.1.
The Brome *Abraham and Isaac* and Impersonal Compilation

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What kind of book is the Book of Brome? Lucy Toulmin Smith, who studied the manuscript *in situ* at Brome Hall, calls it a 'commonplace book' in the title of her 1886 edition. But in her introduction, the Book of Brome is only called a 'small paper manuscript', in which an early owner — one Robert Melton of nearby Stuston in Suffolk—'wanted to put down his notes of manorial duties and other matters […] and finding this volume only half filled with poetry, used it for his purpose'.[1] Thomas E. Marston ventures too that Brome might 'best be described as a commonplace book' when it was acquired by Yale's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library in 1967 (where it is now MS 365). Yet Barbara Shailor's catalogue entry on the manuscript ventures nothing beyond 'book', 'codex', or 'manuscript'.[3] Recently scholars have classed the Book of Brome more consistently as a miscellany rather than commonplace book (now understood to mean a compendium of short, sententious notes, excerpted in reading, as practiced by early modern humanists). As Carol M. Meale observes, Robert Melton jots down his varied notes on commercial transactions and useful recipes into only part of the book, and these jottings-down are not the standard aphoristic fare copied out into what we would call

[1] Toulmin Smith, *A Commonplace Book of the Fifteenth Century,* p. 2.
[3] Marston, 'The Book of Brome,' pp. 141-5; Shailor, *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library*, II, 210-14.

commonplace books today.[4] Meale, then, prefers to call the Book of Brome an amateur miscellany, and alternately, a personal compilation.[5]

Yet much of the miscellaneous material of the book predates Melton's amateur additions to it, notes of transactions made between 1499 and 1508. Poetry, as Toulmin Smith could readily see, had half-filled this book beforehand, and among that poetry was a dramatic piece, a play of *Abraham and Isaac*, written by an anonymous East Anglian scribe. Abraham and Isaac was of a kind with the pageant-plays, each dramatizing one episode of salvation history, performed in sequence in the cycle dramas of late medieval English towns.[6] This first scribe writes, as Toulmin Smith puts it, in the 'small close neat hand of a professional writer'. Shailor describes the hand as a 'small well formed Anglicana script'. The hand 'looks professional' to Davis, too.[7] And though Meale is primarily interested in Brome as an amateur miscellany and personal compilation, she readily acknowledges that its first scribe was 'professionally trained' and 'commercially motivated', and that the book 'as it was originally conceived […] was never intended as a personal manuscript compilation'.[8] The Book of Brome is a composite production, the combined work of this first scribe with a professional hand (who I will refer to here as the Brome scribe) and the amateur Melton coming along later. Since the text of *Abraham and Isaac*

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[4] For Toulmin Smith, common-placing here might entail copying out texts in full into books collecting various articles and notes for apparently personal use. This sense of 'commonplace book' was current at the time of her edition's publication.
[5] Meale, 'Amateur Book Production and the Miscellany', pp. 157-8. Meale attaches a proviso to the amateur label, that 'such scribes are amateur only in relation to their lack of formal involvement as producers within the commercial manuscript book trade', but I take this comment to refer to Melton. No evidence suggests that the first scribe of Brome lacks formal involvement in book production.
[6] Middle English took 'pageant' from the Latin *pagina*, to mean the wagon upon which these plays were performed, as well as the dramatic performance. On the definition of 'pageant', see Clopper, 'Drama, Play, and Game', p. 130.
[7] Toulmin Smith, p. 10; Shailor, *Catalogue*, II, 213; Davis, ed., *Non-cycle Plays and Fragments*, p. lix.
[8] Meale, p. 165. There is some tentative evidence that this scribe made a little money upon the sale of the book on 1 May 1492. There is a record of payment made in his well-formed hand on the inside front cover, though whether this receipt is for the book is unclear. Kahrl is rather sure it records a payment for the book in 'The Brome Hall Commonplace Book', p. 159. Meale posits, however, that this may be a model of a receipt, rather than a receipt itself.

was copied down by that first Brome scribe, this instance of early drama was committed to paper as part of a process of impersonal compilation undertaken by this Brome scribe prior to the book's use in the Melton household, rather than one of amateur, personal compilation. To better understand the pageant play's manuscript context, I will ask here what the kind of book Brome was first made to be, with a focus on the manuscript's earlier stage of production rather on its later additions or on its readers in a Suffolk gentry household.[9]

