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The essays in this volume were first discussed at a workshop in Montréal in the fall of 2006, generously funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and by Concordia University. For their help in the initial planning for that event and in the subsequent production of this volume, I owe thanks to Daniel Anderson and Julija Šukys. Eugene O’Connor and Paul Allen Miller have been generous and very helpful overseers of the production of the book. But above all I wish to thank the authors of the essays that follow. They did the real work and deserve to be read slowly and with celebration.
The essays in this volume discuss moments in the history of philology, a history of the ever-changing regulation, disciplining, and interpreting of texts. When philologists take up the tools of textual criticism, they contribute to the very form of texts, and when they adopt articulate protocols to define correct interpretation, they become the legislators of reading practice. In philology, in other words, literature is both produced and received; philology is where literature happens, and we do well to attend to its permutations through time.\(^1\)

But what is philology? Much more than it appears at any given moment. These essays are largely unconcerned with the nineteenth-century German university, where *Philologie* was synonymous with the study of language and literature. That epoch’s apparent monopoly on the term and its disciplinary associations can blind scholars to its much longer and more diverse history, and for the same reason any pat definition of philology would run the risk of barring access to the rich plurality of interpretations it has acquired over the course of nearly two and a half millennia. In fact, every definition of philology remains part of its history: to be a philologist means to appropriate a term and to revive or recover a practice. This has never been more the case

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1. The most complete survey of the history of philology remains Sandys 1964, but see also Brink 1986, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1982, Pfeiffer 1968 and 1976 seem to belong to this group but in fact represent a far more sophisticated undertaking; likewise Momigliano’s historiographical work (see Momigliano 1994). Henderson 2006 is a fascinating opening on a new approach. On the genre of the philological introduction see Hummel 2000.
than today. Though it has been the object of a number of direct critiques,\(^2\) philology has also been subject to a series of very high-profile revivals in the last half-century.\(^3\) But when philology is recovered, the dynamics of its recovery often involve an element of forgetting, so that what is revived is only a fragment of the much larger assemblage of practices, epistemic orientations, and gestures of recovery associated with the term over its millennia-long history. A kind of narrowing and focusing takes place, one whose ultimate aim is often to buttress the meaning and value of the project currently called “philology,” whatever that project might be. A recent example, from Sebastiano Timpanaro’s justly celebrated *Genesis of Lachmann’s Method*, illustrates this well. In the following passage, Timpanaro discusses Angelo Poliziano’s methods of textual criticism.\(^4\) Poliziano, he says,

already understood that the manuscripts (at least the oldest and most valuable ones) had to be collated not occasionally but systematically, registering all the readings that diverged from the vulgate text, including those that were certainly erroneous but that might turn out to be useful for restoring the text. This is the criterion he asserted in the *subscriptiones* to the writers *De re rustica*, to Pliny, Statius, Pelagonius, and Terrence; he had a full and justified awareness of its methodological novelty, even if earlier Humanists and, probably, medieval scribes had already begun to apply it. In this regard he was a precursor of Ernesti and Wolf and was already beginning to overcome the erroneous concept of *emendatio ope codicum*, which implies that collations are made not constantly but only occasionally.\(^5\)

One does not have to read too carefully to discern the strongly teleological movement of this narrative: Poliziano *already understood* the importance of systematic collation, a locution implying that important ground had been

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2. The paradigm for twentieth-century critiques of philology is Ferdinand de Saussure (1986; first ed. 1916). In order to establish “linguistics” as a legitimate and autonomous field, Saussure (re)defines philology as seeking “primarily to establish [fixer], interpret and comment upon texts” using criticism (*critique*) as its methodology (13–14). More recent, and setting the tone for the apparent abandonment of philology in the age of “high theory,” is Wellek and Warren 1956.

3. See de Man 1982 (reprinted in De Man 1986); Gaiisser 2007; Gumbrecht 2003; Kallendorf 1994; Said 2004; Ziolkowsky 1990a (=1990b); and the additional examples discussed in Altschul’s contribution to this volume. The appearance that philology was ever abandoned was not altogether accurate: not only has it continued to be a major term of disciplinary identification in classical studies, but it has remained a not-so-invisible force in some of the central texts associated with comparative literature, especially Auerbach 1949, 1965 and 1969 (see Lerer 1996); Curtius 1953: 1–15; Szondi 1986: 2–22 (“On Textual Understanding” [Über philologische Erkenntnis]; see Szondi 1962).

