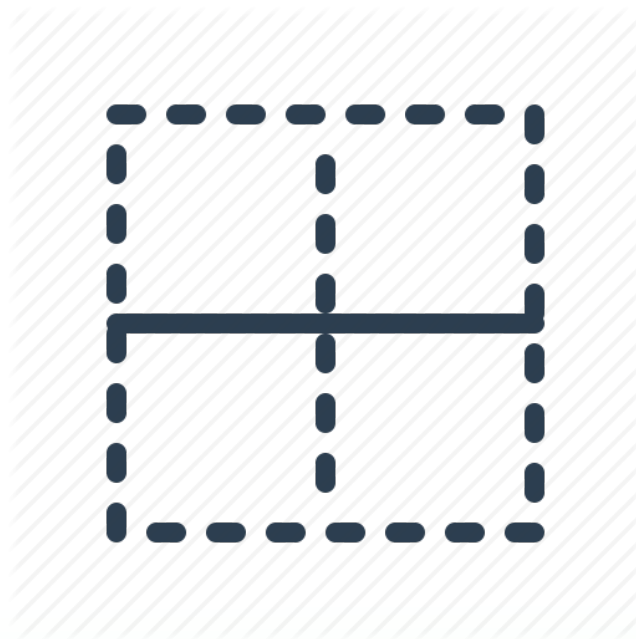


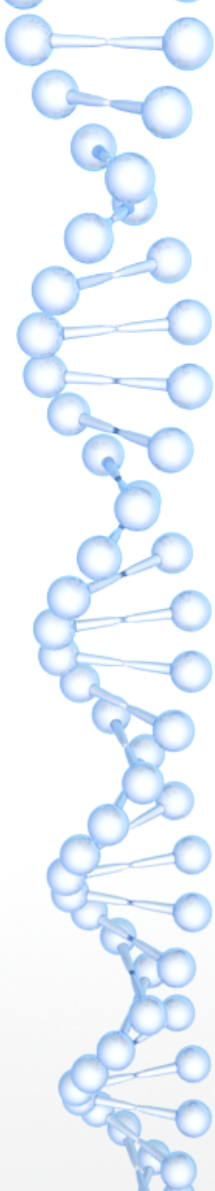
Paolo Monella

# Encoding Pre-modern Writing Systems



*Sunoikisis Digital Classics,  
Summer 2022 programme*  
May 12, 2022





**European Research Council**

Established by the European Commission

*ERC PAGES (AdG 2019 n° 882588)*

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 882588)



# Outline



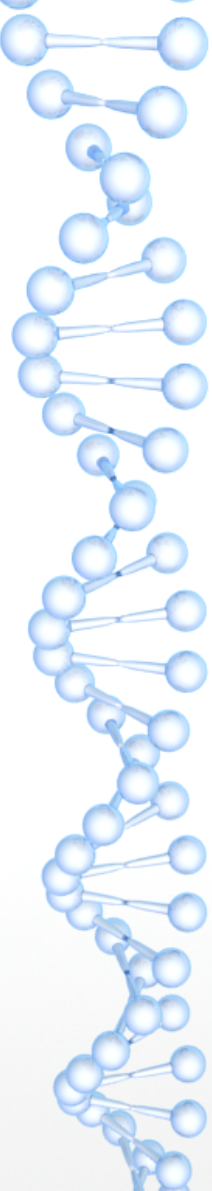
# Outline

- **Interoperability**  
of digital scholarly editions (DSEs)  
based on diplomatic transcriptions
  - The issue
  - Current solutions
  - Interoperability through modelling
- Orlandi's **table of sign**
- **Graphemes/allographs**

A white speech bubble with a dark blue background. The bubble has a rectangular body and a triangular tail pointing downwards and to the left. The text "Interoperability: the issue" is centered within the rectangular body in a dark blue, sans-serif font.

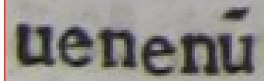
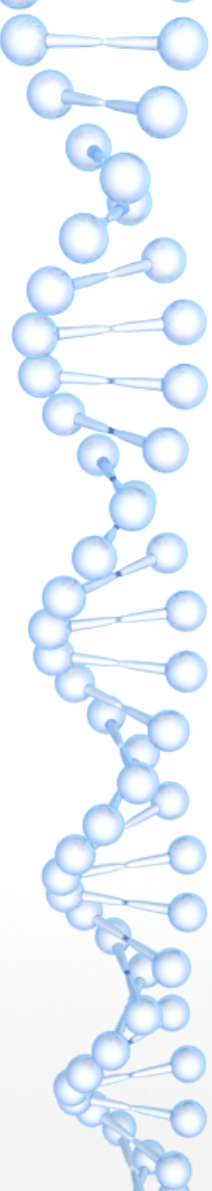
**Interoperability: the issue**

# Interoperability: the issue



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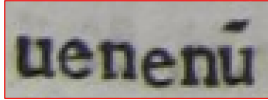
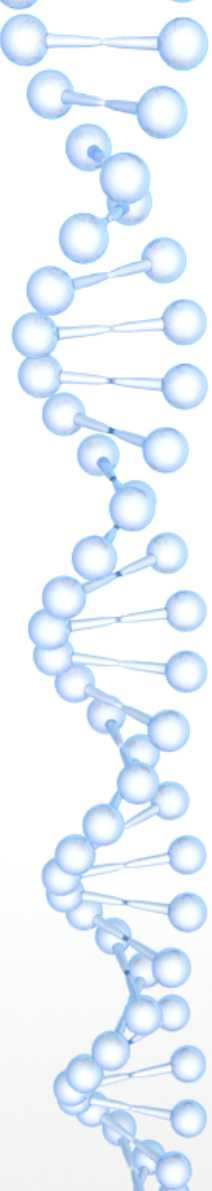
# Interoperability: the issue



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# Interoperability: the issue



