

Nationalism and the Science of History in the Representation of the Valencian Past*

PEDRO RUIZ TORRES

Universitat de València

Modern historiography and nationalism are closely connected to one another. Both had their origins in the final decades of the eighteenth century and were fostered by the same process of far-reaching intellectual change which led to the emergence of a radically new way of thinking about the world and participating in it.¹ It was this change that brought us the unquestionably modern concepts which we still use to perceive and interpret events to this day.

The way the nation thought of itself began to change as the dynastic kingdoms and ideas based on religion went into decline. The nation as an entity linked to the person of the monarch was replaced by an abstract concept which—recalling the words of Benedict Anderson—breathed life into an imagined political community, inherently limited and sovereign.² ‘Imagined’ because the members of that community would never meet the majority of their fellow countrymen, yet they never gave up their conception of something fundamental—traditions, a language, civilization, culture—that bound them fraternally into a ‘political community’. Such a political community was ‘limited’ and ‘sovereign’ because it had borders, beyond which lay other nations, while its identity was expressed through

* This paper results from work undertaken as part of the Research Project PB 93—0358–C02-01, financed by the DGICYT.

¹ The most important work to illustrate this change is without doubt the dictionary of basic historical concepts, published in seven volumes, from 1972: O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Kosselleck, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexicon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972–1992). R. Kosselleck reflects on this conceptual shift in *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979); also Jürgen Habermas, *Der philosophische Discurs der Moderne*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985).

² B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983; 2nd revised ed., 1991).

the institutions making up the new State which had emerged as a result of the liberal break with the old empires and dynastic kingdoms. As a result, nationalism emerged as an ideology combined with a collective vision: as an ideology it was linked to the political ideas of popular sovereignty and democracy; and as a collective vision it gave rise to the concept of identity, particularly for individuals who were aware that they formed part of a group rooted in a community with a culture, history and attachment to a particular geographical area, and with a project for the future.³ In that sense, history was to prove fundamental, but historical thinking also had to change radically so that the nations could be conceived of differently.

It is not difficult to understand how the intellectual revolution in the latter part of the eighteenth century transformed the old concept of history which until then was merely a cultural product inherited from another era. The new class of intellectuals, conscious of the rapidity and intensity of social change, lost interest in the classical method of historical inquiry. Since Greek and Roman times, the past had been regarded as a repository of examples, each significant in its own right, and capable of illuminating, in a general and recurrent way, some aspect of human affairs. However, according to our modern conception of history, nothing is significant, as Hannah Arendt points out, beyond the concept of process, and of a historical temporality in which the past is inherently distinct from the present which in its turn is distinct from the future. Therefore, there is no better way to separate the concepts of ancient and modern in history than this idea of process, an idea which culminated in Kant and Hegel's philosophy of history, and which at the same time gave rise to the new 'science of history'. Belief that the truth resides in and is revealed through a temporal process is characteristic of modern historical thinking and is radically novel and different from classical or Judeo-Christian historical thinking. The effects of this change of outlook on the academic world were soon experienced. In the words of Hannah Arendt: 'el surgimiento de las humanidades en el siglo XIX estuvo inspirado por el mismo sentimiento, por la misma apreciación de la historia y, por lo tanto, se distingue claramente de los renacimientos recurrentes de la antigüedad que tuvieron lugar en períodos anteriores' ('the rise of the humanities as a major area of interest in the nineteenth century was inspired by this same feeling, this same appreciation of history and, therefore, is clearly different from the repeated renaissances in the study of the Ancient World which took place in earlier periods').⁴

³ As pointed out by Montserrat Guibernau, *Nationalisms: The Nation-State and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).

⁴ H. Arendt, 'History and Immortality', *Partisan Review* (1957), published in the book *De la historia a la acción*, selection and introduction by Manuel Cruz (Barcelona: Paidós, 1995), 52.

While this is not the place to examine in detail the mutually influential relationship between history and nationalism in the last two centuries, it is appropriate to highlight what seems to us to be a very important and significant issue. While the nations were thought of as being authentic social organisms in a permanent state of development throughout an unvarying and secularized time, history was useful because it was the best means of showing the meaning of their advance. The earlier approach to historical enquiry resulted in a 'general history' built on the concepts of civilization and culture, both of which concepts owed their origins to the radical intellectual change to which we have referred. Both concepts, as Norbert Elias shows, are an expression of the awakening of the different forms of the West's 'national conscience', while its social genesis should be sought in the intellectual sectors of the bourgeoisie, which at that time were developing very differently in France and Germany. Linked to all of this, history, now conceived of as an academic discipline, began to be introduced in the universities early in the nineteenth century, at a time when the first professorships were being created in France and Germany. The new professional historians, working within their academic circles in their different nations, developed the methodological principles of the new 'science of history' and from that basis carried out the work of interpreting the past which they themselves proudly came to distinguish from work done by 'scholars' and 'antiquarians'.⁵ History, until then understood as constituting a plurality of examples, the majority serving a moral function, would now emerge as a single discipline: the sum of all human experience which identified and characterized each nation. This same concept designated history as reality and at the same time as a reflection on that reality—a reflection which had immediate practical consequences because, even as it produced knowledge of the past with a view to understanding the future, history was being transformed into a guide for men's actions, thanks to which they could hope to shape their destiny.⁶

⁵ According to Juan José Carreras, history as an academic discipline first moved away from scholarship to science in the little city of Göttingen, in the Electorate of Hanover, during the second half of the eighteenth century. In that place historians such as Gatterer and Schlözer combined the breadth of vision of a Voltaire, Gibbon or Montesquieu with mastery in learning and textual criticism. Their expertise, moreover, extended to the so-called *Kameralwissenschaften*, or the sciences of public finance and administration—which included Statistics. These professors of history believed in the capacity of the science of history to formulate theories that would determine the best approach to elucidating the enormous mass of documents gathered over the centuries by scholars (cf. J. J. Carreras, 'Teoría y narración en historia', *Ayer* [Madrid: Marcel Pons, 1993], No. 12, 20–21). Gérard Noiriel devotes a long and interesting chapter to the development of history as a scientific discipline in his book, *Sur la 'crise' de l'histoire* (Paris: Belin, 1996), 47–89.

⁶ G. Noiriel, *Sur la 'crise' de l'histoire*, 49 ff.

Throughout the nineteenth century, history in Spain was not pursued with sufficient professionalism, and neither was the nationalism which was its driving force from the beginning.⁷ In spite of this, the development of a national consciousness, as happened in Western Europe, influenced the emergence of a new kind of history, the 'historia general de España' ('general history of Spain') which both fulfilled the requirements of the new methodology, involving work with original documents, and answered the demands being made by the new public with its middle-class roots. This kind of history, as José María Jover has emphasized, had an obvious protagonist—the Spanish nation—, and, he adds, 'el narrador proyectó sobre las grandes encrucijadas que jalonaban la trayectoria de su protagonista, unos criterios valorativos de raíz específicamente nacional, que subrayaban la continuidad de un *Volkgeist*, unas veces en posición triunfante y otras ominosamente doblegado' ('The narrator imposed on the great historical events which marked the crossroads in the development of Spain, his protagonist, standards of judgment of distinctly nationalist origins which underlined the continuity of a *Volkgeist*, sometimes in triumphant mode and at others ominously subdued').⁸ During the nineteenth century the nationalist character of the work of liberal Spanish historians followed very closely the model of the *Histoire Générale de la Civilisation en France* (1830) by François Guizot. This was clearly visible in the *Historia general de España desde los tiempos primitivos hasta nuestros días*, by Modesto Lafuente, which was published in thirty volumes between 1850 and 1867, and was the most widely known and highly regarded work of history written in the second half of the century. Its nationalist purpose was not only continued but strengthened when history at the turn of the century was transformed into a professional discipline. Little by little, as Ignacio Peiró and Gonzalo Pasamar have shown, the politicians, writers, philosophers and journalists of the nineteenth century, with little training in critical methodology, were being replaced by professional scholars employed in the State Archives and later, in the early years of this century, by academics trained in the study of the science of history. From then on, and very slowly, history began to play an important role in the universities, and without it the nationalism of Spanish

⁷ I. Peiró, *Los guardianes de la historia* (Zaragoza: Institución 'Fernando el Católico', 1995); Borja de Riquer, 'Aproximación al nacionalismo español contemporáneo', *Studia Historica. Historia Contemporánea* (Salamanca: Univ. de Salamanca, 1994), XII, 11–29. On nationalism in the Iberian Peninsula see also *Nationalism and the Nation in the Iberian Peninsula*, ed. C. Mar-Molinero and A. Smith (Oxford: Berg, 1996).

⁸ J. M. Jover, 'Caracteres del nacionalismo español', *Zona Abierta* (April–June 1984), No. 31, 8. See also B. Clavero, 'Cortes tradicionales e invención de la historia de España', an offprint from *Las Cortes de Castilla y León 1188–1988* (Valladolid: Ed. Cortes de Castilla y León, 1990), 149–95, and P. Cirujano, T. Elorriaga and J. S. Pérez Garzón, *Historiografía y nacionalismo español, 1834–1868* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos del CSIC, 1985).

historiography would have taken on a different character.

