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Classroom Commentaries and their Communities of Interpretation in Central Europe in the 1510s and 1520s

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Abstract. This paper presents the East Central European late medieval and early sixteenth century classroom commentaries as a source material which is still relatively unexplored and little researched, and has a great potential for understanding the communal experience of reading at the threshold of the early modern times. A large number of early prints survive from the years 1480–1550 with manuscript annotations which show clear signs of having been read in a university environment. After a survey of the typical characteristics of such prints, I will particularly focus on sources coming from the university of Cracow and Vienna from the years 1490–1535, and examine this material from several aspects, including the reading procedure, the purposes of reading, the commenting practice, the main type of commentaries, and the individual reading experience. I will try to show that the change in the format of media that the appearance of print, and particularly this type of prints brought along was also able to involve new readers and change the way in which the interpretation of the text was carried out.

Keywords: humanism, Renaissance education, pedagogical commentaries, marginalia

Scholarly studies on the history of reading in the Renaissance tended to focus so far on the individual reader, and especially on the historically significant individual reader, the pioneers and luminaries in a field of knowledge, whose reading experience seemed worthy of and in-depth investigation and reconstruction. We know a great deal more about the individual reading habits of the Renaissance thanks to the studies of Lisa Jardine, Anthony Grafton, Ann Blair, Kevin Sharpe and many others. Nevertheless, we still know relatively little about the reading habits of the interpretive communities in the sixteenth century.[1] How was the experience of reading

1 As Anthony Grafton put it, "scholarly work on marginalia has so far found it most productive to focus on single readers": Grafton and Sherman, "In the margins of Josephus," 216. This

shared, communicated, and commemorated within a community? What were the circumstances of communication, and how did the individual interpretations match the communal interest in shaping a shared understanding of a text? In the following study, I suggest that a previously neglected type of sources, the marginalia found in early sixteenth century printed university textbooks might give an insight into this neglected field of the history of reading.

Perhaps the greatest challenge in reconstructing a community's reading experience in the early modern era is to find the adequate and relevant source material that allows us to draw clear conclusions for these questions. Personal accounts of individual reading experiences within a community,[2] or reconstructions of reading experiences in urban libraries have survived,[3] but parallel descriptions of the effect of reading a certain book or a single passage (comparable to the modern-day evaluations of books on Amazon or goodread.com) are obviously harder to find. Important studies have dealt with the public reading of a certain text or a single edition, e.g. of Copernicus *De revolutionibus*, the First Folio edition of Shakespeare, or of the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney, and these made possible a more exact and factual reconstruction of a how a novel idea started to circulate, or how Renaissance readers reacted to an innovative poetic text.[4] Recently, a number of studies have dealt with the lessons of Renaissance marginalia for the history of reading, still, they are hardly concerned with an interpretive community.[5] On the following pages, I would like to examine a place of shared reading, the classroom. Some classroom commentaries that survive in multiple copies make a more precise investigation of the classroom community and the practices of interpretation in the late fifteenth and sixteenth century possible and allow us to better understand the functioning of one of most eminent early modern communities of interpretation, the classroom. I will argue that this source material gives us an incomparable insight both into the social habits of participation in classroom work and class attendance, and into the personal interests of each and every pupil, their individual understanding of a text and their liberties of interpretation.

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2 Corbellini, "Creating Domestic Sacred. See also the studies in Boillet and Ricci, eds, *Les femmes et la bible*.

3 Corbellini and Hoogvliet, "Late Medieval Urban Libraries."

4 Gingerich, *An Annotated Census*; Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio*; Mayer, *Shakespeare's Early Readers*; Boutcher, *The School of Montaigne in Early Modern Europe,* Vol. 2.

5 Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*; Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England*; Acheson, ed., *Early Modern English Marginalia*.

Classroom commentaries on a classic or a canonical text were usually dictated by the master already in the Antiquity,[6] and this remained unchanged through the Middle Ages, though the surviving evidence about the actual practice of classroom dictation is meagre and hard-to-interpret, as the surviving sources are often contradictory.[7] Still, a number of such classroom commentaries have survived from the High Middle Ages onwards and the practice of school dictation was widespread in the Later Middle Ages.[8] Dictation itself was a widespread phenomenon in the early modern classroom.[9] In the late fifteenth century, however, these classroom commentaries took on a new material format with the aid of the printing press: professors started to have their course texts printed. Nevertheless, commenting was still primarily an oral activity, and the commentaries were noted down by hand on the margins of the printed books by the students. This practice resulted in a mixed form of textual transmission, where printing and manuscript annotation had an equal share in the communication process. A part of these lecture notes (called "Vorlesungsmitschriften" in German, or "notes de cours sur un support imprimé" in French) have already been examined by scholars focusing on case studies or specific fields of knowledge. Anthony Grafton (1981) has examined the note-taking practice of a student studying under the Ramist professor, Claude Mignault in Paris in the 1570s, and emphasized the presence of Ramist notions of rhetoric in the manuscript analyses of Classical poetry. Jürgen Leonhardt (2008) surveyed in a series of studies the lecture notes on Classical texts in Germany in the 1510s, concentrating on the University of Leipzig, and discussed the choice of Classical texts that were selected for commenting. He arrived at the conclusion that the masters had a preference for texts which were able to train the students in conversational Latin, while they tended to neglect other aspects. Still, the entire genre and the practice of commenting in the early sixteenth century classroom still remain unexplored to a large extent, and many questions remain open. As Grafton put it: "Our evidence has taken us as far as it can, but we have still only reached the door of Mignault's classroom. […]

6 Skeat, "The Use of Dictation in Ancient Book-Production"; Petitmangin and Flusin, "Le livre antique et la dictée"; Dorandi, "Den Autoren über die Schulter geschaut."

7 See e.g., the case study on the so-called late medieval German Engelhus-vocabulary, where an extremely detailed examination of the surviving two manuscripts allows only a hypothetical conclusion that the two copies were dictated. Cp. Bunselmeier, *Das Engelshusvokabular*, 52–82.

8 See the exemplary study on the university commentaries of the *Poetria nova* by Woods, *Classroom Commentaries*.

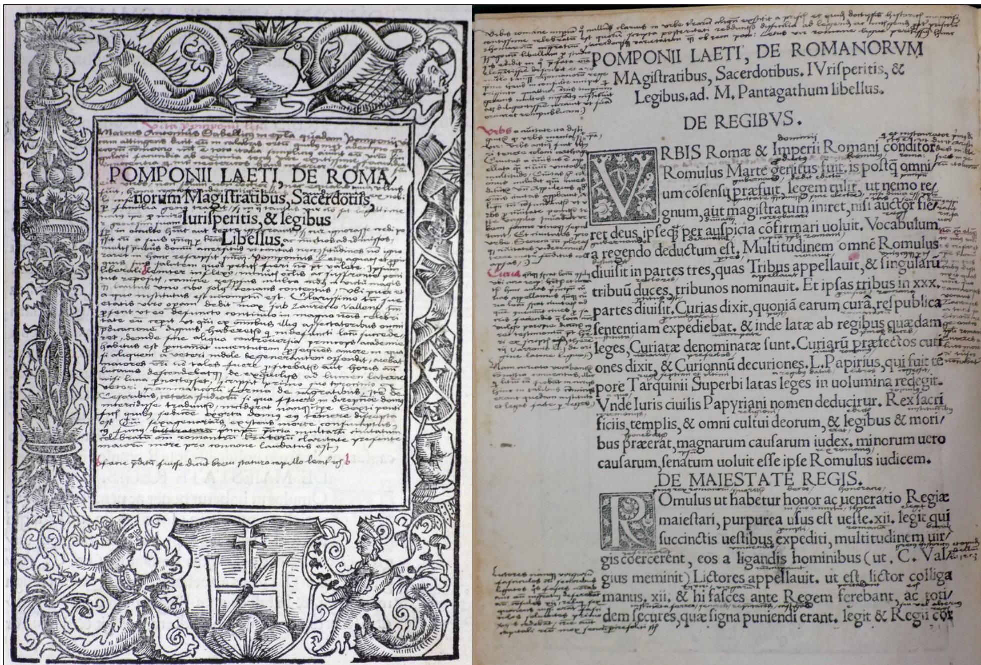
9 The canonic visitation to Bergamo in 1575 notes that separate notebooks were required for the students in Latin and Italian dictation. See Carlsmith, *A Renaissance Education*, 113–117. In Leicester in 1574, students created their own books by dictation in grammar school. See Richards, *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance*, 80. See also Schurink, "An Elizabethan Grammar School Exercise Book."

When he lectured, did he read from a script? Or did he speak extemporaneously as Ramus did, only reading direct quotations? How many students were before him? [...] What sort of notes did they take?" (Grafton 1981, 50). Although "the door of Mignault's classroom" might remain closed for good, I argue that it is possible to answer these questions by approaching these notebooks not as unique, individual objects, but as a group of sources that share several characteristics.

Multiple copies of the same edition of a classroom text often contain similar or identical marginal notes. These "identical" notes are not identical in the sense that they would contain word by word the same manuscript commentary: rather, they reflect the individual understanding of the dictation of a master, selecting the information that was important for a single student, while neglecting others that seemed tedious. They might survive from the same course, although they were taken down by different students, but in certain cases, it can be clearly seen that the master repeated the same course over several years, thus, the reaction of the students also varies across time. Moreover, a comparative examination of these sources often allows us to identify the teacher, the student, or at least the university, in which the text was in use. Clues may be hidden in many of the surviving printed textbooks in the paratextual evidence, or given by deciphering the content of the marginal annotations. If one examines multiple copies of the very same editions of a single text, several copies might contain the same, or a similar commentary on the margins.

The multiple transmission of the same course material opens up a new research perspective, which I intend to demonstrate through four examples from Central Europe, from the environment of the universities of Vienna and Cracow in the 1510s and 1520s. On the one hand, these marginal and interlinear annotations allow us to investigate the traces of classroom interaction, and get a more precise picture of what was actually going on in the lecture hall by taking the various levels of misunderstanding and the fragmentation of the commentaries into account. On the other hand, documentary evidence (e.g. correspondence of the publishers, or testaments of schoolmasters) and possessors' notes of the books reveal a substantial amount of information about the actual interpretive community: who the students were, what languages they used for interpreting the text (Latin vs. vernacular), and what kind of commenting strategies were most often applied.

