

*Practices of Appropriation: Writing in the Margin**Mariken Teeuwen*

The history of strategies of reading and writing has come into view only over the past few decades.<sup>1</sup> The field was given a big push by the initiative of large public libraries to make digital facsimiles of medieval manuscripts from their collections available online. For the first time, modern scholars can see not only a few but large quantities of manuscripts. They can compare manuscripts kept in one library with those kept in another on the screens of their computers. Digital images of manuscripts are now available to any scholar interested in them and not only to those for whom they were traditionally part of their research: the philologists, who focused on the content of books, on textual variants and stemmatological questions, and the manuscript scholars, who focused on their appearance, studying and analysing codicological and palaeographical aspects of the book. Now they have become part of the research material of a much greater variety of scholars, interested in historical, social, cultural or intellectual questions of how books were made, read, studied, used, touched, carried around, traded, treasured and discarded. An important feature of manuscripts that has come into view only as a corollary of their new online existence is the annotations in the margins and interlinear spaces. Whereas both philologists and cataloguers, by tradition, were generally inclined to ignore these, these features were largely hidden until very recently, but digitisation and the interest in the history of reading has put them back in the spotlight. In this chapter, my focus drifts to the edges of pages, rather than the middle. I shall address questions such as: What did twelfth-century makers and readers of books do to store, sort, select and summarise their reading?<sup>2</sup> How did they engage with their books, in order to optimise their use of them? Was annotating books common or special? Are certain practices of annotating specific to certain textual genres, or shared by all genres alike? How do they compare over the chronological length of the century, or the geographical area of the Latin West? How did practices shift, potentially,

with the intellectual demands and ideals of their time, and how do they reflect these?

In the grand narrative of intellectual history, the twelfth century is a century of change and innovation, a cultural renaissance which saw the birth of scholasticism, the first universities, the introduction of a new stream of texts from the Greek philosophical tradition, enriched with Arabic interpretations. In terms of manuscript production, it is generally argued that the face of the book itself changed so as to accommodate a new culture of reading: the mere growth of material to be read and studied by a scholar caused a growth in strategies of summarising, structuring and organising texts, and the development of tools such as the index in order to facilitate the consultation of texts.<sup>3</sup> Next to the monastic, contemplative practice, a scholastic model of reading developed, aimed at strategies of reasoning, the selection and comparison of authorities and dialectical engagement.

Parts of this grand narrative seem flawed and in need of revision. Many of the tools twelfth-century readers and writers used to engage with the texts assembled in their books, to aid them in their reading, study and appropriation of the texts, were not new.<sup>4</sup> Their appearance may have changed, but certainly the majority of them were already in use in earlier times. Recent scholarship has shown, moreover, that the goals of the Carolingian reform stimulated a culture of careful, correct reading and diligent text transmission, which involved many of the same intellectual strategies that were so important in the dialectical, scholastic age.<sup>5</sup> It seems timely, therefore, to try and compare annotating practices from different times and different areas, and to take stock. A full analysis of such practices is not yet possible, since scholarship has only recently begun to explore the margins of medieval manuscripts from this point of view. But a tentative comparison between some material collected from two sets of data, one of manuscripts from the period 800–1000, and one of manuscripts from the Long Twelfth Century, will bring a number of interesting observations to light.<sup>6</sup>

### **Manuscripts of the Classics, Manuscripts for the Classroom**

‘Medieval copies of classical works do not naturally constitute a distinct category. The classics were produced, like all other books, according to the nature of the text and the destination of the manuscript.’<sup>7</sup> With this statement, Birger Munk Olsen opens his chapter on the production of manuscripts containing classical texts in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

He is certainly right, of course: a book with classical texts was produced by the same scribes and used by the same readers as many other literary genres. Yet two characteristics of the classical genre make them more interesting than average in the particular context of writing in the margin and in between the lines: first, they often come with a set of glosses, scholia or even a full commentary. Secondly, they were generally produced for usage in education. These two features make them a fruitful category of manuscripts for the exploration of techniques of appropriation, and a safe choice if one wants to observe specific practices of writing in the margin.

Munk Olsen counted around 2,500 manuscripts or fragments with classical texts produced in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and lists twenty-nine texts which survive in more than twenty-five copies. Of these, about 30 per cent are dated to the eleventh century, 70 per cent to the twelfth.<sup>8</sup> Popular were Cicero's moral and rhetorical works, along with the pseudo-Ciceronian text *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Lucan's *Bellum civile*, Statius' *Thebaid*, the *Satires* of Juvenal and Persius and Terence's *Comedies*. The Golden Poets, Horace, Virgil and Ovid, were also popular.

In this first section I present six twelfth-century manuscripts containing classical texts or which were designed for use in the classroom: a Virgil manuscript, a book combining the prosimetric works of Boethius (*The Consolation of Philosophy*) and Martianus Capella (the first two books of his encyclopaedia of the seven liberal arts: *The Marriage of Mercury and Philology*), a copy of Calcidius' commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, a booklet with Ciceronian works on rhetoric and two copies of Priscian.

