

Preface

Academic authors owe much to their peers and predecessors. My first conversation on Adam Smith was with the late Professor Andrew Skinner of Glasgow University, whom I met when we both happened to visit the department of economics at Strathclyde University, where I had been an undergraduate and postgraduate student in the 1960s. I was then a lecturer in economics at Brunel University in West London. We fell into conversation and I mentioned my preparatory work on a series of lectures on the economics of defence for UK senior Army officers, at The National Defence College, Latimer, having been assigned by my then head of department, Professor John Vaizey, to stand in at short notice because the regular lecturer was seriously ill. Andrew recommended opening with Adam Smith's statements on defence in *Wealth of Nations* as the '*first duty of the sovereign that of protecting the society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies, by means of military force*'. [WN V.1.a.1 p 689].

I took Andrew's advice and read the relevant chapter in *Wealth of Nations*. This eventually led to my abiding interest in the life and Works of Adam Smith. When Andrew and I met over the following decades at seminars and conferences on the history of economic thought, or when

we conversed by telephone, we discussed aspects of Adam Smith's life and Works, of which Andrew was the leading authority. I owe much in the approach that follows herein to Andrew's insight and advice, and to his many publications, though I exculpate him completely for any errors or omissions that may have crept into what follows.

I also developed a close academic relationship with the late Professor Ian Simpson Ross, whose *The Life of Adam Smith* (2005) is the definitive biography of Adam Smith. I had the pleasure of occasional face-to-face discussions with Ian when he visited his native country of Scotland from his home in Vancouver, Canada, his lovely soft Dundonian Scot's accent as clear as if he had never left Dundee. We also exchanged correspondence on Adam Smith, for which help and insights, I was both grateful and encouraged.

Another influence on my thinking came from a talk I gave in Edinburgh on Adam Smith, after which I was approached by Norman Butcher, a geologist and tutor at the Open University, whose interest was in James Hutton, the early geologist and Enlightenment colleague of Adam Smith. For many years afterwards Norman became a significant element in my unfolding interests in the Enlightenment. I accompanied Norman on several field visits to important geological sites at Edinburgh's extinct volcano where Hutton's excavations can still be seen and down the coast to Siccar Point, where sea erosion had exposed the powerful effects of geological forces on molten rock formations in very ancient times, known as 'Hutton's unconformity'. Norman and I regularly conversed, and his enthusiasm for knowledge about Hutton matched mine for Smith. He provided insights into how the Enlightenment was a cooperative effort by a unique group of Edinburgh's finest eighteenth-century scholars.

Other scholarly influences, to whom I owe much for their insights and opinions, and, indeed, also for their criticism of my interpretations, include Dr. Craig Smith, Profs. Christopher Berry, Keith Lumsden, Alec Scott, Ryan Hanley, Sandra Peart, Mark Blaug, Paul Walker, Brandon Dupont, Daniel B. Klein, Paul Oslington, and Sir Alan Peacock, though these conversations revealed many scholarly differences in our approaches to Adam Smith and his Works. However, I

must record that despite our occasional differences of interpretation, I benefitted from their insights, challenges and perspectives.

Of course, authors must be aware of how much they owe to the professional expertise of a publisher's staff. Palgrave is no exception. This is my third book with Palgrave and as with the first two, writing it has been a pleasurable experience.

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