

**‘On love and friendship, either true or false’:
Ordinatio of Text and of Meaning in Oxford, New College, MS 98¹**

The twelfth century witnessed significant developments in the audiences, composition, and reception of academic works of the Middle Ages.² The scholastic methods of learning and disputation that came to define higher education in Western Europe resulted in a fundamental shift in both the contents of books and their presentation, with the ruminative devotional reading practised in monasteries shifting towards those that aligned with the demands of students for texts optimised for easily accessible reference material.³ These trends in the literary culture of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, as Malcolm Parkes observed, resulted in the production of ‘new kinds of books—a more technical literature—[for the] new kinds of readers’ associated with the schools.⁴

The most important consideration underlying these ‘new’ books was the necessity of clearly delineating the *ordinatio*—the order, or internal structure—of their contents to make reading comprehension more straightforward, and the organisation of a text more apparent. Critical readings of *ordinatio* tend to focus on its effects on the composition of texts—as its emphasis on structure and order influenced the ways in which narratives themselves were composed—or on the visual layout of their manuscripts, whose conventions similarly sought ‘[to] draw attention to the structure of the works [a scribe] copied’.⁵ A manuscript’s *ordinatio* is conventionally interpreted in terms of the ways in which it reflects the structure of the text copied on the page, as a visual aid integral to ‘books that more readily met the needs of scholastic readers and more fully reflected current theories of textual form’.⁶

As a result of this primary association of the function of *ordinatio* with the literal activity of reading, however, the ways in which a text’s *ordinatio* intended to influence its reader’s interpretative responses to its contents have been less well explored. By ‘packaging’ a text in a specific way, *ordinatio* can indicate more than just the structure of its contents: the way in which its scribe or compiler perceived its meaning, the context within which a piece of writing ought to be received, its envisioned use, and the attitude that its reader was expected to adopt towards it, could likewise be implied by something as seemingly trivial as the placement of coloured ink.⁷ Consider, for example, the ways in which a textbook and a Penguin Classic use colour, font, page layout, and images in different ways in order to communicate the ‘kind’ of text that it contains and, by extension, the ‘kind’ of approach that a reader is expected to take towards reading it.

¹ I am very grateful to Dr Christopher Skelton-Foord for allowing me to access MS 98 for my studies, and for his support in composing this paper. The quotation in the title is taken from the first subject heading in William de Montibus’s *Proverbia*, ‘de amore vel amicitia vera vel falsa’ (f. 59v).

² The concept of a ‘twelfth-century Renaissance’ in academia and the arts has a long history, although revisionist scholars have criticised several aspects of this thesis. See for example, Charles Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), Robert Benson, Giles Constable, and Carol Lanham (eds.), *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), and Caroline Walker Bynum, ‘Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1) (1980), 1-17.

³ On the body of monastic reading practices known as *lectio divina*, see Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. by Catherine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982).

⁴ Malcolm Parkes, ‘The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book’, in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London: Hambledon, 1991), pp. 35-70, at p. 35.

⁵ Andrew Kraebel, ‘*Ordinatio*: The Arrangement of Parts in a Book’, in Alexandra Gillespie and Deidre Lynch (eds.), *The Unfinished Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 62-77, at p. 64.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ For an example of the significance that coloured ink has on interpretative responses to a text, see Noelle Phillips, ‘Seeing Red: Reading Rubrication in Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 201’s *Piers Plowman*’, *The Chaucer Review* 47 (7) (2013), 439-464.

This paper considers the visual and the interpretative effects that the *ordinatio* of Oxford, New College, MS 98 had on the envisioned reception and use of its texts.⁸ Dating to the first quarter of the thirteenth century, MS 98 is significant not only because of its association with the history of New College itself, as one of the founding members of the original college library, but also because it contains the only complete version of the *Proverbia* of William de Montibus (d. 1213), ‘a significant, and hitherto largely unnoticed, contribution to the *florilegia*-literature of the Middle Ages’.⁹ Before analysing the ways in which the *ordinatio* of MS 98 reflects the intended reception of its contents and the ways in which they were expected to be understood, it will be shown that *ordinatio* was integral to the functioning of medieval *florilegia*, facilitating their use as reference works and enabling the decontextualization required for the re-use of their quotations. Following this brief description of the *florilegium* as a genre, the layout of MS 98 will be analysed with respect to its role in articulating intended uses and meanings of the texts quoted in the *Proverbia*; its *ordinatio* will likewise be demonstrated to reflect the stated intentions that William himself expressed for the work in its opening paragraphs. Then, the success of MS 98’s *ordinatio* in influencing medieval perceptions of the meaning of a particular text will be illustrated by analysing the use of two quotations contained in the same section—one from Seneca, the other from Virgil—in a contemporary Anglo-Norman pastoral treatise, the *Compileison de Set Morteus Pecches*.¹⁰ As another text whose manuscripts’ *ordinatio* is closely associated with the conveying of meaning as well as the practice of reading, the *Compileison*’s integration of a variety of Latin quotations similar to those found in William’s *Proverbia* will be shown to be integral to articulating the intentions of its compiler regarding the function of his treatise and the audience that he expected to receive it.

