What shall we do with a text collection

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First of all, I want to tell who I am, because in this case "qui raconte" strongly shapes what is being done and how it is being done. It is important to note also that I will speak more as a participant observer --- or an observing participant --- than as an impersonal, objective voice.

[1] I come from Croatia. Croatia is a somewhat croissant-shaped country in "the Other Europe", roughly between Austria, Hungary, the Adriatic, and the Balkans. When I was born, in 1968, Croatia was a part of Yugoslavia, a country trying to be socialist and communist, but not a member of the Eastern bloc. Some twenty years later, after 1990, the country I live in became independent, grew much smaller --- its current population of some 5 million could fill barely a half of London --- and changed its dominant ideology, metamorphosing from a socialist and communist into a capitalist nation state. My country is not a member of the European Union: for some time now, it stands at the doorway looking in (officially, it is a candidate country). So, on the one hand, Croatia is pretty much an ordinary central European country; on the other hand, it is a small, relatively poor society where the humanities have always been either a luxury or a matter of national pride, where traditions are too easily broken, forgotten, or dismissed.

Moreover, I am trained as a classical philologist, a specialist for reading texts written in Ancient Greek and Latin. As you well know, these two languages happen to be means of expression with which a great part of European --- or Western --- cultural heritage has been created and transmitted. Roughly until World War I, star classical philologists have enjoyed --- in the striking simile of James O'Donnell --- "a prestige comparable to that of the cancer-fighting geneticists in our own time."[1]

All this is different today. In the Western world, including Croatia, Greek and Latin are not languages of "cultured public" any more. This means that, regardless

1 O'Donnell, James Joseph. 1998. Avatars of the word: from papyrus to cyberspace. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. p. 100.

of the number of extant texts (ancient, medieval, renaissance, early modern, Greek, Byzantine, Latin, Neo-Latin), when measured by the number of currently active users, both Ancient Greek and Latin have become very, very small languages --- even smaller than Croatian. Besides, this means that Greek and Latin texts are today read and used, when they are read and used, mostly in translation --- what is not translated has less chance of being read. Finally, philology in general --- understood as a way of reading and studying texts *very* closely --- has itself become a slightly esoteric discipline; as regards reading, "good enough" is today, most of the time, well, good enough.

So living and working in Croatia places me on one kind of margin; being a classical philologist with Neo-Latin interests places me on another; a combination of these margins produces the situation where, for example, after some twenty years of studying Greek and Latin, I can claim with only a little exaggeration that I know practically every active Greek and Latin scholar in Croatia (and, what is even more terrifying, that a lot of them were my students at some point). A small community inside a small society: seems like a recipe for claustrophobia.

However, this is not intended as a lament. First, when you are used to living on one kind of margin, you find it easier to cope with another. Second, a combination of these particular marginal positions can have certain unexpected advantages. For somebody raised and trained as a philologist in a culture of scarcity, in a culture where, for example, books (and all kinds of information) were always relatively hard to get --- for such a person resources like Amazon or Google Book Search seem the Garden of Earthly Delights (like the one by Hieronymus Bosch [2]).[2]

In a further unexpected turn of events --- at the intersection of copyright laws and mass digitisation initiatives --- if you are able to read books in Greek or Latin and have internet access, you find yourself with much more to read than you could ever have expected. An

2 When a senior colleague of mine first tried out the TLG, Thesaurus linguae Graecae text collection, it literally brought tears to his eyes: what you had to spend a whole lifetime trying to achieve --- working hard for years and years to one day have "all of the Greek literature" at your fingertips --- happened in an instant, becoming true in a completely *literal* sense: to call to memory thousands of Greek literary texts, you just had to put your fingers on the keyboard.

often quoted fact that, in the Western world at least, Latin was the learned language for scholarly and political affairs becomes dramatically verifiable --- practically tangible --- in the situation which makes it easier and cheaper to obtain and read a copy of a book published in 1809 than a copy of a book published in 2009. [3, 4] Today, sitting at my desk in Zagreb, Croatia --- far from the treasures of the British Library --- I can read, as I please and almost instantly, books that even in a culture of abundance would not have been easy to come by: for example, books printed in Quattrocento or Cinquecento.[3]

So if you are trained in reading and studying very closely Greek and Latin texts, there is a lot to read and study today. The big questions are what you will read and study, and when, and how. Of course, the really big question, the monster that all the time lurks out there in the darkness, is *why* you will be doing it. Let me try and offer my answers to all those questions in the rest of this lecture.

