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This is a contribution from *A Comparative History of the Literary Draft in Europe*.

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## 1.2.7 Italian traditions

### From Humanism to authorial philology

Paola Italia

The history of genetic criticism in the Italian tradition starts with Humanism, and from Francesco Petrarca's "Codice degli Abbozzi" (fourteenth century). This chapter traces the framework of this tradition, highlighting how, with the simple but revolutionary gesture of leaving even the ugliest copies of his own masterpieces – the so-called "scartafacci" – to posterity, Petrarca created a model of an intellectual, a champion of classicism, the "style to be imitated". Petrarca's model left a trace of the toil of writing, the labor *limae*, which is considered the secret of style. From Machiavelli to Guicciardini, from Ariosto to Tasso, the "authorial function" has delivered a model of conservation and philology. After the triumph of the "scartafacci", two exemplary nineteenth-century cases (Manzoni and Leopardi) will be discussed, as well as the twentieth-century text production, in which the study of manuscripts, tormented by countless revisions, reveals a possible "grammar of corrections" and is flanked by crucial problems of authorship.

**Keywords:** authorial philology, genetic criticism, Humanism, authorial will, archival will, *scartafacci*, authorship

#### Humanistic genetic criticism: Petrarca

Since the 1970s, genetic criticism has spread throughout the world as a useful critical approach whereby the genesis of literary creation is studied through manuscript editions and analysis. Notably, however, genetic theory has developed out of the examination of autographic versions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary texts and has extended only recently to eighteenth-century works (Ferrand 2012; *Genesis* 2012). Furthermore, based on that analysis, it has been assumed that the creativity represented in manuscripts has existed only since the notion of creative genius was born, that is between the Enlightenment and Romanticism. Due to the large number of twentieth-century manuscripts that exist, a particular branch of genetic criticism has also been developed for studying modernist authors (Van Hulle 2008, 2014; Gabler 2018). But what happened before the eighteenth century? From the perspective of genetic criticism, authorial manuscripts from that time still constitute virgin territory.

In this respect, the Italian context is a fruitful area of investigation because, within Europe, it is the only one that features autographic manuscripts spanning the fourteenth century through to the twentieth, and that sees these manuscripts examined through the critical lens of a particular branch of philology. While born in the seventeenth century, this philological branch developed in earnest in the twentieth century, thanks to that period's Italian philological school, which was specifically devoted to the study of variants that result from the different intentions a given author has for their text (Isella 1987 and 2009; Italia and Raboni 2010).

Italy is also a special case because, in addition to having had a specific discipline devoted to editing authorial variants, namely *authorial philology* (Italia and Raboni 2021), it has, since the 1930s, developed a criticism based precisely on the study of these variants – that is, Gianfranco Contini’s critique of variants, which, as we will see, is closely linked to the French tradition and, in a certain sense, to genetic criticism as well. The great wealth of manuscript documentation and a discipline dedicated to the study of ancient variants has also developed a methodology for studying the third dimension of maps, which is that of “time” (the “z” dimension), for the analysis beyond the visible spectrum of correction stratigraphies, a methodology developed on ancient and modern manuscripts (see *Manoscritti 2.0* and *Thesma Project*).

As mentioned above, and as recently also recognised by genetic criticism (Del Vento and Musitelli 2019), the Italian tradition is the only one in Europe that provides a vast number of authorially corrected manuscripts, from the Middle Ages to modern times. The first preserved document of an initial draft – the so-called “Codice degli abbozzi”, by Francesco Petrarca – is Italian and dates back to the mid-fourteenth century. Now kept in the *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana* (Vat. Lat. 3196), this manuscript is the rough draft of Petrarca’s *Canzoniere* (*Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*), the most important collection of 366 everyday microtextual poems (365 plus the proemial sonnet). Written, corrected, and arranged between 1336 and 1374 (the year Petrarca died) into a general structure (macrotext) (Paolino 2000), it is a masterpiece of Italian Humanism and became a structural prototype of an author’s collection, that is, a collection of poems assembled in an order determined by the will of the poet rather than, say, the order of writing. The *Canzoniere* became a model of European poetry for three centuries, influencing writers from Thomas Wyatt to William Shakespeare, and from Pierre de Ronsard to Luis de Góngora (Chines 2016).

Since Petrarca’s death, his *scartafacci* – which, as legend has it, he kept in his fur, writing and correcting the texts during his walks – have come to be considered very precious objects. They were retained, along with the fair copy of the *Canzoniere* (BAV, Vat. Lat. 3195), as material objects of worship, and preserved sufficiently well as to be considered worthy of a critical edition, which was published by Francesco Ubaldini in 1642 in the very first “genetic edition” in print form. In this recently rediscovered work (Italia 2018a), Ubaldini re-evaluates the idea that the act of correction is the origin of literary style, starting with Virgil, who – according to Pliny – tended the fruits of his literary labour like a mother-bear licks its cubs (“Virgil, conforme ne racconta Plinio a guisa d’orsa leccando finiva i suoi parti”) (Ubaldini qtd in Italia 2018a).<sup>1</sup>