LEARNING, READING, AND ARRANGING FLOWERS:
THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF MEDIEVAL FLORILEGLIA

The ways in which the makers and users of medieval books understood *ordinatio* to influence interpretative responses to texts as well as to provide guidance for the act of reading itself are exemplified in *florilegia*, reference texts that collated quotations from a diverse variety of sources into a single compilation.¹¹ Derived from the Latin *flos* + *legere* (*flower* + *to collect*), the *florilegium* promised to offer its users their very own field of flowers: a selection of quotations from ‘authorities’ (*auctoritates*) that could be usefully arranged into different kinds of bouquet for improving one’s knowledge, soul, and literary compositions.¹² As the Sparknotes equivalent of the medieval world, *florilegia* rose in popularity in conjunction with the increasing numbers of the ‘new’ kinds of readers associated with the schools, evidencing ‘the drive to make inherited material available in a condensed or more convenient form’, reflecting the demands of students for texts that enabled them to familiarise themselves with large quantities of material at an accelerated pace.¹³ As we shall see, the *florilegium* contained in MS 98 stands out from other contemporary examples on account of its scope, length, and *mise-en-page*; Joseph Goering notes that ‘reference

⁸ For a description of the MS, see Henricus O. Coxe, *Catalogus codicum MSS. qui in collegiis aulisque Oxoniensibus hodie adservantur*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1852), I, 36.

⁹ Joseph Goering, *William de Montibus (c. 1140–1213): The Schools and the Literature of Pastoral Care* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1992), p. 334. See also Hugh MacKinnon, ‘William de Montibus: A Medieval Teacher’, in T. A. Sandquist and M. R. Powicke (eds.), *Essays in Medieval History Presented to Bertie Wilkinson* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), pp. 32–45.

¹⁰ This work has never been edited in full; it is the first in the five-part series of pastoral treatises now known as the *Compileison for the Religious Life*, which is #644 in Margaret Boulton and Ruth Dean, *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts* (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1999).

¹¹ For an overview of medieval *florilegia*, see R. H. Rouse, ‘*Florilegia* and Latin Classical Authors in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Orléans’, *Viator* 10 (1979), 131–60.

¹² On medieval notions of *auctoritas*, see ‘auctour and auctoritee’, *Oxford Reference* <www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095433440> (Accessed: 14 December 2021).

¹³ Parkes, ‘Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio*’, p. 127.

works like this one [the *Proverbia*] have a long history, but William’s collection stands at the beginning of a golden age in which they enjoyed unparalleled popularity’.¹⁴

However, much in the same way as flowers tend to sustain their beauty when left in nature as opposed to being arranged in a vase, *florilegia* derived much of their utility from decontextualising their selected quotations from the literary and cultural context within which they were originally composed, rendering the meaning and use of the excised material far more flexible in the hands of their medieval user. Crediting their sources, for example, was by no means the stringent requirement that it is today; indeed authors, in the medieval period, ironically lacked much authority at all.¹⁵ ‘*Auctoritates*’, as Parkes explains, ‘were texts rather than persons. They are *sententiae* or ideas excerpted from their immediate context in a work and divorced from the wider context of the writings of an *auctor*’.¹⁶ He then quotes a medieval definition of *auctoritas* that illustrates contemporary attitudes towards the act of compilation:

Auctoritas: that is, a phrase worthy of imitation.¹⁷

The *expression* is authoritative in isolation from its source or its author, neither of which are implied to be necessary to account for when evaluating the meaning or utility of an expression. It is unsurprising, therefore, to find contained in MS 98—a *florilegium* that, as will be shown, advertises itself as a work of outstanding morality ideally suited for spiritual edification—an entire section of quotations on love derived from the works of Ovid, one of the most controversial authors in literary history.¹⁸ As with other Classical authors whose identity William either did not know or chose to omit, Ovid is referred to merely as ‘the poet’—about as generic an ascription as can be. Removing these works from their sources gave William the freedom to include quotations that ostensibly seemed to convey excellent and time-honoured advice for expressing and maintaining a proper (i.e. spiritual) sort of love. For example, the *Proverbia* includes a quotation from Ovid that initially appears unreproachable: ‘ut ameris, amabilis esto’ (‘if you want to be liked, be likeable’). Sound advice, surely—and advice that can be readily integrated within the Christian framework of the saving love of God, through which a faithful soul makes itself lovable (i.e. sinless) to God, and therefore earns His love in return. However, the original context of this quotation is far less innocuous: it derives from Book 2 of Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*, which, controversial during his own lifetime, remained one of the most polarising works of the Middle Ages. In her commentary on this section of the text, Sarah Brooks notes that ‘Ovid’s use [of the language of love] is deeply self-centred: reciprocal love is not presented as a viable option; instead, the lover should make himself “loveable”’.¹⁹ The word *amabilis*, furthermore, ‘is ambiguous ... [an] unusual term [that] can be used specifically of physical attractiveness’—a meaning far removed from the inner beauty of the soul!²⁰

This example illustrates the utility of *florilegia* to medieval audiences, as neatly organised collections of the most important quotations from *auctoritates* that could be re-purposed at will to suit an individual’s own compositions. For modern audiences, a *florilegium* can reveal not only the role that *ordinatio* played in directing and facilitating the intended use of a text, but also changing attitudes to *auctoritas* throughout the lifetime of a particular manuscript. In MS 98, for example, a later hand has added the names of Ovid and Statius in the margins, complementing later versions

¹⁴ Goering, *William de Montibus*, p. 334

¹⁵ See Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

¹⁶ Parkes, ‘Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio*’, p. 116, n. 1.

¹⁷ ‘*Auctoritas*: id est sententia digna imitatione’, *ibid.*

¹⁸ On medieval receptions of Ovid and his works, see James Clark, Frank Coulson, Kathryn McKinley (eds.), *Ovid in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹⁹ Sarah Brooks, ‘A Commentary on Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 2, 1–294’ (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2014), p. 109.

²⁰ *ibid.*

of the *Proverbia* found in other manuscripts that contained them from the start.²¹ Perhaps this annotator considered these poets suitably authoritative enough that works using these quotations would be enhanced by the mention of their names, or, perhaps, he was supplying what he considered to be a deficiency in the manuscript that would limit a potential student's study of a particular source.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE IN OXFORD, NEW COLLEGE, MS 98

As a single-author volume, MS 98 illustrates what Andrew Kraebel has described as 'multi-work *ordinatio*': the application of the guiding principles of *ordinatio* to the layout of entire books as well as to their constituent texts.²² The works originally contained in MS 98—the *Numerale*, *Tropi*, *Proverbia*, and a collection of moralised fables—are not only similar in their structure, genre, and function: they also form a self-contained collection of texts whose utility is authenticated by the *auctoritas* of their author, much in the same way as the Shakespeares and Dickenses of the world tend to be the authors bound into 'collected works' or 'the essential' anthologies today.²³ As reference works that conveniently compartmentalise essential knowledge within mnemonic schemes designed to further facilitate learning and memorisation, these texts affirm William's legacy as 'an able popularizer who simplified theological learning and provided practical manuals for the instruction of the less-educated parochial clergy'.²⁴ The *Numerale* is a treatise that sets out teachings of the Christian faith that he considered most essential to know ('the many things', he concluded, 'omitted here have been written down in greater numbers in our other works') within a mnemonic scheme of numerological symbolism, while the *Tropi*'s descriptions of interpretative figures integral to the understanding of Scripture are organised within a numbered and alphabetised framework.²⁵

It is in the *Proverbia*, however, that William's identification of visual *ordinatio* as vital to the successful articulation and analysis of textual *ordinatio* is most clearly illustrated. Comprising over 5,000 quotations organised under 281 subject headings, the scope of the *Proverbia* requires a comprehensive and systematic structure to help its user navigate the text.²⁶ MS 98 is copied in two columns, a standard layout for reference texts. These columns are ruled to a markedly narrow width, such that nearly half of the original surface area of each folio consisted of blank margins.²⁷ The ratio of margins to text could be considered to serve two purposes: the smaller area occupied by writing on the page assists a reader in maintaining their focus on what is being read, while the addition of notes, annotations, and authors' names in the margins by later hands suggests another reason for providing this space. In an era where parchment was expensive to produce and purchase, the ruling of MS 98 might also have been intended to reflect the status of its original commissioner, implying a source wealthy enough to be unconcerned with making economical use of the whole page.

