The title of this chapter may give the impression that there is such a thing as a single Continental editorial theory, preferably different in interesting ways from an equally monolithic Anglo-American theory. Kathryn Sutherland has demonstrated the variety of perspectives among British and American textual scholars, the tradition that most of the readers of this Companion will know best, but at least all these theorists and practitioners have a common language that enables them to discuss their different and evolving opinions. This is a luxury that Continental textual scholars do not have.

A national literature (or in countries like my own, each of three different national literatures) is studied by scholars who have chosen to work in their native tongue and not in a foreign language, which is often taught and studied in an entirely different department. More importantly, these textual scholars tend to discuss the details of their work primarily with colleagues active in that same language. In some cases this language barrier means that one’s peers consist of a very select group and then there is no reason to cross national boundaries to look for colleagues confronted with similar problems. As a result, these scholars’ work is little known outside their own tradition and the individuals themselves often remain unaware of developments abroad. Despite attempts by professional organizations such as the European Society for Textual Scholarship (established as a forum to encourage discussion of methodological issues across linguistic and national borders), the level of cross-fertilization remains low. Even if they do look at other intellectual traditions, scholars tend to rely on a single editorial tradition that for the most part has been borrowed from one of the neighboring cultures, with just a few cultures that have been and continue to be more important. These will be discussed in more detail here, with the German and French traditions as the most influential centers of editorial theory and practice.

In the case of the ESTS, the working language is English, but despite the seeming ubiquity of this new lingua franca, many older colleagues working
in this field do not function usefully in English and thus many potential members of the Society may not even know of its existence. As a result, these scholars’ work is unknown outside their own tradition and the individuals themselves often remain unaware of developments abroad.

Yet all of these textual scholars have something in common with other textual scholars in Europe and elsewhere. In the scholarship on literary texts in all the different European languages, textual studies play the same role. In many cultural traditions we find the same tension between scholars who engage in textual scholarship and those critics who concentrate on an already established text, interpret it, place it in its historical or critical context, or deconstruct it in terms of philosophical, psychoanalytical or other theoretical frameworks. Just as in the English speaking world, European exponents of the textual approach often engage in theoretical debates with their fellow editors. Yet the details of these discussions and the precise differences of opinion are almost never the same and when they do appear to be related, this impression may be based on the fact that often similar terms are used: when confronted with seeming parallels we should never forget that words such as work, text, variant, fragment, or version, can denote many different things. There is little to be gained by translating these discussions all too hastily into terms that make sense in the current debates among Anglo-American textual scholars. Each of these cultural or national traditions may have its own unique history, a history that we cannot even begin to do justice here.

In the last decades two factors have been important for a new climate that can often be observed among younger scholars: the opening up of Eastern Europe and the increased mobility of researchers, with students more often studying abroad. Graduates from other European or American universities bring home new ideas that are now beginning to influence local traditions, a process that is not always without its own difficulties, especially in academic contexts that can still be very hierarchical, leading to conflicts that tend to be reported, just as on CNN, only by those participants who are able to communicate in English but who are not necessarily more accurate (or even sufficiently fair) than their opponents who do not master English.

We can therefore only try to be fair in our account of developments in European Continental theory and practice, but certainly not exhaustive. In fact the great majority of national and cultural traditions in Europe will not even be mentioned, a decision that is not just due to lack of time and space, but also to the writer’s inability to read Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Swedish, Polish, and so many other European languages. My ambition can merely be to present a first introduction to the often quite disparate ways in which textual scholarship has developed in some parts of Europe.
Early traditions of textual scholarship

When we discuss the study of national literary traditions, we should keep in mind that in most European countries the general field of textual study has its own particular history that often but not always follows the same general course. As a separate discipline, textual study dates from Hellenistic Greece: the Alexandrian critic Eratosthenes was the first person to call himself philologos. Anthony Grafton, the most recent historian of the earliest tradition of textual scholarship, has shown that textual study began with the philologists of Alexandria while he and earlier historians of the discipline such as J. E. Sandys and Rudolf Pfeiffer, have traced the path of these first beginnings to the Romans and then to Western Europe. After a period of relative neglect in the Middle Ages, textual criticism was rediscovered in the fifteenth century by humanist scholars such as Lorenzo Valla of Rome and Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam in the careful study of Latin and Greek classical texts. It was then further developed, in the contentious climate of the reformation, in the study and edition of patristic literature and even of the biblical text, on which both Valla and Erasmus had worked.

