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A different reality: studies on the work of Elena Garro.

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PQ7297.G3585Z66 2007
Gonzalez Ricano, Maria Eugenia.

PQ2797.G3585Z74 2002
Melgar-Palacios, Lucia.

PQ2797.G3585Z80 1978
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San Pedro, Teresa Anta, 1948-.

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Toruno, Rhina.

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Umanzor, Marta A. (Marta Aida).

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PQ2797.G3585Z98 2008
Yo quiero que haya mundo : Elena Garro 50 anos de dramaturgia.
If I had heard the term “shelflisting” before taking this course, I would have imagined it to be a simple task. After having built a shelflist for Elena Garro, it is clear that there is nothing simple about it. Building a shelflist involves a lot of thought and many resources. One must be able to acquire certain information about a work. This information can be obtained from the book itself, but if the physical book is not accessible, it can be obtained from the Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) record. That requires knowledge of MARC records and how they work. The second key element in being able to build a shelflist is knowledge of the required tables: the Cutter Table, the Table for Literary Authors with One Cutter Number, the Preferred Shelflist Order and the Translation Table. Unfortunately, most of these tables have limitations and they require the user to have prior knowledge on how they work before they can be used. One table in particular, the Table for Literary Authors with One Cutter Number (P-PZ40), has several limitations of which users must be aware. Otherwise they may make the mistake of assuming the table is all that is required to build a shelflist.

**P-PZ40 Table Limitations**

The first problem I encountered when looking at the P-PZ40 table is the lack of glossary or definitions for the language used. Had it not been for our class lecture notes, I would not have known that “Collected Works” means the entire collection of an author’s work at the time of publication. I also would not have known that “Selected Works” means a collection of several different complete works by an author and I would not have known that “Selections” means excerpts from an author’s complete work(s). Lastly, the final category “General Works” would have seemed completely vague to me. The P-PZ40 table works under the assumption that if one is using the table, he or she already understands the terminology.

The second and possibly most crippling limitation of the table is its lack of rules. The table displays many categories: collected works, translations, separate works, etc. There is a column that states either “by date” or “by title.” And there is a column where all the entries read “.x(other letters and numbers),” e.g. .xA11-13 or .xZ5-599. Again, if not for our lecture notes, these categories would have been meaningless to me. The table lacks any type of rules or clarification that would allow a new user
with no prior knowledge to have a basic understanding of how it works. It also doesn’t have any guidelines alerting the user to when and how to use other necessary tables, such as the Preferred Shelflist Order and the Translation Table.

The last general limitation I found in the table has to do with the specificity of the call numbers being assigned to works. For example, all selected works must be assigned a .xA6 number. The works in this category are arranged by date since they all have the same call number. But what happens when you have two, or even three, distinctly separate works in this category that were published in the same year? You cannot extend the .xA6 with other numbers because you would then be entering into the .xA61-Z458 territory, reserved for separate works only. The call number has to be modified in some other way (in this case adding a “b,” then “c,” etc.), but since the table does not have instructions, it is assumed that the user already knows to do this.

These issues, plus others I will discuss, were all taken into account when building my shelflist for works by and about Elena Garro. I took the project step by step. My first step was to collect the 30 records of works I would be using to build the shelflist. Then I verified that the call numbers on the records were correct. If they were not, I corrected them. Next I put the list in order using only the call numbers. Finally, I went through the list again, only this time checking that the works were in alphabetical order, or chronological order depending on the category, and checking against the Preferred Shelflist Order. Each step in the project presented new issues that needed to be confronted and corrected.

Collection of Records

I began the assignment by collecting the records that I used to build the shelflist. I employed three different online public access catalogs (OPACs) for this task: Library of Congress, CONSULS and the Boston Public Library. I chose the latter because I thought that a library in a city as large as Boston would have a wide selection of works. Luckily, I was correct in my assumption; however the records themselves were not of the highest quality. I had to go to other sources, such as the Library of Congress, to verify the records I retrieved from the Boston Public Library. In many cases, the information in the Boston Public Library records was incomplete, especially in the case of authorized headings.
The problem I encountered most frequently when deciphering the records, is discerning whether they were selected works or separate works. I included many of them in the selected works section of the shelflist because they were (incomplete) collections of short stories. After further research and discussion on the course discussion thread, it turns out that some of them had only been published together in one work, and not separately. I then reassigned call numbers to those that fell into the separate works section of the shelflist and reordered my list accordingly. The issue probably would have been resolved more easily if I had the physical books in hand. Accurate English translations of the Spanish titles and descriptions would have helped as well.

