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«MODUS SCOLIPETARUM ET REPORTISTARUM»
Pronuntiatio and Fifteenth-Century University Hands*

I

In the German-speaking countries cursive and «bastard» book hands are predominant during the fifteenth century. There is a very high number of manuscripts extant from this time, and the book hands used vary extremely, representing an abundance of types and varie-

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Titles abbreviated in the notes:

CMD-A II. UNTERKIRCHER, FRANZ: *Die datierten Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek von 1401 bis 1450*, Wien 1971 (*Katalog der datierten Handschriften in lateinischer Schrift in Österreich*, 2).

CMD-A III. UNTERKIRCHER, FRANZ: *Die datierten Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek von 1451 bis 1500*, Wien 1974 (*Katalog der datierten Handschriften in lateinischer Schrift in Österreich*, 3).

CMD-CH I. SCARPATETTI, BEAT MATTHIAS VON (and others): *Ka-*

ties. A small part of what has been transmitted may now be studied in the Austrian and Swiss catalogues of dated manuscripts. Both catalogues cover large parts of the material to be included from these countries, whereas the series devoted to the Federal Republic of Germany is still at its very beginning.

The amount of dated material made available opens the way for a closer examination of fifteenth-century cursive book hands. It is true, however, that the documentation of dated manuscripts has a somewhat heterogeneous character. Within each catalogue specimens are arranged in a strictly chronological order thus enabling the reader to perceive the development of book hands in the course of time. As a result, there is, at any given stage, a high variety of different scripts, scripts originating from various countries or regions, and scripts of different levels of execution, reaching from calligraphy to simple cursive hands. If inquiry into chronological developments is one main task, distinction of types, to my mind, should be another one. It may be remembered that G.I. Lieftinck very seriously took into account the heterogeneous character of the material to be dealt with. While preparing the first volume concerning the Netherlands, he decided not to establish a chronological sequence, but to adopt an arrangement of a classifying kind¹.

As all later catalogues continue to cling to the chronological principle, it becomes increasingly necessary to discuss by way of complementary investigation such questions as the formation of types and the distinction of regional styles. The following observations are intended to contribute to this investigation in a limited area. The aim is to characterize a specific variant emerging from the abundance of German cursive book hands of the fifteenth century, i.e. what I pro-

talog der datierten Handschriften in der Schweiz in lateinischer Schrift vom Anfang des Mittelalters bis 1550. Vol. 1. *Die Handschriften der Bibliotheken von Aarau, Appenzell und Basel*, Dietikon-Zürich 1977.

CMD-D I. POWITZ, GERHARDT: *Die datierten Handschriften der Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main*, Stuttgart 1984 (*Datierte Handschriften in Bibliotheken der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 1).

1. G.I. LIEFTINCK, *Manuscripts datés conservés dans les Pays-Bas. Catalogue paléographique des manuscrits en écriture latine portant des indications de date*. T.1: *Les manuscrits d'origine étrangère (816-c. 1550)*, Amsterdam 1964.

pose to call «the students' cursive hand» («Schul- und Studienkursive») as used in the process of learning at late-medieval universities and grammar schools.

II

The outline given here is based upon three catalogues of dated manuscripts: Austria, volumes II-III (Vienna), Switzerland, volume I (for the most part Basle), and Federal Republic of Germany, volume I (Frankfurt am Main). Among the some hundred specimens of fifteenth-century cursive writing assembled in these catalogues, the students' hand may be traced and recognized as a variety of its own, contrasting significantly with other varieties. Without being a «script», it may be characterized, to begin with, as a variant of *Cursiva currens* in its most unpretentious form. Used as a means of noting down rapidly glosses and commentaries, it continues scribal traditions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The catalogues cited provide evidence that this kind of *Cursiva* was in use in the Faculties of Arts of Austrian and German universities, as for instance at Vienna, Ingolstadt, Leipzig in the East, or Basle, Heidelberg, Mainz and Cologne in the West. At the same time, it is the kind of writing familiar to «scolares» attending grammar schools in places like Ulm and Isny, Worms, Brunswick or Zwickau. The texts most frequently glossed or commented upon include some of the well known teaching books of the *Artes liberales*. A first group comprises grammars, e.g. the *Ars minor* of Donatus, the *Doctrinale* of Alexander de Villa Dei, the *Graecismus* of Eberhardus Bethuniensis. A second group, as may be expected, is constituted by the writings of Aristoteles, such as the *Organon*, *Physics*, *De anima* etc. Other texts commented upon are the Bible, the *Liber sententiarum* of Peter Lombard, hymns, *Astronomica*, classical authors etc.

