

## ***Consolatio* 1m1 in early English: an anthology**

1. The Old English Boethius (s.ix<sup>2</sup> or s.x<sup>1</sup>) pdf. p. 2
2. Geoffrey Chaucer (1380s) pdf. p. 5 (text); p. 9 (explanatory notes)
3. John Walton (1410) pdf. p. 11
4. George Colvile (1556) pdf. p. 14
5. Queen Elizabeth 1 (1593) pdf. p. 15
6. John Bracegirdle, *Psychopharmacon* (1602x1614) pdf. p. 18
7. 'I.T.' (1609) pdf. p. 22

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# The Old English Boethius

With Verse Prologues and  
Epilogues Associated with  
King Alfred



Edited and Translated by

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ege from ðam eorle. He hine inne heht  
on carcnes cluster belucan.

Pa wæs modsefa miclum gedrefed  
75 Boetius. Breac longe ær  
wlencea under wolcnum; he þy wyrð meahthe  
þolian þa þrage þa hio swa þearl becom.  
Wæs þa ormod eorl, are ne wende,  
ne on þam fæstene frofre gemunde,  
80 ac he neowol astreaht niðer ofdune  
feol on þa flore, fela worda spræc,  
pp. forþoht ðearle; ne wende þonan æfre  
cuman of ðæm clammum. Cleopode to drihtne  
geomran stemne, gyddode þus:

## Meter 2

“Hwæt, ic liōða fela lustlice geo      heofende  
sanc on sælum; nu sceal siofigende,      x x s r o n  
wōpe gewæged, wreccea giōmor,  
singan sar-cwidas! / Me þios siccetung hafað  
5 agæled, ðes geocsa, þæt ic þa ged ne mæg  
gefegean swa fægre, / (beah ic fela gio þa  
sette soð-cwida þonne ic on sælum wæs.  
Oft ic nu miscyrre cuðe spræce  
and beah uncuðre ær hwilum fond.  
10 Me þas woruld-sælða welhwæs blindne

in him was fear because of that nobleman. He commanded  
him to be locked in a prison cell.

Then Boethius's mind was greatly  
troubled. For a long time he had enjoyed 75  
prosperity under the skies; he found it all the harder  
to endure so harsh a time when it befell.  
Then the nobleman was despondent, was not expecting  
mercy, nor did he think of any comfort in that stronghold,  
but, stretched out prostrate and turning downward, 80  
he fell on the floor; spoke many words  
in great despair, never expecting to come from there  
out of those fetters. He called to the Lord  
with a sad voice, sang as follows:

## Meter 2

“Formerly I sang many songs  
joyfully in happy times; now, sighing, exhausted  
by weeping, I, a sad outcast, must  
sing laments. This sighing and sobbing  
have hindered me so that I cannot compose 5  
those songs so elegantly, although I formerly  
composed many a true discourse in happy times.  
Often now I misapply known words,  
and yet previously composed with more unfamiliar ones.  
These worldly joys, which I always thought 10

on ðis dimme hol dysine forlæddon,  
 and me þa berypton rædes and frofre  
 for heora untrewum, þe ic him æfre betst  
 truwan sceolde. Hi me to wendon  
 15 heora bacu bitere and heora blisse from.  
 Forhwām wolde gē, weoruld-frynd mīne,  
 secgan oððe singan þæt ic gesællīc mon  
 wære on weorulde? (Ne synt þā word sōðe)  
 nū þā gesælða ne magon simle gewunigan."

## Prose 2

Þa ic þa þis leoð, cwæð Boethius, geomriende asungen hæfde,  
 þa com þær gan in to me heofencund Wisdom and þæt min  
 murnende mod mid his wordum gegrette, and þus cwæð:  
 "Hu ne eart ðu se mon þe on minre scole wære afeded and  
 gelæred? Ac hwonon wurde þu mid þissum woruldsorgum  
 þus swiðe geswenced? Butan ic wat þæt þu hæfst þara wæpna  
 to hraðe forgotten þe ic þe ær sealde." Ða cleopode se Wis-  
 dom and cwæð: "Gewitaþ nu awirgede woruldsorga of mines  
 begenes mode forþam ge sind þa mæstan sceapan. Lætaþ  
 hine eft hweorfan to minum larum."

2 Þa eode se Wisdom near, cwæð Boethius, minum hreow-  
 siendum geþohte and hit (swa niowulhwæthwugu up arærde.  
 Adrigde þa mines modes eagan and hit frægn liðum wordum  
 hwæðer hit oncneowe his fæstermodor. Mid þam þe ða þæt  
 Mod wið his bewende, þa gecneow hit swiðe sweotele his  
 agene modor, þæt wæs se Wisdom ðe hit lange ær tyde

to trust best, have enticed me,  
 foolish and nearly blind, into this dark hole,  
 and have deprived me of advice and comfort  
 owing to their faithlessness. They cruelly turned  
 their backs on me and took their happiness away from me. 15  
 Why, my friends, would you  
 say or sing that I was a fortunate man  
 in the world? Those words are not true  
 since the joys cannot last forever."

## Prose 2

When, said Boethius, I had sung this song, lamenting, there  
 came to me heavenly Wisdom, and he greeted my mourn-  
 ing mind with his words, and said as follows: "Are you not  
 the person who was nourished and taught in my school? But  
 how have you become so sorely oppressed by these worldly  
 sorrows? It is, I know, because you have too quickly for-  
 gotten the weapons which I had given you." Then Wisdom  
 called out and said: "Depart now, you accursed worldly sor-  
 rows, from my pupil's mind, since you are the worst of evil-  
 doers. Leave him to turn again to my teachings."

Then, said Boethius, Wisdom came nearer to my griev- 2  
 ing thought and lifted it up a little from where it lay prone.  
 Then he dried my mind's eyes, and asked it with gentle  
 words whether it knew its foster mother. As soon as the  
 Mind turned that way, it recognized very clearly its own  
 mother; that was Wisdom who had trained and taught it

mother, yet  
 mase.

# THE RIVERSIDE CHAUCER



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"For sith it may not here discussed be  
Who loveth hire best, as seyde the tercelet, 625  
Thanne wol I don hire this favour, that she  
Shal han right hym on whom hire herte is set,  
And he hire that his herte hath on hire knet:  
Thus juge I, Nature, for I may not lye;  
To non estat I have non other yē. 630

"But as for counseyl for to chese a make,  
If I were Resoun, thanne wolde I  
Conseyle yow the royal tercel take,  
As seyde the tercelet ful skylfully,  
As for the gentilleste and most worthi, 635  
Which I have wrought so wel to my plesaunce  
That to yow hit oughte to been a suffisaunce."

With dredful vois the formel hire answerde,  
"My rightful lady, goddesse of Nature!  
Soth is that I am evere under youre yerde, 640  
As is everich other creature,  
And mot be youre whil my lyf may dure;  
And therefore graunteth me my firste bone,  
And myn entente I wol yow sey right sone."

"I graunte it yow," quod she; and right anon  
This formel egle spak in this degre: 646  
"Almyghty queen, unto this yer be don,  
I axe respit for to avise me,  
And after that to have my choys al fre.  
This al and som that I wol speke and seye; 650  
Ye gete no more, although ye do me deye!

"I wol nat serve Venus ne Cupide,  
Forsothe as yit, by no manere weye."  
"Now, syn it may non otherwise betyde,"  
Quod Nature, "heere is no more to seye. 655  
Thanne wolde I that these foules were aweye,  
Ech with his make, for taryinge lengere heere!"  
And seyde hem thus, as ye shul after here.

"To yow speke I, ye tercelets," quod Nature,  
"Beth of good herte, and serveth alle thre. 660  
A yer is nat so longe to endure,

And ech of yow peyne him in his degre  
For to do wel, for, God wot, quyt is she  
Fro yow this yer; what after so befallē,  
This entremes is dressed for yow alle." 665

And whan this werk al brought was to an ende,  
To every foul Nature yaf his make  
By evene acord, and on here way they wende.  
And, Lord, the blisse and joye that they make!  
For ech of hem gan other in wynges take, 670  
And with here nekkes ech gan other wynde,  
Thankynge alwey the noble goddesse of kynde.

But fyrst were chosen foules for to synge,  
As yer by yer was alwey hir usaunce  
To synge a roundel at here departynge, 675  
To don Nature honour and plesaunce.  
The note, I trowe, imaked was in Fraunce,  
The wordes were swiche as ye may heer fynde,  
The nexte vers, as I now have in mynde.

"Now welcome, somer, with thy sonne softe,  
That hast thes wintres wedres overshake, 681  
And driven away the longe nyghtes blake!

"Saynt Valentyn, that art ful hy on-lofte,  
Thus synge smale foules for thy sake:  
[Now welcome, somer, with thy sonne softe, 685  
That hast thes wintres wedres overshake.]

"Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,  
Sith ech of hem recovered hath hys make,  
Ful blissful mowe they synge when they wake:  
[Now welcome, somer, with thy sonne softe, 690  
That hast thes wintres wedres overshake,  
And driven away the longe nyghtes blake!"]

And with the shoutyng, whan the song was do  
That foules maden at here flyght away,  
I wok, and othere bokes tok me to, 695  
To reede upon, and yit I rede alwey.  
I hope, ywis, to rede so som day  
That I shal mete som thyng for to fare  
The bet, and thus to rede I nyl nat spare.

*Explicit parliamentum Auium in die sancti Valentini tentum,  
secundum Galfridum Chaucers. Deo gracias.*

624 discussed: decided  
627 right: exactly

628 on hire knet: joined to her  
632 Resoun: Reason; i.e., if (as in a personification allegory) she were Reason rather than Nature, her advice on choosing a mate would follow rational judgment rather than natural desire.

634 skylfully: reasonably  
640 yerde: authority

648 respit: period of delay  
657 for taryinge: to prevent tarrying

663 quyt: free

665 This entremes is dressed: this between-course dish is prepared

668 evene acord: mutual agreement

674 usaunce: custom

675 roundel: a French lyric form using repeated lines as a refrain

677 note: tune Fraunce: Some manuscripts give the name of a French song here.

