

Carolingian Scholarship on Classical Authors: Practices of Reading and Writing

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When the term Carolingian Renaissance was minted in the 1830s by the French literary historian Ampère, the achievement of preserving and appropriating the classics was one of the reasons to use this very term – Renaissance.¹ In the reigns of Charlemagne, Louis the Pious, and Charles the Bald, so it was argued, a real effort was made to collect ancient (and late-ancient) literary heritage, and the study of this heritage deeply influenced the literary culture of the late eighth and ninth centuries. With the term ‘renaissance’ other factors were acknowledged as well: a general revival of letters, culture, and art; a concern with Latin as the language of religion, administration, and court; and a great concern for a unified Christian church, with one dogma, one cult, one identity.² Nevertheless, the revival of the study of the classics, and the reverence for the Latin of the classical authors was recognized as an important characteristic.

The Carolingian achievement was indeed remarkable in this respect. A great number of manuscripts from the Carolingian period survive with ancient or late-ancient texts. The texts of only a few ancient authors (Virgil, Terence, Livy)

1. Sullivan, ‘Introduction’, 5, notes 11–12.

2. Contreni, ‘The Carolingian Renaissance’, esp. 709–12.

3. Bischoff, 'Libraries and Schools in the Carolingian Revival of Learning'; Bischoff, 'Benedictine Monasteries and the Survival of Classical Literature'.

4. See, for example, Ziolkowski and Putnam, eds., *The Virgilian Tradition: The First Fifteen Hundred Years*.

survive in complete manuscripts from antiquity; for all other authors the oldest surviving manuscripts are from the Carolingian period, or even later. In all the major Carolingian intellectual centres – that is, the monasteries with libraries that started growing in the eighth century, and were in their full glory in the ninth century – classical authors feature in their catalogues, and new copies were produced in their scriptoria. Classical texts were part of the intellectual backbone of the average ninth-century scholar, who recognized quotes from Virgil, Terence, and Horace just as he would recognize quotes from the Bible.³

An important source for the history of the study of the classics through time is the transmission history of texts and authors, as explored by Reynolds and Wilson in their fundamental *Scribes and Scholars*, in Reynolds' edited volume, *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, or in Munk Olsen's multi-volumed *L'étude des auteurs classiques latins aux XI^e et XII^e siècles*, and has been researched for many individual authors and texts.⁴ In this essay, however, a different approach is taken: whereas previous scholarship has investigated *which* authors and texts were read and copied, and *when* and *where* this happened, my focus will be on *how* they were read and copied. It is my goal to analyze the methods of readership and scholarship that we encounter in Carolingian manuscripts of the classics as reflected by the manuscripts themselves. My eye will therefore drift from the main text to the margin, where the traces left by copyists, readers, and students are found. Three different types of scholarship witnessed by these marginal voices will be introduced and analyzed here. First the signs of textual criticism, an activity which had the correction of the ancient and late-ancient texts as its main goal, will be studied. A second type of activi-

ty that we can witness in the margin is the establishment and evolution of commentary traditions, which reflect a use in the classroom or a smaller-scale educational setting, such as a private exchange between a master and one or two students. The third type of marginal activity I will briefly reflect upon is a less-organised one, and testifies to individual readers' interests in texts.

No claim is made that these three types are the only ones which characterize the Carolingian appropriation of classical texts. On the contrary, I am convinced that more types will surface as the study of the annotation practices in Carolingian manuscripts continues, and as we create better inventories for their shared and individual traits in the process. The current paper should be seen as a first exploration of material that has been little studied until now. Up until five or ten years ago, medieval manuscripts were only studied by palaeographers, codicologists, and philologists, either in the pursuit of data on the material culture of the book, or in the pursuit of making editions. Nowadays, with the fast growing number of digital facsimiles on the web, the medieval book has an unprecedented presence in the work of a more diverse range of scholars, and is starting to become a much richer source for the intellectual history of the Middle Ages. Textual practices that were hidden in, or even completely erased by the critical apparatus of traditional editions, can now be consulted with ease by any scholar who has access to the internet. The present paper, which explores the marginal and interlinear annotations in the margins of early medieval manuscripts of the classics, is an example of such new research possibilities. It explores textual practices in these manuscripts which have generally been ignored or at times deliberately obliterated by earlier scholarship, and this

5. Mostert, 'The Tradition of Classical Texts in the Manuscripts of Fleury', 23-8; Munk Olsen, 'The Production of Classics', 5.

6. See, for example, Charlier, 'Les manuscrits personnels de Florus de Lyon et son activité littéraire'; Pellegri, 'Les manuscrits de Loup de Ferrières'.

exploration is based on the assessment of digital facsimiles or the consultation of manuscripts 'in the flesh', namely from Leiden University's collections.

