What is Authorial Philology?

Paola Italia, Giulia Raboni, et al.

A stark departure from traditional philology, *What is Authorial Philology?* is the first comprehensive treatment of authorial philology as a discipline in its own right. It provides readers with an excellent introduction to the theory and practice of editing 'authorial texts' alongside an exploration of authorial philology in its cultural and conceptual architecture. The originality and distinction of this work lies in its clear systematization of a discipline whose autonomous status has only recently been recognised.

This pioneering volume offers both a methodical set of instructions on how to read critical editions, and a wide range of practical examples, expanding upon the conceptual and methodological apparatus laid out in the first two chapters. By presenting a thorough account of the historical and theoretical framework through which authorial philology developed, Paola Italia, Giulia Raboni and their co-authors successfully reconceptualize the authorial text as an ever-changing organism, subject to alteration and modification.

*What is Authorial Philology?* will be of great didactic value to students and researchers alike, providing readers with a fuller understanding of the rationale behind different editing practices, and addressing both traditional and newer methods such as the use of the digital medium and its implications. Spanning the whole Italian tradition from Petrarch to Carlo Emilio Gadda, and with examples from key works of European literature, this ground-breaking volume provokes us to consider important questions concerning a text's dynamism, the extent to which an author is 'agentive', and, most crucially, about the very nature of what we read.

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1. History

Paola Italia and Giulia Raboni

1.1 Author’s variants from a historical perspective

In his seminal book *Storia della tradizione e critica del testo* (1934), Giorgio Pasquali laid the foundations for revising Karl Lachmann’s philology. In this book, Pasquali replaced the dream of a very ‘accurate and mechanical’ philology as proposed by Lachmann with a more historical and documental approach to the transmission of texts. Pasquali also notably pointed out the possible occurrence of authorial variants in classical texts as one of the areas where textual criticism needed to be corrected and expanded. Pasquali adumbrated the possibility that some variants that were believed to be due to transmission might actually be ascribed to later redactions by the author, whose original manuscript was obviously lost. Pasquali made this consideration by analogy with the state of Italian literature, which Michele Barbi had remarkably emphasized in those same years with his studies on the tradition of vernacular texts, studies that were later collected in his volume *La nuova filologia e l’edizione dei nostri scrittori da Dante a Manzoni* (1938).

Pasquali downplayed somewhat the significance of this situation in the next edition of his book (1952) because of the way other philologists, after the 1934 edition, had begun to propose excessively simplistic attributions of intentional authorial variants. All the same, the same scenario occurs at the origins of Italian literature given that the manuscript tradition of texts often contains variants that give grounds for us to suspect the author’s intervention. For example, the poems of

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1 Paola Italia wrote sections 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7 of the text; Giulia Raboni wrote sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.5.
Dante’s *Vita Nuova* seem to have undergone a redrafting designed to produce a consistent organism at the moment of their inclusion in the book (which is formally prosimetric — that is, a mixed text containing poems framed by prose narrative). In paragraph xxxiv, Dante himself refers to the existence of a double beginning of the sonetto ‘Era venuta nella mente mia’, but depends on conventions, giving the first and highly influential authorial testimony of his own subsequent re-elaboration of this composition. While in this case, as with variants in many other texts, we can often only speculate, the situation is different when we face the autograph of a text, as we find for Petrarch’s *Canzoniere* (see section 3.1) or Boccaccio’s *Decameron*. For Boccaccio, we have not only the autograph of the final version, the MS Hamilton 90 codex kept at the Berlin State Library, but also the previous version transmitted by the Parisian BnF MS Italien 482, housed at the National Library of France.

The status of authorial variants changes with the invention of the printing press, as the phenomenon becomes notably more common and can be distinguished with variants that arise from tradition. During the Renaissance there are some famous cases of authorial variants: Ludovico Ariosto (for his chivalric epic, the *Orlando furioso*, we have not only the three printed editions supervised by the author himself but also autograph fragments), Niccolò Machiavelli, Baldassarre Castiglione, Giovanni Della Casa, Pietro Bembo, and finally Torquato Tasso, whose *Rime d’amore* represents even today one of the most interesting philological problems (see, once again, section 3.3). What is more, some of the outstanding literary texts of the eighteenth century — the works of Giuseppe Parini, Vittorio Alfieri, Vincenzo Monti — exist in authorial manuscripts, which allow us to reconstruct the stages in their development and the processes of textual correction.

However, manuscript witnesses increase and abound from the nineteenth century onwards, also thanks to a greater availability of paper which in the preceding centuries was a rare and precious commodity. Works by Ugo Foscolo, Giacomo Leopardi, Alessandro Manzoni, Ippolito Nievo, Giovanni Verga, Giosuè Carducci, all survive as a rich set of handwritten documents, taking us from the first germ of the text to the final copy before printing. In the same way, it is possible to retrace the internal history of the works of Giovanni Pascoli and Gabriele D’Annunzio and the great Italian poets and prose writers of
the twentieth century, such as Eugenio Montale, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Umberto Saba, Vittorio Sereni and Carlo Emilio Gadda.

Beginning in the second half of the twentieth century, we can add to handwritten documents those that are typed first with mechanical typewriters, and then with electric typewriters. Photocopies take the place of copies made by copyists and, for the first time, mechanical means become part of the process of textual production. Such technologies involve different phenomenologies of transmission and correction of the text, which end up influencing the authors’ process of working as well. These examples offer only a foreshadowing of the great revolution of the finale decade of the last century, dominated by a change in the production of literary texts, with the progressive (though not definitive) abandonment of handwriting and its replacement by computerized word-processing, that is, a way of writing that is completely different, both in how the text is conceived and how it is revised.

1.2 Methods throughout history: from Ubaldini to Moroncini

Authorial philology and its application in the form of criticism of variants has only come into existence with a coherent set of analytical tools, both methodological and critical, from the beginning of the twentieth century. This was the result of a theoretical and philosophical reflection that has brought with it an innovative way of considering how the literary work is made. At the same time, it is true that the focus on authorial variants has not come about suddenly, but has had a long genesis ranging across the history of literary criticism and beginning at least with Bembo’s work as editor of Petrarch and a theorist of the language, and to some extent as a figure indebted to an earlier tradition. As demonstrated by Gino Belloni (1992), the way Bembo compared variants in his comments on Petrarch’s poetry in the Prose della volgar lingua was a practice already used by Giovanni Pontano in his Actius (1495–1496), where the character of Azio-Sannazaro quotes some lines from the Urania (by Pontano) in a double version, to demonstrate how to amend the text in order to obtain the desired result of ‘hastening’ the poetic lines.
This is an important passage. It is unlike other parts of Pontano’s treatise, where the concrete example of how to compose poetry is made through the manipulation of Virgil’s lines where we are given the actual line, yet its elements are manipulated in order to prove how the author’s use of *dispositio* is the most suited to achieved the desired stylistic effect, according to a method already used by Cicero and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Instead, in this passage, Pontano’s variants come directly from the author’s workshop and are actually proven by handwritten versions of *Urania* that survive in the autograph manuscript Vaticano Latino 2837.

