Introduction

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With its roots in the fourth century CE, the medieval codex is an old soul which pushed its established competitors, the papyrus book and parchment scroll, into the margins of history with surprising speed and ease.[1] Christian culture in late antiquity needed a medium that could both hold longer texts and help readers access them more easily than was possible with the scroll.[2] The success of the codex reflects its ability to meet this requirement. However, the first surviving codices from the Latin West looked very different from manuscripts made in the later Middle Ages. The physical format of manuscripts developed significantly throughout the medieval period, because new physical traits, production methods and scribal practices were introduced, either to improve established practices or for no apparent reason at all. The number and speed of such developments, it appears, increased during periods of cultural and intellectual change; for example, Carolingian rulers presented educated society with a new script, the product of deliberate design rather than spontaneous evolution.[3] When culture shifts, arguably the practices of reading and writing do as well.

Bearing in mind this potential relationship between general cultural change and transformations in written culture, the present collection of essays focuses on the production and use of manuscripts in the Long Twelfth Century – that is, the period stretching from the late eleventh through the early thirteenth century – taking the cultural changes that occurred during the so-called Twelfth-Century Renaissance as its point of departure.[4] This period is significant for manuscript culture, which saw a substantial increase in the production of books as well as the appearance of important new physical features. This 'Renaissance' also gathers under one umbrella a number of important and interrelated historical events, such as monastic reform, the establishment of universities, the birth of scholasticism, a revival of jurisprudence and the introduction of Greek and Arabic science and philosophy. The 'Awakening of Western Europe', to

use David Knowles' term,[5] was characterized by a boost in energy and optimism within educated society, whose members sensed that they were living in a time different from the immediate past and who contemplated, often explicitly, their role in the course of history and the new – or at least changing – present.[6]

The term 'renaissance of letters' is sometimes used to emphasize that this cultural movement was primarily driven by intellectuals: scholars who read and wrote texts with renewed passion and interest.[7] First there were those in northern France, England and northern Italy, followed by kindred spirits in southern Italy (the Kingdom of Sicily), the Germanic lands, the Low Countries and Christian Spain. These intellectuals – who lacked cohesion beyond a shared background (a 'career', perhaps) in higher education, a deep yearning for knowledge and the sense that classical ideas ought to be revived in their lifetime – exchanged ideas through texts and letters which were disseminated through the main intellectual centres of medieval Europe: monasteries, cathedral schools and proto-universities. Here the new voices, presenting new ideas in Latin, the language of eloquence in the West, were read and heard, contradicted and expanded upon, by a broad range of intellectuals from St Bernard of Clairvaux and William of Malmesbury to Peter Abelard and John of Salisbury.

The Long Twelfth Century was a seminal period for the development of the handmade book in medieval Europe: not only did production increase dramatically but it was also a high point in material terms such as construction and legible writing, as well as in decoration, usually modest though sometimes of great splendour and elegance. What Neil Ker said of English books of the period can be generalized (with appropriate nuances) to Europe as a whole:

> The period is the greatest in the history of English book production. Manuscripts were perhaps better written in the eighth century and in the tenth, but they are not numerous. It is no exaggeration to say that a well-written English twelfth-century manuscript is something we have a good chance of being able to see in many of our towns. [. . .] In London, Oxford, and Cambridge there are hundreds of them. They are the considerable remains of the large number of books produced by the scribes of this period; accurately copied, competently and often beautifully written and decorated, well spaced, fully punctuated, and neatly corrected.[8]

The fundamental texts of both polytheist and Christian antiquity were disseminated more widely than before, and some indeed were revived for the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire. Scribes now took greater care with word separation, punctuation and the articulation of texts. Books

catered to new readerships: new styles of monasticism, those with means but 'illiterate' (i.e. not literate in Latin) and the populations of the fluid educational communities termed collectively 'schools' by contemporaries. Different styles of formatting were developed for the different disciplines of law, theology and biblical studies. Each of these developments has received considerable scholarly attention, but they have not been integrated into a 'big picture' overview.

Providing such an overview, encompassing the whole of Western Europe and based upon expert analysis of each subject area, is the aim of this book. Certain elements of the manuscripts from the Long Twelfth Century have already received scholarly attention, such as script, decoration, binding and the glossing they frequently contain.[9] Furthermore, the contexts of production and use have been illuminated for some individual copies,[10] regional centres[11] or monastic houses.[12] However, the manuscript as a whole and as a developing European book format has not yet received significant attention, nor has the historical backdrop of its creation as a pan-European intellectual movement.

The present volume, then, investigates how readers in the twelfth century interacted with books and texts. It aims to show how a changing literary taste, a shift in the use of texts and a new outlook on the world among intellectuals affected the practices of book production and reading in varying degrees. In an age defined by the introduction of an unusually high number of new authors (both foreign and home-grown), texts (original Latin works and translations) and genres (natural philosophy, encyclopaedias), as well as a new approach to reading and evaluating the written word – through, for example, the scholastic method – it became important for readers to own manuscripts that presented texts in formats different from those they inherited from the Carolingians and their successors. By gauging the physical features of manuscripts and their dispersal, the chapters in this book assess, for example, what features were developed for manuscripts holding different text genres, what the manuscripts of these genres tell us about how the texts were used and how the different genres 'sit' in the book culture of the period. How did their numbers increase or their physical aspects evolve over the course of the century? To address these and other textual and 'bookish' questions, the essays in this volume are presented in three sections.

