

# LITERARY GEOGRAPHIES

## Cartography as a Tool for Studying Iberian Literary Relationships: Evaluation of a Practical Experiment

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**Abstract:**

This article presents the results of the *Digital Map of Iberian Literary Relations (1870-1930)* project, which applies a cartographic approach to interactions between Iberian literary systems in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Firstly, it provides an overview of the theoretical foundations underpinning the project, examining both the field of Iberian Studies, which forms the basis for the study, and the development of digital cartographies in recent years. Secondly, it explains the specific methodology used in the project, from the selection of data and their codification into a database to possible issues and options for visualization through interactive digital maps. Finally, the article presents a preliminary analysis of the results of the project and the conclusions emerging from the 'digital map'. It seeks to demonstrate the way in which this innovative cartographic and visual approach to transnational literary history can serve as a tool to reflect on the centres, nodes and peripheries of the dissemination of Iberian cultures. In addition, the article highlights several limitations of the model, providing a stepping-stone from which to propose further developments.

**Keywords:** digital humanities; Iberian studies; literary geography; digital cartography; GIS.

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### Iberian Studies as a Theoretical Framework and Basis for Study

This study aims to present the methodology and results of the *Digital Map of Iberian Literary Relations (1870-1930)* project (henceforth, *Digital Map*).<sup>1</sup> The project seeks to develop a cartographic visualisation of the interactions between the different Iberian geocultural regions during a period of relative proximity and interaction (Sáez Delgado and Pérez Isasi 2018). It adopts an approach which combines debates surrounding the renewal of literary history (in general and in the Iberian Peninsula in particular, as in Abuín González and Tarrío Varela 2004, and Cabo Aseguinolaza 2011, among others), reflections on the role of space in cultural phenomena as part of the well-known *spatial turn* in the humanities (see Juvan 2015), and the use of digital humanities as a tool not only for dissemination but also for research and knowledge production.

As it is well known, a renewed interest in space characterised the humanities in the second half of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century and early twentieth century, with successive reconfigurations of critical Geography, founded on (post-)Marxist, poststructuralist or postcolonial theory. Authors such as Lefebvre (1974), Massey (1994), Soja (1996) or Harvey (2001) set the foundations of this conceptual reconsideration of the spatial dimension; on the other hand, philosophers like Foucault (1984) or Deleuze and Guattari (1980) contributed to this theoretical framework with the concept of 'heterotopy', a space-other that escapes and disrupts the dominant rules in the world outside of them, or with the opposition between *espace lisse* and *espace strié*. This concepts may very well be applied to the consideration of cultural history vs. political history or history *tout court*, in the sense that a tension or friction occurs when the boundaries and concepts of political history try to be applied to cultural or literary phenomena. This new focus on space was also present in literary studies (see Santos Unamuno 2002; Piatti, Bär, Reuschel, Hurni and Cartwright 2009; Piatti et al. 2009; Hess-Lüttich 2012). For example, in works such as *Atlante del Romanzo Europeo* (1997) and *Graphs, Maps, Trees* (2004), Franco Moretti laid some of the foundations for a geographic and cartographic approach to literature by developing a methodology based on *distant reading* (or *telescopic reading*, a term coined by Santos Unamuno 2017), that is, the interpretation of texts not through reading and exegesis, but through the extraction of factual information to create an extensive textual corpus. Over the last few years, the spatial turn in the humanities has been boosted by the development of digital methodologies adapted to research in the humanities. Specifically, with regard to the link between literature and spatiality, a number of useful tools have emerged that allow geographic data to be extracted from literary texts, analysed and subsequently visualised on maps. The most important of these tools is GIS or Geographic Information Systems, which, while displaying certain technical and epistemological limitations when applied to cultural phenomena (the tool was not originally designed for analyses of this kind)<sup>2</sup>, nonetheless produces highly relevant results with potential for reinterpreting and analysing literary data through cartographic visualisation (Juvan 2015; Alves and Queiroz 2015).

Such tools have led to the emergence of pioneering projects such as *Mapping the Lakes*, *Mapping the Republic of Letters* and *Ein Literarischer Atlas Europas*, as well as *Compostela Geoliteraria*, *Mapa Literari Català d'Espais Escrits* and *Atlas das Paisagens Literárias de Portugal Continental* in the Iberian context. These projects are based on the collection of geolocalised data, grouped in a database and presented to the user on static, dynamic or interactive maps, sometimes with textual explanations and a time axis. Some of these projects also adhere to the concept, which has gained traction in recent years, of 'deep mapping', in which multimedia maps are used in complex ways to depict both the objective information about a place, and the meanings, feelings, experiences and connections of this same place (see, among others, Bodenhamer, Corrigan and Harris 2015 or Roberts 2016).

In the *Digital Map* project, this innovative methodology is applied to the study of literary intersections between Iberian cultures during a specific period: the transition between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. This period coincides with the development of a certain 'cultural' or 'spiritual Iberism' linked to the more diverse economic or political Iberism, which had fallen into decline in the 1870s (Pérez Isasi 2014). The different Iberian literary systems clearly displayed very different degrees of consolidation at the end of the nineteenth century: while the Spanish and Portuguese literary systems (despite recurring lamentations over their decline) had a strong, uninterrupted tradition with established repertoires, institutions, a wide network of actors and audience, other peninsular systems such as the Galician, Catalan and Basque systems were beginning to emerge, creating what Torres Feijó (2011) termed proto-systems.

Such an intertwined study of the relation between Iberian nations and cultures also responds, on the other hand, to a renewed interest towards Area Studies (now freed of their Cold War geopolitical foundations), and in particular, of course, to the emergence of Iberian Studies (Bush 2017; Pinheiro 2013). The field of Iberian Studies was founded relatively recently<sup>3</sup> and sets out to explore the literary and cultural phenomena present in the Iberian Peninsula, challenging and transcending established political and academic divisions. Iberian Studies aims to reconfigure and reconceptualise the Iberian cultural space, considered as a (poly-)system (Even-Zohar 1990) or interliterary system (Đurišin 1998) which is complex, multicultural and multilingual, with intricate historical networks of interference, conflict and mutual contamination (Casas 2003; Resina 2009)<sup>4</sup>. Research in this field reconsiders cultural objects and phenomena in terms of and in relation to the spaces in which they are produced, rejecting the Romantic link between a language, a literature and a nation (Lambert 1991; Subirana 2018).

Of course, as César Domínguez (2006) and Casas (2019) observe, 'Iberia' and 'the Iberian Peninsula' are geographic terms whose limits, especially when considered from a cultural and historical perspective, are more questionable than they may initially appear. These terms are historical and ideological constructions whose origin may be traced back as far as the Middle Ages, and which have been subject to alterations in terms of both their scope and their definition throughout the centuries (Pérez Isasi 2012). They are influenced by external and internal visions of Iberia as a whole and of the nations within it. It is

important, therefore, to be aware of the contingency of the very object of this study, a contingency which extends to more traditional and supposedly self-evident disciplines such as Hispanic, Portuguese, Catalan, Galician or Basque Studies.

This is the theoretical context on which the *Digital Map* project is based: it aims to use visual methods to demonstrate that the history of various literary systems present in Iberia can only be appropriately perceived when they are considered as an interwoven net of connections and interferences, positive and negative influences and contaminations, and cultural and political exchanges. The mere juxtaposition of homogeneous and monolingual national literary or cultural histories, which erases the traces of such mutual interferences, must therefore give way to an intertwined history that better responds to the reality of the *espace lisse* of the circulation of culture. Such an intertwined approach to Iberian literary and cultural history has already been proposed, for instance, by Thomas S. Harrington (2000) in his approach to movements parallel to the so-called Generation of 1898 on the Peninsula, in the *transperipheral* focus suggested by Calderwood (2014) or to the framework of titles such as *De espaldas abiertas* (Sáez Delgado and Pérez Isasi 2018) and *Comparative History of Literatures in the Iberian Peninsula* (Cabo Aseguinolaza, Abuín González and Domínguez 2010; Domínguez, Abuín González and Sapega 2016).

