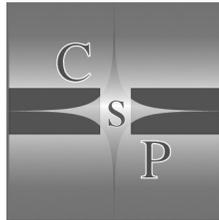


Methods and the Medievalist

Methods and the Medievalist: Current Approaches in Medieval Studies

Edited by

Marko Lamberg, Jesse Keskiaho, Elina Räsänen
and Olga Timofeeva,
with Leila Virtanen



Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Methods and the Medievalist: Current Approaches in Medieval Studies,
Edited by Marko Lamberg, Jesse Keskiäho, Elina Räsänen and Olga Timofeeva,
with Leila Virtanen

This book first published 2008

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2008 by Marko Lamberg, Jesse Keskiäho, Elina Räsänen and Olga Timofeeva,
with Leila Virtanen and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or
otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-84718-899-0, ISBN (13): 9781847188991

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements vii

Introduction

Marko Lamberg, Jesse Keskiaho, Elina Räsänen & Olga Timofeeva 1
Methods and the Medievalist

Investigating Texts and Textual Constructs

Tuija Ainonen 12
*Manuscripts, Editions and Textual Interpretation: Alan of Lille's
Distinction Collection Summa "Quot modis" and the Meaning
of Words*

Katriina Kajannes 38
*The Written Space: Theories of Space in Reading Medieval Latin
Drama*

Mari Isoaho 57
*Methodology of the Historical Image Research in the Study
of Medieval Sources*

Inka Moilanen 70
*The Construction of Images: Representation of Kingship
in the Historiography of Early Medieval Britain*

Mikko Vasko 86
*The Mongols in Syriac Texts from the Late Thirteenth and Early
Fourteenth Century: A Point of View of Image Research*

Sini Kangas 103
The Genesis of a Crusade Chronicle in the Early Twelfth Century

Nicole Crossley-Holland	123
<i>Learning from Primary Sources: The Study of Moral, Ethical and Spiritual Responsibilities</i>	

Researching the Popular and Quotidian

Janken Myrdal	134
<i>Source Pluralism and a Package of Methods: Medieval Tending of Livestock as an Example</i>	

Johanna Andersson Raeder.....	159
<i>Turning Genealogy into Statistics: Remarriage among Noble Women in Medieval Sweden</i>	

Ylva Stenqvist Millde.....	177
<i>Traces of Roads and Travel in Pre-Industrial Agrarian Society</i>	

Kari Uotila, Anna-Maria Vilkuna, Isto Huvila, Elisabeth Grönlund & Heikki Simola.....	199
<i>Bringing together Interdisciplinary Strategies for the Study of the “Seats of Power” in 3D Modeling</i>	

Interpreting Materiality, Visuality and Orality

Auli Helena Tourunen	224
<i>Zooarchaeology and Historical Sources</i>	

Sofia Lahti & Elina Räsänen	241
<i>Visible and Tangible: On the Questions of Materiality in the Study of Medieval Images and Objects</i>	

Alaric Hall.....	270
<i>The Oral Culture of a Silent Age: The Place of Orality in Medieval Studies</i>	

Notes on the Contributors.....	291
--------------------------------	-----

Index.....	294
------------	-----

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book owns its existence not only to enthusiastic individuals inspired by common European heritage but also to enlightened institutions that understand and support this enthusiasm. We editors and writers would like to address our warm thanks to the Academy of Finland, the Department of History and Ethnology at the University of Jyväskylä, Glossa Society, Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation as well as our publisher, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

METHODS AND THE MEDIEVALIST

MARKO LAMBERG, JESSE KESKIAHO,
ELINA RÄSÄNEN & OLGA TIMOFEEVA

The concept “medieval studies” easily calls to mind intricate scripts on time-worn parchments, elegant cathedrals, robust castles, and a seemingly endless gallery of kings, saints or other colorful personalities. These and similar elements of the medieval period have indeed long been the key objects of study and continue to be so even today. But the research tradition has undergone considerable changes, especially during the last twenty or thirty years: for example, the emphasis has shifted from the history of prominent individuals to that of common people and, from high politics and courts to various forms of everyday life.

However, we would be simplifying matters if we were to speak of “medieval studies” as a discipline of its own. Most medievalists identify with one discipline at a time, the one of their formation. Therefore, they remain archeologists, historians, literary historians, linguists, philologists, theologians, or cultural anthropologists, to name a few common titles among the scholars engaging with medieval studies. While they may deal with similar questions, even the same sources and subjects, they do not necessarily read each other’s publications—partly because they are not always aware of their existence. Even if they do endeavor to read each other’s work, scholars from different disciplines may find the discipline-specific jargon or the theoretical framework incomprehensible or even outdated: what is current in one field may appear old-fashioned in another. Nonetheless, barriers of these kinds are hardly insurmountable. Indeed, research projects involving representatives from several disciplines—humanists together with natural scientists—have proved tremendously fruitful. Conferences, too, function as scenes for academic interaction and the exchange of ideas: if one visits those devoted to medieval issues, one cannot escape noticing their growing interdisciplinary nature. It is now generally acknowledged that traditional discipline-bound toolkits alone do not suffice.

These questions and ideas were hotly debated during an international

conference entitled “The Methods and the Medievalist” which was held in Jyväskylä, Finland, on October 12–14, 2006. The current volume is based on a selection of the presentations given during this conference. The essays are meant to provide an overview of the current trends and methods available within contemporary medieval studies. Several of the essays directly explore aspects of interdisciplinarity by applying sources and methods of different types, while others address more theoretical but even then basically multidisciplinary developments within their own disciplines.