The first section, Book Production, is devoted to the production of manuscripts. The four chapters in this section discuss how twelfth-century manuscripts were produced and who was involved in their production. The focus is on the objects' main material aspects, from the execution of

script (Chapter 1) and the physical construction (Chapter 2), to techniques of decoration (Chapter 3). These chapters attempt to emphasize how the twelfth-century book reflected the shifting interests of readers: they show how the objects were, to a large extent, customized for use in a new age, while maintaining certain features inherited from earlier centuries. The final discussion in this first section (Chapter 4) focuses on the individuals or teams who made these manuscripts that survive in their thousands, as well as the locations in which they produced, stored and used their books: shelved cupboards (*armaria*) in the monastery, perhaps even a 'scriptorium' that was a physical entity.

The second section, Readers and Their Books, assesses the ways in which readers interacted with texts and the physical books that contained them. The essays in this segment focus on the owners of manuscripts, both individual scholars (Chapter 5) and institutions, most importantly monasteries (Chapter 6). Other chapters in this section deal with the consumption of texts, highlighting new modes of reading (Chapter 7) and new practices in annotating books (Chapter 8). These chapters show how different groups of readers practised different ways of reading and interacting with texts (monks, scholars and students), while also highlighting the networks through which texts were disseminated and how the texts were made available to readers, for example in libraries.

The main thread running through the third section, Types of Books, is the contents of manuscripts produced in the Long Twelfth Century. After an assessment of Hebrew manuscripts in the West (Chapter 9), the focus shifts to the seven main text genres that were popular in the period: Liturgy (Chapter 10), Theology (Chapter 11), Philosophy (Chapter 12), the Classics (Chapter 13), the Sciences (Chapter 14), Medicine (Chapter 15) and Law (Chapter 16). The final two chapters deal with a new genre of texts, those written in or translated into the vernacular languages of England and France (Chapter 17), and Germany (Chapter 18). The chapters in this third section enquire how these genres advanced in the century and a half between 1075 and 1225, how manuscripts accommodated genre-specific elements such as diagrams, glosses, complex thoughts or debates, or how information not previously available in Europe (such as that found in scientific texts) was presented to the reader. Ultimately, the authors aim to place the contents of manuscripts within their historical context alongside evidence of use and observations related to the book as a physical object.

We might have included a chapter on the legacy of the twelfth century. Some of the types of book mentioned earlier in this introduction, and some of the characteristics of their construction, formatting and decoration

continued to appear through later centuries, and indeed still influence book culture today. Other features died quickly. In the course of the thirteenth century Benedictine monasteries largely ceased to produce their own books, and the grand monastic books that characterize the first half of the twelfth century gave way to products of commercial workshops and extra-monastic milieus such as university towns. Speed and expense were now significant factors influencing book production, aimed at new readers such as students and friars. Splendid luxury books continued to be made in small numbers up until the era of print. Some specific types of book disappeared altogether: glossed books of the Bible, produced in great numbers throughout the second half of the twelfth century, were no longer made after the late thirteenth century.[13]

Some of this process may be reasonably described as 'decline' or at least as deliberate change, whether due to fashion (especially as applied to decoration) or economic factors. But the legacy of the twelfth century is greater than that appears at first sight – and this is often forgotten – simply because of the lasting qualities of the books made then. Glossed books ceased to be made because the existing stock was sufficient and would remain usable over the centuries.[14] When Europe revived again in the wake of the Black Death, and another 'renaissance' fostered renewed interest in the classics and the Fathers, twelfth-century volumes were reread. The marginal annotation and ownership inscriptions of fifteenth-century humanists demonstrate this to have been so. An inadvertent compliment was paid to the earlier age through the development of 'humanist' script and decoration, which was influenced by exemplars in twelfth-century script.[15] When printers started to use roman type, which was developed from this humanist script, the artisans gave, indirectly, new life to the venerated Pregothic script. This renewed, now mechanized script appeared on pages that already featured other traits developed during the Long Twelfth Century, such as running titles bearing the name of the text, foliation and the relative proportions of the page itself. In many ways the legacy of the handmade books studied in this volume endures in printed books today.

Notes

1. Hall 2004; Roberts and Skeat 1983.
2. Searching through pages of a physical book is still today easier than 'scrolling' through an electronic text.
3. Ganz 1995.

4. Benson and Constable, *Renaissance*; Haskins, *Renaissance*; Swanson 1999.
5. Knowles 1962, 79.
6. Abulafia 2006; Jaeger 1994.
7. Damian-Grint 1999; Luscombe 2004; Verger 1999.
8. Ker, *English MSS*, 1.
9. For example, Derolez, *Gothic*; Cahn, *Romanesque MSS*; Sheppard 1995; De Hamel, *Glossed Books*, respectively.
10. For example, Donovan 1993; *Eadwine*; Gullick 1990.
11. For example, Kauffmann 1975; Ker, *English MSS*; Thomson 1998, 2006.
12. For example, Palmer 1998; Thomson, *St Albans*.
13. De Hamel, *Glossed Books*, p. xiii; more nuanced, L. Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria* (Leiden/Boston, 2009), 181–7.
14. The most convenient evidence for this is the editions of many late medieval booklists in *CBMLC*, which include identifications of surviving books.
15. Ullman, for example, argues that late fourteenth-century humanists preferred manuscripts written in large twelfth-century script, especially Italian: Ullman 1960, 12, 14 n. 10.