Introduction: objects, assemblages, affects, ecologies

> Texts are bodies that can light up, by rendering human perception more acute, those bodies whose favored vehicle of affectivity is less wordy: plants, animals, blades of grass, household objects, trash.
>
> Jane Bennett, 'Systems and Things'

This book is devoted to the emotional allure of textual objects.

When we choose to inhabit the space of a book, we accept an invitation to fashion imaginative worlds with it, in an ongoing creative act that incorporates not only the words on the page as we translate them into our mental landscape but also the physical ecology of the book: in the particular features of its heft, scale, layout, and structure; in the smells and sounds of its turning pages; in its distinct fonts, illustrations, marks of previous readership, and other sensual cues to its unique world. Literary studies has long explored this imaginative textual space and its affective impacts; only more recently have the material site of the text and its effects claimed literary critical attention. More recently, the easy availability of electronic texts, with their own distinctive features, has prompted us to reconsider the full extent of our attachment to the concrete codex: the capacity, mobility, and low reproduction cost of otherwise generic e-texts with their uniform reading environments across diverse platforms weighs against the rich sensual encounter and varied flexible formats of the cumbersome, storage-demanding, resource-heavy book. While certain practical matters may weigh in favour of the electronic text, the emotional pull of the book object is strong.

Medievalists feel particular allegiances to both platforms: we appreciate that digitised copies of medieval manuscripts distribute visual access to books otherwise available to only very few

select experts, while we are keenly aware of the material medieval manuscript's extensive somatic range and durability. In this book, I document the emotional attraction of the medieval book through an extended analysis of one fifteenth-century literary anthology that has entranced me for some time now. I trace how that particular book wields this force in collaboration with the inhabitants of its pages – human and non-human, tangible and intangible – and with its readers in manuscript, print, and digital ages. The diverse strains of influence that books exert as material objects are exhibited in this single book's behaviour in the world: the effects of its peculiar material form, the impressions of the assorted texts it contains, and especially the affective responses that the book, including but not limited to its contents, generates. Indeed, this medieval manuscript's agency is witnessed in the very existence of *Objects of Affection*, a book produced centuries later in direct encounter with the realities of the manuscript's physical forms, extending its emotional influences to new cultural, historical, and material environments. *Objects of Affection* models the varied consequences that books have as they participate in cross-temporal collaboration with shifting systems of reading, changing configurations of distribution and archiving, and diverse communities of feeling.

More specifically, this new materialist case study of the physical book that scholars call Oxford, Bodleian Library Manuscript Ashmole 61 (hereafter Ashmole 61) demonstrates the emotional agency of the book through the affective literacy training that Ashmole 61 provided a late fifteenth-century English household. Scholars have recognised Ashmole 61 for its spiritually and socially hortatory interventions in the lives of its earliest audiences through its conduct texts, saints' lives, devotional guides, prayers, didactic narratives, and romances. Reconsidering the manuscript with the assistance of new materialist critical approaches (among them vibrant materialism, object studies, posthumanism, and actor-network theory) draws attention to the prominent pedagogical role of non-human agents, including the book itself: they model exemplary morality and spirituality, encouraging in the humans who appear in the collection, and in those who read it, responses of penitence and sorrow, fear and horror, humility and forgiveness. A full range of medieval ecologies – literary, social, religious, textual, and material – enabled the book's generation of these effects. Apprehended

this way, Ashmole 61 broadens our understanding of medieval communities of feeling and of medieval and post-medieval text technologies.

Two central concepts guiding this investigation are 'household' and 'ecology', and the two are, perhaps surprisingly, closely intertwined. Ecology, despite the long semantic history implied by its Greek roots (*oikos*, 'house, dwelling', and *logos*, 'discourse, doctrine'), has had a very short life in English, first used in the nineteenth century (entering from German, rather than directly from Greek) as a specialised term in biology, then spreading to sociology in the early twentieth century. Its current wider usage developed as humans' interest in their damaging effects on the environment (that is, on what is often called the 'natural world') grew, from the late 1960s onwards. 'Ecology' tends to carry with it, today, associations with the 'natural' environment even as it is often deployed more broadly to describe 'the interrelationship between any system and its environment',[1] of which 'natural' ecology is a special case. Making full use of these denotative and connotative possibilities, this book investigates various ecologies bound in this single codex: the ecology of the late medieval English household, the ecology of the medieval book, the ecology of affective spirituality, the ecology of reading.

I thus deploy 'ecology' figuratively and transtemporally as well as what we might consider more literally. The close etymological relation of 'ecology' to 'economy', with which it shares the root *oikos* (and which, like 'ecology', offers many fruitful figurative applications, particularly in the plural), provides opportunities for further clarification: the suffixes *logos* ('discourse, doctrine') and *nomos* ('law, custom') both pull the *oikos*, or household, in the direction of regulation (be it through normative order or through laws); yet their differences point towards the key concerns of each term, especially as used by literary and other scholars over the past twenty-five years: 'economy' attends to the law or custom – the regulation(s) – of the household, while 'ecology' focuses on its discourses or doctrines. The latter of these opens up possibilities for description, the focus of which is not a system of exchange so much as a system of being and becoming, of intersubjective ontology. Given the roots of 'ecology' in 'house, dwelling', the term 'household ecology' might seem a redundant deployment; yet it serves to draw

attention to the systems of the household, systems which include but are not restricted to exchanges based on assessments of fiscal or other value.

The household is one ecology of which the medieval book Ashmole 61 is a part. The diverse inhabitants of that household produce the ecology of the book as they are incorporated into it, in the material world they generate and that guides their living, in the social and spiritual desires that shape their influences in that world, and so on. The household ecology is that set of systems invested in the sustenance of a family. In its medieval manifestation, the family is sustained through the interventions of an extended collection of contributors, human and non-human. For instance, in a later fifteenth-century lower gentry household of the sort whose needs most immediately sponsored the production of Ashmole 61, the household would comprise the family who 'owned' the house and its environs, and the people employed to ensure the day-to-day survival of the family and its belongings (including servants and apprentices as well as, in many cases, family members whose primary commitment was to other households): as P. J. P. Goldberg describes it,

> The bourgeois house was [like that of the peasantry] a place for eating, sleeping and supplementary economic activity, but these were not its sole functions. For artisans with their workshops and merchants with their stock and their counting houses, the home tended also to be the principal locus of *all* economic activity associated with the household.[2]

Traditionally, the definition of the late medieval gentry household would stop there, including only the human collective inhabiting and sustaining the household and its environs. From a new materialist perspective, however, non-human elements, organic and inorganic, come into full view as household members – as participants in the system of the household making their own distinct contributions to its ongoing existence. Viewed this way, the household would include not only the gentry family and its human support staff but also the buildings themselves (and the systems that produce these buildings, from systems of inheritance to those mobilising local resources such as wood, clay, water), local varieties of crops, the regional educational resources and histories of linguistic development, and so forth. Such

a perspective is further encouraged by an observation from P. J. P. Goldberg and Maryanne Kowaleski:

> in later medieval usage, *household* need not mean just people; it could denote possessions. Thus Roger Salways of York left his wife 'all my household holy' and Elizabeth Poynings likewise referred to 'all myne hole apparell and all my stuff of houshold being within my dwelling place' when she made her will.[3]

My work on the medieval household owes much to Vance Smith's *Arts of Possession* (2003), which focuses on household management – especially the skilful ideological management of surplus – and the means by which the household reproduces itself materially. His project is guided by Xenophon's definition of the household as 'the sum of its possessions, a definition based … on the utility of goods, on the notion that it is objects that constitute our world'.[4] I share Smith's (and Xenophon's) orientation towards the objects that constitute the household, but my primary interest is not in utility as such but in how the household – that is, its shifting community of humans and non-humans – sustains itself affectively. I build on Smith's clarification of medieval English people's attitudes towards the objects they owned, carefully read in terms of the system of ownership inherited and being revised at the time: he demonstrates that '[i]n the English Middle Ages, it is often difficult to know how, or whether, you actually possess your own household',[5] a situation that he shows generates much anxiety concerning the act of possession and the things possessed. My own orientation is towards how one lived with – among, in relation to, in terms of – things (surplus or otherwise), and how this relationship offered challenges and opportunities extending beyond conundrums of naming and claiming to inform the affective ecology of the household.

Household books

The subject of this study is one representative of a type of medieval book that recently emerged from a century of seclusion. Its extant examples were originally produced for and consumed by late medieval lower gentry and wealthy merchant family households outside London. These collections of recycled texts efficiently provided their

owners a 'library "in parvo"'[6] – that is, a mini-library, a library contained in a single book. These books gather saints' lives, romances, exemplary narratives, conduct texts, prayers, devotional lyrics, retellings of biblical stories, psalms, and lyrics.[7] Some include chronicles and historical documents relating to the region and the family. These relatively inexpensive books were locally composed and local-facing, their imaginative possibilities appealing to their audiences' individual and collective needs and desires. Produced mostly in the East Midlands in the last half of the fifteenth century and into the first decade of the sixteenth,[8] these manuscript books were soon to be outmoded, manufactured just as the printing press started to offer readers in England a new – not to mention less expensive and more widely accessible – alternative format. (It is, in fact, a time rather like our own, with new platforms providing options alongside the long-standing default mode of textual production and reception, when multiple formats also coexist: incunabula alongside manuscripts then, e-books and audio recording and digitised print and manuscript books alongside paperback and hardcover books now.) In addition to Ashmole 61, other such extant manuscripts are the Heege MS (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland MS Advocates 19.3.1), Cambridge University Library (CUL) Ff.2.38,[9] and British Library MS Cotton Caligula a.2. These are largely unadorned paper books produced by one or two scribes for what seems (as we are certain of little about the individuals who originally owned these books)[10] to have been a lower gentry, yeoman, or wealthy merchant family.[11] The proportions of the 'pragmatically informative material' vary significantly, sometimes acting physically as 'filler' but otherwise serving the same needs of the household as do their narrative and poetic counterparts.

Based on the domestic audience of manuscripts such as these, Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards assigned them the label 'family books'.[12] Boffey and Edwards offered this category in 2003 to describe books 'compiled for the tastes and purposes of a household or related households, and drawing on available external resources';[13] their aim was to supplement and contrast the already established category of the 'household book', which had been associated with a kind of wholly pragmatic ad hoc reference collection that was 'a repository of practical information of more or less domestic kinds – recipes and remedies and instructions on matters such as dyeing,

fishing, arboriculture, and book production – which various members of a household may have wished to consult, or to have recorded, for different contingencies'.[14] Boffey and Edwards thus coined 'family book' to describe books generally containing texts that we tend to call 'literary' and with a noticeably different purpose from those that had been labelled household books, although books of both kinds ('household' and 'family') were 'produced not just for but within the environs of a particular family or household'.[15] In this move their category addresses the full ecology of the book, expanding a narrow focus on the nature of the book's contents (pragmatic information used as an everyday resource by household members) to include as an important taxonomic feature the locus of its audience and producer, in this case 'the environs of a particular family or household'. Through an analysis of codicological evidence, Michael Johnston demonstrates how manuscripts such as Ashmole 61 were probably products of the gentry manor house: 'The household was the provincial institution that brought together a series of individuals immersed in the documentary practices necessary to run a landed estate and maintain a home full of servants, practices that could easily be applied to copying out literary texts.'[16] This production model parallels the one long familiar to scholars in London, with 'in this case, local clerks turning their attention from documentary production for their master to literary production for him'.[17] Therefore, more directly than does 'family book', the term 'household book' acknowledges the range of ways these collections attended to the shifting needs of a particular, local, non-noble household ecology in its fullness, including but extending beyond the human family. The term 'household book' also positions the manuscript materially – in terms of the buildings and land, the non-human inhabitants and fellow producers of the household – and locally: held in place, kept, possessed, even grasped by hand.

