

To write, to tell, to keep: the diary of Santander in European exile (1829-1832)

Escrever, contar, guardar: o diário de Santander no exílio europeu (1829-1832)

Libertad Borges Bittencourt*

RESUMO

O propósito deste artigo é examinar o diário do general granadino Francisco de Paula Santander (1792-1840), um dos líderes da independência da Colômbia, escrito na primeira metade do século XIX. Dentre as temáticas que ele privilegia em seus escritos, optei por destacar suas reflexões sobre a situação política da Colômbia, bem como suas considerações sobre Bolívar. Os dois generais se desentenderam quanto ao modelo de governo a ser estabelecido nas regiões libertas do jugo espanhol, e esse dissenso levou à acusação de traição, prisão e condenação de Santander à morte. A pena foi comutada por Bolívar, substituída pelo exílio na Europa, e essa experiência como desterrado é narrada em seu diário.

Palavras-chave: Francisco de Paula Santander; Simón Bolívar; diário; exílio.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to examine the diary of the Granadine General Francisco de Paula Santander (1792-1840), one of the leaders of the independence of Colombia, written in the first half of the nineteenth century. Among the themes he favors in his writings, I chose to highlight his thoughts on the political situation in Colombia as well his notes about Bolivar. The two generals quarreled about the model of government for the regions which had gained independence from Spanish rule and this disagreement led to the arrest of Santander, his trial for treason, and his condemnation to death. The sentence was commuted by Bolivar, and replaced with exile in Europe. This experience is reported in his diary.

Keywords: Francisco de Paula Santander; Simon Bolivar; diary; exile.

In the period of consolidation of the desired project of Bolivarian unity, Gran Colombia, disagreement emerged between the founding fathers of independence in that part of South America. Among the points of discord, Francisco de Paula Santander opposed the liberator in defending a model of government which could guarantee the autonomy of Colombia.¹ Accused of

*Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG), Faculdade de História. libertadborges@yahoo.com.br

treason after the 1828 “September Conspiracy,” he was arrested and condemned to death. This was commuted to exile, and this stage profoundly marked his reflections of this period. He registered the experience of exile in a diary (Santander en Europa...), which he began to write on 27 August 1829, when he was released and embarked for Europe, and was finished on 17 July 1832, when he landed again in Santa Marta, as president elect.² He was appointed to this position even when absent, highlighting that he still personified values and political aspirations in his patria. During the nearly three years he spent in exile, single and in his forties, Santander, the *Man of Laws*, visited several countries in Europe and also went to the United States.

When dealing with diaries as a source of research it is fundamental to problematize the specificity of this approach. Reflecting on the challenges of memory and biography, Vavy Pacheco Borges (2004, p.58) highlights the importance of thinking about what the trajectory of a life means. Although I do not focus too much on the biography of the Granadine general Francisco de Paula Santander, companion of Simón Bolívar in the achievement of independence, this was the essential motivation of this research. More precisely, the writing of Santander (diary and letters) instigated me, in which he narrates his period of exile in Europe between 1829 and 1832. In this article I focus on his diary.

The source I examine consists of two volumes referring to Santander’s European diary. Virgilio Barco, editor of the volumes, highlights the glory which preceded the general and how his status as a political exile raised the interest of those in Europe who were informed or interested in the events and ideas of rebel America. This factor won him contacts with people in the cultural and political milieu. His reception was heightened by the revolutionary agitations in Europe, leading to sympathy to the American cause, of which he was considered a hero and victim. Santander did not fail to record the manifestations of this recognition.

In the preface of this publication, Mario Germán Romero emphasizes the importance of some diaries as a source of history, emphasizing the sobriety and distinction of the writing of the Granadine general in his exile. During his long European tour, it was evident how much Santander, also known in his country as the ‘Organizer of Victory,’ felt appreciated by being received by authorities and the honorable mentions he received personally and in newspaper articles. All this was carefully recorded, as if he was seeking to ratify the recognition of his *independentista* actions.

It is necessary to reference here a concept of Foucault, when the latter thought of the subject as constituted by subjectivating practices, which allow

someone to know themselves and to think of themselves as a subject, and also the discursive practices, which played the role of epistemic producers (Araujo, 2001, p.87-88). According to this conception, the question is how the subject can say something as a truth in itself, and how he comes to need to 'tell the truth.' In Santander's case, it was his trajectory from achieving power as vice-president until his public execration, when he was considered a traitor and expatriate, which led him to rework the past. In his exile he sought to reposition his trajectory, which for him was a moral imperative.

Perhaps because it was hidden for more than a century, Santander's diary unveiled aspects little known about the general, also allowing an approximation with this period when he was far from his native country. The selection of events which led to exile denotes his concern with recording the good use he made of his time. A time suggested as precious when he took care to learn about the functioning of political and social institutions, as if he was preparing for future tasks in the decision making institutions of his country. The accurate record of his activities reveals the concern of someone who was writing to be later the object of an authoritative reading.