Early sixteenth century classroom commentaries are recognizable by their materiality. Generally, the printed book itself is printed in octavo format, and the text is surrounded by unusually wide margins, which are great enough to host a great number of manuscript commentaries. Furthermore, the lines of the text are usually printed at a greater distance, so that the students reading the text may explicate the words by synonyms in interlinear annotations. Most classroom textbooks are not longer than 16, 20, or 32 folios, because this length would suffice for a single


POMPONII LAETI, DE ROMAnorum Magistratibus, Sacerdotiis, Iurisperitis, & legibus Libellus.

POMPONII LAETI, DE ROMANORVM MAgistratibus, Sacerdotibus, IVrisperitis, & Legibus. ad. M. Pantagathum libellus.

DE REGIBVS.

VRBIS Romae & Imperii Romani conditor Romulus Marte genitus fuit, is postq omnium cōsensu praefuit, legem tulit, ut nemo regnum, aut magistratum iniret, nisi auctor fieret deus, ipseq per auspicia cōfirmari uoluit. Vocabulum a regendo deductum est. Multitudinem omnē Romulus diuisit in partes tres, quas Tribus appellauit, & singularū tribuū duces, tribunos nominauit. Et ipsas tribus in xxx. partes diuisit, Curias dixit, quoniā earum curā, res publica sententiam expediebat. & inde latae ab regibus quaedam leges, Curiatae denominatae sunt. Curiarū praefectos curiones dixit, & Curionnū decuriones. L. Papirius, qui fuit tempore Tarquinii Superbi latas leges in uolumina redegit. Vnde Iuris ciuilis Papyriani nomen deducitur. Rex sacrificiis, templis, & omni cultui deorum, & legibus & moribus praeerat, magnarum causarum iudex, minorum uero causarum, senatum uoluit esse ipse Romulus iudicem.

DE MAIESTATE REGIS.

ROmulus ut habetur honor ac ueneratio Regiae maiestati, purpurea usus est ueste. xii. legit qui succinctis uestibus expediti, multitudinem urgis coercerent, eos a ligandis hominibus (ut. C. Valgius meminit) Lictores appellauit. ut est, lictor colliga manus. xii. & hi fasces ante Regem ferebant, ac totidem secures, quae signa puniendi erant. legit & Regi cor

Figure 1 A typical classroom textbook edition with manuscript commentary. Pomponio Leto, *De Romanorum magistratibus* (Kraków: Vietor, 1518), 1r–v. Chicago, Newberry Library, Wing ZP 555.V66.

semester, but there are cases, when one can find prints that run to more than a hundred leafs and are commented throughout. A very important aspect is their printing place: they were usually published at the printing presses of university towns (Paris, Strasbourg, Cologne, Erfurt, Leipzig, Frankfurt an der Oder, Wittenberg, Vienna, Kraków) and cities famous for their schools (such as Zwolle or Deventer). The appearance of this specific type of print seems to have been a Northern phenomenon: while there survive prints in similar size and format from Italian printing centers, as well (Venice or Milan), they are rarely surrounded by manuscript commentaries which reflect the teachings transmitted on a university course.[10] Not only classical texts, but also all kind of readings perused during the arts course were printed in this manner, including humanist Latin poetry and drama, arts of letter writing, rhetorical aids, musical textbooks, and introductions to logic, moral or natural philosophy. In 2004, Jürgen Leonhardt has claimed that at least 1000 editions appeared in this format which probably survive in more than 4000 copies,[11] but the recent developments in digital cataloguing have uncovered a much greater number

10 Leonhardt, "Exegetische Vorlesungen in Erfurt," 91–110; Leonhardt, "Eine Leipziger Vorlesung über Ciceros," 26–40; Leonhardt, "Gedruckte humanistische Kolleghefte," 21–34.

11 Leonhardt, "Gedruckte humanistische Kolleghefte," 25.

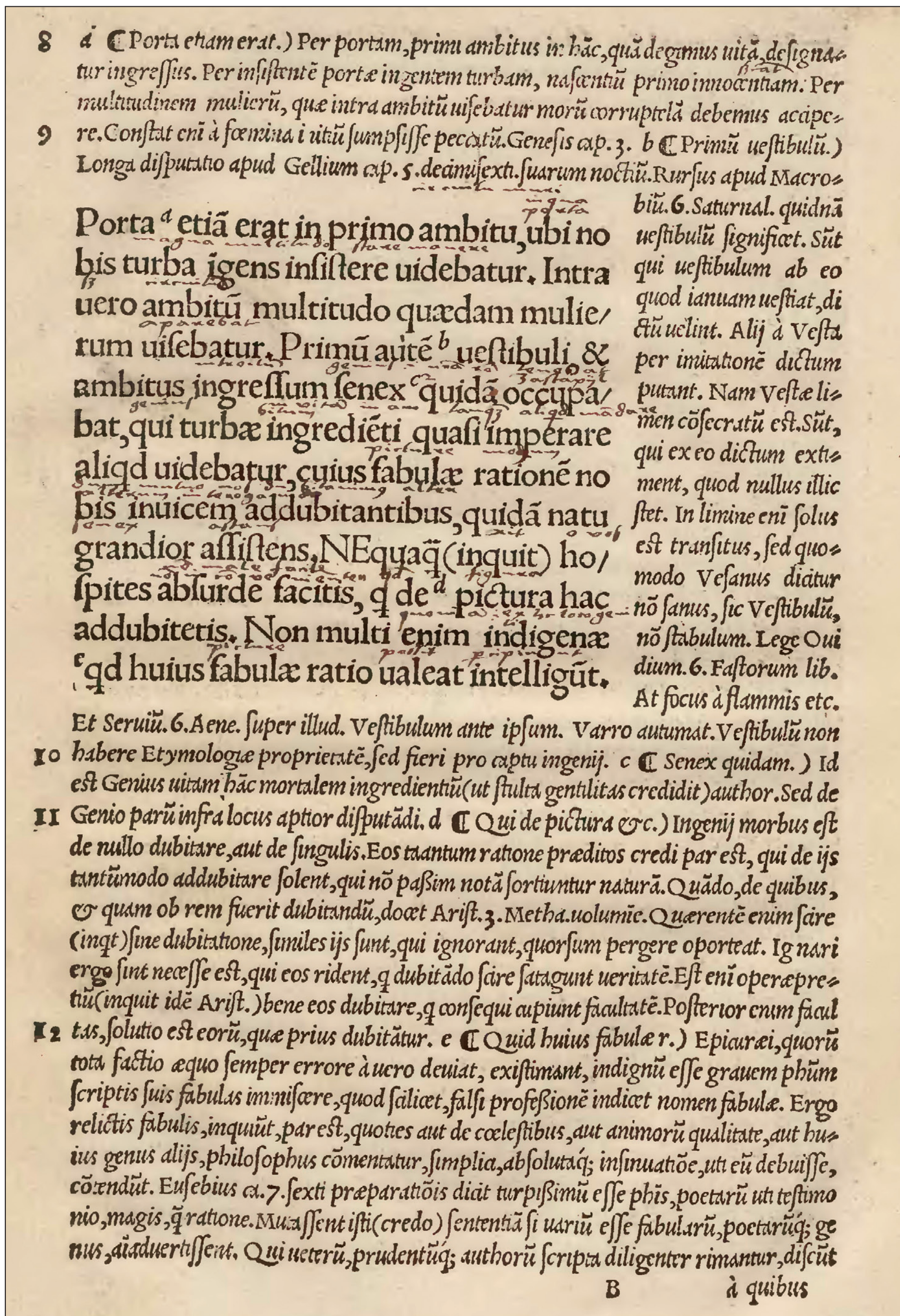
of copies than it was previously supposed, and many more still remain hidden in smaller research libraries and ecclesiastic institutions, monastic and diocesan libraries.[12]

Students were bound to buy these copies in order to participate in the classwork. Hence, the margins of many of the surviving copies are full of annotations (sometimes to the extent that the notes cover every free white spot on the page), which are generally of three kinds. The interlinear annotations are above the words of the text, and are mostly only synonyms, or occasionally interpretations of names. The second type is a short keyword that calls attention to a rhetoric phenomenon (e.g., imitation, exclamation, excursus), or summarizes the text with a keyword that alludes to its moral or physical qualities, or refers to the described character. Third, much longer and extensive marginal notes may explain the events in the text, clarify its sources, or bring parallels similar to traditional scholarly commentaries. All three types were supposed to be dictated by the master during class, a practice which ensured that students are present and actively take part in the class. Nevertheless, there survive a few printed editions, in which the keywords and extensive marginal annotations were printed beforehand, and only the interlinear synonyms were added by the students in manuscript. This kind of printed classroom commentaries obviously helped a clear and correct understanding of the master's words which was often impeded by the misunderstanding of foreign, Greek or Hebrew names and place names. Johannes Camers, a professor at the University of Vienna, who already edited many classroom textbooks in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, decided to print his annotations in 1524, when he published his commentary to the *Tablet of Cebes*, a popular Platonizing school text about the moralizing interpretation of an image depicting the dangers of human life.

The surviving copy in the Ossolineum library (Figure 2) shows that in this case only the interlinear synonyms had to be annotated by hand, as the rest of the commentary was printed. Still, it is possible that both the synonyms and marginal notes were read up by the professor in class. Several other examples of printed classroom commentaries of this kind have survived, as that of Johannes Honorius's annotations on Basil the Great's *Address to Young Men*, who published his notes in Leipzig in 1501.[13] Ulrich Fabri published an even more detailed school commentary on the

12 E.g., the 1514 Vienna edition of Janus Pannonius' *Elegiarum aureum opusculum*, to be analyzed below, was known in three copies in the Hungarian Bibliography of Old Books, while digital catalogues uncovered sixteen copies altogether.

