Lectionarium Placentinum as a Challenge to the Editor

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I regard theories as crutches
It’s obvious that they are indispensable
When you have broken a leg
But their benefits presuppose nonetheless
That you are already disabled

AT TIMES I HAVE felt inclined to agree with the poet Dan Turèll,1 the Danish counterpart to and translator of Allen Ginsburg, and just read medieval texts without intellectual crutches. On the other hand I think that scholarly research might be compared to the “illness that besets the intellectual: the indefatigable will to mastery”, to paraphrase the Norwegian-American author Siri Hustvedt’s description of the main character in her novel Sorrows of an American.2 As such I do feel the need of methodological crutches, especially when confronted with the task of editing medieval manuscripts, the folios of which were, as Stephen Nichols describes the situation of philology in a manuscript culture:

not raw material for text editors and art historians working separately. They contained the work of different artists and artisans – poet, scribe, illuminator, rubricator, commentator – who projected collective social attitudes as well as interartistic rivalries onto the parchment. The manuscript folio contains different systems of representation: poetic or narrative text, the highly individual and distinctive scribal hand(s) that inscribed the text, illuminated images, coloured rubrications. Each system is a unit independent of the others and yet calls attention to them. Each tries to convey something about the other while to some extent substituting for it […]. A miniature we admire as a work of art in its own right also represents a scene in the poetic narrative, now transposed from the verbal to the visual medium.3

1 Dan Turèll, Karma Cowboy (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1983), p. 103
2 Siri Hustvedt, Sorrows of an American (New York: Picador, 2005), p. 177

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This statement by Stephen Nichols offers an illustrative description of some of the problems facing the editor of medieval manuscripts and texts, because he/she has to pay respect to the often multi-level information of the manuscript source itself and at the same time also show respect for the reader in presenting a reliable as well as readable edition of the text or source in question.

Within the Ars edendi programme, my present project forms part of the research field dealing with Liturgical texts and concerns *Lectionarium Placentinum* from the second half of the twelfth century. Although this project has certain affinities with projects in other fields of research in the programme, the lectionary should appropriately be classified as a liturgical book, since it contains lectiones to the Divine Office. In addition to the biblical psalms the office includes the singing of antiphons, verses and responsories and the reading of prayers and lectiones. As indicated in the Rule of St Benedict, biblical expositions and exegesis written by the Church fathers were to be included in the celebration of the office. Therefore, sermons, homilies and biblical commentaries by known authors and numerous anonymous texts such as saints’ vitae, passions, and legends were selected, modified and divided into lectiones to serve as readings for the nocturnes of Matins and usually transmitted in a lectionary with readings for the feasts of the liturgical year. To give some impression of the variety of material in this lectionary, I might mention that *Lectionarium Placentinum* contains texts of more than thirty named authors such as Origen, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Bede the Venerable, and Gregory the Great – and less familiar ones, such as Claudius of Turin and the local Iohannes Archidiaconus.

While antiphons, verses and responsories have been edited in René-Jean Hesbert’s *Corpus Antiphonalium Officii*, a similar edition of the complete repertory of all lectiones has to my knowledge not yet been published; Anne-Élisabeth Urfels-Capot’s recent edition includes only the Sanctorale part of the thirteenth century Dominican Office in Roma, Santa Sabina c. xiv L1. Although lectionaries were used daily in cathedrals, churches and monasteries all over Western Europe throughout the Middle Ages, such an edition will probably never appear due to the lack of primary sources.

Since a limited number of lectionaries has been preserved, mostly in different local versions and often only in parts, it appears a viable scholarly alternative to offer access to a complete collection of lectiones in a modified diplomatic edition of one single source from one specific diocese in a particular period. In editing the approximately 1340 folios of *Lectionarium Placentinum*, my Ars edendi project will focus on the liturgical tradition and usage in the cathedral of Piacenza in the second half of the twelfth century. The entire lectionary is

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contained in codices 60–63 and preserved in the city’s Biblioteca Capitolare as four of the manuscripts included in what I’ve called the Ribaldus-collection.\footnote{5} The Temporale section is included in codices 61, containing the readings from Advent to Easter as indicated on its old wooden cover \textit{A prima dominica adventus usque ad pascha}, and 60 with readings for the rest of the liturgical year, whereas the Sanctorale is included in codices 62, with the readings to the saints’ feasts from Stephen the protomartyr on December 26 to the end of July, and 63 with the readings for Peter in Chains on August 1 and the rest of the year as well as an adequate \textit{commune sanctorum} section. Together these four codices contain, besides approximately 300 Gospel incipits, more than 700 different texts, which in itself might be considered a challenge to the editor.

