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MK: What do the terms digital scholarly editing and digital publishing in the broadest sense mean to you?

FF: I stick to the definition of my dear friend and colleague Patrick Sahle. According to that a scholarly digital edition is a critical representation of texts or documents under the conditions of an ecosystem of digital knowledge resources. So, if you like we can discuss each and every word of this definition. Because this has many implications, consequences. And yes, to start with, we just published a manifesto for digital scholarly editions as a result of a one-day, or rather one-morning workshop at the Conference for the Digital Humanities in the German speaking countries. It has been published on the blog of the DHd community and we are now working on translation into several language to make it more accessible also for non-German speakers. And yeah, I think that was very, very productive, a very efficient way of defining the field a little bit, because there's a lot of misconceptions, and everyone who wants to go digital. But not every digital edition or every digitised edition is really what we think a digital edition should be like. So, also for funding institutions, for traditional philologists, editors, historians to clarify a misunderstanding of what it implies to actually create a digital edition. Because in the course of the digital transformation of humanities and science in general, there is no alternative, scholars need to go into the direction of doing digital research and digital publications. But doing digital editions implies a change of methods and theories that are directed towards your text and textual material.

MK: Thank you. Just to say I did a preliminary English translation because the colleagues over here in Ireland are very interested in that manifesto.

FF: Ah ok, very cool. There is a link on the website of the IDE who has had the initiative of the workshop. It is a network or a think tank that has been founded two decades ago. I'm afraid, some time has really gone by since we, some friends working in Cologne, Berlin and Graz created this virtual institute, run a website, organise now the translations of this manifesto and many other things, a review journal and publication series and lots of other things related to digital scholarly editing.

MK: Thank you and because you mentioned the Review Journal IDE, you've been an editor there since 2014. What observations have you made in terms of the dominant ways of which scholarly editors approach editing?'

FF: I mean this journal is specifically for digital editors, so I don't know how far this transforms the perspectives and practises or routines of more traditional scholars. We just thought it would be very useful to create, to launch a platform, a journal that looks at the specifities and established criteria to describe and evaluate digital resources and especially editions of texts because this has been neglected or been carried out insufficiently in traditional review journals of the traditional disciplines of literary studies. Of course, sometimes you would find a review also about a new digital resource. But the difficulty in evaluating a digital scholarly edition is that you should be

familiar at least with the basics of both sides: the basics of the disciplinary field, the textual material, the genre, etc. on the one hand, and on the other with the basics of the technical questions related to the realisation of the specific edition. To bring both sides together, we thought there is no other way than launching a journal, and that works quite well. So I mean, maybe not every review is nice to read, but they are meant to accompany the evolution or transformation of editorial projects, because usually there is no final product, but editions might reach a state that is worthwhile to be reviewed). Usually these are just like snapshots in the course of a life cycle of a digital scholarly project. And that's the whole idea, to have points of reference, to make suggestions that may help the digital editors of a project, which are in fact usually collaborative projects and include traditional scholars as well as DH scholars and other specialists; to give suggestions on how to improve or enhance the resources. And also, to set standards, so that people have some orientation, to maintain or reach a certain standard of quality which regards not only the editorial method, but also the technical requirements.

MK: In that context, I was wondering have you seen any outliers, any particularly unusual approaches to digital editing that have stuck in your mind?

FF: Unusual? There is barely any standard edition so far. There are beacon editions, or some flagship editions, great achievements right from the beginning of digital scholarship. In 1996, I think, we see the Canterbury Tales edition on CD-ROM... I mean, now there are very many and increasingly sophisticated editions. It's a field that is in a constant change, new technology comes about, or paradigms change. The linked open data paradigm, for example, or the paradigm of distributed knowledge resources. This has an immediate impact on the design of new scholarly editions. Since the beginnings, it has been standard to include facsimiles, the textual material. That has been done since the '90's Ploughman Edition, the Beowulf Edition and the Canterbury Tales Edition. Now they should be included via IIIF protocols, so that's probably the latest   …

MK: Trend?

FF: Trend or rather, almost a requirement: if you don't provide them you have to justify why you don't. Maybe your facsimiles are not provided by the host institution via that protocol so there is no other way to do it. But in general, you should design, if possible, your project like this to include materials and resources from the holding institutions or from authorities that provide not only images but also information about named entities, catalogue data, all these things, maybe even linguistic information. You would not create silos anymore. That has been or still is a problem of many resources that have been created in the course of the history of scholar digital scholarly editing. To escape the problem that editions break - I mean, they still break but it's just a question of how to put resources together and then to secure the commitment of responsible institutions to maintain these resources. People believe this is more sustainable. Let's hope, we don't know that future brings.

