Two Proposals for Critically Editing the Texts of the *rNying ma'i rGyud 'bum*[1]

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Abstract: We propose two new methods for critically editing Tibetan texts that take advantage of contemporary electronic developments in presentation of data, and in collaborative workings ("e-Sciences"). While developed in the course of our practical work editing canonical *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* texts, we hope these methods will be of interest for editors of texts of many kinds, in many different languages.

Electronic innovations in textual criticism

It is widely recognised that electronic methods should be able to add a great deal to textual criticism, and much work has been done on finding methods of doing so. So far, several approaches have been attempted: people have worked on presenting colour images of the original manuscripts,[2] on attempts to automate the arduous job of collation,[3] on exploring new methods of analysis,[4] on ensuring a perfect page layout of a complex apparatus,[5] and on developing software allowing people to word-process complex editions in a form exportable to the Text Encoding Initiative TEI.[6] The TEI itself, of course, has been hailed by many as the ultimate in electronic textual editing tools, and we have no doubt it offers many advantages (we wish to emphasise at the outset that our proposal is aimed at complementing TEI, not at displacing it).[7] Many of these electronic

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[2]   *The Wife of Bath's Prologue on CD*, Peter Robinson, Cambridge University Press. Format: CD-ROM ISBN: 0521465931 Series: The Canterbury Tales on CD-ROM Published: June 1996.
[3]   Peter Robinson's *Collate* software.
[4]   Robinson, Peter M.W., & Robert J. O'Hara. 1996. "Cladistic analysis of an Old Norse manuscript tradition". In: *Research in Humanities Computing*, 4: 115–137.
[5]   Many textual scholars have attempted this through using TeX and LaTex.
[6]   Stefan Hagel's *Classical Text Editor*.
[7]   Many others have remarked on TEI's drawbacks. It is extremely forbidding in its complexity, and except for those with well developed computing skills, TEI should probably not be attempted without professional or semi-professional assistance. TEI also offers such an extensive array of riches to those wishing to mark up their texts that it is full of redundancies for most purposes - for example, editing Tibetan texts. It also demands a high degree of definition before the editorial process actually begins, while at the same time restricting overlapping categories. For these and various other reasons, TEI is not always seen as satisfactory: the eminent text critic Jerome McGann summed up his prolonged involvement with TEI in the following words: "TEI's greatest legacy is the demonstration it makes of its own inadequacy as a means for computerizing the information content of humanities materials." (Jerome McGann, lecture given

text editing initiatives have been quite ambitious, in one or two cases even involving comprehensive rethinking that is designed to revolutionise textual practice. Some of them are also theory-led, or inspired by abstract reflection on electronic methods.

In this article, we wish to present two somewhat more modest proposals that seemed to emerge more or less naturally from our day to day work in editing two rather intractable texts from the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* (NGB).[8]

1. Technically speaking, the first involves a more simple yet more focussed mark up system than that envisaged in TEI, one that should be usable even in the simplest and most user-friendly types of software, and which can be endlessly flexible in use. From an intellectual point of view, it takes as fundamental the axiom that an editor wants to be able to account for the way in which every single textual variation in the text under consideration has arisen. Practically speaking, it comprises a short list of categories arising naturally out of the process of creating the edition, each of which therefore actually applies quite directly to the particular text being edited. In this way, it takes into account what E. J. Kenney (1974:98) has called 'the only completely and universally valid principle of textual criticism ever formulated'—i.e., A.L. von Schlözer's dictum, so powerfully amplified at a later date by Pasquali, that 'there is something in criticism which cannot be subjected to rule, because there is a sense in which every case is a special case.'[9] This is in contrast to TEI's encyclopaedic all-inclusive a priori list of categories, intended to encompass all conceivable eventualities within all manuscript genres.[10] The emphasis here moreover is on applying categories that are actually of practical use to the editor in making editorial analyses and decisions, rather than on categories focused more on presentation to the reader in the final publication (although of course the latter is not by any means excluded – indeed, we believe it is improved through the more particular and subtle nuancing achievable this way). It is also essential that the categories be instantly mutable, instantly applicable, and instantly removable; above all there should be no need to define them all

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at the National Humanities Center on Thursday, October 3, 2002, on the occasion of his receipt of the Richard W. Lyman Award). Professor McGann was in fact the first recipient of the Richard W. Lyman Award, presented by the National Humanities Center to recognize outstanding achievement in the use of information technology to advance scholarship and teaching in the humanities, and has an unrivalled track record in the application of digital methods to the humanities. His most famous paper publication is his epoch-making *A Critique of Modern Textul Criticism*, 1983, while his most famous digital publication is probably the *Rossetti Archive*, located at http://www.rossettiarchive.org/.

