

Editing of Catalogues and Bibliographies

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ABSTRACT

The paper shares the experiences of understanding and deciphering problems of manuscripts in designing catalogues, annotations, editing of the texts, Classification and calendaring at Arabic and Persian Research Institute (Tonk) where author was directing the Institute and designing important catalogues of the institution.

KEY WORDS

Cataloguing, Classification, Editing, calendaring, Transliteration

INTRODUCTION

Research in Orientalology is a tedious, tenacious, sensitive and time consuming affair but editing of any document is more problematic, peculiar and pain-staking than any facet of research. Editing manuscripts, Journals and texts of varied and veritable interests or editing of catalogues- all these themes come in the domain of research -still editing of *Catalogues and Bibliographies* demonstrate diametrically debatible and difficult problems facing the scholar and exhausting him in developing the hypothetical and synthetical deliberations or deductions in disseminating established results after examining the original sources and raw material of historical facts and archival documents etc.

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EDITING

Orientalology, a cherished subject pragmatic with multifaceted disciplines interwoven and inter-related with each other, has always been relegated to a neglect perhaps being retarded by lack of profound knowledge or constraint of resources and aptitudes of the highest magnitude. The compilation of data-collection and channelization of facts in systematic and categorized ways and means rather in methodological terms in tune with chronological order embracing the salient features and characteristics of a scientific system of expertise, can analytically be coined as editing but it is higher than this categorization. It is why editing is always considered an allied subject of research with its own significant entity encompassing fundamentally all potentials and peculiarities.

Editing is a ticklish but interesting chapter of research which can be categorized in multidisciplinary subjects of intrinsic values and varieties, for example, editing of manuscripts, editing of difficult and classical texts involving diametrically divergent views either in deciphering or disseminating the theme in critically textual format. This is technically termed as redaction and rendition both covering the editing process. Redaction and rendition though separate, are inter-related with each other and overwhelmingly dominating the matter. The editing of *Catalogues and Bibliographies* also comes in the domain of this subject which basically focuses the spirit of editing.

EXPERIENCES

My association with editing of catalogues and bibliographies and textual criticism has helped to gather the knowledge in the sphere. Even after consuming four decades in this tedious job, one feels that expertise is lacking in this vast field. Similar is the case of *Maulana Imtiaz Ali Khan Arshi* (of revered memory) who had arrived at the same conclusion while discussing certain problems and technical

methodology of compilation of catalogues. Being a renowned orientalist, veteran scholar and doyen of cataloguers had occupied a prominent place in the illustrious galaxy of the distinguished bibliophiles with towering and titanic faculties. His pioneering work of bibliographical interests pertaining to *Oriental Studies* coupled with seasoned and sound experience in textual edition of obsolete texts and undecipherable documents is professedly an institute's work of acclaim and applause. He while perusing the data collection and bio-bibliographical notices of Arabic and Persian Descriptive Catalogues (collected for Tonk Institute) , appreciated the endeavours but simultaneously invited our absorbing attention to the common problem of diversity of facts and dissimilar schemes followed upon by various cataloguers. He also insisted upon to evolve a common and systematic methodology of editing catalogues in a scientific and systematic way. We had proposed, from Tonk, some formats and methodological formulae to be evolved from various cataloguing schemes of the world celebrated bibliographers and cataloguers, mainly from *Brockelmann, Storey, Rieu, Ethe and Steingass*. We then developed a separate system of editing catalogues in a renovated and improved format by following upon the methodology from erudite and scholarly works and out of certain significant peculiarities of utilitarian interest. Since then we delved deep in examining original sources while giving hypothetical and synthetical approaches to this intensive enterprise.

Thus our experience shows that a scholar while compiling and editing catalogues faces discouraging and dejecting problems and one has to tackle the un-surmountable difficulties in sorting out the themes, tracing out titles, sub-titles and assigning periods to the undeciphered and untitled manuscripts lying in an uncared condition, loose folios, fragments and tracts in a deteriorating and damaged form. Moreover, editor /cataloguer has to adopt a transliteration scheme in rendering the Arabic and Persian titles in English denoting

the correct spelling in the light of phonetic expressions. There is no uniformity in adopting transliteration scheme. The basic and primary need of the cataloguer is to adopt this scheme to give a vent to the phonetic expressions into English in conformity with vowels and consonants. This is a toil- some and tedious job in view of a rich treasure of 'Ash-Shamsi' and 'Al-Qamari' letters available in Arabic.

W. Ahlwardt a veteran orientalist has very scholarly dealt with 10,000 manuscripts of Arabic preserved in Berlin, keeping in view the multidisciplinary subjects of Arabic studies. He has also framed a transliteration scheme in his own style and system in 1899 (**Ahlwardt, 1899**).

Brockelmann, another learned cataloguer, has also devised a transliteration scheme which is more or less a healthy and considerably rich one. He framed this scheme in 1937 in dealing with Arabic manuscripts. He has not only devised this scheme but also classified the interdisciplinary subjects related to Islamic and Oriental studies. It is a separate science involving mastery over the subjects and multifaceted problems cropped up in furnishing data collection, bibliographical notices, chronology, themes of the varied subjects and discerning aptitude in deciphering texts with authenticity and accuracy (**Brockelmann, 1937**).

