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Looking for specific patterns in commenting philosophy:
a comparison between Servius' and William of Conches's
methods of *explanatio*

William of Conches was one of the most important members of the School of
Chartres, along with its founder, Bernard of Chartres (first Canceller, from 1119
to 1126), and Gilbert of Poitiers, Thierry of Chartres or Bernard Silvester. He was
once a teacher in Chartres – and probably in Paris as well.

In this 'Platonic' age, it is little wonder that several members of the school of
Chartres were involved with Plato's *Timaeus*[1], and more precisely with the anno-
tated Latin translation of the fragment 17a-53c, made by Chalcidius in the middle
of the fourth or in the beginning of the fifth century[2]. This is the basis of William of
Conches's *Glossae super Platonem*, of which Edouard Jeauneau wrote the first crit-
ical edition. This text is almost certainly the only source they had for Plato. Their
other indirect access to Platonism is given by Macrobius' commentary on *Somni-
um Scipionis*, of which William of Conches wrote the *Glossae super Macrobium*.

After having been forgotten for a long time, William of Conches reappeared
quite unexpectedly, mainly thanks to Charma's reading[3], and has been the focus
of a few studies since then[4].

1. *William's biography*

We know very little about William of Conches's life. He was born in 1080, ac-
cording to Jeauneau (2006) and Lenormand (1979), or in 1085 according Patar's
Dictionary of Middle-Ages Philosophers, or possibly even circa 1090 (LLT-A notice,
following Ronca 1997), certainly « towards the end of the 11th century » (Jeauneau
1965: 9). His official birthplace is, again without certainty, the city of Conches,
near Evreux, but Charma (1857, 2 and 26) places his birth nearby, in the village
of Saint-Martin-du-Tilleul where he believes he identified his gravesite; the only

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[1] On that, see Gregory 1955, Jeauneau 1973, Stock 1972, de Libera 1993, 313-319, Gross
2005, Kobusch 2005.

[2] On which see mainly Ricklin 2000, Dronke 2005.

[3] See Charma 1857.

[4] See Gregory 1955; Obrist - Caiazzo 2011; Stock 1972, 237-271.

certainty we have is that he is from Normandy, as he says himself that he has poor intelligence, memory and eloquence probably because he was born in thick-aired Normandy, among sheep[5]. He probably was a pupil of Bernard of Chartres, and of William of Champeaux and Pierre Abélard in Meaux or in Paris[6]. He died (again, probably) in 1154 and had, among others, two particularly well-known students: one was John of Salisbury[7], who wrote that William was the best grammarian after Bernard of Chartres[8]; the second was the future King of England, Henry II, for whom William acted as a preceptor during the last years of his life, while he was working for Henry's father, Geoffrey V Plantagenet the Fair, count of Anjou and Duke of Normandy, to whom he dedicated his *Dragmaticon Philosophiae*.

As Geoffrey the Fair was Duke of Normandy only between 1144 and 1149, we can assume that the *Dragmaticon* dedicated to the *dux Normannorum* was written during this period; in the same book, William says he has been teaching for more than twenty years[9], allowing us to trace the beginning of his activity as a teacher back to 1120-1125; at least, we know through Albericus Trium Fontium (Alberic of Trois-Fontaines) and his *Chronica* of the year 1154, where he described Henry II's accession to the throne of England, that the king's master, William, was a very famous philosopher at the time[10]. To sum up, William of Conches, born in Normandy at the end of the 11th century, taught grammar, mainly in the School of Chartres, from 1120, was the preceptor of young Henry II and had a good reputation in 1154, probably the year of his death[11].

We know little more about his works, even if some of them have been eventually attributed to other authors, for instance the Venerable Bede. William of Conches wrote at least two synthetic treatises, one *Philosophia* (probably in two versions, *maior* and *minor*) and the *Dragmaticon philosophiae*. He also wrote several commentaries.

The chronology of his works is, by the way, difficult to establish with certainty. We follow here Jeauneau's hypothesis[12], to which we add the *Glossae super Juve-*

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[5] See Ronca 1997, Guil. de Conchis, *Dragmaticon philosophiae* 6,1,1: *Et unde michi tam hebes ingenium, tam madida memoria, tam imperfecta eloquentia? An quia in patria ueruecum crassoque sub aere Normanniae sum natus?*

[6] See Burnett 2011.

[7] See de Libera 1993, 314s.

[8] See Ioann. Saris. *Metalogicon* 1,5 (Webb): *Willelmus de Conchis grammaticus post Bernardum Carnotensem opulentissimus.*

[9] See Ronca 1997: *Dragm.* 6,1,1: *per uiginti annos et eo amplius alios docui.*

[10] See *Monumenta Germaniae historica - Scriptores*, XXIII 842: *huius tempore magister Guilelmus de Concis philosophus magni nominis habitus est.*

[11] See Jeauneau 1965, 10.

[12] See Jeauneau 1965, 14.

nalem that Jeauneau did not retain in his own list as it is, according to him, not authentically written by William of Conches:

> Works composed in his youth:
> 1. *Glossae super Boethium* (on *Consolatio*)[13];
> 2. *Glossae super Macrobium* (on *Somnium Scipionis*)[14];
> 3. *Philosophia*;
> 4. *Glossae in Juvenalem*, 1st redaction[15];
> 5. *Glossae super Priscianum*, 1st redaction;
> Works written during maturity
> 6. *Glossae super Platonem* (on Chalcidius' translation of *Timaeus*)[16];
> 7. *Glossae in Juvenalem*, 2nd redaction[17];
> 8. *Dragmaticon philosophiae*;
>
> Work written in old age
> 9. *Glossae super Priscianum*, 2nd redaction.

He also probably wrote a gloss on Martianus Capella's *Nuptiae*[18] and there is even a trace, in a catalog from the early 15th century, of a Virgilian gloss (*Philosophia W. de Conchis super Eneidos Virgilii*)[19].

2. Glosa *vs* commentum

For authors of this period, or at the very least as far as William is concerned, both synthetic treatises and books of glosses are equally important. Glosses are not a genre of lower interest. In his *Philosophia* and in his *Dragmaticon*, he cites specifically his textual glosses and in his glosses, he refers to his treatises. Both kinds

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[13] On which, see Caiazzo 2002, 57-72.

[14] On which, see Lenormand 1979, Nauta 1999 and Penher 2012-2013. On the Middle Age commentaries on Boethius' *Consolation*, see Courcelle 1939.

[15] On which, see Wilson 1980.

[16] On which, see Jeauneau 1965 and 2006 and Martello 2014.