4. On Poliziano see Celenza’s contribution to this volume.

staked and that that this was done correctly; he was a precursor of Ernesti and Wolf, which sets his scholarship in a line of ascent culminating in contemporary textual criticism; and he was beginning to overcome the erroneous concept of emendatio ope codicum—beginning, but not successful (that would have to wait for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries); and overcoming a method that was, simply, wrong. Timpanaro’s story about the so-called “method of Lachmann” aims, in part, to justify and if necessary correct current practice in textual criticism, particularly in classical studies. Certainly contemporary textual criticism can be described as a rigorous and sophisticated art with a history of producing valuable results in the form of generally accepted and widely used classical texts. But we might wonder about the narrative teleology that Timpanaro imposes on his material: why must Poliziano’s philology be described in terms that seem to presume that today’s textual methods are better? One might claim that modern text-criticism just is better, on the grounds that it has come closest to recovering the words and the cultural contexts of historical texts; that is, it is “just more right” than anything that has come before. If this is the case, however, a critical reader would be justified in pointing out that such a claim depends on the assumption that the past has been recovered, that modern philology has somehow achieved a relatively greater presence of the past in the present. It could be argued that Timpanaro’s teleological account is no more than the narrative echo of a view of history and the relationship between historical epochs that is surprising and even paradoxical: the past is now, we have it, and historical narration merely illuminates and justifies this founding anachronism. (It changes nothing to observe that the best and the most perspicuous textual critics do not usually insist that texts have been absolutely or perfectly recovered. That would mean that the past is fragmentarily present, not fully: but the central assumption, that it is more present and less fragmentary than it once was, remains.) But hasn’t this always been the case? Hasn’t every era felt that its model of the past was, finally and for good, the right one, and didn’t it strive to develop techniques and methodologies in which it could trust, just so it could rest confident in its recovery of the past? From a certain disquieting perspective the belief that ours is the best philology proves just the opposite, namely, that, at least in its claim to be the best, it is just like all its predecessors.

6. The “Method of Lachmann” is the technique of establishing an abstract genealogy of manuscripts by the differential analysis of error. Although it is usually ascribed to Lachmann, in its current form it was systematized by Maas 1963 (first German ed. 1927). See the contributions of Maynes and Altschul in this volume.
But surely no justification of the present of philological practice actually depends, in the first instance, on such a historical vision. On the contrary, someone might suggest, it relies on observations that are methodological rather than historiographical. Textual criticism today is better than its past instantiations because it is based on a rigorous logic that accurately abstracts from the maximum available evidence the correct ideal relationships between manuscripts. Here the teleological narrative is justified from the point of view of technique: today’s tools are just better than before. But this explanation also fails, and for many of the same reasons. Since one of the fundamental criteria of philological technique is its ability to recover the past, a technical defense of current practice ends up falling back on historiography: the presence of the past again becomes a methodological principle. If this is avoided, however, the results are even more questionable. We are then required to ask about the temporality of technique itself, and the manner in which it constructs its own history; and here again it seems that technique has improved simply because it is in the nature of technique to have achieved perfection, simply because the history of technique is always the result of a retrojected teleology—a claim that, in the end, reintroduces circularity and begs the question of history in its own way.7

My point is not that there is something terminally wrong with Timpanaro’s story, but rather that his way of telling it exemplifies the process by which every philology appropriates the term and its history to itself. This collection trains its regard on that dynamic of appropriation, both to document it and, by attending to a multiplicity of historical instances without privilege or prejudice, to contest it.

Studies like Timpanaro’s are written from within a tradition of study that aspires to be scientific, an aspiration encouraged both by the institutional contexts in which it has flourished and by the needs of its public in other disciplines (this is true even when the part of philology that is historicized is interpretive or historiographical rather than text-critical, where claims to “scientficity” are harder, perhaps, to maintain). Outside this tradition,

7. To put this differently: a technical justification of the progress of textual criticism would, in the end, need the kind of questioning inaugurated by Martin Heideggar in The Question Concerning Technology (Heidegger 1977) and pursued today under the general heading of science studies. See the important start offered by Müller-Sievers 2006. Historians of philology will need to take account not only of philology as technē but also of how philological technique produces subjects and communicative apparatus: for this, the superb contribution of Daston and Galison 2007 does much more than blaze a trail (though it deals with the history of science, not philology). There has been a great deal of technical reflection on philology in classical studies, and this is growing, partly in response to pressures from other fields: see the Hypomenata series edited by Glen Most, a very important collection of materials, and Gibson and Kraus 2002.
however, the progressive widening of the objects of humanistic study, which has taken place in tandem with a changed awareness of the historical contingency of humanistic study itself, means that philology is no longer just a mode of scholarship, but has become one of its objects. Literary historians in particular are turning in increasing numbers to the history of philology, in its institutionalized instantiations in the German sphere of the nineteenth century, in the rise of Renaissance scholarship, or in the considerably less disciplined but for that reason more engaged and literary habits of classical scholarship in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England. As the institutions in which it has thrived—the university and the research institute, the book, the archive, even the self—have come under scholarly scrutiny, philology has begun to offer itself to analysis within new and different frames of reference. To be sure, these new histories will continue to encounter resistance among those who are only interested in its value as an instrument for the discovery of long-lost truths—there will always be, in other words, those who find such studies “as useless as they are boring,” as one notable classicist once wrote. But given that the negotiation and formation of the classical past is a crucial element in the cultural history of modernity, it is unlikely that philology will cease to be an object of interest to cultural historians and literary scholars across the humanities. Indeed, as the artificial epistemic divisions that prevailed in the 1980s and the 1990s between classics and the rest of the humanities increasingly crumble, it seems more and more inevitable that the cultural history of philology will cease to pause, as it often does today, at the threshold of technical detail and will begin to offer closer and deeper readings not only of the results but also of the methods of philological research.

