

Towards the Digital Cultural History of the Other Silver Age Spain

ESTUDIOS HISPÁNICOS EN EL CONTEXTO GLOBAL
HISPANIC STUDIES IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT
HISPANISTIK IM GLOBALEN KONTEXT

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Dolores Romero López /
Jeffrey Zamostny (eds.)

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Table of Contents

Dolores Romero López and Jeffrey Zamostny

Introduction. Silver Age Spain, Today: The View through a Digital Lens 7

I. Corpus, Archive, Database, Library: Digital Repositories and their Uses

José Calvo Tello and Nanette Rißler-Pipka

Chapter 1 Replication Crisis and the (Digital) Humanities: Perspectives
from the Spanish Silver Age(s) 35

Rosario Mascato Rey and Adriana Abalo Gómez

Chapter 2 From the Digital Humanities to Digital Modernism:
Critical Approaches to Technology and Literary Databases:
SilverAgeLab Translations and Valle-Inclán's Manuscripts 67

José Miguel González Soriano and Joaquín Gayoso Cabada

Chapter 3 *Mnemosine*: A Digital Platform for Research and Rediscovery
of the Other Silver Age Spain 89

Maite Zubiaurre and Wendy Perla Kurtz

Chapter 4 Digitizing *Erotica*: A Virtual Wunderkammer: Sexual Cultures
in Early Twentieth-Century Spain 107

Elena Bonmatí González

Chapter 5 A Distant and Close Reading Analysis of Spanish Anarchist
Magazines and Erotic Magazines of the Early Twentieth
Century 123

II. Maps and Networks: Perspectives from Hispanic, Iberian, and Transatlantic Studies

María Jesús Fraga

Chapter 6 Mapping *Celia en la revolución* by Elena Fortún 149

Blanca Gómez Cifuentes

Chapter 7 Dance Studies and Digital Humanities: On Tour with Antonia Mercé La Argentina's Ballets Espagnols (1927–1929) 169

Santiago Pérez Isasi

Chapter 8 Digital Cartography as a Tool for Studying Transnational Literary Relations: The Iberian Case 187

Hanno Ehrlicher and Jörg Lehmann

Chapter 9 Transatlantic Transfers: Dynamics of Circulation in Literary and Cultural Magazines of the Silver Age 211

Lucía Cotarelo Esteban

Chapter 10 New Models for a Digital Reading of the Republican Exile of 1939 229

List of Tables 253

List of Figures 255

Notes on Contributors 259

Index 265

José Miguel González Soriano
Universidad Complutense de Madrid
josemigo@ucm.es

Joaquín Gayoso Cabada
Universidad Politécnica de Madrid
j.gayoso@upm.es

Chapter 3 *Mnemosine*: A Digital Platform for Research and Rediscovery of the Other Silver Age Spain

1. *Mnemosine*: Concept, Origin, and Configuration

There can be no doubt that we are living through a period of rapid change in the ontology and epistemology of historical study, driven by the emergence of the Digital Humanities and the phenomenon of mass digitization of large collections of historical books and periodicals (Romero López, 2021). New technologies have already transformed our scholarly disciplines and are poised to bring further significant changes to traditional hermeneutic methods of analyzing texts and identifying research objects. As philologists, we cannot remain indifferent to these transformations, but rather should seek to leverage the potential of technology intelligently to our own ends. Specifically in the case of experts on the Silver Age of Spanish culture, the first two decades of the twenty-first century witnessed the digitization of numerous books, periodical publications, kiosk literary collections, archival documents, and collections of letters, facilitating access to a vast alternative corpus of texts, some unpublished, others considered “raros y olvidados.” This in turn has opened the traditional canon into what we now call the “otra Edad de Plata” or “other Silver Age” (Ena Bordonada, 2013). Hence, we are currently seeing the rediscovery and revaluation of numerous Spanish women authors whom we did not yet know in all their complexity, as well as of great journalists who, in books and the many newspapers of the time, contributed to an unparalleled period in the history of Spanish letters.

In this context of transformation and increased access to information, *Mnemosine: Biblioteca Digital de La otra Edad de Plata* serves as a database, knowledge base, and laboratory for ideas whose aim is to surpass traditional historiographic principles in order to elaborate a “digital history” of the

period.¹ According to Jairo Antonio Melo Flórez, the digital historian's archive migrates from a static, specialized space to a nomadic space of immaterial content like that of the web. Digital History is defined not only by its digital sources, but also by “la relación misma con la tecnología informática, con las bases de datos, la hipertextualización y las redes para crear y compartir conocimiento histórico” (Melo Flórez, 2011: 85). Melo Flórez elaborates in a subsequent article:

