

Boethius 524–2024

with financial support of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic,
Czech Music Fund, Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of Charles University

Prague, Charles University – Faculty of Arts,
nám. Jana Palacha 2, 116 38 Praha 1 (room No. 104);
National Library of the Czech Republic
24–25 October 2024

Programme

Thursday 24 October 2024

10.00–10.30 Registration
10.30 Welcome

I. Boethius – Mathematician, Philosopher, Theologian

Chair: Zbyněk ŠÍR

10.35–11.00 Agnieszka KIJEWSKA (John Paul II Lublin Catholic University): *Evil as an Illusion of Power in „The Consolation of Philosophy“*
11.00–11.30 Tomáš MACHULA (University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice): *From Boëthius' De Trinitate to Aquinas' theory of science*
11.30–12.00 Zdeněk HALAS (Charles University, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics): *Boethius' De institutione musica – a mathematician's point of view*

12.00–14.30 Lunch

II. Boethius' *De institutione musica*

Chair: David EBEN

14.30–15.00 Daniela V. ARETIN (München): *Diagrams in Boethius' De institutione musica – function and materiality*
15.00–15.30 Jasmin HARTMANN-STRAUß (Würzburg University, Institut für Musikforschung): *„Et sit hoc modo formata description“ – Ordering and shaping (musical) knowledge in diagrams of Boethius' De institutione musica*
15.30–16.00 Elżbieta WITKOWSKA-ZAREMBA (Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Art): *Boethius and 'Enchirias musicus': Cracovian glosses to De institutione musica (ca 1458)*

16.00–16.30 Coffee-break

III. Boethius' Legacy

Chair: Jan BAŤA

16.30–17.00 Jiří K. KROUPA (Prague, Association for Central European Cultural Studies): *Bohemian Jesuits as Promoters of Boëthius' Consolatio philosophiae in 1670s*
17.00–17.30 Walter Kurt KREYSZIG (University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada / Dono Delius, Conservatorio di musica “N. Paganini”, Genoa, Italy): *On the Reception of*

Boethius's Threefold Classification of musica in Paul Hindemith's Symphony "Die Harmonie der Welt" (1951)

19.00 Concert of the ensemble *Sequentia* (Church of Our Lady beneath the Chain in Lesser Town of Prague)

Friday 25 October 2024

IV. Lecture-recital

10.00–11.30 Sam BARRETT (Cambridge University) / *Sequentia: Singing and Listening to the De consolatione philosophiae in the Early Middle Ages*

11.30–14.00 Lunch

V. Excursion to the National Library of the Czech Republic

14.00–16.00 Excursion

16.00 Closing of the conference

17.00 Concert of the ensemble *Dyškanti* (The Italian Chapel of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in the Old Town of Prague)

19.00 Social event

Abstracts

Daniela V. ARETIN (München): *Diagrams in Boethius' De institutione musica – function and materiality*

The study of Boethius' *De institutione musica* has become an object of study itself. From the beginning, scholars have read the text, tried to make (more) sense of it by adding annotations and comments, and quoted from it. This practice has generated a new textual dimension, and sometimes the borderlines between text and glosses are blurred. But the treatise does not only transmit words, it also contains a considerable number of diagrams, essential to Boethius' teaching. While the text has undergone only marginal changes, the diagrams have been altered more frequently, reflecting the desire to clarify their message, and to transmit it with more ease. Scribes have obviously felt that they were more at liberty to do so, in comparison with the text. In my paper I will present aspects of materiality accompanying these changes. I will discuss the times and places at which these changes have taken place, as far as possible, and show by which techniques the material was incorporated into the textual tradition, referring to selected examples from the corpus of manuscripts, showing at the same time some of the basic differences.

