

Theory and History of Ontology ([ontology.co](http://ontology.co)) by Raul Corazzon | e-mail: [rc@ontology.co](mailto:rc@ontology.co)

## Ancient Catalogues of Aristotle's Works: First Part

### Contents of this Section

#### The Philosophy of Aristotle

For Aristotle's Categories see: **Index of the section "History of the Doctrine of Categories"**

This part of the section History of Ontology includes the following pages:

#### Aristotle on the Subject Matter of Metaphysics

[The subject matter of Aristotle's Metaphysics. An overview](#)

[Selected bibliography on Aristotle's Concept of Metaphysics](#)

#### The Origins of Aristotelianism

[Aristotle: Bibliographical Resources on His Logical and Metaphysical Works](#)

[The Rediscovery of the \*Corpus Aristotelicum\*](#)

#### Ancient Catalogues of Aristotle's Works:

[Diogenes Laertius, \*Lives\*, V 22-27 \(Current page\)](#)

[Hesychius and Ptolemy al-Garib](#)

[Listes Anciennes des Ouvrages d'Aristote :](#)

[Diogène Laërce, \*Vies\* V, 22-27](#)

[Hésychius de Milet et Ptolémée el-Garib](#)

[Bibliography on the Ancient Catalogue of Aristotle's Works](#)

#### Bibliography on the Recovery of Aristotle's Works

## Studies in English: A-Gra

## Studies in English: Gut-Z

## Studies in German, French, Italian and Latin

On the website "History of Logic"

Aristotle's Logic: General Survey and Introductory Readings

Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*: Semantics and Philosophy of Language

Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*: the Theory of Categorical Syllogism

History of Ancient Philosophy from the Presocratics to the Hellenistic Period



Aristotle's Doctrine of Categories: annotated bibliography of the studies in English:  
Complete PDF Version on the website [Academia.edu](#)

## The *Vitae Aristotelis* and the Ancient Catalogues

"The following pages are an attempt to give a brief account or compressed overview of what may be called the 'traditional' *Vitae Aristotelis*, namely, the lost *Vita* authored by the Peripatetic Hermippus of Smyrna, and the lost *Vita* composed by the Neo-Platonist Ptolemy, whom the Arabic biographers call Ptolemy-el-Garib. These two *Vitae*, which have been compiled in antiquity, survive in one form or another only through their respective 'derivatives' or epitomes of which we still possess a fair number.

The more important biographies of Aristotle, (6) which have been handed down to us from antiquity, are:

Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives And Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* V. 1-35; (7)

the *Vita Aristotelis Hesychii*; (8)

the *Pseudo-Hesychius*; (9)

the *Vita Aristotelis Marciana*; (10)

the *Vita Aristotelis Vulgata*; (11)

the *Vita Lascaris*; (12)

the *Vita Aristotelis Latina*; (13)

the *Vita Aristotelis Syriaca I* (anonymous); (14)

the *Vita Aristotelis Syriaca II* (anonymous); (15)

the *Vita Aristotelis Arabica I* (by An-Nadim); (16)

the *Vita Aristotelis Arabica II* (by Al-Mubashir or Mubassir); (17)

the *Vita Aristotelis Arabica III* (by Al-Qifti); (18)

and the *Vita Aristotelis Arabica IV* (by Usaibi'a). (19)

All these *Vitae* in some ways are related to, or are more or less accurate abridgments of, either the *Vita Aristotelis* of Hermippus or the *Vita Aristotelis* of Ptolemy-el-Garib. An attempt shall be made here to reconstruct the essential content or outline of these two basic *Vitae* with the help of their surviving 'derivatives' or epitomes. Such an undertaking, however, is a purely tentative effort based on much conjecture and many hypotheses.

According to C. A. Brandis, E. Zeller, F. Susemihl, E. Heitz, W. Christ, F. Littich, W. Jaeger, W. D. Ross, L. Robin, I. Düring and others,(20) Hermippus -- the Peripatetic, the disciple of Callimachus and the justly famed librarian at Alexandria (towards the end of the third century B.C.) -- must be considered the main, though by no means the sole, source for the biographical notes found in Diogenes Laertius. It has been claimed by some scholars that as a librarian at the Alexandrian Museum this Hermippus had at his disposal ample biographical materials about Aristotle. In the year 306 B.C., when all 'alien' or 'subversive' philosophers were threatened with banishment from Athens by the decree of Demetrios Poliorcetes,(21) Ptolemy Soter, the King of Egypt, invited Theophrastus to come to Egypt and also to transfer the Peripatetic School together with its library to Alexandria. Although Theophrastus declined this invitation, two of his disciples or colleagues in the Peripatus, Straton of Lampsacus and Demetrios of Phaleron, for a short period of time actually went to Egypt. (22) Undoubtedly, these two men brought to Alexandria some of the writings of the Peripatetics, including probably some of Aristotle's compositions or, at least, notes and excerpts from his works. It is also known that at the time of his death (288-87 or 287-86 B.C.) Theophrastus bequeathed the library of the Peripatus, including the writings of Aristotle, to Neleus of Scepsis.(23) Neleus (or his heirs) subsequently might have sold parts of this library or 'collection' to Ptolemy Philadelphus, the successor of Ptolemy Soter.(24)

All this would indicate that in the course of the third century B.C., Alexandria had become one of the great centers of Aristotelian and Peripatetic scholarship as well as the repository for many Aristotelian and Peripatetic works. Such a situation, in turn, enabled Hermippus to draw much reliable information concerning the life and works of Aristotle from the materials which had accumulated in Alexandria. Moreover, Hermippus himself was considered a painstakingly objective and conscientious scholar whose statements could unquestionably be taken at face value.

This highly idealized picture, which, among other matters, is based on the entirely unsupported presumption that many of Aristotle's writings had reached Alexandria and that Hermippus was a dispassionate as well as objective reporter, was shattered by I. Düring. On the strength of his detailed and searching studies, Düring, in opposition to many scholars, reached the well-founded conclusion that Hermippus' biographical reports were uncritical accounts, heavily slanted in favor of Aristotle.(25) In keeping with the general literary tendencies of the time (which were concerned primarily with entertaining and amusing one's readers), Hermippus, according to Düring, concocted a strange *mélange* of fact and fiction, history and anecdote, truth and gossip, praise and slander. To be sure, Hermippus' biography contains many items which are correct, or almost correct. In accord with a widespread Hellenistic trend, however, it is also replete with many fanciful stories devoid of all foundations in fact. Moreover, it is by no means certain that any of the intramural, 'esoteric' or doctrinal late writings of Aristotle, provided they were actually and in toto authored by the Stagirite, ever reached Alexandria during the fourth and third centuries B.C., although it will have to be admitted that some of his 'exoteric' early compositions were known there. According to tradition, after the death of Theophrastus (c. 286 B.C.) the 'esoteric' works were carried to Scepsis by Neleus of Scepsis, where they were gradually lost. Düring believes that Hermippus' most important contribution (and, perhaps, least credible addition) to the biographical tradition concerning Aristotle was his determined effort to present Aristotle as the true and sole founder of the Peripatetic school. Among the many and, in all likelihood, fanciful stories he invented, probably the most conspicuous was the legend, subsequently widely accepted (and widely exploited), that Aristotle seceded from the Academy and from Plato's basic teachings while Plato was still alive. (...)

