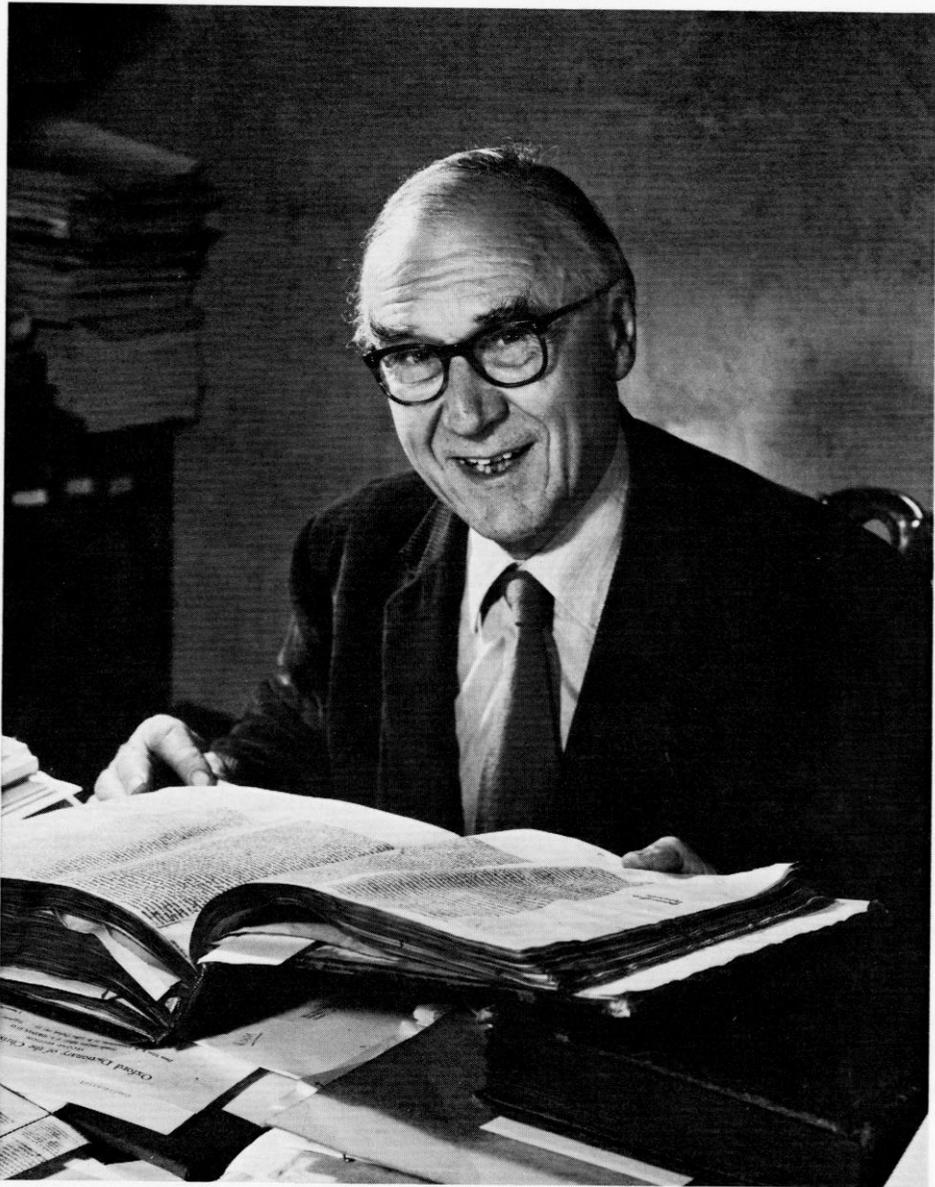


PLATE XIX

MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH ACADEMY



R. W. HUNT

J. W. Thomas

RICHARD WILLIAM HUNT

1908–1979

I

ANY account of Richard Hunt and his place in contemporary British scholarship has a peculiar shape imposed upon it by the surviving materials as well as by the nature of the man and of the positions which he occupied for most of his life. He shunned publicity and the posts he held for over forty years—a lectureship at Liverpool University followed by the Keepership of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library—gave full scope to his instincts for withdrawal from the limelight. Moreover, his publications were relatively brief, by-blows (one might say) in a life of scholarship, the results of chance encounters with *Festschriften* and meetings of societies. His main influence was exercised in personal contacts with scholars from all parts of the world. He was not an expansive writer, whether in public or private. He looked on the written word as a vehicle for conveying information as briefly as possible and he almost never allowed his private feelings of grief or disappointment or frustration or, for that matter, of joy, to rise to the surface of speech, much less of writing. To one who expressed sympathy with him in the bitterest of his personal griefs—the loss of his first wife and expected baby after only one year of marriage—he made a brief acknowledgement and passed without a pause to the description of manuscripts. It was not that he was heartless, far from it; but, when there was nothing to say, he said nothing.

