

Reviews

Sebastiano Timpanaro, *La Genèse de la méthode de Lachmann*, tr. Aude Cohen-Skalli and Alain Philippe Segonds, L'âne d'or, 51 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2016). Paperback. XXXVIII + 228 pp. Index. Bibliography. ISBN-10 2-251-42060-6. ISBN-13 978-2-251-42060-8. € 29.

Sebastiano Timpanaro (1921–2000), an outstanding intellectual of the twentieth century, classical philologist, historian of culture (materialism, Marxism, and classicism in particular), also profoundly engaged in the debate on psychoanalysis and politics, remains one of the very few Italian scholars of the second half of the twentieth century to have been influential and widely translated abroad.

This translation appears fifty-seven years after the publication of the first edition of *La genesi del metodo del Lachmann* (hereafter, *GML*) in the form of a double-issue journal article in 1959–1960¹ and is the last step of the remarkable fortune of a classic. The *GML* has in fact deeply marked the thinking and re-thinking of text-critical editing in the second half of the twentieth century and beyond. Timpanaro focuses in this essay on the question of which was exactly the role of Karl Lachmann (1793–1851) in the development of the so-called *method of Lachmann*—an expression that according to Michael Reeve was rightly put in inverted commas only in the first edition, while inverted commas unfortunately went lost in the title of the later ones, starting from that of 1963²—with an admirable selection of examples and a total command of the subject, an extremely lucid mind and an astonishingly clear expression. In so doing, Timpanaro continuously approaches central questions of the history and method of textual criticism. His conclusion—that has been eventually further specified by the important book of Giovanni Fiesoli³—is that while *emendatio* was practised since Antiquity and kept on being applied

- 1 See S. Timpanaro, 'La genesi del «metodo del Lachmann»', *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica*, 31 (1959), 182–228, and 32 (1960), 38–163.
- 2 See M. Reeve, 'Shared innovations, dichotomies, and evolution', in A. Ferrari, ed., *Filologia classica e filologia romanza: esperienze ecdotiche a confronto. Atti del Convegno Roma 25–27 maggio 1995* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1998), 445–505, here p. 445, n. 2; repr. in Id., *Manuscripts and Methods. Essays on editing and transmission*, Storia e letteratura, Raccolta di Studi e testi, 270 (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2011), 55–103.
- 3 G. Fiesoli, *La genesi del lachmannismo*, Millennio medievale, 19 (Firenze: Sismel Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2000).

in re-editing *vulgata*-based texts for centuries, either *ope ingenii* (by conjecture) or *ope codicum* (collating manuscript witnesses), it is the *recensio* that emerges as the new decisive acquisition of the nineteenth century textual criticism. Within the various methodological sections of the *recensio*, Lachmann's contribution is (1) to have re-confirmed the importance of the systematic use of manuscripts, even though this had already been proposed by other philologists; (2) to have limited the use of later manuscripts (a point later challenged by Neo-Lachmannians); (3) to have adopted the reconstruction of the genealogical relationship of the witnesses, although certainly not for the first time and not even with the best method; (4) to have indicated for the first time criteria for the mechanic determination of the readings of the archetype.

With the last chapter dedicated to the parallels between philology and linguistics, and the appendix C (first appeared in the enlarged 1981 edition) on the thorny questions of bipartite stemmata upon which Joseph Bédier built up his criticism of Lachmann's method,⁴ Timpanaro's book imposed itself as one of the founding texts of the so-called *Neo-Lachmannian method*, after Giorgio Pasquali's path-breaking *Storia della tradizione e critica del testo* and along with Gianfranco Contini's many fundamental contributions on Italian and Romance philology.⁵

After a series of substantial re-editions—in 1963, 1981 and 1985—and translations—into German in 1971 and English in 2005⁶—this French