If we accept Norman Cantor’s opinion, as he put it some twenty years ago, that “since 1960 generally the most original and suggestive work in medieval studies has been not by historians but by scholars in literature departments,”¹ it now seems clear that, especially since 1980, a significant further influence on medieval studies has been anthropology, particularly when combined with varieties of post-structural or postmodern theory.² While the French historians of the *Annales* School had already shifted their attention to economic, social, and mental structures, after the linguistic and other consequent “turns,” scholarly attention is now focused on the social creation and play of structures and categories such as gender or space.³ Similarly, art historians have moved from individual artists and canonical artworks to questions of patronage, reception, or the social meanings of images.⁴

In fact, the field of medieval studies has been multidisciplinary from its very inception. Even in its most common form—the study of medieval events, persons, families, institutions, or objects—the research has required mastering more than just one of the so-called auxiliary disciplines (*Hilfswissenschaften*), for example paleography, codicology, chronology, iconography, heraldry, sigillography (sphragistics), numismatics, genealogy, and prosopography.⁵ What is more, rapid developments in

¹ Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages*, 38.

² See, for example, Goetz, *Moderne Mediävistik*, esp. 106-17; Hartmann, *Mittelalterliche Geschichte studieren*, 240-8.

³ The fields of medieval studies have also been influenced by several “turns” or innovative scholarly trends, all of which have contributed to changing the intellectual landscape in the humanities since the 1960s. Currently, the latest “turn” seems to be a spatial one; see, for example, Hanawalt & Kobialka (eds.), *Medieval Practices of Space* and Howes (ed.), *Place, Space, and Landscape in Medieval Narrative*.

⁴ For some current approaches, see, for example, Rudolph (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval Art* and Sears & Thomas (eds.), *Reading Medieval Images*. On the *rencontre* between the disciplines of history and art history, see Bolvig & Lindley (eds.), *History and Images*.

⁵ See, for example, Bresslau, *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und*

information technology have contributed greatly to the available research methods.⁶ As the publication of specialized handbooks indicates, there is a sense that methods particular to medieval studies do exist.

Perhaps the most visible and—still lively—developments have involved the philosophical basis of historical inquiry. Debates on what we can know—and by implication, what we should seek to know—about the past are ongoing. At the same time, and partly in connection with these debates, medievalists have adapted interpretive theories from anthropology, psychology, and folklore studies, to name a few. Of course, the same trend can be seen within research on other historical periods as well, but it can be argued that medieval studies in particular has profited greatly from the growing multi- and interdisciplinarity: since the medievalist's sources or study objects, whether manuscripts or brick tiles, are usually fragmentary and contain numerous gaps, impetus and assistance from other disciplines have helped to build more holistic and satisfying interpretations and reconstructions.⁷

The past few decades have seen a positive development in the scholarly world in general: scholars from diverse disciplines have become acquainted with each other's goals and methods better than in the past. Indeed, for anyone engaged in serious study, historical or otherwise, an interest in methods should be viewed as a matter of course. This means maintaining an understanding of previous approaches and formulating (and constantly correcting) a conceptualization of one's own approach and working principles. The concept "method" seems to have different meanings, depending on the discipline or tradition of inquiry in question. One meaning is the purely technical aspect of our work, be it the study of manuscripts or the excavation of material remains. Secondly, to the historian, the notion of method has traditionally meant the selection of proper sources and the way one has gone about reading them. Thirdly, it is also at times used to denote the theoretical approach or framework of interpretation we work with, the philosophy behind the questions we ask of our materials. To an extent all of these components—the preparatory work, interpretation and intellectual foundation or contextualization of our interpretation—are all part of what the scholar of the past does, although, depending on the discipline and school of thought, just one or two of them

Italien; von Brandt, *Werkzeug des Historikers*; Guyotjeannin, Pycke & Tock, *Diplomatique médiévale*; Hartmann, *Mittelalterliche Geschichte studieren*.

⁶ Gourdiaan & Mandemakers (eds.), *Prosopography & Computer*.

⁷ As argued, on students of the Early Middle Ages, by Ian Wood, "Conclusion: in praise of uncertainty," 303-12, here at 307. See also Goetz, *Moderne Mediävistik*, 117-9.

end up being emphasized.

The present collection seeks to present a selection of engaging and thought-provoking essays on methods as applied in actual ongoing research. No matter which aspect of medieval civilization each essay deals with, the methodological examples may also be applied to other contexts. The overall time period covered by the volume extends from the Early Middle Ages to the beginning of the Early Modern Era, with the emphasis on the High and Late Middle Ages (from the eleventh to fifteenth centuries). Each of the “three orders” of medieval society—those who worked, those who fought, and those who prayed⁸—are discussed in individual articles; women, the “fourth estate,”⁹ i.e., those who herded the cattle, also receive our scholarly attention.

The division of the current volume into three sections is partly based on the nature of the sources, but also partly on the topics analyzed. An important line can be drawn between the research possibilities offered by written sources and those offered by unwritten sources. Most historians are used to dealing with written sources, but as any medievalist knows, only a small fraction of all that has been written has been preserved for modern scholars to engage in the task of its interpretation. Moreover, as the studies discussing medieval literacy have shown, not all cultural knowledge shared by contemporaries was necessarily ever written down.¹⁰ Some of it was and is still available as symbols, folk customs, oral traditions, and material surroundings or their remnants. Indeed, a great deal of important unwritten information can be sought by exploring fields such as archaeology, art history, and folkloristics. But a bipolar division between “Written” and “Unwritten” would be too simplistic, since it is usually advantageous to study all the available sources despite their physical character. Several essays in this volume deal with the everyday life structures which have become an increasingly popular subject since the 1960s when the field was influenced and inspired by the French Annalists. But as a couple of the essays in this third section show, modern researchers have rejected the overtly anti-elitist nature of early research dealing with the quotidian—the culture of the nobility, too, can and should also be worthy of our historical consideration.

Tuija Ainonen turns her attention to one of the few technical

⁸ Duby, *Les Trois Ordres*.

⁹ Shahar, *The Fourth Estate*.

¹⁰ See, for example, Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*; Treitler, “The ‘unwritten’ and ‘written transmission’ of medieval chant and the start-up of musical notation”; Nedkvitne, *The Social Consequences of Literacy in Medieval Scandinavia*.

methodologies of the historian, namely manuscript studies. While the importance of manuscript studies for establishing better texts has long been clear, she draws attention to non- and para-textual features, such as layout, and the effect these have on how the texts could be read. She focuses on Alan of Lille's (ca. 1128–1202/3) distinction collection *Quot modis* and its manuscript tradition, to show how scribal changes to the layout of the text have distorted its interpretation by modern readers.