### **Leiden, Universiteitsbibl. BPL 92A: Virgil's *Bucolica*, *Georgica* and *Aeneas***

BPL 92A is a beautiful book made of very high-quality, perfectly smooth parchment and enriched with illustrated initials in black, blue, green and red inks.<sup>9</sup> It is dated around 1150 and was probably produced in England.<sup>10</sup> The layout reckons with the addition of commentary: a rather narrow single column is used for the main text, and a column in the outer margin which is almost as wide is pricked and ruled for the purpose of commentary. Each line of the main text potentially houses two lines of commentary text. The lines of the main text are widely spaced, so that between the lines annotators had ample room to write their glosses and comments as well. The pages measure ca. 240 mm × 150 mm (a rather narrow book),<sup>11</sup> the text-space ca. 200 mm × 62 mm, in the *Aeneas* part of the manuscript

200 mm × 73 mm, which makes the percentage of marginal space vary between 60 per cent and 66 per cent of the page.

The commentary added here represents a settled commentary tradition: it has elements of Servius, Donatus and several anonymous established commentaries on the texts at hand, together with a mix of *vitae* of Virgil and *accessus*.<sup>12</sup> The commentary text is split up into blocks, which surround the main text and which are placed so as to line up, as much as possible, with the lemmata they refer to. Where the placement could cause confusion, minute tie marks are inserted. The set of signs or squiggles used here are combinations of dots, circles and lines.

In general, each annotation is marked at the beginning with a paragraph sign or hook (Γ), the top of which is elegantly curved upwards. Remarkably, most of the interlinear glosses also begin with this sign. On some pages, the marginal annotations are boxed or demarcated with lines, elegantly broken with small 'ribs', so as to set them apart as a unit for the reader.

Apart from the stylishly entered commentary, the manuscript carries very little evidence of use. There are no later layers of commentary added to it, or ad hoc reader's notes. The whole manuscript, with text and commentary, must have been produced in one go, and afterwards it was kept in pristine condition.

### **Leiden, Universiteitsbibl. BPL 144: Boethius' *Consolatio* and Martianus' *De nuptiis***

In BPL 144, two prosimetric texts, notably Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* and Martianus' *The Marriage of Mercury and Philology* (Books I–II), are combined. This book was possibly produced in the Netherlands in the last quarter of the twelfth century.<sup>13</sup> Just as in the previous book, the scribe reckoned with commentary that needed to be added around the main text: he created a rather narrow main text column in the centre of the page, and provided for two extra columns left and right which could house annotations. The pages measure circa 225 mm × 165 mm, with a writing space for the main text of 150 mm × 75 mm (a marginal space of 70 per cent). In the Martianus Capella part of the manuscript, this marginal space is at times made even larger, so as to create space for even more commentary. The main text lines are pricked and ruled; for the marginal text columns, only the vertical lines are pricked and ruled. Each line of main text has the same height, approximately, as two lines of commentary.

In the margins and interlinear space a first, contemporary set of annotations has been added followed by a second one, roughly a century younger. The basic layout of the first, contemporary layer of commentary is similar to that of the Virgil manuscript discussed earlier: the annotations are arranged around the main text as blocks of text, if possible placed so as to match the line of the lemmata in the main text. As a rule of thumb, the marginal annotations start with a paragraph sign (¶), the interlinear glosses do not. No tie marks are given. In the annotations, the lemma is often underlined. In the Martianus Capella part of the manuscript, the volume of commentary is at times so large that the marginal space is almost completely filled. Only small strips of space at the top and bottom of the pages are left blank.

As to the use of text and commentary, the differences between the original layer of commentary and the later one are striking. Whereas the scribe of the first copies a settled tradition, the second – to be dated in the last quarter of the thirteenth century<sup>14</sup> – consists of ad hoc additions, personal notes and lively interactions with the text at hand. The annotator adds *nota* signs, pointing out which part of the text caught his interest, often enlivening them with pointing fingers and faces, or other small drawings. On f. 10r he adds a nice drawing of Boethius' wheel of fortune (Figure 8.1). Many of his *nota* signs, hands and faces are right at the edges of the pages, which may be only because of the binder's knife that cut the edges down in modern times, but one could also imagine that they were purposefully put there to allow the annotator to browse through his book and be reminded of passages he liked or which left an impression. This personal voice is absent from the Martianus Capella part of the manuscript, but present again in a part which must have been added to the first two at a later stage: a copy of Macrobius' *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, produced in France around 1100. Only a few folia of this text survive, but they caught the interest of our late thirteenth-century reader, who wrote lengthy comments and illustrated points in the text with small cosmological diagrams.

