

Medieval Miscellanies and the Case of Manuscript British Library, Cotton Titus D.XX*

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British Library, Cotton Titus D.XX is a composite codex comprising three parts, one from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, one from the early fifteenth century, and one from the late fifteenth century. All parts are written in different late Gothic scripts and represent clearly defined codicological units. Part One contains Alexander Neckam's *De nominibus utensilium* and John of Garland's *Dictionarius*. Part Two is composed of three items: the *Cronicon Monasterii de Waldensi* to the year 1321 and two poems attributed to John Lydgate (d. 1449/50): the *Dietary*, a guide for healthy living that begins imperfectly with verse 35, and the *Successio Regum Angliae* which starts with William the Conqueror and ends imperfectly on folio 96r with the first line of the stanza on Henry IV. Part Three of the codex and its latest addition contains a miscellaneous collection of excerpts which is the focus of this essay.

The parts were already amalgamated in 1621, and there is firm evidence that the third part was added to the previous ones by Sir Robert Bruce Cotton (d. 1631) himself, namely his signature which appears in the upper margin of folio 97r. Whether the other two parts were put together by Cotton as well is hard to say. He personally, or more likely, his librarian and secretary Richard James (d. 1638) is the author of the "Table of Contents" or *Catalogus Tractatum in isto uolumine* added at the beginning of the manuscript on folios 1r–2r.¹ Whoever the author of

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¹ The *Catalogus* lists 27 items, providing also a reference after each one to the folio on which the piece begins. The folio numbers in this list do not coincide with those in the modern catalogues because the author of the seventeenth-century

the *Catalogus* was, his table of contents is not complete for he did not detect the presence of either Garland's *Dictionary* in the first part or Lydgate's *Dietary* in the second.²

Cotton Titus D.XX is in its entirety a good example of what could be called a "secondary miscellany," that is, a codex containing various parts written at different times and by different scribes, which did not belong together originally but were bound within the same covers at a later stage, often at random. On this basic compositional level we need to pay attention to the "syntax" of the codex. Do the individual "morphological" elements which are found in it interact in a way that creates a meaningful "sentence" or are they only unrelated sections that are simply bound together? In the case of Cotton Titus D.XX, the three different parts of the manuscript are completely independent of each other, thus representing separate codicological entities that had been removed from their original context and brought here into a new one.

Within this "secondary miscellany," Part Three is a typical example of what could be called a "primary miscellany," that is, a compilation created from the very beginning by a person or a group of people with an overarching idea and purpose. The original creative impulse may not be immediately apparent to the modern reader, but a close scrutiny normally reveals that in the so-called "primary miscellanies" we are not confronted with the mechanical gathering of texts, which characterizes to such a high degree the nature of the "secondary miscellanies," but with a collection that exhibits clear evidence of intentionality.³

In this essay I will examine in more detail the third and last part of Cotton, Titus D.XX, which is a primary miscellany exhibiting a collection

Catalogus clearly did not include the pages of the table of contents in his counting.

² The only entries in the *Catalogus* for Parts One and Two of the codex are: (1) *Alexander Neckam de nominibus utensilium*; (2) *Chronicon Monisterii (sic) de Walden. ad annum 1321* (corrected from 1412); and (3) *Successio regum Angliae a conquestore ad Hen. 4. Rithmis Anglicanis*. On the use and importance of Neckam's text, see Tony Hunt, *Teaching and Learning Latin in Thirteenth-Century England*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1991), vol. 1, 177–90, and Rita Copeland, "Naming, Knowing, and the Object of Language in Alexander Neckam's Grammar Curriculum," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 20 (2010): 38–57.

³ These helpful terms, with further elaborations and explanations, were also used by Filippo Ronconi in his *I manoscritti greci miscellanei. Recerche su esemplari dei secoli IX–XII* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 2007).

of summaries and extracts from various classical and medieval works, thus covering a range of topics and raising a number of fascinating questions. The most obvious one is "Why?" Can we discover any meaningful rationale in the creation of the compilation or is it, at least for us who are far removed from the original concerns of the compiler, just an incomprehensible gathering of unconnected snippets? The other question is, of course, "How?," namely, how does the compiler go about collecting and organizing his material?

In order to answer these questions, I will look at the compilation in Cotton Titus D.XX from two different perspectives: content and form. First, I will attempt to define the topics in which the anonymous compiler seems to be interested. Second, I will outline the compiler's strategies for abbreviating and summarizing. In doing so, I hope to show that the author of the compilation has succeeded in creating an entirely new cultural context for the original compositions he had chosen for his collection, and that the act of excerpting provided the impulse for him to contextualize classical and medieval knowledge in the late fifteenth century. In this process he shaped a compendium of learning intended both for teaching and for facilitating the retrieval of information.

The miscellaneous compilation under consideration here is preserved on folios 97r-197v of Cotton Titus D.XX. It is written in the same hand throughout, which suggests both physical and intentional unity. The entries included are:

	Title in the manuscript (mostly in larger display script)	Folios	Entry in the <i>Catalogus Tractatum in isto uolumine</i>
1.	No title, no authorial attribution [a digest of mythological information from various sources]	97r-104v	(4) <i>Imagines Deorum ex Fulgentio et aliis</i>
2.	Marcianus Capella	104v-12v	(5) <i>Epitomen Matiani (sic) Capellae de Nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae</i> ⁴

⁴ This text was mentioned briefly among the anonymous commentaries on Capella in Claudio Leonardi, "I codici de Marziano Capella," *Aevum* 33 (1959): 443-89, at 479, n. 229.

