Editor’s Message:
Scholarly Journals and Data: A Case of Academic Celebrity?

Sheri Spaine Long


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Like our academic siblings in the sciences for decades, humanities scholars are paying more and more attention to hits, views, and citations. Are we becoming aspiring academic “rock stars” who want to be listed on the citation hit parade? Lately, for better or worse, scholar-teachers in languages, literatures, and linguistics are increasingly self-conscious of our quantitative as well as our qualitative profiles. Why? Digitization has made it easier than ever to track and count almost everything. Society is smitten with data reporting and tracking. Because sometimes all of this counting appears to be more of a sport than a reflection of the seriousness of purpose rooted in the humanities and social sciences, we might be inclined to say: Who cares about these data? However, increased accountability has motivated instructors, researchers, and administrators alike to seek more numerical documentation to justify our importance and productivity to various stakeholders such as deans, department heads, trustees, and so on.

In a day in my life as Editor of *Hispania*, I am able to view in JSTOR some intriguing usage statistics about the journal. JSTOR is a nonprofit online system for archiving academic journals. One can view electronically the complete contents of all back issues of *Hispania* since 1917 up to three years short of the current volume. Since our affiliation with JSTOR in 2002, there have been more than 2.5 million views of *Hispania* articles online. The fact that users can view, search, and print back issues of *Hispania* articles has given unprecedented exposure to our content and produced some so-called academic celebrities due to frequent consultation.

Beyond simple popularity, what can we learn by studying the data and examining these lists? How do we interpret this usage information? Is there a back story? How do titles and topics add to the discourse on literary canon formation and/or pedagogical trends? The top three most-viewed and most-downloaded *Hispania* articles that are listed on the next page rightly reflect our broad scope and the diverse interests of the AATSP membership.

Before we proceed further, take a moment to review the *Hispania* mission statement printed below so that you will appreciate the broad sub-fields (italicized) in which we publish regularly. Then look at the lists of the most-viewed and most-downloaded articles that follow.

*Hispania*, the official journal of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), invites the submission of original, unpublished manuscripts on language, linguistics, literature, literary criticism, film, culture, cultural studies, applied linguistics, and pedagogy having to do with Spanish and Portuguese. Throughout *Hispania*’s history since its founding in 1917, it has published scholarly articles and reviews that are judged to be of interest to specialists in the discipline(s) as well as to a diverse readership of teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. All manuscripts submitted for publication should display thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the subject and field. Further considerations in the evaluation of manuscripts include their contribution to the advancement of knowledge, originality of method or focus, organization, and clarity of expression.

**Most Frequently Viewed Hispania Articles in JSTOR (To Date)**

Most Frequently Downloaded *Hispania* Articles in JSTOR (To Date)


The JSTOR lists make us mindful of the second part of *Hispania*’s full title—*A journal devoted to the teaching of Spanish and Portuguese*—because just these five titles encompass pedagogy, language, linguistics, and literature. The relevancy of *Hispania*’s broad mission is affirmed in the listing.

In perusing these “most frequently” lists, the eminent Hispanist Salvatore Poeta appears first in both categories. The popularity of his article in *Hispania* may well elevate our colleague to academic celebrity status. Cementing Poeta’s popularity is the canonical status of both *La casa de Bernarda Alba* and Federico García Lorca (as both playwright and poet) as documented by Brown (79, 97). All of these factors, not to mention the quality of the scholarship, support the recurrent digital viewings and downloads of Poeta’s article.

As teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, such lists can also record our curricular priorities, research, and assessment practices. The JSTOR data presented provides a diachronic snapshot of *Hispania*’s most utilized scholarship online in its archive. For a synchronic look at frequently downloaded articles that covers *Hispania*’s current volumes, go to www.aatsp.org and log in as a member of the AATSP, then click on *Hispania* online. There you will find the Project Muse page and a feature called “frequently downloaded articles”. At this writing, the following title was displayed in top position.


This title reflects an increase of research in the growing sub-disciplines of placement assessment and heritage language learners. The list of frequently consulted *Hispania* articles points out areas of critical need for additional research and scholarship as well.

As Editor, I invite you to read this issue of *Hispania*. You may want to predict our future academic celebrities and potential frequently downloaded articles and, as always, enjoy and learn from the solid content that we offer.

Sheri Spaine Long  
Editor  
*Hispania*

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