


The magazine as a medium of cultural translation

First steps towards transnational research

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Literary Translation in Periodicals: Methodological challenges for a transnational approach

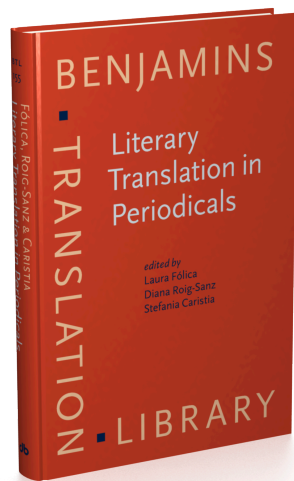
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The magazine as a medium of cultural translation

First steps towards transnational research

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Our research project seeks to understand periodical publications as a medium of cultural translation. This article explains some of the practical challenges which must be confronted when building a digital corpus which transcends the logic of national archives. Focusing on a specific journal, *La Gaceta Literaria*, the article then proceeds to explore data visualizations in a mixed-method approach which aims at building a bridge between quantitative and qualitative analyses. The project also explores the periodical's ambition to construct a global community from an Ibero-American perspective, an aim not without (neo)imperialistic implications. It does so with a particular focus on the role of translation, and the use of various languages used within the journal in order to reach this goal.

Keywords: Cultural Magazines, Spain, Latin America, Digital Humanities, metadata, visualization, *La Gaceta Literaria*, imagined Iberian-American community, translation, multilingualism

Not only newspapers, but also the different types of journals and magazines are vehicles *par excellence* for the translation of culture across national and linguistic borders. In the following article I will be looking at the cultural artefact of the magazine in this mode,¹ taking my examples from the corpus of the ongoing DFG-

1. For my analysis of *modernista* and avant-garde cultural magazines in the Spanish-speaking world the term “magazine” is not used to describe an exactly defined historical type of periodical publication as analysed, for example, by Haake 1971. In fact, one of the objectives of our research is to analyse the formal differences and their development in the dynamic field of periodical press situated between the daily and weekly newspaper press on one side and the book market on the other. As this intermedial position is, according to Frank, Podewski and Scherer (2010), one of the outstanding structural features of the “little archive” of cultural magazines, our corpus comprehends different types of journals (mostly titled “revista” by the editors themselves, but also “boletín”, “magazine” or remaining without any explicit label), ranging from very

funded research project *Cultural Magazines from “Modernismo” to Avant-Garde: Processes of Modernization and Transnational networks*.² As can be seen in the visualization of our corpus, which consists of some 60 magazines (Figure 1), the field of our research not only encompasses the entire Spanish-speaking cultural area on both sides of the Atlantic, but also includes the cities of New York and Paris as important places of publication outside the Spanish-speaking nations.



Figure 1. The magazines of our research corpus represented on a world map

Although it is well known that the “imagined community”³ founded in Spanish-language magazines does not necessarily coincide with political national borders, the attempt to do justice to this transnational imaginary in practice within the framework of a comparative research project, however, leads to methodologically far-reaching difficulties. This is especially the case if one moves, as with our project, in an archive of (world) literature expanded by digitization. For ease of understanding, I will present my ideas in three stages. Firstly, I will explain some general methodological problems which arise when one moves from printed sources to digital corpora, and from national archives to a transnational corpus. In a second stage, I will focus more specifically on one Spanish literary journal in our corpus, *La Gaceta Literaria*, and present some experimental methods of data visualization

specialist and short living “little magazines” focused only on literature (as, for example *Création/ Creación* directed by Vicente Huidobro), to illustrated magazines with mixed content designed for a much broader public (as, for example, *Mundial Magazine* directed by Rubén Darío).

2. A short description of the project is offered at this site: <http://gepris.dfg.de/gepris/projekt/327964298?language=en>

3. For this concept Anderson (2016), and for its critical reception in the Latin-American context Castro-Klarén and Chasteen (2003).

with which we are seeking to explore the intercultural dimension of journals on the basis of the metadata gained in our project, whereby quantitative and qualitative analysis methods closely intersect. And thirdly, I will deal, continuing with the example of *La Gaceta Literaria*, with the problem of multilingualism and linguistic translation, a problem which should be particularly interesting in the overall context of this publication.

Building a transnational corpus of digitized Spanish-language magazines: Some methodological challenges

The design of a corpus always implies a whole series of preliminary methodological decisions. In our case the decision was based on three central criteria. First, the corpus should cover the whole range of typological variations within the landscape of periodical products between the printed mass media and the book, as already explained in footnote 1. Second, it should be representative of the two main aesthetic movements of modernism in the cultural world based on the Spanish language before and after the turn of the twentieth century, the so-called *modernismo*⁴ and the avant-gardes. A corollary of this second criterion was that we had to consider the diversity of the Latin American context with the varying impacts of heterogeneous indigenous cultures, which cannot be reduced to a simple denominator and resists a simple construction of named identity (Rojas Mix 1991). Finally, our choice was driven by the criterion of online accessibility, because our corpus needed to be a corpus of digitized magazines in order to enable the application of digital research methods. Some of our materials we could find in open-access repositories provided by different archives and libraries of Spain⁵ and Latin America,⁶ and part of it had to be digitized specifically for our project. To this end, we worked with the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin (IAI) which is part of

4. The concept of *modernismo* as a label for a specific *fin-de-siècle* aesthetic in the literature of Latin America and Spain has not to be confounded with the broader term of modernism in the tradition of English and North American Literature. See for a brief introduction Aching (2013).

5. For Spain, we took most materials from the BNE's *Hemeroteca Digital* (<http://www.bne.es/es/Catalogos/HemerotecaDigital/>), but also from the *Biblioteca Virtual de Prensa Histórica* of the Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte (<http://prensahistorica.mcu.es>), from the *Portal Revistas de la Edad de Plata* hosted by the Residencia of Estudiantes in Madrid (http://www.edaddeplata.org/revistas_edaddeplata/) and from the *Arxiu de Revistes catalanes antigues* (<http://www.bnc.cat/digital/arca/index.php>) which is offered by the Biblioteca de Catalunya.

6. For Latin America, we used mainly the following repositories: *Hemeroteca nacional digital de México* (<http://www.hndm.unam.mx/index.php/es/>), *Portal Memoria Chilena* (<http://www.me->

the cultural heritage of the former Prussian state, and which has already digitized part of its collection of cultural journals,⁷ so it was a win-win situation to continue digitizing magazines within this research collaboration.