But why should Petrarca’s “Codice degli abbozzi” be considered the founding moment in authorial philology, not only in Italy but throughout Europe? Because it is in this work that Petrarca successfully reconceptualises the authorial text as an ever-changing organism, subject to alterations and modifications. The question is not whether the authors of the past were producers of authorial variants. Thanks to numerous indirect testimonies, studies by Pasquali ([1934] 1988) and other outstanding classical philologists (Canfora 2012; Dorandi 2020) have

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1. Unless otherwise stated, all the translation in the chapter are mine.

shown that authorial variants have always existed and that, in the fourteenth century, the compositional process evolved from dictation to writing in the so-called “author’s book” (Petrucci 2017). We know this about St. Thomas Aquinas, Severinus Boethius, and Dante himself, who mentions two incipits of a sonnet in his *Vita nova*. Every author is an author of variants, because every act of writing is an act of correcting.

The point, rather, is that there are no remaining material documents of such variants because, before Petrarch, no author had an “archival will” (Albonico and Scaffai 2015; Italia 2020), no author believed it was important for these drafts *not* to be “given to Vulcano” (that is, to be burned), and no author thought that drafts were worthy of being preserved “non illorum dignitati, sed meo labori consulens” [not for their merit but for my effort] (*Rerum Familiarum Libri*, I, 1, 10), and that they therefore warranted being passed down for posterity. Prior to Petrarch, only the final work – the author’s last will – was important. What preceded it was not preserved, because it was either written on a perishable medium (such as wax tablets or poor quality paper (Cursi 2016)) or not considered preservable or valuable. It is with Petrarch, and the birth of the archival will, that we see profound changes in perspective. For the *Canzoniere*, Petrarch’s most important work, the poet wanted to preserve not only the definitive codex (Vat. Lat. 3195) but also the “Codice degli abbozzi” (Vat. Lat. 3196; the codex is available at [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.lat.3196](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.3196)), consisting of twenty sheets (of paper, as opposed to precious parchment) of draft material, which testify to the first versions, with corrections, of 57 poems. Some of these poems were then copied in Vat. Lat. 3195, while others remained unpublished in a draft state, replete with immediate and late corrections, discarded by Petrarch and reinserted later.

But why did Petrarch preserve this material? Because he believed that what was relevant to posterity was not only the final version of his work – a work that he left as the foundation of Humanism and classicism – but also the *labor limae* required to reach that final poetic value: “non illorum dignitati, sed meo labori consulens” [not for their merit but for my effort] (Petrarcha, *Rerum Familiarum Libri* I.1:10). The concept of an archival will is revolutionary, as it constitutes the basis for the concept of what is “classic”: that is, an author who becomes a model of life and style and must therefore be studied as a way of extracting, pedagogically, how that style was shaped. If genetic criticism existed in Italy as early as the seventeenth century, with Ubaldini’s first genetic edition, then Petrarch’s *scartafacci* show that the creative genius – as it might be recognised in an author’s style or in their way of making corrections – was not born with Romanticism but with Humanism, with the gesture with which an author considers their mistakes and corrections worthy of study, and entrusts these to posterity along with their *opus perfectum*.

It is the “authorial relationship” to literary drafts (Petrucci 2017: 63–64) that gives value to them. The significance for Petrarch, as well as for the scholars who followed him, of preserving and studying even the “bad” versions lies in the style that emerged from the *labor limae* – the “style to imitate” that we associate with “classicism” (Tatti 2015).

## From Humanism to the Renaissance: Ariosto's fragments

It was in the fourteenth century that – thanks to Petrarch and Giovanni Boccaccio (whose *Decamerone* manuscripts have been preserved, even if we do not have its drafts, see Fiorilla and Iocca 2021) – autography became an integral, not to say fundamental, element of authorship. Yet the fifteenth century witnessed an erosion of the borders of autography, almost to the point of their disappearance, as a result of the often intimate collaboration between authors and the copyists working under their direction. In such instances, it would normally be impossible to get to the heart of the textual traditions because, when handwriting is not identified, texts remain a confused and indistinct jumble. However, submitting these texts to technical analysis that uses spectrometry and imaging and that is thus capable of providing scientific results, has proved extremely fruitful. It is not possible to draw up an intellectual history of the fourteenth century without taking the writing into account, that is without delving into the thick of humanistic writings. Only a deep analysis using spectrometry and imaging can put to rest recent doubts about Petrarch's contributions to Livio's corrections in the margins of the "Harley" Manuscript (MS 2493, British Library) – the famous "Livio Harleiano," owned and with marginalia by Petrarch, the father of Humanism. That said, the humanist approach to manuscripts truly started with his second reader, Lorenzo Valla. In fact, Valla not only signs his notes with "LV" but also attributes to Petrarch many reading, correction, and collation notes, some of which may not actually be his (Berté and Petoletti 2017). Given the humanists' particular way of working – constantly returning to their own texts as well as to ancient sources, and adopting a practice that featured erasures and superimposed layers as much as, if not more than, juxtapositions – a *manuscript analysis* method that allows for the rediscovery of textual amendments that can no longer be studied with the naked eye or other traditional instruments leads *ipso facto* to the recovery of entire areas of humanistic culture that were previously buried beneath the manuscript surface. This is to say nothing of the recovery of the actual documents: in many cases, the fading or acidity of the ink has resulted in the physical loss of pages that are central to our cultural history.

