

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle Willis  
Baum Henry Nietzsche Dumas Flaubert Turgenev Balzac Crane  
Leslie Stockton Vatsyayana Verne  
Burroughs Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Homer Tolstoy Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato  
Potter Zola Lawrence Stevenson Dickens Harte  
Kant Freud Jowett Andersen London Descartes Wells Voltaire Cooke  
Poe Aristotle James Hastings Shakespeare Chambers Irving  
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# **The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy**

Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius

# Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius

Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany

ISBN: 978-3-8424-3515-5

[www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

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BOETHIUS

THE THEOLOGICAL TRACTATES

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY H.F. STEWART, D.D.

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THE CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY

WITH THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF "I.T." (1609)

REVISED BY H.F. STEWART

1918

## NOTE ON THE TEXT

In preparing the text of the *Consolatio* I have used the apparatus in Peiper's edition (Teubner, 1871), since his reports, as I know in the case of the Tegernseensis, are generally accurate and complete; I have depended also on my own collations or excerpts from various of the important manuscripts, nearly all of which I have at least examined, and I have also followed, not always but usually, the opinions of Engelbrecht in his admirable article, *Die Consolatio Philosophiae des Boethius* in the *Sitzungsberichte* of the Vienna Academy, cxliv. (1902) 1-60. The present text, then, has been constructed from only part of the material with which an editor should reckon, though the reader may at least assume that every reading in the text has, unless otherwise stated, the authority of some manuscript of the ninth or tenth century; in certain orthographical details, evidence from the text of the *Opuscula Sacra* has been used without special mention of this fact. We look to August Engelbrecht for the first critical edition of the *Consolatio* at, we hope, no distant date.

The text of the *Opuscula Sacra* is based on my own collations of all the important manuscripts of these works. An edition with complete *apparatus criticus* will be ready before long for the Vienna *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*. The history of the text of the *Opuscula Sacra*, as I shall attempt to show elsewhere, is intimately connected with that of the *Consolatio*.

E.K.R.

## INTRODUCTION

Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, of the famous Praenestine family of the Anicii, was born about 480 A.D. in Rome. His father was an ex-consul; he himself was consul under Theodoric the Ostrogoth in 510, and his two sons, children of a great grand-daughter of the renowned Q. Aurelius Symmachus, were joint consuls in 522. His public career was splendid and honourable, as befitted a man of his race, attainments, and character. But he fell under the displeasure of Theodoric, and was charged with conspiring to deliver Rome from his rule, and with corresponding treasonably to this end with Justin, Emperor of the East. He was thrown into prison at Pavia, where he wrote the *Consolation of Philosophy*, and he was brutally put to death in 524. His brief and busy life was marked by great literary achievement. His learning was vast, his industry untiring, his object unattainable— nothing less than the transmission to his countrymen of all the works of Plato and Aristotle, and the reconciliation of their apparently divergent views. To form the idea was a silent judgment on the learning of his day; to realize it was more than one man could accomplish; but Boethius accomplished much. He translated the [Greek: Eisagogae] of Porphyry, and the whole of Aristotle's *Organon*. He wrote a double commentary on the [Greek: Eisagogae] and commentaries on the *Categories* and the *De Interpretatione* of Aristotle, and on the *Topica* of Cicero. He also composed original treatises on the categorical and hypothetical syllogism, on Division and on Topical Differences. He adapted the arithmetic of Nicomachus, and his textbook on music, founded on various Greek authorities, was in use at Oxford and Cambridge until modern times. His five theological *Tractates* are here, together with the *Consolation of Philosophy*, to speak for themselves.

Boethius was the last of the Roman philosophers, and the first of the scholastic theologians. The present volume serves to prove the truth of both these assertions.

