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Introduction
Textual scholarship in the age of media consciousness

We are entering a great age of editing.
– Jerome McGann, 1997

We see before us a great age [of editing] – indeed, a heroic age, one filled with triumphs and false starts, messy, destabilized and destabilizing, and above all, dynamic.
– Greg Crane, "Give us Editors! Re-inventing the Edition and Re-thinking the Humanities," 2010

The role of the scholarly editor is too often assumed to be best performed when least visible: when the editorial work has produced a seamless artifact from which its own traces have been effaced. But as Greg Crane suggests, we can situate this work differently if we understand it as constitutive – rather than merely curatorial – of textual culture. If we are indeed standing at the threshold of a "great age of editing," it is because we now understand the crucial importance of precisely how texts get mediated, and because the importance of textual scholarship to the humanities disciplines has never been clearer. The growth of interest in digital media over the past two decades has of course contributed substantively to our heightened awareness of medium as a methodological question. The process of theorizing the digital representation of objects of study has also required us to attend to the meanings of their original medium. But other influences have been crucial as well: the renewed attention to textual materiality spurred by Jerome McGann's and D. F. McKenzie's groundbreaking work, accompanied by interest in the history of the book and the politics of textual production, all of which have rendered our understanding of authorship and textuality immeasurably more complex.[1] Crane's evocation of both the heroism and the dynamic, risky messiness of editorial work responds to both this significance and this complexity: if the terrain seems to be populated chiefly by challenges and problems, it is because there is so much at stake. If the New Bibliographers at the turn of the twentieth century opened up a set of novel and pressing questions which appeared to be substantially resolved by

the comprehensive and magisterial work of McKerrow, Greg, Bowers, and Tanselle, the turn of the twenty-first century has brought us a fresh agenda that, as McGann and Crane both suggest, will take decades to address.

Our primary goal in this *Companion to Textual Scholarship* is both to suggest the scope of that agenda and to provide a grounding in its foundational issues for those who will be carrying out these new inquiries. The essays in this volume provide a clear, engrossing, and accessible introduction to the central topics animating the field of textual scholarship. Through their multiple perspectives they demonstrate the centrality of textual scholarship to current literary studies of all kinds, and express for those new to the field the intellectual excitement of a crucial scholarly discipline.

There have been excellent introductions to the field by David Greetham (*Textual Scholarship: An Introduction*, 1992) and by William Proctor Williams and Craig S. Abbott (*An Introduction to Bibliographical and Textual Studies*, 1999).[2] Both of these provide exemplary overviews of such traditional subfields as analytic bibliography, descriptive bibliography, historical bibliography, and textual criticism, which they consider at a level of comprehensiveness and practical detail that make them obligatory reading for the new textual scholar. Our complementary goal in this collection is to present more focused and critically probing explorations of the history, significant debates, and important conceptual dimensions of the field, charting not just the past and present, but also its future directions. For reasons of space we focus chiefly on the Anglo-American traditions of textual scholarship with an emphasis on textual criticism, but we situate these traditions in a broader context with respect both to geography and domain.

This broader view reflects the importance of the field within humanities scholarship more generally. If, during the height of New Bibliography and thus for most of the twentieth century, textual scholarship was widely perceived as being merely a precondition for the more serious work of critical interpretation, it has now itself fostered new modes of critical reading and interpretation that focus upon the materiality, production, transmission, and reception of texts. Pages and screens are also now being read as quantum fields in which the meaning of words are interdependent with the graphic elements in which they are embodied, surrounded, and displayed. Textual scholarship, that is to say, is no longer best considered as a specialized field of concern only to scholarly editors and bibliographers, but rather as a domain fundamental to literary and media studies of all kinds, one that is not separate from contemporary theoretical concerns but inextricably connected with them.

We are now, moreover, in the midst of a golden age of editorial theory. Both new and familiar forms of editions – eclectic, versioning, genetic, variorum – are finding fresh expression under the influence of the electronic

medium, which is transforming editorial theory and practice. Similarly, the emergence of new objects of editing – such as images, born digital literature, film, performance art, and digital games – is prompting a reexamination of editorial methods that are adapted to more purely textual materials. These new "texts" are both the products and instruments of change; the emerging techniques they demand highlight the fact that editions are themselves theoretical constructs, foundational forms of scholarly argument. For such reasons, Jerome McGann and Dino Buzzetti can legitimately claim in a recently published volume on electronic scholarly editing: "Scholarly editing is the source and end and test of every type of investigative and interpretational activity that critical minds may choose to undertake."[3]

