Paolo Trovato

Everything you Always Wanted to Know about Lachmann's Method

A Non-Standard Handbook of Genealogical Textual Criticism in the Age of Post-Structuralism, Cladistics, and Copy-Text

Foreword by Michael D. Reeve

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Traduzione di Federico Poole

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Foreword

Pythagoras, says Jerome, preached that after God truth should be worshipped, because nothing else sets mortals next to God, *post Deum veritatem colendam, quae sola homines Deo proximos faciat*. So we read in manuscripts as old as the 9th century. The passage often appears in medieval anthologies, but one such, a 15th-century manuscript at Tarragona, drops the explanation and offers *post Deum varietatem esse tollendam*, 'after God variety should be abolished'. So much for Bernard Cerquiglini's *Éloge de la variante*, to say nothing of God.

Without variants, commentators would survive, but editors would be reduced to transcribing and assembling texts, because copies not written out by the author would amount at worst to photocopies at various removes from the original. There would be no debate about which of two or more variant readings the author actually wrote, or whether the author left behind more than one version, or which of the variants are worth communicating, and why, to other readers of the text.

Since the last third of the 19th century, editors cut off from the original of a work by a maze of variants have tried to assess their relative value not by totting up the copies that present each of them, or by seeking out the oldest copies, but by placing all the copies in a genealogical relationship. Obviously earlier copies cannot descend from later ones, but the main principle adopted has been that when copies share an innovation absent from the rest they are related (more closely, that is, than by being copies of the same work); if none of those that share the innovation can plausibly be regarded as the one where it originated, it must have origi-

nated in a lost ancestor common to them all. With luck, the extant copies and their postulated ancestors can be arranged in a family tree, which in any passage will show whether a variant could go right back to the original. If more than one variant survives the test, the editor will have to choose on other grounds; and if none survives that looks fit to have been written by the author, the editor will have to come up with a bright idea, grandly known as a conjecture or emendation.

With luck. How can I tell, though, whether a reading is an innovation? Granted that 'variety' and 'abolished' are innovations, must any other manuscript where they occur be related to the one at Tarragona, or could they have come about more than once, *varietatem* through resemblance in shape and sound to *veritatem*, *tollendam* through the resemblance between *c* and *t* in the commonest medieval scripts and the equivalence of single and double consonants in the practice of some scribes? If a manuscript has *veritatem*, can I be sure that it was not copied by a reflective scribe from one that had *varietatem*, or that none of its ancestors had *varietatem* corrected to *veritatem* by someone who checked another copy? Is it neither the mind of Pythagoras nor Jerome as translator that matters to me but perhaps the use made of the passage in medieval sermons? Were the compilers of medieval anthologies not authors quite as much as Jerome?

Not just these objections have been levelled at genealogical methods but two others of very different kinds. If a work survives in hundreds of copies, who has time to compare their texts at every point? and why, in almost all the family trees that editors have sketched, do two branches, not more, sprout from the original or from the reconstructed copy nearest to the original? Famously, the second question was posed a century ago by the Romance philologist Joseph Bédier, after whom it is often called Bédier's paradox. It led him to recommend just picking a good manuscript and sticking to it, a policy also comforting to anyone daunted by the first question.

It was the second question that brought me in the 1980s, by way of Sebastiano Timpanaro's monograph *La genesi del metodo del Lachmann*, to the study of editorial methods, and through it I made the acquaintance of Paolo Trovato, who kindly sent me in 2005 an offprint of an article in which he too addressed it. In 2012 I had the pleasure of meeting him in Bologna, and in 2013 another offprint arrived, in which he struck at the roots of the various family trees that Bédier drew up in desperation one after another for the *Lai de l'ombre*. Shortly afterwards, he offered

me the chance to read a draft of the present book, and I seized it. A classicist myself (I stuck my neck out when I edited Geoffrey of Monmouth), I have often felt that the sharpest controversies over editorial aims and methods have engaged medievalists, who in consequence have been at the forefront of developments.

Especially in France and North America, the heritage of Bédier has come to dominate, but Italy maintains a strong tradition of defending and refining genealogical methods. As Italian is seldom the foreign language that speakers of English learn first even when they do learn it (or any), Trovato sets out to acquaint English-speaking scholars with the work of such figures as Michele Barbi, Gianfranco Contini, Cesare Segre, Alfredo Stussi, and Alberto Varvaro, as well as those better known in classical circles such as Giorgio Pasquali and Sebastiano Timpanaro; and he sternly warns against the inaccurate and outdated accounts of genealogical methods often given by scholars impatient with them. As the text at stake for him was often written by authors as great as Dante, Petrarch, and Machiavelli, he deserves the gratitude of everyone for his trouble.

