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Abstract

Twentieth-century pre-independence Sri Lanka saw the emergence of a new generation of historians that embraced "modern" approaches to writing history. As in other regions of South Asia, these histories were often in service of projects of identity formation. One historian from this group, S.G. Perera, made significant contributions towards knowledge of the history of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka in particular, translating a significant amount from Portuguese historical materials. As part of a larger project investigating the relationship between historical practice and Catholic identity through the work of Sri Lankan Jesuit historian and priest S.G. Perera, this article focuses on Perera's 1932 textbook, A History of Ceylon for Schools. Using qualitative coding methods, it observes the historical method and discourse used in Perera's textbook to demonstrate how he worked within this modern tradition to rhetorically advance a Catholic, Sri Lankan nationalist perspective.

Introduction

In 1932,[1] the first published edition of Fr. S.G. Perera's *A History of Ceylon for Schools* appeared. Previously, Perera (1882–1950) had worked as a clerk translating *tombos* (land registries) of the Portuguese colonial period at the Land Registry Office in Ratnapura, and as a result had an excellent grasp of Sinhalese, English, and Portuguese. After being ordained the first Sinhalese Jesuit priest in 1917, Perera pursued an academic career, teaching as a professor in Rome before returning to serve in schools back in Ceylon (Mendis, 2017). It was during his time teaching at St. Aloysius College in Galle that Perera realized the need for a new history textbook. Schools in pre-independence Sri Lanka had been relying on British histories of the island, and previous books, such as H.W. Codrington's *A Short History of Ceylon*, treated both the precolonial and colonial periods, but less comprehensively than desired. Perera's book, published in two volumes, focuses solely on the colonial periods, as it details events from the beginning of the sixteenth century and the arrival of the Portuguese, through the island's seizure by the Dutch, until British administration, from which Sri Lanka would later gain its independence in 1948.

While *A History of Ceylon for Schools* was limited in scope, its coverage of the colonial periods was highly comprehensive. As such, it was used widely in Sri Lanka, and provides an avenue for understanding how Perera presented Sri Lankan history for future generations, as a researcher who specialized in the Portuguese period. Although this textbook spans Sri Lanka's three colonial periods, this analysis focuses on the sections of the textbook involving contact with the Portuguese in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Specifically, this article explores a particular example of 20th century historical methods in Sri Lanka through S.G. Perera's treatment of the Portuguese colonial period. As part of a larger project investigating the relationship between historical practice and Catholic identity in the case of S.G. Perera, this article hopes to provide an initial exploration into the corpus of a significant Sri Lankan historical scholar of the 20th century, which as yet, has not been a prominent focus of research.

In what follows, I first explore some of the characteristics of historical frameworks in use during the 20th century, and their influence on historical practice and pedagogy in pre-independence Sri Lanka. Further, I give attention to some of Perera's published remarks on the place of history and historical education, particularly in relation to nationalism and the Catholic Church. Both of these elements aid and feature in the analysis of Perera's textbook. Preceding

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[1] The first edition of this text marks the year as 1923. Thanks to Avishka Senewiratne for pointing out to the author that this is an unfortunate misprint.

this analysis is a discussion of the method used in this article. Namely, I describe the purpose and process of qualitatively coding the respective sections of Perera's textbook at issue in this study. Finally, I share the data and discussion of S.G. Perera's *A History of Ceylon for Schools*, making connections to how modernity is constructed through Perera's historical methods in service of a Catholic, nationalist perspective in this textbook written for a wide audience.

Historical Methods in 20th Century Pre-Independence Sri Lanka

The early 20th century saw the rise of a new generation of historians in pre-independence Sri Lanka, and in South Asia more broadly, that embraced "modern" approaches to writing history. These histories existed as a part of a genre that took up practices of historical inquiry heavily influenced by European histories in service of identity formation projects as national identities were crystallizing. Moreover, both the colonial histories written in pre-independence Sri Lanka and neighboring South Asian countries preceding this period shed light on 20th century historical practice in Sri Lanka.

As British Ceylon approached independence, a sense of Sri Lanka as a nation-state was emerging. This context of emerging national identity is significant to note in considering historical practice during this time. From S.G. Perera's words, a national identity requires that its people "have common memories of the past, a common endeavour in the present, and common hopes for the future" (1962, p. 32). In other words, to speak of a national identity requires a "common history" (p. 33). This impression of history's importance to constitute collective identity has persisted and comprises a commonplace in historical studies in general (Foster & Crawford, 2006, p. 5). In the early 20th postcolonial context, the ability to claim a collective identity was important both for emerging nation-states and the regions comprising them (Deshpande, 2007, p. 2–3). Historian Prachi Deshpande reminds us that one should not make the mistake of thinking that historical consciousness itself emerged in South Asia in the 20th century, as historiographers have chanced to imply from time to time (p. 5). It is during this time that one observes a *particular kind* of historical consciousness, which was influenced by European and colonial norms of historical practice.

Developing historical frameworks: Perera's predecessors and contemporaries

As historian of Sri Lanka John Rogers notes, dominant historical frameworks of the early and mid-nineteenth century during British rule included two major assumptions: that Sri Lanka's

ancient past comprised a "great Sinhala civilization," and that the island was peopled by distinct, ethnic groups, which were often at odds with each other (1990, p. 87). Such histories were particularly influential in the lowlands of the island among Sinhala people, and later nineteenth century and early twentieth century Sri Lankan historians largely left these assumptions unquestioned (p. 87). James de Alwis (1823–78), for example, has been considered the first modern Sri Lankan historian. He was influenced to a great extent by the British historians writing about Sri Lanka before him, translating works to dispute their characterizations of ancient Sinhala civilization, but still working within the same Victorian frameworks to make his argument (Rogers, 1990, p. 93–94; Wickramasinghe, 2013, p. 93).

