

# Beginnings

All the readers of this journal are well aware of the formative, professional and emotional bond that brings us together to Giovanni Solimine. For this reason, it's a pleasure which goes beyond any formality that the journal, of which we have the honor of being editor in chief and assistant editor in chief, dedicates him a special issue on the occasion of his retirement.

Besides our bond and of the entire editorial board, we are interested in celebrating above all the one Giovanni Solimine has woven with his students and readers, also through this journal, as an editor in chief from 2001 to 2010 (when the journal was called *Bollettino AIB: rivista italiana di biblioteconomia e scienze dell'informazione*) and more generally as an author.

Through his classes, his writings and his numerous activities, Giovanni Solimine has taught the powerful role of book and reading as enabling tools, he has defined the perspective of considering libraries as a trigger, as nodes of a framework for the cultural and civil growth of people and society. This passage has been almost a generational trait, an imprint, for all the students and the professionals who have intercepted him in their path and have deepened 'his librarianship'. It is this awareness that has guided the design of this special issue that aims to return the lesson learned.

The issue is opened by the text of the last academic lecture held by Giovanni Solimine on May 28<sup>th</sup> 2021 to his students: with the goal of restoring the atmosphere of a class in which the Professor is also an interpreter, an amplifier, a connector of his words with those of others, the text does not contain bibliographic citations in the footnote. The section *Saggi e testimonianze* collects reflections of colleagues and friends written in his honor, as in a more traditional *Festschrift*. Within the borders of the inevitably limited space of a journal issue, the variety of topics treated testifies the breadth of interests and the value of the contributions that Giovanni Solimine has given us. The section *Rileggendo l'opera* tells of a past that smacks of the future: new reviews of some of the works published by Solimine during his long career are presented here, from which emerges all the relevance of certain interpretative keys precious in the contemporaneity. Finally, the *Bibliografia degli scritti* guides us through his numerous publications – more than 500 – written since 1981.

When we planned this issue, and in particular we thought of the section *Rileggendo l'opera*, it came us naturally to reflect on Solimine's first book, *L'informazione in biblioteca: introduzione ai problemi dell'informazione bibliografica*, published by the Editrice Bibliografica in 1985. The reasons for this choice are mainly two.

A long time ago Giovanni Solimine himself revealed to us that in his opinion, *L'informazione in biblioteca* is his best book, because it contains the enthusiasm of the beginnings and the first times. We do not know if in the meantime the author has changed his mind, also because in the last years some books have been published by Laterza that have had great echo in the cultural world, well beyond the library environment, but we believe that, even if this were the case, an author's bond with his first work is always strong and indissoluble, perhaps also because it is imbued with nostalgia.

Secondly, reading in the *Premessa* to the book that «Questo lavoro nasce dall'esperienza del contatto con il pubblico della Biblioteca Universitaria di Napoli e di alcuni incontri seminariati tenuti negli anni accademici 1982-83 e 1983-84 presso il Dipartimento di Filologia dell'Università della Calabria, nell'ambito del corso di biblioteconomia» («This work arises from the experience of contact with the public of the University Library of Naples and some seminar meetings held in the academic years 1982-83 and 1983-84 at the Department of Philology of the University of Calabria, as part of the of the library and information science course») is a small Proustian *madeleine* which works, in our opinion, both towards its author and on us, that have taken over – perhaps unworthily – from the Solimian heritage and have done so respectively in the academy and in the profession.

It may be that the contents of this book have aged more than Giovanni Solimine's other works; yet in this one we recognize all the traits that will characterize his future career and many of the insights that will then be developed in the years to come and in his later research works. Here in relation to libraries, it was already outlined the need to think in the direction of «una specializzazione orizzontale o verticale» (p. 112) («a horizontal or vertical specialization»), which will be examined 35 years later with *La cultura orizzontale*, only to refer to his last work and close a circle.

Therefore, this beginning can actually be considered the first of countless 'beginnings' which have punctuated his scientific and professional path. We wish to Giovanni Solimine that this important moment of his life will represent a further and even more fruitful beginning, hoping we learned also this his teaching, that is the ability to constantly rethink and renew oneself, with patience and enthusiasm.

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