Melton makes his later additions for the purposes of personal reference: how to treat jaundice, and who paid him how much for corn. But the purposes of Brome's first scribe are less apparent, and rather less studied, than Melton's: why copy these particular texts into this book, and why copy of a play of *Abraham and Isaac* among them? Like the purposes of so many anonymous scribes who produced medieval books, the Brome scribe's purposes are legible, if at all, only by the light thrown by the small implications of the book's structure and design, which might point to some operative scribal priorities. His choices in production necessarily responded to material circumstance: the availability of exemplar texts from which to copy, say, or his stock of paper at hand. His choices responded to more abstract notions of textual fashion, too: what kind of texts would his reader likely want to have in a book? How should they look, and how arranged? Due to this responsiveness to forces both material and cultural, an anonymously and professionally made miscellany such as the Book of Brome becomes an imperfect index of a literary culture in the place and moment of its production. It is a picture of that culture warped and cropped according to those limiting material conditions and its compiler's idiosyncratic impressions of which texts would appeal to a local readership, and in what arrangement. The Book of Brome indexes, however imperfectly, a moment when a pageant play like *Abraham and*

[9] For the latter approach, see MacDonald, 'Fragments of (Have Your Desire)'.

Isaac could be thought fitting and fashionable material for compilation along with its miscellaneous poetry and legal templates. In this, the manuscript affords us a glimpse—albeit a peculiar one—of its local East Anglian literary culture featuring a pageant play and drama in the foreground of that picture.

Though he left no personal signature or informative colophons, the Brome scribe did leave a few clues in the book's structure and design to suggest how he went about making the volume half-filled with poetry that later came into Melton's possession. We might begin with some observations about its collation. The manuscript is made up of five quires, still bound in an original cover of limp parchment. The Brome scribe's texts never span the gaps between these five gatherings. The disposition of his texts across the book's quires—compartmentalized within quires as they are—suggests that the scribe set to work filling each of them separately, each a conceivably discrete scribal production. He copied *Abraham and Isaac* into the first of these five quires. The play is the last of a motley assortment of texts in Quire I: preceding it are short poems of advice in conduct, some misogynistic cipher texts and satirical pieces, a dice poem, and a dialogue on Christian virtues, *Ypotis*.[10] The scribe then left three pages blank (fols 3v–4v), on which Melton jotted down a few words later (on fol. 4r).[11] A devotional emblem, depicting the sacred monogram (IHC) with a heart pierced by a spear, is drawn onto fol. 14v, on the half-page below the closing lines of *Ypotis*. Across the opening from the Monogram, *Abraham and Isaac* begins on fol. 15r, running until fol. 22r, before its blank verso completes Quire I. The Brome scribe begins Quire II with the *Fifteen Signs of Doomsday*, followed by a blank leaf (later

[10] In Boffey and Edwards, NIMEV, these conduct poems are numbers 2064 (fol. 1r) and 324 ('Precepts on -ly', fol. 1v). On the ciphers on fol. 1r (NIMEV 3256.3), see Johnson, '*Xpmbn*'. The satirical poem is NIMEV 3372.6 (fol. 1v). The dice poem is NIMEV 3694.3 (fol. 2v); the dialogue of *Ypotis* is NIMEV 220 (fols 5r-14v).
[11] The notes 'Harry Cade' and 'At Stuston'. Two Cades—Thomas and John—appear in Melton's accounts on fol. 48r.

filled by Melton) on fols 27^{r}–27^{v}. The purgatory narrative *Owayne Miles* and an atelous copy of a *Life of St. Margaret* follow.[12] Melton then fills out the last two folios of Quire II with purchase notes. Quires III and IV of the Book are entirely the work of Melton. The Brome scribe then half-fills Quire V with miscellaneous matter: Latin and English conveyance forms, a carol of annunciation, and more moral verse in the form of a truncated *Seven Wise Counsels*.[13] (Those looking for the full complement of seven counsels in this book, however, must settle here for only four of them).

