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The Representation of War and Peace Under the Government of King Leopold I (1831–65) in Belgian Textbooks for National History for Secondary Education (1910–60)

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1 Introduction

In his *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson describes a nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson 1991, 6), that has a need for ideological affirmation and legitimation if it is not to lose its performative power.[1] Taking this as a point of departure, I want to analize in this study how the authors of Belgian textbooks for national history between 1910 and 1960 from a Belgian unitarian nationalist and patriotic perspective affirmed their representation of the war which the young Belgian nation had waged war to safeguard its independence during the reign of Leopold I, its first king (1831–65).[2] Using the sensitizing concepts that Marc Ferro employs in his *Comment en raconte l'Histoire aux enfants*, I will investigate the extent to which Belgian textbook authors, consciously or otherwise, wrote history from a nationalist "therapeutic"

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and "militant" perspective to educate students to become proud and patriotic citizens (see, e.g., Ferro 1981, 8–11). Applied to this case, the "therapeutic" use of history means the manipulation of history to treat the political and cultural injuries suffered by the nation in war (46–47, 67–69ff.). The "militant" use of history is understood as the use of history to defend the political and cultural identity, unity and sovereignty of the nation (153–54, 161–76). Following the approach of Ferro, I will assess the degree to which history and nationalist imagination are combined in the textbooks by comparing the textbooks' narratives with the corresponding treatment in Belgian academic historiography (cf. 181–207).[3] In so doing, I will try to identify the textbooks' nationalistically motivated omissions from and adjustments to the historiography.[4]

2 Methodology

This study focuses on Belgian textbooks about national history, also initially called the history of the fatherland, written in Dutch and French and published between 1910 and 1960. There are several reasons for this choice of source material. In this period, history education was intended to promote love for the fatherland and a sense of citizenship (see, e.g., De Baets 1989, 326–30, 334–37; Catteeuw 1999, 9; Muys 2004; Sollie 1986, 37–39, 120–21). In the 1949 and 1954 curricula for history education, for example, it was stated that "it is the objective of history education to provide the pupil with the necessary knowledge in order to make him an adequately developed human being … fostering a sense of citizenship and love for the fatherland, more specifically by the acquiring of a certain critical mindset" (cf. Muys 2004; unless otherwise stated, all translations my own). As such, national history textbooks played an especially important role in citizenship education. Until 1960, citizenship education was the focal point of this type of textbook, even more so than other history textbooks. The point of departure was the idea of the proud and militant Belgian nation defending itself against foreign aggressors for centuries before it was able to acquire the status of an independent state (e.g., Leclère 1937, 7–9). Following the example of the romantic historical narratives of the nineteenth century,

history textbooks focused on political and military history revolving around prominent figures and events (see Sollie 1986, 37–39, 120–21). Although this approach persisted and dominated until 1960, a minor trend manifested itself after the Second World War: following the emergence of *nouvelle histoire* in Europe, albeit very slowly in the beginning, political history gave some room to a more broadly conceived history of civilization, with more attention given to economic and social history.[5]

The choice to make textbooks about Belgian history, or the history of the fatherland, the main source material for this study determines the chronological limits of our research. 1960 is the endpoint because this is the time when the originally explicit connection between citizenship and nationalist history education became much less prominent. The source material dating from 1830 to 1960 is too extensive—and, seen from other paedagogical perspectives, too diverse—to be investigated in a satisfactory manner within the scope of a single chapter. Taking 1910 as the start date provides sufficient scope to incorporate textbooks with a romantic historiographical approach into the study. The large time span covered will allow this study to track possible signs of a transition from political and military history to a more broadly conceived history of civilization, which began to appear in general educational historiography in Belgium after the Second World War.