8   Actually, most texts from the NGB seem to be rather intractable.

9   Kenney, E.J. 1974. *The Classical Text.* Berkeley: University of California Press. See pages 98ff.

10   TEI can confidently take such an encyclopaedic approach because all significant Western texts have been edited and re-edited many times over during the last 500 years, so that no real surprises remain; yet the NGB is completely virgin territory, in text-critical terms.

before even beginning one's edition, nor should there be even the slightest problem in allowing them to overlap.[11]

2. The second involves a transparent presentation of background workings that we believe to be an essential precondition for effective collaborative working. As well as having practical value, this also has profound cultural implications, since it peels back the magisterial veneer behind which textual analyses have traditionally been concealed, and in which editors typically have had to take the position: "if you really want to know why I edited the text the way I did, then proceed to translate and edit the text for yourself". Under our proposal, by contrast, the reader could instantly consult the editors' background workings - doubts, hesitations and all - to understand exactly how and why they made their decisions. Electronic text is mutable, unlike typeset text. While the traditional typeset edition was almost unavoidably required to be made as though to last for 100 years or more (and thereby demanding a magisterial attitude from the editor), the mutable electronic edition is made to be updated and changed every 100 days. Hence the necessity of saving and presenting background workings to better enable ongoing improvement of the edition by collaborators. In very straightforward cases, the allocation of a category may be all that is necessary: an abbreviation or an obvious minor spelling error, for instance, warrants no discussion. But where an editorial decision may not be quite so obvious or unambiguous, the reasoning can be fruitfully spelt out at some length.

The simple application of categories

Let us start with the first proposal. From one perspective, this is a natural extension of the traditional apparatus, in which sigla and other signs are used to indicate text-critically significant data in the text. The traditional text-critical apparatus is a brilliantly well adapted and practical method of demonstrating such data as single readings and shared readings, which it achieves through its use of sigla and notes; in addition, extra data is conveyed by various conventions, abbreviations and symbols - for example, where text is emended by a further hand than the original scribe, or where the text has damaged portions, etc. But such traditional methods of presentation were not designed with the computer in mind, and thus fail to exploit its abilities of searching and sorting. Moreover, they were originally intended as much or more for presentation of data to the reader than as a practical analytic tool for the editors in the course of their work. We feel an improvement to the traditional system now lies in applying computer-searchable and sortable categories to each and every variant noted (not just a few), in such a way that the editors' task is simplified, and in such a way that the editor can make further analysis by examining the distribution and frequency of the categories attached to each variant.
The best way to convey this is by giving examples. In editing the *Phur bu Myang 'das* and *rDo rje Khros pa rTsa ba'i rgyud* from the NGB, we found that

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the following 20 categories emerged as worth attaching to our variant readings for these two texts (other texts and other editors will surely require different categories). Some variants attracted only one category, others attracted several.[12] The categories were as follows: 1) Codicological; 2) Stylistic; 3) Punctuation; 4) Metrical; 5) Permissible Alternatives; 6) Verb forms; 7) Spoonerisms; 8) Eyeskip; 9) Homophones; 10) Simple orthography or spelling; 11) Recensional; 12) Omissions; 13) Additions; 14) Dittography; 15) Haplography; 16) Visual error; 17) Literary criticism; 18) Psychological; 19) Editorial notices (marginal notes etc.); 20) Archaisms.

The recognition of different types of variants has long been part of text editing method. Our innovation is to enumerate a classification which can be usefully applied to one's work during the process of the editing and assessment of the different versions of the text, and which can be used for data gathering purposes and further analysis once the edition is complete. It is important to note that the specific categories emerged as we worked on these particular texts. While they may turn out to be especially pertinent to *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* texts as a whole and perhaps to Tibetan literature in a broader sense, a far better practice will be to let a fresh set of categories emerge naturally for each text as one edits it, since there is so often something unique about every text that makes an a priori generalisation of categories an unsound and intellectually crude practice. But these categories could serve as a working basis, to refine, amend or replace as the editing process proceeds.

1. Codicological

The first category relates to features of the manuscript itself, as well as the handwriting or printed letters, which impinge on the textual readings of the edition or copy. For instance, in the *Myang 'das*, we have noted the following examples under category 1:

   Chapter 6, "la: D not clearly printed; resembles 'a". In this case, it is not that D was in error - no doubt, a "la" was intended but the letter is faint, either due to block damage or to poor printing (since we consulted two copies, the former possibility is more likely).