681 wedres: storms overshake: shaken off

686 recovered: got back, found again

## BOECE



THE PHILOSOPHER Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius was born about 480 A.D. in Rome and was put to death in prison in Pavia in 524. He was a public servant — in 510, consul — under Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths and after 493 de facto ruler of Rome, who had continuous reason to be grateful for his services, but who eventually imprisoned and executed him as a traitor for defending too strenuously the rights of the Senate. Boethius, conceiving of his service to Rome in the broadest cultural terms, developed an ambitious program to improve the minds and hearts of his countrymen by translating into Latin, commenting on, and reconciling with each other the works of Aristotle and Plato. He finished only the logical works of Aristotle and a comparison of Cicero's and Aristotle's *Topics*. He also left books on arithmetic, geometry, and music and several treatises on major theological issues of his day. Many of his books were standard texts in schools and universities throughout the Middle Ages.

The *Consolation of Philosophy* has proven the most lasting of all. In genre both a Platonic dialogue and an "invitation to the philosophic life," modeled apparently on Aristotle's *Protreptikon* and Cicero's *Hortensius*, two works now lost, it records in the allegorical form of a conversation between Boethius and Lady Philosophy the process of thought that enabled him to reconcile himself to his imprisonment. The wisdom and insistent logic with which it distinguishes between partial, contingent, apparent goods and the "one true good" or God raises it from the realm of prison literature into what E. K. Rand has called "a theodicy of great power and scope," which has given philosophical direction to the everyday life of many. Gibbon's famous remark that it is "a golden volume not unworthy of the leisure of Plato or of Tully" is somewhat mislead-

ing. No one's leisure could have produced it; it is the product of suffering, not of leisure; and though it is more personal, less abstract, than Plato's dialogues and the philosophical writings of Cicero, it is great precisely because it brings philosophical thought fruitfully to bear on the problems of an actual life.

The *Consolation* belongs to imaginative literature as well as to philosophy. Though hardly as frank and detailed as Augustine's *Confessions* (397-401), it has a place in the history of autobiography: in it, Boethius is articulate not only about his thoughts but about his emotions and about his response to the events of his life. It had a major influence on the development of allegory, in particular on the figure of the female counselor. Nature in *The Parliament of Fowls*, for example, is a descendant of Lady Philosophy, as is, pre-eminently, Dante's Beatrice. The goddess Fortuna, who dominates the second book of the *Consolation*, became one of the dominant images of medieval culture. And the choice the "hero" Boethius has to make between these two women, the alluring but false Fortune and the plain but true Philosophy, reflects an archetypal plot of great literary importance. Boethius by no means invented it but he surely helped to give it currency.

Philosophy begins her discipline by chasing away the Muses. (This implies that Boethius had first sought consolation in literature but failed to find it, and that failure has troubled lovers of literature ever since. Yet presumably what has been chased away is only meretricious poetry that focuses on partial goods, for poetry is embedded deeply in the fabric of the work: verse alternates with prose throughout, enhancing and deepening the argument by giving it an imagistic base. Some of the poems, notably 2.8, 3.9, and 4.6, remain among the loveliest celebrations

authorial plan

of cosmic harmony we have and were of profound importance to Dante, Spenser, and Milton as well as to Chaucer. The vision of the physical universe in many of the poems is of opposing forces bound and reconciled; and it is precisely such a reconciliation of the oppositions in human experience — success and failure, joy and sorrow, good and evil, stability and change, liberty and bondage, affirmation and skepticism — toward which the play of ideas in the proses progresses. At the same time, the poems have the further effect of belittling earth by placing it in a transcendent cosmos; and side-by-side with the urge to reconciliation is Philosophy's urge to transcend, to make Boethius see the gap between our everyday understanding of the world and the world as it actually is.

Among the partial goods that men and women seek Boethius does not list human love. Yet he makes it clear that one of the major pains of imprisonment is his separation from his family, and, in the memorable poem on Orpheus that ends the third book, Orpheus's grief at Eurydice's death, and the power of his appeal to Pluto to give her back to him, are movingly sung. In what is perhaps the most austere moment in the book, however, Orpheus's turning to look at Eurydice is taken as a turning from the one true good toward a partial good. And this very austerity, this clear focus on permanent values, seems in fact to be what made the *Consolation* appealing to Chaucer as he meditated on the instability of human love. It is granted to Troilus finally to see love from a more sublime point of vantage than that from which Orpheus saw it. Chaucer's understanding, not only of love but of human life itself, seems to have been fundamentally Boethian. He expresses that understanding most directly in the beautiful Boethian lyrics *The Former Age*, *Lak of Stedfastnesse*, and *Truth*, and he gives it supreme fictive embodiment in *Troilus* and *The Knight's Tale*. It is surely present also, though less conspicuously, in the ethic of "patient suffraunce" that pervades such of *The Canterbury Tales* as *The Clerk's Tale*, *The Franklin's Tale*, *The Parson's Tale*, and *The Tale of Melibee*, and in the master image of pilgrimage, which reflects, however distantly, the Boethian-Platonic-Christian myth of the soul in exile, seeking to journey home to God. Boethius gave Chaucer a capacity to focus on fundamental general questions, augmenting his sense of character, his human touch, and his tolerance.

It is Boethius who made Chaucer a philosophical poet, and not simply a courtly maker.

Chaucer may have been led to the *Consolation of Philosophy* by Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Roman de la rose*. Jean probably owed to Boethius not only various individual sentiments but his development of the central student-teacher relationship between the dreamer and his three guides: the God of Love, Reason, and Nature. The *Roman de la rose* may even have provided Chaucer with the impetus to translate, for one of Jean's citations of the *Consolation* is introduced thus:

*Anyone who thinks that his native land is here is very much a slave and a naive fool. Your native land is not on earth, as you can learn from the clerks who lecture on Boethius's Consolation and the ideas in it. If someone were to translate it for the laity he would do them a great favor (5033-40).*

What is noteworthy here is not merely the call for a translation (which may slyly pave the way for Jean's own) but the clear implication that the *Consolation of Philosophy* had become the property of professors. Taken together with Dante's remark in the *Convivio* that it is "not known to many," this suggests that despite its academic standing it was in fact not reaching the broad audience it deserved. We may suppose, then, that Chaucer by translating it was filling a clearly perceived need, making the work available to his contemporaries, not, as some readers have speculated, merely writing out a pony for his own use. The lyric Adam Scriveyn shows his concern for the integrity of the text, and the number of surviving manuscripts suggests a reasonably broad circulation.

"It may be supposed that Chaucer would apply more than common attention to an author of so much celebrity," wrote Samuel Johnson in *Idler* 69, but in fact "he has attempted nothing higher than a version strictly literal, and has degraded the poetical parts to prose, that the constraint of versification might not obstruct his zeal for fidelity." This is a just estimate, although Johnson underestimated how uncommon Chaucer's attention, and his zeal for fidelity, in fact were. His version is an attempt not merely to translate Boethius accurately but to fuse with it, in an effort to provide a definitive guide to the work, both Jean de Meun's French translation and the Latin commentary tradition, especially the commentary of Nicholas Trivet. Jean's translation was particularly important to Chaucer. It

was probably Jean's example that persuaded him to "degrade" the poetical parts to prose. Furthermore, in setting the *Consolation* into French, Jean had, as it were, parsed it for Chaucer, identifying the antecedents of pronouns, arranging Boethius's artful word order into the analytic syntax of French, clarifying the relationships of clauses in lengthy sentences, resolving absolute phrases. All this Chaucer found of inestimable value. Yet it is evident that he also checked Jean's work rigorously against the Latin. He sought always to render the Latin sense faith-

fully, and where Jean wavers into paraphrase — as he does frequently in the poems — Chaucer returned directly and aptly to the Latin. The result is still "a version strictly literal," but ambitiously so, a version that makes frequent use of both Jean's French *Consolation* and the commentary tradition to render Boethius for English readers with full clarity. In the process Chaucer also transformed his own sensibility, as his poetry shows.

RALPH HANNA III and  
TRAUGOTT LAWLER



## Boece

### Incipit Liber Boecii de Consolatione Philosophie.

CARMINA QUI QUONDAM STUDIO FLORENTE  
PEREGI. — Metrum 1

Alas! I wepynge, am constreyned to bygyn-  
nen vers of sorwful matere, that whilom in flor-  
ysschyng studie made delitable ditees. For  
lo, rendyng muses of poetes enditen to me  
thynges to ben writen, and drey vers of wretch-  
idnesse weten my face with verray teres. At  
the leeste, no drede ne myghte overcomen  
tho muses, that thei ne were felawes, and fol-  
wyden my wey (that is to seyn, whan  
I was exiled). They that weren glorie of 10  
my youthe, whilom weleful and grene,  
conforten now the sorwful wyerdes of me, olde  
man. For eelde is comyn unwarly uppon me,  
hasted by the harmes that Y have, and sorwe

hath comandid his age to ben in me. Heeris hore  
arn schad overtymeliche upon myn heved, and  
the slakke skyn trembleth of myn emptid body.  
Thilke deth of men is weleful that ne comyth  
noght in yeeris that ben swete, but  
cometh to wrecches often yclepid. Allas, 20  
allas! With how deef an ere deth, cruwel,  
turneth away fro wrecches and nayteth to  
closen wepyng eien. Whil Fortune, unfeithful,  
favoured me with lyghte goodes, the sorw-  
ful houre (that is to seyn, the deth) hadde al-  
moost dreyn myn heved. But now, for For-  
tune cloudy hath chaunged hir deceyvable  
chere to meward, myn unpietous jif draweth  
along unagreable duellynges in me. O ye,  
my frendes, what or wherto avauted ye 30

This text was edited by RALPH HANNA III and  
TRAUGOTT LAWLER.

Incipit, etc.: Here begins Boethius's *Book of the Consolation of Philosophy*.  
Carmina, etc.: The first few words of the Latin are quoted at the beginning of each section.  
Metrum 1.3 ditees: poems  
4 rendyng: rearing  
11 grene: green, flourishing  
12 wyerdes: fates

16 overtymeliche: prematurely  
17 emptid: exhausted  
22 nayteth: refuses  
24 lyghte: inconsequential  
26 dreyn: overcome (drowned)  
28 to meward: toward me unpietous: pitiless, wretched  
28-29 draweth along: drags out  
29 duellynges: lingering

amicitia  
3p.2.9

Presence of Boethius in Chaucer's verse

me to be weleful? For he that hath fallen stood nocht in stedefast degre.

