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THE BOYDSTON ESSAY PRIZE 2009

The Boydston Essay Prize was established in 1995 by Jo Ann Boydston to honor the best essay or review published anywhere during the previous two years, the primary focus of which is the editing of a volume of works or documents. The following essay by Ronald Broude is the winner of the 2009 Boydston Essay Prize. It appeared originally in *Textual Cultures*, 3 (2008), the publication of the Society for Textual Scholarship, and is reprinted by permission of Indiana University Press. The members of the Prize committee were William C. diGiacomantonio, associate editor of the First Federal Congress Project; Peter Engelman, associate editor of the Margaret Sanger Papers; Leslie Rowland, co-editor and project director of the Freedmen and Southern Society Project; and Carol DeBoer-Langworthy, editor of the Neith Boyce Project, chair.

The Gilbert & Sullivan Critical Edition and the Full Scores that Never Were^{*1}

Ronald Broude

ABSTRACT: The critical edition of the “Savoy Operas” of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan provides a useful example of the ways in which scholarly editions of performing works can alter important elements of the sources on which they are based. The accepted form for the presentation of a critical edition of an opera is the “full score,” but for no Savoy Opera did a real full score ever exist—nor was one ever intended. The sources closest to full scores were the copying masters that Sullivan prepared for use by copyists extracting parts for performers, but these are skeletons into which Sullivan often did not enter revisions. In preparing critical texts of Savoy Operas, editors have been obliged to take different elements of the text from different sources: the instrumental parts from Sullivan’s holographs (with ambiguities clarified by surviving early band parts); the vocal lines and underlaid words from printed vocal scores; and the dialogue and stage directions from printed libretti. Thus are created full scores that not only “never were” but that were never intended.

Scholarly editions can often be artificial texts, prepared for purposes that may be quite different from those for which the texts they present were originally created. In no case is this more so than with performing genres, and in no per-

^{*} The author wishes to thank Marc Shepherd, who, after the publication of this paper in *Textual Cultures*, kindly brought to his attention several points requiring clarification; Mr. Shepherd’s suggestions have been incorporated into the present state of this paper.

¹ The critical edition here referred to is *Gilbert & Sullivan: The Operas* (New York: Broude Brothers Limited, 1994–). Since the expiration in 1961 of the international copyright that protected the Savoy Operas, several editions have been undertaken. Almost immediately after copyright expired, the firm of Edwin F. Kalmus (then of New York, now of Boca Raton) began to produce editions of the most popular Savoy operas, eventually publishing scores and performing material for nine works; Kalmus’ full scores were evidently scored up from D’Oyly Carte band parts, with instrumental readings adjusted to agree with pre-existing vocal scores. Dover Publications (Mineola and New York) has produced full scores of *The Mikado* (1999), *The Pirates of Penzance* (2001) and *H M S Pinafore* (2002), all in editions by Carl Simpson and E. H. Jones. Oxford University Press (Oxford and New York) began but abandoned a critical edition after the publication of one volume—*Ruddigore*, edited by David Russell Hulme—in 2000.

forming genre is this more the case than with opera. The purposes for which a scholarly edition of an opera is undertaken necessarily include analysis, research and teaching, but the purpose for which the original sources were prepared often looked no farther than performance. The adjustments that must be made in order to produce a text suitable for use by music theorists, theater historians and teachers often alter—sometimes subtly and sometimes grossly—important elements of the original sources, conferring a sense of permanence on texts that were originally at best provisional.

The format in which opera is customarily presented in scholarly editions is the full score, a form in which each vocal part and each instrumental part is represented in detail, with every pitch and every indication of tempo, dynamics, and articulation unambiguously specified. But for much of the history of opera, publication in full score was the exception rather than the rule. In some periods, opera composers composed in short score,² and even when composers prepared full scores, their full-score holographs did not necessarily represent what was actually performed.³ In the world of nineteenth-century light opera, where a constant demand for new works led to a stream of pieces hastily composed, inadequately rehearsed and, in some instances, regarded by their creators with embarrassment, composers often thought of their works as too slight or too ephemeral to merit the trouble of preparing full scores.

Editorial practice has traditionally assumed that an edition should seek to present the text of some specific document, whether a document that actually exists, a document that once existed but is now lost, or the ideal document that would have existed had the creator of the work represented transferred his conception to paper with perfect accuracy and without mechanical error. More conservative editors, referring to an edition that offers the “ideal” text that such a hypothetical document would transmit, often speak disparagingly of such an edition as presenting “a text that never was.” An editor preparing a musicological edition of a light opera for which the composer had never set about to prepare a real full score is in the even more unenviable position of preparing “a text that was never intended.”

