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W. K. C. Guthrie

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A HISTORY OF
GREEK PHILOSOPHY

VOLUME VI

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A HISTORY OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY

BY
W. K. C. GUTHRIE

VOLUME VI
ARISTOTLE
AN ENCOUNTER



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The device embossed on the front cover of the hard-back edition is a head of Aristotle from the Kunsthistorische Museum, Vienna (the gift of Archbishop V. E. Milde, 1846)

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PREFACE

Aristotle that hath an oare in every water, and medleth with all things.

Montaigne tr. Florio

I have chosen the sub-title of this volume for two main reasons. First, it is not an encyclopaedic 'enquire within' for any information about Aristotle. For one thing, much of his original contribution to philosophy took the form of criticism of his predecessors, and so his name will be found frequently in the indexes to previous volumes; for example his thoughts on plurality and continuity, still of great value, occur largely in his criticism of the Eleatics Parmenides, Zeno and Melissus, and so belong to vol. II, in which his name figures largely; his views on infinity as potentially but not actually possible in his criticism of Democritus in *Phys.* 3, the difference between infinite in divisibility and infinite in extent in his remarks on Zeno, both in vol. II, and his views on induction and definition, fully treated here in vol. VI, find more than a mention in his discussion of the contribution of Socrates (vol. III, 426ff. = *Socr.*, 106ff.), and *Rhet.* 1.10 and 1.15 will also be found in vol. III (pp. 123ff.). Secondly, on re-reading what I have written I find it intensely personal. I have always admired Aristotle as a thinker and particularly as a pupil and critic of Plato. To me he is, as my first pages make clear, both the last of the ancient and the first of the modern philosophers. The Hellenistic Age which followed, also known, significantly, as the post-Aristotelian, did not produce another Aristotle, and represents, philosophically speaking, a falling-off from him. I hope that this personal outlook does not seem too misplaced in what purports to be a history, but as I may have said in a previous preface, any history of philosophy is bound to be to some extent personal. Although I would not endorse everything of Harold Laski's, I am with him when he says, 'I am pretty sure that every philosophy is really no more than the brilliant hypostatization of an individual temperament.'

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Moreover, such an encyclopaedic work has been supplied by Professor Düring, with his *Aristoteles*. Professor Düring is as fluent in German as he is in English or his native Swedish. He is, besides, an eminently fair-minded man, and after he had given us *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* and his edition of the fragments of the *Protrepticus* in English it was obviously the turn of the Germans, in whose language, unfortunately for readers of English only, *Aristoteles* appeared. In the body of a work such as the present, one tends to mention a book only to argue with it, so I take this opportunity of expressing the great debt which I owe to this work, especially in leading me to passages in Aristotle which I might otherwise have overlooked. To quote Marrou's review: 'To have planned a work on this scale was a daring ambition, to have brought it to a successful completion is a magnificent and heroic achievement.' Nevertheless, as G. E. R. Lloyd has also said in a review, 'this is not an easy book to read or use, and it is hardly one to recommend to beginners'. In particular, the lack of an adequate and comprehensive index is to be regretted.

This reminds me that a reviewer of an earlier volume in the present series feared that it may have fallen between two stools, being too learned for the beginner and too elementary for the expert. This cheered me, for it meant that I was probably hitting the target primarily aimed at, namely the student, who is surely half-way between the two. Although I would be the last to defend the breadth of my reading in modern philosophy, this also accounts for my quoting other philosophers, 'even Descartes' as another reviewer complained, from general introductions to philosophy such as are likely to be in a student's library. Another class which, to judge from my correspondence, has appreciated the work has been that of colleagues in related, but different, especially literary, disciplines. But I must not fall into the trap, which lies baited for writers of multi-volume works, of reviewing my reviewers; they have in any case been all too kind.

It will be assumed in what follows that the bulk of the writings which have come down to us as Aristotle's are genuinely Aristotelian. For the extreme views on either side see those of P. Gohlke and J. Zürcher (summarized by P. Moraux in *Aristoteles in der neueren Forschung*, 69f.). Zürcher's mountain of proof falls like a house of

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Preface

cards, says Moraux. He has been followed now by F. Grayeff (see the Bibliography).

Translations, from both ancient and modern authors, are my own unless otherwise stated. I hope it is excusable to put translated quotations from foreign authors between quote-marks.

To end on a still more personal note, I suffered a stroke in the summer of 1979. My work on volume VI was by that time virtually complete but I have been unable to give the *Politics* and the *Poetics* the treatment I would have hoped to had I been well. The appearance of any further volumes has been made impossible. That will be a pity, as I had hoped to link up with the Neoplatonists and the beginnings of Medieval and Christian philosophy. It is, however, of lesser importance both for the reason I have given and because that period has recently received considerable attention from English-language scholars.

