

**Writing the Classics: A Manuscript Symposium**  
(Leiden University Library, 3 September, 2013, 10.30-18.00)

**Sten Ebbesen (University of Copenhagen)**

*"How a few manuscripts made a big difference" - the Aristotelian Revolution of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries*

The early 12<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the beginning of an educational boom that issued in the creation of the first universities about the year 1200 and the reception of the full Aristotelian *corpus Aristotelicum* later in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Crucial to the development was the discovery of long-forgotten Latin translations of three of Aristotle's works and the translation from Greek of all the rest of the *corpus* between ca. 1125 and 1280.

The three old translations may all have been contained in one manuscript. The new translations will have required a score of Greek manuscripts or so. The resulting archetypes of the translations (perhaps two-score in all) started to multiply as soon as their ink was dry, and they were to have thousands of descendants before the end of the manuscript era. It thus took a few scores of manuscripts to launch a revolution in Western philosophy and, more broadly, in higher studies.

**Irene O'Daly (Leiden University)**

*Diagrams and the Transmission of Roman Rhetoric*

This paper focuses on a phenomenon of manuscript design and content: the schematic diagram. Seen as extra-textual elements of the manuscript, their significance is often underestimated by editors of texts and scholars. I contend, however, that these diagrams can be an important resource for understanding the readership and use of medieval classics. Focusing on a series of diagrams found within the Ciceronian rhetorical tradition, this paper shall examine the kind of content that could be displayed in a diagram, decisions made regarding its placement, and its potential application for medieval readers. The paper shall debate their role as a supplement to the text, and argue that certain diagrams operated alongside the classical and medieval tradition of commenting on Cicero's rhetorical works. Efficient, compact, and aesthetically pleasing, such diagrams can inform us about the experience of reading and understanding classical works in the Middle Ages.

**Mariken Teeuwen (Utrecht University, Huygens ING)**

*Carolingian scholarship on Classical authors*

The term Carolingian Renaissance has been minted precisely because of the revival of interest in classical authors and works in that period. Under the reigns of Charlemagne, Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald, it has been argued rightfully, a culture of reading and writing flourished in which the Classics were held in the highest esteem. They were copied, studied and commented upon, and were held up high as models for their Latin, their rhetoric and style. The scale and nature of this Renaissance has been measured by the number of copies of classical texts that have survived in Carolingian monastic libraries, and surveys of which texts have been quoted by Carolingian authors. In other words: through the traditional instruments from the fields of transmission history and philology. In this paper, a different approach will be taken. Signs of Carolingian readership will be studied to examine

what the early medieval students of these texts were after. What did the Carolingian scholars deem particularly important in these texts, and what did they ignore? What were their scholarly strategies to deal with these texts? How do these traces of their scholarship reflect the intellectual world they lived in? With this approach we go to the manuscripts themselves and consider not only the content in the main frames of their pages, but also the voices that speak to us from their margins and flyleaves.

**Rodney Thomson (University of Tasmania)**

*William of Malmesbury and the Latin Classics*

The Benedictine monk William of Malmesbury (c. 1090-c. 1143) has a well-established reputation as one of England's greatest historians and also as a considerable classicist. Recent research has, if anything, increased his stature as a reader, editor and interpreter of ancient Latin literature. This paper will present some findings of this research under three heads: (a) new identifications of classical texts known to him; (b) a short bio-bibliographical text about Sidonius and Symmachus attributed to his authorship; (c) texts thought to have been edited or commented on by him: Pliny's *Natural History* and Suetonius.