Interpretative Mechanisms in the Textual Cultures of Scholarly Editing

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Abstract

A companion talk to David L. Vander Muelen's "Bibliography and Other History", this essay examines recent questions in the field of textual criticism and its relations to book history, historical linguistics, bibliography, codicology, and literary criticism. It also investigates the place of material philology and the thorny questions of interpretation, the stemma codicum, and the textus receptus as—for better or for worse—essential parts of scholarly editing.[1]

Since 1667, thanks to Jean Mabillon, we have had the story at our disposal. In 1109, following the tradition of earlier biblical correctories of collating numerous books, Stephen Harding chose as his base text one that he considered "fuller" and most worthy of his faith ("Et quia illum pleniorem caeteris invenimus, fidem ei accommodantes").[2] But its inclusion of pieces of text not included in other bibles ultimately troubled him. Well after the transcription was well underway of the Cîteaux bible that would bear Harding's approval, he turned to Jewish scholars and their scrolls in order to resolve the discrepancies that occurred between his "fuller" exemplar and many other Latin copies ("in aliis multis historiis Latinis").[3] Harding's editorial model is the venerated Jerome himself, to whom Harding will refer throughout the note as "interprete" ("ut quod ab uno interprete, videli-

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1. A shorter version of this essay was delivered 15 March 2007 in my absence by Francesca Parmeggiani in the opening plenary session, "Book History, Textual Criticism, and Bibliography: Relating and Distinguishing the Sub-Disciplines", organized by Paul Eggert and Peter Shillingsburg for the Fourteenth Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference of the Society for Textual Scholarship (New York).
2. The story is told by Stephen Harding himself in his bible's famous bibliographical note on the process of editing the correctory (see Mabillon 1667 and Denifle 1888). All quotations are from Mabillon's text printed in the *Patrologia Latina*. All translations are my own.
3. Harding's bible is today found in Dijon, in the Bibliothèque municipale, MS 14.

cet beato Hieronymo", etc.), the 'translator' of the "single Hebrew source". Like Jerome the "interprete", Harding too will put his faith in the Hebrew and Chaldaean texts to edit his own "interpretation". But there are two additional aspects of his editorial process that he stresses in his account. The first is his repeated report that he converses with the Jewish scholars in the vernacular ("ac diligentissime lingua romana inquisiumus de omnibus illis scripturarum locis"). The second is the final editorial technique that Harding will employ to correct his copy: he scraps off the erroneous and superfluous passages, mentioning that the erasures are very apparent ("omnia illa superflua prorsus abrasimus, veluti in multis huius libri locis apparet [. . .] quia rasura pergameni eadem loca non celat"). His final step is significant. He proscribes ("interdicimus") future emendations and/or tampering with the erasures to restore the erroneous readings. Nor can future readers add marginal glosses:

> Nunc vero omnes qui hoc volumen sunt lecturi rogamus, quatenus nullo modo praedictas partes vel versus superfluos huic operi amplius adjungant. Satis enim lucet in quibus locis erant, quia rasura pergameni eadem loca non celat. Interdicimus etiam auctoritate Dei et nostrae congregationis, ne quis hunc librum, magno labore praeparatum, inhoneste tractare, vel ungula sua per scripturam vel marginem eius aliquid notare praesumat.
>
> We now appeal to all future readers of this book: in no way should they add to this work the aforementioned parts nor these superfluous verses. It should be clear enough where they were since the scraped off parchment does not hide the places. Upon the authority of God and our congregation we prohibit the mistreatment of this book, prepared with great labor. Nor should the text be altered by using one's fingernail nor anything be noted in the margin.

Harding's account of his editorial experience almost seems the stuff of scholarly parables: a guiding principle of a return to reliable witnesses, the Hieronynian model of interpretative editing through translation from those witnesses, even the desire that the resulting text be "the final word", closed to reassessment, addenda, and marginalia. And, of course, we know the struggle between philological inquiry and truth has not just been about stubborn witnesses. Luciano Canfora's recent *Filologia e libertà* (2008) reminds us again of the long history of institutional and bibliographical obstacles that have significantly raised the cost of biblical textual studies, from Johann Jakob Wet-

stein (1694–1754) and Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) to Louis Duchesne (1843–1922) and Alfred Loisy (1857–1940), the latter whose philological work spanned, and suffered during, the unforgiving encyclicals of Pius IX (*Providentissimus Deus* 1893) and Pius X (*Pascendi dominici gregis* 1907).

However, it is Harding's willingness to reopen his own textual inquiry in the midst of the final process of preparing such an edition ("magno labore praeparatum") that strikes me, especially the way he integrates erasure as a meaningful part of the text by calling the reader's attention to what has been eliminated and the appearance of the material object itself. His description of those erasures and, ultimately, his admonition tell us a great deal about the medieval reader's relationship to the material of the book itself, the nature of its script, and its legibility, features that still guide our definitions, for example, of "fair copy". In Harding's account, erasure defines accuracy, the very tangible results of his textual method that has equally significant spiritual results. Harding's *nota* inexorably links text to its materiality.