MK: What is your experience with the maintenance of these projects? I can imagine once funding ends this becomes a problem.

FF: My experience is manifold. I have digital editions myself which need to be maintained. I created for example the Confessio Edition at the Royal Irish Academy during my time as a post doc from 2008 to 2011, about ten years ago. Exactly on St Patrick's Day ten years ago we launched that edition in the presence of the two Bishops of Dublin, the Protestant Bishop and the Catholic Bishop, so yes, that's exactly ten years ago. This edition has been created more like a silo. The new paradigm of linked open editions was not about at that stage. It's still working though. Of course things broke: the viewer of the facsimiles or other things broke at some stage and then we had to improvise. Ironically, it was the plan at the stage when this project was funded by the IHEA, the idea with European funding was to build up digital humanities infrastructure in Ireland because it has been diagnosed there were shortcomings. They invested

a lot of money and hired external experts from all around the globe, including myself, from Germany, which was very nice at the time... But then the big crisis came, the economic crash, and they closed, for example, the Digital Humanities Observatory which was planned to have a lead role in Ireland to create sustainable structures. Of all things, this was they closed first. I don't think the Digital Repository of Ireland is not able to maintain a complex resource like a digital scholarly edition. People in charge of maintaining this edition, myself and still the head of the Dictionary of Medieval Latin from Celtic Sources at the Royal Irish Academy, yeah, we got into trouble and then made agreements with an institution that was able to maintain, to some extent, that resource. At the time this was the University of Cologne. I have now left Cologne but my colleagues are still taking care of that edition. And then, the Royal Irish Academy has an in-house IT support. But of course they're not specialists for digital humanities resources. That's a very specific case. There are other cases of my responsibility as Director of a Digital Humanities Competence Centre in Venice. Before that, in Cologne, we applied various strategies, it always depends … usually these projects are collaborative, so depending on the lead of the project academies can take responsibility... if they have the personnel or long-term contracts with research software developers, that might work. Another way is to design the project in a way that they suit a repository that is created to include and comprise lots of resources, like our colleagues from Graz for example. They created a repository for great variety of resources, including editions. The Gams they call it. And that works very well because they create synergies. You don't have to take individual project problems when you upgrade your systems or resources, which otherwise would behave exponentially, the workload if you design specific solutions for each individual project or edition, for every project that you have seen funded and that you're involved in. You have to do both, in a way, because projects are always specific, otherwise you don't get any project funding. So they have to be very specific... so that's kind of a dilemma. Challenging...

MK: Thank you. And then talking about tools and platforms for a little while, what would you say the dominant tools and platforms are? And what do you see as the affordances of limitations of these platforms?

FF: I am not aware there is a platform or there are more platforms that are dominant. I do not think there's one. There is great heterogeneity in creating digital resources, including scholarly editions. I don't see that single platform. In Germany, the Berlin Brandenburg Academy for the Sciences and Humanities, as many projects that share a certain design, they have a very professional group of digital humanities specialists that are able to maintain these resources. Also, in Germany there's a huge initiative for creating infrastructures to maintain these resources and to promote requirements: the NFDI. There are many institutions involved, with a great diversity regarding their research practices. But there are actions undertaken to create a more and more homogenous, as far as possible, technical setup of editions or future editions, to somehow enable research institutions to maintain these resources. But nothing is in place right now. They intend to invest a lot of money on that...Then you have European Infrastructures projects like DARIAH or CLARIN. Or in France: Biblissima. But then, in the individual case, you have to see: does it suit my research requirements creating an edition of specific material. It always depends.

MK: Thank you. And maybe to broaden the scope with how would you say the field, the entire field of digital editing, has changed over the course of your career? Any major changes that would come to mind?

FF: It's larger, so it's growing of course. When I started my PhD to create a digital edition, this was really something new and fancy still and you had traditional editors who were publishing in print without any bad consciousness. Now this is not happening anymore. I think everyone has at least digital components if not a fully-fledged digital edition. Components of your editorial results should be made available digitally, and ideally more than just in PDF. It's now common practise that a scholarly edition has to be digital. I think that's more and more common sense

that you can't achieve the same level of scientific quality in the print. Print would always be deficient in a way. I mean it can be created by most excellent scholars, greatest experts of the material in question, but there would always be missing substantial components. That was not the case when I started to create a digital edition. Slowly tools, standards have been developed, the field was growing in all regards: tools, requirements, methods... Now more and more machine learning comes in. Every new technology is immediately welcomed and embraced: how can we benefit from this innovation and improve our research? Can we address new research questions to the material, to new material available? The material that is now available and provided according to standards, such as IIIF. Or other resources, graphic information, geographic information... Scholars immediately try to see how they can include this into the design of an edition, an edition that is really reflecting the opportunities of today. Opportunities grow on a daily basis and that's the interesting thing about digital editions. An edition in five years will look different as an edition that is created right now. That is exciting but that is also what is threatening some scholars because you just never know where are you going or where the field is moving to.