The light operas created by W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan between 1871 and 1896 provide an informative example of the difficulties faced by scholarly editors preparing editions of operatic works for which full scores were never intended. In all, Gilbert and Sullivan collaborated on some fourteen light operas, and musical sources enabling us to reconstruct complete texts are available for all

² A short score is a score in which only the vocal lines and bass are given.

³ For a survey of the various sorts of sources, unpublished and published, by which nineteenth-century Italian opera was created and preserved, see Philip Gossett, *Divas and Scholars* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), *passim*, but esp. 3–106.

but their first collaboration, *Thespis*, for which only bits and pieces are extant.⁴ These works enjoyed immense popularity in their own time, and still hold the stage today. So much an institution have they become and so devoted a following do they command that the Gilbert and Sullivan community has a lexicon of its own. The works are solemnly referred to as “operas,” the parts from which the pit orchestra plays are called “band parts,” and the corpus is spoken of as “The Savoy Operas,” even though six of them were premiered before the Savoy Theatre opened and one was never performed there at all.⁵

The Savoy Operas are unusual in that they belong to one of the longest lasting closed performing traditions in the history of musical theatre. All but the first two Savoy operas were composed for a troupe assembled by Gilbert, Sullivan, and the impresario who brought them together, Richard D'Oyly Carte. The D'Oyly Carte organization controlled the rights to these works until the expiration of their international copyright in 1961, almost three quarters of a century after the premiere of the last collaboration, *The Grand Duke*, in 1896.⁶ Almost from the first—when a quarrel between the Triumvirate (Gilbert, Sullivan and Carte) and their financial backers led to there being two rival *Pinafore*'s running simultaneously in London—the D'Oyly Carte organization identified itself as the only company performing the versions of the operas authorized by composer and librettist. And, indeed, down to its last unhappy days, the D'Oyly Carte Company could boast that its singers and musicians belonged to a tradition in which roles had been passed from generation to generation in an unbroken line going back to the singers and musicians directed by Gilbert and Sullivan themselves. However, as the work of editors preparing editions has revealed, even in such a carefully controlled environment, and with every incentive to do so, the D'Oyly Carte establishment found it impossible to maintain the stability of either the textual or the performing tradition.

What an editor undertaking a critical edition of a Savoy Opera might like to produce is an edition based on a fair copy holograph full score prepared by Sul-

⁴ Parts of the score of *Thespis* were recycled; the fascicle containing “Climbing Over Rocky Mountain” was incorporated in the holograph of *The Pirates of Penzance*, where it became No. 5. There have been several attempts to reconstruct the score of Gilbert and Sullivan's first collaboration, most proceeding from the assumption that the music of *Thespis* is to be found in some of Sullivan's other works—usually with new lyrics.

⁵ The Savoy Theatre opened on October 10, 1881, and the Gilbert and Sullivan collaborations written prior to that year—*Thespis*, *Trial By Jury*, *The Sorcerer*, *H M S Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and *Patience*—opened in other theatres. *Patience* was moved to the Savoy in the middle of its opening run, and the other early operas, with the exception of *Thespis*, were revived at the Savoy over the years.

⁶ Even after the expiration of copyright, the D'Oyly Carte Company continued to perform and record the operas, and the D'Oyly Carte Opera Trust maintained a library of band parts that served both its own company and other groups, both professional and amateur, interested in performing any work in the repertoire.

livan. Alas, nothing of the kind exists for any Savoy Opera. It is one of the well-known ironies of Sullivan's career that the composer and many of his admirers regarded his collaborations with Gilbert as musical slumming, and Sullivan's casual attitude towards the scores of his Savoy Operas may be seen to reflect his sense that while these were works that may have been financially rewarding, they were not the creations for which he would want to be remembered. An editor, then, is left to declare as his aim the construction of the text of a full score such as Sullivan might have produced had he been inclined to do so, to which one must add Gilbert's dialogue and stage directions.

Traditional editorial practice has favored basing an edition on a single source, emending that source where there is a mechanical mistake—e.g., a spelling error—or when the editor believes that the source transmits a reading that the creator did not intend. Such a procedure is out of the question for the Savoy Operas, since for none of these works was there ever a single source that provides all of the data necessary to construct a full score. To construct a full score of an opera, one needs information about the sequence of musical numbers and connective verbal matter, the content of the vocal lines and the underlaid lyrics, the content of the instrumental lines, and the content of the dialogue, scenery and stage directions. No single source of a Savoy Opera provides all this information.

