

PLATE XLVIII



SIR EDWARD STANLEY GOTCH ROBINSON

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1887-1976

STANLEY ROBINSON was born on 4 July 1887 at 23 Westfield Park, Clifton, Bristol, the sixth of the seven children (four sons and three daughters) of Edward Robinson and Katherine Frances, *née* Gotch. His father was one of the eight children of Elisha Smith Robinson, who, coming to Bristol in the earlier 1840s at the age of 27, started business there as a paper merchant and grocers' stationer. In 1875 Elisha visited the United States of America and there acquired the British rights in a new machine which revolutionized the British paper-bag industry, and he introduced the printing of shopkeepers' names on the bags they used. By this means the family fortunes were founded, and Elisha Robinson in due course became Lord Mayor of Bristol and a Justice of the Peace. The Robinsons had in fact been centred around Bristol, Gloucester, and the Forest of Dean for about two centuries; and Nathaniel Robinson (born in 1775) had even thus early been a paper-maker at Winchcombe, while earlier generations had included nail-makers.

Control of the family business passed, in time, from Elisha, under whom the firm became E. S. and A. Robinson, to Edward Robinson. Edward's wife, known as a woman of great sweetness, was the daughter of the Revd. Dr. Gotch, a member of the Old Testament Revision Committee; and both she and her husband were loyal supporters of the Baptist Church. Stanley Robinson (as he was to be known for most of his long life) was thus born into a large, prosperous, nonconformist, West of England family of civic consequence, and, being almost the youngest of that large family, was perhaps of a disposition naturally too gentle to compete easily with the demands of his environment. At all events, after he had attended Miss Cundall's dame-school, he had become a diffident child. He was left-handed by nature, and, whether or not because he was compelled or induced to turn to right-handed usage, he early developed a stammer. This, though cured later in life, left him, even after cure, with a softness—it was not even a noticeable hesitation—in speech. By contrast his handwriting never showed the forced change from left to right hand, developing into a beautiful, free-flowing, but disciplined form which was instantly recognizable.

It was in order to develop him and give him a sense of independence that, at the age of ten or thereabouts, Robinson was sent to London to live for a time with (and receive tuition from) E. J. Seltman, a speech therapist, who was also a numismatic scholar and dealer of note, and the father of that Charles Seltman who was ultimately to become a Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge, and to make his own name as the author of *Greek Coins* in the Methuen series of *Handbooks of Archaeology*. While he was living with Seltman, Robinson would quite certainly have seen many coins—and principally Greek coins—passing through Seltman's hands, with all the attendant problems of authenticity or doubt; and, as he was being trained in the classics, Robinson doubtless integrated this numismatic knowledge (or rather the beginnings of it) into the general classical education he was receiving. Three elder Robinson brothers—Foster, Percy, and Harold—had all in turn gone to Clifton College at Bristol; and it was to Clifton that Stanley himself went, when he was not much more than eleven, as a day-boy in the college's North Town house. Of the academic details of his time at school nothing is known, save that he was to win a classical scholarship to Christ Church, Oxford, in 1906: this was a step, and a stage, of permanent importance in his life, for it steered him away from the business of the family firm, by now expanding with all success, to a life of scholarship. His time at Clifton was not, however, devoid of other, if minor, distinction, as a player of games: in his last two years there (1905–6) he was a member of the second cricket XI, in which he is recorded as being more successful with the bat than as a bowler. Later on he was to play cricket in the Robinson family XI in the local matches which became a family ritual; and here it was as a bowler that he was remembered: as a boy of only fourteen he had once taken all ten wickets with his cunning googlies, of which the knack afterwards deserted him. He also played rackets at Clifton, being secretary of the Rackets Club.

When Robinson went up to Oxford in 1906, Christ Church, like the University as a whole, was experiencing that renaissance of classical studies which, after the more easy-going days of the nineteenth century, was stimulated by European scholars—philological, historical, and archaeological; and he responded keenly. After a First Class in Honour Moderations, he went on to Greats; and it was from his Greek history tutor, Robin Dundas (or 'D' as the generations of his pupils universally knew him), that he received the personal stimulus which lighted up

his mind for the rest of his academic life. Dundas was a terse and laconic Scot. A product of Eton and New College, he had himself only just come as Greek history tutor to Christ Church, and he was afterwards accustomed to say that Robinson, little younger than himself, was his first, as also his best, pupil. Like all succeeding generations of Dundas's pupils, Robinson found in him a tutor who both knew his ancient sources very well (re-reading them, 'D' would say, yearly) and approached them in a constant spirit of inquiring and critical curiosity. He was and remained a first-class tutor, and he left his mark strongly and permanently on Robinson, as well as establishing an intimate friendship for life.

