

ARTICLE



Recording the war effort: immigrant communities in Latin America and the memory of the Great War

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyse the initiatives undertaken by some immigrant communities residing in Latin America to record their mobilisation around the First World War. After the armistice, European communities in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and other countries gathered detailed information about their activities during the conflict, published as profusely illustrated books of remembrance, offered to their governments as proof of their loyalty. The article intends to establish the peculiar nature of these publications as records of the war effort, and analyse the agents and processes of their elaboration, and their role as commemorative but also as archival documents.

KEYWORDS

First World War; Latin America; immigrant communities; books of remembrance; war mobilisation

Introduction

After the First World War, the warring states and their civil societies devoted themselves to building the collective memory of the conflict. Many commemorative operations were launched, and a myriad of cultural devices were employed to make sense of the war and keep the memory of it alive for future generations. These memorials¹ included official histories of the war, monuments, museums, archives, and anniversaries of significant war events.² Among these devices, commemorative books constituted a specific war genre that, as far as we know, has not been systematically explored yet, despite its omnipresence in the belligerent countries and the similar tone.³ In fact, this kind of commemorative instrument became widespread in the aftermath of the war. It was the result of official initiatives centralised by the State⁴ and also of civilian and military associations (schools, universities, parishes, boroughs, commercial and industrial firms, battalions and regiments, and so on).⁵ The promoters of those works extolled the war cause that they had defended and registered the names of the fallen soldiers, whose sacrifice was the proof of their devotion to the homeland. However, although books of remembrance have been frequently used as a source of information, they were not studied as a topic in itself.

From the perspective of the social and cultural history of the war⁶, this paper intends to analyse some books of remembrance commemorating the participation of immigrant communities in Latin America in the Great War, examining their meaning for the building of the memory of the armed struggle. The Americas were a favoured

destination for the great transatlantic migrations of the second half of the nineteenth century. The tide of European immigrants that between 1857 and 1914 flooded the continent headed for the United States (27,000,000 people), Argentina (4,600,000), Canada (4,000,000) and Brazil (3,300,000).⁷ In the nineteenth century, these four countries were the most important receivers of European immigrants in the world.⁸ During the Great War, the warring powers mobilised their societies for total war. The call to the home front also included the citizens residing overseas, showing the global and transnational character of the conflict. Those migrants, despite the distance, responded on a great scale to their government's military and economic requests. Once the conflict concluded, they also dedicated themselves to remembering their contribution to their countries' war effort through different memorials, including books of remembrance.

An approach to the sources

The seven commemorative books analysed in this article are the only ones we could locate up to this time in our research in Latin American and European libraries and archives.⁹ Written in English, French, Italian or Spanish, these books were published in the immediate aftermath of the First World War to memorialise the communities' war mobilisation. Except for the study of a facsimile edition of one of them,¹⁰ these publications have never been explored as such.

These books combined public and private sources, and a wide range of documents: newspapers, diplomatic and consular records, documents from community institutions, letters, and information and photographs provided by families and friends of the mobilised soldiers, among others. Some of the original sources consulted by the books' editors are still available, like many ethnic newspapers and official reports sent by plenipotentiary ministers and consuls in Latin America to their countries' Foreign Affairs offices. However, other sources that provided information to the compilers did not survive the passing of time. For instance, personal and family documents or associations' archives frequently remained in private hands or were lost. As a result, books of remembrance have the virtue of perpetuating information that, without them, would be lost.

Four of the seven books of our corpus of analysis were produced by different actors related to the British community in Latin America. Usually considered as elite immigration, most of this community was connected to British companies installed in the subcontinent since the nineteenth century, which controlled the main resources of the local economy (commerce, credit, insurance, transport, meatpacking, government loans, land). The British presence was particularly important in Argentina (which concentrated 10% of Britain's total overseas investments on the eve of the war), in Brazil, in Chile and in Uruguay, with smaller interests and investments in other countries.¹¹ Argentina and Uruguay mainly depended on the British market for exports and imports, and British railway companies dominated the transport systems. In Brazil, government loans and coffee trade were controlled by British capital, while British companies ruled the Chilean nitrate industry.¹²

Their presence was significant in large cities, as well as in small urban and rural towns. The British had a high literacy rate, enjoyed the prestige derived from the civilisational

role attributed to them by the Latin American elites and also exerted social influence through sports. Like other immigrant communities, they developed a dense network of social, cultural, and recreational associations.

Activities of the British Community in Argentina during the Great War 1914–1919 was published ‘with the request and under the patronage’ of the British diplomatic and consular authorities in Argentina, and different community institutions that had actively participated in the war effort:

The British Society in the Argentine Republic, agreeably with the request and under the patronage of H.M. Minister, Sir Reginald Tower, K.C.M.G., C.V.O., H.M. Consul-General, Mr H.G. Mackie, C.B.E., and The British Legation, the British Consulate-General, the British Chamber of Commerce, the British Patriotic Committee in the Argentine Republic, the British Women’s Patriotic Association, the British Patriotic Society of Rosario, St. Andrew’s Society of the River Plate and the Royal Colonial Institute Branch in Argentina.¹³

