

WHY HERE? WHY NOW? PAST, PRESENT FUTURE

THE MARCHERS AT the “Unite the Right” rally, which happened in Charlottesville, Virginia on August 11 and 12, 2017, carried shields bearing the red cross of the Knights Templar, the Norse *sonnerad*, and the black eagle standard associated with St. Maurice.¹ The medievalism evident at the Charlottesville rally, is just one of the ways that the modern far right has looked to an imagined medieval past to legitimize white supremacist cisheteropatriarchal political beliefs today. Antiracist scholars and activists like Adam Miyashiro, Mary Rambaran-Olm, and others have demonstrated that the early medieval period has become a focal point for far-right groups to project masculinist fantasies of a violent heroic past.² In these fantasies, the early Middle Ages function as both an “all-white” point of origin and an idealized point of return. It is important that scholars resist this appropriation of the field at risk of legitimizing racist, homophobic, and sexist beliefs in the present.

However, we should also recognize—as these scholars do—that the right-wing groups who have constructed their ideologies around medieval symbols are not new. They participate in an extended tradition of white imperialist medievalism. Scholars like David Matthews, Haruko Momma, Stephanie Trigg, and more recently Eduardo Ramos and others have shown that the study of medieval English literature, as it emerged from philological accounts of English language, was enmeshed in colonial anglophone interests and politics.³ The reflection more recent work has prompted in medi-

1 The irony of modern white supremacists fixing on the heraldry of the Black St. Maurice has been noted by scholars. However, as Annie Abrams observes, the alt-right is not interested in the accuracy of their medieval imagery. “Elastic” imaginings of the medieval allow white supremacists to invoke, despite actual genealogical differences, a shared heritage in a past formulated to legitimize and sustain their world view: Annie Abrams, in conversation with Livingstone, “Racism, Medievalism.”

2 See Miyashiro, “Our Deeper Past”; Rambaran-Olm and Wade, “What’s in a Name?” For a sample of other work in this area, take three special issues: Rambaran-Olm, Leake, and Goodrich, eds., “Race, Revulsion, and Revolution,”; Andrews and Beechy, eds., “Indigenous Futures”; and Lomotu, ed., “The ‘Medieval’ Undone.”

3 Momma, *Philology to English Studies*, esp. 60–136; Matthews, *Making of Middle*

eval studies, broadly defined, is certainly not complete; but I think it fair to say that in manuscript studies it has hardly begun.⁴ While philology has been roundly critiqued, paleography, codicology, and other constituent disciplines have remained silent partners to cultural imperialist work. The field of manuscript studies is deeply implicated in such work. In this chapter, I interrogate the founding assumptions of the field, and its co-development alongside other cognate disciplines, to ask what they might suggest about current concerns and future directions.

The roots of manuscript studies within the imperial institutions of the eighteenth-century had a normativizing influence on the development of the field; an influence, as I suggest in this chapter, that developed from the field's enmeshment in the parallel field of natural history, and its investments in sexology and scientific racism.⁵ These developments resulted in methods that prioritized measurement and classification over phenomenological inquiry. Sonja Drimmer sees such influences playing out in the scientizing of paleographical methods, and the resultant "impasse" found in current work of Middle English attributive paleography.⁶ I suggest that it is also the root of book history's supposed reluctance to respond to approaches from critical theory, up to and including at a methodological level. Both of these pieces collocate in a resistance to grappling with the abstract. Elsewhere, I have formulated this resistance more broadly as a claim to objectivity that hinges on the material, the "fallacy (that) because we study real objects using pseudoscientific observational methods, we deal in proofs and establishable facts."⁷ As I suggested in my introduction, an adherence to the idea of the measurable and replicable scientized study of the concrete object draws limits around the questions we can ask and around the impact and reception of scholarship that steps outside of those parameters.

English; Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, 157–86, esp. 159 and 179; and Ramos, "Philology and Racist Appropriations."

4 There are exceptions. An important one that I return to in this chapter is the growing body of work on white-passing Morgan librarian, Belle da Costa Greene: see, for example, Kim, "Belle da Costa Greene"; Gennari-Santori, "This Feminine Scholar"; Lomuto, "Belle da Costa Greene"; Ardizzone, *Illuminated Life*; Ciallela and Palmer, eds., *Belle da Costa Greene*.

5 My thanks go to François-e Charmaille, for encouraging me to dig further into the influence of sexology.

6 See Drimmer, "Connoisseurship."

7 Sargan, "Trans Codicology," 577.

I chart this history not as a stick with which to beat the field. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, drawing on Paul Ricoeur, might accuse the first section of this chapter of beginning from “a certain stance of suspicion”; that is, in looking back (selectively) on the early history of the discipline of manuscript studies, I establish a position from which the “bad news is always already known.”⁸ However, I do so to “suggests the possibility of unpacking, of disentangling from their impacted and overdetermined historical relation to each other, some of the separate elements of the intellectual baggage that many of us carry around.”⁹ This history is intended as a calling-in, not as a calling-out. For many, the manuscript studies of today is so far removed from its late nineteenth-century counterparts that their relation to one another barely crosses our mind. The legacies of this history are not explicit; they are engrained in methodological and linguistic choices. But, as I will show, for those impacted by them, such legacies are ever-present. By facing them head on, I hope in this chapter to make it “more possible to unpack the local, contingent relations between any given piece of knowledge and its narrative/epistemological entailments.”¹⁰ To that end, the chapter concludes with two sections that look forward and look otherwise, presenting a counterhistory that offers to lead us to trans bibliography.

A Brief History

Paleography training entered university education in the mid-eighteenth century in the form of diplomatic, which was taught in law faculties as a tool for determining and asserting property rights.¹¹ By 1765, Johann Christoph Gatterer (1727–1799), professor of history at the University of Göttingen, had incorporated diplomatic into his theorization of Universal History. Gatterer’s *Elementa artis diplomaticae universalis* (1798) introduced to diplomatic a classification system inspired by Linnaeus’s formalization of binomial nomenclature in the natural sciences.¹² Gatterer viewed history as a system that could be sorted, standardized according to shared dating conventions, and arranged diagrammatically into a model of world events.

⁸ Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading,” 3 and 10.

⁹ Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading,” 4.

¹⁰ Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading,” 4.

¹¹ For more on the disciplinary separation of paleography and diplomatic, see Duranti, *Diplomatics*, 36–58.

¹² Duranti, *Diplomatics*, 38.

Diplomatic was an essential building block in that schema and required regularization if it was to prove effective in dating and locating the documentary record. “He wanted to develop a ‘Linnaeismus graphicus’ analogous to (those used in) botany and develop a procedure for measuring time on the basis of diplomatic. (Er wollte analog zur Botanik einen Linnaeismus graphicus und auf Basis der Diplomatik Verfahren einer Chronometrie entwickeln.)”¹³ Just as botanists identified plants by the absence or presence of component botanical anatomies, so Gatterer used components of script to date and place manuscript documents. These components were tabulated according to time and place, mapping the interests of the field—in sorting, measuring, locating, and dating—onto those of parallel disciplines like the natural and physical sciences. Indeed, two of the eight founding members of Göttingen’s “Historical Institute” were natural scientists.¹⁴ History, as envisioned by Gatterer, could also be a “precise science (präzisierte Wissenschaft).”¹⁵

Eighteenth-century methodological developments extended, rather than diverted, earlier foundational interests. The formal study of historic writing traces its roots to Jean Mabillon’s (1632–1707) *De re diplomatica* (1681), a rejoinder to a dispute over the authenticity of a diploma of Dagobert I raised by the Bollandist Daniel Papebroch (1628–1714). Mabillon’s six-book response constitutes the first attempt to present a comprehensive history of handwritten Latin script; classify and describe its identifying features; and provide instruction on dating and authentication from a range of external (materials, seals, subscriptions, provenance) and internal (form, formulae, style, script) features. Book five is dedicated entirely to paleography.¹⁶ A decade later, Mabillon published the *Traité des études monastiques, dédié aux jeunes religieux bénédictines de la congrégation de Saint-Maur* (1691), in which he advocated for the inclusion of diplomatic within the monastic curriculum.¹⁷ For Mabillon, the categorization of script was a crucial tool in the management and security of those great regulators of bodies, the institution and the state.¹⁸