Although used by many individuals at different places, the students' cursive hand has maintained a certain degree of uniformity, a fact probably due to the specific situation of *Pronuntiatio* and *Reportatio*. As Karl Christ has pointed out in 1938, universities in German-speaking countries did not adopt the *pecia* system². Evidence is

2. K. CHRIST, *Petia. Ein Kapitel mittelalterlicher Buchgeschichte*, in *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 55 (1938), pp. 1-44, concerning *Pronun-*

provided by the statutes of various Faculties of Arts³ that students had to supply themselves with teaching books by using the methods of Pronuntiatio and Reportatio. Doing this, they found themselves in a situation fundamentally different from that of the ordinary medieval scribe. Pronuntiatio and Reportatio mean oral tradition. There are a number of colophons stating expressively the situation, students and scolares using such phrases as *commentum...pronuncciatum...et reportatum* (1401); *Lectura Donati pronunciata... reportata* (1426); *reportata per discretum locatum meum* (1436); *Bakelarius... pronunciavit in estate pro precio 4 denariorum* (1467); (Ovidius) *pronunciatus per honestum baccalareum Stanislaum* (1477)⁴. In 1429, Albertus de Francfordia, tunc temporis scholaris Ulme, shows himself grateful to his pronuntiator Konrad Bonhart of Gundelsheim: *Et ego refero et referam multas gratiarum actiones pro mea parte scilicet pronuntiatori et etiam autori*⁵.

This is not the place to discuss in full length the system of Pronuntiatio⁶ and its implications as to the palaeography of late medieval teaching books. It should be remembered, however, that by order of the university authorities the exemplar used had to be

tiatio and German universities pp. 36-39. Cf. G. FINK-ERRERA, *Une institution du monde médiéval: la «pecia»*, in *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 60 (1962), pp. 184-243, especially pp. 232-235; B. BISCHOFF, *Paläographie des römischen Altertums und des abendländischen Mittelalters*, Berlin 1979, p. 61; 283.

3. K. CHRIST (cf. note 2) pp. 37-39 (Prague, Vienna, Heidelberg, Erfurt). There is no indication that the system of Pronuntiatio should have applied to the higher faculties. For a vice-versa-limitation of the pecia system (except Paris) cf. G. POLLARD, *The pecia system in the medieval universities*, in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries. Essays Presented to N.R. Ker*, London 1978, p. 150 et seq.

4. CMD-A II 8; A II 217; CH I 227; D I 169; A III 435.

5. CMD-CH I 177.

6. The system of Pronuntiatio and what it meant to the history of the medieval book have not yet been studied in detail. In addition to university statutes, surviving manuscripts are sources of peculiar interest because they indicate how the system actually worked. Cf. K. CHRIST (as in note 2) p. 37: «bei der Dürftigkeit der urkundlichen Quellen läßt sich nur auf den Hss. selbst als den erhaltenen Zeugen die bessere Erkenntnis des Buchwesens der deutschen Universitäten im Mittelalter aufbauen».

examined and corrected, before the text was allowed to be dictated to the audience. The teacher had to pronounce the text distinctly, passage by passage, indicating paragraphs, capital letters, and punctuation marks⁷. As far as I see, the procedure developed in two different ways.

- The pronunciation of the text to be commented upon.

The script, generally, is a *littera bastarda* or an enlarged form of the students' hand, written carefully and distinctly, leaving no doubt how the «textus» should be read⁸.

- The pronunciation of a commentary.

There is more than one way to pronounce and to note down a commentary. In many cases the scribe uses a textbook that has been arranged in advance. In these circumstances the situation of *Pronuntiatio* and *Reportatio* is largely determined by three factors imposing a number of common features upon the cursive hands used.

The first factor: Lack of space.

As a rule, the commentary is more voluminous than the text, often considerably exceeding it in length. Nevertheless, the commentary has to be laid down within the narrow marginal columns, whereas additional glosses must be distributed now and then in the small spaces left between the lines. Faced with the need to conserve space, scribes adopt specific techniques of writing. The pen is cut in such a way as to make it narrow, even pointed; letter forms are small-sized; distances between the lines are reduced to a minimum; descenders from one line are overlapping with ascenders from the following line; general abbreviations and abbreviations of technical terms are used extensively.