Central in the development of this first phase of modern textual scholarship was the invention of the printing press and the resulting publication of an editio princeps of each of the major Greek and Latin works, a first printed version of a text that had hitherto existed only in manuscript but that in its printed form could serve as reference text. In itself it was useful to have a single text against which variants could be attested, because most of these early printed texts had been edited on the basis of a single or at most two manuscripts, with various emendations unsystematically applied. E. J. Kenney has explained that before the nineteenth century “editors of texts were largely engaged in a piecemeal and haphazard attempt to undo the damage that had been inflicted in the period between the ninth century and the Renaissance.”¹ Also important was the fact that the findings in this field were reported in Latin, the language of science and lingua franca of what came to be called the republic of letters, an international network of scholars and scientists that included not a few textual editors. Although political conflicts and religious wars in the centuries following the reformation created sharp divisions between nations and religions, the members of this republic still managed to communicate their ideas. Protestant Dutch and English scholars traveled to France and Italy to hunt for manuscripts and they corresponded widely with like-minded but Catholic colleagues. Occasionally Protestants and Catholics would even contemplate collaborating on projects that were as contentious as a new translation of the Bible.²
By the seventeenth century the critical and historical study of texts, which for a pioneer like the Dutchman Baruch Spinoza included the text of the Bible, was a central part of a literary and scientific culture that did not yet know the difference between what C. P. Snow famously called the two cultures. Isaac Newton spent considerable time on an attempt to coordinate biblical and other chronologies and in that process the role of the accuracy of the text was an important issue. In 1690 Newton wrote an essay on “notable corruptions of scripture” to demonstrate that, as Erasmus had shown earlier, the comma johanneum in the first Epistle of John was a late intrusion into the Latin text and could not constitute biblical evidence for the Trinity. Versatile scholars like Richard Bentley (who corresponded with Newton) applied their erudition and critical skills to a wide variety of texts. On the basis of a close study of Homeric meter, Bentley even correctly postulated the existence of the digamma, a Greek letter that was still present in some words in Homer, but not represented.³

Philology and the natural sciences became part of the core tasks of the new type of research university that had been developed and pioneered in Berlin by Wilhelm von Humboldt in the early part of the nineteenth century. Most of the early philologists had been amateurs, either independently wealthy or else working under royal or aristocratic patronage. To some extent the figure of the literary and historical scholar survived into the nineteenth century (especially in its comic guise as the pedant), but in Germany textual scholarship was one of the cornerstones of the new university that had the close study of classical texts in their proper historical context as an integral part of its curriculum and that would become the model of the new kind and non-confessional type of higher education in the rest of the world.

In a parallel development it was in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century that, partly as a result of the French Revolution, most of the manuscripts that had earlier moved between great private collections, at last found a public resting place in university and national libraries, especially in those nations that had been occupied by the revolutionary French armies who closed the monasteries and appropriated the religious, royal, and aristocratic libraries. It was in these new public institutions that the manuscripts became available for the kind of serious study that could only now begin. Sebastiano Timpanaro has described how this new learning developed in Germany, on the basis of insights derived from the study of the complex transmission of the biblical text,⁴ while E. J. Kenney comments that Bentley’s aborted plan for a critical edition of the New Testament makes him the chief founder of the science of historical criticism.⁵

Although both Timpanaro and Kenney claim that Karl Lachmann had been preceded in many respects by other critics, the German scholar in
his edition of the Roman poet Lucretius is considered to have been the first to formulate fully the main principles of modern textual criticism. This set of principles would grow, especially in the work of his students and followers, into the so-called Lachmannian method, a careful examination of the manuscript record to define the relationship between the different documents. Lachmann saw that a systematic study of all the available manuscripts of a text would reveal complex relationships that could be represented in a stemma, a tree-structure. This preliminary work, the recensio, leads us to conclude which of the existing manuscripts is the closest to the original text, selectio; the text of that manuscript is then carefully studied, the examinatio, in order to correct the errors with the help of a fixed set of procedures. In the exemplary case of the edition of Lucretius’ De rerum natura, Lachmann was able to demonstrate that the three different manuscript traditions all derive from a single archetype with 302 pages of 26 lines each. He also showed that this conjectured manuscript of Lucretius’ work was itself copied from a manuscript written in minuscule letters, in its turn copied from one in rustic capitals. Although each of the methodological steps of the method had been anticipated and used by earlier critics, Lachmann seems to have been the first to employ all of them systematically and in any case his “method” became identified with his name in the decades after his death. Both Kenney and Timpanaro stress that the method has remained influential in classical studies although not uncontroversial.

