

Textual Criticism

P. S. Langeslag



Stemmatology

The Genealogical Model

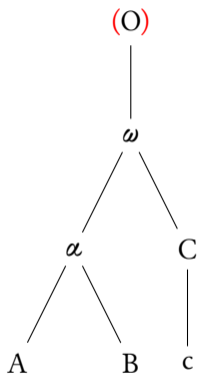


Figure 1: Arbitrary stemma

- ▶ **Witness**: manuscript copy of a given text
- ▶ **Siglum** (pl. *sigla*): symbol assigned a witness
- ▶ **Original** (O): the presumed original, lost document
- ▶ **Autograph**: a witness copied down by its author themselves
- ▶ **Archetype** (Ω/ω ; Maas α): the lost node closest to the original about which we can make inferences
- ▶ **Exemplar** (*Vorlage*): The model used to copy out a given witness

The Value of Errors and Variants

- ▶ Errors tell us more than correct readings
- ▶ For the extended sense of *error*, we may speak more neutrally of *variant readings*
- ▶ It takes a comparison of more than one variant reading to establish a relationship

Shared Errors Suggest Closeness

Especially with errors that are unlikely to arise:

- ▶ B: The capital of Egypt is cuttlefish.
- ▶ C: The capital of Egypt is cuttlefish.

Shared Errors Suggest Closeness

Especially with errors that are unlikely to arise:

- ▶ B: The capital of Egypt is cuttlefish.
- ▶ C: The capital of Egypt is cuttlefish.

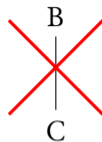


Figure 2: Premature stemma

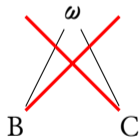


Figure 3: Premature stemma

Shared Errors Suggest Closeness

- ▶ A: The capital of Egypt is Cairo.
- ▶ B: The capital of Egypt is cuttlefish.
- ▶ C: The capital of Egypt is cuttlefish.

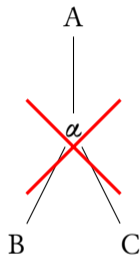


Figure 4: Premature stemma

Distinct Errors Reveal Relationships

- ▶ A: The capital of Egypt is Cairo.
- ▶ B: The capital of Egypt is cuttlefish.
- ▶ C: The capital of Egypt is curdlefish.

- ▶ A: not many people
- ▶ B: barely any people
- ▶ C: barley people



Figure 5: Preliminary stemma

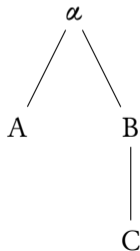


Figure 6: Preliminary stemma

Shared Variants Suggest Closeness

More trivial variants are useful if cumulative:

- ▶ A: I strive to please.
 - ▶ B: I seek to please.
 - ▶ C: I seek to please.
-
- ▶ A: VI hectares
 - ▶ B: four hectares
 - ▶ C: IV hectares
-
- ▶ A: the woman was
 - ▶ B: the women were
 - ▶ C: the woman was

A Multilingual Network of Nodes

- ▶ *Translatio et miracula Sancti Swithuni*: “CXXIIII” (124)
- ▶ Ælfric’s *Life of St Swithun*: “hundtwelftig” (120)
- ▶ Modern English translation: “a hundred and twelve”

Scribal Error

Dittography



Figure 7: London, British Library, Cothon Tiberius A. iiii, fol. 81v (detail; PD/[British Library](#))

Dittography

mynfcre þenemnedir pegina leah þur ilce
~~þite eac spylce hiberma ꝛotta ealand glice~~
þur ilce þite eac spylce hiberma ꝛotta ea
londe gelice pælerlogh ꝛcꝛlmde. pæron

Figure 8: Oxford, Corpus Christi College 279B, fol. 56v (detail; [Digital Bodleian](#))

Haplography

- ▶ A: Mississippi
- ▶ B: Mississippi

Haplography by Eyeskip from Two Identical Words

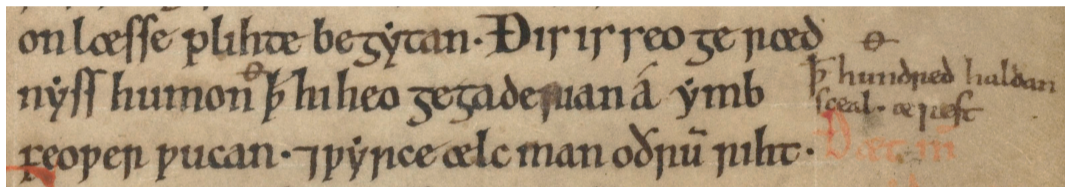


Figure 9: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 383, fol. 10r (detail; [Parker Library on the Web](#))

