Terras, M. (2009). Review of Schreibman (S.), Siemens (R.), Unsworth (J.) (eds). "A Companion to Digital Humanities". Blackwell Publishing, Oxford. Classical Review, Cambridge University Press. 59.1. pp 288-290

Schreibman (S.), Siemens (R.), Unsworth (J.) (eds). A Companion to Digital Humanities. Blackwell Publishing. Pp. xxviii + 611. Malden, MA, Oxford, and Carlton, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. Paper £29.99, €42 (Cased £105, €147). ISBN: 9781405168069 (9781405103213 hbk).

In the modern, networked, information environment, many scholars - including those in the arts and humanities - are turning to computational technologies to assist and facilitate them in their varied research tasks. *A Companion to Digital Humanities* is the newly released (2008) paperback edition of the 2004 hardback *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, which aims to provide an overview of the emerging application of computational methods to humanities research problems. Published as one of Blackwell's *Companions to Literature and Culture*, the chunky tome of collected essays scopes and identifies "Digital Humanities" as an academic discipline, in much the same way as Romanticism, the Victorian Novel, or Restoration Drama are identified as bona fide scholarly fields in the same print series.

The editors refrain from providing the definitive description of what is meant by the phrase "Digital Humanities": a common concern for those operating within the discipline which has also been known as "humanities computing" (de Smedt *et al* 2002, McCarty 1998, Unsworth 2000, McCarty 2005, Terras 2006). Meanings do emerge in the thirty-seven chapters which constitute the volume, for example the Digital Humanities are described as "the automation of every possible analysis of human expression" (Busa, p. xvi), "using information technology to illuminate the human record, and bringing an understanding of the human record to bear on the development and use of information technology" (Schreibman *et al*, p. xxiii), and "the applications of computing to research and teaching within subjects that are loosely defined as "the humanities" or in British English "the arts". (Hockey, p.1). However, instead of arguments regarding the definition or scholarly approach of the term, the span and reach of activities which can be described as "Digital Humanities" are demonstrated by the book's wide content range. Split into four sections: history, principles, applications, and production, dissemination and archiving, the text covers both the use of computational technologies in specific subject areas (archaeology, art history, classics, etc), overarching principles behind automated computation processes (how computers function, databases, text encoding, etc), how these processes can and have been applied to general research problems (authorship studies, linguistic corpora, textual editing, etc) and how the resulting digital resources can be effectively produced, used, shared, and preserved in both scholarly research and teaching in the humanities. As such, the book represents a turning point for the Digital Humanities, bringing together a wide range of expertise from both theorists and practitioners, demonstrating that it can be considered a field in its own right.

It would be tempting for Classicists to skip directly to Greg Crane's chapter "Classics and the Computer: An End of the History" to discover what the Digital Humanities holds for them. In this chapter, Crane directs the reader to an earlier paper by Theodore Brunner, founder of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG), which covers the development of computing in the classics until the end of the 1980s (Brunner 1993), before picking up the story from then onwards. It is a multifaceted history dependent on the developing information environment, and Crane highlights broad

movements, achievements, and future prospects. Case studies demonstrate that the use of computing aided in the tricky issue of classical typesetting, helping to lower the publication costs of Harvard Studies in Classical Philology and the Loeb Classical Library, and, in a separate project, provided tools to efficiently use the TLG, allowing users to search on the various permutations in verb form possible in classical Greek. The strength of Crane's paper, however, lies in his attitude that

> There should not be a history of classics and the computer, for the needs of classicists are simply not so distinctive as to warrant a separate "classical informatics." Disciplinary specialists learning the strengths and weaknesses have, in the author's experience, a strong tendency to exaggerate the extent to which their problems are unique and to call for a specialized, domain-specific infrastructure and approach… For classicists to make successful use of information technology, they must insinuate themselves within larger groups, making allies of other disciplines and sharing infrastructure (p.47).

Indeed, it is the rest of the text beyond this chapter, informing the reader how to go about such tasks as text encoding, linguistic and textual analysis, cognitive stylistics, and authorship attribution, in which a classical scholar may find an introduction to computational approach which can aid them in undertaking their research task more efficiently and effectively. The *Companion* should be approached not to discover what computing has done previously for Classics, but as an introduction to tools and techniques which may prove useful for the individual research of the Classical (or other humanities) scholar.

