

Consolidation Comes with Practice On Ending a Prime Exploratory Journey in the Digital and Public Humanities

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1 Of Parameters Filled with Self-awareness and Some Due Over-enthusiasm

With this second issue of *magazén's* 2021 volume we are drawing towards the end of a research journey, which involved dozens of international scholars mutually pondering what kind of methodological consolidation was in sight for the wider and heterogeneous field of digital and public humanities after more than two decades in the making. Browsing through the papers of both issues of the current volume, we are under the impression that the scholarly community globally operating in this varied domain demonstrates a scientific self-awareness such as to make it finally an established sector. Perhaps we are overenthusiastic for the novelties emerging from various research clusters. Or, rather, we are simply underestimating how much it takes to establish a new (inter)disciplinary field at academic level, which of course also comprises the appointment of tenure-track positions and stably funded research centres. However, it is already notable that scholars who are active in the digital and public humanities get on conducting their independent research. This

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becomes evident when looking at the varied range of resources and modes of research conduct, even in the papers collected in this issue, which self-assuredly supersede disciplinary categories and scientific vocabularies to find their own parameters and terms. It may seem obvious, perhaps, but we believe it is relevant to stress this even more: as the six articles of this second issue demonstrate, consolidation of a new domain comes with practice.

Also for the second issue of volume 2021 scholars at different levels of their careers – from PhD candidates to senior researchers and full professors – contributed to our topic, effectively turning *magazén* into an open platform for theoretical debates, methodological reflections, and the analysis of case studies ranging from philology to history, from art history to archaeology, from cultural heritage to the GLAM sector. Keeping up the best possible editorial standards, such as to strengthen our scientific venture, the published papers resulted from a thorough process of selection and vetting. After the international call for proposals, the selected authors underwent double blind peer review and only a third of the received proposals made it to the stage of final publication. This tough selection involved as always a broad set of international reviewers from major universities and research centres, whom we would wholeheartedly thank for their precious time and attention. We sincerely hope that our audience will appreciate the work that lies behind this entire volume, finding high quality and exciting novelties across the published papers.

This year's final issue further comes with the definitive implementation of our new online platform hosted on our publisher's website, Edizioni Ca' Foscari, thus allowing the exploitation of a new set of search tools across all papers published in our journal so far. In fact, we propose a categorisation of analytical purpose based on five core domains useful as cross-referential pillars in the digital and public humanities, being materials, media, methods, sharing modes and involved actors/factors. On top of this, the second issue of volume 2021 also opens with a special feature section comprising a guest contribution by a renowned scholar, which this time is devoted to a specification of the peculiar name we have given ourselves. For this reason we are very honoured to include the invited paper by Lorenzo Tomasin embarking on a methodological quest relevant to the digital and public humanities, starting with the term 'magazén'.

2 Another Set of Contributions for the Purpose of Consolidation

The contributors chosen for the second issue of volume 2021 explore the concept of consolidation by putting into practice a range of methodological perspectives tailored on specific case studies, presenting the audience with different takes on how to conduct research in the evolving domain of digital and public humanities.

To begin with the first contribution, Lorenzo Tomasin presents the VEV project (*Vocabolario storico-etimologico del veneziano*) through a fascinating excursus of the origin and meaning of the word *magazen*, which dates back to the fourteenth century: we discover that the earliest known Venetian attestations of this word are among the earliest ever in a Romance language, and that 'magazenos' are already mentioned in a pact signed in 1302 between Venice and the sultan Melech Nasser, king of Egypt. In the second essay, Gamze Saygi and Marie Yasunaga focus on the case study of the biggest lost city of the premodern world, Edo (present-day Tokyo), enquiring on its street life using a hybrid model that combines 3D visualisations and 2D mapping, with the aim of retrieving what the real street life of the city would have been like.

In the third contribution of this issue, Yael Dekel and Itay Marienberg-Milikowky demonstrate how computer-based analysis of different readings carried out by many readers can produce a relatively minute picture. Taking the Hebrew novel as case study, since its emergence in 1853, the research reflects on the conceptual benefits, as well as the limits, of public distance reading.

Paola Moscati, in the fourth essay, explores the interdisciplinary turn observed in the development of digital archaeology through a number of archaeological case studies pivoting around the Etruscan civilisation. In doing so, she shows to the reader how digital developments – GIS and multimedia systems – create a unitary platform on which methods and practices of data acquisition, analysis, interpretation, and communication can converge.

Coming to the two final essays, Simone Fagioli introduces us to the subject of the automatic colouring in photography, presenting data and experimental results with original examples of automatic colourisation applied to anthropological images, reflecting on its use for the extraction of different pieces of information.

Finally, Petros Apostolopoulos in his reflection on Public History, explores the historiography of the discipline focusing on the concept of the 'public', as it appeared in the historiographical production and debates of the United States. He presents the development of this concept over time, an analysis that proves particularly relevant to understand the future of the discipline itself.

We wish to thank all the Authors of this issue, who presented different compelling case studies, theoretical debates and methodo-

logical reflections with the aim of carrying further the discussion on the nature and developments of the different facets of the Digital and Public Humanities.

At the very last, but not least, we wish to thank all experts and scholars involved in this year's journey: our Advisory Board members, the generous peer reviewers, our tireless editorial board members and the very efficient team of our publisher. Looking forward to next year's volume, which will be devoted to the topic of '[re]constructions', we hope that 2022 will offer us the chance to overcome the pandemic for good.