

should make an excellent text for general undergraduate courses in world culture, social sciences, and humanities.

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*Las fuerzas armadas de Venezuela en el siglo XIX*. Vols. I-X. Prepared by the PRESIDENCIA DE LA REPÚBLICA. Caracas, 1963-1969. Presidencia de la República.

As part of their campaign to provide historians with good collections of republican Venezuela's most important documents, Pedro Grases and Manuel Pérez Vila have given us ten volumes of material on the armed forces of Venezuela in the nineteenth century. To date there are five volumes on the independence and four on the republican period to 1846. There will be three more volumes taking the series to the beginning of the twentieth century.

Within the collection, the material divides into chronological blocks. Two volumes cover the period up to the Congress of Angostura (1819), two more volumes the decisive era from the Congress of Angostura to the battle of Ayacucho (1824), and a fifth volume carries the collection to the dissolution of Gran Colombia in 1830. For the republican period two volumes (numbers 6 and 7) span the early governments from 1830 to 1841, and an eighth volume includes the *Ordenanzas del ejército* of 1841. The ninth contains the Naval Ordinances of 1793, while the tenth covers the rest of the early governments through 1846.

Throughout the series we find the same high quality of presentation, annotation, and documentation that we have come to expect from the compilers' previous work on *Pensamiento político venezolano del siglo xix* and the *Escritos del Libertador*. Every volume begins with a preface explaining the scope and purpose of the documents included, the selection criteria, and a short discussion of the historical context and significance of each piece. Following the prefatory remarks Grases and Pérez Vila have placed a "Sumario: relación de documentos," in which they list each document, describe its contents, and indicate its source. Once the entire collection is completed there will be a volume of indices.

Such is the plan of this important work. Many pieces included in the collection come from other printed sources and thus are not being published for the first time, but most of these are much more readily available here than in their earlier form. The annual *Memorias* of the Secretaría de Guerra y Marina form the base of this collection, but the documents included run the gamut from official battle reports, through private letters from prominent military figures, to personal *hojas de*

*servicio*. There are internal documents of the armed forces, as well as external laws, regulations, and comments about them. There are treatises on strategy, manifestos by military heroes, Army and Navy budgets, a manual of arms, and a discussion of tactics for the infantry. And this short list only begins to catalogue the varied information included.

To be sure, the compilers have avoided political polemics against the armed forces, and the collection stresses official papers. Yet given the central role of the Army in nineteenth-century Venezuelan affairs, this material is invaluable. Moreover, before Pedro Grases and Manuel Pérez Vila went to the trouble to bring it together a student of Venezuelan history had to expend a great amount of time and energy searching out even the basic documents concerning the Army.

In sum, these volumes provide an outstanding collection of sources, some official and some unofficial, some published previously and some manuscript, on the history of Venezuela's armed forces. The *Presidencia de la República* deserves our gratitude for its support of this project.

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*Rómulo Gallegos y su tiempo*. By JUAN LISCANO. Caracas, 1969. Monte Ávila Editores. Colección Prisma. Pp. 250. Paper.

Juan Liscano, poeta y prosista venezolano, nos ofrece en su obra, *Rómulo Gallegos y su tiempo*, no solamente la producción literaria del famoso novelista, sino también la historia política y social de Venezuela, lo que hace de su libro una de las mejores aportaciones a la bibliografía galleguiana. El poeta Liscano piensa, a mi parecer, al igual que el filósofo español José Ortega y Gasset, que no nos encontramos en el aire, sino sobre los hombros de generaciones anteriores. Por esto estudia toda la historia de su nación anterior a Rómulo Gallegos, para conocer a fondo los problemas que le legaron, pues no es posible dictaminar sobre las diversas y complejas reacciones de un escritor, sin conocer a fondo la época que le tocó vivir. Frente a la solución de éstos es que se desarrolla su manera de ser y pensar.

El autor, por su condición de publicista y nacionalidad, se encuentra mejor documentado y preparado que cualquier otro investigador para penetrar en la historia literaria, política y sociológica de su patria. A través de las cuatro partes en que divide el libro, nos lleva de la mano para adentrarnos en el proceso de gestación de toda la labor literaria de Rómulo Gallegos. Desde el inicio, el lector se da cuenta de la perfecta compenetración entre el biógrafo y el biografiado.