The Reception and Transmission of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* in Late Medieval England

Kathryn Peak
St Cross College
University of Oxford

Abstract

This study advances our understanding of how Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* was read in England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The reception of the *Consolatio* does not conform to easy categorisation; it was a popular text in the Middle Ages, equally at home in secular and religious contexts. It could sit happily with Boethius's other works which formed part of the university quadrivium but also lent itself to literary interpretation and reinvention. It is therefore useful to study the work's material transmission, to gain a wider perspective of the nature of reception and transmission of texts in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England.

This thesis takes a manuscript-centred approach, and through a series of case studies and sampled groups of copies it considers how the work was read and renewed. The high esteem in which the text was held promoted copying and annotation, and encouraged commentaries to be written that circulated as texts in their own right. Further interpretation came from those who, like Chaucer and Walton, translated the text while integrating material from commentary and other sources. The *Consolatio* was rarely left alone as an unadorned manuscript, but invited multiple kinds of response with differing degrees of formality. These responses do not cleanly divide between the scholar working in Latin and a vernacular, secular use of the *Consolatio*. The Latin text and responses were used in secular and literary contexts just as text and commentary in English could be created and used by academic scholars.

The first chapter examines English copies of the *Consolatio* from the tenth to the thirteenth century, to consider how these manuscripts changed use in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries which are the thesis's focus, and why late medieval readers continued to use these

earlier materials. The second chapter weighs up the evidence of educational use of the *Consolatio*, and through a survey of manuscripts it considers how use divides between pupils learning Latin in school, engagement by university scholars as an extension of the curriculum, and use by fellows and clerics to support individual research interests. The third chapter continues the analysis of schoolbooks through a case study of the commentary to the *Consolatio* by schoolmaster William of Wheteley, considering how he used the text in his attempts at professional preferment. The fourth chapter looks at the commentary to the *Consolatio* by Nicholas Trevet, both its broad use and its influence, with a particular case study of one bilingual manuscript which combines Trevet's commentary with Chaucer's translation. The fifth chapter examines *The Boke of Counfort of Bois,* a fifteenth-century rendering of Book 1 of the *Consolatio* using Chaucer's translation; the chapter considers both its textual construction and the codicological evidence from its single witness. The sixth chapter looks at the translation by John Walton, with a particular study of the commentary to the translation. The conclusion draws together the evidence of the previous chapters and sets out an amended understanding of the medieval *Consolatio* as a text that defies scholarly, pedagogical, and literary boundaries, and nods towards the implications of a manuscript-centred approach for our reading of the text. For when we analyse the *Consolatio* in its material form we discover greater complexity and nuance in its use, and we can better appreciate how the text was altered and mediated by its creators and users.

Contents

Acknowledgments 5

Conventions and Short Forms 8

Introduction 13

1. Putting an old book to good use? 35

2. The *Consolatio* as textbook 81

3. The work of a schoolmaster: William of Wheteley's commentary 114

4. The Scholar's Commentary? Trevet, Chaucer, and the *Consolatio* 150

5. *The Boke of Counfort of Bois*: an exercise in borrowing and response 177

6. Walton's *Boethius*: text and commentary as *translatio* 215

Conclusion 265

Bibliography 272

Acknowledgments

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Daniel Wakelin. He has been extremely patient, and generous with his time and comments. His humour and encouragement have kept me afloat.

My college, St Cross, has been my supportive home from home in Oxford, and I have been blessed by the goodwill I have received from staff within the college. I also need to thank the staff of the Disability Advisory Service at the University of Oxford, whose help has been transformative.

My research has required many visits to libraries, and I am extremely grateful to the library staff of the following institutions: the Bodleian Libraries; the Manuscripts Reading Room of the British Library; the Special Collections Reading Room of Cambridge University Library; the Special Collections Reading Room of the University of Reading; Salisbury Cathedral; Lincoln Cathedral; Kent Records and Archives in Maidstone; the Barker Library of Durham University; Hereford Cathedral; New College, Oxford; Exeter College, Oxford; Magdalen College, Oxford; the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge; Jesus College, Cambridge; and the Royal Library in Copenhagen. I have received a great deal of support and enlightenment from library professionals, and I am particularly grateful to the many library staff during the COVID-19 pandemic who helped me when the libraries were shut, and who gave me access to libraries during the brief periods of respite between lockdowns.

I was fortunate to be able to present early drafts of chapters in this thesis at the conference of the Early Book Society in Dublin, at the Colloque international de paléographie latine in Florence, and at the conference on Medieval Publishing organised by the University

of Helsinki and held at Jesus College, Oxford. Each of these events led to useful conversations that improved my work, for which I am grateful.

Several individuals have offered ideas and given me opportunities to develop my research. They include Jakub Kujawiński of the University of Poznań; David Rundle of the University of Kent; Simon Horobin of Magdalen College, Oxford; Lesley Smith of Harris Manchester College, Oxford; Nicholas Orme of the University of Exeter; and Andrew Honey, Andrew Dunning, and Matthew Holford, all of the Weston Library in Oxford. The Library and Information History Group of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, with whom I have a close association, has been patient and supportive while I completed my thesis, and I am particularly grateful to Jill Dye of National Museums Scotland, whose mentorship has been inspiring.

There are a few institutions in Oxford who have been especially supportive and offered me encouragement when it was most needed. These include the committee of English Graduates at Oxford; Pusey House Library; the library and archive staff of Magdalen College, Oxford; and the staff of the Weston Library Manuscripts and Special Collections Reading Room.

I will always be grateful for the love and support I received from Eve and Chris Baker, especially in the early days of my research. I know Eve would have been so delighted to see my efforts come to fruition. I also want to thank my parents, Sylvia and David Peak, who have been unstinting in their enthusiasm for my academic achievements, cheering me on from the sidelines, as well as offering a much needed spare bed for research trips up north.

I wish to offer my love and thanks to Jim and Clara Powers, who have grown up with medieval manuscripts, and who have been stoic and graceful in the face of my repeated absences and preoccupations.

Finally, I want to thank Malcolm Powers. His unwavering faith in me has steered this thesis past its many hurdles. Without his love, support, and encouragement, this thesis would never have been finished.

Conventions and Short Forms

Conventions

Manuscripts are in the first instance identified by place, library, and shelfmark, but this is shortened in subsequent references. Evidence within manuscripts is referred to by shelfmark and folio number. Pagination is occasionally referred to where this is pertinent to the manuscript copy.

The rules of transcription vary from one chapter to another, depending on the context. For instance, when comparing codicological data between manuscript copies, the precise transcription is necessary. Where transcription is from the manuscript, I have maintained scribes' use of the graphs **v** and **u**. I have not used **J** in transcriptions; for instance, 'Johannes' is transcribed as 'Iohannes'. Where punctuation has been modernised for clarity this is specified. Abbreviations and contractions have been silently expanded.

In other cases, when considering a text across multiple witnesses, it is more appropriate to cite a modern edition, such as Tim William Machan's edition of Chaucer's *Boece*, the *Loeb Boethius*, or Taite Silk's unpublished edition of Trevet's commentary, in which cases I maintain that edition's punctuation, tabulation, and use of capitals. Quotations from the *Loeb Boethius* are given with that edition's translation. Other translations, with modern punctuation, are my own, unless specified. Quotations from Chaucer's works other than *Boece* are taken from the *Riverside Chaucer*, and that edition's line numbers are included. When citing the Tavistock Boethius, I give the page number for Mark Science's EETS edition of Walton's *Boethius*, which was transcribed from the Tavistock copy.

Unless there is an existing convention, names have been anglicised; for instance, Guillaume de Conches is referred to as William of Conches.

Short Forms

BL	British Library
BL Cat	British Library detailed records of Western manuscripts <www.bl.uk>
Black and Pomaro	Robert Black and Gabriella Pomaro, *La Consolazione della Filosofia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento Italiano: Libri di scuola e glosse nei manoscritti fiorentini* (Firenze: SISMEL edizioni del Galuzzo, 2000)
BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
BoC	Anon., 'The Boke of Coumfort of Bois [Bodleian Library, Oxford MS Auct. F.3.5]' ed. by Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr, Jason Edward Streed, William H. Watts, and Philip Edward Phillips in *New Directions in Boethian Studies*, ed. Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr. and Philip Edward Phillips (Kalamazoo MI: Western Michigan University, 2007)
BodL	Oxford, Bodleian Libraries
CB	M. T. Gibson, Lesley Smith, and Marina Passalacqua, *Codices Boethiani: A Conspectus of Manuscripts of the Works of Boethius*, 4 vols (London: The Warburg Institute, 1995-2009)
CHB2	Nigel Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume II, 1100-1400* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)
CHB3	Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume III, 1400-1557* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
CJC	Cambridge, Jesus College
CMP	*Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, 5 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1856-67)
Consolatio	Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*

Copeland	Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
CPC	Cambridge, Pembroke College
CPH	Cambridge, Peterhouse
CUL	Cambridge University Library
Disciplina	pseudo-Boethius, *De Disciplina Scholarium*
DPBO	*David Pearson Book Owners Online* <https://bookowners.online/Main_Page>
DUL	Durham University Library
ESTC	*English Short Title Catalogue* <estc.bl.uk>
Gibson	Margaret Gibson, ed., *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981)
Gillespie and Wakelin	Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin, eds., *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)
Griffiths	Jane Griffiths, *Diverting Authorities: Experimental Glossing Practices in Manuscript and Print* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)
GUL	Glasgow University Library
HCL	Hereford Cathedral Library
Hoenen and Nauta	J. F. M. Hoenen and Lodi Nauta, eds., *Boethius in the Middle Ages: Latin and Vernacular Traditions of the Consolatio Philosophiae* (Leiden: Brill, 1997)
HUO2	*The History of the University of Oxford: Volume II, Late Medieval Oxford*, ed. J. I. Catto and Ralph Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

LALME	Angus McIntosh, M. L. Samuels, and Michael Benskin, *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986)
LCL	Lincoln Cathedral Library
McKenzie	D. F. McKenzie, *Making Meaning: "Printers of the Mind" and Other Essays*, ed. Peter D. McDonald and Michael F. Suarez, S. J. (Amherst MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002)
Minnis, *Chaucer*	A. J. Minnis, ed., *Chaucer's Boece and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993)
Minnis, *Medieval*	A. J. Minnis, ed., *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of De Consolatione Philosphiae* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987)
MLGB3	*Medieval Libraries of Great Britain* <http://mlgb3.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>
MMOL	*Medieval Manuscripts in Oxford Libraries* <https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NLW	National Library of Wales
OBC	Oxford, Balliol College
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://www.oxforddnb.com/
OEB	Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine, eds., *The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius's De Consolatione Philosophiae, 2 vols.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)
OEC	Oxford, Exeter College
OMC	Oxford, Madgalen College
ONC	Oxford, New College

Orme	Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2006)
Riverside	*The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed., ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
SCL	Salisbury Cathedral Library
SC	*A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, 7 vols, ed. Falconer Madan and R. W. Hunt (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1895-1953)
Science	John Walton, trans., Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. Mark Science EETS os 170 (London: Early English Text Society, 1927)
Spaces	Mary C. Flannery and Carrie Griffin, eds., *Spaces For Reading in Later Medieval England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)
Szirmai	J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (London: Routledge, 2017)
Tester	Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. S. J. Tester (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1973)
Thomson with Clark	Rodney M. Thomson, ed., with the assistance of James G. Clark, *The University and College Libraries of Oxford* (London: British Library, 2015)
USTC	*Universal Short Title Catalogue* <https://www.ustc.ac.uk/>

A poem like a missal found
In the mud, a missal for that young man,

That scholar hungriest for that book,
The very book, or, less, a page

Or, at the very least, a phrase, that phrase,
A hawk of life, that latined phrase:

To know; a missal for brooding-sight.
To meet that hawk's eye and to flinch

Not at the eye but at the joy of it.
I play. But this is what I think.

[Wallace Stevens, 'The Man With the Blue Guitar' in *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1984), 165-84 (177-8)]

Introduction

This thesis is concerned with Boethius's great late classical prison text, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, and tells the story of how the text was read, copied, and created anew in England in the late Middle Ages. This is a story oft told, but one usually informed by the close analysis of a given text, be that Boethius's original Latin work, Chaucer's translation, or Walton's verse translation. This thesis is not ambivalent about the importance of the primary voice, but shifts the focus to objects – the manuscripts, their bindings, the paratexts, signs of use and ownership – and to the secondary representations of the *Consolatio* – the glosses, commentaries, and adaptations – that reflect the diverse scope of interest in Boethius in late medieval England. These secondary representations tell us more about how Boethius was received, always in these mediated forms, than Boethius's original text. Like Wallace Stevens' man with the blue guitar, the *Consolatio* through this late medieval lens becomes a thing always altered, never showing things quite as they are, ideas filtered through adaptive texts and the manuscripts that hold them.

One such manuscript of interest is Oxford, Magdalen College, MS Lat. 196.[1] This copy of the Latin *Consolatio*, dated 1459 in the manuscript, was the scribal creation of Thomas Candour, an English cleric with several benefices in England but whose role of most relevance took place at the papal curia. Having learnt the humanist *littera antiqua* during his time in Italy, he then applied this to codices he made back in England. His copy of the *Consolatio* is interesting on several counts. The scribal hand is clearly English, which A. C.

[1] Ralph Hanna, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts of Magdalen College, Oxford*, unpublished notes, 922-4; David Rundle, 'The Scribe Thomas Candour and the Making of Poggio Bracciolini's English Reputation' in *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700, vol 12 (Scribes and Transmission in English Manuscripts 1400-1700)*, ed. by Peter Beal and A. S. G. Edwards (London: British Library, 2005), 1-25 (15-6).

de la Mare identifies as Candour's.[2] It is consciously archaic, with Italian decoration, which suggests that Candour either copied it while abroad or took it with him on one of his trips to Italy. It has a marginal commentary based on that by Remigius of Auxerre, including what may be two diagrams associated with the commentary, and frequent interlinear glossing.[3]

Candour designed the *mise en page* for commentary to be included, with a text box divided to give columns for initials, primary text, and commentary. (A separate column for initials is another archaizing feature, commonly seen in earlier medieval manuscripts.) The text is also spaciously laid out to allow interlinear glossing.[4] This sense of a cohesive design is confirmed by the scribal hand. Candour's hand is evident in all three elements – primary text, interlinear gloss, and the Remigian marginal gloss – with each part well thought out in relation to the rest of the page.[5] For instance, Candour adds *signes de renvoi* to the marginal commentary, repeated next to brief interlinear glosses, likely of his own authorship.[6] In doing so, Candour retains the *auctoritas* of the commentary while simultaneously adding new data to the paratextual structure. He makes the Boethian response something new, whilst never ignoring the value applied to earlier scholarship.

---

[2] A. C. de la Mare, 'Humanistic Hands in England' in *Manuscripts at Oxford: an exhibition in memory of Richard William Hunt (1908-1979), Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library Oxford, 1945-1975, on themes selected and described by some of his friends*, ed. by A. C. de la Mare and B. C. Barker-Benfield (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1980), 93-101 (96).

[3] The commentary is noteworthy in not being humanist but the earliest complete commentary, dating from the late ninth century. See Pierre Courcelle, *La Consolation de Philosophie dans la Tradition Littéraire: Antécedents et Postérité de Boèce* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1967), 254-9. The diagrams, now very faded by water damage, are included on OMC, MS lat 196, ff.22^{v} and 23^{r}. They are circular, drawn by compass, and now have illegible text written across the middle.

[4] Candour includes dialogue markers to indicate in certain passages where Boethius and Philosophy are speaking, but unusually these are also located in the space designated for interlinear gloss rather than in the outer margin, as is more common. This can be seen, for instance, on OMC, MS lat 196, f.34^{v}.

[5] Where the scribe uses a curved rather than an upright **s** he tends to drop the final tail of the letter below the line. This is visible in both body and gloss texts. The **d** is the same in both, with a slight kink to the top of the ascender. Majuscule **A** is always written as a Roman capital rather than the insular **a**. Furthermore, red infill is added to both the body text and gloss text in the same way, with a hatched, skeletal infill. Admittedly the infill could have been added later, but it is hard to see this being done by anyone other than the scribe, and looks to have been done contemporaneously with the marginal commentary.

[6] For instance, on OMC, MS lat 196, f.12^{v}.

Furthermore, where interlinear glossing occurs in Boethian manuscripts they tend to be very brief – one or two words, usually to clarify the Latin – but Candour reveals his intellectual curiosity about the text by including many longer glosses amongst the shorter ones.[7] It is almost as if there are two commentaries going on here; the planned, 'formal' commentary by Remigius in the outer column, and an informal interlinear commentary, composed by Candour or perhaps taking marginal notes from his exemplar and incorporating them into this secondary work. Either way it shows that Candour was not just a copier of Boethius or of Boethian commentary, but was actively interrogating the text. The resulting manuscript therefore fulfils several roles: as a copy of a text and related secondary material, as the evidence of a self-pedagogic process – reading, learning, and applying this new knowledge to the page – and then, when complete, as a multi-layered text placed at the disposal of other contemporary and future readers.

In this case we are lucky enough to have more than one *ex libris* from Candour in the manuscript, which gives us biographical information to add to the evidence of the manuscript itself. Furthermore, the idiosyncrasy of Candour's humanistic hand has allowed us to recognise his work in other manuscripts, including another Latin copy of the *Consolatio* at New College, Oxford, where his handiwork is seen not in the primary text but in the glosses he added to the margins, with the same pattern of both marginal and interlinear annotation.[8]

---

[7] For instance, on OMC, MS Lat. 196, f.3^{v}, referring to Thrace in 1m3: 'a vallibus concauie tracie regionis' ('in the hollow valleys of the region of Thrace') and 'lacessitam id est provocatam/imitatem et multa pericula passam' ('she was excited, that is provoked/imitated and suffered many dangers') for 1p3, and on f.5^{v}: 'quia rem pub amabam et omnium vtilitati prouidem curabam' ('because I loved the state and cared to provide for the welfare of all').

[8] See David Rundle, 'Scribe Thomas Candour', 2, 18-9. Oxford, New College, MS 265. H. O. Coxe, *Catalogus Codicum MSS. qui in Collegiis Aulisque Oxoniensibus Hodie Adservantur* (Oxford: academico typographeo, 1852), Collegii Novi 95. This Italian manuscript was not written by Candour and was not spaced to allow interlinear glossing. Nonetheless, in the same humanistic hand as the main text of OMC MS Lat. 196 Candour adds interlinear glossing in a tiny but surprisingly legible hand. Candour also added annotation to other manuscripts held in New College, such as a volume of Livy's Decades, MS 277. He largely follows the same pattern of glossing as in the Boethian manuscripts, though he tends to place his glosses in the outer margin, with fine lines added to the primary text to denote to where marginal notes are referring, which would suggest that to Candour the cognitive distinction of interlinear personal notes and marginal commentary is maintained.

Beyond being by a better-known scribe, however, Magdalen MS Lat. 196 is typical of the codices interrogated in this thesis; that is, copies of the *Consolatio* or its associated commentaries, translations, and adaptations, that have a reasonably secure origin in fourteenth and fifteenth century England, or, in the case of one chapter, in earlier manuscripts with significant signs of use and adaptation in the later medieval period.

Indeed, if Candour's manuscript is typical of the kind of codex that is the focus of this thesis, then Candour is typical of the creators, adaptors, readers, and owners of these physical objects that inform a deeper understanding of how Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* was received and transmitted. They were often priests or those under holy orders. They were often teachers in various guises, and some had access to libraries both personal and institutional, either with the financial means to buy books or with access to the skills and communities of learning and scribal copying to make and adapt books for themselves. This making could be for their own purposes or to serve others, whether that be an institution, their students, or a private patron. It is important, then, to stress that a great deal of the provenance information examined in this thesis yields evidence of use and ownership by clerics and teachers, for texts both in Latin and in the vernacular. Indeed, many of the extant copies of the *Consolatio* and Boethian adaptation, commentary, and translation, have survived thanks to their ownership by university and college libraries, often going back to very shortly after their medieval creation. However, while absence of evidence does not mean evidence of absence, as scholars we must take care that we are not so concerned with what we have lost that we lose sight of the value of what remains. While the overall picture of copying and use of the *Consolatio* is inevitably incomplete, that does not negate the importance of the manuscripts still available to us. Their stories are still valid, as this thesis will demonstrate.[9]

[9] For more on the rate of manuscript loss, c.f. Mike Kestemont, Folgert Karsdorp, Elisabeth de Bruijn, Matthew Driscoll, Katarzyna A. Kapitan, Pàdraig Ó Macháin, Daniel Sawyer, Remco Sleiderink, and Anne Chao, 'Forgotten Books: The Application of Unseen Species Models to the Survival of Culture', *Science*, 375 (2022), 765-9 (766).

Why should this matter to us, and how might this fundamental underpinning help us to answer important questions about the late medieval readership of the *Consolatio*? D. F. McKenzie understood the practice of bibliography as being one that 'cannot exclude from its proper concerns the relation between form, function, and symbolic meaning.'[10] However, he goes further to recognise that if 'forms effect meaning' then a full consideration of a text 'allows us to describe not only the technical but the social processes of their transmission'.[11] There is, therefore a continual pinball effect that scholarly analysis can illuminate. A text is commissioned for a purpose, the author composes their text, it is designed, written, and decorated by scribe and limner, and bound in a variety of forms by the bookbinder. It is then owned, read, borrowed, used as surety, scribbled in, glossed, taken apart, put back together in a new form, scribbled in again, and new glosses added. If the book is lucky, it will be read and read again by a variety of different readers, who will interpret the text in their own way, prejudiced as they are by cultural baggage and readerly needs. Eventually, if the book is unlucky, it will be either lost in fire or flood, eaten by mice or insects, or will be subjected to the ignominy of being taken apart and used as wrapping and binding for other texts or as lining for another object such as a hat or a box. Such is the life of a book. To study a text may be vital as one part of our understanding of it, but the meaning cannot be distilled into its essence by the words alone. As McKenzie put it, 'Meanings are not therefore inherent but are constructed by successive interpretative acts by those who write, design and print books, and by those who buy and read them.'[12] McKenzie may here have been describing the life of a printed book, but it holds just as true if not more so for the text transmitted by scribal manuscript, where scholarship 'would seek to derive its primary evidence from original

[10] D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10.
[11] McKenzie, *Bibliography*, 13.
[12] D. F. McKenzie, *Making Meaning: "Printers of the Mind" and Other Essays*, ed. by Peter D. McDonald and Michael F. Suarez, S. J. (Amherst MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 268.

artefacts as products of distinctive contexts and yet also demonstrate their successive transformations in response to new needs.'[13] This thesis takes this theoretical framework and seeks to make the chain of interpretation more vivid for Boethius's *Consolatio* in late medieval England. This is appropriate because Boethius's reception was often shaped by secondary versions or responses to his text – glosses, commentaries, paratexts, bindings, etc. – alongside or in place of the original Boethian text.

If this theoretical framework is applied more specifically to medieval manuscripts than to McKenzie's broader context, then we are called to consider, what in the manuscript should we be concerned with? What signifiers are most significant? Ruth Carroll and her colleagues give a comprehensive idea of what matters when they argue that 'Research on the late medieval page may address script, colour, and layout; the size, binding, and material of the book itself; and paratextual elements such as tables of contents and running titles.'[14] This thesis looks at these features of the material text in many cases, such as with the archaic hand used by Candour in Magdalen College, MS Lat. 196, or the unusual ruling of Walton's verse translation and commentary in Copenhagen, Royal Library, MS Thott 403 2º (in Chapter 6, below).

To this one can add the catch-all idea of 'notes', which cannot be easily defined by the idea of 'spatial separation' from other elements on the page, but can be considered 'as something commenting on another text or a point in the text, usually with some kind of visual highlighting to separate notes from the text'; such additions can be described variously as 'gloss, marginalia, annotation, and commentary' but all have the virtue of being optional: 'notes can be skipped without the text losing its coherence.'[15] However, such a statement

[13] McKenzie, *Meaning*, 271.
[14] Ruth Carroll, Matti Peikola, Hanna Salmi, Mari-Liisa Varila, Janne Skaffari, and Risto Hiltunen, 'Pragmatics on the Page: Visual Text in Late Medieval English Books', *European Journal of English Studies*, 17 (2013), 54-71 (55).
[15] Sirkku Ruokkeinen and Aino Liira, 'Material Approaches to Exploring the Borders of Paratext', *Textual Cultures*, 11 (2017), 106-129 (120).

must always come with a caveat, that the note on the page will always have some effect on the reader, if only to lend an air of authority and authenticity to the primary text.

These notes in their several forms can not only be situated in different places on the page, writ small or large, rubricated, underlined, decorated, interlinear, marginal, formal, informal, the briefest 'nota' to detailed comments with lemmata, but they also represent a particular act of connectedness to the text. For instance, some notes 'are *retrospective*, because when they were written they recounted an act of reading or reception that had already occurred, and some are *proleptic*, because they describe how people wanted reading or reception to occur in the future.'[16] It may be splitting hairs, but between this retrospective act (even if only by the moment it takes to read, consider, and to place quill to parchment) and the proleptic anticipation of future reading (whether for the scribe of the note or by other readers), there is arguably a third kind of comment, the *performative*, which while necessarily retrospective (it is hard to think and write at exactly the same time), nonetheless is a representation of the thoughts of the reader being elucidated in a circular pattern of present moments as they read, consider, and write the note. To put it another way, writing down our thoughts on the page can often help to clarify to ourselves what we think about the text as we mull it over. The note here is the evidence of the performance of interpretation; showing the ways in which process is important to the person making the book or note, as well as the finished product. For instance, while Candour's interlinear notes in Magdalen College, MS Lat. 196 may be taken from the exemplar he copied from, there is a good chance that what we are witnessing here is Candour (or if not Candour, then the creator of his exemplar) in the act not (or not only) of noting what he has thought about the text, or anticipating a future reader,

[16] Daniel Wakelin, 'Instructing Readers in Fifteenth-Century Poetic Manuscripts', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73 (2010), 433-52 (433-4). These ideas are developed further by Jane Griffiths, *Diverting Authorities: Experimental Glossing Practices in Manuscript and Print* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 4-6.

but giving clarity to himself by the act of writing it down between the lines of the primary text.

Traces of the process of interpretation may be seen in those texts that sit independently of the Latin *Consolatio* such as Chaucer's *Boece*, his prose translation into Middle English, and broader interpretations of the text such as the anonymous adaptation of Book 1 of the *Consolatio*, *The Boke of Counfort of Bois*.[17] It is in consideration of this variety of Boethian response that this thesis sometimes argues for a performative origin to a text, whether the evidence can be found in the margins (such as the commentary to Walton's verse translation) or silently assimilated (like *The Boke of Counfort of Bois*).

Indeed, one of the challenges explored in this thesis is that of considering the extent to which we can see the evidence in late medieval English copies of the *Consolatio* of this kind of performative act being writ out on the page, even if we can only see it refracted through later manuscript witnesses. This is what has been called *exercitatio* by Rita Copeland, a term which she takes from Pliny the Younger to mean 'practice in composition that develops literary technique'.[18] This act of *exercitatio* is an exercise or form of training, which in this context can be understood as the text or commentary becoming both the exercise of 'doing' – of annotating, translating, or adapting – as well as a text for future use. The performative moment does not negate future and different readings of the text.

It is customary in medieval studies to compare different roles using those terms used by Bonaventure, where the scribe, commentator, and writer are identified by the value they

[17] The extent to which Chaucer wrote for his own benefit or for other readers is considered by Ralph Hanna III and Traugott Lawler, notes for *Boece*, *Riverside*, 396. They reject the suggestion that Chaucer wrote for his own use, an argument also made more recently by Alastair J. Minnis and Tim William Machan, 'The Occasion of Chaucer's *Boece*', *New Medieval Literatures 23*, ed. by Philip Knox (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2023), 130-78 (158, 161). *The Boke of Counfort of Bois*, discussed later in the thesis, is found in one manuscript witness, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct F.3.5. Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr., Jason Edward Streed, William H. Watts, and Philip Edward Phillips, eds., 'The Boke of Coumfort of Bois [Bodleian Library, Oxford MS Auct. F.3.5' in *New Directions in Boethian Studies*, ed. by Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr. and Philip Edward Phillips (Kalamazoo MI: Western Michigan University, 2007), 223-79.
[18] Copeland, 31-2.

add to the text; where the scribe adds nothing (and hopefully reproduces the text correctly), the compiler gathers the work of other writers, the commentator explains the text without adding substantially to it, and the writer creates something that can be considered independently of the text they elucidate if they add important ideas to the original.[19] While these roles may not always be so clear-cut to us, we can, however, see that each layer of response brings with it some recognition of the *auctoritas* of the Boethian original, some assimilation of intermediate Boethian material, and a development of new material to add to the mix. This also holds true for the shift of the *Consolatio* into the vernacular – we could easily add the roles of translator and adaptor to Bonaventure's list. As Rita Copeland puts it:

> If there can be challenges to the prestige of preceding vernacular translations, then the vernaculars – and vernacular translations – have already inscribed their power within the system of *translatio studii*, as linguistic traditions that mediate between the ancient *auctores* and ever new receptions of those *auctores*. Intralingual *exercitatio* therefore affirms the capacity of native languages to appropriate and perform the function of *translatio studii* and to assimilate the discourses of academic culture.[20]

Copeland describes this theoretical framework in terms of the primary texts, from Latin to English, say, or from primary text to exegetical adaptation. Consideration of these vernacular transformations makes up a significant feature of this thesis. There were several translations into Middle English, both whole and partial, in prose and verse, assimilating more or less commentary and source material from other texts.

These vernacular adaptations spill into the margins as gloss, and have the effect of giving greater authority to the vernacular text that Copeland describes and upon which it comments. However, if we turn to the manuscript forms of the kinds of works she considers, the additions to the page, and even the way these pages and books are constructed and displayed, add to the picture which she sketches of *auctoritas*, assimilation, rupture, and development. One can never entirely separate one element from another, and recognition of

---

[19] For more on this concept, see Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic literary attitudes in the later Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 94-5.
[20] Copeland, 129.

this feedback loop enables us to see a richer and more informed medieval text by turning to more detailed manuscript evidence than the theoretical model employed by Copeland.

Moreover, this thesis does not only or even primarily focus on these vernacular versions which have been the object of most scholarship on late medieval English responses to Boethius. Rather, it begins from the Latin manuscripts in circulation at that time. If there were readers and copyists, it raises the question, how were they reading, what did they copy, why were they so fascinated with one passage over another? This thesis takes a holistic, codicological view of a text in a place and time, and asks why the text mattered to the reader, through the best evidence we have, the books that they read. To do so, this thesis takes as its scholarly foundation the first volume of the *Codices Boethiani*.[21] That project, which ran to four volumes before being halted, sought to catalogue all extant manuscript copies of Boethius's work (not just the *Consolatio* but also Boethius's commentaries and translations, his works on music and arithmetic, and the *Opuscula Sacra*). Volume One, which covers Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, covers the majority of copies of the *Consolatio* that are fourteenth- or fifteenth- century in origin (or have significant additions from this period), and have a reasonably secure English provenance. Effort has been made to track down copies elsewhere which are not otherwise included in the *Codices Boethiani*, though this effort has been by no means exhaustive, particularly given the availability of sufficient witnesses for study in the UK. Although the authors are clear that their work does not cover vernacular translations or commentaries (such as the extremely popular commentary by the thirteenth-century Dominican Nicholas Trevet) unless they are held with Latin copies of the text, nonetheless the *Codices Boethiani* is designed to be comprehensive enough to inspire further

[21] M. T. Gibson and Lesley Smith, *Codices Boethiani: A Conspectus of Manuscripts of the Works of Boethius: vol 1 (Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland)* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1995).

scholarship and to light the way for development of ideas regarding the late medieval English *Consolatio*.[22]

There are 475 manuscripts of the *Consolatio* or fragments thereof in the four volumes of the *Codices Boethiani*.[23] The project remaining incomplete, these volumes cover the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, the Vatican, Portugal, and Spain. The key territories missing from this picture are the USA, Germany, and France, though undoubtedly there are copies elsewhere. I have made attempts to discover copies in France, though English provenance in those libraries surveyed is surprisingly low, given the porous nature of the exchange of books and ideas across England and France at that time. Of those copies listed in the *Codices Boethiani*, 356 date from the fourteenth century onwards, thirty-eight have a reasonably secure English provenance, and sixteen are English copies from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In particular, the gathering of this dataset allows an appreciation of the *Consolatio* in statistical terms: copies of the text increased in number markedly in the twelfth century, waned slightly in the thirteenth, then exploded in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries before their place was taken by print and vernacular copies of the text.[24] Even accounting for the vagaries of manuscript attrition over time, this still paints a picture of a popular text, well read and much copied.

This thesis has not attempted to be comprehensive. However, most late medieval English copies still extant have been surveyed (as well as some older copies for the first chapter on early manuscripts used at this later date). A close examination has been made of eleven copies of the *Consolatio* alone, as well as a further seven copies of the *Consolatio* bound with Trevet's commentary, three copies of the *Consolatio* with Wheteley's

---

[22] *CB1*, 1, 33.
[23] M. T. Gibson, Lesley Smith, and Marina Passalacqua, *Codices Boethiani: A Conspectus of Manuscripts of the Works of Boethius*, 4 vols (London: The Warburg Institute, 1995-2009).
[24] *CB1*, 25.

commentary, and two copies of the *Consolatio* with Chaucer's *Boece*. Furthermore, this thesis has surveyed the only extant prose version of the *Old English Boethius*, the only witness to *The Boke of Counfort of Bois*, a stand-alone copy of Chaucer's *Boece*, a copy of the pseudo-Boethian *Disciplina Scholarium* with Wheteley's commentary, and five copies of Walton's *Boethius*.

My choices have been partially directed by pragmatic concerns; I did not consult manuscripts in the USA out of a desire to minimize the carbon footprint of my research. On the other hand, I selected manuscripts in Durham, Lincoln, Salisbury, Maidstone, and Hereford out of a conscious desire to broaden the scholarly material concerning Boethian manuscripts beyond an understandable tendency of scholars to rely on copies available in Oxford, Cambridge, and London. In particular, while it would be tempting to only pick those manuscripts with plentiful glossing and provenance data, I have actively tried not to be swayed by such factors, but to reflect what can be seen. In many cases what can be seen is a great deal, and speaks to the degree that scribes wished to mediate reading of Boethian texts and readers wished to reflect upon their own understanding of the text.

It is important to acknowledge that there is already plentiful literature on Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* in the Middle Ages, of which modern scholarship begins with that of Pierre Courcelle in 1967.[25] His seminal work is primarily concerned with the literary elements that make up the *Consolatio*, such as the characters of Philosophy and Fortune, and the prosimetric structure seen in the work of Martianus Capella. Crucially, however, while Courcelle is not overly concerned with the manuscript history of the medieval *Consolatio*, a significant portion of the book is given over to a survey of the commentary traditions. Whereas certain commentaries are particularly well-known, such as those of Remigius of

[25] Pierre Courcelle, *La Consolation de Philosophie dans la tradition littéraire: antécedents et postérité de Boèce* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1967).

Auxerre, William of Conches, and Nicholas Trevet, Courcelle recognises the proliferation of manuscripts, many with commentary, that continued the popularity of the *Consolatio* in the late medieval period, particularly as a pedagogic text.[26]

Conversely, while Courcelle was only concerned with the Latin text and its paratextual support, the 1981 volume of essays edited by Margaret Gibson considered Boethius's Latin texts (not just the *Consolatio*) then broadened the scope of scholarship to consider medieval European vernaculars.[27] Of particular significance are the chapters by Alastair Minnis and Nigel Palmer, which acknowledge the porous nature of translation and adaptation between the Latin and vernacular texts, and set the stage for much of the research that has followed.[28]

Indeed, it is hard to overstate Alastair Minnis's influence on the field of medieval Boethian studies, particularly where it relates to theories of authorship, and though he concerns himself primarily with a structure of literary theory that works effectively when discussing medieval texts and the medieval reception of texts, nonetheless the reader is always aware of the manuscript evidence that is fundamental to the arguments he puts forward.[29] For instance, his analysis of Chaucer's *Boece* and in particular of Chaucer's level of reliance on Trevet's commentary is heavily based on the manuscript evidence, such as Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.3.21 (examined in Chapter 4 of this thesis).[30] Further scholarship, particularly that by Lodi Nauta (both in his edited book with Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen and as a contributor to Minnis's work) examines the reach and influence of the

---

[26] Courcelle, 336.
[27] *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence*, ed. by Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981).
[28] Alastair Minnis, 'Aspects of the Medieval French and English Traditions of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*' in Gibson, 312-361, particularly 313; Nigel F. Palmer, 'Latin and Vernacular in the Northern European Tradition of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*' in Gibson, 362-409, particularly 364-6.
[29] Such as: *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer: 1987); Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988); *Chaucer's* Boece *and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993).
[30] A. J. Minnis, 'Chaucer's Commentator: Nicholas Trevet and the Boece' in Minnis, *Chaucer*, 83-166 (88-9).

commentaries that were read alongside the *Consolatio*, though the broader Continental scope of Nauta's work is less directly relevant to the focus on English manuscripts in this thesis.[31] By far the most indispensable work on Chaucer's *Boece* to this manuscript-focused thesis has been the introduction to Tim William Machan's edition of the text, which serves as a supremely lucid approach to the manuscripts and the evidence of influence, source material, and textual affinity.[32]

While Alastair Minnis's work has focused heavily on Chaucer's *Boece* and the source material for the work, a similar effort has been made by A. S. G. Edwards, and particularly by Ian Johnson, in relation to Walton's *Boethius*.[33] Johnson's work is important in understanding the function of the verse translation, its level of reliance on Chaucer and Trevet, and some of the quirks that have been discovered in attributing the text to Walton, such as the acrostics hidden in the text. In contrast, Edwards' contribution focuses on the manuscript tradition and has been the primary point of departure for the chapter in this thesis. However, with brief comments on glossing and commentary aside, Edwards' focus is not on the commentary, and does not scrutinise the complexity of the commentary or its relationship to the verse translation, or to the manuscript and the early print edition which hold it.

With a few brief exceptions, the literature on Boethius in the late Middle Ages is more focused on the text than manuscript, and where it does consider the manuscript it is mostly for the evidence it provides for textual point. This thesis is instead concerned with the

---

[31] Lodi Nauta, 'The 'Glosa' as Instrument for the Development of Natural Philosophy' and 'The Scholastic Context of the Boethius Commentary by Nicholas Trevet', both in Hoenen and Nauta, 3-67; Lodi Nauta, '*More Platonico loquitur*: What Nicholas Trevet really did to William of Conches', Minnis, *Chaucer*, 1-34.

[32] *Chaucer's Boece: A Critical Edition Based on Cambridge University Library. MS Ii.3.21, ff. 9^{r}-180^{v}*, ed. by Tim William Machan (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2008), xi-xli. Mention must also be made here of the recent essay by Alastair J. Minnis and Tim William Machan, 'The Occasion of Chaucer's *Boece*', which adds greatly to our understanding of the cause of its creation and to the history of CUL MS Ii.3.21, a copy of *Boece*, which is discussed in Chapter 4.

[33] I. R. Johnson, 'Walton's Sapient Orpheus', in Minnis, *Medieval*, 139-68; Ian Johnson, 'Placing Walton's Boethius' in Hoenen and Nauta, 217-42; Ian Johnson, 'New Evidence for the Authorship of Walton's Boethius', *Notes and Queries* (March, 1996), 19-21; A. S. G. Edwards, 'Reading John Walton's Boethius in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries' in *Spaces*, 35-49 (35-6).

reception and transmission of the *Consolatio* in England in the late Middle Ages, as reflected in manuscripts. Jane Griffiths unpacks this approach well when she writes that:

> recent scholarship has tended increasingly to focus on reception and transmission rather than origination; the former is grounded in the evidence provided by material witnesses, whereas the latter risks reverting to some imaginary 'ideal' form of the text, whose existence must always remain a matter of speculation.[34]

'Grounded' is an instructive word here. This thesis aims to take the evidence of the material text as a means to an end (and not the end in itself). Through the surviving manuscripts we can see the development of ideas being applied to the *Consolatio*, such as the Aristotelian world view put forward by Trevet, the theologizing and sermonising of the commentator to Walton's verse translation or in *The Boke of Counfort of Bois*, and the pedagogic and reflective notes added by countless scholars and readers. As Anthony Grafton argues, modern scholarship:

> assumes that changes in an original form, text, or idea were charged with meaning unless the contrary can be proved – that they normally represent conscious artistic and intellectual decisions rather than failures to reproduce a primal truth. More specifically, medieval and Renaissance changes in classical and biblical originals are themselves not simply innovations, but moves in a game some of whose rules were established in antiquity itself. All literary or artistic creations – classical as well as postclassical – result from choices among preexisting genres and elements and take effect only by the grace of scribes and printers and the conscious activity of readers.[35]

Grafton's historical model resembles the rhetorical model of Copeland and the theoretical model of McKenzie, and sets out well the kinds of 'reception and transmission' studied in this thesis. There is no contradiction in recognising both the continuity of old modes of writing and reading, and the development of new ideas reflected through new texts, books, and modes of book creation, and we can reasonably assume the intentionality of both as reflected in the surviving witnesses. Likewise, this thesis intentionally leans closer to the material text than some previous scholarship on the medieval *Consolatio*, and the resulting analysis of the

---

[34] Griffiths, 9.
[35] Anthony Grafton, 'Introduction: Notes from Underground on Cultural Transmission' in *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Anthony Grafton and Ann Blair (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 1-7 (2-3).

text through the prism of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England reveals a very human complexity of dissemination. Latin reading does not have to mean pedagogic use, and English translation and adaptation do not have to mean secular or unlearned. The text remains the same but is renewed; and the books that hold these primary and secondary texts contain both continuity and novelty. *Auctoritas* is valued, as well as the development of new philosophical and theological approaches. This is what the manuscripts tell us.

This thesis comprises six chapters, charting a rough chronology in the development of paratextual scaffolding as it applies to Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* in late medieval England. This thesis begins with a broad survey of manuscripts that date earlier than the primary focus of this thesis, but which have significant signs of glossing, readership, and rebinding, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (and sometimes later). It can be hard for the modern scholar to appreciate the scarcity and value of texts and books in the medieval period. As Margaret Connolly argues:

> we see far more manuscripts than any medieval reader, a privilege which enables us to draw comparisons between books that never passed through the same hands or sat together on the same shelves before modern times.[36]

It is akin to trying to remember what it was like to look up information before the Internet, when the data held in a book or journal had an appearance of stability that is now fast receding, and a text was invested with a certain degree of authority simply for being available to us. We have all become fussier scholars. It is with this idea in mind that this thesis begins by trying to gauge the range of manuscripts already available to these readers of the late Middle Ages, and their range of responses to much older books. In particular, this chapter considers the value of a book, often for the text that it holds, but also for its beauty, prestige,

[36] Margaret Connolly, 'Compiling the Book', *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 129-49 (147-8).

its economic value as an object that could be pawned, and in the case of books that were dismantled, for the physical materials they were made from. As Hannah Ryley puts it:

> Manuscripts are made of animal skins, as well as other organic products. They are also vehicles for education, status display and piety, among other socio-economic roles. They can be described as nonhuman objects, matter, stuff, artefacts, things, commodities, and they were made by skilled craftsmen – at this time, by hand.[37]

Therefore, the chapter on early manuscripts considers what mattered to the late medieval reader, what they looked for in a book, the different kinds of value which could be applied to a book or its components, as well as looking at more academic and intellectual ideas of the value of the text, for instance, as a glossed text or as an extract within *florilegia*.

Among those academic and intellectual uses, by far the most evident use of Boethius was the pedagogic, which is the focus of the second chapter. The kind of readerly and writerly interpretation described in this introduction, which can be seen now only in glimpses and half whispers, may well be a result of the kind of pedagogic practices that these writers picked up in the schoolroom, where 'schoolroom learning made its way out of books'.[38] However, as Christopher Cannon acknowledges, it is hard to evidence this kind of lived experience through the prism of literary output, except to say that the author had the kind of grammar school or university education that would promote a certain performative process in the writing of later works, in the sense that they return to texts previously encountered and use pedagogic modes of exegesis and translation in new works designed for both inside and out of the academy. That said, it is not hard to imagine that a school or university education would encourage the development of Boethian philosophy and dialogic modes of philosophical discourse, Boethius having been such an intrinsic part of particularly the

[37] Hannah Ryley, *Re-using Manuscripts in Late Medieval England: Repairing, Recycling, Sharing* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2022) 9.
[38] Christopher Cannon, *From Literacy to Literature: England*, 1300-1400 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 231.

university *quadrivium*.[39] This brings in another element of circularity and development, where a schoolboy (usually) would be taught pedagogic methods of *exercitatio* and a scholastic ability to respond to a text, and would later have had at least a passing familiarity with the works of Boethius, before continuing his education and training to the point where he developed and deepened his own response to the *Consolatio*, and passed on both the old and the new Boethian material to the next generation in his teaching.[40] This practice and the evidence for it will be examined in the chapter on use of the *Consolatio* in schools and universities.

Pedagogic reading often developed into more substantial explication of the text, as in the example examined in the third chapter, the Latin commentary to the *Consolatio* written by William of Wheteley in the early fourteenth century. This commentary, surviving in three manuscripts, is heavily based on the work by Trevet. This raises the question: why did William bother to write it? As well as digging into the textual variance of the witnesses and gaining a better appreciation of William's work, the chapter answers the question of why William *did* bother to write a commentary by considering William's known biography in contrast to what is suggested by the manuscripts themselves. When we know that William was highly educated, with some evidence for training in Oxford and Paris, and that he was a schoolmaster in Stamford and then at Lincoln, a picture begins to emerge of the itinerant cleric. As Kathryn Kerby-Fulton describes them, these 'underemployed of the clerically educated world' took on various jobs while touting for a better gig, as 'chaplains or vicars to the beneficed…Or they found work as secretaries or chaplains to great households, in governments (from royal to municipal), or as schoolmasters, choirmasters, or liturgical

[39] For more on the university curriculum, see Anders Piltz, *The World of Medieval Learning*, trans. by David Jones (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 15-7.
[40] As will be examined in Chapter 2, the evidence suggests that Boethius was not commonly used in English schools but was often encountered at university level. This may be because the schoolbooks have not survived where their university counterparts have been better protected, largely through the efforts of college libraries.

singers'.[41] Kerby-Fulton's list goes on. If William of Wheteley was one of these, then the surviving copies of the commentary become worthy of closer attention for the evidence they betray of a cleric looking for a benefice of his own, for the patronage that writing a pedagogic commentary might bring his way. William of Wheteley's 'schoolbook' betrays itself as something else (or at least as something else as well); Boethian writing as an advertisement for scholarship and professional competence.

Wheteley's commentary was one of many which often accompanied Boethius's work. Among them, Nicholas Trevet's commentary to the *Consolatio* was immensely popular in the late medieval period, and perhaps unsurprisingly, given that Trevet was a homegrown scholar, he was particularly favoured by English readers. There are a great many surviving manuscript witnesses, and he is quoted by numerous scholars and literary writers, in such a way that much as a medieval writer might name-drop Augustine, Aristotle, or Fulgentius as sources, it was likewise an advert for scholarship and authoritative exegesis to mention 'Commentor triuet' in one's work.[42] With this background in mind, a thesis on manuscript evidence for responses to the *Consolatio* in late medieval England would be incomplete without a chapter focused on this important work. As well as giving brief surveys of Trevet copies and the signs of reading and ownership that can be discerned, this chapter then focuses on one manuscript, Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.3.21, which holds the *Consolatio* with marginal commentary derived from Trevet, intercalated with Chaucer's *Boece*, as well as the commentary by William of Aragon from a later stage of binding. Close analysis of the marginal commentary that sits alongside both the *Consolatio* and *Boece* reveals distinct layers associated with the Latin and Middle English texts. In particular, there is evidence for

[41] Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *The Clerical Proletariat and the Resurgence of Medieval English Poetry* (Philadelphia PA, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), 2-3. For a review of what is valuable and what is less convincing in this study, see the review by George Shuffelton in *Speculum*, 97 (2022), 1217-8.
[42] As John Walton does in his commentary. See Science, 365.

the extracts of Trevet commentary having come from multiple readers or scribes in exemplars past, here presented as a seamless whole.

Something similar is discovered in the penultimate chapter, which focuses on another commentary (of sorts), but now one in the vernacular: the single witness to *The Boke of Counfort of Bois*, the only English language text in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct F.6.4. Based on Book 1 of the *Consolatio*, *The Boke of Counfort* combines a loose adaptation of Chaucer's *Boece* with other source material to create a sermonising Boethian text that frequently alludes to the original's *auctoritas*, while happily straying from the primary text to create something that is neither translation, nor Chaucer, nor a straightforward commentary. In particular, through close analysis of this short text it is possible to see patterns of Chaucerian and non-Chaucerian material, and alternating modes of short *id est* glossing and longer stretches of commentary which in many other copies of Boethian works are found on different parts of the manuscript page. All of this is in stark contrast to the plainness of the manuscript, which makes no distinction in source material and suppresses the layeredness which more academic and pedagogic manuscripts make a virtue of. It may even be possible to see some traces of provenance through codicological analysis of this manuscript.

The final chapter considers one final vernacular commentary, but one which appears in the margins of a manuscript – and makes the transition into a printed book. John Walton, a fourteenth-century chaplain at Osney, near Oxford was commissioned to write a verse translation of the *Consolatio*. This final chapter does give some consideration to the structure and language of the translation, its reliance (or otherwise) on Chaucer's *Boece*, and to the manuscript copies of Walton's *Boethius*, matters explored well in recent scholarship. However, this survey is then used as the foundation to the primary focus of the chapter, the commentary to the verse text (the first full commentary to the *Consolatio* written in English), which has hitherto received little attention and no close analysis. This secondary text is only

available in two witnesses, Copenhagen, Royal Library, MS Thott 403 2º, and the Tavistock Boethius, an early printed copy dating from 1525. The former is a complicated manuscript, deficient at the start and end, with folios elsewhere missing and others misbound. While these errors, typeset into the Tavistock Boethius, may give a clear indication of progression from one material book to the next, it nonetheless offers particular challenges in attempting to create an authoritative version of the text, given that the Tavistock printer, the monk Thomas Richard, made numerous changes to the text along the way. This chapter examines the available witnesses, analyses the glosses, and attempts to answer questions about the authorship of the commentary, the creation of the manuscript and the Tavistock Boethius, and the intended readership of the text, commissioned by a secular reader but steeped in classical references and an assumption of Latinity.

At its heart this thesis is concerned with interconnectedness, with the idea that while text, manuscript, and ideas may change over time, each step taken from the centre (that is, from Boethius sitting in his cell writing about the consolation afforded by thinking about philosophy) is still connected to that centre. Each progression, of the book, of text, of commentary, is a starburst that sets off further chain reactions of response and development of ideas. To capture it all would be impossible, even if more (or indeed fewer) of the material witnesses had survived, but this thesis hopes to identify and understand some case studies of these changes in one place and during one brief period of time.

1. Putting an old book to good use?

What is the value of a book? A book that matters greatly to me, that has great textual value, or was expensive to buy, or is old, or rare, or has sentimental or sacramental value, may be of little interest to you. If I give it away or sell it, what kind of value will it have to its next reader? This chapter is concerned with the kinds of value applied to Boethian manuscripts. While readers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries did commission and read new books, a thesis concerned with reception and transmission in late medieval England has to look to the books that were already on the shelves or in book chests, where signs of late medieval use may also exist. Through discussion of nine earlier English copies of the *Consolatio*, this chapter considers not simply how a manuscript was used, but what kinds of value were attached to it over an extended period.

What is meant by such adaptation of use over time can be seen in features of binding, script, and annotation, including frequently where such evidence is small but nonetheless apparent. One example might be Cambridge, University Library, MS Additional 3038, which holds both twelfth- and fourteenth-century manuscripts, with signs of varied use over an extended period of time.[1] Though at time of writing the boards and cords are detached from the text block, this parchment codex was bound in the fourteenth century with chemise-covered boards and shows signs of once having straps attached and looped around the bindings, so the book was considered valuable and worthy of extra protection.[2] On the leather stuck down on the inside boards there are faint marks visible of three columns of text, suggesting that a fragment of an earlier manuscript was used as a pastedown, another book sacrificed for the sake of this one.

---

[1] Jayne Ringrose, *Summary Catalogue of the Additional Medieval Manuscripts in Cambridge University Library Acquired before 1940* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2009), 51-2. *CB1*, 49-50.
[2] For more on this kind of binding, see Szirmai, 236.

The book contains three texts. The first is an *accentuarius* or guide to liturgical pronunciation of a kind that later came to be included in early printed breviaries (not the same work as the poem *Accentuarius* by John of Garland).[3] This fourteenth-century part, written in textura semi-quadrata (in places drifting into rotunda) in long lines, includes lists of common words from the missal in the margins in anglicana, apparently the same scribal hand, as well as further notes on pronunciation in a different fourteenth-century anglicana hand.

The *Consolatio* follows in the codex. This twelfth-century part, in a protogothic book hand, begins imperfectly part way through Book 2 with a further loss in Book 4.[4] New sections begin with initials in coloured ink, and the start of Book 4 features a finely-wrought *littera notabilior* featuring a dragon with foliate decoration which extends into the margins. Verse sections of text are bracketed in red. Prose and metre markings are noted in a small hand, not the scribe's, in the margins. The manuscript contains no gloss, but does include a few highly abbreviated notes in a very informal fourteenth-century anglicana hand.

The final work is a fragmentary copy of another prosimetrical text, *De nuptiis philologiae et mercurii* by Martianus Capella, an allegorical narrative using personifications of the seven liberal arts, as well as depicting a love of learning as the maid Philologia, and Mercury as the pursuit of intellectual gain.[5] Gibson and Smith suggest that the *Consolatio* may have two scribes, and that the second of these may also be the scribe for *De nuptiis*, which is certainly possible.[6] Aside from the similarity of the scribal hand, these last two texts use a similar quality of parchment, with almost identical text boxes. There are a very few pen trials and brief notes written into the top and bottom margins of *De nuptiis* in a late

[3] On such liturgical texts, see Christopher Wordsworth and Henry Littlehales, *The Old Service-Books of the English Church* (London: Methuen, 1904), 74, 189.
[4] The text of CUL MS Add. 3038 begins imperfectly at 2p4 l.89, 'non sinit esse felicem', a loss of several quires, and there is a further omission at ff.51-2, the text covering 4p7 l.40 to 5p1 l.51, a sufficient loss to suggest a missing quire.
[5] Martianus Capella, ed. by James Willis (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983), 1-11. This text in CUL MS Add 3038 begins at the start of Book 1 but ends imperfectly part way through Chapter 24 (still in Book 1).
[6] *CB1*, 49.

thirteenth-century anglicana hand. The same hand includes a note on the final blank verso of the codex, giving ownership of the book to a 'magistro h de bollech arche'.

There are at least two layers of book use visible here, then, the first being the earlier book which contained the *Consolatio* and *De nuptiis*, the second being the addition to the front of the book of the *accentuarius*.[7] The earlier two in combination suggest use in the schoolroom or an early centre of study, whereas the addition of the *accentuarius* with its later connection to the breviary suggests use by a boy in a song school, or perhaps by a priest. This argument is reinforced by Jayne Ringrose's observation that the nineteenth-century acquisition of the manuscript by Cambridge University Library came from the trustees of a parish church in Lavenham, Suffolk. It is therefore possible, though from such a late provenance by no means certain, that the manuscript had a long-standing association with a church library, church school, or the personal library of a priest.[8] The *Consolatio* in this context has multiple uses, and therefore its value shifts accordingly, even if only in subtle ways. For instance, if the earlier book was used in a school setting, and was then used by a priest when the *accentuarius* was added to it, the value could shift between being a borrowable book, a transient object of use for the student who was required by a master to read it and learn from it, to becoming a book in the permanent possession of a scholar who had more leisure to read the book and the freedom to rebind the codex with another text. The changes of binding, of placing with other texts, and the addition of marginalia are all evidence of this slight shift in the value of a book.

The Cambridge manuscript described above exemplifies just one way that different kinds of interest and value can be applied to a manuscript over time. A tenth-, eleventh-, twelfth-century manuscript of the *Consolatio* could be glossed, corrected, rebound with other

[7] A leather label has been nailed onto the front board, which reads 'Boecius de consolac/Item Accentuarium', which indicates that the *accentuarius* was added to the codex later.
[8] This is mentioned by Jayne Ringrose, *Summary Catalogue of the Additional Medieval Manuscripts*, 52.

texts, incomplete manuscripts added to, over hundreds of years. It raises the question: does the extended life of an earlier manuscript suggest that it was considered valuable, to be prized and venerated, or do these manuscripts with a punctuated history of use reflect a more workaday attitude, that a text did not need to be copied afresh because copies already existed? Or does it mean even that the text's status had declined enough for it not to be considered worthy of copying afresh? This chapter attempts to answer these questions by considering several manuscripts created earlier than the stated timeframe of this thesis, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but which show later signs of addition, use, and ownership in this period (and sometimes much later). Through its care or neglect one gains a clearer picture of the varying ways in which a manuscript mattered to its medieval readers. In particular, in our concern for the reception history of the *Consolatio*, we can learn how much medieval readers actually cared about the text the manuscript contained.

At its most fundamental level, a manuscript is usually a collection of parchment or paper bifolia collected into quires and stitched, and commonly bound with outer boards.[9] As such, a manuscript's value may be displaced from the textual, aesthetic, or pedagogic values it had at its creation and during its initial use, and become an object useful for its material fabric, to be broken down and used for its components, such as to create the base layer of a bishop's mitre before covering it with fabric, to line a hat box, and as backing for wallpaper.[10] However, it is not surprising, given the practicalities of using such material, that most

[9] On the typical construction of a manuscript, see Jane Roberts and Pamela Robinson, 'Paleography and Codicology' in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, vol 1, 2nd edn, ed. by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2020), 51-64 (58).

[10] The bishop's mitre was created in the early modern period using a late thirteenth-century manuscript of secular poetry, Copenhagen, Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, MS AM 666 b 4to. See Erik Kwakkel, 'A love story hidden in a hat' <https://tmblr.co/Zig9QsplJ9Qb> [accessed 26 September 2021]. The hat box is Suffolk Archives S1/2/403. The wallpaper liner is Oxford, New College, MS 368. Both are cited by Julia Craig-McFeely, 'Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music: The evolution of a digital resource' <https://journal.digitalmedievalist.org/articles/10.16995/dm.16/> [accessed 26 September 2021]. See also Hannah Ryley, *Re-using Manuscripts in Late -Medieval England*, 63-4.

recycling of parchment was used as support for new books, such as pastedowns and flyleaves for printed books, and as limp binding wrappers.[11]

That said, economic considerations of the book did not always mean stripping it down for the parts. In pedagogic settings it was common for books to be left as surety for a loan. We know this from the *cautiones* or pledge-notes written into manuscripts when they were used in this way at both Oxford and Cambridge in books of law, philosophy, and theology, or commentaries thereon, though admittedly it is not always clear how far the valuations in *cautiones* reflected the marketable value of the book, or more pragmatically represent the monetary need of the pledgers.[12] Books were also regularly bought and sold second-hand, providing evidence that the required academic reading for a degree changed little over time, and a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century book could still be useful in the fifteenth century.[13] This use of the manuscript is an interesting dual recognition of the material state of the manuscript (the quality of the craftsmanship of the text, decoration, parchment, and bindings, the level of wear and tear) with the relative value of the text, both its usefulness and rarity.

Conversely, it is apparent that the initial cost of a manuscript was skewed towards the different kinds of labour that went into the making of the book, rather than towards the materials, with the text itself, other than its length, being irrelevant in terms of cost as long as an exemplar was available.[14] It is therefore important also to recognise the aesthetic value of

---

[11] For recently discovered examples, see Daniel Sawyer, 'Rediscovered manuscript fragments of "The Prick of Conscience" in the library of Queens' College, Cambridge', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, vol 15 (2015), 515-539; Hannah Ryley, 'Constructive parchment destruction in medieval manuscripts', *Book 2.0,* vol 7 (2017), 9–19. See also the foundational study by Neil R. Ker, *Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts used as Pastedowns in Oxford Bindings with a Survey of Oxford Binding c. 1515-1620* (Oxford: The Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1954), xvii-ix.

[12] See recently Rodney Thomson, 'Fourteenth-Century Cambridge University and Its Books' in *King's Hall, Cambridge and the Fourteenth-Century Universities: New Perspectives,* ed. by John Marenbon (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 67-86 (81-3); Jenny Adams, 'Thomas Hunt's Monograms', *The Library*, vol 22 (2021), 376-82. See also the foundational studies by Graham Pollard, 'Mediaeval Loan Chests at Cambridge', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research,* vol 17 (1940), 113-60, and M. B. Parkes, 'The Provision of Books', *HUO2,* 407-83 (410-2).

[13] On second-hand books see Parkes, *HUO2*, 407-83 (418-24); Eric Kwakkel, 'Commercial Organization and Economic Innovation' in Gillespie and Wakelin, 173-91 (176-7).

[14] For an interesting discussion of the cost and changing value of manuscripts in the late medieval period, see Joanne Filippone Overty, 'The Cost of Doing Scribal Business: Prices of Manuscript Books in England, 1300-1483', *Book History*, vol 11 (2008), 1-32.

a book, though admittedly this is hard to quantify. A prettier book, perhaps with tooled boards and coloured end bands, a higher grade hand, and plentiful illumination, must have held an added pleasure for the reader, much as the cuttings by nineteenth-century enthusiasts testify to the enduring appeal of the decorative book.[15] We can see examples of this in two late fourteenth-century European copies of the *Consolatio*: Glasgow University Library, Hunter MS 374, a deluxe Genoese copy of the text with commentary, and some cuttings in the Wallace collection from a French copy of the text.[16]

In contrast, the many copies of the *Consolatio* with copious marginal notes evidence perhaps the most irreplaceable kind of book, that which has a personal value. For instance, a mid-fifteenth-century French copy of Trevet's commentary has been written in a currens secretary hand on paper, with plenty of brief personal notes added by the scribe, a notary from Dieppe. Though rubricated with some decorated initials, the book has a scruffy feel, with ink smudges, words crossed out, and a messy attempt at only one of Trevet's diagrams. The cost and choice of paper in this case as the material on which to write is an unknown factor here – as a notary, paper may have been a conveniently accessible material.[17] However, the homemade nature of the book suggests that though the book itself would not have been worth much, it had utility for the scribe.[18]

---

[15] On modern era interest in manuscripts, see Roger S. Wieck, 'Folia Fugitiva: The Pursuit of the Illuminated Manuscript Leaf', *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, vol 54 [Essays in Honor of Lilian M. C. Randall] (1996), 233-254.

[16] J. Young and P. H. Aitken, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1908), 300-1. N. Thorp, *The Glory of the Page: Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts from Glasgow University Library* (London: Miller, 1987), 131. J. J. G. Alexander, *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscript Cuttings* (London: Trustees of the Wallace Collection, 1980), 16-9.

[17] On the economic consideration of paper as a writing material, see Orietta Da Rold, *Paper in Medieval England: From Pulp to Fictions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Library, 2020), particularly 58-60.

[18] This is Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 18. 6. 3. See National Library of Scotland, Archives and Manuscripts Division, 'Catalogue description in the typescript "Catalogue of the Advocates' Manuscripts": Adv.MS.18.6.3. "BOETHIUS. A manuscript of a commentary on the 'De consolation philosophiae', written by Michael Miniclardi, probably notary in Dieppe, in 1443'.

These kinds of value – material, economic, aesthetic, and personal – are just some ways of thinking of the currency of a medieval book. Such values are hard to measure – particularly when we step outside the realms of cost – and difficult to consider from the point of view of the medieval mind. However, it is one thing to understand how or why a manuscript has survived to the present day, but another matter to consider why a late medieval reader would have kept, used, and adapted a manuscript already hundreds of years old. Therefore we have to take the risk of placing modern value judgements upon the medieval creator or reader of the book if we are to understand a book's history. With this in mind this chapter looks in turn at materials and labour, the primary text of the *Consolatio*, its auxiliary matter of commentary and glossing, and the *Consolatio* in the context of placement within *florilegia*, illustrating each category with one or two manuscripts, to give some suggestions of what mattered in a book in late medieval England.

The *Consolatio* as a destructive text: to bind or be bound

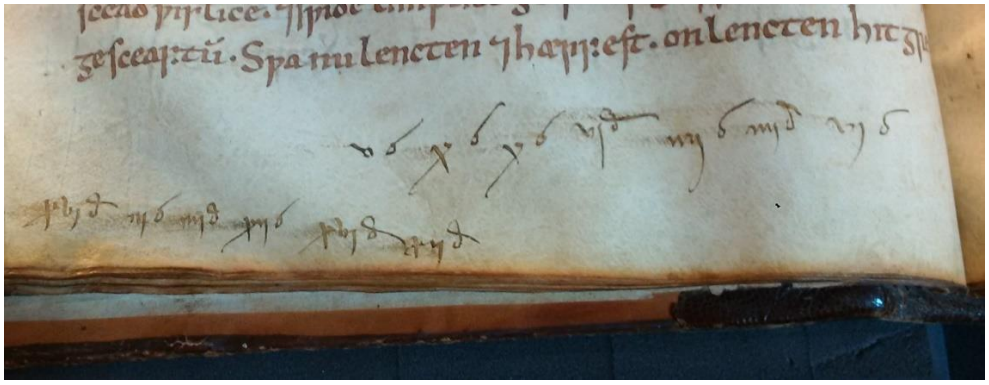
One of the most intriguing instances of the value placed upon a Boethian text is with Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 180, which contains the *Old English Boethius*, the prose version of the Old English translation of the *Consolatio*.[19] This loose translation has traditionally been attributed to Alfred, but there is plenty of debate as to whether it was more likely written by the one of the coterie of scholars that Alfred employed later in his reign.[20] The only focus in this chapter, however, is the much later use of the manuscript.

MS Bodley 180 is an early twelfth-century manuscript containing a preface attributing the text to Alfred, followed by the *Old English Boethius* and a prayer, also in English. The

[19] Orietta Da Rold, 'MS. Bodl. 180' in *MMOL*.
[20] For further on this debate see Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine (eds.), *The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius's De Consolatione Philosophiae*, vol 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 140-6; Janet Bately, 'Did King Alfred Actually Translate Anything?' in *Medium Ævum*, 78 (2009), 189-215.

manuscript is written in twenty-four and occasionally twenty-five long lines on vellum. It is written in an predominantly insular hand with occasional Caroline elements. Capitals are written in various sizes between two and seven units high in several colours. The text is not glossed, but contains frequent interlinear correction in the scribal hand. A fourteenth-century anglicana book hand has added occasional references to the Latin text at the top of the folio or in the outer margins, in the standard format of book, prose, and metre markings usually seen in Latin copies of the text.

It is hard now not to revere MS Bodley 180 as particularly precious because it is the last surviving copy of the prose version of the text, though we know that the text had at least a limited circulation due to its use as source material for Nicholas Trevet in his commentary to the Latin *Consolatio*.[21] This use by Trevet then went on to have further echoes in later texts, such as William d'Eyncourt's *Ecclesiastes*, held in Oxford, Balliol College, MS 27, as well as Walton's *Boethius*, a verse translation of the *Consolatio*, and the anonymous *Boke of Counfort of Bois* (both of which are discussed later in this thesis).[22] However, the existence of MS Bodley 180 as a commodity can be seen in what may be *cautiones*, figures in shillings and pence, in the bottom margin of a folio: '?s xs xs vijd iiijs iiijd vjs xvjd iijs iiijd xijs xvjd xijd' (f.29^{v}).



Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 180, f.29^{v}

[21] On the relationship between the *OEB* and Trevet's commentary, see B. S. Donaghey, 'Nicholas Trevet's Use of King Alfred's Translation of Boethius, and the Dating of his Commentary', in Minnis, *Medieval*, 1-31.
[22] For William d'Eyncourt's *Ecclesiastes*, see OBC, MS 27, ff.332^{r} and 351^{v}-352^{r}.

These rudimentary marks, written in two lines of text, are in a fourteenth-century hand, though it is not certain that this is the same hand as that of the annotator who added the Latin prose and metre markings. It has been suggested that these notes are numbers of chapters and books, but if that were the case we would not expect the numbers to hop about, nor to have the 's' and 'd' references implying amounts of money.[23] There are at least two plausible causes for these notes. While other pledge-notes in manuscripts as mentioned above are more descriptive of names and dates, the marginalia added to MS Bodley 180 are plausible as a series of amounts of money loaned to one individual against a valuable book. If this hypothesis is correct then the book had a practical and economic value as an object that could be pawned, and had sufficient value to see someone through a lean patch. The lack of detail from a college or a stationer, such as date or monogram, might indicate a personal arrangement between a wealthy but sympathetic individual and the scholar in need of cash, where the formalised legal and social structures of pledge-notes would be rendered unnecessary.[24] Alternatively, the notes may simply be the scribbled notes of book-keeping, using the margin of an open book as available support for unrelated financial transactions. These possibilities have different implications, both of which depend on the book as a material entity, the first being the economic value of the text and of the book, the second being merely the practical value of having material to write on.

However, this book clearly was considered valuable enough not to be dismantled, the fate suffered by some other Boethian manuscripts. Further, in this case another text was cut up and used as binding support for the *Old English Boethius*, perhaps, as the medieval reader would have considered it, for *Alfred's* translation of Boethius. It is therefore useful, in addition to the evidence of later use seen in MS Bodley 180, to consider the manuscript in

[23] C.f. Catalogue description 'MS. Bodl. 180', *MMOL*.
[24] See Daniel Wakelin, '"Thys Ys My Boke": Imagining the Owner in the Book' in *Spaces*, 13-33 (17, 31-3).

tandem with Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Additional D. 98, a fragment of the *Digest* of Justinian.[25] These twelve complete and partial leaves contain part of the *Digest* in a fourteenth-century hand. They are written in an anglicana formata script, with an addition on one folio in a cursive secretary sixteenth-century hand which reads 'Boecius de consolatione philosophie translated into the Saxonie tong by King Ælfred'.[26] These leaves were folded and used as flyleaves to MS Bodley 180, the outer leaves being used as pastedowns. There is also evidence of stitch holes where the leaves were bound into the bigger text. These leaves then remained as part of the bigger manuscript until 1884, when they were removed from the bindings and catalogued separately. It is not clear from the records kept whether the fragments were used as part of medieval bindings.[27]

When one considers that MS Bodley 180 was acquired by the Bodleian Library in 1601, the possible pledge-notes, the rebinding with the *Digest*, and the annotation on the fragment, imply use of the manuscript in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and that the book was considered valuable, with the attention given to it 'attesting to some care for such books' before the Reformation.[28] As well as these factors it must also be borne in mind that the book's prestige and value can be attributed at least in part to the reverence in which Alfred was still held in the late medieval and early modern period. Indeed, twelfth-century works like *The Proverbs of Alfred* testify to his fame and perceived wisdom, even if there is no evidence that he had any connection to the writing of the text.[29] However, this 'cult of Alfred' goes hand in hand with his reputation as a literary *auctor*, cited by Ranulf Higden in the *Polychronicon* and later used as a role model by Richard Ullerston to support

---

[25] 'MS. Add. D. 98', *MMOL*.
[26] This is on BodL MS Add. D.98, f.3^{r}. For further on the kind of hand see Kathryn James, *English Paleography and Manuscript Culture, 1500-1800* (New Haven CT: Yale University, 2020), 96-9.
[27] N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 359. Ker suggests that the use of the fragment as a binding was a medieval act.
[28] Godden and Irvine, *OEBl* 1, 16.
[29] For more on Alfred's long acclaim, see Robert Allen Rouse, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12-5; O. Arngart, *The Proverbs of Alfred: An Emended Text* (Lund: Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1979), 5.

his argument in 1400 for the translation of sacred text into the vernacular.[30] This reverence may go some way to explaining how this Old English text of Boethius had so great a value centuries after the manuscript was created and even longer after the text was written.[31]

However, this reverence for Boethian manuscripts was not uniform, and just as the fragment of Justinian is used to support the *Old English Boethius*, so the *Consolatio* could be destroyed to support other texts. This is evident in Maidstone, Kent History and Library Centre MS U1121/M2A, a manorial court book from the village of Cuxton, near Rochester in Kent, holding records from 1586 to 1641.[32] The folios are made from paper, now much degraded and supported by modern repairs. Part of the original limp binding for the book is still in place, a parchment sheet holding a sixteenth-century lease for a messuage and land at Marden Thorn, south of Maidstone, written in English in a secretary hand.

