

## Introduction

Medieval manuscript miscellanies are ubiquitous in modern manuscript collections. They easily form the single largest group of medieval manuscripts and include texts in all medieval languages. Especially by the end of the fifteenth century, writing and collecting texts was expanding in medieval society and the use of paper rather than expensive parchment meant that more people could hope to possess their own copies of texts in manuscript form. In this way, this manuscript type is most relevant for researching the history of everyday life. Yet until recently miscellanies have not attracted much scholarly interest in their own right.<sup>1</sup> The lack of scholarly concern may stem from the sheer difficulty of defining them. One could see them simply as codices that are not easy to categorize as far as their contents are concerned, as a group of “leftovers” within medieval lists of library holdings, as well as within contemporary catalogues of medieval manuscripts. As modern scholars have recently turned their attention to medieval manuscripts as historical artifacts in their own right, as part of “materialist philology” and as part of the flourishing fields of the history of the book and of reading, they have begun to re-examine the ways that medieval manuscripts were created and the purposes that they could serve for their owners and their communities.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The most important recent volumes on the topic are Edoardo Crisci and Oronzo Pecere, eds., *Il codice miscellaneo. Tipologie e funzioni. Atti del Convegno internazionale Cassino 14–17 maggio 2003*, a special issue of *Segno e testo: International Journal of Manuscripts and Their Transmission* 2 (2004), Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel, eds., *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), and R. Jansen-Sieben and H. van Dijk, eds., *Codices miscellaneorum*, a special issue of *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* 60 (1999). Among ongoing projects, there is, for example, “The Dynamics of the Medieval Manuscript: Text Collections from a European Perspective” (for details see: <http://www2.hum.uu.nl/project/medievalmanuscript/index.htm>, accessed January 11, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel, “Introduction,” in *The Whole Book*, 1. See Stephen Kelly and John J. Thompson, “Imagined Histories of the Book: Current Paradigms and Future Directions,” in *Imagining the Book*, ed. Stephen

Such a focus has forced investigators to rethink the role of miscellanies and to confront the inadequacy of our current definitions. This relatively recent approach to the study of manuscripts demands that one considers the relationship of a particular text to the codex in which it is conveyed, asserting that the way that a text was read and interpreted could have been affected by the surrounding contents.<sup>3</sup> If one accepts that the manuscript itself is an object worthy of study and that its arrangement may affect the way one regards a text, then a miscellany, “a manuscript into which many things of diverse content have been copied,” seems to require a closer look. As Nichols and Wenzel have noted, that kind of definition can be misleading by implying an arbitrary principle of organization for contents when in fact the method of organization could be quite clear; such a definition “does not even provide an accurate taxonomy for cataloguers, editors, and historians of bookmaking, let alone literary scholars.”<sup>4</sup>

The question is, how does one make sense of such a manuscript? How does one define and approach it? In their volume, Nichols and Wenzel outlined certain areas that require attention:

1. codicological features, such as the physical make-up of a volume, and especially whether it is composed of fascicles;
2. the subject matter of a volume, that is how it is arranged and whether it possesses thematic unity;
3. intentionality: is there a unifying purpose for the material collected and if so, what is it, and does it serve a function for a group of readers?<sup>5</sup>

A number of recent scholars have concentrated on Nichols and Wenzel’s first point, the codicological issues. The basic terminology has already been developed (e.g., by J. Peter Gumbert,<sup>6</sup> Marilena Maniaci,<sup>7</sup> and Denis

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Kelly and John J. Thompson, *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 1–16.

<sup>3</sup> Nichols and Wenzel, “Introduction,” 2–3.

<sup>4</sup> Nichols and Wenzel, “Introduction,” 3.

<sup>5</sup> Nichols and Wenzel, “Introduction,” 6.

<sup>6</sup> J. Peter Gumbert, “Codicological Units: Towards a Terminology for the Stratigraphy of the Non-Homogenous Codex,” in *Il codice miscellaneo*, 17–42.

<sup>7</sup> Marilena Maniaci, *Terminologia del libro manoscritto* (Rome: Istituto centrale per la patologia del libro, 1996).

