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## A Guide to the Digital Humanities

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Diese These bildet in Carsten Groths Buch den Abschluss des Teils F (»Bundesrepublik und DDR«, 274–279), während die »Definition des hansischen Rechts« (281) als einer Mischung aus »Seerecht« und »diffusem kaufmännischem Gewohnheitsrecht« durch den dem Nationalsozialismus eng verbundenen Wilhelm Ebel<sup>4</sup> (1908–1980) aus dem Jahr 1949 den Anfang des Teils G (»Zusammenfassung und Ausblick«, 280–291) darstellt, was dem chronologisch-ideengeschichtlichen Ansatz der Arbeit widerspricht – und die durch den Rezensenten aufgeworfenen Fragen zu rechtfertigen scheint. Doch wird so die innere Spannung einer Forschungsgeschichte »zwischen Rechtsge-  
schichte und Geschichtswissenschaft« (285) als Gegenstand des Buches und dem »Ausblick« (290 f.) aufgebaut. Hier spricht sich Carsten Groth strikt

dafür aus, eine »Quasistaatlichkeit« des Hanserechtes abzulehnen, das Lübisches Recht nicht als das der Hanse auszugeben und die wissenschaftlichen Fragen richtig zu stellen. Dem ist nur zuzustimmen.

So bietet Carsten Groths Buch einen kompetenten und gut lesbaren (aber wegen der angemerkten Methode nicht immer leicht benutzbaren) Führer durch die Geschichte der Hanseforschung, der sich durch ein Personen- und ein Sachverzeichnis erschließt (329–336). Seine Analysen liefern zu den abgeschichteten Zeithorizonten der Darstellungsordnung wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Erkenntnisse, die sich mit vergleichbaren Werken zur Ideengeschichte, beispielsweise aus der Geschichtswissenschaft, in Beziehung setzen lassen. ■

**David Glück**

## A Guide to the Digital Humanities\*

The emerging field of the digital humanities seems not yet to have incisively affected the discipline of legal history, although recent publications have investigated ways to apply digital tools and methods in legal-historical contexts (see, for example, volume 24 of this journal) and even examined methodologies of a genuinely *digital* legal history (see *Law and History Review* 34.4). The lagging adoption of the digital humanities in legal history may be due to the very specific nature of the (technical) tools and methods they use. On the other hand, there is also a lack of introductory literature to methods and topics related to the digital humanities, at least in German, making them all the more inaccessible to scholars at all levels.

The book under review addresses this lack of introductory surveys, presenting itself as a textbook

(»Lehrbuch«, xi) and an introduction to the most important aspects of the digital humanities, aimed at establishing them in German-speaking academia (xi–xii). For that, the collection comprises chapters on a variety of topics from the digital humanities and by 14 different authors, most of them well-known figures of the German-speaking digital humanities. A critical look on the book as a comprehensive textbook, though without discussing each chapter in detail, reveals its usefulness as a guide for (legal-historical) scholars to the digital humanities.

The chapters, 25 in total, are organised in five larger parts. The first on the foundations of the digital humanities leads, after a quick summary of their (international) history, to a chapter of central importance to the volume, which evaluates their nature as an academic discipline (»Wissenschaft«,

4 Der Vortrag Ebels »Hansisches Recht: Begriff und Probleme« auf der 65. Jahresversammlung des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins und 62. Jahresversammlung des Vereins für Niederdeutsche Sprachforschung am 9. Juni

1949 in Celle ist nachzulesen in: WILHELM EBEL, Probleme der deutschen Rechtsgeschichte (Göttinger rechtswissenschaftliche Studien 100), Göttingen 1978, 35–46.