When attempting to recast some of the main features of Hermippus' *Vita Aristotelis*, we must always bear in mind, however, that with the exception of the very complex *Vita Aristotelis* of Diogenes Laertius and some parts of the *Vita Hesychii*, all surviving *Vitae Aristotelis*, in the main, go back to Ptolemy (-el-Garib) rather than to Hermippus. It is more than likely, however, that Ptolemy (or his sources) to some extent is also influenced by Hermippus' *Vita*, although the degree of this influence can no longer be determined. Hence, it would appear that any attempt to reconstruct the basic contents of Hermippus' *Vita Aristotelis* will have to rely almost exclusively on Diogenes Laertius . Düring has suggested a tentative and conjectural sketch of the main features that were characteristic of the likely contents of Hermippus' original biography of Aristotle.(28) Implementing Düring's suggestions, it may be assumed, as some of the other *Vitae* of Diogenes Laertius indicate, that ancient biographies of philosophers seem to have followed a general pattern. They recite, (i) the name of the philosopher; (ii) the name of his father, but rarely that of his mother; (iii) sometimes the 'social position' and occupation of the father; (iv) the place of birth of the philosopher; (v) the time of his birth; (vi) sometimes the more remote ancestry of the father and occasionally that of the

mother; (vii) the philosopher's schooling and his teacher or teachers; (viii) his 'intellectual qualities'; (ix) his physical appearance and physical peculiarities; (x) his travels; (xi) his 'social connections'; (xii) sometimes his 'family status'; (xiii) his public or political activities; (xiv) his scholarly activities and achievements; (xv) bits of general information; (xvi) some particular events in his life; (xvii) some particular honors bestowed upon him or some unusual misfortunes that befell him; (xviii) sometimes his last will and testament or his last sayings; (xix) his death; (xx) a list of the works he wrote; (xxi) his most distinguished pupils; and (xxii) a summary of his philosophic teachings. Naturally, not every ancient biography follows this pattern, mentions all the fact we have indicated or observes the order suggested above."

## Notes

(6) Except for the purpose of shedding some additional light on the several *Vitae Aristotelis*, no attention will be paid here to occasional biographical references to Aristotle by a host of ancient authors, historians, grammarians, critics and commentators. For an exhaustive treatment of our subject, see also I. Düring *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition*, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, vol. 63, no. 2 (Goteborg, 1957), *passim* [this work contains a critical edition of all the *Vitae Aristotelis. Added by R. Corazzon*]; O. Gigon, 'Interpretationen zu den Antiken Aristotelesvit'en,' *Museum Helveticum*, vol. 15 (1958), pp. 147-93. Also, no mention is made here of the 'abridgment' or 'chronology' found in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *I Epistola ad Ammaeum* 3-5. This epitome, it will be noted, is based on several *Vitae Aristotelis* that were in circulation during the latter part of the first century B.C. See A.-H. Chroust, 'The Vita Aristotelis of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (I Epistola ad Ammaeum 5)' *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol. 13 (1965), pp. 369-77, and Chapter II.

(7) See O. Gigon (see note 6); I. Düring, *cit.*, pp. 29-56; P. Moraux, 'La composition de la "Vie d'Aristote" chez Diogène Laerce,' *Revue des Études Grecques*, vol. 68 (1955), pp. 124-63; A.-H. Chroust, 'A Brief Analysis of the Vita Aristotelis of Diogenes Laertius (DL V. I-16)', *Antiquité Classique*, vol. 34, fasc. I (1965), pp. 97-129, and Chapter III.

(8) This *Vita*, which contains an important 'list of Aristotle's writings,' is also known as the *Vita Menagiana* or *Vita Menagii*. It is reprinted in V. Rose, *Aristotelis Qui Ferebantur Librorum Fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1886), pp. 9-18; I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 82-9.

(9) This relatively unimportant *Vita* is a brief compilation from Diogenes Laertius and from the *Vita Hesychii*. See I Düring (see note 6), pp. 92-3.

(10) This important *Vita* was first edited by L. Robbe, *Vita Aristotelis ex Codice Marciano Graece* (Leiden, 1861); V. Rose (see note 8), pp. 426-36. See also A. Busse, 'Neuplatonische Lebensbeschreibung des Aristoteles,' *Hermes*, vol. 28 (1893), pp. 252-73; I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 96-106; O. Gigon, *Vita Aristotelis Marciana: Kleine Texte für Vorlesungen und Übungen*, Heft no. 81 (Berlin, 1962). The *Vita Marciana*, in the main, is dependent on an abridgment of Ptolemy's lost *Vita Aristotelis*.

(11) This *Vita*, which is also called *Vita Pseudo-Ammoniana* or *Pseudo-Elias*, is probably an abridgment of Ptolemy's *Vita Aristotelis* or is based on such an abridgment. It contains some additions which can also be found in an anonymous commentary to Porphyry's *Isagoge*. See A. Busse, *Die Neuplatonischen Ausleger der Isagoge des Porphyrios* (Berlin, 1892), *passim*; V. Rose (see note 8), pp. 437-41; I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 131-6.

(12) This *Vita* is an unimportant abridgment of the *Vita Marciana*. See I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 140-1; A. Továr, 'Para la formation de la Vita Marciana de Aristoteles,' *Emerita*, vol. 11 (1943), pp. 180-200; V. Labate, 'Per la biografia di C. Lascaris,' *Archivo Storico Siciliano* (1901), pp. 222-40; L. Alfonsi, 'Su una Vita di Aristotele scritta da C. Lascaris,' *Giornale di Metafisica*, vol. 4 (1949), pp. 381 ff.

(13) This *Vita*, which can be found in V. Rose (see note 8), pp. 442-50, is a rather 'liberal' thirteenth-century Latin translation of a Greek epitome of Ptolemy's *Vita* or of the *Vita Marciana* (which likewise is based on such an epitome), with some minor additions from the *Vita Vulgata* (?). See I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 142-63.

(14) This brief *Vita*, which might be called a Syriac version of the Greek *Vita Vulgata* (see note 11), ultimately goes back to Ptolemy's *Vita* (or to an abridgment of this *Vita*), which probably was

brought to Nisibis when Emperor Zeno closed down the Neo-Platonic school in Edessa. It was edited and translated by A. Baumstark, *Syrisch-Arabische Biographien des Aristoteles* (Leipzig, 1900), appendix to p. 130, and *ibid.*, p. 38. See I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 185-6.

(15) This very short and relatively unimportant *Vita*, which is likewise based on Ptolemy's *Vita*, was translated by A. Baumstark (see note 14), p. 116. See I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 187-8.