The *Consolation of Philosophy* is indeed, as Gibbon called it, "a golden volume, not unworthy of the leisure of Plato or of Tully." To belittle its originality and sincerity, as is sometimes done, with a view to saving the Christianity of the writer, is to misunderstand his mind and his method. The *Consolatio* is not, as has been maintained, a mere patchwork of translations from Aristotle and the Neoplatonists. Rather it is the supreme essay of one who throughout his life had found his highest solace in the dry light of reason. His chief source of refreshment, in the dungeon to which his beloved library had not accompanied him, was a memory well stocked with the poetry and thought of former days. The development of the argument is anything but Neoplatonic; it is all his own.

And if the *Consolation of Philosophy* admits Boethius to the company of Cicero or even of Plato, the theological *Tractates* mark him as the forerunner of St. Thomas. It was the habit of a former generation to regard Boethius as an eclectic, the transmitter of a distorted Aristotelianism, a pagan, or at best a luke-warm Christian, who at the end cast off the faith which he had worn in times of peace, and wrapped himself in the philosophic cloak which properly belonged to him. The authenticity of the *Tractates* was freely denied. We know better now. The discovery by Alfred Holder, and the illuminating discussion by Hermann Usener,[1] of a fragment of Cassiodorus are sufficient confirmation of the manuscript tradition, apart from the work of scholars who have sought to justify that tradition from internal evidence. In that fragment Cassiodorus definitely ascribes to his friend Boethius "a book on the Trinity, some dogmatic chapters, and a book against Nestorius." [2] Boethius was without doubt a Christian, a Doctor and perhaps a martyr. Nor is it necessary to think that, when in prison, he put away his faith. If it is asked why the *Consolation of Philosophy* contains no conscious or direct reference to the doctrines which are traced in the *Tractates* with so sure a hand, and is, at most, not out of harmony with Christianity, the answer is simple. In the *Consolation* he is writing philosophy; in the *Tractates* he is writing theology. He observes what Pascal calls the orders of things. Philosophy belongs to one order, theology to another. They have different objects. The object of philosophy is to understand and explain the nature of the world around us; the object of theology is to understand and explain doctrines delivered by

divine revelation. The scholastics recognized the distinction,[3] and the corresponding difference in the function of Faith and Reason. Their final aim was to co-ordinate the two, but this was not possible before the thirteenth century. Meanwhile Boethius helps to prepare the way. In the *Consolation* he gives Reason her range, and suffers her, unaided, to vindicate the ways of Providence. In the *Tractates* Reason is called in to give to the claims of Faith the support which it does not really lack.[4] Reason, however, has still a right to be heard. The distinction between *fides* and *ratio* is proclaimed in the first two *Tractates*. In the second especially it is drawn with a clearness worthy of St. Thomas himself; and there is, of course, the implication that the higher authority resides with *fides*. But the treatment is philosophical and extremely bold. Boethius comes back to the question of the substantiality of the divine Persons which he has discussed in Tr. I. from a fresh point of view. Once more he decides that the Persons are predicated relatively; even Trinity, he concludes, is not predicated substantially of deity. Does this square with catholic doctrine? It is possible to hear a note of challenge in his words to John the Deacon, *fidem si poterit rationemque coniunge*. Philosophy states the problem in unequivocal terms. Theology is required to say whether they commend themselves.

One object of the scholastics, anterior to the final co-ordination of the two sciences, was to harmonize and codify all the answers to all the questions that philosophy raises. The ambition of Boethius was not so soaring, but it was sufficiently bold. He set out, first to translate, and then to reconcile, Plato and Aristotle; to go behind all the other systems, even the latest and the most in vogue, back to the two great masters, and to show that they have the truth, and are in substantial accord. So St. Thomas himself, if he cannot reconcile the teaching of Plato and Aristotle, at least desires to correct the one by the other, to discover what truth is common to both, and to show its correspondence with Christian doctrine. It is reasonable to conjecture that Boethius, if he had lived, might have attempted something of the kind. Were he alive to-day, he might feel more in tune with the best of the pagans than with most contemporary philosophic thought.

