

Living Memory

Boethius, Cassiodorus, and the *Consolation of Philosophy*





unipress

Fabio Troncarelli

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Boethius, Cassiodorus, and
the *Consolation of Philosophy*

With 63 figures

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to Petrarch (14th Ct.).

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Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
William Shakespeare

To Philip and Sharmila—
*Quid dulcius quam habere quicum
omnia audeas sic loqui ut tecum?*
Cicero, *De amicitia*, 6, 22

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Preface

Over the past two and a half decades, many prominent scholars have examined new aspects of the life, works, and influence of Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (ca. 480–525 CE), discovering new texts as well as new meanings in old and well-known texts.¹ We can say not only that they have found “new words on Boethius,” but also “new words of Boethius,” because they have gathered from different manuscripts some very interesting fragments of lost texts written by the

1 The edition of the *Anecdoton Holderi* by Alain Galonnier, for example, offers a new approach to this famous text, which is full of information on Boethius, namely about the *Opuscula Sacra*, whose authorship has been challenged in the past (See A. GALONNIER, *Anecdoton Holderi, ou Ordo generis Cassiodororum. Éléments pour une étude de l'authenticité boécienne des Opuscula sacra* [Louvain: Peeters, 1999]). Likewise, the publication of a portion of the unpublished edition of the *Opuscula sacra* by Edward Kennard Rand (F. TRONCARELLI, *Cogitatio Mentis. L'eredità di Boezio nell'Alto Medioevo*, Storie e testi 16 [Naples: D'Auria, 2005], 324–327) offers scholars an explanation of the different views of the American medievalist on this topic and new evidence concerning the Boethian authorship of the Fourth Theological Tractate. This represents only a fraction of a much larger problem: the deep meaning of Boethius's theological writings and their diffusion. Sara Petri discovered traces of this in a treatise by Diaconus Rusticus, who wrote polemical works in Constantinople during the second half of the sixth century (*Rustici diaconi contra Acephalos*, ed. S. PETRI, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* 100 [Turnhout: Brepols, 2013]). This means that Boethius was well known in the Eastern Roman Empire, confirming the conclusions of many scholars, who have analyzed the afterlife of Boethius in Constantinople (see, especially, J. MAGEE, “The Text of Boethius' *De Divisione*,” in *Vivarium*, 32 (1994), 1–50, and F. TRONCARELLI, “Boezio a Costantinopoli: testi, contesti, edizioni,” in *Litterae Caelestes*, III (2008), 203–236). We have even found new traces of Boethius's afterlife in the West, discovering his portrait and his grave by reading inscriptions that had been erased and misunderstood (see F. TRONCARELLI, “La consolazione del dolore: nuove ipotesi sul dittico del Poeta e della Musa,” in *Arte medievale*, IV series, I [2010–2011], 9–30, and “Forbidden Memory: The Death of Boethius and the Conspiracy of Silence,” in *Mediaeval Studies*, 73 [2011], 183–205). For articles by leading scholars on the full range of the Boethian corpus, see *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages*, ed. N. H. KAYLOR, JR. and P. E. PHILLIPS, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 30 (Leiden: Brill, 2012). Concerning Boethius's post-Vivarium afterlife, see F. TRONCARELLI, *Painting in the Shadow: Hidden Writing and Images in Manuscripts and Portraits (Boethius, Cassiodorus, Justinian, Theodora, Theodoric)* (Göttingen: Brill | V&R unipress), 2023.

Roman philosopher, even discovering his autograph.² The most important of those fragmentary texts is the longest one: the possible lost prologue to Boethius's Fourth Theological Tractate, which eventually could be partially recovered and read from a new perspective.³ It is possible also that we have been able to capture the very echo of Boethius's final words, ones he pronounced during his last public speech before his arrest and trial.⁴

It is true that these new discoveries concerning Boethius would have been impossible without these long and careful studies. However, they are also the consequence of a capacity to "be surprised" and able to identify a "little gate" that is still open, a narrow path to follow that results in the discovery of some unexpected treasures. To appreciate such treasures, it is necessary to share the same skill, because "being surprised" should be a skill of the reader, shared with those engaged in conducting serious research. Indeed, one should be receptive to changing one's traditional views on a topic of study: but this should be the goal of every researcher and should not be a real "surprise," having published several studies on this topic since my first volume *Tradizioni perdute* (1981).

