

In what follows I will examine the mereological tradition founded by Aristotle and presented to the early medieval West by Boethius. Given the paucity of what was available from Aristotle's extensive opera, it is no surprise that some important concepts are not carried over to the early medieval period, or if they do appear, they often do so in a distorted form. Sometimes this omission and distortion is attributable to Boethius. Boethius' logical works are almost without exception introductory treatises. As one would expect from introductory textbooks, Boethius' treatment of mereology often glides over complexities, which a more advanced work would stop to address. Hence, Boethius' remarks about parts and wholes are often general and devoid of nuance.

It is by no means clear that Boethius actually has a theory of parts and wholes. He might, as some of his contemporary interpreters have urged, be merely parroting remarks he finds in elementary, (probably) neoplatonic textbooks without worrying whether these remarks are consistent. (49) I will not assume that this is the case from the start. Rather, I will attempt as best as I can to reconstruct Boethius' metaphysics of mereology. This reconstruction will require that I piece together stray remarks, think through the specific examples that he gives, and generally extrapolate from an admittedly sparse collection of rules, examples and hints. My method carries the risk of yielding not Boethius' theory of parts and wholes, but rather a Boethian theory. But this is the same risk that Abelard, Pseudo-Joscelin, and all the thinkers of the early medieval period took when attempting to piece Boethius' remarks into a coherent metaphysics of mereology."

(49) Some have argued that Boethius' *De divisione* is derived from Porphyry's lost commentary on the *Sophist*. Andrew Smith reprints the entire *De Div.* as 169F in his edition of Porphyry's fragments. On his reasons for inclusion consult his introduction (Frag. x-xii). Others suggest that Boethius had two sources, one being Porphyry's commentary and the second being a treatise on division by Andronicus of Rhodes. Magee concludes that Porphyry's prolegomena to his *Sophist* commentary is the direct source of Boethius' *De divisione*. However, he does not discount the possibility that Andronicus is an indirect source, nor does he discount the possibility that some of the material in *De divisione* is original to Boethius (1998, lv-lvii).

One of the reasons that scholars suspect that Boethius borrows from more than one source is that there are problems with Boethius' presentation of the modes of division (Zachhuber 2000, 88-89).

References:

"Three of the five treatises that comprise the Opuscula sacra [= OS] contain interesting philosophical material. (1) All three treatises attempt to make aspects of God intelligible using Greek philosophical concepts.

The treatise Quomodo substantiae (OS III) discusses how something can be essentially predicated of both God and His creatures. On the Trinity (OS I) and Against Eutyches and Nestorius (OS V) are concerned with the individuality and unity of, respectively, God and Christ. Along the way to formulating his solution to his chosen puzzles, Boethius presents some of the elements of a general theory of individuals. In this chapter we will concentrate on the general theory of individuals that can be reconstructed from Boethius’ Opuscula. (2) The theological treatises are not the only places that he discusses individuals, and at times we will make use of Boethius’ commentaries on Aristotle and Porphyry to flesh out some of his remarks. (3) Nonetheless, we will focus on the account of individuals that can be reconstructed from the theological treatises for two reasons. First, this account has exerted a tremendous influence on subsequent generations. Second, Boethius admits that his main role in the logical commentaries is to present a sympathetic elucidation of Aristotle’s or Porphyry’s views. (4) The doctrines in the Opuscula presumably are Boethius’ own.

After we have examined and reconstructed Boethius’ general treatment of individuals, we will finish this chapter by asking whether this general account of individuals can illuminate the nature of the Incarnation and the Trinity." (p. 129)

"Conclusion.
In his Opuscula sacra, Boethius presents some of the elements of a metaphysical theory of individuals. He does not flesh out his theory. But what he does tell us is tantalizing. It is little wonder that Boethius’ brief and incomplete treatments of individuals captured the imagination of numerous medieval philosophers. (29) The elements of the theory of individuals that he presents in the Opuscula are marshaled in order to make the Incarnation and Trinity intelligible in so far as these Divine truths can be made intelligible to the unaided human intellect. Our assessment has been that Boethius comes up short. But then again, Boethius admits that his task is doomed to fail.

These inadequacies, however, should not detract from the importance of Boethius’ Opuscula. The student of medieval metaphysics should begin with Boethius. Boethius defines the problems that will inspire generations of philosophers, and he gestures toward many of the solutions that subsequent philosophers will offer." (p. 151)

(1) All references are to the Latin edition by Claudio Moreschini (Boethius 2000), in the format of number of the opusculum, followed by its section and the line of the edition. As an aid to students who do not have much Latin, citations of passages from the Opuscula will include a reference to the corresponding English passage in the Loeb edition (Boethius 1973).


(2) For this reason, we will not be able to touch upon many of the interesting and puzzling aspects of the Quomodo substantiae. The third theological treatise is an extremely difficult one, and there is significant disagreement over its structure and meaning. For introductions to Quomodo substantiae see Marenbon 2003a, 87-94 and Chadwick 1981, 203–11.

For detailed studies see De Rijk 1988; MacDonald 1988; and McInerny 1990, 161–98. There are book-length studies by Schrilmr (1966) and Siobhan Nash-Marshall (2000), and a detailed commentary by Galonnière (2007). Pierre Hadot’s interpretation of Boethius has been extremely influential. See, in particular, Hadot 1963 and 1970. Recently there has been a lot of work on Boethius’ metaphysical Opuscula in Italian. For example, see Maioli 1978; Micaelli 1988 and 1995.

(3) For a survey of Boethius’ remarks on individuals and individuation that carefully considers not only the Opuscula sacra, but also the logical commentaries, see Gracia 1984, Chapter 2, 65–121.

(4) For example, in his famous discussion of universals Boethius announces that he has provided an Aristotelian solution to the problem because he is commenting on an Aristotelian treatise, not because it is the best solution (2IS [Second Commentary on Isagoge] 167.17–20; English translation in Spade 1994, 25).

(29) On Boethius’ influence in general see the next chapter. [Christophe Erismann, The medieval fortunes of the Opuscula sacra, pp. 155-177] For Boethius’ influence on medieval ruminations on the metaphysics of individuals, start by consulting Gracia 1984; Spade 1985 I, Chapter 23; and King 2000.

References
"The exact status of the fourth tractate included among the Opuscula Sacra of Boethius is still uncertain, though the other theological works are now almost universally accepted as genuine. Boethian scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were generally inclined to reject Tractate IV. (1)" (p. 55)

(Another possibility, more prosaic, corresponds better with what we know about the treatise. Tr. IV is simple and brief, but it is not incomplete. It is so written, with energy, with conviction, and with sensitiveness, as to be exceedingly impressive. There are, in addition, definite indications of a didactic motive on the part of the author. (46) Because of these considerations, I wonder if it is not more likely that Boethius meant it to be a guide for the layman. We know that the doctrinal questions of Boethius' day, especially those of Oriental origin, were very confusing to ordinary Western Christians, who were interested in them but for obvious reasons could not always distinguish between the orthodox and the heretical. We know also that there were attempts both by the Scythians and by their opponents in Rome to win public support. (47) It has already been shown that Boethius' theology was very close to the Scythan; whether their alliance was openly avowed or not, we do not yet know. Boethius unquestionably understood the Eastern doctrines then being discussed so widely in Rome better than any of his countrymen. Perhaps he and his friends thought it advisable for him to turn from his highly specialized theological works to edify, to protect, and if possible, to win over the Romans. That would accord with the strange weaving together of Trinitarian doctrine and a compact narrative of Christian history. In that fabric nothing is clearer than the importance the writer put upon his Trinitarian teaching, which he proclaimed one of the fundamental doctrines of the Catholic faith." (pp. 68-69)
(1) Viktor Schurr lists some of those for and against in Die Trinitätslehre des Boethius im Lichte der "skythischen Kontroversen" (Paderborn, 1935), 8, n. 40. He mistakenly cites August Hildebrand as supporting the authenticity of the document.