Before I start my exploration, however, a second *caveat* is appropriate: no claim is made here that the textual practices witnessed in the margin and interlinear space of manuscripts with classical texts are peculiar to either the genre or the period. As for the genre: classical texts and Christian texts, such as treatises from the Church Fathers, are surrounded with the same kind of annotations; and their lay-outs, sizes, and variations in the quality of their parchment and scribal work are identical. In fact, one could question whether a category of classical texts would be useful in its own right. Such a category could be seen, after all, as an anachronism, as was done by Marco Mostert in his article on the classical texts in the manuscripts of Fleury.⁵ That said, it is still worth considering which textual practices were used in Carolingian manuscripts of the classics. As for the period: at present our knowledge of standard and peculiar textual practices specific to the margin is too limited. Individual case studies have been done,⁶ but a systematic assessment of the practice of annotating books in the Middle Ages is still lacking. It is one of the goals of my current research to start filling this lacuna for the Carolingian period.

Textual Criticism: Lucretius and Macrobius

The first type of marginal scholarship encountered in Carolingian copies of classical texts introduced here is textual criticism. This may be an unexpected category, since textual criticism is supposed to be a nineteenth-century scholarly method, connected to the birth of the critical edition, to Karl Lachmann and his stemmatological approach, or perhaps to the

eighteenth-century methods developed by Johann Albrecht Bengel and Johann Jakob Griesbach to make new editions of the New Testament. Nevertheless, as the provocative book by Mireille Chazan and Gilbert Dahan, *La méthode critique au Moyen Âge*, convincingly shows, medieval scholars had their own methods of checking their copies against others, and of recording variant readings, emendations, and lacunae.⁷

One of the most famous manuscripts from Leiden proves this point: the ninth-century VLF 30, which is one of the two copies of Lucretius' *De rerum naturae* kept in Leiden (the other one is VLF 94, also from the ninth century). They are the only two complete surviving copies of the text. There is another fragment, also from the ninth century, in addition to a handful of references in library catalogues to the author or his work, as well as some excerpts of the text in florilegia. The text disappeared after the ninth century until its rediscovery in the early fifteenth century, apparently by the Italian humanist Poggio Bracciolini, who set out to find ancient treasures in monastic libraries.⁸ The two complete manuscripts, VLF 94 and VLF 30, have been nicknamed the *Lucretius Oblongus* and the *Lucretius Quadratus* after their shape: the *Oblongus* is a rather long and narrow book with measurements of approximately 314x204 mm (height x width), the *Quadratus* is smaller, and almost quadrangular with measurements of approximately 227x215 mm. They have been studied in great detail by David Ganz; his findings are summarized here.⁹ The *Oblongus* is dated to the beginning of the ninth century and was written by a scribe trained in Northwest Germany, perhaps in Mainz. The book was written with exceptional care, in a large and beautifully-shaped Carolingian minuscule. Red ink and uncial letters are used to structure the text for the reader. To quote Ganz:

7. Chazan and Dahan, 'Préface', 7-11.

8. Bischoff, 'Libraries and Schools', 110.

9. Ganz, 'Lucretius in the Carolingian Age', 91-102.

10. Ganz, 'Lucretius in the Carolingian Age', 92.

11. Bischoff, *Karl der Grosse, Werk und Wirkung*, 206, no. 365.

12. Ganz, 'Lucretius in the Carolingian Age', 94-5; Ferrari, "In papia convenient ad Dungalum"; Vezin, 'Observations sur l'origine des manuscrits légués par Dungal a Bobbio'.

'it is hard to think of a contemporary non liturgical volume copied in such large script and with such lavish spacing'.¹⁰

A second scribe can be observed to work on the text: he noted variant readings and filled in lacunae. He worked in the margin but seems to have taken care not to spoil the beauty of the page. He inserts corrections with a triple-dot omission symbol, which mark lines with errors in the metre of Lucretius' verses (e.g. on fols. 94r, 166v, and 176v). Sometimes he 'overrules' the text in a more invasive way, by erasing words or lines, or overwriting them in his own hand. In this process of close collaboration between copyist and corrector it should be noted that the copyist was clearly aware of the fact that the corrector would check his work, for he sometimes left blank spaces for the corrector to work in. On fol. 10r their cooperation is clearly visible: the corrector takes over from the scribe and adds some lines to the text (Plate 1).

A close study of this second hand has made it possible to establish the identity of the corrector: Bischoff unmasked him as Dungal, an Irish scholar who was active at the court of Charlemagne around 800.¹¹ Dungal was famous for his knowledge of the classics. In 811 he composed a treatise on lunar eclipses, in which he cites from Macrobius' commentary on Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*; and in one of his letters he compares the crossing of the Channel with a crossing between Scylla and Charybdis. In 825, he was appointed schoolmaster in Pavia, and he was an active monk in Bobbio, where he donated a number of manuscripts to the library upon his death.¹² While it may be a surprise that a work with such overtly non-Christian content was read at all in a monastic environment in the ninth century, the fact that it was Dungal who actively studied the text in order to create a reliable witness for this text, is perhaps less surprising.