3.	Bernardus Siluestris	112v-17v	(6) <i>Bernardi Siluestris Geographiae (sic) Epitomen</i>
4.	Lucanus	117v-22v	(7) <i>Lucani Poetae Epitomen</i>
5.	Perseus	122v-24v	(8) <i>Persii (sic) Historia</i>
6.	Petrus Riga	124v-30r	(9) <i>Petri Riga Alegoriae Bibliae Epitomen</i>
7.	Rufus(?)	130r-32v	(10) <i>Affrae meritricis uita a Rufo scripta Epitomen</i>
8.	Seneca	132v-33v	(11) <i>Senecae Cordubae Tragediarum summa</i>
9.	Sompniora	133v-34v	(12) <i>De somnis Tractatus</i>
10.	Marcialis Cocus	134v-37r	(13) <i>De Martiali Coco et eius scriptis Narratio ampla</i>
11.	Argonaute	137r	(14) <i>De Iasone et Argonauticis</i>
12.	Hymeneus	137v-38r	(15) <i>De Hymeneo filii Bachi</i>
13.	Claudianus	138r-40r	(16) <i>Poemata Claudiani Galici Epitomen</i>
14.	Anteclaudianus	140r-43r	(17) <i>Epitomen Ante Claudiani Alani Anglici</i>
15.	Architrenius	143r-44v	(18) <i>Iohannis Hauilensis Angli Architrenii epitomen</i>
16.	Philosophus	145r-59r	(19) <i>Philosophorum uitae et scripta</i> (20) <i>De Hermeto et aliis philosophis narratio</i> ⁵
17.	Poeta	159r-67r	(21) <i>Poetarum uitae et scripta</i>
18.	Potestates	167r-74v	(22) <i>De magistratibus Romanorum</i>
19.	Senator	174v-76r	(23) <i>De senatoribus</i>
20.	Sibilla	176r-76v	(no entry in the <i>Catalogus</i>)
21.	no title, starts imperfectly ⁶	177r-81r	(24) <i>De prouinciis Angliae et Iosephi Aramathia aduentu ad insulam Aualoniam</i> (25) <i>De sacerdotio Melchisedechi</i> ⁷
22.	Sedes	181r-82r	(26) <i>De sedibus et prouinciis orbis Christiani</i>
23.	Quintus Curtius (sic)	182r-97v	(27) <i>Alexandri Magni Gesta ex Quinto Curtio</i> (ends imperfectly) ⁸

⁵ *De Hermeto et aliis philosophis narratio* is entered as a separate entry in the *Catalogus*, but there is no reason for this separation. It is true that the letter "H" in the name of Hermes is bigger and slightly more decorated than the rest of the capitals but this is simply because this section starts on a new folio (152r). Since the list of the philosophers is organized more or less alphabetically, it does not make sense to divide it in the middle.

⁶ It seems that at least a leaf is missing here because the text on the English provinces starts at the top of folio 177r and apparently without a break.

⁷ Again the *De sacerdotio Melchisedechi* is presented as a separate entry in the *Catalogus*. No separation of any kind is seen in the manuscript.

⁸ This epitome is discussed and edited in Edmé R. Smits, "A Medieval Epitome of the *Historia Alexandri* by Quintus Curtius Rufus: MS. London BL Cotton Titus

The first theme that emerges clearly from this collection is the human relationship with the divine, both in the form of pagan mythology and Christian faith. This admittedly is a very broad concept, but it is the thread that runs through the compilation. This relationship is explored in its manifestations both in literary works and in treatises on religious administration and practices.

Gods and humans—pagan mythology and ancient religious practices

The entire collection starts with an exposition that discusses eighteen ancient mythological figures from the point of view of how they are depicted visually and what their pictorial attributes mean morally.⁹ The section for each divinity contains two complementary segments: first, a quick reference to the ancient authorities, and second, a summary of the opinion of a later, Christian author. Among the ancient authorities the compiler mentions Fulgentius's *Mythologiae*, Aristotle, and some unspecified *poete*, while the later tradition is represented by the *Fulgentius metaforalis* of Johannes Ridevallus (or John Ridewall, fl. 1330/40)¹⁰ and the *De formis figurisque deorum* composed by Petrus Berchorius (or Pierre Bersuire, d. 1362) but often falsely ascribed to Thomas Waleys (or

D.XX and MS. Oxford Corpus Christi College 82," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 42 (1991): 279–300, at 289–300.

⁹ The characters included in the tract are: Saturnus, Jupiter, Neptunus, Pluto, Mars, Apollo, Mercurius, Pan, Bacchus, Pheton, Ganimedes, Perseus, Paris, Juno, Minerva, Diana, Venus, and Cibeles. The moral interpretations of the first four gods reveal that Saturnus is *figura prudentie* (fol. 97r), Jupiter is *figura amoris beneuoli* (fol. 97v), Neptunus represents the *uirtus intelligentie* (fol. 98r), and Pluto the *uirtus prouidentie* (fol. 98v). One of the gods, who are symbols of vices, is Mars called *uicium tiranidis* (fol. 99v). This mythological tract is edited and discussed in Greti Dinkova-Bruun, "Imagines Deorum: Christianizing Mythography in Manuscript Cotton Titus D.XX," *Archives d'Histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 79 (2012): 313–34.

¹⁰ See *Fulgentius metaforalis*, ed. Hans Liebeschütz (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1926). The compiler of Cotton Titus D.XX does not mention the title of Ridewall's work. When he refers to it, he simply says *secundum Ridewaus* or *iuxta Ridewaus*. The *Fulgentius metaforalis* was probably written in the 1330s.

Walensis, d. 1350).¹¹ Our compiler certainly believed that Thomas was the author of the work he was using and referred to him repeatedly with expressions such as *secundum Thomam Waleys, prout scribit Walensis* or *secundum Walensem*.