13 Gierl, *Geschichte als präzisierte Wissenschaft*, 133.

14 See Miller, *History and its Objects*, 80.

15 Gierl, *Geschichte als präzisierte Wissenschaft*.

16 Aris, “Jean Mabillon,” 23–25; Duranti, *Diplomatics*, 37–38.

17 Aris, “Jean Mabillon,” 27.

18 For expansion on this point of Mabillon’s philosophy, see Hiatt, “Diplomatic Arts,” 357.

By the nineteenth century, paleography was widely referred to as an ancillary or auxiliary science. As early as 1784, Thomas Astle stated in *The Origin and Progress of Writing* that he intended “to illustrate, ‘the Diplomatic Science; the knowledge of which will enable us to form a proper judgement on the age and authenticity of manuscripts, charters, records, and other monuments.’”¹⁹ On the founding of the Palaeographical Society in November 1870, Sir Edward Augustus Bond defined the group’s purpose—particularly in relation to new photographic facsimiles—as, “collecting materials for the study of a branch of antiquarian science not yet established on a satisfactory basis, through one in which it is possible to attain to a very great exactness.”²⁰ Such descriptions positioned paleography as a “science,” with methods and rules that allowed for “exactness” in its claims, and which underpinned or enabled other areas of study.

Philology was one such area. As Momma, Matthews, and others have demonstrated, philological method became popular among British scholars of Old and Middle English in the early nineteenth century, when Northern European academics turned the tools of comparative philology towards the construction of national heritage. When British philologists produced new editions of medieval texts, they did so in an effort to strengthen connections between contemporary culture and the premodern past. At the heart of this genealogical urge is a raciolinguistic claim to cultural and colonial supremacy on behalf of white English (and by association wider anglophone) peoples. Within the race-making logics of nationalist philology, early England was imagined as a model of white, patriarchal, heroics, and every movement away from the Old English language, as a marker of that purity, was perceived as a threat against white supremacy.²¹ The texts edited, marketed, and circulated by learned societies, then, asserted the cultural superiority of British imperialists to colonist (and colonized) readers at home and abroad.

But the nationalist logic of paleography was not imported from philology. In 1704, George Hickes’s (1642–1715) *Linguarum veterum septentrionalium thesaurus* incorporated numerous plates depicting different dated samples of script chronologically arranged, which he used “to identify post-Conquest intrusions into, and fabrications of, Saxon documents, lest the knowledge and reputation of Saxon language, customs, and laws be

¹⁹ As cited by Treharne, “Good, the Bad, and the Ugly,” 262–63n4.

²⁰ Treharne, “Good, the Bad, and the Ugly,” 265.

²¹ See, for example, Momma, *Philology to English Studies*, esp. 60–136; Kabir, “Analogy in Translation,” 183–204.

vitiated.”²² The parsing, dating, and locating of scripts was a fundamental support to the philological pursuits of textual editing and linguistic analysis. Indeed, many of the period’s most esteemed palaeographers were prolific editors. Sir Fredric Madden (1801–1873) edited—among other things—the Middle English *Havelok the Dane* (1828) for the Roxburghe Club, Layamon’s *Brut* (1847) for the Society of Antiquaries, the Old English *Gesta Romanorum* (1838), and with Josiah Forshall (1795–1863) a celebrated four-volume multi-text edition of the Wycliffite Bible (1850). Bond (1815–1898), a founder of the Palaeography Society, edited a facsimile volume of English charters, several chronicles, and documents from Chaucer’s time in service to the Countess of Ulster.²³ Sir Edward Maunde Thompson (1840–1929), the Society’s co-founder whose *Handbook of Greek and Latin Palaeography* was first published in The International Scientific Series in 1893, was the editor of numerous Anglo-Latin chronicles. All three men served as Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum, with Bond and Thompson promoted to Principal Librarian. In 1888, Thompson became the first director of the British Museum. In that role he funded collecting expeditions to Mesopotamia, Egypt, Cyprus, Ephesus, and Carchemish, and contributed to Sir Aurel Stein’s second trip to central Asia.²⁴ He was in charge when the Benin bronzes, now characterized by lawyer Carsten Stahn as “the public face of colonial injustice,” were looted by British forces in a “punitive expedition” to Benin City, present day Nigeria, in 1897.²⁵

Paleography’s cultural imperialist investments and its ongoing claims to scientific method intersect in critical ways. In the mid nineteenth century, the natural scientific typologizing that palaeographical classification was based on turned its eye to the classification of humans. Just as scientific racism employed ostensibly measurable characteristics—such as Petrus Camper’s “facial angle”—to both assert the “truth” of racial difference and to justify imperialist policies of colonization, race-based violence, and the transatlantic slave trade,²⁶ philologists and paleographers used the veil of

²² Hiatt, “Diplomatic Arts,” 354.

²³ Garnett, “Sir Edward A. Bond,” 114.

²⁴ Borrie, “Thompson.”

²⁵ Stahn, *Confronting Colonial*, 173. For more on the Benin bronzes (and other art objects) and their status in ongoing conversations about repatriation see, for example, Agorsah, “Restitution of Cultural Material”; Gundu, “Looted Nigerian Heritage”; and Hicks, *The Brutish Museums*.

²⁶ On Camper see, for example, Bindman, “*Race is Everything*,” 43–49. For more on the fallacy of scientific racism see, for example, Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*.

measurable scientific data on historical language and script to assert the cultural and linguistic superiority of modern English and support colonial language and cultural policy. Their conclusions contributed to the consideration that English literature had more artistic value than any indigenous languages of the Indian subcontinent; that the English language was better suited for cultural and intellectual production; and that Indian languages did not have developed literatures of their own. By positioning contemporary Indian languages as analogous to premodern Englishes, civil servants in India, Ananya Jahanara Kabir demonstrates, made a case for education to be conducted solely in English. Study of the English classics, like the study of classical Latin and Greek in the English Renaissance, would be the path to India's own Enlightenment.²⁷

The same period marked the advent of medical sexology. Through the collection and publication of case histories, medical sexologists sought to classify deviant genders and sexualities (at this point considered holistically through the subject-oriented lens of "sexual inversion"). Richard Freiherr von Krafft-Ebing published his *Psychopathia Sexualis: eine Klinisch-Forensische Studie*, the study credited with reclassifying sexuality as an observable scientific phenomenon, in 1886.²⁸ While Thompson was taking possession of the Benin bronzes, the English edition of Havelock Ellis's *Sexual Inversion* (1897) presented thirty-four new case studies of British inverters. As Siobhan Sullivan discusses, parallel developments in the scientization of race and sexuality "were not only historically coincident but in fact structurally interdependent and perhaps mutually productive."²⁹ Medical sexology, whether sympathetic or condemnatory in its attitude to homosexuality and gender transitivity, exhibited the same drive to pathologize—and thereby regulate—non-white, non-cisheterosexual bodies through measurement and categorization. "The question of sex," Ellis wrote, "with the *racial questions* that rest on it—stands before the coming generations as the chief problem *for solution*."³⁰ Accordingly, expressions of gender and sexuality in colonized cultures that did not accord with the binary, cisheteronormative, and patriarchal structures of colonial power, were subject to simultaneous study and suppression. The first chapter of *Sexual Inversion* is dedicated to

27 Kabir, "Analogy in Translation," 183–204. See, also, Rajendran, "Undoing 'the Vernacular:'"

28 Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*.