Considero que la historia digital es ante todo una historia global y como tal debería ser la lectura realizada por el investigador. Es decir, las búsquedas por categorías cualitativas que se realizan diariamente expresan relaciones que son halladas de manera automática por el algoritmo de búsqueda. Además, entre más complejo sea el algoritmo y mejor almacenada esté la información en el repositorio más evidentes resultarán dichas relaciones. [...] De manera cotidiana los investigadores estamos leyendo en red a través de buscadores y, por ende, lo hacemos de manera fragmentada. [...] El buscador jerarquiza las fuentes según la pertinencia y cantidad de información disponible de acuerdo con una serie de palabras claves o preguntas recurrentes. [...] El buscador “lee” y selecciona por nosotros, quienes tenemos la tarea posterior de revisar la pertinencia de lo hallado a partir del contexto de las obras. (Melo Flórez, 2017: 180–181)

Launched by the research teams LOEP (La otra Edad de Plata) and ILSA (Ingeniería de Lenguaje, Software y Aplicaciones) at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, the digital library *Mnemosine* selects, catalogs, organizes, and makes visible in electronic form a forgotten repertoire of texts that were marginalized from the canon of Spanish literature between 1868 and 1936. The platform organizes information in a dynamic fashion, using digital tools that resist rigidity and facilitate the creation and visualization of new collections and repertoires. Its intention is to make the leap from analog to digital models of historiographic scholarship. In the words of Dolores Romero López, the library's founder and coordinator: “Legado digital, programas y herramientas colaboran en los nuevos planteamientos de la historiografía literaria que, en buena medida, se ha ido gestando en torno a colecciones, archivos y bibliotecas de autores, lectores y público” (Romero López, 2021: 19). The cataloging system of a traditional library is relatively static; that of a digital library or knowledge base like *Mnemosine* is less so, both in terms of the information it contains and the way that information is structured. Starting with a user's interests, as defined by their specific searches, data retrieval in a digital library is dynamic thanks to the nature of the library's data and metadata (always open to edition or modification), the links between

1 See <<http://repositorios.fdi.ucm.es/mnemosine/>>. [Accessed 30 September 2021].

them, and the increased volume of scholarly content adapted to the particular needs of each collection. To give one example, some collections in *Mnemosine* provide metadata on authors such as their places of residence and the literary genres they cultivated, facts that offer updated ways of categorizing historiographic knowledge.

The objective of this digital research platform is thus to enable scholars to harness the digital medium of the web to concretize concepts, intuitions, and knowledge through tailored searches. *Mnemosine* helps users make meaning by offering numerous possibilities for locating and cross-referencing data. Methodologically, the library stems from the mass digitization of content by libraries and institutional archives and the use of specific metadata to catalog and provide scientifically relevant information about the digitized objects. The use of this library and database – in reality, a knowledge base² – promises to connect the data about all the texts, authors, and other diverse entities it stores, thereby establishing previously unrecognized networks and opening new avenues for research into the literature of the time.

With these goals in mind, *Mnemosine* is an open-access platform of odd and forgotten texts of Silver Age Spain, where the Silver Age is understood to encompass the period between the Glorious Revolution of 1868 and the Civil War of 1936–1939.³ José María Jover Zamora (1963) and Miguel Martínez Cuadrado (1973) follow this periodization in their contributions to the volumes *Introducción a la Historia de España* and *Historia de España. La burguesía conservadora, 1868–1931*, respectively, and it has gone on to enjoy increasing usage among specialists such as Urrutia Cárdenas (1999–2000), Abad Nebot (2007), Romero López (2014), and Thion Soriano-Mollá (2021), among others. In the twenty-first century, the concept of a Spanish Silver Age has taken on greater nuance through

2 A knowledge base is a database dedicated to the preservation and expansion of knowledge, “un tipo especial de base de datos para la gestión del conocimiento. Provee los medios para la recolección, organización y recuperación computarizada de conocimiento.” See <https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Base_de_conocimiento>. [Accessed 1 October 2021].

3 The *Mnemosine* digital library applies the term “raros y olvidados” to texts more than to authors, as it focuses more on literature itself than on writers. Among other advantages, this facilitates the cataloging of literature written by women alongside that written by men, as a parallel category with certain specificities. The library’s text-based organization also draws attention to inter-literary phenomena (translations, networks of contacts) and transdisciplinary phenomena such as the links between literature and art, science, film, music, and others (see González Soriano, 2021: 34).

three developments: (1) the expansion of Cultural Studies and Postcolonial Studies and their interrogation of the canon; (2) the mass digitization of content; and (3) the emergence of transdisciplinary and transversal pedagogies that integrate scholarly and technological innovation. These three processes “han ido creando unas expectativas teóricas y de contenidos que han culminado en un ‘archivo infinito’ [...] un *continuum* de datos deslocalizados que son objeto de estudio para muchos investigadores. Conviene ir poniendo orden y tomar posiciones desde el criterio propio para no perdernos en el magma de otra teoría del todo” (Romero López, 2021: 20).