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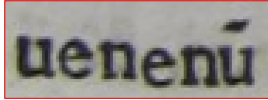
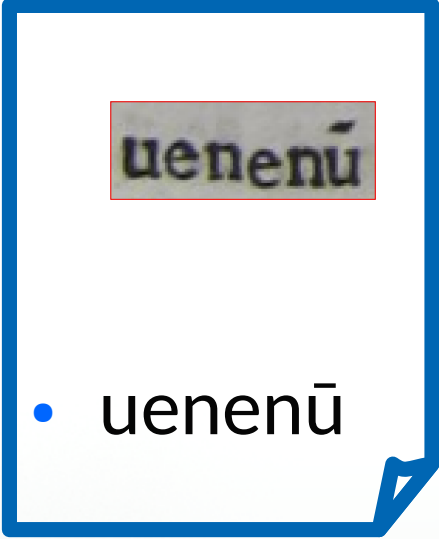
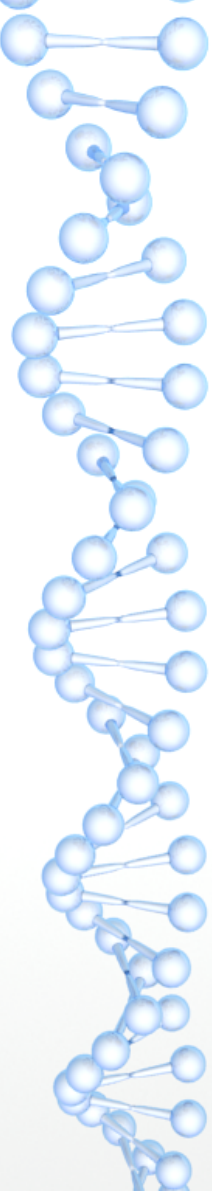
- uenenū

Diplomatic

- Manual or HTR
  - Visualization
  - Processing



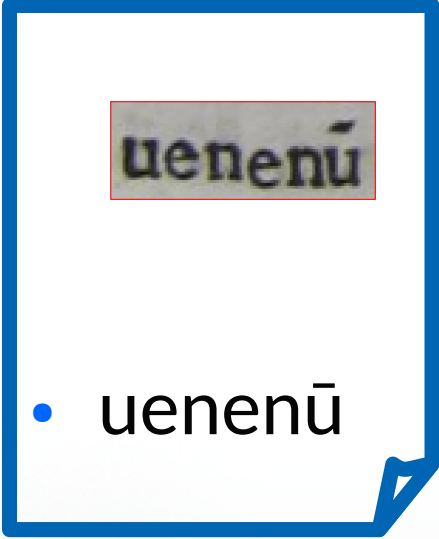
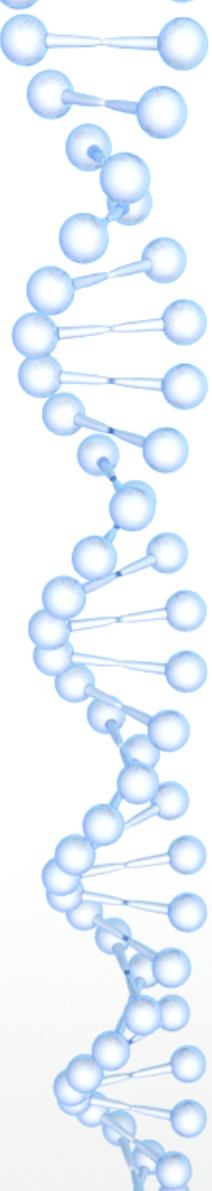
# Interoperability: the issue



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# Interoperability: the issue



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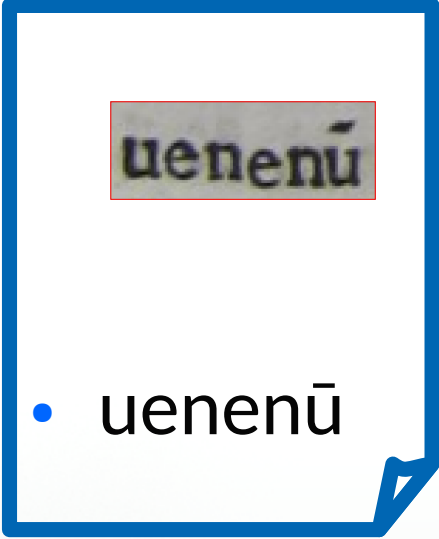
- uenenū

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# Interoperability: the issue

- Processing
  - Search
  - Collation
  - NLP (lemma, PoS etc.)
  - Statistics (dist. reading)