Something must be said about the structure and organization of secondary history education in Belgium during the period under investigation. Secondary education was provided by the Catholic Church, with a large number of private schools, and by the Belgian state, with a much smaller number of schools (e.g., D'hoker 2003, 39–40, 48–49, 56–57). At that time, secondary education was organized for students between the ages of eleven and nineteen.[6] The Belgian state managed colleges (*athenea*, later also *lycea* for girls) (Descamps and Vancoppenolle 2011, 20–24), teacher-training colleges (*rijksnormaalscholen*) and schools providing the first two to three years of secondary education only (*rijksmiddelbare scholen* or *écoles moyennes*). The Catholic Church organized institutions equivalent to each of these. Textbooks for the "fourth grade" of primary education, for twelve- to fourteen-year-olds, are not included in our source material. This is because this grade, initiated in Belgium after the introduction of general compulsory education in

1914, was not regarded as secondary education in the strict sense, or even as the gateway to this education, but as a separate kind of final education (e.g., De Clerck et al. 1984, 35–38; D'hoker 2003, 55–56). This is why textbooks for this fourth grade are not included in our source material. The same goes for the textbooks for technical and vocational education (for eleven- to nineteen-year-olds), which were on the rise in this period. This was also regarded as a separate path outside of secondary education, with very different objectives and a different approach and structure (e.g., Depaepe 1998, 116–17; D'hoker 2003, 58, 62–67).

It should be noted that secondary schools that offered a full programme (such as the *athenea*, with six to seven years of school) structured their history education in one of two ways, by implementing a single or a double education cycle (*cyclus/cycle*). In state secondary education the double course was mandatory, while Catholic schools had a choice between the two courses. The Catholic schools too, however, had to conform as much as possible to the curricula drawn up by the state (De Baets 1989, 334–37). In the double course of education, the first was a period of two or three school years in which general history from antiquity to modern times was covered, along with an overview of Belgian national history (alternatively, this overview was given parallel to "general history"). Then, in the second course, a period of medieval or modern history was investigated in more detail in each school year (the period between 1492 and 1798 was covered in the fifth year, for example), so that students were given a concise and complete overview of history in chronological order. In the final year, the focus was on the most recent period and a thorough study of Belgian history. In the single course of education, general history was studied year after year in chronological order from antiquity to modern times. (In general, during the first year only antiquity was studied, during the second year the history of Rome, and so on.) In the final year, undivided attention was given to Belgian history (Muys 2004).

A sample of textbooks was selected to ensure that each of these kinds of history education was represented, resulting in a corpus of eleven. Four of these were commonly used textbooks intended primarily for state education (Vander Linden 1922; Baekens et al. 1950;

Gysels and Van den Eynde 1955) and seven were, in principle, intended for Catholic schools (Mercelis 1922; Kurth 1924, 1934; Leclère 1931, 1937; Poukens 1942; Dierickx 1955).[7] Of these textbooks, three (Mercelis 1922; Kurth 1924, 1934) could be used in both upper and lower secondary education. Two of the textbooks were mainly intended for the graduating class of secondary education (Dierickx 1955; Gysels and Van den Eynde 1955) and the six remaining for the first two to three years of secondary education (Vander Linden 1922; Poukens 1942; Baekens et al. 1950; Gysels et al. 1953; Leclère 1931, 1937).

3 The Ten Days' Campaign

3.1 The View of Belgian Historiography: Disastrous Defeat for Belgium

The two main historiographers of Belgian national history between 1910 and 1960 for the period of the Ten Days' Campaign and its political consequences during the reign of Leopold I were Louis de Lichtervelde and his epigone Carlo Bronne,[8] whose works are frequently quoted by the textbook authors. De Lichtervelde's and Bronne's accounts of this particular episode in Belgian national history in the main concur, and can be summarized as follows. On August 2, 1831, shortly after the Belgian declaration of independence from the United Kingdom of the Netherlands (October 4, 1830), and after his accession to the throne (July 21, 1831), Leopold I was faced with an attack by the Netherlands. Under the direction of the princes William and Frederic, sons of the Dutch king, William I, an army not more than forty thousand strong crossed the northern border of Belgium and achieved a series of rather easy victories: the towns of Turnhout and Diest were occupied, thus opening the way to Brussels (e.g., de Lichtervelde 1929, 51). According to de Lichtervelde and Bronne, this attack certainly did not come unexpectedly; however, the provisional Belgian government, still savouring victory after the almost complete expulsion of Dutch

