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978-0-521-87650-6 - Aristotelianism in the First Century Bce: Xenarchus of Seleucia

Andrea Falcon

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FIRST CENTURY BCE

This book is a full study of the remaining evidence for Xenarchus of Seleucia, one of the earliest interpreters of Aristotle. Andrea Falcon places the evidence in its context, the revival of interest in Aristotle's philosophy that took place in the first century BCE. Xenarchus is often presented as a rebel, challenging Aristotle and the Aristotelian tradition. Falcon argues that there is more to Xenarchus and his philosophical activity than an opposition to Aristotle; he was a creative philosopher, and his views are best understood as an attempt to revise and update Aristotle's philosophy. By looking at how Xenarchus negotiated different aspects of Aristotle's philosophy, this book highlights elements of rupture as well as strands of continuity within the Aristotelian tradition.

ANDREA FALCON is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Concordia University, Montreal. He is the author of *Aristotle and the Science of Nature: Unity without Uniformity* (Cambridge 2005) and *Corpi e movimenti: il De caelo di Aristotele e la sua tradizione nel mondo antico* (Naples 2001).

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*In memory of Bob Sharples,
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Aristotle's physics is one of the most astonishing systems human reason has ever built; it gave answers to all the questions the ancients had about the heavens and their motions, the elements and their transformations, the most precise and complete answers offered up until then, and all these answers were logically organized in a theory compared to which all prior doctrines seemed to be mere beginnings. That such a system exercised on minds the powerful seduction that most of the Arabic or Christian philosophers experienced in the Middle Ages, is easy to understand. In contrast, it is surprising to learn that the immediate successors of Aristotle proved themselves to be, in general, rebellious to this influence.

(Pierre Duhem, *Le Système du monde*, vol. 1, p. 242, my translation)

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Acknowledgments

This book carries forward the investigation I conducted in *Aristotle and the Science of Nature: Unity without Uniformity* (Cambridge 2005). While working on it, it became clear to me that Aristotle's physics is both exceptional and anomalous in the context of ancient physics; at that point, the decision to study the reception of this physics in the Peripatetic tradition was easy to take. And when I discovered that this reception was at best mixed, what it meant to be a Peripatetic philosopher in antiquity became an interesting and urgent question. This study attempts to answer that question. I am throughout indebted to the work of Bob Sharples on the Peripatetic tradition, which has been a model of scholarship as well as an invaluable source of information.

I finished the book while I was away from teaching in the Fall of 2009. I thank Concordia University, Montreal, for granting me a sabbatical leave to complete my task. The bulk of the book was written while I was a member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton in the Winter and Spring of 2008. During that period Heinrich von Staden was a wonderful mentor, always generous in advice and suggestions. Special thanks go to Alan Bowen and Bob Todd, who were generous in reading early drafts of this book. Their extensive comments have saved me from many mistakes. I am also grateful to the anonymous reader for Cambridge University Press, whose suggestions on the structure of the book were very helpful.

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For full titles of ancient works, see the Index of passages. Editions and fragment collections are abbreviated as follows:

Aëtius	Aëtius, <i>Placita</i> , as reported in H. Diels, <i>Doxographi graeci</i> (Berlin 1879).
Arrighetti, <i>Epicuro</i>	G. Arrighetti, <i>Epicuro: Opere</i> (Turin 1960).
Des Places, <i>Atticus</i>	É. Des Places, <i>Atticus: Fragments</i> (Paris 1977).
Deuse, <i>Theodoros</i>	W. Deuse, <i>Theodoros von Asine: Sammlung der Testimonien und Kommentar</i> (Wiesbaden 1973).
DK	H. Diels, W. Kranz, <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> (Berlin 1951 ⁶).
Döring	K. Döring, <i>Die Megariker: Kommentierte Sammlung der Testimonien</i> (Amsterdam 1972).
<i>Dox. gr.</i>	H. Diels, <i>Doxographi graeci</i> (Berlin 1879).
Edelstein–Kidd, <i>Posidonius</i>	L. Edelstein, I. Kidd, <i>Posidonius: Fragments</i> (Cambridge 1972).
FHS&G	W. W. Fortenbaugh, P. M. Huby, R. W. Sharples, D. Gutas, <i>Theophrastus of Eresus: Sources for his Life, Writings, Thought, and Influence</i> (Leiden/New York/Cologne 1993).
Giannantoni	G. Giannantoni, <i>Socratis et Socraticorum reliquiae</i> (Naples 1990).

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Heinze, <i>Xenocrates</i>	R. Heinze, <i>Xenocrates: Darstellung der Lehre und Sammlung der Fragmente</i> (Leipzig 1892).
Isnardi Parente, <i>Senocrate</i>	M. Isnardi Parente, <i>Senocrate-Ermodoro: frammenti</i> (Naples 1982).
LS	A. A. Long, D. N. Sedley, <i>The Hellenistic Philosophers</i> (Cambridge 1987).
Philoponus, <i>Contra Aristotelem</i>	Ch. Wildberg, <i>John Philoponus: On Aristotle on the Eternity of the World</i> (London 1987).
SVF	H. von Arnim, <i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> (Leipzig 1903–1905).
Usener, <i>Epicurea</i>	H. Usener, <i>Epicurea</i> (Leipzig 1887).
Wehrli, <i>Dikaiarchos</i>	F. Wehrli, <i>Die Schule des Aristoteles</i> , vol. I: <i>Dikaiarchos</i> . 2nd edn. (Basel/Stuttgart, 1967).
Wehrli, <i>Herakleides</i>	F. Wehrli, <i>Die Schule des Aristoteles</i> , vol. VII: <i>Herakleides Pontikos</i> . 2nd edn. (Basel/Stuttgart, 1969).
Wehrli, <i>Straton</i>	F. Wehrli, <i>Die Schule des Aristoteles</i> , vol. V: <i>Straton von Lampsakos</i> . 2nd edn. (Basel/Stuttgart, 1969).

CONVENTIONS

[Square brackets] indicate that the enclosed words are added to amplify the translation. When the author's name appears in [square brackets], the work is not regarded as genuine. Words in <angle brackets> are conjectures relating to the Greek text.