In short, the so-called 'general history of Spain', or the 'history of Spanish civilization' identified nation with state and completely adopted the idea of Castile's predominant role in the formation of the Spanish nation. This was one of the most striking characteristics of nineteenth-century works of history, and can be seen in the extensive works of Rafael Altamira, one of the main forces in the modernization of history in Spain.⁹ In an intellectual milieu dominated by such nationalism, historians favoured specific areas, individuals and periods in their analyses. Both the history produced in Spanish universities, lacking in the maturity of French or German work, and that promoted by the Centro de Estudios Históricos since its foundation in 1910, which shared the regenerationist ideals of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, revolved around the Spanish nation, a nation 'forjada desde Castilla' ('forged from Castile'). The majority of intellectuals of the turn of the century tended to identify 'the problem of Spain' with the problem of Castile's boom and decline. Other 'provinces' or 'regions' were of little interest in themselves, outside the contribution they had been able to make to a process determined by values embedded in Castilian history. As the historian Rafael Altamira was to write, 'civilization' was an organic whole consisting of the material and spiritual facts pertaining to a specified people. The 'history of Spanish civilization', in our case, revealed the triumphs and set-backs of the 'Spanish people', whose greatest splendour—the era of 'Spanish supremacy'—coincided with the beginnings of the process of centralization set in motion from Castile by the Catholic Monarchs. According to this theory, that early centralization successfully stimulated state action and the defence of the national interests which it represented. After a long period of 'decline' during the reign of the last Habsburgs, the eighteenth-century 'revival' and the revolution of the nineteenth century took place, which almost completely fulfilled the modern monarchy's ideal of centralization and unification. Old differences, along with territorial and social privileges, disappeared when the State imposed the same laws on all Spaniards. At the end of the nineteenth century, the reaction against the idea of Spain as a single Nation-State posed a new problem of great historical importance for Spain: the question of autonomy for some of its regions. Throughout all this

⁹ I. Fox, *La invención de España. Nacionalismo liberal e identidad nacional* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1997). We are unable to devote the space to it that Rafael Altamira's conception of history deserves; this conception is much more complex and innovative than one would have expected of him, given his identification with a predominant Spanish nationalism. For some idea of what his conception involves, cf. *Estudios sobre Rafael Altamira*, ed. A. Alberola (Alicante: Instituto de Estudios Juan Gil-Albert, 1987). The way history was taught and its influence on the formation of a nationalist conscience in Spain has been studied by Pilar Maestro in the fourth chapter of her unpublished doctoral thesis, *Historiografía y enseñanza de la historia* (Univ. de Alicante, 1996), 2 vols.

continual progression, powered by the 'ideal of civilized life', the 'history of civilization' was from the 'earliest times' the history of the Spanish people and of the Spanish nation. At times this progress was interrupted, as happened during the period of the Spanish Civil War. As a consequence, while in exile, well into the post-war years, Rafael Altamira, in finishing his book, called the attention of the United Nations to the grave problem of the lack of liberty of a people who were the repository of a thousand-year-old culture.¹⁰

During the nineteenth and the greater part of the twentieth century, up to the important watershed of the sixties, the writings of Valencian historians had a definite Spanish nationalist slant. This was not to be an obstacle to the swift emergence of a localized vision of the past. In the first half of the nineteenth century, with political ideologies as opposed as were those of anti-liberal traditionalism (Xavier Borrull) and republican federalism (Vicente Boix),¹¹ there were those who were interested in the Valencian past with a view to laying the foundations of a different model for the Spanish nation. In their writings, these authors forcibly removed the old institutions, with their basis in regional *fueros* (rights and privileges), and their medieval origins, from the context of their feudal system and hierarchical class structure. By locating these institutions in a romantically idealized past, they used their writings to exalt them for political ends. The influence of this Romantic recreation of the medieval institutions with their *fueros* also left its mark on the Valencian political regionalism of the end of the nineteenth century. However, the Valencian nationalism of the *Renaixença*, unlike what happened in Catalonia, did not give rise to an alternative nationalism for a Spanish nation shaken by the crisis of 1898. Historians with Valencian interests restricted themselves to producing a series of studies, literary or academic, which were dedicated to the rescue of Valencian history, and were predominantly local in their approaches. Many of these studies took as their frame of reference the three provinces (Alicante, Valencia and Castellón) into which the old Kingdom of Valencia had been divided since 1833. Others, on the contrary, affirmed the rights to the old territorial boundaries and set these claims

¹⁰ R. Altamira, *Historia de la civilización española*. Manuales Soler XXIX (Barcelona, 1902), republished with important changes in 1929, and again in 1945, when a chapter was added covering the period between 1923 and the years immediately following the Spanish Civil War. There is a recent edition of this last version, with a preliminary study by Rafael Asín (Barcelona: Crítica, 1988).

¹¹ X. Borrull, *Fidelidad de la ciudad y reyno de Valencia en tiempos de las guerras civiles que empezaron en 1700* (Valencia, 1810); *Tratado de la distribución de las aguas del Río Turia y del Tribunal de los Acequeros de la Huerta de Valencia* (Valencia: Imp. Benito Monfort, 1851); V. Boix, *Historia de la ciudad y del reino de Valencia* (Valencia: Imp. Benito Monfort, 1845–1847), 3 vols. See the biography of Vicente Boix published by Eduardo Ortega (*Vicente Boix* [Valencia: Alfons el Magnànim, 1987]).

for territorial unity against the interior divisions within the Valencian region brought about by the Liberal State. In every case, academics and regional politicians were a long way from questioning, through their ideas and work, the broader picture of Spain's general history, although they viewed this history from a perspective which was different from that adopted by the Castilians, and they endeavoured to record the historical features peculiar to the Valencian region.

Historiografía Valenciana, by Francisco Almarche Vázquez, published in 1919—a period in which for the first time a truly solid Valencian political platform had emerged—is a good example of what the histories of the region were like at the time, and the stage of development they had reached.¹² The book's opening pages clearly show a desire to connect with the Valencian school of writing of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, 'iniciada en las doctrinas reformadoras y críticas del genio valenciano Luis Vives, continuada luego por los Jaime Pérez, Pérez Bayer, los hermanos Mayans, Cerdá, Teixidor, Sales, Rodríguez, Galiana, Villanueva, Sala, Martí, Ribelles y, en épocas más modernas, por Gonzalo Morón, Boronat y el Canónigo Chabás' ('which had begun with the analytical teachings of the Valencian genius and reformer Luis Vives, and had been continued in later periods by Jaime Pérez, Pérez Bayer, the Mayans brothers, Cerdá, Teixidor, Sales, Rodríguez, Galiana, Villanueva, Sala, Martí, Ribelles and, in more recent times, by Gonzalo Morón, Boronat and Canon Chabás'). Most of these writers were old-style academic ecclesiastics. In the words of Almarche, they represented 'una no interrumpida cadena de investigadores y tratadistas prez y ornato de una gran nación' ('an uninterrupted succession of researchers and writers, the glory and adornment of a great nation'). The word 'nation', to the study of whose past the aforementioned school of Valencian historians had been devoted, is not, however, open to misunderstanding. The book's author applies it to the only reality conceivable from the point of view of Valencian regionalism of that time, that is, to the Spanish nation. 'La escuela crítica valenciana llena toda España con los nombres de sus preclaros seguidores' ('the Valencian School of Criticism, with the names of its illustrious adherents, has become known throughout Spain'), while also contributing to the development of the study of history 'en el reino de Valencia' ('in the Kingdom of Valencia'). It combined both pursuits without any difficulty, because:

... estos diligentes cultivadores de la verdad histórica consultan los archivos, acopian manuscritos, acumulan documentos, deshacen fábulas, compulsan fechas, depuran los materiales para la Historia de

¹² See, for a recreation of the context, A. Cucó, *El valencianismo político* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1977), especially 96 ff, as well as V. Franch, *El nacionalisme agrarista valencià (1918–1923)* (Valencia: Prometeo, 1980), 2 vols.

España, al mismo tiempo que comienzan la bibliografía y dejan bien provistos almacenes de refinados materiales para reconstruir la moderna historia, moderna en el sentido expositivo, de la ciudad y reino de Valencia, amplia y extensa, heroica y grande, no como quisieran acostumbrarnos a concebirla y verla, raquítica y pequeña a través de prisma divisional en provincias artificiales, sin tradición ni prosapia con intento único de ser desligadas de su pasado.