While visualisation using maps cannot, as we will see, resolve all the issues inherent in narrative and national literary history, it may serve to overcome or at least challenge both the link between language, literature and nation and the demand for an authorial voice that orders, ranks and evaluates literary phenomena. The results of the project are far from exhaustive, but they do go some way to fulfilling this purpose.

## Methodological and Technical Aspects of the *Digital Map*

### *Objectives and Scope*

It is important to start by emphasising that the *Digital Map* does not aim to identify, locate and visualise Iberian literary activity and production in its entirety (this would be an impossible task), but rather to establish points of interference between different cultures, that is, the elements present in one literary system that interact in a significant manner with agents from other systems. The task, therefore, was to map the points of intersection: those events and publications that involved agents from two or more Iberian literary systems, or those which referred to a shared Iberian literary or cultural space. This conceptual boundary helped identify the type of data that would then be gathered and introduced into the database:

- Individual publications devoted to Iberian literary and cultural relations published in the timeframe of the project;
- Periodicals which were thoroughly devoted to these Iberian literary relations, or which published individual texts devoted to them;
- Literary events that gathered authors from more than one Iberian literary system;

- Encounters between two or more specific authors from different Iberian literary systems (but which did not constitute or were part of an organized or institutionalized event)
- Literary institutions that superseded national boundaries or received members from more than one Iberian culture (such as associations, clubs, academies, etc.)
- Authors and other cultural agents who participated in any one of the aforementioned categories (publications, events or institutions)

In addition to this boundary defining the content of the items entered into the database, two more boundaries were also set, based on geography and chronology. The geographic boundary is the Iberian Peninsula, given the subject of the study. However, it is important to bear in mind that a geographic concept such as this is not without theoretical and practical issues, as observed above. Although the majority of the data relevant to this project are indeed situated on the geographic territory of the Peninsula, this boundary fails to encompass the context in its entirety, as some of the most significant cultural agents under study (for instance, Antero de Quental, Miguel de Unamuno or Almada Negreiros) either were born, lived at some point, or died outside of the strict limits of the Iberian Peninsula. Therefore, while the map must focus primarily on the Peninsula, it must not overlook other relevant geographic areas, such as the Spanish and Portuguese archipelagos, the spaces inhabited by Iberian exiles, and the former American and African colonies. The latter are only taken into consideration when referred to by the Iberian agents included in the database; however, relations between the peninsular states and their respective colonial territories (Cuba, Puerto Rico, Philippines, etc.; Angola, Mozambique, East Timor, etc.) were excluded *a priori* of this study. Of course, this decision may be questionable, given the historical, political and cultural relevance of colonial ties at the studied period (which includes, for example, the 1890 conflict between Portugal and the United Kingdom for their African colonies, or the crisis provoked by the 1898 war between Spain and the United States and the subsequent loss of the few remaining American and Asian Spanish colonies). In fact, as Matos (2018) has recently argued, the concept of Iberism was discussed in parallel with other geocultural and geopolitical concepts and configurations, such as Hispano-Americanism, Pan-Lusitanism and Pan-Latinism. It is also true, however, that Iberism (in its political but also cultural or spiritual form) had a strong influence among certain intellectual elites at that time, and that it was for the most part constructed as an intra-Iberian endeavour, disregarding its colonial repercussions. On the other hand, from a more practical perspective, including all possible ties between Iberian literatures and their Latin-American or Lusophone counterparts would have made the project overly ambitious and the scope and number of data unmanageable.

With regard to the chronological boundary, the period under study (end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century) was selected as a time of particularly intense interaction between the peninsular cultures, when a series of literary movements and phenomena emerged which were common to several, if not all, of the Peninsula's literary and cultural systems: literary and national renaissance movements,

currents such as naturalism, symbolism and modernism, the avant-garde in its various guises, etc. Initially, the largely symbolic dates of 1870 and 1930 were chosen: the year 1870 is particularly relevant in the context of Portuguese literature and culture, as it makes symbolic reference to the Generation of the 1870s, a prominent group of intellectuals and authors—including Antero de Quental, Oliveira Martins, Eça de Queirós and Teófilo Braga—which produced a relevant corpus of works relating to the cultural rapprochement between Portugal and Spain. However, once the data collection process had begun, it became necessary to set an earlier date: 1868, the year of the Glorious Revolution in Spain, when Queen Isabel II was deposed and forced into exile and the period known as the Sexenio Democrático began. This date was selected because of its major repercussions for Portuguese intellectuals, especially Antero de Quental. Similarly, although 1930 was initially selected to ensure that the period under study would conclude prior to the establishment of the Second Republic in Spain, the end date was eventually extended to 1936, when the Spanish Civil War began. This historic event radically altered relations between the two countries.

Despite the imposition of chronological and geographic boundaries and a thematic focus on literary relations between Iberian cultures, it proved necessary to select from an immense number of literary events, publications, personalities and institutions existing on the Iberian Peninsula during the period. As mentioned above, the *Digital Map* covers numerous cultural areas and is unable to reflect the full extent of production and activity. Therefore, as well as limiting our focus to cultural phenomena involving interconnections between more than one Iberian literary system, it became imperative to filter the data according to the relevance of the phenomena to the different Iberian cultural systems. From a theoretical perspective, the concept of ‘systemic relevance’ coined by Isaac Lourido (2019), ambiguous as it is, could serve as a basis from which to attempt to overcome the problematic arbitrariness apparent in the selection process.<sup>5</sup> Cultural agents, then, are not considered more or less relevant in view of their (subjective and elusive) aesthetic value, but of their representativity as actors in the net of interrelations that define the cultural system they belong to; in this case, the Iberian literary system. On the other hand, the exhaustive revision of secondary bibliography written on Iberian literary relations in that period, as explained further in the following section, helped identify those actors that most radically contributed to define an Iberian cultural and literary (poly)system.

### ***Data collection, selection and georeferencing***

In line with the project objectives, the preparation of the data prior to their visualisation on the digital map involved three phases which are not necessarily consecutive: identification and selection of the relevant data, design of a database adapted to the structure of the data, and completion of the database with the georeferenced information.

In a project of this kind, one inherent danger in the process of selecting information lies in the potential for circularity between the initial hypotheses and final results of the project, i.e. the possibility that the final digital map represents no more (nor less) than the

researchers' prior knowledge at the time of implementation. As mentioned in the previous section, in order to avoid this circularity, a detailed and exhaustive exploration of the relevant secondary literature published in relation to Iberian literary relations during the period under study was carried out. In the first phase, several historiographic volumes focusing on the period and topic researched in the project, including *Suroeste* (Sáez Delgado and Gaspar 2010) and *De espaldas abiertas* (Sáez Delgado and Pérez Isasi 2018), and edited collections in Iberian Studies containing specific articles about the period in question, such as *Looking at Iberia* (Pérez Isasi and Fernandes 2013) and *Aula Ibérica* (Marcos de Dios 2008), were consulted and the most relevant data identified. Following this, specific searches were performed on events (e.g. the 'Casino Conferences' and the gatherings at Café Pombo), authors (e.g. Miguel de Unamuno and Emilia Pardo Bazán) and specific institutions (e.g. Grupo Nós and the Catalan Renaissance). This allowed us provisionally to identify the elements of the different categories (publications, events, institutions and authors) that would need to be entered into the database.