A generation later a scholar lived of whom we know a great deal more: Lupus of Ferrières (c. 805 – c. 862). He was one of the most famous scholars of his time who left a collection of letters in which he writes about the process of seeking out more copies of a text in order to compare and correct.¹³ From a young age, Lupus was a monk in Ferrières, where he must have excelled in school from early on, for his abbot sent him to Fulda to study under Rhabanus Maurus. Lupus brought some books with him to Fulda, including Cicero's *De inventione* and Boethius' *Consolatio philosophiae*, which he knew to be flawed and incomplete copies. In Fulda, he was hoping to correct his copies, and what he could not find there, he tried to find elsewhere: he began to write letters to sister abbeys, to bishops and even the pope in order to get his hands on new texts, or texts for which he had a less than perfect copy. Fortunately a collection of his letters has survived in one manuscript, which is now in Paris (BnF, lat. 2858).¹⁴ These letters inform us of his quest for books and his hunt for texts. Another testimony to his insatiable pursuit of books and knowledge is the rich library and flourishing scriptorium in Ferrières, where Lupus was appointed abbot in 840 by Charles the Bald. Next to the letters and the library, however, the manuscripts themselves – and especially their margins – bear clear evidence of Lupus' work: an entire group of manuscripts has been recognized to contain annotations and emendations in his own hand.¹⁵

In the way Lupus annotated his manuscripts, he shows himself principally as a collator and not a teacher. He did not use the margin to offer explanations or additional information to the readers, instead, he carefully corrected texts and suggested alternative readings, but he did so with the use of a limited, unobtrusive set of signs. An example of his working

13. Bischoff, 'Palaeography and the Transmission of Classical Texts', 123-6; Beeson, *Lupus of Ferrières as Scribe and Text Critic*; Holtz, 'L'humanisme de Loup de Ferrières'.

14. The digital facsimile is available at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b0318625w>, accessed May 2014.

15. Bischoff, 'Palaeography and the Transmission of Classical Texts', 123-7; Pellegrin, 'Les manuscrits de Loup de Ferrières'. A new study of Lupus and his manuscripts is on the way in Allen's fresh edition and commentary of Lupus' letters for CCCM. I thank Michael Allen for sharing with me an article pre-publication: 'Poems by Lupus, written by Heiric'.

method is found in a manuscript from Tours, BnF, lat. 6370, with Macrobius' *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*.¹⁶ In this manuscript four different hands copied the text. In addition, in the margin up to six different hands may be identified, ranging from the ninth to the fifteenth century. Lupus' hand is among these marginal scribes: he marked words or passages for which he had an alternative reading, using a symbol consisting of three dots (tridot), and the Tironian sign for *alter* (a vertical stroke with a second stroke attached that resembles the number 2, such as in BnF, lat. 6370, fol. 20r). A second characteristic is his use of the Tironian sign for *antiquus*, a triangle or Greek capital delta (Δ), which he also used to mark a variant reading (fol. 39v). The fourth way to mark variants used by Lupus is more universal: an abbreviated *vel* ('or') followed by an alternative reading. Characteristic for Lupus' hand is his use of a particular nota-sign (meaning: *nota (bene)*, 'pay attention here'). The use of the nota-sign is very common in Carolingian manuscripts, but Lupus' nota has a distinctive and recognizable shape: it combines N and T in a rather abstract way, so that the sign resembles two steps of a staircase rather than the letter combination (e.g. fol. 19v). Slashes with dots (*/.* or *·/*) are also used, usually to mark a place where an insertion should be made.

This limited and rather neutral set of signs has been found in many manuscripts, which have been subsequently assigned to Lupus or his close circle, both on account of the presence of the signs in the margin and on the basis of the evidence from Lupus' letters, in which he talks about his pursuit of certain texts. VLF 12b and VLF 122, two fragments containing Cicero's *De senectute* and Macrobius' *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* respectively, both dating to the second third of the ninth century, have been suggested to contain corrections

in Lupus' own hand. This verdict is based on the presence, among other things, of the dotted slash to mark the place of insertions, or his typical nota-sign.

While we may find a few of Lupus' characteristics in these manuscripts, the evidence is very slim and inconclusive: the use of a dotted slash is not exclusive to Lupus; it is, in fact, quite a common practice for marking a place where an insertion should be made, just as the abbreviated '*vel*' for variants in the margin. The attribution to Lupus has therefore been contested and is no longer commonly accepted in the Leiden cases. But an important observation we *can* make is that his system of annotation and his way of marking-up texts during the process of collation spread beyond his personal use: it was also used by a circle of 'disciples' around him. We may understand him, therefore, as part of a school of textual scholarship, or perhaps even call him the inventor of a particular set of textual practices to mark textual variants. He was, at any rate, one of the first scholars to reflect on this kind of scholarly activity, which is also found in kindred institutions, such as the monasteries of St Benedict in Fleury and St Germain at Auxerre.¹⁷

17. Bischoff, 'Benedictine Monasteries and the Survival of Classical Literature', 145; Von Büren, 'Auxerre, lieu de production de manuscrits?', 171-4.

