

**Review / Reseña**

Darío, Rubén. *Obras completas*. Editores generales Daniel Link y Rodrigo Caresani. Tomo 9 (1912-1916). Volumen III. *La vida de Rubén Darío escrita por él mismo* (1915 [1912]); [“Historia de mis libros”] (1913); “El oro de Mallorca” (1913-1914). Edición crítica al cuidado de Diego Bentivegna. Sáenz Peña: Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, 2021.

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Given the fame that Rubén Darío obtained over his lifetime, an ample paper trail has been left behind in both serial publications and in the first and second editions of books, allowing us to study the poet’s work philologically, and of course, critically. This is the case for tome 9, volume III of the new collection of *Obras completas* which comprises a critical edition of three works: *La vida de Rubén Darío escrita por él mismo* (1915 [1912]), “Historia de mis libros” (1913), and “El oro de Mallorca” (1913-1914). The first of these is autobiographical, the second a biography of his three major works, and the third, unfinished, is a novelization of his life. The philology project of the editor of this volume, Diego Bentivegna, allows for ample alphabetically lettered footnotes, revealing variances between the versions of these texts published during Darío’s lifetime. The critical side of this edition requires 627 numbered endnotes providing historical and cultural information. Also contained within the volume are two rich appendices, including over one-hundred-and-fifty pages of related letters, poems, and other texts (451-513), and visual materials (518-560), making available to readers a

tranche of handwritten, and published documents from the period. The volume concludes with a bibliography of Darío's works as well as of works about his production (562-586). The closing section consists of an onomastic index (587-619).

The three biographical works contained in this volume of Darío's *Obras completas* are of major significance because Darío was the premier poet of that time, the influencer and figurehead of the literary movement called *modernismo*, which was different from the Catalanian architectural and the Brazilian literary movements of that name, as well as from Anglo-American "Modernism", which came after. Darío himself was conscious of spearheading a movement, to which he assigned a name, and he realized that his way of experimenting with language in his poetry and prose stimulated the evolution of both form and content of Spanish-language poetic expression. Even poets associated with our time, over a century after Darío's passing, openly admit their debt to the poet from León, Nicaragua. This was the case with the Mexican poet Octavio Paz, who went on to win the Nobel Prize in literature, and such is the case with Klokka poet Domingo de Ramos, who is presently adding a new dynamic to Peruvian poetry. To examine all of Darío's writings published in that time—fiction, poetry, journalism, and autobiographical pieces—is to understand the most powerful force that fed into that historical and cultural moment. Hence the importance of the entire *Obras completas* collection. The autobiographical writings in volume III, tome 9, in particular, constitute a useful font of the who's who of the literary establishment during Darío's time and also provide private details about some of the lives of contemporary Latin America and Spain's political elites. Poets and dictators equally sought out this Nicaraguan wunderkind of poetic expression.

The volume opens with a particularly insightful and complete introduction by the editor Diego Bientivenga (7-62), which he follows with a description of the philological method employed ("Nota filológica preliminar" (64-69)). The volume then turns to "The Life of Rubén Darío Written by the Author" (*La vida de Rubén Darío escrito por él mismo*) (76-254). The undated first edition of the book, released by Editorial Maucci in Barcelona, most likely in 1915, is the correct basis for philological analysis since all other editions were subsequent to it. In this section, editor Bientivenga includes excerpts of many of the chapters that had appeared prior in the periodical *Caras y Caretas* (1912), allowing for easy comparison. *La vida de Rubén Darío* is a substantial text, and it is also a valuable resource for scholars studying the life and work of this emblematic poet of Latin American letters.

Although there have been many editions of *La vida de Rubén Darío escrito por él mismo* over the course of the twentieth century, various were released with an incorrect title not imagined by its author, *Autobiografía*. The title assigned by the author, *La vida de Rubén Darío escrito por él mismo*, reproduces the edition that hurtled the autobiography into the intertextual fabric of Latin American literature. Since this is a text from 1915 there is no need for stemmatological or phylogenetic approaches, especially since the intent is not to organize a diverse array of manuscripts (such as was the case during the medieval times). The editor, Diego Bentivegna, could have opted for a copy-editing approach for checking and correcting for errors. There could have been some benefit to that, yet this is what has been done for some of the twentieth-century editions cited in the bibliography. What Bentivegna opted for was a philological approach that at the same time takes note of errata in the 1915 edition and also calls out variances between this edition and the 1912 periodical versions that frequently occurred, as Spanish was evolving from nineteenth- to twentieth-century standards. The text of *La vida de Rubén Darío escrito por él mismo* belongs to the community, to friends and scholars of Latin American literature, but so do the errata and variants that say a lot about Spanish and Argentine editors' conceptions of the book. Bentivegna furnishes footnotes sequenced by alphabetical letters, revealing variants with the earlier *Caras y Caretas* version.

The second part of the volume collects miscellany that has become known as "The History of My Books" (*La historia de mis libros*) (255-278). This segment was never published as a book, but as articles appearing on three separate dates in 1913 in the newspaper *La nación*, and then as an ensemble in the journal *Nosotros* in 1916 on the occasion of the poet's passing. This edition reproduces the original prose as it was divulged to 1913 readers in Buenos Aires. Few variances were worthy of mention, among the editions.

The third part of the volume is dedicated to segments of an autobiographical novel, "El oro de Mallorca", (pp. 279-326) that Darío was working on but never finished. "El oro de Mallorca" has a much more complicated story of versions. This edition is based on the sections appearing in *La nación* of Buenos Aires in 1913 and 1914 and is compared to *La Almudaina* edition published in Palma de Mallorca, with each *tiro* coming out in *La Almudaina* immediately after the corresponding appearance in Buenos Aires.

While the second and third sections dedicated to "The History of My Books" and "El oro de Mallorca" did not originate as books, as did *La vida de Rubén Darío*, editor Diego Bentivegna and his team treated the texts (from the periodical press) with the

same tenderness as *La vida*. Although “The History of My Books” and “El oro de Mallorca” represent much shorter sections of the volume; the treasure of having the “first editions” of them back-to-back with *La vida* will make a handy volume for researchers and aficionados alike. All the texts, presented here in organic form as an autobiographical tome, will become the standard reference for Darío’s life.

This editorial endeavor is of the highest caliber, and it will most urgently clear a path for those scholars interested in the relationship between Rubén Darío’s oeuvre, his perception of himself, and his artistic project, as a product of his time and still of interest in our time.