EXPLORATIONS IN ANCIENT AND MODERN PHILOSOPHY

M. F. Burnyeat taught for fourteen years in the Philosophy Department of University College London, and then for eighteen years in the Classics Faculty at Cambridge, twelve of them as the Laurence Professor of Ancient Philosophy, before migrating to Oxford in 1996 to become a Senior Research Fellow in Philosophy at All Souls College. The studies, articles and reviews collected in these two volumes of Explorations in Ancient and Modern Philosophy were all written, and all but two published, before that decisive change.

Whether designed for a scholarly audience or for a wider public, they range from the Presocratics to Augustine, from Descartes and Bishop Berkeley to Wittgenstein and G. E. Moore. Their subject-matter falls under four main headings: ‘Logic and Dialectic’ and ‘Scepticism Ancient and Modern’, which make up the first volume with ‘Knowledge’ and ‘Philosophy and the Good Life’ contained in this, the second volume. The title ‘Explorations’ well expresses Burnyeat’s ability to discover new aspects of familiar texts, new ways of solving old problems. In his hands the history of philosophy becomes itself a philosophical activity.

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EXPLORATIONS IN ANCIENT AND MODERN PHILOSOPHY

VOLUME II

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Part II Philosophy and the Good Life

M. F. BURNYEAT
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Preface

‘If a philosophical argument is worth attention, so is its history’. The first words of this two-volume collection make an apt beginning to the whole. Philosophy, argument and history are what readers will find in the sequel. The proportions vary: sometimes one ingredient will predominate, sometimes another. But each chapter, long or short, whether written for a professional audience or for a more general readership, contains all three.

The collection reprints just about every publication of mine that I think still worth reading from two places and periods where I have taught: the Philosophy Department at University College London (1964–78) and the Faculty of Classics, Cambridge University (1978–96). Volume II closes with ‘First Words’, the Valedictory Lecture (delivered on 31 May 1996), with which I left Cambridge and teaching for a quite different existence at All Souls College, Oxford. I remain deeply grateful to my colleagues and friends in London and Cambridge for all the philosophy, argument and history we shared together in those most companionable years.

I am most grateful to Laura Macy for her careful and precise work on the index.

To Pauline Hire and Jeremy Mynott of the Cambridge University Press I owe thanks for their support and patience through the years during which the project was delayed – for some while even mislaid – by my preoccupation with other projects made possible by the freedom I enjoyed at All Souls. It is Pauline who compiled the consolidated bibliographies. Less visible is the finicky work she undertook, page after page, of translating US spelling conventions back into English and standardising the reference conventions of so many different publishers. Such accuracy and consistency sustained over so many pages is a gift to marvel at as well as to give thanks for.

To Jeremy I am grateful for ensuring that the Press remained committed to the project even at times when I was not making the progress expected. His tactful insistence on my corresponding commitment has achieved its goal at last.

MFB
Acknowledgements

The chapters in this book, with the exception of chapter 12 which is previously unpublished, first appeared in the following publications, and we are grateful for permission to reproduce them.

3 ‘The philosophical sense of Theaetetus’ mathematics’: *Isis* 69 (1978) 489–511
4 ‘Plato on the grammar of perceiving’: *Classical Quarterly* NS 26 (1976) 29–51
5 ‘Socrates and the jury: paradoxes in Plato’s distinction between knowledge and true belief’: *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 54 (1980) 173–91
Acknowledgements

14 ‘Did the ancient Greeks have the concept of human rights?’: Polis 13 (1994) 1–11

Note: To give help in following up references, the original pagination of the reprinted articles is indicated at the top of each page on the inner margin, and the original page divisions are marked in the course of the text by a pair of vertical lines, ∥.
Abbreviations

SVF  *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, Leipzig 1903–24

Classical references are abbreviated according to *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* 3rd edn, with the exception of the following:

M  Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians*

P  Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*