In 2002, the dean of Italian textual criticism, Domenico De Robertis, published the results of fifty years of research on the complex textual traditions of the lyric poetry of the world's most studied author, Dante Alighieri. Printed in five tomes, one devoted to the texts of the poems themselves and the other four to introduction, critical apparatus, and assessments of the witnesses, De Robertis's edition (2002) would appear to be an ode to neo-Lachmannian methodology and conservative textual criticism. It is an admirable monument to the power of philological erudition that is uniquely De Robertis's. However, it has also become part of the recent and expanding debate about the nature and limits of the methodological application of textual cultures.[4] Both in print and in presentations, De Robertis has been scrupulous in his caution about the role of interpretation, even of otherwise legitimately Lachmannian applications of *iudicium* in editing. Just months before the publication of the edition, when asked at a conference in Padova what after all these years of investigation he could tell us about Dante's lyric language, De Robertis replied: "Nothing. I can tell you about the language of the copyists who transcribed Dante's poems, but not about Dante's language".[5] De Robertis's cautious reply at first seems to be the result of a

4. For a more detailed investigation of this debate, see the essay by Michelangelo Zaccarello "Metodo stemmatico ed ecdotica volgare italiana: brevi considerazioni su alcuni recenti contributi metodologici", in this issue of *Textual Cultures*.

5. De Robertis's remarks were delivered in the inaugural session of the international conference "Da Guido Guinizzelli a Dante. Nuove prospettive sulla lirica del Duecento" (Padova and Monselice 10–12 May 2002), but were never recorded for the *acta* (see Brugnolo and Peron 2004).

modest arrival at the archetypes of the lyric poems attributed to Dante and his correspondents. Closer inspection of De Robertis's textual operations reveals in some cases far less concern with the archetype than with multiple and equipollent versions and even parallel traditions.[6] The first to establish, and back in 1954, independent versions of poems that would later be revised by Dante for his *Vita Nova*, in 2002 De Robertis reveals the implications of those independent redactions as separate poems.

Because of De Robertis's extraordinary authority as a philologist, critical reaction to the edition in Italy has been both muted and at times less than "critical". Then president of the Italian Dante Society, Guglielmo Gorni (2002), whose contributions to the critical matrices in the edition are considerable, registered only mild complaint that he had hoped for even more definitive and clearly stated solutions to problematic *cruces*. However, it has been an American literary critic in the field of Dante studies, Teodolinda Barolini, who has called out the elephant in the editorial room of this landmark edition: De Robertis's radical break from tradition in his refusal to hypothesize a chronology for the poems, as the venerated Michele Barbi—codifier of the neo-Lachmannian method—had done in his milestone 1921 edition. Instead De Robertis arranges the lyrics in his edition following two sets of order inherent in the medieval textual condition of Dante's lyrics: that is the typical organization of medieval song repertories (or *canzonieri*) by genre (long poems—or *canzoni*—first and then short lyrics, such as sonnets and *ballate*), and the textual order of many poems as received by Dante's most ardent promoter and early editor, Giovanni Boccaccio. However, Barolini's discomfort with what she sees as De Robertis's "great refusal" hinges not only on his unwillingness to establish a chronology of Dante's lyric production but also on his insistence that interpretation does not enter into his editorial method for establishing Dante's texts. For Barolini the learned philologist fails to apply his own *iudicium* after years of wrestling with the complex historical traditions of these texts.[7] Her argument essentially pivots on

6. Fruits of De Robertis's stemmatics have begun to emerge as well from other critics with the conjecture of an authorial book of canzoni which would have pre-dated Boccaccio's compilations of what he called in an explicit Dante's "canzoni distese" (for example in MSS Vatican, Chigiano L v 176 and Toledo, Biblioteca Capitular 104.6). However, this subsequent stemmatic reconstruction is particularly problematic thanks to the tangible presence of an earlier and partial compilation fused with canzoni and *ballate* by Guido Cavalcanti and Caccia da Castello in MS Laurenziano Martelli 12.

