

A Short Introduction

We all learned stories in school. As I work on the history of teaching, or rather learning, both during the Middle Ages and now, I often ask myself, “What stories was I taught?” “Which do I remember most and why?” “What were the characters like?” “What did they make me feel—and see?” When I look at medieval school manuscripts for answers to the same questions, I find evidence that emotions, genders, and actions mattered then, as they did in my childhood and adolescence. Often the stories I remember most vividly focused on characters very different from me.

I first read in graduate school St. Augustine’s description of weeping for the death of Queen Dido in the *Aeneid*, the source of my title and the first example in this book. My graduate studies at the Centre for Medieval Studies directed me toward medieval Latin manuscripts, and the twenty-five years I spent working on the commentaries on a popular rhetorical treatise, the *Poetria nova* of Geoffrey of Vinsauf, reinforced my sense of the importance of the glosses (annotations) written above the words of a text and in the margins.

The project discussed in the three chapters that follow, based on the E. H. Gombrich Lectures given at the Warburg Institute in 2014, has been a labor of love. I had become fascinated with the tradition of boys performing emotional speeches in women’s voices in schools and the evidence from manuscripts indicating that this tradition persisted during the Middle Ages, as well as before and after. I returned to the *Aeneid*, and in the meantime I

had developed an admiration for two other texts much used in medieval schools but not well known now: the unfinished *Achilleid* of Statius, which in medieval manuscripts is treated as a complete work about an adolescent hero who pretends to be a girl (while proving himself to be a man); and the *Ilias latina* or Latin Homer, a condensation of the *Iliad* influenced by Virgil, that tells a version of the story foregrounding the pathos of the deaths of soldiers. What follows is based on an examination of more than 60 manuscripts of the *Aeneid*, 50 of the *Achilleid*, and 30 of the *Ilias latina*, each statistic but a fraction of the number extant. The manuscripts quoted date from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries and were copied and/or glossed in Germany, Italy, England, and France. Because these chapters draw almost entirely from unedited manuscripts, they demand a great deal of readers, who are asked to pay close attention to very specific, sometimes cryptic comments of teachers and to take seriously the almost completely unfamiliar practice in which such teachers were engaged. A knowledge of Latin or of the works themselves is not necessary, however. The major emphasis is on what appears to have made the works attractive to the students, whether they were feeling Dido's pain, or mentally dressing in Achilles's women's clothes, or hamming it up while reciting a variety of scenes.

Boys were the primary medieval audience of the glossed manuscripts of these texts, which they read in school. Each of the chapters that follow begins with a boy: the historical Augustine who weeps for the suicide of a fictional queen; young Achilles waking up in a strange new land where he will be asked to pretend to be a young woman; and an anonymous boy in a medieval lyric poem who performs a woman's lament for her dead lover. Each provides a different window into three interrelated aspects of medieval teaching: emotion, gender, and performance, with special emphasis on emotion.

The history of emotion continues to be a powerful focus of scholarly energy, and this book contributes to the ongoing scholarly conversation.¹ Emotions were not taught in medieval schools for their own sake, but as effective and cogent aspects of the acquisition of the Latin language and the cultural capital of shared texts. This teaching took place in a single-sex environment: while the classical tradition does not appear to have been a significant part of medieval women's or girls' education, for many boys classical and pseudo-classical texts comprised a good portion of their pedagogical experience. Since medieval teaching was relentlessly practical, and what had worked earlier continued to be utilized, pagan Latin texts and works based on them remained one of the most fundamental learning experiences of those who became *litterati* until very, very late in the tradition. Even when texts of a more overtly (if superficially) Christian context appear to have overtaken the educational system, manuscripts show us that texts like those described in this volume were still copied and studied intensively.²

¹ For an overview, see Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2015). Barbara Rosenwein's *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006) began the examination of the medieval period from this perspective; see also *Ordering Emotions in Europe, 1100–1800*, ed. Susan Broomhall (Leiden: Brill, 2015). The classroom resembles a specific kind of "emotional community" in Rosenwein's terms: a social setting where "people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value—or devalue—the same or related emotions," p. 2. See also Martin Irvine's redirecting of what Brian Stock identifies as "textual communities" in *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983) toward the classroom in *The Making of Textual Culture: "Grammatica" and Literary Theory, 350–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Irvine focuses on centuries earlier than those discussed here. On the impact of Aristotle's treatment of the emotions in his *Rhetoric*, see Rita Copeland, "Pathos and Pastoralism: Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in Medieval England," *Speculum* 89 (2014): 96–127.