The second factor: Want of time.

The method to note down a commentary dictated by a *baccalarius* or a *rector scolarium* implies the necessity to write rapidly. As a result, letter forms tend to be reduced to less elaborate or rudimentary shape⁹. Moreover, pressure of time enforces the tendency to make

7. K. CHRIST (cf. note 2) p. 38.

8. CMD-CH I 177 (1429); CH I 227 (1436); A II 474 (1447); D I 120/121 (1452); CH I 358 (1453); CH I 430 (1463); A III 456 (1478); D I 206 (1479).

9. Cf. for example: r in «rationabiliter reprehendi» CMD-CH I 70 (1399; l.7); «reiterari», «pater» D I 322 (ca. 1443; l.4); - m, n, i, u in «gratuita

use of abbreviations. Consequently, in addition to the flat, pressed-down duct, the frequency of single or twofold curved strokes above words comes to be a characteristic feature of the script as a whole¹⁰.

The third factor: Writing for private use.

Scribes using a script of a highly informal character may do this, because they are working without regard to objective standards, but for their own, private use. The text must be legible to the scribe only and nobody else, although there are examples of *Reportata* being sold some time later to younger students¹¹. As may be expected, most of the hands, judging by their main features, lack harmony. One of the scribes, fully aware of the quality of the text just completed, confesses: *Quia non bene scripsi, ideo pudoris causa nomen obmisi*¹². Texts of this kind written on long lines extending to 8-11 cm in width, make it hard for the reader's eye to advance to the line coming next. This is the reason why texts even in octavosized books tend to be divided into two very narrow columns measuring usually not more than 4-5 cm in width¹³.

An observation of this kind may provoke the question whether *scolares* and students were instructed, in one way or another, how

benignitate» A II 455 (1446, l.1 et seq.); «conuertibilium», «remouere» D I 209 (1481; col. b, l.5 et seq.). - s in «contingens», «negacionibus» CH I 443 (1464; text ll. 2, 5). - g in «castigacio» A II 149 (1419; l.13). - p in «potest», «positione», «posito» D I 209 (1481; col. b, ll. 1,3,4); in «opinatur» D I 226 (1488; last line). - -um in «totum», «solum», «2^m» CH I 165 (1428; ll. 11, 15, 16). - Ligatures: «in libro», «cum psalterio» CH I 225 (1435; l.6).

10. For example: CMD-CH I 378 (1455); A III 172 (1459).

11. For example: CMD-A II 217 (Cod. 4993; Johannes Stadler: *Lectura Donati. Reportata...Anno XXVI*^o; sold 1449 to a frater Sebastianus de Mannsee tunc temporis existens studens Wyennensis); A II 487 (Cod. 4785; Johannes Faber de Werdea: *Concepta parvorum logicalium. Finita per me Caspar Kirchner de Herbipoli tunc temporis existens studens eiusdem* [Wiennensis] *studii...1448*; sold 1449).

12. CMD-A II 149 (Cod. 3827; *Reportatum* 1419).

13. Long lines: CMD-CH I 102 (1412); CH I 166 (1428); A II 446 (1445); A II 487 (1448); D I 109/110 (1450); CH I 378 (1455); D I 226 (1488). - Two columns: CMD-A II 25 (1403); A II 112 (1414); CH I 134 (1422); CH I 165 (1428); D I 151 (1461); A III 252 (1464).

to organize their teaching books. How did they come to be acquainted with the intricate lay-out of text, glosses, and commentary? How did they learn to handle such rather sophisticated abbreviations as were in use for technical terms in the field of medieval grammar and logic? Taking as a basis the evidence of surviving manuscripts we may assume that a minimum of instruction as to formalities has been part of the dictation. But, obviously, this does not apply to the script. It is true that, in spite of varieties in the degree of regularity and individual characteristics, certain common features may be observed; but such features, as far as I see, are caused by the necessities inherent in the situation of *Pronuntiatio* and *Reportatio*, necessities exercising a uniforming influence upon the script.

