The Importance of Conserving Originality: the Editing of Neo-Latin Baroque Texts
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Texts found on inscriptions and in archives contain a wealth of information for historians, archaeologists, philologists, linguists and other scholars and interested persons. Sooner or later, nearly everyone engaged in Baroque studies is confronted with inscribed texts on tombstones or manuscripts.   Editors of such texts must render them in an intelligible manner and use a standard format, such as that established by the Leiden Convention of 1931.

The idea behind establishing an accepted convention is naturally to avoid confusion. Prior to the Leiden Convention, numerous methodologies and individual styles existed, which were only intelligible to a very small circle. Publications often lacked explanations of the editorial principles employed therein. Reference materials to the individual styles remained largely unpublished, making it quite a puzzle for outsiders to comprehend the purpose of the editor.

A bigger challenge lay in overcoming the pervasive influence of the neo-classical movement, which tried to 'correct' previous expressions of art, such as the Baroque, into what was perceived to be truly classical proportions - thereby destroying the original character of works belonging a different era.

Classical scholars influenced by these principles had an incorrigible urge to 'amend' Neo-Latin texts (all Latin written from the Renaissance onwards) to the standards of the classical era. They regarded Neo-Latin as Latin gone astray and therefore in dire need of correction. In short, their ideal was to have Cicero as their editor-in-chief. This tendency to put hundreds of years of language development through the blender of classical correctness in order to produce works of conjecture has been frowned upon since the 1930s.

One can neither 'correct' the works of William Shakespeare to the standards of Chaucer, nor the other way around. Any attempt to 'correct' the spelling in Neo-Latin texts must therefore be regarded as a grave mistake, since orthographical and morphological customs reflect contemporary ideas of etymology and relations between words.[1]

The Leiden Convention strives to avoid such editorial malpractice. Every era has its own peculiarities, which must be appreciated, respected and conserved. The essential qualities of Neo-Latin lie in its differences to classical Latin, and certain fundamental issues should not be open to any kind of dispute.

Editing practice
The importance of producing a *strict diplomatic*, or *semi diplomatic* edition, respecting and conserving the originality of all aspects of the text, cannot be stressed enough.

Besides providing an accurate version of what is preserved, an editor must also try to restore text that is not preserved – while making a clear distinction between restored text which is reliable, and that which is conjectural and unsupported. Restored text must conform to stylistic features such as orthography, grammar and spelling, and to the peculiarities of the period, region, function and social context.

It stands to reason that when transcribing a text, the spatial organisation, such as the original line and word order, should be kept. The spelling of the text has to be preserved, so that it does not lose its authenticity and value, even when it is regarded as 'wrong'.[2] For a correct appreciation and understanding of Neo-Latin texts, and of course of any other languages found in archives or on inscriptions, it is always sensible to refer to

The Leiden Convention of 1931

The Leiden Convention of 1931 introduced a system of editing epigraphical or palaeographical texts using a convention of diacritical signs which has gradually developed into an auxiliary science.[3] From the 1930s onwards, papyrologists, epigraphists and, to a lesser extent, palaeographists, were zealous advocates for an academic standard in this field.

The Leiden Convention is now regarded as the standard in editing in the international academic community.[4] All major periodicals in these fields require authors to edit their articles for peer-reviews and publication accordingly. Important collections of Latin inscriptions, such as the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (CIL)* have adopted a scientific approach with help of diacritical signs.[5]

Prof Sterling Dow was one of the moving forces behind the development of the Leiden System in the 1960s. According to him, proper editing is to *render in print, by use of regular, understood and agreed upon conventions, which shall be as simple and clear as possible, an unambiguous and correct representation of the original text, so that both academics and non-specialist readers may comprehend such texts with the minimum of difficulty*.[6] The proper recording of texts is an aid to their conservation and restoration, due to their appearance on perishable materials.

dictionaries of the period in question, especially regarding the use of orthography, morphology, syntax and vocabulary.

The editor in charge is responsible for the delivery of a complete and intelligible text. To achieve this task, editors are faced with a large number of decisions, using diacritical signs as their tools. In this decision-making process, all the epigraphic and palaeographic findings within the original text must be taken into consideration before the text is transcribed.

These findings normally comprise ligatures, hyphenation, tildes, abbreviation signs, special signs, palimpsests, corrections, additions, writer's or stone-cutter's mistakes, omissions, dittography, haplography, *litera, rasura* and *damnatio memoriae*.

When a text is being published for the first time, a description should be given of the text's physical qualities, such as material, dimensions, detailed information on lettering and iconography, state of preservation and condition, binding, numbering, material, function and locality. Previous editions and sources of comparison ought to be also be listed.

A photograph should accompany the publication of an inscription, to give the reader an overall impression. In palaeography, a facsimile of the original pages is often offered. When only part of a work is published, photographs or facsimiles are not always necessary.

