Non-autonomous Texts: On a Fifteenth-Century German *Gregorius* Manuscript (Constance, City Archive, Ms. A I 1)

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The use of editions, which generally present individual texts, leads even literary scholars to forget that medieval textual witnesses are usually transmitted together with other texts in miscellanies. "If one adds," according to Lothar Bornscheuer, to these literary miscellanies

> the numerous compendia, florilegia, exemplary books, encyclopedia and so forth, one should highlight as a main characteristic of medieval literature the "compilatory" use of an immense, hardly classifiable heritage of traditions and conventions.[1]

Along with Latin texts, this observation also applies to vernacular literary production in the German-speaking realm, which during the Late Middle Ages experienced enormous growth. This process of compiling includes both literature for transferring knowledge as well as poetic and religious texts. Miscellanies rose to the position of the dominant medium in the Middle Ages for preserving and passing down texts.

The collective tradition—according to my thesis—is therefore an essential characteristic of the medieval textual tradition, for in manuscript miscellanies the texts do not necessarily simply appear accidentally and autonomously next to one another. Individual texts take on new meanings when they are transmitted in the company of related texts. And therefore a collection of related texts can produce a text on its own with its own individual meaning.

"The conventional form of transmission in the medieval codex," writes Franz M. Eybl, whose thoughtful observation I draw upon,

> is often adjacent to completely heterogeneous texts, held together above all through the commonality of the subject area or a specific intended purpose.

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1 Lothar Bornscheuer, *Topik. Zur Struktur der gesellschaftlichen Einbildungskraft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), 13–14 (my translation).

> Medieval *codices* arise in their respective historical figurations through use in a concrete location. The text itself is variable. Generally we deal with miscellanies which were combined in the scriptorium by a selective, corrective, and compiliatory process of copying. Through this proximity the individual text is not yet independent, but rather bound to supplemental texts, which authorize it or are authorized by it.[2]

During the Middle Ages one read and wrote, one could say, in textual communities. The motivation behind the specific selection of the texts for a codex and their arrangement can be aesthetic or pragmatic, thematic or liturgical. Often several of these factors come together and are joined by additional factors external to the text.

The collective way of handing down texts in miscellanies is among the most conspicuous characteristics of manuscript culture, though it has been hardly reflected upon theoretically. Therefore, in the following case study the question to be discussed is whether, in addition to established concepts such as the "openness," the "mouvance" and the "variance" of texts, a further characteristic of the medieval textual tradition should be added—the "non-autonomy" of texts.

1. Macroscopic view: The text collection of the Constance manuscript A I 1

Basing my analysis on a German-language codex from the first half of the fifteenth century, I would like to deal with the phenomenon of a text whose meaning is affected by the texts with which it is transmitted. And I would like to show which factors allow the individual texts to become dependent parts and the miscellany to become a coherent whole.

The miscellany manuscript A I 1, preserved in the City archives in Constance, belongs to the large number of simply adorned and inconspicuous vernacular books of the late Middle Ages. It is a paper manuscript which can be dated around 1425 on the basis of watermarks.[3]

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2 Franz M. Eybl, "Typotopographie. Stelle und Stellvertretung in Buch, Bibliothek und Gelehrtenrepublik," in *Topographien der Literatur. Deutsche Literatur im transnationalen Kontext*, ed. Hartmut Böhme, Germanistische Symposien, Berichtsbände 27 (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2005), 229–30 (my translation).

3 The report from July 26, 1959 completed by Gerhard Piccard reads: "Based on the watermark it can be said with absolute certainty that ms. A I, 1 was not written before 1422. Likely timeframe of the transcription: 1422–1425" (unpublished watermark report bound to the manuscript Ms. A I 1).

There are blank spaces for planned colored initials that were never filled. Nevertheless, the spaces graphically mark an implied unity.

The individual texts of the miscellany are separated from one another by a blank line and are thus recognizable as separate units. There are no headings that would have separated the texts more clearly from one another. The texts continue from one quire to the next, which precludes the possibility of subsequent assembling of originally independent parts and suggests that a purposeful plan was in place when the texts were copied. This feature also corresponds to the original, continuous foliation with Roman numerals on the recto of each folio.

The following texts are transmitted in the manuscript:

1r–4v	The Legend of Mary of Egypt
4v–12v	Wetzel von Bernau: *Margareta*
12v–45r	Hartmann von Aue: *Gregorius*
45r–63v	The Life of the Virgin Mary
63v–77v	Sibylline Prophecies
77v–85v	*Der Spiegel* [*The Mirror*] (version II from *A Lament of Our Lady*)
85v–87r	Rhyming couplets from the Ten Commandments
87r–89r	The Legend of Barbara
Subsequently added:	
89r–128v	The Chronicle of Constance in various margins there are chronological additions and a total of 42 cooking recipes, as well as medicine prescriptions
129r–v	a letter about the persecution of the Jews from 1411

The codex contains narratives, moralizing legends, biblical stories and visionary tales from the second half of the twelfth century. They are followed by a Chronicle of the City of Constance from the early fifteenth century, which was written later with a different quill and includes notes on local events that were added by readers. The codex owes its great significance in the literary tradition to the narrative legend *Gregorius* by Hartmann von Aue (fol. 12v–45r), which was composed in the 1190's and was based on an Old French draft. It is considered to be one of the most prominent German texts of courtly literature. The text picks up the Oedipus myth, relocates the plot to an Aquitanian court, and precedes the mother-son incest with a brother-sister incest.

