

Martín Güemes: Tyrant or Tool? A Study of the Sources of Power of an Argentine Caudillo. By ROGER M. HAIGH. Fort Worth, 1968. Texas Christian University Press. Figures. Notes. Appendices. Bibliography. Index. Pp. ix, 77. Paper. \$3.50.

Robert M. Haigh expands his earlier treatment of Güemes (*HAHR*, November 1964, pp. 481-490) in this short monograph. He holds to his conviction that Güemes was not a tyrannical caudillo, but rather an agent of the dominant group. Since the question "tyrant or tool" was already decided in the article, one should not expect an extensive discussion of the subject here. This failing might have been partially overcome had the author taken the reader into his confidence by commenting on his discovery of Güemes' true role.

Divided into four brief chapters, Haigh's monograph concentrates on the royalist-patriot struggle in Salta during the chaotic 1810-1821 period. It is a particularly sensitive account of the attempt by a remote province to maintain its identity in the face of both constant threats from Spanish Upper Peru and intrigues in Buenos Aires and the neighboring provinces. Five appendices coupled with a useful index and bibliography provide valuable biographical data concerning Salta's kinship elite.

The work builds to the last chapter, wherein the relationship of Güemes to the kinship elite is made explicit. The validity of Haigh's theory depends on his demonstration of Güemes' connection with the coterie of dominant landholding families. While the author's conclusion is eminently plausible, history would have been better served had he presented but one shred of direct evidence to prove conclusively that the election of Güemes by the Salteño elite was a conscious act. Still—though scholars have assumed the inbred nature of regional leadership in Latin America—it is Haigh who has performed the signal service of docu-

menting this phenomenon for the Argentine northwest.

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Guardia Nacional. Orígenes del partido y ciudad de Chacabuco, 1865-1890. By OSCAR MELLI. La Plata, 1967. Ministerio de Educación. Publicaciones del Archivo Histórico de la Provincia "Dr. Ricardo Levene." Illustrations. Maps. Tables. Notes. Pp. xii, 294. Paper.

The publication of historical studies concerning the peopling of Buenos Aires province has been a major undertaking of the provincial archives "Ricardo Levene." In this volume, number thirty-four of the series, Oscar Meli has more than adequately fulfilled his stated purpose of presenting the reader with an "exact account of the birth, organization, and development of a village and district of rural Buenos Aires province in the second half of the past century" (p. 8). In tracing the founding of Chacabuco district (1865) and the subsequent growth of its central town, the author has not attempted to write another laudatory pioneer chronicle. To the contrary, his thirteen carefully written chapters sketch the panorama of the agricultural and transportation revolution that transformed the Argentine pampas in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Particularly interesting to this reviewer is Meli's account of the Argentine government's attempt to populate the pampas south and west of the capital by granting land to national guard veterans of the Paraguayan War. Speculation and fraud soon ended this experiment. The study also recounts the disappearance of the Indian and gaucho, the policy and personal conflicts among local officials, the impact of immigrant farm workers on the region, and the discouraging struggle to provide a minimum of educational opportunities for the rural areas. Well-documented from provincial and national archives, clearly written and