

‘Edifying Words’ in the *Florilegium* of New College MS 98¹

Oxford, New College MS 98 (dating from the early thirteenth century, hereafter MS 98) is a manuscript which is linked to the foundation of New College itself.² Although it predates the College by some one and a half centuries, it arrived at the College library with New College’s 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 the College’s library until the present day. The manuscript is a compilation of medieval texts, from *tractates* by William de Montibus to a collection of allegorical narratives.³ The segment upon which I will focus forms over half of the manuscript, and is a compilation of *florilegia*: excerpts from assorted authoritative texts grouped together. These extracts include quotations from Scripture, the Church Fathers, and classical authors such as Horace, Claudian, Juvenal, and Ovid.

The *florilegium* in MS 98 reveals some methods for compiling *florilegia* in the Middle Ages. While the form of the *florilegium* dictates that quotations are plucked from their context, the compiler of this text ensures *ordinatio*, 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 specific sections could be used to teach and preach. I focus on excerpts from Ovid in the *florilegium*, since he was a contentious source when looking for edification in the Middle Ages. The compiler’s approach to Ovid demonstrates how he both gathers from a wide array of sources, seeking breadth, but also organises the text intensely. From the script and layout to the contents of the *florilegium*, the compiler is consistently focused on presenting a clear and meticulously organised text.

The provenance and circulation of MS 98 suggests the versatility of uses for manuscripts in the Middle Ages. The manuscript dates from early in the thirteenth century, and originated in Ely, Cambridgeshire.⁴ Neil Ker placed the manuscript in the Benedictine cathedral priory at Ely, but Dorothy Owen convincingly argues that it was in fact linked to episcopal properties in Haddenham in Cambridgeshire.⁵ From this monastic context, it travels to a secular schooling context. It is next documented in the possession of William of Wykeham when he donates it, in the late fourteenth century, to the library of the College which he founded in 1379: New College, Oxford.⁶ William of Wykeham (1324–1404) was the Bishop of Winchester and, in conjunction with the foundation of New College, had also founded New College School and Winchester College, both designed to act as ‘feeder’ institutions for New College. The manuscript therefore changes location, context, and therefore its purpose and use. The monastic setting of Cambridgeshire, ensconced in the Benedictine intellectual tradition, could see MS 98 being used

¹ I am grateful to Dr Christopher Skelton-Foord for his generous help in preparing this piece, and for providing access to the forthcoming catalogue of New College Library’s manuscripts. My thanks also to the staff at New College Library for their assistance when viewing MS 98.

² For the catalogue listing of MS 98, see H. O. Coxe, *Catalogus Codicum MSS. qui in Collegiis Aulisque Oxoniensibus*, vol. 1 (Oxford: E Typographeo Academico, 1852), p. 36.

³ The works by William de Montibus include *Numerale*, *Tropi*, and *Flores Sapientiae*. Other contents include injunctions to parish priests from councils held at Oxford, London and elsewhere. For this description of the manuscript’s contents I have drawn upon the draft description of MS 98 by Dr James Willoughby, for the forthcoming catalogue of manuscripts in New College Library, Oxford.

⁴ On MS 98’s provenance, see its entry in the online database of *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain* (Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, 2015) <http://mlgb3.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/mlgb/book/6901/?search_term=new%2098&page_size=500> (Accessed 15 March 2020).

⁵ Neil R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: a List of Surviving Books*, ed. by Neil Ker, 2nd edn. (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1964), p. 78. Owen’s argument is based on the list of names on fol. 143^v of the manuscript, which is a wax-scot payment list recording two hundred and thirteen houses in the parish at Haddenham. Dorothy Owen, ‘Two Medieval Parish Books from the Diocese of Ely: New College MS 98 and Wisbech Museum MS P’, *Reading Medieval Studies* 11 (1985), pp. 121–31 (p. 121).