To his trenchant and vigorous arguments he adds a wealth of convincing examples, in other languages as well as Italian; two of the most striking, for instance, are taken from the Spanish *Celestina*. The rewards of perusal include entertainment. At the outset I mentioned Cerquiglini, and not far into the book, in connexion with the misprint *corte esplosiva*, readers will find a witty rejoinder to one of his more portentous assertions; so I like to think that the *corte esplosiva* was mined against Cerquiglini. What accounts for it, though? I once read in the *Times* that a Member of Parliament had accused another of 'looking like a cat that had got at the Queen'; the usual expression is 'got at the cream', doubtless misheard, but perhaps there was also interference from a nursery rhyme ('Pussycat, pussycat, where have you been?' / 'I've been to London to see the Queen'). Readers of the Watergate transcripts may have encountered the strange comment 'That's verbal evil'; I think it was Leonard Boyle, during his tenure at that great storehouse of variants the Vatican Library, who told me that Nixon actually said 'That's very believable'. From things misread we have moved to things misheard, but in scribal culture, as Alphonse Dain pointed out, there was something in between reading and listening: *dictation interne*, the habit of reading words and saying them silently to oneself before copying them out.

Enough. I have mentioned that my first essay on editorial methodology concerned the number of branches in family trees, and my latest concerned editing with the aid of computer programmes. On these topics and many another, Paolo Trovato's combative and richly instructive book leaves me far behind, and it is a privilege to have the opportunity of commending it.

<div align="right">Michael D. Reeve</div>

Preface

> Every practising critic, for the humility of his soul, ought to study the transmission of some appropriate text [….]. Many a literary critic has investigated the past ownership and mechanical condition of his second-hand automobile […] more thoroughly than he has looked into the qualifications of the text on which his theories rest.
>
>   Fredson Bowers, *Textual and Literary Criticism*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1966, 5

> Without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no civilization, no society, no future.
>   Elie Wiesel

1.

This book, written mainly with the non-Italian reader in mind, addresses a central problem in textual criticism, and one that it is currently fashionable to regard as insoluble or anachronistic—although the traditional method has yet to be proved inadequate—; namely, how to try to correctly reconstruct a text of the past so that, even if not identical, it is *as close as possible* to the lost original, starting from a number of copies more or less full of mistakes; that is to say, how to preserve part of the memory of our past. In Western literatures, this problem mainly concerns Greek or Latin classical texts, and medieval and Renaissance texts in any language, including Latin and Greek. However, this kind of difficulty also

occurs, to different degrees, for the texts of great authors of our recent past, from Melville to Whitman, and from Kafka to Eliot.

I am well aware that in various parts of the world, and especially in the United States, most varieties of contemporary critical thought deny the legitimacy of any conjectural attempt at reconstruction, indeed, of any editorial technique. As early as 1987, Lee Patterson addressed this issue in depth in a very acute and to some degree prophetic essay. However, as Patterson himself warns, "the refusal to edit—which is a part of the larger refusal to interpret"—ultimately threatens to "undermine both the rigor and the inclusiveness of the interpretative activity that is at the heart of textual criticism" (Patterson, "The Logic of Textual Criticism", 112).

After all, as Peter L. Shillingsburg observes,

> we don't want editions to do what […] old editions did. For example, we don't want an edition that represents the aesthetic tastes of editors in the 1890s; we don't want the clear reading text representing some 1960s editor's notion of what the author's final intentions might have been; we don't want a clear reading text of a historical edition from which the influences of the production process have been purged. Well, how long do we suppose that the current fashion of disdaining these achievements will last? And how long will it be before we start hearing that scholars do not want multiple texts, historical or otherwise, for the works they wish to interpret? (Shillingsburg, *From Gutenberg to Google*, 154).

℃ Throughout the book, references to works regarded as especially useful from the perspective of the book are given in an abbreviated form; the full citation can be found in the "General bibliography". Works equally important, but with a more specialized approach and language, are cited in full in the text, mainly in the "Bibliographical notes" at the end of each section

2.

> Actuellement, il n'existe qu'une seule filière "Editionswissenschaft" en Allemagne, à la Freie Universität de Berlin […]. La politique de l'éducation et de l'université ne s'intéresse guère au travail des philologues et éditeurs. Leur travail est considéré comme improductif, peu profitable et peu rentable (Thomas Bein, "L'édition de textes médiévaux allemands en Allemagne: l'exemple de Walther von der Vogelweide", in Duval, *Pratiques philologiques en Europe*, 30).

> Whatever the reason, it is obvious that the mood in literature departments, at least in the United States, is certainly less philological (if not antiphilological) than, let us say, in the 1960s (Peter F. Dembowsky, review of Carapezza, *Ecdotica*, *Romance Philology* 62, 2008, 175-184: 180).