The spatial trend, which has gained momentum during the last ten years in the fields of medieval studies, is also visible in the present volume. While the last contribution in the book is devoted to physical spaces, Katriina Kajannes focuses her essay on literary spaces. This is done by analyzing *Dulcitius*, a drama written by a female author, Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim (c. 935–1001/1002). Her text is studied by combining new theories about the representation of space in literary works with existing feminist theories of literary history. Spatio-cultural memory, as well as the textuality of the drama, can also be seen as a linguistic space in which meanings are born.

Several articles in the present volume deal with imagery. They use the word “image” to cover a mental picture or representation of a particular phenomenon, or idea reflected in the mind of an individual, or of a certain group of people. One of these is Mari Isoaho's essay, a discussion on the approach which she illustrates with her interpretation of the historical and simultaneously mythical image of the Russian prince Aleksandr Nevskiy (1220–1263). Isoaho follows the Russian historical writing to the year 1547, when Aleksandr was canonized as a saint. The way the great prince was perceived after his death was in a conspicuous relationship with later political developments in Russia.

In her article, Inka Moilanen discusses the theoretical principles of the formation of mental images and how this approach may be applied to the study of early medieval historiographical sources. Drawing inspiration from cognitive studies, the author argues for the formation of subconscious mental conceptions, images, as part of the process of human perception and interpretation of the world. She studies how the image of a kingship is constructed in the writings of, for example, Beda Venerabilis (673–735). She maintains that tradition, intentionality, and the subconscious all affected the formation of the images of kingship and the Christian discourse concerning the relations between secular and ecclesiastical powers.

The third contributor in this group of scholars studying mental images is Mikko Vasko, who explores Mongols in Syriac Christian texts. He concludes that Syriac historians were mainly interested in Mongol Khans,

whom they tried to integrate into their conception of history as tolerant and nearly Christian rulers. Vasko's essay highlights the centrality of kings in Christian thought on peoples and nations, and their role in history, also evident in Moilanen's essay.

Like Isoaho, Moilanen, and Vasko, Sini Kangas delves into the mental conceptions evidenced by historical texts. However, her essay on the construction of chronicles of the first crusade reminds us of the importance of treating each text individually. By demonstrating the basic methodological steps in approaching source texts, she emphasizes the variable rather than the common features of the views evidenced by the texts. She highlights the way the preoccupations of the author or the projected audience guided the composition of these texts, and examines their connections with Classical, Christian, and oral traditions of historical narrative. She concludes that in spite of their differences, together the early twelfth-century chronicles offer a good source of the conceptions and ideas of the crusaders.

Nicole Crossley-Holland discusses our possibilities for interpreting medieval texts. The essay is written from an angle that can be described as personal as well as hermeneutical: the task of the researcher-interpreter invariably involves responsibility. Thus, Crossley-Holland also treats the important question of scholarly ethics which also could and should be found in every medievalist's toolkit. The increasingly competitive mood in the academic "marketplace" may tempt scholars to over-interpret their sources or overlook details that fail to fit into their preconceptions. Medievalists are not immune to these realities that face all scholars—in a certain fashion, they face an even greater risk since their sources are usually fragmentary, which easily leaves room for conscious or subconscious falsifications.

Janken Myrdal's essay highlights what can be gained by combining various types of sources. Myrdal presents a method that he calls "source pluralistic." This is thoroughly clarified by means of a case study of a rarely treated but nevertheless significant feature of every-day history, namely the question of who tended cattle in medieval Scandinavia. By analyzing writings of miscellaneous origins—mainly law texts, miracle stories and fiscal documents, Myrdal is able to present a synthesis on gender and the social issues connected to the task of the cowherd.

Also Johanna Andersson Raeder is treating an aspect of medieval social history, namely the question of how common noble women's remarriages actually were. Without an equivalent of the famous Florentine *Catasto*, by means of which statistical conclusions on aristocratic family

structures in Southern Europe have been made,¹¹ Andersson Raeder turns to the genealogies reconstructed by earlier scholars. By utilizing a method which can be characterized as quantitative computerized prosopography, she manages to present not only new statistical information but new interpretations on women's freedom of choice in patriarchal society.

Ylva Stenqvist Millde's essay is one of the chapters where archaeological evidence, in this case our knowledge of medieval road and settlement infrastructure, is combined and contrasted with preserved written documents. Early modern documents are utilized as tools for a retrospective analysis and for the sake of analogies. Stenqvist Millde approaches agrarian communities by attempting to estimate how much and to what degree their inhabitants traveled. Simultaneously, the study reveals important aspects of the peasant population's social and kinship networks as well as its political and administrative culture.

The contribution by Kari Uotila, Anna-Maria Vilkuna, Isto Huvila, Elisabeth Grönlund, and Heikki Simola is part of a bigger interdisciplinary research project "The Seats of Power in Medieval and Early Modern Finland," which aims to produce simulated 3D-models of medieval and early modern Finnish castles. In their article, the group first discusses some of the technical issues concerning 3D-modeling in archaeological research and three-leveled activity zonation for the buildings of medieval nobility. Since the socio-economic influence of the castle was not usually limited to the physical building itself but comprised a vaster area, also the interaction between the castle and its rural hinterland is analyzed. This concluding essay offers a fluent example of how historians and archaeologists can successfully utilize modern technology and collaborate with their colleagues from the natural sciences.

Auli Helena Tourunen's essay is an attempt to bring together zooarchaeological studies and written sources in order to visualize animal husbandry patterns in southwest Finland in medieval times. Examining the osteological material from this area and comparing it against the data from tax rolls, estate inventories, accounts of castles, and so forth, Tourunen proceeds to discuss the species and breeds of animals as well as their status and role in the household. Her combined material yields new information about sheep breeding and cattle castration practices in medieval society.

