



Summary :

A philosopher from Tralles. He studied in Alexandria and was active during the first half of the 6th century. He was also a distinguished grammarian and poet. He compiled commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and Nicomachus Gerasenus' *Introduction to Arithmetic*.

Date and Place of Birth

Tralles

Date and Place of Death

After 560/570

Main Role

Scholar - philosopher

1. Biography

Asclepius was born in the city of [Tralles](#) and was active in the first half of the 6th century. We know very little about his life. He studied philosophy at [Alexandria](#), in the school of the Neoplatonic philosopher Ammonius Hermiae and was a classmate of [Simplicius](#). In Alexandria, Asclepius followed courses in Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy, studying especially Plato's *Theaetetus*. He delved into the genre known as **hypomnema**. He compiled commentaries on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and Nicomachus Gerasenus' *Introduction to Arithmetic*. We have no evidence with respect to Asclepius' date or place of death. We only know that he died after Simplicius, i.e. after 560 or 570.

2. Works

Only two of Asclepius' hypomnemata survive.

2.1. Commentary on the Metaphysics

Asclepius' commentary (*scholia*) on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is important for the history of Philosophy. This work is a hypomnema to the first seven books of the *Metaphysics*, and, as Asclepius mentions in the beginning of his text, it is based on the lectures delivered by his teacher Ammonius. This work was not circulated as an independent book. According to Spandagos,¹ the scholar Ioannes Tzetzes (1110-1180) reports that Asclepius had composed other mathematical works as well.

2.2. Commentary on the Introduction to Arithmetic

Asclepius also wrote a commentary on the *Introduction to Arithmetic* of Nicomachus Gerasenus. This annotated edition of the *Introduction to Arithmetic* was used as a textbook for the teaching of mathematics, usually as a preparation to the teaching of philosophy, and it remained a popular instructive book until the late Renaissance. Four different manuscript editions of these texts have survived. The existence of a similar *hypomnema* (commentary) compiled by Ioannes Philoponos, another student of Ammonius, had led scholars to the conclusion that both Asclepius' texts originate from notes taken during Ammonius' lectures.

1. Σπανδάγος, Β. - Σπανδάγου, Ρ. - Τραυλού, Δ., *Οι θετικοί επιστήμονες της βυζαντινής εποχής* (Athens 1996), p. 38.



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	Elder E. , "Mindarus", Smith, W. (ed.), <i>Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology</i> , Vol. 2, London 1861, 1089-90
	Tannery P. , "Le manuel d' introduction arithmétique du philosophe Domninos de Larissa", <i>Revue des Études Grecques</i> , 19, 1906, 362-363
	Westernik L.G. , "Des commentaires sur Nikomaque: Asclepius et Jean Philopon", <i>Revue des Études Grecques</i> , 77, 1964, 526-535
	Βλαχοπούλου Φ. , "Ασκληπιός", <i>Εγκυκλοπαιδικό Προσωπογραφικό Λεξικό Βυζαντινής Ιστορίας και Πολιτισμού 3</i> , Αθήνα 1996
	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire 3:1</i> , Cambridge 1992
	R. Goulet , <i>Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques</i> , Paris 1989
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	Gercke , "Asklepios II", <i>Paulus Realencyklopedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, Neue Bearbeitung herausgegeben von G. Wissowa</i> , Stuttgart 1894, 1697
	Asclepii , <i>In Aristotelis metaphysicorum libros A-Z commentaria</i> , M. Hayduck (επιμ.), <i>Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 6.2</i> , Oxford 1976

Glossary :

	hypomnema
A work containing explanatory notes or commentaries on an already existing text of another author, either secular or religious.	

Quotations

The significance of the historical information on the Aristotelian corpus in the *hypomnemata* of Asclepius

[...] we learn from Asclepius of Tralles, who has preserved many valuable notices from the works of the more ancient commentators, that [...] on the death of Aristotle some parts of the manuscript were missing, and that these had to be completed from the other writings of Aristotle by the survivors of Aristotle (οἱ μεταγενέστεροι). Asclepius, *Prooem. in Aristot. Metaph. libr. A*, p. 519.

W. Smith (ed.) *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* (1870) vol. 2, p. 77 (entry "Eudemus").

Auxiliary Catalogs



Editions:

M. Hayduck (ed.), *Asclepii in Aristotelis metaphysicorum libros A-Z commentaria*. Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 6.2 (Berlin 1888; rep. Oxford 1976)

Ασκληπιός, *Commentaria in Nicomachi Geraseni Pythagorei introductionem arithmeticam*, in L. Tarán, «Asclepius of Tralles. Commentary to Nicomachus' introduction to arithmetic», *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 59.4 (1969) 24-72.