As the above quotations suggest, today we find ourselves in a historico-cultural context indifferent, if not hostile, to textual criticism. Scholars who still produce editions of texts transmitted in more than one copy—an essential activity for our knowledge and understanding of our past—can be divided into three groups, reflecting three different approaches or editorial philosophies:

A) those who believe that the original—i.e., the text written by the author—is completely beyond our reach, and that we should be content with a real text whose historical existence is beyond question, a scribal version, that is, a text in the form in which it has been handed down to us, the work of this or that other copyist, in a broad sense (that is, including typists and such);

B) those who argue that the editor cannot trace the original of a text beyond the so-called "archetype" (i.e., the manuscript from which the surviving tradition derives, which is by definition lost, but can be reconstructed by comparing all surviving copies), that is, the most correct text one can reconstruct by comparing the readings extant in available manuscripts and editions;

C) staunch "reconstructionists", who believe that the task of a scientific edition is not merely to transcribe a manuscript, or to reconstruct the archetype of surviving manuscripts, but to use the archetype as a point of departure, using all available means—linguistic, stylistic or metrical information, historical data, etc.—to try to come as close as possible to the lost original, detecting and correcting, as far as possible, but always as rationally and transparently as possible, the errors shared by surviving copies.

I believe an up-to-date illustration of approach C, that is, the genealogical-reconstructive method, also known as the common-error or (Neo-) Lachmannian method—which happens to be mine—may also be useful, at least as a stimulus, to scholars who favor approaches A or B. This is because approach C, which has been applied for more than a century in the fields of classical philology, medieval Latin and modern languages, can boast a more plentiful and varied range of experiences, from the reconstruction of an ancient text through the collation of all its surviving copies to the investigation of several authorial versions, whether autograph or not. Approach C is also the only one of the three that has known a centuries-long and very lively debate about the pros and cons of its different procedures. This book may therefore be useful, even by confirming them in their positions, to all (poststructuralists, postmodern critics) who believe that the only possible solution is not "to revise our editorial techniques, but to abandon them entirely" (I am quoting again from PATTERSON, "The Logic of Textual Criticism", 111).

3.

I will try to explain more clearly, to myself first of all, why I have written this book. I am a professor of the history of the Italian language. For many years I studied a subject that was later to become fashionable, namely, "the forms of texts that emerged from the social process leading to public distribution", that is, in my case, how sixteenth-century editors published, or rather "rewrote", Italian literary texts. I could never have addressed this theme without having recourse to the basic criteria of genealogical textual criticism.

ℂ A synthesis of my research can be found in my book *"Con ogni diligenza corretto." La stampa e le revisioni editoriali dei testi letterari italiani, 1470-1570*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1991, repr. Ferrara, UnifePress, 2009; to be complemented with Brian Richardson's excellent book *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy. The Editor and the Vernacular Text*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1994.

More generally, for about thirty years I have regularly worked in the field of textual criticism. For about fifteen years, I have been teaching a course entitled "Textual criticism" at my university in Ferrara, where I discuss with students whatever textual problems I happen to be working on at a given time. For about ten years I have codirected a journal of textual criticism, *Filologia italiana*. I have never thought of writing a manual for the Italian public. Many are available, possibly too many, and some are excellent. Significantly, the idea of writing this book—which I largely wrote off the cuff in the summer of 2011, and then left to age, as one does with wine and cured meats—first occurred to me in 2006-2007, when I had the privilege of being a visiting professor for a semester at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Of the three courses I taught, the most selective, reserved for graduate students, was called "Textual criticism", and was attended by four "students" of uncommon competence: a Romance philologist who was planning a critical anthology of early French poetry, two medieval history students working on an edition of Latin texts from the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and a student who wished to publish an edition of a remarkable sixteenth-century Yiddish text, and was also a capable translator into Italian of twentieth-century Hebrew narrative. From the first session, we agreed that, after I had briefly introduced them to the basic rules of textual criticism, we would collectively work on their respective editorial projects. On that occasion, more than in any other course provided in Italy, where students in faculties of letters usually have at least a smattering of knowledge on the subject, I felt these

students' gratitude to me for having given them the keys to a kingdom that had been unknown to them, but whose existence they had suspected or caught glimpses of. As each of the four, at different times, felt the need to explain to me: "Nobody had ever talked to us about these things". For several decades, very few, if any, Biblical, Germanic and Slavonic philologists, or French Romanists, or German editors of Anglo-American, German or Medieval Latin texts, have been talking about many of the things this book is about.

4.