troops from the new Belgian territory, had miscalculated by assuming the Netherlands would continue to observe the truce the Great Powers of Prussia, France, Britain, Austria and Russia had imposed while the separation of the two countries was negotiated. The Dutch King William I, however, did not want to accept the loss of the Belgian provinces and proclaimed that he would resist the impositions of the Great Powers. After failing to undo the split between North and South by diplomatic means, he prepared for military action (38). A few Belgian officers had reported alarming movements of Dutch troops near the northern border as early as July 10 (31–37). They also informed the provisional Belgian government of the belligerent tone the Dutch newspapers were taking (37–90).

The Belgian historians de Lichtervelde and Bronne are united in their claim that the provisional Belgian government and especially Amédée de Failly, the Minister of War, neglected all these warnings and failed to carry out necessary defensive works (e.g., de Lichtervelde 1929, 39; Bronne 1947, 67ff.). The Belgian troops were too few in number and spread thinly through the country. The Flemish legion of about 3700 soldiers was scattered between the North Sea and the Scheldt. The Luxembourg army, four thousand strong, was located at the other end of the country. The army of the Scheldt, under the command of General Michiel de Tiecken de Terhove and of some sixteen thousand men, laid siege to the citadel in Antwerp with the Dutch general David Chassé and his eight thousand troops inside. The Meuse army of fourteen thousand men, under the command of General Nicolas Daine, was also stationed far from the northern border of Belgium.[9] Moreover, the organization of these troops itself left much to be desired. The armies were largely staffed by inexperienced recruits (e.g., de Lichtervelde 1929, 46) and led by barely competent officers,[10] many of whom were involved in Orangist conspiracies aiming at a return to the union with the Netherlands (38, 43, 58). Belgium did not even possess a unified command which could coordinate the actions of its troops (51).

Bronne and de Lichtervelde also point out the important role of King Leopold in the defence of Belgium. After the resignation of de Failly on August 3, Leopold took command of a hastily organized military force and, on the advice of his minister of foreign affairs, Joseph Lebeau (e.g.,

de Lichtervelde 1929, 47), requested military assistance from Britain and France. Leopold hoped to repel the invaders with the combined Meuse and Scheldt armies, but this hope was in vain: the army of the Meuse, under the command of General Nicolas Daine, was defeated by Dutch troops at Hasselt on August 8, and the army of the Scheldt suffered the same fate in Louvain on August 12. In the meantime, only France had responded to Leopold's request for intervention. On August 12, the French field marshal Etienne Maurice Gérard arrived in Wavre with fifty thousand men and managed to prevent Dutch troops from occupying Brussels.

Typical of the critical attitude of the Belgian historians is that they do not hesitate to mention tensions between Leopold I and his government, pointing out that Leopold had accepted France's offer of military assistance without having obtained prior consent from the Belgian parliament, as stipulated in Article 121 of the constitution. This stated that no foreign troops could undertake service with the state or occupy or cross the territory except by law. Leopold's action led to great political upheaval in Belgium, since it looked like an authoritarian transgression of the powers the constitution had granted him.

3.2 The Textbooks' View: Turning the Defeat into Victory

When the narrative in the Belgian national history textbooks is compared with the historiography, differences immediately become apparent. Most of the textbook authors, regardless of the level of education or educational network and throughout the whole period under investigation, demonstrate a "therapeutic" and "militant" use of history to stir up national pride among learners (Vander Linden 1922, 245–46; Mercelis 1922, 258–63; Kurth 1924, 194–201; 1934, 208–15; Leclère 1931, 170–74; 1937, 193–96; Baekens et al. 1950; Gysels and Van den Eynde 1955, 705). Unlike the historiographers, the textbook authors tend to slide over this humiliating campaign quickly and to tilt the balance as much as possible in Belgium's favour. Different techniques are used. Although most of these textbook authors openly admit the