13 Magnus Basilius *de poetarum, oratorum historicorumque ac philosophorum legendis libris cum commentariolo Magistri Johannis Honorii Cubitensis* (Leipzig: Jacob Abiegnus, 1501). On the author, see *Deutscher Humanismus 1480–1520: Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 1., c. 1137–1143.



8 a ❨Porta etiam erat.) Per portam, primi ambitus in hãc, quã degimus uitã, deſigna-
tur ingreſſus. Per inſiſtentẽ portæ ingentem turbam, naſcentiũ primo innocentiam. Per
multitudinem mulierũ, quæ intra ambitũ uiſebatur morũ corruptelã debemus accipe-
9 re. Conſtat enĩ à fœmina i uitũ ſumpſiſſe peccatũ. Geneſis cap. 3. b ❨Primũ ueſtibulũ.)
Longa diſputatio apud Gellium cap. 5. decimiſexti. ſuarum noctiũ. Rurſus apud Macro-

Porta[d] etiã erat in primo ambitu, ubi no
bis turba igens inſiſtere uidebatur. Intra
uero ambitũ multitudo quædam mulie-
rum uiſebatur. Primũ autẽ[b] ueſtibuli &
ambitus ingreſſum ſenex[c] quidã occupa-
bat, qui turbæ ingredieti quaſi imperare
aliqd uidebatur, cuius fabulæ rationẽ no
bis inuicem addubitantibus, quidã natu
grandior aſſiſtens, NEquaq̃ (inquit) ho-
ſpites abſurde facitis, q de[d] pictura hac
addubitetis. Non multi enim indigenæ
[e]qd huius fabulæ ratio ualeat intelligũt.

biũ. 6. Saturnal. quidnã ueſtibulũ ſignificet. Sũt qui ueſtibulum ab eo quod ianuam ueſtiat, di-
ctũ uelint. Alij à Veſta per imitationẽ dictum putant. Nam Veſtæ li-
men cõſecratũ eſt. Sũt, qui ex eo dictum exti-
ment, quod nullus illic ſtet. In limine enĩ ſolus eſt tranſitus, ſed quo-
modo Veſanus dicitur nõ ſanus, ſic Veſtibulũ, nõ ſtabulum. Lege Oui
dium. 6. Faſtorum lib. At focus à flammis etc.

Et Seruiũ. 6. Aene. ſuper illud. Veſtibulum ante ipſum. Varro autumat. Veſtibulũ non
10 habere Etymologiæ proprietatẽ, ſed fieri pro captu ingenij. c ❨Senex quidam.) Id
eſt Genius uitam hãc mortalem ingredientiũ (ut ſtulta gentilitas credidit) author. Sed de
11 Genio parũ infra locus aptior diſputãdi. d ❨Qui de pictura &c.) Ingenij morbus eſt
de nullo dubitare, aut de ſingulis. Eos tantum ratione præditos credi par eſt, qui de ijs
tantũmodo addubitare ſolent, qui nõ paſſim notã ſortiuntur naturã. Quãdo, de quibus,
& quam ob rem fuerit dubitandũ, docet Ariſt. 3. Metha. uolumĩe. Quærentẽ enim ſcire
(inqt) ſine dubitatione, ſimiles ijs ſunt, qui ignorant, quorſum pergere oporteat. Ignari
ergo ſint neceſſe eſt, qui eos rident, q dubitãdo ſcire ſatagunt ueritatẽ. Eſt enĩ operæpre-
tiũ (inquit idẽ Ariſt.) bene eos dubitare, q conſequi cupiunt facultatẽ. Poſterior enim facul
12 tas, ſolutio eſt eorũ, quæ prius dubitãtur. e ❨Quid huius fabulæ r.) Epicuræi, quorũ
tota factio æquo ſemper errore à uero deuiat, exiſtimant, indignũ eſſe grauem phũm
ſcriptis ſuis fabulas immiſcere, quod ſcilicet, falſi profeſſionẽ indicet nomen fabulæ. Ergo
relictis fabulis, inquiũt, par eſt, quoties aut de cœleſtibus, aut animorũ qualitate, aut hu-
ius genus alijs, philoſophus cõmentatur, ſimplia, abſolutaq; inſinuatiõe, uti eũ debuiſſe,
cõtendũt. Euſebius ca. 7. ſexti præparatiõis dicit turpiſſimũ eſſe phĩs, poetarũ uti teſtimo
nio, magis, q̃ ratione. Mutaſſent iſti (credo) ſententiã ſi uariũ eſſe fabularũ, poetarũq; ge
nus, aĩaduertiſſent. Qui ueterũ, prudentũq; authorũ ſcripta diligenter rimantur, diſcũt
B à quibus

Figure 2 Cebes of Thebes, *Cebetis Thebani Socratisque discipuli Tabula vitae totius humanae cursum graphice continens, addito Ioannis Camertis ordinis Minorum sacrae theologiae professoris commentariolo non inerudito* (Kraków: Vietor, 1524), B1r. Wrocław, Ossolineum XVI Qu. 2393.

same work at the University of Vienna in 1518.[14] Leonard Cox, the English humanist who taught in Poland and Hungary between 1518 and 1527 exposed his views in print on the *Venatio*, a contemporary Latin hunting poem of Adriano Castellesi in 1524, and on the first two poems of the *Silvae* of Statius in 1526.[15]

Despite the exceptions mentioned above, the standard method remained that the text itself was printed with the necessary space on the margins to engulf the exposition of the teacher that was transmitted orally. The reasons behind this practice may have varied, but one of them might have been financial. There must have been one great disadvantage in printing one's annotations in advance: students had no reason to turn up in class and pay the class fee. It can be illustrated by a treatise on the art of memory published by Johannes Cusanus in Frankfurt an der Oder in 1510 and in Vienna in 1514.[16] Cusanus was a wandering professor of mnemonics and arithmetic, who visited several university cities with the extracurricular subjects he taught, and offered his services to private students. The owner of one of the surviving copies of his treatise on the art of memory proudly wrote in his book that "I took the class on this treatise from the very knowledgeable master Joannes Cusanus in 1517, for which I paid three pounds,"[17] a significant sum by sixteenth century standards. The publication itself contains images for the art of memory which are not fully explained in the printed text: obviously, a student who had access only to the book without the professor's aid could not grasp the techniques of artificial memory. Some surviving copies bear marks of this complementary knowledge in the form marginal notes and extra sheets added later (Figure 3).

Thus, professors had an interest in reserving some of their knowledge to the oral performance in the class, which explains why many of these extensive annotations, which had been prepared for the classes in advance, never saw daylight in print. Of course, during the oral performance of their classes, they could not escape failures. Philippus Gundelius (1493–1567), a professor of rhetoric at the University of Vienna from 1518 to 1530, published the seventh book of Pliny's *Natural history*

14 Basilii Magni Caesariensis … *Libellus de veterum scriptorum et praesertim poetarum libris… una cum scholiis per Udalricum Fabri adiectis* (Vienna: Singrenius, 1518).

15 For an analysis, see Juhász-Ormsby and Kiss, "Leonard Cox's Pedagogical Commentaries," 169–193. Further examples include the commentaries of Joannes Camers (Giovanni da Camerino) on Florus (Vienna, Singrenius, 1511) and Solinus (Vienna: Singrenius, 1520); and Ulrich Fabri's printed commentary appended to his edition of Maffeo Vegio's *Philalethes* (Vienna: Singrenius, 1517).

16 On the publication history of this text, see Kiss and Wójcik, "[Henricus Vibicetus-Johannes Cusanus]: *Tractatulus artificiose memorie*," 303–10.

17 Kiss and Wójcik, "[Henricus Vibicetus-Johannes Cusanus]: *Tractatulus artificiose memorie*," 306, fn. 18.

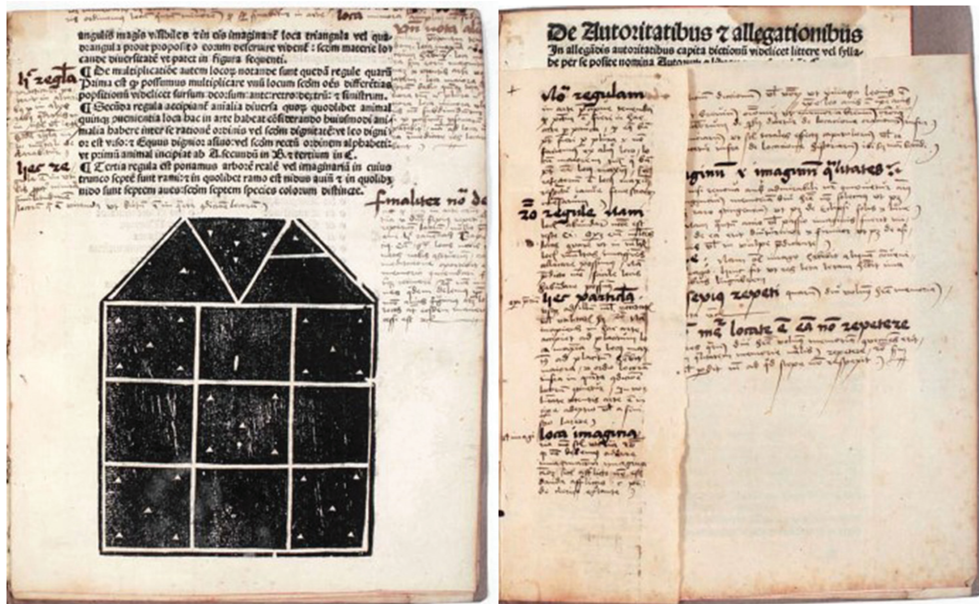


Figure 3 Johannes Cusanus, *Tractatulus artificiose memorie* (Vienna: Vietor and Singrenius, 1514), Budapest, Hungarian National Library, Ant. 10008, a3r.

in 1519.[18] The rich marginal and interlinear commentary which survived from this class[19] records not only his textual corrections, but also the places where the philologist could not correct the text and despaired: “Gundelius thinks that this place is faulty, but he cannot help it, and Ermolao Barbaro does not mention this problem.”[20] Occasionally, he gave up on entire passages in the text: “Gundelius confesses that he does not understand this chapter.”[21]

This transitional state of knowledge transmission between print and oral performance which forced students to take down the words of the professor to their textbooks created circumstances which allows us to take a closer look at the

18 C. Plinii Secundi *Liber Septimus Naturalis historiae*(Vienna: Singrenius, 1519). See Worstbrock, “Gundel (Gündl, Gundelius, Gundeli, -ly, -elli), Philipp.” The text was already edited by Joachim Vadianus in Vienna in 1515 (VD16 P3527). A commented copy survives in Leipzig, University Library, St Thomas. 799/10 (with the commentaries of Vadianus?).