Written by an international group of prominent textual scholars, the essays presented in this volume attempt to do justice to the history, range, complexity, and vitality of the field. They are organized around two overarching sets of concerns, each of which unfolds in a set of six chapters, framed by this introduction and a coda. The first half of the volume explores the history and culture of textual scholarship, moving from large foundational issues about the nature of texts, textuality, and the disciplinary evolution of the field to more focused examinations of the key concepts, methods, and debates within and among the primary "schools" of editorial theory and practice. It concludes by considering how textual scholarship produces itself through the rhetoric of reading surfaces in editions, the construction of specific types of readership, and the political investments that underlie its work. The second half of the volume builds on this history by exploring specific textual modalities and the methods by which textual scholarship works to denaturalize them and reawaken our awareness of them as modes of signification. By considering the ways in which we read and study books, oral texts, manuscripts, images, and digital inscriptions, the latter half of the volume both demonstrates and reflects upon textual practice as deliberate interpretive strategy. As a group, then, these essays consider how textual scholarship has been shaped as a field over several centuries, how it may develop further in the future, and what it means, intellectually and politically, to engage in such work.

The opening essay by David Greetham, "A history of textual scholarship," establishes both the significance and the scope of textual scholarship through a historical overview stressing the cultural centrality of the field. Greetham tackles the question – crucial to orienting the reader of this volume – of what textual scholarship is and what it includes: how its boundaries are drawn and how they have come to take their present contours. For Greetham, textual scholarship is, broadly put, "the history of history." Moving from the classical to the postmodern, he traces a field whose main paradigms were established in the opposition between the Platonic textual

idealism of Alexandria – with its attempts through the concept of *analogy* to construct from versions known to be "corrupt" an "ideal text" with no known prior physical incarnation – and the philologically inflected Aristotelianism of Pergamon, which attempted through the concept of *anomaly* to reproduce the "best text" among necessarily flawed but historically incarnate versions. The tensions between these two positions have reverberated throughout the centuries, playing themselves out in the reproductions of classical and biblical texts that were the main focus of textual scholars until the beginning of the nineteenth century, as well as in the subsequent turn to vernacular literature and national canons that has characterized the past 200 years. If the twentieth century was dominated first by the attempt to make textual scholarship more rigorously "scientific," and then by the debate over the "sociology of the text," as launched by McKenzie and McGann, it ended very much consumed with the problems and possibilities of the digital, according to Greetham, who is perhaps more reserved about these possibilities than McGann. He situates the debate in its most extreme form as between "liberation technologists," who proclaim the revolutionary nature of the digital medium, and textual conservatives, such at G. Thomas Tanselle, who strongly rebut such claims. For Greetham, the jury is still out.

While Greetham's essay seeks to establish the broad cultural significance of textual scholarship, the next two chapters by Kathryn Sutherland and Geert Lernout offer a detailed account of how the field has been shaped over the past two centuries in both the Anglo-American and Continental traditions of editorial theory. Sutherland's account in Chapter 2, taking as its point of departure the New Bibliography of the early twentieth century, traces a sustained debate concerning the role of the editor in relation to history, authority, and meaning. While at the beginning of the century Anglo-American editors favored the kind of scrupulous belletrism displayed in R. W. Chapman's 1923 Oxford edition of Jane Austen's novels, a vigorous and successful challenge to this method was launched by such New Bibliographers as McKerrow, Pollard, and Greg, whom Sutherland describes as championing historical recension over humanistic interpretation, with an "unwavering concentration on physical evidence and the facts of transmission." They thereby situated textual scholarship as "objective" and "scientific," professionalizing the discipline. For Sutherland, a crucial distinction between British and American editorial theory and practice emerged in the 1960s with the idealizing methods of the Americans Fredson Bowers and later Thomas Tanselle, who transformed Greg's "pioneering enquiry into historical processes" into a "forensic investigation into the text as the scene of a crime." Fundamental differences in understanding the ontology of texts and their relation to history underlie these traditions: "On the British side of the divide, history is a persistent and messy intermediary between author