What was initially a collection of edifying and moralizing texts (fol. 1r–89r) ends with what could be called a domestic book (fol. 89r–128v, including the marginal notes), which was expanded with a *History of the City of Constance* and other notes on local events, home and garden work,

as well as a medicinal section. The Constance miscellany thereby exhibits a clear conceptual break, which, on fol. 89r, is also optically visible through changes in the script. Apparently in the process of producing the manuscript there was a change in literary interests toward more pragmatic uses that had no connection with the original planning.

Therefore, the following discussion refers only to the texts on fol. 1r–89r, a section that was purposely created as a collection. There one finds stories that broach the issue of the fate of different female figures from different perspectives. First—embedded in a background story in which Saint Didymus appears—is a story of a girl who runs away from her parents and becomes a prostitute. A further account is provided of the circumstances that lead her to give up her sinful way of life and become a particularly devoted believer. She, the later hermit Mary of Egypt, is active as a prostitute, even on her pilgrimage:

> *Vnd do ich in dz schiff kam do fragt ma[n] mich wo ich den sold hett ze fuor lon Do antwurt ich army sünderin ich hette kaine lon ich welty ger[n] in mine[n] lip dar stekken vn[d] in geb[e]n dar.*
>
> And as I arrived at the ship, they asked me where I had the money for the crossing. And I as a poor sinner answered that I had no money and that I would like to give them my body instead (fol. 2v).

After Mary finally arrives in Jerusalem, she is still hindered from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was her objective. However, she is nevertheless able to glimpse an image of Mary that suffices to trigger a complete change of mind: *do gieng ich vnd enphieng buoss vber min schuld* ("I then went and began to repent because of my guilt," fol. 3r).

From this point on she leads an ascetic life in complete seclusion. Although in her earlier life *die ma[nnen] wol gefielent* ("men appealed very much") to her and she had *so süss lustlich fröd mit manne[n]* ("such sweet and lustful joy with men," fol. 2v–3r), the sinner is forgiven by God because of her sincere and deeply felt penance.

It is to be noted that my naming this text the *Legend of Mary of Egypt* deviates from the index reference of the City Archives of Constance and also from Burghart Wachinger's description in the introduction of his edition of *Gregorius*, where the text is recorded as the *Legend of Patriarch Didymus*, a German version of the corresponding *Vitae Patrum* leg-

end.[4] This divergence reflects the perspective of a different reader. There is no original title in the manuscript. I chose the alternative title *Legend of Mary of Egypt* after reading the text not in isolation, but rather as part of a compilation with an overarching organizational principle. The texts in fol. 1r–89r, all focus on women contextualizing the supposed *Legend of the Patriarch Didymus* in such a way that one's attention is steered very clearly towards Mary of Egypt, one of the most prominent saints of the Middle Ages.

The *Legend of Mary of Egypt* is followed by the *Legend of Margaret of Antioch* in the form of a literary adaptation by Wetzel von Bernau. The story of Margaret is preceded by a prologue that encourages readers to do their best to be virtuous:

> *[W]ess muotte ze ganczer tugend ste / der höre vnd merke dest er me / wa man[n] icht guotter dinge sage / selige dz er nit dar an v[er]zage / eran tuot das beste wa er muge / behüte sich vor valscher luge / vor hasse vnd och vor nide / vntrüw er och gar v[er]mide / hatz herhait vn[de] spot / so min[n]et in vnser herre got / vnd all die welt besunder.*
>
> He who is completely focused on virtue / He listens and notices all the more / When one does not talk sincerely / Blessed be the one, who does not thereupon despair / Who does the best that he can / bewares of false lies / Of hate and envy / Avoids infidelity / Agitation, hubris and mockery / Then our Lord and, in particular, all the world love him (fol. 4v).

After a description of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise (fol. 4v) as a prime example of sinful behavior and its consequences, a positive example follows: Margaret, the symbol of unwavering beauty, learns of the dangers of attractiveness. The pagan King Olibrius is attracted by her beauty and shows his interest in her. The Christian woman rejects his overtures and also his marriage proposal. The aggrieved man avenges himself: she is taken captive, tortured with torches and submerged under water. Although this does not harm her, eventually she is executed by decapitation. Nonetheless, the text still calls her a patron saint for child-bearing women to whom she should provide help:

> *Vn[d] hilff in weliche[m] huse / es sy da ma[n] gebere[n] sülle ain kind / wer dich durch mich denne an ruff geschwind / dz denne dz kind / nit werd kru[m] ald*

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[4] Cf. the entry in the index reference of the City Archives of Constance regarding Ms. A I 1; also *Gregorius von Hartmann von Aue*, ed. Hermann Paul and Burghart Wachinger, corrected and extended edition (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004), XIII.

lam ald blind / noch ain stum stu[m] vn[d] ane witze[n] / vnd dz es och nit der bos gaist besitze / du muot[er] an ser gebere / gnädiger her des du mich gewere.