The cathedral of Piacenza appears to be the evident provenance of the four codices, since the inventory of the cathedral chapter’s book collection dated to 1266 mentions the Temporale as \textit{duo volumina humiliarum} and the Sanctorale as \textit{duo volumina a passionum sanctorum}, and likewise the inventory dated to 1358 lists \textit{duo passionaria} and \textit{duo omeliaria}.\footnote{6} Furthermore, the opening rubric to the entire Sanctorale (c. 62 f. 1) presents the formula: \textit{Incipiunt sermones, homiliae, vitae, passions sanctorum apostolorum, martyrum, confessorum atque virginum, qualiter leguntur in hac ecclesia per anni circulum}. The connection of the two Sanctorale volumes is manifest in the rubric in c. 63 f. 19 col. B (Plate 1), \textit{Cetera require in alio volumine infra passione Marcelli papae} (i.e. in c. 62 f. 36v–39v), which follows the opening lines to the passion of the martyr Cyriacus on 8 August.

When it comes to influences, some indications may be derived from scribal peculiarities and initials. According to the investigations by Arturo Quintavalle and Segre Montel, a number of initials in similar Bobbio manuscripts from the first half of the twelfth century resembles initials in codices 60 and 62.\footnote{7} In his \textit{Lezioni di paleografia} Giulio Battelli observes that the confusion in regard to the summarizing conjunctions \textit{ergo} and \textit{igitur} – the Piacentinian scribes often put \textit{ergo} where modern editions of the texts have \textit{igitur} and vice versa – might point to an Irish influence and probably is due to the ability to read and write the similar abbreviations of the two conjunctions.\footnote{8}


\textit{Lectionarium Placentinum} as a Challenge to the Editor
more, the two Bobbio sources, Vat. lat. 5771 from the ninth century and Vat. lat. 5772 from the first half of the twelfth, contain vitae of particular Piacentinian saints, e.g. Inventio corporis Sancti Antonini as a single lectio to Piacenza’s patron saint Antoninus on November 13 in Vat. lat. 5771 (fol. 143r–v) and Vat. lat. 5772 (fols. 54–56v) as well as in codex 63 (fols. 210–211) and Vita beati Savini episcopi on January 17 divided according to monastic tradition in 12 lectiones in Vat. lat. 5772 (fols. 54–58v) but only in six in codex 62 (fols. 39v–41v) with a sermon by Ambrose as the last three lectiones. Since the monastery in Bobbio was founded by the Irish monk Columbanus in 612 and in the twelfth century belonged to the diocese of Piacenza, it should certainly come as no surprise to find a number of Irish influences in this Piacentinian lectionary.

Considering purpose, structure and contents, an edition of a full lectionary poses a number of questions regarding the choice of editorial method, since such an edition as mentioned above includes texts and genres treated in other fields of research in the Ars edendi programme. The forthcoming edition of the four codices 60–63 is planned to consist of five volumes, of which the first will be an introductory volume in English including a description of the codices, an introduction to the genre and a detailed inventory of the readings in the lectionary to facilitate further analysis of the single feasts. The text edition is planned to appear in four volumes, presenting each codex in a separate volume, including a critical apparatus listing the editorial efforts of the scribe(s), errors, misspellings and my editorial efforts, as well as an apparatus fontium listing biblical references, quotations of the Church fathers and information on earlier editions of the texts.

Initially the project aims to test as its editorial method a modified diplomatic edition of a single liturgical source. Such an edition will hopefully provide scholars with an instrument for further studies in various fields of medieval research such as the Latin language and literature, medieval biblical exegesis, homiletics, liturgy, theology, hagiography, the history of ideas and Latin translations of Greek texts.

Problems and challenges in editing the Lectionarium Placentinum

How do we then define a “modified diplomatic edition”? We might compare it to the “critical transcription”, which David d’Avray defines as his editorial method in the introduction to his book Death and the Prince: Memorial Preaching before 1350. In his discussions he makes a distinction between the critical transcription of several sources and the one of a single source, describing the latter as being “in effect diplomatic editions, apart the limited normalization, modern punctuation (in the reader’s interest), and correction of recognizable


Lectionarium Placentinum as a Challenge to the Editor
Although the editorial outcome of the approaches defined in the two terms seems to be almost identical, I prefer to apply the term “modified diplomatic edition” to describe my editorial method. In my opinion d’Avray’s term seems to convey confusing connotations to the reader, since ‘transcription’ is generally understood as a mere rendition of the source while ‘critical’ indicates editorial interference in the transcribed text.

