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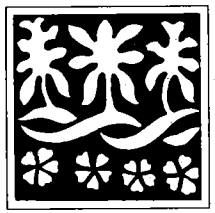
THE RIVERSIDE CHAUCER



THIRD EDITION

GENERAL EDITOR

Larry D. Benson, *Harvard University*

BASED ON

The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer

Edited by

F. N. Robinson

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"For sith it may not here discussed be
Who loveth hire best, as seyde the tercelet,
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 yë.

"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,
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,
As is everich other creature,
And mot be youres whil my lyf may dure;
And therfore 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:
"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;
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.
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.
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 befalle,
This entremes is dressed for yow alle."

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,
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,
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,
And driven away the longe nyghtes blake!

"Saynt Valentyn, that art ful hy on-lofte,
Thus syngen smale foules for thy sake:
[Now welcome, somer, with thy sonne softe,
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,
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 awey,
I wok, and othere bokes tok me to,
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
688 **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 misleading. 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

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 faithfully, 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 Consolacione Philosophie.

CARMINA QUI QUONDAM STUDIO FLORENTE
PEREGI. — *Metrum 1*

Allas! I wepynge, am constreyned to bygynnen vers of sorwful matere, that whilom in florysschyng studie made delitable ditees. For lo, rendynge muses of poetes enditen to me thynges to ben writen, and drery vers of wretchidnesse weten my face with verray teres. At the leeste, no drede ne myghte overcomen tho muses, that thei ne were felawes, and folwyden my wey (*that is to seyn, whan I was exiled*). They that weren glorie of my youthe, whilom weleful and grene, conforten nowe 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, allas! With how deef an ere deth, cruwel, turneth awey fro wrecches and nayteth to closen wepynge eien. Whil Fortune, unfeithful, favourede me with lyghte goodes, the sorwful houre (*that is to seyn, the deth*) hadde almoost dreynt myn heved. But now, for Fortune cloudy hath chaunged hir deceyvable chere to meward, myn unpietous lif draweth along unagreable duellynges in me. O ye, my frendes, what or wherto avaunted ye

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 **rendynge:** tearing
11 **grene:** green, flourishing
12 **wyerdes:** fates
16 **overtymeliche:** prematurely
17 **emptid:** exhausted
22 **nayteth:** refuses
24 **lyghte:** inconsequential
26 **dreynt:** overcome (drowned)
28 **to meward:** toward me **unpietous:** pitiless, wretched
28–29 **draweth along:** drags out
29 **duellynges:** lingering

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

HEC DUM MECUM TACITUS. — *Prosa 1*

In the mene while that I, stille, recordede these thynges with myself and merkid my weply compleynte with office of poyntel, I saw, stondynge aboven the heghte of myn heved, a womman of ful greet reverence by semblaunt, hir eien brennynge and cleer-seynge 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 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 hirselven 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 heyere, sche percede the selve hevene so that the sighte of men lokynge was in ydel.

Hir clothes weren makid of right delye thredes and subtil craft of perdurable matere; the whiche clothes sche hadde woven with hir owene handes, as I knew wel aftir by hirselve declarynge and schewynge 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 thise clothes, men redden ywoven in a Grekissch P (that signifieth the lif actif); and aboven that lettre, in the heieste bordure, a Grekyssh T (that signifieth the lif contemplatif). And bytwixen thise 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 awey swiche peces as he myghte geteen. 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 thise poetical muses aprochen aboute my bed and enditynge wordes to my wepynges, sche was a litil amoeved, and glowede with cruel eighen. "Who," quat sche, "hath suffred aprochen to this sike man thise comune strompettis of swich a place that men clepen the theatre? The whiche nat oonly ne asswagen noght his sorwes with none remedies, but thei wolden fedyn and noryssen hym with sweete venym. Forsothe thise ben tho that with thornes and prikkynges of talentz or affeccions, 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 noght folk fro maladye. But yif ye muses hadden withdrawen fro me with youre flateries any unkunnynge 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 withdrawen me this man, that hath ben noryssed in the studies or scoles of Eleaticis and Achademycis in Grece. But goth now rather awey, ye mermaydenes, whiche that ben swete til it be at the laste, and 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 dounward to the erthe, and, schewynge by rednesse hir schame, thei passeden sorwfully the thresschefold. And I, of whom the sighte, ploungid in teeres, was dirked so that Y ne myghte noght knowen what that womman was of so imperial auctorite, I wax al abaysscheed and astoned, and caste my syghte doun to the erthe, and bygan stille for to abide what sche woolde doon aftirward. Tho com sche ner and sette her doun uppon the uttereste corner of my bed; and sche, byholdynge my chere that was cast to the erthe

Prosa 1.1 **recordede:** remembered
2–3 **weply:** 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 . . . declarynge:** at 1.pr3.40–41
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 wepynge, compleynede with thise wordis that I schal seyn the perturbacion of my thought.

