

Sporus of Nicaea Encyclopedia Article

Sporus of Nicaea

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c. 240-c. 300

Greek mathematician and teacher of Pappus (fl. c. A.D. 320), noted for his work on classic problems and his critiques of other mathematicians' approaches. Sporus developed his own solutions to the problems of doubling the cube and squaring the circle, and it was in the latter context that he produced the most notable among his critical comments regarding the work of others. It was his view—and numerous historians since have agreed—that the quadratrix of Hippias (c. 460-c. 400 B.C.) required the user to know the radius of the circle in question, thus assuming the knowledge it was supposedly designed to provide. In addition to his work as a mathematician, Sporus wrote on the Sun and the comets.