The subject headings that structure the content of the *Proverbia* witness the innovations made in the use and appearance of running titles in thirteenth-century manuscripts, when 'the potential of running titles was explored and realised' following the revival of the practice in twelfth-century books.²⁸ Unlike earlier *florilegia*, the *Proverbia* are organised by subject rather than by author, and are given in alphabetical order. Goering observes that this organisational choice 'made [this]

²¹ i.e., the versions contained in Cambridge, Jesus College, MS Q.B.17, ff. 48r–62v and Cambridge, Trinity Hall, MS 24, ff. 86v–101r.

²² Kraebel, 'Ordinatio', p. 75.

²³ On the history and contents of these other works, see Goering, *William de Montibus*.

²⁴ 'William de Montibus', *New Catholic Encyclopedia* <www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/william-de-montibus> (Accessed: 12 December 2021).

²⁵ 'Plura quidem hic omisa in aliis opusculis nostris copiosius sunt exarata' (f. 33r).

²⁶ The full list of sub-headings is given in Goering, *William de Montibus*, pp. 344–8.

²⁷ The manuscript has been trimmed at some point in its history, as the top margin is noticeably shorter in proportion to the bottom.

²⁸ Parkes, 'Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio*', p. 122.

work more accessible to scholars and preachers who wished to find apposite quotations for their own uses', with the number of quotations given in each section suggesting what contemporary users of the text would have been envisioned as finding useful.²⁹ Perhaps reflecting this fact, the distribution of material within the *Proverbia* is far less systematic than the presentation of the running titles: while the longest sections, 'on love or friendship, either true or false' and 'on war' contain 121 and 115 quotations respectively, the shortest sections contain only two or three, with the average section containing between ten and twenty-five. The use of alphabetically ordered running titles to organise the *Proverbia* 'distinguished [it] from contemporary collections' visually and structurally, further adding to the historical and literary significance of MS 98.³⁰

In addition to more readily facilitating cross-referencing and the identification of subjects in his *florilegium*, William's decision to not use authors' names as a finding aid complements the analysis of the importance of anonymity to his treatment of Ovid above—a reading that is supported by the visual presentation of sources in this manuscript. In addition to replacing references to certain sources with vague citations like 'the poet', MS 98 does not visually separate authors' names from their associated quotations in any way, merely giving the name at the beginning of the section containing material attributed to them followed by a single *punctus*. While Goering criticises William's 'casualness regarding attributions of authority' as a 'limitation' to the *Proverbia*'s utility, his contemporary audiences would not have considered their omission a detriment to the success of the text in all likelihood. Writing shortly after the compilation of MS 98 in the mid-thirteenth century, the Dominican Jacobus de Fusigano advised preachers to indicate their sources when composing sermons as follows:

Decens est quod predicator qui vult adducere verbum alicuius philosophi ostendat verbum illud extraneum esse a doctrina sacra. Quod facit dicendo 'sicut habetur in alia doctrina' . . . tacendo nomen philosophi et etiam libri, licet in scribendo sermonem possit ponere nomen libri pro maiori certitudine lectoris.

It is fitting that a preacher who wants to quote the saying of some philosopher should indicate that this saying is from outside holy doctrine. This he can do by saying 'as is said in some other teaching' . . . pass[ing] over the name of the philosopher and the book as well, except that when he writes down the sermon he may put down the name of the book, for greater assurance to his reader.³¹

Anonymity, de Fusigano suggests, is the best way to 'authenticate' sources whose non-Christian origins could potentially cast doubt on their moral character; it is no accident that he refers to the authors of such works as 'philosophers', a term often used to indicate non-Christian *auctoritates* in academic circles. William's choice to sanitise the Ovids and Virgils contained in his *Proverbia* by anonymising them as 'the poet' is not evidence of a lack of research or carelessness, but rather an indication of how medieval compilers' attitudes to particular works were influenced by their cultural and theological background.