### Leiden, Universiteitsbibl. BPL 64: Calcidius, Commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*

From Macrobius, it is a small step to Calcidius, a second great authority in matters of cosmology. BPL 64 is a manuscript composed of multiple codicological units. The first part (Plato's *Phaedo*) was produced in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, the second (Calcidius' *Commentary on*

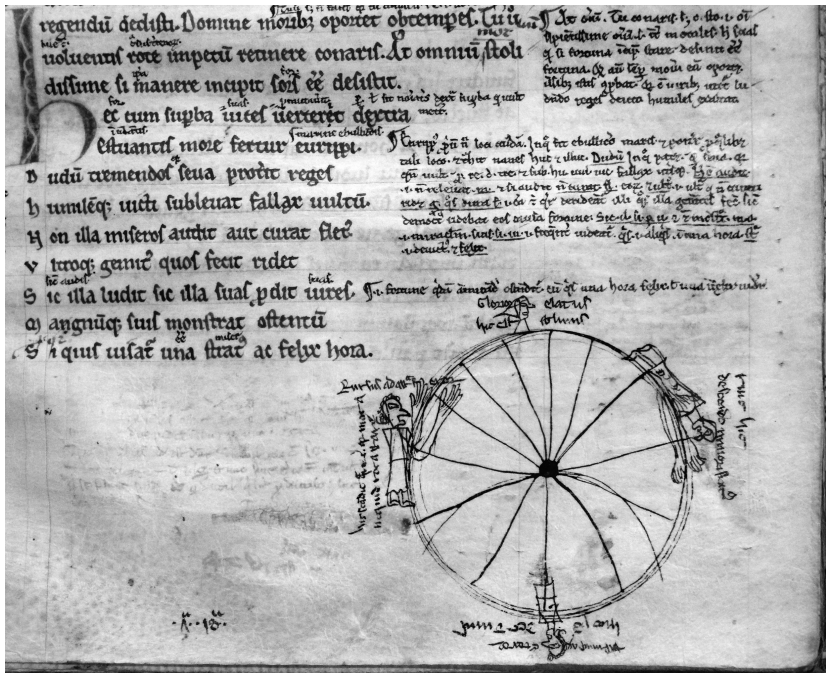


Figure 8.1 Two hands entering commentary in the margins. Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL 144, f. 10r.

*Plato's Timaeus*) dates to the twelfth. This twelfth-century part is followed by two more parts: a supplement of a missing part of Calcidius' commentary dated circa 1300, and a copy of works of Aristotle, a.o. *De caelo et mundo*, copied in the second half of the thirteenth century. The entire manuscript may have been produced in the southern Netherlands.<sup>15</sup> The interesting part for the purpose of this chapter is the second part: ff. 37–124, with Calcidius' commentary.

In this part, we see, again, a beautifully executed copy of the text, fitted with extra-wide margins and ample interlinear space for the purpose of commentary. The pages measure 290 mm × 200 mm, the single main text column 225 mm × 130 mm, which leaves about half the page free for commentary. The outer margin is the space reserved for commentary, but the narrow inner margin, the upper and lower margins are at times also used to add notes, explanations and excursions. It is clear that multiple hands were at work in this manuscript, both for the copying of the text and for the layers

of annotation. Some of them are contemporary, some later (perhaps added only in the thirteenth century, when the other parts of the manuscript may have been added), but they are difficult to distinguish with certainty.<sup>16</sup>

In the margin, we can observe phenomena which are by now familiar: blocks of text, arranged next to the main text so as to line up with the lemma they respond to; as a rule of thumb marked at the beginning with a paragraph sign (¶). Occasionally, tie marks are used, such as the letters B or θ. Remarkable in this case are the many small diagrams which are added to the set of diagrams already available in the text: they illustrate abstract concepts such as numerical ratios, or visualise the relations between terms and their characteristics. We can see added *nota* signs, calling attention to certain passages in the text. We can also observe how in the annotations multiple authorities are referred to: Augustine, Tertullianus and Remigius are all mentioned in relation to the text at hand. A new phenomenon in this particular manuscript is the use of ‘co’ (for *commentarius*) at the beginning of some of the annotations, which fits with the impression that this book was tailored for the classroom. It emphasises the fact that a teacher could be treating both text and commentary to guide the reading process of his students.<sup>17</sup>

### Leiden, Universiteitsbibl. BPL 189

BPL 189 is a very different example. It is a booklet measuring just 175 mm × 105 mm, a composite of several parts which were written in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, containing a peculiar, seemingly incoherent or haphazard collection of texts, ranging from *computus* (Johannes Constantiensis, *Epistola de luna paschali*) to canon law (Fulbert of Chartres, *Liber penitentialis*), and from classical comedy (Terence) to rhetoric (Cicero’s *De inventione* and Thierry of Chartres’ commentary on Cicero).<sup>18</sup> Especially this last part of the manuscript (ff. 42–47), which was made in France in the second half of the twelfth century, is interesting for the purpose at hand. Its layout is the opposite to the books described earlier: it has small, fully filled pages, with just a few millimetres of margin: a writing space of 167 mm × 97 mm on a page of 175 mm × 105 mm – a marginal space of just 12 per cent. Yet a reader still felt invited to add little notes and signs in the margin: we can see a few key words, sometimes written at a 90 degree angle so as to fit on the page, some hooks, crosses, quotation marks and a few faces, both smiling and non-smiling, which illustrate the content of the text in a playful way: the frowning face stands next to a passage about ‘empty’ eloquence without *sapientia* (wisdom); the

smiling face stands next to a passage about how the faculty of eloquence makes mankind superior to animals (Figure 8.2).<sup>19</sup> While it is difficult to put a date to the faces and signs, we can be certain that the key words and interlinear glosses are written in a contemporary hand. Since the ink of these markings matches that of the signs and faces, it is safe to assume that these too were contemporary with the main text. They seem to have been created to personalise this copy of Cicero's rhetorical treatise to the taste of the twelfth-century owner of these pages.