⁶ A note on fol. 144^v of the manuscript records, ‘Liber Collegii S. Marie Wyntonie in Oxonia ex dono venerabilis in Christo patris et domini domini Willelmi de Wykeham, episcopi Wyntoniensis, et fundatoris collegii predicti’.

to further monastic duties or further the intellectual pursuits of individual monks. Joan Greatrex notes that in the cloisters of medieval English cathedral priories, instruction in subjects such as grammar or rhetoric was ‘subservient to the aim of ensuring . . . proficiency that enabled them to use with understanding the primary texts of the faith, i.e. the Scriptures and the Psalms’.⁷ While formal teaching was geared towards Scriptural exegesis, this did not stop individual monks from pursuing autotelic forms of reading, ‘by borrowing books [from their monastic libraries], by purchasing them with their pocket money, and by annotating and copying treatises for their own use.’⁸ From a provenance of preaching, the manuscript moves to New College library, where we might expect a pedagogical emphasis as well as preaching and individual, autotelic interest in texts.⁹ 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 could usefully be described as the medieval versions of the ‘greatest hits’ of classical and patristic authorities.¹⁰ They comprise excerpts from texts gathered together, most often from *auctores* such as the Bible, the Church Fathers, and Roman poets such as Virgil, Statius, and Ovid. So Peter of Blois wrote in his letter to one ‘R., Archdeacon of Nantes’ in 1160:

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 itself the honey of suave urbane speech.]¹¹

The term *florilegium* literally refers to ‘a gathering of flowers’ (*flos* and *legere*, ‘flower’ and ‘to gather’). The medieval compiler, then, plucked extracts from a wider body of text and made something new of it, a honey which subsequently circulated as its own work. The earliest extant examples of *florilegia* are from the early ninth century.¹² Most *florilegia*, however, were assembled in the latter half of the twelfth century and the thirteenth, including two important manuscripts: the *Florilegium Angelicum* and *Florilegium Gallicum*, both closely tied to the classical school of Orléans in the twelfth century.¹³ These texts were primarily made for instructive purposes, as anthologies which could teach grammar and wisdom from authorities. Aphoristic sentences which offered instruction, moral guidance, or could help the recipient learn Latin were included. Elizabeth Kuhl, drawing on

⁷ Joan Greatrex, ‘The Scope of Learning Within the Cloisters of the English Cathedral Priories in the Later Middle Ages’, in *Medieval Monastic Education*, ed. by George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 41–55 (p. 41).

⁸ Greatrex, ‘The Scope of Learning’, p. 42.

⁹ MS 98 is not the only manuscript which moves from a monastic to a secular context. Oxford, Exeter College MS 23 is another example of a manuscript from the beginning of the thirteenth century which does so. The manuscript moved from the hands of John Grandisson (1292–1369), Bishop of Exeter, to a fellow of Exeter named Thomas Plymiswode (d. 1418) and the library of Exeter College. Exeter 23 also contains a vast breadth of *florilegia*, and follows MS 98’s pattern of moving from a bishop’s hands to the library of an Oxford college. For the catalogue description of Exeter 23, see Andrew G. Watson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of Exeter College Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 33–35. The *ex libris* is on f. 1r of Exeter 23.

¹⁰ For more information on medieval *florilegia*, see: Vincent Gillespie, ‘From the Twelfth Century to c. 1450’, in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, vol. 2: The Middle Ages*, ed. by Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 145–235 (pp. 178–86); and R. H. Rouse, ‘Florilegia and Latin Classical Authors in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Orléans’, *Viator* 10 (1979), 131–60.

