**Making History with Manuscripts: Response**

*Jane Gilbert*

Keywords: historical desire, claiming kin, scale, community, manuscripts

In this volume, highly specialized techniques of scholarly analysis that require very close reading – literally, long periods spent staring at or handling pages – are skillfully deployed to show how medieval manuscripts "make history" through the minutiae of their physical presentation. Tiny material details connect intimately with such immaterial phenomena as "theories of authorship, rhetoric, [or] philosophy of history" (Wilson, X).[1] The essays here show how medieval people's aspirations to historical significance are asserted not only through textual content but also through such practices as script, hand, page layout, images (including absent ones), compilation, and correction.

Medieval philosophy and intellectual historians, on the one hand, and literary critics, philologists, paleographers, and codicologists, on the other, do not always take an interest in each others' fields. Excellent counter-examples nevertheless abound. Since this project was developed at a workshop generously hosted by the Medieval Studies Workshop and the Center for Medieval and Early Modern Studies at Stanford University, in November 2022, I highlight Stanford contributions to an ever-increasing range of scholarship that bridges disciplinary divides. Elaine Treharne's recent *Perceptions of Medieval Manuscripts*, which

[1] Further references to essays in the present volume will be given in parentheses in the text, in the form: Author, page number. I also indicate author names in parentheses where their essay furnishes a particularly clear example of a particular point; readers will no doubt find many other connections.

deploys the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty to bridge the gap that traditionally separates physical manuscript details from large medieval understandings of the world, can valuably be read alongside the essays here.[2] We may see in the practices of medieval manuscript makers a kind of "unthought" medieval culture, on the model of Marisa Galvez's "unthought medievalism"; that is, one that expresses itself not in academic discourse but in imaginative expansions across different media and practices. Understanding such "unthinking" opens up new dialogues and modes to us.[3] The intellectual project represented by this volume stretches far beyond Stanford, of course: the contributors to this volume were trained and work in various countries, outside and within the English-speaking academic world, and their essays draw on regional as well as international traditions and networks. This collection is one, fine, demonstration of the richness of bringing together different scholarly traditions.

In writing this response, I aim to draw together several themes that emerge from the volume: historical desires of various sorts; the claiming of kin; modifications in scale; interrelations between time and space. Some of these themes I see in all the essays, in different ways and to different degrees; others characterize only some essays but develop more richly when the collection is read in its entirety. The manuscripts discussed in detail in these essays emerge as singular objects that deploy these (and other) instruments as they "make history" (Ruhland).

[2] Elaine Treharne, *Perceptions of Medieval Manuscripts: The Phenomenal Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

[3] Marisa Galvez, "Unthought Medievalism," *Neophilologus* 105, no. 3 (2021): 365–89. From Stanford, see also Kathryn Starkey, *Reading the Medieval Book: Word, Image, and Performance in Wolfram von Eschenbach's "Willehalm"* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004).

**Historical desires**

Among the immaterial phenomena that the essays in this volume show to be conjured out of material minutiae, the force and variety of historical desires is striking. Primary among these is the desire to forge a meaningful place in history and thereby to craft a historical significance that will satisfy the manuscript-making subjects in their particular historical situation. As conceived in the Christian Middle Ages, history itself does not need to be given significance by human makers; a grand narrative, it awards or withholds significance to particular events, people, and so on.[4] To forge a meaningful place within it is therefore to claim a share or role in this divinely ordained scenario. History emerges as an ambiguous fantasy, both transcending contingency and radically contingent on human history-making actions. The challenge facing those who would make history with a manuscript is, therefore, how to make their particular manuscript historically meaningful by connecting it, or allowing it to connect, to greater notions of History.

The essays collected in *Making History with Manuscripts* bring to light how this "will to history" (to borrow from Nietzsche) takes a number of forms in medieval manuscripts. For instance: through such devices as narrative interpolation (Boitani), textual compilation (Ravenhall), annotation (Brix), or play with missing or self-referentially gappy images (Richards), the history-making manuscript emerges here as what Henry Ravenhall, drawing on Deleuze and

[4] A three-tiered distinction between "history" as events, narrative, and concept is elaborated in the Introduction (Ruhland, XXX). My use of the terms "history" and "historical" is indebted to Ruhland's formulation while also differing somewhat.