If so, it is my hope that readers of this book will be "surprised" and appreciate the results of my lifelong passion for Boethius, the "Last of the Romans," and one of the "Founders of the Middle Ages," according to E. K. Rand's famous description.⁵ I hope, too, that readers will appreciate what I have discovered. It is the fruit of a long quest: the logical consequence of my extensive research on Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae* [hereafter *Consolatio*] in an uninterrupted, continuous, and coherent flow.

Over the course of forty years, I have discovered hidden in many Carolingian manuscripts a late antique edition of Boethius's *Consolatio* that has several links

2 M. GEYMONAT, "Arithmetic and Geometry: Surveyors, Intellectuals and Poets," in *Nuncius*, XXIV [2009], 11–34; F. TRONCARELLI, "'Haecine est biblioteca...[.]': Manuscript Fragments of Boethius' Library?" in *Sit liber gratus, quem servulus est operatus. Studi in onore di Alessandro Pratesi per il suo 90° compleanno*, ed. G. Niccolaj-P. CHERUBINI, I (Vatican City: Scuola Vaticana di Paleografia, Diplomatica e Archivistica, 2012), 21–26; F. TRONCARELLI, *La consolazione della chimera. Parole e immagini negli autografi di Boezio* (Rome: Artemide, 2022).

3 F. TRONCARELLI, "Mentis cogitatio. Un prologo di Boezio in un prologo a Boezio?," in *Les prologues médiévaux*, ed. J. HAMESSE (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 39–86; ID., *L'antica fiamma. Boezio e la memoria del sapere antico nell'alto medioevo* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 2017) (Temi e testi 162), 7–24; ID., *Cogitatio mentis*, 301–336). In his *Theological Tractates*, Boethius attempted to explain some difficult theological problems with the help of his philosophical training (first, with the help of Aristotle).

4 F. TRONCARELLI, "Inaudita in excerpta: la 'Vita di Boezio' di Jordanes e i suoi lettori (Giovanni de' Matociis, Jacques Sirmond, Nicolas Caussin)," in *Revue d'histoire des textes*, IX, 2014, 157–199.

5 E. K. RAND, *Founders of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928); M. GRABMANN, *Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode*, I (Freiburg im Brisgau: Herder, 1909), 148–177. On Boethius "Last of the Romans, First of Scholastics," see L. VALLA, *Opera omnia* (Basileae: Henricum Petrum, 1540), 644.

with the works and the manuscripts of Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator (490-ca. 585 CE). I analyzed it in *Tradizioni perdute* and other subsequent publications.⁶ Despite the veil of silence or *damnatio memoriae* imposed on Boethius for political reasons after his death,⁷ the *Consolatio* emerged from Boethius's place of incarceration and circulated immediately. At a very early date, someone prepared an edition of the *Consolatio* to which he appended his own preface and commentary on this work to perpetuate Boethius's memory.

This edition of Boethius's *Consolatio* includes a preface (a "Vita Boethii"), in which the ancient editor praises Boethius and Symmachus, exalting simultaneously their faith and their classical and human background. We find sentences in the *Vita* identical to ones of the so-called *Anecdota Holderi*, a letter written by Cassiodorus, preserved only in fragments. This link with Cassiodorus is reinforced by the text's commentary, whose main concern is the rhetorical figures used by in the *Expositio Psalmorum*, which are identical—or at least similar—to the ones outlined by Cassiodorus. In both cases, the rhetorical notes are written in Greek and translated in Latin using the same words. The commentary also includes metrical notes that display a knowledge of its Latin prosody, which was lost in the Early Middle Ages. Both the rhetorical annotations and the *Vita* were typical expressions of both Cassiodorus's and Boethius's cultural and social milieu, and this was not by chance. The "editions" of the classics were distinctive marks of the cultural and political identity of the ruling class of late antique Rome. As Arnaldo Momigliano asserts, "Those antiquarians were not frivolous"; their cultural task was a political duty to preserve the old traditions of a civilization, fighting against the breakdown and the collapse of the Antique World.⁸

