

Preface

This volume collects a dozen of the papers on Stoicism I have previously published in journals and conference proceedings. The articles are printed here without substantial revision in most cases, but I have taken the opportunity to make minor corrections and stylistic or bibliographical changes. I have also added a postscript to three papers whose topics have been the subject of much discussion during the intervening years. In assembling the papers together in this form, I hope to make them more accessible to the growing number of people who are seriously interested in Hellenistic philosophy.

I am not a Stoic, for more reasons than are stated or hinted at in this book. But their philosophy has fascinated me now for thirty years. Of all the Greek schools, Stoicism was the most ambitious in its quest for a system that would explain how human nature fits into the world at large. That project, which has beguiled many subsequent philosophers, seems to me to be vulnerable to the evidence of history, cultural diversity and our continuing ignorance of the kind of animals we are. It is, none the less, a noble error. If the Stoics were too eager, as I think they were, to make *cosmic* order relevant to *human* values, they advanced numerous theories and concepts that are a continuing challenge to thought.

Although one of the papers dates from 1971, the majority were written a decade or more later. Given the need to produce a book of manageable length and price, I decided (with helpful advice from a Cambridge University Press reader) that a selection concentrated on my more recent work would be the most useful. Hence I have omitted a good many of my older papers, including those I contributed to *Problems in Stoicism* and other papers whose findings are partly incorporated in two of my later books, *Hellenistic Philosophy* and *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, co-authored with David Sedley.

(Details of this other work are included in the bibliography of the present volume.) Apart from issues of length and topicality, I wanted to select papers that would make for a reasonably coherent volume. I have tried to achieve these objectives by focusing on three themes: the Stoics' appropriation and interpretation of their intellectual tradition (chapters 1–4), their ethics (chapters 5–9), and their psychology (chapters 10–12). If the length of the volume had been no concern, I should also have included papers dealing with sceptical criticism of the Stoics and Stoic responses to that criticism. That important theme, which has been well recognised in modern scholarship, is one that I hope to include in a subsequent book.

Although each chapter is self-standing and can be read as such, many chapters make reference to at least one of the others. Readers who are primarily interested in Stoic ethics will find something relevant to that topic in every chapter, and chapters 6–8 may be read in sequence as three successive attempts to clarify the central concepts of their moral thought. Written as they were at different times, these chapters also differ from one another in their perspectives and emphases (see the postscripts to chapters 6 and 7), but I have let the differences stand because they seem to me to reflect the complexity of Stoic ethics and the difficulty of assessing it from a monolithic point of view. Retrospectively, I can see chapters 6 and 7 as preparatory to chapter 8, which is my most ambitious attempt to justify the coherence of Stoic ethics in terms of its exponents' psychological and theological assumptions. As for logic and physics, which are the other two official divisions of Stoic philosophy, some aspects of logic are treated in chapter 4, and physics is a major topic of several chapters, especially 2, 9 and 10. Although the book does not seek to give a comprehensive account of Stoicism, its content reflects the fact that this was a peculiarly holistic and systematic philosophy. Trying to do justice to this fact is the main principle that has guided all of my work on Stoicism.

Apart from the corrections and updating mentioned above, I have frequently substituted words like 'human being' or 'persons' for 'man' or 'men' in the original publications. This is not because I think that history should succumb to political correctness; it would be absurd to convert the technical expression *ho sophos*, literally 'the wise man', to 'the wise person'. But while Stoic philos-

ophers followed convention in writing of their ethical paragon in the masculine gender, their generalisations about good and bad lives were intended to apply to persons without regard to their sex or class or ethnicity. Thus the Christian Lactantius was correct in supporting his own resistance to discrimination by referring to 'the Stoics who said that slaves and women should philosophise' (*Inst. div.* III.25), and the Roman Stoic Musonius Rufus delivered discourses proving that females have the same nature as males, so far as their minds and virtues are concerned, and that daughters should be educated in the same way as sons (Musonius, ap. Hense III, IV). The Stoics' ethical significance will be made clearer to modern readers by avoiding language that could imply their lack of interest in half of the human race. This is an instance in which the deplorably sexist language handed down to men of my generation has helped to falsify history.

Each of these papers began its life as the result of an invitation to contribute to a colloquium or to a collective volume. In the preface of *Hellenistic Philosophy* I acknowledged the great benefit I have derived from such invitations. It is a pleasure for me to repeat such thanks. Friends too numerous to single out by name have given me corrections and suggestions which I have gratefully incorporated. In preparing the book for publication, I could not have received better assistance than was given me by Pauline Hire and Susan Moore, from Cambridge University Press. I am also most grateful to James Ker, a graduate student at Berkeley, for help with proofreading and compiling the indexes.

During the time when most of these studies were written I had the good fortune to be encouraged and helped by Harold Cherniss and Gregory Vlastos. These men were giants, both as scholars and as persons. With all its shortcomings, this book would scarcely have been written without their consistent support, and so I dedicate it to their memory.

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A. A. L.