### Leiden, Universiteitsbibl. BPL 91 and 92: Two Twelfth-Century Priscian Manuscripts

Finally, two manuscripts of Priscian's *Grammar*, BPL 91 and 92,<sup>20</sup> could be expected to reveal practices of teaching and learning in the twelfth-century classroom. In fact, however, their annotations are not unequivocal about their function. BPL 91 is an Italian manuscript of high quality produced in the second half of the twelfth century, with numerous contemporary and later annotations, but only in the first few pages. After these, the annotation quickly dwindles to almost nothing. The pages measure 260 mm × 165 mm, and the writing space measures 205 mm × 110 mm, leaving about 48 per cent of the page free for commentary. Thus we can see how the pages of this manuscript were laid out to contain commentary, but in this case they were prepared with less care than we saw in the other manuscripts: a column is left free on the outside of the text, but it is not pricked with extra vertical lines, or ruled. The designated place for commentary seems to have been the outer margin, but the top, inner and lower margins are occasionally used as well. The interlinear glossing is dense, but only at the beginning. The beginnings of annotations are, as a rule of thumb, marked with the usual paragraph sign, although some of these were added by later hands. A later hand has also inserted paragraph signs in the text at the beginning of each sentence. In this manuscript, furthermore, an inventive set of tie marks is made from dots, circles, lines and squiggles, in imaginative combinations. The large amount of correction is remarkable, again in different hands and belonging to different chronological layers of working on this text.

BPL 92 is a composite manuscript, consisting of four parts. Each of these units contains a part of Priscian's *Grammar*, and they must have been brought together with the purpose of creating one more or less complete copy. The first, second and fourth parts were all made in France in the twelfth century;<sup>21</sup> the third was made in the thirteenth century, probably in



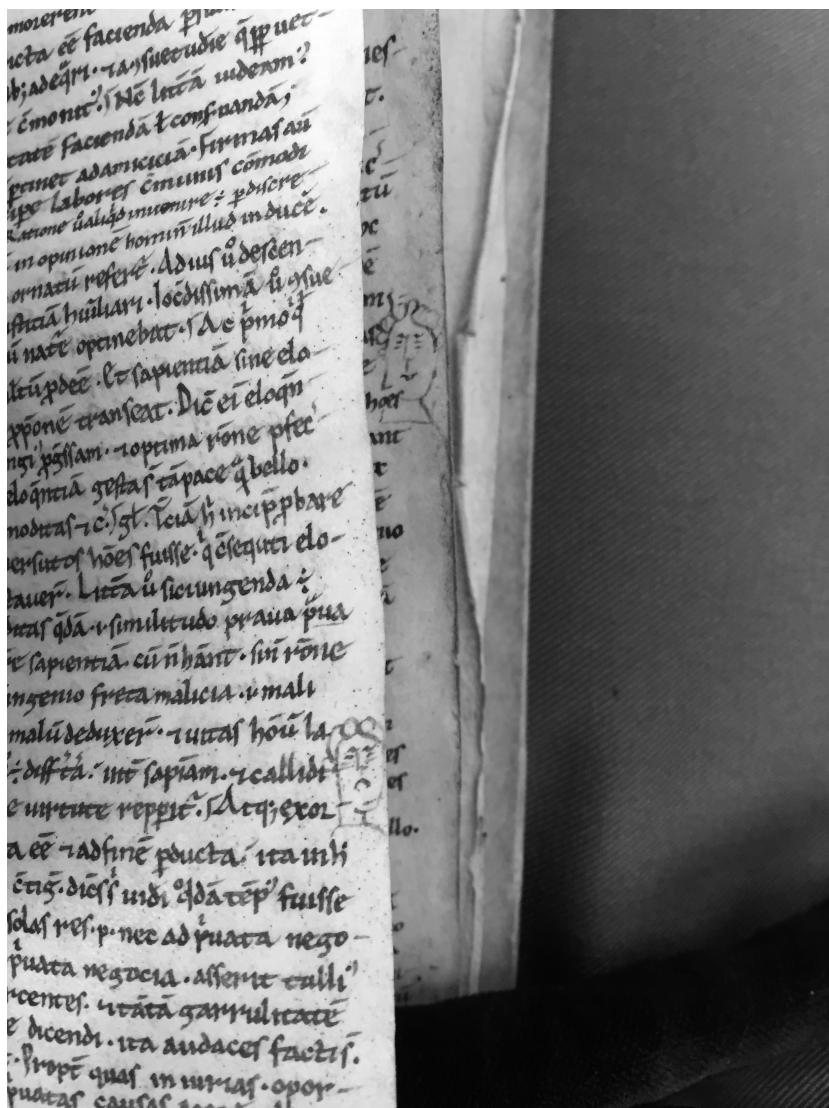


Figure 8.2 Faces on the edges. Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL i89, ff. 44r and 45r.

the Netherlands, in order to supplement the other parts. Here too, space is available for commentary, especially in the outer margins, but it was not pricked or ruled for the purpose. In this case, the writing lines are not widely spaced either to provide for glossing. The marginal space available for annotations in the twelfth-century parts of the manuscript varies between 50 per cent and 62 per cent.