In another recent article, we detailed the origin and development of *Mnemosine* (González Soriano, 2021). The Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad awarded official funding to the project “Escritorios electrónicos para las Literaturas-2” on 5 September 2012 (Ref. FFI2012-34666), launching the creation of a digital library of odd and forgotten texts of the Spanish Silver Age. The first step was to import a wide repertoire of authors and works previously selected by the research team LOEP into the new web platform. They came from two main repositories: *HathiTrust Digital Library*, of which the Biblioteca Complutense became a member in November 2010; and the *Biblioteca Digital Hispánica*, with which an agreement was reached to digitize books by odd and forgotten Silver Age authors held in the Biblioteca Nacional de España (Romero López, 2014: 417–418; Romero, Bueren, and Gayoso, 2017: 405). The incorporation of digital objects from these two libraries took place through the use of *Clavy*, a rich internet application (RIA) developed by the research team ILSA at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid for managing digital collections. To cite some of the team members, *Clavy* “aporta mecanismos de manejo de múltiples colecciones en un mismo repositorio, mecanismos para la importación y exportación de objetos digitales desde y hacia otros repositorios y, de forma novedosa, mecanismos para transformar y unificar esquemas de metadatos de colecciones diferentes facilitando al máximo la integración de repositorios y la importación y exportación” (Fernández-Pampillón, Gayoso, Sarasa, and Sierra, 2018: 75–76).

Following the first bulk import of titles and authors using *Clavy*, the next step centered on content curation and a mapping between the elements in MARC 21 (still the most commonly used format for machine-readable bibliographic records) and the elements of the data and metadata model defined for *Mnemosine*. Further, it was necessary to integrate the records into a predesigned model to allow for their export into other compatible hypertextual formats such as HTML, XML or JSON. Sometimes, the virtual objects required less granular detail than was present in MARC 21; other times, it was useful to incorporate

specific metadata that do not appear in MARC 21 but that enhance the library's search and retrieval functions. These metadata include facts about authors (gender and sexual identity, place of birth and death, residences, geolocalization, nationality, professional activities, pseudonyms, preference for particular genres) and works (genres and subgenres, artistic influences, etc.; see Fig. 3.1). Such information responds to the needs of researchers and teachers and must build on the prior knowledge of specialists in philology and literary studies, without whose expertise the library would not exist. As we have emphasized in various settings, this expertise is crucial for situating the bibliographic records in their historical, literary, and cultural contexts.⁴

The screenshot displays two profiles on the Mnemosine platform. The left profile is for the author Luis Bello, featuring a portrait and a list of biographical data. The right profile is for the work 'El corazón de Jesús', featuring a decorative emblem and a list of bibliographic and descriptive metadata. Both profiles include navigation links for '¿QUÉ ES MNEMOSINE?', 'COLECCIONES', 'GRUPOS, EQUIPO Y CONTACTO', and 'AYUDA'.

Author Profile: Bello, Luis

- ▼ **Datos del Autor:**
 - Nombre: Bello, Luis
 - Fechas asociadas al nombre: 1872-1935
 - Forma desarrollada del nombre: Bello Trompeta, Luis Nicolás
 - ↳ Género: Hombre
 - ▼ **Variantes de nombre:**
 - Variantes del nombre: Farandul
 - ↳ Variante: Pseudónimo
 - Variantes del nombre: El Trajeista
 - ↳ Variante: Pseudónimo
 - Variantes del nombre: Juan Berber
 - ↳ Variante: Pseudónimo
 - Fecha de nacimiento: 6-12-1872
 - Fecha de muerte: 5-11-1935
 - ▼ **Lugar de nacimiento:**
 - Ciudad: Aña de Tormes (Salamanca)
 - ↳ País: España
 - ▼ **Lugar de muerte:**
 - Ciudad: Madrid

Work Profile: El corazón de Jesús

- ▼ **Obras:**
 - ▼ **Datos de la Obra:**
 - Título: El corazón de Jesús
 - Lugar de publicación: Madrid
 - Editorial: El Cuento Semanal
 - Fecha de publicación: 1907 (8-11-1907)
 - Lugar de impresión: Madrid
 - Impreso: Imp. Artística de José Blass
 - ▼ **Descripción física:** [20] p.
 - Longitud: 29 cm.
 - ↳ Otras características físicas: Il.
 - ▼ **Género y subgénero:**
 - ↳ Género: *hazratka*
 - ↳ Subgénero: *Novela coral, político-social*
 - ▼ **Serie o Colección:** El Cuento Semanal
 - ↳ Volumen / Designación secuencial: Año I, núm. 45
 - Número de control BNE: bnoBNE/199/0655691/BN09100072889
 - Número de control OCLC: 433700133
 - ▼ **Recursos:** *Bello, Luis*
 - ↳ **Obra-Persona:**
 - ↳ Tipo de relación: Escrita por

Fig. 3.1. Author and work profiles in *Mnemosine*

4 The Digital Humanities open new perspectives to philologists in their work of organizing, classifying, and implementing data and modeling new collections. These perspectives were the main theme of the XXVII Curso de Verano of the UNED (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia), held on 27–29 June 2016 at the Centro Asociado de Ponferrada, under the title “Introducción a las Humanidades Digitales: Nuevas oportunidades y perspectivas para los filólogos” (directed by Elena Bárcena and coordinated by María Goicoechea de Jorge). During the event, we presented the paper “*Mnemosine*: Biblioteca digital de la otra Edad de Plata” alongside other experts in electronic editions and the digitization of bibliographic holdings.