Over time, these household books lost their domestic utility and, as a result, their readers; they moved out of households and, in the case of those that have survived the centuries, took up residence in private and then institutional manuscript collections.[18] By the late 1800s their human visitors were limited to editors seeking variants of individual texts and manuscript scholars concerned with medieval books' material composition: for editors, the books contained copies of rare and enduring texts to be refined and recirculated (select

texts, that is, from among the many alongside which a given manuscript houses them); for manuscript scholars, they exemplified a waning textual technology. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, a developing nexus of scholarly concerns drew attention to these manuscripts: cultural studies and New Historicism found much to value in the anthologies' full contents, texts such as Middle English romances, conduct items, and exemplary tales that had promised little scholarly reward for the preceding period's primarily aesthetic and formalist investigations.[19] The deployment of medieval cultural practices and ideologies in such genres offered new insights, and the prevalence of such texts in household books garnered these manuscripts renewed critical attention. Such reading methods can enable more than listening to the past:[20] they can speak with it, an act that recognises that the past is present, that a book born in the Middle Ages but with us still lives in the present as much as in the various past moments through which it has endured.[21] The book ecology of MS Ashmole 61 includes medieval paper manuscript folios and modern ones (now living in the Bodleian Library, then living in a gentry household in Leicestershire); it includes print pages, too (the edition of the book made by George Shuffelton and published by TEAMS in 2008),[22] and electronic ones (the online version of Shuffelton's edition[23] and the select digitised folios available online[24]). The book's ecology similarly includes readers medieval and modern (and all those in between) – along with its community of Middle English verse texts (themselves retellings and translations of previous texts) and their human and non-human inhabitants.[25]

The book ecology of Ashmole 61

Generally unremarkable among medieval manuscripts (which are most often exemplified today via illuminated *de luxe* manuscripts, however unrepresentative those are of books generally across the Middle Ages), Ashmole 61 identifies itself through some distinctive features that appear to be associated with its singular scribe-compiler.[26] Despite having been called 'peculiar' and 'remarkably haphazard' in its production – an assessment that seems to result from a genre-centric critical approach that recognises patterns in the appearance of clusters of a given genre but not in thematic or other associations[27]

– the book's compilation facilitates patterns that suggest thematic as well as generic associations.[28] Such patterns can be seen, for instance, in the early portion of Ashmole 61 that is frequently referred to as the 'Children's Corner'.[29] It begins with the parallel placement of the saint's life *St Eustace* and the romance *Isumbras*. These texts share so many plot elements that they are considered genre remediations of the same story. *St Eustace* appears at the start of the section (which is also the start of the book, and the start of the first quire and of a booklet), and *Isumbras* appears at the start of the second quire, beginning what is the equivalent of a second booklet.[30] In the first quire, following *St Eustace* is a satiric piece from Lydgate (an estates satire-style critique of failures throughout society, *Ram's Horn*) and then two conduct items (*The Wise Man to his Son* and *The Good Wife Taught her Daughter*); in the second quire following *Isumbras* is a poetic version of the *Ten Commandments* and then two additional conduct texts (Lydgate's *Stans Puer ad Mensam* and *Dame Curtasy*). In each case, then, a narrative leads the quire, followed by three texts that are either recognisable conduct pieces or items acting like conduct texts in the way they offer instruction on how to behave to achieve successful social integration. Ashmole 61 has a reputation among manuscript scholars for being 'idiosyncratic'[31] – a euphemism for 'unreliable as a source for authoritative editions' – given the great variation expressed by its versions of multiply attested texts. Certainly, Ashmole's scribe, 'Rate', appears to have been interventionist in his efforts, actively modifying words, deleting lines, combining two texts into one, adding stanzas of his own creation, and so on. Yet while Rate's scribal attitudes and practices collide with modern editing practices and desires, such features of the manuscript as the 'Children's Corner' indicate that they were not simply haphazard, however peculiar.

Ashmole 61 indeed exhibits many peculiarities. The codex has an unusual shape, with tall, narrow pages wide enough for only one column of verse, not sufficient to the two columns per page seen in other extant household books, which are wider and shorter quarto-format codices. At 16 inches (40.6 cm) tall and 5 inches (12.7 cm) wide, the page dimensions of Ashmole 61 have encouraged debate about the possibility that it was a holster book, traditionally conceptualised as a portable manuscript carried in a bag at the belt and commonly associated with minstrels; however, this debate seems

to concern our critical terminology more than it does the book's purposes. Lynne S. Blanchfield, in the first modern extended investigation of Ashmole 61 in the early 1990s, finds the 'account-book or "agenda" format' more appropriate to the manuscript than holster book.[32] The paper appears to be account paper that was first folded into an eight-inch by five-inch 'square', possibly to produce a more commonly sized household manuscript, then unfolded before being used for this verse collection.[33] Blanchfield observes that the manuscript's long, narrow shape makes it easier to hold with one hand while doing something with the other, or while reading aloud without a stand.[34] Erik Kwakkel describes how manuscripts with such dimensions were frequently produced for material that would be sung during Mass or used for instruction in monastic schools. However, such items tended be thin as well as narrow, the equivalent of a quire or two and often unbound, to reduce their weight while being held in one hand. Kwakkel notes as well that a late medieval copy of *The Romance of Richard Coeur de Lion* is very slim, which he avers seems to indicate it was made to be used by minstrels.[35] In the case of Ashmole 61, Blanchfield notes that 'the bulk and weight of the volume would have made it cumbersome to carry about, unless in individual quires, in which case more wear and tear would surely be present; only the first quire is likely to have been so used'.[36] Its pristine condition even today suggests that if it had been produced to be carried around as a holster book was, whoever carried it did so with great care rather than treating it perfunctorily as a minstrel's aid.[37]

As it happens, though, there is no need to rely only on the book's size to discern its purposes, since a performance use for Ashmole 61 is also suggested by the fact that all the texts in this manuscript are in verse, at a time when prose was increasingly popular and regularly appeared in other household books (particularly in the chronicle material that Ashmole 61 notably lacks). The modern editor of Ashmole 61, George Shuffelton, finds that the collection's texts 'were chosen on the basis of their suitability for reading aloud' and reaches the significant conclusion that '[w]hat ties the manuscript together is … a deep investment in oral entertainment as the centerpiece of domestic life'.[38] This is not to say that other household books containing prose were not concerned with domestic life; but in offering texts especially well-suited to public reading in the

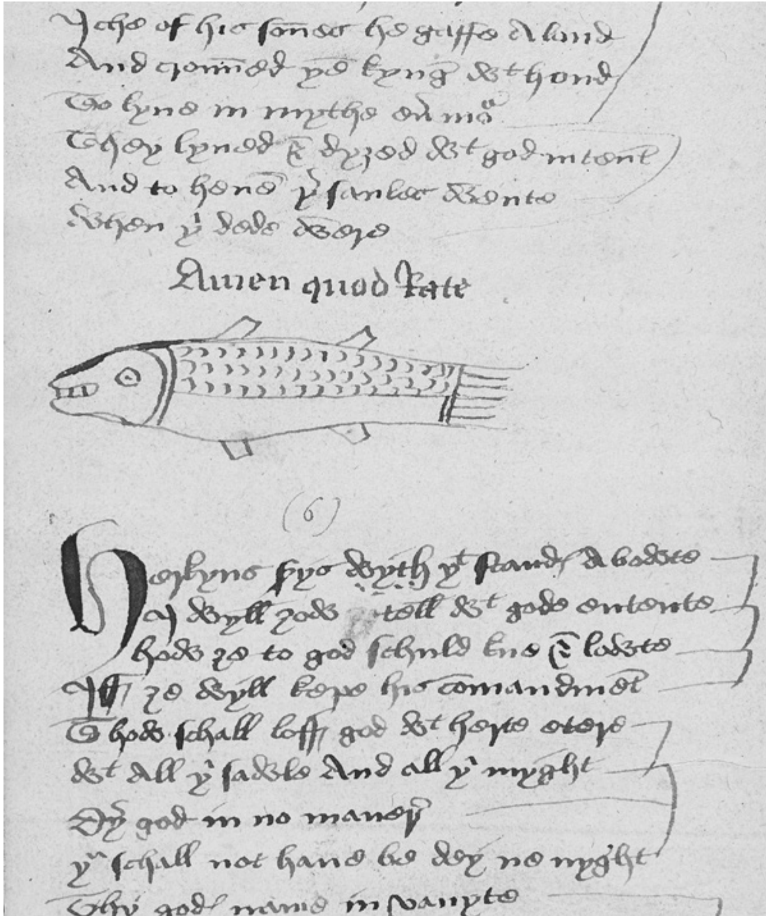
household, to be shared in an act that gathers the household physically and ideologically, Ashmole 61 announces that '[r]eading was thus a communal duty with a communal purpose'.[39] So even if its account-page format explains its form and the creases on its pages, making unlikely any holster book identity, this doesn't negate the oral presentation or performance orientation of the collection – further supported by the ease it offers for reading aloud without a stand.[40] In this and other ways, Ashmole 61 seems oriented towards inviting communal household engagement through public performance of its contents.

The performative outlook of the collection, with its verse-only texts and its abundant references to minstrels and minstrelsy, is one distinct feature of its materiality; another seemingly contradictory one is the unusual visual presence, even prominence, of its scribe throughout the anthology. When a book like this is being read aloud to a physically present audience, the reader whose speech enlivens the words on the page becomes the local vehicle for the voice of the narrator or, where appropriate, the author; the scribe, in contrast, is directly present only to the single individual encountering the book visually in order to enact the text. Despite the evident focus in the collection on the larger community audience who would engage with the manuscript in its aural form, the Ashmole 61 scribe (whose identity has not been discovered, though some critical consensus swirls around a Leicester ironmonger)[41] took the unusual step of signing his name, Rate – or, once, a variant thereof, 'Rathe' – to half of the items in the manuscript.[42] This gesture points towards an anticipated reader of the book engaging directly with the scribe's visual contributions to the collection. It also repeatedly draws attention to one select member of the household and manuscript ecologies: the scribe.[43]

Ashmole 61's physical features thus raise new questions even as they seem to answer others, maintaining a number of codicological mysteries. These include its most baffling: the illustrations of fish and flowers that fill its pages – 33 of them across 41 items. This is simply exceptional. Household books only very rarely contain even basic marginalia or images (at most, a reader will encounter what Johnston describes as 'sporadic touches of color (typically rubrication) on the first initials of individual lines'),[44] and certainly not repeated images participating in what is a sustained pattern of illustration.

Indeed, of the medieval English manuscripts containing romances (household books among them), the Auchinleck manuscript – a costly collection produced two centuries earlier – is the only one besides Ashmole 61 to contain illustrations. Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson call Ashmole 61's illustration a 'rudimentary, but nonetheless effective, programme of rubrications and decoration'.[45] This distinguishing feature seems all the more insistent because fish and flowers, the recurring images here, are insignificant players in the poems in the manuscript: just one fish is referenced in its texts, and flowers appear only very rarely. Furthermore, the fish all look the same, as do nearly all of the flowers. The images thus cannot be identified as visual adjuncts to individual written texts.[46]

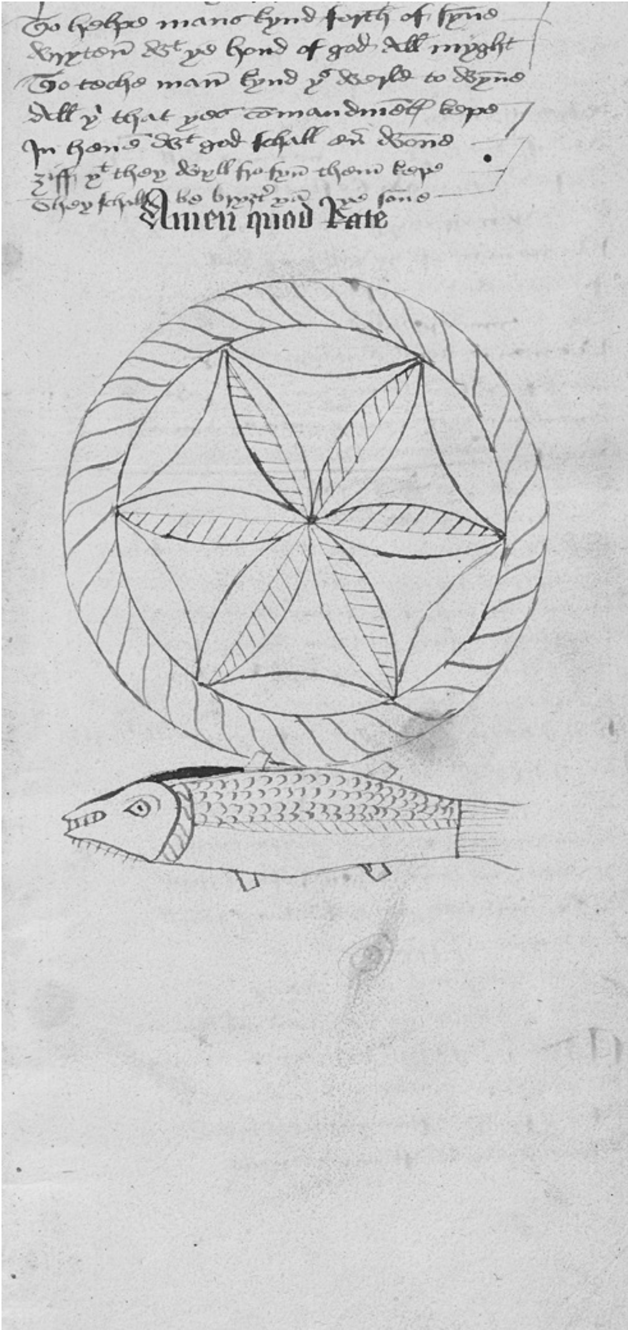
Rate is generally thought to be the producer of the images (in large part because the text and images use the same ink, and also because of the graffiti-like nature of the images). They are thus integrated even more intimately into his act of copying and compilation. Very few textual items in the manuscript appear with titles or incipits. The colophon alone,[47] which appears at the end of each item, consistently indicates the transition from one text to the next, granting this feature special influence in organising the layout of the collection and in guiding the reading experience. Tracing the quick development of this pattern in the first items in the collection helps clarify the significance of the scribal signature in the colophon and its association with the fish and flower images: For each of the first eight items of the manuscript (the so-called 'Children's Corner'), a colophon appears. After the first two texts' colophons – a simple 'Amen' in each case – the scribe shifts consistently to the extended 'Amen quod Rate' ('Amen says Rate'). In this act, he positions himself in relation to the text, marking it with his utterance, inscribing his name alongside the text; he also positions himself in the audience's (later) moment of reading or hearing the text by encouraging a shared response through the 'Amen'. As soon as he inserts himself this way into the colophon in the third item of the text, Rate begins accompanying this verbal signature with a drawing of a fish and, much of the time, a flower (see Figure 1). That is, these accessories rapidly increase in complexity: while items 1 and 2 lack 'quod Rate' or images, all the rest have the full 'Amen quod Rate' tag accompanied by a fish (items 3, 4, and 5) and a stem of flowers (item 4), to the point that item 6 ends with a very large floral braided ring, filling



1 Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 61, fol. 16v: *Sir Isumbras* and the *Ten Commandments*

most of the blank space between this item and the following – and below the ring-with-flowers appears a fish (see Figure 2). The remaining two items in this section have either a flower (item 7) or fish (item 8).

