

## Events

*I Libro: I Disegno*

Elena Ippoliti

Among the basic rules for defining an experience as “scientific”, there is the publication of its results to ensure registration, permanence and dissemination. In this way, the increase of knowledge resulting from scientific experience can be shared and therefore first validated by the scientific community and then unfold its social utility.

Communication is therefore a constituent of research itself, and more generally, it is indispensable to the transmission of knowledge and to its own production, because of its cumulative and cooperative nature.

With the centrality of communication to scientific activities, different studies have questioned the influence between *medium* and knowledge on each other. Among these, some have identified a causal relationship between the invention of moveable type and the formation of modern thought in the West, with the Reformation, the Renaissance, and the Scientific Revolution [Eisenstein, 1979]. Others have rested on the digital transformation of publications, highlighting not only their capacity for diffusion, but also for the interactions that these establish with models of thought and the organization of knowledge [Ditella, 2018].

I believe that the reflections on the reciprocal influence between *medium* and knowledge may and should be expanded according to a wider interpretation of the term *medium*, considering the means of communication in a sense that it also includes different possible types of publications. In general, “placing communication as focus of scientific activity, we can see its evolution and follow its paths through the tools used to collect and transmit information. The history of communication becomes the history of the *media*—that is, literally ‘means of communication’—which have allowed the circulation of scientific knowledge and contributed to its concentration in increasingly rigorous and consistent paradigms” [Santoro, 2001].

It is precisely in this perspective that recognition is deserved due to the indisputable value of the initiative *I Libro: I Disegno (I Book I Drawing)* designed by Massimiliano Ciammaichella, Enrico Cicalò, Laura Farroni, Francesca Fatta, and Ornella Zerlenga.

In recent years, for reasons entirely extraneous to scientific knowledge, an incorrect interpretation and consequent faulty application of some rules (which have nothing to do with evaluation but at most with misunderstood added value) has surely and undeniably

discouraged many scholars of Drawing from facing the not unquestionable fatigue needed to produce a monograph. This interpretation, however, has evidently become easily rooted among us, either the young and not so young, as evidenced by threshold indicators for participating in procedures for national scientific qualification, whatever the role or range.

The *I Libro: I Disegno* initiative is therefore an opportunity to open an essential reflection that can no longer be delayed, at least posing, if not answering, some equally essential questions. Can our discipline really do without monographs—that is, broad, extended, weighty, consolidated treatises initially considered the undeniable form of transmitting knowledge and research advances? As well, can we truly be capable of building and controlling the body of knowledge by juxtaposing and interrelating the individual essays that are now growing in number? Precisely because they are more numerous, are we certain that we can understand the value of each individual essay within the context of reference?

It is obvious that all of us (whether readers or authors) realize the complexity of the question and that it is not easy to distinguish between the

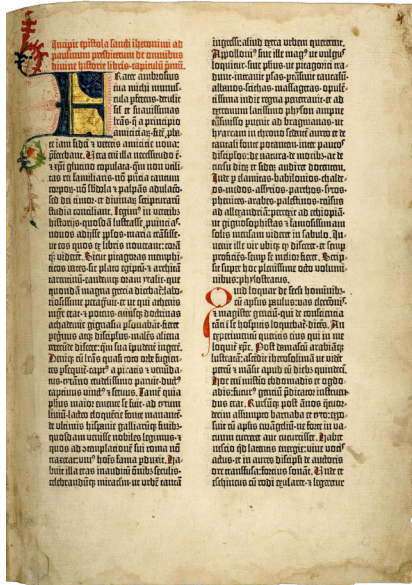


Fig. 1. The Bible printed by Johannes Gutenberg, 1454/55, from the digital collection of the Harry Ransom Center of the University of Texas at Austin (Biblia latina, Vol. 1, fol. 1r, Epistle of St. Jerome, <https://hrc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15878coll1/001/dl2664/recl1>).

different editorial types (research monograph, university textbooks, popular books). But we are certainly able to distinguish “an organic treatise from an improvised collection of previously edited essays, careful attention from the extemporaneous assembly of chapters, the translation of a text of capital importance for a given topic from the simple version of a book in another language” [Vademecum, 2020, p. 5]. Moreover, I believe that we all aspire to write a scientific monograph one day that can be read like a popular book and which also shows formidable strength

as a teaching supplement [Vademecum, 2020, p. 5], although we have all learned by now that “what matters is not the finished product, but rather the method that generated it and the results obtained by its application” [Vademecum, 2020, *ibid.*].