defeat of Belgium in this campaign, they underscore how unexpected the attack was and the newly drafted army's lack of training. Little or nothing is said of individual battles, so the precarious situation of the troops is nowhere represented in full. One of the later textbooks (Gysels et al. 1953) does not say anything at all about the vulnerability of the Belgian army and the defeats it incurred, stating only that William I declared war on Belgium in 1831 and that the French prevented the occupation of Brussels and forced William I into an armistice, thus turning the defeat in a kind of a victory for Belgium (465). Nowhere is the possibility that the French intervention might have been caused by the Belgian government's tactical failures and poor preparations confirmed or alluded to in this or the other textbooks. The textbooks also fail to report the numerical strength of the two armies, so that the reader cannot grasp that the Belgian army would have been close in size to the Dutch if it had been united as King Leopold had wished. A partial exception to this rule is Leclère, who in his 1937 edition clearly gives the numerical strength of the army of the Prince of Orange as forty thousand. In doing so, however, he omits to mention the numerical strength of the Belgian army, so the same effect is achieved (Leclère 1937, 195).

Despite the textbooks' nationalist approach to the Ten Days' Campaign, after 1940 there is nevertheless a trend towards a version that corresponds to the historiography. This appears to apply throughout the different systems and levels in both Catholic and state education. For instance, the textbook by Gysels and Van Den Eynde no longer claims that the Dutch attack came as a total surprise (1955, 705). Two textbooks, Poukens (1942) and Dierickx (1955), go a step further by no longer justifying the defeat by claiming the Dutch attack was sudden and by blaming the National Congress for failing to organize the Belgian army properly. Both estimate the numerical strength of the Dutch army accurately: Dierickx at thirty-seven thousand (1955, 183), Poukens at thirty-six thousand (1942, 240). The authors no longer beat around the bush when telling us about the actual events of the battles (cf. Baekens et al. 1950, 134). Dierickx, for example, writes of the two most important manoeuvres during the Ten Days' Campaign: "[The Prince of Orange] first marched against the

Meuse army under the command of Daine and defeated it in Hasselt on August 8; then he turned on the Scheldt army under the command of King Leopold himself, and defeated this as well in Louvain on August 12" (1955, 183). Poukens also definitively ends the myth that the Dutch invasion was unexpected by reporting that as early as July 12, three weeks before the attack, William I had answered the Belgians' acceptance of the Treaty of the Eighteen Articles with a declaration of war (1942, 240).

It is remarkable that Leopold I is not referred to more in the textbooks. His role in the battles, attempts to organize the Belgian defence and call for France's military assistance are either simply not mentioned in the textbooks or restricted to the appeal to France. Only Mercelis, author of one of the oldest textbooks for Catholic schools (1922), suggests that the role of Leopold I was praiseworthy, mentioning that "fortunately, Leopold managed to obstruct the road to the capital" (1922, 260ff.). The marginalization of the role of Leopold I may be due to the gradual transition in Belgian and other European historiography from a focus on great figures to a more structural approach with a greater emphasis on economic and societal history. Alternatively, Leopold may be sidelined because from a nationalist perspective it is not flattering to admit that the young Belgian nation had to be rescued by a king who had only just arrived from abroad and acceded to the throne.

4 Political Consequences of the Defeat: The Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles

4.1 The View of the Historiography: Severe Consequences of the Defeat for Belgium

The historians de Lichtervelde (1929, 64ff.) and Bronne (1947, 83–84) clearly state that the defeat in the Ten Days' Campaign had severe consequences for Belgium. The Great Powers Prussia, Austria, Britain and Russia had now witnessed the vulnerability of the young kingdom. They concluded that Belgium could not be counted on to provide