This leads us to the specific problems associated with this particular corpus. Due to our transatlantic and transnational perspective, the various national contexts of our digitized corpus meant there were no common standards of digitization. Some of the digital copies are just image files, others are already processed for optical character recognition but often in very low quality, and never did we have access to editions of the texts in xml format and encoded in TEI-standard which are nowadays the de facto “gold standard” for the application of digital methods of research. Therefore, what we study are not just the texts that come out of the old archive of printed books and are transformed into another medium, but a new “epistemic thing” for literary studies (Trilcke and Fischer 2018). What we have then to construct are, in the first step towards analyzing this new epistemic thing, files of the structured metadata. These metadata are extracted from the digital objects, organized in tables, where each variable forms a column and each observation a row, and saved in csv-files (comma-separated values). The main elements used to categorize our journals are the names of contributors, their sex, the title of each contribution, the number of pages it occupies in the journal and the contribution’s genre, with a differentiation made between exact and abstract genre categorization. Such differentiation was planned in order to enable a later comparison between different magazines using freely available software tools for visualization and statistical exploration, such as *Gephi*⁸ or *R*.⁹

In the case of the objects digitized by the IAI, we can already use the basic metadata of journals provided in the METS/MODS standard,¹⁰ but it is easy to show that this kind of general metadata, which can be provided by libraries, is just the first step for future research and that there is enormous work to be done to build a corpus of structured metadata. To explain this, let’s focus just on one

moriachilena.cl/602/w3-channel.html) and *Publicaciones Periódicas del Uruguay* (<http://www.periodicas.edu.uy/v2/index.htm>).

7. The materials are presented online at: <https://digital.iai.spk-berlin.de/viewer/collections/lateinamerikanische-kulturzeitschriften/>

8. <https://gephi.org/>

9. <https://www.r-project.org/>

10. METS stands for Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard, MODS for the Metadata Object Description Schema based on this standard. While it is the most common international standard for library metadata at this point, not every archive or library from where we got our digitized materials could provide it.

magazine taken from the avant-garde period, the very “little magazine” *Creación/ Création*, directed by the Chilean avant-garde author Vicente Huidobro. This journal published only three issues and a supplement. The first two numbers appeared in 1921, and the third issue appeared with a supplement in 1924. Nevertheless, it is highly relevant for an understanding of the history of the Spanish-speaking avant-garde, since it was one of the few attempts of an actor linguistically rooted in the Spanish-speaking world to play an active role in the construction of an “international” of artists, which, as we know, shaped the second phase of the avant-garde of the 1920s. While the transnational network of magazines of the Constructivist Internationale, which spread from Berlin as the main hub throughout Central Europe in the 1920s, has already been well researched (Van den Berg 2006; Wenderski 2015; Joyeux-Prunel 2017: 270–296),¹¹ Vicente Huidobro’s parallel early attempt to connect in a similar way an international community of artists and writers has gone virtually unnoticed. This situation was due not least, of course, to the difficulties in accessing this little magazine, which changed its place of publication, travelling with his director from Madrid to Paris. This change of cultural context also changed the linguistic tone of the magazine which began as a *Revista internacional de arte* which demonstrated its claim to be “international” in the first issue presenting texts in five main European languages (Spanish, French, English, Italian and German) without any translation or abstract. Nevertheless, after arriving in France it changed to a French-only *Revue d’art* (issues two and three) to end with a “suplemento castellano”, a personal diatribe in Spanish against Guillermo de Torre, one of Huidobro’s mayor rivals in the field of the Spanish-language circle of the avant-garde. The research produced by Pedro Lastra (1979) on this magazine still remains the only systematic study to date, with the reason for the lack of research being explained by Lastra himself when he laments that “Bibliographical work on magazines connected to Spanish America is often obstructed by the paucity of complete collections and by the lack of adequate analytical cataloguing” (Lastra 1979: 181). The lack of research on the magazine becomes even more obvious when contrasted with the amount of studies dedicated to the quarrel about Huidobro’s *creacionismo* as a new avant-garde label within the Spanish avant-garde circle.¹²

11. Bulson (2016: 51–58), on the other hand, sees in the formal features of what he calls “the Dada grid” “a mode of exchange encoded by design” (51), which does not belong to a particular movement, but which formed a rhizomatic, decentralized abstract network.

12. See, e.g., Admussen/De Costa (1972) or Bary (1980) with respect to the relationship between Huidobro and Reverdy; as for the personal quarrel between Huidobro and Guillermo de Torre it can be best analyzed in Huidobro’s correspondence to de Torre, Diego and Larrea. See on this topic Huidobro (2008, XLIX–LIX) and García (2005).

Despite the increase in digitization in recent decades – also considerable in the institutions of the Spanish-speaking world – little has changed in this particular case. The catalogues of the national libraries which hold the extremely rare original editions contain only incomplete information on *Creación/Création*. The National Library of Spain contains only the first issue, and provides practically no metadata on the magazine, so that the user could easily miss its transnational character.¹³ This is the same situation with the National Library of Chile, whose catalogue provides nevertheless at least the information that the “Spanish” magazine contains texts in various languages.¹⁴ The catalogue of the National Library of France, on the other hand, separates the “French” issues from the first one, which appears to have been treated like an exotic offspring from unknown foreign climes (in the field of the land of publication you can read “inconnu”, unknown).¹⁵ National libraries must, due to their very ontological mission, apply national philological criteria when dealing with literature. This necessarily leads to problems, as our example illustrates perfectly, when they are confronted with a transnationally oriented publication. It is therefore not surprising that such a “strange” object has also not been prioritized in the digitization of the holdings of the mentioned libraries. It is a matter of fact that Huidobro’s little magazine would not have found its way into the new augmented corpus of digitized literature if its digitization had not been demanded by our research project. While for the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* Huidobro’s magazine was too Spanish to enter the new digitized archive, for the *Biblioteca Nacional de España* it may have been too French and for the National Library of Chile too European. To digitize this little cultural vehicle, it needed therefore the initiative (and finances) of our research project and the already mentioned collaboration with the IAI which recently made the facsimile print of the journal available as a digital object. Nevertheless, even the IAI, which clearly has a transnational mission with respect to the Latin American literatures it holds in its archive, as an institution which is part of the cultural heritage of former State of Prussia cannot help but continue to work with the traditional criteria of nationalist archival processes. This becomes obvious when ones see the metadata related to our little magazine in the IAI’s catalogue¹⁶ and on the website on which