After examining the initial results of the search and reflecting on the structure of the data, a relational database was designed using Access software from Microsoft. In the first design, the data were grouped into seven sets: authors, periodical publications, individual works and texts, institutions, events, encounters and translations (although the translations tab was later abandoned). These tables (Figure 1) display the phenomena considered relevant when mapping Iberian cultural interactions in relation to the project objectives.

PERSONALIDADES	OBRAS_TEXTOS	PUBLICACOES	INSTITUICOES	EVENTOS	ENCONTROS	TRADUÇÕES	EDITORES	PARTICIPANTES
Nome do campo	Tipo de dados	Descrição (Opcional)						
ID_AUTOR	Numeração automática	NÚMERO DE IDENTIFICAÇÃO DO AUTOR/ ID_AUTOR						
NOME	Texto Breve	NOME COMPLETO/ NOME						
PSEUDO	Texto Breve	NOME ALTERNATIVO (PSEUDÓNIMOS E ALCUNHAS) / NOME_ALT						
ATIV	Texto Breve	ATIVIDADE PRINCIPAL/ ATIV						
SEXO	Texto Breve	SEXO/ SEX						
NACIONALIDADE	Texto Breve	NACIONALIDADE/ NAC						
LINGUA_MATERNA	Texto Breve	LÍNGUA NATIVA/ LING_NATIV						
LOCAL_NASCIMENTO_ANTIGA	Texto Breve	NOME ANTIGO DA RUA/ LOCAL_NASC						
LOCAL_NASCIMENTO_ATUAL	Texto Breve	NOME ATUAL DA RUA (MORADA, FREQUENCIA, CONCELHO, DISTRITO)/ LOCAL_NASC_ATUAL						
LOCAL_NASCIMENTO_Y	Número	LOCAL NASCIMENTO Y/ LOCAL_NASC_Y						
LOCAL_NASCIMENTO_X	Número	LOCAL NASCIMENTO X/LOCAL_NASC_X						
DATA_NASCIMENTO	Data/Hora	DATA DE NASCIMENTO/DATA_NASC						
HABILITACOES_LITERARIAS	Texto Breve	GRAU DE ESCOLARIDADE/ESCOLARID						
LOCAL_MORTE_ANTIGA	Texto Breve	MORADA ANTIGA/LOCAL_MORT						
LOCAL DE MORTE_ATUAL	Texto Breve	MORADA ATUAL (MORADA, FREQUENCIA, CONCELHO, DISTRITO)/LOCAL_MORT_ATUAL						
LOCAL_MORTE_Y	Número	LOCAL DE MORTE Y/LOCAL_MORT_Y						
LOCAL_MORTE_X	Número	LOCAL DE MORTE X/LOCAL_MORT_X						
DATA_MORTE	Data/Hora	DATA DA MORTE/ DATA_MORT						
IDEOLOGIA_POLITICA	Texto Breve	IDEOLOGIA POLITICA OU PARTIDO/IDEO						
FONTES	Texto Longo	FONTES/FONT						
WEB	Hiperligação	PÁGINA WEB/WEB						
ANEXOS	Anexo	ANEXOS/ANEX						

Figure 1. Tables from the database, with a specific focus on the 'Personalities' tab [Source: *Digital Map*].

The 'Personalities' tab functions as the main tab in the database, connecting all the others either directly or indirectly, as it contains the active agents (authors, publishers, journalists, etc.) in the web of relationships being traced. The 'Works and texts' and 'Publications' tabs refer to individual works and periodicals respectively, while the 'Institutions' tab features information about the collective entities which brought together the individuals who participated in Iberian relations.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, the 'Publishers', 'Participants' and 'Members'

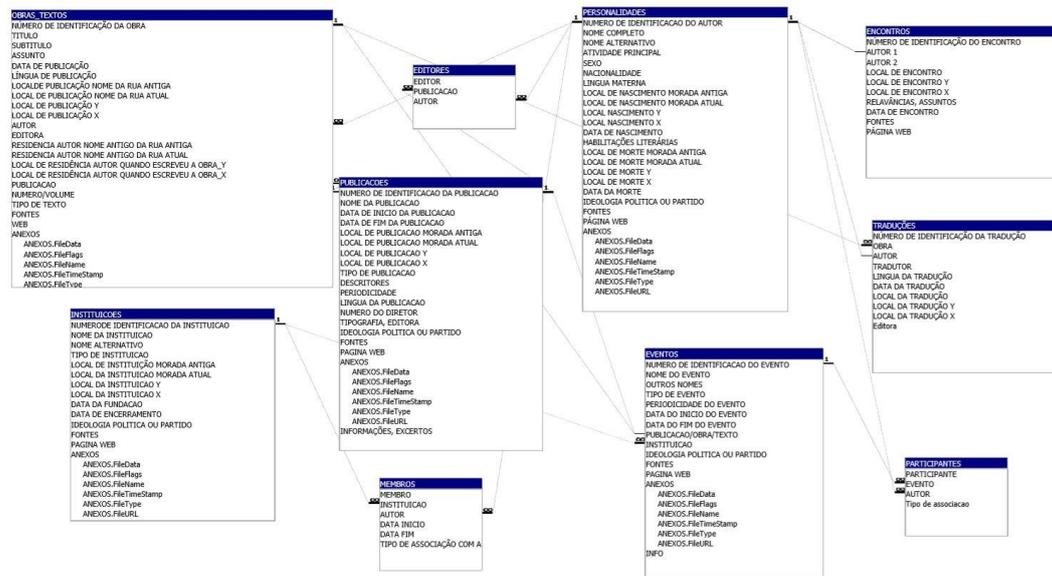


Figure 2. Structure of the database indicating the connections between tabs [Source: *Digital Map*].

tabs (as shown in Figure 2) supplement the ‘Publications’, ‘Events’ and ‘Institutions’ tabs respectively, allowing the latter to be linked to more than one personality and avoiding the duplication of information in the main tabs.

As the ‘Personalities’ tab indicates (Figure 3), each of the tables contains at least one geographic element, described in text format (with two different fields to take possible alterations to historical toponyms into account) and codified in terms of longitude and latitude so that each item in the database may subsequently be visualised in cartographic form. The degree of accuracy of this geographic data depends on the type of data (place of birth, place of publication, event venue, etc.), as well as on the available and accessible information, which may vary from the country to the exact address.

Difficulties naturally arise in identifying a precise location for phenomena or events which, by their very nature, occupy shifting, fluid or scattered spaces. This is the case, for example, with literary movements and institutions such as naturalism and the Generation of the 1870s, which display no direct link to any geographic element, or which possess links to vast territories whose spatial interpretation lacks clarity on the map. In these cases, neither an exact location nor symbolic area was provided, with the result that the connection between these movements and the geographic territory is measured by the respective locations of their events, members and/or participants, published texts, etc. Meanwhile, in the case of institutions, events and periodical publications with different editorial staff at different times, a representative location was selected to avoid repeated entries in the database.