The next point to discuss is if and how to normalize the Latin in the four codices and to which degree it should actually be done. As a general rule I plan to keep the spelling of the scribe(s), although they are far from consistent in their manners of spelling, e.g. the usual confusion of ‘i’ and ‘e’ as in iustitia/iusticia and iudicium/iuditium, the omission or inclusion of ‘h’ as in ortus (= hortus) and hostium (= ostium), the use of assimilated ‘m’ and dissimilated ‘n’ as in impossibile and inpossibile. At one point, however, I plan to deviate from this rule for the sake of readability, that is concerning the question of ‘u’ and ‘v’. Although the codices always write ‘u’, I intend to distinguish between the vowel ‘u’ and the consonant ‘v’ in my edition and consequently write e.g. vult instead of uult.

One of the tricky points in regard to normalization is the abbreviations and how to treat them compared and according to the scribes’ way of spelling. Since for instance the classical prefix prae normally is spelled pre in full text, I intend to use the pre-spelling when it comes to the codices’ abbreviations. In addition to the usual medieval abbreviation IHS which often prompts editors to write Ihesus, the Piacentinian codices have a few times written Iesus in full text, and I will thus keep the latter spelling in the edition.

Another tricky point is the question of punctuation, since the medieval use and conventions are quite different from modern practice. A strict, slavish imitation of the punctuation system applied in the codices would in some cases even complicate the readability of the edition, as is the case with the lack of commas to mark vocatives and the inquit inserted in some biblical quotations. Therefore, I plan to apply modern punctuation in the edition.

Remembering Stephen Nichols’ description of the manuscript folio, the modern editor has to reflect on the layout or mise-en-page of the edition compared to that of the manuscript. As you can see in the plates, the four codices have the text written in two columns without any indication of sections in the text, except sometimes when a new lectio is indicated. Applying a similar procedure in the edition will in no way afford the readability, but hopefully a viable treatment of this issue will evolve during the editorial process and probably depend on the character of the text in question. For instance in Ambrose’s commentary to the Gospel of Luke and Augustine’s exposition of the Gospel of John, parts of which are selected for a number of feasts, I plan to put the quotation or lemma of the biblical text in italics as the beginning of a new paragraph.

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This brings me to the often-treated question in editorial discussions: How am I then going to indicate the biblical quotations? Should I use italics in the running text? Or should I use the same types for the entire text and put the biblical references in the margin? The codices don't indicate such quotations with marks or signs of any kind, and one might argue that an edition which keeps the biblical quotations integrated in the same types as the running text and only puts the actual references in the margin is paying more respect to the manuscript folio, as the modern editor’s marginal references thus will illustrate the medieval author’s use of biblical quotations and allusions in a simple manner.

As mentioned above the twelfth-century Piacentinian scribe(s) and their corrector(s) have already done a number of editorial interferences in the four codices. In addition to the usual erasures of single letters or words they have put dots under letters or words to be deleted as in c.61 f. 34v col. A (Plate 2), *si non tetigi* and *non novi*, whereas they have added supplements above the line, in the margin or in an erasure as in col. B on the same page, *Hanc Mosaicam ... prenoscebam*. Such cases will of course be indicated in the edition.

If the Piacentinian versions of the selected texts differ from the modern editions of the same texts, as in the extended version of Ps. Augustine’s sermon in c.61 f.34v, col. A (see Plate 2),

Subito Joseph intuitu familiaris et licentia maritales aspicit Mariae coniugem suam, vidit in ea venas tumescentes in gutture, attenuari faciem, *pallori-bus obvelari pallorem virgineum*, postremo ut vidit eam gressibus gravari, intellexit Mariae uterum gravidari)

versus the version in Patrologia Latina:

Subito Joseph intuitu familiaris et licentia maritales aspicit Mariam conjugem suam: vidit in ea tumescentes venas in gutture, *et* attenuari faciem, *postremum* vidit eam gressibus gravari; intellexit Mariae uterum gravidari)

I will naturally keep the text of the codices, since the purpose of the edition is to present the Piacentinian reception and modifications of the selected texts and not a collage of the modern editions of these texts. Subsequently, corrections and emendations will only be made when the sense of the text in question requires it, as for instance in the text attributed to *Iohannes episcopus* in cod. 61 f. 52, col. B (Plate 3), where a *non* is needed to constitute the obvious meaning

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Lectionarium Placentinum as a Challenge to the Editor

Si autem contempta iusticia misericordia observetur, ipsa misericordia non est misericordia sed fatuitas. Nam iusticia non est vera iusticia, nisi habuerit in se misericordiam. Iusticia itaque sine misericordia non est iusticia sed crudelitas, et misericordia sine iusticia non est misericordia sed fatuitas.

