



## The Skeptic Way: Sextus Empiricus's Outlines of Pyrrhonism

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**The Skeptic Way: Sextus Empiricus's Outlines of Pyrrhonism** From Brand: Oxford University Press, USA

The *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* by the 2nd century A.D. Greek physician Sextus Empiricus was immensely influential in the history of Western philosophy. The rediscovery and publication of this work in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries led directly to the skepticism of Montaigne, Gassendi, Bayle, Descartes, Berkeley, Hume, and others, and eventually to the preoccupation of modern philosophy with attempts to refute or otherwise combat philosophical skepticism. In recent years, however, it has become apparent that Pyrrhonism--the form of skepticism professed by Sextus--is in several important respects quite different from the modern forms of skepticism to which the writings of Sextus have given rise. Some of these differences are of particular philosophic interest because they seem to render the ancient form immune to many of the standard responses to skepticism that are made today.

In this book, which incorporates a new translation of the *Outlines* in their entirety, Benson Mates presents Pyrrhonism not as a mere historical curiosity, as has often been done, but as a philosophical position eminently worthy of serious philosophical consideration here and now. His thorough introduction sets the stage by explaining what Pyrrhonism is and what it is not, and by contrasting it in the relevant respects with modern skepticism. He gives particular attention to explicating a number of quasi-technical terms that occur frequently in the *Outlines* and have decisive bearing on the philosophical content. By rendering these terms more accurately and uniformly in his translation, he seeks to make the essential features of Sextus's Pyrrhonism more evident to the reader. The latter part of the book consists of a detailed Commentary, which endeavors to discuss and explain the work, section by section, from a philosophical (as contrasted with a philological) point of view.

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#### Review

"A good introduction, engaging translation and a commentary that may make it possible to assign the one volume instead of Annas-Barnes and their translation of the "Outlines". --Owen C. Cramer, Colorado College

"...although there exist a number of partial translations and excerpts of the Outlines of Pyrrhonism, Benson Mates's translation is the first complete English version of the work since the Loeb translation by R. G. Bury, printed in 1933....The Outlines is a work of philosophy, and Mates brings to his work a philosopher's mind. It is undoubtedly an improvement over its predecessor, especially in the rendering of technical terms and in the clarification through translation of some obscure argumentative structures."--Lloyd P. Gerson, International Philosophical Quarterly

Philosophical Quarterly

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About the Author

USA

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