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APPROACHES TO INDIAN PHILOLOGY

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"Indian Philology"
Edition, Interpretation, and Difference

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The very fact that we Indianists have assembled to discuss, not a particular religious or philosophical or literary question, but "Indian philology" as such marks an important occasion in our discipline and area of study. Even if some of us usually think of ourselves also as students of religion, philosophy, or literature, we are all in the end philologists, insofar as we are concerned with *making sense of texts* — the minimalist definition of philology, that much-defined term, that I offer you provisionally and will defend momentarily. All of us were trained by scholars who even more explicitly thought of themselves as philologists, if for no other reason than that most were educated in departments with names that referred in one way or another to "philology." That was before the great transformation beginning in the 1950s that created the area-studies programs where people like me, and now many of you in the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands (though notably not — yet — in France) have spent our careers.

It is surprising, then, that despite its central place in our professional lives philology should be so rarely discussed. Not a single one of my own teachers (whether in Greek, Latin, or Sanskrit) ever cared to explain what it is, where it came from, or, most important, how and why we practice it as we do. This holds for one of the great Sanskrit philologists of the last century, Louis Renou, in whose honor the conference upon which this volume is based was organized. Although one of his first books (1928) concerned the "masters of Vedic philology," and the term "philology" is sprinkled throughout his four decades of scholarship, he must have assumed its nature was too well-known to need any discussion for he offers none, anywhere. That these issues are now on the table here in

Paris and in many other venues around the world shows that it is not so, and this recognition merits reflection.

I myself have thought that the renewed engagement with philology has to do with its fall from grace, ever more accelerating over the course of the last several decades. The loss of status and support and university positions almost everywhere — most catastrophically in India itself, where the brilliant tradition of *pāṇḍitya* has vanished, only to be replaced, in many places, by lifeless routine if not pure quackery — have left us with the prospect that we may soon be facing a world without philology for the first time in three millennia. Indeed, its death has already been announced by observers as thoughtful as the anthropologist Clifford Geertz and the philosopher Richard Rorty, who when contemplating their own endangered disciplines hold up philology's fate as a warning of how forms of thought die, or are believed to die.[1] Others will no doubt have less apocalyptic and more intelligent explanations than mine, but whatever the cause, the happy effect is that we are at last collectively inquiring into the nature of our discipline and its areas, and asking how "Indian philology" can thrive and contribute more broadly to humanistic inquiry.

A volume I recently co-edited, called *World Philology*, was one attempt to jumpstart this conversation.[2] But while working on the book I was struck by three broad areas of silence among our many distinguished contributors. None of them contested the singular number in our title ("philology," not "philologies"), though none tried to show, or even considered for a moment showing, that philology might well have had a general form, analogously to mathematics or philosophy.[3] Second, while many essays record, sometimes explicitly, sometimes only implicitly, the tension between what I shall argue are philology's two core components, edition and interpretation, they present that tension only as a historical

1. "It puts one in mind, all this coming apart at the seams [of anthropology], of departed universes: philology, natural history, political economy, the Habsburg Empire" (Geertz 1983: 91). "By now [philosophy] runs some risk of being ignored altogether, regarded in the same way that classical philology is, as a quaint, albeit rather charming, survival" (Rorty 2007: 184).

2. Pollock *et al.* (2015).

3. The failure of comparative projects to actually compare is widespread. The new book of Grafton and Most on scriptural philology (2016), for example, offers wonderful comparative data — but leaves it to the reader to draw the larger comparative conclusions. The same can actually be said of much of *World Philology*, a deficit I try, haltingly, to correct in the present essay.

fact, not as the continuing puzzle it actually is. Most remarkable was the third silence, regarding the question whether, and if so precisely how, the *history* of philology the contributors were busy writing should (or should not) relate to the philology they actually *practice*. These issues were ignored because they are difficult — as I recognized only after I was foolhardy enough to commit myself to trying to address them in the present essay.

I just made mention of our "discipline" and its "area," so let me start with offering some thoughts about both. We philologists are heirs to an ancient knowledge that humans have found central to their existence as text-making beings since they first began to make texts. Here I want to offer and defend a hypothesis, addressing the first of the silences just mentioned, that like mathematics or philosophy, philology has indeed had, in respect of its basic objects and objectives, an elementary or general form across history; that there does exist a specific object of analysis for us to study in premodern "philology," along with a set of methods and (after a certain historical point) an explicit theory. And it is this form that we can identify existing in particular — or as I prefer to call them, *areal* — instantiations.

Within the practices relating to this disciplinary form, a struggle has taken place over the primacy of this or that component as the defining feature of the form. More often than not this struggle has focused on the supposed distinction between textual criticism and interpretation (the second of my silences), perhaps not dissimilar to the struggle in philosophy between, say, the concerns of epistemology and wisdom (or, instead of that old word, let's say, with the American philosopher Richard Rorty, "talking about our hopes and fears"). Although the struggle is discernible across time and space and continues into the present, philologists themselves know, or should know, not only that the one cannot operate without the other but that they are in fact mutually constitutive activities.

For most scholars, I suspect, "understanding philology" means only understanding our own contemporary practices in making sense of texts. But a second dimension of such understanding pertains to philology's history and thus to the practices people in the past developed to make sense of their texts. The former has been an object of renewed interest in recent years across areas — and Indian studies is no exception — and has produced strong text-critical work, often stimulated by new methods in

the digital humanities. [4] Typically this work, so far as I can judge, tacitly (and unwittingly) accepts universalist proposals enunciated in the principles of modern textual criticism. These proposals include both those thought to be applicable across space (thus the Latinist Alphonse Dain, for whom "Les règles élaborées par les philologues classiques ... valent ... au domaine de l'Orient") and applicable across time (thus the American literature editor Thomas Tanselle, for whom "editing ancient texts and editing modern ones are not simply related fields; they are essentially the same field"). [5] As for ancient Indians' own philology of Indian texts, it has only recently entered the research agenda. [6] It is that traditional Indian philology I will focus on here (mainly on the Sanskrit side), not only for the evidence it offers of the disciplinary coherence of general philology but also for those aspects of *difference* that even a universalist, scientific, philology needs to take into account, and that may encourage us to modify our own practices.

With this, I already have begun to address the third of the silences noted earlier, about what knowledge of that past might have to do with our present aims. Distinguishing between the practice of philology and its history is hardly audacious; an analogous contrast could be drawn for philosophy, where we want on the one hand to learn how to think (or live our lives better) and on the other to learn how other people have thought (or sought to live their lives), without positing any necessary connection between the two goals. What requires audacity is to ask whether we are in some way called up to synthesize history and practice, why we might wish to do so, and how. The history of philology is not, like, say, that of biology, a history of ignorance overcome and where accordingly the past has truly passed away. One obvious difference between them is that every Indian

4. I have in mind Patrick Olivelle's editions of Manu and Yājñavalkya; the scrupulous editing of scientific, philosophical, and commentarial texts of the sort that has never been done before, *e.g.*, the Vienna *Cāraka* project, Philipp Maas's *Yogasūtra* edition, the *Nyāyamañjarī* editions of Kei Kataotka and Alessandro Graheli; Dominic Goodall and Harunaga Isaacson's *Raghuvaṃśapañcikā* of Vallabhadeva. But critical editing has reached a point of fetishization, it seems to me, with dense mathematical analyses and bloated apparati critici reporting scores of manuscript readings to no purpose, almost in an attempt to return, after a period of theoretical excess, to a "heroic age" of text-criticism (Tarrant 2016: 18-21).

5. Dain (1949: 8); Tanselle (1983: 68).

6. The credit for initiating the discussion goes to Gérard Colas (1999). I have sought to add more evidence in two recent publications (Pollock 2015, 2018).

text that we possess was edited and interpreted by Indian philologists, and knowing something of their procedures helps us make better sense of the texts they bequeathed us. A less obvious reason has to do with the sense of "sense-making" in the provisional definition of philology I offer above.

For all philologists I am familiar with — and this has been the case at least since W.D. Whitney explicitly announced the position in 1876, in the course of an attack on the commentarial tradition of the Veda and the Western scholars who wanted to take it seriously — the "true meaning" of a text must, commonsensically, be "one, and not many." I myself have sought to defend just the opposite position: because "meaning" is a quintessentially historical phenomenon, a text cannot even have a "true meaning" that consists in anything other than the sum total of *meanings* attributed to the text over the course of its history. To "make sense" of an ancient text therefore *requires* including the meanings of ancient philologists like the Sāyaṇa whom Whitney denigrated. In philology, at least in my expanded sense of "making sense," the past is not something to be overcome, and is never passed; it is always present and needs to be accounted for.[7]

Let me provide a little map, then, of what I want to do in this essay. First I will try to describe something of that elementary form of general philology, the precursor of our own. We shall find generally familiar the understanding of *edition*, but also, in cooperation or sometimes tension with it, a strong commitment to *interpretation*, which for its part shows strikingly comparable forms prior to the modern European invention of historicism. I want next to consider how far the textual culture of historical India, both the explicit philological practices and the more tacit phenomena of that culture, corresponds to this general form, and where by contrast we might identify particularity: what the original conference proposal refers to as the "*peculiarities* of Indian textual traditions," or what I would call areal difference within a disciplinary matrix. Last, I will explore some ways our philology today might be enhanced by acknowledging these past ways of knowing.

I am well aware that these topics are too many and too complicated to do them real justice in a single essay. But then, real justice is not my goal. I

7. For a fuller exposition, see Pollock (2014), and Pollock (2016a) (where Whitney is discussed on p. 135-136).

aim only to offer a few *pakṣas*, not *siddhāntas*, that may contribute to what I hope will be an ongoing conversation, inaugurated in our conference volume, about Sanskrit, texts, and knowledge.

1. The General Form of Philology

At the very start of our enterprise we are confronted with a standard hermeneutical dilemma, no easier for being so common. We cannot determine whether there is a "general form" of philology across time and space without first defining "philology," but we cannot define it until we know what its general form is. The Indian shastric tradition was well acquainted with the problem. As Śabara put it, we either know or do not know what something is; if we know, there will be no desire to inquire into it, and even less so if we do not know at all. Śabara's response is to take a middle path: The thing in question is known to some degree, but it is an object of multiple understandings, or as Śaṅkara puts it in a parallel passage, there is general knowledge about a thing but disagreement about its specifics. [8] Our response to the dilemma will be something like Śabara's and Śaṅkara's. The way they knew something preliminary about *dharma* or *brahma*, that is, through *āgama*, is analogous to the way we know something preliminary about philology: through tradition itself. The main task is to sort through the disagreements about its specifics.