(16) This *Vita*, which follows the *Vita* of Ptolemy, was translated by A. Baumstark (see note 14), pp. 39 ff. See I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 193-5.

(17) This *Vita*, which shows the influence of Ptolemy's *Vita*, the *Vita Syriaca I* and *II*, and of the *Vita Arabica I*, was translated by A. Baumstark (see note 14), pp. 39-51 and 120-4; and by J. Lippert, *Studien auf dem Gebiete der Griechisch-Arabischen Übersetzungsliteratur* (Braunschweig, 1894), pp. 4-19. See I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 197-201.

(18) This *Vita*, which is a sort of 'article' on Aristotle, to a large extent is based on the *Vita* of Ptolemy as excerpted by several Arabic authors. See J. Lippert, *Ibn al-Qifti's Tarih-al-Hukama* (Leipzig, 1903); M. Steinschneider, *Al-Farabi: Des Arabischen Philosophen Leben und Schriften* (St Petersburg, 1869), pp. 187-91; I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 211-12.

(19) This *Vita*, which likewise follows Ptolemy's *Vita*, contains a 'catalogue' of Aristotle's writings which ultimately goes back to Ptolemy-el-Garib. See P. Moraux, *Les Listes Anciennes des d'Aristote* (Louvain, 1951), *passim*; I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 211-31. The important and influential Greek *Vita Aristotelis* of Ptolemy, which underlies the Syriac and Arabic *Vitae Aristotelis* (and the *Vita Marciana*, the *Vita Vulgata* and the *Vita Latina*), has come down to us only in the garbled, mutilated and abridged form of these *Vitae*. See below. A discussion of the *Vitae* mentioned in notes 9-19 can also be found in I. Düring (see note 6), *passim*; the *Vitae* mentioned in notes 14-19 are analysed in A.-H. Chroust, 'A brief summary of the Syriac and Arabic *Vitae Aristotelis*', *Acta Orientalia*, vol. 29, nos 1-2 (1965), pp. 23-47, and Chapter IV.

(20) These scholars were opposed by V. Rose, J. Bernays, H. Diels, A. Gercke and others, who insisted that the primary source of information used by Diogenes Laertius was Andronicus of Rhodes, the alleged 'restorer' of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* around the middle of the first century B.C. This thesis, which sees in Andronicus the original source of Diogenes Laertius, by now has been mostly abandoned.

(21) See Demochares' *Oration Against the Philosophers* in support of Sophocles' motion to have all 'subversive' philosophers expelled from Athens (in 306 B.C.). D.L. V. 38; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* XIII. 610EF, and XI. 509B; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Vita Decem Oratorum (Moralia* 850B ff.); Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* XV. 2. 6; Pollux IX. 42. Demochares denounced Aristotle in particular (whom he charged with having committed many acts detrimental to Athenian political interests) as well as the philosophers in general.

(22) Straton of Lampsacus probably went to Egypt because he was an 'undesirable alien' in Athens as well as a Peripatetic. Demetrius of Phaleron left because, aside from his association with the Peripatus, he was in political difficulties. See note 21.

(23) D.L. V. 52. See also A.-H. Chroust, 'The miraculous disappearance and recovery of the Corpus Aristotelicum,' *Classica et Mediaevalia*, vol. 23, fasc. 1-2 (1962), pp. 50-67.

(24) Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* L 3AB. See also I. Düring, *Notes on the History of the Transmission of Aristotle's Writings* (Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, vol. 56, Goteborg, 1950), pp. 59-60.

(25) I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 464-7. See also M. Plezia, 'De Hermippi Vita Aristotelis,' *Charisteria Th. Sinko Quinquaginta abhinc Annos Amplissimis in Philosoph. Honor. Ornato ab Amicis Collegis Discipulis Oblata* (Warsaw, 1951), pp. 271-67; P. Moraux (see note 19), pp. 243-5.

(28) I. Düring (see note 6), pp. 465-7.

From: Anton-Hermann Chroust, *Aristotle. New Light on His Life and on Some of His Lost Works. Vol. I. Some Novel Interpretations of the Man and His Life*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973, pp. 1-4.

**The following *Vitae* contain catalogues of the writings of Aristotle:**

- a) Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* - Book V. *The Peripatetics* 22-27 (III century);
- b) The anonymous *Vita Menagiana* or *Vita Hesychii*, attributed to Hesychius of Miletus (V century);

c) The catalogue attributed to **Ptolemy el-Garib**, surviving in two Arabic version by Ibn al-Qifti (ca. 1172-1248) and Ibn Abi Usaibi'a (1203-1270) (IV century?).

### The Works of the Peripatetics on Philology, Literary History and Biography until the Middle of the Third Century B.C.

"Many of Aristotle's pupils and their own pupils shared his interest in philology and literary history. In some of them these interests were even more pronounced than they were in Aristotle himself. This pertains to the following scholars of the last third of the fourth and the first third of the third century BC.:

- 1) Herakleides Pontikos, that respected pupil of Plato, had also heard Aristotle in the Academy but he had returned to his hometown Herakleia on the Pontos when Aristotle reappeared in Athens (335 B.C.). Although he may be counted among Aristotle's pupils, he does not belong to the Peripatetics, but is generally dealt with together with them. His works, which cannot be dated, belong however more to the pre- and exo-peripatetic researches in fields that were also investigated by the Peripatetics.
- 2) Theophrastos of Eresos on Lesbos, Aristotle's versatile successor, who was, however, more interested in other disciplines. We have already made his acquaintance as a doxographer of natural philosophy.
- 3) Phainias of Eresos, a fellow countryman of Theophrastos and of about the same age as he, who had heard Aristotle when he taught in Mytilene on Lesbos (345-343 RC.) and remained there.
- 4) Aristoxenos of Tarentum, nicknamed "the musician", a rival of Theophrastos, who had hoped to become Aristotle's successor. Even today he is highly regarded as a theoretician of music, and we met him already as a doxographer of musicology.
- 5) Dikaiarchos of Messene (Messina).
- 6) Chamaileon of Herakleia on the Pontos, a somewhat younger fellow countryman of Herakleides, who apparently returned to his home town after studying in the Peripatos.
- 7) Demetrios of Phaleron, a pupil of Theophrastos, who switched from science to politics, ruled Athens under Macedonian sovereignty from 317 till 307, had to flee, and lived since 297 in Alexandria at the court of Ptolemaios I.
- 8) Praxiphanes of Mytilene on Lesbos, also a pupil of Theophrastos. He taught on Rhodos. Eudemos, a pupil of Aristotle who hailed from the island, and had worked meritoriously on mathematical and astronomical doxography, taught also there during the last period of his life. It is said that Praxiphanes, purportedly the teacher of Kallimachos, was the first to be named a grammarian in the later Alexandrian sense.(181)
- 9) Hieronymos of Rhodos, probably a pupil of Praxiphanes.(182) The relevant writings of these scholars are lost, but we know the titles of many of their works, and we also know a little more about some of them because they were used by later authors. Thus, it is possible to indicate at least approximately which subjects were dealt with by the pupils of Aristotle and by their own pupils. It is much more difficult to say what they did not deal with, because so little has come down to us."

