

Zitierhinweis

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Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius: *Philosophiae Consolatio*. Trost der Philosophie. Lateinisch/Deutsch. Herausgegeben, übersetzt und erläutert von Joachim Gruber. Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann 2020 (Mittellateinische Bibliothek 5). XXIV, 282 S. € 49.00. ISBN: 978-3-7772-2027-7.

“Schutzheilige sind langmütig, wenn man ihnen nur im Herzen treu bleibt.”
(Eberhard Gothein)¹

Joachim Gruber is the author of the standard scholarly commentary on the *Consolation of Philosophy* (1978 with a second edition from 2006).² In the volume under review he has put together a sort of *editio minor*, comprising a tight and readable *accessus ad auctorem*, a Latin text, *en face* German translation, and some commentary.

For the editor of the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library Latin Series, it’s interesting to compare how they do things in Stuttgart. One wonders what our different decisions reveal about the Germanophone readership for *en face* editions vs. the Anglophone one. This edition emerges as bit of a Janus- or Cerberus-head, for features of its format point in different, not invariably reconcilable directions: up and down. But these features are not a series-wide straitjacket, but are left up to individual editors. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library is different: one cannot format *proprio iure*.

Gruber’s text is based on Ludwig Bieler’s *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 94 edition of 1957.³ There is no apparatus criticus *per se*, but a virtual one is created by noting departures from Bieler in the commentary.⁴ They

- 1 M. L. Gothein: Eberhard Gothein. Ein Lebensbild, seinen Briefen nacherzählt. Stuttgart 1931, p. 60.
- 2 J. Gruber: Kommentar zu Boethius *De consolatione philosophiae*. Berlin/New York 1978 (Texte und Kommentare 9); J. Gruber: Kommentar zu Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*. 2. erweiterte Aufl. Berlin/New York 2006 (Texte und Kommentare 9).
- 3 L. Bieler (ed.): *Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii Philosophiae consolatio*. Turnhout 1957 (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina 94).
- 4 E.g. p. 207 *designarem* for *signarem* (Bieler), though I am slightly surprised to see *cursus velox* mentioned in an exoteric commentary!

are however not identified or sourced, but simply labeled as variants, whatever their nature. Hardly a scientific procedure.⁵ The volume has no footnotes or endnotes, thereby presumably signaling that it is aimed at a more general audience.⁶ But the commentary takes the form of pared-down notes lemmatized *to the Latin text*. The latter feature points to a Latin-literate audience. The translation, appropriately for an *en face* edition, is intended to hew closely to the Latin.

Gruber relies on the internet to keep his bibliography up to date.⁷ Readers are referred to an online bibliography (“Boethius Bibliographie”) compiled by Gruber and archived at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.⁸ A notice (15.10.2020) informs us that a new edition is in production, but the old one is not to be found.⁹ Pending updates to the bibliography, the last version should be kept available online.

German competition: Gothein and Gigon/Gegenschatz

Joachim Gruber’s immediate competition is the Tusculum-edition of Olof Gigon and Ernst Gegenschatz.¹⁰ This highly successful work (1952)¹¹

5 Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library requires a coherent explanation of the text printed, so that the sources of readings are clear.

6 Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library texts have only endnotes – on the commonly held American belief that footnotes make general readers anxious. This theory is proving unhelpful in an era of digital books.

7 A somewhat similar approach has been adopted by the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, where complementary “Additional Materials” that would burst the volumes’ corsets can be moved online. E.g. <http://domedieval.org/books/fortune-and-misfortune-at-saint-gall-by-ekkehard-iv/>.

8 <http://joachimgruber.userweb.mwn.de/Boethius/Titelseite.pdf>.

9 One never knows who one’s reviewers will be. I have worked a fair amount on Boethius, yet in his revised edition from 2006, Gruber cited only my dissertation on Martianus and two Boethiana. D. Shanzer: *Arcanum Varronis iter*. Licentius’s Verse Epistle to Augustine. In: REAug 37, 1991, p. 142 would have been relevant for the source-criticism of 1.M.2.1.

10 O. Gigon/E. Gegenschatz (eds.): Boethius, *Trost der Philosophie / Consolatio philosophiae*. Lateinisch und deutsch. 5. Aufl. München 1998 (Sammlung Tusculum).