This intriguing summary of Christianized mythology is followed by four additional entries dealing with mythological subjects, i.e. *Perseus* (no. 5), *Sompniora* (no. 9), *Argonaute* (no. 11), and *Hymeneus* (no. 12). One of the major sources for these pieces is Boccaccio's treatise *Genealogiae deorum gentilium*,¹² but other authors are mentioned as well. Indeed, the compiler provides not only the name of the author and the work he is using, but also the precise book and chapter. For example, at the end of the entry on the Argonauts (fol. 137r) he says: *Bocachius libro tercio decimo, capitulo vicesimo sexto*. Similarly, in the section on Bacchus's son Hymeneus (fol. 137v–138r), he provides references to three sources, first Albericus,¹³ then Lactantius, and finally Boccaccio:

- ¹¹ Bersuire's treatise was written around 1340/50. It was first printed separately from Bersuire's *Reductorium morale* in 1484 under the name of the Dominican friar Thomas Waleys. The Paris 1509 edition entitled *Metamorphosis Ovidiana moraliter a magistro Thoma Walleys Anglico de professione predicatorum sub sanctissimo patre Dominico explanata* was reproduced by Garland Publishing (New York and London, 1979). For a modern edition of the text, see *Petrus Berchorius. De formis figurisque deorum. Reductorium morale, liber XV: Ovidius moralizatus*, ed. Joseph Engels (Utrecht: Rijksuniversiteit, Instituut voor Laat Latijn, 1966).
- ¹² See Giovanni Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium libri*, ed. Vincenzo Romano (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1951), 2 vols. Boccaccio's work was first published in Venice in 1472 and was reprinted many times afterwards. The fourth edition (Venice, 1494) was reproduced by Garland Publishing (New York, 1976).
- ¹³ Alberic of London was believed to be the author of the *De diis gentium et eorum allegoriis*, entitled also *Scintillarium poetarum* or *Liber imaginum deorum*, which contains a full range of genealogies and allegorical or figurative representations of the various members of the classical pantheon. This Albericus (or Albricus) wrote his treatise around 1200, and his text is known as the so-called *Vaticanus Mithographus Tercius*. The identity of Albericus has not been securely established, and it has been suggested that he might be identified with the medieval British master Alexander Neckam who died in 1217. See A. G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature 1066-1422* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 125. The attribution to "Albericus" is considered as doubtful by Gisèle Besson who refers to the author as Ps.-Albrecht. (See "Un compilateur au travail: les dossiers préparatoires au traité du Troisième Mythographe du Vatican," in *Parva pro magnis munera. Études de littérature tardo-antique et médiévale offertes à François Dolbeau par ses élèves*, ed. Monique Goullet [Turnhout: Brepols, 2009],

*Hymeneus iuxta Albericum filius fuit Bachi et Veneris, secundum tamen Lactancium filius uiri Atheniensis ... Lactancius in quarto super Statium bene citra finem vide | (fol. 138r) eciam in Bochachio libro quinto, capitulo uicesimo quinto.*¹⁴

The mythological interests of the compiler are further exemplified by the entry *Seneca* (no. 8) which also deals with the world of pagan beliefs, simply because this was the subject matter of all of Seneca's tragedies, with the exception of the ninth (not written by Seneca, as is recognized today) which deals with the death of Nero's wife Octavia.¹⁵

139–58). The *Liber imaginum deorum* of "Albricus" was printed in Paris (a. 1520) as *Allegoriae poeticae seu de veritate ac expositione poeticarum fabularum libri quatuor Alberico Londonensi authore nusquam antea impressi* (reproduced, New York: Garland Publishing, 1976).

¹⁴ There are numerous additional examples of this type of referencing, which await further study.

¹⁵ The full text of this entry reads (orthography preserved): *Seneca de Corduba ciuitate genitus, Lucani patruus, Neronis magister et beato Paulo apostolo multum fauens, uir erat doctissimus pluraque in sui instructionem discipuli notabilia scribens, inter que in stilo poetico scripsit tragedias decem, in quarum prima introducit lunonem de loue ideo conquerentem, quia ad tantum honorem suas pelices quod eas erexit in celum et locauit inter stellas. Post lunonis uero querelam enu | (fol. 133r) meratis hiis louis pellicibus introducit ulterius auctor ipsam lunonem iterum in Herculem Iouis filium matremque eius Alcmenam conuertentem iram suam. In secunda uero tragedia tractat de Pelopis filiis Atreo et Thieste quorum alter, scilicet Thiestes, per Atreum de regno eiectus fuerat, quia eius uxorem Europam per incestum turpiter uiolabat. In tertia de Edippo Laii Regis filio qui in quodam tumultu proprium patrem interfecit, matrem locastam in uxorem duxit filiosque ex ipsa Ethioclem et Polinice, filias uero Hismenem et Antigonom post eius connubium procreauit. In quarta de Ypolito qui falsa suggestionem sue nouerce Fedre per patrem Theseum minus credulum pulsus erat in exilium ibique equorum tractu distractus dilaceratusque usque ad mortem. In quinta de causa expositionis Edippi de modoque quo cognitionem habuit quomodo interfector fuerat proprii patris sui. In sexta de querimonia et exclamacione Heccube Priami Regis uxore super mutacionem | (fol. 133v) fortune in euersione Troie et de dolore flebili quem habebat Andromatha uxor Hectoris in interfectione sui filii Astianactis. In septima de Medea Octe Regis Colchorum filia quam Jason cum aureo uellere rapuit et sibi in uxorem iunxit. In octaua de Agamemone qui per Egistum Thiestis filium consensu Clitenestre uxoris adultere interfectus fuerat, dum ipse Troia destructa ad propria deflectebat. In nona de Octauia filia Claudii et uxore Neronis quam quasi in eum confinxisset insidias interfecit Nero sponsum eius. In decima uero de strenuitate Herculis et de singulis actibus eius.*