Robinson duly gained his First Class in Greats in 1910; and in the process he had developed his numismatic interests, coming under the influence of Percy Gardner, who, after a period in the British Museum and at Cambridge, had been elected Lincoln Professor of Classical Archaeology at Oxford. Many years later, on the occasion of the presentation, in 1967, of a *Festschrift* for his eightieth birthday, Robinson explained what Gardner had meant to him.

Gardner was a numismatist by training, and some of his best work lies in this field. He was the first, I imagine, to give regular teaching at Oxford in numismatics in classes as well as to individuals. Wherever possible, he would relate the coins to the history of the time; and, as I well remember, he always insisted on their importance as a primary source for the study of the ancient world in general. . . . He had to content himself with a few casts and photographs for illustration. . . . The coins belonging to the University, such as they then were, were still held *incommunicado* in a strong room in the Bodleian, and similar limitations held for the College collections. In Christ Church, for example, when I first began to catalogue the [Greek] coins, in theory it required the simultaneous presence of two Canons, each with his key, to open the coin cabinet. . . . I think we owe Gardner more than is perhaps realized nowadays.

The year 1910 thus saw Robinson with a First in Mods. and Greats and a clear desire to pursue scholarship, and primarily Greek scholarship, for although he had absorbed Roman history as well, and commanded skill and grace in the composition of Latin prose and verse throughout his life, it was to the culture of ancient Greece that he directed his eager energy. It was natural that he should follow his time at Oxford by a spell at the British School at Athens; and already in 1911 he was to be

found embarking on an extended journey of exploration in Lycia with a friend on horseback. This tour occupied about two months, during which the young men lived fairly rough, saw much beautiful scenery, copied a good many inscriptions, verified the sites of certain ancient towns, and survived various crises with tired mounts, flooded streams, flea-ridden beds, and rain-storms. Robinson kept a diary, written in a minutely pencilled hand in a small notebook, and containing some good descriptive passages.

April 8th Found a wedding in full swing . . . about 150 Turks squatting in full dress, blue coat and all, watching a wrestling match . . . as we reached the ground the band marched out to welcome us and when we were established on a carpet laid their drums before us for backsheesh, then the wrestling began. They come out into the middle with great ceremony, then walk round to the weird music in a kind of gawkish dance, then retire, then meet in the middle, rub shoulders and wave their left hands. Suddenly the music stops and they approach, gripping by the arms,—the round lasts 2–8 mins. and is finished by a throw. . . . The preliminaries the most amusing, gone through with grt [*sic*] solemnity and slowness, every gesture and step exaggerated. . . . Didn't like to photo for fear of offence.

Years later, as an old man, Robinson paid a return visit to Anatolia, reviving old memories and creating new ones. It was, he said, the only place to which one could return after sixty years and find it hardly changed.

At this period, possibly, Robinson's inclinations turned away, definitely, from archaeology to historical numismatics. Although his 'Lycian diary' makes many allusions to inscriptions, sarcophagi, carvings, and sites in general, his interests seem to have focused more strongly on the coins which he saw and attempted to buy, often vainly (since prices were above London levels, which he evidently knew), and on scenery and people—'better than archaeology', as he noted in one entry. The diary as a whole, as witnessed by the account of the wrestlers quoted above (did he, perhaps, have in mind the coins of Aspendus in Pamphylia?), shows the development of his inner eye for form and movement; and although in later life he took full advantage of the evidence of archaeology, he preferred it to be impeccably presented and expounded by specialists of the eminence of such great friends as Paul Jacobsthal, Henri Seyrig, and Bernard Ashmole.

In any case, once his spell at Athens was finished, it was to

numismatics that he turned for his life's work. In June 1912, he was appointed Assistant Keeper in the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, on provisional tenure that was to be confirmed two years later. At the time of his entry into the British Museum, the Medal Room, as it was then and still is loosely called, had just come under a new Keeper, G. F. Hill, a brilliant Greek scholar (himself the subject of a memoir by Robinson in Vol. 36 of these *Proceedings*) and, like Robinson too, a protégé of Percy Gardner. The two men, one 45 years old, the other 25, formed what turned out to be a close understanding and friendship, based on community of interests and (to quote Robinson's words on Hill) the 'combination of meticulous accuracy with breadth of view'. Hill was not, in the general estimation, a very easy man, but in his young recruit he found a willing disciple, as Dundas had done at Christ Church, and his influence upon him and his work was powerful.