(46) Lines 94-96 and 247-253. Note Schurr's comment, 8-9, n. 46.
(47) For that reason an unknown Scythian compiled the Collectio Palatina and in it appealed to the definitions of Nestorianism and Eutychianism patriot, John, bishop of Tomi, who was presumably John Maxentius. Dionysius Exiguus made his translations of theological documents for the same reason. Pope Hormisdas vigorously defended his rather hostile treatment of the Scythians and Maxentius replied. A senator, Faustus by name, asked the presbyter Trifolius to explain the Scythian formula and Trifolius gave an unfriendly interpretation of the Theopaschite position. Both sides energetically tried to win the support of senate and people.

Contents: Preface VII; Chapter I. Introductory 1; II. Western Europe in the Fifth Century a.d. 9; III. Theodoric the Ostrogoth 18; IV. Boethius the Scholar 33; V. Boethius and Theodoric 44; VI. The Fall of Boethius 57; VII. The Consolation of Philosophy 75; VIII. The Philosophical Background of the Consolation 102; IX. Eternal Life 123; X. The Theological Writings 139; XI. Boethius and Christianity 153; XII. Conclusion 164; Bibliography 170; Index 173.
"In writing about Boethius and his work I have had in mind the general reader who is not equipped with any special knowledge of the Classics or of Philosophy; I have therefore given translations of all passages quoted from Greek and Latin authors. Though I am aware that footnotes are a cause of irritation to some readers, I have employed them for the double purpose of acknowledging my own indebtedness where it is due and of indicating the sources of fuller information.
But in addition to the references I make in the course of the book, I wish to express here my special sense of obligation to two writers, Dr H. F. Stewart and Dr E. K. Rand; to Dr Stewart for his valuable Boethius, An Essay (1891), a book now out of print, to Dr Rand for the chapter he devotes to Boethius in his Founders of the Middle Ages and for his article “ On the Composition of Boethius’ Consolatio Philosophiae ” in Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, vol. xv, and to Dr Stewart and Dr Rand jointly for giving in that volume of the Loeb Classical Library Series for which they are responsible the text and translation of Boethius’s theological writings. This is the only English translation so far as I know of these tractates. My indebtedness to these two writers is great in spite of the fact that on a number of points I have reached conclusions that are different from theirs." (Preface, VII-VIII)

6. Betsey, Andrew. 1991. "Boethius and the Consolation of Philosophy, or, how to be a good philosopher."
Ratio no. 4:1-15.

Inhalt: Vorwort 7; John Magee: Boethius’s Consolatio and Plato’s Gorgias 13; Monika Asztalos: Nomen and Vocabulary in Boethius’ Theory of Predication 31; Margherita Belli: Boethius, disciple of Aristotle and master of theological method. The term i ndemonstrabilis 53; Claudio Moreschini: Subsistentia
Boethius' Metaphysics. Annotated Bibliography: First Part

8. Bradshaw, David. 2009. "The Opuscula sacra: Boethius and theology." In The Cambridge Companion to Boethius, edited by Marenbon, John, 105-128. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. "The Opuscula sacra are a collection of brief but dense and highly influential theological treatises. Their unquestioning commitment to Catholic orthodoxy, not to mention their concern over issues of dogma, has seemed to many to be at odds with the philosophical detachment of Boethius’ other works. For a time in the nineteenth century scholars almost unanimously denied their authenticity, but this situation was reversed in 1877 with the publication of a fragment from a hitherto unknown work by Cassiodorus. The fragment states that Boethius “wrote a book concerning the Holy Trinity and certain dogmatic chapters and a book against Nestorius.”(1) This description corresponds nicely to the first, fourth, and fifth of the treatises that have come down to us. Although the others are not mentioned, since they are included in all the manuscripts, and all save the fourth are explicitly attributed to Boethius, there seems little reason to doubt them as well. Our concern here will be the relevance of the treatises for revealed theology, as distinct from their relevance for metaphysics (to be discussed in the next chapter [Andrew Arlig, The metaphysics of individuals in the Opuscula sacra]). Accordingly we will set aside the third treatise, the so-called Quomodo substantiae or De hebdomadibus, and focus upon the others." (p. 105)

(…)
"Conclusion.
I have observed that each of the four treatises discussed here is problematic. The problems derive in part from Boethius’ desire to treat theological issues using a purely philosophical method, and in part from his exclusive reliance on Augustine as a theological authority. In addition, there is a certain tendency to exaggerate the role of authority itself within theology, as if theology’s sole task were to make authoritative pronouncements which it is then the job of philosophy to render rationally coherent. This is not a very fruitful way to think of the relationship between the two disciplines. Despite such problems, however, the treatises remain a remarkable achievement. Boethius almost single-handedly made philosophy into theology’s indispensable handmaiden, in the process raising theology to a new level of sophistication. (54) Anyone who finds his views unsatisfactory would do well to consider the challenge posed at the end of the Utrum Pater: “if you are in any point of another opinion, examine carefully what has been said, and if possible, reconcile faith and reason” [37])." (pp. 124-125)

(54) As B. E. Daley ['Boethius’s Theological Tracts and early Byzantine Scholasticism', Mediaeval Studies 46, 1984, pp. 158–191] observes, this process occurred almost simultaneously with a similar movement in the Greek-speaking East, so that scholasticism had two more or less independent births.


"Introduction
The writings of Ancius Manlius Severinus Boethius exercised a powerful influence on the nature and development of mediaeval philosophy. The extent of his influence was such that I think it fair to say that anyone seeking more than a superficial grasp of mediaeval philosophy must acquire some first-hand knowledge of his work. The trouble is, however, that while The Consolation of Philosophy is well-known and much commented upon, Boethius’s other works are relatively neglected. (1) Included in this latter group are the five theological treatates, one of which has this imposing title: Quomodo Substantiae In Eo Quod Sint Bonae Sint Cum Non Sint Substantialia Bona. This tractate also has the more manageable title De Hebdomadibus and it is as such that I shall refer to it throughout this article. (2) I have chosen to give an explication of the De Hebdomadibus for three reasons.
First the problem with which it deals (the nature of the relation between goodness and substance) is intrinsically interesting and Boethius’s solution to the problem is a model of philosophical analysis. Second, in addition to the fact that the philosophical status of the nine axioms listed in the tractate is a matter of some scholarly controversy, the answer to the obvious question of how these axioms function in the tractate as a whole is not at all clear. And third, this tractate is philosophically significant to those philosophers who take St. Thomas as their inspiration since it appears that St. Thomas’s existence/essence distinction is adumbrated here. I shall begin my explication by giving a brief overview of the main lines of the tractate. Then I shall lay out the arguments contained in the statement and resolution of the dilemma which Boethius constructs, indicating (by means of Roman numerals in parentheses) where I
think particular axioms are meant to apply. Finally, I shall display the axioms as perspicuously as possible and comment on them." (pp. 419-420)

(1) I am obliged to Professor Ralph McInerny for awakening my interest in Boethius and for his suggestion that the De Hebdomadibus would repay careful study.

(2) All references are to the H. F. Stewart and E. K. Rand edition of The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy, in the Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973)


"A close analysis of William of Auvergne’s metaphysics reveals a distinction between being and essence that more closely approximates the celebrated real distinction of St. Thomas than has generally been recognized. Like St. Thomas, William maintained both a real distinction and a real composition between being and essence in the metaphysical structure of the concrete thing. Since William’s position thus represented a marked development in the history of philosophy with respect to this topic, it is obviously valuable to look at William’s sources, namely, Boethius and Avicenna. Of course, I am in no sense suggesting that the study of Boethius and Avicenna is valuable only for the insights it might lend to one’s perspective of William’s position. On the contrary, such study is eminently valuable in itself.

1. Boethius’s Contribution to the Doctrine of the Real Distinction

In his Opuscula Sacra, Boethius distinguishes between being (esse) and that which is (id quod est). Because William, who borrowed Boethius’s terminology for his own position, was especially influenced by the De hebdomadibus, one needs to look at this work in order to reach a more complete understanding of William. While the scholarly opinion on Boethius’s distinction is quite divergent, Pierre Hadot’s work — in my opinion — represents the best of the scholarly interpretations regarding this topic. Hadot not only seems best to capture Boethius’s doctrine, but his perspective of Boethius also highlights what William seemed to find in him.