   Chapter 6, "/de ni bsgral ba'i yon tan yin/: N this yig rkang written below the lower margin, its positioning indicated by crosses with a ya-btags shape attached beneath the crosses".

   Chapter 8, "N's scribe has mistakenly included the following three yig rkang, the last two of which are a dittography of the preceding two yig rkang, probably caused by eyeskip on the words *de la*. Realising his error, he then deletes them with a crude horizontal line drawn through them: de la dbang gi phur bu bya'o/ /'khar ba 'jon mar seng ldeng dang/ /mdzo mo glang kal tsher can la/"

   In terms of the textual content, D and N do not differ from the other editions in these examples. The marking up of such items, however, is not only of use to those specifically interested, say, in scribal styles of correction, but it can indicate important features of specific editions which the text

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[12]   Unlike TEI and XML, where overlapping categories are a problem, this much simpler system enjoys complete freedom to overlap at will.

critical editor should know. We have many similar notes to the one given above relating to the sDe dge edition, which, despite the careful textual attention given to it by its original editors, leaves much to be desired in its production today. Likewise, the prevalence of deletions, insertions and so forth in N's version of the *Myang 'das* demonstrates the relatively slapdash nature of the scribal work throughout the text, a feature which elsewhere impinges on the actual textual content.

2. Stylistic

This category covers features of writing styles, which may - but need not - have been inherited from the exemplar. It includes alternative spellings for the same word, through which we discover, for instance, that D consistently writes phrin in both texts, where MGTRNK give 'phrin. It is worth identifying such matters of style and distinguishing them from minor spelling mistakes. Even where one alternative may be considered less correct by conventional standards, it may be that a particular spelling is used fairly consistently throughout a text, or even throughout a textual collection. For instance, in both the two texts we studied, MG shared the spelling 'thun for mthun, not invariably but twice as often, suggesting a deliberate style rather than scribal lapse. Similarly, the use of unconventional spellings for particles may also be a stylistic feature shared between the more closely related versions. In the *Myang 'das* for instance, TRN more often give cig for zhig or ces for zhes, TR (and occasionally other versions) tend to use du for tu, while D more often gives ci where MGTRN give ji. In some cases, matters of style may overlap with metrical considerations: D frequently uses yi where other editions give 'i.

   Abbreviations were similarly noted under this category, and through this, we find that R tends to abbreviate rather more than the other texts, while the two Bhutanese manuscripts use abbreviations comparatively sparingly, but of the two, very common abbreviations such as *namkha'* occur more often in our two texts in G than in M. While it may be tempting to see textual affiliations between versions sharing particular stylistic features, caution is necessary since a style of writing may be associated, say, with a specific period or geographical area, but it does not follow that versions close in time and place necessarily used the same exemplar.

3. Punctuation

The most obvious textual variant under the heading of punctuation in a Tibetan textual context is the placement of shads. Quite often, this may be a matter of style, such as after mantra syllables, or in a list, where one version may give a shad after each item in the list, while another version gives a shad only at the end, or after a number of items. In other cases, the placement of shad may have an impact on textual meaning and coherence, and this is especially clear in prose text rather than verse, where a correct order may be more difficult to establish with certainty.

4. Metrical

In text written in verse, it can be very clear where a scribe has made an error and lost the metre. Metre can in fact function very effectively as a device to assist scribal accuracy. At the same time, there may be cases where parts of a text may not have originally been written perfectly in good metre, a scenario we have encountered in some tantric texts from the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* collection and which has also been reported elsewhere. Thus, metrical consistency need not always and in every case indicate correct earlier readings, although it will mostly do so. One advantage of classifying variants relating to metre is that it may become clear where an editor or scribe has incorrectly conjectured a reading in order to recover a lost metre. Our study of the *rDo rje khros pa*, for instance, showed that R had few failed conjectures, suggesting that conjectures had been attempted only rarely, but a large percentage of those identified were apparent attempts to repair the metre.[13] For instance, the reading "su dag" in Chapter 13 becomes the unmetrical "dag" in TRN, but R inserts "dbul" subscribed after "dag", most probably because the scribe noticed that a syllable was missing and wrongly guessed that it was dbul.