11 O. Gigon/E. Gegenschatz (eds.): Boethius, *Trost der Philosophie / Consolatio philosophiae*. Lateinisch und deutsch. Zürich 1952. It would subsequently be available in the DTV series.

announced its dependence (“stellenweise”) on the translation of Eberhard Gothein, published posthumously first in 1932,¹² and then in 1949.¹³ Gigon/Gegenschatz would go through multiple reincarnations.¹⁴ Their annotation is more minimal than Gruber’s and not lemmatized to the Latin but to broader units of text. It concerns itself primarily with primary sources and with cultural history. Gigon/Gegenschatz profiles as a source itself, and does not refer *ad loc.* to its own secondary sources. It cannot therefore be used for further research. The curious have had to turn to Gruber’s high-octane commentary for a gateway to informed answers. Where that is overkill, they now have a slimmer more accessible option with the *editio minor*, but its notes likewise never point to secondary reading.

Anglophone updatings

This intertextuality between translations and preference for updating can be paralleled by the decision of the Loeb Classical Library to reissue Hugh F. Stewart and Edward K. Rand¹⁵ more than half a century later with a new translation by S.J. Tester.¹⁶ This proved a disimprovement.¹⁷ Those who are

- 12 E. Gothein (ed.): Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius. *Trost der Philosophie*. Berlin 1932.
- 13 E. Gothein (ed.): Boethius. *Trost der Philosophie*. Lateinisch und deutsch. Zürich 1949 (Die Bibliothek der alten Welt. Reihe Antike und Christentum).
- 14 E.g. Gigon/Gegenschatz (eds.): Boethius, *Trost der Philosophie / Consolatio philosophiae*. Lateinisch und deutsch (note 11) and O. Gigon/E. Gegenschatz (eds.): Boethius, *Trost der Philosophie / Consolatio philosophiae*. Lateinisch und deutsch. 5. Aufl. Düsseldorf 2004 (Tusculum Studienausgaben).
- 15 H.F. Stewart/E.K. Rand (eds.): Boethius. *The Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy*. With the English Translation of “I.T.” (1609). London 1918 (Loeb Classical Library 74).
- 16 H. F. Stewart/E. K. Rand/S.J. Tester (eds.): Boethius. *The Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy*. New edition. Cambridge, Mass./London 1973 (Loeb Classical Library 74).
- 17 J.J. O’Donnell: Review of: Boethius. *The Theological Tractates and the Consolation of Philosophy*. Edited and Translated by H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester. In: *AJPh* 98, 1977, pp. 77–79.

not put off by English verb forms from 1609 may well prefer “I.T.’s” translation as lightly edited for the 1918 edition of the *Consolation*.¹⁸

Reception

Boethius’ *Consolation* marks a turning point, both a climax for Late Antiquity, as well as a foundational text for the Middle Ages, many facets of which Gruber covers in his Introduction (pp. IX–XXII). I was surprised, though, to see nothing about Dante. Boeth. cons. 2.4.2 (*Inferno* 5.121–123) and 2.M.8.30 (*Paradiso* 33.145) were both certainly worth a mention.¹⁹

As Gruber points out, *Consolation*’s reception as prison literature continued down to the Third Reich in Poem 64 of the *Moabiter Sonette* of Albrecht Haushofer, and, sadly, no doubt beyond. Like Epictetus’ *Enchiridion*, this is a book everyman can turn to in distress: the *Consolation* is a philosophical-spiritual classic.

A surprising moment in my lecturing career occurred in April 1983 at Stanford, when I was defending the historical reality of the imprisonment of Boethius against arguments that the frame-narrative was no more than literary topos.²⁰ Someone suggested that he couldn’t have been in prison without access to books yet have written such a learned and intertextual work. I countered with an argument about ancient schooling and *memoria* (not to mention house-arrest).²¹ “Impossible,” said another. A figure stood up at the back of the room, my *deus ex machina*, and told of his own solitary confinement during the Vietnam War. He had been strengthened and kept alive by

18 Stewart/Rand (eds.): Boethius. The Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy (note 15), pp. XIII–XIV.

19 See Gothein: Eberhard Gothein. Ein Lebensbild, seinen Briefen nacherzählt (note 1), p. 196 where Gothein mused: “Bei jeder Zeile denke ich, wie das Dante gelesen, aufgenommen und wiedergegeben hat.”

20 Soon thereafter D. R. Shanzer: The Death of Boethius and the Consolation of Philosophy. In: *Hermes* 112, 1984, pp. 292–313.