The South Pacific Mail, a leading British newspaper of the West Coast, published a special issue, commemorating the mobilisation of the community of that region: *South Pacific Mail: War memorial number: An historical record of the tribute of the British communities in Chile, Peru and Bolivia, during the Great War 1914–1918*.¹⁴ Valparaiso was the Chilean city that concentrated the largest presence of British subjects, mostly involved in business activities. *The South Pacific Mail* was based there, but it reached to different places in the country and also in Peru and in Bolivia. The editor and owner of this newspaper was Henry A. Hill, who promoted various patriotic fundraising initiatives during the conflict.¹⁵

*A Book of Remembrance, 1914–1918*¹⁶ registered the fallen volunteers of the British community from different latitudes of the subcontinent: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. This book held in its cover the badge of the British Volunteers of Latin America (BVLA) and was promoted by the Anglo-South American Depot, an organisation created in London during the war to care for British volunteers from South America during their service under the British arms.¹⁷

Finally, *The Central Argentine Railway Volunteers: Their Book*¹⁸ was focused on a specific group of the British community in Argentina: the 415 workers of the British railway company who left the country to enrol in the King’s army. It is a very peculiar initiative, and, in fact, it is a project of a non-published book. A Mrs Mary Campbell gathered photographs and newspaper clippings about the war and the volunteers, as well as poems and letters, in a typed, unbound, handmade volume. As in the case of other books’ compilers or publishers, there is practically no information available about her, except that she was the wife (or widow) of a W.F. Campbell. In 1917, she lived in Victoria (province of Buenos Aires, Argentina) and two years later in Cañada de Gómez (province of Santa Fe); both towns were stations on the Central Argentine Railway. It is possible to speculate that she was a relative or a close acquaintance of some of the soldiers honoured in the book or was related to the family of Allan Campbell, an American engineer that designed that line and found British stakeholders for its construction.¹⁹ Mrs Campbell collected materials for the volume for almost two years and after the war presented it to the authorities of the railway company to obtain support for its publication. However, they rejected the project due to its high cost.

A second European community that published a book of remembrance after the Great War was the French one in Mexico. French migration to Latin America exhibited a heterogeneous socio-economic profile, with railway entrepreneurs, importers, bankers, artisans, and people of lower income in services and other economic activities. With a residency pattern like the British one, they also founded a wide range of associations.²⁰ The French were important in the Southern Cone but also in Mexico. In that country, they were the second European community behind the Spaniards.²¹

The *Album d'honneur de tous les français résidant au Mexique partis pour la France, 1914–1919* (Memorial book of all the French residents in Mexico who left for France, 1914–1919)²² was a joint initiative of the publisher and owner of the printing house 'La Nacional', Silvio Greco Cotti, and the trader and French consular agent in the Mexican city of Puebla, Edouard Chaix.²³ It was based on a special issue of one of the French community newspapers, *L'Echo Français*, published in August 1916.²⁴

The Italians in Latin America also released a commemorative book about their war effort: *Gli italiani nel Sud America ed il loro contributo alla guerra: 1915–1918* (*The Italians in South America and their contribution to the war: 1915–1918*).²⁵ The book devoted the major portion of the volume (68%) to the activities of the Italians in Argentina, but also accounted for those carried out in other Latin American countries: Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Guatemala, San Salvador and Honduras. That proportion is due to the fact that Argentina was the main Latin American destiny for Italian migrants, followed by Brazil. Between 1881 and 1914, it received almost 2 million Italians.²⁶ In 1914, the Italian community was the most populous foreign colony in that country; with nearly a million people, it constituted 11.79% of the total population.²⁷

Although, like the other nationalities, Italians settled chiefly in the big cities, they also had an outstanding presence in rural areas. Italian immigrants had a more popular social profile and a lower literacy rate than the British and the French. Despite numerous cases of upward social mobility, which led to the formation of banking, commercial and industrial companies owned by Italians, most of the community in Latin America were part of the working class in their host countries.²⁸

One of the compilers of *Gli italiani* was 'editor of luxury works' and owner of a photogravure firm in Buenos Aires (Argentina);²⁹ his partner, Santino Barbieri, was an unknown writer.³⁰

The last book of remembrance considered in this paper is *El Album de la Victoria* (*The Album of Victory*).³¹ An initiative of Argentine intellectuals who supported the Allied cause during the war, the book contained a summary of the French, British, Belgian, Italian and Romanian communities' material contribution, and also a list of mobilised and decorated French citizens.³² One of its editors, Alberto Gerchunoff, had a long and recognised career in Argentina as a writer and journalist, and during the war adopted a passionate pro-Allied stance.³³ Although it was not a project of immigrant communities, this work shows the interethnic cooperation established by them with their counterparts from the same side in the war and with local sectors with shared perspectives about the conflict.

