

distinguished by the quality and nature of its decoration²⁶ and that

both script and illumination are of the highest quality. The text of Boethius, moreover, is accompanied by diagrammatic and figurative illustration which is both functional and decorative, and the outstanding aesthetic features of the manuscript are also in accord with its scientific content.²⁷

The way in which this manuscript came to rest in New Zealand is well documented and, unlike the two other examples discussed, suggests no likely lines of inquiry which may produce similar treasures. However, this provenance is certainly interesting in its own right. Some tantalising details of the history of the manuscript through the centuries are recorded in the Manion catalogue. The evidence covers its original copying in the second quarter of the twelfth century by a scribe who was possibly Norman, or trained in St. Evroul, Normandy; its listing in the surviving fragment of the mid-twelfth century catalogue of the library of Christ Church Cathedral Priory, Canterbury; inscriptions by possible owners in the fifteenth century (Alexander Staple, a monk at Christ Church), in the early sixteenth century (Wyllm Tallys, conceivably a relation of the composer Thomas Tallis), and later in the sixteenth century (Adam Shakerley); the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century binding decorated with the gilt initials 'I.B.' (attributed by the London bookdealer Quaritch, but without other evidence, to the composer John Bull); the inscription by an anonymous eighteenth century owner; and its purchase by Alexander Turnbull from Quaritch in 1900.²⁸ D. M. Taylor also discusses the manuscript in some detail, and describes the investigations of several others before him.²⁹

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Performers, historians, and musicologists face a very daunting task attempting to track down items such as these in New Zealand.³⁰ The difficulties are compounded by the Cinderella role that music plays in many libraries and other institutions with responsibilities to preserve and transmit our national heritage. Until this situation improves, who can say what other musical treasures may be resting quietly in the basements and attics, cupboards and back rooms of museums, churches, choirs, schools, and private homes throughout New Zealand — wherever music has played a crucial role in our cultural development.

REFERENCES

- 1 Margaret M. Manion, Vera F. Vines and Christopher de Hamel, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in New Zealand Collections* (Melbourne, 1989), p. 116.
- 2 Further details are included in Robert Petre, 'Six New Dances by Kellom Tomlinson: a Recently Discovered Manuscript', *Early Music*, 18 (August 1990), 381-91.