Two compilations and syntheses of Sri Lankan history in the mid-nineteenth century had a particular impact: William Knighton's *History of Ceylon from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (1845) and James Tennent's *Ceylon* (1859). Both worked from what Dipesh Chakrabarty has called a "historicist" orientation, placing events in a narrative of human progress (Chakrabarty, 1990; Rogers, 1990, p. 90). More than previous British writers who dismissed Lankan texts, deemed the population ignorant of "genuine history," and considered the sixteenth century as the beginning of Sri Lanka's "proper history" (p. 88), Knighton's history recognized and accepted the narratives of the ancient Pali epic, the *Mahavamsa*, replicating its sense of a glorious past. Tennent's history was more selective in terms of the content it acknowledged. In terms of historical practice, both of these texts applied nineteenth-century ideas of nationality to the people of the histories they wrote, again conceiving the resulting distinct groups in terms of human progress (p. 91–92).

These colonially-derived intellectual constructs began to influence what kinds of knowledge subsequent writers would deem important, which in turn affected curriculum in schools. Historian Prachi Deshpande, writing about Western India, notes the way in which the colonial education in the late nineteenth century was responsible for the "introduction and endurance of the teleological view of history as a nation's political saga from antiquity to modernity, and . . . of the nation as the natural unit of historical study" (2007, p. 86). Rather than exploring questions of method, historical education in this context emphasized the chronology of its content—that students would know it "factually" (p. 86). Despite colonial discourse' estimation of "historical consciousness" as a feature of modern sensibility, colonial education assigned value to history primarily in service of knowledge of the past. Historical method became relegated to creation of a linear narrative from selected sources. At the university level, exams probed students' declarative knowledge of battles, dynasties, and military and political conflicts, for which they were to provide summaries and estimations of historical personalities in their contributions and the value of their

accomplishments (p. 87–88). These judgments might be made within a nationalist discourse or not, "but as a historiographical exercise, the framework of contributions and judgment remained central" (p. 88). Reinforced by these norms of historical practice and education, this modern framework of historical methods, in turn, affected later written histories .

In Sri Lanka, historical education applied these frameworks of chronology and declarative knowledge primarily to English histories. In a letter to the editor of the *Times of Ceylon*, "A.H.A." of Thimbirigasyaya recalls that students were not encouraged to engage Ceylonese history and would even be punished for not speaking in English (1932, p. 7). Beyond the classroom context however, there were a few popular textbooks on Ceylonese history. Some of the most notable included Louis Edmund Blazé's *A History of Ceylon for Schools* (1900, 250 pages), Donald Obeyesekere's *Outlines of Ceylon History* (1911, 322 pages), Ponnambalam Arunachalam's *Sketches of Ceylon History* (1906, 62 pages), and H.W. Codrington's well-known *Short History of Ceylon* (1926, 193 pages)[2]. Like Knighton and Tennent, these historians often included material from ancient epics like the *Mahavamsa*. Arunachalam, for example, includes material from references of Ceylon within epics of Indian origin, like the *Skanda Purána* and the *Ramayana*. Further, these texts seek to include the island's history in its entirety, spanning from ancient to colonial times. Even taken together, these works cannot compete with the level of detail that S.G. Perera's *A History of Ceylon for Schools* (1932) offers in its coverage of Ceylon's colonial periods, with 304 pages covering the Portuguese and Dutch periods in volume 1 and 241 pages covering the British period until 1911 in volume 2. Effectively, Perera's textbook gave Ceylonese students further access to their recent histories than ever before (Portz, 2024, p. 61).

Contemporary with S.G. Perera's work are the labors of historians Paul E. Pieris and G.C. Mendis. Pieris, a prolific researcher of the Portuguese colonial period in Sri Lanka published many papers on the period by the time of Perera's textbook, even drawing attention to the seventeenth-century text from Fernão de Queirós that Perera would later translate. Scholars write that his historical work, although meticulously undertaken and able to make the times of the histories he consulted "live again," was "definitely one-sided" and "lack[ing] a sense of balance," sympathetic to the contemporary Sinhalese perspectives of his time (Pieris, 1960, p. 114–116; Senewiratne, 2021). On the other hand, G.C. Mendis, sometimes recognized as the scholar who established history as a discipline in Sri Lanka, was very concerned with observing histories' verifiable evidence as part and parcel of establishing a modern standard for historical practice (Wickramasinghe, 2013, p. 93). His works critically evaluated ancient and venerated texts like the *Mahavamsa*, shifting the

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2 For a fuller discussion of these particular sources, see PORTZ, Josie. S.G. Perera's *A History of Ceylon for Schools*. **The Ceylon Journal**, v. 1, n. 2, p. 57–64.

goals of historical practice in Sri Lanka. S.G. Perera's work occurred somewhat between that of these scholars, chronologically, and while it matches his contemporaries' in terms of bringing history to life for the reader, the values and beliefs guiding this work were his own.

S.G. Perera's historical methods

One can learn more about the historical methods by which S.G. Perera was influenced and from which he worked by examining the paratextual material surrounding what has been called Perera's most significant contribution to Sri Lankan history, his translation of *The Spiritual and Temporal Conquest of Ceylon*, by Fernão de Queirós.[3] Queirós' text is one of the most thorough existing documents that details the deeds of the Portuguese while in Ceylon, spanning over a thousand pages. Perera took on this astounding task of translation, making his thoughts about historical practice known in its introduction and in an article detailing his experience translating it called "The Conquista." Additionally significant in relation to parsing Perera's historical methods, select publications and lectures of Perera's were compiled in a collection called *Historical Sketches: Ceylon Church History* that first appeared in 1938.

