Rethinking intertextuality and its digital representation:
a test-case in Late Greek Epic

Ioannis Doukas (NUI Galway)

Triggered by the advent of the Information Age and of the wider processes it has brought about, the practices known as the Digital Humanities indicate a shift in mentality and focus, with the introduction of new frameworks and methodologies.

These tendencies are also evident in the Classical studies, a discipline informed and redefined by technological innovation as well as new theoretical approaches. Among these, we find the application of intertextuality into Classics (Coffee; Edmunds; Hutchinson) and the development of digital tools for the automated identification of text reuse (Tesserae, for example, at <tesserae.caset.buffalo.edu>; see also Coffee et al., 2012a and 2012b). These are of great value to the study of texts coming from the post-classical world, which can be adequately interpreted only in terms of their interdependence with earlier ones, of which they are adaptations and re-workings.

This is the case especially with the epic revival (see Hopkinson, 1994; also Cuypers for a bibliographical survey), which occurred during the Imperial period and resulted in the production of a wide range of poems, varying in size and subject matter, but having as common denominators their provenance (the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire), the language they were written in (Homeric Greek), their metre (dactylic hexameter; see West, 1982: 35-9, 152-7 and 177-80) and their formulaic composition, based on regular expressions "used, under the same metrical conditions, to express a particular essential idea" (Parry 1930: 80).

These attributes and their underlying structure call for the use of digital techniques for the verification and demonstration of the relationship between texts, and the support of a focus constantly alternating from minuscule verbal details up to the entire constellation of classical literature. Furthermore, the abundance of digitised texts allows for the combination of close and distant reading, with the theoretical methodology known as macroanalysis (Jockers).

I place my research within this context and seek to contribute an additional parameter, the concept of a tool developed

for the digital representation of intertextuality. My doctoral project is conducted in the National University of Ireland, Galway, on three Trojan War-themed late Greek epic poems, the Posthomerica by Quintus of Smyrna, The Fall of Troy by Triphiodorus and The Abduction of Helen by Colluthus. Stemming from it, my paper will report on the building of the corresponding electronic resource, which is a test-case in the form of the digital commentary, with a view to the facilitation of intertextual reading.

Dealing with the concept of the born-digital commentary, I will start by demonstrating the current state of the field, with attempts such as Cyrus' Paradise (<www.cyropaedia.org/>) and the Dickinson College Commentaries (<dcc.dickinson.edu/>), which do not seem to take advantage of the digital medium: instead they present a very static interface, as if one is reading through a book with a sidebar of notes in the margins.

I will then address the process for the building of my own project, starting from the identification of the dataset: I will focus on comparable passages from my texts, namely those which deal with the same subject-matter (more specifically the building of the Trojan Horse and the catalogue of the heroes volunteering to enter it in Quintus and Triphiodorus). I will also pay attention to named entities (personal and place names), which in themselves are valuable indicators of intertextuality, but can also be used as gateways for the interconnectedness and interoperability with such resources as digital gazetteers and prosopographies. I will demonstrate the elements of which the resource consists, to allow for the side-by-side comparison of texts, the linking to parallels and the integration of linked open data and metadata, such as diagrams and maps. I will present the computing methodologies used in the encoding and the annotation of the texts and the preparation of the supplementary resources (geographic information system, network analysis and visualisation).

Finally, I will display the final output itself, an interface aiming at an enhanced reading experience for scholars and students: it will represent different types of intertextuality, display the complicated and intricate interaction of sources and, based on a user and reader-oriented approach, it will allow for an open-ended interpretation of the texts.

References

- Coffee, Neil. *Intertextuality in Latin Poetry*. Oxford Bibliographies, 22 April 2013. <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195389661/obo-9780195389661-0113.xml/>.
- Coffee, Neil, Koenig, Jean-Pierre, Poornima, Shakthi, Forstall, Christopher W., Ossewaarde, Roelant and Jacobson, Sarah L. "Intertextuality in the Digital Age". *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 142.2 (2012a): 383-422.
- ---. "The Tesserae Project: intertextual analysis of Latin poetry". *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 28.1 (2012b): 221-8.
- Cuypers, M. *A Hellenistic Bibliography*. Trinity College Dublin, July 2012. <sites.google.com/site/hellenisticbibliography/>.
- Edmunds, Lowell. *Intertextuality and the reading of Roman poetry*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Hopkinson, N. *Greek Poetry of the Imperial Period. An Anthology*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Hutchinson, Gregory O. *Greek to Latin. Frameworks and Contexts for Intertextuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Jockers, Matthew L. *Macroanalysis. Digital Methods and Literary History*. Urbana/Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2013.
- Parry, M. "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. I: Homer and Homeric Style". *Harvard Studies in Classics Philology* 41 (1930), 73-143.
- West, M. L. *Greek metre*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.