In yet one more respect Boethius belongs to the company of the schoolmen. He not only put into circulation many precious philo-

sophical notions, served as channel through which various works of Aristotle passed into the schools, and handed down to them a definite Aristotelian method for approaching the problem of faith; he also supplied material for that classification of the various sciences which is an essential accompaniment of every philosophical movement, and of which the Middle Ages felt the value.[5] The uniform distribution into natural sciences, mathematics and theology which he recommends may be traced in the work of various teachers up to the thirteenth century, when it is finally accepted and defended by St. Thomas in his commentary on the *De Trinitate*.

A seventeenth-century translation of the *Consolatio Philosophiae* is here presented with such alterations as are demanded by a better text, and the requirements of modern scholarship. There was, indeed, not much to do, for the rendering is most exact. This in a translation of that date is not a little remarkable. We look for fine English and poetry in an Elizabethan; but we do not often get from him such loyalty to the original as is here displayed.

Of the author "I.T." nothing is known. He may have been John Thorie, a Fleming born in London in 1568, and a B.A. of Christ Church, 1586. Thorie "was a person well skilled in certain tongues, and a noted poet of his times" (Wood, *Athenae Oxon.* ed. Bliss, i. 624), but his known translations are apparently all from the Spanish.[6]

Our translator dedicates his "Five books of Philosophical Comfort" to the Dowager Countess of Dorset, widow of Thomas Sackville, who was part author of *A Mirror for Magistrates* and *Gorboduc*, and who, we learn from I.T.'s preface, meditated a similar work. I.T. does not unduly flatter his patroness, and he tells her plainly that she will not understand the philosophy of the book, though the theological and practical parts may be within her scope.

The *Opuscula Sacra* have never before, to our knowledge, been translated. In reading and rendering them we have been greatly helped by two mediaeval commentaries: one by John the Scot (edited by E.K. Rand in Traube's *Quellen und Untersuchungen*, vol. i. pt. 2, Munich, 1906); the other by Gilbert de la Porrée (printed in Migne, *P.L.* lxiv.). We also desire to record our indebtedness in many points

of scholarship and philosophy to Mr. E.J. Thomas of Emmanuel College.

Finally, thanks are due to Mr. Dolson for the suggestion in the footnote on the preceding page, and also to Professor Lane Cooper of Cornell University for many valuable corrections as this reprint was passing through the Press.

**H.F.S. E.K.R.**

*October, 1926.*

[1] *Anecdoton Holderi*, Leipzig, 1877.

[2] *Scriptis librum de sancta trinitate et capita quaedam dogmatica et librum contra Nestorium*. On the question of the genuineness of Tr. IV. *De fide catholica* see note *ad loc.*

[3] Cp. H. de Wulf, *Histoire de la Philosophie médiévale* (Louvain and Paris 1915), p. 332.

[4] See below, *De Trin.* vi. *ad fin.*

[5] Cp. L. Baur, *Gundissalinus: de divisione*, Münster, 1905.

[6] Mr. G. Bayley Dolson suggests with greater probability that I.T. was John Thorpe (fl. 1570-1610), architect to Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset. Cf. *American Journal of Philology*, vol. xlii. (1921), p. 266.