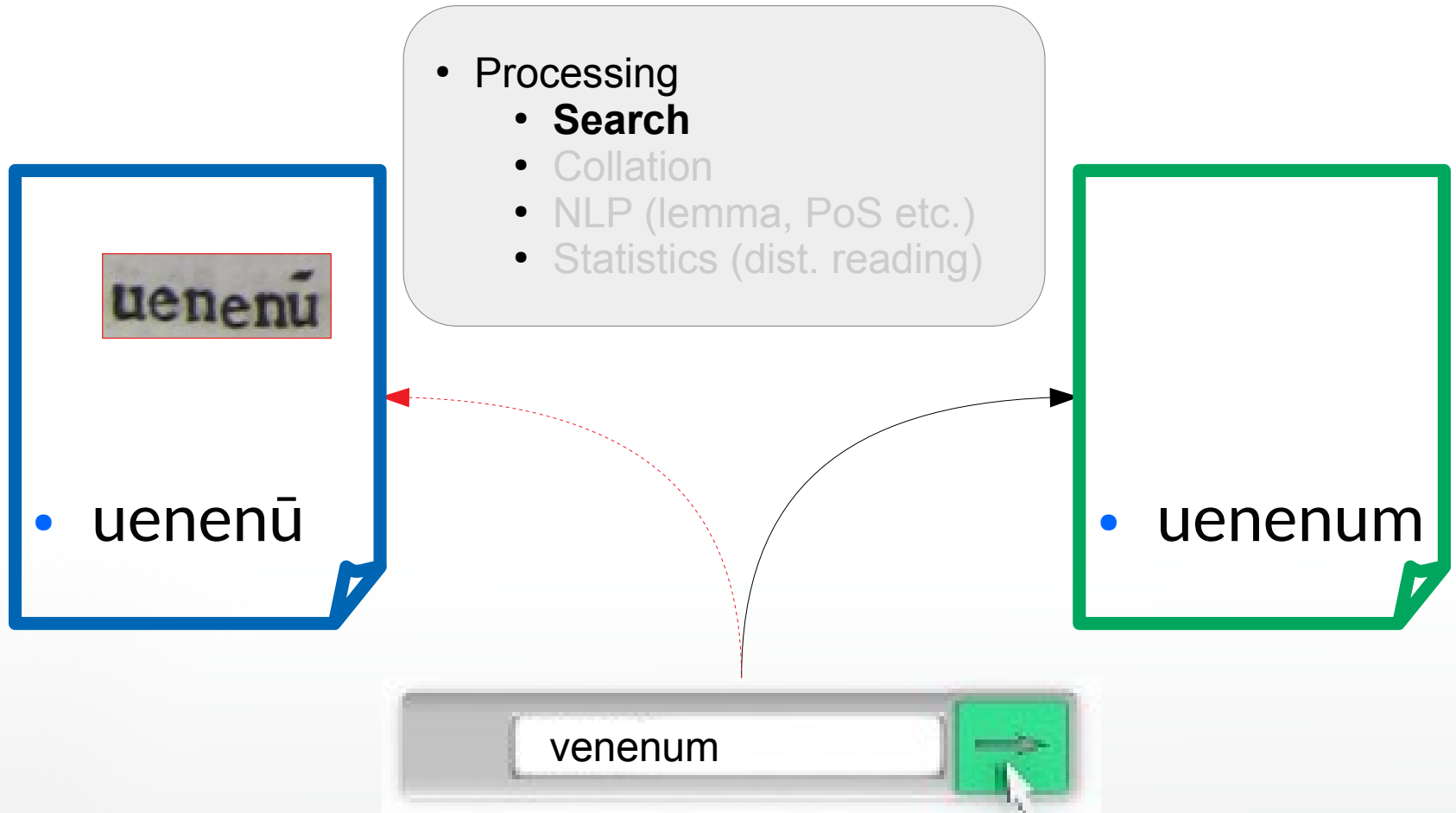
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• uenenū



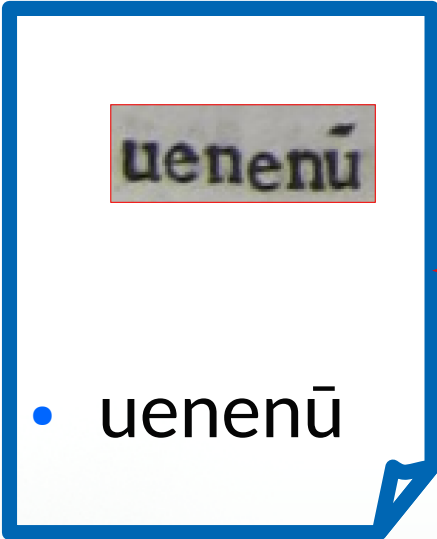
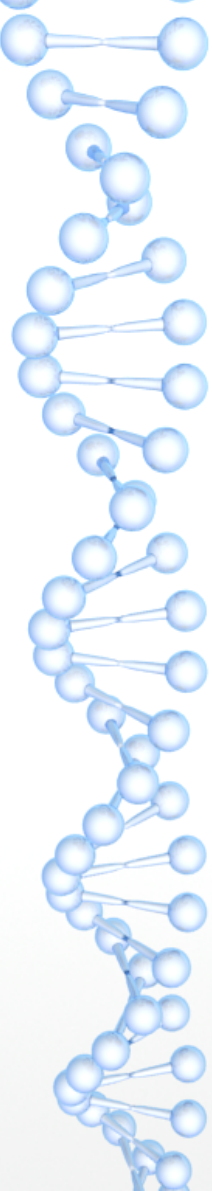
• uenenum

# Interoperability: the issue



# Interoperability: the issue

- Processing
  - Search
  - **Collation**
  - NLP (lemma, PoS etc.)
  - Statistics (dist. reading)



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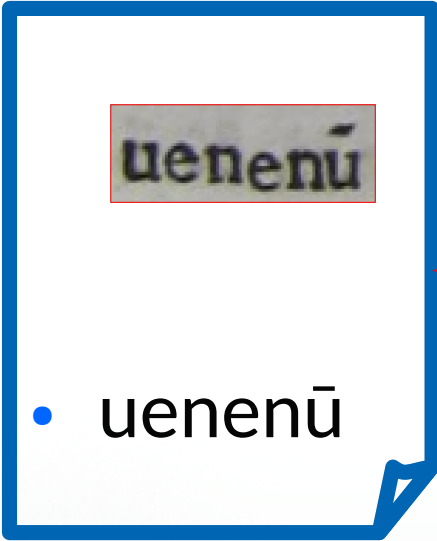
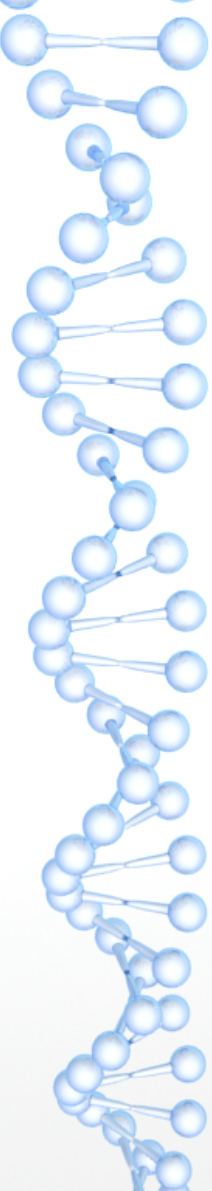
112 excedit] excedit corr. ex  
exceditis R n70  
114 obicitur] obiceretur V S n71  
114 sunt] sint S n72



