Article

§ 1 This special Digital Classicist issue of the *Digital Medievalist* journal is a celebration of the close collaboration and communication that has been exercised between the two communities since their respective inceptions several years ago. Although Digital Medievalist and Digital Classicist are distinct organisations, there is obvious overlap between them. The two have many members in common and members of both share many obviously similar interests: the Latin language, manuscripts and palaeography, obscure alphabets, and the value of digital media and methodologies in studying the often scarce evidence for pre-modern cultures.

§ 2 In addition to these elements of common ground there is a broad recognition that communities of practice focused on disciplinary areas like ours should not be made to exist in a vacuum. Just as both the Digital Classicist and the Digital Medievalist aim to foster collaboration among scholars and projects within our disciplines, so too they should enable and encourage synergy among the larger communities of disciplinary practice they represent. Digital Classicists and Digital Medievalists do not only share many similar concerns as classicists and medievalists, they also share similar concerns as digital scholars—both with each other and with specialists working with digital media in the study of other periods, cultures, and topics.

§ 3 Paradoxically, despite this overlap in disciplinary and technological interests, the two organisations are both quite distinct and stronger for their distinctiveness. They share founding members. When the initial proposals for a Digital Classicist organisation were bruited about soon after the founding of the Digital Medievalist, it seemed initially as if the wisest course of action given these overlapping interests might not be to roll the two groups into a single organisation: a "Digital Pre-Print Era." As we discussed the idea, both on the public listservers and privately among the founding members, however, it gradually became clear that this solution was less than ideal—and not only because of our difficulties in finding a name that did not define us by our subjects' lack of a Renaissance technology. Because while Medievalists and Classicists use many common techniques in their disciplinary research, and while Digital Medievalists and Digital Classicists face many similar problems in their use of digital media, the two groups perceive of themselves as belonging to distinct traditions. There are many classicists who are members of the Digital Medievalist, and there are many medievalists who are members of the Digital Classicist. But there are few who do not see one or the other organisation as their primary home. For members of our historical disciplines who do not consider themselves especially "digital", this focus on the "Classical" or the "Medieval" respectively is even more important: it provides a measure of familiarity in learning about what can easily otherwise appear bewilderingly foreign.

§ 4 Each group celebrates their own digital pioneers and touchstones. Medievalists trace their practice of the Digital Humanities back to Roberto Busa's early work with IBM on the *Index Thomisticus*; Classicists also recognise this early collaborative (Latin) work as seminal, but hark especially to Packard's Livy concordance as the first Classical endeavour in the Digital Humanities field, soon followed by the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (which incorporated much Packard technology; Busa 1949 and Packard 1968). In medieval studies good examples of standard-setting digital scholarship have included the Dictionary of Old English, Canterbury Tales Project, and Sermones.net; in the Classics further examples would include the Perseus Digital Library, the Lexicon of Greek Personal Names, and Suda On Line and many other publications of the Stoa Consortium. (There are also of course many projects that are of interest to both communities, although Classicists for example are not always aware that Medievalists are also interested in the manuscripts and traditions behind the Homer Mulitext Project and the *Suda*; and perhaps Medievalists will be surprised that Classicists consider the Prosopography of the Byzantine World as dealing with materials relevant to Classical studies.)

§ 5 By celebrating rather than attempting to rationalise this sense of distinct communities, organisations like Digital Medievalist, Digital Classicist, and more recent entrants to the field such as Digital Americanists, Digital Slavist, and Antiquist have produced something that is greater than their individual parts. The organisations are stronger because they can share their differences, collaborate on a variety of topics both digital and philological, and speak with the confidence of insiders to their individual communities.

§ 6 This issue of *Digital Medievalist* is an indication of this strength. The papers in this issue are all by scholars who identify themselves as Classicists and deal with topics in classical studies. But they are also of obvious interest to

medievalists. Many of the papers were delivered at a Summer seminar series supported by the Institute of Classical Studies in London and the Centre for Computing in the Humanities at King's College London, the institutional host of the Digital Classicist. But they are now being published by the peer-reviewed journal of the Digital Medievalist Project —an organisation that does not have a principal geographic home. The result is an issue that combines the best of the two organisations and highlights our complementarity rather than uniformity and emphasises the value of specific disciplinary communities rather than the general accomplishments of Digital Humanities as a whole.

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