### Notes

(181) See note 23 above [note 23: Alfred Hilgard (ed.) *Scholia in Dionysii Thracis Artem grammaticam* Leipzig, 1901. (*Grammatici Graeci* I,3) pp. 164, 26-28 and 488, 12-14; Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship: from the beginning to the end of the Hellenistic age*, Oxford, 1968, p. 158.] ; see also Wehrli *Die Schule des Aristoteles. Texte und Kommentar* (1967) Heft 9, fragment 8010 and 16-17, with commentary.

(182) On the cited scholars and their works see the relevant fascicles (Hefte) of Wehrli's collection *cit.* (2. Auf. 1967-69), also his summary in Heft 10, pp. 95-128. Wehrli excluded Theophrastos, which is understandable because what has been preserved of his works would have been beyond the scope of the collection. Only five of the Peripatetics of the 4th and 3rd century B.C. dealt with by Wehrli did not pursue studies in the history of literature: Eudemos (except for the doxography), Kearchos, Straton, Lykon, and Ariston. It is remarkable that except for Demetrios, who had to leave

the city, Herakleides, Phainias, Chamaileon, Praxiphanes, and Hieronymos did not live in Athens for the better part of their lives, but this fact is not quite clear. In addition to the Peripatetics dealt with by Wehrli there were of course at that time also others who were active in literature, e.g. the "Homer scholar" Megakleides named by Tatianos (see above, note 23) and Menon, the founder of medical doxography.

From: Rudolf Blum, *Kallimachos. The Alexandrian Library and the Origins of Bibliography*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991, pp. 47-48.

## The Library of Aristotle

We have four *testimonia* on the destiny of the Library of Aristotle (that included his own works) after his death:

- Strabo, *Geographia*, XIII, 1, 54-55;
- Plutarch, *Sulla*, XXVI, 468 A-B;
- Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, I, 3A-B;
- Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, V, 214D - 215A;

I give the texts in an [Appendix](#) to this page.

"The library of Aristotle which is mentioned by several ancient authors must have been a very plentiful collection of Greek literature, and it was also at the disposal of his pupils. The works of Aristotle and his pupils, especially those mentioned above, show a comprehensive knowledge of literature and could not have been written at all without such a library. Public libraries, where scholars could study works of interest to them or where they could even borrow them, did not exist at that time, neither in Athens nor anywhere else. But Aristotle had the necessary means to acquire the books which he needed from booksellers or other people. Thus, after the death of Speusippos, Plato's successor, he bought his books (library?) (there were only a few of them) for the sum of three talents (18,000 drachmas).<sup>(210)</sup> The geographer Strabo (d. AD. 20) claims in a passage that Aristotle had been the first man, so far as known, to collect books; that, to be sure, is an exaggeration. because Euripides (485-406 B.C), for example, already had a library. But if that statement is limited to the systematic organization of a research library, then it is correct.

The nickname *anagnostis* (reader) which Aristotle acquired in Plato's Academy, seems to indicate that he had a library already at that time. He was also a new type of philosopher in that he, unlike those of an earlier period and quite like those of a modern scholar, perused the literature and made excerpts.<sup>(211)</sup>

During this lifetime, this became the custom of all scholars, largely thanks to his own example, but in his youth, immediately before this change, it still made him the butt of jokes on the part of his school mates who were listeners rather than readers. Euripides, a reader and collector of books, had also been ridiculed by his contemporaries, especially by Aristophanes.<sup>(212)</sup> Plato himself declared in the *Phaedrus* that written notes served not for the communication of knowledge but only as memory aids for the knowledgeable.<sup>(213)</sup> Basically, Aristotle shared this opinion. During his time in the Academy he, like his teacher, published works (mostly in the form of dialogs) that were intended for a larger public, but as head of a school he acted through talks, lectures and didactic writings which grew out of his lectures and were intended only for the school itself.<sup>(214)</sup> Nevertheless, he thought it indispensable to complement the oral transmission of knowledge by the study of literature. His method demanded to begin every inquiry with the collection of material. This included also the perusal and evaluation of the relevant literature.<sup>(215)</sup>

The fate of Aristotle's library is a very remarkable chapter of ancient library history, and it is also important for our present investigation. His collection contained three parts: 1. the copies of works by other authors which he had bought, that is, his library proper; 2. the personal copies of his own works, written by himself or by others, both those that were intended for a larger public, the more

polished 'exoteric' works, and those that were aimed only at his pupils, the "acroamatic" works which resulted from his lecture notes (literally: only intended to be heard); 3. his written legacy (in the archival sense), consisting of notes (*hypomnemata*) of all kinds (annotations, excerpts, lecture notes and the like),(216) letters and personal papers. Well-known scholars of Antiquity as well as modern researchers identified, however, Aristotle's works which formed part of his library with that library itself, as if it had contained only his works and his literary legacy. The term *ta Aristotelus biblia* (Aristotle's books) which occurs in addition to *hē Aristotelus bibliothēkē* (Aristotle's library), is admittedly ambiguous: it means both the books acquired by Aristotle and those written by him. Even those researchers who distinguished between these kinds of books did generally not consider that the books written by Aristotle himself constituted, despite their large number, only a very small part of his library; strictly speaking, they were even no more than an annex to that collection of books which surpassed all earlier ones in scope and importance. This is so because researchers devoted to Aristotle tried to elucidate the fate of the philosopher's library with regard to the history of transmission of his works. Gottschalk and Moraux treated the problem also from that point of view.(217) .217 Since I cannot agree with them on some important points, I must here deal with the fate of Aristotle's library, limiting myself to questions that are relevant for my investigations."

## Notes

- (210) Gellius III 17, 3 and Diogenes Laertios IV 5. According to Carl Wendel "Das griechisch-römische Altertum." Ergänzt von Willi Göber. (In: *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft*, 2. Auf. 3. Bd. *Geschichte der Bibliotheken*, Wiesbaden, 1955. pp. 51-145.) p. 60, note 3, Aristotle bought only the writings of Speusippos, according to Eckart Mensching *Favorin von Arete. Der erste Teil der Fragmente*. Berlin, 1963 p. 75, he bought all books that had been in his possession.
- (211) Ingemar Düring *Aristoteles. Darstellung und Interpretation seiner Denken*, Heidelberg, 1966, p. 607, note 125.
- (212) Georg Rohde "Über das Lesen im Altertum." (In: *Ansprachen und Reden zur Feier der Uebergabe der Spende der Ford Foundation* Berlin, 1951, pp. 16-28) Also in his *Studien un Interpretationen zur Antiken Literatur, Religion und Geschichte* p. 20; Wendel-Göber (1955) p. 56.
- (213) Plato, *Phaedrus* 274 C-277 A, especially the myth of Theuth. Plato argues that only knowledge taught orally by the teacher reaches exclusively those for whom it is intended, and that it can be further explained, if necessary, when pupils ask questions."
- (214) Karl Oskar Brink "Peripatos." *RE Suppl.* VII (1940): 899-949, column 907 f.
- (215) Similarly Wendel-Göber (1955) p. 59 f.
- (216) On these *hypomnēmata* see Paul Moraux *Les listes anciennes des d'Aristote*, Louvain, 1951 pp. 153-166; HOmer (1952) pp. 216-221.
- (217) Hans B. Gottschalk "Notes on the wills of the Peripatetic scholars." *Hermes* 100 (1972): 314-342, pp. 335-342; Paul Moraux *Der Aristotelismus bei den Griechen: Von Andronikos bis Alexander von Aphrodisias*. Berlin, 1973, pp. 3-31 with many references to works by earlier scholars, among which I mention only Brink (1940), especially column 939 f., Otto Regenbogen "Theophrastos." *RE Suppl.* VII (1940): 1354-1562, column 1375-77, and Düring (1966) pp. 38-43 and "Aristoteles." *RE Suppl.* XI (1968): 159-336, and (1968) column 184-200.