This archival document is relevant because of its related material, MS U1121/M2B.[33] This is the other part of the limp binding for the manorial court book and consists of a single parchment bifolium containing an early twelfth-century fragment of the *Consolatio*.[34] The text is in an English protogothic book hand, with little use of abbreviation, and the fragmentary text runs from 4p7 to 5p2.[35]

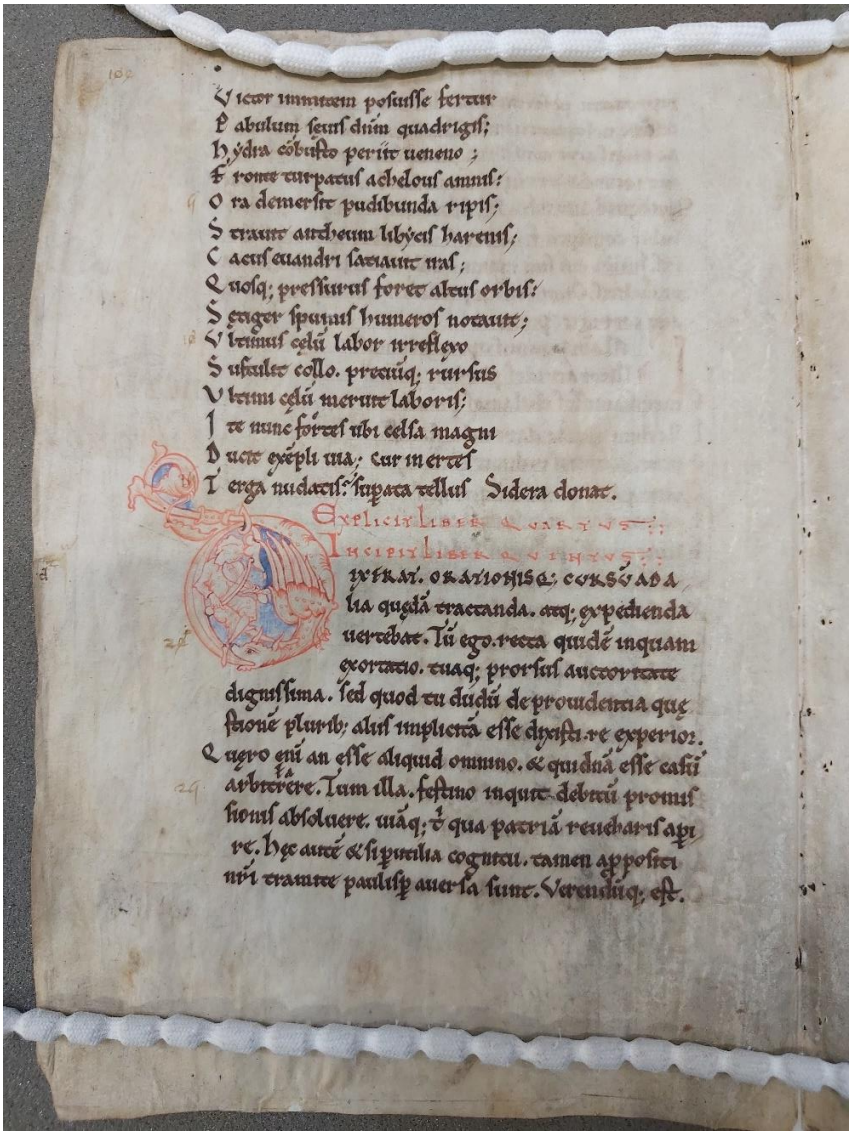
The two folios measure 277 x 188 mm and hold two sets of stitching marks. The first set sits in the centre of the bifolium and looks to represent the original stitching of the manuscript that once held the *Consolatio*. Unusually, the fragment is paginated, not foliated

---

[30] See Elizabeth Solopova, Jeremy Catto, and Anne Hudson (eds.), *From the Vulgate to the Vernacular: Four Debates on an English Question c.1400* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2020), lvii, 34-5.
[31] See Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge, trans., *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and other contemporary sources* (London: Penguin, 1983), 44-8.
[32], 'Manor of Cuxton: Court book, court baron only' in *Kent Archives and Local History* <https://www.kentarchives.org.uk/collections/getrecord/GB51_U1121_1_1_2> [accessed 9 October 2021].
[33] 'Part of Boethius's 'De Consolatione Philosophiae' in *Kent Archives and Local History* https://www.kentarchives.org.uk/collections/getrecord/GB51_U1121_1_1_3 [accessed 9 October 2021].
[34] See *CB1*, 172.
[35] The *Consolatio* text in Kent, History Centre, MS U1121/M2B starts p.103 mid-line of 4p7 l.46, 'in provectu positi virtutis', and ends on p.106 with the start of 5p2, 'Animadverto inquam idque uti tu dicis ita esse consentio'.

as one would expect, in a late medieval or early modern hand, and the pagination appears to refer to the Boethius manuscript, and not the court book. There are also marginal line numbers (every five lines) and markings for new prose and metre sections in the same hand as the pagination. This line numbering is highly unusual for a medieval addition, and therefore suggests that the book was in use soon before the dissolution when it came to be dismantled.[36] Indeed, the copy of the *Consolatio* was not without its charm, including a decorated initial in red and blue, for the start of Book 5. It features a rebeck player in pantaloons and buttoned jacket playing to a dragon which is eating the back of the 'D', reminiscent of the *ouroboros*, the dragon that consumes itself.

[36] These additions are all in Arabic numerals.



Maidstone, Kent History and Library Centre, MS U1121/M2B, p.104

The bifolium contains no marginalia apart from a few book and metre markings, and has no commentary. (Of course, this does not preclude there once having been a commentary in the codex, though it is not common to see commentary with such early manuscripts, and if there was one, it was not intercalated.) It is plausible that if the page numbers refer to the book before it was dismantled, that the book could have contained the whole of the

Consolatio, and would have required approximately a further twenty pages to reach the end of the text.[37]

The second set of stitching holes is two millimetres to the right of the first set and denotes the use of the bifolium as limp binding for the manorial court book. Its use for the court book is made plain by the addition in the right-hand margin of the first page in a large early modern hand: 'Maneriu(m) de Cukstane 1584'.

This was once a lovely manuscript, clear and well-constructed, and one would expect there to have been several more decorated initials. It is probable that the manuscript from which the fragment came originated from the library at nearby Rochester Priory, as Neil Ker believed that the hand was the same as that of some Rochester manuscripts.[38] Given the dates of the manorial court book, it is likely that the copy of the *Consolatio*, having been part of Rochester Priory's library, was sold off at the dissolution of Rochester in 1540, perhaps to a local stationer.[39] Many books from Rochester did enter the royal collection, but it may be that the *Consolatio* was not felt worth saving, it being a well-known text with several print editions in existence in Latin as well as in English translation.[40] One would expect that many copies of the *Consolatio* and its commentaries met such an ignominious end, with two copies

---

[37] The pagination of Kent, History Centre, MS U1121/M2B runs from pp.103-6. Given that the fragment covers the end of Book 4 into the start of Book 5, this would be consistent with a complete copy of the *Consolatio* without commentary.

[38] See S. Freeth, *Catalogue of Medieval Fragments* (Maidstone: Kent Archives Office, 1974); 'Boethius (2 fos.) — Rochester, Kent. Cathedral priory of St Andrew' in *MLGB3*.

[39] See James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (eds.), *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 15, 1540* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, 1896), 147. This shows the order from Henry for the dissolution of Rochester.

[40] 'Rochester, Kent, Cathedral priory of St Andrew' in *MLGB3*. Of the 152 manuscripts listed on *MLGB3* which are believed to have a provenance of Rochester Priory (including the Maidstone fragment), 102 or 67% are in the Royal collection of the British Library, and therefore are likely to have been appropriated by Henry VIII at the dissolution of the monasteries. There were numerous European copies of the *Consolatio* in Latin in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, including from Louvain in 1484, Ghent in 1485, Nuremberg in 1495, as well as Italian copies in 1508 and 1513. See *USTC* for further details on these. For details of the three English translation editions in print during this period, see Brian Donaghey, Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr., Philip Edward Phillips, and Paul E. Szarmach (eds.), *Remaking Boethius: The English Language Translation Tradition of The Consolation of Philosophy* (Tempe AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2019), 63-4, 89. For further on Henry's acquisition of books from Rochester, see James P. Carley, *The Books of King Henry VIII and His Wives* (London: British Library, 2004), 89, 92.

of the *Consolatio* recorded as being used as pastedowns in sixteenth-century manuscripts, as well as a copy of the *Consolatio* with Trevet's commentary, and a copy of the commentary on its own. A further copy of the *Consolatio* with Trevet was used as a limp binding wrapper.[41] These manuscripts taken apart for binding material date from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries, so there was no particular distinction in a manuscript being considered either old or new. There is certainly no sense here that the *Consolatio* was frowned upon as a text, as it continued to be printed into the early modern period, and was held in high enough regard that in 1593 Elizabeth I would make a translation of her own.[42] However, the existence of the Maidstone fragment in the context of the Cuxton court books suggests that it was one of a pile, to be dismantled and reused, where its value was its material durability, and therefore that it had no greater value than the local property record with which it was bound.[43]

The *Consolatio* in miscellany

Both of the Boethian manuscripts described above were special in their own time; the *Old English Boethius* for being considered valuable, the Maidstone fragment in its earlier life at Rochester as a decorated and carefully created copy of the *Consolatio*. However, while it may be pleasing to the Boethian scholar to see the *Consolatio* being held in such reverence in the Middle Ages, it is inevitable that for a text as important to a medieval audience, it was

[41] Neil R. Ker, *Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts used as Pastedowns in Oxford Bindings with a Survey of Oxford Binding c. 1515-1620* (Oxford: The Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1954), 95, 114, 167, 179, 184. Ker identifies four pastedowns and one wrapper using fragments of the *Consolatio* and Trevet's commentary, to be found respectively in the following shelfmarks: OBC, fragments 590.d.9, Oxford, Oxfordshire History Centre GB 160 BOR4/1/A1/1, Worcester Cathedral, MS X.G.11, *Fabulae Aesopicae plures quingentis et aliae quaedam narrationes, cum historia vitae fortunae q; Aesopi, compositae studio & diligentia Ioachimi Camerarii* (Leipzig, 1564), held at York Minster Library (another section of the same *Consolatio* manuscript is also a fragment binding in Oxford, Merton College, MS E.3.12), and Oxford, Merton College, MS E.3.39.
[42] Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel, eds., *Elizabeth I: Translations 1592-1598* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 45-365.
[43] A practice also noted by Christopher De Hamel in *Cutting Up Manuscripts for Pleasure and Profit* (Charlottesville VA: Book Arts Press, 1996), 5-6.

necessarily held in student-friendly practical versions which could support an academic curriculum. Indeed, while many manuscripts may have been retained for the value of the text they held, the development of the university in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries necessitated an increased output of books which were useful to the scholar, and which held multiple texts and collections of excerpts.[44] While many of these books were what we usually think of as *florilegia*, containing short excerpts or citations, they were only one of several types of *compendia* that were common, including books containing shorter works in their entirety, or similar length passages from substantially longer texts. The medieval miscellany was a flexible form of copying, where texts could be bound together, unbound, and rebound in different permutations at a later date, to create new books with components from different scribes and stationers over long periods of time.[45] Sometimes there is a clear organisational scheme visible, of placing similar texts together in a codex. Sometimes the scheme is harder to detect and the scholar is forced to search for possible evidence of the idea at hand. However, there is always the possibility that a given commissioner of a book had two or three unassociated texts in loose bindings or in booklet form and for convenience had them bound in a single book. In this sense we must accept that, as Ralph Hanna puts it, every book is 'the product of special orders', the idiosyncratic and unexplained choice 'for the use of particular persons in particular situations'.[46] The *Consolatio* fits this model well. It was a useful part of teaching of grammar and rhetoric, of philosophy and logic, but it is not too long, breaks down

[44] See M. A. Michael, 'Urban production of manuscript books and the role of the university towns' in *CHB2*, 168-94 (169-70).
[45] See Jacqueline Hamesse, 'Florilegia', in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin Palaeography*, ed. by Frank T. Coulson and Robert G. Babcock (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 885-905 (886-9). See also Derek Pearsall, 'The Whole Book: Late Medieval English Manuscript Miscellanies and their Modern Interpreters' in *Imagining the Book*, ed. by Stephen Kelly and John J. Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 17-29, for a useful discussion of the definition of a miscellany.
[46] Ralph Hanna III, 'Miscellaneity and Vernacularity: Conditions of Literary Production in Late Medieval England' in *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. by Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 37-51 (37).

neatly into books for partial copying, and without any commentary can fit in a manuscript with other texts without becoming unwieldy.

An example of such a manuscript is London, British Library, MS Harley 4092.[47] It is comprised of several texts, including the *Consolatio*, though analysis of the whole codex presents findings that we would not see through consideration of the *Consolatio* in isolation. The bindings for the codex are modern, and each quire has been stitched into a new guard. However, as we shall see below, the appearance of the same hand drawing *maniculae* into more than one text of the codex dates this binding arrangement to at least the fourteenth century, if not earlier. Furthermore, one can see from the varying widths of the tabs that care has been taken to create an even text block, which suggests that previous to this rebinding in 1978 the quires of the manuscript were very uneven. The codex is in three parts, all dating from the twelfth century, but each distinct from the others. The first part includes two folios of the allegorical poem *Psychomachia* by Prudentius, as well as the *Carmen paschale* by Sedulius.[48] The second part contains the satirical poem *De contemptu mundi* by the monk known variously as Bernard of Morlaix or Bernard of Cluny, as well as three folios of anonymous secular verse.[49] The final part contains the *Consolatio*, and on the final folio there is a contents list for the codex. As the list gives the contents that the book holds today, and the list is fourteenth-century, it is apparent that the manuscript has held its current form since medieval times.

The *Psychomachia* consists of the final two folios of the poem.[50] The text is written in verse lines in a protogothic book hand with some Caroline elements, with the first letter of

---

[47] 'Detailed record for Harley 4092', *BL Cat*.
[48] Prudentius, vol 1, trans. by H. J. Thomson (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 334-43; Sedulius, *The Pascal Song and Hymns*, trans. by Carl P. E. Springer (Atlanta GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013).
[49] Bernard is believed to have come from Morlaix but was a monk at Cluny. See Ronald E. Pepin, *Scorn for the World: Bernard of Cluny's 'De Contemptu Mundi'* (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1991); Hans Walther, *Initia Carminum Ac Versum Medii Aevi Posterioris Latinorum: Alphabetisches Verzeichnis der Versanfänge mittellateinischer Dichtungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1959), 816 (15676).
[50] The excerpt begins on l.801, 'sed defensa fides quin et concordia sospes'.

each line placed slightly to the left of the text block. There is some rubrication and new sections start with a majuscule in alternating green and red ink. There is a small amount of interlinear and marginal correction in the same hand, and two brief pen trials, but the text is not annotated.

Sedulius's poem is accompanied by a prose introduction, and concludes with several verses not written by Sedulius but which are associated with him and often included in manuscripts and early print editions. One hand predominates, but another is distinguishable in part of the introduction. The texts include rubrication and *litterae notabiliores*, with minor corrections to the text in the scribal hand. The Sedulius text also includes annotation and pen trials in several hands. A section of verse referring to the heavens is annotated with astrological notes in a fourteenth-century university book hand, slightly lost in trimming, and in the last few folios of the Sedulius text there are brief additions in a thirteenth-century hand, annotating verse on the passion of Christ with notes on the different natures of God.[51] The final verso of Sedulius was once the end of a codex. The page is weathered and stained, and includes many scribbles, such as pen trials, alphabets, *maniculae*, and doodles, in hands dating from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries.

The Bernard of Morlaix text, though also twelfth-century, is of a different style from that which precedes it. The hand is smaller and tighter, with a reduced unit height, though there are at least two hands apparent in this text. The hand is less Caroline and more protogothic. On some folios decorative brackets have been added, and space was allowed for *litterae notabiliores*, which were never added. Similarly to the end of the first part of the codex, it is apparent that the opening folio of *De contemptu mundi* was once at the start of a codex and likely out of hard bindings, being stained, weathered, and slightly crumpled.[52] The

[51] BL MS Harley 4092, f.8^{v}.
[52] This is on BL MS Harley 4092, f.39^{r}.

text opens with a prologue in prose (also written by Bernard of Morlaix) before the verse text begins.[53] There are brief marginal corrections in the scribal hand and a few scholar's notes in an early modern secretary hand. There is also a crude, chubby *manicula* in a late medieval hand, pointing to a line from the second book, which can also be seen in the *Consolatio* text.[54] The last three folios of this section are an anonymous secular poem, written in one of the same hands as *De contemptu mundi*.[55]

The final and most substantial part of the codex is a copy of the C*onsolatio* from the first half of the twelfth century, which is darkened and weathered.[56] There are occasional book and prose/metre markings in a thirteenth-century hand, and decorated initials for the start of new sections, such as at the start of Book 3 with a *littera notabilior* in green ink, six units high but which extends well below the text block, and a particularly fine **Q** to open 3p10, in red, green, and black ink.[57] The parchment is of good quality, and a hole which appears to be contemporary with the twelfth-century creation of the manuscript has been neatly mended.[58]

The *Consolatio* folios are also marked out as distinct from the other texts by the frequent tracing marks that litter the margins, giving the appearance that on many occasions it was used as the support for work on other books, placed underneath another sheet to create the right surface for writing, drawing, or measuring.[59] These marks are not found elsewhere in the codex, so might predate the current arrangement of texts. These include tracing marks of chapter references that have no relevance to the *Consolatio*. There are also unassociated marginal drawings, such as the possible scribbles of a child, and a well-executed drawing of a

[53] See BL MS Harley 4092, f.40^{v}.
[54] See BL MS Harley 4092, f.62^{r}. The line is: 'Nulla nepharia, cernimus omnia pulcra relinqui' ('When no-one is wicked, we see that everything noble is left behind.').
[55] The verse begins 'Qui sua dat cuncus et cui nichil omnia donant'.
[56] The *Consolatio* text begins on BL MS Harley 4092, f.87^{r}.
[57] This is on BL MS Harley 4092, ff.113^{v} and 125^{v}.
[58] This is on BL MS Harley 4092, f.112.
[59] Particularly this on BL MS Harley 4092, ff.97, 103-4, 111-2, 116, 152.

dog.[60] There are no illustrations in the manuscript, and the drawing is outline and very faint, suggesting that the margin was used as a practice space for an illustration to go in a different book, though it may be the work of a more accomplished doodler.

Bearing in mind that these are all twelfth-century copies of texts, the most marked difference between the *Consolatio* and the texts that precede it is the greater degree of addition to the Boethian text, both notes and *maniculae*, beginning on the opening recto with plentiful comment in a fourteenth-century hand, so small as to be illegible. This continues onto the verso with marginalia in both thirteenth- and fourteenth-century hands. The thirteenth-century hand is bigger and slightly easier to read, giving brief annotations to emphasise elements of the text, such as to note the height of Philosophy when she first appears to Boethius, or on the following recto to note that the book Philosophy holds in her right hand denotes understanding and wisdom. The fourteenth-century hand also corrects the text, over-writing the original, with some scraping apparent, a necessary act in a manuscript that is frequently inaccurate in minor ways, such as copying 'scriptum' for 'sceptrum' and 'in ani' for 'inanibus'.[61]

The most concentrated additions of thirteenth-century marginalia are for 3m9, 'O qui perpetua', and 4m7, 'Bella bis quinis', trailing into the start of Book 5.[62] It is compelling that the densest pages of marginalia both cover metre and allude to classical texts; in the case of 'O qui perpetua', referring to Plato's *Timaeus*, and 'Bella bis quinis', creating a highly compressed précis of *The Odyssey*. (As we shall see in the final chapter of this thesis, similar clusters of commentary accompany Walton's verse translation, which reflects the influence of existing models of glossing being applied over several centuries of the Middle Ages.) As

[60] The drawings are on BL MS Harley 4092, ff.92^{v} and 105^{r}, respectively.
[61] Corrections such as on numerous occasions on BL MS Harley 4092, f.125^{r}. Additional marks come in the form of pen trials in a different fourteenth-century hand at the bottom of f.101^{r}, and a note in yet another slightly later hand on f.108^{r} esteeming the notes made so far ('Omnibus est notum quod (??) diligo'). Examples of minor errors in the text are on BL MS Harley 4092, ff.88^{r} and 106^{r}.
[62] BL MS Harley 4092, ff.125^{v} and 147^{v}-148^{r}.

previously, the marginalia are in a tiny hand and hard to read, but it seems that in places the longer marginalia, including lemmata and extended discussions, make up lecture notes, considering not only the classical texts covered by Boethius, but key philosophical discussions, such as Philosophy's arguments on the different natures of fate and providence. There is also a further fourteenth-century hand in the bottom margin of numerous folios, now largely faded and leaving only traces behind.

As well as the markedly heavier use of annotation in the *Consolatio* in this manuscript, there are plentiful *maniculae* in two styles, the most prevalent of which is fourteenth-century and written in a brief and scruffy lead point. The second hand is contemporary but neater. As mentioned previously, the creator of the scruffy *maniculae* also pointed to a passage in *De contemptu mundi*, which adds to the dating evidence that this binding arrangement is medieval.

A survey of the *maniculae* reveals particular interests and suggests practical use. The readers marking the pages were less concerned with philosophy, logic, and Boethius's narrative history than with truisms; nuggets of wisdom and observations on the nature of society that could be used to pepper a disputation or added for flavour and gravitas to a sermon. This also corresponds to the *manicula* in *De contemptu mundi*, which is similarly concerned with a pithy moral quotation. For instance, in the *Consolatio*, a hand points to lines of Philosophy's dialogue from 2p4:

> Quis est enim tam composite felicitatis ut non aliqua ex parte cum status sui qualitate rixetur Anxia enim res est humanorum condicio bonorum et quae vel numquam tota proveniat vel numquam perpetua subsistat[63]

Similarly, two *maniculae* point to a passage of Philosophy's dialogue from 3p10:

[63] BL MS Harley 4092, f.103^{r}, 2p4 ll.41-6. 'For who is so completely happy that he does not find something to quarrel with in his own condition? For the condition of human good fortune is never free from worry; a man never wholly possesses it, nor does it last for ever.'

> Nam quoniam beatitudinis adepcio fiunt homines beati beatitudo vero est ipsa divinitas divinitatis adepcione beatos fieri manifestum est Sed uti iustitie adepcione iusti sapiencie sapientes fiunt ita divinitatem adeptos deos fieri simili racione necesse est[64]

Actually, the *maniculae* pointing to these two passages are from different hands, but the intention is much the same, and is reflected throughout the first three books; to offer moral counsel bound in a logical and philosophical argument. In total there are forty-six *maniculae* in the margins of the *Consolatio* text, which are fairly evenly distributed from 1p4 to 3p10. Regardless of the merits of the *Consolatio* as a work of literature, this codex reveals its use as a scholarly and clerical text, helped along with Boethius' elegant phrasing and the reputation of other Boethian works as being a cornerstone of the *quadrivium*.

The inclusion of medieval *maniculae* in the same hand in more than one text confirms that readers did interrogate the codex holistically. That said, the level of additional marking in the *Consolatio* is far greater than in the other texts. While that does not necessarily make it more popular than the other texts, it does imply, as the marks and comments bear out, that the *Consolatio* received scholarly attention that the other texts did not. This suggests that if there was a unity of purpose in the creation of this multi-part codex, that as its purpose shifted over time, the creator's organisational principle was dislodged. The inevitable result of this is that some texts were used more than others. Overall this manuscript (and particularly the *Consolatio*) was extensively used and reused, as a writing support, as a sketch book, as a book for learning, for reading, for scribbling in, both in the individual components from the twelfth century, and in its final form from the fourteenth century through to the eighteenth or nineteenth century. Its value has been diverse and enduring, though arguably, when one considers the greater use of the *Consolatio*, the miscellany form was not particularly helpful

[64] BL MS Harley 4092, f.127^{r}, 3p10 ll.83-8. 'For since men are made happy by the acquisition of happiness, but happiness is itself divinity, it is obvious that they are made happy by the acquisition of divinity. But as by the acquisition of justice they become just, or by the acquisition of wisdom, wise, so by the same argument they must, when they have acquired divinity, become gods.'

in this instance; that is, the *Consolatio* was used despite being held in a miscellany, not because of it.

A further example of a manuscript that fits the miscellany form, and which shows similar evidence of changing use over time, is London, British Library, MS Royal 8. B. iv.[65] Like the Harley manuscript, MS Royal 8. B. iv is made of four components. Unlike the Harley manuscript, the *Consolatio* text is fragmentary and the codex contains more short works; either short poems, or excerpts of longer works. Furthermore, the individual components of this pocket-sized manuscript were created over a wider period. While BL MS Royal 8. B. iv begins in the twelfth century, further material was added over time, the product of a scholastic curriculum that remained largely unchanged for several hundred years, combined with the expense and difficulty of obtaining the books which formed that curriculum. This creates a codex that feels brought together by convenience and happenstance, and exemplifies the resistant nature of bibliographical evidence.

The recto of the opening folio, in a fifteenth-century hand, lists the chapters of *Suda*, the Byzantine work from which a few of Robert Grosseteste's translations into Latin are contained in the third part of the manuscript, and on the verso there is a continuation of the contents list in different hands, itself a signal of change of time, even within the fifteenth century.[66] The first part of the manuscript contains three Latin poems in different twelfth-century hands and is not glossed.[67] The parchment is of good quality and, though not decorated, the text uses red ink for initials and infill.

The second part, dating from the first half of the thirteenth century, contains the poem *Alexandreis* by the twelfth-century writer Walter of Châtillon, an account of the life of

[65] *CB1*, 154-5. 'Detailed record for Royal 8.B.iv' in *BL Cat*.
[66] On *Suda*, see Tiziano Dorandi and Michele Trizio, 'Editio princeps del Liber qui vocatur Suda di Roberto Grossatesta', *Studia Graceo-Arabica*, 4 (2014), 145-90.
[67] On the poems, see Walther, 225 (4477), 1064-5 (20296), 911 (17385).

Alexander the Great.[68] The text, on coarse and dark parchment, which contains many small holes and some *lisières*, is heavily glossed in several hands, though in places the notes have worn away. New sections begin with *litterae notabiliores* in red and blue which spill into the left-hand margin, though again many of these are very faded. The text ends imperfectly.

The third part of the codex begins with a partial contents list (which does not include the *Consolatio*), squeezed on the verso around recipes in English ('For to maken formete', 'For to make amydoun'). This is followed by the few translations into Latin that Robert Grosseteste made from the *Suda*.[69] There are several blank pages between each entry, with text in different hands from the thirteenth to the first half of the fourteenth century, in secretary, book hand, and late protogothic scripts, with some use of red infill. All of the texts are written in long lines with no marginal space given for notes. As with the previous part, there are holes and *lisières*. These different elements combine to give the impression of loose booklets of Grosseteste's *Suda* copied over a period of time but always held together as a discrete project before the collected folios contributed to the bigger manuscript.

The *Consolatio* is the final part of MS Royal 8. B. iv.[70] This is a partial text, never completed, including only Books 1 and Book 2 up to 2p6. It was copied in the twelfth century and is written in at least three discernible protogothic hands. The text is written in long lines, thirty-five lines to the page, with a small amount of contemporary correction and some interlinear translation of Greek. The manuscript is not decorated, and no coloured ink is used. However, new sections are marked with initials two to four units high.

There are two folios in the *Consolatio* text that are particularly worthy of attention. At 1p6 a folio contains a circular diagram with notes written around it concerning environmental

[68] For the modern edition, see Walter of Châtillon, *Galteri de Castellione Alexandreis*, ed. by Marvin L. Colker (Patavii: In Aedibus Antenoreis, 1978).
[69] Beginning on BL MS Royal 8.B.iv, f.73^{r}.
[70] Beginning on BL MS Royal 8.B.iv, f.102^{r}.

elements and comparing them to the humours within the human body.[71] This was added slightly later, being in a different albeit contemporary hand, and with the space allowed for the addition slightly misjudged. This additional text is based on Chapter 35 of Bede's *De temporum ratione*, though much compressed into note form, a string of phrases and ideas rather than a sentence structure. The notes around the diagram have the following brief captions:

> aer humidas et calidus
> ignis siccus et calidus
> aqua frigida et humida
> estas color rubea adholescentia vel vivente aqua frigida et humida hiemps floria terra frigida et sicaa decrepita estas
> collora nigra frigida
> microcosmus id est minor mundus

Compare the above with an extract from Chapter 35 of *De temporum ratione*, which in turn refers to Isidore's *Etymologies*:

> Terra namque sicca et frigida, aqua frigida et humida, aer humidus et calidus, ignis est calidus et siccus; ideoque haec autumno, illa hiemi, iste veri, ille comparatur aestati. Sed et homo ipse, qui a sapientibus microcosmos, id est minor mundus, appellatur, hisdem per omnia qualitatibus habet temperatum corpus, imitantibus nimirum singulis eius, quibus constat humoribus, modum temporum quibus maxime pollet. Sanguis siquidem, qui vere crescit, humidus et calidus; cholera rubea, quae aestate, calida et sicca; cholera nigra, quae autumno, sicca et frigida; phlegmata, quae hieme, frigida sunt et humida. Et quidem sanguis in infantibus maxime viget, in adolescentibus cholera rubea, melancholia in transgressoribus, id est fel cum faece nigri sanguinis admixtum, phlegmata dominantur in senibus.[72]

---

[71] This is on BL MS Royal 8.B.iv, f.107^{r}.

[72] See Bede, *Bedae venerabilis opera, Pars VI, Opera Didascalia 2*, ed. by Charles W. Jones, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977) 392. For a translation, see Bede, *The Reckoning of Time*, trans. by Faith Wallis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 100-1: 'For earth is dry and cold, water cold and wet, air wet and warm, fire warm and dry, and therefore the first is likened to autumn, the next to winter, the next to spring, and the last to summer. And man himself, who is called "microcosm" by the wise, that is, "a smaller universe", has his body tempered in every respect by these same qualities; indeed each of its constituent humours imitates the manner of the season in which it prevails. For blood, which increases in the spring, is moist and warm; red bile which [increases in] the summer, is hot and dry; black bile, which [increases in] the autumn, is dry and cold; and phlegmatic humours, which [increase in] the winter, are cold and moist. Indeed, blood is at its most active in children, red bile in young people, melancholia (that is, gall mingled with the dregs of black blood) in the middle-aged, and phlegmatic humours dominate in the elderly.' Bede is here referring to Isidore's *Etymologies* 4.5.3 (see Isidore of Seville, *The* Etymologies *of Isidore of Seville*, trans. by Stephen A. Barney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 109.)

The writer here has not copied Bede, but has liberally borrowed from him to explain the opaque diagram included in the manuscript, for example to develop the idea of the human body as a microcosm of the natural world, and to expand on Philosophy's dialogue above it in the *Consolatio* text, which also moves from the rules governing nature to Boethius's personal well-being:

> Habemus maximum tuae fomitem salutis veram de mundi gubernatione sententiam, quod eam non causam temeritati sed divinae rationi subditam credis. Nihil igitur pertimescas; iam tibi ex hac minima scintillula vitalis calor inluxerit.[73]

The diagram foreshadows those included in many Trevet commentaries, and only serves to underpin the tendency of Boethian commentary to become a *glossa ordinaria* of overlapping sources, which formed such an integral part of medieval Boethian scholarship. It is clearly not a coincidence that manuscripts which contain different strains of commentary and annotation, used over extended periods of time, echo and foreshadow elements from other manuscripts in the same tradition. Ideas were taught, shared, and copied, working their way into both formal and informal structures of textual scaffolding.

The other folio of note is the last, which ends imperfectly mid-sentence in the twelfth-century hand, where the scribe left off half-way down a page.[74] The text is then continued in a sixteenth-century hand to the end of the prose section, concluding 'Finis sextae prosae Boetii de philosophica consolatione'. It is known that the manuscript was owned in the sixteenth century by the first Baron Lumley, who also signs his name on an earlier folio, and the completion of this section is in the same hand. This addition by Lumley significantly extends

[73] 'The best kindler of your health we have is your true opinion of the governance of the world, that you believe it to be subject not to the randomness of chance events but to divine reason; do not be afraid, then, for presently out of this tiny spark your vital warmth will glow again.' Tester, 1p6 ll.51-5.
[74] BL MS Royal 8.B.iv, f.112^{v}.

in time the community of use of the codex, and in particular reveals a secular scholar with a concern for completeness, collating against another copy of the text.[75]

Additionally, there is a fourteenth-century pressmark for the abbey at Bury St Edmunds, 'S.184', and there is a note of ownership on the reverse of the English recipes: 'Quaternus monachorum sancti Edmundi de procuratione fratris Henrici de Kirkested in quo continetur narracio sumpta de libro qui uocatur Suda'.[76] Henry of Kirkstead was the librarian at Bury St Edmunds in the late fourteenth century, and his use of pressmarks and notes of ownership in Bury's books has been a boon in facilitating the reconstruction of Bury's well-stocked late medieval library, which included the obligatory commentaries on biblical texts, as well as chronicles, verse works such as Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, and classical historians such as Sallust and Suetonius.[77] From this evidence one may think that the manuscript, with provenance from Bury St Edmunds in both the first and third parts, must have been compiled in that place in the fourteenth century, and supporting evidence for such a theory comes from the fact that a copy of the *De temporum ratione* is listed in the medieval catalogue from Bury.[78] However, it should be noted that the contents list on the verso, squashed around the recipes, includes the contents for the first and third parts only, written in the same hand as the mark of ownership. Bearing in mind that the contents list at the start of the codex is fifteenth-century, a Bury provenance for the final configuration depends on the manuscript having stayed at the abbey for an extended period of time, with a final

[75] On Lumley see Sears Jayne and Francis R. Johnson (eds.), *The Lumley Library: The Catalogue of 1609* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956), 119. Lumley added his name to the bottom of BL MS Royal 8.B.iv, f.2^{r}.
[76] On BL MS Royal 8.B.iv, ff.1^{v} and 72^{r}, respectively.
[77] On the library at Bury, see Richard Sharpe, 'Reconstructing the medieval library of Bury St Edmunds Abbey: the lost catalogue of Henry of Kirkstead' in *Bury St Edmunds: Medieval Art, Architecture, Archaeology and Economy*, ed. by Antonia Gransden (Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 1998), 204-18; Henry of Kirkestede, *Catalogus de Libris Autenticis et Apocrifis*, ed. by Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse (London: British Library, 2004), xxx n, lvii, 169, 254.
[78] Henry of Kirkestede, *Catalogus*, 155.

compilation sometime in the fifteenth century more likely.[79] This both extends the medieval development of this codex, and also suggests that even within a single institution a book's value and purpose could change over time.

It is likely that the *Consolatio* was intended to be a complete copy, consisting as it does of more than one book. If that is the case, then the *Consolatio* text has undergone several changes in its form and status; from the intended complete *Consolatio* that was commissioned, to the fragmentary Boethian text that was the result, to becoming one element of a compendium or miscellany. The other elements in the codex, the verse, Walter of Châtillon, and Grosseteste, combined with the Bury provenance, suggest scholarly use, perhaps at the abbey school for training in grammar.[80] It is a reminder that those in the religious life, or at least those clerks who may have aspired to become priests, had broader tastes than the purely sacred, particularly in the later medieval period. However, the range of the texts makes it unsurprising that when the manuscript left Bury it should have appealed as well to those outside the orders.

This fragmentary manuscript was clearly written in several phases, and feels less cohesive as a final book, with different levels of glossing, of page design, and with various kinds of content. It is therefore harder to see a sense of the organisational principles involved in selecting these texts to sit together, except that they were all pocket-sized and loose and would be better protected (and therefore more likely to be used) if properly bound. It is inevitable that some manuscripts do not lend themselves to easy theorising, though if one were to seek a reasonable hypothesis, perhaps the existence of the miscellany itself is

---

[79] It should also be noted that in the right-hand margin of BL MS Royal 8.B.iv, f.107^{r}, the same page as the diagram and therefore within the *Consolatio* text, a rudimentary figure of a man has been drawn, looking unsurprisingly unhappy as he appears to have been shot with an arrow. This doodle may reflect the book's provenance from Bury St Edmunds in its final form, as the cult of St Edmund Martyr centres around the story, told since the late tenth century, that he was shot by the Vikings with arrows. For more on this, see Antonia Gransden, *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon, 1992), 83-4.

[80] The assertion of use as a schoolbook is made by Tony Hunt, *Teaching and Learning Latin in Thirteenth-Century England*, vol 1 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), 31.

circumstantial evidence for the book having stayed in Bury for so long, that its only commonality was that the texts were all available in the abbey library for binding.

Interconnected difference in *Consolatio* marginalia

From manuscripts that hold a value for their materials, and those that are valued for the combination of short texts that they contain, we turn now to manuscript copies of the *Consolatio* that were kept for long periods primarily for the value of the Boethian text they hold. In the following two manuscripts the *Consolatio* remains largely stable and unchanged, but it is added to by myriad annotating hands. This can be understood through the prism of interconnected difference; that the reader of a manuscript, by adding marginalia, is making a two-fold statement: they acknowledge the value and authority of the text as they receive it, and yet they add new material to the page, which implies that their own contribution also has value and authority (and indeed the student writing their master's comments into the margin is likewise acknowledging the authority of the master). This echoes ideas discussed in the introduction of this thesis, particularly those of Rita Copeland, that through rhetorical practice inherited from antiquity scholars continued to both revere and displace what came before.[81] Further, as Jane Griffiths points out, glossing and commentary for Biblical and academic texts 'were traditionally supplied by a third person', thereby implying 'that a text had been found worthy of detailed attention by someone other than the author'.[82] This rings true for both formal marginalia at the point of the manuscript's creation as well as later informal jotting, and as at each stage there would be no point adding the same annotation as a previous reader, each would contribute a different perspective and data to the text. This thread of difference and similarity creates a community of academic discourse that can accrete over

[81] Copeland, 65.
[82] Griffiths, 7.

lengthy periods of time. The next two manuscripts discussed tap into this idea of interconnected difference, as seen in the responses to the text over an extended period.

Unlike the last two codices, the next manuscript to be considered, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 17814, contains only one stage of construction of the *Consolatio*, written in Caroline Minuscule and from the last quarter of the tenth century.[83] The manuscript consists of a prologue to the *Consolatio*, followed by the primary text, written in twenty long lines with a wide outer margin to allow for gloss.[84] The title page is written in large, centred Roman square capitals in green, orange, and red ink. This is surrounded with the coat of arms of a previous owner of the manuscript, Jean Bouhier de Savigny (1673-1746), a noted bibliophile from Burgundy.[85] The ownership of Bouhier de Savigny is notable in that the tenth-century primary text ends imperfectly.[86] The text is then completed in an early modern hand, followed by 'LIBER V EXPLICIT' in green and red ink, doing a good job of replicating the Roman square capitals used by the original scribe for incipits to prose and metre sections, alongside his usual Caroline minuscule, and reminiscent of the way that the coat of arms of Bouhier de Savigny is woven around the original title page, combining the old and new in the *mise en page*.[87]

Beyond the tenth-century text there are three further elements that add to the multi-faceted nature of the codex, and which make the manuscript significant in this survey: a series of diagrams included within the text, use of contemporary commentary, that of Remigius of Auxerre, and of particular interest, the addition of extensive commentary from the fourteenth century.

---

[83] See 'Latin 17814' in *BnF Archives et Manuscrits* <https://archivesetmanuscrits.BnF.fr/ark:/12148/cc688224> [accessed 24 January 2022].
[84] The prologue is Vita III as identified by *CB1*, 16.
[85] On Bouhier, see Albert Ronsin, *La bibliothèque Bouhier : histoire d'une collection formée du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle par une famille de magistrats bourguignons* (Dijon: Académie des sciences, arts et belle-lettres, 1971), 25-6; Charles Isaac Elton and Mary Augusta Elton, *The Great Book-Collectors* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1893), 193-4.
[86] The text ends on BnF MS latin 17814, f.122^{v}, 5p6, 'eorum tamen unum prius quoque'.
[87] The added text runs to BnF MS latin 17814, f.123^{v}.

The four diagrams included in MS latin 17814 are all circular.[88] The first follows the title page, in green, red, and black ink, with a few notes written at the edges of the page, now faded and illegible. The words written in the outer band of the circle describe the twelve compass winds in language similar though not identical to that used by Isidore in his *Etymologies*.[89] The second diagram falls just below Boethius's reference to the astronomic theories of Ptolemy (2p7), and is a now much faded depiction of a Ptolemaic, that is, a geocentric world view, drawn in green, blue, and red ink.

The third diagram is placed at the start of the famous poem, 'O qui perpetua' (3p9), in the lower right-hand margin. Drawn in black and red ink with a small amount of foliate decoration, it depicts the qualities of the four elements. For instance, 'AQUA' sits between 'HUMIDA' and 'FRIGIDA', 'AER' between 'HUMIDUS' and 'CALIDUS', and so on. This is in keeping with verse 9, based on Plato's *Timaeus*, which gives an account of the physical nature of the universe.[90] It also bears comparison with the diagram held in BL MS Royal 8. B. iv, discussed earlier in this chapter. These respective diagrams are located in different books within the *Consolatio*, and have different textual apparatus, and yet they are obviously related, concerned as they both are with environmental conditions, which in turn makes them similar to the later tradition of diagrams that accompany many copies of Trevet's commentary. The last diagram is placed in the lower-right hand margin of a folio concerned with the nature of free will, depending on whether a person is governed by fate or providence.[91] This simple diagram in red and black ink places providence around the central point of the divine, with fate around the edge of the circle.

[88] The diagrams are on BnF MS latin 17814 ff.2^{r}, 42^{r}, 63^{r}, and 96^{r}.
[89] See Barney et al, *The* Etymologies *of Isidore of Seville*, 275.
[90] See in particular 32B-42D. Plato, *Volume IX: Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 58-93.
[91] This is in 4p6.

Although the early commentary and diagrams are fitted around the primary text, and therefore were not part of the original *mise en page*, nonetheless Boethius's text, the diagrams, and the early commentary, all appear to be contemporary. The diagrams and commentary are executed with a great enough degree of care to suggest a formal addition to the codex, a formulated schedule of layering, rather than informal notes or scribbles during a lecture. The early commentary is frequent though often contributes just a few marginal lines to a page.[92] The Remigian commentary is then expanded with interlinear textual notes in the same hand, and with expanded notes on the commentary in the margin, in a slightly smaller hand in browner ink, possibly a development by the same scribe but more likely by another almost contemporary user.

Additional to these carefully crafted elements is a later, fourteenth-century commentary, in what appears to be one hand writing in two distinct phases (though two hands cannot be entirely ruled out), named Hand C.1 and Hand C.2 for the sake of clarity. These marginalia are more plentiful than the earlier glosses, and often fit into all the available marginal space left by the earlier scribes. Distinguishing features of the two phases are that Hand C.1 is neater, and Hand C.2 is highly current and quite frequently uses lemmata which are underlined. It would therefore appear that after one initial phase of marginalia, the same person added more around the remaining space or to pick up where his earlier phase left off.[93] Analysis of frequency reveals that Hand C.1 is more numerous than Hand C.2 and is heavily weighted to the first three quarters of the manuscript. Hand C.2 is weighted to the second half, and supplies as his annotation a partial copy of Trevet's commentary, though this is not

[92] For more on such commentary, see Johannes Scotus Erigena, *Saeculi Noni Auctoris in Boetii Consolationem Philosophiae Commentarius*, ed. by Edmund Taite Silk (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1935), 305-43.
[93] Such as on BnF MS latin 17814, f.73^{r}.

recorded as such by previous cataloguers.[94] The commentary is not complete, often picking up half way through a section and sometimes adding a few words. For instance, on one occasion in Book 3, Hand C.1 begins at the start of a new section for several lines, before the current Hand C.2 continues Trevet's gloss down the gutter margin to the bottom of the page.[95] The most likely scenario with the fourteenth-century commentary is that a scholar began to add marginal addition in leisure, perhaps with one commentary exemplar in front of them, and then was required to switch to another exemplar but with less time to complete the work.

This process of later addition also means that the commentary is bent to fit the text as well as it can but does not always fit with the *mise en page* of the earlier scheme. For instance, Hand C.1 wraps notes around the diagram representing Ptolemaic astronomy, and yet the lemma ('Adde quod') that begins these notes refers not to Ptolemy, as you might expect, but to the concluding idea that Boethius used Ptolemy to illustrate, that the reach of a person's fame is restricted by external awareness of a given society, that even at its height the renown of great Roman statesmen was not universal.[96] There is no attempt to link marginalia to the diagrams, and the marginalia reflects the topics covered on the page with a greater eye for available space.

This collaborative effort through six hundred years and in the hands of several scribes and scholars has created a manuscript with a complete text and decorative schemata, interlinear textual notes as well as two separate traditions of commentary, that of Remigius of Auxerre and of Nicholas Trevet. However, the currency of the book changed over time. It is apparent in the earliest stages of the manuscript's development that great care was taken over

[94] Such as P. Courcelle, 'Étude Critique sur les Commentaires de la Consolation de Boèce (IXe-XVe Siècles)' in *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age*, (12), Paris (1939), 133-4; Ruth J. Dean, 'The Life and Works of Nicholas Trevet with Special Reference to his Anglo-Norman Chronicle', unpublished thesis, Oxford (1938); Thomas Kaeppeli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi*, vol 3 (Rome: Ad S. Sabinae, 1980).
[95] This is on BnF MS latin 17814, f.58^{r} for 3p7.
[96] This is on BnF MS latin 17814, f.42^{r}. The lemma relates to Tester, 2p7, 216-9.

the text and Remigian commentary, and it is an attractive book, despite its lack of decoration or use of illumination. Hand C.1 continues in this vein to a degree, though the hand is secretary and the effort is workaday. Hand C.2 takes this informality further, adding extensive text but in a hurried fashion that breaks with the formal scheme of the original manuscript. However, its value comes full circle. The final additions, likely by or for Bouhier de Savigny, show once more the parallel concerns for textual usefulness, particularly in completing the imperfect ending of the medieval manuscript, but also for the value of the manuscript as an aesthetic object, returning to the use of Caroline-style coloured ink and majuscule at the book's close.

The second manuscript in this pair is in many ways a similar manuscript, though as we shall see it arguably maintained a less changeable value for its multiple readers over time. Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk.3.21 dates from around the first half of the eleventh century, and is likely to be copied from Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.3.7. [97] It contains the *Consolatio* without an *accessus* or prologue, followed by a maze containing a poem about the Marian Assumption and provenance notes in Old English, both of which provide evidence that the codex came from Abingdon. There are also notes about compass winds, in a mixture of Latin and Old English, and pen trials.[98] Like BNF MS latin 17814, CUL MS Kk.3.21 has only one stage of construction, and contains several layers of addition over time. Though the bindings are seventeenth-century, it does bear traces of an early shelfmark, with the number '101' written onto the fore edge of the text block. The *Consolatio* text is written in twenty-two long lines on good quality parchment. The lines are well-spaced to allow interlinear

[97] See Paul Binski and Patrick Zutshi, *Western Illuminated Manuscripts: A Catalogue of the Collection in Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), no.3, 6-7; *CB1*, 44-5; Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 37-8. Its relationship to the Trinity College manuscript is mentioned in Binski and Zutshi, and in *CB1*.

[98] The provenance note on CUL MS Kk.3.21, f.104^{v} says 'byrnstan beoffansunu ælfnoð ælrices sunu æt hrocanlea'. See 'Boethius — Abingdon, Berkshire. Benedictine abbey of St Mary the Virgin' in *MLGB3*. See also Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, 37-8.

textual glosses, and a significant outer margin and narrower gutter margin are maintained for the inclusion of a formal scheme of commentary.

The text begins with a *titulus* in small majuscule script, followed by the opening line in Roman square capitals two units high, in red ink and green infill with an illuminated initial. Metre sections are written in majuscule, while prose sections are written in minuscule. The marginal commentary, from the Remigian tradition, is written into the margins in a smaller but contemporary minuscule hand. The use of Greek is well-executed and translated into Latin in the margins, which, given the rarity of Greek readership in medieval England, shows an unusual level of scholarship.[99] The amount of commentary varies, though the standard is a neatly measured amount which fits into the left and right margins and tends therefore to stay flush with the primary text box. One of the few exceptions to this is an opening where facing pages are carpeted with contemporary commentary in every available space, including a small circular diagram.[100] This is the same diagram as included in Paris, BnF MS latin 17814, depicting the four elements.[101] It is drawn in black and red ink, and as in the BnF manuscript, also coincides with 'O qui perpetua' (3m9).

In considering the later additions it is useful to look at the different hands individually. The central column, written in a neat Caroline hand, with interlinear textual glossing and the Remigian commentary to left and right, all appears to be in one hand (Hand A), or at the very least to be very similar and contemporary. There is an attention for fidelity to the text, with neat correction and annotation, and there is concern for the design of the page; the outer and gutter marginalia rarely feel squashed in. Hand B, a less formal insular script, makes a few additions to the early commentary on two folios.[102]

---

[99] Such as on CUL MS Kk.3.21, f.43^{v}. For more on Greek literacy in medieval England, see Carlotta Barranu, 'Greek and Philohellenism in England During the Long Thirteenth Century: The Evidence From the Books of the Religious Houses' in *Viator* 52 (2021), 319-57.
[100] This is on CUL MS Kk.3.21, ff.49^{v} and 50^{r}. The diagram is in the bottom left-hand corner of the verso.
[101] This is on BnF MS latin 17814, f.63^{r}.
[102] These additions by Hand B are on CUL MS Kk.3.21, ff.88^{r} and 96^{v}.

In the bottom margins, rarely used by Hand A, have been added frequent page summaries throughout the manuscript in a later medieval hand (Hand C), though they become less frequent as the manuscript continues. These summaries tend not to be very long, a few lines at most, and show an interesting concern to guide other readers. For instance, below the opening metre the summariser has added: 'In isto primo metro plangit boetius signum statum subito mutatur de prosperite in aduersitem a quo accipitur modum plangendi statum mu[tatur] de bono in malum de virtute in vicium de castitate in luxuriam de abstinencia in gulam et sic de consiliatoribus'.[103] Likewise, below the metre 'Cum polo Phoebus' the summariser has added: 'Cum phebi. In isto metro ostendit philosophia quod omnia quae fuerit extra tempus debitum soletur habere malum exitum id est accipitur modum quod tempore debito pro se et amico.'[104] The hand here is a carefully formed anglicana, almost formata, with a precise execution, hooked ascenders, and use of red for the opening capital. It is interesting that the scribe uses quite an open, squarish form, which means that while not being self-consciously archaic, nonetheless the summaries do not look out of place next to the minuscule above. Overall, one can see that Hand C has a neatness which displays the intention of the annotator to make his additions a formal and authoritative part of the manuscript. Additionally, the rhetorical style of the repeated use of antithesis in the first quotation suggests a performative element. These notes are not for personal use, but for the elucidation of future readers. It is also noteworthy that the same scribe has amended their own work, as the words 'et amico' have been added to the end of the line by the same hand but in paler ink, reinforcing the

[103] This is on CUL MS Kk.3.21, f.1^{r}: 'In this first metre Boethius laments the sign. The situation is changed suddenly from prosperity to adversity, which directs the mode of mourning, the state is changed from good to bad, from virtue to vice, from chastity to lust, from abstinence to gluttony, and so it is with counsellors.' In the manuscript 'mutatur' is given as 'mutatatur'.

[104] This is for 2m3, on CUL MS Kk.3.21, f.13^{r}: 'Cum phebi. In this metre Philosophy shows that everything that is done beyond the due time usually has a bad outcome, that is, the indebted time is endured in this way for him and for his friend.'

scribe's concern in both of these quotations not just with how Boethius's actions have affected his own outcomes, but those around him as well.

The formality of Hand C's addition continues, with neatly shaded *maniculae* coloured in black and red, often with a brief moralising note, such as, to mark the close of Book 1: 'letargus patitur communem illusarum mentium morbum'.[105] However, it is a curious feature of the summariser that while their additions are usually in the third person, they occasionally switch to the first person voice, usually in the margin and accompanied by a pointing hand, as on one occasion, 'Ego vero nego ullum esse bonum quod noceat habenti', and on another: 'Tum ego: ostendit quod gloria mundi non sit multum appetenda'.[106] This shift can be easily explained by the summariser's use of quotations. The first of these 'ego' glosses is a direct quotation from the *Consolatio*. However, a careful comparison reveals that the second is taken from the fifteenth-century commentary by pseudo-Aquinas. That source would make these late medieval additions to the manuscript around a hundred years later than earlier scholarship attests, and is unusual in an English manuscript, when most use of the pseudo-Aquinas commentary was in the German medieval tradition of scholarship on the *Consolatio*.[107] The unlikely nature of this finding suggests another stream of commentary, perhaps that which the commentary by pseudo-Aquinas is based on. This interest in commentary is made further apparent by the *manicula* on a later folio which points to the tenth-century commentary, not to the primary text.[108] Furthermore, on one verso in Book 4

---

[105] This is on CUL MS Kk.3.21, f.15^{v}: 'He suffers lethargy, a disease common to deluded minds.'
[106] These marginalia are on, respectively, CUL MS Kk.3.21, ff.28^{r} ('Now I maintain that nothing is good which harms its possessor', Tester, 2p5, 206-7) and f.29^{v} ('Then I: she explains that worldly glory is not much to be desired.').
[107] The gloss is: 'Tum ego: scis inquam: Hinc incipit septima prosa huius secundi in qua ostendit philosophia quod gloria mundana non sit multum appetenda.' *Anicii orquati Severini Boecii viri nominis celebritate quam memorandi textus de philosophie consolatione cum edicione comentaria beati Thome de Aquino ordinis predicatorum*, (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1476), liber secundus prosa septima, f.75^{r}. Binski and Zutshi identify the marginalia only as 'late medieval', but *CB1* suggests that it is fourteenth-century. See Binski and Zutshi, 6. *CB1*, 44. Regarding the use of the pseudo-Aquinas commentary, see *CB1*, 15; Minnis in Gibson, 312-61 (354), and Palmer in Gibson, 362-409 (363, 399).
[108] This occurs on CUL MS Kk.3.21, f.38^{r}.

are two small pencil drawings of a cartwheel, next to the Boethius text regarding how we are affected by fate as we are closer to God. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, where the image occurs in another manuscript, but is a likely reference to Trevet's commentary for this passage of the Consolatio text.[109]

Additions made by the summariser are distinctive in the precision of the hand, particularly when compared to another late medieval scribe, who contributes a small number of glosses in a more current hand (Hand D).[110] These fourteenth-century cursive glosses are in pale ink and hard to read, and make a clear contrast to Hand C; they are the jottings of a scholar making personal notes not designed to support future reading of the text or other commentary.

CUL MS Kk.3.21 is certainly more tidily presented than BnF MS latin 17814. It maintained its value as an aesthetic object long into its life, with most additions of commentary, up to the fifteenth century, still applying material with a desire to write carefully and to add more than brief notes. This may have been because the manuscript was created with care to begin with and invited careful future readers. However, one should not be blinded to the many manuscripts, like the Rochester fragment now in Maidstone Archives, which must once have been part of an attractive codex. As it is, both the Paris and Cambridge manuscripts detailed above are largely stable codicological units, unchanged in their initial composition, that have maintained an intellectual currency for a long time, to be preserved, read, and gloss added to the existing schema for half a millennium before becoming antiquarian objects. Harder to detect is whether a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century reader would have viewed these manuscripts as antique in their own day, but we can clearly see that these objects were still considered useful.

---

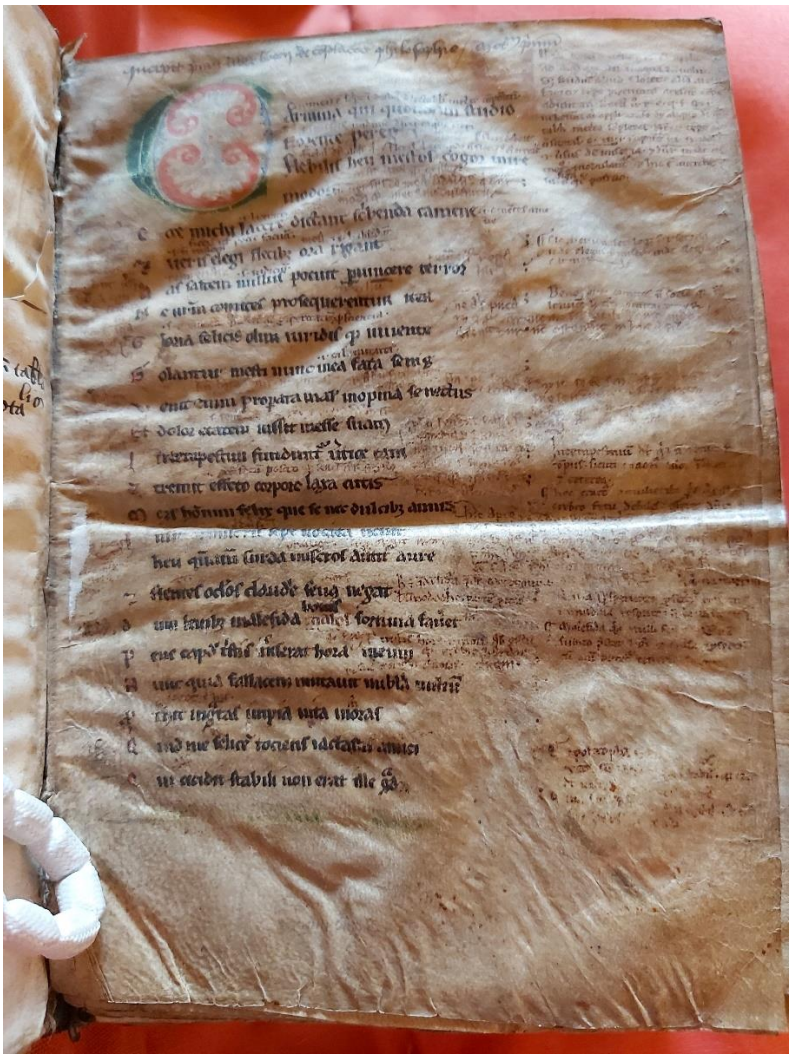
[109] This is on CUL MS Kk.3.21, f.77^{v}, next to 4p6.
[110] These occur on CUL MS Kk.3.21, ff.65^{r}, 70^{v}, and 83^{v}.

The All-in-One Volume

The final section of this chapter takes the discussion of early manuscripts a stage further, in a pattern of development that is also presented in the wider thesis. If in some copies of the *Consolatio* the value of the text was apparent through the signs of provenance, reading, and annotation, then in this last manuscript, what we might call the all-in-one volume, the virtue of the manuscript is in its completeness. The previous two manuscripts contained plentiful addition with informal annotation held on the page next to the primary text, which sometimes means that glossing is cramped or untidily scattered within the available space. The all-in-one volume takes these elements of primary text and paratext, and separates them out into individual texts, still using early copies within a single codex, to create books of text and scholastic apparatus in one handy volume, such as in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius, MS 309 (707), which contains a twelfth-century component, Boethius' *Opuscula Sacra* followed by the *Consolatio*, bound with a bundle of fourteenth-century texts: a copy of the commentary to the *Consolatio* by William of Aragon, two *vitae* of Boethius, and a ninth-century commentary on the metres of the *Consolatio*, *De Metriis* by Lupus Servus (or Lupus of Ferrières), as well as being annotated with some fourteenth-century marginalia.[111] In this way, the Gonville and Caius manuscript has everything the medieval scholar would have needed to gain a thorough understanding of the *Consolatio*, cross-referencing between the different elements of the codex, or it could be consulted at the level of the individual text, depending on the needs of the reader.

[111] Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College*, vol 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907), 354-5. The *Opuscula Sacra* is a compilation of five theological tractates written by Boethius, the earliest in around 513 CE. Distinctive in their strong Catholic orthodoxy, the five texts are: 'De Trinitate', 'Utrum Pater', 'Quomodo Substantiae', 'De Fide Catholica', and 'Contra Eutychen'. All five texts are included in the Gonville and Caius manuscript, though they are not fully itemised in M. R. James's catalogue entry. Vitae I and II as identified in *CB1*, 16. For more on *De Metriis*, see Seppo Heikkinen, 'Copy-Paste Metrics? Lupus of Ferrières on Boethius', *Arctos: Acta Philologica Fennica*, 48 (2014), 164-183.

Similarly, Cambridge, Jesus College, MS Q. D. 7 (48), reveals the desire to create the all-in-one volume from whatever materials were available.[112] MS Q. D. 7 contains a copy of the *Consolatio*, a *tabula* to the text, and a copy of Trevet's commentary. As with the Gonville and Caius manuscript it is a binding together of texts from different periods, though in this instance the effort goes a stage further to create a Frankenstein's monster of a *Consolatio*, using parts stolen from elsewhere and adding new material to cover the gaps.



Cambridge, Jesus College, MS Q.D.7, f1[r]

This manuscript also began life as a copy of the *Consolatio*, created in the first half of the thirteenth century. Writing twenty-seven lines to a page, the scribe left plenty of space in

[112] Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Jesus College, Cambridge* (London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1895), 78.

the outer margin for two columns of commentary. There are several thirteenth-century hands throughout the text, one of which began to add interlinear and marginal notes on the opening recto and onto the verso page, before it stopped and the baton was picked up by a fourteenth-century scribe, who added extra columns to some early folios (both in the gutter and on the inside of existing gloss, eating into the space taken by the primary text).[113] This same hand and others make only sporadic additions to the *Consolatio*, for instance, occasionally adding 'B' and 'P' in the outer margin to mark sections of dialogue between Boethius and Philosophy. One of the later scribes has drawn very rudimentary faces in the margins of several folios, and there are at least two different hands drawing *maniculae* throughout the manuscript.[114] Prose and metre markings have been added in a late medieval hand, and on the flyleaves the contents are noted in a fifteenth-century secretary hand (which M. R. James cites as a likely Durham provenance) and possibly a sixteenth-century hand as well.[115] These disparate elements tell us that already this manuscript has numerous points of engagement over approximately a three hundred year period. The plot twist in the story of this manuscript begins at the loss of folios from Book 3 at some point in its earlier history. The book also ends imperfectly. What happened next is quite unusual.

A fifteenth-century scribe has created a *tabula* or list of lemmata to the *Consolatio*, followed by a copy of Trevet's commentary.[116] This later book of two hundred and eighty-four folios has had great care taken over its creation. Opening sections are decorated with lifelike foliate borders painted with red, orange, brown, blue, green, and purple paints, as well

[113] This runs as far as CJC MS Q.D.7, f.5^{r}.
[114] Such as on CJC MS Q.D.7, ff.3^{v}-4^{v}. There is also a profile drawing of a jester, identifiable by his hat (f.8^{r}), as well as a picture of a creature resembling a bird with the head of a jester, on the same page.
[115] A copy of the catalogue held by Jesus College includes a note from R. A. B. Mynors, disputing the Durham provenance.
[116] The *tabula* begins on CJC MS Q.D.7 f.71^{r}, followed by several blank folios, then the Trevet prologue on f.91^{r} and the commentary incipit on f.94^{v}.

as infilling the border and opening initials with gold. The handwriting is a neater anglicana formata, and there is concern for letter forms not to be squashed.



Cambridge, Jesus College, MS Q.D.7, f.91[r]

Lemmata are underlined in red, and paraph marks have been added in blue. Scribal correction is apparent through scraping and over-writing. Of particular interest, the Trevet commentary in its most complete state comes with several diagrams, and a core standard of seven are

documented, though more are often attested, such as in Hereford Cathedral Library, MS P. III. 6, discussed later in this thesis, which includes nine.[117] Jesus College MS Q. D. 7 also includes nine diagrams, completed with care for detail.[118] Both the number and standard of the diagrams, together with the foliate decoration, the use of different colour pigments as well as gold, and the neatly formed anglicana formata of the script, all create a sharp contrast with the non-luxury copy of the *Consolatio* with which it is bound.

This copy of Trevet's commentary could have quite naturally been treated as a complete book in its own right. However, the owner of the book, which may have been Durham Cathedral, or perhaps a stationer keen to sell it, felt that it needed to be part of an all-in-one volume, that is, with a copy of the *Consolatio* to precede it. With this in mind, a fifteenth-century effort has been made to create one book out of these disparate components. The accompanying twelfth-century copy of the *Consolatio* was made complete through the addition of inserted folios and added text. This was done in several stages. In the case of some missing folios from Book 3, this was managed by adding extra fifteenth-century text to the bottom of two pages of the twelfth-century manuscript, in more than one hand.[119] The following twenty-nine folios were then taken from an entirely different fifteenth-century copy of the text.[120] However, the added leaves were not going to match up perfectly, so yet another fifteenth-century hand added text to the foot of the final folio of this addition, which enabled the text to run continuously into the start of the remaining portion of the twelfth-century copy. The final step was to add new folios to complete the end of the *Consolatio*. This is distinctive, as the rest of text, cobbled together as it was, at least has minor signs of use;

---

[117] For more on the standard scheme of diagrams often found in copies of Trevet's commentary, see Jakub Kujawiński, 'Nicholas Trevet OP (c. 1258–after 1334) as Publishing Friar. Part I. Commentaries on the Authors of Classical and Christian Antiquity' in *The Art of Publication from the Ninth to the Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. by S. Niskanen and V. Rovere (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming), 167-268 (189).
[118] The diagrams are on CJC MS ff.105^{r}, 110^{v}, 130^{v}, 135^{r}, 137^{v}, 181^{r}, 221^{r}, 286^{r}, and 288^{r}.
[119] This fifteenth-century addition is on the bottom of CJC MS Q.D.7, f.27^{r} and onto f.27^{v}.
[120] The fifteenth-century folios taken from a different copy of the text are on CJC MS Q.D.7, ff.28-56. Gibson and Smith identify these folios as coming from another copy: *CB1*, 70.

whereas, these final folios added in the fifteenth century are noticeably clean and free of additional marking. The only sign of continuity here is that prose and metre markings have been given to the text in an additional late medieval hand which goes across all elements of the composite text, and so must have been added late in its development.

It is intriguing, when comparing the quality of the copy of the *Consolatio* and that of the tabula and commentary, to consider why one should bind such an impressive copy of Trevet's commentary to such an ungainly copy of the *Consolatio*, or for that matter, why one should make such an effort to decorate the commentary with colour and gold when its cheek by jowl neighbour was not so adorned. The most likely answer is that regardless of decoration or the humbleness of its origins, it was completed and bound thus for a scholar or communal scholars who required textual completeness. No matter how beautiful Trevet's commentary looks, its scholarly value was greater than considerations of appearance.

Cambridge, Gonville and Caius, MS 309 and Cambridge, Jesus College, MS Q. D. 7 are examples of all-in-one volumes of text and commentary which have been collated to extend scholarly access to information. The relative circumstances of their respective creation and the standard of parchment, decoration, and binding, was less important to the commissioners of these codices than having as much data as possible in one book, in as complete a form as possible.[121] Though this may create some unlikely neighbours, codicologically speaking, it would have expanded study of the *Consolatio* for those who needed more than extracts and rhetorical nuggets. Considering the cost and hassle of not just copying but creating these books from spare parts, the desire for completeness is all the more impressive.

[121] For more on the importance of textual completeness, see Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375-1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 246-74.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to answer the question: does the extended life of an earlier manuscript suggest that it was considered valuable, to be prized, venerated, and reused, or do these manuscripts with punctuated history of use reflect a text not considered worthy of copying afresh? In attempting to answer the question, different kinds of value ascribed to a manuscript – economic, intellectual, aesthetic – have been considered. However, what is apparent in many of the examples is that text *was* copied afresh. Imperfect copies were finished by later scribes. They were corrected, summarised, and annotated. Great care was taken to write separate commentaries to enhance existing manuscripts. There is little sense here that a text was not worth copying afresh, only that when the scholarly data contained within a codex was hard to get hold of and expensive to buy, it made more sense to make do and mend than to start again.[122]

The copies of the *Consolatio* discussed in this chapter do not contain the back and forth of students adding to a greater *glossa*, as seen in some early scholastic manuscripts. Rather, there was an evolution from the sporadic nature of addition and happenstance binding arrangements of a manuscript such as BL MS Royal 8. B. iv, towards a homogenous commentary held separately from the primary text. In these formalised commentaries, ideas, diagrams, and rhetorical pointers increasingly conform to an expected if not a standardized level. We can see this in manuscripts such as in Cambridge, Jesus College MS Q.D.7 or Gonville and Caius, MS 309, which pre-empt the need for informal additions by future readers. When scholars do add with a mind to future readers, such as the rhetorical summariser of CUL MS Kk. 3. 21, it is with a self-consciously didactic tone to their language. Therefore, a manuscript could be valuable for many reasons, and was often

[122] For more on this sustained use of manuscripts, see Hannah Ryley, *Re-using Manuscripts in Late Medieval England: Repairing, Recycling, Sharing* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2022), 67-8.

pedagogic (as the following chapter will explore further), albeit the reason it was added to, kept, or adapted, might be different again for each reader.

2. The *Consolatio* as textbook

There is ample evidence, as the previous chapter began to uncover, of the *Consolatio* being used in educational contexts in medieval England. This extended use of Boethius's literary output makes sense, as works such as his *De arithmetica* and *De musica* both formed part of the Bachelor of Arts *quadrivium* at Oxford and Cambridge universities.[1] Boethius also provided translations and commentaries on Greek works from antiquity that enabled scholarship of the classics in the late antique and early medieval periods, particularly of Aristotle, and provided rhetorical theory in his work *De differentiis topicis* that speaks to medieval rhetorical forms of *accessus* and exegesis.[2] If a student had studied Boethius's works extensively in his education, it is not surprising that he used a work such as the *Consolatio* as a tool, despite it being less obviously pedagogic, when he in turn became a schoolmaster. That is, the *Consolatio*, not apparently a work for the schoolroom on Boethius's part and far from an easy choice when learning Latin, nonetheless was used in this context as coming from the pen of one with pedagogic credentials. It provided grammatical and rhetorical instruction wrapped around nuggets of classical philosophy and poetry, all within a package that was theologically acceptable to the Christian teacher and student. Furthermore, there is a pedagogic quality not only to the content but to the form of Boethius's text. When Philosophy asks Boethius:

> 'Primum igitur paterisne me pauculis rogationibus statum tuae mentis attingere atque temptare, ut qui modus sit tuae curationis intellegam?'[3]

---

[1] On other Boethian works in the curriculum, see J. D. North, 'Astronomy and Mathematics' in *HUO2*, 103-74 (128); F. Ll. Harrison, 'Music at Oxford before 1500', in *HUO2*, 347-71 (352); Ralph Hanna, *Patient Reading/Reading Patience: Oxford Essays on Medieval English Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 25. There is also evidence that Boethius wrote on each element of the *quadrivium*, writing works on geometry and astronomy as well, for which see Gillian R. Evans, 'Boethius' Geometry and the Four Ways', *Centaurus,* 25 (1981), 161-5 (161).

[2] On Boethius and rhetorical theory, see Copeland, 68-9.

[3] 'Now first of all, will you let me ask a few simple questions, to probe and test the state of your mind, so as to learn what kind of cure is best for your condition?' Tester, 1p6, 166-7.

the voice we hear is that of the teacher or master, and Boethius, until recently *magister officiorum*, the head of the Roman government and therefore an incredibly powerful man, is *magister* no longer, answering: 'Tu vero arbitratu,' inquam, 'tuo quae voles ut responsurum rogato.'[4] The shift in power is absolute, and though Boethius gains wisdom as the dialogue progresses, that dynamic remains, and serves well as a metaphor for the moral and Christian instruction of the teacher. Philosophy is ultimately an agent of the divine, a teacher who can appear so tall that she penetrates the heavens:

> Nam nunc quidem ad commune sese hominum mensuram cohibebat, nunc vero pulsare caelum summi verticis cacumine videbatur; quae cum altius caput extulisset, ipsum etiam caelum penetrabat respicientiumque hominum frustrabatur intuitum.[5]

The Platonic dialogic structure of the work reflects well some pedagogic relationships: that of the teacher and student in the schoolroom, as well as that of master and student at university, and the disputational nature of opposing arguments in advanced university study. Boethius was, in turn, deeply indebted to particularly classical Greek pedagogic and neoplatonic literature.[6]

From the occasion when Alcuin mentions the *Consolatio* as being in a library at York in the late eighth century, we know that the text was regularly copied and that commentaries were written soon after.[7] Combine this with the evidence of commentary use in the *Old English Boethius* and a picture is created from the mid-ninth century onwards of the *Consolatio* being used as 'a fairly common textbook in the schools and there were probably several manuscripts covered with the scholia of successive masters and students'.[8] In

---

[4] "'Ask what you will, as you think right,' I replied, 'and I will answer.''

