Latin American Books and Periodicals

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Ever since 1629, when Antonio de León Pinelo in his *Epitome de la Biblioteca Oriental Occidental* attempted for the first time a general American bibliography,¹ the emphasis in Latin America has been more on enumerative or systematic bibliography than on analytical or critical bibliography.² One explanation of that emphasis lies in the Latin American system of book production, for books have been and are still issued there largely without a previously formed plan, but with an immediate and definite purpose, by writers of many kinds and races, whose subjects are as numerous and as individualistic as the area from which they derive is large.

Another reason for such predominance is that analysis or criticism of a book is not possible unless enough of the various forms in which it has appeared are at hand for study. Accessibility necessarily follows knowledge by librarians or others of the existence of such variants before their acquisition is possible.

Book production in all Latin American countries is still such a highly individual matter that acquisition by libraries is incredibly difficult, even within the country where the book appears. The limited number of copies printed of most titles, even in the small commercial book industry; the pirate presses; the extremely large number of privately printed works, especially in the fields of the humanities and history; the almost total lack of an organized book information service, and of sufficient, well-organized and budgeted libraries—all contribute throughout Latin America to the difficulty of knowing the history of a printed title and of having available enough copies of its varying editions to make possible a critical and analytical study of it.

Hence the emphasis at present throughout Latin America and the scholarly world on enumerative or systematic bibliography. The Latin Americans themselves—the librarians, the scholars, the bookmen—are

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becoming more aware of the necessity of developing this form of cultural communication. Today there is not a Latin American country without librarians (in most countries, organized groups) who are attempting to provide some enumerative bibliography of the national printed product. The bookmen too, more and more aware of the problem, have formed promotional organizations which publish journals like the BBB of Brazil and Biblos of Argentina.

Librarians have been encouraged also through the International Advisory Committee on Bibliography, Documentation and Terminology of UNESCO to work together on the problem not only nationally but regionally. This cooperative effort has produced to date the enumerative Bibliografía de Centroamérica y del Caribe (Madrid, Junta Técnica de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos de España, 1958) which has expanded through the years to include most Latin American countries and to change its name to Bibliografía de Centroamérica y del Caribe, Argentina y Venezuela, 1959- (Havana, Comisión Bibliográfica Cubana José Toribio Medina, 1961).

Many national libraries of Latin America have long concerned themselves with producing a record of the national cultural product. An outstanding example of this is the National Library of Chile, which has recently brought up to date its enumerative bibliography from the publication of the first book in that country through 1964. The director, Guillermo Feliú Cruz, has not only been successful in the past two years in filling the gap between 1917 to 1964 in the Anuario de la prensa chilena, but in the volume for the period 1917-1921 has given a complete history of the bibliographical works produced since 1812 through the encouragement of that institution. Trained by José Toribio Medina, the great master of analytical and critical bibliography, Feliú Cruz recognizes the shortcomings of the Anuarios and points out that at least twenty percent of the annual book production of Chile is not represented in them.3

While Chile has thus outdistanced all other Latin American national libraries, many other countries, notably Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, Cuba and Puerto Rico, have shown their increasing awareness since 1937 of the need of this form of bibliography through the compilation of an annual national bibliography. Similar annuals have been issued from time to time by others.

These efforts within and without Latin America have been consistently encouraged from abroad and especially more recently in the United States through the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin Ameri-
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can Library Materials (SALALM), supported by a loosely organized group of dedicated librarians in the United States who have met annually since 1956 at different research centers in search of solutions to problems of obtaining Latin American library materials. From the very first seminar the great need for enumerative bibliography was recognized as an absolute necessity to acquisition. The idea of cooperative effort of all Latin Americanists to fill that need was discussed. Through these seminars the idea for a Publisher's Weekly for all Latin America as well as a Latin American Books in Print has been planted, nurtured and partially fulfilled, by the publication (through the untiring effort of Daniel Melcher) of Libros en venta en Hispanoamérica y España (New York, R. R. Bowker Co., 1964) and the Fichero bibliográfico hispanoamericano (New York, R. R. Bowker Co., No. 1, 1961). This accomplishment has been a result of the cooperation not only of Mr. Melcher and of the seminars but as stated previously of the librarians and bookmen throughout Latin America.