**Assigning and Verifying Call Numbers**

When I was certain that the records were complete and accurate, I assigned call numbers to them. By this time, I already knew that the cutter number assigned to Elena Garro is PQ7297.G3585, so it was just a matter of extending the cutter number. When this was finished, I checked my numbers against the numbers in the records I collected. Most of the time, they were close, which meant I knew I had done it correctly. There were a few times though, where my call numbers were drastically different from those found on the records and I had to figure out where the discrepancies were. A consistent error of mine was mistaking criticisms of selected works for selected works because most of the works were in Spanish, and internet translation is not always accurate. Finally, I discovered that the 600 field of the MARC record usually says if it is a criticism and interpretation.

While I was assigning call numbers, I encountered one pressing issue with the P-PZ40 table. It had to do with the “Biography and Criticism – General Works” area. The table does not specify what to do if a work doesn’t have a statement of responsibility. It also doesn’t state whether the works should be ordered by date, by title or by statement of responsibility. I had to reread the lecture notes to find out that all works filed under “General Works” are to be ordered alphabetically by main entry. It would have been helpful if that information were listed in the table itself.
Ordering the Shelflist by Call Number

After all the call numbers were assigned and verified, I put the works in order using only the call numbers. This was fairly simple until I got to the Z8-899s. To assign the call numbers I used the “Weighted scheme based on averages of actual usage in LC records” table that you posted in the discussion thread. It was helpful, but it turns out I had a lot of works with main entries beginning with letters O-T. I had to spend some time going back and manipulating the numbers so that each work had its own separate call number and so that there was room for any future additions to the shelflist. It seems that the Z5-999 section is too broad. If the table were to have more concrete rules in the use of these numbers, it would not only help the people building the shelflists, but it would increase consistency in shelflists across libraries, making it easier for patrons and librarians to search for works in any given institution.

Ordering the Shelflist by Record

In order to confirm that my shelflist was ordered correctly, first I turned to the Preferred Shelflist Order. I checked to make sure all of my records were ordered according to this table. One of my entries, a criticism of a separate work, was ordered incorrectly. I had it listed with “General Works” instead of after the separate work that was being criticized. This should be clearer in the P-PZ40 table or the table should refer the user to the Preferred Shelflist Order. Had I not known to check the Preferred Shelflist Order, I would have incorrectly listed this work.

During my confirmation of shelflist order I also discovered that some of the entries were not in proper alphabetical order. This is because in the .xZ5-599 section, there is a lot of leeway for assigning numbers. It all depends on which works are being shelflisted at the time. I had to rearrange the records so they were alphabetical which meant I had to also rearrange some of the call numbers so they would be in order as well.

Thoughts on Building a Shelflist

Building a shelflist is not the simple task I would have imagined it to be at one time. It takes thorough knowledge of the Cutter Table, the Table for Literary Authors with One Cutter Number and the Preferred Shelflist Order. Just having these tables at hand, is not enough. A shelflister must know how
and when to use them. Because there are so many different tables to consult, and no rules to guide their use, I created a document that included links to the Cutter Table, the P-PZ40 Table, the Preferred Shelflist Order and the Translation Table. In that document I also included some notes on the use and provisions of the tables. This made the task of shelflisting much easier because all the information I required was in one place.

Now that I am finished with the assignment, I realize that the biggest limitation, for me, in the table is that it doesn’t express when it is necessary to consult the other tables. As I mentioned previously, I would get in the groove of assigning call numbers and then realize that I may have assigned some incorrectly because I hadn’t consulted the Preferred Shelflist Order. I would then have to go back and assign different call numbers to the works.

Once knowledge of the process of shelflisting is obtained, it is not a difficult task. The key is to be thorough. Each work in question must be listed in the correct place. If they are incorrectly assigned call numbers, the works will get lost in the stacks. Possible future additions to the shelf must also be taken into account. If too many works have the same or similar numbers, it may prove complicated to add new works later due to duplicate or extremely long numbers. As long as one knows to use the proper tables, and understands the rules that go along with the tables, shelflisting should be a smooth process.