III

The cursive hand as characterized here is used mainly with a view to write commentaries and glosses explaining a text written on the same page. It may also be employed for noting down a commentary not accompanied by the text or a commentary divided into small passages alternating with corresponding passages of the text¹⁴. In such circumstances, the script tends to be somewhat larger, better spaced, and, consequently, more elaborate.

It should be noted, however, that the use of the students' hand was not strictly confined to the situation of *Pronuntiatio* and *Reportatio*. Thus, it may be the script adopted by scholars (such as *rectores scholarium*, *magistri*, *baccalarii*) for personal notes or for autograph manuscripts of lectures¹⁵. Occasionally, it is used outside grammar schools and universities — as for instance in monasteries — in order to copy a literary text from an exemplar, the scribe retaining as a book hand the kind of cursive script he got acquainted with during the time of his learning at schools or universities¹⁶. On the other hand, a school or university text, bearing otherwise specific features of a *Reportatum*, may appear strange, because it is written in a regular cursive book hand of some quality. A «contradic-

14. CMD-A II 8 (1401); CH I 166 (1428).

15. CMD-D I 58 (Johannes Streler; 1431); A II 456 (1446); CH I 398 (Stephanus Army; 1459); D I 208 (Servatius Fanckel; 1480); A III 480 (1481).

16. CMD-A II 289 (1433; cf. A II 368, the same text written in *Cursiva libraria*); D I 96 (Frankfurt 1445).

tion» of this sort may be explained by the fact that an authentic Reportatum has been copied again with a view to produce a fair copy. This is, for instance, the case of a commentary on the Consolation of Boethius, pronounced in 1459 at the university of Vienna and copied three years later in a remarkably formal script by a frater Gregorius, by then member of the Austrian Charterhouse of Aggsbach¹⁷.

The academic cursive hand has been characterized here as a variety of its own by casting a retrospective glance at parts of the material transmitted. But fifteenth-century scribes themselves regarded it as a specific variant. Evidence is found in the fact that some scribes using this kind of *Cursiva currens* prefer the larger, more elaborate *Cursiva libraria* when writing the colophon, thus indicating the hierarchy of cursive scripts they had in mind¹⁸. A fifteenth-century scribe from Austria, a member of the Teutonic Order, tentatively tried a denomination by paraphrase. In 1433 he warns the reader of his «Concordia quattuor evangelistarum super passionem Domini»: ¹⁹ *Tu qui legis seu studes sis cautus, quia non fui modista in scribendo, sed iuxta modum scole. Scriptura mirabilis*. Three years before, he had finished another text using similar words: *Et sic est finis illius laudabilis operis scriptum...secundum modum scolipetarum et reportistarum. Igitur sis cautus in legendo nec profers «ba» pro «bu» vel «ka» pro «ky»*. Like this Austrian, other fifteenth-century scribes may be suspected to have been aware of the fact that their handwriting lacked the quality of being read without ambiguity. Towards the end of the century, textbooks including marginal commentaries began to come out in print. Some of them are prepared for use by the insertion of empty spaces reserved for glosses between the lines²⁰. The scripts of the handwritten entries found in these printed books are late offsets from the students' cursive hand.

17. CMD-A III 228.

18. CMD-CH I 70 (1399); A II 217 (1426); A II 384 (1439); A II 446 (1445); A II 487 (1448); A III 251 (1464); D I 209 (1481; lines 2-4).

19. Vienna ÖNB Cod. 14457. The following quotations are taken from Unterkircher's description of the manuscript; cf. CMD-A II (text, p. 158).

20. For example: Theobaldus: *Physiologus*. [Köln: H. Quentell 1489]. (Hain-Copinger 15467). - Boethius: *De consolatione philosophiae*. Köln: H. Quentell 1497. (GW 4563).

IV

The method of Pronuntiatio is likely to have been in use at secular and non-secular grammar schools even before the time when universities in the German-language area were founded. Consequently, a comprehensive study of the «students' cursive hand» cannot be confined to the fifteenth century, but will have to be based on the evidence provided by manuscripts of the fourteenth century as well. Pronuntiatio, we are told, was a procedure of teaching peculiar to the German-speaking countries; but what kind of method was adopted e.g. in contemporary Dutch or French grammar schools and Faculties of Arts? A striking feature is — as J. Miethke has exemplified²¹ — that the method of Pronuntiatio occasionally could be used outside universities. When the Councils of Constance and Basle were held, Pronuntiatio sometimes served as a means of publication; Pierre d'Ailly and Jean Gerson are among those who tried to propagate their opinions in this way.