Given the fact that we know that there is an availability of other elaborations of the text by the author, a shift from fictional to real data takes place here, thereby paving the way towards a criticism of variants based on the information offered by the tradition. It is within this trajectory that we should place Bembo’s analysis of Petrarch’s variants. Such an analysis does not involve a theoretical change compared to Pontano’s time, but is simply due to a different availability and access to materials. Bembo’s example is important both because it soon draws its own disciples and because it opens the way to a greater attention to variants connected to different redactions and to the opportunity of a more accurate reading of the texts. It is evidently a turning point which cannot be disconnected from the more general cultural change and the different kinds of texts printed in those years.

It is no coincidence that, while studies of this kind on Petrarch continued, this sort of approach to an *in fieri* text would have been developed from the three editions of Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso* (1516, 1521 and 1532). Works on Ariosto’s variants by Simon Fornari (1549), Giovan Battista Pigna (1544) and Ludovico Dolce (1564) focus the discussion, with some difference among them, on didactic terms, postulating an ‘implicit improvement’ of the text, as Bembo’s comments on Petrarch had done. In other words, in altering the text, the author shows his/her ability to refine it. Such a perspective, however, still lacks the ability to connect the various tesserae in the system of corrections to one another in order to provide a more comprehensive definition of ‘poetics’ (as pointed out by Segre 2008: 133–64).

A different and more advanced solution, and substantially not imitated until the twentieth century, is the one represented by Federico
Ubaldini’s edition of *Rime di M. Francesco Petrarca come estratte da un suo originale*. In this edition, dated 1652, the philologist undertakes a graphical representation of Petrarch’s corrections. Compared to the previous ‘criticism of variants’, this edition presents a striking degree of accuracy and innovation in reproducing in its entirety the readings in the *Codice degli abbozzi* with fitting typographical solutions in order to highlight deletions and drafting revisions. This is no longer a selection of *loci critici* as the aforementioned cases were, but a tool providing a complete vision of the correcting process, consisting in a ‘documentation’ offered without the filter of a preliminary critical judgment.

Ubaldini’s edition, later employed by Ludovico Antonio Muratori in his Petrarchan commentary, would be reprinted in 1750, and then used until the 1891 diplomatic edition by Karl Appel, setting a trend for one of the earliest pioneering and seminal editions of authorial philology, namely that produced by Santorre Debenedetti in his *Frammenti autografi dell’Orlando furioso*. Debenedetti’s work had the merit of taking up again in Italy the cause of representing autograph texts, bringing about — as we will see — Gianfranco Contini’s reflection on Ariosto’s working method and the debate on the ‘critics of *scartafacci*’ (that is, a form of criticism based on rough drafts).

As we are now seeing, criticism of variants and authorial philology have their origins in a series of reflections and considerations on topics of perennial discussion. This is itself a strong sign of the persistence of a tradition, although a ‘subterranean’ one for a long time, and of the relevance of this kind of study. Another major contributing factor, from the end of nineteenth century, that should be noted here is the Italian Unification and the consequent discussion on the national literary heritage, especially concerning works deemed to be politically and linguistically ‘usable’.

The main object of nineteenth-century studies is Manzoni’s great historical novel, *I promessi sposi*. A great number of scholars devoted their attention to Manzoni’s novel, investigating in particular the linguistic differences between the so-called ‘Ventisettana’ and ‘Quarantana’ editions (see section 3.4): see Luigi Morandi (1873 and 1874), Riccardo Fogli (1877 and 1879) and Policarpo Petrocchi (1893 and 1902). The research was also extended to the first redaction with Giovanni Sforza (1898 and 1905) and Giuseppe Lesca (1916), up to Michele Barbi, who conceived a
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general plan (Barbi 1939) for the publishing of Manzoni’s works which came to fruition in the ‘Classici Mondadori’ edition by Alberto Chiari and Fausto Ghisalberti (1954).

However, it was a dilettante, a passionate enthusiast for his object of research, Francesco Moroncini from Recanati, who made the most decisive effort to represent fully authorial variants and to provide an exhaustive apparatus. Having produced first an annotated edition of Leopardi’s *Canti*, Moroncini published a critical edition of the same collection in 1927, creating a typographic system suitable not only for the representation of text variants of manuscripts and prints (up to the definitive Starita edition in 1835, which he used as the base-text), but also for the complex series of notes that surround Leopardi’s autographs. These notes are known as the varia lectio, and include genetic versions, variants, notes that ‘certify’ the language employed by identifying examples from the Italian literary tradition, and literary sources. Taken together, the notes are an essential complement in understanding the genesis and development of the *Canti*.

Moroncini’s work is the real starting point both for the rich reflection on Leopardi’s autographs that has developed from Contini and Giuseppe De Robertis onwards, and for an increasingly refined elaboration of the authorial philology apparatus that is so well exemplified in this edition of *Canti* (see section 3.5). Moroncini’s edition in effect proposed something — in the words of Gianfranco Folena — ‘far beyond the editor’s intentions, a new idea of the poetic text and a new complex and problematic criticism of the relationship between synchronicity and diachronicity, system and evolution, parole and langue in poetry’ (Leopardi 1978: xi).

1.3 Authorial philology and criticism of variants

After a decade in which Moroncini’s admirable work was more often praised and cited than seriously studied, in 1937, Santorre Debenedetti published his critical edition of some autograph fragments from *Orlando furioso*. The fragments consist of four major scenes added to the text of 1521 (the first edition, which was not very different, was printed in 1516): Olimpia’s story; the ‘Rocca di Tristano’ episode with Merlino’s prophetic frescoes; the Marganorre’s narrative; and the story
of Ruggiero and Leone — which brings the total number of Cantos from 40 to 46. These fragments — except the last one that has reached us in an apograph copy — survive in ‘many notebooks and remnants of notebooks, handwritten by the poet [...] with different degrees of elaboration’ (Ariosto 1937: viii), kept (with the exception of some papers) at the Municipal Library of Ferrara.

Debenedetti’s edition tacitly follows some of Moroncini’s own criteria. Despite not offering a systematic solution, Debenedetti tries to answer the main problems of authorial philology. One of these is how to deal with incomplete texts and with a manuscript documentation that is autograph but might not be fully reliable. For example, Debenedetti amends spelling errors but leaves unchanged ‘the wrong readings that Messer Ludovico undoubtedly thought about in that way’ (ibid.: xxxix).

Another problem is how to distinguish between authorial variants that are made in the first act of composition and those that come later: with regard to these variants, Debenedetti argued that ‘since it may be a change made during the writing of the line, or when the line was completed, it would be good to distinguish between the two’ (ibid.: xxxviii).