In these circumstances it might seem an impossible task to write a memoir of these years without event. It must largely be a record of an unremitting pursuit of learning, and even here there are obstacles to be overcome. If we may crudely divide scholars into those who seek to know in order to solve problems, and those for whom problems are just incidental occurrences in exploring as wide an area of learning as possible, Richard Hunt is almost as pure a specimen of the second category as it is possible to find. He solved many problems in scholarship, but only in the way in which he wrote articles or gave talks: they were by-products of scholarship. It is not easy to arrange his work around any central issues. His learning can only be understood in the broader picture of scholarly developments in his lifetime, especially, but not

exclusively, in medieval studies. In this context, nearly everything he wrote is significant, whether he published it or not, and whether or not it was intended for any eyes but his own.

It is at this point that his biographer has an incomparable asset at his disposal. Although Richard Hunt published only a small proportion of what he wrote, and wrote only a small proportion of what he knew, he threw away very little. He was a most tenacious preserver of the written word. He may sometimes have destroyed papers, but not many. When he died he left a large mass of manuscripts, notes, descriptions of manuscripts, scholarly correspondence, lectures, and papers in chaotic abundance. These papers constitute a remarkable archive of scholarship. They contain the materials for several learned works, of which two or three are already in course of preparation. Hidden within the mass of paper there are hints and insights which may provide the starting points for many future enquiries. The devoted labour of Dr Bruce Barker-Benfield has brought order into this chaos and in due course it is to be hoped that these papers will be available in the Bodleian Library for the use of other scholars. The essential task for a biographer, however, is not to catalogue the contents of these papers nor to forestall later enquirers, but to give some idea of the ways in which they illuminate Richard Hunt's scholarly interests and provide a guide to the development of medieval studies in this country in the last fifty years.

The events which I shall have to record are few and unremarkable; but the learned lines to be traced in these papers are of the highest interest, and they will sometimes require a lengthy explanation for their elucidation. By way of introduction it should be said that the half century after 1930 was a period of remarkable change in British medieval scholarship, and Richard Hunt was a central figure in this change. At the beginning of the period, medieval studies in Britain, apart from the study of vernacular literature, were still firmly contained within the secular and institutional limits broadly delineated by Stubbs and his successors since about 1850. Of course, there were and had always been some exceptional scholars who looked beyond these limits—such men as Edmund Bishop, Henry Bradshaw, M. R. James, to name only the most remarkable. But these men had had little influence on the main body of work in British universities. They had no patronage at their disposal and consequently they had little power to encourage young scholars in what were widely looked on as eccentric lines of enquiry. The result of this powerful canalization of effort was that British scholars had taken almost no

part in some of the most important new areas of medieval study. The most striking example of this British isolation was in the study of medieval scholastic thought, which had undergone a huge expansion, largely as a result of the patronage of Pope Leo XIII, following his encyclical of 1878. The policy of this pope had been one of many influences which extended the area of intensive enquiry into every corner of medieval philosophy, theology, and canon law, and to every other aspect of the disciplines of the medieval schools. The influence of this work had scarcely penetrated into British scholarship before 1930. The fate of the young C. R. S. Harris, who as a young Fellow of All Souls in the early 1920s had undertaken a study of Duns Scotus, may be mentioned as an indication of the total isolation of Oxford from medieval scholastic studies: in Oxford he could find neither supervisor nor guide in even the simplest matters of medieval disputations and their transmission. Despite his great ability, his two-volumed work on Scotus, which appeared in 1927, was fatally flawed by his ignorance of the basic disciplines of medieval scholastic thought.

The importance of the 1930s for British medievalists was that these rigid lines of demarcation which separated 'serious' history from eccentricity began to dissolve. A very important influence in bringing this about was the Regius Professor of Modern History in Oxford, F. M. Powicke; but there were also more general influences working in the same direction which need not, at present, be elaborated. Suffice it to say that Powicke was concerned about Richard Hunt's future, partly because it was not easy for anyone with Hunt's interests to get a job at that time, and partly because he saw that in Hunt there was a young scholar capable of taking his place in an area of scholarship from which Britain had hitherto been isolated.