5. Permissible Alternatives

This category can be applied to different words or phrases which may or may not carry the same meaning, but which both/all make good sense in the context. It generally overlaps with one or more other categories, since the alternatives quite often derive from transmissional error, although in the absence of other indications (such as one alternative occurring only as a single reading within a derivative version or copy), it may be impossible to tell which version was the earliest. This category can help to illuminate the range of alternative meanings in a distributive textual tradition such as we find with *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* ritual and symbolic material. For instance, in the opening homage to the *Myang 'das*, we find three alternative readings: D: bcom ldan 'das dpal kun tu bzang po; MG: bcom ldan 'das dpal chen po kun tu bzang po/; TRN: bcom ldan 'das dpal bde ba chen po kun tu (TR: du) bzang po. In fact, this category was one of the most frequently used in our two editions.

6. Verb forms

This category also accounted for a large number of the variants we found in our two *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* texts. To those unfamiliar with Tibetan, it may seem surprising that variations of tense occur so frequently, but Tibetan is rather more permissive in this respect, especially in religious symbolic language, where a future, present, past or imperative might fit equally well. For example, in the lines, "/thugs dang gsung dang sku dang gsum (TRN sku dang gsung rnams ni)/ /so so'i sngags dang sbyar zhing brlab (MG brlabs; TN rlab; R rlabs)/" in Chapter 9 of the *Myang 'das*, D's brlab (future),

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[13]   The others were mostly attempted corrections of Sanskrit spellings.

MG's brlabs (past) and R's rlabs (present) could all work. In some cases, however, it may be quite clear which form is more appropriate or correct. Nonetheless, when working with this genre of texts, it is worth exercising some caution in assuming that versions sharing an apparently incorrect verb form must diverge from the original. There is the possibility that the common ancestor of all the current editions may not have had perfect grammar and that the apparently more correct form may have been introduced as a correction.

7. Spoonerisms

Order reversals are common scribal errors, although again, it is not always straightforward to tell which was the original reading, where either variant can make sense (eg. D has yang snang where MGTRN give snang yang in the *Myang 'das*'s Chapter 9) or it is merely a matter of a change of order in a list of items (also in the same chapter, D gives, /lcags dang *gser* dang zangs *dngul dang*/, where MGTRN give, /lcags dang *dngul* dang zangs (N zang) *dang gser*/). Sometimes, it is fairly clear that one branch of the transmission has changed the order, deliberately or otherwise, to conform to a standard ordering, such as where TRN give oṃ a (N ā) hūṃ for MG's a oṃ hūṃ (and D's gsum āḥ oṃ) in the *Myang 'das*'s Chapter 15. There may also be a clear error, as where MG gives lta stag in the *Myang 'das*'s Chapter 9, apparently in error for sta ltag, or where MGTRNK give byang nub for nub byang (and on one occasion, TRNK apparently corrupt this reading further, to byang chub) in the *rDo rje khros pa*'s Chapter 7.

8. Eyeskip

Within all the NGB texts we have looked at so far, eyeskip has proven one of the most reliable sources of indicative error, showing us pretty conclusively where one branch of the tradition has corrupted the earlier text, and hence where all versions sharing the error must have had a common ancestor in which the error originated. Eyeskip generally involves omission of words and sometimes of entire lines where the eye moves from a word or phrase to another occurrence of that same word or phrase further down the page, omitting the text in between. More rarely, there may be repetition instead, based on the same principle. In Chapter 19 of the *Myang 'das*, D omits four lines of verse through eyeskip from the word, 'phros pas, while in Chapter 2, MG omit six lines, from zhes gsung/ gsol pas to zhes gsol pas (and MG have a large number of similar lapses throughout the text). TRN omit three lines in Chapter 14, probably as a result of eyeskip from kī la yin to kī la ya. It is not generally possible to recover from such omissions of several lines by conjecture, and it is evidence of this strong kind which has enabled us to be certain about the three major groupings within the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* transmission, at least in the case of the texts we have studied.

