

BOETHIUS, Anicius Manlius Severinus (Boethius, Severinus of Pavia)—logician, philosopher, theologian, diplomat, b. around 480 in Rome, d. 524, probably in Pavia.

Boethius probably studied in Athens and Alexandria. In 505 he became a senator, and in 510 a Roman consul. Around 522, Theodoric the Great named him master of court and state offices (*magister officiorum*). In 523 he was accused of collaborating with a group of senators who were plotting with the Byzantine emperor. He was judged guilty of treason and sentenced to death. The sentence was commuted to compulsory exile in the area of Pavia, but he died soon after. Since Theodoric was an Arian, the people of Pavia began to venerate Boethius as a martyr of the faith under the name of Severinus (October 23). In 1883 the Sacred Congregation of Rites confirmed the local veneration.

Boethius owed his titles and distinctions to his origin from the influential Anicius clan, his extraordinary talents, and a thorough education. An ardent lover of ancient science and thought, he transplanted them to the soil of the developing western mediaeval civilization in the belief that his works would have fundamental significance for deepening and perpetuating the Christian faith. He applied, and recommended that believers should direct themselves by the instruction: “Join together, if you can, reason and faith”; in this case reason was represented by Greek science and philosophy, especially Platonic thought. He initiated a restoration of studies in the West by writing textbooks and publishing texts on the so-called seven liberal arts, concentrating especially on logic and mathematics, since the West already had suitable textbooks of rhetoric (Quintillian) and grammar (Priscian). Of Boethius’ logical writings, a commentary of Cicero’s *Topics* and on Porphyry’s *Isagoge* in the translation of Marius Victorinus. He translated from Greek to Latin Aristotle’s *De interpretatione ver periermeneias*, *Categoriae vel praedicamenta*, *Analytica*, *Topica*, and *De sophisticis elenchis*, as well as Porphyry’s *Isagoge*. He wrote several of his own logical treatises (*De categoricis syllogismis*, *Introductio ad syllogismos categoricos*, *De hypotheticis syllogismis*, *De divisione*, *De defferentiis topicis*), in which besides Aristotle’s logic he considers the logic of the Stoics. He also studied mathematics. Under the term mathematics he included arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music; thinking that various aspects of quantity (*quantitas*) are their common object, he regarded them as cosmological disciplines. The study of these disciplines, especially the study of music, would lead to an understanding of man’s essence and the most internal structure of the world, and therefore to a knowledge of the world’s Creator. He presented an elementary outline of arithmetic in *Institutio arithmetica*, of geometry in *Institutio geometrica* (which has perished), and of music in *Institutio musica*.

In his theological writings (*Opuscula sacra*) he showed how one can “join faith and reason” in reference to the mysteries of faith and to winning victory over heresy (Arianism, Akatianism, Theopaschism); these are treatises: that the Holy Trinity is one God, not three gods (*De Trinitate*); whether the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are predicated substantially of the divinity? in what way are substances good? (a treatise known in the Middle Ages under the title *De hebdomadibus*), on the person and two natures against Eutyches and Nestorius. Some have asserted that the *Opuscula sacra* were not written by Boethius; the problem was resolved with the publication of *Anecdoton Holderi* (ed. H. Usener, Bo 1877); in a previously unknown work, Cassiodorus had said that Boethius “wrote a treatise on the Holy Trinity, several dogmatic treatises, and a work against Nestorius”.

Boethius’ dialogue *Philosophiae consolatio* became the most famous of his works. It was written in the then popular form of *prosimetrium* (prose intertwined with poetry). In the work he considered the course of his life and searched for a philosophical explanation of the meaning of his own fate and the meaning of human existence. Because of the unfading relevance of the problems he discussed and the fact that Boethius started writing it after he was sentenced to death, starting the early Middle Ages, this work has been frequently republished, translated repeatedly into national languages (Polish translation: J. A. Bardiński, To 1694; K. Wielopolski, Wwa 1738; T.

Jachimowski, Pz 1926; POK 5; W. Olszewski, Wwa 1962), commented upon, and imitated (e.g., Mateusz of Kraków, J. Gerson). The influence of the *Consolatio* on the shape of European thought is almost equal to that of Augustine's *Confessions*. There is an ongoing discussion as to whether the *Philosophiae consolatio* is a Christological work or a pagan philosophical work. Many scholars support the second position and authors in the eighteenth and nineteenth century firmly stated as well that Boethius was not a Christian (in the twentieth century A. Momigliano held this position). Boethius has a particular influence on the intellectual life of the twelfth century, which was called "*aetas Boethiana*". His way of philosophizing was recognized especially in the Chartres school. For medieval thinkers (e.g., P. Abelard), Boethius was the master of logic, the author of precise terms (the distinction *quo est* and *quod est*), of definitions (eternity, nature, happiness, predestination, Divine Providence), and especially his definition of the person (*persona est naturae rationalis individua substantia*), and he was the teacher of method.