There are good reasons to suppose that even within the enclave of instrumental philology there is little resistance to such renewed historicization. Certainly Timpanaro was not adverse to this kind of work, as his total oeuvre makes abundantly clear. Indeed, even where textual criticism is concerned, two streams of reflection have coexisted for over a century, and these represent in microcosm the division I have just adumbrated between histories of philology aimed at consolidating its position as an instrumental science and those whose interest is its role in the production of multiple modernities. As textual criticism developed a technique for the systematic collation of manuscripts in the service of deducing an archetype, there evolved

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simultaneously an increasing interest in the concrete history of textual traditions, which viewed individual witnesses not merely as abstract systems of signs whose variations could be used as clues for the construction of stemmata, but also as culturally specific products tied to their place and time and linked in a tradition that has historical sense on its own. The history of twentieth-century textual criticism was largely an attempt to balance these two approaches. That the attempt has been generally successful, and that the two approaches to the study of texts have been combined with fruitful results, does not change their radically divergent implications, which Timpanaro saw particularly clearly: “[T]he history of tradition became more and more the history of ancient and medieval culture; in Wilamowitz, in Traube, in Eduard Schwartz, for example, it acquired a richness and complexity unknown to the scholars of the preceding generation, but at the same time it became less and less capable of furnishing a secure criterion for constituting the text [. . .].” When the study of textual traditions reaches a state of autotelic stability the result is a new field of study and a new view of the history of texts, one that is interested not merely in the recovery of a version deemed “original” but in the differing ways in which such a text has combined and recombined with changing material, graphical, and cultural contexts. The history of philology, in other words, ceases to be a justification of the current state of affairs and becomes an object of study in its own right. The fact that, despite their significant differences, these two impulses can and often do work together is an optimistic indication that new work on the history of philology will find avid readers when it begins to speak in more detail about the technical history of the field. It is on the basis of this optimism that the present collection is deliberately ambiguous as to specific disciplinary relevance—are we presenting essays in the history of philology for the benefit of “philologists” or for those interested in philology as a cultural phenomenon in its own right? My hope is that both kinds of readership will benefit, and that these essays may establish a beachhead and provoke deeper probes into the technical structures of philology that also remain mindful of its significance within the cultural history of modernity itself.

Such a crossing of scholarly viewpoints is both natural and potentially transformative. It is natural because, as several of the contributions to this volume make clear, there is no philology without the history of philology: indeed, philological inquiry, at its most rigorous and its most sustained, inevitably and always involves an equally rigorous and sustained inquiry

10. See especially Pasquali 1952.
introdUCtion

into its own history, both as this is instantiated in its long string of prede-
cessors and as it influences its contemporary forms. Whether philology is
to be understood as textual criticism, as a fundamental and intimate ori-
entation to the material details of textuality, or as a viewpoint in which
textual realia are linked to broader cultural concerns, it always involves an
engagement with texts and with texts about texts. But because every text
is the result of human agency and because any human agency which leads
to the production or the interpretation of a text has a good claim to being
called philological, each philology is by definition engaged with other phi-
lologies, and this predicament amounts to an imperative that philology also
be the history of philology. But far from simplifying matters, this observa-
tion leads to surprising and unsettling results which expose both philology
and history to a radical questioning and a possible transformation of their
premises. Since historiography also has a history, and this history has not
been stable but has involved a series of shifting constructions of historical
time, the history of philology must come to terms not only with changing
practices within philology itself, but also with the changing ways in which
philology has constructed its own history. In addition, just as philology is
also and necessarily historiographical, historiography is always dependent on
philology, which it tasks with uncovering and establishing textual evidence.
A feedback loop is thus engendered, a root recursion that is not commonly
theorized but should not be overlooked: which philology will historiography
depend on, and which historiography, in turn, does that philology presume?
These are questions that every philologist, and every historian, no doubt
asks. What the history of philology has the potential to reveal is that the
choices made in adjudicating the mutually informing paradigms of history
and philology constitute a crucial element in the poetics of culture generally,
and can influence not only how modern conversations about the past are
conducted, but also the very nature of that past and the specific dynamics
of its reconstruction and appropriation. This means more than that philol-
ogy and history are generative of historical consciousness. It means in addi-
tion, and more worryingly, that the relationship between past and present,
between the means of study and its object, are much more convoluted and
interpenetrating than is often assumed.

It may be that what emerges at the intersection of philology and his-
tory is the possibility that the study and the invocation of the past is both
informed by and formative of that past. To be sure, there was a world before
us: that is our scholarly interest. But that world, like ours, was produced
from a confrontation between the materials of the past and the poetic capaci-
ties of the present, and neither our time nor the time before can be viewed
as a simple, serene, or stable and unchangeable synchronic slice. We inform it; it informs us; this is a time of times, as it was then also.

THOUGH, AS I HAVE suggested, it may be prudent to resist single definitions of philology as well as historical narratives that emphasize a single period as the time of its greatest fulfillment, we might nonetheless be able to isolate a characteristic by which it could be recognized. Such a characteristic lies, I propose, in philology’s fraught relationship with itself and the need to tell its own history. At the moment when philology begins to critique its predecessors and cognate fields, it opens a perspective critical of its own aspirations: that philology can and does critique other modes of scholarship, or even other philologies, implies that it contains a moment within it capable of self-critique.

