

The paper discusses progress made by the ‘Pleiades’ project since its inception in February 2006 with principal funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and additional support from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Based at UNC’s Ancient World Mapping Center, Pleiades aims to update and expand the spatial and historical reference information assembled by the APA Classical Atlas Project as it prepared the *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (Princeton and Oxford, 2000).

The goal of Pleiades is to establish a functioning, international community of scholars, teachers, students and enthusiasts who collaborate in updating the Classical Atlas Project dataset. To underpin these efforts, the project is developing a multi-lingual, spatially-enabled online workspace: this is being built currently, using the open-source Plone content-management system, and the paper demonstrates progress to date. The project's software customizations are to be made freely available for reuse elsewhere.

Within the framework of the Pleiades workspace, the project’s leaders define and enforce a flexible hierarchy of user roles and responsibilities, permitting interested and accredited individuals worldwide to suggest additions, corrections, observations and improvements to any place name, geographic location, date or bibliographic reference in the dataset. With reference to at least one trial region, if not two (Portugal and western Asia Minor), the paper illustrates the process of rigorous communal and subject-expert review preparatory to publication in print and open digital formats. In collaboration with the Perseus Digital Library, the Stoa Consortium and others worldwide, Pleiades aims to expand the dataset spatially, temporally and thematically through the incorporation (for example) of reference essays and user-contributed Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates. The results of these collaborative efforts are to be disseminated by a variety of means, both on-line and in print, including regular updates to the *Barrington Atlas* and its directories, a comprehensive thesaurus of geographic names, a digital gazetteer, a web mapping service, a classified bibliography, and Geographic Information System (GIS) datasets available for licensed re-use.

Pleiades stems from a recognition that large reference works are increasingly prone to obsolescence even as rapid developments in information infrastructure increase the value of linking, contextualizing and analyzing materials of every type. Pleiades does not just address this issue for its specific field, but also creates a model with wider potential applications. The paper demonstrates how this model overcomes current tensions between highly public collaborative efforts like Wikipedia and traditionally effective mechanisms of academic review and publication.