9. Homophones

This category relates to scribal errors deriving from the similar sound of the copied word to the word which the scribe writes. For instance, in Chapter 6 of the *Myang 'das*, we find, "rku 'tshang 'bru", where MGT give sku for rku; and D gives 'dru and TRN give 'gru for 'bru. In this case, 'dru and 'bru would seem to be straightforward spelling errors, but - as we so often find in this type of ritual text - MGT's reading of sku makes good sense and is just as appropriate at DRN's reading, although the meaning is different,[14] and it is most likely that one of the variants arose through this type of error. We find numerous cases of homophones, many of which are obviously errors: e.g. in the *Myang 'das*'s Chapter 9, MG gives bzhin for sbyin, and byas for bcas, while R gives chung for D's phyung and MG's byung. In Chapter 15, TRN give ser for gzer and in Chapter 20, khro for D's spros and MG's 'phros. It is always valuable to be as closely aware as possible of how scribal variation is generated. Commonly used traditional methods of checking *bu dpe* against *ma dpe* by one scribe reading aloud whilst a colleague follows in the other text, possibly did little to remove errors of this variety.[15]

10. Simple orthography or spelling

We apply this category to minor spelling mistakes such as gyi for gyis, po'i for pos, ste for te, bzungs for gzungs, mchos for mchod, where the intended word is clear, but the spelling is incorrect. Perhaps the most frequently used of the categories, such variants are not in themselves necessarily compelling in assessing the ancestry of an edition, unless shared on a large scale. Quite often, this kind of spelling error may be introduced into different versions purely by chance, and once present, may be corrected in future copying, even without any conscious reflection by the scribe. There are two main usages in analysis: a category 10 variant indicates to the editor that there are no puzzling variations in meaning which might warrant further attention. Secondly, a statistically high number of such errors tends to suggest that an edition is of relatively poor quality, at least in its most recent copying. It may preserve an ancient branch of the tradition, but a high incidence of such mistakes should make us cautious before accepting an interesting meaningful reading which differs from other editions. Conversely, a low count of minor mistakes suggests that attention has been given to ensuring that errors throughout the text are minimised.

11. Recensional

It is often not possible to be sure when a reading is due to recensional rather than transmissional factors, but this category can be used where it seems

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[14] The context is a list of degenerations: rku suggests we have two items here, *stealing* and aggressively criticising, while sku suggests the meaning of the phrase as a whole would be, aggressively criticising the *person* (of the master).

[15] See Samten G Karmay, *Feast of the Morning Light*, Senri Ethnological Reports no. 57, Osaka, 2005, page 79.

very likely that deliberate editorial choice has been made. In the case of our texts, we used it for virtually all the mantras: D, the only printed edition of the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, made carefully in late eighteenth century Eastern Tibet, consistently gives more modernised and standardised Sanskrit for most of the mantras. It is clear that the mantras were edited and corrected throughout this edition to correspond to 18th century norms, while the other editions seem to preserve the more anarchic Sanskrit renderings typical of earlier manuscripts.

12. Omissions and 13. Additions

One or the other of these two categories, more often the first, overlaps with variants listed under Category 8, eyeskip, although here they are more general and inclusive groupings, under which omissions or additions of any kind can be noted. In some texts, it is quite obvious where necessary words have been omitted or an extraneous addition has been made. However, especially when dealing with ritual symbolism such as we find in the *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, it is not always clear whether one version has omitted a word or line, or the other version has added it! During the first round of editing and often beyond, it may be necessary to attach both the categories to variant readings. In some cases, the addition or omission may add or subtract nothing from the meaning (such as TRN's skad ces for DMG's skad in the *Myang 'das*'s Chapter 6, or D's nas for MGTRN's nas 'das in Chapter 9). On other occasions, there may be a difference in meaning, but each version may be coherent. In the opening of the *Myang 'das*'s Chapter 17, for instance, we find three quite different readings, where D gives only nas, while MG give nas yang badzra kī la yar/, and TRN give, nas kar ma kī lā yas/. In such cases, editorial decisions may depend on the most likely stemmatic relations between the editions: it is probable here that D has an omission, since it is likely that MG and TRN had a separate descent from the common ancestor of all three groups, and both MG and TRN retain a variant of what was once most probably a shared reading. Similarly, we treat D's omission of /lcags sam shing bu tsher ma can/ in the *Myang 'das*'s Chapter 12 as a likely category 12, and TRN's addition of /gnyis su med pas bdal ba'i klong/ in the same chapter as a likely category 13. Where there is only a word or two added or subtracted in verse text, these categories also overlap with metrical considerations (category 4); sometimes, the loss of metre can indicate whether we have an omission or addition. For instance, in the *Myang 'das*'s Chapter 9, D unmetrically D adds gzhon nu, which seems rather clearer, but it may have been an editor's construction to make good sense of the line. However, we also need caution where it is uncertain that the original text was always perfectly metrical!