From: Rudolf Blum, *Kallimachos. The Alexandrian Library and the Origins of Bibliography*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991, pp. 52-53.

## The Life of Aristotle by Diogenes Laertius (Vitae, Book V)

"The Catalogue of Aristotle's writings has been thoroughly examined and discussed by P. Moraux, *Listes anciennes des d'Aristote*, Louvain 1951. I refer to his bibliography and his copious and careful references to the earlier literature. I have refuted his thesis concerning the origin of the catalogue in my paper "Ariston or Hermippus?", in: *Classica et mediaevalia* 17, 1956, pp. 11-21, but this hypothesis is a rather unimportant detail in his valuable book. His main contribution is the interpretation and discussion of the individual titles. I have limited myself to very brief notes,

appended to each individual title in the testimonia under the text; for further information I refer to Moraux.

As I have said in my paper, mentioned above (which I am now summarizing), our evidence favours the traditional opinion that the catalogue is a list of manuscripts of Aristotle's works in the possession of the Alexandrian library. To be more precise, I would say that it is an inventory of the manuscripts acquired fairly soon after the library was established. Apart from the *History of Animals* and the *Anatomai*, the important biologic works and the *Meteorology* are missing, but these works are expressly mentioned and quoted by third century writers; it is inconceivable that the Alexandrian library should not have possessed copies of these works. Their absence from our catalogue is best explained, if we assume that it is an old inventory made before the collection was complete. The disposition of the inventory is this:

- 1) Nos. 1-19. The works most widely known by the general public in Hellenistic times.
- 2) Nos. 20-24. Here we recognize Aristotle's synopses of Plato's dialogues and oral teaching, later quoted under the collective title *ta Platoniká*. We do not know anything certain about 23-24; they might be doxographic hypomnemata of the kind mentioned by Aristotle *Top.* I 14, 105 b 12.
- 3) Nos. 25-73. Logical and dialectical writings. Some of the titles are known to us as titles of separate parts of the pragmatics, other titles seem to be entirely out of place. In many instances Moraux's interpretations of individual titles are convincing. More than any other part of the catalogue, this section gives the impression of being an inventory of manuscripts in the possession of a library. It is likely that Nos. 42, 43 and 62 were different manuscripts of the same work, and the same can be said about Nos. 48, 56 and 57. (...)
- 4) Nos. 74-75. Political writings, very meagre indeed. We should have expected to find the ethical treatises here (it is almost certain that Epicurus knew and used the *Nicomachean Ethics*), and the omission is difficult to explain. Nos. 78 - 79. Works on rhetoric and on style. Nos. 90-110 (109 - 110 may be late interpolations). Works pertaining to natural philosophy and biology. Nos. 111 - 116. Mathematical works, including optics and musical theory. In this section we can see that the author has attempted to arrange the books according to their subject-matter.
- 5) Nos. 117-127 (128). *Aporemata* and *Problemata*. It is possible that 128 is a collective title referring to the following section.
- 6) Nos. 129-144. Collectanea. Here Nos. 141 -142 are certainly misplaced, probably interpolated in the course of transmission.
- 7) Letters and poetry.

I can find no philosophy behind this arrangement, no idea that Aristotle's writings should be arranged according to some principle inherent in his philosophy; it is purely matter-of-fact. Any librarian endowed with common sense could have made this list, starting with the more well-known, popular works, proceeding with the bulk of the scholarly works roughly arranged according to their subject-matter, then the so-called hypomnematic works and the collectanea, and finishing the catalogue with the personal documents, letters and poetry.

Hermippus worked in the Alexandrian library and had access to its inventories and catalogues. He hit upon an old inventory of Aristotle's writings and incorporated it in his biography, without essentially (or perhaps at all) changing its character. Perhaps he realized that it would have involved him in a laborious work, entirely outside his competence, to investigate these four hundred-odd rolls, many of which had more or less identical titles or no titles at all."

From: Ingemar Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell 1957, pp. 67-69.

"The catalogues are arranged according to different principles and, overall, there is a great lack of uniformity among them, which would seem to point to different sources. All of the lists, moreover, are unsatisfactory or imperfect for several reasons: for each of the philosophers we can point to titles of works cited by other trustworthy ancient sources which do not appear in Diogenes' lists, many

titles are repeated or duplicated in a single catalogue, there are variant titles for the same work listed separately, instances of melding and blending the other lists and later supplements, the separate listing of individual books of larger, collective works as well as the listing of the collective work, restorations, clear misattributions, and other contaminations and corruptions.(292) All of the lists present almost insurmountable difficulties for interpretation and analysis and the final conclusive word on them has yet to be spoken and may never be. Even if there were space and time to do so, I cannot discuss each item in each list here, but shall limit discussion to a presentation of some of the general characteristics of each list.

The catalogues of Aristotle (5.21-7) and Strato (5.59-60) are most like one another, which is evidence that they derive from the same source. They are ordered along similar lines in a sensible, matter-of-fact manner. Dialogues or exoteric works appear first, listed according to the diminishing number of books included for individual titles. Esoteric works take up the next section, within which various scientific treatises are grouped according to subject matter. Next, collections of different sorts are found, e.g. *aporemata* and *ipomnemata*, and each list concludes with personal papers and letters.(293) Of course in both lists there are titles which are found in each of the sections which do not fit them, but overall one can see this general pattern of arrangement.” (p. 3850)

## Notes

(292) Diogenes does not seem to have been totally oblivious to problems of trustworthiness in the book lists which he transmits. At the end of his entry for Aristotle, he writes: "For Aristotle was in all things !ouest industrious and most inventive, as is obvious front the writings listed before, which come near in number to 400, at least all those that are undisputed" (5.34).

(293) See I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition*, pp. 67-69 and P. Moraux, *Les listes anciennes des d'Aristote* p. 27 ff. and 246-7 .