7. See Barolini 2004. I am grateful to Professor Barolini for the advance reading of the introduction to the first volume of her forthcoming commentary on Dante's

the textual fact that Boccaccio's copy is itself an editorial redaction constructed on the critical interpretative matrices that the compilers and copyists of medieval anthologies often imposed on texts in their reorganizations of copies of song books. Furthermore, Boccaccio's sometimes heavy-handed, culturally retrograde and personally zealous mechanisms of textual reorganization of Dante's works amount to a contaminating tradition that was strong enough to cause the editor of the 1966–1967 critical edition of the *Divine Comedy*, Giorgio Petrocchi, to eliminate—in a curiously "semi-Lachmannian" maneuver—all manuscripts produced after the diffusion and influence of Boccaccio's own copies of the *Comedy*, ca. 1355.[8] Barolini's complaint is that De Robertis edits interpretatively through the *optique culturelle* of Boccaccio's editions and the prevailing scribal mechanisms of larger fourteenth-century anthologies without interrogating the interpretative mechanisms inherent in these models as well.

In a conservatively authority-oriented tradition in which, for example, in 1907 Michele Barbi imposed—without manuscript evidence—forty-two chapters onto Dante's *Vita Nuova* and insisted that future textual scholars not tamper with his invention, De Robertis's admissions to the limits imposed by post-Dantean copyists and his own reliance upon separately definable mechanisms of diverse textual cultures at work in the reproduction of Dante's lyric poetry are often as subtle as they are monumental in the case of an author who stretched the limits of the poetic and scribal cultures of his own day. De Robertis's edition, though in debt to Barbi's philological work, reexamines the entirety of Dante's twenty-five years of lyric experimentation and development, often putting aside Barbi's authority. For example, while a sizeable portion of the poems collected in the *Vita Nova* are reedited by Dante for the prosimetrum, Barbi treated them as a single tradition subsumed by their "collected" forms in the macrotext. But this is a minor example in comparison to the two independent redactions of the sonnet *Per quella via che la Bellezza corre* (*By that road that Beauty runs*), for which De Robertis finds significant contamination in Barbi's and Contini's editorial

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lyric poetry. We should keep in mind that Michele Barbi proposed the importance of the editor's experience and judgment in the linguistic and cultural information associated with the work and the author (1938, xxiii).

8. One example of Boccaccio's editorial style occurs in both of his copies of Dante's *Vita Nova* (also in MSS Toledo, Archivo y Biblioteca Capitulares 104.6 and Vatican, Chigiano L V 176) when Boccaccio explains in an editorial note (*Maravigli-erannosi molti* [. . .]) that we will be moving Dante's explanations of how and why the poems were divided from the body of the prose text to the margins of his edition. Cf. Storey 2004.

methodologies resulting in a neo-Lachmannian fusion of two separate traditions which actually distinguish between two narrative orientations: version A, which presents more allegorical readings, and version B a more 'social text'. In version A metaphorical "License" moves "audaciously"; in version B metaphorical "License" becomes a woman named Lisetta who passes by with the same arrogance ("vanne Lisetta baldanzosamente" [v. 7]). In the allegorical version A, a disembodied voice quickly invites the beautiful woman to rise up ("odesi boce dir subitamente: Lèvati, bella donna" [vv. 7–8]), in version B the same voice asks her as a contrastive social courtesy to turn around ("udissi voce dir cortesemente: / Volgiti, bella donna"). Notably, the notary Aldrovandino's reply in sonnet form to Dante connects exclusively to the social context of the B version of Dante's poem. As we see elsewhere in Dante's works, the cultural context of one version could well have lived a separate editorial existence from the sonnet's more allegorical form.

Even more emblematic of the diverse mechanisms of textual cultures at work in these contexts of production, reproduction and editing is the case of the sonnet *No me poriano zamay far emenda* (*They couldn't ever make it up to me*), the poem that mentions the Garisenda tower in Bologna and is attributed by De Robertis to Dante. In spite of the late nineteenth-century discovery of an early copy of this unattributed sonnet among Bolognese legal registers for 1287, editors such as Michele Barbi (1921) and Gianfranco Contini (1965) edited the poem according to its later witness in the mid-fourteenth-century Florentine, and pro-Dantean, anthology MS Vatican, Chigiano L viii 305, the first extant manuscript to attribute the poem to Dante. The earlier Bolognese copy presents us with a redaction of a poem which demonstrates a more experimental text than the Florentine version that was seemingly edited according to the poetics and linguistic patina of Dante's lyrics and motifs.[9] As I pointed out in 1993 (145–56), the Bolognese copy and the poem's subsequent Florentine copy reveal not only profoundly different historical-linguistic and poetic circumstances of reproduction, but also the editorial politics of academic authority at work in editions from Carducci to Contini.