(... these diligent seekers after historical truth consulted archives, correlated manuscripts, amassed documents, discounted myths, collated dates, elucidating all the source-material available on the History of Spain, while at the same time embarking on writing books, and leaving depositories well-stocked with material which had been carefully sifted to enable a modern reconstruction of the history of the city and Kingdom of Valencia: 'modern' in the sense of being concerned to explain that history as it was, complete and unabridged, heroic and great, and not as others might want us to get used to seeing and understanding it—that is, from a partial perspective, in a limited and disorganized way, as that of a land artificially divided into provinces, without tradition or ancestry; their sole purpose being to observe each of its provinces detached from their joint past.)¹³

There is no doubt that Valencian regionalism succeeded in widening the horizons of historical research when it opened the way to a modern, document-based study of Valencian history. Almarche's own work insisted on the need to obtain, in order to achieve this new history, 'el necesario auxilio de los Archivos y monumentos y demás elementos de prueba y consulta para el esclarecimiento de la verdad' ('essential aid from the Archives and historical buildings and other sources of reference and consultation for the purpose of verifying the truth'); all of which should be in accordance with 'el más amplio y moderno concepto que los tratadistas exigen para la formación de la historia de un pueblo' ('the most comprehensive and most modern conception of their subject required by historians to reconstruct the history of a people'). That is why Almarche's study draws on a series of social and personal diaries, journals, accounts, autobiographies etc., previously unpublished and relating to the former Kingdom of Valencia, arranged in chronological order from the Middle Ages down to the middle of the nineteenth century. The one hundred and thirty-nine sections into which the work is divided, and all of which are very short, are devoted to each of the documents referred to, with a bibliography of the document, the document's history, and a biography of the author if known, 'a fin de obtener exactamente y conocer la fe y la

¹³ F. Almarche, *Historiografía Valenciana* (Valencia: Imprenta "La Voz Valenciana", 1919), 12–13.

autoridad que nos merezca como relato histórico' ('with the aim of determining, and recognizing, exactly how much truth and authority we ought to ascribe to it as a historical account'). This concept of 'modern history' was distinct from that of the great chronicles of Viciano, Beuter, Escolano and Diago, and its main research focus ceased to be only these so-called 'important events' thought worthy of ranking alongside the deeds of Kings, 'a la manera del concepto antiguo y clásico de sentir la historia' ('which was the traditional, classical way of experiencing history'). The new sources, 'que no por ser humildes son despreciables' ('which just because they are ordinary are not to be disparaged'), did in fact furnish a tremendous amount of data uncontaminated 'por el fango de la verdad curialesca' ('by the muddied waters of legalistic truth'). Without any pretensions to style, these sources 'acumulaban cuanto en sus relaciones sociales habían ido adquiriendo' ('gathered together as much information as had been acquired in the ordinary course of social events and relations'): about scandal, unpunished crimes, from news-sheets, and reports of public and private parties and gatherings, on the activities of the rich and the poor—'todo lo que constituye un verdadero cuadro de la vida ciudadana ... verdadero retrato de la agitación y bullicio de estas poblaciones donde el deseo de hablar y la libertad de crítica andaban juntas que en un pueblo libre se daban, consciente que fue de su valer, educado por sus leyes para gobernarse a sí mismo' ('everything that a true picture of everyday city life consists of ... a true portrayal of the excitement, the hustle and bustle of those communities in which the desire to speak and the freedom to criticize went hand in hand, affecting each other within a free society that was aware of how valuable this was and was taught by its own rules to manage its own affairs').¹⁴

'Modern Valencian historiography' is striking in its focus on civic culture, rather than on the wars and great events exalted in traditional chronicles. In this way it showed that it was the kind of historical writing which had links with the concerns and interests of the middle classes, in contrast to the kind that had extolled the warrior deeds of monarchs and members of the nobility. Yet, its specific field of interest clearly lay elsewhere. Ideological conservatism pointed it in a direction which was very different from that of progressive liberalism: towards the reconstruction of the traditions and characteristics peculiar to the former Kingdom of Valencia, instead of towards the 'ideal of civilized life' of the Spanish people. Always ready to connect with the old ecclesiastical scholarly tradition,¹⁵ Valencian historiography current at the beginning of

¹⁴ F. Almarche, *Historiografía Valenciana*, 9–10.

¹⁵ On the historiography of the eighteenth century in general, see A. Mestre, 'Historiografía', in *Historia literaria de España en el siglo XVIII*, ed. F. Aguilar (Madrid: Trotta/CSIC, 1997), 815–82.

the century found methodological support in the type of reorganization of historical studies promoted by the body of archivist-historians to which Francisco Almarche himself belonged. With a conservative ideology, and with a historical methodology, that came from the old school of criticism and from modern professional scholarship, as its two main characteristics, this regionalist historiography ought not to be confused with the liberal historiography which at that time was developing within the University of Valencia and in Spanish universities in general.

Valencian regionalist historiography placed too high a value on the medieval past which had produced both the Kingdom of Valencia and the modern people of the Valencian region. The new Kingdom, created in the thirteenth century by King Jaume I as part of the Crown of Aragon, was, for such historians, the start of a new era which had then been brought to a violent close by the centralism of the Bourbons at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Neo-Romantic idealization of such a past presented it as a splendid moment in our history when ‘un vecino honrado por el hecho de ser ciudadano podía ocupar las más altas magistraturas y sentarse junto a sus Reyes y oponerse a sus actos ilegales’ (when ‘an honourable man, just by being a citizen of the place, could occupy the highest of positions in the judiciary and seat himself next to his King and Queen and oppose their illegal deeds’). The attitude of Francesc de Vinatea in the fourteenth century, who opposed, in the name of the city of Valencia, the subjection under a feudal regime of some of the Province’s most important towns and royal boroughs, as did also the revolt of the Germanías in the sixteenth century, exemplified, in the words of Almarche, the fierce resistance of the civilian population ‘contra el exótico despotismo que entraba por las puertas de aquel diminuto Estado, conculcando sus fueros, haciendo caso omiso de sus Parlamentos, teniendo como letra muerta sus privilegios’ (‘to the unfamiliar despotism which came through the gates of that tiny State, violating its regional laws, ignoring its Parliaments, treating its privileges as dead letters’). The ‘foreign dynasties’ had taken Spain in directions ‘que no eran el ideal de sus Reyes privativos y para allegar recursos no repararon en medios’ (‘which were not in keeping with the ideals of its native monarchs, and they were not particular about the means they used to gather together the resources they needed for their own purposes’). This idealization of the medieval past and of government by *fuero* therefore adhered, to the letter, to the conception of history worked out by Francisco Xavier Borrull, of whom it has been said that he was ‘la encarnación del antiguo y genuino carácter valenciano’ (‘the very embodiment of the traditional and authentic character of Valencia’). His vehement discourses in favour of Spanish institutions, ‘frente a los secuaces de Bentham’ (‘as opposed to those of Bentham’s followers’), supported ‘un modelo de Constitución en la organización del reino

valenciano por Jaime I ... [que] mostraba el espíritu democrático, igualitario y adelantado de aquel Código ... con el propósito de encaminar a la opinión y a los Diputados de la nación por senderos y vías genuinamente españolas y apartar funestas novedades cuyos frutos tuvo la amargura de probar' ('as a model for the Constitution, the kingdom of Valencia as it was organized by Jaime I, ... [which] demonstrated the democratic, egalitarian, forward-looking spirit of its Code of Laws ..., with the intention of leading public opinion and the nation's members of parliament in the direction of truly Spanish highways and byways, and away from disastrous new methods, the fruits of which he had had the bitter misfortune to experience').¹⁶

Valencian regionalism, supported by a group of non-university historians, used the past in order to create its own myths: King Jaume I, founder of the 'modern Valencian State'; the *fueros* which protected 'medieval liberties', and which were 'genuine antecedents of democratic liberalism'; Francesc Vinatea, the 'heroic citizen' standing up to the absolutist monarchy; the revolution of the Germanías, perceived as a 'people's revolt' against absolutism. However, there was more to it than that, and more besides the effort of introducing empiricism and a critical method developed from both old and new scholarship. Valencian regionalism at the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, in contrast to Catalan nationalism, did not develop into a truly nationalist movement and lacked the solid academic backing from historians based in the universities. As Pau Viciano has emphasized, Valencian medievalists were in reality the only truly active group of historians, and their work, from its beginnings, was linked to an insignificant and, in particular, ideologically conservative *Renaixença*. The scholars and royal chroniclers concerned were not academically trained historians, but active politicians—lawyers and landowners—or scholars linked to the Church, who shared a traditional vision of the past and the same social background.¹⁷ They wrote constitutional and institutional history which laid the foundations for a specifically Valencian regionalism compatible with the political system of the Restoration. Manuel Danvila (member of parliament for the Conservative Party, Minister of State and Senator), Canon Roque Chabás (editor of the journal *El Archivo* [1886–1893]), the bibliophile and parliamentary deputy José Serrano Morales, the clergyman José Sanchis Civera, José Martínez Aloy (Mayor of Valencia) and Ignacio Villalonga (future leader of the regionalist Right during the Second Republic), are some of the most representative names of this period in

¹⁶ F. Almarche, *Historiografía Valenciana*, 15–16. On eighteenth-century Romanticism in relation to the figure of King Jaume, see E. Belenguer, *Jaume I a través de la història* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1984), 2 vols.