[5] 'It was difficult to say how tall she might be, for at one time she seemed to confine herself to the ordinary measure of man, and at another the crown of her head touched the heavens; and when she lifted her head higher yet, she penetrated the heavens themselves, and was lost to the sight of men.' Tester, 1p1, 132-3.

[6] On Boethius's philosophical influences, see John Marenbon, *Boethius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 13-4.

[7] On the Anglo-Saxon use of Boethius, see Diane K. Bolton, 'The Study of the Consolation of Philosophy in Anglo-Saxon England', *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age*, 1977 (44), 33-78 (34); *CB1*, 12-3.

[8] For more on commentary influence in the *Old English Boethius*, see *OEB1*, 54-8. The quotation is from Bolton, 37.

particular, we have the fortunate survival of an early eleventh-century letter from Notker, a German monastic, to his bishop, in which he describes making translations of two of Boethius's works into German, the *Consolatio* and *De trinitate*, amongst the works of other writers, including the *Distichs* of Cato and the *Categories* of Aristotle.[9] Most relevant here is Notker's description of the use of these texts as 'praecipue quidem in scolis legendi' ('principally those read in the schools'), and Rita Copeland notes the translation as being an extension of the exegetical practice of vernacular glossing that was already common in German pedagogic texts of the time.[10]

The educational use of Boethius was, therefore, of long standing; but by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the scholia of successive masters and students had proliferated hugely, though as Copeland notes in her consideration of Notker and other vernacular translation, it is not always clear who was the intended audience, whether that be monastic schools, grammar schools, or general lay readers.[11] Similarly, Nigel Palmer recognises that the *Consolatio* was treated in the later Middle Ages as a 'school text', though this term has a broader meaning than a modern context might allow, including the annotated codices for monastic schools as well as books for grammar schools and universities.[12] The crumbs of codicological and palaeographical evidence must be sifted to direct our understanding of how the *Consolatio* was used in an educational context, and indeed there is some evidence that ongoing pedagogic practice had the effect of codifying and separating out the material use of the *Consolatio* between school boys, students, and masters.

---

[9] See Ernst Hellgardt, 'Notkers des Deutschen Brief an Bischof Hugo von Sitten' in *Befund und Deutung: Zum Verhältnis von Empirie und Interpretation in Sprach- und* Literaturwissenschaft, ed. Hans Fromm and Klaus Grubmüller (Tübingen: Miemeyer, 1979), 169-92.
[10] Copeland, 97-9.
[11] Copeland, 128.
[12] Nigel F. Palmer, 'Latin and Vernacular in the Northern European Tradition of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*' in Gibson, 362-409 (362-3).

One can certainly see this in Robert Black and Gabriela Pomaro's study of schoolroom use in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Florence, where a survey of Florentine schoolbooks identifies the *Consolatio* as an intermediate level grammar book, through *ex libris* signs of ownership, the absence of philosophical and theological commentary, and the philological nature of glossing.[13] However, while Black notes that the Florentine books tend to be single-text codices, a survey by Christopher Cannon of schoolbooks mainly from England shows a selection of elementary works of grammar or instruction which appear bound in different permutations in multiple manuscripts from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.[14] These *libri catoniani*, as they were known from one of the works in them, include the *Distichs* of Cato, the *Eclogue* by Theodolus, the Fables of *Avianus*, the Elegies of *Maximian*, the *Achilleid* by Statius, and *On the Rape of Proserpina* by Claudian. In contrast to Black and Pomaro's survey of Italian schoolbooks, Cannon includes only one schoolbook which contains any text of the *Consolatio*: London, British Library, MS Additional 10093. This manuscript contains fragments of Latin grammars and a copy of the *Distichs* of Cato, as well as the first two books of the *Consolatio* and a fragment of the third. Cannon identifies this book as likely of English provenance, but it looks to me, from evidence of texts and provenance, more likely that the book is from south-west France.[15] However, this pairing of the *Distichs* with the *Consolatio* in a pedagogical context is reinforced with an English example, Caxton's printed edition of Chaucer's *Boece*, which in one case was bound with a Latin copy of the *Consolatio* and, again, the *Distichs*.[16] Whether this book was used as a

---

[13] Robert Black and Gabriella Pomaro, *La Consolazione della Filosofia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento Italiano: Libri di scuola e glosse nei manoscritti fiorentini* (Firenze: SISMEL edizioni del Galuzzo, 2000), 32.
[14] Christopher Cannon, *From Literacy to Literature: England, 1300-1400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 61-7.
[15] The book has an *ex libris* from the Jesuit college in Agen, an institution which ran from 1591 to 1762, long after the book's creation. However, the codex also includes two works by Saint Prosper of Aquitaine. While it is possible for the book to be English in origin, it is most likely that the book contains works by a local saint and stayed in Aquitaine long enough to be acquired by the college in Agen. See *CB1*, 110; Paul F. Grendler, *Jesuit Schools and Universities in Europe 1548-1773* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 53, 56.
[16] On this pairing of works, see Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading and English Literature 1430-1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15.

schoolbook is a moot point, but its pairing with the *Disticha*, an elementary work of grammar and moralising written in couplets, would suggest that the *Consolatio* (particularly with Chaucer's vernacular translation) was seen as an appropriate companion to a tool for the learning of Latin, though the trickiness of Boethius's Latin would also suggest that the *Consolatio* is what one does after Cato, as an intermediate step.

At the other end of the spectrum were those books with more advanced pedagogic credentials which included lengthy commentaries and lists of *quaestiones*, reflecting the more advanced studies of university students, their masters, and the college fellows. Certainly this idea of the 'university text-book' accords more naturally with what the *Consolatio* is: a work of complex moral and metaphysical dialogue, though even here, the standard corpus of texts used in the MA course of study would have been primarily the philosophical works of Aristotle.[17] Of course, the scholar's copy is as likely to be bound on its own, though still probably used with a commentary. An early example of this is Robert Grossesteste's copy of the *Consolatio*, Oxford, Trinity College MS 17, a twelfth-century manuscript which has survived complete with considerable annotation by Grosseteste.[18] It is a typical scholar's book, small, unremarkable, and without rubrication, to which Grosseteste added running book and chapter titles. He added numerous cross-references and notes marking sections of interest. It was 'manifestly designed for study, not for reading aloud.'[19]

Evidence of the educational reading of Boethius can be extended beyond Robert Grosseteste's day into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that are the focus of this study; that use will be illustrated in this chapter by six case studies. However, it is worth

[17] On the textual construction of the *Consolatio*, see Anna Crabbe, 'Literary Design in the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*' in Gibson, 237-74 (238); Hanna, *Patient Reading*, 26.
[18] See *CB1*, 243-4; Richard Gameson, *The Medieval Manuscripts of Trinity College, Oxford: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 2018), 166-71.
[19] See R. W. Hunt, 'The Library of Robert Grosseteste' in *Robert Grosseteste, Scholar and Bishop: Essays in Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of his Death*, ed. D. A. Callus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 121-45 (121-2).

remembering that not all copies show such use. For example, New Haven, Beinecke Library, MS 84 is a fifteenth-century copy of the *Consolatio*, and more specifically, it is an English girdle book.[20] What that format tells us is not clear; indeed, while most representations of girdle books in art are in the possession of biblical figures and clergy, there is evidence that they were used by nuns as well as to denote the status, wealth, and literacy of lay women.[21] However, exceptions notwithstanding, in the *Consolatio*'s fourteenth- and fifteenth-century reception, the evidence for educational use is often codicological and palaeographical, such as in the signs of use and ownership, the texts the *Consolatio* is bound with, and the provenance and gifting of a manuscript which in turn creates a picture of institutional use. However, the way this evidence is interpreted varies widely, with some scholars leaning towards the idea of the *Consolatio* as a 'consistent part of elementary learning', with others portraying advanced university scholars using the text with commentaries and *quaestiones* to support oral disputations, or fellows and clerics using the text to support their individual research interests.[22]

An assessment of manuscripts provides evidence of all these different kinds of use, and draws a nuanced picture of the texts' medieval users; both those who commissioned or constructed a book for a certain kind of use, but also those who were guided by an existing manuscript to interpret the text in particular ways. Sometimes it is also possible to see books moving between institutions as teachers and scholars found new positions or held multiple roles, which only makes clearer the porous nature of the categories under investigation. The six manuscripts selected for this chapter possess certain properties. They are all believed to be

---

[20] On girdle books, see Margit J. Smith, *The Medieval Girdle Book* (New Castle DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2017), 23, 282-94; Alexandra Gillespie, 'Bookbinding' in Gillespie and Wakelin, 150-72 (160).
[21] On the use of girdle books, see Szirmai, 236-7; Margit J. Smith, *The Medieval Girdle Book*, 22-30, 284.
[22] The quotation is from Christopher Cannon, *From Literacy to Literature*, 67. Tony Hunt, and Gibson and Smith, describe manuscript copies of the *Consolatio* as schoolbooks; while Nigel Palmer and Lodi Nauta both recognise the wider use of the text in universities. See Tony Hunt, *Teaching and Learning Latin,* 31; *CB1*, 227; Palmer in Gibson, 363; Lodi Nauta, 'The Consolation: the Latin Commentary Tradition, 800-1700' in *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*, ed. by John Marenbon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 255-78 (269-70).

English in origin and created in the fourteenth or fifteenth century. All six have one or more telling characteristics: they show signs of educational use in the intentions evident at the book's creation; contain marginalia or doodles that might denote younger readers; are bound with other texts known to be used in an educational setting; or have a relevant documented provenance. Of course, this necessarily leaves out many possible manuscripts that could broaden the consequent narrative, and while efforts have been made to pick up all manuscripts relevant to this enquiry, nonetheless there are likely to be more. Furthermore, there are many copies of the *Consolatio* which show no signs of use pertinent to this enquiry, and there were undoubtedly many more manuscripts which have not survived to the present day. Indeed, one of the key questions when considering surviving school or textbooks is how many are lost through obsolescence or collapse through over-use. Many of them would have been loaned out by the school in multiple copies, to be lost, torn, doodled in, and loaned out to other students until they were superseded by a 'better' book, new, clean, and with improved content. In this way it is inevitable that manuscripts important to this story have been lost.[23]

Furthermore, we must consider whether those that have survived are the gifts given not because of the book's value (denoting the generosity of the donor), but the opposite, that the donor considered the book of little practical or monetary value, and therefore was willing to part with it. Here it is useful to reflect on John Grandisson, bishop of Exeter (d. 1369) who left his valuable books to Exeter Cathedral and a local monastic house, and only left some cheaper books of theology to Exeter College in Oxford.[24] Such factors may skew the surviving evidence (though to what degree we cannot know) and need to be borne in mind

[23] See Michael G. Sargent, 'What do the numbers mean? A textual critic's observations on some patterns of Middle English manuscript transmission' in *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England*, ed. by Margaret Connolly and Linne R. Mooney (Woodbridge: York Medieval, 2008), 205-44 (212-3). Sargent's chapter covers texts in English and not in Latin. Nonetheless, he makes a reasonable argument about why there is a direct correlation between manuscript survival and the original number of copies made.
[24] On John Grandisson, see Thomson with Clark, 661.

throughout this chapter. However, it is still worth making a qualitative assessment, and judgements can still be drawn from the extant evidence, with these caveats in mind.

Fellows' Books

In a corpus of manuscripts where there is ambiguity about use, it may be as well to begin a survey with two manuscripts that have clear signs of use by more advanced scholars. London, British Library, MS Royal 15. A. xxx is a fourteenth-century copy of Nicholas Trevet's prologue and *accessus*, followed by the *Consolatio* intercalated with Trevet's complete commentary.[25] Its use by scholars is confirmed by the note of donation on the opening folio, 'Iste liber pertinet mag. R. Wood ex dono Ricardi Nercotes'. Richard Wode is listed as having been a fellow of Lincoln College in 1505, while Richard Nercotes was a fellow of Exeter College in 1502.[26]

In construction BL MS Royal 15. A. xxx has the look of a scholar's book. The folios measure 227 x 165 mm, roughly the size of a modern hard-backed fiction book, and the *mise en page* is unfussy. The text runs in one column, with little decoration. Sections begin with capitals in red with minor pen flourishes, but nothing more. More significantly, the modest cost of the manuscript is apparent because none of the diagrams common to Trevet manuscripts are included, nor was space left for their later addition. While it is possible that the exemplar did not contain the diagrams, in extant copies this absence is rare, and most have at least a few poorly executed additions. The parchment is not of good quality, with several holes and *lisières*. Some bifolia are thick and wrinkled, while others are thin like

[25] See *CB1*, 157-8; George F. Warner and Julius P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections*, 4 vols (London: British Museum, 1921), II, 150. The *Consolatio* in BL MS Royal 15.A.xxx is intercalated; that is, the commentary follows Boethius's text section by section on the same page.
[26] On the notes, see *CB1*, 158. However, an *ex libris* by the bibliophile John Theyer (1597-1693), also on BL MS Royal 15. A. xxx, f.1^{r}, as well as notes in the manuscript in hands dating to much later than the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, indicate that the book had left Oxford by the seventeenth century and probably did not return (though Theyer did spend time in Oxford during the Civil War. See 'John Theyer', *DPBO*; 'John Theyer', *ODNB*.

tissue paper. In the intercalated Boethius/Trevet folios, the *Consolatio* is written in a typical fifteenth-century anglicana, whereas the commentary is written in a slightly smaller and more current hand. As is standard in commentary manuscripts of this kind, lemmata are underlined. The text ends imperfectly, omitting the final block of commentary.[27] Instead a different fourteenth-century cursive hand has added a short *vita* of Boethius.[28]

The manuscript was evidently well used in its early years, with numerous marginalia written in one fifteenth-century anglicana hand, mostly notes of classical or philosophical points of interest. The hand is unusually neat, and the rhythm of regular notation is methodical. This hand is distinct from that of the marginalia provided already by the scribe, who cared sufficiently to correct his text and to include omitted lines. There are a few other notes in a different hand, fifteenth- or sixteenth-century, and less easy to read. Particularly lovely is a pen drawing of a little face with a large eye, and a line drawn from the eye to the text.[29] The eye refers to 4p4, in a discussion of moral philosophy:

> Tum ego: 'Cum tuas,' inquam, 'rationes considero nihil dici verius puto. At si ad hominum iudicia revertar, quis ille est cui haec non credenda modo sed saltem audienda videantur?' 'Ita est,' inquit illa. 'Nequeunt enim oculos tenebris assuetos ad lucem perspicuae Veritatis attollere, similesque avibus sunt quarum intuitum nox inluminat dies caecat. Dum enim non rerum ordinem, sed suos intuentur affectus, vel licentiam vel impunitatem scelerum putant esse felicem.[30]

This seems a suitable passage to be read in Oxford given its medieval renown as a centre of logic and moral philosophy. The tone here is the authoritative voice of the gentle teacher, reminiscent of those passages on moral virtue in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, or

---

[27] The missing commentary is for 5p6.
[28] This is on BL MS Royal 15.A.xxx, f.182^{r}.
[29] This is on BL MS Royal 15.A.xxx, f.130^{r}.
[30] The underlined text corresponds with the exact line the eye points to in the manuscript. 'Then I said: 'When I consider your arguments, I think nothing is more truly stated, but if I were to turn again to the judgements of men, is there anyone to whom they would not seem unworthy not merely of belief but even of a hearing?' 'That is so,' she said. 'For they cannot raise eyes accustomed to darkness to the light of manifest truth, and they are like birds whose sight night enlightens but day makes blind. For while they have regard not to the order of the world but their own desires, they think the freedom to commit evil and go unpunished for the evil done is a happy thing.' Tester, 4p4, 346-7.

foregrounding Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*.[31] Boethius fits into this medieval curriculum, influenced by Aristotelian ethics and acting as a major influence on Aquinas, both of whom would have been standard reading material for the fifteenth-century Oxford MA student.[32] The choice of a face with an over-sized eye to bring attention to a text about our figurative sight, is therefore a nice touch and draws attention to key arguments.

With signs of personal response such as this, the manuscript was evidently created for personal scholarship. Given the poor quality of the parchment, the manuscript's lack of finesse, and the multiple scholars' hands, both neat and scruffy, it is likely that the manuscript was produced cheaply by a local professional scribe, or was produced as a functional object by its first scholar reader before being handed on for the use of later scholars, a common practice in late medieval Oxford.[33] It is neat and easy to use and was clearly designed for a scholar whose Latin was sufficiently advanced to read the text for its logic and moral philosophy, and not for its grammar.

There are similar signs of scholars' personal use in Oxford, Balliol College, MS 141.[34] This early fifteenth-century English manuscript is largely made up of a copy of the *Consolatio*, written in an anglicana hand with some formata elements. The *Consolatio* takes up fifty of the codex's fifty-eight folios, though it now begins imperfectly.[35] The codex also includes two short verse epitaphs to Boethius (the first of which is unique to this manuscript), and the *Prologus Manfredi super librum de morte* by pseudo-Aristotle, which is in a different and more secretary hand.[36]

---

[31] See Hanna, *Patient Reading*, 25. For examples, see, for instance: Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 190-4, X.5-6, on pleasure and happiness, and Aquinas, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, trans. Timothy McDermott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 342-90, on moral action.
[32] On this curriculum, see John Marenbon, *Boethius*, 176-7.
[33] On scholars' books, see M. B. Parkes, 'The Provision of Books', *HUO2*, 407-83 (426-7).
[34] R. A. B. Mynors, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Balliol College, Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 121; *CB1*, 219.
[35] The *Consolatio* text in OBC MS 141 begins imperfectly at 1m2.
[36] On the epitaphs, see *CB1*, 16-7. For details of the epitaphs, see Rudolfus Peiper, ed., *Anicii Manlii Severini Boetii, Philosophiae Consolationis: Libri Quinque* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1871), xxxv-vi.

Though the manuscript is dated by Gibson and Smith to the first quarter of the fifteenth century, R. A. B. Mynors notes that the book came into the possession of Balliol College later, in 1498, when it was gifted by John Burton, who was made a fellow of Balliol about 1467, became vicar of Saint Nicholas' Church, Bristol, and died before February 1499.[37] It was certainly common practice, and in some colleges mandatory, for students to gift books when they completed their studies, or if not so early in their careers, it was at least common for them to leave books to their college in their will.[38] OBC MS 141 is a donation, not a bequest, but a donation so close to his death this suggests Burton putting things in order before he died.

Like the previous example, BL MS Royal 15.A.xxx, this Balliol manuscript is an unexceptional Oxford late medieval manuscript, designed to be functional, to be studied and annotated, and by long custom to be passed on for the corporate ownership of the college.[39] Its parchment folios measure 255 x 180mm, with a text box for thirty-two lines of text. Sections begin with *litterae notabiliores* in red and blue with minor flourishes, not completed to a high standard. There is no other decoration in the manuscript and no other use of colour.

The size of the text box gives ample allowance for marginalia. Though the epitaphs and the *Prologus Manfredi* are both unadorned, the *Consolatio* text is heavily glossed, with some marginalia on almost every folio in a secretary hand, in many places carpeting all available marginal space. Though there is plentiful interlinear glossing too and some correction, this pales in comparison to the level of marginal addition. An examination of some marginalia reveals that they are not based on Trevet's commentary, which was the most

[37] Mynors, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Balliol College*, 102-3, 121. From the college records it would appear that MS 141 is the only gift recorded from John Burton. However, he clearly had a strong association with Balliol, as he is named as a beneficiary in the will of the late master of Balliol, William Bell, written in 1495. For which, see Mynors, xlix. See also H. E. Salter, ed., *The Oxford Deeds of Balliol College* (Oxford: Oxford Historical Society, 1913) 335.
[38] On the bequeathing of books, see Parkes, 'The Provision of Books', *HUO2*, 407-83 (456).
[39] See Parkes, 'The Provision of Books', *HUO2*, 407-83 (459-62).

widely used in English fifteenth-century manuscripts. In fact, they are largely synoptic, reframing the vulgate text, identifying the speaker and summarising content. There are some prose and metre marks in a bigger hand, with secretary and humanist influences.

There are three points of particular interest regarding the marginalia. It would be plausible to suggest that the scholar who glossed the manuscript so heavily is John Burton, the cleric who gave the book to Balliol. However, Mynors notes a comment written in Oxford, Balliol College MS 124 which is supposedly in John Burton's hand.[40] A comparison of the hands would suggest that the extensive glosser of OBC MS 141 is not Burton (or that Burton is the not the scribe of the note in MS 124). On the other hand, the prose and metre markings are a good match for Burton's marginal note in MS 124, revealing the engagement of multiple readers to formalise the paratextual structure of the book over a number of years.

The second point of note is the use of two crudely drawn *maniculae* in the left- and right-hand margins of a recto page, clarified by lines down either side of the text box to demarcate the relevant portion of text. They point to a finely constructed argument of logic regarding the goodness of God:

> 'Ita,' inquam, 'necesse est; nec beatum regimen esse videretur, si quidem detrectantium iugum foret, non obtemperantium salus.' 'Nihil est igitur quod naturam servans deo contrarie conetur.' 'Nihil,' inquam. 'Quod si conetur,' ait, 'num tandem proficient quidquam adversus eum quem iure beatitudinis potentissimum esse concessimus?' 'Prorsus,' inquam, 'nihil valeret.' 'Non est igitur aliquid quod summon huic bono vel velit vel possit obsistere.'[41]

---

[40] OBC MS 124 is a fifteenth-century copy of extracts from Pliny's *Naturalis historia* and a Latin translation of Diodorus Siculus's Greek *Bibliotheca historia*. For more on this manuscript, see Daniel Wakelin, 'England: Humanism Beyond Weiss' in *Humanism in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, ed. by David Rundle (Oxford: Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2012), 265-305 (280).

[41] This is on OBC MS 141, f.29^{r}, 3p12.

''It must be so,' I said; 'nor would his rule seem happy, if indeed it were a yoke on the necks of those who would reject it, and not the preservation of willing subjects.'

'There is therefore nothing,' she said, 'which while remaining true to its nature would try to go against God?'

'Nothing,' I said.

'But if anything were to try,' she said, 'will it accomplish anything against him, whom we have justly agreed to be most powerful in his blessedness?'

'Surely it would not be able to achieve anything,' I said. 'Therefore there is nothing, which either would or could resist this, the highest good.'' Tester, 3p12, 302-3.

This snippet of text is reminiscent of the programme of study of logic, as well as being a masterclass in the kind of disputations for which its students needed to train. It is dialogic, with Philosopher the magister allowing Boethius the student to test out arguments in a way that would have been familiar to the medieval scholar. The fact that these lines are accompanied by the only *maniculae* in the manuscript reflects 'the importance allotted by scholastics to the *Consolation* as a primary source of some important questions concerning divine knowledge and human free will.'[42]

The third point of interest is a small, roughly drawn image of a cartwheel in the top left-hand corner of a verso page, of a similar size and standard as described in the previous chapter for CUL MS Kk.3.21, and next to the same part of the *Consolatio*.[43] The text on this page is from Boethius's description of humanity being less subject to fate as they are closer to God:

> Nam ut orbium circa eundem cardinem sese vertentium qui est intimus ad simplicitatem medietatis accredit ceterorumque extra locatorum veluti cardo quidam circa quem versentur exsistit, extimus vero maiore ambitu rotates quanto a puncti media individuitate discedit tanto amplioribus spatiis explicatur, so quid vero illi se medio conectat et societ, in simplicitatem cogitur diffundique ac diffluere cessat, simili ratione quod longius a prima mente discedit maioribus fati nexibus implicatur ac tanto aliquid fato liberum est quanto illum rerum cardinem vicinius petit.[44]

While Boethius's description seems to describe a three-dimensional celestial array of objects, the description given in the parallel section of the *Old English Boethius*, chapter thirty-nine, uses the analogy of a cartwheel, with God at the axle, the best of humanity at the hub, the middle-most people on the spokes, and the weakest at the outer rim-pieces, receiving the

---

[42] Lodi Nauta, 'The Consolation: the Latin Commentary Tradition, 800-1700', *Cambridge Companion to Boethius*, 270.
[43] This is on OBC MS 141, f.38^{v}.
[44] 'For just as, of a number of spheres turning about the same centre, the innermost one approaches the simplicity of middleness and is a sort of pivot for the rest, which are placed outside it, about which they turn; but the outermost one, turning with a greater circumference, the further it is separated from the indivisibility of the central point, the wider the spaces it spreads over; and if anything is joined or associated with that centre, it is gathered into its simplicity and ceases to spread and diffuse itself: in a similar manner, that which is furthest separated from the principal mind is entangled in the tighter meshes of fate, and a thing is the more free from fate the more closely it moves towards that centre of all things.' Tester, 4p6, 360-1.

bumpiest ride. It is possible that the scholar who glossed Balliol MS 141 (and the reader of CUL MS Kk.3.21) had access to a copy of the *Old English Boethius*, but much more likely is that they had access to a copy of Trevet's commentary, which here explicitly uses the Alfredian analogy:

> Alvredus rex in Anglico istam similitudinem aliter pertractat, applicando quod dicitur tantum ad homines, quos in tria genera distinguit, adaptans eos tribus orbibus in rota, per axem intellegens Deum, ut dictum est.[45]

It is telling that such a small and rudimentary image has such a textured history and could act as an effective marginal shorthand for the scholar. This is the only marginal note that can be so explicitly linked to Trevet's commentary, but it does show the reader's consultation of another manuscript of a commentary alongside this one to better engage with the main text, with the wheel perhaps acting as an easier image to visualise in trying to understand Boethius's views on free will and the nature of fate and providence.

As well as two copies of Boethian works with clear evidence of use by scholars, there is a third which though similar in many ways, lacks the distinctive signs of scholarly use. Hereford, Cathedral Library, MS P.III.6, is an early fifteenth-century copy of a commentary to Aristotle's *De Arte Rhetorica* followed by the *Consolatio*, intercalated with Trevet's commentary.[46] The similarity with John Burton's manuscript is striking. Both contain Boethian and Aristotelian material, and both were gifted to their long-standing home in the same century as their creation; Hereford MS P.III.6 was gifted by Owen Lloyd, a late fifteenth-century canon of Hereford.[47]

---

[45] 'Alfred the king draws that description in English in a different way, to be applied it is said just to men, whom he distinguishes in three types, fitting them onto three rings of a wheel, around the axle understood to be God, as it is said.' Taite Silk, 4p6, 616. For more on the *Old English Boethius* in Trevet's work, see B. S. Donaghey, 'Nicholas Trevet's Use of King Alfred's Translation of Boethius', Minnis, *Medieval*, 1-31 (25-8).

[46] R. A. B. Mynors and R. M. Thomson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Hereford Cathedral Library* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), 86; *CB1*, 103-4.

[47] This is recorded at the top of HCL MS P.III.6, f.2^{r} with a note of gifting: 'Ex dono M. Oweyni Lloyd legum doctoris' (By the gift of Master Owen Lloyd, doctor of law). See also A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 1153-4.



Hereford, Cathedral Library, MS P.III.6, f.86r

The book itself is of a fair standard, being neither scruffy nor luxurious, the work of careful hands and an attentive eye on good quality parchment (with some exceptions noted below), and is held in the cathedral's preserved chained library. However, it is smaller than most of the chained books, with each folio measuring 160 x 105 mm. The Aristotle

commentary is written in two columns, with forty-two lines to the page, in an anglicana hand. The first folio is decorated with a foliate border and a large, decorated capital, in red and blue ink, and new sections of text are marked by *litterae notabiliores*. Following the Aristotle commentary are two short inclusions, a table detailing Aristotle's books on rhetoric, and a note on rhetoric.

The prologue to Trevet's commentary is largely in the same hand as the Aristotle commentary, an anglicana hand with formata execution, though a second hand can be discerned for a few folios of the Boethius/Trevet text, which is anglicana with secretary influence.[48] The opening folio of Trevet has similar decoration to the opening of Aristotle, but the two-column layout of the Aristotle commentary is replaced with a single-column text box of around 40 lines to a page. As identified by R. A. B. Mynors and Rodney Thomson, the text was originally intended to be Trevet's commentary only.[49] One can see this in the way that the commentary and *Consolatio* sections are independent texts written on separate folios which have been intercalated. The commentary stops mid-sentence at the bottom of a page and picks up again after a few folios of the *Consolatio* have been slotted into the quire. However, we can see the point at which the scribe chose to include the *Consolatio* in the codex, as the abrupt pauses in the commentary end at the *Consolatio* for 1m6. From this point onwards the *Consolatio* text and the commentary follow each other in complete sections, one section running on to another on the same folio.[50] This change in intention is also apparent in the way that early folios of the *Consolatio* are more likely to have imperfections in the parchment, as if the scribe prepared or acquired enough good quality material for the original needs of the project (Aristotle and Trevet), then needed to use offcuts when the extra text was

[48] The Boethius/Trevet text begins on HCL MS P.III.6, f.57^{r}. The other hand is on ff.61-2 and 78^{r}.
[49] Mynors and Thomson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Hereford Cathedral Library*, 86.
[50] The continuous text begins on HCL MS P.III.6, f.93^{r}, near the bottom of the page, with 'Cum Phebi' (1m6).

included.[51] This raises several considerations. One wonders whether an exemplar of the *Consolatio* became available when work had already begun, or it may indicate that the way in which the *Consolatio* was studied was changing, with a concurrent engagement with both text and paratext becoming less idiosyncratic and more formalised, even if the methods of production have resulted in an idiosyncratic book. This is likely the result of the increase in the production of manuscripts in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, allowing for greater sophistication and variety of layout and textual apparatus.[52]

The diagrams in this copy of Trevet's commentary are particularly noteworthy. Considering that this is not a luxury manuscript, the diagrams are completed to a high standard, and ten diagrams are included (most drawn across the page, but two of them carefully drawn into a margin), making this manuscript unusually complete.[53] Interestingly, eight of the diagrams were added at a separate stage, with space left on the page for these inclusions. This is apparent on several occasions where there is plentiful space around the diagram, as if too much space was allowed by the scribe. This also makes a greater contrast with the diagrams in the margins, which though in the same hand and appearing to be added at the same stage of the book's creation, nonetheless may have been two afterthoughts. This suggests the availability of a particularly good exemplar, but also a concern from the commissioner or scholar-scribe for textual and diagrammatic completeness and accuracy, which was a greater priority than the status and decoration of the manuscript.

---

[51] For more on the use of offcuts in late medieval manuscripts, see Erik Kwakkel, 'Discarded Parchment as a Writing Support in English Manuscript Culture', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700: Volume 17, English Manuscripts Before 1400*, ed. by A. S. G. Edwards and Orietta Da Rold (London: British Library, 2012), 238-61 (246-55). There is a particular echo in the Hereford manuscript of Kwakkel's description of Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS 733B, a copy of *Piers Plowman*, which is constructed from offcuts as well as higher grade parchment.

[52] On the increase in production of copies of the *Consolatio* in the late medieval period, see *CB1*, 24-5. Compare with CUL MS Ii. 3. 21, not much older than the Hereford manuscript, which has the Latin *Consolatio*, as well as Chaucer's *Boece*, commentary by William of Aragon, and partial commentary by Nicholas Trevet, with commentary in both formal page layouts and marginal addition. This manuscript is discussed in Chapter 4.

[53] The diagrams in HCL MS P.III.6 are on ff.67^{v}, 72^{v}, 86^{r}, 88^{v}, 90^{r}, 121^{v}, 151^{r}, 152^{r}, 194^{r}, 195^{r}.

Where this manuscript differs most greatly from Burton's manuscript, OBC MS 141, is in the level of addition to the codex. There is remarkably little, and the majority of what has been added are minor notes of textual correction, as well as over-writing where the original text was faint. The very few glosses are short textual notes in the margin. This concern for accuracy and elucidation can also be seen where Greek characters in the body text are annotated with an interlinear translation into Latin. This speaks very well for the unusual level of academic training of the early fifteenth-century scribe.[54] Adding to this feeling of cleanness and preservation are the folios themselves. Though records show that the manuscript underwent restoration work in the 1960s, nonetheless the book feels remarkably new, lacking in annotation and in signs of wear and tear, of fingers leaving greasy marks or bending corners.[55] The book looks to have been considerately if not expensively created, but not much used.

It is possible that the inclusion of the codex in the chained library at Hereford Cathedral has helped to preserve it, though this assumption must be made with caution. The existing chained library was not created until the late sixteenth century, and while we know that the book was gifted to the cathedral in the fifteenth century, and that some strictures were placed on the library from earlier than this period for books to be protected from theft, it is not clear whether the chaining of MS P. III. 6 is from an earlier iteration of a chained library.[56] If so, restrictions on access and use of the book may explain the lack of annotation either by senior scholars or by less advanced students, of what otherwise appears to be a scholarly book.

---

[54] Such as on HCL MS P.III.6, ff.101^{r} and 139^{r}. Not all copies of the *Consolatio* include the short inclusions of Greek and where they do, they often make errors, such as the deluxe fourteenth-century Italian manuscript, GUL MS Hunter 374, which either includes very poor Greek characters, or omits them entirely (to which someone has later added the missing text in cursive Latin). The limited prevalence of Greek literacy in the Middle Ages was mentioned in the previous chapter.

[55] On the manuscript's restoration, see Mynors and Thomson, 86.

[56] On the chained library at Hereford, see Burnett Hillman Streeter, *The Chained Library: A Survey of Four Centuries in the Evolution of the English Library* (London: Macmillan, 1931), 80-8. See also Mynors and Thomson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Hereford Cathedral Library*, xxi, on the chaining of the books.

On a final note, it is also possible to see that HCL MS. P.III.6 has the same outcome as OBC MS 141, but through different means. The annotator of the Balliol manuscript saw a copy of the Boethius text and added a great deal of gloss to make it more useful to an advanced scholar. The scribe or commissioner of the Hereford manuscript made a decision part way through the book's creation to create a very similar manuscript of text and gloss, but in a more formal and stylized manner. The end result in each case, through multiple points of agency, is much the same, and makes a case for seeing a manuscript through functionality rather than aesthetic appearance, where a manuscript containing both text and paratext, whether formally or informally arranged, could be used in similar ways.

Younger Scholars

In contrast is London, British Library, MS Harley 2519, which has evidence of use (or misuse) by younger scholars and feels less polished than the Hereford manuscript and more like an accidental confluence of material text and reader engagement.[57] This fifteenth-century codex contains the prologue and *accessus* to Trevet's commentary to the *Consolatio*, followed by an index of lemmata to the *Consolatio*, with the bulk of the manuscript taken up with a copy of Boethius's own work. A verso at the back of the manuscript contains a draft of a sixteenth-century letter. The manuscript has several points of provenance, though not all of the individuals can be identified. A colophon identifies the manuscript as written 'manu W. Feroi', and a late medieval hand (identified by Gibson and Smith as circa 1500) on the following leaf writes 'Emptus a Magistro Ward', below which in a sixteenth-century hand is the name 'Thomas Webster'.[58]

[57] C. E. Wright, *Fontes Harleiani: a study of the sources of the Harleian collection of manuscripts preserved in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1973), 410; A. G. Watson, 'Harley Manuscripts', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 4 (1973), 603-9 (606); *CBI*, 139.
[58] These are on BL MS Harley 2519, ff.80^{v} and 81^{v}.

It is apparent that Trevet's prologue and lemmata were completed separately from the *Consolatio* by a difference in *mise en page* from Boethius's text. The prologue and lemmata are ruled for a text box measuring 175 x 110mm, allowing around thirty-eight lines of text, with no visible pricking. However, the layout for the Boethius text has a smaller text box, with twenty-three lines per page and pricking visible on most folios. All of the texts are written in a small secretary hand. It is also apparent that this was meant to be a high standard copy of the *Consolatio*, but though gaps have been left throughout the manuscript for decorated initials, these were never added, with only the guide letters included. It is a 'luxury MS that has been left unfinished'.[59] Further, the smaller size of the text box suggests either space for decoration, or an intentional space for marginalia to be added (reminiscent of OBC MS 141, discussed above), and while a more advanced copy of the *Consolatio* would either include all of the Trevet commentary or invite extensive glossing to be added, the inclusion of only the prologue and *accessus* and an index to the lemmata suggests in the context of a Latin text another copy to be consulted alongside this one in a place where multiple books were available.

There is very little in the way of addition to the text, and what there is can be divided into two categories: scribal and childlike. The scribal annotations include corrections to the text, both interlinear and marginal (again showing the original intention for a good standard copy), and notes marking prose and metre sections, often in the gutter margin.[60] The childlike marks include several pen trials, what appear to be the practicing of letter forms, both cursive and formal, and three small head and shoulders pictures drawn in ink: a long-haired figure wearing what looks like a turban in one bottom margin and two figures in a lower right-hand margin, a regal figure with a tiered crown and a fancy collar, and a smaller, less elaborate

[59] *CB1*, 139.
[60] Such as BL MS Harley 2519, ff.14^{r} and 41^{v}, which have interlinear and some marginal glossing, as well as prose and metre sections marked.

figure wearing a coronet, which might be female.[61] These additions are playful and whimsical, and look very likely to be the work of a child or children. It is reminiscent of the additions to the late fifteenth-century English manuscript Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.3.1, in which a miscellany of verse, including some with pedagogic use for younger children, has been added to by children in the sixteenth century writing out handwriting exercises, and on one folio, adding a pen drawing of a rabbit.[62]

The letter forms and the costume of the figures in MS Harley 2519 appear to be late medieval. Though doodles are hard to date, the figure wearing a tiered crown is likely to be a child's imaginative depiction of the pope wearing the triregnum crown, which places the image pre-reformation, though later protestant mockery cannot be ruled out. This would give the manuscript a likely history of use in a medieval schoolroom or in domestic ownership where children might have used the book for their own playful additions. These findings, combined with the possible academic use of the manuscript in consultation with a commentary, show that BL MS Harley 2519 had mixed pedagogic use by scholars of differing ability and using the text for different purposes, such as grammatical and philosophical. To describe the *Consolatio* as an educational text does not do justice to the complexity of such use.

Books with Evidence of Shifting Pedagogy

With such an idea in mind, we now turn to two codices that clearly have this kind of evidence of mixed use, and show the multi-faceted nature of the *Consolatio* as a pedagogic text in different times and places, or perhaps held in one library but used simultaneously for

[61] These are on BL MS Harley 2519, ff.30^{r} and 37^{r}.
[62] The handwriting exercises are on NLS MS Advocates 19.3.1 ff.118^{v} and 125^{v}, and the rabbit is on f.214^{v}. Digitized at <https://manuscripts.nls.uk/repositories/2/resources/15302> [accessed 14 June 2021]. For discussion of the children's markings see Phillipa Hardman, *The Heege Manuscript: a Facsimile of National Library of Scotland MS Advocates 19. 3. 1* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 2000), 46-7.

different educational purposes. The first of these, Durham, University Library, MS Cosin V.ii.11 is a late fourteenth-century copy of the *Consolatio* intercalated with Trevet's commentary, followed by *De Disciplina Scholarium* by pseudo-Boethius.[63] Our knowledge of this manuscript's provenance is limited prior to its donation to Durham by George Davenport.[64] The manuscript has parchment folios measuring 264 x 179 mm, with a text box measuring 193 x 125 mm, and an average of forty-five lines per page. The opening folio has a decorated initial, seven units high, with a foliate design that continues into the top margin. The initial is surrounded by a box of infill gold leaf, and the foliate design includes a poor attempt at *trompe l'oeil*. The Boethius/Trevet text is written in an anglicana hand, with the *Consolatio* and the Trevet commentary running partly in parallel and in part sequentially. That is, prose sections of the *Consolatio* are dealt with text first, then followed by their corresponding commentary, and the metre commentary begins in a right-hand column and then continues underneath.[65] Lemmata are underlined in red early on, though this later changes to the same brown ink as the text. Subsequent new sections, both *Consolatio* and commentary, begin with decorated initials in blue and red. These are frequently embellished with finely drawn grotesques added to the tail flourishes which continue into the margins. There is also some use of red and blue ink for line filler.

---

[63] A. J. Piper and A. I. Doyle, 'Durham University Library Cosin MS V.ii.11' in *Durham University Library Archives & Special Collections Catalogue* https://reed.dur.ac.uk/xtf/view?docId=ark/32150_s241687h49b.xml> [accessed 9 July 2023]; *CB1*, 91-2.

[64] The book has an *ex libris* on the front pastedown, 'Geo. Davenport 1664'. George Davenport was chaplain to Durham Cathedral and donated many books to what became Cosin's Library, of which this manuscript is one. While many of his donations can be traced beyond their seventeenth-century ownership, the provenance of MS Cosin V.ii.11 before Davenport is unknown. In his investigations, A. I. Doyle recognises that a title on one of the flyleaves is an earlier seventeenth century hand, but he was unable to trace the codex further than to note that around this time Davenport made excursions to the south of England, and often bought books from London and elsewhere. For more on Davenport see 'George Davenport', *DPBO*. For further on Cosin's Library see *CB1*, 91. For more on the lost provenance, see A. I. Doyle, 'The Cosin Manuscripts and George Davenport', *The Book Collector*, 53 (2004), 40.

[65] The Trevet prologue is on DUL MS Cosin V.ii.11, f.1^{r} and the *Consolatio* opening metre is on f.3^{r}.

There is uncertainty about whether the Boethius/Trevet text was written by more than one hand.[66] However, it is certainly clear that Book 2 was written independently of Book 1 with a small gap between the two books, and this is consistent with a slight change in the scribal hand, Book 2 being written in a slightly bigger and more skeletal, bastard anglicana hand. The scribe for Book 2 also adds flourishes to the ascenders of the top line and the descenders of the bottom line of the text box.

Not all of the intended decorated initials have been drawn in, and some guide letters are visible.[67] Likewise, there are two gaps left for diagrams in the commentary text, but no such further gaps, suggesting a change of plan mid-way through the project or a change in the circumstances of production. [68] Compared with other copies of Trevet's commentary, it would have been unusual to intend to include no more than two diagrams.[69]

De Disciplina Scholarium, which follows the Boethian text, has a text box of the same size, and though it was written by a different scribe, the layout and decoration are the same, making this a coherent manuscript in design and intention. There is occasional contemporary marginal correction, and book and prose/metre numbers have been added in the top margin. Annotation throughout appears to be fifteenth-century; short notes to assist with a rendering of the Latin text. There are a few minor doodles, including an image of an abstract windmill, though this design looks less playful than the additions to BL MS Harley 2519, and therefore likely to be in the hand of a slightly older scribbler.[70]

---

[66] Both the Durham catalogue and the *Codices Boethiani* express doubt about whether there is one hand or two. The catalogue notes the independent creation of Book 2. See 'Durham University Library Cosin MS V.ii.11' in *Durham University Library Archives & Special Collections Catalogue*; *CB1*, 91.

[67] Such as on DUL MS Cosin V.ii.11, f.35^{r}.

[68] The gaps left for diagrams are on DUL MS Cosin V.ii.11, ff.94^{v} and 95^{v}.

[69] As discussed above for both CJC MS Q.D.7 and HCL P.III.6, if the diagrams are included in the manuscript, there is a standard scheme of seven that are common. DUL MS Cosin V.ii.11 is more reminiscent of NLS MS Advocates 18.6.3, the French manuscript mentioned in the previous chapter, which includes an abortive attempt at inclusion of the diagrams.

[70] This is on DUL MS Cosin V.ii.11, f.98^{v}.

There are fewer signs of provenance and use to assist in understanding what age or variety of scholar used MS Cosin V.ii.11. However, it is clear that the placing of these three authors into one book, Boethius, Trevet, and pseudo-Boethius, is intentional. If Trevet's text, certainly beyond the prologue and *accessus*, lends itself more readily to be of use to more advanced scholars, then it raises the question why it sits next to *Disciplina*, a didactic text that advises scholars on how to be good students and how to deport themselves in company with teachers and their peers. *Disciplina* ranges in its topics between good behaviour of grammar school boys through to a 'pre-university text' concerned not only with matters of learning and good behaviour, but also with more social and environmental concerns, such as the perils of lending money to friends.[71] The manuscript could then have lent itself well to multiple applications: for didactic use in the grammar school classroom and for the solitary studies of the schoolmaster, for the studies of more advanced university scholars, as well as being an intermediate text, the kind a boy might want when he was first away from home and in need of advice. It is likely that each of these variables was true at different times, which makes this unremarkable book all the more remarkable.

The final manuscript discussed in this chapter features several informal and playful elements as well as evidence of its academic use, and raises intriguing questions about the age and status of its readers. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F.6.4 is comprised of two parts: an early thirteenth-century copy of the *Consolatio*, with some miscellaneous material that would have originally been the end material of the codex, and an early fourteenth-

[71] See Michael Johnson, 'A Critical Edition of the Commentary by William of Wheteley on the pseudo-Boethian Treatise *De Disciplina Scholarium*', unpublished thesis (1982), 1-4. For the prevalence of the *Consolatio* held in early printed books with *Disciplina* see also pseudo-Boèce, *De Disciplina Scolarium*, ed. by Olga Weijers (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 34; Brooke Hunter, 'Boethian Humor and the pseudo-Boethian De Disciplina Scolarium', *Viator* 46 (2015), 161-80 (163-4). Also, the following chapter of this thesis, on William of Wheteley, discusses a manuscript copy holding both the *Consolatio* and the *Disciplina*, Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 155.

century copy of Trevet's commentary, again followed by scraps of text.[72] The miscellaneous material after the *Consolatio* features two mazes, one more intricate than the other, a hymn, some verse on the theme of the zodiac, a list of zodiac signs, and a lower case alphabet, as well as further practice of letter shapes and various scribbles and pen trials. The codex ends with a runic alphabet, each letter written with its corresponding Latin character.[73]

Three names are attached to the book's provenance. An *ex libris* by Thomas Corser ('Liber thomae corsaeri presbiteri oxon') in a hand modelled on anglicana formata script, is consolidated with two notes of gifting, in cursive hands: 'Liber Thomae Corsaeri presbiteri ex dono Radulphi Bloore quondam canonici de Osney, 5 die Maij anno Domini 1543º' and 'Liber thomae Corsaeri presbiteri ex dono radulphi blore nuper canonici de Osney'.[74] A further donation is marked with the addition in a much later hand: 'Thomas Allen D. D.'[75] From this we can deduce that while the codex reached its finished state in the early fourteenth century, it was given in 1543 to an Oxford priest, Thomas Corser, by Ralph Bloore, lately the canon of the Augustinian Abbey at Osney, dedicated to St Mary the Virgin. This date is likely significant. 1543 was only four years after Osney Abbey had been suppressed by Henry VIII and refounded as the cathedral for the new diocese of Oxford, and it was only three years

[72] See *CB1*, 182; 'MS. Auct. F. 6. 4', *MMOL;* 'Boetius, De consolatione — Osney, Oxfordshire. Augustinian abbey of St Mary the Virgin', *MLGB3*. An argument has been made by Blaise Dufal for BodL MS Auct F. 6. 4 to have an Italian provenance, but this is an outlier within existing scholarship, and an English provenance is more likely. See Blaise Dufal, 'Nicholas Trevet: le théologien anglais qui parlait à l'oreille des italiens', *Reti Medievali E-Book, 36* (Florence : Fiorenze University Press, 2020), 87-103 (98).
[73] On the inclusion of runic alphabets in manuscripts, see René Derolez, *Runica Manuscripta: The English Tradition* (Brugge: De Tempel, 1954), xxxv-xxxix. On the hymn see Ulysse Chevalier, *Repertorium hymnologicum: catalogue des chants, hymnes, proses, séquences, tropes en usage dans l'église latine*, t. 1 (Louvain : Polleunis and Ceuterick, 1897), (8782) 526.
[74] These provenance notes are on BodL MS Auct F.6.4, ff.ii^{r}, 1^{r}, and 274^{v}.
[75] This is on BodL MS Auct F.6.4, f.iii^{v}.

before Osney was abandoned altogether and the cathedral moved to the college of Christ Church.[76]

This book, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F.6.4 is a small parchment manuscript, about the size of a modern paperback book, if slightly taller. Its shape, being narrower than most manuscripts, may mark it out as a holster book, which, as Erik Kwakkel notes, was handy for teachers to hold open one-handed, freeing up their other hand.[77] Folios measure 100 x 198 mm and are not of good quality, tending to be thin and with holes and irregularities, the signs of a book created for personal use for someone on a budget.[78] The first part of the manuscript, containing the *Consolatio*, is ruled for a text box measuring 65 x 158 mm, and before being bound to the second part would have been a light book and suitable to fit in a pocket, as well as being suitable for teaching. The text is written in a late protogothic hand, and the signs of economy are evident where a second column has been created on pages which include short verse lines – space is used efficiently. The text opens with a *littera notabilior* in blue, red, and brown ink, which cuts across the inner text box and runs across the top margin and down the left-hand side. New sections subsequently begin with less elaborate *litterae notabiliores* in blue and red. The text box averages thirty-four lines to the page.

The second part of the manuscript, containing Trevet's commentary, has a text box which measures 73 x 150mm, with thirty-four lines to the page, and adds a great deal to the thickness of the codex. The scribes and limner of the later part of the manuscript have made some effort to mimic the earlier work in layout and design, though the scribal hands (there is

---

[76] See Eleanor Chance, Christina Colvin, Janet Cooper, C. J. Day, T. G. Hassall, Mary Jessup, and Nesta Selwyn, 'Sites and Remains of Religious Houses' in *A History of the County of Oxford*, vol 4: the City of Oxford, ed. by Allan Crossley and C. R. Elrington (London: University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1979), 364-8. See also on the books of Osney, Ralph Hanna and David Rundle, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Manuscripts, to c. 1600, in Christ Church, Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 2017), 35-6.
[77] Erik Kwakkel, *Book Before Print* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2018), 166.
[78] For more on budget books, see Erik Kwakkel, 'Commercial organization and economic innovation' in Gillespie and Wakelin, 173-91 (182-3).

more than one) are clearly fourteenth-century anglicana. The Trevet prologue begins imperfectly, skipping the dedication and vitae.[79] Seven of the common diagrams are included in the Trevet commentary, and though they are not of as high a standard as the diagrams in Hereford, Cathedral Library, MS P.III.6, being neither as big, nor as carefully drawn, nor allowed as much space on the page, nonetheless they are still labelled and appear to be accurate.

As well as being constructed in two stages, there are also several kinds of addition to both parts of the manuscript. The *Consolatio* has marginal corrections and book and prose/metre markings in a contemporary hand, as well as numerous small notes expanding on the Latin. However, there are also brief inclusions of longer commentary. The folio containing the verse 'Felix qui potuit boni' (3m12) has dense marginalia in a fourteenth-century hand covering the right-hand margin, in what looks to be a paraphrase of the commentary by either Trevet or William of de Conches.[80] The same hand adds a similar depth of commentary to the top and left-hand margins of the verse 'Bella bis quinis operatus annis' (4m7).[81] These two metre sections give us an idea of the interests of this particular reader, with both verses concerned with classical tropes; respectively, Orpheus in Book 3, and in Book 4 a highly condensed retelling of the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the twelve labours of Hercules.[82] The later part of the manuscript, containing Trevet's commentary, has numerous short notes in the outer margins marking themes and ideas, which occur in two hands, one fourteenth-century, the other possibly a little later.

---

[79] The prologue begins on BodL MS Auct F.6.4, f.62^{r}.
[80] This is on BodL MS Auct F.6 4, f.42^{r}.
[81] This is on BodL MS Auct F.6.4, f.53^{v}.
[82] These passages of the *Consolatio* captivated many medieval readers, as can be seen in their influence on Robert Henryson and William of Worcester. For more on these writers, see Alessandra Petrina, 'Robert Henryson's "Orpheus and Eurydice" and Its Sources', *Fifteenth Century Studies*, 33 (2008), 198-217; William Worcester, *The Boke of Noblesse and the English Text From Its Codicil*, ed. by Catherine Nall and Daniel Wakelin, EETS os 362 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 162-3.

The other type of addition to this manuscript, in a thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century hand, is much more informal, and some if it may be the addition of younger scholars, such as the writing out of an alphabet and practising of letters shapes, a short poem to help you remember the names of the astrological signs, and writing them out as a list, 'aries taurus, gemini' etc. There are also the two mazes at the end of the *Consolatio* manuscript, which may be a reference to the *Consolatio* 3p12, in which Boethius references the labyrinth:

> 'Ludisne,' inquam, 'me inextricabilem labyrinthum rationibus rationibus texens, quae nunc quidem qua egrediaris introeas, nunc vero quo introeris egrediare, an mirabilem quendam divinae simplicitatis orbem complicas?'[83]

Indeed, though one of the mazes is smaller and less elaborate than the other, they both have 'domus est dedali' or 'domus dedali' written at their centre.[84] Neither explicitly refers to the *Consolatio*, but it seems likely that a reader saw this as an engaging way to think about the text. Indeed, the implication that readers explicitly made such a connection is increased by the existence of labyrinths in other copies of the *Consolatio*.[85] The placing of these scraps of text at the end of the first part also suggest that they were added before the fourteenth century addition of the commentary.

As well as this informal material, there are curious series of tiny marks made throughout the manuscript in red ink. These marks are always made on the recto, on the bottom edge of the page, no more than 40-50mm from the bottom right-hand corner.[86] All of these marks are tallies or an increase in marks, usually with some other character, an 'a' or an 's' or what appears to be a back to front 'h'. These could be pen trials or counting of pages in some fashion such as a quire signature.

---

[83] "'Are you playing a game with me,' I said, 'weaving an inextricable labyrinth with your arguments, since at one time you go in where you are going to come out again, and at another come out where you went in? Or are you folding together as it were a wonderful circle of the simplicity of God?'" Tester, 3p12, 304-5.
[84] The mazes are on BodL MS Auct F.6.4, ff.61a^{v} and 61b^{v}.
[85] For more on labyrinths and the *Consolatio*, including manuscript illustrations, see Penelope Reed Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity Through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 139, 142-3, 254-70.
[86] The marks are on the following folios: BodL MS Auct F.6.4, ff.18-20, 25-7, 29, 35-8, 43-6, 51-4, 146-51, 160, 194-5, 199, 220-3.



Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F.6.4, ff.254-60

However, most interesting is one series in which a tiny red hill has been added on one folio, then on the next folio another hill over the top like a contour line, then two hills side by side, and additional layers to the hills, and so on.[87] They are located the same on each page, and the design seems too particular to be a coincidence of a series of pen trials, and too random to be a quire signature. It may be an early idea of a flick book animation, of the kind that one could run one's finger through the page edges and see the picture develop. They are, perhaps, a playful riff on the idea of the quire signature, while serving no practical purpose, and further develop our picture of a manuscript that was a source of parchment for amusement and doodling as much as to read the Boethian texts.

[87] This series is BodL MS Auct F.6.4, ff.254-60.

It would be neat and tidy to think of this manuscript as being a schoolbook in the thirteenth-century part, that is a schoolroom copy of the *Consolatio*, and a more advanced university scholar's text in the commentary section. However, this manuscript shows signs of multiple kinds of use at multiple points in its existence. There are doodles at the end of the earlier part, as well as dense marginalia in brief metre sections of the *Consolatio* text. Furthermore, while the Trevet commentary has additional short marginal notes, the red ink flick book doodles and pen trials cover both sections of the manuscript, and therefore were added to the manuscript in its final iteration. Of course, the doodles, mazes, and writing practice may be the work of adults and not children, but importantly, they could be either, whereas the advanced gloss is unlikely to be the work of a child. It may be that the manuscript has never left Oxford, and its gifting by Ralph Bloore would suggest use in a monastic setting before the dissolution, likely both for those under holy orders as well as boys in a monastic school.

However, the sometimes inexplicable or seemingly unrelated doodling in this manuscript, as in others, recalls Adam Smyth's distinction between the 'highly intentionalist' McKenzian view of the material text and his own 'anti-intentionalist readings of material form', that we can look for 'symbolic meanings' not intended by the creator of a book and which have no textual connection.[88] Smyth was here thinking of waste material used in printed books, such as the manuscript fragments that were used as endpapers, but it may be valid to think of this kind of doodles and playful additions in a similar way. They were not intended by the creator of the manuscript, and may have nothing to do with the texts held in the book – perhaps the doodler never read Boethius, and had no interest in doing so. When we seek to find meaning in these additions it is necessary to think of the two possibilities as a game of Schrodinger's Cat; they may or may not be connected to the primary text, and may

[88] Adam Smyth, *Material Texts in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 14.

or may not be relevant to discussion of the text. For instance, if a child took their parent's book from the shelf and doodled in it, this has no bearing on the text whatsoever, except perhaps to say that the owner of the book was a parent, and the book was kept on a shelf that the child might reach. Similarly, the accountant of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 180, discussed in the previous chapter, may have used the gutter margin of a verso for his lists of shillings and pence for completely unconnected reasons. While making judgements about readers and use of the text, it is helpful to keep this kind of unintentionalist point of view in mind.

Conclusion

It is clear from the above consideration of six manuscripts with evidence of educational use that the *Consolatio*'s repurposing was multi-faceted in late medieval England, reminiscent of the Wife of Bath, who declares that:

> Diverse scoles maken parfyt clerkes,
> And diverse practyk in many sondry werkes
> Maketh the workman parfyt sekirly;
> Of five husbondes scoleiying am I.[89]

However, whereas Alysoun is concerned with husbands, we are concerned with readers, from diverse schools and learning different kinds of material from the *Consolatio* and its associated texts. The dynamic between codex and scholar is different in each case, and though the evidence presented varies, one can see a pattern of plasticity of use.

This variation is the result of pragmatic expediency, such as where a schoolmaster, on leaving the profession to take up a church living elsewhere, would often take a considerable number of books with him, thereby giving the books an opportunity to enrich different kinds of students in other and more advanced ways, in one case with the transmission of 'over a

[89] *Riverside*, III.44c-44f, 105.

hundred volumes, including five of philosophy, ten of medicine, forty-six of theology, liturgy, and canon law, and five of grammar' to a different kind of institution.[90] Any of the manuscripts featured in this chapter could have been transferred in this way, and it is documented that Owen Lloyd certainly gave books to Hereford Cathedral that he had owned, used, and taught with, in Oxford.[91] One must also consider the possibility that just as a reader may add to a book over many years, it is also possible that the scribbles of the schoolboy may be augmented by his Latin glosses as he gains age and confidence, and then added to again when he is a more advanced scholar. There is no specific evidence of such continuity in these manuscripts, but it cannot be entirely ruled out where there is evidence of fluid use over many years.

What these manuscripts show is that 'meanings are not therefore inherent but are constructed by successive interpretive acts by those who write, design, and print books, and *by those who buy and read them*' (my emphasis).[92] If it is ever possible, even for a modern book or texts born digital, for there to be a definitive text and a singular reading, such a theoretical appreciation of a text cannot be aimed at a medieval work, where the lines between the commissioner of a book, its scribes, limners, artists, binders, correctors, commentators, glossators, readers, and doodlers, occupy much less fixed positions, where one person can hold multiple roles, and the idea of a fixed, finished product is less apparent.[93] Even beyond the evidence considered in this chapter, a codex undergoes 'successive transformations in response to new needs', regardless of whether we can see the evidence or not.[94]

---

[90] Orme, 153.
[91] See R. A. B. Mynors and R. M. Thomson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Hereford Cathedral Library* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), xxiii-xxiv.
[92] McKenzie, 268.
[93] C.f. Cal Reveley-Calder, 'Curates, cretins, critics', *TLS*, 12th February 2021, 3-5.
[94] McKenzie, 271.

Of course, the 'interpretive act' of reading a book is directed by the design of the page, which certainly by the fourteenth century had reached a stable and widely accepted layout, often allowing enough space for the inclusion of scholarly notes or denser addition of narrative commentary, whether copied from an exemplar or the product of lecture notes.[95] However, while due credit must be given to the increasing professionalism of scribes by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in allowing space for interlinear and marginal glossing, this should not detract from the users of the codex who left their own marks on the page, and in doing so added to the construction of the codex as a multifaceted piece of technology that can transmit data at multiple levels.

The purpose of this chapter has been to answer the question of whether the *Consolatio* was used in a school or university setting. Some codices have documented or well evidenced patterns of use. This is sometimes driven by how the book was constructed, sometimes by who kept it, and inevitably, where it has gone into institutional holding, its more advanced scholarly use has then been fixed. However, the evidence of the manuscripts described in this chapter require a less fixed understanding of the book's purpose and use, and even its perceived form. To pick up a manuscript of the *Consolatio* is different for each reader in their approach to the book, their intentions in taking it off the shelf, their understanding of the text, paratext and annotation, and their ability and willingness to add to its constructive history. The 'schoolbook' as defined by Nigel Palmer, that codex of different pedagogic settings and functions, can take many forms, even within the context of a single work, the *Consolatio*.[96]

[95] On the layout of notes, see M. B. Parkes, 'Layout and presentation of the text' in *CHB2*, 55-74 (61-3); Stephen Partridge, 'Designing the Page' in Gillespie and Wakelin, 79-103 (79-80).
[96] Palmer in Gibson, 362-3.

3. The work of a schoolmaster: William of Wheteley's commentary

It is a worthwhile exercise to see up close the surviving manuscripts of a given work. While the efforts of the editor lighten the workload of the scholar, the manuscript offers additional information about the text; the why and how of a book's creation and use, as seen through its binding and stitching, and the size and quality of the parchment or paper, what D. F. McKenzie called the 'non-linguistic signs in a book'.[1] This is as well as the bibliographical evidence that *does* mark the page: a book's decoration and palaeography, its marginalia and doodles. Adopting this method, this chapter considers the Latin commentary to the *Consolatio* by William of Wheteley, and through analysis of the few witnesses to his work, paints a new picture of the text's function.

William of Wheteley was a scholar and cleric working in England in the early fourteenth century. He studied in both Oxford and Paris and he is known to have been a schoolmaster in Stamford in 1309 and in Lincoln in 1316.[2] He is most well-known for writing a commentary to the pseudo-Boethian *De Disciplina Scholarium*, which as Harry Sebastian notes, is over ten times longer than the previous marginal 'Common Gloss' for manuscripts of *Disciplina*.[3] However, Wheteley also wrote a commentary to Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. That Wheteley chose the *Consolatio* as a work to commentate fits well with the dual status of Wheteley as both scholar and schoolmaster. However, it is precisely this double tension that this chapter seeks to explore: that of the dual status of the text as a schoolbook and as a university text (a duality of use seen in copies of Boethius in the previous chapter), and the writer as both a schoolmaster and a scholar.

---

[1] McKenzie, 261.
[2] On William of Wheteley, see Harry Francis Sebastian, 'William of Wheteley's (fl. 1309-1316) Commentary on the pseudo Boethius' Tractate De Disciplina Scholarium and Medieval Grammar School Education', unpublished thesis, New York (1970), i.
[3] Sebastian, 88.

There are three surviving copies of Wheteley's commentary to the *Consolatio*, which in each case is intercalated with Boethius's vulgate text and is prefaced by an *accessus*-style prologue: Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 155 (which also holds one of the witnesses of the commentary to the *Disciplina*), Oxford, Exeter College, MS 28, and Oxford, New College, MS 264.[4]

Wheteley's commentary owes a great deal to the scholarship of Nicholas Trevet, and Wheteley is recognised largely as an adaptor of Trevet's work for use in the schoolroom.[5] For instance, a comparison of Trevet's work with Wheteley's reveals the earlier work clarified and slightly expanded, such as to give an easier reading of the Latin. In Trevet's commentary for 4p4, he writes:

> Deinde cum dicit TUM EGO soluit quoddam dubium et circa hoc duo facit. Primo enim mouet Boecius dubitacionem. Secundo Philosophia illam soluit ibi ET MAGNA QUIDEM. Boecius autem mouens dubitacionem primo continuat se ad ea que dicta sunt dicens TUM id est tandem EGO scilicet dixi ISTA QUIDEM scilicet que iam dicta sunt CONSEQUENCIA SUNT EIS QUE PAULO ANTE SUNT CONCLUSA.[6]

Compare this to the same passage of Wheteley's commentary:

> soluit quiddam dubium et circa hoc duo facit primo enim mouet Boecius suam dubitacionem. Secundo philosophia illam soluit ibi. Et magna quidem. Boecius autem mouens suam dubitacionem primo continuat se ad ea que dicta sunt dicens. Ego Boecius respondi id est dixi tum id est tandem auditis deductoribus philosophie. Ista quidem que iam dicta sunt sunt consequentia id est secuutus ex eis que sunt conclusa paulo ante.[7]

---

[4] Wheteley's commentary to *Disciplina* survives in three manuscripts: Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 169, Cambridge Pembroke College, MS 155, and Oxford, Exeter College, MS 28.
[5] See *CB1*, 14-5. Furthermore, Wheteley's commentary to *Disciplina* is close enough to Trevet's that Gibson and Smith mistake it as being his work. See *CB1*, 59-60.
[6] 'Then when he says THEN I SAID she removed a certain doubt, and regarding this she does two things. Indeed, first Boethius raises doubts. Secondly, Philosophy there resolves it. AND GREAT INDEED However, Boethius, raising doubts, continues at first to those things which have been said, saying THEN, that is, at last, I, of course, I said, THESE THINGS, namely, which have already been said DO INDEED FOLLOW FROM THOSE WHICH WERE JUST NOW CONCLUDED.' Taite Silk, 4p4, 575.
[7] OEC MS 28, f.163^{v}: 'She resolves a certain doubt and regarding this she does two things. Indeed, at first Boethius raises his doubt. Secondly, Philosophy there solves it. And great indeed However, Boethius raising his doubt, continues at first to those things which have been said, saying I, Boethius: I replied, that is, I said, then, that is, finally hearing the teachers of philosophy. These things which have already been said, are consequent, that is, followed from those which were just now concluded.'

This text will be discussed in greater detail later, but it is enough at this stage to note that Wheteley's text is similar to Trevet's. Trevet's use of 'scilicet', defined as 'id est' rather than its classical meaning of 'certainly', 'naturally', is converted to 'id est'. Wheteley also expands a few phrases, adding 'suam', 'Boecius respondi' and 'secuutus ex' to make Trevet's Latin a little clearer. Other than these minor changes, the only significant addition is 'auditis deductoribus philosophie' ('when teachers of philosophy are listened to'), a knowing comment from one who considered himself to be such an instructor.

The texts are similar enough that it raises the question why Wheteley felt it was necessary to write his own version, when it would have been easier and quicker to pay a scribe to make a copy of Trevet's text. Indeed, Wheteley's text is close enough to Trevet's that he must have worked from a copy of Trevet's commentary, so textual access was clearly not a difficulty. To follow this reasoning to its logical conclusion, one must consider whether Wheteley was put off by the expense of paying for a scribe, a common occurrence which meant that scholars routinely copied works for their own use. Certainly, Wheteley the schoolmaster wished to simplify the text for a less skilled reader. However, in doing so, Wheteley went further, to create a text formed by 'derivative textuality', working in the border territory between two roles: those of scribe and of commentator producing original work.[8] This is unsurprising, as Matthew Fisher rightly points out, as scribes and authors were often the same people, working in environments where both copying and original composition were taking place, such as in religious orders. Certainly, there was no shortage of scholars adapting or 'improving' exegetical and commentary texts, such as Trevet's use of the commentary by William of Conches, and the textual example above reveals just how

[8] Matthew Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England* (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 2012), 7, 11. It is also clear that Oxford scholars, such as we believe Wheteley to have been, would have been well used to copying texts for their own use, as described by M. B. Parkes, 'The Provision of Books' in *HUO2*, 407-83 (424).

similar Wheteley's work is, and suggests a different or additional motivation than to create a new work of commentary.

Though Wheteley's work has not received a great deal of scholarly attention, it has been described as a schoolroom text and some of the manuscripts described as schoolbooks, understandably so, as Wheteley described himself as a schoolmaster.[9] However, the manuscript witnesses have more to tell us about Wheteley's purpose in writing his commentary to the *Consolatio*, and the ways in which it was used, both in Wheteley's lifetime and throughout the rest of the later medieval period. These questions can be broadened by making several comparisons: between our understanding of the schoolroom text and the evidence of Wheteley's academic training, between the schoolroom text and the sometimes contrary evidence of the manuscripts of Wheteley's text, and between Wheteley the teacher and Wheteley the cleric keen for preferment. Just as the evidence in Chapter 2 of reuse by scholars built on the evidence in Chapter 1 of more generalised reuse, so this chapter builds on this to compare our idea of what a manuscript of Wheteley's text should look like as a pedagogic text, with the available codicological evidence. His commentary invites consideration as a text allied to its material form, which in turn enriches our understanding of the nuanced purpose of the late medieval English commentary.

It is thanks to Wheteley's own words that we know his profession in the early fourteenth century. In OEC MS 28 Wheteley begins his commentary to the *Consolatio* by describing himself as 'magistrum qui rexit scolas Stamfordie . anno ab incarnacione Domini millesimo tricentesimo nono'.[10] We see the next step on Wheteley's career path with a hymn dedicated to St Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, written in 1316 and included in ONC MS 264, in

[9] On Wheteley's commentary as schoolbook, see *CB1*, 15, 227, 237.
[10] This is on OEC MS 28, f.67$^{r\text{-}v}$: 'the master who led the schools at Stamford, in the year since the incarnation of the Lord 1309'. This is too early to be Stamford University, a breakaway offshoot from Oxford, which took place in the 1330s. For more on this see C. H. Lawrence, 'The University in State and Church' in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume I, The Early Oxford Schools*, ed. J. I. Catto (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 97-150 (131-2).

which he refers to himself playfully as ‘de frumenti lege’ (‘the law of the wheat’), a clerk of Lincoln, in the same diocese as Stamford and therefore a local promotion.[11]

Nicholas Orme notes that of the class of school teachers, which had evolved by 1200 and continued for centuries, not all were fully under holy orders or had become secular priests, and that many younger teachers held off making the full commitment to the priesthood and celibacy until appointment to a paid position. Wheteley appears to have followed such a route, from acolyte to sub-deacon, before becoming a rector in later life.[12] Clearly, however, in the early fourteenth century Wheteley was a teacher in Lincolnshire, apparently using the *Disciplina* consistently enough as a classroom text to make it worthwhile to write a commentary. That Wheteley was both a capable scholar as well as a teacher is accounted for by his years of study in Paris and probably Oxford as well, and he bears comparison with the grammar school teacher John Leylond, known as a teacher in Oxford around a hundred years later, in the early years of the fifteenth century.[13] Thomson notes attributions to Leylond of nine Latin works, which reflect Leylond’s schoolroom lectures on grammar, for which purpose his works were copied and adapted in the fifteenth century. However, where Wheteley differs is that whereas Leylond wrote elementary and intermediate works of Latin grammar, Wheteley’s commentaries to both the *Disciplina* and the *Consolatio* are more sophisticated works of formal *lectio*, which reflect the scholastic trend of offering a philosophical work with *quaestiones* which began in universities in the

[11] This is on ONC MS 264, f.262^{r}.
[12] See Orme, 165, 172; Sebastian, *De Disciplina Scholarium and Medieval Grammar School Education*, 10; ‘William Wheatley’ in *ODNB*.
[13] On Wheteley the scholar, see Sebastian, *De Disciplina Scholarium and Medieval Grammar School Education*, 11. On Leylond, see David Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Middle English Grammatical Texts* (New York: Garland, 1979), 6-9.

thirteenth century and was adapted for use in the schoolroom in the fourteenth century.[14] Though Wheteley simplified the Latin used, and particularly in the commentary to the *Disciplina* occasionally paraphrased in French or English for his less proficient pupils, manuscript evidence suggests that his commentary on the *Consolatio* reached readers at a higher academic level.[15] Of the three surviving copies of Wheteley's commentary to the *Consolatio*, two of them include *quaestiones* (OEC MS 28 and ONC MS 264). These two manuscripts are both fourteenth-century in origin and were installed in their respective Oxford colleges before the century was out, where they have since remained.[16] So while some scholars mark out Wheteley's commentary to the *Consolatio* as being a school text, that is not primarily how it was used in the Middle Ages, at least according to the extant manuscripts. Rather, the two earlier manuscripts were gifted to Oxford colleges where they would have supported study for higher degree courses, which required a strong understanding of natural, moral, and metaphysical philosophy, and of course, a prior knowledge of Latin.[17] In such an academic programme, master lecturers would have used *quaestiones* to interpret difficulties in a text, a practice that by the fourteenth century was still being used at Oxford and Cambridge, even as it was extended down to grammar school level.[18]

Such acquisitions as these codices were not out of the common way in the fourteenth century. Thomson notes that amongst the acquisitions that century, Exeter College received

---

[14] Sebastian, *De Disciplina Scholarium and Medieval Grammar School Education*, ii. We do not know for certain that Wheteley is the author of the *quaestiones* which accompany two of the MSS under discussion in this chapter, OEC MS 28 and ONC MS 264. Sebastian is content that the *quaestiones* to both *Disciplina* and the *Consolatio* are by Wheteley, an attribution I agree with, given their appearance only twice in extant witnesses, both accompanying Wheteley's commentary. *CB1* lists them as anonymous. The Exeter College catalogue notes several possible attributions, including pseudo-Aquinas, Wheteley, Thomas Waleys, and Marquard l'Eccossais. The New College catalogue suggests it may be by Wheteley, 'eodem forsan auctore'. See Sebastian, i; *CB1*, 227; Andrew G. Watson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of Exeter College Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 40; Henry Octavius Coxe, *Catalogus codicum mss. qui in collegiis aulisque oxoniensibus hodie adservantur* (Oxford: e Typographeo Academico, 1852), 94.