Signs with Ancient Roots

As shown by these examples from Lupus and his circle, sets of signs were used to mark variants or insert lacunae. Some of these signs had roots in antiquity, where they were first developed in the context of textual scholarship on Homer at the great library of Alexandria in the third century BCE. Aristarchus of Samothrace is famed with the development of such a set of symbols, to be applied to the multiple copies of Homer collected in the library. With the signs, passages could be marked for which the Alexandrian scholars had

18. McNamee, *Sigla and Select Marginalia in Greek Literary Papyri*.

19. McNamee, *Sigla and Select Marginalia in Greek Literary Papyri*; Jocelyn, 'The Annotations of M. Valerius Probus'.

found variants, or which were clearly corrupt. The symbols used included, among others, the asteriskus (star), obelus (a horizontal stroke with or without dots), diple (a symbol resembling a fishhook (>) or arrow head), chrisimon (a chi-rho combined into one sign), ancora (a circle or half circle).¹⁸ In the Middle Ages, lists of these symbols for text criticism were still transmitted, either independently or as a part of the (encyclopaedic) works of Isidore or Cassiodorus. Key texts in this transmission are *Anecdota Parisinum* and *Liber Glossarum*, which include lists of these signs with explanations, but also descriptions handed down by Isidore in his *Etymologiae* and by Cassiodorus in his *Expositio in Psalmos* and *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum*.

The precise transmission history of these texts dealing with the critical signs and their relationships to each other is immensely complicated, with so many variants, rewritings, summaries, and extended versions that it has confused many editors.¹⁹ Classicists, driven by their interest in recovering the ancient scholarly textual practices in the corrupted and incomplete medieval sources, have struggled with the definition of historical layers in the transmission of these lists and texts. What should be considered part of the classical tradition of textual scholarship? And what should be considered a medieval corruption of that classical tradition? Yet the puzzle becomes even more complex when the actual evidence of the use of these signs in early medieval manuscripts is studied: several authors, such as Hincmar of Rheims, Florus of Lyon, Lupus of Ferrières, and his student Heiric of Auxerre use sets of signs which match their own effort in marking-up texts. These individuals also reflect upon their practices, and describe the signs and their function. Obelus and theta (θ), for example, are generally used to express a negative comment on

the text: they mark passages which, according to the annotator, should be read with the utmost caution only, because of their faultiness in the sense of a corrupt text transmission. These signs could also express a dissent of the annotator with the content of the text, exclaiming, as it were, 'beware, reader, this is wrong'! Asterisk or *chrisimon*, on the other hand, are generally used to mark approval, or noteworthy content, just as the multiple forms of an abbreviated *Nota*. A close study of individual manuscripts, however, quickly reveals that there are exceptions to these common rules, that many more symbols are used than defined by the ancient tradition, and that individual scholars or writing communities used their own internal systems for mark-up.

Irene van Renswoude, who studied the manuscripts that reflect the heated theological debates of the ninth century, unearthed a fine set of examples in which different sets of signs are used and explained in prefaces.²⁰ Evina Steinova has done considerable work on the practice of annotating text with signs in general as part of her PhD thesis (expected completion in 2015).²¹ Her important first conclusion is that the accepted scholarly narrative about it is in need of thorough revision. Whereas the traditional view regards the deployment of these non-verbal annotation signs as an ancient practice of which only a few corrupted remnants survived in the Middle Ages, the margins of ninth-century manuscripts testify that the practice was very much alive. The practice of using the classical set of signs for textual criticism did not die with the Roman Empire, nor the theoretical thinking that surrounded them. On the contrary: new practices, signs and meanings were invented, described, and deployed. It is much more fruitful, therefore, to regard the medieval afterlife of these signs not as imperfect, incomplete, and corrupted ver-

20. For a first sample, see Renswoude and Steinova, 'The Annotated Gottschalk: Symbolic Annotation and Control of Heterodoxy in the Carolingian Age'.

21. For a first sample, see Steinova, '*Psalmos, notas, cantus*: the Meanings of *nota* in the Carolingian Period'.

22. Genette, *Seuils*.

23. Huygens, *Accessus ad auctores*. Bernard d'Utrecht. Conrad d'Hirsau: *Dialogus super auctores*.

sions of the great classical tradition, but to see them at their own merit. The margins show a practice in constant evolution and development, with an ever-growing set of signs and meanings full of nuance. A multitude of signs and systems of signs were used, and some scholars or scribal communities were keen to establish their own methods. Steinova's analysis of these is forthcoming.