13. See <https://tinyurl.com/st6am5z>

14. “Textos en español, alemán, francés, inglés”. See <https://tinyurl.com/y8fsk9rl>

15. See <https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb32751997t> for the main entry of the French issues which relates to the Spanish issue as a “titre successif” which needs not to be specified, so that the field for the place of publication, for example, rests without data: <https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb327519954.public>

16. <https://lhiai.gbv.de/DB=1/XMLPRS=N/PPN?PPN=1012316823>

the digital objects are hosted.¹⁷ They can also easily be downloaded, extracted, and read in the following way:

```
<mets:xmlData>
  <mods:mods xmlns:mods="http://www.loc.gov/mods/v3">
    <mods:originInfo>
      <mods:place>
        <mods:placeTerm type="text">Madrid, Paris</mods:placeTerm>
      </mods:place>
      <mods:dateOther>Número 1 (abril 1921)-février 1924</
mods:dateOther>
    </mods:originInfo>
    <mods:classification authority="ivdcc">Varia</mods:classification>
    <mods:recordInfo>
      <mods:recordIdentifier source="gbv-ppn">1012316823</
mods:recordIdentifier>
    </mods:recordInfo>
    <mods:identifier type="purl">http://resolver.iai.spk-berlin.de/
IAI0000695800000000</mods:identifier>
    <mods:identifier type="zdb">2918814-3</mods:identifier>
    <mods:titleInfo>
      <mods:title>Creación</mods:title>
    </mods:titleInfo>
    <mods:titleInfo type="alternative">
      <mods:title>Création &lt;span.&gt;</mods:title>
    </mods:titleInfo>
    <mods:subject authority="gnd">
      <mods:geographic>Spanien</mods:geographic>
    </mods:subject>
    <mods:subject authority="gnd">
      <mods:geographic>Frankreich</mods:geographic>
```

The IAI's metadata is undoubtedly a step forward compared to the catalogue entries previously mentioned – the cultural hybridity of the journal is now clearly recorded – but at the same time the situation remains in need of improvement. There are contradictions between and within the different datasets. One is the solution found for the problem of the periodical having changed its national context – at one side the “place term” is just filled out with a double entry (“Madrid, Paris”), and on the other side there are two different entries for the “geographic subject” (“Spain” and “France”, both written in German). Another one, related with the first, is that the English-language information in the METS/MODS file is still irritatingly mixed with information in German, presenting a stumbling block for international users and a relic of Prussian times when German still had global clout as a scientific language.

17. <http://resolver.iai.spk-berlin.de/IAI0000695800000000>

I have highlighted the case of Huidobro's little magazine because it illustrates well some of the general problems. It demonstrates that while the augmented corpus of digitized literature available on the internet may be of a different order of magnitude to the partial national archives which collected printed books and press in the past, a point that Franco Moretti stresses frequently,¹⁸ it is still the inheritor of the collecting, recording and indexing traditions of the national philologies of the 19th century. Digitization within the logic of traditional international archivism can therefore only be a first step on the way to a truly comparative analysis of world literature. The next step would be for metadata to be collected and exchanged independently of the traditional logics of archive and organized flexibly in collaborative virtual research environments that permit an effective networking of researchers, each of whom may be based in very different locations.

To this aim, we realized, even before starting our own research project, the virtual research environment *Revistas culturales 2.0* constructed as a platform for collaborative international research on magazines. On this platform, magazines such as *Creación* can be annotated by a group of researchers in a deeper and more comprehensive way¹⁹ than is possible for librarians to do within the parameters of 19th-century rules and categorizations.

Once we have the reliable metadata from a set of magazines, we can go on to use them for new, computer-based methods of analyses which Franco Moretti (2013) likes to call "distant reading" and others, in less polemical terms, "micro-analysis" (Jockers 2013). We believe that these new methods should not completely replace old methods of close reading and hermeneutical understanding, but supplement and enrich them.²⁰ To show the direction we are taking with such a

18. See, for example, his statement in the fifteenth Pamphlet of the Stanford *Literary Lab*: "One thing for sure: digitization has completely changed the literary archive. People like me used to work on a few hundred nineteenth-century novels; today, we work on thousands of them; tomorrow, hundreds of thousands. This has had a major effect on literary history, obviously enough, but also on critical methodology; because, when we work on 200,000 novels instead of 200, we are not doing the same thing, 1,000 times bigger; we are doing a different thing. The new scale changes our relationship to our object, and in fact *it changes the object itself*" (Moretti 2017: 1).

19. www.revistas-culturales.de, the possibilities for annotation are explained in a linked video tutorial in Spanish published on *Vimeo*: <https://vimeo.com/119858046>

20. Of course, we are not the only ones to try to integrate a quantitative approach with traditional qualitative methods. After the first polemical division between "close" and "distant" reading there seem to be a trend for searching a new synthesis, as expressed, e.g., by Ganascia (2015: s.p.) "Our claim here is that, despite these debates within the larger Digital Humanities community, for Digital Literary Studies, there is no real antagonism between the logic of the 'sciences of culture', as described by Rickert and Cassirer, and the making of tools that help to interpret

mixed-method approach in our project I will pass now to a second journal of our research-corpus, *La Gaceta Literaria*. much better known (Hernando 1974; Collins 1975; Rojo Martín 1982, etc.) and already well analyzed with traditional methods.

Mixed-method mapping of a imagined transnational literary field: First digital approaches to the *Gaceta Literaria: ibero-americana internacional* (1927–1930)

In contrast to the case discussed so far, *La Gaceta Literaria*, as one of the outstanding cultural journals of Spain of the late 1920s, has already found its way into the internet archives. The National Library of Spain offers a digitization of almost the entire set while the complete text corpus is available via the portal *Revistas de la Edad de Plata* hosted by the *Residencia de Estudiantes*.²¹ Thus, together with the valuable aid of the comprehensive Index established by Hildegard Hille Jeddelloh Collins (1975), in this case it is much easier to apply digital methods to the object based on the systematic collection of metadata. Due to its overtly proclaimed international character, it is quite natural that this magazine would be of interest to scholars of the cross-cultural dynamics of the literary field. The declared internationality of the journal is of course not unusual in itself for the avant-garde phase, whose internationality was one of its outstanding common characteristics and is therefore often found in the titles.²² In the case of *La Gaceta Literaria*, however, there are a few special features: Firstly, the paper's claim²³ not only to represent

huge databases with respect to existing theories. In other words, computer-aided methods can be seen as a continuation of traditional humanistic approaches. As such, they can afford many opportunities to renew humanistic methods and to make them more accurate, by helping to empirically confront working hypotheses with datasets that now approach the entirety of our printed record, taking into consideration not only literary works themselves but also the intellectual landscapes surrounding the authors of these works."