Nome do campo	Tipo de dados	Descrição (Opcional)
ID_AUTOR	Numeração automática	NÚMERO DE IDENTIFICAÇÃO DO AUTOR/ ID_AUTOR
NOME	Texto Breve	NOME COMPLETO/ NOME
PSEUDO	Texto Breve	NOME ALTERNATIVO (PSEUDÓNIMOS E ALCUNHAS) / NOME_ALT
ATIV	Texto Breve	ATIVIDADE PRINCIPAL/ ATIV
SEXO	Texto Breve	SEXO/ SEX
NACIONALIDADE	Texto Breve	NACIONALIDADE/ NAC
LINGUA_MATERNA	Texto Breve	LÍNGUA NATIVA/ LING_NATIV
LOCAL_NASCIMENTO_ANTIGA	Texto Breve	NOME ANTIGO DA RUA/ LOCAL_NASC
LOCAL_NASCIMENTO_ATUAL	Texto Breve	NOME ATUAL DA RUA (MORADA, FREGUESIA, CONCELHO, DISTRITO)/ LOCAL_NASC_ATUAL
LOCAL_NASCIMENTO_Y	Número	LOCAL NASCIMENTO Y/ LOCAL_NASC_Y
LOCAL_NASCIMENTO_X	Número	LOCAL NASCIMENTO X/LOCAL_NASC_X
DATA_NASCIMENTO	Data/Hora	DATA DE NASCIMENTO/DATA_NASC
HABILITACOES_LITERARIAS	Texto Breve	GRAU DE ESCOLARIDADE/ESCOLARID
LOCAL_MORTE_ANTIGA	Texto Breve	MORADA ANTIGA/LOCAL_MORT
LOCAL_DE_MORTE_ATUAL	Texto Breve	MORADA ATUAL (MORADA, FREGUESIA, CONCELHO, DISTRITO)/LOCAL_MORT_ATUAL
LOCAL_MORTE_Y	Número	LOCAL DE MORTE Y/LOCAL_MORT_Y
LOCAL_MORTE_X	Número	LOCAL DE MORTE X/LOCAL_MORT_X
DATA_MORTE	Data/Hora	DATA DA MORTE/ DATA_MORT
IDEOLOGIA_POLITICA	Texto Breve	IDEOLOGIA POLÍTICA OU PARTIDO/IDEO
FONTES	Texto Longo	FONTES/FONT
WEB	Hiperligação	PÁGINA WEB/WEB
ANEXOS	Anexo	ANEXOS/ANEX

Figure 3. Structure of the ‘Personalities’ tab, with a specific focus on the fields relating to geographic location [Source: *Digital Map*].

### Visualisation

The final stage in processing the data collected as part of the *Digital Map* project is the technical development of the cartographic visualisation. This process required decisions to be made on several complex issues and a number of technical and conceptual difficulties to be resolved. As mentioned above, GIS was designed to represent a certain type of data often rather different to those handled in literary studies. Although significant improvements have been made to the tool in recent years, it continues to impose certain limitations and concessions.

The first and most complex issue relates to the difficulty in depicting relationships in a system designed to represent only three types of object: points, lines and polygons. By contrast, the concept of a relationship (which entails interconnections between two or more points, or between points and areas) is alien to most of the usual tools for creating digital maps.<sup>7</sup> After considering several possible technical solutions, we decided to continue to use points to reflect the data from the *Digital Map* project, as each of these points is a node linking at least two Iberian cultures: authors connecting two or more literatures, publications reflecting on Iberian relations themselves, events bringing together authors from more than one geocultural space, etc. Therefore, the map should be read as a constellation of points which multiply out in several different directions, although there are no lines to link them to other points in the space. In the example shown in Figure 4, a Galician publication by a Galician author is linked to the Lisbon space; it would have been superfluous to represent that link with a line on the map, as well as flooding the map with noise in the form of overlapping lines.

Another common problem in this type of project, which was also encountered in the *Digital Map*, is the fact that several pieces of data may be recorded on a single geographic point or on points located very close to one another geographically, resulting in a loss of information due to overlapping. This issue was resolved by creating clusters of points

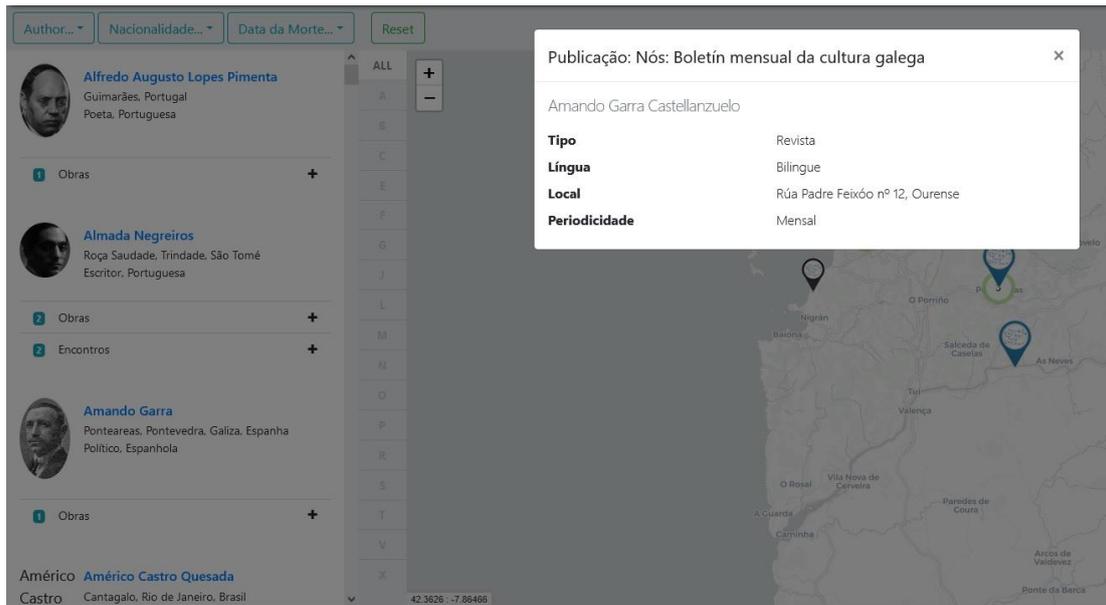


Figure 4. Visualisation of data on texts and works [Source: *Digital Map*].

indicating the total number of elements, which are sub-divided as the user zooms into the map or clicks on the clusters, as seen in Figure 5.

The opposite case is equally problematic: the presence of different points linked to the same phenomenon, such as the Cenacle gatherings, which were held at more than one venue during the period under study (Figure 5). To avoid overloading the map with excessive, redundant information, several locations related to a single phenomenon and linked to the respective dates were included so that they would be visible throughout the timeline.

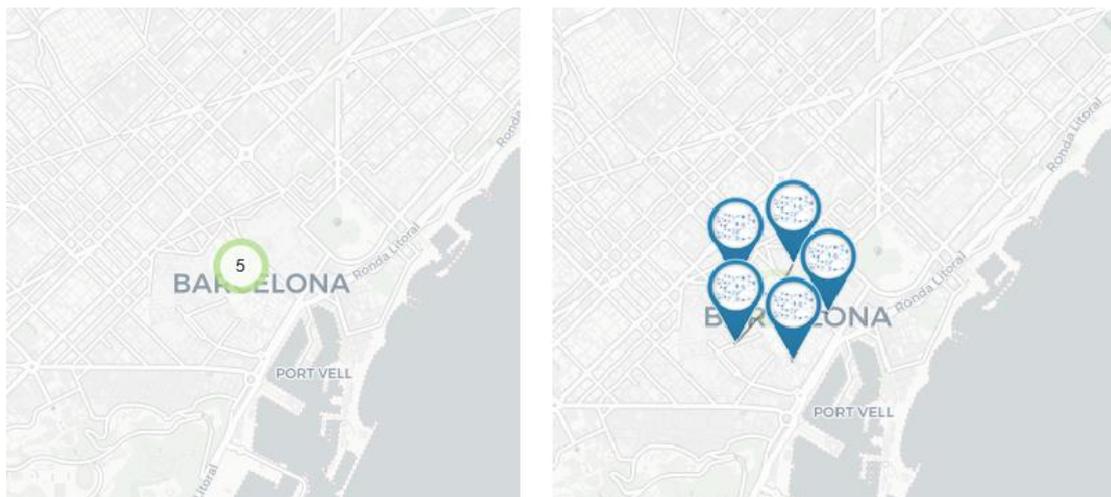


Figure 5. Cluster of points relating to five authors from Barcelona [Source: *Digital Map*].

