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Chapter 3. Textual criticism and text editing

edited by Caroline Macé et alii[*]

1. Introduction (AM–CM–ABa–JG–LS)

(CM) In this chapter, we would like to offer some insights on textual criticism applied to works preserved in oriental manuscripts, as they have been described in the preceding chapters. In doing so, we wish to offer some guidance not only to those who are planning to produce an edition based on manuscripts, but also to those who are using editions prepared by others.

Much attention has been drawn to the materiality of the manuscript in the preceding chapters, and this material aspect should never be forgotten (see for example Ch. 3 § 3.7). Here the focus will rather be on the contents of the manuscripts.

Scholars are not necessarily editors of texts, and not everyone dealing with manuscripts necessarily publishes texts. Nevertheless, some knowledge about textual criticism is indispensable to anyone dealing with texts, since we read nearly all ancient, mediaeval and early modern texts through an edition of some kind.

The expression ‘textual criticism’ is here preferred to the more general and polysemic term ‘philology’. However, the corresponding adjective ‘philological’ is sometimes used, referring specifically to textual criticism, especially as opposed to ‘codicological’ or to ‘literary’.

1.1. Textual criticism and oriental languages

Standard manuals of textual criticism exist (see the general bibliography), but they generally do not take into account problems or needs specific to oriental texts. We are not claiming here that textual criticism of oriental texts is of a totally different nature from classical, biblical or mediaeval (i.e. western vernacular) textual scholarships (see Tanselle 1983, 1995; Greetham 1995), but we want to address those issues which are important for scholars dealing with oriental traditions and which may have been neglected or not stressed enough in standard manuals.

(ABa) Modern textual criticism has refined a methodology that has been developing over centuries, culminating in the middle of the nineteenth century in some principles, long connected to the name of Karl Lachmann. They can be very roughly summarized as follows: complete survey of all the direct and indirect witnesses of the work to be edited (manuscripts, printed editions, quotations, allusions, translations, etc.); defining mutual relationships between the witnesses; reconstruction of an archetypal text. Since the critical edition is a scientific hypothesis, it can be disputed and new hypotheses can be proposed or new evidence can be found, which is why some mediaeval texts are edited more than once.

(CM) In recent times, the opponents of the genealogical method of textual criticism and of the reconstructive method of text editing often associated with it are mustered under the flag of ‘new philology’, a trend in scholarship which came about in the 1990s especially in the United States (see Gleßgen – Lebsanft 1997), following the publication of Cerquiglini (1989), claiming that mediaeval literature being by nature variable, mediaeval works should not be reduced to an edited text, but all mediaeval manuscripts should be considered equally valuable. While this position attracted strong criticism (see for example Ménard 1997), it also seduced some scholars because it may seem more flexible than the stemmatic approach (for an application of some ideas borrowed from ‘new philology’ in the field of Coptic studies, see Ch. 3 § 3.14). However attractive the ‘new philology’ approach may be in the field of literary studies, it is nevertheless almost completely irrelevant for the purpose of this chapter, as it does not provide any method to edit texts with a more complex manuscript tradition. In general in this chapter we will adopt a pragmatic view and avoid any theoretically pessimistic approach towards textual criticism (as that put forward by Sirat 1992 for example, see La Spisa 2012 for a response to it). Modern digital approaches to the edition of texts will be taken into account as often as possible (for a synthesis on digital editing, see Sahle 2013).

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(JG) Of the manuscript cultures addressed by the present handbook, only that of Greek and, to a lesser extent, Hebrew can look back on a tradition of scholarly editions in the modern sense that is as long as that of Latin, which originated by about the fifteenth century. For most of the other 'oriental' cultures, the western approach that was developed by Humanists during the Renaissance was adapted only late, mostly not before the nineteenth century, and only hesitatingly (see General introduction §§ 1.2, 1.3). A comprehensive history of scholarship and text criticism as applied to oriental texts, in the east as well as in the west, has still to be written and falls beyond the scope of the present chapter. Nevertheless, a few preliminary remarks are here necessary in this connexion.