In the same period another and more important shift took place: under the influence of romantic ideas about the national past, especially in a politically divided Germany that badly needed a unified national past, medieval texts in the vernacular were rediscovered, collected, edited, and presented as proof of the fundamental historical continuity of the Volk, the ethnic group, the nation, which found one of its identificatory moments in the study of languages and cultures. This scholarship led in its turn to the insights of comparative linguistics about the historical relations among the different language groups. In the second half of the nineteenth century the German philological movement spread rapidly abroad, again in league with the new idea of a research university, first in the rest of Europe and then in the United States. In many European countries, most of them transforming themselves into the new nation states, some of the initial research had been done by enterprising German scholars, like August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben in Holland and Flanders, and others in France and in Italy. The new philology was a discipline that consisted of the study of the history and structure of classical and of modern languages, as well as the literature written in these languages.
The historical-critical edition was an integral part of this new philology, but it was first and foremost a practice, not a coherent set of theories. The aim of textual scholarship was to offer the best editions of the texts of the past and most of the scholars involved thought that the aim of the exercise was to publish a text that best represented the intentions of the original author. This seems to have been so self-evident that the aim was only rarely made explicit and then often only in terms of finding in the manuscript record the original version: philology was supposed to go *ad fontes*, back to the original source, in order to recapture the pure waters that had been muddied by the passage of time.

Until recently the Lachmann method has been in the background of all editorial discussions in Europe, obviously in the case of classical, biblical, and medieval texts from the manuscript era (Lachmann had been active in all three fields), but even in the publication of literary texts of the print era. Lachmann himself had developed his principles on the basis of the traditions of textual criticism of classical and biblical texts but he applied his method not just to literary works in Latin, but also to the texts of the medieval writers in the vernacular such as Walther von der Vogelweide and Wolfram von Eschenbach and even of the eighteenth-century writer and philosopher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Whereas Bentley had only made elaborate plans for an edition of the New Testament, Lachmann was responsible for the first critically edited version of the New Testament independent of the *textus receptus*, the version that had been the base text for most Protestant Bible editions and translations.

The historical-critical edition

Following Lachmann, the early history of textual editing in the modern period has been predominantly German, with scholars from that country responsible for most of the innovative work on the Bible and on Greek and Latin classical texts, but the move to texts in German was also crucial in establishing the legitimacy of the study of vernacular literature as a new academic discipline. The first university chairs in that subject were only established in the first decades of the nineteenth century and the critical editions of mostly medieval texts played a crucial role in demonstrating the scientific legitimacy of the new field of study. Rüdiger Nutt-Kofoth writes that “the name of Lachmann is closely bound up with the emergence of German scholarly editing and the recognition of German studies as an academic discipline.” As a result, the philological sub-discipline is still called *Editionswissenschaft*, the science of editing. But the legitimacy of the new discipline was based so self-evidently on the methodology of classical philology that Lachmann and his early followers do not even seem to have
distinguished in principle between editing works from the manuscript era and works dating from after the invention of printing, treating for example Lessing’s works no differently than a classical or biblical text, much in the same way that Richard Bentley had edited (and heavy-handedly emended) Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. The end result of this process would become one of the most important German cultural export products, the historical-critical edition of texts in the vernacular.

The first project that identified itself as historical-critical was an edition of Schiller’s works by Karl Goedeke, published between 1867 and 1876. It was followed by the massive 133-volume Weimar Goethe Edition, between 1887 and 1919. These two ambitious projects have been seen to represent the two main ways of editing the two classic authors of the modern period: the Weimar edition was ostensibly based on Goethe’s own edition or “Ausgabe letzter Hand” in which at the end of his life the old master had organized sometimes heavily revised versions of all his work according to genres. In contrast, Goedeke’s Schiller edition presented the author’s works in their historical sequence, with the variants printed at the bottom of the page, as used to be the case in editions of Greek and Latin texts. All of this information was designed to give the reader at least some sense of how the author had actually composed his works. Although the editors of the Weimar Goethe dismissed Goedeke’s procedures as a luxury they could not afford in the case of the much more prolific writer Goethe, they did give the variants in a separate section of each volume, which made it in fact possible to have a better sense of what these various documents contained.