19 Cambridge, MA, Houghton Library, *GC5 G9554 519p. An extensive manuscript commentary survives also in Regensburg, Staatliche Bibliothek, 999/4Class.125, while another student paid attention only to the synonyms and the meaning of words (Vienna, Austrian National Library, *35.D.62.). The synonyms and the reference to the proverb “Non omnia possumus omnes” on a2r prove that the two annotated volumes were used in the same course.

20 “Hunc locum Gundelius putat mendosum esse et hinc succurrere nequit et Hermolaus hunc locum preterit.” Houghton Library, *GC5 G9554 519p, e1v.

21 “Gundelius fatetur se hoc caput nescire.” Houghton Library, *GC5 G9554 519p, e2v.

educational practices of this interpretive community. The multiple surviving copies of the annotated textbooks reveal the individual differences how each student understood and interpreted the text, and how the process of text analysis was going on. In the following, we will take a look at four publications, which demonstrate the different stages of knowledge transmission in this context.

Synonyms and marginalia

The surviving copies of the 1516 Latin edition of Homer's *Batrachomyomachia* (Battle of Frogs and Mice) from Vienna will introduce us to the first level of understanding, the explication of words by synonyms. Carlo Marsuppini translated Homer's *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* in Latin hexameters in the first half of the fifteenth century. Later, at the end of the century, Johann Reuchlin also prepared a prose translation of the text, and the news of this translation may have confused the young Viennese humanist, Joachim Vadian, who attributed the Marsuppini translation to Reuchlin, when he published it in Vienna in 1510.[22] Vadian became a master in the fall of 1508, and began teaching in Vienna in 1510. Although there are only conjectures about Vadian's university classes, it is certain that this text was one of his taught subjects, and the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* was published on the occasion of his course.[23] Vadian's preface testifies that he appreciated the volume primarily because it illustrates the use of *copia*: Homer's epic genius manifests itself in the fact that he was able to describe even a trifle subject clearly and abundantly (*luculenter et copiose*) because two things are most difficult in poetry: to make little things big, using the modes of rhetoric amplification, and shorten long things, the contrary process of abbreviation.[24]

Following Vadian's publication, Bartholomaeus Frankfurter of Buda, a student of Vadian, published the same text at Vietor's press in June 1516, although the paratexts were modified.[25] Vadian's preface and his friends' poems were replaced by the dedication of Frankfurter to his patron, Michael, provost of Kalocsa and canon of Székesfehérvár, and by a poem of Caspar Ursinus Velius. In Bartholomaeus

22 Homer, *Batrachomyomachia* (VD16 H 4627). On the translation, see Knauer, "Iter per miscellanea," 25–27.

23 Näf, *Vadian und seine Stadt St. Gallen*, 1:139.

24 "Dummodo constet autoris ingenium ad Heroici staminis maiestatem texendam nimirum natum fuisse, uel eo solo, quod rem paruam reptilemque adeo luculenter et copiose signauerit. Tam enim arduum est minuta amicabili copia dilatare quam artificiosum amplissima quaeque concinno rerum fasciculo comprehendere" Homeri *Batrachomyomachia*..., 1510, a2r.

25 Homer: *Batrachomyomachia*, hoc est bellum Ranarum & Murum, Joanne Capnione Phorcensi metaphraste. Sequitur aliud Carmen Iocis & facetiis refertissimum (Vienna: Hieronymus Vietor, 1516). (App. H. 114; RMK III. 208.).

Frankfurter's dedication, he already glorifies Homer's playful work with commonplaces taken from the *Praise of Folly* of Erasmus (which was published in the meantime in 1511, and became very popular in Vienna), and instead of the rhetoric virtue of amplification, he praises the changes of style in Homer: how the author was able to praise inferior things in high style (*res humiles eloquii gravitate exaltare*). Perhaps the teacher's person can be deduced from the accompanying paratextual poem: he might have been Caspar Ursinus Velius, a Silesian German, who enrolled in the Hungarian nation of the University of Vienna in 1515, because the Silesians belonged there. Ursinus Velius taught several classes at the university and from 1524 took over Vadian's former rhetorical professorship.[26] He also taught Greek at the university in the late 1510s, and as we will see, the anonymous commentary on the *Battle of Frogs and Mice* often deals with the explanation of the characters' Greek names.

Only two copies of this rare 1516 edition are known (**M**: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 ° A. gr. A. 527, and **B**: Budapest, National Széchényi Library App. H. 114), and both are accompanied by manuscript notes on the margins and in the text. The owner of the Budapest copy was Adamus Jungmair, and his name occurs in the enrolment list of the University of Vienna in the winter semester of 1515.[27] Although the Munich copy is cut around and therefore most of the marginal notes are fragmentary, it is clear after a thorough comparison that the marginalia and synonyms in the two volumes reflect the lectures of the same course, and Jungmair's ownership mark in the Budapest copy makes it highly probable that the surviving course material was delivered at the University of Vienna. As an example, I will only cite the marginal explanations on f. 3v:

To the line "Hidrum fatiferum tollentem colla sub auras":

> *Hidrum rane maxime infestum habent vt vola. ex sententia plinius (!) scribit* **B**
>
> *Hidrum rane maxime infestum habent vt volaterranus ex sententia plinii scribit* **M**

To the line "CERNIT deus omnia vindex":

> *Valerius li. 1. Lento ait gradu ad vindictam diuina procedit ira tarditatemque supplicii pene grauitate compensat. Addidit tibullus: sera tamen tacitis penam venit pedibus.* (**B** and **M** are completely identical)
>
> to the line "Lichopinax ripis stagni qui forte sedebat":
>
> *Pinax stintella dicitur lichnaonte autem lambere est hinc lichopinax mus dicitur quasi lambens sintellam.* **B**

26 Bauch, *Caspar Ursinus Velius,* 356–57.

27 As "Adam Junckmair ex Landaw", cp. Szaivert and Gall, eds, *Die Matrikel der Universität Wien*, II, 425.

> *Pinax […] dicitur lich […] autem lam[…] hinc licho[…] mus dici[…] lambens* **M**

In these two volumes, all the longer marginal notes belong to the same word or proper name and are placed almost at the same section of the page. Their close or identical wording suggests that the teacher dictated the explanations for each Greek word, word by word (probably slowly and understandably).

Although the twenty first century reader's attention is drawn above all to the longer marginal notes, and to their main subject, the etymologizing explanation of the Greek names of the characters, the role of the interlinear synonyms is at least as important for understanding the humanistic mechanisms of text production. The synonyms above the words and their variations give important insight as to how the reading of the text actually took place. Not all the synonyms appear in both volumes, but if there is a synonym for a word in both volumes, they are always identical or near identical (e.g., complemented by another word). This suggests that the search for synonyms was not the task of the students, e.g., by an interactive question and answer method ("Who knows a synonym for 'aequabat'?"). Rather, the teacher announced these as he explained the text line by line:

> Aequabat[28] Martem quanquam sit iunior[29] annis
>
> Hic animo exultans[30] pro[31] stagno constitit alto
>
> Tunc hominum dinumque[32] (!) pater[33] sublimis[34] olympo[35]
>
> Prospicit,[36] et fusas[37] miseratus pectore ranas
>
> Caesariem quassat,[38] talique hinc[39] uoce locutus[40]
>
> Proh superi quam mira oculis spectacula cerno[41]

---

28 Similis erat M

29 s[cilicet] Marte M

30 gaudens BM

31 ante BM

32 deorum M diuorum B

33 Iupiter BM (above 'similis' in B, above 'hominum' in M)

34 altus M

35 ex celo BM

36 Iupiter M

37 prostratas BM

38 commouet B

39 dehinc M

40 s[cilicet] Iupiter M (a marginal note in B: Oratio Iouis)

41 video BM

Terrorem ingentem uideo Meridarpaga[42] in undis[43].
Perdere[44] iam ranas ardet[45] Nunc ocyus[46] omnes
Pallada[47] mittamus bello[48] Martemque ferocem[49] (6v)

We can observe the same phenomena in another passage:

Vt[50] rana attollens[51] pallentia[52] corpora fluctu
Tergore[53] supposito[54] muri sua tecta petebat
Tum subito horrendum uisu uidere per undas
Hidrum[55] fatiferum[56] tollentem[57] colla sub auras[58] (3r)

The aim of providing these synonyms was not only to help the students better understand the Latin of the text. While some synonyms are interpretive (e.g., the 'postquam' – after for 'ut' – as, or the explanation 'Iupiter' – Jove for 'pater' – father), many of the words that are explained are very common, so as any reader with basic Latin skills could understand them, or the synonyms are equally common as the words of the poem (e.g., ocius for velocius, perdere for interficere). Thus, it is clear that the primary aim of this exercise was to enrich the vocabulary of the students, and to get them accustomed to reading in this manner: as soon as one's eye hovers over a word, a series of synonyms should come to mind, which enables the reader not only to better understand the poetic qualities of the text, but also to produce similar sentences by exchanging some words to their synonyms. As we will see, this method of text production was encouraged in the humanist classroom, and pedagogues also called attention to the presence of such techniques in the analyzed texts.