21 Much more effectively formulated by E. K. Rand: *Founders of the Middle Ages*. Cambridge, Mass. 1928, pp. 163–164 “For the ancients had not lost the faculty of remembering” and p. 180 “a scholar who lost so fine a library and who yet could transport so much of it, inside him, to his dungeon-cell.”

reciting poetry he had memorized. It was Admiral James Stockdale.²² *Sic me servavit Apollo!*

Interest in Boethius as a case is still *brandaktuell*. Piet Gerbrandy has just interpreted the *Consolation* as a Kafkaesque drama.²³ Matthias Tischler has just published a survey of the *fortuna* of Ostrogothic Italy in the Carolingian Empire that tracks the early transmission of Boethius.²⁴ I myself have a piece in press on comparative conspiracies with a Boethian midsection.²⁵ And James J. O'Donnell has recently put forward a new theory about why Boethius had to die.²⁶

Checking the translation

Translations should be reliable. And reviewers must certify accuracy: one is not just reviewing the significance and impact of the original.²⁷ Editors correct systematically, but reviewers need, at the least, to dip in and test. Errors in translation can show where translators failed to understand their source texts or in extreme cases did not control the source language. It is easy enough to point out gross errors in translations that were not written in the reviewer's native tongue. But it is also humbling when one must not just diagnose, but heal or improve text in a foreign language.

- 22 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Stockdale: seven and a half years in solitary confinement and with regular torture.
- 23 P. Gerbrandy: The Ordeal of a Sixth-Century Josef K. Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* as a Modernist Drama. In: *Journal of Latin Cosmopolitanism and European Literatures* 7, 2022, pp. 44–64.
- 24 M.M. Tischler: Remembering the Ostrogoths in the Carolingian Empire. In: R. Kramer/H. Reimitz/G. Ward (eds.): *Historiography and Identity. Vol. 3: Carolingian Approaches. Turnhout 2021 (Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages 29)*, pp. 65–122.
- 25 D. Shanzer: *Stilo ... memoriaeque mandavi*: Two and a Half Conspiracies. Auctors, Actors, Confessions, Records, and Models. In: F. Oppedisano (ed.): *Between Ostrogothic and Carolingian Italy: Survivals, Revivals, Ruptures. Firenze 2022*.
- 26 J.J. O'Donnell: Why Boethius Had to Die. In: A.J. Cain/B. G. Hays (eds.): "Omnium magistra virtutum." *Studies in Honour of Danuta R. Shanzer. Turnhout 2022 (Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin 15)*, p. 89 for his three hypotheses.
- 27 E.g. M. Kulikowski: Kings and Kinglets. In: *The London Review of Books*, 12 August 2021.

Gruber is a world expert on his text. His German translation reflects the meaning of the Latin well and doesn't sneakily glide over trouble or leave out words. It is likewise fairly literal, as befits an *en face* offering. In the following discussion I will foreground some of the vocabulary used to criticize translations (E.g. flattening, "unpacking," "spin," disambiguating, preserving ambiguity, unintended possible misinterpretations, limitations of the target language, updating of the target language, and tone) and touch on a few core concepts and problems raised by the *Consolation*, such as the extent to which one should Christianize. Even fairly small differences in translation, which are what we have here, can be illuminating in all sorts of ways.

My soundings included 1.4 Boethius' apology. This is a particularly rich passage because of its mood-swings, arguments, logic, passion, and rhetoric. It raises issues of performance and questions of whether some passages could benefit from mark-up with scare-quotes to trigger the intended inflection for the reader. The more one looks at some of these passages the harder they get.²⁸

Herewith a sample:

1.4.1 ὄνος λύρας

"Esel mit der Leier" (p. 11)

Better perhaps "Donkey <hearing> the lyre"? (Gothein, p. 15 and Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 15: "Esel zur Leier") I would disambiguate for medievalists who might imagine marginal illuminations of animals playing instruments.

1.4.15 *perculsi simus*

"ins Unglück getrieben worden" ("gestürzt" Gothein, p. 17 and Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 19)

The subjunctive is wrong and not from Bieler. The same typo is also found in Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 18. *Percello* should mean "struck down hard" or "felled."

1.4.17 *sacrarium [...] aedium*

"einer heiligen Kirche" (p. 15) (Contrast Gothein, p. 17 and Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 19: "heiliger Gebäude")

28 I am grateful to members of my post-doc Privatissimum for puzzling over some of these passages with me.

1.4.36 *sacrae aedes*

“Kirchen” (p. 17)

Better not to prejudge the religious terminology that Boethius left vague. Sanctuary is of course intended, but Christian terminology was avoided.²⁹

1.4.18 *Atquin eo die deferentibus eisdem nominis nostri delatio suscepta est*

“Und doch ist an diesem Tag, obwohl dieselben Leute uns anzeigten, die Anklage gegen uns angenommen worden.”

