1 Introduction

In this paper I would like to discuss in what manner composite manuscripts from the Middle Ages were meant to be read. As a researcher of Scandinavian philology my starting point is the Nordic material that in some way differs from continental material such as Latin and Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. The Nordic material from the Middle Ages is both younger and less extensive than the continental material. However, I believe my argument might be of interest also for non-Scandinavian philologists.

I propose to show that the occurrence of ‘analogue’ linking within the texts and the common use of ‘paratextuals’ such as pointing hands,
marginal notes, etc. can be interpreted with help from hypertext theory.\textsuperscript{1} The use of analogue linking suggests, for example, that many medieval manuscripts were not intended to be read sequentially in their entirety. Rather, the reader was supposed to use the text as a mere tool, a catalyst, to ponder on other works. There might herein lie a comparison with hypertext and multisequential reading. If medieval manuscripts—especially composite manuscripts—were meant to be read in a multisequential order, digital technology might make it possible to revive the different possibilities of reception structure in a way that paperbound editions cannot do. When paperbound editions of composite manuscripts are rather difficult to penetrate from a receptional point of view, digital editions may pave the way for modern readers to perceive composite manuscripts from a medieval perspective. The use of digital media can give new life to the field of philology.\textsuperscript{2} This is something that is discussed throughout the paper. In the conclusions I will present my own view on how digital editing promises to be a powerful tool for philologists of today, in particular those who study along the lines of what is called ‘new philology’ (for more on the term, see below; see also Nichols (1990) or Gleßgen and Lebsanft (1997)).

2 What Does a Medieval Manuscript Look Like?

What is a medieval manuscript like? Of course, as every manuscript is unique, it is very hard to answer this question in a simple way. However, there are certain fundamentals that we can state. The medieval manuscript is not a printed text; it is written with ink on paper or parchment, and it is written by hand. The tool was a quill that had to be prepared by the writer. Errors in the text had to be erased with a knife. Initial letters and illuminations were done by an illuminator. Together, this means that the manuscript was an entire work of craftsmanship, making each book a unique artefact to a much higher degree than during the centuries to come, the era of printing. It is also important to understand that the material used was expensive and that the literate producers of manuscripts were an educated elite, mostly clerics, from a wealthier stratum of society. Medieval writing was not the business of the common man, it was a professional business. It was not mass media; it was the fabrication of unique objects.

The functions of a manuscript could be of various kinds. Sometimes the manuscript was just meant to be a status symbol. Then it would be placed in a church, a monastery, or a palace so that every visitor could see it and be impressed by its beauty, its bright colours, its knowledge, and its owner’s power. Sometimes the manuscript had an ideological function, containing the law or the belief of the society. When the manuscript was read aloud in front of an illiterate audience the manuscript became the instrument for judging malefactors and sinners. Of course, sometimes the functions of a manuscript could be entertaining, moralizing, or educating, etc. The different uses of manuscripts probably influenced the craftsmen’s work, and the produced object can from this view be seen as a

\textsuperscript{1} I have borrowed the term ‘analogue links’ from Anna Gunder. She distinguishes between digital links that run between content spaces, and analogue links. She describes the latter as typographic links that in print run, for example, from footnote numbers to their anchor in the footnote text. Another example given by Gunder is the text ‘To be continued’ in the closing episodes of television series (Gunder, 2001, p. 121; see also p. 137ff.).

\textsuperscript{2} This has been pointed out in an earlier issue of Literary and Linguistic Computing (14(2), 1999), which concentrates on the uses of digital media when discussing medieval texts in university education.
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witness of medieval mentality. Therefore, the making of manuscripts was an expensive and an exclusive craftsmanship.

Between the often leather-bound covers of a medieval manuscript there could be many different texts. These could be of various genres, both of religious and lay character. The language of the manuscript could be either Latin or vernacular or both. This means that many manuscripts are complex to analyse, both from a linguistic and a philological point of view, implying that an analysis of the composite manuscript as a whole demands both profound and varied scholarly skills. The reception seems to alter when we are turning the pages of the manuscript. Many of today’s readers will, for example, have difficulty determining the audience of the manuscript as they become uncertain of the manuscript’s social context.