II

With these preliminaries I turn to the details of his career. He was born on 11 April 1908, in the Derbyshire village of Spondon, where his father was a general medical practitioner. His mother, Mabel Mary Whitely, came from a family of Nottinghamshire lace manufacturers. Their family consisted of three sons and a daughter, of whom Richard was the second son. As a family, they never left Spondon except for holidays in Suffolk and family visits to a grandmother in Felixstowe. They were not great travellers. In this steadfast immobility we may detect something which came naturally to Richard in later life. The family had the usual rather

spartan comforts and interests of the professional class to which they belonged. They were brought up to have a love of Dickens and Scott and to engage, at a fairly low level of competence, in family games of golf and tennis, activities to which Richard long remained unexpectedly addicted. Financially they were only moderately well off, and scholarships were needed to send the sons to public schools. It seems to have been this need which determined the choice of Haileybury for Richard. In later years he never mentioned his school days, and he seems to have been mildly oppressed by the barbarities of boarding school life. Nevertheless, he made some lasting friendships, among them (Aelred) Sillem, later abbot of Quarr Abbey, and J. R. Liddell, who shared, and perhaps stimulated, his early interest in the Middle Ages.

If Haileybury was lacking in general intellectual stimulus, it provided him with a sound classical education. The Classics master was a former Balliol undergraduate and later Fellow of Merton College, R. G. C. Levens, and it may have been as a result of his encouragement that Richard tried for a Balliol scholarship. He failed to get a scholarship, but with some help from a family trust he was able to go to Balliol as a commoner in 1927. Here he came at once under the influence of his Balliol tutor, R. A. B. (later Sir Roger) Mynors, who will appear frequently in the following pages. In the arts of composition, which then dominated the Oxford study of Latin and Greek, Hunt was only moderately successful, but in his notes and essays which have survived from his undergraduate years we find some remarkable foreshadowings of his later interests and habits of thought. At that time, all undergraduates at Balliol during their first two terms were required to write a general essay each week on subjects chosen by the Master. All these early essays of Hunt's have survived, with careful notes of the tutors to whom they were read, and the remarks which they made about them. With hindsight, it is possible to see that these essays gave evidence of some unusual intellectual powers, and it is perhaps not very creditable to the search for brilliance which the tutorial system encouraged that they seem to have evoked no more than mild commendation. His essay on Lewis Carroll, written in his second term, already shows his extraordinary faculty for picking out bibliographical details which could be used to illustrate important themes. Moreover, at a time when the importance of logic in Lewis Carroll's writing was not as widely appreciated as it now is, Hunt saw that it was one of the mainsprings of Carroll's life and a permanent influence in his books.

It also made him [he continued] very precise and meticulous. We are told that from January 1861 to the time of his death he kept a précis of every letter he wrote. There are 98,721, and all indexed with an ingenious system of cross-referencing devised by himself. . . . His poetry was not the merely imaginative nonsense poetry of Edward Lear. It is mostly either parody or composed on scientific principles. Take the quatrain which appears in *Through the Looking Glass*, 'Twas brillig and the slithy toves . . .': this was made up in 1855 long before the rest of the book was thought of, and was originally meant as a parody of Anglo-Saxon poetry and fitted with a glossary. . . . These books are thoroughly a part of our nursery tradition, itself perhaps the greatest in any language.

I do not know how competent he was at that time to pronounce on the nursery tradition in any language other than English, but the remark has the stamp of his mature years, and no one who knew him in later life can read these sentences without seeing the man who later wrote about the indexing symbols of Robert Grosseteste and the logical grammarians of the twelfth century.

More immediately important for the future, these years also saw the beginning of his lifelong habit of transcribing with meticulous accuracy the unpublished contents of medieval manuscripts. Among the earliest of these is a transcript of verses in a Trinity College manuscript (no. 34). Hunt noted its date (quite in his later style): 's.xii ex.' and the record of his transcription: 'copied in J. R. H. Weaver Esq.'s room in Coll. Trin. Nov. 1930'.

Several notebooks survive which testify to the range of his undergraduate reading—not only Helen Waddell's *Wandering Scholars* and Haskins's *Twelfth Century Renaissance*, which many an undergraduate of that time read with a thrill of discovery, but also (which very few undergraduates can ever have looked at) the recently published edition (1930) of *Carmina Burana* by Alfons Hilka and Otto Schumann. His notes on this last publication show that Hunt had already thoroughly grasped the principles of the exhaustive German method of editing.

These are trifles, but they may be mentioned as the earliest symptoms of what was later to become his life's work. Practically, however, the main need for him in these years was to make sure of a First-Class degree if he was to have much hope of an academic career. This gave him a good deal of anxiety; but, after getting only a Second Class in classical Honour Moderations, he got a First in Greats, and this was followed by his election to a Senior Scholarship at Christ Church for two years from October 1931. In the circumstances of the time, and in view of Hunt's repugnance to presenting himself in a favourable light, it was an imaginative choice.