[17] For the insertion of the *Glosses on Juvenal* in Jeanneau's list, we follow Wilson 1980, 77s. The first redaction, corresponding to the text transmitted by ms. *W* (Baltimore Walters Art Gallery, 20, f. 1-23), could be settled on the decade of the 1130's, while William was teaching at Chartres; the second redaction, provided by ms. *P* (BNF Fonds latin 2904, p. 221-239) could have been produced approximatively in 1140.

[18] See Jeauneau 1965, 12 and Wilson 1980, 78.

[19] See Caiazzo 2002, 58.

of works are, in his sense, identically philosophical and both intend to describe his contemporary world.

As a matter of fact, for William and for the other teachers of the School of Chartres, it seemed important to make a distinction between gloss and commentary, which are not exactly the same object. For instance, when Chalcidius explains to the bishop Ossius, in a dedicatory epistle, why he translated Plato's *Timaeus* and gave of this text a *commentarius*, he says this (*Epistula ad Ossium* [CPL 0578], last but one paragraph):

> Itaque parui certus non sine diuino instinctu id mihi a te munus iniungi proptereaque alacriore mente speque confirmatiore primas partes Timaei Platonis aggressus non solum transtuli sed etiam partis eiusdem commentarium feci putans reconditae rei simulacrum sine interpretationis explanatione aliquanto obscurius ipso exemplo futurum.

> So I obeyed, being sure that it was by God's incitation that such command was made to me by you and, besides, with more joyful spirit and better self-confidence, starting with the beginning of Plato's *Timaeus*, I made of it not only a translation but also a commentary of the same part, because I thought that the image of a hidden thing without the explanation of the interpretation would be somehow more obscure than the exemplar itself.

William comments in his own *Glossae super Platonem*, 10, this epistle to Ossius, which he treats as a kind of *prooemium* to the *Timaeus* commentary. Linked to the lemma *COMMENTVM FECI*[20], William makes this precise *differentia* between *commentum* and *glossa*:

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[20] Chalcidius seems to have written the word *commentarius*, where William seems to read and tell something about the word *commentum*. But this variation, in William's Latin, is probably indifferent and both words could be used in that case. Of course, it is not so in classical Latin, where *commentarius* (or *commentarium*) is used for many kinds of records or archives, then for the genre of the commentary itself, while *commentum*, meaning 'lie', 'fiction', has pejorative connotations. It is the same for the verbs *comminiscor* ('to invent', 'to lie') and its frequentative *commentor* ('to meditate', 'to study', 'to exercise oneself to philosophy'). Isidorus makes a distinction: *Diff.* 90: *Inter Commentarium et commentum, et comicum. Commentarium liber, commentum, vel commentatum volumen, id est, ex diversis libris comatum, scilicet, ex Veteri et Novo Testamento*. But in his *Etymologies* (VI 8.4-5), he seems to make confusion between the two terms: **Commentaria** *dicta, quasi cum mente. Sunt enim interpretationes, ut* **commenta** *iuris,* **commenta** *Euangelii.*

Vt ait Priscianus in Praeexercitaminibus puerorum, comminisci est plura, studio uel doctrina in mente habita, in unum colligere. Vnde commentum dicitur plurium studio uel doctrina in mente habitorum in unum collectio. Et quamuis secundum hanc diffinitionem commentum possit dici quislibet liber, tamen non hodie uocamus commentum nisi alterius libri expositorium. Quod differt a glosa. Commentum enim, solam sententiam exequens, de continuatione uel expositione literae nichil agit. Glosa uero omnia illa exequitur. Vnde dicitur glosa, id est lingua. Ita enim aperte debet exponere ac si lingua doctoris uideatur docere.

As says Priscian in the *Praeexercitamina puerorum*, the verb *comminisci* means 'to collect in a same book several things put in mind by study or science'. By derivation, the word *commentum* is said for a collection in a same book of several things put in mind by study or science. And of course, if we follow such a definition, every kind of book could be said a *commentum*, but nowadays we call *commentum* only a book which makes an interpretation of another one. This word differs from *glossa*. As a matter of fact, a *commentum*, as it pursues only the sense, is unavailable for the flow of arguments and for the interpretation of the letter. On the other hand, a *glossa* pursues every matter. It is the reason why it is called *glossa*, that is *lingua* ('tongue'). For it must explain as so widely as if the tongue of the teacher himself were teaching[21].

In the very beginning of his *Glossae super Platonem*, in the prolog, the same William of Conches makes a similar difference:

Etsi multos super Platonem commentatos esse, multos glosasse non dubitemus, tamen quia commentatores, literam nec continuantes nec exponentes, soli sententiae seruiunt, glosatores uero in leuibus superflui, in grauibus uero obscurissimi uel nulli reperiuntur, rogatu sociorum quibus omnia honesta debemus excitati, super praedictum aliquid dicere proposuimus, aliorum superflua recidentes, praetermissa addentes, obscura elucidantes, male dicta remouentes, bene dicta imitantes.

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[21] Elsewhere, in the *Glossae super Macrobium*, William writes something slightly different: *et in hoc differt commentum a glosa que in expositione sententiarum et continuatione littere lectorem instruit quemadmodum lingua magistri: unde glosa dicitur* (« and that is how the *commentum* differs from the *glossa* which, while exposing the sense and the flow of arguments of the letter, teaches the reader as does the teacher's tongue; that is why we call it *glosa* »). We see here that *lingua* and *glosa* must be understood in the sense of the organ of speech, thus giving to glosses, which have to be read (see *lectorem*), the aspect of an oral lesson (*lingua magistri*). This text, provided by H.Rodnite Lemay from a manuscript of Bern and published in *Guillaume de Conches' division of Philosophy in the Accessus ad Macrobium*, «Mediaevalia», I/2 (1977), 115-129, is quoted in Caiazzo 2002, 47, n. 1.

> Of course we surely know that many authors made on Plato commentaries, many made glosses, but as commentators, who do not intend to deal with the flow of arguments and explanation of the letter, are only involved with sense and glossators are found superfluous about light matters but very obscure or absent about serious matters, invited by the solicitations of some friends of ours to whom we owe all which is beautiful, we decided to say something about the mentioned philosopher, cutting out here and there the unnecessary passages, adding what they have been omitting, explaining what they left obscure, rejecting what was badly written, imitating what was well written[22].