Guattari, calls an "assemblage."[5] The history-making assemblage — a thing made up of variable relations and contingent events — is designed as a lure for historical significance. Gaps just ask to be filled in, glosses or juxtapositions urge us to try out different interpretations, any order invites re-jigging. Examining a "historied" (*historié*, "illustrated") manuscript of the *Ovide moralisé*, Christopher Richards argues that because (all kinds of) holes or absences in manuscripts activate our desire to plug them, they function as *mises en abyme* of the inexhaustibility of meaning and knowledge production. Indeed, the manuscript production process in early fourteenth-century Paris, where text is inscribed around spaces where illustrations will later be provided, means that "[g]aps structure all *histoires*-images because all *histoires*-images begin as gaps which they subsequently occlude" (XX). Richards extends this principle also to verbal histories, marked by inevitably incomplete information and by the need for (inexhaustible) interpretation. Such gaps are invitations and provocations to audience members to participate in the history-making process — to dance with history, we may say.[6] No doubt history-making manuscripts thereby feed our fantasies of definitive closure and final assignment of meaning; but there is also significant pleasure to be got from filling gaps temporarily or partially, in such a way that more gaps emerge,

[5] Thomas Nail objects to "assemblage" as the standard English term for Deleuze and Guattari's *agencement*: "While an assemblage is a gathering of things together into unities, an *agencement* is an arrangement or layout of heterogenous elements." He summarizes two major philosophical aspects of the *agencement*: "the rejection of unity in favor of multiplicity, and the rejection of essence in favor of events"; Thomas Nail, "What is an Assemblage?" *SubStance* 46 no. 1 (2017): 21–37, at 22.

[6] For Seeta Chaganti, medieval line or round dances conjure complex, sometimes unexpected temporal and spatial relationships, both actual and virtual, through the ways in which participants move with and around each other; *Strange Footing: Poetic Form and Dance in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

generating further dissatisfaction, titillation, and pleasure. It seems that history too has its desires, and needs to be courted if it is to connect with the manuscript.

In a different vein, history-making can be considered to be an assemblage when it engages in historical revisionism (Wilson, Falardeau, Cargile, Baker). As Charlotte Lydia Riley succinctly claimed, in a newspaper article on the 2020 toppling by protestors in Bristol of a nineteenth-century statue to Edward Colston (1636–1721), a local benefactor and slave trader, "rewriting history" is "literally what we historians do."[7] Revisionism frames older histories as a kind of quotation or citation contextualized by present concerns; in Riley's words, "The past may be dead but history is alive, and it is constructed in the present" (*ibid.*). Presenting a revisionist history allows the would-be history-making manuscript to access at once continuity and innovation — which, it appears, are equally necessary for laying claim to historical significance. Performing historical discourse well requires one to depart somewhat from existing practices, thus each account aims to contribute something to the historiographical tradition. The same impetus to "add value" drives non-textual manuscript elements. To make history with one's manuscript, one must demonstrate skillful, thoughtful handling of the presentational conventions that make history in manuscripts. A history-making manuscript must look like one, whatever that is taken to mean in individual instances: it must use appropriate script, *mise en page*, scholarly apparatus, etc. But it must ideally also show a slight disconnection from the conventions of history-making: innovating in some way is evidence that the maker is engaged in self-referential deliberation,

[7] Charlotte Lydia Riley, "Don't Worry about 'Rewriting History': It's Literally what We Historians Do," *The Guardian*, Wednesday 10 June 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/10/rewriting-history-historians-statue-past. For more on the controversy, see https://exhibitions.bristolmuseums.org.uk/the-colston-statue/.

aware of conventions and critical of them, thus worthy of trust (Wilson, Cargile). History again emerges as an assemblage. The history-making manuscript combines disparate elements into complicated, shifting and shiftable relationships that must be determined by studying the individual manuscript in great detail.

Crafting history anew may also be presented as making it as it always has been, or rather, as it will have been. The future perfect tense ("it will have happened"; Cargile) and prophetic utterances (Boitani) refer to history's perfectibility, as present and future actions alter its former nature.[8] There is always room for improvement in the historical account: historical desires are proleptic as well as retrospective. Lane B. Baker gives us an example from modern historiography. Baker argues that modern accounts of attitudes towards Roma people typically refer only to a selection of early modern printed documents or critical editions whose accounts of the Roma are highly pejorative. His patient comparison of five fifteenth-century manuscripts of the *Chronik der Stadt Zürich* reveals varying and complex treatments of the Roma who arrived in 1418. While some variants express hostility, "Medieval chronicle manuscripts often contain more diverse and hospitable narratives about the Roma than later adaptations" (XX). If the gap in the traditional scholarly account may have encouraged the unwary to assume worse antiziganism in the medieval period and even to construct a myth of progressive toleration (leading ultimately to our own, supposedly unprejudiced selves?), then Baker shows how history is more accurately made with

[8] On the future perfect's value for history-making, see Zrinka Stahuljak, *Bloodless Genealogies of the French Middle Ages: "Translatio," Kinship, and Metaphor* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), especially 16–48; and "Connected Literature: *Chansons de Geste*, Burgundian *Livres de Gestes*, and the Writing of Literary Theory Today," in *The Futures of Medieval French: Essays in Honour of Sarah Kay*, edited by Jane Gilbert and Miranda Griffin (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2021), 99–112, at 109.

detailed attention to manuscripts, whose varying accounts and contexts nuance our understanding of the past.