Here the example of textual criticism may again prove illuminating. The task of the modern critical edition is to produce a single text and apparatus on the basis of a comprehensive examination of all relevant witnesses. Since every critical edition is based on historical principles, and since every textual witness is itself the product of an act of philology, every critical edition is the product of a philology engaged with the history of philology. But the fact that each textual witness (including, where these exist, previous critical editions) is itself a theory of the text based on some vision of its history means that the history of philology presented by a critical edition is also a critical history of previous histories of philology. Somewhere in the structure of text-critical practice, in other words, there lies an operation that is fundamentally and unavoidably critical of the process of producing a text, that refuses to take at face value any single textual presentation, and that acknowledges that every history of a text is implicitly a history (singular) of textual histories (plural). This operation is at one and the same time fundamental and antithetical to the process of producing a critical edition: fundamental because without it the critical survey of textual witnesses would never get off the ground, and antithetical because the refusal to accept any textual instantiation uncritically must be obviated to some degree if the critical edition is to present a text of its own. If such is the structure of even the most normative philology, it can hardly be surprising that from time to time a project arises that seeks to strip away unifying, ideological tendencies and refuse historiographical closure, opening a view on the complexities of textual engagement.

It can happen that this radical element in philology expresses itself in terms of an equally radical historicism. This indeed is what transpired in the
philology invoked by Walter Benjamin. Benjamin’s engagement with philology, latently present in many works, became most explicit in the context of a dialogue with Adorno over the first draft of The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire. To Adorno’s complaint that he had entered a “bewitched” space characterized by “the wide-eyed presentation of the facts,” Benjamin’s response is subtle and complex, and apparently self-canceling. He begins by insisting that the essay Adorno has read represents the properly philological part of a three-part study whose last part will present the theoretical mediation Adorno missed. But this line of defense prefaces a second claim which effectively negates it: granted that the philological fact must be demystified and the “bewitched” space where magic and positivism cross abandoned, this demystification, says Benjamin, takes place in the reader and thus need not be present in the text. He uses an analogy to make this point: a painting’s vanishing point does need not be visible because the true point of convergence of the perspectival lines is in the viewer. Similarly, the demystification of those facts generated by means of philology takes place by placing it in historical perspective. This means (and the draft of Paris of the Second Empire bears this out) submitting it to a radical and full historicization that eschews theoretical mediation. The analogy with painting in this passage plays the crucial role of establishing that the creation of a fully historicized account, that is, a radically philological one, would cause the reader to experience his own time as the viewer of a perspectival drawing experiences his own space: as a monad (or, as Benjamin would put it elsewhere, as a dialectical image). This statement of method is then followed by the claim that Benjamin’s philological practice is in fact directed against

12. Adorno and Benjamin 1999: 286 (November 10, 1938); translated also in Benjamin 2006, from which I cite. Deeper discussion is provided by the contribution of Ian Balfour to this volume.

13. “The exclusion of theory confirms the empirical. It gives it a delusively epic character on the one hand, and on the other deprives phenomena, as mere objects of subjective experience, of their true historico-philosophical weight. This could also be expressed by saying that the theological motif of calling things by their names is inherently prone to lapse into a wide-eyed presentation of mere facticity. If one wished to give the matter really drastic expression, one might say that the work has situated itself at the crossroads of magic and positivism. This site is bewitched...” (Benjamin 2006: 102).

14. “The philological approach entails examining the text detail by detail, leading the reader to fixate magically on the text. That which Faust takes home in black and white, and Grimm’s veneration of the minuscule, are closely related. They have in common the magical element, which it is left to philosophy—here, the concluding part—to exorcise” (Benjamin 2006: 108).

15. “The appearance of self-contained facticity that emanates from philological study and casts its spell on the scholar is dispelled according to the degree to which the object is constructed in historical perspective. The lines of perspective in this construction, receding to the vanishing point, converge in our own historical experience. In this way, the object is constituted as a monad. In the monad, the textual detail which was frozen in a mythical rigidity comes alive...” (Benjamin 2006: 108).
philological practice: what Benjamin calls the application of philological technique is provoked by the innermost connection between myth and “the attitude of the philologist.” The implications here are that (1) “the attitude of the philologist,” as Benjamin sees it, is marked by a high degree of ideological (that is, “mythical”) thinking, which we can understand in this context as being teleological; and that (2) this teleological thought must be countered from within by using the resources and the tools of philology itself, not by less but by more historico-philological rigor. Enough of Benjamin’s project in both the Baudelaire book and its matrix the Arcades Project were finished before his death for us to be able to see that the historical perspective he was trying to draw included philology: he was, in other words, engaged in a historicization of philology meant to critique philology’s engagements with history. He planned to do this, however, not by abjuring history but by intensifying it to the point where it would overwhelm philology and force it onto a new setting. This was also, inevitably—and on this point Adorno stuck—a philologization of history, and, indeed, of philology as well.

I have cited Benjamin, but signs of the critical element in philology are most easily identified in what have come to be seen as the most characteristic hallmarks of “serious” philological scholarship: the dutiful noting and cataloguing of alternative views, the compilation and responsible reporting of bibliographical references, and, in critical editions, the presentation of textual variants. The imperative to catalogue and present those alternatives from which any given philologist would distinguish his/her own project indicates the constant presence and undeniable force of radical self-criticism. That is: even when a vision of philological history is presented in a tendentious and unifying light, this ideological presentation is exceeded and undercut by the complex paratextual and argumentative apparatus it throws up about it, and which appears to the attentive reader as an open and disseminating network of alternative philologies.