Sofia Lahti's and Elina Räsänen's article investigates the modes of interpreting material, i.e. tactile, medieval images and objects in the light of the recent emphasis on visibility and visual culture within the discipline

¹¹ Herlihy & Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and Their Families*.

of art history. The authors maintain that in the study of images or other works or art, their visuality and materiality should be treated as being intertwined. They present their arguments with the aid of two seemingly different late-medieval artifacts; the first one an immaterial object, a lost reliquary today represented only by a group of relics (a skull and two arm bones) and the second, a double-winged altarpiece, a visually striking work of art by Master Francke of Hamburg. The article shows how an art historian may grasp and analyze something that no longer exists, as well as how neglecting to confront the material history and the very existence of the work—in the name of sheer visuality—may lead to situations where the analysis and the studied work become incompatible.

As we know, words are not only captured in written texts, but they are also articulated in spoken language. In his article, Alaric Hall discusses the usefulness of the concept of orality, today fairly prominent in medieval literary scholarship. The author suggests that scholars have seized on the orality/literacy axis as a means of negotiating the profound cultural gaps between our worlds and that of our sources, and end up, in fact, contrasting the medieval and the modern. Is orality deployed in order to avoid the twentieth-century rhetoric of “primitive” versus “modern”? It may actually fail to do so. The problematic role of the orality/literacy axis in negotiating apparent differences in our rationality is attested by the medieval texts discussed with examples from Old English poetry.

It is naturally unfeasible for any individual scholar to approach his or her subject from every possible angle and to take advantage of every available methodological approach. Nor is it possible to carry out every study as an interdisciplinary joint-project. This is not even the purpose: the strength of each discipline lies in its independence. If and when different disciplines are allowed to develop freely, the greater the scholarly benefit will be when two or more possible approaches are combined or contrasted. The most essential thing is that the scholars continue to show interest in methods applied in their neighboring fields. We hope that the examples presented in the present volume will further strengthen the fruitful interaction between different disciplines.

Bibliography

- Bolwing, A. & Lindley, Ph. (eds.), *History and Images: Towards a New Iconology*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2003.
- von Brandt, A., *Werkzeug des Historikers: Eine Einführung in die historischen Hilfswissenschaften*, 4th ed. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1966.
- Bresslau, H., *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien*. Vols. 1-2 & Register, 3th ed. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1958–1960.
- Clanchy, M. T., *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Duby, G., *Les Trois Ordres ou l'imaginaire du féodalisme*. Paris: Gallimard, 1978.
- Goetz, H.-W., *Moderne Mediävistik: Stand und Perspektiven der Mittelalterforschung*. Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1999.
- Gourdiaan, K. & Mandemakers, K. (eds.), *Prosopography & Computer*. Philadelphia: Coronet Books, 1995.
- Guyotjeannin, O., Pycke, J. & Tock, B.-M., *Diplomatique médiévale*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1993.
- Hanawalt, B. & Kobialka, M. (eds.), *Medieval Practices of Space*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 2000.
- Hartmann, M., *Mittelalterliche Geschichte studieren*. Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004.
- Herlihy, D. & Klapisch-Zuber, Ch., *Tuscans and Their Families: A Study of the Florentine Catasto of 1427* (New Have, Yale University Press, 1985
- Howes, L. L. (ed.), *Place, Space, and Landscape in Medieval Narrative*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2007.
- Nedkvitne, A., *The Social Consequences of Literacy in Medieval Scandinavia*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004.
- Norman, F. C., *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century*. New York: William Morrow, 1991.
- Rudolph, C. (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
- Sears, E. & Thomas, Th. K. (eds.), *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.
- Treitler, L., “The ‘unwritten’ and ‘written transmission’ of medieval chant and the start-up of musical notation,” *Journal of Musicology*, 10 (1992): 131-91
- Wood, I., “Conclusion: in praise of uncertainty.” In *Integration und*

Herrschaft Integration und Herrschaft: Ethnische Identitäten und soziale Organisation im Frühmittelalter, ed. by W. Pohl & M. Diesenberger, 303-12. Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2002.

**INVESTIGATING TEXTS
AND TEXTUAL CONSTRUCTS**

MANUSCRIPTS, EDITIONS AND TEXTUAL
INTERPRETATION:
ALAN OF LILLE'S DISTINCTION COLLECTION
SUMMA "QUOT MODIS" AND THE MEANING
OF WORDS¹

TUIJA AINONEN

Introduction

A medievalist needs to be versed in a number of disciplines in order to be able to make sense of our medieval heritage—history, religion, philosophy, philology and material history, among others. Sometimes, however, this is not enough. Knowledge of the history of the text, the material which forms the basis on which we build our understanding of the past, is important in order to avoid misreading and misunderstanding our sources. Palaeography and manuscript studies are undoubtedly essential when dealing with unprinted texts, but even in cases where an edition might exist, the reader is well advised to keep in mind the steps involved in the transmission of the text from manuscript to printed form. The manuscripts often transmit information which is lost in the printed editions: marginal notations, use of colour, underlining, *mise-en-page*, and other scribal features. These elements were implemented to aid the reader in navigating the text; they have their own dialogue with the text itself, and clarify its meaning. If, however, sufficient care has not been taken in their implementation, they can also hinder our understanding of the text.

¹ Earlier versions of this paper were presented at: International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo 2003; International Medieval Congress at Leeds 2004; Textual Afterlife: A Conference on the Uses and Manipulations of Texts, St Andrews 2004. I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Joseph Goering for valuable comments during all stages of my research, and to James Andean for correcting and improving the language of this article.

When encountering passages which are unusual or hard to understand, the reader should give some thought to the methodological questions of the transmission of a text—could the apparent strangeness be simply the work of a poor copyist, or perhaps of an editor with his own agenda? Sometimes it is crucial to take into consideration the scribal activity involved in preserving these texts.

The following essay examines a particular alphabetically-organised group of late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century reference works—the collections of *distinctiones*—and how the method of transmission of medieval texts affects our understanding of the content. Through research into the codicology and manuscript tradition of one of these—the distinction collection *Summa “Quot modis”* by Alan of Lille—we are able to clarify one aspect of a misinterpretation found in modern research literature, an example which provides us with a clear example of how something as simple as punctuation can turn scriptural interpretation into an interpretation of scribal blunders.