14. Dittography and 15. Haplography

Fortunately for the text editor of difficult or obscure material, certainty is less elusive with the specific type of additions and omissions which unnecessarily repeat a word or passage, or which fail to repeat a necessary repetition. Thus, where TRN give skyon skyon for skyon in the *Myang 'das*'s

Chapter 6, or where MG give dbyings kyi dbyings for chos kyi dbyings in Chapter 12, or G alone repeats three lines in Chapter 19, we can be confident that they are in error. Haplography is less common, because necessary repetitions are uncommon. In our texts, the most numerous examples of haplography occur in the case of mantra syllables, which are often repeated. However, there may also be some measure of uncertainty which version is correct where we are dealing with mantra syllables, since the repetition of syllables or otherwise in mantras may be permissible variants.

While a definitely identified shared dittography or haplography can establish a genetic relationship between a group of manuscripts which share it, its absence may not always indicate that the text has a separate descent. Unlike errors of eyeskip which are generally difficult to repair, an alert scribe or editor may be able to identify and correct dittography and haplography. Thus, in the case of G's dittography in Chapter 19 of the *Myang 'das* mentioned above, it gives us some evidence that it is unlikely that M copied from G, but it is inconclusive since M's scribe might have noticed that the repeated lines were extraneous.

16. Visual error

The category of visual error may overlap with that of homophones (category 9) since words which sound the same may also be written similarly (such as gzugs/gzug, or sku/rku in *dbu med* sources), but there are also common confusions between letters with quite different sounds, such as nga and da, or cha and tsha in Tibetan. Examples found in the *Myang 'das* showing a range of common visual confusions include T's ngang for dang and TRN's tran for dran in Chapter 6; N's langs for yang in Chapter 7; N's dba' for dpa' and bdur for bdud, T's mtshe for mche, MG's lha'i for lnga'i, zung for zur and sogs for logs in Chapter 9; MG's stag for rtags and TR's rgyun for rgyud in Chapter 10; N's sgoms for skoms in Chapter 19; TRN's brtag for brnag in Chapter 20, D's lta for lha and ya la for a la in Chapter 21. On three occasions, MG give yang/yangs for spang/spangs, suggesting that at some stage the ancestral manuscript from which the error stemmed may have been written in *dbu med* script. Visual errors can also lead to tsheg misplacement or omission. Thus, in Chapter 8, N gives bzhig nas for bzhi gnas, and in Chapter 9, RN give brgya for ba rgya. The identification and/or positioning of the vowel may also be mistaken, as in MG's med for mdo in Chapter 10, and D's dogs for dgos in Chapter 17. Where either reading is appropriate in the context, the confusion is more likely to persist and it is less likely for the word to be corrected (D's dbyings for MGTRN's dbyibs in Chapter 17 is a perfectly acceptable alternative reading; it is only the most likely stemmatic relations between the groups which makes it rather more probable that dbyibs was the earlier reading).

17. Literary criticism

This category is not so much a separate class of scribally generated error, but was useful to indicate where variants should best be analysed through predominantly literary criticism, in order to appreciate the implications of

the different readings, and to reach an informed editorial decision about which of the alternatives might be the most appropriate in the context of the text in question. It was sometimes applied as a further decider in cases which were grammatically permissible alternatives (category 5). It might involve considering the significance of the variant readings to two different branches of the tradition, or comparing a passage with a parallel in another chapter or text. In an important sense, the entire edition must be informed by an appreciation of the broader cultural, religious and textual heritage, and even the more mundane editorial decisions must take into account which reading is more appropriate in the context of the literary and religious tradition concerned. Editors might vary considerably in how frequently they highlight this feature: in our case, we tended to reserve the category for cases where different variants suggested rather different and coherent meanings, where wider knowledge of the tradition makes the more likely reading clear, and/or where there are pertinent parallels or contrasts elsewhere in the same or a different text. For instance, we have marked three instances in Chapter 3 of the *rDo rje khros pa*. First, the variants go/sgo occur in the root verse with the line, "srog gi go/sgo ru shar ba dang". There is established precedence and commentarial exegesis for both these variants (see Mayer 1996: 213-5), but in the context of these *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum* texts, the more likely correct reading is go. We find the consort of the second of the Ten Wrathful Ones (*khro bo bcu*) given as rdo rje snyems ma or rdo rje rnam bsnyems ma. A comparison with Chapters 19 and 20 of the *Myang 'das* suggests that the additional rnam is most probably mistaken (a category 18, picked up from rnam rgyal in the line above). Thirdly, one of the two attendants of the sixth of the Ten Wrathful Ones is given as having the head of a cat in DTRN, a rat in MG and a bird in K (byi la/ byi ba/ bya)! In this case, besides the fact that the stemmatic principle would support DTRN's reading, this is also consistent with other sources such as Chapters 19 and 20 of the *Myang 'das*.