Sam BARRETT (Cambridge University): *Singing and Listening to the De consolazione philosophiae in the Early Middle Ages*

This lecture-recital explores different ways into the question of how the poetic portions of the *De consolazione philosophiae* were sung and heard in the Early Middle Ages. We begin with an account of the emotions stirred by listening to this text recorded by Æthelweard (d. c. 998), historian and author of a Latin version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Questions raised by his account lead into a presentation in three parts. First, we consider descriptions of singing and listening given in the *De consolazione philosophiae*, proposing that both were essential in drawing the prisoner into a close relationship with *Philosophia* that proved vital to his restoration. Secondly, we examine evidence for the singing of the *De consolazione philosophiae* in the ninth to twelfth centuries, contemplating details in the recovered leaf of the Cambridge Songs manuscript that suggest that styles of singing were chosen in response to specific modes of vocal delivery implied in the narrative. Finally, we listen to and explore the significance of recently discovered polyphonic settings of four poems recorded ca. 1100 in Aquitaine, placing these song styles within a specific cultural milieu and arguing that their ‘twofold song’ provided new ways of figuring the dialogue that lies at the heart of Boethius’ final work.

Zdeněk HALAS (Charles University, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics): *Boethius’ De institutione musica – a mathematician’s point of view*

The Boethius’ treatise *De institutione musica* is generally regarded as a work in the field of music theory. Nevertheless, it is primarily the opening passages that are commented on, due to their philosophical dimension. However, the majority of the treatise comprises mathematical calculations. The objective of this contribution is twofold: firstly, to provide a summary of the mathematical procedures contained in the treatise and, secondly, to evaluate the mathematical aspect of this treatise.

Jasmin HARTMANN-STRAUß (Würzburg University, Institut für Musikforschung): *„Et sit hoc modo formata description” – Ordering and shaping (musical) knowledge in diagrams of Boethius’ De institutione musica*

In the dedication letter of his arithmetical treatise, Boethius himself indicates that diagrams are significant tools for mathematical propositions. Consequently, they are not merely simplifications of knowledge represented in text; rather, they are graphic representations of these epistemic objects. Furthermore, diagrams offer operative potential, as evidenced by current research in the field of diagrammatology. The variety of different types of diagrams in Boethius’ *De institutione musica* and its glosses exemplify these functions. Similar epistemic contents are made visually perceptible through a multitude of diagrammatic forms in different reception communities, or multiple representations of equal value are transmitted alongside each other in the same community. This prompts the question of the authoritative status of such diagrams, as well as the type of transmission and formation of these visual representations. Based on selected examples from manuscripts of Boethius’ *De institutione musica* this paper will show: a) how different types of graphical realizations of similar epistemic content can order and shape musical knowledge; b) how diagrams can be modified in the tradition, thereby changing the content depicted; c) how different graphic realizations can visualize different degrees of operative potential.

Agnieszka KIJEWSKA (John Paul II Lublin Catholic University): *Evil as an Illusion of Power in „The Consolation of Philosophy“*

One of the scholarly controversies surrounding Boethius’ work is the still-relevant question posed by Bovo of Corvey in his commentary on *O qui perpetua*: namely, why Boethius, in his last work written

in prison, did not refer to Christianity. In this paper, I would like to address this issue indirectly, namely by tracing biblical references and analogies in Boethius's masterpiece. I would like to highlight some analogies between this work and the *Book of Wisdom*, starting from the open quote from this book found in *Consolation* (cf. III, xii). Boethius was tormented by the triumph of evil and injustice, which he had experienced so painfully in his own life. Lady Philosophy, in an elaborate theodicy argument, shows that „good people are always powerful, and evil people are powerless“ (IV,2). Lady Philosophy's argument undoubtedly drew on the argument from Plato's *Gorgias* (466 b), but it also contains many elements in common with the worldview of the *Book of Wisdom*. It can be assumed with a high degree of probability that Alexandrian Platonism, which shaped the author of the *Book of Wisdom*, also became a source of inspiration for Boethius.

Walter Kurt KREYSZIG (University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada / Dono Delius, Conservatorio di musica “N. Paganini”, Genoa, Italy): ***On the Reception of Boethius's Threefold Classification of musica in Paul Hindemith's Symphony "Die Harmonie der Welt" (1951)***