Work with diaries requires a particular reading, since, according to Maria Teresa Cunha,

The action of the hand on paper, canvas, stone, and wherever else it is possible to leave traces, writing records, invents, and preserves always *more or less*, by *telling* many acts of human experience. As a tool of social use, writing can save from oblivion by fixing in time traces of the past and thus writing is constituted as a form of production of memory and as a result in an instrument in the construction of the past. The historian Roger Chartier notes that through writing, in its various supports, the "traces of the past, the remembrance of the dead, or the glory of the living" are established. This statement allows us to record the importance of the written text as an effective medicine against forgetfulness, capable of transcending the fugacity of life. (Cunha, 2009, p.251)

The condition of the public man distinguishes the writings of Santander and his repressed feeling in relation to those who had damaged the destinies of his homeland. Even though the diary was not published during his life, since his personal writings were kept in the private domain for more than a century, what can be observed is the formality of the writing and his concern with not centering his narrative on the picturesque aspects of what he saw and the contacts he made. These reports are concise, a pattern he rarely abandoned.

The valorization of this type of source was driven from within what are usually called the “cultural practices of the sensitive” (Cunha, 2009, p.252). The “memory of the role” is “a support which grants strength as a witness of an era and gives it eternity against the fatality of forgetfulness” (ibidem, p.253). Drawing on Beatriz Sarlo, Cunha reiterates that “two decades ago a *resurrection of the subject* was processed which highlighted a *duty of memory*” (ibidem, p.254). It is this purpose which led to the publication of Santander’s diary, a singular character which ended up being obfuscated by the historiographic consensus about Simón Bolívar, in the dispute for a space on the independence pantheon in South America from Spanish colonization.³

When he talked about his native Colombia and even Bolívar, Santander did this in a few brief lines and rarely expanded his comments. The choice he made for writing stripped of passions, even permeated by resentment, aware of his leading role, is perceptible. Referencing Santander’s diaries I refer to Philippe Artières about this question:

Why do we archive our lives? To respond to a social injunction. We have thus to maintain our lives well organized, put the black in the white, without lying, without jumping pages, without leaving blanks. *The abnormal are those without papers*. The dangerous individual is the man who escapes graphic control. We thus archive our lives, first, in response to the command ‘archive your live’ – and do this through multiple practices: keep your diary carefully and on a daily basis, where every night you examine your day; you preciously preserve some papers by placing them aside in a file, in a drawer, in a safe: these papers are your identity; therefore, write your autobiography, you spend your life clean, tell the truth. (Artières, 1998, p.3)

The Granadine general had a feeling of urgency to register his impressions. According to Artières, writing a diary, keeping papers, in short “archiving your own life is putting yourself in the mirror, it is contrasting the social image to the intimate image of oneself and in this way the archiving of the I is a practice of the construction of oneself and of resistance” (ibidem, p.3). This perspective is consistent with Santander’s writing in the diary, in which he reiterates the events of which he was a victim in the post-independence period.

Reflections about diaries emphasize that they can respond to the need for confession, justification, and even to invent new meanings. The diary considered here is consistent with the question of justification, since Santander

considers that he was wronged by Bolívar and his followers and during his journey he narrated the attempts he made for reparation and recognition. Furthermore, it is authoritative because Santander assumed a place of discourse legitimated by his singular actions in the War of Independence and the administration of New Granada. He wrote with the authority of someone who had made the history of independence and his European reception was warm because of his trajectory. The appeal of his writing is based on the recurrent question of the registration of truth and in the condition of the enunciation of an expatriate who fought against colonial oppression and who was stripped of his rights by his own peers. A question raised by Calligaris also must be reiterated, who, referencing Ariès, highlights:

Autobiographical writing implies a culture in which, for example, the individual, (whatever his social reference) situates his life or destiny above the community to which he belongs, in which he conceives his life not as the confirmation of rules and the legacies of tradition, but as an adventure to be invented. Or also a culture in which it is important for the individual to last, to personally survive in the memory of others – which happens when he begins to live his death as a tragedy, since the community being the great depository of life, guarantees all communities. (Calligaris, 1998, p.5)

Santander embodies this perspective. In the introduction to the volume referring to the diary it is mentioned that he collected documents stated to be authentic, which constituted his personal archive, and that he made known his desire that this would serve as a foundation for the history of his life and his public actions. His purpose was to reestablish what he emphasized as “the truth falsified by the calumnious interpretations” of his enemies. He expressed his will that the documentary *corpus* he gathered “serve as the base for the preparation of the definitive history of his activities as the founder of Colombian nationality, with 30 years of uninterrupted work in favor of his country” (Santander en Europa..., p.1). He was particularly proud of what he considered to be his heroic opposition “to the absolutist and dictatorial regime which annulled his efforts of 18 years toil in the war and in government” (ibidem, p.2). Here he once again subliminally compare his project for the nation with that of Bolívar, reiterating the justice of his proposal. In this way and with this zeal driving his personal and political itinerary, it was impossible for the smallest gesture to be lost in the mists of forgetfulness, for which reason he records the events in which he participated, so that one day he could share them.