Commentary Traditions

A second type of scholarship which is often encountered in the margins of Carolingian manuscripts of the classics is the commentary: a secondary text or set of texts copied next to the main text, in order to give the reader some guidance in the interpretation of the main text. The term *paratext* has been suggested to be used for this type of text, since commentary functions as a gateway between the physical text and the reader, offering supplementary information and giving direction as to how the reader should interpret the words in front of him.²² Commentary texts provide information concerning vocabulary, grammar, and syntax; they elaborate on the content of texts so as to give the reader more background information, for example concerning mythology or etymology; and they expound the lessons that should be drawn from the main text. A common form of *paratext* found in medieval margins is the short introduction to the author, his life and his work – the so-called *accessus*.²³

The nature of commentary texts is notoriously difficult, because of their fuzzy boundaries and their open-endedness. In the case of commentaries, it is not standard to have a transmission of a set text from a certain author on a certain text. Instead, the manuscripts often contain a selection made from that commentary, expanded by a set of com-

mentary texts that come from another source (or sources), or by a set of new commentary texts. These texts are almost always layered, in the sense that a first layer is entered into the marginal space surrounding the main text block, and that second, third or more layers are entered into this same marginal space in contemporary or later hands. Intermediate copies of these layered texts in a single hand, moreover, make it impossible to distinguish between the layers. Even in the few cases where the name of an author is attached to a commentary, for example the commentary of Servius on Virgil or the commentary of Donatus on Terence, a look at the individual manuscripts of these ‘authorized’ commentary texts often reveals a level of variance from copy to copy which is very hard to match with the idea of a ‘set’ text. For the making of editions, the classical philological approach often fails, or, in any case, results in a real struggle, as was most vividly described by James Zetzel:

24. Zetzel, *Marginal Scholarship and Textual Deviance*, 157.

Instead of a single original, there are many; instead of an archetype, there are multiple forms constantly present and transmitted in overlapping patterns; instead of mechanical copying from one manuscript generation to the next, there is pervasive contamination and horizontal transmission. And instead of a unified and unequivocal text, commentaries deliberately contain alternative and mutually contradictory explanations of the text they purport to explain; there is not one text, but many; there is not one truth, but many.²⁴

To attach a date to a commentary text thus becomes an unsolvable puzzle, for whereas it is possible to identify quotes and sources that give a reliable *terminus post quem*, this ter-

minus is only valid for the layer of the commentary to which the particular passage belongs, and layers are more often than not inextricably mixed on the pages of the surviving manuscripts.²⁵

Separate Annotations Versus Running Commentary Texts

In the Carolingian copies of Virgil, Terence, Persius, Lucan, and Martianus Capella (to mention just a few of the authors who were generally accompanied by extensive commentary traditions), main text and commentary text were brought together on the page in such a way that it was obvious which was which. The main text was written in the centre of the page (the main writing space), the commentary in the space around it. Often, this space was prepared for the purpose: columns for commentary were pricked and ruled next to the main writing space. The hierarchy between the two texts was clarified by scaled letter sizes: almost always, a larger letter was used for the main text, and a smaller-sized letter for the commentary. In most cases, both marginal *and* interlinear space was used for commentary, and as one would expect, shorter annotations generally feature in interlinear space, longer annotations in the margin. A widespread phenomenon is the usage of reference signs, which point the reader to the keyword or phrase ('lemma') to which the explanation ('interpretamentum') should be attached. Sometimes the lemma is repeated before the interpretamentum, sometimes not. For the reference signs, different styles of signs could be used: letters from the Latin or the Greek alphabet, reading signs such as dots or asterisks, Tironian notes, musical notation symbols, and newly invented graphemes. Many of these are illustrated in VLQ 18, a composite manuscript with

two codicological units, one (fols. 1-68) produced in the second half of the tenth century, the other (fols. 69-90) in the eleventh century, both possibly in Auxerre. The first unit contains a copy of Juvenal's *Satires*, with the so-called *Commentum Cornuti*, the second, a copy of Persius' *Satires*, also with commentary. The neat layout of text and commentary text is typical for the tenth century and later, as is the variety of signs used (Plate 2).

The open-endedness and layering of commentary texts resulted in different kinds of layout in the manuscripts. Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, a fifth-century handbook for the Greek learned tradition on the seven liberal arts, for example, comes with a complicated history of commentaries. Even after long and detailed research, it is unclear whether *De nuptiis* came to the Carolingian period with a fifth- or sixth-century commentary attached, or whether the Carolingian scholars were the first to build a commentary around it. The oldest manuscripts of the text we have date to the ninth century, so on the one hand there is no evidence to assume that an earlier phase of commentary preceded the surviving one, at least not by centuries. On the other hand, the commentary tradition is already present in the oldest exemplars of the text, and in these same manuscripts the layout of the text clearly provides space for the lengthy commentary found there, which could suggest that a commentary already accompanied the text when it reached the Carolingian intellectual centres where it was copied. In the earliest surviving copies of the text extra columns are provided for. The sources of the oldest commentary tradition include Servius, Boethius, Fulgentius, and Isidore, but also Church Fathers such as Augustine and Ambrose. Occasionally, contemporary names and references are found among the annotations in the mar-

