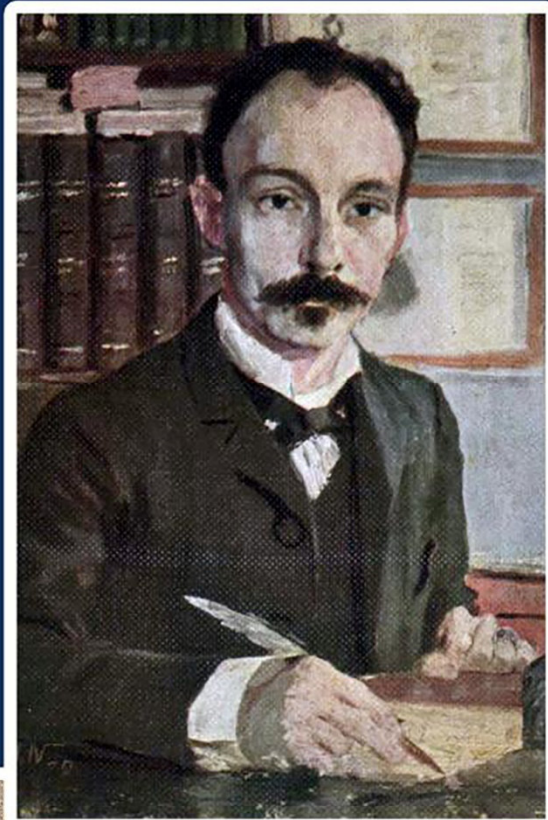


Fuentes y enfoques del periodismo de José Martí en el mensuario

La América



Alejandro Herrera Moreno

Referencia: Alejandro Herrera Moreno: "Un mastodonte". En: *Fuentes y enfoques del periodismo de José Martí en el mensuario La América* (pp. 52-55). Edición Fundación Cultural Enrique Loynaz, Impresión Editora Búho, Santo Domingo, República Dominicana, 2018.

Un mastodonte

En *La América* de agosto de 1883, bajo el título: “Un mastodonte”¹ publica José Martí la noticia del hallazgo de los restos de un animal prehistórico en la localidad de Manlius, al este de la ciudad de Siracusa en Nueva York. Esta misma noticia la encontramos en el periódico *The Sun* de New York del mes anterior, bajo el nombre: “The bones of a mastodon”.² El cotejo de ambos textos indica que muy probablemente Martí obtuvo la información de esta fuente o de otros medios de la prensa norteamericana, donde la noticia se repitió en esos meses con el mismo contenido.

Las similitudes se observan desde el principio en la localidad del hallazgo, las distancias y la ubicación en período y época geológicas. La introducción martiana dice: “Acaban de sacar de la tierra en la ciudad de Manlius, a ocho millas de Siracusa, un animal del período post plioceno de la época terciaria”.³ Claramente, está construida a partir de la traducción libre de partes de la fuente cuando dice: “Syracuse, July 21. – Yesterday workmen, who are digging gravel from a pit in the town of Manlius eight miles east of this city [...] came upon the remains of an extinct animal”. “The animal lived in the post pliocene period of the tertiary age”.⁴

Tras esta presentación, Martí amplía la noticia en su contexto al añadir: “Tan grande es, que es más grande que el famoso mastodonte de Newburgh”.⁵ Antes de 1883, Newburgh tenía dos referencias de hallazgos de mastodontes, una en 1845 con un ejemplar de 20 pies de alto (del cual mostramos en esta página el anuncio de su exhibición⁶) y otra de 1801, con un ejemplar de 12 pies de alto. Por la comparación de tallas, Martí se refiere a este último. En tal ocasión, los científicos y curadores: Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827), operador del Museo de Filadelfia en el momento, y su hijo Rembrandt Peale (1778-1860), excavaron juntos un esqueleto casi completo, que fue montado cuidadosamente convirtiéndose en una de las exposiciones históricas naturales del museo más populares de la época. Dado que ambos eran, además, artistas dejaron constancia gráfica del suceso, el padre con un famoso óleo conocido como “La exhumación del mastodonte”⁷ y el hijo con esquemas científicos muy detallados de la osamenta y el animal completo.⁸

“Acaban de sacar de la tierra en la ciudad de Manlius, a ocho millas de Siracusa, un animal del período post plioceno de la época terciaria. Tan grande es, que es más grande que el famoso mastodonte de Newburgh”.