Klaus Hurlebusch has identified the tension between concentrating on the production of the literary works or on their reception as one of the most important concerns in the history of German textual editing.

After the oeuvre of Goethe and Schiller, the work of Friedrich Hölderlin has been central in the history of German editing, following a major rediscovery of that poet in the first years of the twentieth century, based on a set of hymnic poems that had only survived in the form of unpublished and sometimes fragmentary working drafts. In his so-called “Great Stuttgart Edition,” the first volume of which was published in 1943, Friedrich Beißner edited these later works and he gave them a final form, on the basis of transcriptions of earlier versions that were also included in the edition. In his work on Hölderlin, Beißner for the first time made the extremely important distinction in the study of modern manuscripts between genetic and transmissional variants, differences between versions that were the result of a conscious choice on the part of the author and those that were merely copying errors or other mistakes. Although he later admitted that these early versions of Hölderlin’s poems (mostly two early versions out of which the editor then created a single final form) did not represent these works’
real genesis but only what he called their “ideal growth,” this radical step towards an interest in the development of the literary work was extremely influential among the immediate post-war generation of textual editors in Germany.

It was only a decade or so after the publication of the first volume of the Stuttgart edition that in the theoretical discussions about the new developments, the emphasis shifted towards the genetic study of the work and towards final authorial intentions. Ever since the Weimar Goethe Edition, German editors had seen themselves as executors of the last wishes of the author, agreeing with Goethe himself on privileging the aesthetic superiority of the final versions created by the author. But now this bias came under attack, especially when Ernst Grumach in his “prolegomena” to a new Goethe edition was able to prove that the final revision of many of the poet’s late texts had in fact not been made by the poet himself, but by an assistant. The editors of the new Akademie-Ausgabe of Goethe formulated a set of principles that would be extremely influential in Germany and abroad. They identified a text’s version as one stage in its development, not necessarily a step towards a “better” final text, but just substantially different from earlier or later versions and, on principle, of equal value. Siegfried Scheibe, one of the Goethe editors, even claimed that the real text was not the final result, but the sum of all the different versions.

According to Scheibe it is the editor’s most important task to choose one of these versions of the text and to explain the reasoning behind that choice; but once the choice has been made, editors cannot go back to other versions in order to emend. In strong contrast to Anglo-American copytext editing, German editorial practice avoids the contamination of one version of the text by (elements of) other versions. Concretely the principle of the equivalence of all versions is problematic because it makes all editions practically impossible, since in most cases the different versions (which may differ only in a word or even in a single letter) cannot all be represented in full and even when they are, the crucial critical work is then left to the reader of the historical-critical edition.

Yet despite the principles, editions continued to produce privileged versions of an author’s work and since the deathbed decisions of the author had been discredited, there was a greater interest in earlier authorial versions. Scheibe’s principle of equivalence among versions made it impossible to really ground such a choice for one version, which was necessary if only to distinguish between text and apparatus. The representation of text and apparatus had also been the basis of the critic Beda Allemann’s accusation against Beißner that the Große Stuttgarter Ausgabe only gave the results of the editorial work in providing the reader with earlier versions of the poems,
but did not give the edition’s user the means to check the editorial decisions against the manuscript record.12

It was the editor of a new Frankfurt Hölderlin edition who gave Allemann what he wanted. In this new complete edition, D. E. Sattler includes reproductions of all the manuscripts, sometimes even in the form of facsimiles that mimic the form in which they were transmitted (as in the case of the so-called Homburg Folioheft, a gathering of folios that contains all the late unfinished poems), then typographically faithful transcriptions of these manuscripts and only then his suggestions for the final form these poems were supposed to have: the editor’s active role in this process is stressed by calling the latter forms “constituted texts”). Typically, in the more limited paperback version of the edition, only the reproductions are missing: both the transcriptions and the constituted texts are included. Since 1975, when Sattler’s first volume was published, his example has been followed by the editors of the work of Georg Büchner and most importantly of Franz Kafka, whose works, with the exception of just a few short stories, had not been authorized for publication: the only texts we have are fragmentary and unfinished and this is the form they are given in this edition, not the versions that were later finished by Max Brod.