One of the practical problems that scholars faced in editing oriental texts was the necessity to cope in printing with the different scripts that are characteristic for the individual traditions, a problem that was not yet solved by the beginning of the twentieth century when, for example, the bulk of Buddhist, Manichaean, Christian and Zoroastrian texts in Middle Iranian, Turkic, and other languages were discovered in the manuscript finds of Turfan and other sites of East Turkestan. The simple fact that fonts for printing the Sogdian script, the Manichaean script or the variants of the Turkestan Brāhmī used in those manuscripts were not available to any typesetter, was the reason why several ways of transliteration or transcription were developed, among them the representation of Aramaic-based scripts by Hebrew fonts (see Ch. 3 § 3.9). In a similar way, Slavonic texts written in Glagolitic script in the manuscripts have often been transcribed into Cyrillic in the respective editions. *ʾesṭrangēlā* or *serṭā* scripts and East or West Syriac vocalization systems were and are often freely used as almost interchangeable typefaces in printed editions of Syriac texts, disregarding the scripts actually used in the manuscripts (see Ch. 3 §§ 3.17, 3.21).

Moreover the use of Latin-based transcription systems has persisted in western editions to a certain extent until the present day (for instance in editions of Avestan texts; see Ch. 3 § 3.5), not only for lack of appropriate fonts. As a matter of fact, the application of a Latin transcription instead of the original script(s) may claim to have the advantage of making the contents of an edition accessible to a larger scholarly audience, including readers who are not specialists in the given culture or tradition; however, this approach has a clear disadvantage, too, in that the members of the culture in question may feel inhibited from using the edition and taking it into account for their own purposes. The application of a transcriptional rendering in an edition of manuscript contents should therefore rather be avoided; this is all the more true since there are only few scripts left over today (such as that of the Caucasian Albanian, see Ch. 3 § 3.11) that cannot be encoded digitally on the basis of the Unicode standard (see General introduction § 2.1.1).

Another reason why critical editions concerning languages other than Greek or Latin have developed only gradually, is the fact that unlike the 'Classical' languages, which had been taught in schools since antiquity as artificial 'standards' to be followed, many of the varieties of 'oriental' languages that are represented in mediaeval manuscripts are characterized by the absence or scarcity of exhaustive studies concerning their grammar, lexicography and orthography, which renders choices as to the 'correct' wording (including its orthographical representation) much harder to make (see for example Ch. 3 §§ 3.10, 3.13, 3.20). This very fact has sometimes led to different 'standards' being established and applied in 'western' and 'local' editions. For instance, the editions of Georgian religious texts provided in the series *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (subseries *Scriptores Iberici*) exhibit typical differences in comparison with editions produced in Georgia in the resolution of abbreviations (for example *raymetu* vs. *rametu* for the conjunction 'that, because' which appears generally abbreviated as *r̃* in the manuscripts) or the treatment of postpositions (for example *tws* 'for' and *gan* 'from' treated as separate words vs. suffixes).

Having different backgrounds and goals, autochthonous traditions and practices in editing texts can indeed turn out to be rather surprising for a western scholar, especially as far as the trend towards drastic normalization is concerned (see Ch. 3 § 3.22 on Persian texts and Ch. 3 § 3.10 on printed editions of Arabic popular texts). Ostrowski (2003) argues that the principles of Russian 'textology' (Lichačev [D.] 2001) developed almost exactly the reverse of western textual criticism. Relatively untouched by Renaissance humanism, Russia did not develop its own tradition of stemmatics and the introduction of the printing press led to the search for a standard of uniformity, largely based on the ideological choices of church clerics, rather than to attention to text history. As a consequence Bédier's anti-stemmatic approach (see General introduction § 1.3) was easily adopted and widely accepted during the Soviet period.