29 Somerville, "Scientific Racism," 38. See, also, Markowitz, *Gender Binary*.

30 As cited by Somerville, "Scientific Racism," 38, emphasis mine.

cataloguing incidences of “inversion” found in nature, which Ellis extends to a range of non-white human cultures prompting his conclusion that “deviant sexualities” were prevalent among “lower races.”³¹ Incidences of sexual diversity like these provided a framework for gender and sexual normativity to be constructed against.³² By the same token, non-white people were often excluded from constructions of normative gender expression. When, Sojourner Truth asked, “Ain’t I a woman?” at the 1851 Women’s Convention in Akron, Ohio, she was responding to the exclusion of Black women from contemporary concepts of American womanhood by the wealthy white women extended that category.³³ Non-white races were not considered sufficiently developed to be classified according to binary sex. Meanwhile, white “inverts,” James Kiernan argued in 1892, were the subject of “atavistic reversion,” which returned them to a shared undeveloped sexual state.³⁴

The intersections of race, gender, and sex in sexological thought return us to colonial medievalisms and their modern counterparts. For Ellis, “true inversion” in Europe could be traced to the Renaissance, furthering a cisheterosexist idealized image of the medieval as “a time when men were men.”³⁵ For England, Ellis—like his colleagues in philology and paleography—takes the Norman Conquest as a starting point for moral (and demographic) decay: in “[t]he Norman times it (inversion) seems to have flourished, as it always has wherever the Norman’s have gone.”³⁶ Edward Freeman (1882), a scholar of the Norman Conquest, agreed, explicitly coupling “inversion” to the racial imaginary:

Vices before unknown, the vices of the East, the special sin, as Englishmen then deemed, of the Norman, were rife among [the Norman court]. And deepest of all in guilt was the Red King [William Rufus] himself. Into the details of the private life of Rufus it is well not to grope too narrowly. In him England might see on her own soil the habits of the ancient Greek and the modern Turk.³⁷

31 Ellis and Symonds, *Sexual Inversion*, 1–21.

32 See, for example, Schuller, *Biopolitics of Feeling*. See also Markowitz, *Gender Binary*.

33 Truth, “Ain’t I A Woman?”

34 Kiernan, “Responsibility in Sexual Perversion,” 192.

35 Ellis and Symonds. *Sexual Inversion*, 14–15.

36 Ellis and Symonds. *Sexual Inversion*, 18.

37 Wade, “Skeletons in the Closet,” 286, quoting Freeman, *Reign of William Rufus*, 159. Ellis agreed with Freeman that William Rufus “was undoubtedly inverted” (*Sexual Inversion*, 18).

For these scholars, just as for the “Unite the Right” marchers, pre-Conquest (“Anglo-Saxon”) England was a homogenously white, patriarchal, cisheteronormative space receptive to masculine heroics. As Erik Wade has shown, modern popular imaginings of medieval, and particularly “Anglo-Saxon” sexual morality, compulsory heterosexuality, and masculine dominance have continued to be “cultivated” by academic attitudes. By implying (or stating outright) that locating queer and trans experiences in the medieval past is anachronistic, historicist scholars effectively reinforced white supremacist fantasies about the period.³⁸

The events of May 10, 1933, reveal a more visceral connection between trans subjects, eugenicist politics, and bibliographic study. The Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute for Sexual Science) in Berlin, run by the Jewish-German doctor, Magnus Hirschfeld, was the foremost authority on trans and queer health in Europe at the time. Hirschfeld’s research included work on homosexuality and cross-dressing, but the institute also offered counselling, sexual health, and contraceptive services; provided office space for activists in both sexual reform and feminism; and had living space for staff, visitors, and patients.³⁹ The Institute offered gender affirming care, including hormone replacement therapy, for trans individuals, and in 1931 Dora Richter had the first successful and well-publicized vaginoplasty.⁴⁰ Two years later, on May 6, 1933, after months of observation and harassment, members of the Nazi student movement broke into and occupied the building on Bebelplatz Square. Then, on May 10, the *Sturmabteilung* (SA) dismantled the library. Photographs of the events have become iconographic of Nazi censorship (see Figure 1).⁴¹ Books are heaped up in disorderly piles, flames spreading through them, until at the centre of the heaps their materiality becomes indiscernible. An inner circle of Nazi officers, including Joseph Goebbels, stand around the bonfires, and outside of them a ring of students, with their arms raised in salute.

The institute’s library was emptied, but the books were not destroyed indiscriminately. Heike Bauer finds that “there was a degree of selection in

38 Wade, “Skeletons in the Closet,” esp. 293–99, quote at 284. I note that, though such fantasies look backward, they are deeply invested in the repro-futurity of the modern Christo-nationalist state (see Chapter 3.)

39 Bauer, *Hirschfeld Archive*, 81–83.

40 Bhinder and Uphadhyaya, “Brief History,” 251. Bauer, *Hirschfeld Archive*, 84–87 articulates the advantages and problems with understanding transness in the Institute.

41 See, also, Bauer, “Burning Sexual Subjects,” 25–26.



Figure 1. "Berlin, Opernplatz. Bücherverbrennung durch Studenten," May 10, 1933. Berlin, Das Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-14597. Photograph by Georg Pahl. Reproduced by permission of Das Bundesarchiv.

the process, which suggests that the raid was less about the literal erasure of all of the Institute's holdings than it was concerned with the spectacular effects of invading and devastating a place that had hitherto offered a safe space for explorations of non-normative [genders and] sexualities."⁴² Books, as Bauer observes, have a "crucial role...in collective identity formation and its sustenance."⁴³ Rebecca Knuth has called them "the voice and memory of the targeted group," "central to culture and identity," "vital in sustaining a group's uniqueness."⁴⁴ Or to put it more bluntly, as the playwright and poet Heinrich Heine did in *Almansor* (a text that was also burned that day), "Dort, wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man am Ende auch Menschen (where they burn books, in the end they will also burn people)."⁴⁵ The practices that produce the spectacle are profoundly bibliographic. Witnesses describe SA officers and Nazi students sorting baskets of books and journals to be moved.⁴⁶ Some items were saved, and books containing the Institute's library

⁴² Bauer, "Burning Sexual Subjects," 21.

⁴³ Bauer, "Burning Sexual Subjects," 17.

⁴⁴ Knuth, *Libricide*, 9; per Bauer, "Burning Sexual Subjects," 17.

⁴⁵ Heine, "Almansor," lines 243–44.

⁴⁶ Bauer, "Burning Sexual Subjects," 21.

stamp are now held by libraries in Berlin, London, at the Kinsey Institute in Indiana, and in other places. The Magnus-Hirschfeld-Gesellschaft in Berlin, whose library and archive seek to reconstruct the Institute's collection, regularly announce new finds picked up at second hand bookstores, donated from local library shelves, or given by private collectors.⁴⁷ The burning was treated as a pseudo-cataloguing exercise: "with each new packet...a voice declared the name of the author...and pronounced the sentence of execution," "a French journal reported."⁴⁸ (Here, the book explicitly standing in for the undesirable body.) The Nazi men who sorted the books for burning had to think indexically—deciding which titles to leave and which to burn—but they also thought materially: libraries are not actually very easy to burn. While individual leaves of paper can be seen in photographs of the event, many of the over ten thousand diagnostic questionnaires Hirschfeld used with his patients were retained. The reason, Bauer suggests, was their "physical form." The documents consisted of multiple loose sheets of paper, some were as much as 336 pages long. "[T]he practical difficulties involved in removing the large archive of unbound, handwritten questionnaires," she suggests, "aided their serendipitous survival."⁴⁹ Assessments of size, weight, portability, and ease of combustion, as well as of textual content, governed decisions about what could or should be destroyed.

Moreover, inasmuch as the Nazi attack on the Institute for Sexual Science was an act of bibliographic stochastic terrorism that used queer and trans books as a precursor to queer and trans bodies, bibliography also offered a release from the terror. In Paris, on May 10, 1934, a group of anti-fascist exiles founded the Deutsche Freiheitsbibliothek (German Free Library) or "Library of the Burned Books," an archive that planned to collect copies of all of the books banned (and burned) by the Nazis, along with newspaper cuttings and pamphlets on the events. The library was housed in a two-storey studio on the Boulevard Arago and conceived as "a working archive" and "a centre for the study of fascism."⁵⁰ The Library mobilized an international community of authors, publishers, and academics in support, including the novelist H. G. Wells, who agreed to act as president for

47 "Sammlungsschwerpunkte." Hirschfeld's private papers were saved by his partner Tao Li, although their whereabouts now is unknown: Bauer, *Hirschfeld Archive*, 4.