The visual *ordinatio* of MS 98 extends beyond the level of subject headings. Within each section, individual quotations are separated by alternating green and red paraps to indicate where one text ends and another begins. The decontextualization integral to the successful functioning of a *florilegium* is here taken a step further, with quotations juxtaposed on the basis of their related topics clearly separated from each other as well as from their original texts. Punctuation is used minimally within quotations, suggesting the primary use of the manuscript as associated with reading rather than public performance, and the Latin text makes use of conventional

²⁹ Goering, *William de Montibus*, p. 335.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ Jacobus de Fusigano, *Libellus de arte praedicatorie*, ed. and trans. in Siegfried Wenzel, *The Art of Preaching: Five Medieval Texts and Translations* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2013), pp. 10–96, at pp. 18–21.

abbreviations to further condense the material being read.³² These features correspond with the use of the *florilegium* by students, priests, and other men in minor orders that were expected to be Latinate.

As discussed in the introduction to this paper, *ordinatio* played a significant role in guiding users' approaches to the interpretation and use of texts as well as the reading practices associated with them. The ways in which MS 98 visually and structurally organises the *Proverbia* to support and encourage its referential reading to identify which flowers of knowledge were best suited for picking to decorate a writer's work correlates with the intentions that William set out for his *florilegium* in its Prologue. Relatively modest as far as medieval introductions go, the criteria that informed the selection and arrangement of the *Proverbia*'s contents are advertised in a single paragraph that reads:

Incipiunt proverbia et alia verba edificatoria a magistro Willelmo Lincolnensis ecclesie cancellario in ordine disposita. Ad edificationem animarum et morum informationem unumcumque excerpta utilia proferimus ex omnibus escis que mandi possunt in archam inferentes, ubi etiam flores reperies ad oblectandum, margaritas ad ornatum, favos in esum, et ad confortandum electuaria salubria. Que autem ab omnium bonorum largitore Deo accepimus, ad ipsum referimus, ipsi in omnibus gratias agentes, et eius honori et utilitati publice studium et operam impendentes. (f. 59v)

Here begin proverbs and other edifying words, arranged in order by Master William of Lincoln, secretary of the church. For the edification of souls and morals, we offer useful excerpts of information out of every kind of morsel that can be chewed piled up into a treasure-chest, where you will also find flowers for delighting in, pearls for decoration, honeycombs to eat, and health-giving sustenance for nourishment. But, having received those things from God, the giver of all good things, we mention Him, giving thanks to Him for everything and publicly devoting this effort and work to His honour and usefulness.

On the surface, William's introduction appears to contain the standard tropes and expressions that one would expect to find in this kind of text: the 'bouquet of flowers' etymology of the *florilegium*, the name and occupation of its compiler, dedicating the intentions and success of the enterprise to God, and so on. However, it contains several additional factors that inform us not only about how William envisioned the *Proverbia* to function and signify, but also about the ways in which the *ordinatio* of the manuscript itself was integral to realising these intentions. Its opening rubric, copied in eye-catching red ink and clearly indicating the beginning of the text with a three-line capital A, indicates the importance of a *florilegium*'s visual and literary structure to its successful function: not only are its selected quotations advertised as 'edifying', but they are also 'arranged in order', emphasising the optimisation of its *ordinatio* for referential reading from the very first sentence. The emphasis on the utility of this text for the betterment of its user's soul is further emphasised by the repeated description of both its content and its purpose as 'edifying' and the imagery of eating and digestion conventionally associated with the monastic reading practice of *ruminatio*, re-reading and savouring a text until it is completely internalised in the memory.³³ The concluding sentence presents the text as simultaneously offering 'glory and usefulness': the flowers that it contains are, therefore, not only beautiful to look at or delicious to eat, but also practical sources of authoritative wisdom.

³² The most comprehensive overview of medieval punctuation is Malcolm Parkes's *Pause and Effect: The History of Medieval Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1992), which provides an invaluable account of the historical development of punctuation symbols and their use in medieval manuscripts.

³³ On *ruminatio*, see Leclercq, *The Love of Learning*.

