

In the utopia, *Sinapia* block 27 dedicated to education (Anonymous, 1976; pp. 116-119), where the skills to be attained by the students are indicated as a brief outline of a curriculum already available at the end of the XVII century. We are faced with a reformist proposal of an unknown novator in which iron control of the State over the population is established, in which there are slaves, but no private property. Nevertheless, this rare utopia is very relevant and pleasant to read; and it could well be a pioneer physiocratic treatise at

world level, since it postulates mainly the teaching of agriculture including cattle raising as the capital domain of the Sinapien youth, apart from a careful education of the elites for “the election of the superiors” in specific seminaries; see Cro (1995) for additional comments on this subject.

Both novators and illustrators criticized the stagnation of the Spanish university<sup>11</sup> (Álvarez de Miranda, 1993; 1996), alien to the scientific revolution, stagnant in the scholasticism that denied empiricism and experimentation, without printed books<sup>12</sup> and without access to archives; hence the emergence and rise of academies, gatherings and, above all, economic societies of friends of the country as alternatives to the university, in the French style.

The educational proposals of the illustrators are more extensive, pretentious and with a high concern for the diffusion of science and the use of Spanish as opposed to Latin; see the *Cartas eruditas y curiosas* [Erudite and curious letters] of Feijoo (2009). Antonio (1788) makes an apology for the exact sciences and empirical medicine (Mestre Sanchis, 1996) in his monumental *Bibliotheca Hispana Nova* [New Spanish Library]. Jovellanos (1831/2012) issues his *Memoria sobre educación pública* [Memoir on public education]. Pascual Vallejo abounds in the educational question in his *Discurso sobre la necesidad de una reforma general de los métodos de educación* [Discourse on the need for a general reform of the educational methods] published in 1791 (Labrador Herráiz, 1988). Álvarez Barrientos (2006) defines the illustrators as a mixture of apostles and social climbers.

Enlightened people such as Jovellanos, Olavide, Picornell, Campomanes or Manuel de Aguirre were generally of the opinion that, without the decisive contribution of education, there could be no happiness, understood as wealth at both the individual and collective levels (Ruiz Berrio, 1998), although all of them advocated it according to social class and sex.

In summary, it can be stated that, in spite of the obvious good intentions, but minority and heterogeneous, in the three groups there is

an absence of proposals with technical-rational solutions to concrete problems and even less of a control, that is, an evaluation of the possible proposals, since most of them were not carried out. To advocate for achievements, utopian but praiseworthy, would be to fall into the very Spanish bias of *dolo pio*, the pious fraud of the multiple chronicles, already criticized by the novators (Mestre Sanchis, 1996), falsifying a supposed reality that never existed. However, during this period we must recognize as exemplary experimental programs, not only pedagogical but also ascribable to other disciplines, the establishments of Vera Paz [True Peace] founded by Bartolomé de las Casas in Guatemala, the *Hospitales-Pueblos* [Hospitals- Villages] and the *Escuela de Artes y Oficios* [School of Arts and Crafts] by Vasco de Quiroga in Michoacan (Mexico), the Franciscan missions in New Spain (Mexico) and above all the Jesuit Guarani Reductions in Paraguay, aborted by the royalism of the Enlightenment (Cro, 1995); all of them carried out in Hispanic America and by Catholic agents

## Conclusions

In the transition from the evaluative guidelines of the Ancien Régime to the Liberal State, historical evolution dictated its ideas and the politicians, with their regulations, accommodated themselves to this dictum. A first example of this was how the guidelines were transposed to Hispanic America through the Council of Indies, a section initially of the Council of Castile, even with the change of dynasty and associated administration: from decentralized under the Austrias to highly centralized under the Bourbons.

Such transit maintained two central postulates: the assumed evaluation and the force of rituality. In conclusion, all the evaluative considerations inferred and exposed in this study show us the phenomenon of the evaluation accepted as a voluntary servitude, oxymoron commented by Lasa Ochoteco (2012), and loaded with symbolism as a mystical force: the doctoral victor, the shields of congregations and brotherhoods or the rites as behavioral symbols associated with the ceremonies of transit typical of the evaluative



processes. Unfortunately, we teachers have lost the symbols and the rituals that identified us; as a consequence, faith in the magical power of symbols has been lost, although it still persists to this day in certain quasi-playful or festive scopes; for example, in the ceremonial with its language, protocols and costumes of civic-academic processions (Quijada Espina, 2015).