To review some salient facts of collation: the Brome scribe begins all three of his quires with a new text on the first leaf, occasionally leaves pages blank within them, and never copies texts begun in one quire into the next. Melton then jots down his notes around these texts, and into the book's two quires unencumbered by the first scribe's material. Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson call this neat disposition of Brome's texts within the physical book its 'sectional structure'. They propose that Brome originated as a 'collection […] of unbound and unnumbered blank page gatherings which began to be used for different writing purposes and so were gradually filled up with a very varied body of written material'.[14] Boffey and Thompson assert, as I do above, that the book 'suggest[s] at least two quite different stages' of production. They characterize this production as underwent in a 'very informal style'. But the Brome scribe and Melton had very distinctly informal styles of production, practiced in two stages. Melton's style is hastier and practical, eschewing decorative accents. The Brome scribe's style is more deliberate and ornate, if in its own humble way. For while Melton never went out of his way to

[12] *Fifteen Signs of Doomsday* is NIMEV 1823 (fols 23^{r}-26^{v}); *Owayne Miles* is NIMEV 1767 (fols 28^{r}-38^{r}); the *Life of St. Margaret* is NIMEV 2673 (fols 39^{r}-44^{r});

[13] These model conveyance forms are on fols 68^{r}-77^{r}; the carol is NIMEV 3738 (fol. 79^{v}); *Seven Wise Counsels* is NIMEV 576 (fols 80^{v}-81^{r}).

[14] Boffey and Thompson, 'Anthologies and Miscellanies', pp. 293-4.

ornament his text, the Brome scribe did so consistently. His small neat professional hand is everywhere decorated in red ink: red touches on the initial capitals of verse lines; scrollwork on the two-, three-, and four-line initials beginning new texts; long, braided ascenders for the play's first line; irregular underlining of single words; and brackets to indicate rhyme on select pages (fols 5^{r}–15^{r}, 28^{r}, 40^{r}–44^{r}). He also took care to correct his texts, striking out faulty words with a red stroke throughout the Book and supplying the correct word in black within the text line (on fols 13^{r}, 33^{r}, and 76^{r}, for instance). This immediate revision suggests that the Brome scribe worked in both red and black, all in scribal stride. The Brome scribe aspires to some formality with all his calligraphic decoration and to fidelity to his exemplars through his textual correction. The devotional emblem of the sacred monogram, especially, is no feature of very informal book production; its fills half of its page with its cleanly limned letters on a carpet background of red and black pencilwork.[15] Production proceeded with some care in making these neat, professional quires of Brome, with some concern for its visual impact. The *Abraham and Isaac* play, however prized above its neighbours by modern scholars, inspires little extraordinary embellishment, adorned with the same rhyme brackets, occasional underlining, and decorated ascenders on top lines as its quire-fellows. The scribe decorates the wide variety of texts in Quires I and II similarly, regardless of genre.

This consistency of decoration of verse and drama in the Book of Brome has led Jessica Brantley and others to conclude that the playtext was intended for private reading as much as for performance. The strongest evidence for this intention lies in its treatment of stage directions which, as Brantley notes, 'are written within the playtext, seemingly a part of the characters'

[15] On the sacred monogram, see Lutton, 'Love this name that is IHC'.

speeches'.[16] The Brome scribe provides no visual cues that stage directions were not to be read aloud.[17] Indeed these stage directions are lineated on the page like verse, broken off at the approximate length of the poetic line, as in: 'Her abraham drew hys stroke | And þe angell toke the sword in hys hond soddenly' (fol. 20^{r}, lines 5–6; see Figure 1). Given the scribe's indifference to this text's utility as stage script, Brantley contends that the underlining of select words was unlikely to serve a purpose in performance; rather, underlining had some meaning important for its reading. Brantley persuasively argues for some formal and typological purposes motivating this underlining in *Abraham and Isaac.* Some underlined words begin stanzas, marking a facet of poetic form; others are perhaps underlined to evoke correspondences in the Old Testament episode with the Passion and Resurrection of the Gospel (e.g. 'sacrifice', 'hill', and 'blood').[18] But whatever the specific principles motivating the scribe's underlining, any such principles—whether formal, typological, or dramatic—attest to a degree of scribal care and concern for the visual aspect of the playtext absent from Melton's amateur contributions elsewhere in the manuscript. Paying more mind to these small attestations of scribal production in Brome's earlier formation helps us to see this early dramatic manuscript as a modest but carefully constructed vernacular compilation that became an amateur miscellany only later.

