

TEI XML in context: rationales and alternatives.

Hugh Cayless

The what, who, and how of digital critical editions

1. What kind(s) of material are you working with?
2. Who is it for?
3. How are you going to do it?

Let's think about the problem space...

Perspectives can be tricky...

An edition of an ancient work with a complex manuscript tradition may focus on attempting to reconstruct an archetype.

A more recent work (Western Medieval, e.g.) may have a wide variety of expressions, so that it isn't necessarily sensible to attempt to synthesize a single edition out of them.

A more modern work might have available the author's original manuscript and several published editions, with various types of edits.

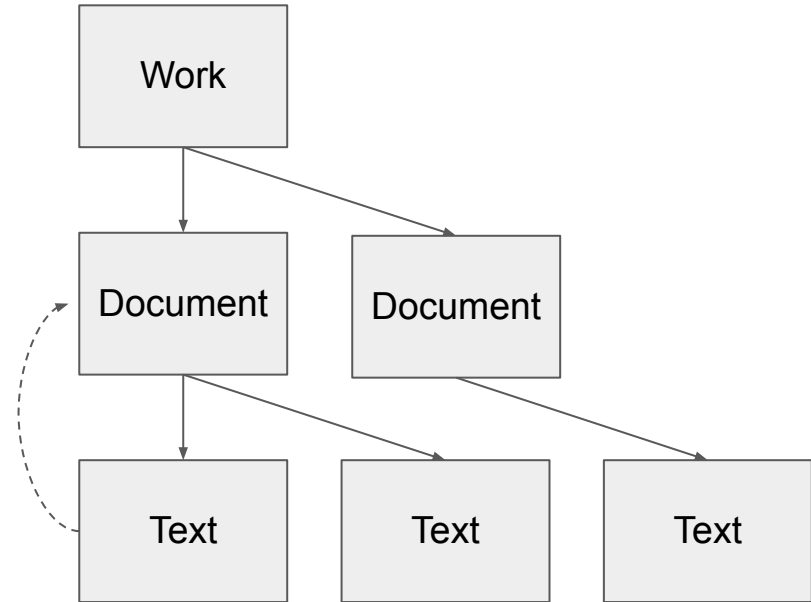
An edition of a single-source document may focus on the reading of that document, noting parallels, textual difficulties, and the materiality of the document.

Works, Documents and Texts (Peter Robinson)

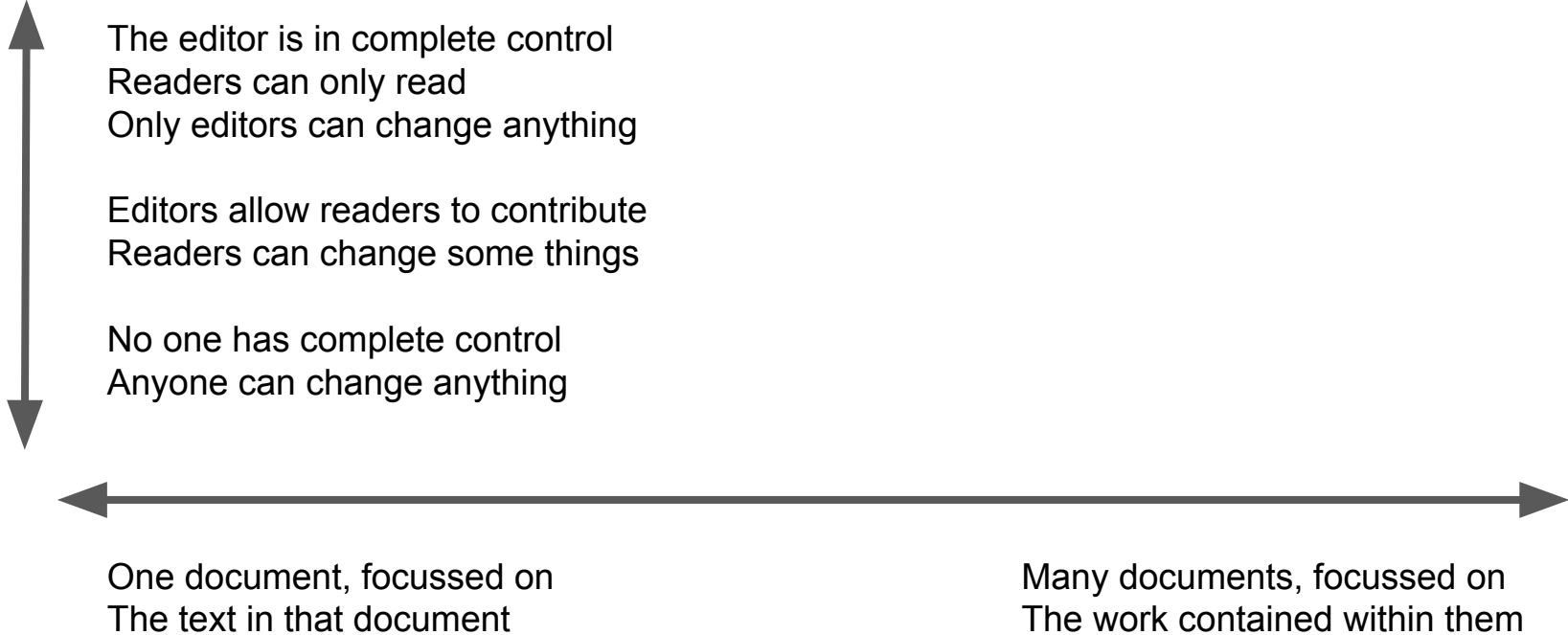
Work: a set of texts which are hypothesized as related