Without delay he set off for Munich, the fountain-head of the modern study of palaeography, with the declared intention of working under the direction of Paul Lehmann. Lehmann in Munich and E. A. Lowe in Oxford were the most distinguished pupils of Ludwig Traube, who at the beginning of the century had shown how the scientific study of manuscripts could be used as an instrument of literary and intellectual history. Lehmann's contributions to medieval studies, like those of Traube himself, were far more than merely palaeographical. He was an innovator in the study of medieval literary forms and in the study of medieval German libraries. It may be conjectured that it was this last interest which was the most powerful influence in taking Hunt to study under him. As long ago as 1907, Lehmann had started under Traube's inspiration to work on the library catalogues of Switzerland and Germany. In 1918 he had produced the first, and in 1928 the second, of the massive series of volumes containing the texts of these catalogues, and there were (and still are) more to come, in 1932, 1933, 1939, 1962, 1977, 1979.

The main inspiration in turning Hunt's attention in this direction came from Mynors, who was at this time urging Hunt to take on, or collaborate in, some kind of similar publication of English library catalogues. Hunt's first reactions were distinctly cool. The sight of Lehmann's icy persistence in a publication which, with all its scholarship, had many of the qualities of a telephone directory, was enough to chill the most enthusiastic admirer. Hunt spoke to Lehmann about it, and Lehmann was not encouraging: it was work, he rightly observed, which could not be undertaken as a spare-time occupation. Lehmann's scholarship made a deep impression on him. Looking back many years later, when he could see his development in perspective, he recorded: 'I always feel grateful to Lehmann for putting me on to an analysis of a big fifteenth century *florilegium* which made me look around for sources.' This work, dry though it was, taught him as nothing else could have done to understand the texture of medieval thought. He worked assiduously in Lehmann's seminar, visited the manuscript collections of Prague in his company, and generally learnt the trade of being a medievalist at its roots.

At the same time, stimulus of a different kind was coming to him from Powicke, who wanted him to write a D.Phil. thesis on Alexander Nequam. Here too Hunt's reactions were cool. If medieval library catalogues seemed too horrendous a task, Alexander Nequam somehow failed to satisfy the breadth of his interests. Yet Powicke was undoubtedly right. Alexander Nequam was a perfect

subject for a D.Phil. thesis: he was an important scholar whose works covered a wide range of grammatical, scientific, and theological learning. His works are preserved in a large, but not overwhelmingly large, number of good manuscripts. They were (and still are) largely unprinted and unstudied; and they are a mirror of a large area of thought at a central moment in the Middle Ages. The arguments for 'adopting' him as a subject were strong, but the impulse was weak.

This nagging choice overshadowed Hunt's last months in Munich in the summer of 1932, while around him a more horrific choice was reaching its fatal issue. Before long Lehmann would be starting his lectures with a Nazi salute. Meanwhile, Hunt certainly benefited from his technical expertise, and by the time he returned to England, he was probably better equipped than anyone in the country at that time with the skills necessary for using manuscripts for studying the literary and intellectual history of the Middle Ages.

His year in Munich had completed his technical education, but the problem of his future was becoming urgent. He had only one certain year of his Senior Scholarship left and he needed something to show for it. Wisely (but perhaps with a slight sense of desperation) he chose Alexander Nequam, and registered as a D.Phil. student at Oxford under Powicke's supervision. In 1933, his Senior Scholarship was extended for a third year so that he could finish his thesis, and in 1934 he successfully applied for a Lectureship in Palaeography at Liverpool in succession to J. A. Twemlow. In 1935 he reported that Alexander Nequam was still hanging heavy on his hands, and though he completed his thesis in 1936, it was by then clear that his heart was not in it.

As soon as the thesis was finished, for all practical purposes Hunt forgot about it. Then and later, his friends begged him to publish it, and common prudence urged the need for publication. As late as 1961, he was persuaded to bring it up to date for publication, and he took some half-hearted steps in this direction. Now, after nearly fifty years, it still remains and still deserves to be published, and it is being prepared for publication by Dr Margaret Gibson. It is a treasury of accurate information about many manuscripts and many points of learned detail over the wide range of subjects covered by Alexander's works. Even in its unpublished state, it has been used more extensively than most theses in the Oxford History Faculty. Why Hunt was indifferent to its publication remains something of a mystery. Of course, everyone is apt to lose interest in a subject after writing about it, and

there are always more important things to do than refurbishing exhausted thoughts for publication. But Hunt's indifference to his longest piece of learned writing has deeper roots than this. Even while he was working on it, his mind was on other subjects, and among these subjects the history of medieval British libraries, which he had not been able to see his way through in 1932, was the most important. This was to be the biggest single interest of his scholarly life, combining, as it did, his early work as an undergraduate in Oxford, when he first discovered the fascination of medieval manuscripts, with his experiences in Munich, when he saw the subject in its full European setting. To understand the way in which the work developed a certain amount of background explanation is needed.