From: Michael George Sollenberger, The Lives of the Peripatetics: An analysis of the contents and structure of Diogenes Laertius ' *Vitae philosophorum*' Book 5. In Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, vol. 36.6, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1992, pp. 3793-3879.

“At the conclusion of three of these catalogues, those of Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Strato, Diogenes appends a stichometric notice. This is meant to be an indication of the total length of all the writings in each catalogue. One *stichoi*, a verse or line, was regarded as a line of prose or poetry equivalent in length to one hexameter verse, approximately sixteen syllables or 34-38 letters.(300) Counting the number of *stichoi* in a given work seems to have been a customary way of measuring its length, and such notices were a common bibliographic practice in Alexandria in the third century B.C., a point to which I shall soon return. The total given for Aristotle is 445,270 verses, for Theophrastus 232,850, and for Strato 332,440.(301) But these numbers are certainly corrupted. If they are supposed to represent the number of lines contained in all the works in each catalogue, there is some great disproportion. There are 146 titles in Aristotle's list which comprise over 550 individual books. His total number of *stichoi* is almost twice that of Theophrastus, and yet the latter is credited with more titles (224) and almost as many individual books (495). Further, Strato's catalogue has only 47 titles (302) which comprise only 58 individual books, yet his number of *stichoi* is nearly half again as many as the number given for Theophrastus. If some rough calculations are made and the number of *stichoi* is divided by the number of individual books, we arrive at some surprising average lengths of individual books. For Strato the average length of a book is 5,732 verses, for Aristotle 809, and for Theophrastus 470. These figures are so incommensurate that, unless we want to assume that Strato composed tremendously long books, over twelve times as long as those written by Theophrastus, we will have to reject them as accurate measurements of the total length of the works listed in Diogenes' catalogues.(303) Diogenes nowhere names his source(s) for the catalogues of Peripatetic writings, but the stichometric notices in the first three, although their accuracy is to be rejected, may provide some clue about the provenance of the lists. Such a reckoning system points, as mentioned earlier, to an Alexandrian source.(304) Book catalogues were compiled in Alexandria during the third century B. C., most notably by Callimachus, whose 130-volume *Pinakes* (305) appears to have been a listing of

works available in the library at Alexandria in his day. (306) It is generally thought that Callimachus arranged the works in large groups according to type or genre, e. g., medical treatises, epic, tragic and lyric poetry, philosophy, political works, etc. Within each of these classes the various authors were listed in alphabetical order. For each author some brief biographical material seems to have been included. Next, the works of each author were apparently listed in alphabetical order, with the *incipit* and number of verses in each being given.(307) But, as already remarked, there are three different types of catalogues among the Peripatetics in Book Five of Diogenes' work: 1) systematic (Aristotle's and Strato's), 2) alphabetical (Theophrastus'), and 3) thematic (Demetrius' and Heraclides'). Surely these must derive from three different sources, which may be Alexandrian in origin. The only one which comes close to fitting the previous outline of Callimachus' cataloguing method is that of Theophrastus. While no one has ever suggested that Callimachus himself compiled Theophrastus' catalogue, and no such claim is made here, most scholars tend to accept the conclusion of H. Usener that Theophrastus' catalogue is derived fundamentally from the work of Hermippus of Smyrna, a follower of Callimachus.(308) Hermippus, in fact, has been put forth by a number of scholars as the source not only of Theophrastus' catalogue, but also of the other four lists of Peripatetic writings. This can hardly be the case, unless one assumes that the same man compiled Bibliographies according to three different systems. It seems more likely that if Hermippus was Diogenes' ultimate source for Theophrastus' list of writings, there is a different source behind his lists of Aristotle and Strato, and probably yet another one for the lists of Demetrius and Heraclides. Besides Hermippus, the source of Aristotle's list has been thought to be Andronicus of Rhodes, the famous arranger and editor of the works of Aristotle and Theophrastus.(309)

On the other hand, others have maintained that Diogenes' ultimate source of Aristotle's list as well as Strato's was Ariston of Ceos, who is considered to have been the successor to the leadership of the Peripatos after Lyco.(310) Further, it has been claimed that these lists pre-date the bibliographic activities in Alexandria and derive from a library list in the Lyceum itself.(311) For the lists of Demetrius and Heraclides, besides Hermippus, Sotion has often been suggested as Diogenes' ultimate source.(312) In addition to all these contending claims concerning the source(s) of these lists there is the matter of the fate of the books of Aristotle and Theophrastus, their alleged disappearance and general unavailability during the two centuries after Theophrastus' death and their rediscovery in the first century B.C. This complicated tale begins with Theophrastus' bequest of 'all the books to Neleus' in his will (5.52). This topic is extremely controversial and complex and requires more space than can be allotted here. It has little relevance to the lives and wills of the Peripatetics, but is of major importance for the influence of Aristotle and Theophrastus and the availability and use of their writings during the succeeding centuries.(313)" pp. 3852-3855

## Notes

(300) Galen, *De placita Hippocratis et Platonis*. 8.2 (vol. 5, p. 655 - 6 Kühn); see T. Birt, *Das antike Buchwesen in seinem Verhältniss zur Literatur. Mit Beiträgen zur Textgeschichte des Theokrit, Catull, Properz und anderer Autoren* (Berlin, 1882) p. 204-5, 214, and 286, K. Ohly, *Stichometrische Untersuchungen. Zbl. für Bibliothekswesen*, Beiheft 61 (Leipzig, 1928) p. 4-22, and R. Blum, *Kallimachos und die Literaturverzeichnung bei den Griechen: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Biobibliographie*. *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 18 (Frankfurt a. M., 1977) p. 124 n. 291 and 238 ff.

(301) D. L. 5.27, 5.50, and 5.60 respectively.

(302) In all three cases the number of titles could be greater or fewer, since in some instances what is listed as one title may in fact be two. One example of this should suffice: 5.59 *Peri ton metallikon mekanematon* may be two titles *Peri to metallikon* and *Mekanematon*.

(303) I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition*, p. 77, writes: "Moraux counted 550 books; a simple calculation (sc. *Listes anciennes* p. 192) shows that his figure tallies well with the number of lines at the end of the catalogue. Taking as standard an average page of a Greek text in the Loeb library with 30 lines of 40 letters in each line, Aristotle's literary output according to Hermippus' catalogue, in which most of the great pragmatics are missing, would correspond to about 12,000 printed pages." The calculations for Aristotle are not disproportionate as far as I. Düring and P. Moraux are concerned, but since Strato's numbers are so incommensurate, perhaps all such

numbers should be suspected of error. It is also interesting to note that Demetrios of Phalerum is reported to have surpassed all Peripatetics in the number of lines written (5.80). However, Demetrios' total is not given by Diogenes; his list of works is nowhere near as long as Theophrastus' or Aristotle's.