The practice of Roman religion, and the actual religious organizations that took care of the day to day serving and consulting of the pagan gods are found in the entries *Potestates* (no. 18) and *Sibilla* (no. 20). Number 18 is an entry that deals both with the religious and secular administration of ancient Rome, which are referred to with the expression *sacrorum et ciuiliū officiorum potestates*. Among the sacred "powers" the compiler mentions the *luperci*, the Arvalian brothers (or Arval Brethern, as modern Classicists call them with an archaizing term), the Flamen Dialis, the augurs, the Vestals, etc.¹⁶ Each entry is short and basically provides the name of the office, its origin and major duties. After the sacred offices, the compiler does the same for the secular ones, among which he mentions senator, tribune, consul, proconsul, dictator, and some of the Roman *collegia*, such as the *potestas duumvirorum classium reficiendarum* or *potestas decemvirorum legum creandarum*. The use of the word *potestas* in relationship to these religious or secular Roman offices is puzzling unless one considers the sources the compiler used for this entry of his collection.

At its very end on fol. 174v, he mentions Livy and Aulus Gellius,¹⁷ who are obvious choices for this type of information, but then he adds: *Hinc inde sparsim, simmatim uero Andreas de Florencia in libro suo De potestatibus Romanis quasi per totum*. This is an important reference not only because it explains the use of the word *potestas*, but also because it allows us to establish a *terminus post quem* for the creation of the compilation. *Andreas de Florentia* is the humanist Andrea Domenico Fiocco or Fiocchi of Florence, who died in 1452. His book *De magistratibus sacerdotiisque Romanorum libellus* represents a historical description of the government and priesthoods of ancient Rome. Floccus or Fiocchi was a distinguished lawyer and secretary to the papal house in

¹⁶ Some of the "powers" mentioned by the compiler are: *Olim apud Romanos uarie multipharieque fuerant tam sacrorum quam ciuiliū officiorum potestates. Inter quos ... potestas lupercorum* | (fol. 167v); *potestas siue* | (fol. 168r) *officium sacerdotum fratrum Arualium*; *potestas augurum, potiorum potestas et pinariorum* | (fol. 168v); *potestas siue dignitas flaminis dialis*; *potestas siue dignitas pontificis maximi* | (fol. 169r); *potestas sacerdotii phecialis* | (fol. 169v); *potestas siue sacerdotium patris patrati* | (fol. 170r); *sacerdotum in sacris dei matris circuire per plateas urbis* | (fol. 170v); *potestas siue officium gallorum*; *officium duumvirorum sacrorum* | (fol. 171r) *septem uirorum epulorum*; *potestas siue officium uirginum uestalium*. The list in the collection is much longer.

¹⁷ The Latin text here reads: *Hec partim Titus Liuius in libro Ab urbe condita, partimque Aulus Gellius in libro Noctium Acticarum* (fol. 174v).

Florence, as well as a student of Manuel Chrysoloras (ca. 1355–1415), the famous classicist who wrote the first Greek grammar used in the West. The *De magistratibus sacerdotiisque Romanorum* was first published in Venice in 1475 under the name of the ancient Roman historian Lucius Fenestella, although Fiocchi's authorship was well known among learned humanists.¹⁸ Whether our compiler had access to Fiocchi's work in a manuscript form or after it was published in 1475 is impossible to say, but at least we can be sure that the collection in Cotton Titus D.XX was compiled no earlier than in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Christian faith, hagiography, and Church history

The matters of Christian belief are dealt with in a similar twofold way. First we are given two examples from literary works, and then texts on the history and organization of the Christian Church. It is not surprising that from the large number of Christian poets the compiler chooses the very popular Bible versification, the *Aurora* by Peter Riga (no. 6), which he diligently excerpts, providing exemplary verses from all the Old Testamental books that were versified by the poet.¹⁹ More surprising is his choice of hagiographical text. Number 7 in the compilation is the verse life of Saint Afra, supposedly written by a poet called Rufus. This raises a number of questions. Why Saint Afra of all saints? And who is this Rufus whom the compiler even calls *metrista egregius*? Afra is a martyr who died in 304 in the city of Augsburg in Germany, after being converted from a life of sin to the Christian faith by the Spanish Bishop of Girona Narcissus. She was a venerated saint in the vicinity of Augsburg where there was a Benedictine Abbey dedicated to Saints Ulrich and Afra until the early nineteenth century when it was dissolved.²⁰ The rationale for

¹⁸ See, for example, Flavio Biondo's statement in his *Italia illustrata*, Book 1, chapter 32. For an edition and translation of this work, see *Biondo Flavio, Italy Illuminated*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey A. White, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 74–75.

¹⁹ The New Testament is not represented. For the edition of Riga's poem, see Paul Beichner, *Aurora Petri Rigae Biblia Versificata*, Publications in Mediaeval Studies, 19.1–2 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965).

²⁰ Josef Hemmerle, *Die Benediktinerklöster in Bayern* (Ottobereun: Bayerische Benediktiner-Akademie, 1970), vol. 2, 45–50.

including the life of Afra in the compilation is not immediately apparent. The attribution to Rufus is puzzling too. This is indeed the only author in the collection who is not easily identifiable. I know of four manuscripts that contain this particular verse life of the saint, the earliest of which do not mention Rufus.²¹ His name appears, first, in our codex which is from the late fifteenth century and, then, in another Cotton Titus D.XVI which is from the sixteenth. Who this man is has to remain an open question for the moment, but it seems that only the epitome should be attributed to him, not the full version of Afra's life.