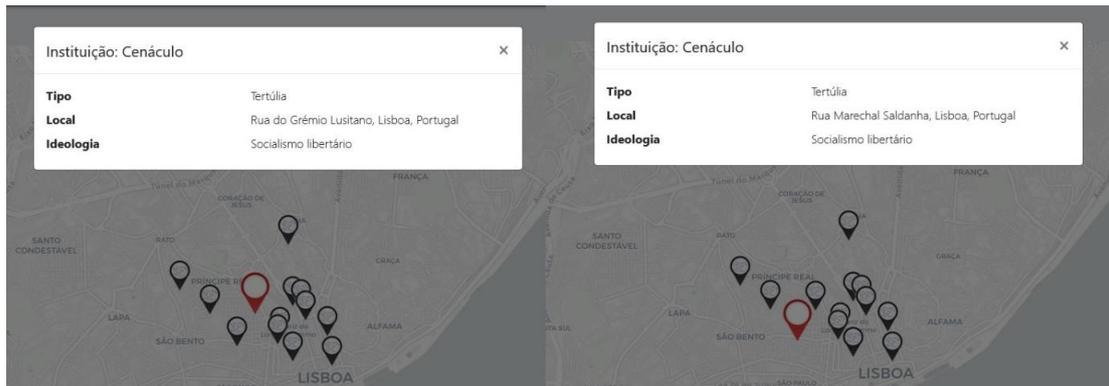


Figure 6. Examples of different locations for a single institution, in this case the Cenacle [Source: *Digital Map*].

The incorporation of a time axis on the map also merits reflection from a technical and conceptual perspective, as cartography has traditionally taken space as its primary dimension, overlooking the temporal dimension (Gregory 2010). The combination of spatial visualisation and chronology has been a source of frequent discussion in the field of digital cartography (Goodchild 2008). From a visual perspective, the simplest and most commonly employed solution (which was used for the *Digital Map*) is to incorporate a time bar into the map allowing users to select the period for which they wish to see the results (Figure 7), but more dynamic and intuitive solutions for integrating both axes (spatial and temporal) may be explored in future projects.

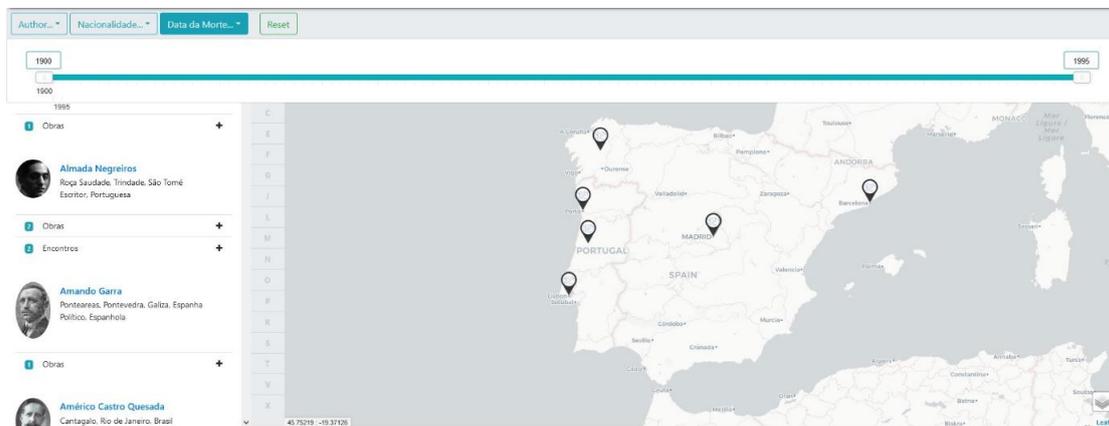


Figure 7. Time bar, date of death of authors from 1902 to 1995 [Source: *Digital Map*].

The final problematic issue concerns the incorporation of keys and explanatory texts into the visualisation, which help to make sense of the map. A complete absence of texts (as in Figure 7) could hinder the interpretation of the information, or even make it entirely opaque to users who are not aware of the meaning of the various points and geographic spaces represented. A simple key explaining the symbols used on the map could provide a first layer of meaning. However, the use of tools such as *StoryMaps* allows text, images, multimedia, hyperlinks and cartography to be linked, offering users a guided interpretation of the information. This is the option selected by the *Compostela Geoliteraria* project in

sections such as ‘Spaces of action’, ‘Cartographies of affect’ and ‘Literary maps and GIS’, among others.

The solution adopted for the *Digital Map of Iberian Literary Relations* offers additional texts in the form of interactive pop ups, which help users to interpret the data visualised on the map. The pop ups contain objective information which allows the items to be correctly identified (based on fields selected from the database) and brief texts indicating the reason why that specific item is relevant to the objectives of the map. The decision was taken to limit the textual information included on the map to avoid producing an authorial voice which would dominate the interactive visualisation, recreating a more convoluted chronological, textual and narrative history in which the map would serve only as an illustration, regardless of its visual and interactive nature.

With this aim in mind, two navigation menus were added to the map (an upper menu and a sidebar menu) offering users several ways of accessing the information. On the upper menu, it is possible to access the full list of authors included in the database, filter them by nationality or slide the time bar (as indicated above). The left sidebar menu, meanwhile, also displays the list of authors in alphabetical order with an image identifying each of them and catalogues the items (works, events, gatherings, publications) in which each of the authors participated. In this way, users are able to access the data directly by browsing the map or using the list in the sidebar menu (allowing the authors to be linked to their production and activity) or by using the search tools at the top of the page, which allow information from the map to be filtered and provide access to the data corresponding to specific interests. The *Digital Map* thus fulfils one of its stated objectives: it can serve as a tool for a wide range of users, including both specialised researchers and curious readers.

### **Analysis of Results: Several Reflections**

This section reflects on the analysis of the map produced using the methodology described above. The intention here is not to provide an exhaustive list of all possible interpretations of the map, which will remain available as an open tool for future study by the authors or other researchers. Instead, three aspects of Iberian literary relations highlighted by the *Digital Map* project will be explored: the multiplicity of centres and nodes of interrelations; Portugal’s central role in the network of literary connections; and the existence of gaps and discrepancies in the map and database. This analysis will allow us to question some of the generally accepted views about Iberian cultural relations, as well as to point towards future lines of work in the field of Iberian Studies.

#### ***The Multiplicity of Centres and Nodes of Communication***

The first conclusion emerging from a visual analysis of the map (albeit a superficial one) is the presence of multiple, highly varied nodes in Iberian literary relations. Almost the entire Peninsula (as well as the Balearic Islands and the Azores, and, to a lesser extent, Madeira)



Figure 8. General map showing data on authors, works, institutions, publications and gatherings noted to date [Source: *Digital Map*].

features points which represent nodes of communication between Iberian literatures and cultures. As expected, the largest gaps are located in the centre of Spain (Castile, especially La Mancha, northern Andalusia, Aragon, etc.).

