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The treatment of ancient readers and commentators in modern editions
& translations

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Shaping 'our' Euclid: a parallel examination of the critical editions of the Elements and the Data (by J. L. Heiberg and H. Menge, respectively)

Abstract - Euclid of Alexandria is phenomenally famous as the author of the *Elements*. Nevertheless, he wrote a number of other treatises as well, most of which are largely neglected mainly because of the *Elements'* prominence. Arguably, one of the most interesting works in this category is the *Data*. Although it deals with plane geometry—exactly like a great part of the *Elements*—it presents a radically different view of geometrical reasoning, and its usefulness for those who want to learn the basic concepts of geometrical analysis has been highly praised by ancient and later commentators.

In 1986, Menge compiled the critical edition of Euclid's *Data* working in parallel with Heiberg, while the latter was preparing the critical edition of the *Elements*. Over the last few years, the work of Heiberg and the way he shaped our own image of Euclid have been a subject of investigation and debate. Nevertheless, Menge's effort has not received similar attention.

Thus, in this paper, I propose to examine the way the critical edition of the *Data* was compiled in comparison to the *Elements*. My starting point is Taisbak's statement in the preface of his English commentary on the *Data*: '...Menge had a sound judgement, and little is gained by looking for variants in manuscripts outside his scope: there is, in fact, no doubt as to the content of the *Data*—the doubts are all about its interpretation.' Fortunately, mathematical treatises do not exist in literary isolation. On this basis, in addition to the extant Greek manuscripts, I examine the secondary sources which refer to the *Data*. A number of interesting questions emerge from this reading: Have all Greek mathematical treatises received the same attention from readers in early and late antiquity? How does this affect the way these texts were altered by their various editors and commentators? In addition, how does this affect the interpretation of the content of these works?