Much like the arrangement of flowers from different locations into a colourful bouquet, William's *florilegium* consistently interweaves Christian and non-Christian sources, exemplifying 'the drive to reorganise inherited material in a new, systematic way, to make *auctoritates* not only accessible but accessible in terms of new ways of thinking' in thirteenth-century academia.³⁴ The *auctoritates* given in the first section, 'on love or friendship, either true or false', are ordered as follows: Bede, Anselm, Seneca, Hilary of Poitiers, Cato, 'the poet' (Virgil), 'another poet' (Stattius), 'the poet' (Ovid), 'another poet' (Horace), 'another poet' (Juvenal), Boethius, Seneca, 'a second philosopher', Seneca, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Saint Egidius, Ambrose, Manefranes, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Seneca, Origen, Jerome, Tullius, Simacus, Solomon, Sirach, Solomon, Sirach, Jeremiah, Amos, Micah, Jerome. The chosen quotations are clearly not arranged by author, even when an author is explicitly named; William's decision to arrange his material in this way perhaps reflects the intention to lend Christian interpretations to non-Christian sources by placing them in a new context alongside Scriptural and patristic citations. In order to illustrate the ways in which this function of a *florilegium* was carried out in practice by medieval compilers, the treatment of two Classical quotations included in the *Proverbia* that a modern reader might recognise as familiar will be analysed: Seneca's 'si vis amari: ama' ('if you want to be loved: love') and Virgil's 'omnia vincit amor' ('love conquers all').

[GOD'S] LOVE CONQUERS ALL':

EDIFYING THE CLASSICS IN THE *COMPILATION DE SET MORTEUS PECCHES*

The *Compilation de Set Morteus Pecches* (*Compilation about the Seven Deadly Sins*) is the first in a series of five Anglo-Norman treatises compiled in the second half of the thirteenth century. Its compiler almost certainly drew on *florilegia* like the *Proverbia* while composing his text, which is littered with quotations from Latin works copied alongside their French translations. While the compiler's attitude to and use of quoted material in the *Compilation* requires a book-length study in itself, his treatment of the two quotations shared with the text of MS 98 suffices to show the ways in which *ordinatio* both indicates and facilitates medieval attitudes to inherited *auctoritates* and the flexibility of the meaning ascribed to them.

In the first chapter of the *Compilation*'s treatise on the sin of Pride, the compiler lists three reasons why a person must hate and flee from sin.³⁵ 'The first reason', he begins, 'is that sin displeases the Lord God, who is our best friend, more than everything'.³⁶ This reason is in turn subdivided further into three reasons explaining exactly why God is a person's greatest friend, the second of which reads as follows:

La secunde resoun est ; ke deu ne ad nul si cher ami en ciel ne en terre. ke il ne har-reit a la mort ; si il trouait en lui mor-tel pecche. ... **E** pur le amur des queus il esluz sanz cupe estre issi pene ; e entre deus larons si vil-ement crucefie. ke eus sanz fin en enfern ne fussent dampne. **C**el amur par droit ne deveroit iames estre oblie. **K**ar lem dit ke amur veint totes choses. **E** pur le grant amur ke il nus mustre ; le devom nus par droit reamer. **A**mor inquit enim vincit omnia. **E**t nichil in mundo ita ad amorem accendit ; sicum amore. **E**t seneca dicit. **S**i vis amari ; ama.³⁷

The second reason is that God has no friend—neither on earth nor in heaven—that is so dear to Him that he would not sentence him or her to death if He discovered mortal sin within them. ... And out of love for such people [sinners], he [Christ] chose—without blame—to be tortured here, and to be crucified between two thieves so

³⁴ Parkes, 'Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio*', p. 117.

³⁵ 'Pur treis causes deit homme hair pecche e eschievre', Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.14.7, f. 2r, col. 1.

³⁶ 'La primere cause est ; ke pecche desplet de tot a dampnedeu ke est nostre meliour ami', ibid.

³⁷ Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.14.7, f. 2r, col. 2.

horribly: so that they would not be damned in hell for eternity. This love must never, by rights, be forgotten—for it is said that love conquers all. **And because of the immense love that he showed us, we must love him back by rights. ‘Love’, it is said, ‘conquers all’. And nothing in the world, therefore, encourages love like love. And Seneca says, ‘If you want to be loved: love’.**

The *mise-en-page* of this manuscript underlines the *Compileison*’s emphasis on *ordre* and *process* that Nicholas Watson and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne see as fundamental to the ambition and realisation of the work.³⁸ Like MS 98, the chapters of each treatise are begun with descriptive rubrics, and rubrics are also used to indicate subdivisions within individual chapters. Running titles are additionally copied across the bottom margin of each folio that correspond to the principal treatise being read (i.e. throughout all the chapters of the treatise on the seven deadly sins, the running title reads ‘de septem peccatis’). Latin text is visually separated from French text by underlining in red ink, and new sentences have their first capital letter touched with red ink as well. As in William’s introduction to the *Proverbia*, the compiler concludes the Prologue of the *Compileison* with a reference to its *ordinatio*, which he associates with facilitating the didactic purpose of the work:

Ore escutez brevement quei **est** contenu en cest escrit e quel **est** le ordre deske a la fin. e pur ceo purrez **vus** le <covient> [MS **contient**] tost retenire en vostre quer. e par cel ordre purrez **vus** prestement. **trouer** ceo ke **vus** vou-drez quere.³⁹

Now listen briefly to what is contained in this treatise and what its order is up to the end; and through this you will be able to retain it all together in your heart, and through such an order you will be able to quickly find that which you would like to look for.