1. A scholarly user: how do I do my job these days

First I would like to demonstrate briefly how do I do my job these days; this will, I hope, open a view both on what is possible today, and what we are still lacking.

[5] Currently I am preparing a critical edition of the Regum Delmatiae atque Croatiae gesta ("Deeds of the Dalmatian and Croatian kings"). This is a short chronicle written in Croatian which Marko Marulić from Split, in 1510, translated into Latin. The translation survived in ten manuscripts and was edited three times, but no critical edition has been attempted until now.

[6] My task is mainly to collate the witnesses and try to reconstruct the text that Marulić originally wrote.[4] I work with photocopies and digital photographs; I have not consulted even one manuscript in situ (the nineteen- and twentieth century editors would be shocked by this confession, but it is a fact of life in the world of limited travel expenses).

3 See especially the Gallica and BSB collections.
4 This edition is to be published in the next volume of Marulić's *Opera Omnia*.

I try to establish what Marulić wrote by comparing thirteen extant versions of this text with each other, and then testing most probable readings against other Latin texts by Marulić (and, sometimes, Latin texts by other authors as well).

Obviously, to do this well and reasonably quickly, I need a good way to compare a lot of very similar texts, not losing track of where I am. To test the readings, I need an easy and fast access to as many texts by Marulić as possible, preferably in reliable editions (by the way, for most of his works there are no real critical editions yet). In addition, I need a good bookkeeping system for all the things I do with the texts and notice in them. Finally, to keep my feet on the ground somehow, I need to discuss ideas and findings with someone sufficiently interested and versed in the matter.

Note that what I am doing can be reduced to several of John Unsworth's "scholarly primitives", mainly to discovering, comparing, annotating.[5]

[7] Last month I came across something suspicious. It is a sentence not present in the Croatian original (we know from Marulić himself that he made some changes in the text). The sentence is a moralizing aphorism of a kind that Marulić likes to use in his own prose; besides, in what may be the oldest MS of the Regum Delmatiae atque Croatiae gesta this sentence is marked by a drawing of a pointing hand --- and we know that Marulić liked to mark with such a device important passages in his own texts (and in the books he owned).

[8] So, reflexively, I go to the Google Book Search, and try my luck, searching for a part of the sentence. It turns out that something similar is found in the Latin translation of Pausanias' Description of Greece. Pausanias wrote in 2nd century CE; Google found the locus similis in an edition of Pausanias printed in 1827; the author of the translation turns out to be (as Wikipedia told me) one Romolo Quirino Amaseo (Udine, 24 June 1489 – Roma, June 1552); Amaseo's translation was first published in 1547.[6]

5 See Unsworth. An additional primitive is also unavoidable: the texts I work on, their connections, and my interventions and notes all have to be somehow represented.

6 Here the plot thickens: Marulić died in 1522, and we know anyway that he translated the Regum gesta in 1510. We know also that his Greek was on a par with Shakespeare's. But before 1510 the only printed translation of Pausanias was the partial one by Domizio Calderini (died 1478; the translation was published c. 1500), and Calderini did not

[9, 10, 11] It is, of course, possible that Marulić got the idea from somewhere else, that another author cited the relevant passage. So I turn to the PHI Latin texts database, and search it with the help of Peter Heslin's Diogenes tool; I search also the Neo-Latin texts prepared by the DFG-Projekt CAMENA, Heidelberg-Mannheim (for this I have to use Google Web Search). Finally, just to be sure, I try looking for the combination of audaciae and roboris all over the internet, marking and annotating interesting search results with Google SearchWiki. (By the way, during the search I also store bookmarks and potentially relevant bibliographic information on my BibSonomy page.)