HEU QUAM PRECIPITI MERSA PROFUNDO. — *Metrum 2*

"Allas! How the thought of this man, dreynt in overthrowynge depnesse, dulleth and forleteth his propre clernesse, myntynge to gon into foreyne dirknesses as ofte as his anoyos bysynes waxeth withoute mesure, that is dryven with werldly wyndes. This man, that whilom was fre, to whom the hevene was opyn and knowen, and was wont to gon in hevenliche pathes, and saughe the lyghtnesse of the rede sonne, and saughe the sterres of the coolde mone, and whiche sterre in hevene useth wandrynge recourses iflyt by diverse speeris — this man, overcomere, hadde comprehendid al this by nombre (*of acontynge in astronomye*). And, over this, he was wont to seken the causes whennes the sounynge wyndes moeven and bysien the smothe watir of the see; and what spirit turneth the stable hevene; and why the sterre ariseth out of the rede est, to fallen in the westrene wawes; and what attemprith the lusty houres of the firste somer sesoun, that highteth and apparaileth 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 yhidd. Allas! Now lyth he emptid of lyght of his thoght, and his nekke is pressyd with hevy cheynes, and bereth his chere enclyned 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, entendynge to meward with al the lookynge of hir eien, seyde: "Art nat thou he," quod sche, "that whilom, norissched with my 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 awey, they schulden han defended the in sekernesse that mai nat ben overcomyn. Knowestow me nat? Why arttow stille? Is it for schame or for astonynge? It were me levere that it were for schame, but it semeth me that astonynge 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 to hertes that been desceyved. He hath a litil foryeten hymselve, 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.

TUNC ME DISCUSSA, *&c.* — *Metrum 3*

Thus, whan that nyght was discussed and chased awey, dirknesses forleten me, and to myn eien repeyred ayen hir firste strengthe. And ryght by ensaumple as the sonne is hydd whan the sterres ben clustred (*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 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 awey*) and discovereth the closed day, thanne schyneth Phebus ischaken with sodeyn light and smyteth with his beemes in merveylynge eien.

Metrum 2.3 **myntynge:** intending
12–13 **wandrynge . . . speeris:** Ptolemaic astronomers thought the planets, or "wandering stars," were borne on invisible spheres. **recourses:** orbits
13 **iflyt:** moved
15 **acontynge:** calculation
22–23 **highteth:** adorns
25 **fletith with:** abounds in (flows with)
Prosa 2.3 **entendynge:** looking
7 **corage:** spiritual state
13 **astonynge:** astonishment
20 **litargye:** lethargy
28 **yplited:** pleated **frownce:** fold
Metrum 3.1 **discussed:** driven away
2 **forleten:** left
5 **clustred:** 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 aperceü," 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.] I.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 consolatione Philosophiae* three times—in the stanza to Adam Scrivenyn (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 "Off Boeces book, the Consolacioun,/ 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 (A^2), and at Cambridge, Pembroke College MS 215 (P), fol. 1r, in a hand of c. 1500 (not that of the scribe), "Istud opus est translatum per Chawcers [sic] armigerum Ricardi Regis 2^{di}."/Copies of Former Age and Fortune in Cambridge Univ. Lib. MS Ii.iii.21 (C^2), 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 (C^2, Hn, perhaps C^1) 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 Barnet 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 C^2 (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 C^2, read "usque in exitum" (glossed "mortem"), not the traditional "usque in exitium." And yet often enough we have found that Chaucer's Latin text resembled not C^2 (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. Dedeck-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. Dedeck-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 Dedeck-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 "chaciee," 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 Koberger's 1476 Nuremberg edition; see, for example, 4.m5.5n.); an unidentified commentary that appears attached to C^2 (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^2). This small minority of readings reflects, we believe, the Latin manuscript from which Chaucer worked: like C^2, 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^2 and P^3) 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^2 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 Dedeck-Héry, we direct the reader to his edition by page and line. But Dedeck-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^{te}," not "nat^{2e}").

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 parallelled 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⊖ have at least some interlinear annotation (most extensive in B). We are particularly struck by the relevance of those glosses common to C^1C^2Hn (sometimes A^1) 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 Dedeck-Héry
Guillaume	Guillaume de Conches's commentary on Boethius
Lat.	The "vulgate" text of Boethius in MS C^2
MSt 14	*Mediaeval Studies*, vol. 14 (Dedeck-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 hath 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 of 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; ParsT VI.727–38.
20 to wrecches: Mistranslating Lat. "mestis," correctly interpreted by Trivet as modifying "annis," and glossed "id est tempore tristicie." 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. "infructuosis").
63 I . . . suffre: 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 computacionem 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.