HEC DUM MECUM TACITUS. — *Prosa 1*

In the mene while that I, stille, recordede these thynges with myself and merkid my wepy compleynte with office of poyntel. I saw, stondyng aboven the heghte of myn heved, a womman of ful greet reverence by semblaunt, hir eien brennyng and cleer-seyng over the comune myghte of men; with a lifly colour and with swich vigour and strengthe that it ne myghte nat ben emptid, al were it so that sche was ful of so greet age that men 10 ne wolden nat trowen in no manere that sche were of our elde. The stature of hire was of a doutous jugement, for somtyme sche constreyned and schronk herselven lik to the comune mesure of men, and somtyme it semede that sche touchede the hevene with the heghte of here heved. And whan sche hef hir heved heyre, sche percede the selve hevene so that the sighte of men lokyng was in ydel.

Hir clothes weren makid of right delye 20 thredes and subtil craft of perdurable matere; the whiche clothes sche hadde woven with hir owene handes, as I knew wel afir by hirselve declaryng and schewyng to me. The beaute [of] the whiche clothes a derknesse of a forleten and despised elde hadde duskid and dirked, as it is wont to dirken besmokede ymages. In the nethereste hem or bordure of these clothes, men reddden ywoven in a Grekissch P (that signifieth the lif actif); 30 and aboven that lettre, in the heieste bordure, a Grekyssh T (that signifieth the lif contemplatif). And bytwixen these two lettres ther were seyn degrees nobly ywrought in manere of laddres, by whiche degrees men myghten clymben fro the nethereste lettre to the uppereste. Natheles handes of some men hadden korve that cloth by violence and by strengthe, and everich man of hem hadde boren away swiche peces as he myghte 40

geten. And forsothe this forseide womman bar smale bokis in hir right hand, and in hir left hand sche bar a ceptre.

And whan she saughe these poetical muses aprochen aboute my bed and endityng wordes to my wepynges, sche was a litil amoeved, and glowede with cruel eighen. "Who," quat sche, "hath suffred aprochen to this sike man these comune strompettis of swich a place that men clepen the theatre? The whiche nat 50 oonly ne asswagen nocht his sorwes with none remedies, but thei wolden fedyn and norysen hym with sweete venym. Forsothe these ben tho that with thornes and prikkynge of talentz or affecciouns, whiche that ne bien nothyng fructifyenge nor profitable, destroyen the corn plentyvous of fruytes of resoun. For thei holden hertes of men in usage, but thei delyvre nocht folk fro maladye. But yif ye muses hadden withdrawn fro me with 60 youre flateries any unkunynyng and unprofitable man, as men ben wont to fynde comonly among the peple, I wolde wene suffre the lasse grevosly; forwhi, in swych an unprofitable man, myne ententes weren nothyng endamaged. But ye withdrawn me this man, that hath ben norysed in the studies or scoles of Eleaticis and Achademycis in Grece. But goth now rather away, yif mermaydenes, whiche that ben swete til it be at the laste, and 70 suffreth this man to ben cured and heeled by myne muses (that is to seyn, by noteful sciences)."

And thus this companye of muses, iblamed, casten wrothly the chere downward to the erthe, and, schewyng by rednesse hir shame, thei passeden sorwfully the thresschefold. And I, of whom the sighte, ploungid in teeres, was dirked so that Y ne myghte nocht knowen what that womman was of so imperial auctorite, 80 I wax al abayssched and astoned, and caste my syghte down to the erthe, and bygan stille for to abide what sche wolde doon afirward. Tho com sche ner and sette her down upon the uttereste corner of my bed; and sche, byholdyng my chere that was cast to the erthe

*Prosa 1.1* recordede: remembered  
2-3 wepy: tearful with office of poyntel: using a stylus (to write on wax tablets)  
13 of a doutous jugement: doubtful, difficult to judge  
17 hef: raised  
20 delye: fine  
22-24 sche . . . declaryng: at 1.pr.3.40-41  
26 forleten: neglected  
27 besmokede: smoke-stained  
28 nethereste: lowest  
34 degrees: steps  
37 uppereste: highest, uppermost

55 talentz: desires  
58 holden hertes of men in usage: restrain men's hearts by habit  
63 wolde wene suffre: would expect to suffer  
68 Eleaticis and Achademycis: two prominent philosophic schools, the followers of Zeno of Elea and Plato, respectively  
69 mermaydenes: sirens  
72 noteful: useful  
75 wrothly: sad; see n.  
85 uttereste: outermost

hevy and grevous of wepyng, compleynede with these wordis that I schal seyn the perturbacion of my thought.

HEU QUAM PRECIPITI MERSA PROFUNDO.

— *Metrum 2*

"Allas! How the thought of this man, dreyn in overthrowng depnesse, dulleth and forleteth his propre clernesse, myntyng to gon into foreyne dirknesses as ofte as his anoyos bysynes waxeth withoute mesure, that is dryven with worldly wyndes. This man, that whilom was fre, to whom the hevene was opyn and known, and was wont to gon in hevenliche pathes, and saughe the lyghtnesse of the rede sonne, and saughe the 10 sterres of the coold mone, and whiche sterre in hevene useth wandryng recourses iflyt by diverse speeris — this man, overcomere, hadde comprehendid al this by nombre (of acontyng in astronomye). And, over this, he was wont to seken the causes whennes the sounyng wyndes moeven and bysien the smothe watir of the see; and what spirit turneth the stable hevene; and why the sterre ariseth 20 out of the rede est, to fallen in the westrene waves; and what attempth the lusty houres of the firste somer sesoun, that highteth and apparileth the erthe with rosene floures; and who maketh that plentyvous autumpne in fulle [yere] fletith with hevy grapes. And eek this man was wont to tellen the diverse causes of nature that weren yhid. Allas! Now lyth he emptid of lyght of his thought, and his nekke is pressyd with hevy cheynes, and bereth his chere enclined 30 adoun for the grete weyghte, and is constreyned to loken on the fool erthe!"

SET MEDICINE INQUIT TEMPUS. — *Prosa 2*

"But tyme is now," quod sche, "of medicyne more than of compleynte." Forsothe thanne sche, entendinge to meward with al the lookyng of hir eien, seyde: "Art nat thou he," quod sche, "that whilom, norissched with my

*Metrum 2.3* myntyng: intending  
12-13 wandryng . . . speeris: Ptolemaic astronomers thought the planets, or "wandering stars," were borne on invisible spheres. recourses: orbits  
13 iflyt: moved  
15 acontyng: calculation  
22-23 highteth: adorns  
25 fletith with: abounds in (flows with)  
*Prosa 2.3* entendinge: looking

melk and fostred with myne metes, were escaped and comyn to corage of a parfit man? Certes I yaf the swiche armures that, yif thou thiselve ne haddest first cast hem away, they schulden han defended the in seker- 10 nesse that mai nat ben overcomyn. Knowestow me nat? Why artow stille? Is it for shame or for astonyng? It were me levere that it were for shame, but it semeth me that astonyng hath oppresside the." And whan sche say me nat oonly stille but withouten office of tunge and al dowmbe, sche leyde hir hand sooftly uppon my breest and seide: "Here nys no peril," quod sche; "he is fallen into a litargye, whiche that is a comune seknesse 20 to hertes that been desceyved. He hath a litil foryeten hymself, but certes he schal lightly remembren hymself yif so be that he hath knowen me or now; and that he may so doon, I will wipe a litil his eien that ben dirked by the cloude of mortel thynges." Thise woordes seide sche, and with the lappe of hir garnement yplited in a frownce sche dryede myn eien, that weren fulle of the wawes of my wepynges. 30

TUNC ME DISCUSSA, &c. — *Metrum 3*

Thus, whan that nyght was discussed and chased away, dirknesses forleten me, and to myn eien peyreped ayen hir firste strengthe. And ryght by ensaumple as the sonne is hydd whan the sterres ben clusted (that is to seyn, whan sterres ben covered with cloudes) by a swyft wynd that hyghte Chorus, and that the firmament stant dirked with wete plowngy cloudes; and that the sterres nat apeeren upon hevene, so that the nyght semeth 10 sprad upon erthe: yif thanne the wynde that hyghte Boreas, isent out of the kaves of the cuntre of Trace, betith this nyght (that is to seyn, chaseth it away) and discovereth the closed day, thanne schyneth Phebus ischaken with sodeyn light and smyeth with his beemes in mervelyng eien.

7 corage: spiritual state  
13 astonyng: astonishment  
20 litargye: lethargy  
28 yplited: pleated frownce: fold  
*Metrum 3.1* discussed: driven away  
2 forleten: left  
5 clusted: gathered in a mass  
7 Chorus: the northwest wind  
8 plowngy: stormy  
12 Boreas: the north wind  
15 ischaken: shaken, shimmering



in the middle and/or at the end. It uses only two rhymes. In Chaucer's time its length varied from eight to fourteen lines or more, depending on the number and extent of the refrains. None of the MSS of PF indicate how the refrains should go, and only one (Gg) gives a full text (but in a later hand). The present version is that reconstructed by Skeat, on a model used by Machaut and others; the scheme is *ABB' abAB abb ABB' (A, B, and B' are the lines used for the refrain)*.

**677** Chaucer seems to be referring to an actual French tune to which the *roundel* was set. Some MSS have after 679, in place of the *roundel*, the words "Qui bien aime a tard oublie" (who loves well forgets slowly), which may indicate that a song of that name could be sung at this point. The line (a proverb: Morawski, *Proverbes français*, 1835; Hassell A63; Whiting L65) is found in several French lyrics. It is the first line of Guillaume de Machaut's "Le lay de plour" (in *Oeuvres* 1:283), and of a hymn to the Virgin by Moniot d'Arras (fl. 1213-39; see H. P. Dyggve, *Moniot d'Arras et Moniot de Paris*, *Memoires de la société neophilologique de Helsinki*, 13, 1938, 69-73). It is part of the refrain of Eustache Deschamps's *Balade* 1345 (in *Oeuvres* 7:124-25); and it appears in two anonymous secular lyrics (see Dyggve, *Moniot*, 145-50; Edward Järnström, *Recueil de chansons pieuses du XIIIe siècle*, 1910, 141). It is possible that the French line indicates simply a tune suitable for the *roundel*. Tunes used with the Moniot and Machaut lyrics have been preserved; see, for Moniot, Hendrik van

der Werf, *Trouveres-Melodien II*, *Monumenta monodica medii aevi*, 12, 1979, 381-83; and for Machaut (per advice of Cinny Little), see *Works*, ed. Leo Schrade (*Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century*, 2), 1956, 90-93. *Now welcome, somer* is set to the music of Machaut's *rondeau*, "Dame, se vous n'avez aperçeu," in Wilkins, *Ch Songs*, *Ch Studies* 4, 1980, 29. Perhaps Chaucer first intended to use a French song, then later inserted a *roundel* in English. The *roundel*, with its references to the birds in the third person (687-89; cf. 684), may possibly have been first composed for another occasion. See the next note.