Here I stop, and invite you to look for a moment at what I am doing from a bystander's perspective. How would I discover things --- how would I search so widely --- without the internet and its search engines and text and data services?

But do notice, please, something else: annotating and collecting bibliographic data is certainly possible without the internet, in the isolation of either my own computer or my own notebook or note cards. So what do I gain by keeping the data somewhere on the internet?

I leave this question open for now. The next part of my talk may seem just loosely linked with this, but the connection will be made clearer afterwards.

2. Metaphors for text collections

Perhaps this is a good time to remind you --- and myself --- that the title of my talk is "What shall we do with a text collection". Starting from a single text I have in fact already mentioned, used, and consulted several different text collections.

Two of them are private: first is my working collection of instances of the De regum gesta. Second is the collection of other texts by Marko Marulić. Then come two public, and very general text collections: the internet and the Google Book Search. There are also two public, but specialised collections --- the PHI Latin texts

translate Pausanias' book 9, the Boeotica, where the sentence is found.

database (in the form I consulted, a commercial product, and available off-line), and the CAMENA Neo-Latin text collection (freely available over the internet).

Though these collections may seem very different, they have one thing in common: I used them primarily for simple searching --- for finding a string of characters. But there are other uses for a collection.

The easiest way to start thinking about these uses is, it seems to me, to recognize the dominant metaphor on which a collection is built. This metaphor to some degree controls what we will do with the collection: it encourages us to use it in certain ways while discouraging other uses.

In the discipline of Greek and Latin philology, I recognize three dominant metaphors: the database, the library, the workplace. [12] The database provides in first line the searching services; its objects are not so much texts, as pieces of texts --- and new texts created of search results.

[13] On the other hand, in a library collection the text objects are seen, and thought about, as books or publications --- they are digital representations of print artifacts (especially so when they consist not of texts, but of page images).

[14] And what would the workplace be? This is not just a collection which we access; the workplace is a sum of texts and tools, a system modeled on how philologists usually work. The workplace enables us to have the main text, the text we study, open in front of us on the desk, surrounded by a dozen of other texts --- vocabularies, encyclopedias, commentaries, articles, bibliographies.

[15] An example for the database may be the collection Poeti d'Italia in lingua latina (http://www.poetiditalia.it/poetiditalia/); [16] an exemplary library is the digital collection of the Münchener Digitalisierungszentrum (http://www.muenchener-digitalisierungszentrum.de/); [17] a workplace would be the Perseus Digital Library (despite its title).[7]

7 There is, of course, a lot of intermediate forms and implementations: libraries with database features, like the Bibit --- Biblioteca Italiana, or the CAMENA; then databases which are also workplaces and libraries, like the Chicago Homer, or those built on the XTF system, or the Indica et Buddhica collection, and so on.

But even the most advanced current Greek or Latin collection lets us find only what is already there. This means that even the most advanced collection does not, as yet, let us share and discuss what we find, nor does it let us annotate or create persistent personal collections (this is possible only off-line, with Diogenes). To be sure, this is not because people who planned and designed these collections are not open to collaboration, and certainly it is not impossible to annotate, collect, or share our discoveries. It is only that to do so we have to go away from the collection --- either to the isolation of our personal computers and files, or to some other network resource or service.

3. Croatiae auctores Latini

About two hundred and fifty years ago, between 1726 and 1744, a countryman of mine, Serafin Marija Crijević (1686--1759), a Dominican friar from Dubrovnik, wrote the following in the prologue to one of his works, speaking about the glory of his hometown:

