

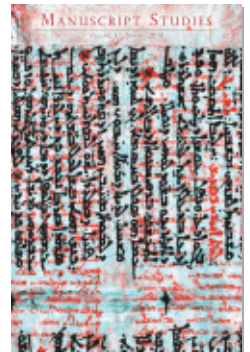


PROJECT MUSE®

*A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval and Renaissance
Manuscripts of the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's
College by David T. Gura (review)*

Lisa Fagin Davis

Manuscript Studies: A Journal of the Schoenberg Institute for
Manuscript Studies, Volume 3, Number 1, Spring 2018, pp. 256-260
(Review)



Published by University of Pennsylvania Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/mns.2018.0014>

➔ *For additional information about this article*
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/693323>

Library of Egypt, but also those hoping to get a sense of the holdings of this collection. It will undoubtedly be a tremendous resource for scholars interested in Arabic book history and Arabo-Islamic history.

David T. Gura. *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts of the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016. 752 pp., 8 color illustrations. \$150. ISBN: 978-0-268-10060-5.

LISA FAGIN DAVIS
Medieval Academy of America

IN THE CURRENT CLIMATE of digitization and the ongoing establishment of metadata standards for medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, it seems almost quaint to publish a print catalog. After all, a printed catalog is out of date almost as soon as it is published, once the library in question makes a new acquisition or any of its manuscripts become the subject of new research or more specific attributions. In addition, it is impossible to capture in print the visual detail and discoverability of a digital surrogate. This is true for any printed catalog, even one as thorough and detailed as David Gura's *Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts of the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College*. On the other hand, print catalogs allow for flexibility and detail that may be challenging to implement in a database format. Gura's work exemplifies both the advantages and disadvantages of a printed manuscript catalog.

The catalog provides descriptions of 288 items (69 codices and 219 fragments) from several collections in Notre Dame, Indiana: the University of Notre Dame Library, the Snite Museum of Art, and St. Mary's College. This not the first work to tackle the University of Notre Dame collections: the University Library and the Snite Museum of Art were included in the 1935 de Ricci *Census* and the 1962 Faye and Bond *Supplement*, and James A.

Corbett published his own catalog in 1978. This is, however, the first catalog to describe the manuscripts belonging to St. Mary's University in Notre Dame as well as the manuscripts acquired by the university since the publication of Corbett's catalog. Gura's work corrects, amends, and expands the previous works, and as such is a welcome addition to the corpus.

The catalog begins with a handlist and browsable lists of manuscripts organized by century, country/region of origin, and language. These are followed by eight color plates, the only images in the catalog (more on this below). After the list of abbreviations used in the catalog, a lengthy introduction details the criteria for inclusion (the catalog intentionally excludes documents and correspondence as well as in situ binding fragments) and summarizes the history of the collection. The introduction also includes an overview of the collection by genre, demonstrating Gura's breadth of knowledge and the depth of the collection.

As part of his curatorial work at the University of Notre Dame Library, Gura has assigned consistent and permanent shelfmarks to the manuscripts that indicate format, language, height, and shelf number (e.g., Cod. Lat. b. 1). The third element, a lowercase letter, indicates a range of height presumably dictated by the library's shelving constraints, although Gura does not explicitly explain the justification for the four height ranges chosen. It is also unclear how multilingual manuscripts will be/handle. For the fragment collection, "each new shelfmark is assigned on the basis of a unique parent manuscript." In other words, the ninety-two leaves from the Book of Hours that was formerly Bergendal MS 8 but whose dismembered folia Gura is systematically acquiring for the university are all contained in the shelfmark Frag. III. 1.

The descriptions themselves represent an impressive accomplishment by a scholar who is clearly a skilled paleographer, codicologist, and textual researcher. Gura's detailed and consistent descriptions, with their emphasis on scribal distinctions, mise-en-page, codicology, and textual identification, reflect those skills. Watermarks are described and identified with reference to Briquet and Piccard, with page-by-page details provided in appendices. Liturgical use is identified when possible, also with reference to the standard resources (Erik Drigsdahl's *Use Tests*, Knud Ottosen's *Responsories and Versicles of the Office of the Dead*, Friedrich Stegmüller's *Repertorium biblicum medii*

aevi, and others). Gothic scripts are classified using Albert Derolez's taxonomy. Texts are extensively researched, with reference to critical editions when possible, and Gura's provenance research is extensive and well documented.

That being said, Gura's defiance of several cataloging conventions is not always for the better. The chosen format for the descriptions forces the reader to search for information that should be easier to find. For example, the size of the page is given in the first paragraph of the description, while the writing space—instead of immediately following in parentheses—is given later, in the section on layout. Significant attention is paid to page layout, with diagrams of each ruling pattern used in each manuscript, but Gura makes no attempt to explain the relationship between a particular ruling pattern and the leaves on which it is used. Instead, for any particular manuscript, a reader who wishes to sort out whether the page layout corresponds with a particular scribe, text, quire, or other feature must cross-reference the range of leaves for each layout against other sections of the description.