The Ancien Régime was swept away by the advent of liberalism, which in Spain was consolidated as a power around 1840 under the auspices of an emerging and careerist bourgeoisie. From the exercise of education based on guilds and ecclesiastical control, it will pass to the control of the State, to a pseudo freedom of work, from inert serenity in the teaching performance to uneasiness due to partisan allegiance. The frustrated hope of liberalism with its disentanglement of communal and ecclesiastical property led to the closing of parochial schools and centers governed by religious orders. The incipient industrialization with its population concentration led to the emergence of a poor urban proletariat that was even more educationally deprived. The proliferation of internal political tensions made the country ungovernable, resulting in a proliferation of changes of orientation until the Moyano Law of 1857 was enacted, which brought some order to education.

This transition within the educational and academic sphere was characterized by the merely formal passage of institutional-academic power from the Church to the State, although the influence of the former declined ostensibly. Milestones of this transition was the university reform with the suppression of several universities or the transfer of others, such as Alcalá de Henares to Madrid, forming the Central University, the only one allowed to confer the degree of doctor (Fernández-Bautista et al., 2014). Political volatility brought already then, as now happens with the plethora of educational laws, successive curricula. In the case of Medicine, up to nine different plans were implemented throughout the 19th century (Fernández-Guerrero et al., 2022). Agents such as the visitators mutated into state inspectors following the Napoleonic model. Latin ceased to be the obligatory

language of academic texts, including doctoral theses, and became the national language. The institutions, evaluative practices and figures changed, if at all and only nominally, since nothing is built from nothing but on previous bases; for example, Voltaire's pretension to annihilate everything that sounded like the Ancien Régime, including his hated Jesuits, with whom he was formed, was in vain, although transitorily he helped somewhat with the temporary dissolution of the Society of Jesus.

After reading this text, and I repeat myself for warning, the reader should not fall into the bias of presentism so typical of historical studies, interpreting the past with keys of the present. It is quite evident that life for most of those people under the Ancien Régime was not a paradise, but neither was it a hell, although evaluative rigor was not the norm but rather the exception, since evaluative norms were somewhat lax and surmountable for payment.

It would not be daring to state that, the current Spain with a possible super-decentralized autonomous state, already quasi confederal, aspires to a return to the Ancien Regime's own guidelines, that of the Austrias, from which we were left with such a cruel phrase as "To go hungrier than a school teacher", although such hunger was not generalizable to all, and even less to the elder members of the Brotherhood of San Cassian.

### **Limitations and bias control**

The author is aware of the limitations of this highly idiosyncratic study because it is confined to the Spanish context and to a specific historical period, the Ancien Régime. A deterministic limitation, scarcely considered in the methodological literature, is entropy, which is feasible for historical studies; entropy<sup>13</sup> being understood as the change in the state of the evidence due to the double jump: from event to primary document and from this to the text of the final revision; Carr (1981, p. 30) already warned "that the facts of history never reach us in a pure state". This is a limitation, already emphasized by Cohen and Manion (1990, p. 90), due to the use of secondary sources (documents to be

integrated<sup>14</sup>) and which is unavoidable in any historiographical review.

One bias is admissible but preventable, such as that of oversimplification of the descriptions of the facts, given the limited space for editing a broader report. Another bias inherent in historical studies is that of presentism, interpreting the past with keys of the present without considering the context of past times. This reviewer/author has been aware of these threats of bias and has tried to avoid them conveniently; therefore, the report tends to be neutral, at the cost of appearing simplistic, but the narrative emphasis is on facts and cautiously less on sharp interpretations and comparisons.

## Advances

Possible advances of this study could focus on each of the evaluative facets, whether practices, institutions or figures, presented here to inquire them in depth and working mainly with primary sources. Such potential studies could be approached with novel methodologies (Vivas Moreno et al., 2005) such as the use of travelers' accounts and life histories, rich in opinions, descriptions, evaluations and value judgments, which swarmed through the uncommunicated Spain (Slidell McKenzie, 1836) but full of documentary narratives to be extracted from the national archives (i.e. Simancas, the King's archive) and personal archives relating to the Ancien Régime.

The findings presented here do not admit comparability with other historical-educational-evaluative studies, as they do not clearly exist or have not been located by this author; but evaluative appraisals in this respect would be admissible, although they are yet to be made, since Croce (quoted in Carr, 1981, p. 28) said that “all history is contemporary history”. Transpositions from the past to the present are feasible and deserve to be investigated; for example, investigating the figures of non-formal teachers such as the *(a)miga* [female friend] and the lectionist, which could take us to present times. Think, for example, of nursery teachers or individual teachers who have survived by giving private lessons. Both a historical and current study of non-formal teaching agents is lacking.

Historical-evaluative studies, inevitably idiosyncratic, would also be possible; for example, the current validity of the Ratio Studiorum or the comparison of the teacher selection model of the Brotherhood of St. Cassian with those implemented by the liberal system and even reaching those of our time.

The past always reappears, although sometimes as a caricature or, even worse, as a revived tragedy. To consider it with the maximum methodological rigor is the task that this study has tried to accomplish.

