

## PROFESSIONAL NOTES

### HISTORICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ARTIGAS CENTENARY

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José Gervasio Artigas is the national hero of Uruguay. His chief fame rests upon the military and political leadership he held in the Banda Oriental from 1811-1820, and the unique part he played during those years in the general Platine struggle for independence and regional domination.

His fugitive forces dwindling away, his homeland in the power of invading armies, Artigas fled to Paraguay in 1820, there to live quietly, with no further part in public affairs. His countrymen had long since thought him dead when, in 1850, he passed away. Years went by before his memory achieved distinction in his native land.<sup>1</sup> Even now, there is no great biography nor monumental document collection, such as have celebrated other leaders of Latin-American independence, by which Artigas' role might be better known and assessed.

Yet the figure of this austere leader is a striking one. He was a federalist, and his leadership personified strong opposition to Buenos Aires and Brazil, the powers of his day. Two major claims now made for him in his own country are: that he gave social content to the Platine *Revolución de Mayo*; and that he alone, among the principal leaders, remained a federalist to the last.<sup>2</sup> These and other, conflicting, opinions about Artigas will be illuminated by the appearance of an important series of publications devoted to him and to the revolutionary epoch in the Río de la Plata.

As part of the national observances of the centenary of his death, Uruguay has set aside large sums<sup>3</sup> for a sweeping program of historical research, writing, documentary publication, and collection of materials for Uruguayan cultural history. These historical contributions will be

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<sup>1</sup> See chapters 1-2 of Eduardo Acevedo, *José Artigas . . . jefe de los orientales y protector de los pueblos libres . . . alegato histórico* (4th ed., 1 vol. to date, Montevideo, 1950). This is the best work, to date, on Artigas. See also the recent series of articles, *La leyenda negra sobre Artigas*, by the eminent Uruguayan, Juan E. Pivel Devoto, in *Marcha*, of Montevideo (soon to appear as a separate publication).

<sup>2</sup> It is fair to say that these claims are contested or not recognized in most references to Artigas in historical literature. Also, the Uruguayans usually except Mariano Moreno from such comparisons.

<sup>3</sup> The appropriation comes to 1,306,000 *pesos uruguayos* (about \$500,000.)

centered about, but by no means limited to, Artigas and his times. All important historical institutions in Uruguay take part in these various activities.<sup>4</sup>

A series of the leading works of Uruguayan literature will be selected and published as the *Biblioteca Artigas*. There will also be publications concerning the musical heritage of Uruguay, including the recording of a large amount of folk-lore. An historical-monuments commission is established and directed to review the most important sites, which will be inventoried, marked, and preserved.<sup>5</sup>

Nine contests will be held for the best writings on given historical themes, the most important of these to treat of "Artigas and his times." This particular competition (and another, for a textbook of national history) offers a prize so liberal as likely to attract foreign writers as well as the best Uruguayan historians. Among the other contests, there is one for a historico-juridical work on Artigas' contributions to national and American life; another on his campaigns; and two for compendia (with commentary) of Artigas documents and *artiguista* thought. A competition for the best Artigas bibliography has also been held, and the resultant publication should soon appear.

The most substantial documentary collection will be the *Archivo Artigas*, probably to consist of thirteen large volumes. The first of these<sup>6</sup> deals with the public and some of the private affairs of Artigas' forebears in the Banda Oriental. The grandfather, D. Juan Antonio, went from Spain to Buenos Aires, to become one of the founders of Montevideo; and the father, D. Martín José, lived well into the nineteenth century. Both, as *cabildantes*, *estancieros*, and captains of the militia, were pillars of local society. Their public lives take up most of the volume (382 pp.), although information about their real and personal property, lineage, families, and wills are given enough room (187 pp.) to provide a fuller idea of what these substantial men had and what they did.

The materials all touch the two central figures in one way or another; but many documents which hardly refer to them are copied in full, thus adding to the value of this volume as a reflection of the Banda Oriental. Thus, we learn much about the post of Santa Tecla, and Spanish concern over it, during 1775 and up to its capture by the Portuguese in

<sup>4</sup> These are listed below, with amounts assigned to each.

<sup>5</sup> This commission will reside in the Museo Histórico Nacional, which furnishes personnel and administration for the time being.

<sup>6</sup> *Archivo Artigas*, Vol. 1. Advertencia del Dr. Felipe Ferreiro. [Comisión Nacional Archivo Artigas.] (Montevideo, 1950.) This set was authorized, and first funds provided, under an earlier law which also specified a competition for an Artigas bibliography. This has been held, and the winning bibliography will soon be published.

1776 (pp. 303-356); and a long catalogue of the effects of Francisco Medina, in 1775, offers an interesting library list, and details of ships' equipment (pp. 434-476). Much information on back-country affairs, such as contraband, is included.

Most of these documents come from the Archivo General de la Nación, Montevideo, reflecting the local character of this volume. Uruguayan historians are, however, well aware that few topics in the history of the Río de la Plata can be thoroughly studied from the materials of any one national archive. Their research expeditions to other countries are evident even in this first volume, for which many items were copied in the Archivo General de la Nación, Buenos Aires. There are eight other civil and ecclesiastical repositories represented here in lesser degree.<sup>7</sup>

The volume is attractive, well-arranged, and carries four indexes: document descriptions (which are also used as headings for the items), persons, places, and ships' names. The writer had the pleasure of watching the careful transcription being done for this series; and the printer has not betrayed the copyists. It is fortunate that the nation's best historical talents<sup>8</sup> are being brought to bear upon this and the other projects; and we may be confident that the results of these efforts, as vouched for in this volume, will continue at the high level established by recent Uruguayan historiography.