21. http://www.edaddeplata.org/revistas_edaddeplata/

22. Within our corpus, this is the case of *Reflector. Revista internacional de arte, literatura y crítica* (Madrid 1920), *Prisma. Revista Internacional de Poesía* (Barcelona 1922) or *Irradiador. revista de vanguardia, proyector internacional de nueva estética* (Mexico 1922–1923).

23. Of course, it is problematic to reduce the complex interplay of the different roles of authorship in a periodical with as many collaborators as *La Gaceta Literaria*, but one can suppose that the main editor, Ernesto Giménez Caballero, was also primarily responsible for the layout and the editorial decisions. In the final issues, however, the entire periodical shrank to a newspaper reduced to the individual "voice" of Giménez Caballero reflecting ironically on his new solitude, writing as "the literary Robinson". For the question of how to identify the different "voices" of a periodical see also the contribution of Elke Brems and Jack McMartin in this volume.

just another actor within a broad network of avant-garde “little magazines”, but to function as a mayor forum that provides an overview and orientation in this field. On the one hand, this claim is clearly reflected in the format and the publication’s frequency, because as a large-format magazine published at fortnightly intervals, *La Gaceta Literaria* is not another little magazine among many, but a newspaper. This expanded format is ostentatious proof that, from the editors’ point of view, trends in the new arts and literatures are no longer marginal and unpopular, but part of a complex and important subculture that deserves no less attention than the political events which inform the news of the mass press. Secondly, the ambition to be an orienting observer of the new trends is also seen in the equally ostentatious use of methods and procedures of mapping within the journal. This is particularly concisely demonstrated in the two imaginary cartographies hand-made by “Gecé”, the alias of Ernesto Giménez Caballero, the newspaper’s main editor.²⁴ The first one appeared in number 14, July 1927, and maps the “universe of the contemporary Spanish literature” in an astronomical manner as differentiated cosmic spheres (Albert 2013: 16). The second cartography was published in number 32 (15 April 1928) and shows the territory of the “new Spanish literature” as a geometrical “theorem” dividing the Peninsula into various triangles which represent the centers of avant-garde activity (Albert 2013: 23), with Castile, according to Giménez Caballero’s special geometry, being more important than Catalonia, Andalusia, Galicia and Portugal (Asunce Arenas 2012: 18–20).

Due to its history, cartography is necessarily, as Denis Wood in particular has shown, connected with the claim to the exercise of (political) power (Wood and Fels 1992; Wood, Fels and Krygier 2010). For this reason, as imaginary and subjective as the use of this dispositive (in the Foucauldian sense)²⁵ might be in the case of “Gecé”, one should not neglect the claim to power and global influence inherent in those maps. As for the magazine as a whole, this claim finds its emblematic expression in the logo reprinted in the advertising brochure and on the front page of the first issue, clearly demonstrating the Ibero-American intention of *La Gaceta Literaria* as a neo-colonial imperialist project.²⁶ For this reason, studies

24. Giménez Caballero himself called this kind of mappings of the literary field “carteles literarios”, i.e. literary posters, and published various as a monograph in 1927 in the editorial Espasa Calpe. For more information about this special genre of art see the catalogue *Madrid-Barcelona: Carteles literarios de “Gecé”* and the articles of Fernández Serrato (1997) and Rodríguez Amaya (2000).

25. For the concept and the problems to translate it into English see Bussolini (2010).

26. These neo-colonial aspects of the project have already been emphasized by Mechthild Albert who has right to point out that “the cultural mission of *La Gaceta Literaria* implies a universal cultural imperative, *urbi et orbi*” (2014: 343).

that chose to focus on the presence of particular cultures in the *Gaceta Literaria* (see Cuadrado Fernández 1988 for the Portuguese culture, Matas Gil 2005 for the Italian, Roberto Mosquera 1996 for the Catalan and Pardo de Neyra 2009 for the Galician) must miss this geopolitical dimension, crucial for the magazine's overall cultural project. Less spectacular, but more systematic and extensive, are the geopolitics of the magazine in the system of "tarjetas postales" ('postcards') that structures the different reviews of particular cultural areas and, in general, in the permanent use of geographical categories present in the entire run of the newspaper. It is precisely this permanence and continuity of geopolitical terms which proves that the famous "batalla" ('battle') about the intellectual meridian, started by the anonymous editorial which opened the eighth issue published on 15th April 1927 and which led to vehement reactions, especially on the part of the Argentinean contributors of *Martín Fierro* (see Alemany Bay 1998, or the documentation in Croce 2006: 55–156), was not a mere coincidence, but a consequence of the cultural-imperialist design of the entire project.

Nevertheless, the magazine as a whole is not identical with Giménez Caballero's intentions. The imaginary maps he presented not only counter-map the reality of the literary field at that time in a distorting, tendentious way, but also ignore the transnational network that the *Gaceta Literaria* effectively came to establish. Giménez Caballero himself looks at the field of literature with an obvious nationalist prejudice, which is why "other" literatures seem to have little or no relevance for his own (the *Teorema de la literatura española* is decidedly territorially limited to the Iberian Peninsula and conceptualizes of other cultural spaces only as alien abstracts, while the *Universo de la literatura contemporánea* in turn hypostasizes this national field of literature into a closed cosmos of its own). It is therefore attractive to oppose Giménez Caballero's personal cartographies with alternative mappings based on the magazine metadata that we collected.²⁷ To this end, we used two different data sets and created visualizations for them. Firstly, we mapped all of the location-related references used in the titles of the contributions to the *Gaceta Literaria* on the basis of a most-frequent word-list, appropriately filtered (e.g. extracting nouns such as "España" or "Pombo", the name of the well-known *tertulia* in Madrid organized by Ramón Gómez de la Serna, as well as adjectives such as "españoles", "americanos", e.g.). That work was done for the individual years of the magazine's publication as well as for its whole run, but only an exemplary visualization of this work can be presented here (see Figure 2).