In the same year, Contini wrote a review essay on Debenedetti’s edition for the journal Il Meridiano di Roma (‘Come lavorava l’Ariosto’, later collected in Contini 1939). This essay is universally considered to be the founding act of criticism of variants. The authorial variants of the Orlando furioso offer the philologist some constant, recurring elements that may allow one to describe Ariosto’s poetics in a way which does not clash with the Benedetto Croce’s celebrated characterization in his Ariosto (1918 then collected in Croce 1920), where harmony is identified as its founding principle. In his review essay, Contini also tackles the more general problem of what it means to study text corrections and their aesthetic and philosophical implications. He does this through the above-mentioned definition of the ‘dynamic way’ in which the art work may be seen, as a ‘never-ending approximation to a value’ (Contini 1982: 233).

Due to the major influence exerted by Croce’s thought and aesthetic on Italian culture, not even a renowned scholar such as Contini could operate on strictly literary and philological platforms, so that the new ‘criticism of corrections’ (the technical term he used before replacing
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it with the more well-known ‘criticism of variants’) was introduced as a ‘pedagogical version’ of Croce’s criticism. Criticism of variants is therefore not in opposition to Croce’s method and it could reach the same conclusions, though starting from a different approach which considered the text in a dynamic rather than static way.

Assuming that the task of criticism was to identify the ‘poetics’ of the text, and that, according to Croce, ‘poetry’ meant ‘lyrical insight’ (rather than the external superstructures which stained its purity), this exercise could only be carried out on the final text as delivered to the printer by the author in its final version. Every reflection around the previous writing stages was a merely linguistic or documentary exercise, useless for the ‘critic’: ‘the work of art has a completely ideal origin, which comes from its presence itself’ (Croce 1947: 93–94).

It is interesting to note that the subsequent dispute with Croce will not refer back to this essay by Contini or to Debenedetti’s edition (and for which Contini’s review essay was, in some way, a ‘justification’), but to another text, which was, in its own way, in favour of a dynamic view of the work of art. The text concerned is the paper published by Giuseppe De Robertis in 1946 in defense of the first version (now known as Fermo e Lucia) of I promessi sposi edited by Giuseppe Lesca under the title Gli sposi promessi (Manzoni 1916). After its publication, Lesca’s edition had been strongly criticized by the celebrated philologist Ernesto Giacomo Parodi (1916: 9). Quoting Contini’s words in an article intended to defend Lesca, De Robertis implicitly acknowledged Lesca’s role in creating the so-called criticism of corrections, supporting his philological effort (see section 3.5) and, more generally, his way of studying how literary works were made.

The debate inflamed the literary journals of the time, in the framework of the intellectual fervour of the post-war years. In 1947, Croce launched a major attack upon the fledgling disciple of criticism of variants with an article entitled ‘Illusione sulla genesi delle opere d’arte, documentabile dagli scartafacci degli scrittori’ (Croce 1947). The article was published in Quaderni della Critica, the recognized journal for supporters of Crocean critical orthodoxy. In this paper, Croce argued that it was completely useless to investigate authors’ manuscripts if one wished to evaluate the text’s true ‘poetry’. Contini’s reply was almost immediate, but it was, so to speak, like ‘shooting the messenger’
so as to reach the person who sent the message. In fact, one year after Croce’s article, Nullo Minissi had come to its defence with the essay ‘Le correzioni e la critica’, published in the journal Belfagor. In this work, Minissi — without having read the original paper by Contini on Ariosto and only knowing De Robertis’ paper — had branded the new critics and its leader as useless and detrimental to Italian culture.

Contini’s essay titled ‘La critica degli scartafacci’ (which appeared the same year in Rassegna d’Italia) reveals that the target was higher than Minissi, with whom the skirmish was purely literary. Here Contini strongly reaffirms that the new criticism was not founded in opposition to Crocean criticism, but as a ‘pedagogical’ version of it (‘I was opposing “directions” to “fixed boundaries”’), one which starts from the same assumptions, as rightly pointed out by Isella (2009a: 5–6):

If the ‘poetry created’ does not naturalistically identify ‘with the letter of the text (or the brushstrokes on the canvas)’, if indeed its ‘value’ is to be understood, in strict orthodoxy, ‘as a transcendental and non-physical presence’, it follows strictly speaking that ‘it can be found fully realized in the text’ as opus perfectum, ‘as well as in the movement or approximation to the text’, considered in its making.

Nevertheless, Contini’s cultural background — which brought together Debenedetti’s philology with de Saussure’s structuralism and Spitzer’s linguistics — led him naturally not to consider within authorial variants the poetical quantum added to the text. This was a ‘didactical’ attitude that was still found in Moroncini’s stance, who declared critical editions to be helpful for teaching young people the directions in which the authors moved, as they transitioned from incorrect to correct modes of expression. On the contrary, Contini’s propensity was to study the text as a system, where change to a single part effected change to the entire text, like a chessboard, where moving a piece (the single variant) alters the structure of the entire game (as Gadda had argued with an evocative image in Meditazione Milanese in 1928). For this reason, Contini argued that the analysis of authorial variants could not be carried out as individual samples but should rather be achieved by means of categories, by correctional systems, by directions, with the purpose of giving a dynamic characterization of the author’s poetics.

Needless to say, such a dynamic vision of the work of art could not be confined to purely national borders. The earliest applications of this
new method of text or textual analysis are indeed devoted both to Italian and French classics. Italian works include Contini’s essays on Petrarch (‘Saggio d’un commento alle correzioni del Petrarca volgare’, 1941, printed in 1943, now in Contini 1970) and on Leopardi (‘Implicazioni leopardiane’, 1947, now in Contini 1970), where, starting from the analysis of the poem ‘A Silvia’, he showed the deep logic of textual corrections in Leopardi’s text. As for his work on French literature, it is worth remembering the ‘Introduzione alle paperoles’ (i.e., paperworks) on the variants of Marcel Proust’s Recherche in 1947, and the essay ‘Jean Santeuil, ossia l’infanzia della Recherche’ (now in Contini 1970). When Proust died in 1922, only the first four parts of the Recherche had in fact been published. The other parts — La prisonnière [1923], La fugitive [1925], Le temps retrouvé [1927] — had been published by Proust’s heirs on the basis of his papers without any proper philological criteria, and this therefore presented a significant problem which would eventually be resolved in the new edition issued in 1987–1989 by Gallimard. What is more, the new dynamic understanding of texts elaborated by Contini has to be put in relation to a ‘Mallarméan consciousness’, which came to him from the very heart of modern poetry through European symbolism (‘Saggio d’un commento alle correzioni del Petrarca volgare’, in Contini 1970: 5):

The poetic school founded by Mallarmé, which has in Valéry its theoretician, by the way it considers poetry in its making interprets it as a mobile and non finishable, never-ending work, of which the historically existing poem represents a possible section, whose primacy is not theoretically justified and which is not necessarily the last. This is from the point of view of the producer, not of the user.