A second reason, which may be branded as chauvinist, for the genesis of this book and the readership it is addressed to coincides with the one facetiously expressed by the Romance philologist Alberto Varvaro:

> I am well aware that, as an Italian, I can be suspected of maintaining a preconceived position. In fact there is no doubt that at least since 1945 we Italians have made a reputation for ourselves as unshakable believers in neo-Lachmannism. Due to this reputation, the majority of our foreign colleagues consider us incurable madmen insofar as we follow an abstract and irrational form of fundamentalism; however, sometimes those same scholars also give us a benefit comparable to that enjoyed by the followers of an alien religion, namely: the suspicion that we might well be correct (Varvaro, "The New Philology from an Italian Perspective", in ID., *Identità*, 613-622: 613-614, originally published in Italian by GLESSGEN-LEBSANFT, *Alte und neue Philologie*, 35-42).

Later on in his article, Varvaro rightly makes a connection between Italians' apparent conservatism and the teachings of an extraordinary trio of scholars who carried our textual criticism beyond the naïve practices of genealogical reconstruction brilliantly exposed by Joseph Bédier in 1928, but also beyond the paralyzing skepticism of Bédier himself. These three scholars were the classicist Giorgio Pasquali, the Dante scholar Michele Barbi, and the Romance philologist Gianfranco Contini.

For almost a century, the repute of the method ascribed to Lachmann had been sinking lower and lower. Criticism of its real or presumed excesses and limits had overshadowed the fact that even for deconstructing a text, or studying the different layers deposited on a text by successive waves of scribal culture, the primary condition is having a reliable text, as close as possible to that produced by its author—regardless of whether we are dealing with Dante, Shakespeare, or an anonymous French compiler of Arthurian ro-

mances—, or at least being able to distinguish, even if only roughly, between different textual layers more or less far removed from the (lost) original. In the same period, Barbi, Pasquali, Contini and their best students contributed decisively to refounding post-Bédier textual criticism on rigorous premises, that is, to founding what can be appropriately called Neo-Lachmannism. On the other hand, for reasons whose discussion lies outside the scope of the present work, in spite of fashion, Ferrari, Brunello di Montalcino and spaghetti, Italian is no longer an international language. More than a hundred years of methodological refinements, including some very significant ones, to "Lachmann's method" have been published predominantly in Italian—by the likes of Barbi, Pasquali, Contini, Avalle, Folena and Segre, to mention only a few names—and have thus remained practically inaccessible to most scholars in the rest of the world. Even Tanselle's solid and very well informed review "Textual Criticism at the Millennium" contains almost no citations of Italian scholars, and the newly published *Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship* devotes less than 20 pages out of a total of 300 to "Continental editorial theory". (The exceptions that prove the rule are Paolo Cherchi's incisive review of Italian textual criticism, in *Scholarly Editing. A Guide to Research*, edited by D.C. Greetham, New York, The Modern Language Association of America, 1995, 438-456, and the English translation published in 2005, forty years after it first came out, of Sebastiano Timpanaro's splendid book on the genesis of Lachmann's method).

5.

Now, I do not want to convey the idea that the genealogical method is something narrowly Italian, like pizza or mandolins. In spite of recurrent attempts to celebrate the funeral of the reconstructive, or common-error, method, by Bédier converts first, by New Philologists next, and most recently by adepts of cladistics, in spite of the deep-seated mistrust that the philological schools of whole nations harbour towards harmless technical terms like *author*, *archetype*, *conjecture*, and *error*, dozens of scholars in Austria, France, Great Britain, North America, Sweden, etc. have unabashedly and successfully continued to employ the method, perfecting it and finding ever wider fields of application for it. The following quotations, chosen from the many that I might have used, bear this out:

> When adherence to the conservative principles of Bédier induces an editor to refrain from changing MS readings in those cases where he merely happens to be able to think of "better" ones, the result is no doubt salutary. But when an editor [....] takes too literally the remark that after all a

thirteenth-century scribe had a better chance of knowing the language of the thirteenth century than a twentieth-century critic […], then the wisdom of a very conservative treatment of the text is more than questionable. Every one who has worked with medieval MSS knows that scribes, in spite of their knowledge of the language of their own time, were often guilty of inattention and carelessness; and that clear, intelligible alternatives may occur in parallel copies, which were made by men with no less contemporary knowledge, but whose work has not happened to win the honor of being chosen […] as a "manuscrit de base" (*The Continuation of the Old French Perceval of Chrétien de Troyes, II. The First Continuation. Redaction of Mss. EMQU*, ed. by W. Roach and R.H. Ivy, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950, viii-ix).

I dare say Professor Vinaver's necrologue on *recensio, stemmata* and composite texts [i.e. E. Vinaver, *Principles of Textual Emendation,* in *Studies in French Language and Medieval Literature Presented to Prof. Mildred K. Pope*, Manchester, 1939, 351-369] is in its generalization somewhat ahead of the event. At a later stage the author himself has recourse to the principle that common errors must have a common source […], and even goes as far as to base on such common errors a *stemma codicum* (Bieler [1962], 32).