Many annotations are added in the margins, but most of these are not from the twelfth century. Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century hands left their traces in this manuscript, which suggest that it was only used for intensive study after the different parts had been assembled in their new composition. In the fourteenth century, the text was enriched with *nota* signs, pointing hands and faces to mark passages of special interest, indexing glosses to guide the reader through the text, and comments which engage with the book's contents. In the twelfth century, the marginal activity consisted mainly of corrections and the completion of a few lacunae.

The two Priscian manuscripts can thus be characterised as reflections of a teaching tradition which was, perhaps, no longer as fully alive as one can observe in some Carolingian manuscripts: here a full commentary is often added, including minute signs to mark grammar, syntax, scansion, Greek vocabulary and other phenomena.<sup>22</sup> BPL 91 starts with a full copy of the settled commentary tradition from its exemplar, but quickly stops. In BPL 92, the text of Priscian is copied, but there is relatively little room for commentary and the marginal space was not prepared to contain any.<sup>23</sup>

### Books of History

When we turn from the manuscripts of the classics and classroom texts to books of history, a different picture of annotating practices arises. Whereas in the first category commentary was often available and needed to be fitted on the page together with the main text, in the historical genre this was, generally speaking, not the case. If we look at the margins of these books, they are rather empty at first glance, but if we look closer, several techniques which helped the readers to work with the texts they read come to the fore. They showcase a different practice of working with text than the manuscripts discussed earlier, yet we can still see how this was done with the use of the same marginal phenomena.

Leiden, Universiteitsbibl. VLF 39 is a large book (315 mm × 230 mm) produced in the first quarter of the eleventh century, probably in the

monastery of Mont-St-Michel, but corrected and annotated in the twelfth century. The book contains Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks* and Ado of Vienne's *Chronicle*.<sup>24</sup> The text is laid out in two columns, leaving about 55 per cent of the page blank. In all this white space, however, just a few signs are inserted: a couple of *notae*, r's for *require* ('check', or 'look up') and an occasional q for *questio* ('question'). Some Roman numbers are added to give the text structure, and careful corrections are inserted over erasures or in the margin, with tie marks. On folia 5r, 6r and 11r, furthermore, the twelfth-century annotator added 'falsum est' in the margin, also carefully placed in the text with a tie mark, a remarkable sign of a critical reading of the text, which matches the corrections and the few *require*- and *questio*-signs found elsewhere in the manuscript.

Leiden, Universiteitsbibl. BPL 30, only slightly smaller (308 mm × 206 mm), was produced in the middle of the twelfth century, probably in the Benedictine monastery of St-Peter in Corbie.<sup>25</sup> It has a part of Eusebius' *Chronicle*, and Sigebert of Gembloux' continuation of it. The layout varies according to the number of columns the text needed, but generally slightly less than half the page is marginal space. Annotations are added in several layers, the earliest contemporary, the latest post medieval. Remarkable and probably part of the contemporary layer of annotations are the long *chi-rho* combinations which are found in the margins at several occasions: these signs, called *chresima*, mark passages of special interest or good use (after the Greek word *chresimos*, 'useful' or 'usable').<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, crosses mark either the beginning of passages or suspicious passages which needed to be checked. *Nota* signs and key words are occasionally added to help the reader find his way in the text, and red Roman numerals indicate the years. Because the annotations consist in large part of signs and not text, it is difficult to assess the chronological layers to which they belong. The use of these signs, however, points rather to an earlier than a later date: they were part and parcel of annotation practices of Carolingian times, and seem to have become less frequent after the tenth century. They thus seem a remnant of an older exemplar, copied together with the text in which they were used to guide the reader. Whether their use and function was still understood in the middle of the twelfth century is hard to guess. To some of the *chresima* extra *nota* signs have been added in a later hand, perhaps to clarify their meaning, but this is not always the case. More examples are needed of the use of these signs in the later period before we can fully understand their meaning and function in this manuscript.

## Two Medical Manuscripts

I end my quick exploration of annotating practices with another textual genre: two medical manuscripts, an eleventh-century one from Monte Cassino and a twelfth-century one, probably from Spain. They are now kept in The Hague, Koningklijke Bibl. 73 J 6 and 73 J 7. The first, 73 J 6, is the famous *Liber pantegni*, the eleventh-century medical handbook of Constantine the African, dedicated by him to Abbot Desiderius of Monte Cassino.<sup>27</sup> The copy now resting in The Hague may have been written under supervision of the author himself. It contains the first ten theoretical books of Constantine's medical manual; the practical part is missing.

