

The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



On the Pseudo-Ciceronian *Consolatio*

Robinson Ellis

The Classical Review / Volume 7 / Issue 05 / May 1893, pp 197 - 197
DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00197525, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00197525

How to cite this article:

Robinson Ellis (1893). On the Pseudo-Ciceronian *Consolatio*. The Classical Review, 7, pp 197-197 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00197525

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

this occasion would have to be drawn from one of the vessels, but their companion balls might be blank and exclude from the revelry.

It is obvious that in the preceding lines the expression *ἐν ὀποίῳ γράμματι δευτεῖ* refers to a letter of the last part of the alphabet.

The messing together of the permanent brigades in Utopia may have contributed to the belief that each brigade formed the juror-panel of a law court in Athens.

E. POSTE.

ON THE PSEUDO-CICERONIAN *CONSOLATIO*.

IN the last number of the *Classical Review* I have stated my doubts as to the prevailing belief that the so-called *Consolatio* was a forgery by Sigonius. The work was first printed at Venice in 1583, with no remarks of any kind. In 1584 Sigonius printed two *Orationes* defending it as the genuine work of Cicero. In April of the following year Latinus Latinius (*Epist.* vol. ii. p. 188), in a letter written from Rome, says he had been informed that Sigonius had confessed on his death-bed that he had forged the work, and asks whether the information is true. Death-bed confessions of this kind are very suspicious; the high character of Sigonius as a scholar appears to me a strong *a priori* argument against our attaching more weight to this than to other similar confessions.

As far back as 1432 there was extant at Perugia a *Consolatio*, which Ambrosio Traversari discovered there when visiting that city at the end of May in the double capacity of inspector of monasteries and investigator of lost Greek or Latin works. In his *Hodoeporicon*, a copy of which, printed in the 17th century, is in the Bodleian, he gives an account of his visit to Perugia as follows (p. 11): I. itaque die Viterbium venimus; II. ad Urbem veterem; tertioque Perusiam, ubi a Thoma nostro, Priore S. Trinitatis, gratis accepti, diem integrum remorati sumus. Inde socius nostri itineris, Abbas Valliscastri, cum bona gratia nostra Fabrianum profectus, deseruit nos. Invenimus illic opusculum de Consolatione, Auctoris ignoti quidem, sed bene eruditi. Id nobis a Priore memorato dono datum, grate accepimus. Profecti Perusia, Arretium venimus.

It seems not impossible that this *Consolatio*, which as described by Traversari very closely corresponds to the editio princeps of 1583 (except that it is there called *M. Tullii Ciceronis Consolatio*), after coming into the possession of Traversari, found its way to Venice, and was the original from which the edition of 1583 was directly or indirectly copied.

This of course opens another question. If the *Consolatio* printed in 1583 was the *Consolatio* read by Traversari in 1432, it can hardly be a *modern* forgery at all: for the style of it is far too classical to have been possible at the beginning of cent. xv.

This pushes back its composition to the third century of the Christian era. For the fragments of what was believed to be the genuine *Consolatio* of Cicero (vol. iv. pp. 989—991 of Baier and Halm's edition, Zurich 1861), all of which are embedded in the Venice *Consolatio* of 1583, are found in Lactantius, whose date is the latter third and early fourth century A.D. But between 45 B.C. and 300 A.D. it is not impossible that the true Ciceronian treatise was lost, and replaced by a spurious one, which Lactantius and after him Augustin and Jerome read as Cicero's, without taking the trouble to examine whether any suspicions attached to it.

Sigonius, indeed, believed that the Venice *Consolatio* was the genuine work of Cicero, and dwells in his two *Orationes* on the natural way in which the Lactantian excerpts reappear in it. In common with most scholars who have studied the question, I find it difficult to ascribe to Cicero a work which seems rather a successful imitation of his style than an adequate reproduction of his treatment and reasoning. I no less feel it to be *in the highest degree improbable* that Sigonius, who, earlier in his career, had edited the fragments of Cicero, and whose interest it could not have been either to lend his name to a forgery or *a fortiori* himself forge a supposed classical work, should have written two discourses upholding its genuineness as Cicero's real *Consolatio*; and almost immediately after the publication of these should have made (1585) a death-bed confession of being himself its author. Nothing in Sigonius' acknowledged writings reminds the reader of Cicero's style: he used a good, but distinctly modern, Latin: and the more he did so, the less chance of his executing such a *tour de force* as this *Consolatio*.

ROBINSON ELLIS.