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0521801540 - Francis Bacon and the Transformation of Early-Modern Philosophy

Stephen Gaukroger

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Francis Bacon and the Transformation of Early-Modern Philosophy

This ambitious and important book provides the first truly general account of Francis Bacon as a philosopher. It describes how Bacon transformed the values that had underpinned philosophical culture since antiquity by rejecting the traditional idea of a philosopher as someone engaged in contemplation of the cosmos.

The book explores in detail how and why Bacon attempted to transform the largely esoteric discipline of natural philosophy into a public practice through a program in which practical science provided a model that inspired many from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. Stephen Gaukroger shows that we shall not understand Bacon unless we understand that a key component of his program for the reform of natural philosophy was the creation of a new philosophical persona: a natural philosopher shaped through submission to the dictates of Baconian method. Thus, we begin to glimpse how the scientific paradigm for cognitive inquiry in our own culture was formed.

This book will be recognised as a major contribution to Baconian scholarship of special interest to historians of early-modern philosophy, science, and ideas.

Author of several important books including an intellectual biography of Descartes (1995), Stephen Gaukroger is Professor of History of Philosophy and History of Science at the University of Sydney.

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STEPHEN GAUKROGER

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*For
Helen, Cressida, and Hugh*

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Acknowledgments

I have built up some debts in the course of writing this book. In spite of the fact that the Australian tertiary system is, like many other university systems in the Anglophone world, in a state of contraction and crisis, and in spite of a parochiality prevalent in Anglophone philosophy which constrains many of its practitioners to see present problems as the only guide to what is of value in the past, work on the book has been undertaken under near ideal conditions. In particular, the Australian Research Council has funded regular relief from teaching, as well as visits to European libraries. I have presented material from the book at conferences or seminars in Auckland, Berlin, Canberra, Hong Kong, Liège, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, and Sydney over the past five years, and I am grateful to participants at these sessions for some probing questions. I am particularly indebted to Conal Condren for enthusiastically pointing out to me what was right with an earlier draft of the book, to Mordechai Feingold for diplomatically pointing out what was wrong with it, and to two erudite anonymous referees. I am also grateful for conversations and correspondence with many people who have helped the book along, especially Peter Anstey, Constance Blackwell, Emily Booth, Floris Cohen, Beatriz Domingues, Marta Fattori, Peter Harrison, Rod Home, Ian Hunter, Helen Irving, Timo Kaitaro, Jamie Kassler, Julian Martin, Guillermo Ranea, Graham Rees, Tim Reiss, John Schuster, Michael Shortland, and John Sutton.

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References to Bacon's works

The *The Works of Francis Bacon* appeared between 1857 and 1861, edited by James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath, in seven volumes, and the *Letters and Life of Francis Bacon* (also called the *Works*, vols. 8–14) appeared between 1861 and 1874, edited by James Spedding, also in seven volumes. These London editions – not to be confused with the American edition of Spedding, which omits the *Life and Letters* but which nevertheless takes up fifteen volumes – are now available complete in a fourteen-volume facsimile reprint (Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt, 1989), in which the *Works* proper appear as volumes 1–7 and the *Letters* as volumes 8–14.

I refer to this edition collectively as *Works*, and the volumes consecutively as volumes 1–14. I preface the reference with the title (or abbreviated title) of the work, and then give the location in the fourteen-volume works. For example: *Nov. Org.* II xxiii: *Works* i. 269/iv. 156 refers to *Novum Organum*, Book 2, section 23, original text to be found in volume 1, and English translation in volume 4, of the continuously numbered volumes of the *Works*. Julian dates have been converted into modern chronology, with the years beginning on 1 January.

A few improved texts have been issued since the Spedding edition, and Spedding himself issued an improved version of one text, 'A Conference on Pleasure', in 1870. Also, a few manuscripts have been discovered since the Spedding edition, and this material is to be included in a new complete edition of Bacon's writings to be published by Oxford University Press, which will eventually supersede Spedding. Only volume 6 in this edition has appeared at the time of writing, although this includes the important Hardwick manuscript *De Vijs Mortis*, the most significant piece missing from Spedding. References to this volume are abbreviated as *BW* vi.

Although I cite English translations where available, I have not always followed Spedding and Ellis's translations of Bacon's Latin, which are occasionally rather laboured and literal; nevertheless, I have kept changes to a minimum. Benjamin Farrington's *The Philosophy of Francis*

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Bacon (Chicago, 1964) contains exemplary translations of several pieces not translated in Spedding and Ellis, and I have used Farrington's translations where available. References to that volume are abbreviated as *PFB*.

The following abbreviations of individual works by Bacon have been used:

<i>Aditus</i>	<i>Aditus ad Titulos in Proximus Quinque Menses Destinatos</i> (appendix to <i>Historia Ventorum</i>)
<i>Adv. Learn.</i>	<i>Advancement of Learning</i>
<i>Advertisement</i>	<i>An Advertisement touching the Controversies of the Church of England</i>
<i>Cog. & Vis.</i>	<i>Cogitata et visa de Interpretatione Naturæ, sive de Inventione Rerum & Operum</i>
<i>Cog Nat Rer.</i>	<i>Cogitationes de Natura Rerum</i>
<i>De Aug.</i>	<i>De Dignitate & Augmentis Scientiarum Libri IX</i>
<i>De Interp. Nat.</i>	<i>De Interpretatione Naturæ Prooemium</i>
<i>De Princ.</i>	<i>De Principiis atque Originibus, Secundum Fabulas Cupidinis et Coeli: sive Parmenides & Telesii, & Præcipue Democriti Philosophia, Tractata in Fabula</i>
<i>De Sap. Vet.</i>	<i>De Sapientia Veterum Liber ad Inclytam Academium Cantabrigiensem</i>
<i>De Vijs</i>	<i>De Vijs Mortis, et de Senectute Retardanda, atque Instaurandis Viribus</i>
<i>Dens. & Rar.</i>	<i>Historia Densi et Rari</i>
<i>Distrib. Op.</i>	<i>Distributio Operis</i>
<i>Flux.</i>	<i>De Fluxu et Refluxu Maris</i>
<i>Glob. Intell.</i>	<i>Descriptio Globi Intellectualis</i>
<i>Hist. Vent.</i>	<i>Historia Ventorum</i>
<i>Med. Sac.</i>	<i>Meditationes Sacræ</i>
<i>New Atl.</i>	<i>New Atlantis</i>
<i>Nov. Org.</i>	<i>Novum Organum</i>
<i>Parasceve</i>	<i>Parasceve ad Historiam Naturalem et Experimentalem</i>
<i>Ph. Univ.</i>	<i>Historia Naturalis et Experimentalis ad Condendam Philosophiam: sive Phenomena Universi</i>
<i>Redarg.</i>	<i>Redargutio Philosophiarum</i>
<i>Sylva</i>	<i>Sylva Sylvarum</i>
<i>Th. Cæli</i>	<i>Thema Coeli</i>
<i>Val. Term.</i>	<i>Valerius Terminus of the Interpretation of Nature, with the Annotations of Hermes Stella</i>
<i>Vit. & Mort.</i>	<i>Historiæ Vitæ & Mortis</i>