III

An interest in the contents of medieval libraries was not new in England. It had a long and continuous history going back at least to the thirteenth century. But in modern scholarship, a new age of careful and scientific investigation began in France with the great Leopold Delisle's *Cabinet des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Impériale* (3 vols. 1868–81) followed in Germany by Becker's *Catalogi Bibliothecarum Antiqui* (1885), and then by Gottlieb's and Lehmann's long series of German and Austrian catalogues from 1895 onwards. In England the only scholarly work of comparable importance was that of M. R. James, notably in his publication of the catalogues of Canterbury and Dover (1903) and—most important for our present subject—his short analysis, published in 1922, of the catalogues associated with a fifteenth-century bibliographer, whom James identified with John Boston of Bury St. Edmunds.¹ It was from James at Eton that Mynors had learnt to study medieval manuscripts, and it was from Mynors that Hunt's interest in medieval manuscripts was given its first distinct impulse. Mynors saw Hunt as the scholar who could carry on James's work with the learning and method which had characterized the work of the continental scholars. As we have seen, Hunt was at first reluctant; but no sooner was he fully committed to Alexander Nequam than the libraries of medieval England be-

¹ Dr R. H. Rouse has shown ('*Bostonus Buriensis* and the author of the *Catalogus Scriptorum Ecclesiae*', *Speculum*, 41 (1966), 471–99) that the compiler of the catalogue was not 'John Boston' but a Henry of Kirkstede (probably Kirkstead in Norfolk), a monk and librarian of Bury who died in about 1380. But since Hunt and his colleagues referred to the author as 'Boston of Bury' in all their discussions, I have retained this label.

came a major feature of his thoughts and efforts. The evidence for this growing interest can be found in countless notes from the years from 1933 onwards. His earliest sketch of the subject goes back to an unpublished paper on *English Monastic Libraries* which he read to the undergraduate History Society of Keble College in the spring of 1934. Like his thesis, from which it was then an imprudent diversion, it deserves to be printed even after this long lapse of time, for it contains a sketch of the physical and mental conditions under which scribes and authors pursued their tasks in the face of wind and weather, neglect, imperfect information, and the disapprobation of their superiors, which can be found nowhere else so well portrayed. There is one passage which deserves to be quoted, for it contains the key to a great deal of Hunt's later career:

In conclusion I should like to touch on the subject of how far books in one monastery were available to others. Little has been done on it so far. I think we may safely say that books were lent from one house to another for the purposes of transcription, though I cannot remember an instance of it later than the ninth century. . . . Some scholars, as William of Malmesbury, journeyed round in search of materials. But if a book was not in the library of one's house, was there any means of discovering it without writing round until you struck a copy? It may be surprising to some people to discover that there was. The earliest example comes from France. There existed in the seventeenth century (two Benedictine scholars saw it) a catalogue of the library at Savigny, and bound up with it the catalogues of Mont St. Michel, Caen, Bec, Jumièges. The date is variously given as 1210 or 1240. Of it, Delisle says (*Cabinet des Manuscrits*, i, 527), 'I do not know any document that shows so clearly how abbeys in the Middle Ages gave a real publicity to their catalogues, and how monk-scholars knew where to find books which were not in the library of their own house'. A fragment (*ib.* ii, 42, 196, 513) has also been found of a general catalogue of the Paris monasteries for the use of students at the Sorbonne.

In England we have a much more ambitious scheme. There exists more than one copy of a work which contains the names and works of all the commoner writers (mainly theological) used in the Middle Ages. The number varies [in different versions] from seventy to ninety-two. Against each work, there is a number or a series of numbers. Each number represents a monastery. Thus if we turn up Alexander Nequam, the first work given is his commentary on the Song of Songs; and against it are the numbers 142, 108, 15, XII, 46. These numbers stand for the following monasteries: Rievaulx, St. Peter's Gloucester, St. Albans, Buildwas and St. Neots. The catalogue was almost certainly compiled by the Franciscans, for it arranges England into seven Custodies, and among the Custodies appears Salisbury, which ceased to exist before 1331. Further, there are very few libraries of friars mentioned, and those

that do occur are almost certainly a later addition. Therefore, it looks as if it were drawn up before the friars had collected large libraries. It is closely connected with another composite work, a collection of references to the incidental comments of the fathers on the Scriptures, and both together are known as the *Tabula Septem Custodiarum*. Thus, on Prov. XXXI.10 it gives references to Ambrose on Luke, Augustine Sermon 35, Bede on Luke, and St. Bernard's second homily on '*Missus est Angelus*'. It indicates whether these references are anagogical, allegorical or tropological and gives exact references to book and chapter, in each case using subdivisions 'a' to 'g' and the opening words of the passages. Together they were meant to be a help to the theologian and preacher.

In the fifteenth century it was much enlarged by, it seems, a monk of Bury called John Boston. His list includes 672 authors and gives some slight account of their lives, where there is an easily available source. For many works it does not note the existence (of any manuscripts). Of course it contains many mistakes. But so far as is known, there is no parallel in the rest of Europe.