Philology had been a German science from the beginning and it was so well-organized and institutionally embedded that outside influences on German editing theory and practice were minimal: most of the challenges came from within. It is only in the last few decades that some of the younger generation of critics have begun to look across the borders, first at French developments and later also at Anglo-American editorial theory. It is probably not a coincidence that quite a few of these critics do not work on modern German literature but in medieval studies or in English literature. The most prominent is Hans Walter Gabler, whose ground-breaking 1984 edition of James Joyce’s Ulysses was the result of a sophisticated but not controversial mixture of French, German, and Anglo-American developments in editorial theory and practice.

It is in this final stage of development of thinking about how to represent literary texts that German editors have been most open to French literary theory and genetic criticism; French and German editorial theorists have attempted to stay in touch with the evolutions across the border. Bilingual conferences and especially the efforts of a few bridge builders have managed to keep some kind of contact between the two major Continental traditions.

In the nineteenth century Victor Cousin introduced German-inspired educational reforms in France, and it is probably not a coincidence that he was also one of the first intellectuals to stress the importance of modern manuscripts. By the end of the nineteenth century the French universities,
like universities all over the world, began to adopt the German model of scientific research (before 1914 more than half of the library budget of the Ecole Normale Supérieure was spent on German publications). The new philology was an important part of this legacy.

The first chair in medieval French literature at the prestigious Collège de France was established in 1852, but the study of medieval vernacular literature remained a contentious subject for much longer than in Germany. Especially after the débâcle of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870 (which the French writer and philosopher Ernest Renan called a victory for German science), the long reform of the old Napoleonic university system was politically contested. Especially controversial in that reform was the role of German philology, most notably in the decade before 1914, during the controversy following the university reforms of 1902 in which the role of Latin had been diminished in favor of the sciences and of modern languages (which included French). This crisis represented a belated version of the late seventeenth-century Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns in which the loss of the central role of Latin was seen as a betrayal of the essential values of the nation. These discussions should also be seen in the context of the political struggle between conservatives and democrats that marked the period between 1870 and 1914.

Quite a few traditionalist literature specialists felt that they had to defend Latin-French values against an aggressive German positivism that in France was first advocated by Gaston Paris and later by Gustave Lanson. It is interesting that the reformists at the beginning of the twentieth century were accused of the same crimes as the French genetic critics 100 years later. Most influential against the Lachmann method in medieval studies was Joseph Bédier who had noticed that most concrete stemmas for medieval texts seemed to consist of only two traditions, a situation that enabled the editors to construct a text of their own devising. He ended up rejecting what he saw as an ultimately subjective methodology and began to argue for the faithful edition of the “best text” of a work, which had at least the advantage of being historically consistent, having been written by one scribe, at a particular moment in time.¹³

At the other end of the spectrum, Lanson’s ideas, formalized by his student Gustave Rudler, concentrated on literary history and did not exclude an interest in the genesis of literary works, but the efforts did not lead to French historical-critical editions. Even the prestigious Pléiade editions of classic works, which began to appear in 1931, were often incomplete, sometimes lacking any kind of apparatus: the genetic critic Almuth Grésillon correctly calls these editions at most “half-critical.”¹⁴ Although a few scholars wrote on the manner in which a number of modern literary works came into being, both the interest in editions and in the textual development were silenced.
by what Grésillon calls the “structuralist wave” of the 1960s, which came to prominence with a debate between the Sorbonne professor Raymond Picard and Roland Barthes in which the former represented the philological tradition dominant at the universities and the latter defended the right of the new critics to introduce structuralist methodologies.

While this French form of New Criticism, like its American cousin, concentrated its work on the published form of the literary text, in the early 1970s a number of young critics began to develop an interest in the careful study of modern manuscripts. The history of this genetic criticism is well-documented: in 1966 the Bibliothèque Nationale acquired a collection of Heinrich Heine manuscripts and Louis Hay became the head of a team of scholars that would study this rich hoard. From the beginning both Hay and his colleague Jean Bellemin-Noël stressed their general agreement with structuralism; they used structuralist terminology and downplayed references to the author’s intentions. Important for the survival of genetic criticism as a discipline was the institutional support the early group of researchers received, especially when the original Heine group joined forces with critics working on the genetic study of complex and interesting works by Gustave Flaubert, James Joyce, Marcel Proust, and Emile Zola. The initial Centre d’Analyse des Manuscrits became ITEM (Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes), a “laboratory” of the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS).