In epigraphy it is customary to first render a transcription in capital letters, in imitation of the original, whereby sentences are rendered line for line according to the original spatial requirements. Neo-Latin palaeography is less complicated in this respect, as one often encounters handwriting only in miniscule. Obviously, the page numbering or page order of the manuscript's present state should be adhered to. In both epigraphy and palaeography, the sentence lines are numbered with an interval of five at the left (5,10,15 etc).

The editor's real work starts with the creation of the *exemplum*, that is, the edited text in miniscule italics in a continuous manner, whereby the lines are divided by a vertical divider called a *solidus*, followed by a superscript line division number ($|^5$ $|^{10}$ $|^{15}$ etc). Footnotes should be avoided in the *exemplum* - instead, in the commentary a lemma can introduce whatever has to be remarked.

The text of the *exemplum* may be reconstructed from a comparison of various other sources. Introducing modern punctuation marks to replace or complement the existing punctuation marks of the original text may prove to be a hazard, as the editor thus assumes that he has fully understood the text and that there is no room for ambiguity.

Epigraphic and palaeographic findings must be marked with a diacritical sign (see page 8 & 9). All abbreviations are to be expanded according to the typical usage of the work in question, including regionally typical solutions. However, interventions of the editor in the *exemplum* should be kept to an absolute minimum and recorded properly in the *apparatus criticus* and the commentary.

When a text has been published before, the editor has more freedom to decide how the text is displayed in relation to the *exemplum*. Budgetary constraints will play a role here, according to the available pages. Finally, a translation complements the transcription. Although the translator needs to know exactly what each word means in the source language, the translation into the target language must be idiomatically correct. After all, we need to translate meaning, not words.

Diacritical signs

Diacritical signs are the tools of the editor, who must always offer the best solution in line with the purpose of the edition. The diagram on pages 8 and 9 hereafter contain a number of such diacritical signs. It is up to the editor to decide which sign brings out the state of the text most truthfully and precisely.

Should the editor reconstruct part of the text from other sources, it is not absolutely necessary to mark all such text in the *exemplum* with a critical sign. In the *apparatus criticus* a lemma will indicate such prior observations and compare the actual text with the other sources. Further details may be given in the commentary.

The *apparatus criticus* and the commentary

The *apparatus criticus* follows the *exemplum*. The Leiden Convention requires that there should be no modern punctuation marks in the *apparatus criticus* other than those found in the original text. All instances which warrant the use of a critical sign (whether actually used or not) deserve to be mentioned in the *apparatus criticus*.

The latter's organisation, in smaller font than the *exemplum*, comprises a line number (bold) followed by a lemma (normal), the original source indication (bold) and the referred source indications (italics). A legend will explain the abbreviations. The source indications are best kept as short as possible. The bold capital letter **A** refers to the source, while an italic capital, often the first letter, refers to the comparative sources. An interpunctuation separates the lemmas, for example:

9 morte **A** morti *B C* · **25** sollertia **A** solertia *B* sollertiam *C*.

A commentary should not contain more information than is strictly necessary, and follows the order of organisation of the text. A line number followed by a lemma, indicating a particular word or words, starts each commentary. The lemma is followed by a single square bracket, for example:

25 âtatis suâ] Follows commentary.

References

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Notes

1. Helander, p.44.
2. ibid., p.21.
3. The Leiden system of critical signs was the result of a meeting of the Papyrological Section of 18th International Congress of Orientalists at Leiden, 1931. The adopted conventions were published first by the Union Académique Internationale, *Emploi des signes critiques, disposition de l'apparat dans les éditions savants de texte grec et latin, conseils et recommandations*, by J. Bidez and A.B. Drachman, Paris 1932, pp.46ff.
4. The Leiden system of critical signs can be regarded as matured and undisputed among peers. See Schmidt, p.23f and Krummrey and Panciera, pp.205ff.
5. CIL Vol. VI, Pars VIII, Fasc.3, *Titulos magistratuum populi Romani ordinum senatorii equestrisque*. Alföldy, G. (ed.), and Caldelli, M. L. et al, 2000, XXXII, pp. 4667-5294.
6. Dow, p.2.