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- 4 See on this point V. Guidi and P. Trovato, 'Sugli stemmi bipartiti. Decimazione, asimmetria e calcolo delle probabilità', *Filologia italiana*, 1 (2004), 9–48.
- 5 See G. Pasquali, *Storia della tradizione e critica del testo* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1934, 2nd ed. 1952; last repr. Firenze: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1988); G. Contini, *Frammenti di filologia romanza. Scritti di ecdotica e linguistica*, ed. G. Breschi, I-II, Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, Fondo Gianfranco Contini, Archivio romanzo, 11 (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2007). For a clear and thorough presentation of the Neo-Lachmannian text-critical approach see now P. Trovato, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lachmann's Method. A Non-Standard Handbook of Genealogical Textual Criticism in the Age of Post-Structuralism, Cladistics, and Copy-Text* (Padova: Libreria universitaria, 2014).
- 6 S. Timpanaro, *La genesi del metodo del Lachmann* (Firenze: Felice Le Monnier, 1963); *Id.*, *Biblioteca di cultura* (Padova: Liviana Editrice, 2nd ed. 1981); *Id.*, *Prima ristampa con alcune aggiunte* (Padova: Liviana, third ed. 1985); *Id.*, *Con una Presentazione e una Postilla di Elio Montanari*, UTET Libreria (Torino: UTET, 2003; repr. Torino: UTET and Novara: De Agostini Scuola, 2010); German tr., *Die Entstehung der lachmannschen Methode*, ed. D. Irmer (Hamburg: Buske, 1971, repr. 1998); Engl. tr., *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, ed., tr. G.W. Most (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

translation,⁷ now appeared in a prestigious series,⁸ planned long ago and finally realized—comes as a sort of definitive consecration of this book. Portions of the third edition of the *GML* were also reprinted, with interventions by the author for the occasion, in an authoritative Italian reader in textual criticism edited by Alfredo Stussi: a mandatory reading for most students in classics and textual criticism in Italian universities, the reader substantially contributed to transmit Timpanaro's ideas and determine their influence on several generations of scholars.⁹

An extremely retired man and never a professional university academic, Timpanaro was always helpful to younger and senior scholars who asked him for advice. He entertained in the course of his life an immense correspondence, the exploration of which has just started (his archive is preserved in the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, where he studied and where he always felt at home). Although as a student I cannot claim to have entertained any special relationship with Timpanaro, at variance with colleagues of my generations also studying at the University of Florence, I witnessed to Timpanaro's daily presence in the libraries of the Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità 'Giorgio Pasquali' and of the Dipartimento di Linguistica and Lingue Orientali in the last years of his life. Not the least merit of this French translation of the *GML* is certainly that of providing an extensive introduction (pp. xi–xxxvii), that is the most updated and comprehensive characterization of Timpanaro's extremely rich and complex personality.¹⁰

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7 Based upon the first posthumous 2003 edition by Elio Montanari.

8 In the same series and with substantial affinities with Timpanaro's approach, see the remarkable collection of essays by J. Irigoin, *La tradition des textes grecs. Pour une critique historique*, L'âne d'or, 19 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2003).

9 See S. Timpanaro, 'Appendice C. Stemmi bipartiti e perturbazioni della tradizione manoscritta' ('per l'occasione rivisto dall'Autore'), in A. Stussi, ed., *La critica del testo*, Strumenti di filologia romana (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985), 199–227 (= repr. of pp. 123–150 from the third ed. of *GML*); repr. in A. Stussi, ed., *Fondamenti di critica testuale*, Strumenti, Linguistica e critica letteraria (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998), 251–286; repr. in A. Stussi, ed., *Fondamenti di critica testuale*. Nuova edizione, Manuali, Filologia e critica letteraria (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006), 131–166.

10 There is only to add the bibliography by E. Narducci and A. Russo, 'Bibliografia degli scritti di Sebastiano Timpanaro', in E. Narducci et al., eds, *Sebastiano Timpanaro. Contributi di Filologia Greca e Latina*, Studi e Testi, 25 (Firenze: Università degli Studi di Firenze, Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità 'Giorgio Pasquali', 2005), 473–504.