The changes we have seen in recent years in the scholarly publishing world – including the growth of digital publishing and the changes to the role and strategies of publishers and libraries alike – represent the most dramatic paradigm shift in scholarly communications in centuries. This volume brings together leading scholars from across the humanities to explore that transformation and consider the challenges and opportunities it brings.

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“This is a timely and judicious collection of essays that examines what is really at stake in the tensions between our established print cultures and the emerging ‘digital humanities’.”
— Thomas Docherty, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, University of Warwick

“Combining close attention to material circumstances with a broad cultural and philosophical outlook, the contributors to New Publication Cultures in the Humanities offer a bracing vision of scholarly research as an open-ended and collaborative enterprise – a vision that this stimulating collection both advances and exemplifies.”
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“As the Gutenberg Parenthesis is closing, Humanities scholarship that wants its fingerprint to be read for its touch to be felt will have to go digital. This handbook points us in the right direction.”
— Ortwin de Graef, Dean of Research, Faculty of Arts, Catholic University of Leuven
New Publication Cultures in the Humanities

Exploring the Paradigm Shift

Edited by Péter Dávidházi

Amsterdam University Press
In memory of Irma Vogel (1954-2011)
who worked for this project to the last
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Publication cultures are systems of social practices held together by the need to publish texts and defined by the dominant paradigms of publishing. Appropriated from Thomas Kuhn’s theorization of scientific revolutions, paradigm here refers to a coherent pattern of communal practice. For Kuhn, a paradigm is either a model derived from actual scientific practice – that is, an accepted example from which a particular tradition of scientific research springs – or, in a broader sense, it “stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community” (Kuhn 10, 175). It is this latter meaning that can be more useful when we seek to understand the far-reaching implications of the current changes in scholarly publishing; indeed, investigators often resort to it without spelling it out or being aware of its use. For example, it seems to have been employed by members of the Modern Language Association (MLA) Ad Hoc Committee in 2000, when they published their classic paper, The Future of Scholarly Publishing, aiming to analyse “the widely perceived crisis in scholarly publishing” and to recommend viable solutions (Ryan et al. 172-186); it was their holistic, if latent, notion of a comprehensive paradigm that enabled them to make valid recommendations for all sorts of scholars, funding agencies, university departments, libraries, publishers and administrations. Kuhn’s multifaceted term is certainly not simple; nor is its application to disciplines outside the natural sciences obvious – though, as has been shown, it is certainly worthwhile (Masterman, cf. Gutting). The essays in the present volume are talking neither about the paradigms of science, nor of any discipline in the humanities, but rather present paradigms of publication cultures. Hence our subject calls for a further reinterpretation of the term, modifying its theoretical and practical implications. Consequently, what we mean by a paradigm is a set of concepts, habits, technologies, institutional norms and regulations, which together govern, directly or otherwise, all our procedures in publishing.

It is the ruling paradigm that controls the latent implications and tacit assumptions of what is meant by the verb publish. It is only by analyzing such paradigms that we can hope to understand the diverse connotations of that verb, far beyond its seemingly obvious sense; that is, to make any
kind of text (a piece of writing, a musical score or something diagrammatic) available in the public domain. That seemingly obvious sense of the word, however, has always been only a fraction of its total meaning. To publish comes from the Old French puplier, which, in turn, derives from the Latin publico, publicare, a verb that could mean not only to make something public, but also to adjudge it to public use, to declare it the property of the state and even to confiscate it. Characteristically, these obsolete connotations have often been revived by some of the modern publication cultures we know. When I started to publish, four decades ago, the meaning of the verb (and its cognates such as the Hungarian publikál) in the region of Central and Eastern Europe implied and foregrounded an unavoidable element of state-controlled authorization, even if the criteria of that authorization were much more lenient than they had been in the 1950s. For example, there was no longer an emphasis on, say, the ideological purity of scholarly works on nineteenth-century literature. While the publication of a text has never been a purely practical or technical endeavour, in the 1970s in Hungary it required a symbolic act of political power performed by a publishing house of the state. It entailed authorization in the manifold sense of official approval, legitimation and appropriation; it restored to the range of meanings carried in ‘publication’ the obsolete element of ‘confiscation’ and, indeed, some age-old implications of publicare. In a world almost hysterically sensitive about the dissemination of any information (including something appearing in as rudimentary a format as a stenciled handout for students of English grammar), the entire infrastructure of publishing was still so jealously monopolized by the ruling party that there was only a narrow margin left for the illegal and risky alternative called samizdat publishing. An official, if unwritten, ban on a text or its author was so forceful that no publishing house in the country could ignore or violate it. It was not until much later, around 1989, that the unauthorized Western publication of a blacklisted work no longer resulted in severe punishment for the author at home. Compare that regime of publication to the wide variety of possibilities available today in the same region, and you begin to see some conspicuous differences between the respective paradigms at work in the two epochs.