In “La distinction de l’être et de l’étant dans le De Hebdomadibus de Boèce,” Hadot summarizes the differences between being (esse) and that which is (id quod est) as they appear in the axioms found in the De hebdomadibus. The characteristics of being (esse) and that which is (id quod est) may be translated as follows. Being: 1) “is not yet,” 2) “in no way participates in anything,” and 3) “has nothing besides itself added on.” That which is: 1) “has received the form of being,” 2) “has received being,” 3) “participates in that which is being,” 4) “is and exists,” 5) “is able to participate in something,” and 6) “is able to have something besides the fact that it is.” (1)


Contents: Abbreviations IX; Chronological Table X; Introduction XI; I Romans and Goths 1; II Liberal Arts in the Collapse of Culture 69; III Logic Part of Philosophy or a Tool of all Philosophy? 108; IV Christian Theology and the Philosophers 174; V Evil, Freedom, and Providence 223; Preservation and Transmission 254; Editions 258; Bibliography 261; Notes 285; Index 307-313.

"Born fifteen hundred years ago (within a reasonable approximation), Boethius wrote one of the dazzling masterpieces of European literature. But he has been seldom studied as a whole, and has been seen more through the eyes of those whom he influenced than in relation to the writers whom he had read and who influenced him.

The purpose of this book is to see the man in the setting of his own turbulent and tormented age, not to trace his large posterity in thought and literature. Moreover, the latter concern predominates in the collection of studies on Boethius by various authors, including myself, edited by Dr Margaret Gibson ([Boethius] Blackwell, 1981). Much is also said of that in the studies of Boethius by Pierre Courcelle ([La consolation de philosophie dans la tradition littéraire: antécédents et postérité de Boèce. Paris], 1967).

Modern reappraisal of Boethius, especially since the work of Klingner ([De Boethii Consolationis Philosophiae. Philiologische Untersuchungen, 27. Berlin], 1921) and Courcelle ([Les lettres grecques en occident de Macrobe a Cassiodore. 2nd edn. Paris], 1948, [Eng. tr. by H.E. Wedek, Late Latin Writers and their Greek sources. Harvard, 1969]), has concentrated on his debt to the late Platonists of Athens and especially of Alexandria. The present book continues that line, and adds fresh Neoplatonist evidence for the interpretation of the five tractates on Christian theology. On the other side, I have also found more affinity with Augustine than has been generally recognized, and therefore conclude with a portrait of
Boethius simultaneously more deeply Neoplatonic and more deeply Augustinian than has been acknowledged. I have also tried to integrate the various constituent elements in his intellectual achievement. The substructure of the *Consolation of Philosophy* is only clear when one has also seen something of his arithmetic, music, and logic, the last being the grand obsession of his mind. It is then possible to make a fresh attack on the question of his religious allegiance, debated since the tenth century when Bovo of Corvey asked how the evidently Christian author of the theological tractates could write a work of so exclusively non-Christian inspiration as the *Consolation*. The examination in the first chapter of the political tangle between the Gothic kingdom of Theodoric the Great and the Byzantine ambitions of Justinian leads me to conclude that it is quite wrong to exclude religion from the causes of his tragic arrest and execution." (Preface, p. V)


"In his treatise on how substances are good in virtue of their existence without being substantial goods (1) Boethius draws a distinction between the existing object (*id quod est*), composed of a subject and the forms it receives, and pure Being (*esse*), simple in itself. All things are good in their own substantial existence only because their *ipsum esse* derives from the First Good, whereas the First Good is good simply and solely in the fact that it exists. In several articles (2) Pierre Hadot has traced the roots of this distinction to two principal sources: (I) the distinction between absolute Being and determinate Being (respectively Being-infinite, To είναι, and being — participle, Tò ov) found in the anonymous *Commentary on the Parmenides* (ascribed to Porphyry) and in Marius Victorinus (3). And (II) the late Neoplatonic distinction (of Proclus, Damascius (4) and Victorinus) between *hyparxis* (preexistence) and *ousia* (substance), i.e., between pure Being in its simplicity prior to all things and Substance, as the determinate subject taken together with all its accidents. I think Hadot is correct in his assessment of these sources, but what I shall do here is attempt to show firstly, that an earlier source is Plotinus himself and secondly, that the distinction is ultimately based upon something more general, but well-founded, in Graeco-Roman thought."

(1) In the middle ages this treatise was mistakenly entitled *De hebdomadibus*. On this and on the treatise in general see H. Chadwick, *Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, and Theology and Philosophy* (Oxford, 1981) pp. 203-211.


Mélanges Henri Grégoire.

It is at most a pardonable exaggeration to say that the fall of Boethius as been almost as much discusses as the falla of Adam. Not that there has been any doubt that the fall of Boethius did in fact take place, but that exactly when it took place, and exactly why, have been less clear. Some have thought Boethius was a martyr, (1) some have doubted that he was a Christian, (2) most have thought that he was the innocent victim of enemies who accused him falsely, (3) William Bark has maintained that he did actually attempt to overthrow Theodoric. (4) The character of Boethius has generally been thought one of the noblest of that antique world which was about to expire; (5) Bark, on the other hand, feels unable to "avoid the conclusion that Boethius could be harsh, selfish and arrogant, and that he well knew how to consult his own interests ..." that he "lacked the steadfastness of Cassiodorus, being apparently unaware of the inconsistency of accepting gifts of power and prestige from Theodoric while working for the King's overthrow." (6)" (pp. 54-55)

(....)
"As to chronology, rereading my paper after many years, I am inclined to accept the conventional dates (arrest of Boethius in 523, his execution in 524), not as a certainty, but as a probability. It is difficult in the extreme, as many have pointed out and as Bieler implies, to believe that Marius Aventicensis, who
made use of the lost chronicles of Ravenna, should have been mistaken. Further, I took Cons. Phil. 3.4.4 Bieler ("Tu quoque num tandem tot periculis adduci potuisti ut cum Decorato gerere magistratrum putares, cum in eo mentem nequissimi sancree delatorisque respicieres") to mean that Boethius had thought of holding office in the same administration as Decoratus but (prevented by the death of Decoratus) had not done so. (This would have made Boethius magister in 525 instead of 523.) Such an interpretation of the passage, though, now seems to me perhaps to place too great a strain upon the Latin. (94) Coming to the question of the guilt or innocence of Boethius, it may be that Bieler slightly simplifies the issue. There can be no doubt that Theodoric thought Boethius guilty: the king would not antagonize the Roman aristocracy, the Catholic church, and the emperor for the mere pleasure of doing so. There is no doubt either — or at least, I have no doubt, and have given my reasons above — that Boethius was not guilty of magic or of conspiring against the king." (pp. 98-99).

(1) For the authorities on this question, see William Bark, "The Legend of Boethius' Martyrdom," in Speculum 21 (1946) 312 n. 1. Cf. "The Beginnings of the Legend of Boethius," by Howard R. Patch, in Speculum 22 (1947) 443-45; also, Charles Henry Coster and Howard R. Patch, "Procopius and Boethius," in Speculum 23 (1948) 284-87, reprinted in chap. 3 above [pp. 46-53]. The essence of the difference of opinion between Patch and me seems to be that the former accepts a broader definition of martyrdom than I do.

(2) For the authorities maintaining this point of view, see Giovanni Semeria, "II cristianesimo di Severino Boezio rivendicato," in Studi e Documenti di Storia e Diritto 21 (Rome 1900) 68-178, cited by Bark in note 4 of the article just referred to, and other authorities cited by Bark in the same note.

(3) See, among many, Procopius, History of the Wars 5.1.33-34; Viktor Schurt, Die Trieritiktheren des Boethius im Uchte der "skytischen Kontroversen" (Paderborn 1935) 201 n. 316; E. K. Rand, Founders of the Middle Ages (Cambridge, Mass. 1929) 159. Stein believes that Theodoric sincerely thought Boethius guilty but that Boethius sincerely thought himself innocent (Stein II 257 [Histoire du Bas-Empire: De la disparition de l'Empire d'Occident à la mort de Justinien (476-565 n. Chr.). Edited by Jean-Remy Palanque. Brüssel/Paris 1949]. I still hold to my view that Boethius was guilty of acts (trying to prevent the charges against Albinus from coming to the notice of Theodoric and trying to minimize the matter when it was brought before the King) that he knew would amount to treason in the eyes of Theodoric, acts which Boethius himself thought justified because his first loyalty was to Romanism and Catholicism.

Cf. lud. Quing. 62 f.


(5) Among many, see Procopius (above, n. 3); Rand (above, n. 3) 135 f., 157 f., 180.

(6) Bark (above, n. 4) 425 n. 66 and 426. See also his "The Legend of Boethius' Martyrdom" (above, n. 1) 317 n. 18. One should add that Bark, elsewhere in the interesting and stimulating articles cited, fully recognizes that in spite of the defects which he finds in the character of Boethius, the latter was "one of the greatest men of the sixth century; his brilliant reputation has no need of spurious honors" ("The Legend" 312). He also says ("Theodoric vs. Boethius" 426), "At the end at least he was loyal to what he believed in and risked everything for it." For another very severe criticism of the character of Boethius, see Thomas Hodgkin, Italy and Her Invaders, III (2nd ed., Oxford 1896) 479, 493, 498.

For a milder criticism, see lud. Quing. 50 f.


Contents: Part I. The mainstream of Hellenism at the death of Theodosius.

Pagan Hellenism: Macrobius; Christian Hellenism: St. Jerome;

Part II. Attempts at confrontation and the decline of Hellenism in the fifth century.

Greek studies in Italy; St. Augustine and Hellenism in Africa; Greek culture in Gaul;

Part III. The renaissance of Hellenism under the Ostrogoths.

The East to the rescue of Pagan culture; Boethius. Introduction; Boethius's scientific works; Boethius' works on logic; The neoplatonism of the 'De consolatione philosophiae'; Boethius' Christianity; Symmachus' course of studies and his failure;

Hellenism in the service of monastic culture: Cassiodorus; The monks in the service of Hellenism: Vivarium and the Lateran;

Conclusion.


Abstract: "Contrary to the claims of recent commentators, I argue that Boethius holds a modified version
of the Ammonian three-fold universal (transcendent, immanent, and conceptual). He probably identifies transcendent universals as divine ideas, and accepts too forms immanent in corporeal particulars, most likely construing these along the Aphrodisian lines that he hints at in a well-known passage from his second commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge. Boethius never states the theory of the three-fold form outright, but I attempt to show that this theory nevertheless underlies and gives structure to what Boethius has to say on the topic."

"Much, in fact most of the scholarship devoted to Boethius' Consolatio has dealt with the work as a philosophical treatise. (1) And this it certainly is. The author is almost ostentatiously conversant with Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, Epicurean, and neo-Platonic thought; what is more, he weaves these various strands into an organic whole. But in addition to philosophy the Consolatio is also literature. Formally, it is an example of an ancient literary genre, the Menippean Satire, a medley of alternating verse and prose, which had served the very different purposes of Petronius, the author of the Apocolocyntosis, Martianus Capella, and the mythological allegorist, Fulgentius. But even those critics who do treat the Consolatio as a work of literature too often limit themselves to tracing Boethius' sources and to indicating his influence on subsequent authors, Dante and Chaucer being the most renowned. (2) What I should like to do, and the present paper is merely a premier essai in this direction, is to determine Boethius' literary purposes and to suggest what implications the literary aspects of the work may have on its philosophical content. More specifically, I shall try to explain how Menippean Satire functions in the Consolatio and why Boethius chose this medium for a philosophical treatise." (p. 343)

(1) For bibliography see:
(2) The most important literary critics and those to whom I am most indebted are [Luigi] Alfonsi. [Friedrich] Klingler, and [Kurt] Reichenberger.

For biographical as well as literary and philosophical reasons, then, the riddle of the depth and orientation of Boethius' Christianity remains important. I do not propose to solve it completely here, when so many others have failed. But I do think it helps us towards a solution to look more carefully at his theological writings, not just by themselves but in the context of the kind of theology being done in the first two decades of the sixth century, especially in the Greek-speaking East. The main point I want to make is simply that Boethius' theological work 'fits', far better than many modern students have supposed: fits organically into his own life and program of work, into his intellectual profile, precisely because it fits into a general pattern of philosophical and theological thinking that was just then beginning to emerge among Greek Christian writers, especially in Alexandria and Palestine. As a result, I believe Boethius deserves to be taken more seriously than he often is as a Christian thinker, and possibly even as an ecclesiastical politician." (p. 163)

"The point I have been making throughout this article - the closeness of Boethius' theological tracts, in method, style and content, to contemporary Greek 'scholastic' theology- leaves some central riddles still unsolved. What, for instance, was the 'home' of this new style of theological writing in the East? Where would Boethius or his informants have made its acquaintance? In what kind of 'school' was it originally done? Were there lecture halls, similar to that of Ammonius, where Christians carried on their theological debates and taught others how to take this dialectical approach to revelation and tradition?" (p. 185)

("That Boethius could find Lady Philosophy consoling in her own right during his final days should not surprise us, or cause us to doubt in the least the sincerity of his Christian faith. It should simply remind us of the respect he felt he owed her, and of the thoroughness with which he had made the Greek cultural tradition which nurtured her own." (p. 191)

"Boethius's treatment of the two words potestas and potentia in the Consolatio is based on a hierarchical model, a model which finds both political and philosophical expression. In classical and medieval usage, potestas implies a legitimate realm of power, and is often the title of a particular office. Potentia, on the other hand, implies the exercise of power; its military applications further suggest the notion of external resistance. (5)" (p. 82)

("In Boethius's commentaries on Aristotle, a similar distinction appears in a philosophical context. In his
commentary on Aristotle's De interpretatione (Editio secunda, ed. Meiser II, 459.19-464.4) potestas is used in conjunction with actus to express the abstract relation between potential and act. Potentia, however, appears to have a more concrete application. In Book III of In Categorias Aristotelis, potentia is used in the dichotomy potentia/impotentia in relation to a physical ability to run or fight: quae ex quadam naturali potentia impotentia que proveniat (244C). The political distinction between "legitimate domain" or "office" (potestas) and "exercise of physical power" (potentia) clearly influences this latter usage. Both the political and philosophical contexts suggest an individual "potens" as intermediary. His legitimate power expressed in the epithet potensis derived from a realm (potestas) and is expressed concretely as physical power (potentia)." (p. 83)

"What has taken place, then, is a redefining and refining of a verbal pair centering on the concept of power in such a way that the once vana nomina with their cumbersome worldly referents can participate in the final union asserted in Book V. Throughout the Consolatio, Boethius rigorously maintains the relation of potestas to potentia - a relation which in both political and philosophical contexts implies subordination of the second term. Once the connection of potentia with s sumnum bonum is established, potestas cannot retain its specifically worldly connotations without denying the linguistic subordination of a now highly elevated potentia. When potestas does reenter the dialectic with a positive connotation, it relates to the psychological dimension on which the definitions of potentia and sumnum bonum itself depend.

Reversal or confusion of this proper relation is inevitable whenever notions of power are referred to various levels within a worldly hierarchy (potestas of kings or princes of mice). Reorientation toward the spiritual leads to reestablishment of proper linguistic relations." (pp. 88-89)


References to Boethius's commentaries are to columns in Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina, vol. 64, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris 1847.