The overstatement of the *glossa*, compared to the *commentarius*, is very probably influenced by the isidorian etymology of *glossa*. The first mention of the term in the treatise *De etymologia* comes very early, in I 5,4 when the bishop of Seville gives the list of the thirty divisions of the *ars grammatica*: *glossae* appears there between *etymologia* and *differentiae* within a word association which seems to be thematic. Further on, Isidorus gives the etymology of *glossa* with some examples of what can be called *glossa* Isid. *Et.* I 30,1 (Lindsay):

> Glossa Graeca interpretatione linguae sortitur nomen. Hanc philosophi aduerb[i]um dicunt, quia uocem illam, de cuius requiritur, uno et singulari uerbo designat. Quid enim illud sit in uno uerbo positum declarat, ut: «conticescere est tacere». Item: 'Latus haurit apertum'. «haurit, percutit». Item cum «terminum» dicimus «finem», aut «populatas» interpretamur esse «uastatas», et omnino cum unius uerbi rem uno uerbo manifestamus.

> *Glossa*, when translated from Greek, corresponds to the noun *lingua* ('language'? 'tongue'?). The philosophers call it *adverbum* because it designs the word which is dealt with by only one single word. The signification is declared in one word, for instance: *conticescere* is *tacere*. Or: *latus haurit apertum* (Verg. *Aen.* X 314): *haurit* means *percutit*. Again when we say *terminus* is *finis* or interpret *populatus* as *vastatus* and generally when we represent the referent of a unique word by a unique word.

As we can see, the word is not used the same way by the two authors. For Isidorus, the *glossa* is an element of word definition, a word-for-word synonym[23].

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[22] See also (in Jeauneau 2006, 348, 26, also on line in LLT-A) the *Glosulae Digbeianae super Platonem (maxima ex parte e Guillemi de Conchis Glosis haustae), glossa marginalis*, 10: *Differt commentum a glosa. Commentum solum sententiam sine continuatione litterae exequens, glosa uero omnia illa exequitur. Vnde glosa dicitur lingua, quia ita aperte debet exponere ac si lingua doctoris uideatur docere.*

[23] Isidorus makes «philosophers» call it *adverbum* (according to Linsdsay's reading,

The commentators (in the common sense) often use *glossae* (in this sense) when they replace one word of the commented text with another, more frequent or easier. Among thousands, let us cite only one servian scholium (Serv. *Aen*. II 3):

> ɪᴠʙᴇꜱ vis, ut «iubeo Chremetem»: nam aliter hoc verbum Aeneae persona non recipit. ʀᴇɴᴏᴠᴀʀᴇ retexere, iterare.

Iubes, explained by *vis*, or *renovare*, explained first by *retexere* then by *iterare* illustrate both the very common glossa-method.

For William of Conches, however, because of the Greek etymology which, signifying 'toungue', refers to the language, *glossa* takes a much broader signification: to him, a *glossa* deals with all the linguistics, the signified of course, but also the signifier in all its aspects. That is why a book of *glossae* is more complete than a commentary: where the commentary is content with explaining the meaning of words, the *glossae*-book also deals with other matters: the flow of arguments, synthesis, summary, related excursus, etc.[24], in a didactic approach a teacher would choose when discussing a text with his students, addressing all the issues involved.

The difference with Isidorus' explanation, in which the special *glossa ad verbum* was a work for «philosophers», is important; obviously, Isidorus and William do not use the term *philosophus* in the same way either.

It appears that William has, for mysterious reasons, overstated the common sense of *glossa* and undervalued the common sense of *commentum* and *commentarius*. He would undoubtedly call himself a *glossator* rather than a *commentator*. But he admits that there has been a lexical change: see above what he writes in his *differentia* (*tamen non hodie uocamus commentum…*). Chalcidius, in his explanation of Plato's *Timaeus*, is a self-proclaimed commentator (*commentum feci*, as says the quotation by William of Conches, instead of *commentarium* in Chalcidius' text itself); Boethius, according to William himself, wrote *commenta*,

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against the absurd *adverbium* he found in manuscripts), or maybe <*glossa*> *ad verbum*. When bilingual, this is the type of lexical correspondence which Cicero calls *verbum ex verbo*. On this process, see Nicolas 2005, 93-138.

[24] See Jeauneau 1965, 16: «Glose et commentaire sont tous deux des explications de textes. Mais tandis que le commentaire expose seulement les idées contenues dans le texte, la glose, sans négliger aucunement les idées, se préoccupe aussi de la lettre du texte. Gloser un texte, c'est en suivre la lettre, phrase par phrase et même mot par mot; et c'est aussi montrer l'enchaînement des phrases et la suite des idées (*continuatio litterae*), de telle sorte que l'analyse des moindres détails ne fasse pas perdre au lecteur la vision synthétique de l'ensemble»; see also Lenormand 1977, 122; Caiazzo 2002, 43ss.

not *glossae*[25]. To William, this does not mean that Chalcidius or Boethius were narrow-minded authors, oblivious to the context of what they are annotating, but in their time, the word was not associated with a lower genre.

3. *William's method*

Let us now have a look at William's gloss methodology and let us compare it to Late Antiquity scholia. Is there a real added value in the glossator's method?

William's glosses (whether on Macrobius, on Boethius, on Juvenal or on Priscian) are part of the genre that Moderns call «continuous lemmatical commentary»[26] into which could be, of course, also put the enormous Servius's lemmatized commentary on Vergilius or Aelius Donatus's on Terentius. Each of William's books of glosses consists in a first part, called *Accessus* (a Preface)[27], and a second, the body of the text. Let us consider the global composition of the so-called *Glossae on Platonem*, as described in Jeauneau 1965, 20-22. First, William makes a very short general Preface (*Prologus auctoris*, chapter I) where he describes his auctorial project and inscribes himself in a literary and philosophical tradition; then he introduces the *Timaeus* (*Accessus ad Timaeum*, chapters II-VI), answering some technical questions; finally, as the commented text is not directly Plato but Chalcidius, he comments Chalcidius' Preface, which is the dedicatory epistle to Ossius mentioned above (*Glosulae super Prooemium Calcidii*, chapters VII-XI). After this introductory corpus, William engages the main corpus with a first book which goes from the beginning of the Platonician translated fragment to approximatively the middle of the text; then comes a second book which deals with all the rest. Here is the summary reconstituted by Jeauneau 1965, 22.

> DIVISIONES
> Glosarum Willelmi de Conchis super Platonis Timaeum
> A. Pars introductoria in qua haec tria continentur :
>   1° Prologus Auctoris, cap. I
>   2° Accessus ad Timaeum, cap. II-VI.
>   3° Glosulae super Prooemium Calcidii, cap. VII-XI.