Comparisons like this are small, first steps towards a systematic exploration of our subject; yet, they are indispensable and their details should be subjected to close scrutiny. A paradigm cannot be ascertained only by a facile and often unwarranted assumption of coherence. Therefore, one should heed the warning of Alfred North Whitehead (whose forgotten Science and the Modern World was once hailed as the most important
philosophical book on science since Descartes’ *Discourse on Method*) that science needs more than just “a general sense of the order of things.” It also requires “the habit of definite exact thought,” methodologically speaking “the priceless habit of looking for an exact point and sticking to it when found” (Whitehead 23). A mathematician and philosopher, Whitehead was interested in the changing worldviews or conceptual schemes underlying the major changes in the history of science; hence, he was looking for exact points, i.e. the dominant preoccupations, defining the mentality of each period. Our own questions are, what kind of order and what kind of exact points should we be looking for in publication cultures when trying to understand what a paradigm is like and what a paradigm shift is about. It is only through well-focused analyses that we can hope to arrive at ‘exact thought.’ Most of the papers in this volume, then, are meant to sharpen our view of key elements hitherto neglected. For example, the paper by Milena Žic Fuchs, which tries to reveal something as vitally important as the possible impacts of research assessment on the future of publication in the humanities, starts with the sobering observation that one can find only “fragmentary data or insights on the effects of assessment mechanisms in a small number of disciplines,” because we still have very few “extensive, in-depth analyses showing more precisely the effects that the evaluation, whether of institutions or individual researchers, have had on publication cultures.” We badly need these in-depth analyses, and once the minutiae of publishing fall into a new pattern, into a composite picture of details we can truly explore, then the task will be to reveal its overall historic significance to our present moment.

Publication cultures have always had their own history, and there is nothing unprecedented about abrupt shifts either. Different epochs have been dominated by different paradigms and there have been exciting periods of transition between them, provoked by a major discovery or other social factors that challenged the established paradigm and called for a new one. The underlying hypothesis of this collection of essays is that we are witnessing one of the most decisive paradigm shifts in history. As was recently noted by Jerome McGann, it can be compared in magnitude to the fifteenth-century printing revolution that the Renaissance thrived on. Yet, if we want to measure how radical a shift the new digital technology is driving in the humanities we need to consider the inexorable fact that “the entirety of our cultural inheritance will have to be reorganized and re-edited within a digital horizon.” (McGann 2010) Thus, we must revise the rationale of a publication culture that has been taken for granted during several centuries of relative stability. Veiled by the present upheaval, a
number of simultaneously existing, even competing, paradigms are at work and our age is still trying to come to terms with its own possibilities, in pursuit of a master paradigm that will likely incorporate or marginalize the others without eliminating them altogether. The time has not yet come to describe that master paradigm, but we can explore the paradigm shift itself, its phenomena and our responses to it. As the new modes of publishing are bound to affect the future of research and our scholarly communities are not yet ready to live up to the new challenge, the goal of this collection is to facilitate a more profound understanding of what this paradigm shift is about and to reveal how to make the most of it in the humanities. At a time when severe budget cuts are jeopardizing the development, if not the sheer survival, of the humanities in most European countries, it is vital for us to find potential resources hidden in the emerging new paradigm.