<<INSERT FIGURE 1: Abraham and Isaac in the Book of Brome, fol. 20^{r}. Image courtesy of Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.>>

[16] Brantley, 'Forms of Reading', p. 23.
[17] The scribe includes three instances of stage directions disguised as dialogue: one on each of fols 19^{v}, 20^{r}, and 21^{r}.
[18] Brantley, pp. 32-4.

While the Brome scribe put to paper the only copy of this version of *Abraham and Isaac*, his other texts in the Book survive elsewhere, in other manuscript compilations. These too were the work of scribe-compilers who, in response to whatever pressures of material circumstance and textual fashion, included a few of the same texts in their own miscellaneous manuscripts. This concurrence of shared texts between Brome and other vernacular compilations testifies to a coincidence of scribe's access to exemplars and those more abstract reasons to copy them—similar notions of textual fashion. These cognate miscellanies offer cases in which another scribe's purposes and practices aligned with the Brome scribe's; absent other surviving witnesses to *Abraham and Isaac*, we might look to them to shed light upon the impersonal compilation of drama in the Book of Brome. I will focus here on one such concurrent compilation, London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A II (c. 1460), in which fashion and pragmatism collude to produce a manuscript of substantial textual overlap with Brome's first two quires.

MS Cotton Caligula A II [hereafter 'Ca'] has attracted scholarly attention largely for its singular collection of Middle English romances, but it can boast of broader generic variety: the Biblical thriller *Pistill of Susan*; an armchair pilgrim's guidebook in *Stations of Rome*; hagiography in the lives of Jerome and Eustace; and didactic poems like Lydgate's *Stans Puer ad Mensam* and *Dietary*.[19] Among all this variety are three texts also copied by the Brome scribe into the first two quires of the Book of Brome: the dialogue *Ypotis* (fols 79va–83ra in Ca), the prophetic *Fifteen Signs of Doomsday* (fols 89ra–91rb), and the purgatorial narrative *Owayne Miles* (fols 91va–95rb).[20] Ca, like Brome, is no lavish manuscript, but it shows signs of

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[19] The romances are *Sir Eglamour*, the Southern *Octavian Imperator*, *Sir Launfal*, *Lybeaus Desconus*, *Emaré*, *Siege of Jerusalem*, *Chevalier Assigne*, and *Sir Isumbras*. On this manuscript, see Thompson, 'Looking behind the book', and White, 'BL Cotton Caligula Aii'.
[20] Middle English verse indexes assign the versions of *Owayne Miles* in Brome and Caligula different numbers. The text in Ca is NIMEV 982, appearing elsewhere only in fragmentary form, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng.

programmatic and careful production. Its one scribe writes in a neat, professional secretary hand, and has outfitted the manuscript with running titles on recto and verso as finding aids to the reader. Red and ochre touches adorn line heads for some unassuming decoration. This scribe corrects his texts, with strikethroughs for deletion and carets for insertion.

The best evidence of meticulous compilation by the scribe of Ca, however, lies in the arrangement of its texts, which consistently begin and end flush with column or page breaks. For example, *Ypotis* begins on fol. 79^{v}, and ends at the bottom of the left column of fol. 83^{r}; *Stations of Rome* begins at the top of the right column, and ends flush with last column, fol. 86va. On fol. 70^{v}, the scribe pads the twenty-eight text lines of a passion lyric with a bit more interlinear space between each, so that the poem sprawls enough to fill the entire page.[21] Text columns vary in length, and so the scribe could lengthen or shorten in order to end his texts cleanly.[22]

An exception to this scribal policy of flush columns proves the rule. *Fifteen Signs of Doomsday* terminates a mere fourteen lines into the right column of fol. 91^{r}. The scribe writes in the next line, ‘Amen for charity’.[23] This added benediction serves as the closing note of *Fifteen Signs* (as it does for *Ypotis* and other texts in Ca) but it also introduces a twenty-eight-line Marian lyric to fill the remainder of the column, ‘Upon a lady my love ys lente’.[24] The poem’s last line recapitulates its titular benediction: ‘Amen we say for charyte’ .The scribe appends that

poet. d.208. Brown and Robbins call Brome’s version a ‘later recension’ without further comment in *Index of Middle English Verse*, p. 157. Easting, however, argues that they are texts of the same version in his *A Vision of the Other World*, p. 60.