Our contribution will call to mind the work of István Hajnal, above all his book «L'enseignement de l'écriture aux universités médiévales»²². Basing his studies upon the statutes of medieval and modern universities, Hajnal tried to prove that universities thought it to be one of their tasks to instruct younger students in the art of writing. Dictation («nominare, legere, pronuntiare, dare ad pennam»), to him, was a means of copying texts and, at the same time, an exercise in teaching beginners how to write fluently, distinctly, and carefully²³. As Hajnal admits, he did not examine the manuscripts emerging from the process and the kind of scripts used²⁴. According to his understanding of the sources, the result should have been «une écriture nette et précise»²⁵. This would fit the script of the texts to be commented upon, as mentioned above. With regard to German universities of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Hajnal recog-

21. J. MIETHKE, *Die Konzilien als Forum der öffentlichen Meinung im 15. Jahrhundert*, in *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 37 (1981), pp. 736-773, especially pp. 753-755 and notes 60-62.

22. I. HAJNAL, *L'enseignement de l'écriture aux universités médiévales*, 2. ed. by LÁSZLÓ MEZEY, Budapest 1959.

23. I. HAJNAL (cf. note 22) p. 126.

24. I. HAJNAL (cf. note 22) p. 142 et seq.

25. I. HAJNAL (cf. note 22) p. 122; 128.

nized a decline in the system. To him, Pronuntiatio lost its didactic character, the only aim being now to supply students with a great number of university manuals²⁶. It is this kind of manuscript, written rapidly and without care, that the present paper, being a palaeographical approach to the subject, has been dealing with.

As far as palaeography is concerned, we may state in conclusion that the «students' cursive hand» has been developed with regard to the practical requirements of learning at universities and grammar schools. Within this sphere it played an important part. The script is far from calligraphy and regularity, but, nevertheless, it has had its impact on the more carefully written book hands (as *Cursiva libraria*) influencing them by its highly current and compact forms, when scribes tried to increase the speed and ease of writing.

In the field of fifteenth-century palaeography there have been several approaches intended to classify German cursive book hands. J. Kirchner, in 1928, distinguished various groups of «Bastarda» (as he called it) characterizing them as regional styles²⁷. Recently H. Lülfiing and O. Mazal have taken up Kirchner's opinion²⁸. From a different point of view, W. Oeser recognized a specific variety adopted in Northern Germany by the religious communities of the «Fraterherren» and the Congregation of Windesheim²⁹. Our own contribution concentrated on the scribal practice at universities and grammar

26. I. HAJNAL (cf. note 22) p. 133 et seq.

27. Cf. E. CROUS-J. KIRCHNER, *Die gotischen Schriftarten*, Leipzig 1928, pp. 19-22; IDEM, *Scriptura Gothica Libraria*, München 1966, p. 12 et seq.; IDEM, *Germanistische Handschriftenpraxis*, 2. ed., München 1967, pp. 22-24.

28. H. LÜLFING, *Schreibkultur vor Gutenberg*, in *Der gegenwärtige Stand der Gutenberg-Forschung*, ed. by H. WIDMANN, Stuttgart 1972, p. 59; O. MAZAL, *Paläographie und Paläotypie*, Stuttgart 1984, p. 20 et seq., pl. 21-28.

29. W. OESER, *Die Brüder des gemeinsamen Lebens in Münster als Bücherschreiber*, in *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, 5 (1964), col. 197-398; IDEM, *Die Handschriftenbestände und die Schreibtätigkeit im Augustiner-Chorherrenstift Böödden*, in *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, 7 (1967), col. 317-448.

schools. It may be hoped that in combining these and other aspects³⁰ we will eventually succeed in spreading more light upon the typology of fifteenth-century cursive handwriting.

30. For a detailed study in German fifteenth-century cursive hands, based on 102 manuscripts transmitting the same text, cf. TH. FRENZ, *Gotische Gebrauchsschriften des 15. Jahrhunderts*, in *Codices manuscripti*, 7 (1981), pp. 14-30. Frenz is right in emphasizing the importance of distinguishing as to function: «Eine Einteilung hätte..., neben zeitlichen und geographischen Merkmalen, vor allem noch die jeweilige Funktion der Schrift zu berücksichtigen.» (p. 14).