A final historical desire on which I shall touch is the burning wish to communicate: to find or produce audiences receptive to the manuscript's claims to significance, authority, and kinship, and who will share actively in its history-making project through what Kate Falardeau calls "participatory reading" (XX). History-making manuscripts aspire to impact on their audiences' lives. This impact may be conceived as change, as when the historical manuscript supports a reform movement (Hernández, Falardeau), is wracked with political upheaval (Wilson), or warns against reproducing the mistakes of the past (Boitani). However, not all history-making manuscripts call upon audiences, with Rilke, to "change your life."[9] Björn Klaus Buschbeck argues that the refusal to convert to Protestantism of the reformed sisters of St. Nikolaus in undis led them to produce manuscripts that inscribed presentational norms belonging to the previous century. We can detect resonances between their choice in favor of tradition and debates over female behavior in our contemporary world. These nuns, like many women today, chose to be traditional not as a way of turning their backs on history but as a form of history-making.[10] Faced with great political pressure to convert, "nevertheless,

[9] Rilke, "Archaic Torso of Apollo," in *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, edited and translated by Stephen Mitchell, with an introduction by Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1982), 61.

[10] Some transnational or global feminists argue that modern Western culture fails to take seriously women who choose traditional values and behaviors. For example, Serene J. Khader argues that "feminism and traditionalism, even the sort of traditionalism that takes some dictates to be beyond question, are not necessarily at odds with one another"; *Decolonizing Universalism: A Transnational Feminist Ethic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 77 and chapter 3, "Autonomy and the Secular: Do Muslim Women Need Freedom?", 76–98. For Khader, "the same value that seems necessary for feminist critique (anti-traditionalism of some kind, often justified with reference to the values of autonomy or the secular) also seems to motivate feminist complicity in imperialism," 76. A Western, and politically different framing of feminine traditionalism is discussed by Amy X. Wang, "Who's Afraid of the Big, Bad Tradwife? Why Women who Dress Up as 1950s Homemakers are

[they] persisted," circulating their archaizing manuscripts in order to build and maintain a community of like-minded people who would also see recent changes as a historical aberration.[11] Buschbeck's analysis shows how textual and visual repetition within and across manuscripts is one of many rhetorical devices that invite audiences to pay attention, and to exercise discretion in determining whether they themselves are called upon to repeat or to desist from behaviors modelled in the manuscript.

**Claiming Kin**

For manuscripts and their makers, an important tactic when trying to establish the authority needed to craft a meaningful place in history is "claiming kin": asserting significant relationships with events, places, institutions, or people in the past, present, and future.[12] One way of doing this is to construct a genealogy, wherein

Driving the Internet Insane," *The New York Times Magazine*, August 20, 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/20/magazine/tradwives-instagram.html.

[11] Katie Reilly, "Why 'Nevertheless, She Persisted' is the Theme for this Year's Women's History Month," *Time*, March 1, 2018, https://time.com/5175901/elizabeth-warren-nevertheless-she-persisted-meaning/.

[12] Kin-claiming has been much discussed in recent years. For environmental reasons, Donna J. Haraway has long urged experimentation with creative, alternative kin-making practices in place of government policies that encourage population growth through child-bearing. See especially her *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2016), and *Making Kin not Population: Reconceiving Generations*, edited by Adele E. Clarke and Donna Haraway (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2018). Contributors to the latter discuss some of the many political problems that kin-claiming or kin-solidarity can raise. On these problems, see also Christina Sharpe, "Lose Your Kin," *The New Inquiry*, November 16, 2016; Alexis Shotwell, "Claiming Bad Kin: Solidarity from Complicit Locations," *Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge Broadsheet* 3 (2019): 8–11. Saidiya Hartman has explored both enslavement's kinship-stripping effects and radical forms of kinship and identity among early twentieth-century Black American women; see, respectively, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007) and *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women and Queer Radicals* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2019). A distinctive approach to kinship has also come from queer theory, notably in the work of Judith Butler. See especially their *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000) and "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?", *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13, no. 1 (2002): 14–44. For a recent, intersectional intervention, see Tyler Bradway and Elizabeth Freeman, *Queer Kinship: Race, Sex, Belonging, Form* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2022).

relationship is expressed by tracking the asserted transmission of some quality over time (and often space), from a "source" to a "target" phenomenon, thus calling upon notions of inheritance and descendance.[13] Genealogies usually identify key staging points in the passage of authority from source to target, as well as asserting the primacy of certain kinds of relationship. The intervals across which kindred are claimed are thus emptied of interest except insofar as they highlight the heroic maintenance of kinship relations. Genealogies manifest authority both in unbroken chains of transmission and in the historical learning that can produce (or disrupt) them for another's gaze.