27. The data collection was realized by all members of the DFG-research-project, but in case of *La Gaceta Literaria* Teresa Herzgsell took main responsibility for the data sheet. All data visualizations used in this article were realized by Dr. Jörg Lehmann.

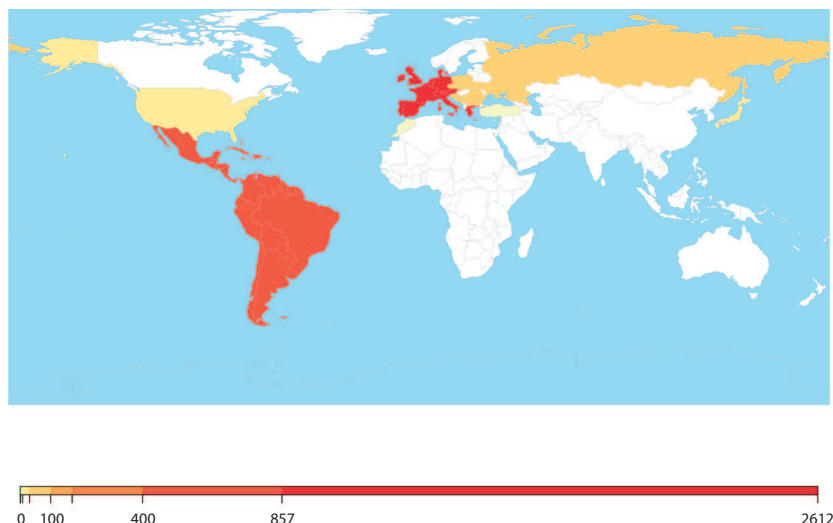


Figure 2. Location-related terms of the contributions to *La Gaceta Literaria* on a world map (analysis spanning the magazine's whole run)

Secondly, we used the postcard system offered by the *Gaceta Literaria* to visualize it both on a world map (see Figure 3) and more specifically on a map of the autonomous communities of Spain, given that the latter rests, notwithstanding the “universalist” magazine’s vision, as the center of the world and as such is more differentiated than the rest of cultural spaces.

By attempting to transfer in such a way the geospatial concepts of the *Gaceta* to a current map system, the aforementioned neo-colonial worldview of the magazine will immediately reveal itself, because the concept system of postcards is categorically anything but consistent or homogeneous. The cultural-spatial differentiations correspond to a changing code which is nowhere made explicit: national terms are preferred for the rest of Europe eastward of the Iberian Peninsula but can be found alongside supranational categories such as “international” and “cosmopolitan” (“postales internacionales”, “postales cosmopolitas”). Within the limits of the Iberian Peninsula political criteria seem to be valid when Portugal and Galicia are distinguished, but on the other hand geographical criteria are used to separate culturally and linguistically linked spaces such as “Catalonia” and “the Balearic Islands”. Nevertheless, the criterion of language community, obviously not used in the differentiation of the “postales” within the Peninsula, regains primacy when it comes to the American continent, with Latin America, which in the *Gaceta* is simply equated with the generic term “America” (“postales americanas”), being contrasted with English-speaking North America, which is differentiated by the explicitly pejorative qualification “yanki” (“postales yankis”). It is also the case in the practice of geography, where maps are used to distinguish different

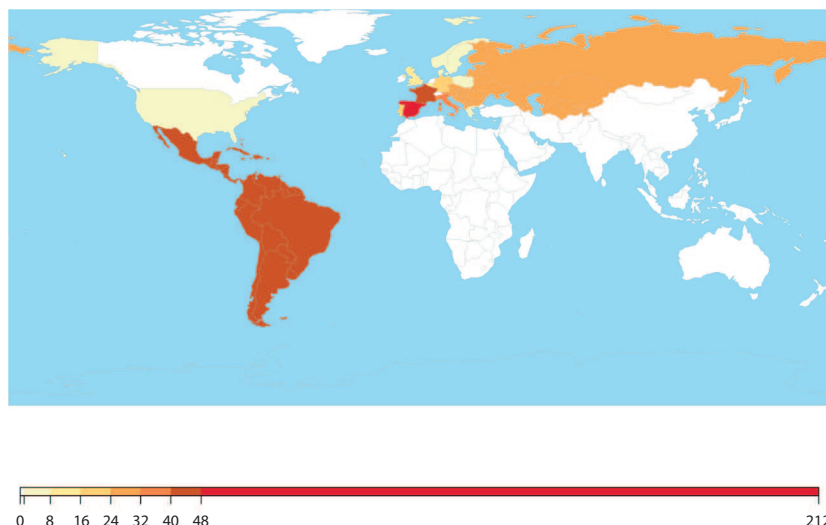


Figure 3. The postcard distribution for the whole run of *La Gaceta Literaria* on a world map

spaces of the world, that there are always such inconsistent mixtures of categories at work which alternate between different historical traditions and political orders. *La Gaceta Literaria* is not oriented towards a given model of cartography, however, but rather creates its own ideologically-based view of the world. This is particularly evident in the treatment of “Sepharad”, which appears as a part of Iberia on the same categorical level as historical regions such as Aragón, Asturias, Andalucía and Galicia. The historical forced exodus of the Jews after 1492 is thus simply annulled in the *Gaceta*’s imagination and the Spanish-speaking Jewish culture is re-integrated into the “imagined community” (Anderson 2016) of the Iberian nation, strengthened in cultural diversity and cultural significance by this reintegration.

It is outside the scope of this study to discuss in detail this problematic approach to Sephardic heritage, which has already been analysed in research (Rehrmann 1998). Without the need to go into details, it is evident that such kinds of ideological distortion of “real world” geographical categories constitute a problem if not a dilemma for any attempt to make a digital geo-referential mapping of the cultural-spatial concepts used in *La Gaceta Literaria*. Either the imaginary mapping of the world of the magazine, and thus its ideological implications, is reinforced and implicitly certified by the evidence effect of cartographic visualization (for example, if Sepharad were simply projected onto the map of the Iberian Peninsula), or else one tries to correct these imaginations by a normatively more “correct” (in this case geographically oriented) referencing of the geographical spaces (for example, those which lie behind the construct of “Sepharad”). However, this in turn would

hide precisely the ideological dimension of cultural imagination that is decisive in the world construction of the magazine. As a way of resolving this dilemma we have decided in this case to place in our visualization “Sepharad” as a virtual second “Iberia” next to the geographical map of the autonomous regions of Spain in order to expose and make explicit the constructed character of this cultural space (see Figure 4).

