## Pelagios South: Researching, Teaching and Learning. Final Report.

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## Cita:

del Rio, Maria Gimena y De León, Romina (2017). *Pelagios South:* Researching, Teaching and Learning. Final Report.

Dirección estable: https://www.aacademica.org/rodeleon/18

ARK: https://n2t.net/ark:/13683/pzWg/tfB



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Linking the places of our past



## Pelagios South: Researching, Teaching and Learning. Final Report





Centro Argentino de Información Científica y Tecnológica

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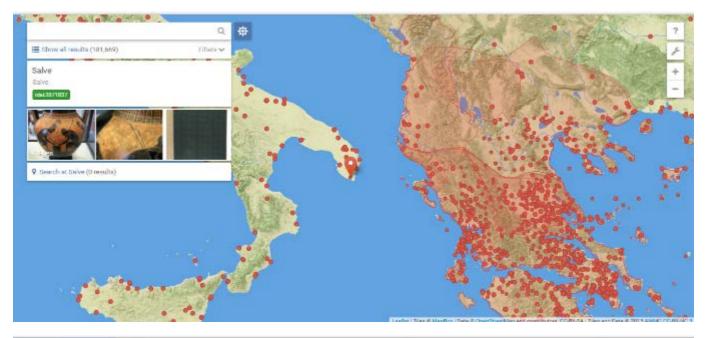
Digital Humanities are an emerging scientific field in a large part of Latin America. However, one of the major problems researches face when trying to establish DH as an academic practice is the weakness and obsolescence of Latin American digital infrastructures and the need for training.

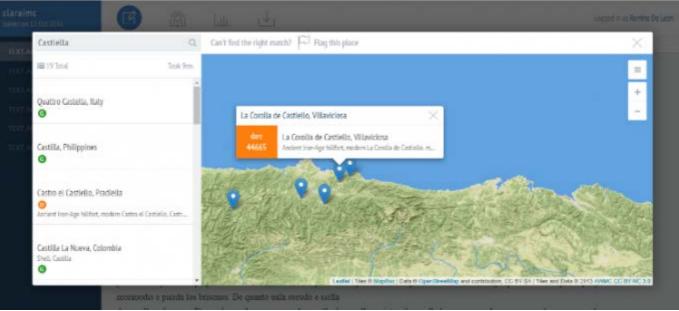
Pelagios Commons offers to the DH community online tools and resources that, on one hand, do not require previous programming knowledge and, on the other, facilitates online work. Moreover, Pelagios Commons offers tools that enable collaborative work with guarantees of long-term preservation. Thus, tools such as Recogito or Peripleo, which have a minimum learning curve and are easy to use autonomously, have proven to be of great interest and usefulness for our community in Argentina since we started working with them, about three years ago.

As we have already commented in another post, in the last three years Pelagios Commons tools and resources were presented and / or used in several events in Argentina and attracted the attention of our community. For example, Recogito was presented in November 2014 at the First Conference on Digital Humanities of the Argentine Association of Digital Humanities (AAHD), and at the First International Congress of the AAHD in Buenos Aires, in November 2016.

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After our work with the LINED team at UNED (http://linhd.uned.es/) in the project Medieval Iberia (Pelagios Microgrants 2016 http://commons.pelagios.org/2016/10/mediaeval- iberia-through-pelagios-commons /) we thought it was time to propose a project based on the interests of our community. Therefore, we thought it was the perfect time to start a project that could relate Spain and Latin America through their history, literature, maps and and Pelagios Commons resources. Pelagios South focused on the Rio de la Plata region and its texts, especially, the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, the last viceroyalty in the region and also the shortest one.





