

# Locus criticus

A portion of the text (*locus*) in which the various witnesses display significant **errors** (cf. also **variant location**). The choice of a number of *loci critici* (*selecti*) allows the editor to establish a **stemma** in traditions that are hardly assessable in their entirety due to their width.

A recent coinage from Latin *locus* "passage, portion (of a text)" and *criticus* in the modern sense of "used for interpreting practice"; the (optional) adjective *selectus* alludes to the fact that the passage has been chosen for critical purposes. Though the expression seems to be first attested in the 1970s (see Balduino 1979), both **Maas** (first ed. 1927) and **Pasquali** (1952, first ed. 1934) had already introduced the similar notion of "collation by samples".

The most important editions of Dante's *Divine Comedy* are based on the scrutiny of *loci critici*: 396 of them from 200 witnesses in Barbi's preparatory work (known as "Barbi's canon"), and 477 in Petrocchi's edition (for further information see Brandoli 2007); in his 2001 edition of the *Comedy*, Federico Sanguineti goes back to Barbi's canon extending the collation to more than 500 witnesses.

## References

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## In other languages

Latin term used throughout.

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