Indeed, it seems that a great deal of Perera's historical work would have been motivated by the impulse to learn more about the Catholic Church's history in the island, and specifically, to have his say about the conditions under which the Church was established. It has been said that the "[p]opular memories of Portuguese and Dutch colonialism are lost in the dust of the lands that were conquered" (Wickramasinghe, 2015, p. 8). Certainly, it has been difficult to arrive at the experience of the common people "beyond the violence of conversion and forced labour," as the archival documents remaining often focus on the experience of the elite (p. 8). The unknowns of this equation are frustrating, and they frustrated Fr. Perera, who seems to have been determined to come to the defense of Catholicism and its disseminators. After all, many of Catholicism's promulgators in pre-independence Sri Lanka were part of the Jesuit order, as Perera was. For him, the tendency of his peers (who were not of the Catholic faith) to "misapprehen[d] the history of the Catholic Church in Ceylon," specifically in reference to the consensus that Catholicism began in Ceylon as a result of force, derives from what he perceives as an issue of method (Perera, 1962, p. 144):

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3 The spelling "Queirós" appears in current scholarship; it is alternatively spelled "Queyroz" in relation to the text. I have chosen to conform this chapter to how the name appears in current scholarship.

The impression I am speaking of is not so much in the minds of our unlettered countrymen . . . but rather in the minds of that ever-growing class of men who have been schooled in English, and are quite alive to the full significance of their words. For they think so not from ignorance . . . but because they think that such is really the case with us. That is the way they have been taught to read history" (Perera, 1962, p. 145).

How his contemporaries were taught to read history, Perera does not outline in this lecture, which reads as both rhetorical and didactic. He does argue that the question of Portuguese conversion methods and the use of force has been repeated "parrot-wise" in regard to most writers, and further critiques this pronouncement from two professors at the University of Colombo.

Exploring the available archival sources regarding Portuguese conversion methods is beyond the scope and purpose of this article. It is worth mentioning, however, as it seems to be a powerful motivator for Perera in articulating his historical methods, as his conclusion on the matter diverges from that of a good deal of historians who have written on the topic. For the time being, it should be noted that in his textbook, Perera does not deny the relevant fact that Portuguese priests and soldiers alike destroyed Buddhist and Hindu temples "whenever they had the opportunity" (Perera, 1932, p. 190). The severity with which he judges these actions, however, seems to be tempered significantly by the way in which he considers the norms of this historical period. As he writes, "Such actions are nowadays considered vandalism, but in those days they did not think that they were doing anything unjust, though at that time, as well as today, it was impolitic, and only made the perpetrators hated" (p. 190). Further observation of such judgments will be made in the analysis below.

For the moment, it serves to consider what practices Perera considered essential for sound historical method, which he describes in terms of "truth." In his lecture on "Portuguese Missionary Methods," Perera explains the efforts involved in striving for truth: "Historical truth is not easy to attain. It requires a great deal of pains and constant self-control, not to be carried away by one's preconceived views. It requires moral no less than intellectual discipline to find historical truth, while the ways of error are innumerable" (Perera, 1962, p. 168). Part of this explanation certainly derives from Perera's position as a Catholic priest as he associates historical accuracy with a moral disposition for self-control. In this lecture, he also maintains that Catholics should have a positive relationship with truth, citing Pope Leo XIII's opening of the Vatican archives for all who would seek to investigate them (p. 153–154). Practically speaking, there are some further guidelines for historical inquiry one might distill from this lecture, despite its defensive nature. In describing

authorities one ought to be able to trust, Perera notes that scholars given to "circumspection and critical insight and dispassionate judgment," who "will not advance statements without proof" or "be content to take their opinions from hearsay" should be a source of "sound and solid historical opinions" (p. 149). In this lecture, Perera makes clear that credibility is given to one who, above all else, searches for proof of every statement, "weigh[s] the testimony of witnesses, and refuses to be "carried away by . . . feelings" (Perera, 1925; Perera, 1962, p. 151–152).

Ultimately, all of Perera's reflections of proper historical method and Catholicism's relationship to truth culminate in his description of "true nationalism" in his lecture "Catholics and Nationalism" (Perera, 1962). In this lecture, Perera insists on the distinct meanings of religion, race, and nationalism. A "true nationalism" which strives for social, public, and national welfare, "requires Christian virtue" as it "habituates one to subordinate self and caste and class and race, in thought and word and deed, in public and private, when the interests of our fellow countrymen are concerned" (p. 57). Perera views Catholics as being uniquely positioned to rise to this challenge, possessing a "grand heritage of principles that have stood the test of time," which he labored to demonstrate in his work of Sri Lankan history (p. 56). In part, it was this kind of enthusiastic statement about Catholic heritage, which is characteristic of Perera's lectures and public-facing work, that motivated a close reading of Perera's textbook written during the time of Sri Lanka's pre-independence.

Because Perera saw the Portuguese colonial period as "the link between . . . mediaeval and modern Ceylon" (Perera, 1925, p. 1), this study focuses primarily on this section of the textbook. This analysis probes the ways in which Perera discloses or enacts the connection he perceives between these colonial histories and his modern present by making use of the research methods described in the following section.