In most cases, the production of the books was costly, being luxury editions, hard-cover, printed on high-quality paper and profusely illustrated. This last aspect seems to

have been the priciest, according to the arguments given by the Central Argentine Railway Company to Mrs Campbell to reject publication:

The very high figure mentioned by the Publishing Firm here as the probable cost of producing your book, quite prevents the Railway Company from undertaking the responsibility ... The great expense lies in the reproduction of portraits, I understand, and these of course, could not be cut down at all.³⁴

It is very likely that, given their cost, these works were intended primarily for libraries of the community's institutions and their members. According to Pérez-Siller, *Album d'honneur* was a best seller in the French colony in Mexico and especially in its city of publication, Puebla, where the most prosperous members of the community were settled.³⁵ That was probably the case of the British in Argentina too. As Arthur Holder stated in a letter addressed to the British Minister in that country, Sir Reginald Tower, 5,000 subscription orders for *Activities of the British Community* would be distributed as follows:

British Society members	2,100
St Andrew's Society for their members	750
British Chamber of Commerce do.	500
British Patriotic Society, Rosario do.	500
The Navy League	300
Representatives and Branches of the British Society for local work	600
Balance as opportunity offers	250
Total	5,000 ³⁶

Besides the high-spending sectors of the community, families and friends of mobilised soldiers were also interested in the acquisition of these books as a souvenir of an event that had marked their lives forever. For instance, the Anglican pastor William C. Morris asked Mrs Campbell about the date of publication of her book project, because 'I desire to purchase several copies for friends, some of whom have come through the war.'³⁷

The South Pacific Mail probably achieved a wider circulation than the other commemorative publications since it was a special issue of the newspaper and, as a result, cheaper than the books.

Compiling the war effort

The First World War represented a turning point in the meaning of war commemoration. Until then, war memorials 'honoured victories and victorious commanders, not massive human loss.'³⁸ The unprecedented scale of violence unleashed by total war led to a democratisation of remembrance, to the recognition of individual loss, to the cult of the fallen soldier, and to 'the remembrance of glory rather than the horror of war.'³⁹ As John Horne stated, total war fostered national mobilisation – and self-mobilisation – appealing to the sense of belonging to the nation.⁴⁰ Language was essential for mobilisation, but also to death and mourning: 'The language of sacrifice, consolation, redemption and rebirth ... ran through the war experience in secular as well as religious terms, presiding over the confrontation of national mobilisation with mass death.'⁴¹

Books of remembrance ‘provide an evidence of the service record of the dead, but also they elevate the names to a semi-sacred status of sacrifice for the nation.’⁴² At the same time, they express patterns of social belonging more circumscribed than the nation.⁴³ In the case we studied, they were focused on the communities that immigrants built in their diaspora in Latin America, and, in the case of Mary Campbell’s scrapbook, on an even smaller group: the workers of the Central Argentine Railway. Thus, soldiers were remembered for their sacrifice serving the homeland and, at the same time, for their status of members of smaller communities related to their homeland by patriotic ties.

This dual nature of the commemoration is also connected with immigrant communities’ condition of transnational actors, located at the intersection of their society of origin and their host society, which usually determines a hybrid identity. In effect, in the diaspora, they developed local social, economic and cultural associations and networks, as well as an awareness of themselves as a specific community; at the same time, they kept linkages with their countries of origin. These interactions resulted in varied and multi-directional identity constructions.⁴⁴

Wars posed a challenge to immigrant communities. Anthony Smith has highlighted the ambiguous effects of wars on national identities, writing that they can contribute to ‘the shaping of ethnicity and its attendant imagery, as well as in fostering and also undermining ethnic cohesion.’⁴⁵ The commemorative books analysed show that, at least at the level of discourse, the war led to the prioritisation of unity to the detriment of internal divisions. Thus, for instance, the editor of *Activities of the British Community* clarified that the book used the term ‘British’ ‘in its most general signification, embracing therefore, all that appertains to the English, Scotch, Irish and Welsh units of the Community.’⁴⁶ The rhetoric of the ‘sacred union’ subsumed these ethnic identities, anchored in historical and cultural factors, into a common loyalty to Britain. In the case of the Italians, the book of remembrance also expressed the prevalence of consensus around the war effort over the internal cleavages, such as regionalist, class, confessional and political differences, that divided the community.

All the commemorative books listed the names of the fallen soldiers as part of the democratisation of remembrance, ‘acknowledging individual loss in a new collective culture of commemoration’, and converting the dead in symbols of exemplary civic virtue.⁴⁷ As Thomas Laqueur points out,

the centrality of names in modern memorial practice must be understood not only . . . as an antidote to a modern anxiety of erasure or disintegration – to the poisons of time – but also as the result of the modern notion that everyone has a memorable life to live, or in any case the right to a life story.⁴⁸

Books of remembrance perpetuated the names of the fallen, rescuing them from oblivion, and transmitting their individual stories of sacrifice to the next generations.

All the books analysed in this article recorded the fallen of each community, and three of them also listed the mobilised soldiers.⁴⁹ Their editors indicated that the compiled information was necessarily incomplete. In general, they had no access to official data and had to collect information in the community press or from families, friends and employers of the soldiers. Holder indicated that *Activities of the British Community* was based on information from:

the “Register of Volunteers from Argentina who responded to the call of our King and Country”, kept by the British Society in the Argentine Republic, and published monthly in the “British Magazine” 1916–1920, in the form of Preliminary Lists, Distinctions and Awards. The Register has been compiled from information supplied by relations, friends and acquaintances of the volunteers, from volunteers themselves, from employers and patriotic organisations in Argentina and London, from press cuttings, and numerous other sources. The compiler not having access to War Office records [it] should not be regarded as official. Efforts have been made, as far as possible, to verify the data, and the publication is now made with the reservation necessary under such conditions.⁵⁰