• uenenum

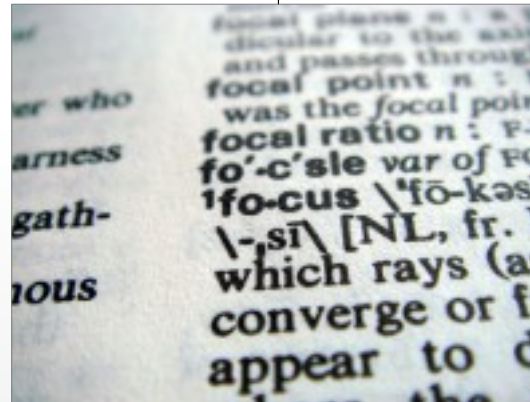
# Interoperability: the issue

- Processing
  - Search
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  - **NLP (lemma, PoS etc.)**
  - Statistics (dist. reading)



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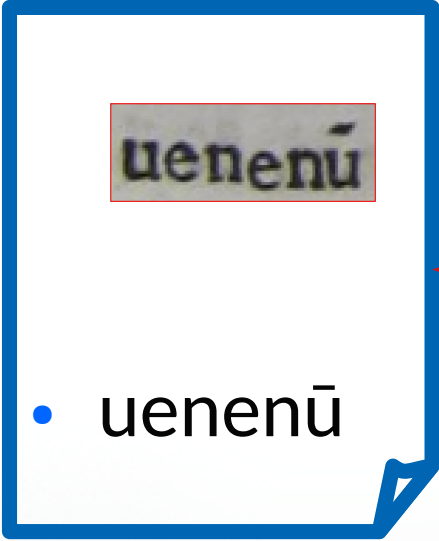
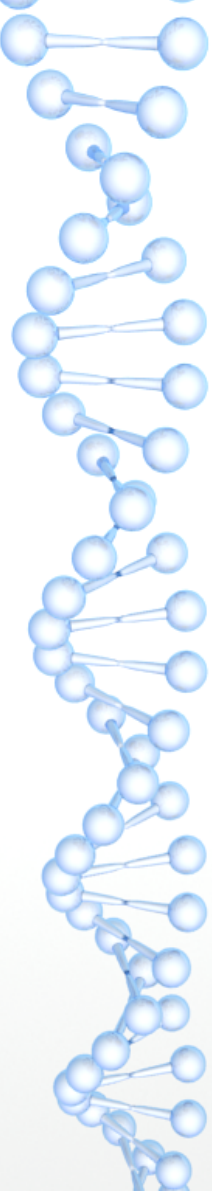
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• uenenum

# Interoperability: the issue

- Processing
  - Search
  - Collation
  - NLP (lemma, PoS etc.)
  - **Statistics (dist. reading)**



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• uenenum





# Interoperability: the issue

- ***My focus: European Medieval handwriting***
  - ...and early print (imitating handwriting)



A white speech bubble with a dark blue background. The bubble has a rectangular body and a triangular tail pointing towards the bottom-left corner. The text is centered within the rectangular body.

**Interoperability:  
current solutions**



# Unicode (TEI's recommendation)

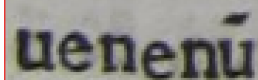
- Solution for new digital texts
- Not enough for pre-modern writing systems
  - Allographs
    - **f** (U+017F) / **s** (U+0073; ASCII 115)
    - Have I told the computer that they correspond to each other (variants of grapheme <s>)?
  - Ligatures
    - **&** (U+0026; ASCII 38)
    - Have I encoded that it is equivalent to “e + t” in that MS?
  - Grapheme set
    - **u** (U+0075; ASCII 117)
    - Have I encoded whether it “covers” (or not) <u> *and* <v>?



# Manual normalized transcription

- venenum

Normalized



uenenū

- Processing
  - Search
  - Indexing
  - Collation
  - NLP (lemma, PoS etc.)
  - Statistics (distant reading)...

- uenenū


Diplomatic

- Visualization
- Processing

# Project-specific pre-processing

- Collation: pre-processing to normalize the text
  - Or instruct collation software to ignore *some* discrepancies
- Same with search/indexing/NLP/statistics software
- Disposable home-made solutions
  - ...for a shared issue



A white speech bubble with a dark blue background. The bubble has a rectangular body and a triangular tail pointing downwards and to the left. The text is centered within the rectangular body.

**Interoperability  
through modelling**

# Interoperability through modelling



**WANTED**

**DEAD OR ALIVE  
REWARD  
\$4,000**

- Documenting project-specific modelling (transcription) and normalization practices
  - What am I transcribing (graphemes/allographs)? How?
  - What corresponds to what (f/s)?
- Documentation
  - In English prose (specifications for other programmers)
  - Formal (software code, tables)

# Interoperability through modelling



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Example ahead!

A white speech bubble with a dark blue background. The bubble has a rectangular body and a triangular tail pointing downwards and to the left. The text "Orlandi's table of signs" is centered within the rectangular body.

**Orlandi's table of signs**



# Orlandi's table of signs



OCR/HTR  
(witness A)



Manual (selective)  
transcription  
(witness B)

# Orlandi's table of signs



Allographic  
transcription

Vnder τhis Castτle



OCR/HTR  
(witness A)

under this caτle



Manual (selective)  
transcription  
(witness B)