and reader. On the American side, and less equivocally than Greg, Bowers was in the business of ideal authorial reconstruction" in which history was to be transcended. These philosophical distinctions take opposing textual form in the "clean look of the edited American page with critical apparatus tidied away at the back of the volume (the encounter of author and reader unsullied by history)" as opposed to continued "standard British editorial practice, where the record of variant readings, deposited like archaeological layers at the foot of each page of text, . . . providing both a historically compromised and a more Classical look" (see pp. 45–6). The differences between American and British theory and practice thus hark back to those between Alexandria and Pergamon as articulated by Greetham in the previous essay and include debates within both countries over such issues as the meaning and use of copy-text, the value and interpretation of authorial intention, and the relations between "text" and "work." Sutherland views the New Bibliographical drive for producing an ideal composite text freed from errors as being complicated and challenged in the late twentieth century by Anglo-American debates touched off by McGann and McKenzie about the text as a collaborative and social product; by editorial interest in "versioning" rather than reproducing a single state of a text; and by the editorial possibilities offered by digital media, reminding us, ultimately, that "All editorial theories imply the authority to represent or speak as the text; and all are ultimately revealed as temporal and temporary protocols for interpretation" (p. 48).

Lernout's contrasting account of the variety of Continental traditions shows them as concerned much more with textual scholarship as a way of investigating national history: philology as a way of reconstructing a "national past" in the origins of language and culture. The editorial practices arising from this history emphasize textual transmission and revision, and the creation of stemma through which textual transmission maps a detailed historical narrative, which is to say that its foundation rests principally on the methodology pioneered by the German scholar Karl Lachmann in his exemplary nineteenth century edition of Lucretius's *De rerum natura* and later systematized into what has been called the "Lachmann method." For Lernout, because the philological practices of Lachmann and his followers did not distinguish in terms of editorial treatment between classical and contemporary authors, they led to "one of the most important German export products, the historical-critical edition of texts in the vernacular" (p. 67), a product imported, of course, into the Anglo-American tradition. Two key later developments in German editorial theory, however, are in marked contrast to the Anglo-American tradition: a rejection of the kind of eclectic mix of readings from different versions of a text that is fundamental to copy-text editing and a resistance to treating versions of a text

teleologically as eventuating in a final privileged version. Both of these positions emphasize the integrity and value of each version of a text and found resonance in France, where they were preceded and influenced by Joseph Bédier's attack on the Lachmann method and his call for medievalists to produce, in the words of Lernout, "a faithful edition of the 'best text' of a work, which had at least the advantage of being historically consistent, . . . written by one scribe, in one moment in time" (p. 70). *Critique génétique*, or genetic criticism, which arose in France in the mid-1960s through the work of Louis Hay and Jean Bellemin-Noël on Heine manuscripts, positions itself even more radically. Aligning with French literary theory, it is interested in *écriture*, writing as process, not product. It therefore eschews the traditional critical edition for a "genetic dossier" of a written work that includes all surviving documents of the writing process, each retaining its own integrity without any teleological privileging of "final" form. While compatible with anti-teleological forms of German editorial theory, French genetic criticism differs from them, as Lernout points out, in its lack of interest in editorial matters and in edited texts. While German and French theory and practice have played a dominant role in Continental textual scholarship, there is now burgeoning activity in the field throughout Europe in a variety of languages and countries that, while difficult at this point to summarize, amounts to a new widespread return to philology and an intensive engagement with digital media.

Concluding the first half of the volume, three essays by Hans Walter Gabler, Paul Eggert, and Michelle Warren explore the professional and political meaning produced through the editorial theories and practices discussed in the preceding essays. While the texts of Shakespeare were the laboratory through which the New Bibliographers largely developed their theories and methods at the beginning of the twentieth century, towards the close of the century they were the focal point for key challenges to New Bibliography. Focusing on the debates in the 1980s over the text of *King Lear* and the controversial one-volume Oxford edition of the *Works of William Shakespeare*, edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Hans Gabler in "Late twentieth-century Shakespeares" (Chapter 4) shows just how high the stakes of such arguments can be. The radical and often contradictory differences between the 1608 Quarto and 1623 First Folio texts of *King Lear* had long been reconciled by editorial conflations of the two into a single work, whose only theoretical warrant for New Bibliographers was that these differences were caused by corruptions in each text of a lost original upon which they were both based. As Gabler explains, "to admit that *King Lear* could have come down to us in two versions would have rocked the foundations of a school of textual criticism whose newly developed bibliographical methodology was seen as a triumphant re-enforcement of the stemmatic thinking