Long before Prof. Brockelmann, *Haji Khalifa* has compiled an intensive work entitled '*Khashfuz Zunun*' treating the oriental works with all their glosses, commentaries, annotations and even super commentaries and critical renditions. It is a first attempt of scholarly and intensively nature. After him, no one has attended the editing work of bibliographies and '*Faharis*' -so called catalogues- and more detailed form or '*catalogue raisonne*' though there is a mass of manuscripts in each part of the world replete with innumerable transcripts, treatises and codices constituting a conspicuous heritage of the world teaming with millions of people, their contribution in the

varied aspects of Art, Culture, Language and Religion. If all the manuscripts and documents are accumulated and centralized, the number could never lag behind the printed works. *Rieu, Etie. Springer, Loth, Storey and Brown* have contributed a great deal in compiling and editing of catalogues intensively and scholarly. Apart from this team of scholars, modern pioneers and bibliophiles like *Kahhala, Zarkali (al-Ailam), Prof. Mahmud Shirani, Prof. Mahmudul Hasan Tonki, Maulana Arshi, Maulavi Abdul Muqtadir, Ivanow, Muhammad Ashraf and Dr. A.A. Rizawi* have also played a vital role in compiling and editing of catalogues in a scientific and systematic way. **Zarkali (1927) and Kahhala (1957)** in their scholarly works though have not dealt with manuscripts but in the context of furnishing bio-data of the Arabic writers and scholars have indirectly summarized their works as well. These works are indispensable for compiling any catalogue. '*Mu'jam ul Mu'allifin*', refer with confidence, is a copy of '*Mu'jam ul Mussanifin*' compiled by *Maulana Mahmudul Hasan Tonki*. It is an unrivalled and monumental scholarly work edited exhaustively and intensively in Arabic comprising of 60 volumes. *Kahhala's* work is a condensed and abridged work, while *Maulana Mahmudul Hasan's* voluminous '*Mu'jam ul Mussanifin*' is very exhaustive and detailed one containing biographical notices of more than 60 thousand authors of the world. For instance, approximately 3,000 writers are named '*Ahmad*' while 1,800 as '*Muhammad*'. The first four volumes were brought out from Beirut in 1923-24. The last fourth volume ends with treatment of the authors named after *Alif (A)* annexed to the letter *Ba (B)* as *Abdulla, Abul Hasan* etc. It is a sheer misfortune rather a dreadful clamity that the remaining manuscripts comprising 56 volumes have either lost or misused in '*Al-Ailam*' and '*Mu'jam ul Mu'allifin*.' The spirit of subjects and adopting of transliteration scheme in dealing with cataloguing projects are the main problems impeding the processing of editing catalogues.

CLASSIFICATION AND CALENDARING

Classification and calendaring is another difficult area the scholar faces in compilation of either '*catalogue raisonne*' or tabular one. The following methods of technical processing are invariably required:

The distribution of subjects according to a scientific system or methodological order following either *Brockelmann*, *Browne*, *Loth or Eihe*, *Rieu* or a common formulae evolved from different cataloguers need primarily be contemplated. After classification the processing of calendaring is another intricate issue to be sorted according to a set chronological pattern. This classification of manuscripts chronologically need to be placed in such an order that the original treatise with its commentaries, super commentaries, glosses, redactions, renditions and even annotated versions (irrespective of their being propounded in any period) should follow the primary source. This is a very hard task that scholars and savants often feel puzzled. Collation and quotation that is comparing one manuscript with other copies from the texts, writings of colophon or fly-leaf and with those of colophonic texts of the authors and scribes while examining and furnishing the lines at beginning and editing of the manuscripts is another discomfoting work.

Sorting of titles, categorisation and channellization of tracts, manuals, untitled fragments, recensions, super annotated reviews on the compendia with a governing grip over marginal and interlinear notes coupled with expertise in deciphering the seal impressions, historical and super scribed writings on the various folios of manuscripts also invite the absorbing attention, concerted and concentrated circumspection of the cataloguers. The technical terminology and chronologically coined classical clauses such as "*Arz Did ah Shudh*", "*Mulahizah Namudah*", "*Arz Namudah*", "*Swad*", "*Minihyat*", "*Tarkah*", "*Lappakari*", "*Barika*",

"*Dandan Mush*", "*Afshan*", "*Mina Kari*", "*Tazheeb*", "*Unwanat*", "*Jadawal*", "*Lawh*", "*Balagha*" and so on are to be scrutinized with care and caution which facilitate in assigning the periods of the manuscripts or the custodians. Similarly the legends chronogrammatic titles (*Tarikhi Maddah*) and the specimens of calligraphic art, ink, paper and the particular system called traveling of letters from one period to another also come to rescue in determining the chronology and helping the editing of catalogues in different patterns.

Contemplating fully the above mentioned problems and factors causing technical and taxing difficulties in editing the catalogues and bibliographies, we have compiled and brought out two sorts of cataloguing work viz. '*catalogue ra'isonne*' and concise catalogue in tabular form. Both require consummate skill and seasoned expertise in compilation of data collection comprising the following descriptions:

Serial number with classified subject, accession number, title of work, name of author, name of commentator, material, script, size, folios, lines, extent, conditions and a column covering additional particulars or remarks treating of date of composition and copying and names of scribes, calligraphists and places with casual remarks on the subject matter and other significance of the manuscript.

On the contrary in compiling the '*catalogue ra'isonne*' we have incorporated the particulars of the concise catalogue more over the detailed account of internal and external evidences perspective of *resumé* of the theme and a critical analysis pertaining to all the details of the manuscripts with the specimens of different portions of the texts are supplemented giving references of being preserved and published in different collections and publications. In the former catalogue, these data collections are in tabular form while in '*catalogue raisonne*' all these details with critical approaches are given in descriptive form.

CONCLUSION

The editing of '*Catalogues and Bibliographies*' is a more difficult area of research because one has to delve deep in the original sources and allied documents while examining internal and external evidences and bringing out synthetical hypotheses and analytical theses. Therefore, one should deliberate over these issues of editing catalogues and adopting a common system of classification, calendaring and uniform scheme of transliteration to achieve more uniformity and consistency. However, being a toilsome, tiring and tedious facet needs more discussion and debate to regulate it on scientific and systematic lines.

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