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## BOETHIUS

### THE THEOLOGICAL TRACTATES AND THE CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY



## ANICII MANLII SEVERINI BOETHII V.C. ET INL. EXCONS. ORD. PATRICII

INCIPIIT LIBER QVOMODO TRINITAS VNVS DEVS AC NON  
TRES DII

AD Q. AVRELIVM MEMMIVM SYMMACHVM V.C. ET INL.  
EXCONS. ORD. ATQVE PATRICIVM SOCERVVM

Investigatam diutissime quaestionem, quantum nostrae mentis igniculum lux diuina dignata est, formatam rationibus litterisque mandatam offerendam uobis communicandamque curauit tam uestri cupidus iudicii quam nostri studiosus inuenti. Qua in re quid mihi sit animi quotiens stilo cogitata commendo, tum ex ipsa materiae difficultate tum ex eo quod raris id est uobis tantum conloquor, intellegi potest. Neque enim famae iactatione et inanibus uulgi clamoribus excitamur; sed si quis est fructus exterior, hic non potest aliam nisi materiae similem sperare sententiam. Quocumque igitur a uobis deici oculos, partim ignaua segnitie partim callidus lior occurrit, ut contumeliam uideatur diuinis tractatibus inrogare qui talibus hominum monstris non agnoscenda haec potius quam proculcanda proiecerit. Idcirco stilum breuitate contraho et ex intimis sumpta philosophiae disciplinis nouorum uerborum significationibus uelo, ut haec mihi tantum uobisque, si quando ad ea conuertitis oculos, conloquantur; ceteros uero ita submouimus, ut qui capere intellectu nequiuerint ad ea etiam legenda uideantur indigni. Sane[7] tantum a nobis quaeri oportet quantum humanae rationis intuitus ad diuinitatis ualet celsa conscendere. Nam ceteris quoque artibus idem quasi quidam finis est constitutus, quousque potest uia rationis accedere. Neque enim medicina aegris semper affert salutem; sed nulla erit culpa medentis, si nihil eorum quae fieri oportebat omiserit. Idemque in ceteris. At quantum haec diffi-

cilior quaestio est, tam facilius esse debet ad ueniam. Vobis tamen etiam illud inspiciendum est, an ex beati Augustini scriptis semina rationum aliquos in nos uenientia fructus extulerint. Ac de proposita quaestione hinc sumamus initium.

[7] sed ne *codices optimi*.

## **THE TRINITY IS ONE GOD NOT THREE GODS**

**A TREATISE BY ANICIUS MANLIUS SEVERINUS BOETHIUS  
MOST HONOURABLE, OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS ORDER OF EX-  
CONSULS, PATRICIAN**

**TO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, QUINTUS AURELIUS MEMMIUS  
SYMMACHUS MOST HONOURABLE, OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS  
ORDER OF EX-CONSULS, PATRICIAN**

I have long pondered this problem with such mind as I have and all the light that God has lent me. Now, having set it forth in logical order and cast it into literary form, I venture to submit it to your judgment, for which I care as much as for the results of my own research. You will readily understand what I feel whenever I try to write down what I think if you consider the difficulty of the topic and the fact that I discuss it only with the few – I may say with no one but yourself. It is indeed no desire for fame or empty popular applause that prompts my pen; if there be any external reward, we may not look for more warmth in the verdict than the subject itself arouses. For, apart from yourself, wherever I turn my eyes, they fall on either the apathy of the dullard or the jealousy of the shrewd, and a man who casts his thoughts before the common herd – I will not say to consider but to trample under foot, would seem to bring discredit on the study of divinity. So I purposely use brevity and wrap up the ideas I draw from the deep questionings of philosophy in new and unaccustomed words which speak only to you and to myself, that is, if you deign to look at them. The rest of the world I simply disregard: they cannot understand, and therefore do not deserve to read. We should not of course press our inquiry further than man's wit and

reason are allowed to climb the height of heavenly knowledge.[8] In all the liberal arts we see the same limit set beyond which reason may not reach. Medicine, for instance, does not always bring health to the sick, though the doctor will not be to blame if he has left nothing undone which he ought to do. So with the other arts. In the present case the very difficulty of the quest claims a lenient judgment. You must however examine whether the seeds sown in my mind by St. Augustine's writings[9] have borne fruit. And now let us begin our inquiry.

[8] Cf. the discussion of human *ratio* and divine *intellegentia* in *Cons. v.* pr. 4 and 5.