[15] On Wheteley's paraphrasing, see Sebastian, 90-1.

[16] See *CB1*, 15, 227-8, 237-8; Thomson with Clark, 660, 1101-2.

[17] On scholars' book needs, see Parkes, 'The Provision of Books', *HUO2*, 407-83 (407).

[18] On the use of *quaestiones*, see Hanna, 23-6.

copies of John Dumbleton's *Summa logicae*, William Heytesbury's logical works, John of Genoa's *Catholicon*, the *Problemata* by pseudo-Aristotle, Walter Burley's commentary on the *Logica vetus*, and books of theology including a copy of Augustine's *De trinitate*.[19] Amongst the acquisitions at New College were copies of Willelmus Durandus's *Rationale divinorum*, Iacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, a glossed copy of the Pauline epistles, a glossed copy of the *Decretum* in three volumes, as well as works by Augustine, Chrysostom, Gregory, Aquinas, Thomas Bradwardine, and Nicholas of Lyre.[20] In the main these works are either scriptural or the work of the early church fathers, or represent common works of theology of the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries; that is, the standard fare of university scholars, as well as the kind of grammatical works they would have taught to their own students. The *Consolatio* with intercalated commentary is perhaps a slight outlier in this company, though it would have sat comfortably with neighbours such as the grammatical *Catholicon* or the scholastic and theological work of Bradwardine.

The Wheteley Manuscripts

In a discussion of the material text it is worth saying that, with only three extant manuscripts, Wheteley's commentary to the *Consolatio* cannot have been a well-known or widely used text. Though we can only guess at the number of copies lost, a comparison with the more than a hundred extant witnesses to Trevet's commentary gives some sense of the relative scale of transmission of Wheteley's work.[21] Given the small number of witnesses, it is also worth looking at the manuscripts of the commentary to the *Disciplina*, to broaden the

[19] On the acquisition of books at Exeter College, see Thomson with Clark, 660-1; Parkes, 'The Provision of Books', *HUO2,* 407-83 (413).
[20] See Thomson with Clark, 1101-2.
[21] Each list of Trevet manuscripts is slightly different. The total number of manuscripts is therefore a combination of those found in the following sources: Pierre Courcelle, 'Étude critique sur les commentaires de la Consolation de Boèce (IXe-XVe siècles)', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age*, 12 (1939), 5-140 ; R. J. Dean, *The Life and Works of Nicholas Trevet with Special Reference to his Anglo-Norman Chronicle*, unpublished thesis, Oxford (1938); T. Kaeppeli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi, vol 3* (Rome: Ad. S. Sabinae, 1980); and *CB1-4.*

codicological picture of Wheteley's work, particularly as it relates to reception and transmission. One of the manuscripts of the commentary to the *Consolatio*, OEC MS 28, also contains his commentary to the *Disciplina*. However, there is another copy of the commentary to the *Disciplina*, in Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 169, a discussion of which is briefly included below.

The first two manuscripts described here are the oldest of the surviving Wheteley manuscripts. OEC MS 28 is a substantial early fourteenth-century English manuscript.[22] Pages measure 224 mm x 350 mm, while the text box measures 175 mm x 270 mm. The manuscript includes Wheteley's commentary to the *Disciplina,* followed by the integrated *Consolatio* and commentary, a list of lemmata to the *Consolatio*, the *quaestiones* on the same, as well as the sermon collection 'Filius matris' and short works by Augustine and Grosseteste. The codex was clearly conceived as a double feature, as the *Consolatio* begins on the verso of the explicit to the *Disciplina*, in the same hand and using the same *mise en page*.[23] Further, there is no darkening to the verso to suggest a pause before a later addition. The text of the commentary is in two columns, with paraph marks and *litterae notabiliores* picked out in red and blue. The *Consolatio* is written in bastard anglicana, in handwriting with a larger module than the commentary text with which it is intercalated. The scribe has included Boethius's occasional Greek, though it is not confidently done.[24] There is also a single diagram in a left-hand margin at 3m9.[25] The diagram in OEC MS 28 is poorly executed in red ink and has text written across it, which is very current and therefore mostly illegible. This diagram is not part of the standard scheme of seven diagrams found in many Trevet

[22] See *CB1*, 227-8; Watson, *Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of Exeter College*, 39-42.
[23] This is on OEC MS 28, f.67.
[24] Such as on OEC MS 28, f.147^{v}.
[25] The diagram is in the left-hand margin of OEC MS 28, f.135^{v}.

manuscripts.[26] Indeed, something similar is found in only five extant manuscripts, three of which are Continental, a further copy being of unknown origin, and only one having a known English origin.[27] The diagram, a visual interpretation of Plato's concept of World Soul as seen in his *Timaeus*, is therefore rare and represents an unusual source copy for Wheteley, although something very similar is included in Walton's *Boethius*, discussed later in this thesis.[28]

Though the manuscript is not decorated beyond the majuscules that open sections, the manuscript is neat and tidy, with plenty of white space around the text box. It is not a luxury manuscript, but it has had time and care taken over its construction. There are some signs of use in the manuscript, such as marginal *maniculae* and what may be occasional lecture notes in the gutter margin.[29] The teaching notes are certainly in a medieval hand, perhaps later fourteenth-century, with one pointing out the dangers of seeking popular favour, below the line from the Consolatio, 3p6, 'Inter haec vero popularem gratiam ne commemoratione quidem dignam puto, quae nec iudicio provenit nec unquam firma perdurat'.[30] This does seem like the sort of thing a schoolmaster might point out to his students, and is reminiscent of the entreaties to good behaviour in the *Disciplina*, contained earlier in the codex. The codex is big and heavy, and while it is suited to teaching from a lectern, would have been

[26] On the diagrams in copies of Trevet's commentary to the *Consolatio*, see Jakub Kujawiński, 'Nicholas Trevet OP (c. 1258–after 1334) as Publishing Friar. Part I. Commentaries on the Authors of Classical and Christian Antiquity'in *The Art of Publication from the Ninth to the Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. by S. Niskanen and V. Rovere (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming), 167-268 (189).
[27] The five copies are Avignon, Bibliothèque municipale MS 1085, Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 484/480, Cambridge, Peterhouse MS 275, Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut. 33 sin. 7, and Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut. 22 dex. 9. Of these, only CPH MS 275 is known to have an English origin. For more on CPH MS 275 see R. M. Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts in the Library of Peterhouse*, Cambridge (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2016), 172.
[28] For Plato's description of World Soul, see *Plato, Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*, trans. by R. G. Bury (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 30b-c, 54-5.
[29] *Maniculae* such as on OEC MS 28, ff.68^{r} and 71^{v}, and a rubricated *manicula* on f.133^{v} to mark the start of 3m9, 'O qui perpetua'. Teaching notes such as on ff.126^{v} and 143^{r}.
[30] 'But here I may say that I do not think popular favour even worth mentioning; it neither proceeds from judgement nor ever firmly endures.' Tester, 3p6, 254-5.

impractical for personal study.[31] The teaching notes may denote that the codex was used in the schoolroom soon after its creation, or may represent its use post donation to Exeter College in the later fourteenth century.

In an interesting twist, Harry Sebastian argues that the version of the text in the Exeter copy of the *Disciplina* commentary, OEC MS 28, is an expansion of the version in the copy at New College, ONC MS 264.[32] However, as discussed earlier, the Exeter manuscript has dating evidence from 1309, the New College manuscript from 1316. The mention of Wheteley as a teacher in Stamford in 1309, which immediately prefaces the intercalated *Consolatio* and commentary in OEC MS 28, suggests that this manuscript is the earlier one.[33] If this is true *and* OEC MS 28 is an expansion of *Disciplina*, then the Exeter manuscript is a combination of a later *Disciplina* commentary and an earlier *Consolatio* commentary, while the New College manuscript is an earlier *Disciplina* commentary and a later *Consolatio* commentary, copied afresh into new codices. Though this chapter is primarily concerned with the commentary to the *Consolatio*, it nonetheless provides evidence of the multiple copying of both texts.

ONC MS 264 is also early fourteenth-century in origin and shows similarities to the Exeter College manuscript. [34] The folios measure 253 mm x 358 mm, with a two-column text box which measures 183 mm x 270 mm. The manuscript includes illumination, with illustrations of animals and foliate border decoration, including the use of gold. The Boethius text and commentary includes rubrication, with blue and red ink used for underlining, paraph marks, some picking out of letters, and the capitals at the start of sections. There are frequent *maniculae* and tiny, rudimentary eyes drawn in the margin, particularly in the first two books

[31] Daniel Sawyer considers just how much the size, shape, and weight of a medieval book effected the ways in which it was practically used; *Reading English Verse in Manuscript c.1350-c.1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 82-5.
[32] Sebastian, *De Disciplina Scholarium and Medieval Grammar School Education*, 402.
[33] This is on OEC MS 28, f.67^{v}.
[34] See *CB1*, 237-8; Coxe, *Catalogus codicum mss.*, 93-4.

of the *Consolatio*, and what looks to be two pairs of spectacles or *pince nez*, directing the reader's attention to the start of 2p3, which reflects on humanity's relentless greed, that some people never have enough: 'His igitur si pro se tecum fortuna loqueretur, quid profecto contra hisceres non haberes, aut si quid est quo querelam tuam iure tuearis, proferas oportet'.[35] These marginal additions are not in the scribal hand, and with their moralising tone may represent later use for teaching or preaching.

As with the Exeter manuscript, the text is written in a clearly delineated fashion. The Boethius text is more widely spaced, and bigger than the commentary text, allowing the readers to easily differentiate between text and commentary. However, the wider spacing is not used to hold interlinear commentary material. Instead, there are lemmata numbered and placed in the margin in the scribal hand with red infill, as well as frequent marginalia marking 'nota', 'exposicio', and 'argumentum', all neatly done, which suggests the copying of marginal as well as primary text from an exemplar. Unlike the Exeter manuscript, both the prologue material and the following *quaestiones* in ONC MS 264 are well delineated, with *titulus* material marked out attractively with red and blue capitals and some marginal decoration, and the *quaestiones* given border decoration and punctuated by blue and red paraph marks. This would certainly have made the manuscript easier to use as an academic text.

The commentary is preceded by a fragmentary treatise on dreams, three dedicatory letters from Wheteley, two to the Bishop of Salisbury, and another to the dean of Lincoln.[36]

---

[35] *Maniculae* such as on ONC MS 264, ff. 9^{v}, 11^{r}, 67^{r}. Eyes in the margin, such as at ff.25^{r}, 26^{r}, 27^{r}, 32^{r}. Both sets of *pince nez* are on f.57^{r}. The text translates as: 'Now if fortune spoke to you in this way in her own defence, you would not know what to reply, would you? If indeed you do have anything to say that justify your complaints, you must utter it.' Tester, 2p3, 184-5.

[36] The first letter is on ONC MS 264, ff.4^{r}-5^{r}, the second is on ff.5^{v}-8^{v}. The letter to the dean of Lincoln is ff.9^{r}-10^{r}. The preface to the *Consolatio* with commentary is on ff.10^{r}-14^{r}. The *Consolatio* begins on f.10rb.



Oxford, New College, MS 264, f.14[r]

Following the *Consolatio* and commentary are Wheteley's *quaestiones*, followed by several short pieces by Wheteley, including a hymn dedicated to St Hugh, a prominent twelfth-century saint associated with Lincoln.[37] What is particularly noticeable in ONC MS 264 is

[37] The *quaestiones* are on ONC MS 264, ff.250[v]-251[v]. A *Tractatus de Signis Pronosticus Sterilitatis* is on ff.253[r]-255[r], and ff.255[v]-259[v] is a fragmentary tract which ends imperfectly. The hymn to St Hugh is on ff.262[r]-265[r], listed by Ulysse Chevalier, *Repertorium hymnologicum: catalogue des chants, hymnes, proses, séquences, tropes en usage dans l'église latine*, t.2 (Louvain : Polleunis and Ceuterick, 1897), (15545) 353.

that the decorative scheme, using several different colour paints, use of gold, large *litterae notabiliores*, several small pictures of dragons, and a distinctive use of alternating blue and red decorated majuscules for headings, is used for most of the codex. Other texts are placed at the beginning and end, with less decoration and often with illuminated initials missing. The central core of the codex includes the letter to the dean of Lincoln, the *Consolatio*, the *quaestiones* to the *Consolatio*, the tractatus, and the treatise. It looks very much like a presentation copy of texts dedicated to a patron or potential patron, which has had other dedicatory material copied into quires added to the beginning and end. Indeed, given that the decorated letter to the dean of Lincoln begins this central core of the codex, and that Wheteley was a schoolmaster at Lincoln at the time, it may have been convenient to add copies of these other short texts to the actual presentation copy for Henry of Mansfield, dean of Lincoln.[38]

The clear delineation of prologue material and *quaestiones*, combined with the inclusion of dedicatory letters and the hymns to St Hugh, are commensurate with the higher overall standard of this manuscript when compared with OEC MS 28. These Oxford manuscripts are alike in the texts they hold, their size, layout, and script, and are roughly contemporary. Also, as we saw earlier, the development of the *Disciplina* and *Consolatio* commentary texts in these two manuscripts suggests multiple copying and revision in the early fourteenth century. However, regardless of the precise dating, the New College manuscript represents a development of Wheteley's commentary to the *Consolatio*, and sees the text evolve into something representational rather than pragmatic, a professional calling card to be admired rather than to be read and used for teaching.

[38] The letter to Henry of Mansfield is on ONC MS 264, ff.9^{r}-10^{r}. See also *CB1*, 237.

The size and layout of the third manuscript, Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 155, is similar to both the Oxford manuscripts described above.[39] However, there are key differences between this manuscript and its Oxford siblings. Like the other copies, CPC MS 155 has two columns, in a markedly later hand than the other copies (fifteenth-century rather than the fourteenth-century of the Oxford copies), in an anglicana formata script, *currens* but remarkably neat and easy to read, with thin vertical strokes, and heavier, pointed down strokes. Capitals that open sections are red and blue with foliate infill, and of a high standard.

The bindings are clearly not medieval; however, a staple mark is visible across the middle of the end leaf, suggesting that in earlier bindings it was part of a chained library. Similarly to the New College manuscript, the prologue material is well delineated, and the *titulus* section picks out the capitals foliate decoration that spills into the margin. The manuscript includes a provenance inscription on the opening flyleaf: 'Iste liber constat M. Thome Westhagh prec. xliii^{s} iiii^{d}'.[40] Thomas Westhagh was admitted as a fellow of Pembroke College in 1436, and gifted the manuscript to the college.[41] This means that like the other copies, this fifteenth-century Cambridge manuscript was gifted to its recipient college not long after its creation, and has remained there since.

In summary, this manuscript is approximately a hundred years younger than the two Oxford copies, with a higher grade of script, and contains nothing but the text of the *Consolatio* with Wheteley's intercalated commentary. Its relative age is noteworthy in that it tells us that either copies of Wheteley's commentary were still in circulation a hundred years later, or at the very least that the two copies lodged with Oxford colleges were being actively

[39] See *CB1*, 73-4; Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Pembroke, College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 152.
[40] On the provenance of ONC MS 264, see *CB1*, 74. 'This book it is agreed to Master Thomas Westhagh price 43 shillings and fourpence'.
[41] On Westhagh amd Pembroke College, see Olga Weijers, ed., *Pseudo-Boèce: Disciplina Scholarium* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 68; 'Part 1: Bede Roll, nos 1-25' in *The Bede Roll of the Fraternity of St Nicholas*, ed. by N. W. James and V. A. James (London: London Record Society, 2004), 1-26; Peter D. Clarke with Roger Lovatt, ed., *The University and College Libraries of Cambridge* (London: British Library, 2002), 7, 745-6.

used. However, this manuscript omits Wheteley's *quaestiones,* a significant factor because it is one of the key defining features that identifies this as Wheteley's work and not a near copy of Trevet.[42] With the exclusion of the *quaestiones*, it would suggest that the scribe or scholar was more concerned to have a copy of the *Consolatio* with commentary, but had no intention of using it in association with the kind of lectures that would have required *quaestiones*. This is, perhaps, a reflection of the increasing use of the *Consolatio* as a text for general readership, as well as changing concerns for more humanistic and less scholastic models of instruction in Cambridge, though this change was a gradual one that does not lend itself to easy distinctions of literary period.[43]

As with CPC MS 155, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 169, is also a fifteenth-century manuscript, but it is otherwise very different from the manuscripts discussed above.[44] MS McClean 169, relevant here for its copy of Wheteley's commentary to the *Disciplina*, is small and chubby, with straps and buckles that look to be medieval, evident from the pair of marks in the paper front leaf where the pins have worn through. The codex holds a total of twenty-four texts, including works of philosophy, mythology, geometry, and arithmetic. This would suggest that it is a scholar's text, perhaps in the preparation of lessons for grammar school boys in Durham. That seems likely because the manuscript is the work of an Oxford-educated fifteenth-century Durham scribe named Robert Emylton, evident from the colophon appended to each text, 'Deo gratias quod R. Emylton' or similar, in the same extremely small hand as the body text.

The *Disciplina* occupies the first nine folios, followed by Wheteley's commentary. The commentary opens with a large decorated capital, with smaller decorated capitals for

---

[42] There is no suggestion in the collation that this omission is due to loss of leaves.
[43] For a detailed discussion of this gradual change, see Damian Riehl Leader, *A History of the University of Cambridge, Volume 1: The University to 1546* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 249-63.
[44] Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the McClean Collection of Manuscripts in the Fitzwilliam Museum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 323-7.

subsequent sections. The decoration is standard, with blue and red infill and foliate decoration, which also runs along top and down left-hand margins, and some use of gold on the opening folio. The manuscript is competent but not lavish, produced at Durham Priory, where Emylton was known to have been under holy orders between 1423 and 1448.[45]

There are small clarifications of the text in the margins, a word or a few words, less frequent towards the end, suggesting that the marginalia are the product of personal notes rather than a systematic addition. The explicit to the commentary reveals that Robert Emylton believed it to be the work of Trevet, not Wheteley.[46] Like the commentary to the *Consolatio*, the *Disciplina* commentary uses the standard scholastic format of *lectio* and *quaestiones*, though this manuscript does not use such a regular and hierarchical layout, particularly as seen in ONC MS 264 and CPC MS 155.

Textual Variance

Before reaching any conclusions about the manuscripts, it is useful to make some textual comparisons. Inevitably, with only three surviving witnesses to Wheteley's commentary to the *Consolatio*, the reader has limited capacity to discern textual variance. However, it is possible to tease out some understanding of how readers used the text. Included here are five points of comparison (including the example used earlier from Book Four), selected randomly from each of the five books, each extract prefaced with the corresponding lines from the *Consolatio*, followed by the relevant section from Trevet's commentary, and the three witnesses to Wheteley's text. The object here is not to give a complete analysis of the relationship between the manuscripts, but to learn enough usefully to inform a discussion of the manuscripts themselves.

---

[45] On Emylton at Durham Priory, see John B. Friedman, *Northern English Books, Owners, and Makers in the Late Middle Ages* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 57.
[46] See also on the explicit, Sebastian, *De Disciplina Scholarium and Medieval Grammar School Education*, 402.

Two further notes: firstly, the discussion of each extract is prefaced by a brief comparison of Trevet's commentary with the text of Wheteley's in OEC MS 28. As will be seen below, the Exeter College manuscript is the most stable of the three (and likely the earliest, though again, this is discussed below), and therefore lends itself best to comparison with Trevet. Secondly, in a discussion of the variants in the textual extracts taken from the three manuscripts, judgements have had to be made where a variation appears to be as a result of error rather than intent. These variants have been discounted in the following analysis.

1m1 'Mors hominum'

Boethius: Mors hominum felix quae se nec dulcibus annis
Inserit et maestis saepe uocata uenit.[47]

Trevet: Deinde cum dicit MORS HOMINUM plangit sue miserabilis uite prolongacionem conquerendo de dilacione mortis. Et primo ponit opinionem miserorum de morte felici, secundo opinionem eorum de morte crudeli ibi HEU. Tercio ex hiis concludit mortem esse crudelissimam erga eum ibi[48]

OEC MS 28 (f.70^{r}):

Hic plangit prolongacionem sue uite miserabilis conquerendo de delacione mortis. Et tria facit quia primo ponit opinionem miserorum de morte felici. Secundo de morte crudeli ibi heheu. Tercio ex hiis concludit mortem esse crudelissimam erga eum ibi.[49]

ONC MS 264 (f.16^{r}):

Hic plangit prolongacionem sue uite misere conquerendo de delacione mortis. Et tria facit quia primo ponit opinionem miserorum de morte felici. Secondo

[47] 'Death, if he come/Not in the years of sweetness/But often called to those who want to end their misery/Is welcome'; Tester, 1m1, 130-1.
[48] 'Afterwards, when he says DEATH OF MEN he bewails the lengthening of his miserable life, complaining of the delay of death. And first he sets forth the opinion of the miserable about a happy death; secondly, their opinion of a cruel death there ALAS; thirdly, from these he concludes that death was most cruel to him there. Taite Silk, 1m1, 20-1.
[49] OEC MS 28 (f.70^{r}): 'Here he bewails the lengthening of his miserable life, complaining of the delay of death. And he does three things, because first he puts forward the opinion of the miserable about a happy death; secondly, of the cruel death there ALAS Thirdly, from these he concludes that death was most cruel to him there.'

de morte crudeli ibi heheu. Et tercio ex hiis concludit mortem esse crudelissimam erga eum ibi.[50]

CPC MS 155 (f.90[r]) is exactly the same as ONS MS 264 in this text.

Here Wheteley has deviated from Trevet very little. Trevet's 'plangit sue miserabilis vite prolongacionem' has been reordered by Wheteley, and the phrase 'Et tria facit quia quia primo' has been added by Wheteley for a little extra scholastic clarification.

In these Book 1 extracts there is relatively little variation between the three manuscripts. The word 'miserabilis' in OEC MS 28 becomes 'misere' in ONC MS 264 and CPC MS 155. 'Tercio' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 becomes 'Et tercio' in ONC MS 264. Lastly, 'ex hiis concludit' in OEC MS 28 and ONC MS 264 is transposed in CPC MS 155 to become 'concludit ex hiis'.

2m3 'Rara si constat'

Boethius: Rara si constat sua forma mundo,
Si tantas uariat uices,
Crede fortunis hominum caducis,
Bonis crede fugacibus.[51]

Trevet: RARA SI ex predictis hortatur non confidere in bonis Fortune dicens SI MUNDO CONSTAT id est permanet SUA FORTUNA RARA ut ex dictis patet SET TANTAS UARIAT UICES, CREDE FORTUNIS CADUCIS HOMINUM id est noli credere. Loquitur enim yronice et yronia debet exponi per contrarium: CREDE id est noli credere. BONIS FUGACIBUS cuiusmodi sunt omnia bona Fortune quod patet ex hoc[52]

[50] ONC MS 264 (f.16[r]): 'Here he bewails the lengthening of his miserable life, complaining of the delay of death. And he does three things, because first he puts forward the opinion of the miserable about a happy death; secondly, of a cruel death there ALAS And thirdly, from these he concludes that death was most cruel to him there.'

[51] 'Earth's beauty seldom stays, but ever changes./Go on, then: trust in the passing fortunes,/The fleeting pleasures of men!' Tester, 2m3, 190-1.

[52] 'SELDOM IF from the aforesaid she exhorts not to trust in good fortune, saying IF THE WORLD STAYS that is, continues, HIS FORTUNE SELDOM as is evident from what has been said BUT CHANGES SO MUCH, TRUST IN THE FLEETING FORTUNES OF MEN, that is, don't believe it. For he speaks ironically, and irony must be explained by its opposite: BELIEVE, that is, don't believe. TRANSITORY GOOD THINGS All good fortune is of this kind, as is clear from this.' Taite Silk, 2m3, 217-8.

OEC MS 28 (f.100^{r}):

> Ex predictis hortatur philosophia non confidere in bonis fortune. Et dicit sic si igitur Fortuna. Constat rara super fidelis in hoc mundo sua forma id est secundum id quod est quia a forma rei tanquam a principaliori accipitur quidditas ipsa uel sua forma id est suo fine quia forma et finis coincidunt. Si ergo ipsa fortuna finaliter loquendo raro in veniatur. Stabilis in istis mundialibus. O tu homo crede fortunis caducis hominum id est noli credere. est enim ibi yronia et yronia debet exponi per contrarium. Item crede id est noli credere bonis fugacibus cuiusmodi sunt omnia bona fortune.[53]

ONC MS 264 (f.59^{v}-60^{r}):

> Ex predictis hortatur philosophia non confidere in bonis fortune. Arguit sic. In illis non est confidendum(?) quod tota die transeunt ab uno in altum . Sed his(?) sunt bona fortune . Quia et t?. Dicit ergo. Si igitur fortuna constat rara. super fidelis in hoc mundo sua forma id est secundum id quod est. quia a forma rei tanquam a principaliori accipitur quidditas ipsa vel sua forma id est suo fine quia finis et forma coincidunt. Si ergo ipsa fortuna fortuna finaliter loquendo rara inveniatur stabilis in istis mundialibus. O tu homo crede fortunis caducis hominum id est noli credere. Est enim ibi ironia. quia debet exponi per contrarium. Item crede id est noli tu credere bonis fugacibus cuiusmodi sunt omnia bona fortune.'[54]

CPC MS 155 (f.126^{r}):

> Ex predictis hortatur philosophia non fidere - in bonis fortune Et dicit sic Si igitur fortuna constat rara super fidelis in hoc mundo sua fortuna id est secundum id quod est quia a forma rei tanquam a principaliori accipitur quiditas ipsa uel sua forma id est suo fine quia forma et finis concidunt Si ergo ipsa fortuna finaliter loquendo raro inveniatur stabilis in istis mundialibus O tu homo crede fortunis caducis hominum id est noli credere Est enim ibi yronia et yronia debet exponi per contrarium Item crede id est noli credere bonis fugacibus cuiusmodi sunt omnia bona fortune[55]

---

[53] OEC MS 28 (f.100^{r}): 'From the aforesaid, Philosophy exhorts us not to trust in good fortune. And so, she says, if fortune therefore It seldom remains beyond the faithful in this the beautiful world, that is, according to what it is, because the form of the thing is taken as if from the principal, from quiddity itself, or its beauty, that is, at its end, because form and end coincide. If, therefore, fortune itself, finally speaking, is rarely found in a steady state in these worldly things, oh, you man, trust in the fleeting fortunes of man, that is, don't believe in it. For there is irony there, and irony must be explained by its opposite. Likewise, believe, that is, don't believe fleeting pleasures; all good fortune is of this kind.'

[54] ONC MS 264 (f.59^{v}-60^{r}): 'From what has been said, Philosophy exhorts us not to trust in good fortune. She argued thus. It is not to be trusted, that all day long changes from one to the other. But to these there is good fortune, because (?). Therefore, she says: If therefore fortune remains but seldom, beyond the faithful in this beautiful world, that is, according to what it is, because it is taken from the form of the thing as if from the principal, from quiddity itself, or its beauty, that is, at its end, because the end and the form coincide. If, therefore, fortune itself, finally speaking, is rarely found in a steady state in these worldly things, oh, you man, trust in the fleeting fortunes of man, that is, do not believe it. For there is irony there, because it must be explained by the opposite. Likewise, believe, that is, do not believe fleeting pleasures; all good fortune is of this kind.'

[55] CPC MS 155 (f.126^{r}): 'From what has been said, Philosophy urges us not to trust in good fortune. And she says thus: if therefore, fortune is rarely found beyond the faithful in this world; fortune, that is, according to

In this extract Wheteley has taken greater liberty with Trevet's text than he did in the sample passage from Book 1. While the opening and closing lines are taken directly from Trevet, the middle section ('super fidelis in hoc mundo…Stabilis in istis mundialibus') is a somewhat jumbled expansion in an attempt to explain Boethius's philosophical thinking, though it is hard to see how this would greatly enlighten the reader.

Similarly, the textual variation between the manuscripts for the extract from Book 2 is more complex, perhaps to be expected in this longer piece of text. The word 'confidere' in OEC MS 28 and ONC MS 264 becomes 'fidere' in CPC MS 155. 'Et dicit' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 becomes 'Arguit' in ONC MS 264. Almost immediately following this there is a sizeable addition to ONC MS 264, which is not included in either of the other two manuscripts: 'In illis non est confidendum quod tota die transeunt ab uno in altum . Sed his sunt bona fortune . Quia et t?. Dicit ergo.' The doublet 'forma et finis' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 is transposed in ONC MS 264 to become 'finis et forma'. The repetition 'yronia et yronia' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 (itself perhaps a miscopying of Trevet's 'yronice et yronia') is 'corrected' in ONC MS 264 to become simply 'ironia'. The verse phrase 'debet exponi' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 becomes 'quia debet exponi' in ONC MS 264. Lastly, 'noli credere' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 is given added emphasis in ONC MS 264: 'noli tu credere'.

3m2 'Repetunt proprios quaeque…'

Boethius: Repetunt proprios quaeque recursus
Redituque suo singula gaudent
Nec manet ulli traditus ordo

---

what it is, because, it is taken from the form of the thing as if from the principal, from quiddity itself, or its beauty, that is, at its end, because form and end coincide. If, then, fortune itself, finally speaking, is rarely found in a stable state in these worldly things, oh, you man, trust in the fleeting fortunes of man, that is, do not believe it. For there is irony there, and irony must be explained by the opposite. Likewise, believe, that is, do not believe fleeting pleasures; all good fortune is of this kind.'

Nisi quod fini iunxerit ortum
Stabilemque sui fecerit orbem.[56]

Trevet: Deinde cum dicit REPETUNT docet idem esse generaliter in omnibus dicens quod QUEQUE REPETUNT PROPRIOS RECURSUS id est suos naturales motus -QUE pro et SINGULA GAUDENT SUO REDITU id est redeundo ad id quod conuenit sibi secundum naturam NEC ORDO TRADITUS scilicet per assuefaccionem uel uiolenciam MANET ULLI NISI QUOD FINE IUNXERIT ORTUM id est nisi redeat ad suum naturale principium tanquam ad finem STABILEMQUE ORBEM id est reciprocacionem coniungendo finem principio in quo stabilitur quiescit SUI FECERIT talem orbem facit qui procedens a Deo tanquam principio transit sic per temporali quod redit ad Deum tamquam finem.[57]

OEC MS 28 (f.121^{r}):

Hic philosophia docet idem esse generalitur in omnibus rebus dicens quod queque id est omnia que sunt repetunt proprios recursus id est suos naturales motus . que pro et et singula gaudent suo reditu id est redeundo ad id quod conuenit ei secundum naturam suam nec ordo traditus aliter per assuefaccionem et uiolenciam manet ulli Nisi quidem id est antequam iunxerit ortum fini id est antequam redierit ad suum naturale principium tanquam ad finem. que pro et et antequam fecerit stabilem orbem suum. per reciprocacionem coniungendo se suo naturali principio . talem orbem fecit ille hoc qui procedens a deo. tanquam a suo principio. si sic transit per bona temporalia quod redeat in fine ad deum per bona spiritualia.[58]

ONC MS 264 (f.75^{r}):

Hic philosophia docet idem esse generalitur in omnibus rebus. dicens quod quoque id est quod omnia que sunt repetunnt proprios recursus id est suos naturales motus. que pro et et singula gaudennt suo reditu id est redeundo ad id quod conuenit ei secundum naturam suam. Nec ordo traditus uiolenciam aliter per assuefaccionem. manet ulli. Nisi quidem id est antequam iunxerit ortum fini id est antequam redierit ad suum naturale principium tanquam ad fine. Que pro et et antequam fecerit stabilem orbem id est reuolucionem sui.

---

[56] 'Each thing seeks its own way back/And coming back is glad;/None is consigned to any ordered course/Save that which links the end to the beginning/And makes its cycle firm.' Tester, 3m2, 238-9.

[57] Then when she says THEY RETURN she teaches that it is generally the same in all EACH THING SEEKS ITS OWN WAY BACK, that is, their natural movements, AND, for and EACH COMING BACK IS GLAD, that is, returning to what belongs to him according to nature, NONE CONSIGNED TO AN ORDER, that is, through habituation or violence CONSIGNED ARE ANY SAVE THAT WHICH LINKS THE END TO THE BEGINNING, that is, unless it returns to its natural beginning as to its end AND A STABLE CYCLE, that is, reciprocity by connecting the end to the beginning in which it rests. DONE TO HIMSELF He makes such a world that, proceeding from God as from the beginning, he passes through the temporal in such a way that he returns to God as the end.' Taite Silk, 3m2, 321.

[58] OEC MS 28 (f.121^{r}): 'Here Philosophy teaches that it is generally the same in all things, saying that each, that is, all that are seeks its own way back, that is, their natural movements and for and and each coming back is glad, that is, returning to what belongs to him according to nature, nor an order handed down, otherwise by habituation and violence it remains for anyone unless, that is, previously, joined the beginning to the end, that is, before it returns to its natural beginning as to the end and for and and previously he made his world stable through reciprocity by joining itself to its natural beginning. He who made such a world proceeds from God, as from his beginning. Thus, if he passes well temporally, then he returns well to God spiritually, in the end.'

> per reciprocacionem coniungendo se suo naturali principio. Talem orbem facit ille hoc qui procedens a deo tanquam a suo principio si sic transit per bona temporalia quod redeat in fine ad deum per bona spiritualia.[59]

CPC MS 155 (f.152[r]):

> hic philosophia docet illud esse generalitur in omnibus rebus dicens quod quoque id est omnia que sunt repetunt proprios cursus id est suos naturales motus Que pro et et singula gaudent suo redditu id est redeundo ad id quod conuenit si secundum naturam suam Nec ordo traditus alitur per assuefaccionem et uiolenciam manet ulli Nisi quidem id est antequam iunxerit ortum fini id est antequam redierit ad suum naturale principium tanquam ad finem Que pro et et antequam fecerit stabilem orbem sui per reciprocacionem coniungendo se suo naturali principio Talem orbem facit ille homo qui procedens a deo tanquam a suo principio si sic transit per bona temporalia quod redeat in fine ad deum per bona spiritualia.[60]

Unlike the extract from Book 2 above, for an extract of this length, the text is very similar to Trevet's. There are a couple of points of note: Wheteley occasionally expands to explain a phrase of Trevet's (e.g. 'id est omnia que sunt', 'id est antequam'), and in the closing phrase he adds a little repetitive flourish. Where Trevet straightforwardly writes 'per temporali quod redit ad Deum tamquam finem', Wheteley uses the phrase 'per bona' and repeats it to emphasise the connection between a soul's temporal and spiritual journey through life: 'per bona temperalia quod redeat in fine ad deum per bona spiritualia'. This points to Wheteley's

[59] ONC MS 264 (f.75[r]): 'Here Philosophy teaches that it is generally the same in all things, saying that everyone, that is, that all that are seeks its own way back, that is, their natural movements, and, for and and each coming back is glad, that is, returning to what belongs to him according to his nature. Nor and order handed down, violence in a different way through habituation. It remains for everyone unless, indeed, that is, previously joined the beginning to the end, that is, before it returns to its natural beginning as to the end and for and and previously he made the world stable, that is, the revolution of oneself, through reciprocity, by joining itself to its natural beginning. He who made such a world proceeds from God, as from his beginning. Thus, if he passes well temporally, then he returns well to God spiritually, in the end.'

[60] CPC MS 155 (f.152[r]): 'Here Philosophy teaches that it is generally the same in all things, saying that each, that is, all that are seeks its own way back, that is, their natural movements. And for and and each one is glad in his return, that is, retuning to what belongs to him according to his nature, nor an order handed down, otherwise by habituations and violence, it remains for everyone unless, indeed, that is, previously joined the beginning to the end, that is, before it returns to its natural beginnings as to the end and for and and previously he made his world stable through reciprocity by joining itself to its natural beginning. That man who makes such a world proceeds from God, as from his beginning. Thus, if he passes well temporally, then he returns well to God spiritually, in the end.'

extensive rhetorical training, a desire to emphasise the theological nature of the *Consolatio*, as well as to play up his literary skill.

The extract from Book 3 has remarkably little variation amongst the manuscripts, considering the length of the text. 'id est omnia' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 becomes 'id est quod omnia' in ONC MS 264. 'aliter per assuefaccionem et violenciam' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 becomes 'violenciam aliter per assuefaccionem' in ONC MS 28. 'orbem suum' in OEC MS 28 and 'orbem sui' in CPC MS 155 becomes 'orbem id est reuolucionem sui' in ONC MS 264. Apart from a minor difference such as suum/sui, there is no textual variance between OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 in the Book 3 extract.

It is hard to say for certain whether the lack of variance in these manuscript extracts is peculiar to this metre of the *Consolatio*. For instance, one might expect there to be greater variation for commentary for 3m9, 'O qui perpetua', which tends to be the most heavily annotated section of the text, whether in Latin or English. There is also an argument for saying that just as Matthew Fisher sees an overlap in the roles of author and scribe, that contrarily they can sometimes be quite different creatures, the scribe determined to represent a work as faithfully as possible within the constraints of quality of exemplar and availability of good book-making materials.[61] Indeed, 'in their handling of parchment defects, verse layout and page breaks too, the scribes sought to preserve the text without interruption or distraction.'[62] Perhaps this says much for the text annotated; that when the scribe interrupts or distracts, it is with good reason.

[61] For instance, see Fisher, 6.
[62] Daniel Wakelin, *Immaterial Texts in Late Medieval England: Making English Literary Manuscripts, 1400-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 235.

4p4 ‘Tum ego: “Ista quidem…’

Boethius: Tum ego: “Ista quidem consequentia sunt eis quae paulo ante conclusa sunt.[63]

Trevet: Deinde cum dicit TUM EGO soluit quoddam dubium et circa hoc duo facit. Primo enim mouet Boecius dubitacionem. Secundo Philosophia illam soluit ibi ET MAGNA QUIDEM. Boecius autem mouens dubitacionem primo continuat se ad ea que dicta sunt dicens TUM id est tandem EGO scilicet dixi ISTA QUIDEM scilicet que iam dicta sunt CONSEQUENCIA SUNT EIS QUE PAULO ANTE SUNT CONCLUSA.[64]

OEC MS 28 (f.163^{v}):

soluit quiddam dubium et circa hoc duo facit primo enim mouet Boecius suam dubitacionem. Secundo philosophia illam soluit ibi. Et magna quidem. Boecius autem mouens suam dubitacionem primo continuat se ad ea que dicta sunt dicens. Ego Boecius respondi id est dixi tum id est tandem auditis deductoribus philosophie. Ista quidem que iam dicta sunt sunt consequentia id est secuutus ex eis que sunt conclusa paulo ante.[65]

ONC MS 264 (f.168^{v}):

Hic philosophia soluit quiddam dubium. Et duo facit que primo. mouet boecius suam dubitacionem. secundo philosophia soluit eam ibi. Et magna quidem. boecius autem mouens suam dubium primo continuat se ad ea que sunt dicta. Dicens. Ego boecius respondi tum id est tandem auditis deductoribus philosophie. Ista quidem supra que iam dicta sunt. sunt consequentia. ex eis que sunt conclusa paulo id est modicum ante.[66]

CPC MS 155 (f.210^{r}):

Soluit quiddam dubium Et circa hoc duo facit Primo enim mouet Boecius suam dubitacionem secundo illam soluit philosophia ibi Et magna quidem Boecius autem mouens suam dubitacionem primo continuat se ad ea que dicta sunt dicens Ego Boecius respondi id est dixi tum id est tandem auditis deductoribus philosophie ista quidem que iam dicta sunt consequentia id est sequuntur eis que sunt conclusa paulo ante.[67]

---

[63] This translates as: ‘Then I said: “These things do indeed follow from those which were just now concluded.’ Tester, 4p4, 344-5.
[64] See fn.6.
[65] See fn.7.
[66] ONC MS 264 (f.168^{v}): ‘This Philosophy resolves a certain doubt. And she does two things: that first Boethius arouses his doubt. Secondly, Philosophy there resolves it. And great indeed. However, Boethius arousing his doubt first, she goes on to that which is said, saying I. Boethius answered that, that is, at last having heard the teachers of philosophy. These things that before now are said are consequent from those that are just now concluded, that is, a little before.’
[67] CPC MS 155 (f.210^{r}): ‘She resolved a certain doubt. And regarding this she did two things. Indeed, first Boethius arouses his uncertainty. Secondly, Philosophy there resolves it. And great indeed. Boethius, however, first arousing his doubt, she goes on to that which is said, saying, I. Boethius answered, that is, he said, then, that is, at last having heard the teachers of philosophy. These things, that already are said, consequent, that is, they follow those which were just now concluded.’

The text here does not deviate greatly from Trevet's. Wheteley adds 'suam' in two places for grammatical completeness, and adds 'Boecius respondi' for clarification. He adds 'auditis deductoribus philosophie' and 'id est secuutus', the latter for clarification, the former perhaps with the experience of the teacher foremost in his mind, that Boethius could not have mused on such philosophical questions as innocence, guilt, and punishment, had he not listened to his teachers in his younger years.

The extract from Book 4 of Wheteley's commentary has the greatest level of textual variation between the three manuscripts.

OEC MS 28	**CPC MS 155**	**ONC MS 264**
'soluit quiddam' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155		becomes 'Hic philosophia solvit quiddam' in ONC MS 264.
'et circa hoc duo' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155		becomes 'Et duo' in ONC MS 264.
'facit primo' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155		becomes 'facit que primo' in ONC MS 264.
'enim mouet' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155		is simply 'mouet' in ONC MS 264.
'Secundo philosophia illam soluit ibi' in OEC MS 28	becomes 'secundo illam solvit philosophia ibi' in CPC MS 155	and 'secundo philosophia soluit eam ibi' in ONC MS 264.
'dicta sunt' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155		is transposed to 'sunt dicta' in ONC MS 264.
'Ego Boecius respondi id est dixi tum id est tandem' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155		becomes 'Ego boecius respondi tum id est tandem' in ONC MS 264.
'Ista quidem que iam' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155		becomes 'Ista quidem supra que iam' in ONC MS 264.
'sunt consequentia id est secuutus ex eis que sunt conclusa' in OEC MS 28	becomes 'consequentia id est sequuntur eis que sunt conclusa' in CPC MS 155	and 'sunt consequentia ex eis sunt conclusa' in ONC MS 264.
Finally, at the end of the extract, 'conclusa paulo ante' in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155		becomes 'conclusa paulo id est modicum ante' in ONC MS 264.

Some of the variation is the result of transposing of one or two words and is not likely to be significant. The most notable changes are from OEC MS 28 to ONC MS 264, but even here, there is as much excision as expansion. This extract reflects a particular interest in this

section of the commentary, and a flurry of independent choice on behalf of the scribe, engaging with the text more fully, revising and emending, revealing a desire to make Wheteley's language clearer, where it was deemed necessary, and likewise to remove clutter where language was considered extraneous.

5p1 'Dixerat oratinisque'

Boethius: Dixerat oratinisque cursum ad alia quaedam tractanda atque expedienda uertebat.[68]

Trevet: DIXERAT ORATINISQUE CURSUM prosa prima libri quinti. Intendit auctor in hoc libro soluer quedam dubitabilia suam determinationem de fato et prouidentia consequentia. Si enim omnia sint prouiso, ita quod nichil eueniat preter ordinem prouidentie, uidetur quod nichil casualiter eueniat, quia casus importat inopinatum euentum. Item, cum dictum sit supra, quod omnia disponuntur secundum seriem fatalem neccessitatus, ista autem, quorum est librum arbitrium, necessitate excludunt, uidetur, quod si ponatur prouidentia et fatum, quod omnino excludatur liberum arbitrium. Unde diuiditur liber iste in duas partes, in quarum prima inquirit, utrum casus sit; in secunda inquirit, utrum sit liberum arbitrium.[69]

OEC MS 28 (f.181^{r}):

Hic incipit prosa 1 quinti libri. In isto autem quinto libro intendit auctor soluere quedam dubitabia suam determinacionem de fato et de providencia dei consequencia. si enim omnia sint prouisa ita que non eveniat preter ordinem providencie dei. videtur quod nichil casualiter eveniat quia casus importat inopinatum rei eventum. Item cum dictum est supra. quod omnia disponuntur secundum seriem fatalem necessitatis ista autem quorum est liborum arbitrium necessitatem excludunt. uidetur quod si ponatur providencia et fatum quod omnino excludatur liberum arbitrium. unde dividitur liber iste in duas partes, in quarum prima inquirit utrum casus sit, in secunda utrum liberum arbitrium sit.[70]

[68] This translates as: 'She finished speaking, and was going to turn the course of her speech to deal with and explain some other questions'. Tester, 5p1, 384-5.

[69] 'SHE HAD SPOKEN AND TURNED HER SPEECH First prose, fifth book. In this book the author intends to resolve some of his doubtful determinations about the consequences of fate and providence. For if all things are provided, so that nothing happens beyond the order of providence, it is seen that nothing happens by chance, because chance implies an unexpected event. Likewise, as it was said above, that everything is arranged according to a fatal series of necessities, but from these, who free will is by necessity excluded, it seems that if providence and fate are assumed, that free will is completely excluded. Hence, this book is divided into two parts; in the first of which he inquires whether chance exists; in the second he inquires whether there is free will.' Taite Silk, 5p1, 667.

[70] OEC MS 28 (f.181^{r}): 'Here begins prose one of the fifth book. And in this fifth book the author intends to resolve certain of his doubts about the determination of fate and the consequences of God's providence. For if

ONC MS 264 (f.207^{v}):

> Hic incipit prosa prima quinti libri. In isto autem quinto libro. intendit boecius soluere quiddam dubitabilia suam determinacionem de fato et de prouidentia dei consequentia. Si enim omnia sint prouisa. itaque non eueniant preter ordinem prouidencie dei tunc uidetur quod nichil casualiter proueniret quia casus importat inopinatum rei euentum. Item cum dictum sit supra quod omnia disponuntur secundum seriem fatalem necessitatis. Illa autem quorum est librum arbitrium necessitatem excludant. Uidetur quod si ponantur prouidentia et fatum quod omnino excludatur liberum arbitrium. Propter(?) quidam liber iste post dividi in duas partes. In quarum prima inquirit utrum casus sit. In secunda inquirit utrum liberum arbitrium sit.[71]

CPC MS 155 (f.233^{r-v}):

> Hic incipit prosa prima quinti libri In isto autem quinto libro intendit auctor soluere quedam dubitabilia suam determinacionem de fato et de prouidentia dei consequentia Si enim omnia sint prouisa ita quod non eueniarit preter ordinem prouidencie dei uidetur quod nichil casualiter eueniat quia casus importat inopinatum rei euentum Item cum dictum sit supra quod omnia disponuntur secundum seriem fatalis necessitatis ista autem quorum est liberum arbitrium necessitatem excludunt uidetur quod si ponatur prouidencia et fatum quod omnino excludatur liberum arbitrium. Unde dividitur liber iste in duas partes. In quarum prima inquirit utrum casus sit. In secunda inquirit utrum liberum arbitrium sit.[72]

The text above is extremely close to Trevet's, with one small but important addition. In case there could be any doubt for Wheteley's readership that by providence Boethius (and Trevet)

---

everything is provided in such a way that events do not occur beyond the order of God's providence, it is seen that nothing happens by chance, because a chance implies an unexpected event. Likewise, as it was said above, that everything is arranged according to a fatal series by ncessity, but those who free will is by necessity excluded, it seems that if providence and fate are assumed, that free will is completely excluded. Hence, this book is divided into two parts; in the first of which he inquires whether chance exists; in the second he inquires whether there is free will.'

[71] ONC MS 264 (f.207^{v}): 'Here begins the first prose of the fifth book. And in this fifth book, Boethius intends to resolve some of the dubious consequences of his determination of fate and the providence of God. For if all things are provided, so that nothing happens beyond the order of God's providence, then it seems that nothing happens by chance, because chance implies the unexpected outcome of a thing. Likewise, as it was said above, that eveything is arranged according to a fatal series by ncessity, but those whose free will is by necessity excluded, it seems that if providence and fate are assumed, that free will is completely excluded. For this reason this book was divided into two parts; in the first of which he inquires whether chance exists. In the second he inquires whether free will exists.'

[72] CPC MS 155 (f.233^{r-v}): Here begins the first prose of the fifth book. And in this book the author intends to resolve some of the dubious consequences of his determination of fate and the providence of God. For if all things are provided, so that nothing happened beyond the order of God's providence, it would seem that nothing happens by chance, because chance implies an unexpected event. Likewise, as it was said above, that everything is arranged according to a series by fatal necessity, but those whose free will is by necessity excluded, it seems that if povidence and fate are assumed, that free will is completely excluded. Hence this book is divided into two parts; in the first of which he inquires whether chance exists. In the second he inquires whether free will exists.'

are speaking of divine providence, Wheteley adds the word ‘dei’ twice (‘de providencia dei’, ‘ordinem providencie dei’). Though Trevet’s commentary repeatedly brings Boethius’s tacit Christianity into the foreground, Wheteley takes this a step further in this passage, so that the tone of this section of commentary is less philosophical and more theological, reminiscent of a sermon manual.[73]

In the variation between copyists of Wheteley’s work, the extract from Book 5 is a much less complex picture than that from Book 4, though it is a longer piece of text. As they commonly do, this scribe also seeks explicitness by replacing the description of the ‘auctor’ in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 to ‘boecius’ in ONC MS 264.[74] The simple ‘videtur’ in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 becomes ‘tunc videtur’ in ONC MS 264. The verb ‘eveniat’ in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 becomes ‘proveniret’ in ONC MS 264. The phrase ‘unde dividitur liber iste in duas partes’ in OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155 becomes ‘Propter(?) quidam liber iste post dividi in duas partes’ in ONC MS 264. Lastly, the closing line in the OEC MS 28 extract, ‘in secunda utrum liberum arbitrium sit’ is added to with the repetition of the verb for emphasis and sense in ONC MS 264 and CPC MS 155, ‘In secunda inquirit utrum liberum arbitrium sit’.

Textual Transmission

It is not a straightforward matter to quantify the variations between the three texts.[75] However, taking the view that so long as one counts consistently, one can gain meaningful

[73] Both Beryl Smalley and Lodi Nauta note that Trevet was a biblicist and theologian as well as a classicist and historian. However, his Christianising tendencies should not be overstated. As a member of the Dominican order writing for a fellow Dominican audience, and with sometimes limited access to texts, it is not surprising that Trevet includes references to Scripture and Church Fathers in his commentary. See Beryl Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), 58-64, and Lodi Nauta, ‘The Scholastic Context of the Boethius Commentary by Nicholas Trevet’ in Hoenen and Nauta, 41-67 (43-7).
[74] For more on the idea of explicitness in scribal variation, see *Piers Plowman: The A Version*, ed. by George Kane (London: The Athlone Press, 1960), 127.
[75] For instance, does one count a variance as each single word of variance or a string of words together, and should one count two words transposed together as a variance? For this analysis the answer to these questions is the latter, and yes.

data, this small analysis of five extracts has found twenty-nine points of variance between OEC MS 28 and ONC MS 264, and twenty-nine points of variance between ONC MS 264 and CPC MS 155 (almost all the same points in the text, but not quite). In contrast, there are only six points of variance between OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155. From this one can draw a few tentative conclusions about the textual relationship of the three manuscripts, both from the quantity but also the quality of the variants. Firstly, whoever copied CPC MS 155 about a hundred years after OEC MS 28 was created, either worked from OEC MS 28 as their exemplar, or from a remarkably similar text, and certainly one with a close textual relationship. However, when we compare the Exeter and New College manuscripts, the relationship between them is harder to pin down. We have already seen that OEC MS 28 and ONC MS 264 were created within a few years of each other, with ONC MS 264 most likely a few years afterward. There is a question mark over whether the variance between the two is down to scribal error, the accumulation of a small percentage of scribal change through multiple intervening copies of the text, or due to scribal choices. To unpack these ideas a little further, it is inevitable that at least some of the variation between the few remaining witnesses to Wheteley's commentary are due to scribal error, given the mechanical nature of the work involved and the length of the text.[76] On the second point, given that we cannot know for certain how many copies have been lost, there is a chance that OEC MS 28 and ONC MS 264 represent the two ends of a sliding scale, with numerous witnesses, now lost, which each contributed some variation, both through unconscious error and conscious variation of language, usually to excise clutter or to expand for clarity.[77] However, given the close age between the two manuscripts, this would seem to be unlikely. Given the small number of remaining witnesses, there were probably never very many copies, which reduces further the

[76] See Kane, 125.
[77] See Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375-1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 51-3.

likely number that circulated in the first half of the fourteenth century, and which could account for the variance between the Exeter and New manuscripts. While it is conjectural, the reality is most likely a combination of factors: some scribal error, an accumulation of changes through lost witnesses, and agency on the part of the two fourteenth-century scribes whose work we *can* see, making decisions on where to maintain fidelity to the exemplar, and where to make what they saw as improvements or corrections. This act of change would have seemed a more natural progression of the transmission of text to the medieval scribe and reader than it likely seems to us. If each successive scribe is using the same models of rhetorical narrative, engaging in 'an aesthetic of return, where pleasure lay in variance', then the exercise, of *lectio*, of *translatio studii*, is continued, one witness to the next, even if the text changes.[78]

If one therefore endorses the sliding scale view of the relationship between author and scribe, then as well as seeing the relationship between Wheteley and the scribes who copied his work, we can also see a comparative relationship between Wheteley and Trevet, also a copier and changer of the work of another (in Trevet's case, between himself and William of Conches), and so on back to earlier Carolingian traditions of glossing to the *Consolatio*. The boundaries between one text and another, and one copy and another, must always be considered to some extent fluid.

A further argument for the minimal number of witnesses between the Exeter and New manuscripts is a comparison with the three extant copies of Wheteley's commentary to the *Disciplina*, which are presented in a different way in each surviving manuscript. In OEC MS 28 it stands alone without its primary text. In CPC MS 155 the primary text and commentary are intercalated. In CFM MS McClean 169 the primary text stands alone and is followed by

[78] For more on the agency of scribal variance, see Bernard Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology*, trans. by Betsy Wing (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 35-8 .

the commentary. This would suggest that copies of the commentary to the *Disciplina* were once a little more plentiful, enough to allow for scribal variation and more varied requirements from users of the text. In contrast, the commentary to the *Consolatio* is presented the same way each time. The only variation is that the Pembroke manuscript omits the *quaestiones*, but these are presented in the two other witnesses following the Boethius and commentary text, and so would be no trouble to omit.[79]

Finally, of the three copies of Wheteley's commentary to the *Consolatio*, OEC MS 28 and ONC MS 264 are both early fourteenth-century, have similar layouts and include the *quaestiones*. On the other hand, the Pembroke manuscript, created a hundred years later and omitting the *quaestiones*, suggests a different purpose in its creation, and could reflect changing pedagogic methods in late medieval education. Indeed, it should be noted that the inclusion of *quaestiones* in British manuscripts became more prominent in the fourteenth century, and then took a couple of centuries to fade out of use, which in turn suggests that scholastic methods of division and disputation continued to be used well into what would be considered the humanist Latin education of the sixteenth century.[80] This would place CPC MS 155 ahead of the trend, but still in line with pedagogic development away from this particular mode of scholastic writing.

---

[79] The collation of the Pembroke College manuscript, according to James's catalogue entry, is 1^{8}-3^{8} 4^{10} 5^{8}-31^{8} 32^{10} (wants 10), 1 flyleaf. As the *Consolatio* with intercalated commentary is the final item in the codex, it is possible that the *quaestiones* have been left out of a later binding. However, the existence of the staple mark on the final leaf would suggest otherwise, that the codex has held this form since its medieval creation.

[80] A search for keyword 'quaestiones' in *MLGB3* returns 591 records, of which it defines 24 (or 4%) as being 12th century in origin, 38 (6%) 13th century in origin, 232 (39%) from the 14th century, 217 (37%) from the 15th century, and 182 (31%) from the 16th century. Though the creation of *quaestiones* does drop off into the late medieval/early modern period, the difference between the 14th and 15th centuries is not significant [accessed 11 June 2020]. A similar search of *MMOL* at time of writing reveals a 19% drop from the 14th to the 15th century when searching for manuscripts of British provenance [accessed 11 June 2020]. As many of these manuscripts have been in Oxford since the medieval or early modern periods, perhaps this more significant difference reflects a greater change in pedagogic methodology in university teaching in the late medieval period than in school education more widely, a tentative suggestion which requires much greater analysis than is allowed in this snapshot analysis. For more on the medieval use of *quaestiones*, see Lesley Smith, *Masters of the Sacred Page: Manuscripts of Theology in the Latin West to 1274* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 125. For further analysis of humanist Latin teaching in the late 15th century and into the 16th century, see Orme, 118-27.

Conclusion

In a comparison of the *Consolatio* commentary manuscripts and the text they transmit, it is apparent that a straightforward understanding of the commentary as a schoolroom text is problematic. It has been noted that the layout particularly of the earlier two manuscripts denotes a standard academic framework of prologue with *accessus* material, text with intercalated commentary, and *quaestiones*. However, all of the manuscripts are large in size and the New College and Pembroke College manuscripts are of a particularly high standard; ONC MS 264 has illumination, decoration, and the use of gold, and the Pembroke manuscript has substantial blue and red decoration of a particularly high standard and is written in a very neat anglicana formata script with less abbreviation than its textual siblings.

These manuscripts can be contrasted with copies of the *Consolatio*, which can be more readily understood as schoolroom books through the standard of their creation, the addition of pedagogic marginalia, and the signs of schoolroom use. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F.6.4 (discussed in the previous chapter) is a small manuscript containing the vulgate text of the *Consolatio* and Trevet's commentary.[81] Its use as a schoolbook is evident not only from the explanatory glossing of Latin words and phrases, but also from the childish notes and doodles it contains. This manuscript also reveals a long period of engagement: the text of the *Consolatio* is in a thirteenth-century hand. Later in the codex has been added a fourteenth-century copy of Trevet's copy, while marginal notes are in a fifteenth-century hand.

This codex is smaller than the copies of Wheteley's commentary to the *Consolatio*, a sign of less expense taken in the construction as well as being a practical size to be hold and carry. It has less decoration, with no use of gold. Less marginal space is allowed around the

[81] See *SC*, no. 2150; N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd edn, (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1964) 140; *CB1*, 182.

text box, and the script is of a lower standard. All of which is to say that the form of a book, its size, standard, and use of space around the text has much to tell the reader about the kind of text they may find inside, and how highly it should be esteemed, 'that every book tells a story quite apart from that recounted by its text'.[82] Of course, it is hard to ignore the idea that Wheteley's commentary to the *Consolatio* is a text designed for grammar schools. Sebastian, and Gibson and Smith, amongst others, view the commentary as the product of Wheteley's work as a schoolteacher, an assumption supported by the pedagogic nature of the *Disciplina*, the commentary for which predates Wheteley's work on the *Consolatio*.[83] However, it is possible to perceive Wheteley's commentary as a school or university text, or at least pedagogic in its broadest sense, while still recognising particularly ONC MS 264 as having a primary purpose beyond the teaching of any pupils. This can be inferred from the fabric of the manuscript and its materials, script, and layout, as well as the inclusion of other materials; the hymns to St Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, and the dedicatory letters to both the bishop of Salisbury and the dean of Lincoln. These represent gestures and pleas for professional favour and advancement, and make sense when allied with the little that is known of Wheteley's life. As outlined earlier, we know that Wheteley spent fifteen years earlier in his life studying in Paris, before becoming an acolyte with a living from the parish of Sulham in Berkshire in 1306.[84] We then know from Wheteley's own words that he was teaching in Stamford in 1309, and in Lincoln by 1316. He was eventually offered the position of rector of Yatesbury in Wiltshire in 1317, which had previously been held by Hugh Wheatley, perhaps a relative, though as a toponym it likely referred to many people from the place in question. However, it should not be assumed that William quit Lincoln at this time, as Hugh Wheatley had installed

[82] McKenzie, 262.
[83] See Sebastian, *De Disciplina Scholarium and Medieval Grammar School Education*, 5; *CB1*, 14-5; *The Victoria History of the County of Lincoln*, vol 2, ed. William Page (London: Archibald Constable, 1906), 471.
[84] The available biographical information differs between scholars, though a fairly clear picture can be obtained by comparing sources: Orme, 'William Wheatley', *ODNB;* Orme, 178; Sebastian, *De Disciplina Scholarium and Medieval Grammar School Education*, 8-14; Page, *Victoria History of Lincoln*, 423, 470-1.

John Wheatley (again, perhaps a relative) as vicar at Yatesbury in 1308, so it may be that William continued in Lincoln whilst receiving the living from Yatesbury. In this context it makes sense that he would seek preferment from likely avenues of advancement in Salisbury and Lincoln, two ecclesiastical centres where the dean or bishop would have had power to license and appoint schoolteachers.[85] Further, though Wheteley's connection to Oxford is tenuous, it was the standard practice, before the scarcity of talent brought by the Black Death, for the schoolmaster at Lincoln to have received his MA, for which it seems likely Wheteley was given leave to attend Oxford to complete his studies.[86] ONC MS 264, with its dedicatory materials and above-average quality (particularly the original core of the book dedicated to the dean of Lincoln) likely represents a presentation copy of the manuscript, designed to show Wheteley's capabilities as a scholar, with pedagogic use as a secondary bonus for later scholars. Indeed, Orme identifies Wheteley's career trajectory as a solid example of the journey of study and advancement that teachers and would-be priests undertook in the fourteenth century.[87]

Furthermore, whilst it is as a schoolteacher that Wheteley is now remembered, the motivation and intentions behind Wheteley's writing needs to be taken into consideration; that for a substantial period of his life (approximately fifteen years in Paris, and perhaps another three in Oxford while he held the living at Sulham) he was a university scholar. It therefore seems fitting that a scholar of some years standing, in choosing to create texts to further his career, would call on erudite works he had come across in his time in Paris and Oxford, where manuscript copies of the *Consolatio* and its commentaries were available and the work was much studied. For instance, he did not choose the kind of grammatical works

[85] On education in Lincolnshire, see Page, *Victoria History of Lincoln*, 422.
[86] On Wheteley and other schoolmasters, see Orme, 169, 178; Page, *Victoria History of Lincoln*, 423; Jo Ann Hoeppner Moran, *The Growth of English Schooling, 1340-1548: Learning, Literacy, and Laicization in Pre-Reformation York Diocese* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 71.
[87] Orme, 178.

later favoured by Leylond, discussed earlier. It would be reasonable to say that Wheteley instead chose a work which could serve two purposes, to answer the increasing use of scholarly works in fourteenth century schools, but which were still evidently in use in a university setting, albeit beyond the official curriculum, and could show his competence to potential supporters.

It is clear from the codicological evidence that William of Wheteley was never a much-read commentator or author, but history tells us that his perseverance in pursuing a scholarly career and a comfortable living eventually paid off. It therefore seems apparent that it was not Wheteley's only nor perhaps his primary motivation to create a schoolroom text in his commentary to the *Consolatio*. Furthermore, though the gifting of each manuscript to its respective college very likely took place after Wheteley's death, it nonetheless seems appropriate that this is where they came to rest.

There are two key points to take from Wheteley's commentary to the *Consolatio*. The first is that there is nothing *in the text* to identify it as being anything other than a schoolbook. Wheteley was a schoolmaster and the text is pedagogic, pitched at a level that crosses the divide between grammar school students and younger university scholars. The significant factor here is the discrepancy between the text and the standard of the manuscripts, which is why it is important to turn to the material books, as this thesis does. Those copies where the text and the design of the book harmoniously suggest schoolroom use have been lost, with the possible exception of OEC MS 28. Secondly, in the few extant witnesses we can see the evidence of scribal decision-making; to transmit as far as possible a text faithful to its exemplar, as with the relationship between OEC MS 28 and CPC MS 155, or to make plentiful small changes, such as the variance between OEC MS 28 and ONC MS 264. Some of the variation will be due to error or accumulated change from lost witnesses. However,

between two manuscripts so close in age, we can also see the scribe as another kind of author, where 'one could say that every manuscript is a revision, a version.'[88]

Wheteley's commentary to the *Consolatio* is a text that requires a holistic assessment of text, codicology, and historical interpretation, to gain a complete picture of its meaning and purpose as a work of literature. A commentary is not always just a commentary, and the evidence of the manuscript should, whenever possible, be considered as part of the literary evidence.

[88] Cerquiglini, 38.

4. The Scholar's Commentary? Trevet, Chaucer, and the *Consolatio*

The previous chapters have looked at copies of the *Consolatio* and some of its related texts with signs of engagement that identify how they were used and sometimes by whom. The first chapter considered manuscripts created earlier than the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the period which is the primary focus of this thesis, but which contain signs of engagement that continue into the late medieval period, and often beyond it. Many of these manuscripts, as in the second and third chapters, have an academic or pedagogic history, used in the schoolroom or held by academic fellows or college libraries. What almost all of these manuscripts have in common is a glossing engagement that helps to explicate the text. These may range from brief *id est* glosses all the way up to formal commentaries bound as separate texts. With each manuscript we can make an educated guess, from the words and other marks on the page, at the kind of reading undertaken. This has often been a university fellow making personal notes. It has sometimes been a secular priest looking for sayings and aphorisms to be considered when preparing for a sermon. There are occasional glimpses of children in the schoolroom, and of scholars both bored and diligent.

This chapter continues the rough chronology of codicological traces of readership by looking at the commentary to the *Consolatio* written by Nicholas Trevet. Although Trevet's commentary preceded William of Wheteley's, which drew upon it, this chapter will look most particularly at an unusual manuscript of the later 1300s or early 1400s which contains both the *Consolatio* and excerpts of Trevet's work, Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.3.21.[1] Trevet's commentary is pertinent to the topic of the thesis as evidence of reception and

[1] See *CMP3*, 424-5; M. C. Seymour and Ralph Hanna III, 'Boece' in *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, M. C. Seymour, (Aldershot: Scolar, 1995), 43-53 (45-6); Machan, xxi; Paul Binski and Patrick Zutshi, *Western Illuminated Manuscripts: A Catalogue of the Collection in Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 181-3.

reading of Boethius's primary text, and as having in turn its own history of reading and reception. In considering the response to a response (in this case the reception of a commentary) it is tempting to see the value in such an exercise as being akin to working through archaeological strata, a linear process of adding layers of response which when stripped back ultimately takes us back to the earliest copies of Boethius's *Consolatio*. However, the reception history of a text such as Trevet's commentary (and indeed the *Consolatio* as well), when viewed through so many extant manuscripts with substantial variance in reader and provenance history, can more usefully be thought of as a room in a house: over time the décor will be modernised, the view from the window will change, the inhabitants come and go and use the room in different ways, adding and subtracting furniture. Is it still the same room? Through this 'focus on reception and transmission rather than origination' we gain insight into the overlapping and gradual shifts and variants of response, too piecemeal to be linear, too complex and human to be simplified into easy explanations and categories.[2]

Trevet's commentary is a later medieval work (written over a few years, approximately 1298 to 1300), highly scholastic in nature, and written by an English Dominican friar who used English source material such as the Old English translation of the *Consolatio* attributed to King Alfred.[3] As Taite Silk noted of Trevet's commentary: 'The scholastic method which divides every idea into parts and these parts into further parts is more likely to infuriate than help the modern reader, but undoubtedly gave the fourteenth-century student exactly what he wanted.'[4] The commentary is also remarkable in having been

[2] See Griffiths, 9.
[3] On Trevet's use of the *OEB*, see B. S. Donaghey, 'Nicholas Trevet's Use of King Alfred's Translation of Boethius, and the Dating of His Commentary' in Minnis, *Medieval*, 1-31 (1, 9-11).
[4] Taite Silk, v. For more on the medieval scholastic method, see Sten Ebbesen, 'Ancient Scholastic Logic as the Source of Medieval Scholastic Logic', *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. by Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, Jan Pinborg, and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 99-127 (101-2).

copied, excerpted, and quoted in so many English manuscripts of this period, and having influenced English literary composition and translation by Chaucer, Walton, and Henryson.[5] Given that Trevet's commentary is ostensibly just a means of making Boethius's text more accessible, it has had a remarkable pedigree of its own, and has been incredibly successful, with around a hundred and thirty copies still extant.[6]

The manuscript of particular interest in this chapter, Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.3.21, is unusual, and has therefore received an unusual level of interest in it. This manuscript contains two distinct parts, constructed separately then bound together. The first, from the early fifteenth century, contains an index to the *Consolatio* and the *Consolatio* itself, as well as Chaucer's *Boece* intercalated, the commentary following section by section on the same page. Placed between Chaucer's translation of 2m5 and the Latin text of 2p6 are two of Chaucer's short poems, 'The Former Age' and 'Fortune'.[7] These poems, included by the scribe in his flow of copying and taking up just a few folios, are works separate from Chaucer's *Boece* but Boethian in tone. In particular, 'The Former Age' comments upon 2m5 and is titled by the scribe as 'Chawcer vpon this fyfte metre of the second book', which means that this is recognised as an alternative interpretation of Boethius's text from Chaucer's *Boece* by the scribe who draws our attention to it.[8] The second part of the manuscript contains a fourteenth-century commentary to the *Consolatio* by William of Aragon, though this is not the focus of the chapter.

---

[5] *CB1* lists many English copies of the *Consolatio* which include part or all of Trevet's commentary to the text. For Trevet's influence on other works see: Machan, xvii; Mark J. Gleason, 'The Influence of Trevet on Boethian Language and Thought in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*', unpublished thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison (1984); Lucy Lewis, 'The Tavistock Boethius: One of the Earliest Examples of Provincial Printing' in *Printing Places: Locations of Book Production & Distribution Since 1500*, ed. by John Hinks and Catherine Armstrong (New Castle: Oak Knoll Press, 2005), 5; Science, li-liii; *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. by Denton Fox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), cv-xix, 146.
[6] See Chapter 3, fn.21.
[7] See *Riverside*, 634-5, 650-3.
[8] *Riverside*, 634-5.

Part One of CUL MS Ii.3.21 contains a hundred and eighty folios (of two hundred and ninety-eight folios in total), with a folio size of 320 x 208 mm. The *Consolatio* opens with what must have been a sizeable illuminated initial, with a foliate border running down the left-hand margin, though this has largely been cut out. Smaller illuminated initials start subsequent books, and the start of *Consolatio* and *Boece* sections have a decorated initial in blue and red. The parchment of both parts of the manuscript is of a good standard, and particularly in the first part the scribe has left plenty of blank space around the text box, making it easier to read and allowing plenty of space for glosses.

The *Consolatio* and *Boece* were clearly designed to be read together, as each prose or metre section of the Latin *Consolatio*, in double-spaced textualis, is immediately followed by its Chaucerian partner in single-spaced anglicana. These section by section alternating blocks of Boethius and Chaucer also include extensive marginal excerpts. These annotations appear to be from Trevet's commentary, though there are additions from at least one other source, as we shall see later. This combination of Latin and Middle English, with two distinct traditions of Latin commentary (the one marginal, the other in the second part of the book), is highly unusual, and has raised questions about the provenance of the manuscript, what the commissioner of the book intended, and how later readers might have engaged with it.[9]

There is some debate regarding the date of composition of Chaucer's *Boece*, either in the 1380s, or perhaps the 1390s, according to Minnis and Machan.[10] However, a precise dating is not necessary to know that it was written at a time when the long-term status of English was changing as a written language for both literary and religious texts. This

[9] In particular, see Minnis and Machan's argument for Chaucer as the commissioner of CUL MS Ii.3.21 as a presentation copy, discussed further below: Alastair J. Minnis and Tim William Machan, 'The Occasion of Chaucer's *Boece*', *New Medieval Literatures 23*, ed. by Philip Knox (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2023), 130-78 (157-68).