2. Linked Data and Literary Collections in *Mnemosine*

Another essential task in the preliminary and subsequent stages of configuring the *Mnemosine* digital library was to create a linked-data structure or model that would later allow for cross-referencing data in relational searches. The library uses language based on RDF (Resource Description Framework) to link information corresponding to virtual objects and to establish different types of relationships between those objects. This language draws on conventional syntactic and semantic schemes that are similar to XML and that facilitate the use of any desired precise vocabulary to define the elements under consideration, which are called “classes” in RDF (virtual objects such as “person,” “work,” “collection” or “periodical publication”), as well as the relationships or “properties” linking those elements (“author of,” “translator of,” “illustrator of,” “director of,” “reviewer of,” on the one hand; “written by,” “translated by,” “illustrated by,” “directed by,” “reviewed by,” “reviewed in,” on the other). *Clavy* allows users to create the necessary elements to establish a unique, tailored ontology for the development of *Mnemosine* and its collections, though it is generally preferable to create the ontology reusing preexisting standardized vocabularies and avoiding an undue number of unique elements. This allows other systems to understand the data model and to reuse the information contained therein. According to Romero, Bueren, and Gayoso, “some preexisting vocabularies that are useful for the definition of the *Mnemosine* ontology are Web Ontology Language (OWL), Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR), Friend of a Friend (FOAF), and Dublin Core. In addition to saving time, using preexisting vocabularies makes it easier to recycle information from the *Mnemosine* database” (2017: 406).

Digital objects are comprised of groups of attribute-value pairs wherein each attribute is associated with a single value. If an attribute is to be related to multiple values, it will undergo a process of duplication internal to the data model in order to maintain this norm. Initially, *Clavy* established two main classes of virtual object for *Mnemosine*, “persona” and “obra,” between which it was possible to establish different relationships. Since then, the number of classes and relationships has grown steadily to describe new collections more accurately. In addition to defining different relationships between the virtual objects in a single collection, it is possible and necessary to link objects to other electronic resources, whether they be URLs external to *Mnemosine* (as in the case of open-access digitized works), or other internal resources associated with the collection and stored within *Clavy*.

Drawing on a constantly growing repertoire, *Mnemosine: Biblioteca Digital de La otra Edad de Plata* is organized around specific collections designed by experts

in the course of their research. These collections also reflect the platform's evolving technological capacities, which allow for increasingly automatized data imports as well as linked-data searches. Currently, *Mnemosine* encompasses a series of collections that shed light on various genres, macro-genres, and sub-genres (Colección Protociencia-Ficción, Diálogo Literario, Literatura Infantil), innovative themes (Memorias de Escritoras Exiliadas, Autores del Exilio Norteamericano, Literatura Femenina Reseñada en *Índice Literario*), readers (Literatura de Quiosco, Libros Interactivos), groups (Muertos en Conflicto, 1936–1939; Traductoras de la Edad de Plata), and individual authors (Colección Carmen de Burgos). The data model is flexible enough to adapt the metadata to the distinct nature of each collection, the needs and criteria of scholars who use the collections, and future plans to introduce more finely-grained search functions. At the same time, this flexibility respects the aforementioned principles of interoperability and data exchange (Zhang and Gourley, 2008), which facilitate the export of data to other digital collections. In this regard, “*Mnemosine* recoge unos contenidos muy avanzados, precisando – y ofreciendo – por ello un modo completo y complejo de acceso a materiales a través de un modelo de búsqueda, de recuperación y de presentación pensado para la actividad académica. Aspectos de catalogación irrelevantes para el lector medio o el ámbito bibliotecario que pueden resultar de gran valía para el investigador son implementados en *Mnemosine*. Asimismo, las herramientas y funcionalidades que se ofrecen al usuario avanzan desde lo general hasta lo particular: desde aspectos como la búsqueda simple hasta la búsqueda cruzada o la anotación” (Cotarelo Esteban, 2018: 27).

Within *Mnemosine*, a collection can be generated automatically by defining a shared piece of information among the metadata in all the virtual objects to be included in that particular collection. For example, a collection might be comprised of the objects that appear in the results when a certain linked-data search is conducted within the database. The needs of particular researchers determine how the data are modeled and how the collections are structured. For instance, Lucía Cotarelo Esteban of the research team GEXEL (Grupo de Estudios del Exilio Literario) developed the collection “Autores en Exilio” to recover and draw attention to writers who fell victim to political exile following the Spanish Civil War. A sub-group within this collection highlights the poets who resided for all or part of their exile on the east coast of the United States (a topic on which Cotarelo wrote her doctoral dissertation). This sub-group can be viewed by applying the filter “Exilio (País)”=>“Estados Unidos” to the collection as a whole. The transdisciplinary data model of “Autores en Exilio” associates a variety of metadata to the virtual object “persona,” some of which are common in other collections: “Forma desarrollada del nombre,” “Variantes del nombre,”

“Nacionalidad” (the exiles often changed their nationality or adopted the citizenship of their destination country), “Actividad profesional” or “Asocaciones a las que pertenece” (a crucial topic for studies of migration and exile). Other metadata linked to “persona” in this collection are more specific to its theme: “Lugar de exilio,” “Muerte en el exilio,” “Fecha de retorno a España,” and elements pertaining to the geolocalization of the individual at different times (“Latitud,” “Longitud,” “Localización”; see Cotarelo Esteban, 2018: 32–37).