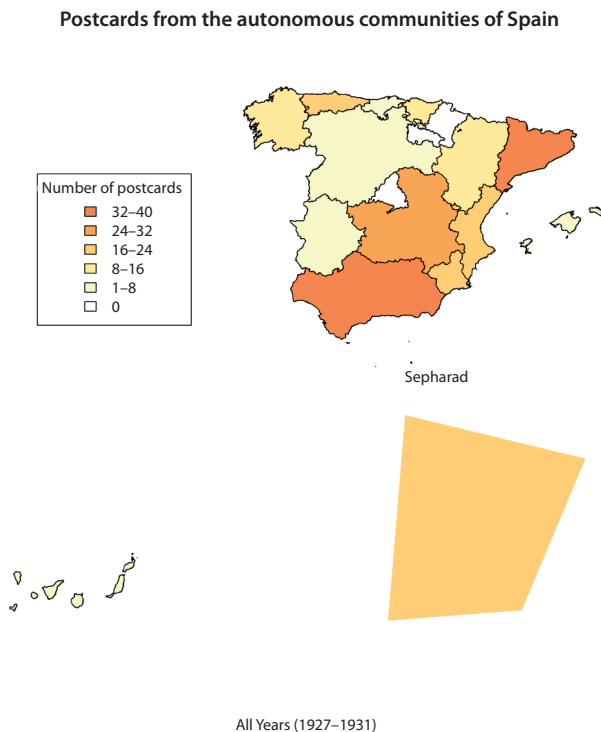


Figure 4. The “Iberian” postcard distribution for the whole run of *La Gaceta Literaria*, including “Sepharad” as part of the imagined “Iberian” community

This example shows quite well that metadata analysis in the humanities does not mean a mechanistic application of “objective” given data, but rather a consistent and continuous reworking of categorizations that contain cultural implications and potential cultural significance.²⁸ Visualizations of these data are less the result of the research process than a heuristic means to be able to control this process in a systematic and controlled manner. In this sense, the maps presented here are only starting points, which allow us to identify the texts that should be analyzed

^{28.} *Data*, in this sense, are *capta*, “taken, not given, constructed as an interpretation of the phenomenal world, not inherent in it” (Drucker 2001: § 3).

via a deep semantic reading. Here, the characteristics of the Sephardic cultures described in the different postcards on “Sepharad”, which are simply denied in the categorical construction of a new Iberian Sepharad, would have to be examined in close readings of those texts. Further research would also be required to explain the interest of *La Gaceta Literaria* in Russian culture, an ostensibly surprising affinity for a magazine whose editor-in-chief openly admitted to admiring the fascist regimes of Germany and Italy, and which disrupts the standard assignment of the avant-gardes to mutually exclusive ideological blocks (an especially typical feature of avant-garde research during the Cold War era).²⁹ Regardless of the further possibilities for deeper and more detailed analyses, the contrast between our digital maps and “Gecé’s” nationally oriented literary maps is still very revealing at first sight. It reveals a fundamentally ideological feature hidden within the magazine, not visible in the subjective maps of Giménez Caballero, namely, a precarious, epistemically unstable neo-imperial construction of world literature from an Ibero-American perspective.

Multilingualism and translation in the construction of an “Iberian” world literature in the *Gaceta Literaria*

In the construction of world literature in *La Gaceta Literaria*, in addition to the already discussed geospatial imaginary, another, more practical aspect is not only of decisive importance in general but also particularly interesting for the question of translation in periodical studies treated in this issue of Benjamins Translation Library: the old question “after Babel” of how to handle the existence of the multitude of natural languages existing in the world (Steiner 1975). On this point, too, the *Gaceta Literaria* takes by no means a consistent position, but rather operates with a strange dual strategy that seems to culminate in the paradoxical tendency towards a positive valuation of the role of translation and its simultaneous devaluation. In order to illustrate the cultural potential of the Iberian Peninsula, the magazine also offers space to the non-Castilian languages of Spain, provided they are Romance languages (the Basque language remains excluded linguistically even

29. Mechthild Albert has already mentioned this particular interest in Russian culture in *La Gaceta Literaria*: “Besides the transatlantic Iberian community, deeply rooted in Spain’s imperial past, *La Gaceta Literaria* is shaping another transnational and transcultural community, as novel as it is, perhaps, surprising. It comes of the affinity between Spain and the Soviet Union in terms of the vanguards and of the periphery” (2014: 343). In view of the quantitative prominence of the Russian cultural area, it is all the more striking that despite the already mentioned research on *La Gaceta Literaria* devoted to individual national cultures there is still no thorough examination of the role of Russian and Soviet Russian culture in the magazine.

if the Basque Country plays a role as a region of Iberia, albeit one of secondary importance in comparison with regions such as Catalonia and Andalusia). A whole series of Portuguese or Catalan texts can be found, while other European national languages are hardly present. Although a quantitative evaluation (see Figure 5) shows that other languages remain the exception to the rule of Castilian monolingualism in the *Gaceta*, the very existence of other languages is remarkable and unusual for the periodicals market in Spain during this period. Few examples of the will not to “impose the Spanish language as the absolute”, as was stressed in the magazine’s prospectus,³⁰ were sufficient to be received as a novelty which was repeatedly emphasized in the contemporaneous press commentaries after the arrival of the new cultural magazine.³¹

This tendency towards multilingualism as a co-presence of different languages in a journal,³² however timid and marginal it may have remained overall, logically implies a devaluation of the role of translation, insofar as it is assumed that the reader must have itself the passive competence to understand all of the presented languages.³³ However – and this is the decisive difference between *La Gaceta*’s

30. “*La Gaceta Literaria* carries the subtitle ‘Ibérica-América-Internacional’, not the exclusive of ‘Hispanic’. With its writing team belonging to the post-war generation, it believes that it has the characteristic sensibility of the times: a taste for universality, a respect for locality. Cosmopolitanism, nationalism: the two currents that 1914–1918 set in motion around the world.” Quote taken from Mosquera (1996: 45). All translations from the Spanish sources were made by Dr. Judith Rideout who also helped to improve the first English draft of this article. My thanks go to her.