When medieval manuscript books contain texts from miscellaneous genres, the modern reader must assume that there is a reason for this. There is often a main thread to be found, which sometimes can establish the manuscript as a whole. Where we see a mishmash of texts, the medieval reader saw a consistent theme. The collection of different kinds of texts in an individual manuscript gives the impression of a small library inside one book. Let us take, for example, Cod. Holm. A 54 from the fifteenth century. It was probably owned by Nicholaus Andree, parish priest in Hagebyhöga, Ostergötland (Sweden). It contains liturgical, historical, and hagiographical texts in Latin together with selected revelations of Saint Bridget, miracles, prayers, and other edificatory texts in Swedish. This blend of genres and mixture of Latin and vernacular is not something unique; it is a rather common feature of a medieval manuscript. However, we must still ponder upon its function.

I have in a previous work shown that the uniting factor for the content of Cod. Holm. A 54 (apart from the liturgical texts) is confession. And from this perspective the reception of the manuscript can be interpreted. A parish priest had to provide catechistic education to his congregation, and perhaps this is what this manuscript is about. The content can be characterized as texts about man’s tendency to sin, which is logical. In 1294 the pope Coelestinus V directed that sins committed with the body or the soul, especially sins that were committed with the five senses, should be carefully investigated at the confession (see Carlquist, 1997). In conclusion, this leads us to the hypothesis that the manuscript was ordered by Nicholaus Andree particularly for his continuance in office (Carlquist, 1996, p. 39ff.). He needed liturgical texts for the divine services, and catechistic educational texts for his service among the laymen. These were all supplied by the manuscript, which can be seen as the priest’s personal, and portable, library (see Carlquist, 2002, pp. 47ff., 115ff.).

As mentioned above, the pages of a medieval manuscript are often formed with a functional purpose. The choice of how many columns the text will be divided into usually has something to do with how the manuscripts are meant to be read—silently or aloud (see Saenger, 1982, p. 374). The use of headlines on different text levels often has a practical function; for example, to help the reader navigate in the manuscript (see Saenger, 1999, p. 134). Often headlines in medieval manuscripts contain meta-
information; for example, with instructions to the reader on how to read the text, and sometimes even at what time of the year or the day the text should be read. Finally, the frequent marginal notes, entered by a reader or by the scribe himself, either help the reader to locate certain passages in the text, or point out to the reader alternative passages on a particular topic discussed in the text.

Also, the uses of different kinds of paratext help the reader navigate through the manuscript and locate certain texts. A manuscript is, as mentioned above, a work of one or more craftsmen. The result of the process—the choice of text, the linguistic use, and the implementation of a certain design—is deliberate and it is up to us to interpret the deliberations behind each concrete artefact (Carlquist, 2002). Nevertheless, the purpose of an individual manuscript often seems hard to analyse for modern scholars, even complicated to determine. Why? Maybe modern readers compare medieval books with modern ones, which might prove to be a pitfall. The functions of those two categories of books are rarely the same and the ways of reading them differ.

I discussed above analogue links, a useful term when discussing medieval manuscripts. Analogue links in a manuscript can be marginal notes, headlines in different colours, marked quotations from, for instance, the Bible or the Church Fathers, reference tables, illuminations, non-linguistic markers such as pieces of cloth, etc. All these can be used to link beyond their respective immediate textual context to another part of the manuscript, sometimes to another manuscript, or merely to some ideology such as a religious idea, etc. This use of paratextual markers can be a problem for modern readers because we may not always understand the instructions provided by the anchor in the link source. This can be compared with typographical links, which place a greater responsibility on the users, who must find the link destination on their own (see Gunder, 2001, p. 138). A user of a medieval manuscript must know how to deal with the implicit information given. This means that today a reader of a manuscript must possess interdisciplinary knowledge of the literate culture of the Middle Ages if he or she is to analyse the text in a fair way.