\* FOTIS JANNIDIS et al. (eds.), Digital Humanities. Eine Einführung, Stuttgart: Springer 2017, XIII, 370 p., ISBN 978-3-476-02622-4

13). Remarkably, the author (Manfred Thaller, a pioneer in the German-speaking digital humanities) evades a precise definition of this field as a discipline in the humanities, emphasising instead its oscillation between serving as a mere provider of digital tools to the humanities and a field of genuinely innovative, digitally driven methods for humanities research (13–15). While this lack of a precise definition of the digital humanities might disappoint at the beginning of the collection, it directly asks the reader to create her own image of what this fluid field might be or become in the future. Moreover, the subsequent chapters comprehensively present the heterogeneous topics of the digital humanities in (almost) all their variety, thus providing a solid base to do so.

The initial part on the foundations of the digital humanities is complemented by a reflective chapter on the theory of digital media, followed by three largely technical chapters on computer hardware and networks, character encoding, and the fundamental ideas of programming. The heterogeneity that emerges, with abrupt shifts from one thematic chapter to the next, is a general characteristic of the book. While the second larger part consists of chapters on the foundations and techniques of data modelling and knowledge representation, the third part is concerned with »digital objects«, including chapters on the (rather technical) foundations of object digitisation as well as theoretical and methodological reflections about digital forms of publication and knowledge creation (e.g. *Digitale Wissensproduktion, Digitale Edition*) and, furthermore, elaborations on so-called »Gedächtnisinstitutionen« (213), meaning libraries, archives and museums, which play a central role in the digital research ecosystem as providers of digital resources. The fourth part presents digital methods of data analysis, with chapters on quantitative analysis, geographic information systems, and information visualisation. The fifth part, finally, rounds out the overview with two short, but momentous chapters on rights and ethics, shedding light on new (European) laws and the ethical consequences arising from digital-humanities research.

The thematic variety of the book corresponds, almost necessarily, with significant stylistic variety between the theoretically descriptive chapters and those of rather technical or didactic character, a variety intensified by the different writing styles of the authors. At first glance, the collection does not

necessarily appear to be a homogeneous textbook. Yet, when closely following the order of the larger parts and their chapters, the thematically and didactically sensible structure of the collection becomes evident, with initial parts and chapters forming the intellectual and terminological foundations of later ones. Some of the chapters even adopt, perhaps involuntarily, a schoolbook-like tone, as with the extensive elaborations on the fundamental ideas of programming (chapter six), illustrating the most basic concepts of programming through simple examples in Python, and other somewhat didactic chapters (e.g. chapter eight on databases and chapter twenty on quantitative analysis) that contrast starkly with the theoretically dense chapters (such as chapter three on theories of digital media and chapter seventeen on digital editions). One wonders whether such didactic elaborations could not have been resolved more directly by, for example, simply referring to the considerable existing literature on these topics and simply describing concise, exemplary use cases.

The lack of references is a significant shortcoming of several chapters of the collection. Some fundamental chapters, such as the chapters on character encoding, on the foundations of data modelling and on digital editions, provide very few in-text citations, making it difficult to look up specific terms or passages of interest. This problem is worsened by minimal indications of chapter-specific references and recommendations for further reading, which reaches its apogee in the collection's general, but sparse »selected bibliography« (361–362). The sparseness of references, remarkable in a self-declared textbook, is also reflected thematically in the chapters, with some topics and concepts receiving adequate or even excessive attention and others being barely hinted at, if that. The latter applies, for example, to some foundations of logic and mathematics (which would have provided a stronger theoretical base for the programming and data-modelling sections of the collection), and (research) software engineering, which today is an increasingly significant topic in the digital humanities, is completely absent.

Notwithstanding these formal and thematic shortcomings, the collection is an appropriate introduction to the digital humanities, particularly due to its largely comprehensive and well-structured coverage of topics and its didactic autonomy, working almost entirely without assuming foreknowledge among its readership. Most of the

chapters, if not all, succeed in mediating relevant and sometimes technically complex matters in a concise and understandable way. Also, more practical, methodological forms of knowledge (e.g. about data modelling, image digitisation, and legal situations) are conveyed in a manner that would serve anyone at the initial and planning stages of a research project with digital components. This applies especially from the perspective of (legal) history, where research based on quantitative data, for instance, has a long tradition, and the book covers »digital« topics that certainly may be relevant to (legal) historians. These include the introductions to digital data modelling, network theory

and the creation of data collections as well as the excellent chapters on geographical information systems and information visualisation. Further, perhaps any research could be confronted – at certain points in the course of a digital research project in legal history – with many of the topics presented in this collection. And even those not directly participating in a digitally driven project will appreciate the book as a comprehensive »conversation course« to learn about relevant topics and terminology of the current (and not just the German-speaking) digital humanities. ■