A third feature that distinguishes many of the ‘oriental’ manuscript traditions from those of Greek and Latin consists in the fact that they are to a much greater extent characterized by fragmentary materials. This is not only true for the extreme case of the manuscript finds of Turkestan (see above) but also, for instance, for the early centuries of the literacy of the Armenians and Georgians (approximately fifth to eighth centuries), the manuscript remains of which are mostly restricted to the underwriting of palimpsests. The special problems resulting from this in the editorial practice are outlined below in the relevant case studies, see Ch. 3 §§ 3.9, 3.11.

(LS) The huge importance of translated texts and texts with multilingual traditions is another typical feature of oriental manuscript studies. Editors are often dealing not with original texts but with translations (often from Greek), which profoundly affects editorial practice and the way in which textual criticism is applied. As far as the source text tradition is known and still extant, it will have to be included in the text critical investigation so as to identify the point where both traditions meet (see for example Ch. 3 § 3.2, §3.20).

1.2. Structure and scope of the chapter

(AM) This chapter is divided in two sections. In the first section (Ch. 3 §§ 2.1–6), we want to provide a synthesis of the set of procedures involved in the editorial process. The second section (Ch. 3 §§ 3.1–23) consists of case studies, illustrating the first section with concrete situations, taken from all languages covered by the handbook and from different literary genres. We do not aim at exhaustiveness, but we find it useful to present a number of traditions and problems, requiring a variety of critical choices and editorial treatments.

Many features of an edition are determined not only by the editor himself and by the material she or he is working on, but also by the series in which this edition will be published (see Ch. 3 § 3.17 and Macé forthcoming). The rules imposed by those series may or may not reflect the state of the art in the field of text-editing. In that respect, as in many others, digital editions pose a different kind of problems: the absence of standardized rules and of recognized circuits of diffusion makes it difficult to guarantee the visibility of editions put on-line.

In what follows, we will try to consider all methodological aspects of the editorial process of oriental texts, in a way which will be as practical as possible. Theoretical questions, such as what is a text, a genre, a corpus, an author, an audience, or for example the way scholarly editing contributes to the shaping of the literary canon, are avoided. Even though they have an influence on the way we edit texts and do show up as major critical issues in several case studies (see for example Ch. 3 §§ 3.4, 3.20), they belong to other disciplines such as semiotics, theory or sociology of literature and literary criticism rather than to the field of textual criticism. Moreover, especially in the case studies, critical editions will be considered and presented as products of practical choices and circumstances rather than from the points of view of methodology and theory in textual criticism. Nevertheless, a number of general assumptions are implicit and will hopefully become clearer as the various cases are presented and discussed:

1) There is no one method or ready-made recipe. Textual criticism shares approximation as an operative limit with all human sciences—the so-called humanities—and probably also most technical and so-called scientific disciplines, even though the latter are probably more reluctant to admit it. In textual criticism, methods vary according to the objective that editors strive to achieve and the objects/products they wish to approximate to. Some aim to reconstruct the original, the authorial text—if such a thing ever existed, for instance in the form of a version authorized by the author or the *Vorlage* of a translation—, others the archetype they posit at the beginning of the transmission chain or chains (on the problems, possibility and desirability of establishing (sub-)archetypes, see Ch. 3 §§ 3.5, 3.7, 3.12, 3.15, and 3.20). In some cases a lost early ‘original’, supposedly written in a prestigious language (often Greek), may be one of the objectives which motivate the process of textual reconstruction (see Ch. 3 §§ 3.2, 3.4, 3.11, and 3.14). Others are content with restoring one manuscript a little or simply reproducing it ‘as faithfully as possible’, according to a disclaimer rather commonly found in the edition of oriental texts (see Ch. 3 § 3.17).

