

La filologia in guerra

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Abstract

Philology at War

The paper aims to investigate the contribution that European philologists gave to their respective countries during the First World War. The engagement of Italian philologists was part of a wider movement of intellectuals' enlistment, which involved all warring nations. To review the role of Italian philologists will also offer the occasion to re-visit the heated debate that developed in Italy during the first decades of the 20th century on the value and meaning of the term "philology". The debate not only focused on specific aspects and contents of the philological method, but questioned the legitimacy of philology itself. Encouraged by the outbreak of the First World War, it acquired, in some scholars, rough anti-German nationalistic trends. Against Fraccaroli and Romagnoli's anti-philological crusade stood, with different sensibilities and purposes, the philological school of Florence, led by Vitelli and the Società Italiana per la Diffusione e l'Incoraggiamento degli Studi Classici di Firenze, with one of its most important members, Ramorino. Both Vitelli and Ramorino warned against the dangers of rejecting the German philological tradition altogether and against the possible negative consequences of this choice on the Italian academic and scientific process.

Keywords: First World War; philology; anti-philology; anti-Germanism; Joseph Bédier.