a buffer against France and they therefore decided to strengthen the Netherlands once again. Thus they replaced the Treaty of the Eighteen Articles, imposed on Belgium as a condition of independence, with the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles, which was more favourable to the Netherlands.[11] The Treaty of the Eighteen Articles implied that Belgium could claim those regions of the former United Kingdom of the Netherlands that had been allocated to the Batavian Republic after 1790. This was true of Maastricht and Limburg, except for the city of Venlo and fifty-three villages of the Generality countries, Zealand Flanders, Northern-Brabant and Overmaze. Besides, Belgium could claim a number of enclaves which reached as far as the heart of the Northern Provinces and had belonged to German princes until 1800. By means of territorial exchange, Limburg could stay with Belgium. The status of Luxembourg required further negotiation (Bronne 1947, 63). But now the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles stipulated that Maastricht and the province of Limburg east of the Meuse would be ceded to the Netherlands and only the Wallonian part of the province of Luxembourg left to Belgium. Zealand Flanders, as well as both banks of the Scheldt estuary, would remain the property of the Netherlands (Bronne 1947, 85). In exchange for this, Belgium was granted independence once again.

Despite fierce argument between the advocates of the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles, who saw accepting it as the only guarantee of Belgian independence, and its opponents, who adopted an aggressive attitude towards William I and the Great Powers, the Belgian government accepted the new peace treaty on November 1, 1831 without an overwhelming majority in parliament (de Lichtervelde 1929, 93–94).[12] On November 15 Belgium signed the treaty in London. William I, however, did not give up hope of annexing parts of Belgium, thanks to his military successes in the Ten Days' Campaign, and refused to sign the treaty. Since there did not seem to be any way to persuade William I to negotiate, Leopold I appealed by way of his ministers to the British and the French to honour their guarantees of Belgian independence. Britain and France declared themselves willing to intervene militarily if William I did not voluntarily order his troops to withdraw from the Antwerp fortress. After William's refusal, the French and British fleets

blockaded Dutch harbours and a French army, again under the command of Field Marshal Gérard, entered the country to lay siege to the Antwerp citadel. The Belgian army was forbidden from taking part in these military actions unless the regular Dutch army invaded Belgium. On December 23, 1831, after more than a month's siege, the Dutch general Chassé surrendered.

Since William I continued to refuse to sign the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles after withdrawing from Antwerp, the Great Powers attempted to force a compromise. On May 21, 1833, negotiations between the Netherlands, France and Britain led to the conclusion of an agreement which was a little more favourable to Belgium: as long as the Netherlands refused to sign the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles, Belgium was to retain Luxembourg and Limburg. A final peace was not reached until 1839. Because of resistance in his own country to the heavy financial burden the war brought, William I made it clear in March 1838 that he would sign the treaty. The conflict between the belligerent and the moderate parties in Belgium flared up again: the more belligerent hoped that by actually possessing Maastricht, Limburg east of the Meuse and German Luxembourg they could confirm these gains in a treaty in the course of time. The Great Powers, however, assumed a threatening attitude towards Belgium after William I agreed to sign the treaty. Leopold I and his government tried to negotiate with them in order to recover the territories, but their efforts proved vain. Amid great political turmoil, both chambers of the parliament approved the acquisition of the new territories with clear majorities. One month later, however, on April 19, 1839, the final texts of the treaty were signed. Maastricht, Limburg east of the Meuse and German Luxembourg were separated from Belgium once and for all.

4.2 The Textbooks' View: A Guarantee of Independence

If we compare the textbooks with the historiography, it is noticeable that the textbook authors all attempt to present the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles in such a way as to avoid hurting Belgian national

pride and patriotic feelings by interpreting the facts "therapeutically" in favor of Belgium as far as possible.