De Robertis's treatment of the sonnet *No me poriano zamay far emenda* also demonstrates an emerging stratum in textual criticism, which grapples with irreconcilable traditions of the same work. Barbi (1921) and Contini (1965) dismissed the earliest copy (1287) because it demonstrated fundamentally divergent variants to be disqualified by virtue of what they deemed

9. Both in terms of national tradition and Dante textual criticism, it is remarkable that De Robertis opts to print the earlier Bolognese redaction of the poem (2002: 3, 331) rather than the later Florentine version preferred by previous editors.

to be the unreliable nature of the witness's container (the transactional and legal documents of the *Memoriali bolognesi*). But recent philological and codicological work on the massive volume of the *Memoriali*'s registers has investigated the separate scribal mechanisms applied according to the genre of the transcription in these civil books from land transfers to sonnet sequences.[10] The larger issue of the reliability of large anthologies has—from Gröber (1877) to Avalle (1985 and 1992) and Zinelli (2002)—been called more and more into question thanks to more precise codicological and philological studies that have begun to interrogate the systems and practices utilized by copyists and compilers to assemble and reassemble lyric sequences found in earlier exemplars. The once-presumed slavishness of copyists to their exemplars continues to lead to the mistaken designation for some earlier anthologies as "good manuscripts" in spite of the fact that they often contain numerous independent traditions of lyrics and lyric sequences by a wide array of poets from different regions. In truth, the primary compiler of the major witness for thirteenth-century Italian poetry, MS Vatican Latino 3793, might well have used very sound exemplars for Guittone d'Arezzo or Monte Andrea da Firenze but have had at his disposal corrupt copies of other poets. The assessment of a 'good witness' could never be claimed for the entire anthology. Rather, even the works of a single poet can be absorbed into anthologies from witnesses of distinctly different quality, suggesting that assessments of 'reliability' have to be limited often to multiple, verifiable traditions within the repertory.

Some of these early anthologies also show material and linguistic evidence of editorial interpretation in the rearrangement of poetic sequences. This is particularly the case with the early fourteenth-century anthology from the Veneto, MS Madrid, Escorial, Lat. e.III.23. A unique witness in its early Venetian copies of poems that circulated throughout Tuscany and the Veneto, the codex is a gold mine of late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century editorial and compilational strategies and tools, including intricate alphabetical and marking systems for reordering the lyrics to create a new manuscript.[11] But there is an additional aspect of this important codex that

10. See, for example, Orlando 2005, especially his introduction: ix–lxxx, and Storey 1993, 133–56. Fundamental for this extensive collection of legal and commercial registers in which drawings and poetry also appear is the ongoing work of Luisa Continelli (1988 and 2008).

11. See Capelli 2004 for an in-depth study of these editorial markers, and Capelli 2006 for a discussion of the ecdotic issues involved in the preparation of the edition of Escorial, Lat. e.III.23. Petrarch as well utilized a less sophisticated system for rearranging the last thirty-one compositions in MS Vatican Latino 3195, the

speaks directly to the question of interpretative strategies of anthologization in medieval manuscripts themselves: the precocious regrouping of sonnets on the topic of vision and the central role of the eyes. The grouping of twenty-four poems, which opens with Dante's *Amor e 'l cor gientil son una cosa* (*Love and the noble heart are one entity*) and concludes with Cino da Pistoia's *Una dona mi passa per la mente* (*A woman passes through my mind*) includes as well sonnets with the same motif by Guido Cavalcanti. It is especially noteworthy that Dante's seven sonnets contain *lectiones* that reveal most probably the state of the individual lyrics before four are revised and ordered in the poet's *Vita Nova* (ca. 1292).[12] However, what was Dante's rationale in ordering these four poems in the *Vita Nova*? While the *Vita Nova* narrates an ideal poetic diary, some of its poems are also grouped according to thematics, not unlike the Escorial editor's thematic arrangement of Dante's, Guido's and Cino's songs.

Some will still pose the question: where do we draw the line between textual criticism and the material reception of works that—in terms of the old and received categories—qualifies possibly as history of the book? or worse, history of the text? or even a history of versions? In truth, this line has never existed. The book marginalia of readers and editors have long been the territory of practicing textual critics and theoreticians of scholarly editing, whose study, for example, of the marginal annotations of Luca Martini's copy of a 1515 Aldine edition of Dante led to the recreation of the oldest and one of the most reliable copies of the *Divine Comedy*.[13] In classical philology, Giorgio Pasquali's development of the principle of *recentiores non deteriores* (1934) and Sebastiano Timpanaro's corrective formula of the textual culture of the "supposed autograph" (1986) among the scholiasts of Vir-

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partial holograph of his *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (cf. Storey 1993 and 2004), a technique that was adopted as well by early copyists required to add and integrate compositions as they were sent by the poet to be incorporated into the song book. One such example is found in the case of MS Florence, Laurentian 41.17 (see Storey and Capelli 2006).

12. Of the first eight sonnets in the reordered cluster, seven are Dante's: (1) *Amor e 'l cor gientil son una cosa*, (2) Guido Cavalcanti's *Chi hè questa che ven ch'ogn'om la mira*, (3) Dante's *Vede perfectamente ogni salute*, (4) *Ne li oggi porta la mia dona Amore*, (5) *De i oggi de quella gientil mia dama*, (6) *De i oggi de la mia dona se move*, (7) *Tanto gientil e tanto honesta pare*, and (8) *Se 'l visso mio a la terra s'enchiena*. Numbers 1, 3, 4 and 7 are revised and reordered in the *Vita Nova* in the intermittent order 1, 4, 8, 3.