² This is a vast area of scholarship. In addition to the works cited in the chapters that follow, useful places to begin are the study by Jaakko Tahkokallio, "The Classicization of the Latin Curriculum and 'The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century': A Quantitative Study

This approach to teaching is characterized by total concentration on the texts themselves: on the Latin words in which they were written. As a result, manuscripts of classical texts used in medieval schools rarely contain allegorizing commentary or other kinds of glosses that would draw attention away from the texts. Instead, glosses and comments (the terms are used interchangeably in this study) on school texts reveal how almost every single word of a school text could be taken seriously. Interlinear glosses (written above the words of the text) explain grammatical relationships, build vocabulary, and create emphasis. Glosses written in the margin, which are typically longer, ensure comprehension of the narrative by providing summaries and paraphrases, identifications of speakers including authorial comments, and background information with which to understand action. The chapters that follow focus on these small pieces of evidence and various kinds of highlighting to try to capture a record of how and how closely medieval teachers and students engaged with these classical literary texts.

In Introduction Image A and Introduction Image B reproduced here, you can see this kind of cooperation in the glosses on the first four lines of Dido's most famous speech in the *Aeneid*: her outburst to Aeneas after finding out that he is about to leave her. Introduction Image A reproduces folio 59r of a late-fourteenth-century Italian manuscript in Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense 685.³ At the top of this image, the first four lines of Dido's speech (the third through the seventh lines on the manuscript page) are highlighted by a framing squiggle with a curlicue at

of the Codicological Evidence," *Viator* 46.2 (2015): 129–54, and the bibliographies in *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature Vol. I: 800–1558*, ed. Rita Copeland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Cf. also Craig Kallendorf, *The Protean Virgil: Material Form and the Reception of the Classics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 63.

³ On this manuscript see *Catalogo dei Manoscritti della Biblioteca Casanatense*, vol. 6 [Ms. 501–Ms. 700], (Rome: Libreria del Stato, 1978), p. 192.

the top.⁴ These four lines are further emphasized with **no**^a, the abbreviation for **{nota / note well!}** to the left of the first words of her speech.

Here are the four highlighted Latin lines in Stanley Lombardo's English translation:⁵