At the same time, these papers detect and analyze the probable causes of our own reluctance to make best use of the digital turn, urging us to overcome our difficulties, be they technical, psychological, or both. Although the new digital world no longer looks as formidable as it used to, when its newly discovered technology elicited knee-jerk or even “neo-Luddite” reactions (Himmelfarb), its pace of development is still frightening enough for many a traditional-minded scholar. From the first group of papers to the last, this book is meant to fulfill its dual function: to facilitate the understanding of the changes and to try to dispel this paralyzing sense of fear by mediating between (to revive a dead metaphor) the cutting edge of science and the thin skins covering some of our best colleagues. Such mediations are vitally important because, as Peter Givler, executive director of the Association of American University Presses, pointed out in 2000, scholars at work today have to cope not only with the usual difficulties of their scholarship but also with developing new vehicles for the publication of their results (Ryan et al. 180-181). Moreover, as the young can master the use of the new electronic devices more quickly and easily (on the whole) than their elders, the digital turn has tended to aggravate the generation gap, always latent in the scholarly community, and the temptation to look at professors of immense traditional knowledge as mere fossils of the past has become greater than ever. Hence we, authors and editor, are convinced that no examination of our rapidly changing publication cultures can suffice without due attention to the human problems involved, because it is vital to minimize the inevitable collateral damage caused by the triumphant progress of the Digital Humanities.

The exploration of an ongoing paradigm shift requires the courage to experiment with the transitory; to ask hypothetical, even counterfactual, questions and to take the risk, greater than usual in research, of being proven
wrong. Facing this challenge, the present collection of essays unwaveringly follows the logic of questions asked by various groups of scholars in our team. The first major unit, titled The Digital Enterprise: Views Philosophical, Historical and Personal, enquires into the general nature of the new modes of publishing. This preliminary section focuses on the transition from paper-based to digital publication in the humanities, devoting papers to the philosophical foundation of Digital Humanities (Jacques Dubucs), to the exciting promises of electronic periodicals (Gudrun Gersmann), to the dynamics of digital publication as exemplified by Digital Lexicography (Claudine Moulin and Julianne Nyhan) and to the provocative question of whether the Web could be overwhelming for the historian or any scholar (Luca Codignola). From various angles, these papers highlight what is at stake now and demonstrate that the digital enterprise, far from being a merely technical issue, is a unique opportunity in the humanities: we can both preserve and renew our ideals of distinction by integrating a great (though in bytes relatively small) cultural heritage in the huge upsurge of miscellaneous digital information. Arguing that digitization is not im-materialization but rematerialization, Jacques Dubucs maintains that the enhanced reproducibility of works of art (now far beyond what it was in Walter Benjamin's time) need not be paralyzing. Moreover, it is the mission of the Digital Humanities to avert the dangers of interpretive anarchism. In a paper suggestively titled 'Looking forward, Not Back: Some Ideas on the Future of Electronic Publications,” Gudrun Gersmann argues that the publishing culture that has dominated academic publication for a century, whereby a few authoritative scholarly journals publish the work of a few distinguished specialists in their field, is no longer unchallenged, mainly because the voice of experts has now been joined by an ever-growing chorus of opinions. Furthermore, the old vertical and hierarchal communication is being replaced by a new communication both horizontal and fluid, transforming the self-image of the humanities. The case study offered by Claudine Moulin and Julianne Nyhan analyzes the digital remediation of the German and Luxemburgish dialectal lexicography, showing how this kind of material may benefit from and contribute to a global information space, such as the emerging Semantic Web, and why it is vital to train some Humanists to understand such new digital tools well enough to bridge the gap between the respective communities of traditional scholarship and e-science. Luca Codignola's paper investigates how profoundly and in what stages the profession of historians has changed with the advent of the Web and other technological inventions. It takes a long, cool look at the trajectory of the ensuing methodological developments in order to ascertain their
diverse, complicated and mostly (but not altogether) beneficial impacts on the quality of historical research and writing.

