



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (010)

TITLE: 1804/1810 — Las Brevas Maduras

AUTHOR: Miguel Angel Scenna

Subject Areas: Latin American History, Southern Cone Civilization, 19th-Century Independence Movements, Political Science.

I. Academic Justification & Context

804 - 1810 - Las Brevas Maduras offers a crucial historiographical transition from the traditional, monumental view of Argentine history to a modern, dynamic understanding of the socio-political forces that forged the May Revolution. As noted by Félix Luna in the prologue, the text strips away the "sacralized" history of statues and textbooks to present a journalistic, deeply researched narrative of the Río de la Plata's most turbulent sexennium.

For university courses, this text is indispensable because it demonstrates that the 1810 Revolution was not a spontaneous local phenomenon, but rather the inevitable culmination of a complex geopolitical crisis triggered by the Napoleonic Wars, the collapse of the Spanish Bourbon dynasty, and the British Invasions. It is the perfect anchor for modules discussing how external imperial crises catalyze internal colonial self-determination.

II. Core Thematic Axes for Lecture & Syllabus Integration

1. The British Invasions as the Catalyst for Self-Reliance (1806-1807)

Scenna meticulously details the British expeditions led by Beresford, Popham, and Whitelocke. This section allows professors to explore the concept of "military vacuum" in colonial empires.

- **The Discredit of the Crown:** The cowardly flight of Viceroy Sobre Monte shatters the myth of peninsular protection.
- **The Birth of the Citizen Militia:** The creation of the *Patricios*, *Arribeños*, and other local regiments transfers the monopoly of armed force from the Spanish crown to the local *criollo* and resident peninsular populations. This structural shift is the true foundation of the revolution.

2. The Vacuum of Legitimacy and Ideological Incubation (1808-1809)

Following Napoleon's usurpation of the Spanish throne (the Bayonne Abdications) and the capture of Ferdinand VII, the Río de la Plata becomes a cauldron of competing political theories. Scenna outlines three distinct paths that students must understand to grasp 19th-century Latin American political thought:

- **Juntismo:** Led by the peninsular Martín de Álzaga. Based on the traditional Spanish legal concept that, in the absence of the monarch, sovereignty reverts to the people (the Cabildos).
- **Carlismo:** Promoted by *criollo* intellectuals like Manuel Belgrano and Juan José Castelli. A pragmatic attempt to establish an independent constitutional monarchy under Infanta Carlota Joaquina, effectively neutralizing the risk of a chaotic republic.



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- **Absolutism/Loyalism:** Represented by figures like Viceroy Liniers and later Cisneros, attempting to hold the fragmented empire together in the name of the Supreme Central Junta of Seville.

3. The Chuquisaca & La Paz Rebellions vs. The Buenos Aires Core

Scenna effectively contextualizes the May Revolution by detailing the earlier, suppressed uprisings in the Alto Perú (1809). This axis allows for a comparative analysis of revolution: why did the radical uprising of La Paz (led by Pedro Domingo Murillo and José Antonio de Medina) end in execution, while the Buenos Aires movement succeeded? The text highlights the critical role of the unified *criollo* militias (led by Cornelio de Saavedra) that Buenos Aires possessed, which the Alto Perú lacked.

III. Classroom Discussion Topics

1. **The Myth of the "Invasion" vs. "Liberation":** Scenna reveals that Beresford and Whitelocke intended to colonize, not liberate, the Río de la Plata. Discuss how the defeat of the British ironically accelerated independence more than a British victory would have. What does this suggest about the formation of national identity?
2. **The January 1, 1809 Mutiny (La asonada de Álzaga):** Scenna and Félix Luna present Martín de Álzaga not merely as a reactionary Spanish loyalist, but as a precursor to the May 25th revolution. Analyze Mariano Moreno's involvement in both the Jan 1st mutiny and the May Revolution. Was Álzaga a visionary or a conservative holding onto power?
3. **The Role of the "Perichona" and Social Dynamics:** How does the scandalous relationship between Viceroy Liniers and Ana Perichon de Vandeuil illustrate the decay of viceregal moral and political authority? How did social reputation intersect with political power in colonial Buenos Aires?

IV. Research Prompts & Essay Assignments

- **Comparative Political Theory Essay:** *"Trace the evolution of 'Carlotismo' and 'Juntismo' between 1808 and 1810 using Scenna's text. Argue which movement was more ideologically radical and which was more pragmatically viable given the geopolitical threats from Brazil and England."*
- **Socio-Economic Analysis Paper:** *"Examine the opening of free trade under Viceroy Cisneros in 1809. Drawing on the 'Representación de los Hacendados' and the opposition from the Cadiz monopoly merchants, analyze how economic necessity forced political concessions, ultimately weakening the Spanish mercantilist grip on the Río de la Plata."*
- **Character Study / Biographical Essay:** *"Select one of the three Viceroys discussed in the text (Sobre Monte, Liniers, or Cisneros). Analyze how their personal decisions during crises (the British Invasions or the fall of Ferdinand VII) sealed their political fates and inadvertently strengthened the 'criollo' military faction."*

V. MLA Bibliography Entry for Syllabus

Standard Citation: Scenna, Miguel Angel. *1804 - 1810 - Las Brevas Maduras*. Edited and with a prologue by Félix Luna. Stockcero / SpanishBookPress, 2026.



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In-Text Citation Format: (Scenna 45) or (Scenna 112) (*Note: Advise students to maintain consistent pagination citations utilizing the exact print or online editions provided by Stockcero to ensure academic uniformity*).

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