

Influence

From the [Carolingian](#) epoch^[12] to the end of the Middle Ages and beyond, *The Consolation of Philosophy* was one of the most popular and influential philosophical works, read by statesmen, poets, historians, philosophers, and theologians. It is through Boethius that much of the thought of the Classical period was made available to the Western Medieval world. It has often been said Boethius was the "[last of the Romans](#) and the first of the [Scholastics](#)".

Translations into the [vernacular](#) were done by famous notables, including [King Alfred](#) ([Old English](#)), [Jean de Meun](#) ([Old French](#)), [Geoffrey Chaucer](#) ([Middle English](#)), [Queen Elizabeth I](#) ([Early Modern English](#)), [Richard Graham, 1st Viscount Preston](#) (English, 1695–1696), and [Notker Labeo](#) ([Old High German](#)).^{[13][14][15][16][17]} Other English translators include George Colville (1556), Henry Roshier (H. J.) James (1897), Walter John (W. J.) Sedgfield (1899), and Richard H. Green (1962). Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* was translated into Italian by Alberto della Piagentina (1332), Anselmo Tanso (Milan, 1520), [Lodovico Domenichi](#) (Florence, 1550), [Benedetto Varchi](#) (Florence, 1551), [Cosimo Bartoli](#) (Florence, 1551) and [Tommaso Tamburini](#) (Palermo, 1657).

Found within the *Consolation* are themes that have echoed throughout the Western canon: the female figure of wisdom that informs Dante, the ascent through the layered universe that is shared with Milton, the reconciliation of opposing forces that find their way into Chaucer in [The Knight's Tale](#), and the Wheel of Fortune so popular throughout the Middle Ages.

Citations from it occur frequently in [Dante's](#) [Divina Commedia](#). Of Boethius, Dante remarked: "The blessed soul who exposes the deceptive world to anyone who gives ear to him."^[18]

Boethian influence can be found nearly everywhere in [Geoffrey Chaucer's](#) poetry, e.g. in [Troilus and Criseyde](#), [The Knight's Tale](#), [The Clerk's Tale](#), [The Franklin's Tale](#), [The Parson's Tale](#) and [The Tale of Melibee](#), in the character of Lady Nature in [The Parliament of Fowls](#) and some of the shorter poems, such as *Truth*, *The Former Age* and *Lak of Stedfastnesse*. Chaucer translated the work in his [Boece](#).

The Italian composer [Luigi Dallapiccola](#) used some of the text in his choral work [Canti di prigionia](#) (1938). The Australian composer [Peter Sculthorpe](#) quoted parts of it in his opera or music theatre work [Rites of Passage](#) (1972–73), which was commissioned for the opening of the [Sydney Opera House](#) but was not ready in time.