3 Sequential Reading or What? Hypertext in the Middle Ages

There has also been a fruitful discussion on how medieval manuscripts were meant to be read (see, e.g. Greene, 1994; Saenger, 1997). It is by no means self-evident that every manuscript was produced for sequential reading, i.e. to be read from the first page to the last. For certain types of manuscripts, such as law manuscripts and some hagiographical manuscripts, the order of different texts is, if anything, referential. This function is more likely if the manuscript contains a table of contents. Tables of contents are not common in my material but they do exist. The hagiographical manuscript Cod. E 8900 from the National Archives in Sweden, for example, begins with an alphabetic list of its texts.
A law manuscript was not meant to be read sequentially; rather, the user probably read certain paragraphs that provided information about current cases. Books of saints’ lives are usually arranged after the ecclesiastical year even if the best-known Old Swedish collection, *The Old Swedish Legendary*, is arranged in a chronological order. It seems, thus, that many saints’ lives from this collection, when copied to other manuscripts, were to be read at the various feast days (Carlquist, 1996, p. 61ff.). When books of saints’ lives were arranged after a liturgical order, it is plausible that the texts were not meant to be read in a sequential order, but must rather be interpreted as references for the various feast days.

Law and hagiographical manuscripts had specific purposes and their referential function is therefore not in question. But I will go further and suggest that it is very rare that any composite manuscripts were arranged for sequential reading. In fact, most of them were probably meant to be read in a referential way. For example, the so-called *Järteckensbok* (i.e. Miracle Book) in Cod. Holm. A 110 consists of 192 miracles, and was to function, as shown by Odenius (1981), as a homiletic aid for the preachers. The *Järteckensbok* was no uniform text, for the miracles are arranged according to different themes, such as *De corpore Christi* and *Miracule de nomine Ihesu*, etc. The preachers used the manuscript to collect different examples for use in their sermons.

The same manuscript also contains a Swedish translation of *Vitae patrum*. This edificatorical text of course forms a whole, probably with a didactic purpose, but the question is whether it was also read as one. The Swedish *Vitae patrum* is full of marginal notes, both textual notes and small images of pointing hands. The notes and the hands can be seen as links that point towards references concerning the monastic vows such as obedience and poverty, exemplified in the main text. The function of the notes and the pointing hands is to raise the content from the concrete text to a more abstract and general ideological level. From this viewpoint, we can see the marginal notes and the pointing hands as analogue links (see Carruthers, 1990, p. 245).

The usage of such analogue links is fairly common in the Swedish composite manuscripts. The same technique can be found in the monastic manuscript Cod. Ups. C 74. This manuscript’s version of *Ars moriende* contains marginal notes such as *bellum corporis et anime*, *conclusio*, *oracio ad virginum mariam*, etc. Here the notes are used to help the reader navigate through the text and find certain parts that can be adopted in oral preaching or in the compilation of other books.

Another instance of analogue linking is found in Cod. Lund. Mh 20 from Vadstena Abbey. At page 165r in this manuscript we can read pingisdagha dagh tha systrana ympnona Veni creator spiritus j tärca na tha sa sancta Mäktill than hälgha anda . . . ('Whitsunday when the sisters sing the hymn 'Veni creator spiritus' at the third hour Saint Mechthild saw the Holy spirit . . .'). Here, I see the Latin quotation as an analogue link to a special hymn, which was known at the monastery. It might also be described merely as a reference, but I think that is to simplify the problem. When a medieval manuscript discusses, for example, a passage in
the Holy Bible, only the initial words are given in Latin (sometimes with a
translation). This does not have to be a reference. The citation is a link to
the whole passage known by the reader. By supplying the initial words the
medieval writers did in fact link to the reader’s knowledge, to his or her
mental library.

Other rather frequently occurring analogue links in most of the Old
Swedish manuscripts are the words \textit{Ave Maria} (or just \textit{am}) and the letters
\textit{pn} for \textit{Pater noster}, which point towards those well-known prayers. As in
the example above, the manuscripts do not reproduce the prayers in their
entirety, but simply link to the readers’ knowledge of the texts by using
the initial words of the prayers.