Given that we are conducting our search across traditions we are of course confronted with conceptual disunity of a sort Śabara and Śaṅkara did not face. But even within a single tradition we encounter very considerable disagreement. The term *philologos* itself is of course a Greek coinage, ascribed to the second Alexandrian librarian Eratosthenes, who sought thereby to express the universality of his erudition. [9] From Eratosthenes' time onward, *philologia* has been constantly redefined — to a degree perhaps unparalleled by any other Western knowledge form — with each new purpose it has been called upon to serve occasioning a new definition. Vico (1725) includes among the philologists "all the grammarians, historians, critics, who have occupied themselves with the study of the languages and deeds of peoples." It was just a step from here to Friedrich

8. *Śābarabhāṣya* v. 1: 10 (*dharmaṃ prati vipratipannā bahuvidaḥ*), *Śāṅkarabhāṣya*, v. 1: 28 (*tadviśeṣaṃ prati vipratipatteḥ*). Neither explicitly states how we know initially at all, though clearly that first knowledge derives from enunciation of the term(s) in *śruti*.

9. Pfeiffer (1968: 156-159).

Schlegel (1797), who understood philology to be "all erudition in language," and to the expansive visions of Niebuhr, Leopardi, or Nietzsche. How vast was the transformation philology experienced, however, by the time of Michel Foucault (1966), who reduced it to comparative grammar, and the many scholars today who think of it as corpus linguistics. [10]

The *vipṛatipatti* with regard to a concept so variously understood in its own tradition, as in modern Europe, is going to expand vastly when we begin to look elsewhere and try to place our general sense of philology, decocted from those Western developments, onto the conceptual maps of other regions. In Abbasid Arabia *ṣinā'at al-adab* ("the art of literary culture"), for example, and in China the varieties of textual practices that coalesced in the late imperial period into *kaozheng* ("evidential research"), seem to overlap with that general sense toward which Schlegel was overenthusiastically gesturing, while also comprising materials largely excluded from it (such as creative writing in the former case, and narrow historical analysis in the latter). In the India of Sanskrit learning, no comprehensive term was available to describe the (provisionally) relevant set of knowledge practices. Instead, that set was distributed across a range of disciplines: *vyākaraṇa* and *mīmāṃsā* in the first instance, but also *nirukta*, *chandaḥśāstra*, and the sub-discipline *vyākhyā*, or exegesis (which, while never theorized, was fully conceptualized as a particular textual practice). [11]

It is hardly surprising that the contours of a form of knowledge should have varied across cultures and, within a shared culture, across time. But however much conceptual variation "philology" has undergone, it

10. For the Vico and Schlegel references, see Pollock (2016a: 10) (Schlegel's vision remained alive to modern philologists such as Leo Spitzer: "Philologie, die Wissenschaft, die den Menschen zu verstehen sucht, soweit er sich im Worte (Sprache) und in Wortgebilden äussert," 1945-1946: 576); Foucault (1966: 292-307) (he traces the very "invention of philology" to Bopp's comparative historical grammar; he is imprudently supported by Ian Hacking, see Hacking 2002: 140-151); for the last, see for example Bamman and Crane (2010). Altschul (2010) adds additional European materials, as does the editor's introduction to the volume in which that essay appears; also Gurd (2015) for a review broader than its title suggests.

11. Aside from the clear concepts of exegetical theory embedded in practice, we know that commentary was also taught as a separate subject. See for example the Kadiyur *agrahāram* land-grant (in Kannada) of 929 CE for the study of grammar, political theory, literary criticism, history, logic, and, "commentary writing" (EI 13: 332: v. 30: *vyākaraṇam arthaśāstra-ānīkaṃ sāhitya-vidhyey-itihāsaṃ mikka-ekākṣaramunitarkkaṃ* ***ṭīkaṃ-bareyat*** *samagrar ābhyāsisuvar*).

is evident that this has always been variation within a stable domain of intellectual inquiry defined by a stable object of study. The domain in question was constituted everywhere by attention to language as configured in texts, by the concern with the things people do with texts and how they do them. The concern was not with numbers, colors, tastes, or anything else but texts and how to make sense of them. The presence of that domain and that object, however various the particular manifestations, *define* a knowledge practice as *philology*. If we may be permitted to repurpose Uddālaka Aruṇi's insight (*vācārambhaṇaṃ vikāro nāmadheyaṃ*), behind all the different designations we are dealing with a single cognitive phenomenon.

While philology thus has a general form, that is, "doing things with texts," the things that have been done divide into two major categories: edition, or getting the text right, and interpretation, or understanding what it says. This division — about which the second silence I mentioned has long been maintained — is one of emphasis, not of substance, as I will argue. The fundamental, indeed infrangible, complementarity of the two categories notwithstanding, however, the division has sometimes been taken as disagreement, even estrangement. And although this may appear to be a recent development, having been explicitly formulated in 19th-century Europe, it has a genealogy that is far deeper in time and space. I have never seen a historical review of this — to my eyes astonishing — bisection, certainly not a deep history, so let me offer a thumb-nail sketch here, working backwards from the modern period. There is no straight path to follow, but twists and turns, as thinkers worked through their uncertainty about what textual knowledge is and how it comes to be produced.

For thinkers like Schlegel, it was because textuality and conceptuality, reading and thinking, were united in a single knowledge form that he could define philology as *alle Sprachgelehrsamkeit*. Within a generation, however, it was to be fractured and reduced to one of its parts, a reduction that has been traced to the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher. The "comprehensive philological conception of critique" as present in Schlegel's "Philosophie der Philologie" (1797) can be dramatically contrasted with the diminished version in Schleiermacher's *Hermeneutik und Kritik* (published posthumously in 1834), which restricted "philological criticism" to textual criticism, and separated off interpretation to an in-

creasingly segregated subdiscipline.[12] While Schleiermacher may have still emphasized, residually, their mutuality, the scholarly study of texts would soon orient itself toward a narrow paradigm. The most extreme expression of this is found in the mechanistic methodology trumpeted by Karl Lachmann: "*recensere sine interpretatione et possumus et debemus.*"[13] The split between edition and interpretation has now hardened into a disciplinary division and a conceptual given. Interpretation in the form of hermeneutics has become the province of philosophy (and, in the form of philosophical hermeneutics, largely divorced from its foundational textuality), and, in the form of literary theory, comparative literature. As for philology, it has been reduced, slowly and pitifully, to one or the other of its constituent parts: textual criticism, bibliography, historical (or corpus or other) linguistics.[14]

The Romantic-era tension and its contemporary stalemate recapitulate a far older development. Consider the state of the question of philology half a millennium before Schlegel. In medieval Europe, the idea of reading, *lectio*, was a comprehensive one, in which edition and interpretation were continuous: one moved from the letter to the sense to the content (*littera, sensus, sententia*) — such is the schema of the *Didascalicon* of Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141).[15] This apparently long-settled way of thinking was disrupted already in the early Renaissance. Angelo Poliziano's philology, like Hugh's, was multilevel, combining *lexis* with *dianoia*, or grammar/text-criticism and interpretation. But the professors of "philosophy" in Florence who were his contemporaries had come to think of philology as narrow textual study, with little or nothing to do with interpreting the world. Poliziano's satire, *Lamia* (The Witch, 1492), was

12. Baisch (2006: 4-5) (who refers to *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, ed. M. Frank 1977: 250).

13. "We both can and must edit without interpreting," Lachmann, preface to his edition of the New Testament, cited in Timpanaro (2006: 88).

14. McGann's "new key" is of a piece with this past, reducing philology to bibliography (2013). For a random sampling of the assumed dichotomy philology *vs.* interpretation (often formulated as philology *vs.* philosophy), see Fehér (2001) ("philology and philosophy, or philology and hermeneutics"); Gjesdal (2006) (while rightly emphasizing the unphilological dimensions of *ontological* hermeneutics), Dostal (2010) (philology as science, interpretation as discipline), Myojo (2011), Barolini (2015) ("the insufficient critical vigilance ... with which we monitor the porous boundaries between philology and interpretation").

15. A succinct citation and exegesis of the *Didascalicon* are given in Robertson (2014: 66).

meant to reestablish the breadth of the discipline. [16]

The tension in *Lamia* between reading and thinking can be traced back to much earlier periods. Neoplatonists, like the enemies of Poliziano, refused to acknowledge any higher claims of philology: "One might be a philologist," says Plotinus, "but certainly not a philosopher." [17] If Varro (d. 27 BCE) could argue, for the first time, for a four-fold philology that saw textuality and conceptuality necessarily combined (in this he is the conceptual father of the *Didascalicon*), Seneca (d. 67) soon thereafter would famously complain how philosophy had in his day turned into philology (*quae philosophia fuit facta philologia est*) [18] — that is, men asked empty questions about texts instead of thinking — and philologists were indistinguishable from grammarians (*philologus aut grammaticus*). [19] In the Latin world more broadly considered, philology was always split, or rather torn, between *emendatio* and *enarratio*, improving texts and explaining them. [20] And so backward in time. While Eratosthanes had coined the term *philologos* to capture — Schlegel-like — the universality of erudition, later in Alexandria the *grammatikoi*, including Aristophanes and especially Aristarchus, were set off from the *kritikoi*, such as Crates of Pergamum, a terminological distinction testifying to a division in disciplinary understanding already in place in the 3rd century BCE. [21]

The "querelle" between philologist as editor and philologist as interpreter holds for much of Chinese history as well. The Han Dynasty *zhang-ju* (chapter and phrase) commentaries were considered the embodiment of glossing commentaries and already the historian Ban Gu (who compiled the Han History) complained that there were too many of them. By contrast, most of Song Dynasty, with the rise of what is called "Song Learning" (*songxue*), philological culture became predominantly interpretive; the repertoire of commentarial and critical genres expanded, and scholars sought the *dayi* (great meaning) of a text. This holds also for poetics, where the couplet-focused craft treatises of the Six Dynasties and Tang period came to be despised as petty and trivial and new genres became popular, among them *shihua* (poetic talk), which is mostly anecdotal and embeds

16. Robichaud (2010: 134-135).
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ep.* CVIII 23.
19. See for example Barnes (1997: 45-46).
20. Zetzel (2015: 47).
21. Pfeiffer (1968: 156-159); Porter (1992: 112); Robichaud (2010: 139).

the heavily philological into broader questions and literary networks of writers. Most of the Chinese craft treatises therefore only survive in Japan, because the Song hermeneuts were all too successful in their polemics. [22] As for the major transition that Benjamin Elman has traced in the early Qing from "philosophy" to "philology," one wonders, given the kinds of global developments sketched so far, whether this might equally be seen as another instance of our long *intra-philological* struggle, where the balance is tipped from hermeneutics to ecdotics — or the reverse. [23]

The one exception here, so far as I can see, is India itself, where, as I will try to show, the work of the philologist joined the two tasks indissociably.

