

Comparing Spatial Depictions of the Roman World

In this assignment you will compare two digital “maps” of the Roman Empire. One is ORBIS: The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World (<http://orbis.stanford.edu>), the digital history project we have discussed in class. The other is Harvard University’s Digital Atlas of Roman and Medieval Civilizations (<http://darmc.harvard.edu>). Both created by elite universities, these two digital projects are the realization of a tremendous amount of labor. Your assignment is to write a three-page analysis of the projects’ depictions of the Roman world. Remember that your paper should not treat the two projects separately. Instead, compare and contrast the two to illustrate your understanding of the time period, the two projects and the difficulties inherent in mapping. You will need to use and, when appropriate, cite the “About” pages of ORBIS and the home page of the DARMC. Below are some questions, broken into sections, to help guide you while writing your review. The assignment’s rubric is on the following page.

Purpose:

What is the purpose of each project?

How does that purpose shape each project?

Argument:

Do the projects explicitly make an historical argument? Implicitly?

What do the projects reveal, both independently and when viewed in conjunction, about the Roman world?

Data:

How do the projects present their data?

What effect does that presentation have on the viewer?

Where do the projects get their data? Is there overlap?

Can you think of an alternative way to present that data?

Rubric for Comparing Spatial Description of the Roman World

<p>The essay compares or contrasts the purposes of the two projects. Its treatment of how they can be used to better understand the past is perfunctory.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 points</p>	<p>The essay compares and contrasts the purposes of the two projects. Its treatment of how they can be used to better understand the past lacks complexity.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 points</p>	<p>The essay effectively analyzes the purposes of the two projects by thoughtfully investigating their stated intent, and reasons for their success or failure. It compares and contrasts the purposes of the two projects, examining how they can be used to better understand the past.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6 points</p>
<p>The essay discusses, but does not effectively compare or contrast the ways the two projects make or do not make an historical argument.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 points</p>	<p>The essay compares or contrasts the ways that the two projects make or do not make an historical argument.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 points</p>	<p>The essay compares and contrasts the ways that the two projects make or do not make an historical argument.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6 points</p>
<p>The essay compares or contrasts the ways the two projects get their data.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 points</p>	<p>The essay compares and contrasts the ways that the two projects get their data.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 points</p>	<p>The essay effectively analyzing the ways that the two projects obtain and display their data by investigating the data sources, and comparing and contrasting the two projects' approach to data collection and display.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6 points</p>
<p>The essays deviations from the appropriate citation style and the conventions of grammar significantly distract the reader.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 points</p>	<p>The essay's deviations from the appropriate citation style and the conventions of grammar, while present, do not distract the reader.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 points</p>	<p>The essay adheres to an appropriate citation style and the conventions of grammar.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6 points</p>

Total: _____/24 points

A score of zero is possible on any row of the above rubrics if the student does not meet the standards asked for in the first column.