And help in a home / In which a child is to be born / Those, who call you through me / So that the child / Will get neither buckled, lame, blind / Nor mute or mentally defected / And that the evil spirit will not possess it / [That] the mother may give birth without pain, gracious Lord, grant this to me (fol. 11v).

This type of intercession is not an irrelevant detail, but rather an indicator of a possible use and audience for the codex. A similar passage is found in the *Driu liet von der maget* [Three songs of the Virgin] from the priest Wernher (around 1172). There, a textual witness of the fourteenth century says:

Hie schult ir wizzen vnder diu: / swâ disiu buochel alliu driu / [werdent behalten], / diu maget wil des walten, / daz dâ nehein kint / werde krump noch blint / [noch] niemer werde geborn / daz êwiclîche sî verlorn, / si welle ez selbe fristen / zuo dem jungisten, / so der lîp mit manigem sêre scheidet von der sêle.

At this point you should know of this / Wherever these three books / Will be kept / There the Virgin will see to it / That no child / Is born either crippled or blind / She herself wants to take care of this / Until the Last Judgement / When the body, with much pain, separates itself from the soul (Wesle, C: V. 3027 ff.).[5]

Whoever possesses the book will give birth to a healthy child—so goes the popular belief.[6] Following this, *alle frumen wîben* ("all pious women," Wesle, C: V. 3051) are expressly requested to transcribe and distribute the Marian text. In this way the target audience of lay women is revealed. It is plausible to assume the same readership for the Constance Codex.

The third text of the miscellany is the *Gregorius* of Hartmann von Aue. The legend tells the story of a double incest: a young noble woman is impregnated by her brother. She then sets out on a pilgrimage so she can give birth to her child unnoticed and far away from the court. The child—Gregorius—is put out to sea, rescued by fishermen and raised in a monastery. The trauma of not knowing his identity leads him to travel

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5 *Priester Wernhers Maria, Bruchstücke und Umarbeitungen*, ed. Carl Wesle, 2nd edition corr. by Hans Fromm (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969).

6 Cf. also Nikolaus Henkel, "Religiöses Erzählen um 1200 im Kontext höfischer Literatur," in *Die Vermittlung geistlicher Inhalte im deutschen Mittelalter*, ed. Timothy R. Jackson, Nigel F. Palmer and Almut Suerbaum (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996), 1–21.

through the land as a knight in order to find his parents. In one of these beleaguered lands he helps a besieged princess fend off her enemies. The two marry without knowing each other's true identity—the princess is his mother. Once they know that they are mother and son, they decide to repent and live forever chaste. Gregorius later becomes Pope and both of them are released from their incestuous sin. In the epilogue the narrator lets the reader know:

> *By disen guotte[n] märe[n] / von den sündäre[n] / wie sy nach nach grosser schulde[n] / erwurbe[n]t gottes hulde[n] / dane sol nieman de hain sündig[er] ma[n] / geneme[n] so böse bilde / dz er sy gott wilde / dz er nicht gedenke also / wiss die fräfel vn[d] fro / wie soltest du v[er]wasse[n] wese[n] / sit das dis sind genese[n] / nach ir grosse[n] missetaut / so wirt din alle guott rautt / vn[d] ist dz ich genese[n] sol / so genes ich also wol* [...] *vnd ist och sin sünd krank / so kumet der selbe gedank / mit tusentfalt[er] missetaut / vn[d] wirt sin niem[er] rautt / da sol der sündig ma[n] / ein sälig bild neme[n] an / wie viel er gesündet hett / will er das sin wol werde rautt / ob er die riuwe begaut / vn[d] rechte buosse bestautt.*
>
> From these good stories / Of these sinners / Who despite great guilt / Still attain God's grace / A sinner should never / Learn such a bad lesson / So that he grows away from God / So that he does not think / Be insolent and cheerful / How could you be damned / If here they are saved / After their great outrages / Then you will be helped just the same / And if salvation is determined for me / Then I will also be saved like these. [...] And even if his sins are small / Then thousands of misdeeds / Are attended by this thought / then he can no longer be helped / The sinner should learn / A holy lesson from this / Regardless of much how he has sinned / If he wants to be saved / And when he shows repentance and genuinely repents (fol. 44v–45r).