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## Endnotes

1. Eguiguren (1949) recovers an amusing and jocular Peruvian vexation of a clergyman doctoral candidate by another clergyman in the voice of an Indian servant of the former, who accuses him of being a pig, a miser and an abuser. The string of imputations continues with some “cedulillas” [little cards]. In one (p. 26), it is said that he is paramour to a nun. The humiliations continue with limericks and ten-line stanzas.

2. The crime of leaving children abandoned in the streets and doorways causes them to die of cold and hunger or eaten by dogs, and likewise in the transfer from distant towns to the city of the foundling home (de Bilbao, 1790, p. 44). García Lorca (1945) in his tragedy *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (The house of Bernarda Alba) describes a similar incident.

3. The certification could also be issued by the Military Orders, the archbishopric of Toledo, the four Colleges of Salamanca, the major colleges of Valladolid and Alcalá de Henares (Montagut Contreras, 2021) and ultimately by the *Justicia del pueblo* [judge of the common people]. Paying witnesses to vouch for cleanliness of blood should not have been a strange practice. To circumvent the all-powerful Inquisition only required intelligence and some money.

4. Recall the figure of the *dómine* [Latin teacher] Cabra in the picaresque novel *Historia de la vida del Buscón, llamado don Pablos, ejemplo de vagamundos y espejo de tacaños* [History of the life of the swindler, called Don Pablos, model for hobos and mirror of misers] by Francisco de Quevedo (2002).

5. This remunerative concept of the *casa-habitación* [house-room or housing] was extended until the end of the 20th century, in the case of

teachers who did not have municipal housing. In Spain, given the secular housing shortage, the State built houses for teachers and also for professors, such as those in the University City of Madrid.

6. Of course, excluding those then included in the Index (*Index librorum prohibitorum*), in force until 1966 (Consejo Supremo de la Santa Inquisición, 1583; Kamen, 2011).

7. Hence the term *pasante* [paralegal] still used today for law students on internships in law firms and consultancies. Such an examination was the only one in the career of a university student in the Ancien Régime, promotion was based on attendance proven by two witnesses. In contrast to today's "titulitis" [obsession with acquiring an academic degree], it was more important to prove the time invested in the study (Beck Varela, 2018).

8. Remember Luis de Góngora's little romance: "Sister Marica,/Tomorrow, which is a holiday,/You will not go to your female friend/Nor will I go to school". In the kingdom of Granada they were called "migas", not to be confused with the culinary preparation, by the ellipsis of the letter a-. In the Granada street map we can find the *Placeta* [Little square] *de la Miga* [of the female friend], located in the Lower Albayzin neighborhood. The (a)miga used to receive a meager stipend from the parents. In the city of Granada at the end of the XIX and beginning of the XX century it used to be "un chavico" [almost a dime coin] per week [¿?], that is, ten cents of peseta, a "perra gorda" [one dime].

9. The selection of positions by election of those presented was not always possible, either due to lack of will or fear of being elected to the point that they resorted to random sortition, to draw from a sack a chosen person (Chamocho Cantudo, 1998).

10. Arbiters were from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century, basically the Spanish Golden Age. Novators worked from the mid-17th to the first third of the 18th century and were continued with the illustrators, who covered the rest of the century.

11. Not only was the university in Spain questioned, but Napoleon also reformed the obsolete French university in depth, even creating alternative institutions such as the *École Normale Supérieure* [Higher Normal School] (Boudon, 2006).

12. Mestre Sanchis (1996, p. 61) reproduces part of the letter that the dean Manuel Martí addressed to Gregorio Mayans complaining about politicians who did not lend the means for the

edition of his *Epistolae*, for which there was no money, but that "if it were for whores or comediennes (which is the same thing), procuresses or gypsies women [sic] (which is the proper thing), or buffoons, of course they would have agreed to it". Martí's blunt and current politically incorrect evaluation of the cultural state of the Spain of his time; read more about it in Gil Fernández (1986). It is debated whether Martí is the author of the *Sinapia* utopia (López, 1982).

13. The concept of entropy taken from thermodynamics means that in every change of state there is a loss of energy, of wear and tear, because the system becomes disordered and irreversible. In a historiographic review there is also a double change: from fact to primary data and then from primary to integrated secondary data. Something similar happens in double translation, as has occur with Russian originals, which have mostly come into Spanish from English translations; for example, the writings of Vygotsky (Fernández Cano et al., 2000). Reversing the Spanish text into Russian would produce another text that is different and of questionable resemblance to the original.

14. The papers integrated into a historiographical review are composed by authors who generally did not live, or rather, did not experience the historical event but through ad hoc documents (i.e. official reports, chronicles, archival data, memoirs, memoirs of participants/witnesses, files, letters, ...). Those papers are already secondary sources in their origin.

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