Although commonly associated with bloodline and pedigree, genealogies need not be lineal or linear.[14] Giulia Boitani's essay in this volume explores the ingenious methods of kin-claiming practiced in a manuscript of the Vulgate *Estoire* and *Merlin*, paying particular attention to the naturalistic figure of grafting. Trees with grafts may sprout in directions quite different from those originally anticipated, thus complicating the singularity and teleology that Deleuze and Guattari associate with "arborescence"; arguably, the grafted arboreal figure tilts

[13] I borrow the terms "source" and "target" from translation studies. The "source" language is that of the work being translated, the "target" that into which the work is translated.

[14] Stahuljak, *Bloodless Genealogies*, stresses the political power of coherent genealogies in medieval literature. David Rollo, contrastingly, analyses how learned writers established their prestige and that of their courtly patrons by disrupting such genealogies; *Glamorous Sorcery: Magic and Literacy in the High Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). Jane Gilbert, Simon Gaunt, and William Burgwinkle emphasize a distinction between "pedigree" and "genealogy" in writing about the past. Whereas "a pedigree legitimizes some contemporary person, thing, or institution by tracing its continuous transmission over a (preferably long) period, in a series of value-preserving or even value-enhancing steps, back to a (supposed) single point of origin in an actual source of value," genealogy "is agnostic about the value of age and of transmission. It details hiccups in *translatio*, revealing that present-day phenomena 'arise from the historically contingent conjunction of a large number of … separate series of processes that ramify the further back one goes and present no obvious or natural single stopping place'"; *Medieval French Literary Culture Abroad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 245–46; inset quotation from Raymond Geuss, "Nietzsche and Genealogy," *European Journal of Philosophy* 2, no. 3 (1994): 274–92 at 274–76.

towards the "rhizomatic."[15] Boitani points out how kin-claiming can draw on the resources of typology or figural resemblance to create non-linear, non-lineal genealogies that nevertheless invoke the divine order lying beneath and transcending history.[16] Relationships created through grafting are explored also through the dense, complex interpolations in Boitani's chosen manuscript: spliced into the Arthurian narrative are materials from the Old and New Testaments, Trojan and Roman histories, and "a constellation of religious didactic material" (XX). Thus grafting further challenges ideas about chronology and hierarchy, since the scion (graft) may be older or greater than the stock (host). Boitani's manuscript claims historical significance in part by mimicking history as assemblage. The figure of the graft adds the important implication that nature is at its best when improved by divine or human craft. This naturalistic metaphor supposes the beneficial effects of "gardening" — selective breeding, education, or curation — as a key process in history-making.

Prestigious kindred grant authority, of varying kinds. Claiming kin with Rome bestows an imperial model, ecclesiastical hegemony, the prestige of Antiquity, and cultural excellence — ideas that are not always compatible. René Hernández discusses how fifteenth-century reformed Franciscans in Italy copied Roman historical material in ways that emphasize at once unbroken tradition and their own power to transform the past retrospectively and to determine new presents and futures. These communities' deployment of the same historical source in quite different compilations and institutional contexts shows the flexible affordances of

[15] "Introduction: Rhizome," in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. and foreword by Brian Massumi (London: Athlone, 2004), 3–28.

[16] For a different example of claiming historical relations not based on blood, see Elizabeth M. Tyler, "Trojans in Anglo-Saxon England: Precedent without Descent," *The Review of English Studies* 64, no. 263 (2013): 1–20.

claiming kin with Rome. Troy (Brix, Ravenhall) and the Old and New Testaments (Boitani) are similarly polyvalent sources open to multiple appropriations and tensions. Such richly ambiguous kin must be deployed selectively, some of their associations valorized while others are deplored or quietly ignored. History's shape requires pruning as well as grafting and training.[17]