The second unit, *Changing Models for Textual Editing in Electronic Publication*, analyzes the ways that editing, one of the oldest practices in the Humanities, is being altered by new media, which seeks to replace the old ideal of perfection (supposedly realized, or at least targeted, by the definitive edition) with an ideal of continuous perfectibility (accomplished by the new digital editions). This section starts with a succinct demonstration of how new and much-needed electronic textual criticism challenges both the editor and the publisher (Gábor Kecskeméti), how effectively the computer can assist the editing of manuscripts (Andrea Bozzi) and how the electronic media is changing methods in classical philology (Bernhard Palme). Gábor Kecskeméti highlights the difference between the steady and manifold usability of the digital edition, volatile or evanescent as it may seem, and the dead-end of its traditional paper-based counterpart, especially if it has no renewable electronic basis. Addressing scholars who work with some of the earliest sources, the papers by Andrea Bozzi and Bernhard Palme illustrate how the newly invented technical devices can be applied to a wide range of textual problems in fields as diverse as late Aegyptian papirology and modern philology, and how they can sustain and even improve fields of study instead of threatening their survival. Explicitly or otherwise, all these papers endorse the reorientation of research as a fundamentally collective and (by definition) unfinished enterprise.

The third unit, *Cutting Edge: New Means of Access, Evaluation and Funding*, charts the possible advantages of some brand new or recently discovered tools of our trade. Here, we learn about the great benefits of Open Access publishing for humanities scholars who make the shift from print to digital publication (Janneke Adema and Eelco Ferwerda); about the far-reaching impact of the new means of research assessment (Milena Žic Fuchs); about the possible roles of ERIH, the European Reference Index for the Humanities, which was initiated with due caution by the European Science Foundation’s Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH) (Ferenc Kiefer, one of the founding fathers of ERIH); and about an important funding scheme that has been masterminded and implemented in order to provide a financial basis for the sustained scholarly work required by great monographs (Vera Szöllösi-Brenig). The OAPEN (Open Access Publication in European Networks) project is shown against a background of transition phenomena: the current communication and publication practices of scholars just getting acquainted with their new possibilities; the slowly (or quickly?) eroding authority still attributed to printed books as opposed to e-publication; the
increasing consumption of online scholarly information and the growing number of scholars who accept Wikipedias, not uncritically, but at least as a supplement to traditional sources of information. ERIH could be listed here as well: its great importance and its highly controversial status was indicated by the clash of metaphors traded at our SCH meetings and our 2009 Budapest conference, one of the metaphors intimately endearing, the other apocalyptically frightening: ERIH is a lovely baby of ours, dirty enough to need a good bath, yet not to be thrown out with the bathwater; but, it is also a highly dangerous invention, a potential loose cannon or even a weapon of mass destruction. The two papers devoted to the subject in our volume abstain from such extreme analogies but painstakingly analyze the prospects of this device together with the proper function and possible benefits or hazards of bibliometrics in general, knowing that the future of the Humanities is at stake. They help us realize that bibliometrics, all too frequently and too crudely used today to measure the ‘impact’ that constitutes a norm of ‘fundability’ in several European countries, is an instrument that can be refined and which should be used together with complementary methods to foster high quality publication in the Humanities.

The fourth paper in this unit concerns the problem of how to protect the future of monographs; that is, books written by one person, based on sustained research and focusing on a single, usually complex, subject. Though traditionally one of the most important publication genres in the Humanities, so much so that we could easily summarize the history of practically every discipline in the Humanities by enumerating the most important monographs as its milestones, the monograph has been unduly ignored recently by both the funding and the monitoring schemes of most European countries. Thus, it has become increasingly difficult to secure the adequate institutional, financial, even psychological conditions needed for its survival. One of the anomalies of the genre’s academic position in Europe remains similar to one diagnosed by the MLA Ad Hoc Committee in the US in 1999-2000; the monograph is the ‘holy grail’ for those waiting for tenure or promotion; yet, publishers, in many ways constrained, cannot find the means for assessing and publishing them (Ryan et al. 172-186) and the number of monographs purchased by libraries nowadays is less than one fifth of what it was in the 1970s (Greco and Wharton 2008, cf. Adema and Ferwerda in the present volume). It seems that foundations have patterned their scheme of support on the requirements of the natural sciences: they tend to favour collaborative research. Likewise, most instruments developed for quality assessment of scholarly production have failed to take monographs into consideration, let alone give them adequate weight. This problem has been
aggravated by the institutional pressure to produce quantities of measurable output; scholars have to write short pieces for conferences where they are given 20 minutes to speak: enough for a paper-to-be but not conducive to writing a book-length study. In countries where the ‘sabbatical’ is not yet established, it is especially difficult for a scholar to escape from teaching duties for a semester in order to prepare or complete a book. In search of remedies for these ills, our last paper, by Vera Szöllösi-Brenig, examines the funding initiative ‘Opus Magnum’ from the VolkswagenStiftung, a promising device to save the endangered academic species that an optimistic analysis recently called a rising phoenix (Steele 2003).