Historical Qualitative Research Methods: a paradoxical framework

In the last few decades, scholars in the field of history have noted a few shifts in the study of history textbooks. These include shifts from focusing on the content of history textbooks to their practical uses in pedagogy, especially in relation to material previously conceptualized as paratextual; and shifts in composing textbooks towards open learning environments rather than "giving answers;" (Repoussi & Tutiaux-Guillon, 2010, p. 155). Further consensus lies in the treatment of textbooks as ideological artifacts, as "[n]o matter how neutral history textbooks may appear, they prove ideologically important because often they seek to imbue in the young a shared set of values, a national ethos, and an incontrovertible sense of political orthodoxy" (Foster

& Crawford, 2006, p.1). Most recently, analyses of history textbooks have sought to understand how textbooks further nationalistic aims (Ognjenović & Jozelić, 2020), what they can reveal about faith-based history education in ideologically-various contexts (Weintraub & Naveh, 2019), their effects in representing the participation of marginalized populations in a nation's history (Sepúlveda, 2022), as well as the process of rewriting history to promote secular and religious nationalisms (Nair, 2021). Further, such shifts have given rise to methodological adjustments, in which quantitative approaches have been increasingly supplemented or even eschewed in favor of qualitative analysis (Repoussi & Tutiaux-Guillon, 2010, p. 155). Comparative and contextual analyses are even more prominent, treating both the features of the text itself and its conditions of production, as well as the surrounding social and political climates that impact the teaching of history and production of textbooks.

The methods employed in this article align somewhat with the methods of history didactics research. For example, this study realizes to some extent the goals of a content analysis traditional to the discipline of history. That is, it has included "an exhaustive inventory" on a particular topic, (Repoussi & Tutiaux-Guillon, 2010, p. 155), namely the Portuguese colonial period as presented in Perera's textbook. The methods here also resonate with what historians have referred to as "linguistic approaches": explorations in "the readability of history textbooks (analyzing language, implicit content, and narrative structure) and the written text (enunciative, argumentative, and/ or actantial discourse)" (p. 156). In a word, the specific methods at use to analyze *A History of Ceylon for Schools*, have been largely informed by the qualitative coding methods as prescribed by Johnny Saldaña (2021).

This researcher, hailing from the discipline of rhetoric and composition, has selected qualitative coding as a method for its affordances in relation to language and close reading. Within Saldaña's (2021) qualitative coding method, researchers assign certain labels to pieces of visual or textual data to track patterns, themes, or any other given relationship the researcher chooses to observe in the dataset. This process usually involves at least two rounds of close reading and labeling of the text. In the first round of coding, the researcher employs a more open-ended approach to collecting and organizing the data in which it is labeled with descriptors derived from the researcher's perception of the data, extant scholarly terminology, or from the language of the data itself. The second round of coding is meant to develop a sense of categorization in which the researcher can build theory about the data. In this process, the original set of codes is refined as the researcher re-categorizes the data based on the patterns they observe. During this stage, the researcher also determines the most relevant categories for the project. The data is then potentially re-coded, depending on the outcomes of this process. Throughout these coding

processes, the researcher also usually keeps a separate log of "analytic memos" that helps them consider emerging trends from their data, make connections between data and secondary scholarship, and foster a practice of critical reflexivity in their research practices.

One benefit of using this type of data analysis in historical inquiry is that it allows the researcher to observe the data outside of a narrative framework. Writing history requires historians to make choices about genre when writing. These affect the format of the text, logic of sequence, how often and why the author may choose to editorialize or express critiques, whether the reader may be addressed, how to position themselves, and more. With qualitative coding, the data need not remain linear as researchers can trace relationships between authors, audiences, land, space, and time in ways that align with their analytic frameworks and better accommodate perspectives that emerge only through engagement with the data. In regard to S.G. Perera's specific practices, this method allows one to attend to how he enacts his historical method, the degree to which his narrative remains linear, and the ways in which he invokes collectives.

The ways in which this method may invoke the modern, the positivistic, and even the colonial as it interrogates the construction of modernity are not lost on this researcher. Ideally, although researchers embark upon studies with a certain purpose, they resist reading meaning onto societies (past and present) of which they are not a part. However, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) warns, the power dynamic of research is inescapable and research conducted "through imperial eyes" is all too easy to enact, as histories of Western research have all but determined the ways in which a number of social phenomena are often observed. These include the privileging of text over oral accounts, an exclusive conception of science, implicit expectations of Eurocentric guiding values, predetermined ideas about time and space, what constitutes "history," human nature, control over who "speaks for" whom, and more.[4] Importantly, these histories of research are entwined with histories of colonization and the seizure of land from Indigenous peoples. As a result, even best efforts towards transparency and ethical research may falter and fail at times.

In service of this ethic to continually grapple with methodology, it seems important that at times one let go of authority—perhaps even of expertise—for the ability to think differently (Bush, 2023). As scholar of rhetoric John Schlib (1999) noted, "if even histories are marked by rhetoric [and, at times, violent rhetoric] then the authority of any field feels vulnerable" (p. 128). Here, Schlib speaks of the field of rhetoric and its inclination to tend toward an obsession with taxonomies and textual canons because of its Aristotelian intellectual heritage, but researchers in any academic discipline may similarly face challenges in their discipline's methodological

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4 For the full list and discussion of these ideas, see Hall, Stuart. "The west and the rest: discourse and power" In: Hall, Stuart and Gielben, Bram. Formations of modernity. Cambridge: Polity Press and Open University, p. 276–320.

orientations. Qualitative researchers Vivetha Thambinathan and Elizabeth Anne Kinsella (2021) draw on decolonial theories to offer their own four-fold suggestions for ethical qualitative research. They suggest that researchers exercise "critical reflexivity, [engage] reciprocity and respect for self-determination, embrac[e] 'Other(ed)' ways of knowing, and embod[y] a transformative praxis" (p. 1). Further, Thambinathan and Kinsella remind us that no one conducting research within the academy, regardless of positionality, is exempt from perpetuating colonial ideas—that research must continue to evolve and be "unsettled" (p. 6; 7).