GREAT AMERICAN Mastodon!!

Now Exhibiting at the Hall

The SKELETON of this gigantic animal was discovered in the month of August last on the farm of Mr. Nathaniel Brewster, in the town of NEWBURGH, Orange Co. N. Y., 6 miles west of the village of Newburgh, and about 100 rods north of the Newburgh and Cohecton Turnpike, imbedded in a marl pit, lying from 5 to 8 feet below the surface.

DIMENSIONS OF THE SKELETON.

Length in straight line, 20 feet; by the curve, 29; of Tusks, 10 1-2. Height of Head, 12 feet; Back, 10; Width of Pelvis, 6. The Tusks were found entire in the Skull, when first discovered, but fell to pieces after exposure. Their place has been supplied by artificial ones which are fac-similes of the original.

NO ANIMAL LIVING APPROACHES THIS IN SIZE.

THE Weight of the Bones is 2002 lbs. and the weight of the Animal when living 20,000 POUNDS.

More than 5000 Ladies and Gentlemen visited this Skeleton while exhibiting in the village of Newburgh.

17. This Skeleton will be exhibited for a FEW DAYS only, in this State, as the Proprietors intend to exhibit it in other places in this Country before going to Europe. (JAMES BARRETT is in attendance at all hours, to answer the inquiries of visitors.)

Para continuar, como se observa en el próximo cuadro, Martí traduce libremente las opiniones del geólogo norteamericano John Farnham Boynton (1811-1890) sobre este nuevo hallazgo y comenta su participación en el desenmascaramiento en 1869 del fraude del gigante de la aldea de Cardiff. En esta aldea del condado Onondaga, en Nueva York, un comerciante mandó a tallar una figura humana de más de tres metros de altura a partir de un bloque de yeso, para luego enterrarla y que fuera descubierta por un constructor de pozos como si se tratara de un hallazgo paleontológico. Más adelante, donde la fuente original compara el peso del mastodonte hallado con el de Jumbo (1860-1885)⁹, Martí usa lo que podría considerarse como una equivalencia en la traducción y sustituye el nombre del animal por una frase cargada de información, que le permite a su vez presentar a un personaje de la actualidad que no está en la noticia original: el empresario y artista circense norteamericano Phineas Taylor Barnum (1810-1891). Tanto Jumbo como Barnum tienen varias referencias en la obra martiana.

José Martí

“Y tan genuino, que el profesor Boynton, que descubrió y probó el fraude del gigante de Cardiff, asegura que éstas de ahora, que ya se disputan los museos, son las reliquias reales de un mastodonte que debió tener quince¹⁰ pies de alzada, y pesar como un tercio más que el formidable elefante a quien pasea entre cadenas por Europa y América ese hombre de genio que lo ha puesto todo en casas de fieras y circos, Barnum”. [p. 119]

The Sun

“Professor Boynton, who exposed the Cardiff giant fraud, says that these are the relics of a mastodon which must have been fully fourteen feet high and probably weighed a third more than Jumbo”.

Aprovechando la presentación de una celebridad del mundo del entretenimiento, añade: “-La tierra, que da dolores, da a quien los alivia. El que descubre medios de atraer y distraer a los demás- es un benefactor de los hombres. La alegría es el vino del espíritu”.¹¹ Retoma entonces el asunto de su noticia y traduce, esta vez reduciendo (al eliminar el nombre y cargo de quien ofrece los datos), para comentar acerca de la incertidumbre de la especie encontrada, a la vez que ofrecer datos de la longitud del colmillo y el peso de las muelas, como se indica en el siguiente cuadro.