Despite the different possible foci available, this article centers on Santander's thoughts about the political situation of Colombia during this period and about some personalities and events he highlights during the journey, especially Bolívar, his old comrade in the wars, and in the end his sworn enemy.

1829 – THE INAUGURAL EUROPEAN TRAJECTORY

Santander's journey in exile commenced on 27 August 1829, when he left prison in Cartagena headed for Porto Cabello, on the central coast of Venezuela, which he reached on 28 August. From there he departed with two companions and three servants for Hamburg, disembarking in the German city in October. He described the crossing of the Atlantic, a part he entitles *Sailing Diary*, writing as a header: "from Porto Cabello to Hamburg, in the sailing ship called Maria. F. P. Santander, Ezequiel Rojas, F. Evangelista González".

While still on the high seas, on 25 September he noted that it was the anniversary of the Bogotá Conspiracy. Santander began the European part of what he called the *Diary and Itinerary* noting that this would contain details which others would consider superfluous, but which he proposed to take note of due to curiosity and because not much was known in Colombia about Europe. This suggests that his project was to write a travel book and not an intimate diary, so in vogue in the nineteenth century.

He stressed the admiration which the people he met in Hamburg felt for him when he described to them some European cities and the geographic knowledge he had acquired in books. Throughout the diary he mentions the letters he received from various parts of Spanish America, other European countries, and the United States, allowing a glimpse of the extensive sociability network in which he shared.

His first reference to Bolívar was made on 23 October in a reception. Considered very young for the immensity of the tasks he had carried out in the fight for independence, some painters asked him if he would wear a military uniform for his portrait to be painted. Responding negatively, he was greeted with the cry "liberty, liberty" and in a reference to Napoleon, they said to him that "someday Bolívar would pay in Santa Helena for his current conduct."

On 27 October, when he presented a writer with a copy of the letter Bolívar sent him congratulating him on being re-elected as vice president and another copy of the letter he had sent to Congress asking for his freedom, the

writer was moved by this gift. By way of retribution the writer showed him the biography he had written about him. Flattered, Santander noted that he had insisted on correcting every detail, such as dates and place, reiterating that he had done this to “correct the errors with which foreigners frequently write our history.”

He reported that on the following day he read in the Parisian newspaper *Le Constitutionnel*, dated 22 October, news about his departure for Europe, in which he was referred to as the vice-president of Colombia and Bolívar called a dictator. On the 30th of the same month he also noted that a daily paper in Hamburg had mentioned him favorably. A political exile who had fought against the colonial metropolis and won, would certainly have attracted the sympathies which preceded him on his journey.⁴

The events of which he was a victim in his homeland were boldly recorded. On 7 November he noted: “Today it is one year since Urdaneta pronounced my death sentence, violating all the rights and laws of justice.” Nonetheless, both here and in other parts of the diary, he does not expand on his brief entries, recorded apparently to reiterate his condition as a wronged and involuntary exile. On 15 November he recorded that he had been a year since he had left Bogotá for the prison in Cartagena, emphasizing that on this day “he had said goodbye to his friends, his family, his idolized Nica and his dear Bogotá,” asking himself: “till when”? On 26 of the same month, he received from someone his letter to the government, demanding his liberty, published in German and Spanish.

In the diary various references are made to the extensive sociability network which preceded him, which contributed greatly to the important contacts he made in the various cities he visited. On 11 December he mentioned articles deploring his suffering, stressing that he had read translations of journalistic publications from New York against the Bolívar dictatorship. Various European and US newspapers were giving important space to the post-independence developments in Spanish America.

On 19 December a Frankfurt newspaper reported a revolutionary movement in Colombia. On 26, Santander recorded his impressions of these events, certainly waiting for more secure information about their developments. He emphasized that he had read in *Le Constitutionnel*, *The Times* and the *Courier* that the insurrection had begun on 12 September and “did not signify any risk to the government.”

The road to Paris passed through Belgium, from where he wrote on 17 December that he had read that an attempt at revolution had failed in Venezuela,

after the defeat of a similar attempt in Colombia. The same day he read in another newspaper a letter from Bolívar “begging” that efforts be taken that he not be nominated president, but rather *generalíssimo* of the army. Santander wrote that the letter was permeated “with other foolish considerations of which Bolívar was stubborn about,” in his view “with the purpose of hiding his ambition for an absolute and perpetual mandate.”

At this time the Parisian newspaper *Le Constitutionnel* published a reserved circular from the French police ministry, ordering that Santander be watched closely and rigorously as soon as he reached the country. In the final notes related to this day Santander transcribed an extract from an article published in the newspaper and dated 20 January:

We read in *Journal de la Meuse* that a confidential circular was sent to the monks of the district, alerting them about the imminent arrival of the American general Santander, asking them to keep watch on all hostelrys in which he might stay, warning them about the seditious meetings which his presence in the country could create. According to this newspaper the inhabitants of the countryside do not even know the name of this person who has imposed this ridiculous terror on the ministry. Readers of the newspaper only know that he is at this moment in Hamburg, but they cannot image how he can represent something so alarming to the tranquility of France...

