

Day 1, 28th September

Recent Histories of the Humanities: A Comparative Perspective

The humanities have been grown tremendously over recent decades in terms of its numbers of practitioners and publications. A multitude of new approaches, avenues of research, sensibilities and interests have come rapidly under the spotlight and, at times, rapidly faded away. We explore the story of different disciplines in the humanities from a comparative perspective, by focusing on how they evolved in terms of their social and intellectual organisation. To do this we will consider the connections among topics being investigated and/or methods used over time, and the social organisation of the field in terms of how scholars picked their topics and methods, collaborated, communicated, organised their research.

Giovanni Colavizza (École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne/ University of Oxford), *The Dynamics of Historiography in the XXth Century*

The History Manifesto by Jo Guldi and David Armitage (2014) stirred a considerable debate highlighting how there is no shared view on the discipline among historians. There is a need to ground any discussion on the future of historiography on sound analyses. I will take a bibliometric approach and analyse all publications in historiography available from the Arts & Humanities Citation Index and Scopus. By far not as comprehensive as desired, and largely skewed towards journal articles in English, these citation indexes at least allow to attempt reconstructing the basic trends of the discipline over the XXth century. I shall explore if and to what extent research is becoming increasingly specialized and technical;; whether the basic areas of research have been maintained or if, under the weight of past literature and the pressing incentives of modern day academia, historiography is becoming increasingly fragmented into a galaxy of disconnected and narrow areas of research.

Matteo Romanello (École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne/ Deutsches Archäologisches Institut), *A Network Perspective on XXth-Century Classical Scholarship*

References to classical texts contained within modern publications perform two essential roles. First, they tell us that a given text (or part of it) was studied, addressed or, at the very least, used by some scholar at a certain point in time. Second, such references when they are found within a common context create relations between different texts. Consider for example the following sentence (references highlighted): “[...] the mention of the Capitol (**Aen. 9.448** Capitoli immobile saxum), which reminds, of course, of **Horace, Ode 3.30.7-9**”. The juxtaposition of these two passages creates a meaningful relation between the two, based on the shared mention of the Capitol. These relations, created by the citation contexts within which classical texts are related with one another, can be formalised as a citation network. One property of this network is to be *dynamic*, that is to evolve over time: in fact, a connection between two authors or texts can be seen as having the same date as the year of the publication where it is a found. In this paper I will analyse and discuss the properties of a similar network, constructed from the citations of classical texts extracted from Classics journal articles in JSTOR. I will discuss the extent to which this network can capture and highlight any macro-level dynamics of Classical scholarship in the XXth century.

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Edgar Lejeune (Université Diderot - Paris 7/Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3), *From Sources to Datas, a Technology-Driven Model under Discussion in "Le Médiéviste et l'ordinateur", France, 1975-1986*

After a conference held in Rome in 1975, a small group of French historians decided to create the first computer oriented journal for medievalists and archivists. The first issue of *Le Médiéviste et l'ordinateur*, published by the IRHT (Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes) came out in 1979. Intended as a forum of discussion and exchanges of experiences between users of computer in history, the journal contained various types of rubriques: reviews of publications, articles, technical notes, bibliographies, schedules of events and tutorials of computer programs. This journal gives historians of historiography the opportunity of observing how in the 1980s a technology-driven model for producing data on the basis of sources took shape. Focusing both on successes and failures in the use of information technology, the journal's content will help us understand a key moment in the history of computing for historians, moment where material constraints generate new ways of making historical research.

How did practitioners shape the sources that they had selected into data? Which theoretical choices did the material organization of data shaping compelled historians to adopt? And how might this have influenced the historiography of medieval history? Examining the ways in which new workflows might lead to new questions, this presentation intends to highlight the main epistemological issues in the construction of a research object in medieval history using computers in the 1980s in France.

Julianne Nyhan (University College London), *The Social History of Digital Humanities: An Oral History Perspective*

For its first 54 years, the history of Digital Humanities² was largely ignored (cf. for example Burton 1981a & b). This began to change c. 2003 (see McCarty 2003) and a marked increase in publications about it can since be noticed (see, for example, Hockey 2004;; Jones 2016;; Nyhan and Flinn 2016). Nevertheless, much about the intellectual, social and disciplinary history of the field and its wider intersections remains to be explored. Open questions include: what dynamics shaped the transmission of knowledge about the potential and application of computing to Humanities research during the "incunabular period"? (see Rockwell et al. 2011 p. 207). What was the role and significance in this process of both individual and collective agency? What comparative perspectives emerge from comparing such findings with scholarship on the development of other academic communities? In this paper I will draw on my oral history and archival research into the history of Digital Humanities from the 1950s until recently. Focusing especially on the oral history interviews I have completed, I will reflect on how the recollections I have gathered advance our understanding of the questions listed above. I will close by reflecting on what a research agenda for the social History of Digital Humanities might prioritise in the coming years.