The Marquis de Condorcet was one of the few Enlightenment ideologists to witness the French Revolution and participate as an elected politician at the centre of events during France's transition from monarchy to republic. His impact on French history, and on the subsequent development of social scientific thought, has been immense. *Condorcet and Modernity* explores aspects of his social and political thought from 1774, the year of Louis XVI's accession, to 1794, and in particular the interaction between Condorcet's political theory, legislative pragmatism and public policy proposals. David Williams's focus is on selected essays and treatises and specific projects and legislative proposals relating to rights and constitutional reform, the civil order, voting procedures, ecclesiastical powers and privileges, the judiciary and the law, economics and the grain trade, the abolition of the slave trade, women's rights, monarchical government, revolution and republicanism.

Professor Williams examines the complex links between Condorcet as the visionary ideologist and Condorcet as the pragmatic legislator, and between Condorcet's concept of modernity, the application of 'social arithmetic' to government policies, and the management of change. Texts that have hitherto received relatively little attention in this context are examined in the light of a particular notion of human rights, and strategies for the implementation of those rights. Based on an extensive array of both printed and manuscript sources, this major contribution to Enlightenment studies is the first full treatment of Condorcet's politics to appear in English for a generation.

David Williams is Emeritus Professor of French in the University of Sheffield. A leading scholar of Enlightenment France, in 1999 he was made Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques by the French government.
For thirty years hardly a day has passed when I have not thought about political science

(Réponse à l'adresse aux provinces, 1790)
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This book is dedicated to the memory of my step-father, Charles Verdun Rattle.
References and abbreviations


A Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal
AN Archives Nationales
BIF Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France
BN(R) Bibliothèque Nationale Richelieu
BN(T) Bibliothèque Nationale Tolbiac
D Voltaire’s Correspondence and Related Documents, definitive edition edited by Theodore Besterman (The Voltaire Foundation, 1968–76)
SVEC Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century

All quotations from Condorcet’s works, including manuscript sources, have been translated into modern English. An English translation of titles of Condorcet’s works forming the subject of more detailed commentary in Chapters 2–10 and the Conclusion has also been given on first reference.