



Aristotle's Empiricism: Experience and Mechanics in the 4th Century B.C.

Jean De Groot

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In *Aristotle's Empiricism*, Jean De Groot argues that an important part of Aristotle's natural philosophy has remained largely unexplored and shows that much of Aristotle's analysis of natural movement is influenced by the logic and concepts of mathematical mechanics that emerged from late Pythagorean thought. De Groot draws upon the pseudo-Aristotelian *Physical Problems* XVI to reconstruct the context of mechanics in Aristotle's time and to trace the development of kinematic thinking from Archytas to the Aristotelian *Mechanics*. She shows the influence of kinematic thinking on Aristotle's concept of power or potentiality, which she sees as having a physicalistic meaning originating in the problem of movement.

De Groot identifies the source of early mechanical knowledge in kinesthetic awareness of mechanical advantage, showing the relation of Aristotle's empiricism to more ancient experience. The book sheds light on the classical Greek understanding of imitation and device, as it questions both the claim that Aristotle's natural philosophy codifies opinions held by convention and the view that the cogency of his scientific ideas depends on metaphysics.

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