Epistemologically viewed, of course, there is no split and there cannot be one between the two fundamental components of philology. "Constituting a text and interpreting it," as Giorgio Pasquali put it, "are, ultimately, one and the same thing." [24] It is not simply that Lachmann's slogan is mere "empty boasting," or even that textual and literary criticism are "necessarily connected." [25] The most basic editorial decisions (including the very choice of "best" manuscript, about which more below), the simplest acts of recension, depend on interpretation — and the reverse is obviously just as true. Even in ancient Greece, where we just observed the bifurcation in its primal state, "hermeneutic" included, besides exegesis, the verbal expression itself. [26] And at the other end of our historical spectrum, in modern Europe, as Dilthey characterized its history, the "art of interpretation" itself originated "in the virtuosity of the philologist." [27] To express this mutually constitutive relationship in an Indian idiom: edition without interpretation would be blind, like *prakṛti* without *puruṣa*, while interpretation without edition would be paralyzed, like *puruṣa* without

22. I am grateful to Wiebke Denecke for this summary. See also Van Zoeren (1991) and Tu (2005).

23. Elman (2001). For the reverse, in the Song, see Dai 2016 (though he also operates with the false dichotomy between hermeneutics and philology — how false is shown, by my lights, in Quirin 1996).

24. Pasquali cited Montinari (2015: 339).

25. Timpanaro (2006: 88), and Tarrant (2016: 111), respectively.

26. Hult (2010: 44). As early as Aristotle, Greek philologists sometimes "solved" problems by offering a rephrasing of the text (see further below). Textual criticism and interpretation were clearly two sides of the same philological coin from at least the 4th c. BCE onward: the constitution of the text itself was, inevitably, "inseparable from the history of its meaning" (Lamberton and Keaney 1992: xii-xv).

27. Dilthey (1990 [1900]: 320). See also Polheim (2009: 220): "Die Textkritik kann die Interpretation genausowenig entbehren wie die Interpretation die Textkritik."

prakṛti. I therefore treat them in the exploration that follows as the two basic and inseparable elements of philology that they are. Learning how both have been performed in the past has, arguably, something important to add to how we might perform them in the present, a question that marks the third of the loud silences earlier described.

2. The Elements of Philology in the World

How does the general form of philology manifest itself across space and time? Answering this question requires a degree of knowledge few individuals possess, the expansiveness of a large monograph, and patience for deep scholarly disagreement. I have none of these so I will provide instead an absurdly brief sketch — for classical Greece and Rome, and medieval China — that depends very much on the work of others and sets aside many matters under dispute.[28] First, however, I must at least mention some fascinating general symmetries that I am forced to ignore here, in particular the vast chronological gap between the author and the witnesses available to premodern philologists (authorial manuscripts have all vanished, and little to no external information about an author's intentions is extent). I must also omit discussion of (1) the *materiality* of philology, except to note that the major transition from papyrus to parchment and from scroll to codex in classical antiquity, and from manuscript to print in Song China, has no analogue in India, where palm leaf and birch bark endured, the introduction of paper was notable by hardly transformative, and printing was known but rejected; of (2) philological *form*, except to note that Sanskrit commentary, like later Greek and Latin scholia (linked to the rise of the codex), generally occurred on the margins, unlike Chinese, which was typically interlinear;[29] and of (3) the *script* situation, except to note that the hyper-diversification of Brāhmī script that occurred, with gathering speed, over the course of the first millennium, dramatically differentiates India from both China and the classical world;

28. For China, where I am a complete novice, I must formally acknowledge the scholarship of Susan Cherniack, Benjamin Elman, and Martin Kern; and advice from Wiebke Denecke, Stephen Owen, and Haun Saussy.

29. Indian commentaries were written above and below (*tripāṭha*) or also on the sides (*pañcapāṭha*), and were often independent of the base-text altogether (of course the interlinear gloss is also known, from the beginning of written texts, as in some Turfan fragments). Alexandrian commentaries starting with Aristarchus' *hypomnemata* were separate books.

and of (4) *scribal practices*, except to note that the medieval Indian copyist like the Chinese was far more proximate to the ancient world than his European counterpart, who often understood little of the text and inhabited a much-altered social environment, ecclesiastical rather than scholastic (which is not to say there were no ignorant Indian scribes!) [30] All these phenomena could be instructively compared, but that must await another occasion.

2.1. *Edition*

There exists no treatise on editorial technique surviving from classical Greece, and the scant information we have makes it hard to get a sense of the ancient editor at work. While notable forms of philology antedated the early 3rd century BCE — including Aristotle's Homer criticism — the founding of the library of Alexandria marked a new moment. [31] Philology was not a project of the polity, but the polity helped create one of its conditions of possibility as a consequence of Ptolemy III's command that every docking ship surrender its manuscripts for copying and deposit the originals in the library. It is arguable that the unprecedented reproduction of many versions of the same text, aside from enabling the Alexandrian compilation and organization of texts, stimulated a more formal engagement with the problem of textual variation than was already visible in the Hellenistic book trade, something that led almost inevitably to the invention of "edition" (*ekdosis*), through "correction," or "emendation" (*diorthosis*). [32] What were the theoretical presuppositions of this engagement?

The most important presuppositions were, first, that every text had a history of transmission, which produced textual variation; second, that there was one correct form of a text; third, that this text was the creation of a single individual. What the *grammatikos* aimed to produce, unlike the scribe, was not just a another copy of Homer, but Homer's Text. When Zenodotus, the first Alexandrian librarian (ca. 280 BCE) invented a new

30. As for basic scribal behavior, all manuscript cultures show evidence of the human deficiencies in perception that produce haplography, dittography, errors in interpreting unfamiliar scripts, and the like.

31. On the "scanty" remains of ancient textual scholarship that make it hard "to form a convincing and detailed portrait of the ancient editor or scribe at work," see Zetzel (1993: 109).

32. See Montinari (2015, especially p. 33).

philological sign, the *obelus*, he meant thereby to indicate not that a line needed correction but that it was possibly *inauthentic*, not part of the one true and proper form. Identification of interpolation was refined by Aristarchus, the sixth librarian (ca. 150 BCE, to whom the invention of the *hypomnema*, the self-standing commentary, is also ascribed), using criteria entirely familiar to us: style, narrative coherence, decorum.[33] But the *vulgata* was still regarded with such reverence that athetized lines were preserved and not deleted.[34] The analysis of lexicon, a preoccupation of the *grammatikoi*, breathed the same quasi-historical spirit: Homer's ancient words had grown obscure over time but their *authentic* sense could be recovered and recorded in glossaries (the contribution particularly of Aristophanes, the fourth librarian, ca. 200 BCE). The methodology for operationalizing this textual theory has long been debated, but it almost certainly included collation, conjecture, and considerations of *modus scribendi*, an author's larger composition habits.

Quite different was the case with Roman philology. That authenticity was a value is shown by, inter alia, Varro's collection of the genuine plays of Plautus (that is, *consensu omnium Plauti esse censebantur*, as Gellius puts it). But the plays were simply collected and "tidied" up, not edited. Evidence for editorial activity at all is rare, and when found, difficult to determine if collation rather than conjecture is at work.[35]

In China, vastly more information about editorial technique is available. "Regulating" texts, *i.e.*, eliminating textual discrepancies, was a "perennial culture project" of the state long before the Song.[36] But the tendency grew ever more pronounced from the 11th century, when, for one thing, the expansion of the civil service examination system required uniform texts, but also, for another, the vast proliferation of printed books of doubtful authority, including imperial imprints, provided an impetus to philology of the sort that the unprecedented presence of multiple copies of Homer provided for the Alexandrian scholars.[37] Textual falsification was a threat everywhere. By the late T'ang, the state had issued

33. Reynolds and Wilson (1991: 12).

34. Later papyri show losses. And contrast Porter: "*graphein*, *metagraphein*, and *anagignoskein*, 'writing,' 'rewriting,' and 'reading' are used interchangeably in the scholia ... To read Homer's epics was, at one level or another, to rewrite them too" (1992: 69).

35. Zetzel (2015: 53-55).

36. Cherniack (1994: 11); see also Gardner (1998: 410-411).

37. Cherniack (1994: 57). Early on, regulation seems sometimes to have been a project of "improvement," so that the line between correction and revision was sometimes blurry.

a royal edict against interpolation, and by the Song, examination questions were set concerning the authenticity of the received texts of the Classics. All this philological thinking was obviously marked by a strong sense of historicity; it also presupposed the existence of a single authentic text that could be recovered through philological scrutiny. The key text-critical qualities evidenced in among Song philologists included rejection of conjecture; emendation on the basis of source documents (which was systematized in the "evidential research" of the Qing, where 122 types of textual error were catalogued); and a breathtakingly full documentation of collation practices. [38]

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the China case is the print revolution of the 13th century. I must pass over this here, however, except to remark on is what it reveals about the *preprint* existence of a vast memory culture. [39] Little work appears to have been done on this important question, but it seems clear that memorization — and not just for the Classics, but other forms of literary culture, such as anthologies — had a centrality in China, with philological consequences, not at all unlike what we will see obtained in India. [40]

2.2. *Interpretation*

The nature of philological exegesis in the Graeco-Roman world is perhaps best illustrated by the work of the Vergil-commentator Servius (fl. 400). He saw himself, and acted, as a participant in an ongoing tradition, though he never names his predecessors (we find only "some say ... oth-

38. On all this Cherniack (1994) is indispensable, see especially p. 20, 28, 72. There is also (contradictory?) evidence that textual emendation in Song was informed by a sense of pure rationality: if a text "did not conform with human nature," or was "unreasonable," it was subject to emendation, a practice that would be decried in the Qing (*ibid.*: 87).

39. One 12th-century scholar noted, "Scholars, due to the difficulty of transcribing texts, were meticulous about learning to recite books from memory, down to the last detail" (Cherniak 1994: 48).