With the exception of *Thespis*, for which only the libretto survives complete (it was published in 1871 and reprinted subsequently in collections of Gilbert's plays), each of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas reaches us in four sorts of sources. First, there are Sullivan's holographs. These provide, in skeletal form, the vocal and instrumental lines, but they contain neither dialogue nor stage directions. Moreover, they were not consistently updated during rehearsals. Second, there are the vocal scores published under Sullivan's direction. But these vocal scores do not provide the instrumental lines; British vocal scores provide neither dialogue nor stage directions, though some of the American ones do. Third, there are the few surviving "band parts" from first productions, but (aside from the occasional cue) these have no vocal lines, much less dialogue and stage directions. Finally, there are the printed libretti: these contain all of the verbal matter—the dialogue, lyrics and stage directions—but they contain no music. The four plates of Figure 1 reproduce the opening of *Trial by Jury*, No. 10, as it appears in the critical edition, 1(a); the holograph, 1(b); the vocal score, 1(c); and an early band part, 1(d).

Facing such a complex of sources, the editor of any single opera is best advised to invoke the principle of "divided authority," a concept that came into vogue in Anglo-American text-critical circles with W. W. Greg's influential

10. SONG (DEFENDANT) WITH CHORUS (BRIDESMAIDS)

Allegretto non troppo vivace (♩ = 100)

Flute

Oboe

Clarinets in A

Bassoon

Horns in G

Cornets in A

Trombones

DEFENDANT

BRIDESMAIDS

1. Oh, gen-tle-men, in-ten, I
2. (You) can-not eat break-fast all

Allegretto non troppo vivace (♩ = 100)

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

a) *Trial by Jury*, No. 10, opening measures, in the edition by Steven Ledbetter, *Gilbert and Sullivan: The Operas*, Vol. 1 (New York: Broude Brothers Limited, 1994), reproduced by permission of the publisher.

(b) *Trial by Jury*, No. 10, opening measures, in Sullivan's holograph, New York, The Morgan Library and Museum, Gilbert and Sullivan Collection, reproduced by the kind permission of The Morgan Library and Museum.

Allegretto non troppo vivace (♩ = 100)

Flute

Oboe

Clarinets in A

Bassoon

Horns in G

Cornets in A

Trombones

DEFENDANT

BRIDESMAIDS

1. Oh, gen-tle-men, in-ten, I
2. (You) can-not eat break-fast all

3 verso

No. 10.

SONG—DEFENDANT.

ALLEGRO
NON TROPPO
VIVACE

1. O gen-til-er, ha-ten 1
2. can-not eat break-fast all

pry, Tho' I own that my heart has been rang-ing. Of na-ture the law I o -
day. Nor is it the act of a sin-ner. When break-fast is ta-ken a -

- ley, For na-ture is con - stant - ly chang-ing; The moon in her pha-se a
- way. To turn his at - ten - tion to din-ner; And it's not in the range of be -

found, The time, and the wind, and the wea-ther, The months in suc-ces-sion come
- lief, To look up - on him as a glut-ton, Who, when he is tir-ed of

(c) *Trial by Jury*, No. 10, opening measures, *Trial by Jury*, vocal score, first edition, second issue (London: Chappell & Company, [1878]), reproduced from a copy in a private collection.

6

B

Segue

No. 10 Song

Allegro Flute & Piccolo

1st Flute

15 9

2nd Flute

Unis

(d) *Trial by Jury*, No. 10, early flute part, reproduced from a copy in a private collection.

paper “The Rationale of Copy-Text.”⁷ If once we accept the basic premise of divided authority—that where a work survives in two or more sources, one source may furnish the best readings for some element(s) of the editorially established text but not for others—then preparing a text of an opera for which no source provides all the needed data becomes a matter of identifying for each element of the opera the kind of source most likely to provide the best readings for that element and then using that source as the base text for that element. The readings of this “base source” are reproduced except for those readings for which the editor believes that the base source does not reflect accurately the state of the opera that the editor wishes his edition to represent. Each reading in which the text that the editor has established does not agree with the base source for that element is reported as an emendation; any reading in any one of the other polled sources that does not agree with the text established by the editor is reported as a variant. In the present context, “best” has been taken in the sense of representing more closely and completely what composer and librettist finally decided they wanted performed. In managing base sources, the editor must be careful to select sources—or layers within sources—that reflect the same state of the opera: one does not want inadvertently to mix, say, the scenery and stage directions of a first run with the vocal lines of a revival for which there was new scenery requiring re-assignment of the vocal parts.⁸