2) The variety of methods and the degree of tolerable approximation may depend both on factual circumstances, such as the history of a text and its transmission, and/or on conscious methodological choices of the editor. The quantity of available witnesses matters as well as the more or less complicated structure

of the work to be edited, which may be an original work, a translation or a compilation; the editor may be dealing with a collection (see Ch. 3 §§ 3.12 and 3.19), a single text or fragments of that text (see for example Ch. 3 § 3.6 on literary papyri). The social status and function of texts and copies—private copies (see for example Ch. 3 § 3.3), canonical sacred literature (see Ch. 3 § 3.21), liturgy (see Ch. 3 §§ 3.5, 3.23), support for choral performance or personal reading—, the level of literary production—high classical vs. low popular, often characterized by linguistic variation in the continuum between classical language and mixed or frankly vernacular varieties (see Ch. 3 §§ 3.10 and 3.13)—and, of course, scribal activity are all factors that influence text transmission and therefore editorial choices. There are texts known in only one language, but there are also texts that originated from or were translated into other oriental languages (this occurs in nearly all case studies presented in this chapter).

3) As will be variously exemplified, critical choices and different methodological approaches derive from the academic backgrounds of scholars and the presumed expectations of their readership at least as much as from scientific discussion. The very same text or textual tradition can be regarded from different perspectives, each requiring specific approaches and methodologies (see Ch. 3 §§ 3.2, 3.20). A critical edition is an academic literary genre, developed to bridge the gap between manuscript and book cultures and responds in a variety of forms to the interests of the editors as authors, their readers and to a lesser extent of publishers and universities as stakeholders in cultural production.

1.3. Bibliographical orientation

A. List of standard manuals and handbooks or important collections of methodological articles

For a complete bibliography, see the COMSt website (as of December 2014). We want to provide here a list of the most important work instruments devoted to textual criticism and text editing of oriental works. It must be noted that for several languages and corpora studied in this handbook those instruments are lacking or out-dated.

Arabic: Blachère – Sauvaget 1945; Hārīn 1965; al-Munajjid 1956; Pfeiffer – Kropp 2007; *Qawāʿid taḥqīq* … 2013; al-Sāmarrāʾī 2013a, 2013b.
Armenian: Calzolari 2014b.
Biblical Studies: Chiesa 1992, 2000–2002; Ehrman – Holmes 2013; Hendel 2010; Kloppenborg – Newman 2012; Wachtel – Holmes 2011.
Ethiopic: Bausi 2008b; Marrassini 2009.
Greek (especially mediaeval): Bernabé – Hernández Muñoz 2010; Harlfinger 1980a; Dummer 1987.
Hebrew: Abrams 2012.

B. List of well-known series of scholarly editions

Äthiopistische Forschungen (Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart), from 1977 until 1993, continued as *Aethiopistische Forschungen* (Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden)

Besides mostly monographic essays and contributions on various branches of Ethiopian studies, the series also includes important text editions, of biblical (Gospels of Mark and Matthew, Pauline Letter to the Romans), exegetical (traditional commentaries), patristic (the theological treatise *Qērellos*), and historical character (annals and chronicles). Various editorial methods have been applied.

Berliner Turfantexte (Brepols, Turnhout)

Dedicated—but not restricted—to the manuscripts of the Berlin Turfan collection (see Ch. 3 § 3.9), the series represents the most prominent place for publishing editions of the (Buddhist, Christian, and Manichaean) texts in Old Turkic and Middle Iranian languages preserved in those manuscripts. Since 1971, when the series was initiated by the Berlin Academy of Sciences, a total of 31 volumes has seen the light (see <http://www.brepols.net/Pages/BrowseBySeries.aspx?TreeSeries=BTT>).

Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum (Brill, Leiden)

A series of critical editions of eight works by several Arab geographers; edited by Michael Jan Goeje between 1870–1894, was one of the first attempts to make critical editions of Arabic texts belonging to a specific topic (reprint in <http://www.brill.com/products/series/bibliotheca-geographorum-arabicorum>).

Bibliotheca islamica (Klaus-Schwarz-Verlag, Berlin)

One of the most important series within the framework of Islamic Studies has edited numerous critical editions of Arabic, Persian and Turkish texts since 1927. Topics include history, prosopography, literature, theology of various Islamic schools, and Sufism. The publication of the series is a joint project of the Orient Institute Beirut and the German Oriental Society (DMG) (<http://www.klaus-schwarz-verlag.com/>).