564 forth] Om. Gg Lns Skt Hth Kch Drn Don Brw; Gg has the more regular line if *herkeneth* is disyllabic.
571 yit] *now* Gg Don.
573 wit] *mygh* Gg; *might* Kch Don.
578 preyeden] *preyede* Gg; *pray(e)d* Ff H R Lt; *preyd(e)* P J; *preying* S; *prai(e)d* Cx Lt; *prayden* F B T D.
581 shewe] *it s.* Gg Don.
585 ever til] *til that* Gg Lns Kch Don.
593 Who shulde recche of that] *What s. I r. of hym that* Gg Kch Don Fsh; *who s. r. of hym that* S J Don Brw; *who s. r.* P.
594 Ye queke] Ff H Cx L F B T Lt; *Ye keke* J; *Kek kek* Gg Lns; *Ee kekyll* R; *ȝa (Ye) queke queke* S D; *Yet quek* P.
yet] Gg Ff H S; om. all other MSS.
seyde] *seith* Gg; *quoth (quod)* P F B; om. T.
goos] *doke* (various spellings) Gg (over an erasure) Ff (over an erasure) Cx F B T Lt D; *goose* R P; *goss* S; *good* J (*d* corrected to *s*). Eds. have *Ye quek yit seyde the doke* Rob Drn (*quod*) Don Bgh Fsh; *Ye kek y. quod the d.* Skt; *Quek quek y. s. the d.* Kch; *Ye kek y. s. the gos.* The problems arose from confusion over whether *queke* is an interjection (by the duck) or a verb.
600 ful] *but* Gg Lns Hth Kch Don Fsh (perhaps correctly); om. Cx.
602 nouther] *nat* Gg Lns Skt Hth Drn Kch Rob Don Bgh Fsh; *not* Cx. Brewer notes (pp. 56–57; see also 125 and 97) that *nouther* is contracted to *nor* in pronunciation and that the scribe of Gg, not realizing this, substituted *nat*.
604 blyve] *blithe* Gg Hth.
613 reufullest] *reufulles* Gg Lns; *rowthful* P; *rewfull* all other MSS Fsh; *reufelle* Kch; *reweful* Don; *rewthelees* Skt Hth Drn Rob Bgh. The emendation adopted is Brewer's, who notes Gg's habit of omitting the final *-t* in consonant clusters.
616 whil] *w. that* Gg Lns Kch Don.
619 nevere] *not* Gg Kch.
621 hir] *the* Gg Cx Lns Skt Hth Kch Drn Don Bgh Fsh.
624 sith] *syn* Gg Lns Hth Kch Don Fsh.
626 hire this favour] Gg; *to h. this f.* H R; *this f. to h.* all other MSS.
629 Thus] Gg J; *This* all other MSS Skt.
632 thanne] *certes thanne* Gg all eds. but Brw. A headless line that Gg emends.
637 hit] Om. Gg Cx Skt Hth Drn Kch Bgh Brw Fsh; *it to you* H.
638 hire] *tho* Gg Lns Kch Rob Don Bgh Fsh; om. P.
641 everich other] *a nothir lyvis* Gg; *another lyves* Don.
642 whil] *while that* Gg Ff Lns Kch Don Fsh.
644 I wol yow sey right] *that wele I seyn wol* Gg; *you wel I s. r.* Ff P T Kch Brw Fsh; *I shall you seyn* B; *you wol I seyn wel* Don.
647 don] *gon* Gg Lns Hth Kch Rob Bgh Fsh; *goon* Don.
655 Quod] *Quod tho* Gg H all eds. Gg "corrects" a headless line.
661 is] *ne is* Gg Kch.
665 for] Gg Cx J; *fro(m)* all other MSS.
666 al brought was] *al wro(u)ght was* F B T Lt D.
670 in] *in his* Gg Ff H Lt Lns Hth Kch Drn Don Fsh.
672 goddesse] *queen* Gg Lns Kch Drn Don Fsh.
674 hir] *the* Gg Kch Don.
676 Nature] *to N.* Gg all eds. but Brw.
677 imaked was] *i. were* Gg; *made was* Ff Cx D; *makid was* (various spellings) H F B T Brw.
678 heer] Om. Gg Lns Kch Brw.
680–92 Complete only in Gg (in a later hand); D has all but 687 with the roundel turned into a stanza; J has only 683–84, 687–89; Ff T leave no gap; H leaves a gap (unfilled); F B R Cx have *qui bien ayme (a) tarde oublie* (no gap). Lines 685–86, 690–92 were conjecturally printed by Furnivall and followed by all editors except Donaldson, who repeats 680–82 after 684 and then, like Furnivall, 680–82 after the third stanza of the roundel. Thynne's edition (1532) has both the French line and 680–92. See expl. notes 675 and 677.
680 thy] Om. Gg.
681, 686, 691 thes] Gg; *this(e)* D all eds. but Brw.
682 longe] *large* Gg Don.
689 Ful blissful mowe they synge when they wake] *f. b. m. t. ben w. t. w.* Gg Drn *(awake); f. blisfully t. s. and endles ioy thei make* D.
697 I] *In* Gg Lns Hth Drn Don Fsh.
699 nyl] Ff T; *nele* Gg Brw Fsh; *wyl* all other MSS.
Explicit . . .] So Gg; *Explicit tractatus de congregacione Volucrum dei sancti Valentini* F; *Explicit Parliamentum auium Quod W. Calverley* Ff; *Here endis the parliament of foulis Quod Galfride Chaucere* S; *Here endith the Parlement of foules* Lt D. *Explicit the temple of bras* Cx.

