

DEL VENTO, Christian and Pierre MUSITELLI, eds. 2019. *Genesis 49 – Une tradition italienne*. Paris: Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne. ISBN 979-10-231-0650-3. Pp. 215. € 33.

In the last few years, there have been several attempts to bring together different scholarly traditions within the field of textual sciences, such as the excellent *Lexicon of Scholarly Editing* of the University of Antwerp. The forty-ninth issue of *Genesis*, focused on Italian manuscripts, contributes to this same endeavour, as its title, *Une tradition italienne*, suggests, with its reference to both the Italian literary tradition and to the Italian tradition of studies on autograph manuscripts (that of the *critica delle varianti/filologia d'autore* and their antecedents).

The historical “frame” of the entire issue is presented in a preface by the editors where they underline the specificity of Italian culture’s relationship with the manuscripts that make up its tradition. Whereas the rest of Europe did not develop the modern conception of the Foucauldian *fonction auteur* before the seventeenth century, in Italy it can be traced back to Petrarch and Boccaccio (if not to Dante), who show an extremely advanced understanding of the problems connected with the transmission and correct interpretation of their own texts. This specificity developed further with the Cinquecento *Questione della lingua*, when philological techniques began being adopted on Petrarch and Boccaccio as the rise of an “imitative” conception of the language called for a better understanding of Petrarch’s compositional practices. Such concerns informed the approach to authorial manuscripts at least until Manzoni’s linguistic reform in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, then, while beyond the Alps the *génétique* began to establish itself, in Italy the hegemony of Benedetto Croce’s idealism on Italian culture hindered progress on the study of manuscripts: in this context, Gianfranco Contini, the first modern Italian scholar to systematically work on authorial variants, had to look for inspiration for his researches precisely from France.

The issue is divided in five sections — *Enjeux*, *Études*, *Entretiens*, *Inédites*, *Chronique*, plus a section of *Varia*, which will not be reviewed here. The *Enjeux* section is meant to give the reader a short history of the discipline, from the Early Modern and Modern Periods (Christian Del Vento) to the twentieth century (Paola Italia, Simone Albonico). Del Vento’s article examines the relationships that various authors from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century had with the authorial manuscripts that were authoritative for them (Petrarch for the Cinquecento, Ariosto and Tasso for the Settecento and Ottocento, Manzoni from the nineteenth century

onwards). While underlining the specificity of each and every example he brings up, Del Vento finds a constant element in the *Questione della lingua*. He argues that what sparked the interest for authorial manuscripts was the necessity of reliable sources of these authors' language, and the need to understand their creative process in order to imitate it. The study of variants therefore has throughout the period a pedagogical aim, in opposition to the aesthetic aims of some twentieth-century studies and the scientific interests of contemporary authorial philology and genetic criticism. The identification of this pedagogical element is particularly important, and I believe it should be extended to early post-unitarian Italy, as testified by the claims of educational usefulness found in the introductions of the comparative editions of the *Ventisettana* and *Quarantana* versions of Manzoni's *Betrothed* produced in the late nineteenth century (FOLLI 1877, 1: I–VII; PETROCCHI 1893–1902, 1: v–vii).

Albonico and Italia's articles are somewhat complementary to Del Vento's, as they cover the role that in the twentieth century Gianfranco Contini had in turning the study of variants into a proper scientific discipline, the *critica delle varianti*. Albonico gives particular attention to how Contini interpreted his teacher Santorre Debenedetti's work on Ariosto's autographs; Italia instead stresses the influence of the aesthetics of French symbolist poetry on the theorization of *critica delle varianti* (thus proving the existence of a common ground between the Italian tradition and *critique génétique*). Both, however, underline how Croce's idealism is still very much present in Contini's method, implicitly in his "monolithic" conception of the text and his preference for "instaurative" variants (Albonico), and explicitly in the evolution of the article "La critica degli "scartafacci" from polemical (in the manuscript) to more diplomatic in the definitive text (Italia). Both articles are commendable for the way they equally distance themselves from blindly celebrating the founder of the discipline and from excessively underlining his limits from our privileged *a posteriori* point of view. They rather allow the reader to fully appreciate the specificity of Contini's method by underscoring its philological basis (possibly the most important difference of the Italian model from the *génétique*, which is instead strictly connected to post-structuralism [SEGRE 2010, 26]) and its ties with French culture, but also without turning a blind eye to how much Contini still owed to Croce's aesthetics.

The *Études* section presents specific cases of textual genesis, all of which are extremely interesting for the nature of the texts themselves or for the perspective adopted. Indeed, the first two cases, that of Boccaccio and that of Torquato Tasso (respectively presented by Claude Cazalé Berard and

Franco Tomasi), deal with matters of exogenesis, in the form of autographs containing other authors' work (Boccaccio's *Zibaldoni*), and of annotated books (Tasso's library). Both articles underline the importance of these materials not only in identifying the influence of other texts in the authors' production, but also in defining how they intentionally created an image of themselves through their readings.

Pierre Musitelli's article on the Verri brothers treats instead a case where the production is not tied to a single individual author, as both of them, Alessandro "le styliste" and Pietro "le philosophe" (95), heavily influenced the other's production either by intervening directly on the text or through letters, in a constant dialogue conducted through epistles and marginalia. Musitelli follows the brothers' cooperation in time until around 1780, when the different interests of the two evolve into a more conservative ideology for Alessandro, while Pietro gets closer to revolutionary ideas, as shown by their different ideas on tyrannicide in tragedy.