The book is long and narrow, 235 mm × 122 mm, but still laid out in two columns each 50 mm wide. Only 36 per cent of the page is left blank. The text itself is well articulated by red section titles. Very few annotations are added in the margin. I counted just two pointing hands, a single R (*require?*) and some lacunae made good in the bottom margin. In the beginning (ff. 2r–4v) and at the end of the book (ff. 85v–89r), additional medical texts and recipes have been copied in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In this part, a few *nota* signs have been added in both contemporary and later hands.

The Hague, Koningklijke Bibl. 73 J 7 gives a completely different impression. Here we have a much-used copy of Gariopontus of Salerno's *Passionarius*,<sup>28</sup> still in its original twelfth-century binding of linen covered with tawed skin. It is a fragile little book, measuring 200 mm × 140 mm, with a writing area of 175 mm × 113 mm, only 30 per cent marginal space. In the first quire of this book many marginal annotations have been added, which summarise material from the main text, function as a marginal index, and explain and expand the main text. As F. E. Glaze has argued convincingly, Gariopontus' *Passionarius* seems to have been used mostly as a schoolbook; the annotations in this particular copy confirm this. They are part of a settled commentary tradition, which was copied from one manuscript to another. There are no signs of a personal, ad hoc engagement with the text.

## Practices Compared

In the earlier sections, I briefly described marginal phenomena observed in six books containing works of classical or school-authors, two books of history and two books with medical texts from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. I chose on purpose examples from different textual genres, so as

to be able to see different sets of annotating practices, with varying functions. My small selection is neither well balanced nor representative: it is a random selection of examples, certainly distorted and incomplete. Marginal practices are only recently starting to come into view as valuable sources for intellectual history and much of the terrain is still uncharted; bold conclusions are, therefore, yet out of place. Yet my observations in the small set of examples do reflect the wider patterns that I saw when going through the collection of photos assembled for Erik Kwakkel's research on the transformation of the book in the twelfth century.<sup>29</sup> A tentative comparison with earlier books and their practices of annotating (as inventoried in my own data set) can thus now be presented. And because some of the examples contained layers of annotations from the thirteenth century, some preliminary suggestions can also be made on how practices of annotations may have changed in the period beyond the twelfth century. All of these observations, however, will need to be backed up by proper systematic investigations in future research.

First, we can observe that just as in the ages before, books were in the twelfth century more often enriched with annotations than not. This phenomenon is not unique to the twelfth century: it is certainly valid for the period before this age, and also for the period after.<sup>30</sup> A book with empty margins is an exception. Marginal spaces are almost always put to some purpose, be it for the addition of a complete commentary or for the notation of just a few signs, corrections or lacunae. Just as in the previous ages and in the succeeding ages, the writing of a book was not finished with the writing of the last word of the main text on the final page: a process of correction, and in many cases also annotation, is part of its making. It is an essential characteristic of the handwritten book, which survives well even into the period of printing culture.<sup>31</sup>

Most of the activity we find in the margins of medieval books is witness to this continuing process of correction, explanation and organising. The exposition of a text in the shape of glosses and commentary (as we have seen with the manuscripts of the classics, the Priscians and Gariopontus' medical handbook) often suggests that the text was used in a classroom, be it within a monastic, cathedral or other kind of school.<sup>32</sup> The enrichment of a text with added texts points at a continued reading and supplementing of the text, both by the author himself and by more distant readers. In only a minority of cases are we dealing with the 'voice of the reader', ad hoc annotations which reflect a personal interest in or engagement with the text. These witnesses, however, offer valuable insights into the culture of reading and writing; they give us a unique look over the

reader's shoulder. They can take the shape of added variants, comments, parallel texts or a-textual markings, such as signs (or drawings) flagging interest, approval or suspicion. All of these shapes that we encountered in my small set of examples are part of the traditional practices of annotating text, except for the pointing fingers or hands and the faces. It is hard to date these a-textual elements, but on the basis of my survey it seems safe to conclude that the adding of pointing hands and faces was an innovation of the late twelfth- or thirteenth-century reader. They serve the same function as the earlier *nota* signs, which, however, remain in use in the twelfth century and later. Some other symbols, which were used to mark interest and approval in earlier times, such as the *chresimon* or *asterisk*, are, so it seems, gradually eclipsed by the new practice.