Bédier's own explanation of the preponderance of two-branch stemmata implied no radical defect in the method but assumed that it was almost universally misapplied (Whitehead-Pickford, "Introduction to the *Lai de l'Ombre*", 149).

Parmi les *stemmata* qu'on nous a présentés beaucoup sont bifides, personne ne s'en est inquiété […]. Est-ce que vous pensez, comme j'ai été enclin à le faire, que logiquement, si la méthode qui aboutit à une majorité de *stemmata* bifides est valable, il n'y a qu'à s'incliner devant le fait et en chercher l'explication dans les conditions de transmission des textes et non pas à inculper la méthode? (R. Marichal, "Conclusions du colloque", in PdO, 287).

Much of our evidence about how they [i.e. medieval scholars and scribes] acquired their exemplars, what kind of text their exemplars presented, what resources besides their exemplars they employed in making their copies [….]—much of this evidence we owe to stemmatic method (M.D. Reeve, "Stemmatic Method: 'qualcosa che non funziona?'" (1986), now in ID., *Manuscripts and Methods*, 38).

The stemmatic method […] is clearly superior to the traditional one when the tradition is bad, i.e. when there are many errors in the MSS. If the MSS. are good, with few errors, it does not matter very much which of the methods is used (Eklund, 18).

> Voici enfin la version française de la première édition critique depuis 1900 de *La Chanson de Roland* […]. L'ensemble est mené avec une rigueur absolue. L'intérêt de ce travail est d'offrir des perspectives neuves alors que la valeur heuristique de la méthode de Bédier, fertile à l'origine, avait fait place à une certaine sclérose: l'objectif de chaque chercheur était d'être plus bédiérien que ses prédécesseurs (G. Roques, review of *Chanson de Roland* S, *Revue de linguistique romane* 54, 1990, 631).

> L'effort "traditionnel" pour classer les témoins et reconstituer le texte de l'archétype n'étouffe nullement la conscience de leur variance originelle: bien plus […], la remontée stemmatique vers l'origine du texte apparait le meilleur moyen pour comprendre et retracer la genèse d'une œuvre et les remaniements successifs qu'elle a subis de l'auteur ou d'autres après lui (D. Poirel, "L'édition des textes médiolatins", in Duval, *Pratiques philologiques en Europe*, 151-173: 157).

6.

I must add that the event that led me to write the present manual—whose impact on myself I would liken to the pistol shot fired in Sarajevo that, according to old history textbooks, provoked World War I—was my need to prepare rapidly a long-distance course in textual criticism for a private university I collaborated with for a few years. In e-teaching, the professor cannot decide, or even update, the contents of his course lesson by lesson, as I, at least, do when teaching face-to-face courses. A long-distance course must be uploaded to the platform before the beginning of the university year to allow students to start following it at any time. While I was writing my lessons, I could not help thinking of those other students, equally interested in the subject and no less lacking in information about it, a sample of whom I had met in Jerusalem: non-Italian textual critics who were not classical philologists. (Classical philology is a discipline in which relations between the best Italian tradition and the best non-Italian scholars were never cut off—we only need to think of Ludwig Bieler's admiration for Pasquali, or the dense exchanges of Edward J. Kenney and Michael D. Reeve with Timpanaro).

A commonplace of mature textual criticism is that every national philology—indeed, every single edition—addresses a different problem. (This is a sort of *locus modestiae* that possibly also serves as an alibi for being poorly informed about other scholars' research, or to alleviate scholars' guilt when their proposed methods malfunction). Now, to limit myself to a pair of obvious considerations, it is evident that:

a) The existence in the classical world and in the Italian Middle Ages of major authors with a clear-cut style and ideology, such as Cicero and Virgil, or Dante and Petrarch, has of necessity made the respective philological schools more sensitive to the issue of authoriality (and more diffident of the latest or next-to-latest fashion) than critics of medieval texts in French or German, which are very often anonymous, or even if they are not nevertheless lack a "strong authorial mark" (A. Varvaro).

¢ Please note that the words "philologist", "philology" and "philological" are always used throughout the book in the narrow German and Italian meanings of, respectively, 'textual scholar or editor', 'textual scholarship', and 'pertaining to textual criticism'.

b) The strong differences between Western countries in the organization of university learning—for example, the separation between linguists and literary scholars in French universities—and the diversity of the textual traditions, whether manuscript or not—for example, the prevalence of single-witness texts in medieval German philology—strongly influence editors' choices of tools and their decisions.

I, like Giorgio Pasquali, however, still believe that the original of, say, a Chinese or Bantu text cannot be reconstructed from surviving copies unless one follows (a small number of) general philological rules, albeit adapted to the great variability and specific requirements of particular texts (and contexts). That is why, although my knowledge of medieval Latin and early varieties of Spanish and French is decidedly inferior to my knowledge of the subject I teach, viz., the history of the Italian language, I have occasionally studied textual problems regarding literary texts in those languages, and shall occasionally be referring to these problems in the present book.

