

Aristotle as an Historian of Science

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Abstract

The aim of this project is to investigate the complex relation Aristotle had with his predecessors in the area of natural science, and chiefly with the Presocratic philosophers. Even though his surviving works do not have the form of historical writings, he frequently refers to his predecessors. References of this kind form an important element of his scientific research methodology. The question is whether they amount to history, whether or not they have a historical purpose. I employ Michael Frede's taxonomy of different practices and approaches that are used in the history of philosophy to understand in what sense or senses Aristotle was in fact an historian of science and also to display his key role in the subsequent development of the practices of the history of science.