Muzerelle<sup>8</sup>). Gumbert helpfully sums up the research of Maniaci and Muzerelle in his article and stresses the importance of two terms: the codicological unit and the composite manuscript. He defines a codicological unit as "a discrete number of quires, worked in a single operation and containing a complete text or set of texts (unless the work has for some reason been broken off in an unfinished state)."<sup>9</sup> Gumbert notes that many volumes are single codicological units, but many others are not. These he calls composite manuscripts or composites, that is, manuscripts that contain two or more codicological units. As an example of this kind of manuscript, he refers to a volume in the Leiden BPL collection, which boasts an eleventh-century text by Augustine, a thirteenth-century copy of Hugh of St. Victor's *De institutione novitiorum*, a thirteenth-century booklet with excerpts from classical works, and a fourteenth-century *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam* by Guillelmus de Boldensele. They were bound together just after 1400 by the Benedictines of Saint-Jacques of Liège, seemingly "in an action to clean up all the small fry of separate booklets that had been cluttering up the top shelves of the library."<sup>10</sup> Gumbert's point is that in such a case, each unit should be judged on its own and not in relation to each other; he sees the principle of organization of the units as a quite arbitrary decision of a given moment.<sup>11</sup> His terms will be taken up by a number of the contributors to this volume, though they may not all agree with his views.

Nichols and Wenzel's second and third points can be harder to work out and can also be subject to disagreement: is the subject matter of a volume clearly arranged and is there a thematic unity? When point two is murky, one can ask whether there is a unifying purpose for the material collected and if so, what is it, and does it serve a function for a group of readers? The problem here, as Derek Pearsall points out in a rather humorous piece, is that scholars can be a little too ingenious in finding organization and clarity where it may not really exist.<sup>12</sup> He does

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<sup>8</sup> Denis Muzerelle, *Vocabulaire codicologique. Répertoire méthodique des termes français relatifs aux manuscrits* (Paris: CEMI, 1985). For further bibliography, see the contributions of Alessandro Zironi and Eva Nyström in this volume.

<sup>9</sup> Gumbert, "Codicological Units," 23.

<sup>10</sup> Gumbert, "Codicological Units," 26.

<sup>11</sup> One should, however, not assume that composite manuscripts consisted only of "old and foreign booklets." Gumbert's point is that we need to take into account the makeup of a manuscript before we make judgements about its contents.

<sup>12</sup> Derek A. Pearsall, "The Whole Book: Late Medieval English Manuscript Miscella-

make some useful suggestions in this regard. One is that investigators should separate out anthologies and commonplace books from the truly miscellaneous volumes. He defines anthologies as volumes whose contents are arranged around a single purpose and states that “the purposes that are described in an anthology or anthology-booklet have to be specific, direct and fairly obvious to the imagined contemporary reader.”<sup>13</sup> Examples of anthologies in Middle English literature would be collections of extracts from the *Confessio Amantis* or from *The Fall of Princes*. Such a definition would seem to fall under Nichols and Wenzel’s point two. Sylvia Huot’s piece on collection of meditative texts in a manuscript designed for a French-speaking queen provides a nice example of what an anthology looks like.<sup>14</sup>

Commonplace books, too, can clearly be discerned as a “classic type of miscellany with a clearly defined aim and little or no unity of contents.”<sup>15</sup> These were collections of extracts organized under headings known as *loci communes*. Pearsall further emphasizes that these volumes must contain material that could be of interest only to the reader himself or herself—records of life, family records, lists of rents, etc. This distinction would also be an illustration of Nichols and Wenzel’s point three, if there is a unifying purpose behind the collection.

Many scholars have noted that it is not unusual to find sections of uniformity of theme or content within otherwise seemingly miscellaneous manuscripts. When found within random sermon collections, Wenzel finds the presence of “a partial arrangement by topic or occasion” to be “an interesting feature” but “to pose no problem for the overall taxonomy.”<sup>16</sup> Pearsall calls these phenomena “spasms of planning,” and speculates that many manuscripts are comprised of what the compiler had to hand, perhaps one or two long texts or items on related themes and then whatever else was lying around.<sup>17</sup>

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nies and Their Modern Interpreters,” in *Imagining the Book*, ed. Kelly Stephen and John J. Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 17–29.

13 Pearsall, “The Whole Book,” 21.

14 Sylvia Huot, “A Book Made for a Queen: The Shaping of a Late Medieval Anthology Manuscript (B.N. fr. 24429),” in *The Whole Book*, 123–43.