Gg readings rejected by all editors (unique to Gg unless otherwise noted):

7 flete] *slete.* **22** out] *ofte.* **31** Scipioun] *sothion.* **40** betwix] *betwixsyn.* **53** worldes] wordis. **57** litel] Om. **69** was first] *f. w.* **82** than foryeven al hir] *that f. is his.* **88** bed] *self* (also Ff). **90** which that] *that* (also Ff S P). **125** half] *syde* (also P). **132** of-caste] *ouercaste.* **138** the] Om. **140** Th'eschewing] *Th(er) shewynge* (*er* inserted). **175** joye] *sothe.* **204** Th'air] *The erthe.* **276** Ceres] *sereis.* **305** mesure] *mesuris.* **324** the] Om. (also S). **326** of which] Om.; no] *myn.* **345** chough] *crowe* (also Ff J). **354** of hewe] *& newe* (also Ff D). **400** ye] *they* (also Ff). **401** yow] *ye.* **404** sorest] *soryest.* **434** untrewe] *vntrere.* **438** knette] *arette.* **444** the] *hire* (also P). **450** and] Om. **471** But as] *That;* me] *to m.* **482** whether] *were.* **494** shende] *shynde.* **495** have] *havyn.* **506** For] *And.* **516** synge] *fynde.* **518** uncommytted] *onquit.* **520** behynde] Om. **524** of] *on.* **540** these] *this.* **558** gent] *so gent.* **560** hire] *hym.* **562** hire] *hys.* **563** She] *He.* **569** she] *he.* **573** wit] *mygh.* **577** turtle] *tersel.* **581** shewe] *it shewe.* **583** turtle] *tersel.* **596** fy] *sey* (also R). **611** the] *thanne a.* **614** wormes] *werm.* **623** as] *a.* **627** right] Om. **645** right] *that.* **658** hem] *hym.* **662** peyne him] *peignynge.* **663** quyt] *what.* **664** Fro] *For* (also P T D). **682** longe] *large.* **694** That] *That the.*

Boece

Authorities: nine extensive manuscripts, one brief manuscript fragment, a manuscript paraphrase of Bk. 1, and the early prints of Caxton and Thynne, classified, as the result of our full collation, as follows:

α	γ	A^2	Additional 16165, British Library
		C^1	Cambridge Univ. Lib. Ii.i.38
	ϵ	B	Bodley 797, Bodleian Library
		H	Harley 2421, British Library
	θ	P	Pembroke College, Cambridge, MS. 215 (only fragments after 4.pr5)
		Cx	Caxton's edition, *c.* 1478
		Th	Thynne's edition, 1532
β	δ	C^2	Cambridge Univ. Lib. Ii.iii.21
		Hn	Peniarth 393D (Hengwrt 328), National Library of Wales (breaks off in 3.pr10)
	η	Mo	Frag. MS. 150, Univ. of Missouri (brief portions of 2.m7 and 2.pr8)
	ι	A^1	Additional 10340, British Library
		Sal	Sarum 113, Salisbury Cathedral
		Auct	Auctarium F.3.5 (VII), Bodleian Library (a paraphrase of 1 only)