However, if the critic considers the work of art as an ‘object’, this represents a concrete object only within his critical interpretation, this ‘objectification’ providing a theoretical justification for the critic’s attitude of self-denial vis à vis the work of art; considering the poetic act will lead him to dynamically relocate his formulae, to seek directions more than fixed boundaries for the poetic energy. A guideline, and not a border, enclose authorial corrections; only today the Mallarméan consciousness, together with the standardized reduction of personality imposed by the aesthetics of expression, allows a rigorous and poetically fruitful study of it.
1.4 Authorial philology and critique génétique

Authorial philology, then, develops a new way of conceiving texts as the result of a different approach to literature, even from a philosophical point of view. Authorial philology and criticism of variants indeed understand a text’s poetics not as a ‘fact’, an established ‘value’, but as an ‘approximation to a value’, which includes and stems from all the texts that preceded it (the avant-textes).

The term ‘avant-texte’ has found some fortune in Italy, but it has often been used with different meanings. Introduced by Jean Bellemin-Noël (1972), this term is employed in France to signify ‘the set of preparatory materials collected, decoded, classified: from simple list of words to notes, sketches, first minimum drafts, until and on to actual versions’ (Stussi 1994: 198). At times, the term is extended to cover areas that are not strictly philological, such as the mental journey of the author, which is at times considered part of the avant-texte.

In Italian authorial philology, the term avantesto refers to the entire set of materials preceding the text. In this sense, it is possible to distinguish:

- materials that do not have a direct relationship with the text (such as lists of characters, literary projects, lists of words, etc.);
- materials which have a direct relationship with the text (such as early versions and later drafts that precede the actual text).

Two different kinds of critical edition derive from this distinction: the French one that is better known as edition génétique or genetic edition, and the German-Italian one that is generally defined as edizione critica or critico-genetica, that is, as a critical edition or a critical-genetic edition. The genetic French edition is distinctive in its editing all the avant-textes, from initial notes to late corrections on printed proofs. It makes no distinction between these two different types of avant-texte and it does not subordinate one type to the other. Examples here are the edition of Paul Valéry’s Cahiers, published in twenty-nine volumes between 1957–1961, or the edition of Un Coeur simple from the Corpus flaubertianum, published by Giovanni Bonaccorso in 1983 for Le Belles Lettres in Paris. The edition génétique is a representation of the history of the text through single ‘pictures’: each one ‘photographs’ a provisional...
status of the text’s history without any distinction between apparatus, preparatory materials and the text itself.

On the other hand, the German-Italian edition tends to give greater importance to the process of correction of the version selected as copy-text or base-text. For this reason, such editions consider only the part of the avant-texte which has a direct relationship with that ‘product’. In other words, the edizione critica (or critico-genetica) focuses on the evolutionary itinerary of the text, that is, the variantistic process leading from the readings contained in the apparatus to the version selected as copy-text (or vice versa). That is the reason why the special character of an Italian critical edition produced by authorial philology the double textual system that it presents to the reader, one which occupies two different typographical areas: the text and the apparatus. The latter is always dependent on the former, even graphically, as the apparatus is found either in the footnotes of each page, at the end of the text, or in a separate volume. Materials that do not have a direct relationship with the text are not included in the edition but these are usually published in a subordinate position, either in an appendix or, in the case of particularly voluminous materials, in a separate volume.

When undertaking the edition of an in fieri text, the philologist should not so much ‘record in slow-motion’ the act of writing, which would smack of disingenuous presumption and might well be pointless, for actually not even the author knows all the steps that have happened in his or her mind, from the first idea of the text until its final version, because s/he cannot recall them in detail. What the philologist should rather do is to translate the obscurity of the manuscript into clear signs representing, whenever possible, the compositional history that s/he was able to reconstruct and — far more significantly — that constitutes his/her hypothesis of what happens ‘before the text’, all that which leads the text to what it is. In other words, through the analysis of manuscripts one should not attempt to divine the mental journeys of the author, but rather to develop ‘standards of formalization of the apparatus and [...] systems able to best render the elaborative process of the writer (with all its internal stages, properly distinguished and correlated), both for manuscripts and prints’ (Isella 2009a: 16). Consequently, if the philologist makes a hypothesis based on the study of variants, the apparatus is nothing but the concrete application of this or, we might
say, the scientific law that describes in a rational and economic way the series of empirical phenomena observed. Like every scientific law, it is to be considered valid until some data emerge that it is unable to explain, and that therefore invalidates the apparatus or obliges the philologist to propose simple adjustments of it.

For this very reason, any attempt at formalization has an experimental character, and it is impossible to provide a single apparatus for what is a non-homogeneous series of phenomena. What is more, since each author has his/her personal set of habits in terms of corrections, style, poetics, compositional strategy, it will be necessary to develop on a case-by-case basis a method suitable for representing such habits.

As mentioned above, the ultimate apparatus (just like the ultimate critical edition) does not exist. What may be fine for one author, does not work for another. Verga does not correct like Gadda, whose correcting habits are paradoxically much more similar to the habits of Bembo, although Gadda and Bembo cannot be brought together from any other point of view. When we have more works of authorial philology and this discipline is more codified, perhaps it will be possible to write a history of Italian literature based on its authors’ various systems of correcting themselves and their relationship with their own manuscripts. New and interesting results would come from this study since in comparing a writer and his/her text we can get useful information on his/her poetics and even on his/her ideas on the world.

1.5 Dante Isella’s authorial philology

The publication of Le carte mescolate. Esperienze di filologia d’autore by Dante Isella in 1987 created a watershed in the field of critical editions of authorial texts both for in fieri works and for works attested to by multiple redactions (see sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2). The successful term filologia d’autore, or authorial philology, which is now commonly used in Italian Studies, derives from the title of this volume in contrast to the previous denomination fenomenologia dell’originale (phenomenology of the original) used by D’Arco Silvio Avalle (1970).

Isella was a student of Contini at the University of Fribourg. From the 1950s, he worked in the field of textual editing and its presentation of authorial variants. In particular, he produced a series of editions for
texts from the sixteenth century to contemporary times, which were increasingly refined in terms of how the critical apparatus was elaborated. Each edition he prepared was characterized by different issues, and this allowed him to develop editing tools in each case. The opening piece of the volume — ‘Le varianti d’autore (critica e filologia)’ — was Isella’s inaugural lecture delivered when he took up the Chair of Italian Literature at the ETH at Zurich, and is a first attempt to provide a history of authorial philology. Isella retraced the theoretical birth of the discipline from the controversy between Benedetto Croce, Giuseppe De Robertis and Gianfranco Contini (see section 1.3), underlining Contini’s fundamental role. Contini’s position is compared, on the one hand, with the aesthetics of Croce. Isella notes here that Contini had already emphasized, in his essay on Ariosto, a sense of perfect complementarity with Croce’s work, seeing the examination of the variants as having a sort of control function in relation to the ‘characterizing’ descriptions typical of Crocean criticism. And, on the other, he compares Contini’s approach with Leo Spitzer’s stylistic criticism, which is corrected and verified by comparing the author’s individual language not so much with a theoretical linguistic norm, but with the author’s subsequent linguistic and textual choices.

