

BETWEEN THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL: INTERTWINING ARCHIVES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HISTORY OF COLONIAL NORTHEAST RIOPLATENSE

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Abstract: This research recovers methodological and heuristic interests that developed a few years ago, which have led us to work on the local and global historical archives from a humanistic horizon. This task puts us in a different place as historians, for it forces us to rethink the social function of the archives and of the historians in those archives. In the Northeast region of present-day Argentina, the space for discussion on archives begins to be a terrain won over by historians, who develop projects to recover, digitise and conserve documentary sources. Throughout this article we will focus on characterising a set of global and local archives that are vital to Rioplatense colonial history. We are interested in problematizing about documentary dispersion and how we build documentary corpus from sources that lie in different repositories. Beyond exploring them and briefly entering its institutional history, the work is oriented to present an in-depth analysis of the documentary typologies that can be found in those archives and that are vital to historical research in the region.

Keywords: archives, colonial history, repositories, globalisation, Río de la Plata.

Northeast Rioplatense is a region located in South America, within the Río de la Plata Basin. It currently comprises a large part of Argentina, Paraguay, southern Brazil, Bolivia and Uruguay. This large area belonged administratively to the High Courts of Charcas (*Audiencia de Charcas*) and the Viceroyalty of Peru in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries until the creation of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata (1776). In this region were founded the following cities: Buenos Aires, Santa

ISSN 2283-7949
GLOCALISM: JOURNAL OF CULTURE, POLITICS AND INNOVATION
2021, 2, DOI: 10.12893/gjcp.2021.2.11
Published online by "Globus et Locus" at <https://glocalismjournal.org>



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Fe, Corrientes, Asunción, Villa Rica, Concepción del Bermejo, starting the mid-sixteenth century. Outside these urban centers, the so-called Jesuit Province of Paraguay was configured with its 30 reductions, along with other villages of Indians under the authority of the Franciscans, complementing the panorama.

The historical construction of the colonial Northeast Rioplatense involves exploring economic, social and political processes in formation, of very diverse uniqueness during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. On the one hand, the districts of cities such as Corrientes, Asunción or Concepción del Bermejo, on the other hand the Jesuit missions of Guaranies, without neglecting the complexity posed by the Chaco in colonial times and above all, the notorious presence of Paraguay. This set of spaces that were articulated in the Northeast did not present a homogeneity in their institutional, economic or social structures; there was no hierarchical center capable of operating on them.

If the historical complexity of the Northeast is a tense theoretical problem, the heuristic question is even more difficult for historians to solve. When reconstructing the colonial history of the Northeast Rioplatense, it is essential to work with a set of repositories that are located in different American spaces. Local archives located in the present-day Argentinian provinces are insufficient in the attempt to build a northeastern colonial history. Historical sources are not only found in local archives but are protected in regional, national and international archives. The documentation of the Colonial Northeast Rioplatense has been disaggregated into numerous repositories for different reasons: colonial administration, institutional changes and/or abductions developed in the nineteenth century. The historian must have a deep knowledge of these archival processes, so that his documentary task be more efficient and a more complete thinking may be achieved.

This research recovers methodological and heuristic interests that developed a few years ago, which have led us to work on the local and global historical archives from a humanistic horizon¹. This task puts us in a different place as historians, for it forces us to rethink the social function of the ar-

chives and of the historians in those archives. In the Northeast region of present-day Argentina, the space for discussion on archives begins to be a terrain won over by historians, who develop projects to recover, digitise and conserve documentary sources. Throughout this article we will focus on characterising a set of global and local archives that are vital to Rioplatense colonial history. We are interested in problematizing about documentary dispersion and how we build documentary corpus from sources that lie in different repositories.

Beyond exploring them and briefly entering its institutional history, the work is oriented to present an in-depth analysis of the documentary typologies that can be found in those archives and that are vital to historical research in the region. The approach is organised into four sections: the first aims at presenting theoretical problems about archival notions and the archival turn. The second is dedicated to providing a brief state of the art of regional works that have characterised documentary repositories. The third seeks to propose a geographical, political and administrative contextualisation of the northeast region. In this framework we explore the communication and circulation of documentation between the Northeast, Charcas and Spain as a way of explaining the appearing of administrative archives. In this context, we also analyse the cultural movement of collecting in the nineteenth century which had consequences in the dispersion and creation of personal collections of documentation referring to the Northeast Rioplatense. The last section focuses on analysis of global and local archives by exploring the institutional history of each repository and focusing on the most interesting series or backgrounds for the history of the northeast.

To undertake this task, it was essential to perform a heuristic survey in the National Archive and Library of Bolivia, the National Assembly of Asunción, the National Library of Rio de Janeiro, the Archives of Indies and the General Archive of the Nation (Argentina). We also include a research work in the local archives and libraries where we explore the repository and documentary typologies, specifically focusing on the General Archive of the Province of Corrientes, the General Archive of the Province of Entre Ríos, the Historical Archive



of the Province of Chaco, the General Archive and Library of the Province of Misiones and the General Archive of the Province of Formosa.

PROBLEMS ABOUT THE NOTION OF ARCHIVE

From the emergence of history as a scientific discipline to the consolidation of the critical-documentary paradigm, an indissoluble alliance was sealed between the historiographic operation and the documents contained in an Archive (Ogas Bilbao 2017: 2). This question meant that the historian's task is associated with passing through the archives, that is, going to a physical place or warehouse where the sources or documents essential to resolving doubts or questions about man's past would be found. In the words of Jacques Le Goff: "Any historian dealing with historiography or the profession of historian will remember that it is essential to resort to documents" (Le Goff in Ogas Bilbao 2017: 2).

For the historian, the archive was the place where the documentation of the past was located. This initial definition refers to the classic Greek term *archeion*, denoting "the cabinet where public documents and diplomas of special interest to the *polis* were preserved: laws, treaties, decrees, court rulings, etc. governing the internal life of a city-state and its relations with the outside world" (Moradiellos 2013: 435). Taking up the definition of the Covarrubias Dictionary, which stated that the archive was "the drawer where original privileges and memories are saved. This keep the Kings of Castile in Seville de Simancas with great order and custody and after them all the lords, cities, churches, convents and communities" (Covarrubias in Añon 2016: 255, our translation).

For a long time, the archive was:

The storage site, where the past has deposited footprints and fragments that are enclosed inside boxes, vaults and walls to make themselves available. This meant that the archive was a place of observation for the historian who could have contact with the past by reading the documents and as such, it was a place of credibility both epistemological and ethical (Ogas Bilbao 2017: 2, our translation).

The idea of a room with a good collection of manuscripts, ease of access and an aura of silent isolation is a thing of the past, quoted Ann Laura Stoler in her article *Colonial Archives and the Art of Governing*. With a retouched idea of Sherron de Hart, Stoler developed a new approach about the archives as fact-producing cultural agents, developing taxonomies and state authority (2013). This new approach involved revisiting the approaches of Michel Foucault (1969), Michel De Certeau (1993) and Jacques Derrida (1995), which have led to questioning the definition of archive as a source or repository to establish the idea that archives are cultural objects and artifacts in the so-called archival turn.

The archival turn has put the archive as “an object of study in its own right”, which is a turning point that implies the need to historicise our understanding of archive nature and management (De Vivo 2013: 699). In this new theoretical perspective, the archive is not the sum of all the texts that preserves a culture nor the institutions that allow to preserve such records, but a system of statements or rules of practice that shape the specific regularities of what can and cannot be said (Foucault in Stoler 2010). Or, in other words, the archive is a place of the imaginary and the institutions which creates stories as it hides, reveals, and reproduces state power².

For a long time, the experience of the archive did not seem to require much reflection, beyond the technical or political problem of preservation and access, as argues the historian Lila Caimari in her book *Vida en el Archivo*. However, in recent decades, scholars and historians have reflected on the archives and repositories, giving an account of the processes of reconstruction and haphazard construction of the documentary corpus. That is, historical and archival research has tried to unravel the obscure (least brilliant) moment constituted by the collection, search and construction of “data” by the researcher (Caimari 2017). This has produced numerous records on the personal or collective vicissitudes in public or private archives, in which difficulties and silences have constituted deviations that historians had to overcome in order to reconstruct their objects of studies. Lila Caimari’s research is key to



illuminating processes of enjoyment, tediousness and detours in the craft of history.

In the field of colonial history, there has been research that gives an account of the emergence of analysis about colonial archives and their configurations. They have appeared accompanying ethnohistorical approaches that have put special interest in recovering stories and voices of invisibilized or forgotten subjects. That is, the coming of new theoretical questions centered on subaltern populations such as indigenous, enslaved and/or female subjects has led historians to seek out and rescue their voices in state-administrative sources. This tour of repositories, series, and files has meant for the historians the questioning about aspects related to the configuration of the archives. In this context, the need has arisen to pause and not to overlook the conventions, the practices that make up their tacit order, their organisational protocols and rules of disposition and reference.