¹⁷ Pau Viciano, *La temptació de la memòria* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1995), 22–23.

Valencian historiography. The studies that they published were no more than partial studies of such aspects as the Valencian regional laws, or *fueros*, the diocese of Valencia, and the municipalities, the Parliament or *Cortes*, and the Provincial Council of the old Kingdom of Valencia. So while this was the period that produced publications such as the *Història nacional de Catalunya* by Antoni Rovira i Virgili, in 1922, and *the Història de Catalunya* by Ferran Soldevila, in 1934, the only general history of the 'city and Kingdom of Valencia' available continued to be the work by Vicente Boix, which was published in the mid nineteenth century and which from its opening pages glories in what the writer himself describes as its 'espíritu de provincianismo' ('spirit of provincialism').

However, regionalist scholarship is not to be undervalued when seeking to explain the changes in how Spain and its history were conceived, changes which began to have political effects after the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. The outstanding Catalan archaeologist and scholar of prehistory Pere Bosch i Gimpera, then Rector of the University of Barcelona, in his famous inaugural lecture of the academic year of 1936–37, given at the University of Valencia, explained the differences between the traditional, official, orthodox vision of Spain, absorbed in school and present in almost all political addresses, and the new pluralistic and democratic concept of Spain which in those years was coming to the fore.¹⁸ Official history 'partía de la idea dogmática de la unidad y cohesión esencial de España y de su civilización, como un ente metafísico. Era consustancial con ella la misión de España en América, la defensa de la unidad religiosa, la realización prefigurada en la época romana, de España por Castilla y por la monarquía desde Ataúlfo a la dinastía borbónica' ('took as its starting point the dogmatic concept that Spain and its civilization had essential unity and cohesion as a metaphysical entity. Inseparable from this idea were concepts such as Spain's mission in the Americas, her defence of the one true faith, the creation, as foreshadowed in the Roman epoch, of Spain from Castile and through the power of the monarchy, from Ataúlfo down to the dynasty of the Bourbons'). Placed in jeopardy by the Muslims, Spain regarded itself as an entity rebuilt during the Reconquest and reaching its peak with the Catholic Monarchs, who were the true restorers of the Spanish nation, and their reign the starting point of its grandeur. Since then, 'los valores castellanos, sublimados por el Imperio, entre ellos la lengua, se han convertido en los valores españoles por antonomasia. Cuanto no se ajustaba al esquema era herético. El hecho de Portugal se consideraba una Rebelión, el de Cataluña, obstinándose en renacer, en cuanto pasaba del mero romanticismo literario o folklórico e intentaba una cristalización política, se condenaba

¹⁸ P. Bosch i Gimpera, 'España', *Anales de la Universidad de Valencia* (October 1937), No. 1, 2^a época, 9–47.

duramente' ('Castilian values, exalted by the Empire, among these the Castilian language, have become the Spanish values *par excellence*. Anything that did not fit into that scheme was seen as heretical. The independent existence of Portugal was seen as Rebellion; the case of Catalonia, committed to regeneration, if this went beyond mere literary or folkloric romanticism, and the region tried for the cohesion of its own political identity, was harshly condemned'). There was only one obvious fact for Bosch i Gimpera:

la unidad geográfica de la Península Ibérica, la relación entre sus Estados y sus pueblos, la analogía de los elementos étnicos que los constituyen, a pesar de sus fuertes diferencias, así como los acontecimientos vividos en común y la participación de unos y otros en la formación de determinados valores culturales, no siendo los mismos ni en la misma proporción. Esto crea una solidaridad, una hermandad, una cierta cultura en común. Pero una Nación unitaria y menos la necesidad de admitir la identificación de determinado pueblo y de determinada cultura con el todo, de ninguna manera.

(the geographical unity of the Iberian Peninsula, the relationship between its Kingdoms and its peoples, the similarities shared by the ethnic elements which make it up, despite their profound differences, as also the events they have lived through together, and the part played variously by all of them in the creation of definite cultural values, not necessarily the same ones or present to the same degree—all this creates solidarity, a close brotherhood, to some extent a common culture. But is the outcome a unified nation that has no need to accept the separate identities of distinct peoples and distinct cultures within the whole? Most certainly not!)

The two writers who did not accept this orthodox idea of Spain, as the Rector Pere Bosch i Gimpera pointed out in his lecture on Valencia, again came from two opposing ideological backgrounds, which were those of anti-liberal traditionalism and federal republicanism. Menéndez y Pelayo had learned from his teacher, Milá i Fontanals, all about the existence of the language, literature and culture of Catalonia. He had no real difficulty in reconciling his traditionalism with his recognition of Spain's diversity, a diversity which, after the effects of ultra-conservatism, had then had to contend with the endeavours to bring about uniformity made by the new State, which had only recently emerged from the ruins of the *ancien régime*. Pi i Margall, on the other hand, following the more democratic currents of liberalism, had advanced the federal alternative, which had been unsuccessfully attempted in 1873 with the proclamation of the First Republic. Both writers represented exceptions to the concept of history dominated by the unitarian Castilian idea of Spain. However, it was

Manuel Azaña, the intellectual and politician who became the leader of the Spanish State during the Second Republic, whom Pere Bosch i Gimpera quoted repeatedly in support of his own ideas. The criticisms which the Republican leader levied many times against official, orthodox history were made in support of a proposed political policy with which academics like Bosch i Gimpera were in sympathy. This involved building a Spain which was plural in its peoples and its cultures, which was at the same time respectful of all its traditions, and which let no single one of its peoples assume the exclusive right to represent the others, or to consider the others to have invalid credentials. The Rector of the University of Barcelona identified with this political policy and with this new idea of Spain, as is reflected in his speech given to inaugurate the academic year at the University of Valencia a few months after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

During the Second Republic, the reforms affecting the treatment of history at the University of Valencia also extended to the field of Valencian nationalism. Within republicanism, an increasingly strong current of Valencian nationalism provided the impulse for the creation of the *Centro de Estudios del País Valenciano* (Centre of Valencian Studies) in 1937. Two of the most outstanding intellectuals among the Valencian Republicans, Emili Gómez Nadal and Manuel Sanchis Guarner, would later see their university careers cut short. Both suffered persecution under Franco. While the historian Emili Gómez Nadal had to go into exile in France, the philologist Manuel Sanchis Guarner spent several years of confinement in a concentration camp in Spain. Under the dictatorship nationalism which claimed to be Spanish, after the fashion of Azaña, was persecuted as well as Valencian republicanism. On the other hand, Right-wing regionalists were tolerated, and allowed to persist in their exalted view of Valencia as a region always ready, according to the words of their 'himno regional' ('regional anthem'), to 'ofrendar nuevas glorias a España' ('offer up new glories to Spain').

Few books have had so much impact simultaneously both on changes in the treatment of history and on the transformation of nationalist consciousness as has the book by Joan Fuster, published in 1962, called *Nosaltres els valencians*. Thirty-five years later, it is still essential for contextualizing the still on-going, lively debate on the 'Valencian problem'. It has been said of Joan Fuster's book that it 'separa la historia de nuestra prehistoria' ('separates our history from our pre-history'),¹⁹ which seems less of an exaggeration if one bears in mind the kind of history which

¹⁹ Ernest Lluch was responsible for this description, using it in a number of his works; see for example the prologue to his collection of articles, *Introducció a l'economia del País Valencià* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1980), 11. This description has been widely used ever since.

dominated the Valencian scene in the early 1960s. The ideas contained in this work decisively contributed to, and provoked, an outbreak of studies on history, sociology and economy dealing with the 'Valencian issue', on such an extensive scale that, within barely a couple of decades, more had been written on the 'Valencian problem' than had appeared throughout the whole of the previous century. In fact, it is only after the publication of *Nosaltres els valencians* that we can speak of the 'new history', the 'social history' or the 'problem history', of the Valencian region, in the sense that we use these terms when referring to the French school of history represented by the *Annales*. In this respect the influence of this work was impressive. In contrast to the traditional scholarly monograph, the historical reconstruction of the País Valencià proposed by Fuster at last offered an overall view derived from a discussion of social issues. As he himself indicated in his introduction, among the studies of the Valencian region written at that time, numerous 'monografías asépticas' ('sanitized monographs'), notable for their 'neutralidad impávida' ('unyielding neutrality') abounded, which were lacking in an overall view or discussion of the issues affecting the region and its people, such as was needed to transcend the limitations of a 'deplorable e indecorosa miopía "nacional"' ('deplorable and shameful "national" shortsightedness'). Joan Fuster's study therefore endeavoured to contribute to our historical and social knowledge of the Valencian people and, at the same time, to give a loud nationalist awakening to the collective consciousness of a people in the throes of depersonalization. He set out to accomplish something which no one before had dared to attempt: a study of history and sociology, in order to provide an answer to the most basic and fundamental question: 'què som els valencians' ('who are the Valencians?'). Because, as he explained in the introduction, 'abusando de la terminología de un ilustre barbudo: *explicar* será una invitación a *transformar*' ('to misquote Marx's famous words: *interpreting* will serve as an invitation to *transform*').²⁰

Nosaltres els valencians appeared in 1962, when Franco was still in power, but long after the difficult, immediately post-war years and when industrialization was well under way. In the early fifties, a group of intellectuals used to meet in the cafés and bookshops of the city of Valencia to discuss the Valencian problem. Regular visitors to these meetings were Miquel Adlert and Xavier Casp, survivors of the Catholic, nationalist organization Acció Valenciana. Both had been expelled, on grounds of being separatists from Lo Rat Penat—the regionalist institution formed in the nineteenth century as a result of the *Renaixença*—and from the early 1950s they brought about a genuine literary and cultural Valencian renaissance by means of publications through the publishing house, Editorial Torre. The writer Enric Valor and the philologist Sanchis

²⁰ J. Fuster, *Nosaltres els valencians* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1962).

