

Knowledgescape

Insights on Public Humanities

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Foreword

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It is probably an unusual choice that a series of “Filologie medievali e moderne” should host a volume entitled *Knowledgescape. Insights on Public Humanities*, and even more eccentric if, scrolling through the index of contributions, one immediately realises that none of them – with the exception of the final essay (on the *Le Ortique* project) – deals with philological and/or literary themes and methods. But, however far-fetched, the choice has some foundation.

Knowledgescape brings together some of the papers presented at the study day *Intersections. New Perspectives for Public Humanities* held in the Zoom virtual space on 3 December 2020. *Intersections* was organised by Humanities for Change (<https://humanitiesfor-change.org>), a network of young students and scholars committed to thinking about and acting on the relations between the humanities and socio-economic ‘realities’, starting from the assumption that it is good for the *studia humanitatis* to leave the reassuring academic enclosure and immerse themselves in the ‘world out there’ (and, conversely, it does not hurt the ‘world’ to maintain a close relationship with the *studia*). Commitment and assumption are not new, nor is especially commitment to the dissemination of humanistic knowledge and its innervation in the body of society. However, it is stimulating (and also comforting) that, once again, a new generation of educated women and men is climbing on the shoulders of the less new

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generations, to look further afield, in this case, towards the largely unknown horizon opened up by the digital turn. It is stimulating for everyone, I would say, but especially for us, lovers of the humanities. The 'digital revolution' summons us to a tight debate on the reasons for scientific practices and coexistence with other types of knowledge in the social landscape and, consequently, on 'what to do?'. A debate that not only concerns communication/dissemination of research, but also, in some cases, the methodological foundations of the disciplines. Hence, the great usefulness of meetings such as *Intersections*.

In its original articulation, the study day consisted of four panels, Public History ("A Glance at Public History"), artistic heritage ("Art, Museum and Cultural Heritage: Some Insights"), dissemination of research ("Beyond the Academy. Dissemination of Research and Employment"), and textual tradition ("The Contribution of Digital to the Tradition of Literary Texts"). Even if some of the contributions to the fourth panel did not result in written form, the other essays give a sufficiently articulated idea of the problems on the ground, which are not exclusive to historical or artistic-museum research but also concern literary traditions as part of the cultural heritage of humanity. The reconstruction, preservation and transmission of textual traditions, understood in the broadest (one might say 'anthropological') sense of the term, regardless of the form and consistency of material supports, are at the heart of humanistic knowledge. Having identified in the 'text' the essential articulation of symbolic-cultural production in a given context is perhaps one of the most important intellectual acquisitions in the humanities in the last thirty years. This allows philologists to look at what is happening in other disciplinary fields, to derive stimuli and matter for reflection for their practices and to maintain a vital relationship with humanistic research in the broadest sense of the term. For this reason, it is a great pleasure to welcome *Knowledgescape* in our "Filologie medievali e moderne" series.