# Orlandi's table of signs



Allographic  
transcription

Vnder τhis Castτle



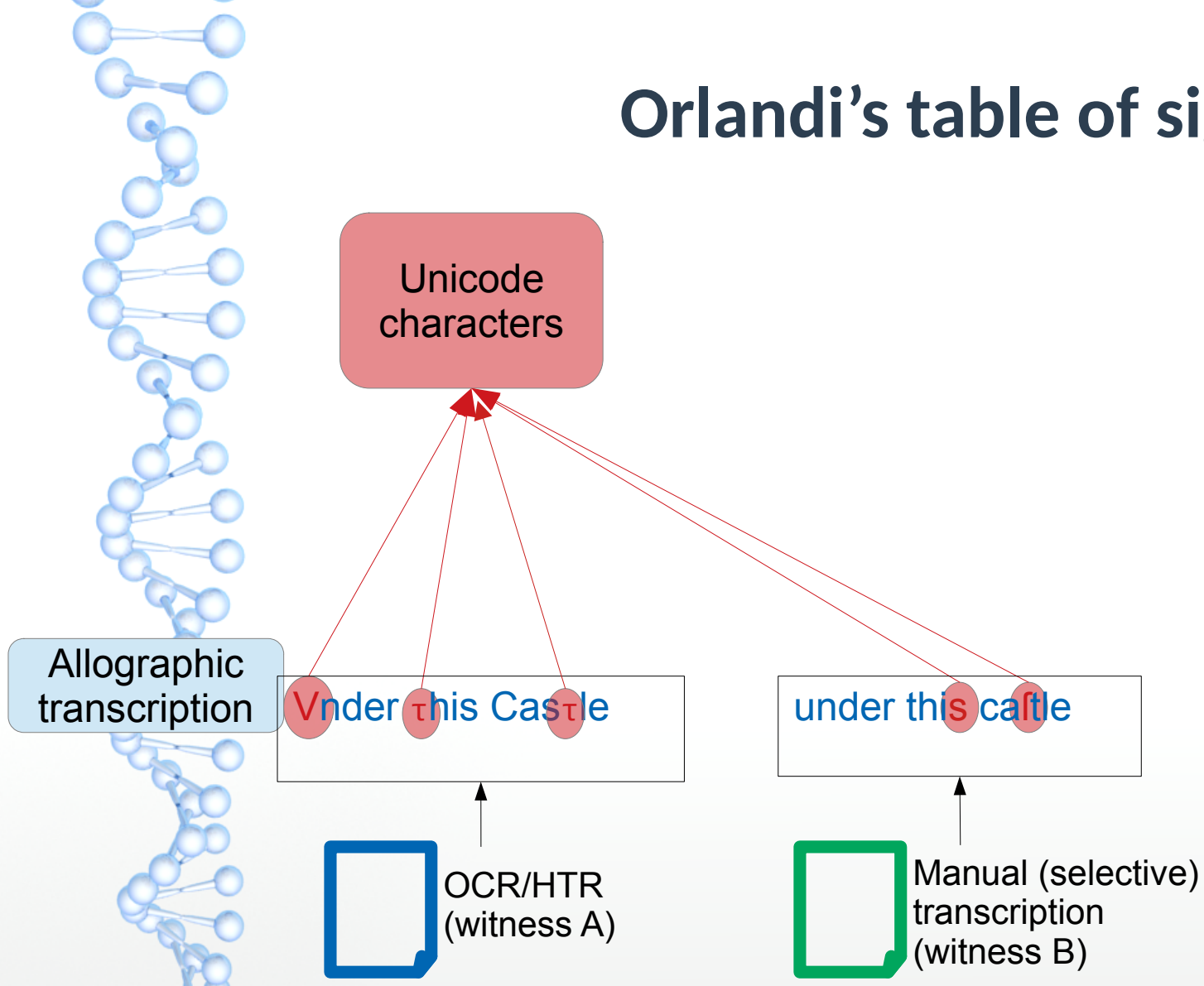
OCR/HTR  
(witness A)

under this caτle



Manual (selective)  
transcription  
(witness B)

# Orlandi's table of signs



# Orlandi's table of signs



Allographic  
transcription

Vnder τhis Castτle

OCR/HTR  
(witness A)

under this caτle

Manual (selective)  
transcription  
(witness B)

# Orlandi's table of signs



Allographic  
transcription

Vnder this Castle

under this caſtle

OCR/HTR  
(witness A)

Manual (selective)  
transcription  
(witness B)

# Orlandi's table of signs



Allographic  
transcription

Vnder τhis Castle

under this castle



OCR/HTR  
(witness A)



Manual (selective)  
transcription  
(witness B)



# Orlandi's table of signs



Allographic  
transcription

Vnder τhis Casτle



OCR/HTR  
(witness A)

under this caτle



Manual (selective)  
transcription  
(witness B)



# Orlandi's table of signs

Allographic transcription

Gr	Allogr
s:	s
t:	τ   ε   √
u:	u   V

Vnder τhis Castε



OCR/HTR  
(witness A)

Gr	Allogr
s:	s   ʀ
t:	t
u:	u

under this caʀtle



Manual (selective)  
transcription  
(witness B)



# Orlandi's table of signs

Graphematic  
layer

unter dem schloss

Gr	Allogr
s:	s
t:	τ   ε   √
u:	u   V

Allographic  
transcription

Vnder τhis Castle



OCR/HTR  
(witness A)