The many uses of metatext can also be seen as some kind of analogue
linking. When we read a revelation given by Saint Mechthild about the
five joys of Virgin Mary in Cod. Holm. A 49 we find a note that reads
\textit{sancte Mäktille book prima parte xxxix} (‘Saint Mechthild’s book, first part,
chapter 39’). This is a more obvious link to another manuscript. A similar
method is also used in some other manuscripts; for example, Cod. Holm.
A 9, where we find passages such as ‘observe what the same Saint Bernard
says in another book’. This use indicates a highly skilled literate environ-
ment where the readers can allude to certain books or texts just by some
simple keywords.

More common is that the Old Swedish manuscripts often link to
certain authors or to the Holy Scriptures. The linking to the Bible is
usually performed in combination with a Latin quotation of the initial words of a certain paragraph as mentioned above. For example: *som propheten siger* (with red ink) *in psalmo dispersit dedit pauperibus* (*as the prophet says in the Psalms “dispersit dedit pauperibus”*, from Cod. Ups. C 181, 296r). Neither is this simply a reference, but a link to the whole text, i.e. *Book of Psalms 111:9: dispersit dedit pauperibus iustitia eius manet in saeculum saeculi cornu eius exaltabitur in gloria*.

Whereas the linking to the Bible is rather explicit, linking to other auctores is much scantier. The manuscripts merely declare ‘and Saint Augustine says . . .’ or ‘as it is written . . .’. Although these link destinations seem vague to a modern reader, they may have been rather obvious to the medieval audience.

There is also a very interesting note in Cod. Holm. A 3 stating:

> Item a alla hälgonna dagh v capitula j sancta mäktilda bok ther sither wty en rödher silikis traadhcer oc standa the all fäm hwart äpther annat oc är thet en godh bok thy tarfwas thet ekke inskriffwas j tässe bok. (83v)

(‘Item at All Saints day, five chapters from Saint Mechthild’s book at the red silk cord. And all the five chapters are written in a row. And this is a good book, so we do not need to write those chapters in this book.’)

Here a silk cord is used as link. We can still follow it with ease. The silk cord is found in Cod. Holm. A 13 and the link destination is a revelation by Saint Mechthild called ‘About the public’s resurrection on doomsday’ (see Carlquist, 2002, p. 94).

Some manuscripts also link towards certain non-textual rituals. In Cod. Ups. C 50 we read that ‘there are many indulgencies given to these fifteen altars . . .’ (150v). The deictic use of the noun phrase ‘these fifteen altars’ (*thessen xv altaren*) is a reminder of the recommended meditative walk around the Vadstena Abbey church’s fifteen altars (Lindgren, 1991).

The above given examples suggest that we are able to find some sort of hierarchical structure in the manuscripts from the Swedish Middle Ages. A certain text is often intended to be read in a sequential order, but the reader is on frequent occasions given the opportunity to follow different kinds of links. These links point to other texts, other manuscripts, other actions, or sometimes just to the reader’s own knowledge. The analogue links often point towards texts that were supposed to be memorized. I am certain that one fruitful way to understand how a short Latin quotation from the Holy Scriptures could become useful for the reader is to discuss the quotation as having a mnemonic function.

4 May Digital Technology Give New Life to Medieval Manuscripts?

An important philological question that has been discussed for two centuries or more is how to edit medieval texts. What kind of conditions...
should be taken into consideration? An edition is always some sort of interpretation of the medieval text and in extension also an interpretation of the social culture in which the manuscript was produced and consumed.

Many traditional editions are focused on the individual texts. The editor tries to interpret what the text was meant to be; he or she edits a hypothetical version of the text by using a text critical and philological method. By comparing the extant texts the editor prepares a textual stemma. The stemma becomes fundamental for the edition; it is the editor’s supervisor when choosing between divergent readings.