For most of the Savoy Operas, the state of the work that seems most desirable to represent is what we would call the “settled” state during the first production.⁹ Given Gilbert and Sullivan’s method of working, it was only quite late in rehearsals that all the numbers and all the dialogue were in a sufficiently advanced state to enable a run-through that would give an overall sense of the entire work. During the course of rehearsals—in fact, right up to opening night—numbers might be added, repositioned, or cut (normally in the interest of improving pacing), and the associated dialogue would be adjusted accordingly. The final test was performance before a real audience, and this took place on

⁷ *Studies in Bibliography*, 3 (1950–51), pp. 19–36. Greg’s essay was, of course, concerned with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English play texts forming ancestral series, but his theories have been tried in other textual circumstances, albeit with mixed results.

⁸ Serious problems can occur when different states are mixed. In *H M S Pinafore*, for example, changes in the scenery between the first production (1878) and the first revival (1887) created uncertainty in early sources about where—onstage or off—Dick Dead-eye is when he sings—if he sings at all—in No. 12, mm 56ff.

⁹ Some exceptions to this rule: Percy M. Young decided that his edition of *H M S Pinafore* (New York: Broode Brothers Limited, 2003) should reflect the settled state of the first revival: he acknowledged that in 1878 *Pinafore* may have “defined the essential Gilbert and Sullivan opera,” but he reasoned that the 1878 version “was not then marked by the confident balance and pacing that would distinguish the subsequent operas” (Introduction, Part B, p. 24). Young therefore chose to print the text in its 1887 form, although his apparatus enables users to reconstruct the text of the 1878 version.

opening night. After judging audience reactions, critics' reviews, and their own responses, librettist and composer might make additional adjustments, and the opera would have reached a "settled" state. A text representing this state is what the editor should want to establish.

The only sources providing the complete dramatic text—the dialogue and the sequence of numbers as finally fixed early in the first run—are the British printed libretti.¹⁰ Therefore, it is these printed libretti that should determine the sequence of numbers and the dialogue of the edition of any Savoy Opera. (However, as we shall see, the printed libretti are not necessarily the best sources for the underlaid lyrics.) The sequence of numbers is usually confirmed by the vocal scores.

Prima facie, the most important category of sources for the Savoy Operas would seem to be the composer's holograph scores: there is one for each of the thirteen collaborations for which music survives.¹¹ These holographs have two important shortcomings: they are not true full scores, and they were not kept current during rehearsals.

The holographs are laid out on printed staff paper, prepared as if for full score, but they are not fair copy full scores in which every note, every dynamic, and every indication of articulation is carefully specified for every line. Rather, they are executed in a musical shorthand that makes liberal use of abbreviations and of verbal instructions that are often ambiguous and sometimes opaque. Some of the abbreviations are conventional and therefore familiar: e.g., "/" may indicate that the content of this measure replicates that of the preceding measure. The verbal instructions are of two kinds: vertical and horizontal. Vertical instructions are usually of the *colla parte* type, indicating that one part is to be derived from another. Thus, the line for the flute may be written out, and the line for the first violin may contain just one note, to establish register, and the instruction "col flauto," i.e., the first violin plays, in the register specified, the same notes as the flute. The horizontal instructions involve reproducing in one place a passage that is to be found written out—or partially written out—in another place: say, taking a passage from an ensemble and copying it into a finale. The actual instruction may appear at the destination location: "No. 11, A-H," meaning, "Copy here

¹⁰ There are American printed libretti—mostly pirated but some of them authorized—but even the authorized libretti did not keep up with changes.

¹¹ Sullivan's holograph of *Utopia Limited* has dropped out of sight, but it has not been unusual for collectors to acquire and secretly to hold Sullivan manuscripts; the *Trial By Jury* holograph was secretly held by such a collector, who offered it for sale in 1975, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of *Trial*'s first production. Fortunately, microfilms of the *Utopia* holograph are in several archives.

the passage in Number 11 consisting of the measures that I have marked there A-H.”¹²

At one time, it was thought that Sullivan’s scores partook of this form because Sullivan was lazy or because he usually wrote under pressure and rarely had time enough to fill in every detail. In short, the assumption was that the holographs were incipient fair copies—and that, had Sullivan had the time or inclination, he would have expanded the abbreviations and produced neat and complete full scores.¹³ In fact, this assumption has proved to be unfounded. As those familiar with sources for musico-dramatic works will recognize, Sullivan’s Savoy Opera holographs belong to the tradition of copying masters, skeleton scores intended solely for the use of the copyists who would extract the parts distributed to the singers and pit orchestra. There is no generally accepted term for such scores: skeleton scores, quasi-scores, shorthand scores, working scores, rehearsal scores, copying masters—all are terms that fail to catch some essential quality of these documents that were intended to serve only at a particular stage of production and not necessarily afterwards.