[9] e.g. Aug. *De Trin.*

## I.

Christianae religionis reuerentiam plures usurpant, sed ea fides pollet maxime ac solitarie quae cum propter uniuersalium praecepta regularum, quibus eiusdem religionis intellegatur auctoritas, tum propterea, quod eius cultus per omnes paene mundi terminos emanauit, catholica uel uniuersalis uocatur. Cuius haec de trinitatis unitate sententia est: "Pater," inquit, "deus filius deus spiritus sanctus deus." Igitur pater filius spiritus sanctus unus non tres dii. Cuius coniunctionis ratio est indifferentia. Eos enim differentia comitatur qui uel augent uel minuunt, ut Arriani qui gradibus meritorum trinitatem uariantes distrahunt atque in pluralitatem diducunt. Principium enim pluralitatis alteritas est; praeter alteritatem enim nec pluralitas quid sit intellegi potest. Trium namque rerum uel quotlibet tum genere tum specie tum numero diuersitas constat; quotiens enim idem dicitur, totiens diuersum etiam praedicatur. Idem uero dicitur tribus modis: aut genere ut idem homo quod equus, quia his idem genus ut animal; uel specie ut idem Cato quod Cicero, quia eadem species ut homo; uel numero ut Tullius et Cicero, quia unus est numero. Quare diuersum etiam uel genere uel

specie uel numero dicitur. Sed numero differentiam accidentium uarietas facit. Nam tres homines neque genere neque specie sed suis accidentibus distant; nam uel si animo cuncta ab his accidentia separemus, tamen locus cunctis diuersus est quem unum fingere nullo modo possumus; duo enim corpora unum locum non obtinebunt, qui est accidens. Atque ideo sunt numero plures, quoniam accidentibus plures fiunt.

## I.

There are many who claim as theirs the dignity of the Christian religion; but that form of faith is valid and only valid which, both on account of the universal character of the rules and doctrines affirming its authority, and because the worship in which they are expressed has spread throughout the world, is called catholic or universal. The belief of this religion concerning the Unity of the Trinity is as follows: the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. Therefore Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, not three Gods. The principle of this union is absence of difference[10]: difference cannot be avoided by those who add to or take from the Unity, as for instance the Arians, who, by graduating the Trinity according to merit, break it up and convert it to Plurality. For the essence of plurality is otherness; apart from otherness plurality is unintelligible. In fact, the difference between three or more things lies in genus or species or number. Difference is the necessary correlative of sameness. Sameness is predicated in three ways: By genus; e.g. a man and a horse, because of their common genus, animal. By species; e.g. Cato and Cicero, because of their common species, man. By number; e.g. Tully and Cicero, because they are numerically one. Similarly difference is expressed by genus, species, and number. Now numerical difference is caused by variety of accidents; three men differ neither by genus nor species but by their accidents, for if we mentally remove from them all other accidents,[11] still each one occupies a different place which cannot possibly be

regarded as the same for each, since two bodies cannot occupy the same place, and place is an accident. Wherefore it is because men are plural by their accidents that they are plural in number.

[10] The terms *differentia*, *numerus*, *species*, are used expertly, as would be expected of the author of the *In Isag. Porph. Commenta*. See S. Brandt's edition of that work (in the Vienna *Corpus*, 1906), s.v. *differentia*, etc.

[11] This method of mental abstraction is employed more elaborately in *Tr.* iii. (*vide infra*, p. 44) and in *Cons.* v. pr. 4, where the notion of divine foreknowledge is abstracted in imagination.

## II.

Age igitur ingrediamur et unumquodque ut intellegi atque capi potest dispiciamus; nam, sicut optime dictum uidetur, eruditi est hominis unum quodque ut ipsum est ita de eo fidem capere temptare.

Nam cum tres sint speculatiuae partes, *naturalis*, in motu inabstracta [Greek: anupexairetos] (considerat enim corporum formas cum materia, quae a corporibus actu separari non possunt, quae corpora in motu sunt ut cum terra deorsum ignis sursum fertur, habetque motum forma materiae coniuncta), *mathematica*, sine motu inabstracta (haec enim formas corporum speculatur sine materia ac per hoc sine motu, quae formae cum in materia sint, ab his separari non possunt), *theologica*, sine motu abstracta atque separabilis (nam dei substantia et materia et motu caret), in naturalibus igitur rationabiliter, in mathematicis disciplinaliter, in diuinis intellectualiter uersari oportebit neque diduci ad imaginationes, sed potius ipsam inspicere formam quae uere forma neque imago est et quae esse ipsum est et ex qua esse est. Omne namque esse ex forma est. Statua enim non secundum aes quod est materia, sed secundum formam