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[25] See these passages of the *Glossae super Boethium* (= Nauta 1999): *ut ait Boetius in **commento** super Cathegorias Aristotilis* (*In Cons.* 1, *pr.* 1, p. 42); *Idem Boetius in **commento** Periermenias* (lib. V, *pr.* 2, p. 295); *dicamus quid idem Boetius dicit in **commento** super Porphirium* (lib. V, *pr.* 3, p. 303).

[26] See Caiazzo 2002, 49: «Guillaume aurait nommé *glosa* ce que nous nommons commentaire continu (*expositio continua*) lemmatique».

[27] On the status of the «accessus», see Frakes 1988, Quain 1988, Spallone 1990, Bourgain 2014.

B. Volumen Primum in quo haec tria continentur :

1° Recapitulatio Socratis de positiva iustitia et narratio Critiae de his rebus quae Solon audierat ab Aegyptio sacerdote [*inTimaeum* 17a-27d], cap. XII-XXXI

2° Tractatus de quatuor mundi causis et de eiusdem creatione [*in Timaeum* 27d-34a], cap. XXXII-LXX

3° Tractatus de anima mundi [*in Timaeum* 34a-39e], cap. LXXI-CIII

C Volumen secundum in quo haec tria continentur :

1° Tractatus de quatuor generibus animalium, in quo maxime circa hominem immoratur Plato sic: «prius ostendendo excogitationem humanae animae, deinde creationem humani corporis, postea utriusque coniunctionem». [*in Timaeum* 39e-43a], cap. CIV-CXXVII.

2° Tractatus de aetatibus hominis et de officio ac utilitate membrorum humani corporis [*in Timaeum* 43a-47e]. cap. CXXVIII-CLIII

3° Tractatus de primordiali materia seu hyle [*in Tima*eum 47e-53e], cap. CLIV-CLXXVI

The two-book division is entirely consistent with the medieval presentation of Chalcidius' treatise on *Timaeus*[28]. In the same way, the *Glossae super Boethium* are divided into five books, each one subdivided in *prosa* or *metrum* chapters, corresponding exactly to the structure of Boethius' *Consolatio*. In this respect, there is no difference with Servius' or Donatus' lemmatized commentaries, where also the basic structure of the commented poet is preserved in all the manuscripts: the whole *Aeneis* or the whole *Andria* are dealt with; the entire first book or the entire first act before the second, etc. Servius and Donatus's books also begin with an introductory corpus, so that, in terms of structural presentation, no difference can be seen between Late Antiquity «commentators» and a Middle Ages «glossator».

If we compare now the proportions of William's glosses and of the text he comments, we observe that the first sections of the glosses are generally more developed than the following ones, even if the corresponding sections of the source text tend to be equal in size. It is not the case for the *Glossae super Platonem*, where the two sections are well-balanced. Elsewhere, however, this disproportion can be obvious. For instance, in Nauta 1999, the first book of the *Glossae super Boethium*, corresponding to the first book of the *Consolatio*, consisting of 97 pages, is about

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[28] See Jeauneau (1965: 20-21).

three times longer than the second book (only 35 pages), while the second book of Boethius is a little longer than the first one[29]. The same remark can be made about the *Glossae in Juvenalem*: Juvenal's first and Second Satires are very much equal in length (171 lines vs 170, respectively); but the concerned sections in the *Glossae* in Wilson 1980 have very different length: 49 pages for 1st Satire, only 23 pages for the second, approximatively twice shorter. And the relation between the text of 3rd Satire (322 lines) and its commentary (14 pages), 4th Satire (154 lines / 6 pages), 5th Sat. (173 lines / 5.5 pages) lead us to a clear conclusion: the more he goes forward in his interpretation, the scarcer his interventions seem.

In the same way, a panoramic view of Servius' commentary of Vergil's *Aeneid*, as seen on the Perseus website (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu), shows some disproportion between the books, while Virgilian books have comparable length: in Servius, the section concerning the 1st book is evidently the longest; books 2, 3 and 4 are longer than average, while 5, 7, 9 seem scarce. In similar fashion, in almost every section, the scholium concerning the first line of each book is longer than average.

Therefore, we are left with the same impression, whoever the commentator is: the commentary seems to fray gradually. And the reason may be that much of the information is given as soon as necessary, in relation with the first lemma it is related to, and is not repeated each and every time thereafter.

Let us now compare the quality of William's annotations with the great models of Late Antiquity. Let us consider first a relatively long annotation randomly selected (*Glossae in Platonem* [=Jeauneau 2006] 1,19, p. 34, l. 1):

> QVID ILLVD Dicunt quidam quod in eodem dialogo praecepit Plato quod mulieres sortito darentur ut, si aliquis aliquam habere uellet, sors mitteretur an eam habere deberet, ita ut nulla sine sorte iungeretur. Nobis uero aliter uidetur, quod Plato populum per classes diuisit ut in una essent senatores, in alia equites, in alia carnifices, in alia agricolae, in alia serui, et sic de aliis; et ita quod homo unius classis non iungeretur mulieri alterius, sed unusquisque de sua classe acciperet. Sed saepe contingebat quod duo eiusdem classis eandem quaerebant, digni eadem. Vnde si uni daretur, alteri auferretur, posset nasci odium et inuidia. Contra hoc malum instituit Plato ut sors, quis eam acciperet, mitteretur. Non igitur in omnibus nuptiis sed in quibusdam sors ponebatur. Quod et ratione possumus probare et ex uerbis auctoris conicere. Si enim aliquis de minori classe aliquam de maiori quaereret, sine sorte repudiaretur. Si iterum unus solus aliquam de sua classe quaereret, ad quid ibi poneretur sors? Ex uerbis auctoris percipitur per hoc quod dicit: MELIVS MORATAE VIRGINES MELIORIBVS PROCIS. Proci dicuntur quasi preci - e mutata in o causa differentiae - quia qui quaerit uxorem multos precatur.

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[29] See Penher (2013: 1).

The annotation is linked to a short segment of Chalcidius' version, corresponding to *Tim.* 18d: *Socrates: Quid illud, quod sine odio atque aemulatione nubentium melioribus procis melius moratae uirgines sortito obueniant, inferiores porro inferioribus?* («what about the fact that without hatred, without rivalry from the married people, the high level young brides go by drawing of lots to the high level grooms, and the lower to the lower?»). It is obvious that William begins with a briefing on arranged weddings and tries to justify the drawing of lots in the constitution of the future couples. And this presentation has no automatic relation with the two words *quid illud?* which are the textual lemma linked to this development. We must therefore understand that the lemma here is to be considered only as a textual marker. On the other hand, in the end of the text, the section *Proci dicuntur quasi preci – e mutata in o causa differentiae- quia qui quaerit uxorem multos precatur* has another status: linked (implicitly) to the term *procis*, quoted in the previous segment, it intends to explain it etymologically. Thus, we can conclude that the lemma-annotation relation is not always the same.