26. Teeuwen, 'Writing Between the Lines'.

27. Teeuwen, 'Glossing in Close Co-operation'.

gin, but it is unclear whether these should be considered part of the original commentary or as later additions.²⁶

One of the oldest manuscripts with a rich transmission of the earliest commentary tradition is VLF 48, a manuscript that was perhaps made in Auxerre in the period 820-840 (Plate 3). The opening page shows a central writing space for the main text and two columns for annotations around it. The upper and lower margins are also filled with annotations, just as the small inner and outer margins around the commentary-columns, and the interlinear space, which is extra wide for the purpose. In this particular example, the commentary text found in the prepared commentary columns was written by two scribes who worked closely together. The two hands, who are quite similar, are mainly distinguishable by differences in the colour of their ink and the width of the nibs of their pens. Apart from these differences in appearance there seems to be no clear division in terms of roles or tasks in their copying activity. Both hands copied annotations in the interlinear space *and* in the marginal space, both hands corrected each other. They were two scribes working together, simultaneously and on equal terms, and they used one or more exemplars to enrich the text with commentary. In doing so, they relied upon a more or less fixed commentary text, which they copied rather faithfully into the margins of VLF 48. In other words: the commentary text found here is not a set of ad-hoc-annotations of individual scholars, but a text with a written transmission from one manuscript to another, even when the contours of the text are more flexible than usual.²⁷ A third hand, however, who entered an extra layer of annotations in the inner and outer margins (but mostly in the first few pages), seems to enter more ad-hoc, personal annotations: his script looks less formal, and contains a relatively

high number of Tironian notes. Annotations added by this third hand are not present in most of the other manuscripts with the oldest commentary tradition.²⁸

In the case of VLF 48, the commentary text took the shape of small blocks of text spread across the page. These blocks of text can only be understood in relation to the lemmata they reflect upon, and their spacing generally matches the occurrence of the phrase to which the annotation should be linked. In other cases, the commentary has taken the form of a continuous text, with lemmata incorporated into the running text and explanations following. This is the case, for example, in a later Martianus Capella manuscript with a commentary ascribed to Remigius of Auxerre, BnF, lat. 7900A, famous for its pictures of the seven liberal arts.²⁹ Here, the commentary is written continuously in a separate column, which is, in fact, at times wider than the text column. Lemmata are incorporated in the text and only distinguished from their interpretamenta by the use of capitals for the lemma and lower case for the explanation. Such a commentary can almost be read separately from the text, and, indeed, often makes an effort to be clear even to a reader who does not have the main text at hand. The fact that these running or continuous commentary texts were used in a more independent fashion is also evidenced by the fact that incongruences can be observed: a commentary text can, for example, reflect a different version of the main text (repeated in the commentary as lemmata) than present on the same page in the main writing space. Or the text on the page and in the running commentary are sometimes out of sync, when the lemmata incorporated in the commentary are found on a different page. In order to explain these incongruences, Zetzel introduced the term ‘remarginalized commentary’: a

28. O’Sullivan, *Glossae aevi carolini in libros I-II De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, LXVII-LXVIII.

29. Mutherich, “‘De Rhetorica’”. Eine Illustration zu Martianus Capella’.

30. Zetzel, *Marginal Scholarship and Textual Deviance*, XXX.

31. Zetzel, *Marginal Scholarship and Textual Deviance*, 155; Teeuwen, 'The Impossible Task of Editing a Ninth-Century Commentary Tradition', 197-8.

commentary text started in the margin, relying heavily on the lay-out and presence of the main text on the same page, but evolved to a text which could function more or less separately from the main text.³⁰ It was perhaps also copied in separate manuscripts. At some point, however, a scribe decided to bring main text and commentary together on the same page, and started to copy the commentary text next to the main text: he 'remarginalized' it. Since commentary text and main text did not necessarily share a common text tradition, however, incongruences could come into existence.³¹

There are several formats in between these two extremes: there are cases where separate blocks of text at some point start to grow into a running text; or, by contrast, where a running commentary starts to fall apart into smaller blocks of text at some point. Sometimes, a set text is copied at the start, but after a few pages only a selection from the set text is copied. It is extended with elements from other texts. In these cases of mixture between set text and ad-hoc text, the boundaries between text block (for the main text) and margin often also start to blur. One could question the use of the word 'margin' for a writing space that is prepared (in that it is pricked and ruled) to contain a set text, even if it is only a secondary one, which is there to interact with the main text. Visually the page not only contains two (or more) texts, main work and its commentary, but a hierarchy of primary and secondary texts can be discerned as well. The margin, in this case, would be the 'white area' around the second writing space, and not the second writing space itself. On the other hand, the 'second writing space' is seldom consistently used for a set commentary text. Very often, new layers, individual annotations, corrections, and variant readings creep in. A common feature is that a text is copied with a set sec-

ondary text from the outset but after a number of pages the layout is abandoned or put to different use. For example, the commentary columns pricked and ruled to contain the commentary are, in fact, used for the copying of the text itself; the commentary is driven to the edges of the pages. Or the columns are still there but remain empty: there is no commentary present. In some cases, the columns are used for other texts, presumably because they were left empty. It was considered a waste not to use them for a better purpose than being blank.