Guarner also attended these meetings, and in the 1960s they were joined by lecturers of Catalan origin from the University of Valencia, such as Joan Reglà, Miquel Dolç and Miquel Tarradell. Young Valencians also took part who had recently graduated from the University, and who were destined to play a key role in the new movement for Valencian nationalism: the journalist Vicent Ventura, the editor Eliseu Climent, the historians Alfons Cucó and Manuel Ardit, the socio-linguist Lluís Aracil, the anthropologist Joan Francesc Mira, the sociologist Josep Vicent Marqués etc.²¹ Joan Fuster very soon became the central figure of the group. The power and clarity of his ideas, as well as the literary brilliance with which he expounded them, contributed decisively to this. Around him, a new nationalist generation would emerge, made up fundamentally of academics whose social background and ways of thinking were very different from those who had pioneered regionalist historiography.²²

Fuster's ideas about nationhood were not very original. Once more we encounter the traditional appeal to consider as an individual entity a people sharing a history, a language and, in effect, a culture. On the other hand, what was new was the resounding attack against regionalism, which clearly denoted the distance between the earlier Valencianism and the new type of nationalism. A year before the publication of *Nosaltres els valencians* he wrote: 'No me he sentido nunca inclinado a la añoranza de una edad media desplazadamente walterscottiana y convencional. No me interesa absolutamente una democracia de gremios, beneficiados y almogávares, presidida por la momia ilustre del rey don Jaime' ('I have never felt inclined to feel nostalgia for the inappropriately Walter Scott type of conventional view of the Middle Ages. I am not in the least interested in a democracy made up of guilds of artisans, incumbents of benefices and soldiers skilled at forays, presided over by the mummified figure of the illustrious King Jaime').²³ Fuster's nationalism differed from Valencian regionalism because he backed the idea of a Catalan nation which would comprehend the 'caso valenciano' ('Valencian issue'), a nation which would provide a framework for analysis within which the past of both peoples could be understood. This nation would enable at the same

²¹ D. Mollà and E. Mira, *De impura natione* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1986); B. Sanz and M. Nadal, *Tradició i modernitat en el valencianisme* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1996); J. V. Marqués, *Tots els colors del roig* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1996).

²² On Fuster, see J. Iborra, *Fuster portàtil* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1982).

²³ This response, published in the journal *Serra d'Or* (June 1961), No. 6, is included in J. Fuster, *Contra el nacionalisme espanyol*, introduction and selection of texts by Jaume Pérez Montaner (Barcelona: Curial, 1994), 49. This book consists of a series of articles, chapters from books etc. by Fuster, which he published throughout his life, and which clearly show Fuster's nationalist way of thinking. His was a nationalism which was not at all given to mythologizing the past, and which was prepared to be superseded when—which he considered most unlikely—the Spanish nationalism which fed it, disappeared.

time a joint proposal for a political system to be made, with a view to bringing about integration into a democratic Europe in the future, once the Dictatorship had ended. No one writing on the Valencian issue had ever before approached the problem posed by nationalism viewed from this double perspective.

In Catalonia, on the other hand, there had been a significant precedent on which Joan Fuster draws for inspiration from the outset in his dissertation. In 1954, the Catalan historian, Jaume Vicens Vives, had published *Notícia de Catalunya (News from Cataluña)* with the intention of knowing 'què som i per què som com som els catalans' ('who are the Catalan people, and why are we the way we are?') and in 1960 the second edition had just appeared, considerably corrected and extended. The book should have had the title *Nosaltres els catalans*, but fear of censorship made him change the title. Fuster's thinking was expressly conceived as complementary to the ideas initiated by Vicens, with the purpose of discovering what had happened to the Valencians, 'els altres catalans' ('the other Catalan people'). Jaume Vicens Vives, a pupil and close collaborator of Pere Bosch i Gimpera, during the Second Republic did not go into exile, like his teacher, when the war ended. He could not escape the purge, but he managed to return in 1947 as a lecturer at the University, and a year later, at the University of Barcelona, he had adapted ideologically to the regime.²⁴ His scientific, non-political attitude—as he repeatedly liked to point out—led him to introduce into Spain, following from the IX Congreso Internacional de Ciencias Históricas (IXth International Congress of the Science of History), held in Paris in 1950, the new 'economic and social' approach to history of the *Annales*. In the fifties—the last decade of his life—the Catalan historian published a series of influential studies which were works both of research and of synthesis. These works radically changed the way Spain's history was viewed in an intellectual context still dominated by the surviving followers of Fascism and by the overwhelming predominance of a national-Catholic ideology. Taking advantage of a cautiously more open approach to Europe, Vicens, with his ideas, exercised an equally powerful influence on the revival of Catalanism and contributed to the emergence of a moderate nationalism, whose leading exponent was the current president of the Generalitat of Catalonia, Jordi Pujol. Vicens died in 1960 at the age of fifty—two years before the publication of *Nosaltres els valencians*—but Vicens' investigative programme, by then in full swing, provided the departure point for Fuster's dissertation. In addition to whatever other goal he had, Vicens' main objective was to promote the continual improvement of the scientific implements of historical research, following the guidelines of the 'new economic and social

²⁴ For everything related to the life and work of Vicens see Josep M. Muñoz i Lloret, *Jaume Vicens i Vives. Una biografia intel.lectual* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1997).

history'. In this way reform of the science of history was to lead to a growing awareness that the Catalans and the 'other Catalans' were a collective entity, and this awareness was very different in type from that produced by traditional political history. Catalan historians proposed by means of this reform to contribute decisively at the same time to transforming their present situation, which is what Lucien Febvre had proposed. The pursuit of this double objective explains the huge influence of *Nosaltres els valencians* on new generations of historians trained at the University of Valencia.

Fuster's dissertation and the important influence of Vicens on the study of history revealed to Valencian university students of the sixties—present in ever greater numbers as the University became socially more democratic²⁵—that another kind of history was possible. The history of their own country, ignored by official historians and idealized nostalgically by regionalist medievalists, could now be accepted within the University as a true science and, at the same time, one that enabled political commitment to a viable plan for the future. The science of history thus helped to bring about changes to their own age which, therefore, seemed to herald the end of the dictatorship and the start of a new era. While these young students researched the history of their own country scientifically, they became in their turn conscious of the existence of another kind of nationalism, which was more attractive than the traditional nationalism. For that nationalism, the identification of state and nation, in nineteenth-century fashion, no longer made sense, especially as the future was being viewed from within a completely new and democratic European context, one that was respectful towards different national cultures.

The Valencian essayist had repeatedly stated in his different writings that, given the obvious failure of regionalism, the only other Valencianism which was an acceptable alternative to dominant Spanish nationalism was the one within the 'Païses Catalanes' ('Catalan-speaking Lands'). In his view, the specific nature of the 'cas valencià' ('Valencian issue') was a product of Valencian history, which in its course had progressively distanced the Valencian region from the medieval past that it had shared with Catalonia. While Vicens argued for a direct relationship of the Catalans with Western Christianity since Carolingian times—the period when 'una mentalidad propia y diferenciada' ('a distinct and characteristic mentality') was formed—, Fuster also traced the origins of the modern Valencian people to the period when Christianity dominated, as the

²⁵ The political democratization of the University was not to take place until much later, after the death of Franco, and only when democracy had sanctioned the principle of university autonomy—as set out in the *Ley de Reforma Universitaria* (Law of University Reform) of 1983, and in the statutes of the various universities—during the first half of the 1980s.

