**Supporting Diversity in the Spatial Humanities: the Pelagios Association**

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Since 2011 the Pelagios project has been dedicated to horizon-scanning, mapping and bridging the semantic annotation research landscape in the spatial humanities. It has done so by organising research events, developing software, formulating standards, writing documentation, and supporting new initiatives through an annual programme of small grants. Its community includes content providers, gazetteer maintainers and educators, in addition to more than 3000 registered users of its Recogito annotation platform. Its members vary enormously in the scale of their activities, their motivations and restrictions, their levels of technical literacy, and the domain of their interests across space, time and disciplinary agendas. But at the heart of this endeavour lies a paradox: how can initiatives like Pelagios whose funders expect them to offer unifying guidance and leadership also support diversity and difference? In attempting to classify and coordinate digital ecosystems do we risk constricting or even killing them?

This presentation does not (and could not) attempt provide a solution to this challenge but describes recent and current developments within the Pelagios initiative that are intended to help address it. Foremost among these is establishment of Pelagios as an (unincorporated) voluntary network association guided by a series of six chartered Activities. By clearly specifying the scope of its mission Pelagios is now able to devolve more control to independently managed projects that collectively realise its objectives. In return, these projects are supported in aligning their activities with those of others that can maximise their impact and benefit from their implementation.

Three of the Association’s Activities are dedicated to the theoretical development and concrete implementation of the production, registration and use of semantic annotations. Three more will support gazetteer production and alignment, education & training, and a small grants programme. Each of these activities is led by two people appointed bi-annually by their relevant stakeholders’ community, and collectively they will undertake to further a vision of linked open geodata founded on the principles of collaboration, mutual benefit and reducing barriers to entry for data providers and end users alike. The Association is thus open to any individual engaged within the field to help forge its future direction, and we openly invite expressions of interest to join it. With the Association’s establishment in early 2019, DH2019 is an ideal opportunity to reflect on the early successes and challenges of this new organisational model as means for balancing diversity and synergy in the Spatial humanities landscape.