Philology’s constitutive critical element has two characteristic elements: (1) a commitment to extremely slow reading that results in (2) unfastening and opening the text to a vertiginous contingency. Insistence on slow reading is a first and crucial element. The “magic” of philology which Benjamin wanted to dispel comes, he says, from philology’s insistence that the reader “examine the text detail by detail.” The philologist’s slowness has no limits. Indeed, the radical element in philology begins to be vitiated when a limit or a locus for reading is established, in the tropological structure of language, for example, or in ideologies or identities, and even in the notion of a text that truly captures “what the author really wrote.” We could suggest that philology ceases to be radical when slow reading transforms into
close reading because a surface or limit has been established along or against
which the reading moves, as a hand moves over a hard and impenetrable
surface. Resisting such reification, philology churns up debris in the form of
suspected readings and emendations, commentaries, marginal annotations,
insights generated by figure and rhetoric. Above all, it produces the impres-
sion that any given text could be given otherwise.

When this begins to take place, however, the second radical element of
philology comes into play. To read into and beyond the text means to begin
to see the places where the joins don’t fit, where words and lines seem odd or
out of context. At the greatest extreme texts begin to look like collocations of
ill-fitting fragments or traditions of variance that could never be turned into
a single “perfect” form. By what may seem to some an intolerable reversal,
the result of slow reading is a perspective before the text, in the sense that a
radical reading will force the reader to make choices, to create and formulate
a text for him/herself.

These two elements can be corroborated in the characterization given to
philology by Edward Said. Said, like Benjamin, sees philology as a mat-
ter of reading: “reading is the indispensable act, the initial gesture without
which any philology is simply impossible” (60). It is, to be more precise, “a
detailed, patient scrutiny of and a lifelong attentiveness to the words and
rhetorics by which language is used by human beings who exist in history”
(61). This involves an imperative to make a slow and careful engagement
with literary texts into the basis for developing alternatives to the forces
Said saw impinging on enlightenment, freedom, and humanity. Said sees
philology as an amalgam of receptivity and resistance, each linked to a dif-
ferent moment of reading. “Receptivity” attends to what Said joins with Leo
Spitzer in calling the revealing detail that could bring the whole into focus
and let a reader access the text as the author saw it (66–68). By contrast,
“resistance” achieves a systematic recusatio of jargons and sound-bites and
enforced but specious disciplinizations.

This does not seem to have any connection with the formative interven-
tions typical of textual criticism. When we read Said’s text more slowly,
however, the picture becomes more nuanced. The act of reading involves two
times: that of the reader and that of the written, or, perhaps, the “now” of

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17. “To work from the surface to the ‘inward life-center’ of the work of art: first observing details
about the superficial appearance of the particular work [. . . ] then, grouping these details and seek-
ing to integrate them into a creative principle which may have been present in the soul of the artist;
and, finally, making the return trip to all the other groups of observations in order to find whether the
‘inward form’ one has tentatively constructed gives an account of the whole” (Spitzer 1948: 19, cited
textual encounter and the “then” of textual production. This makes philology anachronistic. But it does not exhaust the multiple temporalities involved in philological reading, for both the philologist, who reads in order to resist, and the author who writes for the same reason, are out of sorts with their times. “Art is not simply there: it exists intensely in a state of unreconciled opposition to the depredations of daily life” (63). This is a triple untimeliness at least, based on non-dialectical oppositions between (1) the reader’s time and the text’s time, (2) the reader and his/her own time, and (3) the author and his/her time. Perhaps the defining emblem for this constitutive philological anachrony can be found in the description of close reading that Said takes from Spitzer. For Spitzer, the only way out of the moment of blankness when a text says nothing is to read and reread. Rereading is, for Said, the clue to philology’s resistance. When he insists that it is the privilege of time that allows the American academic the ability to resist the prefab languages of the marketplace, the essential characteristic of this time is the luxury to read a book unhurriedly, which means to read it more than once, to bring the experience of different days to its pages, and even to decide to read against its bound sequence, unbinding and resorting, if only in the mind, what the publisher packaged as a legible work, a cultural commodity. As a commodity made to be sold and sold to be read once and in the prescribed sequence, the book is one of the most important sites of resistance for this philological project: one reads to resist the book. And here, despite Said’s silence on the theme, textual criticism returns as the specter of slow reading: for what is this resistive reading if not a principled and systematic unbinding of all the materialities of the bound and binding book and a willingness, even a commitment, to see it not for how it initially appears but as a constellation of fragments strewn across time and space?

SEVERAL COMMON themes emerge from the essays that follow. The first is philology’s fraught contact with philosophy. Every philology must involve rigorous thought as well as textual practice; but thought, in taking leave of texts, leaves philology behind as well. Where and how philology should accommodate itself to thought is a constant concern in its history. A second returning theme is the role philology plays in the production and evaluation of the annotations, marginalia, and other accretions that reflect the labor of reading over time. If philology is intimately connected to reading, and if this reading cannot stop at the surface of the text, one result is that philologists also engage in an incessant writing of their texts. In textual criticism this can be seen in the role philology plays in establishing what the text is: in inter-
interpretation it leads to the addition of side- and sub-texts which seek, by means of their material presence on the page, to forge meanings for future readers. Finally, there is a recurrent concern with materialism, with texts as bodies and embodiments, and how philology construes such embodied histories. Every philology runs up against the concrete *realia* of texts, those aspects of textual communication that are more than linguistic or literary—paper, ink, *mise-en-page*, handwriting and typefaces are only some of the most evident examples. Such concerns are perhaps due to the fact that philology encounters itself most intimately in the traces of the making and transmission of texts: since every text is the result of a philological production, the history of that production will inevitably need to account for all its aspects, not just the linguistic. The matter of the text is more than just a null-point of meaning, the site where translation and interpretation fall mute and effects of presence are most intimately felt. It is also the place where every history of philology, necessarily a rigorous self-investigation, a kind of immanent critique, touches its other with infinite intimacy.