Ironically, the qualitative coding enacted in this study is not intended to categorize or make comparisons, but to enable a posture of humble learning for this researcher, a Catholic married into a Catholic, Sri Lankan family. S.G. Perera's Church histories were the first to introduce this researcher to Sri Lankan history and contributed significantly to the study of Sri Lankan history during the period in which history was being formalized as a discipline. Therefore, as this study constitutes an initial venture in analyzing Perera's influential corpus, I hasten to note that this study remains preliminary and partial, in the hopes of even richer engagements with Perera's historical corpus in the larger project, of which this study is only part. Nevertheless, the tables below illustrate relevant sections of the codebook that resulted from the qualitative coding procedures employed for this study of S.G. Perera's textbook, *A History of Ceylon for Schools*.

In the interest of closely examining Perera's textbook on its own terms to the degree possible, the coding processes employed here did not include any predetermined codes derived from previous scholarship. Instead, the descriptive, in vivo, and process codes were generated from the language of Perera's textbook and the researcher's perceptions of this language. In particular, codes were primarily developed to observe how Perera discusses historical method (if at all), how he invokes collectives, and how Perera enacts his historical method in terms of the functions that the text accomplishes (see discussion of process coding below).

As a first step, a significant portion of data collection involved descriptive, or topic coding to get a better idea of the content Perera's textbook includes. In descriptive coding, the researcher notes the main topics of passages of data (Saldaña, 2021). Table 1 provides a portion of the codebook focused on descriptive coding of historical figures. Over 30 historical figures were identified in this coding process, the majority of which were commanders of either Portuguese or Sinhalese forces.

In addition to descriptive coding, I employed an in vivo coding process to observe Perera's historical choices at the language level. This form of coding is inherently inductive, as the verbatim language of the data is used to make sense of its meaning (Saldaña, 2021). As this study is interested in the ways in which Perera's historical method lends itself to a Catholic, Sri Lankan

nationalist perspective, emerging codes were selected to observe overt discussion of historical method ("history), practices of naming ("Ceylon,"), and linguistic choices that signify collectives, especially where they locate Perera in Sri Lanka ("we," "this island").

Table 1: Descriptive Coding of Historical Figures

Code	Description	Representative Examples
Rājasingha	The text focuses on the personality or actions of Rājasingha I, the king of Sitawaka (r. 1581–1592)	"Rājasingha now turned his attention to the Udarata" (p. 67).
Don Juan of Austria / Konappu Bandara / Wimaladharma	The text focuses on the personality or actions of Don Juan, the man who became King Wimaladharma of Kandy (r. 1592–1604)	"Portuguese and Sinhalese officers . . . including Konappu Bandara, son of Virasundera of Peradeniya, who had become a Christian under the name of Don Juan of Austria, vied with one another" (p. 69).
Senarat	The text focuses on the personality or actions of Senarat, the king of Kandy (r. 1605–1635)	"Wimaladharma had named his brother Senarat guardian of his son . . ." (p. 112).
Dharmapāla	The text focuses on the personality or actions of Dharmapāla, the king of Kotte	"and the king issued letters patent appointing Dharmapāla heir to the throne of Kotte..." (29)

Table 2 displays the major codes developed through process coding, the final coding method used in this preliminary study. Process, or action coding, involves using gerunds to make observations about the actions undertaken in the data (Saldaña, 2021). In a longer selection of data such as this textbook, it is not always practical to code each line for process. In this case, process was coded with respect to the researcher's perception that Perera was enacting some function of historical method. These codes often were related to explicit exercises of judgment or interpretation, but they also reflected how historical narrative is presented. For example, "hypothesizing," "presenting evidence," and "clarifying misrepresentations" in Table 2 all refer to Perera's treatment of historical content. Instances of "praising" and "blaming" were likewise coded, with regards to particular collectives as a way to observe any rationale behind Perera's judgment of historical figures, contemporary to the historical methods of this period. Finally, a series of subcodes emerged from an initial code phrased "explaining in hindsight," which are also included in Table 2. These subcodes all relate to interpretative work or commentary that Perera includes, especially where it seems that not all information has been presented to the reader or where narrative is presented in the context of Sri Lanka's history as a whole.