SALALM from the first recognized the need of enlisting the Latin Americans in the effort. At its second meeting held in 1957, the participation of a sizeable group from Mexico was most effective, and since then each seminar has been greatly enriched by the contributions of Latin Americans. The value of the seminars to the field of bibliography has recently been recognized by Henry E. Adams in his characterization of its reports as "a good source for gauging the Latin American bibliographical 'temperature'" and his recommendation that the researcher consult them on a regular basis.4

Discussion of enumerative bibliography in the United States pertaining to the Latin American field would not be complete without reference to the Handbook of Latin American Studies,5 whose purpose from its beginning in 1935 has been that of a selective systematic bibliography of Latin America in the fields encompassed. The realization of that purpose has been hampered greatly, however, by the difficulty of access to knowledge of the very materials needed for such a selective bibliography. The wealth of material it has had at hand recently, attributable in some degree to the measures taken to meet the problems of acquisition and enumerative bibliography as a result of SALALM, has, among other reasons, caused the editors of the Handbook to alter its form of publication by dividing it into two parts—the humanities including history, and the social sciences—with each published separately in alternate years.

Scholars who use the Handbook should always remember that it is
intended to be merely a highly selective bibliography, which precludes it from being comprehensive. It therefore seldom devotes space to new editions and impressions of books previously listed even though knowledge of these later editions is so necessary to effective analytical bibliography.

Prior to the publication of the Handbook of Latin American Studies at Harvard in 1936, the person most active in enumerative Latin American literary bibliography was Sturgis E. Leavitt, who, as early as 1922, produced a bibliography of Uruguayan literature which was followed in rapid succession by one on Chilean literature (1923) and one on Argentine literature (1924). His A Tentative Bibliography of Peruvian Literature (1932)—his first contribution to the Bibliographies of Spanish-American Literature, sponsored by the Harvard Council on Hispano-American Studies—is singled out by Alberto Tauro as the first attempt to compile a check list or hand list of Peruvian literary works, and Tauro’s Bibliografia peruana de literatura begins with 1931 where Leavitt’s work ended. Each of the bibliographies produced by the Harvard Council between 1931-1937 was devoted to a specific country.

During this period of intensive publication of enumerative bibliography at Harvard, some of this type of bibliography was being published in different Latin American countries; but between 1937 and the mid-fifties little became known aside from that appearing in the Handbook of Latin American Studies or in some of the literary journals of Latin American and other countries. Beginning in the fifties there has been, however, a considerable bibliographical revival in the field of Latin American literature, especially with respect to fiction and drama. Illustrative are those on the Brazilian, Argentine, Colombian and Venezuelan novel and on the Mexican short story. Among other recently produced bibliographies are those relating to drama in Chile, Brazil, Mexico and Cuba. The bibliographical work on Peruvian post-modernist poetry is evidence that that genre has not been entirely overlooked. Coverage of the national literary output has also been revived in Mexico, Peru, Brazil, Haiti, and Argentina. At the same time a few general bibliographies on Latin American literature have appeared.

Deserving of special mention in the category of enumerative bibliography are the recent bibliographies or guides to the literary journals of Latin America, both of a general nature and of a national character, especially those of Argentina and Mexico. Also to be mentioned
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are the indexes to the content of journals, especially the Leavitt Revistas hispano-americanas; índice bibliográfico 1843-1935,8 the Index to Latin American Periodical Literature, 1929-19609 and its continuation, and Antonio Matos' very recently initiated A Guide to Reviews of Books from and about Hispanic America.10

Enumerative bibliography in the field of history, like that of literature, has developed primarily along national lines with a few general works appearing like Robert Arthur Humphreys' Latin American History; a Guide to the Literature in English (London, Oxford University Press, 1958); the sections relating to Latin America of the Guide to Historical Literature (New York, Macmillan, 1961) of the American Historical Association, and of A Select Bibliography: Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America (New York, American Universities Field Staff, Inc., 1960) and its supplements; Latin America in Soviet Writings; A Bibliography, compiled by the Hispanic Foundation of the Library of Congress and published in Baltimore by the Johns Hopkins Press, 1966; the periodicals Indice histórico español (Barcelona, Editorial Teide, 1953- ) of Spain and Revista de historia de América of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (Mexico, 1938- ).