This situation cannot surprise a connoisseur of the lemmatized Late Antiquity commentaries because this method is vastly similar to what Servius or Donatus do in their own commentaries. Let us take for instance this example: Geta, in Terentius' *Phormio* 179, says to himself:

> Nullus es, Geta, nisi iam tibi aliquod consilium celere reperis.

Donatus (*ad Pho.* 179), commenting this line, says:

> 1 NVLLVS ES GETA NISI IAM TIBI ALIQVOD CONSILIVM in hac scaena serui currentis officium est tendens ad perturbationem Antiphonis, quem oportet abesse conspectui patris usque ad cognitionem rerum et καταστροφήν fabulae. 2 CONSILIVM CELERE hoc celere neutraliter dicitur[30].

Here again, the first lemma has no direct link with the first scholium, but is used only as a textual marker. As it represents the first line of a new scene, it is used in this purpose and the first scholium, beginning by the recurrent formula *in hac scaena*, is in fact a small presentation of the whole scene, characterized here as a *servus currens* scene and placed in its context and described in its dramaturgical aspects. Only after, with the second scholium, something is said about one textual element of the same line («*celere* is a neuter form»).

In that way, the second scholium of this short set linked to the line 179 of Ter-

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[30] I use here the text as we edit it on the site hyperdonat.huma-num.fr for the Hyperdonat program of which I am with Prof. Bruno Bureau creator and scientific editor.

entius' *Phormio* is a microstructure when the first scholium is a macrostructure, involving not only the line itself but also the whole segment of which it is the beginning. Usually, the very first words of each comedy are linked as a lemma to the *Praefatio* which appears at the beginning of the volume and presents the play in its entirety: such lemma has, as such, a super-macrostructural relationship with the fragment of text it is linked to. For instance the same lemma *Postquam poeta vetus* (the very first words of *Phormio*, in the Prolog) is used in three different ways in Donatus' commentary:

> 1. POSTQVAM POETA VETVS POETAM NON POTEST Hanc comoediam manifestum est etc.

(beginning of the *Praefatio*): lemma in super-macrostructure, representing the whole play;

> 2. POSTQVAM POETA VETVS POETAM NON POTEST hoc initium ad destructionem personae aduersarii sumitur etc.

(scholium 1,1): lemma in middle macrostructure, representing the whole Prolog;

> 3. POSTQVAM POETA VETVS POETAM NON POTEST nota 'postquam' apud ueteres non praeterito modo sed etiam praesenti tempori adiungi

(scholium 1,2 also availaible for scholia 1,3-5): lemma in microstructure, representing itself or one single word of the quoted passage (here *postquam*).

And this relationship between lemma and scholium, whether macro- or micro-structural, is precisely operating, as we saw above, in William's glosses technique.

Going forward, if we detail the contents of the microstructures, we find no obvious difference between William's and Donatus' or Servius' pedagogical methods. All the *trivium* knowledge may be mobilized for an *ad hoc* explanation which intends to make the reader understand all the ins and outs of the source text:

- grammatical remark:

> Guil. de Conchis, *Glossae super Boethium* (= Nauta 1999) 1, metrum 1,l,15: Et notandum quod hoc uerbum 'auertitur' in diuersis constructionibus diuersa significat. Si enim construatur cum accusatiuo solo, deponens est et tantum ualet quantum 'sperno' uel 'fugio' ut in hoc loco: «auertitur miseros», id est 'spernit' uel 'fugit'. Si uero construatur cum ablatiuo iuncto

propositioni, passiuum est et tantum ualet quantum 'remoueor' aut 'auertor ab illo', id est 'remoueor'

Don. *Ad Pho.* 282,2 (Hyperdonat): Et nota FVNCTVS OFFICIVM accusatiuo casu, quod nos ablatiuo.

- rhetorical remark:

Guil. de Conchis, *Glossae super Platonem* 1,62, p. 109, 30: Postea sequitur ephexegesis: ATQVE AD EIVSDEM PARILITATEM /

Serv. *Aen.* I 27: SPRETAEQVE INIVRIA formae epexegesis est etc.;

- dialectical remark, by, for instance, recognizing a type of argument:

Glossae super Platonem 2,171, p. 311, 13: Hoc argumentum explicat Plato quinquepartito sillogismo, quia proponit et probat, assumit et probat assumptionem et ad ultimum concludit /

Serv. *Aen.* I 328: O DEA CERTE hic o distinguendum, ut post inferat 'dea certe' confirmans opinionem suam. et conclusio est syllogismi, qui constat ex propositione, adsumptione, conclusione. nam si nec uox nec uultus mortales sunt, restat ut dea sit.

- reformulation by adding complements and/or replacing one word by another (following the *glosa*-method in the sense Isidorus gives to the word):

Glossae super Platonem 1,14 p. 26, 10: ORDO uerborum et sententiarum SOLIDETVR, id est confirmetur,

linked to

Chalcicius' *Timaeus* 1,7,12 (Waszink): ordo solidetur…

Don. *Ad Pho.* 192,1 (Hyperdonat): SED VBI ANTIPHONEM REPERIAM 'sed' pro 'ergo', ut sit: 'ergo ubi Antiphonem reperiam?';

- clarification by making some causes explicit:

Glossae super Platonem 1,14, p. 26, 7: DIGESTVS, id est dissolutus, quia res nouiter memoriae commendata nondum firma est in animo sed leuiter potest dissolui.

Don. *Ad Pho.* 38, 3: CONFICEREM quia in promptu non erat;

Etc.

4. *Is there a philosophical way to comment?*

The specificity of William's glosses as compared to the long tradition of the Late Antiquity lemmatized continuous commentary, may be not in the details of the scholia, but in his desire to promote a kind of global comprehension of the text he is writing about. It appears both in the main texts and in the prefaces.

4.1 *in the main corpus*

In the main gloss text, there is a specific kind of system. As Jeauneau 1965, 17 shows it, with the special exemplification of William's chapters 58-60 of his *Timaeus* gloss (about Chalcidius' *Timaeus* 31b), three moments can be identified:

- first, linking it with a macro-structure lemma marking the beginning of a new development, William explains in a doctrinal manner what the passage deals with and occasionally gives some useful definitions;
- secondly, he makes a summary of what he previously said and creates elements of contextualization for the new development;
- thirdly, beginning often with *Et hoc est*, he goes on with detailed explanations of the interesting single words or expressions involved in the passage[31], of which he gives all the ins and outs.