Document: the material object upon which marks are inscribed

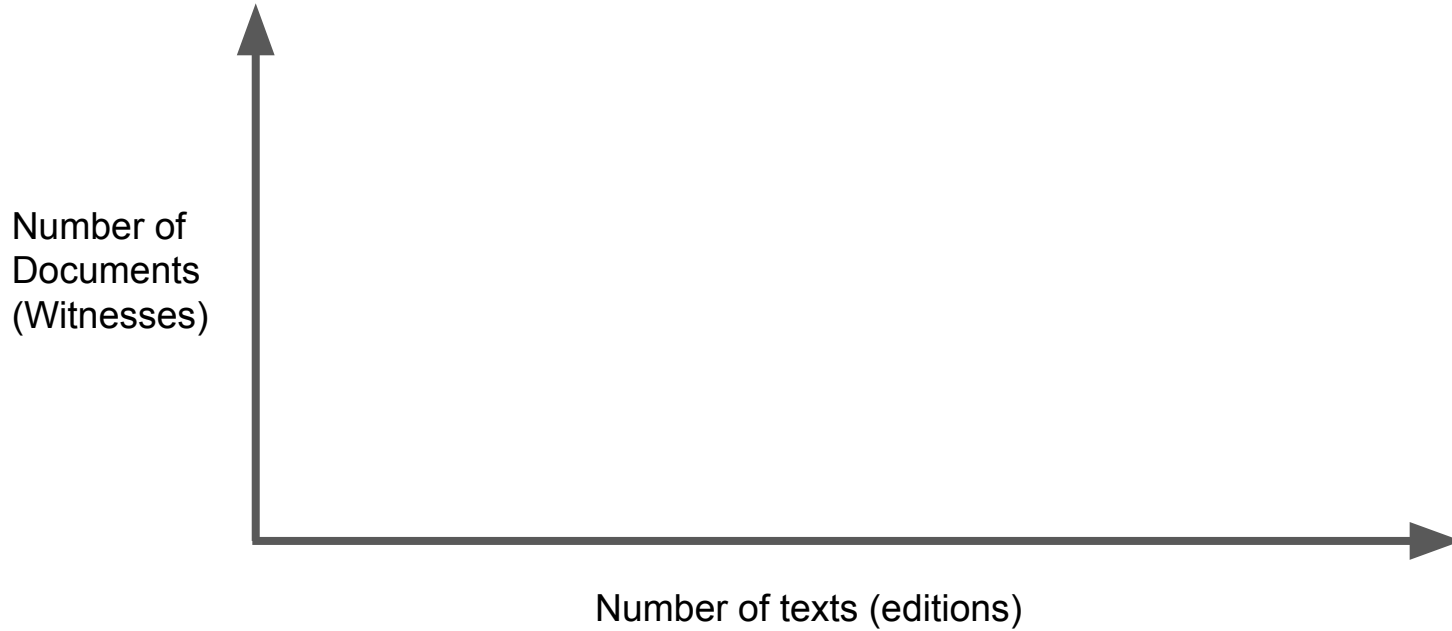
Text: the communicative linguistic act which a reader deduces as present in the document



