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# Humanities: approaches, contamination and perspectives

Conference proceedings, Verona 17-18<sup>th</sup> October 2019

*a cura di*

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# Indice

F. Tommasi, M. Tagliani, V. Canciani, <i>Introduction</i>	9
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## STUDYING HUMANITIES: METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

V. Canciani, <i>Revising an archaeological context through the archival excavation: the Duino Mithraeum as a case study</i>	15
---	----

S. Calvi, <i>Dizionari monolingue in classi di francese lingua straniera. Il TLFi (Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé) e la progettazione di un'unità didattica sull'acquisizione dei colori</i>	27
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E. Marrucci, <i>Ricostruire prassi umane attraverso frammenti eterogenei: la filiera tessile nell'antica società greca</i>	39
--	----

F. Piangerelli, <i>Un esempio dell'utilità del multifocal approach: Platone e i Barbari</i>	51
---	----

F. Righetti, <i>A digital approach to the old English version of the story of Apollonius of Tyre</i>	61
--	----

## RECONSTRUCTING HUMANITIES: FRAGMENTS AND LAYERS

M. Abballe, <i>From scattered data to palaeolandscape reconstruction: a case study from the Romagna plain, Italy</i>	73
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- L. Arioli, *Roman glass lamps. Fragmented information in archaeological literature and a failed hybridisation in ancient material culture* 87
- P.R. Costa León, *Extralinguistic traces of Andean exoticness in dictionaries. References to past and society in lexicographical definitions of coca and llama* 99
- N. de Manincor, *First insights into Lazzaro Bastiani's underdrawing* 109
- C. Fiorotto, M. Carra, M. Cavalazzi, *The castrum of Zagonara. An archaeobotanical approach to the study of a medieval castle's human-environment dynamics* 125
- C. Pasetto, *Frammenti poetici di età augustea: il caso di Vario Rufo e la fortuna del Thyestes nella tragedia di I sec. d.C.* 139

#### CONNECTING HUMANITIES: HYBRIDIZATION

- A. Arnieri, *Harmony and Dissonance: Notes on Sound Metaphorization in Shakespeare's Othello* 151
- S. Cramerotti, *Contamination of looks. Triangulation of practitioners' experience, experts' knowledge and teachers' self-reflection for developing teaching professional competencies* 163
- M. Norris, *Time and timelessness. New configurations in the worldview of Zeno of Verona* 171
- F. Ramasso, "Voi, ad uccidere bruchi nei boccioli di rosa!". *Elementi meticci ed ibridi nell'opera teatrale Perikızı. Un sogno di Emine Sevgi Özdamar* 185
- C. Striolo, *The reception of Titian's models at the court of Brussels in the 16th century* 195
- F. Tommasi, *Hybrid Guide in the Study of Work: Temporal Framework in Work and Organizational Psychology* 209

## DECODING HUMANITIES: AMBIVALENCE

T. Benevento, <i>“Una grande, grande glossa ridicola e abissale”</i> . <i>Ambivalenze ne Il brigante di Robert Walser</i>	221
P. Bjelica, <i>The ambivalence of Stavrogin: Benjamin’s reading of Dostoevsky’s character as a precursor of Surrealism</i>	231
A. Grimaldi, <i>Ancient variant, emendation or error? Some notes on Eratosthenes’ epigram on the De duplicatione cubi, line 2, and the apographs of a lost manuscript belonging to Giorgio Valla</i>	241
R. Zanoni, <i>Cloud Atlas, individual identity in-between fiction and reality</i>	251
D. Panizza, <i>La comprensione delle implicature indirette in tempo reale negli adulti e nei bambini</i>	261
List of Contributors	276



# Introduction

The academic disciplines falling under the definition of Humanities are the product of a long historical reflection on both method and subject of studies. Over time, scholars have renewed the interest for new factual and control-factual insights on separate fields of research, which has resulted in an impetus for deeper understanding, controversial methodological debates, and enriching discoveries. The current research within the Humanities has therefore developed in various and autonomous fields of study, which are nevertheless organized around interconnected bunch of research. As a matter of fact, specific research agendas can often lead researchers to interdisciplinary considerations, which cover different domains of knowledge. On the basis of this awareness, the international conference Humanities in the Third Millennium: approaches, contaminations, and perspectives aims to be an opportunity for reflection and discussion on the current challenges of the Humanities among young scholars and researchers.