The decontextualization and re-appropriation of these quotations in the *Compileison* exemplifies the ways in which medieval *florilegia* invited those that made use of them to ascribe meanings to their contents that differed significantly from those of their original sources. The first quotation, ‘omnia vincit amor’, is derived from the final book of Virgil’s *Eclogues*; while Seneca is named in both the *Proverbia* and the *Compileison*, suggesting that he enjoyed a positive reputation as an authority in thirteenth-century England, Virgil is referenced only as ‘the poet’, perhaps suggesting either that contemporary audiences would not have been expected to recognise his name, or that Virgil was not considered sufficiently authoritative enough for his quotation to benefit from being attributed to him.⁴⁰ While the *Proverbia* quotes this line from the *Eclogues* in full—‘Omnia vincit amore, et nos cedamus amori’ (‘Love conquers all, and let us yield to love’)—the compiler of the *Compileison* elected to include only the first half of the quotation, perhaps to keep his passage centred on the necessity of requited love for God to the salvation of souls. Virgil’s original phrase expresses the last words spoken by Gallus, a poet who (quite literally) dies of unrequited love for Lycoris, a former lover who leaves him for another man.⁴¹ Although several gods intervene in an attempt to dissuade Gallus from his futile obsession, he insists that the magnitude of his love has left him unable to resist succumbing to it—and, furthermore, that the intensity of his passion renders it inevitable. ‘Let us’, he concludes, ‘submit to love’: ‘nos cedamus amori!’ Far from complementing its medieval use as an *auctoritas* that affirms the reciprocation of Christ’s love required of true and devout Christians, Virgil’s text conveys a negative portrayal of the madness

³⁸ Nicholas Watson and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, ‘The French of England: the *Compileison*, *Ancrene Wisse*, and the Idea of Anglo-Norman’, *Journal of Romance Studies* 4 (3) (2004), 35–59.

³⁹ Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.14.7, f. 1v, col. 1.

⁴⁰ On some aspects of Virgil’s medieval reception, see Sergio Casali and Fabio Stok, ‘Post-Classical commentary’, in Charles Martindale and Fiachra Mac Góráin (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 95–108.

⁴¹ cf. Eclogue X in J. B. Greenough, *The Bucolics, Aeneid, and Georgics of Virgil* (Boston, Mass.: Ginn & Co., 1900).

caused by sexual, secular love—a love that is, to add another layer of irony, anything but reciprocated in the original story. Given this context, the following Latin phrase added by the compiler as though it were part of the original *auctoritas*—‘and nothing in the world, therefore, encourages love like love’—articulates not a logical confirmation of the superlative worthiness of Christ’s love for humankind, but a complete contrast to the message that Virgil initially sought to convey. Unlike the love expressed by Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross, nothing is commendable or imitable of Gallus’s love: it is ‘madness’, ‘cruel’, and ‘sated with tears’.

As with Virgil, the compiler’s subsequent recontextualization of the quotation from Seneca alters its significance in comparison to the context within which it was originally received. In his ninth letter to his friend Lucilius, Seneca discusses his philosophy of friendship and offers the following advice to a would-be ‘wise person’ (*sapiens*) who desires to make a quick friend:

Quaeris quomodo amicum cito facturus sit? Dicam, si illud mihi tecum convenierit, ut statim tibi solvam quod debeo et quantum ad hanc epistulam paria faciamus. Hecato ait, ‘ego tibi monstrabo amatorium sine medicamento, sine herba, sine ullius veneficae carmine: si vis amari, ama’. Habet autem non tantum usus amicitiae veteris et certae magnam voluptatem sed etiam initium et comparatio novae.⁴²

Are you asking how a friend can be made quickly? I will tell you, if you are agreed with me on this: that I might immediately pay the debt that I owe you and call it even insofar as this letter is concerned. Hecato says, ‘I will show you friendship without potions, without herbs, without any witch’s spells: if you want to be loved, love’. Now there is not only fulfilment in maintaining old and established friendships, but also in beginning and securing new ones.