For this reason, these new visions particularly impact colonial studies causing the emergence of analysis about the colonial archives and their configurations. Studies focus on the need to pause and not to ignore their conventions, the practices that make up their topical order, their organisational protocols, and disposition and reference standards. In this sense, the understanding of the archive is oriented towards the understanding of the institutions that it has served (Stoler 2010). Kathryn Burns' approaches in *Info The Archive. Writing and power in Colonial Peru* are key when it comes to thinking about the role of colonial archives as historical artifacts and the role of the historian in unraveling the voices of the past.

In this becoming and concern for the construction of colonial archives, we find works focused on explaining the configuration of certain archive and others devoted to some kind of specific record. In the first approach, we could locate the approach of Constanza González Navarro and Silvano Benito Moya on the Archive of the Province of Córdoba, which attend to a comprehensive look at the configuration of this documentary collection. For the case of Chile, we highlight Claudio Ogass Bilbao's master's thesis (2017) entitled *Del cuerpo*

del rey al corpus eclesiásticos: genealogía del archivo de la parroquia de El Sagrario, Santiago de Chile (Siglos XVII-XVIII).

In the second approach, we would include situated analyses such as that of Caroline Cunill (2016) which explores the birth and operating of the Mayan archives in the Yucatan of the sixteenth century, or the case of María Cecilia Oyarzabal and Dolores Estruch on indigenous and archives in Colonial Jujuy (2016). We could also highlight the proposal of Roxana Boixadós and María Clara Larisgoitía on the *Archivos y (des) memoria indígenas en La Rioja (Argentina)*, published in 2020. These historical or ethno-historical works suggest the need to rethink the archive configuration, emphasizing the need to understand how the archive was built or how it became as such. This implies a deconstruction of the archive as an institution and above all, the analysis of its repositories and their limits or silences.

THINKING ABOUT NORTHEAST RIOPLATENSE FROM LOCAL AND REGIONAL ARCHIVES

In the northeast region, interest in archives is underworked and little cared for by historians and archivists. However, there are some works that resume interest in the archives as an “object of knowledge” in the region. In these approaches we find an overview of local archives, while other approaches have been interested in certain repository and/or archives. We believe that all of these researches are valuable backgrounds that, in short, account for the region and its archives in the broad sense.

In 1978, Ernesto Maeder published the article *Relevamiento de fondos documentales de los archivos de la región nordeste de Argentina y de Asunción del Paraguay*, which featured a series of local and regional archives that were vital to the historian interested in the history of the northeast region. In this approach, centrality was given in the administrative and historical archives which were located in the present Argentine provinces of Corrientes, Chaco, Formosa and Misiones. It also proposed a characterisation of the National

ISSN 2283-7949

GLOCALISM: JOURNAL OF CULTURE, POLITICS AND INNOVATION

2021, 2, DOI: 10.12893/gjpci.2021.2.11

Published online by “Globus et Locus” at <https://glocalismjournal.org>



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Archive of Asunción as Paraguay's main documentary repository. It provided future users with helpful information about each archive such as general information, document collection, documentary resources as well as other relevant data. This research could fall into the category of a renewed guide to local archives, but as a reading of the archives of the region it was insufficient and limited, because the construction of the history of the region requires an approach from the regional or global archives.

Years later, Ernesto Maeder edited the research concerning the Angelis Collection that was safeguarded at the National Library of Rio de Janeiro. The article provided a holistic look at the organisation and history of the documentary collection, highlighting how the collection had been built and then acquired by the National Library of Rio de Janeiro. Specifically, the article provided valuable inventory on Chaco mapping, sources and records.

As for research focused on certain documentary repositories, we can mention the approaches to the National Archive of Asunción³ and its repositories. One of those was developed by Herib Caballero Campos and aimed at exploring the organisation of the NAA, paying special attention to the collections and identifying sources for a regional history of the Northeast (2014: 321-330). To this, we must add the publication called *Estado de las fuentes documentales y bibliotecas públicas y privadas en el Paraguay para el estudio de las dos guerras* by Adelina Pusineri (2006). This work surveys more than 40 documentary repositories between archives and libraries that can be consulted in Paraguay when undertaking research focused on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is also worth mentioning the work of Ignacio Telesca focused on the NAA, which seeks to catalog and inventory the Jesuit documents that are disaggregated in the repositories of these sections: History, New Binding, Civil and Judicial and Testaments-Properties. This approach focuses on the history of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay which leads to examining documentation that could be vital when undertaking research on this subject.

As studies focused on certain documentary records, articles were published that explored the sources for the study of northeastern Argentina in colonial times from the documentation of the General Archive of the Province of Corrientes (GAPC). This line includes the works of Enrique Schaller which aims to provide a description of the GAPC documentary repository; and following that perspective, we should mention the publication of Fernando Ariel Pozzaglio, Rocio Moreno Cabanillas and Pedro Omar Svriz Wucherer (2019). Also the works of M. Laura Salinas and Fátima Valenzuela on the judicial repositories of the Archive of Corrientes (2019).

In relation to production focused on specific record types, the book *Entre los datos y los formatos. Indicios para la historia indígena de las fronteras en los archivos coloniales* coordinated by Lidia Nacuzzi is a key approach to exploring the documentary sources which allow to reconstruct the indigenous history of the Chaqueña and Pampean borders. This collective research analyses the formats of the documents, the vestiges of bureaucracy, the different voices and the silences that can be perceived in them. We incorporate this production because it dialogues and shares an interest in rescuing fundamental sources for the reconstruction of the history of the Great Chaco, from an ethnohistoric approach.

THE REGION OF COLONIAL NORTHEAST RIOPLATENSE: THE PROBLEM OF REPOSITORIES DISPERSION IN LOCAL AND GLOBAL ARCHIVES

The approach to the break down and dispersion of sources in the case of the northeast region has an intimate relationship with the institutional, political and administrative functioning of these lands in relation to colonial power. For this reason, when a researcher tries to locate the colonial documentation he has to reflect on the contexts of institutional production, that is, consider general aspects of the institutions transplanted and/or grafted from de Península (Lohman Villena 2000: 452; Lucaioli 2018: 203). In this way, in this section, we will make a brief consideration towards the institutional history of the region which



Fig. 1. *The Northeast region.*

Source: *Own elaboration based on the cartography of Gutiérrez, Maeder, 1995: 17.*

will allow us to problematise the dispersion of colonial sources and the idea of a multiplicity of archives for a historical region. The Colonial Northeast was located in the space we represent on the following map (figure 1).

From the arrival of the Spaniards and their distribution in the Rio de la Plata basin, these spaces began to be limited with the foundation of cities, the definition of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions, the gradual settlement and the productive occupation of the lands (Maeder, Gutierrez 1995: 16). In the

Northeast, exploration and discovery trips accompanied the process of founding cities in the River Plate Basin: Asunción (1537-1541), Ontiveros (1554), Ciudad Real (1557), Santa Cruz de la Sierra (1561), Villa Rica (1570), Corrientes (1588), Concepción del Bermejo (1585), Santa Fe (1573), Buenos Aires (1580), Santiago de Jerez (1593). Shaping throughout the territory was “a complex and widespread network of institutions and jurisdictions that the Habsburgs worked in their distant American provinces such as town councils [*cabildos*], magistracies [*corregimientos*], governorates [*gobernaciones*], high courts [*audiencias*], viceroyalties [*virreinos*], among others, which constituted a political-administrative technology” (Barriera 2019: 238).

The incorporation of these territories into the viceroyalty of Peru, created in 1542, occurred gradually, displacing the regime of the *adelantados* [judicial and military administration officers in the border zone]. In 1593, the first governor of the Río de la Plata was appointed and a minor province was established, politically subordinated to the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata and at the judicial level, to the *Audiencia de Charcas*. The enormous distances between the jurisdictions caused the authorities to arrange the division of these lands into two provinces by the Royal Decree (*Real Cédula*) of 1617. The province of Guayra or Paraguay with capital in Asunción had jurisdiction in the cities of Villa Rica, Ciudad Real and Santiago de Jerez. The province of Río de la Plata with capital in Buenos Aires, was responsible for the cities of Corrientes, Santa Fe and Concepción del Bermejo. In these spaces, the colonial administration was in the hands of governors residing in the head cities of the provinces⁴. In subordinate cities resided the lieutenant governors, who performed different functions such as the command of justice and the militias. In cities, the *cabildo* was “the expression of local power, for it was the gathering of the local notables, neighbors [*vecinos*] who made up the political body of the city” (Barriera 2019: 234) (our translation).