"From Parmenides onwards, ancient and medieval thought had a special liking for metaphysical speculation. No doubt, speculative thought was most influentially outlined by Plato and Aristotle. However, what the Christian thinkers achieved in metaphysics was definitely more than just applying and adapting what was handed down to them. No student of medieval speculative thought can help being struck by the peculiar fact that whenever fundamental progress was made, it was theological problems which initiated the development. This applies to St Augustine and Boethius, and to the great medieval masters as well (such as Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus). Their speculation was, time and again, focused on how the notion of being and the whole range of our linguistic tools can be applied to God's Nature (Being).

It is no wonder, then, that an inquiry into Boethius's notion of being should be concerned, first and foremost, with his theological treatises, especially De hebdomadibus.

(...) My final section aims at showing how Boethius's notion of being is clearly articulated in accordance with his semantic distinctions. This is most clearly seen in the main argument of De hebdomadibus where they may be actually seen at work.

As is well known, the proper aim of De hebdomadibus is to point out the formal difference between esse and esse bonum, or in Boethius's words: 'the manner in which substances are good in virtue of their being, while not yet being substantially good' (38.2-4). Its method consists in a careful application of certain formal distinctions, viz.:

(a) The distinction between an object 'when taken as a subsistent whole and id quod est = the constitutive element which causes the object's actually' being; it is made in Axiom II and used in Axiom IV.
(b) The distinction (closely related to the preceding one) obtaining between the constitutive element effecting the object's actual being (forma essendi, or ipsum esse) and the object's actuality as such (id quod est or ipsum est); it is made in Axioms VII and VIII.
(c) The distinction between esse as 'pure being' (= nihil aliud praeter se habens admixtum), which
belongs to any form, whether substantial or incidental, and *id quod est* admitting of some admixture (lit. 'something besides what it is itself'), it is made in Axiom IV and in fact implies the distinction between *esse simpliciter* and *esse alicuius*.

(d) The distinction between 'just being some thing', *tantum esse alicuius*, and 'being something qua mode of being'. It is made in Axiom V and used in Axiom VI and is in fact concerned with a further distinction made within the notion of *id quod est*. It points out the differences between the effect caused by some form as constitutive of being *some* thing and that caused by the main constituent (*forma essendi*) which causes an object's *being simpliciter*.

(e) The distinction between two different modes of participation, one effecting an object's *being subsistent*, the other its *being some thing*, where the ' *some thing* ( *alicuius*) refers to some (non-subsistent) quality such as 'being white', 'being wise', 'being good', etc.

The application of these distinctions enables Boethius to present a solution to the main problem: although the objects ( *ea quae sunt*, plural of *id quod est* ) are ( *are good*) through their own constitutive element, *being (being good)*, nevertheless they are not identical with their constitutive element nor ( *a fortiori*) with the IPSUM ESSE (BONUM ESSE) of which their constituent is only a participation." (pp. 1 and 22-23).


"There can be no doubt whatsoever about Boethius's exceptional merits for transmitting Aristotle's logic to us. But while 'Aristotelian' logic is in many respects synonymous with 'Aristotelico-Boethian' logic, the question can be raised whether Aristotle himself was an 'Aristotelian'. To give just one example: from Lukasiewicz onwards there has been much debate among scholars about the telling differences between traditional syllogistic and that of the Prior Analytics. (1)

In this paper I intend to deal with two specimens of Boethius's way of commenting upon Aristotle's text. They are found in his discussion of De interpretatione, chapters 2 and 3, which present Aristotle's views of *ónoma* and *rhema*. (2) One concerns the semantics of indefinite names, the other that of isolated names and verbs." (p. 227)


(2) *Rhema* properly stands for 'what is said of', including not only our 'verb' but also adjectives, when used in attributive position. One should realise, however, that 'verb' refers to a word class, rather than a semantic or syntactical category, as *rhema* does.

(....)

"Conclusion.

Returning now to Boethius' manner of commenting upon Aristotle's texts, the following points can be made:

[1] In the wake of Ammonius, (3) Boethius explains [De int.] 16b22-25 on the apophantic level, i.e. in terms of statement-making, instead of framing significative concepts, i.e. on the onomastic level.

[2] Whereas in Ammonius' report of the predecessors, Alexander and Porphyry, as well as his own exposition of the issue, there are many clues to the previous alternative reading and interpretation on the onomastic level, Boethius does not even refrain from cleansing the text (including his 'quotations'), by changing, at any occurrence, 'ens' into 'est'.

[3] In doing so, Boethius decisively influenced the commentary tradition on account of the purport of De int. 3, 16b19-25. He effectively contributed to the common verdict on this paragraph in terms of 'a curious medley'.

[4] As far as the semantics of the indefinite verb (3, 16b14-15) is concerned, Boethius apparently adhering to the so-called 'Ammonii recensio' was far less deastrous for the common understanding of Aristotle on this score, and, in effect, merely provided us with some stimulating Medieval discussions of the semantics of term infinitiation.

[5] Finally by way of speculative surmise, it might be suggested that both the fact that Boethius dealt with the 'Ammonii recognise' without reading it in his lemma of 16b14-15, as well as his rather ruthlessly interfering in the quotations of the pre-Ammonian sources, should make it more plausible that Boethius had extensive, but incomplete marginal notes to his Greek text of Aristotle at his disposal, rather than a full copy of Ammonius' commentary (or those of other Greek commentators)." To comment upon Aristotle's work naturally includes developing his lore. But nothing can ever guarantee that this will happen ad mentem auctoris. (4)"

(3) It is unmistakably plain that in De int. ch. 3, Boethius is strongly influenced by what he read in Ammonius (or in marginal notes on Ammonius' view).


"A highly controversial problem is: whence did Boethius derive his Greek culture, from Athens, from Alexandria, or have we to imagine that he simply worked in his library in Rome? [Follow an examination of the opinions of Courcelle, Minio-Paluello, Shiel and de Rijk: Courcelle thinks that Boethius studied at Athens, the other authors are of the contrary opinion.]" (p. 49)

(...)

Summing up the result of this part of my inquiry I think I can make the following modest statements.

(1) On the basis of contemporary evidence it must be accepted as certain that Boethius spent his school years in Athens, say from the age of 9 or 10 up to about 17 or 18.

(2) It is very probable that immediately after that period he was Ammonius' student at Alexandria, from the age of 17 or 18 till about 20.

(3) Taking into the account that he was extremely precocious it is probable that he returned to Rome as early as the year 500 or a little later. There and about that date he composed the first of his mathematical treatises, the \textit{Institutio arithmetica} and followed it up by the other three.

To these three points I add a fourth, concerning the period in which Boethius' other works were written. In the preceding pages I did not discuss the important article of C. H. Coster on \textit{The fall of Boethius}, (34) which did not touch on my subject. However, the present account of Boethius' younger years which brings us up to the beginning of his own works may be duly concluded by a correction of the traditionally accepted final term of his life and work. I think that Coster's above-cited paper offers the grounds for such a correction. By a careful analysis of the contemporary sources the author comes to the conclusion that the execution of Boethius and Symmachus must have taken place in the summer of 526, shortly before Theodoric's death. If that is correct and I think Coster's arguments are solid, the framework into which the list of Boethius' works is to be fitted will be enlarged by two years. Since a few years ago Dr. De Rijk drew up such a list in the pages of the present Journal, (35) it may not be out of place to mention the result of Coster's research at the end of this study. What I have not done in these pages but wish to do in the next number of this Journal, is to reconsider Boethius' argument in the \textit{Consolatio} more closely from the point of view of what does and what does not correspond to his own convictions." (pp. 65-66)


I dealt with this paper in section II of my contribution to the German work \textit{Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt}, Band III, prepared atTübingen for1972.


"So to Boethius, as it had been to St. Augustine, true philosophy and Christian faith tended in the same direction. To Augustine Christian faith had been the fulfilment of that which philosophy had promised. He did not identify them. Did Boethius?" (p. 2)

(...)