Diacritical sign	Application abc represents here the text of the *exemplum*.	Examples From inscriptions and manuscripts.
ab|c	*Solidus*. Single vertical stroke marks a line division	*navibus|*[5] *praefectus* (including an example of a line number in superscript).
ab||c	Double *solidus*. Double vertical line division to mark text outside the cartouche of an inscription or notes in the margin of a manuscript. Also used to mark the end of a text colon.	*Frà. Agos-||altra simile. Altra simile* is written in the right margin, while the next line continues with *tino Morando*.
(vac.)	To indicate an empty line.	
v, vac or vacat	To indicate empty letter spaces; vac or vacat can be used to fill up larger spaces.	PRÆvSSET, (*præesset*).
aᵒbc	Open interpunctuation. To mark both *punctum* (interpunctuation) and *hedera* (ornamental or floral design serving as interpunctuation). Classical inscriptions usually do not have punctuation marks. They may have interpunctuation between each word instead of spaces. Neo-Latin inscriptions and manuscripts have both spaces between words and modern punctuation marks. The interpunctuation on an inscription is often inserted by the engraver for lay-out purposes.	*donat, dicat, consecrat*ᵒ for DONAT, DICAT, CONSECRAT
âbc	A circumflex indicates joined letters, such as ligatures, or in palaeography some strokes indicating ligatures (æ, œ etc.).	*âtatis suâ* for
abc(!)	To indicate an original writing or cutting mistake, slip of the pen, incorrect grammar, unusual variation.	SPLENDORVM(!) in the plural when *splendorem* in the singular should have been written.
abc (underdotted)	Underdotting occurs when a letter is so dim or doubtful due to damage or erosion, that in isolation it cannot be read. The context may give the solution, but it may not be decisive whether or not underdotting should be applied.	*benemerentibus*
a'bc'	Period related insertion.	*'obiit die III ivlii' accepta et avcta Gloria 'MDCLXXXVII'*
<u>*abc*</u>	Letters read by previous editors which are at present lost.	*reparatae sal<u>utis</u>*
ab(c), (abc)	Round brackets are used to expand abbreviations and for the rendering of special usages. When, as a personal taste, too many brackets appear, one may also chose italics instead. When abbreviations appear in the original inscription within brackets, the abbreviations will be in italics. Special signs are rendered in letters and placed within brackets. A tilde is rendered in letters and placed within brackets. Often a tilde replaces an *m*, *n* or indicates a longer abbreviation Some use of ligatures and tildes needs to be clarified within brackets.	D(EO) O(PTIMO) M(AXIMO). DEO *OPTIMO MAXIMO* (QUAM OLIM *FRATER DOMINUS*) *(Novem)bris for 9bris* *moru(m) for morū* *(itidem)* for *Ven(eran)dae* for
ab(c?), (abc?)	Indicates that the reading or the expansion of the abbreviation is not certain.	*p(ri?)us for p:us*

<abc >	Angle brackets have a wide use. They indicate accidentally omitted letters or for correct letters inserted by the editor. Haplography is the unintentional writing of a letter once, while it should have been repeated.	*<p>raeclaris for braeclaris* *pos<i>tum* for *postum* *e.g.* PRÆ<E>SSET
<<abc>>	*Litura.* Double angle brackets indicate a period related insertion on an erased field.	<<BONAPARTE>>
{abc}	Brace brackets mark superfluous letters inscribed on the stone or manuscript, *i.e.* too many letters, repeated letters or words. Dittography is the unintentional repetition of a letter.	*e.g. Imp{p}eratori* *e.g. æ{e}tatis.* Attention is needed here. Knowledge of the local habits is indispensable, *e.g.* there is, in Neo-Latin Maltese context, no dittography in *re pubblica,* as the reduplicated *b* is typical for Italian writers of Latin, related too *la repubblica.*
[abc]	Square brackets indicate letters lost due to damage or erosion, but which can be restored with certainty by the editor.	*[An]no Dom[ini]*
[\\\\\]	Letters deleted on the stone while restoration is unsure.	Each \ represents one letter.
[---]	Square brackets with three dashes indicates a gap within a sentence line, with an uncertain number of letters missing, but for which restoration may be suggested from other sources.	*anno [---]*
[------]	Square brackets with six dashes indicates a whole lost sentence line, but for which restoration may be suggested from other sources.	*anno [------]*
[--c7--]	Square brackets with dashes and a number indicates how many letters approximately are missing from a sentence line, but for which restoration may be suggested from other sources.	*anno [--c7--]* *e.g.* Suggested restoration: *salutis*
- - - - - -	Six dashes indicates a lost part, often at the periphery of a stone or document	*anno - - - - - -*
[...]	Square brackets with dots for letters presumably lost and not restorable.	It may also appear as *e.g. [..8..]* when the number of missing letters can be given, or as *[..c8..]* when an estimated number of letters can be given.
+++	*Cruces* indicate that the rest of the letters cannot be read with certainty and cannot be restored.	*lemoc*++++ (here four letters)
[[abc]]	Double square brackets indicate a period related *rasura* or damnatio memoriae.	*[[NERO]]*
[ ]	Square brackets in English are an editor's tool in order to be more specific. In translation it is used to facilitate understanding in the target language what is understood in the source language. To attract the reader's attention to a mistake or an apparent mistake by the following insertion of [*sic*].	He [William Shakespeare] was a successful writer William Shakepeare [*sic*].