48 Gillespie, "Virginia Woolf," 176.

49 Bauer, "Burning Sexual Subjects," 23–24.

50 Fishburn, *Burning Books*, 55; for more see esp. 54–63.

the British “Society of Friends of the Library of the Burned Books.”⁵¹ Matthew Fishburn demonstrates an increasing momentum behind the idea of the book as both a resistive and a combative force, particularly in the American press. In 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt sent a letter to the American Booksellers’ Association stating, “We all know that books burn—yet we have greater knowledge that books can not be killed by fire. People die, but books never die. No man and no force can abolish memory...In this war, we know books are weapons.”⁵² Queer and trans people participated in this response. Virginia Woolf’s anti-war essay, *Three Guineas* (1938), takes resistance to book burning in a different direction, casting it—through a satirical, moribund lens—as a rebirth. A series of metaphorical fires (of a cheap and poorly constructed women’s college; the house of the professions; the idea of feminism, written large on a protest banner and now no longer needed) make way for a rebuilding of culture and society: her suggestion, that “[w]riters with minds of their own can revitalize a culture dominated by masculine competitive and acquisitive values.”⁵³

It is perhaps unsurprising, given the views that he expressed, that Havelock Ellis was a member and sometime council member of the Eugenics Society.⁵⁴ Readers may be more surprised to know that he also edited early modern drama, heading up the Mermaid Series, which launched in 1887 under the strapline “the best plays of the old dramatists.”⁵⁵ So, while manuscript studies’ involvement in medical sexology is certainly less overt than its colonial interests (notwithstanding the intrinsic enmeshment of the two), the influence of sexology and the power structures that it supported remains visible. Lachmannian stemmatics, the model used by textual critics to reconstruct the order of manuscript copies and their proximity to a (usually hypothetical) authorial original, relies heavily on the mechanics of patrilineal heterosexual social reproduction (I return to this in Chapter 3). Manuscripts are discussed in terms of descent, genealogy, and relationality and grouped into “families” according to their shared features. The pathologizing language of “corruption” or “deviation” characterizes the mistakes, alterations,

51 Fishburn, *Burning Books*, 56.

52 As quoted by Fishburn, “Responses to the Nazi Book Fires,” 236.

53 Gillespie, “Virginia Woolf,” 180.

54 For Ellis’s views on sterilization, see Ellis, “Sterilization of the Unfit,” 203–6. Ellis resigned from Eugenics Society in 1931 in protest of their views on sterilization: Wyndham, *Norman Haire*, 192.

55 Krygier, “Mermaid Series.”

and additions that mark successive rounds of copying. Diagrammatic representations of such relationships take the form of genealogical diagrams modelled on family trees. The modern field, as Roberta Magnani and Diane Watt observe, “continue(s) to be dominated by masculinist discourses.”⁵⁶

Manuscript studies may no longer seek inclusion among the physical sciences, but the “scientizing” of paleography—its enmeshment in the imperialist taxonomizing of philology, sexology, and race science—have methodological import too. Sonja Drimmer, Elaine Treharne, and others have explained the “impasse” produced when scholars come to the different conclusions on the attribution of scribal hands, while citing the same conditions of measurability.⁵⁷ But the influence of colonial investments in scientific racism and medical sexology over the foundation of the discipline has, from my perspective, a more insidious legacy. Such commitments impact the demographic makeup of the field by privileging certain scholars with certain backgrounds, experiences, and commitments.⁵⁸ In recent years, the broad discipline of medieval studies has been rightfully critiqued for its lack of diversity. The situation is only intensified in manuscript studies. In part, this is a problem of access: until the movement to digitize manuscript materials became widespread, most of the canonical objects of manuscript study were concentrated in a very few privileged institutions. As a consequence, those institutions also became the places where the techniques of manuscript study were passed on. There are currently only two dedicated permanent posts in paleography in England, the endowed chairs at the University of Oxford and King’s College London. Tellingly, as A. S. G. Edwards points out, the chairs are housed in different faculties, English and History respectively, and the current incumbents have different disciplinary backgrounds: “in England...you become a palaeographer by being something else first.”⁵⁹ Such limited options for guaranteed specialist training ensured that the field, and not just its methods, was built on a genealogical model, in which opinions, methods, and scholarly trajectories might be traced from supervisor to student through particular schools. The heritability of such scholastic structures is visible

56 Magnani and Watt, “Towards a Queer Philology,” 256.

57 Drimmer, “Connoisseurship,” 416.

58 Magnani and Watt, “Towards a Queer Philology,” 256.

59 Edwards, “What is Palaeography For?,” 23. Other paleographers are, of course, employed in UK universities, but these positions are “ad-hominem” hirings rather than ensured posts.

in the still current terminology of the German doctoral relationship, where a supervisor might be referred to as “Doktorvater/mutter.” Here the conditions of the discipline’s inception replicate themselves.

As Kate Ozment shows, the effacement of minoritized voices from book history at large is a feature, not a bug. In her “Rationale for Feminist Bibliography” (2020), Ozment surveys the contents of twenty-two book history readers, companions, introductions, and handbooks published between 1999 and 2017. Of the 625 authored pieces, she found women authors and editors to be “globally in the minority” and only about 2 percent of index entries related to women or women’s work.⁶⁰ The same problem, though untraceable through name data alone, applies to the work of other racial, sexual, and gender minorities. Happily, in the volumes or parts of volumes that Ozment counts with a particular focus on medieval book history and/or manuscript studies, most volumes achieved relative parity, with women authoring roughly 43 percent of chapters overall. But, that figure elides substantial variation: 61 percent of chapters in one volume were by women, there were only four (12 percent) in another. It is also notable that the same names frequently come up in multiple volumes. It is often the same few women who are accorded disciplinary expertise.

I do not mean to suggest that limited conditions of access to manuscript materials are not sometimes necessary. Nor do I seek to undermine the value of specialist training in areas like paleography, codicology, or languages. Rather, I suggest that alongside these necessary impediments to manuscript study, inheritances—both linguistic and methodological—from the field’s early colonial interests curtail its appeal, relevance, and availability to many demographics. “As long as manuscript studies...continue(s) to be dominated by masculinist discourses,” Magnani and Watt observe, “the field will remain elitist and conservative, as it will focus on ring-fencing privilege and its default identity: white, able-bodied, straight, male, and Christian.”⁶¹ In short, the field’s early investments continue to play out in how the field has developed; in what questions it is possible to ask; and in how it is possible to answer them.

⁶⁰ Ozment, “Feminist Bibliography,” 153.

⁶¹ Magnani and Watt, “Towards a Queer Philology,” 256.

A Briefer Counterhistory

In response to the persistent exclusion of Black women's ideas from academic feminism, Black scholars have developed alternative accounts of feminist intellectual history. Barbara Smith, in a radical attempt to define an independent field of Black lesbian feminist criticism in 1977, pushed Black women to "work from the assumption that writings by Black women constitute an identifiable literary tradition," rather than seeking to integrate the work of individual women into a hostile canon.⁶² Such moves rethink canonicity with two key aims: to draw attention to the Black intellectual labour that was and continues to be elided in modern accounts of the discipline, and also to constitute what Lisa Lowe has termed a "past conditional temporality"—one that offers alternative considerations of "how we got here"—to present "a much more complicated set of stories about the emergence of the now."⁶³ As Patricia Hill Collins asserts, "(t)he shadow obscuring [the] complex Black women's intellectual tradition is neither accidental nor benign."⁶⁴ Rather, ignoring Black women's contributions to feminist discourse allowed white feminist scholars to co-opt the useful innovations and unique oppressions of the Black experience, while skating over inconvenient critique and silently eliding dissent. Such elisions present the history of Western feminist theory as a "monolithic genealogy" primarily produced by white women, and in doing so frame critique of that narrative as antifeminist and reactionary.⁶⁵ Counterhistories that foreground the work of Black thinkers acknowledge that Black women have always been a part of feminist thought, while demonstrating the potential for the field and its methods to be otherwise: more honest, more radical, more intersectional.

⁶² Smith, "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism," 22.

⁶³ Lowe, *Intimacies*, 208. For Lowe's work used in this context see Mann, "Theorizing 'What Could have Been,'" 575.

⁶⁴ Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 3; see also Smith, "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism," 25–26.