After providing the reader with these two examples of Christian biblical and hagiographical poetry, the compiler includes two entries (nos. 21 and 22), which give information on the history and organization of the Christian Church. Number 22, *Sedes*, talks about the four principal churches at the dawn of Christianity (Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem), and then continues with the later developments. This account is based primarily on Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical History*. Number 21, which is a rather confused entry, seems to be a summary of the *Defensorium ecclesiasticae potestatis* by Master Adam from Easton near Norwich, Cardinal Priest of Santa Cecilia in Rome, who died in 1397.²² His *Defensorium*, a condemnation of Lollard heresy, was completed in 1381 and dedicated to Pope Urban VI. Adam's work on ecclesiastical "power" is a nice counterpart to the large entry on the pagan religious *potestates* discussed already. Thus it appears that more conscious planning went into creating the compilation than appears at first.

The entries 'poeta' and 'philosophus'

The remaining themes represented in the compilation are somewhat more difficult to define. The two general entries *Philosophus* (no. 16) and *Poeta* (no. 17) could be a guide to broadly outlined interests in "philosophy" and "poetry" but these are such large and multifaceted terms that

²¹ These are manuscripts Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 515 and British Library, Royal 9.A.XIV, both written in the thirteenth century. The Royal manuscript preserves the entire life, ca. 700 hexameters long, on fol. 113r-287r. Manuscript Laud Misc. 515 has no attribution at all, while Royal Manuscript 9.A.XIV says in a marginal note that the author of the poem is one Magister Hermannus.

²² For a brief biographical summary, see Nicholas Schofield and Gerard Skinner, *The English Cardinals* (Oxford: Family Publications, 2007), 46-48.

they are really not very helpful here. And also, themes often overlap. There is seldom as clear a dividing line between genres and disciplines, which makes the thematic classification I am trying to propose difficult and somewhat artificial. It is clear that the compiler of Cotton Titus D.XX was very much interested in poetic works, no matter what the topic. After all, almost half of the entries in the compilation derive from poetic compositions. This interest is exemplified also in the alphabetic lists of poets he provides in item no. 17, *Poeta*. It is worth noting that among the poetic works he chooses to include in addition to the list of poets, we see two examples of satirical writing, one from the classical corpus represented by Martial's epigrams (no. 10) and one from the late twelfth century, which summarizes the well-known anti-church polemical poem *Architrenius* by Iohannes de Hauvilla (no. 15).²³ Again classical and medieval examples are juxtaposed nicely. The list of poets presented in the entry *Poeta* (no. 17) comprises in alphabetical order as many as 57 poets. Among them we see representatives of all poetic genres (lyric poetry, tragedy, comedy, and satire) writing, as the compiler puts it, *fabuloso uelamine* and *rethorico calamo*. Each entry in the list is short, beginning with a clarification of the poet's place of origin, as in *Eschiles natione Siculus* (fol. 160v); *Iuuenalis de Aquino oppido natus* (fol. 162r); *Marcianus Capella natione Affricus et ciuis Carthaginensis* (fol. 162v); *Quidius ex Peligno oppido natus* (fol. 163v); *Sophocles Atheniensis* (fol. 164v); *Terencius poeta Carthaginensis* (fol. 165v); *Virgilius poeta Mantuanus* (fol. 166v), etc. The time when the poet lived could also be given in relative terms, as in *Oracius Virgilio contemporaneus* (fol. 163r); *Orpheus omnium poetarum uetustissimus* (fol. 163v); or *Valerius Catulus Veronensis plura tempore Machabeorum egregie scripsit* (fol. 166v). After this introduction follows an explanation in general terms of what the poet has written. Last comes a note on where to find more information about the writer in question.

Among the most often mentioned sources presented in this section of the compilation are Livy, Aulus Gellius, and Valerius Maximus who provide the biographical and geographical information for the individual poets. In the majority of the cases the compiler states his positive judgement of the poet's worth and importance by calling him *poeta illustris*, *poeta famosus*, *poeta peritus*, *vir nobilis*, *vir insignis*, *vir ingeniosus atque*

²³ See Iohannes de Hauvilla, *Architrenius*, ed. Paul G. Schmidt (Munich: W. Fink, 1974).

prudens, and *scriptor egregius*. The longest entry in the list is dedicated to *Iohannes Bochacius de Certaldo*, who is said to have written many notable works, among which the exceedingly excellent book on the genealogies of the gods (*plura scripsit notabilia tempore suo inter que magis egregium scripsit librum de genealogiis deorum*). Here the compiler presents a table of contents of each of the fifteen books of Boccaccio's *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*,²⁴ which, as already mentioned, is one of his major sources for a number of entries throughout the collection. Dante and Petrarch are also included in the list, but the entries for them are quite cursory and generic.²⁵ There is no question that Boccaccio was a much more important author for our compiler. The only two female poets deemed worthy of mention are *Sapho puella Lesbica*, after whom the Sapphic verse was named (fol. 164v), and *Cornificia huius poete Cornificii germana* (fol. 160r). Cornificia, a Roman poetess who wrote epigrams in the first century BCE, is one of the one hundred and six subjects of Giovanni Boccaccio's *On Famous Women*. Thus we can conclude that the compiler knew this work of Boccaccio in addition to his *Genealogy*. No medieval women poets were included, but then there were not that many to choose from.

The broad topic of "philosophy" is treated in a similar way. Here again we have the general entry *Philosophus* (no. 16) and the specific entries on the Neo-Platonic works of Martianus Capella and Bernardus Silvestris (nos. 2 and 3), as well as on the moral theology of Alan of Lille's *Anticlaudianus* (no. 14).²⁶ These personalized entries are very much of a

²⁴ The entry for Boccaccio is found on fol. 161v–162r. The first five books of Boccaccio's treatise are described as follows: *Primus progeniem Demogorgonis exprimit omnem. Etheris in altro numeratur stirpitus ordo. Celius in tercio, generis pars scribitur omnis. In quarto Titan datur et Titania prolis. Est Iouis in quinto proles sed Dardanus extra, etc.* (fol. 161v).