Considering Cassiodorus's commentary on Boethius, we must remember the statement of Amplonius Ratinck of Berk (1364–1435), who attested to the existence of a beautiful and well-corrected book of Boethius's *Consolatio* with the commentary of Cassiodorus (to be discussed in Chapter II). Amplonius, who was born in the Rhine region, studied in Prague and Cologne, where he later worked for many years as physician to the Archbishop Frederik III (1401–1414). He also held the position of Professor at the University of Erfurt. In 1412, he donated his library, consisting of 633 manuscripts, to the University.⁹ Among his many

6 F. TRONCARELLI, *Tradizioni perdute. La 'Consolatio Philosophiae' nell'Alto Medioevo*, Medioevo e Umanesimo 42 (Padova: Antenore, 1981), 84–86.

7 F. TRONCARELLI, "Forbidden Memory," 183–205.

8 A. MOMIGLIANO, "Cassiodorus and Italian Culture of His Time," in *Secondo contributo alla storia degli studi classici* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1960), 219–229.

9 On Amplonius, see M. MORITZ and K. BRODERSEN, eds., *Amplonius: Die Zeit. Der Mensch. Die Stiftung. 600 Jahre Bibliotheca Amploniana in Erfurt*, Schriften des Museums für Thüringer Volkskunde Erfurt 34 (Erfurt: Volkskundemuseum, 2012). See also: *Der Schatz des Amplonius: Die große Bibliothek des Mittelalters in Erfurt. Begleitbuch zur gleichnamigen Ausstellung der Stadt- und Regionalbibliothek Erfurt und des Angermuseums Erfurt vom 2. September bis*

books, Amplonius mentions this commentary by Cassiodorus on Boethius's *Consolatio*.¹⁰

Among manuscripts of the *Consolatio*, we can find at least 38 complete or fragmentary copies of this previously mentioned archetype from the ninth to the twelfth century.¹¹ The most complete copy is British Library, Harley 3095+2688 (ninth/tenth century). It is an elegant and unusual volume featuring rubricated captions and Greek words. It was written near Cologne, where Amplonius lived, and it belonged first to Liège Cathedral.

Most of the rhetorical notes found in the *Consolatio* edition are also used by Cassiodorus in his *Expositio Psalmorum*. These notes include the same ones in Greek, with the same translations of Greek terms into Latin. A comparison with the most important grammatical and rhetorical Latin authors confirms that the notes are typical of Cassiodorus, as opposed to those found in the common tradition.

Moreover, it is important to emphasize that the *Anecdoton Holderi*, excerpted and partially adapted in the *Vita*, was an exceedingly rare text, of which only one mediaeval manuscript survived. It was a private letter written by Cassiodorus to Rufius Petronius Nichomachus Cethegus, the leader of the Roman émigrés in Constantinople, which traces Cassiodorus's genealogical links with the noble Anicia family, to which both Symmachus and Boethius belonged.

My discovery of this edition of Boethius was received favorably by many scholars, although there were some who objected at first to its attribution, maintaining that the edition should be dated to the eighth rather than to the sixth century. One of these, Margaret Gibson, the distinguished scholar who had expressed the most serious doubts, later withdrew her criticisms.¹² The reasons of

4. November 2001, ed. K. PAASCH and E. DÖBLER (Erfurt: Stadt- und Regionalbibliothek, 2001); TH. BOUILLON and B. PFEIL, "Amplonius Rating de Berka und seine Büchersammlung. Bedeutung, Geschichte und Perspektiven der Bibliotheca Amploniana," in *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte und Altertumskunde von Erfurt*, 70, N.F. 17 (2009), 31–53; J. PILVOUSEK and J. RÖMELT, *Die Bibliothek des Amplonius Raten de Berka und ihre verborgenen Schätze. Anmerkungen zur Wiederentdeckung "Erfurter" Augustinus-Predigten*, Erfurter Theologische Schriften 39 (Würzburg: Echter, 2010). See also, on a controversial problem, viz. a possible misunderstanding by Amplonius, the clarifying analysis of R. JAKOBI, ed., *Grillius: Überlieferung und Kommentar*, Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 77 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005).