40. Kern and Hegel (2004: 168). Martin Kern (personal communication): "Nobody has done sustained work on the question of textual transmission altogether. There are some who believe — erroneously, in my view — that textual transmission in Chinese antiquity was primarily written from the very beginning, but I cannot make sense of what they claim as evidence. Then there are people like me who think that written and oral transmission always intersected, and that for a long time, memorization, performance, and recitation were by far the dominant forms in which the cultural memory was sustained and perpetuated. Yet unfortunately, there are no dedicated studies to the topic."

ers...)." He approached Vergil's poems line by line, often word by word. More than half of all his commentary consists of lexical and grammatical glosses, and elucidations of syntactical structures (*ordo est ...*); the rest treat rhetorical figures, and supply the parallel passages that vindicate Vergil as a master of learning. Only a small portion address historical or intertextual allusions, and "virtually none ... discusses aesthetics or literary form." Servius rarely contemplates the work as a whole; he was instead essentially a "miniaturist," offering small bibelots of learning, which (to my mind at least) often reveal possibilities of interpretation that might have been encouraged if the more confining tradition of exegesis had been relaxed. [41]

In all this, and especially in his character as a literalist, Servius seems to have continued the practices of the earliest Alexandrian critics on the Homeric poems, who pursued a kind of hermeneutic parsimony. This was first enunciated by Aristarchus, when he famously asserted that Homer should be understood via Homer himself (*Homeron ex Homero saphenizein*), "without wasting one's time on anything not said by the poet." [42] This seems to have been directed toward another tendency in Greco-Latin philology, where scholars were prepared to read into a work as well as out of it. [43]

That tendency had begun already with Aristotle's *Homeric Questions* (only fragmentarily preserved), where the goal of interpretation was to offer solutions to the epic's inconsistencies, moral difficulties, and the like (why, for example, was Polyphemus, the son of a god and nymph, born an uncivilized cyclops?). [44] The Aristotelian *zētēma* was to become Servius's *quaestio* (or rather, *quaeritur*, "the question is put," *e.g.*, why was

41. Kaster (2010, especially p. 494); Ziolkowski and Putnam (2008: 630); Fowler (1997). Among such possibilities are the historicist (*e.g.*, his insight that *intentio Vergilii haec est, Homerum imitari et Augustum laudare a parentibus, ad Aeneidem*, ed. Thilo, v.1 : 4) and the narratological (*e.g.*, his concern with what we would now call focalization: the question, from whose perspective is the war of Troy "long ago," *veteris ... belli*, *Aeneid* 1.23; on the latter, see Fowler (1997: 75).

42. Pfeiffer 225-227, who doubts the ascription of the phrase to Aristarchus while showing that it was his general position.

43. The division between text-critical and "exegetical" is clearly visible in the Homeric scholia A and D on the one hand, and bT on the other. See Dickey (2007: 19-20).

44. Here Aristotle generally marshals parallel cases; but he will also employ allegorical interpretation straightforwardly: the oxen of Helios, for example, represent the days of the (lunar) year.

the deity Juno, or indeed *pius* Aeneas, called *saeva/saevus*?).[45] Later Stoic and Neoplatonist critics, starting as early as the Pergamene Crates in the mid-2nd century BCE, intensified this trend, with an interpretive style that inaugurated one of the great hermeneutical contests in history — especially since it was reproduced among early Christian exegetes — namely, allegoresis (a term I will complicate in due course).[46] Representative here is Porphyry, who in the 5th century produced studies of the *Odyssey* that read the epic as an allegory of the soul's struggle for liberation from the body — a philological orientation replicated into the 12th century and beyond both in Byzantium and the Latin West.[47]

It is far more difficult for an outsider like me to grasp the shape of the history of hermeneutics in China, let alone to try to summarize it responsibly (surprisingly, no general account exists). I do however feel capable of offering one general and one specific observation.

First, the movement of intellectual history here seems to follow a recognizable general pattern. Early exegeses filled the familiar glossing function of commentary, which reach something of an apogee in the historicalism of the early Song. Thus, the commentators on the Classics, such as the celebrated scholar Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072), sought to read the *Book of Songs* and related texts in a more or less literalist spirit, by locating a specific moral aim for a specific historical context. Counterposed to such thinkers were others like Wang Anshi (1021-1081) who saw the poems as originating, more elusively, in the poet's emotion. The "most characteris-

45. Servius pretty clearly inherited much of this style from Donatus and even earlier scholars such as Valerius Probus (whose *quaestio* on Aeneid 10.18 he cites); more important, we now know that he drew from Greek scholiasts on Homer (Farrell 2008, and elsewhere). The scholarship on the history and structure of the *quaestio* is surprisingly thin; see *e.g.*, Casali (2007), and for the example given, Fowler (1997: 73). I thank Robert Kaster for further insights, and Joseph Farrell for sharing work in progress.

46. Whether or not a passage is intended metaphorically is "one of the oldest problems of hermeneutics, a discipline whose origins are bound up with the theological disputes over the allegorical meaning of the Old Testament texts" (Szondi 1986: 9). See most recently Most (2016). A physicalist allegorical reading of Homer goes back to Theagenes in the 5th c. BCE. See Lamberton (1997: 43).

47. For the former: Johannes Tzetzes understood the "dear homeland" to which Odysseus longs to return as the "heavenly Jerusalem" (Browning 1992, who notes that his over-allegorical style was opposed by Eustathius); for the latter, Bernardus Silvestris would "construe the first six books [of the *Aeneid*] in Neoplatonic terms, as describing the maturation of the hero from early sin and confusion to eventual grace and understanding" (Ziolkowski and Putnam 2008: 626).

tic feature" of the philological style of Wang and his colleagues was "the pervasiveness of its allegorical readings." [48]

To characterize all this somewhat more specifically, the shifting relationship between poetry and philosophy among the Neo-Confucians in the Song-Yuan period reveals a hermeneutic expansiveness not unlike that of the Stoics and Neoplatonist. Poetry that had earlier been viewed as "simple literature" — a description of landscape, for example, was a description of a landscape — came to be interpreted as embodying the insights of philosophy, that is, as functioning in the manner of allegory. While such interpretation may today be viewed by some as irresponsible distortion or misrepresentation of the literal text, the medieval audiences for which they were intended received them with enthusiasm. Indeed, the tradition of Confucian hermeneutics so far as I can see demonstrates an unequivocal openness to pluralism and debate: there were as many readings of a classic text as there were commentaries on it, and these were not only tolerated but encouraged. [49] Interpretation of this sort led to an Aristarchan-type backlash in the Ming-Qing, when as I have noted philologists began to move away from moral speculation on the Classics to narrower, historical problems, above all, concerns of textual authenticity. [50] But this seems to have been just another swing in the literalist-allegorical oscillation constitutive of philology.

3. INDIAN CONFORMITY

How far does the philology of Sanskrit India conform to the general model I have just rudely sketched? Here we need to distinguish between practices that were made explicit in acts of editing and interpreting, and those that were left tacit. Explicit Indian philology shows substantial convergence with the disciplinary form just charted. Tacit philology, by contrast, offers insight into what I have termed *areal* particularities.

As is the case of ancient Greco-Roman learning, explicit Indian philology was never systematized. Here the *lacuna* is however rather odd, given

48. Mittag (2010: 322-323).

49. Gardner (1998: 398) citing Richard Lynn. A fully acknowledged interpretive pluralism is suggested in particular by the Confucian commentarial tradition. There was no singular meaning of the Classics. As the commentaries demonstrate at every step, there were multiple meanings; all of them evince the construction of signification as a historically situated practice. See Gardner (*passim*).

50. Han (2013: 69-70, 73); Elman (2001).

the otherwise vast systematization of knowledge forms representative of the Sanskrit intellectual world. In the case of edition, we are left to quarry the principles from the genre of philological commentary that makes its appearance toward the end of the first millennium (which is quite late, given the millennium-long prehistory of the literary culture).[51] We know nothing about the conditions of possibility of this new genre; there was, for example, no sudden explosion of manuscript reproduction, as in Alexandria. We only know that a new set of exegetical concerns arose along with a new text-critical vocabulary, with technical terms like *pāṭha*, "variant," or *prakṣipta*, "interpolated text," *kalpita*, "conjectured text," in contrast to the *āgata*, or "received text" (later often called *sāmpradāyika*), suddenly coming into vogue. To be sure, commentary devoted to philosophy and science had appeared centuries earlier, but such commentary is more purely exegetical; the focus is on the work's argument, not its textuality. Kumārila, author of some of the greatest philosophical commentaries of the medieval period, discusses textual questions only three times, by my count, in his entire *œuvre*, and even so, they are presented as philosophical, not philological, problems.[52]

The distinction between philological and quasi-philosophical commentary is found in the Greco-Roman world. Greek philology began with Homer and the lyric poets, though other genres came gradually to be included. Latin by contrast probably began with law.[53] Chinese philology was first directed toward the Classics, which were multi-genre but it was predominantly the *Book of Odes* that stimulated the interpretive habit. And as in Greece and China, philological commentary in classical India is by and large concerned with art poetry and the epics (which were often

51. A fuller argument on the rise and character of Indian commentary is offered in Pollock (2015).

52. The one well-known instance pertains to what Kumārila calls the Vṛttikāra's "*pāṭhāntara*" (*satsaṃprayoga* for *tatsaṃprayoga*, *Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.4), but *pāṭhāntara* here signifies not a "variant reading" but a "textual revision" required to solve an epistemological problem (*Ślokavārttika Pratyakṣasūtra* 13cd). This is precisely the signification of *pāṭhāntara* in the *Vakroktijivitā* and *Vyaktiviveka*, two late-tenth century Kashmir *alaṅkāra* texts, where the concern is to address literary problems. (See Pollock 2018 for a discussion of these works and the other instance where Kumārila uses the term to refer to a parallel tradition of *recitation*, not a difficulty in scribal transmission.) The verbal *pāṭh* is found occasionally in Pali commentaries and the *Visuddhimagga*, but the variants thereby referenced are never adjudicated, only glossed. For Buddhaghosa's editorial technique, see further in von Hinüber (2013/2014).

53. Dickey (2007: 10); on the Latin tradition, Zetzel (2015: 49).

understood to be poetry).[54] This is unsurprising given that such texts alone, as the critic Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka taught at the start of the 10th century, are *śabdārthapradhāna*: where both concern with the authorial original (the *artha*) and the need for textual exactitude (the *śabda*) predominate, whereas philosophy prioritized *artha*, which was thought of as something independent of embodiment in any particular *śabda*.[55]

Vedic commentary, which also emerges around the beginning of the 2nd millennium, shows no interest whatever in textuality. While perhaps expected for that tradition given its supposed immunity to textual drift, the same unconcern also applies to the commentaries on Southern Buddhist and Jain texts (both do register textual variants but do not critically adjudicate among them) as well as those on the broad range of new scriptures produced throughout the 1st millennium, whether Mahāyāna, Śaiva, or Vaiṣṇava. The *prāmāṇyam* of these later holy texts is never based on their linguistic actualization, despite their claim to be composed by God or to be words spoken by the Buddha), but instead on their truth.[56]

3.1. *Indian Conformity in Edition*

Philological commentary in India (which, it is worthy adding, was typically an important source of a text's stability, just as in Graeco-Roman antiquity) shows that commentators usually functioned as editors, though curiously we have no traditional Sanskrit terms for any of the activities associated with this activity.[57] While all editors shared similar conceptions of recension — and the authorial intention and textual coherence upon which recension is predicated — few explain their procedures. The late

54. Recall that readers like Ānandavardhana thought of the *Mahābhārata* as embodying the *rasa* of *kāvya*, while the *Rāmāyaṇa* is of course the *ādikāvya*.

55. Pollock (2016b: 149). Compare Zetzel (1993: 112). Only very rarely does commentary on other genres do philological work in Sanskrit (Viśvarūpa's text-critical comments on *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* in 9th-century Kerala are unusual).