Although some of the first French geneticists were specialists of German literature (Louis Hay, Grésillon) or of James Joyce (Daniel Ferrer), genetic criticism grew out of French structuralism and post-structuralism. Most French historians of the field downplay the importance of French manuscript work before the seventies, for reasons that have more to do with contemporary academic politics in France than with historical realities. Genetic criticism, a discipline that depends on larger research groups always in need of adequate funding, has been under constant attack by representatives of other scholarly approaches, who are competing for the same, ever diminishing funds. As a result the first generation of généticiens tended to stress the continuity in their thinking with then dominant (post-)structuralist ideas and their fundamental differences with the old-fashioned criticism, an emphasis that has recently been criticized.15

Most of the French genetic critics are active both in practical genetic work and in textual theory: the members of ITEM have found a balance between work on the chosen set of authors and advanced work on the material study of manuscripts, closely related to what is called “analytical bibliography” in the Anglo-American tradition (where the emphasis tends to be on books instead of manuscripts). At the same time there has been a tendency to reflect on the theory of editing as well as a lively confrontation of ideas with other
members of the team, and increasingly over the years, with people working in related fields (such as music, architecture, art) and with genetic critics in other countries, in Europe and America.

ITEM’s emphasis on theoretical reflection and the exchange of ideas among its members has not resulted in a single theory of literary manuscripts or of the genesis of literary texts, although the more central figures of the group seem to agree on a number of defining characteristics, one of which is certainly the initial dependence on (post-) structuralist thought and its insistence on the fundamental openness to interpretation of the literary work. This emphasis was based on a psychological model where the writing subject is believed not to be in full control of the writing process but instead to be controlled by écriture: poems, just like other works of literature, write themselves. The particular history of a given work, to the extent that it survives in the form of manuscripts, was called the avant-texte by Jean Bellemin-Noël, although Grésillon noted that the term itself implies an identifiable text that seems to have a definite enough form to become the telos of the process that precedes it. But genetic critics reject this kind of teleology and Grésillon favors the more neutral term “genetic dossier” which she defines as “the sum total of the written documents that one can afterwards consider to have been part of a writing project of which it does not matter whether it resulted or did not result in a published text.”

The anti-teleological bias is crucial in the self-understanding of genetic critics who routinely stress that they are not interested in editing, in the constitution or emendation of final texts. In fact, for most genetic critics the final or published version of a text is neither more nor less interesting than any other stage of development: all versions of a text have equal value and what interests the genetic critic is the process of writing, not its result. Genetic criticism thus feels itself closest to those of the recent German editors who stress the temporal dynamics of writing and the fundamental equivalence of all versions of a work, but it differs from the German tradition by its lack of interest in editorial matters and in edited texts. In their introduction to a volume of translations of genetic essays, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden even come to the conclusion that “genetic criticism is not concerned with texts at all but only with the writing processes that engender them.”

But this does not mean that all genetic critics disdain edition. Some généticiens have identified “genetic edition” as one of their tasks: reproducing the complete genetic dossier, which of course first needs to be studied, transcribed, made sense of and ordered. Again, this does not mean that the end of the process then acquires a more special status than any of the intermediate stages. Ordering the documents in their temporal succession is only the first part of the work. The dossier should be read, both in reverse, to
see where all the later versions come from, but also in the order in which the writer produced them, in order to observe how each choice necessarily implies the neglect of alternatives, the roads not taken.

The result of some of the uncompromising genetic thinking about editions has led to criticism that such monster collections of all of a writer’s manuscripts simply do not have readers in the real world: in most modern editions, Flaubert’s story “Un cœur simple” takes up less than thirty pages, but the story’s genetic dossier is 700 pages long. Almost from the beginning the genetic critics were aware of this problem (if only because it was constantly repeated by critics of their work) and some of them became pioneers in the exploration of the possibilities of hypertext and the use of digital resources. This has resulted in a rich literature that merits more presence in the debates about the use of computers in editing in other traditions. Although some of the early work in this genre suffered from an exaggerated optimism, the metaphor of hypertext has helped the généticiens to formulate more efficiently what genetic criticism can mean to the study of texts and how it can create a new kind of reader. This type of work has also had practical results, for example in the digitization of many books by the project Gallica of the Bibliothèque Nationale, an initiative that can now be recognized as having been a precursor to Google Books. From the very beginning the French national library worked closely with ITEM, more specifically with the Zola research group which in 2003 brought out an exemplary genetic dossier of the novel Le Rêve.\footnote{At the times a maybe relevant that the announcement of the birth of a new genetic reader as prophesied by some geneticists,\footnote{seems to have been premature: of all the thematic dossiers available on Gallica, the Rêve dossier is the one that has been least popular with browsers.\footnote{Developments in the twentieth century and beyond}}