unter dem schloss

Gr	Allogr
s:	s   ʀ
t:	t
u:	u

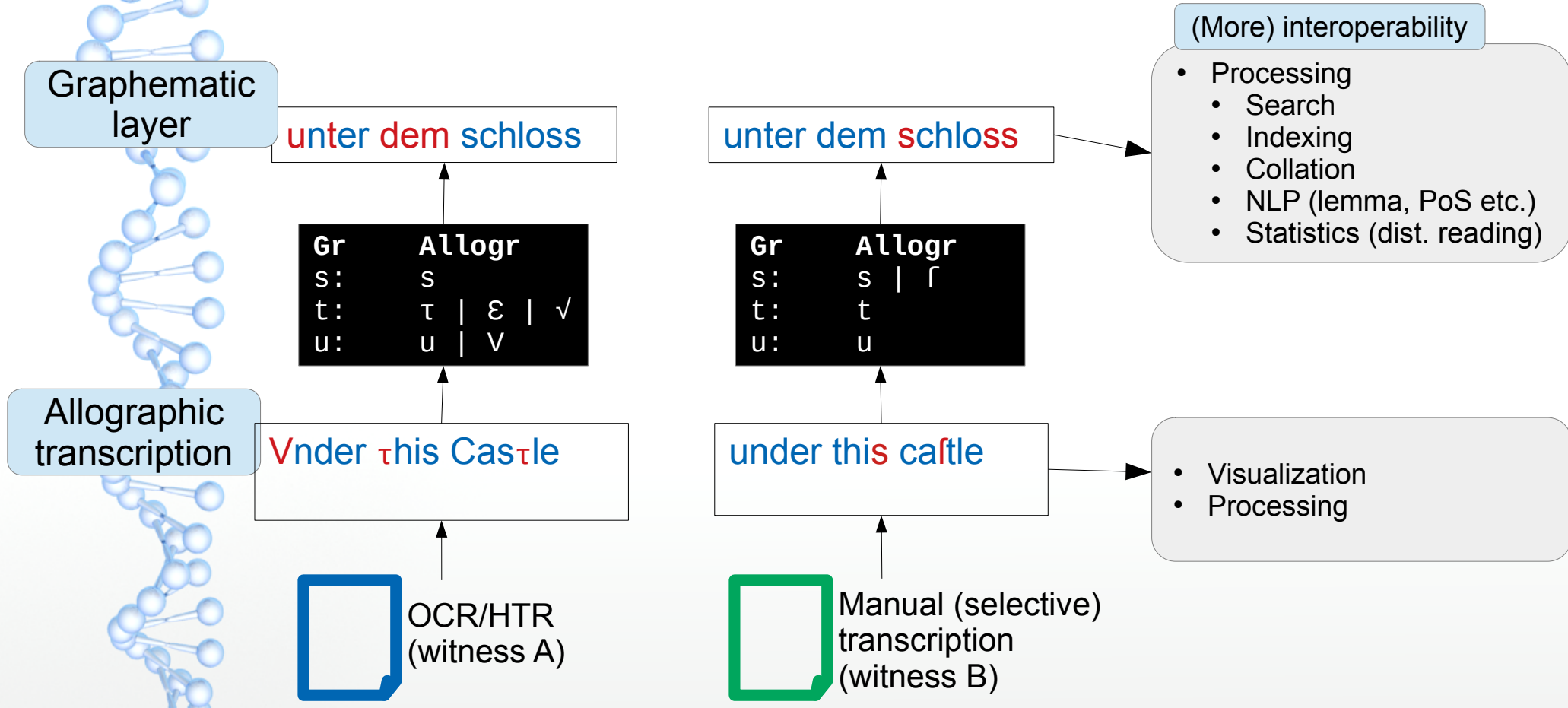
under this castle



Manual (selective)  
transcription  
(witness B)

- **Not** hard-coded in the project-specific normalization practice/software
- **But** documented and formalized

# Orlandi's table of signs



# Interoperability through modelling



**WANTED**

**DEAD OR ALIVE  
REWARD  
\$4,000**

- Documenting project-specific modelling (transcription) and normalization practices
  - What am I transcribing (graphemes/allographs)? How?
  - What corresponds to what (f/s)?
- Documentation
  - In English prose (specifications for other programmers)
  - Formal (software code, tables)

# Interoperability through modelling



**WANTED**

**DEAD OR ALIVE  
REWARD  
\$4,000**

- Scholarly discussion on **modelling**
  - What is a grapheme? What is an allograph?
- **Shared** models
  - Grassroot approach, from discussion
- Reusable **software** libraries