historians of the Romantic period had done. However, in contrast with the regionalists, his book argued that, after the defeat of the Moors and their restriction to certain areas—a fact which was responsible for the regrettable but irreversible break with ‘other Valencians’—the recently established Kingdom of Valencia had come under the control of the Catalans. The Catalans also controlled at the time to an equal degree the entire Kingdom of Aragon, including its Mediterranean empire. However, during the period when the ‘nación catalana’ (‘Catalan nation’) was at the height of its powers, which coincided with the Early Middle Ages, it failed to lay the foundations for a modern State. From the time of the Catholic Monarchs Catalan greatness gave way to what Vicens described as ‘el predominio de la actitud hispánica’ (‘the predominance of a Hispanic Approach’), an old plan for a pluralist system which ended in failure, for which the supremacy of Castile was to blame. It was not surprising, therefore, that throughout the modern and into the contemporary era the supremacy of Castile acted gradually to loosen the ties between the Valencians and the people of Catalonia and fostered the acceptance of a single, unified State. According to Fuster, this was due not only to ‘external’ but also to ‘internal’ factors, characteristic of ‘nuestra manera de ser colectiva’ (‘our collective national attitude’). ‘We are an anomalous people’, stated the author of *Nosaltres els valencians*, ‘pero las anomalías de un pueblo nunca son fortuitas’ (‘but the peculiarities of a people never come about by chance’). Nor, according to Fuster, are they ever caused by a crisis in a single generation, or by random disloyalty on the part of a few oligarchies: ‘Tienen su origen en zonas internas y en móviles más incisivos del ser colectivo, en los cuales, por otro lado, azares, generaciones y oligarquías también tienen su parte’ (‘They originate in interior spheres and from more powerful motives, of the collective self, in creating which, on the other hand, chance events, successive generations and oligarchies have also played their part’). The matter, however, was far from being as simple as Joan Fuster recorded it. Research needed to be done into the ‘collective self’ of Valencians across space and through time, ‘incidir sobre la realidad viva’ (‘to look into the living truth of it’) and ‘remontarse a su genealogía’ (‘to go back to the question of its genealogy’), using ‘los instrumentos metodológicos del historiador y del sociólogo’ (‘the methodological implements of the historian and sociologist’). In this way, the factors that had determined the shape of our present situation would be discovered and the effects which their influence could have on Valencians in the future would be revealed.

Valencian social history owes, in this respect, a great deal to *Nosaltres els valencians*, given that its historical hypotheses concerning the ‘Valencian issue’ very much influenced the studies subsequently produced from within the University. Nevertheless, the impact of Fuster’s work

should not be exaggerated, since that work benefited from being produced within an academic milieu which had already begun to change. The influence of this changing environment on an academic like Fuster was unquestionable, even although, as the writer himself recognized, he did not receive the dual training as both historian and sociologist which he would like to have come across in the academic sphere in Valencia, which continued to be dominated by the old style of scholarship. From the end of the fifties, the University of Valencia underwent profound changes which affected the chairs in humanities, and in particular that of history. In the Arts Faculty at that time there was a significant number of academics in the humanities who were eager to modernize approaches in their respective disciplines and who were increasingly isolated from traditionally accepted opinion: José María Jover, Joan Reglà, Antonio López Gómez, Miquel Tarradell, Miquel Dolç, Manuel Sanchis Guarner, José María López Piñero, Carlos París, Antonio Ubieta, Julián San Valero, Emil Giralt etc. Many of them did not harbour nationalist feelings, either in the sense understood by the regime or as understood by Fuster; others, on the other hand, showed obvious sympathy for moderate Catalanism. Several had even been close collaborators and students of Vicens, such as the holder of the Chair of Early Modern History, Joan Reglà, and Emilí Giralt, Professor of Modern History, or they were influenced directly by Pere Bosch i Gimpera, as was Miquel Tarradell, Lecturer in Archaeology and Prehistory. Two of the most outstanding students of Vicens, Jordi Nadal and Josep Fontana, towards the end of the sixties and in the early seventies, also held, in turn, the Chair of Economic History in the recently created Faculty of Economics at the University of Valencia.

As a result, changes in the study of history were clearly evident by 1969, when the III Congreso de Historia de la Medicina (Third Conference on the History of Medicine) was held in Valencia. A significant number of papers on Valencian social history were presented at the Conference. Shortly afterwards, the Primer Congreso de Historia del País Valenciano (First Conference on the History of the Valencian Region) was inaugurated on 14 April 1971, a date of enormous importance, as it was also that on which was celebrated, in semi-clandestine fashion, the declaration in Spain of the Second Republic forty years earlier. The Primer Congreso de Historia del País Valenciano became the event *par excellence* which demonstrated the great advances made in less than a decade in the field of modern Valencian historiography. The new direction taken by the journal of the Faculty of Arts, *Saitabi*, and the appearance of *Estudis*, a journal of early modern history founded in 1972 by Joan Reglà, and also the foundation, two years later, of *Arguments* (1974–1979), and the publication of *Estudis d'Història Contemporània del País Valencià* from 1978 onwards, both devoted to modern Valencian history, completed the broad picture of

astonishing changes which had taken place within scarcely a couple of decades.

The 'Valencian anomaly' identified by Fuster was more clearly defined in the first works on the social history of the País Valencià. According to Fuster, the cause of the progressive weakening of Valencia as a nation seemed to be a difference in its 'structural' character when compared to Catalonia. The historian Joan Reglà expounded the theory of 'dualismo valenciano' ('Valencian dualism') in various writings: a dualism which, in his opinion, was present in the Kingdom of Valencia from its very beginnings. The conflicts between the feudal estates of the Aragonese aristocracy, well established in the interior of the country, and the urban centres along the coast, where Catalans had resettled, and where a bourgeois mentality prevailed, originated from that time. That original dualism imposed an unstable but dynamic equilibrium throughout the rest of the Middle Ages, which succeeded in preventing the transformation of the Valencian territory into a vast appendage of feudal estates occupied by nobility from the Kingdom of Aragon, as had happened in the case of Andalusia in its relations with the Kingdom of Castile. The offensive taken by the feudal nobility in the so-called 'War of the Union', in the middle of the fourteenth century, was to provoke the first crisis created by the dualism, and was to produce an appropriate response from the bourgeoisie whose reaction led to the victory of King Pedro el Ceremonioso. Half a century later, with the Compromise of Caspe, events once again favoured the interests of a feudal society, but its effects were counteracted thanks to the economic flourishing of the maritime regions, which proved not only capable of restoring the equilibrium but of playing a dominant role in the fifteenth century. At the beginning of the next century, the well-being of the urban communities was to end in the swan song signified by the revolt of the Germanías. Unfortunately, the 'aristocratic reaction' which followed meant the definitive triumph of countryside over town, the effects of which were difficult to counteract even by the expulsion of the Moriscos at the start of the seventeenth century. The overthrow of the Germanías in the sixteenth century, the ultimately very negative consequences for the urban communities of the expulsion of the Moriscos in the early seventeenth century, and, a hundred years later, the crushing of the peasant revolt against the aristocracy in the War of Spanish Succession destroyed once and for all the balance of power to the advantage of the agrarian, feudal way of life. The regionalist and romanticized view hitherto taken of the Valencian past, with its traditional rights and privileges, had given too much importance to the loss of the *fueros* following the military defeat of 25 April 1707. In contrast to that view, the Valencian problem was now being recognized as the product of a particular social structure, created at the height of the period of the *fueros* and

consolidated during the crisis of the 1600s. By any reckoning the consequences were evident from the very beginning of the early-modern era. While Catalonia was then beginning to become industrialized, the Valencian deputies in the Cádiz Cortes were denouncing a serious situation of conflict, characterized by abuses created by the landed aristocracy and by the extreme harshness with which the seigneurial system operated in the countryside.

Joan Reglà's interpretation of Valencian history was conceived as an abstract for a paper: 'he intentado desarrollar un esquema sencillo, una especie de coordenadas básicas que pueden servir de guía, en un intento de comprensión "total" de la historia de Valencia, desde la incorporación de Reino valentino a Europa—y naturalmente a la España cristiana—por la conquista del Jaume I, a los problemas de nuestro tiempo' ('I have tried to develop a simple scheme, some basic coordinates that can serve as a guide, in an attempt to understand "completely" the history of Valencia, from the incorporation of the Valencian Kingdom as part of Europe—and, of course, as part of Christian Spain—by virtue of its conquest by Jaime I, through to the problems of our own time'). The influence of Vicens and his intellectual dialogue with Fuster in their informal meetings at the end of the fifties, had left a clear mark on the work of a man who was at that time the holder of the Chair of Early Modern History in the University of Valencia. His working hypotheses, as he himself regarded them, in keeping with the ideas set out in *Nosaltres els valencians*, promoted and brought together over many years the first studies of social history and the first doctoral theses to emerge from the new Valencian historiography. The initial results of such historical research seemed to show that the Valencians had isolated themselves from mainstream Catalan society, distancing themselves as a result from the truly modern route leading in the nineteenth century to the industrial revolution. Valencian society seemed to have followed a completely different direction from that taken in Catalonia, and to have continued under the strong influence of an agrarian and feudal system of the kind which had held sway in Castile and in most of Spain.²⁶

²⁶ There are many articles and works of historical research which share this point of view. For some of the most significant of these articles see: S. García Martínez, *Els fonaments del País Valencià modern* (Valencia: Garbí, 1968); M. Ardit, *Els valencians de les Corts de Cadis* (Barcelona: Dalmau, 1968) and, for rather more detail, *Revolución liberal y revuelta campesina* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1977); E. Císcar and R. García Cárcel, *Moriscos i agermanats* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1974); J. M. Palop, *Hambre y lucha antifeudal. Las crisis de subsistencia en Valencia (siglo XVIII)* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1977); C. Pérez Aparicio, *De l'alçament maulet al triomf botifler* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1981). Also see the contribution by J. Regla and his students in the book published shortly after his death—which, like that of Vicens, happened prematurely—*Història del País Valencià*, Vol. III (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1975).