of old in the discipline" (pp. 82–3). Those foundations were indeed rocked in 1983 with the publication of *The Division of the Kingdoms*, a volume of essays edited by Gary Taylor and Michael Warren, which forcefully argued that each of the two versions of *King Lear* had its own distinct integrity as a performance text and reflected revisions made by Shakespeare over time.[4] As Gabler remarks, "By assuming that Shakespeare was a revising author like other authors, and recognizing that the material transmission of *King Lear* held substantial evidence to prove the contention, . . . the proponents jointly succeeded in bringing Shakespeare textual criticism in line with the discipline of textual criticism as internationally and trans-nationally conceived and practiced" (p. 84). At stake in *The Division of the Kingdoms* and in the Oxford Shakespeare published three years later, which edits the plays in versions that approximate performance texts, is a crucial argument about the very ontology of Shakespeare's texts that emphasizes their theatricality and places variability at their core. That this argument emerged in significant dialogue with a concomitant turn in Shakespeare criticism towards exploring the plays as performance highlights the interdependence between textual and literary criticism, long denied or effaced earlier in the twentieth century. In Gabler's view, textual editions are increasingly inviting critical engagement with themselves "as products of critical scholarship." For him, the "prime question to be asked, be it in editorial or in critical terms, is no longer simply the normative one of 'what is the work's text?', but rather – and in far greater complexity – the critical one of: 'what is the range of variability of the work's text(s), from which we may gain analytic advantage toward interpretation?'" (p. 95). As the number of Shakespeare editions proliferate for classroom use in all of their textual variability, they bring this lesson home in a fundamental way, inextricably linking textual scholarship with literary criticism.

In discussing the difference between editions that through their architecture and layout present readers with a "bookish" Shakespeare as opposed to a "theatrical" Shakespeare, Gabler engages an important issue developed by Paul Eggert in "Apparatus, text, interface: how to read a critical edition" (Chapter 5). Scholarly editions face the perpetual challenge of how to present the text both legibly and informatively; by the same token, readers of editions face the challenge of how to interpret the often complex and recondite detail of scholarly apparatus. Debates over the proper presentation of apparatus make it clear that this textual surface is far from transparent, but is most significant for what it omits or condenses, and for how it persuades. While introducing readers to the often complex and sometimes befuddling machinery of the critical edition as it has evolved over time, Eggert views the reading interface created through an edition's "internal organization, declared conventions, and page layout" as "the systematic embodiment

of the editorial argument." The perspective gained through a generation of electronic editions, he argues, has denaturalized the conventions of the print edition and allowed us to understand "text, apparatuses, tabulations, appendixes" not simply as interface elements, but also as expressions of "various beliefs about the nature of the work" (p. 99). Eggert's comparison of the architecture of Anglo-American and German critical editions of the 1960s exposes the extent to which edition design is ultimately ideological, dependent on assumptions about the ontology of literary works. Whereas the Anglo-American editions were geared toward presenting the work as such, German editions were designed to emphasize textual variations between the various manuscript and print versions of the work, replete with elaborate apparatus strategies highlighting the integrity of these versions. Eggert's turn to the strategies through which recent editions of *Hamlet* have been embodied demonstrates how the ideological commitments and implicit argument of a critical edition is materialized in its interface and enacted on its page, while at the same time returning us with a different vantage point to the key debates about Shakespearian textuality upon which Gabler focused.

The use of Shakespeare by both Gabler and Eggert for focusing on the ideologies implicit in the construction of textual editions highlights the ability of textual scholarship to explain in specific, material ways the constructedness of all texts. It also enables textual scholars, as Michelle Warren argues in "The politics of textual scholarship," to identify with "historical and cultural precision the power dynamics (both oppressive and resistant) that sustain language and text systems" (p. 119). Warren thus views textual scholarship as belonging within the larger ambit of politically inflected literary and cultural studies, "from the postcolonial to the queer, the ecological to the philosophical." For her, the politics of textual scholarship broadly construed involves not only the production of texts, but their dissemination and consumption as objects of cultural analysis, encompassing "the national contexts of professionalized textual scholarship, power relations embedded in editorial forms, and ideological implications of the language used to describe editorial practice" (p. 119). Her discussion of the French adoption of *The Song of Roland* as both a national epic and anchor for national identity illuminates many of these issues, placing Bédier's development of "best text" theory as part of this larger narrative, including the French need to overtrump the predominant German editions of *Roland* that were based on Lachmannian recension. Her attention to the various relations of power embedded in the material forms of editions not only echoes Gabler and Eggert, but highlights the importance of treating editions as objects that in themselves require critical interpretation. As she explains, even so-called unreliable editions "have important stories to tell about ideological appropriations and political histories" – including, for example, editions of the Early English Text Society

circulated for colonial purposes in British India, or Mary-Lafon's edition of the French epic *Fierabras* as an explicit aid to North African colonization. Warren also usefully directs our attention to the power relations encoded within the rhetoric of textual scholarship itself, which is founded on metaphors of "corruption," "variation," "correction," and "normalization." But what does not get said, nor done, nor archived is as powerfully political as what does. Warren's questions about what we might learn about the methods and theoretical underpinnings of textual scholarship from editions with explicit political commitments to feminist, postcolonial, or gender theory serve as an important reminder at the conclusion of the first half of the volume, which details the history of the field, about how relatively absent such editions have been from that history.

