

Oxford, New College MS 98 (dating from the early thirteenth century, after MS 98 is a manuscript which is linked to the foundation of New College. Although it predates the College by some one and a half centuries, it arrived at the College library with the founder in the late fourteenth century. Donated by William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester and founder of New College, MS 98 came from a monastic context in Cambridgeshire to reside in WKH & ROOHJH · V OLEUDU \ XQWLO WKH SUHVHQW GD \ 7KH tractate by William de Montibus to a collection of allegorical narratives segment upon which I will focus forms over half of the manuscript, and is a compilation of excerpts from assorted authoritative texts grouped together. The extracts include quotations from Scripture, the Church Fathers, and classical authors such as Horace, Claudian, Juvenal, and Ovid.

The florilegium MS 98 reveals some methods for compilation in the Middle Ages. While the form of the florilegium dictates that quotations are plucked from their context, the compiler of this text ensures that retaining a sense of the source of the extracts across the work. The preface, which asserts that the text is for the purpose of edification, illuminates which authors and texts were seen as edifying in the medieval period, and which sections could be used to teach and preach. I focus on excerpts from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* since he was a contentious source of a

to further monastic duties further the intellectual pursuits of individual monks. Joan Greatrex notes that in the cloisters of medieval English cathedral priories, instruction in subjects such as JUDPPDU RU UKHWRULF ZDV ¶VX Eproficiency in Latin and Greek. The monks used with understanding the primary texts of the faith, i WKH 6FULSWXUWHLE DQG W formal teaching was geared towards Scriptural exegesis, this did not stop individual monks from SXUVXLQJ DXWRWHOLF IRUPV RI UHGGLQJ ¶E\ ERUURZL purchasing them with their pocket money, and by annotating and copying treatises for their own X V. From a provenance of preaching, the manuscript moves to New College library, where we might expect a pedagogical emphasis as well as preaching and intellectual interest in texts. The versatility of florilegia as I will show, makes it an adaptable format: excerpts, shorn of their context, can be easily appropriated for different uses.

Florilegia FRXOG XVHIXOO\ EH GHVFULEHG DV WKH PHGLH classical and patristic authorities. They comprise excerpts from texts gathered together, most often from authors such as the Bible, the Church Fathers, and Roman poets such as Virgil, Statius, DQG 2YLG 6R 3HWHU RI %ORLV\$ ZERWHIDIEQ IRM ODIQWHHV. V

Legi et alios, qui de historiis nihil agunt, quorum non est numerus. In quibus omnibus, quasi in hortis aromatum flores decerpere, et urbana suavitate loquendi mellificare sibi potest diligentia modernorum.

[I read others too who do not deal with history, whose number is legion, in all whom the diligence of moderns can pluck flowers as it were in a fragrant garden and make for

¶(GLI\LQJ :RUGV.

New College Library Oxford, MS 98f. 59v [detail]

incipiunt prouerbia et alia uerba edificatoria a mastro willelmo lincolniensis et cansue
cancellario iordidne disposita.

ad edificaconem animam et morum informationem unumcumque exempta utilia
proferims. . .¹⁶

[Here begin proverbs and other edifying words, arranged in order by Master
William, secretary of the Church of Lincoln.

We offer for the edification of souls and a grounding in moral character each suitable
selection . . .]

The preface is clear in its intent and the florilegium of edificatoria
edificacionem ¶ H G L I \ L Q J to the description of the extract as utili ¶ V X L W D E O H
V H O H F W L R Q · R. The excerpts are moral, useful and edifying, chosen for the purpose
of offering some wisdom or teaching. In most modes of reading medieval manuscripts, it can be
unclear as to why the scribe, glossator or editor has annotated a certain word, underlined,
or chosen particular pieces, and we cannot know for sure why some sections of manuscripts
remain bare or are overrun with annotations. In this preface, however, the compiler has made his
intentions explicitly clear. 6 H Y H U D O D V S H F W V R I W K H P D Q X V F U L S W D V

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¶(GLI\LQJ :RUGV.

†(GLI\LQJ :RUGV.

particularly precise); or perhaps it displays a desire to bring ~~order to~~ the new text he is creating.

Finally, one example towards the beginning of ~~the~~ ~~legion~~ displays both tendencies I have discussed

New College Library, Oxford, MS 98, f. 60 [detail]

The majority of the section is taken from Ovid, with several Ovidian quotations in quick succession:

flebile pincipium melior fortuna sentor [Met VII. 518]

tenebris audacia crescit [Met VIII. 82]

in audacesam est