A book of Remembrance also admitted the fragmentary nature of its list of the fallen British Volunteers from Latin America. The book only enumerated those registered in the Anglo-South American Depot,

supplemented by information given by individuals and firms connected with Latin America . . . those Anglo-South Americans who were already living as students or visitors in the British Isles at the outbreak of war, and also volunteers from the Falkland Islands and British Guiana.⁵¹

In some cases, the difficulties came from the geographical scope of the books. Arigoni and Barbieri declared that they had travelled around Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay personally, consulting diplomatic and community authorities, as well as journalists, and that they depended on correspondence for data from other countries.⁵²

Considering that *Album d'honneur* was based on a very early record of information – dating from 1916 – and published in January 1919, it is probably the least comprehensive book of the corpus analysed here. On the other hand, *The Central Argentine Railway Volunteers* had the merit of recording all the volunteers who took part in the war, according to the official information provided by the company.⁵³

Most of the books listed the names of the mobilised and/or fallen soldiers in a strict alphabetical order, thus reflecting the democratisation of remembrance and the equaliser effect of death. This criterion was the same as that applied by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, which opted for the uniformity of graves and headstones, independently of rank or decorations, thus expressing wartime camaraderie.⁵⁴

There were two exceptions in our corpus. The first one was the *Album d'honneur*, which organised the lists of mobilised and fallen ‘poilus’ (as the French infantry soldiers were informally called) by the commercial or industrial firm to which they belonged. This was probably related to the fact that the book was mainly aimed at the French community elites. In addition to advertising their establishments, the social status of the owners was outlined, as well as their influence on the workers they employed. The second exception was Mary Campbell’s book project, which listed the volunteers and decorated soldiers according to their department in the Central Argentine Railway; then within each department, the list followed an alphabetical order. This way of arranging information implied the prioritisation of the ethnic social hierarchies previous to the war. It also allowed to show that, responding to the call to arms, the administration had been up to its social and civic responsibility, stimulating workers and employees with its own example of loyalty to the homeland.⁵⁵

Both cases reflect the widespread prevalence of the familial corporate rhetoric on businesses and industries in the first decades of the twentieth century. According to it, the employers exerted a patriarchal role over their employees, and workplace relations were

guided by obligation, cooperation, harmony and camaraderie.⁵⁶ Wartime reinforced that organisational logic within the community businesses around the 'sacred union' discourse. For the mobilisation effort, the economic elites of the community exerted their ethnic leadership through a deferential influence that, at the same time, was presented as horizontal solidarity to the homeland.

The detailed information about the military mobilisation provided by most of these books is an invaluable source for the social and cultural history of the war in the periphery. It allows for reconstructing the profile of the sector more directly committed to the war cause: the citizens abroad who risked (or lost) their lives to serve their homeland, despite the distance and the links established with the host society. Usually, the books included the professional and geographical background of the enlisted soldiers, date of departure to Europe, regiment, military rank, honours and distinctions, cause of death and portraits, generally in military uniform. On occasions, it is also possible to establish if they were the first or second generation of Europeans. Moreover, the books sometimes allow the readers to glimpse the tragedy of the war through family stories; for instance, a list of 'Brothers who served' registered cases of families who had lost many of their enrolled sons.⁵⁷

Despite the deficiencies of their sources, the editors of the books of remembrance could offer a general panorama of the communities' military contributions to the Great War. For instance, the British colony in Argentina provided at least 4,852 volunteers to the Empire's army, 527 of whom were recorded in the Roll of Honour for having fallen in the battlefields. At the same time, the enrolled Britons from the West Coast (most of them from Chile) numbered 1,781 men, 245 of whom were killed in action.⁵⁸ For their part, the Italians mobilised from Argentina were around 32,430, with 393 casualties,⁵⁹ and those from Brazil, 8,951, with 280 dead.⁶⁰

These figures included immigrants' sons born in Latin America, according to the *jus sanguinis* adopted by the European states. This citizenship principle clashed with the Latin American nationality laws, based on the *jus soli*. According to it, nationality was automatically granted to those born in their territory. As a result, the second generation of Europeans were considered Latin American citizens and subjects to the military obligations associated with that status. During the war, this was a source of tensions, since the second generation had to face the superposition of military duties, as European and Latin American citizens, that affected war mobilisation. As some studies state, the response to the call to arms seems to have been higher among the first generation than among their sons. However, the military mobilisation of Europeans abroad was also limited, among other factors, by their integration into the host societies, especially strong among Italians and French compared to British.⁶¹

The migrants' remittances from Latin America to their homelands were a usual practice that contributed to the European nations' economy.⁶² In emergencies like the Great War, they increased. Thus, besides the lists of mobilised and/or fallen soldiers, four of our books also offered a detailed catalogue of the extensive range of the communities' human and material contributions to the war effort.⁶³ As the editor of one of them pointed out,

The work of those who remained behind in these Republics – the women, the physically unfit, and the older men – also deserves to be placed on record. Though they could not go themselves they contributed a magnificent quota to the innumerable War Relief Funds.⁶⁴

The exhaustive balance of the collected money and its allocation included in these publications make it possible to assess the scale of the communities' contribution to the war and the prioritised humanitarian projects, and to observe some differences between them. Taking the Argentine case as a reference, the Italian community assigned the collected money to serve in the first place the needs of the soldiers' families and, as the conflict prolonged, those of the widows, orphans and disabled, and only in second place their homeland's official charity initiatives and war loans.⁶⁵ On the other hand, the British community raised money in the first place for the British Red Cross, in second place for other British and Allied War and Patriotic Funds, and finally for local war, patriotic relief and repatriation funds.⁶⁶ These different priorities can shed light on the complexity of identity processes in diaspora contexts and, again, on the differential levels of integration in the receiving society.