It has been argued that the book changed face in the twelfth century so as to accommodate a new 'book fluency', or the ability to read a text quickly and accurately. As constituents of this new book format, reading aids such as running titles, paragraphs, quotation marks, marginal notes, cross references and diagrams have been mentioned.<sup>33</sup> Each of these phenomena, however, was already in use in the Carolingian world, and some may go back even further.<sup>34</sup> Running titles, for example, are a regular feature of the oldest books that survive to us from the fourth and fifth centuries; they are, in fact, interpreted as a consequence of the development from scroll to codex.<sup>35</sup> We can also see how hierarchically distinguished scripts were used to visually mark titles, subtitles, incipits and explicits from very early on.<sup>36</sup> Quotation marks are, again, a frequent phenomenon in Carolingian and older books: they are used to flag passages which are quotes, sometimes with and sometimes without explicit cross-references to the authors who are quoted.<sup>37</sup> The creation of thematically coherent compilations, for example of exegetical texts from different Church Fathers, is one of the more prominent intellectual activities of Carolingian theologians. The thirteenth century is often called the 'age of compilation',<sup>38</sup> but the ninth century could carry the same label. The annotating practices that Carolingian scholars used to perform the activity shaped the way in which texts were read, analysed, used and digested.<sup>39</sup> They are the cradle for the dialectical practices of twelfth-century logicians and theologians, who used comparison and textual analysis to build their arguments.

Marginal notes are also not new in the twelfth century. These were present in abundance in earlier ages, both in manuscripts of texts which came with a commentary tradition and in an ad hoc form. In the Carolingian copies of Virgil, Terence, Persius, Lucan, Boethius and Martianus Capella – all texts which came with settled commentary

traditions – text and commentary were brought together on the page to form a coherent whole, where the voice of the author and the voice of the expositor were both present in such a way that they could still be easily separated by the reader.<sup>40</sup> The layering of such commentary traditions is a well-known phenomenon: a first layer is usually entered into a marginal space which may be laid out for the purpose, with columns and writing lines, but more layers may be entered in this same marginal space in contemporary or later hands. The level of variance and flexibility is, therefore, much higher in these marginal texts than in the set texts that feature in the middle of the pages of our medieval books.<sup>41</sup> The layout of such commentary texts varies, from blocks of texts placed close to the lemmata they refer to, to margin-filling continuous texts, in which the lemmata are distinguished by underlining, the use of capitals or coloured ink. This format is, if not invented, then at least used frequently in the ninth century, and continues to be used in the tenth and eleventh centuries. In ninth- and especially in tenth-century manuscripts, the use of tie marks is common, employing different styles of signs: letters from the Greek or Latin alphabets, reading signs such as dots or asterisks, Tironian notes, musical notation symbols and newly invented graphemes.<sup>42</sup> In the twelfth-century manuscripts we saw a similar variance, be it that the beginning of an annotation was generally marked with a hook or paragraph sign. This particular feature I did not encounter in earlier manuscripts.

Diagrams are definitely not new either in the twelfth century: they appear, for example, in ninth-century copies of quadrivial or logical texts, explaining abstract matters with visual means, probably to enable an easier understanding or a better imprint on the memory. The fact that diagrams travel from one text to another certainly suggests that this new kind of visual literacy worked for at least some readers, and that they felt invited to quote their diagrams just as they felt invited to quote definitions.<sup>43</sup>

So, I would argue that in our comparison of the practices of annotating books in the centuries before, roughly, 1100 and thereafter the changes are not grand but subtle. First of all, I would point to the *disappearing* of certain practices. In the Carolingian period Tironian notes are a common phenomenon in the marginal and interlinear space of manuscripts. They are used in the copying of commentary, where space was scarce and the system of shorthand notation came in handy. They were also used to annotate text with unobtrusive personal marks, to indicate which part of a text was to be copied, remembered or studied, or which context was to be

used for its interpretation.<sup>44</sup> I am not aware of any annotations in Tironian notes from the twelfth century: perhaps the practice of using them did not completely disappear, but at least the frequency of using them in the margin dwindled. A second practice which seems to have disappeared is the use of signs to mark suspicion, disagreement or even rejection of the main text at hand. In the earlier period a number of signs were used to flag unease or warn the readers, including the *obelus* (a horizontal stroke, with or without dots) and the *theta*. These signs were described by Isidore and Cassiodorus, further developed and prominently used in the Carolingian period, when they were an intrinsic part of the scribal toolkit.<sup>45</sup> Their use did not altogether disappear in the twelfth century, but they are certainly less frequent. In the examples assembled here, an explicit 'falsum est' was used instead of such a sign. On the other hand, the personal engagement with the text by means of marking it up with pointing fingers and faces seems to have intensified. This practice may have started in the twelfth century and was, according to my quick survey of material, in full swing in the thirteenth century. It may have been the result of the fact that a growing number of books, over the course of these ages, were owned by individuals rather than institutions and were, hence, more likely to be annotated with personal notes. The faces, hands and drawings that we found in later layers of annotations in some of the examples presented here may also point in this direction. More comparative research is certainly needed here.

Perhaps the new kind of reading of the twelfth century is not so much attested by marginal techniques as such. The differences in approach to text may be clearer from the *contents* of the books, with the introduction of the *logica nova*, new kinds of dialectical collections such as *summa* and *distinctiones*. In the margin, twelfth-century readers and writers mostly continued using the many marginal writing practices their predecessors already used before them, in order to correct, give structure and add commentary. They preferred to abandon a number of them rather than to add new ones. My sample was too small to be conclusive, but it would be worthwhile to further explore the hypothesis that the nature of marginal scholarship changed from active to more passive in the twelfth century, and that its active nature became more prominent only in the thirteenth century. The active part of twelfth-century scholarship thus may not have found its expression so much in the development of new techniques for the handling and appropriation of transmitted texts, but rather in the creation of new texts.