This is off, and “obwohl” isn’t doing the work needed. I would have rendered “And nevertheless/yet on that [very/same] day, *with precisely this same pair as informers*, a denunciation of my name was taken up.” Boethius is expressing outrage (Gothein, p. 17 “Doch etwas; an demselben Tage gaben dieselben Leute uns an, und die Anzeige unseres Namens wurde angenommen” and Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 19 “Doch an demselben Tage gaben dieselben Leute uns an, und die Anzeige unseres Namens wurde angenommen” had the same instinct as I did). In German, “ausgerechnet” should do the job. I also wondered about bitter overtones of legitimacy (*suscepta est*), and being named (*nominis nostri*) sounding in Boethius’ characterization of this most misbegotten of delations.³⁰ If this is right, then Gruber lost content by reducing *nominis nostri* to “gegen uns.”

1.4.19 *Nostraene artes ita meruerunt [...]*?

“Haben das unsere Handlungen so verdient [...]?” (p. 15)

This sounds flattened, but it’s hard to see what Boethius intended. Tester translated “exercises of office.”³¹ Gothein, p. 17 and Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 19 both have “Bestrebungen,” viz. “efforts,” less neutral than “Handlungen.” I would prefer a more positive term, like “skillful efforts/tactics,” “diplomatic skills,” “Moral character exemplified in conduct”? I wondered (but only for a second) whether *artes* was not perhaps “scare-quoted” by Boethius, intending rhetorical skills that had been negatively characterized by his enemies as “machinations,” “stratagems,” or “contrivances.”

29 On the topic, see D. Shanzer: *Haec quibus uteris verba: the Bible and Boethius’ Christianity*. In: N. Lenski/A. J. Cain (eds.): *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity. Selected Papers from the Seventh Biennial Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity Conference*. Farnham/Burlington, VT 2010, pp. 57–78.

30 For the *susceptio* of the child, see J. Marquardt: *Das Privatleben der Römer. Erster Teil: Die Familie*. Darmstadt 1980. Unveränderter reprografischer Nachdruck der von A. Mau besorgten 2. Aufl. Leipzig 1886, p. 83.

31 Stewart/Rand/Tester (eds.): *Boethius. The Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy* (note 16).

1.4.19 *an illos accusatores iustos fecit praemissa damnatio?*

“oder hat jene Leute die vorhergehende Verurteilung zu berechtigten Anklägern gemacht?” (p.15).

I would turn the heat up here. Boethius is being snide with this alternative question. I prefer Gothein’s more pointed and (I hear) antiquated (pp. 17–19) “Oder hat jene (sc. Leute) die eben erfolgte Verurteilung zu glaubwürdigen Anklägern *umgeschaffen?*” reprinted by Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 19. It could now be updated to “*verwandelt.*” The “unpacking” of *praemissa damnatio* helps readers understand that it was Gaudentius’ and Opilio’s condemnation, not Boethius’.³²

1.4.22 *Infitiabimur crimen? Ne tibi pudor simus?*

“Sollen wir etwa die Beschuldigung abstreiten? Soll ich wirklich für dich eine Schande sein?” (p. 15)

Gruber takes these as two sentences. I prefer to merge the two. “Should I contest a charge [that was right] so as not to shame you?” (Gothein, p. 19 and Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 19 did as I did.)

1.4.31 *Sed fas fuerit nefarios homines, qui bonorum omnium totiusque senatus sanguinem petunt, nos etiam, quos propugnare bonis senatuique viderant, perditum ire voluisse.*

“Aber **es mag möglich gewesen sein**, daß verbrecherische Menschen, die nach dem Blut aller Guten und des ganzen Senats verlangen, auch den Wunsch gehabt haben, daß wir, die sie als Vorkämpfer für die Guten und den Senat gesehen hatten, zugrunde gehen.” (p. 17)

Gruber mistranslated *fas* and failed to capture the bitter tone. Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 23, do better with, “Aber **es mag in Ordnung sein**, daß die Nichtswürdigen, die nach dem Blute aller Gutgesinnten und des ganzen Senates lechzten, auch unser Verderben begehrten, da sie in uns den Vorkämpfer der Guten und des Senates sahen.”