José Martí

“No se está aún bien seguro de la especie del animal descubierto. Mastodonte lo creen unos, y mamut otros. El colmillo, es tal que mide once pies. Una de sus muelas pesa veinticinco libras”. [p. 119]

The Sun

“Professor Brown, instructor in natural history at Syracuse university, thinks the bones are those of a mammoth, rather than a mastodon”. “The tusk, he say-, must have been at least eleven feet long”. “A huge molar, weighing about twenty-five pounds [...] has been brought to this city”.

En lo que continúa, nuevamente incorpora Martí elementos que no están en la fuente, pero que son parte de sus lecturas de las obras del naturalista inglés Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882) durante sus viajes en el Buque de Su Majestad Beagle,¹² posiblemente sus notas sobre mamíferos fósiles en la “Zoología del viaje del HMS Beagle” que trata ampliamente sobre el mastodonte. Con ello, enriquece la narración y añade sus valoraciones sobre este trascendental científico:

Grandes son los esqueletos que se han descubierto antes de ahora en la América del Norte; y los que Darwin cuenta que vio en aquel fructífero viaje que, con singular modestia y llaneza, cuenta en los dos libros que escribió como cronista científico de la expedición inglesa, a través de marea lejanos y de extrañas tierras. Leer aquel libro, sincero, ordenado, más lleno de deseos de saber que de generoso calor humano, más preocupado del modo con que los insectos vuelan que del modo con que vuelan las almas- es como entrar por los espacios vastos de

aquel maravilloso cerebro, a cuya implacable lealtad no faltó acaso, para poner a su dueño entre los seres casi divinos de la tierra, -más que el don de amor, lo que hace fecundo al genio.¹³

Con la mención a Darwin enlaza los últimos datos de su noticia, esta vez sobre la magnitud del esqueleto del animal descubierto, en comparación con las observaciones del científico inglés: “Darwin vio en Buenos Aires, restos de gigantescos animales: pero dicen que este que acaba de descubrirse en Manlius, es esqueleto tan grande que figura entre los más notables conocidos”.¹⁴ La fuente solo dice: “The tusk, he says, indicates one of the largest skeletons that has ever been exhumed”.¹⁵ Y con el entusiasmo de los paleontólogos y unas poéticas palabras de cierre, concluye: “Los paleontólogos están animados, y ya emprenden viajes al lugar del buen suceso, ya publican comentarios sabios. Da gozo ver a los hombres de ahora. Puede asegurarse que ya empieza la época de la verdadera revelación. La del hombre a sí propio”.¹⁶

La noticia original tiene doscientas treinta y ocho palabras y la de Martí tiene trescientas ochenta y ocho palabras. En lo que al hallazgo del mastodonte de Manlius se refiere, que es el tema de la noticia, Martí indica la localidad y ofrece detalles del período y la época geológica a las cuales corresponde, afirma la veracidad del descubrimiento y las dudas acerca de la clasificación de la especie (mastodonte o mamut) a través de opiniones especializadas y brinda datos morfométricos (altura, longitud, y peso del animal y algunas de sus partes) en comparación con un pariente actual (el elefante Jumbo) y con hallazgos similares en otras localidades. Esta parte ocupa un 36% del texto y se basa en datos seleccionados de la fuente original, pues Martí no toma toda la información que ésta ofrece.

La noticia martiana es más extensa porque incorpora un 64% de información adicional que no aparece en la fuente. La mitad del texto añadido es ampliación de la noticia en su propio contexto (la referencia al mastodonte de Newburgh o los descubrimientos de Darwin), con el elefante como sujeto temático (al ampliar la historia de Jumbo); y la otra mitad es puramente literaria y filosófica acerca del gozo del descubrimiento científico y el avance de las ciencias. Seis años después, en 1889, Martí retomará este tema en *La Edad de Oro*, cuando escriba “Cuentos de elefantes”¹⁷, donde narrará el hallazgo del primer esqueleto de mamut en el Noreste de Siberia.