The work has been previously edited, always with C^1 or C^2 as base, in the various complete works of the poet: Skeat's Oxford Ch, the Globe Ch, earlier editions of Robinson, and Fisher. Of the editions, only that in the Globe, prepared by Mark H. Liddell, appears to have been based on collation of all manuscripts known to the editor. Two of the manuscripts have been printed in full: C^2 by F. J. Furnivall, Ch Soc. 1st ser. 75 (1886); and A^1 by Richard Morris, EETS e.s. 5 (1868; rep. as Ch Soc. 1st ser. 76, 1886). On the basis of these printed texts, L. Kellner provided a full collation of Cx (ESt 14, 1890, 1–53); more recently Cx has been printed in Beverly Boyd, Ch According to Caxton, 1978. Th has twice appeared in photographic facsimile: with an introduction by Walter W. Skeat (?1904), and with an introduction by D. S. Brewer (1969). Sal was identified as a copy and its version of 1.m1 printed by R. P. Wülcker (Anglia 2, 1879, 372–73). George B. Pace and Linda E. Voigts provided a full description and text of Mo in SAC 1, 1979, 143–50. Liddell (Academy 49, 1896, 199–200) successfully demonstrated that Auct is a paraphrase of Chaucer, not a separate translation (as Skeat claimed), that it was prepared to provide text for a commentary, and that it is associated with ι. Phillipps 9472, mentioned by Skeat as containing "a translation" (Oxford Ch 2:xliv) and assumed by Robinson (p. 903) to be Chaucer's version, is in fact a copy of Walton's verse translation; the manuscript is now Cambridge Univ. Lib. Additional MS 3573.

The textual notes to *Boece* were prepared by Ralph Hanna III and Traugott Lawler.

In our analysis, the textual situation resembles that of many Middle English prose translations. There has been a substantial loss of harder authorial readings between O, Chaucer's autograph, and O′, the ancestor of all surviving manuscripts. Within the visible English textual tradition, variation has proved considerably less drastic: α and β, the archetypes of the surviving manuscripts, differed only occasionally. But at later stages in the tradition two distinctive, and usually corrupt, traditions emerged. The ι group has very frequent and highly distinctive variation: A^1 and Sal agree in unique errors nearly as often as all other manuscripts combined. This tradition (although Mo shows an early transitional form) seems to have fully developed about 1450, perhaps in the northeast Midlands. (Both Sal and Auct show traces of such a dialect.) In contrast, the tradition we identify as θ seems originally to have resembled H fairly closely; however, θ itself was sporadically conflated with a text most closely resembling Hn. A number of these readings were carried over into Cx and Th; but P's additional errors and agreements with Hn avoided by Cx and Th indicate either that Cx had access to a better θ manuscript or that P represents a less adequate derivative of θ than Cx. Although Th used Cx for copy, a number of readings indicate consultation of an independent manuscript version, a text most closely resembling A^2 and B; see James E. Blodgett, Library 6th ser. 1, 1979, 97–113, and his paper on Th's text read at the 1979 meeting of the Midwest Modern Language Association.

In this edition we follow C^1 as copy-text. We chose this manuscript because it is complete, tolerably consistent in its spellings, and one of three manuscripts most faithful to O′. Of these three, Hn is incomplete and C^2 often idiosyncratic in its forms. Although, as Robinson noted (p. 904), the orthography of C^1 differs considerably from that of such early manuscripts of the *Tales* as Hg, we have retained its spellings and indeed have put all emendations into C^1 forms. Editors who have followed C^2 have, we believe, been somewhat misled by externals: that C^2 forms a Boethius anthology, provided with Latin text and a variety of commentaries, has led to some overestimation of the quality of the English text. Indeed, C^2 varies from O′ slightly more frequently than does C^1; moreover, erroneous readings of C^2 are frequently substantial, in contrast to the quite incidental errors typical of C^1.

In the notes that follow we use a number of symbols to identify Chaucer's source texts—L for the Latin text of C^2, F for Dedeck-Héry's French, T for Trivet. We use the sigil Z to represent Chaucer's Latin manuscript, where that differs from L, and the sigil Y to represent Chaucer's French manuscript, where that differs from F. Where a reading of Y occurs in an extant manuscript, we identify that text in parentheses, using Dedeck-Héry's sigla. Thus Y (B) *sont* means "we suppose that Chaucer's French source read *sont*, as the manuscript B in fact does." The sigla Z and Y refer not simply to the actual reading of Chaucer's hypothetical manuscripts but also to Chaucer's perception of the form of his source—which may have been erroneous. (The abbreviations are summarized below.)

The symbol O′ means "the latest common ancestor of

all surviving witnesses." But since the ordinary basis for positing the reading of O′ is agreement of all witnesses, we also use unqualified O′, in lieu of inventing some further symbol, to mean "all witnesses." Thus "om. O′" means "all witnesses omit, and we posit therefore that O′ omitted." In a few cases, however, we cite one witness in addition to O′; in such cases the cited manuscript stands as a factual exception to "all witnesses" but is not regarded as evidence against the posited reading of O′. Thus "*of* O′ (*off* B)" would mean "all witnesses but B read *of*, and we posit O′ *of* despite B *off*."