[10] For the approximate dating of the composition of *Boece*, see Machan, xi-xii; Ralph Hanna III and Traugott Lawler, 'Explanatory Notes to *Boece*', in *Riverside*, 1003; John H. Fisher, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2nd edn (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1989), 814. For recent scholarship on the dating of *Boece*, see also Minnis and Machan, 'The Occasion of Chaucer's *Boece*', 132-47.

evolution cannot be pinned down to one event, such as the Black Death or the Hundred Years War. Moreover, the increased number of texts written in English, and the standardization of English as a literary language came from and gave energy to 'a new sense of their importance', 'as writers tried both to articulate their growing consciousness of the distinctiveness and coherence of English language and culture and to give the language a status closer to that of French or Latin.'[11]

Furthermore, there is evidence that writers in the late Middle Ages saw, in the act of writing in English, a way of expressing themselves that gave immediacy and clarity to their message. This view is well articulated in the Prologue to Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love*:

> Let than clerkes endyten in Latyn, for they have the propertie of science and the knowinge in that facultie; and lette Frenchemen in their Frenche also endyten their queynt termes, for it is kyndely to their mouthes. And let us shewe our fantasyes in suche wordes as we lerneden of our dames tonge.[12]

In this way they sought not to give primacy to English, nor to take a defensive stance, but to acknowledge different modes of discourse appropriate to Latin, French, and English.[13]

There is also an argument that placing a Latin text next to an English translation may have been for the benefit of one whose Latin was not advanced enough to read without translation. However, given that the commentary, written only in Latin, is placed around both the Latin and English primary texts in the same scribal hand, this argument is weakened.[14] It would be unusual to write Latin commentary around an English text if proficiency in Latin

---

[11] See Nicholas Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing' in *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280*-1520, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 314-30 (331-52). The quotation is on 333. See also on this subject John Burrow, 'The Languages of Medieval England' in *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English*, *Volume 1: to 1550*, ed. by Roger Ellis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7-28 (14-26).

[12] Thomas Usk, *Testament of Love*, ed. by Gary W. Shawver (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 45, ll.28-32.

[13] On the status of English, see Ruth Evans, Andrew Taylor, Nicholas Watson, and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'The Notion of Vernacular Theory' in *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280*-1520, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, Ruth Evans (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 326-7.

[14] Such as CUL MS Ii.3.21, ff.12^{v} and 35^{r}.

was a core concern. There might have been an argument for using the margins around the Middle English text to allow enough space for Trevet's copious commentary, except that the scribe adds excerpts only, in small blocks of a few lines, a couple of blocks per page, leaving plentiful space around sections of both Latin and Middle English. The combination of Latin and vernacular would certainly be useful to a reader with only elementary Latin, but that was likely not the commissioner's purpose in demanding this specification. Rather, the clear distinction in the layout of text, translation, and commentary, gives the reader choice to read in different permutations of one or two textual elements, or all three together, depending on their preference and need.[15]

Who was the commissioner? Is it possible that the person who asked for a manuscript of combined Latin and vernacular was a writer of English? When we consider the verse translation by John Walton, which will be discussed in greater detail in the final chapter, we can see the enacting, similar to the act of translation made by Chaucer in *Boece*, of *translatio studii*, the transfer of knowledge from one time and culture to another, integrating with it a *study* of the nature of translation through the *act* of translation, as well as elucidating the work being translated.[16] Similarly, CUL MS Ii.3.21 would have been helpful to a reader paring a translation down to its words and phrases, considering this or that interpretation, seeing in the Latin juxtaposed with the English an exercise in choice, with the end goal to make not just the meaning but the emotional effect as clear as possible. The inclusion of Chaucer's Boethian short poems reflects such an endeavour, and has the bonus of reflecting Boethius's metre back into verse, the 'rhetoricae suadela dulcedinis' that was Boethius's original intent.[17] Though the commissioner of the book was not necessarily engaged in

[15] On different ways of reading, see Daniel Wakelin, 'Possibilities for Reading: Classical Translations in Parallel Texts ca. 1520-1558' *Studies in Philology* 105 (2008), 463-86.
[16] The concept of *translatio studii* is considered in greater detail in Copeland, 103-7 looking at the practice in general, 128-9 specifically with *Boece* in mind.
[17] See Christopher Cannon, *The Making of Chaucer's English: A Study of Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 22-36. The quotation is from the *Consolatio* 2p1, 'the sweet persuasiveness of rhetoric'.

translation, that act of decision-making was the first step in the creative act of making this book. This act fits with Minnis and Machan's speculation that Chaucer translated the *Consolatio* over an extended period of time as 'a mature work initially composed for presentation', and particularly 'as an appropriate gift for John of Gaunt', with whom Chaucer had a long association.[18] Furthermore, this would make sense of the mismatch between the highly developed framing of Latin text, English translation, gloss, and the quality of the manuscript, with the presentation for someone with less polished Latinity.

The above are intriguing ideas, considering how influential the *Consolatio* has been on literary works, and the fact that a writer as versatile as Chaucer chose a philosophical prison text as suitable for translation. However, there is a danger in seeing CUL MS Ii.3.21 as literary in purpose, perhaps to support the further creation of vernacular works influenced by Boethius, precisely because we have the literary endeavours that resulted from a late medieval interrogation of the text, a kind of *ergo hoc propter hoc* logical fallacy.[19]

Whatever else this manuscript is, it is not simply a random confluence of texts resulting from accidents of circumstance. There are many manuscripts where the binding together of particular texts defies easy explanation, and the suggestion can be made that a reader with a diverse library had two texts in loose quires of the same leaf dimensions and chose to bind them together for the convenient protection of both texts. That argument cannot be made here, where the Latin and Middle English follow each other on the same page, so that the *mise en page* makes clear the intention to create the book with both works. The addition of William of Aragon's commentary in the second part, codicologically a separate booklet, might look more opportunistic, where it originates from a separate stage of

[18] Minnis and Machan, 'The Occasion of Chaucer's *Boece*', 158, 161.
[19] For more on this kind of argument, see Minnis and Machan, 'The Occasion', 151.

production of the codex, but the positioning together of the Boethius and Chaucer texts is a purposeful act.

What I hope to have shown is that strands of several arguments may be at play here; certainly the increasing status of English as a written language, and the fact that no matter how the manuscript was used, a greater acceptance of English for literary texts makes the existence of such a manuscript more likely. However, there is another way of thinking about CUL MS Ii.3.21 that is less concerned with the status of English as a literary language and more interested in what kind of text Chaucer's *Boece* is, and what role it plays when placed next to Latin commentary.

Trevet's Commentary

The *Codices Boethiani* acknowledge that CUL MS Ii.3.21 has 'extensive excerpts from Trivet's commentary, in the scribe's hand'.[20] As previous chapters have already shown, the use of Trevet in late medieval Boethian manuscripts is very common. Commissioned by one of his fellow Dominicans to create the commentary, Trevet's work uses as a source material the commentary of William of Conches, often responding to William, referring to him as the 'Commentator', most particularly when he disagrees with him on points of Aristotelian philosophy, such as the idea of 'world soul'.[21] Reminiscent of students replying to each other's marginalia in scholastic books, Trevet updates and, as he sees it, improves William's commentary, but maintains the scholastic structure, and makes it even more encyclopaedic, increasing the use of source material, notably Aristotle, Isidore, and Fulgentius, as well as citing the *Old English Boethius*.[22] Perhaps this scholastic structure of

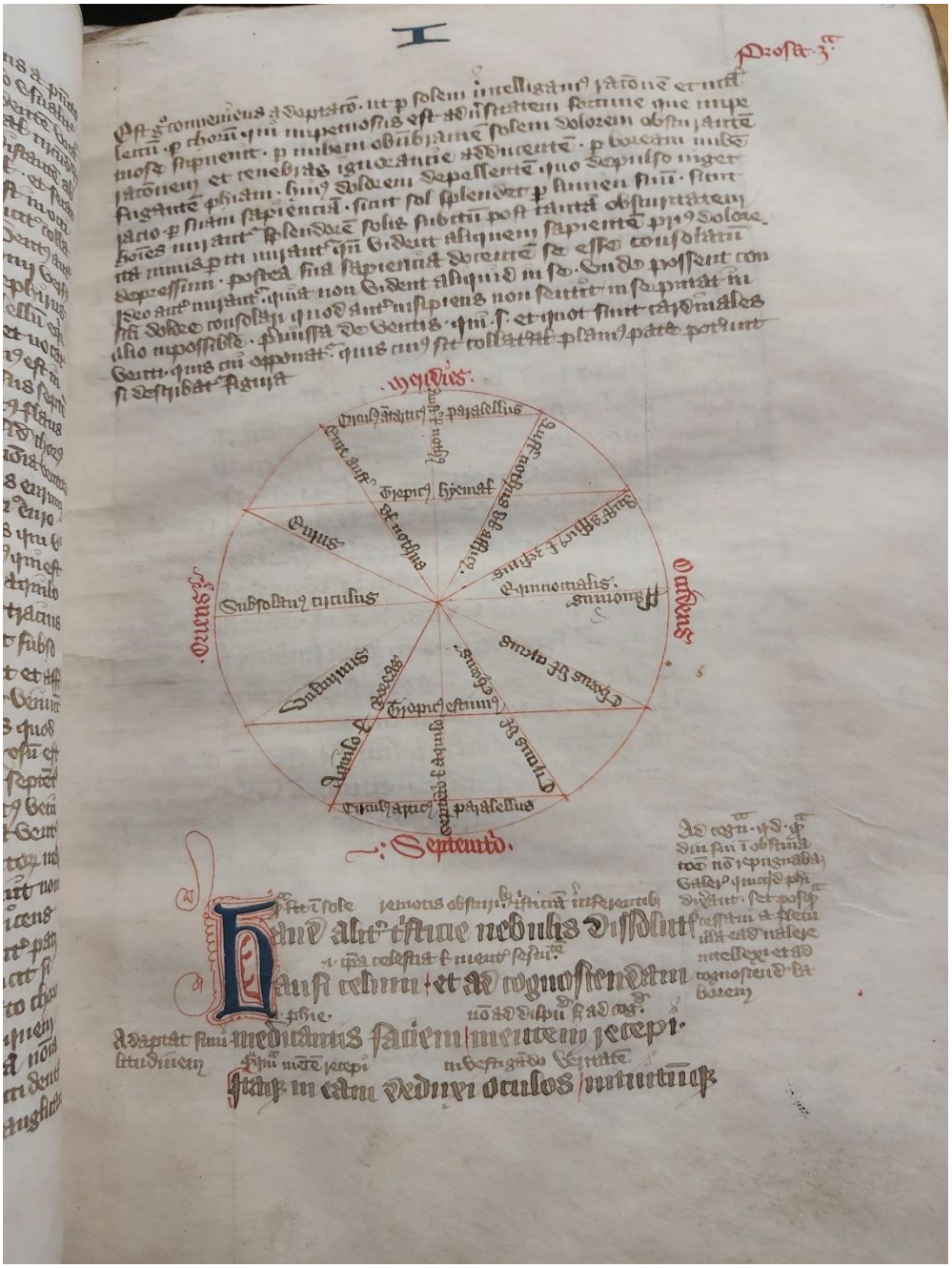
[20] *CB1*, 43.
[21] On Trevet's commentary to the *Consolatio*, see Ruth J. Dean, 'The Dedication of Nicholas Trevet's Commentary on Boethius', *Studies in Philology*, 63 (1966), 593-603; A. J. Minnis and Lodi Nauta, 'More Platonico loquitur: What Nicholas Trevet really did to William of Conches' in Minnis, *Chaucer*, 1-33 (1-3).
[22] See Donaghey, 'Nicholas Trevet's Use of King Alfred's Translation of Boethius, and the Dating of His Commentary' in Minnis, *Medieval*, 1-31.

atomized parts has been its saving grace, making it relatively easy to lift certain elements from Trevet's work as the scribe or annotator requires. It therefore also lends itself well to different modes of presentation: the text complete (such as CJC MS Q.D.7; BodL MS Auct. F.6.4), alternating with Boethius section by section or through extended lemmata (such as DUL MS Cosin V.ii.11; HCL MS P.III.6; BL MS Royal 15.A.xxx), placed in the margins (such as BnF MS Latin 17814), and through the use of excerpts and brief points of information (such as CUL MS Ii.3.21; BL MS Harley 2519).

To take one telling comparison from a survey of copies of Trevet's commentary, Cambridge, Peterhouse MS 275, offers a precedent to CUL MS Ii.3.21 in its use of an alternating layout, albeit alternating different things.[23] This fourteenth-century manuscript contains the *Consolatio* and Trevet texts alternating section by section, with sections of Trevet's work further connected to Boethius's text through lemmata underlined in red. The diagrams which tend to appear alongside Trevet's text are noteworthy for being executed with an unusual level of care, with the pictures of 'sol' and 'terra' being lovely works in miniature. The academic nature of the manuscript is evident through the manuscript's size (265 x 190 mm, too big to be pocket-sized, too small to be a presentation or lectern copy), the intercalation of Boethius's and Trevet's texts, as well as the addition of marginal notes in more than one hand in both outer and gutter margins (though marginalia in the gutter margin has been obscured by the tight seventeenth-century binding). Furthermore, Rodney J. Thomson identifies that CPH MS 275 was annotated by John Holbroke and perhaps also John Warkworth. Holbroke was Master of the college from 1418 to 1431, and Warkworth became Master in 1473. Though CPH MS 275 was not given to the college by Warkworth, we do know that as Master he gave over fifty manuscripts in 1481, including works by Grossesteste,

[23] Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Peterhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899), 348; R. M. Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts in the Library of Peterhouse, Cambridge* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2016), 172.

Aquinas, Peter Lombard, Stephen Langton, Augustine, Origen, and the *Legenda Aurea*, among many others (similar to the donations to Exeter College and New College, noted in the previous chapter).



Cambridge, Peterhouse, MS 275, f.15^{r}

He did not, however, donate any works by Boethius, which might explain why Warkworth would have used the copy of the *Consolatio* belonging to Peterhouse. The manuscript was

given to Peterhouse by a late fourteenth-century Master of the college, John Newton.[24] However, there is also a third hand in the marginalia, that of the scribe. Given that the manuscript is fourteenth-century, this gives three stages of marginal addition, one which appears contemporary with the primary text (the ink of these early marginalia change colour in line with the text), a brown-green ink from the early fifteenth-century hand that would fit with Holbroke's tenure, and a spikier, dark ink, later fifteenth-century hand that could be Warkworth's. The spikier annotation in CPH MS 275 is remarkably similar to the first scribe copying the *Brut* in CPH MS 190, a copy which, as well as the continuation of the *Brut* text copied from William Caxton's printed edition, also contains the work known as the 'Warkworth Chronicle', for which Warkworth was either author or for whom the work was written. While the comparison is not conclusive, particularly when one is writing a Latin text and the other an English, the looped ascenders of **d** and **h**, the extended left flourish of **p** and in particular the occasional **e** that looks like a lopsided figure eight, all suggest that the scribe here is the same. It may well not be Warkworth, but if not it is likely that in both manuscripts we are looking at the hand of a Peterhouse fellow contemporary with Warkworth. This tells us several important things about this manuscript: that the creation of this Boethius manuscript was academic and that its later medieval use was within the university, after which the manuscript has likely been in Cambridge for seven hundred years. This creates a point of connection with CUL MS Ii.3.21 in its pattern of alternating texts, but also a point of difference in the academic nature of the contents of this book with its solely Latin texts; the Peterhouse manuscript alternating the *Consolatio* and Trevet's commentary, CUL MS Ii.3.21 alternating the Latin *Consolatio* with the English *Boece*.

[24] See Peter D. Clarke with Roger Lovatt (ed.), *The University and College Libraries of Cambridge*, vol 10 (London: The British Library, 2002), 444, 485, 534-548, 720-2. On Warkworth, see Lister M. Matheson, *Death and Dissent: Two Fifteenth-Century Chronicles* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999) 86-7.

In contrast to the Peterhouse manuscript, Cambridge, University Library, MSS Mm.2.18 and Dd.1.11, are both considerably larger and of better quality parchment. CUL MS Mm.2.18 is a fourteenth-century manuscript containing the *Consolatio* with Trevet's commentary.[25] However, it is a thick book containing twenty-one varied texts, including works of astrology, mathematics and algebra, science, ethics, extracts from Augustine, Jerome, and Ambrose, Macrobius, the *Topographia Hiberniae*, a saint's life, epigrams of Martial, extracts of stories from Ovid, and a commentary on Ovid. The *Consolatio* with Trevet is the final item in the book, with spaces left for the diagrams commonly included alongside the text, which have not been added. However, other texts in the codex do have diagrams, so there was clearly a variance in availability and concern for completeness. The Greek has been poorly attempted in places and loose equivalent translations are given in Latin. This ineptitude in Greek is not unusual.[26] There is some foliate and animal decoration at the start of sections and a little use of gold. The book as a whole contains very few marginalia; though some texts in the book include some, the *Consolatio* and Trevet's commentary do not.

We do know that CUL MS Mm.2.18 was much later a part of the library of bibliophile Sir Thomas Knyvett of Ashwellthorpe (d.1618), most of whose printed books and manuscripts are now housed in Cambridge University Library, although there are two different signatures in the codex, so one of these is likely his namesake son or grandson.[27] This does not answer the question of why the book was kept clean of paratextual marking in

---

[25] See *CMP4*, 132-8.

[26] Good renditions of the small amount of Greek in the *Consolatio* are notable in their scarcity. Examples of the typical, poor attempt are Glasgow University Library, Hunter MS 374 and London, British Library, Royal MS 8.B.iv, where the scribe either omits the words completely, or tries to copy the characters without having enough knowledge of Greek to transliterate. Examples of good execution of the Greek are Hereford, Cathedral Library, MS P.III.6 and CUL MS Kk.3.21. See also CUL Ii.3.21, the manuscript under discussion in this chapter, which translates the Greek into Latin, such as on f.37^{r}.

[27] See D. J. McKitterick, *The Library of Sir Thomas Knyvett of Ashwellthorpe c. 1539-1618* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 2-7, 157, 173; Bertram Schofield (ed.), *The Knyvett Letters (1620-1644)* (London: Constable and Company, 1949), 16-7.

the first approximately two hundred years of its existence. However, given the book's larger size and higher standard, it was likely either in another private collection or held amongst the confined books of an institutional library such as a college or cathedral, emphatically not one of those *in electiones sociorum*, available for the younger scholars to borrow.[28] Indeed, given the time period when the elder Knyvett bought the manuscript, a purchase from the dismantled libraries of the dissolution is highly credible.

Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd.1.11, is a very similar kind of manuscript.[29] It is of much the same size and thickness as CUL MS Mm.2.18, and came from the private library of Archbishop Parker, another collector who gathered things after the dissolution. The two parts of the codex were already in one volume when Parker gave the book to the University of Cambridge, though it is unclear whether this binding took place before or during Parker's ownership.[30] Part one contains *Epistolae Pontificum et Canones* in a fourteenth-century hand, and takes up the better part of the manuscript. The second part, which is much shorter, contains a fifteenth-century copy of Trevet's prologue and commentary without the *Consolatio* itself. The text of the *Epistolae* is in a large, neat, regular hand, with some picking out of letters in yellow and some rubrication at the start of sections. This makes a striking contrast with Trevet's text, where the hand is in a much smaller and more jerky anglicana hand and comes with standard decorated initials in red and blue. There are gaps left for eleven diagrams, which were never added. Trevet's text is immediately followed by a table of the books of the *Consolatio*. Like the previous manuscript, the text is

[28] On that system, see Neil R. Ker, 'Oxford College Libraries Before 1500' in *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. by Jozef Ijsewijn and Jacques Paquet (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1978), 293-311 (294). See also Roger Lovatt, 'College and University Book Collections and Libraries' in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland, Volume 1: To 1640*, ed. Elisabeth-Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 152-77 (168).
[29] See *CMP1*, 10-11.
[30] See R. I. Page, *Matthew Parker and His Books: Sandars Lectures in Bibliography Delivered on 14, 16, and 18 May 1990 at the University of Cambridge* (Kalamazoo MI: Medieval Institute Publications), 46.

remarkably clean, with only occasional words picked out in the margin, and the indication of prose and metre sections.

Though one must be wary of drawing conclusions from absence, it seems likely that both of these manuscripts now in Cambridge University Library came from restricted medieval libraries, that is to say, the library of a priest or monastic, or a secular scholar and book collector of sufficient means. This would explain the dimensions of the leaves and quality, and the clean state of the texts, with very little in the way of interlinear or marginal comment. This is not to suggest that readers not part of an educational institution did not write in books. However, as we saw in Chapter 2 with manuscripts such as OBC MS 141 and BL MS Royal 15. A. xxx, books used in the academy are frequently annotated to support the studies of the students, to such an extent that the margins can read as hastily scribbled lecture notes, and the scholarship of the fellows, as in the more measured additions of CPH MS 275 above. Once again, drawing a comparison with CUL MS Ii.3.21, neither CUL MSS Mm.2.18 nor Dd.1.11 has had the care and attention lavished upon it that was given to CUL MS Ii.3.21.

This does beg the question, were scholars permitted to write in communal copies?[31] It is hard to say, but we can see that where books, even in chained libraries, were allowed to be borrowed, their chances of long-term survival have been much lower, and one suspects that a book not under the watchful eye of a librarian would have been fair game for glossing lectures.[32] Certainly the chained copy of Hereford, Cathedral Library, P.III.6, perhaps under the watchful eye of the librarian, was not much annotated. However, many books which have been characterised as scholars' copies were once owned by a scholar before being donated or

[31] The evidence is sketchy. We know that annotation of copies by pupils was encouraged in the late medieval period, but that access to books was by no means uniform, and library books were more likely to be kept out of reach of young scholars. For more on this see H. J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 46; Nicholas Orme, 'Schools and School-Books' in *CHB3*, 449-69 (454).
[32] Roger Lovatt, 'College and University Book Collections and Libraries', 168. See also on collections held by communities, M. B. Parkes, 'The Provision of Books', *HUO2*, 407-83 (435-8).

sold second-hand, which is what took place with the books donated by Owen Lloyd, a canon of Hereford, mentioned in Chapter 2.[33] Mynors and Thomson note that some of Lloyd's donated books appear to have been of higher status and less scribbled in, while others show the signs of his students' jottings in the margin, from his time teaching in Oxford, and others have the scribbles of earlier students where Lloyd bought them second-hand.[34] It would therefore appear that HCL MS P.III.6 was considered a more valuable manuscript, being a high-grade copy with a complete schema of well-executed diagrams, and was likely kept within the library.

While we do not always know who the reader was, we can often see the kind of reading practice he engaged in. The many copies of the commentary show evidence of use by scholars old and young, by other readers, whether secular or under holy orders, and to assist in the writing of translation, adaption, and as a source material for other works of literature. It can be used to assist in understanding Boethius's dense Latin, to interpret the meaning of the *Consolatio* and to give it context, particularly in light of Boethius's use of Platonic and Aristotelian works. As noted earlier, the structure of Trevet's commentary lends itself well to being divided and excerpted, and therefore can be placed in multiple reader contexts.

Marginalia in CUL MS Ii.3.21

The examples above provide some context for the largely academic uses that the Trevet commentary was put to, and the permutations of text, commentary, and additional gloss (or lack of it) that characterises these manuscripts. With this in mind, we now turn back to CUL MS Ii.3.21, the specialness of which becomes more apparent in light of other copies.

[33] See R. A. B. Mynors and R. M. Thomson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Hereford Cathedral Library* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1993), xxiii-xxiv.
[34] On Lloyd in Oxford see A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 1153-4.

We previously noted Gibson and Smith's recognition of the scribal marginalia in the first part of CUL MS Ii.3.21 as being excerpts from Trevet's commentary.[35] In fact, Tim William Machan is more accurate in noting that only 'much' but not all of the gloss is from Trevet's commentary'.[36] In an assessment of secondary material, particularly when it is in the scribal hand, it is pertinent to know: what is Trevet? What is not Trevet? And how do Boethius's text and the Chaucerian texts interact with Trevet's and this other material? The scribe has devised a schema of four interacting source materials. What was he trying to do?

A partial survey of some individual pages in the first part of the manuscript goes some way to answering these questions. For instance, one page is entirely taken up with Chaucer's version of 1p4.[37] There are five short marginalia on this page: 'passat de dampnacione sua sine demnito suo', 'demnitos', 'prosa bonum', 'hic narrat que inquam proponit de bonis factis suis', and 'super addit quomodo iactancia de factis bonis diminuit modicum consciencie'. None of these marginalia are taken from the Trevet commentary. Compare this page with the end of Boethius's 2p2 followed by the start of Chaucer's corresponding Middle English.[38] There are nine marginalia on this page, transcribed in the following table. Ellipses indicate use of Trevet's text in an excerpted fashion, the scribe taking only words or phrases from Trevet's commentary and refashioning them into short annotations. The glosses are labelled L1, L2, R1 etc. to denote whether they are in the left or right margin, and their order from top to bottom of the folio. Text from Trevet's commentary is signalled in bold type.

37^{r} [Boet. 2p2]	L1: **quia unum quodque in sua naturali operacione delectatur** [2p2, 197][39]	R1: **Apollin**us…**respondit…cres**o **per** hunc…**versiculo** [2p2, 198]

[35] *CB1*, 43.
[36] Machan, xxi.
[37] This is on CUL MS Ii.3.21, f.23^{v}.
[38] CUL MS Ii.3.21, f.37^{r}.
[39] Highlighted texts are accompanied by section and page references for Taite Silk.

	L2: **Ciro** cepit cresuus et **pos**uit enim **in igne**m **sed tanta inunda**tum **facta est** ut **extin**to **ign**o **eva**deret [2p2, 198]	R2: **Cresus perdet alim transgressus maxima regna alim autem fluvius erat** [2p2, 198]
	L3: **Ouidius metamorphoseon libro tercio…ultima semper…dies…exspectanda… est…homini…dicique beatus ante obitum nemo** post quia **funera debet** [2p2, 199]	R3: **paulus consul romanus** cepit **regem pesarum** et recolens quanti honoris antea et quanti miseri tantum esset rex prefatus fleuit [2p2, 199]
	L4: quia **prospera succedunt aduersi**s et e contra [2p2, 202]	R4: **homerus…uocat…domum iovis sublunarem regionem id est mundum propter aerem qui in eo est limen uero terram que inferior ad modum liminis calcatur duo dolia prosperitatem fortune et aduersitatem sed omnes qui intrant id est qui uiuunt in mundo de utroque** aliquid **hauriunt sed quidam plus de bono quidam plus de malo** et per **domum iovis…describit**ur…**mutibilit**as fortune ut plus supra [2p2, 200-1]
[Chau. 2p2]	L5: hic alloquitur philosophia boecio in prosa fortune querens in quibus fecit sibi iniuriam numens quod in nullo	

Two things stand out here: the first is that the scribe, or whoever prepared the exemplar from which his work descends, has been highly selective, picking and choosing the bits of Trevet's work that appealed or seemed particularly useful or pertinent, each ellipsis indicating where Trevet's text has been omitted. This includes references to classical works, here Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but also passages of brief marginal précis. Secondly, all of the Latin text is surrounded by Trevet's work or a selective paraphrase of it, while the Middle English text has fewer and shorter marginalia which are not based on Trevet but are brief phrases to indicate where to find topics.

Again, consider two marginalia on another page, the first two in the left-hand margin.[40] The first sits next to the end of Chaucer 2p5, followed by a marginal note for Boethius 2m5:

51ᵛ [Chauc. 2p5]	L1: Diuicie auferunt securitatem ab homine
[Boet. 2m5]	L2: C**ommendat**ur **prima eta**s et **plangit**ur…**presens In qua auaricia et cupiditas diuiciarum dominat**ur/**Et est hic** notandum quod **poete quatuor etates mundi distinxerunt…sub similitudine quator metallorum …primam…auream sub saturno/secundam…argenteam sub Ioue quia…homines licet rudes** tamen **consulcius** tamen **vixerunt** et **ceperunt inhabitare domos et colere terram…**terciam…**eneam quando homines propter curam rerum propriarum ceperunt alios depellere nec totaliter tamen erant dediti malicie…quartam…ferream quando in tantum habundabat auaricia et malicia hominum quod nec fides nec iusticia in terra manebat**…**De prima igitur…et vltima…etate…loquitur …Boecius…primam etatem commendat…nostram…que est vltima deplorat** [2m5, 252-3]

Here the pattern continues. The marginalia on Chaucer's *Boece* are short and not from Trevet: 'Riches rob man of security' is both a truism and a simple reflection on the topic of metre 5 as a whole. The Boethian marginalia, again with Trevet's text here highlighted, are largely copied from Trevet and are extensive.

That can be seen by comparing Trevet's commentary (as edited by Taite Silk), where the bold text added here highlights what is used in the marginal note:

> Quia igitur sicut Philosophia inuexit contra divicia hic **commendat primam etatem** que sine cupiditate diviciarum erat et de**plangit** etatem **presen**tem **in qua avaricia et cupiditas diviciarum dominat. Et est hic** considerandum quod **poete quatuor etates mundi distinxerunt** quas **sub similitudine quatuor metallorum** scripserunt. **Primam** enim etatem posuerunt in qua homines more inculto et cum innocencia transegerunt vitam et hanc vocabant **auream sub Saturno. Secundam** etatem posuerunt quando **homines licet rudes** aliquo tamen modo **culcius vixerunt** quia **tunc ceperunt inhabitare domos et colere terram** et istam vocabant **argenteam sub Iove quia** minor erat innocencia tunc quam prius. **Terciam** posuerunt **eneam quando homines propter curam rerum propriam ceperunt alios depellere nec totaliter**

[40] These are on CUL MS Ii.3.21, f.51ᵛ.

> **tamen erant dediti malicie.** Sed **quartam** etatem dicebant **ferream quando in tantum habundabat avaricia et malicia hominum quod nec fides nec iusticia in terra manebat.** Unde Ovidius primo Metamorphoseon describens istas etates de iusticia dicit:
>
> et virgo cede madentes
> ultima celestum terras Astrea reliquit.
>
> **De prima igitur etate et ultima loquitur** hic **Boecius** et secundum hoc in isto metro duo facit. Primo **primam etatem commendat**. Secundo **nostram** etatem **que est ultima deplorat** ibi.[41]

What is evident from a close comparison of Trevet's text with the marginalia of CUL MS Ii.3.21, is not just how selective the scribe is in picking short extracts of Trevet's text, but indeed that the manuscript text hops about Trevet's work, jumping several lines down before hopping back. This tells us that this is not a straightforward copying of even an excerpted copy of Trevet into the manuscript.

Overall, we can see through this small survey of annotation, covering 2p1, m1, and p2, both in Latin and English, that collectively there are twenty-seven marginalia attached to Boethius's text, and eighteen attached to Chaucer's.[42] Of these forty-five annotations, only one gloss to Boethius cannot be conclusively attributed to Trevet, and only one gloss to Chaucer shares text with Trevet. Furthermore, one of the Chaucerian marginalia refers to the gloss included in the body of Chaucer's text, and therefore can only have come from a Chaucer manuscript.[43]

There are a number of conclusions one can draw from this comparison of the four texts used in the first part of the manuscript. Trevet-based marginalia go alongside the Latin Boethius text. Other marginalia, shorter and more sparse, go alongside the Middle English Chaucer text. This implies that the scribe worked from two exemplars, a copy of the *Consolatio* and a copy of Chaucer's *Boec*e. In doing so, he chose to copy the marginalia in each respective exemplar manuscript into the corresponding section of the text, be it Latin or

[41] Taite Silk, 2m5, 252-3.
[42] The sample includes marginalia from CUL MS Ii.3.21, ff.32^{v}-38^{r}.
[43] This is on CUL MS Ii.3.21, f.38^{r}. Where the Chaucer text reads '//Glose// Tragedye is to seyn / a dite of a prosperite for a tyme þat endith in wrecchydnesse//' the annotation beside it reads 'Vide de tragedia'.

Middle English. This idea of a scribe copying the annotation wholesale into a new manuscript is reinforced by the hopping about within Trevet's text. In the Boethius exemplar, a previous reader or readers annotated their manuscript with Trevet's text, likely at different stages of use of the manuscript, adding what seemed relevant at a given time to a given person. The scribe of CUL MS Ii.3.21 has transcribed this annotation as a neat list, very often using red ink paraph marks and infill to denote a new item of gloss, without noticing or being aware that this means sometimes muddling up the Trevet text, putting lines and phrases in the wrong order, and occasionally running more than one Trevethian quotation together in a single string of text. It is not therefore apparent that the scribe of CUL MS Ii.3.21 actually had a complete copy of Trevet's commentary in front of him as he worked. He simply copied from the already excerpted exemplar as given.

This may imply a hired scribe who did not think very much about what he was transcribing, and certainly, commercial scribes often took care to copy the annotation associated with a text, even when this allowed unwitting errors and omissions to creep in.[44] However, what may seem like carelessness to a modern reader, muddling references and running annotation into each other, was likely the best effort of a copyist working with the limited data granted by their exemplar. Further, it also suggests that it was not considered necessary or appropriate to connect Trevet's commentary with Chaucer's English text. In this sense, regardless of the appearance of combination of language in this manuscript, Latin scholasticism and English translation remain separate.[45]

---

[44] E.g. the scribe of BodL MS Fairfax 3 does something similar to the Latin marginalia around Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. See Derek Pearsall, 'The Organisation of the Latin Apparatus in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*: The Scribes and their Problems' in *The Medieval Book and a Modern Collector: Essays in Honour of Toshiyuki Takamiya*, ed. by Takami Matsuda, Richard A. Linenthal, and John Scahill (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), 99-112 (101-2).

[45] This is reminiscent of Alastair Minnis's recognition that Latin commentary rarely accompanies Middle English works. See Alastair Minnis, *Translations of Authority in Middle English Literature: Valuing the Vernacular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 17.

Precedents for Bilingual Manuscripts

So far this chapter has considered what makes CUL MS Ii.3.21 so unusual. It is therefore worthwhile flipping this question to consider what precedents there are for the manuscript, and whether its distinctiveness is a useful way to frame our thinking about the codex. The manuscript has vernacular text alongside the Latin, but this is not unique. A similar arrangement occurs in Columbia, University of Missouri, Fragmenta Manuscripta MS 150, which now consists of a single vellum pastedown.[46] The fragment holds an early fifteenth-century copy of what must once have been a manuscript much like CUL MS Ii.3.21, with prose and metre sections of the *Consolatio* followed by the corresponding section of Chaucer's *Boece*, in this case holding parts of the English of 2m7 on the recto, and Latin and English text of 2p8 on the verso, in an anglicana hand. As the format and period of creation of both manuscripts is so similar, it is tempting to think that there is a relationship between the two copies. However, several points argue against such a conclusion. The Missouri fragment does not maintain the hierarchy of hands that we see in the Cambridge manuscript, as here, by contrast, both English and Latin are written in anglicana formata. Further, there is no Latin apparatus in the margins: though the survival of only one fragment does not exclude the possibility that this occurred on other folios, it is worth noting that the relevant folios of CUL MS Ii.3.21 do have extensive commentary.[47] The only implication we can take from the existence of the fragment is that such bilingual format codices must have been sought after by readers and therefore created by scribes and booksellers to meet this demand in the market.

Adding to this picture of fifteenth-century copying of vernacular and Latin copies of Boethius, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. G.41 is a twelfth-century copy of the Latin

---

[46] See 'Dialogue between Life and Fortune', *University of Missouri Special Collections and Archives* <https://library.missouri.edu/specialcollections/items/show/573> [accessed 21 September 2022]; Machan, xxii; George B. Pace and Linda E. Voigts, 'A 'Boece' Fragment' in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 1 (1979), 143-50; Seymour and Hanna, 'Boece' in Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, 43-53 (48).
[47] Compare CUL MS Ii.3.21 f.62ʳ.

Consolatio made in England. It had been relocated by the fifteenth century to the Abbey of Saint-Martin de Laon in northern France, when additions were made to the manuscript from Jean de Meun's French translation of the text.[48] However, the vernacular additions do not continue through the text, ending abruptly after thirteen folios, still in Book One of Boethius's text. Indeed, this manuscript is more reminiscent of the Salisbury manuscript mentioned above, which includes a few pages of the Latin text in the margins, but where those additions of Latin also stop abruptly in Book One.[49] There was clearly a desire for this kind of juxtaposition, which could be added in the margins if it was not constructed at the book's creation.[50]

Unlike BodL MS Rawl. G.41 and SCL MS 113, CUL MS Ii.3.21 does not really look like a scholar's copy, as the marginal addition is a formal part of the scribe's original copying. It is more reminiscent of CUL MSS Dd.1.11 and Mm.2.18, which are both very clean copies, without the scribble and haste one is accustomed to seeing in the marginalia of scholars' copies such as those considered earlier in this thesis. It is also worth mentioning here the glosses by Chaucer himself, most of which are found in most copies and included in the body of his prose, including CUL MS Ii.3.21.[51] We will also see this use of Chaucer's glosses again in future chapters concerning the anonymous *Boke of Counfort of Bois* and Walton's *Boethius*, the former in manuscript form, the latter making the leap from manuscript to print.

However, if there are some points of similarity, it must be acknowledged that none of these manuscripts has such a formalised addition of text, translation, and commentary as CUL

---

[48] See *SC*, vol 3, 349. Nigel Palmer, 'Latin and Vernacular in the Northern European Tradition of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*' in Gibson, 362-409 (365-66, 367).
[49] On the Salisbury manuscript, see R. M. Ball, 'Thomas Cyrcetur, a Fifteenth-century Theologian and Preacher', in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 37 (1986), 205-39 (231-2). This manuscript is discussed in the next chapter.
[50] On the addition of Latin by readers, see Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature 1430-1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 13-4.
[51] CUL MS Ii.3.21 has eight such glosses incorporated into the body text on the following folios: 22^{r}, 24^{r}, 38^{r}, 56^{v}, 86^{r}, 94^{v}, 101^{r}, 168^{v}.

MS Ii.3.21.[52] It is this intentionality at one stage of construction, as discussed above, that makes the manuscript unusual. Whereas the previous chapters considered manuscripts which came to include multiple elements of text with auxiliary text and paratextual scaffolding over an extended period of time, CUL MS Ii.3.21 constructs a formal integration of several elements in part one of the manuscript alone, before then adding the commentary by William of Aragon. It shows a desire for a book to have a value-laden sense of completeness. Previously the power of commentary was as much pedagogic and personal, writing hurriedly in margins, often in a borrowed or shared book, taking exegetical material from lectures or secondary texts to assist an active understanding and interpretation of the primary work. In CUL MS Ii.3.21 the expectation that these are useful elements in a manuscript are prefigured and anticipated, and the scribe, working for themselves or another, adds in those elements, with concern to leave space on the page and a sense of order. This removes the useful performative act of adding the extra material to assist in committing it to memory, particularly if the scribe was not the commissioner of the book, but it certainly makes the manuscript, removed of clutter, much easier to read. Further, it assumes that the text alone is insufficient to gain a full understanding of its value, whether that be educational, philosophical, or literary. This act of anticipation is then heightened by the inclusion of Chaucer's *Boece*. A codex of such textual complexity that is organised so meticulously does rather suggest a commissioner who was very well organised. The question remains, for what purpose did they need such completeness?

We might think here of Malcolm Parkes's seminal argument, seeing in the development of the *mise en page* a shift from simpler manuscript design for the ruminative process of monastic reading, to the more selective and highly organised act of scholastic

[52] Again, with the caveat that Columbia, University of Missouri, Fragmenta Manuscripta MS 150 may have had marginalia, including some form of commentary in the margin or held elsewhere in the codex.

reading in the universities.[53] Parkes's argument makes eminent sense, and certainly the division of texts, the use of rubrication and paraph marks to organise our reading, and the careful placement of different kinds of gloss, all apply in this context. Ironically, however, the argument this thesis makes is that the structure of this manuscript almost goes too far, including a complexity of paratextual scaffolding that might have been lost on its intended reader, and perhaps reflects more accurately the capabilities of the commissioner. Further, this would fit with Minnis and Machan's argument, discussed earlier, that the commissioner was Chaucer himself.

As broached earlier in this chapter, there is plenty of evidence that Trevet's commentary to the *Consolatio* was used alongside Boethius's work and Chaucer's translation in late medieval English literature, and CUL MS Ii.3.21 reflects this through the combined use of texts. Indeed, Minnis and Machan have identified that in composing his Middle English translation of *Boece*, Chaucer had to hand a copy of the *Consolatio* alongside Trevet's commentary and a copy of the French vernacular translation by Jean de Meun, itself an analogy for one possible use of CUL MS Ii.3.21: text, commentary, and translation combining to assist in the making of new work.[54] It is even possible that Chaucer worked from a combined Latin and French manuscript like BodL MS Rawl. G.41, mentioned earlier. It makes sense that a book which combined Latin with a vernacular could assist in the creation of a work that further integrates material from different languages. Likewise, the Scottish poet Robert Henryson, in his poem *Orpheus and Eurydice,* not only uses the *Consolatio* as source material, but takes freely from Trevet's exposition of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice which Boethius incorporated into Book 3 of the *Consolatio*.[55]

---

[53] Malcolm Beckwith Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book' in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, ed. J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 115-41.
[54] A. J. Minnis and Tim William Machan, 'The *Boece* as Late-Medieval Translation' in Minnis, *Chaucer*, 167-88 (173-4).
[55] See *Poems of Robert Henryson*, cv-cix.

Henryson also goes further in explicitly mentioning the commentator in the *Moralitas fabule* which acts as an epilogue to the poem:

> Lo, worthy folk, Boece, that senature,
> To wryte this feynit fable tuke in cure,
> In his gay buke of consolacion,
> For oure doctrine and gude instruction;
> Quhilk in the self, suppose it fenyeit be,
> And hid under the cloke of poesie,
> Yit maister Trewit, doctor Nicholas,
> Quhilk in his tyme a noble theology was,
> Applyis it to gude moralitee,
> Rycht full of frute and seriositee.[56]

More tenuously, with Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and Thomas Usk's prison text *The Testament of Love*, it has been suggested that both texts refract Boethius's *Consolatio* through the lens of Trevet's commentary.[57] While these arguments don't have the smoking gun of Henryson's nod to Trevet, it is not hard to imagine Trevet having a similar role in the gestation of both these works.[58]

Trevet's commentary, one of those 'Latin glosses', was emphatically a part of this picture of intertextual influence, a bouncing of ideas and source material from one related text to another, like conversation around a convivial table. It is hard not to see CUL MS Ii.3.21 through this same lens, as an attempt to bring all of the elements of that late medieval conversation together in one book, available to assist in the creation of the next Boethian interpretation.

Conclusion

In a final point, it is worth considering what kind of work Chaucer's *Boece* really is. Coming from such an inventive and entertaining writer as Chaucer, it would not be

---

[56] *Poems of Robert Henryson*, ll.415-24, 146.
[57] See Mark J. Gleason, 'The Influence of Trevet on Boethian Language and Thought in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*', unpublished thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison (1984); and Melinda Nielsen, 'Being Boethius: Vitae, Politics, and Treason in Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love*', *Studies in Philology* 115 (2018), 25-47.
[58] For more on this, see Nielsen, 28.

unreasonable to expect his *Boece* to cause similar reactions in its readers. Samuel Johnson made the well-known comment that despite espousing Chaucer's 'lyric eminency', he nonetheless was of the opinion that Chaucer 'had 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'.[59] The comment is a curiosity now, both because of the bluntness of Johnson's language and the fact that he is not entirely wrong. In lambasting Chaucer's 'zeal for fidelity' Johnson fails to recognise the commentary and vernacular influences, but the meat of the argument is correct, borne out in the fact that Walton's verse translation seems to have been more popular, if the number of extant copies can be relied upon as a marker of transmission.[60] Indeed, it suggests a desire on Walton's part to write the verse translation that Chaucer did *not* write, aside from his series of short poems on Boethian themes, such as 'The Former Age' and 'Fortune' that are included in CUL MS Ii.3.21. However, the great fallacy of Johnson's comment is that he expects Chaucer as 'the Father of our Poetry' to be overtly literary in his translation, that is, to aim for literary merit. What if Chaucer's aim was to do something quite different?

Rita Copeland goes some way to appreciating this when she argues that 'vernacular literary translation develops out of exegetical procedures which carry the imprint of rhetorical procedures'.[61] Nigel Palmer takes this a step further when he notes that in translation of Boethius 'there is a growing tendency for the vernacular rendering to be treated as a commentary to the Latin rather than as a substitute'.[62] As a user of text, commentary, and translation, well able to master an artistic interpretation of Boethius, as we see so strikingly in

---

[59] See Samuel Johnson, 'Some Account of the Life and Writings of Chaucer', *The Edinburgh Magazine or Literary Miscellany* (1785), 298-302 (300); Samuel Johnson, 'The Idler No. 69' (August, 1783) in Samuel Johnson, *The Idler by the Author of the Rambler with Additional Essays in Two Volumes*, vol 2, 4th edn (London: J. Rivington and Sons, T. Carnan, T. Payne and Son, T. Cadell, J. Nichols, T. Evans, and S. Hayes, 1783), 91-5 (91).
[60] On the popularity of Walton's translation, see A. S. G. Edwards, 'Reading John Walton's Boethius in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries' in *Spaces*, 35-49 (36-7).
[61] Copeland, 65.
[62] Palmer in Gibson, 365-6.

Troilus and Criseyde, it seems more likely that in *Boece* Chaucer is not creating an end product of artistic output, but a helpmeet of the kind Palmer describes, or perhaps, as Minnis and Machan define it, a work of 'late-medieval academic translation.'[63] The value of *Boece*, at least as it appears in this impressive manuscript, is in its interpretive role, not as an alternative to the Latin but as another exegetical layer, much as we could say the same here about Trevet's commentary, both writers engaged in the kind of *translatio* a classical rhetorician might have recognised, where vernacular language rendering is as much an exercise in exegesis as commentary.

If this is true, and Chaucer's *Boece* is auxiliary in nature or at the very least a way of reframing a work already known and understood in its original Latin, then CUL MS Ii.3.21 is a codicological way of reflecting this idea. We cannot know if any or all of these ideas went through the mind of the maker of this book, but that maker knew both Latin and English very well and wanted a manuscript that would give maximum utility to understand the *Consolatio* from different angles. Commentary and translation are part of the same cultural language, links in a chain that began with school boys and university scholars being taught the works of Boethius both as grammar and in advanced studies, going on to become a flourishing of Boethian interpretation in multiple grammatical, rhetorical, and artistic forms, as reflected in this manuscript.

[63] Minnis and Machan, 'The Occasion', 151.

5. *The Boke of Counfort of Bois*: an exercise in borrowing and response

The previous chapter considered a manuscript which takes multiple layers of Boethian material and carefully structures the *mise en page* to support the reader in multiple contexts. This chapter considers a manuscript which does something similar, but attempts to make that more seamless and integrated. Whether it succeeds in doing so is a moot point. *The Boke of Counfort of Bois*, the last work in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F.3.5, its single witness, is a Middle English text based on Book One of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. Despite being one of only three Middle English works based on the *Consolatio* (the others being Chaucer's *Boece* and Walton's *Boethius*), little attention has been given to its composition and reception. This mid-fifteenth-century work is significant in taking the scholarly apparatus of text, grammatical gloss, and exegetical commentary that featured in Latin copies of the *Consolatio*, and combining and adapting this apparatus for easy accessibility to an English-speaking audience.

The Boke of Counfort is a prose work of 1550 lines, and the only text in BodL MS Auct. F.3.5 not in Latin. It is known, where it is known at all, for being a melding of Chaucer's *Boece* with extensive commentary.[1] The relative neatness of this blending is reinforced by the cleanness of the manuscript, devoid of rubrication and annotation which would betray any disruption in the process of combination. However, this appearance of a harmonious text is just that – an appearance. In truth, *The Boke of Counfort* is a complex text

[1] The title the *Boke of Coumfort of Bois* was given by Noel H. Kaylor, Jason E. Streed and William H. Watts: 'The Boke of Coumfort of Bois', *Carmina Philosophiae: Journal of the International Boethius Society*, 2 (1993), 55-104. (They spell it 'coumfort', but BodL MS Auct. F.3.5 gives the spelling on f.198^{r} ll.4 and 29 as 'counfort', which I follow throughout.) All quotations from the text are taken directly from the manuscript. The modern punctuation is my own. However, Kaylor and Phillip's 2007 edition of the text is helpfully set in manuscript lines with folio references, so I have also included throughout the line and page numbers from their edition: Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr. and Philip Edward Phillips, eds., 'The Boke of Coumfort of Bois [Bodleian Library, Oxford MS Auct F.3.5]: a transcription with introduction' in *New Directions in Boethian Studies*, ed. by Noel Harold Kaylor and Philip Edward Phillips (Kalamazoo MI: Western Michigan University, 2007), 223-79.

in which, at different stages of its creation, language has been borrowed, translated, and adapted. This 'compiled' text is then added to by the anonymous compiler through mostly small but frequent linguistic changes and flourishes, to create a work that is distinct from Chaucer's *Boece*. What the compiler creates is two-fold: evidence of his own education seen through the process of creation, and the end product, in which each layer of engagement and response to the text is placed obliquely so as to make the *Consolatio* as accessible as possible to a readership that was literate and intellectually curious, but without the more extensive education of the compiler.

Though the multi-layered nature of the text may make it difficult to categorise in terms of genre, it is worth noting the rationale stated by the anonymous compiler of this text (a term I shall defend below), which gives the reader useful clues in locating the text:

> For als meche as eche a boke oweth worthily to be hadde in prose, chargede and louede aftur the worthinesse of his auttour, and the profite of the mater tretid there inne; therefore, as anemptes the boke of counfort the weche with lowly subiecciоun of myself to corecciоun of alle wiser, principaly for ese of my self and thenne for other good frendes, I take in purpos to telle the menynge of hit in Engelische.[2]

The telling of 'menynge' here could be taken to mean a number of things, including translation and commentary.[3] However, this chapter argues that the author here is suggesting an interpretive definition, that is, he is not giving us the text 'in Engelische', but he is, in English, giving us the meaning of the text, an exegetical and moralistic interpretation for the 'ese of myself and thenne for other good frendes'. This intention is reinforced by the change in voice throughout the text from Boethius's first-person narrative to a third-person narrator, speaking with a didactic voice. Furthermore, the reference to 'good frendes' implies people of a similar social status to the writer, which might be a religious, collegiate, or professional community.

---

[2] This is on BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.198^{r}; *BoC*, 226 (ll.1-7).

[3] 'mening ger.', in *Middle English Dictionary*, gives the definition 'meaning, sense, interpretation' <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED27342/track?counter=1 &search _id=26643814> [accessed 25 July 2023].

Dating back to the late nineteenth century, scholars have had difficulty defining the genre of *The Boke of Counfort*, preferring to keep a loose description of a text that leans heavily on Chaucer's *Boece*, in one instance describing it as 'disguised to a certain extent, and equipped with a commentary containing the usual array of metaphysical explanations of Boethius current at the time', and elsewhere as 'here modified and paraphrased and to some extent accompanied by a commentary'.[4] This hedging of bets continues into more recent analysis, where the creator of *The Boke of Counfort* is described as a 'translator', 'rendering Book I of the Consolation into Middle English', while also noting that it 'provides an interpretive apparatus for Boethius's work'.[5] However, Tim William Machan, in his edition of Chaucer's *Boece*, pins it down nicely when he shifts away from the idea of translation, describing it as 'the unique text of what is in effect the earliest-known commentary on the Consolation in English (albeit limited to Book One), which uses the text of Boece as its point of departure'.[6]

It is also useful to consider to what extent the format of *The Boke of Counfort*, a prologue followed by the first book of the *Consolatio*, conforms to the development of pedagogic and scholastic texts in the late medieval period. The prologue is reminiscent of the medieval *accessus ad auctorem*, though the paradigm shifted over time, both in the elements which were required to be included (the *titulus*, the *materia*, the *intentio* etc.), but also its increasing use for philosophical works, which in turn during the later medieval period allowed it to bridge the divide between the secular and the sacred.[7] With this label in mind, R.

[4] See Mark Liddell, 'Chaucer's Boethius Translation', *The Academy*, 49 (1896), 199-200; *SC* vol 2 part 1, 492.
[5] See Kaylor, Streed and Watts, 'Boke of Coumfort of Bois', 55.
[6] Machan, xiii.
[7] The *accessus* is described by A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, eds., *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c.100-1375: The Commentary Tradition*, rev. edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 12-4.

W. Hunt's description of the 'type C' *accessus* fits well with the prologue of *The Boke of Counfort*.[8]

Further, the inclusion of only the first book of the *Consolatio* fits well with pedagogic forms in the medieval period. Analysis of the occurrence of glosses in Chaucer's *Boece* gives good evidence that individual books sometimes circulated (and therefore were also copied) separately from each other, thus giving the possibility of the compiler having access to only the first.[9] This is backed up by the inclusion in schoolbooks of often only one or two books of a longer work, and, as noted in Chapter 2, Christopher Cannon identifies only one Boethian schoolbook, BL MS Additional 10093, which contains the standard grammar text the *Distichs of Cato*, in addition to the first two books of the *Consolatio*.[10]

Whilst the description of the text as having been written for 'myself and thenne for other good frendes' does not suggest that the compiler had a straightforwardly pedagogical intention, there are several factors which cumulatively suggest that this was a learning exercise influenced by the pedagogical practice the writer received, akin to the kind of text the compiler might have been taught from, and which a more established scholar might himself write for his own enlightenment, and as he points out, also for his friends. As well as the inclusion of an *accessus* prologue and of only one book, there is also evidence of his process from the copious use of scholastic commentary material, and reference to other works, both sacred and secular.

One might expect a manuscript with such a dense integration of Boethian text and commentary to display this textual difference through rubrication, underlining, or interlinear

---

[8] R. W. Hunt, 'The Introduction to the "Artes" in the Twelfth Century' in *Studia Mediaevalia in Honorem Admodum Reverendi Patris Raymundi Josephi Martin*, ed. by Raymond M. Martin (Bruges: De Tempel, 1948), 85-112 (94-6).
[9] As argued by Tim William Machan, 'Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer's Boece' in Minnis, *Medieval*, 125-38 (131).
[10] Christopher Cannon, *From Literacy to Literature: England, 1300-1400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 64-7.

or marginal differentiation of text. For instance, we saw in the previous chapter with CUL MS Ii.3.21 the change of script between the Latin and Middle English texts, as well as a formal marginal addition of commentary, the use of rubrication, titles, and prose and metre markings. Similarly, in Chapter 3 we saw with ONC MS 264 that the manuscript reflects the different textual elements through visual indicators: different scripts for primary text and commentary, underlining in red for lemmata, rubrication, and, again, prose and metre markings. Indeed, there are scribal errors in the text of BodL MS Auct. F.3.5 which suggest copying from an exemplar, so a manuscript thus delineated may once have existed.[11] However, the manuscript still extant has a layout of twenty-three leaves of solid text, unadorned by any decoration (gaps for decorated initials are unfilled), pricked and ruled for thirty-four lines of one column in black ink, with no differentiation in the presentation of different source materials and no rubrication.[12] Judging by the manuscript layout alone, one would assume this to be the work of a single author with no citation or interpolation, and indeed it is only from analysis of the text that the layering of source materials can be detected.

However, by identifying the strands of Chaucerian text and comparing them with manuscript copies of *Boece* it may be possible to identify the textual tradition used by the 'compiler' of *The Boke of Counfort* as his exemplar.[13] Furthermore, previous analysis has uncovered the anonymous author's dependence on Latin commentary, as evidenced through

[11] Kaylor and Phillip note there are two scribal errors in *The Boke of Counfort* in BodL MS Auct. F.3.5. These take place at f.211^{r} ll.909-18 and f.219^{r} ll.1354-7. In both cases the text is garbled. See *BoC*, 224, 257, 275-6. However, further analysis shows that in both cases the confused text comes from both Chaucer and commentary. This tells us that the exemplar must also have been garbled, and therefore there were once multiple copies of this text.
[12] There are a few marginal annotations in a different hand to the scribe. These are so faint as to be illegible. There is a single note in ink to denote where the prologue ends and the paraphrase of Chaucer's text begins. There are also a few catchwords.
[13] See Elisabeth Dutton, 'A Neglected Witness to Chaucer's *Boece* in a Medieval Devotional Commentary on The Consolation of Philosophy', *Carmina Philosophiae: Journal of the International Boethius Society*, 22 (2013), 1-33 (12-3). The term 'compiler' is given by Dutton, 13-4. It does not perfectly describe the role of the anonymous creator of *BoC* but is used here as a shorthand.

echoes and borrowings from the twelfth-century commentary of William of Conches.[14] However, the early fourteenth-century commentary by Nicholas Trevet should also be considered as a source for the compiler. The length and frequency of interpolations from Trevet present in *Boece* are extensive enough to make it likely that Chaucer 'had most if not all of Trevet's commentary at his disposal'.[15] Taking this a step further to look specifically at *The Boke of Counfort*, Lucy Lewis has argued that 'the debt to Trevet needs to be acknowledged'.[16] If this is the case, we need to distinguish the use of Trevet in Chaucerian passages of the text from other uses of Trevet's commentary that are independent of Chaucer, as well as the use of other commentators independent of Trevet. The addition of a prologue to *The Boke of Counfort*, not included in Chaucer's *Boece*, also allows comparison with the prologues included in some of the commentaries, and to the *vitae* tradition which preface many copies of the *Consolatio*.

The Manuscript

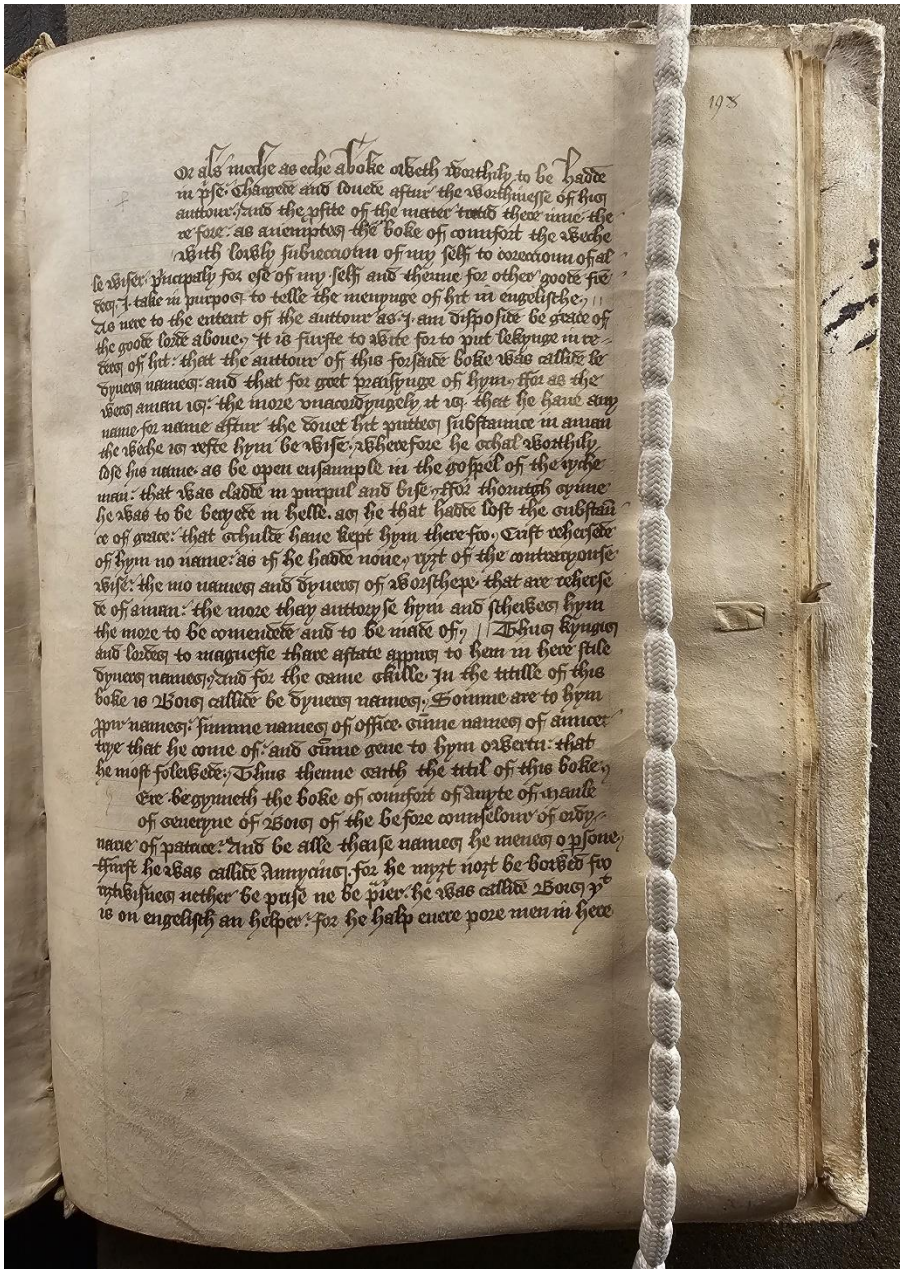
The difficulty in defining *The Boke of Counfort* makes it all the more important to place the text in a broader context of genres with which it may share some attributes, and to understand what this might signify of both intended users and use. Moreover, it is also important to place *The Boke of Counfort* in the wider context of the manuscript in which it is bound. The other texts are: the first few leaves of a *Distinctiones theologicae*, a manual on the *artes predicatoriae* by Ranulph Higden, two texts attributed to Peter of Blois, namely a tract on the twelve uses of tribulation and his *Contra Iudeos*, Fulgentius's *Mythologiae*, and a sermon manual by John of Wales. Most scholars, if they note the other texts at all, do so only

[14] Dutton, 13-21. A list of Latin commentaries to the *Consolatio* is given by Courcelle, 403-18; *CB1*, 12-5.
[15] See Alastair J. Minnis, 'Chaucer's Commentator: Nicholas Trevet and the Boece' in Minnis, *Chaucer*, 83-166 (89).
[16] Lucy Lewis, 'The Tavistock Boethius: One of the Earliest Examples of Provincial Printing' in *Printing Places: Locations of Book Production and Distribution Since 1500*, ed. by J. Hinks and C. Armstrong (New Castle DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2005), 1-14 (5-6).

in passing, or go further to suggest no connection between *The Boke of Counfort* and the other six texts in the manuscript.[17] However, the evidence of the codex suggests otherwise: despite the miscellaneous contents being written in different hands and trimmed to slightly different sizes, the binding of all the texts in BodL MS Auct. F.3.5 can be dated to the fifteenth century.[18] The inside back board shows signs of having been part of a chained library not once but twice, the latter occasion when the manuscript was one of the early acquisitions of the Bodleian Library in the early seventeenth century, but with an earlier, possibly late medieval instance as well.[19] Allied to this, the folios do not show signs of having been previously stitched before the current stitching. While it is possible that a later binding has used the same stitching holes, the stitching and end bands are of a high standard and fifteenth-century in origin.[20] Further, all the texts after the first one have physical markers – tabs – or the signs of one having previously been in place, to allow for easy shuttling between texts, in what looks to be a fifteenth-century act to organise them, and the tab for *The Boke of Counfort* has a fifteenth-century script **a** just visible, not an indicator of the text's place in the manuscript but a scrap of an earlier manuscript.[21] What this suggests is that though the texts were copied individually, the choice of these seven texts in one codex was consciously made by a medieval owner of the book, and likely for an institutional setting, such as the chained

[17] Such as Dutton, 1, 28 (n11); *BoC*, 223-4; Melinda Nielsen, 'Putting Boethius into Chaucer's *Boece*: The Ethics of Authorship in the *Boke of Coumfort*', *The Chaucer Review* 54 (2019), 441-63 (447).
[18] I am grateful for the assistance of Andrew Honey at the Weston Library, Oxford, for his help in analysing the stitching and boards of BodL MS Auct. F.3.5.
[19] On the inside back board there is a clip mark a few centimetres from the bottom inside corner. Closer to the middle of the bottom edge there is a second clip mark, which has started to crack the wooden board, for which repairs are evident. A third clip mark, just to the right of the second, using the same size and shape of clip has then been added. These have left holes in the wooden board, and the two later clips have left scars on the back flyleaf. For more on chained libraries and the marks they leave behind, see Hillman Burnett Streeter, *The Chained Library: A Survey of Four Centuries in the Evolution of the English Library* (London: Macmillan, 1931), 200-3. Also, see Szirmai, 267-71 (in particular on chain marks, 268).
[20] See Szirmai, 159-62. For the dating of the end bands in BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, I thank Andrew Honey.
[21] Text B has holes for a thread tab, though the thread is now missing. Texts C and D have the thread still in place. Text E has a triangular parchment tab still in place. Text F has the holes for a parchment tab which has now been lost. Text G, which is the *The Boke of Counfort*, has the same design of triangular parchment tab as Text E (Peter of Blois, *Contra Iudeos*). For more on these kinds of finding aids see Daniel Sawyer, 'Navigation by Tab and Thread: Place-Markers and Reader's Movement in Books', *Spaces*, 99-114.

libraries that sometimes existed within parish churches and cathedrals and for which these texts would have been well suited, with books available for public use, some with texts in English and French as well as Latin.[22]



Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F.3.5, f.198[r]

[22] On books in churches, see Fiona Kisby, 'Books in London Parish Churches before 1603: Some Preliminary Observations', in *The Church and Learning in Late Medieval Society: Studies in Honour of Professor R. B. Dobson*, ed. by Caroline Barron and Jenny Stratford (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2002), 305-26 (310-4). On chained books in non-institutional settings see also Daniel Sawyer, *Reading English Verse in Manuscript c.1350-c.1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 104-7.

The story of this manuscript is heightened by the inclusion of a scribal colophon to one of the Latin texts, Peter of Blois's *Contra Iudeos*, which reads 'domini Willelmi Martyne titulo empcionis de Jo. Luffyngcote', a manuscript which dates to the late fifteenth century.[23] William Martyn appears to refer to the owner of Athelhampton Hall near Puddletown in Dorset (not to be confused with Sir William Martyn who was lord mayor of London). William Martyn of Athelhampton was a major landowner in the late fifteenth century.[24] John Luffyngcote is noted in a deed of feoffment of February 1469 as a bailiff in Exeter (fifty-three miles from Athelhampton as the crow flies).[25] This colophon only applies to one of the Latin texts, so the binding postdates the purchasing of the Peter of Blois manuscript. However, the colophon helps us to say that these texts were bound together in the late fifteenth century by someone well-read and intellectually curious, and placed in a chained library, likely in the south west of England, where it could be accessed by a wider audience.

These features raise broader questions about the devotional and philosophical nature of the seven texts, which must have been in the mind of the owner of the individual manuscripts who commissioned the binding together as one codex. Broadly, the connecting theme of the texts is that each takes classical principles of rhetoric and logic and applies them in a Christian context. Two of the texts, those by Ranulph Higden and John of Wales, are manuals on the art of preaching, a popular genre in the late medieval period and which show a desire to continue Ciceronian models of classical oratory, to the 'epideictic or occasional oratory' that fitted the context of medieval Christianity.[26] The fragmentary *Distinctiones Theologicae* and the two works by Peter of Blois similarly attempt to debate theological

[23] This is on BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.106^{v}.
[24] See William Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Dorset*, vol 2 (London: Archibald Constable, 1908), 142-3.
[25] This can be found at 'Feoffment Reference 51/1/4/10', *The National Archives* <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ details/r/fff89bf4-3669-499d-aeab-4843d92da9c0> [accessed 2 November 2019].
[26] See Margaret Jennings, *The* Ars Componendi Sermones *of Ranulph Higden, O.S.B.* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), xi-xii.

matters using Scripture as the basis for logical argument.[27] (It is also worth noting that SCL MS 113, which contains one of the extant copies of Chaucer's *Boece*, also contains Peter of Blois's *Tractatus Utilis de Duodecim Tribulacionis*.) *The Boke of Counfort* and Fulgentius's *Mythologiae* are perhaps the two outsiders here, though both have their arguments for inclusion. Interestingly, Fulgentius's *Mythologiae* is not a Christian text, though it is highly allegorical in nature, and it is possible to see Fulgentius's Christian motive in writing the text, which is indeed reminiscent of Boethius.[28] The *Consolatio* is in part a Platonic dialogue, and offers the reader a masterclass in using classical models of rhetoric to build up a logical, philosophical argument. The compiler has then taken Chaucer's largely faithful translation and embellished it to give the overtly Christian morality that the original was lacking, and which brings it closer in line with its sermonising neighbours. The *Consolatio* is after all a deeply theological and moral text which, while never overtly Christian, must from a known Christian writer always be implied. Of course, the connections between the texts should not be overstated. These texts were written in different hands and were collated from different sources. However, the date of the manuscript bindings and the evidence of being chained, allows for a choice in binding together that appealed to the medieval reader, in particular to a medieval institutional or secular church readership.

The Use of Commentary as Source Material

As Chaucer's *Boece* does not include a prologue, and as *Boece* acts as the base text for *The Boke of Counfort*, the inclusion of a prologue is a clear instance of the compiler using a different framework of composition. There is a rich history of prologues to copies of the *Consolatio*, with seven *vitae Boetii* noted in the *Codices Boethiani*, of which one 'either

[27] See Thomas H. Bestul, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 76.
[28] See Leslie George Whitbread, *Fulgentius the Mythographer*, Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 1971), 16-21.

precedes the *Consolation* or is set as a marginal gloss to the *titulus* of Book I.'[29] It is therefore unsurprising that the compiler, dependent on commentary for so much of his material, and using the apparatus of the commentary tradition, should follow this path and also add a prologue.

The compiler of *The Boke of Counfort* had ample access to commentaries, which would have assisted him in reading the *Consolatio* and would have provided more than enough exegetical material for his work, including the prologue.[30] Indeed, as the commentary of William of Conches was the basis for Trevet, who in turn influenced the commentary works by pseudo-Aquinas and William of Wheteley, it can sometimes be hard to see which commentators have influenced a text. However, in the borrowings and additions of the commentaries by William of Conches, Nicholas Trevet, and the 'many lesser mortals' in Latin manuscripts, we can see the closest that the *Consolatio* gets to a 'glossa ordinaria'.[31] In *The Boke of Counfort* it is possible to see the compiler's use of Nicholas Trevet, and likely use of William of Conches as well. Early in the text, the compiler introduces a *titulus*, closely following a Latin commentary model:

> Here begynneth the boke of counfort of Anyte of manle of seueryne of Bois of the before counselour of ordynarie of patrice. And be alle thaise names he menes o persone. Furst he was callide Annycius, for he myȝt noȝt be bowed fro riȝtwisnes nether be prise ne be praier; he was callide Bois þat is on Engelisch an helper, for he halp euere pore men in here ryȝt and nede; he was callide Seueryne, and that is men sais was his propur name, for he lefte neuere in iuggement the treuthe nother for loue drede profite ne mede; he was callide manlius of the kynred that he cam of; and he was callede Cyconsul of office that he was inne; And he was callede ordynarie for he sette men and [and] ordeynde hem in here office; And he was callede patryce, for he cam of the worthy fadres of Rome and be the maner of hem he gouernyd.[32]

Elisabeth Dutton, in comparing the above text to a passage from William of Conches, notes that of the list of Boethius's many names, the compiler omits Torquatus, which William

---

[29] *CB1*, 15-6.
[30] See Dutton, 14.
[31] See Alastair J. Minnis and Lodi Nauta, '*More Platonico loquitur*: What Nicholas Trevet really did to William of Conches' in Minnis, *Chaucer*, 1-33 (9).
[32] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.198^{r-v}. *BoC*, 227 (ll.29-42).

includes, and that the description of Boethius's names is different in *The Boke of Counfort* from that in William's commentary, implying the use of a different but related work.[33] The evidence is not conclusive, but it should be noted that while Trevet's commentary does mention the name Torquatus, its inclusion is subsumed into the description of the name Manlius: 'Fuit enim Boecius de cognacione et familia Manlii Torquati, a quo omnes istius familie cognominati sunt Manlii' ('For indeed he was Boethius of the relationship by birth and household of Manlius Torquatus, from which all of that family take the name Manlius').[34] Furthermore, the compiler's initial list of names ('anyte', 'manle', 'seueryne', 'Bois', 'counselour', 'ordynarie', 'patrice') matches that of Trevet's lemma at the beginning of this section ('Anicius', 'Manlius', 'Severinus', 'Boecius', 'Exconsularis', 'Ordinarius', 'Patricius'), making Nicholas Trevet's commentary the more likely source.