15 Pearsall, “The Whole Book,” 23–24.

16 Siegfried Wenzel, “Sermon Collections and Their Taxonomy,” in *The Whole Book*, 18.

17 Pearsall, “The Whole Book,” 25.

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The aim of the Prague conference was to bring together scholars who have been working with medieval manuscripts in order to attempt to grasp the elusive nature of miscellanies and to conceptualize the ambiguity either of their material form, or of their content, or—most frequently—of both. The participants were instructed to consider three points—composition, authorship, and use, areas aligning closely with those of Nichols' and Wenzel's volume but which perhaps address the notion of authorship more directly. Perhaps the most surprising element was the varying degree of the participants' engagement with the actual materiality of texts: there was a clear tension among participants stressing the primary role of codicology and palaeography as opposed to those who saw the core in philology (mainly contextualized textual analysis). The heated debates proved that the subject is very much alive, dynamic, and worthwhile.

This volume presents the results of that encounter. Some of the contributions deal with Latin texts, others with vernacular (German, Dutch, Italian, French, and English). Some address the subject of the interpretability of miscellanies as meaningful coherent wholes, others show the dependence of a particular text's meaning on the material context in which it is found. Some authors use primarily philology, others combine it with codicology, palaeography, or other sciences. Some present complex tables and introduce new generally applicable criteria, others simply describe the contents. They also differ in the degree of the medieval compiler's authorship and intent that they argue for. Nevertheless, they all agree that, although one cannot simply claim that there is a unity in the apparent variety and a clear purpose behind the seeming randomness, an exploration of texts in their material contexts offers insights into the manuscripts' texts that would not be gained otherwise.

While each contribution is based on a particular case study, it also attempts to conceptualize and draw more widely applicable conclusions. Arranging the contents of the volume proved to be somewhat difficult. An obvious division would have been to concentrate on the three main areas of our interest: *composition*, *authorship*, and *use*. Yet, these are very closely tied to each other and actually inseparable. In fact every study included here concentrates on *composition*, be it composing a new text out of excerpts and other texts (Gioanni, Rivers, Dinkova-Bruun), composing a whole codex or a part of it by selecting particular texts (Zironi, Schepers, Nyström, Müller, Doležalová, and also Rivers), placing a text

into a particular context among other texts (Wenzel, del Puppo, Watkins), or devising accompanying images to go with a text (Cohen). After some debate, the editors decided to begin the volume with the papers that most directly addressed questions of taxonomy and methodology for miscellanies; then to include the papers closely linked to authorship and the influence of accompanying texts in a manuscript on other texts (what Diana Müller calls the non-autonomy of medieval texts); and finally to turn to use. Within each section, the essays are arranged chronologically.

Thus for issues of taxonomy, Greti Dinkova-Bruun helpfully distinguishes between 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,” and 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.” Dinkova-Bruun concedes that the organizing principle may not always be obvious, but 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.” In her presentation of a particular “primary miscellany,” she attempts to go beyond simple subject descriptions and uncover the underlying intentions of the compiler of this unique selection of texts.

Adam S. Cohen draws on Dinkova-Bruun’s taxonomy to develop his analysis of Clm. 14731 in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, seeing it as a perfectly typical miscellany—both a primary and secondary miscellany. In noting both types of miscellany within the same volume, Cohen seems to add currency to the notion of “spasms of planning” that were discussed above. His overall focus is the relationship between text and image. Addressing the problem of the motivation in creation of the codex and its subsequent use, he manages to show that illuminations in a twelfth-century miscellany from Regensburg that have hitherto seemed randomly selected are actually connected to the texts. He sets the case carefully into the historical and cultural contexts, showing its value for our understanding of the spiritual and intellectual monastic education of the Regensburg area.