This summary warns readers that this story should not be misunderstood as a trivialization of sinful behaviour. As the saying goes: if Gregorius and his mother-wife received forgiveness for their grave misconduct, then how much more readily will God forgive me for my lesser ones. The legend shows that one may hope for salvation even after serious offences—provided that one regrets such actions and exercises sincere penance. The comments in the epilogue are linked to the prologue, which precedes the main narrative and reflects on the sins of youth and explains the risks of delaying contrition and repentance for too long owing to the threat of unexpected death:

> *wer durch der helle scherge[n] raut / den trost zuo sin[er] juge[n]t hautt / dz er dar vff sündet / alz in die juge[n]t schündet / dz er gedenket dar an / du bist ain junger ma[n] / aller diner missetaut / der wirt noch vil guot rautt / du gebüssest sy in dem alt[er] wol / der gedenket anders denne er sol / er wirt es villicht*

entsetzet / wa[n] in des wille[n] letzet / die ehaffte nott so der bitterlich tod / den vorgedank richtet / vn[d] in das alt[er] brichet / mit aine[m] schnelle[n] ende

He who, based on the counsel of the infernal executioner / Trusts in his youth / So that he continues to sin / Because youth pushes him / To it and thinks / You are a young man / For all your misdoings / Redress will be created / You can repent at a ripe old age / He thinks otherwise than he should / His plan easily fails / For he is prevented from this wish by an act of God: / If bitter death / Takes revenge for hubris / And cuts short his lifetime / With an early end (fol. 12v).

The prologue also incorporates a parable of the Two Ways and that of the Good Samaritan. These parables tell about life as a simple, comfortable path without obstacles that, however, leads to eternal death. This path is contrasted with the path to bliss that is nonetheless cumbersome and full of obstacles. They serve as illustrations to sensitize the reader to the necessity of penitence and demonstrate the efficacy of contrition. In addition, this religious framework, by highlighting its exemplary moments, guides the reception of the text by readers.

Attached to the *Gregorius* as an additional text is the *Life of the Virgin Mary*, a unique version though based in its essentials on the apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew.[7] The passage in which the village inhabitants learn of the pregnancy of the still underage Mary is described in detail:

Owe du alt[er] trug[er] / Vn[d] du valscher phleg[er] / wie hanst du der magt so gephleg[en] / dz du bist bi ir gelege[n] / du wurt ir zuo aine[n] hüter geb[e]n / Vn[d] söltest nit bi ir sin gelege[n] / Vntz das du sin von recht söltest neme[n] [...] hetest du din bosshait nit mit ir getrib[e]n / sy wäre noch maget belibe[n].

Oh woe, you old fraud / And false caregiver / How could you care for the girl in such a manner / That you slept with her / You were placed at her side as a guardian / And were not to sleep with her / Until you could do so by right [...] If you had not performed your wickedness with her / She would still be a virgin (fol. 55v–56r).

After Joseph is initially accused of having impregnated Mary, she must face the suspicion of the village community. They maintain that she *müst von aine[n] ma[n] han* ("ought to have [...the child...] from a man," fol. 56v). The facts, however, are made clear through a judgement of God—

7 Kurt Gärtner, "Marienleben der Konstanzer Hs. A I 1," in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 2, ed. Kurt Ruh (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1987), vol. 6, 15.

Mary and Joseph pass the ordeal by water—after Mary calls upon God as her witness and again asserts her virginity:

> *Ich wil gott ze gezuge han / dz ich nie gewa[n] kaine[n] ma[n] / V[n]d also an dise[n] tag kome[n] bin / dz mich nie beruort kain bös[er] sin.*
>
> I want to have God as a witness / That I never had a man / And have arrived up to this day in this manner / So that an evil thought never touched upon me (fol. 56v).

The Life of the Virgin is followed by the Sibylline prophecy. Though concentrating on the birth and death of Jesus, it includes a listing of historical rulers and material relating to the Antichrist and thereby portraying the end of the world. The ambivalence of the text is here reduced by its context within this collection as a whole. In an instructive-moralizing textual environment, the prophecy has no propaganda function whatsoever, but rather should

> raise the reader's or listener's awareness of the imminent end of the world and the Last Judgement [...] and thereby prompt him to change his life, repent and lead a life pleasing to God.[8]

The remarks on the coming of the Antichrist substantiate the general theme of "life change" by again conspicuously stressing the problem of illegitimate pregnancies:

> *[...] end crist in der zitt wird empfange[n] in der muott[er] so vert der tiefel mit gewalt in si Also wirt si des endes crist schwang[er] in ir vnd wa[n] dan[n] die zitt ende hatt dz sich die zitt d[er] vierzig woch[en] ergatt Vn[d] si den tiefel geber[n] sol so wirt si gross vn[d] schwartz als ain kol Vn[d] zespringet ze stuke[n] alz ain glas (...) [V]nd alz er den[n] gebor[n] wirt so neme[n]t in die tiefel ze hand in ir pflicht vn[d] ler[n]t in bosshait manigfalt bis dz er wäre drissig jar alt wie er die welt sölle v[er]kere[n] [...] Vn[d] bringen die welt ze vngelobe[n] gar.*
>
> In these times the Antichrist will be conceived by his mother. The devil will violently enter her and thus she will carry the Antichrist in her. And when then the time comes to an end and the forty weeks are passed, and she shall give birth to the devil, then she will become large and black as coal and shatter like glass into pieces. [...] And when he is then born, the devils will take him by the hand in their care and will teach him much wickedness until he is thirty years old and shall pervert the world and bring it to utter loss of faith (fol. 74v-75r).