One month after Robinson's confirmation in his post, the First World War interrupted what had seemed to be so promising a pattern of life. Robinson was a first-class scholar, lively and energetic, and his connection with the family business meant that he need not worry about the pittance paid by the British Museum to members of its staff. With the war all this was changed. Robinson joined the Northamptonshire Regiment in 1914 and served in France in 1915-16, until he was very severely wounded in the leg and made a cripple on two sticks for life. Like so many young men of eager spirit, he sought some solace from the horrors of war in poetry, and many of the poems of that time, slight pieces of greatly varied metre, dwelt on love and death. Two in particular illuminate the personal agony that he himself felt after so crippling a physical blow.

I was tall and straight,
 Very strong was I,
 People turned to look
 When I passed by.

Now my limbs are bowed
 O'er ungainly ways.
 I must go halting
 All my days.

But inside my thought branching
 Like a green beech tree
 (Though I go halting,
 Back and knee,

And people turn to look
 As they pass me by),
 Shoots up straight and strong,
 And that's I.

The second, darker and more despondent, recalls the fact that he had been very fond of dancing (he was, incidentally, a great lover of ballet—vicarious movement—in later life):

I shall dance no more.
 Never again my feet
 Shall move, as the music falls
 In urgent beat,
 Answering other feet.

I shall ride no more
 Nor feel between my knees
 Shoulders of a horse
 Rippling at ease
 As we turn to breast the breeze.

And if round the full-ringed trunk
 Though its branches whisper to the sky
 Murderous ivies cramp
 Green and nigh,
 That tree shall surely die.

Having recovered to the extent that he could, Robinson spent a short time in the Home Office, returning thence to the British Museum, to take up again the life work which had been so painfully interrupted. During his convalescence he had married Pamela, daughter of Sir Victor Horsley, C.B., F.R.S., an eminent surgeon. She from this time on, during a remarkably happy married life of nearly sixty years, cherished and cared for him serenely, not so as to fuss over his infirmity, but so as never to forget it, remembering always that his scholastic activities were for him the true half of his existence. They were to have a large and closely united family of six children, two sons and four daughters, in whom (with numerous grandchildren in the years to come) they found and enjoyed a company of never failing stimulus and delight.

Once back in the British Museum, Robinson succeeded automatically to his share in the writing of the *British Museum Catalogue of Greek Coins*. This, begun in 1873 with the volume on Italy, had progressed round the Greek world, clockwise (on

the lines first followed by Eckhel in the eighteenth century), reaching the Near East with Hill's successive volumes on Phoenicia, Palestine, Arabia-Persia by 1910, 1914, and 1922 respectively. The sequence now pointed to North Africa, and it was on Cyrenaica that Robinson now worked, the volume being published in 1929. As Dr. Cahn has observed in his academically warm and sensitive obituary remarks (*Schweizer Münzblätter*, Nov. 1976, p. 90), this was more than simply a British Museum catalogue, being in fact a corpus, for it included much material not in the Museum's collection. Robinson was now developing his meticulous and extraordinarily accurate gifts of observation, backed by patient approach, a tenacious memory, and a firm knowledge of his historical sources; and it is interesting to note that his Cyrenaica volume included 275 pages of commentary as compared with only 127 pages of catalogue proper. Every aspect of the coinage of this self-contained area was explored fully—historical, mythological, religious, metrological, and botanical; for the coinage was to be seen in as wide a context as possible. This was always to be his approach, even though it was never again, perhaps, to be quite so abundantly realized.

In the earlier 1930s Robinson began that process which turned him, as Dr. Cahn has emphasized, into *the* authority to be consulted on the authenticity or otherwise of a Greek coin of importance. And so Calouste Gulbenkian, the oil magnate and the Pierpont Morgan of Europe, having bought certain coins from the Prinkipo hoard of 1930, began a long series of consultative visits to the British Museum, adding steadily to a collection of superb quality, in part magnificently catalogued later on by Robinson with M. Castro Hipólito (1971). 'Mr. G.', as Robinson affectionately spoke of Gulbenkian, had a number of standard questions about any coin he fancied buying. Was it certainly genuine? Were its types already known? Was it more, or less, rare? Was its price low or high? Was its condition average, or better than most? Of these questions, authenticity and condition seem to have ranked highest, condition becoming an obsession, so that Robinson found himself virtually charged with the responsibility (Hill having become Director of the British Museum in 1931) of forming Gulbenkian's collection for him on the most exacting standards (see *Colóquio, Revista de Artes e Letras*, Lisbon, Oct. 1966, p. 22). His achievement can be judged from the unique splendour of the collection in the Gulbenkian Museum at Lisbon today.