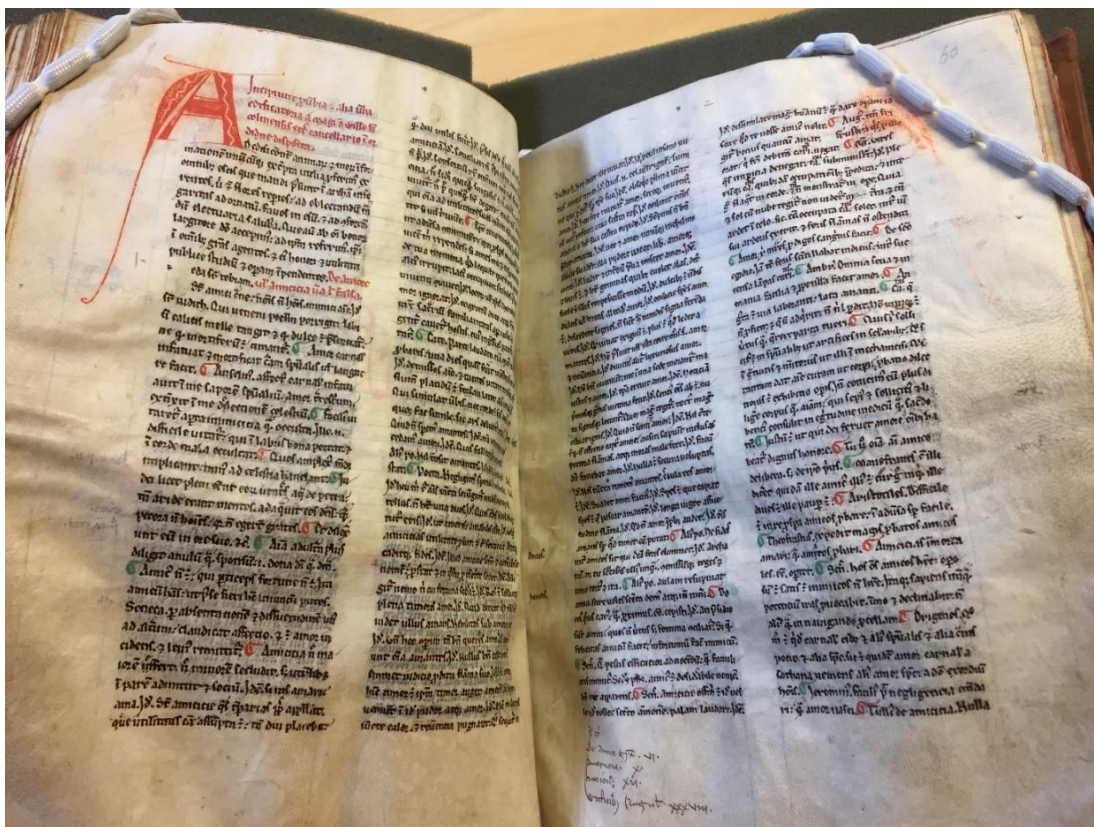
¹¹ Peter of Blois, ‘Epistola CI – Ad R. Archidiaconum Nannet’, in *Petri Blesensis, Bathoniensis Archidiaconi*, ed. by A. Giles, vol. 1 (Oxford: I. H. Parker, 1847), pp. 314–18 (p. 317). Translation by Lynn Thorndike, *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), p. 17.

¹² See John Richmond, ‘Manuscript Traditions and the Transmission of Ovid’s Works’, in *Brill’s Companion to Ovid*, ed. by Barbara Weiden Boyd (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 443–84 (p. 452).

¹³ On these two manuscripts and Orléans, see Rouse, ‘Florilegia and Latin Classical Authors’.

Mary and Richard Rouse and Birger Munk Olsen, characterises these important twelfth-century monastic *florilegia* as 'a bridge between Carolingian and late medieval awareness of classical texts'.¹⁴ These compilations were easily digestible, with the most salient points of the original texts plucked and handily gathered in one place. *Florilegia* proved to be a popular form of digesting the classics: up to seventy classical *florilegia* were made before the thirteenth century, and there was an increase in circulation and production after the turn of the thirteenth century.¹⁵ The form is useful to modern readers, too, since it offers some suggestions as to which parts of texts may have been memorable, useful, or interesting to the medieval compiler. In this sense, *florilegia* serve the same scholarly purpose as reading medieval glosses or annotations in manuscripts: they illuminate how the medieval monk, scholar, or general reader reacted to the words they were reading. From *florilegia*, and particularly the *florilegium* of MS 98, we can better understand medieval modes of reading authority, as well as ways of teaching and learning in the Middle Ages.