With a related theme, the collection “Memorias de Exiliadas” under the directorship of Begoña Cambor (Universidad de Oviedo) compiles women authors of Silver Age Spain who published memoirs during their exile. The collection recuperates literature narrated in the first person by numerous female voices and offers a repertoire of great scholarly interest within the current boom in Gender Studies. Its dataset shares specific metadata with the collection “Autores en Exilio” such as “Lugar de exilio” and “Muerte en el exilio,” as well as more general metadata that are common to many collections in *Mnemosine* and can turn up in wide-ranging searches. The virtual objects within “Memorias de Exiliadas” are the result of a linked-data search for the values “memorias” and “autobiografía” within the attributes “género literario” and “subgénero” among the virtual objects called “obra,” and for the value “mujer” within the attribute “género sexual” among the objects called “persona.” As director of the collection, Cambor was responsible for applying philological criteria and her direct knowledge of the works to label them as memoirs or autobiographies in the first place.

In a similar fashion, researchers have created the other collections in *Mnemosine*, each one with its own particular data model, using the data they provide in Excel spreadsheets once they have been imported through *Clavy*. The library is fully reconfigurable in terms of its content and metadata, and the model’s extensibility allows for the addition of new descriptive elements, the definition of new classes, and the definition of new relationships between objects. For example, the collection “Literatura de Quiosco,” organized by Jeffrey Zamostny of the University of West Georgia, builds on metadata of special interest within that macro-genre (Fig. 3.2). The collection establishes the new class “colección” for virtual objects comprising the titles of kiosk literary collections, including series of short novels that attained immense success in early twentieth-century Spain. Attributes specific to this class include the founder or director of each series, the number of titles published, size of print runs, frequency of publication, time and point of sale (many of these collections came out weekly on a particular day), price, and format or physical characteristics. Other attributes refer to the literary content of the collections, conveying information about subgenres, stock characters, and spatial and temporal settings of the works published

therein. Such attributes are difficult to find in the catalogs of traditional libraries. *Mnemosine* also includes call numbers for the many kiosk collections held in the important Ricardo Donoso-Cortés y Mesonero-Romanos Collection of *Literatura de Kiosco* (1900–1967) at the University of California, Los Angeles (Zamostny, 2018). In the case of *La Novela de Hoy* (Madrid, 1922–1932) and a few other significant collections, the virtual objects called “colección” link to the works in their catalogs; conversely, the virtual objects called “obra” link to both their authors and the short novel collections to which they belong.

COLECCIÓN: LITERATURA DE QUIOSCO

En el primer tercio del siglo XX el quiosco fue un nodo para la difusión de abundantes colecciones literarias de gran tirada que se vendían a precios asequibles para el entretenimiento de las masas. La Colección de Literatura de Quiosco ofrece metadatos correspondientes a un número considerable de las colecciones que se multiplicaron tras el éxito de *El Cuento Semanal* (1907-1912) y que llegaron a publicar una enorme cantidad de textos novelísticos, teatrales, eróticos, políticos y cinematográficos, escritos por hombres y mujeres. De momento, la Colección contiene información sobre aproximadamente 350 series, la mayoría de ellas con ejemplares físicos en la Colección Ricardo Donoso-Cortés y Mesonero-Romanos de Literatura de Quiosco, albergada desde 2011 en la Universidad de California-Los Angeles. En un futuro próximo, se espera importar los metadatos de casi 9.500 títulos específicos pertenecientes a estas colecciones e impulsar la digitalización de más textos impresos. Se abre así un esplio panorama sobre la cultura popular de la Edad de Plata.

Coordinador: Jeffrey Zamostny

La NOVELA del SABADO

RESULTADO PARA LA BÚSQUEDA: LITERATURA DE QUIOSCO
EL NÚMERO DE ELEMENTOS ENCONTRADOS ES : 873

Fig. 3.2. The collection “Literatura de Quiosco” in *Mnemosine*

To create the collection “Traductoras de la Edad de Plata,” organized by Amelia Sanz Cabrerizo of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, it was necessary to define a new multi-valued attribute called “reediciones.” This attribute makes it possible to associate a virtual object – in this case, a work in translation – with its first edition and all subsequent editions, which vary by date and even by publisher. In this way, the multi-valued attribute facilitates the philological and historical reconstruction of a translation’s trajectory over time, its *stemma*. “Traductoras de la Edad de Plata” was generated by selecting the values “mujer” and “española” within the attributes “género sexual” and “nacionalidad” among the objects called “persona” in the *Mnemosine* database. From there, it was necessary to examine the works associated with each Spanish woman writer. If the person-work relationships uniting a writer to her works included the term “traductora de,” then that writer was considered for inclusion. For its

part, the collection “Diálogos literarios en la Edad de Plata” under the directorship of María Jesús Fraga (Universidad Complutense de Madrid) highlights the profusion in the first third of the twentieth century of the literary dialogue, a venerable genre that reached a high point with sixteenth-century Renaissance humanism. This collection was modeled around the attribute “género literario” and possible sub-genres within the virtual objects called “obra.” However, the medium of publication for literary dialogues of the time – usually, the literary press – required the definition of new metadata containing information about the particular publications that printed these texts, as well as a new class or entity titled “publicaciones periódicas” with its own dataset.