[21] On fol. 1^{r} a later hand attributes the title ‘A prayer or bywar’ to the poem, which is NIMEV 1701.

[22] *Ypotis*, for instance, is written in columns of thirty-six lines (fol. 82vb), thirty-eight lines (fol. 82va), forty lines (fols 79va, 80rb, 81$^{ra–b}$, 81$^{va–b}$), and forty-two lines (fols 79vb, 80ra, 80vb, 82^{ra-b}). The final column (fol. 83ra) has thirty-eight lines. Its final line, ‘Sayth all Amen for charyte’, is followed by blank space and then a gratuitous ‘Explicit’ on the fortieth line. Perhaps, as the poem neared its close, the scribe shortened his penultimate column by a handful of lines such that the text ends evenly on its final one.

[23] The *Visio Tundale* also ends halfway through a column on fol. 107vb; the religious lyric that follows—*Veni coronaberis* (NIMEV 3225)—is made to measure, occupying the remaining half-column and all of fol. 108ra.

[24] This poem in seven quatrains rhyming *abab* is NIMEV 3836.

lyric for the purposes of columnar symmetry, but in the process, he records the only surviving witness to it. This lyric supplement to *Fifteen Signs* is evidence of a thoroughgoing scribal concern for the look of the page that is the invisible to the quick glance—unlike an easily-spotted finely wrought initial or an ample carpet border—but perceptible upon closer inpection of the scribe's wider program. Here, 'Upon a lady' indexes the literary and visual purposes of this compiler simultaneously. Yes, he thought this lyric fashionable enough as a text to include in this book of romances and devotional material. But it was also a useful makeweight for the page. The choice to tack it on to *Fifteen Signs* participated in a sustained effort to make a book that looks a certain way. Both material and literary purposes coincide in motivating the attachment of this lyric; the poem passes muster as fashionable, for how it will read as well as how it will look.

Scribal designs are harder to discern in the physical construction of this compilation. To start, collating Ca confidently is impossible, as its pages were guarded when it was rebound in 1957 (as Thompson explains, 'its individual folios were mounted on modern paper strips', [173]). The manuscript lacks catchwords and quire signatures, and had not been collated prior to being guarded. Thompson, however, has proposed a quire structure based on the physical evidence of the watermarks, mould sides, and presumed folding patterns of its paper. His proposed first quire, with copies of the *Pistill of Susan* and *Sir Eglamour*, might be thought of as a 'booklet' unto itself, with a 'kind of semidetached relationship to the rest of the manuscript'; quires 2–4 record romances with minor Lydgate poems and other smaller fare for filler.[25] Thompson's quire 5 (fols 82–101) records the last two pages of *Ypotis*, *Fifteen Signs of Doomsday*, and *Owayne Miles* (i.e., the texts Ca shares with Brome). He arrives the tentative

[25] Thompson, p. 180. Quire 4 of Ca poses what Thompson calls a 'seeming intractable collation problem' (p. 179). The manuscript shows signs of textual loss between fols 58 and 59, on which a Lydgate poem titled 'the nyghtynghale' begins acephalously. This loss of an unknown number of leaves makes any proposed collation for this section based on watermarks, folding patterns, and mould sides extremely tenuous.

conclusion that Ca ‘once consisted of a series of unbound, blank and partly filled quires in which items were not necessarily copied in the order in which they now survive’, before being compiled into a whole book (180). (Texts like *Ypotis* and *Lybeaus Desconus* span the boundary between quires, implying that these texts were copied after the compiler had committed to an order of these quires). This mode of miscellany production—unbound quires filled piecemeal with texts of various genres, then bound—corresponds with the mode of Brome’s production during the first ‘professional’ stage. And as the consistently flush-with-the-page texts of Ca prove, its scribe was preoccupied throughout with visual presentation these texts when copying these texts into constituent quires, and compiling them into a book; like the Brome scribe, he strove to produce a visually appealing miscellany, within his means and according to his own peculiar notions of visual appeal. Brome in its first stage and Ca were the same kind of book: modest late-fifteenth century vernacular miscellanies prepared by scribes with professional competence, and some care for the visual aspect of their products. Two scribe-compilers, working likewise, selected a few texts likewise. As forces both material and cultural mutually informed the shape of miscellany manuscripts during production, they culminated in products with affinities both material and literary, like in the double conjunction of both textual taste and compilatory process between Ca and Brome.

