Why study manuscripts

- Codicology: the book as an archeological object
- Textology: history and transmission of texts
- History: recorded in texts
- Language: of texts? of manuscripts? of scribes?
- Orthography
- Paleography
- Art history
- Preservation and access, but of what?
- Context
  - "New" or "material" philology
  - Lara Sels, "On artifacts and editors: The Vidin miscellany digital edition project"
  - Caroline Macé, "Edition and history of texts in the digital age"

Manuscript description

- Manuscript description as document
- Manuscript description as database
  - Search, query: Find manuscripts that contain specific texts or textual materials
  - Compare, cluster: Which manuscripts are similar to which others with respect to their contents, and how:
    - Analyze: quantitative codicology
    - Visualize: non-textual views of patterns of textual information

What should an edition look like

- For codicology
- For textology
- For history
- For language
- For orthography
- For paleography
- For art history

Some editorial decisions

- Variant letter forms
- Orthography
- Capitalization
- Word division
- Punctuation
- Abbreviation
- Page layout
- Additions and deletions
- Errors, omissions, etc.
Structured text principles

- Single source and multiple use
- Document analysis: properties inherent in the object and features that interest us
- OHCO: Ordered hierarchy of content objects
  - A convenient partial truth ...
  - ... with some inconvenient side-effects

It always starts from the manuscript

- We study different aspects of manuscripts, but ...
- ... no matter what the focus, the evidence is found in the same place: the manuscript
- Studies with different goals
  - Don’t use different primary materials
  - Do use differently selective views of the same primary materials
  - May use different ancillary materials

Single source and multiple use

- Why create editions that serve multiple purposes?
- Practical
  - Avoid duplicate effort
  - Avoid errors caused by inconsistency
- Philosophical
  - Replicate the human experience of targeted, purposeful reading

Document analysis

- Identify inherent structural and other properties of the document
- Identify properties of the document that are of interest
- Both are conveyed in the original object by pseudo-markup or inferred from external reader knowledge
- Both are encoded in the digital source files with markup

Ordered hierarchy of content objects

- OHCO
- Why documents are ordered hierarchies of content objects ...
- ... and why they aren’t
- Multiple, overlapping hierarchies
- Why XML doesn’t admit overlapping hierarchies and how we work around the limitation

Manuscript editing and information theory

- Transcription is always an interpretive act
- An edition is not information ...
- ... it is a view of information
- Can it be multiple views, serially or simultaneously?
Normalization

- Orthographic variation matters for linguistic and orthographic study
  - Language of the manuscript?
  - Language of the scribe?
  - Language of the text?
  - E.g., chronicle entry dated 980 in a text from 1112 in a manuscript from 1377
- Orthographic variation complicates text-critical study

Thinking afresh about normalization

- Diplomatic and normalized transcriptions are different views of the same real object
  - Both are interpretive
- Select during use, instead of during production

Editions of manuscripts

- Unique physical object
- Physical structure
  - Hierarchical (folios, sides, lines)
  - But not always (convolutes, divided manuscripts, rearrangement during rebinding)
  - Focus on representation: abbreviation, letter forms, etc.
- “Fetishization of manuscripts”

Types of apparatus

- Apparatus fontium
  - References to biblical and other sources (sometimes with references to particular witnesses)
- Traditio textus
  - Changing list of manuscript sigla relevant for the page
- Apparatus criticus
  - Patterns of witness variation
- (Versio brevis: traditio textus and apparatus criticus)
- Apparatus collationum fontium
  - Comparative apparatus
  - Cf. apparatus fontium

Text-critical variation

- Abbreviated (traditional) critical apparatus
  - Pro: See patterns of agreement easily
  - Pro: Economical use of space
  - Con: Selective, making the interpretive results un reproducible
  - Con: Only the copy text is complete
  - Con: Only the copy text is legible
- Interlinear edition
  - Pro: See patterns of agreement easily
  - Con: Generous use of space
  - Pro: Complete evidence, making interpretation reproducible
  - Pro: All texts are complete
  - Pro: All texts are legible

Of screens and paper

- How is the screen like paper?
  - Limited area
- What does paper do that the screen can’t?
  - The publisher controls the appearance of paper
  - Digital publications cannot anticipate the devices and clients that will be used to access them
- What does the screen do that paper can’t?
  - The screen is dynamic and interactive
  - The page is static
Thinking afresh about variation

• Generate interlinear views and traditional critical apparatus from the same source
  – User selects view
  – Does the apparatus become cluttered with insignificant variation?
• User selects and deselects witnesses dynamically in either view—or let the system suggest
• Properties: location, order; typeface; size; color; outlines, borders
• Non-textual representations of variation patterns

Nontextual views of textual variation

• Full text: variant graph (Stemmaweb)
• Miscellany contents: plectogram (Repertorium)
• Variation and contamination: multidimensional scaling (Weitzman)

Toward user-oriented editions

• Readers of manuscripts pay attention to the features they care about
• In traditional editions, the editor chooses the features
• Can that choice be returned to the user of the edition?
• Practical
  – One transcription serves multiple purposes
  – The edition earns a wider audience
• Philosophical
  – Reading the edition becomes more like reading the manuscript

The digital workstation

• The user determines the view / perspective
  – Dynamic response
• The edition should anticipate and facilitate where the user will go next
• Textual and non-textual views are interlinked
  – Because they’re all views

Thinking about digital editions

• What we know
  – The manuscript is a physical object, a textual witness, linguistic evidence, and more
  – Editions of manuscripts vs. editions of text is an oversimplification
    • There are more than two perspectives on the complex information encoded in manuscript
  – Different views of the information in the manuscript are required to answer different research questions
    • Those views have a lot of data in common
• How we might think about it
  – Can that data be encoded once and used for multiple purposes?
    • Select the information we need
    • Avoid being distracted by the information we don’t need
    – Can those decisions be left to the user?