²⁵ The entry for Dante (the only vernacular poet included in the collection) reads as follows: *Dantes de Aledigeriis poeta Florentinus tres de Paradiso uidelicet Purgatorio et Inferno |* (fol. 160v) *in suo uulgari eloquio scripsit notabiles comedias*. The text for Petrarch is found on fol. 161r: *Franciscus Petrarcha nacione Florentinus plura composuit opuscula inter que de bello Punico opus scripsit egregium quod Africam appellare decreuerat post consummacionem*.

²⁶ The text from this manuscript is printed in Christel Meier, "Die Rezeption des Anticlaudianus Alans von Lille in Textkommentierung und Illustration," in *Text und Bild. Aspekte des Zusammenwirkens zweier Künste in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. Christel Meier and Uwe Ruberg (Wiesbaden: L. Reicher, 1980), 408–548, at 524–26.

summary nature, introducing the reader to the basic contents of the works of the authors, with some extracts from his actual composition in the case of Bernard. In addition, we have the general entry entitled *Philosophus*, which is the largest in the collection. This entry occupies 14 folios and represents an alphabetical list of names, short lives and philosophical affiliation of as many as 87 ancient thinkers, astrologers, orators, musical theoreticians, and eminent physicians who, says the compiler, are worthy of being remembered because the creator of all things revealed to them the very secrets of his creation (*plasmator supremus sua secretiora reuelauit consilia plasmationis*). Among them we find Aristotle, Cato, Demostenes, Diogenes, Epicurus, Epictetus, Gorgias, Heraclitus, Plato, Pliny, Seneca, Socrates, Solon, Thales, Tullius, Valerius Maximus, Varro, and Zeno. As with the poets, this is an impressive list of well-organized and easily accessible information gathered by the compiler, in his own admission, from Book 8 of Isidore's *Ethymologiae*, Book 14 of Augustine's *De ciuitate Dei*, and Book 15 of Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*. The short biographies of the "philosophers" are constructed very much like those for the poets. Interestingly, they are described differently than their literary colleagues. Thus, the qualities of the learned men singled out by the compiler are industriousness, constancy, and intelligence, even though fame and popularity are also invoked occasionally.

All of this paints a fascinating picture, for it is illuminating to discover that in all of these broad topical areas (i.e. religion, poetry, philosophy, administration) classical and medieval works are included by the compiler on a completely equal basis. This is a clear sign that the compilation, even though written in the late fifteenth century, is still very much embedded in the teaching and learning ideology of the Middle Ages. Many of the authors chosen for the compilation are names known from the medieval school curriculum (for example, Lucan, Claudian, Martianus Capella, Bernardus Silvestris, Peter Riga, Allan of Lille, and John of Hauvilla), but to this well-established teaching canon later texts are added as well, such as the *Fulgentius metaforalis* from 1330, Adam of Easton's *Defensorium* from 1378, and Andreas Fiocchi's *De magistratibus sacerdotisque Romanorum* from the first half of the fifteenth century. The fruitful coexistence of these texts shows that the compiler is not only looking back to tradition, first and foremost to the established authority of the medieval school texts, but also to other late medieval texts that appeal to his personal tastes and interests. In addition, he is also aware of the accomplishments of his own time, exemplified by Fiocchi's book on Roman history. Thus, the compilation in Cotton Titus D.XX reveals to

the modern reader a learned mind at an interesting junction of intellectual awareness. What we see in his compilation is a repository of knowledge that seems to be trying to define itself as a teaching, writing, and reference tool. It is by no means a medieval *florilegium*, but it is not a Renaissance commonplace book either.²⁷ At the same time it has features of both, and more. With this I mean to suggest that in the same way the inclusion in the compilation of authors—classical and medieval, old and modern—creates a sense of the liminal, border-line position of the collection as a manifestation of a scholarly mind working on a threshold between two intellectual eras, the variety of epitomizing approaches exhibited by the various entries in the Cotton Titus collection defies our expectations and disagrees with the standard definitions of the typical features that characterize the different types of compilations we encounter in medieval manuscripts. As a result, borderlines are crossed here again, this time on the level of form. And so I move to my second line of inquiry, namely, how does the compiler construct the entries included in his collection.

Composition of the compilation: excerpts, summaries, encyclopedic entries

The examples discussed above have already provided a sense of how different the individual entries in the compilation are. The seventeenth-century *Catalogus tractatum* calls many of the texts "epitomes" (see the Table above). The exceptions are *Seneca* (no. 8) where we see *summa*, *Martialis* (no. 10) and *Philosophus* (no. 16) where we have *narratio ampla* and *narratio*, respectively. In addition, some entries are not given a denomination, for example, *De Hymeneo filio Bachi* (no. 12) or *De magistratibus Romanorum* (no. 18). How are we to understand these labels? In order to answer this question, we need to look at the individual entries in order to understand the peculiarities that define them.

First, there are items that follow quite faithfully the rules of excerpting for a typical *florilegium*, i.e., numbers 6, *Peter Riga* and 10, *Martialis Cocus*. The two entries demonstrate similar abbreviating techniques, even though one is called *epitome* and the other *narratio ampla* in the

²⁷ For a general discussion on the understanding and the use of commonplaces from Antiquity to the Renaissance, see Joan Marie Lechner, *Renaissance Concepts of the Commonplace* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1962).

