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Aristotle

last edited by  Danielle Weber 3 years, 11 months ago
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Aristotle (384BC–322BC)

A Brief Timeline of Aristotle's Life:

- 384 BC-- Born in Stagira (small town in Northern Greece and very close to Macedonia). His father was the doctor and friend to the King of Macedonia
- 367 BC-- Moved to Athens to study at Plato's Academy. Aristotle stayed in Athens for the next twenty years, where he not only was a student of philosophy and science, but also taught and wrote. Additionally, Aristotle debated and discussed with other intellectuals ethics, politics, psychology, metaphysics and epistemology, and logic.
- 347 BC-- Leaves Athens for Assos after Plato dies. The reason for his relocation is unclear. Some believe that he left because of his political ties with Macedonia and the rising hatred for Macedonia in Athens, which caused him to leave. Other scholars suggest that he disagreed with the views of Plato's replacement at the Academy. In the next few years Aristotle also married a noble woman from Assos and they had a daughter. He also continued to debate with intellectuals in his new home
- 344 BC-- Leaves Assos after his wife's extended family is dethroned and moves to Mytilene where he also begins to teach one of his most famous pupils: Theophrastus.
- 343 BC-- Summoned by the King of Macedonia to tutor is 13 year old son Alexander (soon to be the great) because of his family's connections with King Philip
- 335 BC-- Moves back to Athens after Philip dies and Alexander now reigns. He establishes his school [Aristotle's Lyceum](#). His wife dies and he remarries and fathers a son. He also works to build an extensive library at his school, which of course included his own manuscripts.
- 323 BC-- Following his conquests to Egypt, Syria, Persia, and India, Alexander dies. Macedonian politics and the turn of events, create anti-Macedonian sentiments throughout Athens, causing Aristotle to leave his school to Theophrastus and flee the city.
- 322 BC-- Aristotle dies in Chalcis

Aristotle's Major Works:

*The only thing that scholars agree on is that we do not have all of Aristotle's texts. The percentage varies from only one third to one fifth of his works surviving today.

Organon (tool) Works: category theory, doctrine of propositions, logic and argumentation, sturcutre of scientific theory, and basic principles of epistemology

1. Categories
2. On Interpretation
3. Prior Analytics
4. Posterior Analytics
5. Topics

Theoretical Sciences:

1. Metaphysics, or First Philosophy

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Practical Science:

1. Nicomachean Ethics
2. Eudemian Ethics
3. Magna Moralia
4. Politics

Productive Science:

1. On Rhetoric
2. Poetics

- Students of Aristotle must realize that during this time there was a difference between esoteric and exoteric writing. During this time texts that were well crafted and clear were meant for circulation and therefore exoteric. Aristotle's surviving works on the other hand are esoteric and thought to be lecture notes or works in progress. This also explains for the numerous revisions and/or contradictions throughout his corpus.

Brief Summary of *On Rhetoric*:

In the introductory chapters of Book I, Aristotle claims that Rhetoric is the counterpart to the dialectical method. It is a tool that the speaker can use when attempting to persuade an audience. The techniques the rhetor uses can be applied to any general topic, making it an applicable skill in all disciplines. He states that there are three forms of persuasion: a. the speaker's trustworthiness (ethos), the logical aspects of the argument (logos), and the emotional response the audience has to the speaker (pathos). There are three types of argument based on what and if the audience is "judging." A judicial argument looks for judgement on past actions and the speaker looks for justice as the end result. A deliberative argument looks for judgement on future actions in hopes for the improvement of the audience's present environment. An epideictic rhetoric does not look for judgement, but is just made in order to praise or blame someone; the audience listens to a speech but is not meant to take action.

Persuasive forms are either non-artistic (i.e. direct evidence), and some examples are facts, witnesses, documents. The artistic form is a logical argument that the speaker invents and can be either inductive or deductive. Inductive arguments are paradigms; the speaker draws parallels between a previous situation to the present issue at hand. Deductive arguments are what Aristotle calls enthymemes, which is a conclusion from a maxim (stated/implied premise). These enthymemes originate from other disciplines, specifically politics and ethics.

Aristotle continues on in Book II to discuss different emotions, such as calmness, enmity, fear, shame, etc. and characteristics, old, rich, powerful, etc. Because the rhetor must be aware of who his audience is in order to tweak his argument and examples, Aristotle gives a myriad of examples and descriptions to help the speaker navigate the population. The final chapters of Book II he discusses various forms of argument, including enthymemes, common topics, and maxims. The final book of *On Rhetoric* addresses Delivery, Style, and Arrangement. Topics that he touches on are word choices, the synthesis of sentences, figurative language, appropriateness, and the arrangement of the ideas

Sources Consulted:

Aristotle. *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. Ed. George A. Kennedy. New York: Oxford UP, 2007. Print.

Barnes, Johnathon, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*. New York: Cambridge UP,

1995. Print.

Shields, Christopher. *Aristotle*. New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.

Vella, John A. *Aristotle: A Guide for the Perplexed*. New York: Continuum, 2008. Print.

 Comments (5)



[Danielle Weber](#) said

at 7:19 am on Nov 17, 2011

I'm not done yet... just FYI



[Dionne Blasingame](#) said

at 7:53 am on Nov 17, 2011

I love the timeline addition. It helps to put things in perspective (historically).



[Danielle Weber](#) said

at 6:23 pm on Nov 17, 2011

I totally agree-- it was helpful also to read about and really understand why he kept leaving Athens and coming back. Without knowing his family's background, it didn't really make sense to me.



[Marissa Pierce](#) said

at 8:03 am on Nov 17, 2011

I agree with Dionne, the timeline is really helpful. I also like the lists - it helps to put the pertinent information in a form that allows readers to get a sense of his areas of study easily.



[bwang8@student.gsu.edu](#) said

at 7:58 pm on Nov 17, 2011

You are definitely good at summary! Thanks for the timeline, the sorted works and the summary. I checked my knowledge on this book with your summary.

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