As a final example, the linked-data model and types of relationships between virtual objects are even more complex in one of the most recent collections in *Mnemosine*, “Literatura femenina reseñada en *Índice Literario*” (Fig. 3.3). Developed by Juana María González of the Universidad Internacional de La Rioja, the collection centers on *Índice Literario*, a cultural magazine published between 1932 and 1936 and directed by Pedro Salinas. The publication consists of “una serie de reseñas anónimas de libros de reciente edición donde se intenta adoptar un tono objetivo y exento de crítica personal” and is noteworthy “por incluir en sus páginas reseñas sobre obras escritas por mujeres intelectuales y escritoras relevantes del momento” (González, 2021: 2–3). The virtual object for *Índice Literario* in *Mnemosine* links to all the woman-authored works reviewed in the journal. In turn, the works link to the journal through the relationship “reseñada en,” as well as to their respective authors, who have the value “mujer” within the attribute “género sexual” among the virtual objects called “persona.”

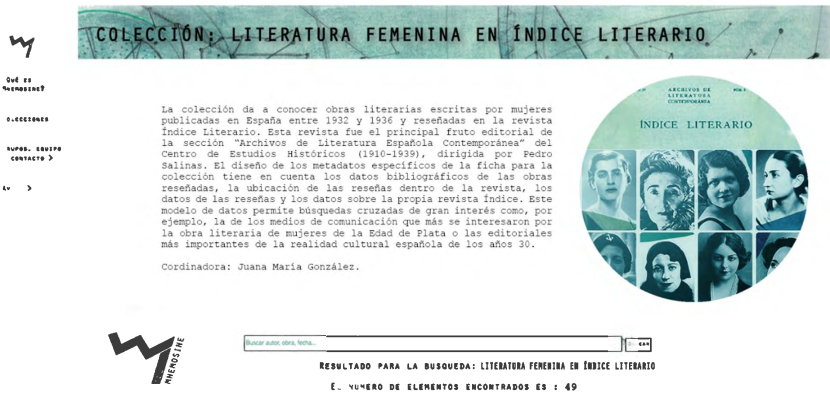


Fig. 3.3. The collection “Literatura femenina en *Índice Literario*” in *Mnemosine*

3. Relational Searches: Tailoring Collections to Expert Knowledge

Mnemosine is constantly evolving due to its role as a research library. For this reason, it requires the support of a platform like *Clavy*, which is not strictly limited to working with a finite group of object types as in a traditional library. The classic library's ontological terminology tends to be restricted to existing object types such as books, periodical publications, and authorities or persons (writers, translators, illustrators, etc.). In *Clavy*, each type can support a range of different attributes all at once. *Clavy's* extensibility, which is essential for establishing *Mnemosine's* special ontology, must be compatible with basic functionalities of consultation and data retrieval, including searches.

To conduct a search of an indeterminate group of object types, it must be possible to adapt to potential growth in the number of types or the attribute schemes defined in relation to the virtual objects. This dilemma is particularly apparent with searches that involve relationships between objects, as in a search that detects the relationship of a work to multiple people who participated in its creation in different capacities: primary or secondary author, illustrator, etc. The problem is greater still when the search takes into account particular attributes associated with each object. To exemplify this type of search, consider a search for all the works published in a specific year – say 1923 – whose primary author was a woman (Fig. 3.4).

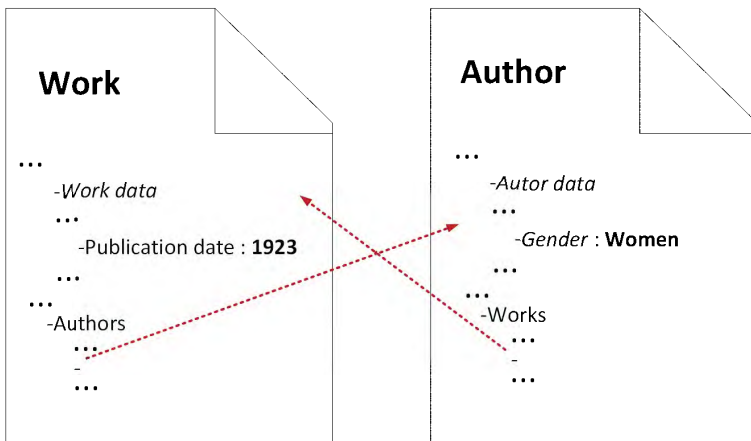


Fig. 3.4. Two-way relationship between Work and Author

Typically, search systems are pre-designed to sidestep this type of problem. In any given search, they search only for a single object type, and all the objects that belong to that type share a single attribute scheme. This limitation reduces the level of expressivity that can be achieved using the search system. In a traditional library, we can usually search for attributes within the dataset of objects called “works” or attributes within the dataset of objects called “persons,” but we cannot perform the searches simultaneously.