This volume naturally owes more than the others to other people. My thanks are due in the first place to Cambridge University Press for publishing this book and its predecessors. Proofs have been read by Mrs Ann Buttrey and the bibliography and index compiled by Mrs Catherine Osborne. Dr G. E. R. Lloyd has read several chapters of the book in typescript and has made useful suggestions. Thanks are also owed to my wife, who has given me throughout 'supportive background' and whose knowledge of Greek has proved invaluable, and to Miss B. M. Gorse, who as before has done my typing and has shown herself as much an old friend to us both as a typist.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Most works cited in abbreviated form in the text will be easily recognizable under the author's or editor's name in the bibliography. It may be however helpful to list the following:

ARISTOTLE'S WORKS

<i>An. Post.</i>	<i>Posterior Analytics</i>
<i>An. Pr.</i>	<i>Prior Analytics</i>
<i>Ath. Resp.</i>	<i>Constitution of Athens</i>
<i>Cael.</i>	<i>De caelo</i>
<i>Catt.</i>	<i>Categories</i>
<i>De an.</i>	<i>De anima</i>
<i>De int.</i>	<i>De interpretatione</i>
<i>De phil.</i>	<i>De philosophia</i>
<i>De resp.</i>	<i>De respiratione</i>
<i>Div. per somn.</i>	<i>De divinatione per somnum</i>
<i>EN</i>	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
<i>Eud.</i>	<i>Eudemus</i>
<i>GA</i>	<i>De generatione animalium</i>
<i>GC</i>	<i>De generatione et corruptione</i>
<i>HA</i>	<i>Historia animalium</i>
<i>IA</i>	<i>De incessu animalium</i>
<i>Insomn.</i>	<i>De insomniis</i>
<i>Iuv.</i>	<i>De iuventute</i>
<i>MA</i>	<i>De motu animalium</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Magna Moralia</i>
<i>Mem.</i>	<i>De memoria</i>
<i>Met.</i>	<i>Metaphysics</i>
<i>Meteor.</i>	<i>Meteorologica</i>
<i>PA</i>	<i>De partibus animalium</i>

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<i>Phys.</i>	<i>Physics</i>
<i>Poet.</i>	<i>Poetics</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politics</i>
<i>Protr.</i>	<i>Protrepticus</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Rhetoric</i>
<i>SE</i>	<i>Sophistici Elenchi</i>
<i>Somn.</i>	<i>De somno et vigilia</i>
<i>Top.</i>	<i>Topics</i>

PERIODICALS

<i>AGPh</i>	<i>Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie</i>
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Classical Review</i>
<i>IPQ</i>	<i>International Philosophical Quarterly</i>
<i>JHI</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
<i>JHP</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Philosophy</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>PAS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society</i>
<i>PCPS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>PR</i>	<i>Philosophical Review</i>
<i>Philol.</i>	<i>Philologus</i>
<i>Phron.</i>	<i>Phronesis</i>
<i>PQ</i>	<i>Philosophical Quarterly</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>YCS</i>	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>

OTHER WORKS

(Full particulars are in the bibliography)

<i>AABT</i>	I. Düring, <i>Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition</i>
<i>ACPA</i>	H. Cherniss, <i>Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy</i>

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DK	Diels–Kranz, <i>Die Fragmenter der Vorsokratiker</i>
D.L.	Diogenes Laertius
RE	<i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , ed. Wissowa, Kroll <i>et al.</i>
<i>Symp. Ar. I</i>	<i>Aristotle and Plato in the mid-fourth century</i> . Proceedings of the first Symposium Aristotelicum
<i>Symp. Ar. II</i>	<i>Aristote et les problèmes de méthode</i> . Proceedings of the second Symposium Aristotelicum
<i>Symp. Ar. III</i>	<i>Aristotle on Dialectic</i> . Proceedings of the third Symposium Aristotelicum
<i>Symp. Ar. VII</i>	<i>Aristotle on mind and the senses</i> . Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium Aristotelicum

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OBITER DICTA

ἐνὸς ἀτόπου δοθέντος τᾶλλα συμβαίνει. τοῦτο δ' οὐδὲν χαλεπὸν.

Phys. I, 185a11

One absurdity having been granted, the rest follows. Nothing difficult about that.

διὸ καὶ ὁ φιλόμυθος φιλόσοφος πῶς ἐστι. ὁ γὰρ μῦθος συγκεῖται ἐκ θαυμασίων.

Met. A, 982b18

Therefore even the lover of myth is in a sense a philosopher; for myth is composed of wonders.

ἀνάγκη δὴ στῆναι.

Met. Λ, 1070a4

One must stop somewhere.

Τὸ διορίζειν γὰρ οὐκ ἔστι τῶν πολλῶν.

EN 1172b3

To make clear distinctions is not characteristic of most men.

ἃ γὰρ δεῖ μαθόντας ποιεῖν, ταῦτα ποιοῦντες μαθάνομεν.

EN 1103a32–34 and *Met* Θ, 1049b29–32

What we must learn before we can do, we learn by doing.

σχέδον δ' οἱ πλείστοι φαῦλοι κριταὶ πρὸς τῶν οἰκείων.

Pol. 3, 1280a15

Most men are bad judges in their own case.

πᾶν γὰρ ἀσαφὲς τὸ κατὰ μεταφορὰν λεγόμενον.

Top. 139b34

Everything said metaphorically is unclear.

δεῖ μνησθῆναι ἄνθρωπον ὄντα οὐ μόνον τὸν εὐτυχοῦντα ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν ἀποδεικνύντα.

Vita M. (*AABT*, 103f., from *On the Good*)

To remember that one is but a man befits not only the fortunate but also the logician.