Eva Nyström analyses a fifteenth-century Greek miscellany, *Codex Upsaliensis Graecus 8*. Inspired by the codicological work done by Gumbert and Maniaci, she develops a methodology to use with

miscellanies that takes into consideration both structure and contents. For structure, she insists on the need to determine whether a given miscellany is homogeneous or whether or not several codicological units can be discerned. Are these units connected by paper, layout, script, decorations, et cetera, or are they unrelated in origin? In terms of content, one must ask whether the texts—within and also across codicological units—are related in subject matter, in genre, chronologically, or in other ways. Nyström draws up a set of parameters to screen her manuscript for codicological criteria, which includes noting points such as the quire boundaries, external damage to outer leaves, and different quire construction. Nyström determines that the book in question was the work of a professional scribe, and that the book “seems to have functioned as a personal one-volume library, consisting of texts worthy of keeping for the sake of their usefulness as model texts, as treasuries, in some cases for the interesting subject matter and, probably, in other cases for the sheer joy of reading.”

Another group of papers focuses more directly on questions of authorship and how the meaning of texts may be altered in a manuscript by the presence of other texts. Diana Müller contributes to the general discussion on non-autonomy of medieval texts, and her example is followed by Siegfried Wenzel and Kimberly Rivers, each interpreting particular texts in their material surroundings. The idea that the meaning of a medieval text is closely dependent on the other texts that surround it in a codex has already been explored for a number of texts, especially vernacular ones.<sup>18</sup> In her discussion of *Gregorius* by Hartmann von Aue within, as she shows, an “educational book for young lay women,” Müller presents both the “macroscopic” level of composition of the codex contents and the “microscopic” level of comparison of the individual manuscript witnesses of the text. She employs the concept of the non-autonomy of texts to suggest six categories of analysis in general for medieval miscellanies: the idea of a “supertext” in the manuscript (such as an educational book for young lay women), that is comprised of a “serial structure” of individual texts. These are united by a “collaborative form of production, organized by the compiler. The meaning of the

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<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., Fred C. Robinson, “Old English Literature in its Most Immediate Context,” in *Old English Literature in Context*, ed. John D. Niles (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1980), 11–29; Joyce Tally Lionarons, “Introduction: Manuscript Context and Materialist Philology,” in *Old English Literature in its Manuscript Context*, 1–9.

text collection is “situationally dependent.” In addition Müller stresses the “openness of the reception” of separate texts within the “supertext” or of the insights of reading the collection as a whole. Finally, she suggests that all five characteristics can be condensed into the idea of the non-autonomy of texts, that the meaning of an individual text may be revealed through its transmission as a “dependent part of an (intended) collection.”

Siegfried Wenzel’s study of the manuscript transmission of *artes praedicandi* surprises by the observation that even the most complete *ars praedicandi* never travelled alone. Such texts were usually accompanied by other theological works and often by other *artes praedicandi*. This tendency is even more marked for shorter *artes*. Wenzel rejects the possibility that the manuscript compilers were attempting to create an anthology of *artes praedicandi*, because these works generally do not stand alone within the manuscript. Rather, they travel with other types of works of obvious interest to preachers, such as concordances to the gospels, lists of the books of the Bible, and the like. Wenzel sees the explanation for this phenomenon in the notion that there was not a fixed or uniform technique of preaching to be learned, but rather that one needed to have access to different types of advice and examples. His study does indeed tell us more about the role and meaning of these texts, and thus supports the notion of their non-autonomy.

Various notions of medieval authorship have been hotly debated in medieval studies,<sup>19</sup> and the specific context of medieval miscellanies with

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<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., Daniel Hobbins, *Authorship and Publicity before Print: Jean Gerson and the Transformation of Late Medieval Learning* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988); *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism 2: The Middle Ages*, ed. Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Jan Ziolkowski, “Cultures of Authority in the Long Twelfth Century,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 108:4 (2009): 421–48; Kevin Dunn, *Pretexes of Authority: The Rhetoric of Authorship in the Renaissance Preface* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994); Elizabeth Andersen, ed., *Autor und Autorschaft im Mittelalter: Kolloquium Meissen 1995* (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1998); Virginie Greene, ed., *The Medieval Author in Medieval French Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Sebastian Coxon, *The Presentation of Authorship in Medieval German Narrative Literature 1220–1290*, Oxford Modern Languages and Literature Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001); Stephen Partridge and Eric Kwakkel, eds., *Author, Reader, Book: Medieval Authorship in Theory and Prac-*

a number of degrees of authorial intervention and intention behind the individual compilations presents a special challenge to the current discourse. While, again, every study in this volume touches on the issue, it is addressed in detail by Kimberly Rivers. Rivers begins with an analysis of a small tract *Ex Johanne de hysdinio de memoria* as far as its contents (extracted from Jean de Hesdin's *Commentary on Job*) and purpose are concerned. Considering its place within a miscellaneous codex, Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, 1075, among treatises on the art of memory and on meditation, she is able to draw general conclusions about the implications of Benedictine monastic reform.