To enable searches that capitalize on *Mnemosine*'s constant evolution and do not overlook the relationships between objects, we must go beyond a search system based on attributes and move towards certain retrieval techniques similar to those in RDF and the Semantic Web, where relationships are at the core of the system itself.

Relational searches of this type will allow us to obtain or retrieve all the objects that fulfill a specific criterion, not only in their attributes, but also in those of their related elements. To go back to the example of works published in 1923 by women writers, it is typically possible to use a combined search to retrieve, on the one hand, the works published in 1923 in the dataset pertaining to “obras,” and, on the other hand, the works written by women in the dataset concerning “personas.” From there, one can cross-reference the two groups of search results to obtain the desired works (Fig. 3.5a). This type of search is feasible for groups of virtual objects with a small or moderate number of metadata and static relationships between them, especially when there is a chance of using cache memory to accelerate the search process. Problems arise as the number of object types and relationships between objects grows. As the system's complexity increases, so too does the difficulty of the search process, all too quickly. The time dedicated to calculating intermediate search results grows significantly when it is necessary to cross-reference vast groups of search results that are only partially stored in cache memory. Besides the additional time and resources required, this type of combined search fails to take advantage of the relationships between objects already identified as attributes within each object.

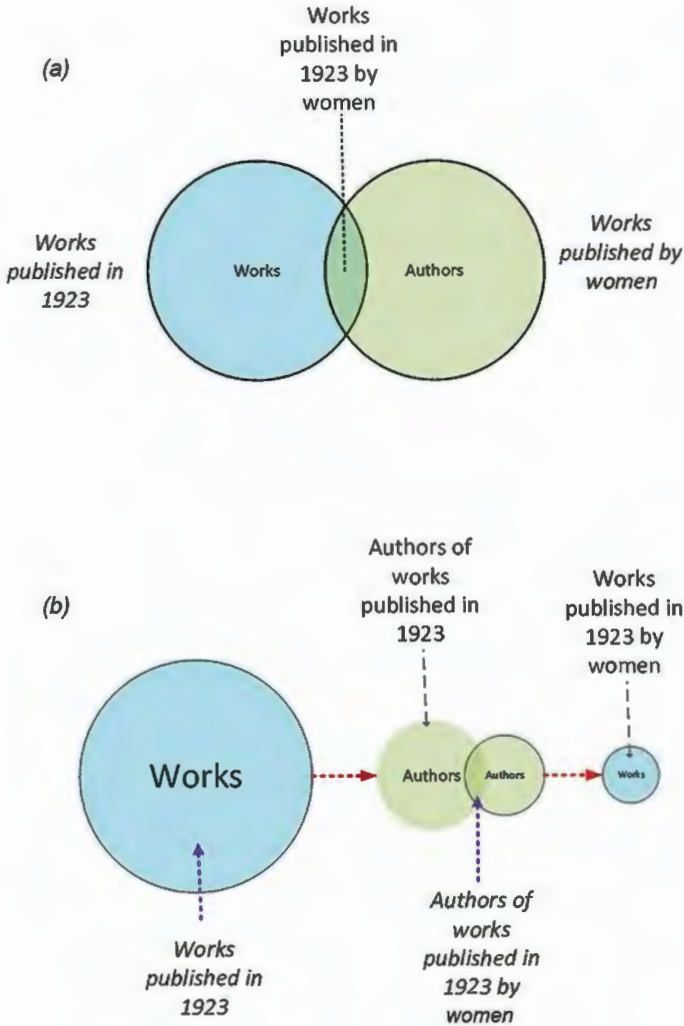


Fig. 3.5. Solutions for the search “Works published in 1923 and authored by a woman writer.” Graphic (a) shows a combined search derived from the intersection of independent searches. Graphic (b) illustrates a relational search using a navigational mechanism filtered according to relationships (horizontal arrows) and attributes (vertical arrows).

To overcome these obstacles, the platform *Clavy* takes advantage of these same relationships to streamline the retrieval process in relational searches that yield semantically complex results and provide experts with sufficiently expressive search capacities to open new ways of analyzing data.

This unique functionality allows for searches capable of generating collections of objects in *Mnemosine* and breaking the barrier of the object as the primary search term. With relational searches, the relationships established between objects are the main terms of the search that creates a collection. Due to the nature of the objects in *Mnemosine*, the relationships between entities take the form of a one-to-one, bidirectional correspondence (“Work” \leftrightarrow “Person”), wherein “authored by” represents the “Work” \rightarrow “Person” relationship and “author of” represents the “Person” \rightarrow “Work” relationship. This characteristic simplifies searches since the same results can be derived from starting on either end of the relationship.