Kathleen McNamee’s “Reading Outside the Library” shows classical scholarship at work on its texts in the earliest accessible phase of its history: in marginalia found in Greek papyri. Many of the marginalia she discusses may have been the result of schoolchildren copying the lectures of their teachers; these teachers in turn were working from personal compilations of scholarship emanating from larger centers like Alexandria (the “library” of her title). By emphasizing that even here the annotation of literary works involved the collection of scholarly notes from other sources as well as the addition of original elements, McNamee indicates that the practice of philology and an awareness of the history of philology coincide early in the tradition. In showing how work from such centers found itself in the margins of the books of private readers, McNamee also suggests that philology was as much an aspect of the practice of reading in school or at home as it was a profession carried out in great libraries under the patronage of kings. Indeed, her breakdown of the kinds of activities that led to the addition of marginalia in Greek papyri includes scenes not only from the household and

18. These ancient notes offer important early examples of the kind of notes also found in many medieval manuscripts of classical literature, commonly referred to as scholia. Scholia typically preserve exegetical explanations, textual variants, and fragments of learned commentaries from earlier works of scholarship. The scholiasts who copied or compiled these collections of notes were, to be sure, philologists interested in the immediate elucidation of their texts; but they were also historians of philology who collected what they considered their predecessors’ most important observations. But by the time the great medieval scholia were made, the orientation to textuality they embody was already very old. On scholia and their history, see McNamee 1995, 1998; Reynolds and Wilson 1991; Wilson 1967, 2007.
the schoolroom, but also from the scriptorium: the first layer of annotations are corrections of errors introduced when the scribe copied his exemplar. These textual practices cross the book at all the stages of its history and use—tentative confirmation, perhaps, that philology is as much about the consolidation of the literary object as it is about its study.

McNamee’s study of marginalia in Greek papyri suggests that the history of philology must also be the philological study of previous philologists. In “Philologizing Philologists,” Craig Maynes deepens this insight by emphasizing that every act of philology is also an act of scholarship directed at philology, since the activity of the authors who originated classical texts and of the subsequent textual agents responsible for its transmission can be characterized as philological. Insisting that textual transmission is both a diachronic process of tradition and a sequence of individual philological activities defined by their own local and synchronic contexts, Maynes elaborates the crucial internal connection between the history of philology and the establishing of a text. Since philology is not one thing but a sequence of changing things, the history of textuality (which is also always the history of philology) must come to terms with a field that is by nature variegated and multiple. That is: a critical edition is not only concerned with the formal plurality of literary texts, but also with a cultural and epistemic plurality, since every edition is dependent on constantly changing historical constructions of how the individual judgment of each textual agent plays a role in textual production. This produces a scholarly situation in which the study of even the least canonical of texts inevitably involves a synoptic view not only of the text through history, but also of the culture of the text through history. The stakes are high, here, but Maynes pushes further, observing in addition that even modern attempts to represent this complex textual, cultural, and epistemic multiplicity are themselves multiple. Maynes’ analysis of the philological history of Claudius Namatianus’ fourth-century C.E. Latin poem De Reditu Suo—which, incidentally, calls into question the correctness of the traditional author’s name and poem’s title—begins with a detailed analysis of the variations prevailing between the early modern textual witnesses in their titles, incipits, and explicits, thus continuing McNamee’s focus on the extra- or para-textual materials which make up so much of philology’s historical archive. Here again, in other words, sorting out the history of the text means sorting out the history of the philology on or, more correctly, around it. Crucially, Maynes’ analysis of the historical embodiments of philological practice includes not only the history of interpretation and textual emendation but also the history of the use of the material objects themselves, as early scholars “recycled” old manuscripts to repair other ones, or erased them in
order to write on the newly “cleaned” pages. Philology not only produces
texts: it also recycles and on occasion destroys them.