The multiplicity of points scattered across a large part of the Iberian Peninsula is accompanied by the appearance of central nodes where larger amounts of information are concentrated. This phenomenon was to be expected (like almost any other social or political system, literary systems function on the basis of tensions between centripetal and centrifugal forces), but the map demonstrates the tendency towards centralisation around several points both visually and numerically.<sup>8</sup> These centres are usually (but not exclusively) capital cities in the respective geocultural areas. Madrid thus features information relating to 60 works (of 200), 15 institutions (of 67) and 25 periodical publications (of 80), while Lisbon has 39 works, 14 institutions and 23 periodical publications and Barcelona has 19 works, nine authors, six institutions and 11 periodical publications.

This centrality is reinforced when analysing the places of publication of the works included in the database (Figure 9): while it is true that there is a relatively large number of publication places, it is also clear that Madrid and Lisbon (in that order) are the cities with the largest number of works, significantly higher than the next location, Barcelona.

If we consider the places of death of the authors in the database (Figure 10.2), this centralisation becomes even more apparent than in the case of their places of birth (Figure 10.1). Convergence in the authors' trajectories was to be expected as they moved closer to the centres of production, institutionalisation and canonisation, where gatherings were

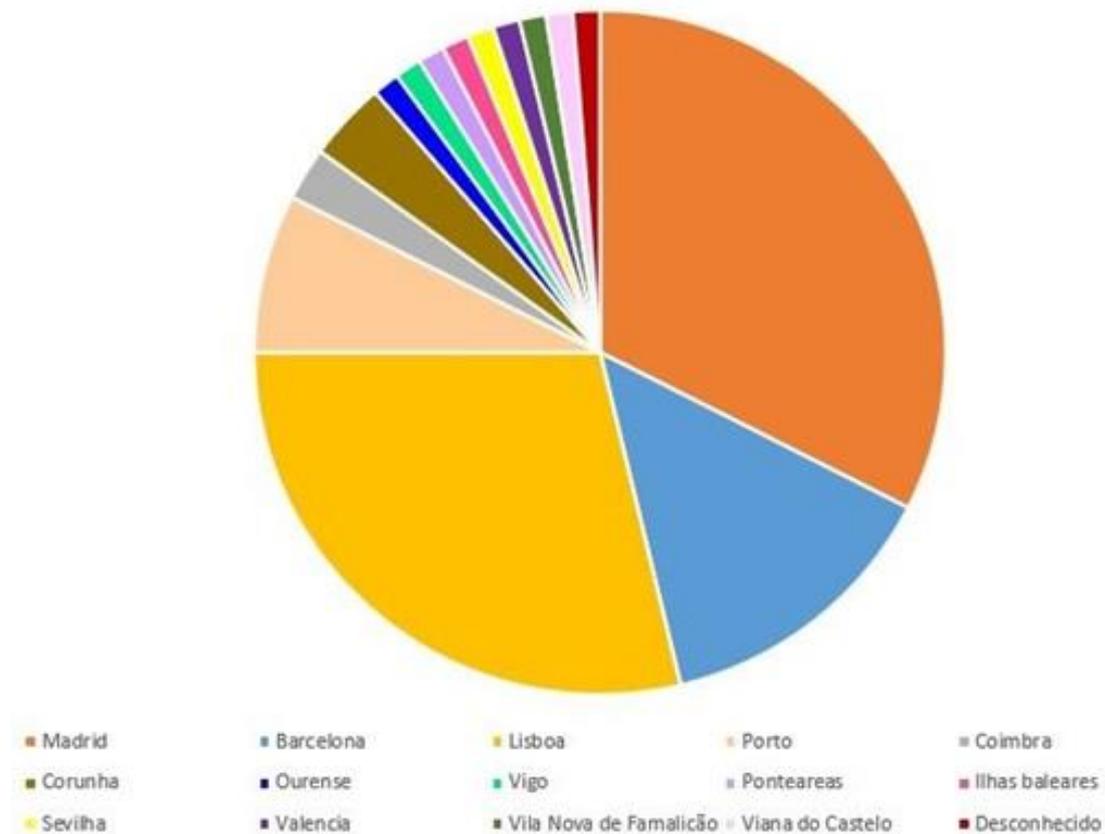


Figure 9. Distribution of periodical publications by city.

held and newspapers, publishing houses and academies were located. These centres tended to be large cities, especially capitals, and a central axis linking Lisbon-Madrid-Barcelona thus emerged.<sup>9</sup>

This brief analysis of the nodes and production centres in the Iberian literary systems in the studied period allows us to extract some theoretical conclusions. First of all, as is obvious, a mere geographical analysis points towards the limitations of considering individual (national or proto-national) cultural systems as monolithic entities. With different poles and centres (in the Portuguese case, for instance, Lisbon vs. Coimbra), it is easy to identify underlying tensions that go beyond the mere opposition of centre and periphery (in this case, the tension between the conservatism of the capital and the progressive views of the younger generation of Coimbra students). On the other hand, it also points towards the need of going beyond the ‘network’ metaphor, as Mercè Picornell (2019) argues, and looking at a more intricate and complex way of thinking transnational relations: one that does not necessarily work hierarchically (from the regional to the national to the supranational) but also investigates interactions and flows at other levels – for instance, crossings and exchanges through the Galician-Portuguese border that do not necessarily pass through the metropolitan centres.



Figure 10.1 - Places of birth of authors [Source: *ArcGIS online*].



Figure 10.2 - Places of death of authors [Source: *ArcGIS online*].

### ***Portugal's Central Role in Iberian Relations***

A second conclusion which may be drawn from the map and which is visible from the general heatmap for the project (Figure 11) is that Portugal played a central role in Iberian literary relations as a whole. Among a total of 135 authors, 51 were born on Portuguese territory, representing a higher concentration than the 78 authors born on Spanish territory, who are scattered across a larger area and belong to different cultural regions (34 to the Castilian cultural area, 20 to the Galician area, 19 to the Catalan area and five to the Basque area). In terms of works published, although 200 texts were selected, the place of publication is only known for 174 of them. Among these works, 67 were published in Portugal. Of the 106 texts and works published in Spain, 60 are associated with the Castilian geocultural area, 22 with the Catalan area and 20 with the Galician area. Finally, among the 80 periodical publications selected, 33 were published in Portugal and 46 in Spain (and one in an unknown location), but analysis by specific cultural area reveals that 30 of the publications are linked to the Portuguese cultural space, 21 to the Spanish space, 10 to the Catalan space, six to the Galician space and 13 to the Iberian space as a whole (Figure 12).