Since the linguistic question features so centrally in manuscript variants, the study of variants in manuscript materials from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is directly connected to issues of linguistic codification (Del Vento and Musitelli 2019). The Italian case is unique within the different European traditions, for historical and cultural reasons, because not only did Petrarch help to spread a "pedagogical" consideration of manuscripts and draft works, but also his *Canzoniere* became a model for a literary poetic language in the Italian vernacular, standardised through Pietro Bembo's edition of the *Canzoniere* (1501) and his *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525). The latter work presented a literary grammar based on Petrarch's poetry and Boccaccio's prose, and it gave birth to Petrarchism as a poetic style, which spread from Italy to the rest of Europe through to the eighteenth century. In this context, the preservation of autographs reinforces the idea of classicism, since it suggests that a text must be preserved, even in its earliest versions, precisely because it becomes a model of language and style.

The same principles that informed Petrarch's "archival will" can be found in the work by authors who lived in the age of Humanism and the Renaissance, as illustrated by the growing evidence of a large number of ancient authorial manuscripts, such as those by Poliziano and Leon Battista Alberti (fifteenth century) and Niccolò Machiavelli, Francesco Guicciardini, Giovanni della Casa, Baldassare Castiglione, Benedetto Varchi, and Pietro Bembo himself (sixteenth century), as well as the famous *Autograph Fragments* of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (see Figure 1).

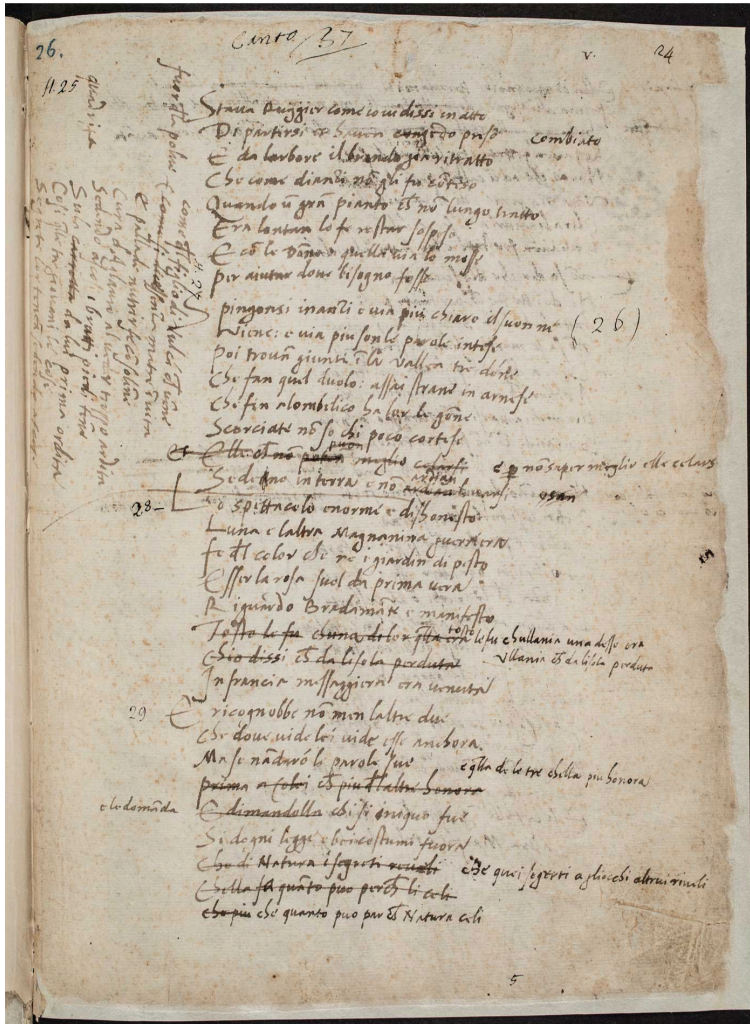


Figure 1. L. Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, San Martino, ms. S.Mart.353

After Petrarch's manuscripts, the *Autograph Fragments* are the most important preserved early modern drafts, not only because they pertain to one of the founding texts of the chivalric

genre that has become a model throughout Europe, but also because, in the twentieth century, when writing a review of DeBenedetti's 1937 critical edition of Ariosto's *Handwritten fragments: How Ariosto worked (Come lavorava l'Ariosto)*, the brilliant 24-year-old Gianfranco Contini founded the "criticism of variants" (Contini 1939). According to Contini, whose ideas have only recently been recognised as having been influenced by the French cultural milieu and Mallarmé and Valéry's theory of the fragment (Italia 2019a), and in opposition to the philosophy of the author's last will as proposed by Benedetto Croce (who coined the contemptuous definition of *scartafacci*), the dossier of first drafts has philosophical significance. In some scattered notes from 1944, recently discovered and published (Italia 2018b), Contini speaks of "poetry not as 'being' absolute presence (text = object) but as 'having to be' infinite evolution" ("o la poesia è un essere, una presenza assoluta (testo = oggetto) o è un dover essere, una evoluzione infinita") (qtd in Italia 2018b: 45). In relation to certain cases of *scartafacci*, from Petrarch's to Manzoni's, Contini states that the poetic value of the text lies not in the last will alone but in all of the author's previous corrections, which are – to quote Mallarmé – an "approximation to the value" (Contini 1992; Italia 2019a).

