

Boethius (480- 525)

(Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius)

- 480 Born in Rome to a very ancient, prestigious, patrician family, about the time the last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was deposed by the Ostrogothic king Odoacer.
- 487 Father was made consul; died soon after; Boethius raised by Memmius Symmachus descendant of the great Symmachus of the age of Ambrose, who gave his step-son a love for philosophy and literature (and later his daughter's hand in marriage).
- 490 Studied Greek philosophy in Athens, or possibly Alexandria; learned Greek and Greek philosophy.
- 493 Ostrogothic King Theoderic became king of Italy based in Ravenna.
- 500 Married Roman aristocrat Symmachus's daughter Rusticiana
- 510 Boethius appointed consul.
- 510 Was one of the main sources for the *quadrivium*, an educational course introduced into monasteries consisting of four topics: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and the theory of music, in use until the Middle Ages through Cassiodorus his successor as PM.
- 515 Elected to the Senate.
- 515 Boethius working on his translations of Aristotle and Plato. Translated Plato and Aristotle and wrote commentaries on their works; project to reconcile the two philosophers. Made Latin translations of Aristotle's *Categories* and *De interpretatione* and of Porphyry's *Isagoge*, with commentaries; in use through the Middle Ages
- 520 Worked to reconcile the Eastern and Western Churches. Met frequently with the Pope. In touch with emperor in Constantinople.
- 522 Sons Symmachus and Boethius appointed co-consuls; a very great and unique honor for the family; Boethius stated in his *Consolation of Philosophy* that this was his greatest achievement.
- 522 Appointed *magister officiorum*, head of all government and court services, essentially Prime Minister for Theodoric.
- 523 Accused of treason for allegedly corresponding with Justin I, the Emperor in Constantinople (orthodox trinitarian, Nicene Creed) Theoderic was an Arian Christian.
- 523-524 While in prison, wrote the *Consolation of Philosophy (De consolazione philosophiae)*, the last great Western work of the Classical period; it is a conversation between himself and Lady Philosophy, and ponders such questions as the existence of evil in a world ruled by God, and how happiness can be achieved amidst fickle fortune.
- 525 Executed in Pavia Buried in Pavia in same church as Augustine (brought there by later Lombard king of Italy), church: San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro.