Joseph Holland and the Idea of the Chaucerian Book

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Abstract
The antiquarian Joseph Holland (d. 1605) owned a large, but damaged, Chaucerian manuscript from the early fifteenth century (now Cambridge University Library Gg.4.27). Holland recognized in the manuscript an effort to construct a collection based on Chaucerian authorship, and he repaired and added to it using a copy of the 1598 printed edition of Chaucer's collected Works. From this edition, he took not only the text of Chaucer's poems, but paratextual materials as well, including a glossary, biographical information, and a frontispiece. His activities reveal how a distinctly post-medieval understanding of what the collected works of Chaucer should look like shaped the history of this fifteenth-century manuscript, and underscore impact of later stages of transmission can have on the way medieval books are read and preserved.

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://repository.upenn.edu/mss_sims/vol1/iss2/2