No less interesting are the cases of Michelangelo Buonarroti and Benedetto Varchi. Buonarroti's collection of poems, *Rime*, constitutes a single philological case of a double text (Campeggiani 2012), where the alternative variants coexist in double and even triple form, as if the literary texts were the equivalent of an unfinished sculpture. Varchi, for his part, authored the *Storia fiorentina* [Florentine History]. Countless of its hitherto unknown *scartafacci* are housed in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence, along with the very precious copy that features the author's late corrections as well as recognisable censorship interventions by the commissioner of the work, Cosimo I de' Medici, and his collaborator, Baccio Bandini (see Brancato and Lo Re 2015, and VASTO). Varchi was neither a trained historian nor a protagonist of those tumultuous years; rather, he was a mere spectator and, moreover, one whose sympathies were openly Republican. However, his position as official historian gave him free access to the private archives of the Duke and of the old Republic of Florence (the so-called Archive of the Reformations). This allowed Varchi to collect and transcribe a large number of documents, and – when added to the various histories and chronicles (including manuscripts) that enriched his extensive library, and to first-hand information (including what was gathered from the Republican exiles Iacopo Nardi and Giovanni Battista Busini) – these transcriptions formed the basis of the impressive work involved in drafting the *Florentine History*. Thus, a large number of draft excerpts exist, most of them kept in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence. Such excerpts consist of summaries or notes, as opposed to narrative texts. The collection of this material was nonetheless guided by a certain order and logic, which stems from a fourfold principle of "truth, prudence, gravity, and grace", as informed by the urgency of organising matter and form according to an Aristotelian principle. Evidence of this can be seen in the various conceptual maps scattered throughout the manuscripts of sketches and drafts.

### The novel and the new nineteenth-century poetry: Manzoni and Leopardi

The study of authors' *scartafacci* becomes even more intriguing when the author's work had a troubled psychological, literary and religious genesis, as is the case with Torquato Tasso's *La Gerusalemme liberata* [Jerusalem Delivered], whose entangled *scartafacci* have only recently come to light (Poma 2005; Russo 2020). With the Enlightenment, the archival will persists with a new idea of the self, as we can see through drafts by Giambattista Vico, Vittorio Alfieri (Zanardo 2019), Vincenzo Monti, and Giuseppe Parini (Isella 1987), and represents an interesting compositional *travail* due to the interweaving of literary creation and political problems, especially in the manuscripts of Cesare Beccaria's *Dei delitti e delle pene* [On Crimes and Punishments] and of Pietro Verri's *Osservazioni sulla tortura* [Observations on Torture] (Nava 2019; Verri 2018). A wider availability of paper led to a significant increase in the number of manuscripts. Moreover, the new status accorded to men of letters enabled the preservation of authorial archives, with a greater degree of preservation of the materials used to prepare the texts before they were sent to print. The man of letters would also individualise his status through the act of writing, marking his authorship on the page and returning to his works in a process of continuous improvement and authorial rewritings, which resulted in successive and differing editions and drafts of the manuscript text.

Once again, the intrinsic connection with the question of language, which held a central position throughout the nineteenth century, means that studying the emending layers not only provides insights into the genesis and evolution of the writing and the themes of the text, but also depicts a historical diagram of individual linguistic uses and their interrelations, as well as of the general evolution of the national literary language. The case study of Alessandro Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* [The Betrothed] (Milano, Biblioteca Braidense)<sup>2</sup> brings the latter aspect to the fore in both literary and linguistic terms, given the interconnection between issues related to establishing a national language and experimenting with a new genre, namely that of the novel.

The different versions of *I Promessi Sposi* – from the rough draft of *Fermo e Lucia* (now well known as *Gli sposi promessi*, see Italia 2019b) to the corrections to the manuscript for the first edition and the corrections added by Manzoni to the censor's copy – provide an exemplary documentary record of this process, which is at once literary and linguistic. A scientific analysis of the emending series of *I Promessi Sposi* would make it possible both to resolve the problems connected with the dating of the text, which remain unsolved even after the 2006 critical edition of the work, and to attribute the so-called “dubious variants” either to the first draft of the text or to the second (see Figure 2).