Seneca’s original advice regarding the maintenance and fulfilment of different kinds of secular friendship—itsself quoted from an earlier Greek philosopher—is transformed into a spiritual message that teaches faithful Christians about the love that is required of them to earn the saving love of God (absent any potentially heretical connections with potion-making or witchcraft). The love that the compiler discusses in this passage is then contrasted with the sinful love of those whose affections tend towards worldly, carnal relationships and desires, with its conclusion reiterating the necessity of ‘*dreit amur*’ (love that is ‘rightful’, ‘just’, or ‘proper’) for God that Seneca’s quotation was initially used to affirm:

Mes ki en sei dreit amur e charite a deu e a son prome avera ; iames illokes herberge ne serra.⁴³

But whoever has rightful love and charity for God and his or her neighbour within themselves will never be imprisoned in such a place [i.e. hell].

The love of God that lasts forever once rightfully earned contrasts with the advice given for making a quick friend or two on earth in the original context of this quotation, while the concluding sentence of this section grounds the interpretation of Seneca in the Gospels: ‘thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself’ (Matthew 22:37–9). And yet, not a single word in either Latin quotation cited here—both in the *Proverbia* and in the *Compileison*—was changed. *Ordinatio*, therefore, works on multiple levels in order to structure the meaning of a text as well as its contents.

⁴² Seneca, *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium*, ed. by L. D. Reynolds (Los Altos: Packard Humanities Institute, 1991), Book 1, Letter 9, Chapter 6.

⁴³ Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.14.7, ff.2r col. 2–2v col. 1.

NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD, AND THE RECEPTION OF THE *PROVERBIA*

How successful was William's stated intention of making his *florilegium* a useful work intended to increase accessibility to the classical canon for less well-educated audiences? The circulation history of MS 98 suggests that in this, the work was a success. Originally produced by a Benedictine Abbey in Cambridgeshire, it was owned by Haddenham parish church in Ely between 1230–1240, before being donated to New College by its founder, William of Wykeham, in the late fourteenth century.⁴⁴ While the context of a Benedictine monastery is readily associated with a place of learning and study, a parish church might seem less so: this particular church was only staffed by a single chaplain, the lowest paid and least educated rank of the clergy.⁴⁵ However, Andrew Reeves notes that 'the presence of a manuscript of William's works in a parish church is not an isolated example', and that this particular manuscript offered Haddenham's chaplain 'access to some fairly sophisticated works of moral theology'.⁴⁶ It is, therefore, easy to see why William of Wykeham considered MS 98 to be ideally suited for teaching Oxford undergraduates as an entry-level textbook of authoritative knowledge.

The first sub-heading in the *Proverbia* has been recalled throughout this paper: 'on love and friendship, either true or false'. While the majority of its quotations treat truth and falsehood in a literal sense—God is the best friend of the soul, a sinful soul is like a cheating spouse, and so on—the phrase is remarkably apt when the wider enterprise of the *florilegium* is accounted for. In the quotations from Virgil and Seneca examined in the *Proverbia* and the *Compileison*, the 'true' meaning of the original texts were, in a sense, 'falsely' represented, being re-gifted new, Christian meanings as part of an endeavour to recall sinful souls to the 'truth' of God's love.

Samira Lindstedt
Faculty of English
University of Oxford

⁴⁴ 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. The connection with New College is affirmed by an *ex libris* inscription on f. 144v: 'This book belongs to the College of Saint Mary of Winchester in Oxford through the gift of the venerable in Christ Father and Lord, Master William of Wykeham, the Bishop of Winchester and the founder of the aforesaid college'. (Liber Collegii S. Marie Wyntonie in Oxonia ex dono venerabilis in Christo patris et domini Willelmi de Wykeham, episcopi Wyntoniensis, et fundatoris collegii predicti). The college was founded in 1379.

⁴⁵ cf. C. H. Lawrence, 'The English Parish and its Clergy in the Thirteenth Century', in Peter Linehan, Janet L. Nelson, Marios Costambeys (eds.), *The Medieval World* (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 648–670, at p. 653.

⁴⁶ Andrew Reeves, 'Teaching Confession in Thirteenth-Century England: Priests and Laity', in Greg Peters and C. Colt Anderson (eds.), *A Companion to Priesthood and Holy Orders in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 252–280, at p. 267.