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This book challenges several widespread views concerning Aristotle's methods and practices of scientific and philosophical research. Where does the boundary between the animal and the plant kingdom come? How can supposed cases of spontaneous generation and metamorphosis be explained? What do the processes of reproduction, growth and digestion have in common that allows Aristotle to apply his theory of 'concoction' to each? What contributions to astronomical theory does Aristotle hope to make? Does he claim to apply precisely the same explanatory schema to every mode of sense-perception? How does he use his notion of 'nature' in his politics? Does he have unified concepts of analogy, of metaphor, of demonstration? Professor Lloyd explores generally unrecognised tensions between Aristotle's deeply held *a priori* convictions and his remarkable empirical honesty in the face of complexities in the data or perceived difficult or exceptional cases. The picture that emerges of Aristotle's actual engagement in scientific research and of his own reflections on that research is substantially more complex than is usually allowed.

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Aristotelian explorations

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Preface

This book originates in lectures and seminars that I have given over the last eight years, in Cambridge, Oxford, Paris, Boston and Princeton. Two of the chapters (the first and the second) have been published before in English and one (chapter 9) in French. Their provenance, and my policies for revising them here, are explained in notes to the chapters concerned. Other studies stem from presentations to Dr David Charles' workshop in Oxford in May 1994 (chapter 3), to a Laurence reading week in Cambridge in June 1994 (chapter 8), to a conference organised by Professor Barbara Cassin in Paris in October of the same year (chapter 5), or derive from my lecture courses and seminars in Cambridge over the last four years. Since they all deal with the broad problem of the interactions between Aristotle's *theories* of scientific and philosophical research and his actual *practices* in a variety of domains, I have thought it worthwhile to collect and revise them for publication as a set of studies devoted to that subject.

My thanks go in the first instance to my lecture and seminar audiences, to all those who have participated in the discussion on the various occasions when this material has been presented. I have corresponded on several controversial questions with a number of scholars who have generously offered helpful comments on the issues, and especially with Professors Allan Gotthelf, Wolfgang Kullmann, Jim Lennox and Pierre Pellegrin. Finally I have been most fortunate in receiving detailed criticisms of a draft of the entire text from both Professor Myles Burnyeat and Dr David Charles. This has caused me to qualify, elaborate, and, I trust, improve, my interpretation in innumerable places. None of those I have mentioned should be presumed to agree with many, or indeed any, of the points of view here expressed. But I must record my gratitude to them all for the help they have given me in clarifying my arguments on complex and difficult questions.