Contini supplemented and systematized this frame of analysis by drawing on the contributions made by structuralism and this allows him to overcome the ‘atomistic’ idea of single variants (typical of the contemporary critical position of Giuseppe De Robertis), in favour of a systemic conception of the correcting process, one which proves particularly fruitful in the analysis of Leopardi’s poetry. This results in a series of philological endeavours that characterize Italian criticism of the 1940s. In the following chapters of the volume, Isella aims to exemplify these innovations, shifting the focus from theory to practice. This change of focus implicitly leads him to modify decisively the relation between philology and criticism to the advantage of the former. From that point on, philology is considered not only equal and complementary to criticism (and already this is a major advance when compared to the ancillary role Croce had given to philology), but is also viewed as being by itself capable of providing new critical perspectives, through its elaboration of its own methodology. In other words, compared to Contini, Isella is much more of an editor. For Contini in fact never directly
worked on authorial editions, except for the *Opera in versi* by Montale, edited with Rosanna Bettarini, and the collaboration of Montale himself, and his critical work takes place retrospectively on the material offered by genetic editions, such as the edition of Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso* by Debenedetti or Leopardi’s *Canti* by Moroncini and then Peruzzi. The examples Isella gives deal with very complex cases, and the preparation of the apparatus is based on a reasoned chronological ordering of the papers and the interpretation of the ways an author’s habits and modes of correcting develop. Ecdotics itself — the science that deals with the problems related to the editing of texts — is therefore an interpretative act, which demands a greater responsibility on the editor’s part, as the editor must adapt the methodological aspect to his/her reconstructive hypothesis. It demands the shift to more analytical and more flexible tools for representing variants that can be adapted to different textual conditions.

Three other chapters of Isella’s book are dedicated to explaining some notable cases, in order to provide a template or model for a ‘hypothetical handbook’ of authorial philology. The next chapter (‘Le testimonianze autografe plurime’), the most succinct and methodological in the volume, describes three complicated cases of authorial philology: Tasso’s *Rime d’amore*, Parini’s scattered poems and Manzoni’s first drafts of *I promessi sposi* (the aforementioned *Fermo e Lucia* and the so-called *Seconda minuta*). The following two chapters deal in a more comprehensive and analytical way with Tasso’s rhymes and Parini’s *Giorno*. Isella always focuses his attention on the peculiarity of the textual condition of the works he examines, and comes up with new proposals, strictly related to the interpretative framework.

In the cases of Tasso’s collection of rhymes and of the different versions of Parini’s poems, Isella insists on the necessity of distinguishing between different compositional phases that correspond to different authorial arrangements, and he creates apparatuses which are functional to representing the variantistic process. To this end, Isella introduces, in the case of Parini’s *Giorno* (1969), the distinction between *genetic apparatus* and *evolutionary apparatus*. The former includes the genetic elaboration before the copy-text; the latter testifies to the variants that follow it without taking shape in a completed and coherent revision (thus giving evidence of a writing phase which is completely
different from the one represented by the following drafting status). On the distinction between *genetic* and *evolutionary* apparatuses, see section 2.2.1.

The quest in the apparatuses for an adequate and effective way of formalizing the set of variants responds to an attitude inspired by a sense of adherence to the text; an attitude which, in Isella’s words, resembles the way in which a seismograph is sensitive to the registration of the movements of the earth. Any formalization must be properly modelled on the author’s particular correcting practice. Gadda’s typical procedure is to increase the sentence *ex post* through insertions and writings on the side of the page, and is therefore representable in a rather photographic way, not idiomatic. Manzoni’s working method is instead characterized by logical implications that are developed from a ‘base’ sentence. The syntactic organization of these implications in new segments entails the replacement of the first draft with a different wording and requires a more cohesive representation that allows the visualization and the comparison of the whole structure subject to variation, according to a hierarchy of compositional phases as comprehensive as possible. This is what has been done with the apparatuses for Gadda’s texts on the one hand and of *Fermo e Lucia*’s critical edition on the other. The latter is significantly directed towards an interpretative representation that gives priority to the comparability between long passages of the text over a punctual and topographic indication.

Some years separate these two projects: they were directly carried out by Isella or by his school students, and they further refined the editorial criteria. From the edition of Gadda’s *Racconto italiano di ignoto del Novecento* in 1983, Isella was able to clearly state the distinction of a triple textual filter: (1) apparatus, (2) marginalia, (3) alternative variants. This filter is used for the complete edition of Gadda’s work published by Garzanti’s series ‘I libri della Spiga’ since 1988. Though not all texts are provided with an apparatus, for all of them a Note provides exhaustive information on the drafting and editorial scenario. The edition of Verga’s *Malavoglia* produced in 1995 by Isella’s student Ferruccio Cecco (Verga 1995, 2014) introduces some fundamental techniques in the establishment of linear apparatus for prose texts. In Cecco’s edition, a *diachronic apparatus* is experimented with for the first time. In this kind of apparatus, parts of the text are arranged in a
chronological order, separated and hierarchized by a number until the last phase (the copy-text) with minor variants in parentheses. This is a concise and highly critical form of representation, since it is not always easy to decide, especially in the case of long prose sentences, which elements are introduced at the time of writing and which are added later. In order to establish their timeline, the philologist should take into account every graphic, topographic, linguistic and semantic indicator which is available. In this edition, Cecco deals with, and successfully solves, the problems raised by the representation of the avant-texte and the need to distinguish in those further variants of the print, as compared with the final manuscript, the interventions that can be attributed to the author (evidently testified by drafts now lost) from those that can be attributed to the typographer.

