

**Self-Annotated Literary Works 1300-1900:
An Extensive Collection of Titles and Selected Metadata**

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General Information and Aims

This collection was created in the context of my PhD thesis titled *The Author as Annotator: Ambiguities of Self-Annotation in Pope and Byron* (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, 2021, GRK 1808 “Ambiguität”, DFG-Projektnummer: 198647426). It lists more than 1100 literary works published between 1300 and 1900 that feature self-annotations, i.e. marginal notes, footnotes, or endnotes written by the author of the work. Self-annotations here only refer to notes that were *published* in a work, not private, handwritten comments in the author’s own copy.

The aim of this collection is threefold. First of all, it shows the prevalence and variety of literary self-annotation before 1900. While authorial notes in post-1900 literature have received a considerable amount of critical attention, the number and ‘experimentality’ of earlier self-annotations is often underestimated among literary scholars. The present collection strives to correct this view. Secondly, the collection reveals general tendencies in the field of literary self-annotation, providing tentative answers to questions like ‘when did it become popular to use both footnotes and endnotes in the same work?’. Thirdly and most importantly, this collection is meant to provide an incentive and starting point for further research by laying the (albeit yet insufficient) groundwork for quantitative research, by including a multitude of now-forgotten works, and by citing relevant secondary literature on as many titles as possible.

What This Collection Provides

Given the topic of my thesis, this collection has a special focus on English poetry between 1700 and 1830. However, it also features prose texts and dramas, as well as many works in French and German, and a few titles in Italian, Spanish, Latin, Polish, and Russian.

All entries provide

- the name of the author (if available)
- the title of the work
- the year of its first publication
- the genre of the work (poetry, prose, or drama)
- the language of the work

About one third of the entries cite secondary texts in which the self-annotations of a particular work are discussed or at least mentioned. In the cases of Pope’s and Byron’s works, the present collection does not provide references to scholarly works; for a literature review on this topic, see the introduction of my thesis.

In the “Comment” column, I provide further information (1) whenever I found the title of a work in one of the two other online collections of literary works with self-annotations¹ and (2) whenever there is anything particularly noteworthy about the annotations (e.g. in terms of length, number, or typographical arrangement).

¹ These two lists are Bernhard Metz and Sabine Zubarik’s <http://www.amrandebemerkt.de/bibliographie.htm> and William Denton’s <https://www.miskatonic.org/footnotes.html>. Both of these lists are much shorter than the one presented here: Metz and Zubarik offer ca. 220 titles, while Denton mentions ca. 200. Denton’s list has a strong focus on post-1900 literature; Metz and Zubarik also mention many post-1900 works. For this reason (and due to my research focus), my own collection is restricted to pre-1900 titles.

Entries for English poetry between 1600 and 1824 also offer detailed information on the visual presentation of the annotations, focussing on three aspects:

(1) **“Indication”**: the way in which the presence of an annotation is indicated in the annotated text itself. In the works I found, there were eight ways in which this was done:

- i. Sign before the item²
- ii. Sign after the item
- iii. Sign after the line
- iv. Number/letter before the item
- v. Number/letter after the item
- vi. Number/letter after the line
- vii. None
- viii. Other (e.g. sign or number before the line in which the annotated item appears)

Some works – especially ones that feature both footnotes and endnotes – use two different ways of indicating the presence of an annotation, e.g. signs for footnotes and no indications for endnotes.

(2) **“Position”**: the place(s) in which the annotations appear. The position can also change from edition to edition (e.g. in Byron’s *The Giaour*). In my collection, I’ve only focussed on the first edition of each work. In the works I’ve looked at, there were six possibilities:

- i. Marginal notes
- ii. Footnotes
- iii. Endnotes after each chapter, book, or canto
- iv. Endnotes at the very end of a poem or volume
- v. Endnotes and footnotes combined
- vi. Other (e.g. annotations interspersed between the lines)

When a work has both footnotes and endnotes, there are two possibilities: either both of them contain ‘annotations proper’, or the footnotes serve just as references to the endnotes (e.g. “See page 100, note 6”). If the latter is the case (which is quite rare), I mention this in the “Comment” column.