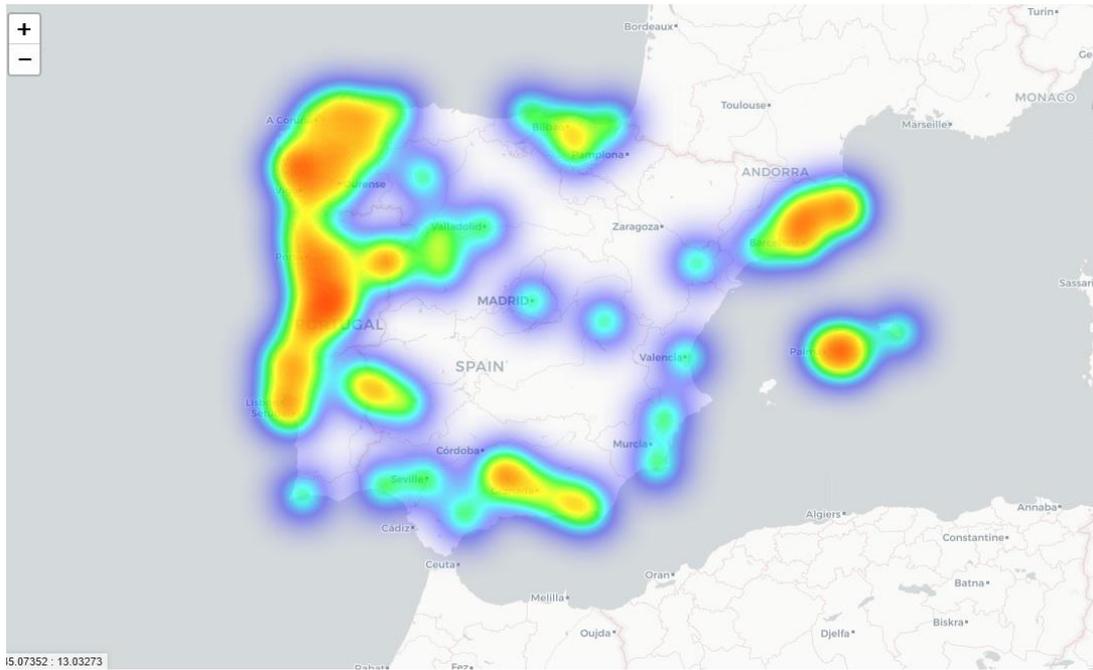


Figure 11. General map or heatmap [Source: *Digital Map*].

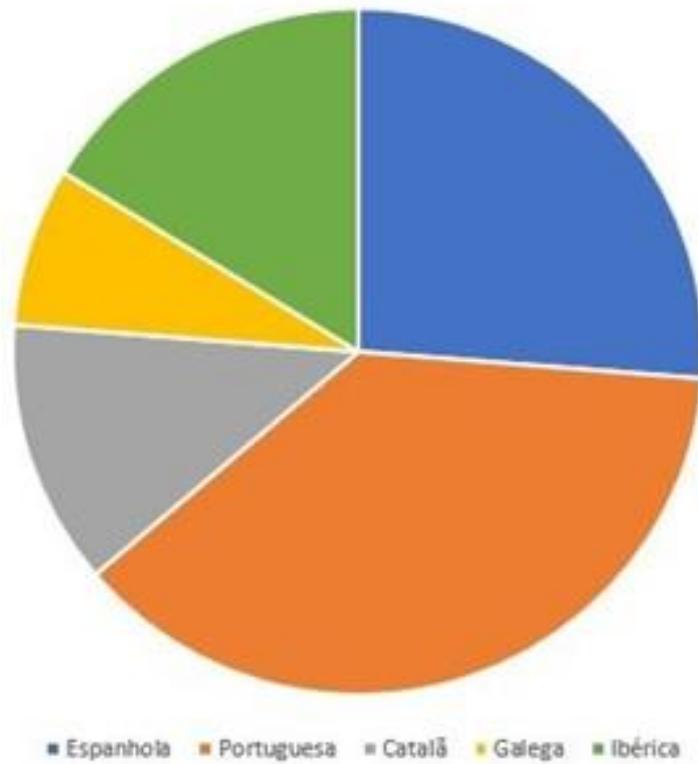


Figure 12. Distribution of periodical publications by cultural area.

The central role played by Portugal in Iberian relations as a whole has two different yet complementary explanations. From a historical perspective, as mentioned above, the period under study corresponds to a time of cultural and spiritual Iberism, which called not for political unity among states (like political Iberism) but for a rapprochement between the different Iberian cultures. In this context, Portugal was the essential component in the models of Iberism comprising two countries (Portugal-Spain) and three countries (Portugal/Galicia-Spain-Catalonia). Indeed, Portugal was considered by at least some Catalanists to be a desirable ally in the confrontation with central/Castilian Spain (Martínez Gil 2013). At the same time, Portugal was a symbolic reference for intellectuals involved in Galician regionalism and nationalism (Torres Feijó 2008, 2009). As such, the Portuguese geocultural space became the key vertex in the network of relationships between the different cultures on the Peninsula.

With this in mind, the second possible explanation for the predominance of the Portuguese space on the map may be linked to bias in the secondary literature analysed. As studied by Gimeno Ugalde and Pérez Isasi (2019), the literature published in Iberian Studies since 2000 has been clearly biased towards analyses of relations between Spain and Portugal, to the detriment of the interconnections between the remaining cultures. For instance, analysis between Catalan and Galician literatures in the 19<sup>th</sup> century are scarce, and between the Basque literature and other Iberian literatures, as we will see in the next section, are practically non-existent.

However, as previous analysis has shown (Gimeno Ugalde and Pérez Isasi 2019), publications on Iberian Studies, both those produced by researchers from the Iberian Peninsula itself, and in the USA and the United Kingdom, have a tendency to place the Spanish-Castilian geocultural space as their central axis. This configuration recreates, in academic terms, the radial configuration that determines many aspects of Spanish and Iberian cultural, economic and political systems (from material circulation of goods to translation, from political influence to the Spanish highway system). The analysis of the data included and visualized in the Digital Map suggests that this type of conceptualization of the Peninsula might distort the image of cultural flows. It could be argued, given the centrality of the Portuguese node(s), that the Iberian polysystem is best understood if we consider it as structured by the tension between accepting and resisting the centripetal pull, by ways of constructing alternative alliances and lines of communication with Iberian literatures and cultures other than the Spanish-Castilian one, the most relevant of which was the Portuguese one.

### ***Gaps and Discrepancies***

The previous two sections reflected on the elements present on the map: the significant dispersal of the data, which are relatively concentrated in cities and capitals, and the proportionally larger quantity of information found in the Portuguese geocultural area. This third section will focus on some of the most notable gaps and discrepancies on the map and in the database on which it is based.

One such gap is the absence of phenomena representing the Basque geocultural area. As mentioned above, only five authors from the corpus were born in the Basque Country, and all five of these authors are linked to literary systems other than the Basque system: Pío Baroja, Miguel de Unamuno, Ramiro de Maeztu and María de Maeztu are all linked to the Spanish/Castilian system, while Raimundo de Bulhão Pato is associated with the Portuguese system. Once again, there are historical reasons for this gap: the Basque space was generally excluded from nineteenth century Iberism (mentions of Basque culture are always incidental and without practical consequence) and Basque nationalism itself ‘was generally more inclined to dispense with close relations with the other peoples of the Peninsula’ than Galician and Catalan nationalism (Rocamora 2000: 117). As a result, it is difficult to find references in the secondary literature to gatherings and exchanges between Basque literature and other peninsular literatures. Other associations are merely anecdotal: Bulhão Pato was born in Bilbao; Oliveira Martins began his *História da civilização ibérica* with a reference to the Basque race (in line with the Basque-Iberist theories which were in vogue at the time), and Alexandre Herculano produced a dramatic work, *A Dama Pé de Cabra*, set in the Basque country.

The limited presence of female writers and intellectuals in the database is also significant: only 12 per cent of the authors in the corpus (16 from a total of 135) are female. It is unclear whether this meagre representation mirrors women’s exclusion from cultural elites at that time, or whether a significant bias is present in the literature consulted, favouring men over women.<sup>10</sup> Of course, the database and map feature key pioneering figures from various literary and cultural milieux, such as Emilia Pardo Bazán, Ana de Castro Osório and Caterina Albert (‘Víctor Català’). Besides these canonical figures (who function to some extent as token females in a clearly male world), a search of recent secondary literature, such as the *New History of Iberian Feminisms* (Bermúdez and Johnson 2018) and recent research on ‘the Sinsombrero’ and the ‘other’ Generation of ’27 (such as the *La Otra Edad de Plata* project), reveals a far larger (and growing) number of female writers in the various Iberian languages. However, the information available about these authors is often limited (or in some cases non-existent) and does not reveal whether they participated in gatherings or events with an Iberian scope or focus.