Even in the birth of modern poetry, which was both marked out and revived as a tradition by Giacomo Leopardi's *Canti* (Naples, Vittorio Emanuele III Library), there is an intrinsic connection between the history of the emending stratigraphies of manuscripts, and poetry's unique engagement with form, which is characterised by the continuous coming into being of the

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2. See [www.alessandromanzoni.org](http://www.alessandromanzoni.org)



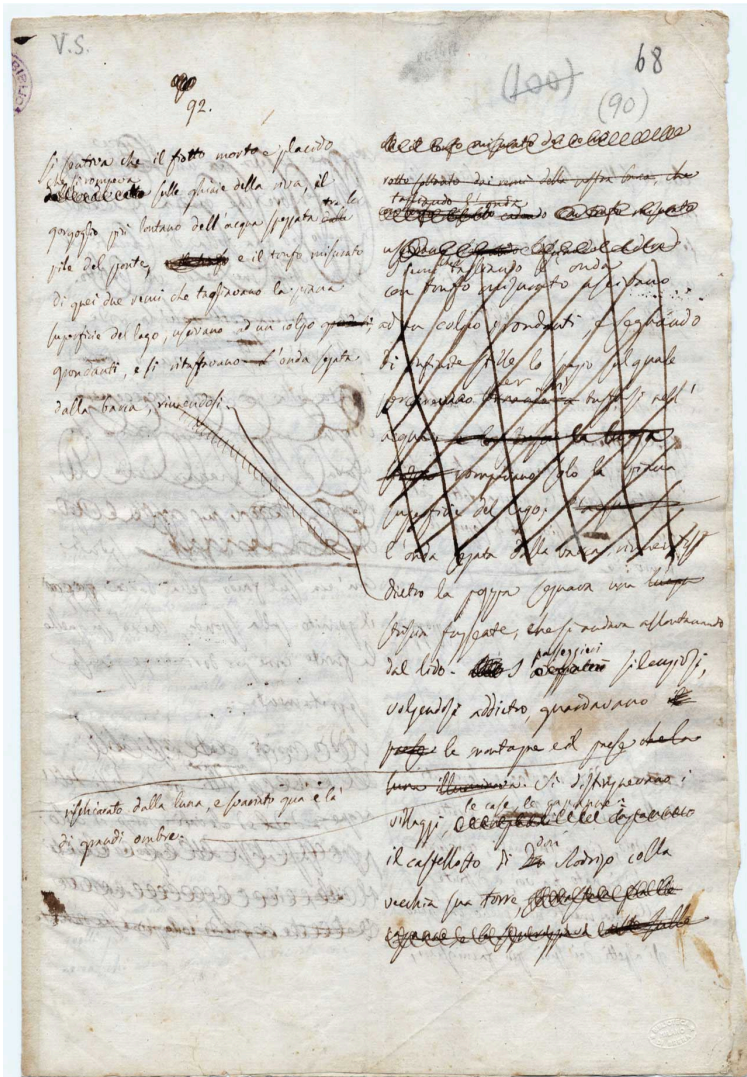


Figure 2. A. Manzoni, *Fermo e Lucia*, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, t. I, c. 92a

poetry on the author’s pages. The hidden gems that Leopardi’s manuscripts may have in store for us – to be uncovered by means of digital technology – relate not only to the variants of the *Canti* but also to the notes that the author placed in the margins of the text, which sometimes record the various readings that inspired the verses as well as the author’s stylistic and linguistic considerations. Recently translated into English, the original manuscript of the *Zibaldone* might also contain some important discoveries, since subsequent additions to the first draft often significantly modify the development of Leopardi’s thought. Not by chance, the textual examples of work by these major nineteenth-century authors establish a method for studying and representing manuscript corrections, which has led to the foundation of *Authorial Philol-*

ogy as a modern discipline for the study of authorial amendments ([www.filologiadautore.it](http://www.filologiadautore.it)). The late nineteenth century witnessed a boom in autograph drafts from such authors as Giovanni Verga, Giovanni Pascoli, and Gabriele D'Annunzio.

### Twentieth-century philology and criticism of variants: Montale and Gadda

The dynamics of the nineteenth century took on a radical form in the twentieth century, with an exponential increase in both the quantity of materials that were preserved by authors and available for study, and the importance of their variants. This was provoked, on the one hand, by the fragmented nature of the early twentieth century and the crisis of the novel, and on the other, by the poetics of modernism. The latter led to the arrival in Italy, from France, of the theorisation of the un-finished, a poetry dedicated to process rather than product, and whose point of arrival is always in progress. The study of variants and authorial handwriting is therefore an *indispensable process* carried out in parallel with the interpretation of the text itself. The text is no longer conceived of as a *datum* but rather, thanks to the contribution of Contini's critical study of variants, as a continuous "value approximation", presented as a means of providing a scientific basis for the study of numerous cases of apocrypha both in Italian literature and in twentieth-century European history. Scientific analysis of manuscripts might resolve numerous cases of *fakes*, from Eugenio Montale's *Diario postumo* [Posthumous Diary], which is considered apocryphal, to the forged diaries of Hitler and Mussolini.