The Ashmole 61 fish is sometimes relatively symmetrically placed in an open space left between two items in the manuscript, but more often than not it seems to have been drawn before the text it follows



2 Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 61, fol. 17r: conclusion of the *Ten Commandments*

was completed, so that the last lines of the preceding poem must be squeezed in, to the point sometimes of nearly preventing independent perception or comprehension of either.[48] The fish, which at these and many other moments appears to be grinning, refuses to defer to the text. Text and drawing intersect, sharing the same space, neither dominating the other – with the effect of flattening traditional hierarchies of text and image. Text becomes extra-textual, image becomes extra-iconic, each moving into spaces and behaving in ways generally disallowed them. The enmeshed elements demand more than separate places and roles, insisting on the interrelatedness of these elements in the book's ecology.

Collectively, these patterns suggest an act of branding on the part of the scribe – a metonymic association between himself and the non-human and non-verbal, offering Rate additional avenues for entangling himself within the world of the book. This enmeshment I am perceiving is not a purely symbolic association – wherein, for instance, the image would be a rebus of the scribe's family name,[49] or a symbol of the Leicester guild of Corpus Christi[50] – that is, where the fish and flower exist only because they can visually represent a person or a human corporation, are present only because they just so happen to convey in graphic shorthand something human that they otherwise do not relate to in any meaningful way. The physical features of the manuscript may be inconsistent, even contradictory, providing texts for oral presentation but building a relationship between the scribe and the book's visual readers; they highlight the range of household inhabitants within the manuscript while emphasising the identity of the individual household member responsible for producing the collection. Indeed, a single coherent meaning for such elements might be exactly what they refuse to offer, however sustained, giving evidence instead of this book's (and all books') rich multiplicity.

Household object ecologies

Ashmole 61 is itself a household object. Produced in a household, apparently by one member of that household for its other members, and engaging the worldly and spiritual concerns of the household collective,[51] the textual collection teems with objects of the household,

both real and imaginary: tables, mirrors, beds, door jambs, meat and food, alcohol, household members' bodies and others' bodies – fingers, hands, foreheads – and their products, a stag, a crucifix, demons, a ram's horn, a bird, fiends, chains, tears, a hunting dog, a hawk, two giants, a bridge, an enchanted hall, boiling oil, pieces of the holy cross, two evil dragons, prayer, torture, a human–tree hybrid, a lyre, a death tableau, a fairy castle, deer carcasses, a drinking game. The plenty of this merely partial list accentuates the lively household ecology that extends throughout the anthology – an ecology in which these objects do much more than simply coexist or provide a backdrop for human activity.[52] We might add to the ecology those objects, witnessed by their effects, that are not necessarily materially perceived. In the case of Ashmole 61, such objects would include Catholic Christianity, monarchism, the power of one's word, the power of the Word, hospitality, largesse, patriarchy, monogamy, family. Within texts and across the collection, these objects constitute and reconstitute different household assemblages that serve a range of purposes, from the pragmatic to the philosophical. The scribe-fish-flower synthesis recurring in the book's pages, very tangibly *on* its pages, encourages readers (who in the process of reading become part of the book ecology) to consider the integrations of the non-human and human objects of the household and the various provisional object ecologies generated throughout. In doing so, Ashmole 61 manifests a view of the world in which human institutions and their ethical and moral concerns are produced through interaction with, and often through the intervention of, non-human agents, animate and inanimate.

Such attention to the influence of the non-human challenges contemporary expectations that medieval Christian morality and ethics would be exclusively human concerns. The human soul and its eternal post-mortem experience seem the primary site of Christian moral attention. As Karl Steel notes, 'From the standpoint of *professional, scholarly* texts running through the entirety of the Middle Ages [key examples being Augustine and Aquinas], the difference between having human intelligence and a beast having intelligence is that between a pleonasm and an impossibility.' Steel further observes that such is the case in 'the *systematic* thought of the Middle Ages: outside systematic thought, a vast array of other material teemed'.[53] Evidence from medieval culture suggests that moral agency was

often understood much more expansively. As Caroline Walker Bynum demonstrates extensively in her 2011 book *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*, even medieval theologians – the authorities regularly engaging such matters in the context of institutional religious ideology – spoke of matter as 'organic, fertile, and in some sense alive'.[54] The non-human world was not, first and foremost, starkly divided into the animate and the inanimate; as extensive taxonomies of that world were developed, their central identifier was not, as it would become in later generations, 'the living' and 'the dead'. Matter was not perceived as fixed and non-generative but as 'by definition that which changes': what was inanimate was, in some key features, animate, since it experienced change and did so in ways recognisable from the animate world.[55] Given such understandings of animate and inanimate objects as similarly subject to – and capable of – change and development, certain objects (in this case, human objects) were less likely to be perceived as automatically and naturally the single agential subject, surrounded by multitudes of objects present only to be acted upon and through. J. Allan Mitchell has demonstrated that medieval thinkers understood the human body to be ontologically variant over time, as exhibited during the process of the body's development, during which 'the embryo is in transit between successive species'.[56] Mitchell describes as 'conventional' the statement that 'the [human] embryo lives the life of a plant, then the life of an animal, and afterwards the life of a human being'.[57] As another example, Nicole Oresme observed that 'there are many (or at least several) intermediate *species* between sperm and a complete man'.[58]

These views, however unfamiliar to long-standing modern habits of understanding the material world, share much with the new materialism, a term used to describe a range of affiliated approaches within the humanities and social sciences that promote a renewed materialism in the face of a decades-long emphasis on discourse, language, culture, and constructivism. In its emphasis on materiality, new materialism does not seek a 'return' to a positivist empiricism; instead, it pursues a materialism in ongoing conversation with anti-realist philosophies and informed by dramatic developments in science and technology. Among the new materialisms are some approaches attending primarily to matters of ontology, others primarily focused on biopolitical and bioethical concerns. All include ecocritical

practitioners though not all are predominately ecocritically oriented or motivated. They all 'recognise that phenomena are caught in a multitude of interlocking systems and forces'; they 'consider anew the location and nature of capacities for agency'.[59] The multiplicity and diversity of these systems and forces, and the emphasis on previously neglected sites of agency, are central insights of the new materialism.

Generally associated with the new materialism are a cluster of approaches often described as object-oriented (including or in conversation with vibrant materialism, speculative realism, object-oriented ontology, and actor-network theory) that offer methodological and theoretical assistance in reformulating our approaches to reading the physical world in medieval texts. Object-oriented studies have encouraged us to look beyond inherited understandings of objects as inert recipients of human action, agentless entities that exist as drifting victims of the human will. Instead, objects are understood as having effect on others and, in that, having agency.[60] Further, object-oriented studies extends the usual notion of 'the object' to include human and non-human, animate and inanimate, tangible and incorporeal.[61] Clustering these different approaches under the 'object-oriented studies' umbrella highlights the value of their shared features while downplaying the particular qualities that distinguish them.[62] All object-oriented approaches reject the long-dominant concept of the exceptional human and, simultaneously, flatten ontological hierarchies[63] to produce a model of the world that, while making distinctions among its components, removes evaluative association from those distinctions and avoids correlationism, 'the belief that things can only exist in relation to (human) minds or language'.[64] It is a deeply descriptive mode, one that depends on representations of abundant diversity (as in the 'Latour litany' demonstrated via the extended list of household objects that began this section).[65] It fights against traditional and lingering (philosophical and vernacular) 'association[s] of matter with passivity', a view that sees matter as mechanistic, which has long had the effect of 'weakening our discernment of the force of things'.[66] All object-oriented theorists agree upon the force of things; how exactly that force operates in terms of the force of *other* things is where key distinctions are made. Jane Bennett expresses the relationships among things' forces as follows: 'Earthly bodies, of various but always finite

durations, affect and are affected by one another. And they form noisy systems or temporary working assemblages which are, as much as any individuated thing, loci of affection and allure.'[67] The emphasis on objects' being in flux, impermanent, and composite – that is, 'built from swarms of subcomponents' – extends throughout vibrant materialism, actor-network theory, and the new materialisms at large.

Bringing both the non-hierarchical ontology of the object and the concept of the object-assemblage to bear on medieval texts helps us to recuperate hermeneutic possibilities that have been lost to our modern encounters with them. Such orientations can enable new possibilities in our relation to the past and in our engagement with the present. I focus especially on generally neglected non-human objects in order to understand how they operate in collaboration (intentional or not) with one another in the particular textual ecology of Ashmole 61, in order to underscore premodern conceptualisations of the physical world.[68] Particularly useful for discerning the effects of collective agency are medieval considerations of stones and minerals, given modern Western conceptions of them as fixed, inert, incapable of development or self-generated change. J. Allan Mitchell shows how medieval models of mineral development reflect those understood for human development: as the human embryo moved across species during its growth – existing as plant then animal then human – the mineral was '[m]etabolizing, coagulating, transforming' and 'emerging in time and spatial environments where they contribute something palpable'.[69] Mitchell and Valerie Allen demonstrate that minerals were understood to develop in ways we would describe as mammalian: for example, Allen shows how Albertus Magnus 'takes stones to be a matrix or "womb", a material cause of metal, "as if the substance of stones were, so to speak, a place peculiarly suitable for the production of metals"'.[70] The stone behaves as surrogate mother to the mineral.

Minerals and humans exhibit shared experiences of gestation, and they are similarly positioned within the moral ecology inherent to earthly existence. Recent work on medieval lapidaries has revealed premodern readings of morality unanticipated by modern natural or ethical philosophy. Kellie Robertson demonstrates, for instance, that the physical intimacy of two differently gendered fire stones is described as generating spontaneous combustion. This characteristic

of fire stones is often read allegorically, ultimately transforming into an *exemplum* against (human) lust. But such representations of non-human affective behaviour, Robertson clarifies, were not 'mere analogies' for the human, for 'in a physical world where the rock and the human differ more by degree than by kind, where the divide between the material and the immaterial was not yet so indelible, the reciprocity of moral lessons was underwritten by an ontological connection manifest in the *scala naturae*'.[71] The human fornicator and the mineral fornicator were connected by the relationships among all beings and things – rather than being essentially and fundamentally distinguished by the conscience (and thus moral capacity) of one and the total lack thereof in the other.

This feature appears in medieval writing as *virtus* or *vertu* (the first in Latin, the second in English and French): 'inherent powers and the primary source of … agency' that '[c]osmic and ecological imprinting' offer all earthly elements, including, in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's sample, seemingly static stone.[72] Cohen goes on to say that 'lapidaries … developed a sophisticated vocabulary for the explication of nonhuman agency', including *virtus*, 'a trigger to worldly activity', a term offering 'creatureliness without anthropomorphism'.[73] Medieval associations between generative power and morality demonstrate that the latter was not conceived of as exclusively a human trait.[74] Allen shows that Albertus Magnus understood 'mineral virtue' to be 'the power the stone or metal receives, in the immediate from earthy exhalations, ultimately from the heavens, because (as Albertus explains), "all the powers of things below come from above"'.[75] As part of that power, the stone or metal behaves in certain ways – such as falling when dropped – 'not because of gravitational pull but because the prepondering element of earth in them "desires" to return to base, and thus makes objects move in downward direction'. Further, Allen observes, 'A stone has a sense of place, yet its earthward love is not simple, for the sensible qualities belonging to the other elements compromise its purity, rendering it a microcosm of concord-in-discord.'[76] The innate tendencies and moral lessons offered by stones may be understood by us today as allegorical and thus as simply analogous, because our cultural default is to read rocks as incapable of acting morally (or immorally – or, for that matter, acting at all). Only humans, for us, have that potential for virtue or vice. Not so in medieval lapidaries, or elsewhere: as Holly A. Crocker observes, 'these inherent bodily powers were central to

everyday practices that focused on the natural potencies of physical bodies' generally.[77] In Ashmole 61, non-human objects tend to exhibit a capacity for moral clarity that is sometimes greater than that of the humans with whom they are in contact, as we will see in the behaviour of lions (e.g., *St Eustace*), awls (*The Debate of the Carpenter's Tools*), tables (*Stans Puer*), cherries (*Sir Cleges*), kisses (*The Knight who Forgave his Father's Slayer*, *Lybeaus Desconus*), and books themselves in the very performance of this unique textual community.

The texts co-inhabiting the book, and the book itself (as an object including other objects but not subsuming or subsumed by them), have effects in the world, and this is their agency. Contemporary materialist approaches recognise this quality of texts: Timothy Morton, for instance, declares that '[a] poem is not simply a representation, but rather a nonhuman agent'.[78] A text does not just represent the world 'outside' itself; it acts on the world with which it engages, imaginatively and materially.[79] To some extent, this is axiomatic to those who study literature. A text's action, though, tends to be understood as a manifestation and expression of its human author's agency. The ability of a text to have effect in the world is, however, as Jane Bennett observes, 'a function of a distributive network of bodies: words on the page, words in the reader's imagination, sounds of words, sounds and smells in the reading room, etc.'[80] These varied objects in the book ecology can be sensed multiply, by the human eye, ear, imagination – generating a new ecology, wherein the words and pages take on a new instantiation, material and immaterial. Such effects of the material text circulating in the world, building and rebuilding human–non-human ecologies, go well beyond the act of representation, of expressing an isolated human insight or desire. A text's effects can even be such that it 'can help us feel more of the liveliness hidden in such things and reveal more of the threads of connection binding our fate to theirs'.[81] Here Bennett extends the text's liveliness and its effects in the world to the point of a particular ethical influence on readers (one that, again, may or may not be intended or acknowledged by the text's human or non-human producers): causing us to recognise the interconnections of ourselves and others.