Robinson's Edition Space



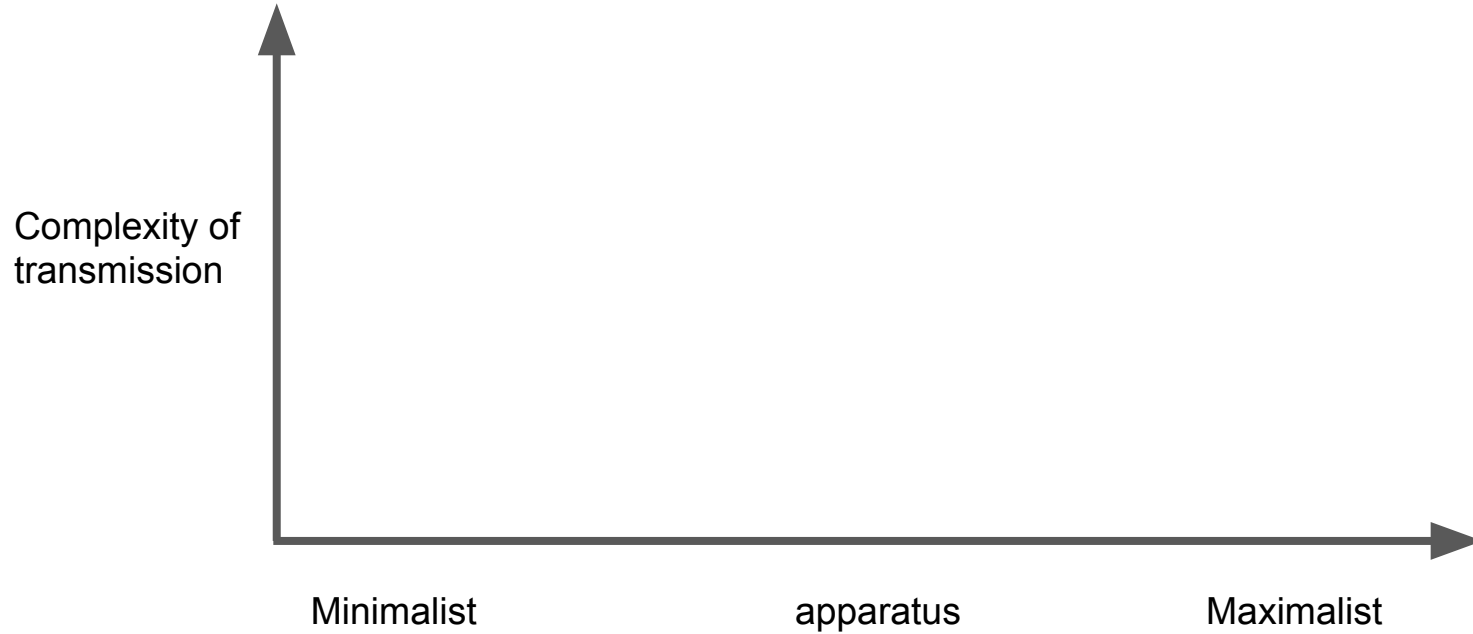
Nature of the edition



Nature of the tradition



Nature of the editor's presentation



And who is the audience?



Nature of the audience vs. interface



OK, let's think about the “how”

Choices:

- “Plain” text
 - Easily processable. Can feed it into collation tools, machine learning models, etc.
 - Can do a lot with plain text + annotation.
- HTML or Markdown
 - Displays on the web without any problems; limited semantics.
- LaTeX and/or PDF
 - Produces beautiful print-ready copy; can produce searchable images; restrictive formatting.
- TEI
 - Unparalleled expressivity in the data model. You have to decide what to do with it.

Tool

Problem

Result

1.



2.



3.



Can your tool do this?

- Record ancient punctuation or diacritics. Don't print it in the text, but in the apparatus. Let users search for examples of, e.g. “diastole” in context.
- Manage both original word spellings and normalized spellings. Display the original in the text and the normalization in the apparatus. Let users search for either in context.
- Record variant readings in an apparatus. Allow readers to substitute a variant reading into the main text.
- Manage variants where the variants have different word or line order.