**Wolfram Brandes**

## 1000 Jahre Papstgeschichte\*

Catharina Gowers, Waldemar Könighaus, Marcus Schütz, Cornelia Scherer, Thorsten Schlawitz, Victoria Trenkle, Judith Werner und natürlich dem *spiritus rector* des Unternehmens und einem der besten Kenner der Papstgeschichte, Klaus Herbers, kann man nur den größten Dank aussprechen, dass sie sich der höchst mühsamen und komplizierten Aufgabe angenommen haben, den »Jaffé« in einer dritten Auflage zu überarbeiten.

Das tragische Schicksal des Philipp Jaffé (1819–1870) kann hier nicht thematisiert werden, wirft aber ein bezeichnendes Licht auf die deutsche Me-

diävistszene im 19. Jahrhundert. Erinnerung sei an seine sehr unschönen Auseinandersetzungen mit Georg Heinrich Pertz und den *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, die Publikation seiner *Bibliotheca rerum Germanicarum* I–VI (1864–1873) – durchaus als Konkurrenz zu den MGH gedacht – und seinen tragischen (bis heute nicht wirklich geklärten) Selbstmord.<sup>1</sup> In seinem 32. Lebensjahr (!) erschienen die *Regesta pontificum Romanorum* (1851), die dann am Ende des Jahrhunderts unter der Leitung von Wilhelm Wattenbach von Samuel Löwenfeld, Ferdinand Kaltenbrunner und Paul Ewald in einer

\* *Regesta pontificum Romanorum* ab condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII edidit PHILLIPUS JAFFÉ, editionem tertiam emendatam et auctam iubente Academia Gottingensi sub auspiciis NICOLAI HERBERS, tomus primus [sic!] (a S. Petro usque ad a. DCIV) curavit MARCUS SCHÜTZ cooperantibus VICTORIA TRENKLE, IUDITH WERNER itemque CATHARINA GOWERS, WALDEMARO KÖNIGHAUS, CORNELIA SCHERER, THORSTANO SCHLAUWITZ, Gottingae (in aedibus Vandenhoeck et Ruprecht) MMXVI, XV et 584 p.; ISBN 978-3-525-31003-8; *Regesta pontificum Romanorum* ab

condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII edidit PHILLIPUS JAFFÉ, editionis tertiae emendatae et auctae iubente Academia Gottingensi sub auspiciis NICOLAI HERBERS tomum secundum (ab a. DCIV ad a. DCCCXLIV) curaverunt WALDEMARUS KÖNIGHAUS, THORSTANUS SCHLAUWITZ cooperantibus CORNELIA SCHERER, MARCO SCHÜTZ, Gottingae (in aedibus Vandenhoeck et Ruprecht) MMXVII, XVI et 406 p.; ISBN 978-3-525-31035-9; *Regesta pontificum Romanorum* ab condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII edidit PHILLIPUS JAFFÉ, editionis tertiae

emendatae et auctae iubente Academia Gottingensi sub auspiciis NICOLAI HERBERS, tomum tertium (ab a. DCCCXLIV usque ad a. MXXIV) curavit IUDITH WERNER cooperante WALDEMARO KÖNIGHAUS, Gottingae (in aedibus Vandenhoeck et Ruprecht) MMXVII, XV et 708 p.; ISBN 978-3-525-31036-6

1 SCHWARTZ (2016) (Rezension von K. Herbers in: <https://www.hsozkult.de/publicationreview/id/rezbuecher-27485>); siehe auch SCHWARTZ (2015); immer noch wichtig ist BRESSLAU (1921) bes. 326 ff. und passim.