This conclusion is reinforced when one considers a passage of the prologue a few lines later, which depicts the imprisonment of Boethius at the hands of Theodoric:

> He leuede in the ȝere aftur the Incarnacyoun five hundrede and xxj, in the tyme that the tyraunt Theodoryk with the gothes soiette Rome to hem and purposede the slaughter and the destruccioun of the comun profite and his ȝe whos malicious entent this ryȝtiwis man wisely and latoures myȝthily with stode. And therefore be malice of that tiraunte acused of unlawful and uicious persones of diuerse fals pointes, of the weche mynde schal be made in the boke plainly nouȝt araynede to be lawfully enpeched and put to answere, but in his absence he was falsly foriugged and put in exile to papy and in harde and foule prisoun.[35]

There is some doubt whether William could have been used in this passage, when one considers that he provides details of the false charges under which Boethius was arrested, as *The Boke of Counfort* does not.[36] It also needs to be noted that the compiler here repeats Chaucer's phrase 'comun profite' from 1p4 of *Boece*, and though the context is not quite the same, in both cases the common profit stands against the tyranny of Theodoric, which

---

[33] See Dutton, 15-6; Lodi Nauta, ed., *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae Super Boetium* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 6-8. All quotations of William of Conches's commentary to the *Consolatio* are taken from Nauta's edition.
[34] Taite Silk, 9.
[35] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.198^{v}; *BoC*, 228 (ll.48-59).
[36] See Dutton, 14-5; Nauta, *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae*, 4.

suggests that the compiler used Chaucer's language even when he was working from other material, making up for the deficiency of a prologue in Chaucer's work.[37]

It is true that Trevet does not mention the full extent of the false charges brought against Boethius. Indeed, Trevet acknowledges that his depiction of Theodoric is taken from 'historiam Theodorici regis Gothorum ex diuersis cronicis collectam censui prelibandam' ('a history of Theodoric king of the Goths taken from diverse chronicles I judged suitable to be bound as a collection').[38] His use of these other texts therefore makes his depiction of Boethius's imprisonment rather light on details pertaining to Boethius, and heavier on the history of Theodoric's reign, which mirrors the passage from *The Boke of Counfort* cited above. Trevet's only precise reference to Boethius's imprisonment is taken, he writes, from the *Old English Boethius*, 'ut testator Aluredes rex Anglorum qui libros de Consolacione de Latino in Anglicum transtulit, Papie in carcerem detrudit' (as witnessed by Alfred king of the English who translated the books of the Consolation from Latin into English, in Pavia he was thrown in prison).[39] On the other hand, the lines of *The Boke of Counfort* which immediately follow are a relatively close translation of William's Latin, and both William and Trevet refer to Pavia.[40] Previous analysis establishes the use of commentary, but not whose. Trevet's is the more likely, but as is shown later in this chapter, evidence of the use of William of Conches's commentary does exist elsewhere in the text, and therefore its use by the compiler here cannot be discounted.

Gloss Forms in *The Boke of Counfort*

Analysis of *The Boke of Counfort* and a line by line comparison with Chaucer's *Boece* reveal patterns and anomalies which provide evidence of how the work may have been

[37] Machan, 1p4, 8.
[38] Taite Silk, 1.
[39] Taite Silk, 5-6. For Trevet's source material, see *OEB*, vol 1, 243-4 (Old English text), vol 2, 4-5 (translation).
[40] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, ff.198^{v}-199^{r}; *BoC*, 228 (ll.53-71); Nauta, *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae*, 4 (ll.18-38).

written, and how it has been transmitted. Apart from the prologue, the text of *The Boke of Counfort of Bois* can be understood as an almost continuous stream of 'pairs' of text: the compiler's paraphrase of Chaucer's *Boece* followed by commentary material from a variety of sources. Sometimes the Chaucerian lemma is shorter than the commentary that follows it, like so:

> [Chaucer:] This womman forsayde bare bokes in hir ryȝt hande and in hir lefte hande a septre.
>
> [Commentary:] That is to meene, that wisdam is to geue al worldely promocyouns, but spirytual undurstandynge be the bokis and temporal undurstandynge be the septre. Also sche berith bokis for hem that ar simple and wolde be goode are unkunnynge, the bokis of wisdam is here techynge to sweche the septre be tokenes auttoryte of ponyshynge of hem that arn euyl.[41]

Such examples are described in this chapter as 'lemma and commentary' and reflect the format of commentaries such as those by William of Conches and Nicholas Trevet, where lemma is shorter than comment for the most part. On the other hand, sometimes the Chaucerian text is longer than the glossing, like so:

> [Chaucer:] Allas now sche saith, he is priuyd the lyȝt of sweche thouȝt that is contemplacioun of wisdom and liȝtnes his soule, and he hath his necke threste doun with heuy cheynes.
>
> [Commentary:] That is with the mouynge of his fleschly affeccioun.[42]

Examples such as these are described in this chapter as 'text and gloss' and reflect the format of shorter marginal 'id est' glosses. Analysis of *The Boke of Counfort* reveals that after the prologue (ll.1-130), the text can be divided into roughly three sections. The first third of the text (ll.130-556) is almost entirely made of 'lemma and commentary' pairs of text. The final third (ll.1047-1548) is strongly made up of 'text and gloss' pairs of text. The middle third

[41] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.202^{v}; *BoC*, 237 (ll.309-15). The transcription is correct, and likely has a word missing. It should be 'wolde be goode but are unkunnynge'.
[42] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.205^{v}; *BoC*, 244 (ll.529-33).

(ll.556-1047) is made up of shorter blocks that tend either way.[43] These patterns allow us to distinguish different sections, which might reflect differences in the compiler's working process: either the compiler created his text in a sporadic or (in the light of a comparison I shall make below) peripatetic fashion of fits and starts, approaching the text and its apparatus in different ways at different times, or the compiler takes a 'cut and paste' approach to the creation of the text, using the work of other writers (much as he has used Chaucer). Perhaps it simply reflects a waning of energy as he progressed. The following two sections consider these forms in greater detail.

Lemmata and Commentary Forms

It is useful to consider further examples of the lemma and commentary form in *The Boke of Counfort*, both as evidence of how it is used by the compiler and in further consideration of the compiler's source material. For instance, 'I saw a womman of grete reuerence besemeland that stode aboue my heuede' is a close paraphrase of Chaucer's line 'I sawe stondinge aboven the heyte of myn heved a womman of ful gret reverence'.[44] The compiler then follows Chaucerian text with a much longer passage that acts as commentary to the lemma, quoted here in full to give a sense of the scale common to this kind of lemma and commentary form used by the compiler:

> that is to mene wisdom and acordyngly he assignes hir standyng aboue his hedde. For al wisdom com fro god, as the wise sais. The weche is hed of alle creatures also for be philosophie in a mannys hed is the sete of wisdom, and þat within thre scelles of thre parties of the hede in thre chaieres. Furste scho sites in the scelle of the forme partie

[43] This textual analysis does not take account of short additions to convert from first to third person, such as 'as Boith said' or 'sche saith'. It also does not take account of additions to the text of fewer than three words, which includes many two-word additions to create curial doublets e.g. 'and wondrynge'. Some lines have also been discounted: the prologue (ll.1-130), none of which is Chaucerian, some sections garbled in transmission where it is hard to make sense of the text (ll.909-18 and 1354-7), some prefatory sections in which the compiler introduces the next prose (ll.1408-15 and 1437-43), and the explicit (ll.1548-50).

[44] This is on BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, ff.200^{v}-201^{r}; *BoC*, 233; Machan, 1p1, 3. It is also worth noting that the use of '-and' to denote the present participle is mapped by *LALME* mostly to the north of England, though there is a cluster of use in the south west, in line with provenance information discussed in this chapter: <http://archive.ling.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme_scripts/lib/create_feature_map.php?mapid=0580002> [accessed 20 December 2023].

> of the hedde in the sete and in the chaier of undurstondynge; In the celle of þe myddis part of the hed in the sete and chaier of discrecioun and resonable demynge; In the celle of the hinder part of the hede, in the sete and chaier of mynde and fast on thenkynge. and for al wisdom is schewede be oon of thaise thre: undurstandynge, discrete demynge, and haldynge in mynde acordengly.[45]

This format is then repeated over the next several pages, with shorter lemmata taken from Chaucer (or close paraphrases of Chaucer) followed by longer non-Chaucerian commentary text. It is tempting to assume that the commentary must derive from Trevet, and indeed, there is a strong correspondence. However, the relevant section from Trevet is much longer than this, and too long to reproduce here in its entirety (over two pages in Taite Silk's unpublished edition), and interestingly, the description used by the compiler of the 'forme', 'myddis', and 'hinder' parts of the 'hede' is rendered in a different order by Trevet:

> Iste autem tres potencie habent organa sua in uertice, id est in superiori parte capitis, ita quod organum fantasie est in parte anteriori, organum memorie in parte posteriori organum, uero cogitatiue in medio.[46]

Compare this to William of Conches's earlier commentary, from the second quarter of the twelfth century, which hugely influences Trevet's work of the early fourteenth century:

> EST MICHI ASTITISSE SVPRA VERTICEM. Philosophia supra uerticem Boetio uidetur astare, quia *omnis sapientia a deo habet esse*…Ista uero tria, quae perfecte faciunt sapientem, in capite habent sedem. Est enim in prima parte capitis cellula cerebri in qua est uis intelligendi quae uocatur fantastica. Quod ita probatum est quod cum uidissent phisici aliquem boni ingenii, accepto in ea parte capitis uulnere, ingenium amisisse, retinendo discretionem et memoriam, compererunt in ea esse uim intelligendi. In medio uero capitis est alia cellula in qua est uis discernendi, quod similiter per uulnus probatum est. In occipite, id est posterior parte capitis, est alia cellula in qua uis est retinendi memoriam.[47]

---

[45] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.201^{r}; *BoC*, 233-4 (ll.205-16).

[46] 'Indeed these three powers have their organs in the crown, that is in the higher part of the head, so that the instrument of imagination is in the part at the front, the instrument of memory is at the back of the head, and the thoughtful part is in the middle.' Taite Silk, 1p1, 26-7.

[47] *CB1*, 13-4. Nauta, *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae*, 18-9: 'THERE STOOD ABOVE MY HEAD Philosophy seems to reach above the height of Boethius, because *all wisdom comes from god*…But these three, which make perfect wisdom, have their seat in the head. For in the foremost part of the head is that chamber of the brain where is found the power of understanding which is called imagination. Thus it has been proved that although natural philosophers had seen some of a good disposition, I understand that with that part of the head injured, nonetheless the capacity has been lost, but that retaining discernment and memory, they learned in this way to have the power of understanding. Indeed in the middle of the head is another chamber of the brain in which is the power of discernment, which similarly through injury has been proved. In the occipital, that is the hindmost part of the head, is another chamber of the brain in which is found the power to retain memories.'

Whilst *The Boke of Counfort* has strong echoes from both commentaries, the choice and order of words by the compiler is closer to William on this occasion, in particular William's '*omnis sapientia a deo habet esse'* (the use of italics here is Nauta's) translated by the compiler to become 'For al wisdom com fro god, as the wise sais'. Such a corresponding line does not exist in Trevet's commentary.

At the other extreme, perhaps the most compelling evidence for the compiler's use of Trevet's commentary as well comes amidst a long block of pairs of lemmata and commentary:

> also wisdom saith that Bois was wount to encerche what spirit turnyd the stable heuene, as who say he wist wel that þat spirit was not a soule of the worlde as summe philisophes seynede. But it was the myȝtty wil of the maker.[48]

This is a reference to the theological argument between William of Conches and Nicholas Trevet about the concept of World Soul. Indeed, Trevet makes several references in his commentary to William of Conches as the 'commentator', as he does in the commentary to 4p6 of the *Consolatio*:

> QUIBUSDAM SPIRITIBUS FAMULANTIBUS DIVINE PROVIDENCIE sicut dicebant aliqui philosophi antiquiores SIVE ANIMA scilicet mundana, ut exponit commentator[49]

William of Conches adapts the idea of *anima* as 'World Soul' and attempts to represent it as the Holy Spirit. While respectful to William, Trevet does not accept this Christianizing explanation, and 'has substituted an Aristotelian theory of causality', taken from both Book VIII of Aristotle's *Physics* and Book XII of his *Metaphysics*.[50] A concept of a 'world soul' which can be interpreted as the Holy Spirit is out of keeping with the original Aristotelian

---

[48] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.205r; *BoC*, 243 (ll.501-4).
[49] 'BY CERTAIN DIVINE SPIRITS ACTING AS SERVANTS OF PROVIDENCE as some ancient philosophers said WHETHER THE SOUL that is worldly, as the Commentator explains.' Taite Silk, 4p6, 612-3.
[50] See A. J. Minnis and Lodi Nauta, '*More Platonico loquitur*: What Nicholas Trevet really did to William of Conches' in Minnis, *Chaucer*, 1-33 (21-23); Brian Donaghey, 'Nicholas Trevet's Use of King Alfred's Translation of Boethius, and the Dating of his Commentary' in Minnis, *Medieval*, 1-31 (24-5); Aristotle, *The Physics, Books V-VIII*, trans. P. H. Wicksteed and F. M. Cornford (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 266-275; Aristotle, *Aristotle: Metaphysics X-XIV, Oeconomica, Magna Moralia*, trans. H. Tredennick and G. C. Armstrong (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 144-153.

idea, and therefore out of keeping with Boethius, and with the Thomistic ideas present in Oxford at the turn of the fourteenth century.[51] By including Trevet's opinion on the concept of the 'soule of the worlde' the compiler tells the reader that he had used Trevet's commentary as a source material, and that he agreed with some of its key metaphysical arguments. However, ironically, the compiler seems to have misread the Latin and applied the idea of Word Soul to the ancient philosophers and not to the commentator, as Trevet does.

The two examples above provide evidence that the compiler had access, at least for a time (and perhaps at different times), to the commentaries by William of Conches and Nicholas Trevet. This in turn raises interesting questions about how the compiler accessed his source material. Brian Donaghey made a convincing case for the peripatetic nature of Trevet's writing experience of his commentary on the *Consolatio*.[52] It can only be speculation, but the frequency and order of commentary references in *The Boke of Counfort* raises questions about whether the compiler was also a traveller, borrowing books for limited periods of time, or suffered from 'exemplar poverty' and had only limited access to copies of commentaries in libraries.[53]

Elsewhere in this same block of lemma and commentary is evidence of the compiler using source material that is neither Chaucerian translation nor Boethian commentary. The compiler writes of Boethius 'that he was wount to seke the causes of the hote brennynge wyndes that steris so mouyndly the smothe water of the see'.[54] This corresponds to 1m2 of *Boece*: 'he was wont to seken the causes whennes the sownynge wyndes moeven and bysien

[51] On the philosophical ideas behind Trevet's commentary, see Lodi Nauta, 'The Scholastic Context of the Boethius Commentary by Nicholas Trevet' in Hoenen and Nauta, 41-67.
[52] Donaghey, 'Nicholas Trevet's Use of King Alfred's Translation', 6-9.
[53] On the concept of 'exemplar poverty' see Ralph Hanna III, 'Miscellaneity and Vernacularity: Conditions of Literary Production in Late Medieval England' in *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 37-51 (47).
[54] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.205^{r}; *BoC*, 243 (ll.493-5).

the smothe water of the see'.[55] This is followed in *The Boke of Counfort* by a much longer commentary:

> that is he wyst that the sonne be the beemes of him makes the erthe hote and dry, and drawes to him ward drye uapours of the erthe, and lyftes hem up to a colde place of the ayre callyd in philosophie *medium insterticium aeris*, and for the drynes of there uapours is contraryous to the kyndely moystnes of the ayre, therefore thare fallith a distourblelance in ayre, sweche as is callyd blastes.[56]

Both William of Conches and Nicholas Trevet cover this section of the *Consolatio* in detail.[57] The compiler's reference to that which is 'callyd in philosophie medium insterticium aeris' is a citation from a philosophical work rather than a reference to the character of Philosophy. Twice in his exposition of this section of Boethius's text, Trevet refers to works by Aristotle:

> Et est hic notandum quod, sicut patet per philosophum tercio Metaphysicorum, uentus generatur ex uapore sicco et eleuato per calorem qui ascendens ad locum nubium a frigiditate repercutitur et ex illa repercussione fertur in latus et impellit aerem tanto uehemencius quanto forcius repercutitur et quanto maior est uapor repercussus; et quia in tali repercussione et impulsu aer impellit aerem, impulsio autem aeris causat sonum, ut dicit philosophus secundo de anima.[58]

Here Trevet's references become a little muddled, as the description in *The Boke of Counfort* which mirrors Trevet so closely comes not from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* or from *De Anima*, but from Aristotle's *Meteorology*. If Trevet is discounted as the source of this passage of text, there are other possible sources for the compiler's reference, as three medieval writers make use of the phrase (with adjustments for spelling and Latin suffixes) 'medium interstitium aeris': Roger Bacon in his *Opus Majus*, Robert Grosseteste in his *De natura locorum*, and Bartholomaeus Anglicus in his *De proprietatibus rerum*.[59] All of these writers used Aristotle's

---

[55] Machan, 1m2, 5.
[56] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.205^{r}; *BoC,* 243 (ll.495-501).
[57] See Nauta, *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae*, 54-58; Taite Silk, 47-49.
[58] 'And it must be noted here that, as is clear from the philosopher in the third part of *Metaphysics*, the wind is generated from dry vapour and elevated by the heat that rises up to the clouds, is reflected by the coldness, and from that reflection it is carried to the side and it drives the air as violently as it rebounds and the greater the reflected vapour; and because in such a repercussion and impact the air pushes the air, and the pressure of the air causes a sound, as says the philosopher in the second part of *De Anima*.' Taite Silk, 1m2, 47.
[59] See J. H. Bridges, ed. *The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon*, vol 1 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1900), 214; Ludwig Baur, ed., *Die Philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1912), 66; Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* (Nuremburg: Anton Koberger, 1483), Book XI, Chapter 1.

Meteorology considerably in their own work, and could have inspired the compiler's reference. However, perhaps the most likely of the three is the thirteenth-century Franciscan writer Bartholomaeus Anglicus. The eleventh book of Bartholomaeus' encyclopaedic work covers the properties of wind and air. Whilst not conclusive, some of the early paragraphs give a close enough likeness to the compiler's comments as well as to his Latin reference, that it is certainly worthy of consideration:

> Alia est impressio et dicitur assub ascendens . generatur autem ex vapore calido et sicco grosso . longitudinis et latitudinis equalis existente in parte superior medii intersticii aeris inflammato per ignem et motum firmamenti . descendit autem inferius propter frigus circumstans et pondus materie grossioris ut dicit Aristotle[60]

As noted above, there are several possible references for the compiler's meteorological text in *The Boke of Counfort*. However, within *De Proprietatibus Rerum* we can see that: 'calido et sicco' becomes 'hot and dry', 'ut dicit Aristotle' becomes 'callyd in philosophie', 'medii intersticii aeris' becomes 'medium insterticium aeris', and 'descendit autem in ferius propter frigus circumstans et pondus materie grossioris' becomes 'for the drynes of there uapours is contraryous to the kyndely moystnes of the ayre, therefore thare fallith a distourblelance in ayre'. None of it is conclusive, and the paraphrasing of the Middle English gives the impression of working from multiple points of reference or a closer reference not yet discovered, but still the similarity makes Bartholomaeus a strong candidate for the compiler's source in this section of the text.[61]

---

[60] Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* (Nuremburg: Anton Koberger, 1483), Book XI, Chapter 1: 'There is another impression and it is called 'Assub' ascending. It is generated from hot and dry steam, being of equal length and breadth in the upper part of the middle interstice of air, inflamed by fire and the movement of the firmament, as says Aristotle.'
Also it is said the thrust and the ascent of the 'Assub' is generated from the warm, dry, heavy winds of even length and width in the upper part of the middle partition of the air, set alight by the fire and the motion of the sky. And it descends with heavier material on account of the surrounding cold and the weight of the heavier material, as said by Aristotle.'

[61] For more on Bartolomaeus Anglicus, see M. C. Seymour, *Bartholomaeus Anglicus and His Encyclopaedia* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992), and particularly on the prevalence of manuscript copies and the likely availability to the compiler, see M. C. Seymour, 'Some Medieval English Owners of *De Proprietatibus Rerum*', *The Bodleian Library Record*, 9 (1973-8), 156-65.

With or without Trevet's muddle-headed assistance the compiler must already have had a knowledge of scientific treatises to draw on in order to find the correct reference, as well as available access to the necessary manuscripts. Whichever text the compiler is quoting here, it reveals a use of source material beyond Chaucer and commentaries, beyond Scripture and devotional texts, reinforcing the impression of the compiler as a well-educated man, likely to have received a university education.

'Id est' glosses

A different kind of scholarly response can be seen in other sections of *The Boke of Counfort*. There are many instances, particularly in the latter part of the text, where longer sections of paraphrased Chaucer are followed by brief interpolations, giving the appearance of shorter glosses absorbed into the body of the text. If true, this balance of text and gloss is suggestive not of an author reading in a wide array of sources, as with Bartholomaeus Anglicus, but rather of a Middle English *Boece* manuscript as a primary source material, with the marginal or possibly interlinear glosses from that manuscript here rendered in the main body of the text. Within the ten extant manuscripts of *Boece*, three hundred marginal and interlinear glosses have been identified, which makes it possible that such glosses were present in the manuscript that was *The Boke of Counfort*'s source.[62] These glosses come in a variety of forms: some are sentence-length but most are shorter, a few words at most, to explain philosophical terms or difficult language, 'nota' glosses as well as readers' personal responses, which if they were absorbed into *The Boke of Counfort*, might account for the inclusion of glosses of different but overall shorter lengths.[63] However, the suggestion that a *Boece* manuscript is the source of the glosses is often inconclusive, partly because the

[62] As argued by Machan, xxvi-vii.
[63] See Tim William Machan, 'Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer's Boece' in Minnis, *Medieval*, 125-38 (126-34).

exemplar is likely lost, and also because gloss material in *The Boke of Counfort*, regardless of its origin or inspiration, does not always follow linguistic patterns we might expect if it had originated with interlinear or brief marginal glosses (as witnessed later in this section). Where the compiler does follow the conventions of such glossing, there is a great deal of added material prefaced with a standard form of words such as 'by weche', 'that is to undirstonde', 'that is sche said', such as in the examples below from the first half of the fourth metre:

Boke of Counfort* text related to Chaucer's *Boece	***Boke of Counfort* text not from Chaucer, possibly a gloss**
if a man be clere in wertue, sadde and wel undurstonde in his leuynge, that can put undur fote the proude werdis and loke o lyke on other fortune, (ll.838-40)	
	that is in the same degree take aduersite and prosperite, (ll.840-1)
thanne schalt þu holde the clere undyscounfyted, and sche tells, for nother thenne the manas, ne the wodenes that kestes up heete fro the grounde of the see, (ll.841-4)	
	be weche as I sayde is undurstondyn the persecuciouns of unclene and lecherous leuers, Or that comes to a man be enuye or malyncoly of wordes. (ll.844-6)
Ne the unstable mountayne that hight uesauus, the weche out of his brokyn chynnes sendes smokynge fyres, (ll.847-8)	
	be weche is undurstonde persecuciouns caused of couetyse, or of the fire of ire, and hudde rancoure of herte of dedely hurte. (ll.849-51)
Ne the way of thoundris liȝt the weche is wount to smyte hie toures adoun, (ll.851-2)	
	that is persecucyouns caused of pride and of proude men weche be raueyne castith doun many that were hye be ryches. (ll.852-4)[64]

[64] These quotations are on BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.210^{r-v}; *BoC*, 254-5.

The run of quotations above shows the commentary response that follows an 'id est' form but is longer than one would expect of such glosses, which are usually just a few words in other Latin manuscripts.[65] However, elsewhere in the text this shorter form does exist, as again can be seen in a block of similar pairs of text, such as in a run of paraphrased Chaucer followed by short interpolations which cover a section in the middle of 1p4, as shown below:

Boke of Counfort **text related to Chaucer's** ***Boece***	***Boke of Counfort*** **text not from Chaucer, possibly a gloss**
For towchynge the letteres that were falsly made, be the weche I am acusyde, that I schulde an hoopede the fredom of Rome, (ll.1145-47)	
	that menes, for to haue delyuerede fro thraldom of the tyraunt Theodoryk. (ll.1147-8)
What profites it me to speke there of? Of the weche letteres the fraude and gile hadde ben schewede openly, if I hadde had fredom for to haue ben at the confessioun of myn acusores, I wolde thanne haue answerede be the wordes of a man that hight Canyus, (ll.1148-1153)	
	that was in his tyme oon of the wise gouernowres that was in Rome. (ll.1153-4)
For whanne he was acusede of Cesar Gayus Iermayn sone, that he was knowenge and consentynge of a coniuracioun made agaynes him, this Canyus answerde thus: if I hadde wist it, þu haddist not wist it. In the weche thynge sorewe has not so dullyd my wit, that I playne oonly, that schrewede folke susteynes schrewedenes agaynes wertuis. But I wonder gretly how thay may performe thynges that thay haue supposede for to do, for why to wilne schrewedenes that comes perauenture of oure defaute. But it is like to a monster, (ll.1154-1163)	
	that is a myschapen thynge. (l.1163)[66]

The second column shows the short, frequent additions by the compiler, using the kind of linguistic forms that one might expect of marginal glosses ('that is', 'that was'), and offers the possibility that they have indeed been drawn from marginal material in another

[65] C.f. BodL MS D'Orville 154, an English copy of the *Consolatio* c.1300 which includes the kind of short, explanatory 'id est' glosses described above.
[66] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, ff.214^{v}-215^{r}; *BoC*, 265-6.

manuscript. Alternatively, the compiler, might have added material from other texts or of his own creation, but has nonetheless imitated the phrasing of interlinear glosses to enable the exegetical tone of *The Boke of Counfort*.

This difficulty in knowing where gloss material has come from, whether it is material borrowed or newly created in an imitative style, is demonstrated in the following text from *The Boke of Counfort*, which closely renders part of 1p2 of Chaucer's *Boece*:

> Knowist þu me nouȝt? Why art þu so stille? Is it for schame or for stonyenge and wondrynge? I hadde leuer sche saith it were for schame. But me semes that wonder has oppressid the. Sche had leuere he held his pes for schame thanne for stonyenge of hire words, for thanne that wolde seme that he coude answere if he wolde. And whanne sche saw me not aloonly stille, but as it were with oute tounge al dounbe, sche put sofly hire hande to my brest and felde me.

This is followed by the brief addition of non-Chaucerian material: Here sche dide the maner of a leche, that be touche asaith if the seke be curable.[67] The language does not have the same linguistic phrasing of a marginal gloss, but it is short enough an interpolation to be considered like one and has a suitably didactic voice, explaining, clarifying. As ever, both William of Conches and Nicholas Trevet offer commentary material which are likely sources, Trevet being on this occasion much the closer:

> Sic Philosophia ADMOVIT PECTORI Boecii id est cogitacioni uel intencioni MANUM discrecionis ut temptaret si esset obstinatus quia tunc non esset spec curacionis. Et quia in Boecii non fuit talis obstinacio, ideo subiungit ipsum confortando.[68]

These examples above of the text and gloss form are hard to categorise. While it is possible that these are marginal glosses from manuscripts no longer extant or whose glosses are yet to be identified with *The Boke of Counfort*, they may also be a development of commentary material which the compiler has shortened and adapted for his own use.

---

[67] This is on BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.206^{r}; *BoC*, 245 (ll.556-64). This closely follows Machan, 1p2, 5.
[68] 'So Philosophy: SHE MOVED TO HIS CHEST Boethius, that is, for his thinking and intention THE HAND of discretion so that she might discern if he was being stubborn at that time which would have no hope of a cure. And as Boethius's condition was not of a stubborn nature, therefore she increased his strength.' Taite Silk, 1p2, 57.

Some Conclusions about Gloss Forms in *The Boke of Counfort*

As the evidence of the different forms – lemma and commentary, and text and gloss – reveals, *The Boke of Counfort* appears to have been created from multiple stages of composition and sourced from multiple manuscripts, which may be the result of the compiler's fractured practice or periods of working on the text. This is well captured by Matthew Fisher's assertion, that:

> Derivative texts were written to be read, not consulted. Derivative textuality brings together unacknowledged quotation and translation, frequently translated and transposed from multiple sources, into a narratively continuous and textually coherent whole. They superficially resemble compilations in reducing multiple sources to a single narrative, but they very precisely do not draw attention to their heterogenous constituent texts, whether through citation or other means. Derivative texts combine constituent texts more complexly than do compilations, switching back and forth between multiple source texts over the course of even a few lines.[69]

Indeed, although there is a patina of stylistic smoothing out across the whole work (and the manuscript has been copied in one seamless style too), the evidence suggests different forms of commentary, glossing, and exegesis, among which the compiler has cherry-picked before adding his own authorial style to the whole.

It would seem clear that the compiler was willing to modify the work of other writers whose work he appropriated, because he wished to be considered as more than a compiler or translator. Early in this thesis Bonaventure's well-known piece of medieval literary theory was introduced, describing how he makes the distinction between the scribe who changes nothing, the compiler who integrates the work of others, the commentator who adds his own voice to a work but only for the purpose of clarifying the work of others, and the author who may use the work of others, but to support his own writing.[70] Using these definitions, the

[69] Matthew Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England* (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 2012), 70.
[70] This is described by A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic literary attitudes in the later Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 94-5.

creator of *Boke of Counfort* is not a scribe. Nor is he an author. He is arguably, as he has been described elsewhere, a compiler.[71]

However, if that is so, one must also acknowledge the possibility that some of the dependence on Chaucer later in the text, where there is less interpolation, is symptomatic of the compiler running out of steam, with little more than the modification to transfer the text from the first to the third person voice to fit the rest of the narrative.[72] Where other material is included, this too comes in more sizeable chunks, as if the complexity of drawing on a number of different source materials for multiple short passages is more time consuming than bigger blocks of Chaucer followed by large blocks of didactic or exegetical material. For instance, early in the fifth metre there is an interpolation from the compiler regarding the way that the moon receives light and heat, which runs for thirty-four lines, but which is followed by forty-one lines of text paraphrasing most of the corresponding section of Chaucer's *Boece*, with only very brief additions, mostly to transpose the text into the third person.[73] There follows an introductory passage on the content of 1p5, lasting eight lines, before including the entirety of Chaucer's text for Prose 5, again paraphrased and with only minor additions. This pattern then continues to the end of *The Boke of Counfort*.

The Boke of Counfort in the Tradition of *Boece* Manuscripts

Having established the extent of the compiler's reliance on Chaucer's *Boece* as considerable, analysis of *The Boke of Counfort* against *Boece* allows us to see the textual tradition of Chaucer's work which was used as the basis for the compiler's development of

[71] See fn. 13.
[72] It should be noted that the compiler of BodL MS Auct. F.3.5 fails on a few occasions to change the voice from first to third person. These appear to be oversights rather than by intent. These slips occur at f.204^{r} (ll.412 and 414), f.206^{r} (l.561, and twice on l.563), and f.206^{v} (l.579).
[73] This is onBodL MS Auct. F.3.5., ff.216^{v}-217^{v}; *BoC*, 270-2, ll.1268-1341; Machan, 1m5-1p5, 11-3.

the text. There are ten extant manuscripts of *Boece*. One of them, Columbia, University of Missouri Fragmenta Manuscripta MS 150, is a fragment from Book 2 of *Boece*, and cannot be compared to the first book coverage of *The Boke of Counfort*. Of the remaining nine manuscripts, none is a conclusive candidate as exemplar.[74] There is direct evidence in *Boece* of eleven glosses which were absorbed into the text. As *The Boke of Counfort* only covers the first book of the *Consolatio*, this covers the first two of these integrated glosses. The evidence for the compiler using the first of these glosses is sketchy. However, the second Chaucerian gloss is included in every extant manuscript of *Boece* apart from Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 797 (which can therefore be discounted as an exemplar), and has a close rendering in *The Boke of Counfort*. The gloss in *Boece* reads:

> As thus: that, yif a wyht have prosperite, he is a good man and worthi to han that prosperite; and whoso hath adversite, he is a wikked man, and God hath forsake hym, and he is worthi to han that adversite. This is the opinioun of some folke.[75]

This gloss has been copied word for word in *Boke of Counfort*, barring variations in spelling:

> as thus: That if a man haue prosperite, he is a goode man and worthy to haue that prosperite. And who so haue aduersite, he is a wickede man, and god hath forsaken him and he is worthy to haue that aduersite. This is the opynyon of summe folke.[76]

Beyond the easy dismissal of Columbia, University of Missouri Fragmenta Manuscripta MS 150 and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 797, Tim William Machan notes the two distinct textual traditions of *Boece*, and places BodL MS Auct. F.3.5 in the β group, which includes four manuscripts: CUL MS Ii.3.21 (discussed in the previous chapter); National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 393; London, British Library, MS Add. 10340; and Salisbury, Cathedral Library, MS 113.[77] These manuscripts are remarkably close to each other textually and to BodL MS Auct. F.3.5. However, a comparison of these manuscripts with *The Boke of*

---

[74] The nine manuscripts are: BL MS Add 16165, BodL MS Bodley 797, CUL MS Ii.1.38, BL MS Harley 2421, CPC MS 215, CUL MS Ii.3.21, NLW MS Peniarth 393, BL MS Add 10340, and SCL MS 113. For more on these manuscripts, see Machan, xx-xxii.
[75] This is on CUL MS Ii.3.21, f.24^{r}; Machan, 1p4, 11.
[76] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.216^{r}; *BoC*, 268 (ll.1231-5).
[77] Machan, xxvii-xxviii.

Counfort reveals a degree of difference, as shown in the following five examples. None of the changes is big enough to be conclusive, and individually all are within the range of scribal variance, but cumulatively the examples allow us to make some suggestions.

In the first of these points of comparison, as Philosophy seeks to console Boethius and remind him of the wisdom he learnt from her, *The Boke of Counfort* reads: 'I hadde leuer sche saith it were for schame'.[78] The corresponding second prose section of CUL MS Ii.3.21 text adds a couple of words to make it 'It were *me* leuer *that* it were for shame' (my italics).[79] BL MS Add. 10340 and SCL MS 113 agree with CUL MS Ii.3.21.[80] NLW MS Peniarth 393 is closer to *The Boke of Counfort* text: 'it were me leure it were for shame'.[81]

On the following folio *The Boke of Counfort* reads 'it were not sittynge ne leueful'.[82] The text in the third prose section of all four manuscripts of *Boece* switches round 'sittynge ne leueful' to become 'leueful ne sittynge'.[83] CUL MS Ii.3.21 goes further and varies this to 'it *nere* nat leueful ne sittinge'.

In the fourth metre of *The Boke of Counfort* it reads 'thanne schalt þu holde the clere undyscoumfyted'.[84] The corresponding text in CUL MS Ii.3.21 varies this to read 'he may his cheere holde undescounfited'.[85] The change of 'clere' to 'chere' appears to be a scribal error of the part of *The Boke of Counfort* scribe, mistaking the two letters **h** and **l** with ascenders, as all four of these *Boece* manuscripts agree in using 'cheere'.[86] That aside, it is only CUL MS Ii.3.21 that switches round 'cheere' and 'holde'. All three other manuscripts agree with *The Boke of Counfort*. SCL MS 113, for example, reads: 'he may holde his chere undiscomfetid'.

---

[78] This is on BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.206^{r}; *BoC*, 245, (ll.556-8).
[79] CUL MS Ii.3.21, f.13^{v}; Machan, 1p2, 5.
[80] BL MS Add. 10340, f.4^{v}; SCL MS 113, f.4^{r}.
[81] NLW MS Peniarth 393, f.1^{v} <http://hdl.handle.net/10107/4398051> [accessed 2 November 2019].
[82] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.207^{v}; *BoC*, 249, (l.670).
[83] CUL MS Ii.3.21, f.15^{v}; Machan, 1p3, 6; BL MS Add. 10340, f.4^{v}; NLW MS Peniarth 393, f.2^{r}; SCL MS 113, f.4^{v}.
[84] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.210^{r}; *BoC*, 255 (ll.841-2).
[85] CUL MS Ii.3.21, f.16^{v}; Machan, 1m4, 7.
[86] BL MS Add. 10340, f.5^{r}; NLW MS Peniarth 393, f.2^{v}; SCL MS 113, f. 5^{v}.

In the prose section that follows, *The Boke of Counfort* reads ‘for certis he sais I haue euere wolde it that menes the saluacioun of the senate ne I schal neuere lette to weele it and that I confesse and am a knowe’.[87] CUL MS Ii.3.21 varies this to read ‘Certes, I haue wold it (that is to seyn, the sauacioun of the senat), ne I shal neuer leten to wilne it, and I confesse and I am aknowe.’[88] The word ‘euere’ is an addition by the compiler not included in any of these *Boece* manuscripts.[89] However, the difference of wording in CUL MS Ii.3.21, ‘and I confesse and I am aknowe’, is not found in the other three, which all agree with *The Boke of Counfort*. For example, BL MS Add. 10340 reads ‘Certis I haue wolde it þat is to seyne þe sauuacion of þe senat. ne I schal nevur leten to wilne it and þat I confesse and am a knowe’.

Lastly, in the seventh metre of *The Boke of Counfort* it reads ‘thanne the waues that summe tyme were as clere as glas and lyke to the faire bryȝt daies’.[90] Both CUL MS Ii.3.21 and NLW MS Peniarth 393 vary this.[91] NLW MS Peniarth 393 in the seventh metre section reads ‘the wawes that weren whilom clere as glas and lyke to the faire bright dayes’. CUL MS Ii.3.21 switches the language in NLW MS Peniarth 393 to read ‘whilom weeren’, but goes further in ending this section ‘and lyk to fayre deere dayes and brihte’. However, both BL MS Add. 10340 and SCL MS 113 agree with *The Boke of Counfort*.[92] For example, SCL MS 113 reads ‘þe wawes þat suntyme weren clere as glas and like to þe faire briȝt daies’.

Having looked at five textual examples of Chaucerian text in *The Boke of Counfort*, some suggestions can be made about the textual tradition. In every one of the five examples above, CUL MS Ii.3.21 does not agree with *The Boke of Counfort* text, and it can therefore be dismissed as a possible textual authority, despite the presence of Trevet in that manuscript, ready at hand. Of the remaining three manuscripts, BL MS Add. 10340 agrees with *The Boke*

[87] This is on BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.214^{r-v}; *BoC*, 265 (ll.1122-4).
[88] CUL MS Ii.3.21, f.22^{v}; Machan, 1p4, 9.
[89] BL MS Add. 10340, f.6^{r}; NLW MS Peniarth 393, f.4^{r}; SCL MS 113, f.7^{r}.
[90] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.220^{v}; *BoC*, 279 (ll.1532-4).
[91] CUL MS Ii.3.21, f.32^{v}; Machan, 1m7, 15; NLW MS Peniarth 393, f.8^{r}.
[92] BL MS Add. 10340, f.8^{v}; SCL MS 113, f.11^{r}.

of Counfort in three of the five examples, and NLW MS Peniarth 393 and SCL MS 113 agree with four of the five examples. On such minor variance we cannot say with any assurance which is the more likely textual affiliation. However, given the possible connection of BodL MS Auct. F.3.5 with the South West of England, it is an interesting speculation to compare the Auct manuscript with SCL MS 113, its close textual cousin.

This is because Salisbury, Cathedral Library, MS 113 was once the property of Thomas Cyrcetur, a canon of Salisbury Cathedral, who died circa 1452.[93] Cyrcetur was educated at Oxford, though was neither Wycliffite nor vehemently anti-Wycliffite in his leanings.[94] He was vicar in Wellow in Somerset by 1413, then made a canon of Bath and Wells in 1425/6, then, additionally of Salisbury in 1430/1. Cyrcetur's theology was largely driven by pastoral concerns, and this is evident through his writing and the books that he owned or had access to through the libraries in Wells and Salisbury: a well-thumbed copy of John de Burgh's *Pupilla Oculi*, a copy of the *Veritas theologie* which was ascribed to Thomas Aquinas but actually written by Hugh Ripelin of Strasbourg, and John of Wales's *Communiloquium*, and many anonymous fragments and collections of sermons and sermon-making manuals; texts which would have supported the work of a priest dedicated to preaching, both to clerics and to the laity, and his books contain notes suggesting preaching in English as well as in Latin.[95] Furthermore, Cyrcetur as an individual and Salisbury Cathedral collectively took seriously the responsibility to support scholars, and it was during Cyrcetur's time as canon at Salisbury that the chapter undertook to build a new library in the 1440s.[96] Indeed, SCL MS 113, although now bound in paper endleaves with watermarks dating to

[93] See S. M. Lakin, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cathedral Library of Salisbury* (London: Spottiswoode and Co, 1880), 22. Also, see the unpublished catalogue notes of Salisbury Cathedral Library, 86-7.
[94] See R. M. Ball, 'Thomas Cyrcetur, a Fifteenth-century Theologian and Preacher', in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 37 (1986), 205-39.
[95] Ball, 'Thomas Cyrcetur', 206, 208, 210, 218, 220-1, 224. See also on the kind of books Cyrcetur had access to: Morton W. Bloomfield, 'A Prelimary List of Incipits of Latin Works on the Virtues and Vices, Mainly of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries', in *Traditio*, 11 (1955), 290.
[96] Ball, 'Thomas Cyrcetur', 208.

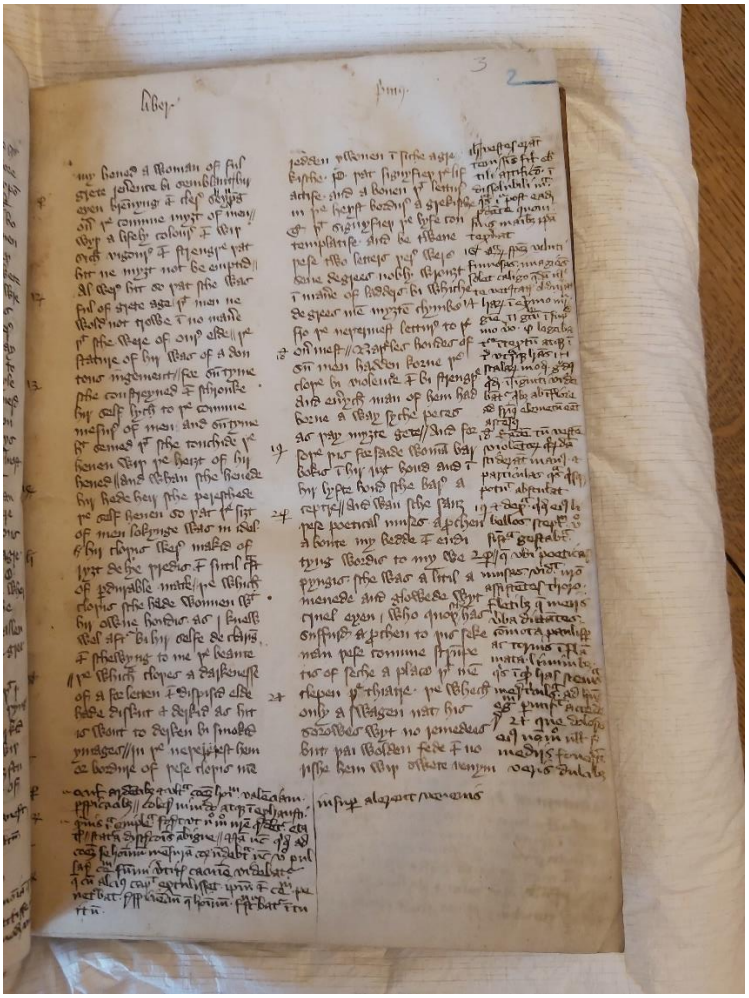
1813, has a rust mark on the last folio which suggests it was added to the chained library which Cyrcetur helped to create.[97]

Compare this history of the Salisbury *Boece* manuscript to BodL MS Auct. F.3.5. They were created around the same time, in the mid-fifteenth century, and both show signs of having been in a fifteenth-century chained library. SCL MS 113 has connections to Somerset and Wiltshire, BodL MS Auct. F.3.5 to Dorset and Devon. They were used in similar ways. Cyrcetur's interest in scholastic writing and sermonizing is reminiscent of the texts included in BodL MS Auct. F.3.5; a fragment of *distinctiones*, a text by John of Wales, and both manuscripts contain a Boethian text and a text by Peter of Blois. Even the manner in which *The Boke of Counfort* is composed is reminiscent of Cyrcetur. *The Boke of Counfort* is both authoritative yet exegetical, aiming to elucidate while be accessible, quoting Scripture and philosophical texts hand in hand. *The Boke of Counfort* breaks off at the end of the first book, while Cyrcetur wrote the Latin into the first few pages of his copy of *Boece*, breaking off mid-phrase as if he ran out of steam or needed to move on to other things.[98]

The evidence connecting these two manuscripts is circumstantial, and there is no positive evidence to suggest that Cyrcetur wrote *The Boke of Counfort*. If the manuscripts are related, then clearly *The Boke of Counfort* is a copy, with significant scribal errors, and probably created a few years after Cyrcetur's death. However, at the very least, this description of Cyrcetur and Salisbury Cathedral is significant in showing the kind of scholar who created *The Boke of Counfort*, or the kind of environment in which BodL MS Auct. F.3.5 was created, and the kind of library in which it was held and was deemed to be useful to clergy, scholars, and perhaps to the laity as well. The concern for pastoral enlightenment and scholarly access is the same in both cases.

---

[97] This is on SCL MS 113, f.95^{v}.
[98] The Latin is held in the margins of SCL MS 113, ff.2^{v}-3^{v}.



Salisbury, Cathedral Library, MS 113, f.2[r]

How the Compiler Used Chaucer

It is easy enough to see that the compiler used Chaucer's translation of the *Consolatio* as his base text. Chaucer writes ''I woot wel', quod I, and answerede that God is the bygynnyng of alle', and the compiler follows: 'I wot wel quod Bois, that god is the begynnynge of alle.'[99] However, the compiler's text is rarely as straightforward an adaptation as this, where the only change is that Chaucer's first-person voice has been modified to the compiler's third-person narrative. More often, the compiler uses Chaucer's text closely enough for us to recognise the use of Chaucer as a base text, but frequently with

[99] See CUL MS Ii.3.21, f.31[v]; Machan, 1p6, 14; BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.219[v]; *BoC*, 277 (ll.1474-5).

phrases moved around. The compiler also habitually switches Chaucer's adjective or abstract noun for one of his own and he often expands single words into curial doublets. For instance, Chaucer writes:

> how that, in the present syhte of God, may ben achieved and performyd swiche thinges as every felonos man hath conceived in thowht ayeins innocentz.[100]

However, the compiler writes:

> how that in the present siȝt of god sweche thynges may be performyde as euery maliciowse schrewe has conceyuede in his thouȝt agaynes conscience and innocence.[101]

Here the compiler omits Chaucer's 'acheved', and turns around 'performyd swiche thinges' to become 'swyche thynges may be performyde'. The compiler changes the description of the 'felonos man' to the more emotive 'maliciowse schrewe', and adds 'conscience' to create the curial doublet of 'conscience and innocence'. There is only one extant copy of *The Boke of Counfort*, so there are limited data to explain the changes to Chaucer's text, but in the corpus of *Boece* manuscripts there are no variants recorded for this section of the text.[102] We can therefore hypothesize that the changes are the choice of the compiler. The choice of the word 'schrewe' is particularly interesting. Certainly Chaucer uses it or related terms ('shrewede', 'shrewednesse') on numerous occasions in other passages of *Boece*, and on four occasions in Book 1, the only Book that we can be sure the compiler knew.[103] While the compiler may have been working from a textual variant not extant, the degree of difference throughout the work makes it more likely that he is revealing the idiomatic influence of Chaucer's language even while he is rewording the particular passage from Chaucer which is his source here, just as he did in the prologue with his use of 'comun profite' from *Boece*, as noted above.

---

[100] CUL MS Ii.3.21, f.23^{r}; Machan, 1p4, 10.
[101] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.215^{r}; *BoC*, 266 (ll. 1163-6).
[102] As recorded in the notes for *Boece* in *Riverside*, 1153.
[103] See Machan, i) 1p4, 10, l.105; ii) 1p4, 10, l.107; iii) 1m5, 12, l.25, iv) 1m5, 12, l.26.

The use of curial or clergial prose is worthy of particular note. It taps into the style of French courtly literature of the fourteenth century which was then adapted into English legal and diplomatic documents in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[104] Its use by Chaucer in *The Tale of Melibee* in the fourteenth century is indicative of its leap into literary works. However, the ease and frequency with which the compiler uses curial doublets to expand Chaucer's text of *Boece* may also be a reflection that, like Chaucer, the writer was someone who had professional experience of legal or diplomatic documents and letters. The use of curial doublets, found regularly in *The Boke of Counfort*, appears to be primarily a stylistic device, and may have been used to formalise language and make it more ceremonial, whilst simultaneously using pairs or even triplets of 'mutually defining near-synonyms' to clarify the meaning of the language.[105] Given the absorption of glossing into the text and the use of gloss-like writing, it therefore makes sense for the compiler to use curial doublets to create a kind of *id est* clarification of language which had the double advantage of adding a stylistic flourish to the writing.

The small linguistic changes noted above are scattered throughout *The Boke of Counfort*, and the use of Chaucer's work must be understood to be loose in this way. It is hard to know whether the compiler was masking Chaucer's identity as the author of the borrowed text, or whether he simply had no concern that his reader should be aware of Chaucer's influence. However, it is evident that the prologue actively directs the attention of the reader to Boethius as author, as discussed earlier, while Chaucer is not mentioned. Furthermore, the compiler often takes Chaucer's Latinate language from *Boece* and exchanges it for words with Germanic roots. Chaucer consciously used a 'borrowed' vocabulary in *Boece*. He took language with its roots in Latin or Old French and amended it to include an English suffix, to

[104] For more on the curial style see J. D. Burnley, 'Curial Prose in England', *Speculum*, 61 (1986), 593-614; Imogen Marcus, 'A comparative investigation of anaphoric reference devices in Anglo Norman and Middle English personal letters', *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, 57 (2022), 225-77.
[105] Burnley, 'Curial Prose', 596.

such an extent that *Boece* becomes a linguistic playground, a text in which he was able to be 'lexically experimental'.[106] One can see in the following three examples Chaucer's conscious use of Latin and sometimes the French of Jean de Meun, which is then rendered in *The Boke of Counfort* into a different kind of English, one less obviously linked to Latin and French, in a less educated register, and on one occasion below, omitting the Latinate word 'contrarios' entirely. The italics in the examples are mine.

Boethius:	Nunc quia fallacem mutavit nubile vultum, Protrahit ingratas *impia* vita moras.[107]
Jean de Meun:	Orendroit pour ce que ele, oscure, a mué son decevables voult, ma *felonnesse* vie m'aloigne desegreable demeure de mort.[108]
Chaucer:	But now, for Fortune, clowdy, hath chaungyd hyre deceyvable cheere to meward, myn *unpietous* lyf draweth along unagreable dwellynges in me.[109]
Boke of Counfort:	but now sone sche hath withdrawe hir be gylynge and clowdy semblaunde and chaungynge hir chere of welthfulnes unto disesy nedefulnes, my *unkynde* bodily lif drawes alonge and agayn my wille is abidynge in me.[110]
Boethius:	Quisquis *composito* serenus aevo.[111]
Jean de Meun:	Quiconques hom, renommésde aage *ordené*.[112]
Chaucer:	Whoso it be that is cleer of vertu, sad, and wel *ordinat* of levynge.[113]
Boke of Counfort:	if a man be clere in wertue, sadde and wel *undurstonde* in his leuynge.[114]
Boethius:	Hoc tantum dixerim ultimatum esse *adversae* fortunae sarcinam.[115]
Jean de Meun:	Mais tant en di je li derreniers fessaus de fortune *perverse*.[116]

[106] This is the argument put forward by Christopher Cannon, *The Making of Chaucer's English: A Study of Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 122-6.
[107] Tester, 1m1, 132.
[108] V. L. Dedeck-Héry, ed., 'Boethius' *De Consolatione* by Jean de Meun', *Mediaeval Studies* 14 (1952), 165-275 (172).
[109] Machan, 1m3, 3 (ll.15-7).
[110] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.200^{r}; *BoC*, 232 (ll.158-62).
[111] Tester, 1m4, 144.
[112] Dedeck-Héry, 'Jean de Meun', 1m4, 176 (l.1).
[113] Machan, 1m5, 7 (l.1).
[114] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.210^{r}; *BoC*, 254-5 (ll.838-9).
[115] Tester, 1p4, 156.
[116] Dedeck-Héry, 'Jean de Meun', 1p4, 181 (ll.158-9).

Chaucer: And thus moche I seye: that the laste charge of *contrarios* fortune is this.[117]

Boke of Counfort: And thus meche I say: that the lest charge of fortune is.[118]

What we can see above is Chaucer's fidelity to the Latin and French texts, so that 'impia' becomes 'unpietous', and 'ordené' becomes 'ordinat', creating what Samuel Johnson described as 'a version strictly literal' in its lexis.[119] In contrast, the compiler changes 'unpietous' to 'unkynde', and 'ordinat' to 'undurstondynge', perhaps with a concern to make his text accessible to his intended audience.

One way to explain this use of language in *Boece* is to understand it as 'an academic textbook', written using rules of medieval translation handed down from Jerome's translation of the Vulgate, with assumptions about grammar and glossing that were part of a standard school curriculum.[120] It helps to bear in mind the great influence of rhetorical theories of translation which developed in the classical Roman period and which evolved into slightly different rhetorical practices in medieval Europe.[121] This 'rhetorical' translation was a simultaneous process of veneration and subjugation (as above with the use of the word 'schrewe'), a theoretical model which evolved throughout the medieval period, so that Chaucer's decision to translate the *Consolatio* as an academic text can be seen as part of 'a well-established Latin tradition of theorizing and practising prose style'.[122] Further, to follow a formal, academic tradition makes sense in light of Minnis and Machan's speculation, discussed in the previous chapter, that *Boece* was written with an aristocratic audience in mind, where care for form would have been supremely in Chaucer's mind. This echoes the

[117] Machan, 1p4, 11 (l.167).
[118] BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, f.216^{r}; *BoC*, 268 (ll.1237-8).
[119] See Samuel Johnson, *The Idler*, vol 2, 3rd edn (London: T. Davies, J. Newbery, and T. Payne, 1767), 91.
[120] See A. J. Minnis and Tim William Machan, 'The Boece as Late-Medieval Translation' in Minnis, *Chaucer*, 167-88 (168-9).
[121] As put forward by Copeland, 30-1.
[122] On Chaucer's use of prose in *Boece*, see Eleanor Johnson, *Practising Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: Ethics and the Mixed Form in Chaucer, Gower, Usk, and Hoccleve* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 55-7.

translation by Jean de Meun from Latin to French, where a work also written using academic methods could nonetheless be directed towards a lay or courtly culture.[123]

Conclusion

Whatever Chaucer's aims, the compiler used Chaucer's translation, and whilst he used much of the didactic apparatus one would associate with an academic text, such as commentary material, glosses, and exegetical interpolations, the small adjustments to (primarily Chaucer's) language throughout *The Boke of Counfort* have an impact on the nature of the whole. It has been argued, when considering Trevet's process of commentary writing, that his muddled references and use of poor exemplars were often the result of lack of access, that he worked from the best, often the only, manuscripts that he could get hold of.[124] We may see the compiler's use of Latin didactic apparatus and assume that the same lack of access was in play here, and that he only created a text in English because Chaucer's translation was the version of the *Consolatio* to which he had consistent access. However, given the very large number of manuscripts still extant of the *Consolatio*, compared to the nine copies of *Boece*, if access had been a difficulty, it is more likely that the compiler would have worked from a Latin text than from Chaucer's English translation.[125] Moreover, the compiler had access to commentaries which might have circulated alongside the Latin text (as we have seen in other chapters). It is therefore more likely that the compiler, as well as producing this exercise for his own use, also created a text that was intentionally English, for a wider readership.

---

[123] See Copeland, 133-5.
[124] As argued by Beryl Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960), 59, 64.
[125] Compare the many copies extant of the *Consolatio*, as listed in the four volumes of *Codices Boethiani*, with the nine manuscripts, one fragment, and two printed texts derived from manuscripts no longer extant, which exist of Chaucer's *Boece*, as listed by Machan.

What we are able to see, the unadorned *Boke of Counfort* in BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, is a product to be read by its intended audience without previous knowledge or the need for cross-referencing with other works, and its palaeographical cleanness is resonant with the distillation of multiple unacknowledged sources into 'a single narrative'.[126] The scribe made two significant errors in copying, so this is clearly not a holograph manuscript, but there may nonetheless be a similarity between the intention of the compiler for his reader and the intention of the scribe in creating this manuscript as he did.[127]

This chapter has already discussed the kind of role played by the creator of the text of *The Boke of Counfort*. The title 'compiler' frames his work very much as a process of excerpting Chaucer's *Boece* and other source material, and joining up the fragments. However, *The Boke of Counfort* is more than a compilation of other texts. The changes to Chaucer's language and the additions to the commentary are the compiler's attempt to tip the balance, to make himself a commentator in his own right, making the transition into English of the textual apparatus found in many copies of the *Consolatio* in Latin, as we have seen in so many copies of the *Consolatio* in previous chapters of this thesis. Indeed, Machan sees this most clearly when he notes that BodL MS Auct. F.3.5 is 'perhaps most comprehensible not as an aberration but as an extension of tendencies already latent in the work's textual history.'[128] If the work is derivative of previous commentators, then this is an intentional placing of the work in the mould of earlier Latin commentaries, to identify himself as one of the 'lesser mortals' (in a phrase already quoted) to the 'glossa ordinaria' that is Boethian commentary.[129] Like so much medieval Boethian literature and commentary, both that discussed earlier in this thesis and in the chapter still to come, it is a new text that alludes to the authority of the old.

[126] This distillation is described by Matthew Fisher, *Scribal Authorship*, 69-70.
[127] See footnote 11.
[128] Machan, xxviii.
[129] See fn.31.

6. Walton's *Boethius*: text and commentary as *translatio*

This thesis has so far followed a rough trajectory of reception to the *Consolatio* in England from the use and reuse of twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts to the later adaptation and response to the text through commentary and translation. This chapter takes the journey to its logical conclusion. It is concerned with John Walton's early fifteenth-century verse translation of the *Consolatio*, and in particular its accompanying commentary, which occurs sporadically in one manuscript, now deficient through loss of leaves, as well as in print. While *The Boke of Counfort* represents a response in English, but in only one extant manuscript, Walton's *Boethius*, a near contemporary to *The Boke of Counfort*, was a more successful project. The translation itself covers all five books of the *Consolatio*, as well as adding new prefatory material. Further, not only are there multiple extant witnesses to Walton's *Boethius*, but the text with its associated commentary made it into print, and while it is not the last translation of the *Consolatio* to begin in manuscript form, it does mark the end of an era, with the next English adaptation being Colvile's much later printed translation, in 1556.[1]

John Walton wrote his Middle English verse translation in 1410. It exists in twenty-three partial or complete manuscript copies, and it was printed at Tavistock Abbey in 1525, an early example of provincial printing in England.[2] The Tavistock Boethius also includes the commentary to the text, and took as its exemplar a single manuscript witness, Copenhagen,

[1] On later translations, see Brian Donaghey, Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr., Philip Edward Phillips, and Paul E. Szarmach, eds., *Remaking Boethius: The English Language Translation Tradition of The Consolation of Philosophy* (Tempe AR: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2019), 92-7.
[2] This is *ESTC* S113387. See Lucy Lewis, 'The *Tavistock Boethius*: One of the Earliest Examples of Provincial Printing' in *Printing Places: Locations of Book Production & Distribution Since 1500*, ed. by John Hinks and Catherine Armstrong (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2005), 1-14.

Royal Library, MS Thott 403 2º, which is the particular focus of this chapter.[3] This may be the earliest manuscript of a commentary to the *Consolatio* in English, given that the manuscript and its commentary look to be close in age to the composition of the verse translation, and its nearest competitor in age of composition, *The Boke of Counfort of Bois*, is likely mid-fifteenth century, and in any case only covers the first book. This chapter considers how the verse text is represented in the extant manuscript witnesses and how the commentary is situated alongside the primary verse text. Beyond this codicological analysis, it is also important first to understand how the text was constructed from various source materials and second to demonstrate the distinct iterations of the commentary represented in the Thott and Tavistock texts. In this way we can consider the purpose, effect, and readership of Walton's commentary.

The history of Walton and his verse translation is sketchy. While many copies of the translation are extant, they are mostly anonymous. Only two copies (Oxford, Balliol College, MS 316A and Oxford, Christ Church, MS 151) identify the work as 'translatus per Johannem Waltoun'.[4] A further manuscript, Philadelphia, Rosenbach Foundation, MS 1083/30, erroneously names the translator as 'Johannem Tebaud alias Watyrbeche', an attribution that has not been explained. Nearly half the surviving manuscripts contain a colophon identifying the writer as 'capellanum Johannem', a title that accordingly passed into some modern scholarship, though the true identity was deduced and then confirmed in the twentieth century, including the discovery of anagrammed acrostics of Walton's name.[5]

---

[3] See Irma Taavitsainen, *The Index of Middle English Prose, Handlist 10: Manuscripts in Scandinavian Collections* (Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 1994), 18. A digitised copy of Thott is available at <http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/627/eng> [accessed 2 August 2023].

[4] The identification of John Walton is on OBC MS 316A, f.109^{v} and OCC MS 151, f.127^{r}. See also A. S. G. Edwards, 'Reading John Walton's Boethius in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries' in *Spaces*, 35-49 (35-6).

[5] 'John the Chaplain' is referred to in Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Victor Watts, rev. edn (London: Penguin, 1999), xi. On the identification of Walton, see Science, xlii-l; Ian Johnson, 'New Evidence for the Authorship of Walton's Boethius' in *Notes and Queries* (March, 1996), 19-21.

Little is known about Walton himself. The manuscript evidence describes him as a chaplain, and lately a canon at Osney ('nuper canonicum de Oseneye'), an Augustinian house near Oxford. Eight of the manuscripts describe the text as 'liber Boecii de Consolacione philosophie de Latino in anglicum translatus Anno domini millesimo cccc^{mo} x^{o}', that is, translated in 1410.[6] The poem's first editor, Mark Science, also identifies Walton as very likely the same man made a papal chaplain in 1398.[7] Finally, in four concluding stanzas not found in the extant manuscripts but in the Tavistock Boethius (where its exemplar, the Copenhagen manuscript, has lost leaves), the text identifies the patron who commissioned the text as Elizabeth Beauchamp, daughter of Thomas Berkeley, the fourth Lord Berkeley, and wife of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick.[8] Thomas Berkeley is known as a commissioner of works from Latin into English, most notably of John Trevisa, though Beauchamp appears to have been a keen promoter of new translated works in her own right.

This chapter considers Walton's verse text and contextualises its manuscript history before focusing on the clusters of commentary found in Copenhagen, Royal Library, MS Thott 403 2°, and in a more complete form in the Tavistock Boethius. Analysis of the commentary adds an important element to the story of Boethian commentary and therefore of medieval Boethian transmission – it is arguably as much a part of the tradition of 'glossa ordinaria' to the *Consolatio* as the Latin works from which it is adapted. Furthermore, discussion of the commentary is supported by an appendix at the end of this chapter, which tabulates the commentary's textual variants. This chapter also adds pertinent data regarding the authorship of the commentary and its nature complementary to the poem, where verse and

---

[6] See Science, xlii.
[7] Science, xlvii.
[8] For more on the commission and writing of the translation, see Edwards in *Spaces*, 35-49 (35); Ralph Hanna III, 'Sir Thomas Berkeley and His Patronage', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), 878-916 (899-902); Ralph Hanna, 'Augustinian Canons and Middle English Literature' in *The English Medieval Book: Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards, Vincent Gillespie, and Ralph Hanna (London: The British Library, 2000), 27-42 (32-3).

gloss are closely interwoven, each informing the other. I shall later in the chapter confirm the overwhelming likelihood that Walton was the author of both the translation and the commentary. To avoid confusion before I reach that point, I shall refer to the commentary's author as Walton from the outset.

Clarifying the origins of the translation

The text of the verse translation bears comparison with the Latin original and with Chaucer's *Boece*, as well as with the Latin commentary tradition, though it is treated briefly here, primarily to provide context for the discussion of the commentary which follows.[9] Walton's text, in its most complete form, is written in a thousand and two stanzas, broken down into (i) a *prefacio translatoris*, (ii) a *prologus*, (iii) Book 1, (iv) Book 2, (v) Book 3, (vi) a *prefacio translatoris* to Books 4 and 5, (vi) Book 4, and (vii) Book 5. This is the form found at its fullest extent in Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 103, and which therefore understandably formed the basis of Science's EETS edition in 1927.[10] The stanzas up to the preface to Books 4 and 5 are written in eight lines of decasyllabic in a rhyme form *ababbcbc*, a French ballade form that Chaucer used in the *Monk's Tale*, another poem which speaks of men brought to tragedy by the vagaries of Fortune.[11]

This is only one way in which Walton taps into multiple existing literary traditions. Although Chaucer's *Boece* is a prose text, Walton uses a Chaucerian verse form, and it is a reasonable assumption that Walton would have been aware of Chaucer's other work. This is reinforced by the change introduced by the preface to Books 4 and 5 from octets to rhyme

[9] For further on particularly the use of Boethius's Latin text in tandem with Chaucer's *Boece* and Trevet's commentary, see Ian Johnson, 'Placing Walton's Boethius' in Hoenen and Nauta, 217-42 (219-23).
[10] As Science notes, xvii-xviii, the text in LCL MS 103 is complete but for the loss of one folio in Book 1, which is supplied in the EETS edition with text from BL MS Royal 18.A.xiii.
[11] On the verse form in Walton's translation, see Nicholas Myklebust, *Misreading English Meter: 1400-1514*, (unpublished thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2012) 501-574.

royal, which Walton then continues to use to the end of the work.[12] Not only is rhyme royal the verse form Chaucer used in *Troilus and Criseyde*, but one can also argue that Walton alludes to Chaucer as well as to Boethius as *il miglior fabbro*.[13]

One might expect Walton, if he closely adhered to Chaucer's text, to include text from the glosses, discussed in the previous two chapters, likely written by Chaucer and included in most manuscript copies of *Boece*, the glosses having been integrated into the body text rather than situated in the margins. In fact, the picture here is mixed. Of eleven integrated glosses in Chaucer's *Boece*, Walton makes a clear reference to only the first four in the translation, and includes the fifth in the commentary.[14] For instance, in 1p4, Chaucer's *Boece* reads:

> Whan that Theodoric, the kyng of Gothes, in a dere yer hadde hise gerneres ful of corn and comaundede that no man ne sholde byen no corn tyl his corn weere solde, and that at a grevos deere prys, Boece withstood that ordinaunce and overcom it, knowynge al thys the kyng hymself.[15]

Walton then weaves the gloss into the verse text:

> And when þe province þat highte Campanye
> Was sore oppressed in a dere ȝere,
> Þat no man muste selle corne and bye
> Til þat þe kyng had solde vp his garnere
> At suche a prys so greuous and so dere
> Þat pore men were harmed and anoyed,
> Þan I wiþ-stood þe kynges officere;
> Wityng þe kyng; þat statut I destroyed.[16]

The requirement that the king's grain must be sold first is not found in Boethius's Latin, but in the integrated gloss in Chaucer's *Boece*, which is then absorbed into Walton's text.[17] This use of Chaucer's glosses changes in 2m1, where Chaucer's gloss is as follows:

---

[12] Also on the verse form, see Science, lxvii.
[13] On Boethius's use of metre, see Eleanor Johnson, *Practising Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: Ethics and the Mixed Form in Chaucer, Gower, Usk, and Hoccleve* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 30-7.
[14] The eleven glosses found in most copies of *Boece*, including CUL MS Ii.3.21, are: 1p4 (ll.41-7), 1p4 (ll.161-4), 2p1, 2m1, 2p2, 2p6, 3p9, 3m10, 3m11, 5m3, 5m4.
[15] Machan, 1p4, 8.
[16] Science, 33.
[17] Furthermore, Walton mimics Chaucer's padding out of the metre with the word 'so' in 'so greuous and so dere'. Compare with lines from Book III of *Troilus and Criseyde*: 'And over al this, so wel koude he devyse/Of sentement and in so unkouth wise/Al his array, that every lovere thoughte/That al was wel, what so he seyde or wroughte. *Riverside*, ll. 1796-1799, 537.

> *Glose*. 'Tragedye' is to seyn a dite of a prosperite for a tyme that endith in wrecchydnesse.[18]

However, in Walton's verse translation there is no sign of the additional gloss, but instead it is integrated into Walton's commentary, which supports the argument that Walton was the author of both primary text and commentary:

> Tragedies ben dites mad of certeyn persones Which bigynneth in welthe & prosperite & endith in meschef [19]

Compare the choice of language in Chaucer's *Boece* with the Walton commentary. Walton adds a curial doublet that does not exist in the source, and transposes the longstanding English word 'wrecchydnesse' for the Anglo-Norman borrowing 'meschef'.[20] Just as Chaucer often makes a Latinate choice of word to upgrade his language, so Walton does the same to Chaucer.[21]

There is a further Chaucerian connection which may also be referred to here. If Walton was familiar with the *Monk's Tale*, he would also have seen Chaucer's definition of tragedy, included in the prologue.[22] As both of Chaucer's definitions use similar language (the repetition of 'prosperitee' and 'endith in wrecchydnesse' becoming 'endeth wrecchedly') either borrowing by Walton is possible, though the length of the text from Walton's commentary (seventeen words of prose) most closely echoes the *Boece* gloss (sixteen words of prose). This is the last reference to the Chaucerian glosses included, placed now in the commentary rather than the verse. The inclusion of Chaucer's glosses in both poem and commentary, but only in earlier sections of the text, raises the possibility that one person worked on a concurrent project of text and commentary in two phases, the first using a copy

---

[18] Machan, 1p2, 18.
[19] This is on CRL MS Thott 403 2°, f.11ᵛ. This gloss is omitted in Science's edition.
[20] On this use of doublets, see J. D. Burnley, 'Curial Prose in England', *Speculum*, 61 (1986), 593-614.
[21] This is in contrast to the anonymous compiler in *The Boke of Counfort*, discussed in the previous chapter, who switches Latinate language for Germanic.
[22] See *Riverside*, ll. 1973-1977, 241.

with the glosses, and then one without. It is this work on verse and commentary in tandem which increases the likelihood, asserted earlier, that the author of the commentary was Walton. It also suggests that Walton was working with both Boethius's Latin as well as Chaucer's Middle English in front of him. Practically speaking, if Walton drew on multiple texts he was giving himself more options, and as he notes in the prologue to Book 4, he found his 'wittes ben vnmete/The sentence for to saue in metre trewe'.[23] Indeed, the argument has been well made that just as Chaucer drew on Boethius's Latin, as well as Trevet's commentary and the French vernacular of Jean de Meun, Walton likewise drew on Boethius, Trevet, and Chaucer, not in an Archimedean sense of one source displacing another, but rather in a complementing process of respecting the Boethian language, using Trevet to expand his ideas, with Chaucer used as a source of linguistic rendering; 'less a prime repository of Boethian 'sentence', and more a secondary one of 'verba'.[24]

As noted previously of *The Boke of Counfort*, the distinctions made by modern scholars of what constitutes translation, adaptation, and commentary, become blurred in the late medieval text, where the nature of the work can be multifaceted, and the resulting text is then further layered through layout and marginalia to form a complex structure in the resulting manuscript. The nature of such intellectual experimentation can be seen in concrete examples, when we consider how, while both Chaucer and Walton worked with Boethius, Trevet, and a vernacular translation in front of them, they produced works of such strikingly different character, regardless of overlaps in language. It is possible to argue that Chaucer has a greater 'anxiety of authority', seeking to render the Boethian text as faithfully as possible and sacrificing an element of style in the process.[25] However, if one accepts that each writer had quite different intentions in the creation of each work, Chaucer to create an academic

[23] Science, 210.
[24] As argued by Johnson, 'Placing Walton's Boethius', 220-1.
[25] Johnson, 'Placing Walton's Boethius', 221.

work that presents commentary and hermeneutic interpretation as translation, and Walton to present a work academically based but in the more artful form of verse, then the outcomes make sense and one can see that both writers are successful in creating the complex knitting together of source material in their individual contexts. Intention meets source material to produce a woven material text.[26]

Some copies of Walton's *Boethius*

This intention is integral to the functioning of Walton's text in its material form in Thott and Tavistock. To facilitate an analysis of them, it is helpful to begin with a discussion of other manuscripts which act as a point of comparison, allowing a more rounded consideration of the Thott manuscript. Of the twenty-three copies of Walton's poem still in existence, what follows is a brief analysis of six, chosen for their varied material characteristics and textual apparatus, before turning our attention to the primary source material of this chapter.