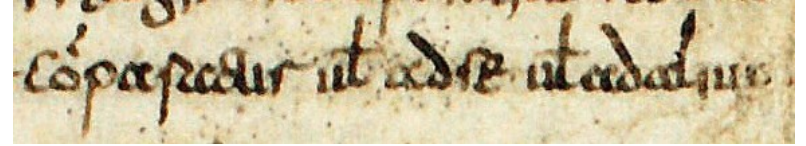


**Graphemes/allographs**

# Graphemes/allographs: the commutation test

System

Comparatur vel ad se vel ad alium  
*He is compared to himself or to another*



<s>

<t>

Text

- cōparaEur

u

adfe

uɫadaliu

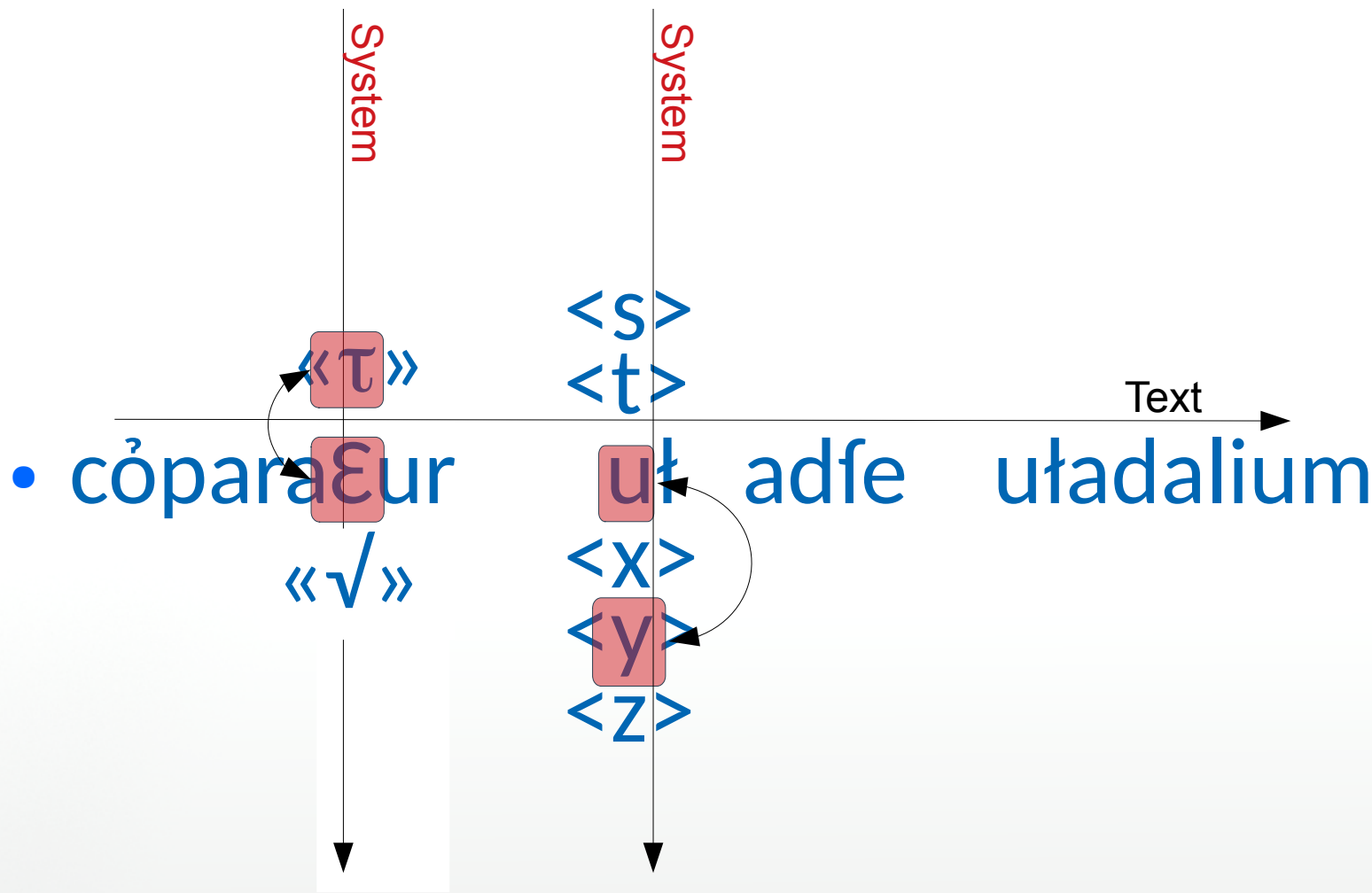
<x>

<y>

<z>



# Graphemes/allographs: the commutation test





# Graphemes/allographs: the commutation test

• còparaEur

**Substitution:**

→ No change  
in “denotative  
meaning”

«τ»

«√»