MK: Thank you. I've noticed you have often written about the concept of text and textural cultural heritage and what text is and I wonder if you could speak to that in the context of digital editing.

FF: The notion or the theory of text or what text actually is was always wide, but in the print format following the print paradigm usually, you realise only one dimension of textuality. But textual dimensions are varied, starting from the material aspects of a text, which comes with basic digitisation of manuscripts, inscriptions or maybe applying advanced imaging technologies to decipher things, make text readable from the very material basis. Then you have the whole range of textual aspects that regard the semantics, the contents, the palaeographic aspects, the linguistics aspects... And all these aspects can be recorded and analysed according to certain scholarly traditions, applying new tools or old methods. Or combining these things. In this way digital scholarly editions can become very complex. You have to make much more decisions than in the past. What do I actually want or what can I do? You have to be very clear about your research questions, regarding materials, that's the one thing. But also the requirements and expectations regarding the edition are growing, so you have to be much more aware of where you come from, what your community is, what your peers are, what they expect. And then you have to be aware of what you are not doing. In the past, we had routines. I'm a traditionally trained philologist. You would create a critical edition, you'd apply a methodology to establish a critical text, you'd display other aspects of the texts like the variance and the textual transmission in an apparatus. Or you'd describe it in the introduction. And then you'd have done an excellent job without thinking too much. It can be a really hard work, of course, but without doubting your methodology because these are established ways and routines and paths that you follow. Nowadays, there is so much to do. You start with TEI encoding, you want to create a digital edition. But then you see that with TEI you can do this or that, you can do these things because TEI is open to all the traditions that are there and able to support so many perspectives on texts, and enable you to make a record of different notions of texts. You have to make all these conscious decisions about what your text actually is, because in the end it's what you look at. It can be very different things. And if you talk about a text you often do not talk about the same thing. I'm very much influenced by my colleague and friend Patrick Sahle, who established a theory of textuality which helps very much to locate your idea of textuality or components of an edition on wheel or cycle of textual aspects. That is very helpful. All sorts of communications, any perspective can be justified and is a perspective in its own right. But you should be aware that this is always a question of a perspective, they are not exclusive. Personally, I'm interested in palaeographic aspects, visual aspects of text. That's because I am a Mediaevalist. My expertise is not so much in linguistic analysis. But you do want to collaborate with linguists who then use maybe your transcripts that you have enriched and maybe transformed, normalised. Then you can hand it over to the expert who can do some natural language processing with this and increase the knowledge about the material.

MK: Then I'd like to talk a little bit about the actual projects that you have worked on. Maybe for a start, could you maybe give an overview of the projects that you have worked on?

FF: There are very many, I have been involved in various roles.

MK: You can pick and choose.

FF: My thesis was a digital edition of a Mediaeval Latin Treatise on Liturgy, which has never been edited before. Starting from the scratch with everything, including doing digital images myself. I toured the libraries and archives, which was very nice. Then I just started, with an open mind creating something new, something digital. That was quite experimental. I think it was - at least it has been said - this was the first digital critical edition of a Latin work in human history! So I'm very proud of this. Then as a postdoc I created a digital edition of Saint Patrick's Confessio. This was based on an already existing canonical version of the scholarly text version. But then we widened the textual perspective in order to include the material transmission, translations and a lot of contextual material. This meant, enriching the textual information and presenting it in a dynamic way. The apparatus or the various apparatuses are very functional, with hyperlinks and other features. Then, during my time back in Cologne, projects were sometimes very much technology driven. For example, there is a project which is still not accessible online, which is very annoying in my regard because it's a pity that ten years ago or longer we started to support or collaborate with a papyrologist who worked on lead tablets of curses, ancient curses in Greek. These tablets have been thrown into a well to curse your unfaithful lover or the racehorses of your opponent. And they are almost impossible to read. So we applied Reflectance Transformation Imaging, RTI, and so at this stage we were - or rather, the experts of this genre were able to read them. We then created an editorial framework to include RTI and an RTI viewer, at a later stage. This is already all there, but still not launched officially because the papyrologist is very traditional. He wants to finalise his editorial work first. Adhering to the field of digital humanities, I am more inclined to release at an early stage, and to release often. So there is this struggle, the colleague just doesn't want to give the material out of his hand or give up control about it. He's anxious about this. It's a pity because for the DH community it would have been very interesting at the time. Now it becomes more and more common, but it really was avantgarde, in a way. I'm especially interested in critical editions. They have a long tradition applying the Lachmannian textual criticism. But still, there are very few in digital format. Currently, I'm looking for funding for a project on a Medieval Latin text that has never been edited, a work by Peter of Poitier: the Compendium Historiae in Genaelogia Christi. This is not a text structured in paragraphs or in chapters. It's a graph, like a stemma. And it's a timeline starting from Adam and Eve, the history of salvation as told in the Old Testament to the advent of Christ. And there's the challenge, how do you represent textual variation? How do you create a representative text from that tradition. It is very vast tradition, with very beautiful, very different manuscripts, with a lot of iconographic elements. And the graph itself is a structural element. It's not linear text. A beautiful project. How to model this as data? So that's happening right now. As for other projects, in Cologne I worked for and with various Academy projects, long-term project, which had a lot of time to be developed and realised. For example, Capitularia, which are reports about legislation of the Carolingian emperors. They can't be traced back to any original. So how do you present this? We established workflows to create collation tables, to identify chunks of texts that correspond, but that are texts in their own right. The editors still stick to the idea to also provide a critical text, which represents in the best way all the versions that exist. That's actually what Peter Robinson and Barbara Bordelejo promote. The edition of the Greek New Testament, for example: colleagues from Munster in Germany they gave up the idea of creating an architype version. Instead they create a text version that is critical in the sense that it represents all the versions in the best possible way, but they don't claim to present 'the text' or 'original'. It's just a window or the best way to access the diversity of texts that came over to us through textual transmission.