The second half of the volume begins with two very different investigations of the material "bookness" of books and the interpenetration of materiality and textual meaning. Randall McLeod's essay "Fearful asymmetry" (Chapter 7) offers a detailed and materially grounded performance of analytical bibliography, working through minutely observed physical idiosyncrasies such as dog-earing and stitching patterns to trace what these reveal both about the production processes through which the book is constructed, and the kinds of intentions and meanings that we can uncover as a result. His understanding of book production as a stack of tightly interrelated activities, of which authorship is only one instance, establishes a revealing dialogue with Chapter 8 by Peter Stallybrass and Roger Chartier, in which this same set of concerns is explored from a historical perspective. In answering their opening question, "What is a book?," Stallybrass and Chartier situate the physical and textual book in a complex web of legal, philosophical, literary, and political debates. Our definition of "book" emerges as a constructed, contested, and shifting notion which carries considerable cultural freight: for example, in the lawsuits over copyright in the early eighteenth century that created "new relations between notions of individual authorship, originality, and copyright" in which the author came to have, for the first time, ownership of his own work. This legal construction of authorship as property has proven culturally decisive, but as McLeod's very different anatomization of the book suggests, there are other ways in which a much more attenuated sense of authorship penetrates the material artifact we handle, animating while not actually accounting for the significant physical configurations the analytical bibliographer reveals.

If what these two essays, in their different ways, establish for us is in effect a denaturalization of the printed book as a cultural form and as a surface through which meaning is transmitted, the next two essays probe the cultural centrality of print from another angle by examining the alterity – from the standpoint of textual scholarship – of manuscripts and oral texts. Both

kinds of texts challenge traditional methodologies and require, as John Niles in Chapter 9 says of orality, "alternative ways of thinking about such central editorial issues as transmission, variation, and authorship" (p. 220). Michael Sargent in Chapter 10, "Manuscript textuality," discusses the history of early modern literary manuscripts, finding that the main constant of such texts is variance itself, what Paul Zumthor has termed "*mouvance*." For Sargent, although text of any kind "has always had a centrifugal tendency toward variation," manuscript text "is variable in ways that we do not commonly think of printed text as being: no two manuscripts of the same work are ever identical" (p. 228). Sargent finds that print editions have been overtaxed in attempting to capture the complex "mouvance" of manuscripts, a problem further exacerbated in the textual remediation of oral performances, in which the limits of print and even video to represent the complex, embodied, and interactive performances of oral events are all too apparent, as John Niles discusses in Chapter 9: "Orality." With few issues about oral texts theorized by textual scholars and no agreed upon methodological procedures for editing them having been established, modern editions of oral texts rarely explain or rationalize their own editorial procedures, which often vary dramatically and, Niles claims, foster misconceptions involving "an overestimation of the inherent capacity of either script or print to simulate oral performance, together with an undervaluing of the impact of scribes, collectors, and editors on what is widely received as 'oral literature'" (p. 205). As an example of some of these problems, Niles explores the only recently understood dialogic interplay between oral and written transmission of the various songs comprising *The Song of Roland*, in which any "variant text might display the signs of both scribal degradation and oral/aural modification." Neither Lachmannian recension nor Bédier's "best text" method are sufficient to address this level of hybrid variability. Like Sargent, Niles hopes that electronic editions will provide adequate means for addressing the kind of textual alterity they discuss, but that medium has yet to produce a panacea. Animating their essays is the question of how textual scholarship constructs its object as a text, and how the methods of textual scholarship may be applied to documents (using this term broadly) that in various ways push at the boundaries of our traditional understanding of "text." The final two essays in the volume, Chapters 11 and 12, take this issue even further to consider how images and digital inscriptions may be usefully studied and interpreted using (or adapting) techniques arising from textual scholarship.

Although the term "textual scholarship" seems to point as explicitly as possible towards textual artifacts and text-oriented methods, Kari Kraus's "Picture criticism: textual studies and the image" (Chapter 11) argues for the crucial role images have to play in the textual ecology, and suggests how