It seems fair to conclude, then, that the preparation of the layout, the pricking, and ruling of the quires, were not always considered leading: it could be overruled by the scribe, and the page could be adapted to better match the text that was to be copied on it.

32. Ganz, 'On the History of Tironian Notes', 50-1.

Tironian Notes and Personal Annotations

A phenomenon that is part and parcel of the genre of commentary texts, especially in the ninth century, is the relatively widespread use of Tironian notes.³² Tironian notes are signs from an ancient shorthand system, believed to have been invented by Cicero's scribe Tiro so that he could notate his master's speeches at dictation speed. The system survived and was used in the context of administration and law by professional scribes in the early Middle Ages. Among complete manuscripts in Tironian notes, Psalters stand out, and were probably used as training manuals: the Psalters, so it is argued, were known by heart and these texts were therefore very apt to train the eye for the Tironian signs. As for other textual genres, a more extensive use of Tironian notes is quite rare, presumably because they were mainly used for drafts and not for finished products of writing; and the survival

33. Holtz, 'Le ms. Lyon, B.M. 484 (414) et la méthode de travail de Florus'; Hellmann, 'Stenographische Technik in der karolingischen Patrologie'.

34. Hellmann, *Tironische Noten in der Karolingerzeit*, 54-92.

35. <http://www.rzuser.uni-heidelberg.de/~mw8/sntz/n/in-cipit.htm>, accessed May 2014.

rate for drafts, one can safely assume, is much lower than for finished products. In commentary texts, however, Tironian notes are frequently used, presumably for various reasons: not only could the shorthand script have been used to compensate for the lack of space, but it has also been suggested that these texts, which must have functioned in a context of school or private teaching, reflect an oral aspect. They could have been the notes used by a teacher to lecture, or the notes taken by students listening to their teachers and writing down their words. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine a student being allowed just to take notes in a manuscript, for writing manuscripts was an activity that was organised in a strict and hierarchic fashion.³³

Two things are clear on the usage of Tironian script in early medieval manuscripts: they are a testimony to education at the highest level and to a certain professionalism of the scribe. Moreover, they have a personal touch. The script, as Hellmann explained, is a basic set of strokes and curves signifying a certain syllable, and the individual elements are connected to make words. The connections, however, are personal: different forms can be used to connect one element to another, which makes it very difficult to read the Tironian shorthand of a person with whom one is not familiar.³⁴ Hellmann's online dictionary of Tironian notes, the *supertextus notarum tironianarum*,³⁵ starts from the basic elements and allows the user to follow their transformation when connected to other elements to form words. Yet it is still very difficult to solve the Tironian writing found in the manuscripts because the connections found in the margins of manuscripts only rarely match precisely the ones given by the dictionary.

The personal aspect of Tironian writing fits the character of commentary with its fuzzy, open boundaries well.

An individual scholar may have felt welcome to add his own thoughts in a manuscript that already contained a commentary tradition on a main text, precisely because the nature of commentary texts was open to adding layers of information. The use of Tironian shorthand, furthermore, suggests that he did so for private use, or at least for a select audience, namely those familiar with his style of writing Tironian notes and his marginal textual practices. The fact that he was – evidently – allowed to write in a manuscript at all furthermore confirms the speculation that he belonged to a highly educated scholarly elite of professional scholars, a circle of advanced students and teachers.

Apart from the use of Tironian notes for concise, perhaps personal commentaries, the shorthand script was also used to code certain remarks about the texts at hand. We have already seen how Lupus of Ferrières used the Tironian sign for ‘alter’ and Tironian ‘antiquus’ to mark variants he came across when consulting several copies of the same text. Tironian notes meaning ‘hic’ or ‘usque hic’ were frequently used in the margin, perhaps to make an unobtrusive note for a scribe who was to export text from one copy to another; or by a copyist who marked his own progress of the day; or by a reader who had read a certain text up to a certain point. We encounter other signs of a similar personal nature, for example in a manuscript of Seneca’s letters, BnF, lat. 8658A (Fig. 1).³⁶ This manuscript was produced in the second half of the ninth century in Northern France (Tours and Rheims have both been suggested) and was annotated by Heiric of Auxerre or someone from his circle in the 860s or 870s, under the abbacy of Hincmar of Rheims. The margins are full of personal signs: nota-signs, crosses, obeli, require-signs (check-signs), and keywords. These marginal activities reveal a scholar who

36. A digital facsimile is available at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bt-v1b8426791q>, accessed May 2014.