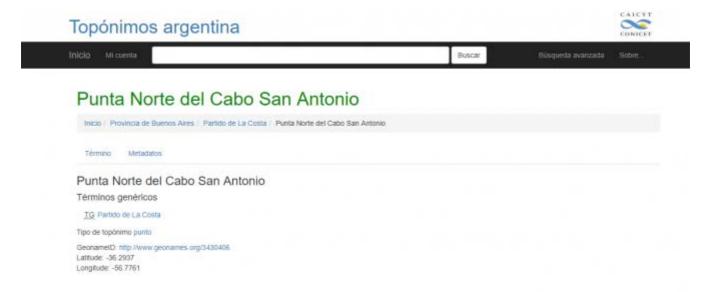
In June 2017, we were awarded with a Resource Development Grant from Pelagios Commons. Our project Pelagios al Sur proposed to extend Pelagios tools to other spatial and geographical borders, beyond the Ancient or Medieval World, and the Euro-Asian geography. We decided that, in order to call the attention of our community in Argentina, we should focus our work in the XVI-XVII<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the Río de la Plata area could be variables of interest for a small research project (in this case, six months, although we know that if a project is of interest, it goes on for a long time and generates new projects). These inaugural texts, halfway between chronicle and fiction, could interest historians, philologists, etc.

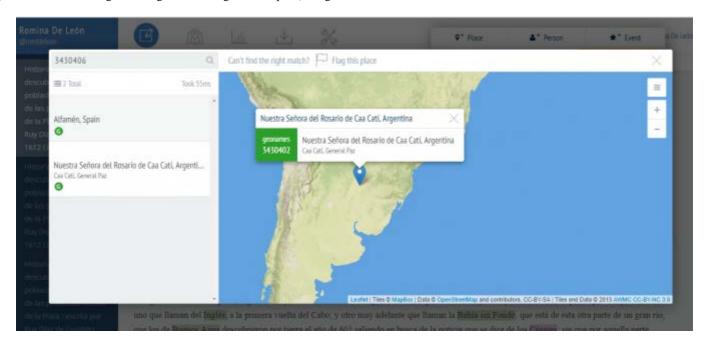
The South of the American continent was a rather late destination for the Spaniards, however, it was visited" and described by many different eyes -also the natives- between the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, from Bartolomé de las Casas to Charles Darwin. For this reason, we focused on a corpus of texts that describe the so-called "lands of the Río de la Plata", from a particular perspective, and for the first time in written Spanish:

- Comentarios (de Pero Hernández) a Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (first edition 1542/1555)
- Viaje al Río de la Plata- Ulrico Schmidl (first edition 1567)
- La Argentina- Martín del Barco Centenera (first edition 1602)
- LaArgentina manuscrita Ruy Díaz de Guzmán (first edition 1612)
- Un Informe de un viaje por el Río de la Plata y desde allí por tierra a Perú...- Acarete du Biscay (first edition 1672)

The first step in Pelagios South was to search all these texts in a reusable version that did not infringe copyright and was under Open Access laws. Once identified, the texts were cleaned and transformed to txt format. Then, they we uploaded them on the Recogito with their revised metadata and the relevant Creative Commons licenses.

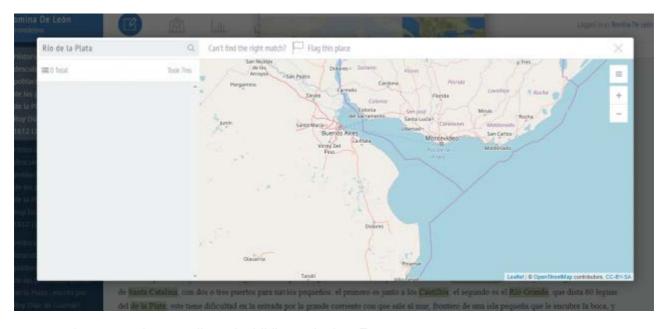
Next, we created a Controlled Vocabulary for Argentina from Geonames to Tematres, accessible from: <a href="http://vocabularios.caicyt.gov.ar/geoar/vocab/index.php">http://vocabularios.caicyt.gov.ar/geoar/vocab/index.php</a>. TemaTres is an open source web tool for managing knowledge representations. It allows managing open source controlled vocabularies (glossaries, taxonomies, thesauri, lists) in open source servers. We registered the names (place names) of the spaces and geographic features existing in the sociogeographic environment of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in this territory. Having the places indicated in this controlled vocabulary with their Geonames dentifier was very useful to detect some places we couldn't find using Recogito. As it was expected, most of our places donot appear in the gazetteers and and we needed to find a way of "tricking" Recogito to help us in the searches. One good example is a place called by Ruy Díaz de Guzmán as Cabo Blanco, a place that is nowadays called Cabo San Antonio. Cabo Blanco is not a searchable reference neither in our Controlled Vocabulary or in Recogito. Cabo de San Antonio can only be found in the Controlled Vocabulary with its Geonames identifier. A solution to "trick" Recogito was to look for Cabo de San Antonio through its Geonames identifier, mark it, and then explain in a comment we were identifying there Cabo Blanco:





We decided to focus all our attention on a text of great importance for literature and Argentine history, written by a Hispanic-Guarani mestizo: *La Argentina Manuscrita* – Ruy Díaz de Guzmán (first edition 1612), which we have just mentioned above. We reinforced our intuition after a meeting with historians of the Ambrosetti Institute and IDECU, where the interest in editing and georeferencing this text was also exposed. Therefore, we decided to undertake a thorough and interdisciplinary work, seeking to combine the knowledge of historians with the IIBICRIT (Philology) and CAICYT (Information Science) research teams. We looked for ways to work methodically not only in places but in events and people using Recogito to mark Ruy Díaz de Guzmán text.

First of all, we made a careful examination of the types of annotations we were looking for. The colonizing movement is described in these texts, many times, from the birth or mouth of a river. There is no construction of space in the "European" sense in these texts, there is no notion of city, monument, etc. This brought complexity to the marking of the texts, beyond the obvious difficulties with georeferencing. Here we mention some recurrent appearances of rivers and other geographical features, such as *Río de la Plata*, *Cordillera de los Andes*, *Iguazú Falls*, which can be observed in OpenStreetMap references but which are not obviously recognized by Recogito.



For person and event marks we collected a bibliography in a Zotero group: https://www.zotero.org/groups/1669951/hdcaicyt-pelagios\_al\_sur, such as Gonzalo de Mendoza or the discovery of America or of the River of the Silver, current City of Buenos Aires.







In order to open the project to the community and train those interested in the use of the Pelagios Commons tools, we dictate -Gimena del Rio and Romina De León- two workshops. The first, on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017, within

the framework of Science Week, at the CAICYT of CONICET: "Workshop on Georeferencing, Digital Humanities and Rioplatense stories in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries". Here is a brief entry on the experience: http://www.caicyt-conicet.gov.ar/micrositios/hd/?p=1043.



The second workshop, on October 12th was specially designed for historians of the Ambrosetti Institute and IDECU who wanted to join the project: http://www.caicyt-conicet.gov.ar/micrositios/hd/?p=1072

To conclude, several of the members of Pelagios South are part of Pelagios Commons Multilingualism SIG.Part of its activities was the translation to Spanish of the tutorial of Recogito, which we also used in our workshops: http://recogito.pelagios.org/help/en/tutorial. As a complementary activity to our project and to the work in this SIG, we offered a lastworkshop on November 24<sup>th</sup> together with another member of the project and the Multilingualism group, Melisa Martí, as part of the activities of the III<sup>rd</sup> Conference on fiction and narration "Un milenio de contar historias: los conceptos de ficcionalización y narración de la Antigüedad y el Medioevo" at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Buenos Aires. The slides can be found here:

https://es.slideshare.net/GimenaDelRioRiande/taller-pelagios-jornadas-ficcionalizacin-ffyl-uba.



We believe that Pelagios Commons resources and tools of will become key elements of the Latin American Digital Humanities, due to their intuitive nature and the possibility of working on collaborative cloud platforms that also allow exporting options.

Pelagios South will continue working next year on its texts, as well as in the possibility of creating a Recogito instance. Likewise, new workshops and training sessions at the Buenos Aires National (secondary) School and at the University of Mar de Plata have been scheduled. Finally, and after the incorporation of Lic. Nidia Hernández to Digital Humanities CAICYT, a specialist in Natural Language Processing (NLP), we are designing an automatic marking tool for placenames.

All Pelagios South activities were published at CAICYT Digital Humanities site (http://www.caicyt-conicet.gov.ar/micrositios/hd/) and their social networks (Facebook and Twitter). They were also replicated by the networks of the Asociación Argentina de Humanidades Digitales (AAHD) and the Ancient History Encyclopedia.



Gimena del Rio Riande (IIBICRIT, CONICET)

Romina De León (CAICYT, CONICET)

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