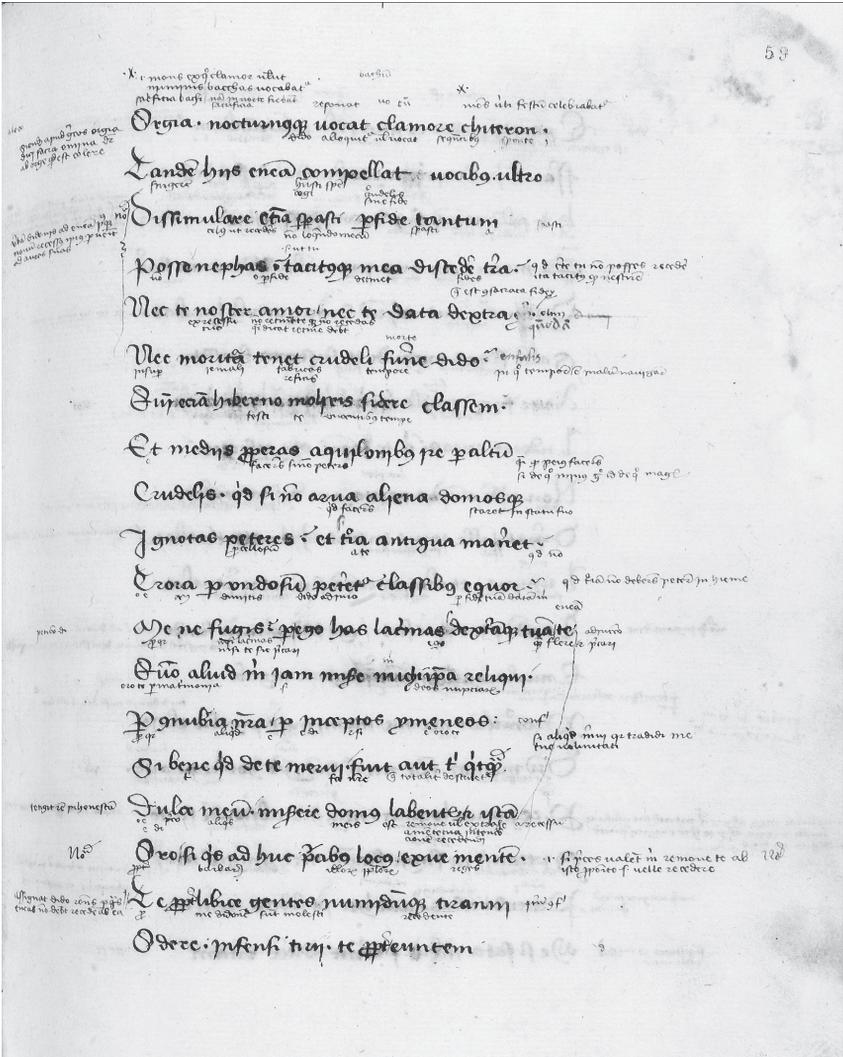
Traitor! Did you actually hope to conceal
This crime and sneak away without telling me?
Does our love mean nothing to you? Does it matter
That we pledged ourselves to each other?
Do you care that Dido will die a cruel death?
(*Aen.* 4.305–08; Lombardo 4.344–48)

In Introduction Image B, I have transcribed the Latin lines of this passage along with their interlinear and marginal glosses.⁶ Below the transcription is a literal English translation. In both transcription and translation, the glosses and marginal comments

⁴ The term “framing squiggle” was suggested by my art historian colleague Joan Holaday. Scholars often simply refer to the technique generically as highlighting. Curved brackets were sometimes used in early printed books to indicate this kind of marking, as in the rather elegant versions on pp. 243 and 296 of the 1584 edition of Reginald Scott's *The Discoverie of witchcraft: wherein the lewde dealing of witches & witchmongers is notable detected*. . . (London: William Brome) in the Harry Ransom Center of the University of Texas at Austin. Curved brackets are used here to a different purpose, however.

⁵ Stanley Lombardo's translations of Virgil's *Aeneid* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005) and Statius's *Achilleid* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2015) have been used throughout whenever possible. His performance-based translations, while more informal and colloquial than others, are often supported by medieval rhetorical glosses and readings.

⁶ The glosses are all in Latin. (There are relatively few vernacular glosses in medieval Latin school manuscripts, although those that do exist have received more scholarly attention.) For medieval school glosses on other classical texts, see, for example, Suzanne Reynolds, *Medieval Reading: Grammar, Rhetoric and the Classical Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Frank T. Coulson, ed. and trans., *The Vulgate Commentary on Ovid's Metamorphoses Book 1* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2015); and Lisa Ciccone, ed., *Esegesi Oraziana nel medioevo: Il commento "Communiter"* (Florence: SISMEL Edizioni del Galuzzo, 2016). For translations of medieval Latin glosses on a vernacular text see *Les Echéz d'Amours: A Critical Edition of the Poem and its Latin Glosses*, ed. Gregory Heyworth and Daniel E. O'Sullivan with Frank Coulson (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 607–72.



Introduction Image A. Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense 685, fol. 59r.