The book does have some issues: in a broad spanning text such as this, some contributions will always be better than others. Certain themes emerge in papers dealing with the history of the use of computing in various disciplines which could have been concatenated into a broader social history of the computer, such as the limitation of available machinery and processing power in the 1970s, the predominance of databases in the 1980s, and the effects the Internet and related technologies has had on the information environment since the early 1990s. The papers have not been updated since the original publication in 2004, and technology does rapidly change: notable in their absence is any real mention of social computing, "web 2.0" communities, the adoption and use of blogs by humanities academics as efficient discursive spaces, recent large scale digitisation efforts and digital libraries, or current developments in e-Science and cyberinfrastructure. Nevertheless, as an overview text of a diverse field, the Companion does serve as a detailed, useful introduction to how computational technologies have and may be appropriated, utilised, and even innovated by humanities scholars. The recommended readings and online resources provided as further reference at the end of each chapter serve to open up the community, academic concerns, and practice of Digital Humanities to readers from all humanities disciplines, which are applicable in both research and teaching. It is worth noting that the paperback edition retails for significantly less than the hardback companion (£29.99 as opposed to £105), which puts the text in the accessible price range for an interested scholar out with the core digital humanities community, or marks it as a useful overview reader for inclusion on classroom reading lists.

The irony of this, of course, is the fact that a paper reader has been produced to cover a complete discipline of research and development which functions in the digital

Terras, M. (2009). Review of Schreibman (S.), Siemens (R.), Unsworth (J.) (eds). "A Companion to Digital Humanities". Blackwell Publishing, Oxford. Classical Review, Cambridge University Press. 59.1. pp 288-290

realm. This fact is not overlooked by the editors, who have collated the contributions online, although not at the advertised address (http://www.ach.org/companion/) but at http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/. The resulting digital resource presents humanities scholars of all disciplines with the chance to discover more about the use of computing in both their, related, and distant fields: interested scholars in the Classics are advised to start with Greg Crane's chapter, and explore outwards accordingly.

MELISSA TERRAS
*School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, University College London*

Brunner (T. F.), (1993). "Classics and the Computer: The History". In Solomon (J.) (ed.), Accessing Antiquity: The Computerization of Classical Databases. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, p. 10-33.

Busa (R. A), (2004). "Foreword: Perspectives on the Digital Humanities". In Schreibman (S.), Siemens (R.), Unsworth (J.) (eds) (2008). A Companion to Digital Humanities. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. xvi-xxii.

Crane (G.), (2004). "Classics and the Computer: An End of the History". In Schreibman (S.), Siemens (R.), Unsworth (J.) (eds) (2008). A Companion to Digital Humanities. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. 46-55.

Hockey (S.), (2004). "The History of Humanities Computing". In Schreibman (S.), Siemens (R.), Unsworth (J.) (eds) (2008). A Companion to Digital Humanities. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. 3-19.

McCarty (W.), (1998). "What is humanities computing? Toward a definition of the field". http://www.kcl.ac.uk/humanities/cch/wlm/essays/what/.

McCarty (W.), (2005). "Tree, turf, centre or archipelago? Poetics of Disciplinarity for Humanities Computing". Literary and Linguistic Computing 20.4.

de Smedt (K.), Gardiner (H.), Ore (E.), Orlandi (T.), Short (H.), Souillot, (J.), Vaughan (W.) (eds) (1999). "Computing in Humanities Education, a European Perspective". University of Bergen. http://helmer.aksis.uib.no/AcoHum/book/.

Terras, M. (2009). Review of Schreibman (S.), Siemens (R.), Unsworth (J.) (eds). "A Companion to Digital Humanities". Blackwell Publishing, Oxford. Classical Review, Cambridge University Press. 59.1. pp 288-290

Schreibman (S.), Siemens (R.), and Unsworth (J.), "The Digital Humanities and Computing: An Introduction". In Schreibman (S.), Siemens (R.), Unsworth (J.) (eds) (2008). A Companion to Digital Humanities. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p. xxiii-xxvii.

Terras (M.) (2006). "Disciplined: Using Educational Studies to Analyse 'Humanities Computing'." Literary and Linguistic Computing, Volume 21. 229 - 246.

Unsworth (J.) (2000). "What is Humanities Computing and What is Not?" A talk delivered in the Distinguished Speakers Series of the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities at the University of Maryland, College Park MD, October 5, 2000. http://www.iath.virginia.edu/%7Ejmu2m/mith.00.html