Haplography by Eyeskip from Two Identical Words

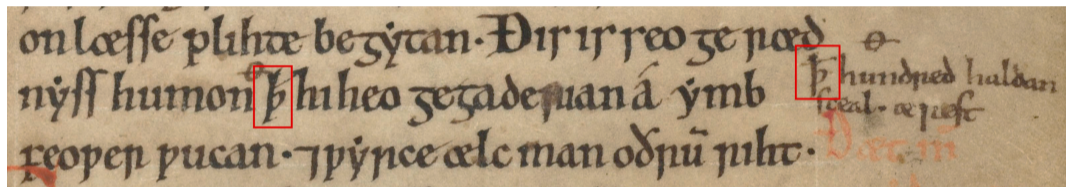


Figure 10: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 383, fol. 10r (detail; [Parker Library on the Web](#))

Haplography by Eyeskip from Two Identical Words

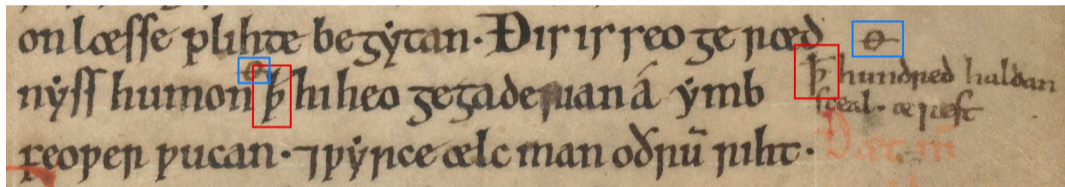


Figure 11: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 383, fol. 10r (detail; [Parker Library on the Web](#))

- ▶ *signe de renvoi*: mark to indicate where in the text a marginal annotation applies

Dittography by Eyeskip from Multiple Identical Words

Table 1: Dittography in *Be heofonwarum* and *be helwarum*

MS	Reading
J	hit bið andrislic dæg · ȝ unrotnessa dæg · ȝ sorga dæg · ȝ dimnessa dæg ȝ storma dæg · ȝ wracena dæg ȝ fyres dæg · ȝ nearunessa dæg · ȝ gehnipes dæg ȝ þystro dæg ;
K	hit bið andryslic dæg · ȝ unrotnessa dæg · ȝ sorga dæg · ȝ dymnyssa dæg · ȝ storma dæg · ȝ wracena dæg · ȝ dimnyssa dæg · ȝ wracena dæg · ȝ fyres dæg · ȝ nearunessa dæg · ȝ genipes dæg · ȝ þystro dæg ·

Homoeoteleuton and Homoeoarcton

Eyeskip from Homoeoteleuton

- ▶ A: They were sing**ing** and danc**ing**
- ▶ B: They were sing**ing** and danc**ing** and danc**ing** (dittography)

Eyeskip from Homoeoarcton

- ▶ A: **And** ongean þam **andgyte** þe of godes agenre gyfe cymð
- ▶ B: **Andgyte** þe of godes agenre gyfe cymð (haplography)

Haplography by Eyeskip from Two Words That Collocate

Table 2: Haplography in Napier homily XLVI by eyeskip from “ælmihtigan” to “drihtne”

MS Reading

- N Hwi noldest ðu forwyrhte biddan þe arfulle þingeras wið þone **ælmihtigan** þrym þære halgan þrynnesse · 7 æt þære soðan annesse ; Hwi noldest ðu ungesælige andettan þinum **drihtne** · 7 biddan þone halgan michael · þæt he wære þe fultumigend · 7 ealle his halgan ;
- O Hwi noldest þu forwyrhte · biddan þe arfulle ðingearas · wið þone **ælmihtigan** ðrym · þære halgan þrynnesse 7 æt ðære soðan annesse · Hwi noldest ðu ungesælige andettan þinum **drihtne** · 7 biddan þone halgan michahel þæt he wære ðin fultumiend · 7 ealle his halgan ·
- I Hwi noldest þu forworhte biddan þe arfulle þingeræs wið þone **almihtige drihtine** · 7 biddan þenne halga michael · þæt he wære þe fultymigend · 7 alle halgan
-

Glosses and Scholia

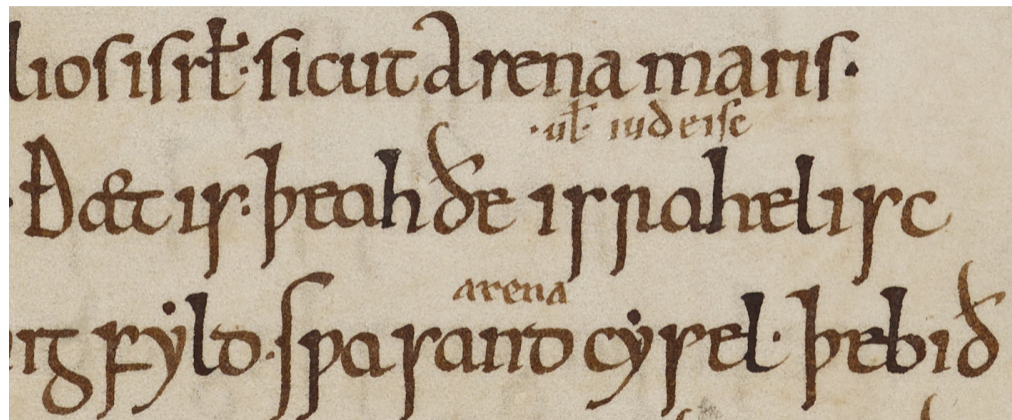


Figure 12: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 114 fol. 119r (detail; [Bodleian Libraries](#))

Principles and Strategies

Lectio brevior potior

The principle that the shorter reading is usually more representative of the archetype.