In 1968, Emili Giralt, Professor of Modern History at the University of Valencia, and also a student of Vicens, introduced a somewhat different perspective, when he defended the idea of a seventeenth-century Valencia presided over by 'una larga etapa de crecimiento económico' ('a long period of economic growth').²⁷ He argued that in the eighteenth century Valencian society had experienced some forms of economic and social growth that placed it in a good position from which to prepare for industrialization. Although neither Fuster nor Reglà denied the economic expansion of that century, the fact is that up till then it had attracted little attention, as it was believed that the growth during the eighteenth century had not substantially changed the traditional agrarian structure of our society. When Emili Giralt formulated a hypothesis which was to a certain degree at odds with interpretations inspired by the thesis about dualism, his ideas on the period immediately prior to the industrial revolution provoked extreme and significant controversy in the seventies. The majority of historians who intervened in the controversy did so to correct Emili Giralt's view of the eighteenth century, to deny that growth had produced an 'auténtico desarrollo' ('a genuine development'), and to restate the thesis that the backward economic structure that lasted until the middle of the twentieth century had had its origins in the early modern period.²⁸ While for Giralt the causes of the failure of the industrial revolution were to be found in the nineteenth century, and the cause of this failure should be attributed to the change of direction away from promoting bourgeois interests and a capitalist system, and back towards agriculture, to the detriment of industry, the view that prevailed in the end among historians during the seventies proved to be even more pessimistic than that taken by Fuster and Reglà. This was that the defeat of the Germanías, the expulsion of the Moriscos and the War of Succession formed part of a process of 're-feudalization' which continued right into the eighteenth century. The frequent mutinies and anti-feudal revolts of that century, as well as the extraordinary harshness of the seigneurial system

²⁷ E. Giralt, 'Problemas históricos de la industrialización valenciana', *Estudios Geográficos* (1968), Nos. 112–13, 369–94, published as 'Antecedents històrics' in the collection *L'estructura econòmica del País Valencià* (Valencia: L'Estel, 1970), I, 18–38.

²⁸ For examples of work with this viewpoint, see: M. García Bonafé, 'El marco histórico de la industrialización valenciana', *Información Comercial Española* (1974), No. 485, 135–46; R. Aracil and M. García Bonafé, *Industrialització al País Valencià (el cas d'Alcoi)* (Valencia: Elieus Climent, 1976); E. Lluch, *La via valenciana* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1976); Pere Sisè [pseudonym of the group of writers made up of Dolors Bramon, Vicent Soler, Màrius García Bonafé, Teresa Carnero, Jordi Palafox and J. Antonio Martínez], *Raons d'identitat del País Valencià* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1977); M. J. Cucó, M. A. Fabra, R. Juan and J. Romero, *La qüestió agrària al País Valencià* (Barcelona: Aedos, 1978); J. A. Martínez Serrano, E. Reig, V. Soler and J. Sorribes, *Introducció a l'economia del País Valencià* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1980).

which had been denounced by Valencian politicians in the first half of the nineteenth century, showed the persistence of a traditional agrarian, feudal or semi-feudal, social structure, depending on the terms preferred by the historians concerned. That social structure, grown to maturity in the middle centuries of the modern age, had hindered the development of industrialization and was the real reason for the centuries-old backwardness of the Valencians. The problems of contemporary society in the Valencian region, which were profound and far from being simply a result of political events, could and should be explained through using the new methodological approaches to economic and social history.

The controversy concerning the crucial period of the 'transición del feudalismo al capitalismo' ('transition from feudalism to capitalism'), as it began to be called after the famous Marxist debate had achieved a wide influence, tended to find the causes of Valencian under-development far back in time, in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. That backwardness, nevertheless, continued to be seen as one of social structure, although, in order to explain it, historians such as Emili Giralt drew on conditions in the nineteenth century. This was because the apparent failure of the two—the industrial and the bourgeois-liberal—revolutions in the nineteenth century was also perceived as being to a great extent responsible for the fact that the traditional agrarian system remained practically intact in the Valencian region. The absence of an 'authentic bourgeoisie' with industrial interests was seen to have had decisive effects on the national consciousness of the Valencians.²⁹ According to this way of thinking, the fact that a modern industrial system had not emerged, as it had done in Catalonia, the development of which would have brought to a head the conflict between the native Valencian bourgeoisie and the ruling Castilian-Andalusian classes, meant that the socio-economic situation had itself worked to strengthen the ties binding the ruling classes in the Valencian region to the State. At most there was

²⁹ Among the books which appeared at this time, and which, exceptionally, did not take this view on the question of the bourgeois revolution and the existence of a bourgeoisie, might be mentioned: the works of the historian Enric Sebastià, particularly his book *València en les novel·les de Blasco Ibáñez. Propietat i burgesia* (Valencia: L'Estel, 1966); his unpublished doctoral thesis, submitted in 1971, *La transición de la cuestión señorial a la cuestión social*; and his article 'Crisis de los factores mediatizantes del régimen feudal. Feudalismo y guerra campesina en la Valencia de 1835'. See also the work of the sociologist J. V. Marqués, especially *País perplex* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1974), and his articles in *Andalán* and *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*; similarly the study by J. A. Tomás Carpi, *La economía valenciana: modelos de interpretación* (Valencia: Fernando Torres, 1976). I referred to historiography during this period in 'Recientes aportaciones a la historiografía del País Valenciano', in *Historiografía española contemporánea. X Coloquio del Centro de Investigaciones Hispánicas de la Universidad de Pau. Balance y resumen*, ed. M. Tuñón de Lara (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1980), 486–96.

a regionalist apoliticism which characterized—in the words of Afons Cucó—‘una clase borrosa e incompleta, la pseudoburguesía de la Restauración’ (‘a shadowy and incomplete class, the pseudo-bourgeoisie of the Restoration’), which had strong links with centralist politics. Teodoro Llorente, the most representative and influential individual of the Valencian *Renaixença*, according to the historian just mentioned, had connections with an agriculture based on exportation, which marginalized industry; and with a class of despotic, absentee landowners, who accepted completely the Spanish Restoration State.³⁰ Following a course unlike that which led to Catalan nationalism, Valencian nationalism had to suffer the lack of an ‘authentic middle class’ with an industrial base. The Valencian agrarian ruling classes never wished to break the strong ties that linked them with Spanish nationalism.

Thus, the first results of historical researches into the past of Catalonia and the Valencian region, using the approaches and methods of modern economic and social history, produced an evident political paradox. While Catalan nationalism, as depicted in the historical studies of Vicens, exercised increasing political influence when it came into contact with the aspirations of a moderate nationalist middle class that was recovering from the rule of silence that had been imposed by Franco’s dictatorship, Valencian nationalism, inspired by Fuster’s work, felt it had been deprived of its origins in the Valencian middle classes which historically ‘did not exist’. This paradox perhaps explains the accumulation of problems and contradictions that have arisen over the last two decades on account of the Valencian issue. To start with, outside the small circle of intellectuals, academics and students committed to political parties of the Left, it proved difficult to encounter any sense of awareness within Valencia of belonging to the Catalan nation, a fact which did not synchronize easily with Vicens’ theories. According to Vicens, the Catalan nation was to a large degree the outcome of the actions taken by its leading minorities. As he wrote in *Notícia de Catalunya*: ‘No hay cultura posible sin una minoría selecta que constituya la osamenta; no hay política posible sin un grupo que la haya concebido y que la realice’ (‘No culture is possible unless a select minority of people provide the skeletal framework for its existence; no political system is possible unless a group of people who have conceived it put it into effect’). Thus, the feudal Catalan ruling classes, the leading figures from the commercial towns, and the groups of artisans from which the enterprising middle classes had emerged that had industrialized Catalonia from the nineteenth century onwards, had each fulfilled their respective historic roles. First, they had created the Catalan nation in the Middle

³⁰ A. Cucó, *El valencianismo político 1874–1939* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1977), particularly chapter 1. See also, by the same author, *País i Estat: la qüestió valenciana* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1989).

