Italia, Paola, Claudia Bonsi, eds. 2016. *Edizioni Critiche Digitali. Digital Critical Editions*, Roma: Sapienza Università Editrice. ISBN 978-88-9377-003-3. Pp. ix+177. Open Access (DOI: https://doi.org/10.13133/9788893770033).

Edited by Paola Italia and Claudia Bonsi, this book is a collection of thirteen contributions focusing on digital projects about European (Jane Austen, Fernando Pessoa, Nietzsche, and Proust) and Italian (Leopardi, Manzoni, Gadda) authors. They are written by Italian and international scholars, but all the topics are tackled from a distinctly international cultural perspective.

The book is divided into three sections. The first presents a cluster of digital projects, introduced as case studies, assessing their theoretical validity and practical applications, underlining the strengths and weaknesses of each. The projects presented consist of both digital archives and digital scholarly editions, ranging from the archive of Pessoa's *Book of Disquiet* to the digital edition of the Leopardi's *Canti*, efficiently combining Italian and international case studies. The second section examines the "self-description" of such digital projects, such as the choice of the most suitable name for the resulting "digital object", distinguishing between editions and archives. The third and final part presents the innovative project THESMA (TeraHErtz & Spectrometry Manuscript Analysis), dedicated to an analytical study of manuscripts, allowing scholars literally to read a book through its cover. Building on the experience of multi-spectral inspection, TeraHErz visualizes hidden layers by means of different optical techniques, seeing — so to speak — through the paper, e.g., allowing the reading of pages (or parts thereof) that have been stuck together.

The variety of the reported projects provides an opportunity to deal with various controversies and solutions from different perspectives. The strength of the work lies in the possibility of comparing innovative methodologies and assessing how (or if) they are used in the direction of a collective construction of knowledge. Citing Shillingsburg, Milena Giuffrida recognises the priority of the reflection on methodology in order to create a scholarly digital edition. Similarly Fiormonte, in another contribution, states that the discipline of Digital Humanities needs to unify in defence of the need to reflect upon the content of the digitization, avoiding the transformation of everything into data.

Simone Celani's introduction to *Digital Critical Editions* explains how digital media overcomes the limits of a linear and hierarchical representation, abandoning the division between the text and the critical appara-

tus to really "unveil a text in the making" (61). Most of the contributions underscore the notion that digital editions permit a dynamic, hyper-textual representation that achieves not just forms of textual publication but manages to enlighten the process of writing itself while enhancing our understanding of the context in which a work was produced.

The technical flexibility of the digital medium holds obvious advantages over the rigidity of printed text. This is evident in the case of the *LdoD Archive* (http://ldod.uc.pt): the digital archive is based on Fernando Pessoa's *Livro do Desassossego* and focusses on the dynamic process of the actions of writing, editing, and reading. This foundational idea has led to an archive where the users can simulate the production and analysis of the literary work.

Taking into account the non-linearity of manuscripts, the prototype developed by Elena Pierazzo and Julie André for Marcel Proust's manuscripts is based on a mimetic logic that through a few pages of *Cahier 46* shows Proust's writing and its transcription and allows readers to follow different paths while reading the various manuscript drafts. It means the user can be guided in reading while visualizing either a "reading sequence" or a "writing sequence". Regarding the first one, it allows us to read the last version of the story directly on the manuscript; the last stage of this path is the most challenging, as it reconstructs a hypothesis about the various stages of writing.

It seems that digital projects seem to favor the understanding of the habits of the writer and to provide scholars with new tools to analyse the object of study in its complexity. More generally, DH is challenging the idea of the *oeuvre* as a monument, shifting priority to the dynamics of its creation, as the *critica delle varianti* (or *critique génétique*) did before, albeit through different tools, in the Italian (or French) context.

On the other hand, Paolo D'Iorio developed his *Nietzsche Source* (an evolution of *HyperNietzsche*, whose interface was insufficient) by a new organization of its interface: the latter now fully considers scholars' habits, namely respecting scholars' work practices. He realized that using extremely innovative structures was useless for this purpose, deeming a clear-cut separation between navigation and contextualization to be the most efficient solution.

What emerges is that the user now has a central role in the re-thinking of a literary text's representation, affording the possibility of interacting with it at different levels. The interface thus plays a key role in representing the temporal dimension of the writing process. Deeply aware of the importance of interfaces, Domenico Fiormonte and Desmond Schmidt

developed *Ecdosis*, a platform that enables users to prepare digital scholarly editions. It goes beyond the traditional XML-centered approach that presents problems of "markup variability" (which means that different encoders tend to mark up the same element in different ways) and overlapping. *Ecdosis* instead caters to the open and dynamic nature of the text, employing a user-friendly interface that can easily and interactively create editions, thus overcoming the well-known dichotomy between representation and visualization of the text.

Certainly, the case studies presented in this collection seem to challenge the current definitions of digital objects and reframe their context in new and important ways. While "archive" and "edition" seem to be more related to a traditional type of medium, in lieu of "digital editions" or "digital archive" Francesca Tomasi proposes the concept of a "knowledge site" that better conveys the possibilities offered by an innovative digital object. This means a digital object is not limited to textual representation; rather, it enlightens the relationships between the data represented. As we have seen, the digital medium compels scholars to challenge their beliefs and redefine editorial work itself, in a fashion that often provides new answers to old questions of textual scholarship. Comparing and assessing the various answers and approaches explored in the book creates solid grounds for an ongoing, engaging debate.

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