## Notes

1. Cavallo and Chartier, *Reading*, 1–5.
2. For these ‘four S’s of text management’, see Blair 2010, 3.
3. Rouse and Rouse 1982; Hamesse 1999, 103–11; Kwakkel 2012, 79–80.
4. Tura 2005; Teeuwen 2011.
5. Contreni 2014.
6. The data sets are collected by the NWO-VIDI projects ‘Marginal Scholarship: The Practice of Learning in the Early Middle Ages (ca. 800–ca. 1000)’, led by Mariken Teeuwen, and ‘Turning over a New Leaf: Manuscript Innovation in the Twelfth Century Renaissance’, led by Erik Kwakkel.
7. Munk Olsen 1996, 1.
8. *Ibid.*, 5, 17.
9. Munk Olsen 1982–9, 2. 726. BPL 92A is one of six twelfth-century Virgils in the Leiden collection; the others are BPL 5, BPL 35, BPL 43, BPL 1048 and VLQ 42.
10. Gumbert 2009, 48 (01187–8), with added comments from Erik Kwakkel.
11. Kwakkel defined a book of such measurements as a ‘holster book’ and argued that the narrow format is a good fit for classroom use. Kwakkel 2012, 41–4.
12. Munk Olsen 1982–9, 2. 726.
13. Gumbert 2009, 70–2 (01300–01).
14. I thank Erik Kwakkel for dating the second marginal hand for me.
15. Gumbert 2009, 36 (01126–9).
16. Again, I thank Erik Kwakkel for his dating. He dated the most active later hand to the first half of the thirteenth century.
17. Reynolds 1996, 105.
18. The size, modest appearance and peculiar selection of texts suggest that this booklet may have been a personal *vademecum* of some scholar (from Chartres?), who may have carried it around for his own studies or teaching purposes.
19. I thank Irene O’Daly for her observations about the interpretation of the faces.
20. Gumbert 2009, 48 (01181, 01183–6), with added comments from Erik Kwakkel.
21. Kwakkel dates the first part to ca. 1100, the second and the fourth to 1100–50.
22. See, for one example among many, St Gallen, Stiftsbibl. 904 ([www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/csg/0904](http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/csg/0904)); the marginal and interlinear annotations in this manuscript are fully explored by Hofman, online edition at [www.stgallpriscian.ie/](http://www.stgallpriscian.ie/) (last consulted March 2016).
23. When in the twelfth century the grammatical handbooks of Donatus started to disappear, Priscian was still copied in relatively large numbers, only to be eclipsed by the new grammatical handbooks of Alexander de Villedieu and Évrard de Béthune in the thirteenth century. The presence of rather unannotated copies of Priscian, however, may be an early indication of its eventual loss of popularity: Holtz 2009.

24. De Meyier 1973, I. 84–6.
25. Gumbert 2009, 26 (01072).
26. Steinová 2016, 211–4, 408–9.
27. Burnett and Jacquart, *Constantine*, 322; Kwakkel and Newton, in press.
28. The history of transmission and use of this text is described by Glaze 2008.
29. I am well aware that my selection is not consistent or well balanced: it is a random selection, chosen on the basis of the scanning photos assembled by Erik Kwakkel and my own quick search focused on manuscripts which would be easy to access for me, to wit the collections of Leiden and The Hague. Kwakkel's collection of photos (close to 4,700 in number) started with a full analysis of the pictures assembled in the *Manuscripts datés* series and expanded from there to include an even wider selection of manuscripts. My own data set contains a full analysis of the marginal activity in about 350 Carolingian manuscripts.
30. Jardine and Grafton 1990; Saenger 1999, 131–48.
31. Rouse and Rouse 1991; Blair 2010.
32. For a good analysis of annotations which could point to the intended use in a school setting for a manuscript, see Reynolds 1996.
33. See, for example, Illich, *Vineyard*, 93–114. Notably, although Rouse and Rouse 1982 are often mentioned when ideas about a direct relation between a changing face of the book and changing literacy are discussed, they themselves were careful when it comes to ascribing manuscript innovations to the twelfth century. In the work of Richard and Mary Rouse, it is generally emphasised that phenomena used in twelfth-century books had a history and that they were not newly invented.
34. Caillet 2009; McKitterick 2012, 23–31.
35. Lowe 1925, 1928.
36. Ganz 1995, 798–9.
37. McKitterick 2012, 25–7; Steinová 2016, 200–6; Teeuwen 2016.
38. Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*, 221–55.
39. Contreni 2014, 120.
40. Teeuwen 2015, 34–41.
41. Zetzel 2005.
42. In ninth-century manuscripts, tie marks are found in many shapes and sizes, but in the tenth century an even greater variety of signs is used to make the layout of text and commentary precise.
43. Eastwood 2011.
44. Teeuwen 2015, 41–3.
45. Steinová 2016, 121–51; Van Renswoude and Steinová 2017.