They in turn depend on Gothein, p. 19, who had the explicitly sarcastic “Aber **es mag ja nur recht und billig sein**, daß die Nichtswürdigen, die nach dem Blute aller Gutgesinnten und des ganzen Senates lechzten, auch unser Verderben, da sie uns als Vorkämpfer der Guten und des Senates sehen, begehrten.” I like Gothein’s “recht und billig” and his use of the particles “ja” and “nur” to fix the tone. Even his widow knew how these things

32 A possibility perhaps: for pre-condemnation in such situations, compare Amm. 29.1.18 *ut dum adhuc dubitaretur de crimine, imperatore non dubitante de poena, damnatos se quidam prius discerent quam suspectos.*

go: “Wie zu erwarten, heimsten die Ankläger des Boethius [...] hohe Ehren am Hofe ein.”³³

So my version might look like this: “But it was perhaps,³⁴ naturally, only fair and square for wicked men, who go/thirst for the blood of all upright citizens and of the whole senate, to seek to destroy us too, whom they had seen fighting in the front line for the righteous and the senate.”

1.4.36 *O meritis de simili crimine neminem posse convinci!*

“Fluch über sie, die es verdient haben, daß niemand eines ähnlichen Verbrechens überführt werden kann!” p. 19

Gothein, p. 21: “O über sie, die es verdienten, daß niemand eines gleichen Verbrechens überwiesen werden könnte!”

Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 23 disambiguates: “O über die Senatoren, die es verdienten, daß niemand eines gleichen Verbrechens überwiesen werden könnte!”

I have always found this climactic passage tricky and been (so far ineffectively) unhappy about the text.³⁵ All other deployments of exclamatory “O!” in the *Consolation* are transparent. This one is more complicated. The substantivized participle governs an accusative-infinitive construction: “O you who deserved that no one could be condemned!”³⁶

The first difficulty lies in deciding whether the exclamation is one of grief (“O” = “Alas!”) or whether it is a curse (“O” = “A plague upon!”).³⁷ It could also be either a straight or ironic *makarismos*: “Oh ye [lucky ones] who earned the right not to be convicted of a crime [like mine]!”

A second, related problem lies in identifying the referent of *meritos*. There are stark differences of opinion about the latter point. I would rule out Tester’s translation as logically unsatisfactory: “Ah me! Surely I deserved that no one

33 Gothein: Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius. *Trost der Philosophie* (note 12), p. 205.

34 Independent perfect subjunctive is softening in that it *insinuates*.

35 Gruber: *Kommentar zu Boethius, De Consolatione Philosophiae*. 2. Aufl. (note 2), p. 133 doesn’t offer enough help, and the reference to Pfeilschifter needs to be corrected to p. 176.

36 As in A. Gudeman: *convinco*, -vīcī, -ctum, -ere. In: *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae Online*. Berlin/New York 2011, col. 877.58–877.69: *aliquem convincere de aliqua re*.

37 All exclamations express emotions. See D. H. Cruttenden: *The Philosophy of Language or, Language as an Exact Science*. Revised edition. New York 1870, pp. 381–384 for a (now quaint) exposition based on 19th century English!

could possibly be convicted on a charge like this one!”³⁸ The 17th century translation reprinted by Rand has: “O Senate, which deserves that never any may be convicted of the like crime!”³⁹ Victor E. Watts followed, “How they (sc. the Senate) deserve that no one should ever be convicted on a similar charge!”⁴⁰ Anglophones see: “Oh (sc. poor senators) who deserved that none of you could be convicted on a charge like mine!”

The German translators see here instead a curse on those weak and evil senators who deserved what Boethius got, but couldn’t be convicted. “Oh you (sc. accursed/evil senators), who “deserved” that none [of you] can be convicted on a similar charge [to mine]!” How to resolve this issue of a dark vs. a light-filled reading? Boethius here depicts the prisoner at his psychological nadir,⁴¹ so that alone might tip the balance towards the *interpretatio Teutonica*.

1.4.42 *Ita non est satis nihil mihi tuam profuisse reverentiam, nisi ultro tu mea potius offensione lacereris.*

“So ist es nicht genug, daß mir meine **Verehrung für dich** nichts genutzt hat, sondern du wirst noch **obendrein** durch **den Anstoß, den ich erregte**, belästigt” (p. 19)

Goethein, p. 21 had: “So ist es denn nicht genug, daß mir **die Ehrfurcht, die dir gebührt**, nichts genutzt hat, vielmehr wirst du noch durch den **Angriff auf mich** verletzt.”

Gigon/Gegensatz, p. 25: “So ist es denn nicht genug, daß mir **deine Erhabenheit** nichts genutzt hat, vielmehr wirst auch du noch durch **den Angriff auf mich** verletzt.”