TRANSCRIPTION

{Verba Didonis ad Eneam postquam
nouum recessus ipsius peruenit
ad aures suas}

{fingere} {habuisti spem cogi} {o crudelis sine fide}

{Nota} Dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum {nosti}

{celus [=scelus] ut recedens} {non loquendo mecum} {sperasti} {a}

Posse nephas? tacitusque mea discedere terra? {quod certe tu non posses recedere ita tacitus quod nescirem}

{non} {o perfide} {detinet} {fides} {que est consociata fidey}

Nec te noster amor nec te data dext<e>ra quondam

{ex recessu tuo} {non retinente quod non recedas quasi dicat retinere debet}

Nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido? {enfasis}

TRANSLATION

{The words of Dido to Aeneas
after the news of his departure
reaches her ears}

{did you have hope to be forced} {o cruel, faithless} {to fake}

{Note!} Did you hope, traitor, to conceal so great {what} you knew {to be}

{a wickedness, that is, leaving} {not speaking with me} {did you hope} {from}

A crime? and silent, to leave my land? {because at any rate you could not leave so silently that I would not know}

{not} {o traitor} {oath} {detain} {which is joined to oath}

Does neither our love nor pledges ^ you
{as a result of your departure} {is not holding you back from leaving as if she were saying it ought to}

Nor Dido, about to die facing cruel ruin, hold <you>? {emphasis!}

Introduction Image B. Transcription and Translation.

are reproduced in bold and enclosed in curved brackets. Here and throughout this study, the abbreviations in the Latin text are expanded silently, but medieval orthography, capitalization, and punctuation (or lack thereof) are retained.

The interlinear glosses, as here sometimes multiple ones, simplify sentence structure and support comprehension. They usually start as high as possible above a line so that additional glosses can be added below later. (Thus, the gloss below {*enfasis*} at the end of these lines refers to the line following.) One reads the glosses vertically from the top of the space between the lines down toward the word: the gloss written lowest has been written last. For students listening, the glosses were probably heard as continuous and sequential elaboration.

Some short glosses clarify grammar, such as the little {*o / o*} above “*perfide / traitor*” in the first line of the speech, indicating that *perfide* is in the vocative case (direct address).⁷ Others insert words from the text where they would occur in prose word order, as when {*perfide*} itself is provided as a gloss later over “*te / you*” in the third line. Similarly, {*sperasti / did you hope*} over “*discedere / to leave*” in the second line is a word repeated from the first line, and the verb {*detinet / detain*} is supplied above the third line, because the verb “*tenet / hold*” is delayed until the end of the next line. Still others clarify meaning, and more: the adjective-conjunction combination “*tacitusque / and silent*” is first glossed {*non loquendo mecum / in not speaking with me*}, and then a second gloss emphasizes, {*scilicet ut tu*}, which I have freely translated as {*yes, you!*}.

Longer comments elaborate on the emotional content. When Dido asks Aeneas at the end of these lines why knowledge of her

⁷ On the performance implications of the vocative {*o*} cue, see Jan M. Ziolkowski, *Nota bene: Reading Classics and Writing Melodies in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), p. 163.

fate if he leaves does not deter him, the glossator adds, {**as if she were saying it ought to**}. Here he⁸ recognizes that, for Dido, Aeneas's knowing that she will die should keep him from leaving her—but, of course, it does not. This elaboration, like the channeling of her pride and anger two lines earlier, {**because at any rate you could not leave so silently that I would not know!**}, keep us longer in Dido's anger and pain. Near the bottom of the page this glossator marks as **No^d** {*Notandum* / **To be noted!**} another line in her speech where she begs Aeneas to remain with her. In the margin to the right of this line the glossator paraphrases her: {**that is, if my prayers succeed, withdraw from what is proposed, namely to want to go away**}, a gloss that is itself also marked {*Notandum*}.⁹ Thus, the lines where she is most self-delusional and heartbreaking are those to which the most attention is paid. When we slow down and read with as much attention as a medieval teacher could bring to a particular passage, we are helped not just to understand but also to feel what is happening to a character.

So far we have been *looking* at the glosses, as a teacher would have, but students more often *heard* them along with the text. Indeed, much medieval schooling took place by ear. During most of the Middle Ages and in most areas of western Europe, few students had their own manuscripts, and even when students were fortunate enough to have manuscripts in hand, they still heard, learned, and recited texts constantly and in groups. Thus, learning literature was a shared social experience, rather than an individual relationship with a physical, visually conveyed text, as became the more usual (although not universal) European practice in later centuries.

⁸ "He" is used specifically to refer to male commentators and teachers. I have found no evidence in the manuscripts I looked at that they were prepared, annotated, read, or heard by women.

