

ARISTOTLE'S "HISTORY OF... MARINE INVERTEBRATES"VOULTSIADOU E.¹ & VAFIDIS D.²

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Aristotle has been considered as "father of zoological classification" and "the first marine biologist". A considerable part of his zoological work was devoted to marine animals and is believed to have been based on his personal research activity during his stay in Lesbos and Asia Minor. The purpose of the present work was to enlighten Aristotle's contribution to the knowledge of marine invertebrates. His works *History of animals*, *Parts of animals*, *Movement of animals*, *Progression of animals*, and *Generation of animals*, were searched for records of marine invertebrates. Out of approximately 200 marine animal names encountered, 85 names or descriptive items were found to belong to modern invertebrates, the remaining being fishes, cetaceans and reptiles. According to Aristotle, the animals known today as marine invertebrates were *άναιμα*, (=animals without blood) and were classified by him into three *μέγιστα γένη* (=major genera): i. *Μαλάκια* identified as Cephalopoda; ii. *Μαλακόστρακα* identified mostly as Decapoda Crustacea; iii. *Οστρακόδερμα*, including Bivalvia, Gastropoda and generally animals bearing a hard exoskeleton such as Echinoidea, Asteroidea and Ascidiacea. Several bloodless marine animals, however, such as sponges and sea anemones, were not included in the three above groups. On the basis of his descriptions, sometimes very detailed and accurate, almost all names were assigned to 81 recent taxa, 7 for *Μαλάκια*, 21 for *Μαλακόστρακα*, 37 for *Οστρακόδερμα*, and 16 for other *άναιμα*. Approximately 60 % of the identified taxa were at the species level, and the remaining higher taxa were mostly at the class category. Besides the data on marine invertebrate diversity of the Aegean 2300 years ago, Aristotle's zoological works, gives valuable information on their structure and function, as well as on their habitat, symbiotic relationships and behavior, deserving a thorough study by specialists.