⁶⁵ Mann, "Theorizing 'What Could have Been,'" 582–83; duCille, "On Canons," esp. 37–42. DuCille's chapter tracks these counter-canonical moves across the history of Black feminist studies. She notes the evergreen nature of the need for counterhistory, which must be reformed, recapitulated, and reasserted among successive generations of scholars as the needs and interests of the fields change. The rethinking or revising of accounts of the canon, she warns must not become a way of integrating into white supremacist canons, but a way to reenvision the standards and methods of intellectual history. For an example, see Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 266–71.

We might learn from Black women's approaches to building space for themselves, their knowledge, and their histories within and without the field of literary criticism. For, despite the intellectual history laid out above, it is not the case that manuscript studies has been, without reservation, a cisheterosexual, white, and masculine institutional preserve. As Edwards notes, a corollary of its limited institutional presence is that for the last hundred years many paleographers and book historians have operated outside of the academy. As paleography and philology grew apart in the first half of the twentieth century, the discipline of paleography became more institutionally precarious. In some cases, that meant research careers were only open to those with independent wealth, but others "eked out a precarious existence. And still do."⁶⁶ Without a cohesive disciplinary identity, in private British paleography is sometimes considered by its practitioners (affectionately, no doubt) to have a history of eccentricity (personal, sexual, or otherwise). "The history of palaeography in England," as Edward's puts it euphemistically, "is in part a history of personalities."⁶⁷ "As a discipline," Noble and Pyke note, "bibliography emerged in part from a distinctly homosocial community of bibliophiles."⁶⁸

Women, queer people, and people of colour—and people occupying more than one of these categories—have been, albeit in small numbers, part of the field from its inception. Like many fields that relied on the hand-processing of large amounts of repetitive data—in this case, the transcription, comparison, and collation of manuscript variants—women were often involved in the production of early editions. When F. J. Furnivall and Alfred Pollard published their edition of the *Macro Plays* in 1904, they worked from transcriptions made by Eleanor Marx, daughter of political theorist Karl Marx, who had worked on the manuscript at Furnivall's request around twenty years earlier.⁶⁹ Later in the editing process, women typed, checked, and proofed manuscripts, and prepared slips for indexes and glossaries. Many of these women went unnamed by volume editors. For others, like "Miss Gunning and Miss Wilkinson, of Cambridge, who prepared the 'slips' recording the references, and, in most cases, the meanings also" for the glossary of Walter Skeat's *Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (1894), the names we have

⁶⁶ Edwards, "What is Palaeography For?," 23.

⁶⁷ Edwards, "What is Palaeography For?," 24.

⁶⁸ Noble and Pyke, "Queer Bibliography," 150, citing Robinson, "Ornamental Gentlemen."

⁶⁹ Delany, "Medieval Marxists," 10; see Furnivall and Pollard, eds., *The Macro Plays*, ix.

cannot be associated with any other records.⁷⁰ In this sense, manuscript studies in general, and the discipline of textual criticism in particular, were built on the labour of anonymous women.

However, some interventions can be more readily traced, and attending to those interventions could open up the field to an alternative set of methodological investments. Elizabeth Elstob (1683–1756) was the daughter of a respected merchant family in Newcastle. Her brother William, who was ten years her senior, received his MA from Queen’s College, Oxford in 1697. At this time Queen’s was a centre for the study of Old English and Elstob seems to have picked up her interest in the subject from him. Under William’s guidance she learned and translated works in French, Latin, Greek, and Old English, and made the acquaintance of various members of the field. In 1702, she and her brother moved their household to London, where they hosted academics, authors, and thinkers like the philosopher Mary Astell (1666–1739). During this period, Elstob produced the first Old English grammar in English, her *Rudiments of Grammar for the English-Saxon Tongue* (1715). She also edited Old English texts, publishing several editions, including a stand-alone book, *An English-Saxon Homily on the Birth-Day of St. Gregory* (1709).⁷¹ Elstob’s scholarly career was cut short in 1715, when her brother and her mentor George Hickes both died, leaving her with many debts and little advocacy among the academic community. Production on her edition and translation of Ælfric’s *Catholic Homilies*, then already being proposed for subscriptions by the press, stalled and by 1718 Elstob had disappeared from public life leaving her books and papers behind.⁷²

Elstob’s edition of the *Homily on the Birth-Day of St. Gregory* offers several innovations to standard practices of the day. She abandons Latin in favour of English as the language of translation and scholarly exchange.⁷³ Elstob’s work evinces the urge to trace linguistic continuity from Old to modern English, but her interest is accompanied by a concern for widening access to Old English texts. Her preface elucidates the connection she perceives between these aims. Old English, by Elstob’s estimation, belonged

70 Cited by Moreshead, “Gender and Para-Academic Labor,” 1; see, also, 18–22.

71 Hughes, “Elstob,” 3.

72 In her later years, Elstob is known to have run a small private school for girls, before being offered the position of governess in the household of Lady Margaret Cavendish Bentinck, granddaughter of the author Margaret Cavendish. For a more detailed biography see Hughes, “Elstob,” 3–24. For a more detailed account of Elstob’s work, see Gretsche, “Elizabeth Elstob,” parts 1 and 2.

73 Elstob, *English-Saxon Homily*, viii–ix.

to a female linguistic history and Ælfric's writing in particular makes the case for women's learning and the potential for social transformation. The work of editing, she demonstrates, is a reciprocal "dialogue between the past and present through which both are enlivened."⁷⁴ Linguistically, "she distinguishes Old English by its difference from Latin and Greek," the languages of the male academy, and instead asserts "a more particular [feminine] Agreement with some Words which I had heard when very young in the North."⁷⁵ "By publishing somewhat in Saxon," she writes, "I wou'd invite the Ladies to be acquainted with the Language of *their* Predecessors, and the Original of *their* Mother Tongue."⁷⁶ Through her textual apparatus and notes she makes the case not only for women's participation in the academy, but for the necessity of a feminine approach to understanding Old English texts. In Elstob's hands, as Kathryn Sutherland has shown, textual criticism became an act of "self-possession" that moved the editing of texts into "the sexual-political arena," asserting women's knowledge and language as vital to understandings of the past, while using the past to support that assertion.⁷⁷

Eleanor Prescott Hammond (1866–1933) was considered among the most gifted scholars of Middle English manuscripts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hammond was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, and attended the University in Leipzig before gaining admission to the Society of Oxford Home Students (now St. Anne's College). She graduated with a PhD from the University of Chicago 1898 and went on to teach there for six years. After her resignation, she taught occasionally at Wellesley College and for a time may have been associated with Northwestern University, but she conducted most of work outside of the academy.⁷⁸ Hammond was a prolific scholar, with two extensive books to her name alongside many notes and short articles. Her interests were wide ranging, although she is most well-known for her work on Chaucerian verse form and metre, the poetry of Lydgate, and on fifteenth-century copying practices. In 1908, she published *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual*, a 579-page volume that provides "careful accounts of Chaucer's life and canon, of all known manuscripts and printed editions, together with discussion of his versification." The book "is

74 Sutherland, "Editing for a New Century," 217.

75 Sutherland, "Elstob," 69, citing Elstob, *English-Saxon Homily*, vi–vii.

76 Sutherland, "Editing for a New Century," 223; Elstob, *English-Saxon Homily*, vii.

77 Sutherland, "Elstob," 69–70; Sutherland, "Editing for a New Century," 213–37.

78 Edwards, "Hammond," 91.

still a standard reference work," the importance of which, by Edwards's estimation, "cannot be overemphasized."⁷⁹

Hammond's name is also remembered in relation to her work on scribal attribution. In two articles, published in *Anglia* in 1905 and 1907, she identifies a number of fifteenth-century copyists of Lydgate working across several manuscripts, including a scribe now known as the "Hammond scribe."⁸⁰ Returning to the Hammond scribe in 1929, she identifies his hand in six manuscripts of Chaucer and Lydgate.⁸¹ She uses the scribe's access to exemplars and his ability to pick up copying in the middle of a text, to suggest that this copyist was a professional. More significantly, in several of his manuscripts, he seems to be working from multiple exemplars at the same time. Her observations led Hammond to conclude that "manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales are not necessarily entities, are often of double, even of multiple, source; and the variants of scribes are in part, sometimes in large part, negligible for purposes of classification."⁸² Hammond moved away from a model of patrilineal descent that measured a copy's separation from an authorial original in terms of error, toward a sociologically-aware consideration of variation rooted in the practices and working conditions of individual scribes.