Object-oriented interpretation reads all objects with equal attention to their effects, regardless of the recipient of those effects, of the intention behind those effects, of the consistency of the effects. In

terms of analysing texts, this means ensuring that non-human objects (including texts, including books) are not acknowledged only in order to examine more extensively their influence on human objects (who thereby retain the position of exceptional subject).[82] This potentiality is of particular concern when investigating the object ecologies of a medieval literary collection such as Ashmole 61, given the strong devotional bent of many of its texts. Our traditions for interpreting the genres in the collection (romance, saint's life, conduct text, *exemplum*, for instance) assume a central human subject whose transformation is the text's purpose – the human subject in the text, and ultimately the human subject addressed by the text. With the combined assistance of contemporary new materialism and medieval ontological reciprocity, however, alternative interpretive orientations are available.

While the religious texts in Ashmole 61 and elsewhere might appear to pose the biggest barrier to a new materialist approach, medieval religious expression shares its larger culture's human/non-human intimacy. Caroline Walker Bynum has demonstrated extensively how 'late medieval devotional objects speak or act their physicality in particularly intense ways that call attention to their *per se* "stuffness" and "thingness"'.[83] She observes that devotional objects' material features are not elided by their sacred meaningfulness but instead are necessary to that very significance. Bynum classifies 'various types of holy matter [that] … were powerful because they were physical presences. It was *as objects* that they conveyed divine power.'[84] She demonstrates through the increasingly common appearance of animated statues and bleeding hosts in the later Middle Ages an enthusiasm for what she calls 'animated materiality'.[85] Thanks to the Eucharist, Bynum explains, theologians (even, importantly, orthodox theologians) maintained that matter was not excluded from holiness. As with Robertson's discussion of the fire rocks' moral responsibility, the consecrated bread and wine are not simply signs of Christ's sacrifice; they *are* Christ's sacrifice.[86] Bynum's argument makes explicit the foundation for the ontological reciprocity that Robertson describes: the ladder of nature includes the divine as well as the earthly, on a continuum of being.[87] In such a cultural environment, detailing the various participants in an object ecology is less likely to reveal only how the non-human elements react to or manifest human will.

Taken to an extreme, an object studies approach to literary texts can risk erasing or overlooking elements that meaningfully demarcate human community. Jane Bennett explains how certain varieties of object studies (in this case, her target is object-oriented ontology, or OOO) insist on 'aloof objects … positioned as the sole locus of activity'.[88] They depict a cosmos of object-planets cautiously protected by the seemingly vast, empty space in between.[89] In this, feminist literary critic Rebekah Sheldon describes OOO as 'an emphatically anti-relational ontology in which objects recline at a distance from each other and from the networks in which they are embedded'.[90] In its intense focus on the object and as a result of its investment in preserving the integrity of the object's individual agency, OOO seems to require an unchanging object invulnerable to the influences of time, or of other objects, most especially the objects we know as 'society' and 'discourse'.

The incompatibility of OOO with feminism is hard to miss here in a number of ways. For one thing, feminism depends upon change – on the fact that what was and what is will not always be and has not always been such, a situation that makes critique and intervention possible. As feminist rhetoric scholar Jen Talbot observes, 'flattened ontologies … render illegible the historical and political forces that shape our everyday experiences'; these forces include what she calls the 'agential asymmetries that exist among human bodies'.[91] In other words, flattening ontologies can maintain a specious perspective that is powerfully displaced by Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality, which has recently, belatedly, become fundamental to much feminist thought.[92] Such an approach reveals that not only does OOO tend to focus problematically on the individual entity *as* entity, and downplay, ignore, or even deny the relations between and among entities; in so doing it overlooks and declares insignificant the many ways in which relations among and between entities is structurally lop-sided.

Fundamental insights of Karen Barad's agential realism further support a feminist alternative: for instance, among many other fruitful orientations, she clarifies that 'the relationship of the cultural and the natural … is not a static relationality but a doing … that always entails constitutive exclusions and therefore requisite questions of accountability'.[93] In a process ontology such as this, agency is not defined by what the object is, nor does it pre-exist relations – key

premises for OOO.[94] For Barad, '[a]gency … is an enactment, not something that someone or something has'.[95] Feminist materialist theories 'foreground the inseparability of the social and [the] material through the lived experience of micro-interactions', Talbot observes.[96] Such an approach – for instance, the object-oriented feminism promoted by Katherine Behar[97] or the transcorporeality of Stacy Alaimo,[98] or the agential realism of Karen Barad, among other material feminisms[99] – can thus help readers perceive more fully some of the uneven relations that feminism specialises in discerning and that texts regularly document – whether an author so intends or not.

A household is not a random assortment of things occupying a particular shared domestic space,[100] but rather an ecology of inhabitants, human and non-human, whose shared occupancy includes entanglement in collective habits and expectations. This section began with an extended list of some of the occupants of the texts in Ashmole 61, and the rest of this book will aim to demonstrate the myriad forms of enmeshment that these household objects experience within the manuscript. The anthology's household object ecologies meld the fantastic and the everyday in this and other ways, responding to and producing pertinent household affect ecologies.

Book agency

The idiosyncratic physical features of Ashmole 61 multiply and incoherently draw attention to the materiality of its texts, to the space of the paper page, to the ink, words, and objects that share it, and to the range of human–non-human ecologies that generate and sustain it. Arthur Bahr and Alexandra Gillespie observe that contemporary object-oriented criticism – like medieval visual art and like medieval material textuality[101] – tends 'to direct our attention to the text as *a thing among other things*, including the things – pictures, pages, scripts, rubrics, bindings, catchwords – that we must deal with when we notice that our object is a book as well as a text'.[102] A new materialist orientation led me, for instance, to pay a different kind of attention to the 'decorations' in Ashmole 61, so that I did not try to resolve my dissatisfaction with the purely symbolic readings of the remarkable Rate fish that were the only scholarly explanations on offer for this mysterious creature feature.

Scholarly explanation strives to understand these unusual illustrations in terms of human corporations – to read them as a mystery to be solved by discerning how the non-human can convey specifically human significance. Melissa Furrow, for instance, has posited that it might be 'a rebus alluding to where Rate was living or where he was born', offering as example 'a name like Rosgill in Westmoreland County, which has nothing to do etymologically with either roses or fish gills'. Furrow concludes, 'I have no evidence to support that solution to the riddle, and it remains an interesting puzzle to solve.'[103] The seeming lack of a representational foundation for the fish has led one scholar to conclude that '[t]here is no discernible pattern to these drawings, meaning they were likely added according to Rate's whimsy'.[104]

New materialism encouraged me to ask different questions, to follow the fish's lead rather than searching for ways to hook and master it by attaching it to (and explaining it through) human-centred cultural phenomena (the scribe's surname, the symbol of Christ). The unusual relationships among scribe, text, and image suggest that, instead of being a case of doodles-gone-wild or a simple symbolic expression of faith, the distinctive pesco-floral unit operates as a signature-equivalent. This association develops into an interchangeability of verbal signature ('Amen quod Rate') and iconic one (fish-and-flower portrait). Following the fish this way led me to see the preponderance of non-human actors throughout the texts of the manuscript, as well as in the book's composition. It led me to see how, in concert with the verses at whose conclusion they present themselves, the fish and flower operate as a poetic refrain.[105] The flowers (sometimes appearing with the fish, sometimes present independently) may be read through the medieval concept of the *florilegium* (Latin *flos*, 'flower', and *legere*, 'to gather'), a compilation of fine writings gathered together.[106] The flowers present throughout the collection as illustration might thus act as a visual manifestation of the verse, playing up an association between flowers and verse with which readers at the time would have been familiar and once more refusing distinctions between text and image. In other words, the fish and flowers do not appear only as cues to the spatial divisions between individual texts; nor do they appear only as indicators of the less bifurcated system of the text (human and non-human objects in and outside of the text incorporated in/as the book), nor to draw

attention to the lines' copyist; they also participate in the literary ecology of the anthology by presenting a variable but easily recognisable actant in the ongoing verse project of Ashmole 61. Simply put, they become part of the poem, whose identity is changed by the inclusion of the image. In this way, the pesco-floral-scribal assemblage enacts the integration of human and non-human, visual and oral, textual and iconic, poetic and imagistic.

A new materialist outlook led me to see that Rate's experience as a scribe may have introduced him to an association between scribal flourishes (such as colophons) and fish images, as can be seen in the fish-shaped cartouche[107] on f. 55v of Harley MS 3744, which is a close sibling, nearly a twin, of the Rate fish.[108] It changed my relationship to the paper on which the words and images appear – a feature I had previously seen as reducing this manuscript's critical currency, lacking as it did the parchment pages that Bruce Holsinger and Sarah Kay have shown hold much potential for readings inflected by work in critical animal studies.[109] Attending carefully to the paper led me to see it as one more household contributor to the manuscript's existence: the appearance of late medieval household books such as Ashmole 61 depended not only on the spread of literacy, but also on the recent rise of paper in England – a relatively cheap and abundant alternative to the parchment required for book production prior to the fifteenth century. It encouraged me to note, further, that paper was a by-product of the household, made from cast-off rags, recirculated just as the very texts such books contain were recirculated in them, and revealing the household's waste to be an important contributor to its cultural prosperity. In these and endless other ways, seeing the text in a manuscript as 'a thing among other things' required me to read differently, to account for the many agents producing the book.

Books did not wait for object-oriented ontologies or Deleuze and Guattari[110] to grant them agency, and scholars working in the late twentieth century prior to the development of the new materialisms exhibited an awareness of the agency of the book even without this particular theoretical scaffolding: 'The master trope of book history', Leah Price observes, 'has always been personification. Elizabeth Eisenstein's *Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, Jerome McGann's "socialization of texts", and Paul Duguid's *Social Life of Information* anthropomorphise books.'[111] Seeing the agency of books in human

terms, as these phrases indicate book historians and textual scholars did, is an important step towards seeing books' agency in their own terms, as 'book-agency'. Michael Johnston and Michael Van Dussen deploy the same lively model in their 2015 introduction to *The Medieval Manuscript Book: Cultural Approaches*, where their three central theses are presented by applying the analogy of the life cycle of the human to that of the manuscript.[112] Arthur Bahr's 2013 book *Fragments and Assemblages* helps guide us towards a more deliberate recognition of that agency, one that incorporates the contributions of the modern reader to the book's construction. Bahr defines a compilation as 'the assemblage of multiple discrete works into a larger structure'. This assemblage generates further 'assemblages of disparate historical moments: of their individual texts' composition and subsequent, often gradual evolution into the particular material form they now occupy, which itself often differs from its original medieval form'. [113] Human intervention is one factor in this ongoing constitution and reconstitution, with the texts' changing material form influenced by the texts themselves and by factors outside them. But it is just *one* factor, so that compilation is not something a scribe does to texts as he produces a book – and which manuscript scholars simply perceive and describe disinterestedly – but, as Bahr further defines it, compilation is 'a way of apprehending and interpreting objects, rather than … an inherent quality of the objects themselves'.[114] That is, a manuscript's compilation is produced by the relationships among the objects in a given collection, witnessed to by the interpretation that their compilation suggests and that directs (and is the product of) the particular act of compilation. It is not a fixed feature of the manuscript, but one that is produced and reproduced in variant relationships with and within the book.

Bahr's redefinition of *compilatio* provides a solid foundation for an investigation of a household book's diverse actants, one interested in interpreting cross-temporally the relationships among those actants as attested by the material book. Particularly in the case of a collection such as Ashmole 61, typically categorised as a miscellany,[115] attempts to trace connections among its contents have tended to be rejected by manuscript scholars for being the product only of the modern critic's wishful thinking. Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu allude to the ongoing contention over the definition of a miscellany (and particularly the resistance to any reference to a manuscript's

texts' bearing witness to scribal or other intentionality) when they note that 'one of the few generic (and "safe") definitions of the miscellany which emerged from the Insular Books conference in 2012 was that of "multi-text manuscript"'.[116] Derek Pearsall insisted, for instance, that despite recent critical attempts to see things otherwise, a miscellany is simply that: a random collection, a feature that he determines is so because it 'looks pretty miscellaneous'.[117] Motivating this critique is a view that interest in finding a guiding principle results from modern scholars' discomfort with the often absent author figure in medieval literature, reflecting the continuing investment in the author in literary studies at large.[118] My interest in the diverse actants that contribute to the existence of Ashmole 61 does not pursue any sort of '"guiding intelligence" … that turn[s] an apparent miscellany into a continuing thematic meta-narrative'.[119] Instead, I take up Bahr's invitation to see that '[m]iscellaneity is … most useful as a provocation to further investigation and new modes of reading, rather than as an objective designation'.[120]

Attending to the agency of the book object – which includes any and all scribal and compiler contributions, along with a whole host of other agents – broadens the traditional focus on the human production of manuscripts. As one result, manuscripts that scholars have labelled miscellanies, while 'being vastly outnumbered, perhaps six to one, by manuscripts of single long poems … *have stimulated exceptional interest*'.[121] They have effects – that is, they have agency – and in the case of household books, those effects are the effects of household agents. Indeed, as Pearsall observes, 'collections that are brought together by choice and chance unpredictably mixed … provides a rich set of opportunities for "imagining the medieval book"'.[122]

Household affect ecologies

Just as book history's personification of the book recognised aspects of book agency before new materialism developed a discourse to suit, the history of emotions has provided a methodological structure for the activity that some historians and literary scholars were already performing.[123] Sarah McNamer observes that '[l]iterature, after all, is the chief archive of the emotions', while Stephanie Trigg notes of

literary critics that 'their business has always been about feeling'.[124] For those studying premodern cultures, that business tends to be oriented towards what Barbara Rosenwein has helpfully labelled 'emotional communities'. Investigating this collective orientation of medieval emotion serves to counteract generalisations based on modern Western norms with their focus on the autonomous individual. A prime site of 'emotional display and engagement' for such investigation is the medieval household,[125] for emotion is hardly the exclusive purview of the royal family or of public political life, both of which as a result of the larger extant archives tend to receive most attention from historians of emotion. Everyday emotional expression in the intimate yet public space of the household offers a rich albeit infrequently visited venue for understanding the 'communal production' of medieval emotion,[126] which is on display in the literature of the household. Rosenwein notes that 'emotions are among the tools with which we manage social life as a whole',[127] and the utility (and risk) of emotions in a setting such as the household is high. Emotions are 'tools [to] manage social life' in Ashmole 61, a place where even literal tools are also devices for fashioning community, themselves direct participants in the emotional life of the household. This society includes, throughout the household that is Ashmole 61, not only people but also animals and inanimate inhabitants, including objects such as the chisel, adze, awl, and hammer of its unique text *The Debate of the Carpenter's Tools*.[128] Social life is here managed through the development of a household-oriented emotional literacy.

