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This paper deals with the principles for representing historical records in digital publications (collections) that can provide historians with proper tools for external and internal criticism of historical sources. The authors substantiate three principles ("paradigms"), which should be taken into consideration by archaeographers and editors of digital collections of historical records: 1) digital publication is an open semantic network, which links arbitrary fragments of texts, images, and research abstracts and commentaries to each other; 2) digital publication is a specific toolbox that encompasses different tools of palaeographic, diplomatic, and textual analysis of the published historical records; 3) digital publication is a network service (Web information system) that incorporates historical sources, research tools, and research results into a knowledge-based system, which is specially created for a network community.