More recently, enumerative bibliography in the historical field of a national character has appeared primarily in various journals like the historiographical articles on the various countries. Among those countries which are contributing most to bibliography in the field of national history are Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Peru, and Venezuela.

Before completing this discussion on enumerative bibliography, mention should be made of the recent work of Abel Rodolfo Geoghegan, Obras de referencia de América latina,11 an invaluable aid to all bibliographers and scholars, and of the appearance in printed form of the catalog of some of the large research libraries rich in Latin American materials, such as the Newberry Library in Chicago, the Bancroft Library of the University of California, and the New York City Public Library.

Some of the bibliography here mentioned is the simplest form of check list, frequently limited to listing only author, title, place and date of publication, if that much. Some go so far as to make a brief comment on the substantive content of the titles listed, but none of it meets, or indeed attempts to meet, the standards for Americana suggested by Lawrence C. Wroth.12 Most of it is dedicated to the simplest form of book listing or to recording the fact that a book of
a certain title exists. Its use to the subject specialist as a guide to
the desired material is unsatisfactory because of the limited descrip-
tive information accompanying the entries.

The truth is that this type of bibliography can never adequately
fulfill the needs of the real scholar or the librarian. Only analytical
bibliography can do this, and, unfortunately, since the great monu-
mental works of Medina in the first quarter of this century, little such
bibliography on Latin America has been produced. In fact, only some
of the works of Agustín Millares Carlo have matched the standards
set by Medina. It is, therefore, not surprising that, in order to meet
the need for critical bibliography, all of his bibliographical works have
recently been made available both on microfilm and in print.

Beside the reprinting of Medina's works stands the reprinting of the
great analytical bibliography of Joaquin García Icazbalceta relating
to sixteenth-century Mexico. Practically all recent analytical bibli-
ography has been inspired by the work of these two men and has
taken the form of additions to their work.

All of Medina's work terminated within the first quarter of the nine-
teenth century. Thus there has been so far no critical bibliography
produced covering the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—the period
of largest book production and of which critical bibliography is much
needed. Possibly the lack of critical bibliography for this period is
explained by the dearth of nineteenth-and twentieth-century printed
materials in libraries either in or outside of Latin America and the
tendency of most Latin American scholars until very recently to look
to the colonial past. Other factors also threaten the future of this form
of bibliography.

The pressure to mechanize, to emphasize the physically scientific
to the exclusion of the humanistic and cultural is becoming so ex-
plorative that the very objects—books—needed for bibliographical study
are threatened by either near or total extinction. This threat cannot
be laid only at the door of the scientists, for scholars of the humanities
and social sciences are equally guilty of a lack of appreciation of
books outside their field of interest. Many librarians belong to this

group.

Any curator of Latin American library materials can attest to the
general attitude that a library needs only one copy of a title regardless
of the edition, that the acquisition of additional copies or of other
editions or impressions is an absolute waste of money and space, and
that such purchases are not to be countenanced. This protest against

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additional copies or editions is often unanimous throughout all the library administration. Yes, and this protest includes frequently even the scholarly world,\textsuperscript{14} which should know better.

Unless this attitude can be modified and unless more responsibility is assumed by librarians within as well as without Latin America to preserve the physical entities necessary to bibliography, it, as a scholarly pursuit, will be impossible. This is particularly true of late nineteenth-and twentieth-century Latin American books because of the rapid deterioration of the paper on which most of them are printed and the very limited number of copies issued of an edition or impression.