It seemed that, having catalogued the Greek coins of Cyrenaica, Robinson's attention would now move westward along North Africa to Libya, Carthage, and beyond, for in 1935 he made an extended visit to Tunisia and Algeria, keeping (as previously in Lycia) a minutely detailed record in notebooks, fortunately preserved. He acquired many coins, of which those comprising the El Djem hoard showed that the Punic issues contained in it were not (as previously supposed of parallel issues found elsewhere) of plain bronze, but of silvered bronze. North Africa, however, was to lapse from his programme of work, for his interests were turning in a very different direction. His colleague closest in age at the British Museum was Harold Mattingly, who had already shown the same brilliance in Roman numismatics that Robinson showed in Greek, the first (and revolutionary) volume of the British Museum Roman Imperial Catalogue having appeared in 1923. The two men could never be close personal friends, for they differed too much in temperament and outlook, and Hill, as a Greek scholar, had perhaps smiled the more on Robinson, but they performed a joint exercise of immense importance, by a combination of sheer scholarship and, perhaps, jointly inspired intuition, when in their 'Date of the Roman Denarius' (*Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1932) they dissociated the institution of the denarial coinage of Rome from Pliny's date of 269 B.C. and so opened the way for discussion of other and much later contexts. This was a major, indeed an explosive, change in modern studies of Republican Rome; it is now accepted, in principle, by virtually all scholars. The study involved in this work gave Robinson a deep and permanent interest in the miscellaneous Greek coinages of the Italian peninsula, of which he himself was to collect the coins of certain mints (including Thurii and Velia) on an exhaustive scale. Together with all this, in what must have been a peak period of inventiveness and experiment for a mind of restless activity and criticism, he conceived the project of the *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum*, long since sponsored by the British Academy, and now uniformly, and flatteringly, followed by other institutions in Europe and America, in which important collections of Greek coins were reproduced, photographically, with a minimum of supporting text. This project, of which he continued to be a primary editor until his death, might in a sense be considered a major monument to him: it communicated to scholars, easily and not expensively, the contents of great collections in a reliably exact form, and it revived, in a manner which

achieved universal acceptance in an age of vastly improved reproduction, the format of H. de la Tour's well known but much earlier *Atlas des monnaies gauloises*.

In 1938 Robinson took a step which possibly influenced the directions of his future research work when, after the retirement of J. G. Milne from the Readership in Numismatics at Oxford, he succeeded to that position. It suited him, and he performed it, admirably. He gave no formal lectures, and it is doubtful whether, even if Oxford had followed the example of some European countries by the establishment of a professorship in this now rapidly growing subject of specialist study, he would have been willing to subject his natural hesitancy to such a public ordeal: it had only been by his wife's encouragement that he had consulted and had been greatly helped by an eminent speech therapist. But, coming to Oxford for a night every week or so, and staying at Christ Church with Dundas (with whom he re-established, to his wry amusement, the old pupil-tutor relationship), he could devote the better part of two days a week in the Heberden Coin Room of the Ashmolean to the private instruction of those—undergraduates, graduate pupils, and dons—who wished to learn his views on numismatic points which affected the study of Greek history as such. These tutorials, during which the passage of the hours was disregarded in discussion, were responsible for the grooming of many a student; and for the Coin Room too they were important, as Robinson now became intimately familiar with its university policy and purpose, its Greek collection, and the very great defects in that collection. The effect upon two of his pupils is described a little later; and Bernard Ashmole clearly remembers his great patience and kindness with the young.