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Developments in the twentieth century and beyond
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In Italy, German editorial thinking was introduced at the end of the nineteenth century, although the new method was probably mediated for the Italian philologists through the work of Gaston Paris on medieval manuscripts. By the turn of the century, there were already editions of Italian texts, among them those of Dante, based on the new principles. The relative success of the new approach was hindered by the enormous influence of Benedetto Croce’s idealist aesthetics in the study of Italian literature in the first half of the twentieth century. Croce rejected textual studies as a positivist aberration and with other conservative critics he protested against what was considered as a rationalist attack on the sovereign nature of literary genius. As late as 1947 he explicitly rejected the idea that one could learn anything by looking into a writer’s wastepaper basket.\footnote{In 1947 he explicitly rejected the idea that one could learn anything by looking into a writer’s wastepaper basket.}
Between the world wars, editorial theory, especially in the field of classical Greek and Latin texts, was still largely the domain of German critics. Paul Maas’s concise description of the basic principles of the edition of classical texts in his book *Textkritik* was the occasion for a reaction by Giorgio Pasquali, first in a review and then in an ambitious and still immensely readable book. Pasquali did criticize the rigidity of the method, but his critique remained well within the parameters set by Lachmann. In the wake of Pasquali’s study and in a book that has been translated into German and English, Sebastiano Timpanaro was one of the first scholars to identify the exact role of Lachmann in the development of the methodology that carries his name. In the late 1930s Pasquali’s conclusions became the basis upon which Italian scholars such as Michele Barbi, Gianfranco Contini and others built what Barbi called the *nuova filologia* or *variantistica*: a careful study of the specific textual tradition of the text which has been described as “neolachmannian” and even “translachmannian.”

If in England the work of Shakespeare has been at the center of editorial discussion and in Germany the writings of Goethe, Schiller, and Hölderlin, a similar role is played in Italy by the rich and complex history of the works of Dante. Barbi edited the *Vita nuova*, but the 600 manuscripts of the *Divina commedia* continue to baffle the scholars: there is still no genuine critical edition of the text. Here, as in the case where we can be sure that certain writers produced different authorial versions of the same text, Italian critics have given priority to the historical reality of each of the variants over a rigorous methodology.

Every national culture in Europe, including regional cultures such as the Catalan or the Flemish, have sought legitimacy as nations in the publication of texts of their literary past. In most of these cases, the editorial principles for such initiatives were borrowed ultimately from a Lachmannian tradition, sometimes via quite circuitous routes. In the case of Spain, for example, editors hesitated a long time before they adopted the principles that had first been applied by Italian editors, whose *nuova filologia*, itself inspired by Gaston Paris’s edition of medieval manuscripts, was developed in the wake and the spirit of Lachmann. For their part, Dutch editors have worked mainly in the German tradition, whereas a small group of Belgian editors and geneticists (first in the research group *Genese* and later in the Center for Manuscript Genetics in Antwerp) have attempted to compare and reconcile the different scholarly approaches (Dirk Van Hulle) or have done pioneering work in electronic editions (Marcel De Smedt, Edward Vanhoutte, and Van Hulle again). In Denmark too German editorial theory was more influential, whereas Swedish editors, at least since the early 1990s, show a tendency to follow the developments in Anglo-American theory.
Continental editorial theory

For political reasons the study and edition of literary texts in Russian could only develop in the brief period between the revolution and before the reestablishment of censorship in the Soviet Union. A new discipline was created as part of Russian philology and this Russian “textology” had its own theory of artistic creation. It is interesting to see that some of these textologists (whose genetic work has just been translated into French) turn out to be the same formalists that (post-)structuralists had considered as their precursors: Boris Eikhenbaum and Boris Tomashevskii.22