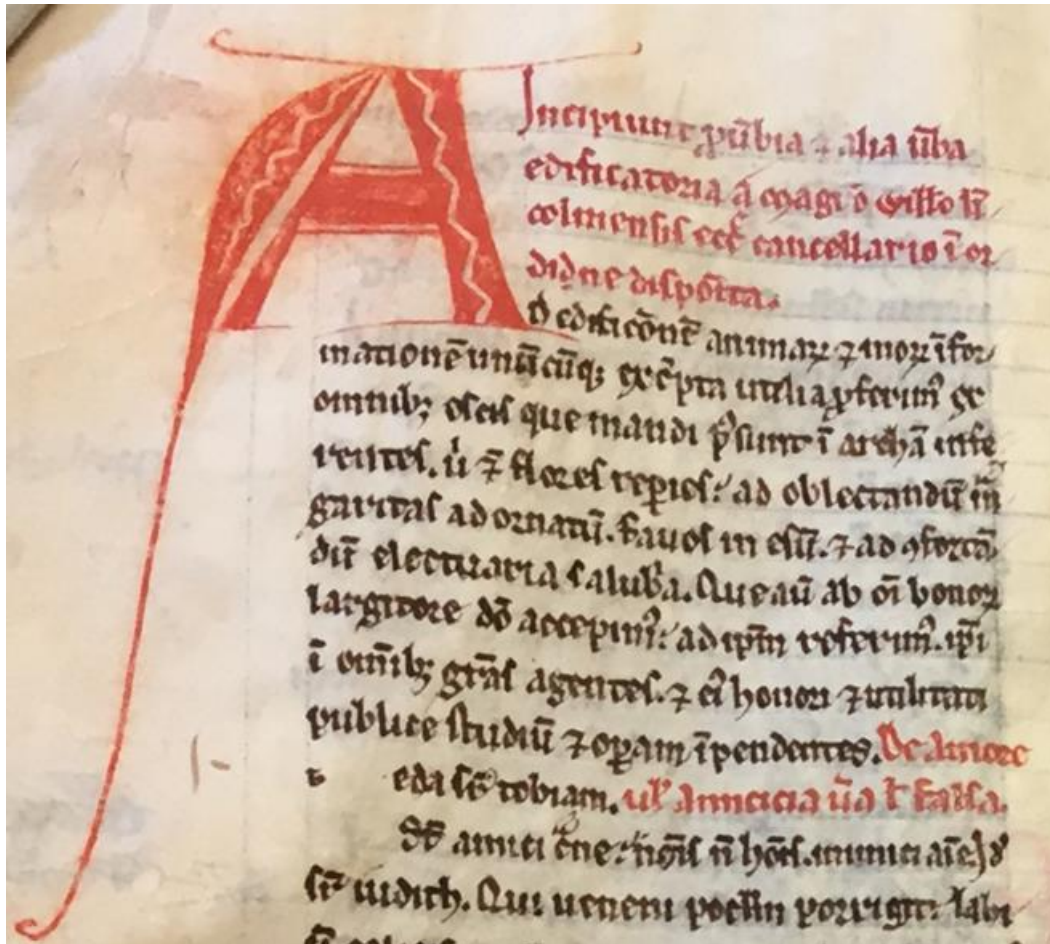
Almost two thirds of MS 98 is taken up by the *florilegium*, spanning ff. 59v to 123r. The remaining folios of the manuscript (which runs to f. 144v) are taken up by *tractates* by William de Montibus, and a collection of allegorical narratives, all in thirteenth-century hands. Each folio of the manuscript contains two columns of writing, often with scribal and post-scribal annotations in the margins. In the *florilegium* itself, new quotations are demarcated by rubricated paraphs, in alternating green and red ink. The *titulus* is furnished in red ink, and is followed by an *incipit* which begins with a rubricated, majuscule 'A', both of which preface the text proper. They direct how the subsequent *florilegium* ought to be read:



New College Library, Oxford, MS 98, ff. 59v–60r

¹⁴ Elizabeth Kuhl, 'Education and Schooling at Le Bec: A Case Study of Le Bec's Florilegia', in *A Companion to the Abbey of Le Bec in the Central Middle Ages (11th–13th Centuries)*, ed. by Benjamin Pohl and Laura L. Gathagan (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 248–77 (p. 249), where she cites details of the Rouse and Munk Olsen studies.