(3) **“Info before Note”**: the information that is provided before each annotation to help readers identify which item in the main text it refers to. In the texts I’ve found, there were six ways of doing this:

- i. Sign/number repeated (i.e. the sign or number that indicates the presence of an annotation in the main text is also given right before the annotation itself)
- ii. Quote (i.e. the annotated item or the line in which it appears is quoted at the beginning of the annotation)
- iii. Page (in the case of endnotes, the number of the page on which the annotated item appears is provided at the beginning of the annotation)
- iv. Line (i.e. the number of the line in which the annotated item appears is given)
- v. Stanza (i.e. the number of the stanza in which the annotated item appears is given)
- vi. None (this case is rare and is mostly used with marginal notes)

Many works use a combination of these solutions, e.g. quoting the annotated passage and repeating the number given in the main text.

² “Sign” usually refers to asterisks, daggers, etc. The “item” is the word, phrase, line, or passage in the main text to which the annotation refers.

Information on the Data Formats in Which the Collection is Presented

The collection is presented in five different formats:

- **Microsoft Access** (.accdb): this file allows users a variety of filter options (sorting by year, alphabetic sorting by author name, filtering according to languages and genres, grained filtering according to the visual presentation of the notes). Unfortunately, this data format can only be opened when you are using Windows.
- **XML**
- **HTML**: this file does not allow filtering; the entries are ordered chronologically
- **Pdf (complete)**: this file does not allow filtering; the entries are ordered chronologically. It provides all the information also given in the Access file, but its presentation is not very user-friendly.
- **Pdf (reduced)**: this file does not allow filtering; the entries are ordered chronologically. This file is more user-friendly, but it does not provide all of the information given in the Access file. It only lists title, year, author, genre, and language. The file does not provide information on the visual presentation of the notes, nor does it contain references to secondary literature.

What This Collection Does Not Provide

The present collection does not offer a reliable basis for quantitative research. This has several reasons, including the fact that my search mainly focussed on a specific language, genre, and period. Furthermore, random samples have shown that a considerable number of works contain self-annotations but do not mention this in their titles. Thus, due to my method of collecting data (see below), my collection mainly contains works the title of which announces that they feature self-annotations. Though my collection (especially of English poetry) is large enough to allow for some general conclusions (e.g. that endnotes gained popularity in the 1810s), it does not allow for quantitative comparisons like ‘were self-annotations equally popular in Britain and France?’ or ‘what was the ratio of unannotated works to annotated works at a given time?’. The latter question is, however, tentatively answered in my thesis for the years 1728, 1729, and 1799.

How the Data Was Collected

I found the titles listed in the collection by two methods. First of all, the collection contains works that are mentioned in secondary literature on self-annotations and that appear on Metz and Zubarik’s as well as Denton’s lists of self-annotated literature. The overwhelming majority of entries, however, come from searches in library catalogues and digital collections. The search was restricted to pre-1900 titles.

Search terms I used in the “title” search:

- “notes”
- “annotations”
- “suivi des notes”
- “avec des notes”
- “con note”
- On HathiTrust and ECCO: “poem in two cantos” (repeated with three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, and twelve cantos)³
- “Anmerkungen”
- “Anmerckungen”

³ I did this after noticing that most long narrative poems around 1800 contain self-annotations even if they often do not mention this fact in the title. For each entry that I found using this search term, I checked a digitised version of the work to verify that it contains self-annotations.

The results also showed many titles that were *not* included in my collection:

- Non-literary works
- Works with annotations not written by the author but by an editor
- Translations of self-annotated works
- Later editions of self-annotated works⁴

Resources I searched:

- Bibliothèque nationale de France
- Bodleian Library
- British Fiction 1800-1829
- British Library
- Catalogo del servizio bibliotecario nazionale
- Early English Books Online-Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP)
- Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO)
- English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC)
- Hathi Trust (Languages searched: English, German, French)
- National Library of Australia
- National Library of Scotland
- “New Publications” and “Quarterly List of New Publications” in the *Quarterly Review* (1809-1824) [On the *British Periodicals* platform]
- Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
- University of Oxford Text Archive
- Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 16. Jahrhunderts (VD 16)
- Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 17. Jahrhunderts (VD 17)
- Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des 18. Jahrhunderts (VD 18)
- World Cat (Languages searched: English)

Suggested Citation

Lahrsow, Miriam. *Self-Annotated Literary Works 1300-1900: An Extensive Collection of Titles and Selected Metadata*. Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, 2021. [+ handle or doi]

Contact

If you have questions about this collection, you can reach me at: miriam . lahrsow [at] gmail . com

⁴ The collection only lists the first edition of each work. However, some works which were only annotated in a later edition are included as well (e.g. Scott’s Waverly novels).