Some textbooks only mention the positive content of the treaty. Gysels and Van den Eynde, for instance, only report that this treaty ensured the neutrality of Belgium (1955, 706). The reader thus learns nothing about the negative consequences of the treaty for Belgium. Alternatively, only a few of the negative consequences of the treaty are reported, so the reader cannot become fully aware of the real impact and severity of the treaty. So Vander Linden writes: "With the Twenty-Four Articles the Conference of London decided to apportion to [William I] the eastern part of Luxembourg and a part of Limburg equal to the part of Luxembourg which was left to Belgium" (1922, 245). In his account, the author omits to mention Zealand Flanders and other territorial losses for Belgium. Finally, all eleven textbooks favourably interpret the facts by emphasizing that accepting the treaty was inevitable in order to stay independent, that the Belgians were unwilling to approve it and that they resisted heroically for as long as possible. There is only a difference of literary style between the textbooks before and after 1940. With the exception of Vander Linden (1922, 244–46), the textbook authors from the period between 1910 and 1940 reveal themselves to be belated adherents of the romantic narrators so typical of European historiography in the nineteenth century (Kurth 1924, 196; 1934, 210; Leclère 1931, 173; 1937, 196; Mercelis 1922, 263; cf. De Schryver 1990, 299–313). This is most conspicuous with Mercelis, one of the earliest authors, who reports the sessions of the Belgian parliament in the style of epic drama:

> All the sessions, in particular the last one, were very turbulent. "How shall I depict the grievous dismay of the meeting?" a historian says, "when M. Bekaert, delegate from Courtrai, votes on the necessary separation with a broken heart, and then drops dead as if overwhelmed by grief? How shall I show the general mood, when Mr. Gendebien, delegate from Luxembourg, upon hearing his name during the vote, shouts: 'No, no, 380,000 times no! For the 380,000 Belgians you sacrifice to your fear! How can I depict the tears when, right after the vote, they hear that fierce patriot offer his resignation and watch him leave the room in

> tears?'—100 members participated in the vote: 58 voted for the treaty, 42 against. The senate also approved it with 31 votes to 14. The painful sacrifice had been made, yet it was absolutely necessary for the maintenance of our young independence." (1922, 263)

The authors of textbooks after 1940 also try to soften the humiliating consequences of the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles for Belgium by presenting its acceptance as inevitable for Belgian independence and by stressing the fierce resistance of the Belgians. But they replace the epic-dramatic style with more neutral and less stilted language. Dierickx reports on the acceptance of the final peace treaty as follows:

> Rather unexpectedly, William I declared on March 14, 1838 that he accepted the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles. But now fierce resistance arose in Belgium. Until then, the representatives of Limburg east of the Meuse and of the German-speaking part of Luxembourg, with a population of 180,000 souls, had taken their seats in our rooms. Leopold I had armed these regions, had even suggested purchasing them with real gold. All in vain. As Prussia, Austria and Russia now supported the Netherlands, and France wanted to remain neutral, Belgium had to give in. With a small majority of 58 to 41 votes the Chamber of Representatives approved the treaty. On April 19, 1839 the Definitive Treaty of London was signed by the five Great Powers as underwriters on the one hand and by Belgium on the other. That day *our independence and our neutrality were confirmed definitively*. (1955, 183, emphasis in original)

The textbooks by Poukens (1942, 240) and Baekens et al. (1950, 135–36) are similar.

Another technique that the textbook authors use to legitimate the actions of the Belgian nation is also worth mentioning. Most of the textbook authors (Catholic or otherwise and regardless of the level of education), especially those before 1935, do not stress the connection between Belgian defeat in the Ten Days' Campaign and the humiliating peace treaty. Kurth (1924, 195; 1934, 209), after his account of the Ten Days' Campaign, writes of the treaty: "At last the relationship of our country with the Netherlands was settled in the Treaty of the

Twenty-Four Articles, which was signed in London by the European powers". Mercelis's first lines also avoid any connection: "As William refused to accept the Treaty of the Eighteen Articles, the Conference drew up the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles" (1922, 262). The same goes for some of the later textbooks, which say "the Conference of London settled the issue of the border between the Netherlands and Belgium" (Gysels et al. 1953, 465) and "the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles (October 14, 1831) altered the previous conditions" (Gysels and Van den Eynde 1955, 706). By failing to relate the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles to the defeat in the Ten Days' Campaign, these textbook authors present the reason that the treaty was so unfavourable as the attitude of William I, not the failure of the Belgian government and army.