Notas.

1. José Martí: “Un mastodonte”, en *La América*, Nueva York, agosto de 1883, OCEC, t.18, pp. 119-120.
2. “The bones of a mastodon”, *The Sun*, New York, 19 de julio de 1883. Chronicling America, Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress, USA. All Digitized Newspapers 1789-1922. Disponible en: <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>
3. *Ibídem*, p. 119.
4. “The bones of a mastodon”, ob. cit.
5. JM: “Un mastodonte”, ob. cit., p. 119.
6. American Philosophical Society Library. Fuente: <http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/islandora/object/great-american-mastodon-now-exhibiting-hall#page/1/mode/1up>
7. “Exhuming the First American Mastodon”. Imagen disponible en: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>
8. Working Sketch of the Mastodon, 1801. Imagen disponible en: <http://www.americanrevolution.com/gallery/>
9. Se trata de un famoso elefante africano de 5 m de alto, 11 de largo y 21 toneladas de peso, conocido mundialmente por sus presentaciones en espectáculos en París, Londres y finalmente en los Estados Unidos.
10. Dice catorce pies en la noticia original.
11. JM: “Un mastodonte”, ob. cit., p. 119.
12. “Fossil Mammalia Part 1 of The zoology of the voyage of HMS Beagle”. Disponible en el Portal de Charles Darwin: <http://darwin-online.org.uk/contents.html>
13. JM: “Un mastodonte”, ob. cit., pp. 119-120.
14. *Ibídem*, p. 120.
15. “The bones of a mastodon”, ob. cit.
16. JM: “Un mastodonte”, ob. cit., p. 120.
17. JM: “Cuentos de elefantes”, en *La Edad de Oro*, Vol. I, No. 4, octubre de 1889, OC, t.18, pp. 485-490.



NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JULY 19, 1893.

report the matter to his Local Assembly for action.

Article XVI relates to strikes. A Local Assembly which has a grievance shall transmit a "bill of grievance" through its corresponding delegate to the District Master Workman, which shall be signed by the Master Workman and Recording Secretary. On a two-thirds vote the Local Assembly may make application by telegraph for authority to strike, telegraphing also the result of the vote. It is provided that "the bill of grievance shall contain a clear and concise statement of all matters pertaining to the grievance, also the number of members involved, married or single, or single men who have others depending upon them, total number in Local Assembly, total number voting on the circular, cash in the treasury, and amount of money due the Local Assembly subject to order." The District Master Workman appends to the bill of grievance a statement of the amount of money required weekly from each Local Assembly during the strike, if sanctioned, and other information in his possession, and sends a copy to each member of the District Executive Board, who shall return their vote on the same within twenty-four hours to the Chairman of the District Executive Board.

Sections 4 and 5 of this article are as follows: If, at the expiration of forty-eight hours, two-thirds of the votes of the District Executive Board are in the affirmative, the District Master Workman shall notify the Local Assembly that the strike or lockout has been sanctioned, and action thereon shall be taken by said Local Assembly within three days after receipt of said notice. It shall require a two-thirds vote of the members present to authorize a strike after authority to strike has been given by the District Assembly or District Executive Board.

Members ordered to strike shall receive the following sums per week: Single men, \$5; married men, \$7; single men who have others depending upon them, \$7.

Women are not mentioned. Section 2 of Article XVII reads:

No strike can be instituted until after all attempts at arbitration have failed. A Committee of Arbitration, consisting of not less than three and not more than five, shall be appointed to negotiate between employer and employee to effect a satisfactory result.

The Executive Board of the District Assembly may withdraw financial aid when they consider a strike lost. An employee discharged by his employer for striking may, on settlement of that fact by a Committee of Inquiry, receive by order of the District Master Workman and District Executive Board the weekly strike allowance or additional compensation until he procures employment. Under the head of "Special Notice" is the following:

The password for Local Assemblies of District Assembly No. 45 is changed quarterly on the first of January, April, July, and September of each year. Members of Telegraphers' Assemblies in possession of the local password and a membership card can gain admittance to any assembly in this district.