Santander wrote on 20 January that *Le Constitutionnel* in Paris had also transcribed an article from a Brussels newspaper, notifying his arrival in the city. The same day he received a pamphlet printed in Panamá in 1828, with the title “The anguish of Colombia”, which positioned itself against the behavior of Bolívar. On 29 January, he wrote that English newspapers gave information about the actions of Páez, who was fighting for the autonomy of Venezuela. A public act had been held in Caracas, on 26 November, in which separation from Colombia was demanded, since the demonstrators were afraid of the establishment of a monarchical government. The following day Santander noted that the fear in Venezuela was that General Bolívar would be crowned.

Santander emphasized the divergences between his group and the one led by Bolívar and marked his position. On 2 February he sent correspondence, questioning a letter published by *Courier Français* from his opponents with the purpose of “discrediting him with his European friends of true and rational liberty.” He did not passively accept that his image would continue to be denigrated by Bolívar’s supporters, who were certainly concerned with Santander’s

actions in Europe and the versions he would present of the events which led to his arrest in his own country and finally to exile.

1830 – THE CARTOGRAPHY OF REVERENCE

Santander entered French territory on 13 February, having been informed by the government that it would grant him asylum as long as his behavior merited it. He was also warned not to involve himself with the parties which were agitating the country and to refuse any public demonstrations, “such as triumphs and ovations he might receive”; otherwise he would be obliged to leave the country. The Granadine general wrote about this:

I answered that the government’s proposal was just, and that I hoped not to cause something like this, since I would behave as I had behaved in the dominions of Denmark, Prussia and the Low Countries, where the authorities had not been involved with me, and that whatever my conduct and political opinions in my own country, I knew well what I could do, both in France and any other country (Valenciennes, 13 February).

He arrived in Paris on 17 February. In his first trip through the city, he described in a rapt manner what he saw and reported what he had read in various newspapers, that the insurrection was continuing in Venezuela. He also read about the awarding of laurels to the president of the United States in Colombia on 25 September 1828; a medal “to perpetuate the memory of the redemption of Bolívar”, he criticized. He wrote that he had received visits and letters from illustrious Colombians offering their services. On 19 September he highlighted that the newspapers announced his arrival in a Paris “in satisfactory terms,” some even speculating that he intended to settle in the city.

On 22 February he received a letter from Jamaica, dated 21 December, which together with news about his family and friends, detailed the events in Caracas on 25 November, questioning the authority of Bolívar to proclaim the federation. He made no comments about these events, as if they proved his conceptions to be correct. Instead he only stated that he would try to publish in Paris the decisions of the Council of Caracas about his condemnation and imprisonment.

Santander mentioned that he had been presented to numerous famous people, such as the principal editor of *Revue Encyclopédique* and General Lafayette. On 2 March he received letters from Benjamin Constant criticizing

Bolívar's conduct, and on 4 March he received a letter from London with an article from the *Morning Herald* about his cause in Bogotá, a text which he considered did him justice. His self-proclaimed modesty often ceded to the praise he received, especially in relation to how he was distinguished in a foreign country, which seemed to refer to his most representative work: the struggle for American independence and the autonomy of Colombia. In the atelier of a well-known sculptor Santander wrote that the artist had a reverent attitude to him; saying that he would make a statue of Santander because he took pleasure from working with the images of great men.

He received a project for an ecclesiastic code for Peru on 9 March, having written that he would expand on the means of promoting an increase in social and commercial relations between Europe and the Americas. Pondering the appointment of a commission to resolve the errors which, he stressed, "Europe in general suffers in relation to the state, the situation, and resources of the different nations of our continent." He also highlighted that he observed much curiosity in relation to him, and that various people came to listen to him or see him, without even directing themselves at him.

On 12 March the newspapers mentioned the letter sent by General Páez to General Bolívar and to the authorities in Venezuela, about the purpose of dissolving the central union. Santander wrote that a duke, who had just arrived from Bogotá, had criticized the situation in the country, saying that the government was in the hands of five or six people and that the opposition was incipient, the mass of the population was passive, and there were no political conditions to establish a republican government in that scenario.