"In fact, Courcelle thinks that Boethius tried to give a kind of synthesis of the Alexandrian Neoplatonism of Ammonius and Christianity, in the same way as later St. Thomas Aquinas proposed a synthesis of Aristotle's philosophy and Christian theology without mixing up the fields of reason and faith. Thus, we can understand that such an expression as the "prima divinitas", even on the lips of Philosophia, appears a lapseus to Courcelle. On the whole, again, I think his view of Boethius is right: in fact, the "last of Romans", who was a Christian, spent his life in the Neoplatonic philosophy of his age, and he did so rather technically. Even in his theological treatises he tackled the problems as a philosopher, applying the distinctions of Aristotle's logic to the terms used in theology.

Was it so strange then, that to him, when in prison, philosophy appeared to have a word to speak, a word which must have appealed to him the more since its tendency was in agreement with what he believed as a Christian.

No doubt this is the main-point. But there are a few unsettled problems. I wish to dispose them under the following three points.

1. Are there any clearly Christian features in the \textit{Consolatio}? And if so, where and which are they?

2. What about the \textit{loci sacrae Scripturae}, gathered by Fortescue and mentioned as parallels in Bieler's new edition of the \textit{Consolatio}? Are all of them either vague parallels or just a matter of coincidence, or will there be found one or two cases in which a very peculiar biblical thought or expression occurs in the \textit{Consolatio} in precisely the same form? This would be an interesting thing to us. I think it has to be carefully checked.

3. In which form do the "pagan", non-Christian elements present themselves in the \textit{Consolatio}? Are they confined to the part in which Philosophy is speaking, or do they sometimes occur in our Christian-philosopher's own part as well? Another question might be raised in this context: is it necessary to believe that Boethius accepted every word spoken by his Mistress without any reservation, or can he be supposed to have had some reservations with regard to certain details of her teaching?" (p. 3)

27. Dod, Bernard G. 1982. "Aristoteles Latinus." In The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy from the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism 1100-1600, edited by Kretzmann, Norman, Jenny, Anthony P. and Pinborg, Jan, 46-79. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. "All of Aristotle's works were translated into Latin in the Middle Ages and nearly all were intensely studied. The exceptions are the Eudemian Ethics, of which no complete translation survives, and the Poetics, which, although translated by William of Moerbeke, remained unknown. Most of the works were translated more than once, and two of them, the Physics and Metaphysics, were translated or revised no fewer than five times. The translations we are concerned with spanned a period of about 150 years; some were made from the Arabic, but the majority directly from the Greek. Some translations became popular and remained so; some became popular but were then superseded by other translations; others barely circulated at all." (p. 45)

(...)

"At the beginning of our period only two of Aristotle's logical works, the Categories and De interpretatione, were known in Latin, in Boethius' translation; these two works, which together with Porphyry's Isagoge became known as the 'logica vetus', had already become standard school texts in logic. One of the results of the quickening interest in logic in the early twelfth century was the recovery, from about 1120 onwards, of the rest of Boethius' translations of the logic: the Prior Analytics, Topics and Sophistici elenchi. How and where these translations, made some six centuries earlier, were found is not known. The logical corpus was completed by James of Venice's translation (from the Greek) of the Posterior Analytics; in 1159 John of Salisbury in his Metalogicon shows a familiarity with all these works. (He also quotes from a second translation of the Posterior Analytics, that of Ioannes, which otherwise remained virtually unknown.)" (p. 46)


"The aim of this study is to show that an adequate assessment of the literary genre of the Consolatio requires (i) a thorough analysis of features (topoi, themes, and methods) considered typical of the consolatory genre and (ii) a consideration of the goal of Greco-Roman consolations. (11) It is only by following this approach that we can gain the knowledge and insights necessary to determine accurately the ways in which Boethius's text resembles and differs from Greco-Roman consolations. (12) The significance of an investigation into whether the Consolatio is a consolatory text is not only that of assessing its literary genre, but has further exegetical importance. Typically, an author's choice of employing a specific literary genre — particularly in the case of ancient and medieval authors — is a telling sign of the purpose of the text, the way the content of the text is to be considered, and the author's motivation to write it. (13) Thus, the exegetical importance of assessing the literary genre of the Consolatio is that, among other things, it crucially affects the way we interpret the text's goal and its philosophical arguments. If we consider the Consolatio to be a consolatory text, then it is appropriate to focus on its overt meaning and consider its philosophical arguments as designed to offer consolation. On the other hand, if we think that the Consolatio is, for example, a "Menippean satire" we cannot stop at the overt meaning of the text but have to read between the lines in order to identify the text's underlying agenda. (14)

This paper will be divided into seven parts. After a brief discussion of the origin of the Greco-Roman consolatory tradition, we shall examine, one by one, those features of the Consolatio which can be traced back to Greco-Roman consolations (sections 2–5) and those which seem to distinguish it from these texts (sections 6–7)." (pp. 3-4)


(12) The very significant number of consolatory texts composed before and immediately after the Consolatio makes it impossible to study, within the limited scope of a paper, the relation between the Consolatio and ancient as well as medieval consolatory texts. Thus, we shall limit our study to the investigation of the relation between the Consolatio and some well-known Greco-Roman consolations. Greco-Roman consolatory texts present several advantages for our study: 1) scholars such as Gruber (Kommentar zu Boethius) have persuasively demonstrated that Boethius knew these texts; 2) many of the consolatory strategies contained in these texts are very clearly spelled out and easy to recognize; 3) these texts are amongst the earlier examples of consolations and hence it is reasonable to start from them when investigating the place of the Consolatio within the consolatory tradition.


(14) The scholars who consider the Consolatio to be a "Menippean satire" believe that the goal of its philosophical arguments is not really to convey philosophical ideas, but to present flawed arguments that..."
are supposed to illustrate the limitations (Marenbon) or failures (Payne, Relihan) of the discipline of philosophy. See Marenbon, Boethius; Payne, Chaucer and Menippean Satire; Relihan, The Prisoner's Philosophy.


"In the last 50 years the field of Late Antiquity has advanced significantly. Today we have a picture of this period that is more precise and accurate than ever before. Nonetheless, the study of one of the most significant texts of this age, i.e. Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy (henceforth Consolation), did not sufficiently benefit from these advancements in the scholarship. This book aims to fill this gap by investigating how the study of the Consolation can profit from the knowledge of Boethius' cultural, philosophical and social background that is available today.

The goal of this enterprise, however, is not simply that of placing the Consolation in its historical and cultural background, but to unlock its exegetical difficulties by employing an approach hitherto mostly unexplored. In this text, I show that some of the Consolation's long-standing exegetical issues can be more adequately addressed by going beyond the text and investigating the extent to which the cultural, philosophical and social context of Late Antiquity informs Boethius' last work. In this book I explore the hypothesis that the Consolation is not simply influenced by the context of Late Antiquity, but is a 'product' of Late Antiquity. A text may be regarded as the 'product' of its age when (i) it does not simply contain individual views and features that are common to intellectuals of a particular age, but also (ii) presents elements that are specific to the mindset of the time in which it was written. The view that the Consolation is a product of Late Antiquity, however, does not imply that the text lacks originality and can be reduced to its background. On the contrary, it is by examining how Boethius receives, refashions and expresses literary, philosophical and cultural elements that are typical of his age that it is possible to fully appreciate the Consolation's originality." (From the Introduction)


Abstract: "In book one of the Consolation of Philosophy, Boethius is portrayed as a man who suffers because he forgot philosophy. Scholars have underestimated the significance of this portrayal and considered it a literary device the goal of which is simply to introduce the discussion that follows. In this paper, I show that this view is mistaken since it overlooks that this portrayal of Boethius is the key for the understanding of the whole text. The philosophical therapy that constitutes the core of the 'Consolation' can in fact be properly evaluated only if we recognize the condition it is designed to cure. Through the portrayal of Boethius's forgetfulness, the 'Consolation' illustrates that it is the very nature of philosophical knowledge that makes it susceptible to being forgotten. Philosophical knowledge can (i) turn into misology, when it appears unable to solve certain problems, and (ii) be overrun by strong emotions. The therapy offered in the 'Consolation' is designed to make Boethius aware of the 'fragility' of philosophical knowledge and show him how to 'strengthen' it. He is taught how to more fully embody philosophy's precepts and that philosophy's inability to solve certain problems reveals not its failures but its limits."