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[8] Bernhard Schnell, "Sibyllen Weissagungen (deutsch)," in *Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 8, 1141 (my translation).

These terrifying descriptions of the consequences of rape are likely to have left a lasting impression on readers. Furthermore, *The Mirror* ties in with the prophecy. This text is a mix of Marian lament and moral teachings. Here again the beauty of young women, the focus of the Legend of Margaret, plays a role: there are allusions to the transience of feminine beauty and the preeminence of internal values.

At this point the prologue of *The Mirror* should be examined more closely, since it offers insights into the target audience for the collection, reading customs, as well as contexts of use. Here a first-person narrator, who characterizes himself as a *lieben knecht* ("affectionate servant") (fol. 78r), reports on how he translates a Latin Marian lament into German:

> *Ich sass allain an eine[m] tag / un[d] na[m] für mich marie[n] klag / Ir gross qual un[d] ir pin / dz wart mir völlecliche[n] schin / an aine[m] büchelin / da vand ich in latin Geschribe[n] was die maget sprach [...] do kam ze hand in mine[n] muot / dz ich die wort die ich do vand / In tütsche wolte tuon bekant*
>
> One day I sat alone / And devoted myself to the Marian sorrow / Her great torture and her great pain / Became clear to me / With the help of a little book / There I found written down in Latin what the Virgin said [...] And it crossed my mind / That I would like to make known in German / What I discovered there (fol. 78r).

This reference to sources is followed by an instruction on reading. The text should act as a mirror to the soul and should be referred to often, in order to recognize God's goodwill:

> *Vnd land diss klain büchelin / iuw[er] sele spiegel sin / es sol der spiegl sin gena[n]t / ir sond es dik neme[n] ze hand / so müge[n]t ir gottes min[n]e / er kenne[n] wol dar in[n]e.*
>
> And let this little book / Be a mirror of your soul / It should be called The Mirror / You should often refer to it / In this way you may discover God's love (fol. 78r).

There are isolated sprinklings of Latin to evoke a scholarly tradition, such as the biblical quotation Ct 3,11:

> *Er [Salomon] sprichet in latin Egredimini filiae syon et videte regem Salomone[m] in dyademate q[uo] coronavit eu[m] mat[er] sua* (fol. 78r).

However, no knowledge of Latin is necessary to understand this passage since the quotation is repeated in German a few verses later:

> *Da von ir tohtern von syon / sehend den künig Salomon / gand uss her egredimini / und sehend wie schön der kung si*

> Daughters of Zion / See the King Solomon / Go out *egredimini* / And see how beautiful the King is (fol. 78v).

One further detail is important: the readership is often addressed directly in this text as *kind* "child" (fol. 78r–v) or *raine frowen* "pure women" (fol. 78v). This fits with the image of the target audience suggested by the texts analysed earlier, namely young women.

At the beginning it is pointed out that all those *die diss buechelin lesend od[er] höre[nd] lesen* ("who read or hear this little book read") could expect friendship and leniency from Mary if one *liset oder höret mit zucht* ("read or hear with proper disposition")—in other words in a conscientious and disciplined manner (fol. 77v). In connection with the preceding prayer to Jesus and to Mary, guidance for contemplation for the young female readership takes shape.[9] This instructive, educational attitude is taken up later, when general guidelines for ways to express emotional life, enjoyable activities, consumption of alcohol, moral and religious commitments as well as agreeable conduct with fellow men are listed:

> *Mitt rainer vn[d] mit guotter zucht / dar an lit der sele frucht / ze masse lachen vn[d] waine[n] vil / tantze[n] fliehe[n] vn[d] der welte spil / lützel rede[n] dz ist guott / die ogen twinge[n] vn[d] den muott / Guoter gebärde bis beraitt / Vnd min[n]e alle kiuschhait / alsam ain tub ainfaltig sin / Mitt masse trinken starken win / wache[n] lange betten gern / So wirt der me[n]sch ain lucern / Ob er icht hatt beschaidenhait / diu all[e]r tugende[n] krone trait / Min[n]en vn[d] minne[n]t gott / Mit fliss behalten sin gebott / ain fridliches hertze han / vn[d] lasse[n] alle[n] argen wan / Hie bi sol sin demütikait / die ist guott mit gedultekait.*
>
> The thriving of the soul / Depends on clean and good conduct / Restrained laughing and much crying / Keep yourself away from dance and worldly game / Speak little that is good / Curb eyes and spirit / Make efforts at good behavior / And love all chastity / Be innocent as a dove / Drink strong wine in moderation / Be always alert and pray gladly / In this way man becomes a light / Modesty bears the crown of the virtuous / Love God / Abide by His Commandments / Have a peaceful heart / And let all anger be / In addition, also be humble and patient (fol. 78v).

In the main section of *The Mirror*, the first-person narrator finally asks Mary to evoke her suffering at the crucifixion of Jesus; she complies and describes the painful loss of her child.

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9 Hans-Joachim Ziegeler, "Unser vrouwen klage," in *Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 10, 95.