7.

In spite of my attempt to provide an honest and clear presentation of most of the procedures and problems of the Neo-Lachmannian reconstructive philological technique, the present manual is little more than an appetizer, especially for readers who have fasted for so long. I trust that the specific bibliography I provide at the end of most sections, I hope with sufficient generosity, will help readers to find not only their bearings, but also enough nourishment.

To present honestly does not mean to present neutrally. Having read with interest several dozens of textual criticism studies written over the

last thirty years by scholars of various nationalities—North American, Dutch, etc.—who adhere to the New Philology, study "socially produced texts" or are involved in computer-assisted philology (or New Stemmatics), I was struck by four recurrent features:

a) A little familiarity with the genealogical or common-error method. These scholars only cite a few late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century works, or elementary and at least unwittingly tendentious generalizations by earlier New Philologists, while never citing recent authoritative applications, from which much is to be learned even as far as methodology is concerned.

₡ Just by way of example, an outstanding work in this regard is the important collection *Texts and Transmission. A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. by L. Reynolds, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983; for medieval Latin, one could cite *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo—Medieval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, ed. by P. Chiesa and L. Castaldi, the first 5 volumes of which have come out (Firenze, Sismel, 2004-2013); for early French, Cesare Segre's 1971 edition of the *Chanson de Roland*, and his revised edition of 1989 (*Chanson de Roland* S, to be taken together with his book *La tradizione della "Chanson de Roland"*, Milano-Napoli, Ricciardi, 1974); for Italian, Tiziano Zanato's edition of Lorenzo il Magnifico's *Rime* and *Comento*, published in 1990 by Olschki (to be read jointly with his commentary, Lorenzo de' Medici, *Opere*, Torino, Einaudi, 1992), Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti and Cristina Montagnani's 1999 edition of Boiardo's *Inamoramento de Orlando* (Milano-Napoli, Ricciardi), or Lucia Bertolini's recently published edition of Leon Battista Alberti's *De pictura* (Firenze, Polistampa, 2011).

b) The consequent attempt (typical of new disciplines, in search of proselytes and funding) to discredit the genealogical method by caricaturing it and blaming it for shortcomings that are non-existent, or have been overcome or have lost importance in a long and undeniable history of successes.

₡ I fully agree with Tanselle, "Textual Criticism at the Millennium", 71-74, who writes, among other things: "Those who have taken an either/or position, suggesting that an interest in authorial intention is futile, unproductive, and outmoded, have shown by their manner of proceeding that they are more concerned with promoting a particular point of view than with welcoming all approaches that can contribute to fuller understanding […]. Understanding rather than victory: this is the motto for civilian scholarship".

c) "Alternative" philologists' renaming of key terms of genealogical theory such as *error* (→ 4.4) or *stemma* to make them acceptable to their co-religionaries (e.g., "It is best described not as a 'stemma', but as a 'table

of relationships'": Peter Robinson, → 4.3), while a non-ambiguous termi-nology is actually indispensable when working with more than one witness.

d) A reluctance to make explicit and discuss all the limitations and data-manipulation usually involved in the use of alternative methods, such as the choice of a single manuscript (the *bon manuscrit*) or digital philology.

For these reasons, after illustrating the basic rules of the genealogical method inaccurately attributed to Karl Lachmann, I will try to explain its strengths, its advances (in some cases ascribable to what, from afar, may appear as the Italian "school"), and the limits of its application, some of which Bédier had already acutely pointed out.

The first part of this manual deals with "Theories". After a brief illustra-tion of the basic assumptions of the genealogical-reconstructive method, or common-error method (often called Lachmann's method: Chap. 1), I shall be dwelling at length, in Chap. 2, on the objections of the great Joseph Bédier (1913, and especially 1928-29) and on the consequences, at the global level, of his impassioned argumentation, from the spread of the *bon manuscrit* criterion to Quentin and the dawn of digital philology.

In Chap. 3, I will examine in more detail some essential notions, such as those of archetype, stemma, and *vulgata*.

In Chap. 4, I will discuss the theory and practice of computer-assisted stemmatics, which for at least twenty years has been meeting with great success in North America, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, and is be-ginning to take hold in Italy, too.

After discussing methods of reconstructing textual *substance*—estab-lishing whether at a certain point in the text it is more correct to choose the variant *cat* or the variant *rhinoceros*—in Chap. 5 I will touch on is-sues of reconstruction of the *form* of a text (Engl. *love* or *loove?* French *amot* or *amoit?* It. *spazio* or *spatio?*).