13. The early printed book and its marginalia is preserved in Milan at the National Braidense Library, Aldina AP XVI 25. Martini's apparently systematic 1548 collation of a now lost Florentine copy, transcribed between 1330 and 1331, makes its marginalia the oldest edition of the *Divine Comedy* (cf. Vandelli 1922).

gil's works have their origins in the careful study of what lies beyond or was traditionally eliminated from the pool of substantive variants. Especially in the field of *descripti* copies, and in the footsteps of Pasquali's still indispensable *Storia della tradizione* ([1934] 1971), scholars such as Dario Del Puppo (2007), Samuel N. Rosenberg (2006), and Michelangelo Zaccarello (2000 and 2008) have demonstrated to different degrees the importance of the interpretative mechanisms of distinct compilational and formatting techniques—especially in the paratext—among editorial cultures that have altered and increased the kinds of evidence to which we must turn to edit ancient and modern texts. My own reconstruction in 1989 of rare scribal formulae for 22- and 25-verse extended sonnets in the late Italian thirteenth century, ultimately depended on a stark contrast between the rhetorical density of the works' poetics and the standardizing tendencies of Tuscan scribal culture in the 1280s that produced the single witness in which the sonnets are found, a cultural apparatus that essentially suppressed less standard, and possibly authorial, scribal mechanisms. The words of d'Arco Silvio Avalle still clarify the rich and expansive nature of textual studies and even critical editions. Summarizing in 1992 the experience of years of textual work in numerous traditions and years of teaching, he noted that:

> A [text's] culture is not created solely from an author's originals, but from all the subsidiary activities that engage the process of publishing, the piecemeal circulation of works, imitation, parody, and even plagiarism. By now a critical edition of a single work represents the final phase of the process of drawing as near as possible to an author's original. Nevertheless, the [critical edition] is gravely incomplete when it is not preceeded by a profound knowledge of the character and historical significance of compilations (both of individual texts and miscellanies) that have transmitted the work [. . .].[14]
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> (Avalle [1992] 2007, 716)

And while Avalle considered stemmatics the methodological key to the *restitutio textus* of the original, he championed the study of miscellanies and

14. "Una cultura non è fatta dunque solo di originali d'autore, ma anche di tutte quelle attività sussidiarie che comprendono l'editoria, la divulgazione spicciola, l'imitazione, la parodia e anche il plagio. Ora, l'edizione critica di un'opera singola rappresenta l'ultima fase del processo di avvicinamento all'originale d'autore. Tuttavia essa è gravemente incompleta quando non è preceduta da una più approfondita conoscenza del carattere e del significato storico delle comilazioni (testi unici o mescellanee) che ce l'hanno trasmessa [. . .]".

editions of multiple-author collections key to the same process. Avalle proposed, in fact, the need to rethink the "philosophy of restoration" and to "treat texts in manuscript traditions [often in miscellanies] with the same precautions used in the conservation of [. . .] the plastic arts".[15]

The climb back up the tree toward the archetype, now under reassessment by Trovato (2006) as a concept and by scholars such as Reeve (1986) and Zaccarello (2003 and 2009, the latter in the pages of this issue) as a pragmatic tool rendered statistically unreliable in various traditions, does not suggest the end of the *stemma codicum* but instead a renewed, realistic—and far less dogmatic—application of Barbi's own methodological "rule", probably his only rule, that every text presents unique problems that consequently require unique solutions (1938, x–xi). If these new questions move textual criticism further toward descriptive bibliography, it is a movement that only reinforces one of the textualist's primary tools. The cultural strata of manuscripts and editions in the past left behind by the statistical drive for common errors are now being reevaluated for information that has in some cases revealed to us interpretative filters we inherited from these "mangled artifacts" and that we didn't know we still used. The problem of the *textus receptus* for any number of traditions still plagues more canonical, if not iconic, works both in form and *lectiones*.[16] In his *Principles of Textual Criticism*, Avalle (1977, 30), fashions an explanation which not only distances the question of the *receptus* from the working context of the critical edition, but also strikes at the core of the historical and continuing problematic nature of the *textus receptus*, moving from the St. Jerome Bible to the 1921 national edition of Dante's *Divine Comedy*:

> Con il termine di "textus receptus" si intende il testo dell'edizione corrente (vulgata) di un'opera accettato dalla maggioranza degli editori in ossequio alla tradizione, senza riguardo per la qualità della lezione. L'autorità del "textus receptus" è stata messa in forse per la prima volta nel Sei-Settecento dai teologi protestanti a proposito della Bibbia. Oggi un'edizione è critica nella misura in cui esclude in partenza ogni concetto di imposizione. Naturalmente questo non toglie che nelle edizioni commerciali e scolastiche ancor'oggi si faccia ricorso

15. "Di qui la necessità di ripensare la filosofia del restauro, di trattare i testi della tradizione manoscritta con le stesse precauzioni che presiedono alla conservazione dei prodotti, per es., delle arti figurative" (Avalle [1992] 2002, 715).