10 P. LEHMANN, *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskatalog Deutschland und der Schweiz* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1918), 2, 11, and 33.

11 F. TRONCARELLI, *Tradizioni perdute*, 1–11.

12 In 1984, Margaret Gibson wrote concerning the Cassiodorean *Vita Boethii* that I published, "Such coincidences do not of themselves constitute an independent *Vita*, still less a *Vita* written in the earlier sixth century" (M. GIBSON, *Tradizioni perdute of the "De Consolatione philosophiae."* *Comments on a recent book*, in *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 30 [1984], 274–278, especially 275). Just before her premature death, however, when the fifth volume of *Codices Boethiani* was "complete and ready to enter in the final stages of editing" (*Codices*

such a *retractatio* are evident, especially when we consider the development of scholarship during the last thirty years. Indeed, the initial hypothesis of a Cassiodorean attribution, backed by substantial philological arguments, has been corroborated by many paleographic, codicological, and historical confirmations.

Since that time, I have continued studying Boethius's manuscripts and gathering new evidence on both the Cassiodorian edition and on the manuscripts of the *Consolatio*, which were published in 1986 in my book *Boethiana Aetas*.¹³ A revised edition of this book, with some changes and new bibliographical entries, is the volume *Cogitatio Mentis*. I have devoted considerable attention to the manuscript circulation of Boethius's last work. I carried out a census and an analytic description of 135 codices of the *Consolatio* between the ninth and twelfth centuries, a project undertaken together with Armando Petrucci, many years ago, which has been enriched over time by additional enquiries, such as the census, with a more synthetic description, of the *Theological Tractates* between the ninth and twelfth centuries. Neither the census of the manuscripts nor the evaluation of their structural aspects arises, however, from a love of numbers or statistics. Rather, my study is aimed at an enquiry of a cultural kind, in which the material and quantitative data must be correlated with the social and historical aspects of the phenomena under examination. In analyzing the interpretations of the man and his works, one understands more fully what is suggested by the codicology.

The results of the codicological research complement the cultural research, revealing that these two faces of Boethius are two sides of the same coin. For, in turning to the manuscript circulation of Boethius's works, wondering with which other works they were associated, we can evaluate the results of this enquiry by linking them with an analysis at a cultural level. This brings to light the general categories of thought with which Boethius's works were connected. Thus, the main lines of the enduring and profound success of his survival in manuscripts will appear easier to understand.

Boethiani: A Conspectus of Manuscripts of the Works of Boethius, vol. 5, ed. M. GIBSON, L. SMITH, AND J. ZEIGLER, [London: The Warburg Institute, 1995], she wrote, "In substance the *Vita* is pre-carolingian and perhaps sixth-century" (M. GIBSON, *Codices boethiani*, 15). Similarly, in 1984, Gibson wrote that "eighth-century Italy, [which was] an active teaching milieu, [...] had the materials used in the edition" and "may well have been responsible for it" (M. GIBSON, *Tradizioni*, 278). But, in the preface of the *Codices Boethiani*, she wrote: "Troncarelli brought to general attention [these] manuscripts with late antique features in their *mise-en-page* and a marginal annotation, that was distinctly prior to the 'Remigian' norm" (M. GIBSON, *Codices boethiani*, 12).

- 13 F. TRONCARELLI, *Boethiana Aetas. Modelli grafici e tradizione manoscritta della "Consolatio Philosophiae" tra IX e XII secolo*, Biblioteca di "Scrittura e Civiltà" 2 (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1987).

The 38 manuscripts of the edition of the *Consolatio* should be separated from the other nearly 135 copies ranging from the ninth to the twelfth century. They have a unique size and *mise-en-page* that are akin to the ancient and medieval copies of Cassiodorus's works.