**680** *Now welcome, somer*: It is on the first of May that the birds in ProLGW F 171 (having in 145 just offered blessings to St. Valentine) sing "Welcome, somer." Perhaps *somer* is used in the present passage "for the warm season in general" (Robinson; see Bo 2.pr5.67n. and Moore, N&Q 194, 1949, 82-83); or perhaps this is an indication that, as suggested above, the song was first composed for another occasion.

**688** *recovered*: Brewer suggests that the meaning is simply "to get or obtain." Bennett, in *Ch Problems*, 144, prefers "found again, got back": the suggestion being that they all separated while the parliament was in session." A. J. Gilbert, *MAE* 47, 1978, 301, accepts the OED's "to get back or find again" (s.v. *Recover* [v.] 1.3.9) in the Boethian and neoplatonic sense of cyclical renewal. Cf. Bo 3.m2.40-42: *and alle thynges rejoysen hem of hir retornynge ayen to hir nature*.

## Boece

Chaucer refers to his translation of Boethius's *De consolacione Philosophiae* three times—in the stanza to Adam Scrievyn (2), and in the comprehensive canons provided in the Prologue to the Legend of Good Women (F 425) and in the Retraction (CT X.1088). Lydgate also asserted that Chaucer "Of Boeces book, the Consolacion, / Maad . . . an hool translacioun" (Fall of Princes 1:291-92). The translation here edited is universally accepted as Chaucer's on the basis of internal evidence, early borrowings, and later ascriptions. Thomas Usk borrowed from it (and from *Troilus* as well) in his *Testament of Love* (probably 1387, though see introductory note to *Troilus*), and so did John Walton in his poetic translation (c. 1410). See Skeat 7:xxv-xxvi; Mark Science, *Boethius*, 1927, pp. xlii-lxii, and TLS, 22 March 1923, 199-200.

*Boece* is thus a work that circulated during Chaucer's lifetime. The only ascriptions attached to the work itself, however, occur in John Shirley's verse table of contents (Brown and Robbins, *Index of Middle English Verse*, 1943, 1426), rubrics, and running titles in British Library MS Additional 16165 (A2), and at Cambridge, Pembroke College MS 215 (P), fol. 1r, in a hand of c. 1500 (not that of the scribe, "Istud opus est translatus per Chawcers [sic] armigerum Ricardi Regis 2<sup>di</sup>." [Copies of Former Age and Fortune in Cambridge Univ. Lib. MS li.iii.21 (C2), but not *Boece* itself, are ascribed to the poet.

Like most of the canon, the *Boece* can be dated only approximately, and then only by such evidence as its association with, and use in, other works provides. It is most probably a labor of the late 1370s or early 1380s. *The House of Fame*, especially Book 2, shows a close knowledge of some portions of Boethius's work, notably 4.m1, although not a knowledge that necessarily implies that Chaucer had translated it. In the poems traditionally assigned to the early and middle 1380s, *Troilus* and *The Knight's Tale*, Chaucer shows a wide and detailed interest in topics Boethian (not simply the issues of causation discussed in 5; see 3.m12.52-55n., for example). This interest may well have coincided with his decision to give the work broader dissemination in England through a translation. In any event, a clear *terminus ad quem* is provided by Usk's borrowings: *Boece* must have achieved some degree of circulation by around 1387, even though the oldest surviving manuscripts (C2, Hn, perhaps C1) are thirty years later. (Our independent examination of Usk convinces us that he did indeed use *Boece*, although Skeat exaggerates the extent of that use; we disagree with Virginia Jellech's conclusion [cf. DAI 31, 1971, 6060A] that he used only Jean de Meun.)

Nearly all critical commentary on the *Boece* has been concerned with either Chaucer's prose style or the mechanics of his translation. This latter topic involves three separate issues—the nature of Chaucer's Latin text, his use of a French "pony" to aid in the translation (typical of nearly all his Latin translations), and his reliance upon commentaries. In the literature, these issues have usually

been discussed separately and the best current opinion on any single topic has never conveniently meshed with that on another. One major purpose of both our Explanatory Notes and our Textual Notes is to coordinate information relevant to all three problems.

False assumptions about Chaucer's Latin source text and his reliance upon it have bedeviled discussions of the work and have produced some extraordinarily negative comments on Chaucer's abilities as a Latinist. Furnivall long ago made the genial injunction to his readers to buy a two-shilling copy of Boethius to compare with Chaucer's text (Ch Soc 1st ser. 75, page v): he assumed that Chaucer should have had access to and used exclusively the same text of Boethius as that printed in modern critical editions. This same assumption has governed a number of discussions of Chaucer's failure as a Latinist, usually accompanied by lists of his blunders; see Hugh F. Stewart, *Boethius*, 1891, 222-26; Mark Liddell, *Nation* 64, 1897, 124; Liddell's notes to his edition in the *Globe Ch*; most extensively, Jefferson, *Ch and the Consolation*, 16-25; and Robinson's notes.

Chaucer may in fact have been ignorant of many specifically classical locutions, but his Latinity is not nearly as bad as these early studies claim. Liddell himself (*Nation* 64:124) saw half the answer to the problem: fourteenth-century texts of Boethius had lost, in many places, the readings of the traditional text. Major advances on this matter were made in two still unpublished Yale dissertations. Edmund Taite Silk, DAI 31, 1970 (diss. 1930), 2355A, showed that Chaucer's Latin text was most probably the version of Boethius that typically accompanies the commentary composed by Nicholas Trivet in the early fourteenth century; and Barner Kottler, DAI 31, 1971 (diss. 1953), 6013A-14A, showed that such texts constitute a later medieval "Vulgate" tradition of the *Consolation*. (See further MS 17, 1955, 209-14.)

In our notes, we rely on Silk's and Kottler's findings. We use as our basic Latin text (and cite as Lat.) an early fifteenth-century English "vulgate" manuscript, the Latin text intercalated with manuscript C2 (Kottler's Ca) and edited with scrupulous care by Silk. This text often presents Chaucer's supposed errors in a new light; for example, at 1.pr1.70 Chaucer plainly had a text that, like C2, read "usque in exitum" (glossed "mortem"), not the traditional "usque in exitum." And yet often enough we have found that Chaucer's Latin text resembled not C2 (and those readings typifying the "vulgate" tradition) but the traditional Latin (for which we use the most recent critical edition by Ludwig Bieler, 1957).

Thus the "errors" are only half explained by reference to the vulgate Latin tradition. A number of them, upon inspection, are neither errors, nor based upon variant Latin readings, but direct translations from a second source that Chaucer used side-by-side with his Latin: the French prose translation by Jean de Meun (for its authorship, see Langlois, *Romania* 42, 1913, 331-69). Its relevance was first noted by Stewart, *Boethius*, 202-6; his findings were seconded by Liddell, *Acad* 48, 1895, 227, who printed some readings from Jean in the *Globe Ch*. John L. Lowes demonstrated Chaucer's reliance on Jean

The explanatory notes to *Boece* were written by Ralph Hanna III and Traugott Lawler.

in a sample passage, RomR 8, 1917, 383-400; and V. L. Dedek-Héry, in a series of articles, showed definitively that Chaucer used the whole work and, moreover, a copy resembling a small subfamily of manuscripts; see PMLA 52, 1937, 967-91; Spec 15, 1940, 432-43; PMLA 59, 1944, 18-25. Dedek-Héry's contributions culminated in his posthumous edition of Jean's text, MS 14, 1952, 165-275, from which we draw the majority of our French readings.

Our investigations confirm Dedek-Héry's claim that the closest surviving copy to that used by Chaucer is Besançon MS 434 (B); they further show that Chaucer translated literally, and from both Latin and French simultaneously. 1.m3.1-2 *discussed and chased* for Latin "discussa," French "chacée," is but one example of several hundred that might be cited. Chaucer, then, regularly combined Latin and French readings, sometimes by doublets, more often by following the more explicit French syntax while preserving Latin lexis. Thus many of Chaucer's supposed misunderstandings of Latin are direct translations of the French.

A good deal of Chaucer's text, however, reproduces neither the Latin nor the French. In many places Chaucer translated not what was before him as the text of Boethius, but the explanatory commentary that frequently accompanied the text in manuscripts. Liddell first noticed Chaucer's reliance on explanatory, rather than textual, materials; in Nation 64:124-25, he identified the explanatory text Chaucer used as "the pseudo-Aquinas commentary," which occurs in a number of early prints. This identification was refuted by Petersen (PMLA 18, 1903, 173-93), who showed that Chaucer relied rather upon the commentary of Nicholas Trivet. Petersen's selective demonstration is extended in Silk's dissertation, cited above. We are indebted to Professor Silk for kindly supplying us with a typescript of his edition of Trivet and for allowing us to quote from it; we regret that he died without publishing it and before we could show him how much he had helped us.

Our study of this commentary has, in the main, confirmed Silk's conclusion that Chaucer is indebted to Trivet. But in a small minority of instances Chaucer follows, not Trivet, but Trivet's source, the commentary of Guillaume de Conches (we cite BL MS Royal 15B.iii, which lacks some portions of Book 3 and the last third of 5.pr5). In a few isolated cases Chaucer used other commentaries: an ancestor of the pseudo-Aquinas (for which we cite the Huntington copy of Anton Koburger's 1476 Nuremberg edition; see, for example, 4.m5.3n.); an unidentified commentary that appears attached to C<sup>2</sup> (see, for example, 3.pr12.182n); and one gloss (see 3.pr5.57-58n) from the commentary of William of Aragon (for which we use the copy in C<sup>2</sup>). This small minority of readings reflects, we believe, the Latin manuscript from which Chaucer worked: like C<sup>2</sup>, which contains an abbreviated copy of Trivet but other glosses as well, Chaucer's Latin text gave eclectic annotation of Boethius.

