

impressive detail, the three-dimensional materiality of the original source seems to haunt this feature. Since the quartos were photographed at six different institutions and each book is unique, no single page is photographed completely flat, nor to the exact same scale. By zooming in and out along the limited presets offered, it was rarely possible to arrive at near equivalent size and scale between copies. When this was possible, I often noticed that the particular copies were held by the same institution and, thus, I assume, photographed under more rigorously similar circumstances. Clearly it would be desirable to standardise photographic practices across institutions and the presentation of the images could give a better sense of scale from millimeters to pixels. Otherwise this promising feature is of very limited use. The “crop” feature however does allow for images to be exported easily (so as to be viewed and manipulated using another program).

During my use of the *Archive* over two months, the functionality of the interface was reliable and intuitive. I never encountered any discrepancies between the photographic facsimiles and the XML transcriptions. (Extensive encoding documentation is offered at <http://www.quartos.org/info/documentation.html>.) The advance features allow for notes to be saved as “annotations sets” and desktop displays can be saved as “exhibits”, a particularly useful feature for use in the classroom. The *Shakespeare Quarto Archive* is an impressive collaborative effort and promising resource for better understanding Shakespeare’s first printed books.

*John Vincler*

John van Wyhe, ed. *The Complete Work of Charles Darwin Online*. 2006. <http://darwin-online.org.uk/>.

*The Complete Work of Charles Darwin Online* is a truly comprehensive and ambitious resource whose current version was launched in 2006. It was developed from a pilot website, *The Writings of Charles Darwin On The Web*, which first went live in 2002. Created and directed by John van Wyhe, a historian of science and Senior Lecturer in the Departments of Biology and History at the National University of Singapore, *Darwin Online* aims to digitise all of Darwin’s writings, along with relevant supplementary material. Unlike sites such as the *Blake Archive* or the *Rossetti Archive*, *Darwin Online* was not necessarily inspired by the particular editorial opportunities that the web offers over print publication, but rather its aim is to act as a central research resource for those with an interest in Charles Darwin and his

work. To that end, the site contains previously unpublished documents, at least one exemplar of all known Darwin publications, and editions of some of his works accompanied by new introductions and annotations composed by scientists and textual scholars.

One of the major strengths of the site is its dedication to achieving completeness. Though it is already home to a staggering mass of material, a regularly-updated “What’s New” page alerts users to recent additions, while another page lists forthcoming works. The main contents of the site are listed under the general headings of “Publications” and “Manuscripts”, each of which leads to an extremely long list of documents which might benefit from some re-organisation. For the general reader, there is a “Major Works” page which offers more direct access to Darwin’s better-known writings, though there is no link to this list from the homepage of the site. An alternative to browsing the “Publications” and “Manuscripts” is provided by a search engine powered by the same open-source Lucene technology employed by Jstor. After negotiating the site’s navigation, the user will find an extraordinary wealth of material: not only does the site boast the largest collection of Darwin’s manuscripts and private papers ever published, it also contains translations of works in ten European languages (with more to follow), works available as free mp3 downloads, and individual exhibits of interest, such as copies of Darwin’s works annotated by his son, Francis, and a recently-added variorum edition of *The Origin of Species*. The extensive “Supplementary Works” section of the site contains scholarly works about Darwin, as well as reviews and responses to his work, and obituaries and reminiscences about the man himself.

When reading most of the documents in *Darwin Online*, the user is provided with a range of viewing options: they may read a text in transcription, view a digital facsimile of the original source, or opt for a parallel display of the two. Helpfully, pdf files of the facsimiles are available for download and printing, for those who prefer to read a paper copy. In keeping with the comprehensive nature of the site, the electronic versions of Darwin’s works are presented in their entirety: books are scanned from front cover to back, and nothing is omitted in the transcriptions thereof. All of the transcriptions are, naturally, fully searchable, and documentation in the “User Guide” offers thorough guidance for the user on searching the electronic documents and the bibliographical databases that are also available on the site. The “User Guide” is admirably detailed, providing guidelines on citation and a full description of the development of the site, and the categorisation of its contents. Technical documentation is provided, which can be of immense benefit to scholars who are undertaking similar