[N]un merkend von den zehen gebott ("Now read the Ten Commandments carefully," fol. 85v), the manuscript continues. In the context of this miscellany the Ten Commandments remind readers of their own moral insufficiency and urge them to Christian acts. Transformed into a rhyming couplet poem and furnished with educational vocabulary, they supplement the remaining texts with concrete rules of conduct.

This story is followed by the *Legend of Barbara,* a cruel and dramatic story about a beautiful and strong-minded woman, who tries to resist the pagan beliefs of her father with her Christian convictions. Barbara is locked by her father in a tower with two windows; after she has a third window constructed as a sign of the Trinity, her father tries to stab her with his sword. At first saved when a fissure opens in the mountain, she is subsequently tortured and has her breasts cut off. The legend with its evocation of sexual abuse, ends with Barbara dying from her injuries. Her father and adversary thereupon meets his death:

> *Vnd also er nach de[m] berg gat mit dem volk da hatt sich beschen war ain dikken wolk Vnd bracht sinn schwebel vn[d] regen Vnd v[er]brant in[n] dz man fand flaisch noch gebain enweder Also ward er gar v[er]lore[n].*
>
> And as he went with the people to the mountain, a thick cloud arose and poured down brimstone and rain. These burned him, so that one found neither flesh nor bones. He had completely vanished (fol. 89r).

In an infernal scenario of fire and brimstone, the father is overtaken by God's punishment. Barbara, on the other hand, reached the kingdom of heaven because of her steadfast adherence to her Christian convictions.

These texts from the Constance manuscript have two main facets: the legends of saints, and a moralizing and didactic literature. The veneration of saints suggests that the collection has been tailored for lay piety. The level of complexity assumes no knowledge of theology. Instead of theological reasoning these texts are built on narratives and emotions. Sporadic Latin elements in *The Mirror* are no indication of Latin knowledge on the part of the target audience, since the passages are promptly repeated in German.

The patron saints that appear here are exclusively female, targeted at girls and women. Mary of Egypt is the patron of penitent women, Margaret of wet nurses, virgins, pregnant women as well as women desiring a

child, while Barbara is considered the patron saint of girls.[10] The Virgin Mary is also naturally deemed to be a suitable advocate for pregnancy and birth.[11]

In addition, the three saints as well as Mary are presented in the legends as adolescent women—a group which could therefore easily have identified with them. Even the acts and actions in the legends have a strong relevance to young women. There is a recognizable subtext of adolescence, sexuality, feminine charm and the associated risks. By raising the issues of prostitution, the beauty of youth, rape and unwanted pregnancy, the stories warn readers of these dangers.

The legends are combined with moral didactic tales. In this category I count the Sibylline prophecy, *The Mirror* and also the poem of the Ten Commandments. The Sibylline prophecy with the portrayal of the apocalypse and the worldly court serves to draw attention to the end of the world and the Last Judgement. Readers are invited to question their own way of life, to do penance, and to lead a life agreeable to God. *The Mirror* is a text teaching behavior and virtue, as are the Ten Commandments. In addition to serving as an example, the legends show the zeal with which the Christian notions of morality and piety should be embraced. The contents are immediately understandable: readers are to compare the idealized model with their own behavior and moral attitudes. In this way they may question their own piety. They can then re-discipline their own faith and strengthen their own virtues. Such a devout, pious and virtuous life will eventually lead them to salvation—so the promise goes.

The function of the Constance miscellany thereby becomes evident: it is an educational book aimed at young lay women. The selected texts are designed to make girls aware of dangers, such as the loss of virginity outside marriage and the social stigmatization of children born out of wedlock, and are also to be morally instructing in this regard. In the process, the theme of "sexuality" determines the moral discussion and the question of committing sin. The knowledge that is to be conveyed follows the Christian doctrine of salvation, in which the central ideas of "penitence" and "conversion" are the prerequisites for divine grace. The mode of instruction follows the principle of *imitatio* in illustrating correct behavior

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[10] Cf. the respective entries in *Lexikon der Namen und Heiligen*, ed. Otto Wimmer and Hartmann Melzer (Innsbruck: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1988).

[11] Britta-Juliane Kruse, *Verborgene Heilkünste. Geschichte der Frauenmedizin im Spätmittelalter*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte 5, 239 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1996), 157.

and the principle of deterrence in exemplifying the negative results of sexual violations or sexual misconduct.

This strategy of religious and moral instruction only functions effectively, if the manuscript is received as a whole and the readers make the corresponding mental links. Through contemplative, concentrated reading of large text units, the complex interaction of the individual texts and the overarching themes can be grasped. However, even if that was not achieved, the selection of the texts alone is enough to bring certain themes to the fore.