Alan of Lille and Distinction Collections

Alan of Lille (ca. 1128–1202/1203) was a prolific writer who, like so many of his contemporaries, defies modern categorisation; he was famous simultaneously as a poet, literary author, theologian, philosopher, exegete, scholar, preacher and teacher.² Despite the fact that Alan’s distinction collection was popular at the time—there are still over fifty manuscripts of the text in existence scattered throughout Europe—and despite it being one of the few collections available in print, it has been studied surprisingly little. One major obstacle is undoubtedly the corrupt state of this edition, which not only makes the text nearly unintelligible, but also includes misleading scribal interventions or editorial decisions which can lead to false interpretations of Alan’s literal sense.

For the uninitiated, collections of distinctions are hard to read, and even more difficult to understand. One obvious hindrance is the scarcity of printed editions; another is the mangled information one sometimes finds in these editions. There are three distinction collections which to date have appeared in print; one is based on a single manuscript and published in a Polish series on medieval philosophy,³ and two have been printed in the

² For a study of the author and his writings, see d’Alverny, *Alain de Lille: textes inédits*.

³ Radulphus de Longo Campo, *Distinctiones vocabularium semanticum*.

monumental *Patrologia Latina* (hereafter P.L.) series.⁴ Both of these two P.L. editions have serious flaws. The collection published in volume 112 is credited to Rabanus Maurus, when in fact the text is not by a ninth-century author, but rather dates from the thirteenth century. It is sometimes attributed to Cistercian Warner of Rochefort, and sometimes to Premonstratensian Adam of Dryburgh.⁵ The edition of the text itself,

⁴ Warner of Rochefort (Pseudo-Rabanus Maurus), *Angelus*; and Alan of Lille, *Summa "Quot modis."*

⁵ The text was first attributed to Rabanus Maurus by its first editor, C. Colvener, an erroneous attribution which is preserved in the P.L. edition (Palleschi, *Ricerche*, 38). As the manuscript evidence regarding the author's identity is contradictory, there has been a great deal of debate in this regard. One manuscript attributes the text to a certain Adam O. Praem. (Poitiers, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 23, saec. xiii: *Prologus magistri Adam praemonstratensis ecclesiae canonici in sequens opus*, quoted from Palleschi, *Ricerche*, 39), while two other manuscripts attribute it to a Cistercian "Garnier, at one time bishop of Langres, previously the abbot of Clairvaux" (Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 32, saec. xii: *Hunc librum compilavit dominus G. episcopus quondam lingonensis*; and Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 392, inscr. saec. xiii: *Angelus domini Garnerii quondam Lingonensis episcopi prius abbatis Clarevall.*, both quoted from Wilmart, *Un répertoire d'exégèse*, 49). Wilmart contested Colvener's attribution on the basis of internal evidence, and he reattributed it to the end of the twelfth-century Cistercian milieu (Wilmart, *Les allégories sur l'écriture*, 50). He later furthered his argument and suggested that Adam of Dryburgh wrote only the prologue while Warner of Rochefort could be the author of the collection itself (Wilmart, *Un répertoire d'exégèse*, 339); this was later supported by C. Spicq (Spicq, *Esquisse*, 39). Meanwhile, F. Petit (Petit, *Ad viros religiosos*, 26-7) and A. Vaccari (Vaccari, *Esegeti d'altrei tempi*, 456-7) favoured Adam of Dryburgh as the author; N. J. Weyns later supported this (Weyns, *Het premonstratenser*, 28-31), and it was further confirmed by de Lubac (De Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, I, 152). Fr. Palleschi also declared Adam of Dryburgh to be the author, based on similarities between this distinction collection and *De tripartito tabernaculo* (P.L. 198, 630A-696D, 697AB), which had been confirmed as Adam's work. (Palleschi, *Ricerche*, 39-40). I have recently discovered that the distinction collection in Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 32 combines two different collections into one text. It includes not only the *Angelus* text as it is printed in the P.L. edition, but also the collection *Summa Abel* by Peter the Chanter. Both collections are intertwined into a single text, and only a closer comparison reveals that these two distinction collections have been used in the compilation of the collection in this manuscript. The full attribution at the foot of fol. 2v reads: *Hunc librum compilavit Dominus Garnerus Episcopus quondam Lingonensi antea Monachus Clarauallis et Abbas nonus eiusdem Domus. _ _ _ 1186*, with something inked over in front of 1186. (I have seen only a microfilm of the manuscript.) The attribution has been written by another and later hand. More research needs to be done on this manuscript and its

however, seems to be fairly reliable. The other P.L. edition of *distinctiones*, Alan of Lille's *Summa "Quot modis"* in volume 210, will be discussed later in more detail. For now it should suffice to say that the edition has serious corruptions, and should be used only with utmost caution. Beyond these three editions, there is one study from the mid-nineteenth century of the *Clavis Scriptura* of Pseudo-Melito of Sardis, which makes extensive use of excerpts from various collections.⁶ Here the editor, in order to advance his interpretation of the historicity and afterlife of his main text,⁷ has printed a number of choice passages from various texts, and spread them out in several volumes; the entries for the twelfth- and thirteenth-century distinction collections are difficult to find, incomplete and out of order.

Although a number of researchers have published observations on individual collections in connection with their main interests, and have included in various articles individual entries culled from various collections,⁸ an overarching survey of this particular kind of text is still lacking. As a result, we do not know how many of these collections there were, how popular they might have been, how wide their dissemination was, how they were used, nor what their textual connections to each other and to earlier texts might be. The common element in the variety of

possible influence, but the content of the manuscript calls the authorship of the *Angelus* text into question: the Latin verb *compilavit* could also mean that Warner compiled it from two pre-existing sources. One of these sources for the distinction collection as it appears in the manuscript Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 32 was Peter the Chanter; whether or not the other of the two texts, the *Angelus*, was authored by the compiler needs to be confirmed by further research. Nevertheless, until further research has been done, I have chosen to maintain its attribution to Warner of Rochefort in this article.