18. Psychological

The category of Psychological can be used for various scribal errors involving psychological associations or assumptions rather than more straightforward misreading. It includes cases where a scribe has understood the sense of the text, and writes a word with a similar meaning to the original word (such as MG's byed for spyod and rang for bdag in Chapter 6 of the *Myang 'das*; TRN's log rtog (R logs rtogs) for rnam rtog in Chapter 7, and 'dab chags for bya yi in Chapter 10). A scribe may also record a word with a different meaning, which has probably arisen through some psychological association (such as TRN's rin chen nor bur for rin chen sgron bus in the *Myang 'das*'s Chapter 9), or which is to be expected in the context of the verse or passage. For example, MG give sgo ma bzhi for sgo ma gsum in Chapter 8; there are invariably four door protectresses, but in this case only three are specified. Alternatively, the reading may fit naturally with the preceding word or syllable (MG's gnyis su for gnyis dang in Chapter 9; TRN's ye shes for ye nas, or D's gnyis su med for gnyis su 'byed in Chapter 10). Another scenario is where the word is picked up from elsewhere on the page, not so much from any kind of eyeskip but simply through it

registering mentally and becoming mixed up with the words copied at that moment. For instance, TRN gives char chu for shwa chu in the *Myang 'das*'s Chapter 7, probably picked up from char chu some lines above, and similarly gnyis med for dmigs med in Chapter 10, while MG give 'gal bas - which occurs on the following line - for ldan pas, also in Chapter 10. Another kind of psychological muddle is found in D's seng ha for sing ha in that chapter, where D's reading mixes the Tibetan with the Sanskrit word for a lion.

19. Editorial notices

In the two texts which we worked on, the only clear evidence for editorial notices were in D, which on a number of occasions in both texts gives alternative readings at the top or bottom of the page, and also notes in the *Myang 'das* that the mantras had been edited. Clearly, it is useful to have a clear idea of the extent of editorial intervention, which this category can achieve.

20. Archaisms

NGB texts often contain very old materials, and archaic forms sometimes persist in some editions. These are not always easy to discern however, since layer upon layer of transmissionally generated variation can blur the issue considerably. Some examples where a heavy over-use of Sanskritic constructions are employed might be a little less uncertain. In the *Myang 'das*'s Chapter 6, MG give mu tra where the other editions give phyag rgya; similarly, in the *Myang 'das*'s Chapter 9 and 20, TRN several times give tri where the other editions give gsum. This can lead to further transmissional complications: dbu gsum is given as dbu tri on a few occasions, which at one stage then becomes corrupted to pu sgri.

Foregrounding the background

Our second proposal anticipates the rapidly emerging e-Sciences approaches to scholarship, in which numbers of different scholars, typically distributed over wide geographical areas, work together via an electronic network and as a single collaborative team on academic projects, including the editing of texts. While the electronic challenges to such developments are now trivial or non-existent, the intellectual challenges are as yet far less explored, let alone overcome. But working as a team of two over the last three years, in different rooms and using different computers, albeit in the same building, we believe we confronted and tackled similar problems to those that would be faced by much larger teams working over much larger areas.

The basic challenge is how to communicate: how to enable one's colleagues to understand exactly how and why one made the editorial assessments that one did make. The solution is in fact surprisingly simple, even if seldom practised so far as we know: a separate apparatus is maintained in which an explanation of the cause and nature of every variant

reading is carefully recorded, along with expansions on all decisions or analyses made regarding that variant. This is also the locus of the assigning of categories as described above. These background workings - de facto the invisible intellectual engine room or backstage area of every critical edition ever made - have not generally been comprehensively presented to public view, as far as we know. Nor are we here proposing that such convoluted or obscure reasoning routinely be presented to all readers in future electronic editions, unless the reader actually clicks to see them (in which case, of course, they should always be made fully accessible to the curious). But there is simply no other way for a true collaboration to proceed other than to maintain such background workings in the collaborative foreground: the team must above all understand the inner workings of their colleagues' minds, and be able to address them creatively. Moreover, a further bonus of maintaining such notes is that even in cases where a single scholar is working, time is saved on each occasion that the editor reviews his or her work.