The importance of this passage is that it was a first attempt to put in the larger setting of their purpose as aids to theological study the remarkable series of documents to which M. R. James had called attention in 1922. The passage also shows that, already in the spring of 1934, Hunt had done a great deal of detailed work on these lists. By the middle of 1935, with his thesis still unfinished, Hunt had prepared a transcript of the earliest of this series of texts, preserved in the Bodleian MS Tanner 165. Hunt reported this achievement to Mynors on 28 March, adding that he had also got some distance in understanding the method of compilation and the causes of confusions which were later to give much trouble to its editors. He had worked out that the composite catalogue was based on reports of manuscripts actually seen in the libraries enumerated. To this extent, therefore, it contained first-hand evidence of existing volumes; but reassuring though this was, there was the warning that 'the compiler must have been absolutely at the mercy of the contributions sent in', Mynors's reaction to this news was immediate. On 5 April he wrote: 'It is heroic of you to have transcribed already the vast mass of Tanner. . . . It clearly ought to be the first volume of a *Corpus Catalogorum* under the auspices of the British Academy.' On 30 May, after studying the transcript, Mynors wrote again: 'it marks an epoch in medieval studies.' Almost certainly by this time Hunt had already completed some of the remarkable studies identifying the works and manuscripts mentioned in these lists, which are to be found among his notes. Two years later Mynors himself contributed to this

venture by completing an elaborate annotated transcript of the later, larger, and even more baffling catalogue associated with John of Boston. By 1937, therefore, the study of this collection of catalogues and the identification of the works and manuscripts mentioned in them was well advanced. Why then, did it not appear? Why is it still, even now, a project adopted by the British Academy for *future* publication?¹

The main part of the answer to this question is that the project grew in complexity as it developed. The number of detailed enquiries necessary for turning bare lists of books and libraries into reliable accounts of real men, real libraries, and actual manuscripts became larger and larger. So far as Hunt was concerned, the range of these enquiries was soon extended to embrace a complete survey of all the existing British manuscripts of which the medieval provenance could be established. This soon became a distinct project on its own, and like the 'Boston of Bury' project, it also had a tendency to grow as it progressed. The earliest evidence for the existence of such a project in the Hunt papers is a letter from Mynors of 9 April 1932, mentioning that he had started a 'slip catalogue of manuscripts of known provenance, which has quickly reached over 800 slips'. More collaborators, notably Hunt and Liddell, were quickly drawn in, and the accumulation continued from several different sources. Among Hunt's papers there is a list of manuscripts of monastic provenance in Cambridge University Library, with a note in his hand: 'copied by Pink and given me by J. R. L(iddell), 1936'. In this list the evidence for continuing activity is clearly apparent. The original list contained about 100 manuscripts, but there are many additions in Hunt's hand. So the process of collection was going ahead vigorously in the years from 1932 onwards, and it was given still further momentum under the impulse of C. R. Cheney. In November 1937 he suggested that a collaborative effort should be made to produce a list of all extant British manuscripts of known monastic provenance. From this time, work on this project (very soon extended to include secular as well as monastic libraries) went ahead with increasing vigour with a uniform system of descriptive cards, a single collecting centre, and with N. R. Ker emerging as its editor and chief collector and executive, while Hunt was increasingly the member of the group to whom everyone turned for criticism, information, and an authoritative judgement on doubtful points. The team was remarkable in bringing together

¹ The work is now well advanced, and the long-awaited edition of these catalogues, edited by Richard and Mary Rouse, will appear before long.

in total harmony and mutual confidence four or five men of different talents but with a single object. Their work in the years before 1940 did more than anything else to lay the material foundations for the later study of intellectual life in England in the Middle Ages: in a unique way, it linked learning to the harsh realities of physical objects and available resources. It is hard to believe that this could have been accomplished in so short a time by any other combination of scholars. But there was a price to pay: quite abruptly the 'Boston of Bury' project began to take second place to *British Libraries*. Hunt recognized that the later project was a necessary preliminary to the completion of 'Boston'. It will, he wrote, 'save an endless labour' in locating manuscripts, and 'be a means of making available the things we find by the way'.¹ The consequence was that *British Libraries* took an increasing proportion of his time. His correspondence with Ker (it has survived on both sides in remarkable completeness) gives a picture of scholarly co-operation worthy of a better age. It will not be out of place to quote a small part of one long letter from Hunt to Ker as an example of the kind of co-operation which was quietly bringing about, at this most unfavourable moment, the publication of a remarkable piece of historical scholarship. The letter is dated from Liverpool 25 September 1940:

I have been going through M(edieval) B(ritish) L(ibraries) with great enjoyment, slightly tempered by fears for the safety of the MS. The notes I have made speak for themselves, though some of them may give you some trouble, I am afraid, because I have not always been able to verify my queries: and some of them may turn out to be mare's nests.