On 2 April he celebrated his anniversary. Saying that he was very sentimental, he stated that he had written again to his family. On 13 April he read Bolívar's message to Congress and his proclamation, making the following comment:

I wrote a memorial with the date of yesterday to the Liberator President General Bolívar, asking him to print the case which had been made against me in Bogotá, in relation to the conspiracy of 25 September 1828 and letter I wrote from Bocachica [where he was imprisoned] on 13 December, refuting the unjust sentence from the commandant of Bogotá. I took this measure due to the message which the President sent on 20 January to Congress. This memorial is being sent through the intermediation of Senhor Palácio, who is the agent of the Colombian government here. (Paris, 14 April)

He emphasized that everyone asked him with great interest for his opinion of the possible removal of General Bolívar. However, Santander makes not reference to his responses to these questions. On 22 April he described a great stir among the editors of *Le Constitutionnel* about the political agitation in Colombia and “the state of civilization in South America for federative governments.” On 25 he stated that the daily newspapers reported the new constitution of Colombia, which seem to have kept the government centralized. He wrote:

I was with General Lafayette, invited by him to discuss reconciliation with Bolívar. I explained to him the origin and the development of our enmity, the persecution I suffered, the outrages, and my unjust condemnation; I told him that Bolívar was vindictive and proud, and that in my current disgrace I should not neither abate myself nor humiliate myself, and that with these principles he could use me as much as seem convenient and opportune to him. (Paris, 6 May)

In relation to this question, he emphasized that nothing was resolved. Later, he made the following assertion about this question:

they were talking with me about the projected reconciliation with Bolívar. I told them decidedly that on my part the reconciliation could be made under the following conditions: 1) that the political regime in Colombia would be republican and partially federative; 2) that General Bolívar, in good faith, would agree to this and govern without privileging any parties and in conformance with the law; 3) that all the outrages and persecutions I suffered would be remedied. On the other hand, I cannot commit myself to anything, because that would mean humiliation and debasement, unworthy of me and prejudicial to the welfare of my homeland. (Paris, 7 May)

One further meeting was recorded with General Lafayette and with important Colombians on 13 May, when it was decided that the former would write to Bolívar asking for a reconciliation between the two of them, though “without offending, even minimally, the honor and respect” of Santander, “which now more than ever needed to be preserved.” The entries indicate a greater frequency of information about Bolívar and Colombia, which allowed him to follow the institutional crisis which was underway. On 17 May he stated that he had read various public papers from Caracas critical of Bolívar.

On 1 June he began the preparations for a trip to London, where he arrived on 8 June. From there he wrote his longest reflection on the situation in Colombia and Venezuela, repeating his criticisms of Bolívar:

There I heard of Bolívar's new farce in Bogotá in April and read some public documents from Bogotá. In summary there was a movement in Casanare in favor of the Venezuela pronouncement, for which reason the principal neighbors of Popayán sent a petition to Congress, dated 29 March, stating that it was necessary to cede to the nature of things and the impulse of public opinion, forming a confederation to prevent war with Venezuela, which the Granadines did not want to do this because the Venezuelans should not be considered, according to the principles of public law, as factions, since a large dissident part of a state which had the means to support their decisions could not be treated like this. They conclude by asking for the convocation of a Granadine congress and the adoption of a federal regime which is desired on a daily basis by people with an imperious need. Another document signed by General Obando in Bogotá expresses equal feeling and talks of the effervescence in the capital. Based on all of this the provisional government of Bogotá (D. Caycedo, Osorio, Márquez and Herrán), or instigated by Bolívar, who saw that the opinion was decided in favor of the Venezuela pronouncement and the federation, sent a message to the Congress on 15 April inviting it to dissolve and to meet in a new convention in New Granada. This produced a great altercation in Congress when García Del Rio and De Francisco called the provisional government revolutionary and traitors. Nevertheless, the ministers of England, Brazil, and the United States had sent a note to the government, without the interest of intervening in domestic affairs and without being able to appreciate the reasons for the message of the government to Congress, declaring that any secession of Colombian territory would impose on them the duty to withdraw, taking their functions to be finished and that any treaties with Colombia on the part of their respective governments would be considered invalid. This scandalous note produced its effect: the Council declared that it would preserve national integrity and the Council of State proclaimed Bolívar as president, with the debates in the Chamber being suspended. Bolívar returned to his mandate. (London, 26 June).

Even lamenting Colombian political events, he wrote on 1 June to the English philosopher and jurist Jeremias Bentham, asking permission to visit him, and received an invitation from the latter for a meeting on 3 June, the end of which Santander transcribed in his diary: "It is very notable and honorable

for me that this scholar, respected in general in the educated world and leader of the enlightened Radical Party in England, ended his letter with these words: "With all the respect which your fame inspires in me, dear sir, I am yours. Jeremy Bentham" (London, 3 July).

Bentham was described by Santander as an old man of more than 80, happy, short, fat, with grey hair that reached his back; he dressed modestly in an old fashioned manner, without a tie or any ornament. Santander observed that the latter, due to his advanced age, forgot some names, but "he had vast talents and some vanity." They walked in the small garden and Santander was shown the house in which the celebrated poet Milton had lived, which now belonged to Bentham and where a friend of General Miranda lived. They spoke about Colombia and Bolívar, and Santander considered the Englishman's opinions to be liberal. The latter told him that no tyrant existed who had not been defeated and that he expected that Bolívar would not be an exception to this rule consoling to liberty.