This passage presents various problems. First, it clearly is intended as an indignant “not only ... but also” structure,⁴² but in a slightly funky rhetorical variation “not sufficient ... unless,”⁴³ which requires some fine-tuning. And

38 Stewart/Rand/Tester (eds.): Boethius. The Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy (note 16), p. 155.

39 Stewart/Rand (eds.): Boethius. The Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy (note 15), p. 153.

40 V.E. Watts (ed.): Boethius. The Consolation of Philosophy. London: 1969 (Penguin Classics), p. 45.

41 At 1.5.1 Boethius characterizes the prisoner’s outburst as “*delatravi*,” (“barked out”), which Gruber neutralized slightly to “herausgepreßt.”

42 *Non solum ... sed etiam*.

43 *Non satis ... nisi ultro*. The second component is not far from the explicitly sarcastic *nisi forte*.

then come “unpacking” problems. Relationships between nouns and adjectives need to be resolved to read unambiguously in the modern target language.

The key issues involve *tuam reverentiam*: “that you are worthy of veneration” (almost equivalent to a standard honorific: Gothein and Gigon/Gegenschatz) or “my respect for you?” And similarly, does *mea offensione* unpack as subjective (Boethius offended others) or objective (Boethius was attacked)? Likewise, does *ultra* mean “over and above” or “of your own accord?”

Gruber handles the basic sentence structure nicely and also the unpacking of *tuam reverentiam*.⁴⁴ But I prefer Gothein, p. 21 and Gigon/Gegenschatz’s, p. 25 interpretations of *mea offensione*: “Angriff auf mich.” Boethius alluded to the protreptic theme of philosophy on trial in the person of the philosopher that the prisoner deploys in his bitter question to Philosophy in 1.3.3 *An tu quoque mecum rea falsis criminationibus agiteris?*⁴⁵ At 1.5.9 Philosophy will specifically refer to *nostra criminatione*, which likewise supports “Angriff auf mich.”

The final result should convey the sense that insult has been added to injury: “And so, as if it were not bad enough that my devotion to you has been of no avail to me – you too rather must needs be mangled⁴⁶ by the attack on me.”

3.M.2.15–16 *primusque lacer dente cruento | domitor rabidas imbuit iras*

“und als erster, von blutigem Zahn zerrissen | **lernt** der Bändiger ihren wütenden Zorn kennen” (p. 75)

“und zerfleischt vom blutigen Zahn sinkt | Erstes Opfer des Zorns der Zwingherr” (Gothein, pp. 73–75 and Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 99)

All the German translators skirted the double entendre of *imbuit* that I.T. expanded to: “Then he that tamed them first doth feel their rage, | And torn

44 Easier to follow than the archaic I.T. (note 15), p. 153 “so that it is not enough that I reap no commodity for thy respect, unless thou beest also dishonoured for the hatred conceived against me.” Cf. Watts (note 40), p. 46 “It is not enough that my devotion to you has not helped me at all, but you are now made the victim of the hatred that should be directed at me alone.” and Tester (note 16), p. 157: “So it is not enough that reverence for you shall have done me no good: you too must be abused because I have offended.”

45 Cic. fin. 1.1.2 for *philosophia accusata et vituperata* in the Hortensius. Boeth. diff. top. 2 also speaks of the *defensio* of philosophy in the lost dialogue.

46 See 1.1.5 for the torn dress of Philosophy.

in pieces doth their fury slake.”⁴⁷ So flattening. “And it’s the lion-tamer who first, mauled by its (sc. the lion’s) gory tooth, slakes/bloods/quenches its rabid rage.”

3.M.2.17–18 *quae canit altis garrula ramis | ales caveae clauditur antro*

“Ein Vogel, der auf hohen Zweigen zwitschernd singt, | wird im **engen Raum** des **Vogelbauers** eingeschlossen.” (p. 75)

“Hoch in Zweigen gurrte der Vogel, | nun umschließt ihn des Käfigs Gefängnis.” (Gothein, p. 75 and Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 99)

The *cavea* is a bird-cage, but the expression *caveae antro* is unparalleled. Does it mean no more than “the hollow of bird-cage?” I see an additional layer. Gothein experimented with “prison,” which is a step in the right direction to reflect the plight of the prisoner. But *antrum* may have been intended to reflect Plato’s Myth of the Cave, which Boethius evoked in 1.M.2.24–27. But squeezing that layer of allusion into the translation is no easier in English than in German.⁴⁸ Tester’s solution: “Is shut in a coop like a cavern” tries hard, but “coop” smacks of chickens, and “cavern” may not trigger “cave.”⁴⁹

3.M.9.2 *Terrarum caelique sator*

“der Erden und des Himmels Schöpfer” (p. 97) (Ditto Gothein, p. 93 and Gigon/Gegenschatz p. 129)

A flattening, as if it read *conditor*? See 3.M.9.20 for *seris*. Sowing, paternity, and insemination are emphasized. German may not have quite the right lexeme available here and usually has recourse to “Vater.”

