It was only by the very end of the early modern period that illuminated manuscripts from the Middle Ages were, if only gradually, looked upon as art and as a genre of painting in its own right.¹ The French librarian and scholar Abbé Jean Joseph Rive (1730–1791) [Fig. 1] played an important, though often neglected role in that process: he was first in making an attempt to write a history of book illumination, and to come up with a catalogue of questions to classify manuscripts. His work, although of no wide currency, had a considerable impact on other scholars concerned with medieval art and book

Fig. 1. Jean Joseph Rive. Anonymous drawing, c. 1775/80. Paris, Cabinet des Estampes.