⁶ Pitra, *Spicilegium Solesmense*, Vol. II: 1-519 and Vol. III: 1-308. (Includes excerpts from the collections of Maurice of Provins, *Distinctiones fratris Mauricii*; Petrus Capuanus, *Alphabetum in artem sermocinandi*; Peter the Chanter, *Summa quae dicitur Abel*; *Distinctiones Monasticae*)

⁷ It was compiled from the works of St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and other Latin Fathers, probably in the eighth century. Pitra found it in a Greek translation, and took it for a lost work of St. Melito of Sardis. (Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, 246-7 n. 5).

⁸ See, for example, Barney, *Visible Allegory*; Bataillon, *Les instruments*; Bataillon, *Intermédiaires*; Bataillon, *L'agir humain*; Bataillon, *The Tradition*; Goering, *William de Montibus*; Giusberti, *Materials*; Hunt, *Notes*; Hunt, *English Learning*; Lehmann, *Mittelateinische Verse*; Longpré, *Les 'Distinctiones'*; Pfander, *The Medieval Friars*; Rouse and Rouse, *Biblical Distinctions*; Rouse, *Cistercian Aids*; Rouse, *L'évolution des attitudes*; Twomey, *Medieval Encyclopedias*; Weijers, *Dictionnaires et répertoires*; Wilmart, *Un répertoire d'exégèse*.

material that has been called ‘distinction collections’ is the method by which the collections deal with their subject matter, to which their Latin name *distinctio* refers (division, partition; also difference or a distinguishing between the same word used in different ways). These collections bring together a selection of words and concepts, which are analysed individually. All the entries in the collections subdivide in some manner the topic at hand; they offer different interpretations, uses or synonyms for a variety of words, and often follow them with a quotation which presents an example of the particular use. The subject matter can range from theology to jurisprudence, from grammar to biblical exegesis. Some are arranged alphabetically and some topically or in an otherwise logical fashion. Sometimes the treatises are written in a continuous text with full, intelligible sentences; on other occasions they are in schematic form with a telegram-like text. Their purpose is to provide for the reader a concise and coherent presentation of the topic at hand, somewhat similar to an encyclopaedia entry, which is then often followed by an authoritative quotation supporting the author’s interpretation of the given word. The word *distinctio* can be used for both the whole and for the part: a *distinctio* can be the full explanation of a headword with all its different parts (for example, the possible exegetical, grammatical or etymological considerations), or it can be used to refer to one of these parts of the explanation of a word.

One of the principal categories within the distinction genre is biblical distinctions, so-called not so much because they elaborate upon words taken from the Bible, but because they make extensive use of biblical quotations when providing support for their arguments. Some collections concentrate more particularly on the biblical books, while others also quote the Church Fathers, classical authors, and even popular wisdom.⁹ These collections appeared towards the end of the twelfth century in the theological circles of Paris, reached their peak by the mid-thirteenth century, and by the beginning of the fourteenth century were on their way out, as new collections ceased to be written.¹⁰ They are seen as consisting of expositions of the different senses of words in the Holy Scripture,

⁹ Much research is still needed regarding the sources of quotations in the distinction collections. Some indication of the variety of material can be seen in the studies on the collections of William de Montibus (Goering, *William de Montibus*, 265), the anonymous *Distinctiones Monasticae et Morales* (Lehmann, *Mittellateinische Verse*, 331-4), Peter the Chanter (Barney, *Visible Allegory*, 89), and Radulphus de Longo Campo (Sulowski Radulphus de Longo Campo, *Distinctiones*, 9-10).

¹⁰ Rouse and Rouse, *Biblical Distinctions*, 27-37.

forming a kind of dictionary of the literal (historical) and the spiritual (allegorical, anagogical and tropological) meanings of a selection of words, sometimes expounding on all these four meanings, but more commonly only on a few.¹¹ However, we should not think this enumeration of different spiritual categories to be the only content in these collections, as they can also contain grammatical, etymological and doctrinal matters, among other things. Each collection of *distinctiones* is unique, not only with respect to the words chosen for analysis and their organisation, but also with respect to the types of explanations chosen for the entries. Certainly, they all draw on a common tradition of biblical exegesis, but they also contain some unique elements. The extent to which they are unique, or repeat the same maxims, remains to be researched.

Traditionally, these collections have been seen as useful tools for preachers preparing their sermons, but they were also a powerful tool for systematising instruction and clarifying doctrine in the classrooms of future theologians. There can be little doubt that there is a link between sermons and the distinction collections, but it is noteworthy that the *distinctio* form is also to be found in lectures and disputations. It was taught in the schools as an important skill for those who wished to construct clear, accurate and persuasive arguments.¹² Nor was this form restricted to theological matters, as legal collections were also compiled in the manner of distinctions.¹³ The ‘*distinctiones*-technique’ is a method of organising knowledge and presenting its complexities in a manner which would be both understandable and memorable. The whole is taken apart, deconstructed into its elements, and different—even conflicting—approaches to the word or topic at hand are presented in a concise manner, often with supporting quotations from other texts: “The *distinctiones* have, on the whole, been described and understood as *lists of words*: they should instead be considered as *catalogues of ideas* or, in other words, as

¹¹ That the medieval authors did not always attempt to interpret according to a full four-fold scheme is confirmed by the words of Warner of Rochefort in the prologue to his distinction collection (*idem.*, “Angelus,” P.L. 112, 851A): *De illis autem rerum significationibus et nominum interpretationibus secundum suas duas intelligentias, modo secundum tres, modo vero secundum omnes quatuor ad nostram aedificationem tractat...*

¹² Goering, *William de Montibus*, 53–4.