Convincing links to Cassiodorus's manuscripts and the survival of late antique features in Carolingian copies, however, should not come as a surprise. Outstanding paleographers and historians such as Elias Avery Lowe,¹⁴ Edward Kennard Rand,¹⁵ Julian Brown,¹⁶ Armando Petrucci,¹⁷ and Paul Meyvaert¹⁸ had already pointed out similar paleographical and codicological continuity with Cassiodorus's manuscripts and in both late antique and Carolingian copies of other Latin authors, such as those of Prudentius, Terence, and Plautus, all of which have been analyzed by outstanding scholars, especially H. Woodruff, R. Stettiner, R. Raffaelli, and C. Questa.¹⁹

Many years have passed since the publication of my two major books and various other articles on this topic.²⁰ Some scholars have sustained my conclusions, and new arguments—both regarding the edition and Cassiodorus and his work—have come to light. My original attribution of the late antique edition

14 E. A. LOWE, *Paleographical Papers, 1907–65*, ed. L. BIELER (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

15 E. K. RAND, "The New Cassiodorus," in *Speculum* 13 (1938), 443–447.

16 J. BROWN, *A Palaeographer's View: The Selected Writings of Julian Brown*, ed. J. BATELY, M. BROWN, AND J. ROBERTS (London: Harvey Miller, 1993).

17 A. PETRUCCI, "L'onciale romana. Origini, sviluppo e diffusione di una stilizzazione grafica altomedievale (sec. VI–IX)," in *Studi medievali*, s. III, 12 (1971), 75–134, and Id., "The Christian Conception of the Book in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries," in A. PETRUCCI, *Writers and Readers in Medieval History. Studies in the History of Written Culture*, ed. C. M. RADDING (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 19–42.

18 P. MEYVAERT, "Bede, Cassiodorus and the Codex Amiatinus," in *Speculum*, 71 (1996), 827–883.

19 R. STETTINER, *Die illustrierten Prudentiushandschriften* (Berlin: Grote, 1905); H. WOODRUFF, *The Illustrated Manuscripts of Prudentius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1930); L. W. JONES AND C. R. MOREY, *The Miniatures of the Manuscripts of Terence prior to the XIIIth century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1931); R. RAFFAELLI, "Prologhi, perioche, didascalie nel Terenzio Bembino (e nel Plauto Ambrosiano)," in *Scrittura e Civiltà*, 4 (1980), 41–101; C. QUESTA, *Numeri innumeri: ricerche sui cantica e la tradizione manoscritta di Plauto* (Rome: Ateneo, 1984).

20 F. TRONCARELLI, "Tradizioni ritrovate? Risposta ad alcune obiezioni a un libro recente," in *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes*, 31 (1985), 215–226; Id., *Boethiana Aetas* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'orso, 1987); Id., *Una nuova edizione della Consolatio Philosophiae nel CCSL*, in *Scriptorium*, XLI (1987), 133–150; Id., "La più antica interpretazione della *Consolatio Philosophiae*," in *Nuova Rivista Storica*, 72 (1988), 501–550; Id., *Immagini tardoantiche nei codici di Boezio*, in *Schede Medievali* 17 (1989), 342–368; Id., *Boezio a Costantinopoli: testi, contesti, edizioni*, in *Litterae Caelestes* 3 (2008), 203–236; Id., *Caligo quaedam neglectae vetustatis. Antichi modelli e copie altomedievali della Consolatio Philosophiae*, in *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 65 (2010), 657–694; Id., *Nuove ricerche e vecchi problemi. Note sulla diffusione della Consolatio Philosophiae in età carolingia*, in M. D'AGOSTINO AND P. DEgni, eds., *Alethes philia. Studi in onore di Giancarlo Prato* (Spoleto: CISAM, 2010), 662–665.

of the *Consolatio* to Cassiodorus has been supported subsequently by many authoritative scholars, including J.-P. Callu, H. Silvestre, F. Gasparri, L. Cracco Ruggini, J.-Y. Tilliette, J. Marenbon, V. Sivo, A. Marcone, A. Galonnier, G. Fissore, G. Pomaro, C. Kakridi, P. Mastandrea, and M. S. Bjornlie.²¹ Others, such as D. Shanzer, J. Magee, M. Vitiello, and C. Moreschini, have judged my Cassiodorian attribution to be certain.²²

