

Philology

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on the Evolution of Languages, Cultures and Texts

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Editorial

Philology Two Thousand Fifteen

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PHILOLOGY is an international journal devoted to the study of human traditions as they emerge from oral, written, carved, painted, digital, performed, ancient, contemporary texts and ethnotexts.

The journal aspires to be the expression of philological studies in the present day, insofar as the contemporary world should be understood in its multicultural complexity and philology must therefore be re-founded as a *social science* and as an *ethnophilology*. To this end, we encourage constant dialogue with the methodologies of other disciplines, including linguistics, cultural anthropology, archaeology, paleoethnology, genetics and cultural biology. PHILOLOGY promotes all efforts to go beyond the traditional boundaries of our habitual fields of enquiry, with the purpose of accomplishing *anti-dogmatic and unprejudiced tools* for facing the challenges of contemporaneity.

In opposition to the taboos against retrospective analyses now common in the Humanities, the journal embraces the need to return to the study of the *origins* and *evolution* of languages, cultures, texts and signs, and to follow the inroads opened during the last decade by neo-evolutionistic and neo-Darwinian theories. In this sense, we understand philology in accordance with its original omnivorous vocation: taking our cue from August Böckh's famous definition of philology as "the knowledge of what is and has been known", we see philology as *the knowledge of what is not and hasn't yet been known*.

PHILOLOGY does not primarily deal with texts and interactions between them, but rather with the rich, wide-reaching webs of relationships among humans and their artefacts, *including* texts. Textual criticism is also encompassed in this view, as only one of the possible techniques for penetrating the texts' underlying meanings, as a way to understanding something beyond the texts themselves. *Philology is a strategy of reflexive learning, not a single method of observation*.

When philology was the queen of the sciences in the nineteenth-century European university, it was still a subversive discipline, the one that asserted our right to read and study holy texts, despite the obscurantism of their guardians. However, the field has gradually transformed its inclination towards *freedom* into inflexible methods and *regimes of truth*. As scholars open to questioning our own complex, ever-changing roles in the contemporary world, we must doggedly refuse to be co-opted by mainstream studies and by their logical-formal arrangement, and must assert *our right to be irreverent*, which lies at the very root of the notion of science. In the light of the foregoing, PHILOLOGY sees research first and foremost as *a form of rebellion* and as *a defense of dissent*: rather than exponents of an academic discipline we could think of ourselves as witnesses to an *indiscipline* that aims to know texts. Far from the obsession of seeking truth about texts or within them, we could try to give up this authoritarian presumption and become consciously active parts of the process of “traditioning” tradition, always preserving its acentric, heterogeneous and de-territorialized essence.

PHILOLOGY could then provide evidence of the salutary effect emerging from the innate human instinct to explore the unknown, making us able and free to plunge time and again into the waters of doubt.

The journal is open to a wide variety of interdisciplinary approaches, from the study of language evolution to literary interpretation, from textual criticism to the investigation of texts and ethnotexts, from etymological reconstructions to the cognitive analyses of archaeological *facies*. Philological problems exist in the grammar of signs inscribed on a prehistoric stone or a shamanic drum no less than they do in the transmission of a text from one old manuscript to another.