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[31] Jeauneau 1965, 17: «Guillaume suit pas à pas la lettre du dialogue platonicien. Sa manière de procéder est toujours la même. On peut facilement y discerner trois temps. Le plus souvent, notre glossateur annonce d'abord le morceau de texte qu'il s'apprête à commenter, en mettant en exergue les premiers mots dudit morceau. Ainsi, au début du chapitre LVIII, s'apprêtant à commenter la page 31b du Timée, il met en exergue les deux mots: 'Et quia'. Dans un premier temps, il expose de façon systématique le contenu doctrinal du passage en question, en y joignant les différentes notions qu'il juge utiles à une bonne intelligence du texte. Dans l'exemple que nous avons choisi - chapitres LVIII-LX des Gloses sur le Timée - il emprunte à Constantin l'Africain la définition du terme 'élément'. Le deuxième temps est constitué par une formule de transition dans laquelle Guillaume résume ce qui a été dit et annonce ce qui reste à dire. Cette formule de transition commence en général par le mot 'Continuatio' et se termine par les mots 'Et hoc est' lesquels introduisent directement le texte à commenter. Dans l'exemple que nous avons choisi, la formule de transition se trouve au début du chapitre LX. Enfin, le troisième temps consiste dans l'explication littérale du texte, phrase par phrase et parfois mot par

It is the second phase which could be considered as William's 'added value'. This moment, where the philosopher shows how two successive arguments are connected, is usually introduced with the term *Continuatio*, that we can translate as 'flow of arguments'. It is precisely that lexical field he uses when he describes the elements which lack the method of the *commentum* compared to the *glosa* (see above in his Prefaces: *literam nec **continuantes** nec exponentes*; *de **continuatione** uel expositione literae nichil agit*). As a matter of fact, the phrase-word *Continuatio* in William of Conches, is a real stylistic hallmark that can be found 83 times in the *Timaeus* gloss and 39 times in the Boethius gloss[32]. For instance:

> *Glossae super Boethium* (=Nauta 1999), 1, metrum 1, p. 13, 90: Sed ea quae uenit aetate, naturalis est senectus. **Continuatio.** Merito me dixi senem QVIA VENIT SENECTVS INOPINA id est etc.

The *continuatio*-tag seems to be a methodological tool[33], even if the word disappears for long periods of time[34] and, when it reoccurs, it may be difficult to understand what textual coherence is involved as it seems to be only an empty term of transition[35]. In any case, it is true that neither Servius nor Donatus insist so frequently on the chain of ideas. The reason for that is that this particular attention to argumentation is due to the philosophic nature of the source text itself.

4.2 *in the Accessus*

The preface called *accessus* can be compared to the *Praefationes* sections in Donatus or in Servius. That is where in each case general information is given about the source text and its author.

The information is always standardized. For instance, although the pattern of the Preface genre is not specified in Donatus, we can recognize it by comparison

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mot. Tel est le canevas constant des gloses de Guillaume de Conches. Si la trame, ici ou là, en est moins apparente, elle n'en demeure pas moins réelle, et l'on retrouvera aisément, sous le tissu des gloses, les fils directeurs qu'on vient de distinguer ».

[32] But there is none occurrence in the Juvenal gloss, stylistic proof, maybe, that this book may not be retained in William's works.

[33] The use of *continuatio* and *et hoc est* tags in William may be influenced by Boethius who uses these expressions (but not as tags) in his own commentaries. See Jeauneau 1965, 17, note 2.

[34] For instance, there is only one occurrence of *Continuatio* in the second book of the Boethius gloss, without obvious reason: see Penher 2013, translation, note 174.

[35] See Penher 2012, XXII.

because each Preface of his Terence commentary contains the same specific items in the same order: 1. Generic information on the play (title, name of the Greek model, original author, date of representations, etc.); 2. Summary of the story with some dramaturgical information (for instance *Andria* has a cyclic composition and the division in five acts is hard to establish); 3. Detailed plot of each act, scene by scene.

In Servius, the first Preface is linked to the *Aeneid*, which is the first Virgilian work he comments and therefore the most developed. Servius begins with the methodic items of the commentator. Here are the very first words of the Vergil commentary:

> In exponendis auctoribus haec consideranda sunt: poetae vita, titulus operis, qualitas carminis, scribentis intentio, numerus librorum, ordo librorum, explanatio.

He then proceeds to deal with each criterion in the same order. For *Georgica* and *Bucolica*, the Preface is shorter because the *poetae vita* (quite long) has been made earlier at the beginning of the Vergil commentary and does not need repeating. But the items (not repeated either) appear in the same order.

In William's two main glosses, something close to Servius's own work can be observed: the *Accessus* sections indicate the technical questions which are necessary to answer in a gloss book. However, the number, order and type of questions are not completely standardized, neither are all of them directly influenced by the servian items:

> *Glossae in Boethium* (=Nauta 1999), *accessus*, p. 3, 3: In principiis philosophorum ista VI inquiruntur: causa compositionis operis, materia, modus siue ordo agendi, utilitas cur agat, cui parti philosophiae supponatur, et titulus.

> *Glossae in Platonem* (=Jeauneau 2002), *accessus*, p. 6, 1: Incipientibus Thimaeum Platonis inquirendum est quae compositionis operis illius causa fuerit, unde in eo agatur, et qualiter, et qua utilitate, et cui parti philosophiae supponatur, et titulus.

In both prefaces, the inquiry (see *inquiruntur* and *inquirendum*) concerns six points; four of them are identical or very similar and occur in the same order: 1. *causa compositionis*; 4. *utilitas*; 5. *cui parti philosophiae supponatur*; 6. *titulus*.