Catalogus.²⁸ In both cases, the bulk of the text is composed by exemplary quotations from the author's body of work. In Riga's case the excerpts are arranged in the order they occur in the original composition, starting with the Book of Genesis and ending with the Book of Tobit, while in the entry on Martial the chosen epigrams are presented both in the order of the books they appear in and according to topic, for example: *In primo libro contra emulum inuehit per hunc modum* (fol. 134v); or *Contra lubricos in quarto libro sic* (fol. 134v-135r); or *In detractores libro septimo sic* (fol. 135r), etc. Each of these topical titles is then followed by quotations from the epigrams. The references to the books in Martial's corpus coincide perfectly with the divisions between the books that have been accepted in the modern editions of the poet. In contrast, there are a number of readings in the quotations that are not the ones printed in the modern critical editions of Martial, a fact that could provide valuable insights for scholars who are interested in the history of classical reception.²⁹ In Cotton Titus D.XX, the nickname *Cocus*, the Cook, is attached to Martial's name and the following well-known explanation of the *cognomen* is provided at the beginning of the entry:³⁰

Martialis Cocus: Ideo sic est dictus quia quemadmodum cocus per ignis decoctionem a carminibus humorem noxium extrahit et eas homini ad gustandum aptas facit. Sic iste per inuectiuum calamum uiciorum saniem ab humano corde eicit, quodque prius erat cloacha sordium posterius per huius electionem sordidatis uas sincerum in susceptionem uirtutis efficit atque mundum (fol. 134v).

Martial the Cook: He is called so because like a cook with the help of the cooking fire he extracts from the poetic compositions their harmful substance and

²⁸ Perhaps the denomination *narratio ampla* for Martial could be explained with the fact that the poet was also mentioned in the encyclopedic entry *Poeta* (no. 17), where he was simply introduced very briefly like everybody else in the list.

²⁹ For a detailed and useful survey of the numerous humanist commentaries on Martial's *Epigrammaton libri*, see Frank-Rutger Hausmann, *Martialis, in Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum*, ed. F. Edward Cranz and Paul Oskar Kristeller, vol. 4 (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1980), 249–96.

³⁰ This explanation has been printed many times. Among them, see Michael D. Reeve, "Martial," in *Texts and Transmission. A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. L. D. Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 239–44, at 244, n. 46; and Wolfgang Maaz, *Lateinische Epigrammatik im hohen Mittelalter. Literarhistorische Untersuchungen zur Martial-Rezeption* (Hildesheim et al.: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1992), Appendix IV: Das Cognomen "Cocus," 262–67, at 267 (reference and quotation from Reeve).

makes them suitable for human consumption. Thus with his criticizing pen he removes from the human heart the bad blood of sin, and what was previously a cesspit of waste, becomes, after being cleansed of its filth, a sincere and pure receptacle of virtue (my translation).

This is high praise for the power of satire and invective, a poetic genre that was very popular in the Middle Ages and used often for criticizing corrupt Church officials and dubious papal policies.

After the epigrams *tres alios libellulos* by Martial are also mentioned, i.e. *Exennia* (= *Xenia*), *Apoforetha* (= *Apophoreta*), and a book on the feasts (*tractat de feriis*) which in fact represents a selection from the *Liber Proverbiorum* of Godfrey of Winchester.³¹

The entry on Peter Riga begins with a short introductory paragraph, in which Riga, called *vir approbate vite profundeque sciencie*, is identified as the author of the celebrated poem *Aurora*. Excerpts from Old Testament books versified by Riga follow the opening remarks. Not surprisingly, Genesis and Exodus are best represented, with 56 and 36 verses respectively. These are also the longest books in Riga's composition. It is worth mentioning here that the compiler of Cotton Titus D.XX follows the division into smaller units (*libri*) within each biblical book which we see in the first version of Riga's poem and which was removed in later redactions of the text. This suggests that our excerpter probably had access to a manuscript containing some of the earlier versions of the *Aurora*.³² The passages chosen by the compiler represent famous biblical episodes, such as the creation, the Fall, Noah's ark, the destruction of Sodom, Jacob's lament over the death of Joseph, the crossing of the Red Sea, and so on. Some of the selected passages contain allegorical interpretations with Christological prefigurations and ecclesiological significance, while others simply paraphrase the biblical story, thus remaining on the literal level of meaning. As with all the other poetic entries in the compilation, nothing in the page layout alerts the readers to the fact that they are dealing with poetry. No indentation, *litterae notabiliores* or any other particular sign in the layout distinguish between prose and verse in the

³¹ Inc.: *Vndique susceptum qui miscuit utile dulci*. Martial's and Godfrey's epigrams were often transmitted in the same manuscript. See Maaz, "Chapter I: Godefrid von Winchester – Martialis Redivivus," *Lateinische Epigrammatik im hohen Mittelalter*, 25–102.

³² For the textual tradition of the *Aurora*, see Beichner, *Aurora Petri Rigae*, vol. 1, xvii–xxvii.

manuscript. Clearly, the user of the codex was expected to figure out for himself where the poetic quotations began and ended.

It is interesting that in the entries on Martial and Riga we can observe the art of selection on another, more localized level. Excerpting from a given work is the first step in creating an epitome or an abbreviated version, and this activity represents the first level of decision-making for the compiler. The next step is to choose which other works are to be included in the collection. Thus selection happens within selection. For the modern reader, who strives to understand the meaning of these miscellaneous constructs, it is like parsing the syntax of a sentence, only here we are parsing the syntax either of an entire composite codex, when we talk about "secondary miscellanies," or of a single original compilation, when we talk of "primary miscellanies." The level of complexity in this type of research is often so intricate that some aspects will probably always remain without a convincing explanation.

The second abbreviating technique is creating a summary, which we saw in the entry entitled *Seneca*.³³ This text is just a brief outline of what each of Seneca's tragedies is about, no more, no less. No quotations are provided, and this is not really the type of entry that would be included in a typical medieval *florilegium*. It is rather what we would expect to see as part of an *accessus* to an author, an impression that is strengthened by the short biographical note that opens the entry. Such notes are sometimes included in medieval *florilegia*, but usually they are followed by excerpts from the author's body of work. Other examples of summaries are *Martianus Capella* (no. 2), *Alanus de Insulis* (no. 14), and *Curtius Rufus* (no. 23). These *summae* are clearly intended to provide a quick and easy reference to the contents of the work by compressing them into a shorter version. Whether these summaries were intended for school use is difficult to say, even though this is definitely a possibility.