Textual criticism as a method was established during the nineteenth century (although the tradition can be traced back to around 200 BC; see Haugen, 1988, p. 71). The term textual criticism was first mentioned by Jacob Grimm in his commemorative speech about Karl Lachmann in 1851 (see Haugen, 1988, p. 70).

The purpose of text editions following this tradition is often literary. The text in itself, the abstract text, is in focus (see Cerquiglini, 1999, p. xi ff.). This indicates that the different kinds of concrete versions become of minor importance. They contain scribal errors, misunderstandings, etc. Of course, individual manuscripts can be used from a linguistic point of view (e.g. to discuss the scribe’s dialect) but individual manuscripts have not been important as a whole. The editors have very seldom discussed whether variants from a concrete version of a text can be explained from the context of the manuscript. The surrounding texts have not been taken into account and the main thread of the manuscript has been evaded. As I discussed above, all this together may help to determine the text. Both the linguistic and the paratextual appearances are deliberately composed and must be interpreted (see, e.g. Glier, 1990, p. 32ff.; Cerquiglini, 1999, p. 33ff.).

In new philological theory the individual manuscript versions, the concrete versions of a text, are called textual witnesses. To an increasing degree, these are deemed valuable in their own right, as every textual witness tells the scholars something about the culture of medieval manuscripts (Carlquist, 1996, p. 14ff.). Differences between versions do not need to be interpreted as errors; but might rather be a matter of reception, modernization, or a change in the original text’s use. Medieval scribes were, just like modern writers, influenced by their social environment and its culture. They knew that their audience was not necessarily as educated as themselves, and consequently they could adjust the text according to its receptional context. There are also results of deliberate considerations to be found within the manuscript’s design, its content, and its textual composition. Society and culture are changing with time, and so are medium and text, today as well as in the Middle Ages (Gehrke, 1993, p. 1ff.; Kittay, 1988, p. 220).

So, new philology revalues the many textual witnesses; the individual manuscript is in focus, not the hypothetical text. As far as new philology is concerned, each version of a text has its own story to tell and when editing a version or an individual manuscript, the focus is shifted from
the literary text to the social and cultural context of the text. I expect that these kinds of editions will give life to the people of the Middle Ages, because the manuscripts were made and used by them. I look forward with expectancy to editions of individual manuscripts where the editor’s purpose is to interpret the literacy context, not the literary one (see Carlquist, 2002).

Of course, editions of this kind can be printed in books. The editor’s primary task is to give a fair picture of the manuscript, from the viewpoints of both content and manuscript design. Marginal notes and other analogue links will not be placed in footnotes, but in the immediate context of the edited text. Also, there will be a need for a commentary—not just a textual critical one, but one in which the editor also discusses the function and the assumed uses of the manuscript. Finally, the editor must try to explain divergences from other known textual witnesses from a social and cultural point of view.

My idea of how an edition should be constructed is inspired from the movement of new philology. The manifesto of new philology was presented in a theme number of *Speculum* (1990). Briefly, it brings the physical manuscripts and manuscript culture to the centre of attention. As Anna Mete Hansen stated: ‘A corrected and constructed reproduction of a manuscript text supplied with text material from other manuscripts does not represent the medieval manuscript: it is a post-medieval reconstruction, and such a text can not tell anything at all about the social and historical context of the manuscript’ (Hansen, 2000, p. 124) New philology asks for single manuscript editions where textual variants are treated according to their historical value (see Nichols, 1997; Cerquiglini, 1999).

Printed editions of medieval manuscripts from this point of view are, of course, a possible alternative, and there are some examples (see, e.g. Kroon, 1993). The problem, however, with printed ‘new philological’ editions is that they can easily become difficult to work with and even to fathom. A new philological edition must contain lots of information on, for instance, linguistic, literary, historical, social, or cultural matters. This is important, as many medieval manuscripts had a function as the owner’s private library. In this miniature library the medieval reader collected texts that he or she needed, just as Nicholaus Andree did. The many different genres gathered in a single manuscript demand to be explained in a commentary part of the edition, crammed with facts. It has thus been hitherto nearly impossible to make a new philological edition, but today we have that possibility. Now we are equipped with a more promising tool to present the medieval social culture of manuscripts, namely the computer. The computer has an encyclopaedic capacity that can be used to store large quantities of information, and it can sort and present information in an easily accessible environment. Different kinds of systems, environments, and tools have also been developed recently to present manuscripts in digital environments; for example, the ‘PLAO’ systems, the BAMBI system, the editing environment MVED, and the tools Debora and Inote (Lecolinet *et al.*, 2002).