Other "source" cultures knew more varied fortunes. On the one hand, some kin might be (or become, or cease to be) harder to claim than others, or less flexible in their affordances. By studying mid-sixteenth-century annotations to earlier manuscripts, Antoine Brix shows how the great thirteenth- and fourteenth-century history known as the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, although generally discredited by humanists, could still be mined for some kinds of authoritative past even as other aspects were ideologically disinvested. Brix draws our attention to the fact that any invocation or rejection of a historical source culture needs to be approached with care. On the other hand, some claimants could lay more authoritative kin-claims than could others. The claim to kin with Christian Rome expressed "negatively" by the nuns who rejected local Protestant pressure to move with the times (Buschbeck), may have seemed more tenuous to contemporaries than those put forward "positively" by the male communities discussed by Hernández.[18]

[17] On the need to cut networks to manageable sizes, see Jeanette Edwards and Marilyn Strathern, "Including Our Own," in *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*, edited by Janet Carsten (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 148–66. For a use in the context of medieval studies, see Gilbert, Gaunt, and Burgwinkle, "Dark Networks: Prehistories, Post-Histories, and Imagined Geographies," in *Medieval French Literary Culture Abroad*, 194–242.

[18] On the ways in which certain cultural, social, and political paths open more easily and "naturally" for some bodies than for others, see the work of Sara Ahmed, especially *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), and Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

Of course, kin are not only claimed but also made: to claim kin is to shape source and target phenomena into desired images, as well as to project certain ideas about what a meaningful relationship looks like. Historical kin-claiming, therefore, imposes a particular form on history, valorizing and densifying some areas and connections while divesting others. As the essays in *Making History with Manuscripts* show, kin may be claimed by asserting difference as well as similarity. Relations of contrast, irony, contestation, or supplementation may be ways of claiming kin. Formal contrasts created for instance by *mise en page* (Wilson, Cargile), narrative organization (Boitani), or literary form (Cargile), are used to leverage relationships with particular traditions. Indeed, it appears that expanding the kinship network is the duty of a would-be kinsperson. Manuscripts that incorporate or add "miscellaneous" elements shift the grounds of kinship and with it, the nature of the claim to historical significance – correspondingly, the idea of what history, precisely, the manuscript makes. Thus, Falardeau argues that the monk who, c. 1000 CE, added a recipe for hair-restorer to a ninth-century manuscript of Bede's *Martyrology*, evoked the venerable historian's famed computistical expertise in favor of the sponsor community's wellbeing, extending ancient Christian history into present and future benefits for the community and its members. The same aim is expressed in a different Bede manuscript by adding intercessory prayers, but the greater distance between medical and hagiographic discourses perhaps promises greater historical efficacy because it widens and redraws the kinship network more. In an example from Hernández' chapter, late fifteenth-century manuscripts from San Francesco Grande in Padua compiled works about grammar alongside the *Epistola ad senatum Romanum de Iesu Christo*, a supposed eye-witness account of Christ. These examples show how,

complementarity, even contrast, could be the basis on which kinship was constructed. Particular additions or alterations foreground changing practices of textual production and reception that allow the sponsor communities to transfigure their recent pasts in ways that authorize reform. Another effect of such apparent heterogeneity is the creation of new networks of kinship for historical discourse, networks that expand the grounds on which kindred can be claimed (Ravenhall).

**History on Different Scales**

Scale, and the differences it makes, have become topics of interest to literary historians in recent years.[19] The essays in *Making History with Manuscripts* foreground two kinds of historical scale: the span of time envisaged, and the relative size of the focus adopted (individual, community, world/cosmos).

In terms of the time period that their narratives cover, the historical *texts* discussed range from a single year (Baker) to centuries or even millennia – particularly due to interest in relating Christian history to ancient Rome (Hernández) or to Troy (Brix, Ravenhall). However, the historical *manuscripts* are shown to inhabit macro and micro scales at the same time. I do not know of a coinage capturing a temporal equivalent of "glocal" ("both global and local" according to the *OED*, and also highlighting (smooth or bumpy) interactions between these scales), but it is evident that in the search for historical significance, manuscript makers maintained an eye to their own moment and

[19] For instance, the conference *Scale(s) of Literary History: Europe c. 500–1500*, held by the Centre for Medieval Literature (University of Southern Denmark/University of York) at the Danish Institute in Rome, 5–7 April 2022, https://www.sdu.dk/en/forskning/cml/events/2022_cml_conference. See also Kellie Robertson, "Scaling Nature: Microcosm and Macrocosm in Later Medieval Thought," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 49, no. 3 (2019): 609–31.