Another example appears in the rubric in c. 63 f. 126v, col. A (Plate 4) to the seventh day in the celebration of the Piacentinian patron saint Justina, in which the word ⟨vitae⟩ has to be added, as the translatio in this context refers to a translation of the text from Greek to Latin and not to the ritual translation of relics:

Item septima die post festum. Incipit alia translatio ⟨vitae⟩ sanctorum martyrum Cypriani et Iustinae, quam episcopus Aldo a Constantinopoli detulit, sicuti in Grecorum libris interpretatam et scriptam invenit Iohannes omnium monachorum sacerdotumque ultimus.

In the following prologue by the humble translator Johannes most editors would probably feel inclined to emend the adjective Nazanzenus to the traditional one Nazianzenus, but such an emendation doesn't seem quite as obvious in my opinion.

Finally, I would like to mention an aspect that seems to have less relevance for the edition, although its many appearances might tell us something about the understanding of the Latin language in the twelfth century. This aspect was in fact the main subject in Leonard Boyle’s keynote lecture at the Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo in May 1998: how do we treat the accents intended to help the liturgical lector to pronounce tricky words correctly? A number of such signs may be observed in some of the plates, for example in c. 61 f. 24v, col. B (Plate 5) we have two examples of the infinitive páere of pario (to give birth) with the accent to help the reader to distinguish this infinitive from parére the infinitive of pareo (to obey), in the same codex in f. 31v, col. A (Plate 6) we find accents put on the interjections O in o miracula, o prodigia, and in c. 63 f. 126v, col. A (Plate 4) the accent helps the lector to pronounce Constantinópoli correctly. Interesting as it is, this feature should certainly be described in the introduction but not be incorporated in the edition.

As you probably understand, the transcription of the more than 1300 folios has been my main concern during the first period of the Ars edendi programme, and so far I have done approximately 1000 folios. Due to this particular occupation, the editorial process is only in its initial stages, so your comments and suggestions will certainly help me strengthen my methodological crutches in preparing a critical editio princeps of Lectionarium Placentinum.
tudius fabiacebit. Simultæ
et uria quem pudor usitatum
parat, ut detulissert coramque
subiit diplocaussa. pudoris
q signatur non designatur.
morindus et ipsis e turin
errit. Uteor ergo lubitantur.
os haec molestias sententia
seri volant simuladulteros
puerum mandavit. Sic nāp
aure aduerter obscurum
ustv et omnis audientur timent
in ager impiet. Hac mosca sante
t tā ego paceba. ἐπάλα
lavra ἐποιεσαβα magnum q ad
philin me stābe. regali me fīnus
sudono sūcebam. Sed qm
nēchur murū. melā. e. noui.
melā occultū. melā absteo
sum qm non reuecetur et
ocultă qm impulsa ne unum
alqem inā deru religa. recolo hysta
ram. DAUD. dege inerbae-
urē ecehet mulere audam
æxtul regalis. marā. dām
regis filia cognata impulit
puellāris. nec e timor tertu
ut parentals. Quid ș facē.
q fæg agam. Amo. gemo. do
leo. curro. constu quero. nec
pentus quemo. Prodo aut
raco. Quid facē. pentru ne
feio. Prodo adulterum aut ta
co. pte obscurum. Si pudore
adulerum qudem ní consentio.
fed nefas crudelitans usitam.
Plate 3: Piacenza, Biblioteca Capitolare c. 61, f. 52 (see col. B) (published "Su concessione del Capitolo della Cattedrale di Piacenza")

Lectionarium Placentinum as a Challenge to the Editor
Plate 4: Piacenza, Biblioteca Capitolare c. 63, f. 126v (see the rubric in col. A) (published "Su concessione del Capitolo della Cattedrale di Piacenza")
etamen unus tonus audire.

Plate 5: Piacenza, Biblioteca Capitolare c. 61s. f. 24v (see col. B, lines 5 & 6 from the bottom) 
(published "Su concessione del Capitolo della Cattedrale di Piacenza")

Lectionarium Placentinum as a Challenge to the Editor 12
Plate 6: Piacenza, Biblioteca Capitolare c. 61, f. 31v (see col. A, the lower part)
(published "Su concessione del Capitolo della Cattedrale di Piacenza")

Lectionarium Placentinum as a Challenge to the Editor