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978-0-521-09704-8 - Plato's Philebus
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PLATO'S PHILEBUS

*Translated with an Introduction
and Commentary by*

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CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1972

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by
Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521097048

© Cambridge University Press 1945, 1958

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First published 1945 (under the title *Plato's Examination of pleasure*)
Reprinted 1958, 1972
Re-issued in this digitally printed version 2010

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-08460-4 Hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-09704-8 Paperback

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PREFACE

On 4 January 1943, when the manuscript of this book was just completed, I heard of the death, the day before, of F. M. Cornford. It will be obvious that I owe a great debt to that fine scholar and interpreter of Plato; it was indeed at his suggestion that I turned to the *Philebus*, and without his encouragement I should probably not have carried through my task.

Anyone who tries to interpret a Platonic dialogue must gratefully acknowledge his obligation to Professor A. E. Taylor. Another living scholar to whom I am much indebted is Dr R. G. Bury, the most recent English editor of the dialogue; the fact that his edition appeared nearly half-a-century ago may help to excuse me for attempting what is, from one point of view, a supplement to his work.

Amongst foreign scholars I have probably derived most help from the writings of Diès, Friedländer, and Constantin Ritter. I have consulted no translation save the German version by Apelt, and have followed Burnet's text, except where noted.

That I have not attempted a full-dress commentary in the traditional style is due partly to my disinclination for the purely philological labour involved, partly to the existence of Dr Bury's book, in which such labour has been so fruitfully expended. I believe, however, that there are many students nowadays who prefer interpretation of a work of ancient philosophy to be offered in a more or less continuous form, or in what approximates to a running commentary, rather than in footnotes to a text or translation. Footnotes cannot indeed be avoided; but I have tried to limit them to essentials.

I am especially grateful to my friend Mr F. H. Sandbach for reading the whole of the translation in manuscript, and for making valuable corrections and suggestions. I have been helped on various points by Dr A. B. Cook, Professor D. S. Robertson, and Mr S. G. Campbell. My thanks are also due to the careful readers of the University Press.

R. HACKFORTH

July 1944