The objectives of the books

What were the purposes of these books of remembrance? Why did Europeans settled in Latin America decide to leave a testimony of their war mobilisation? There is not a univocal response to these questions. However, we can observe some explicit goals and speculate about others, not necessarily mutually exclusive.

All the books – not only those devoted to registering the military mobilisation – declared their intention to pay tribute to the community's men who joined their homeland's army, especially to those who lost their lives in the war. They extolled the individual sacrifice of men, who abandoned the social position they had built in the New World and travelled considerable distances to serve the homeland, risking or even giving their lives. Thus, the books were launched:

To help keep green the memory of those men ... who so willingly responded to the call of their country. Many of them, left home, wife and children; many gave up hopes of advancement, their health and many their lives to rally round our flag.⁶⁷

in memory of those gallant men who, coming across the seas from South America, Central America and Mexico, to fight in the Great War, gave their lives in the cause of freedom ... They were few in number, but they formed a fitting tribute, a very convincing evidence of love to the Empire for which they fell.⁶⁸

Those works, which focused on the communities' military and economic contribution, honoured the memory of the soldiers with different emphases. British books offered first a list of all the enrolled soldiers and those mentioned in the Roll of Honour with a short biographical sketch of each one and the portraits of most of them; then in second place, information about the fundraising activities of the leading associations participating in the war effort.⁶⁹ For its part, *Gli italiani* registered first the material contributions, and then the names of the fallen, with a few pictures of some of them.

On the other hand, these initiatives were aimed at making visible to their governments and countrymen in Europe the response of these migrant communities to the general mobilisation. Recording their contributions, in manpower and money or supplies,

represented a reaffirmation of their connections with the homeland despite the physical distance, the passing of the years and their integration into the host societies.

As Arthur Holder explicitly asserted, '[t]he object of this volume is to place on record the response of the British Community in Argentina, in Men, Money and Material, to the call of the Motherland.'⁷⁰ Or, in the words of the editors of *Gli italiani*,

it seemed that . . . in Italy, fully occupied with the gigantic effort on which depended its very existence, it was not well-known, in all its quality and range, the extraordinary contribution of the Italian community in South America to the last war of independence . . . we were interested in offering the faithful and concrete notion of the collective spirit of strong and genuine patriotism that animated the Italians of South America, without distinction of class, age and years of staying far away from homeland.⁷¹

In most cases, the authorities of the countries of origin recognised the effort made by their overseas citizens, sending messages of gratitude that were included in the commemorative books. That was the case of the note posted by King George V to his subjects in Latin America acknowledging their 'acts of patriotism and self-sacrifice', and that written by Queen Mary, thanking the volunteers that had contributed to the war fund she had chaired.⁷² The Italian community in the subcontinent received messages of acknowledgement from Vittorio Orlando, Minister of Interior until 1919; Benito Mussolini, Prime Minister from 1922; Admiral Paolo Thaon di Revel, Minister of the Navy from 1922; General Enrico Caviglia, 'victor of Vittorio Veneto', and General Pietro Badoglio, which are reproduced in the book of remembrance.⁷³ Recognition also came from different sectors of the civil society, such as the members of the Anglo-South American Depot, who promoted the publication of *A book of Remembrance* in their honour.

In some cases, publicity and commercial purposes also intervened in the elaboration of these memorial resources. Four of these commemorative books contained advertisements for companies belonging to the community. Sometimes, this advertising – usual to get financing support for publication – was accompanied by a kind of covert advertising. For instance, as mentioned before, the *Album d'honneur* gave a central place to the businesses of the French community in Mexico and used them as criteria to organise information on the mobilised 'poilus'. In addition to numerous advertisements of companies of the Italian community in Argentina and Brazil, *Gli italiani* devoted almost 10% of the volume to review the trajectory of banking, industrial, commercial and agricultural companies of that origin. This figure sharply contrasts with the 1.82% of the pages devoted to registering the names of the fallen soldiers from all the Latin American countries included in the book.

Finally, it is possible to speculate that books of remembrance helped some community leaders to accumulate social, symbolic and political capital.⁷⁴ The notables who chaired the war committees formed after the outbreak of the war – usually businessmen and intellectuals – controlled the community's institutions and social networks and centralised fundraising. Some of the analysed books included the lists and even portraits of their leaders, extolling their wartime action. *Gli italiani* was an extreme case. It listed the leaders of the Comitato Italiano di Guerra (Italian War Committee) of each district of Argentina, and, to a lesser extent, of other community associations, and it published hundreds of portraits of the most prominent of them. As mentioned previously, the *Album d'honneur* also focused attention on the community elites and their businesses, emphasising their role in the war effort.

Without intending to minimise the ethnic leaders' patriotic zeal, we should not exclude an instrumental use of their role in the community's mobilisation in wartime to consolidate or expand their individual sphere of influence inside the colony and/or in the society of origin. The prestige of having led the patriotic campaign during the war could be translated into prominent positions in the local and/or transnational community in its aftermath. In that sense, books of remembrance could serve as tools for the community's internal politics.

