

Collaboration and Community in the Future of Humanities Research

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The persistent paradigm of the Humanities scholar is the ‘lone wolf’. Despite some funding bodies introducing project grants on the model of the sciences, the majority of humanities researchers work primarily as individuals – or at least they present themselves that way. But in practice, published scholarship is the work of many individuals: not only the author, but also the editor, peer reviewer, seminar question-asker and chance interlocutor. Except in the case of a multi-authored publication, however, most of this collaboration remains hidden away in a book’s acknowledgements or an article’s footnotes, preserving the image of the scholarly ‘lone wolf’.

In this paper, I explore the place of collaboration and community in the future of Humanities research. I argue that collaboration is an undervalued facet of academic life, that opportunities for it should be encouraged in doctoral studies and beyond, and that the resulting sense of community offers benefits not only for research quality, but also for the well-being of Humanities researchers themselves. In arguing this, I draw on recent research on collaborative scholarship,¹ as well as on my own experience of collaborating at multiple levels: co-authoring chapters and seminar papers; co-organising work-in-progress seminars to bring together early career academics as a community; co-organising a conference on collaboration in ancient literature which highlighted the flaws of the ‘solo author’ model diachronically; and establishing a ‘virtual library’ space to enable a sense of community for early career academics during the isolating time of pandemic lockdowns.

I consider ways in which collaboration can be encouraged and fostered during doctoral studies and beyond, and best practice for acknowledging collaboration of all kinds in published work. I hope to prompt a wide-ranging discussion about the roles that both institutions and individuals can play in reshaping our notions of research production and the communities and collaborations that underpin it.

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¹ E.g. Bramley, A. and Ogilvie, L. (2021) *Research Collaboration: A Step-by-step Guide to Success* (IOP PUBL Ltd.); Bozeman, B. and Boardman, C. (2014) *Research Collaboration and Team Science: A State-of-the-Art Review and Agenda* (Springer); Griffin, G., Hamberg, K. and Lundgren, B. (2013) *The Social Politics of Research Collaboration* (Routledge).