Documentary publications will also include iconographic materials prepared in the Museo Histórico Nacional, and the previously inedited acts and documents of six town councils,<sup>9</sup> these from the Archivo Nacional. The cabildo records will probably emphasize once more that the Banda Oriental lacked the status of a united province, and was the scene of conflicting jurisdictions and active rivalries, both among the local settlements and with the viceregal capital of Buenos Aires.

The competitions are to be concluded, and winning entries published, by the end of 1954. Through the medium of this comprehensive program we stand to gain a new, revealing view of the Plata region, par-

<sup>7</sup> Most important is the Archivo del Juzgado Letrado de Primera Instancia en lo Civil de Primer Turno, Montevideo; and less so the Archivo de la Escribanía de Gobierno y Hacienda. Scattering or single items come from the Archivo de la Curia Eclesiástica; the Archivo de la Parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción y de los Santos Apóstoles Felipe y Santiago; the Museo Histórico Nacional (its Archivo y Biblioteca "Pablo Blanco Acevedo"); and the Parroquia de San Francisco de Asís, Archivo de la Orden Tercera, all in the same city. Likewise, the Archivo del Arzobispado de Buenos Aires, and one from a personal collection.

<sup>8</sup> And those of the distinguished Argentine scholar Dr. Emilio Ravignani, as director of the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas of the Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias in the national university.

<sup>9</sup> Those of Colonia, Maldonado, Soriano, Canelones, San José, and Santa Lucía.

ticularly during that period when the viceroyalty was disintegrating and the would-be nation states were struggling toward independence.

*Competitions*: agencies in charge, themes, and prizes (first, second) in Uruguayan pesos.

*Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Previsión Social*

- 1) Artigas and his times . . . . . 15,000(10,000)

*Facultad de Derecho y Ciencias Sociales*

- 2) An historico-juridical theme concerning "acción y influencia de Artigas en la vida nacional y americana" . . . . . 5,000(3,000)

*Consejo Nacional de Enseñanza Primaria y Normal*

- 3) A life of Artigas, for primary schools . . . . . 2,000(1,500)  
4) Text of readings, duly annotated and illustrated, of *artiguista* documents . . . . . 2,000(1,000)

*Consejo Nacional de Enseñanza Secundaria*

- 5) Annotated anthology of *artiguista* thought, with an historical study, for secondary schools . . . . . 2,500(1,500)  
6) Text of Uruguayan history (presumably for secondary schools) . . . . . 7,500(2,500)

*Ministerio de Defensa Nacional*

- 7) A work on the campaigns of Artigas . . . . . 2,500(1,500)

*Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores*

- 8) A synthesis of item (2), above, to be done by the winner of that competition: for translation into various languages . . . . . 1,500(none)

*Comisión Nacional de Monumentos*

- 9) An inventory of historical sites related with the life of Artigas . . . . . 2,500(1,500)<sup>10</sup>

*Appropriations for direct publication.*<sup>11</sup>

*Comisión Nacional Archivo Artigas*

- 1) Documents (the *Archivo Artigas* set) . . . . . 185,000  
2) The Artigas bibliography . . . . . 15,000

*Museo Histórico Nacional*

- 3) The iconographic publication, and other materials relating to his life . . . . . 30,000

*Biblioteca Nacional del Uruguay*

- 4) Facsimilar reproduction of printed materials dating from 1811-1820 . . . . . 30,000

<sup>10</sup> Commissions are set by the law (or in some cases will be appointed) to judge these competitions. The rules, however, had not yet appeared at the time of writing.

<sup>11</sup> Also, an item of 100,000 pesos uruguayos is granted to the departmental governments of Uruguay. Up to half of the sum received by each may be used toward expenses of departmental historical competitions concerning Artigas' role in those localities.

*Archivo Nacional del Uruguay*

- 5) Acts, documents of Soriano, Canelones, Maldonado,  
Colonia, San José, and Santa Lucía . . . . . 30,000

*Instituto Histórico y Geográfico del Uruguay*

- 6) A variety of publications . . . . . 30,000

*Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias*

- 7) Publications already selected . . . . . 35,000

*Servicio Oficial de Difusión Radioeléctrica*

- 8) Publications on Uruguayan music, and sound re-  
cording of folklore anthology . . . . . 30,000

RAFAEL ALTAMIRA

The dean of Spanish historians, Rafael Altamira, died in Mexico City on June 1. His name is too well known—both to students of Spanish history who for more than a generation have used his famous *Historia de España y de la civilización española*, and to those interested in world affairs through his manifold activities on behalf of peace and international coöperation—for it to be necessary here to detail the chronology of his distinguished career.

One of the men who formed the distinguished circle developed by the *Junta de Ampliación de Estudios*, Altamira was actively concerned with the revival of Spanish culture in the early years of the century. He brought new high standards in the study of legal and institutional history to the Universities of Oviedo and Madrid; he did much to spread the influence of the Spanish universities more widely through the nation; and he contributed largely to the revival of good-will and better cultural relations between Spain and the Hispanic-American states.

He had traveled widely through America and in recent years had made his residence in Mexico where he continued, in retirement, his studies of colonial law. Many of his recent writings have been published by the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, with which he maintained close relations. Few Spaniards, if any, surpass this departed scholar in influence and prestige among Hispanic-American scholars. The spontaneous campaign, earlier during the present year, in favor of his candidacy for the Nobel Peace Prize was strongly supported in a number of American republics and was evidence, not