

**The Title and Length of Aristotle's *Protrepticus***  
Part VII section 1 of

Aristotle's *Protrepticus*  
reconstructed, edited, translated and commented upon, with essays, by

D. S. Hutchinson and Monte Ransome Johnson  
version 2013xi10

The title *Protrepticus* occurs on all three of the ancient lists of Aristotle's writings: the list of titles in Greek by Diogenes Laertius (D); the list of titles in Greek appended to the Vita Hesychii (H); and the list of titles in Arabic in Ptolemy al-Garib (A).

The title Προτρεπτικός α', meaning "*Protrepticus*, one book" is the same on the two Greek lists; the Arabic list conflates the *Protrepticus* and the *On Philosophy* and erroneously reports the number of books of the latter work.

The Greek lists of Aristotle's writings are ordered according to an editorial system of dividing his philosophy, on the first level into "universal works", "intermediate works" and "particular works"; on a second level dividing "universal works" into "treatises" and "notebooks", and on a third level dividing "treatises" into "dialogues or exoterica" and "works in propria persona". There are further divisions of the "works in propria persona" (instrumental, practical, productive, and theoretical works), but we need not go into further detail because the *Protrepticus* is included among the "dialogues or exoterica" section on the two ancient Greek lists. Here is a translation and text of the first 24 titles in Diogenes Laertius' list (5.22) of Aristotle's works (5.22; the codes in parentheses give equivalences on the other surviving lists).

- D1. On Justice, 4 (H1; A4). Περὶ δικαιοσύνης α' β' γ' δ'  
D2. On Poets, 3 (H2; A7). Περὶ ποιητῶν α' β' γ'  
D3. On Philosophy, 3 (H3\*; A1b). Περὶ φιλοσοφίας α' β' γ'  
D4. On the Statesman, 2 (H4\*; A-). Περὶ πολιτικοῦ α' β'  
D5. On Rhetoric, or Grylus, 1 (H5\*; A3). Περὶ ῥητορικῆς ἢ Γρύλος α'  
D6. Nerinthus (H6; A-). Νήρινθος α'  
D7. Sophist, 1 (H8; A2). Σοφιστής α'  
D8. Menexenus, 1 (H10; A-). Μενέξενος α'  
D9. Erotic, 1 (H12; A14). Ἐρωτικός α'  
D10. Symposium, 1 (H-; A-). Συμπόσιον α'  
D11. On Wealth, 1 (H7; A-). Περὶ πλούτου α'  
**D12. *Protrepticus*, 1 (H14; A1a\*). Προτρεπτικός α'**  
D13. On the Soul, 1 (H13; A-). Περὶ ψυχῆς α'  
D14. On Prayer, 1 (H9\*; A-). Περὶ εὐχῆς α'  
D15. On Noble Birth, 1 (H11; A6). Περὶ εὐγενείας α'  
D16. On Pleasure, 1 (H15; A17a). Περὶ ἡδονῆς α'  
D17. Alexander, or About Colonies, 1 (H22\*; A-). Ἀλέξανδρος ἢ ὑπὲρ ἀποίκων α'  
D18. On Kingship, 1 (H16; A8\*). Περὶ βασιλείας α'  
D19. On Education, 1 (H18\*; A5). Περὶ παιδείας α'  
D20. On the Good, 3 (H20\*; A9\*). Περὶ τἀγαθοῦ α' β' γ'  
D21. From the Laws of Plato, 3 (H23\*; A18\*?). Τὰ ἐκ τῶν νόμων Πλάτωνος α' β' γ'  
D22. From the Republic, 2 (H-; A16). Τὰ ἐκ τῆς πολιτείας α' β'  
D23. On Economics, 1 (H17; A-). <Περὶ> οικονομίας α'  
D24. On Friendship, 1 (H24\*; A28\*). Περὶ φιλίας α'

Here are the first 24 titles on the list appended to the Vita Hesychii.

- H1. On justice, 4 (D1; A4). Περὶ δικαιοσύνης δ'  
 H2. On poets, 3 (D2; A7). Περὶ ποιητῶν α' β' γ'  
 H3. On philosophy, 3 (D3\*; A1b\*). Περὶ φιλοσοφίας δ'  
 H4. Statesman, 1 (D4\*; A-). Πολιτικὸν α'  
 H5. On statesman or Grylus, 3 (D5\*; A3\*?). Περὶ πολιτικῆς ἡ Γρυλὸς γ'  
 H6. Nerinthus, 1 (D6; A-). Νήρινθος α'  
 H7. On Wealth, 1 (D11; A-). Περὶ πλούτου α'  
 H8. Sophist, 1 (D7; A2). Σοφιστῆς α'  
 H9. On Prayer, 1 (D14\*; A-). Περὶ εὐχῆς α'  
 H10. Menexenus, 1 (D8; A-). Μενέξενος α'  
 H11. On Noble Birth, 1 (D15; A6\*). Περὶ εὐγενείας α'  
 H12. Eroticus, 1 (D9; A14\*). Ἐρωτικὸς α'  
 H13. On the Soul, 1 (D13; A-). Περὶ ψυχῆς α'  
**H14. Protrepticus, 1 (D12; A1a). Προτρεπτικὸς α'**  
 H15. On pleasure, 1 (D16; A17a\*). Περὶ ἡδονῆς α'  
 H16. On Kingship, 1 (D18; A8\*). Περὶ βασιλείας α'  
 H17. Economics, 1 (D23; A-). οἰκονομικὸν α'  
 H18. On Education or Teaching, 1 (D19\*; A5\*). Περὶ παιδείας ἢ παιδευτικὸν α'  
 H19. Of Syllogisms, 1 (D48; A-). Συλλογισμῶν α'  
 H20. On the Good, 1 (D20\*; A9\*). Περὶ τοῦ τἀγαθοῦ α'  
 H21. On principles, or On Nature, 1 (D41\*; A-). Περὶ ἀρχῶν ἢ περὶ φύσεως α'  
 H22. Alexander, or Concerning Colonies, 1 (D17\*; A-). Ἀλέξανδρος ἡ ὑπὲρ ἀποικῶν α'  
 H23. From Plato's Laws, 3 (D21\*; A18\*?). Τὰ ἐκ τῶν νόμων Πλάτωνος α' β' γ'  
 H24. On Friendship, 3 (D24\*; A28). Περὶ φιλίας α'