> Id unum hactenus desiderabatur, ut florentissima civitas civium suorum illustriumque virorum fieret imagine spectabilis. Equidem nulla fere natio est, nulla civitas, quae illustrium civium scriptorumque bibliothecas non instruxerit, sive alia id genus commentaria ad posteritatis memoriam non ediderit, quae praesertim eximios e suis civibus incolisque viros complecterentur. Sola fere urbs nostra non modo caeteris usque adhuc nationibus ignota, sed parum sibi ipsi cognita, fere sine nomine, sine laude, quia sine laudatore fuit. Hinc res civium nostrorum per multa secula bene gestae ex hominum memoria exciderunt, quia nempe scriptores illis laudatoresque defuerunt.
>
> *Until now just one thing has been missing: our wonderful city should be adorned with images of its citizens, its famous sons. For indeed there is hardly any nation, any city, without a library of its distinguished citizens and writers, or without some other commentary of a similar type, prepared to aid the memory of later generations, a work comprising especially the best of its citizens and inhabitants. Our city is almost the only one left to this day not only unknown to other nations, but insufficiently known to itself as well, almost without a name, without fame, because the city had nobody to celebrate it. Therefore all the fine things our citizens have done through centuries fell into oblivion; certainly, because there was nobody to write about them, to celebrate them.*[8]

The work opened by these words bears the name Bibliotheca Ragusina, The Dubrovnik Library. It tells --- in Latin language --- about the lives and the writings of 435 authors (writing in Latin, Croatian, and Italian) from

8 Crijević.

Dubrovnik, or somehow connected with the city. The Bibliotheca Ragusina remained unpublished until 1975--80. But even in manuscript form, this lexicon helped shape how we think about Croatian literature today, especially about the literature of early modern Dubrovnik. And still, the role of Crijević in this shaping of views remains not wholly acknowledged: the literary scholars and biographers whom we remember better, whom we credit and appreciate oftener, are those who *read* Crijević (in Latin, in manuscript), and afterwards published the fruits of their reading.

In the idea, in its realisation, in the very fate of the Bibliotheca Ragusina of Serafin Crijević I see a kind of model, or a cautionary tale, for what I intend to do. Because, as you will remember, the main reason I am here, the reason I speak to you, is that I lead a project intending to build a collection of digital texts by Croatian Latin writers.

From several points of view, a collection of such texts follows closely in the footsteps of Serafin Marija Crijević. Firstly, it arises from the same insecurities, I guess. A society feels not appreciated enough, feels left out; it has to legitimate itself, to make itself heard, appreciated; it needs to prove to the whole wide world that it too has done something for the common weal. Citizens of Dubrovnik in the 1720's must have felt much like citizens of Croatia feel today.

On the upside, Serafin Crijević had at his disposal a medium that could make the glory of Dubrovnik available and comprehensible to the whole learned public of the Western world. To one writing in 1720's, this medium is the Latin language. But Crijević still lacked something: because his work did not find its way to the printing press, he was denied means to distribute what he wrote. Besides, even if the Bibliotheca Ragusina had been printed, even in the 18th century, in the age of the Encyclopédie and other voluminous publications --- still the space, the number of pages, available to Crijević would remain seriously limited, as it was for every author, for every scholar, up until last fifteen or twenty years; only recently we have begun to play with the idea of publishing *everything*, of having a million books at our disposal. Moreover, Crijević could have presented what he wrote in only one way per edition,

fixing his entries in one sequence (his was, by the way, a somewhat idiosyncratic one --- alphabetically by *first* name), having to resort to indices for any alternative ordering, and so on. All of what Crijević could not have done can be achieved today, in digital editions and collections; but you know that.

The interesting thing --- which I will come to again later --- is that we today also lack something. Yes, we have at our disposal means of distribution and presentation Crijević could not have dreamed about; but, with a collection of Latin texts, we lack a universal medium of expression. True, all who can read Latin, can read Crijević, too --- but what language is common to those who do not read Latin?

Still, what is more important, what is important for me as I think about how this collection could look, is the simple fact that we can today think about the *real*, the *literal* Bibliotheca Ragusina (even the Bibliotheca Croatica). Today we can imagine having almost *all* of the texts by Croatian Latin authors at one place, and this is not daydreaming. Since Croatia is a small country, there is not that much text: we know today that there are, in all, some 6500 printed works published from the 15th century until 1848 which contain a Latin text by a Croatian author. A liberal estimate would be that there are some 1000 more such texts in manuscripts (there is no central catalogue of manuscripts in Croatia yet), with perhaps another thousand published from 1848 until the present day (there will always remain, to be sure, an unknown number of Latin documents and inscriptions created in Croatia or by Croatian authors, such as the Dubrovnik archive records that Fernand Braudel wrote about in La Méditerranée).

