Simplicius Encyclopedia Article

Simplicius

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Simplicius

c. 490-c. 560

Byzantine philosopher who wrote commentaries on several early mathematics texts. A student of Ammonius Hermiae (fl. c. 500), Simplicius later studied at the Academy in Athens under Damascius (480-c. 550), who was still serving as director in 529 when the emperor Justinian I (r. 527-565) closed down all pagan schools. Thereafter Simplicius, Damascius, and other scholars spent a brief period as scholars in the court of Persia's Khosrow I (r. 531-579) before returning to Athens. Simplicius's writings include commentaries on Aristotle's (384-322 B.C.) *De caelo* and *Physics,* as well as Euclid's (c. 325-c. 250 B.C.) *Elements.* All these works involve extensive references to the work of various mathematicians, and Simplicius serves as a source regarding long-lost works as well as the men who wrote them.