The scientific analysis of twentieth-century manuscripts could also have a major impact on our knowledge about the connections between politics and literature, as illustrated by the recent critical edition of Carlo Emilio Gadda's *Eros e Priapo*. A particularly abundant source of stratigraphies and sheets of paper or pages that are stuck together can be found in the papers of Carlo Emilio Gadda, an author who was in the habit of returning to his writings incessantly, adding variants, corrections and revisions, and many of whose texts remain unpublished. The papers that were left to Alessandro Bonsanti and now held at the Archivio Contemporaneo of Gabinetto G.P. Vieusseux in Florence, were badly damaged by the 1966 flood. Although they were recovered in 2003, the flood damage rendered many of the pages illegible. This is the case for one of the notebooks of the *Giornale di guerra e di prigionia* [Journal of war and imprisonment]: namely, *Quaderno di Campagna II di Gadda* [Gadda's Campaign Notebook 2],<sup>3</sup> which remains partly undiscovered to this day because it was completely washed out and then deposited at the *Fondo Gadda* [Gadda's Archive] in Florence. However, the Terahertz analysis technology could hypothetically generate numerous further discoveries, making it possible to examine texts concealed by sheets of paper in Gadda's *Cognizione del dolore* [The Experience of Pain] and *Adalgisa* (at the Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan).<sup>4</sup>

3. See also the webpage of the Thesma Project: <http://www.filologiadautore.it/wp/thesma-project-sapienza-ricerca-2014-2016/>

4. Terahertz analysis is a non-invasive analysis of the papers, using Terahertz ray (short waves in the range of 0,3 mm to 0,03 mm) to read even heavily deleted words or faded inks (see Flammini et al 2017).

In Italy after the Second World War, Contini's "criticism of variants" was applied to works by such great authors as Petrarch and Leopardi (Contini 1992), while a methodology for the representation of variants was developed by Dante Isella (one of Contini's students), with the critical editions of Parini's and Manzoni's works. Isella's contribution to the development of the field was foundational: his *Authorial Philology* (1987) was accompanied by the very first scientific model for representing authorial corrections, the edition of Gadda's drafts of *Racconto italiano di ignoto del novecento* [An Italian short story by an unknown twentieth-century author].<sup>5</sup> In this critical edition, all of the different elements of the text are represented in different ways ("genetic", "evolutive" variants are separated from "alternative" variants and "metatextual notes" (Italia and Raboni 2010)) and – thanks to a pioneering use of spectrometry – different "layers" of the corrections have been separated, which allows instant corrections to be distinguished from ones added later.<sup>6</sup>

These philological methods and technologies have been subsequently applied to two ground-breaking critical editions, both published in 2006 and dedicated to the most important philological cases of prose and poetry of the nineteenth century. One of these editions is the first draft of Manzoni's *Promessi sposi: Fermo e Lucia*, which is an example of *scartafacci* characterised by a particularly complex correction stratification (Raboni 2017). The other edition is Leopardi's poems, *Idilli* [Idylls], which served as the case study for the first scientific representation of the author's variants (since Moroncini's 1927 critical edition) and was eventually followed by three other critical editions, including one by Franco Gavazzeni in 2006, as has recently been brought to the attention of the general public thanks to the WiKi Leopardi<sup>7</sup> and Ecdosys Leopardi digital scholarly editions (DSEs).<sup>8</sup> These critical editions develop for the first time a new model of apparatus, whereby the author's corrections are not represented in diplomatic form according to their position in the manuscript, but interpreted critically, with distinct correction phases identified. This reflects a significant difference compared to the model used in genetic criticism (for an account of these differences see Italia and Raboni 2021).

This innovation makes it possible to adopt a streamlined system of representing correction methods. It uses specific and unique abbreviations for single variants (deletions, insertions, displacements, variants taken from others, overwritten and underwritten variants), and numbers and letters for complex variants (identifying correction phases and sub-phases); moreover, thanks to its ability to identify a stratification of the editorial process, it allows the reader to distinguish between *instant variants* (corrections made at the time of writing, both in line and overwritten) and *late variants* (corrections made after the first draft was completed).

The result is a brand-new type of critical apparatus, separated from the text and capable of representing all correction phenomena in a *diachronic* and *systemic* way (Italia and Raboni 2010, 2021). Evidence of this can be seen in one simple but exemplary case found in the repre-

5. Isella's method is explained in Italia 2017 and Italia and Raboni 2021.

6. Terahertz and spectrometry (Thesma Project) and RTI (CHI-RTI 3D Leopardi)

7. See [https://wikileopardi.altervista.org/wiki\\_leopardi/index.php?title=Wiki\\_Leopardi](https://wikileopardi.altervista.org/wiki_leopardi/index.php?title=Wiki_Leopardi)

8. See <https://leopardi.ecdosys.org/it/Home/>

sentation – in both the diplomatic and the authorial philology methods – of “La Ricordanza”, one of Leopardi’s *Idylls* (see “Come si fa un’edizione critica” [How to make a critical edition];<sup>9</sup> Italia and Raboni 2020; and the digital critical edition with layers of corrections in Ecdosys Leopardi).