In summary, collective and patriotic motivations and particular interests, sometimes intertwined, converged in the elaboration of books of remembrance.

Conclusions

In the first post-war years, European migrants established in Latin America focused on recording their participation in their countries' war mobilisation through a widespread commemorative resource that helped them to make sense of their war effort: the books of remembrance. These publications articulated the different dimensions and networks in which the communities operated: local, regional and transnational. Summarising their contributions in soldiers and money to the war cause, they served several simultaneous purposes. They allowed communities to reassert their diaspora identity, anchoring them into a place and time, and getting recognition for the sacrifices of their volunteers and reservists, and their material contributions to the homeland. At the same time, commemorative books made the colonies visible in their countries of origin and allowed them to invoke and reinforce their transnational identity. Finally, they may have contributed to position the elites inside the communities' political schemes at a local and/or transnational level.

These sources have great potential to contribute to the social and cultural history of the war in the peripheries. They are useful to study the response of migratory groups to the dilemma of wartime and their military, economic and cultural mobilisation. They shed light on the building of a community memory that expressed a multi-sided ethnic identity. Finally, they allow decentring the history of the First World War, drawing attention to the interactions between belligerent Europe and the global peripheries through the intermediation of the European diaspora.

From an archival perspective, these books of remembrance constitute a unique source. In the first place, they gather scattered and fragmentary information, of different nature and geographical origin, and compile data still available with other of more ephemeral existence. In this sense, besides their commemorative role, these books also play the function of repositories of information that transcend its time. In the second place, these publications defy the usual distinction between published sources and archives since they build themselves from both and compile them in a printed volume. Finally, the transnational nature of the war experience and its recording lead to revising the notion of archives as a self-contained corpus, proving the necessity of crossing diverse archives from different locations, and showing the importance of the dialogue between different kind of sources.

Notes

1. A memorial can be defined as ‘a material object, a ritual, a monument of solid stone or portable ‘commemorabilia’ (Bruce Scates and Rebecca Wheatley, ‘War memorials’, in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge history of the First World War, Volume 3 Civil society*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2014, p. 529).
2. On the growing historiography about the memory of the First World War, it is worth mentioning Annette Becker, *Les Monuments aux morts: patrimoine et mémoires de la Grande Guerre (Memorials to the dead: Cultural heritage and memories of the Great War)*, Errance, Paris, 1988; George L Mosse, *Fallen soldiers: Reshaping the memory of the world wars*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1991; Jay Winter, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning: The Great War in European cultural history*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995; Daniel Sherman, *The Construction of memory in interwar France*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1999; Nicholas J Saunders (ed.), *Matters of conflict: Material culture, memory and the First World War*, Routledge, London, 2004; Jay Winter, *Remembering war: The Great War between memory and history*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2006; Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and medieval memory: War, remembrance and medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914–1940*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009; Paul Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2013; Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and memory*, Bloomsbury, London, 2013; Bart Ziino (ed.), *Remembering the First World War*, Routledge, New York, 2015.
3. Not only the victorious nations commemorated war and published books of remembrance, but also the defeated, as the German case illustrates (Goebel, p. 32).
4. Like the Canadian Book of Remembrance, the British House of Commons Book of Remembrance 1914–1918 and the unfinished project of ‘*Les livres d’or des Morts pour la France*’ (‘*The Golden books of the men who died for France*’).
5. An impressive list of French commemorative books, showing the multiple organisations engaged in the publication of this resource, is available at <<http://jeanluc.dron.free.fr/th/Bibliographie3.htm>>.
6. For an updated assessment of the social and cultural history of the Great War, see Jay Winter, ‘General introduction’, in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge history of the First World War, Volume 1 Global war*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2014, pp. 1–10; and John Horne, ‘End of a paradigm? The cultural history of the Great War’, in *Past and Present*, vol. 242, no. 1, February 2019, pp. 155–92.
7. Fernando Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina (History of immigration to Argentina)*, Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 2003, p. 247.
8. José C Moya, ‘A continent of immigrants: Postcolonial shifts in the Western hemisphere’, in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 86, no. 1, 2006.
9. In Argentina, the Biblioteca Nacional and the Academia Nacional de la Historia; in Chile, the Biblioteca Nacional de Chile; in Mexico, the Biblioteca Nacional de México; in France, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon and La Contemporaine; in the United Kingdom, the National Library and the National Archives; in Germany, the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut and the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.
10. Javier Pérez-Siller, ‘La huella de una nueva época’ (‘The mark of a new time’), in *Album d’honneur de tous les français résidant au Mexique partis pour la France, 1914–1919 (Memorial book of all the French residents in Mexico who left for France, 1914–1919)*, Sabença de la Valeia, Asociación Franco Mexicana, Suiza et Belga de Beneficencia, Mexico, 2005.
11. Rory Miller, *Britain and Latin America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2013, pp. 3–5.
12. *ibid.*, p. 175.
13. Arthur L Holder (ed.), *Activities of the British Community in Argentina during the Great War 1914–1919*, The Buenos Aires Herald, Buenos Aires, 1920, 487 pages. The quotation comes from the title page.