21 J. CALLU, "La première diffusion de l'Histoire Augusta," in *Historia Augusta Colloquia* '82–83 (Bonn: Habelt, 1985), 89–129; G. FISSORE, "Review of F. Troncarelli, *Boethiana Aetas*," in *L'Indice*, 10 (1988), 29–30; V. SIVO, "Review of F. Troncarelli, *Boethiana Aetas*," in *Quaderni Medievali*, 26 (1988), 251–253; F. GASPARRI, "Review di F. Troncarelli, *Boethiana Aetas*," in *Scriptorium*, 42 (1988), 261–263; A. MARCONE, *Due epistolari a confronto: corpus pliniano e corpus simmachiano*, in *Studi di storia e storiografia antiche* (Pavia: Ateneo, 1988), 143–53; H. SILVESTRE, "Review of F. Troncarelli, *Boethiana Aetas*," in *Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique* 84 (1989), 627–628; L. CUPPO CSAKI, *Beatus Cassiodorus*, in *Vivarium Scyllacense*, VIII/2 (1997), n. 38; R. BLACK-G. POMARO, *La consolazione della filosofia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento italiano*, Biblioteche e archivi 7 (Firenze: SISMEL, 2000), 82; J.-Y. TILLIETTE, "Eclipse de la fortune dans le Haut Moyen Ages?," in *La fortune: thème, représentation, discours*, ed. Y. FOEHR-JANSSENS and E. Métry (Genève: Drosz, 2003), 95; C. KAKRIDI, *Cassiodorus Variae. Literatur und Politik im Ostgotischen Italien*, Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, 223 (Munich and Leipzig: De Gruyter, 2005), 268 n. 394; P. MASTANDREA, "Vita dei principi e Storia Romana, tra Simmaco e Giordane," in *Il calamo della memoria*, 4 (2011), 207–245, especially 230, n. 82; M. S. BJORNIE, *Politics and Tradition Between Rome, Ravenna and Constantinople: A Study of Cassiodorus and the Variae 527–554*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, Fourth series, 89 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 150; and C. MORESCHINI, *A Christian in Toga. Boethius: Interpreter of Antiquity and Christian Theologian*, BERG 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2014), 29–30.

22 J. MAGEE, "The Text of Boethius' *De Divisione*," *Vivarium* 32 (1994), 1–50 (especially 10); J. MARENBO, *Boethius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 173; C. MORESCHINI in A. M. S. BOETHII, *De consolatione philosophiae, Opuscula theologica*, ed. C. MORESCHINI, revised edition, Bibliotheca scriptorum graecorum et romanorum Teubneriana 1119 (Munich: K. G. Sauer Verlag, 2005), X–XII; C. MORESCHINI, *Sulla tradizione manoscritta della Consolatio e degli opuscula theologica di Boezio: proposte per una recensione*, in C. MORESCHINI, *Varia Boethiana*, Naples, D'Auria (Storie e testi, 14), 2003, 77–134; M. VITIELLO, *Cassiodorus anti Boethius?*, in *Klio* 90 (2008), 483–484; A. GALONNIER, in *Boèce, Opuscula sacra* (Louvain: Peeters, 2007), 95; D. SHANZER, "Interpreting the *Consolation*," in J. MARENBO, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 228–254, especially 240–245. Other scholars have pointed out that the edition of the *Consolatio* is late antique, without affirming that Cassiodorus is the author: cf., G. MILANESE, "Review of F. Troncarelli, *Tradizioni perdute*," in *Maia* 34 (1982), 270–273; G. D'ONOFRIO, "Review of F. Troncarelli, *Tradizioni perdute*," in *Schede Medievali*, 2 (1982), 98–101; O. PECERE, "La tradizione dei testi latini tra IV e V secolo attraverso i libri sottoscritti," in *Tradizioni dei classici, trasformazioni della cultura*, ed. A. Giardina, IV (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1986), 19–81 e 210–246, especially 340 n. 310; B. PABST, *Prosimetrum: Tradition und Wandel einer Literaturform zwischen Spätantike und Spätmittelalter*, Ordo 4, 1/2 (Köln-Weimar-Wien: Böhlau, 1994), 281–282; T. RICKLIN, "Femme-Philosophie et hommes-animaux: essai d'une lecture satirique de la *Consolatio Philosophiae* de Boèce," in *Boèce ou La chaîne des Savoirs*. Actes Du Colloque International de La Fondation Singer-Polignac, Présidée par Edouard Bonnefous (Paris, 8–12 juin, 1999), ed. A. GALONNIER, *Philosophes Médiévaux* XLIV (Louvain: Peeters,

