

Aristotle and the six-pack, or: All flesh and no muscle?

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Flesh is, Aristotle says, pretty much the body of animals. But what is flesh? Clearly one aspect of flesh is that it functions in touch; flesh is sensitive. This covers (the) one essential feature of all animals. Locomotion is another feature which belongs to most, if not all, animals. But flesh, apparently, plays no role in explaining locomotion, unlike, for example, sinews and bones. Now, Aristotle nowhere uses the term *mus* muscle. This can be seen as a radical piece of economy as against the texts in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, which identified, for example, the heart as a large and powerful muscle; other Greeks also show ample knowledge of (and fascination with) muscles. In this paper I look at some explanations for Aristotle's view of flesh, in the context of his explanation of animal locomotion; I conclude that this is one economy too many for the health of his theory of locomotion.