Ages, and then they had defended it in the modern era until they had formed an identity as a people, which they had maintained down the centuries. The País Valencià, on the other hand, given the betrayals it had endured from the minority that had controlled it, the absence of an authentic industrial bourgeoisie, and the domination by a landowning *élite* of self-enriching *rentiers*, could do little other than assert its right, for historical reasons, to resort to popular resistance. The ‘Valencian people’, who had maintained their native language and culture down the centuries, in spite of being abandoned and betrayed by their ruling classes, and in spite of all the obstacles, pressures and repression from outside, were to be the leading figures in the new nationalist history of their region that was being written. The new Valencian nationalist movement, with its sympathies for the people and with its criticism of the dominant classes, would end up transforming itself politically into a movement of the Left—‘el País Valencià serà de izquierdas o no serà’ (‘the Valencian region will be Left-wing or it will not exist at all’), wrote Fuster—and this was to become even more obvious during the years of transition to democracy in Spain. The moderate Catalan nationalism defended by Jaume Vicens—mentor of the Christian-Democrat option which Jordi Pujol stood for—wished to find a bourgeoisie ready to ‘catalanizar España’ (‘turn Spain into a Catalan-conscious country’). In contrast, Fuster’s ideas had their first political effects on the Partit Socialista Valencià (1964–1970), on the Partit Socialista del País Valencià in the seventies,³¹ on the Moviment Comunista, the Partit Comunista del País Valencià, the Unitat del Poble Valencià, and on the minority groups that supported independence, such as the Partit Socialista d’Al·liberament Nacional or the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya. This was a difficult collaboration between the moderate Catalan nationalism of the Convergència i Unió and the Valencianism of the Left wing, in support of one nationalist option, but each with a very different political agenda. While this cooperation lasted, it produced the successive electoral failures of Valencian nationalism—a fact which explains the recent post-Fusterian retreat to a more strictly Valencian form of nationalism, one which was ready to renounce the principle of a ‘utopia de los Países Catalanes’ (‘utopia of the Catalan-speaking regions’).³²

³¹ Practically all the authors quoted in footnote 28 were leading figures or active members of this party, which was headed by the journalist V. Ventura, along with others such as E. Lluch, A. Cucó and J. F. Mira who are also quoted in this article. Most of them went on to join the PSOE when, after the electoral defeat in 1977, the PSPV was disbanded.

³² See the recent book by J. F. Mira, *Sobre la nació dels valencians* (Valencia: Eliseu Climent, 1997), which, however, reiterates the basic line of arguments of historiography in the sixties and seventies, with familiar references to feudal reaction in the modern period, to ‘de-nationalization’ as the fault of successively dominant classes, national resistance by the people, and with the Valencian bourgeoisie defined as a class of ‘rentistas improductivos’ (‘non-productive people with private means’).

A dynamic and capitalist middle class was needed to bring together the moderate Catalanist plan proposed by Vicens and the nationalism of Fuster, and the existence of such a middle class is the second interesting aspect of the paradox referred to. Not only had a middle class actually existed in our recent history, as historians were soon to point out, but it was proving increasingly difficult to view it as a non-productive, *rentier* class, linked to a traditional agrarian economy. Agrarian and commercial development had not set this class against Spanish nationalism, quite the opposite in fact, nor did the change to a fully industrialized society which took place in the sixties bring with it a radical political transformation in the new nationalist sense that Fuster had suggested. On the contrary, the democracy's recognition of the autonomy of the Valencian Community—the name which replaced that of the 'Valencian Region', which had been in vogue during the Second Republic and the crisis years of the Franco regime, and also the much older description of the Kingdom of Valencia—strengthened regionalist feelings among the Valencian governing classes. The repeated electoral defeats suffered by the Fusterian nationalists coincided with the overwhelming ascendancy of the state parties of the Right and Left (UCD, PSOE, PP), which have been successively in power in the Valencian government since that time. The most extreme regionalists in Valencia completely rejected not only Fusterian nationalism, but everything to do with Catalan culture, to the extent of furiously defending the existence of an independent Valencian language, contrary to the opinion of philologists in all the universities. However, in spite of the political failure of Fusterian nationalism, many of his ideas on the past and future of the Valencian people spread widely throughout Valencian society. These spread to the increasingly numerous groups of influential people working in the service industries, which was a sector of our economy which was becoming more and more developed, and this affected especially all aspects related to education and culture.

The third factor in the paradox of the Valencian 'issue' concerns the science of history. As we have seen, the close connection between nationalism and the scientific interest in history caused a far-reaching change in the discipline in the sixties and the seventies. History then became a field of study in which processes, conflicts and social structures were examined as a means to explain contemporary problems. As a result, the history of the Valencian region was no longer nostalgically idealized. However, scientific advances in the way in which history was conceived did not prevent a new way of representing the past from emerging which was reluctant to come to terms with developments in historical research. Paradoxically, the same criticism could be made of the 'orthodox' national view of the Valencian past, characteristic of the sixties and seventies, as was levelled in 1935 by Vicens at the nationalist conception of history for

which Ferrán Soldevila was responsible. Even though it was new as far as its conception of history went, and its main subjects of study, unknown to old political history, were economic structures, social classes in conflict, and the like, this type of historical approach, synthetical in character, did not fail, nevertheless, to reveal its basic dependence on familiar argument. Like the old national histories of Catalonia, criticized by Vicens, or the liberal orthodox histories of Spain which we have had the opportunity to consider, this historical approach again pursued a line of argument concerned to describe 'la preocupación nacional' ('the national concerns') and reveal 'el dolor de los fracasos y la esterilidad de las resistencias' ('the painful failures and the futility of any resistance'). Such an argument 'a cada momento recordaba la discrepancia de los fenómenos estudiados respecto al camino ideal que debía seguir la trayectoria propuesta' ('constantly brought to mind the discrepancy between the phenomena studied and the ideal route which the proposed course of action should take').³³ Such an evolutionist way of proceeding, typical of the traditional nationalist conception of history, brought with it, in the 1960s and 1970s, a large dose of structuralism and economics, a combination typical of the second generation of historians involved with the *Annales*. Neither of these approaches was to withstand the effects produced by historical research for much longer.

Over the last two decades, attitudes to the history of the País Valencià have once more changed substantially. The theses about social dualism which regarded it as the outcome of the Conquest, of the feudal reaction and the extreme harshness of the seigneurial system, of the long-standing economic underdevelopment caused by an agricultural system incapable of implementing important technical and social changes, or of the lack of a middle class with a capitalist mentality, were abandoned and other lines of interpretation took their place.³⁴ However, the historical

³³ The words quoted come from Vicens' critical analysis of Ferrán Soldevila's *Història de Catalunya* (1934), which is included in J. M. Muñoz i Lloret, *Jaume Vicens i Vives*, 64. For Catalan historiography in general see, J. Nadal, B. Riquer, A. Simon, J. Sobrequés, J. Termes and E. Ucelay, *La historiografia catalana* (Girona: Cercle d'Estudis Històrics i Socials, 1990).

³⁴ This is not the place to discuss this matter, but I refer readers to other studies in this book; as well as to Vols. II, IV and V of the general *Història del País Valencià* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1989 & 1990); to the introductory study by E. Belenguier of the re-edition of Vol. II of this work; and to the overview by A. Furió, *Història del País Valencià* (Valencia: Edicions Alfons el Magnànim, 1995). Another Catalan historian to contribute decisively to the rewriting of the economic history of the Valencian region is Ramón Garrabou in his book *Un fals dilema. Modernitat o endarreriment de l'agricultura valenciana (1850-1900)* (Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 1985), which offers a different interpretation of the Valencian nineteenth century. I shall limit myself to mentioning here only a few works dealing with the Valencian eighteenth and nineteenth

approach, synthetical in character, that derived from early working hypotheses was directly incorporated, with slight modifications, into successive revisions of Fusterian views on nationalism—the most recent historical studies excepted. Researches into the Valencian past have led to changes in the approaches adopted and the problems perceived, have introduced new and multiple factors which did not fit into reductionist or over-simplified views of our history, and have situated social processes in different times and locations. Nevertheless, the traditionalist nationalist view of history has continued, which conceived of nations as if they were a collection of subjects that were somehow separate from the changes brought about by their own history. The split between history and nationalism seems to have produced once more a division into two approaches: on the one hand, there is the scientific study of history which is monographic in character; on the other hand, there is the approach based on historical synthesis, which is nationalist in character, and which takes little account of the latest results of historical science. Perhaps the matter will end up being resolved when either a new synthesis of history emerges, capable of arousing a different kind of nationalist awareness, or a new nationalism comes forth which is ready to interpret history in a different fashion. This might happen, but it is by no means certain, since nowhere is it written that history and nationalism have to be as closely linked as they have been in the case of the Valencian region during the last two centuries.

centuries: P. Ruiz Torres, *Historia del País Valenciano* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1981), VI, 5–384; and ‘El País Valenciano en el siglo XVIII: la transformación de una sociedad agraria en la época del absolutismo’, in *España en el siglo XVIII. Homenaje a Pierre Vilar*, ed. R. Fernández (Barcelona: Crítica, 1985); and ‘Los señoríos valencianos en la crisis del Antiguo Régimen: una revisión historiográfica’, *Estudis d’Història Contemporània del País Valencià* (1984), No. 5, 132–249.

Copyright of Bulletin of Hispanic Studies is the property of Carfax Publishing Company and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.