(304) In addition to the studies of T. Bity, R. Blum, and K. Ohly (note 300 above), see F. Ritschl, *Die Stichometrie der Alten*, in: ID., *Die Alexandrinischen Bibliotheken unter den ersten Ptolemäern und die Sammlung der Homerischen Gedichte durch Pisistratus* (Breslau, 1838, Reprint: Amsterdam, 1970) p. 91 and 103 ff. = ID., *Opuscula Philologica* vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1886) p. 74 and 84 ff., E. Howald, *Die Schriftenverzeichnisse des Aristoteles und des Theophrast*, *Hermes* 55 (1920) p. 204, F. Schmidt, *Die Pinakes des Kallimachos*. *Klassisch-Philologische Studien* 1 (Berlin, 1922) p. 68 ff., W. Weinberger, *Stichometrie*, *RE* 3A,2 (1929) col. 2487 - 8, P. Moraux, *Listes anciennes*, p. 214 n. 17 and 246, I. Düring, *Ariston or Hermippus?*, *Classica et Mediaevalia* 17 (1956) p. 19, and L. Daly, *Contributions to the History of Alphabetization*. *Coll. Latomus* 90 (Brussels, 1967) p. 92. While stichometric notices are given for the sum of the writings of both Speusippus (4.5) and Xenocrates (4.14), elsewhere totals are given in *epe*, e. g., 1.34, 9.20 and 9.111. Totals for individual writings are also given, e. g., 1.61, 68, 79, 85, 89, 97, 101, and 8.77.

Several different purposes were achieved by stichometric notices. They served to indicate the extent of a work or corpus of works, to determine the pay of the copyist, to determine the price or value of a work or corpus of works, to ascertain the integrity of a work or corpus as well as its authenticity. Moreover, stichometry facilitated the citation of individual passages in a work, for just as line numbers are often used in modern books, consecutive numbers of verses were often placed at regular intervals in the margins of a work. See the citations of line numbers by Diogenes at 7.33 and 7.187-8 and the remarks of M. Sschanz, *Zur Stichometrie*, *Hermes* 16 (1881) p. 309-14, K. Wachsmuth, *Stichometrie und kein Ende*, *Rheinische Museum* 34 (1879) p. 481-4, and K. Ohly, op. cit. (note 300) p. 74 f.

(305) The full title of the work is recorded as [*Pinakes (or Tables) of those who were eminent in every branch of learning, and what they wrote, in 120 volumes*] in the Suda, s. v. *Kallimachos* (no. 227, part 3, p. 19.27-9 Adler).

(306) See O. Regenbogen, *Pinax*, *RE* 20.2 (1950) col. 1419-20, and R. Blum, op. cit. (note 300) p. 224 ff., for much of the older literature on Callimachus' Bibliographical work.

(307) On the reconstruction of Callimachus' work see R. Pfeiffer, *Callimachus*, 2nd ed. (Oxford 1965), fr. 429, 435, 438, and 452-3, R. Blum, op. cit. (note 300) p. 231, and F. Sschmidt, op. cit. (note 304) p. 58 ff.

(308) H. Usener, *Analecta Theophrastea* (Diss. Bonn; Leipzig, 1858) p. 22-4, reprint. in: Idem, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. L. Rademacher, Vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1912). For a succinct summary of Usener's argument, see O. Regenbogen, *Theophrastos* col. 1366-9.

(309) For a review of the scholarly battles on the sources of these lists and the various proponents see P. Moraux, *Listes* p. 15-21, 211-16, and 221-37, and Idem, *Der Aristotelismus bei den Griechen von Andronikos bis Alexander von Aphrodisias I. Die Renaissance des Aristotelismus im 1. Jh. v. Chr.*, *Peripatoi* 5 (Berlin-New York, 1973) p. 4 n. 2, and C. Lord, *The Early History of the Aristotelian Corpus*, Amer. Journal of Philology 107 (1986) p. 137-61.

(310) P. Moraux, *Listes* p. 243 ff., and more recently with a bit of hesitation, Idem, *Diogène Laerce et le Peripatos* p. 251-2. That Ariston was Diogenes' source was first suggested by A. Gercke, *Ariston* no. 52, *RE* 2.1 (1896) col. 953 ff.

(311) J. Keaney, Two Notes on the Tradition of Aristotle's Writings, *American Journal of Philology* 84 (1963) p. 58-63.

(312) P. Moraux, *Listes* p. 220-1 and 246-7, F. Wehrli, *Schule Aristoteles* vol. 7, p. 64-5, and H. Gottschalk, *Heraclides of Pontos* (Oxford, 1980) p. 6 n. 20.

(313) The most recent treatment of this problem is that of C. Lord, op. cit. (note 309) where much of the relevant secondary literature will be found listed.

From: Michael George Sollenberger, The Lives of the Peripatetics: An analysis of the contents and structure of Diogenes Laertius' *Vitae philosophorum* Book 5. In Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, vol. 36.6, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1992, pp. 3793-3879.

(\*) See my page in French, *Les Listes Anciennes des Ouvrages d'Aristote : Diogène Laërce.*

## Who is the source of Diogenes' Catalogue: Aristo of Ceo, Hermippus of Smyrna or an Anonymous author?

### The Traditional Thesis: Hermippus of Smyrna

"Hermippus refers by name to the following writers: Eumelus, Bryon (from whom he quotes Theocritus of Chios), Timaeus, Timotheus, Lycon, Timon. It is a well-known fact that many ancient writers like to quote their subsidiary sources but keep silent about their principal sources. Hermippus worked in the library of Alexandria and was a diligent compiler. It is reasonable to assume that he had access to a rich material, not only of books published in the usual manner, but also of records and other unpublished material which had reached the library from the archives of the Peripatos. The Catalogue of Aristotle's writings which he included in his biography is best explained as an inventory of the books in the possession of the Alexandrian library.

The Hellenistic biographic literature in the two centuries after Hermippus was very rich, but in most cases only the titles of these works are known. It is likely that a small standard biography of Aristotle crystallized in what we use to call the *koiné historia*, corresponding to our encyclopaedias. Dionysius of Halicarnassus refers in general words to the *koiné historia* and to "those who have written about the life of Aristotle". No certain fragments of these biographies are known.

Some fragments of other Hellenistic literature give us glimpses of what we have lost. A valuable fragment of Apollodorus' *Chronica* on the chronology of Aristotle's life is preserved by Dionysius and Diogenes. Aristocles tells us that Apellicon wrote a book on Aristotle's relations with Hermias. It is tempting to assume that Artemon used some of the letters which Apellicon had bought from Aristotle's heirs in Scepsis in his collection of Aristotle's correspondence (in no less than eight books). But most of the letters in his collection were probably faked, which did not prevent later writers from quoting them as genuine. Philodemus is generally held to be the author of the *Index Academicorum philosophorum Herculensis*, containing precious information from old reliable sources. In his *Volumina Rhetorica*, written about 75 B.C., he deals at length with the Epicurean attacks on Aristotle.