In addition, there are some entries that combine the excerpting and summarizing approaches. These are, for example, *Bernardus Silvestris* (no. 3) and *Claudianus* (no. 13), where citations from each author are imbedded into a narrative describing his life and literary production. This type of literary pastiche constitutes the most original entries in the compilation because they indeed use the quotations from the classical authors to create a completely new literary reality. The technique is used even for mythical figures, such as, for example, *Perseus* (no. 5), whose

³³ See above, note 15.

story is told by paraphrasing Seneca's first tragedy and the twelfth book of Boccaccio's *Genealogy* and by citing Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Books 4 and 5) and Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* (Book 7).³⁴ The result is a new story created from the compiler's favourite sources. This is a more elaborate way of arranging the material, and in doing so the compiler shows himself to be a product of his late fifteenth-century cultural milieu. The literary pastiche incorporated into Cotton Titus D.XX show the reader how extracts from classical sources could be infused with new life and shaped into original fictional constructs.

The final way of organizing information is represented by entries such as *Philosophus* (no. 16) and *Poeta* (no. 17), which exemplify an encyclopedic approach to knowledge. The elements included in these sections are arranged alphabetically and each is very short and to the point. It is obvious that these entries are meant to serve as reference tools. In the same group we can also include *Potestates* (no. 18) and the mythological digest at the beginning of the collection (no. 1), which, even though not arranged alphabetically, are similar in their concise encyclopedic way of presenting abundant material found in various sources. These types of entries can be considered as precursors to the subject dictionaries which become popular during the Renaissance.

None of these ways of epitomizing and excerpting is strikingly original, with the possible exception of the literary pastiche. What is unusual, however, is that we find them all together in the same compilation. The anonymous author of the collection in Cotton Titus D.XX does not seem to be hampered by definitions and genre characteristics. His compilation gives the impression of being something created for the particular use and out of the particular interests of one particular learned, late-fifteenth-century individual. In this it comes close to what we associate with the term "commonplace-book," which is basically a late medieval

³⁴ The entry ends with the following statement on the sources used in its creation: *Ouidius quarto de transformatis finem et quinto in principio; uide etiam in tragediis Senece tragedia prima quomodo iste Perseus Persis bellum intulit ip-sisque uictis ibidem Persepolim edificauit* | (fol. 124v) *ciuitatem et patriam a suo nomine Persiam nuncupauit. Qualiter posterius ipse cum uxore Andromeda assumptus erat in celum et collocatus inter astra uide in Bochachio libro duodecimo, capitulo uicesimo quinto. De Perse Persei filio qui primo apud Persas adinuenit sagittas uide in Plinio libro septimo, capitulo quinquagesimo septimo et in Bochachio libro duodecimo, capitulo quadragesimo.*

and early modern information retrieval system.³⁵ The term appears in the sixteenth century, even though the genre begins to develop much earlier. The commonplace books generally contain miscellaneous amalgamations of quotations, sometimes arranged by topic, sometimes copied at random. In either case the emphasis is always on the excerpted passages or the so-called "common places" whose versatile usefulness is stressed in numerous ancient works on rhetorical theory. It suffices to quote Cicero here who says in his *De Inventione*: "We call 'common places' those arguments which could be transferred to many debates."³⁶ However, this is not what Cotton Titus D.XX is about, not exclusively, anyhow. There is much more present in it, from summaries to short carefully crafted stories, from alphabetical lists of items on a certain general topic to real epitomes of literary works. This is indeed a multifaceted and unconventional way of approaching the sources one has at one's disposal.

There is much more work to be done on this compilation, especially in relationship to its intended readership. Was it created for private or public use, was it gathered for teaching or simply reading, was it intended for general use or does it represent a personal notebook? These are important questions that need to be asked. The didactic value of the collection is unmistakable, but its potential for being a reference and research tool is also inherent.

The identity of the compiler is also of interest. Is he a master who is creating a useful teaching tool either for himself or for his pupils? If so, we would be dealing with a work that is close to his medieval models. Or is the author a student of the seven liberal arts who is excerpting from the texts that have been assigned to him in the course of his study? In this case, the compilation would be more in the tradition of the Renaissance commonplace book which was the principal support system of humanistic pedagogy. Or is the compiler a scholar who is gathering material that would be important for him in his future intellectual work? This would indeed be a methodology very similar to our own research approach.

³⁵ See Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 136.

³⁶ See Book II, Chapter XV.48: *Haec ergo argumenta, quae transferri in multas causas possunt, locos communes nominamus.*

In any case, the collection in Cotton Titus D.XX is unique in its amalgamation of themes and epitomizing approaches. It defies our efforts to slot it into a clear and well-defined category. On all levels—content, form, and intent—this is a compilation that crosses the borders between fields of knowledge and ways of thinking. Its ambiguous status is precisely what makes it such a fascinating work to study. The various epitomizing techniques used by the compiler have truly become a force of creation, because the collection in Cotton Titus D.XX is not a random or even purely thematic collection of extracts; rather it is a personalized reference guide that reflects both what the author had read and what he believed the user of the compilation should read too. It is a “primary miscellany” with attitude.

Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies:
Composition, Authorship, Use

MEDIUM AEVUM QUOTIDIANUM

SONDERBAND XXXI

Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies: Composition, Authorship, Use

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Figure 28: New Haven, CT, Beinecke Library, 1030, c. 2r.

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