14. *The South Pacific Mail, War memorial number: An historical record of the tribute of the British communities in Chile, Peru and Bolivia, during the Great War 1914–1918*, The South Pacific Mail, Valparaíso 1920, 185 pages.
15. Juan Ricardo Couyoumdjian, 'Apuntes sobre un periódico inglés de Valparaíso: "The South Pacific Mail" entre 1909 y 1925' ('Notes on an English newspaper of Valparaíso: "The South Pacific Mail" between 1909 and 1925'), in *Valparaíso 1536–1986*, Primera Jornada de Historia Urbana, Instituto de Historia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Ediciones Altazor, Valparaíso, 1987, pp. 186–88.
16. *A Book of Remembrance, 1914–1918*, Hudson & Kearns, London, no date, 130 pages.
17. *ibid.*, pp. 6–10.
18. *The Central Argentine Railway Volunteers: Their Book*, no publisher, no place of publication, no date, 315 pages. It is preserved at the Imperial War Museum in London, which was created in 1917 to document the British civil and military effort during the First World War. On this museum, see Gaynor Kavanagh, 'Museum as Memorial: The origins of the Imperial War Museum', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1988.
19. Eduardo Romero de Oliveira and Mónica Ferrari, 'Convergences of the railway's historical process and management of railway heritage (Brazil and Argentina)', paper delivered at the XVIth International TICCIH Congress, Lille, 2015.
20. Hernán Otero, *La Guerra en la sangre: Los franco-argentinos ante la primera guerra mundial (War in Blood: The French Argentinians before the First World War)*, Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 2009, pp. 29–32.
21. Spaniards were 29,541 and French 4,729, that is, respectively, 0.19% and 0.03% of total population; Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, *Estadísticas Históricas de México 2009 (Historical statistics of Mexico 2009)*, INEGI, Mexico, 2009, p. 83).
22. Eduardo Chaix and Silvio Greco Cotti (eds), *Album d'honneur de tous les français résident au Mexique partis pour la France, 1914–1919 (Memorial book of all the French residents in Mexico who left for France, 1914–1919)*, Empresa Comercial Editora La Nacional, Puebla, 1919, 150 pages. We are using here the facsimile edition mentioned in note 10.
23. Pérez-Siller, p. 155.
24. *ibid.*, p. 157.
25. Arturo Arigoni and Santino Barbieri, *Gli italiani nel Sud America ed il loro contributo alla guerra: 1915–1918 (The Italians in South America and their contribution to the war: 1915–1918)*, Arigoni and Barbieri, Buenos Aires, 1922, 769 pages.
26. Devoto, p. 247.
27. *Tercer Censo Nacional levantado el 1º de junio de 1914 (Third national census collected on the 1st of June 1914)*, volume II, Talleres Gráficos L. J. Rosso & Cía., Buenos Aires, 1916, pp. 395–6.
28. About Italian immigration to the Americas, see Gianfausto Rosoli (ed.), *Un secolo di emigrazione italiana: 1876–1976 (A Century of Italian emigration: 1876–1976)*, Centro Studi Emigrazione, Roma, 1978, and 'Un quadro globale della diaspora italiana nelle Americhe' ('A Global picture of the Italian diaspora in America'), in *Altreitalie*, no. 8, July–December 1992; Samuel Baily, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870–1914*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2004; Fernando Devoto, *Historia de los italianos en la Argentina (History of the Italians in Argentina)*, Cámara de Comercio Italiana en la República Argentina, Biblos, Buenos Aires, 2006; Mark I Choate, *Emigrant nation: the making of Italy abroad*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2008.
29. Arigoni and Barbieri, p. 732.
30. Co-author with Adriano Irala Burgos of *Paraguay – Uruguay: las fiestas de confraternidad celebradas en Asunción con motivo de la peregrinación uruguaya al solar de Artigas (Paraguay – Uruguay: The fraternity festivities celebrated in Asuncion on the occasion of the Uruguayan pilgrimage to Artigas' home)*, Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, Buenos Aires, 1913.
31. Alberto Gerchunoff and Aarón Bilis (eds), *El Album de la Victoria (The Album of victory)*, E Danón, Buenos Aires, 1920.