online work: the particulars of document scanning procedures, file sizes and formats, and the enhancements completed to improve the quality of facsimiles of damaged manuscripts are also outlined. Transcription policies, date encoding, and content markup are described, though it appears, from the lack of detail in the latter category, that the texts are only subject to light structural encoding. Though the technical documentation asserts that “[m]aximum compliance with public and established encoding standards is a high priority”, it seems that *Darwin Online*’s texts (with the exception of the Variorum *Origin of Species*) are not encoded according to the standards published by the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). XML encoding is used, and files are converted to static XHTML for web display, but the documentation does not refer to a reason for not using the TEI, a widely-used and recognised international standard for scholarly electronic editions.

Though *Darwin Online* contains several works with excellent new introductions and annotations, readers of this journal will be most interested in the textual scholarship evident in Barbara Bordalejo’s Variorum *Origin of Species*, published last November on the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the work’s first publication. In her introduction to the edition, Bordalejo describes the edition as a response to the shortcomings of Morse Peckham’s Variorum Text (1959), which left the user with the difficult task of reconstructing the original texts. Here, the web browser helps to overcome such problems by enabling the visualisation of the full texts of six British editions of *Origin of Species* published between 1859 and 1872. Colour-coded text is used to indicate the presence of variants elsewhere in the set of six witnesses: the user may view a transcription opposite a facsimile of an edition, or in a parallel view with another edition. The possibility of viewing a single witness with a “show variants” option is also available. The means by which the six lengthy texts were collated and encoded are outlined in the introduction to the edition, and, as with the best solutions, the method adopted is sophisticated, yet simple and intuitive. What the edition succeeds in doing is illustrating the development of the text of *Origin of Species* under Darwin’s supervision during this period: a fascinating result is the observable development and refinement of his composition methods, as Bordalejo points to instances of depersonalisation, reinforcement and clarification in the author’s style, in addition to his revisions that incorporate new and recent scientific hypotheses. The manuscripts of *Origin of Species* are not currently included in the Variorum edition, but the editor’s methodology includes allowances for their integration at a future time: this would add a further level of interest to this already accomplished

piece of scholarship. Though the navigation of the edition is fairly instinctive, it lacks a user guide which might be of benefit to users who are unfamiliar with variorum editions, a relatively rare concept in the sciences. A brief note on the rationale behind the choice of the six texts would also be helpful; these are the first six British editions published by John Murray, but a sixth edition with additions and corrections was also published in 1876. Is there a particular reason for this text's omission?

Overall, *Darwin Online* is a timely, comprehensive and well-executed resource that contains riches that will be of interest to the general reader as well as the specialist. The world of Darwin scholarship is indeed fortunate to have a meticulous team of researchers and contributors led by John van Wyhe at the head of this ambitious and useful archive.

*Justin Tonra*

*Vincent van Gogh: The Letters*. Eds. Leo Jansen, Hans Luyten and Nienke Bakker. Amsterdam: Van Gogh Museum; The Hague: Huygens Institute—KNAW, January 2010 <<http://vangoghletters.org/vg/>>.

One of the most remarkable and somewhat unexpected artists featured in the so-called “Pantheon” of Dutch and Flemish writers at the recently reopened Literary Museum in The Hague is without a doubt Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890). Whereas Anne Frank — presumably the other odd one out in this *dream team* of a hundred classic writers in the history of Dutch literature — did have literary ambitions during her short lifetime. Van Gogh, as far as we know, did not.

Nonetheless, the hundreds of letters that Van Gogh wrote, mostly to his brother Theo, have been edited, annotated and published several times, and already two websites with two different interfaces and two different underlying encoding schemes presented (almost) all of them online. One might be inclined to think that the recent web edition of *Vincent van Gogh: The Letters* by the Van Gogh Museum and the Huygens Institute is nothing new under the sun, but that would be a tragic mistake. On the contrary, this new digital edition of all 902 delivered letters by and to Van Gogh will hopefully make it easier for both scholarly editors and other scholars in Digital Humanities to convince grant funders and project subsidisers that simple digital publishing and cutting-edge scholarly digital editing are two totally different endeavours.

As early as 1990 the Van Gogh Museum, which holds the majority of the artist's letters, had plans for a new edition of the correspondence.