context as well as to the pasts narrated in or represented by their contents.[20] This dual awareness is evident also in the material details of manuscripts. Wilson describes how in the autograph manuscript of his *Chronicon de tempore regis Ricardi* from the end of the twelfth century, Richard of Devizes generates meta-historical reflection not only through his language but also through page layout. Drawing on Stephen G. Nichols' work on the "manuscript matrix," Wilson shows how writing and reading move across the page as well as down, such that Richard's layout itself sketches new spatial and temporal relationships.[21] In short, our impression of the kind of history described on the page, and our attitudes towards it, depend on our physical orientation towards the page's contents. Wilson's account of the various temporalities of inscription in Richard's manuscript further shows how changes to the *mise-en-page* dramatize the passage of time and political change, and the impact that these have on historical subjects. Notably, the seismic event of King Richard's definitive removal from England in 1191 distorts the page's "spatial geopolitics" (21): the account of the king's activities moves from the body-text into the margins, thus at once reflecting the power vacuum created by the royal withdrawal and granting the margin more than usual power. Readers are forced to imagine and experience a land without a king, or rather, one where the king is semi-offstage, functioning in ways that challenge traditional hierarchies. Falardeau similarly argues that practices of medieval historical manuscript-making "created a past that was inextricably linked to the writing support, rather than just recorded on it" (21). Falardeau reads miscellaneous

[20] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "glocal (adj.)," July 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/6817619084.

[21] Stephen G. Nichols, "Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture," *Speculum* 65, no. 1 (1990): 1–10.

additions to ninth-century manuscripts of Bede's *Martyrology* as expressing audiences' desire to insert themselves into history, which is embodied by the manuscript. By adding local saints, pharmaceutical recipes, a list of alleged thieves, or prayers, communities redrew Christian history spatially and temporally to include themselves and their concerns. History is often made in manuscripts out of such often overlooked "inessentials."[22]

Falardeau's analysis leads on to the second issue of historical scale that I wish to discuss: history-making at individual, communal, and "universal" scales. To some extent, these correspond respectively to ethical, political, and theological concerns; however, this analytical distinction is constantly blurred in practice as levels and concerns interweave. Nevertheless, individual, community, or cosmos emerge in different essays here as primary points of connection – "quilting points" or "upholstery buttons" – that join the manuscript to historical significance and produce an impression of historical substance.[23] The choice of one such point over another is explored in this volume for its affordances and limitations: how it shapes both the specific history-making manuscript and the idea of history to which any such manuscript points.

Carolyn Cargile focuses on Orderic Vitalis's use of prosimetrum in Book V of his *Historia ecclesiastica* (1120s), where verse couplets commemorate the lives of

[22] See the discussion of "incidences" in the Introduction (Ruhland, 9-10) for another example of how both text and layout could be exploited both to situate local history and to extend an account's and a manuscript's historical scale, reach, and import.

[23] "Quilting points" and "upholstery buttons" refer to the *point de capiton* in the thought of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan: "the point in the signifying chain at which 'the signifier stops the otherwise endless movement of the signification' (E, 303) and produces the necessary illusion of a fixed meaning"; Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1996), 151, quoting Jacques Lacan, "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious." In *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), 292–325.

particular bishops or archbishops of Rouen while "prose synchronisms" fill in the narrative gaps to complete a history of the early church in Normandy. History's nature as an assemblage is here aestheticized as prosimetrum, thus foregrounding its potential for affective engagement. Historical texts and manuscripts often compile different forms or genres, but the way in which Orderic does so highlights his own artistry as the fulcrum joining global to local, micro to macro, the personal to the communal to the universal. It is his literary skill that allows "history" to manifest itself in the manuscript for present and future audiences. That the onus is also on reception is shown in Cargile's discussion of how Orderic in this particular section of his autograph manuscript copies verse and prose continuously and without distinguishing between them, in contrast to the usual practice for the period of giving verse a distinctive columnar layout. The tasks of noticing the change of form, of experiencing surprise, of recognizing the verse as such, and of identifying the rhetoric of love within the historical account, here skewer us to history like butterflies pinned to a corkboard. Thanks to Orderic's skill and loving care as both writer and manuscript maker, readers or audience members are drawn into history both as individuals and as members of greater wholes, finding their own significance through love for the see and its officials, and for Christ and His Church.

A different way in which the individual may become the key to historical significance is shown by Brix. The copious marginal notes supplied to his manuscript of the *Grandes Chroniques* by Parisian magistrate Jean Le Féron in the 1550s and 1560s defied sixteenth-century assertions of the obsolescence of this medieval text, symptomatic of a wider rejection of medieval historiography. Le Féron's notes transform his manuscript into a precious record of the (supposed)

longevity and stability of political institutions and forms (notably royal offices, aristocratic lineages, and heraldry) whose antiquity was key to their contemporary authority. Although Le Féron's annotated manuscripts in one perspective define the split between medieval and early modern periods, therefore, they do so by insisting on a significant substance transmissible across ruptures and by rejecting particular historical discontinuities.

