

Pliny the Elder Encyclopedia Article

Pliny the Elder

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Pliny the Elder

23-79

Roman scholar and writer who produced a comprehensive encyclopedia of zoology and botany, as well as astronomy, geography, and other topics. In the encyclopedia, *Historia Naturalis* (Natural History), Pliny compiled information gathered from some 2,000 written sources. In many cases, *Historia Naturalis* is the only remaining record of the works of ancient scholars. The 37-volume encyclopedia became a primary educational reference and remained in high regard until the fifteenth century, when critics determined that the books were rife with errors. It is now seen as an important literary work, but one that has little scientific merit.