But the items in the second and third spots may be different from one gloss to another. Is *materia* the same thing as *unde in eo agatur*? Does *modus siue ordo agendi* concern the same inquiry as *qualiter*? In the first case, *materia* vs *unde in eo agatur*, the answer is yes. For William, dealing with each item in its specific

spot, continues in the *Timaeus* gloss with *Causa uero compositionis huius operis talis fuit*. But in fact, in the same development which concerns the cause, he switches slightly to the second criterion (*unde in eo agatur*) and writes (Jeauneau 2002, 7, 11): *Sed quoniam illa circa creationem mundi maxime apparet, ad illam se transfert. Unde possumus dicere quod **materia** huius libri est naturalis iusticia vel creatio mundi: de ea enim propter naturalem iusticiam agit*. So the question *unde* and *materia huius libri* seem to be the same thing. Right after this, he answers the next technical question (announced as *qualiter*) with these first words (*ibid.* 8, 1, chapter IV): *Agit hoc **modo** de tali materia*, showing that the *qualiter* question concerns the *modus sive ordo agendi*; in the same sentence, exposing some ordinated arguments with chronological adverbs (*deinde, postea*), he demonstrates that the *ordo* also is involved.

The anonymous author of the *accessus ad Iuvenalem*, who was probably a student of William of Conches, whom he mentions by name, has also in the very beginning of this preface six questions, formulated in a very similar way to the *Timaeus* gloss (with *unde* et *qualiter* instead of *materia* and *ordo*) but not exactly in the same order (he follows a 2-3-4-1-5-6 order). *Glossae in Iuvenalem*, *accessus* (= Wilson 1980: 89, 1):

> Unde et qualiter et qua utilitate et causa agat iste auctor et cui si alicui philosophie parti suponatur et quis titulus primo nobis considerandum est.

In summary, if we consider that the order of questions in the Juvenal gloss is a mistake, as the very first criterion is displaced in place 4, the other questions being identically ordered, the questions the philosopher must deal with when explaining a text could be formulated this way: (1) why? (2) where from? (3) how? (4) what for? (5) what part of philosophy? (6) which title?

Some of those questions may have an echo in the servian commentary tradition (*titulus*; *qualitas carminis* vs how?; *scribentis intentio* vs why? or what for?). More generally, the interrogative formulation echoes the rhetorical manner for testing the truth of a narration as we can read it in Marius Victorinus (*Explanationes in Ciceronis Rhetoricam* 1,21):

> Probabilis, inquit, erit narratio, si in ea fuerint illa omnia, quibus solet ueritas inueniri; nam in his septem omnis ad fidem argumentatio continetur: (tabula: quis: persona; quid: factum; cur: causa; ubi: locus; quando: tempus; quemadmodum: modus; quibus adminiculis: facultas. opinio: natura nostra, opinio iudicum, uulgi mos). (…) Septem illa superiora, quis, quid, cur, ubi, quando, quemadmodum, quibus adminiculis, omnes artium scriptores tractarunt et in praeceptis suarum artium reliquerunt. (…) Itaque narra-

tionem probabilem esse dicit si in ea sint septem illa: quis, quid, cur, ubi, quando, quemadmodum, quibus adminiculis.[36]

This list is also provided by Boethius, an author well known to William of Conches (*De topicis differentiis* 4,1,4):

Circumstantiae vero sunt: quis, quid, ubi, quando, cur, quomodo, quibus adminiculis.

But William's list of questions clearly has a specific item: his fifth question, «what is the relevant part of the philosophy?» has no correspondence in any tradition. This is the point that makes the real difference with Servius' and Donatus' methods of explanation. William has a philosophical point of view.

4.3 *a philosophical framework*

For William of Conches and his masters of Chartres, all pedagogy is directed to the matter he calls *philosophia*, which is a very inclusive matter. In his view, all the quadrivium as well as some other matters are included in philosophy, as is shown in his *Timaeus* gloss, when he defines the term *philosophia* (*Glossae Super Platonem* [=Jeauneau 2002] 5, p. 9, 1sq.):

Philosophia igitur est eorum quae sunt et non uidentur et eorum quae sunt et uidentur uera comprehensio. Huius duae sunt species: practica et theorica. Practicae uero sunt tres species: ethica de instructione morum (ethis enim est mos); economica, id est dispensatiua (unde economus id est dispensator -haec docet qualiter unusquisque propriam familiam debeat dispensare); politica, id est ciuilis (polis enim est ciuitas - haec docet qualiter res publica tractetur). Theoricae similiter sunt tres species: theologia, mathematica, phisica. Et est theologia ratio de diuinis: theos enim est deus, logos ratio. Mathematica uero quadruuium continet, dicta mathematica, id est doctrinalis. Mathesis enim cum aspiratione est doctrina, sine ea est uanitas. Et dicitur doctrinalis antonomasice, scilicet quia perfectior fit doctrina in quadruuio quam in aliis artibus.

So philosophy is the real comprehension of what is and cannot be seen and of what is and can be seen. It has two species; one practical and one theoretical. The practical one has three species: the ethical about the moral in-

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[36] See also *ibid.* 1,24; 1,26; 1,28; Aug. *Rhet.* 7: *Sunt igitur haec: quis, quid, quando, ubi, cur, quem ad modum, quibus adminiculis, quas Graeci* ἀφορμάς *uocant*; Iul. Victor *Ars rhetorica* p. 3, 16 (Giomini and Celentano, Teubner 1980); *ibid.* p. 73, 4, etc.

struction (for *ethis* means *mos*), the economical, that is regarding expenses (from where comes *economus*, signifying *dispensator*): this branch teaches how each one has to manage the family resources; the political, that is the civil (for *polis* means *civitas*): this branch teaches how the state must be managed. The theoretical has also three species: theology, mathematics, physics. Theology is the science of divine: for *theos* means God and *logos* science. The mathematics contains the *quadrivium* and is called *mathematica*, that is *doctrinalis*. For *mathesis* (with an h) means knowledge and without h (*scil. mateosis*) vanity. And it is said *doctrinalis* by noun exchange, obviously because the knowledge we acquire during the *quadrivium* is more achieved than in the rest of the school techniques.

William draws then a (lost) table presenting the knowledge as a whole. Jeauneau 1965, 62 makes of it a clear reconstitution from the text istself:
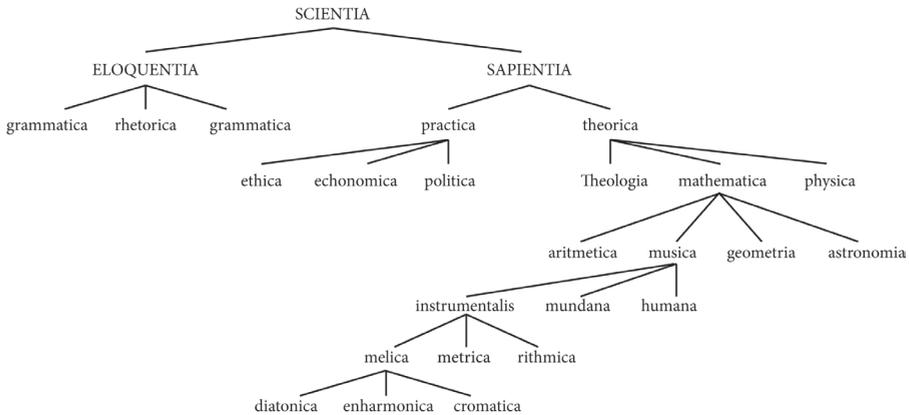
The whole of «science» is divided into «eloquence» and «knowledge». But the knowledge section represents *Philosophia* in its entirety[37]. And we can see that all the quadrivium, under the item *mathematica*, but also ethics, economics, politics, theology, and physics are divisions or subdivisions of philosophy. If we consider now the gloss genre, which also uses the methods of the trivium (grammar, rhetoric, dialectics) in its micro-structures (see above), we can say that the gloss is a stock of universal knowledge. Nothing is excluded from William's analysis and, as a glossator, he is concerned with all of reality.