The preservation of these books cannot be left to the national libraries of the Latin American countries. It is the responsibility of all interested in the area’s cultural history and development. Illustrative of the difficulties of critical bibliographical study in relation to Latin American literary writers, is the case of \textit{Hijo de ladrón} of Manuel Rojas of Chile, and \textit{El señor presidente} of Miguel Angel Asturias. \textit{Hijo de ladrón} has appeared with at least nine different publication dates: three, from the presses of Editorial Nascimento, five and possibly eight from that of Editorial Zig-Zag, and one from Emecé in Buenos Aires. It is a fact that there are distinct differences in some of these—textual and otherwise—yet there is no known location of all of them. Only two libraries in the United States, according to the \textit{Union Catalog}, appear to have copies of more than one of these. Most libraries, doubtless unaware of the difference in text of the different issues, probably feel that a single copy of the title is sufficient; but for the literary scholar the differences are important, and he would want to have in the library at least the true product of the author, not just any copy that might be printed. The same is true of Asturias’ \textit{El señor presidente}; that is, some significant textual changes have been made in the various printings of the work, from Mexico City, Lima, Havana, Montevideo, Madrid and Buenos Aires, as well as other places where it has appeared also in translation.\textsuperscript{15}

Some would argue that copies of all the different imprints could be found in the National Library of the author’s homeland or at least in the national libraries of the countries in which the books appeared, but this is not the case. Although most Latin American countries have laws requiring deposit in the National Library of books appearing within their boundaries, not only is the law frequently ignored by both the author and the publisher or printer but also the law itself,
at times, provides that deposit of the title in any one edition or impression fulfills the law; thus only one edition or impression may reach the National Library.

Effective research in the different disciplines requires not only adequate enumerative bibliography to inform the scholar of the materials in his field of special interest, but also analytical bibliography to guide him to its true form. Today, more than ever, the scholar needs guides to the best available. Enumerative bibliography may inform a scholar that Ulrich Schmidel's description of his Viaje al Río de la Plata appeared first in Spanish in Volume 3 of Andrés González de García Carballido y Zuñiga's Historiadores primitivos de las Indias Occidentales . . . (Madrid, 1749) and that the first English translation appeared in London in 1891 in the works of the Hakluyt Society (Cambridge University Press, Hakluyt Society, Number 81), but a critical bibliography would explain that neither of these should be consulted by the scholar looking for an accurate account written by Schmidel of life in the River Plate area between 1524 and 1554, for both translations were made from the poor translation into Latin in 1599 by Hulsius Levinus who had used, not the original work in German but rather, a poorly transcribed manuscript copy. Nor would it be possible to glean from the enumerative bibliography the information that the best Spanish edition of the work appeared in Argentina in 1938, translated by an Argentine German, fluent in German and Spanish, personally familiar with the region described, and using as a basis for his translation the original manuscript written by Schmidel (Wernicke, Edmundo. Ulrico Schmidl, Derrotero y viaje a España y las Indias. Santa Fe, Argentina, 1938).

There are those who would argue that bibliography should be left to the subject specialist and is not a matter of concern for librarians or schools of library science. But good bibliography is just as necessary to the library as is instruction in the administration of a library, the technique of cataloging or any other subject relating to the library. Good reference work is dependent to a large degree on the availability of adequate bibliographical tools as is also the best cataloging and the most successful acquisition program. Given these reasons plus the very fact that without the book, the study of which is the core of bibliography, there would be no libraries or schools of library science, it seems reasonable that librarians and schools of library science should not only make use of bibliography but should encourage and develop it to a much greater extent. To do so would
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not only facilitate their own effectiveness but would also render a true service to the scholar and subject specialist, who deserves to be aided and better served, especially in the little developed but necessary field of analytical bibliography. Today, with the growing interest in Latin America, the collaboration of librarians and scholars to fill this need is especially great.

Bibliographical Note

Since this article is professedly a survey of trends rather than a detailed account of work done, the bibliography is not comprehensive. For a more complete bibliographical listing see the work of Abel Rodolfo Geoghegan cited in reference 11 below.

References

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12. Wroth, *op. cit.*


14. For an example, see Weismann, Donald L. *Jelly Was the Word.* Foreword by Roger Shattuck and Introduction by William Arrowsmith. Austin, Texas, Pemberton Press, 1965, p. 37. It was inspired by William B. Todd’s, “The Early Issues of Poe’s Tales (1845),” *The Library Chronicle of the University of Texas,* 7:13-17, Fall 1961.

15. I am indebted to Cedomil Goic of the University of Chile for part of the information relative to the significant textual changes in Manuel Rojas, *Hijo de ladrón* and Miguel Angel Asturias, *El señor presidente.*