Given all these facts and suppositions, it is reasonable to suppose further, following Petersen and, in recent unpublished papers, Jerome Taylor, that Chaucer used a manuscript that contained all three of his sources together: a Latin text with commentary and French translation. Six of the seventeen surviving copies of Jean's translation in fact contain a Latin text and a commentary, and in two (P<sup>2</sup> and P<sup>3</sup>) the commentary is Trivet's. But none

of these augmented texts has a version of the French with the specific readings of Chaucer's source, and Petersen's and Taylor's suggestion remains attractive but beyond substantiation.

Apart from discussions of the mode of translation, scholars have shown only moderate interest in the *Boece*. Jefferson, Ch and Cons., and Koch, Anglia 46, 1922, 1-51, collect passages elsewhere in the canon influenced by the *Consolation*, and critics who cite the translation typically do so as historical evidence to bolster interpretations of the individual poems (notably of *Troilus*). For a general introduction to the *Consolation*, one might consult Edward K. Rand, Harvard Sts. Class. Phil. 15, 1904, 1-28; and the translations by Richard Green, 1962; V. E. Watts, 1969; and S. J. Tester, 1973. For the literary influence of the work, see Patch, Goddess Fortuna, 1927, and Tradition of Boethius, 1935; the latter is now superseded by the exhaustive study of Pierre Courcelle, La Consolation, 1967. For notable critical readings, see Lewis, Discarded Image, 75-90; Winthrop Wetherbee, Platonism and Poetry, 1972, 74-82; and Dronke, SMed 6, 1, 1965, 389-422. On the practice of translation in the Middle Ages, see Jacques Monfrin, Jour. des savants 148, 1963, 161-90, and 149, 1964, 5-20. On Chaucer's prose, see Baum, JEGP 45, 1946, 38-42; Schlauch, PMLA 65, 1950, 568-89, and in Ch and Chaucerians, 140-63; Elliott, Ch's English, 132-80; and Lawler in Edwards, ed., ME Prose, 1984, 291-313. For Chaucer's and Jean's reliance on the gloss tradition, see Minnis, in Gibson, ed., Boethius, 1981, 312-61. For the best recent scholarship on Boethius, see the essays in Gibson's collection; Henry Chadwick, Boethius, 1981; and Edmund Reiss, Boethius, 1982. See also Peck's comprehensive annotated bibliography on Boece, 1986; Seth Lerer, Boethius and Dialogue, 1985; and Tim Machan, Techniques of Translation, 1985, which appeared too late to be of use here.

The notes that follow, in addition to the customary function of identifying sources and references to historical figures and paraphrasing difficult passages, are intended to provide a thorough commentary on the mode of Chaucer's translation. We take as normal—and so do not comment on—any reading that adequately reflects the Latin or French or both, although occasionally, where Chaucer's reliance on the French has seriously distorted Boethius's meaning, we comment on that fact. We attempt to identify all palpable mistranslations: our silence on a number of readings commonly thought to be mistranslations is to be taken as our sense that Chaucer has indeed accurately rendered the text (usually either the French or a reading from the Latin vulgate tradition) before him.

In addition, we identify readings where Chaucer's translation rests upon what we take to be a scribal error in or corruption of the source text. In many cases, the error occurs in either C<sup>2</sup> or the Latin cited by Trivet and is so identified. Where we hypothesize an error in Chaucer's French source, and where the reading occurs in an extant manuscript as reported by Dedek-Héry, we direct the reader to his edition by page and line. But Dedek-Héry's variants are incomplete. We have made our own collation of B, and, in many places where he is silent, we add the notation "as B" to indicate "the reading of B and, perhaps, of other extant MSS." By "Chaucer's Lat. MS" and "Chaucer's Fr. MS" we mean not simply

the actual reading of Chaucer's hypothetical source, but also "Chaucer's perception of the form of his source"—which may have been erroneous, as at 2.pr8.15 ("spe"), or 5.pr6.229 ("ncc" not "nat").

Finally, we have tried to indicate everything Chaucer took from Trivet and other commentaries and glosses. Departing from previous editions of Robinson, we use italics in the text only to indicate clearly extratextual phrases and sentences not paralleled in either the Latin or the French. (Many readings that Robinson italicized as if they were glosses are simply Chaucer's effort to provide, parenthetically, the French reading.) All italicized phrases and sentences not explicitly commented upon in these notes are from Trivet. Of the remainder, most are Chaucer's original efforts at annotating the text or his mode of translating it (see 1.pr4.229-30n., 1.m5.25-26n., 5.pr4.36-37n.); a few others are from sources other than Trivet, and are also noted below. We do not italicize, but do note, numerous short additions grammatically integrated with the text. Some of these are derived from Trivet, but the greater number, marked "a Middle English addition," are without parallel in the source texts. Many may be by scribes, though at least some may be glosses by Chaucer.

Space has precluded extensive discussion of other potentially Chaucerian glosses (some Latin) found in the English manuscripts. All the manuscripts except H<sup>0</sup> have at least some interlinear annotation (most extensive in B). We are particularly struck by the relevance of those glosses common to C<sup>1</sup>C<sup>2</sup>Hn (sometimes A<sup>1</sup>) and believe these may be by Chaucer. We have cited these glosses, however, only when they have been of use in illustrating or explaining a point about the text we have wished to make on other grounds.

Summary of special abbreviations:

B	MS Besançon 434 of Jean de Meun's French translation of Boethius. "As B" means as MS Besançon 434 actually reads.
Chaucer's Fr. MS	The manuscript Chaucer used of Jean de Meun's translation
Chaucer's Lat. MS	The manuscript Chaucer used of Boethius
Fr.	Jean de Meun's French translation as edited by Dedek-Héry
Guillaume	Guillaume de Conches's commentary on Boethius
Lat.	The "vulgate" text of Boethius in MS C <sup>2</sup>
MSt 14	Mediaeval Studies, vol. 14 (Dedek-Héry's edition of Jean de Meun's translation)
Trivet	Nicholas Trivet's commentary on Boethius
Trivet's Latin	The text of Boethius that Trivet cites in his commentary

For the abbreviations used for manuscripts of *Boece*, see the introduction to the Textual Notes.

Title: At Adam 2 Chaucer uses *Boece* as the title of the book; this and ProLGW F 425 (*he bath in prose translated Boece*) seem to imply that at times "Boece" was to Chaucer synonymous with "The Consolation of Philosophy," even though he surely knew of Boethius's other works.

The form "Boece" is the normal English development, through French, of med. Lat. "Boetius" (like "Horace" from "Horatius"). Chaucer says *Boece de Consolacioun* at Rom 5661 (if he wrote it) and *Boece de Consolacione* in the Retraction, CT X.1088; and he alludes to the *De musica* at NPT VII.3294.

## BOOK 1

## Metrum 1

- 12 sorwful wyerdes: From Trivet's Latin "mesta fata mei senis," not Lat. "mesti . . . senis."  
 18-23 Cf. Tr 4:501-4; PardT VI.727-38.  
 20 to wrecches: Mistranslating Lat. "mestis," correctly interpreted by Trivet as modifying "annis," and glossed "id est tempore tristitie." But Guillaume's gloss "qui sunt in adversitate" (short version, MS Vat. lat. 5202) may lie behind Chaucer's translation.  
 28 to meward: Chaucer's Fr. MS (as B) added "vers moy."  
 30 wherto: Chaucer ignores Lat. "tociens," Fr. "tant de fois."

## Prosa 1

- 12-17 The details are transposed into the description of Fame, HF 1368-76.  
 22, 25 clothes: Chaucer's Fr. MS (as B) added "robes."  
 30-32 The letters represent the traditional division of philosophy into two parts, "practica" (π) and "theorica" (θ). See Boethius's In Porphyrium dialogi 1 (PL 64:11).  
 41 this forseide womman: Chaucer's Fr. MS added "la devant dite fame" (Fr. "Elle"). In 42, the ordering of the phrases *smale bokis* and *in hir right hand* also follows Chaucer's Fr. MS; cf. MSt 14:173/22. Fr. has the phrases in reverse order.  
 56 fructifyenge: Chaucer's Fr. MS (as B) read "fructefians" (Fr. "fructueuses," Lat. "infructuosus").  
 63 I . . . suffer: Lat. "ferendum putarem," Fr. "je le deusse souffrir."  
 69 mermaydenes: Lat. "Sirenes," where the mythological allusion is clearer. Cf. NPT VII.3270-72.  
 75 wrothly: An adjective modifying 74 *companye* (Lat. "mestior"); Chaucer keeps Fr. word-order, in which "plus courrouciee" follows the verb.  
 79 so that y: Chaucer's Fr. MS (as B) read "a ce qui ie" (Fr. "ne," Lat. "nec").

## Metrum 2

- 14 comprehendid al this: Lat. "comprensam" (sc. "stellam"), Fr. "compris . . . quelconque estoille." Perhaps Chaucer's Lat. MS read "comprensa."  
 14-15 of . . . astronomye: From Trivet "per computationem parcium temporis"; cf. Guillaume "comprehendebat numero quando stella debet stare, quando retroire. Astronomia enim constat numeris. Oportet enim astronomum scire quot annis, quot diebus explet unusquisque planeta cursum suum."  
 24 maketh: Chaucer's Fr. MS read "fait" (Fr. "a donné que," Lat. "dedit"); cf. MSt 14:174/13.