In the world of million books, this seems not much; but the very *idea* of having it all in one place --- in a place significantly smaller than a whole library building --- and having all these texts somehow networked, interconnected, and open to everyone with an internet access --- well, this idea seemed, when it first crossed my mind, equally staggering as it would have seemed to Serafin Crijević.[9]

9 Another idea that would hardly ever occur without a text collection sprang to mind as we compiled a prosopography with basic bio-bibliographical data for some 250 Croatian Latin writers included in the Leksikon hrvatskih pisaca (A Lexicon of Croatian Writers, Zagreb 2000), organising the data in a database: now we have the materials for a sociological analysis of Croatian Latin writers as a group --- and such analysis has, to my knowledge, never been

4. Know your users

[18] "Pay attention to your audience and use all the tools available to communicate with them." To turn a little bit away from the 18th century, Latin language, and Croatia, I quoted what I just happened to read in an article about Boxee, "the first 'social' media center" (http://blog.boxee.tv/about/). This is an observation picked at random, but, I think, representative of how people today think about networked services. Therefore it has a lot to do with designing a networked collection of Croatian Latin writers.

"Pay attention to your audience." So who will be using our collection?

First answers are similar to those reported by Julia Flanders in connection with the Brown University Women Writers Project. The collection of texts from Women Writers Project is intended primarily for students --- and it "attempts to make student work more like that of professionals in the field; it attempts, in short, to make learning more like research" (Flanders 2002:49).

So every humanities text collection --- the Women Writers Project collection as well as the Croatiae auctores Latini --- can expect two kinds of users: scholars and students. Or, more generally, those who already do research, and those who are learning to do it.

There is also another division, a division of disciplines. I know for certain that the works of Croatian Latin writers interest not only philologists and literary critics, but also historians, art historians, theologians, even archaeologists. Each practitioner comes to the collection with a specific set of expectations, with a specific set of questions. The collection must be designed so that each practitioner can *pose* these questions.

Finally, the people interested in the Croatiae auctores Latini collection may be from Croatia as well as from abroad. Even when they work in a same discipline, members of these two groups will differ in what they already

attempted.

know; the blank areas on their maps, so to say, will be in different places. You do not have to explain to anybody educated in Croatia who is Marko Marulić, where is Dubrovnik, and what makes these subjects worthy of a scholarly resarch. This is not so with somebody educated in the UK.

There is a certain point, though, at which all these groups converge. As people use the collection, as they explore it, they all have to learn something new. Whatever their background, coming to the Croatiae auctores Latini collection the scholars will sooner or later find themselves confronting an unknown body of knowledge, a terra incognita. This can be safely assumed for almost all collections. "The test of a collection's design", writes Flanders, "is what happens when its user comes to it in a state of ignorance --- exactly the state in which most students, and indeed many scholarly readers, will approach Women Writers Online. As a result, the modes of access we offer for the collection have to anticipate and provide for this unfamiliarity."

To anticipate the unknown. This may sound as a bit of a paradox, and this paradox can be sharpened further: the whole text collection is an artifact --- everything in it is human-made, everything in it is put in there on purpose, is selected by someone --- but the sum of it is an unknown quantity, a new territory, a terra incognita. The task of the designer is not to explain the unknown away, not to pretend that it is not there, but to give the explorers means to orientate: to give them the instruments with which to navigate through this man-made unknown territory.

5. Orientating users in a collection

What would such instruments be? We could start remembering the collection-as-workplace metaphor, and looking around us: what is on our desk as we read and study? What reference works do we most often turn to? Obviously, these would be the resources that a collection could profit from.[10]

10 To obtain or query them, a collection could turn to other collections: for example, the Perseus project has already made freely available both an XML-encoded Latin dictionary that could be consulted by the users of the Croatiae auctores Latini collection, and the infrastructure to query this dictionary.