Uncritical editions of Boethius's works were published in PL (63–64). Boethius's translations of Aristotle's logical writings were published in critical editions by L. Minio-Paluello (*Aristoteles latinus*—I 1, Bg 1961 *Categoriae*; I 6, Bg 1966 *Isagoge*; II 1, Bg 1966 *De interpretatione*; III 1, Bg 1962 *Analytica priora*); Boethius' commentary on *De interpretatione* was published by C. Meiser (L 1977–1880), his commentary on the *Isagoge* was published by S. Brandt (W 1906, CSEL 47); his mathematical works by R. Peiper (L 1871), H. F. Steward and E. K. Rand (NY 1918, 1968⁷), E. Rapisarda (Catania 1960²), and a Polish translation of these treatises by T. Jachimowski (Pz 1926, POK 5); *Philosophiae consolatio* was published by L. Bieler (Turnhout 1957) i K. Büchner (Hei 1960²).

K. Bruder, *Die philosophischen Elemente in den opuscula sacra des B.*, L 1928; L. Cooper, *A Concordance of Boethius. The Five Theological Tractates and the Consolation of Philosophy*, C 1928; H. R. Patch, *The Tradition of Boethius. A Study of His Importance in Medieval Culture*, Lo 1936; P. Courcelle, *Étude critique sur les commentaires de la "Consolation" de B.*, AHDLM 14 (1939), 5–140; K. Dürr, *The Propositional Logic of Boethius*, A 1951; K. Reichenberger, *Untersuchungen zur literarischen Stellung der "Consolatio philosophiae"*, Kö 1954; J. Schwarz, *Untersuchungen zur "Consolatio philosophiae" des B.*, W 1955; L. Mino-Paluello, *Les traductions et les commentaires aristotéliens de B.*, *Studia Patristica* 2 (1957), 358–365; F. J. Solowski, *Les sources du "De consolatione philosophiae" de B.*, *Sophia* 25 (1957), 76–85; J. Shiel, *Boethius' Commentaries on Aristotle*, MRS 2 (1958), 217–244; H. Potiron, *B. théoricien de la musique grecque*, P 1961; P. Hadot, *La distinction de l'être et de l'étant dans le "De hebdomadibus" de B.*, in: *Die Metaphysik in Mittelalter*, B 1963, 147–153; L. M. de Rijk, *On the Chronology of Boethius's Works on Logic*, *Vivarium* 2 (1964), 1–49, 125–162; H. M. Barrett, *Boethius. Some Aspects of Times and Work*, NY 1966; G. Schrimpf, *Die Axiomenschrift des B. (De hebdomadibus) als philosophisches Lehrbuch des Mittelalters*, Lei 1966; P. Courcelle, *La "Consolation de philosophie" dans la tradition littéraire. Antécédents et postérité de B.*, P 1967; W. Michalowski, *Problem interpretacji sylogizmów hipotetycznych B. w systemach logiki nowoczesnej* [Problem of the interpretation of Boethius' hypothetical syllogisms in systems of modern logic], RF 15 (1957), n. 1, 41–58; J. Craemer-Ruegenberg, *Die Substanz-metaphysik des B. in den "Opuscula sacra"*, Kö 1969; M. Folkerts, *B. Geometrie II. Ein Mathematisches Lehrbuch des Mittelalters*, Wie 1970; C. J. Vogel, *The Problem of Philosophy and Christian Faith in Boethius' "Consolatio"*, in: *Romanitas et christianitas*, A 1973, 357–370; R. Giaccone, *Arti liberali e classificazione delle scienze. L'esempio di B. e Cassiodoro*, *Aevum* 48 (1974), 58–72; R. McInerney, *Boethius and Thomas Aquinas*, RFNS 66 (1974), 219–245; S. Wroński, *Charakterystyka klasycznej definicji osoby u B. i jej punkt wyjścia* [Characteristics of the classical definition of the person in Boethius and its starting point], SMed 19 (1978) n. 2, 109–115; M. Kurdzialek, *Średniowiecze w poszukiwaniu równowagi między platonizmem a arystotelizmem* [The Middle Ages in search of balance between Platonism and Aristotelianism], Lb 1996, 75–78.

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