The work of Sara Ahmed offers a rich resource for conceptualising emotional literacy as an object-oriented process. Emotions, for Ahmed, have two key distinguishing features: they are affective assemblages, and they are generated through circulation. An emotion is not restricted to a subject's interiority (despite our vernacular tendency to describe emotions this way), nor does it exist in isolation.[129] That is, sadness does not exist as an entity within nor does it infuse and define a given individual.[130] Instead, in Ahmed's object-oriented matrix of emotion, feelings are produced through contact, and the shaping of the subject is not a direct, simple effect of a single cause.[131] An event or experience – a distinct object – does not cause a human to experience pleasure, for instance; the contact of the objects, itself, forms a happy individual. As an extension, objects 'circulate as

social goods' and 'accumulate … affective value as they are passed around'.[132] Among these objects circulating as social goods are not only what we might think of as physical things but also 'objects in the sense of values, practices, and styles, as well as aspirations'.[133] This circulation conveys the social nature of emotion: it depends upon exchange; further, emotion requires contact with objects. Objects are typically excluded from 'the social', which is assumed to be the exclusive domain of (human) subjects. Ahmed's emphasis on emotion as being produced through contact with objects, and through the circulation of such contact and its effects (which are themselves objects), posits a network of interaction that suits new materialist conceptualisations of emotional ecologies as generated by human and non-human objects in ongoing yet provisional contact with one another.

The establishment and maintenance of communities, in Ahmed's conceptualisation, occurs through emotions – which is to say, it results from 'how we respond to objects and others'.[134] This response, which produces the community's boundaries, takes the form of judgements of value, evaluation that results from being affected by something.[135] This evaluation, though, is not autonomously generated and controlled by the subject; it is culturally and socially instructed, for in that contact lie as well prior histories of contact.[136] Emotion produces social subjects, by producing particular kinds of social bodies in response to and in relationship with particular kinds of objects.[137] Rosenwein's emotional communities are thus established and maintained. Discrete social communities are studied by the historian with the goal, as Rosenwein explains it, of

> uncover[ing] systems of feeling: what these communities (and the individuals within them) define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others' emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore.[138]

It is within distinct emotional communities with 'a common stake, interests, values, and goals' that the circulation of social goods occurs,[139] with value judgements adhering and amassing. In emotional communities of the English Middle Ages, for instance, thriving Christian community depended upon the experience of emotions

that hold much less cultural prominence (or social utility) in Western societies today, such as contrition and compassion.[140] Circulation within particular emotional communities generates and regenerates the local norms of emotional literacy – which tends to involve what Ahmed describes as a 'slide between affective and moral economies'[141] – such that certain affective states and acts (contrition, compassion) are moral, in the Middle Ages, and not simply individually perceived feelings. Such social norms are not reinforced by active suppression of 'actual' or 'authentic' emotions, with only the rare 'real' emotion breaking through. Norms do not contain and control sincere emotion, which remains unaffected but hidden. Rather, the experience of emotion can occur only in terms of the relevant affective economy.[142] By investigating medieval emotional communities we can expand our concepts of emotion through what Tracy Adams describes as 'the variety of ways … emotion was understood as a communal rather than private phenomenon'.[143]

The emotional histories of the Middle Ages produced by Rosenwein, Trigg, Adams, and McNamer, among many others, draw attention to features of medieval culture – and resources for encountering it in literary texts – that allow for new ways of thinking. To that, Ahmed's approach adds the vital contribution to emotion-production of the circulating object and the human body's engagement with it. Monique Scheer's notion of 'emotional practices' similarly attends to this involvement of 'the self (as body and mind), language, material artifacts, the environment, and other people … emerging from bodily dispositions conditioned by a social context, which always has cultural and historical specificity'.[144] Emotional practices are, then, coalitions of human and non-human objects, embodied practices taking effect in the world in terms of the particular cultural norms that become part of the affective object itself, in order for it to have those effects. Bynum observes that 'it is of the nature of objects to carry practices with them'.[145] That is, practices do not exist independently of the objects associated with them, and these objects' identities depend upon the affiliated practices (evergreen trees; hearts pierced by arrows; pieces of cloth with stripes, perhaps some stars or a crescent moon, of particular colours). As a result, such objects – those participating in and thus generating socially meaningful practices, such as sacramentals and contact relics, in Bynum's rendering – are agents causing effects in the world. Such

affective agency is contingent upon the emotional practices circulating with the object.

This kind of agency is exhibited not only by devotional objects but also by ordinary household objects. Such objects' agency derives from their existing in community with a range of practices supporting the thriving of the household (such as the aforementioned chisel, adze, awl, and hammer). Objects need not be sacred in order to carry practices and to exhibit affective agency, nor do these practices need to be part of a sacred ecology. Kathleen Stewart describes the ordinary as 'a shifting assemblage of practices and practical knowledges' – that is, the ordinary is itself produced by acts and associated insights understood as serving practical purposes, as determined by and within particular settings. Stewart thus reveals the affective agency of such objects, which she calls 'ordinary affects' and describes as 'the varied, surging capacities to affect and to be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergences'.[146] Ordinary affects are the effects of objects in circulation, participating in everyday, ordinary practices – what she describes as 'a surging, a rubbing, a connection of some kind that has an impact'.[147] All of this is the product of repetition and practical engagement, 'a kind of involuntary and powerful learning and participation'.[148] As with Ahmed's affective economies, ordinary objects 'work not through "meanings" per se, but rather in the way that they pick up density and texture as they move through bodies, dreams, dramas, and social worldings of all kinds'.[149] Ultimately, ordinary affect (like all affect) is 'not about one person's feelings becoming another's but about bodies literally affecting one another and generating intensities: human bodies, discursive bodies, bodies of thought, bodies of water'.[150] Here, Stewart's affinities with new materialism are most apparent: all bodies – be they material, linguistic, conceptual, hydro – bear agency when in contact, and in their contact lies the circulation of affect. The ordinary household ecologies of Ashmole 61 are generated in just this way through everyday objects' affective contact. The readings of Ashmole 61 that constitute this book will observe a stag initiating a calamitous course of penance, a drinking horn revealing royal infidelity, and out-of-season cherries enabling distributive justice, among other moments of emotional literacy gained through contact that reveals everyday household object agency.

Remediated book ecologies

Over the years since Rate affectionately found the fish and flowers a new home on the pages of this manuscript, contact and affect have generated a new medieval book – not in the case of Ashmole 61 alone, but for medieval books at large. The ecology of the medieval book is very different today than it was just twenty-five years ago, much less 400 years ago. The arrival of the print book transformed the manuscript, and digitisation is transforming both still further. The manuscript itself, as an object, has in most cases not been physically changed by digitisation (except for the rare case where that process threatens damage to extremely fragile manuscripts such as the *Beowulf* manuscript, Cotton Vitellius A.xv), just as it was not itself physically changed by print; yet the manuscript is certainly changed as a result of digitisation, becoming henceforth known by contemporary scholars primarily through that remediation. Only the rarest of medieval scholars has encountered the *Beowulf* manuscript firsthand; most, however, have interacted with the digitised version, which they regularly share with students as well. The manuscript ecology thus now includes thousands more living human participants than it did even in the 1990s. And yet that knowledge is limited to the book's visual appearance, and even that is engaged just one weightless page at a time – with the pages so durable that the investigator can change the size of the page, zoom in on just one brushstroke, and otherwise mangle the manuscript in ways physically and ethically impossible with the single material original. The ecology of the medieval book has, in the case of manuscripts such as Cotton Vitellius A.xv, expanded to include virtual copies that significantly alter the relationship of the reader and the book object.

However, medieval books have long experienced similar kinds of changes to their ecology through the intervention of modern technologies, for their post-medieval life has for the last 150 years been sustained primarily through modern editions in print. The life of Ashmole 61, for instance, changed dramatically in 2008 with the publication of a modern edition (twin editions, really: one in print and one online). Ashmole 61 suddenly welcomed many new readers and found itself participating in conversations from which it had previously been excluded. In that act of remediation, the book became

modern and approachable rather than baffling and in need of a guide, left behind with its similarly aged and unfashionable contemporaries, as it had been prior to 2008.[151] Modern editions bring new readers and, in the process, new readings, new compilations – thereby producing, in this case, a new Ashmole 61.

Digitisation contributes to the ongoing life of a manuscript, even as it challenges our traditional estimation of the manuscript's value in terms of its singularity. Literary scholars, like manuscript scholars, often emphasise the uniqueness of a manuscript, of *the* manuscript, as essential to its identity and its worth. Derek Pearsall, for instance, sees this feature as so fundamental that it cannot possibly be emphasised enough, sometimes repeating it three lines in a row, commenting on 'the uniqueness of the artefact' and 'the importance that must be attached to the unique and individual act of making'.[152] The new digital medium's seeming intangibility threatens to replace a personal physical encounter with the unique material manuscript with a purely mental encounter with an unreal object. This concern is apparent in Maura Nolan's analysis in her 2013 *Chaucer Review* article 'Medieval Habit, Modern Sensation: Reading Manuscripts in the Digital Age', where she writes, 'the material book [and here she includes print and manuscript] is a technology that orchestrates habit. Its conventions act as triggers for habitual behaviors, which in turn function as a means of ordering both the physical sensations of reading and the immaterial content of the work':[153] a reader of a medieval manuscript develops those particular human habits that the medieval codex engineers. Thus modern readers' actions and perceptions match those of medieval readers, as they smelled, felt, heard, and saw the weight of the codex, the scent of the animal skins, the creak of the turning folios, which informed their reception of the book's contents. The manuscript ecology, its form and ideas, incorporates the reader, whatever his or her temporal positioning.

But digitisation threatens to deprive the manuscript book of this power. Nolan describes the process of digitisation – that is, as she represents it, non-human reading of the manuscript by the camera and the computer – in very different terms: violent rather than collaborative, and something akin to rape: 'the digital camera acts as a kind of proboscis, wriggling into the hidden crevices of the medieval past'.[154] The camera pries into and invades the body of

the book, and then distributes to others the knowledge revealed through that act of aggression: 'From thousands of miles away, readers can now explore the nooks and crannies of manuscripts they have never touched.'[155] Others experience the benefits – the access to previously concealed knowledge – without personal, embodied, human–manuscript contact. For Nolan, touching the text encourages 'a different kind of intimacy, based not on penetration but on sympathy: the effort of the modern reader to understand the experience of the medieval reader'.[156] According to this narrative, ethical knowledge comes through gentle touch, while a reader participating in the ecology of the digitised manuscript inevitably disregards the agency of the manuscript's original readers and even of the 'medieval past' into whose crevices Nolan says the digital camera 'wriggles'.

What is it, one might ask, about reading-while-touching that, for twenty-first-century medievalists, best mimics a medieval reading experience? For many in the Middle Ages, after all, books were encountered only through the materiality of another's voice, distributed by the single reader who was able to see and touch the book – so that the full range of sensory engagement we experience in the manuscript library goes far beyond the limited somatic experience of many, perhaps most, medieval readers. Indeed, one might argue that digitising manuscripts produces a reading situation *more* like a medieval one, with one reader (in this case a technological one) distributing the text visually (rather than aurally) to distant other (human) 'readers'. At issue alongside matters of phenomenology seem to be questions of ontology, concerning this 'new and improved version of the original object'. It seems as if this new version cannot actually 'be' the original, which is displaced, perhaps even destroyed, in the process.