Table 2: Process Coding for Historical Methods

Code	Description	Representative Examples
Clarifying misrepresentations	The text contests a prior claim or hypothesis by presenting further contrasting evidence or reasoning.	"the supposition that it was a deliberate trick is discountenanced by the fact that the Dutch did not garrison any fort on the strength of this article nor appeal to it for justification" (147).
Hypothesizing	The text presents a hypothetical alternative to historical events	"Had he (Rājasinha) been wiser in his government and devoted some time to the consolidation of his conquests, and had he been less jealous of rivals, he might have achieved the glory of uniting the whole island under his sway" (75).
Presenting evidence	The text provides support for a claim, either through logical reasoning, or material evidence.	"Before their time, it (the kingdom of Jaffna) was peopled by Buddhist Sinhalese, as showen by the recently discovered remains of vihāras and dāgobas and by the large number of Tamilicised Sinhalese place-names" (2).
Quoting a source at length	The text quotes from a source at length.	"According to the Mahavansa, he was murdered by Rājasinha who 'in the wickedness of his heart slew his father with his own hand'" (65).
Praising/Blaming Sri Lankans	The texts praises deeds of Sri Lankans, either directly, or by reviewing them favorably. Alternatively, it finds fault with their deeds.	"Vīdiyē proved himself a daring and capable general and succeeded in checking the advance of Mayādunna" (26). "He (Dharmapāla) was the most pathetic figure in Ceylon history, who brought trouble on himself and all connected with him (87).
Praising/Blaming Portuguese	The texts praises deeds of Portuguese, either directly, or by reviewing them favorably. Alternatively, it finds fault with their deeds.	"The camp was in confusing and dismay at this desertion, but Azevedo acted with great coolness…" (106). "Albuquerque's maladministration had embittered the people, his weakness had emboldened Mayādunna and Senerat" (130).
Emerging codes from initial code: "Explains in hindsight"		

Interpreting military strategy	The text interprets the strategy of the military forces at issue.	"His (Rājasinha's) object was not to exchange one foreigner for another, . . . he hoped that by offering them (the Dutch East-India Company) the monopoly of cinnamon and a fort in the island he could induce them to rid him of the Portuguese" (144).
Interpreting motivations and sentiment	The text interprets the motivations or feelings of historical figures.	"Senarat was not able to prevent the work, but he felt that the Portuguese were bent on cutting him off from dealings with foreigners" (130).
Narrativizing	The text presents the current discussion in the context of a larger narrative of Sri Lankan history.	"This was a most opportune moment to attempt their (the Portuguese's) complete expulsion from the island" (109).
Interpreting with authority as a narrator	The text discusses an event or situation from a critical distance of time, presenting a big-picture.	"The people around Batticaloa were forbidden to come to the fort without the king's licences, and the Dutch had reason to think that the king was keeping the spices hidden" (148).

The following section describes the results of these coding procedures as applied to S.G. Perera's *A History of Ceylon for Schools*, discussing their implications in relation to the experience of a reader of the textbook, the extent to which the textbook aligns with 20th century, modern historical practice, and the ways in which it presents as an artifact of a Catholic, nationalist perspective.

Results and Discussion

This analysis focuses on the first edition of the textbook *A History of Ceylon for Schools*, published in 1932, which includes some sparse bibliographies in later sections as well as a glossary and index at the end. The final edition of the textbook, edited by another prominent Jesuit historian, Fr. Vito Perniola, was published in 1956 and includes study questions after each chapter. The first edition does not include these features, and even shows the development of Perera's method as the first volume, covering the Portuguese and Dutch colonization proceeds without sources for the most part, while the second volume of history during British colonization includes a short bibliography at the end of each chapter, as well as the contents at the start of each chapter.

User experience of the textbook

The impact and significance of Perera's historical practice should be considered alongside its genre. This work being a textbook, Perera wrote with pedagogical purposes, gathering archival information into a singular text to be used in schools. While readers would find a singular text more approachable than sifting through and making sense of various archival documents, *A History of Ceylon for Schools* is written in English, making it indeed accessible to a wide audience internationally, but in terms of local context, restricting access to an English-speaking readership.

As regards the organization and layout of the textbook in general, some aspects of *A History of Ceylon for Schools* make it fairly navigable, while other aspects may hinder the reader unfamiliar with the content that Perera covers. In service of navigability, the way in which the text is divided is very clear. At the largest scale, the book is divided into three parts according to foreign colonial power at issue in the respective time frame (Portuguese, Dutch, and British). For example, Perera begins part 1 of the book, "The Portuguese Period 1505–1658" on page 14. These three parts span two volumes, with volume one comprising parts one and two and volume two comprising part 3. These three parts are further divided into chapters, with the content largely following a singular narrative. At the start of each chapter, Perera reviews the rulers of the Lankan kingdoms at issue in that section of the text, like Kotte or Kandy. The text of each chapter is then broken into smaller sections. In their focus, these sections seem to predominantly follow the flow of power and control of land, including military tactics, secret plots and betrayals, attempts to secure foreign aid, etc. At times, these chapters even additionally specify a time frame: for example, "Bhuvaneka Bahu and Mayādunna, 1521–1545," "Portuguese Aid Sought by the Kings of Ceylon, 1545–1550," "Dharmapala and the Portuguese 1560–1582" "The Portuguese Domination, 1597–1602," and "Struggle between the Portuguese and the Dutch, 1630–1645" (Perera, 1932).

There are a couple of factors beyond this overarching structure that make Perera's text a bit less navigable, especially in relation to this first edition, which lacks some of the specifications of later editions. Perhaps most noticeably, this edition's explicit references to primary or secondary sources are sparse. For the most part, Perera describes evidence in the text itself—either quoting texts directly, as he does with the Pali epic, the *Mahavamsa*, or presenting the archaeological evidence, as he does in an instance where he includes the image of a relief sculpture which depicts the story he references.[5] These instances, however, are somewhat few, such that most of the information included in the book is presented without a reference. While this simplifies the

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5 This story is that of the soldier Simao Pinhao who rescued the prince in northern Jaffna who became King Pararāsa Sekeran. Perera notes that this story is depicted on a stone slab in the Sabaragamuwa Maha Saman Dēwalē (p. 78).

content that a student might have to learn, it does hinder the ease of further research. For better or worse, the reader must rely on Perera's expertise, extensive as it was.