Once we recognize the status of the holographs as copying masters, we can understand why the holographs present some of the problems that they do. They were prepared for copyists familiar with Sullivan’s personal conventions, and any abbreviation that a copyist misconstrued could be caught during rehearsals. Refinements of tempo, dynamics, articulation and nuance could also be effected during rehearsals. And so the holographs are often silent about matters that would be dealt with when rehearsals began. Thus, the vertical instructions of the holographs usually leave us in doubt about such details as articulation and dynamics: if only one part is written out, are the articulation and dynamics of the model line to be applied to all lines?¹⁴ The answers to these questions can come only from the band parts—if such survive—actually marked by the pit musicians during rehearsals in accordance with Sullivan’s ad hoc instructions. Similarly, the horizontal instructions almost invariably leave us uncertain about whether the tempi and dynamics of model passages should be reproduced in derived passages, or whether derived passages require tempi and dynamics suitable for their new contexts. There is, of course, every reason to expect that the tempi and dynamics

¹² So many are the passages that must be expanded from abbreviations and so great the potential for misinterpretation that the critical apparatus for each opera contains a table of passages that have been so expanded.

¹³ Steven Ledbetter, in his edition of *Trial By Jury* (New York: Broude Brothers Limited, 1994), proceeded from this premise; see his discussion of sources, pp. 156–58.

¹⁴ Roger Harris has suggested, in a personal communication, that perhaps Sullivan intended that some sort of formula be applied, e.g., that dynamics for the lower brass be a level softer than those for the upper brass.

of a phrase lifted from an aria and incorporated into an overture or finale would be different in the two iterations. Again, we must be edified by the band parts.

But the holographs have another important deficiency: when changes were made during rehearsals, Sullivan did not always enter them in the holographs. Thus the holographs, as we have them, do not always represent the latest state of each number. In the holograph of *H M S Pinafore*, for example, No. 9, the First Lord's Song, "When I was a lad," still has Sir Joseph beginning his career in a cotton-broking firm, even though in this number's final form the ruler of the Queen's Navy started out as "an office boy in an attorney's firm."¹⁵ The forms of these numbers as Sullivan finally fixed them are to be found in the vocal scores. Somewhere between the holographs and the vocal scores there were undoubtedly sources—perhaps leaves of manuscript paper, perhaps marked up engraver's proofs, perhaps menus from Simpson's—on which Sullivan first recorded what the vocal scores tell us he eventually wanted. But whatever these sources may have been, they are now lost: no surviving source in Sullivan's hand has been identified as being intermediate between holograph and vocal score. In the end, the holographs are the best sources in matters of orchestration, but they need a great deal of assistance from other sources.

There are other scores connected with the D'Oyly Carte tradition that sometimes assist in reading Sullivan's holographs. There are house copies of the holographs made by D'Oyly Carte copyists. These are on the whole simply dutiful transcriptions of Sullivan's holographs, and, although they do not usually expand Sullivan's abbreviations, they do occasionally show us how a professional copyist familiar with Sullivan's notational idiosyncracies understood a reading that is ambiguous in a holograph. There are also scores of *H M S Pinafore* and *The Mikado* published in Germany.¹⁶ It is clear that these scores were produced with D'Oyly Carte's co-operation—probably with a view to obtaining German copyrights—for each is derived from the respective holograph, access to which could have come only through D'Oyly Carte. Neither score has any independent authority, but both are helpful in showing how Sullivan's contemporaries might have construed his notation.

The vocal scores are the sources most likely to incorporate the musical details, for the elements they transmit, upon which Sullivan and Gilbert finally set-

¹⁵ The superseded first verse reads: "When I [was a lad I] served [a term] | [As] office [boy to a] cotton-broking firm. | [I] cleaned [the windows with a] flannel & a mop, | [And I] took down the [shutters & I] swept [the shop]." The material in brackets is not present in the holograph and is supplied from other sources.