¹³ It was used, for example, by the doctors at Bologna as they pursued their task of rediscovering the systematic aspects of Justinian’s compilation and the essential unity of the varied provisions gathered in Gratian’s *Decretum*. See, for example, Silano, *The ‘Distinctiones Decretorum’*, 26.

classifications of concepts. [...] They are *catalogues*; that is, they are the result of an activity of *ordering* words and ideas."¹⁴

The principles of organisation in the distinction collections are manifold: no two collections are organised the same way. One of the main approaches for ordering the headwords follows the system which is familiar from the tradition of glossing the Bible, in which the headwords are organised according to the order in which they appear in the Bible —or more precisely, in the Psalms.¹⁵ However, at the same time as some collections were being organised in the biblical order, some authors chose the alphabet as the basic principle for ordering the headwords. The alphabetisation was rarely executed thoroughly,¹⁶ as most authors in this group took into account only the first letter of the word, and then used another, secondary system for further organisation. Petrus Capuanus, for example, after having lumped all the words together based on their first letter, then organised them hierarchically; his secondary order is based on the association of the words pertaining to God, the angels, the firmament, air, people, animals, earth, water, and, at the end of the list, to the abyss.¹⁷ Alan of Lille, on the other hand, used the grammatical function of the

¹⁴ Giusberti, *Materials*, 88 (emphasis Giusberti's).

¹⁵ Two early examples of this are the *Distinctiones super Psalterium* by Peter of Poitiers (see Moore, *The Works of Peter of Poitiers*, 78-96), and the *Summa super Psalterium* by Prepositinus of Cremona (see Lacombe, *La vie et les oeuvres de Prévostin*, 104-130). This principle of organisation can also be found in the mid-thirteenth-century collection *Distinctiones super Psalterium* by Odo de Castro Radulfi (see Stegmüller, *Repertorium Biblicum Medii Aevi*, IV: 6082).

¹⁶ Peter the Chanter seems to have been the first one to use full alphabetical order for his *Summa Abel*. See Rouse and Rouse, *Biblical Distinctions*, 29.

¹⁷ *Primo enim ponuntur dictiones que incipiunt ab A, secundo (secundo ... a C) om. Pitra) que a B, tertio que a C et sic per totum ordinem alphabeti. Ad maiorem etiam operis distinctionem et ut quod queritur facilius inueniatur in singulis litteris ordo alius annotatur. Nam inter illas (alias Pitra) que incipiunt ab A primo ponuntur dictiones ille que proprie conueniunt Deo uel his que circa Deum attenduntur, secundo que angelis uel circa angelos, tertio que firmamento uel circa firmamentum, quarto que aeri uel circa aerem, quinto que homini uel circa hominem, sexto que brutis uel circa bruta, septimo que terra uel circa terram, octauo que aquis que sunt sub terra uel circa aquas, nono et ultimo ponuntur que conueniunt abyssu uel his que attenduntur circa abyssum ut secundum collocationem rerum ipsarum a summo usque ad imum ordinate fiat descensus qui ordo in B, C, et in omnibus aliis litteris obseruatur. Pitra, *Spicilegium Solesmense*, III: 498 and manuscripts Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 16894, 1ra-2ra; Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 1158, 3ra-4ra; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 1380, 1ra-1va.*

word,¹⁸ while Warner of Rochefort seems to have ignored the consonants and considered only the vowels and semivowels.¹⁹

One additional issue to keep in mind when approaching the collections of distinctions, whether through editions or manuscripts, is the need to analyse the visual elements of the presentation of the different distinctions. Two main layouts can be identified—one schematic and the other continuous—and at times these two are mixed even within the same manuscript. Some of the distinction collections seem to have been designed originally to be presented in a schematic fashion; in this presentation the word to be distinguished is written alone in the left margin, or in a small column to the left of the main text, and it functions as a title to the distinction entry. From this one headword several lines radiate to the main column, each line being drawn to the beginning of each part of the explanation, thus representing the number of different analytical elements for the word.²⁰ Searching and using the collections as reference tools is thus made easy, and browsing through them is fairly effortless. It is important to notice that several early authors of these collections, including Alan of Lille, originally presented their exegesis in a schematic manner. Only after we realise this are we able to understand the difficulties the scribes faced when trying to reproduce these schematic texts, or when changing them to a continuous format: if even one headword or radiating line was forgotten, or drawn to the wrong place, the entire interpretation is in danger.

The other common method for presenting the text is to write each entry as a continuous paragraph. In this style the different parts of the analysis of a word are written in a continuous form, with a specific separating mark between each explained component. This method takes up less space, as there is no empty line ending at the end of each explanation,

¹⁸ This is not visible in the P.L. edition, but only from the manuscripts. See discussion in the next section.

¹⁹ *Ut autem Lector quaesita citius possit inuenire, dictiones ad eas pertinentes res de quarum diuersis significationibus loqui proponimus, secundum ordinem alphabeti et secundum illum etiam ordinem quo litterae semiuocales et mutae uocalibus coniunguntur, hoc modo proponimus...* The text in the P.L. edition of Warner of Rochefort, “Angelus” (851B) is missing the *secundum ordinem alphabeti* and its reading is somewhat corrupt in other places as well. My transcription is based on Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 588, f. 2ra, 589 f. 1vb, and 599 f. 2ra.

²⁰ See the edition of Robert Grosseteste, *Templum Dei*, for a printed example of a schemata form. In the current article a model which is more familiar for the modern reader is used, in which the headword forms a title row, and each part of the explanation starts a new row, and is preceded by “ - ”.

but at the same time the text is more difficult to search as the reader needs to browse through the entire content to get an idea of the kinds of distinctions made. The risk of scribal mistakes during the copying of the manuscripts was acute, as the different parts of the exposition were not necessarily separated clearly, and though some scribes attempted to help the reader to see the different parts of the exposition by placing some kind of indicator in front of each part (most commonly either a chapter mark or a coloured initial), these are not necessarily present in every manuscript. This scribal carelessness is one reason why some of the distinction collections are difficult to read and to understand.

