

= Consolatio (Cicero) =

Consolatio or " Consolation " is a lost work written by Marcus Tullius Cicero in the year 45 BC . The work had been written to soothe his grief after the death of his daughter , Tullia , which had occurred in February of the same year . Not much is known about the work , although it seems to have been inspired by the Greek philosopher Crantor 's ancient work *De Luctu* (" On Grief ") , and its structure was probably similar to a series of letter correspondences between Servius Sulpicius Rufus and Cicero .

Fragments of the work survive , having been quoted by Lactantius , and Jerome makes note of the work in a consolatory letter to Heliodorus of Altino . A popular piece of writing until its loss , the Consolatio is widely accepted as the distinct work that transmitted the earlier consolatio literary tradition to the Romans of the late Republic . In 1583 , Italian scholar Carlo Sigonio claimed to have discovered a non @-@ fragmentary version of the Consolatio , although most scholars now agree that this work was either a fraud or a hoax , with modern stylometric methods seeming to back this up .

= = Background = =

Marcus Tullius Cicero (January 3 , 106 BC ? December 7 , 43 BC) was an Ancient Roman philosopher and politician , famous for his oratory skills . He came from a wealthy municipal family of the Roman equestrian order , and is widely considered one of Rome 's greatest orators , and one of the premier prose stylists during the Golden Age of Latin . Tullia Ciceronis (August 5 , 79 BC or 78 BC ? February 45 BC) , Cicero 's daughter , died in the winter of 45 BC after giving birth to her second son ; this caused Cicero to go into a period of deep mourning .

Cicero decided to stay with his friend Titus Pomponius Atticus for a time , during which he perused Atticus 's library , reading any and all books that dealt with overcoming grief . Unsatisfied with what he found , he relocated to his villa at Astura , where he composed the Consolatio . It was during this time that he also wrote the famed ? and now lost ? dialogue *Hortensius* . Cicero later opined that the Consolatio was written in an attempt not only to heal himself emotionally , but also to benefit others who are mourning or experiencing sadness .

= = Composition = =

A reference to the Consolatio made by the Christian theologian Jerome in a consolation letter to Heliodorus of Altino concerning the death of St. Nepotian suggests that the work was heavily based on the Greek philosopher Crantor 's ancient work *De Luctu* (" On Grief ") . Paul MacKendrick argues that the general outline for the Consolatio can be deduced based both on the structure used by Servius Sulpicius Rufus in a consolation letter sent to Cicero following Tullia 's death , as well as the structure of Cicero 's reply . From what little remains of the work , it would appear that the piece was addressed to Cicero himself . A novel part of the Consolatio seems to be Cicero 's idea that Tullia deserves to be deified into a god . Cicero notes that , in order for his plan to work , her assent must both be recognized by the gods , as well as the Roman public . In order to win over the public , he concludes that he will build Tullia a shrine .

The only extant pieces of the Consolatio are fragments , of which seven were preserved by the early Christian author Lactantius in his work *Divinarum Institutionum* (*The Divine Institutes*) . In the work , Lactantius used the excerpt from the Consolatio both to point out the futility of paganism , as well as to argue that pagans actually accept some tenets of Christianity , without them even realizing it . Lactantius criticized what Cicero wrote , but also applauded Cicero for paralleling ? albeit coincidentally ? what the Bible says at times . However , the quotes preserved by Lactantius have been criticized due to their lack of context . MacKendrick notes that Lactantius was using partial quotations in order to frame what Cicero wrote so that Lactantius could more easily refute his ideas . Other excerpts from the Consolatio were preserved by Cicero himself , of which two sections were quoted by him in his *Tusculanae Disputationes* .

Another important reference to the work can be found in the aforementioned letter by Jerome addressed to Heliodorus ; Jerome noted that the *Consolatio* contained references to " men who showed equal fortitude in sorrow and war , and whose bereavements [Cicero] has set forth in his book " .

= = Legacy = =

The work was of major importance , and today the *Consolatio* is widely accepted as the distinct work that transmitted the earlier *consolatio* literary tradition to the Romans of the late Republic . The work supposedly survived well into the 15th century ; St. Ambrose Traversari claimed to have discovered a copy of the text at Perugia , Italy in 1432 AD .

= = = Forgery = = =

In 1583 , Italian scholar Carlo Sigonio claimed to have discovered a non @-@ fragmentary version of the *Consolatio* . While this news was met with excitement at first , scholars ? after reading the work ? began to argue that the manuscript was a fraud , with humanist Antonio Riccoboni being among the most vocal . However , Sigonio continued to defend the work until his death , even mentioning in two different orations his belief in the truthfulness of the text . The scholar Latino Latini , however , later claimed in a letter that Sigonio had admitted to the forgery on his deathbed . By and large , the academic community concluded that the version of the *Consolatio* discovered was not genuine , and the document later earned the name the Pseudo @-@ Ciceronian *Consolatio* .

Despite the gradual condemnation of the work and the accusation that Sigonio had created it himself , there were some holdouts . Robinson Ellis , in 1893 , argued that the Pseudo @-@ Ciceronian *Consolatio* , while probably not a genuine work of Cicero 's , was not a forgery by Sigonio . He reasoned that , because St. Ambrose Traversari had claimed to have found a copy of the work so close to its rediscovery by Sigonio in 1583 , it was possible that Sigonio had simply found the Perugian text . He also proposed the idea that , because the Pseudo @-@ Ciceronian *Consolatio* contained all of the extant fragments from Lactantius 's work , the true *Consolatio* had been lost and replaced by a " spurious one " in the distant past that was read by Lactantius , Augustine , and Jerome , who mistakenly assumed its veracity ; this false *Consolatio* was then rediscovered by Sigonio , who unwittingly believed it also to be genuine . Finally , Ellis argued that , because Sigonio was a man of " high character " who had spent much of his life editing the fragments of Cicero , for Sigonio to stoop to forgery would have been completely out of character .

In 1999 , Richard Forsyth , David Holmes , and Emily Tse used linguistic techniques to test the veracity of the document . The paper differentiated between two types of Latin : Cicero 's writing and " Ciceronianism " , which is a style of New Latin popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that sought to emulate the style of Cicero . Forsyth , Holmes , and Tse argued that , if the Pseudo @-@ Ciceronian *Consolatio* were devoid of " Ciceronianism " , that is to say New Latin , it could be accepted as a genuine work of Cicero . Forsyth , Holmes , and Tse collected six Classical Latin authors (Cicero , Julius Caesar , Cornelius Nepos , Gaius Sallustius Crispus , Lucius Annaeus Seneca , and Publius Cornelius Tacitus) , and five New Latin authors (Sigonio , Piero Vettori , Marc @-@ Antoine Muret , Bernadino di Loredan , and Riccoboni) and compared them using stylometric methods . The three concluded that the text of the Pseudo @-@ Ciceronian *Consolatio* is " extremely uncharacteristic of Cicero , and indeed that the text is much more likely to have been written during the Renaissance than in classical times . " Furthermore , the study also provided evidence that the work matched more closely with the style of Sigonio , rather than any of the other New Latin writers , suggesting that he created the document .