On 7 July Santander's request for a visa for Russia was denied, which led him to go to Holland. Certainly this refusal was due to his declared republican sympathies. He reported that an Amsterdam newspaper had announced his arrival in the city on 21 July, also stating that Bolívar had left Bogotá for Cartagena, having decided to abandon Colombia. On 23 July the newspapers published new details about Bolívar's withdrawal from public business and his departure for Cartagena in the middle of May to sail to Europe. Santander wrote nothing more about this and continued to report local contacts.

The first entry for 7 August remembers the eleventh anniversary of the emblematic Battle of Boyacá, in Colombia, which occurred on 1819, when the troops commanded by Bolívar defeated the Spanish. He reached Berlin on 16 August and in a visit to a museum in the city met Alexandre Humboldt, highlighted that he had been the subject "of the most honorific expression and particular attention" from him. The Baron stated that he had realized that General Bolívar was an obstacle to liberty in Colombia, and that he considered absurd the Bolivian constitution. He also said that Santander had acted in the political business of Colombia in a manner suitable to a constitutional and honored magistrate.

Also emphasized was the first anniversary of his embarkation in the Porto Cabello for Europe, which occurred on 27 August, "happy to leave the imprisonment to which I had unjustly been condemned, despite the fact that I was being separated from my homeland for the first time." In one of the coaches

in which he travelled there was an officer from the Prussian army who thought he looked like a Spaniard, which led Santander to note flattered:

To my answer that I was no longer one, because my country was an independent state and called Colombia, they asked me several questions about our army, the way of fighting war, and, particularly about Bolívar; I sought to be moderate about the political conduct of our Liberator and praised his military conduct; the officer answered that irrespective of what I had said there were important men in Colombia who were opposed to the political conduct of Bolívar, which to him seemed doubtful whether or not they were without ambition. My answer was reduced to saying that in effect he had personal enemies and enemies of his political principles, and that time would say with justice which was right. The officer named Sucre as being opposed to Bolívar and, not remembering my name, said these precise words: "There is another general who was president of Colombia when Bolívar was in Peru who they say demonstrated great talent and many services, and who positioned himself completely against the ideas of Bolívar, as he supported the laws of his country." This praise made me flush, but I did not reveal myself. However, my servant, in a stop to change horses shortly afterwards, revealed who I was, and the officer paid me many flattering compliments. (Prussia, 27 August)

This episode provided him a better place in the coach, since the officer told the other passengers who he was and a Prussian gentleman, who he discovered later was a municipal councilor, made him sit by his side and they talked about Prussia and Colombia. Reaching Saxony he wrote than in a library, to please a worker there, he had to leave the signature of General Bolívar from a letter from 1818, giving an idea of how much the news about the independence struggles in America were known in Europe and the interest which American dignitaries attracted on the old continent.

On 10 September he reported the second year of the year of the handing over of the government to Bolívar, and on 13 September he presented a person he met with two books printed in the Parisian *Revue Encyclopédique* about Colombia and Bolívar. These publications certainly met the demands of an interested public in a Europe also convulsed by revolutions and for whom the American example was emblematic.

On 23 September he wrote about the confirmation of the news announced by the *Augsburg Gazette* about the death of the meritorious General Sucre, one of the leaders of independence and ally of Bolívar. Santander wrote: "It seems

that the long spoken about counter-revolution of Venezuela in favor of Bolívar was reduced to miserable attempts suffocated by the government.”

He also recorded in his diary the second anniversary of the revolution of Bogotá, on 25 September, and on the same day travelled to Rome. On 7 November he noted that it had been two years since his unjust death sentence had been pronounced. In Florence on 10 November he went to the ball of the Grand-Duke, with whom he talked about Colombia. Suggesting the idea of prolonging his stay while he waited for more clarity about the situation in his country, Santander noted that that the Duke told him that he had met with Iturbide, “who had the madness of returning to Mexico”. Santander did not mention this, but implicit in Iturbide’s return to Mexico, for whose independence he had fought and which he even governed, was his execution. On the 15th of the same month he remembered that two years previously he had left Bogotá as an exile “for being a friend of liberty,” abandoning friends, family, goods and his homeland. On 22 November he mentioned the receipt of a letter from Bogotá and Cartagena, giving the sad news about the civil war which was tearing through the nation.

He restarted his trip to Rome and the Pontifical States, which he reached on 8 December. He described in detail the monuments of antiquity, the Vatican, the Palatine Hill and other historic places, based on informative prospectuses, as he himself wrote. On 11 December he recorded that that day the funeral of the pope (Pius VIII –1829-1830) had commenced, to which he went. On 30 December he received a packet of newspapers from Bogotá, referring to the month of October, which very much “saddened him because of the bad luck of his country.”

1831 – THE DECISIVE YEAR – THE RECOVERY OF HIS POLITICAL RIGHTS

Santander received an invitation to a reception in the house of Jerome Bonaparte, Prince of Montfort, on 18 January. On 2 February, after hearing the cannon of Sant’Angelo announcing the election of a new pope, he joined the crowd assembled outside the Quirinal Palace, where the choice of Cardinal Cappellari was announced, a 74 year old Venetian, who would take the name of Gregory XVI. He followed the ceremonies related to the latter’s consecration during the following days.