- ▶ In favour: glosses are sometimes incorporated into the main text.
- ▶ Against: there are many cases in which material is lost in transmission.

Lectio difficilior potior

The principle that the more difficult reading is usually more representative of the archetype.

- ▶ In favour:
 - ▶ Scribes confronted with difficult passages would tend to simplify;
 - ▶ Eyeskip may result in simplification, sometimes in two steps.
- ▶ Against: glosses are sometimes incorporated into the main text.

Language, Grammar, Context

- ▶ A: ne nan mæg oðrum
- ▶ B: ne nan ne mæg oðrum

Watching Witnesses Interact

CCCC 419	s. xi ¹	68.1.123	ᝥ hit is ealles þe wyrse þe his ænig ende ne cymð æfre to worulde ·
Hatton 114	s. xi (3rd quarter)	331.56.123	ᝥ hit is ealles þe wyrse ⁊ þe his ende ne cymð næfre to worulde ·

Figure 13: Variance in *Be antecriste* (ECHOE)

Watching Witnesses Interact

CCCC 419	s. xi ¹	68.1.123	ᝥ hit is ealles þe wyrse þe his ænig ende ne cymð æfre to worulde .
Hatton 114	s. xi (3rd quarter)	331.56.123	ᝥ hit is ealles þe wyrse ⁊ þe his \ænig/ ende ne cymð næfre to worulde .

Figure 14: A correction in *Be antecriste* (ECHOE)

The Latin Source Can Help!

Table 3: Variance in the Old English *Life of Saint Basil*

W	Þa com færlice mycel wynd and wearp upp þa duru, þæt ða scytelses toburston and hie slohon on þone weall.
f ¹	Þa com færlice mycel wynd and wearp upp þa duru, þæt ða scytelses toburston and heo sloh on þone weall.

The Latin Source Can Help!

Table 4: Variance in the Old English *Life of Saint Basil*

Latin	Deciderunt claves cum pessulis, ostia tanquam valido concussa vento paruerunt et cum impetu quodam ferebantur at parietes.
W	Þa com færlice mycel wynd and wearp upp þa duru, þæt ða scytelses toburston and hie slohon on þone weall.
f ¹	Þa com færlice mycel wynd and wearp upp þa duru , þæt ða scytelses toburston and heo sloh on þone weall.

Indicating Interventions

Maas

Table 5: Maas's editorial symbols

Intervention	Indicated by
addition	<angular brackets>
deletion	{curly braces}
conjecture (known lacuna)	[square brackets]
emendation (corrupt text)	<i>italics</i>
none but wtf	†

Modern Practice

Varies:

- ▶ Use square brackets for most purposes
- ▶ Or intervene silently, marking corrupt readings in the apparatus
- ▶ Additionally, one can mark additions \thus/

Bibliography I

- Andrews, Tara, and Caroline Macé, eds. *Analysis of Ancient and Medieval Texts and Manuscripts: Digital Approaches*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2014.
- Busch, Nathanael, Jürgen Wolf, and others, eds. “Handschriftencensus: Eine Bestandsaufnahme der handschriftlichen Überlieferung deutschsprachiger Texte des Mittelalters,” n.d. <https://handschriftencensus.de/>.
- Echard, Siân, and Stephen Partridge, eds. *The Book Unbound: Editing and Reading Medieval Manuscripts and Texts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
- Fraistat, Neil, and Julia Flanders, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
<http://han.sub.uni-goettingen.de/han/cambridge-companions-online/dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781139044073>.
- Haugen, Odd Einar, Caroline Macé, and Philipp Roelli, eds. “Parvum Lexicon Stematologicum,” November 13, 2015. <http://wiki.helsinki.fi/display/stematology>.

Bibliography II

- Kleinhenz, Christopher, ed. *Medieval Manuscripts and Textual Criticism*. North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures: Symposia 4. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Department of Romance Languages, 1976.
- Lapidge, Michael. "Textual Criticism and the Literature of Anglo-Saxon England." *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 73, no. 1 (1991): 17–45.
- Maas, Paul. *Textkritik*. 4th ed. Leipzig: Teubner, 1960.
- . *Textual Criticism*. Translated by Barbara Flower. Oxford: Clarendon, 1958.
- Machan, Tim William. *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1994.
- Parker, David C. *Textual Scholarship and the Making of the New Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Roelli, Philipp, ed. *Handbook of Stemmataology: History, Methodology, Digital Approaches*. Berlin: DeGruyter, 2020. <https://www.degruyter.com/view/title/569065>.

Bibliography III

Trovato, Paolo. *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lachmann's Method: A Non-Standard Handbook of Genealogical Textual Criticism in the Age of Post-Structuralism, Cladistics, and Copy-Text*. Revised edition. LibreriaUniversitaria.it, 2017.