philosofus et literatus potest fieri ueniunt rogas quare de epicuro
 tam multa benedicta referam potius quam in; quid; tam qua
 re tantis epicuri uoces putas esse publicas quam multa per dicitur
 quare philosophis aut dictas aut dicenda; Non autem gametracos
 nec togatas nras habentem hanc quoque; aliquid seueritatis; & sine
 comedia accorago sed uas medicum duntaxat dissertissimorum uersum
 intermi; os uas quanta multa publicus non ex calceatis sed quotur
 natis dicenda sunt uersum quid philosophiam proinde & ad
 hanc partem quare modo fuit in manibus; referam quoniam for
 tuita in me habenda; diu enim; omne quicquid optando euenit
 hunc uersum accedens paulo melius sed adstrictus memini;
 Non enim facinorosa fecit tuum; illud & iam nunc melius dictum
 atque per te; Da bonum quod potuit auferri potest; hoc enim
 in putos solent de tuo tibi UALE

Ammetto rophen dat inquad a epistola epicurus eos quid
 aut sapientem seipso esse contentum & propter hanc amico non indige
 re desiderasse; hoc obicitur saluti ab epicuro & in quibus
 summum bonum uisum; Animum in patientia in ambiguitate inci
 dendum; si ex primere a phathian uno uerbo cito uoluerim
 in patientia dicere; Propter contentum etiam in quod signi
 ficare uolumus intellegi; nos eum uolumus dicere; quiescat
 omnis malis sensu; accipit & is qui nullum ferre possit malum;
 Vide ergo non satis aut in uulnereabilem animum dicere;
 aut animum extra omnem patientiam positum; hoc in nos & illos
 inter; Nos ter sapienter uincit quidem in contentum omne sed sentat
 illum in sentat qui de illud nobis illis commune a sapientem
 seipso esse contentum sed tam & amicum habere uult & uicini & co
 gubernalem; quous sibi ipse sufficiat Vide quare sit contentum

studied the text for its Latin, who marked the content with keywords so as to navigate with ease through the text, and who added personal remarks triggered by the text. He noted points of interest, textually problematic passages and points that ought to be checked or that raised questions. The marginal activity in this manuscript is not of an explanatory nature, but a reflection of a scholarly and individual engagement with the text.

Conclusions

In the present essay examples have been shown of the textual practices used by scholars and students to mark up their texts of classical and late-antique authors. We studied the methods and techniques of textual criticism, the comparison of text versions, and the process of notating them in the margin or interlinear space. These techniques, driven by a general pursuit for textual correctness and accuracy in the copying process, were built on ancient practices, but Carolingian scholars developed their own systems of signs and markings as well. We saw examples of commentary, which was both transmitted as a set text from manuscript to manuscript, and open to a certain kind of layering, addition, and transformation. Commentary texts, so it was argued, are almost always the result of a dynamic process, and their shape and content are only rarely fixed. The nature of commentary texts firmly puts the classical authors in the context of education: their margins and interlinear spaces are full of annotations that focus on a correct text, grammar, syntax, poetic techniques, rhetorical figures, vocabulary. There is usually a strong emphasis on Greek vocabulary, which is marked with colours or lines, and explained. A second important goal of the marginal annotations seems to have been to organise and summarize

the text for the reader: definitions are repeated in the margin, keywords are added to make it easier for the reader to find his way, concise tables are shaped to make pieces of learning more memorable. Third, it is very obvious that the knowledge in one text was usually connected to that of others. Authorities on certain subjects are collected in the margin, and compared with each other.

This last characteristic of commentary texts – a critical comparison – enriches the setting of the study of these texts. Traditionally, books with annotations or commentary traditions are seen as schoolbooks, but they should also be seen as books of scholarship, scholarly discussions, and dossiers for scholarly disputes. This context of private scholarship is also reflected by the examples of private annotations in the form of critical signs, selection marks, and nota-signs. These make sense to their maker and his (or her) close circle, but they are often meaningless to those further removed. Precisely these annotations, I argue, are intriguing sources to study the intellectual history of the time. They bring us as close as possible to the monk or scholar who wrote them with his quill. Familiar hands have been recognized, such as the hand of Lupus of Ferrières, Florus of Lyon, John the Scot Eriugena, or Heiric of Auxerre. Each of them has been shown to have his own set of peculiarities when it comes to annotating, correcting or guiding the process of copying texts. These peculiarities reveal the specific scholars or their close intellectual circles, and make it possible to study contacts, networks or travels of these scholars and their books. By studying the annotations, we can analyze which subjects caught their attention, and which did not. Which parts of the ancient learned heritage did they adopt, which parts did they transform into something new, and how did they do this? Which parts did

they ignore or reject? We can analyze the nature of their comments on certain subjects, and the dynamics of the methods used to interpret them. We can follow the history of thought on certain subjects and see continuities and discontinuities. There is, in other words, a wealth of information still to gain from the voices in the margin.

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Aut serpens calcata
Maiestas teritur. huiusq[ue]
Non coniunx. non ipse
Sufficiunt odus. non
Non notos egisse sat est
Funditus. & nomen ge
Nec celeris ^{perunt} loeto. crud
Supplicis fruttur.
Dilato mucrone para
Larcendi rabies. cono