

John Walton, verse translation of Boethius, *Consolatio Philosophiae*

Parchment (FSOS). Fols: 127 + i (numbered 128, but also marked as fol. i). Rather dog-eared at the edges, especially in the lower corners of pages, where there is also considerable spotting from damp. The text obliterated by damp on the lower halves of fols 21^v-25 and isolated readings damaged on fols 49-53^v, 58^v-77^v, 91^v, 93^v-127. Overall: 220mm x 160mm; writing area: 150mm x 95mm, to the bounds, not the line ends). In long lines, 28-31 lines to the page. No signs of pricking; bounded in stylus but unruled. Written in secretary. Unpunctuated, rare point.

2° f^p: On auenture

CONTENTS

Fols 1-127: 'Insuffishauce of connyng and wytte | Defaute of langage --- of þe Iuge on hie | That all þing' doth beholde plenerly Amen *Explicit liber Boicij de Consolacione Philosophie de latino in Anglicum translatus per Iohannem Waltoun nuper Canonicum de Oseney Anno domini Millesimo CCCC^{mo} Decimo*?

JOHN WALTON, *Boethius* (IMEV 1597; DIMEV 2677), ed. Mark Science, EETS 170 (1927); he describes our manuscript at xiii-iv. The manuscript is one of only two -- the other being Oxford: Balliol College, MS 316A -- that now contain a full and accurate authorial ascription; see Science, xlii (the fragmentary Copenhagen: Kongelige Bibliothek, MS Thott 304 2°, which formed compositor's copy for the 1525 print, presumably once included a yet fuller identification of the author and his patron, Elizabeth Berkeley, countess of Warwick). This manuscript is a twin of Balliol MS. 316A, with the same contents, but the two lyrics here added are in the original hand there. Although Balliol MS. 316A has a flashier opening page, it is much plainer in its overall decorative scheme. Mynors notices (333) that our manuscript has been corrected against that at Balliol (which arrived in their collection in 1656).

Fol. 127^v was originally blank, now with added texts:

(a) Fol. 127^{va-vb}: 'Thesu for thi blode þou bleddest | And <i>n the furst tym . . . ?' (IMEV 1701; DIMEV 2838), ed. Carleton Brown, *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century* (Oxford, 1939), 95-97, from Balliol MS. 316A.

(b) Fol. 127^{vb}: 'I the honour with all myght | In forme of brede as y þe see . . . ?' (IMEV 1372; DIMEV 2292), ed. Rossell H. Robbins, 'Private Prayers in Middle English Verse', *Studies in Philology*, 36 (1939), 466-75 at 472-73, also from Balliol MS. 316A.

In double columns, about 35 lines; single line red lombards at the opening of each stanza, line brackets in red, two- and three-line red lombards, unflourished, to introduce each of two lyrics; in secretary, s. xv^{ex}.

COLLATION 1-15⁸ 16⁸ (-8, a stub, presumably blank). Catchwords running into the gutter. All leaves in the first half of each quire originally signed with a letter and arabic numeral, most now the victims of damp and the deteriorating corners; sporadically visible in quires 5-13, in this system e-o. In addition, quire 5 includes bits of more faded set in crayon, 'f iij' and 'f iiij' on fols 35-36.

TEXTUAL PRESENTATION AND DECORATION Headings in red for textual divisions (the Latin incipits are in text ink) and in the marginal 'B[oethius]' and 'P[hilosophia]' which designate the speakers. The opening leaf, much faded, has a five-line painted red lombard as part of a demivinet of leaves and flowers. At the openings of the books, three-line champes; at the openings of smaller textual divisions, two-line champes (one on fol. 72^v cut out), all in gold leaf with red and blue, with green and gold floral sprays. The quality of the decoration deteriorates through the volume; e.g., after quire 6 (fol. 48), there is no green

paint or leafy design in the sprays. Stanzas introduced by alternate one-line red and blue lombards. See AT no. 535 (53), dating s. xv med.

BINDING A limp vellum wrapper, s. xv. Sewn on four thongs. On the upper cover at the leading edge, a pair of triangular sets of holes from the seats for metal clips to hold ribbon ties; two holes at the centre of the lower cover where they would have been secured. A ChCh bookplate inside the upper cover. No pastedowns.

PROVENANCE There is no very useful information and no indication of the donor. There are a few names, 'William Bryante William hustence [?] Iustence] Henery Sloper ye 28 of may' and pentrials (fol. 128, s. xvi/xvii). At the inside of the upper cover, the New Library shelfmark, now rather indistinct, in Edward Smallwell's hand: 'B.3' (see Appendix IV). There is, at bottom centre of fol. 127, another pre-ChCh shelfmark: '283' (s. xviii?). The absence of this manuscript from the 1676 catalogue and that of the Old Archives (Appendices I and II) may suggest a mid-eighteenth century date of arrival.

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