3.M.9.24 *In te conspicuos animi defigere visus*

“die betrachtenden Blicke des Denkens auf dich richten” (p. 99) (Gothein, p. 95 and Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 131 simply left out *conspicuos*)

Conspicuos could mean “visible,” or “lofty/ eminent.” “Betrachtend” seems redundant with “Blicke.” But the expression’s source (Prud. ham. 862–865 *Nec mirere locis longe distantibus inter | damnatas iustasque animas concurrere uisus | conspicuos meritasque uices per magna notari | interualla, polus medio quae dimidit orbe*)⁵⁰ suggests that it means that the gazes meet “face to face.” There is a

47 Stewart/Rand (eds.): Boethius. The Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy (note 15), p. 233.

48 Ibid. tried “unpleasing,” which doesn’t quite work. I might have tried “lightless cage.”

49 Stewart/Rand/Tester (eds.): Boethius. The Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy (note 16), p. 239.

50 Known to Gruber: Kommentar zu Boethius, De Consolatione Philosophiae. 2. Aufl. (note 2), p. 285.

possible allusion to 1 Cor. 13.12 *facie ad faciem*. Extromissive visual theory permits an interesting merger of imagery from arrow-shooting (*defigere*) with that of gazing.

3.M.9.27 *Tu requies tranquilla pius*

“du die stille Ruhe für die Frommen” (p. 99) (Ditto Gothein, p. 94 and Gigon/Gegenschatz, p.131)

Pius can be tricky to the extent that *fromm* in modern German might prejudice *pius* as Christian. Earlier on it clearly could mean “brav, tüchtig, tapfer.”

3.M.12.18 *immites superos querens*

“Klagen über die grausamen Götter” (p. 121)

“Unhold schilt er die droben,” (Gothein, p. 113) “Grausam schalt er die droben” (Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 161).

I prefer to stick to “complaining that the gods were harsh.” Orpheus is a flawed focalizer, so best to keep the indirect speech clear.

4.M.7.33–34 *Cur inertes | Terga nudatis?*

“Warum legt ihr träge | keine Last auf euren Rücken?” (p. 169)

Why not, “Why, indolent ones, do you turn tail [sc. in the battle of life]?”

The expression *tergum fuga nudare* normally refers to flight. Gothein, p. 157 “warum seid ihr träge | Zieht nun kampflös ab?” Gigon/Gegenschatz, p. 227 “Warum seid ihr träge, | Zeigt nackte Rücken?”

Summa summarum

Despite some of the self-contradictory features outlined above, the Germanophone world should welcome this new accessible and reasonably priced (49 €) bilingual version. The commentary seems aimed at university students, but could also be used as by the teacher as a guide to highlight the many themes and leitmotifs that unify the *Consolation*. *Fachdidaktik* arrows signify themes that were index-worthy, so that the reader can pursue them through the *Consolation*. (e.g. from “Abbild” and “Blick,” to “Zügel”) Indeed, the canny teacher examining a student orally on the *Consolation* could ask for terse disquisitions on a theme or two.

Latin is compressed and lapidary – not to mention dead. Reasonable people interpret texts differently, and rival solutions cannot necessarily be mechanically dismissed or discounted. But the translator’s hand is forced: one must print *something*. When I went back subsequently to check Gothein and the Swiss team (Gigon/Gegenschatz), I regularly found that I preferred their

earlier 20th century versions. I may just be old-fashioned. Or perhaps the innovations were *Verschlimmbesserungen*? I wonder about why over the period from 1932 to 2020 the German translations sounded, to my ear, progressively deadened? According to Austrian classicists I have consulted, modal particles have fallen out of favour in modern written German because they sound either too archaic or too colloquial.⁵¹ But there may be more to the matter.