Chap. 6 addresses the *emendatio* (weeding out errors, improvement) of a text, i.e., that part of textual criticism that is as creative and difficult as it is indispensable. I subscribe to the opinion of many scholars that philology is a technique rather than a science, that is, a set of procedures to be followed and decisions to be made that are more easily learned by editing an actual text than by reading a manual. I therefore decided that the most effective way to "teach" this way of working on texts would be to collect and comment on some universally accepted emendations, or some especially significant ones, first and foremost in Italian texts, but also in some Latin, French and Spanish ones.

As I mentioned at the beginning, for reasons of parsimony—an important criterion, in textual criticism as in any other field—I will touch only marginally on issues concerning other historical sectors of textual criticism, such as textual bibliography (It. *critica dei testi a stampa*) or a vital ancestor of the French "critique génétique", *critica delle varianti* [criticism of variants], also known as *filologia d'autore* [author philology]. Excellent studies on this subject exist, which I will be referring to as needed.

Since my approach has been to draw my readers gradually to the discussion of real problems, the second part of the book ("Practical applications") is devoted to a brief but I hope not superficial analysis of three manuscript traditions of different degrees of difficulty: the relatively simple one of a short Latin treatise produced in Palestine in the time of the Crusades (Chap. 7); that of the *Lai de l'ombre*, the early French poem that inspired Bédier's methodological schism, but which in my opinion is relatively easy to rationalize in terms of standard Neo-Lachmannian rules (Chap. 8); and that of Dante's *Comedy*, that is, the most difficult textual problem in any modern European literature (Chap. 9).

I dedicate this manual to my students in Aix-en-Provence, Ferrara, Jerusalem, Leiden, Novedrate, Salerno, and Venice, from whom I have learned more than I have taught them, and to my future students, in the hope of learning from them, too.

P.T.

Capo Palinuro-Cariati-Ferrara, summer 2011-summer 2014.

Acknowledgements

It goes without saying that any errors that remain are my own.

For anyone who has teaching duties and is not single, writing a sizable book inevitably means reducing, for a more or less long period, the time devoted to "normal" life (taking care of the kids, going to the movies, etc.). Last but not least, therefore, I thank Beatrice, Gregorio and Margherita for allowing me to "steal" some of the time that was rightfully theirs.

How to use this book

Unlike other Western countries such as Germany, England, France, the United States of America and others, which have great classical, medieval, Humanist, Romance and Germanic philological traditions, but are all in the process of parting ways with these very same traditions, in Italy textual criticism is still practised with great intensity. The vitality of the discipline in its various fields of application—from classical philology to modern literature, with a special focus on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance—is reflected in an abundance of university manuals, often of a very high level, and in updates to them. I will cite a number of them, obviously with no claim to exhaustiveness:

A. Del Monte, *Elementi di ecdotica*, Milano, Cisalpino-Goliardica, [1975]; A. Roncaglia, *Principi e applicazioni di critica testuale*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1975; G. Contini, entry "Filologia", in *Enciclopedia del Novecento*, 1977 (subsequently republished with updates several times); d.S. Avalle, *Principî di critica testuale*, Padova, Antenore, 1978[2] (I ed. 1972); F. Brambilla Ageno, *L'edizione critica dei testi volgari*, Padova, Antenore, 1984[2] (I ed. 1975); A. Balduino, *Manuale di filologia italiana*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1989[3] (I ed. 1979); A. Stussi, *Introduzione agli studi di filologia italiana*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2011[4] (I ed., entitled *Avviamento agli studi di filologia italiana*, 1983); G. Inglese, *Come si legge un'edizione critica. Elementi di filologia italiana*, Roma, Carocci, 2006[2] (I ed. 1999); B. Bentivogli, P. Vecchi Galli, *Filologia italiana*, Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 2002; A. D'Agostino, *Capitoli di filologia testuale: testi italiani e romanzi*, 2. ed. corretta e accresciuta, Milano, CUEM, 2006 (I ed. 2005); P. Mari, *L'armario del filologo*, Roma,

Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 2005; P. Stoppelli, *Filologia della letteratura italiana*, Roma, Carocci, 2008; P.G. Beltrami, *A che serve un'edizione critica? Leggere i testi della letteratura romanza medioevale*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2010; P. Chiesa, *Elementi di critica testuale*, Bologna, Pàtron, 2012² (I ed. 2002); A. Varvaro, *Prima lezione di filologia*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2012.

In spite of notable exceptions, in other countries textual criticism is less and less practiced, and not regarded as an autonomous discipline, in the conviction that

> a man who possesses common sense and the use of reason must not expect to learn from treatises or lectures on textual criticism anything that he could not, with leisure and industry, find out for himself. (A.E. Housman, cited in KENNEY, *Textual criticism*).