The concordance of old and new shelfmarks (Appendix 1) is critical, although it is unclear whether all of the old shelfmarks are identical to the *Census* or *Supplement* numbers. This is important information to provide because, as Gura himself points out, the old "MS 2," for example, could refer to any of three different manuscripts, only one of which is *Census* MS 2 (p. 3). Appendix 2 is a list of North American manuscripts cited in the collection, given with no cross-references to the catalog itself. Since these manuscripts are also listed in the "Index of Manuscripts Cited," this appendix seems redundant. Appendix 3 provides page-by-page details for watermark usage in nine manuscripts. Like the page layout diagrams, these minute details feel somewhat orphaned and in need of further analysis.

The bibliography is detailed and includes a list of online resources, at least one of which is already out of date: the Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts is now found at <https://sdbm.library.upenn.edu/>. Three indices conclude the volume: Manuscripts Cited (organized by city rather than by country or state), Incipits, and General.

This catalog will be of great use to textual scholars and liturgists, who will find much of value in these descriptions and who will hopefully discover manuscripts in these collections that will be of use to them in their

work. Discoverability, after all, is the ultimate purpose of any catalog. Art historians, however, will find the catalog frustratingly thin on stylistic description and will find themselves even more frustrated by the lack of images. The eight plates at the beginning of the volume, chosen to represent noteworthy features such as the deletion of “Papae” from an English calendar, are tantalizing in their paucity. It is to be hoped that the manuscripts are being imaged and will soon be available online in their entirety. Availability of images will lead to further refinement of Gura’s attributions, which tend to be somewhat general and, when specific, may lack justification (for example, Constable MS 2 is confidently attributed to Bruges, but without explanation).

The same is true for the leaves and fragments. Although “great effort has been made to provide a comprehensive list of locations, shelfmarks, citations, and contents . . . of all discoverable leaves from the parent manuscripts” of broken books (p. 51), these lists will need constant updating as more leaves come to light. Online images of the fragments will certainly lead to additional discoveries as single leaves are further affiliated with their sisters in other collections (for example, I am fairly certain that I have seen at least two other leaves of Frag. I.1, but I cannot be sure without consulting the Notre Dame images). The leaves of Frag. III.1 (p. 461) are still circulating, and so Gura’s printed list will quickly be out of date. To the list of leaves associated with Constable MS 3 (a.k.a. S. Gwara, *Otto Ege’s Manuscripts*, Handlist 61), I can add Smith College MS 36-7. Leaves of the parent manuscript of Constable MS 4 (Gwara Handlist 11, a.k.a. the Wilton Processional) were recently acquired by The Ohio State University and Colby College. In response to Gura’s stated uncertainty, I could easily determine if Constable MS 8 is in fact part of the French lectern Bible known as Ege’s Fifty Original Leaves (FOL) 14 if images were available, especially since multiple leaves of the relevant section of the manuscript (Jerome’s Index) were recently acquired by Yale University. To the list of sisters to Snite Museum Acc. 1989.20.6 (p. 55, a.k.a. Gwara Handlist 325), I would add a newly identified leaf in private hands in Texas. It is also worth noting that since the catalog went to press, the Otto Ege collection of codices formerly on deposit at the Cleveland Museum of Art (cited on p. 430) has migrated to Yale University’s Beinecke Library. Finally, while the volume was in

press, the University of Notre Dame Library acquired a leaf of the Beauvais Missal (Ege FOL 15) (Frag. I.38).

A manuscript description is never complete, and neither is a manuscript catalog. No one ever has the last word. And so this catalog, rather than serving as the ultimate authority, is instead a snapshot of these manuscripts as they were observed and studied in 2016, and the volume should be considered in tandem with the earlier, albeit also flawed, catalogs. Although Gura's descriptions provide the first truly detailed work on these manuscripts and are therefore most welcome, they are frozen in ink on paper and, without images, are frustratingly incomplete. It is to be hoped that the descriptions will eventually be uploaded as PDFs, TEI-encoded documents, searchable data, or some combination thereof, and made available online linked to their associated digital surrogates. The print catalog alone is only half of the story.

Christopher De Hamel. *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts*. London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2016. Vi + 632 p. illus. £30 / \$45. ISBN: 978-0-241-00304-6.

DANIEL TRAISTER
University of Pennsylvania

BECAUSE IT IS HEAVILY ILLUSTRATED, Christopher de Hamel's immensely readable *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* is far less daunting than its page count might imply. It wants to be read by anyone even remotely curious about early Western manuscripts and book history. Although it is too long for use as a text in most book history courses, and is in any case written for interested nonspecialists (me, for example; but I suspect that specialists would enjoy it, too), my only difficulty, were I to teach such a course again, would be choice of chapters. I would use more than one.

De Hamel discusses twelve manuscripts in order of their creation, from the late sixth through the early sixteenth centuries: roughly a thousand