On 5 February Carnival began in Rome. Santander noted its characteristics, appearing at the coronation of the pope in St. Peter's Basilica the following day. On 11 February he recorded that Carnival had been suspended due to the beginning of the revolution in the Papal states. The garrison of Rome was increased, but the routine remained calm in the city. With few important contacts, different from what had happened in France and England, on 24 February he resumed his trip to Paris.

On 1 March he, in Florence he read in *Journal du Commerce*, a report dated 21 February that Bolívar had died close to Santa Marta on 17 December 1830. He laconically commented: "A loss for independence." On 2 March he received a letter from Cartagena, dated 5 January 1831, confirming the report.

After spending a short time in Milan and Switzerland, he restarted his trip back to Paris. On 2 April he noted that it was the day of his patron saint and his own birthday. After this the intensification of epistolary exchanges is perceptible. On 21 April he visited Humboldt, who approved his decision to remain in Europe. He wrote an article about this decision for the Parisian daily papers, and on 15 April he sent a letter to the Congress of Colombia asking for case and his letter to Bolívar to be published. On 23 he stated that an article he had written justifying his decision not to return at that moment to Colombia had been published in *Le Constitutionnel*.

On 29 April he received a letter from New York, dated 31 March, saying that there had started in Colombia "a reaction in favor of the Constitutional regime." He returned to London on 23 May. There he reported some meetings and on 13 June received letters from Cartagena and Jamaica, telling him about the capitulation and fall of Urdaneta, who had governed Colombia. His network of sociability kept him informed about the decisive questions in his homeland, and he seemed to be awaiting political developments to return. He made a short trip to Scotland, reaching Glasgow on 18 July, also visiting Ireland, before returning to London on 1 August. On 19 August he returned to Paris, from where he sent on 25 August a forceful letter to the government of Bogotá, asking for the publication of his case, sent after the events of 25 September 1828.

After sending letters to Bogotá, Cartagena and New York, on 27 September his principal purpose was achieved. On 19 June he received Colombian newspapers with the publication of the decree which restored his political rights, "removed by the sentence of 7 November 1828, in the most honorable terms." Given these developments he withdrew the petition he had sent to the Colombian government.

On 3 September he received a letter suggesting his presence in the United States and noted that the *Daily Advertiser* referred to him “in an eminently honorable manner.” The political future of Santander seemed evident when, after strong resistance when he arrived in France, he was received by King Louis Filipe. In relation to this meeting, he wrote:

I was presented to the king in his palace of Neuilly by Count Saint Maurice; I went with a complete military uniform, and the king, the queen, and Mme. Adelaida, the king’s sister, asked me different question about the geography of Colombia and its political situation. The king told me that we should not fear any attack from Spain, for which it would be necessary to form a government that would inspire confidence in Europe and maintain public order. (Paris, 16 September)

He began the final stage of his journey on 18 September, headed towards the United States, reaching New York on 10 November. This stage of the journey was described briefly in a single paragraph, writing that he embarked on 22 September and landed on 9 November, when they anchored at the entrance to New York bay. It was a trip of 32 days with contrary winds and storms until close to Newfoundland. For the rest of the year he laconically recorded meetings and visits, indicating only that he was awaiting the outcome of internal struggles in Colombia to return to his country.

1832 – RETURNING TO THE INTERRUPTED PROJECT

Santander was presented to Joseph Bonaparte, Count of Survilliers, who lived in New Jersey, on 9 March, and also visited Philadelphia and Washington. In the US capital he visited the Senate on 27 March. In a meeting with parliamentarians he observed: “We spoke about events in Colombia, and having been asked for the principal reason for these episodes, I answered that it was the total ignorance of the people and the immoderate ambition of the leader is what led to the war of independence.” His resentment did not cool even after the death of Bolívar.

Indicating the importance he had achieved as vice-president of Colombia and future possibilities, on 29 March he was received by President Jackson and heard from him protestations of friendship and desires that the country would unite and enjoy peace and liberty. Santander was impressed by the frank manners and lack of etiquette of the president and with the fact that he only spoke

in English, an observation that he stressed more than once about the US. On 31 March he met again with the senators and reported:

Much was spoken about Colombia and Bolívar, and I took advantage of this to inform Clay and Calhoun about the projects for monarchy which currently existed in Europe and the steps being taken in relation to this. When Calhoun was talking about Bolívar, he asked me if he had a passion for money. I answered no, because his two dominant passions were: glory and power. Clay said: "so there are three, since he was very much in love with the fair sex." All the people I spoke with showed a strong desire for Colombia to establish itself as some form of union. (Washington, 31 March)

Santander went to Baltimore with a heavy cold, and on the return from Philadelphia remained in bed from 13-22 April. On 29 April, recovered, he visited Joseph Bonaparte again, on his return to New York. After having been elected deputy to the Bogotá Convention when he was in the United States, on 12 May he received news of his nomination as president of New Granada by the same convention, though he showed no surprise or emotion as if this was the natural outcome of the events he had waited so long for. Nor did he make any comment about this. Joaquín Acosta and Honorato Rodríguez, the emissaries of the government, arrived from Bogotá. On 21 May he noted that the US government had congratulated him on his election to the presidency and offered him a warship in Pensacola, from where he would embark for Colombia on 20 June. Santander refused what he considered as a "petty offer," certainly hoping for transport most conducive to the position he held.

