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Vareschi, Mark and Wacha, Heather, eds. *Intermediate Horizons: Book History and Digital Humanities*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2022. 202 pp. \$79.95, casebound. (ISBN 9780299338107)

BH and DH: close not only alphabetically, but also conceptually. Through *Intermediate Horizons: Book History and Digital Humanities*, editors Mark Vareschi and Heather Wacha curate a collection of chapters by scholars representing a variety of bookish interests, across a range of careers and career stages. The chapters stem from a 2017 conference hosted by the Center for the History of Print and Digital Culture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison about the intersections of book history, bibliography, and digital humanities. *Intermediate Horizons* adds to the scholarship situating digital technologies and methods in a longer lineage of communications histories and networks.

Taken as a whole, *Intermediate Horizons* is an argument for the merging of concrete materialities and abstract data. As Mary Learner observes in her chapter about digitized early modern botany books, digital databases allow researchers to examine surface-level characteristics of more – and more geographically distant – materials than ever before, facilitating the identification of broader phenomena manifest through those materials (in Learner’s case, needlework sampling from florilegia). At the same time, Learner notes, we must acknowledge inconsistent digitization practices that do not always include important contextual data, high-resolution and comprehensive scanning, and presentation formats that mimic tactile interactions with the material. Although digitized copies are nothing to scoff at, they do not obsolesce their tangible equivalents so much as offer new ways of looking.

This is, in essence, the complementary nature of bibliography and digital humanities: the former brings our attention to the unique physicalities of individual artefacts, and the latter presents opportunities to generalize across wider collections. While digital technologies allow for the production and use of large datasets that may be shared for replicability, though, *Intermediate Horizons* makes clear that individualized interpretation is hardly passé. The value of personal perspective is clearest in Jayme Yahr’s chapter, in which Yahr argues for the application of museum studies scholarship and practice to digital contexts using the curiosity cabinet as a metaphor for digital instances of individualized interpretation. Quoting Dagmar Motycka Weston, Yahr writes that “[w]hat the curiosity cabinet provided to collectors and viewers from the seventeenth century on was an individualized way of conceiving of pertinent and critical links between tangible objects, visual stimulus, spatial

juxtapositions, and the ‘tension between the object’s affinities and differences’” (p. 42).

Alexandra Alvis focuses on another kind of modern curiosity cabinet: the social media page. For Alvis, book history and bibliography may serve as conceptual lenses for digital phenomena; Alvis herself likens institutional and individual contributions to the #LibraryTwitter hashtag to the various textual and visual elements in medieval books of hours. Throughout her chapter, Alvis emphasizes personal readings of both books of hours and social media content. In both cases, users must recontextualize that which they are seeing, making sense of multimodal juxtapositions that may initially appear disparate. Mattie Burkert’s article, which presents a broad overview of scholarship about the integration of cultural criticism in digital humanities, further speaks to moving “away from rhetorics of scale, objectivity, and novelty, and toward an increased focus on the material specificity and social embeddedness of digital artifacts” (p. 168). Thus, while ‘digital’ tools can facilitate greater scales and spreads for research projects, the same tools may be used to support projects more focused on close investigations of particular artifacts, people, and experiences.

*Intermediate Horizons* repeatedly asserts bibliography’s potential for adding context to otherwise de- or recontextualized digital bits. Inversely, the book shows digital technologies’ potential for encouraging book historians to think bigger about their areas of study by, for example, making use of the vast amounts of material now available in digital databases. These databases, however, are not without their issues. Catherine A. Winters and Clayton P. Michaud statistically analyse the representation of race and gender diversity in four popular online text collections (Project Gutenberg, Wikisource, Google Books, and Open Library), indicating that demand does not always correlate with supply. Criteria for collection inclusion are neither consistent nor clear across the databases under consideration; the authors assert that market-driven decisions, library collections, and cultural logics of the literary canon may contribute to determining what gets digitized and why. Paul A. Broyles suggests that one way to enhance transparency of digital resources is versioning: recording the states of the resources as they are edited. Christy L. Pottroff attempts a kind of versioning in her chapter about American postal databases spearheaded by Benjamin Franklin, which eventually included printed tables to systematize and standardize information management. These standards are perpetuated in today’s digital databases.

All of *Intermediate Horizons*’ chapters are well-written and valuable scholarly contributions, but they are contributions to different kinds of conversations. Some chapters (e.g. Pottroff, Yahr, Leaner, Alvis) would complement gentle introductions to questions about digitality and

digitisation for settled book historians. Others (e.g. Locke and Wright, Winters and Michard, Broyles) could serve as more targeted provocations for book historians already conducting digital research. Burkert's concluding chapter is a literature review that may be of interest to advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students seeking a general introduction to the politics of materialities and their infrastructures. *Intermediate Horizons* is a book with something for every book historian, regardless of familiarity with or enthusiasm for digital integration. For this reason, it may not be one for everyone to read cover-to-cover, but rather one that readers return to for periodic reference as their digital horizons expand.

While the wide scope of *Intermediate Horizons* is indeed a strength of the volume, it is simultaneously a weakness in regards to structural organisation. Following a forward by Matthew Kirschenbaum and an introduction by the editors, the book comprises eight chapters that are divided into three sections: approach, access, and assessment. Yet all of the chapters touch on all three of these topics, and the book's sectioning seems to represent an unnecessary academic modesty that tries to contain argumentational influence within three themes that are broad, but evidently not broad enough.

That the primary weakness of *Intermediate Horizons* is its uninspiring sectioning testifies to the high quality of this insightful collection. The book also offers a foundation for broader considerations of how canonical book history, bibliographical, and digital humanities frameworks may be combined in ways that provide new scholars with starting points for individual and collaborative bookish digital research. In their chapter, Joseph L. Locke and Ben Wright demonstrate the new opportunities for collaboration in open access academic textbooks in particular, situating their discussion within long-standing utopian dreams associated with widespread access. Yet, Locke and Wright conclude, 'only deeper and more-sustained structural change will allow digital humanists to live up to the democratic potential of disruptive technology' (p. 103). As we continue to reflect on the intersections of bibliography and digital humanities, we must too reflect on what we want new technologies to do and why. Book historians have long been reflecting on technologies of the past, highlighting the disruptive nature of text. All these book historians need to do is turn their heads behind them, towards the future. *Intermediate Horizons* represents a sharp glance in the right direction.