At the same time, this exposure and democratisation of knowledge has significant consequences for the culture of textual editing. Pre-digital technologies, especially the pre-digital economics of publishing, have conspired up till now to shape the culture of critical editing into a typically magisterial undertaking, in which the intellectually aloof editor presented an edition with no detailed explanation of every decision made, but which instead emphasised the claim to individual philological virtuosity, and the consequent viability of the typeset edition for many years to come. The printed codex simply did not permit the space for any presentation of background workings, even if such were desired. The interested reader was normally expected to try to work out what the editor was doing the hard way - by reworking and figuring out the editorial processes on their own. Yet the discarding of so much background thinking from so many of the great critical editions of the past and present is surely a detriment. Electronic text has no such limitations, and we expect editorial culture to change accordingly. Textual criticism is now entering the age of the endlessly mutable edition, collaboratively made, and with all its background processes transparent.

Here are some examples of the workings of our editorial tasks from the beginning of our editorial notes on the *Myang 'das*:

TRN insert a cover title not found in DMG: /[T+ rdo rje] phur bu [TN+ chos] [T+ thams cad] mya ngan las [mya ngan las: N myang] 'das pa'i [pa'i: N kyi] rgyud [TR+ chen po] bzhugs [TN+ so]// [TN+ dge'o]//

DMG's omission of first title: recensional, or loss of title when kept as separate text? Or, perhaps more likely, it might have been added by TRN's ancestor as a cover title. 11, 13.

Sanskrit title (Note that all versions essentially agree on badzra kī la ya sarba dharma... ma hā tan tra):

nirbbā

ṇa: MG: nu dha ma pra ti pan na ma; T bu dha ma phra ti pa/; RN budha ma phra ti pa/

sDe dge here distinctive; perhaps a deliberately reconstructed title, translating the Tibetan title (which everyone agrees on exactly)? TRN

essentially the same and different from MG, although similar/related elements between two groups. Not possible to say whether one derived from the other. D 11

dpal chen po: D dpal; TRN dpal bde ba chen po: cannot comment on whether we have additions or subtractions, or why. Only generally demonstrates our text families. 5, 12/13?

chos: D omits. D could make sense but the sense would seem clearer with it included. It could be an omission of D or an ancestor of MGTRN might have added it in as it would fit naturally here. Most likely 12

rang bzhin: TRN bdag nyid. Essentially the same meaning in the context; cannot be certain whether this was an error, and who made the change, although it is quite likely that TRN's ancestor copied bdag nyid from the yig rkang above. 5, 18

dang: MG omit; no difference to the meaning; either alternative possible 5, 12

gzhal yas khang: D gzhal yas; here, Immeasurable Palace seems correct, but of course, D's gzhal yas is an acceptable short form. Cannot say if D omitted khang or MGTRN elaborated gzhal yas. Most likely 12; 5

'bar ba sna tshogs: MG sna tshogs 'bar ba; reversal, either version acceptable 5,7

gcig cing ye nas gsal ba na/ bcom ldan 'das: MG de la rigs kyi yab dang./ yum dang./ (eyeskip: perhaps from ngo bo to ngo bor - 11 yig rkang further down - and then to the two yig rkang following ngo bor, after which the earlier place is recovered) Most likely 8
In place of: (they) are single, primordially radiantly manifesting, the Victorious One... MG give: the male and the female deity of the (Buddha) family...

In some cases, we have added to each other's initial comments. For instance, from the editorial notes on the *rDo rje khros pa*'s Chapter 3:

DK a pa ra dzi ta; MGTRN a pa rā dzi ta
<are DK technically wrong here?>
<<Although D seems clear, I don't think we can dismiss the possibility that there may have been damage to the blocks - ie. D now may not read the same as it did 100 years ago in the case of missing letters, vowels etc. The poor printing is a major disadvantage of D, despite its generally better readings.>>

D sre; MGRNK sgre; 5 T sgro 10,16
<again, transmissional factors condition iconographical description>
<<D is I think in line with our commentarial and other sources, but might just have likely have emended sgre, as sgre arising through a shared error of MGTRNK (D possibly 11?)>>

Occasionally, an entry may have three comments (from the editorial notes on the *rDo rje khros pa*'s Chapter 6):

dbu la: MGTRNK dbu lnga 10,16, possible 18 - repetition of following lnga
<17 there are three heads, not 5>
<<I thought this an error at first, but now I'm not so sure - the five heads could simply be the fivefold crown representing the five families. Maybe an error, but I think this one has a question mark on it! >>
<<<However, in the *Myang ʼdas* ch. 18, all editions agree with D here.>>>

In this way, the editorial work is cumulative, and does not need to be repeated each time one contributor revisits the edition.

❖