Lucie Doležalová, while trying to offer possible reasons for a scribe copying the same text several times, discusses the library of a curious wandering monk, Gallus Kemli from St. Gall, and links three of his miscellaneous codices as subsequent revisions of collections of "useful material." Her paper illustrates the gradually growing role of personal interests of scribes and compilers in the Later Middle Ages.

Discussions of the use of miscellanies are usually complicated, because very little explicit evidence on actual manuscript use survives. The intricacies of exploring this subject are again apparent in all the contributions but are shown especially well by Alessandro Zironi, Stéphane Gioanni, Csaba Németh, Kees Schepers, Dario del Puppo, and Elizabeth Watkins. Alessandro Zironi shows a unity of purpose (and, consequently, of use as well) in a Carolingian volume that is miscellaneous by all other criteria. After carefully delineating the codicological structure of his manuscript, he demonstrates that it was likely intended as a kind of *schola monachorum*, useful for advanced study in rhetoric, Greek, and astronomical computing. His case is also an especially apt example of the fruits that the cooperation of philology with codicology and paleography may bring.

Stéphane Gioanni shows the shifting purposes behind compiling extracts from the Church Fathers as well as the transformation of the function and reception of such collections of excerpts. His study reveals that such collections helped to establish the authority of patristic authors in the Early Middle Ages. Later, they helped to buttress contemporary

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*tice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011); Slavica Ranković et al., eds., *Tradition and the Individual Talent: Modes of Authorship in the Middle Ages* (Toronto: PIMS, 2012). Note also the number of conferences on the topic, e.g., *Medieval and Early Modern Authorship* (Geneva, 2010), or *Auctor et auctoritas in Latinis Medii Aevi litteris* (Benevento, 2010).

opinions during theological disputes, such as the Eucharistic Controversy in the eleventh century. His example is thus focused on high-medieval text unified in its material aspects (one scribe, one time and place of origin, the same parchment or paper) but in fact composed from miscellaneous extracts.

Like Gioanni, Csaba Németh also analyses collections of extracts, in this case of “theological distinction.” After he defines this type characteristic of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, he examines the purpose and function of collections of distinctions, which he sees as a special type of *florilegium*. He argues that the flexible form of distinctions made them easy to collect; however, once they had been gathered together, their anonymity and brevity made the subsequent collections subject to easy disintegration. Using a particular example, he also shows how these collections could be used as the basis of biblical commentaries.

Following in the footsteps of *The Whole Book* and other studies,<sup>20</sup> Kees Schepers seeks a unity of purpose and use in compositions of especially miscellaneous miscellanies to find coherence in what seems incoherent at first. He carefully uncovers the possible use of a voluminous codex containing a wide variety of Middle Dutch devotional texts, into which was pasted an assortment of drawings. It would seem to be the result of a very personal selection, yet, judging from its physical appearance, it was designed to be used by a community. His analysis points to an urban group of lay readers impatient with clerics and wishing to create their own devotional library.

Two final contributions address the changing roles and shifts of meaning connected to re-positioning (re-contextualization) of texts. Dario del Puppo discusses the enduring fascination with Brunetto Latini’s *Tresor* during the Renaissance in spite of its outdatedness and

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<sup>20</sup> A nice example is the study of the miscellany contained in Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, C.58. Its contents were first carefully described and published by Jakob Werner (Jakob Werner, *Über zwei Handschriften der Stadtbibliothek in Zürich. Beiträge zur Kunde der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters* [Aarau, 1904]). Jean-Yves Tilliette then masterfully analysed the design and purpose of this miscellany: see his “Le sens et la composition du florilège de Zurich (Zentralbibliothek, ms. C 58). Hypothèses et propositions,” in *Non recedet memoria eius. Beiträge zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters im Gedenken an Jakob Werner (1861–1944)*, ed. Peter Stotz, *Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters* 28 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1995), 147–67.

considers the medieval and early modern notions of and attitudes to the fantastic, science, and philosophy.