This survey starts with a manuscript that has little addition, and then works outwards to examine manuscripts with different kinds of evidence of readerly interest. The first to be considered, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 100 is a fifteenth-century manuscript, written on paper in black ink, in a neat anglicana hand.[27] The decorative scheme is standard for manuscripts of this period. New books have a decorated initial in blue and red with foliate infill that spills into the left-hand margin. New prose and metre sections begin with a decorated initial in red and black, and each stanza is separated by a gap one unit high, with

[26] Regarding the more artful form of writing in verse, Christopher Cannon, *From Literacy to Literature: England, 1300-1400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 138-45, persuasively argues for the writing of verse as a basic form of literacy, which was to be emulated where possible.
[27] 'MS. Douce 100', *MMOL*. The existence of copies of Walton's *Boethius* on paper is not unusual. Edwards notes that four copies are on paper: Philadelphia, Rosenbach Foundation MS 1083/30, DUL MS Cosin V.ii.15, BodL MS Douce 100, and Cambridge, St John's College, MS G.29. In fact, there is another, as BL MS Harley 43 (discussed below) is also on paper, with just a few folios of parchment. See Edwards in *Spaces*, 49.

the initial letter of each stanza in red. Following the tradition in Latin copies of the *Consolatio* (as well as copies of Chaucer's *Boece*), new prose and metre sections are marked in the outer margin in red, as well as by rubricated incipits and explicits. The final verso is darkened, suggesting that the manuscript spent some time without hard bindings, and there are missing folios.[28] There is also a line missing from 3p9, with a gap left for its later addition, perhaps where the exemplar was illegible or the scribe 'does not believe it is right or that he has read it rightly and so leaves a gap to solve the puzzle later'.[29] Significantly for this study, the manuscript shows very little in the way of marginal addition, except for a few minor corrections and *id est* notes in the margins, such as to write 'byschop' next to a line about Pope John (likely post-Reformation), to correct a spelling of 'Boece', to change 'thenne' to 'heyn' and change 'say' to 'saw'.[30] There is more than one marginal hand, most of which look to be roughly contemporary with the scribal hand, although the correcting hand could be the scribal hand adopting a more secretary form. There was, therefore, more than one person, be it scribe or reader, keen to read and understand a correct text, though such emending of the text is in sharp contrast to the volume of addition to Thott, as well as to some of the other manuscripts later in this survey.

While BodL MS Douce 100 shows care for textual accuracy, Durham, University Library, MS Cosin V.ii.15 contrasts with it in being more textually problematic, though this is not apparent at first glance. It is a mid-fifteenth-century copy of Walton's *Boethius*, written on paper, but supported by parchment flyleaves and now held in a modern binding.[31] Its style

[28] There is a leaf missing from BodL MS Douce 100 after ff.18, 29, 45, two leaves missing after f.48, and one apiece missing after ff.100 and 103. These all appear to be later losses.
[29] The missing line is on BodL MS Douce 100, f.51^{v}, the last line of stanza 449. For more on gaps in manuscripts see Daniel Wakelin, 'When Scribes Won't Write: Gaps in Middle English Books' in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 36 (2014), 249-78 (250).
[30] Marginal corrections such as those on BodL MS Douce 100, ff.4^{r} and 5^{v}. There is a *nota* mark and manicula on folio 46^{r} pointing to stanza 392, 3p5 regarding the sword of Damocles, and on f.52^{r} someone has copied out a line from the adjacent stanza, 454, 3p9.
[31] 'Durham University Library MS. Cosin V.ii.15', *Durham University Library Archives & Special Collections Catalogue*, https://reed.dur.ac.uk/xtf/view?docId=ark/32150_s1wh246s21j.xml [accessed 26 February 2023];

of script is distinct from most other copies of the text, written with clear elements of secretary, and it does not conform to the standard patterns of decoration, written in bracketed stanzas without prose and metre markings and no foliate decoration. This manuscript, at first sight a book constructed to a reasonable standard for an academic or non-aristocratic reader, is very muddled. Written on more than one grade of paper, with text boxes drawn in smudgy brown on some folios and in lead elsewhere, the text begins deficient in the *prefacio translatoris* due to lost folios and has several omissions and blocks of text mislocated, from which we can infer loose folios or errors in the exemplar.[32] The codex is the descendant of something made without a great deal of care, from the resources – both textual and material – available at the time. Indeed, Book 1 may have a textual affinity to BodL MS e Mus 53, discussed below, but subsequent books do not, suggesting a piecemeal approach to the copying.[33]

A seventeenth-century hand more than once erroneously attributes the text to John Lydgate.[34] It was part of the library of George Davenport, a seventeenth-century chaplain to Durham Cathedral, whose book collection, discussed earlier in this thesis, makes up a sizeable proportion of Bishop Cosin's library, now held in the Durham University Barker Library.[35]

A. S. G. Edwards, 'Medieval manuscripts owned by William Browne of Tavistock (1590/1?-1643/5)', in *Books and Collectors 1200-1700: Essays presented to Andrew Watson*, ed. by James P. Carley and Colin G.C. Tite (London: British Library, 1997), 441-449 (442, 446).

[32] The online catalogue notes several different papers used in the construction of DUL MS Cosin V.ii.15, including a thinner chancery paper. It is important to distinguish between the lost folios at the start of the manuscript which may well be a later loss, and the mix-up of stanzas which are likely the result of a poor exemplar. Muddles in the text include, for example, the omission of the second half of stanza 146 from 1p6, which throws the bracketing of every stanza following up to the end of the prose section; following the first three lines of stanza 187 in 2m2 the text jumps to stanza 350, 3p2; three lines are omitted from stanza 362, 3p3 which throws the bracketing of the next three stanzas; and the continuity of text that begins at stanza 350 continues until the first two lines of stanza 370, 3m3 then jumps back to the last line of stanza 207, 2p4.

[33] The textual affinity was suggested by Science, xvi.

[34] Science, xv.

[35] As argued by A. I. Doyle, 'The Cosin Manuscripts and George Davenport', *The Book Collector*, 53 (2004), 32-45 (40).

The folios are riddled throughout with later scribbles, pen trials and childish doodles, inky smudges, marks, and indentations of having been used as the support for work on other folios, and a fox and geese game grid has been drawn onto the back of the parchment flyleaf.[36] There are also faint stamp marks on a few folios that may have been made by an early modern bookseller. The book does not include any commentary or significant marginalia. There are numerous small notes in more than one early modern hand, including adding the Greek to the margin from the original Boethius text, but nothing contemporary to the creation of the manuscript or soon after.[37] Cumulatively this would show that fifteenth-century readers did not need to read Walton's verse with a commentary, though it does not negate the possibility, given the prevalence of Latin commentary manuscripts available at this time, that the reader would have supplemented his reading with, for instance, a copy of Trevet or William of Conches.

Bigger than either of the manuscripts described above, and of a higher status, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Mus 53 is bound in leather-covered wooden boards which are also original to the manuscript or date from early in its history.[38] Significantly, it has two sets of puncture marks on the front and back boards, demonstrating that the book once had hook and clasp fastenings and was considered valuable and worthy of good curation. The opening folio features a full border and large decorated initial with foliate decoration and gold leaf. New sections begin with decorated initials in blue and red, two line-depths high. The manuscript includes both the *prefacio translatoris* and the *prologus* but ends deficient in Book 5 where leaves have been cut out. There are also numerous textual omissions not through loss of leaves.[39] There is little sign of use in the manuscript, with no commentary and only a few

[36] On the fox and geese game, see H. J. R. Murray, *A History of Board-games Other Than Chess* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1978), 98, 101-3.
[37] The addition of the Greek marginalia is to DUL MS Cosin V.ii.15, f.9^{v}, 1p4.
[38] 'MS. e Mus. 53', *MMOL*; Otto Pächt and J. J. G. Alexander, *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, vol 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 88 (no. 1021).
[39] For the textual gaps, see Science, xv.

later *ex libris* marks to show its provenance. With so few signs of use in the manuscript it is hard to speculate on the provenance of the codex prior to its donation in the mid-seventeenth century. With such a high standard of decoration and furniture and a lack of evidence of engagement it is possible that the book remained in secular use for its first two hundred years, or at least if held in a college or religious house was likely in the private collection of a member of such an institution. Again, this suggests reading without a commentary or with an independent commentary text, though the luxury nature of the copy implies the former; a book to be read for pleasure.

While it can only be speculatively suggested that unadorned copies of Walton's verse may have been read with Latin texts alongside, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. poet. 151 reveals evidence which hints at this kind of reading. It is a parchment manuscript and slightly bigger than BodL MS Douce 100 but is otherwise a very similar fifteenth-century copy.[40] The text begins deficient through the loss of one leaf near the end of the *prefacio translatoris*. New books are opened with a decorated initial in gold with standard foliate decoration. Unlike BodL MS Douce 100, BodL MS Rawl. poet. 151 is written without blank lines between stanzas but it distinguishes stanzas with an opening initial in alternating blue and red, a common practice found in several other copies of Walton's verse translation.[41] Similarly, like several other copies of the translations by Chaucer and Walton, parts of the text with quick exchanges of dialogue between Boethius and Philosophy are marked in the left-hand margin with 'B' and 'P' in red ink to indicate the speaker. These markers assist the reader in distinguishing the speaker but are also a reminder of the dialogic nature of the text. This feature is not unique to Boethian manuscripts. In Hoccleve's *The Regiment of Princes*, for instance, where 'the prologue is almost entirely composed of dialogue', paraphs rather

[40] 'MS. Rawl. poet. 151', *MMOL*.
[41] Such as LCL MS 103 and OBL MS e Mus 53.

than abbreviated names are used in the layout for BL MSS Arundel 38 and Harley 4866, which 'avoids the confusion of speakers, and the paraphs provide a punctuational function.'[42]

There are a few notes and corrections in the margins, but nothing further, despite a text box which allows plenty of white space around the main text.[43] However, it is significant that beneath the standard marking of prose and metre sections in red ink have been added the first few words of the corresponding original Latin. These few words are in themselves insufficient, obviously, to allow study of the Latin; to be useful, they require an accompanying copy of the Latin to which they could direct the reader for comparison.[44] So the Middle English text was here designed to be read with the Latin text alongside. While this does not necessarily mean that the text was read in an academic setting, BodL MS Rawl. poet. 151 is still held in its medieval boards, with a single chain staple four fifths of the way down the back board, a similar staple mark to early manuscript holdings at both Pembroke Hall at Cambridge and Merton College in Oxford.[45] With no other signs of metal fixings on the manuscript, this would suggest that the manuscript had been part of a chained library in its earlier life, likely in an arrangement with shelves below the desks.[46] It is therefore not fanciful to imagine an academic library or religious house in which Walton's *Boethius* and a copy of the original Latin would have been chained side by side.

While BodL MS Rawl. poet. 151 was designed to be used side by side with a copy of the Latin *Consolatio*, Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 103 shows us more evidence of such

---

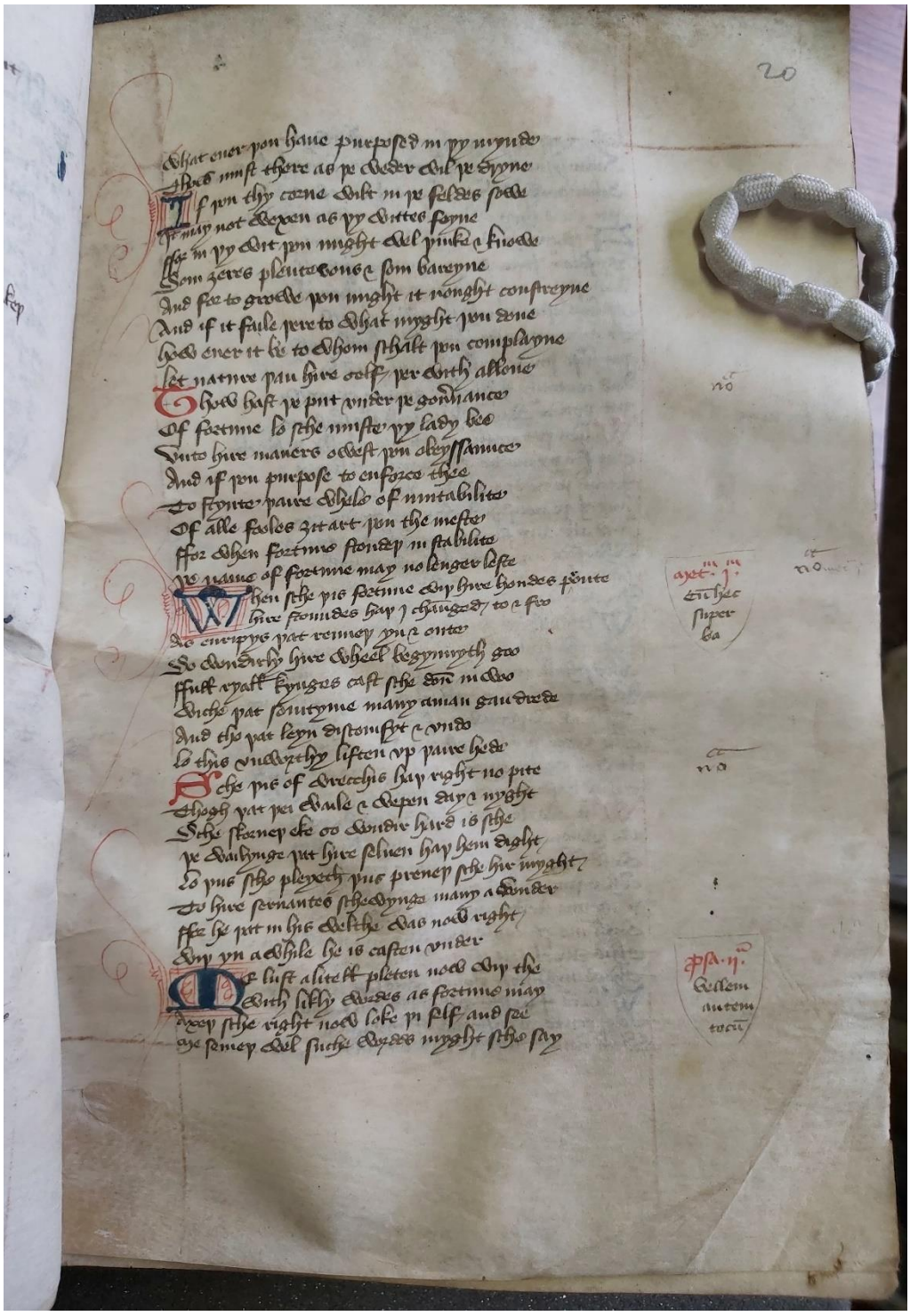
[42] Aditi Nafde, 'Stanza Markers in MSS Arundel 38 and Harley 4866 of Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*', *Notes and Queries* 61 (2014), 15-8 (16-7).
[43] For example in BodL MS e Mus 53, 'nota de constat' on f.5^{r} referring to stanza 54, 1m2; correction in the gutter margin on f.10^{v}; a *nota* for stanza 100, 1p4, on f.10^{v}; 'Conclusio' and *nota* on f.13^{r} for 1m4; and 'nota fallaciam fortune' on f.17^{v} referring to stanza 157, 2p1. Some of these additions look to be in the scribal hand and some are in a different contemporary or slightly later hand.
[44] As Daniel Wakelin notes in *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature 1430-1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 12, these snippets of Latin in the margins are not unique to this manuscript.
[45] The data on Pembroke Hall and Merton College comes from *MLGB3*.
[46] On such arrangements of furniture, see Szirmai, 267-70.

use, revealing significant early signs of engagement with the text.[47] This fifteenth-century parchment manuscript is housed in early twentieth-century bindings in a standard house style for Lincoln Cathedral. Following a pastedown and flyleaf on modern paper, the first two folios contain an early sixteenth-century copy of the *Letter of Lentulus*, a brief work in Latin. The collation confirms that this was added onto empty flyleaves after the creation of the codex. Walton's text follows, written in anglicana formata on good quality parchment, the text box in lead point giving a generous outer margin. Mark Science confirmed that the Lincoln manuscript, which was used as the basis for his EETS edition, has a close textual relationship with both Oxford, Balliol College, MS 316B and London, British Library, Royal MS 18.A.xiii.[48] The opening folio of Walton's text as well the start of each new book and the prefatory sections such as the *prefacio translatoris* and the *prologus* have a decorated initial with gold infill, on a foliate background of blue and maroon, surrounded by a foliate spray in green and black. New prose and metre sections begin with a capital two lines high in blue and red ink, and as is standard with many copies of Walton's translation, new stanzas are indicated by an opening capital in alternating red and blue. LCL MS 103 also continues the tradition of occasionally adding 'B' and 'P' in the left-hand margin to denote who is speaking.

The Lincoln manuscript gives further assistance to the reader in adding the first few words of the Latin text in black ink beneath the prose/metre mark, sometimes with the addition of a shield drawn around the text in black ink, and occasionally adding a few words of the Latin midway through a section as well.[49] All of these additions are in the scribal hand, and faint guide words can be spotted on the outer edges of the margins where the scribe left himself a prompt to go back and add content. As in CUL MS Ii.3.21 (in Chapter 4) and BodL MS Rawl. Poet. 151 (discussed above) the snippets of Latin show a similar interest in a

[47] R. M. Thomson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), 77-8.
[48] Science, vii-viii, xvii-xviii.
[49] Such as on LCL MS 103 ff.10^{v} and 17^{r}.

bilingual approach to the text, and make an assumption that the reader had access to the Latin *Consolatio* in a separate codex.



Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 103, f.20[r]

It is notable that the scribe's tics leave further signs of engagement with the text in two particular ways: he adds material at precisely the same point in the outer margins, as if

writing in a column, and he has a habit of adding '//' before his additions, such as prose and metre markings, added Latin, and plentiful comments of *nota* and *conclusio*, and on one folio a red paraph mark has been added on top of a '//nota'.[50] Using two virgules in this way is likely a standard prompt by the scribe to add coloured paraphs later on.[51] However, bearing in mind the variety of contexts where the virgules are used, this suggests that the scribe did not simply copy the text, but interrogated it as he went along, or at the very least registered the value of careful additions made in his exemplar and took care to plan them into his copy. These data imply the involvement of a professional or scholar scribe (of this manuscript or the one that preceded it) copying the text at a deeper, more performative level.

Besides these additions, a few brief notes are likely to have been added by a seventeenth-century dean of Lincoln Cathedral, Michael Honywood (d.1681).[52] Honywood supported the building of the Wren Library at the Cathedral, and gave a considerable number of books to the library, including MS 103, once part of his personal library.[53] This is relevant to our understanding of this manuscript's medieval provenance because many of Honywood's books were bought in Cambridge before his translation to Lincoln, and one can therefore speculate that LCL MS 103 may have been created by or for a Cambridge scholar. Significantly, if this were true it would mean academic engagement with the *Consolatio* both in Latin and Middle English, and an interest in the *translatio studii* of the Middle English form.

That academic engagement can be most convincingly demonstrated for the final manuscript in this sample: London, British Library, MS Harley 43. While DUL MS Cosin V.ii.15 was written entirely on paper, BL MS Harley 43 is constructed out of both paper and

[50] This is on LCL MS 103 f.38^{v}.
[51] On the use of virgules and the layering of colour, see Daniel Wakelin, *Designing English: Early Literature on the Page* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2018), 75.
[52] See 'Michael Honywood', *ODNB*.
[53] On Honywood's active bookish support, see Thomson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library*, xxi.

parchment, spread through the quires to the end of the codex, three quarters written on paper, a quarter on parchment.[54] Unlike the circumstantial evidence of the example above, this mid-fifteenth-century manuscript has a known scholarly provenance from early in its history, having been owned by Thomas Chaundler (d.1490), chancellor of the University of Oxford.[55] Indeed, given the date of creation, it is possible that the book was created for Chaundler. The codex, which has received extensive conservation work, opens with a minor Latin work, *Cato Major*, and ends with several short treatises and poems in English. All of these additions postdate the creation of the codex containing Walton's *Boethius*. The opening parchment flyleaves include an *ex libris* by Chaundler in a self-consciously anachronistic hand, a fifteenth-century humanistic take on a protogothic majuscule.

Walton's text begins with another *ex libris* for Chaundler, above a large decorated initial in red and blue that expands into the upper and left-hand margins.[56] The text is written in a late anglicana hand with secretary influences. It is ruled to give a generous outer margin, clearly designed to allow additions to the text. This addition comes in the form of the original Latin of Boethius's text.[57] This is written in a small, neat hand, again anachronistic in style – an attempt at a humanist minuscule – and likely written by Chaundler.[58] The Latin addition seems to stop and start, written in blocks, but in fact simply takes up less space than Walton's

[54] There is a pattern of parchment folios running in pairs with a gap between pairs of between six and nine paper folios. This might suggest the parchment folios wrapping around the outside of each paper quire. At the time of writing the British Library is suffering a major systems outage and I am unable to check whether this theory is correct.

[55] BL MS Harley 43, *British Library Archives and Manuscripts* <http://searcharchives.bl.uk/permalink/f/79qrt5/IAMS040-002045871/> [accessed 1 August 2023]; *Duke Humfrey and English Humanism in the Fifteenth Century: Catalogue of an Exhibition held in the Bodleian Library Oxford* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1970), 20 (no.34c). For more on Chaundler, see Andrew Cole, 'The Style of Humanist Latin Letters at the University of Oxford: On Thomas Chaundler and the *Epistolae Academicae Oxon. (Registrum F)*' in *Form and Reform: Reading Across the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Shannon Gayk and Kathleen Tonry (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 40-64.

[56] Walton's text in BL MS Harley 43 begins on f.4^{r}.

[57] On Chaundler's hand, see Andrew G. Watson, *The Library of Sir Simonds d'Ewes* (London: British Museum, 1966), 273. A. C. de la Mare's unpublished notes at the Bodleian Library also confirm the additional Latin to be in Chaundler's hand. Edwards in *Spaces*, 41, erroneously identifies this as Latin commentary.

[58] A description of such anachronistic practice can be found in M. B. Parkes, 'Archaizing Hands in English Manuscripts' in *Books and Collectors 1200-1700*, ed. by Carley and Tite, 101-41.

Middle English verse. Chaundler therefore leaves occasional breaks to let the Middle English catch up with the Latin in the margin. This scheme of addition continues to the end of Walton's text, though the marginal hand changes markedly partway through, so it appears that someone later completed the Latin text, whether or not he did so at Chaundler's behest.[59] In similar fashion to copies of Walton's *Boethius* (discussed above) which include the prose and metre markings and sometimes include the first few words of the Latin text, Chaundler clearly wished to do the same here but in a more complete fashion, reminiscent of copies of Chaucer's *Boece* where similar schemes of parallel text are created, such as the partial addition of Latin in SCL MS 113, or the elaborate scheme of Latin and English in the first part of CUL MS Ii.3.21 (discussed in a previous chapter). It is interesting that Chaundler's copy should do so in a humanistic fashion, where an English text has scholarly value, but for which the value can be enhanced by leaning into its classical credentials, adding *auctoritas* through the addition of the Latin in a pseudo-Carolingian script.[60]

In this brief survey of some other Walton manuscripts there is a pattern of evidence, albeit circumstantial, for scholars creating and using copies of Walton's verse translation and interrogating the text alongside the Latin. (Admittedly, this is not always the case. The evidence for the commissioning of the text by Elizabeth Beauchamp presents a picture of secular readership as well, though even here the secular commission was given to a religious scholar.) The manuscripts discussed have purposely ranged from those with little addition to those where the addition has become a key feature of the codex. The survey also provides evidence of the different kinds of engagement: from brief *id est* notes to snippets in the margin to allow for reading with the Latin in a separate codex, ultimately to a manuscript that allows for all-in-one bilingual reading. Crucially, it reveals that Walton's verse translation,

[59] The change of hand in BL MS Harley 43 begins on f.29^{v}.
[60] On the classicising tendencies in Chaundler's manuscripts see also Wakelin, *Humanism*, 14.

even in Middle English, even in the less academic verse form, was considered a useful representation of Boethius's text, as both an alternative reading experience and a form of exegesis of the Latin.[61] It is with this picture of largely scholarly interest that we now turn to the primary manuscript of concern to this chapter.

The Thott manuscript

The examples show the range of medieval response and reveal different ways of reading Walton's *Boethius*, including manuscripts with significant reader engagement and presented for comparative reading with the Latin *Consolatio*. Copenhagen, Royal Library, MS Thott 403 2º takes these paratextual elements to the furthest degree of any extant manuscript of Walton's translation, certainly in the use of commentary, and comes closest to doing for Walton what CUL Ii.3.21 offers for Chaucer's *Boece* in this regard.

The Thott manuscript is housed in modern bindings, with each quire stitched onto card tabs, giving the codex a neat square book block that it likely did not have when created. Prefaces and new books begin with a decorated initial four units high, the letter in gold leaf with foliate infill in blue and purple and a border down the left-hand margin also in gold. New prose and metre sections within books begin with a similar initial but two units high, in gold, blue, and purple, with foliate decoration which spills into the left-hand margin. With each new section there are also prose and metre markings in red, often with a blue paraph, as well as the first few words of the corresponding section of Boethius's Latin (similar to LCL MS 103) with a blue or red initial and then in black ink. There is also a *capitulum* marking in red, which enumerates each section of Boethius's original text as sequential chapters, ignoring the difference between prose and metre. These additions are standard throughout the

[61] On the engaging experience of reading Boethian literature in verse, see also Johnson, *Practising Literary Theory*, 85-6.

text and occur in both left- and right-hand columns of the ruled text box, discussed in greater detail below.

Walton's translation is written in verse lines which generally sit comfortably inside the widest column of the text box. The text box is ruled to accommodate thirty-two lines of text, clearly an element of the book's design, as for most of the text Walton uses the eight-line ballade stanza, meaning that until the switch to rhyme royal in Books Four and Five there is a standard *mise en page* of four stanzas to a page.[62] Similarly to other Walton manuscripts, the scribe indicates when either Philosophy or Boethius are speaking by beginning a section or a line with the abbreviations 'Phia' or 'Boe' in red. Concern for accuracy is evident in occasional correction by scraping and rewriting.[63]

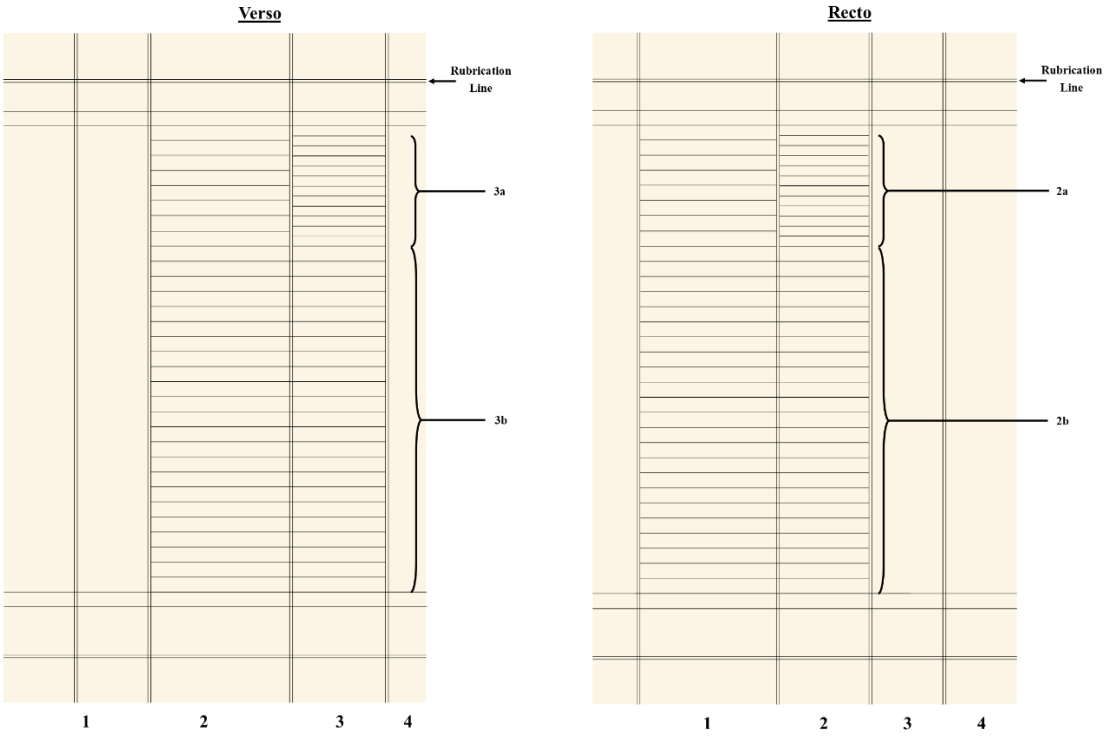


Fig. 1 The pattern of ruling for CRL MS Thott 304 2°

[62] BodL MS Douce 100 has the same arrangement of 32 lines per page, going so far as to make an explicit of one book and the incipit of the next take up the space for a whole stanza (for instance on f.19^{v}), so as to maintain the four-stanza *mise en page* in the earlier part of the manuscript.
[63] Such as on CRL MS Thott 304 2°, f.44^{v}.

An unusual feature of Thott is the intentionality visible in the ruling of the manuscript folios. Ruling for recto and verso pages is different, as shown in the diagrams above. Each ruling scheme allows generous white space around the text box with an upper double-ruled line for rubrication, and a three-column grid inside the margins, the pricking for which is still visible on some folios. On the recto page the first column is wider and used for the main text. The second column is the primary column for commentary, though column three is sometimes occupied in sections of extensive addition. On the verso page this is altered to make the second column wider to take the primary text. The first column as the outer column mirrors the recto in being most likely to remain blank, with the third column as the primary location for commentary. However, on those pages which include commentary, the ruling for this formal addition is added bespoke with narrower feint lines in a carefully designed fashion, and the diagrams above give an illustration of the kind of variation between commentary pages.[64] This ruling has been added page by page to accommodate a specific quantity of commentary, and on each occasion the scribe has considered whether to rule across one or two columns, and for a required number of lines. This complexity would have required careful planning and extra pricking along the top and bottom to treat the placement of verticals differently on each side of the leaf. This effort then continues in the ad hoc ruling for commentary. This is reminiscent of earlier practice. Christopher de Hamel, writing of twelfth-century glossed Bibles, describes the fluid size of the central text box and the bespoke ruling page by page:

> An important feature of this variation is that the scribes were tackling the problem of layout a single page at a time rather than writing the whole book and leaving the insertion of the gloss to chance. In this new method, the scribe assessed roughly the

[64] For instance on CRL MS Thott 304 2º ff.45ᵛ-46ᵛ. See fig.1: Recto 2a and 2b, Verso 3a and 3b. The ruling varies to accommodate either a wider box of primary text or is ruled with a narrower feint for more plentiful commentary.

> extent of the gloss for any one page and ruled the columns of the page accordingly before beginning writing.[65]

This is precisely the method apparent in Thott, though in 'English in later centuries, such well adapted and improvised ruling is only rare', making this manuscript all the more remarkable.[66] This process of interrogating the text section by section perhaps makes sense of the *mise en page* that neatly holds four stanzas for the first three books, but breaks the pattern with the rhyme royal of the last two books. The scribe dealt with each section and its required layout one page at a time.

It is worth making a particular focus on 3m9 of the *Consolatio*, 'O qui perpetua', because the author of the commentary was clearly concerned to give extensive coverage of this metre in Thott, which the scribe contributes to by including both the commentary and interlinear glossing on these folios.[67] The interlinear glossing comprises occasional words in Latin from Boethius's text which correspond to Walton's Middle English. For instance 'gubernas' appears above 'gouernest', 'mundum' above 'wordli', 'ratione' above 'reson', and 'tempus' above 'tymes'. The scribe has written the text with the Latin in front of them (or has copied an exemplar where such glosses are included). This interrogation of the Latin text by the creator of the manuscript as a 'primary' act then facilitates a close reading with the Latin text for future readers as a 'secondary' act.[68] It is significant that the commentary and interlinear glosses are in the same hand.

Furthermore, as there is throughout the book where commentary appears (as mentioned above), here too there is special ruling added to the text box columns for the extensive commentary included on these few folios, which runs from the upper rubrication

---

[65] Christopher de Hamel, *Glossed Books of the Bible and the Origins of the Paris Booktrade* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1984), 16-7.
[66] Wakelin, *Immaterial Texts*, 79.
[67] 'O qui perpetua' and its extensive commentary runs CRL MS Thott 304 2° ff.45^{v}-47^{r}.
[68] For discussion of primary and secondary evidence in late medieval English manuscripts, see Daniel Sawyer, *Reading English Verse in Manuscript c.1350-c.1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 7-8.

line to the gutter line. In most other parts of the poem the commentary is short enough that ruling is only needed in one of the narrow columns, or occasionally a little at the head of foot of the page. However, much more space is needed at the end of this metre section, where only one stanza is included on the page, in order to fit the large amount of commentary around and underneath it.

Though not as grand in scale, the scheme in Thott is reminiscent of Glasgow, University Library, Hunter MS 374, a late fourteenth-century Genoese manuscript of Boethius with commentary.[69] Aside from the spectacular scale of the decoration and illustration included in the Genoese manuscript, it is also notable for including small amounts of primary text, while the outer columns hold Trevet's commentary, which often dwarfs Boethius's text in the middle of the page, with great care taken to ensure that Trevet's commentary corresponds to the main text on the page. Indeed, in making such a comparison the wonder is that Walton did not include more commentary than is evident in either Thott or Tavistock. Given that the commentary is fuller in some sections than others, with most pages not glossed at all, it is possible that a longer and less piecemeal commentary text was originally planned but then abandoned.

A similar story of commentary in the vernacular can be told with Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.3.12, which holds Virgil's *Eneados* along with an authorial commentary, written by Gavin Douglas in 1513 and copied into the Trinity manuscript by a scribe who had a working relationship with Douglas, and who could reasonably be expected to complete the manuscript to the author's design. Plenty of space was allowed in the manuscript to accommodate the commentary, though as Jane Griffiths notes, 'only the Prologue and the first seven 'chapters' of Book I are consistently glossed, but the layout of the manuscript suggests

[69] Patrick Henderson Aitken and John Young, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow*, (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1908), 300-1.

that the comment was originally intended to accompany the whole of Douglas' translation.'[70] If Walton wrote both text and commentary, as this thesis argues, then the Thott and Trinity manuscripts would both provide evidence of writers with an academically grounded concept of translation using commentary to guide a particular reading.

A further point of interest in the representation of commentary in Thott is the inclusion of a single diagram on the final folio of the commentary for 3m9.[71] This diagram is not part of the standard scheme of seven diagrams found in many Trevet manuscripts.[72] Indeed, this diagram is found in only five extant manuscripts, three of which are Continental, a further copy being of unknown origin, and only one having a known English origin.[73] The one known to have an English origin, Cambridge, Peterhouse MS 275, is likely to have been in Peterhouse at the time of both Walton's writing of the verse translation and the creation of the Thott manuscript, which suggests that Walton might have encountered it in similar academic circles, given his abbey's proximity to Oxford.[74] The diagram, a visual interpretation of Plato's concept of World Soul as seen in his *Timaeus* (discussed in Chapter 3), is therefore rare and represents an unusual source copy for Walton. Intriguingly, on the previous page, there is a banner in red and black which includes a complex series of numbers which refers to the progressive division of beings by the demiurge (not exactly the creator but the moulder of chaos into the features of the world) with the World Soul placed at the centre.

---

[70] See Griffiths, 82. This intention to have created a more complete commentary is reinforced by Bawcutt and Cunningham. See Gavin Douglas, *The Eneados: Gavin Douglas's Translation of Virgil's Aeneid*, vol 1, Introduction and Commentary, ed. by Priscilla Bawcutt with Ian Cunningham (Edinburgh: The Scottish Text Society, 2020), 10.

[71] On CRL MS Thott 304 2º, f.46ᵛ.

[72] On the diagrams usually found in copies of Trevet's commentary, see Jakub Kujawiński, 'Nicholas Trevet OP (c. 1258–after 1334) as Publishing Friar. Part I. Commentaries on the Authors of Classical and Christian Antiquity' in *The Art of Publication from the Ninth to the Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. by S. Niskanen, V. Rovere (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming), 167-268 (185-6).

[73] The five copies are Avignon, Bibliothèque municipale MS 1085, Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 484/480, Cambridge, Peterhouse MS 275, Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut. 33 sin. 7, and Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut. 22 dex. 9.

[74] For more on CPH MS 275 see R. M. Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts in the Library of Peterhouse*, Cambridge (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2016), 172.

This concept, combining creation philosophy with mathematical principles, is taken directly from Plato's *Timaeus*, which in turn was used as the base text by Boethius for 3m9. This suggests that something like the banner may also have been in Walton's source copy of Trevet.[75]

The implication of the presentation in Thott of this single metre is profound. The inclusion in the commentary of the Chaucerian gloss that does not appear in the verse text suggests that Walton wrote both the text and commentary. It can also be argued that the interlinear glosses included in the 'O qui perpetua' metre should be associated with the commentary that surrounds it. After all, the author of the commentary and the initial creator of the glosses were both very interested in this particular metre of Book Three of the *Consolatio*. Is it possible that Walton wrote these glosses, which have been copied alongside the commentary?[76] The layering of text and different forms of gloss implies a small number of copies between the urtext and Thott, and represents a fairly loyal transmission of a formal and intentional placement of text and paratext on a spacious commentary. Though the evidence is circumstantial, it is more than fanciful conjecture to see in Thott second- (or third-) hand evidence of Walton as the creator not only of a text but of several elements of paratextual scaffolding: the commentary, the interlinear glosses, and the structure of the *mise en page*. This opens up our understanding of Walton as the maker not only of a poem but also of a book in its broader sense; as writer, commentator, glosser, scribe.

If we then shift our focus from the creator of the book to its intended reader, the inclusion of Latin references and the unusual inclusion of Latin interlinear glosses sitting

---

[75] This is on CRL MS Thott 304 2°, f.46ʳ. The number progressions for the division of beings, as described in *Timaeus*, are 1, 2, 4, 8 and 1, 3, 9, 27. See *Plato: Timaeus; Critias; Cleitophon; Menexenus; Epistles*, trans. by Robert Gregg Bury, rev. repr. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), 64-7. A rudimentary version of the same banner is held in BodL MS Auct F.6.4, f.33ʳ, a manuscript discussed in Chapter 2, just before the *Consolatio* text for 'O qui perpetua' (3m9).

[76] For more on this debate regarding *Boece*, see Machan, xxvi-xxvii; on the *Canterbury Tales*, see Stephen Partridge, 'Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales: An Edition and Commentary', unpublished thesis, Harvard University (1992), 2-15 – 2-19.

above Middle English together indicate an encouragement to the reader to engage with an English text at an academic level.[77] Medieval translation was not an act of utility but a reflection of the way that writers and readers engage with and consider a text, and the levels of structure, both textual and material, affect the complex nature of our approach to and interaction with a book.

Walton's commentary

The complexity of this engagement becomes more pronounced when we then consider in more detail the commentary that sits in the margins of Walton's verse translation, particularly the tension between the academic purpose of glossing and commentary, and the highly unusual presence of this commentary in English. The commentary to Walton's verse occurs in two iterations in only two copies, as marginal commentary to a single copy of a Walton manuscript, Copenhagen, Royal Library, Thott 304 2°, and as part of the printed scheme of Tavistock. As noted previously, the variants between the two witnesses to the commentary are sufficiently complex that I have tabulated each 'block' of commentary across the three versions available to us, namely Thott, Tavistock, and the modern edition by Science, in the appendix to this chapter, which informs the detailed discussion of the commentary text to follow in this section and the following section. The commentary is significant as being the first wide-ranging commentary to the *Consolatio* in Middle English (and possibly earlier than *The Boke of* Counfort, which in any case only covers Book 1), yet it had a very limited circulation in the immediate aftermath of its composition, to appear in only one extant manuscript before being printed in 1525. The Royal Library in Copenhagen has dated the manuscript to the first quarter of the fifteenth century, and if they are right, then it

[77] As opposed to most interlinear glossing which is Latin glossed with simpler Latin, Greek glossed with Latin, or English glossed with English, as in the following manuscripts mentioned in this thesis: CUL MS Ii.1.38, CUL MS Kk.3.21, Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 309 (707), CJC MS Q.D.7 (48), BL MS Harley 2519, BL MS Harley 4092, BL MS Royal 8.B.iv, OBC MS 141, and BnF MS latin 17814.

would have been produced no more than fifteen years or so after the composition of the translation by Walton in 1410.[78] Indeed, textualis letterforms of the fifteenth century 'were taller and stiffer than in the previous century such that a page consisted of lines of writing with letterforms consisting of upright heavy thick strokes'; however, the textualis hand evident in Thott (both main text and commentary) is squatter and rounder.[79] The **w** is formed more like a fourteenth-century hand, and there is little or no ascender above the crossbar of **t**.[80] Given that we know that Walton wrote the text in 1410, this suggests a manuscript created not long after the work's composition. It is also possible that the manuscript was created in Tavistock or somewhere close, for the manuscript with its commentary to be available as an exemplar a hundred years later.[81]

The commentary itself is far from comprehensive. In the Copenhagen manuscript, which has lost folios at both the start and finish and occasional folios in between, the commentary appears in eight intermittent clusters over fourteen pages.[82] In its more complete witness, Tavistock contains sixteen blocks of commentary across thirty-five pages. As well as including material lost from the beginning and end of the Copenhagen manuscript, Tavistock also has commentary to Books 2 and 3, which covers folios lost from the middle of the

[78] See the catalogue notes in the Royal Library: 'Thott 304 2º: Boethius, De Consolatione Philosophiae, anglice', *Det Kongelige Bibliotek*, <http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/627/eng>.
[79] See Pamela Robinson, 'Gothic Script in England c.1300-1500' in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin Palaeography*, ed. by Frank T. Coulson and Robert G. Babcock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 369-90 (377).
[80] The hand in Thott also shows similarity in letterforms with BL MS Add 41175, particularly the smaller textualis semi-quadrata formata, which Jane Roberts, *Guide to Scripts Used in English Writings up to 1500* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 143, 178-9, dates to c.1400.
[81] On the manuscript's history, see Brian Donaghey, Irma Taavitsainen, and Erik Miller, 'Walton's Boethius: From Manuscript to Print', *English Studies* 5 (1999), 398-407 (405); Edwards in *Spaces*, 35-49 (42-3). Indeed, the Cornish scholar William Borlase (1696-1772) owned the book and added an *ex libris* in 1737, increasing the likelihood that the book remained in the South West of England for the first several hundred years of its existence. See 'Thott 304 2º: Boethius, De Consolatione Philosophiae, anglice', *Det Kongelige Bibliotek*; 'William Borlase', *ODNB*.
[82] These clusters are: i) f.5^{r} covering 1p5, ii) ff.6^{v}-7^{r} covering 1p6, iii) ff.45^{v}-47^{r} covering 3m9, iv) f.55^{r} covering 3m11, and v) ff.55^{r}-59^{r} covering 3m12.

Copenhagen manuscript.[83] However, as well as these differences due to later losses, which we can disregard, more meaningful are the numerous changes made by the monk Thomas Richard who printed the book at Tavistock. In other cases it would be necessary to interrogate the relationship between manuscript and printed book, looking for clues of iterations of the text that came between them, especially given the hundred years between the creation of the two. However, in this instance the connection is very straightforward, as it has been demonstrated that there are printer's marks left on the manuscript, as Richard or his colleagues prepared to print, and there are errors in rubrication from Thott which caused related errors to Tavistock.[84] The Thott manuscript was the exemplar for the Tavistock Boethius.

Most of the variations between Thott and Tavistock are minor divergences of word choice, such as the addition or subtraction of conjunctions, and a few occasions of modernising the language, such as updating 'hiȝt' and 'clepid' to 'named'.[85] However, there are two more significant textual differences between Thott and Tavistock: a passage of commentary in Thott for 3m9 that was not included in Tavistock, and conversely a passage of Latin and English in the commentary for 1p5 that is not in Thott but which has been added to Tavistock. (As Science took his commentary from Tavistock this means that the latter is included in his edition, but the former is not.)

---

[83] Walton's text in Thott begins at stanza 88, partway through 1p4 and ends with the first line of stanza 779, 4p6 on f.75^{v}. The loss of leaves causes the following jumps:

i) from stanza 118, 1m5 at bottom of f.4^{v} to stanza 127, 1p5 at top of f.5^{r};
ii) from stanza 294, 2p7 at bottom of f.25^{v} to stanza 303, 2p6 at top of f.26^{r};
iii) from stanza 530, 3p11 at bottom of f.54^{v} to stanza 539, 3m11 at the top of f.55^{r};
iv) two lines into stanza 578, partway through the *prefacio translatoris super quartus librum et quintum* on f.59^{v} to partway through stanza 596, 4m1 on f.60^{r};
vi) from stanza 669, 4p4 at bottom of f.68^{v} to stanza 706, 4p4 at top of f.69^{r};
vii) from stanza 760, 4p6 at bottom of f.74^{v} to stanza 770, 4p6 at top of f.75^{r}.

Additionally, folio 65 is a misplaced leaf, running from the last line of stanza 760 to the end of stanza 769, 4p6. Understandably, Science took his transcription of the commentary from Tavistock. In a further irony, the *EEBO* copy of Tavistock is missing multiple pages: *The boke of comfort called in laten boetius de consolatione philosophie translated in to englesse tonge* <https://www.proquest.com/books/boke-comfort-called-laten-boetius-de-consolatione/docview/2248522290/se-2> [accessed 7 April 2023].

[84] On the marks and errors, see Donaghey, Taavitsainen, and Miller, 'From Manuscript to Print', 406.

[85] *OED* notes both 'clepen' and 'hoten' as archaic.

In truth, it is not hard to see why Thomas Richard, the Tavistock printer, might have excluded the first of these, the passage of commentary from 3m9. In the manuscript as it survives now the text here is small, faded, and littered with splodges of unknown age of what might be either wine or soup or mud. Secondly, compared to most of the commentary text, this particular passage is sometimes rambling and occasionally difficult to parse.[86] Finally, this particular section of text occurs on folio 45^{v}, which also contains another passage in a different column, which continues onto the next folio 46^{r}, and therefore it would have been quite easy to keep copying and forget to go back to this standalone piece of text. Unable to find this commentary in any scholarship, it is included here in full:

> After þe maner speking of poetes and eke of philosofres Boecius calleth þe world al þe hole vniuersalite of creatures bothe heuenli and erthli. And al þis is binethe god.
>
> Heven he calleth þe two heyer elementes. Þe fir and þe eyr þe erth (sic) he callith þat oþer two water and erthe þe which as sedes wher of be engendred al corruptible creatures.
>
> Al þing þat is vnstable is changeable fro one estat to anoþer wher after som parte hit passith and after som parte hit abidith and so þat he receceyuith som þing newe and so nedith hit in þing to graunten þat it was mad and þis repugneth to þe diuine simplicite. Also we moste graunt þat þanne is a maner peynfulnesse of suffering bi cause of his meving and þis repugnith to þe pure dede and parfit for in a pure and parfit dede accioun and passion mow noȝt be medled as coincedent.
>
> Riȝt as in eueri þing þat worchip after nature onli hit nedith þat þe forme of þing to be don be bifore in þe worker after naturel beyng. Riȝt so in peyin þat worketh bi undirstonding þe forme of þing to be most ben so þe worker after leyng of vnder standing els a werking þat maketh an hous sith he worcheth in reson and vnderstonding he most nedith for to haue þe forme of þis hous and his mynde as an exsampler after which he makith þis naturel hous. So god þat worchith bi vnderstanding had eternalli þe exsampler of þis material world and of al þe partes in his mynde after liknesse of which he produceth al þing in to material beyng.
>
> Þis exsampler is callid of clerkes minds architopus which Boecius calleth þe fayre world conteynid in þe mynde of god. Of þis exsampler is hit þat seynt Ion spekith in his gospel wher he seith Quod factum est in ipso vita erat. Al þat is mad was lif in crist þat is to seyn eternalli conteynid in his mende. In þis exsampler alle creatures

[86] For instance, ‘and so þat he receceyuith som þing newe and so nedith hit in þing to graunten þat it was mad and þis repugneth to þe diuine simplicite’. The meaning can be partly construed but could have been phrased more clearly. It is referring to the Timaean division of beings, admittedly not an easy concept to understand or describe.

> hauith more verreyli and perfith hir beyng þan þey han in þis temperel beyng. For þis beyng is but deth in comparison of þat eternal beyng which seynt Ion calleth [??].[87]

There are clear echoes here of the commentary by Nicholas Trevet, though it is embellished with Walton's additional guidance, such as the reference to John's Gospel. [88] It is heavily influenced by the *Timaeus*, mentioned above, though largely mediated through Trevet. Indeed, when Walton writes that 'Þis exsampler is callid of clerkes minds architopus which Boecius calleth þe fayre world conteynid in þe mynde of god' it is actually Trevet, not Boethius, who echoes through the choice of language:

> MUNDUM PULCHRUM id est similitudinem exemplarem mundi qui dicitur mundus archetipus ab archos princeps et tipus similtudo quasi principalis similitudo cuius ymago dicitur mundus iste sensibilis.[89]

Though Walton previously invoked 'Commentor triuet', in this instance all other source material bar Boethius and Scripture is tacitly subsumed.

The second passage of commentary worth discussing is that which is not contained in the comparable surviving page of Thott but is included in the later Tavistock text.[90] As it has already been established that Tavistock is based on Thott, this must be an intentional addition, and cannot be a divergence that took place in a manuscript copy between Thott and Tavistock. Given the many small changes of text, it is apparent that someone, presumably Richard, not only used Thott as their exemplar but closely interrogated the text. For instance, where Thott in the commentary for Book Three has the slightly awkward phrase 'which þe terme & of al our wordli labour þou art þe same', Tavistock renders it more clearly, 'thou art the terme & ende of al our vvordly labour'. In a similar vein, there are occasions where

[87] CRL MS Thott 304 2º, f.45ᵛ. The last word is illegible.
[88] John 1:3-4.
[89] 'BEAUTIFUL WORLD that is, a similar example of the world as it is said, the archetypical world from 'archos' the foremost and 'tipus' or likeness, like the principal likeness of which image it is said this world can perceive.' Taite Silk, 3m9, 403.
[90] The comparable page of the manuscript which excludes this passage is CRL MS Thott 304 2º, f.5ʳ.

omissions have been amended. There are two gaps in 3m12 which have been completed with the word 'affection' in the Tavistock Boethius.[91] The text in the manuscript is as follows:

> His wif Erudis bitokenith þe neþer parte of þe soule þat is _____ hos loue desireth Aristeus þat bitokenith vertu . for in such a man þat is wis and eloquent vertu kendli couetith to abide . Bute þis _____ reffuseth vertu and fleth[92]

There is evidence of scraping, which might suggest error on the scribe's part, which he perhaps intended would be corrected later but forgot to finish before he lost access to an exemplar to fill in the gaps. However, knowing that this is the exemplar for Tavistock makes clear Richard's close reading of the commentary for the printed text. Indeed, this section is an expanded version of Trevet's point, which doesn't explicitly speak of 'affection', coming as close as to speak of Eurydice as symbolising 'scilicet pars hominis affectiua quam sibi copulare cupit Aristeus'.[93] This idea of the 'affectiua' or 'desiring' art of humanity is described by Richard as 'affection'. Given the nature of the text, it is also possible that the original language was deemed morally unsuitable.

In similar fashion, later in the same metre section the word 'hope', skipped in Thott with no gap on the parchment, is added in Tavistock.[94] Furthermore, in tiny red script in the margin to the right hand of the manuscript commentary is written the word 'hope', likely by Richard. The creator of the Tavistock commentary has on each occasion made sensible choices to complete the text.

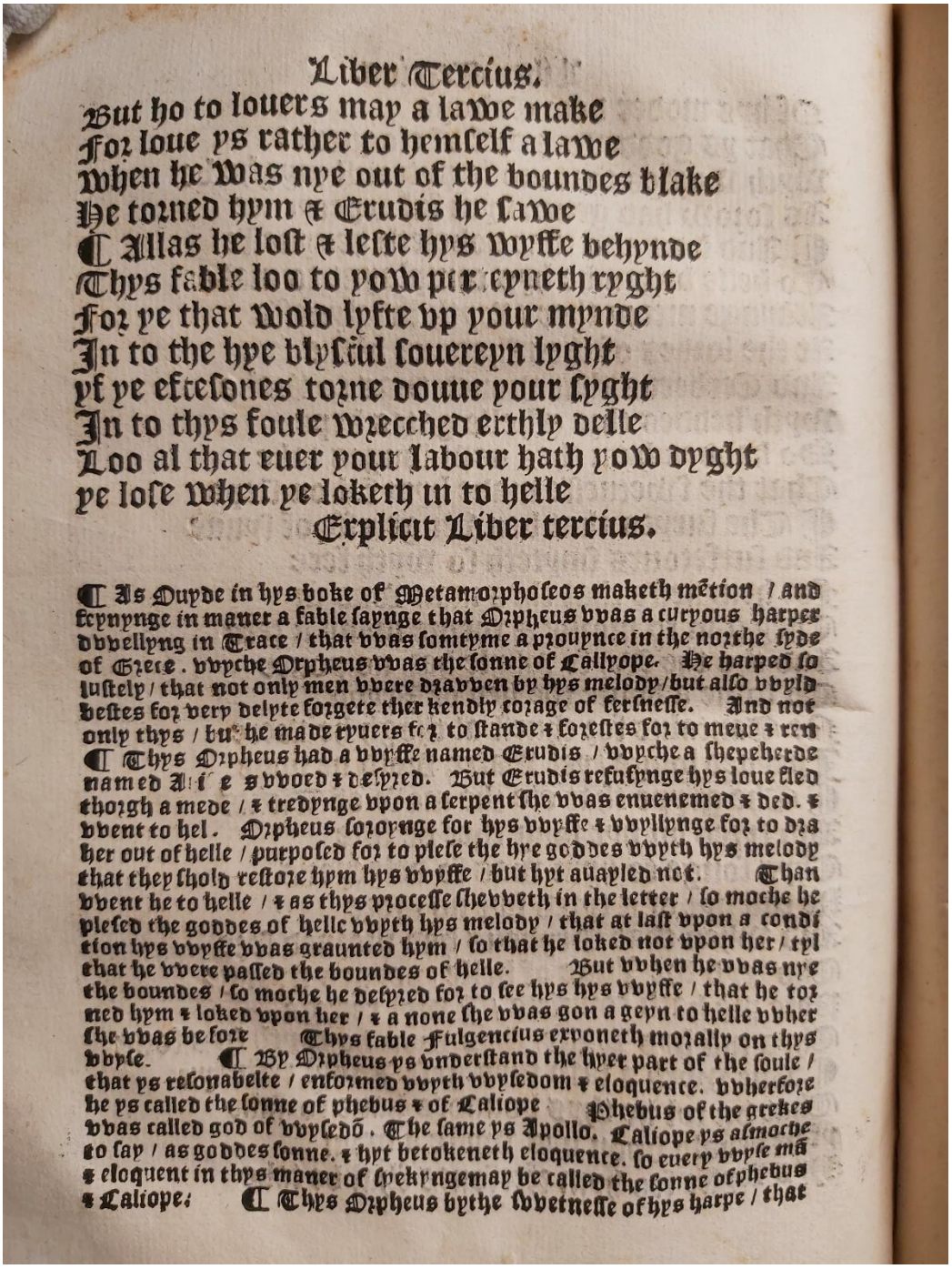
Given these small changes, it is less surprising that Tavistock also includes the following longer passage within the commentary text for 1p5, not found elsewhere:

> Si enim cuius oriundus sis patrie. The realme & the very contre of resonabelte ys the blysse of heuen. And al the whyle vve vvorke after reson vve ben in our contre as holy & heuenlych by maner of vverkenge. The realme of Athenes firste vvas gouerned by kynges / vyche regned the terme of lyues. And after that vvere ordeyned princes annual that regned comenly .x. yeres / After thes vvere made princes annual that

[91] Tavistock Boethius, f.80^{r}; Science, 372.
[92] CRL MS Thott 304 2°, f.58^{r}.
[93] Taite Silk, 3m12, 502.
[94] CRL MS Thott 304 2°, f.59^{r}; Tavistock, f.81^{r}; Science, 373.

> regned but one yere / & of them shulde be ix. at ones . and of thes here speketh Boetius[95]

The Latin is a straightforward lemma taken from 1p5 of the *Consolatio*.[96] The English text does not come from Chaucer, but is remarkably similar to Trevet's commentary:



Liber Tercius.

But ho to louers may a lawe make
For loue ys rather to hemself a lawe
When he was nye out of the boundes blake
He torned hym & Erudis he sawe
¶ Allas he lost & leste hys wyffe behynde
Thys fable loo to yow perteyneth ryght
For ye that wold lyfte vp your mynde
In to the hye blysful souereyn lyght
yf ye eftesones torne douue your syght
In to thys foule wrecched erthly delle
Loo al that euer your labour hath yow dyght
ye lose when ye loketh in to helle

Explicit Liber tercius.

¶ As Ouyde in hys boke of Metamorphoseos maketh mẽtion / and feynynge in maner a fable saynge that Orpheus vvas a curyous harper dvvellyng in Trace / that vvas somtyme a prouynce in the northe syde of Grece. vvyche Orpheus vvas the sonne of Callyope. He harped so lustely / that not only men vvere dravven by hys melody / but also vvyld bestes for very delyte forgete ther kendly corage of fersnesse. And not only thys / but he made ryuers for to stande & forestes for to meue & ren ¶ Thys Orpheus had a vvyffe named Erudis / vvyche a shepeherde named A[illegible]s vvoed & desyred. But Erudis refusynge hys loue fled thorgh a mede / & tredynge vpon a serpent she vvas enuenemed & ded. & vvent to hel. Orpheus soroynge for hys vvyffe & vvyllynge for to dra her out of helle / purposed for to plese the hye goddes vvyth hys melody that they shold restore hym hys vvyffe / but hyt auayled not. Than vvent he to helle / & as thys processe shevveth in the letter / so moche he plesed the goddes of helle vvyth hys melody / that at last vpon a condi tion hys vvyffe vvas graunted hym / so that he loked not vpon her / tyl that he vvere passed the boundes of helle. But vvhen he vvas nye the boundes / so moche he desyred for to see hys hys vvyffe / that he tor ned hym & loked vpon her / & a none she vvas gon a geyn to helle vvher she vvas be fore Thys fable Fulgencius exponeth morally on thys vvyse. ¶ By Orpheus ys vnderstand the hyer part of the soule / that ys resonabelte / enformed vvyth vvysedom & eloquence. vvherfore he ys called the sonne of phebus & of Caliope Phebus of the grekes vvas called god of vvysedõ. The same ys Apollo. Caliope ys almoche to say / as goddes sonne. & hyt betokeneth eloquence. so euery vvyse mã & eloquent in thys maner of syekyngemay be called the sonne of phebus & Caliope. ¶ Thys Orpheus bythe svvetnesse of hys harpe / that

Tavistock Boethius, f.79v

[95] Science, 366.
[96] Tester, 1p5, 162-3.

> Sed non sic de patria Boecii, per quam mansionem infra terminos racionis intelligimus. In hac enim est tantum unus princeps, scilicet Deus, qui est principium et regula recte racionis, unde et unusquisque in terra uiuit secundum rectam racionem in quantum subicitur legi et regule diuine. Et quia in quantum quis uiuit secundum rectam racionem in tantum manet in patria et ciuitate propria cuius Deus est princeps, patet quod in tantum quis manet in patria in quantum subicitur Deo.
>
> QUE REGITUR IMPERIO MULTITUDINIS UTI scilicet patria ATHENIENSIUM quia secundum Eusebium in Cronicis regnum Atheniensium primo gubernabant reges secundum tempus uite sue succesiue, postea uero constituti sunt principes annui ita quod nouem electi annuo imperio ciuitatem regebant[97]

Though there are approximately a dozen lines between the two extracts above (depending on the copy consulted), it nonetheless reads as a closely translated abridgement of Trevet's work; philosophical reasoning firmly associated with a reaching for the divine, and invoking the Chronicon of Eusebius to provide a contrast in the potted history of Athenian governance. The text between these two extracts, which goes into far greater detail about how even princes are subject to God, is dropped from the Tavistock Boethius. As we shall see below, the commentary in Thott owes a great deal to Trevet, and it is apparent that the printer of Tavistock was sympathetic to this programme of work, to the point of using the same source materials to fill what they perceived as a gap in the commentary data. It is also evident, through the changes both large and small, that the creator of Tavistock was familiar enough with the *Consolatio* at an intellectual level that he could adjust and improve the paratextual apparatus accordingly. Indeed, though it is clear that urban printing houses employed scholars to prepare texts for press, it is unusual to find evidence of the same kind of engagement with such a small provincial press.[98]

---

[97] 'But not thus from the homeland of Boethius, by which we understand a dwelling in the definition of reason below. In this certainly is the sovereign alone, namely God, which is the origin and the correct rule of reason, from which every one on earth who lives following correct reason is subject to divine law and rule. And of the many who live following correct reason stay in the homeland and the particular city of which God is chief, it is clear that they who are subject to God will live in the homeland…[NOT] LIKE THAT OF THE OLD ATHENIANS, GOVERNED BY THE RULE OF THE MANY that following Eusebius in the Chronicle the rule of the Athenians at first kings governed according to their lifespan, then by agreement were annual princes in this way nine were elected annually and they ruled the city with the right to power.' Taite Silk, 1p5, 152-3.

[98] On the preparation on texts for print, see Lotte Hellinga, 'Printing' in *CHB3*, 65-108 (85-6).

It is unclear whether Tavistock Abbey had copies of any Boethian texts, and though the abbey did have a library, it had no sister or daughter houses with which to share books.[99] We know through a colophon to Tavistock that Richard was encouraged to print Walton's Boethius 'to the instant desyre of the ryght worshypful esquyer Mayster Robert Langdon', of which nothing is known.[100] This entreaty or commission echoes the earlier command of Elizabeth Beauchamp to Walton, a secular commission to a religious scholar, and it is certainly possible that the necessary books were supplied by Langdon.[101] Indeed, while there is no evidence of Trevet's work being held at Tavistock or by Langdon, other chapters in this thesis have shown how widely disbursed his work was.

Analysis of Walton's Commentary

The sixteen blocks of commentary held in Tavistock and partially in Thott provide the evidence of Trevet's influence on Walton, but also show the use of other source material and show a different intention on the part of Walton than a straightforward Englishing of Trevet's exposition.[102] The following section provides analysis of the commentary, referred to by the number of the 'block' in the aforementioned table in the appendix.

So if the glosses are not all derived from Trevet, where do they come from? The commentary on the *prefatio translatoris*, 'Caliope as poetes…' (in the appendix, block 1), is a seven-line gloss which primarily acts as a description of Calliope. It follows a stanza which in a clear instance of translation as a form of textual development that flatters as it transforms,

---

[99] See Frances P. Jenkins, *The Benedictine Abbey of St. Mary and St. Rumon: Tavistock, Devon 974-1539* (Tavistock: Tavistock Parochial Church Council, 1999), 6.
[100] Tavistock Boethius, f.134^{r}.
[101] *MLGB3* lists only four manuscripts known to have a Tavistock provenance, none of which are Boethian. See also on Thomas Richard, H. P. R. Finberg, *Tavistock Abbey: A Study in the Social and Economic History of Devon*, 2nd edn (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1969), 265, 290-2; George Oliver, *Monasticon Dioecesis Exoniensis* (Exeter: P. A. Hannaford, 1846), 89n, 240; Jenkins, *Benedictine Abbey*, 13.
[102] 'Block' is perhaps not the most elegant way to describe the sections of commentary that accompany Walton's verse translation. However, some blocks are short enough to be described as glosses, and some are multiple glosses that follow sequentially on the folio, separated by short gaps and red paraph marks. 'Block' is therefore a coverall description of convenience.

Walton makes clear that he is invoking neither Calliope, the muse of epic poetry, nor the furies Tisiphone, Alecto, or Megaera (itself also a nod to the muses that seek to drag Boethius down in the opening metre of the *Consolatio*), but rather looks to God to bring him the necessary eloquence. Again, it is unclear whether the flattery is paid to Boethius or to Chaucer, who invokes the muses and furies in the opening or prologue to most of the books of *Troilus and Criseyde*.[103] As Virgil invokes the muses and names Calliope, it also gives a nod to the *Aeneid* as the other great non-biblical work much read in the Middle Ages. In a similar vein, in Gavin Douglas's Middle Scots translation, the *Eneados*, a little over a decade before the printing of Tavistock, one can also see what appears to be an example of 'self-glossing', where Douglas added glosses to his translation using academic sources which 'simultaneously cast Douglas as the latest in a series of interpreters and draw attention to the historical particularity of his work.'[104] The third passage of commentary, on the *prologus eiusdem super librum Boecij*, 'Hir Heroicus ys…' (appendix, block 3) responds to the verse prologue in a similar way. This brief gloss expands on Walton's description of Symmachus as a 'heroicus' figure, to include what could not fit in the stanza.

Furthermore, though the commentary frequently uses a scholastic model of sequential points and rigorous sub-division, Walton has the same concern for sermonising that we saw with *The Boke of Counfort*. The other gloss on the *prologus eiusdem super librum Boecij*, 'Misterium iam operatur…' (appendix, block 2), only six lines long in Tavistock, opens with a Latin quotation. It is not attributed, but comes from 2 Thessalonians 2:7, with no obvious correlation to Trevet's commentary. Rather, it seems to respond to the theological nature of the stanzas that immediately precede it, including a description of the antichrist. The commentary therefore complements it as a straightforward exegesis of biblical material. It is

[103] See *Riverside*, I.6-9, 473; II.8-9, 489; III.45, 514; IV.22-4, 538.
[104] See Griffiths, 81.

a move typical of fifteenth-century textual development, in which scholastic commentary is the foundation on which to place a theological imperative. Through the use of the moral argument all roads lead back to God.

Where Trevet is clearly the source of the gloss, there is likewise an unwillingness to follow the material in a consistent way. Sometimes the commentary's translation follows Trevet's Latin closely, while at other times the source is used with a lightness of touch that shows Walton either using Trevet's work as a guide without slavishly following it, or using Trevet as one source among several. However, in case there was any doubt whether Walton used Trevet rather than, for instance, the work by William of Conches (on whose work Trevet's commentary is based), then the commentary to 1m1, 'Fortune was depaynted…' (appendix, block 5) is the proof that Walton's commentary depends rather on Trevet. This gloss, a couple of paragraphs long, discusses why the character of Philosophy is female. It is a clear translation of part of Trevet's commentary for 1m1, but Walton goes further to mention the arguments made by 'Commentor Trivet'.[105]

Indeed, there is a certain irony evident in the commentary to 1m6-1p6, 'Here before hath…' (appendix, block 8), in which Walton is keen to flex some scholastic muscle, arguably outdoing his model. Trevet's text at the start of 1p6 and Walton's commentary reveals a reasonably close translation from the Latin to Middle English:

> Hactenus inquisiuit Philosophia qualitatem et condicionem informitatis Boecii. Hic inquirit huius infirmitatis Boecii partim fuit in deordinata affeccione in quantum nimis doluit pro amissione temporalium partim in falsa existimacione et hoc precipue quoad duo quorum unum erat quod malos homines et potentes existimauit felices. Secundum erat quod vices Fortune per quas non numquam boni deprimebantur mali exaltabantur estimabat contingere sine regimine prouidencie.[106]

[105] Science, 365; Taite Silk, 1m1, 25.

[106] 'So far Philosophy has inquired on the quality and condition of Boethius's sickness. Now she inquires of Boethius's sickness that sometimes too sorely, that is excessively, inasmuch as he grieved too much for the loss of temporal goods through mistaken judgement, and two things especially, of which one was that he considered evil and powerful men to be fortunate. Secondly were those changes of Fortune through which he judged that sometimes good men were repressed while wicked men were exalted without control of providence.' Taite Silk, 1p6, 161.

> Here before hath philosophy enquered the qualyte and condition of the greuance that thys clerke vvas in. Now here she begynneth to enquere the rote and original cause / viche stondeth specially in iii thinges, one because he sorved vnskylfully that is to sey out of mesure the losse of his temporal goodes. The second stode in errour of false opinion trouyng that vvycked myghty men to the vvorld vvere by myght of vvickednes vvelful. The thyrde that he troued the enterchangynge of fortune by vyche often tymes the good ben depressed and the vvicked reded / vvas without rule of goddes purueaunce.[107]

Walton follows the scholastic pattern of dividing and sub-dividing points of argument, in this case further than Trevet does himself (or at the least disagreeing with the way Trevet has counted the sub-division of his points of argument), a policy which Walton repeats later in this section of commentary. He engages with the text closely enough to make a close translation and to make improvements as considered necessary.

As well as Walton's adjustments in Thott, the creator of Tavistock makes numerous small changes of language of his own. For instance, 'Þis was the very ground' in Thott becomes 'So the very ground' in Tavistock and in the perfect example of textual variance, 'vnstable variance' becomes 'unstabilitye'.[108] As well as these small emendations, there are two more significant alterations. The first is possibly an occasion of eyeskip where a line is omitted from Tavistock. Compare Thott:

> to which wrong god þat is perfith riȝtwis bi no wey may consente . And ȝif he wer hir gouernoure & witingh suffred þis wrong he semid to consente . Wher for he supposed þat god had forlet þe gouernaunce of man . committing þeyr reule to fortunes vnstable variance

with the version in Tavistock:

> to vyche vvronge god that ys perfyt ryghtuous by no vvay may consente : vvherfore he supposed that god had forllete the gouernance of man / committynge ther rule to fortunes unstabilyte[109]

The second version still makes sense with the omission so may have been made on purpose, and could be seen as an unnecessary subordinate clause, though eyeskip is more likely.

---

[107] Science, 366-7.
[108] CRL MS Thott 304 2º, f.6ᵛ.
[109] Science, 367.

The second alteration worth mentioning in this section is the line omitted from Tavistock which closes this section in Thott: 'Also ȝif he schold lette þe execucion of malice þanne'.[110] It is a minor change on the face of it, but the line does not entirely make sense, as if left incomplete, and like the longer passage discussed earlier, does not add to the reader's understanding of the text. If the printer is making a close interrogation of the text, he may have chosen to leave this line out of the printed version for the sake of clarity.

In contrast to the sections of commentary described above, a block in 4m7, 'In thys chapytre…' (appendix, block 15), runs for six pages in Tavistock, the only witness which contains this text. It is both the longest block of commentary on Walton's *Boethius* and one of the most straightforward. Walton strips out the lemmata and some of the references, but otherwise makes a close translation, maintaining the order of business kept by Trevet to give on occasion a sense for sense and even word for word translation. For instance, in the description of Ulysses' trials after the Trojan war, the language of the commentary follows Trevet's remarkably closely:

> FLEVIT AMISSOS ponit secundum exemplum de Ulixes, ubi aduertendum quod Ulixes rediens a bello Troiano decem annis errauit per mare multa pericula et aduersa sustinens. Eo autem tempore casu peruenit ad antrum Polyphemi, qui erat gigas maximus unicum habens oculum sed maximum in fronte. Qui socios Ulixis comprehendens occidit et comedit.[111]
>
> Ageyn this abasshement / he putteth the second exsample of Vlixes, vvyche vvhen he had x yeres erred sayling in the see after the distruction of Troye and suffered many mysse aduentures / and specyally in transformation and lesynge of his felloshippe by the cursed enchaunteresse Circes. Here he telleth how the grete gyant polyphemus vvyth one yee in his front / had deuoured and dystroyed his people.[112]

With the exception of the mention of Circe, this is recognisably Trevet rendered in Middle English, down to the repetition of 'errauit' as 'erred', and the use of the lexical doublet that

---

[110] CRL MS Thott 304 2º, f.7ʳ.
[111] 'HE WEPT FOR THOSE LOST He gave the second example of Ulysses, when he was to return from the Trojan war, having roamed for ten years across the sea, enduring many dangers and facing much adversity. Moreover, in that place, by accident of time, he reached the cave of Polyphemus, who was an enormous giant with one large eye in his forehead. Who, catching Ulysses' comrades, he killed and consumed them.' Taite Silk, 4m7, 655.
[112] Science, 374.

completes the description, where 'occidit et comedit' becomes 'deuoured and dystroyed', though Walton changes the order, perhaps because he took the lead from his verse, 'For Poliphemus darying in hys denne/So fersly had deuoured all hys men'.[113] This may be the result of source materials that Walton was less familiar with, though the reference to Circe suggests more pragmatically that Walton used Trevet as one lever amongst several that could be engaged to create a more layered commentary. His reliance on Trevet in this gloss is apparent. Metre 7 takes a gallop through the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and then step by step the bulk of the six pages is taken up with each of the twelve labours of Hercules, before ending with Walton's characteristic moralising, explicitly telling the reader that 'after my symple connynge / I have moralysed then in my maner / leuynge the correction to other that ben clerkes and more connyng in that science.'[114] This is an interesting comment from a scholar, a retraction of sorts, perhaps for referring to so much classical material, indeed as he goes on to say, that 'hyt apperteneth not to holy vvryt'. What makes it so curious is that he translates these references from Trevet, who was a Dominican friar, and as Beryl Smalley noted of earlier scholars such as Trevet, they saw no conflict between an interest in classical material and their Christian vocation.[115] It is, perhaps, an unapologetic apology, which gives licence to Walton's work, as one also under holy orders.