There are authors who seem to have originally designed their analyses of the meanings of words to be presented in this continuous fashion. Their text is almost prose-like, with full functional sentences (though the verb *esse* is often missing) and multiple layers of interpretive considerations. In many ways these texts represent a proto-sermon which needs only to be fleshed out and embellished with rhetorical devices. The authors approach the topic from several angles, and present multiple viewpoints of a given interpretation. Such texts differ from those which seem to have been designed to be presented in a schematic form. In the schematic texts there are very few full sentences as the text reads very much like a point-form list of possible uses of the word in question, and there is rarely any further analysis. Any possible further thoughts on a specific interpretation are all handled immediately, whereas in the continuous form the different interpretations are analysed multiple times from different viewpoints.²¹

Despite the fact that Alan of Lille's distinction collection *Summa "Quot modis"* was printed in continuous form, it belongs to the schematic tradition. The manuscript tradition for his text shows both visual styles in use.²² There can be little doubt that his text was originally written in schematic form, and that it was only later changed into a continuous text.

²¹ Petrus Capuanus' text regularly presents the presence of good (*in bono*) and evil (*in malo*) in a given word, and often also the morally indifferent (*indifferenter*) use of the word. Capuanus analysed most of the words presented in his collection from multiple perspectives, and provided supportive quotations mainly from the Scriptures. For an example of continuous form, and multiple perspectives, see his presentation of *brachium* (*infra* note 40), and for schematic form, see Alan of Lille's approach (*infra* note 25).

²² For example manuscript Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ross. 393 is written in schematic form, while manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 7635 is copied in continuous style; manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 14794 shows both methods in use: it begins in schematic style, but ends in continuous style.

This shift from schematic to continuous form introduced some strange peculiarities into Alan's exegesis. Understanding the changes in the layout, manuscript transmission and scribal activities of the text is essential for differentiating between Alan's exegesis and scribal blunders, between sense and non-sense.

The Literal Meaning of Words in Alan of Lille's *Summa "Quot modis"*

An analysis of Alan of Lille's use of the word *proprie* ("properly") in the collection's entries provides an illustrative example of the problems caused by changing the form of presentation. The text of the P.L. edition is presented in continuous form, the sentences directly following one another within each headword. Each new entry, or headword to be explained, begins with a new paragraph, but within each entry the sections are strung together. Consider, for example, his entry for the word 'arm':

An arm, properly, is called the Son of God, whence in Isaiah: "*And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed.*" And He is thus called an arm, since, just as an arm extends out from the body and remains of the same nature with the body, thus the Son extends out from the Father without any diminishing and remains of the same nature with the Father; and just as a person works through an arm, thus the Father through the Son. It is called the Antichrist, whence the Lord: "*And their uplifted arm is broken.*" What else is understood through uplifted arm unless the arrogance of the Antichrist and the loftiness which is set up upon the spurious minds of people by enumeration of secular glory, so that the sinning human pretends to be God above the people while looking down upon being thought of as a human. It is called grave punishment, whence in the Psalm "*With a strong hand and an outstretched arm.*" It is called authority or power, whence in the Psalm "*Since the arms of the sinners will be destroyed.*" It is called good work, whence in the Psalm "*He made my arms like a brazen bow.*"²³

²³ *Brachium, proprie, dicitur Filius Dei, unde in Isaia <53:1>: "Et brachium Domini cui (tui : P. L.) revelatum est". Et dicitur ideo brachium, quia, sicut brachium exit a corpore, et remanet ejusdem naturae cum corpore, ita Filius exit a Patre sine omni diminutione, et remanet ejusdem naturae cum Patre; et sicut homo operatur per brachium, ita Pater per Filium. Dicitur Antichristus, unde Dominus <Job 38:5>: "Et brachium excelsum confringetur". Quid aliud per excelsum brachium intelligitur, nisi superbia Antichristi et celsitudo quae super reprobas mentes hominum fastu gloriae saecularis erigitur, ita ut homo peccator tum homo aestimari despiciens, se Deum super homines mentiatur? Dicitur gravis vindicta, unde in Psalmo: Initium potenti et brachio excelso, etc. <cf. Ps. 135:12: In manu*

Initially, it is somewhat laborious to read such an entry. The subdivisions for different interpretations are not immediately visible, though soon one understands that a full stop and the verb ‘it is called’ (*dicitur*) seem to indicate a shift in the interpretation: “An arm, properly, is called the Son of God ... It is called the Antichrist ... It is called grave punishment ... It is called authority or power ... It is called good work ...” Next, one notices the references made to other texts in which this particular interpretation is in use; for example, for the interpretation ‘Antichrist,’ Alan offers as support the words “and their uplifted arm is broken” (Job 38:5). For this particular sub-entry, Alan offers a further thought on this interpretation, warning against the arrogance which can accompany secular glory, which he compares to the arrogance of the Antichrist. From this entry it is clear that Alan does not always elaborate on his interpretation of the meanings of a word. For the remaining three possible meanings, Alan merely provides a reference to a biblical passage in which the particular interpretation is in use, but does not offer any further insights into the interpretation.

Examining this entry through the fourfold scriptural interpretation, two things immediately become apparent. Firstly, attention is not explicitly drawn to the fourfold division of biblical interpretation; nowhere does Alan explicitly name the kind of interpretation he is making. Secondly, there are more than four interpretations for the word ‘arm,’ and thus Alan is not rigidly following the fourfold scheme. The interpretation of arm as ‘good work’ likely falls under the tropological (moral) category of interpretation, and ‘grave punishment’ under anagogical (afterlife), while ‘Antichrist’ would be the allegorical aspect. The interpretation of ‘arm’ as ‘authority or power’ is harder to place; is it referring to good works and morality (tropology)—poorly executed, since the biblical passage shows that these will be struck down—or does it refer to future rewards (anagogy) (or, in this case, punishment)? The word *proprie*, though, here presents a bigger problem when trying to understand Alan’s interpretative position. It may seem as though Alan is claiming that the proper, literal interpretation of the word ‘arm’ is “the Son of God,” and thus that for him the literal meaning is different from the usual

potenti et brachio excelso> *Dicitur potestas sive potentia, unde in Psalmo <36:17>: “Quoniam brachia peccatorum conterentur”, etc. Dicitur bona operatio, unde in Psalmo <17:35>: “Posuisti ut arcum aereum brachia mea”. Alan of Lille, *Summa “Quot modis,”* P.L. 210, 722B-C. The translation for the first Psalm quotation is given according to suggested emendation.*