I have only checked thoroughly those houses, whose MSS. or catalogues I have gone into at one time or another. I would have done more, but have not had time. The library A.R.P. regulation is that everyone 'without exception or excuse' either leaves the building or descends to the lowest stack floor, which isn't furnished with books.

Will you look up Berlin Phill. 1805 and 1904? We haven't the Berlin catalogues here and my notes are insufficient to show whether their

¹ The question of priority between the two projects was probably never explicitly faced, partly because M. R. James's judgement that the publication of the 'Boston' catalogue was an essential preliminary to 'any really thorough investigation of ancient English libraries' was accepted without dispute. Hunt's contrary judgement was the result of several years' work, which had shown that 'Boston' presented a mass of problems, which could only be resolved by a detailed study of the surviving books from the constituent libraries. For M. R. James's initial judgement, see his study of the library at Bury St. Edmunds in *Cambridge Antiquarian Society Octavo Publications*, xxviii (1895), 34; and R. W. Pfaff, *M. R. James* (1980), p. 201, for a general account of these developments.

provenance can be determined. According to my notes, C(orpus) C(hristi) C(ollege, Cambridge, MSS) 28 and 182 both have erased inscriptions, but the MSS. were in CCC when Jock (Liddell) and I went through them, and we didn't try the ultraviolet.

If there are things in my notes which are not intelligible, just send them back with fierce comments and I'll try to elucidate them.

This letter was almost the last which passed between Hunt and Ker on this subject before the volume, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, was printed. On 1 August 1940, Cheney ('at three in the morning' after 'pretty long hours in a government office') had written to Hunt: 'Here is a sample page of our Med. Brit. Libraries for your comments and criticisms. If we can finish it off soon, we can get it printed and published by the R. Hist. Soc. at once—the printer has *just* enough paper and the Society is willing.' The volume was in fact 'finished off soon', and it was published by June 1941.

With this part of the 'medieval libraries' enterprise successfully completed, the way was clear for a final push to finish the earlier 'Boston of Bury' project. But the war was now pressing more closely than before. So far as Hunt personally was concerned, his second marriage in 1942, his growing family, and above all his increasing obligations towards Liverpool University (the Professor of Medieval History, Coopland, had retired in 1940; no successor was appointed till 1945, and in the interval a large part of his work was done by Hunt) all combined to make immediate progress on 'Boston' impossible.

It was the fate of 'Boston' to be continually thrust aside by other projects which appeared to be necessary to it either as a foundation or overflow. It was in this guise that, in the last months of 1937, yet another project began to present itself. This was a plan for a new periodical which would gather up the flow of new discoveries. On 29 November 1937, Hunt wrote: 'I have been discussing lately with a friend (Dr. Raymond Klibansky) the possibility of starting a periodical to deal with medieval thought and learning. Such a periodical is badly wanted. There is no English periodical which will print material on medieval thought: it has to be sent abroad.' The discussions thus started continued and broadened in scope during 1938. By the middle of the year the outline of the first number of the new periodical had been determined. It only remained to find a publisher, printer, subscribers, and to put out a prospectus. The indomitable energy of Dr Klibansky was largely engaged in canvassing and solving these problems, and in the last days of 1938 a prospectus was issued for

a periodical, familiarly and (in the circumstances of the time) sardonically known as MARS: it announced that *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* would appear twice a year, starting in October 1939 with an appetizing list of thirty contributions promised for the first numbers. The first number was ready in the summer and was sent to Belgium to be printed. It was lost in the turmoil of the following year, printed again in England, and finally appeared in 1941, with a further instalment in 1943. Planned under the imminent threat of war, and brought into existence in the presence of war, it represented a concentration of the new spirit of medieval research which was stirring at that time. The periodical struggled on after the war with four further numbers from 1950 to 1968. The high standard of editing persisted and the need did not diminish, but the periodical languished amid manifold distractions. It deserves to be mentioned here as an expression of the hopes and efforts of the pre-war years.

IV

When the war ended, the 'Boston of Bury' project was immediately revived. But two new obstacles now appeared. The first of these was a minor international incident which, however slight its practical importance, elicited contrasting statements of rare interest from the groups of continental and British scholars interested in the project. To understand the continental point of view we have to go back to M. R. James's article of 1922 which first brought to light the importance of the 'Boston of Bury' group of library catalogues. One of the earliest scholars to grasp the significance of the discovery was the Belgian scholar, Fr. Joseph de Ghellinck, SJ. He wrote briefly about the discovery in a paper for a Congress of Librarians in 1923, and at greater length in a paper of extraordinary brilliance, 'En marge des catalogues des bibliothèques médiévales', in 1924.¹ A brief quotation from this paper will give a clear idea of the point of view and personality of this highly gifted scholar. The dry lists of books in medieval library catalogues, he writes,

sont tout autre chose qu'une pétrification de la bibliographie rudimentaire antique . . . Elles recèlent la matière de tout un chapitre dans l'histoire de l'esprit humain; . . . ces notices anonymes jouent le rôle de témoins dans l'histoire de la diffusion des écrits et de la transmission des idées; . . . elles nous donnent un tableau, souvent très net, de la transmission de la culture, de ses moyens de propagation et de leur