Elizabeth Watkins analyzes fragments of codex London, BL, Cotton Vitellius D.III, which was almost completely burnt. The composition of this intriguing miscellany, including both French and English romances, was very probably the result of Sir Robert Cotton's later interference, rather than an indication of medieval literary taste. Thus, Watkins nicely shows the omnipresent dangers of overinterpretation in analyzing the contents of codices.

Although this volume does not attempt to suggest a line of development of miscellanies during the Middle Ages, the chronological order of the studies within the sections makes the gradually growing tendency towards personal selection within miscellanies apparent. In addition, the ubiquity of miscellanies especially in the Late Middle Ages becomes obvious. However, this is surely due to the change of historical, social, and material conditions (especially the rise of universities, the popularity of mendicant orders, and the use of paper instead of parchment) rather than a development of a "genre." Since most of the work to date has taken the form of case studies, it is difficult to decide what is common and what is unusual. Moreover, an agreed terminology is lacking, although certain descriptive phrases reappear, such as "personal interests," "useful material," or "practical relevance." Indeed, the late medieval miscellanies in particular often seem to have served as personal encyclopaedias and handbooks, as a source of condensed knowledge otherwise available only in thick volumes. The combination of fact and fiction, personal devotion and general prescriptions, or science and entertainment they present is perhaps a characteristic feature of this type which seems to be centred on selected easily accessible practical information. At the same time, however, these miscellanies do not tend to be exhaustive or fully coherent.

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Each of the studies included in this volume cautiously establishes an argument for some type of a unity of purpose or use behind a specific miscellany. It should, however, be kept in mind that such a guiding purpose is not the rule. As Vincent Gillespie puts it: "Miscellany manuscripts are frequently governed by an inscrutable internal logic and even more often by

the random acquisition of material.”<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, even a “random” collection is never absolutely random: one can only gather what is accessible at a certain time and place, which means the choice is certainly not unlimited and is dependent on historical, intellectual, and social conditions.

To give a full description of a medieval miscellany, with all codicological, palaeographical, and philological aspects included, is a very difficult task, and surely one of the reasons why the catalogues of medieval manuscripts have become thicker in recent years. Such a description can be most revealing but the wealth of detail may obfuscate the patterns. While careful descriptions of medieval codices should surely be the starting point of any enquiry into miscellanies, more precise typology should also be developed, i.e., terminology that goes beyond general vague titles like “pastoral,” “moral,” or “spiritual” miscellany. Notwithstanding several illuminating studies addressing these issues,<sup>22</sup> much remains to be done.

The tension between randomness and order, the question of recoverability of intention, and the problems of identification of meaning form part of any historical enquiry. This volume stresses the necessity to study medieval texts in their material context, that is, in the immediate context in which they were transmitted. Looking at the material form of texts enables us to see the actual way they “lived” (were read, copied, adjusted, and understood) during the Middle Ages, it opens up for us the everyday experience of textual reception. Thus we move away from mere philological analysis into actually “touching” the Middle Ages. This context may be time-consuming to study and difficult to interpret but is undeniably relevant and opens up new possibilities of research.

Lucie Doležalová and Kimberly Rivers

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<sup>21</sup> Vincent Gillespie, “Vernacular Books of Religion,” in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375–1475*, ed. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 325.

<sup>22</sup> E.g., see Daniel Hobbins’ analysis of a new type of text he calls “late medieval tract,” which appeared and quickly spread in the fifteenth century, “The Schoolman as Public Intellectual: Jean Gerson and the Late Medieval Tract,” *The American Historical Review* 108 (2003): 1308–37; see also Franz Josef Worstbrock’s article on late medieval condensations of knowledge: “*Libri pauperum*. Zu Entstehung, Struktur und Gebrauch einiger mittelalterlicher Buchformen der Wissensliteratur seit dem 12. Jahrhundert,” in *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, ed. Christel Maier et al., Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 70 (Munich: Fink, 1996), 41–60.

Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies:  
Composition, Authorship, Use

MEDIUM AEVUM QUOTIDIANUM

SONDERBAND XXXI

Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies:  
Composition, Authorship, Use

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