The notes that follow annotate our handling of the text. We give information on all readings we take to be cruces, places where the English manuscripts show various readings difficult of resolution and places where we have suggested (but not printed) emendations that would bring Chaucer's text into nearer accord with L and F. In addition, on the basis of our study of the traditional Latin, L, F, T, and Guillaume de Conches, we have printed a number of conjectural emendations. In all such places, which are bracketed in the text and marked with an asterisk in the notes, we believe the reading of Chaucer's holograph (O) has been lost in the archetype of all surviving English manuscripts (O′). Our consultation of Chaucer's sources has led us to conclude that Chaucer regularly consulted both Latin and French, that he translated very literally (though often preferring the syntax and wording of French), and that it is inherently unlikely that Z and Y agreed in the same corruption. Thus, agreement between L and F in the absence of a relevant French variant is of great value in positing what Chaucer probably wrote. Moreover, we find many readings that are far more simply explained as English scribal errors than as mistranslations or Chaucer's translation of errors in Z or Y (for example, 3.pr3.63 or 3.pr11.9–10).

Although for the sake of economy we usually merely cite L F as our basis for making or suggesting emendations, we have in fact satisfied ourselves in each case that the O reading we posit is likely to have produced O′ by some common sort of scribal error—most often eyeskip or *lectio facilior*. Furthermore, we cite only relevant sources; when F is cited without L, or T without L F, the sources not mentioned are to be understood as not contradictory but irrelevant.

In addition, we give selective examples of the different textual choices made by our predecessors, especially Robinson; since most past editors have simply printed C^1 or C^2, our silence often indicates that they reproduce the majority reading of the English manuscripts. Finally, at the end of the notes for each book we group all readings not elsewhere mentioned where we have departed from the text of C^1.

Summary of special abbreviations:

F Jean de Meun's French translation as edited by Dedeck-Héry

L The "vulgate" text of Boethius in MS C^2

Lid Mark Liddell's edition in the Globe Ch

T Nicholas Trivet's commentary on Boethius

trad The reading of the oldest tradition of MSS of Boethius's Latin text, as represented by the edition of Ludwig Bieler, 1957

Y The MS Chaucer used of Jean de Meun's translation; letters in parentheses after Y represent actual French MSS, as reported by Dedeck-Héry

Z The MS Chaucer used of Boethius

BOOK I

Metrum 1 Hn lacks through pr1.72 (lost leaf).
29 **in me]** Om. α (−B) Rob; but *m'aloigne* F.

Prosa 1 ***24–25** **me The beaute [of] the]** *me the beaute the* O′ (*off* [marg.] *the* H); L F begin new clause *Quarum speciem, la biauté des queles.*
38 **and]** *or* α (−B) Lid Rob; but *et* F.
45 **aprochen]** Probably contaminated from 48; *assistentes* L, *estans* F imply *stondynge* O.
50 **nat]** C^2 only; om. all others.
59 **ye]** C^2 Auct only; *þe* all others.
72 **by]** Hn begins.

Metrum 2 **6** **dryven]** β (−Hn) Auct Rob add *to and fro*, without parallel in L F.
9 **hevenliche]** Hn lacks isolated readings from here to the end of m2 and also in m3 and pr3.1–2; the folio is torn.
***25** **yere]** *yeris* O′; but *pleno anno* L, *en plain an* F.

Metrum 3 **8** **with]** C^1 Hn only; *by* all others.

Prosa 3 ***4** **whan that]** Om. O′; but *ubi* L, *puis que* F.
66 **whiche]** δ Rob add *tempestes*, ι add *tempeste;* both readings have probably intruded from 65.

Metrum 4 **13** **o wrecches drede ye]** Perhaps *han wrecches wondrede on* in O; cf. *mirantur* L, *merveillent* F.