History at the communal scale appears repeatedly in these essays. Baker shows us how Swiss communities imagined themselves coherently by projecting anti-communal values onto Roma; Buschbeck argues that a community of nuns resisted change by maintaining the values and appearances of an earlier century. Ravenhall analyses how a French manuscript dating from the end of the thirteenth century assisted in Corbie Abbey's aspiration to become an *axis mundi* or meeting-point of secular and sacred history, on the model of Constantinople and Jerusalem.[24] The manuscript is best known today as the sole witness to the knight Robert de Clari's account of the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204, but Ravenhall reads its carefully homogenous presentation as staking even greater territorial claims. Individuals and universals are present through historical accounts that indicate significant points between the fall of Troy (Jean de Flixecourt's French translation of Dares Phrygius's *De excidio Troiae*) and 1260 (the *Récits d'un ménestrel de Reims*), and in the moral or political lessons to be drawn from the past. However, Corbie itself is promoted as the anchor connecting events and persons to the divine plan, which is here presented as the east-to-west *translatio*

[24] The classic study of *axis mundi* or world-navel (*omphalos*) is Mircéa Éliade, "Symbolism of the Centre", in *Images and Symbols*, Princeton 1991, 27–56. For a recent intervention on ancient, medieval, and modern world-navels, maps, and imperialisms, see Rasmus Grønfeldt Winther, "Cutting the Cord: A Corrective for World Navels in Cartography and Science," *The Cartographic Journal* 57, no. 2 (2020): 147–59.

of spiritual, cultural, and political authority. Key both to this idea of history and to Corbie's significance within it are the relics that Robert and others gave to the abbey, part of the great spoliation of Byzantine relics that transformed western European spirituality in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade.[25] If Orderic Vitalis's manuscript works to center Normandy and the religious communities at Rouen, it does so via the mediation of the individual, whose scale thus becomes a gateway to greater historical significance. In Ravenhall's account, the Robert de Clari manuscript establishes Corbie as history's central subject and object, and the community as the operative historical scale.

Boitani argues that for the makers of her chosen manuscript, access to historical significance turned on successfully weaving together different kinds of "universal" materials: sacred, Roman, and Arthurian histories with wide temporal and spatial horizons, and spiritual admonition in the form of sermons, prayers, and treatises. Individuals and events here provide the raw materials out of which history can be made: eye-witness remains key, in the extended form provided by Merlin's all-encompassing knowledge of past, present, and future events. A fiction of voice further personalizes the accounts, as the interpolated materials are always spoken by one character to another in the Vulgate Arthurian frame narrative. But it is the cosmic or universal scale that promises access to historical significance – or threatens to withhold it. Those characters who listen poorly to history's lessons or interpret them incorrectly are punished by imprisonment within repetitive, spiritually and morally deteriorating cycles, whereas appropriate

[25] See the work of Anne E. Lester, especially "Translation and Appropriation: Greek Relics in the Latin West in the Aftermath of the Fourth Crusade," *Studies in Church History* 53 (2017): 88–117; and "Intimacy and Abundance: Textile Relics, the Veronica, and Christian Devotion in the Aftermath of the Fourth Crusade," *Material Religion* 14, no. 4 (2018): 533–44.

attentiveness is rewarded by a vision of improvement towards spiritual fulfilment. Access to the universal thus determines the historical, ethical, and political value of lives and institutions.

**Time and Space**

The final thread that I wish to pull in this response relates to the ways in which the essays in this volume deploy and challenge conceptual binaries like original/copy (Ravenhall), scribe/author (Wilson, Cargile), host/interpolation (Boitani), history/fiction (Boitani, Richards), or survival/lacuna (Richards). This is not to suggest that such binaries lay false trails. As they appear in this volume, binaries are useful tools in building arguments that go beyond them – and this applies both to the authors of the essays and to the manuscript makers. Sometimes, the essays show, manuscripts add together contrasting terms to produce something of greater value: verse plus prose (Cargile), history plus allegory (Richards), Constantinople plus Corbie (Ravenhall), Arthurian romance plus spiritual guidance (Boitani), text plus annotation (Brix). On other occasions, a change of perspective from a dominant or more obvious term to a seemingly lesser, incidental one produces new insights into manuscript contents and compilations: the contributors switch our analytical focus from martyrology to medical recipe (Falardeau), from Roman imperial history to hermeneutical text (Hernández), from presence to absence (Richards). In a third set of cases, binary contrasts are suspended as thinking – and the material objects to which it relates — moves productively and reflexively between terms. Among those binaries so treated are producer versus consumer, original versus copy, body text versus margin, human versus non-human, local versus global, concept versus context. Beyond the binary structure, moreover, the

essays in *Making History with Manuscripts* show how medieval manuscripts dissolve the clear partitioning of past, present, and future without merging these terms, and how this movement facilitates the development of ideas and of dialogue. The same may be said for categories of genres, discourses, and disciplines, which are shown to be mixed productively in medieval manuscripts' historical assemblages. (The essays contain so many instances of these last claims that they defy listing.)