In the Northeast, a set of reductions and villages of Indians were established in the space of Paraguay and Corrientes between 1580 and 1615. In the vicinity of Asunción, were

erected San Lorenzo de Altos (1580), San Blas de Itá (1585) and San Buenaventura de Yaguarón (1586). To the north of Asunción were located: Tobatí, San Francisco de Atirá, Ipané, Guarambaré and Perico. To the south-west, appeared Caazapa and Yutí. Very close to Corrientes, emerged Itatí, Candelaria de Ohoma, Santa Ana de las Guácaras and Santa Lucia⁵. Outside the villages of clerics and Franciscans, the Jesuit Province of Paraguay was configured. From 1610, the Society of Jesus set out to develop missionary entrances and fronts in Guayrá, Iguazu-Monday, Uruguay, Tape and Itatín. Which led to the foundation of about forty villages of different Guaraní identities between 1610-1636⁶.

The whole of cities, Indian villages and Jesuit reductions constituted the administrative and population centers of the Colonial Northeast, however, outside these spaces was the large space of the Gran Chaco. In this vast territory, numerous indigenous groups with diverse ethnic and linguistic identities lived, which offered systematic resistance to political subjection for a long time⁷. Colonial institutions sought the constant pacification of these indigenous nations, so they relied on the Society of Jesus to reduce insubordinate groups to villages.

SCATTERED AND DISAGGREGATED PAPERS OF THE COLONIAL NORTHEAST ON A GLOBAL SCALE

The importance that in the colonial period had the circulation of ideas, resources and people between Spain and America is known, involving in their journey the existing societies on both sides of the Atlantic (Salinas 2009: 30). In this sense, we are interested in exploring the circulation of documentation. “In modern times, institutions begin to record in writing many actions [...] and on the other hand, to systematically preserve the documents received and produced in the exercise of their functions as a guarantee of their functions used in their management and resolution” (Gómez Gómez 2012: 158) (our translation). The emergence of writing, the consolidation of writing and reading practices invade new social and cultural facets. This gives rise to the development of

the written document as a means of communication between the various delegated bodies and the figure of the monarch, at the same time, the subjects capture in writing their requests and pleas as the author herself argues. The circulation of documents in American spaces was a way of governing and ensuring control between Spain and America⁸. The monarchy appealed to the use of documents as a way of communicating with the authorities and people of the New World, to notify decisions, to deliver justice, in short, to govern the Indies (Pérez Cañete 2017). As Horts Pietschmann points out, the general written submission as well as the particular royal document was prepared in order to solve problems of distance from the Indies and to be able to transfer the monarch's authority (1989).

The complex network of institutions and jurisdictions that operated in the Northeast Rioplatense region has produced a huge documentary mass of different nature. The *cabildos*, lieutenants governors (*tenientes de gobernadores*), local notables (*vecinos*), religious orders and many other actors have been the producing agents of papers, writings and diverse documentation. Many times, the circulation of these papers was local, but on most occasions, the production was sent to higher institutions that had to keep control of these spaces and above all, administer justice and resolve local conflicts⁹.

The *cabildo*, the lieutenants governors, the governors of the provinces of Río de la Plata and Guayra generated numerous writings linked to the colonial administration of the territory. This documentation could have an internal circulation in the area of governorates, but it was also forwarded to the spaces of greater colonial control such as the headquarters of the Virrey, the *Audiencia* or the Council of Indies. In the case of the Northeast, the circulation of documentation commonly reached two areas: the *Audiencia de Charcas* and the Council of the Indies (*Consejo de Indias*). The *Audiencia de Charcas* in its role as the highest court of justice for these lands, received and kept documentation relating to the Northeast, but in turn produced its own papers when it handed down judgments in the disputes it attended. On the peninsula,



Fig. 2. *Circulation between Charcas, Indies, Northeast Rioplatense and Sevilla.*

Source: *Own elaboration.*

the Council of the Indies imposed maximum control over the peripheral and marginal spaces of the Empire, for that reason, it protected the documentation relating to the government, treasury (*hacienda*) and justice of these lands.

From the peninsula, the Monarchy, the Council of Indies, the House of Commerce (*Casa de Contratación*) and the different secretaries of state have produced their own documentation for the control and management of the overseas territories. For this reason, the peninsular institutions have generated their roles about the administration and organisation of the territories of the Colonial Northeast. But in turn, they have received accurate reports of the state of the jurisdictions of governors, viceroys, and *Audiencias*. The peninsular archives have been the safeguard of documentation, to them came *emisiones*, reports, news and all kinds of documentation. From the central authorities, documentation and provisions for these territories were dispatched.

With regard to documentary circulation, it is necessary to focus on the birth of the first “State Archives”, in which all the documentation generated by the Crown was concentrated. The monarchy had to gather the documents concerning the state government. The archive became the fundamental element of the administrative machinery and acquired a predominant legal-political function. The possibility of maintaining organic repositories from the producing institutions gave rise to the archives as institutional deposits (see Lopez 2017). In this regard, it is interesting to highlight two examples: the Simancas Archive,¹⁰ which was created between 1540 and 1545, as the first attempt to organise a deposit of official documents in the kingdom of Castilla and the General Assembly of The Indies.

The General Archive of the Indies was created following the disposition of King Carlos III, with the purpose of gathering in one place the documents concerning the Indies, which until then were scattered in centers located in Simancas, Cadiz and Seville. This new archive would receive documentation from different producing agencies, initially having to transfer repositories from the Council of The Indies, the Secretaries of



State and the Office (*Secretarías de Estado y del Despacho*), the *Casa de Contratación* and the Consulates.

COLLECTING IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, AS A PROCESS OF DISPERSAL AND CREATION OF PERSONAL COLLECTIONS

The circulation of colonial documentation was one of the causes that led to the dispersal of the papers of northeastern Rioplatense. This natural process had an impact on the composition of the repositories of the archives established between the eighteenth and nineteenth century, as we will discuss in the following sections. However, outside of this process, we have to refer to cultural practices that shaped the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. These practices generated a circulation of colonial documentation, and above all, they developed a dissemination of repositories and the emergence of private collections in libraries of regional scope.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, an eagerness arose for the possession of collection of documents and books.¹¹ The collections were formed with the aim of «access to the past, so in the passage of the eighteenth to nineteenth century, a stage of search, collection and trafficking of documents will be inaugurated" (Angueira 2020) (own translation). Argentine historians emphasised the need to design the works on the basis of original documents. This generated a large network in which books circulated and also documents, either in copies and originals. Pedro de Angelis was the intellectual who started the field in the Río de la Plata, and then others such as Bartolomé Mitre will join. The form of constitution of personal archives and libraries was based on purchase, exchange and donations. Historians and/or interested parties were generating their personal libraries, with a large number of copies or volumes. In this analysis we would like to highlight two collections that were configured with repositories related to the Northeast Rioplatense: the Collection of Pedro de Angelis, acquired by the National Library of Rio de Janeiro and the Library of Mitre.

When it comes to thinking about where the northeast colonial documentation is located, it is key to be clear about the circulation and operation of American colonial institutions, the configuration of state archives, and the organisation of private collections in the nineteenth century. These processes have impacted the dissemination of sources and repositories in global, regional and local archives and libraries. In this sense, the revision of local archives is insufficient to explain the history of the Northeast, without a knowledge of all these repositories.

THE LOCAL AND GLOBAL ARCHIVES FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF NORTHEAST HISTORY

The disaggregation and dissemination of colonial repositories in the control institutions of Spain and America, implied that the documentation of the Northeast Rioplatense has been preserved and protected in different parts of the world. The historian should know in detail this process of configuration and organisation of local, regional and global archives. Many times, consulting local repositories could generate the idea of absence of documents that would lead to a silence in the writing of history. On the other hand, if the historian applied the same processes in other archives of regional and global scope, he would find clues or traces to better reconstruct the history. In this way, the intertwining of repositories would be a routine of heuristic work for colonialists. In this section we will try to briefly present the configuration of the archives from the local to the global.

Outside the Northeast space, we find that there are regional or global archives or libraries that protect documentation on this wide territory. Specifically, we would like to refer to: *a*) archive of Indies in the city of Sevilla (Spain); *b*) national Archive and Libraries of Bolivia, located in the city of Sucre (Bolivia); *c*) general Archive of the Nation based in the city of Buenos Aires (Argentina); *d*) national Library of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) is a very valuable documentary collection to take into account when trying to reconstruct the history of the region.