31. As an example of one of those enthusiastic reactions, see *La Veu de Catalunya*, 15 January 1927, which welcomed “an unexpected voice that raises a cry from the center of Iberia to all members of the intellectual family scattered over the whole Peninsula and Latin America to raise their arms from the bottom of our bitter isolation” (quoted in Mosquera 1996: 46).

32. Being aware of the amplitude of the theoretical problem of multilingualism and translation (Meylaerts 2010), my understanding of “multilingualism” is here just very basic, signifying the co-presence of different languages in the same print medium. Within our corpus of magazines very interesting types of literary multilingualism have been found, based mainly on the different forms of co-presence of Spanish and indigenous languages such as Quechua. This is especially the case with various texts in the *Boletín Titikaka*. In the case of *La Gaceta Literaria*, however, literary multilingualism within the presented texts is practically absent. The co-presence of the three Iberian Romance languages is, however, a sign of the political ambition of the periodical which I will endeavour to explain in more detail.

33. As the exhaustive monograph analyzing the social backgrounds of the *Gaceta Literaria* demanded by José Carlos Mainer (1988: 40) still remains to be written, we can only repeat his “conjectures” about the effective readership of the periodical: “In the absence of the missing monograph, we have more conjectures than answers. With almost total certainty, we should not estimate at more than two or three thousand the number of copies of *La Gaceta* that circulated

Gaceta Literaria: Relative Percentages of Contributions in Several Languages

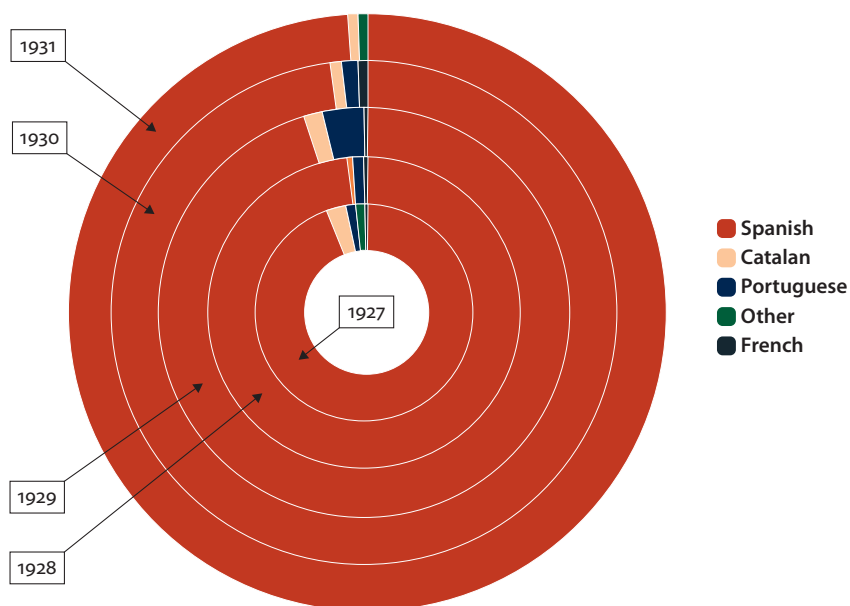


Figure 5. Relative percentages of contributions to *La Gaceta Literaria* in different languages

Ibero-American strategy of internationalization and Huidobro's European multilingualism as seen in the first issue of *Creación* – this position is taken only in reference to the family of the Ibero-Romance languages. While Huidobro's presentation of five European languages in one journal issue is proof of an aesthetically interesting yet politically utopian acceptance of linguistic diversity after Babel, the more restricted Iberian multilingualism of *La Gaceta* seems more realistic and reader-friendly for the common Latin ground offers, of course, a good basis for a rather far-reaching passive understanding within the group of Iberian Romanic languages.

The proposition from Madrid to construct an “Iberian” community which is based on the recognition of linguistic diversity, was explicitly praised and actively supported by the non-Castilian speaking Spanish cultural areas represented in the *Gaceta*. For example, a Portuguese article by João de Castro Osorio in the

for each issue. And with absolute certainty we can affirm that its most regular readers would be in their twenties or thirties, would live in cities and would be part of the professional, university or administrative middle class. And if their number were higher in Madrid, nor would it be low in the provinces, as these are years in which we know that the latter awoken from the lethargy of Restorationism to the heat of new communications, greater concerns and vague anxieties that were very well addressed by *La Gaceta's* editorial mission.”

first issue reinforces the “Esperança Lusiada e a fraternidade Ibérica” (1927). The linguistic policy of the *Gaceta* is also explicitly praised, to give a second prominent example, by the Catalan magazine *L'Amic de les arts*, whose editorial by Josep Carbonell (1928) is reprinted in excerpts in the 50th issue of the Madrid magazine in January 1929. The attitude of *La Gaceta* towards Catalonia is appreciated there as a “supernationalism” or “superhispanism” in the sense of a new “peninsular” spirit, which had been sown by Catalonia, but which had not yet completely flowered. Carbonell demonstrates this new attitude by pointing out that the proper names of Catalan contributors are not hispanized in the Madrid journal as usual but “have been respected with their vernacular spelling” (1929: 4)³⁴ or, to respect the Catalan original, “resten pulcrament respetats” (Carbonell 1928: 1). Already this small detail, a Catalan note of praise for the recognition of linguistic independence, yet itself translated into Spanish, highlights the paradoxes and unresolved tensions in the project for a “transnational” cultural construction that cannot really leave the national behind, but which tries to integrate different dynamics of the national. That the bridges between the inner-Iberian linguistic regions were in reality not as stable as desired, but quite fragile, becomes apparent in the case of the cooperative agreement between the *La Gaceta* and the Portuguese *Presença*, which started enthusiastically, but which was finally broken off at the end of 1929, accompanied, among other things, by the accusations of excessive Francophilia directed by Giménez Caballero towards the Portuguese group (Cuadrado Fernández 1988: 58s).

