Philology on the Internet: The Internet and Philological Studies (summary)

This article deals with online resources for philological studies on the Internet. The Internet must be seen as an important tool for research and education in philology today, especially for researchers working far away from medieval archives. On the net there are lots of sites that consist of text editions or sites that discuss medieval matters. In my paper I divide the resources in two different fields, first I discuss net editions of primary sources, and then I discuss different kinds of secondary sources accessible on the net.

Online editions of medieval manuscripts and texts can be grouped in two different classes. We have net editions of medieval texts presenting the text in a machine-readable format, which means that the text is transcribed and the result is an interpretation of the original medieval text. We also have net editions that present the text as image-files, i.e. the original document is photographed and the image is published on the net. These types of editions I refer to as facsimile editions.

The machine-readable text editions can be of three different qualities. First, facsimile transcriptions where each single character is faithfully copied. Second, diplomatic transcriptions where there is less allographical variation, e.g. the Carolingian and Insular f may be represented with the same character and abbreviations are expanded. Third, normalized transcriptions where the orthography is based on standard dictionaries and grammars.

In the article I present and discuss a selection of both facsimile and machine-readable online editions. While facsimile editions often are based on an institutional website they are reliable and are often characterized by high quality. The problem is that mostly illuminated manuscripts or luxury manuscripts are presented on the web, while utility manuscripts are not. This means that we usually can't base our philological research on net publications. We usually must visit one or more archives. But we can, to a much higher degree than today, use the facsimile editions for education in for example palaeography.

Among the machine-readable editions the most common editions are variants of diplomatic transcriptions and normalized transcriptions. It is usual that important criticism of the sources about the editions is missing which makes them problematic to use. The aim of these transcriptions is

mostly literary. From a research perspective, machine-readable editions are most useful when they are connected to some sort of concordance, or to a multi-task search engine.

In the discussion about secondary sources accessible on the net I discuss the importance of knowing how to use a search engine. I strongly underline that both researchers and students must learn to understand the aim of the resource before for example quoting it. The Internet is crowded with information about nearly everything, but it is up to the user to consider the pros and cons of the information that they find.

The types of secondary sources that I am discussing in the paper are those that can be used to search for *incipits* in religious texts, and those that can be used to search for different religious themes or motives.

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