Commentaria in Aristotelem Armeniaca. Davidis Opera (Brill, Leiden)

This series, founded in 2009 and directed by Valentina Calzolari and Jonathan Barnes, aims at publishing a revised critical edition of the Armenian translation of the commentaries on Aristotelian logic which tradition ascribes to David the Invincible (sixth century). Besides the critical text of the Armenian, each volume contains a complete study of the work edited, together with a comparison of the Armenian with the underlying Greek model, and a translation into a modern language.

Corpus Christianorum Corpus Nazianzenum (Brepols, Turnhout)

The *Corpus Nazianzenum* aims at publishing the Greek homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus (only one volume so far), as well as their translations into Arabic, Armenian, Georgian, and Syriac, and some related material in Greek and in translation (mediaeval commentaries). The editorial board is established at the Institut orientaliste of the Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium).

Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum (CCSA) (Brepols, Turnhout)

Founded in 1981, the *Series Apocryphorum* of the *Corpus Christianorum*, directed by the AELAC (Association pour l'Étude de la Littérature Apocryphe Chrétienne), aims at publishing all the pseudepigraphical or anonymous texts of Christian origin attributed to biblical characters or based on events reported or suggested by the Bible. The series' purpose is to enrich the knowledge of apocryphal Christian literature by supplying editions of unedited or difficult to access texts. Besides the critical text, each volume contains a complete study of the apocryphon edited, with commentary and translation into a modern language.

Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca (CCSG) (Brepols, Turnhout)

Founded in 1976, this series of scholarly editions of Greek patristic and Byzantine texts, without translations (some of the volumes have been translated elsewhere, especially in the series 'Corpus Christianorum in translation', started in 2009) is known for the quality of its publications. The editorial board is established at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium). Some volumes contain texts in Syriac or other oriental languages.

Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (CSCO) (Peeters, Leuven)

With the six subseries *Scriptores aethiopici, arabici, armeniaci, coptici, iberici*, and *syri*, the CSCO series (since 1903; see <http://www.peeters-leuven.be/search_serie_book.asp?nr=94>) covers a large amount of Christian traditions in oriental languages. Usually, the 'Scriptores' series contains editions of the original texts with translations (into Latin, English, French, German or Italian) printed in parallel volumes (for the *Scriptores syri*, see Ch. 3 § 3.17). The subseries *Subsidia* (see <http://www.peeters-leuven.be/search_serie_book.asp?nr=244>) provides additional information (lexical materials, concordances, etc.) pertaining to one or several of the individual traditions.

Études médiévales, modernes et arabes (Institut français d'études arabes de Damas).

A number of titles have been digitized since 1996 and are freely available on-line (<http://www.ifporient.org/publications/mediaeval>).

Al-Furqān: Islamic Heritage Foundation (London)

Al-Furqān Foundation supports the edition and publication of a wide selection of manuscripts of particular significance in the Islamic heritage, as well as facsimile editions of well-preserved important manuscripts. The series 'Edited texts' includes a number of important reference works that deal with Arabic history, geography and sciences (<http://www.al-furqan.com/publications/manuscript-centre/editing-texts/>).

Islamkundliche Untersuchungen (Klaus-Schwarz-Verlag, Berlin)

The series ‘Islamkundliche Untersuchungen’, published by Klaus Schwarz Publishers since 1970, is one of the most important series related to Islamic Studies. It includes a number of important critical editions of texts belonging to various fields and genres (<http://www.klaus-schwarz-verlag.com/>). A number of titles are digitized and freely available on-line (<http://menadoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/iud>).

Ismaili Texts and Translation (Institute of Ismaili Studies, London)

Critical editions, introduction and English translation of Ismaili texts in Arabic, Persian and Indic languages (<http://www.iis.ac.uk/view_article.asp?ContentID=104893>). See also the series *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*, published by Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, a multi-authored critical edition and annotated English translation of the Arabic *Rasāʾil Iḫwān al-Ṣafaʾ* (tenth-century Iraq; <http://www.iis.ac.uk/view_article.asp?ContentID=112055>).

Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi (Brepols, Turnhout)

Albeit focusing mostly upon palaeographical investigations, the series is well suited for (diplomatic) editions of special types of manuscripts such as the Georgian, Armenian, and Caucasian Albanian palimpsests covered by volumes 1 and 2 of the sub-series *Ibero-Caucasica* (see Ch. 3 § 3.11).

Pamjatniki pis’mennosti Vostoka (Nauka, Moscow)

Since 1959, the Russian publishing house Nauka has published the series *Памятники письменности Востока* (*Pamjatniki pis’mennosti Vostoka*, Monuments of the literature of the east; altogether 138 items in 223 volumes by 2013), which covers a great amount of critical editions of original texts in oriental languages (mostly in Persian, Turkish, but also Armenian and others) as well as translations (into Russian). The most famous items include the nine-volume edition of Firdawsī’s *Šāhnāma* (edited by Evgenij Ėduardovič Bertel’s, volume II.1–9 of the ‘major’ subseries *Памятники литературы народов Востока—Большая серия* (*Pamjatniki literatury narodov Vostoka—Bol’šaja serija*, 1963–1971), the two-volume edition of ‘Omar Ḫayyām’s *Rubā*‘*iyyāt* (edited by the same scholar, volume II.1–2 of the ‘minor’ subseries *Памятники литературы народов Востока—Малая серия* (*Pamjatniki literatury narodov Vostoka—Malaja serija*, 1959), or the critical edition of the Middle Persian *Kārnāmag-ī Ardašīr Pābagān* (*Книга деяний Ардашира, сына Папака / Kniga dejanij Ardašira, syna Papaka*) by Ol’ga Michajlovna Čunakova (volume 78 of the main series, 1987).

Patrologia Orientalis (PO) (Brepols, Turnhout)

Founded in Paris in 1904 in an attempt to extend the ‘Patrologiae cursus completus’ by Jacques Paul Migne, which aimed to cover the written heritage of Greek and Latin church fathers exhaustively in the two series *Graeca* (161 volumes, 1857–1866) and *Latina* (217 volumes, 1841–1855, plus four volumes of indexes, 1862–1866), the PO series provides a large amount of Christian text materials from nearly all oriental traditions (235 fascicles in 53 volumes up to the present day). Since 1970 (volume 35), the series has been taken over by Brepols Publishers, Turnhout (see <http://www.brepols.net/Pages/BrowseBySeries.aspx?TreeSeries=PO>). The editorial approach is very inconsistent; however, even some of the older volumes have remained valuable sources until today.

Sources Chrétiennes (Cerf, Paris)

This collection has published about 550 volumes of editions of Greek and Latin patristic authors. The quality of the editions is uneven, and sometimes the Greek or Latin text is taken from a previous publication, but the French translation and introduction are always useful. See <http://www.sourceschretiennes.mom.fr/collection/presentation>.

Teksty i razyskanija po armjano-gruzinskoj filologii (Fakul'tet vostočnych jazykov Imperatorskogo Sankt-Peterburgskago Universiteta, St Peterburg)

Twelve volumes were published between 1900 and 1913, mostly *editiones principes* of important Old Georgian texts (by Nikolaj Marr).

Textes arabes et études islamiques (Institut Français d'Archéologie orientale, Cairo)

Studies and text editions, 50 issues, published since 1948 (<http://www.ifao.egnet.net/publications/catalogue/TAEI/>).

Ʒveli kartuli enis ʒeglebi (Tbilisi)

Fifteen volumes, published between 1944 and 1977, comprise critical editions of Old Georgian biblical and theological texts.

References

Cerquiglini 1989; Gleßgen – Lebsanft 1997; Greetham 1995; La Spisa 2012; Lichačev [D.] 2001; Ménard 1997; Ostrowski 2003; Sahle 2013; Sirat 1992; Tanselle 1983, 1995.