This brings us back to the neo-imperialist political level associated with the “Ibero-American” cultural imagination, which is sometimes also reflected in *La Gaceta*’s language and translation policies. If within the Iberian language family (excluding the Basque) multilingualism tends to be used as an alternative to translation, translation is recognized as a decisive means to gain global importance for the Iberian cultural space in the realm of world literature. It is for this reason that the magazine pays great attention to the translations of “Iberian” cultural production into other linguistic regions. Translations into other European languages are

34. “In short, that for the writers of *La Gaceta Literaria*, their attitude, vis-à-vis Catalonia, isn’t the result of a hyperintelligent, understanding, humane, systematic position vis-à-vis the Catalan reality – such as would have been correspondingly adopted by their predecessors, an ‘Azorín,’ an Araquistáin etc. – before any other problem of human liberty. It is an enlightenment in their spirit – devoid of all other effective patriotism – of a supernationalism, of a superhispanism, of which, it must be recognized, Catalonia sowed the seed, but without yet seeing the harvest [...] In the last issue of the Madrid review, beside the Castilian, Catalan and Portuguese articles which lord over the space, one sees the index and summary of Andalusian magazines and books, where the names of the Catalan contributors are found respected with their vernacular spellings, in dedications, reviews and articles.”

meticulously noted as signs of a growing cultural importance of the emerging Pan-Iberian cultural nation, which is why translations from Catalan into other world languages are recorded as well as translations of Castilian authors and texts.³⁵ In general, within *La Gaceta Literaria* there is a great awareness of the importance of translation as a means of transnational dissemination of a culture, which can also be seen in the frequent explicit thematization of translation – relatively frequent in terms of what was usual in cultural magazines at this time. Despite such diversity in these unsystematic reflections (from different authors on different occasions in varying degrees of depth),³⁶ once again we can observe the overall tendency for an inconsistency in categories typical of the cultural imaginary of *La Gaceta*. Translation is particularly praised when it promotes and enhances the status of its “own” transnationally constructed Ibero-American culture in the world. This applies not only to translations from this cultural area, but also into it, for example when in an article on “Descartes en Catalán” the author (very possibly Tomàs Garcés) celebrates translation as a cultural and creative achievement of appropriation, which in principle ranks on the same level as cultural activity in one’s own language. In order to conceptualize this act of appropriation, the author refers to Catalan, from which he takes the concept of “nostrar”, a word he claims is “henchida de significación” (‘bursting with meaning’).³⁷

To discuss translation in a Castilian text with a Catalan expression like “nostrar” shows two things: the attempt to form a Pan-Iberian ingroup feeling, in which individual national ambitions are included and should be overcome to form a new synthesis, but also the cultural separation of one’s own group from the foreign, which continues to be at work even in this new transnational imagined community. Even so, translation from other languages is not always so self-confidently celebrated as a cultural achievement of its own; on the contrary, in the commentaries about translations in *La Gaceta*, time and again we see a fear of “alienation”

35. Ferrán Soldevilla (1929), to give a concrete example, praises in this sense the translation of the Catalan chronicle of Bernat Desclot into English.

36. Although a more detailed and systematic study of the translation problem within *La Gaceta* is still missing, Mosquera (1996: 50–53) dedicates some space to the “Diálogo de las lenguas”.

37. “Descartes en catalán”, *La Gaceta Literaria* III, 67 (October 1929): 2. The author refers explicitly to a prior article in which he had already introduced “nostrar” as the Catalan word for translation as appropriation, claiming Carles Ribas to have introduced this notion. See the “Noticario” of the “Gaceta Catalana” in *La Gaceta Literaria* III, 59 (June 1929): 4. Since this notice is part of a block of information related to Barcelona and it has been Tomas García who was responsible, within the *Gaceta Catalana*, for the Barcelona Area (Juan Chabas, on the other hand, reported on Valencia), one can assume that he was the author of both this information and the article on “Descartes en catalán”.

through an excessive presence of the “Other”, a fear of alienation which leads also to a rejection to translate the Other. Such fear is particularly explicit in the dispute over the “intellectual meridian”, in which Latin American writers were called upon to abandon their supposedly overpowering cultural orientation towards Paris and instead orient themselves towards Madrid, the metropolis of the old motherland, because this motherland was now ready for fraternal cooperation. One of the theses formulated in the context of this dispute, issued by an unnamed author, was that in reality it is not Paris but *translation* which constitutes a false meridian, marking the intellectual hour not only for Latin America but for Spain itself. With regard to the conditions of the book market on both sides of the Atlantic, the weakness of domestic cultural production is criticized, because even in Madrid, as the supposed center of *hispanitas*, the production of its own literature would be far too weak and meaningless in relation to translations of “other” literature.

The Spanish publisher has come to understand that his duty is to serve as a bridge between the central cultures of Europe and the avid and snobbish curiosity of America. Therefore, dear Spaniards, why do you shout so much about the Meridian of Madrid? Sadly, the real Meridian of Hispano-America right now is the servile act of translation.³⁸

As has been already stressed by some critics (e.g. Falcón 2010), although the “battle of the meridian” seems at first to be a conflict motivated by identity politics and national pride, very concrete issues such as the influence in the global book market were at stake. The translation politics of the *Gaceta* was definitely not only driven by the idealistic objective of increasing the world-wide circulation of ideas and installing a new brotherhood of intellectuals, it was also driven by ambitions for very materialistic gains in influence and power.

In every case, the discourse on “misery and splendor of translation” that would be made prominent later by Ortega y Gasset (1947) was, in the case of the debate in *La Gaceta Literaria*, clearly influenced by the specific upheavals of Spanish culture in a phase in which postcolonial cultural dynamics (Spain vis-à-vis America) overlapped with neo-colonial dynamics (Spain vis-à-vis Africa) and led to a complete breakdown in ideological consistency.

Modern Spanish-language cultural magazines in the phases of *modernismo* and the avant-garde, which we examine in our project and of which I could only discuss two examples here, functioned not least as media able to construct competing imaginary communities that were no longer (only) national. In order to study this cultural dynamic successfully in their entire complexity in the future, it

38. “El verdadero meridiano Hispanoamericano: la traducción”. *La Gaceta Literaria* I, no. 17 (September 1927): 1.

will no longer be sufficient to refer to the data collected in the respective national archives, because in culture “data” are not simply given, uncontestable facts and because the archives’ own national logic cannot be methodically transcended for the formation of a world literature as easily as Franco Moretti, for example, seems to imagine. A first step in the right direction would therefore be to combine the new digital methods of research with a real practice of transnational networking in the research community. This practice can only take place through joint work on metadata as a new kind of meta-language for comparative research on digitized materials. Only through the collaborative exchange of data can it be ensured that the expanded archive of digital world literature not only becomes larger in terms of quantity, but also more deeply understood, in a way that questions the traditional categories of evaluating literature we inherit still from the national-oriented philologies.

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