32. As mentioned previously, Italians were 11.79% of total population. Britons comprised 0.35% of the population; French: 1%; Belgians: 0.06%; and Romanians: 0.02% (*Tercer Censo*, pp. 395–6).
33. María Inés Tato, 'En defensa de la causa aliada: La militancia de Alberto Gerchunoff durante la Primera Guerra Mundial' ('In Defence of the Allied cause: The Militancy of Alberto Gerchunoff during the First World War'), in *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2013.
34. Letter from the Chief engineer office of the Central Argentine Railway to Mary Campbell, dated in Buenos Aires on 19 February 1919, in *The Central Argentine Railway Volunteers*, unnumbered page.
35. Pérez-Siller, p. 156.
36. United Kingdom, London, The National Archives, Foreign Office. Embassy and Consulates, Argentine Republic: General Correspondence. From Miscellaneous, 'Letter from Arthur Holder to Sir Reginald Tower', dated Buenos Aires, 16 May 1919.
37. Letter from William C Morris to Mrs. Campbell, dated Buenos Aires, 19 June 1919, in *The Central Argentine Railway*, unnumbered page.
38. Scates and Wheatley, p. 529.
39. Mosse, p. 6.
40. John Horne, 'Introduction: mobilizing for 'total war', 1914–1918', in John Horne (ed.), *State, society and mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 2–3.
41. Horne, p. 10. On the religious aspects stimulated by the war, see Annette Becker, *La guerre et la foi. De la mort à la mémoire, 1914–1930 (War and faith. From death to memory, 1914–1930)*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1994.
42. Marguerite Helmers, *Harry Clarke's War: Illustrations for Ireland's Memorial Records, 1914–1918*, Irish Academic Press, Sallins, 2016, p. 22.
43. Scates and Wheatley, p. 530–45.
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45. Anthony Smith, 'War and ethnicity: the role of warfare in the formation, self-images and cohesion of ethnic communities', in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, no. 4, 1981, p. 379.
46. Holder, p. 9.
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48. Thomas W Laqueur, 'Names, bodies and the anxiety of erasure', in Theodore R Schatzki and Wolfgang Natter (eds), *The social and political body*, Guilford Press, New York and London, 1986, p. 135.
49. *The South Pacific Mail, Activities of the British Community*, and *Album d'honneur*.
50. Holder, p. 120.
51. A book of *Remembrance*, p. 127.
52. Arigoni and Barbieri, pp. 3–4.
53. 'Preface', in *The Central Argentine Railway Volunteers*, p. 7. The book mentioned 415 volunteers among the Argentine staff. A complete account based on supplementary sources indicates 419; available at <<https://www.fcbap.ca/railways/volunteers.htm>>, accessed 20 March 2020.
54. Mosse, p. 84.
55. The fact that the book's editor expected to obtain financing support from the company was probably another factor to be considered.
56. On this corporate culture, see Polly Reed Myers, *Capitalist family values: Gender, work, and corporate culture at Boeing*, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 2015. On this logic applied by the British railway companies in Argentina, see Silvana Palermo, 'Protesta laboral, nacionalismo e internacionalismo: La huelga ferroviaria de 1917 en tiempos de la Gran Guerra' ('Labour protest, nationalism and internationalism: The rail strike of 1917 at the time of the

- Great War'), paper delivered at the XXI Jornadas de Historia Económica, Caseros, 23–26 September 2008.
57. *The South Pacific Mail*, unnumbered page.
 58. *ibid.*
 59. Arigoni and Barbieri, pp. 214–8.
 60. *ibid.*, p. 586.
 61. Emilio Franzina, 'La guerra lontana: il primo conflitto mondiale e gli italiani d'Argentina' ('The distant war: the first world war and the Italians of Argentina'), *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos*, no. 44, 2000, and *Al caleidoscopio della Gran Guerra: Vetrini di donne, di canti e di emigranti (1914–1918)* (*The kaleidoscope of the Great War: Images of women, songs and emigrants (1914–1918)*), Cosmo Iannone Editore, Isernia, 2017; Otero, *La guerra en la sangre*, and Hernan Otero, 'Emigración, movilización militar y cultura de Guerra: Los franceses de la Argentina durante la Gran Guerra' ('Emigration, military mobilisation and the culture of war: The French in Argentina during the Great War'), *Amnis*, 10; available at <http://amnis.revues.org/1137>, accessed 14 March 2020; María Inés Tato, 'El llamado de la patria: Británicos e italianos residentes en la Argentina frente a la Primera Guerra Mundial' ('The Call of the fatherland: The British and Italian residents in Argentina facing the First World War'), in *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos*, no. 71, 2011, and 'Italianità d'oltremare: La comunità italiana di Buenos Aires e la guerra' ('Italians overseas: The Italian community of Buenos Aires and the war'), in Andrea Scartabellati, Matteo Ermacora and Felicita Ratti (eds), *Fronti interni: Esperienze di guerra lontano dalla guerra (Internal fronts: War experiences far from the war)*, Edizione Scientifiche Italiane, Naples, 2014.
 62. Xosé M Núñez Seixas, 'Remesas visibles e invisibles: La emigración transoceánica de retorno y sus efectos en las sociedades ibéricas, 1850–1950' ('Visible and invisible remittances: Transoceanic emigration and its effects on Iberian societies, 1850–1950'), in Xosé M Núñez Seixas *Las patrias ausentes: Estudio sobre historia y memoria de las migraciones ibéricas (1830–1960)* (*The Absent homelands: Study on the history and memory of Iberian migrations*), Genuve Ediciones, Gijón, 2014, pp. 81–114.
 63. *Activities of the British Community*, *The South Pacific Mail*, *El album de la victoria* and *Gli italiani*.
 64. *The South Pacific Mail*, unnumbered page.
 65. Arigoni and Barbieri, p. 57.
 66. Holder, p. 243.
 67. 'Preface', in *The Central Argentine Railway*, p. 7.
 68. *A book of Remembrance*, pp. 5, 10.
 69. That was the case of *Activities of the British Community* and *The South Pacific Mail*.
 70. Holder, p. 9.
 71. Arigoni and Barbieri, p. 3.
 72. *A book of Remembrance*, p. 3; Holder, pp. 19–20.
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 74. On the tensions between interests and altruism in the ethnic leaderships, see Xosé M Núñez Seixas, 'Modelos de liderazgo en comunidades emigradas: Algunas consideraciones a partir de los españoles en América (1870–1940)' ('Leadership models in migrant communities: Some considerations from the Spanish in America (1870–1940)'), in Núñez Seixas, *Las patrias ausentes*, pp. 132–4.

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