While these findings are not exactly new or groundbreaking, and they were to be expected in the first place, they point towards a need for Iberian Studies to reconsider its focus and its research agenda for the near future (as argued in Pérez Isasi 2020): instead of focusing on periods, spaces and authors that have already been extensively studied, it would be crucial to identify and research on those blind spots that have, so far, eluded the interest of most scholars. And while there might not really be much to find about certain aspects (for instance, the interconnection of the Basque geocultural area with the rest of the Peninsula might be just as sporadic as it seems), in relation with others, such as the participation of women writers and intellectuals in the cultural and political debates, there is surely a vast unexplored territory waiting to be studied.

## Final Reflections

As we have attempted to demonstrate in previous sections, the *Digital Map of Iberian Literary Relations* project shares its basic methodology, as well as certain risks and problems, with other similar projects dedicated to representing literary and cultural phenomena cartographically. Any literary GIS project must negotiate a series of tensions which are inherent to the very nature of the tool: the tension between the theoretical objectives of the project and the possibilities offered by the available tools; the tension of attempting to convert cultural phenomena characterised by their plurality, interconnections and fluidity into visually representable elements (points, lines, polygons); the tension between including too much information, creating noise, and including an excessively limited selection, reducing the value of the project; the tension between using explanatory texts to help users understand the information on the map and overlaying the text on the map, running the risk of reducing it to a mere illustration; and the tension between the spatial and temporal axes and the way in which they interact on the map.

For this reason, the *Digital Map* is intended as a testing ground for methodological experimentation which may produce knowledge applicable to similar studies while also generating sub-projects on topics, areas and items which have not been included in this initial phase of development (for example, letters exchanged or translations) and experimenting with different visualisation tools allowing solutions to the aforementioned issues to be found. The practice of applying digital cartography to fictitious texts has grown exponentially in recent years, although studies on literature in space, such as *The Space of Slovenian Literary Culture* or the project presented here, are less numerous. The development of this type of project and the theoretical reflection generated as a result of interactions between projects may prompt a new way of understanding and disseminating literary history through cartography to take root.

Finally, one of the innovative aspects of the project presented in this article is the subject matter selected: a literary history that not only attempts to transcend teleological narratives and the centrality of chronology but also questions the linguistic and national boundaries which have dominated literary history in the last few centuries by drawing on the premises underpinning the field of Iberian Studies. The consideration of all Iberian literary systems as a complex and rich polysystem, with mutual interactions and interferences, and not as the mere juxtaposition of independent systems as they were traditionally considered, might not only question the validity of traditional monolingualistic and monocultural literary histories, but also offer a scalable model for the study of transnational literary relations. Additionally, within the field of Iberian Studies itself the process for selecting, compiling and systematising data intended for visualisation on the map (personalities, publications, events, institutions, etc.) has produced a set of information which had until now been scattered and, in some cases, little explored, and has allowed us to extract some conclusions that point towards possible misconceptions or shortcomings. For instance, it points towards the necessity of reconsidering the spatial conceptualizations of the Iberian literary and cultural space, which is neither the sum of

homogeneous cultural blocks (each of them metonymically defined by their capital city), neither the transposition of the radial configuration that drives Spanish and Iberian economy, politics or culture, with the Castilian space as unquestioned axis. In fact, it might well be the case that the study of cultural flows and nodes of production and distribution helps evidence the different ways in which the national and supranational space is conceptualized, manifesting the tensions between the established political boundaries and the fluidity of cultural phenomena: overlapping maps that have for too long been mixed together as if the same rules governed both of them.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Exploratory research project funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (IF/00838/2014) as part of the Investigador FCT 2014 programme and attached to the Centre for Comparative Studies. The results of the project are available at <http://maplit.lettras.ulisboa.pt>.

<sup>2</sup> Bodenhamer summarises the limitations of these technologies: ‘Spatial technologies in general, and especially GIS, are expensive, complex, and cumbersome, despite recent advances that have driven down costs and simplified the user experience. They require significant investments in time to learn both the language and techniques of the toolsets they employ. GIS and its cousins are literal technologies: they favour precise data that can be managed and parsed within a highly structured tabular database. Ambiguity, uncertainty, nuance, and uniqueness, all embedded in the evidence typically available to humanists, do not admit readily to such routinisation. GIS also has difficulty managing time, which is a major problem in disciplines that orient their study to periods and epochs’ (Bodenhamer 2010: 23).

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the different trends and characteristics of Iberian Studies both in Europe and in the USA, see Pérez Isasi (2019).

<sup>4</sup> It is clear that Iberian Studies is not the only academic and scientific rearticulation attempting to overcome the limitations of national philologies, and the crisis in Hispanic Studies in particular, in a national and international context. Iberian literatures and cultures also interact with the European, Transatlantic and Mediterranean spaces and may therefore be articulated from different perspectives, each of which is able to cast light on certain aspects or issues but none of which (including Iberian Studies) are exhaustive.

<sup>5</sup> Lourido tentatively defines this systemic relevance as follows: ‘um determinado produto, prática ou processo é sistemicamente relevante quando a sua análise nos serve para entender como está estruturado e como funciona globalmente o sistema – ou partes alargadas do mesmo – e para identificar tendências que informam sobre mudanças e persistências dum ponto de vista histórico, em qualquer dos fatores do sistema que levemos em conta (produção, consumo, produtos, merca-do, instituição e repertório)’ [a certain product, practice or process is systemically relevant when analysing it serves to understand how the system – or at least a large part of it – is structured, or how it globally

works, and to identify tendencies that give information about changes and continuities from a historical perspective, in any given sector of the system (production, consumption, products, market, institution or repertory] (Lourido 2019: 206)

<sup>6</sup> These institutions are then sub-divided into different types: movements, literary groups, educational institutions, etc.

<sup>7</sup> One possible solution to this issue was to design visualisations using dashboards similar to those used in the *Mapping the Republic of Letters* or the *SPIN - Study Platform on Interlocking Nationalisms* projects, in which the interconnection between different points (origin and destination of the various letters, in this case) may be visualised. On the other hand, an analysis of the data focusing on the concept of the relationship may also benefit from the use of network analysis tools, some of which already offer options for visualising geographic data. This is the approach applied, for example, in the project *Map Modern. Mapping Hispanic Modernity. Cross-border Literary Networks and Cultural Mediators (1908-1939)*, which studies a similar subject but adopts a different methodology focusing on network analysis.

<sup>8</sup> It is important to bear in mind that the *Digital Map* does not aim to be exhaustive; the numbers presented in this section have no statistical significance and serve instead as an approximate indication of the relevance of certain spaces as focal points for interaction between Iberian cultures.

<sup>9</sup> The project *The Space of Slovenian Literary Culture* reached similar conclusions after analysing data relating to the personalities in its database: the authors, born in different parts of Slovenia, tended to subsequently group together in Ljubljana (Perenič 2013).

<sup>10</sup> In Portugal, for example, it was not until the academic year 1891-92 that a woman was admitted to the University of Coimbra for the first time. She remained the only female student until 1896-1897 (Vaquinhas 2018: 222). This question is the subject of another article by the same authors, which is currently in press.

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