In most European countries, editorial practice and theory began to receive institutional support in the 1970s and 1980s, with the establishment of the French ITEM and the German Arbeitsgemeinschaft für germanistische Edition. Most of the Scandinavian editors have been active in a multilingual Nordiskt Nätverk för Editionsfilologer, founded in 1995. It is only in the last thirty years that some of the members of these larger groups have begun to look across national and institutional borders, and initially it was the German and the French scholars who most closely studied each other’s theory and practice, beginning with a colloquium they organized in Paris in 1977. Since then there have been frequent contacts between the different groups, usually in the form of participation at conferences or surveys of the developments in the other traditions. In the last decade it has become difficult in this field to find collections of essays in German or French or issues of specialist journals without at least one article referring to the “other” tradition.23

The Anglo-American tradition was much slower to make an impact in France and Germany, and it was Hans Walter Gabler’s edition of Ulysses that for the first time demonstrated that the three traditions could be made relevant, a three-way confrontation that has also been studied by Dirk Van Hulle in his book on editions of Joyce, Proust, and Thomas Mann. Since the 1990s, mostly through the efforts of a few critics like Peter Shillingsburg, a dialogue has been established between Continental editors and their American and British colleagues that led directly to the establishment of the European Society for Textual Scholarship, which in its turn fostered much closer contacts among some of the Continental textual scholars. To some extent, English has replaced Latin as a lingua franca among the younger generation of editors and the much closer contact has resulted in international conferences, joint publications and research projects.

As the controversy about Gabler’s Ulysses has demonstrated, it might be hazardous to combine principles from different editorial traditions,24 but at the same time such rare cases also show that it is not always useful to argue about textual problems and editorial decisions on the basis of purely theoretical principles. Although the reference to post-structuralist theory...
may have had some salutary effect in editorial theory, some of the work in this area does not go beyond a sophisticated discussion of the metaphors used by editors when they describe their work.

One of the most exciting recent developments in Continental editorial theory has been the increased interest in the related fields of classical and biblical textual scholarship and in disciplines such as paleography and book history, all of this despite the obvious difficulties created by the increased specialization in each of these fields. Such interest may be due to a growing awareness of the origins of textual scholarship, an interest that should not be surprising in such a preeminently historical discipline. Few disciplines have been so ruthless in their interest in the history of their own tradition and in their critique of the political relevance of some of its work (especially in Italy where Giovanni Fiesoli has written a detailed study on the genesis and the reception of Lachmann’s work). There have been extremely critical studies of the ideas of some of the early philologists by Luciano Canfora, Edward Said, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, and Bernard Cerquiglini. In 1989 Cerquiglini’s *Éloge de la variante* was one of the inaugural statements of yet another “new philology,” this time a call for a return in the study of medieval vernacular literature to the uniqueness of the single manuscript, against a philology that was accused of homogenizing, with its belief in authorial intentions (the similar movement of “radical philology” in classical studies does not seem to have had many European followers). Few critics have noted how the rhetoric and the thrust of this pamphlet signal a return to Bédier’s editorial practice and to other rejections of rational enquiry by post-structuralism that I have elsewhere described as romantic.25

In many European cultures, textual studies have become much more central in recent years than they were during the height of post-structuralism. There has been a return to the archives and a new interest in the materiality and the genesis of texts, old and new. It is interesting to see that at least some of this new work returns to the interdisciplinary roots of philology and of historical inquiry in general. We also note that it is in the course of some of this work that young scholars of different backgrounds (national, disciplinary, and theoretical) have discovered a common basis of scholarly work on texts. Not surprisingly, some of this new work is in digital editing, because it is there that technical developments have made not just a quantitative but also a qualitative difference with what was possible in the print era. But computer resources too have had an important impact on the development of digital techniques of manuscript comparison, with a strong input from information theory and, appropriately perhaps, from evolutionary genetics. For this new group of textual scholars, the object of study is no longer just the major works of a select group of modernist writers; it now includes classical and medieval works, as well as biblical texts.
Despite the many names it has acquired over the years, textual study has not only survived the twentieth century in Continental Europe, but both its theory and its practice seem to be thriving. In its intense study of its own past, its interdisciplinary and increasingly international interest in developments in related philological, literary, biblical, and historical scholarship, it is no longer just a preliminary and according to some critics even pre-scientific auxiliary discipline; it has established itself as one of the more interesting and coherent ways of studying our written heritage.

NOTES

5 Kenney, Classical Text, 100–1.
8 Ibid., 326.
16 Grésillon, Eléments, 109.
18 See http://gallica.bnf.fr/Zola/


See the French translation of a number of these essays in André Mikhailov, André Grichounine and Daniel Ferrer, eds., La textologie russe (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2007).