<s>  
<t>

<x>

<y>

<z>

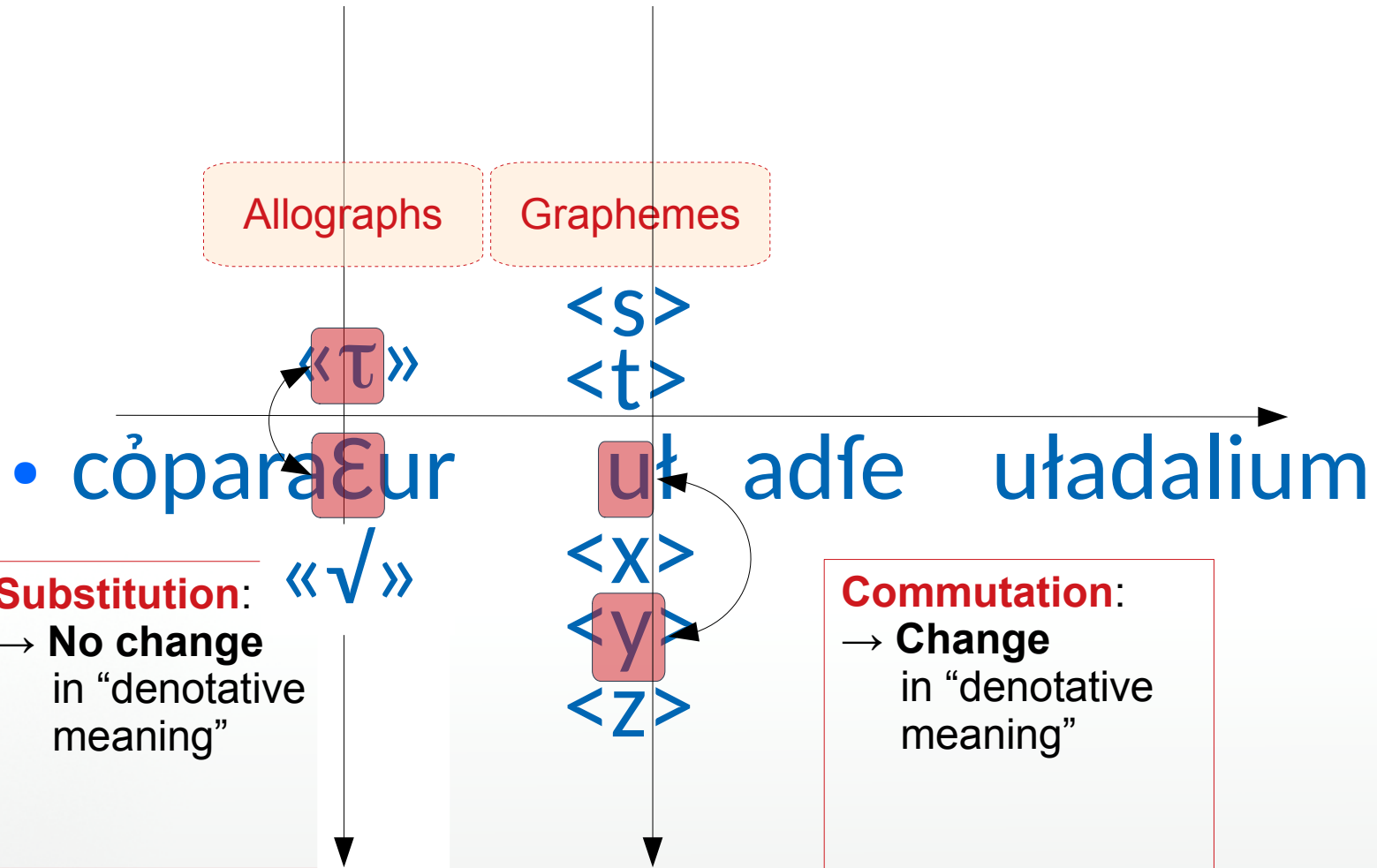
adfe

uɫadaliu

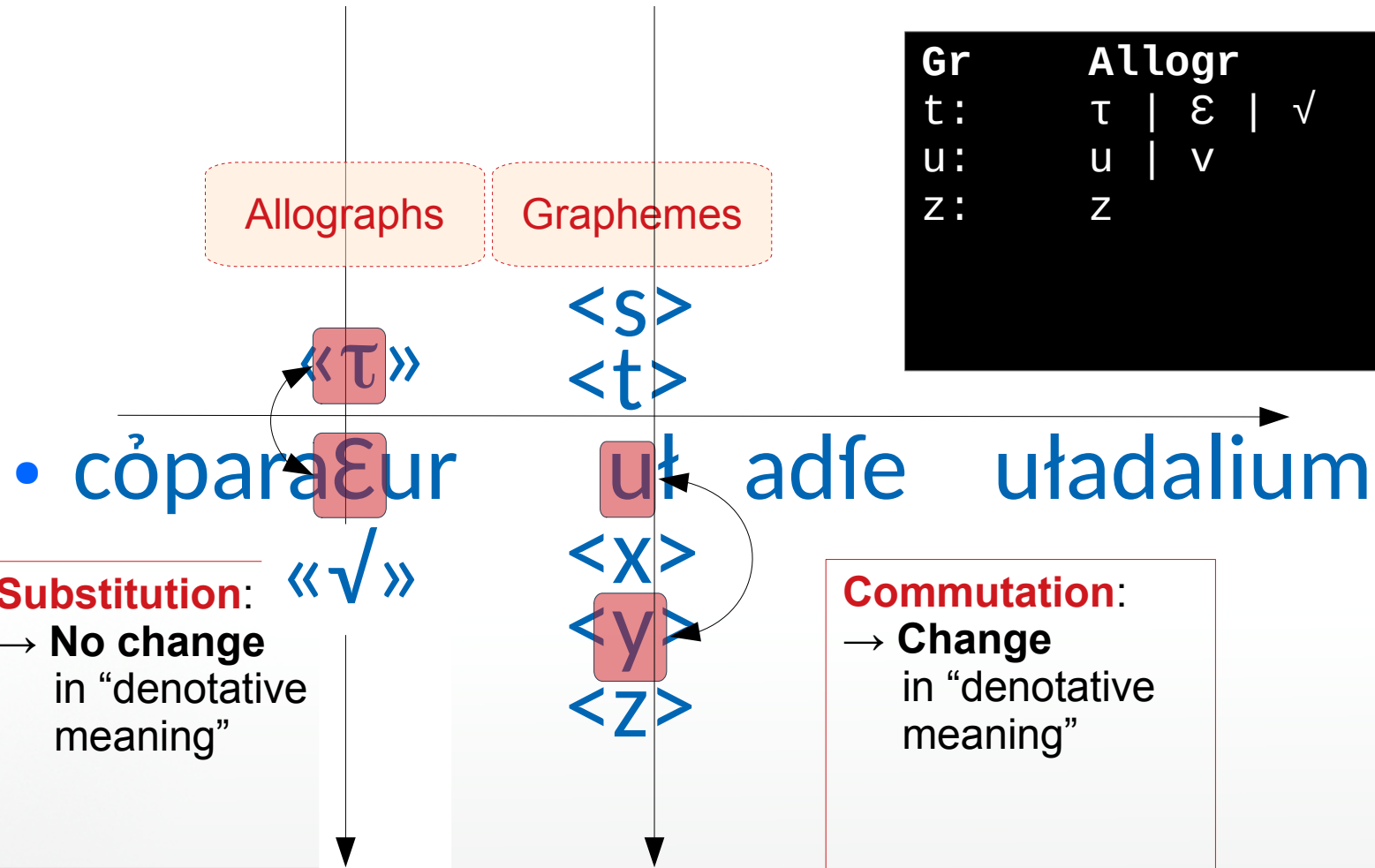
**Commutation:**

→ Change  
in “denotative  
meaning”

# Graphemes/allographs: the commutation test

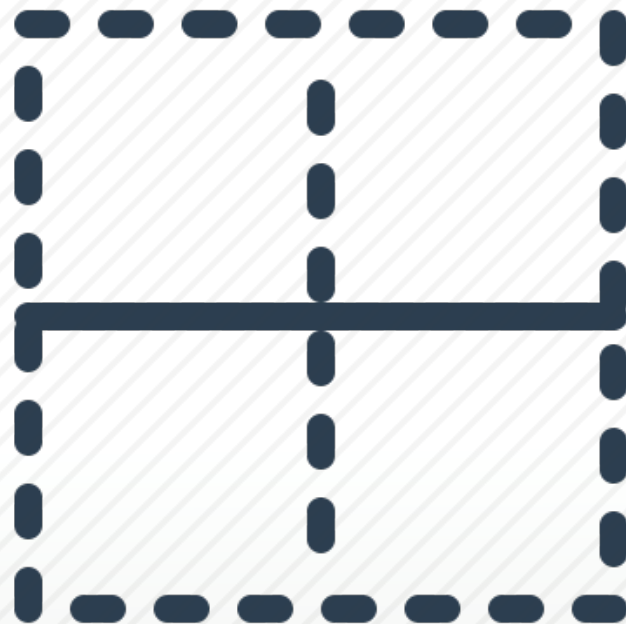


# Graphemes/allographs: the commutation test



# Graphemes / allographs: what to transcribe?

- Whatever our project needs!
  - Based on its scientific interests
  - (...and on time / money)
- But: *declaring* what we are transcribing
  - Based on a formal distinction, e.g., between graphemes / allographs
  - Documenting it
    - English prose
    - Formal (software, tables...)





**Good practices**



# Good practices

- See section [Seminar readings](#) on GitHub
  - Human-readable tables of signs
  - Machine-readable tables of signs

A white speech bubble with a dark blue background. The bubble has a rectangular body and a triangular tail pointing downwards and to the left. The word "Exercise" is centered within the rectangular body in a dark blue, bold, sans-serif font.

**Exercise**



# Exercise

- See section [Exercise](#) on GitHub





# Outline



# Outline

- **Interoperability**  
of digital scholarly editions (DSEs)  
based on diplomatic transcriptions
  - The issue
  - Current solutions
  - Interoperability through modelling
- Orlandi's **table of sign**
- **Graphemes/allographs**