These considerations create the framework for the initiative *1 Libro: 1 Disegno*, which, reinterpreting the condition of separation and turning it into an opportunity for coming together, led to a series of meetings last May to present and discuss books published by professors, researchers, and scholars in the scientific disciplinary sector ICAR/17-Disegno.

Starting with the list of scientific publications by associates (which the UID has collected following a call based on voluntary reporting since 2016), the creators organized for this first edition a series of 7 online encounters generally held in the late afternoon on the last Friday of each month. Three books were presented at each session (on one occasion there were four) which varied by field, subject, approach, etc., in order to gather the breadth of topics related to the discipline of Representation.

Aware of the difficulty of maintaining the interest in remote communication, communication that cannot draw on empathy due to the impossibility of appreciating all the presenters’ styles, the organizers carefully studied the format of the encounters. After a brief opening and introduction by the organizers, each discussant had 30 minutes to present the volume, not in the usual way, but by interacting with the author, asking questions and suggesting points for reflection. A dense and lively dialogue therefore ensued for each book, necessarily starting—according to the

format designed by the organizers—with a single image unknown to the author that the discussant has judged to best encompass the essence of the book. Each encounter then ended with “questions from the public” proposed in the chat platform, which are synthesized and asked by the moderator.

In the first series of 7 meetings (held on 28 May, 25 June, 16 July, 24 September, 29 October, 19 November, and 17 December), the discussants Fabrizio Agnello, Marinella Arena, Marcello Balzani, Laura Baratin, Cristiana Bartolomei, Stefano Bertocci, Marco Bevilacqua, Stefano Brusaporci, Emanuela Chiavoni, Stefano Chiarenza, Mara Capone, Agostino De Rosa, Edoardo Dotto, Marialinda Falcidiello, Giovanna Massari, Valeria Menchetelli, Anna Osello, Caterina Palestini, Rossella Salerno, Marta Salvatore, Alberto Sdegno, and Chiara Vernizzi presented 22 books by authors Giuseppe Antuono, Salvatore Barba, Alessandro Basso, Carlo Bianchini, Fabio Bianconi, Alessio Bortot, Jose Calvo-Lopez, Cristina Cànido, Alessandra Cirafici, Marco Filippucci, Andrea Giordano, Domenico Iovane, Elena Ippoliti, Marco Limongiello, Ana Lopez-Mozo, Alessandro Luigini, Francesco Magliocco, Maria Martone, Cosimo Montecone, Pablo Navarro-Camalonga, Ivana Passamani, Assunta Pelliccio, Manuela Piscitelli, Matteo Pontiglio Emilii, Luca Rossato, Daniele Rossi, Simona Scandurra, Roberta Spallone, Michele Valentino, Starlight Vattano, and Ornella Zerlenga.

As already mentioned, the initiative aims for a longer stride, so the organizers are already on the verge of preparing the second edition (the UID call to report volumes published in 2021 has already been issued), but not before reflecting on what

has been done. Therefore, a meeting has been planned in January to summarize the experience by sharing a report on the results and to begin planning the next edition.

Thus, while the monograph genre is clearly experiencing a crisis, the initiative *I Libro: I Disegno* holds the undeniable merit of having begun, really at the right moment, a fundamental

reflection for the discipline and, in the long term, will know how to display its beneficial effects, but not without the active participation of all scholars of Drawing.

#### Author

Elena Ippoliti, Department of History, Representation and Restoration of Architecture, Sapienza University of Rome, elena.ippoliti@uniroma1.it

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