This perceived ontological destruction underlies Nolan's interpretation of the act of digitisation, which follows Walter Benjamin's interpretation of the act of photography: for Benjamin, the painter keeps a 'natural distance from reality' and thereby offers a 'total' picture of it, but the photographer 'penetrates deeply into its web' and offers not a total picture of reality but a reassembling of fragments 'under a new law'. Through Benjamin, Nolan paints a reader of material manuscripts as obedient to the natural laws, and thus sympathetic to the medieval reader, while the reader of digitised

manuscripts defies natural laws, and refuses the restrictions of pre-digital reading. Nolan says that

> habits of reading [material books] are manifestations of human limitations as well as expressions of the conventional behavior of the human mind; they reveal the boundedness of life within a body while also demonstrating that cognition occurs in patterns, organising data by means of habitual processes of thought. Books function as visible records of such habits, objects from which cognitive patterns can be deduced.[157]

Electronic reading in this scenario – in which it is positioned as non-human because dependent on advanced technology – presents a threat to the human, asserting a posthuman supremacy.

Such a view assumes a transparency of the *medieval* medium.[158] Even as she previously defined the book as 'a technology that orchestrates habit', Nolan observes that 'digital reading lacks the near-global commonality of holding a book in the hands'[159] – as if books weren't a new and foreign technology when they first appeared,[160] as if electronic reading doesn't involve touch and habituation, as if the human body's senses are fixed and not shaped by culture, as if in the Middle Ages manuscripts were accessible to more than the very, very few.[161] Indeed, the act of digital reading often looks significantly like non-digital reading, with pages that users swipe as they would turn a material book's pages, reflecting the tendency for new technologies to bear skeuomorphs, forms that are traces of prior technologies' functionalities, despite their serving no such purpose in the new context. Further, Jerome McGann observes that while 'the computer [has] greater capacity for simulating phenomena – in this case, bibliographical and socio-textual phenomena', '[b]ooks are simulation machines as well … with hard coded machine languages (we call those typography and graphic design) and various softwares (modes of expression – expository, hortatory, imaginative – and genres)'.[162] Working from Raymond Williams's definition of a medium as a 'material *social* practice' (and not simply material alone, like canvas or screen, and not simply a technique or a technology),[163] W. J. T. Mitchell adds that while both materials and technologies comprise a medium, 'so do skills, habits, social spaces, institutions and markets'.[164] They all constitute a given medium. We have long habits and traditions of including various actants in our understanding

of the medieval manuscript assemblage, and of the print text; we simply have yet to develop that understanding of the digital one. As a result, the e-book seems a minimalist – and perhaps anti-human – entity, lacking contributors that we consider central to the book (paper, ink, binding, vulnerability to damage, heft) just as print books lacked features indicative of the manuscript assemblage (a human rather than mechanical producer, uniqueness, idiosyncrasy of size and shape). Indeed, Nolan concludes that '[d]onning the habits of medieval readers allows us to touch them with an intimacy that cannot be reproduced, but without which we cannot understand the past'.[165] Yet the e-book, like the print book before it, incorporates previously absent actants (in this case, computer code, screens, energy and resource efficiency, the ability to preserve fragile originals) as well as those that are very familiar, even as we tend to downplay the nature of their participation in the collective.

Nolan observes that

> Digitization places intense pressure on our presumptions about experience – that is, on the idea that enacting the habits and re-creating the sensations of the past can give us special insight into what it meant to be a medieval reader – because it offers a new and improved version of the original medieval object, the book.[166]

This situation is cautiously celebrated by Susanna Fein and David Raybin in their editorial introduction to the 2013 special issue of *Chaucer Review* devoted to medieval English manuscripts[167] when they acknowledge that a manuscript's 'library setting is itself merely a museum in which to preserve a book already divorced from its original making in a localised setting some six to seven hundred years ago' – implying that perhaps a digital locus may be only similarly divorced from the book's origins – and they offer the possibility that, '[a]s digitized facsimiles become more widespread, they may, with their scientifically enhanced photography, actually lend to the medieval manuscript a freshness to the data it can yield, providing information unknown even to original users and to generations of scholars sitting in manuscripts reading rooms'.[168] This perspective imagines, as Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin observe, that '[n]ew digital media are not external agents that come to disrupt an unsuspecting culture. They emerge from within cultural contexts.'[169] Our challenge, and opportunity, in this period of the

e-incunabulum is to observe, describe, and theoretically conceptualise this new assemblage just as we have done its parchment- and paper-based precursors. We may note, for instance, that as the medieval text took on a different form in each manuscript appearance, depending on the scribe's materials and opportunities, the virtual text takes on a different shape in each encounter, depending on the reader's materials and preferences. The digitisation of our manuscripts and of our print books does not place them beyond sensation, out of the reach of our embodied humanity, but instead keeps the texts they display well within our grasp.

A central aim of this book is to discern this single manuscript's multiplicity, to document and appreciate the whole ecology of the book-in-time. A new materialist transtemporal rendering of Ashmole 61 reads the book's object agency in the array of communities collaboratively generated across its lifespan, circulating among its manuscript, print, and digital iterations. Direct contact with the slender codex's soft paper pages covered in brown ink in the early 2000s transformed what had been a multi-manuscript study of late Middle English romance into a project dedicated to this single manuscript, known at that time primarily for its textual aberrations and misbehaving scribe.[170] Already a devotee when its modern edition appeared in print and online in 2008, I was positioned to observe the adhesion encouraged by the conjunction of Shuffelton's editorial assistance with the reach of TEAMS' series of editions and the field's growing interest in non-canonical literacies.[171] The readings performed here seek to document the emotional literacy instruction generated for audiences in the fifteenth century, doing so with respectful awareness that such readings inevitably indicate still more about how Ashmole 61 affects its unanticipated yet eager reader today.

Notes

1 *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 1.c.
2 Goldberg, 'The fashioning of bourgeois domesticity', p. 135.
3 Goldberg and Kowaleski, 'Introduction', p. 2. They note, too, that 'The object-centered approach to the household as the repository of possessions is also evident in recent archaeological works' (p. 2, n. 8).
4 Smith, *Arts of Possession*, p. 7 and n. 16.

5 Smith, *Arts of Possession*, p. 19.
6 This phrase comes from Philippa Hardman's 1978 essay on MS Advocates 19.3.1. The term 'household book' has a mixed heritage, about which I will have more to say later in this chapter. For now, I hope that the quick description of this type of book that I provide here will suffice; it will also guide my investigation throughout *Objects of Affection*.
7 Julia Boffey describes such books as including 'a certain amount of pragmatically informative material [that] is amalgamated, in variable proportions, with texts which serve devotional or recreational purposes' ('Bodleian Library', p. 127).
8 Based on its watermarks and script, George Shuffelton dates Ashmole 61 to between 1490 and 1510 ('Is there a minstrel in the house?', p. 55), putting it at the end of this era of household book production.
9 CUL Ff.2.38 and Ashmole 61 share some paper stock (the fourth of four different paper stocks in CUL and the third of three in Ashmole 61) and were copied by a scribe (not the same one) in Leicestershire, and share certain linguistic features (Johnston, 'Two Leicestershire romance codices', p. 87). They also share six texts, but they don't share an exemplar for any of them (Johnston, 'Two Leicestershire romance codices', p. 89). Unlike Ashmole 61, CUL seems to have been produced on commission (Johnston, 'Two Leicestershire romance codices', p. 89, working from Felicity Riddy). Leicester was an active site for book production at this time, with a scriptorium at the Augustinian Abbey of St Mary de Pratis, just outside the city walls (Johnston, 'Two Leicestershire romance codices', p. 88).
10 The Heege manuscript has been convincingly associated with the yeoman Sherbrooke family in Derbyshire, with signatures of three family members appearing in the manuscript in late fifteenth-/early sixteenth-century hands. The Sherbrooke family sold the manuscript to Sir Walter Scott (in service to the Advocates Library in Edinburgh) around 300 years later, in 1806 (see Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry in Late Medieval England*, pp. 142–53, esp. p. 144). Even less is known about the producer(s) or owner(s) of Cotton Caligula a.2 than about Ashmole 61.
11 Johnston argues that romances (and the manuscripts in which they appear) became associated with the landowning gentry as they developed as a class (with early fourteenth-century roots, according to Coss, referenced by Johnston – what he describes as a couple of generations earlier). 'Knights, long the heroes of romance and long the mounted cavalry so important to the English army, had now also become the highest tier of the gentry' ('Romance, distraint, and the gentry', p. 438).

12 The primary book under discussion in their essay is MS Arch. Selden B.24, a Scottish anthology from the late 1400s that includes Chaucer and Hoccleve, Scottish texts and more, all in verse.
13 Boffey and Edwards, 'Bodleian MS Arch. Selden B.24', p. 34.
14 Boffey, 'Bodleian Library', p. 125. The example Boffey and Edwards provide is the Tollemache 'Book of Secrets' ('Bodleian MS Arch. Selden B.24', p. 34).
15 Boffey and Edwards, 'Bodleian MS Arch. Selden B.24', p. 34. Boffey and Edwards twelve years later continued this orientation towards the family milieu, resisting readings of the Findern Manuscript 'as an "anthology" or "miscellany". It needs to be set in its temporal and familial contexts as a "family" book created in a particular place over time to reflect the literary tastes and literary activities in a shared environment' ('Towards a taxonomy', p. 267). 'Family' as it is used today excludes many members of the medieval household, among them servants and apprentices; as a result, its modern use references something different from these manuscripts' arenas of initial production and reception. Further, the term 'family' held ambiguities at the time of these anthologies' production: it could refer narrowly to the 'servants of a household', from the Latin *familia* ('family servants, domestics collectively, the servants in a household', from *famulus*, 'servant') and thus include precisely those elements that 'family' excludes for a modern audience (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. 'family', www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=family). 'Family' could also, though, refer by the fourteenth century (via Middle French) to a 'group of people living under the same roof, household', and by 1440 more narrowly to a 'group of people related by blood, lineage' (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'family'). In the 1540s, a family was a 'collective body of persons who form one household under one head and one domestic government, including parents, children, and servants, and as sometimes used even lodgers or boarders' (*Online Etymology Dictionary*; thanks to Karl Steel for encouraging this line of inquiry). Associations for 'family' varied extensively then, while the term's meaning is exclusive now, making it less useful than it could be to describe these manuscripts. The term 'household', in contrast, consistently refers, from the fourteenth century to the present day, to '[t]he inhabitants of a house considered collectively; a group of people (esp. a family) living together as a unit; a domestic establishment (including any servants, attendants, etc.)' (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Thus referring to these collections as 'household' books includes everyone – and everything – living and working in the household in this period when a home was not, as we would say, nuclear.

16 Johnston finds that the dialect of a manuscript's scribe tends to be similar to that of its early owners, indicating that the manuscript was produced by an employee of the gentry family (*Romance and the Gentry*, p. 98).

17 Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry*, pp. 122–3, 125; see also p. 116. Johnston believes such a production setting 'would best account for the confluence of dialectal and provenance evidence found in these miscellanies' (Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry*, p. 125). I would like to note here that while Johnston regularly uses the term 'provincial miscellany' to describe such manuscripts, which has the benefit of being clear and precise when used among manuscript scholars, I worry about the connotations of such a phrase, for it retains London as the focus of much Middle English literary history, with 'provincial' suggesting they are not only geographically but also culturally marginal (Johnston himself directly refutes this assumption). In addition, 'miscellany' implies a haphazardness and lack of any internal cohesion. While Johnston refers to some of these collections as demonstrating particular production patterns (especially in the case of those produced as a series of booklets), he does not make such a case for all. One aim of the current study is to investigate further the implications of this miscellaneity, which I address in further detail later in this introduction.

18 Ashmole 61, CUL Ff.2.38, Cotton Caligula a.2, the Heege MS; Thornton's Lincoln and London MSS would be categorised this way by some, as well.

19 Providing just one example of this motivation, Nicola McDonald in her introduction to *Pulp Fictions* defends the study of Middle English romance specifically for its 'power to shock us, to unsettle our assumptions about, among other things, gender and sexuality, race, religion, political formations, social class, ethics, morality and aesthetic distinctions', and its utility in the 'interrogation of the norms that order and regulate our lives' (McDonald, 'A polemical introduction', pp. 16–17). See Symes, 'Manuscript matrix, modern canon'; Connolly, 'The whole book'; and Radulescu, 'Vying for attention'.

20 I use 'the past' in terms of Timothy Morton's observation that 'What is called the past is really other objects that coexist with the object in question' ('An object-oriented defense of poetry', p. 220).

21 Carolyn Dinshaw refers to this as a recognition of the 'multitemporality of the *now*' (*How Soon is Now?*, p. 10; italics original). The effects of including post-medieval readers in the ecology of the (medieval) manuscript book can be seen in views such as Jessica Brantley's that '[i]t no longer necessarily matters only how a manuscript was designed to work, if you can see, from the readers' perspective how it did' ('The

pre-history of the book', p. 635). Brantley elsewhere observes that '[a] miscellany is most meaningful, not because it was designed to work in a particular way, but simply because it does' ('The pre-history of the book', p. 11). Such statements indicate a move away from validating as authoritative only origins and the intentions of the past (its scribes and collators), and towards an acceptance of the influence of the present (in this case, the readers who later encounter the book) on the past. While Brantley's 'how it did' does imply a prioritising of medieval readers' engagement with the manuscript (as if how it worked then either explains or trumps how it works now), also understood is the contribution of the modern scholar who actively inhabits 'the readers' perspective' – so that the book's readers include not only medieval ones but also those living today who perform the deep interpretation for which Price's definition of book history calls.

22 Shuffelton, *Codex Ashmole 61*.

23 Shuffelton, *Codex Ashmole 61*, d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/shuffelton-codex-ashmole-61-introduction.