¹⁵ This figure only includes manuscripts which survive and are known to us; still more may have been in circulation in the Middle Ages. See L. D. Reynolds, *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. by L. D. Reynolds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. xxxviii.



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

incipiunt prouerbia et alia uerba edificatoria a magistro willelmo lincolniensis ecclesie cancellario in ordidne disposita.

ad edificacionem animarum et morum informationem unumcumque excerpta utilia proferimus. . .¹⁶

[Here begin proverbs and other edifying words, arranged in this 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 *praefatione* is clear in its intent and the *florilegium's* content, from the repetition of *edificatoria... edificacionem* ('edifying... edification') to the description of the extracts as *excerpta utilia* ('suitable selection', or 'useful excerpts'). 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 commentator 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. Several aspects of the manuscript attest to the compiler's desire for

¹⁶ All manuscript transcriptions are according to diplomatic transcription conventions.

clarity: as well as the direct preface here, each excerpt begins with the name of its source, and the script is consistent, clear and meticulously rubricated with alternating red and green paraphs.

The compiler's assertion of moral enlightenment is particularly interesting given the wide range of authorities cited. Scripture and the Church Fathers are used—unsurprising, given the manuscript's monastic context and the unequivocal status of Scripture as the ultimate authority. These quotations could easily have been used for preaching or teaching. In the manner of *florilegia*, these Biblical and patristic quotations are interspersed with classical authorities, such as Claudian, Juvenal, Horace, Virgil, and Ovid. The inclusion of these sources is also typical, since they are authors possibly known from the schoolroom and were widely read in the Middle Ages for wisdom and solemn sagacity. Ovid (43 BC–c. 17 AD), however, proves an interesting case, and the compiler is keenly aware of the differing texts that this ambiguous authority had to offer. Termed 'the most ambivalent of all the men of great authority' by Alastair Minnis, Ovid complicates the notion of learning sage and edifying advice from ancient poets.¹⁷ The author of both the bawdy, salacious *Ars Amatoria*, and the mythographic epic *Metamorphoses*, Ovid courted both fame and infamy in the medieval period.¹⁸ The fact of his exile from Roman life in 8 AD, as well as his impropriety in his poetry, made him a dangerous—but attractive—figure. An edict from Oxford University in the late fourteenth century banned the *Ars Amatoria* and *Pamphilus* (an erotic comedy based on Ovid's *Amores* I. 8) from being used in the schoolroom—demonstrating the fact of the texts' inclusion as well as its provocativeness.¹⁹ Despite this edict, however, Kathryn McKinley shows that Ovid's texts lived on in the schoolroom, remaining popular.²⁰ Conrad of Hirsau, writing his *Dialogus Super Auctores* in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, illustrates the divisions between the texts:

Pupil: 'Why should the young recruit in Christ's army subject his impressionable mind to the writing of Ovid, in which even though gold can be found among the dung, yet the foulness that clings to the gold defiles the seeker, even though it is the gold he is after?'

Teacher: 'Your aversion to the error of falsehood is grounded in good sense. Even though some of the writing of that same author Ovid might have been tolerated up to a point, namely the *Fasti*, *The Letters from Pontus*, *The Nut*, and some others; who in his right mind would endure him croaking about love, and his base deviations in different letters?'²¹

The same poet embodies different kinds of authority, and offers vastly different modes in different forms of poetry. Commentators in the Middle Ages went to great lengths to perform literary gymnastics on some of Ovid's poetry, sometimes moralising, sometimes banning. Two points which are overwhelmingly clear are the facts that Ovid was widely read and popular, and that medieval readers and commentators both struggled against and engaged with Ovid and his poetry throughout the Middle Ages.