In the European music-theoretical discourse from Antiquity to the present-day deliberations, no author has enjoyed a more pivotal position than the Roman consul, polymath, historian and philosopher Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, who in his translations of Greek authors (among them Aristotle and Plato) with commentaries singlehandedly took on the principal responsibility in transmitting the musical legacy of Greek Antiquity to the Latin West. Testimony of his seminal efforts are his *De institutione arithmetica* and *De institutione musica* – treatises in which Boethius, as a precursor of the Scholastic movement, disclosed the teachings of Pythagoras and thus laid the foundations for the ongoing in-depth study of Pythagoreanism foundational for the continued examination of the *disciplina musicae*. Foremost anchored in the overall curriculum of the *facultas artis* of the university, the preoccupation with Boethius as an *auctoritas* spread from Europe to North America, with Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) showing a special interest in the study of the Pythagorean concepts of the music of the spheres articulated by Boethius in his *De institutione musica*. As the founder and a faculty member (1940-1953) of the School of Music of Yale University and an ardent supporter of early music (as founder of the Yale Collegium Musicum in 1943), Hindemith communicated the results of his detailed study of Boethius's music treatise in his *A Composer's World: Horizons and Limitations* (completed June 13, 1951). Fascinated with Boethius's comprehensive discussion of *musica*, based on his threefold classification of the field according to *musica instrumentalis*, *musica humana* and *musica mundana*, Hindemith explored Boethius's system of classification in his *Symphony "Die Harmonie der Welt"* (1951), a commission from Paul Sacher (1906-1999), founder and conductor of the *Basler Kammerorchester* (1926-1987), with the premiere of Hindemith's work, under the baton of Sacher, in Basel on January 23, 1952 in celebration of the ensemble's twenty-fifth anniversary. With the title of this work Hindemith pays tribute to the *Harmonice mundi* (Linz, 1619) of Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), an ardent defender of the Pythagorean tradition. In the note attached to a letter of June 26, 1951 from Hindemith's wife Gertrude to Paul Sacher, as well as in his program notes on the symphony, Hindemith merely discloses the titles of the individual movements (*Musica instrumentalis*, *Musica humana*, *Musica mundana*), without indicating the source of his indebtedness. The audiences of the performances of Hindemith's *Symphony "Die Harmonie der Welt"* in all likelihood perceived this work with its reliance upon all the musical intervals of the twelve-tone equally tempered scale unfolding within both neo-Baroque and neo-Classical idioms, perceived this work as absolute music, presumably unaware of the connection of the individual movements to Boethius's *De institutione musica*. A number of contemporary scholars (among them Günther Metz [1976], Hermann Danuser [1995, 2009], Siglind Bruhn [2004, 2005, 2012]) include references to Kepler, without any or merely opaque allusions to Boethius's pathbreaking efforts – a contribution which has hitherto informed contemplations in the realms of *theorica musicae* and *practica musicae*. This apparent lacuna will be addressed in this

contribution, with a detailed consideration of Hindemith's *Symphony "Die Harmonie der Welt"*, known for its considerable audience appeal, in the context of Boethius's *De institutione musica*.

Tomáš MACHULA (University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice): ***From Boëthius' De Trinitate to Aquinas' theory of science***

In his Commentary to one of Boëthius' *Opuscula sacra De Trinitate* Aquinas commented only on the introduction, the 1st chapter, and a part of the 2nd chapter, while leaving other parts of Boethius' text. In the commented part Boëthius describes three branches of the speculative science: natural philosophy, mathematics, and theology (or metaphysics). Aquinas comments this topic in the 5th and 6th questions of his commentary. The proposed paper deals with the Aquinas' theory and methodology of science, its Ancient roots and Modern scholastic development.

Elżbieta WITKOWSKA-ZAREMBA (Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Art): ***Boethius and 'Enchirias musicus': Cracovian glosses to De institutione musica (ca 1458)***

Manuscript 1861 of the Jagellonian Library in Cracow transmits the only copy of Boethius's *De institutione musica* preserved in Polish collections. The manuscript was written in Kraków, most likely around 1455. The text of *De institutione musica* there is provided with numerous glosses. Some of them are closed with a statement: "Haec Enchirias musicus" (This is said by Enchirias the musician). The text of these glosses was borrowed (literally or paraphrased) from the *Scolica enchiriadis* and other minor texts compiled in the 9th century as well as from Hucbald's *De harmonica institutione* (10th c.). All these texts are included in manuscript 1965 of the Jagellonian Library written in the 11th c., which was donated to the Arts Faculty of the Kraków University by Albertus of Opatów (d. 1467), who studied and lectured at the Kraków University, and in Padua and Bologna. The paper is an attempt to explain the reasons and intentions of the glossator who in the middle of the 15th century commented Boethius' *De institutione musica* using the texts written in the Carolingian era.