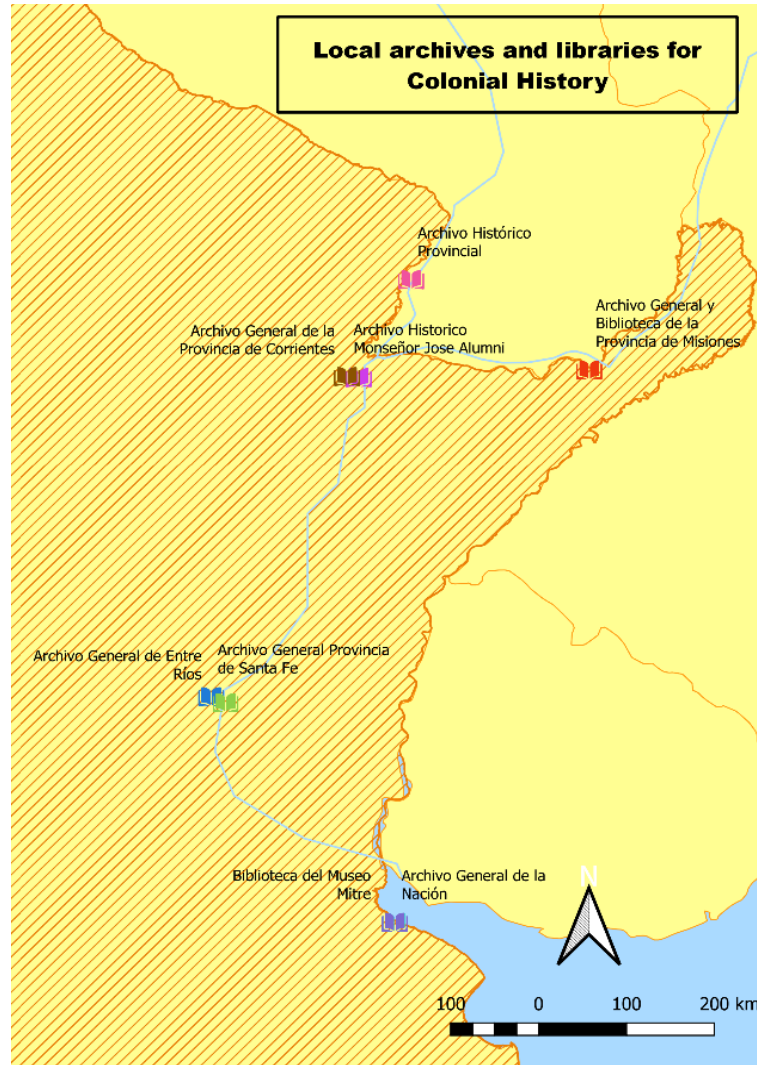


Fig. 3. *Local archives and libraries for Colonial History.*

Source: *Own elaboration.*



Fig. 4. *Global archives and libraries for Colonial History.*

Source: *Own elaboration.*

Also worth mentioning is the Mitre Museum located in the city of Buenos Aires, which has interesting collections related to the Northeast Rioplatense. Throughout this section, we will take care of analyzing the origin and institutional history of these repositories which will allow us to focus on their collections and series. In this task, we will track documentation of the studied region and focus on description of the documentary typology and its presence in Global or Regional American archives.

THE INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF GLOBAL ARCHIVES AND THEIR REPOSITORIES

The General Archive of the Indies (GAI)[AGI]

The *Archivo General de Indias (AGI)* was created on paper in the Royal Decree of 22 November 1781 and effectively in October 1785, with the laudable intention of archival coherence. The creation of the archive involved the establishment of Ordinances for its government, a magnificent monument of archival doctrine that collects and reworks the entire Spanish archival tradition.

The GAI will safeguard documentation from a set of metropolitan and colonial bodies; that is, collections would be received from the various offices of the Council or metropolitan bodies. These include: *a*) Counsel of the Indies (*Consejo de Indias*, sixteenth-nineteenth centuries); *b*) Consulates of Sevilla and Cádiz (*Consulados de Sevilla y Cádiz*, sixteenth-nineteenth centuries); *c*) Secretaries of State and Universal Office of the Indies, State, Grace and Justice, Treasury and War (*Secretarías de Estado y del Despacho Universal de Indias, de Estado, de Gracia y Justicia, Hacienda y Guerra*, eighteenth-nineteenth centuries); *d*) General Secretary of Arrivals (*Secretaria General de Arribadas*, eighteenth-nineteenth centuries); *e*) Comptroller of the Public Treasury of Cadiz (*Comisaría Interventora de la Hacienda Pública de Cádiz*, eighteenth-nineteenth centuries); *f*) Directorate General of the Revenue of Post Office (*Dirección General de la renta de Correos*, eighteenth century); *g*) Court of

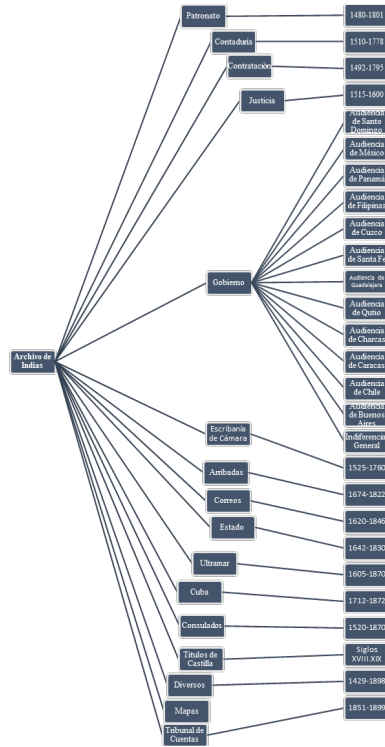


Fig. 5. Archival repositories of the General Archive of The Indies.

Source: Own elaboration based on information gathered from the GAI Classification Table.

Accounts (*Tribunal de Cuentas*, nineteenth century); *b*) Royal Havana Company (Real Compañía de la Habana, eighteenth-nineteenth centuries)¹².

The documentation came from colonial institutions such as Captaincy General of Cuba (*Capitanía General de Cuba*) or archives belonging to individuals related to colonial administration such as the Duke of Veragua or Viceroy Abascal¹³. The possibility of gathering documentation from all these producing bodies made GAI the main documentary repository for the study of the Spanish Administration in the New World, or, as has been said, the mecca of Americanism. This allows us to state that this archive fundamentally gathered

documentation regarding the conquest, rule and administration of the overseas territories, that for almost five centuries were in charge of the Spanish crown (López Gutiérrez 2007).

The GAI retains some 43,000 files containing documentation from the years 1480 to 1892, giving rise to 80 million pages of original documents. These involve about 8 linear kilometers of shelves that allow to delve into more than three centuries of history of an entire continent.

The organisation of the GAI documentary repositories respects the principle of origin, i.e. respect for the origin of either the institution or the functions of the institutions. Which implies an organic-functional classification, which determines about 16 sections that we represent in the graphic (figure 5).

The northeastern region of Rioplatense in the GAI

The documentation relating to the Northeast Rioplatense can be traced in general series of metropolitan bodies, but also in specific series referring to colonial bodies that served this jurisdictional space. We will try to reflect on the searches about the documentary series of the General Archive of the Indies, in this regard, we do not want to develop an inventory or list of sources but to suggest a problematization about the producing agencies that have safeguarded the documentation.

At the specific level of series, we have the documentary repositories of the *Audiencia de Charcas* and Buenos Aires that belong to the group of Section V – Government. With regard to the *Audiencia de Charcas*¹⁴, the documentation corresponds to the period 1534 to 1833 and is around 741 files¹⁵. As for the *Audiencia de Buenos Aires*, this corresponds to the first and second actions, so it extends between 1661-1671 and 1783. That's about 624 files. Globally, there are general series of metropolitan agencies that safeguard valuable documentation for the history of the northeast. These include documentation from the Council of the Indies, or from the Government Notary (*Escribanía de Gobierno*), Section VI of the GAI. The Council of the Indies as a metropolitan body is responsible for the following matters: legislative, executive, judicial, treasury

and military of the New World. Council repositories at the GAI are divided into two sections: Justice and Chamber of Justice Notary (*Justicia y Escribanía de Cámara de Justicia*). The documentation kept in the Chamber notary comes from the Council's Archive in Madrid. As a continuation of the justice section, it has been protecting documentation since 1790. For the case of the northeast, there are specific series such as: Litigations (*Pleitos*), Commissions (*Comisiones*), Residences (*Residencias*) and Visits to the *Audiencia* (*Visitas a la Audiencia*) de la Plata and Buenos Aires¹⁶.

La Casa de Contratación is section III of the GAI. In it, there are numerous administrative documentation linked to trade and to people who passed to the Indies. This body assumed a multiplicity of functions because it served in the treatment and negotiation with America and the collection and management of the assets of Real Hacienda and the Justice in which Royal Judges (*Oidores*) participated. The documentation in this series does not have a systematic organisation or organic classification. As for documentary typologies, it is possible to find Bail Bonds (*Fianzas*), Powers (*Poderes*), Public Deeds (*Asientos*), Petitions (*Peticiones*), Collection Actions (*Autos de cobranza*), Passengers to Indies (*Pasajeros a Indias*), among many other series. Inside these, there is a cluster of documentation referring to the northeast¹⁷.