2. Microscopic view: the prologue to Hartmann von Aue's 'Gregorius'

While hitherto we have focused on the collection of texts as a whole, in order to comprehend the criteria for inclusion, it is now the editorial treatment of the selected texts that is of interest. For this we will focus on a small but meaningful excerpt: the prologue to Hartmann von Aue's *Gregorius* in the Constance miscellany. Only three out of six remaining textual witnesses (the fragments are not considered here) contain a prologue. One of the prologue versions is shorter than both of the others. A schematic presentation provides a clear picture of the different versions:

Miscellanies	Rome, Bibl. Apostolica Vaticana, Regin. 1354 (13th c.)	Strasbourg, Bibl. Municipale Ms. 314, Ms. 489 (formerly Johannite Library, *A 100) (14th c.)	Vienna, Austrian National Library, 2881 (15th c.)
Prologue:	without prologue	without prologue	without prologue

Miscellanies	Cologny-Genève, Bibl. Bodmer., Bod. 62 (14th c.)	Berlin, State Library, germ. qu. 979 (15th c.)	Constance, City Archives, A I 1 (15th c.)
Prologue: (Organization)	1) Topos sins of youth 2) Warning of the Last Judgement	1) Topos sins of youth 2) Warning of the Last Judgement	1) Topos sins of youth 2) Warning of the Last Judgement

3) Abel, the first hermit, as foreshadowing for the penitence of Gregorius	3) Abel, the first hermit, as foreshadowing for the penitence of Gregorius 4) Two-Path parable 5) Samaritan parable	3) Abel, the first hermit, as foreshadowing for the penitence of Gregorius 4) Two-Path parable 5) Samaritan parable

Only Constance A I 1 and Berlin, Ms. Germ. quart. 979 have an extended version of the prologue. Along with Hartmann von Aue's *Gregorius*, the Berlin manuscript includes two spiritual songs of the monk of Salzburg (*Mönch von Salzburg*)—one for the Eucharistic prayer and a praise of Mary—the Mary's Lament from Bern, a supplementary Eucharistic prayer, a prose transcription of Psalm 51 (50), and further prayers, as well as a prescription against urinary stones. Moreover, both miscellanies exhibit a similar, edifying-moralizing profile aimed at a lay audience. Their arrangement indicates that we are not dealing with coincidences of transmission but that the extended prologue was presumably perceived as "strongly situation-based"—as Volker Mertens already ascertained.[12]

It stands to reason that there was an editorial decision taken to include the *Gregorius* in the Constance text collection only with an extensive introduction. By comparing the intended use of the Constance miscellany with the version of the *Gregorius* that was included there, we can reconstruct the meaning it may have brought to its readers. The suggested purpose and use of the Constance manuscript—an educational book for young lay women—corresponds with the arrangement of the Constance *Gregorius*. Unlike the textual versions in the Vatican, Strasbourg, Viennese and the Bodmeriana manuscripts, the *Gregorius* presents itself in the Constance miscellany as expressly moralizing and educational: it includes not only the abbreviated version of the prologue (which in turn includes both the topos of the sins of youth and a warning of the coming Last Judgement as well as the foreshadowing reference to Abel) but in addition also the parables of the Two Ways and the Good Samaritan (fol. 13r–v). These two parables support the pedagogical significance of the *Gregorius*.

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12 Cf. Volker Mertens, ed., *Hartmann von Aue: Gregorius – Der arme Heinrich – Iwein*, Bibliothek des Mittelalters 8 (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2004), 826 (my translation).

This suggests reservations about selecting a story concerning the incestuous relationship of a noble brother and sister at the Aquitainian court and its scandalous results. The text is perfectly suited to raise awareness of relationships out of wedlock and on how to deal with unwanted pregnancies; but at the same time, a positive fate befalls both the female protagonist as well as her child born out of wedlock—Gregorius is selected as Pope and also his mother-aunt-wife finds salvation. This is a bold message which could not stand on its own as part of an educational book, but rather required legitimization and additional explanation. The added explanation was conferred through the prologue and enhanced via the addition of the two parables. This example shows that textual variances of medieval writings and the intended meaning of text collections can be closely connected.

3. Miscellanies as a complex medium

To what extent one sees a text as an autonomous unit as opposed to a part of a larger textual structure depends on cultural norms and habits. The typical medium of manuscript culture is the miscellany, a book that—like the Constance manuscript—unites diverse texts. Fundamentally the category "autonomy" of a text offers a wide spectrum of possibilities for gradation and had different meanings in the Middle Ages than in modern times. In the nineteenth century, the era of ambitious editions of vernacular medieval literature, German philologists highlighted independence by making individual editions of selected works. Early research thereby made medieval literature "conform to the author-text model suggested by the printed book."[13] This type of processing and presentation of literary heritage is still common practice.

In order to understand the effect of pre-modern texts in their historical milieu, it is necessary to consider their regular transmission in textual communities, textual variants, and the socio-cultural function of texts. In the case of Constance A I 1, such an approach reveals how a loosely associated group of thematically related texts could be conceptually coordinated with one another. The coherence of the texts in 1r–89r is defined via different factors: the codicological finding that the text

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[13] John Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture. Glossing the Libro de Buen Amor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 19.

distribution was carried out tactically across the individual layers and also the uniform layout of the codex.

In addition, the compiler seems to have selected and arranged the texts in order to complete an "educational book for girls." This strategy also creates connections among the texts, allowing them to become a single entity. First and foremost, the knowledge for obtaining salvation is passed on. This happens primarily via the subtext that tells of extramarital sexuality, illegitimate pregnancy and rape, and pervades the entire text collection. Moreover, in this way the texts raise awareness about the dangers specific to women and principles of sexual morals.