The compiler of the *florilegium* in MS 98 plucks excerpts from the breadth of Ovid's poetry, including nearly all of his works. The fact that different Ovidian texts were seen as being edifying

¹⁷ Alastair Minnis, 'De Vulgari Auctoritate: Chaucer, Gower and the Men of Great Authority', in *Chaucer and Gower: Difference, Mutuality, Exchange*, ed. by R. Yeager (University of Victoria: English Literary Studies, 1991), pp. 36–74 (p. 65).

¹⁸ See especially *Ovid in the Middle Ages*, ed. by James Clark, Frank Coulson, Kathryn McKinley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹⁹ See *Libri cancellarii et procaturum, munimenta academia*, ed. by Henry Anstey, Rolls Series 50 (London, 1868), p. 441.

²⁰ Kathryn McKinley, 'Manuscripts of Ovid in England 1100 – 1500', in *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700*, ed. by Peter Beal and Jeremy Griffiths, vol. 7 (London: The British Library, 1998), p. 43.

²¹ I quote the translation for ease of reading. Latin in R. B. C. Huygens, *Dialogus super auctores* (Berchem-Bruxelles: Latomus, 1955), p. 114 (51). Translation in Alastair Minnis and A. B. Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100–c. 1375: The Commentary Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, rev. edn. 1991), p. 56.

or not provides a test for *florilegia*, which necessarily removes quotations from their context. Accordingly, extracts from the *Metamorphoses* and ‘legitimate’ Ovidian works sit alongside the *Ars Amatoria*. The format of *florilegia* offers a way to legitimise these unedifying texts of Ovid in this way, since the name of the poem is not included. This is not carried out to its logical conclusion—the compiler does not lay out all of the excerpts in a mass group, but rather includes paraphs and the author’s name. In some instances, the compiler does choose indiscriminately from the text he is citing; but on a larger number of occasions, the compiler attempts to retain some of the context of the works cited. Ovidian texts are grouped *together*, ordered by the poem that they originate in. On several layers, the *florilegium* is ordered, and *ordinatio* is brought to a form which is intended to sever text from its context.

In MS 98, the *florilegium* is set out in the manner of an alphabet. A rubricated heading indicates which word will be alluded to or discussed, which runs in alphabetical order, and the compiler then gathers phrases from classical authorities which include the word at hand. In the illustration above, for instance, the *florilegium* begins with *de amore* (‘on love’), which is rubricated and subsequently followed by a range of excerpts which deal with love. From *amore*, the compiler moves to other words beginning with ‘a’, and so on through the alphabet.