16. See again the 2006 volume of *Filologia italiana* 3 (cited as Zaccarello 2006), the selected *acta* of the 2004 Verona conference entitled "Vulgata: Il prestigio storico del *textus receptus* come criterio nel metodo filologico e nella prassi editoriale".

> all'edizione ritenuta più autorevole. Resistenze nei confronti delle edizioni 'moderne' ne sono sempre esistite, dalla versione della Bibbia di san Gerolamo (combattuta per vari motivi dalle comunità piú sensibili ai valori della 'vetus') sino all'edizione nazionale delle Opere di Dante (1921) a suo tempo accolta con scetticismo o, addiritura, scandalo per le sue novità grafiche e morfologiche.
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> With the term *textus receptus* we understand the 'common text' of the 'vulgate version' of a work accepted by the majority of editors out of an obsequious respect for the [commonly] transmitted tradition and without regard to the quality of the readings. The authority of the *textus receptus* was first questioned in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by protestant theologians in the case of the Bible. Today an edition is considered 'critical' in as much as it excludes from the start every notion of a critically imposed text [purely on the grounds of reception]. Naturally this does not exclude the fact that even today commercial and school editions are based on an edition considered 'authoritative'. Resistance to 'modern editions' has always existed, from the Saint Jerome version of the Bible (resisted for various reasons by communities that were sensitive to the values of the *vetus*) to the national edition of 1921 of the Works of Dante, considered at the time of its publication with great skepticism and even scandal because of its innovations in morphology and punctuation.

As in the case of most editorial manuals, those practices—such as the *textus receptus*—to be dismissed from the process of constructing an edition are often given summary treatment. Avalle's description of the two categories of resistance that propose redefined notions of "authority" and "modern scientific inquiry" as a cultural battle with which we are still all too keenly familiar and not only in the sphere of editorial issues: (a) the philosophical values inherent in versions of works in which communities have invested and (b) a cultural nostalgia, if not outright fetish, for certain editions. But it is Avalle's lightning assessment of the initial and amazingly sustained outcry against the 1921 national edition of Dante's works that reveals two significant planks in the resistance of the *receptus* in the face of new and more broadly scientific editions. The first involves the editorial treatment of historical-linguistic forms (morphology) in the struggle to assess and then typographically represent accurately the phonological constructions of Italy's ancient vernaculars. The still current practice of linguistic standardization and modernization, even in critical editions, represents a received cultural mechanism

long avoided by historical linguists and paleographers but accepted by many textual editors.

It is Avalle's second point regarding the 1921 edition of Dante's *Opere* and its innovations in punctuation that leads us to the heart of the problem of the *textus receptus*. The path it sends us down is not solely textual, but cultural and with significant implications for our notions of the "local" in textual editing. Avalle refers not to the typographical use of semicolons rather than periods in the 1921 edition, but to commas. Early critics of the edition objected to its changes to the voicing of Dante's verses. Barbi's 1907 neo-Lachmannian edition of the *Vita Nuova* had scandalized Italian *dantisti* not only because of his demotion of certain venerated and "authoritative" codices now mixed with lesser witnesses in a *stemma codicum*, but also for his altering of the pauses in verses. And similar changes instituted in Vandelli's 1921 *Divine Comedy* rocked the world of Italian Dante studies. But why? Were they all living by the commas in these texts? No, rather the foundations of the *textus receptus* of both of these works were more insidious, especially in the case of the *Comedy*, whose verses were—and to a certain degree still are—memorized and recited frequently from a young age on in the Italian school system. Though it might be the stuff of academic legend, the father of the Italian educational system, Francesco De Sanctis (1817–1883), was purported to have never consulted an actual copy of the *Divine Comedy* to produce his *Lezioni su Dante*, rather he drew on his memory of the verses. We are, of course, at the nexus of a wider cultural definition of "text", especially—as I mentioned before—in the case of certain canonical works, which hovers between the written and the memorized, making the *Comedy* as much a collectively inherited as a scholarly "text". Those of you who have attended a public lecture on Dante in Italy will recall the collective murmur which arises from the audience that recites with the speaker the verses quoted from the *Divine Comedy*. This is not only an exercise in "collective textualization" but in the reinforcement of an *interpunctio recepta* in which the *pausarius*, who leads the pauses of the rowers, seems to come from nowhere special but is well rehearsed.