As a professionally produced vernacular compilation, the Book of Brome in its first stage is something of an outlier among the manuscripts recording medieval English dramatic texts. The Brome scribe did something rather exceptional when he copied a pageant play into a miscellany outside of the context of a larger cycle. For one, it attests to an exceptional, textual portability of the Abraham and Isaac episode, as appealing dramatic material for compilation. The episode was a mainstay of pageant drama, with analogues of the Brome version appearing in the four

surviving creation-to-Judgment cycles.[26] Another dramatization of the Abraham and Isaac story appears without a cycle in a manuscript now bound as part III of Trinity College, MS 432 (fols 74v–81r).[27] The manuscript is a miscellany, recording a copy of Chaucer's *Steadfastness*, a number of political poems, and lists of English kings and civic officers of Northampton. On the evidence of these political poems and its local political interest, it is thought to have been written in 1461 in that city. Yet unlike the Brome scribe, the Northampton scribe has produced a playtext of an Abraham and Isaac play that invites and abets performance. Red horizontal lines divide the speaking parts of its dramatis personae, whereas Brome's characters are only indicated by speaker-tags in the left margin. Stage directions are cordoned off from text with lines, and even further distinguished from dramatic speech by virtue of being in Latin.[28] The scribe, meanwhile, shows little interest in visual presentation, like the Brome scribe does. The playtext lacks any decorative initials or scrollwork. Those horizontal lines meander at points, and some rhyme brackets are traced over inexactly, all of this giving many pages of the playtext a clumsy aspect. Whether this manuscript was compiled by this scribe for personal use or profit, the Trinity Abraham and Isaac text was designed to look like a performance script and be useful as one. In this, it has more in common with the other pageant plays surviving apart from larger cycles than with the *Abraham and Isaac* in Brome.[29]

[26] The York cycle survives in London, British Library, MS Add. 35290; Towneley in Pasadena, Huntington Library MS 1; Chester in a number of postmedieval manuscripts as well as in Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS Peniarth 399; and the N-Town Plays in British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian D VIII. On Huntington see Johnston in this volume; on Peniarth, see Sergi.
[27] Davis, ed., *Non-cycle Plays and Fragments*, pp. xlviii-lviii. Folios have been disordered in rebinding, and fol. 75 misbound into the play, though it records political poetry.
[28] Davis prints a facsimile of the play in *Non-Cycle Plays and the Winchester Dialogues*, pp. 36-45.
[29] For example, the Norwich Grocers' Play (on the Creation of Eve) survives as edited from a now-lost eighteenth-century transcript of the also-lost *Grocers' Book*, written in 1533 by the wardens of that guild for performance (see Davis, *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, pp. xxi-xxiv). Select pageants from the Coventry cycle survive in guilds' playbooks and a transcription of a lost manuscript by the Coventry antiquarian Thomas Sharp; see also Pamela King's contribution to this volume, immediately following.

In compiling a pageant play so seemingly useless as a performance script, the Book of Brome uniquely indexes a textual fashion for playtexts in professionally produced miscellanies, primarily intended for reading; for such dramatic texts to be decorated with initials and calligraphic embellishments and a typologically evocative devotional emblem; for such a readers' pageant play to enrich the mixture of devotional and narrative reading material typically found in professionally produced vernacular compilations like it, and Ca. As a singularly impractical performance script, the Brome *Abraham and Isaac* is medieval drama *as* manuscript: an invitation to see the pageant play as a textual genre circulating as an article for private reading, rather than an expressly performed genre of public culture.[30] The work of the Brome scribe attests to the possibility of the pageant genre's currency as miscellany material, and intimates a range of further possibilities of drama in manuscript now lost to us. It is a happy accident that scholars of medieval drama have this glimpse of the pageant moving in East Anglian manuscript culture as a fashionable reading text, thanks to the Book's survival through the centuries in Brome Hall. Just as the York and Chester cycles have stood in for a rich, widespread culture of cycle performance in medieval England lost to the historical record, so too might we let the Brome *Abraham and Isaac* exemplify a more widespread practice of dramatic compilation now obscured from our view.

[30] On the "anomolous connection" of a majority medieval playbooks to performance, see Pamela King's contribution to this volume, n. 1.

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