From then on, these solutions have been taken and improved by other editions connected to Isella, a great promoter of philological workshops especially since his teaching years in Pavia. We already mentioned, on the one hand, the workshop on Tasso’s rhymes launched in Pavia by Lanfranco Caretti in collaboration with Luigi Poma, Cesare Bozzetti and Franco Gavazzeni and, on the other hand, the Gadda workshop, to which a workshop on Verga was later added on account of Carla Ricciardi’s, as well as Cecco’s, participation. Another workshop was that on Manzoni, producing editions, in Pavia again, of the treatise *Della lingua italiana* by Luigi Poma and Angelo Stella (1974), of the *Scritti linguistici e letterari* by Luca Danzi and Angelo Stella (1991), of the *Scritti letterari* by Carla Ricciardi and Biancamaria Travi (1991) and even of the *Inni sacri* by Franco Gavazzeni and Simone Albonico (Manzoni 1997). Thanks to Isella’s initiative, many editorial series were created that proposed critical editions of texts existing in several authorial redactions. This is the case with the ‘Classici Mondadori’ (and then of the ‘Meridiani’), ‘Studi e strumenti di filologia italiana’ by the Arnoldo and Alberto Mondadori Foundation, the National Edition of D’Annunzio’s works, and then the ‘Fondazione Pietro Bembo’ series, which was created by Isella with Giorgio Manganelli and continues to be directed by Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo and Alfredo Stussi. These series contained significant studies and emerged from other centers of excellence close to Isella’s interests, in particular from scholars associated with Domenico De Robertis.
In light of what we have seen, the overall picture is an extremely positive one for Italian philological studies, which is at the cutting edge in this particular field. And yet we should not ignore the fact that — as Isella himself lamented it in a speech held in 1999, now collected in the new edition of *Le carte mescolate* (Isella 2009a: 235–45) — these editions have frequently not produced a lively debate or increased the volume of related studies, as one would expect. One reason for this is in part due to the tight connection of ecdotics with criticism in editions that are highly interpretative in character, and this may perhaps have led to a feeling of momentary overload. However, another reason stems from the difficulty in consulting apparatuses which are often extremely complex. This is a problem that could at least partly be solved by adopting, as far as possible, shared rules (on the problematic nature of some apparatuses, see the examples given in Stussi 2006: 196–257).

1.6 Authorial philology in the digital era

Starting from the 1930s, with the introduction of typewriting, and then from the 1970s with the widespread use of photocopies, authorial philology has had to deal with the introduction of new writing materials and devices altering the processes of production, revision, editing and printing. Consequently, it has had to develop new standards for representing corrections. One only needs to consider, for example, phenomena such as the different series of corrections represented by handwritten variants on a typewritten document, the possibility of assessing the relation between witnesses on the basis of the typewriter used, the use of white concealer on typewritten documents, the many kinds of photocopies that are useful in the reconstruction of the sequential order of macro-texts, and so forth. All these problems are constitutive features of the philology related to twentieth-century texts, as can be seen in section 3.6, which is dedicated to Gadda.

Only since the 1980s and 1990s, with the introduction of word processing, did we begin to witness an epochal change in the forms of communication, generated by the processes of conceiving, writing and revising the digital text that are completely different from what happens with handwritten texts. This shift is analogous to the great change represented by the invention of printing. Nevertheless, at present, we
are still not dealing with literary works that belong entirely to the new mode of production, that is, works that are conceived, designed, written and revised exclusively in digital form. Rather we are dealing with transitional products, works of literature of a generation straddling both handwritten and digital production. It is important not to confuse these two realities.

Adopting Peter Shillingsburg’s judicious distinction (2006), we might say that it is one thing to embrace new technology in order to make critical editions of literary works belonging to the Gutenberg generation, and yet completely another to conceive of a new philology meant for literary works belonging to the Google generation. From Gutenberg to Google is indeed the title of Shillingsburg’s acclaimed book in which he discusses the delicate transitional phase between these two historical moments, and reflects on the criteria that are suitable for providing a reliable critical edition of a text published on the world wide web (see Italia 2007a). The enormous body of texts available online makes the formulation of a standard protocol ever more urgent for literary works belonging to the Gutenberg era and edited in the Google era. Building such a set of protocols, will allow a common platform for both the critical editor and the reader whether a specialist or not. The editor will continue to assume responsibility for establishing which version is to be selected as copy-text (even if on the web), and its features, while the reader will select the information provided by the electronic infrastructure according to their interests and the queries made to the text.

From this point of view, it does not make sense to talk about the need for a ‘new philology’. Even those who are learning to read today and who, in fifteen years, will probably find Don Quixote on the web, will still be able to count on Francisco Rico’s edition, without the need to establish a new critical edition of the text for the web. If these same people are fascinated by the poetry of Petrarch’s Canzoniere, they will be able to discover the amazing genesis of that text through Laura Paolino’s edition of the Codice degli abbozzi (see section 3.1), perhaps with the support of a Just in Time Markup — JITM program. On the other hand, the so-called Google generation texts, i.e., those entirely conceived, designed, made and read (or listened to) on the web, raise other issues. These texts will no longer be made of paper, but of bytes and pixels. We
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should truly consider a new kind of philology in this case, and this will be a task that will fall to the next generations.

Let us examine at any rate how the introduction of digital technologies has led to certain innovations in the framework of the ‘old’ philology that have completely changed what it means to do philological work. The first major change is in the phase of collecting and studying the witnesses, and it concerns the digitalization of manuscript materials. Such materials can be studied both on the autograph and on a digital medium, thus overcoming the historical problem of witnesses often being stored in archives and libraries that were very far apart and that of the quality of their reproductions as well. A high-definition digital photo (which can be easily made, even with a digital camera) allows us to enlarge the image up to ten times its natural size, to rotate it, to modify the colour and the contrast or even to read under deletions what would normally unreadable to the naked eye (see the DVD of the latest critical edition edited by Gavazzeni [2009], as discussed in section 3.5).

A great advantage of digital editions is also the possibility of archiving off-line and on-line any kind of manuscripts, typescripts and printed documents related to a text. Through such editions, the reader can trace the philologist’s work much more easily than in the past and follow it directly on the documents, concretely testing the working hypothesis offered by the critical edition.

A second change in the work of the philologist dealing with authorial materials affects the establishment of the critical edition, and this concerns the possibility of using a digital rather than paper-based medium in representing the genesis and evolution of the text. Experiments of this kind carried out so far, now fairly numerous (see www.filologiadautore.it), show the rich opportunities given by hypertextual editions in representing the historical stages of a text and the dynamics underpinning the corrections. Unlike the paper-based edition, the online one allows us to use internal or external hyperlinks, as well as chromatic markers, in order to represent the text’s multiple layers and various phases of composition. As we shall see, all such elements in the printed edition were rendered by typographical (monochrome) markers and by means of symbols and abbreviations. Here, too, the large amount of information that can be archived on the web overcomes the difficulties that come from using a paper-based medium, for which the
philologist had to devise the apparatus in a way that took into account the cost of printing. This is not to say that new editions should be repetitious and overly abundant, but rather that they make the handling of multiple witnesses much easier, thanks to the great availability of storage space and the ease of making a digital synoptic comparison between multiple documents. In this way there is no longer any need to find a difficult balance between text and apparatus, as shown in the solution of the Fermo e Lucia’s philological issue (on this, see section 3.4).

Digital technology has also introduced great advantages in how we can use critical editions both for teaching purposes and for specialized study, due to the immediate availability of the online editions that can be viewed, studied or even downloaded on the computer if enabled. We should not forget that authorial philology has always been a prerogative of a scholarly and refined but also very expensive kind of publishing, one which employs extremely sophisticated typographical techniques. The increased use of digital tools is therefore a true democratic revolution. The availability and the user-friendliness of editions produced at an international level is another advantage. In this way, Italian authorial philology is able to measure itself against the use of imaging and study techniques for variants developed in other countries, and not only in Europe, setting in motion a virtuous circle of communication. This will allow the work produced in Italy to emerge from the isolation it has experienced so far and the international scientific community should be able to come up with increasingly shared protocols and techniques of representation as well, the true foundation of a scientific method.