Prosa 4 **18** **and]** H θ (−P) ι Rob add *touchynge* (in C^1 Hn as an interlinear gloss preceded by *scilicet*). Robinson thus replicates a frequent variety of scribal error, the absorption of a gloss into the text; see for example, 2.pr4.94 *in*, where δ have interlinear gloss *inest* but ι read *inmest* in text.
21 **nature]** Cf. *cum mihi siderum vias radio describeres* L, *quant tu me escrivoies par ta verge les voies des estoilles* F. Chaucer may have written *whan thow descryvedest me the weyes of the sterres with thy yerde,* omitted in O′ by scribal eyeskip.
32 **seidest]** Perhaps *amonestedest* or *warnedest* in O; cf. *monuisti* L, *amonnestas* F.
56 **propre]** ι only; *prospere* all others (and Lid Rob) (*goodly* Auct); cf. *cuiusque fortunas* L, *biens de chascun* F (after *bona fortuna* T; but perhaps O *prospere* represents Z *bonas fortunas*).
79ff. **Coempcioun]** Skeat and Robinson split the gloss, moving this portion to follow *effect* in 92. We follow O′ and Lid, assuming that this portion of the gloss looks forward to subsequent material.
124 **men]** *me* C^2 may be authorial.
126 **towne]** *the towne* C^1 B θ (−P) C^2 Rob. We follow Lid in adopting Chaucer's normal usage.
138 **in somme]** Perhaps *the somme* in O; cf. *summam* L, *la somme* F.
***212–13** **And wel thow remembrest]** Om. O′; but *meministi inquam* L, *et bien te remembre* F.
218 **al]** Perhaps *the innocence of al* in O; cf. *uniuersi innocenciam* L, *l'innocence du tout* F.

224 **conscience]** Perhaps *conscience preysinge itself* in O; cf. *consciencie probantis* L (*laudantis* T) *se, la conscience loant soy meismes* F.
297 **thynke]** Perhaps *mynne* in O; cf. *reminisci* L, *remembrer* F.
the[1]] *in* θ (−P); om. C^1. Perhaps in O *the rumours and the;* cf. *rumores* L, *les nouvelles* F. Possibly the otiose *ryght* is a remnant of this phrase.
***310** **lien]** *ben* O′; but *iacere* L, *gisent* F.

Metrum 5 **35** **So]** Perhaps *I see* in O; cf. *Je voy que* F.
49 **peple]** *the peple* θ Sal Lid Rob.

Prosa 5 **18** **emperoures]** Perhaps *emperyë* in O; cf. *imperio* L, *empire* F.
19 **weren]** Perhaps *weren whilom* in O; cf. *quondam* L, *jadis* F.
20 **that[2]]** *he* B Auct; om. Lid Rob.
27 **cite]** May represent an erroneous gloss taken into the text; cf. *qua* L (sc. *lege*), *par la quelle* F (sc. *loy*).
32 **and the clos]** C^2 only; *and þe closing* B; om. all others. Perhaps an English gloss taken into the text of C^2 B.
49 **honestete]** C^1 Hn only; *honeste* α (−C^1) C^2; *vnhonestee* ι Auct.
58–59 **wrongdede]** *wrongful dede* θ β Lid Rob.
***68** **turbacions]** *tribulacions* O′; but *tumultus* L, *turbacions* F.

Metrum 6 **20** **devyded]** *denyed* H; *dampned* Sal. Perhaps *brydeled* in O; cf. *cohercuit* L (*alligando eas propriis officiis* T), *refrenees* F. Chaucer routinely translated *coercere* with a doublet consisting of *constreyne* and a verb derived from F.

Prosa 6 ***13** **folie]** Lid Rob; *fortune* O′; but *temeritate* L, *folie* F.
17 **it is]** C^1 Auct only; all others transpose.
***36** **by]** Om. O′; but *robore* L, *par* F; *thorw* Lid Rob.
***37** **and]** Lid Rob; *is* O′; but cf. *hiante* L, *derompue et ouverte* F.
***62** **woot wel that I]** Om. O′; but *esse me sciam* L, *ne sai je bien que je sui* F.
***75** **and despoyled]** Om. O′; but *exulem . . . et expoliatum* L, *exilléz et . . . despoilliéz* F.
87 **noryssynges]** Singular in θ (−P) Lid Rob (*fomitem* L), *trust* B. But Chaucer seems frequently indifferent to distinctions of number in the original.
***100** **that]** Lid Rob; *and that* O′; but *hanc* L, *la* F.

Metrum 7 **7** **withstande]** C^2 only; *withstant* all others (and Lid). Perhaps *wawe . . . was . . . withstant* in O; cf. *vnda . . . obstat* L, *l'unde . . . empeesche* F.
18 **foure]** Om. γ ϵ Lid.

Additional corrections of C^1:

Metrum 1 **24** **the]** *þe sil* (perhaps expunged). **26** **for]** Om. **29** **unagreable]** *vngreable.*

Prosa 1 **11** **nat]** Om. γ. **16** **the[1]]** Om. **19** **the]** *ich.* **20** **of right]** *riȝt of wol.* **34** **ther]** *þei;* Om. ϵ. **54** **tho]** *þe two.* **57** **corn]** *cornes* C^1 ι. **76** **schewynge]** *schewen.* **88** **seyn]** *seyn off* (later).

Metrum 2 **4** **as[2]]** Om. **8** **wont]** *won.* **32** **the]** Om. C^1 ϵ P ι. **fool]** *foule* α (−P Th) ι; *foltes* Auct.