Only four of the eleven textbooks link the Belgian defeat and the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles. Leclère still proceeds carefully when he rather euphemistically argues that the Conference of London "believed" it had to alter the previous treaty after the Ten Days' Campaign (1937, 195). And Vander Linden admits with some hesitation that after the Ten Days' Campaign William I had the power to have the Treaty of the Eighteen Articles revised (1922, 245–46). In this respect, Dierickx once again adheres most to the historiography, reporting these events without disguising the facts (1955, 183): "On October 14, 1831 the last and irrevocable Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles was completed: Belgium had proven itself too weak and too dependent on France; now the Great Powers wanted to make the Netherlands stronger both financially and militarily". Less harsh is Poucken's (1942, 240) wording, but he casts no doubt on the strict relation between the two events, saying that "the Belgian defeat had as its consequence the alteration of the Treaty of the Eighteen Articles".

5 Conclusion

Based on the above survey, some conclusions can be drawn. The dominant finding is that in this case the textbook authors, in line with their objective to educate in patriotism and citizenship, contributed to the

design and the legitimacy of an "imaginary" Belgian national identity among students. This identity was based on the idea of the unity and courage of the Belgian people and nation, viewed as a "political community", "inherently limited" (by its historical frontiers with surrounding nations) and "sovereign", that successfully and heroically defended itself against the foreign aggressor King William I, who threatened the nation's independence and territorial unity in the Ten Days' Campaign (cf. Anderson 1991, 6). Although blatant falsehoods are not present in the textbooks, this still results, to follow Ferro (see above, Introduction), in a "therapeutic" and "militant" reading of academic Belgian historiography which, by omissions and other reductions (such as simplification, generalization and misleading ordering), filters out of the historiography whatever does not contribute to the student's patriotic education. So the defeat is transformed as much as possible into a victory, with the positive consequences for Belgium especially highlighted. This was the dominant and persistent approach for the whole period under investigation (1910–60), applied consistently throughout the Catholic and state education systems, at all education levels and in both the single and double course of education. This strong concurrence between Catholic and state education is not surprising in view of the fact that the Catholic education system had to conform as much as possible to the educational objectives developed by the Belgian state, in order to receive its limited share of state funding (e.g., D'hoker 2003, 6, 54, 70–78; Muys 2004).

Despite these dominant constants, there was nevertheless a minor trend that began to manifest itself after 1940. In the Catholic Belgian history textbooks intended mainly for the graduating class of secondary education, a trend towards following academic Belgian historiography can be detected: the link between the humiliating defeat of the Belgians during the Ten Days' Campaign and the Treaty of the Twenty-Four Articles, which was much less beneficial for Belgium, was no longer glossed over. As we have seen, this tendency can probably be explained as an early manifestation of a less patriotic approach to history education in Belgium since the late fifties, which resulted in the severing of the ties between patriotism and history education in Belgium with the introduction of new school curricula from 1960.

Finally, a more general point can be made about the relationship between the textbooks and the historiography. All the textbooks under investigation turned out to be nothing more or less than patriotic paraphrases or, to borrow a phrase from education historian Piet Fontaine, "cast-offs" of the Belgian academic historiography of the same period (1980, 14–15). In this light, Belgian national history textbooks can be regarded as Belgian national history "writ small" (Van Wiele 2011, 244–47). This underscores, from a purely methodological point of view, the importance of Depaepe and Simon's plea for textbook research to be contextualized in a cultural history of education, so that textbooks can be analyzed and interpreted in relation to their historical and literary context and previously under-researched determinants of education can be investigated (2003, 65–78; 2009, 31–34). By systematically interpreting national history textbooks in the light of the underlying historiography, I have demonstrated the crucial importance of historiography in detecting the nationalist "therapeutic" and "militant" use of history in textbooks in Belgium, and have uncovered one of the "large structures" of the "grammar of schooling" that shaped national history education at the secondary level in Belgian schools between 1910 and 1960. A follow-up study is needed to determine whether this structure continues in textbooks after 1960 and, if so, how and why this occurs.