"In Boethius's Consolatio Philosophiae one finds a rather unusual argument contending that human beings can lose their natures as the result of immoral or virtuous activity. A number of texts in the work argue that the polarities of beast and god serve as options for those who lead highly immoral or highly virtuous lives. This argument is examined in detail in light of its philosophical ancestry. The paper argues that those who think the Boethian doctrine is Platonic in origin tend to read the texts about the loss of human nature as metaphorical. The paper then suggests that if one places the argument in an Aristotelian context one is able to see it as a metaphysical argument, and more particularly, as part of Boethian psychology. This paper thus provides a new context for approaching Boethius's contention that human beings can lose their natures."


"Boethius distinguished himself from most panegyrical orators by having pursued the study of the words he lived by beyond ordinary grammar and rhetoric school. He may not have delved deeply into the theory
of grammar, but his works on topics demonstrate a live interest in the borderland between rhetoric and logic, and he spent much time on Aristotelian logic. He saw logic as fundamentally a language science: logic and grammar study the same matter, he says; but though logic gives a deeper understanding of language than grammar, it cannot replace grammar, for they study the subject from different points of view.

We might expect Boethius to have thought about the question “What is a word” and the related questions “What is a phrase?” and “What is a sentence?” (pp. 257-258, note omitted)

(...)

"Boethius’ discussion of molecular propositions is revealing of his way of thinking. A conjunction of propositions is semantically several propositions, but a conditional is somehow one proposition: ‘If it is day there is light’ does not signify several things, but rather one “following”, one consequently as he says, translating the Greek ακολουθία. In other words: it takes two facts to make two conjoined propositions true, but only one to make a conditional true. A fact that can be described in a conditional is at least as good a fact as one describable in a categorical proposition.

One might think Boethius should have distinguished between assertion and signification; he could have held that the conditional signifies whatever the antecedent signifies and whatever the consequent signifies, whereas it asserts that one follows from the other. Boethius actually had the necessary tools for so doing. The verb “proponere”, which does occur in the context, would do nicely for “assert”. I doubt, though, that he would have embraced the recommendation with acuity. If I am not mistaken, his intuition was that words signify real things, and things are more real the more they are understood as unit-seeds capable of unfolding in multiplicity. Consequents of true conditionals really are contained in their antecedents in the sense that what the whole conditional signifies is one thing the richness of which may be gauged by seeing it unfold in a conditional. (34) (pp. 272-273, notes omitted)

For the unity of conditionals and the antecedent-consequent relationship, see Boethius, Top. Cic. IV. 1124-1126.

34. Erismann, Christophe. 2009. "The Medieval Fortunes of the Opuscula Sacra." In The Cambridge Companion to Boethius, edited by Marenbon, John, 155-177. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. "The history of the medieval reception of the Opuscula sacra shows that, like late ancient philosophy, medieval philosophy was often a question of exegesis. Early medieval philosophy is characterised by its frequent reliance on ancient, late ancient and Patristic texts, as a basis for speculation. Commenting on an authority was often the occasion of expressing original thought, as noted by John Marenbon: ‘It is in commentaries that much of the most important philosophical work of the ninth to twelfth centuries was accomplished.’ (6)

Despite its particular rules, the practice of commentary did not restrain philosophical thought; on the contrary, it often stimulated it. Gilbert of Poitiers and Thomas Aquinas are good examples of this phenomenon.

I shall proceed in three stages: first, I shall give an historical overview of the medieval reception of the Opuscula sacra; I shall then consider the methodological and lexical influence of Boethius, and conclude with a presentation of some of the philosophical discussions which Boethius initiated in the Middle Ages. &ldquo;Making Sense of the de Trinitate: Boethius and Some of His Medieval Interpreters”, in Studia Patristica 18, ed. E. A. Livingstone, Kalamazoo and Leuven: Cistercian Publications and Peeters, 446–52 1982) 446.

35. Evans, Jonathan R. 2001. The Boethian Solution to the Problem of Future Contingents and its Unorthodox Rivals, University of Nebraska. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis available at ProQuest, reference number 3034374. Abstract: "One concern bothering ancient and medieval philosophers is the logical worry discussed in Aristotle's De Interpretatione 9, that if future contingent propositions are true, then they are settled in a way that is incompatible with freedom. Another is if we grant God foreknowledge of future contingent events then God's foreknowledge will determine those events in a way precluding freedom. I begin by discussing the standard compatibilist solution to these problems as represented in Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy and then examine theories that allegedly deviate from the Boethian solution. Boethius's solution to these separate problems involves showing that both problems operate on an ambiguity in the scope of the modal operator ‘necessarily’ present in the articulation of the problem. Once the ambiguity is removed we see that both disambiguations fail to offer a sound argument against the compatiblity of free action with either God's omniscience or future contingent proposition's being true. The only difference between the solutions is that before executing the scope distinction strategy in the theological problem, Boethius reminds us that God knows future contingents rather than foreknowing them, since God is timeless.

The rest of my discussion examines positions that allegedly deviate from the Boethian solution: positions held by Peter de Rivo, William Ockham and Plotinus. I argue that Ockham doesn't in fact deviate from the Boethian solution to the theological problem as is commonly held. Instead of offering a compatibilist position where God's omniscience includes foreknowledge, Ockham denies that God foreknows the
future advocating instead a more sophisticated Boethian position. The other two philosophers, Rivo and Plotinus, deviate from Boethius, but unfortunately neither position appears philosophically plausible. Rivo's incompatibilist solution to the logical problem is inconsistent with his retention of the Boethian solution to the theological problem and is probably implausible on its own. Plotinus's compatibilist account fails not because it claims that necessity and freedom are compatible, but because the account of moral responsibility Plotinus offers to justify the compatibility fails.

"In The Consolation of Philosophy Boethius addresses two main problems posed by the problem of future contingents that shed important light on his conception of necessity and possibility: (1) a logical problem that alleges that if propositions about the future are true now then they are necessarily true, and (2) a theological problem that centers on a supposed incompatibility between divine foreknowledge and a contingent future. In contrast to established readings from the Consolation, this paper argues that a proper understanding of book 5 requires understanding the modal concepts employed there in atemporal terms. This interpretation requires revising the traditional understanding of the two problems present in the Consolation text, particularly in seeing how timeless knowledge or truth could be conceived as a threat to human freedom. It also stresses the importance of a strategy used by Boethius to disambiguate the scope of modal operators used in his opponent's arguments and how that strategy unifies his discussion in book 5."


"Does The Consolation of Philosophy console? Is Philosophy able to bring the prisoner not simply to an acceptance of and reconciliation with his situation, but further to move him beyond this to ultimate peace through philosophical activity? The Consolation does offer some consolation but only ironically and not in the way intended by the character Philosophy. Philosophy is attempting to bring the prisoner to a philosophical experience in which he will contemplate and enjoy eternal truths, and thereby be consoled. Nevertheless the prisoner will in the end reject this project which takes him away from what he perceives to be his life's work. Philosophy's failure to console the prisoner is disconsoling in part to herself because the prisoner ultimately rejects her invitation to become a martyr for her sake. It is disconsoling in part to the prisoner who seeks a consolation that would support his firmly held desire to remain engaged in public life."

"Even after the prisoner has accepted Philosophy’s specific arguments concerning fortuna, however, he is not yet prepared to accept the abstract principle necessitated by this analysis: i.e. that the all-encompassing divine ordo precludes the existence of any and all random events. Thus Boethius presents in Cons. V, pr. 1 a brief analysis of the abstract concept of casus. This treatment is heavily dependent on the Aristotelian and post-Aristotelian analyses, but Boethius omits much of the traditional material and incorporates subtle alterations into his argument, especially in changing the emphases of the Aristotelian presentation, resulting to a certain degree in a new definition of chance. The concept naturally undergoes further modifications in the post-Boethian tradition. The first attempts to assimilate the system of the Consolation in the vernacular were the translations by Alfred the Great in the ninth century into Old English and by Notker Labeo at the turn of the eleventh century into Old High German. They further modify the tradition derived from antiquity, not only by translating the text of the Consolation, their principal source for that tradition, but also by attempting to translate Boethius’ system of thought in such a fashion as to render it accessible to their own cultures. The present study investigates the concept of casus as it is developed by Boethius, Alfred and Notker in the context of the tradition. The analysis must then begin by establishing this context, and thus Aristotle’s discussion of the topic must be briefly treated, since his was the first full examination of the problem, which then through Boethius’ adaptation became the basis for medieval analyses."