The latest developments on the web, consisting in the use of work platforms and information exchange, have ultimately led to a real methodological innovation. The overcoming of geographical distances between scholars enabled them to engage directly with one another’s work and to share the contents and the virtual spaces from various platforms in real-time, in a sort of constant seminar. This new way of working offers extraordinary potential on a global scale (see the experiment on Gadda recalled in section 3.6) that will bring even more changes to the philologist’s work by bringing it from an individual (if not solipsistic) dimension to a scenario in which knowledge is shared and is available to the entire scientific community.
1.7 Authorial philology in the latest decade

In the last ten years, also thanks to the diffusion of the discipline in the Italian philology classes of Italian Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees, and to the impulse given by digital philology, authorial philology has undergone notable development. This development has produced new critical editions (such as the original unpublished version of *Eros and Priapo* by Carlo Emilo Gadda, Milan, Adelphi, 2016 and the critical editions of *Storie ferraresi* by Giorgio Bassani, such as *Una notte del ’43*, Siciliano 2018b, 2019), new studies (Italia 2016, Caruso 2020) and the series of books *Filologia d’autore*, launched in 2017, which collects volumes dedicated to ‘How ancient and modern authors worked’, starting with *Come lavorava Manzoni* (Raboni 2017) and *Come lavorava Gadda* (Italia 2017a, soon to be translated into French), followed by similar works on Gabriele D’Annunzio (Montagnani and De Lorenzo 2018), Francesco Guicciardini (Moreno 2019), Giosuè Carducci (Caruso and Casari 2020), Giovanni Boccaccio (edited by Maurizio Fiorilla, forthcoming) and Niccolò Machiavelli (edited by Pasquale Stopelli, forthcoming).

What is more, in 2010 the website www.filologiadautore.it was founded, and has now become a digital environment for information, updates and training in authorial philology, and a repository of Wiki editions (WikiLeopardi and WikiGadda, whose main pages have had more than 750,000 contacts). The website is consulted daily by all those looking for an introduction to the discipline. Also relevant to this development are studies of the history, methods, reviews of the critical reference texts, and the Catalogue of Digital Critical Editions produced by Greta Franzini (https://dig-ed-cat.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/).

The website contains, in the ‘Authorial Philology Exercises’ section, examples of editions of autographs with corrections by Gabriele D’Annunzio, Luigi Pirandello, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Elsa Morante. The site presents both the ‘French-style’ genetic edition — a *diplomatic edition* which is the first step for a correct deciphering of the manuscript and for the synoptic vision of the original and its transcription — and a *critical edition* adhering to the method of authorial philology, with the diachronic reconstruction of the series of phases (1, 2, 3) and sub-phases (a, b, c) being given. In addition to these exercises, there is the ‘How to Prepare a Critical Edition’ section (section 2.6 in this book),
which is carried out on Giacomo Leopardi’s *Alla luna*, which is an apparently simple, but actually very complex case because, on the fair copy, Leopardi made, in three different years (1819, 1820, 1821), three different layers of corrections, with three different pens (which are distinguished in the critical apparatus using letters) and a final series of corrections, probably meant for the 1826 edition of his poems (intitled, *Versi*), in red pen (a layered representation of the corrections is given in the digital edition Ecdosys Leopardi, cf. Giuffrida et al. 2020).

The method of authorial philology provides the best possible interaction between philology and criticism, as it makes it possible to represent the correcting movement in diachronic form, by phases — divided, if necessary, into sub-phases and internal bifurcations — and to compare the variants not only, as has been done so far, from a lexical point of view, but also from a syntactic point of view, a procedure that is impossible with the synchronic and photographic representation offered by genetic criticism. An analytical study of the variants, carried out on syntactic categories, will make it possible to extend the criticism of variants, for the first time, to the study of the genesis of the syntax of the sentence, and to establish new categories, to be added to those identified by Gianfranco Contini in 1937 in his essay ‘Come lavorava l’Ariosto’ (later collected in Contini 1939), with which authorial variants (especially lexical variants) are normally studied: lowering or raising the style, increasing dialectality, introducing more dignified forms, introducing forms of direct speech, etc.

Thanks to the advantages of the digital medium, the relations between authorial philology and genetic criticism, which in the 1990s had been rather lukewarm, have been strengthened in a common effort to enhance philology in general, by promoting seminars, conferences and specific studies on the genesis of texts. One could say that the disappearance of manuscript variants, now that creativity is no longer developed on white paper but on computer screens, has aroused a new interest in authors’ corrections, and has overcome the old methodological differences. The study of authors’ variants has also taken on an interdisciplinary perspective, with various projects of stratigraphic analysis of manuscripts, and with digital philology projects (such as Philoeditor Manzoni, see Di Iorio et al. 2014), which have pushed authorial philology to dialogue and collaborate with other
philologies, with a view to extending the study of authorial variants to all disciplines based on the evidence of the document: history, philosophy, science, physics.

Thanks to the collaboration with ITEM, directed by Paolo D’Iorio (founder and coordinator of one of the main digital archives of authorial papers, Nietzsche Source), it has been possible to collaborate with an international network of scholars to consolidate studies of authorial variants worldwide and to collaborate with the working group on eighteenth-century Italian manuscripts directed by Christian Del Vento, within the Équipe Écritures des Lumières directed by Nathalie Ferrand (Ferrand and Del Vento 2018, and Ferrand 2019). Genetic critics’ interest in the ‘Italian case’ culminated in the monographic issue of *Genesis* (Del Vento and Musitelli 2019) dedicated to Italian manuscripts from Petrarch to Antonio Tabucchi. While, in the last ten years, on the French side, authorial philology has built relationships that have allowed a fruitful dialogue with genetic criticism, on the Spanish side the diffusion of the discipline has been even more significant, as shown by the Spanish translation of *What is Authorial Philology?* published in the journal *Creneida*. The challenge of the next few years is to extend this network of relationships to other branches of philology, i.e., to the study of authorial variants in Europe, a project launched by Dirk Van Hulle and Olga Beloborodova: *Towards a Comparative History of Literary Drafts in Europe* (forthcoming, 2021).

The establishment of a stable and lasting network of relationships will allow, despite the plurality of methodologies of representing corrections, a sharing of good practices in order to achieve, in a short time, a crucial objective that can only be realized in collaboration with other philologies. The first, already signalled by Dante Isella, but unfortunately not yet achieved, is to establish a common system of representation for similar textual phenomena: acronyms and abbreviations have indeed not yet reached a shared standard. A good example for this is deletion, which since classical philology has been represented with inverted angle brackets (\(<xxxxxx<\)\), while some critical editions use a different mode of representation, with some of them even opting to use regular angle brackets (\(\langlexxxxxx\rangle\)\), which would normally represent the opposite of a deletion, that is a textual integration by the editor meant to resolve a mechanical or textual lacuna. This inevitably leads to misunderstandings.
and difficulties in deciphering the apparatuses, creating an easy target for anti-philological polemics.

