
Although the importance of book collections for the study of book history has long been acknowledged by scholars, the study of the collections themselves has often proven to be problematic. The reason for this, according to the editors of this issue of Queeste, Folkerts and Gabriël, is the difficulty to access the primary sources that this kind of research relies on. Consequently, the research output on medieval book collections has remained relatively small. To initiate further consideration of the relationship between books and their context as part of a library or a collection, Queeste organized a conference on this theme in February 2013. Four of the speakers’ essays were published in its 20th issue.

Albert Derolez’ article ‘Medieval Libraries in the Low Countries – Thoughts for an Integrated Approach’ opens the collection of essays. Derolez focuses on the study of medieval book lists and their value for the study of the use of medieval libraries. It is his aim to shed light on the ways in which texts could be retrieved in medieval libraries and to examine to what extent books were actually read. He draws on several medieval library catalogues, from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, to find answers to the following questions: how were new library acquisitions entered and changed in the book lists and how were miscellaneous manuscripts described in such lists? Furthermore, Derolez illustrates how books were not just lent to, but also sold to, individuals by consulting ecclesiastic book lists. In this way, he presents insightful examples of methods for studying medieval library collections and their catalogues.


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book lists, marginalia and inventories, thus highlighting the importance of studying contextual evidence alongside the books themselves. Hopefully, this issue of *Queeste* will stimulate further research into this fascinating area.

Sarah Laseke