Robinson had become Deputy Keeper in his department at the British Museum in 1936, under John Allan, the orientalist, and it was therefore natural that when the coin collection was dispersed for safety during the 1939-45 war—a dispersal abundantly justified when the Medal Room was destroyed, through enemy action, by fire—he should play a primary part in its guardianship in the country, where his time at Compton Wynyates in Warwickshire was perhaps most pleasantly spent. Very possibly, these years, spent quietly away from normal semi-administrative British Museum routine in London, allowed his mind to define and crystallize his views on certain problems of chronology and attribution affecting coinages in their historical context, for a series of fundamentally important papers flowed

from him from 1943 onwards. Of these, his study of the coinage of the Libyans (1943; also 1953 and 1956) resulted in the secure attribution of a coinage, hitherto unattributed, to a precise historical context: his study (1946) of the Samians, Rhegium, and Zankle, in similarly elaborating the exact relationship between coinages and recorded history, provided a fixed chronological point for the early issues of Sicily and South Italy: his study (1949) of the Athenian currency decree, which remained without equivalent treatment for two decades, once again demonstrated the close relationship between numismatic and non-numismatic evidence; and his famous paper (1951) on the coins from the Ephesian Artemisium was a total reappraisal of the chronology of early Greek coinage (still unchallenged after a quarter of a century) in which he embraced not only historical evidence but also that of Assyrian sculptural art forms. These notable papers were followed by others in the 1950s and 1960s, of which that (1954) on the 'cistophori' of Eumenes II—by a stroke of genius which he said came to him in his bath—gave them instead to Aristonicus fifty years later, so leading to a complete reassessment of the regal Pergamene coinages. By the same token, his study (1966) of the coinages associated with the second Punic War fixed the vast and varied coinage of the Brettii in a historical framework not likely to be seriously disputed in the future.

Dr. Colin Kraay, himself taught at Oxford by Robinson, and now Keeper of the Heberden Coin Room, has kindly allowed the quotation here of his comments on certain predominant interests and characteristics of Robinson's work.

1. The periphery of the Greek world: Cyrenaica, Sinope, Olbia, North Africa, the Carthaginians in Spain, Persia. One may add from personal knowledge his keen interest in Lycia, South Anatolia, Cyprus, Phoenicia/Palestine.
2. The integration of numismatic with non-numismatic evidence (literature, sculpture, archaeology, etc.).
3. The importance of hoards, overstrikes, die-links, etc. This is worth emphasizing because, though these phenomena were known when Robinson started his numismatic career about 1911, their potential contribution was not yet recognized.

Continuously underlying the 'highlights' listed above was the publication of a vast number of individual coins—such as the components of hoards, in catalogues of collections (Woodward, Locker Lampson, Gulbenkian), in *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* (e.g. Lockett), in periodic reviews of British Museum accessions, etc. One cannot here discern trends or influences; these were, as Robinson himself said, the bricks

which constituted the edifice of numismatics. Each brick was presented with totally authoritative commentary, founded on his long and intimate knowledge of the great British Museum collection; ideally, he thought every single detail was worthy of record and might one day be useful to someone, but like most of us he did not always achieve this ideal. Sometimes, as in the studies listed above, the bricks were assembled into small, perfectly constructed edifices, but more often they were stacked on one side for future use by himself or others. The completed edifices were in the end rather few because Robinson was a perfectionist; he published only when a problem was completely solved, and when every detail had fallen into place to his own full satisfaction.

Despite the seemingly effortless perfection of his articles, this effect was not obtained easily or without labour. He was not a very systematic worker. Though he assembled a large private library, far from exclusively numismatic, he had no comprehensive system of references or files; notes were written on scraps of paper of varying size and loosely strung together on treasury tags. Articles reached their final form only through a number of drafts in his own hand, each heavily corrected and revised, for his subtle mind tended to see additional complications at each revision.

In the integration of numismatic evidence with that of sculpture and painting, Robinson was closely associated in the British Museum with Professor Bernard Ashmole, then in the Greek and Roman Department, each learning much from the knowledge of the other. Usually they worked together on the trustworthiness of style as a guide to dating, and on the question whether there is any safe chronological comparison to be made between coins, sculpture, and vases. Already by 1936 these two scholars had begun to define certain lines of relationship between coins and sculpture (*Trans. Internat. Num. Congress, London, 1936*, pp. 17 ff.), and their joint studies and discussions were to continue. Professor Ashmole has written in a letter (20 Jan. 1977), 'A few years ago I remember lengthy discussions with Stanley (and argument) over the foundation-deposits at Persepolis, and how the foreign coins there might be dated. Of course it was always Stanley who knew accurately all the historical—and of course numismatic—background, but yet was ready to listen to views from another angle.'