24 Just eleven folios are available (fol. 016v–017r, 105v–106r, 106vn107r, 127v–128r, 150v–151r and fol. iir) at https://iiif.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/iiif/viewer/13230b1f-f5a2-4868-a05e-ff0c8ed8c5f8#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&r=0&xywh=-2257%2C0%2C7182%2C4041; some of these also appear in the Bodleian Library's online supplement to its 2012 'Romance of the Middle Ages' exhibit, at www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/news/2012/medieval-romance28-01-2012 (both accessed 11 September 2020).

25 John Dagenais has observed that '[o]ur traditional view of the medieval page sees it as a prepared laboratory cross-section, sprayed with fixative and placed on a glass slide for scrutiny under the microscope'. Perceiving the manuscript as a material object fixed in time and stored in the modern archive to await expert examination places all agency with the scholars and with the present and denies the continuing life of the page, of the text, of the manuscript, throughout the centuries. Dagenais promotes an alternative model: 'The medieval manuscript page and its culture are more like an open Petri dish, a living, growing thing, placed within a fertile, organic medium.' As a result, '[t]here are, in fact, no medieval pages. Whatever medieval pages there may have been were all destroyed in the Middle Ages' ('Decolonizing the medieval page', pp. 39, 67). See, too, Warren, 'Post-philology'.

26 It also contains none of the political, chronicle, or prose items popular in other household manuscripts.

27 '[U]nlike CUL, there is no generic organizational pattern to the manuscript' (Johnston, 'Two Leicestershire romance codices', p. 90).

28 Boffey and Edwards include this manuscript among the '"themed" anthologies' (including Robert Thornton's two collections, Lincoln, Cathedral Library MS 91 and British Library MS Additional 31042), describing it as 'the evidently bowdlerised collection of family reading' ('Towards a taxonomy', p. 271).

29 The first eight items exist independently of the remainder of the manuscript even as they are fully integrated with it; this section has come to be called the 'Children's Corner'. It is the focus of Chapter 1.

30 This mirrors the structure Ralph Hanna has discerned in most of the booklets of the revered Auchinleck MS: as 'top-heavy', that is, with 'the most substantial text coming first' (*London Literature*, p. 76). Arthur Bahr builds on this in his demonstration that *The Legend of Pope Gregory*, the first text in Auchinleck as it now exists, is imitated in structure by the first romance in the collection (which is in booklet 3), *Sir Degare* – both include women who have sons in shameful circumstances; he is raised by a holy man, then he gets the tokens his mother left him; he becomes a knight and goes to claim his birthright, and in the process wins a tournament and thus his (unrecognised) mother as wife (Bahr, *Fragments and Assemblages*, ch. 3).

31 Used by Lynne S. Blanchfield in her title ('An idiosyncratic scribe') and showing its pull in Johnston's use of it in describing, too, the vertical fold used on the paper to create the tall pages (*Romance and the Gentry*, p. 115).

32 Blanchfield has shown that Rate modelled the size of the manuscript on account books ('An idiosyncratic scribe', pp. 13–20).

33 Bruce Barker-Benfield further explains that 'a horizontal crease occurs on every leaf [that is, right in the middle of the long page, extending side-to-side]. The direction of the folds, and the occasional spurt of ink where the scribe's pen has hiccupped over the crease (e.g. fol. 34), suggest that these folds were present *before* writing; a decision must have been taken to change the format of the blank paper from a modest-sized quarto to a "holster" book. This seems more likely than the alternative theory, which posits an unorthodox and awkward mode of carrying' (quoted in Blanchfield, 'An idiosyncratic scribe', p. 14).

34 Blanchfield, 'An idiosyncratic scribe', p. 18.

35 Kwakkel, *Books Before Print*, pp. 165–7.

36 Blanchfield, 'An idiosyncratic scribe', p. 18. The first quire is the only possibly independent quire (i.e., booklet) in the manuscript; all others, beginning with quire 2, end in the middle of a text, which is then continued in the next quire.

37 This entire debate revolves around negative associations with 'minstrel' poetry that linger from the mid-twentieth century but are inappropriate

to current approaches. Shuffelton writes, in a study of the many references to minstrels in Ashmole 61: 'dismissing these references to minstrels as merely tropes or formulaic gestures [as those who want to 'redeem' the texts do] loses sight of their larger significance. Many texts make explicit connections between minstrelsy and the household's generosity' ('Is there a minstrel in the house?', p. 66).

38 Shuffelton, 'Is there a minstrel in the house?', pp. 58, 69.

39 Shuffelton, 'Is there a minstrel in the house?', p. 58. Here, Shuffelton builds on Joyce Coleman's earlier argument (in *Public Reading*) that 'the accounts of reading aloud in English settings tend to emphasise community, bonding "the listeners as a social unit – a family or a household – within an atmosphere of reassuring spiritual and social authority," even as it "functioned as a means of basic social control," and a way to tamp down domestic strife' ('Is there a minstrel in the house?', p. 58).

40 Particularly given Blanchfield's observation that the shape makes it well suited to holding while reading aloud.

41 The LALME places the scribe's dialect just to the north-east of the city of Leicester (Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry*, p. 88). Shuffelton offers that the scribe 'was most likely William Ratte, ironmonger, whose name appears among the free citizens of Leicester in 1509' ('Is there a minstrel in the house?', p. 55); Johnston reaches a similar conclusion, noting there are 'various Rates attested in the city archives' in Leicester, but '[n]one, unfortunately, can be definitively identified as the scribe of Ashmole 61, though I believe William Rott, ironmonger, to be the most likely match' (*Romance and the Gentry*, p. 117). Rory G. Critten notes that 'all but one of the potential candidates for Rate's identity put forward by both Shuffelton and Blanchfield belong to the merchant class' ('Bourgeois ethics again', p. 117).

42 Advocates 19.3.1, a household book produced nearby at the same time and including some of the same watermarked paper, contains some scribal signatures (of its scribes Heege and Hawghton), but only at the ends of booklets, except in very rare instances (Evans, *Rereading Middle English Romance*, p. 76).

43 It is also one of the features that manuscript scholars read as pointing towards an amateur scribe: 'A professional scribe producing a book would hardly have signed his own name repeatedly or drawn a series of what are presumably esoteric illustrations in a volume meant for someone else, suggesting that Rate probably made this for his own household's consumption' (Johnston, 'Two Leicestershire romance codices', p. 90).

44 Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry*, p. 109.

45 Further, Boffey and Thompson conclude that '[t]hese details, involving little technical expertise and no great expense, are obviously attempts to enhance the appeal of Rate's book for its intended readers. They reflect a conception of "the whole book" and a concern for its visual attractiveness which are not always apparent in other non-systematic book productions of the period' ('Anthologies and miscellanies', p. 298).

46 One image in the manuscript, which is neither a fish nor a flower and thus not part of this ongoing 'programme of rubrications and decorations', *is* such a visual adjunct (the shield accompanying *The Wounds and the Sins*); the fact that in one case an image does provide a visual supplement to the text makes all the more suggestive the fact that the repeated images – 33 of them – do not.

47 That is, the brief annotation at the end of a text (or of a manuscript) in which the scribe, speaking in the first person, asks for or offers a prayer, names himself, or otherwise engages with the audience

48 There appears, among those who have paid attention to MS Ashmole 61 in recent years, to be the sense that Rate's fish appear only between poems. Perhaps this can be traced back to Michael Johnston's description – one of the few published sources on the manuscript – of the fish as appearing 'at seemingly random intervals … at the conclusion of texts' (*Romance and the Gentry*, p. 117). The fish do appear at the ends of texts, but not only there, for they also appear in the middle of texts at the bottom of the page, as for instance throughout item 19 (*The Erle of Tolous*, fol. 27v–38v) at the bottom margin on folios 31r (single fish), 32v (two flowers), 33v (one flower), 36v (two fish) and facing that, 37r (one fish), as well as at the poem's end, on 38v (a flower).

49 See Shuffelton, *Codex Ashmole 61*, p. 3.

50 Blanchfield ('An idiosyncratic scribe'), referenced in Shuffelton, *Codex Ashmole 61*, p. 5.

51 Ashmole 61 has been described as 'an anthology of *domestitia*, texts dealing with family life and family relationships … the scribe has chosen items which deal with all aspects, normal and abnormal, pleasant and unpleasant, of relationships within the family … the emphasis is on middle-class domesticity, manners and morals, on the joys and perils of marriage and ownership of property, on the instruction and education of children and, above all, on the godly life, with a warning against "vanyte", and with a leavening of Romance, slanted also to the domestic bias' (Ginn, ed., *Sir Cleges*, pp. 82, 84–5).

52 In addition, it includes only those items generally perceived as objects. Object-oriented new materialist approaches include, as will be discussed

below, objects not immediately perceived by most people as objects, such as religious faith, hip-hop, or an ice age.

53 Steel, *How Not to Make a Human*, p. 3, italics added; p. 4, italics original.

54 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 30.

55 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 254.

56 Mitchell, *Becoming Human*, p. 16.

57 Lemay, *Women's Secrets*, quoted in Mitchell, *Becoming Human*, p. 16. There are many additional examples in Mitchell's chapter 'Being born'.

58 *Nicole Oresme and the Marvels of Nature*, p. 233 (with Oresme's notion of 'intermediate species' following Aristotle's *History of Animals*, pp. 921–3 [8.1], in *Complete Works*, vol. 1), cited in Mitchell, *Becoming Human*, p. 16; italics added.

59 Coole and Frost, 'Introducing the New Materialisms', p. 9.

60 Latour's concept of the 'actant' allows clarification that this agency need not be intentional. See *Reassembling the Social*.

61 It also insists that these things are objects, 'not just amorphous matter', and that 'real things exist' (Morton, 'Here comes everything', p. 165).

62 Internal distinctions have, at times, been a dominant focus among its leading theorists, including Graham Harman, Timothy Morton, Levi Bryant, Ian Bogost, and Jane Bennett. Some object-oriented approaches insist upon the irreducibility of the object (object-oriented ontology, in particular, in which I include Levi Bryant's onticology and Ian Bogost's alien phenomenology) even while recognising the shifting relationships among objects; others perceive the object particularly in terms of the networks or assemblages it participates in (vibrant materialism and actor-network theory, for example).

63 This phrasing is attributed to Manuel DeLanda.

64 Morton, 'Here comes everything', p. 164. Many of these views are shared by new materialists, well beyond those doing object-oriented studies.

65 I should note, even as my project does not depend on such distinctions, that Bogost argues that '[l]ists remind us that no matter how fluidly a system may operate, its members nevertheless remain utterly isolated, mutual aliens' (*Alien Phenomenology*, p. 40).

66 Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, p. 65.

67 Bennett, 'Systems and things', p. 231.

68 I am assisted by the alternative perspective offered by Jane Bennett: 'there is not so much a doer (an agent) behind the deed … as a doing and an effecting by a human-nonhuman assemblage' ('Systems and things', p. 28).

69 Mitchell, *Becoming Human*, p. 76.
70 Allen, 'Mineral virtue', p. 133, with quotation from Albertus Magnus, *De Mineralibus*, Book 3, Tractatus 1, chapter 1, the English translation here from Wyckoff, p. 153.
71 Robertson, 'Exemplary rocks', pp. 93, 99–100. Robertson has further pursued her consideration of the *scala naturae*, in 'Scaling nature', where she offers an extended consideration of new materialism, and of Bennett in particular (see pp. 625–8), in relation to ideas about 'microcosmic thinking' expressed by later medieval thinkers such as Alain de Lille, Jean de Meun, Guillaume de Deguileville, and the anonymous author of *Eschéz d'Amours*.
72 Cohen, *Stone*, p. 15. See also pp. 55–6. Cohen notes, among other things, that lapidaries taught that '[t]he topaz prefers chaste companions' (p. 234).
73 Cohen, *Stone*, pp. 232–3. For particular consideration of how the term lost its gendered associations with *vir* (Latin, 'man'), see pp. 233–4, and for discussion of *virtus* generally, see pp. 232–7.
74 See, as well, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's evocative entry on 'C is causality that *vertu* confuses', where '[s]tones and leaves radiate *vertu* as easily as knights, horses and clerics. Humans may ally themselves with the *vertu* of gems or herbs to accomplish through mineral and vegetal friendship feats otherwise impossible. *Vertu* is a life force: reproduction and vitality, affect and intellect and health, that which moves the flesh' ('An abecedarium', p. 292).
75 Allen, 'Mineral virtue', p. 130; the Albertus Magnus quote Allen cites from *De Mineralibus*, Book 2, Tractatus 1, chapter 3, in the English translation by Wyckoff, p. 63. Cohen similarly discusses this feature of Albertus Magnus's writing in *Stone*, p. 234.
76 Allen, 'Mineral virtue', p. 129.
77 Crocker, *The Matter of Virtue*, p. 3. She continues, 'Virtues are not intangible, theoretical principles; rather, bodies have the potentialities their virtues enable' (p. 4). Crocker's section on 'material virtue' in the introduction to *The Matter of Virtue* offers an excellent overview of this feature of premodern Western European culture (pp. 2–6); her book's chapters trace 'how literary authors, in seeking to represent women's ethical action, end up inventing new virtues through their female characters' (p. 9). Further, see Steel, *How to Make a Human*, esp. pp. 10–15 where he engages with the work of Joyce Salisbury, Dorothy Yamamoto, and Erika Fudge, for consideration of this issue in terms of medieval animals.
78 Morton, 'An object-oriented defense of poetry', p. 215. As Levi Bryant says, 'Texts aren't simply *about* something, but *are* something … [a

text] is a real thing that circulates throughout the world and does all sorts of things', by 'producing all sorts of real effects' (Coffield, 'Interview: Levi Bryant', n.p.). Such effects aren't necessary for a thing to be 'real', but they are helpful indicators that let us discern the reality of the object. The non-human agent that is the text 'directly intervenes in reality in a causal way' (Morton, 'An object-oriented defense of poetry', pp. 215, 206).