The Accounting (*Contaduría*) section, as part of one of the offices of the Council of The Indies, constitutes the second section of the GAI. The crown had placed particular interest in tax control in the Indies, which induces the appearing of the Chief Accounting (*Contaduría Mayor*), the Board of Treasury of the Indies (*Junta de Hacienda de Indias*) and the Royal and Official Funds or Treasury in the Indies (*Cajas Reales y Oficiales en Indias*). In this section we find the papers belonging to the Royal Repository of Peru and Buenos Aires, which range from 1532-1775 and corresponding to the archives of 1679-1875.

National Archive and Libraries of Bolivia

In 1825, the Public Library of Chuquisaca or National Library of Bolivia was created as an institution that sought to safeguard the documentary repositories produced by the colonial institutions of Charcas and those generated in the sixty years of the Republic. In 1883, President Narciso Campero undertook the founding of the National Archive of Bolivia by law of October 18, 1883, which declared the “general archive of the nation [to be] that of the Old Audience of Charcas” (Inch2014: 166) (our translation). Since 1935, the National Archive of Bolivia has operated as a single entity and under the same Direction with the National Library of Bolivia, being called National Archive and Libraries of Bolivia (NALB). The NALB protects documentation corresponding to the public institutions of the colonial and republican era from 1549 to 2000. This became “one of the richest archives to reconstruct the history of Bolivia, Argentina, northern Chile, southern Peru and Paraguay” (own translation)¹⁸.

In the following leaderboard (figure 6), we organise two levels of the Archive: the three sections and the backgrounds of the colonial section. Below the backgrounds, we find the so-called sections and collections. In the case of the colony section, which is the one with the greatest interest in this study, we can mention that it is organised into repositories, series and factitious collections. Within the *Audiencia de la Plata* repositories, we find numerous series of singular importance for the Northeast Rioplatense. Among the series and factitious collections we should mention: *a*) Records (*Expedientes*), 23660 files (1569-1825); *b*) Royal Decrees (*Reales cédulas*), 1155 documentary units (1543-1820); *c*) Correspondence, 2069 documentary units (1493-1824); *d*) Agreements Books (*Libros de acuerdos*), 24 documentary units (1561-1824); *e*) Emancipación (*Emancipación*), 609 expedients (1807-1824); *f*) General Uprising of Indians (*Sublevación general de indios*), 350 files (1774-1810); *g*) Chamber Notary (*Escribanía de cámara*), 27 volumes (1748-1826); *h*) Loans High Court (*Juzgado mayor de censos*), 3 volumes; *i*) Academy of Forensic Practice (Academia de Práctica Forense), 2001 files; *j*) Documentary Resources on mining (*Recursos documentales sobre la minería*), 1528 files; *k*) Mojos and Chiquitos, 1572 files; *l*) Univer-

sity of San Francisco Xavier (*Universidad de San Francisco Xavier*), 105 records; *m*) Civil War between Vascongados and other nations in Potosí (*Guerra Civil entre vascongados y otras naciones en Potosí*), 49 documentary units; *n*) Tithes (*Diezmos*), 13 boxes¹⁹.

In the case of the Colonial Northeast, the series that collects the most documentation of the region is that of “Colonial Records”. These are civil and criminal records elevated to the *Audiencia* de la Plata. From our studied jurisdiction, we found trials, visits, litigations involving the notables (neighbors) of the cities of Corrientes, Concepción del Bermejo, Asunción, Santa Fe. These had been elevated to the *Audiencia* for resolution. The following cases are examples of some of the files found in this series: *a*) 1593. Buenos Aires Regiment with Don Torres de Vera *adelantado* of the province of Río de la Plata, having sold mares, horses and *potros cimarrones* as his heritage; *b*) 1607. Trial opposing Diego Martínez Irala and Domingo Verdejo Rojas on the *encomiendas* of Caliagyque Indians in Concepción²⁰; *c*) 1653. Visit of the Indians of the reduction village of Nuestra Señora de la Concepción de Itatí, by Garavito de León²¹; *d*) 1668. Captain Lucas Gómez de Saravia asks that the Indians who are in the city of Vera de las Siete Corrientes be reduced to the nation of the Ometas²².

The series *Real Cédulas* and *Books of Agreements* (*Libros de Acuerdos*) are very relevant to the history of Northeast Rioplatense. The Royal Decrees (*cédulas reales*), orders issued by the Spanish crown for the administrative regime of this jurisdiction of Charcas, extend from 1546 to 1820. For the search for the *cédulas reales*, we have several catalogues prepared by Gunnas Mendoza (1957) and Judith Terán Ríos and Jesús G. Torricos (2001). The Agreements Books have been transcribed by “the paleographers Jhemy Columba, Víctor Hugo Montecinos, Marlene Romay and Carmen Thompson, under the technical direction of the Spanish paleographer and researcher José Miguel López Villalba” in a work *Acuerdos de la Real Audiencia de La Plata* (Guiteras Mombiola 2009) (our translation).



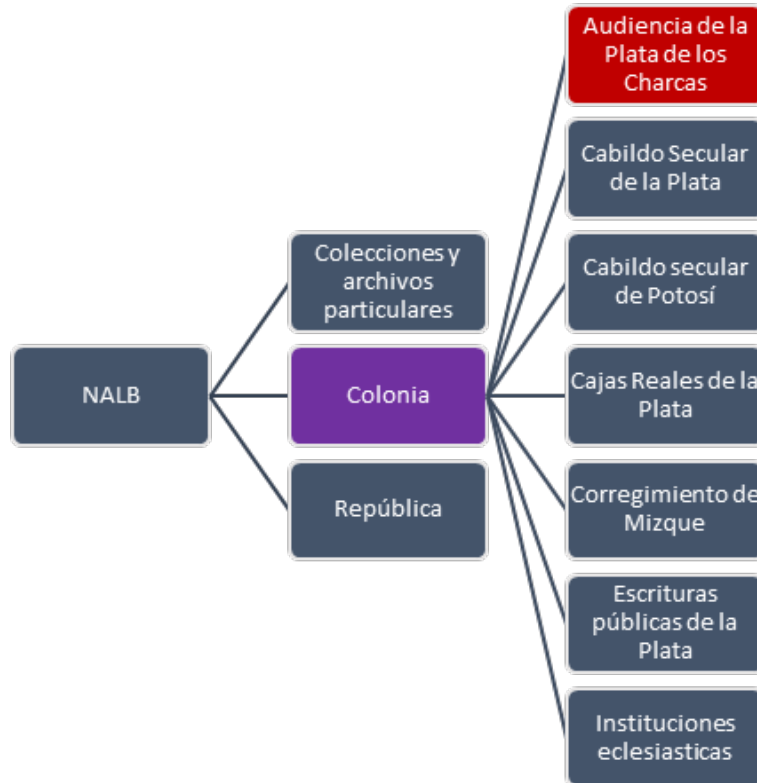


Fig. 6. *Bolivian National Archive and Libraries Classification Table.*

Source: *Own elaboration based on the Census-Guide of Archives of Spain and Latin America.*

The General Archive of the Nation

Governor Martín Rodríguez founded the Archive of the Buenos Aires Province in 1821. All the public archives existing at the time in the city of Buenos Aires were gathered there, in order to ensure the continuity of administration, the publicity of the acts and facilitate scientific research. In 1884, this institution was federalised, acquiring the name General Archive of the Nation by decree of President Julio Argentino Roca.

Since 1580, Buenos Aires was a management center of important archival value. The determination to be head of the viceroyalty-dependent governorate in Lima meant an increase in military, administrative and judicial documentation. When the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata was created, bureaucracy became more complex. For this reason, the colonial repository safeguards documentation of different institutions that operated in the Governorate and the Viceroyalty.²³

Currently, the GAN/AGN is divided into several departments: Written Documents, Intermediate Archive, Archive and Private Collections and Maps Libraries. The department of “Written Documents” preserves the public documentation produced by the Hispanic bureaucracy between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries until 1810, as by the post-May Revolution governments until 1870. It also retains documentation of private origin entered by purchase or donation²⁴. For a better organisation of this department, we elaborated the following graphic (figure 7).