The critical edition that was made using the authorial philology method shows great differences when compared to the diplomatic edition, revealing the effectiveness of the former’s phase-based apparatus: an alphanumeric system uses numerical exponents to represent the diachrony of the corrections and alphabetical exponents to represent the pens used by the poet in the different correction phases of the text (Italia 2020). When fruitfully applied to *Fermo e Lucia* and to Leopardi’s *Idilli*, the diachronic and phase-based apparatus – which goes beyond the diplomatic representation of manuscripts used by genetic criticism – defines a very wide range of correction phenomena, capable of understanding all of the case studies of the author’s corrections. This is so much the case that the apparatus can be used for some fundamental editions of authorial philology in the twenty-first century, such as in Giorgio Bassani’s work (Haller 1977; Siciliano 2018; see Figure 3b) and Gadda’s manuscripts (Italia 2017, 2020; see Figure 3a).

The revolutionary intuition of Contini – who was strongly opposed to Croce’s historicist philosophy and his new “theory of the genesis of the text”, developed in France but based on the Italian literary tradition since Petrarch – changed the idea of the text in terms of its substance and endowed the genetic process with a hermeneutic value vis-à-vis the final work by addressing authorial actions and the agency implied by them. Yet the “criticism of variants” can be developed even further, as part of a more ambitious theoretical challenge, as is the objective of such a criticism, which may have unexpected consequences for the concepts of creativity and genius. Specifically, the theoretical challenge would be to use philology and computational analysis, as applied to the Italian context, to conduct comparative analyses of authors’ compositional and correction methods, since correction patterns offer the opportunity to identify style.

Two fascinating hypotheses can emerge as a result of this theoretical challenge being accepted and explored. According to one hypothesis, the correction patterns depend on *culture*, on *exogenous* elements (as argued by Menger 2009, who attributes creativity to social drives), with different authors tending to correct in similar ways if they belong to the same historical period. According to the other hypothesis, correction patterns depend on *nature*, on *endogenous* elements, and do not reflect cultural influences but the relationship that each individual has with the written page. In this context, the page is considered a surface that reflects not only the author’s individuality but also their relationship with the other, and the deep unconscious patterns that emerge and are formalised through their literary creation (see also Van Hulle 2014). But since every act of writing is an act of rewriting (Gabler 2018; Italia 2020), only a comparative study of corrections will allow for an unprecedented general history and theory of corrections to be written.

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9. <http://www.filologiadautore.it/wp/come-si-fa-unedizione-critica/>

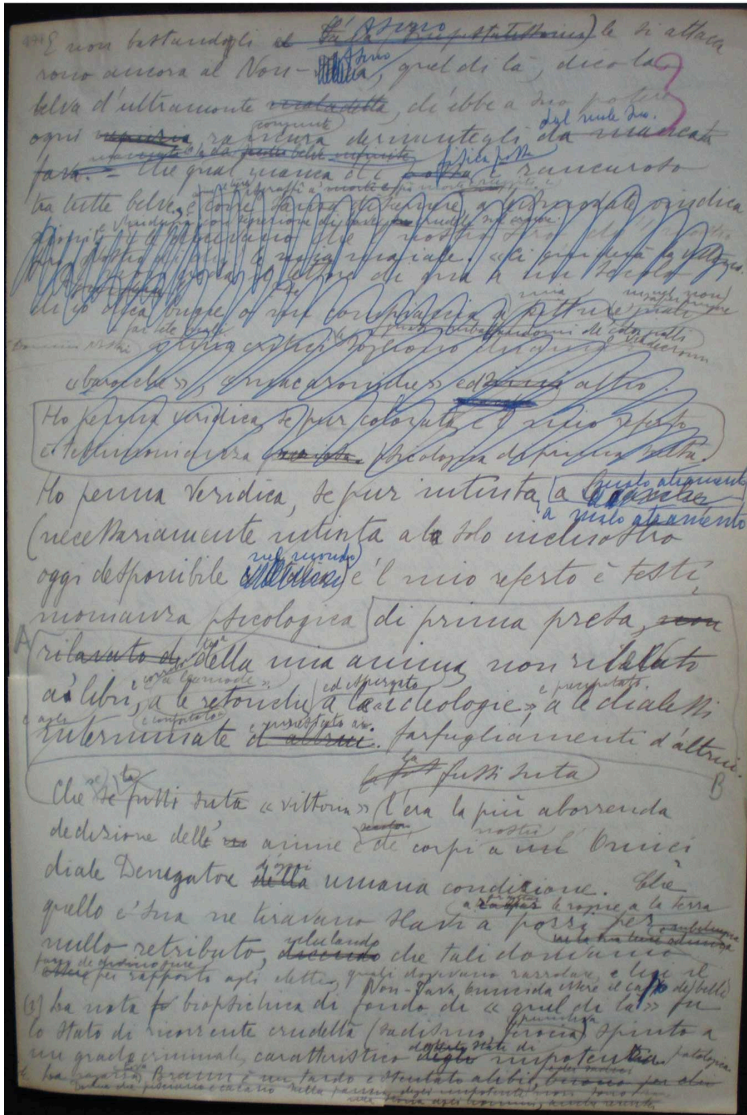


Figure 3a. C. E. Gadda, *Eros e Priapo*, c. 474, Archivio Liberati

A first analysis of some exemplary cases of the Italian modern tradition – Leopardi, Manzoni, Morante, Gadda, Bassani – has allowed us to recognise two types of writers: those who write using “a map” and those who write using “a compass” (Italia 2017). The writers who work using a map plan all of the phases of composition before starting their process; their plans look like a budget estimate; their *scartafacci* are a detailed conceptual map of the text they are about to write. The first drafts of their texts are therefore similar to clean copies because the design phase has already been completed, and they work by adding text (as in Gadda’s manuscripts). The “compass” writers, by contrast, do not know where they will go; they follow an inspiration