¹⁶ *H M S Pinafore*, with a German text, was published as *Amor am Bord* (Braunschweig: Henry Litolf's Verlag [1883]), and *The Mikado* was published with its English text—although not the final one (Leipzig: Bosworth, c. 1889).

tled. These scores—containing all vocal lines, both solo and choral, and all lyrics (i.e., words to be sung) together with piano reductions of the orchestral parts—were prepared for sale, to be used by amateur groups giving public performances and by private individuals for use at home. The vocal scores were usually being prepared for printing while rehearsals were still in progress, in order to have them available for sale shortly after opening night. For operas beginning with *Patience*, stereos were made and sent to the United States so that American and English editions might be published simultaneously, thereby discouraging the American pirates who had been printing the most popular songs from the operas ever since the spectacular success of *H M S Pinafore*.¹⁷

For such a market, it was important that the vocal scores reflect the settled states of the operas, and, it would seem, some effort was made to see that they did so. Changes were entered on the stereos so that a page of a vocal score might go through two—or even three—states. For example, some of the pages of *H M S Pinafore* were altered and type was set for some new pages when the first revival took place in 1887: these alterations were made to correct mistakes, to reflect changes, and to incorporate the overture, which had not been included—quite possibly because it had not yet been written—when the first issue of the vocal score had appeared in 1878. Unfortunately, however, the alterations were not made with uniform care, and many readings in need of correction were overlooked.

Because the stereos from which plates would be made in America were dispatched several weeks before opening night, the American vocal scores give us “avant-première” states of the operas they transmit. The vocal scores, therefore, provide valuable insight into the process by which operas were refined as opening night approached, and they sometimes include numbers that were suppressed before the London premieres.¹⁸ In most cases, the English vocal scores probably represent—with allowance for the inevitable error and oversight—what composer and librettist considered the settled state of each work, and they should therefore be the base text for the vocal lines and the underlaid lyrics. However, since the piano parts are reductions of the instrumental ensemble, they provide only limited information about the orchestral lines—say, clarification of a harmony. Moreover, some of the information that they provide, such as dynamics, cannot be assumed to be applicable to performance by a pit orchestra.

¹⁷ The protection of American copyright was available only to citizens of the United States, and it was not until *Princess Ida* (1884) that Gilbert, Sullivan, and Carte hit upon the strategy of retaining an American—George Lowell Tracy of Boston—to prepare the piano reduction for the vocal scores, thereby providing the basis for a claim to American copyright protection.

¹⁸ For example, the American vocal score of *Iolanthe* contains the inflammatory song “Fold Your Flapping Wings,” which was cut after opening night, and which never appeared in an English vocal score.

Early band-parts, it was once hoped, would provide valuable information about the details of Sullivan's orchestration. Modern D'Oyly Carte band parts—still available from the most recent successor to the D'Oyly Carte Opera Trust—cannot be considered textually reliable, thanks to the D'Oyly Carte practice of transcribing new copies neither from archive exemplars of band parts nor from authorized master copies but rather from any at-hand copy of the required part. This practice was bound to introduce and/or perpetuate bad readings, sometimes because the copyist reproduced his exemplar inaccurately and sometimes because he reproduced accurately unauthoritative readings introduced earlier in the train of transmission. D'Oyly Carte long denied any knowledge of early band parts, and it was only in 1999, when two determined Gilbert & Sullivan researchers, Helga Perry and Bruce Miller, unearthed a trove of early band parts, some dating back to original productions, that an assessment of what information early band parts might provide was possible.¹⁹ However, the band parts raised as many questions as they answered. Collation revealed that, notwithstanding Sullivan's reputation as a stickler for detail, the D'Oyly Carte performing tradition was more flexible than we might have supposed. When two copies of the same part (say two violoncello parts for the same opera) were compared, they were found to differ in numerous readings, ranging from articulation and dynamics through pitch and value to the presence or absence of entire passages. In retrospect, the existence of such discrepancies should not have been surprising: a set of parts might have been used by several companies. In D'Oyly Carte's heyday there were, in addition to the principal company performing in London, several touring companies. Conductors of these companies were often obliged to make adjustments for the unique circumstances of particular performances.²⁰ For an editor, therefore, the utility of these parts is limited to resolving ambiguities and filling in gaps in

¹⁹ Among the early parts, Miller and Perry were able to identify the original No. 6, "Reflect, My Child," of *H.M.S. Pinafore*, suppressed before opening night and thought to be lost forever. The discovery was announced in a paper read at the New York meeting of The Society for Textual Scholarship, April 15, 1999, "Reflect, My Child: Reflections on the Suppressed No. 6 in *H.M.S. Pinafore*." This paper, in an expanded form, is published as the introduction to "Reflect, My Child," *Former No. 6, Reconstruction by Bruce I. Miller and Helga J. Perry*, Gilbert and Sullivan: The Operas, 3A (New York & Williamstown: Broude Brothers Limited, 1999).