In 1905, Belle da Costa Greene (1879–1950) was hired as the personal librarian to John Pierpont Morgan, the financier and art collector. Greene was born in Washington to a well-off family. Her father, Richard Greener, was the first Black man to graduate from Harvard College and became the dean of the law school at Howard University. By 1900, Greene's parents had separated and, now in New York, she and her mother adopted the name "da Costa Greene" and began passing as white.⁸³ Greene attended Northfield Seminary for Young Ladies from 1896 to 1899, where she was naturally gifted at, and interested in, languages. The following summer she participated in five-week summer school in library economy at Amherst College, directed by William I. Fletcher, the college librarian. By 1902 she was working as a library clerk in Princeton University Archives, where she spent four and a

79 Edwards, "Hammond," 93.

80 Hammond, "Two British Museum Manuscripts," 1–28; Hammond, "Ashmole 59," 320–48.

81 See Hammond, "Scribe of Chaucer," 27–33.

82 Hammond, "Scribe of Chaucer," 31.

83 For discussion of Greene's "multi-axis situatedness in relation to her racial, gendered, and sexuality status" and its intersections with her collecting and cataloguing decisions for Morgan, see Kim, "Belle da Costa Greene," 46.

half years under the leadership of Ernest Cushing Richardson organizing, classifying, and cataloguing new accessions.⁸⁴ When J. P. Morgan completed construction on a private library building in 1905, Junius S. Morgan, his nephew and Princeton's associate librarian, recommended Greene for the job of organizing the growing collection. In this role, she "swiftly became the principal mediator among the dealers, experts and museum curators involved in the making of the (Morgan's) collection(s)."⁸⁵ She was Morgan's librarian for over forty years.

On the library side, Greene intended that the collection should become "pre-eminent, especially for incunabula, manuscripts, bindings, and the classics."⁸⁶ She had a special interest in the first hundred years of print, but she was also responsible for acquisitions that extended the library's collections into areas of interest outside of traditional European history. For instance, in 1911 she acquired two albums of drawings, one Persian and one Mughal.⁸⁷ Greene's personal collection of Islamic and Asian manuscripts and art also ended up in the library's collections.⁸⁸ When Morgan died in 1913 he left very few instructions. The future of the collection fell to his son, Jack Morgan, and more than half of the art was dispersed to defray outstanding personal and business expenses.⁸⁹ However, Greene not only kept the library intact, she saw it opened to the public in 1924, and in 1930 corresponded with Max Farrand at the Huntington Library on shared plans to make "their important original material available to serious students wherever located."⁹⁰ In 1939, in recognition of her achievements and contribution to the field, she was made a fellow of the Medieval Academy of America. Greene retired from her post as director of the library in 1948.

Outside of cataloguing and reporting on the library's collections, Greene did not publish in her lifetime. With that said, her collection development policies, personal interests within those policies, purchasing power, and connoisseurs eye when it came to acquisitions, shaped the interests of the

84 Foner, "Education," 53–61.

85 Gennari-Santori, "This Feminine Scholar," 186.

86 Belle da Costa Greene to J. P. Morgan, April 23, 1909, as cited by Gennari-Santori, "'This Feminine Scholar,'" 196n21.

87 Gennari-Santori, "This Feminine Scholar," 189; Lomuto, "Belle da Costa Greene," 16–18.

88 Kim, "Belle da Costa Greene," 51 and 55–57. On Greene's "[b]lack [o]rientalism," identification with Cleopatra, and construction of self, see 52–55.

89 Gennari-Santori, "This Feminine Scholar," 189–91.

90 As cited by Lomuto, "Belle da Costa Greene," 14.

field at large and of her particular academic and artistic associates. Greene's insistence on the importance of collecting "examples of manuscript traditions from around the world"—including an important collection of Coptic bindings—appears to "anticipate" current interest in the global Middle Ages.⁹¹ She was part of a network of medievalists, many of whom she mentored and trained at the Morgan Library.⁹² By opening the library to the public, she extended that network of interest, positioning medieval art and literature as a more outward-facing, progressive, and open discipline.

To some, Caroline Spurgeon (1869–1942) is better remembered for the advances she made for women within the academy—her part in founding the National Union of Women's Suffrage Society (1897), her position as the first woman in England to hold a professorial chair in English (1913), and her role as co-founder of the International Federation for University Women (1919)—than for her work as a medievalist, much less a book historian. Spurgeon was born in India in 1869, studied at Cheltenham Ladies College, King's College London (KCL), and University College London (UCL), and, in 1899, sat the examinations for the Oxford Honours School in English. She became teaching faculty at Bedford College, a women's college of the University of London, while working on her doctoral research. Her doctorate, *Chaucer devant la critique en Angleterre et en France depuis son temps jusqu'à nos jours*, was awarded by the Sorbonne in 1911. Two years later, Spurgeon became Hildred Carlisle Professor of English Literature and Head of English at Bedford College.⁹³

There is no record that any of the people treated here were ever married, but more is known about Spurgeon's living arrangements than most. I will avoid speculating over her experience of gender and sexuality in favour of presenting the facts of those arrangements: Spurgeon met Lilian Clapham (1871–1935) in around 1895, when they were both members of the King's College Ladies Department.⁹⁴ They lived together, sometimes in a cottage in the South Downs village of Alciston, and, when in London, at 19 and 21 Clarence Gate Gardens, Marylebone.⁹⁵ In the summers, they were visited in Alcis-

91 Eze, "Librarian as Medievalist," 147.

92 Eze, "Librarian as Medievalist," 154–55.

93 Haas, "Spurgeon," 99–109.

94 See Fitzgerald, "Academic Networks," 16.

95 From 1918 to 1929 Caroline Spurgeon is found at 19 Clarence Gate Gardens in the Electoral Register (e.g., 1918, Electoral Registers 1902–1970, Westminster, London, England, P.D.E. No. 4, Dorset Square and Regent's Park Ward, Div. 1, p. 10, no. 952, Spurgeon, Caroline Frances Eleanor). Over the same period (until 1930),

ton by Virginia Gildersleeve, Dean of Barnard College, and in the autumn or winter Spurgeon would make the return trip to New York.⁹⁶ She listed Clapham as her next of kin when making these visits.⁹⁷ When Clapham died in 1935, Spurgeon erected a gravestone in the village “in grateful remembrance of forty years of steadfast friendship and of happy life together.” After Clapham’s death, Spurgeon moved with Gildersleeve to Tucson, Arizona, where she died in 1942. In accordance with her wishes, after World War II had ended Gildersleeve had Spurgeon’s ashes removed back to Alciston to be buried next to Clapham in a shared plot.⁹⁸

Spurgeon’s three-volume monograph, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion 1375–1900* (1925), was a pioneering investigation of the history of reception, which catalogues “all the opinions that could

Lilian Mary Clapham is registered at 21 Clarence Gate Gardens (e.g., 1918, Electoral Registers 1902–1970, Westminster, London, England, P.D.E. No. 4, Dorset Square and Regent’s Park Ward, Div. 1, p. 10, no. 954, Clapham, Lilian Mary). From 1927 to 1939, Spurgeon was also registered at Old Postman’s Cottage, Alciston, East Sussex, with Clapham registered there from 1931 to 1936 (e.g., Electoral Registers, 1705–1963, East Sussex, England, Eastbourne, P.D.M, Parish of Alciston, p. 2, no. 21, Clapham, Lilian Mary, and p. 3, no. 10, Spurgeon, Caroline Frances Eleanor). Together, they are at 19 Clarence Gate Gardens, for both available census in this period: London, The National Archives, Census of England and Wales, 1911, London, Marylebone, 19 Clarence Gate Gardens, schedule 354, Spurgeon, Caroline F. E.; London, The National Archives, Census of England and Wales, 1921, London, Marylebone, 19 Clarence Gate Gardens, schedule 353, Clapham, Lilian Mary. In 1921 Spurgeon was not present on the day of the census, but a gap has been left in the first slot on the return, as if anticipating her position as “head” of the household (where she appears in 1911). The prefilled address on the back of the return has her name, which was neatly crossed out and replaced with Clapham’s when it became clear that Spurgeon would not be filling it in. In 1911, 21 Clarence Gate Gardens was home to Mildred May Nickalls; in 1921, no return was filed at that address.