56. Pollock (2018). Although Śabara denies that Vedic words differ from *laukika* words (PMS 1.2.32: *sa [padānām arthaḥ] yathaiva loke vivakṣitas tathaiva vede 'pi bhavitum arhati*), Kumārila unequivocally states that linguistic form itself (*rūpād eva*) shows the Veda to be *apauruṣeya* (*Tantravārttika*, v. 1: 166, line 2). It is curious, then, that linguistic form is never thematized as a criterion of authenticity.

57. While *śodhana*, "purifying" — note the metaphor, found in other traditions, of textual variation as pollution — is occasionally used for the act of editing, no term for "editor" or "edition" exists, or for the act of collation or the analysis of witnesses. Vergil's text, given his commentators, was far more stable than that of Ovid.

12th-century Kerala scholar Dakṣiṇāvartanātha may have been the first to allude to the practice (in his still unpublished commentary on *Raghuvaṃśa*) that he prepared his work "after examining variants in manuscripts from various regions." [58] He was echoed a half-century later by Udāḷi Varadarāja (editor of both the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, and appropriately awarded the *birudas colapaṇḍita* and *vyākyātṛcuḍāmaṇi*), who refers to the need "to examine multiple manuscripts from multiple regions," [59] and, four centuries later, by Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara, who gathered "many manuscripts from different regions" for his edition of the *Mahābhārata*. Aside from the problem of regionalization visible here, to which I turn shortly as an instance of tacit philology, all these statements clearly imply, and their procedures confirm, some collation of manuscripts. But, as in the classical Mediterranean world (and unlike Song China), they reveal nothing about their procedures, and again, have no actual term to designate the practice.

All the manuscripts referred to (or, possibly, recensions — the latter may, possibly, be designated by the term *saṃpradāya*) were held to be versions of the same work, and could accordingly be used to emend each other. None of the commentators mentioned describes his method of emendation, though all state their criteria. Dakṣiṇāvartanātha aimed to record "the *correct* readings (*sādhūn [pāṭhān]*) and reject the others"; Udāḷi sought to establish "the *right* reading (*samyakpāṭha*)" that had been "corrupted by scribes unskilled in the various scripts"; Nīlakaṇṭha "critically established the best readings" (*viniścitya ca pāṭham agryam*). By and large Indian editors were Alexandrians in their method: they drew the best readings from wherever they found them, in a happily eclectic manner. Regionality was a condition of edition but never a determinant.

The categories "correct," "right," "best," referring to grammatical, metrical, or other sort of norm, are complimented by additional criteria found already in 10th-century Kashmir. The poetry editor Vallabhadeva, who is more forthcoming about his practices than any other commentator, judges readings on the basis of grammar and context, narrative consistency, scholarly authority, antiquity, social normativity (*i.e.*, by excluding obscenity), and aesthetic power. He employs the familiar principle of *lectio difficilior* and the antiquity such difficulty implies (*aprasiddhatvād*

58. *vaideśikeṣu kośeṣu pāṭhabhedān nirīkṣitān*. See Pollock (2015: 353 n. 18).

59. *bahudeśasamānītabahukośaparīkṣaṇāt* (in his commentary on the *Rāmāyaṇa*). See Raghavan (1941-1942).

ārṣaḥ pāṭhaḥ [sc. *sādhīyān*]), but will also sometimes combine principles of antiquity and aestheticism (*jaratpāṭho 'tra ramyataraḥ*).[60] Where witnesses offer no guidance in correcting a solecism, Vallabha will suggest a revision in order to shield his author from censure. But he does not alter the text, and instead preserves the offending reading. And in this he was typical: the text as received in the manuscript tradition (*āgata*) always trumped a text as conjectured (*kalpita*).[61]

A similar fidelity to toward the received text is found in the treatment of interpolation (*prakṣipta*, later *kṣepaka*), another early-2nd-millennium conceptual innovation. Commentators identify interpolation by a wide range of criteria: manuscript collation; narrative coherence; stylistic and aesthetic refinement, even *usus scribendi*.[62] Thus the early 18th-century scholar Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa rejects a verse in the *Rāmāyaṇa* on the grounds that it is (1) ignored by earlier commentators, (2) internally incoherent, and (3) narratively inappropriate.[63] But again, the offending passage was

60. Not just as grammatically or contextually "correct/reasonable/proper/right" (*sādhu/yukta/samīcīna/samyak*), but also as "authoritative" (*prāmāṇika*), "false" (*ayukta, apapāṭha*), "mistaken" (*prāmādika*), "corrupt" (*duṣṭa*); "narratively contradictory" (*asaṃbaddha*), "illogical" (*anyāyya*, [V. on KS 6.19], "obscene" (*asabhya*), "ancient" (*ārṣa/prācīna/jarat*; and, lastly, "lovely," "beautiful," and "more beautiful" (*sundara/ramya/ramyatara*). Regarding the *difficilior* principle, James Zetzel provides evidence from the "archaizing" period of Roman literary culture (early empire) showing how *less* common words could replace *more* common ones. The *difficilior* is, evidently, not always *melior* or *potior* (Zetzel 1993: 108).

61. Others like Nīlakaṇṭha offer additional criteria of evaluation of readings by their frequency (common, occasional, rare) and of manuscripts by their age (old, recent, damaged, "good"), see Pollock (2018: n. 24). The binary *āgata/kalpita* is apparently late in its text-critical sense. Some commentators, Mallinātha for example, occasionally gave into the temptation to alter the text (see Pollock 2015: 122).

62. It can only have been by having comparing manuscripts that the 14th-century commentator Mallinātha could athetize six verses in Kālidāsa's early 5th-century poem *Meghadūta*, though he himself is silent about his procedures. *Rāmāyaṇa* commentators use the criterion of narrative coherence regularly. For stylistic and aesthetic refinement see Arjunavarmadeva on the *Amaruśataka* (NSP [1st ed.]: 47), who proscribes a half-dozen verses as an inauthentic "patched rag of poems." Similarly on *Rāmāyaṇa*: Govindarāja on *Rām.* 4.58.1 recognizes five chapters as spurious; *Rām.* 2.89.19+, a passage all commentators call interpolation. But in every such case they continue to transmit the materials and do not suppress them. See p. 30, n. 77 below on Mahima Bhaṭṭa's use of the whole corpus (*usus scribendi*) of Kālidāsa to rule out a usage.

63. *Tilaka* on *Rām.* 3.48. 24 (NSP): "At this point in the chapter some [editor-commentators] include a verse where Rāvaṇa speaks: '...' Insofar as it is not commented on by *Kaṭaka* it must be an interpolation. Moreover, the first quarter-verse [in which Rāvaṇa

preserved and transmitted.[64] Copyists behaved like the editors, routinely declaring *yādṛṣam pustakaṃ dṛṣṭaṃ tādṛṣaṃ likhitaṃ mayā*, whether it was right or wrong. And again, this was not just convention. As an editor of the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* put it, he found no evidence that any scribe "ever *deliberately or intentionally* omitted a single line of the text."

Indeed, unlike what we find in say, Confucius, who sought to reduce texts, removing 2700 of the 3000 poems of the *Shih ching* — authenticity was achievable through eliminating additions, and less was more — Indian philologists often seemed to have wanted to expand them: more was always more. Even though the typical Indian mytheme saw human textual history as a history of reduction or even loss (of Śiva's primal texts, for example, as for example in *Mahābhārata* Book 12, or of all-encompassing tales like the *Bṛhatkathā*, of which only a fragment remains from Varāruci's burning), editorial practice moved in the opposite direction. Thus, India's primal editor, Vyāsa, agglomerated texts; the bigger the better seems to have been the order of the day. And scribes followed suit, preserving everything, including interpolations, while avoiding excision, even excision due to sectarian disagreement. We need far more detailed work on scribal practices, but we can aver that they were often (though not always) scholars, who tried to make sense of the texts they were copying, and altered (usually simplified) them when they felt alteration was required.

3.2. *Indian Conformity in Interpretation*

Unlike editorial method, which emerged without historical precedent, interpretative method derived in some measure from Mīmāṃsā, or traditional Vedic hermeneutics, which therefore merits a brief comment by way of prelude.

In general, Mīmāṃsā scholars sought to impose boundaries on meaning proliferation, rather like the Alexandrians. Similar to his defense of a

describes himself as a master of the fourteen *vidyāsthānas*] makes no sense with reference to the other quarter verses. It is also entirely inappropriate that a person who has the knowledge described in the third quarter-verse [knowing the twenty-five principles, *i.e.*, 'knowing the difference between what is eternal and not eternal'] should engage in the behavior described."

64. Vallabhadeva transmitted sarga 8 of the *Kumārasambhava* even though he thought it obscene — just as Alexandrian scholars athetized but did not suppress the Aphrodite-Ares song in *Odyssey* 8 (Zetzel 1993: 109).

narrow concept of Vedic canonicity, Kumārila aimed to limit rather than extend the reach of interpretive polysemy. The use of *nirukta* (etymology), for example, was not to be permitted to exceed the socially familiar realm of semantic reference (*pikanemādhikaraṇa*); words could have one and only one meaning in a given context, to be determined in doubtful cases by the *śiṣṭas* (*yavavarāhādhikaraṇa*); signification in general was to be regulated by a carefully plotted hierarchy of semantic powers, from "direct statement" (*śruti*) to implication (*liṅga*) and so onward (*balābalādhikaraṇa*).[65] At the same time, Mīmāṃsā thinkers were entirely open to quasi-allegorical interpretation.[66] In the *mantraliṅgādhikaraṇa*, for example, metaphorical analysis is adduced to support the hermeneutists' claim that the purpose of apparently nonsensical *mantras* is indeed to communicate meaning.[67] The possibility of "overinterpretation" here was never proscribed,[68] and it would mark the larger tasks of Indian philology henceforth.

The Indian philologist generally approached interpretation like his

65. See respectively *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.3.10-11; 1.3.8-9; 3.3.14.

66. The possibility is already broached in Śabara's theorization of the distinction between *śruti* and *lakṣaṇa* (direct denotation and indirect connotation), and by Kumārila's analysis of *gauṇī vṛtti* and *lakṣaṇā* (metaphor and metonymy), respectively. See *Śābarabhāṣya* on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 6.2.20; *Tantravārttika* on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.4.22 (p. 313) (cited with approval in *Kāvyaprakāśa* 2.12 *vṛtti*).