MK: And building on that if you were to start any of your projects again both then and now, what would you do differently?

FF: Oh everything! [Laughs]

MK: Everything has changed I suppose.

FF: Yeah, absolutely. I would do things very differently. I'm happy, proud about what I did. I don't regret to have done things like this. Of course, some methodological decisions maybe I don't feel so comfortable with anymore. These were projects of their time. One question is: What can you do or what do you have to do to make sure they remain part of the ecosystem of digital resources? That's difficult and it needs to be done by those people who have been in charge of creating the resource, because they are quite complex resources. But of course, as a scholar you go ahead and have new projects and you change institutions, change interests. But that's a huge problem. How to preserve and save these resources that have been created ten or even twenty years ago. It's a big challenge for research and knowledge institutions. A library which would take care of your print edition in the past, is not always a suitable institution to take care of these new types of resources in digital format. Some libraries have a unit of experts who might be able to do something with these resources. Others just have a completely different profile of competence. We need institutions nationally organised, regionally organised or organised around certain communities or with a specific interest in types of texts or genres or traditions. It that's a big challenge...

MK: Thank you. And maybe looking from there onto the wider field of publishing and editions and resources, is there something you think the field is missing or some development that you would like to see?

FF: There's always something missing. And you always have your individual perspective. What's missing is a shared idea or a concrete format of what a scholarly edition is supposed to be. Of course, this your business, you define and agree on what an edition should look like. It would be very useful for all the practitioners who create digital editions. A common idea would be useful. But it would be an artificial restriction, a limitation of all the possibilities that are there … It's our nature to try out new things, new technologies that come up: machine learning, new imaging technology, new ways of analysing, presenting, sharing information, data...That's in the nature of digital scholarship. So, what does it mean? What are the consequences? I think we have to start conceiving of editions as distributed resources, as an architecture of distributed knowledge resources. From there we have to draw conclusions about what that actually means for each and every aspect or the component of a scholarly edition focusing on a particular text.

MK: Yes, thank you. And then finally what does the future digital edition look like to you?

FF: The work of the editor is to some great extent, or maybe all an editor has to do is to identify textual features an components, the textual material, manuscripts, documents, you identify connections of words, first you identify words, you identify content, semantics, you identify entities of all kinds, linguistic information, you establish connections to resources that are then stable references for this identification game. You establish structures, you define the work, you identify the author, you identify the work itself. Using these identifiers, you establish functional connection. Once you have identified a textual witness then you can establish the connection to the facsimile of this particular manuscript or document. If you identify content, you relate it to authority files of persons or of geographical information, or other realia. You identify sources, in the traditional apparatus where you identify the sources, you establish the connection to the corpus where these texts are integrated and identifiable. You find out this is that and that is all your business. And if this is realised in a technical way, you can then create editions which are just connecting information where a connection has been established by the editor.

MK: Thank you, Franz. Thank you so much. Before we stop the recording, is there anything else that you feel that needs to be mentioned that we haven't talked about yet?

FF: Not sure, I mean you are aware of the catalogues, the manifest, the catalogue of criteria... the fact that scholarly resources, editions are more progressive, fluid, collaborative... increasingly, these aspects play an important role in realising editions as scholarly enterprises and projects.