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Historical Epistemology

Although the term 'historical epistemology' has been used to indicate more than one cluster of research projects, it was originally coined by Dominique Lecourt as a label for the French philosophical tradition associated with Gaston Bachelard and Georges Canguilhem. I shall discuss historical epistemology in this original sense. I shall argue that the philosophical significance of historical epistemology would be even greater if historians of philosophy, first, properly distinguished Bachelard's and Canguilhem's respective philosophies, and, second, considered often neglected historical epistemologists, including Léon Brunschvicg, Émile Meyerson, Hélène Metzger, Abel Rey and Lucien Lévy-Bruhl. I shall also argue that historical epistemology offers interesting historiographical models to the historically-minded historian of philosophy.