79 The necessity of early print copies of vernacular translations of the Bible to the developments of the Reformation in the sixteenth century is a vivid indicator of this combination of imaginative and material agency.

80 Bennett, 'Systems and things', p. 232. Bogost notes, 'When people or toothbrushes or siroccos make sense of encountered objects, they do so through metaphor. As Whitehead and Latour suggest, this process requires creative effort' (*Alien Phenomenology*, p. 111).

81 Bennett, 'Systems and things', p. 232.

82 The affirmation of human exceptionalism, however unintended, is the fundamental flaw that Harman observes in Bill Brown's thing theory: 'the assumption that "the real" has no other function than to accompany the human agent and mold or disrupt it from time to time' ('The well-wrought broken hammer', p. 193).

83 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 29.

84 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 153; emphasis hers.

85 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 21.

86 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 158.

87 The 'Prayer at the Levation' (item 17) provides extensive demonstration of these connections through an ongoing metaphoric equation of Christ with earthly elements human and non-human, animate and inanimate: a series of depictions of Jesus as flower, fruit, king, knight, prince, duke, emperor, rose, and pearl is framed in the first and last lines of the poem through the Eucharistic prayer 'Welcom, Lord, in forme of brede' (ll. 1 and 35). The poem indicates that as Christ is present in the form of bread, he is present throughout creation in such other forms, as well.

88 Bennett, 'Systems and things', p. 229.

89 This follows particularly from Graham Harman's key concept of objects' 'withdrawal'. See Harman, 'The well-wrought broken hammer', as well as Bennett's response in which this critique appeared ('Systems and things').

90 Sheldon, 'Form/matter/chora', p. 194.

91 Talbot, 'Flat ontologies and everyday feminisms', p. 87.

92 See Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex'.

93 Barad, 'Posthumanist performativity', p. 135. Indeed, Barad formulated her theory in the early 2000s, publishing *Meeting the Universe Halfway* in 2007 prior to the appearance of OOO and in conversation and communion with an established community of feminist and feminist-friendly materialist approaches.
94 See Harman, *Object Oriented Ontology*, for an explanation and defence of the OOO perspective.
95 Barad, 'Posthumanist performativity', p. 144.
96 Talbot, 'Flat ontologies and everyday feminisms', p. 89.
97 Behar, 'An introduction to OOF'.
98 See Alaimo, *Bodily Natures*.
99 See Alaimo and Hekman, *Material Feminisms*.
100 And needless to say, not an animated collection of household furnishings as in the Disney version of *Beauty and the Beast* (1991).
101 Bynum's description of medieval visual arts demonstrates how such an enmeshment would be less unusual in the Middle Ages than we might anticipate: 'Medieval art was neither naturalistic nor illusionist. Unlike the painting of a Renaissance Madonna, for example, in which the artist concentrates on making the viewer see paint on canvas as fabric or skin and hence (among other things) admire his or her skill at creating illusion, a medieval image induces the viewer to notice that it is made from paint and wood or vellum and ink. But the stuff of which medieval images were made was not incidental nor indeed was it only an iconography to be decoded' (*Christian Materiality,* p. 28).
102 Bahr and Gillespie, 'Medieval English manuscripts', p. 356; emphasis added.
103 Furrow, ed., *Ten Bourdes*, introduction to *Sir Corneus*, n.p. Consistently, such explanations fail to satisfy even their own proponents, as Shuffelton observes, *Codex Ashmole 61*, p. 5.
104 Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry*, p. 117.
105 More specifically, Dan Remein, a collaborative participant with Ashmole 61, led me to see this.
106 My thanks go to the members of the audience at a talk I gave at the University of Victoria for encouraging me to pursue such lines of inquiry (and to Allan Mitchell for providing the opportunity). Furthermore, the abundant fish (which appear much more frequently than do the flowers) may also re-enact the feeding of the five thousand, with Rate thereby distributing the loaves and fishes to feed the hungry, participating in an assemblage of earthly objects, both human and non-human, with the divine.
107 A cartouche is an illustrated frame for a catchword.

108 Thanks to Bruce Holsinger for drawing my attention to the Harley 3744 catchword fish.

109 Holsinger, 'Of pigs and parchment' (see also Holsinger, 'Parchment ethics'); Kay, 'Legible skins' and *Animal Skins*. Paper manuscripts do seem, by the relative permanence of the ink on their pages compared to the easy erasability of marks on parchment, to be incomplete participants in Stephen G. Nichols's 'manuscript matrix' ('What is manuscript culture?', p. 39). Orietta Da Rold's *Paper in Medieval England: From Pulp to Fictions* (Cambridge University Press) has much to say about paper's agency in literary and non-literary communities in England.

110 'A book is an assemblage … and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity' (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 4).

111 Price, 'From the history of a book', p. 136.

112 Johnston and Van Dussen, 'Introduction'.

113 Bahr works here from Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of book-as-assemblage in *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 4.

114 Bahr, *Fragments and Assemblages*, p. 11.

115 Seth Lerer clarifies that '[t]he critical consensus seems to be, now, that a miscellany is any collection of texts not necessarily guided by an editorial, authorial, scribal, or patronal aegis' ('Medieval English literature', p. 1265, n. 8; p. 1255). See Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu, 'Introduction', pp. 4–5 for additional and more recent discussion of these distinctions.

116 Connolly and Radulescu, 'Introduction', p. 1. Arthur Bahr, 'Miscellaneity and variance in the medieval book', acknowledges the 'safe' definition provided by Connolly and Radulescu while encouraging alternative types of engagement.

117 Pearsall, 'The whole book', p. 23. He includes in this category, along with nine other manuscripts, as well as 'the various collections of Chauceriana' and all of the output of the scribes John Shirley, Robert Thornton, and John Colyns, 'the romance-miscellanies such as' Cotton Caligula a.2 and Ashmole 61 ('The whole book', p. 17). See the reflections of Bahr on this issue ('Miscellaneity and variance in the medieval book', pp. 187–8).

118 For an example of the ongoing dominance of the author in many medievalist literary scholars' inquiries, even those guided by a deep engagement with manuscripts, see Pearsall's complaint in his 2000 essay of the manuscript work being done (for example with glosses and illustrations of Chaucer texts) that '[i]t was clear I wasn't learning anything new about what Chaucer's text meant' but 'only about the

constraints that the illustrator was under, from ignorance, or from the dominance of conventional models, or from the absence of relevant models' ('The value/s of manuscript study', p. 172).

119 Pearsall, 'The whole book', p. 18.
120 Bahr, 'Miscellaneity and variance in the medieval book', p. 182.
121 Pearsall, 'The whole book', p. 17; emphasis added.
122 Pearsall, 'The whole book', p. 29.
123 Adams, 'Introduction', p. 173.
124 McNamer, 'Feeling', p. 242; Trigg, 'Emotional histories'.
125 Broomhall, 'Emotions in the household', p. 2.
126 Tracy Adams observes that in the Western Middle Ages, 'emotion was understood as a communal rather than private phenomenon', as a 'communal production' ('Introduction', pp. 174, 179). See Downes and McNamara, 'The history of emotions'.
127 Rosenwein, 'Worrying about emotions in history', p. 842.
128 *Carpenter's Tools* has become rather a celebrity since the publication of the 2008 edition of the manuscript, collecting investigations such as Lisa Cooper's in 2011 (*Artisans and Narrative Craft*) and Wendy Matlock's in 2014 ('Reworking the household'). It receives extended discussion in Chapter 3.
129 For Ahmed, 'the nonresidence of emotions is what makes them "binding"' (Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, p. 119).
130 Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, p. 119. This depiction of affective economies maintains the subject–object distinction, which I tend to read as an artificial boundary that gives opportunities for granting to those objects that humans determine to be deserving the status of subjects with an exclusive claim to agency. However, this is no limitation to Ahmed's argument, for her treatment of objects (and subjects) weakens that boundary and makes her affective economies useful models for an object-oriented approach.
131 Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, p. 6.
132 Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, p. 8; 'Happy objects', p. 31. Ahmed investigates 'how happiness functions as a promise that directs us toward certain objects, which then circulate as social goods. Such objects accumulate positive affective value as they are passed around', and she describes this affective quality as 'sticky' ('Happy objects', p. 31).
133 Ahmed, 'Happy objects', p. 41.
134 Ahmed quickly connects affect and object(s) – in the sense of not subject – when she says that 'happiness also turns us toward objects. We turn toward objects at the very point of "making." To be made happy

by this or that is to recognise that happiness starts from somewhere other than the subject who may use the word to describe a situation' ('Happy objects', p. 31).

135 Ahmed, 'Happy objects', p. 31.

136 Ahmed, 'Affective economies', pp. 6, 10. The evaluation does not occur in the independent now, but within a social – a historical – community. Helpful in visualising this is F. R. Ankersmit's description of sensation, including 'feeling' more broadly, through the experience of holding a vase in our hands: 'We then feel the vase's form because our own hands take on the very same form as the vase's. We are formed by what we perceive, what we perceive leaves its indelible traces on us' (Robinson, 'Touching the void', pp. 130–1; quoted from Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience*, p. 512.)

137 See Trigg, 'Emotional histories', describing Ahmed. Objects include things such as hunger. In her overview of different current and former approaches towards emotion in history, Broomhall notes of the current bodily emphasis that it raises various questions about how things such as hunger in lower-income households influenced emotion, asking the important question 'Were the emotional reactions to such bodily states historically specific, or simply recognised and reported differently?' ('Emotions in the household', p. 8).

138 Rosenwein, 'Worrying about emotions in history', p. 842.

139 Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, p. 25. Importantly, 'people move (and moved) continually from one such community to another – from taverns to law courts, say – adjusting their emotional displays and their judgments of weal and woe … to these different environments' (Worrying about emotions in history', p. 842).

140 King, 'Emotions in medieval thought', p. 2. See McNamer, *Affective Meditation*.

141 Ahmed, 'Happy objects', p. 30.

142 Nagy, 'Historians and emotions'.

143 Adams, 'Introduction', p. 174.

144 Scheer, 'Are emotions a kind of practice?', p. 193.

145 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 226.

146 Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, p. 2.

147 Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, p. 129.

148 Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, p. 40.

149 Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, p. 3.

150 Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, p. 9.

151 The extreme rarity of such an opportunity is apparent in Raluca Radulescu's observation that '[t]he only recent example of a new way of editing such a manuscript is available in the full edition of

the Rate manuscript … There a choice was made to present all the texts continuously, in the order they appear in the manuscript, and only include notes and a commentary separately, thus not impeding fresh independent interpretations of the whole or parts' ('Vying for attention,' p. 121, n. 6).

152 Pearsall, 'The value/s of manuscript study', p. 168.
153 Nolan, 'Medieval habit, modern sensation', p. 467.
154 Nolan, 'Medieval habit, modern sensation', p. 472.
155 Nolan, 'Medieval habit, modern sensation', pp. 472–3.
156 Nolan, 'Medieval habit, modern sensation', p. 473. Note as well that the manuscript is merely a vehicle for human-to-human contact (ultimately a mere instrument).
157 Nolan, 'Medieval habit, modern sensation', p. 470.
158 For instance, Guðrún Nordal began her 2014 plenary address on Icelandic manuscripts at the New Chaucer Society meeting in Reykjavik by saying, 'Manuscripts are our windows to the past. Open a manuscript, and you open the window.' Derek Pearsall similarly describes the encounter with a manuscript: 'There is the manuscript and there am I, and for a moment I have the vivid sense that the past is speaking directly to me. It is difficult to convey the uniqueness of this experience, or fully to express this sense of historical intimacy, of privileged and immediate access to the past' ('The value/s of manuscript study', p. 167).
159 Nolan, 'Medieval habit, modern sensation', p. 465.
160 This situation is humorously represented in the skit 'Medieval Helpdesk' from the Norwegian comedy show *Øystein og jeg*, in which monks are baffled by book technology the way twenty-first-century people were first perplexed by iPads. www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQHX-SjgQvQ (accessed 26 August 2020).
161 My thanks to Lara Farina for pushing my thinking here yet further.
162 McGann, 'From text to work', p. 60.
163 Williams, *Keywords*, p. 158.
164 Mitchell, 'There are no visual media', p. 260.
165 Nolan, 'Medieval habit, modern sensation', p. 476.
166 Nolan, 'Medieval habit, modern sensation', p. 471.
167 The issue, guest-edited by Bahr and Gillespie, included Nolan's essay.
168 Fein and Raybin, 'About this issue', pp. 344–5.
169 Bolter and Gruisn, *Remediation*, p. 19. Lisa Gitelman in a similar vein calls these contexts 'socially embedded sites' (*Always Already New*, p. 6).
170 Perhaps this is not the place to confess that Ashmole 61's peers – including Advocates 19.3.1, CUL Ff.2.38, and Cotton Caligula a.2 – simply

paled in comparison. Admittedly this first contact occurred in Duke Humfrey's reading room, an ideal setting for the start of a love affair.

171 The abundant smiling fish seem to have been powerful participants in this assemblage, showing that Boffey and Thompson's observation of the manuscript's illustrations – that though they 'involved little technical expertise and no great expense … are obviously attempts to enhance the appeal of Rate's book for its intended readers' – extends to unintended readers, as well ('Anthologies and miscellanies', p. 298).