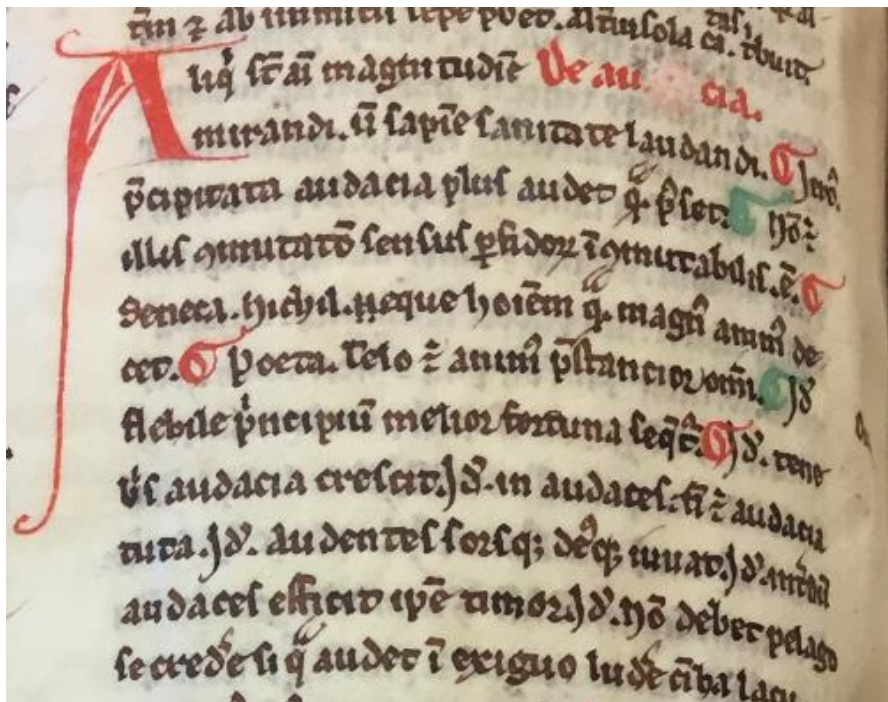
In some cases, the compiler plucks from the wide range of the Ovidian corpus, seemingly indiscriminately. For instance, the section *de ira* (‘on anger’) on f. 87r chooses extracts from the *Metamorphoses*, *Heroides*, *Amores*, and *Ars Amatoria*, grouped by their use of the term *ira* or related terms.²² The compiler is clearly aware of a vast array of Ovidian works, and is perfectly happy to place the *Amores* next to the *Metamorphoses*, despite the varying assessments of the two texts which I outlined above. However, there are a larger number of instances wherein the compiler displays a preference for grouping Ovidian texts together. In the segment *de conscia* (‘on conscience’) on f. 68r, he homes in on the *Fasti*, using *F. I.* 485–86, directly followed by *F. IV.* 311–12. Similarly, on fol. 103^r, the phrase *timet naufragus omne fretum* (derived from *Ex P. II. ii.* 126, ‘I am a shipwrecked man, fearful of every sea’) is directly followed in the *florilegium* by *tranquillas et naufragus horret aquas. qui semel est lesus fallaci piscis in hamo omnibus unca cibus era subesse putat* (‘the shipwrecked sailor even fears calm water / the fish that has been hurt by a treacherous barb / thinks that there is a bronze hook in all its food’, from *Ex P. II. vii.* 8–10). In both instances, Ovid is using the idea of shipwreck metaphorically or proverbially. There are other places in Ovid where the noun *naufragus* (‘the shipwrecked person’) is used—four times in *Metamorphoses XI* alone, all in the narrative of Ceyx and Alcyone, a section of the *Metamorphoses* undoubtedly well known in the Middle Ages since both Chaucer and Gower refer to Ovid’s version in ‘The Book of the Duchess’ and *Confessio Amantis*.²³ The compiler goes, however, to the *Ex Ponto* twice, using the same set of poems (*Ex Ponto II*). Perhaps the association of Ovid as a *naufragus* was more immediate to the compiler than Ceyx in his mythology. The opening poems in the *Tristia* are the memorable ‘storm at sea’ sequences, where Ovid details his exilic journey across treacherous seas to his new, barren life in exile.²⁴ We know that Ovid’s exile poetry was read in the Middle Ages—students used Ovid’s exile poetry to learn the different forms of exile, for instance—and we see the compiler here reaching for the same Ovidian context.²⁵ Perhaps the *Ex Ponto* was a text which he had to hand; maybe it was the text which he could remember most accurately (although the quote from *Ex P. II. ii.* 126 is not

²² *Metamorphoses* VIII. 279; *Heroides* XI. 17–18; *Amores* I. vii. 66; *Ars Amatoria* I. 374. All references to Ovid’s poetry are from the Loeb Classical Library series, rev. edns. G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

²³ Ovid uses the noun *naufragus* at *Metamorphose XI*: 628; 668; 686; and 719. Chaucer draws on the *Metamorphoses* for this section in ‘The Book of the Duchess’, and Gower in Book IV of *Confessio Amantis*. On both Chaucer and Gower’s use of the Ovid’s version of the Ceyx and Alcyone narrative, see David R. Carlson, ‘Gower *Agonistes* and Chaucer on Ovid (and Virgil)’, *The Modern Language Review* 109 (4) (2014), 931–52.

²⁴ For a more detailed analysis, see Jennifer Ingleheart, ‘Ovid, *Tristia* 1. 2: High Drama on the High Seas’, *Greece and Rome* 53 (1) (2006), 73–91.