Goethein (1853–1923) was not a classicist, but an economist and cultural historian, who did his *turnus* as Rector at Heidelberg in 1914–1915. He was clearly, like Boethius, a remarkable man with a remarkable family. He was associated with the circle of Stefan George, and his translation was dedicated to Friedrich Gundolf. He lived a life of total engagement and found in Boethius a historic garment for his ethics.⁵² “Ich nahm mir wieder meinen lieben alten Boethius vor, [...] er ist doch ein trefflicher Tröster in der Einsamkeit.”⁵³ “Heute am Sonntag habe ich mir einen guten Tag gemacht. Ich hatte gestern in der Mittagspause Boethius gelesen und er hatte mich wieder so gepackt, daß ich mich, da ich abends sehr munter war, [...] noch nach Mitternacht hinsetzte und das vierte Buch, dem ich immer aus dem Wege gegangen war, zu übersetzen begann.”⁵⁴ Boethius, according to Goethein, had been badly misjudged by philologists, so his translation, even though he felt insecure about his qualifications and dithered,⁵⁵ was (among other things) both self-therapy and a mission.⁵⁶

51 “In der Tat werden solche Syntax und Gedankenführung klärenden kleinen Wörter in früheren Übersetzungen häufiger verwendet – so ist das übrigens auch noch im Schulunterricht in Latein. Es gilt aber heute das Ideal, möglichst wenig Wörter in den Ausgangstext einzuschleusen.” So my dear colleague Kurt Smolak, whom I thank for discussing my draft with me.

52 Goethein: Eberhard Goethein. Ein Lebensbild, seinen Briefen nacherzählt (note 1), p. 193.

53 Ibid., p. 194.

54 Ibid., p. 195.

55 Ibid., p. 60.

56 E. Goethein: Die Aufgaben der Kulturgeschichte. Leipzig 1889, p. 56.

When I see a sentence of his like the following (written to his wife), I am reminded of the climax of cons. 1.4.

Wenn ich nun die Universitäten, die doch nur einen Teil des geistigen, sogar nur einen Teil des wissenschaftlichen Lebens darstellen, sich so unmäßig rühmen höre, und dann ganz abgesehen von der Geringwertigkeit vieler Vertreter und ganzer Wissenschaftszweige – aus der Kenntnis des Lebens heraus bemerke, wie kahl diese Ansprüche sind, und wie gering in Wahrheit unser Einfluß, dann wandelt mich oft eine Art Grauen vor dem Phrasenschwall an, und wenn ich nicht wüßte, daß man das nicht offen sagen darf, um das bißchen wirklicher Bedeutung nicht noch mehr zu zerstören, möchte ich das Gewebe von Selbsttäuschung und Selbstberäucherung zerreißen.⁵⁷

Videre autem videor nefarias sceleratorum officinas gaudio laetitiaque fluitantes, perditissimum quemque novis delationum fraudibus imminenti, iacere bonos nostri discriminis terrore prostratos, flagitiosum quemque ad audendum quidem facinus impunitate, ad efficiendum vero praemiis incitari, insontes autem non modo securitate, verum ipsa etiam defensione privatos. Itaque libet exclamare:

Uhde-Bernays noted the following compatible detail, not far from “die verruchten Werkstätten der Frevler:”

Er verschmähte, in die Niederungen der außerhalb der Sitzungen mit geheimem Geschacher geführten Vorverhandlungen hinabzusteigen, und wollte auf der Bühne sich betätigen, nicht hinter den Kulissen. Daß er zudem bei seinen Kollegen an den Universitäten keine Unterstützung fand, empörte ihn.⁵⁸

I will end with a second personal moment. I am writing in Vienna and, when I went to get our library’s copy of Gothein’s 1932 translation, saw to my surprise that it was what we in English call an “association copy.” It had been sent to Karl Mras by the author’s son, Percy Gothein, for Christmas on the 24th of December 1933. Percy and his mother, Marie Luise, collaborated on publishing Gothein’s translation posthumously. It had been in-

57 See Gothein: Eberhard Gothein. Ein Lebensbild, seinen Briefen nacherzählt (note 1), pp. 186–187. Cited by H. Uhde-Bernays: Eberhard Gothein. In: H. Uhde-Bernays: Mittler und Meister. Aufsätze und Studien. München 1948. Reprint Berlin/München/Boston 2019, p. 114.

58 Uhde-Bernays: Eberhard Gothein (note 57), p. 127.

tended for her all along.⁵⁹ The striking Percy attracted George's attention as a teenager on the street in Heidelberg in 1910.⁶⁰ He was associated with the George-Kreis and was a scholar of the Renaissance. Yet he would himself die in KZ Neuengamme on the 22nd of December, 1944. One wonders whether Percy, like Haushofer, thought of Boethius' fate in his Nazi prison.

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59 Gothein: Eberhard Gothein. Ein Lebensbild, seinen Briefen nacherzählt (note 1), p. 60 and p. 196: it was intended as a wedding-present and "vor allem gehört das Buch dir."

60 Ibid., pp. 203–204.

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