Any member who takes the place of a brother while that brother is resisting the encroachments of unjust employers is guilty of violation of his obligation, and shall be tried accordingly. Taking a brother's place is not "extending a helping hand."

"Is this a correct copy of your constitution and laws?" Editor Mitchell of the *Telegraphers' Advocate* was asked yesterday.

"It is unauthorized by us, and we don't know anything about it. You will have to get your information from the Western Union, which furnished this document."

The Situation in Other Cities.

CHICAGO, July 18.—In anticipation of a strike by the operators, a large crowd gathered about the Western Union offices and remained most of the day. The first news was that the Chicago Telephone Company had refused to agree to the demands of the linemen. Forty-six of the linemen quit work and marched to their lodge room in North Clark street. Most of them had been with the company ever since it started. Superintendent Brennan claims to have sent ten road men to attend to the present plant, and says that none of the strikers can return at any price.

At 11 o'clock this morning every Western Union operator was busy, but each momentarily expected a command to stop work. The superintendent, electrician, and the heads of the various departments entered the operating room quietly, to see the culmination of the strike. At the lunch hour the operators expressed great surprise at the delay, which was not dissipated until they learned of the appointment of a sub-committee by the Western Union directors. A prominent member of the

THE BONES OF A MASTODON.

Remains of an Animal that Must have been a Third Larger than Jumbo.

SYRACUSE, July 18.—Yesterday workmen who are digging gravel from a pit in the town of Manlius, eight miles east of this city, for the West Shore Railroad, came upon the remains of an extinct animal. Last evening a huge molar, weighing about twenty-five pounds, and a piece of a tusk nearly five feet long and eight inches in diameter in the thickest part were brought to this city. To-day other portions of the tusk and part of a shin bone were found. The remains lay about thirteen feet beneath the surface in a deposit of gravel. Search is being made for the remainder of the skeleton. Prof. Boynton, who exposed the Cardiff giant fraud, says that these are the relics of a mastodon which must have been fully fourteen feet high, and probably weighed a third more than Jumbo. The tusk, he says, must have been at least eleven feet long. The animal lived in the post-pleistocene period of the tertiary age. Prof. Boynton is of the opinion that the remains were washed into the gravel pit where they were found. Prof. Brown, instructor in natural history at Syracuse University, thinks the bones are those of a mammoth, rather than a mastodon. The tusk, he says, indicates one of the largest skeletons that has ever been exhumed. The tooth and the tusk are in a state of excellent preservation. The tip of the tusk shows the natural color of the ivory.

An Eighteen-year-old Bride of Four Months Puts an End to Her Life.

Joseph Bauer is the proprietor of Germania Hall, one of the most popular German resorts in Williamsburgh. It was given to him seven months ago by Mrs. Thekla Bittner, to whose daughter Mary he was then engaged. He had been hiring the hall to give dancing lessons, and his sweetheart, who was 18 years old, was one of his pupils. Four months ago they were married. The wedding was a famous one in the neighborhood, and the bride was called the handsomest blonde in the Sixteenth ward.

On Tuesday they spent the day at Rockaway, and returned home early in the evening, apparently in good spirits. Mrs. Bauer soon went to her bedroom. At 10 o'clock she called her sister-in-law, Miss Bauer. The husband, who responded in place of his sister, found his wife in great agony. A physician was summoned, and found that she was suffering from the effects of Paris green. The usual remedies were administered, but without avail. She died at an early hour yesterday morning. Her mother, who was summoned to her bedside, asked her why she took the poison, and she replied: "Mother, I had to do it. I took it on account of jealousy." Mr. Bauer said that he had never given her any cause to be jealous. He wandered about the house as if dazed for a couple of hours, and then went away.

Mrs. Bauer had been suffering from the poison for two hours before she called out for Miss Bauer. The latter accompanied her and her husband to Rockaway on Tuesday. She says they spent the day very pleasantly, and that Mrs. Bauer seemed to be the happiest one in the party. The mother says that her daughter did not say of whom she was jealous, and adds that she never complained of being unhappy with her husband.