²⁰ The comings and goings of the D'Oyly Carte touring companies are traced in detail by Cyril Rollins and R. John Witts, *The Gilbert and Sullivan Operas: A Record of Productions 1875–1961* (London: Michael Joseph, [1962]). It is clear from the tables of Rollins and Witt that the operas were performed on tour well after they had finished their London runs, so that band parts were frequently if not continually in use. D'Oyly Carte touring companies did not necessarily include instrumentalists; instrumentalists were often recruited in each city the company visited. When the necessary musicians were not all available—when, for example, only one clarinetist could be found instead of the two for which the work was scored—adjustments would be made, and these adjustments might be reflected in the parts. Similarly, adjustments would be made to accommodate musicians of modest capabilities, to meet the requirements of singers, or to conform to the characteristics of the hall.

the holograph, aiding in such questions as: Are both horns playing at this point or is only Horn 1? Are the celli here really still pizzicato (as the absence of “arco” in the holograph implies) or are they indeed arco (as the musical sense suggests)?

The holograph scores, vocal scores and band parts constitute the musical sources, and they represent a textual tradition independent of what we may think of as the “dramatic” tradition—the dialogue, descriptions of scenery, and stage directions—of which the printed libretti form the most important component.

In keeping with a tradition going back to the birth of opera at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the libretti of the Savoy Operas were published separately; copies were sold at the theatre door to patrons so that they could follow along during performances, and copies were available in shops, to be purchased by Savoyards who might want to enjoy Gilbert’s wit at home. It has long been known that the type for most of the printed libretti was set up from copy supplied by Gilbert shortly before and/or during rehearsal, and that this type was kept standing until after opening night, so that the libretti could incorporate the changes made as the opera evolved towards its settled state.²¹ Galleys served for rehearsals and as the text sent to the Lord Chamberlain for licensing. When Gilbert and Sullivan had become an established concern, a routine was developed: type was kept standing until Gilbert’s text had reached a settled state, at which point stereotypes were made; when revisions were required, new type was set, impressions were taken, and the results cut into the stereotypes to replace the superseded material.²² However, for earlier operas—at least through *Pirates*—there might be several editions, and so several settings of type, some incorporating authorized changes but each introducing its own complement of errors.

Just how closely these libretti tracked authorial changes could be determined only when copies of the libretti were collated against each other and against other sources. Some idea of the extent to which all of the sources—both the printed libretti and the vocal scores—fail to reflect the verbal material actually being performed in productions directed by Gilbert and Sullivan themselves can be seen by examining early prompt copies. There is at the British Library a set of prompt copies prepared upon Gilbert’s instructions in 1890, and this set presum-

²¹ For a discussion of how the libretto of one opera, *The Grand Duke*, was printed, see John Bush Jones, “The Printing of *The Grand Duke*: Notes Toward a Gilbert Bibliography,” in *W. S. Gilbert: A Century of Scholarship and Commentary*, ed. John Bush Jones (New York: New York University Press, 1970), pp 273–84.

²² In the twentieth century, after the advent of offset lithography, new material was typeset, proofs pulled, and the proofs were pasted over superseded material to provide the camera copy for a new printing; the newly added word or words can be readily distinguished because they are lighter and sharper than the surrounding material.

ably represents the authorized states of the respective texts as of that year.²³ These prompt copies consist of copies of printed libretti interleaved with blank pages, on which blocking diagrams and similar material have been entered by hand. On both the blank and printed pages handwritten entries have been made to bring the printed text into conformance with what was being performed. In these prompt copies the substantial number of printed readings cancelled and replaced by manuscript entries indicates how far the vocal scores and printed libretti often were from the words actually sung and spoken under Gilbert's direction. In the critical edition, the prompt copies have usually been accepted as the basis for verbal matter—except for lyrics. Where the prompt copies provide readings that supersede those in the printed libretti—that is, where a printed reading is cancelled and replaced by a handwritten entry—the manuscript entry is usually to be preferred, on the assumption that no change would have been made if it had not been required. However, after consulting other reliable sources, editors have reason to believe that there are readings in prompt copies that should have been changed but were not. Thus, the fact that no change was made in a prompt copy cannot be regarded as unassailable evidence that the prompt copy reflects what was being performed circa 1890.

