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Aristokles of Messene (664)

T 1

Suda s.v. Aristokles (Ἀριστοκλής) Translation

Subject: **philosophy**Source Date: **10th century AD**Historian's Date: **Unknown**Historical Period: **Unknown**

Μεσσήνιος τῆς Ἰταλίας, φιλόσοφος Περιπατητικός. συνέταξε Περὶ φιλοσοφίας βιβλία ἰ (καταλέγει δὲ ἐν τούτοις πάντας φιλοσόφους καὶ δόξας αὐτῶν). Πότερος σπουδαιότερος Ὅμηρος ἢ Πλάτων. ἔγραψε δὲ καὶ Τέχνας ῥητορικάς· Περὶ Σαράπιδος· Ἠθικά βιβλία θ̄.

Of **Messene** in **Italy**, Peripatetic philosopher. He composed **On Philosophy** in ten books (in these he reports on all the philosophers and their opinions); **Whether Homer or Plato is more serious**. He also wrote **Arts of Rhetoric**; **On Sarapis**; and **Ethics** in nine books.

Commentary

Aristokles of Messene is mainly known for the fragments of his doxographical work, **On Philosophy**. As there is no evidence for his other works, the historical character of his writings, e.g., the **On Sarapis**, is undiscoverable. Note that A. Gutschmid (*apud* A. Adler, *Suidae Lexicon* (Leipzig 1928), A 3916) has proposed to transfer the non-philosophical works – including the one **On Sarapis** – to the **Suda** entry of **Aristokles of Pergamum**, a sophist who wrote during the second century AD and who seems a better fit for the rhetorical works. However, Gutschmid's proposition does not enlighten the authorship of the **On Sarapis**.

Biographical Essay

We do not know much more about **Aristokles**' life other than what the **Suda** reveals (**T 1**). He was a Peripatetic philosopher from **Messene** in **Sicily** who might have lived around the second century AD. For modern speculations about the dating of his life, see M.L. Chiesara, *Aristocles of Messene. Testimonia and Fragments* (Oxford 2001), xiv–xxiv.

Bibliography

- M.L. Chiesara, *Aristocles of Messene. Testimonia and Fragments* (Oxford 2001)
- S. Follet, 'A 370 Aristoclès de Messine', R. Goulet *Dictionnaires des Philosophes Antiques* 1 (Paris 1989), 382–4

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