Mr. Bauer said: "My wife rose from the table after we had eaten, and, saying that she was going to the butcher's, went out. In about fifteen minutes she came back, left some meat in the basement, and came up through the barroom laughing and talking, and passed up stairs to her bedroom. About 9 1/2 my sister came in and told me that Mary was calling. When I went up stairs she was standing in the middle of the room and didn't seem at all excited. She said: 'I've taken Paris green.' Just as she said this she vomited some green stuff. I called down to Katie, 'Run and get the doctor. Mary has taken Paris green.' I asked her several times why she had taken the poison, but she only said, 'I don't know.' Pretty soon the doctor came. We have always been happy, and we have never had any quarrel at all. I have no idea what caused her to do

DENIS KEARNEY BARRED OUT.

He Charges Park Commissioners Olliffe with Trying to Smother Free Speech in New York.

Denis Kearney of California had a genuine grievance yesterday. He said to THE SUN reporter: "I went to the Park Commissioners on Tuesday morning and wrote out an application in my own handwriting and signed it myself for a permit to speak from the plaza on Union square. I filed it with the Secretary, who told me the Commissioners would meet to-morrow—that's to-day. I went around to-day at 11 o'clock, and I asked one of the Commissioners what they had done with my application. He asked me my name. I told him, and he shook hands with me and said his name was Mr. Olliffe. He said they had passed on it, and I was to get a permit as soon as I got one from the Police Commissioners. I went right away down to the Police Commissioners' office on Mulberry street, and there met the Superintendent of Police. He laughed at the idea of my coming there for a permit. He said he had no authority to give me a permit; that the authority lay with the Board of Park Commissioners. His duty, he said, was to protect any meeting, and see it was not disturbed or broken up; any citizen had a right to call a meeting in any place he wanted to, and the business and duty of the police was to protect him in that right, provided he did not interfere with anybody else, and the Park Commissioners had sent me on a wild-goose chase.

"I went back to the Park Commissioners and they were in executive session. I waited about an hour and then saw their President, Mr. Olliffe, and told him what the Superintendent of Police had told me. He asked me to go into an adjoining room where the secretary was, and he had a private consultation with the secretary, after which the secretary told me they could not give me a permit to speak in Union square until I had one from the Police Commissioners. I told him what the Superintendent of Police had told me, and that there was no use sending me to and fro in this way; they could either give me a permit or refuse it and be done with it. Mr. Olliffe, as President then called another meeting of the Board and they went into executive session. In about three minutes they came out and told me they would not go back on their original resolution, which was that Denis Kearney might have a permit as soon as he produced one from the police. I said that was no use. The secretary commenced to explain the law. I told him I knew about as much of the duties of a citizen as he did, and I considered it a blank refusal on the part of the Commissioners. It looked to me as if he bulldozed the Commissioners.

"Then I went to the office of the Mayor and explained to him what had happened. He told me to call back in an hour, and he would look into the matter. I did so, and he told me the Park Commissioners were the proper parties to give a permit, and the police had nothing to do with it further than to protect the meeting and see that it was not broken up or interfered with. I asked him, in the event of my holding a meeting there without a permit, would the Park Commissioners have power to arrest me? 'Unquestionably they could,' he said; 'they could any time order the police to arrest you for holding a meeting there without a permit.' "Now I have made up my mind to hold a meeting in Cooper Union on Saturday night next, if I can get the hall. I think it is an outrageous piece of business. I would not have obstructed anybody in the square. I spoke there before. The Park Commissioners did not have the courage to say 'No,' and wanted to put it off on some other Commission.

The meeting was to be Thursday night, but cannot be now because I cannot even get a public square in the foremost Democratic city in the Union to speak in. They seem to be in favor here of smothering free speech. They put me to the expense of hiring a hall, which of course the audience will have to pay for. I will choose