Prosa 2 **7** **to]** *into.* **23** **yif]** *ȝif it.*

Metrum 3 **7** **that[2]]** Om. C^1 H θ Auct.

Prosa 3 **5** **byholde]** *byhelde* α (−P) Auct. **46** **of men]** Om.; *of* θ (−P); *of some men* Hn. **tho]** *þe* (since *e* and *o* are frequently indistinguishable in C^1, subsequently such apparent variation of C^1 is not noted). **57** **Soranas]** *Soronas* γ; *Soranos* θ (−P); *Sorans* δ; *Sorancis* ι Auct. **59** **ne]** Om. γ B. **77** **fro]** Om.; *for* B. **78** **palys]** *paleys* γ H θ ι Auct.

Metrum 4 **15** **ne]** *and.* **16** **unmyghty]** *vnmygthy* (a common form for *-ght*, which, like the far rarer *-gth(t)*, is not henceforth noted).

Prosa 4 **7** **I that]** Transposed. **19** **or]** *and* γ ϵ Sal. **30–31** **so befille]** *be so fille.* **56** **fortunes]** *fortune.* **65** **tormentyde]** *tormentyden* C^1 B θ C^2. **76** **a]** Om. γ. **102** **Is it]** Transposed. **102** **nat]** Om. C^1 B. **108** **tho]** *the* γ H P A^1 Auct Lid Rob. **124** **on]** *in* C^1 Sal. **143, 151** **accusour]** *accusours.* **148** **I schal]** γ ϵ transpose. **181** **by]** *byfore; of* θ Auct. **193** **the]** Om. **195** **as]** *and.* **204** **wilned]** *wilnen; wil* H. **213** **the]** Om. C^1 C^2. **216** **the[1]]** Om. C^1 H. **218** **peril]** *gret peril.* **240** **now]** Om.; added B. **243** **studie]** *studies* C^1 H θ (−P) Auct. **254** **thou]** *though.* **256** **ne[2]]** Om. γ B Sal Auct. **262** **goddes]** *goodes* γ. **was]** *is* γ B Auct; *nys* H; *nas* P Hn; om. C^2. **275** **am]** Om. γ H. **278** **yif]** Om. **283** **ne]** Om. C^1 Auct. **316** **in]** *on.*

Metrum 5 **2** **art]** *arn* γ H. **21** **yer]** *eyr* C^1 B. **25** **in]** Om. α Hn. **31** **thou]** Om. γ ϵ. **32** **refusestow]** *refusedestow.* **42** **derke]** Om. γ B Auct. **58** **governest]** *gouernedest.* **the]** Om. C^1 θ (−P).

Prosa 5 **15** **ne]** Om. C^1 B. **29** **founden]** *to founden.* **sete]** *cite.* **32** **palys]** *palays* γ H θ A^1 Auct. **35** **wil]** *wel* C^1 Auct. **38** **so]** *as.* **39** **axe]** *axen.* **41** **sete]** *cite* C^1 Sal. **55** **tho]** *the* C^1 θ Sal; *to* A^2. **62** **eschaufede]** *enchaufede; echaufed* A^2 P; *enchaced* θ (−P). **63** **ne]** Om. C^1 B θ.

Metrum 6 **18** **offices]** *office* C^1 Auct.

Prosa 6 **28** **with]** *with the.* **55** **Remem-]** *Reme-* (a common form, not henceforth noted). **76** **of]** *fro* γ ϵ Auct. **80** **whiche]** *swiche.* **the]** *how the.* **89 nis]** *is* C^1 B θ (−P) Lid Rob; *nil* A^2. **90** **underput]** *vnderupt.* **91–94** **but . . . But]** *But* γ ϵ.

Metrum 7 **4** **medleth]** *medleeth.*

BOOK II

Prosa 1 **3** **she seyde thus]** Om. α Rob Lid; but *sic exorsa est* L (F is fully translated as the gloss).
10 **desfeted]** "Withered away"; other eds. emend to *deffeted,* but the form is a possible, if unique, reflex of OF *desfait* (F *te defaus*).
27–28 **and despysen]** Om. γ ϵ ι Lid; but *ostendendo eam contempnendam* T, *et la despisaies* F, both explaining the verb rendered as *pursuydest* in 30.
53 **maneres]** Perhaps O added *this is hir nature;* cf. *ista natura* L, *tele est sa nature* F.
***79** **and]** Om. O′; but *et* L F.
88 **fro adversite into prosperite]** Perhaps *fro prosperite into adversite and fro adversite into prosperite* in O; cf. *tam in prosperitate quam in aduersitate* T and lines 89–91.