A bunch of books
Book collections in the medieval Low Countries

Symposium at the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of
Queeste. Journal of medieval literature in the Low Countries

Nijmegen, 14 February 2013

Due to the überlieferungsgeschichtliche Methode and New Philology, the idea that the meaning of texts is determined by the material context in which they are preserved has become central to the study of historical literature in the Low Countries. However, this approach has mainly inspired researchers to study texts in their manuscript context, especially that of miscellanies. During a symposium on book collections we would like to explore the significance of material context outside the manuscript. Not only individual texts, but also manuscripts as a whole functioned in the context of a larger collection of books and derived meaning from the context of this collection. In Memory’s Library. Medieval Books in Early Modern England (2008) Jennifer Summit stated that ‘libraries were dynamic institutions that actively processed, shaped, and imposed meaning on the very materials they contained’.

The focus of this symposium will be on the ways in which books functioned in the context of a collection, on how individual books related to collections as a whole and to the users and owners of these collections. Book collections constitute a melting point of materials and themes that are often studied separately: Latin and vernacular texts, religious and secular literature, manuscript and print, rhyme and prose, splendour and plainness, old and new. By making use of inventories, library catalogues and preserved manuscripts the speakers at this symposium investigate the characteristics, size and meaning of book collections in the Low Countries. They address questions about the owners and users of these collections, social and cultural exchange, the formation of meaning, the organisation of collections, and the consequences of this approach for our view on literary history. The confrontation of the study of texts in their manuscript context and in book collections will be one of the central discussion points of this day.
Program

10:30 Welcome and Coffee

11:00 Introduction
Suzan Folkerts and Renée Gabriël

11:15 Keynote
Texts in medieval libraries: Thoughts for an integrated approach
Prof. Dr Albert Derolez (Ghent University)

12:00 Books that are collections of books
Prof. Dr Herman Brinkman (Huygens ING / University of Amsterdam)

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Collecting Religious Knowledge: books, libraries and networks
Dr Sabrina Corbellini (University of Groningen)

14:30 Book Collections and their Use. Some Examples from Princely and Noble Libraries
Dr Hanno Wijsman (Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes Paris)

15:00 Coffee and Tea break

15:30 The Beckers Connection: Some Thoughts on the Latin Books of Hours in the Soeterbeeck Collection
Ad Poirters MA, in collaboration with Dr Hans Kienhorst (Radboud University Nijmegen)

16:00 Keynote
Devotional anthologies: Collectors of religious texts and their methods
Dr Ryan Perry (University of Kent)

16:45 Drinks

Venue
Gymnasion, room GN 3
Heyendaalseweg 141
6525 AJ Nijmegen

Route
http://www.ru.nl/contact/bereikbaarheid/

Costs
€15,– (students 7,50)

Registration
Please send an e-mail to Renée Gabriël (r.gabriel@let.ru.nl) before 1 February 2013

You are also invited to the public lecture Medieval Manuscripts as Truly Open Data by Dr. Will Noel, Director of The Special Collections Center and The Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies (University of Pennsylvania) on Wednesday 13 February at 16:30.