67. The *pūrvapakṣin* holds that *mantras* have no meaning (they are to be used for their sound value only) because among other reasons they talk about nonexistent things, like "[a being with] four horns," etc. The *siddhāntin* responds that such texts need to be understood in a secondary sense: *gauṇī [sc., vṛttiḥ] kalpanāpramāṇavattvāt*, "Secondary meaning [TV: metaphorical, *rūpakadvārā*, or even allegorical meaning)] [can be accepted] insofar as it possesses probative force through assumption [sc., of the impropriety of some *adṛṣṭārtha*]." Thus the celebrated *mantra catvāri śṛṅgāḥ trayo asya pādāḥ / dve śīrṣe*, etc. ("It has four horns, three feet, two heads," *Ṛgveda* 4.58.3) is taken as a series of metaphors: by the four horns are intended (*abhiprāya*) the four priests, by the three feet the three pressings of *soma*, by the two heads the patron of the sacrifice and his wife. In addition to interpreting non-existent entities metaphorically/allegorically, the Veda will anthropomorphize the insentient instruments of a sacrifice in order to exalt it. Thus, the *mantra* "Listen, you pressing stones!" can be interpreted to mean: If insentient stones are listening when the morning prayers are being repeated, how much more so learned Brahmans? (*Śābarabhāṣya* on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.2.34-41, p. 147-153).

68. Though that is something with which Kumārila implicitly charges Śabara. But Kumārila's revision of Śabara's metaphorical meaning is only meant to provide an exegesis more in keeping with the *viniyoga* of the rite in question. See *Mīmāṃsākaustubha* p. 73. The *Tantravārttika ad loc.* offers an *arthavāda* that contains a *yāgastuti* encouraging the sacrificer when performing the rite. (The "four horns" refers to the four parts of the day, the "three feet" to the three seasons, etc.)

Latin counterpart — Mallinātha looks very much like Servius, with dhoti replacing toga — in small matters and large. Just as for Servius, it is the individual *vākya* that occupied the Indian commentator's attention, and within that *vākya*, its grammar, syntax (*ity anvayaḥ = ordo est*), lexicon, and especially figures of sound and sense. Both the Roman (and Greek) and the Indian commentator brought out their heaviest "exegetical artillery" at the start of the work, to establish both their own expertise and the deficiencies of the competition. [69] For both, tracing intertextual references was central, for this demonstrated both the significance of the work within a particular cultural matrix but also the absolute competence of the author. But the hermeneutic impulse could extend beyond this, and it was driven by the same sense of textual coherence and unity that we observed in the work of edition.

Consider in this regard Devabodha, the first known commentator on the *Mahābhārata* (ca. 1000). [70] While his philology shared the glossator's concerns of some of his successors (*e.g.*, the 13th-century Vimalabodha in his *Durbodhapadabhañjanī*, along with the *Vyāsaghaṭṭa*, *-kūṭa*, or *-durghaṭa* genre), he had far larger objectives. He has, for example, a conception of the epic as a whole: it is "a means of attaining the four ends of man" and hence actually represents four *śāstras* in one, with Vyāsa as the "great vessel to ferry man over the sea of delusion," but who is not author but rather "rememberer" of an epic whole that existed in earlier creations. [71] With this unitary vision in mind Devabodha invented the *tātparyārtha* interpretive method, where the epic is understood to offer, over its entire expanse, a coherent argument subdivided into a series of sub-topics that could be encapsulated in exegetical summaries (*tātparya*). The method would be emulated for the next five centuries or more. [72]

69. Sluiter (2013) (on the Homeric scholiasts).

70. He was prior to Sarvajña Nārāyaṇa, who is now dated ca. 1100. His influence was enormous and enduring. Sukthankar was justified in calling the work of the great 15th-century commentator Arjunamiśra of Bengal a "revised and enlarged edition of Devabodha's *Jñānadīpikā*" (1944: 403). A comparison of their *Udyoga* commentaries shows this clearly (see for one example *ad* crit. ed. 5.140), and see below n. 71 and 72.

71. *Ad Ādi* v. 6. While acknowledging the *rūḍhi* meaning of *Jaya* as the title *Bhārata* (*tato jayam udīrayet*), Devabodha foregrounds the *yoga* meaning: establishing one's own position and refuting the opponents, *i.e.*, establishing *dharma, artha, kāma*, and *mokṣa* while refuting their opposite (*jaya* is also said to imply the *anubandhacatuṣṭayam* of the work). Compare the introductory verse of Arjunamiśra's *Udyoga* commentary (Vyāsa produced a tree of language rich with the fruits of *dharma, artha, kāma*, and *nirvāṇa*, etc.)

72. Arjunamiśra, for example, summarizes the *Kṛṣṇāgamanaparvan* of *Udyoga* by reflect-

The certitude that prompted editors to question material that violated the text's coherence and unity — as in the case of interpolation — also obliged them to address conceptual problems that could not be text-critically resolved. These "doubts" (*śaṅkhā*) — like Aristotle's *zētēma* or Servius' *quaestio* — shaped the commentarial tradition especially in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (as a glance at the commentaries on Rāma's killing of Vālin or his renunciation of Sītā quickly shows), and in vernacular traditions would become something of an autonomous genre of expository art, the *śaṅkāvalī*.[73] These general concerns also readily opened the way to fully realized allegorical exegesis by the 14th century.[74]

The most systematic such allegoresis was that of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas on the *Rāmāyaṇa*, though Nīlakaṇṭha on the *Mahābhārata* and especially on the *Harivaṃśa* is comparable, and a similar strategy is found among Vedic commentators, such as Madhva in the 14th century, or Rāvaṇa in the 16th. Thus Govindarāja, the 14th-century Tenkalai scholar, represents the narrative of Rāma's departure into exile in *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* as the story of man's quest for spiritual liberation: One leaves (Ayodhyā =) Vaikuṇṭha, Viṣṇu's heaven; crosses (the Ganges =) the Virajā River in heavenly Gokula; enters

ing on its general purport: here, the political error of the Kauravas — "which could not be rectified even by a thousand words of wisdom from men as learned as Bṛhaspati" — and that inclined them to fatally underestimate the capacity of human effort to overcome an evil fate. "The thinking of Duryodhana, Karṇa, Duḥśāsana, and Śakuni was so affected by bad policy that it could not be breached even by a thousand words of wisdom from men as learned as Bṛhaspati. Thus, despite the fact that Karṇa was enlightened in private by Kṛṣṇa's authoritative discourses in accordance with *dharma* and *artha*, the kind of human effort Kṛṣṇa instructed him in — effort conditioned by action no less than the mental states produced by fate — completely escaped Karṇa. Accordingly, among the Kauravas evil fate was far more powerful than human effort, whereas among the Pāṇḍavas, fate and effort were in mutual balance and conducive to action. That is the main purport of this section" (MBh. 5, GPP p. 396, reading *kṛtyanukūle* for *kṛtānukūle*; this is taken verbatim from Devabodha, see his commentary on p. 66 of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan edition).

73. This is an understudied problem. Svarupa Das' *Mānasaśaṅkāvali* on the *Ramcaritmanas*, 1876, must surely have had predecessors. Paula Richman (2001: 28) mentions "a MŚ of Vandan Pathak (ca. 1815-1909) published in Banaras in the 1840s and [which] contains 120 doubts."

74. It is only then too that we find a fully realized allegorical literature, starting with *Prabodhacandrodaya* ca. 1050. No critical reflection on the allegorical mode accompanied this innovation, however. Commentators on Kṛṣṇamiśra's play, for example, make no mention of the fact that what they are reading is an allegory. There doesn't even seem to be a term for it in Sanskrit critical discourse. Figures like *samāsokti* (see *e.g. Kāvyādarśa* 2.203-206) or quasi genres like *anyokti* are not quite the same thing, given that the correspondences are not systematized throughout a work.

the forest (of transmigration); betakes oneself with one's individual soul to (a tree =) the body; eats, *i.e.*, experiences the fruits of one's karma; longs to find (Bharadvāja =) a wise teacher, and finally comes to the certainty that among the various spiritual paths, *ācāryaniṣṭhā*, or absolute confidence in one's teacher, is the superlative means of reaching (Citrakūṭa =) release.[75]

In sum, Indian philology largely conforms to the general philological model in both edition and interpretation. Texts were held to unitary creations embodying the intention of a single author, even for genres such as *itihāsa* that many today consider paradigms of composite authorship.[76] While the unified, authorialy-intended text was exposed to corruption in transmission or to interpolation, it could be "purified" (*śodhana*, the key term of art) by the judicious assessment of variants through manuscript collation. Unoriginal material, no matter how compelling the evidence of its unoriginality, still had to be preserved for inspection; in this sense the text as received was inviolate (commentators will transmit a text integrally even when they revise it in their commentary). Criteria of textual criticism were developed in harmony with these fundamental principles of unity and coherence. If variants could be adjudicated on the basis of antiquity, for example, it was because of the conviction that

75. Pollock, *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* vol. 2 (1986), chapter 40, n. *ad loc.*, and compare the complex allegoresis in n. *ad* 2.47.22. See also Rao (2014), Minkowski (2005, especially p. 190) and Minkowski (2016). Note however that others in India — like their compatriots in Alexandria — could contest such interpretations. For Govindarāja and Maheśvaratīrtha, Mārīca has a vision of Rāma's true, unparalleled greatness by his continually calling to mind Rāma's superhuman deeds and determines that he is the Primal Being, so that that death at his hand would fulfill the highest human goal. Here the hardheaded *Kaṭaka* commentary argues against the "stupid piety" of this interpretation ("How could Mārīca possibly know that Rāma is the Supreme Soul?" etc.). See my note *ad Rām.* 3.39.17.

76. I do not know of any instances of Indian philologists questioning the authorship of a given work — even when that work was clearly pseudonymous. Was authorship as such of a text (aside from a given interpolation) *ever* disputed? [*e.g.*, multiple works attributed to Kālidāsa by others, such as *Ghaṭakarpara* (attributed by *e.g.* Abhinavagupta) *Rākṣasakāvya* and *Śṛṅgāratilaka* [which many mss. attribute to him.] [I suppose this is true for genres as well. Anyone could produce a new Upaniṣad, Purāṇa, Tantra, (Mahāyāna) Sūtra. For the Vedic canon Kumarila sought heroically to impose limits — which demonstrates the availability of the conception of "authenticity" — but clearly not all that successfully — which demonstrates the conception's practical inconsequentiality. And note that the category "*anon.*" was not unknown. The frequent attribution in anthologies of a given poem to *kasyacid* ("someone") means only that the one author has been forgotten, not that the one author never existed.

the older the reading the closer it brought us to that authorial original. The notion of interpolation developed into the widespread criterion it became only because texts were viewed as coherent wholes;[77] regional variation was the variation of a single text, and no conception of textual pluralism is anywhere visible.[78] Because the text embodied the intention of a single author it had to exhibit consistency and self-sufficiency, and eschew internal contradiction and incompleteness. Such features never constrained larger interpretations such as allegoresis; on the contrary, they enabled them, and generally speaking, hermeneutic pluralism, proliferation of meaning, even overinterpretation were permissible and to a degree encouraged as virtuoso readership (consider the dozen or so meanings the commentator Nārāyaṇa discovers in the opening verse of the *Naiṣadhīyacarita*), even more so than in Alexandria or Neo-Confucian China.