Though all the authors of this volume are related to the humanities, the perspective they jointly offer is interdisciplinary, combining the insights of philosophy, linguistics, historiography, literary scholarship and lexicography, knowledge acquired as university professors, researchers, editors, publishers or representatives of a founding agency. True interdisciplinarity, however, can only be achieved by the masters of each discipline. Hence, the authors of this volume have been selected with care from among the eminent practitioners of diverse professions in many regions of Europe. My initial idea for this project, though considerably narrower in focus, was conceived in 2008 at a brainstorming session of the Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH) at the European Science Foundation (ESF) and the proposition was soon accepted. The first contributors, then, were the volunteering members of that Committee, selected and delegated by their respective countries. But we also needed to invite further researchers from outside the ESF, via networking, because of their special expertise. Although the SCH has always been devoted to a ‘bottom-up’ science policy – that is, to letting the researchers themselves take the initiative in proposing new projects, and to confine its own role to assessing, ranking and selecting the proposals for whatever financial support was available – it sensed a growing need for a supplementary ‘top-down’ strategy; that is, taking the initiative, not least because members of the SCH were themselves scholars with insights of their own. Their Science Policy Briefing of 2011, published under the title Research Infrastructures in the Digital Humanities, succinctly yet amply documents their initiative to bridge physical and digital research infrastructures, to secure their sustainability, to evaluate the outputs of digital research and to educate new generations of scholars so that they master the computing skills required. In the meantime, we were also eager to study the specific manifestations of the paradigm shift in the context of our respective disciplines, and each of us had the opportunity to write papers based on individual research (e.g. Dávidházi 2013). Thus, our project
has evolved through these phases: adopted by the ESF in 2008 and adapted by an international team of scholars, it was developed at the ESF ‘Strategic Workshop’ held at the Hungarian Academy in Budapest on 27-28 November 2009; then, at the ‘Humanities Spring,’ a forum for young European researchers organized in Maynooth on 9-11 June 2011 to inspire their common manifesto on the changing publication cultures in the Humanities (Kelleher and Hoogland 2012); and finally, through the papers collected in the present volume. Meanwhile, from 2008 to 2014, our subject developed faster than practically any other we have ever dealt with, so we had to learn faster than ever, revising and updating our papers several times until the very last minute and, let the tormented editor sigh, far beyond the appointed deadline.

Finally, I want to thank all those who helped this project from its inception; first and foremost, the fellow members of the ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities, a scholarly community I was part of between 2004 and 2009. This book is indebted to Milena Žic Fuchs, the chair of the Committee from 2009 to 2012, who has staunchly supported the project from the beginning. I am grateful to the previous staff of the ESF office, especially for the inventiveness of Monique van Donzel and Rüdiger Klein, for the help received from the angelic and unforgettable Irma Vogel (1954-†2011) as well as to its recent staff, especially Arianna Ciula and Claire Rustat-Flinton, both of whom worked for the project at crucial stages of its development, and Nina Kancewicz-Hoffmann, who secured the financial support through difficult times of institutional transition. The 2009 Budapest conference, the occasion for the first draft of several papers in this volume, was carefully looked after by Villő Denke, at that time one of the secretaries at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. A dialogue with Carol Chillington Rutter, fine Shakespeare scholar and ever-helpful friend, helped to clarify some of my ideas for this preface.

A special tribute is due to the former chair of the Committee, Gretty Mirdal. A clinical psychologist supervising the treatment of refugees who had been victims of torture, yet also a professor of psychology deeply versed in literature, she was our guiding light from 2004 to 2009. Many of us will always be grateful for having been transformed by her transcultural wisdom, tactful benevolence and quiet serenity. This book would not have materialized without her inspiring presence in our thoughts. Her leading role in the Committee when we were composing our ‘Position Paper 2007’ was epitomized by its starting point that “self-reflection is at the root of the humanities” (ESF 2007, 5), and the legacy of this insight shaped the present project as well, causing us to realize that we cannot explore paradigms without exploring ourselves.
Bibliography