Giulia Raboni instead focuses on Manzoni's *Betrothed*, a "classic" Italian case which, despite having been studied, as we have noted, since the end of the nineteenth century, and having received special attention in the critical edition to which Raboni herself collaborated (COLLI-ITALIA-RABONI 2006), has not been fully deciphered yet. Specifically, the article focuses on the *Seconda minuta*, highlighting how the linguistic revision of the first version of the novel fuelled the author's creativity leading him to add a "linguistic" anecdote to Fra Cristoforo's backstory, while at the same time removing historical reconstructions present in the *Prima minuta* in favor of more attention to the fictional characters' psychologies, unveiling a phase where the author is still negotiating the balance between history and fiction, and in which narrative creativity has not yet been paralyzed by the unsustainability of the author's conception of realism, as it would be a few decades later.

The *Entretiens* section is opened by an interview with Gianni Francioni carried out by the editors themselves, in which a number of problems are raised, such as the matter of authoriality in the case of Cesare Beccaria's *Dei delitti e delle pene*, which was heavily altered with the author's approval by Pietro Verri, and restructured into a proper treatise by André Morellet; the question of how authorial philology can help reconstruct Antonio Gramsci's "labyrinthine" writing; and the handling of texts, such as Gramsci's *Quaderni*, that are no more than *avant-textes* for a systematization that never came into existence.

The other interview, conducted by Monica Zanardo with Erri De Luca and Silvia Acocella, is instead a discussion with a living writer and his

archivist, allowing us to enter the author's workshop, discussing how he builds his notebooks of literary quotations, and how he plans and revises his books. At the same time, the interview touches on a point very similar to one treated in Cazalé Berard's article — that of the “musealization” of an author's collections as a way to build a self-representation.

The *Inédits* section contains a diplomatic edition of a passage from a manuscript of Elsa Morante's *Senza i conforti della religione*, with an introduction commenting on how the unrealized book ended up being reworked into *La Storia*, revealing a fundamental phase of the pre-history of the novel. Similarly, the other *Inédit*, edited by Vincenza Perdichizzi, is a chapter from Antonio Tabucchi's *Perdute salme*, the *avant-texte* to *Il filo dell'orizzonte*. Having been typewritten in 1982, the draft testifies to a moment in Tabucchi's literary evolution in which despite the emergence of the postmodernist structure of his later works, a very political-historical inspiration can still be clearly seen.

The monograph part of the issue ends with Matteo Motolese and Emilio Russo's article presenting one of the most ambitious contemporary works on Italian manuscripts: the *Autografi dei letterati italiani*, an ongoing census of autographs by Italian literati from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century consisting of seven physical volumes containing sheets analyzing each author's hand and manuscript production and of a constantly-updated website where the manuscripts are described and often reproduced.

This issue of *Genesis* has the merit of being accessible to readers unfamiliar with the Italian manuscript and scholarly tradition while presenting a wealth of new information and perspectives: it contains a philological analysis of a scholarly article (Italia), studies of problems connected to autographs that contain other authors' texts (Cazalé Berard, Tomasi) and autograph marginalia (Cazalé Berard), matters of authoriality (Musitelli) and of the genesis of philosophical and even administrative texts (Musitelli, Francioni). Even the more “conventional” chapters present very interesting cases, as is the case with Albonico, who explores how much of our understanding of Ariosto's manuscripts is still tied to Contini's interpretation, or Raboni, who shows an extremely fluid situation “at the crossroads” between different versions of the same text and different conceptions of the historical novel. The two *Inédits* are equally relevant, as both are *avant-textes* of books that ended up being very different from the author's original conception. It can also be said that this is a book that looks to the past of the discipline (Del Vento, Albonico, Italia) and at the same time looks ahead by investigating the practices of a living author (De Luca), showcasing the usefulness of digital tools for genetic studies (Cazalé Berard, Moto-

lese-Russo), and discussing methods for investigating and representing the genesis of specific kinds of texts (Albonico, Tomasi, Francioni), as well as by editing texts for the first time (Zanardo, Perdichizzi).

With a topic of such richness it is inevitable that some areas are left aside. It might have been interesting, for example, to see more discussion of how the *fonction auteur* in Petrarch and Boccaccio differs from the self-representation of the author found in the earlier lyric tradition, or of Dante Isella's fundamental contribution to the evolution of the *critica delle varianti* into *filologia d'autore* through the development of a method to synoptically represent authorial variants. Considering, however, how much the volume intertwines concepts and methods from the Italian scholarly tradition with those of *critique génétique* (cf. Raboni, p. 107; Francioni, p. 122), it would also have been appropriate to discuss the possibility of finding a theoretical common ground between *filologia d'autore* and *critique génétique*, as this much-needed academic dialogue, to which this issue gives a fundamental contribution, still lacks a proper theoretical basis.

Francesco Feriozzi
University of Oxford

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BELLOMO, Saverio and Stefano CARRAI, eds. 2019. Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio*. Torino: Einaudi. ISBN 9788806189617. Pp. 602. €60,00.

After his edition of Dante's *Inferno*, published in 2013, we now have Saverio Bellomo's commentary of *Purgatorio*, the second canticle of Dante Alighieri's *Commedia*. The notable scholar sadly passed away in 2018, leav-