In the meantime, the studies on Boethius and Cassiodorus have continued with great force, and the general understanding of their respective roles and milieu have improved accordingly.²³ Naturally, as often happens in similar cases, for most readers the evidence that Cassiodorus was responsible for producing a late antique edition of Boethius's *Consolatio* that played an important role in the transmission and reception of that work should be compelling.

After more than forty years of research, the time has come for me to synthesize what I have written on this topic into a unified, coherent study of the late antique

2003), 131–146, especially 131; M. VITIELLO, *Theodahad: A Platonic King at the Collapse of Ostrogothic Italy* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2014), 84; 203, n. 74; 237, n. 170.

- 23 The bibliography on this topic is vast. Here, I am compelled to quote selectively from the most important recent and relevant sources (that also include excellent bibliographical references), such as F. TRONCARELLI, *Vivarium. I libri, il destino*, *Instrumenta patristica*, XXXIII (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998); *Cassiodorus: Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning and On the Soul*, ed. M. VESSEY and J. HALPORN (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004); M. VITIELLO, *Il principe, il filosofo, il guerriero: lineamenti di pensiero politico nell'Italia ostrogota* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006); J. J. O'DONNELL, *The Ruin of the Roman Empire* (New York: Ecco, 2008); P. E. PHILLIPS, "Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius: A Chronology and Annotated Bibliography," in *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages*, 551–589; P. BROWN, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 A.D.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Id., *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2013); and two recent studies by M. VITIELLO: *Theodahad: A Platonic King at the Collapse of Ostrogothic Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014) and *Amalasuintha: The Transformation of Queenship in the Post-Roman World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017). The latest studies regarding the circulation of Boethius's *Consolatio* during the ninth and tenth centuries have cast new light on the fortune of the work in Carolingian times. In 2005, M. Godden outlined an evaluation of the studies on the glosses in insular writing of Vat. Lat 3363, on the problem of the alleged Asser's commentary on the Boethian work and on that of the circulation of the *Consolatio* in England between the ninth and tenth centuries. Subsequently, other scholars have written essays dedicated to the controversial problem of the continental Carolingian commentaries on the text: M. GODDEN, "Alfred, Asser and Boethius," in K. O'BRIEN O'KEEFE AND A. ORCHARD, eds., *Latin Learning and English Lore Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge* (Toronto: University Press, 2005), I, 326–48; see also *The Old English Boethius. An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius's De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. M. GODDEN AND S. IRVINE (Oxford: University Press, 2009); A. PAPAAGI, "Destin et providence (*Consolatio Philosophiae* IV, pr. 6). La réception du néoplatonisme Boécien à l'époque carolingienne," in "Comptes rendues de l'Académie des Inscriptions (Janvier-Mars, 2006)," 671–711; J. WITTIG, "The Remigian Glosses on Boethius's *Consolatio Philosophiae* in Context," in C. D. WRIGHT, F. M. BIGGS, AND N. HALL-THOMAS, eds., *Source of Wisdom: Old English and Early Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Thomas D. Hill* (Toronto: University Press, 2007), 168–200; Id., "The Transmission of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* in the Carolingian Age," in *Medium Aevum* 78 (2009), 1–15. I have written on their studies, analyzing them and adding new texts and documents on such topics, most recently in F. TRONCARELLI, *Painting in the Shadow. Hidden Writings and Images in Manuscripts and Portraits (Boethius, Cassiodorus, Justinian, Theodora, Thedoric)* (Göttingen: Brill | V&R unipress, 2023), 106–135. Regarding the descriptions of the manuscripts, to avoid any confusion, I quote from my own catalogue in *Cogitatio mentis*, where readers will find bibliographical references.