⁹ {*idest si preces ualent mihi remoue te ab isto proposito, scilicet uelle recedere*}.

Therefore, throughout this book I have inserted the interlinear and short marginal glosses into the text rather than reproducing them as they appear on the page and in Introduction Image B. The glosses are in bold and in curved brackets, both in the manuscripts I cite and when quoting glosses quoted by other scholars. As a result, visually they stand out more than the text, an effect that may seem counterintuitive but that reinforces the emphasis of the classroom. When reading the result that follows, I would suggest reading the lines aloud, if possible with a different tone for the glosses, and best of all in a class or other group to approach the oral/aural experience of medieval students and to appreciate the added weight of the focus on Dido's emotional state that such glosses can provide.

{The words of Dido to Aeneas after the news of his departure reaches her ears:}

{Note!}

"{O} {cruel, faithless} Traitor! Did you hope {did you have hope to be forced}, to conceal {to fake} {what you knew to be} so great

A crime {a wickedness, that is, leaving}, and silently {not speaking with me—yes, you!} {did you hope} to leave {from} my land?

{Because at any rate you could not leave so silently that I would not know!}

Does neither {does not} our love {O traitor}, nor our pledges {oath which is joined to oath} {detain} you?

Nor {does} Dido, about to die {as a result of your departure}, facing cruel ruin {death!} hold you?"

{That is, she is not holding you back from leaving—as if she were saying it ought to!}

As in this passage from the *Aeneid*, while women were overwhelmingly absent from this schoolboy classical world except in

texts, their emotions permeated and sometimes dominated the classroom experience.

The pain and suicide of Queen Dido when her lover leaves her often remain a student's most powerful memory of the text, even today. Accordingly, I begin with the *Aeneid* since it is the work most likely to be known by the modern reader and scholar, moving next to the less familiar *Achilleid* of Statius and *Ilias latina*. In some parts of the chapters that follow, I return to passages that I have examined elsewhere but with new insights; in others, I analyze material to which I had not given much previous thought—but which the glosses taught me that medieval teachers considered important.

The first chapter allows us to spend more time with the attractive and doomed Dido as medieval manuscripts reveal their emphasis on her emotions, a focus illuminated by modern research on memory.¹⁰ Chapter 2 examines two short classical works read by students at a lower level, and the interlinear glosses are more basic. It is easy to become impatient with them, but they imprint on us, too, the intimate, detailed knowledge of the words of the texts that the students imbibed. Both poems focus on issues of masculinity. In the *Achilleid*, the protagonist's mentors mirror his transitions from wild child to female impersonator to warrior in training, and his time pretending to be his own sister is framed by the fears first of his mother and then his lover (later wife). In the *Ilias latina* the increasing focus on death in battle evokes relentlessly the pathos of male characters, dying themselves or killing others. Yet the narrative ends with the grief of Hector's wife, Andromache, at his funeral. The third and final chapter looks at passages that beg for performance and at evidence for the recitation by boys of emotional scenes, often with female characters. The

¹⁰ The first Gombrich Lecture has been divided into this "Short Introduction" and Chapter 1.

manuscripts discussed here fit squarely into an already established pedagogical tradition that begins long before and continues long after the “middle” ages.

I address the medieval teaching of literature from a transhistorical as well as historical perspective and in ways that I hope encourage comparison with other periods. This study is not meant to replace those of individual manuscripts or specific geographical areas or other interests of commentators, but rather to suggest that some commonalities exist among the often quite disparate pedagogical traditions of the Latin Middle Ages. Most generalizations about medieval schooling are pejorative with isolated examples of insight offered as counterpoints. I present instead recurring, interrelated threads of medieval pedagogy that can enable us to begin to see a broader picture. I hope that this study will be attractive and useful to all kinds of readers, from those for whom the medieval period is uncharted territory to those with prior expertise who may be trying to determine whether similar manuscript material they have found is generic or idiosyncratic. Fuller attention than one often finds is paid here to late manuscripts; more of these survive than manuscripts from any earlier period, and they provide compelling evidence of continuity in pedagogical approaches to classical texts that, I believe, can help us make more educated sense of the Western tradition as a whole.