

Placita by Aetius

Post by “Bryan” of March 26, 2024 at 12:09 PM

Placita means "pleasing things," or "preferred things" but in a philosophical context, it means "tenets," "opinions," or "views." **Τὰ Ἀρέσκοντα** (Ta Areskonta) literally means "the preferred things" or "things that are pleasing." This matches the meaning of "Placita." The transition from "the pleasing things" to "tenets" or "opinions" makes sense in a philosophical context, where what pleases or satisfies intellectual criteria becomes a tenet or an accepted view. An expanded name may possibly have been (from Ps. Plutarch) **Περὶ τῶν ἀρεσκόντων φιλοσόφους φυσικῶν δογμάτων** "Regarding the physical theories preferred by philosophers." The authors in the Loeb edition say, "In all probability, therefore, the lost original work had the title Περὶ τῶν ἀρεσκόντων, On the Placita (the Latin equivalent is De placitis)."

I will add some related quotes from the authors of this Loeb edition:

"The original treatise is incompletely preserved and has to be reconstructed from evidence in two main authors (with further assistance from a third). Diels had produced his reconstruction in two columns and was thus unable to provide a single authoritative text. For this reason it was never translated into any modern language, with the exception of a double column Italian version (Torraca, I dossografi greci)."

"The name of the author of the compendium can be deduced from cross-references in Theodoret. Three times the bishop refers by name to the sources for the information he has on the doctrines of the philosopher, on one occasion also adding the titles of the works he used."

"No ancient author with the name Aetius is known who can plausibly be connected with the compendium. As for the date of the work, the latest time of the composition, i.e., its *tempus ante quem*, is furnished by Ps. Plutarch's Epitome, which from the evidence of the Christian apologist Athenagoras, must have been completed by about AD 150. For the earliest time of composition, i.e., its *tempus post quem*, we have to use the evidence of its content. The last philosopher to be mentioned is the Peripatetic philosopher Xenarchus of Seleucia, whose death occurred in the final years BC."

"The Placita shows evidence of the beginnings of the Middle Platonist movement, which is to be dated to the period 50 BC to AD 50"

"As for the place of composition, the work itself gives no clues of any kind. Alexandria has been suggested, but this is no more than an educated guess. All that can be said is that the author must have had access to a considerable body of information on the doctrines of ancient philosophers."

Placita (Loeb Classical Library) <https://a.co/d/hibjIE>

Aëtiana V: An Edition of the Reconstructed Text of the Placita With a Commentary and a Collection of Related Texts (Philosophia Antiqua, 153) (English, Greek and Latin Edition) <https://a.co/d/767F1uL>