42 murem BM
43 in aquis B
44 interficere BM
45 cupit BM
46 velocius B velocius statim M
47 dea belli B
48 ad B ad bellum M
49 crudelem M
50 postquam BM
51 eleuans BM
52 timentia B
53 dorso BM
54 ubi tergus erat supposito BM
55 serpentem B serpentem aqualem M
56 inferentem mortem B inferentem M
57 extollentem M
58 in aere B

From these examples it is clear that the students must have selected primarily from the synonyms listed by the teacher for each word. The master must have offered one or two possible synonyms for each word, but the students took notes only of what was relevant to them, and did not make notes to all the words. But at the same time, it seems that there was not much creativity in this process: if a synonym appears in both volumes, they are always identical or near identical, thus it can be ruled out, that any individual work or any interaction between the glossing teacher and the students took place during class. It is likely that the teacher read out a pre-prepared, glossed volume line by line, as it seems improbable that he would have relied on his improvised synonyms for every single word. The process of synonymizing seems to have been one-directional and not interactive. It cannot be ruled out that students sometimes may have been entrusted with the creative activity of finding synonyms, thus helping to build linguistic abundance, but there is little sign of such freedom in the surviving annotations. Nevertheless, it is clear that students had the liberty of jotting down some synonyms and omitting others, taking note of some comments and leaving aside others.

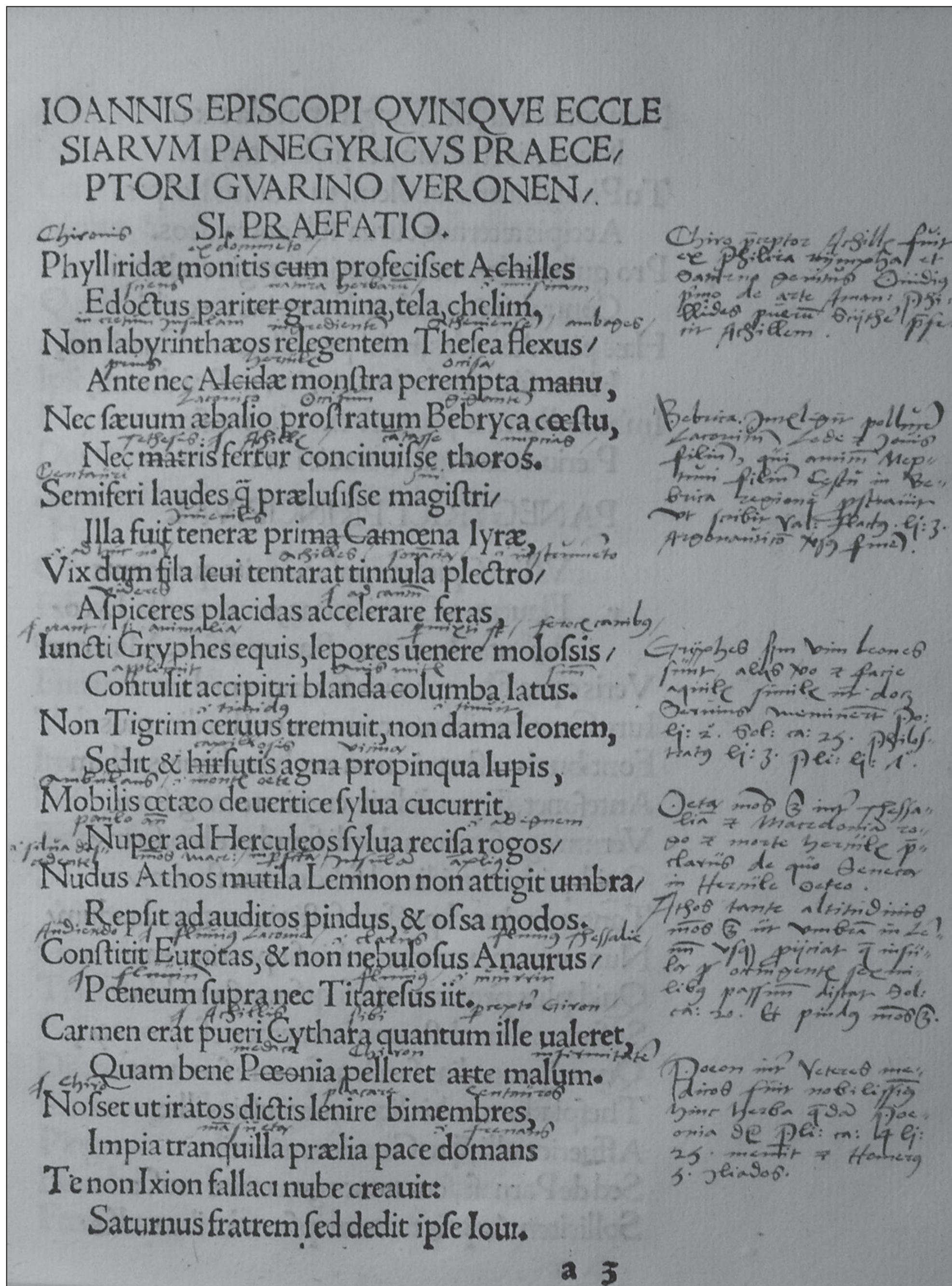
Textual universe and imitation

The marginal notes had a slightly different function than the synonyms, and their nature varied from professor to professor. In the following four different examples they will be introduced as an illustration. Sometimes these longer notes explained some obscure parts of the main text, but more often, they tended to create a textual universe of ancient sources and parallel places which provided identical or contrary information about a certain subject mentioned in the text. Ideally, this textual universe included every single ancient source that was known to the lecturer about a historical event, figure or place, and moreover, they often cited Renaissance encyclopaedias (e.g., by Volaterranus),[59] collections of exempla (as that of Sabellicus),[60] lexica (as the *Elegantiae* of Valla), and dictionaries. Again, the aim of transmitting this 'textual universe' for the students was not primarily the explication of the text, but rather showing a mosaic of consentient and differing opinions about a certain subject.

The *Panegyric of Guarino Veronese* by Janus Pannonius (1434–1472) was a good choice of a text to transmit the idea of this textual universe. The *Panegyric of Guarino* is an important monument for the history of humanistic education in Italy, and in addition to Battista Guarino's *De ordine docendi et studendi* and the funeral eulogy of Lodovico Carbone, the primary source for Guarino Veronese's

59 Volaterranus, *Commentariorum urbanorum liber.*

60 Sabellicus, *Exemplorum libri decem.*



IOANNIS EPISCOPI QVINQVE ECCLE
SIARVM PANEGYRICVS PRAECE/
PTORI GVARINO VERONEN/.
SI. PRAEFATIO.

Phyllyridæ monitis cum profecisset Achilles
Edoctus pariter gramina, tela, chelim,
Non labyrinthæos relegentem Thesea flexus/
Ante nec Alcidæ monstra perempta manu,
Nec sæuum æbalio prostratum Bebryca cæstu,
Nec matris fertur concinuisse thoros.
Semiferi laudes q̄ prælusisse magistri/
Illa fuit teneræ prima Camœna lyræ,
Vix dum fila leui tentarat tinnula plectro/
Aspiceres placidas accelerare feras,
Iuncti Gryphes equis, lepores uenere molossis/
Contulit accipitri blanda columba latus.
Non Tigrim ceruus tremuit, non dama leonem,
Sedit & hirsutis agna propinqua lupis,
Mobilis œtæo de uertice sylua cucurrit,
Nuper ad Herculeos sylua recisa rogos/
Nudus Athos mutila Lemnon non attigit umbra/
Repsit ad auditos pindus, & ossa modos.
Constitit Eurotas, & non nebulosus Anaurus/
Pœneum supra nec Titaresus iit.
Carmen erat pueri Cythara quantum ille ualeret,
Quam bene Pœonia pelleret arte malum.
Nosset ut iratos dictis lenire bimembres,
Impia tranquilla prælia pace domans
Te non Ixion fallaci nube creauit:
Saturnus fratrem sed dedit ipse Ioui.

a 3

Figure 4 Janus Pannonius, *Panegyricus: in laudem Baptistae Guarini Veronensis Praeceptoris sui conditus* (Vienna: Vietor and Singrenius, 1512), 3r. Harvard University, Houghton Library, *ZHC. C4974.512p

pedagogical method.[61] Thus, the publication of this work was certainly justified from a pedagogical point of view, but the paratexts of the edition reveal to us that the reason for national pride and the salvation of cultural heritage also played an important role.[62] The edition is dedicated by Paulus Crosnensis, professor of rhetoric and poetics at the University of Kraków, to Gabriel Perényi, the royal chamberlain of Hungary, who was a patron of Crosnensis during his trip to Hungary. The edition is accompanied by verses of Adrianus Wolphardus and Joachim Vadianus, who probably cooperated in the editorial work in Vienna, because Crosnensis was already in Kraków by that time.

At least thirteen surviving copies of this edition exist.[63] Seven copies contain extensive student annotations. Interestingly, they are not all identical, as they can be divided into two groups.

The relationship of the comments to each other can be illustrated with a few verses, to which at least four copies offer an explanation. In the following verses, Janus describes Guarino's youth, and how he chose the study of poetry instead of the ignoble medicine or logic:

> Post ubi creuerunt sensus crescentibus annis
>
> Non medicina tibi, scitu pulcerrima quamquam,
>
> Actu foeda tamen, logice aut placuere proteruae ... (f. A4v, ll. 52–54)

As your senses outfolded with the growing year, neither medicine—which is awful to practice, even though knowing it is beautiful, nor logic has pleased you…

> B1: "Vnde Hypocrates in libro de flatibus ait medicinam artem esse sordidam cum medicus res fedas sordidas et graueolentes tractare cogitur" – *Hence, Hippocrates says in his book on flatulence that medicine is a dirty craft, because the physician is forced to touch dirty, filthy, and heavily smelling parts.*
>
> B2: "Describit Guarini studium et in eo diligentiam in sua adolescentia que ad quartum decimum usque annum post 7m. Lege Censorinum." – *He describes Guarino's studies and his diligence in it in his youth, which lasted to his fourteenth year from the seventh. Read Censorinus.*

61 See Thomson, *Humanist pietas,* 68–251.

62 Pannonius, *Panegyricus: in laudem Baptistae Guarini Veronensis Praeceptoris sui conditus*.

63 Budapest, Hungarian National Library, RMK. III. 177/1 and 2 (two copies, B1 and B2); Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, *ZHC.C4974.512p; Cracow, Bibl. Jag. Cim. 4186, 4187, Neo-lat. 1349 (three copies, P1 and P2); London, British Library, 11408. ee. 27.; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 4 Diss. 899 coll. 27., Prague, Národní knihovna, 9 B 62; 65 D 2961 (two copies); Vienna, Austrian National Library, 79. R. 41.; Wrocław, Ossolineum, XVI Qu. 3713.; Warsaw, BN. XVI. Qu. 117.