It is important to understand that for the Savoy Operas—as for many other operatic texts—the musical sources (all descended from Sullivan's holographs) and the dramatic sources (all descended from the compositor's copy that Gilbert delivered to the printer) represent independent textual traditions, and that there are numerous discrepancies between the two. These discrepancies are the result of the way in which the Savoy Operas were created. Once a plot was agreed upon, Gilbert would prepare the words for individual numbers and deliver them to Sullivan a number—or sometimes a few numbers—at a time. Sullivan would set what Gilbert had delivered, and the two would later confer to identify and revise passages that seemed unsatisfactory to one or both. Differences between the words Gilbert delivered and the words sung in the finished musical number resulted sometimes from Sullivan's either deliberately or inadvertently setting a word or phrase other than the one Gilbert had provided or from a considered revision involving both parties. Since Gilbert himself directed productions—and was known for his insistence that singers and actors adhere scrupulously to his text—he must surely have been aware when singers were singing words other than those he had given to Sullivan. In some cases, discrepancies between the musical sources and the printed libretti may have resulted

²³ These prompt copies, known collectively as "The Gilbert Prompt Copies" (London, British Library, MSS Add 49310-49313), were prepared, probably by Charles Harris, during the Great Carpet Controversy, when Gilbert thought it likely that he would permanently sever connections with D'Oyly Carte.

from Gilbert's failing to pass along to the printer changes in which he had acquiesced; in others, he may have preferred to retain in the printed libretti the words he had originally written, even though he had agreed that they might be altered in performance. When there is a discrepancy between what Gilbert supplied and what Sullivan set—as evidenced by the vocal scores and prompt copies—it seems clear that the reading of the musical tradition—what Sullivan actually set—should be preferred.

Not until after World War I was any effort made to bring the musical and the dramatic traditions into agreement with each other. And when such an effort was made, it was directed not at restoring the original texts but rather at providing libretti reflecting what was being performed at the time—including unauthorized material that had found its way into the performing tradition.

For most of this essay we have addressed two textual traditions—the musical and the dramatic. But at the point that performance began taking place—from the first reading at the first rehearsal—a third tradition was developing: the performance tradition. This third tradition was atextual and would involve performative components present neither in the musical nor in the dramatic texts. It might include a brief musical fragment (in *The Mikado* the phrase, played by the piccolo, from the air that the condemned criminal is described as having whistled), a bit of gagging (the “No money, no grovel” passage in *The Mikado*), or an interpretation as important as the tragic reading of the final stage direction in *Yeomen*, “Point falls insensible.” This tradition would take on a life of its own; it would be passed on from performer to performer, usually without benefit of text, becoming part of the opera that audiences would expect and that actors would feel obliged to deliver—even though it might have no basis in any authoritative text.

The result of all this juggling of sources is for each opera a constructed text representing what might have been performed on any given evening during its first run or, in some cases, during its first revival. But such a text is quite a different thing from a critical edition of a novel or a poem, which proposes to offer the text of a document that an original audience might have read. The critically edited full score of *Patience* or *Iolanthe* does not represent the text from which either Arthur Sullivan or Francis Cellier (his assistant and successor at the podium) would have conducted the opera. D'Oyly Carte conductors have almost always conducted from vocal scores, since Sullivan's holographs were safely locked away to prevent piracy. Consequently, a conductor never knew with certainty whether the notes played by the pit musicians corresponded to what Sullivan had written. Rather, the critical edition introduces a reassuring if artificial mechanism of control, since all components of the text—vocal score, band parts and libretto—derive from a single source, the editorially established full score. Thus, all components of the text are co-ordinated in a way that rarely occurred in the real world of the theatre, where ill-matched performing materials, such as band parts

representing one line of descent and vocal scores representing another, often required conductors at rehearsals to devise ad hoc solutions to the problems that such discrepant texts presented. The critical editions therefore authorize musicians and audiences who care about such things to believe that what they are playing and hearing is relatively close to what Sullivan wrote, as certified by knowledgeable editors. The critically edited musical score, moreover, serves as a reference text against which variants can be logged in the apparatus, so that users can reconstruct the states through which various portions of the text have passed. It also gives them historical and textual information that allows them, if they wish, to incorporate traditional but unauthoritative material in their productions or to restore material that composer and librettist suppressed. However, the process of preparing these editions reminds us that these are works that have survived quite successfully without benefit of a unifying master text that specifies in detail the content of each component part. We are therefore also reminded that with a performing work the purpose of sources is often not to serve as repositories of a work's identity, as a means of preserving it for posterity, but simply as a mechanism for getting it performed.