And if we can talk about the influence of the *receptus*, memorized and recited, as an aural collective whose origins today date back for Dante's *Comedy* to the Petrocchi edition (1966–1967), the typographical and punctuational forms of a genre such as the sonnet are even more entrenched in the visual memory of readers from the fifteenth century on, that is the conversion of the common medieval form of the fourteen-verse sonnet transcribed on seven lines, two verses per line. The hurdle of editing the book of three hundred sixty-six poems of Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, a work en-

shrined in the collective memory of Italian scholars before the rediscovery of the author's autograph, has seemed at times, in keeping with the metaphor, above my cultural stride and in defiance of the documentation.

This is not a clarion call for the New Philology of the 1990 *Speculum* vintage.[17] Rather when we think of the implications of "Barbi's rule" for the work now defined across the generations by the diverse cultural mechanisms of linguistic and material structures that have been applied to its textual representation, a scenario that does not necessarily lead back to an archetype but that attempts to understand the work in its multiple phases of production and diffusion, we have the opportunity to assess more soundly our own interpretative mechanisms in scholarly editing.

De Robertis's edition demonstrates the undeniable influence of the developments in and contributions of both quantitative and descriptive codicology and the collaborative results of the expanded fields of descriptive bibliography and history of the book, the foundations of the material philology practiced by a growing number of specialists in Romance philology and manuscript culture in France, Italy, and the United States.[18] Like my colleagues in material philology here and abroad, I neither predict nor pray for the death of *variantistica*, of textual criticism, nor—frankly—of any other textual method. The methodologies of neo-Lachmannian stemmatics that have produced erroneous stemmata to fuse—as we saw in Barbi's and Contini's editions of Dante's lyrics—two separate versions of *Per quella via che Bellezza corre*, or similar applications of methods without the context of the cultural structures at work in the reproduction of the text risk proposing simply an erroneous text. Petrocchi's 1966–1967 edition of the *Divine Comedy* based the stemma exclusively on codices datable between 1321 and 1350, a stemma at whose center, in the b subgroup of the α family, is the manu-

17. I refer, of course, to the special issue of *Speculum* (see Nichols 1990), well represented in the pages of *Textual Cultures* (see, for example, Altschul 2006).

18. It is impossible to list them all, but I would call particular attention to the work of scholars such as Ezio Ornato, Director of Research at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Richard Trachsler, editor of the edition of the thirteenth-century verse romance *Escanor* (1994), Frédéric Duval, editor of the 2006 École des Chartes volume *Pratiques philologiques en Europe*, Maria Careri, editor of the 2001 *Album de manuscrits français du XIII^e siècle* and co-editor of "Intavulare", the series of volumes dedicated to descriptive studies of the codicological features of anthologies of Old Occitan, Old French and early Italian, Furio Brugnolo, one of my co-editors on the facsimile edition and material-philological commentary of Petrarch's ideograph of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (2003, Padova–Roma: Antenore/Vatican Library), Peter Stallybrass, director of the Seminar on Material Texts and co-editor of the University of Pennsylvania's series "Material Texts".

script Cortonese 88, datable—according to Petrocchi—to before 1341. But the archival and codicological evidence provided in 1994 by Gabriella Pomaro demonstrates that the codex could have been produced no earlier than the 1380s. If Petrocchi's examination of Cortonese 88 had gone beyond the collation of the variants to include a careful study of the manuscript's codicological details, the problematic readings of this codex at the center of Petrocchi's stemma could have been dealt with more accurately.

My own diplomatic-interpretative edition of Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* depends heavily upon the integration of codicological details which Petrarch used in his partial holograph to restructure both the macrotext and his microtextual poetics, as well as upon later witnesses to resolve readings altered or obfuscated by subsequent users of the partially holograph manuscript. In the case of Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, numerous interpretative filters are at work in several editorial strata as the poet changed the register of the codex from fair copy to working draft, shifting also forms of editorial punctuation, markers, and annotations, and erasing and revising numerous readings.

But if the interpretation of the editorial mechanisms imposed by Petrarch in various places of his own manuscript seems unwieldy, even more problematic is the weight of the critical tradition of the previously discussed *textus receptus* as a cultural icon for over six hundred years. Alessandro Vellutello's 1525 alternative edition reacted with philological incredulity to Aldo Manuzio's 1501 claims of access to Petrarch's original manuscript and enjoyed fifteen reprintings in the sixteenth century, some of them influencing the historical-biographical tendencies of the French Petrarchists and the Pléiade poets.[19] Vellutello's edition represents the first serious attempt to challenge the powerful system of textual authority established by the humanist Pietro Bembo, whose 1501 and then 1514 Aldine editions served as the gold standard until the late nineteenth-century rediscovery of Petrarch's autograph copy in the Vatican Library (Latino 3195).[20]

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19. Vellutello's edition historically reconstructs the chronology of the poems with a convenient map to follow Laura's and Petrarch's footsteps around Provence.