P1: "Vnde hyppartes (!) In libro de flatibus ait: medicinam artem esse sordidam: cum medicus res fedas sordidas et graueolentes tractare cogitur." *Hence, Hyppartes says in his book on flatulence that medicine is a dirty craft, because the physician is forced to touch dirty, filthy, and heavily smelling parts.*

P2: "Describit Guarini studium infantiamque et in eo diligentiam in his adolescentia que ad 14m usque annum post 7m ducat. Lege Censorinum de nati." – *He describes Guarino's studies, his infancy, his diligence in his youth, which lasted to his fourteenth year from the seventh. Read Censorinus' The Natal Day*.

Obviously, B1 and P1 on the one hand, and B2 and P2 on the other represent the course materials of two different lectures. The irregular, cropped and extremely difficult-to-read notes of the London copy (L, British Library 11408 ee. 27) can also be classified in the B2–P2 group, as shown by the note to the following lines:

Inachidas Marius? qui plus quam Marte Lyeum / Quam me cum musis coluit... (104–105):

About Marius? Who has honored rather Bacchus with Mars, than me with the Muses…

B2: "Hystoriam hanc accepit auctor ex valerio maximo li. 2o. ti. 1o. ca. 5o. et ca. sequenti habetur historia que hic recitatur de aquinate [!] cicerone, plus scribit pli. ca. 11o. 33i. marium in emulatione liberi patris bachi cantaris visum fuisse quod et valerius scribit li. 3. ti. 6. ca. 1." – *The author received this story from Valerius Maximus, Bk. 2. title 1, ch. 5 and 6, where this story is contained which is repeated here about Cicero of Aquino. Furthermore, Pliny writes – bk. 33, ch. 11 – that Marius was competing with Bacchus father in drunkard ness, that is hinted to by Valerius, too, bk. 3, title 6, ch. 1.*

P2: "Item scribit Pli[nius] ca. 11mo li. 33. Marium in emulacionem Liberi patris Canthereosum fuisse etc. et Valerius Maximus scribit li. 3. ti. 6o. ca. 1mo." – *Pliny writes – bk. 33, ch. 11 – that Marius was competing with Bacchus father in drunkenness etc., that is hinted to by Valerius Maximus, too, bk. 3, title 6, ch. 1.*

L: "Hystoriam hanc accepit auctor ex valerio maximo li. 2. titulo 1o cap. 16 et cap. sequenti habetur hystoria que hic recitatur de arpinate Cicerone. Item scribit pli. cap. 11. 33 libri Marium in emulacionem liberi patris caterosum fuisse quod et valerius scribit li 3 ti 6 ca 1." – *The author received this story from Valerius Maximus, Bk. 2. title 1, ch. 5 and 6, where this story*

is contained which is repeated here about Cicero of Arpinas. Furthermore, Pliny writes – bk. 33, ch. 11 – that Marius was competing with Bacchus father in drunkeness, that is hinted to by Valerius, too, bk. 3, title 6, ch. 1.

Obviously, the three notes were taken down at the same lecture,[64] but it is their differences that are the most revealing. One of the students did not seem to know the birthplace of Cicero, thus he noted down Aquino instead of Arpinas, as the birthplace of Thomas Aquinas might have sounded more familiar. The rare Latin word "canthareosum" (drunkard, from *cantharus*, drinking vessel) was beyond the reach both of the annotator of B2 and L, as obviously they could not connect it to *cantharus*, and one of them distorted it into 'cantaris visum', the other into 'caterosum'. It shows that classroom teaching was far from being clear, and many students struggled hard to follow the words of the professor.

These notes are not only important documents of Renaissance university pedagogy, but they also point out that behind their humanist texts, their contemporary readers saw an encyclopedic textual universe which consisted of poetic, generically related texts, and historical or geographical sources likewise. The B1–P1 commentaries regularly refer to historical books (Solinus), collections of moral exempla (Valerius Maximus, Plutarch), and geographical authors (Strabo, Pomponius Mela). When Janus Pannonius parallels Guarino's travel to Constantinople to Plato's trip to Egypt, Pythagoras' studies among the Assyrians and Apollonius of Tyana's visit among the Brahmins (ll. 95-98), Ioannes Camers's commentary (in B2-P2) cites the Biblical prologues of Jerome and claims that Janus imitated him in comparing Guarino to these three heroes of knowledge. In fact, not even modern editors seem to have identified this reference, which is partly mistaken, because it turns up not in Jerome's Biblical prologues, but in his Epistle to Paulinus of Nola (Ep. 53, 1).[65] Nevertheless, this case proves that Janus, the humanist poet, and his early sixteenth century interpreters lived in the same textual universe, where every ancient author could provide a reference for an idea, independently of the genre of the text, and of its pagan or Christian nature.

The other commentary in the copies B1–P1 (which can be perhaps attributed to Joachim Vadianus) is also revealing in many respects, as it betrays that in addition to literal, word-by-word imitation, it is at least as important to discover the imitation of sentence structures where each word is exchanged with synonyms. The commentary in P1 to line 483 says:

64 The Harvard copy also belongs to the same group, but it contains the notes only on the first page of the poem. I identified the lecturer with Ioannes Camers, professor of rhetoric and later theology at the university of Vienna, based on one of the statements in the marginal notes.

65 Eusebius Hieronymus, *Epistolae*, 1:443–444. (CSEL 54). Cp. Panegyrici, ed., Mayer-Török, 2018, 164. On Jerome's attitude to Apollonius of Tyana, see Adkin, "Apollonius of Tyana in Jerome," 67–79.

> Axe sub arctoo positi uenere Poloni (l. 483)
>
> There came the Polish, who are placed under the Arctic axe…
>
> P1: Iuxta illud Vergilii: et penitus toto diuisos ab orbe britannos [Verg. Ecl. 1, 66] – *Following Vergil, 'and the Britons utterly divided from the whole world'.*

Not a single word is identical in the two phrases, nevertheless, the sentence structure and the idea is clearly closely related. 'Orbe' (world) is exchanged with 'axe' (axis), 'divisos' (divided) becomes 'positi' (positioned), 'penitus toto' (utterly from the whole) is transformed into 'arctoo' (Arctic), and finally Britons become Polish, just if they had been exchanged with synonyms during class. This imitative practice is the direct result of the search for synonyms that was taking place in the first phase of textual analysis in the humanist classroom.

These references are sometimes called 'imitations', but more commonly, the commentaries introduce them by the words "iuxta illud" ('according to that sentence'). The "iuxta illud" does not necessarily imply a direct dependence between the texts, but hints at an existing connection, be it in the field of literary imitation, emulation, moral or natural philosophy. Any kind of nodes in the network of texts within the textual universe might justify the link of "iuxta illud." When Janus expresses how difficult it was for Guarino to advance as a pioneer in the field of knowledge, the B1–P1 commentary connects it with a moralizing statement from the *Ars poetica* of Horace:

> Dos tamen ista tibi facili non indita casu / Sed parta labore (ll. 28–29)
>
> But this gift has not been attributed to you by chance, but acquired by hard work
>
> B1–P1: Iuxta illud Horacii: Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam Multa tulit fecitque puer sudauit et alsit. Abstinuit venere et bacho qui Pythia cantet. In arte poetica. [Hor. AP 412–414]). – *According to those verses of Horace: He who is industrious to reach the wished-for goal, has done and suffered much when a boy; he has sweated and shivered with cold; he has abstained from love and wine; he who sings the Pythian strains.* (transl. C. Smart)

There is no other reason to connect the two statements than their common moral lesson, the need of hard work to succeed in life. Still, in the textual universe surrounding the commented text in the class, any similar statement might be recalled with the words "iuxta illud" ('according to that'), as if there was a direct relationship between these poems.

Diverging interpretations

Students arrived with very different expectations and prior knowledge to these classes, and seem to have followed their own rhythm in taking notes, and class presence. These individual differences might not only be demonstrated by the misunderstandings mentioned above, but also by the differences in their note-taking habits and the extent of their surviving commentaries. A case in point might be the 1514 Vienna edition of Janus Pannonius' elegies, the very first edition of this fine collection of Neo-Latin poems.[66] The edition is known to survive in fifteen copies, at least.[67] From these fifteen copies, five contain extensive contemporary annotations from the early sixteenth century (Gdańsk, Munich, Olomouc, Philadelphia, Târgu Mureş). From these five set of annotations, two different clusters seem to emerge. It seems that just as in the case of the *Panegyric to Guarino Veronese*, two different classes were held on this text, but maybe in different semesters, by other professor. The easiest way to identify these two groups is the comparison of the synonyms. The copies in Gdansk (G) and Olomouc (O) contain the following glosses on some lines of the first poem, the elegy on the fountain nymph Feronia:

O sacri fontis mater Feronia, cuius
G-O: sacrati // Feronie parens Dea // fontis

Felix Paeonias Narnia potat aquas.
G-O: salubres // Umbriae civitas

Iam prope littorei tetigit sol brachi Cancri
G: Phaebus // chelas
O: ferme // at Phaebus // chelas // signi celi

Obviously the Gdańsk, and the Olomouc copies (from now on G-O) must have been commented at the same class, and the student had more or less an equal interest in the synonyms of the text. The G-O commentary offers a detailed description of the content of the first elegy, which is likewise shared by them:

---

66 Janus Pannonius, *Elegiarum aureum opusculum*.

67 Budapest, National Széchényi Library RMK III. 188, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences RMK III. 79.; Cambridge, Trinity College Library, III.6.37[8], Munich, BSB 4o A. lat. b. 161b/7, Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek, MISC.A 328, Gdańsk, Acad., Cb. 7620 8o adl. 3.; Marosvásárhely, Teleki-téka Bo-25120 coll. 17; Modena, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria; Newhaven, Yale University Library, BEIN If M81 r516 (Cuthbert Tunstall), BEIN Zi 9477; Olomouc, Státní Vědecká Knihovna 27829; Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Library, Kislak Center for Special Collections, HunC5 J2689 514e; St. Gallen, Vadianische Bibliothek, Inc. 759-855/2; Strasbourg, BNU, R.105.038 Res.; Vienna, Austrian National Library, 70.V. 71; Zwickau, Ratsschulbibliothek.

