
Old and New Philology, or textual and material philology, reproduce a perhaps already outdated binary in 2022, as researchers have developed and quickly adapted to hybrid approaches since Stephen G. Nichol’s introduction to the special volume of Speculum in 1990 (Stephen G. Nichols, “Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture,” Speculum 65.1 (1990): 1–10). That clarion call for a return to manuscript philology and codicological consideration of physical textual histories raises no objections today, demonstrating the degree to which a once somewhat critical apprehension of the then-developing approach has been subsumed under the general rubric of Medieval Studies in general and philology in particular (see, for example, Susan Yager, “New Philology,” Handbook of Medieval Studies. Terms – Methods – Trends, ed. Albrecht Classen, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011, 999–1006). Lachmanns Erbe brings the state of the field forward, primarily from German, French, and Italian perspectives as a bridge between Lachmann and the present.

This volume, arising from a 2018 workshop at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, contains an introduction to the Lachmannian program and its implications in edition history and 13 contributions, one in English and the rest in German, divided into seven categories (two each in six pairs and a solitary contribution under the first heading after the introduction), namely Antike Texte in mittelalterlichen Handschriften, Variantentypologie I: Eigenvarianten der Schreiber, Variantentypologie II: Ursprüngliche Fassungsvarianz in der Liedüberlieferung?, Der Archetypus und seine Hyparchetypen, Partielle Überlieferung abweichender älterer Textstufen, Partiell oder ausschließlich indirekte Überlieferung, and Digitalität und Methode. This review will concentrate on essays concerning the editing of medieval texts or the medieval reception of classical texts (chapters 2, 3.2, 4.2, 5.2, 6.2, 8.1, and 8.2).

In the introduction the editors outline Karl Lachmann’s program and method of ‘strenghistorische Kritik’ in the genealogical textual reconstruction of works based on manuscript witness deviations and correspondences, a method that only later pejorative-ly became known as such. The history of Lachmann’s contributions to classical and medieval philology receives extensive coverage for an introduction in order to outline both his contributions as well as later criticisms and refinements to them, including so-called Lachmannian ‘phantoms’ of reproduced errors and terminological considerations of central importance such as stemma and archetype. Bédier, Stackmann, Bumke, and other familiar names round out the extensive synopsis of philological history, providing windows into various new directions in principal manuscript identification, the normalization of Middle High German, and the dimensions of textual and scribal cultures that influence reconstruction principles and their application.

The final section of the introduction outlines the volume’s contributions as variations and developments within the rubric of ‘strenghistorische Kritik,’ followed by two appendices, the first of which is a description and defense of (some) Lachmannian positions from 1817 and the second of which is a parallel Italian text and German translation from Pasquali over a century later outlining newer ‘fundamentals’ for would-be editors of antique texts. In total, the introduction spans nearly a quarter of the entire volume and could stand alone as primer for this indispensable branch of philological history.