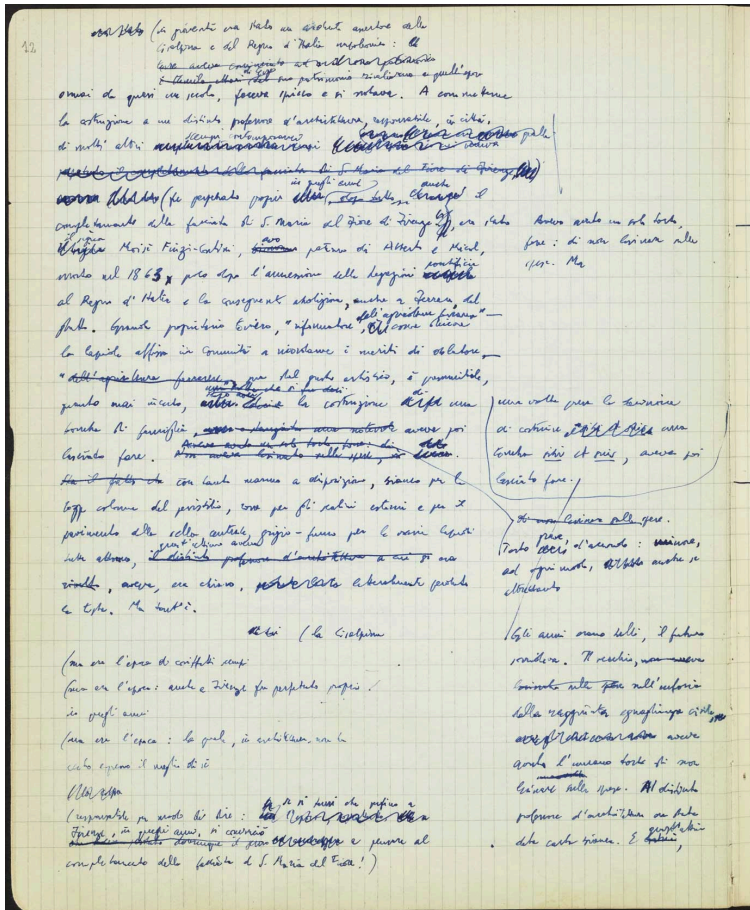


Figure 3b. G. Bassani, Il Giardino dei Finzi Contini, I, p.12, Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea

that propels them forward, from one variant to the next. Their drafts are a battlefield of ideas that compete for the physical space of the page (as in Manzoni’s first drafts). These two typologies reflect two ways of relating an author’s self to the text and produce corresponding correction methodologies.

But how many writers work using “a map” and how many are using “a compass”? And are there other ways to write a draft? Evidence from ancient and modern Italian *scartafacci* offers the perfect case study material that Italian philology is now ready to investigate and that may yield more innovative results in the future.

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10. For the bibliography of the critical editions, see the Bibliography section of [www.filologiadautore.it](http://www.filologiadautore.it), in which the editions that present problems of authorial philology are listed: XIV–XV century: Petrarch, Boccaccio, Sacchetti, Visconti; XVI century: Ariosto, Bembo, Beni, Castiglione, Della Casa, Galeazzo di Tarsia, Guicciardini, Machiavelli, Rota, Tasso; XVIII century: Parini, Alfieri, Beccaria, Verri, Monti; XIX century: Foscolo, Leopardi, Manzoni, Nievo, Capuana, Verga, Carducci; XX century: Pascoli, D'Annunzio, Deledda, Tozzi, Ungaretti, Sbarbaro, Fortini, Montale, Gadda, Morante, Moravia, Bassani, Sereni. Among *Digital Critical Editions of Authorial manuscript (CDE)*, there are only three Italian editions: Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia*, Varchi's *Storia fiorentina* (VASTO Project), Leopardi's *Digital Zibaldone* ([digitalzibaldone.net](http://digitalzibaldone.net)). For the study of correcting methods, see the *Come lavoravano* series, published by S. Albonico, P. Italia, and G. Raboni: Italia, P. 2017. *Come lavorava Gadda*. Roma: Carocci [to be published in French Translation by Claire Riffard]. Raboni, G. 2017. *Come lavorava Manzoni*. Roma: Carocci. Montagnani, C. 2018. *Come lavorava D'Annunzio*. Roma: Carocci. Moreno, P. 2019. *Come lavorava Guicciardini*. Roma: Carocci, 2019. Casari F., and C. Caruso. 2020. *Come lavorava Carducci*. Roma: Carocci.

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11. For selected chapters in Italian and English, see: [www.filologiadautore.it](http://www.filologiadautore.it).