Notes

1. The term "imagined" is, however, ambivalent and open to varying interpretations. I agree with Anderson that the character of a nation and its correspondent ideology are not necessarily imagined in the sense that they rely on unfounded fabrications and statements. For Anderson, Gellner's view that "nationalism … invents nations where they do not exist" is problematic since "invention" is all too easily associated with the production of falsehoods (Anderson 1991, 6ff.). I would argue with Anderson that true elements also have a part to play in the construction of nationalism. The imaginary character of nationalist ideology rather lies in a selective reading and interpretation of history intended to promote a feeling of ethnic solidarity based on socio-cultural markers, such as common language, beliefs, religion,

political systems, territory, etc. This interpretation does not exclude the possibility that fact and fiction may be mixed in nationalist historical narratives. See Flacke (1998), for Belgium, Morelli (1995), Tollebeek (1998, 328–52).

2. In order to collect the source material, I had recourse to the available textbooks on Belgian national history in the special collections of textbooks in the libraries for teacher education at the Université catholique de Louvain and Ghent University. All textbooks in their various editions were consulted which in one way or another gave coherent reports of Belgian history under the reign of King Leopold I, more specifically about the Ten Days' Campaign and its political and social consequences. This resulted in a definitive corpus of eleven textbooks. This sample is likely to be representative, although caution is always advised since not all of the textbooks in these collections have yet been catalogued and made accessible to the public.
3. An important methodological remark here is that this Belgian historiography may also have been influenced by implicit and perhaps even explicit nationalist tendencies. Since no separate study of this question is yet available, it falls outside the limited scope of this study.
4. Throughout his study Ferro also uses such concepts as "purification", "simplification", "transfiguration", "changes of perspective", "reduction" and "construction" as categories in his analysis of didactic materials (see, e.g., Ferro 1981, 43–44, 188–89, 283–86ff.). These terms were highly instructive when identifying ideological motives in this study.
5. See for a very good introduction to this shift in historiography De Schryver (1990, 299–313). Another excellent survey from different perspectives of this evolution in Western European historiography can be found in the contributions by Tollebeek, Vries, Boterman, Dorsman, Beliën, Lorenz, Jansz and Blaas, collected in Beliën and van Setten (1991). For the sake of comparison, Verschaffel (1987) should also be consulted, where the legitimization of Belgian and Flemish identity in romantic book illustrations is investigated.
6. Until 1924 the programme of the "classical humanities" (*klassieke humaniora*) consisted of seven consecutive years of study; after 1924, this was reduced to only six years. See, e.g., D'hoker (2003, 58), Descamps and Vancoppenolle (2011, 25).
7. Sometimes, with the approval of Catholic authorities, it was permitted to use history textbooks intended for secondary education organized

by the government in the corresponding classes in Catholic secondary education. This was true of Gysels and Van den Eynde (1955, 4).

8. Besides Bronne and de Lichtervelde, there were also other important historians in this period who dealt with the history of Belgium since its independence, such as Henri Pirenne (see, e.g., Pirenne 1932). However, because these historiographers do not focus as much as the others on the figure of King Leopold and because their accounts of the Ten Days' Campaign do not differ from Bronne and de Lichtervelde, I did not incorporate these authors into my overview. Of course, Belgian historiography since 1960 ameliorated the historical record on this topic with further investigation, but a comparison of the textbooks with more recent writings would run the risk of anachronism. I refer only to some important more recent works on the early history of Belgium for the sake of comparison: Luyckx and Platel (1985), Stengers (1992), Witte (1983, 315–45), Witte et al. (1997).
9. For the position and the numerical strength of the Belgian troops, see, e.g., de Lichtervelde (1929, 44–45).
10. Many of the Belgian army officers had obtained their ranks from the temporary government for their patriotic merits, without having undergone the requisite training. See de Lichtervelde (1929, 57–58).
11. France and Britain supported the content of the treaty. Prussia, Austria and Russia, however, did this on condition of a more favourable declaration for the Netherlands. See, e.g., Bronne (1947, 95).
12. See for the content of these debates, e.g., de Lichtervelde (1929, 93–94).

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