

# Introduction: Crossing Borders: Digital Humanities Research across Languages and Modalities

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The Digital Humanities (DH) Benelux 2023 conference took place from 31 May to 2 June 2023 at the KBR (Royal Library), Brussels, Belgium. This was the 10th edition of the annual conference, which serves as the go-to platform for the community of interdisciplinary Digital Humanities researchers to meet, present and discuss their latest research. Contributions could be submitted in five different formats: (1) long papers; (2) short papers; (3) posters; (4) application and tool demonstrations; and (5) workshops. As a result, the conference had an interesting mix of keynotes, workshops, panels with thematically organized oral presentations, posters, and demonstrations.

The central theme of the DH Benelux 2023 was “**Crossing borders: digital humanities research across languages and modalities**”. We considered of particular interest contributions that address multilingualism or integrated processing of sources in different forms as images, maps, sounds, texts and datasets.

As with previous editions, participants of DH Benelux 2023 were invited to submit an extended version of their paper or abstract for publication in the DH Benelux journal. In total, 13 manuscripts were received and sent out to review. Each paper was reviewed by three anonymous peer reviewers. If the reviewers requested minor revisions, the paper was accepted after one revision round. If the reviewers requested major revisions, the paper was sent back to the reviewers after the revision for a final review round. After this review process, 12 papers were ultimately published in this issue.

As the title of the conference indicates, a wide range of subjects is covered in this issue. From a variety of disciplinary perspectives, all contributions deal to a certain extent with methodological challenges encountered when undertaking humanities research with digital methods.

Three contributions address issues related to the digital analysis of historical texts. Laura Soffiantini presents a geoparsing experiment on Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History* with the goal of automatically identifying and extracting place entities. Nynke van ’t Hof, Vera Provatorova, Mirjam Cupera and Evangelos Kanoulas investigate OCR error detection and post-correction with word2vec and BERTje on Dutch historical

data. Gabor Mihaly Toth proposes a novel technique to quantify information flow in Early Modern Europe with Bayesian time-to-event analysis.

Another four contributions focus on literary analysis. Isabelle Gribomont and Lucie Mentalechta introduce a typology to classify literary bots on social media. Nulette Heyns and Menno van Zaanen create and leverage an annotated database to train a computer system capable of automatically annotating literary texts according to their structural components. Julia Neugarten maps the relationship between violence and the gender of the fictional characters in relationships in fanfiction about Greek myth. Finally, Felix Hermans and Dirk Van Hulle introduce a digital manuscript chronology that lists information found in manuscripts, notebooks, and letters in order to elucidate the compositional histories of literary works.

Taking the Digital Humanities themselves as an object of study, Aida Horaniet Ibañez presents a classification of current approaches to data visualisation in DH. Theodoros Georgiakakis and Tim van der Heijden contribute to cultural heritage studies by addressing the role 3D technologies can play in the virtual reconstruction of cultural heritage objects. In the field of archaeology, Irene Agües-Escolano designs a methodology for the digital recording and documentation of historical graffiti using photogrammetry. From the perspective of urban and cultural geography, Dan C. Baciú, Sunit Kajarekar and Anna Abramova present a geospatial discovery tool for text collections. Finally, at the intersection of education sciences and game design, Austin Mason, Franziska Funken, Emmanuel Guardiola, Marie-Paule Jungblut and Johannes Pause introduce a co-design process for historical game development. This wide-ranging combination of themes and methodologies offers a compelling sample of current Digital Humanities research carried out in the Benelux and beyond.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all the authors, reviewers, and conference participants who contributed to the success of DH Benelux 2023. It is their enthusiasm, expertise, and commitment that make this conference an important, high-quality, yet welcoming gathering for the Digital Humanities community in the Benelux (and beyond). We hope that the insights shared within this issue inspire further exploration, collaboration, creation and alteration in the Digital Humanities.