Although these lists frequently disagree as to the title and lengths of different works, Diogenes Laertius' title 12 is identical to title 14 in the list of Aristotle's works in the Vita Hesychii (edition in During, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition*, 83). Thus the earliest and the Greek evidence point to this title of Aristotle's work:

### *Protrepticus*, 1 book

### Προτρεπτικὸς α'

Further evidence, should it be required, is that this is also the exact title that we should expect from the direct references to the work in the commentators: ἐν τῷ Προτρεπτικῷ (Alexander of Aphrodisias *in Top.* 149.13; Olympiodorus *in Alciab.* 144.15); also: ἐν τῷ Προτρεπτικῷ ἐπιγεγραμμένῳ (Elias *Proleg.* 3.18); ἐν τινὶ Προτρεπτικῷ αὐτοῦ συγγράμματι (David *Proleg.* 9.2). Further, all cognate titles by other writers from the fourth century or earlier have the same title: Προτρεπτικός (Antisthenes DL 6.1, Athen. 656f; Aristippus DL 2.85; Demetrius of Phaleron DL 5.81; Chamileon Athen. 184d; Epicurus DL 10.28); cf. [Plato]: Κλειτοφῶν ἢ προτρεπτικός (DL 3.60); see Gigon, 283-4. The words τὸν Ἀριστοτέλους Προτρεπτικόν in the dedication attributed to Teles preserved in Stobaeus (45.22 H) are due to local grammatical context.

The only alternative indication of the title and number of books is in the list of Aristotle's works in Ptolemy el-Garib,<sup>1</sup> *Catalogue of Aristotle's Writings*, included in the biography of Aristotle written by Ibn Abi Usaibia (1203-1270) in his *Lives of the Physicians (Uyūn ul-Anbā fī abaqāt ul-Aibbā)* (pub. 1245-1246), ed. August Müller (Konisberg, 1884). Here is an English translation, Latin translation (by Mauricio Steinschneider in Rose, Berlin Aristotle volume 5, 1449-1473), [and Arabic text].

Work in which he exhorts to philosophy, 3 books.  
In Greek entitled *Protrepticus to Philosophy*.

*liber in quo exhortatus est ad philosophiam, tractatus III*  
<et nominatur graece wtulkis fslitukis>

The reason for the difference in number of books from the other lists probably has to do with a conflation of two titles: *Protrepticus, On Philosophy*. The latter is said to have been in 3 books (cf. title 3 of Diogenes Laertius). Thus a reconstruction has been offered by Moraux (*Listes*, 295) followed by Düring (*Biographical Tradition*, 222), and Gigon (Berlin v. 3, 39):

Προτρεπτικός  
Περὶ φιλοσοφίας γ

Such a reconstruction of Ptolemy's text that assumes there was confusion in the Arabic translation between the titles of the Προτρεπτικός and the Περὶ φιλοσοφίας γ (thus leaving the number of books for the *Protrepticus* unspecified but presumably 1). There is no reason to suspect on the basis of the later Arabic list that Aristotle's *Protrepticus* was a multi-book work. Contextual evidence underscores the point: it is not until the third century that there is any variation in the number of books and hence the syntax of protreptic titles: Προτρεπτικοί (Cleanthes DL 7.175; Persaios DL 7.36; Poseidonius DL 7.91 and 129); Προτρεπτικῶν β (Ariston of Chios DL 7.163); Προτρεπτικοί α β γ (Chrysippus SVF 3.69; 139; 753); Περὶ τοῦ προτρεπεσθαι (Chrysippus SVF 3.167; 761).

---

<sup>1</sup> The exact identity of Ptolemy, to whom the third list is attributed by its Arab source, has not been definitely established. It is possible that Düring is right in identifying him as "an Alexandrian neoplatonist, influenced by or belonging to Iamblichus' school (fourth century AD)". Elias called him "Ptolemy Philadelphus"; cf. Moraux, *Listes*, 289-309.