The binary on which I shall linger, however, is that of time and space, whose treatment in this volume falls into all three of the types just mentioned. The contributors show that making history in medieval manuscripts requires both spatial aspects of time and temporal dimensions of space. Where the space concerned is the manuscript page or opening, these essays are concerned not only to study pages archaeologically in order to reconstruct the chronology of their production: much less traditionally, they go on to consider the page in the light of a spatial logic that allows for different temporalities of reception, including different apprehensions of text, decoration, image, blank space. We can look across the page or opening in defiance of unidirectionality or the hierarchies of *mise-en-page*, and we can expand the manuscript matrix phenomenologically to include what presents itself to us now, additions, revisions, omissions, even subtractions (for instance, where images have been erased or excised), and all. Like the gaps to which Richards draws our attention, revisions and corrections are powerful hooks for the imagination and curiosity, drawing us into relation with a manuscript by playing on our historical desires.

If we take the manuscript itself to be "the space," then time is constitutive of its reception as of its production. Wilson summarizes: "the support [that is, the history-making manuscript] is not outside of time" (32 n. 37). Discovery, selection,

collection, and compilation take time and shape time, as does perceiving them (Hernández, Falardeau, Cargile, Ravenhall, Buschbeck). Interpolation, insertion, annotation, and erasure are material and embodied as well as textual processes (Wilson, Boitani, Brix, Richards). Some manuscripts show traces of intervention over long periods during the medieval millennium (Falardeau), others in post-medieval centuries (Brix). Medieval (and later) audiences encountered manuscripts as opportunities for making history as well as recorders of a past against which they measured themselves, such that manuscripts and audiences became both subjects and objects of history, reciprocally shaping and shaped. Historical manuscripts provoke historical responses, whether in the form of annotation, revision/correction, or skilled reproductions that can truly be called "faithful." The will to history works both to bend history to our will and to bend us to history's truth. The extremely delicate task of telling the difference between these two may be vital in determining the truth-value of a particular account or manuscript.[26]

Finally, we may take the text or texts in a manuscript as "the space." Individually or in compilation, texts may evoke places that are near-by or far-off, familiar or unfamiliar, desired or disliked. They may impose a narrow focus on a single site or an expansive vision of migration, travel, or conquest. Different places can be conjured up by mentioning material trappings such as buildings, food, clothing, equipment, or physical appearance, or by institutions and customs. Such spatial locations also have obvious temporal dimensions. Imputed authors,

[26] On the need to exercise our judgement at every level when approaching historical accounts, including supposed "facts," see the classic account by Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), especially chapter 1, "The Power in the Story," 1–30.

linguistic features, or claims of translation, origin, and transmission, or of patronage, conjure times as well as places. Imagined geographies shape historical narratives: the New Jerusalem, imperial Rome (Hernández, Ravenhall, Richards), Arthurian Britain (Boitani), Paris or France (respectively Richards, Brix), imply particular trajectories and goals. Places are constantly juxtaposed or overlaid across large temporal and spatial distances. Some prove very mobile (Troy, Constantinople; Ravenhall) while others, such as Jerusalem, seem locationally fixed but capable of multiple presences in their spiritual power.

**Conclusion**

People make history with manuscripts, and manuscripts make history with, as well as for, people. In Bruno Latour's terms, manuscripts are not "intermediaries," which transport historical "meaning or force without transformation," but "mediators" that "translate, distort or modify the meaning or elements they are supposed to carry."[27] Or rather, in the spirit of this volume's approach to binaries, they may function both as intermediaries and as mediators. As they travel through times, places, and changes, manuscripts present their audiences with new faces and different opportunities for making history anew – hence also, for remaking it as old, according to traditionalist models. Manuscripts externalize, transform, and preserve human emotions and perspectives. Existing narratives, practices, desires, institutions, relationships, conceptual and social structures, places, periods, and so on: all are grist to the history-making manuscript's mill, subject to endless revision, which may present itself as reform or as return, as revolution or

[27] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 39.

preservation. Such revisions may present themselves to us today as internal to the manuscript, for example, as annotations, revisions, addition, erasures. They may also present themselves externally to the manuscripts, in careful, caring analyses such as those contained in these essays. Our scholarship continues to make history with manuscripts: their histories, and our own.

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