96 Fitzgerald, “Academic Networks,” 16–17. Spurgeon and Clapham kept a guest book at Old Postman’s Cottage, which is now East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Records Office, AMS6516/7.

97 At some points during the period that Spurgeon was visiting the US, ships asked for the name and address of passengers’ “nearest relative or friend” in the country of origin. See, for example US Department of Labor, Arriving Passenger and Crew Lists, 1820–1957, List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States, S.S. Carmania, Passengers Sailing from Southampton, December 17, 1921, List 4, no. 5, Spurgeon, Caroline F. E. In December 1933, Spurgeon and Clapham travelled together.

98 Fitzgerald, “Academic Networks,” 17. Spurgeon and Clapham’s headstones are next to each other in the graveyard at Alciston Church, Alciston, East Sussex. Gildersleeve is buried with Elizabeth Reynard under a shared headstone in the cemetery of St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church, Bedford, New York.

be gathered on Chaucer.”⁹⁹ The book is part reference work, part analytical investigation, presenting a diachronic study of trends in critical opinions, citations, and references to Chaucer’s works based on a huge volume and variety of documents. In many ways, the study anticipates the modern rubric of distant reading, or so-called “big data” approaches to book history.¹⁰⁰ Her work on Shakespeare’s imagery extends this method. In *Shakespeare’s Imagery, and What it Tells Us* (1935), she produces a stylometric analysis that quantifies various word clusters across Shakespeare’s plays as a measure of different signature interests and ideas over his canon.¹⁰¹ Her conclusions, then, consider the role of the individual in the creation, transmission, and reception of the text, and by extension, the status of the critic both as an individual reader and as a product of a historically contingent reading culture. Spurgeon’s interest in reading and reception extends to her more traditionally book historical work. Her short volume, *Keats’s Shakespeare* (1928), comprises a description and commentary on the nine volumes of Shakespeare owned by the poet John Keats, with particular focus on his annotations.¹⁰² Here, the material form of the book becomes a tool for the analysis of literary influence and the development and transmission of imagery.

The four people discussed in this chapter represent just a fraction of the contributions made to the field by individuals who were not cisheterosexual, white, and male. Others are less well documented. Projects like the “Women in Book History Bibliography” edited by Cait Coker and Kate Ozment, or the “Black Bibliography Project” directed by Jacqueline Goldsby and Meredith McGill work to resurface the contributions of those who have historically been undercredited. However, it is likely that the labour—physical and intellectual—of women like “Miss Gunning and Miss Wilkinson” will never be fully recovered. Elstob, Hammond, Greene, and Spurgeon are people about whom we possess a certain amount of knowledge, due often—at least in part—to their patronage by wealthy or socially and institutionally respected men. They benefitted from and contributed to the kyriarchical standards of the field, as well as being taken advantage of by them. Elstob was wealthy until she was not; she enjoyed the freedom of following her interests with

99 Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years*.

100 For distant reading, see Moretti, “Style, Inc.,” 134–58. For approaches to “big data” in manuscript studies see “Big Data and Manuscript Studies,” ed. Mattison and Ryley.

101 Spurgeon, *Shakespeare’s Imagery*.

102 Spurgeon, *Keats’s Shakespeare*.

the support of her brother and other well-off academic patrons. Spurgeon lost her parents as a small child, but as the well-educated, Indian-born daughter of an army Captain, she was, as Nancy Woloch has said of Virginia Gildersleeve, “a consummate insider”:¹⁰³ the picture of “an (upper-) middle-class daughter of the British Empire.”¹⁰⁴ As the daughter of an academic turned diplomat, Greene too was born into relative privilege; though this, as Dorothy Kim has shown, did not put the family above racialized precarity.¹⁰⁵ Her ability to pass as white granted her access to the elite world of New York art collecting, but did not remove the necessity of balancing personal, ethical, and practical commitments with the interests and aspirations of her employer-cum-patron. Consequently, Greene’s collection at the Morgan Library was typical of the manuscript interests of the early twentieth-century academy: it is primarily a “white heritage collection for the agenda of white, American industrialists.”¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, each found tactics to navigate and adapt disciplinary norms, and a field built with attention to their work might be more open about its investments, less susceptible to patriarchal assumptions, think more transhistorically and transregionally about the past, and acknowledge the reciprocity of our relationships with it.

Queer Bibliography, Trans Bibliography

Queer and trans people have always engaged in bibliographic practice, Sarah Pyke and Malcolm Noble point out in the introduction to a 2024 special issue on Queer Bibliography. In the period discussed above, we might think—as Noble and Pyke do—of Stephen Gordon in Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), whose queerness, figured by Hall as “sexual inversion,” implicates both gender and sexual non-normativity (“I must be a boy, ‘cause I feel exactly like one,” Stephen tells the housemaid, Collins).¹⁰⁷ Reading her father’s marginalia in a copy of Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) prompts a recognition that both registers the queerness she already feels, and shapes the path of the rest of her life. Reading the signs

103 Woloch, *The Insider*, 51.

104 Haas, “Spurgeon,” 99. Spurgeon received an army pension of £12 a year from 1873 to 1891: see Royal Hospital Chelsea, Compassionate Allowances, Royal Bounty and Relief Fund, WO 23/116, no. 42, paper no. 70918/9.

105 Kim, “Belle da Costa Greene,” 44–46.

106 Kim, “Belle da Costa Greene,” 47.

107 Hall, *Well of Loneliness*, 14.

of her father reading sexology, for Stephen, shows her that she was always already queer.¹⁰⁸ “[Q]ueer bibliographical labor and expertise,” Noble and Pyke show, “have always existed, in professionalized and amateur forms, even if queer bibliography is only now emerging in a new disciplinary formation.”¹⁰⁹ Queer people understand the power of texts as material forms to shape, share, and transmit identity; and queer readers develop the ability to read with, through, and counter to the form of the book, in order to identify material likely to provide self-recognition. For modern queers, intuitive approaches to the identification of queer content might include “poring over covers, colophons, and card catalogs, decoding, chasing clues, following tenuous ‘threads of connection’ from material text to material text.”¹¹⁰ For many queer bibliographers, the intuitive material approaches they developed as young people led to formalized studies of book objects that foreground the haptic and affective qualities of that engagement. This book contends that premodern queer and trans people also understood the power of the material text to construct gender and sexuality through active embodied use (see esp. Chapter 4).

The presence or absence of trans lives in the documentary record has primarily been theorized by librarians and archivists. Research in this area can be divided into several key themes. One concern is access: it does not matter whether material is in an archive, if no one is able to find and use that material. For material to be findable, it must be catalogued and tagged using appropriate and comprehensible terminology and/or equipped with clear and non-pathologizing bibliographical classification (the call number that designates where a book is filed on the shelf and the language used to describe its content). As Melissa Adler points out, before the 1970s books with queer characters or storylines would have been catalogued under the subject heading “sexual perversion.” At that time, activists inside and outside the “Task Force on Gay Liberation” of the American Library Association, like Barbara Gittings, Joan Marshall, and Steve Wolf, pursued the Library of Congress to change cataloguing standards. Librarians realized, Adler reminds us, that “dominant heteronormative discourses relied upon and were enforced by subject classifications,” and that “categories both open and close fields of possibility. In the library, this ongoing dialectic brings subjects

108 Hall, *Well of Loneliness*, 231; Noble and Pyke, “Queer Bibliography,” 155; see Rohy, *Lost Causes*, 123.

109 Noble and Pyke, “Queer Bibliography,” 153. See, also, Noble and Pyke, “Bibliographical Gathering.”

110 Noble and Pyke, “Queer Bibliography,” 154.

into being on the library shelves while simultaneously positioning the user in relation to documents and the system of categorization.”¹¹¹ You cannot be what you cannot see. But decisions about what new terms we ascribe to a record also have consequences, K. J. Rawson points out. Deploying terms like “transgender” too liberally, or too conservatively, risks speaking for people who have not been allowed to speak for themselves and thereby isolating those records from the histories they belong to. The project to negotiate expanding identity categories while reducing harm in the ways information about race, gender, and sexuality are organized and assigned in libraries and archives continues through projects like the *Homosaurus*, “an international linked data vocabulary” of LGBTQ+ terms intended to “function as a companion to broad subject term vocabularies,” “enhancing discoverability” by providing breadth while standardizing and advising on terminology.¹¹² Queer and trans archival studies, then, acknowledges the need for a revisioning of the historical record, and the way such documents participate in structures of power.