The original order of the GAN Documentary Repositories has been altered on several occasions. In order to respect and recover the organisation of documents, it has been conceptually reorganised following ISAD-G standards. For this reason, the archival principle of provenance is followed, so that each Documentary Repository is identified with the natural or legal person who gave rise to them. Colonial institutions or bodies are presented in the following scheme: *a*) Political and legal institutions [*Instituciones políticas y jurídicas*] receive documentation from the following agencies or bureaucracies: Viceroy and Secretary of Chamber [*Virrey y Secretaría de Cámara*]; Secretary of the Governorate and Governorate of the Intendency [*Secretaría de la Gobernación y Gobernación de la Intendencia*], *Cabildo*, Justice and Regiment of Buenos Aires, [*Justicia y Regimiento de Buenos Aires*]; *Real Audiencia de Buenos Aires*; Royal Consulate Court, [*Real Tribunal del Consulado*]; *b*) Tax institutions receive documentation from the Royal Customs of Buenos Aires, [*Real Aduana de Buenos Aires*], Superior Board of the Royal Treasury [*Junta Superior de la Real Hacienda*], Superior Court and Royal Account High Courts [*Tribunal Mayor y Real Audiencia de Cuentas*], Royal Treasuries [*Cajas Reales*],



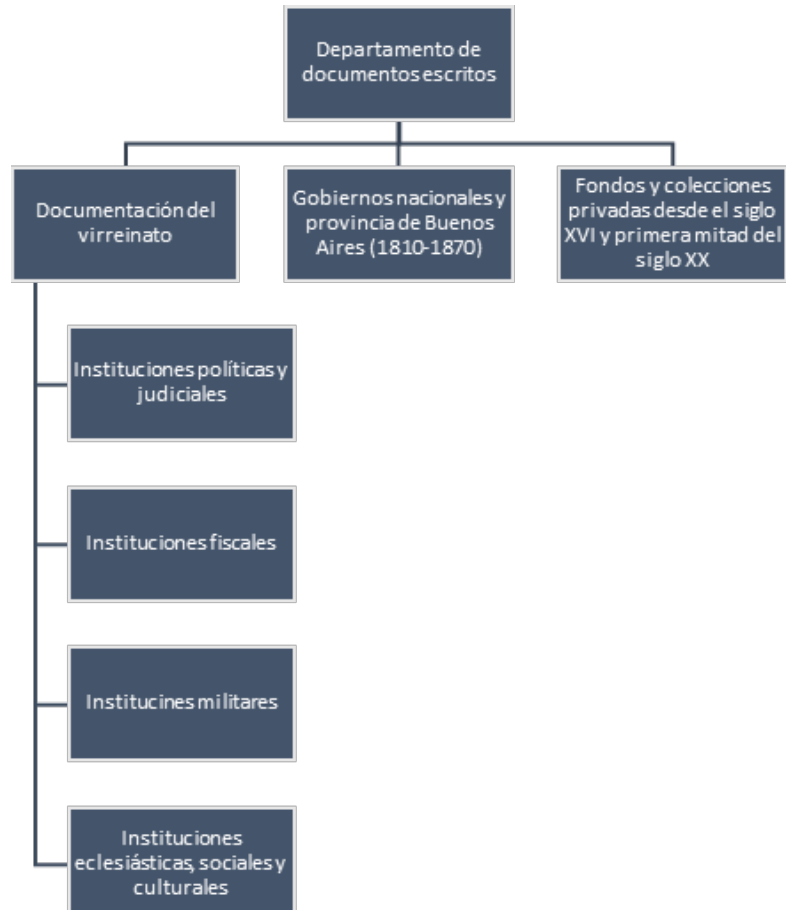


Fig. 7. Organization of the Department of Written Documents (GAN).

Source: Own elaboration based on information from the General Archive of the Nation, Documentary Repositories. Colonial period. Standard Description Program (2011).

General Directorate of Tobacco and Playing Cards [*Dirección General de Tabacos y Naipes*], Board of Temporalities [*Junta de Temporalidades*] and Royal Revenue of Post Office [*Real Renta de Correos*]; c) Military institutions are divided into two

areas: army and navy.; *d) Ecclesiastical, social and cultural* institutions : Bishopric of Buenos Aires, the Society of Jesus, College of San Carlos and Bethlehem Order, Order of Mercy, Order of Santo Domingo, Brotherhood of Holy Charity and Order of San Francisco.

Taking into account the organisation chart and classification table, the documentation relating to the Northeast may be linked to the action of political and legal institutions. The documents relating to Corrientes, Asunción, Paraguay, Santa Fe, villages of Indians, Jesuit missions are very varied although most refer to the eighteenth century. We can find information that was transferred to the Governorate, *Intendencia* and Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata from the local *cabildos*. We list some of that we found: *a) 1729. Corrientes Cabildo*. Represented by Francisco Solano Cabral with Pedro Griebes about the amount of cattle that the latter perceived. Courts²⁵; *b) 1790. Ecclesiastical Cabildo of Paraguay*. The Eminence Lord Bishop and the *Cabildo* of that locality represented the urgent need of that choir for one or two chaplains to supply the lack of several canons. Justice; *c) 1794. Cabildo of Itaty*. About elections of its *cabildo*. Interior; *d) 1717. Census of Indians in the city of San Juan de Vera*; *e) 1780. On the creation of the curate in Empedrado*.

The National Library of Rio de Janeiro

Globally, the National Library of Rio de Janeiro is a large collection that needs to be consulted when reconstructing the history of Northeast Rioplatense. The National Library of Rio de Janeiro arises from the installation of the Portuguese royal family in Brazil from 1808 and the transfer of the Royal Library. In 1810, it was founded under the name of Royal Library of Rio de Janeiro. This library was incorporating several documentary repositories from the purchase, donation or granting from individuals and public institutions.

In 1853, it incorporated the library and manuscript collection of Pedro de Angelis. This collection consisted of some 2785 printed volumes and 1291 handwritten documents. This



collection refers to the Jesuit documentation of Paraguay (seventeenth-eighteenth centuries) with countless documents relating to Guaraní and related groups, of the region. The de Angelis Collection was inventoried and a number of sections were established: *a*) Section I. Documents on the Provinces of the Río de la Plata; *b*) Section II. Untitled, divided into paragraphs. 1. Paraguayan Missions; 2. *Moxos* and *Chiquitos* Missions. 3. *Annuaire* of the Missions; *c*) Section IV. Untitled and divided into paragraphs. 1. Chaco Documents. 2. Documents on the coast of Patagonia. 3. Documents on the Strait of Magellan and Tierra del Fuego. 4. Documents on the Malvinas Islands; *d*) Section IV. Plans and maps (Maeder 1976: 200).

The value of this collection is considerable for the history of Argentina and neighboring countries, so it is essential to consult it when building the history of a region such as the Northeast. The documentation that integrates the collection is of diverse nature. There are government and administrative roles involving local authorities such as governors, but there is also documentation produced by the Society of Jesus for the government of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay and Chaco. We should also mention a set of very valuable travel diaries that refer to the entrances to the Chaco and the navigation of the Bermejo.

To cite some examples, without coming to present an inventory: *a*) 1638. Authorisation of the Governor of Buenos Aires so that the Indians of the reductions ravaged by the Portuguese, may bring their cows (*vaquear*) in the lands of the uruguayan and Corrientes reductions²⁶; *b*) 1651. Agreement of the Asunción *Cabildo*, not to receive tribute from the Indians, but to compel them to personal service²⁷; *c*) 1728. Letter of Viceroy of Peru, ordered to replace the Jesuit fathers at their school in Asunción del Paraguay²⁸; *d*) 1766. *Annuaire* of the Chaco reductions, from 1744 to 1766²⁹; *e*) 1780. Diary of the trip of D. Jaime Nadal y Guarda, from the reduction of San Bernardo el Vértiz to the city of Corrientes; *f*) 1788. Description of the bishopric of Asunción del Paraguay. Currently, the National Library of Rio de Janeiro allows online consultation of its digital collection.



Fig. 8. National Archive of Asunción.

Source: *Own elaboration.*

The local archives of Northeast Rioplatense

In the northeastern region of Rioplatense, a series of national or provincial historical archives were configured. These maintained the peculiarity of being linked to the former colonial cities of the region such as Asunción, Corrientes and Santa Fe. Outside of those archives, we should mention others that were configured in Chaco, Misiones, and Formosa. In this section we will briefly discuss the institutional history and the main repositories of these archives. The National Archive of Asunción³⁰ (NAA/ANA) was established by Hernandarias in 1596. This repository is considered the oldest in the Southern Cone and contains fundamental documentation for the study of five centuries of Paraguayan and regional history from the title of Governor and Captain General granted to Pedro de Mendoza to the Memoirs of General Francisco Isidoro Resquín on Paraguay's war against the Triple Alliance³¹.

The NAA organisational graphic is shown in figure 8. For the colonial period, the main series are New Binding (*Nueva Encuadernación*), History, Civil-Judicial, Properties and Testaments, and Books of Treasury (*Libros de Hacienda*): a) History sections, made up of about 499 boxes, it is possible to find government documentation such as chapter acts (*actas capitulares*), (*reales cédulas*) or correspondence; b) New Binding section, consisting of about 3417 volumes, “safeguards documentation of diverse nature such as wills, chapter acts, census, trials, etc.” (Telesca 2006: 9, our translation); c) Civil and judicial section: 947 volumes; d) Properties and wills section; e) Treasury Books (*Libros de Hacienda*): 67 volumes.



Fig. 9. General Archive of the Province of Corrientes.

The most part of these series are catalogued and inventoried. Currently, the online consultation is possible on the official website of the National Archive of Asunción and in the Mormon Latter-day Church. The National Archive of Asunción offers many possibilities for the study of regional history. It has central documentation for the study of boundary issues, political history, commercial traffic in the region, social-family relations between Corrientes, Asunción and Paraguay, among many other topics or subjects awaiting the attention of historians (Maeder 1978: 14).