Elsewhere, Walton has a less close reliance on Trevet. In these instances he chooses selectively among often compressed data, such as in 2m1, 'Erinus ys a…', and 3m10, 'Tagus ys a…' (appendix, blocks 9 and 12).[116] These brief glosses both have a straightforwardly informative function, adding data that could not be fitted into the verse translation. The commentary from 2m1 is held in both Thott and Tavistock with almost identical language.[117]

---

[113] There is a possible reference here to Chaucer's description of 'Th'enchauntementz of Medea and Circes' in *The Knight's Tale*, I.1944. See *Riverside*, 51. The verse reference is stanza 811, 4m7, Science, 280.
[114] Science, 378.
[115] Smalley, *English Friars*, 61-2.
[116] These are on, respectively, CRL MS Thott 304 2º, ff.10ᵛ and 51ᵛ.
[117] This commentary is omitted from Science.

It sits alongside stanza 172 in 2p1, and explains Walton's mention of the Euripus Strait in the Aegean, which regularly reverses flow, as a metaphor for the turns of Fortune's wheel. Though it is likely taken from Trevet's commentary, Walton does not translate Trevet but removes much of the detail; he uses it as source of material to be used according to his own design. Likewise, the block of commentary to 3m10 is a short factual gloss regarding rivers mentioned by Boethius; Walton carries some of Trevet's material over into the verse translation and then explicates it further in the commentary. It is a compressed translation of Trevet, again shorn of lemmata and Trevet's references to other works, in this case Hugucio and Isidore.[118] Just like the compiler's use of Bartholomaeus Anglicus in *The Boke of Counfort* (discussed in the previous chapter), these blocks of commentary convey an interest in the factual that is reminiscent of encyclopaedic writing that Walton was keenly aware of and chose to emulate, from both his primary source, Trevet, as well as Isidore (invoked both directly and through Trevet). Indeed, the late medieval desire to be scholastic in analysis went hand in hand with the wish to be encyclopaedic in range, to be as expansive as one could be detailed.[119] What is fascinating is to see Walton taking those Latin traditions of the scholastic and encyclopaedic and offering them afresh in English, where translation offered a new linguistic option to the reader, while providing an opportunity to the writer to place their stamp on pre-existing material.

This method is also used in a block of commentary to 1m5 which continues alongside 1p5, 'Hyt belongeth not…' (appendix, block 7), running to a page long in Tavistock. This includes the section beginning 'Si enim cuius oriundus sis patrie', discussed above, which is only attested in Tavistock. However, it is clear that the Tavistock printer who added the lemma and translation from Trevet was simply picking up where Walton left off, as this

[118] Taite Silk, 3m10, 448-9; CRL MS Thott 304 2º, f.51ᵛ.
[119] For more on scholastic encyclopaedism, see Mary Franklin Brown, *Reading the World: Encyclopaedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 33-7.

whole block is a translation and development of the Trevet commentary for 1p5, as seen earlier in this chapter. The use of a lemma is the exception that proves the rule, and serves to highlight the less rigid structure employed by Walton in his commentary.

This is taken to its fullest extent in the commentary to 3m9, 'God gouerneth al…' (appendix, block 11).[120] This lengthy section of commentary, several pages long (the layout of which is discussed above), is dedicated to exposition of the well-known Boethian poem, 'O qui perpetua', and is arguably the most significant in the commentary as a whole. In terms of the source material, the picture is mixed. Walton does not closely follow Trevet and offer a line by line translation. If anything, by freeing himself from the need to give line by line exposition, lemma and gloss, Walton is able to change the order, to expand where he felt it necessary, and to skip over some of Trevet's source material. For instance, Trevet mentions the Book of Genesis in passing before moving onto a discussion of the binding of the elements. Walton expands this to give the quotation from the Vulgate, 'Terra / hoc est terrena materia erat inanis et vacua' followed by a brief exegesis, before moving back to translation from Trevet.[121] Trevet then includes references to Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* and to Macrobius, which Walton ignores, preferring a consideration of Plato's *Timaeus*, the primary source for Boethius in 'O qui perpetua'. Discussion of the air, water, and earth as they respond to heat and cold, humidity, and dryness, is taken via Trevet from *Timaeus* (as was noted), though these ideas also features in Aristotle's *Meteorology*.[122] There is an exposition of the 'anima mundi' or world soul, and then the division of elements, complete with the single diagram (discussed earlier). Again, Walton handles these components in a different

[120] As noted before, this section has added text in Thott which is not included in Tavistock and which does not add a great deal to the text, and Science omits a short passage alongside the diagram from his transcription of Tavistock.
[121] Here taken from Science, 368.
[122] This echoes the equal fascination with meteorological phenomena seen in other manuscripts discussed in this thesis, including the diagrams and commentary in BL MS Royal 8.B.iv and BnF MS latin 17814 in Chapter 1, and the textual references in *The Boke of Counfort* in BodL MS Auct. F.3.5 in Chapter 5.

order from Trevet, and in a more succinct fashion. Indeed, the exposition works in a similar way to the diagram, being almost like one sometimes found in Trevet's work but not quite, and which explains concepts described by Trevet in a circumlocutory fashion.[123] Walton here uses the material to create something still scholastic but more user-friendly and self-consciously different.[124]

Having examined Walton's selective use of Trevet with other source material, it remains to consider where Walton relies more heavily on other texts, either to make a translation or used with a lighter touch to provide source data. In the case of the commentary to 2p2, 'Tragedyes hen dytes…' (appendix, block 10), as discussed earlier, there is evidence in Walton's verse translation of a selective use of the integrated glosses that appear in most copies of Chaucer's *Boece*.

That Walton used Chaucer's *Boece* is not particularly surprising. More unusual is the likely use of Fulgentius' *Mythologies* alongside Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, particularly the evidence that Fulgentius was used independently of Trevet. The commentary for 1m4, 'The couetous kyng…' (appendix, block 6), is ten lines long and refers to the line in stanza 74, 'Or art þow lyk an asse to þe harpe' which in turn refers to Apollo giving asses' ears to King Midas. The origin of the myth is not mentioned by Boethius, Chaucer, or Trevet. It most likely comes either from Book XI of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or from Fulgentius's *Mythologies*. Fulgentius does recount the story of Midas and the asses' ears, but Trevet refers to Fulgentius only once, and covering a different section of the commentary (discussed

[123] The diagram is on CRL MS Thott 304 2º, f.46ᵛ and Tavistock, f.64ᵛ.
[124] Here, compare Taite Silk, 3m9, 413-6 with Science, 369. Trevet takes three pages of Taite Silk's typescript to describe world soul and the division of elements. In contrast, Walton briskly summarises the same material in two paragraphs and a diagram.

below), so Walton has not taken his reference from Trevet's commentary as intermediary.[125] This is particularly interesting as there are few attested copies of Fulgentius's work in medieval English libraries.[126] However, it is worth bearing in mind that though unusual, his work was not unknown, and indeed, BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, the English fifteenth-century manuscript (discussed in the previous chapter) which holds *The Boke of Counfort*, also holds part of Fulgentius's *Mythologies*.[127]

Likewise, Walton uses Fulgentius and Ovid in the commentary for 3m12, 'As Ouide in…' (appendix, block 14). This section of commentary, running over four pages in Tavistock, has a remarkable level of textual similarity between the two witnesses, particularly given its length. Walton begins by referring to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the Orpheus myth, and then soon after quotes Fulgentius by name. Indeed, this section is a lot less discursive than previous glosses, perhaps because its reliance on Greek myth does not allow for a great deal of theological development of ideas, though Walton occasionally finds ways to include it. Rather, this is mostly a factual passage of many glosses placed together, describing the myths of Orpheus and Eurydice, Cerberus, Tantalus, and the representation of hell in Greek mythology. Walton clearly knew and had access to a copy of the *Mythologies*, and presumably *Metamorphoses* as well. A comparison of Trevet for 3m12 with Walton in this section shows an interesting cross-section of resources, reminiscent of Ian Johnson's analysis of the verse translation, revealing that this is not a zero sum game; the use of one source does not necessarily displace another.[128] The order of references and subjects clearly follows

---

[125] For the Fulgentius source material, see Fulgentius, *The Mythographer*, trans. Leslie George Whitbread (Ohio State University Press: Columbus OH, 1971) 93. Taite Silk, in the introduction to the unpublished edition of Trevet's commentary, notes the 'single or scattered citations' of Fulgentius, and as well as a reader's familiarity with the text, an optical character recognition or OCR scan of the whole of the work found only one mention of Fulgentius, in the commentary for 3m12. Further references are unlikely but possible; in places the typescript is of very poor quality, and the scan may have missed some relevant text. This points up the need for a published edition of Trevet's commentary to the *Consolatio*.

[126] As apparent in a search of *MLGB3*.

[127] Fulgentius is at BodL MS Auct. F.3.5, ff.35^{r}-78^{v}.

[128] Johnson, 'Placing Walton's Boethius', 219-21.

Trevet here: Ovid, Eurydice, Calliope, Fulgentius and so on. However, the narrative nature of Walton's commentary, less driven and interrupted by lemmata and source material, is distinct from Trevet's, and reads more like the storytelling of Fulgentius. For instance, though Walton mentions Ixion only in passing in the verse translation, his commentary presents a detailed description of Ixion, of his fathering of the centaur, the attempted rape of Juno, and of Juno's relationship to Hercules. Walton's commentary in this block falls into two halves, the first based on the narrative of Fulgentius, essentially the start and the end of the Fulgentius's myth of Ixion. (This is the more likely source, given that *Metamorphoses* mentions Ixion only twice, and briefly at that.)[129] The second half of this block is a slightly compressed version of Trevet's more moralising analysis. Trevet's logically structured approach is clear:

> Qui apud inferos in rota uolvitur quia deditus curis temporalibus continue eleuatur prosperitate et deprimitur aduersitate. Que quidem rotacio desistit quando homo sapiencia instructus talia contempnit. Unde dicit Philosophia VELOX ROTA NON PRECIPITAT CAPUT YXIONIUM id est Yxionis scilicet Orpheo canente.[130]

That can be contrasted with Walton's more narrative approach, free of lemmata and using the oratorial device of anaphora to emphasise the moral argument:

> Such on is continuelli torned on a whel in helle. For he þat is ȝeuen to temperel businesse contynuelly most enterchaungen up and doun; now wel now wo, now meri now sori, now in prosperite now in aduersite. bute þis whel cessith whan a man bi informacion of wisdom þis wordli loue forleteth.[131]

This drawing from multiple channels is reflected throughout this section until the very end, when Walton pulls the moral arguments together to apply them to Boethius, that 'beynge in prison / out of al vvordly lustes / he had clere sight and conceyt of the vnstablenesse and the wrecchednesse of this present lyffe'.[132]

---

[129] See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by Frank Justus Miller, 2 vols (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), IV.461, 465; Fulgentius, *The Mythographer*, 79-80.
[130] 'Who, at the place of the souls of the dead, turned on a wheel, is consigned with the grief of time to be continuously lifted by prosperity and depressed by adversity. That in fact the rotation ceases when the distinguished man trained in wisdom despises it. Whence said Philosophy, IXION'S SWIFT WHEEL NO LONGER SPINS HIS HEAD that is Ixion's namely from Orpheus's song.' Taite Silk, 3m12, 511.
[131] This is on CRL MS Thott 304 2º, f.58ᵛ-59ʳ. See also Science, 373.
[132] Science, 373.

Walton does something similar in the commentary to 3m11, 'No þing elles…' (appendix, block 13). This ten-line gloss, added in both Thott and Tavistock with minor textual variance, develops a somewhat obscure reference of Boethius's to Plato's *Meno*, in particular the concept that the soul forgets what it knows objectively outside the body of the eternal world from the time of birth, and has to relearn it. However, the gloss is distinctive in using the metaphor of the harp that contains all possible music and the task of the harpist to learn it. This is significant as it is not referred to by Trevet. Indeed, though Trevet mentions Plato several times in the commentary for Metre 10, and names Plato's *Meno* by name, the image of the harp is a Platonic metaphor used in *Phaedo*.[133] Neither *Meno* nor *Phaedo* is well-attested in known English manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which suggests the use of references in other works or manuscripts, such as florilegia.[134] While Walton was clearly drawing widely in his use of source material, we can only infer his references from the largely unreferenced textual crumbs left behind.

This process of using primary and secondary works is extended in the final block of commentary, for 5p6, 'As clerkes haue…' (appendix, block 16). This block, surviving only in Tavistock, comes close to the end of the verse translation, and is unusually placed by the Tavistock printer mid-way through a stanza. The positioning of the commentary in Tavistock is often different from that in Thott (where we are able to make a comparison), but nonetheless the placing of the commentary sections is not likely to be arbitrary, as we have seen with the considered approach to the textual changes made to the Tavistock text. The stanza in question, refers to Plato, and has a direct relationship with the commentary that interrupts it on the page:

> Lo Plato seith þis world haþ evire be,
> And to an ende neuire it schall be broght.
> They seie þerfore it haþ eternite,

[133] Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. Harold North Fowler (Harvard University Press: Cambridge MA, 1914), 316-9.
[134] For instance, *MMOL* lists no copies of *Meno* and just one fifteenth-century copy of *Phaedo*. *MLGB3* lists no copies of *Meno* or *Phaedo*.

> And even i-wyk wiþ god þat haþ it wroght.
> Bot yit allone, incertayn is it noght
> A lyf interminable for to lede,
> As Plato wende hym-self it is no drede;[135]

The commentary that interrupts this stanza gives a detailed breakdown of the movement of time and its relationship to the eternal nature of God:

> The vvyche lyne is deuyded ynto ccclx even partes of vvyche partes / everych is called a degree. The mesure of a risyng of xv degrees is called an houre naturel. The mesure of a risyng of xxiv houres ys a day naturel. The mesure of ccclxv dayes + vi houres of encresse and certeyn mynutes / ys called a yere.
>
> …
>
> But the perdurabelte of the vvorlde ys mesured by meuyng of the heven / vvyche is called tyme and lenger than heuen meueth shal ther be no tyme. Than ys yt so that the beyng of God is called eternite.[136]

The opening section regarding the division of time has no basis in Trevet. However, the discussion that follows for most of this section, regarding the nature of eternity and of God and our relationship to the eternal is a much more complex picture. Trevet speaks plentifully in his commentary on this subject, and refers to both Aristotle and Plato, but there is no evidence that directly connects Walton's commentary to Trevet's, as has been the case in earlier passages. Indeed, though Walton's commentary mentions Plato by name more than once, it never refers to a particular work. It would seem most likely to be referring to Plato's *Timaeus*, as previously, especially chapter forty-eight, which considers the forms of matter in the universe. It is hard to draw conclusions from absence, but given the scarcity of recorded copies of Plato in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, combined with the use of unreferenced material and the citation of Plato but not of a specific text, it is probable that as well as using several complete texts (such as the *Consolatio*, Chaucer's *Boece*, Trevet's commentary, and likely at least some of Fulgentius's *Mythologies* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as well), Walton supplemented this with other kinds of material, such as florilegia and other

[135] This is stanza 957; Science, 322-3.
[136] Science, 378-9.

forms of miscellany, such as those discussed in Chapter 1. Where Walton is sure of his ground he tends to be specific; where he is vague suggests that he has only part of a work, or is unsure of its authorship, or both. This is not a surprise, and to draw such a conclusion is reasonable given the many partial, composite, and excerpted manuscripts still extant from Walton's period.

Conclusion

The commentary to Walton's verse translation of the *Consolatio* is fascinating for showing us how far Boethius's sixth century text had travelled from its earliest transmission. The verse itself is a reframing of Boethius's text, dependent on Chaucer's *Boece*, Trevet's commentary, and other works, rendered in verse as a secular commission. This text was transmitted through manuscripts which frequently employed marginal signs, notes, and markers, both to annotate the text but also to allow the translation to become the exegesis through side by side reading of the Latin and the English. Thott takes this a step further, providing the markers to the Latin but also providing the verse translation with an unprecedented degree of authority by giving it its own commentary, in English. In Rita Copeland's idea (discussed earlier in this thesis) that interlingual translation was an act both of veneration and subjugation, the endowment of the English work with academical and intellectual value is made complete through the addition of commentary.[137]

The Tavistock printed edition of the verse translation and commentary is a continuation of this process. It reveals a more concrete acceptance of the commentary as part of the intellectual package – Walton might have been an outlier in providing an English commentary, but the Tavistock printer made the intellectual choice to include the commentary, to interrogate it, and where appropriate to change it. Just as each reader may

[137] Copeland, 30-1.

create a text afresh when they turn the pages that hold it, the history of Walton's verse translation is similarly imbued with a catalogue of overlapping engagements from the writer, commentator, scribe, printer, reader, and annotator. We therefore have the ability to see some of the ways in which encounters with the text have left their mark, which in turn changes the nature of the text, which is then reflected in the next engagement in the chain. The community of engagement is of long duration, messy and human in its complexity, varied in its education and outlook, but still sought to connect with Boethian ideas on their own terms.

Appendix

Section of commentary text	**Copenhagen, Royal Library, MS Thott 403 2º**	***Tavistock Boethius***	***Boethius: De Consolatione Philosophiae* ed. Science**
1) *prefatio translatoris* (Caliope as poetes…)	*	follows stanza 8, *prefatio translatoris*	*
2) *prologus eiusdem super librum Boecij* (Misterium iam operatur…)	*	follows stanza 13, *prologus eiusdem super librum Boecij*	364
3) *prologus eiusdem super librum Boecij* (Hir Heroicus ys…)	*	between ll.4-5, stanza 28, *prologus eiusdem super librum Boecij*	*
4) *prologus eiusdem super librum Boecij* (Reson and intelligens…)	*	follows stanza 31, end of the *prologus eiusdem super librum Boecij*	364-5
5) 1m1 (Fortune was depaynted…)	*	follows stanza 37, end of 1m1	365
6) 1m4 (The couetous kyng…)	*	follows stanza 73, end of 1m4	365-6
7) 1m5-1p5 (Hyt belongeth not…)	f.5^{r}, begins adjacent stanza 127, 1p5 (commentary begins deficient and omits later text beginning ‘Si enim cuius…’)	follows stanza 123, end of 1m5	366
8) 1m6-1p6 (Here before hath…)	ff.6^{v}-7^{r}, begins adjacent stanza 139, 1p6	follows stanza 138, end of 1m6	366-7
9) 2m1 (Erinus ys a…)	f.10^{v}, adjacent stanza 172, 2m1	follows stanza 172, 2m1	*
10) 2p2, (Tragedyes hen dytes…)	f.11^{v}, adjacent stanza 182, 2p2	follows stanza 182, 2p2	*
11) 3m9, (God gouerneth al…)	ff.45^{v}-47^{r}, begins adjacent stanza 459, start of 3m9	follows stanza 467, end of 3m9 (omits text beginning ‘After þe maner…)	367-71 (omits texts: beginning ‘After þe maner…’ from Thott, and to right-hand side of Tavistock diagram

			beginning ‘thou art peseable…’)[138]
12) 3m10 (Tagus ys a…)	f.51^{v}, adjacent stanza 504, 3m10	follows stanza 504, 3m10	*
13) 3m11 (No þing elles…)	f.55^{r}, begins adjacent stanza 539, 3m11	follows stanza 539, end of 3m11	371
14) 3m12 (As Ouide in…)	ff.58^{r}-59^{r}, begins adjacent stanza 565, start of 3m12	follows stanza 573, end of 3m12 and explicit Bk 3	371-4
15) 4m7 (In thys chapytre…)	*	follows stanza 818, end of 4m7 and explicit Bk 4	374-8
16) 5p6 (As clerkes haue…)	*	Between ll.1-2, stanza 957, 5p6	378-9

[138] In what appears to be eyeskip, Science omits a few lines to the right of the diagram in Tavistock.

Conclusion

This thesis paints a picture of how responses to the late medieval English *Consolatio* developed. Over the course of the roughly two hundred years covered by this study there were fundamental changes to the way that Boethius's *Consolatio* was read and transmitted, seen through the design of the surviving manuscripts and through the commentary and annotation that was generated as a response to, and assimilated into, the primary text, whether in its original Latin or in English translations that were themselves, already, responses to the text.

Of course, where each chapter is based upon multiple witnesses to a text (with the exception of *The Boke of Counfort of Bois*), it has been necessary to present each text or idea across a timeframe that overlaps with other chapters. This is quite aside from the fact that many of the manuscripts discussed in this thesis cannot be precisely dated or show multiple signs of construction and engagement over an extended period. Nonetheless, the chapters do begin, cumulatively, to suggest a development over time. They show that from the start of the fourteenth century writers, readers, and scribes developed new ways of approaching the text, adding more complex methods of parallel reading, integrating gloss and commentary, and crucially, developing different kinds of vernacular response. These changes were then absorbed into the presentation of the *Consolatio* in the printed books of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[1]

The use of earlier manuscripts reveals that a codex, or the individual texts it holds, could have a value that extended well beyond the initial creation and intended use envisaged by the patron who commissioned it or the user-producer who undertook the copying or

[1] For more on the *Consolatio* in early print see Alexandra Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate, and Their Books 1473-1557* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 69-72.

binding of a manuscript. By adding interlinear or marginal notes, through the binding of the *Consolatio* with a commentary like Nicholas Trevet's, and by dismantling a book and binding it with new neighbours, the *Consolatio* could be adapted for a broad spectrum of readership inside and out of clerical circles. Where new manuscripts were created they could incorporate more formal structures of commentary, such as that written by William of Wheteley, could be written in ruled boxes designed for the purpose, like the commentary that accompanies Walton's *Boethius* in Copenhagen, Royal Library, MS Thott 403 2º or, like the texts used by students or those owned by university fellows, could allow generous space for the addition of lecture notes and personal reflections of study. There is an evident gradual development of new ways to engage with the *Consolatio*, through the changing form of the codex, the *mise en page*, the commentary, and the Boethian text itself.

In particular, the transmission of Trevet's commentary reveals this variety of development – the formal, the informal, the piecemeal – in the many extant witnesses, and it goes further by sitting in parallel with Middle English translation (as it does for instance in Cambridge, University Library MS Ii.3.21) as well as being a text of influence in the creation of Chaucer's *Boece*, Walton's *Boethius* and its accompanying Middle English commentary, and *The Boke of Counfort of Bois*. It is therefore appropriate that Trevet's commentary, the readership of which crossed the boundary between the academic and the vernacular (and back again) should be represented in such a wide range of codicological forms.

The codicological evidence reveals the changes in the form of the Boethius text and commentary through many stages of translation and adaptation, which ultimately enabled the vernacular work and commentary to be considered authoritative. As Copeland notes, the 'vernacular subsystem of *translatio studii* thus also represents an undoing (or exposing) of the myth of historical continuity with the *antiqui* which Latin exegetical practice works to

sustain.'[2] Yet, while we may see it retrospectively as a rupture from the Latin tradition, there is no getting away from the much-vaunted flaunting of *auctoritas* that Middle English writers continued to insist existed in their new works. The use of Trevet in Middle English translation and adaptation is clear evidence of this desire for literary respectability, which is ironic, considering that Trevet mined many works to inform his own, including the *Old English Boethius*, attributed to Alfred, itself an earlier rupture from the Latin tradition. There is, perhaps, nothing new under the sun, only degrees of difference, and an acceptance that what is ubiquitous – Boethian literature in its many forms, Trevet's commentary in its many forms – is therefore authoritative.

Just as these vernacular translations and adaptations are themselves responses to, and appropriations of, Boethian and Trevethian authority, so the codicological evidence (which is the main focus of this thesis) reveals further stages of response in the extent to which it replicates or dispenses with the paratextual choices offered to the reader. A Latin text, with Latin commentary in a separate column or position, allows the annotation to have a degree of optionality, as Ruokkeinen and Liira identify; it may direct the reader to a certain kind of reading, but the reader has the choice to ignore it if they wish.[3] However, the translated text, no matter how authentic it claims to be, is not only evidence of the linguistic choices made by the translator, but as seen with *The Boke of Counfort* and the Walton translation, it involves the silent absorption of other material which changes the text beyond any diligent attempt at telling 'the menynge of hit in Engelische'.[4] Even the commentary that accompanies Walton's verse translation engages in this kind of improvement. Walton quotes 'Commentor triuet' early on but uses many other sources, both silent and acknowledged, and produces a

[2] Copeland, 129.
[3] Sirkku Ruokkeinen and Aino Liira, 'Material Approaches to the Exploring the Borders of Paratext', *Textual Cultures*, 11 (2017), 106-29 (120).
[4] *BoC*, 226.

substantive text.[5] As Boethius is translated and changed into something new, so Trevet is changed likewise, while both text and commentary continue to claim their *auctoritas*, as Walton makes clear in the opening *prefacio translatoris*:

> As fro þe text þat I ne vary noght
> But kepe þe sentence in hys trewe entent,
> And wordes eke als neigh as may be broght
> Where lawe of metir is noght resistent[6]

Walton was responding to the demands of readers for a text that matched Boethius's 'trewe entent' but acknowledges that this can only be done as far as form is not 'resistent'. As Walton recognises of his verse, the same is true of the paratexts and codicology discussed in this thesis, which show change and authority co-existing.

That co-existence has been common to the patterns of Latin and English usage of the *Consolatio*, which this study has explored. It has identified, where possible, communities of use, whether they be university fellows, students, schoolboys, those under holy orders, as well as a minority of secular readers through both collective and private libraries. That evidence then suggests that the *Consolatio* was far from being a typical grammar schoolbook in England (in contrast to late medieval usage in Florentine schools), that it *was* used plentifully by more advanced scholars and by fellows, but that this is not the whole story.[7] Provenance data provides evidence that text, annotation, and longer form commentary were used in non-academic contexts, and in ways that cross the divide between Latin and English. The Latin Boethius was of interest to those with the education to read it, and English text, as *translatio studii*, and English commentary drawing on classical sources and earlier Latin commentary, were provided with the academic credentials to make it of interest to students and fellows and those under holy orders. This culminates in late medieval text and

---

[5] The reference to Trevet is at Science, 365.
[6] Science, 1.
[7] On the use of the *Consolatio* in Florence, see Robert Black and Gabriella Pomaro, *La Consolazione della Filosofia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento Italiano: Libri di scuola e glosse nei manoscritti fiorentini* (Firenze: SISMEL edizioni del Galuzzo, 2000), 32. This study is discussed in Chapter 2.

commentary in both literary and academic forms that shifts comfortably between Latin and the vernacular.

Indeed, while the focus of this thesis has been on late medieval manuscript transmission, it is important to note that this circular pattern of seeking authority from the past while simultaneously presenting new developments in the *Consolatio* did not end with the transition to printed books. For instance, William Caxton printed the *Consolatio* in Westminster in 1478, but as is well known, important copies of Latin scholarship continued to predominate, and so imported copies of Boethius were read in England too.[8] An example of this is Oxford, Bodleian Library, 4º B 2 Art. Seld., printed by Jacques Maillet in Lyon in 1496, a copy of the Latin *Consolatio* and the pseudo-Boethian *Disciplina Scholarium*.[9] The *mise en page* presents both primary works in a small inner text box surrounded by wrap-around commentary, reminiscent of particularly Continental manuscript copies of the *Consolatio*.[10] It may be a coincidence, but both the Boethian *Consolatio* and the pseudo-Boethian *Disciplina* are surrounded by pseudo-Aquinan commentary, which suggests an intentional homogeneity in content. Indeed, the planned scheme of binding the texts with their respective commentary is clear not only from the typography of the page but also from the *tabula* for the *Consolatio* which follows the *Disciplina* at the back of the book. Perhaps this is evidence, like that argued for with Trevet, that the Thomistic ancillary texts added value and *auctoritas* to the book. More broadly, it reveals a commercial willingness on behalf of printers to continue producing copies of the *Consolatio* with commentary.

---

[8] For more on Caxton's 1478 edition and other printed editions of the *Consolatio* in English translation, see Machan, xxii-xxiii; Brian Donaghey, Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr., Philip Edward Phillips, and Paul E. Szarmach, eds., *Remaking Boethius: The English Language Translation Tradition of The Consolation of Philosophy* (Tempe AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2019), 63-5, 89, 97.

[9] Boethius, *Boetius De Consolatione Philosophie: necnon De Disciplina Scholarium cum commento Sancti Thome* (Lyon: J. Maillet, 1496). For more on BodL 4º B 2 Art. Seld. see also Alan Coates, Kristian Jensen, Cristina Dondi, Bettinna Wagner, and Helen Dixon, *A Catalogue of Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century Now in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), vol 2, 608-9.

[10] Such as Glasgow, University Library, Hunter MS 374, discussed in Chapter 6.

Of particular relevance here, 4° B 2 Art. Seld. has an *ex libris* which reads 'Liber fratris Willelmi Godmersham monachi sancti augustini Cant', as well as having a record of known English provenance post-Reformation, so we know that the book came to England not long after its printing, and never left.[11] Further, there are several short marginal notes to the first few pages of both the *Consolatio* and the *Disciplina*, likely in more than one hand. However, one of the hands looks, from its similarity to the *ex libris*, to be written by Godmersham, revealing a continuity of engagement into the sixteenth century of the kind examined by this thesis.[12]

Another early printed copy, the English translation by Colvile of 1556, is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce B subt. 238.[13] This pocket-sized book is bound in vellum but printed on paper. The *mise en page* is interesting in presenting the summation of medieval English Boethian codicological design.[14] Each page holds three columns, of which Colvile's translation holds the central widest space in a Black Letter font. The original Latin is located in the innermost column in italics, and frequent but not continuous commentary in English occupies the outer margin in a smaller Black Letter font.

These two early printed books confirm the ongoing desire from readers for copies of the *Consolatio* which allowed for multiple kinds of reading and response. Indeed, if this thesis has argued for a winding path of codicological development, where text is copied and annotated, where annotation is formalised, text and annotation is translated, and both are assimilated and adapted to other forms of text, then these two early printed books represent

---

[11] See 'Boetius — Canterbury, Kent. Benedictine abbey of St Augustine (originally of St Peter and St Paul)', *MLGB3*.

[12] BodL 4° B 2 Art. Seld. (Lyon, 1496) contains brief marginal notes in Latin (such as on ff.1^{r}, 8^{v}, 142^{r}), and in a few places a reader has corrected the text or filled in the letters where the printing is patchy (such as ff.27^{v}, 87^{v}, 112^{r}). The marginalia which looks most convincingly to be in Godmersham's hand is in chapter 3 of the *Disciplina*, f.141^{r}. The annotation is often partially lost through trimming. They are generally brief 'sicut' and 'id est' notes.

[13] Boethius, *Boetius de consolationæ philosophiæ*, trans. by George Colvile (London: John Cawood, 1556); *ESTC* no. 3201. See also on Colvile's edition, Donaghey et al, *Remaking Boethius*, 92-7.

[14] On the *mise en page* of Colvile's translation see Daniel Wakelin, 'Possibilities for Reading: Classical Translations in Parallel Texts ca. 1520-1558', *Studies in Philology*, 105 (2008), 463-86 (472).

the next stage on that journey, as successive generations of scribes and readers and, in time, printers formalised paratextual structures by integrating them into the *mise en page*.

On a final note, through the plethora of manuscripts and, finally, printed books examined in this thesis, many stories have been told, of the patrons of book culture, the scribes, readers, and annotators who held these books and who sometimes left behind their mark. It is not that we really need to know the name of the person who owned a book and wrote in it in a particular way; fascinating as that it is, the names in this context are simply identifiers that help the scholar link fragments of evidence of readership. (In any case, the name is more often than not a luxury the scholar does not have.) More important than the biographical nuggets are what they add to the overall picture. When we can isolate one strand of engagement or influence we can see and have a better understanding of creation, use, and adaptation. When we separate out further strands within the codicological history of a single manuscript or the material history of a text across several witnesses, and place them in parallel, as I have attempted to do here, the emergent picture tells how the meaning of a text is made – by one reader, by many readers (with the briefest whisper of those who held the manuscript but left no marks behind) – within the discernible period of time evident in the dating of a book and the notes that it holds. Boethius in late medieval England was met in mediated fashion: with notes, with commentary, in translation, and sometimes with multiple elements held in one book. Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* was a text to learn from, to read for pleasure, with which to engage with classical myth and philosophy, and also to console. Its readers were many and varied, and they lost no opportunity to hold the book, to read the text, and to make it their own.

Bibliography

Manuscripts

Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS 733B
Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 393
Avignon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 1085
Cambridge, University Library, MS Additional 3038
Cambridge, University Library, Dd.1.11
Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.1.38
Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.3.21
Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk.3.21
Cambridge, University Library, MS Mm.2.18
Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 309 (707)
Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 484/480
Cambridge, Jesus College, MS Q. D. 7 (48)
Cambridge, Peterhouse, MS 275
Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 155
Cambridge, St John's College, MS G.29
Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.3.7
Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.3.12
Columbia, University of Missouri, Fragmenta Manuscripta, MS 150
Copenhagen, Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, MS AM 666 b 4to
Copenhagen, Royal Library, MS Thott 403 2°
Durham, University Library, MS Cosin V.ii.11
Durham, University Library, MS Cosin V.ii.15
Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 18.6.3
Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.3.1
Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut. 22 dex. 9
Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut. 33 sin. 7
Glasgow, University Library, Hunter MS 374
Hereford, Cathedral Library, MS P.III.6
Ipswich, Suffolk Archives, S1/2/403
Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 103
London, British Library, MS Add 10340
London, British Library, MS Add 41175

London, British Library, MS Harley 43
London, British Library, MS Harley 2519
London, British Library, MS Harley 4092
London, British Library, MS Royal 8.B.iv
London, British Library, MS Royal 15.A.xxx
London, British Library, MS Royal 18.A.xiii
Maidstone, Kent History and Library Centre, MS U1121/M2A
Maidstone, Kent History and Library Centre, MS U1121/M2B
New Haven, Beinecke Library, MS 84
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Additional D.98
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct F.3.5
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct F.6.4
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 180
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 797
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS D'Orville 154
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 100
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Mus 53
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Fairfax 3
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. G.41
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. poet. 151
Oxford, Balliol College, fragments 590. d. 9
Oxford, Balliol College, MS 27
Oxford, Balliol College, MS 124
Oxford, Balliol College, MS 141
Oxford, Balliol College, MS 316A
Oxford, Balliol College, MS 316B
Oxford, Christ Church, MS 151
Oxford, Exeter College, MS 28
Oxford, Magdalen College, MS Lat. 196
Oxford, Merton College, MS E.3.12
Oxford, Merton College, MS E.3.39
Oxford, New College, MS 264
Oxford, New College, MS 265
Oxford, New College, MS 277
Oxford, New College, MS 368

Oxford, Oxfordshire History Centre, GB 160 BOR4/1/A1/1

Oxford, Trinity College, MS 17

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 17814

Philadelphia, Rosenbach Foundation, MS 1083/30

Salisbury, Cathedral Library, MS 113

Worcester, Cathedral Library, MS X.G.11

Primary Sources

Aesop, *Fabulae Aesopicae plures quingentis et aliae quaedam narrationes, cum historia vitae fortunaeque Aesopi, compositae studio & diligentia Ioachimi Camerarii* (Leipzig, 1564)

Aquinas, Thomas, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, trans. by Timothy McDermott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)

Aristotle, *Aristotle: Metaphysics X-XIV, Oeconomica, Magna Moralia*, trans. by H. Tredennick and G. C. Armstrong (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1935)

—— *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

—— *The Physics, Books V-VIII*, trans. by P. H. Wicksteed and F. M. Cornford (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1934)

Bacon, Roger, *The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon*, vol 1, ed. by J. H. Bridges, (London: Williams and Norgate, 1900)

Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* (Nuremburg: Anton Koberger, 1483)

Bede, *Bedae venerabilis opera, Pars VI, Opera Didascalia 2*, ed. by Charles W. Jones, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977)

—— *The Reckoning of Time*, trans. by Faith Wallis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999)

Bernard of Cluny, *Scorn for the World: Bernard of Cluny's 'De Contemptu Mundi'*, trans. by Ronald E. Pepin (East Lansing MI: Colleagues Press, 1991)

Boethius, *Boetius de consolationæ philosophiæ*, trans. by George Colvile (London: John Cawood, 1556)

—— *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, trans. by John Walton, ed. by Mark Science, EETS os 170 (London: Early English Text Society, 1927)

—— 'Boethius' *De Consolatione* by Jean de Meun' ed. by V. L. Dedeck-Héry, *Mediaeval Studies* 14 (1952), 165-275

—— *Boetius De Consolatione Philosophie: necnon De Disciplina Scholarium cum commento Sancti Thome* (Lyon: J. Maillet, 1496)

—— *The Boke of Comfort called in Laten Boetius De Consolatione Philosophie: Translated in to Englesse Tonge* (Tavistock: Dan Thomas Rychard, 1525)

—— *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. S. J. Tester (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1973)

—— *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Victor Watts, rev. edn (London: Penguin, 1999)

Capella, Martianus, *De nuptiis philologiae et mercurii*, ed. by James Willis (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983)

Chaucer, Geoffrey, *Chaucer's Boece: A Critical Edition Based on Cambridge University Library. MS Ii.3.21, ff. 9^{r}-180^{v}*, ed. By Tim William Machan (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2008)

—— *The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2nd edn, ed. by John H. Fisher (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1989)

—— *The Riverside Chaucer,* ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008)

Fulgentius*, Fulgentius, The Mythographer*, trans. by Leslie George Whitbread (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 1971)

Godden, Malcolm and Susan Irvine, eds., *The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius's De Consolatione Philosophiae,* 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Grosseteste, Robert, *Die Philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln*, ed. by Ludwig Baur (Münster: Aschendorff, 1912)

Isidore of Seville, *The* Etymologies *of Isidore of Seville*, trans. by Stephen A. Barney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

James, N. W. and V. A. James, eds., 'Part 1: Bede Roll, nos 1-25' in *The Bede Roll of the Fraternity of St Nicholas* (London: London Record Society, 2004)

Johnson, Michael, 'A Critical Edition of the Commentary by William of Wheteley on the pseudo-Boethian Treatise *De Disciplina Scholarium*', unpublished thesis (1982)

Henry of Kirkestede, *Catalogus de Libris Autenticis et Apocrifis*, ed. by Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse (London: British Library, 2004)

Henryson, Robert, *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. by Denton Fox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981)

Johannes Scotus Erigena, *Saeculi Noni Auctoris in Boetii Consolationem Philosophiae Commentarius*, ed. by Edmund Taite Silk (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1935)

Kaylor, Noel H., Jason E. Streed and William H. Watts, 'The Boke of Coumfort of Bois', *Carmina Philosophiae: Journal of the International Boethius Society*, 2 (1993), 55-104

Kaylor, Noel Harold, Jr. and Philip Edward Phillips, eds., 'The Boke of Coumfort of Bois [Bodleian Library, Oxford MS Auct F.3.5]: a transcription with introduction' in *New Directions in Boethian Studies*, ed. Noel Harold Kaylor and Philip Edward Phillips (Kalamazoo MI: Western Michigan University, 2007), 223-79

Langland, William, *Piers Plowman: The A Version*, ed. by George Kane (London: The Athlone Press, 1960)

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2 vols, trans. by Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1916)

pseudo-Boethius, *Pseudo-Boèce: Disciplina Scholarium* ed. by Olga Weijers (Leiden: Brill, 1976)

Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. by Harold North Fowler (Harvard University Press: Cambridge MA, 1914)

—— *Volume IX: Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*, trans. by R. G. Bury (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1929)

—— *Timaeus; Critias; Cleitophon; Menexenus; Epistles*, trans. by Robert Gregg Bury, rev. edn (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1952)

Prudentius, *vol 1*, trans. by H. J. Thomson (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1949)

Sedulius, *The Pascal Song and Hymns*, trans. by Carl P. E. Springer (Atlanta GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013)

Stevens, Wallace, 'The Man With the Blue Guitar' in *Collected Poems* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1984)

Trevet, Nicholas, *Expositio Fratris Nicolai Trevethi Anglici Ordinis Praedicatorum Super Boetio De Consalatione,* ed. by Edmund Taite Silk (unpublished typescript, 1980)

Usk, Thomas, *Testament of Love*, ed. by Gary W. Shawver (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002)

Virgil, *The Eneados: Gavin Douglas's Translation of Virgil's Aeneid: Volume 1, Introduction and Commentary*, ed. by Priscilla Bawcutt with Ian Cunningham (Edinburgh: The Scottish Text Society, 2020)

Walter of Châtillon, *Galteri de Castellione Alexandreis*, ed. by Marvin L. Colker (Padua: In Aedibus Antenoreis, 1978)

William of Conches, *Guillelmi de Conchis Glosae Super Boetium,* ed. by Lodi Nauta (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999)

William Worcester, *The Boke of Noblesse and the English Text From Its Codicil*, ed. by Catherine Nall and Daniel Wakelin, EETS os 362 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023)

Secondary Sources

Adams, Jenny, 'Thomas Hunt's Monograms', *The Library*, 22 (2021), 376-82

Aitken, Patrick Henderson and John Young, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1908)

Alexander, J. J. G., *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscript Cuttings* (London: Trustees of the Wallace Collection, 1980)

Arngart, O., *The Proverbs of Alfred: An Emended* Text (Lund: Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet, 1979)

Ball, R. M., 'Thomas Cyrcetur, a Fifteenth-century Theologian and Preacher', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 37 (1986), 205-39

Barranu, Carlotta, 'Greek and Philohellenism in England During the Long Thirteenth Century: The Evidence From the Books of the Religious Houses', *Viator* 52 (2021), 319-57

Bately, Janet, 'Did King Alfred Actually Translate Anything?', *Medium Ævum*, 78 (2009), 189-215

Bestul, Thomas H., *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996)

Paul Binski and Patrick Zutshi, *Western Illuminated Manuscripts: A Catalogue of the Collection in Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Black, Robert and Gabriella Pomaro, *La Consolazione della Filosofia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento Italiano: Libri di scuola e glosse nei manoscritti fiorentini* (Florence: SISMEL edizioni del Galuzzo, 2000)

Bloomfield, Morton W., 'A Preliminary List of Incipits of Latin Works on the Virtues and Vices, Mainly of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries', *Traditio*, 11 (1955), 259-379

Bolton, Diane K., 'The Study of the Consolation of Philosophy in Anglo-Saxon England', *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age*, 44 (1977), 33-78

Burnley, J. D., 'Curial Prose in England', *Speculum*, 61, (1986), 593-614

Burrow, John, 'The Languages of Medieval England' in *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English: Volume 1, to 1550*, ed. by Roger Ellis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7-28

Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge, 5 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1856-67)

Cannon, Christopher, *From Literacy to Literature: England, 1300-1400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

—— *The Making of Chaucer's English: A Study of Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Carley, James P., *The Books of King Henry VIII and His Wives* (London: British Library, 2004)

Carroll, Ruth, Matti Peikola, Hanna Salmi, Mari-Liisa Varila, Janne Skaffari, and Risto Hiltunen, 'Pragmatics on the Page: Visual Text in Late Medieval English Books', *European Journal of English Studies*, 17 (2013), 54-71

Cerquiglini, Bernard, *In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology*, trans. by Betsy Wing (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999)

Chance, Eleanor, Christina Colvin, Janet Cooper, C. J. Day, T. G. Hassall, Mary Jessup, and Nesta Selwyn, 'Sites and Remains of Religious Houses' in *A History of the County of Oxford, vol 4: the City of Oxford*, ed. by Allan Crossley and C. R. Elrington (London: University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1979), 364-8

Clarke, Peter D. with Roger Lovatt, ed., *The University and College Libraries of Cambridge* (London: British Library, 2002)

Coates, Alan, Kristian Jensen, Cristina Dondi, Bettinna Wagner, and Helen Dixon, *A Catalogue of Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century Now in the Bodleian Library,* vol 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Cole, Andrew, 'The Style of Humanist Latin Letters at the University of Oxford: On Thomas Chaundler and the *Epistolae Academicae Oxon. (Registrum F)*' in *Form and Reform: Reading Across the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Shannon Gayk and Kathleen Tonry (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 2011, 40-64

Connolly, Margaret, 'Compiling the Book', *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 129-49

Copeland, Rita, *Rhetoric Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

Courcelle, Pierre, *La Consolation de Philosophie dans la Tradition Littéraire: Antécedents et Postérité de Boèce* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1967)

—— 'Étude Critique sur les Commentaires de la Consolation de Boèce (IXe-XVe Siècles)', *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age*, 12 (1939)

Coxe, H. O., *Catalogus Codicum MSS. qui in Collegiis Aulisque Oxoniensibus Hodie Adservantur* (Oxford: e Typographeo Academico, 1852)

Crabbe, Anna, 'Literary Design in the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*' in *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence*, ed. by Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 362-409

Craig-McFeely, Julia, 'Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music: The evolution of a digital resource', *Digital Medievalist*, 3 (2008)
https://journal.digitalmedievalist.org/articles/10.16995/dm.16/

Da Rold, Orietta, *Paper in Medieval England: From Pulp to Fictions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Library, 2020)

De Hamel, Christopher, *Cutting Up Manuscripts for Pleasure and Profit* (Charlottesville VA: Book Arts Press, 1996)

—— *Glossed Books of the Bible and the Origins of the Paris Booktrade* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1984)

de la Mare, A. C., 'Humanistic Hands in England' in *Manuscripts at Oxford: an exhibition in memory of Richard William Hunt (1908-1979), Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library Oxford, 1945-1975, on themes selected and described by some of his friends*, ed. by A. C. de la Mare and B. C. Barker-Benfield (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1980), 93-101

de la Mare, A. C. and Richard Hunt, *Duke Humfrey and English Humanism in the Fifteenth Century: Catalogue of an Exhibition held in the Bodleian Library Oxford* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1970)

Dean, Ruth J., 'The Dedication of Nicholas Trevet's Commentary on Boethius', *Studies in Philology*, 63 (1966), 593-603

—— *The Life and Works of Nicholas Trevet with Special Reference to his Anglo-Norman Chronicle*, unpublished thesis, Oxford (1938)

Derolez, René, *Runica Manuscripta: The English Tradition* (Brugge: De Tempel, 1954)

Donaghey, B. S., 'Nicholas Trevet's Use of King Alfred's Translation of Boethius, and the Dating of his Commentary' in *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987), 1-31

Donaghey, Brian, Irma Taavitsainen, and Erik Miller, 'Walton's Boethius: From Manuscript to Print', *English Studies 5* (1999), 398-407

Donaghey, Brian, Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr., Philip Edward Phillips, and Paul E. Szarmach, eds., *Remaking Boethius: The English Language Translation Tradition of The Consolation of Philosophy* (Tempe AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2019)

Dorandi, Tiziano and Michele Trizio, 'Editio princeps del Liber qui vocatur Suda di Roberto Grossatesta', *Studia Graceo-Arabica*, 4 (2014), 145-90

Doyle, A. I., 'The Cosin Manuscripts and George Davenport', *The Book Collector*, 53 (2004), 32-45

Dufal, Blaise, ‘Nicholas Trevet: le théologien anglais qui parlait à l’oreille des italiens’, *Reti Medievali E-Book, 36* (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2020)

Dutton, Elisabeth, ‘A Neglected Witness to Chaucer’s Boece in a Medieval Devotional Commentary on The Consolation of Philosophy’, *Carmina Philosophiae: Journal of the International Boethius Society*, (2015), 1-33

Ebbesen, Sten, ‘Ancient Scholastic Logic as the Source of Medieval Scholastic Logic’ in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. by Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, Jan Pinborg, and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 99-127

Edwards, A. S. G, ‘Medieval manuscripts owned by William Browne of Tavistock (1590/1?-1643/5)’, in *Books and Collectors 1200-1700: Essays presented to Andrew Watson*, ed. by James P. Carley and Colin G. C. Tite (London: British Library, 1997), 441-449

—— ‘Reading John Walton’s Boethius in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries’, in *Spaces For Reading in Later Medieval England,* ed. by Mary C. Flannery and Carrie Griffin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 35-49

Elton. Charles Isaac and Mary Augusta Elton, *The Great Book-Collectors* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1893), 193-4

Emden, A. B., *A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963)

Emden, A. B., *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957)

Evans, Gillian R., ‘Boethius’ Geometry and the Four Ways’, *Centaurus,* 25 (1981), 161-5

Evans, Ruth, Andrew Taylor, Nicholas Watson, and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, ‘The Notion of Vernacular Theory’ in *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280*-1520, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, Ruth Evans (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 314-30

Finberg, H. P. R., *Tavistock Abbey: A Study in the Social and Economic History of Devon*, 2nd edn (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1969)

Fisher, Matthew, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England* (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 2012)

Franklin Brown, Mary, *Reading the World: Encyclopaedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012)

Freeth, S., *Catalogue of Medieval Fragments* (Maidstone: Kent Archives Office, 1974)

Friedman, John B., *Northern English Books, Owners, and Makers in the Late Middle Ages* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995)

Gairdner, James and R. H. Brodie, eds., *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII: Volume 15, 1540* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, 1896)

Gameson, Richard, *The Medieval Manuscripts of Trinity College, Oxford: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 2018)

Genette, Gérard, *The Architext: An Introduction*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1992)

Gibson, Margaret, ed., *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981)

Gibson, M. T., Lesley Smith, and Marina Passalacqua, *Codices Boethiani: A Conspectus of Manuscripts of the Works of Boethius*, 4 vols (London: The Warburg Institute, 1995-2009)

Gillespie, Alexandra, 'Bookbinding' in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 150-172

—— *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate, and Their Books 1473-1557* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

Gleason, Mark J., 'The Influence of Trevet on Boethian Language and Thought in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde', unpublished thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison (1984)

Gneuss, Helmut and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014)

Grafton, Anthony, 'Introduction: Notes from Underground on Cultural Transmission', in *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Anthony Grafton and Ann Blair (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 1-7

Gransden, Antonia, *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon, 1992)

Grendler, Paul F., *Jesuit Schools and Universities in Europe 1548-1773* (Leiden: Brill, 2019)

Griffiths, Jane, *Diverting Authorities: Experimental Glossing Practices in Manuscript and Print* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

Hamesse, Jacqueline, 'Florilegia', in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin Palaeography,* ed. by Frank T. Coulson and Robert G. Babcock (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 885-905

Hanna, Ralph, 'Augustinian Canons and Middle English Literature' in *The English Medieval Book: Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, ed. by A. S. G. Edwards, Vincent Gillespie, and Ralph Hanna (London: The British Library, 2000), 27-42

—— *Patient Reading/Reading Patience: Oxford Essays on Medieval English Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017)

—— *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts of Magdalen College, Oxford*, unpublished notes

—— 'Miscellaneity and Vernacularity: Conditions of Literary Production in Late Medieval England' in *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany,* ed. by Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 37-51

—— 'Sir Thomas Berkeley and His Patronage', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), 878-916

Hanna III, Ralph and Traugott Lawler, notes for *Boece*, *Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Hanna, Ralph and David Rundle, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Manuscripts, to c. 1600, in Christ Church, Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 2017)

Hardman, Phillipa, *The Heege Manuscript: a Facsimile of National Library of Scotland MS Advocates 19. 3. 1* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 2000)

Harrison, F. LL., ‘Music at Oxford before 1500’ in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume 2, Late Medieval Oxford*, ed. by J. I. Catto and Ralph Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 347-71

Heikkinen, Seppo, ‘Copy-Paste Metrics? Lupus of Ferrières on Boethius’, *Arctos: Acta Philologica Fennica*, 48 (2014), 164-183

Hellgardt, Ernst, ‘Notkers des Deutschen Brief an Bischof Hugo von Sitten’ in *Befund und Deutung: Zum Verhältnis von Empirie und Interpretation in Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. by Hans Fromm and Klaus Grubmüller (Tübingen: Miemeyer, 1979), 169-92

Hellinga, Lotte, ‘Printing’ in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume III, 1400-1557*, ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 65-108

Hoeppner Moran, Jo Ann, *The Growth of English Schooling, 1340-1548: Learning, Literacy, and Laicization in Pre-Reformation York Diocese* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985)

Hunt, R. W., ‘The Introduction to the “Artes” in the Twelfth Century’ in *Studia Mediaevalia in Honorem Admodum Reverendi Patris Raymundi Josephi Martin*, ed. by Raymond M. Martin (Bruges: De Tempel, 1948), 85-112

—— ‘The Library of Robert Grosseteste’ in *Robert Grosseteste, Scholar and Bishop: Essays in Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of his Death*, ed. by D. A. Callus, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 121-45

Hunt, Tony, *Teaching and Learning Latin in Thirteenth-Century England*, vol 1 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991)

Jackson, H. J., *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2001)

James, Kathryn, *English Paleography and Manuscript Culture*, *1500-1800* (New Haven CT: Yale University, 2020)

James, Montague Rhodes, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College*, vol 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907)

—— *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Jesus College, Cambridge* (London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1895)

—— *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Pembroke, College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905)

—— *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Peterhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899)

—— *A Descriptive Catalogue of the McClean Collection of Manuscripts in the Fitzwilliam Museum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912)

Jayne, Sears and Francis R. Johnson, eds., *The Lumley Library: The Catalogue of 1609* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956)

Jenkins, Frances P., *The Benedictine Abbey of St. Mary and St. Rumon: Tavistock, Devon 974-1539* (Tavistock: Tavistock Parochial Church Council, 1999)

Jennings, Margaret, *The* Ars Componendi Sermones *of Ranulph Higden, O.S.B.* (Leiden: Brill, 1991)

Johnson, Eleanor, *Practising Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: Ethics and the Mixed Form in Chaucer, Gower, Usk, and Hoccleve* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013)

Johnson, Ian, 'New Evidence for the Authorship of Walton's Boethius', *Notes and Queries* (March, 1996), 19-21

—— 'Placing Walton's Boethius' in *Boethius in the Middle Ages: Latin and Vernacular Traditions of the Consolatio Philosophiae*, ed. by Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen and Lodi Nauta (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 217-42

—— 'Walton's Sapient Orpheus', in *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of De Consolatione Philosophiae,* ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer: 1987), 139-68

Johnson, Samuel, *The Idler*, 3rd edn, vol 2 (London: T. Davies, J. Newbery, and T. Payne, 1767)

—— *The Idler by the Author of the Rambler with Additional Essays in Two Volumes*, vol 2, 4th edn, (London: J. Rivington and Sons, T. Carnan, T. Payne and Son, T. Cadell, J. Nichols, T. Evans, and S. Hayes, 1783)

—— 'Some Account of the Life and Writings of Chaucer'*, The Edinburgh Magazine or Literary Miscellany* (1785), 298-302

Kaeppeli, T., *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi*, vol 3 (Rome: Ad. S. Sabinae, 1980)

Ker, N. R., *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957)

—— *Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts used as Pastedowns in Oxford Bindings with a Survey of Oxford Binding c. 1515-1620* (Oxford: The Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1954)

—— 'Oxford College Libraries Before 1500' in *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages,* ed. by Jozef Ijsewijn and Jacques Paquet (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1978), 293-311

Kerby-Fulton, Kathryn, *The Clerical Proletariat and the Resurgence of Medieval English Poetry* (Philadelphia PA, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021)

Kestemont, Mike, Folgert Karsdorp, Elisabeth de Bruijn, Matthew Driscoll, Katarzyna A. Kapitan, Pàdraig Ó Macháin, Daniel Sawyer, Remco Sleiderink, and Anne Chao, 'Forgotten Books: The Application of Unseen Species Models to the Survival of Culture', *Science*, 375 (2022), 765-9

Keynes, Simon and Michael Lapidge, trans., *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (London: Penguin, 1983)

Kisby, Fiona, 'Books in London Parish Churches before 1603: Some Preliminary Observations', in *The Church and Learning in Late Medieval Society: Studies in Honour of Professor R. B. Dobson*, ed. by Caroline Barron and Jenny Stratford (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2002), 305-26

Det Kongelige Bibliotek, 'Thott 304 2o: Boethius, De Consolatione Philosophiae, anglice', <http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/627/eng>

Kujawiński, Jakub, 'Nicholas Trevet OP (c. 1258–after 1334) as Publishing Friar. Part I. Commentaries on the Authors of Classical and Christian Antiquity' in *The Art of Publication from the Ninth to the Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. by S. Niskanen, V. Rovere (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming), 167-268

Kwakkel, Erik, *Book Before Print* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2018)

—— 'Commercial Organization and Economic Innovation' in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 173-191

—— 'Discarded Parchment as a Writing Support in English Manuscript Culture' in *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700: Volume 17, English Manuscripts Before 1400*, ed. by A. S. G. Edwards and Orietta Da Rold (London: British Library, 2012), 238-61

—— 'A love story hidden in a hat' <https://tmblr.co/Zig9QsplJ9Qb>

Lakin, S. M., *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cathedral Library of Salisbury* (London: Spottiswoode, 1880)

Lawrence, C. H., 'The University in State and Church' in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume 1, The Early Oxford Schools*, ed. by J. I. Catto (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 97-150

Lewis, Lucy, 'The Tavistock Boethius: One of the Earliest Examples of Provincial Printing' in *Printing Places: Locations of Book Production & Distribution Since 1500*, ed. by John Hinks and Catherine Armstrong (New Castle: Oak Knoll Press, 2005), 1-14

Liddell, Mark, 'Chaucer's Boethius Translation', *The Academy*, 49 (1896), 199-200

Lovatt, Roger, 'College and University Book Collections and Libraries' in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland, Volume 1: To 1640*, ed. by Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 152-77

Machan, Tim William, 'Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer's Boece' in *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer: 1987), 125-38

McIntosh, Angus, M. L. Samuels, and Michael Benskin, *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986)

McKenzie, D. F., *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

—— *Making Meaning: "Printers of the Mind" and Other Essays*, ed. by Peter D. McDonald and Michael F. Suarez, S. J. (Amherst MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002)

McKitterick, D. J., *The Library of Sir Thomas Knyvett of Ashwellthorpe c. 1539-1618* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978)

Marcus, Imogen, 'A comparative investigation of anaphoric reference devices in Anglo Norman and Middle English personal letters', *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, 57 (2022), 225-77

Marenbon, John, *Boethius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Matheson, Lister M., *Death and Dissent: Two Fifteenth-Century Chronicles* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999)

Michael, M. A., 'Urban production of manuscript books and the role of the university towns' in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume 2, 1100-1400*, ed. by Nigel Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 168-94

Minnis, Alastair, 'Aspects of the Medieval French and English Traditions of the De Consolatione Philosophiae' in Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence, ed. by Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 312-361

—— ed., Chaucer's Boece and the Medieval Tradition of *Boethius* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993)

—— 'Chaucer's Commentator: Nicholas Trevet and the Boece' in *Chaucer's* Boece *and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), 83-166

—— ed., *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of De Consolatione Philosophiae* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer: 1987)

—— *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic literary attitudes in the later Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010)

—— *Translations of Authority in Middle English Literature: Valuing the Vernacular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Minnis, A. J. and Tim William Machan, 'The *Boece* as Late-Medieval Translation' in *Chaucer's* Boece *and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), 167-88

—— 'The Occasion of Chaucer's *Boece*', *New Medieval Literatures 23*, ed. by Philip Knox (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2023), 130-78

Minnis, A. J. and Lodi Nauta, 'More Platonico loquitur: What Nicholas Trevet really did to William of Conches' in *Chaucer's* Boece *and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), 1-33

Minnis, A. J. and A. B. Scott, eds., *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c.1100-1375: The Commentary Tradition*, rev. edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991)

Morwood, James, ed. *Pocket Oxford Latin Dictionary: Latin-English*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Mueller, Janel and Joshua Scodel, eds., *Elizabeth I: Translations 1592-1598* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009)

Murray, H. J. R., *A History of Board-games Other Than Chess* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1978)

Myklebust Nicholas, *Misreading English Meter*: 1400-1514, unpublished thesis, University of Texas at Austin (2012)

Mynors, R. A. B., *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Balliol College, Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963)

Mynors, R. A. B. and R. M. Thomson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Hereford Cathedral Library* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993)

Nafde, Aditi, 'Stanza Markers in MSS Arundel 38 and Harley 4866 of Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*', *Notes and Queries* 61 (2014), 15-8

The National Archives, 'Feoffment Reference 51/1/4/10', <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ details/r/fff89bf4-3669-499d-aeab-843d92da9c0>

National Library of Scotland, Archives and Manuscripts Division, *Catalogue of the Advocates' Manuscripts: Adv.MS.18.6.3: 'BOETHIUS. A manuscript of a commentary on the*

"De consolation philosophiae", written by Michael Miniclardi, probably notary in Dieppe, in 1443', unpublished papers

Nauta, Lodi, 'The Consolation: the Latin Commentary Tradition, 800-1700' in *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*, ed. by John Marenbon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 255-78

—— 'The 'Glosa' as Instrument for the Development of Natural Philosophy' in *Boethius in the Middle Ages: Latin and Vernacular Traditions of the Consolatio Philosophiae*, ed. by Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen and Lodi Nauta (Leiden: Brill, 1997)

—— '*More Platonico loquitur*: What Nicholas Trevet really did to William of Conches' in *Chaucer's* Boece *and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius*, ed. by A. J. Minnis, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), 1-33

—— 'The Scholastic Context of the Boethius Commentary by Nicholas Trevet' in *Boethius in the Middle Ages: Latin and Vernacular Traditions of the Consolatio Philosophiae*, ed. by Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen and Lodi Nauta (Leiden: Brill, 1997)

Nielsen, Melinda, 'Being Boethius: Vitae, Politics, and Treason in Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love*', *Studies in Philology* 115 (2018), 25-47

—— 'Putting Boethius into Chaucer's *Boece*: The Ethics of Authorship in the *Boke of Coumfort*', *The Chaucer Review* 54 (2019), 441-63

North, J. D., 'Astronomy and Mathematics' in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume 2, Late Medieval Oxford*, ed. by J. I. Catto and Ralph Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 103-74

Oliver, George, *Monasticon Dioecesis Exoniensis* (Exeter: P. A. Hannaford, 1846)

Orme, Nicholas, *Medieval Schools: from Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2006)

—— 'Schools and School-Books' in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume III, 1400-1557*, ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 449-69

Overty, Joanne Filippone, 'The Cost of Doing Scribal Business: Prices of Manuscript Books in England, 1300-1483', *Book History*, 11 (2008), 1-32

Pace, George B. and Linda E. Voigts, 'A 'Boece' Fragment' in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, vol 1 (1979), 143-50

Pächt, Otto and J. J. G. Alexander, *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, vol 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973)

Page, R. I., *Matthew Parker and His Books: Sandars Lectures in Bibliography Delivered on 14, 16, and 18 May 1990 at the University of Cambridge* (Kalamazoo MI: Medieval Institute Publications)

William Page, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Dorset*, vol 2 (London: Archibald Constable, 1908)

—— ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Lincoln*, vol 2, (London: Archibald Constable, 1906)

Palmer, Nigel F., 'Latin and Vernacular in the Northern European Tradition of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*' in *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence*, ed. by Margaret Gibson, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 362-409

Parkes, M. B., 'Archaizing Hands in English Manuscripts' in *Books and Collectors 1200-1700*, *Essays presented to Andrew Watson*, ed. by James P. Carley and Colin G.C. Tite (London: British Library, 1997), 101-41

—— 'The Influence of the Concepts of Ordinatio and Compilatio on the Development of the Book' in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, ed. by J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) 115-41

Parkes, M. B., 'Layout and presentation of the text' in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume 2, 1100-1400*, ed. by Nigel Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 55-74

Parkes, M. B., 'The Provision of Books', in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume 2, Late Medieval Oxford*, ed. by J. I. Catto and Ralph Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 407-83

Partridge, Stephen, 'Designing the Page' in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. by Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 79-103

—— '*Glosses in the Manuscripts of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales: An Edition and Commentary'*, unpublished thesis, Harvard University (1992)

Pearsall, Derek, 'The Organisation of the Latin Apparatus in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*: The Scribes and their Problems' in *The Medieval Book and a Modern Collector: Essays in Honour of Toshiyuki Takamiya*, ed. by Takami Matsuda, Richard A. Linenthal, and John Scahill (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), 99-112

—— 'The Whole Book: Late Medieval English Manuscript Miscellanies and their Modern Interpreters' in *Imagining the Book*, ed. by Stephen Kelly and John J. Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005)

Peiper, Rudolfus, ed., *Anicii Manlii Severini Boetii, Philosophiae Consolationis: Libri Quinque* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1871)

Petrina, Alessandra, 'Robert Henryson's "Orpheus and Eurydice" and Its Sources', *Fifteenth Century Studies*, 33 (2008), 198-217

Piltz, Anders, *The World of Medieval Learning*, trans. by David Jones (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981)

Piper, A. J. and A. I. Doyle, 'Durham University Library Cosin MS V.ii.11' in *Durham University Library Archives & Special Collections Catalogue* <https://reed.dur.ac.uk/xtf/view?docId=ark/32150_s241687h49b.xml>

Reed Doob, Penelope, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity Through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1990)

Riehl Leader, Damian, *A History of the University of Cambridge, Volume 1: The University to 1546* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

Ringrose, Jayne, *Summary Catalogue of the Additional Medieval Manuscripts in Cambridge University Library Acquired before 1940* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2009)

Roberts, Jane, *Guide to Scripts Used in English Writings up to 1500* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015)

Roberts, Jane and Pamela Robinson, *'Paleography and Codicology'* in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, 2nd edn, vol 1, ed. by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2020), 51-64

Robinson, Pamela, 'Gothic Script in England c.1300-1500' in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin Palaeography*, ed. by Frank T. Coulson and Robert G. Babcock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020) 369-90

Ronsin, Albert, *La bibliothèque Bouhier : histoire d'une collection formée du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle par une famille de magistrats bourguignons* (Dijon: Académie des sciences, arts et belle-lettres, 1971)

Rouse, Robert Allen, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Rundle, David, 'The Scribe Thomas Candour and the Making of Poggio Bracciolini's English Reputation' in *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700, vol 12 (Scribes and Transmission in English Manuscripts 1400-1700)*, ed. by Peter Beal and A. S. G. Edwards (London: British Library, 2005), 1-25

Ruokkeinen, Sirkku and Aino Liira, 'Material Approaches to Exploring the Borders of Paratext', *Textual Cultures*, 11 (2017), 106-129

Ryley, Hannah, 'Constructive parchment destruction in medieval manuscripts', *Book 2.0*, vol. 7 (2017), 9–19

—— *Re-using Manuscripts in Late Medieval England: Repairing, Recycling, Sharing* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2022)

Salter, H. E., ed., *The Oxford Deeds of Balliol College* (Oxford: Oxford Historical Society, 1913)

Sargent, Michael G., 'What do the numbers mean? A textual critic's observations on some patterns of Middle English manuscript transmission' in *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts in England*, ed. by Margaret Connolly and Linne R. Mooney, (Woodbridge: York Medieval, 2008), 205-44

Sawyer, Daniel, 'Navigation by Tab and Thread: Place-Markers and Reader's Movement in Books' in *Spaces For Reading in Later Medieval England,* ed. by Mary C. Flannery and Carrie Griffin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 99-114

—— *Reading English Verse in Manuscript c.1350-c.1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

—— 'Rediscovered manuscript fragments of "The Prick of Conscience" in the library of Queens' College, Cambridge', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, vol. 15 (2015), 515-539

Schofield, Bertram, ed., *The Knyvett Letters (1620-1644)* (London: Constable and Company, 1949)

Sebastian, Harry Francis, 'William of Wheteley's (fl. 1309-1316) Commentary on the pseudo Boethius' Tractate De Disciplina Scholarium and Medieval Grammar School Education', unpublished thesis, New York (1970)

Seymour, M. C., *Bartholomaeus Anglicus and His Encyclopaedia* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992)

—— 'Some Medieval English Owners of *De Proprietatibus Rerum*', *The Bodleian Library Record*, 9 (1973-8), 156-65

Seymour, M. C. and Ralph Hanna III, 'Boece' in *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts* by M. C. Seymour (Aldershot: Scolar, 1995), 43-53

Sharpe, Richard, 'Reconstructing the medieval library of Bury St Edmunds Abbey: the lost catalogue of Henry of Kirkstead' in *Bury St Edmunds: Medieval Art, Architecture, Archaeology and Economy*, ed. by Antonia Gransden (Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 1998)

Shuffelton, George, review of Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *The Clerical Proletariat and the Resurgence of Medieval English Poetry*. (Middle Ages Series.) Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021. Pp. xx, 388; black-and-white figures. $89.95. ISBN: 978-0-8122-5263-7; *Speculum* 97 (2022), 1217-8

Smalley, Beryl, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960)

Smith, Lesley, *Masters of the Sacred Page: Manuscripts of Theology in the Latin West to 1274* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001)

Smith, Margit J., *The Medieval Girdle Book* (New Castle DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2017)

Smyth, Adam, *Material Texts in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)

Solopova, Elizabeth, Jeremy Catto, and Anne Hudson, eds., *From the Vulgate to the Vernacular: Four Debates on an English Question c.1400* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2020)

Streeter, Burnett Hillman, *The Chained Library: A Survey of Four Centuries in the Evolution of the English Library* (London: Macmillan, 1931)

Szirmai, J. A., *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (London: Routledge, 2017)

Taavitsainen, Irma, *The Index of Middle English Prose, Handlist 10: Manuscripts in Scandinavian Collections* (Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 1994)

Thomson, David, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Middle English Grammatical Texts* (New York: Garland, 1979)

Thomson, Rodney M., ed., with the assistance of James G. Clark, *The University and College Libraries of Oxford* (London: British Library, 2015)

Thomson, R. M., *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts in the Library of Peterhouse*, Cambridge (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2016)

—— *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989)

—— 'Fourteenth-Century Cambridge University and Its Books' in *King's Hall, Cambridge and the Fourteenth-Century Universities: New Perspectives*, ed. by John Marenbon (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 67-86

Thorp, N., *The Glory of the Page: Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts from Glasgow University Library* (London: Miller, 1987)

Wakelin, Daniel, *Designing English: Early Literature on the Page* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2018)

—— ‘England: Humanism Beyond Weiss’ in *Humanism in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, ed. by David Rundle (Oxford: Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2012), 265-305

—— *Humanism, Reading and English Literature 1430-1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

—— *Immaterial Texts in Late Medieval England: Making English Literary Manuscripts, 1400-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022)

—— ‘Instructing Readers in Fifteenth-Century Poetic Manuscripts’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73 (2010), 433-52

—— ‘Possibilities for Reading: Classical Translations in Parallel Texts ca. 1520-1558’ in *Studies in Philology* 105 (2008), 463-86

—— *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375-1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

—— “Thys Ys My Boke”: Imagining the Owner in the Book’ in *Spaces For Reading in Later Medieval England,* ed. by Mary C. Flannery and Carrie Griffin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 13-33

—— ‘When Scribes Won’t Write: Gaps in Middle English Books’ in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 36 (2014), 249-78

Walther, Hans, *Initia Carminum Ac Versum Medii Aevi Posterioris Latinorum: Alphabetisches Verzeichnis der Versanfänge mittellateinischer Dichtungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1959)

Warner, George F. and Julius P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King’s Collections*, 4 vols (London: British Museum, 1921)

Watson, Andrew G., *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of Exeter College Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

—— ‘Harley Manuscripts’, *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 4 (1973), 603-9

—— *The Library of Sir Simonds d’Ewes* (London: British Museum, 1966)

Watson, Nicholas, ‘The Politics of Middle English Writing’ in *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280*-1520, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 331-52

Whitbread, Leslie George, *Fulgentius the Mythographer* (Columbus OH: Ohio State University Press, 1971)

Wieck, Roger S., ‘Folia Fugitiva: The Pursuit of the Illuminated Manuscript Leaf’, *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 54 (1996) [Essays in Honor of Lilian M. C. Randall], 233-254

Wordsworth, Christopher and Henry Littlehales, *The Old Service-Books of the English Church* (London: Methuen, 1904)

Wright, C. E., *Fontes Harleiani: a study of the sources of the Harleian collection of manuscripts preserved in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1973)

Young, J. and P. H. Aitken, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1908)