At about this time Cicero was in Athens, listening to lectures held by Antiochus of Ascalon and other reputed professors. Cicero's letters and philosophic treatises testify to his great interest in Aristotle, and I do not doubt that it was Antiochus who stimulated this interest. With Antiochus begins the revival of Aristotle; according to him the Peripatos after Straton had degenerated; it was his ambition to resuscitate the old Peripatetic tradition. The final result of this revival is Andronicus' edition of Aristotle's scholarly works.

As an introduction to his edition Andronicus wrote a book *On Aristotle's writings* which I have characterized as a "catalogue raisonné". It is superfluous to repeat here what I have said in the chapter on the Roman edition of Aristotle's works about the ideas which inspired Andronicus. It is nowhere attested that his book contained a biography of Aristotle. Hermippus' Life of Aristotle remained the standard work."

From: Ingemar Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell 1957, pp. 466-467.

### The ancient *testimonia* on the Library of Aristotle

The texts are collected in:

- Ingemar Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition*, Part III. *Fragments of the Ancient Biographical Tradition*, Chapter VII. *Aristotle's Library*, pp. 337-338; see

also Chapter XVIII. *The Roman edition of Aristotle's works*, pp. 412-425.

- Olof Gigon, *Aristotelis opera III: Librorum deperditorum fragmenta*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987;
- William Fortenbaugh et al. (eds.), *Theophrastus of Eresus*, Part One, Leiden Brill 1992, *Writings. Preservation and Publication [Fragments] 37-41*, pp. 90-94 (with English translation).

*These are the more relevant texts:*

[1] From Scepsis [a town in the Troad] were the Socratics Erastos and Coriscus, and Coriscus' son Neleus, a man who studied under Aristotle and Theophrastus. He received the library of Theophrastus, which contained also Aristotle's library. For indeed Aristotle gave his own library to Theophrastus, and also left his school to him.

[2] Aristotle was the first man we know to have collected books, and he taught the kings in Egypt how to organize a library.

[3] Theophrastus gave (the library) to Neleus. But Neleus brought it to Scepsis and gave it to his heirs, ordinary men who kept the books shut up and carelessly stored. And when they learned that the Attalid kings, to whom their city was subject, were eagerly searching for books for the provision of the library in Pergamum, they hid them in a place dug in the ground.

[4] After some length of time their descendants sold the books of Aristotle and Theophrastus, which were damaged by dampness and moths, to Apellicon of Teos for a large sum of money. But Apellicon was more a bibliophile than a philosopher. For this reason, though he attempted to correct parts that had been eaten through, he transferred what was written to new copies, making restorations that were not good, and published the books full of errors.

[5] Since the ancient members of the Peripatos after Theophrastus were entirely without books, except a few, and these were mostly the exoteric writings, it happened that they were unable to do philosophy in a systematic way, but could (only) hollowly declaim theses.

[6] Those who came later, after these books (re)appeared, were better able than they to philosophize and to expound Aristotle. Nevertheless they were forced in many cases to state what was probable, due to the great number of errors.

[7] Some also added much to this (situation). For immediately after Apellicon's death, Sulla, who had taken Athens, seized Apellicon's library, and after it had been brought here (to Rome), Tyrannio, the grammarian, a lover of Aristotle, got his hands on it by playing up to the person in charge of the library, [8] and some booksellers, employing poor scribes and not comparing (manuscripts) — which also happens in the case of books copied for sale, both here and in Alexandria. But enough about these matters."

From: Strabo (64/63 B.C.-25 A.D.), *Geographia*, XIII, 1, 54-55.

---

"Having put out from Ephesus with all his ships, (Sulla) anchored on the third day in Piraeus. And after being initiated into the mysteries, he carried off for himself the library of Apellicon of Teos, in which were most of the books of Aristotle and Theophrastus, at that time not yet clearly known to many. When it (the library) was brought to Rome, Tyranndon the grammarian is said to have prepared many (of the books) and the Rhodian Andronicus, obtaining the use of copies from him, published them and drew up the lists now in circulation. In themselves the elder Peripatetics appear to have been elegant and fond of learning, but neither to have read many of the writings of Aristotle and Theophrastus nor (to have done so) with care, since the estate of Neleus of Scepsis, to whom Theophrastus left his books, passed to men who lacked aspiration and were ordinary."

From: Plutarch (ca. 45–120 A.D.), *Sulla*, 26.1-3.

"He (Athenaeus) says that he (Larensis) possessed such a great number of ancient Greek books that he outdid all those who have been admired for their collections: Polycrates the Samian and Peisistratus, who was tyrant of the Athenians, and Euclid, who was also an Athenian, and Nikocrates the Cypriot and, moreover, the kings of Pergamum and Euripides the poet and Aristotle the philosopher (and Theophrastus), and Neleus, who preserved their books. From him, he says, Ptolemy, surnamed Philadelphus, the king of our country, purchased all of them and transferred them along with those from Athens and Rhodes to beautiful Alexandria."

From: Athenaneus (? - after 192 A.D.), *Deipnosophistae*, 1.4, 3A-B: Livius Laurensis, a rich Roman, is the host of the symposium (this first book is extant only in a byzantine epitome of unknown date).

"And he [Athenion] seized not merely the property of citizens [of Athens], but presently he took the goods of foreigners as well, reaching out his hands even for the property of the god at Delos. At any rate, he sent to the island Apellicon of Teos, who had been made an Athenian citizen and had run a chequered and novelty-seeking career.

When, for example, he professed the Peripatetic philosophy, he bought up Aristotle's library and many other books (for he was very rich), and began surreptitiously to acquire the original copies of the ancient decrees in the Metroön, as well as anything else in other cities which was old and rare. Detected in these acts at Athens, he would have forfeited his life if he had not absconded. But after a short while he returned to Athens again, having won over the favour of many persons; he then enlisted in the cause of Athenion, as one who belonged to the same philosophic sect. Athenion, meanwhile, had forgotten the precepts of the Peripatetic school, and was rationing out a quart of barley every four days to the silly Athenians, giving them food fit for cocks, not human beings. And Apellicon, though he had set out with a military force to Delos, behaved as if he were attending a festival rather than as a true soldier, and, on the side toward the town of Delos, set a guard which was too negligent; as for the regions behind the island, he left them completely unguarded, and went to bed without even throwing up a palisade. When this came to the knowledge of Orbius, who was the Roman praetor in charge of Delos, he waited for a night when there was no moon; he then led out his troops and attacked the Athenians when they were asleep or carousing, and slaughtered them and their companions in arms like sheep, to the number of six hundred; he also took about four hundred prisoners. And this noble general Apellicon made off from Delos in secret flight. When Orbius observed many others fleeing together for refuge in farm-houses, he burned them up, houses and all, as well as all their appliances for a siege, including the siege-engine which Apellicon had constructed when he came to Delos..."

From: Athenaneus, *Deipnosophistae*, 5, 214D - 215A.

### Pages in PDF format

See the [Catalogue of Titles of Works Attributed to Aristotle](#) compiled by Monte Ransome Johnson for the Greek text and an English translation.

[Graphic of the Greek Philosophical Corpus](#)