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## Bonner Studien zur englischen Philologie

Herausgegeben von K. D. Bülbring

Heft VI

# John Waltons metrische Übersetzung der Consolatio Philosophiae.

Untersuchung des Handschriftenverhältnisses  
und Probe eines kritischen Textes

von

**K. Schämmer**

Bonn

Peter Hanstein, Verlagsbuchhandlung

1914

3. pere was þat tyme an holy heremyte;
4. As he was in his contemplacioun,
5. he sawe theodorik in visioun
6. By-twine symachus and pope Iohn,
7. right as a peef to his dampnacioun
8. how he was led, and after þat anoon

1. *as*] f. N; *Gregor*] Gregory Pr Hs Ph; *selue*] self R. — 2. *As his diologe*] As yet hys bokes Pr, As his diologue Hs, As his dialoge M D, And as his diologe Ba. — 5. *sawe*] dyd se Pr; *in*] in a Ph. — 7. *a*] f. Hs.

30.

1. In þe yle of vlcane was he casten penne,
2. þat fult is of a fury flaumbe of heft,
3. þer-in alwey in peynes for-to brenne,
4. And with þe foule fendes forto dwell.
- 5<sup>b</sup>] 5. ffor tyrantes, þat so ferse been and felt,
6. Suche reward is arayed for þaire mede.
7. I saye yow but as olde bookes tell.
8. Now to my purpose tyme is þat I spede;

1. *vlcane*] vulcane Pr N M, vulcan Ph. — 2. *a*] thee D, f. Ph; *fury*] fyre Pr. — 4. *with þe foule*] thus with the Hs. — 5. *ferse*] fers R; *and*] and so Hs. — 6. *Suche reward is arayed*] Ben arayed suche rewardes Pr, Suche rewardis arayed be M D. — 7. *yow*] f. D; *as olde*] alle Ph; *tell*] do telle Pr. — 8. *is þat*] it is M D.

31.

1. And enery lord or lady, what ye<sup>1</sup>) be,
2. Or clerk, þat likeþ forto rede þis,
3. Beseching lowly wip humylite:
4. Supporte where I hane seyde amys,
5. Correcte only pere þat nedeful is,
6. If worde and sentence be noght as hit scholde.
7. My-self I am unsuffishaunt I-wys;
8. ffor if I couthe hane beter done, I wolde.

1. *or*] and Hs; *ye*] he R D. — 3. *Beseching*] Biseche I M. — 4. *Supporte*] Support R, Supporteth Pr; *hane seyde*] hane ofte seyde Pr; *seyde*] goon Ba Ph, doon N Hs M D, f. Bb L. (*In Bb ist seyde von späterer Hand eingefügt worden.*) — 5. *Correcte*] Correcteth Pr; *þat*] f. N. — 6. *and*] or Pr N Bb D. — 8. *hane beter done*] doo better doo M D, better a do Ph.

1) Sieh § 59 Anm. und § 100.

Explicit prologus. Incipit liber Boecii de consolatione philosophiae. Metrum primum.

32.

1. Allas, I wrecche, þat whilom<sup>1</sup>) was in welthe,
2. And lusty dytes (songes)<sup>2</sup>) usid forto write,
3. Nowe am y set in<sup>1</sup>) sorowes and unselthe,
4. With mornying nowe my myrþe I most respite.
5. Lo, rendyng<sup>3</sup>) muses techen me to endite;
6. Of wo with wepyng weten þai my face.
7. Thus hath disese distryed all my delite,
8. And broght my blis and my bone-chife all bace.

1. Alas that I wreche whiles I was in welth Pr; *whilom*] whilon R. — 2. *dytes*] songes die Handschriften. — 3. *in*] f. R; *sorowes*] sorow Pr Ba Ph; *unselthe*] unhelthe Pr M, in slewth Hs. — 4. *mornying*] tmornying Pr; *nowe*] f. Pr; *myrþe*] f. Hs Tr; *myrþe*] wyttes Bb Ba Ph (*in Bb jedoch ist wyttes später in nisse umgedändert worden*), myrthes C N; *I must*] must I Ph. — 5. *Lo rendyng*] Hs Ph] Lamentable Pr, Lo Rndyng Tr, Lo redyng C N Bb B L Hs M D Ba (*in Bb ist über e von redyng ein n von späterer Hand geschrieben*); *muses*] musyng Tr. — 6. *Of*] And M; *weten þai my*] they weteth my Pr, wepeth þai my Tr, wyphen þai my M, wipyn theye. D — 7. *distryed*] distraynd Tr; *delite*] myght N. — 8. *blis*] lyf N; *my* (2)] f. Ph D; *all*] in N; *my bone-chife all bace*] Iolyte ful bace Pr.

33.

1. And þogh<sup>1</sup>) þat I with<sup>1</sup>) myschef nowe be mete,
2. þat false fortune lourith þus on me,
3. No drede fro me ne myghte þese muses lete
4. Me forto sewe in myn aduersite.
5. My ioye<sup>4</sup>) þei were all in my iolite
6. Of youthe, that was so gladsom and so grene;
7. Nowe þai solace my drery destine,
8. And in myn age my confort nowe þei bene.

1. And þogh þat I with myselfe nowe be bette Hs; And now that I with myselfe be bete Tr; And þogh þat I with my thef wow be mete M; And þogh þat I nowe with my theef be mete D; *þogh*] þoght R; *with*] witht R, be Ph. — 2. *þat*] And þat N; *lourith þus*] thus lowreth Tr; *þus*] f. N; *on*] vppon N Hs. — 3. *fro*] for. Pr M D; *ne*] f. Pr Ph; *þese*] the L Hs. — 4. *Me forto sewe*] Me to ensue Pr. — 5. *ioye*] Pr Tr Hs] ioyes die übrigen Handschriften; *all in*] in all Pr Tr Hs. — 7. *solace*] solacen R.

1) Sieh § 59 und § 105. 2) Sieh § 85 und § 105. 3) Sieh § 85 und § 104. 4) Sieh § 62 und § 103.

34.

1. Unwarly age cometh on me hastily,
- 6<sup>a</sup>] 2. byeng on me for harme, þat I haue had,
3. And sorow his eld hap hoten to be ney;
4. hore beris on myn hede to rathe ben sprad,
5. All toome of blode my body waxeþ bad,
6. Myn ampty skyn gynneth<sup>1)</sup> to tremble and quake.
7. I knowe no cause wher-of I scholde be glade,
8. But socourlese þus am I all for-sake.

1. *Unwarly*] Vnwar H<sub>2</sub>; *me*] me now Tr. — 2. *haue*] f. Tr H<sub>1</sub>. — 3. *sorow his*] sorowes H<sub>1</sub> Tr; *eld*] hestes Pr; *ney*] me ney N. — 4. *Der Vers fehlt in* H<sub>1</sub> Tr; *to*] soo M D; *ben*] f. N. — 6. *gynneþ* M D] begynneþ Pr und *die übrigen Handschriften*. — 7. *knowe*] haue Pr; *wher-of*] whye H<sub>1</sub> Tr; *I scholde*] I may Pr, shuld I C. — 8. Thus mornyng for mysese (muses H<sub>1</sub> Tr) my mone I make Pr H<sub>1</sub> Tr; *am I*] I am Ba Ra.

35.

1. A deth of men, a blisful þing it were,
2. If he wolde spare þeym in paire lustynesse,
3. And come<sup>2)</sup> to þem þat ben of heny chere,
4. Whan þai him caſt to slaken paire distresse;
5. But out allas, howe duſt and deaf he is<sup>3)</sup>,
6. Wryeng<sup>4)</sup> away fro wrecches, when þei clepe,
7. And werneth þenne with wonder cruelnesse
8. þe eyen forto close þat waile and wepe.

2. *þeym in paire*] þeyn and hire H<sub>1</sub> Tr. — 3. *come*] cometh Bb R. — 5. *out*] o(h) Pr M, ought H<sub>1</sub> (*in Bb ist out von späterer Hand in oñz umgeändert worden*), f. D; *duſt and deaf*] duſt how deff H<sub>1</sub> Tr, deaf and duſt M D; *he is*] is he C Bb R L H<sub>2</sub>; *howe*] f. Bb (*das Wort ist später hinzugefügt worden*). — 6. *Wryeng*] Wryngyng Pr Tr, Wryng RD (*in Bb ist ein Punkt sichtbar unter dem e von Wryeng*), Writhyng Ph. — 7. *þenne*] them H<sub>1</sub> Tr N M D.

36.

1. Bot while fortune unfeithfull and untrewē
2. Of lusty lyf was to me fauorabill,
3. fful sodanly myn hede adown<sup>5)</sup> he drewe,
4. þe carefull oure of deth unmerciabill;
5. But nowē þat sche so<sup>6)</sup> chaunging and unstable
6. hath turned unto me hire cloudi face,

1) Sieh § 109. 2) Sieh § 56 und § 101. 3) Sieh § 71 und § 102.

4) Sieh § 59 Anm. und § 102. 5) Sieh § 104. 6) Sieh § 59 und § 100.

7. This wrecchid lyf, þat is vnconfortable,
8. Witt drawe a-long, and tarieth nowē, allas.

1. *while*] wyly Tr; *unfeithfull*] vnfeip H<sub>1</sub>. — 3. *adown* H<sub>1</sub> Tr] down CN Bb R L H<sub>2</sub> M D Ba Ra Ph, to grounde Pr; *drewe*] threw Tr. — 4. *oure of deth*] deth of hem H<sub>1</sub> Tr. — 5. *þat*] f. Ph; *so*] is so R; *so chaunging*] so changyth H<sub>1</sub> Tr, changeable Ph. — 6. *unto*] to N M D Ba; *me*] f. H<sub>1</sub> Tr. — 7. *is*] is so Ba. — 8. *Witt drawe*] Draeth Pr.

37.

1. Wher-to, ye frendes, made ye your awaunt
2. So often tyme<sup>1)</sup> of my felicite?
3. This worldly welthe is noght perseueraunt,
4. Ne neuere abidyng in stabilite;
5. ffor he þat falliþ out of his degre,
6. Ye knowen wel þat stable was he noght,
7. Ne he stood neuer in full prosperite
8. þat in-to meschef is so lowe I-broght.

1. *Wherto ye*] Wher-to þe Bb L Ba, Therto my H<sub>2</sub>; *made ye*] maden Pr H<sub>1</sub> Tr D Ph. — 2. *often tyme* Tr H<sub>1</sub>] often tymes *die übrigen Handschriften*. — 4. *Ne*] Nor D; *in stabilite*] in no stabilite Pr, in felicite H<sub>1</sub> Tr. — 5. *his*] high N M D; *degre*] dignite Pr Ba Ra. — 6. *Ye knowen wel*] ful soth it is Pr; *þat*] f. Ph. — 7. *Ne*] Nor D; *in*] in no Ph. — 8. *in-to*] vnto D, in Ba Ra; *is*] was Pr N; *I-broght*] brought D.

38.

Prosa prima.

1. In mornyng þus I made my complaynt,
2. And forto write my fyngres gan I folde;
3. ffor drerynesse I wax all feibill and feynt,
- 6<sup>b</sup>] 4. þat of my lyf almost noping I tolde,
5. But upward atte laste I gan beholde;
6. In sothe, y seie so faier a creature,
7. I couthe hire noght discriuen, þogh I wold,
8. So semely was hire schap and hire feture.

1. *In*] Now Tr; *made*] make H<sub>1</sub> Tr. — 2. *fyngres*] figures N; *gan I*] cau I Tr, gan N, can I not Ba Ra. — 3. *drerynesse*] drednesse Ph. — 4. *my*] f. Tr H<sub>1</sub>. — 5. *gan*] can Ba Ra. — 6. *sothe*] sothly Tr, feyth Ba Ra; *so faier*] suche Tr, so H<sub>1</sub>. — 7. *hire noght*] nott her Tr, hir D; *þogh*] they Ph, and Tr.

1) Sieh § 104.

## *Consolatio* 1m1, translated by George Colvile (1556)

[sig. B1<sup>r</sup>]

I That in tyme of prosperite, & floryshing studye, made pleasaunte and delectable dities, or verses: alas now beyng heauy and sad ouerthrwen in aduersitie, am compelled to fele and tast heuines and greif. Beholde the muses Poecicall, that is to saye: the pleasure that is in poetes verses, do appoynt me, and compel me to writ these verses in meter, and y<sup>e</sup> sorowfull verses do wet my wretched face with very waterye teares, yssuinge out of my eyes for sorowe. Whiche muses no feare without dout coulde ouercome, but that they wold folow me in my iourney of exile or banishment. Sometyme the ioye of happy and lusty delectable youth dyd comfort me, and now the course of sorrowfull olde age causeth me to reioyse. For hasty old age vnloked for is come vpon me with al her incommodities and euyls, and sorow hath commaunded and broughte me into the same old age, that is to say: that sorowe causeth me to be olde, before my time come of olde age. The hoer heares do growe vntimely vpon my heade, and my reuiled skynne trembleth my flesh, cleane consumed and wasted with sorowe. Mannes death is happy, that cometh not in youth, when a man is lustye, & in pleasure or welth: but in time of aduersitie, [sig. B1<sup>v</sup>] when it is often desyred. Alas Alas howe dull and deffe be the eares of cruel death vnto men in misery that would fayne dye: and yet refusythe to come and shutte up theyr carefull wepyng eyes. Whiles that false fortune fauoryd me with her transitorye goods, then the howre of death had almost ouercom me. That is to say deathe was redy to oppresse me when I was in prosperitie. Nowe for by cause that fortune beyng turned, from prosperitie into aduersitie (as the clere day is darkyd with cloudes) and hath chaungyd her deceyuable countenance: my wretched life is yet prolonged and doth continue in dolour. O my frendes why haue you so often bosted me, sayinge that I was happy when I had honor possessions riches, & authoritie whych be transitory thynges. He that hath fallen was in no stedefast degre.

[marginal glossm, sig. B1<sup>r</sup>] The poetes do faine that ther be .ix. Muses, that do geue y<sup>e</sup> Poetes science to make versis in meter, and y<sup>e</sup> same muses be called camene, that is to saye, synging swetlye, for that y<sup>t</sup> they do muche delyte men by reason of suche meter, & they cause men to delyte in y<sup>e</sup> vayne hyecions of poetes, and in the vayn plesures of the worlde.

ELIZABETH I



TRANSLATIONS

1592-1598



*Edited by*  
Janel Mueller and  
Joshua Scodel

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Queen Elizabeth's translation of Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae*, October–November, 1593 (original-spelling version)<sup>1</sup>

THE FYRST BOOKE

FY[RST] MYTER

~~Verse ones~~ Rhymes that my groing studie <sup>ons</sup> perfourmed  
In tears alas cumpeld woful staues begin  
My muses torne behold what write I shuld indites  
Wher tru WofuL uerse my face with dole bedews  
Thes at Lest no terror might Constrain

[5]

1. Source: Kew, Surrey, The National Archives, State Papers, 12/289, fols. 13r–57r, 64r–83v. All Meters (unless noted otherwise) and some portions of prose sections (each noted locally) are in Elizabeth's late, loosely formed italic hand. The remainder of the text is in two hands—predominantly a secretary hand, secondarily an italic hand—that show intermittent local revisions by Elizabeth. As a number of notes in our modern-spelling version document, the clerk evidently wrote at the queen's dictation. R. E. G. Kirk identified him as Thomas Windebank, Clerk of the Privy Seal (or Signet) in 1598; see Caroline Pemberton, ed., *Queen Elizabeth's Englishings of Boethius, De consolazione philosophiae*, A.D. 1593; *Plutarch, De curiositate* [1598]; *Horace, De arte poetica (part)* A.D. 1598, Early English Text Society, orig. ser. 113 (London, 1899), xi. There is an abortive fair copy—book 1, through the opening section of prose 3—on fols. 100r–102v, in the same format: verse in italic, prose in secretary hand. Because this fragment bears no trace of Elizabeth's intervention, our copy text has greater authority. We record the few substantive variants in the fair copy in the notes to our modern-spelling version. For ease of reference, we have filled

Queen Elizabeth's translation of Boethius, *De consolazione philosophiae*, October–November 1593 (modern-spelling version)

THE FIRST BOOK<sup>1</sup>

METER 1

Rhymes, that my growing study once performed;<sup>2</sup>  
In tears, alas, compelled, woeful staves begin.<sup>3</sup>  
My Muses torn (behold) what write I should, indite,<sup>4</sup>  
Where true woeful verse my face with dole bedews.<sup>5</sup>  
These, at least, no terror might constrain

5

out headings of Meters and prose sections in full and have numbered the lines of the lyrics in square brackets.

1. **First Book** Awaiting execution without trial for the treason and other offenses of which he has been accused, the imprisoned Boethius laments his recent fate.

2. **growing . . . performed** “quondam studio florente peregi” (once I accomplished with prospering eagerness). **growing** flourishing. **study** keen pleasure or interest in something; “studio.” The *OED* notes that in translations of Latin, “study” had a wide variety of early modern senses corresponding to its cognate “studium.”

3. **compelled . . . begin** **compelled** I am compelled. Elizabeth often omits subject pronouns and auxiliary verbs. **staves** verses; “modos” (verses). **begin** to begin. She often omits the infinitive marker “to.”

4. **indite** dictate; the subject is “Muses.”

5. **true . . . dole** **true . . . verse** “elegi,” the metrical form of meter 1, considered appropriate for lament. **true** In Boethius, “veris” modifies “fletibus” (with unfeigned tears) rather than “elegi.” **dole** grief, mourning, weeping.



that felowes to our mone our Way they shuld refrain  
 The glory ons, of happy griny<sup>2</sup> Youthe  
 Now, fates of grunting Age, my Comfort all  
 VnLookt for Age hied by mishaps is Come  
 And Sorow bidz ~~tr~~ <sup>his my time to to</sup> add ~~him~~ WithaL [10]  
 Vnseasond hore heares Vpon my hed ~~to~~ <sup>ar</sup> poWrd  
 And Lovs~~end~~ <sup>and</sup> skin in feable body shakes  
 blessed dethe that in switest yeres refraines  
 but oft Calld Comes to the woful Wights  
 O with how defe eare she ~~Wree~~ <sup>from</sup> wretched Wries [15]  
 And Wailing Yees Cruel to shut denies.  
 While Gileful fortune with Vading goodz did chire  
 My life wel ny t the doleful houre bereued  
 Whan her fals Looke a Cloude hath changed  
 My wretched Life thankles abode protractz [20]  
 Why me so oft my frindz haue you happy cald  
 Who fa<sup>leth</sup> <sup>downe</sup> in stedy step ~~stode~~ <sup>yet</sup> neuer yet stode

## [1. PROSE]

While of aL this aLone in silence I bethoght me and tearesful  
 Complaint in stiles office ment, Ouer my hed to stand a Woman did  
 apaire Of stately face with flaming yees of insight aboue the Comun  
 worth of men of fresche coulour and unWon strength thogh yet so old  
 she Wer that of Our age she seamed not be One her stature suche as  
 skarse Could be desernd for sune While she skanted her to the  
 Comen stature of men strait she semed With Crowne of hed the  
 heauens to strike and lifting vp the same hiar the heauens them selues  
 she enterd ~~and~~ <sup>begiled</sup> <sup>ing</sup> the sight of Lookars on her Wides the wer of

2. **griny** greeny. On Elizabeth's idiosyncratic practice of spelling English *ee* (long *e*) with *i*, see *ACFLO*, xxiv–xxv.

6. **our . . . refrain** refrain from following the speaker's path.

7. **grunting . . . all grunting** groaning. **my . . . all you**, the Muses, are all my comfort.

8. **hied . . . withal** hied hastened. **bids . . . withal** commands that his time be added to this.

9. **Unseasoned** Out-of-season, untimely; "Intempestivi."

10. **refrains** holds back; "se nec . . . Insertit" (does not introduce herself).

11. **wights** human beings.

12. **from . . . wries** swerves from wretched [me]. **wries** swerves.

That, fellows to our moan, our way they should refrain.<sup>6</sup>  
 The glory once of happy, greeny youth,  
 Now Fates of grunting age, my comfort all.<sup>7</sup>  
 Unlooked-for Age, hied by mishaps, is come,  
 And Sorrow bids his time to add withal;<sup>8</sup> 10  
 Unseasoned,<sup>9</sup> hoary hairs upon my head are poured,  
 And loosèd skin in feeble body shakes.  
 Blessed Death, that in sweetest years refrains,<sup>10</sup>  
 But, oft called, comes to the woeful wights;<sup>11</sup>  
 O with how deaf ear she from wretched, wries,<sup>12</sup> 15  
 And wailing eyes, cruel, to shut denies.  
 While ~~guileful~~ <sup>male-fide</sup> Fortune with vading goods did cheer,  
 My life well nigh the doleful hour bereaved;<sup>13</sup>  
 When her false look a cloud hath changed,<sup>14</sup>  
 My wretched life, thankless abode<sup>15</sup> protracts. 20  
 Why me so oft, my friends, have you happy called?  
 Who falleth down, in steady step yet never stood.