"That Boethius should be considered primarily as part of the Platonic tradition follows from a consideration of both his aims and his achievements. On the one hand, we have his projected but never completed program of translating with commentary all of Aristotle’s writings on logic, ethics, and physics; of translating with commentary all of Plato’s dialogues; and of demonstrating that the two philosophers are in agreement on the most fundamental questions. (2) This program should be understood in terms of the Alexandrian Neoplatonic one, in which Aristotle’s works were studied not for their own sake but as introductions to Plato's philosophy. (3) On the other hand, we ave the extant work De Consolatione Philosophiae which includes not only frequent allusions to passages in Plato’s Gorgias, Meno, Republic, and Timaeus (4) but also references to Plato as a profound philosophical authority. (5) This should be contrasted with the same work’s relatively limited appeal to Aristotle’s Protrepticus and Physics. (6) But Boethius was also a Christian, and this immediately leads to the question: how did he reconcile Platonism and Christianity? Here the influence of Augustine, who is explicitly cited on one occasion as a source, (7) is perhaps the crucial factor. Indeed, Boethius seems to have fashioned the synthesis along his predecessor’s lines, realizing clearly that this involved both a responsibility and an opportunity.

In the first place, only those aspects of Platonism consistent with the Christian teaching could be adopted. (8) Thus, Boethius made no place in his theory for the order of henads postulated by Proclus; he combined the first and second hypostases of the Neoplatonists: the One and Intellect, in order to remove a subordination element from the divinity; and he found little use for the Platonic doctrine of the world soul. (9) In requiring these modifications of the doctrine derived from contemporary philosophical schools, Christianity played an indirect role in determining the character of the system which finally emerged. In the second place, it was possible to pursue Platonism independently of Christian teaching from a methodological viewpoint. (10) This was demonstrated when Boethius employed philosophical theories as additional support for dogmatic positions in De Trinitate and Contra Eutychen et Nestorium. (11) and in detachment from theological dogma in De Consolatione Philosophiae. (12) In permitting such elaborate discussion of philosophical questions to take place, Christianity assumed a subordinate role at least in the presentation of material.

That he is primarily a Platonist and that Christianity often plays merely an indirect or subordinate role in his arguments are two facts which make it imperative to include Boethius in our survey of the pagan philosophical tradition in late antiquity. In describing his teaching, we shall therefore take our starting point from its relation to the philosophical tenets of the pagan schools, although sometimes it will be necessary also to take account of peculiarly Christian transformations of the material." (pp. 651-654)
Boethius: De Consol. Philos. III, pr. 12. 63-64.


"According to L. Obertello's chronology, Boethius' writings on topics: the commentary on Cicero's 'Topica' and the 'De Topics Differentiis' date from the last few years of his life (ca. 518 — 524) (1). They do indeed reveal the maturity of reflection characteristic of a thinker who has translated and commented upon Aristotle's Organon and is perhaps on the threshold of elaborating the Platonic synthesis of which De Consolatione Philosophiae stands as a poigniant reminder. In this paper I hope to show how the notion of 'place' ( locus) developed in Boethius' topical writings lies at the heart of important issues not only in rhetoric and dialectic but also in metaphysics." (p. 391)

(....)

"Boethius develops in response to Cicero two definitions of 'topic': a. A topic is the seat or foundation of an argument (24); and b. A topic is that from which one draws an argument (25). These formulations are of considerable interest because of the connection established with the notion of 'argument'. Since for Boethius, an argument is a rather complicated phenomenon — on the surface it is simply a reason producing belief regarding something which is in doubt (26), yet on a deeper level it embraces the complementary aspects of being 1a. something expressed verbally (27) and 1b. something thought conceptually (28); and 2a. a connected set of propositions (29) and 2b. that through which propositions are connected (30) — then we must allow that this complexity arises from the topic as the argument's source. Thus, it may be that a topic is implicitly both verbal and conceptual, both connected and connecting (31)." (p. 395)


(26) De top. diff. I, 1180 C; In Cic. Top. I, 1048 B.

(27) In Cic. Top. I, 1050 B orat. prolat. Strictly speaking, Boethius distinguishes I. 'argumentation' ( argumentatio) which is verbal and II. 'argument' ( argumentum) which is conceptual. See In Cic. Top. I, 1050B. However, the distinction having been made quickly breaks down in practice. See In Cic. Top. I, 1053 B.

(28) De top. diff. I, 1180 C ratio.

(29) In Cic. Top. I, 1050 B propositionem contexione dispositum.


(31) That the topic cannot be totally separated from its argument follows from the dynamic nature of both. See below.


Abstract: "This essay attempts to provide more evidence for the notions that there actually is a Latin (as opposed to a Greek) Neoplatonic tradition in late antiquity, that this tradition includes a systematic theory of first principles, and that this tradition and theory are influential in Western Europe during the Middle Ages. The method of the essay is intended to be novel in that, instead of examining authors or works in a chronological sequence and attempting to isolate doctrines in the traditional manner, it proceeds by identifying certain philosophemes (a concept borrowed from structuralist and post-structuralist thought and here signifying certain minimal units from which philosophical "systems" can be constructed), and then studying the combination and re-combination of these philosophemes consciously and unconsciously by a selection of important medieval writers. These philosophemes occur in Augustine, De Genesi ad litteram; Augustine, De Trinitate; Augustine, De vera religione; Augustine, De musica; Macrobius, Commentarius in somnium scipionis; and Boethius, De consolatione philosophiae. The sampling of medieval authors who use these philosophemes includes Eriugena, William of Conches, Thierry of Chartres, and Nicholas of Cusa."


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greatest medieval analysis of this theological tractate of Boethius was that of Thomas Aquinas. The purpose of the present study is to disclose the theological methodologies and the contents of this Boethian tractate and the Expositio of Aquinas." (p. 2)

Abstract: "This paper argues that Boethius’ De Consolatione Philosophiae presents theoretical metaphysical speculation as having a direct bearing on the life of the metaphysician. Boethius accomplishes this through his depiction of Lady Philosophy’s ‘therapy’ wherein complex metaphysical arguments are utilized to pull Boethius out of his depression, returning him to what she calls his true self. I begin the paper by contextualizing this discussion in terms of the debate as to whether or not the ‘philosophic life’ of pagan antiquity is present in medieval thought. I then turn to a discussion of the therapeutic metaphysical arguments of Lady Philosophy and their effects on Boethius’ mental and emotional state. I conclude the essay by listing some questions raised and directions for further study."

Abstract: "Boethius and Augustine of Hippo and are two of the fountainheads from which the long tradition of regarding God’s existence as timelessly eternal has flowed, a tradition which has influenced not only Christianity, but Judaism and Islam too. But though the two have divine eternity in common, I shall argue that in other respects, in certain crucial respects, they differ significantly over how they articulate that notion."
Boethius' Metaphysics. Annotated Bibliography. Second Part: K - Z

Boethius' Contribution to the Quadrivium. Annotated Bibliography

Boethius: Übersetzungen und Studien in Deutsch

Boèce: Traductions et Essais en Français

Boezio: Traduzioni e Studi in Italiano

The Problem of Universals in Antiquity and Middle Ages

Boethius' Logic: A Selected Bibliography of Contemporary Studies

Annotated Bibliography of L. M. de Rijk

On the website "History of Logic"

The Works of Boethius. Editions and English Translations

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