When, in the third-century B.C.E., Eratosthenes distinguished himself
from the Stoic-influenced κριτικοί (critics) and the overly-pedagogical
γραμματικοί (grammarians) by arrogating the title φιλολόγος (philolo-
gist) to himself, his point, according to Suetonius, was that his research was
far too multiform and variegated—too interdisciplinary—for any of the
vocational names then in circulation. The promiscuousness of philologi-
cal interest is, perhaps, a direct result of its prevailing concern with texts,
any and all of them, regardless of their “disciplinary” affiliations or “owner-
ship,” and it has been perennially controversial, since philologists who thus
interest themselves in everything can easily be charged either with lacking
deep knowledge of any single thing or with intruding in regions where
they have no business. Under this aspect, philology seems to be Kantian
philosophy’s unacknowledged kin. If for Kant the role of philosophy was to
adjudicate the cognitive claims of the “faculties” (what today would more
appropriately be called the “disciplines”) by investigating their principles
and their conditions of possibility, philology undertakes a similar project in
its insistence on the rigorous consideration of the documentary, textual, or
linguistic bases for higher-order claims. This is bound to be upsetting, and
philology does upset. Christopher Celenza’s contribution discusses one such
philological incursion in the early modern period: Angelo Poliziano’s choice
to teach the Aristotelian Organon in the late 1480s and early 1490s. This
choice unsettled some, and Poliziano found himself needing to respond to
the charge that he was teaching texts for which he had no proper training,
since he was not a philosopher. His response, the Lamia, a praelectio to his
course on the Prior Analytics, argues via a redrawing of disciplinary bound-
aries that to be a philosopher is impossible—the bar is just too high—and
that given this situation the best one can hope for is to bring the tools of
the student of language and literature to bear even on philosophical texts.
Celenza insists, however, that the Lamia is not engaging in a “contest of the
faculties” (invoking Kant). Philology’s mode is different from that of phi-
losophy: its immanent critique is based on reading. Nonetheless, philology
and philosophy converge in Poliziano’s account since the basis for philologi-
cal analysis, that is, the analytical study of language, turns out to be the
Aristotelian Organon, which is, therefore, not merely philosophical. Conse-
quently, the ideal philosopher, which Poliziano insists he is not, resembles
the actual humanist scholar, crossing disciplines and reading obscure and

non-canonical sources. Such a strategy subtly and quietly disqualifies the philosophers who objected to Poliziano’s incursion into their territory: they lack the textual and linguistic skills to engage Aristotle as closely as Poliziano will, and their claim to be philosophers appears to be based on a misreading of the *Organon* itself. Careful reading, Celenza shows Poliziano suggesting, represents the only true way of seeking wisdom.

Nonetheless, it can happen from time to time that philology disciplines itself and seeks to close down or escape its own radical core. In “Philology and the Emblem,” Bradley J. Nelson begins with the observation that the emblem—that combination of epigram, allegorical image, and commentary which has been a constant presence in European print culture for nearly five centuries— is an inherently philological form, and then capitalizes on this fact to make the further claim that philology can become emblematic in its turn. In Nelson’s analysis, emblematization designates a process in which the interminable crisis in representation definitive of modernity is blocked or assuaged by a presence which pretends to be transcendental and immediate. I write “emblematization” rather than “the emblem” here because in Nelson’s analysis, the emblem itself emblematizes: that is, it is itself an example of a process which is far more widespread but to which it lends its name by metonymy. Philology plays a double-edged role in this story: it is, on the one hand, a primary example of the process of emblematization: the products of philological work on Golden-age Spanish drama are seen as producing emblematic presences. But at the same time, as a means of production, philology is also a crucial player in the deterritorialization of the sign that underwrites the crisis the emblem aims to waylay. Thus Nelson’s own philological insistence on the materialities of production, which shows that the “emblem” was in fact the product of multiple agencies involved in the process of making a book and in no way the result of a unifying authorial intention, works against the apparently philological energies of the emblem itself. For the emblem would block access to these materialities. In a complex set of slippages between material analysis and effects of presencing, philology both constructs and deconstructs its objects. This double movement is embodied in the process of emblematization itself, which, in its attempt to produce what Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht calls an “effect of presence,” disconnects its objects from their original contexts and thus reproduces the very disjunctions it seeks to mitigate. Nelson concludes by suggesting, in harmony with many of the other contributors in this volume, that philology can temper and become more aware of its constant engagement with presence-effects by becoming more ludic, or, as he puts it, more carnivalesque.
Jonathan Sachs (“On the Road: Travel, Antiquarianism, Philology”) focuses on the work of one scholar-traveler working in the middle of the eighteenth century. Robert Wood’s *Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer* proposed (among other things) that Homer was illiterate and did not write the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. He based this argument on two important journeys around the eastern Mediterranean, and Sachs argues that the “orality” thesis in Wood can only be understood in the context of Wood’s locative hermeneutics, that is, his sense that reading in place was the most effective way to understand the Greek epics. Sachs shows Wood combating earlier commentaries on Homer with evidence drawn not from books or textual analysis but from his own experience of the lands Homer knew. In a move parallel to that of Nelson, he links this to Gumbrecht’s understanding of philology as intimately concerned with a desire for presence: Wood’s belief that the places in which the Homeric epics were set can make those texts more comprehensible to the modern reader amounts to an attempt to transform geography into an emblem, a luminous presencing of times long lost. Philology has always been, as McNamee underlines in this volume, a matter of annotating texts by adding words and comments in the margins, and Sachs’ discussion shows this process continuing in the eighteenth century: many of the insights in the *Essay* are drawn from the extensive marginalia in his interleaved copy of the epics. Sachs shows that, although for many of Wood’s contemporaries the practice of adding marginalia involved collating one text with another, Wood’s own practice collates text with place. His marginalia track the similarities between what the epics contain and what Wood sees in the “primitive” life of the inhabitants of what was once the Greek east. In this process of collation, space becomes a figural stand-in for time, as the sights of eighteenth-century Turkey and Egypt provide clues for the nature of ancient Ionia. This is, then, a philology that is also historicist, but one whose historicism depends on an anachronistic misreading of the present as the past: a resorting of chronology that Sachs identifies as “ludic” and locates, following James Porter, at philology’s constitutive core. This is to say, in other words, that philology is at one and the same time rigorously focused on the text and ecstatically moving away from it, committed to a historical vision and yet incapable of achieving this by anything other than the most non-historical of perspectives.

