

Foreword

Michelangelo Zaccarello

The first missing aspect is that, up to now, almost without exception, no scholarly electronic edition has presented material which could not have been presented in book form, nor indeed presented this material in a manner significantly different from that which could have been managed in print. (P. ROBINSON, *Where We Are with Electronic Scholarly Editions, and Where We Want to Be*, <http://computerphilologie.uni-muenchen.de/jg03/robinson.2004>)

JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, PETER ROBINSON — A TRUE PIONEER OF digital humanities — pointed out that the majority of digital scholarly editions did not feature contents or methodological solutions that could not be expressed by traditional critical editions on paper. The rapid development of innovative solutions in markup languages and web design, however, has led digital scholarly editions to work more and more independently from the categories and criteria of their paper counterparts in the establishment of text and in the storage and display of variants and documents.

This issue of *Textual Cultures* publishes some of the papers presented at the fifth meeting of the *Filologia Digitale* series — managed by Adele Cipolla at the Università di Verona — just over a year ago (15–16 June 2018). The meeting, which enjoyed the precious help of Anna Maria Babbi and her PhD students at various stages of its organization, was devoted to the theme *Edizioni e testi “born digital”: problemi di metodo e prospettive di lavoro* (*Born-digital editions and texts: theories, working approaches and methods*). Both Verona and Pisa have been at the forefront in the application of Digital Humanities to philology and textual criticism, especially for medieval texts. In fact it was the University of Pisa’s Dipartimento di Filologia, Letteratura e Linguistica in collaboration with the Institute of Information Science and Technology at Pisa (ISTI), part of Consiglio Nazionale delle

Ricerche (CNR), that designed and built *Dante Sources* (<http://perunaenciclopediadantescadigitale.eu>), voted best DH tool or suite of tools at the DH Awards for 2015.

Featuring some of the most prominent experts in digital scholarly editions of various fields of medieval studies (Mid-Latin, Romance, Germanic and Italian philologies), the colloquium aimed to outline the main methodological solutions shared by recent editions developed and based entirely on the web, with related philological and conservation issues posed by more recent “born digital” literature and its online circuit of publishing, reading, scholarly and/or teaching applications. Such aspects have long attracted due scholarly attention in the English-speaking world, in terms of both editorial theory (e.g., GREETHAM 1999, SHILLINGSBURG 2006) and applied technology (e.g., KIRSCHENBAUM 2016), but still need to be addressed comprehensively in the field of Italian textual scholarship, as may be also seen by the limited space usually allocated to these issues in university textbooks.

Direct contacts and exchange between the Italian and the American scholarly editing traditions are limited, as may be clearly seen by the scarce examples of translation of Anglo-American philological theory into Italian or vice versa. With its scholarly tradition in both Classical and Romance philology, however, Italy has greatly influenced the maturing of modern theories and practices of scholarly editing, pioneering the philological study of authorial drafts in the 1920s (MORONCINI 1927 on Leopardi’s poetry): usually associated to other philological traditions (French, German) and to more recent — especially nineteenth-century — literature, this kind of Italian *critique génétique* was soon to be applied to Renaissance authors such as Ludovico Ariosto (DEBENEDETTI 1937). It is surely not an isolated case: in this volume, Diego Perotti’s essay outlines the complex editorial problem of Torquato Tasso’s lyric poetry (*Rime*), witnessed by a number of holograph manuscripts and printed copies annotated by the author.

Even from a theoretical standpoint, Italian scholars may be credited with the anticipation of key concepts such as “social text”. For instance, Pasquali (1934; a must-read in Classical studies, which has not yet been translated into English) started to draw scholarly editors’ attention on the reception history of texts (*storia della tradizione*), describing the latter as “spring water” that absorbs the taste of both the rocks surrounding its source and the *terroir* through which it runs (PASQUALI 1951, 11). More recently, those who emphasized the inescapable plurality of text — voiced by the *New Philology*, from Cerquiglini 1989 on — could count on some “continental” precursors: a decade before, Cesare Segre (1928–2014) sug-

gested that a critical text should reflect the “negotiation” between different factors in its transmission; using the linguistic notion of *diasistema*, Segre insisted on the importance to assess a wide range of factors (historical and geographical, social and cultural) in order to both fully appreciate the text and express its diversity in the scholarly edition (SEGRE 1979).

Thus, with the publication in *Textual Cultures* of these essays from the June 2018 Verona conference, we hope to fulfill another purpose: to strengthen the cooperation and exchange between Italian and North-American textual scholarship in the context of digital scholarly editing. Our initiative interestingly coincides with others that share its purpose, such as CANDIDO 2019 on *Italian Philology in the Digital Context* and a forthcoming volume that translates — often for the first time — some important North-American textual scholars and editorial theorists. Among them, some are founding members of the *Society of Textual Scholarship* (Eggert, Kirschenbaum, McGann, Robinson, Shillingsburg in ZACCARELLO 2019), and the volume aptly concludes with an Afterword by the Society’s current President, H. Wayne Storey.

With an academic background equally divided between Italy and the USA, Storey has always played a paramount role in prompting academic contacts and scholarly cooperation “across the Ocean”: with gratitude that far exceeds this initiative, I want to acknowledge an inspirational friendship that started in 2004. Quite meaningfully, that year marked the seventh centenary since the birth of Petrarch, a paramount Italian author that Storey published innovatively in print and digital format: from the *Edizione Nazionale* of the Vatican holograph manuscript (BELLONI, BRUGNOLO, STOREY, ZAMPONI 2004) to the recent *Petrarchive* (<http://petrarchive.org>) developed at Indiana University with Isabella Magni and John Walsh.

Finally, my first time as issue editor of *Textual Cultures* would not have been possible without the ongoing help and support of the journal’s editor-in-chief Marta Werner, who patiently led me through a publishing process considerably different from that of Italian journals: this, too, is a precious and effective way to promote scholarly exchange and cooperation “across the Ocean”.

University of Pisa

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