Here Housman is obviously overlooking the fact that someone endowed with these faculties—common sense, the use of reason, leisure and industry—could reinvent many things, from the wheel up, or rewrite many chapters in modern medicine manuals, but this would require a huge expense of time and labor.

Moreover, I find him overoptimistic when he argues that "what the lectures and treatises can do for him is to save him time and trouble by presenting to him immediately *considerations which would in any case occur to him sooner or later*" (my emphasis).

That is why this manual, as I said above, is mainly addressed to non-Italian scholars and students. The following pages do not constitute an organic course of textual criticism, from A to Z: I would end up doing nothing but repeating what has already been written, often in an impeccable manner, by some of the authors just cited. My intention, instead, is to elucidate aspects and questions of the discipline that I find important or interesting, but still not sufficiently known.

I would therefore invite non-specialist readers to first familiarize themselves with one of the above-listed manuals, or with manuals written in other languages.

All quotations from books and articles written in Italian have been translated into English. I have been less systematic in all such cases where I could assume among non-Italian textual scholars a wider knowledge of the language in question, or where the context suggested paraphrasing as a more appropriate solution.

* * *

I will often be giving essential definitions of technical terms as I introduce them. I also refer the reader to the Index at the end of this manual.

The symbol → means that the subject is addressed or further discussed in other chapters and paragraphs in the book (for example, → 2.7 refers to Chapter 2, Section 7).

The symbol ₵ before a sentence in a smaller font size means that this sentence contains bibliographical or terminological remarks, that can be skipped without compromising the reader's understanding of the text.

The symbol [ ] (square brackets, sometimes with a space between them) means that some words or the words in the brackets are lacking (Lat. *lacuna)* and need to be restored.

The following abbreviations are used:

Engl. = English.

f., ff. = folio, folios.

Germ. = German.

It. = Italian.

l., ll. = line, lines.

Lat. = Latin.

ms., mss. = manuscript, manuscripts.

s.v., s. vv. = *sub voce, sub vocibus.*

Bibliographical notes. For those who read Italian, I would recommend Stussi's manual for its clarity and orderly progression. For those who read Spanish, a good choice would be Blecua (other Spanish manuals are discussed in H.O. Bizzarri's overview "Veinte años de reflexión sobre crítica textual (1983-2003)", *Revue Critique de Philologie Romane* 4-5, 2003-2004, 296-321). Among manuals in French, I recommend Bourgain-Vielliard's. For English readers, useful points of departure include West or Foulet-Speer, or Kenney's fine summation "Textual criticism", or Wegner, *A Student's Guide.*

Actually, almost all existing manuals of textual criticism are useful, because they reflect the experiences of different scholars—that is, the characteristics of the texts they studied—and, apart from the simplest cases, different texts usually pose partially different problems.

"This book, written with the non-Italian reader in mind, addresses a central problem in textual criticism, and one that it is currently fashionable to regard as insoluble, namely, how to reconstruct a text of the past so that it is *as close as possible* to the lost original, starting from a number of copies more or less full of mistakes. The idea of writing this book—which I left to age, as one does with wine and cured meats—first occurred to me in 2006-2007, when I had the privilege of being a visiting professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. As the students felt the need to explain to me: 'Nobody had ever talked to us about these things.' For decades, very few, if any, Biblical, Germanic and Slavonic philologists, or French Romanists, or German editors of Anglo-American or Medieval Latin texts, have been talking about many of the things this book is about" (from the author's preface).

"My first essay on editorial methodology concerned the number of branches in family trees, and my latest concerned editing with the aid of computer programmes. On these topics and many another, Paolo Trovato's combative and richly instructive book leaves me far behind, and it is a privilege to have the opportunity of commending it" (from M.D. Reeve's foreword).

PAOLO TROVATO is a scholarly editor and book historian in the field of medieval and Renaissance Italian literature. Professor of the history of the Italian language at the University of Ferrara since 1994, he was a Fellow at the Harvard Center for Italian Renaissance Studies (VIT) and at the Newberry Library, Chicago, as well as visiting professor in Aix-en-Provence and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
Among his books: *Dante in Petrarca. Per un inventario dei dantismi nei "Rerum vulgarium fragmenta"* (Olschki 1979); *Con ogni diligenza corretto. La stampa e le revisoni editoriali dei testi letterari italiani, 1470-1570* (il Mulino 1991; repr. UnifePress 2009); *Storia della lingua italiana. Il primo Cinquecento* (il Mulino, 1994; repr. libreriauniversitaria.it 2012); *Il testo della Vita Nuova e altra filologia dantesca* (Salerno ed. 2000) and the editions of Machiavell's *Discorso intorno alla nostra lingua* (Antenore 1982) and Aretino's *Cortigiana* (Salerno ed. 2009).
Since 2002 he has been leading a small team on a critical edition of Dante's *Commedia*.

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Storie e linguaggi