G-O: Hanc primam elegiam ad divam scribit Feroniam, cuius fontem maiorem in modum extollit (G: extullit) eo quod presentaneam languenti potatori medelam exibeat. Occasionem vero ex eo sumit quod sub flagrantissimo caniculo sydere arido siti laborans cum eiusdem fontis liquoribus sitibundas fauces (O: -) recreaverit. Est enim Feronia foncium nemorisque dea a ferendis arboribus. Tradunt enim cum nemus eius aliquando fortuitu (G: forte) arsisset incendio et ob id transferre simulachrum incole vellent, subito nemus eviruisse. Hinc dixit Verg. Et viridi gaudens Feronia luco.

Janus writes this first elegy to the Goddess Feronia, whose great fountain he celebrates because it gives instant cure to the languished thirsty traveler. He takes the occasion of writing from there that he—suffering from thirst under the rise of the hottest star Dog Star (Sirius)—could relish his dry throat by the liquids of this fountain. Because Feronia is the goddess of fountains and groves from bringing in ('fero') trees. Because they say that when her grove once caught fire by chance, because of this the locals wanted to transfer her statue, all of a sudden her grove became green. Hence Vergil says: And Feronia, happy with her green grove.

The Latin transcription above reveals that the student writing the Gdańsk copy had a much more rudimentary knowledge of Latin than the one present in the Olomouc copy. He omitted key words, and had no idea about the relatively common word "extollite" ('praise') which he put into writing with the meaningless "extullit".

At the same time, not only the different levels of understanding but also the varying approaches of the professors to the text caused great divergences in the interpretation. The copies in the Bavarian State Library in Munich (M), at the Library of the University of Pennsylvania (P) and the Teleki-Bolyai Library in Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureș, T) contain a completely different set of identical synonyms and marginal commentaries, and obviously, they must have been dictated by another professor. Even the introduction to the text is completely different:

M: Argumentum elegie: Remeat Ianus ex urbe Roma eo tempore quo occidente Cancro sol caniculam celeste signum ingredebatur, hoc est Idibus Julii, xv videlicet Julii die [... de quibus side-?][68] ribus Columel. ca.2. li. xi. et Plin. ca. 4to li. 2. et capite 28 li. 18 eo autem tempore ingentes calores esse solent. Sit[ibun]dus itaque poeta tum longo itinere cum solis incendiis ad feroniam fontem pervenit cuius aqua recreatus lepi[dam?] cecinit elegiam in qua salubrit[ates] fontis describit.[69]

68 The Munich copy is heavily cropped, so I am reconstructing the text here.

69 Only M contains this portion, as P failed to write it down, and T's notes start only with the poem De apro et cervo (see below).

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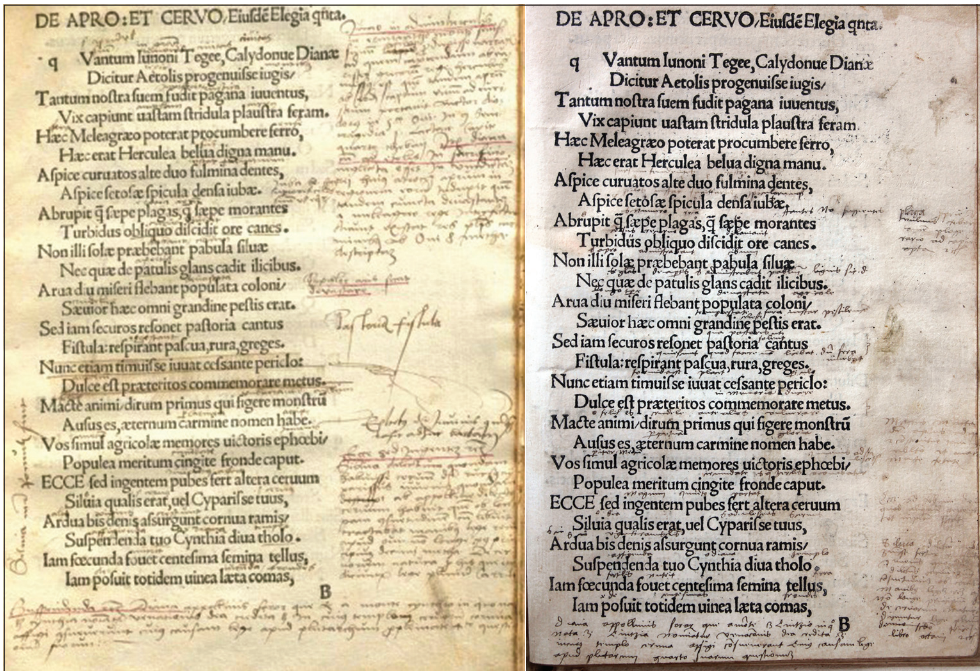
DE APRO: ET CERVO Eiusdē Elegia q̄nta.

q Vantum Iunoni Tegee, Calydonue Dianæ
Dicitur Aetolis progenuisse iugis/
Tantum nostra suem fudit pagana iuuentus,
Vix capiunt uastam stridula plaustra feram.
Hæc Meleagræo poterat procumbere ferro,
Hæc erat Herculea belua digna manu.
Aspice curuatos alte duo fulmina dentes,
Aspice setosæ spicula densa iubæ.
Abrupit q̄ sæpe plagas, q̄ sæpe morantes
Turbidus obliquo discidit ore canes.
Non illi solæ præbebant pabula siluæ
Nec quæ de patulis glans cadit ilicibus.
Arua diu miseri flebant populata coloni/
Sæuior hæc omni grandine pestis erat.
Sed iam securos resonet pastoria cantus
Fistula: respirant pascua, rura, greges.
Nunc etiam timuisse iuuat cessante periclo:
Dulce est præteritos commemorare metus.
Macte animi/ dirum primus qui figere monstrū
Ausus es, æternum carmine nomen habe.
Vos simul agricolæ memores uictoris ephœbi/
Populea meritum cingite fronde caput.
ECCE sed ingentem pubes fert altera ceruum
Siluia qualis erat, uel Cyparisse tuus,
Ardua bis denis assurgunt cornua ramis/
Suspendenda tuo Cynthia diua tholo.
Iam fœcunda fouet centesima femina tellus,
Iam posuit totidem uinea læta comas,
B

Figure 5 The elegy De apro et cervo in M and T (where T "took up the thread").

Argument of the elegy: Ianus comes back from Rome during the season when the descending Cancer enters the heavenly sign of the Dog Star, i.e. the Ides of July, i.e. the 15th of July, about which stars see Columella, bk. 11, ch. 2, et Pliny bk. 2, ch. 4, and bk. 18., ch. 28., because at that season there is usually a huge heat wave. Thus the thirsty poet, when he arrived from the long road under the burning sun to the fountain of Feronia, he was recreated by its water, and wrote this clever [?] elegy in which he praises the healthiness of this fountain.

The differences are telling: whereas the G-O commentary cites the poet Vergil in its first annotation, the M-P-T commentary quotes the scientific authors Columella and Pliny the Elder, and this rather diverging approach remains throughout the commentaries. Furthermore, the comparison of the M-P-T commentaries reveals a much greater diversity in the actual note-taking of the students. Whereas M is very detailed both in its marginal and interlinear notes, P provides almost only the synonyms (i.e., the interlinear notes) and the marginal notes are only occasional. The most interesting case is T, where the notes start only from the elegy 'De apro et cervo' (On the boar and the deer) on f. B1r, and they are interrupted again several times (e.g., the beginning of the elegy Threnos de morte Barbarae matris suae – Elegy on the death of his mother, Barbara, on B2r) and stop completely on C2r.

Although the annotator of T payed attention to both marginal and interlinear commentaries, the student who was responsible for these annotations probably joined the class later, and his presence was only occasional.

In the case of the Elegies of Janus Pannonius it is clear, that not only the professors, but also the students were responsible for creating a completely diverging interpretation of the text, although the class communication was directed by the professor.

Classroom commentaries in the service of civic education and self-representation

Our fourth example will show us a humanist who did not dictate his commentaries on a Classical or Neo-Latin text, but rather, decided to write up the textbook himself, and reveal its treasure to the student public in class in the form of marginal commentaries. Valentin Eck wrote his *De administratione reipublicae dialogus* (Dialogue on the administration of the republic), about government, the role of the prince, the duties of citizens, and the administration of the state, which was published for the first time in 1520.[70] Valentin Eck (Valentinus Ecchius, 1494–ca. 1545) is not among the best-known humanists of the period, although he played an important role in the civic life of the cities of Upper Hungary in the first decades of the sixteenth century. He was born in Lindau, an important free city on the shore of the Bodensee in South Bavaria.[71] In 1508, he was studying in Leipzig, together with his friend and teacher Rudolf Agricola Jr., in whose steps he later followed when he moved to the University of Cracow in 1511. In 1514, having received a bachelor's degree, he wrote an entertaining panegyrical poem to Augustinus Moravus, canon of Olomouc, and in the winter semester of the same year, Eck was able to take up a position teaching metric composition (*ars versificatoria*) at the University of Kraków, after Agricola moved to Vienna and then to Esztergom, to the court of Archbishop Tamás Bakócz. Eck published a small textbook to accompany his course (*De arte versificatoria*, 1515), based on a similar work written by Heinrich Bebel. In the following year he taught the Roman historical compendium of Florus, and in the meantime composed a panegyric celebrating the victory of the Polish king Sigismund I over the Russian tsar. However, his position as a teacher of poetry at Kraków University was taken over by another German humanist with better

70 Valentinus Ecchius, *De reipublicae administratione dialogus*. Copies survive in Cracow, Budapest, Vienna, Munich, and Stuttgart. A Latin–Slovak bilingual edition of Eck's text has been published in *De reipublicae administratione dialogus*, edited by Daniel Škoviera.