Then there are all the contextual materials usually found in anthologies or scholarly editions: notes, introductory essays, biographical and historical information. Here Julia Flanders warns against either providing too much information, in form of "on-line reference libraries of general-purpose resources", which is a difficult and expensive task (some cultural heritage collections, like CAMENA or Bill Thayer's Lacus Curtius, have, interestingly, experimented with reference materials which are itself part of the collection --- this would be equivalent to using the Bibliotheca Ragusina of Serafin Crijević as a source of background material), as well as against information that is too specific, such as we usually find in a scholarly commentary, "supplying whatever knowledge that creator happens to have about individual words, passages, related events, and so forth", which could make people embrace the received wisdom too easily: "the student walks through a maze, picking up magic tokens, reaching the goal, but still not grappling with the text independently" (Flanders 51). Even the middle approach --- "brief contextual essays on the authors and works and topical essays on selected cultural issues" may turn out to be problematic: creating such essays requires a lot of effort, and the resources created may quickly become dated. And, after all, "contextual materials can only set the text within a framework of what is already known about it and its relationship to its larger context." That is, we risk to explain the unknown away.

A prudent strategy would be to provide contextual information which is both as succinct and as incontestable as possible. This is bibliographical and biographical metadata, information on genre of the text, on places and dates connected with it, on contents of the text (based, as much as possible, on the indices, titles, and tables of contents that are a part of the text itself), on other works one text cites --- roughly the metadata that the MONK project (http://monkproject.org/) describes as belonging to the top level (bibliographical) and the mid-level of discursive organization (chapters, scenes, stanzas, etc). In selecting and preparing such metadata the collection designers are helped greatly by knowledge of the disciplines our potential users belong to (philology, history, literary history, art history, theology, etc). Categories of such metadata will then, almost by itself, allow detailed and refined searching

for "more like this" --- or, of course, in the hands of a creative researcher, searches for "something completely unlike this".

6. It takes a village

Excuse me if I mention once again the prologue of the Bibliotheca Ragusina by Serafin Crijević. I do it because in that text I recognize another problem that bothers me today. People have forgotten the glory of Dubrovnik, writes Crijević, "quia nempe scriptores illis laudatoresque defuerunt": he understood that, if heritage is to be recognized and appreciated, somebody has to *use* it, to write about it. Furthermore, he mentioned the authors, in plural: so there has to be *more* people researching a tradition. Finally, in a sharp contrast to the whole team of the French Encyclopedists, Crijević himself remained alone, a one-man-band, a single writer trying to bring the glory of Dubrovnik back to the res publica litterarum.

This is the main trap that I feel the Croatiae auctores Latini digital text collection has to avoid somehow.

In my short and modest career as a Neo-Latin scholar I have learned three things. First, as Neo-Latin studies are a relatively small discipline --- in a sharp opposition to the vast Neo-Latin heritage of the Western world --- there is a lot of things *not* being done, and within the framwork of "normal" humanities (whose forums are journals, conferences, and books), the discipline itself easily becomes fragmented, with each scholar concentrating on his or hers own thing.[11] Second, while Neo-Latin studies in Croatia have in the 1970's made contact with the international Neo-Latin community --- finding warm welcome and sparking some interest --- this contact has since been lost, mostly because the Neo-Latin scholars *in Croatia* (and there is not much more than two dozen of them at the moment) did not succeed in forming a community, deciding on priorities, and carrying on with realization of such a programme. Third, I am now at a point where I can see clearly what can be done in my chosen discipline --- but I can see equally clearly that I myself will not be able to do even a tenth of things

11 For a report on the state of Neo-Latin studies, see Helander, Ford, and Haskell. Ford gives an optimistic view of this state, while Haskell is more reserved.

that *I* see possible, let alone those which lie beyond my imagination and capabilities; one result of this insight is that these days I am obsessed by the need to leave breadcrumbs, to somehow bookmark (both for others and for myself) the interesting things that I find or think about.