In relation to Perera's work as a textbook, the descriptive, in vivo, and process coding procedures revealed a prioritization of the exercise of power and strategic military operations. Descriptive coding provided a view of who receives the most attention in Perera's historical narrative. Unsurprisingly, Lankan kings and Portuguese generals feature most prominently, although Perera's source material likely contributes to these actors as foci. In addition to the narratives of military strategy and skirmishes, these elite received additional sections that commented on their careers as a whole. This is the case with Bhuvanekabahu of Kotte, Mayādunna of Sitawaka, Dharmapāla of Kotte, Rājasinha I of Sitawaka, Wimaladharma of Kandy, Jeronimo de Azevedo of Portugal, as well as commentary on the Portuguese and their deeds and influence on the island in general.

In vivo coding for historical method revealed virtually no direct discussion of historical method, with the word "history" itself almost never mentioned. This is not surprising given the historical methodologies at hand during the time. Instead, Perera's methods are somewhat opaque as he favors attending to a singular narrative. This narrative is not entirely linear, however, as previous historical figures can be looped into the treatment of individuals' accomplishments, as in section 235, "The Achievements of Sa" (Perera, 1932, p. 128). In vivo coding for practices of naming unsurprisingly indicated ubiquitous usage of "Ceylon," to refer to the region at the time. Usage of "we" and "this island," which can linguistically and rhetorically function to locate Perera as well as the reader in the country, occur far less often, with "this island" used primarily in relation to governance, and "we" occurring only a few times, when Perera addresses the reader.

Finally, process coding revealed a preoccupation with presenting and clarifying evidence that enabled the historian to judge the praiseworthiness of the historical figures mentioned by Perera . The interpretive work that Perera undertakes in sections initially coded as "explaining in hindsight" (i.e. "interpreting motivations and sentiment," "interpreting with authority as a narrator," and "narrativizing") further emphasizes the expectation to make such judgments, sometimes invoking the trajectory of Sri Lanka's history in the process: "Thus within two years of his arrival, Constantine de Sa raised the power of the Portuguese in Ceylon to a height it had never before attained" (Perera, 1932, p. 128).

Alignment with a modern methodological framework for historical practice

Measuring Perera's historical method in this textbook against typical modern frameworks of historical methodology in the 20th century, the results of coding reveal alignment in a few areas. Most notably, Perera's decision to divide historical periods according to colonial domination places the struggle for land as the main structural principle of these periods. Alternate to Perera's method, scholars have described the periods at issue in this textbook as the Kotte and Kandyan periods, according to the time frames in which those respective kingdoms dominated the island. The death of King Dharmapala in 1597 completed the transition of the Kotte kingdom into Portuguese possession, for example, which marks the shift from the Kotte period to the Kandyan period. Further, emerging data from descriptive coding shows a focus on the "careers," "characters," and "achievements" of both Lankan and Portuguese historical figures in power, which additionally aligns this text with modern historical frameworks. The text focuses on the act of summarizing the contributions and accomplishments of historical personalities in a way very similar to the kind of curriculum that Deshpande (2007) describes.

In vivo coding turned up very little direct discussion of historical method; however, process coding revealed a couple of patterns relevant to 20th century frameworks of historical practice. Emerging codes such as "hypothesizing," "presenting evidence," and "clarifying misrepresentations," for example, demonstrate where Perera treats historical content as factual and verifiable. In a similar way to how historical curriculum of the 20th century emphasizes judgment of historical personalities, Perera demonstrates in this textbook how he weighs historical evidence. Despite the phrasing of these emergent codes, Perera's method appeals in a very particular way to the construction of scientific empiricism. While Perera does stress historical fact as verifiable through exploration of evidence, the sorts of evidence he values are more diverse, as he cites from ancient epics such as the *Mahavamsa* in addition to logical reasoning as well as archaeological evidence and the "genuine histories" written after colonial involvement (Rogers, 1990, p. 90).

Subliminal messaging towards a nationalist perspective

While Perera's historical methods are somewhat opaque in this textbook, they are not elsewhere. In the work cited earlier, "The Conquista of Queyroz," Perera describes the role of the historian to be "sift[ing] historical testimony as a judge sifts the evidence in a law suit" (1925, p. 14). In this role, Perera argues total absence of prejudice to be impossible, but that it is only when the historian "is so obsessed with a preconceived notion" that "real culpable prejudice occurs" (p. 15). Further, Perera holds that personal convictions can be separated from historical practice, explaining that such is the case with the historical practice of a major source of his historical

material, Fernão de Queirós (p. 15), though Queirós' historical reliability has been a topic of debate (Abeyasinghe, 1980; Strathern, 2000).

In the same vein, however, it would be surprising if Perera were to directly write about Sri Lankan nationalism in the section of a historical textbook about the period of Portuguese colonialism in Sri Lanka. What can be said about this section of the textbook is that the idea of nationhood is mobilized in Perera's manner of conceiving of the island's history in a few ways.