71 On his life, see Bauch, "Walentin Eck und Georg Werner," 40; Klenner, *Eck Bálint, Thurzó Elek humanista*; and Jacqueline Glomski's magisterial book: *Patronage and Humanist literature in the age of the Jagiellons*. On his death, see Guitman, "Adalékok Eck Bálint életéhez," 1245–52.

qualifications, Johann Hadeke,[72] thus Eck was forced to look for a new post, which he found in Bartfeld, a German city in Upper Hungary (Hungarian: Bártfa; Slovakian Bardejov, in present-day Slovakia) in 1517. He strove for recognition from the very first moment in this small town, and published poems praising Andreas Reuber, the judge of the city, who was his main patron. Taking up the job of the schoolmaster, he must have felt responsible for the education of the young local elite, and therefore he composed the *Dialogue on the administration of the republic* in 1520.

The use of these works in school teaching is indicated by a few surviving copies that contain annotations, most probably made by Eck's pupils, which suggest that his ideas reached wider circulation and were interpreted in his community. Five annotated copies of the text have survived, all bearing the same marginalia.[73] Interestingly, one of the copies in the Ossolineum notes on its title page that "I listened to this under Eck, who compiled it in the year 1520" (Figure 6). Thus, it is relatively sure to assume that Eck started to use it as a course book from 1520 onwards. He might have even promoted it, as the Munich copy notes on the title page: "I will explain this, so that I would not regret having said it, neither would you regret hearing it" (Figure 7).

Figure 6 A student note on the title page: „Eckio sub audiuj hoc quod compilatum per eundem constat 1520". Copy: Wrocław, Ossolineum XVI. Qu. 3587.

A similarly annotated manuscript copy of the treatise on the administration of the republic has survived in Prague in the Strahov library, where both the main text and the commentaries are in manuscript. As it is dated to the year 1531, it is probable that he continued to lecture on the very same text until that year, but he might have run out of the available copies by that time (or the student could not afford it).

72 Wiegand, "Johannes Hadeke-Hadelius ein niedersächsischer Wanderhumanist," 105–33, and Bauch, "Johannes Hadus-Hadelius." 206–28.

73 The used copies: Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, RM. IV: 117/a (**A**) and Prague, Strahov D. D. IV. 6 (**S**, containing also the *Comedia Poliscena* of Leonardo della Serrata; it was owned by Sebastian Chojnaczky and copied in 1531, probably at the University of Cracow). The notes differ slightly, those of **R** being less extensive, and thus probably earlier. There are two more copies in the Ossolineum in Wrocław (Ossol. XVI. Qu. 3587 and XVI. Qu. 1839, both of them in hardly legible handwriting) and one quite readable copy in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich (M, Pol. g. 75.).

Figure 7 Another student's note, perhaps quoting Eck: "enodabo vt nihil me dixisse vosque audiuisse penitebit" ("I will explain this, so that I would not regret having said it, neither would you regret hearing it"). Munich, BSB, Pol. g. 75, 1r.

Eck employed the distinctive teaching strategy of commenting on his own works: while most schoolbooks from this period bear the signs of identifying synonyms, writing keywords in the margins, or summarizing chapters in full sentences, on the basis of the surviving copies we can presume that Eck, as a teacher, lectured on his own works. Editing and printing a classical work for a university class was a fairly common practice at the Northern universities in the early sixteenth century, of Vienna and Kraków at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and course material was commented on during classes, and the dictated words of the teacher appear in many booklets from these years. Eck's practice, however, went even further, as he commented not on the classics, but on his own works, as proved by the fact that he often dictated the actual source of his sentences.[74] This strategy is most obvious in those cases in which the manuscript marginalia directly reveal the classical citations that Eck's work imitated. For example, to the sentence in which Philomathes asks if governing a republic is such an arduous task ("Estne reipublicae administratio res tam ardua?"), the notes point us towards which classical author the word "arduous" comes from.[75] In relation to the phrase "ministri dei officium est percutere malos et occidere pessimos" ("it is the duty of the minister to punish the sinful and kill the wicked"), for example, the manuscript notes refer to the source, "Hoc habetur ex vocabulis domini hieronimi", "this is taken from the words of Saint Jerome."[76] The next sentence refers to the example of the bad parent and the boy, in which the negligent father fails to take away a knife from his son, so as to avoid making him cry, only for the youngster to cut himself. Again, the manuscript marginalia reveal

74 My hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that a missing—and very important—line at B4v is supplied to the text by a different hand than the writer of the notes, possibly by Eck himself before distributing his work to his students.

75 *De administratione...*, f. a4v: "Cicero oficiorum primo res publicas et vehementer arduas plenasque laborum" i.e., Cicero, *De officiis* 1, 66; in both **R** and **S**). In **R** we find a further parallel, from Ovid: "Ardua prima via est."

76 Valentinus Ecchius, *De reipublicae administratione dialogus*, B4v. For the manuscript commentary, see Appendix 4. The direct source of the sentence was Gratian. *Decret.* C 23, q. 5, can. 28.

the original source: "This is taken from Saint Augustine" and quote the example *in extenso*.[77] It is difficult to imagine how anybody could, or why they would, identify these sources so successfully, unless we suppose that Eck himself dictated the sources of his treatise to his pupils. A similarly annotated copy of the poem "Whether a prudent man should marry" survives in the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.[78] Where the poem describes how marriage causes troubles (it seduces youth, carries off men, and causes bitter death to the old), the notes quote the source, Epistle 106 of Enea Silvio Piccolomini.[79] The main sources of Eck's commentary were the most popular collections of sentences, adages, and commonplaces in his age. The *Adagia* of Erasmus is often quoted explicitly by him, and it serves as the main source of materials related to Greek. The *Ten books of historical examples* (*Exemplorum libri decem*, 1507) by the Venetian historian Marcantonio Sabellico were mostly exploited for their classical stories. Eck must have used the *Decreta Gratiani*, as well, and explicitly referred to its text in his dictation on a few occasions. He probably turned to the *Cornucopiae* of Niccolò Perotti on Roman matters and the Latin language, an encyclopedic treatment of Latin vocabulary and Roman social history. The most surprising and most extensively used source was the *Polyanthea* of Domenico Nanni Mirabelli, perhaps the most popular commonplace book in the sixteenth century.[80] Although Eck never refers to it explicitly, it must have been his main treasure trove of Classical and Patristic citations. This alphabetic encyclopedia contained hundreds of authoritative statements on different subjects, from *A et ab* to *Zodiacus*. While many of the articles provide simple definitions and etymologies, the most important Christian and moral concepts (e.g. capital sins, cardinal virtues, *abstinentia*, or *lex*) receive detailed treatment, with dozens of related quotations. More often than not, Eck picked his citations from this collection.

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77 Ecchius, o.c., B4v, and the comment: "*Hoc ex sententia diui Augustini acceptum est* qui viciis nutriendis parcit et favet ne contristet peccantium voluntatem non tam est misericors quam qui non vult cultrum rapere puero ne audiat plorantem et non timet ne vulneratum doleat et extinctum." The direct source—not cited by Eck—is Gratian. *Decret*. C 23, q. 5, can. 8.

78 Budapest, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Ráth 1575. An annotated copy of his treatise on Contempt for the world (*De mundi contemptu*, Cracow: Vietor, 1519) can be found in the Calvinist college in Debrecen Debrecen, Library of the College of the Reformed Church, RMK 1235.

79 "Seductrix iuuenum, fortisque rapina uirorum, / Et longaeuorum mors peramara senum." Printed note: "Ex 106. Epist. Ene. Sylvij." Manuscript note: "vbi sic ait: Mulier est iuventutis expilatrix, uirorum rapina etc." Furthermore, two surviving copies of the dialogue contain the manuscript commentary (Wroclaw, Ossolin. XVI Qu. 3587-88 and XVI. Qu. 1839) and a handwritten note in one of them states explicitly that the owner of the volume studied under Eck and heard him lecturing on his own book (in Ossol. XVI. Qu. 3587: "Eckio sub audiui hoc quod compilatum per eundem constat 1520").

80 On its printing history and various editions, see Blair, *Too Much to Know,* 178–85.

All in all, Eck emerges as a self-conscious humanist author from these self-commentaries, and his compiling work on humanist authorities (e.g., on Erasmus or Valla) precisely demonstrated the way to his students on how humanism can be turned into practice. What sounded only as a Classical proverb or a literary adage in the text, turned out to be a quotation from Cicero, Jerome or Erasmus, which could be adapted to "real-life" wisdom and applied in everyday situations. Most of his students probably never became humanists (though one of them, Leonard Stöckel did, becoming an important Reformer in Northern Hungary), and the advice he gave through the figures of his dialogue received their significance in the activity of these civic students.

Conclusion

The early sixteenth century humanist classroom emerges as an active and engaging community of interpretation from the examples above, which may give us important insights into the reception of Classical and Neo-Latin texts in the sixteenth century. It might not have been as interactive as a modern, twenty first century classroom, but it certainly relied heavily on the individual creativity of the master, and the surviving parallel commentaries witness that many students were captured by these incentives. It is obvious that the research perspectives which the investigation of the marginalia in multiple copies is offering has hardly been explored so far both in the geographical and chronological sense. It seems definitely worth going further in this direction, as it offers lessons about such various issues as regular class attendance, the individual freedom of students in selecting information, or the understanding and misunderstanding of texts. Through the mirror of these commentaries, we might not only better understand what the students could grasp from these teachings and how humanism spread through the channels of pedagogy, but also identify new textual sources that can be safely attributed to one professor or another. These publications seem to have had a primary importance for the teacher both in the intellectual and in the financial sense, as it was a direct way of marketing their knowledge. Therefore, it seems a must in the future to look at all the surviving copies of this type of publications and explore their manuscript afterlife of the printed text.

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