In the following days he did not mention this question again; he only reported visitors and on 20 June, wrote: "Preparations for my return to New Granada and farewell to friends and acquaintances." On 23 June he sailed for Santa Marta with Acosta and his wife and Honorato Rodríguez. Nothing else was written, and 17 July he wrote that he had arrived "in Santa Marta at 7:30 in the morning and began his career in New Granada."

A singular source, Santander's exile diary unveils the determination of this unique person and how much American events were a subject of importance in European newspapers. The support and consideration he achieved in Europe and the United States corroborated the purpose of recovering his image, stained by the label of traitor imposed by Bolívar and his sympathizers in a paradigmatic moment of the definition of the direction of the government in his homeland free of the Spanish yoke. At the moment when the power held by Bolívar was

slipping away, Santander's name was indicated by the fact that he could give Colombia governability. Exile fed the resentment of a man who had lost his freedom in the name of the republican ideal, which he did not give up.

The interregnum between his exile and triumphant return, when he was chosen as president in his absence, indicates that he never lost sight of the possibility of his return to power. Santander wrote comments in his diary, showing that Bolívar would lose support by insisting on a model of government which ignored the strong regional interests. Santander understood this precociously and paid a high price at a time when Bolívar's group was not prepared to rupture the fragile bonds which held together the project of the unity of Gran Colombia.

In exile Santander enjoyed important recognition. His significant network of sociability was further expanded and he had access to important members of various social and political groups during his journey. Mentioning this reception he appeared to reiterate the weight of his biography, constructed on the toils of the war of independence and in government. He was made a general of the colonial army when he was still very young, thanks to his bravery, and his experience in the administration of what is now Colombia, where he was vice-president, was also emblematic.

In exile he knew how to plan each step and make each meeting reverberate, aiming to support his purpose. His narrative reiterates the ties with his homeland, thus his interest in the publication of the case against him in the so-called 'September conspiracy.' The diary also unveiled the way he acted in exile, and showed that Santander knew how to take advantage of the contacts he established.

As Norbert Elias emphasized: "To know someone, it is necessary to know the primordial anxieties which he wants to satisfy" (Elias, 1995, p.13). To understand Santander based on his diary of exile, it is necessary to reference his struggle to reposition his biography as an intransigent defender of a "partial federation," as he stated, respected the autonomy of Colombia and Venezuela, which led to his falling out with Bolívar, defender of the indissoluble unity of Gran Colombia. While Santander has been forgotten in the dispute among memorable *independentista* leaders, in that short period he attracted recognition and glory, as highlighted by the writings in his diary. Bolívar, in disgrace, fell into ostracism, until his name was raised to the pantheon of great heroes some decades after his death. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing Santander's intention, which he did not give up, in the certainty that he was pointing to the

most suitable path to the political future of the region. History showed that his purpose was the correct one.

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NOTES

¹ After the independence of Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and Ecuador in 1819, Santander, “the Man of Laws,” also known as the “Organizer of Victory,” was appointed vice-president, by the Department of Cundinamarca, the name then adopted for New Granada, currently Colombia, and took responsibility for the government while Bolívar led the war against the Spanish. After the establishment of the unitary political regime in 1821, he was confirmed as vice-president of Gran Colombia.

² The eight notebooks containing the manuscripts which composed his diaries were only divulged in 1948, when exhibited for the first time at the headquarters of the National Museum of Colombia. The diaries were first published with the sponsorship of the Colombian *Banco de la República* in 1963. The edition I use, in two volumes (one corresponding to the period 1829-1832 and the other to 1830-1832), is from 1989, published by *Biblioteca de la Presidencia de la Republica* in Bogotá. Part of this editorial project are two more volumes containing the correspondence of Santander during the same period, and

one volume with the commented index of the people and places the general visited during his time as a political exile in Europe. There are, thus, five volumes. I have translated the quotes used in this article.

³ It is important to highlight that this is not an outdated question in the game of power, aiming at defining the place of the generals who led the independence struggles in Spanish America. The deceased Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez Frías insisted on reiterating Santander's betrayal of Bolívar, feeding a disagreement which gave rise to the rupture between them, the result of which was the extradition of Santander.

⁴ Santander was in contact with the editor of *El Correspondiente*, who gave him reports from US newspapers. He mentioned the visit on 6 November of an illustrious Hamburger, who showed him books about Colombia and Guatemala, a work about Mexico and recently released works in London about the Americas, as well as maps of Colombia, made by Humboldt, which he considered excellent. He was impressed because everyone communicated publically in French.