## PROSE 1

While of all this, alone in silence I bethought me, and tears-full  
 complaint in style's office meant,<sup>16</sup> over my head to stand a woman did  
 appear. Of stately face, with flaming eyes of insight above the  
 common worth of men; of fresh color and unwon<sup>17</sup> strength, though  
 yet so old she were that of our age she seemed not be one. Her stature  
 such as scarce could be discerned, for sometime she scanted her to  
 the common stature of men, straight<sup>18</sup> she seemed with crown of head  
 the heavens to strike; and lifting up the same higher, the heavens  
 themselves she entered, beguiling<sup>19</sup> the sight of lookers-on.

13. **vading . . . bereaved** vading fleeting; "levibus" (fickle). **My . . . bereaved** "Paene caput tristis merserat hora meum" (A sad hour nearly submerged my head).

14. **When . . . changed** "Nunc quia fallacem mutavit nubila vultum" (Now that cloudy [Fortune] has changed its false face).

15. **thankless abode** unwelcome delay.

16. **tears-full . . . meant** moaned my tearful lament with the service of a stylus. **in . . . office** "stili officio."

17. **unwon** unvanquished; "inexhausti" (of limitless).

18. **somewhile . . . straight** "nunc . . . nunc" (at one time . . . at another). **some-while** sometimes. **scanted her** diminished herself. **straight** immediately.

19. **beguiling** cheating, disappointing; "frustrabatur" (she eluded, disappointed).

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John Bracegirdle's  
*Psychopharmacon*

A Translation of Boethius'  
*De Consolatione Philosophiae*  
(MS BL Additional 11401)

*Edited by*

Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr. & Jason Edward Streed



Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies  
Tempe, Arizona  
1999

**Psychopharmacon.**

**The Mindes Medicine, or the  
Phisicke of Philosophie, contained  
in five bookes,. called the Consolation of  
Philosophie, compiled by Anicius, ~  
Manlius Torquatus Seve//  
rinus Boethius, in the  
time of his exile and  
proscription.**

To the Right Honorable my singuler  
good Lord the Earl of Dorsett, Lord  
high Treasurer of England, et:

**Right Honorable:**<sup>1</sup> the Romaine usage,<sup>2</sup> that none presum'd to approach to any of sort more eminent, w<sup>th</sup>out some significac[i]on of their love, by some rare guift hath<sup>3</sup> mooved me to p[re]sume to p[re]sent this small token of my loyall affection, and gratitude, unto yo[ur] hono[ur]. Wherein, though I may seeme rather guiltie of impudence<sup>4</sup> then mynde-full of my imbecillity<sup>5</sup> and obscuritie in attempting to offer this Tralac[i]on to yo[ur] worthiest self, of *Divine Boecius*: yet notw<sup>th</sup>standing[,]<sup>6</sup> yo[ur] hono[urs] favors, and most ample benefitte, to mee freely, and often collated, have emboldened mee to undertake the one, [and] y<sup>e</sup> benefitt w<sup>ch</sup> I have often sucked in difficulties from this worke, hath urged mee, long since, to undertake y<sup>e</sup> other. Who more fitt or able to iudge of this worke, then yo[ur] hono[ur]? Who have heretofore most gravely [and] prudently taken paynes therein?<sup>7</sup> What worke more availeable to all Estates, to p[er]swade the mynde to calme contentment in y<sup>e</sup> sturdy stormes of all crossing chaunges, then this Author? Breefly the quiett establishing of my bodily estate proceedeth by meanes of yo[ur] hono[ur], and my myndes establishm[ent] by meanes of this author. Yf any obiect, I ought not imploye myself so much in *Philosophie*, [and] *Poetrie*: I answere this booke contayneth excellent grounds of Divinitie. But I write this privately, to signifie my obedience [and] thanckfullnes, not to satisfie y<sup>e</sup> Curious, most humbly beseeching yo[ur] honorable acceptance hereof, w<sup>ch</sup> is all that I desire, [and] more then

sufficient recompence for my poore labors, who rest in all duetifull affecc[i]on at yo[ur] hono[urs] commaundement and service, to expresse greater meanes of gratefull remembrance of yo[ur] hono[urs] benefitte, whensoever abilitie, [and] oportunitie shal be offered. In the meane season, I most humbly, [and] in hartiest prayer commend yo[ur] hono[ur], my right honorable Lady, yo[ur] honorable progeny, and family, to y<sup>e</sup> blessed protection of the Almighty *Fountaine* of eternall felicitie, in whome I rest,

*Your Honors servant at  
commaund,*

*John Bracegirdle · Bachelor  
in Divinity ·*

<sup>1</sup> Right Honorable:] Right Honorable, *MS*

<sup>2</sup> usage,] use *MS*

<sup>3</sup> hath] hath, *MS*

<sup>4</sup> impudence] impudence, *MS*

<sup>5</sup> imbecillity] imbecillity, *MS*

<sup>6</sup> notw<sup>th</sup>standing[,]] notw<sup>th</sup>standing *MS*

<sup>7</sup> therein?] therein. *MS*

1 [r]

THE · PHYSICKE · OF · PHILOSOPHIE.<sup>1</sup> /

contained in five bookes, compiled by Anicius

Manlius Torquatus Severinus

Boethius, touching the consolation

of Lady Philosophie in the

tyme of his banishment.

The first booke expressing the signes,  
and causes of Boethius his sicknes. /

## The first Meter ·

I, who did, in study late flourishing, meditate mery verses,  
In ditties tragicall, am, alas, constren'd to rehearse these. /  
See, the rufull Muses do relate to me songes to be viewed,  
And to lament miseries, w<sup>th</sup> teares, sory cheekes they be-dewed.  
5 Terror at all could never amaze them, or urge to relent them,  
But that alonge followinge me banished, only they went then.  
These were a glory to youth many daies, when pleasure abounded,  
Now they solace sely<sup>o</sup> daies, w<sup>th</sup> greife verie mightely wounded,  
For very fast old age doth approach, w<sup>th</sup> labor, or ache spent,  
10 And miseries that I feele, compell horie heares, to be present.  
Such graie heares to my head, redy prest untimely be hasted,  
And wrinkled skin, apace shivereth, on a weake body wasted.  
Fortunate is mans death, so she spare men, in absolute yonge yeares,  
And to release maladies, that abound, will not tarry longe teares.  
15 (Ah me, a wretch) to my suit very deafe no returne she replieth,  
Death cruel, eies miserable to close, very stoutly denieth.  
While ficle fortune of old favoured, full treacherous in shiftes,  
Deathes sorrowfull last howre, well neare had abandoned all giftes.  
Now to sinister event, chance changed againe me betrayinge,

20 Iniurious life, longe protracteth tyme by delayinge.  
Why did ye my state, freinds, boast often aloft to be mounted?  
Farre from a state stablished, who so falles may truly be counted. /

## Prose 1

These things while I did w<sup>th</sup> my selfe record,  
And had w<sup>th</sup> penne, my pensive playrits displaid,  
A woman reverend, in semely shape,  
W<sup>th</sup> ardent eies, peircing beyond mans reach,  
5 Over my head appeared then to stand,  
Of lively coulour, and unwasted strength,  
Although to be so full of daies she seemed,  
That of this age to be, none would have deemed.  
Her stature allwaies was not of one height,  
10 Somtyme no taller then a common man,  
To touch the sky somtyme *her* head did seeme,  
Who when *her* head *she* did mount upp on highe,  
Above mans sight *she* past the azure sky.  
Her garments were w<sup>th</sup> finest threeds compact,  
15 W<sup>th</sup> matter intricate, and *art* exact.  
These garments *she*, (as afterward *she* sayd)  
Compiled of *her* selfe, whose outward *showe*  
By negligence of man in former daies,  
Darknes, like smoked pictures, had obscur'd.  
20 In nether<sup>2</sup> hemme wherof .P. did appeare,  
In the upper part, T. was embroydered,  
Betwen w<sup>ch</sup> le[t]res, certaine stepes were wrought  
Like staires compact, whereby from P. belowe,  
To T. above, w<sup>th</sup> ease one might ascend.  
25 Yet was this garment rent by violence  
Of some, who, what they could purloine, did take.  
In *her* right hand some bookes *she* also bare,  
A septer, in *her* left hand, *she* did hould,  
Who when *Muses* poetically *she* sawe,  
30 Unto my bed to be approached neare,  
Indittinge sonnets w<sup>ch</sup> my woes might showe,  
W<sup>th</sup> eies like fire inflamed, thus *she* spake. /  
P. These *harlotts* Scænicall<sup>o</sup> who doth permit,

[1 v]

<sup>1</sup> PHILOSOPHIE] PHILOSOPIE MS<sup>2</sup> nether] neith[er] MS

## *Consolatio* 1m1, translated by I.T. (1609)

I That with youthfull heate did verses write,  
Must now my woes in dolefull tunes endite,  
My worke is fram'd by Muses torne and rude,  
And my sad cheeks are with true teares bedew'd,  
For these alone no terrour could affray, [5]  
From being partners of my weary way,  
My happy and delightfull ages glory,  
Is my sole comfort, being old and sory,  
Old age through griefe makes vnexpected hast,  
And sorrow in my yeares her signes hath plac't, [10]  
Untimely hoary haire couer my head,  
And my loose skin quakes on my flesh halfe dead,  
O happy death, that spareth sweetest yeares,  
And comes in sorrow often call'd with teares.  
Alas how deafe is he to wretches cries; [15]  
And loth he is to close vp weeping eyes;  
While trustles chance me with vain fauour crowned,  
That saddest houre my life had almost drowned:  
Now she hath clouded her deceitfull face,  
My spitefull dayes prolong their weary race, [20]  
My friends, why did you count me fortunate?  
He that is fall'n, ne're stood in setled state.