

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)
announces a public lecture

by

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Open Data and the Reinvention of Philology for a Digital Age

This talk explores the shape of philology as it is evolving within, and for, a digital environment. Several features have already begun to emerge. First, there is increasing consensus among digital-native researchers that source materials should be treated as open data, freely exchanged and modified. The model has shifted from the author of a commercial publication charging money for access to the scientist collecting and disseminating data from a global audience. This shift in perspective raises technical and economic questions as well: how do we track the provenance of particular contributions? How do we enhance the circulation of ideas across boundaries of language and culture? How do we sustain the system financially? Second, we need to rethink how we teach historical languages such as Greek and Latin. The increasingly sophisticated multi-lingual tools available allow any determined individual to quickly engage directly with historical languages such as Greek and Latin. The issue is -- at least for heavily worked texts such as Homer or the Bible -- thus not necessarily access per se, but the speed and quality of intellectual access with the original source text. Possibilities are now emerging to create smart editions, designed to support readers from many different linguistic backgrounds and to open up historical sources to a global audience. Research in computer assisted language learning and assessment may become as central to the study of historical languages as constituting accurate texts was in print scholarship. The production of open textual data and the support of e-learning represent critical areas of work for philology in the twenty-first century and their prominence arguably reflects a fundamental shift from late twentieth century activity.

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