Robinson continued as Deputy Keeper of Coins and Medals from 1936 to 1949, then becoming Keeper until his retirement in 1952, at the age of 65. It was a difficult period in which to hold the Keepership. Destruction of the old and hallowed Medal Room was followed by the re-assembly of the coins in other and temporary parts of the museum, arranged of necessity where

they could be, and not as they should be. Perhaps fortunately, his age-seniority limited the span of his Keepership, for although he was able to decide on the rebuilding of the new Medal Room on the site of the old, the actual work involved fell on his successor, Dr. John Walker. Robinson, however, even though he was not by nature inclined to administration, and though his systems of arrangement were sometimes a problem to all but himself, was precise, punctilious, and strictly economical in practical matters. On one occasion, for example, when a visiting scholar wished to work on coins temporarily stored in a room which at that moment lacked the invigilator required by the department's rules, Robinson neatly solved the problem by enrolling the visitor as a kind of special constable. He was, however, looking ahead to his retirement. For some years past he and his family had occupied a charming country house, The Rookery, at Burton Bradstock, in Dorset. Now, in 1951, he took a long lease from the late Lord Crawford of the splendid house known as Stepleton at Iwerne Stepleton, near Blandford Forum, in the same county. To this house, with its little church in the park, its lake, and its gardens (which, after finding them neglected, he helped to restore and re-design, adding a lake and incorporating a swimming pool by the rose garden), he retired in 1952. He had become a Fellow of the Academy in 1948; and he was now made C.B.E.

From this time onward he was able to devote himself to a desired sufficiency of chosen research combined with visits to London (where he also occupied a house, next to the British Museum) and for teaching at Oxford. To both the British Museum and the Ashmolean he now stood forth as a benefactor of the first order. He had been channelling fine and rare Greek coins into the British Museum for a long time past; his gifts there, beginning in 1917 with two Persian sigloi, continued with a wide range of choice or important coins, and with hoard-material, down to the 1960s. At Oxford, continuing as Reader until 1958, and thereafter as Honorary Curator of Greek coins at the Ashmolean, he began to inject great numbers of Greek coins into the collection there, which until then had been very patchy. Of the quality of his teaching and of the purposes of his collecting and his gifts of coins at this time, Dr. Kraay has written as follows:

No comment on Robinson would be complete without some mention of the related aspects of teaching and collecting. His teaching was like, and in some cases no doubt actually was, the preparation of an article. Each

tutorial on a given subject was like a new draft of an article—the ground was gone over afresh; newly discovered evidence was evaluated and incorporated; and new ramifications were observed. In these circumstances it is not surprising that he rarely came to definite conclusions; but in compensation, every student could be confident that he was receiving the most thorough and up-to-date treatment of the subject in question. In speaking of collecting, one thinks not only of the coins which Robinson bought for himself but also of those which he gave to the British Museum and to the Ashmolean (over 5,000 to the Ashmolean). This was not collecting in the normal sense nor from the usual motives. The object was to have readily available in this country, whether in London or Oxford, adequate material for teaching and research—and the more complete that material the better. There was no substitute for seeing and handling the coin itself; if it was a unique coin, then its actual local presence was all the more important. In addition to the single coin, there was also the realisation that in some cases the only key to mint history lay in building dense series, as in the cases of Thuri, Velia, Corinth, and Persia. Fortunately in his case both the financial means and the material were readily available at the same time; today such series of coins are probably no longer to be found at any price.

All told, he enriched the Ashmolean collection of Greek coins by some 5,500 specimens, most of them personally approved by himself, for the Ashmolean Coin Room became, in time, the annual beneficiary of a substantial sum for the purchase of Greek coins selected by Robinson himself. And in 1964 he presented his own splendid collection, extraordinarily rich in certain selected series, to the Ashmolean.

Mr. Kenneth Jenkins, until lately Keeper of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, was also a pupil of Robinson's at Oxford after the 1939–45 war, and he, like Dr. Kraay, was struck by the quality of Robinson's tuition.

Of course I was always deeply impressed by his tutorials, going patiently through details which he knew by heart but which he obviously so enjoyed going through again for the umpteenth time, and it was fascinating when one came to know that there were all sorts of riches waiting in readiness in his head. Never in a hurry to reach conclusions, but letting them grow naturally as far as possible, his discourse could be disconcerting as he would pursue relentlessly any thought that happened to come to him—and with no inhibition about sticking to the point. In my early days with him as his pupil he was still doing early electrum (bewildering detail to a beginner!) and then, in the middle of some knotty point about weight standards he would produce some *recherché* detail from Assyrian sculpture which unexpectedly made everything fall into place.

