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The Science of Dreams and Early Italian Poetry: The Somniale Danielis in Medieval and Humanistic Miscellanies

“The Science of Dreams and Early Italian Poetry” analyzes the uninvestigated connections between the popular culture of the ‘scientific’ genre of dream books and medieval Italian poetry. The medieval dream-book is a popular and widely circulated manual, which guided the interpretation of dreams. It is an important tool in the understanding of medieval literary dreams, and helps in the identification and description of traditional dream *topoi*. The entries of the dream-book represent a framework on which medieval vision poetry develops its network of images and motifs. Moreover, the medieval miscellany often provides us unexpected insights into textual cultures. These usually thematic collections made by copyists at the requests of a reader not only supply us with little-known texts excluded from codices arranged by author or genre, but also give us a view into how a culture associated diverse texts. A reflection of what a reader selected as “associative texts”, medieval miscellanies can teach us lessons about influence across geographical and cultural boundaries of ‘high’ and ‘low’ strata of literature, chronicle, superstition, and science. Therefore, this research focuses on the specific ways in which the dream manual was materially bound with and utilized by early Italian visionary literature. I propose a diplomatic, synoptical, and critical edition of the *Somniale Danielis* in its Latin and vernacular Italian versions, conserved in Ninth to Fifteenth century miscellanies. These codices bear the only known attestation of this kind of dream-book combined with literature such as Dante’s *Vita Nuova*, in which associations with ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture claim special significance.
