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Medieval literary networks as statistical data

The aim of this project is to establish a digital repository of literary dedications and commissions found in medieval Latin literature. The reason why such data should be significant to us is that they allow for statistically oriented research into various social contexts across the Middle Ages, a rare condition in medieval studies. Furthermore, because the central information invariably concerns the relationship between the author and another party or parties, the data in question are measurable. Important is also that the data can be collected in great quantities. For dedications and commissions are regularly stated in prefaces and dedicatory letters, with which medieval works typically open, and are expressed in manifest ways.

The databank will provide for a variety of application and insight into a number of subjects of historical consequence. For instance, we may compare how laymen or women participated in networks of publishing in the capacity of the dedicatee during the periods from 1150 to 1300 and from 1250 to 1400 and from 1350 to 1500 in Italy as opposed to Bavaria. Or we may measure the presumable intensification of papal authority in the field of publication from area to area and thus establish a pre-history of the *Index librorum prohibitorum* (*The List of Prohibited Books*), an early-modern concept with medieval roots.

The undertaking is related to the ERC Starting Grant project *Medieval Publishing from c. 1000 to 1500*, which opened this year.