In 1955 Oxford conferred an Honorary D.Litt upon him, and Christ Church made him an Honorary Student. He was now retired, more leisured in the sense that he was more free, immensely happy at Stepleton (in which he took to his heart the house and gardens and the many guests who were entertained there), and able to plan his work ahead at a time when many would be laying it down. This consisted, first, of the continuing supervision and editing of the *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum*; secondly, of work on sundry learned articles and on the Gulbenkian catalogue; and thirdly—and mainly—of the planning and writing, ultimately with collaborators, of what was intended as the first (and pilot) fascicule of a totally revised edition of the *Historia Numorum*, of which the last edition had appeared in 1911. On this he worked unremittingly, contributing a large number of entries, exactly proportioned, carefully documented, and expressed in a lean and lively prose, comparable with that of J. D. Beazley, which made his meaning perfectly clear. In his later years, he was much worried, and his attention was often diverted, by minutiae: should one, for example, write Cumae or Kyme, Caelia or Kailia, and should one's references follow this or that plan? This was, however, perfectionism, and not pedantry, as anyone who knew him as a person could tell. Indeed, his personality at this time flowered into a serene yet acute peak. Although his crippled leg made him steadily less mobile, and although deafness increased (and this alone irritated him), he enjoyed life—leisure and work—to the full. He continued his Oxford visits, staying after Dundas's death with Dr. Sydney Watson, then organist of Christ Church, who has written of him (15 Dec. 1976):

What I would include among my most dominant memories of him is the vivid interest he showed in everybody and everything around him. I remember staying at Stepleton after the filming of certain parts of 'Tom Jones' in the garden, and while filming was still going on in the neighbourhood. Stanley insisted on us driving to Cerne Abbas one afternoon just to see whether anything was happening. We were lucky: filming was happening that day, and Stanley sat on the grass wearing his beret and looking as happy as a schoolboy. We had difficulty in getting him home for tea. . . . On more than one occasion when he was staying with me at Christ Church he came to my rooms and found that I was out. He would go and call on an undergraduate on the same staircase and have a cordial and easy conversation with him, during which he had found out more about the young man than many of that undergraduate's friends. It was impossible, at Stepleton, to think of him

as the distinguished academic that he was . . . and equally impossible to imagine him as anything other than the notable scholar whenever he opened his mouth. . . . 'Vivid' is the word that comes to my mind whenever I think of him. He was such a vivid person.

His work at Stepleton was done in a markedly individual way. He would rise late after a frugal breakfast, always of yoghurt, sometimes perhaps with olives. His great bedroom was also his library and his study combined, overlooking the park, and here he could work quietly, clad in winter, if need be, in his own version of a medieval burgher's gown for ease and comfort. Part of the day would be wholly social, or spent in the sunny garden in summer. After dinner in the evening, which he greatly enjoyed, with some good wine, he would sleep for a little before going to his study, about 11, to work in absolute quietness until about 3 a.m. And then to bed.

Oxford claimed two speeches from him on the occasion of his eightieth birthday in 1967, when he and his wife gave a party in Christ Church Hall, and when a volume of essays, dedicated to him by a number of scholars who were friends or former pupils, was presented to him in the Senior Common Room garden. It claimed a third in 1970, when the Vice-Chancellor and the Visitors of the Ashmolean entertained him at dinner at Lincoln College, to his great enjoyment. The crowning mark of distinction, which claimed no public speech, came in 1972 when a Knighthood was conferred upon him 'for services to numismatics and the Ashmolean Museum', an honour which pleased the multitude of the friends of Robinson and his wife.

During his last years, Sir Edward Robinson (as he then became) turned again to writing small poems, some looking back to the First World War, some romantic, some satirical, some epigrammatic, some reflecting his interest in the supernatural, some just to amuse the family. One or two look forward, such as the one written in 1973:

So may no morbid fears
Born of the huge, cavernous, smoke dimmed
past,
Dog these declining years,
Nor linger till the last.

I have made my venture of faith,
The World is seamless, One,
And so, when all is done,
To death.