Summarizing the characteristics of the Constance manuscript miscellany, I would suggest six categories, which, in my opinion possibly have a wider application:

1. *Supertext:* By selecting, combining and arranging existing elements, a coherent "supertext"[14] is formed.
2. *Serial structure:* The "supertext" consists of individual texts, which are strung together.
3. *Collaborative form of production*: Text formation and book production take place separately. Along with the authors of the individual texts, the compiler also "writes" the "supertext" by selecting, arranging and making editorial decisions on the texts.
4. *Situation dependency*:[15] the text collection is tied in its communicative structures to the circumstances as well as the discourses of the time of origin of the codex.
5. *Openness of the reception*: Attention can be either focused on the meditative-edifying effect of separate texts (which corresponds with the accustomed reception of Books of Hours); or attention can be focused on the indirect insights and teachings of the

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14 I borrow the term from the study by Michele Camillo Ferrari, *Il 'Liber sanctae crucis' de Rabano Mauro. Testo–immagine–contesto*, Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters 30 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999). Ferrari defines "supertexts" as texts that come together in a codex and form themselves into a semantic unit.

15 Cf. Christian Kiening, "Medialität in mediävistischer Perspektive," *Poetica* 39 (2007): 344; Peter Strohschneider, "Situationen des Textes. Okkasionelle Bemerkungen zur 'New Philology'," in *Philologie als Textwissenschaft. Alte und Neue Horizonte*, ed. Helmut Tervooren and Horst Wenzel, special issue of *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 116 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1997), 62–68.

doctrine of salvation and sexual morals by reading and understanding the text collection in its entirety.

These attributes of medieval text transmission can be summarized and condensed into the characteristic of "non-autonomy":

6. *Non-autonomy*: The individual texts of a miscellany may be understood as separate units and be independently received; however, an important dimension of meaning—and exactly that which sheds light on the "circumstances in which transmission educates, maintains and changes"[16]—reveals itself through the reception of the individual texts as dependent parts of an (intended) collection.

* * *

Manuscript culture often reproduced older sources. A creative element was the act of connecting texts into new semantic entities. Our analysis of Constance A I 1 shows how miscellanies—the most widely used medium of textual dissemination of the Middle Ages—may have functioned.

Strategies may be developed both for editions and for the understanding and interpretation of fiction in order to provide "access to medieval tradition, which is based on the medium."[17] In so doing we can meet both the demands of "New Philology"[18] and do justice to manuscript culture. Thus, the interpretation of texts of manuscript culture would no longer concentrate on individual texts, but rather on the contexts of manuscripts. Instead of projecting the perspective of the printing press era onto manuscript culture, the specific conditions of manuscript culture should be taken into account through stronger consideration of the "non-autonomy" of texts and the compilation of manuscripts. Thanks to this approach, even canonical texts such as the *Gregorius* can be perceived in a different light—such as here in the Constance miscellany A I 1 as part of an educational book created for lay women.[19]

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16 Kiening, "Medialität," 344 (my translation).

17 Kiening, "Medialität," 293 (my translation).

18 See *Speculum* 65, no 1 (1990), which is devoted to "The New Philology." Cf. also *Philologie als Textwissenschaft*.

19 Ulrich Ernst's ascription of Constance A I 1 to a monastic setting (Reichenau) should be corrected. Cf. Ulrich Ernst, *Der 'Gregorius' Hartmanns von Aue. Theologische Grundlagen – legendarische Strukturen – Überlieferung im geistlichen Schrifttum*, Ordo 7 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2002), 233 and 251.

Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies:
Composition, Authorship, Use

MEDIUM AEVUM QUOTIDIANUM

SONDERBAND XXXI

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Table of Contents

III. Use

Figures

Figure 17: St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, 692, p. 13, *Cena nuptialis*.
Figure 18: St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, 692, cover.
Figure 19: Paris, BNF, lat. 17371, fol. 153 (electronic elaboration).
Figure 20: Paris, BNF, lat. 528, fol. 71v (electronic elaboration).
Figure 21: Paris, BNF, lat. 5340, fol. 146v, 11th century.
Figure 22: Wiesbaden, Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, 3004 B 10, fol. 1v: *Salvator Mundi* (copyright Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv). See also the colour plate at the end of the volume.
Figure 23: Wiesbaden, Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, 3004 B 10, fol. 2v (copyright Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv). See also the colour plate at the end of the volume.
Figure 24: Wiesbaden, Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, 3004 B 10, fol. 3r (copyright Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv). See also the colour plate at the end of the volume.
Figure 25: Wiesbaden, Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, 3004 B 10, fol. 24v: *The Adoration of the Magi* (copyright Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv). See also the colour plate at the end of the volume.
Figure 26: New Haven, CT, Beinecke Library, 1030, c. 52v.
Figure 27: New Haven, CT, Beinecke Library, 1030, c. 53r.
Figure 28: New Haven, CT, Beinecke Library, 1030, c. 2r.

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