So at last I come to the main point of my talk. Working in a small, esoteric discipline, we can consider a collection of texts a product (or even a by-product), a research result, something to publish and then go on to other things. But if we think so, we lose something. A collection of texts offers a chance to create, or strengthen, a research community --- it can serve as a focus around which can be gradually built what Peter Shillingsburg calls "a knowledge site" and "a village of scholars".[12] It can be, to use another known simile, structured as a bazaar, a meeting place, a place where --- even if everybody works on their own individual themes --- people work close to each other.

But why would people want to do it? And why would they want to do it in a digital, networked environment, instead of a more familiar space of a scholarly conference or a learned journal? To answer the last question first, a digital collection is obviously less bound by requirements of space and time; this collection would give the researchers easy and instantaneous access to all materials and tools needed for their work, and for making their work known to others. And why work with others at all, why let them look over my shoulder, why share ideas while they are still only half-baked? Because I like to do it, I guess, and I suppose --- this is a risk I have to take --- that my other colleagues would also like it.

What exactly is needed to transform a collection into such a bazaar? Obviously, a reliable way to personalize a collection: to form one's own sub-collections in accordance with one's own research project, to mark and annotate whole texts or individual passages. Then there has to be a way to add content to a collection --- not only in form of notes or comments, but also as further bibliographic entries, or even further primary and secondary texts. Moreover, there has to be a way to share content one is willing to make public, so that others can

12 Shillingsburg.

use or judge or improve on what we have found or made. (All such activities require also that some people take on the role of editors of these contributions.) And, finally, what goes for the users, goes for the collection itself --- it too could connect with other collections, using and sharing materials.

This sounds nice, I know --- besides, a lot of it simply reproduces practices standard outside a virtual, digitally networked world --- but what is to be done? How one would go about building such an ideal collection?

Looking around me, I see a lot of elements available, even though they do not work together: there is Wikipedia, as a model of a community where lot of people can add content, with good technical capabilities for both editorial control and version control. There are social bookmarking services for collecting and sharing all kinds of bibliographic data, like BibSonomy, Delicious, Connotea, and, to some degree, WorldCat (all with easy and enticing ways of exporting citations and creating bibliographies). There is the Open-Access Text Archive, "open to the community for the contribution of any type of text, many licensed using Creative Commons licenses." There are even services for creating book collections and annotating --- or reviewing --- individual titles, such as Digital Texts 2.0 or Library Thing.

What we still lack --- as research by John Bradley and Peter Boot has shown --- is a system for annotating texts and sharing these annotations. What we also lack is glue, a way to put all this together, a full-text collection management system where collecting, annotating, and sharing would be possible alongside searching, browsing, and reading.

Summary and conclusions

Using the "freely available" internet services is today paid mostly by adding content. Tools and space that can be thus obtained --- an infrastructure for creating knowledge --- encourage me to strive for what Croatian humanities (especially the Neo-Latin studies in Croatia) could not have achieved in the past, because of the severely limited resources.

Greek and Latin philologists today have ample material, and ready means, for computer- and internet-assisted basic functions of discovering, comparing, referring, sampling, illustrating and representing. However, designing and organising collections in which we will carry out these basic functions deserves careful thought: the metaphor chosen for a collection may channel the use to which the collection will be put.

The best metaphor seem to be that of a workplace (enabling a scholar to create a subset of texts from a collection needed for a particular project), because it reflects closely the way scholars usually work. Furthermore, even the most experienced scholars have to explore a collection, to learn it, to discover the links and connections it makes possible. The collection is, therefore, an unknown territory which must be navigated somehow --- which must include some means of orientation.

Scholars also work by sharing and discussing what they find; as yet, there is no collection of Greek or Latin texts that I know of that would offer such social capabilities. True, in the "real" world sharing and discussing *before* research is completed is done usually in an informal way; besides, there are people who do not like to expose their work-in-process in this way. But a small discipline, with an even smaller specialist area of study --- as the study of Croatian Neo-Latin literature is today --- may benefit from an experiment with a virtual bazaar in which researchers (usually separated by space or time or both) could work side by side.

We already have several models of such networked communities (discussion lists, the Facebook); but to create a scholarly community around a text collection --- a community which would, at the same time, *support* this collection --- it seems necessary to build a place where we can find, read, and annotate --- if not *together,* then at least side by side.