This was conceived in serenity, when he was 86. And for the most part 'these declining years' were very happy, with his much loved wife and a constantly varying, almost kaleidoscopic pattern of sons and daughters and their wives and husbands and children, and guests, all in the setting of his beloved Stepleton, where the house seemed to have been built expressly for him, and where, increasingly immobile though he was, he seemed to know (by going around in his little electric chariot) every flower that bloomed in the gardens.

One of the chief pleasures in his family circle was his reading aloud—a habit from many years back, founded on his love of English literature. In prose, Dickens was one of his great favourites—with P. G. Wodehouse; in poetry, Bridges, Hardy, and especially Yeats, where he attributed his enjoyment to the influence of his old friend Dame Peggy Ashcroft in re-awakening his poetic interests by her own brilliant reading aloud.

There was much, indeed, to make him repine. He knew that his own capacity for intensive work was slowing down; he could no longer travel with any ease to London or Oxford; the new *Historia Numorum* could hardly be launched in his lifetime; and his deafness could make social conversation difficult for him. And so there came the inevitable contraction, when it was decided to leave Stepleton and move back to the house which he occupied next to the British Museum at 89 Great Russell Street, where he died shortly afterwards, on 13 June 1976. He was buried at Stepleton, in the tiny churchyard of the tiny church (where, though never a member of the Church of England, he had been churchwarden and had regularly chosen and read the lesson from the Bible he knew and loved well), a hundred yards from the house in which he had lived for so long. A memorial service, attended by very many, was later held in Christ Church Cathedral at Oxford.

The dominant personal impression of Robinson that should remain is perhaps that conveyed by the elegant and accomplished portrait, by Devas, which he and his wife generously gave to Christ Church in 1971. This was painted in 1954, when he was in the prime of his powers. It shows him, dressed casually (with a blue neckerchief emphasizing the clear, almost hyacinth blue of his eyes), seated holding a tray of coins at his desk—a study of controlled liveliness, of tightly wound vigour and eagerness held in check, all irradiated by the feeling of gaiety and keen observation. Those who would remember Robinson at that period will remember him also as a dashing adventurous

driver of his Land-Rover through Dorset tracks and fords, a tireless swimmer (he could not dance, alas, but he was a strong swimmer) doing his many lengths in the pool at Stepleton while never ceasing to discuss historical or numismatic details with visiting scholars, and a man of exquisite courtesy and witty conversation and anecdote, always well pointed, but never remotely unkind (even though his scholastic criticism was fearlessly expressed), and totally without complaint at the limitations which his injured leg imposed upon him. 'Massive patience'—the phrase is that of Mr. Jenkins—was a characteristic of his whole life.

As a scholar, he played the part of a deeply skilled and indeed inspired navigator, steering the course of Greek numismatics from the era of Barclay Head (whom he revered) through a great many uncharted areas, in which his superbly acute knowledge and observation were the guarantee of safety, to a new stage in which the comparative study of hoards, the study of die-links, the simplification of metrological questions, and the parallelisms between the art-forms of coins, sculpture, and painting were the essentials. Robinson was easily the greatest Greek numismatic scholar of his day, as was recognized by the distinctions which he received, and the medals and honorary memberships conferred upon him. He took all necessary part in the activities of his profession, being, for example, a Secretary of the Royal Numismatic Society and an Editor of the *Numismatic Chronicle* for many years. But office did not greatly attract him. His restless and richly furnished mind wished to research, reflect, and prove, and—over and above that—to make material available in publication. Hence his long-continuing devotion to the *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum*, his personal creation, of which he said on one occasion, when its economy of printed detail was being unfavourably criticized by a foreign scholar, 'We give scholars the red meat: it is up to them to prepare it properly'. As a scholar himself he was in the first rank; and in his specialist branch of scholarship, numismatics (which, as it pleased him to recall, Wilamowitz had described as 'the English science'), he was a patient genius of equally matched humanity, charm, wit, and integrity.

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A bibliography of Sir Edward Robinson's published work down to 1966 is to be found in *Essays in Greek Coinage presented to Stanley Robinson*, ed. G. K. Jenkins and C. M. Kraay (Oxford, 1968). To this should now be added: *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1967, pp. 1 ff. (with M. J. Price), 'An emergency coinage of Timotheos'; *A catalogue of the Calouste Gulbenkian collection of Greek coins*, Part 1, Italy-Carthage (with M. Castro Hipólito), Lisbon, 1971; *Revue Numismatique*, 1973, pp. 229 ff., 'A hoard of Greek coins from southern Anatolia?'