The descriptive coding process reveals an emerging sense of nationhood in the way that historical figures deeds' are valued in relation to the island as a whole. The text, for example, presents a mostly linear narrative focused on elite historical figures, but it breaks with this narrative occasionally in order to comment more substantively on the accomplishments of these historical figures. This maneuver effectively recalls past events and invokes the island's history in totality to give an impression of the figure's impact. In the case of Dharmapāla of Kotte, Perera writes "[h]e was the most pathetic figure in Ceylon history, who brought trouble on himself and all connected with him" (p. 87). Such a description can be read in connection with the fact that Dharmapāla was the last king of Kotte and his reign, beginning when he was a child, helped secure Portuguese domination of Sri Lanka's lowlands. On the other hand, Perera speaks very highly of Rājasinha I of Sitawaka, a man who is said to have killed his own father. Perera writes, however, "Yet he was by far the greatest monarch that this island had for centuries" (p. 75). Bravery, ambition, and military expertise appear to compensate for much, for Perera insists, "It was indeed a sad death for one of the most warlike kings that ever ruled in Ceylon" (p. 74). Further, a passage coded during process coding as" hypothesizing" suggests "[h]ad he been wiser in his government and devoted some time to the consolidation of his conquests, and had he been less jealous of rivals, he might have achieved the glory of uniting the whole island under his sway" (p. 75). In each of these excerpts— "in Ceylon history," "the greatest monarch . . . this island had," and "the glory of uniting the whole island"—Perera invokes a shared history and a unity of the island.

Interestingly, Perera writes about the "character" of the Lankan figures he mentions— Mayādunna, Rājasinga I, and Wimaladharma, for example. These details are easy to observe in the table of contents at the start of the textbook (Perera 1932, pp. iii, iv, v). Then, one can also observe that when Perera writes about the Portuguese generals and military officials, he writes about their achievements, as he does with Lankan rulers, but instead of their "character," he attends to their "careers," as in the case of Don Jeronimo de Azevedo as an individual and the Portuguese as a collective (p. v; viii). This difference between commenting on character and career is interesting, though Perera outlines his nuanced estimation of the Portuguese influence in the last several pages of Part one of the textbook.

Drawing from observations made during in vivo and process coding, Perera describes the Portuguese, arguing their greatest influence to be religion: the spread of Christianity was accomplished on the island upon Dharmapāla's death in 1597, with his gift of lands to Franciscans and the beginning of Portuguese domination of Kotte (p. 188–189). Perera additionally notes that the general representation of the Portuguese career in the island as cruel is somewhat deserved because of their "methods of repression and execution," although he argues these practices occurred primarily "in the heat of warfare" rather than as a general rule (p. 188). Hedging somewhat, Perera notes that "cruelty does not cease to be cruelty because **we** can assign a motive" (p. 188). Perera continues, relating that the Portuguese did not display any hatred of Ceylon's inhabitants, but even adopted some Sinhala and Tamil customs, distinguishing them from "the other nations that succeeded them in this island" (p. 188). In this section, as Perera judges the deeds of the Portuguese, he invokes the reader into his judgments of this shared history, which in scale constitutes the entire colonial force of Portugal on Sri Lanka's trajectory. This act of judging the impacts of Portugal's colonial history in Sri Lanka is further nuanced by Perera's positionality as a Catholic, Jesuit priest, which is not necessarily visible in the text, although Perera also maintains his conspicuous insistence here on the lack of proof to substantiate the claim of forced conversions under Portuguese rule (p. 189). This entire discussion of Portuguese deeds, while not initiating a discussion on nationalism, does prime the reader for a discussion of the nationalism arising alongside the Buddhist revival that happens in the second volume of the textbook, devoted to British Ceylon, which is to be explored in the larger project encapsulating this study.

Conclusion

Jesuit priest S.G. Perera belonged to a new generation of historians in the early 20th century. They were characterized by a departure from mythic histories and an embrace of discerning and critical approaches (Wickramasinghe, 2013, p. 93). Perera himself sourced and sifted through many archival documents from Lisbon as well as the Vatican, collecting many accounts of 16th and 17th century Sri Lanka—many of which were correspondences of the Jesuit order. Perera's writing displays his discerning and critical approach to history. He writes with an authoritative, yet even-handed style, in which he parses contradictory accounts and separates fact from conjecture according to his experiences and knowledge of a significant volume of historical documents of the time of Portuguese colonization.

Through processes of descriptive, in vivo, and process coding, Perera's *A History of Ceylon for Schools* demonstrates an implicit nationalist sensibility, emerging from a modern

Catholic perspective. As Perera journeys through an estimation of the historical deeds laid out in Portuguese colonial texts and the available Sri Lankan texts, he leads the reader through a narrative wherein these deeds constitute the shared history between pedagogue and student. Here, Perera reprimands Sri Lankan Christian rulers who falter in strength, as in the case of Dharmapāla, and praises Sri Lankan rulers who prove military prowess amidst moral ambiguity, as in the case of Rājasinha. Although Perera only invokes the reader on occasion, the frameworks through and the premise on which this textbook is written signals an appropriation of 20th century historical method for the purposes of claiming a shared history and shared identity for this emerging nation-state.

In the context of contemporary educational contexts for the instruction of history in Sri Lanka, scholars have commented on the ways that the study of history has at times equated to the construction and maintenance of heritage, and further, that the current state of history's instruction has somewhat reverted to previous frameworks of memorization and prioritization of a selected few time periods and rulers that reflect a glorious past shaped by majority ideologies (Gunawardana, 1979; Wickramasinghe, 2013, Devapriya, 2021). S.G. Perera's role in this trajectory has been a unique one in that he has contributed to development of critical methods in Sri Lanka while at the same time championing his own religious viewpoints and calling for interethnic collaboration in nation-building. While his position as a Jesuit priest and a Catholic historian do not feature overtly in the textbook examined here, these aspects of Perera's identity motivated and even guided his historical practice.

In the continuing study of Sri Lankan history and historiography, analyses of influential textbooks such as S.G. Perera's can be useful to occasion a wider space for the discussion of critical approaches in historical education as well as the dynamic and diverse influences of positionality and identity on historical practice.

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Additional Information

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