4. INDIAN DIFFERENCE

We thus find, across the major sectors of the world history of philology, broad areas of agreement over its objects and objectives — about textual authenticity, coherence, intelligibility, the need for and procedures of correction, the wide possibilities of interpretation — however varied the specific methods, and the reasoning behind them, may have been. And most of these objects and objectives are also entirely familiar to contemporary philologists. But are there any particular areas of Indian *difference* that complicate this elementary form of philology? Here I turn to *tacit* philology, that is to say, philological phenomena that confronted Indian scholars and shaped their philology without their explicitly acknowledging them.

The first of these phenomena pertains to the place of orality in Indian literary culture. Whatever may have been its ultimate significance in shaping that culture, orality was almost completely ignored by those who

77. And not only were individual texts viewed as coherent wholes (so that higher-order criteria such as non-contradiction across the narrative could be invoked), but so was an author's *œuvre*: thus the early 11th-century critic Mahima Bhaṭṭa can make appeal to Kālidāsa's works in their entirety to rule out a given usage.

78. No one ever questioned the foundational *petitio principii* that the goal of excluding variation depended on a view of authenticity that was itself predicated on or posited by an exclusion of variation... This is a vicious circle, upon which the hermeneutical paradox is founded.

participated in it, both poets and scholars. Whether our concern is the transition from orality to literacy, their relative authority, or continuing mutual influence, we find no direct discussion in the premodern period.[79]

In general, contemporary Indologists seem to me to both overstate and understate the importance of orality. No doubt "memory culture" once played an important role in Indian textual life, but it is an overstatement to claim that memory is "the true guardian of transmission."[80] Transmission of some Sanskrit texts was certainly lost when memory of them was lost. But written transmission had a long-term importance of its own (and a character entirely familiar to us). It is not something modern scholarship has retrojected onto the past.

Orality is understated, on the other hand, when, as in recent work on the Sanskrit epics, some have argued for a *completely* literate origin.[81] Whatever comparative epic studies may be able to contribute to this question (the assertion that oral epic *never* emerges in the absence of literacy strikes me as simply preposterous),[82] manuscript evidence for neither Sanskrit epic can be squared with the denial of some degree of oral transmission. That evidence for the *Rāmāyaṇa* unequivocally demonstrates — or demonstrated to me almost four decades ago — that "the recensions must have been handed down through oral transmission ... The resulting versions were then independently fixed in writing at different times and places."[83] The evidence for the *Mahābhārata* is more variegated, suggest-

79. I leave aside such passing remarks (as Kumārila's) on the invalidity of Vedic literacy (the Veda loses its efficacy if learned from a written source rather than the mouth of the *guru*), or the occasional assertion (for which however I find little ancient evidence) of the superiority of memory over literate knowledge.

80. Colas and Gerschheimer (2009: 13). On "memory culture", see Houben and Rath (2012: 12).

81. Hiltebeitel (2001: 20) imagines the *Mahābhārata* to have been written down "by a committee ... at most through a couple of generations" between about 150 BCE and the beginning of the Common Era. Among other improbable assumptions this hypothesis presupposes a vast project of inscription soon after the very dawn of literacy in India. Martin Kern's work on the Chinese *Book of Odes* (extant manuscripts dating to mid-2nd century BCE) testifies to "the prevalence of textual transmission independent of particular written models ... No two manuscripts ... point to a common written tradition" (2002: 175), which fairly describes the early history of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, and almost certainly that of the earliest stratum, now inaccessible to us, of *Mahābhārata* transmission.

82. Hiltebeitel (2001: 19). Can he have failed to register the obvious fact that prior to the invention of literacy the existence of oralture cannot be recorded?

83. Pollock (1984: 88). Compare again Kern on early Chinese texts: "However, one may suggest to abandon, completely or in part, the double assumption of the written

ing both literate transmission (for the greater part of the epic) but also, for some portions (such as the perhaps more performative *Virāṭaparvan*), oral transmission, again, with different versions recorded at different times and places.[84] A mixed oral and literate transmission environment with massive amounts of memorized texts is what scholars now hypothesize even in early China. But one Indian difference lies in the fact no literary culture offers as rich and complicated a corpus of *preserved* textual variation as the Sanskrit for making sense of the relationship between the oral and the literate — and thereby helping us rethink our philological practices.

The role of the oral in India presents important peculiarities in two other areas. Fully literate texts such as the *Kampan Rāmāyaṇa* and *Rāmcaritmānas* were experienced predominantly through oral performance and possibly transmitted orally to a large degree, but with astonishingly minimal textual variation. Could the memory culture of the Vedic tradition have set a standard for the transmission of these quasi-scriptural works outside the Vedic sphere?[85] On other genres of a purely *laukika* sort the oral has exerted just the opposite effect. The manuscript history of many works of poetry, such as Bhartṛhari's *Śatakatrayam*, demonstrate indubitably the influence of living memory practices, showing variants that are neither scribal errors nor learned corrections but quasi-oral *pāṭhabhedas* in what was nonetheless fundamentally a literate culture.[86]

Here the Sanskrit world presents philological challenges unknown

Urtext and its subsequent continuous process of copying. One could instead propose the existence of multiple, mutually independent written versions that at least once, and perhaps more often, were generated not from copying but from a memorized or orally transmitted text" (2002: 149). He goes on to add, "This is not meant to rule out the possibility that the unrecoverable Urtext was initially composed in writing. It only suggests that after the composition, the text was not continuously transmitted along the genealogical lines of the stemma codicum." It is also true that by the time of the *Bālakaṇḍa*, oral performance had already become a literary trope — of a sort that would have been impossible to conceptualize in a world of pure orality — and along with the *Uttarakāṇḍa* may embody a different reproduction technology (Pollock 2006: 78).

84. Altogether ignored (except for one footnote, 837) in the elephantine *vāntāśanam* of Adluri and Bagchi (2018).

85. See Sathaye (2017, especially p. 431).

86. As in China, manuscripts were hard to acquire in India, laborious to copy, and often carried in people's "throats" rather than in books (*kaṇṭhastha* rather than *granthastha*), whether in the classroom, where the set text was (and still is) typically recited from memory, or in literary performance, where the text could be launched into the world of memory from recitation from a single written exemplar.

to the classical tradition, where manuscript copies "do not represent different versions of the work, but rather scribal attempts ... to reproduce a single form of a text." [87] In India, transmission was usually *unbroken*, not radically interrupted as in the West, where for a variety of reasons (not least the caesura of Christianity) many classical works were extant only in a single medieval manuscript before transmission was resumed. [88] Sanskrit transmission was also usually not *defined*: manuscripts moved across scripts and regions, were compared by copyists and editors and emended, in addition to being affected by variants alive in memorized transmission.

That said, in a large array of other genres oral variation, whether structural (as in the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*) or episodic (as in Bhartṛhari's poetry) is entirely absent. Many shastric texts, such as the recently re-edited *Nyāyamañjarī*, present no text-critical problems that cannot be addressed by the general rules of classical and contemporary philology (widely taught works, such as Gadādhara's *Śaktivādavicāra*, do show layers of pedagogical orality, as Gerschheimer has shown). [89] As for radical discontinuity, some Indian text traditions were indeed exposed to it, such as northern Buddhism in the early 2nd millennium; and the fate of many texts did indeed hang by a thread as slender as that of Greek and Latin works (Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, to name just three). [90] Abhinavagupta's *Abhinavabhāratī*, one of most significant works in the history of Indian aesthetics, presents an especially intriguing case. So far as I am able to determine, the text disappeared from its homeland soon after it was written. No one had access to it in Kashmir — or anywhere else, except for a small and related group of scholars in late 12th-century Gujarat. [91] The work was preserved in what seems to have been a single manuscript (and some late medieval copies of it), and not in Kashmir or even in Gujarat but 3000 km to the southwest,

87. See Tarrant (2016: 3-4). [But not entirely unknown in the West, of course: Niles on the interplay between oral and written transmission in the *Chanson de Roland*, both "scribal degradation and oral/aural modification" at the same time (2013: 215). "Mouvance."

88. Catullus, Propertius, and Petronius among others. Additional causes of interruption include changes in writing materials — from papyrus to parchment — or in writing style — from Roman half uncial to Carolingian minuscule.

89. Gerschheimer (1996).

90. Reynolds and Wilson (1991: 103).

91. Pollock (2016b: 398).

in Malabar.[92] A theory of Indian philology remains to be developed that is sophisticated and flexible enough to account for such widely divergent transmission phenomena as evinced by the epics, the *Śatakatrayam*, discursive texts with multiple witnesses like the *Nyāyamañjarī*, and a unicum like the *Abhinavabhāratī* — to say nothing of dealing seriously with the astonishing fact that there exists not a single autograph manuscript for any text whether Sanskrit or vernacular prior to the 19th century. Premodern Indian philologists themselves developed no such theory, having noticed not a single one of the phenomena I have mentioned.

A second area of difference concerns the regionality earlier noticed. When Indian philologists refer to the regionalization of recensions, they take it as a simple fact, not as the text-theoretical conundrum it is. What is puzzling is why most works of Sanskrit literature, when sufficiently widely disseminated, should display regionalized diversification. The two epics divide (or seem to divide)[93] into a northern and a southern recension, with the added oddity that it is the northern recension of the *Mahābhārata* — like that of Bhartṛhari — that is the more conservative, and by contrast the southern recension of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.[94] Dramas exist in multiple regional recensions: *Śākuntala*, for example, in three (eastern, southern, and northwestern), *Nāgānanda* in five (from Nepal, Tibet, North India, the Deccan, and South India). So does lyrical poetry (the *Amaruśataka* has a western, southern, and eastern recension), and court poetry (five such recension have been described for the *Raghuvaṃśa*: eastern, western, Kashmira, southern, and north-central). Regionalized recensions, which typically do not reduce to an archetype — a fact again unrecorded by premodern Indian philologists — present a phenomenon entirely unknown to the classical (or, so far as I can see, Chinese) philology.

A wide variety of additional questions for a history of difference in Indian philology remains that I can only raise. Why was translation, though so frequently (and in some ways, massively) practiced, never once refer-

92. The loss of all earlier *Nāṭyaśāstra* commentaries can be accounted for by the intellectual *supersession* common elsewhere in the Sanskrit tradition (Śabara superseding the Vṛttikāra, Śaṅkara superseding Upavarṣa-Bodhayana, and so on). But supersession obviously cannot explain the numerous examples of single-manuscript survival of many major works, though neither can we blame the "generations of carelessness and stupidity" that some have attributed to early medieval European readers (brilliantly parodied in Stoppard 1997: 24).