This is all the more urgent not only to prevent the scholar, and the general reader, from having to learn a system of representative signs from scratch each time and to memorize it when reading the edition, but also because standardization has become necessary to allow the automatic querying of data through digital text analysis, and the extraction of data on the basis of shared parameters. It is obvious that, as the discipline stands today, when faced with editions that use widely different systems of signs, such standardization is still a long way off.

It could be argued that XML/TEI marking provides a set of parameters dedicated to the representation of corrections which can constitute a shared system. But if TEI marking is applied to different representations of the same phenomena, it will replicate, in the digital world, the original dissimilarity found in physical editions. Moreover, the TEI marking, when used for authorial variants, has the drawback of not allowing double marking, tag overlapping, and automatic collation systems can be used only partially and only on texts with a very low rate of variation, and above all for variants that do not imply transpositions, since the systems do not automatically recognize the positioning of the transposed text portions. Despite the desirable speed of automatic collation, it is necessary to intervene to manually correct the portions of text that the computer cannot recognise syntactically and semantically. This is further complicated by the impetus imposed by the digital medium, towards an increasingly ‘Bedierian philology’ (Raboni 2012) — in which the document prevails over the text — that has led to the diffusion, especially in the Anglo-Saxon sphere, of the so-called documentary editions, that in traditional philology terms are hyper-diplomatic transcriptions, despite being often presented as critical editions (see the critical view in Pierazzo 2014).

It is no coincidence, in fact, that for more complex manuscripts, such as those of the Charles Harpur Archive, edited by Paul Eggert, the ‘graphs’ method (Ecdosys), elaborated by Desmond Schmidt with Domenico Fiormonte (Fiormonte 2015), has been used instead (Schmidt 2015), because it makes it possible to identify the different correcting layers and represent them in progression, breaking the bi-univocal relationship between text and apparatus, and replacing the parcelling
out of the witnesses, provided by the *apparatus*, with the ordering of the different correcting phases, which can be displayed synoptically in the digital edition. Choosing between TEI marking and the marking with the ‘graphs method’ corresponds to choosing between a photographic and synchronic representation versus a dynamic and diachronic one, and shows that digital philology shares the same problems as analogical philology. We note two in particular: 1) a single shared model that can be adopted on the Internet has not yet been identified, despite the numerous attempts to model and extend the infrastructure to the single editions; 2) there is not yet a procedure to provide digital editions with a sort of ‘certification’ that allows us to distinguish scholarly editions from non-scholarly texts.

Authorial philology has also undergone considerable development thanks to the use of digital technologies for manuscript analysis that improve the legibility of manuscripts using the most sophisticated techniques: analysis of stratigraphies of corrections, under-erasure readings, readings under cartouches that cannot be removed. Collaboration with optics and photonics has allowed us to benefit from the progress made in recent years in the field of imaging: stratigraphies represented through spectrometric analysis, the use of terahertz waves, and 3D representation of the third (or ‘Z’) dimension, time, which can give, for manuscripts of particular importance, a new procedure of reproduction and conservation (see the THESMA PROJECT, developed at the University of Rome ‘Sapienza’ in collaboration with the Department of Physics, as well as the YouTube channel devoted to authorial philology, and Leopardi 3D, which aims to reconstruct the stratigraphy of the manuscript, understood as a three-dimensional object, and to allow an analytical study, even by non-experts).

The sharing of methods of representation for correctional phenomena is a necessary condition to reflect on the compositional modalities that might be common to different authors, and on the existence of *common writing patterns*. In this regard, in Bologna, a working group called Manus-creative has been set up, bringing together researchers from different historical periods linked by the study of manuscripts with digital technologies: from ancient manuscripts, to medieval and humanistic manuscripts, to modern and contemporary manuscripts (up to typescripts with manuscript corrections, which are comparable
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to manuscripts), to investigate the possibility that there could be a ‘grammar of correction’. It is a fact, however, that the definition of such correction schemes is possible only by being able to compare corrections that have been represented with diachronic-systemic apparatuses, not with synchronic-photographic apparatuses. The first studies carried out on modern authors, from Manzoni to Bassani, lead us to believe that there may be a connection between some aspects of the ideology and poetics of the authors and the formalization of their creative thought on the manuscript (Italia 2017b).

The extension of the method of authorial philology to writers of other literatures could enhance the value of investigating creative thinking through the study of variants, and make it possible to understand whether the methodology of correction depends on the language used or on the genre chosen or on the relationship between the author and his/her own writing. However, there is also another objective that can only be achieved through collaboration with other disciplines. While it is true that the changeover from writing on paper to digital writing might cause the ‘extinction’ of authorial philology, as the study of authors’ corrections for the writing of the 2000s will concern exclusively digital variants, it is also true that a new boundless area of investigation is opening up to authorial philology. The study of authorial manuscripts can indeed be extended to non-literary disciplinary fields that are based on the evidence of manuscript documents which have not yet been investigated with a philological method, from history, to economics, to law, to philosophy. One thinks of the extraordinary results obtained, precisely thanks to the analysis of autographs, in the study of Nietzsche’s thought (Nietzsche Source is a sure reference model for digital archives), or that of Gramsci (the ecdotic model established by Gianni Francioni for the Quaderni dal carcere and the authorship studies carried out by Maurizio Lana and Mirko Degli Esposti). Recently, the drafts of Benedetto Croce himself, a proud opposer of Contini’s criticism of variants, have been analyzed for a sort of counterpoint, with interesting critical results (Tarantino 2005). But we are yet to see the diffusion of research practice on the authorial variants of texts related to the ‘hard’ sciences, such as physics, mathematics, natural sciences and, more generally, the history of science. Expanding the study of authors’ corrections to a broader conception of authorship means entering more
deeply into the paths of creation, and together with the methods we have now refined for understanding and representing variants, not only on paper but also in digital editions, it will allow us to investigate scientific creative thinking and relate it to the genetic dynamics of non-scientific texts, as well as to solve authorship problems involving scientific texts.

This opens up very ambitious challenges for authorial philology: 1) to extend the study of variants to the wider dimension of syntax; 2) to establish a set of common procedures in the representation of similar textual phenomena; 3) to work towards a European perspective to build relationships with similar disciplines; 4) to enhance the critical paper editions already produced and often lying unused in the stacks of libraries and give them a new digital life, sharing them in an international research dimension, and finally 5) to extend the philological method to disciplines where a genetic study of authorial texts can be extremely productive, not only to broaden knowledge about the creative thinking of authors, but also to spread a philological attitude, which is the best antidote to save new generations from a passive, unconscious and, therefore, irresponsible use of texts.