Philology has frequently been concerned not only with its history but also with its name; from time to time it displays anxiety over the fact that the very expression “philology” is, in some of its instantiations, an apparently un-philological misapplication of the word. For most of what philology practices, the correct ancient name was *grammatica*, the term used by
Poliziano in the _Lamia_. In “What is Philology?” Nadia Altschul explores some of the instabilities that surround philology at the levels of semantics and scholarly practice in medieval studies, focusing in particular on philology’s sometimes difficult relationship with the close study of texts, on the one hand, and the broad consideration of culture, on the other. Altschul, observing that philology is not only textual criticism but also includes an important element of cultural analysis that is no longer cognate with nineteenth-century forms of historicism, proposes that the whole philological field can be subdivided into _ecdotics_ on the one hand (a Graecism borrowed from Spanish and Italian usage to describe the scholarly study of textual editions in all its forms) and _cultural studies_ on the other. By defining itself as ecdotics and cultural studies, she argues, philology might be able to integrate with other cultural studies whose orientation is not towards the past but to the present. Unstated in Altschul’s proposal, but unquestionably present as a challenge, is the possibility that just as a “cultural studies of the past” might deepen other cultural studies’ historical perspective, so too might it flatten medieval studies’ historical view, allowing for scholarly narratives and analyses which combine multiple times in its purview. What Altschul is proposing, in other words, is a reinvigorated contact with the anachrony typical of philology and addressed in other forms throughout this volume.

James Porter (“Nietzsche, Rhetoric, Philology”) takes as his subject the materialism of Nietzsche’s early writing and lectures on classical rhetoric. Strikingly, Nietzsche places rhetoric _before_ language, not after it: that is, he insists that language is the result of a process of genesis that is rhetorical (and not vice versa). The rhetoric that “produces” language is bodily and gestural—and that at the level not of the arms or the vocal chords, but of the physiology of perception and the physical translations that relate perception, thought, and expression. Porter shows that this position is the result of an engagement with ancient works of rhetorical theory, on the one hand, which are themselves importantly exercised by the role of the body in the production of speech, and with the modern criticism of these works in the figures of Lange and Gerber, on the other. At stake in Nietzsche’s physiology of rhetoric is his “ongoing use of classical philology as a mode of critiquing contemporary (‘modern’) culture.” But this is a critique that, rigorously and perhaps fanatically, resists all hypostatization—even of “matter,” “rhetoric,” or “language.” The result is a writing that is neither argumentative nor probative, but rather stages positions drawn from others—from antiquity and from its modern interpreters—and draws texts and readers into a vertiginous and unsettling process of questioning. For this reason, Porter argues, readers of Nietzsche must also resist hypostatization, resist leveling reading to the
uncovering of a consistent “story” or “position.” This, he claims, means they must read philologically. Such a philology would be, like Nietzsche’s own, attached only to its own refusal of closure. Porter’s recusatio includes the closure imposed by Paul de Man at the level of language and tropes: this is a Nietzsche, and a reading of him, that is more ungrounded and hence more radical than (American) deconstruction.

Ian Balfour (“The Philosophy of Philology and the Crisis of Reading: Schlegel, Benjamin, de Man”) also tracks the intersections of philology and deconstruction. Tracing the filiation which joins F. Schlegel to Walter Benjamin and Paul de Man, Balfour unpacks the fraught relations between philosophy and philology that are also addressed, in this volume, by Christopher Celenza. Balfour asks what happens when philology becomes the object of philosophical thought. Thinking about philology turns out to produce some uncomfortable results, the first of which lies in the fact that philology can function as a crucial legitimating factor for philosophy itself: as Schlegel puts it, philosophy without philology is nothing at all. But this means more than that there can be no properly philosophical thought without rigorous attention to texts and language. For all three of Balfour’s authors, philology not only “underwrites” philosophy; it is also a crucial medium of philosophical reflection. Critique can take place only via the philological, a move that returns philology to the center of attention, for to think about literature philosophically one must philologize. Philology becomes capable of radical critique, in Balfour’s account, because of its resolute and inalienable historicism: for philology a text is (and must be) fundamentally different, and therefore in a crucial relation to at least two times and places of which one is that of the philologist. The alien nature of the philological text leads to critique in different ways in Schlegel, Benjamin, and de Man—in Schlegel the otherness of the text begins as a datum before it is elevated to an essential content of critical thought, while in Benjamin the relationship between the present and the past occurs as a subterranean correspondence, even a kind of cryptic predestination, and in de Man the temporal spacing of the text arises out of his construction of the literary event. But in each case the result is a vision which, from viewing philology as a means of critique, leads inevitably to a vision of reading as fundamentally and forever in crisis—the more in crisis the more serious it gets. Philology, in other words, carries reading beyond the complacent belief that what it does is skim a signifying surface or even process a linguistic communication and into a space characterized above all by vertigo—a condition diagnosed as well, as we have seen, in Porter’s engagement with Nietzsche.


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