The General Archive of the Province of Corrientes (GAPC/AGPC) was created by regulations of the Provincial Congress in 1821. At that time, a commission consisting of Isidoro Martínez y Cires, Ramón de Galarraga and Ciriaco Roa was formed to organise the local archive.

El GAPC treasures much of the documentation of the city and province of Corrientes corresponding to the colonial period (1588-1810) and most of that corresponding to the national era (1810-1960). According to Ernesto Maeder, this archive was the richest of the entire Argentine coast for colonial times, with the exception of Buenos Aires.

The documentary series for the colonial period are indicated in figure 9. The colonial sources preserved in the GAPC not only refer to the institutional, economic and social history of the city of Corrientes. In the institutional, judicial and notary repositories it is possible to find documentation that refers to the Jesuit Province of Paraguay, villages of Indians under the authority of the Franciscans (Santa Lucia, Santiago Sanchez, Itaty, Candelaria de Ohoma), Gran Chaco and its various partialities, Santa Fe-Buenos Aires. Despite being a local archive, this repository presents regional documentation. In Santa Fe, the State House

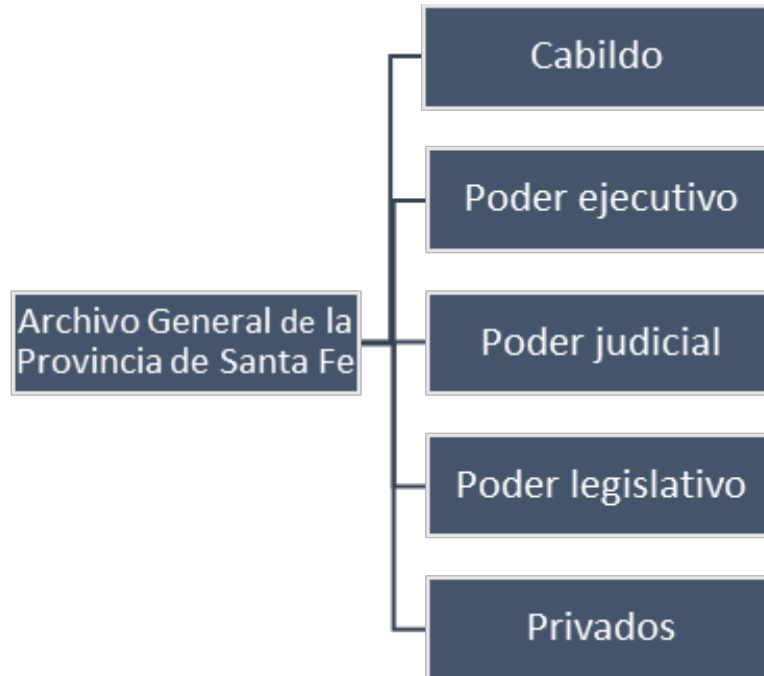


Fig. 10. General Archive of the Province of Santa Fe.

Source: Own elaboration based on documentation of the Provincial Archives System of Santa Fe.

Library was created in 1921, which was later called *the Government Historical Library and Archive*. In 1961, it was established as the General Archive, the only repository for the preservation of executive branch documentation.

The documentation safeguarded in this archive comes from varied sources. The main repositories of the General Archive of the Province of Santa Fe cover all aspects of provincial life: *cabildo*, government, accounting, justice, worship, public instruction, topography, public works, agriculture, promotion and others³². The main repositories are illustrated in figure 10. The *Cabildo* section is subdivided into the Santa Fe repository, Municipal Board of Temporalities, Board of Tithes [*Junta de Diezmos*] and other authorities and Asunción.

In the case of the Santa Fe repository, it consists of a cluster of series such as Acts (*Actas*), Royal Decrees and Provisions/(*Cédulas reales y provisiones*) various documents, tax books, notes and other communications, various documents, communication files received, agreements, notes and minutes.

The current provinces of Argentina such as Chaco, Misiones, Entre Ríos and Formosa possess their own historical and general archives. The particularity of these archives is that colonial documentation is almost non-existent, most of the repositories corresponding to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: *a*) General Archive of the Province of Entre Ríos³³: was created in 1860 from the government of Justo José de Urquiza, organised into 9 repositories that collect documentation from 1821 to 1902; *b*) Historical Archive of the Province of Chaco: it was founded in 1954, its documentation comes from public and private institutions dating from 1874 to the present day³⁴; *c*) General Archive and Library of the Province of Misiones: it was created in 1955 as General Archive of the Governorate of Misiones, and has documentation from 1882 to 1973 (Maeder 1978: 29); *d*) General Archive of the Province of Formosa: It has documentation from 1872 to the present day. Among its repositories are collections called Government Documents and Civil and Criminal Causes³⁵.

The Mitre Museum, a valuable documentary repository for Regional History

Beyond the set of repositories that we have presented and analysed in the work, the Mitre Museum deserves to be considered a bibliographic, documentary and numismatic center.

The Mitre Museum consists of an American Library and a Historical Archive. The library consists of about 20,000 volumes of copies on history, geography and languages ranging from the sixteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century. This library was assembled and catalogued by Bartolomé Mitre in view of his interest in American and universal culture. The historical archive safeguards some 53.000 documentary

pieces, making it an archive of historical magnitude and relevance³⁶.

In the Historical Archive there are a series of collections among which are: Documentary Contribution for the History of the Río de la Plata, Documents of the Archive of J.M. de Pueyrredón, Documents of Domingo de Oro, Archives of José de San Martín, Documents of the Colonial Archive, Archive of Manuel Belgrano, Literary, Historical and Political Correspondence, Correspondence of D. F. Sarmiento-Mitre, Bartolomé Mitre Martínez Repository, Wescelao Paunero Repository, Emilio Mitre Repository, Taboada Family, Documents by José María Bustillo, Engineer Emilio Mitre and Vedia Repository.

The Colonial Documentary collection allows to reconstruct the historical research of the Río de la Plata from the sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century. This collection is ordered in 28 boxes containing documentation referring to certain places of production/publication such as the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, royal residences, Buenos Aires, Governorates of Paraguay, Tucumán and Buenos Aires, Asunción, Córdoba, Charcas, Viceroyalty of Peru, towns of Paraguay, Paraná and Uruguay, other cities of Spain (Vasallo, Peralta 2018: 115).

The documentary typology we observe in this collection is quite diverse, administrative or government records stand out as royal orders, royal decrees, communication acts (*oficios del cabildo, oficios*), decrees, reports, among many other typologies.

CLOSING NOTIONS

This article emphasizes the need to pause the task of historical research and pay attention to archives as an object of knowledge. Taking the new theoretical aspects of the archival turn, a field of reflection is assumed in which the institutional history and the organisation of the archives acquire relevance and impact on the historical work (this implies setting aside the classic role of data extraction and turn to a new process of analysis, reflection and examination on the historical configuration of the colonial archives).



Throughout our years of work in different archives located in the cities of Sucre, Buenos Aires, Sevilla, Asunción and Río de Janeiro, we observed the need to rethink why the colonial sources of the Northeast were in a set of archives so dispersed and disaggregated in Latin America and Europe. This question became even more relevant when we began to work on a research project on Public Policies and Archives in the Northeast of Argentina. In this context, we developed numerous fieldwork and permanent stays in national, regional and international repositories, initially aimed at elaborating archive guides for this region, but over time, an emerging field of work was visualized, generating questions that mobilized us towards studies on archives and repositories, a disciplinary space in vogue where historians have been generating valuable results in recent years.

The communication and circulation of information is analysed as support for a way of governing and ensuring control between Spain and America. The territories of the Northeast Rioplatense were closely linked to the *Audiencia* in Charcas, *Audiencia* de Buenos Aires and to the metropolitan agencies resident in Seville during the sixteenth-seventeenth-eighteenth century. This administrative issue explains the organisation and flow of sources that are scattered and disaggregated in global repositories such as the General Archive of the Indies, National Archive and Library of Bolivia, National Archive of Asunción, and the General Archive of the Nation.

The dissemination of colonial repositories was not a process concluded in the colonial period, as we observed throughout the article. In the nineteenth century there were new cultural environments that led to the establishment of private collections. Intellectuals and scholars bought, acquired, and redeemed original documentation or copies and books in their quest to build their own libraries and personal collections. This process explains the existence of documentation of the Northeast region in the National Library of Rio de Janeiro and in the Mitre Museum.

The institutional history of documentary repositories led us to differentiate between global archives and local archives. In the first category, we include the General Archive of the

Indies, National Archive and Libraries of Bolivia and General Archive of the Nation. In the second category, we located the archives that emerged from the old colonial cities. With more than 43,000 files and 80 million pages of original documents, el GAI is one of the main archives for the construction of the history of Northeast Rioplatense. The possibility of exploring its institutional history and its numerous documentary series, allowed us to focus on Government Notary, *Casa de Contratación*, Government and Accounting as some of the fundamental series to be explored when reconstructing the history of the northeast region.