20. In fact, Bembo's 1514 edition reinterprets and "corrects" an essential component of the 1501 edition and of Petrarch's partial holograph: the seeming division between a first grouping of 263 poems and a second "part", never declared as such by Petrarch, soon defined by copyists and editors as those devoted to Laura after her death. Bembo's 1501 edition establishes this division between the sonnet 263 (*Arbor victoriosa triumphale*) and the canzone *I' vo pensando* (264), a division of three ruled but blank chartae in the partial holograph that was soon reflected in most of the late fourteenth-century manuscript tradition. In 1514 Bembo aban-

The question of the role of interpretation, authority, and materiality through the cultural mechanisms of textual production, from copyists to typographers and editors, is of course the contentious ground upon which many of us in the Society for Textual Scholarship argue our cases, not only when variants alone will not solve the *crux* but because the variants of painstaking collations against base manuscripts or copy-texts cannot be expected, as Avalle reminds us, to tell the whole story of a work's texts. And there are those textual conditions that are literally the history of the work's reception, the history of the book, either by accident or by editorial design: all editions of Marco Polo's travels, coauthored with Rustichello, revert to the history of the book's reception and translation into Italian since we have lost the original in Old French. Our few editions of the extant versions of the eighth-century *Epistola de rebus in oriente mirabilibus*, compiled with that other story of monsters in MS British Library Cotton Vitellius A xv, are essentially investigations of the independent reuse, refashioning, and reapplication of the letter in distinct cultural contexts since its original in Greek, whose residue lingers in faint linguistic borrowings in the Latin, is now lost to us. Similar questions of suppression and revelation strike even closer to home. In the first issue of the 2007 *Textual Cultures*, guest-edited by Martha Nell Smith, Robin Schulze (2007) examines the elaborate textual cultural problems posed by Marianne Moore's and her friend and editor Grace Schulman's suppression of variants and versions that should be included in a critical edition of Moore's poetry. And should anyone believe that these questions of editorial reception can be resolved simply by the application of enlightened standards, consider the current editorial treatment of W. E. B. Du Bois's 1953 revisions of antisemitic passages in his 1903 edition of *The Souls of Black Folk* in George Bornstein's essay in *Textual Cultures* 1.1 (2006).

Whether in the context of any number of national traditions or in the U.S. under the influence of McGann's "social text" (1991) or thanks to the contributions of those who collect and provide access to materials and documentation so that students and scholars alike can retrace the genesis of literary production in diverse cultural contexts, from Stephen Harding's textual note to the Dickinson Electronics Archives, the philosophy which increasingly links textual criticism to advances in other fields of textual inquiry is one that recognizes the reality of the multiple cultural conditions of literary production, revision, and reproduction. I dare say that many more mem-

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dons this material division for a thematic rationale, dividing the macrotext between sonnet 266 (*Signor mio caro, ogni pensier mi tira*) and 267 (*Oimè il bel viso, oimè il soave sguardo*). For a discussion of Bembo's 1501 and 1514 editions and the "massive contamination of philology by interpretation", see Barolini 2007, 32–42.

bers today of the Society for Textual Scholarship have not edited a text, and yet their research in the fields of textuality and the cultural origins of its mechanisms play an essential role in our collaborative efforts. If scholarly editing cuts itself off from any of those related fields, it does so at its own risk. By the same token, literary critics who ignore the powerful influence of the complex cultural itineraries of a text and the textual scholar's task and toil in attaining it condemn their own work to irrelevance. Those who see an unnatural hybridity—akin to Dante's hissing reptilian-humanoid thieves—in the expansion of the disciplines of philology, historical linguistics, and scholarly editing in the shift from pure "texts" to the investigation of texts in their multiple contexts of reproduction and reception should, I suppose, count themselves lucky. Could it be, however, lest we forget the lessons of Sebastiano Timpanaro's and Adam Phillips' analyses, that the textual scholar is a bit like the psychoanalyst: "a professional who sustains his competence by resisting his own authority"?[21] After the great labor of collating bibles in the early twelfth century, it must have been easier for Stephen Harding to call upon the authority of God to insist upon his own textual solutions. But human nature being what it is, even when collating variants, it is still hard today to run one's eye over the scraped parchment of a medieval erasure and not allow the material to draw us back into the genesis of the copy and its exemplar. It is difficult not to wonder what was once there.

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21. The phrase is not, however, from Timpanaro's *Lapsus freudiano: psicanalisi e critica testuale* (1974) but that of Adam Phillips (1995), an expert in his own right on Jane Austen.

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