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[37] *Scientia* or *sapientia* and *philosophia* are consubstantial in William. For instance, telling his intentions in the beginning of his treatise *Dragmaticon **philosophiae***, he writes (*Dragmaticon* 1,5): *Spe igitur ista excitati et incitati, tibi et filiis tuis aliquid quod ad **scientiam** pertineat scribere proposuimus.*

Of course, when the gloss is about *Timaeus*, the philosophical point of view is natural and conforms to the source text, which is by itself universal (*Glossae super Platonem Accessus ad Timaeum* 6):

> De omnibus igitur partibus philosophiae aliquid in hoc opere continetur: de practica in recapitulatione positiuae iustitiae, de theologia ubi de efficiente et formali et finali causa mundi et de anima loquitur. Vbi uero de numeris et proportionibus, de mathematica; ubi uero de quatuor elementis et creatione animalium et de primordiali materia, de phisica.

> So something of all parts of philosophy is included in this work: practical, when is dealt with positive justice, theology when is said something about efficient, formal and final cause of the world and of soul; when the subject is numbers and proportions, it is mathematics, when it is elements and creation of animals and primordial matter, it is physics.

But what is probably specific to William of Conches, even among the members of the School of Chartres, is that any text, whatever genre it represents and whatever themes it discusses, can be considered philosophical, in this inclusive sense. The anonymous student of William who wrote the preface to the Juvenal gloss preserved two Chartrian masters' debate over the nature of poetic works. The conflict of opinion concerns a *Magister Bernardus* (who might be Bernard of Chartres, the first Canceller, rather than Bernard Silvester[38]) and Master William of Conches (*Accessus ad Juvenalem ab auctore incerto* [Wilson 1980: 89-90; translation by Wilson 1980, 28-29]):

> Sunt qui querendum existiment et in hoc et in aliis auctoribus cui parti philosophie subponantur. Magister vero Bernardus dicebat hoc non esse in auctoribus querendum cum ipsi nec partes philosophie nec de philosophia tractant. Magister Wilelmus de Conchis dicit auctores omnes, quamvis nec partes sint philosophie nec de ipsa agant, philosophie suponi propter quam tractant, et omnes illi parti philosophie suponi, propter quam tractant. Utraque ergo lectio vera est ; auctores suponuntur philosophie id est propter ethicam, que pars est philosophie, tractant, ut scilicet moralem comparent instructionem, et auctores non suponuntur philosophie, id est non sunt partes eius.

> There are those who value asking both in this and in other authors to what part of philosophy they may be subjoined. In truth Master Bernard said that this is not to be sought in authors when they themselves treat neither the

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[38] See Wilson 1980, 90, note 3.

parts of philosophy nor concerning philosophy. Master William of Conches says all authors, however much they may be neither the parts of philosophy nor treat concerning it, are to be subjoined to philosophy on account of what <matter> they treat, and all are to be subjoined to that part of philosophy on account of what <matter> they treat. Each reading, therefore is true; authors are subjoined to philosophy, that is, on account that they treat ethics, which is a part of philosophy, so that certainly they might furnish moral instruction, and authors are not subjoined to philosophy, that is, they are not its parts.

The fifth question the glossator has to answer, *cui parti philosophiae subponatur*, is, according to William of Conches, always relevant, whatever the text is. Of course, a satiric text such as Juvenal's, by representing various types of vicious men, has a natural relationship with ethics. But, if William effectively wrote a Vergil gloss, we could suppose he also gave an answer to the fifth question and assigned the *Aeneid* to one subdivision of philosophy.

On the other hand, William writes elsewhere that every text, even a philosophical one in a narrow sense, like *Timaeus* for instance, can be explained through different methods see *Dragmaticon* 1,6:

> De eodem namque dialectice, sophistice, rethorice, philosophice disserere possumus. Considerare namque de aliquo an sit singulare an uniuersale, est dialecticum; probare ipsum esse quod non est, uel non esse quod est, est sophisticum; probare ipsum esse dignum praemio uel poena, rethoricum; sed de natura ipsius, moribus, officiis disserere, est philosophicum.

> We may discuss one matter in a dialectical, sophistical, rhetorical, or philosophical way. As a matter of fact, wondering whether something is singular or universal is dialectical; proving something exists which does not exist or that something does not exist which exists is sophistical; proving something deserves reward or punishment is rhetorical, but discussing its very nature, characteristics, or duties is philosophical.

To conclude, we can guess that there are, for William of Conches several matches between source text and gloss text:

(1) poetic text (for instance *Aeneid*) explained in a non-philosophical way (for instance a rhetorical commentary on *Aeneid*)[39];

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[39] See for instance Marco Antonio Ferrazzi's *Exercitationes rhetoricae in praecipuas P. Virgilii Maronis orationes quae in Aeneidum libris leguntur*, Padova, 1694 and its on-line

(2) poetic text (for instance Juvenal's *Satires*) explained in a philosophical way (for instance William's *Glossae in Juvenalem*);

(3) philosophical text (for instance *Timaeus*) explained in a non-philosophical way;

(4) philosophical text (*Timaeus*) explained in a philosophical way (for instance William's *Timaeus* gloss).

The third match is probably absurd, because of the status of the source text which forces the commentary to be philosophical. But in any case, for William of Conches, philosophy (in its broadest signification) being everywhere, only the fourth match is useful, because the glossator, aiming for universality, must use the philosophical approach; and the second match is only a variant of the fourth one because there is no text, in William's view, which is not assignable to philosophy.

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presentation by the group RARE of Grenoble university, http://rare.u-grenoble3.fr/spip/spip.php?rubrique19.

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