3 A rather simple but in many cases interesting digital edition of a manuscript is given by Springborg (2000). The edition presents Cod. Holm. Perg. Fol. Nr 7 in pdf format and is useful for classroom teaching purposes but not for research, as the edition does not support links from the facsimiles.

4 See the Shakespeare Database Project, at http://ves101.uni-muenster.de/default.html.
p. 52). Even if no single one of these fulfils the aims of a new philological edition, these efforts show the possibilities of what can be done.

In the encyclopaedic digital environment we can have facsimiles of the manuscripts in colour. This is important for the modern scholar’s understanding of the visual signs that a manuscript contains. We can present a text critical transcription of the text linked to the facsimiles. The text can be represented by many versions, transcribed versions, standardized versions, translated (or modern linguistic) versions, etc. The edition can also contain related versions of the same text from other textual witnesses (as in the Canterbury Tales Project; see Robinson, 1996). The analogue links can be transferred to digital ones and they will then point towards, for instance, quotation sources, pictures, or scholarly articles on topics discussed or alluded to in the manuscript.

The editor may also insert new links that are not found in the original manuscript, but are needed for the modern reader’s understanding. The material linked to can, for example, supply information about palaeography, historical linguistics, terminology, the critical status of the text, etc. It is thus very important that these links are clearly separated from the original analogue links. The edition is presented at two different levels, one that will give the medieval view of the manuscript, and another that will help the modern reader.

A both economical and scholarly interdisciplinary venture on digitalization of medieval manuscripts ought to give new life to the study of philology. It may take the knowledge of the medieval manuscript culture further and make it interesting in our modern context. Digitalization also makes the manuscripts more easily accessible to scholars (see Kay Druggan, 1999), and this is important for two reasons. First, researchers will be allowed to study this fragile material not just in the library or in the archive, but at home or in other parts of the world. Second, each manuscript is unique and must be seen as an irreplaceable historical artefact. The manuscripts are a part of our cultural treasure and of our history. Thus, it is vital that this treasure is preserved for the coming generations. Also, the manuscripts must be made accessible to scholars from different academic fields. Digitalization is an acceptable solution to all who are involved in the preservation and filing of manuscripts. The libraries and archives can protect the manuscripts from unnecessary use, but still make them available and possible to analyse on CD-ROMs, DVDs, or on the Web.

Together with six other Swedish scholars, I initiated in January 2003 two national projects called ‘Vadstena Abbey as an environment for producing texts and manuscripts—production, tradition and reception’ and ‘Manuscripts from Vadstena Abbey electronically accessible—a digital archive project’. The first project is headed by Professor Lars-Erik Edlund from Umeå University, and the second by Karl G. Johansson from Oslo University. Both projects have received grants from The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation. The projects aim in different ways to present, edit, and analyse important manuscripts from Vadstena Abbey from a new philological point of view. The editions will be presented in a new digital environment.

5 This point of view is heavily stressed by Kiernan et al. (2002) when discussing how new computing techniques and electronic editions can help restore damaged manuscripts and provide easy access to formerly inaccessible texts.

6 Vadstenaklostret som text- och handskriftsproducerande miljö—produktion, tradition och reception.

7 Vadstenakloostrets handskrifter elektroniskt tillgängliga—ett digitalt arkivprojekt.
digital form and the different studies connected to this will be linked to the editions. The projects have the ambition to build up a national philological network that can revitalize and consolidate this scholarly field in Sweden. Digital editions will, it is hoped, attract new scholars to the Swedish Middle Ages.