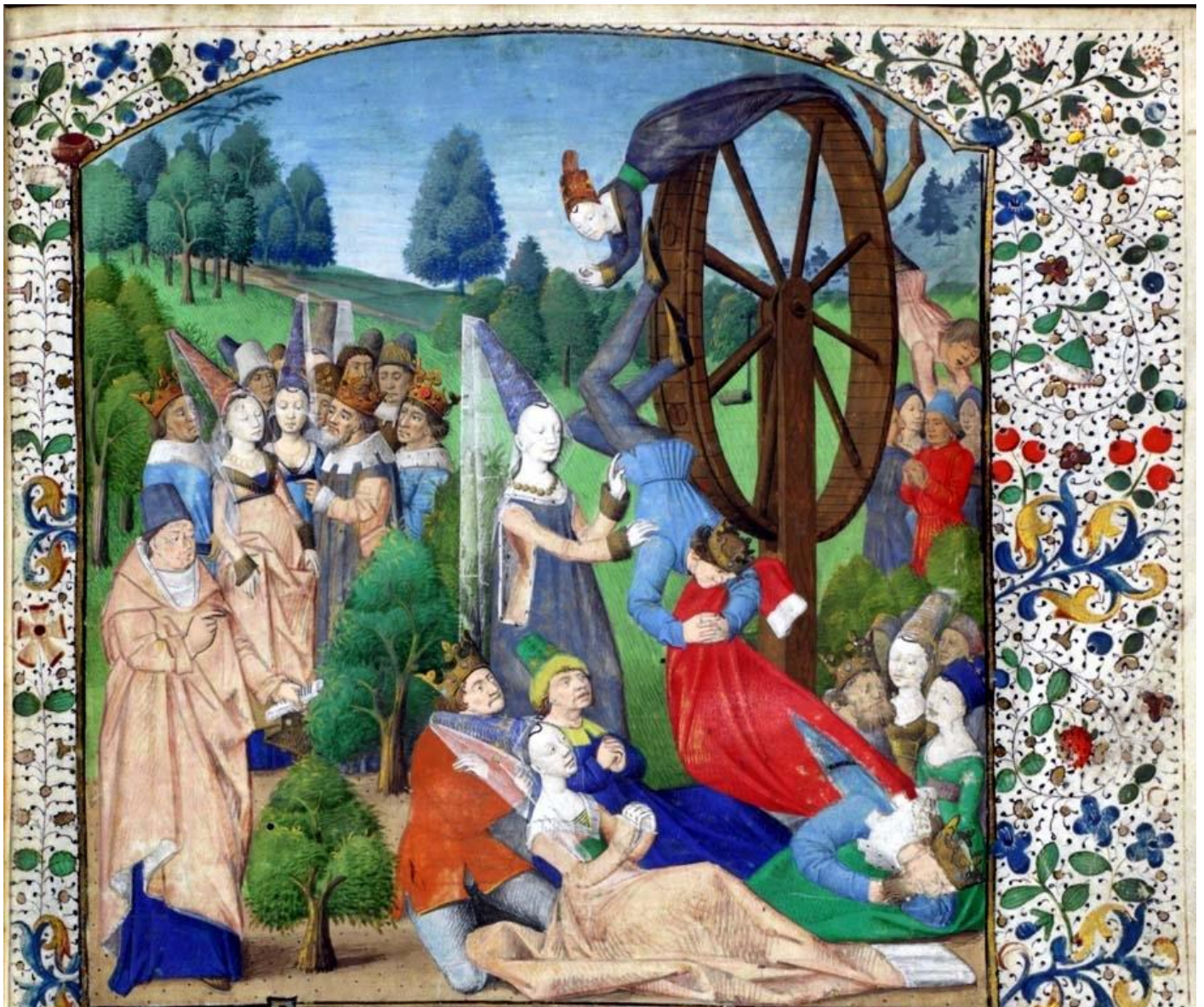
[Tom Shippey](#) in [The Road to Middle-earth](#) says how "Boethian" much of the treatment of evil is in Tolkien's [The Lord of the Rings](#). Shippey says that Tolkien knew well the translation of Boethius that was made by King Alfred and he quotes some "Boethian" remarks from [Frodo](#), [Treebeard](#), and [Elrond](#).

Boethius and *Consolatio Philosophiae* are cited frequently by the main character Ignatius J. Reilly in the [Pulitzer Prize](#)-winning [A Confederacy of Dunces](#) (1980).

It is a [prosimetrical](#) text, meaning that it is written in alternating sections of [prose](#) and metered [verse](#). In the course of the text, Boethius displays a virtuosic command of the forms of [Latin poetry](#). It is classified as a [Menippean satire](#), a fusion of [allegorical](#) tale, [platonic dialogue](#), and lyrical poetry.

Edward Gibbon described the work as "a golden volume not unworthy of the leisure of [Plato](#) or [Tully](#)."^[20]

In the 20th century, there were close to four hundred manuscripts still surviving, a testament to its popularity.



Non raison et bonnes
meurs l'omme soy ex
ercant en aucune sa
ence speculatiue ou
aultre puet honeste
ment maer son con
seil ou propos de bien
en meulx attendre la mutacion des cho
ses et des temps et des lieux Et aussy
puer vint potier casser et rompre aucun
vesset combien qui soit bñ fait
pour lui donner aultre forme qui lui
samble mieulx Et ceste licence de
changer la chose en meulx n'est pas

donnee a l'omme pour seulement ame
der ou corruier sa propre oeuure mais
mesmelement leist a chun de ce faire
en la besoigne d'autrui puique on la
face par l'ouure de couraige et par mou
vement de vraie charite qui en soy ne
contient enuie ne arrogance **Com**
me donques la piece Je laue ne de pre
mier fait a l'enhoitement et Requeste
Sancius eusse translate de latin en
francois le mots mal que far peu
vut tresnotable et exquis liure de
Jehan Boctice des cas des nobles ho
mes et femmes En la translation du

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