Within this context, a hypothetical collection of “Works Written by Women and Published in 1923” could be created using a search in *Clavy* for *Obras\$fechadepublicacion: “1923”->Autor\$genero: “mujer.”* The information that defines the collection goes deeper than the metadata associated with the objects themselves (persons and works), as it brings into play the work’s publication date, the author’s sex, and the relationship between work and author. Fig. 3.5 visualizes the classic combined search process in comparison to the relational process in *Clavy*. To conduct this search, *Clavy* employs a filtering mechanism that navigates through attributes and relationships, such that each step of the process yields an equal or smaller group of results. This technique based on navigation allows for multiple relationships to be processed with no need for cross-referencing search results (Fig. 3.5b).

It can be a challenge for the experts who use *Mnemosine* to conduct relational searches, since they are not necessarily familiar with the formal query language typically used in retrieval systems. Therefore, it is necessary to create user-friendly mechanisms to make writing searches a simple, transparent task for researchers without them knowing the exact query language in the background of *Clavy*. In the case of *Mnemosine*, we opted for a form-based system wherein each predicate consists of queries concerning a particular object type, which in turn can be related to other object types. For each object type, users can choose to search for specific attributes and values (Fig. 3.6).

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Objeto: AUTOR			
<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
AÑADA ATRIBUTO <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Objeto: OBRA			
<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
AÑADA ATRIBUTO <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
AÑADA PRECISADO <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

BUSCAR

Fig. 3.6. Form for the creation of advanced searches in *Mnemosine*

4. Future Outlook and Conclusions

At the time of writing, *Mnemosine: Biblioteca Digital de La otra Edad de Plata* has imported, configured, and developed metadata for approximately 1,776 authors and 3,500 works. The library's progress in the area of Digital History makes it possible to reevaluate the historiography of Spanish literature of this period by creating specific collections suited to the needs of users for research and teaching. For now, there are around 20 such collections in the library, each of which represents a diverse cultural constellation in the Silver Age universe. Thanks to the development of digital tools, *Mnemosine* functions as a database, a repertoire of digitized open-access texts (ever growing as works come out of copyright), and an experimental laboratory for modeling data and proposing concrete research methodologies (Cotarelo Esteban, 2018: 26).

A specific data model like *Mnemosine's* offers simple and advanced search functions in relational, linked-data searches capable of retrieving information in a focused, highly selective fashion. Returning to the previous example, if we

associate the metadata for female-authored works with the dates of those works and their place of publication, we can retrieve data that is relevant from the perspective of the sociology of literature. For example, within the limits of the library's contents, we can learn about the varying number of female-authored works over time, their publication in cities such as Madrid or Barcelona, or the relative abundance of such works in the 1920s, with the creation of institutions such as the Residencia de Señoritas (1915) or the Lyceum Club Femenino (1926). We can also discover the women writers who belonged to one or both of these institutions, another piece of metadata compiled in *Mnemosine*. Hence, an automatized search or information retrieval can help confirm or disprove a hypothesis or preliminary idea for research. Further, linked-data searches encourage a wide range of readings, illuminating different lines of thought for teaching and research. With a complex, well-defined data model and objects described in detail with quality data, the possibilities for use are limited only by our imagination, whether the objects be authors, editors, illustrators, genres, themes, etc.

In sum, this chapter offers an experimental model and seeks to define ideal traits of an electronic platform to be used as a scholarly database, in this case of the "other" Silver Age Spain. Yet as we have insisted, without accurate, direct knowledge and a close, attentive, and analytical reading of the literary works themselves, new digital environments will lead us nowhere (González Soriano, 2021: 56). Once the initial phase of mass digitization on the part of libraries and institutions is well underway, it is the task of expert philologists, archivists, and literary scholars to apply their knowledge to organizing the vast array of documents, publications, resources, and other virtual objects, thus facilitating their optimal use and reuse in particular contexts. For precisely this reason, a growing number of specialized digital libraries are developing methods to increase the efficacy of document transmission via the web. In the words of Carmen Díez Carrera,

Existe cierta sintonía entre las voces *centro de documentación y biblioteca especializada* [...] bibliotecarios y documentalistas manejan por igual las tecnologías en un mundo inmerso en ellas, tienen un conocimiento y unas técnicas comunes, como lo son los retos e inquietudes profesionales. En un mundo digital y global, las bibliotecas y centros de documentación aspiran a tener documentos digitales y digitalizados, todo tipo de documentos; a describir el conjunto y sus partes, y de la manera más amplia posible, tanto en lo formal como en lo conceptual a través de una gran variedad de metadatos para su posterior recuperación; [y] a crear diferentes productos. (2012: 37–38)

Ever conscious that the libraries of the past compiled and organized our inherited knowledge, *Mnemosine* aims to be today's sandbox for generating new

approaches to a digital literary history (Romero López, 2021: 23). It is a digital research platform in beta version that currently is open to new results obtained by implementing the metadata for each of its collections, which are being used as practical case studies. It is open, too, to the future possibility of offering the platform as a hub to access the data of other related digital projects. The conclusions derived from a Digital History approach promise to offer a new interpretive framework based on the principles of transdisciplinarity, transversality, and Smart culture, which enrich our possibilities for reading and study.

Translated by Jeffrey Zamostny

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