The different research approaches adopted within the fields of Humanities share the effort of exploring the human potential which can be expressed in various forms, ranging from the comprehension of manuscripts and trans-media to the critical evaluation of ancient authors; from the study of foreign languages and literatures to the investigation of psycho-behavioural phenomena; from the development of new challenging methods to explore human history to arts and archaeological studies.

Nowadays, the Humanities are experiencing a challenging condition, as in the global marketplace of higher education, the disciplines

falling under this umbrella term are increasingly threatened by decreased funding. According to a report in *Research Trends* magazine, by Gali Halevu and Judit Bar-Ilan, international humanities funding has been in constant decline since 2009. In the United States, for instance, the financing for humanities research in 2011 was less than half of one percent of the amount dedicated to science and engineering research and development. Furthermore, in countries such as Japan, Australia, Italy and France a relative decline of about 25 percent of humanities degrees has been reported over the past few years (from Ella Delany, *The New York Times* 2013). Within this challenging academic framework, the international conference *Humanities in the Third Millennium* aims to provide young researchers with the opportunity to present their own work by encouraging interdisciplinary and transversal discussion which can lead to the evaluation of new approaches to conduct critical research in the fields of humanities.

At the beginning of 2019, the aim to create an opportunity for discussion for young PhD students of humanities disciplines has led to the organization of this conference. Under the supervision of the Doctoral School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Verona, we have assiduously worked as organizing committee to create an open, vibrant and stimulating floor for interdisciplinary discussions. This effort has resulted in the two-day international conference titled *Humanities in the Third Millennium: approaches, contaminations, and perspectives*: more than 30 speakers specialized in large number of disciplines have presented their work in front of a heterogeneous audience of students and researchers, providing important insights and food for thought on different subjects. Moments of discussion were organized in four broad thematic areas, which we believed to represent some of the cornerstones of the scientific research conducted in the fields of Humanities, namely: theoretical framework and methodology in human science; fragments and layers, hybridization and ambivalence. A call for papers organized in macro-thematic areas gave us the opportunity to encourage young PhD students to go beyond the traditional limits of their fields of research, and reflect on the interdisciplinarity and great potential of the humanities disciplines. The challenge has been enthusiastically accepted by many PhD students working in different fields of research:

arts, archaeology, philology, literature, performance studies, foreign literatures, languages, linguistics, education, philosophy and psychology. Two young researchers, Daniele Panizza and Caterina Previato, shared their experience with the audience of students and fellow researchers. This fruitful gathering of researchers coming from universities across different countries has led to the publication of the present volume, with the aim of leaving a trail of the experience lived in Verona on the 17th and 18th of October 2019.

The publication of these proceedings would not have been possible without the help and the suggestions of the Scientific Board of the conference: Professor Andrea Rodighiero, Professor Manuela Lavelli, Professor Attilio Mastrocinque, Professor Stefan Rabanus, and Professor Paolo Pellegrini. We also would like to thank our colleague Elia Marrucci as part of the Organizing Committee. A special expression of thanks is due to the reviewers who have kindly decided to take part at the blind peer-review process which have undergone the articles presented in this volume. We would also like to thank Mrs Catia Cordioli for her invaluable help throughout all the organizational steps of both the conference and the publication process and Mr Andrea Dilemmi who helped us with the design and layout of these proceedings. Lastly, particular thanks go to the all the authors and all the researchers who have attended the conference, who have made all this possible.

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