The Bolivian National Libraries and Archive, a repository that safeguards the documentation of the ancient *Audiencia de Charcas*, is another essential institution to be consulted and examined. Its *Audiencia de la Plata* repository and the series of colonial archives are essential to know the lawsuits and litigation involving local actors with the *Audiencia*.

The General Archive of the Nation, an institution that safeguards documentation of the institutions that operated during the Viceroyalty and the former Governorate of the Río de la Plata, acquires magnitude and historical relevance for the studies of the Northeast Rioplatense. Although most of the sources are from the eighteenth century, we can find interesting documents that allude to the colonial administration of the spaces of Corrientes, Asunción, Santa Fe, the Jesuit Province of Paraguay (and its villages).

The approach adopted here led us to provide a brief institutional history of the general archives constituted in the former colonial cities of Asunción, Corrientes and Santa Fe, these treasure interesting local documentation of an institutional and private nature about the actors, notables and inhabitants of these spaces of the Northeast. The National Archive of Asunción is considered the oldest in the Southern Cone and contains fundamental documentation for the study of five centuries of Paraguay's history. Its series: History, New Binding, Civil and Judicial, Testaments and Properties, Books of Treasury have valuable documentation about the region and Paraguay. In our analysis, we do not leave aside a brief consideration of the local historical archives that have been created in the provinces of



Chaco, Formosa, Misiones and Entre Ríos. These present the particularity that the documentary repositories correspond to the contemporary and recent period.

The analysis of the global archives included the presentation of the National Library of Rio de Janeiro with its Collection of Pedro de Angelis consisting of about 2785 printed volumes and 1291 handwritten documents referring to the Northeast Rioplatense. Meanwhile, the local tour allowed us to explore the documentary backgrounds of the Mitre Museum, emphasizing the colonial collection.

Consideration of the global and local repository set shows the necessity of a heuristic perspective in order to intertwine archives and libraries as a more accurate way to build the history of Northeast Rioplatense. In the case of the Northeast Rioplatense, this article is a significant contribution to understanding how local, regional and global archives were built and gestated. This first reading on repositories can be further deepened in the future through a cross-look between a local archive and another of global or regional scope. In this sense, the need to rethink the processes of disaggregation and dissemination of repositories from the Northeast constitute a theoretical knowledge that every historian must understand clearly before undertaking his tasks in the archives.

On a methodological level, the article invites historians to work at different scales when exploring their documentary sources. Thus, intertwining the archives and repositories appears as a key heuristic route, essential to take when it comes to reconstructing the colonial history of northeastern Rioplatense. In this way, the silences, concealment or invisibilisation could be overcome with a countercurrent type of work between archives of different characteristics.

NOTES

¹ This research is part of the Executing Unit Project (EUP) called the NEA Region and Public Policy, in which we set out to survey documentary repositories from the region in local, regional and international archives.

² To complete this perspective, a key analysis is that contributed by Ricardo Nava Murcia which thoroughly explores “the archive ache in the writing of history”.

His perspective is central to accounting for the deconstruction of the concept of archive and the need to rework the definition taking into account aspects of the traces of deleted, destroyed and manipulated events; the modes of treatment of technical supports, sorting orders and the power of interpretation; and the question of authority about who authorises and what relationships are woven between the different footprints present in every archive (Nava Murcia 2012).

³ From now on NAA.

⁴ Between 1593 and 1618, the Río de la Plata, 12 governors exercised when the province continued to be united. After the division, 36 governors served between 1618 and 1784. See Maeder 2018.

⁵ To explore in detail the functioning of the clergy and Franciscan villages in Paraguay and Corrientes, we recommend Salinas 2010, 2012, 2019.

⁶ The historiographic production on the thirty villages and the actions of the Society of Jesus in Paraguay are very vast. Just to mention, see Maeder 2013.

⁷ The Great Chaco is a subject widely worked by historians and anthropologist. Worth mentioning is that the work of the Jesuits expelled from the eighteenth century, which constitute sources of great value to reconstruct the history of indigenous populations (see Dobrizhoffer [1784] 1967, Paucke 2010).

⁸ To deepen the issue of administrative correspondence see Lorenzo Cadarso 2001.

⁹ On this occasion as for Religious Orders we will not focus on exploring the communication or circulation of papers between the Jesuit Province of Paraguay with superiors in Rome. We will deal with colonial administration and the circulation of documentation in America and Europe.

¹⁰ In Simancas, all the documentation of the Council of Indies was kept from the time of its foundation until the late seventeenth century, documentation that had arrived in different remittances in 1568, 1582, 1619, 1658 and 1718 (Granda Jueas 1999).

¹¹ For this subject there is a vast historiography. See Buchbinder 1996.

¹² Census Guide to Archives of Spain and Latin America. General Archive of Indies (Sevilla-España), <http://censoarchivos.mcu.es/CensoGuia/archivodetail.htm?id=10>.

¹³ Census Guide to Archives of Indies, <http://censoarchivos.mcu.es/CensoGuia/archivodetail.htm?id=10>.

¹⁴ Among the archives of Audiencia de Charcas in The Indies, we can find documentation regarding the secular authorities and cabildos of Buenos Aires, Paraguay, Uruguay and Santa Cruz de la Sierra. But it is also possible to find documentation about the ecclesiastical authorities of Buenos Aires and Asunción del Paraguay.

¹⁵ An interesting approach to Charcas repositories in the Indies has been published in the Review *Nuevos Mundos Mundos Nuevos* and belongs to María Belén García López (2009).

¹⁶ In the visits to the Audience of Buenos Aires, we will be able to identify for example: pieces related to the visit of *cajas reales* of Asunción del Paraguay and Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo in 1715.

¹⁷ An example may be the information archive and passenger license to the Indies of Pedro de Goytía, Franciscan friar of the province of Asunción del Paraguay. CONTRACTING, 5501, No.1, R.12 .

¹⁸ Census Guide to Archives of Spain and Latin America. National Archive and Libraries of Bolivia, <http://censoarchivos.mcu.es/CensoGuia/archivodetail.htm?id=54851>.

¹⁹ This information has been retrieved from the Bolivian General Library and Archive Guide, <https://www.archivoybibliotecanacionales.org.bo/index.php/uniarchivo/catalogosabnb/guiageneralabnb>.

²⁰ NALB. Colonial Archives. 1607.1.

²¹ NALB. Colonial Archives. 1653.31.

²² NALB. Judicial records. 1658.34.

²³ Census-Guide to Archives of Spain and Latin America.



²⁴ Written Document Departments. General Archive of the Nation. Ministry of the Interior <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/interior/archivo-general-de-la-nacion/departamento-de-documentos-escritos>.

²⁵ GAN. Written documents.

²⁶ National Library of Rio de Janeiro. Manuscript. MS-508 (17) DOC.339, Manuscripts. 1638.

²⁷ National Library of Rio de Janeiro. Manuscript. I-029, 001, 121. 1651.

²⁸ National Library of Rio de Janeiro. Manuscript. MS, 508, 23, doc. N. 598. 1728.

²⁹ National Library of Rio de Janeiro. [S.l.: s.n.], 1766.

³⁰ The National Archive of Assumption has a website where it is possible to consult much of the documentary sections but not in their entirety See <http://www.archivonacional.gov.py>.

³¹ Census Guide to Archives of Spain and Latin America. National Archive of Asunción <http://censoarchivos.mcu.es/CensoGuia/archivodetail.htm?id=45798>.

³² In the case of the General Archive of the Province of Santa Fe, information is found in the Province of Santa Fe Digital Newspapers Library Friar Francisco de Paula Castañeda. But it is also valuable to visit the website called the Provincial Archive System, Santa Fe, CONICET where you can access the Historical Archive Database (1573-1920). See: <http://www.santafe-conicet.gov.ar/sipar/archivo.html>.

³³ The General Archive of the Province of Entre Ríos has its website, where you will find accurate information about its repositories and series See <https://www.entrerios.gov.ar/archivogeneral/>

³⁴ The Historical Archive of the Province of Chaco has a website. It can be consulted at <http://patrimoniochaco.blogspot.com/p/archivo-historico.html>.

³⁵ The Historical Archive of the Province of Formosa has a website information regarding its repositories and documentary series <https://formosa.gob.ar/patrimonio/archivohistorico>.

³⁶ To consult the Mitre Museum. National Museums we recommend reviewing its website where catalogs and inventories of the different collections are available <https://museomitre.cultura.gob.ar/info/museo>.

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ISSN 2283-7949

GLOCALISM: JOURNAL OF CULTURE, POLITICS AND INNOVATION

2021, 2, DOI: 10.12893/gjcp.2021.2.11

Published online by “Globus et Locus” at <https://glocalismjournal.org>



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