93. Unless this is the bipartite stemma illusion that Bédier first and famously identified.

94. Kosambi (1948: 74).

enced in Sanskrit let alone theorized? Why were vernacular languages, though everywhere spoken by Sanskrit philologists, never analyzed by them? Was there any relationship between textual practices and religious confession — was there a Buddhist or Jain philology as there was a Christian philology (or at least a Protestant philology, under the banner *sola scriptura*), as there was a Buddhist and Jain aesthetics, logic, and so on? Unlike Song China or Humanist Europe, India never experienced a philological revolution directed toward scripture. The core religious texts of the Sanskrit tradition, the Vedas, forever escaped text-critical scrutiny even as they were subjected (beginning, as noted above, largely in the early 2nd millennium) to intense hermeneutical scrutiny.

5. Philology as the Discipline of Making Sense of Areal Texts

Understanding Indian philological difference, and philology in general — the areal aspect and the disciplinary aspect — is clearly a work in progress. Why this work should be engaged at all depends to a large extent on our answer to the question I raised earlier: do our present practices have any need to take account of the philology, whether explicit or tacit, of India's past?

Our answer to this question requires answering a more basic one: What does it mean, in my definition of philology, to "make sense of texts"? Contemporary philologists, of whatever area, have shown themselves to be entirely indifferent to, even innocent of, the need of arguing out a theory of meaning, though clearly that is foundational to everything they do. I have begun to think that any such adequate theory would of necessity be multidimensional, in fact, three-dimensional. Let me briefly summarize.[95]

The first dimension is *historicism*. A discovery of 18th-century European philology and its conceptual cornerstone ever since, historicism insists that the true meaning of a work is exclusively the meaning it possessed for the author and original audience. This is the default (and generally unconscious) position of modern philology. The second is what we can call *presentism*. Philosophical hermeneutics has provided strong arguments for the inescapability of our own subjectivity in the establishment of meaning. And it is of course the flip side of historicism: if all

95. An attempt at a deeper historical and theoretical presentation can be found in Pollock (2014).

meaning is specific to its time, the historicist's meaning will contain an inexpungable component of his own historicity.

To the historicism and presentism, both entirely familiar, I add a third, less well-theorized, dimension: *traditionism*, by which I mean the entire range of meanings the text has had in the course of its transmission. These would include the "allegorical" interpretations I earlier adduced from traditionist readers like the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, Neo-Confucians, and Byzantine Christians. Of course, such readers are presentists from a synchronic perspective; their intepretation is less about what a text may originally have meant (a question either uninteresting or, quite possibly, incoherent to them) than about what it could mean to them.[96] Also, of course, since every reading is already an *Auseinandersetzung* with some other reading, and hence in a contest with it, all traditionist interpretations were as much subject to contestation in their own times as our interpretations are in ours.[97]

None of these meanings — and this is the very core of my argument — comes closer to the essence of the text than any other, *because the text has no essence*.[98] On the contrary, it is only by unifying all three — a unity that, philologically considered, is neither irrational nor impracticable — that we can claim to understand the text's meaning in full. I want to try to suggest the implications of this theory of meaning in the two domains I have explored in this essay, edition and interpretation.

5.1. *Pluralist Edition*

For a century Western textual criticism has been a battlefield between the followers of Karl Lachmann, who believe the extant witnesses of a text point toward a single archetype from which they derived, and those of Joseph Bédier, who believe we cannot reach that archetype but must instead settle for the "best manuscript" available. This contest (its relationship to Indian philology both premodern and modern being quite

96. Allegoresis does not aim "to repress or conceal or get 'beyond' its [own] historicality, its belongingness or finitude, but rather asserts it" (Bruns 1988: 392).

97. Stoic allegorists, for example, were accused of willful distortion (Lamberton and Keaney 1992: xvi), and recall *Kaṭaka*'s criticism of Śrī Vaiṣṇava allegory (above, p. 29, n. 75, and Minkowski 2016), and Eustathius's of Tzetzes (p. 19, n. 47). The larger disputatious context of classical interpretation is sketched in Sluiter (2013).

98. The most consistently intelligent defense of this position is to be found in the work of the American philosopher Richard Rorty (*e.g.* Rorty 2007).

variable) has diminished, with a sort of *madhyamamārga* eclecticism making a strong return. [99] The multidimensional philology I advocate considers the Lachmann-Bédier choice to be a false one; we want both the best manuscript and the original toward which it and the other witnesses indubitably point, however elusively (purely oral traditions, if we could really posit them, would raise additional questions). In the past, even if both positions, the one more or less historicist, the other traditionist, were known to have merit, there was no actual procedure for moving from conviction to practice. Today, digital technologies permit their simultaneous presence: an edition prepared in Lachmannian spirit can at the same time code data in such a way as to permit the reader to generate each of the constituent witnesses upon which it is based. The "best manuscript" edition can then exist side by side — or click by click — with the reconstruction. Readers can have both truths before them. [100]

A three-dimensional philology, however, wants to do something more than this, including understanding the actual construction of meaning by the premodern Indian editor, *i.e.*, the traditionist reader. Consider again the *Śatakatrayam*. For D.D. Kosambi, who prepared a critical edition in 1948, there existed (as for Whitney) a single textual truth. In the new edition I am preparing, I am concerned not only with what Bhartṛhari (or "Bhartṛhari," it doesn't matter) may have written but also what Indian editors thought he wrote, and of course thereby also with what actual readers actually *read*. I accordingly base my edition on the two most accomplished (and probably oldest) editors, Rūpacandra and Rāmarṣi (both from 16th-century Rajasthan). Their selection and arrangement of poems embody a particular aesthetic — one that foregrounds repetition, echoing, *samsyāpūrti* and the like, which are clearly compositional techniques foundational to the collection — just as the selection and arrangement that informs the work of later southern editors like Rāmacandra Budhendra, which is almost certainly derived from the "decad" structure of the *Tirukkuṛaḷ* and embodies a similar didacticism. [101] This

99. Tarrant (2016: 61) remarks on the renewed respect for editorial eclecticism (beginning in classical studies with the second edition of Giorgio Pasquali's *Storia della tradizione e critica del testo*, 1952).

100. See further in Pollock (2018).

101. They arranged the anthology in *daśakas* (they call them *paddhatis*) that brought together verses sharing some discourse on *nīti*, *śṛṅgāra* [variation here], or *vairāgya*. On the *Tirukkuṛaḷ*, Norman Cutler's remarks, "Every verse ... belongs to a "chapter" (*atikāram*) of ten verses, and each chapter bears a title which putatively, and in most cases fairly

traditionist dimension, whether northern aesthetic or southern didactic, is part of the *meaning* of the poetry but vanishes entirely in Kosambi's edition. At the same time, however, Kosambi's historicist truth needs to be honored, for rejecting a reading that is clearly superior would be to honor the indigenous editor at the potential cost of dishonoring the poet. We need both dimensions, and there is no reason we cannot have both. [102]

The same multidimensionality pertains across the philological board, as for example with respect to interpolation. The Latinist Richard Tarrant invites us to think of this phenomenon not as falsification or forgery, but instead as emendation, annotation, or even collaboration: the first two types addressing textual defects or obscurities, the last, improving in some way a text seen as incomplete. These are forms of meaning as revelatory as any in the "original." [103]

5.2. *Pluralist Interpretation*

It is in the realm of interpretation, however, that the full force of multidimensional philology can be seen. We have observed how the historical general model of philology offers a far more open domain of interpretation than contemporary philology would allow. In India in particular, interpretative principles such as the *nītārtha/neyārtha* distinction among the Buddhists, the *saṃvṛti-sat/paramārtha-sat* (or *vyāvahārika/pāramārthika*) differentiation drawn from this, and considerations of *upāya*, already presuppose something of this pluralism, and offer a stark contrast to the sorely impoverished hermeneutic of one-dimensionalism that characterizes philology of the modern West (*i.e.*, 19th century to the present). [104] Current scholarship on the epics, for example, offers a reprise of the 19th-century *agon* between analysts and synthesists (and with something of the same venom). It is clearly absurd to deny the historically layered quality of the Sanskrit epic texts: the manuscript tradition testifies to this on virtually every page of the critical editions. But is also clearly absurd to re-

obviously, identifies the topic or theme treated in its constituent verses" (Cutler 1992: 551).

102. A good example is *Śatakatrayam* 2.12: *śakayuvatikapolapāṇḍutāmbūlavallī. śaka-*] Kosambi; *śuka-* Rāmarṣi, Rūpacandra. The reading I accept is that of some *southern* manuscripts.

103. Tarrant (2016: 87-89).

104. Or perhaps, instead of pluralism, we might say "multiplism": "while critical pluralism holds that admissible interpretations are equally preferable, multiplism allows that admissible interpretations may be unequally preferable" (Krausz 2002: 1).

ject an entire millennium or more of a reading practice that held the texts to be coherent, meaningful wholes. But why are we compelled to choose between the two approaches? The *Rāmāyaṇa* can be — indeed, must be — understood *simultaneously* on a historicist plane as a post-Aśokan fictional account of a new political theology of the earthly god-king (as I described it more than thirty years ago); on a traditionist plane as a fully unitary narrative in general and in particular as a Śrī Vaiṣṇava allegory about the soul's progress; and on a presentist plane as ... well, in any number of ways in compliance with our subjectivities, depending on who "we" are, and according to the end to which we wish to direct our interpretation: as gender model or antimodel, as political hope or threat, and so on. None of these interpretations is or can be *false*, since they are real responses generated by real features of the text, however attenuated the connection between text and response might seem to us. They are all embodiments of human consciousness, and such forms of consciousness cannot be untrue with respect to the facticity of their historical existence.

SUMMARY

As the foregoing everywhere indicates, I believe our philological practice will be strengthened by finding ways to take seriously both the historical disciplinary form of Indian philology and its areal specificity, and the latter both in its explicit and tacit dimensions. That practice should thus seek, on the one hand, to recover the large philology that Vico, Schlegel, and others envisioned for modern Europe, where exegesis and interpretation are invariably co-present and mutually constitutive; the philology that, as we have seen, marked the whole premodern world, where scholars like Mallinātha were complemented by Govindācārya in 15th-century India; Eustathius by John Tzetzes in 12th-century Byzantium; Ouyang Xiu by Wang Anshi in Song China; the philology, in other words, where meaning was held to be immanent at once in the text and in the reader as historically constituted. It should also seek, on the other, to know both what Indian philologists believed to be the case, and what was (or what we now think was) the case though earlier philologists may have been unable to see it. It respects tradition but in the full conviction that no tradition is competent to understand its own world completely. And in its three dimensions it at once acknowledges the scientific value of truth, the political value of pluralism, and the hermeneutical necessity of asking

what a given text means to one's own life.

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