Access, Rawson observes, is also about the space, shape, and time of the archive: archival spaces shape how researchers interact with records. The Sexual Minorities Archive, Rawson suggests—where archival objects are permanently on display with minimal interpretative metadata—presents a model of discovery in which objects are allowed to “speak to” the researcher, “embracing a different kind of satisfaction that recognizes that collections can have desires and want to be touched, too.”¹¹³ Similarly, the lived-in archive presented by Tom of Finland House puts visitors in intimate relation with the erotic art and ephemera on show, blurring the distinctions between archival objects, household tools, tongue-in-cheek play things, and ephemeral pornography.¹¹⁴ Many of these encounters could take place *only* outside

111 Adler, “Let’s not Homosexualize,” 503.

112 *Homosaurus*.

113 Rawson, “Desiring Queer(er?) Archival Logics,” 137.

114 Tom of Finland House at 1421 Laveta Terrace, Los Angeles was the home of celebrated erotic artist Tom of Finland (Touko Laaksonen, 1920–1991) and is still the residence of his one-time partner Durk Dehner and Dehner’s long-term partner Spike, as well as several resident artists at any one time. It is also the world’s largest repository of homoerotic art, and houses a functioning library and archive run by Marti Pike. For the purposes of this book, Pike’s work at the library, which includes establishing a catalogue and classmark system that could cope with the diverse collection of source material Tom used in his work and make meaningful differentiations between a wide assortment of erotic and pornographic materials, should be better known. The collection is spread throughout the house, with the main

of the institutional setting, in community archives that build trust, understanding, and even overlap between patrons and those caring for the collection. However, such reimaginings of the object-encounter are instructive. At Tom of Finland house, living with the collection is generative: it is part of the creative inspiration for artists participating in the Tom of Finland Foundation's in-house residency scheme. Rawson posits that alternative modes of archival access like these constitute "a queer revision of traditional historiographic method...that is based on the ways that researchers *feel* archives and *desire* history, and the ways that archives and history feel and desire right back."¹¹⁵ The reciprocated touch of the archive—famously figured by Carolyn Dinshaw as "the queer historical impulse...toward making connections across time"—complicates the linear temporality presented by western historiographies, especially in the hands of transgender researchers, whose identification with archival materials may carry the shame, fear, or anguish borne of current oppressions in lieu of the pleasure of recognition.¹¹⁶

Finally, such spaces are negotiated by embodied subjects. This book takes its cue, in particular, from Susan Stryker's reminder that "embodiment not only animates the research query but modulates access to the archive, in both its physical and its intellectual arrangement."¹¹⁷ Rawson and Charles E. Morris III recognize the reciprocal relationship between archive and body in their formulation of the "archival queer." Archival queers "resist the archive as a purely intellectual space and...seek out affective relations with the past."¹¹⁸ For example, Marika Cifor recalls "the intoxicating affective mixture of surprise and (dis)pleasure" she felt on encountering a hair belonging to trans sex worker and activist, Victoria Schneider, while going through the contents of Schneider's makeup bag in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society's (GLBTHS) reading room. For Cifor, the hair, as a piece of bodily ephemera, animated the bodily violation that Schneider experienced, but it was her own embodied response that "alters

library room (which houses Pike's database and about two thirds of the Foundation's books, including most of Tom of Finland's original publications) situated next door to the communal bathroom, enmeshing it within the fabric of the daily life of getting up and getting out in a multi-person household.

115 Rawson, "Desiring Queer(er?) Archival Logics," 137.

116 Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, 1. See Rawson, "Desiring Queer(er?) Archival Logics," 139; Love, *Feeling Backward*.

117 Stryker, "Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity," 153. See also Kirsch and Rohan, eds., *Beyond the Archives*.

118 Rawson and Morris, "Queer Archives/Archival Queers," 80.

[Cifor's] identification with Victoria in appropriately messy and uncomfortable ways, calling attention to [her] privileges (gender, class, education) and the dangers of identification in erasing meaningful differences."¹¹⁹ As I have suggested elsewhere, then, embodied experience is a crucial stage in the acquisition of knowledge: "Research is, in the spirit of true Baconian empiricism, simply a series of sensory inputs and outputs."¹²⁰ Trans and queer bodies accrue across their lifetimes a shifting range of experiences unavailable to their cishetero counterparts: the embodied experiences we bring to the archive, and the affective resonances they facilitate, are fundamental for recognizing alternate ways of knowing.

Noble and Pyke's introduction converts these archival considerations into a series of preliminary precepts—intellectual and ethical—intended to delineate expectations for queer bibliography as a sub-field:

Queer bibliography centres affect and embodiment. It attends to how and what printed matter makes us feel, and it wonders how material felt in queer historical hands.

Queer bibliography intuit. It amplifies the minute material, paratextual, and textual signals steering receptive readers in the right direction, attuned to hints and traces, the coded and the unsaid, the "bat's squeak of sexuality." It listens to silences very carefully.

Queer bibliography is messy and speculative. It strives to describe material texts' resonances, qualities, or techniques that may resist easy expression; it can be tentative, or pluralistic and rich. It sometimes overflows the limits of existing training, conventions, and infrastructures.

Queer bibliography takes place inside and outside universities, libraries, archives, and other institutional settings. Practitioners need not be academics, nor have formal training. Queer bibliography is being carried out by book artists, printers, booksellers, and by communities of young people on Instagram and on TikTok who have developed their own book cultures and protocols. These may be viewed askance as a form of para-academic, wholly unorthodox—though rigorous—"peer review."¹²¹

These tenets remain true for trans book history. Trans studies shares the queer commitment to liberation from normative frameworks of gender and sexuality, and in this book I will often deploy the words "trans and queer"

¹¹⁹ Cifor, "Presence, Absence, and Victoria's Hair," 248.

¹²⁰ Sargan, "Trans Codicology," 576.

¹²¹ Noble and Pyke, "Queer Bibliography," 166.

simultaneously. However, I propose some additional parameters of my own also, using Noble and Pyke's model as a starting point but guided by the particular (sometimes divergent) interests and approaches of trans studies. For Stryker, trans studies was born as "queer theory's evil twin": disrupting and refusing to stabilize the gender systems on which sexuality is built.¹²² I take special note of trans studies' particular interest in the *processes* and *techniques* of embodiment. "Queer," Heather Love comments, "has proven less useful than transgender studies in accounting for embodiment. Trans studies makes accounting for material experience and making space for new forms and experiences of embodiment central."¹²³ Finally, as Andrea Long Chu and Emmett Harsin Drager hypothesize in their state-of-the-field discussion "After Trans Studies," transness knows what it is to make and break norms, "what it means to be attached to a norm—by desire, by habit, by survival." Trans studies offers more ambivalent approaches to what is normative, and to how community might be constructed in, through, and around normative modes.¹²⁴

Trans bibliography reveals normative models.

Trans bibliography fosters connection and community formation.

Trans bibliography emphasizes process.

Trans bibliography is materially engaged.

I have used these guidelines as a roadmap to the chapters that follow. Of course, the presence of most of them will be felt in more than one chapter, but each chapter is conceived to foreground one tenet in particular. This chapter began by exposing and rethinking the foundations of the field in white patriarchal imperialism and thinking through some of the normativizing legacies that history has left behind. Chapter 2 is premised on the normativity of the manuscript record and the tactics trans people have employed to navigate such records. Chapter 3 proposes a framework to reformulate relations between manuscripts, situating the material text as a processual and connective force. The fourth chapter brings together these ideas to put forward embodied touch as a tactic that turns normative manuscripts into tools of trans and queer community formation, both in the past and today.

122 Stryker, "Transgender Studies."

123 Love, "Queer," 175.

124 Chu and Drager, "After Trans Studies," 108.