²⁵ On students learning about exile through Ovid’s exilic narrative, see Ralph J. Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling* (Munich: Arceo-Gesellschaft, 1986), pp. 103–5.



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

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

flebile <u>p</u> ri <u>n</u> ci <u>p</u> iu <u>m</u> melior fortuna sequ <u>t</u> ur	[<i>Met.</i> VII. 518]
tenebr <u>i</u> s audacia crescit	[<i>Met.</i> VIII. 82]
in audaces <u>n</u> on <u>e</u> st audacia tuta	[<i>Met.</i> X. 544]
audentes forsque de <u>s</u> que iuuat	[<i>F.</i> II. 782]
audaces efficit ipse timor	[<i>F.</i> III. 644]
<u>n</u> on debet pelago se credere si <u>q</u> ua audet <u>i</u> n exiguo ludere <u>c</u> umba lacu	[<i>Tr.</i> II. 329–30]

As shown in the illustration above, the text runs on in the manuscript—I lay out the text individually here to demonstrate the different sources. The compiler is not consistent in the length of phrases—in the instance of *tenebris audacia crescit*, he takes a hemistich, while in the last example from *Tristia* II, he uses a couplet. These excerpts are linked, with the exception of the first, by the noun *audacia*. The rubric *de audacia*, ‘on boldness’, means that the compiler can draw from a range of syntactic usages: *audaces* in *Metamorphoses* X and *Fasti* III, in its adjectival form (and in the *Metamorphoses*, adjacent to the governing *audacia*); *audentes* in *Fasti* II, the verb *audere* meaning ‘to go boldly’; and *audet* in the *Tristia*, from the same *audere*. The phrases of Ovid are being recalled by their connected language, with specific words linking Ovidian phrases across texts. The compiler plucks phrases from the breadth of Ovid’s poetry. A more nuanced understanding of the compiler’s mental associations emerges: he works within a framework where he can recall Ovid’s poetry from a wide array of texts, but also retains an awareness of where the text is from by grouping them together.

The compiler in MS 98, then, creates a text which fulfils the form and function of a *florilegium*: extracts from texts, plucked from their context, which can be brought together in a new way. They form interesting and edifying bits and pieces, and even in the most salacious work of the most infamous *auctor*, pieces of moral wisdom can be found. All the works used are shaped to become texts that could be instructive, offer aphorisms, and could be used to teach or preach. The movement of the manuscript from a monastic to a secular context provides an example of the same words being reused in different contexts. This description applies equally well to the *florilegium* itself, when the same words are formed in a different way. Perhaps the versatility of the *florilegium*, demonstrated masterfully by the compiler here in his wide choice of texts, made it easier for the manuscript to serve differing functions as it was circulated in different locations.

Moreover, we can see some of the ways that the classics were read—which bits of Ovid were plucked, for instance, and how they were grouped and organised. While *florilegia* are supposedly texts which separate extracts from their context, MS 98's compilation demonstrates that they could be constructed by both plucking the text from its original source and retaining a sense of its context. This *florilegium* is ultimately driven by *ordinatio*, and the aphorisms within are arranged and chosen according to what the compiler deems moral or ethically useful. So Vincent Gillespie says:

For in the land of the compiler, *ordinatio* is king. No matter how much deference is paid to the authority of the sources; no matter how many *topoi* defer authority away from the compiler to the texts, the *a priori* ordering of material under topical or moral headings imposes an external interpretative context on the collected materials.²⁶

Under the vast critical umbrella of *ethicae subponitur*, all Ovid can be co-opted for edification, and the form of the *florilegium* provides the perfect tool to do so. Whether the excerpts found in MS 98 were used for edification, or whether they were used instead for pedagogical, or autotelic applications, they illuminate some of the methodology for reading the ancient *auctores* and compiling *florilegia* in the Middle Ages.

Rebecca Menmuir
Research Student
Jesus College, Oxford

²⁶ Gillespie, 'From the Twelfth Century', p. 182.