

Making a Collaborative Digital Commentary on Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3

The moment for digital commentaries of classical texts has arrived. Already *Dickinson College Commentaries* has forged a media-rich, digital successor to Bryn Mawr's venerable series of intermediate readers. Major initiatives such as the *Open Philology Project* and *Digital Latin Library* are laying the foundations for robust, open, scholarly editions and commentaries. Digital commentaries enable scholars to integrate interactive resources, to supplement the text in ways not possible in print, and to target effectively multiple readership with a coherent yet multiform edition. The boundless space of a digital commentary, however, demands from digital commentators heightened discernment. This paper describes how participants in my advanced seminar on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* integrate traditional and digital tools to develop a data-rich yet readerly digital commentary on the Echo and Narcissus episode from the third book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (339–510).

The project begins by identifying what how a digital commentary can and should differ from a print commentary and what is needed to make a digital commentary that is responsive to the needs of readers, teachers, and students. Having sketched our goal, participants formulate workflows for the project, and then establish teams and working groups. Development launches with participants using both print and digital tools. Teams, coordinating their efforts via *Slack*, research traditional scholarly artifacts (e.g. articles and commentaries pitched to various readerships). At the same time working groups use the *Perseids* annotation platform to treebank their passages (i.e. digitally annotate the syntax of the sentence). For any commentary, authors must completely parse their text. Yet traditional commentaries obscure this potential resource—appearing in a few judicious comments on syntax and morphology. Treebanking, in contrast, renders transparent the authors' complete interpretation of a passage's grammar, while also

creating a machine-readable digital corpus. Treebank data will be shared via *GitHub* with Perseus' *Latin Dependency Treebank Project* and *The Bridge* vocabulary app. All participants use *PenFlip*, a collaborative writing tool, to develop introductory materials on the author, work, manuscript tradition, and other topics deemed essential to understanding the episode. They also utilize digital tools such as *Tesserae*, a tool that detects and ranks textual similarities between texts. Participants can compare machine-generated results with allusions detected by human experts, allowing them to identify new loci of textual contact while also considering the role of reader intervention in allusion. They annotate geographic locations in the text using *Recogito*, a *Pelagios 3* tool for geotaging classical texts. Portion of class meetings are devoted to discussing the comparative capacities and merits of print and digital tools and publication media.

This semester-long collaborative project requires participants to gain proficiency in a suite of digital tools for commenting on classical texts and to produce new resources for the Classics community. But utilizing print materials and digital tools in the service of producing a born-digital, open access commentary on a classical text requires seminar participants to investigate the capacities and challenges of traditional and emergent media, all while developing critical abilities and technological skills.