5 Digital Editions and New Philology

I will conclude this paper by giving a more concrete sketch of how a digital edition from a new philological view may turn out. Of course this is a visionary sketch, and I am not primarily discussing technology even if I am convinced that SGML or XML should be used for sorting and linking information (see, e.g. Kiernan et al., 2002, p. 21; Lecolinet et al., 2002, p. 53). My view of electronic editions is difficult to compare with currently existing digital editions of medieval material. Whereas I am interested in the single manuscript, existing projects such as, for example, the Canterbury Tales Project, The Piers Plowman Electronic Archive, or The Electronic Caedmon’s Hymn are interested in the literary text. Of course, a new philological edition can borrow ideas and solutions from other projects, but it is important to remember that the perspective of a new philological edition is different. In these kinds of editions, the uses of the concrete manuscript must be brought to the fore.

If a manuscript is made accessible in digital form it is important that the edition is based on facsimiles, i.e. high-resolution colour images of the manuscript. The reader must also have the possibility to zoom in on the images. This is important for the interpretation of complicated readings, for analyses of scribal hands, ductus,8 etc. The quality of the manuscript image must, of course, remain high even when the reader chooses to enlarge details.

The facsimile’s text must also be linked to a transcripted version of the text that will be printer friendly. The latter entails aspects of copyright, but if a scholar is to use the edition for research he or she must have the possibility to work with the text in the old pen and paper context. The edition must be made usable.

The transcripted text must attain the usual levels of critical accuracy, meaning that the edition needs to follow diplomatic standards and be the product of expert work. The modern reader must have confidence in the edited text.

All analogue links and all paratext must also be linked. For example, quotations from the Holy Scripture will be linked to the full text of the paragraph, and quotations from auctores must point to their medieval sources. The homiletic use of a Bible passage must be linked to the Latin Vulgate. And if a saint’s name is underlined with red ink it will be linked to short articles about the medieval importance of this saint. Because the specific manuscript is in focus and not the single text, it becomes important that the information on, for example, a saint also discusses local cults, etc. The linking from the facsimile will focus preferably on the hypertextual status of the original manuscript. The links will as far as possible

8 The order and direction of the strokes of the pen (see Gilissen, 1973).
reflect (1) the intentions that the manuscript producer had with the analogue links and the paratexts, and (2) the reading experience that those links gave the presumed reader. The thinking behind the manuscript content must be made obvious.

Thus, the facsimile will have only a main link, always accessible, to the transcripted text, and the original links that we can find in the manuscript. Nothing else! When reading the facsimile the mind must be able to focus on the medieval product of literacy.

The transcripted text will also contain links. These are to be regarded as a part of the scholarly interpretation of the text. By using hypermedia we can provide grammatical, lexical, or phonological explanations of certain passages without disturbing the reading experience of a text. Hypermedia also allows us to link not just to articles about, for instance, liturgical terminology or historical facts, but also to audio files containing medieval music. By the use of links we can present the critical apparatus, allow stemmatological connections to other manuscripts, or point to discussions about criticism of the textual sources, for all of which the Canterbury Tales Project has developed very useful solutions that must be taken into account (see Robinson and Solopova, 1999).

The digital facsimile edition should reflect the medieval reading of the manuscript, the private library of the original owner, the ideology that is found between the lines, the hypertext of the manuscript, and the digital transcription that reflects the scholarly interpretation and explanation of the manuscript. If this is performed correctly, carefully, and with accuracy, one individual digital edition of a manuscript can be a massive gateway to medieval studies.

Producing such an edition cannot possibly be the work of a single person. We are in need of research teams, of production teams that work together in an interdisciplinary manner. Experts on the Middle Ages must collaborate with experts on philology and digital technology. Without these contacts, there will be no edition.

Maybe an edition of this kind is not just a vision. I fear it may also be a utopian idea. But I still think that it can be produced. The question is if we want it or not, and if we need it. I, myself, am certain that we do.

References
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