¹ *Miscellanea Francesco Ehrle*, vol. 5, *Studi e Testi*, 41 (1924), 331-63.

rapidité, de la proportion des divers éléments qui y entrent; elles nous apprennent la mesure du succès des ouvrages, le rôle des pays et des époques, des écrivains et des groupements d'écrivains, dans la formation de la pensée médiévale.

It would be difficult to make greater claims than these for any single body of evidence. In Fr. Ghellinck's paper, they were supported by a scintillating array of examples, including the 'Boston of Bury' group of catalogues, of which it is not unfair to say that, dazzling though they are in their variety, they scarcely provide the illumination of *la transmission des idées* promised in the first paragraph. Fr. Ghellinck, however, was certainly the first to appreciate the wider importance of the 'Boston' catalogue which M. R. James had brought to his attention, and the English scholars always, though somewhat quixotically, accepted that he had a prior claim to any future publication. They were, therefore, reluctant to take any step towards publication without his agreement.

After the war, when contact with foreign scholars was re-established, it soon became apparent that the kind of work which Hunt and Mynors had been doing before the war was not what Fr. Ghellinck wanted. He was not at all interested in the identification of the precise manuscripts referred to in these catalogues, nor in the detailed history of the libraries to which they belonged. He was interested only in the evidence which they provided for the use or disuse of the various works mentioned in the catalogues. That is to say, he was interested only in the light they could throw on the general history of Christian thought along the lines which he had laid down in 1924. A bare publication of the lists as they stood would (as he thought) satisfy his needs. With the raw material in front of them in print, it could be left to him and other widely ranging scholars to draw their own conclusions.

This view was entirely consistent with Fr. Ghellinck's earlier writings on the subject. But it struck at the foundations of the detailed work of Hunt and Mynors. With a view to getting a favourable hearing for their point of view they sought the help of W. A. Pantin, who wrote to Fr. Ghellinck giving the views of the English scholars. Ghellinck replied in a letter which is a masterpiece of wit and learned polemic. He first analysed the contrasting points of view of the English and continental scholars: he and his colleagues (he wrote) were interested only in this material as evidence for the diffusion and transmission of literary works, as a contribution to the history of thought and doctrine. Whatever went beyond this was superfluous: 'non pas inutile, mais tout à fait

secondaire'. The English scholars, by contrast, were interested in the history of libraries, or what he called 'la documentation d'histoire bibliothéconomique'. This latter constituted 'la belle tradition anglaise dans l'histoire des bibliothèques, des Botfields, des Edwards, des Bradshaws, des James, etc.' The English scholars were conducting an investigation into points of detail in which he and his friends had no interest. Nevertheless, despite his prior claim to these documents, he did not wish to deprive the English scholars of their chance of realizing their aim 'essentiellement anglais par son objet et ses matières'; but he pointed out that the researches of his English colleagues would take many years, and during this long time the learned world would be deprived of the use of documents which in their simple unadorned state would render 'd'énormes services' to those who could use them for literary and intellectual history. What he and his committee therefore suggested was that the English scholars should prepare the documents for immediate publication with a minimum of introduction, and without any attempt to identify individual manuscripts or to describe the state of individual libraries. Once published, they could get on with their own researches at leisure without depriving the learned world of the documents which it needed. This manner of proceeding was, he claimed, a well-established practice. It would release the documents in a form that would provide 'un remarquable ensemble de renseignements pour la tradition littéraire du moyen âge et pour les inspireurs de sa pensée' and it would give the English scholars ample time for their secondary investigations.

The contents of this letter must have given its recipients a *mauvais quart d'heure*. If Fr. Ghellinck was right they were relegated to the position of humble toilers at the coal-face, extracting ore to fuel the intellectual powerhouses of Europe, free in their long leisure to potter about among the old books, harmlessly engaged in finding out who had owned them, leaving the more serious work of tracing the intellectual history of Christian Europe to others. The strength of this view of the matter depended upon the correctness of Ghellinck's assumption that the material could be used for his grand purposes without further refinement. It was, therefore, essential, if the contrary view were to be maintained, to demonstrate that nothing could be made of these documents without the most careful assessment of the individual manuscripts, and the clarification of the many confusions embodied in the material available to medieval librarians. To neglect these facts could lead only to a superficial view of the European intellectual tradition.

It was left to Hunt to draft the reply to Fr. Ghellinck. His draft is a monument to his judgement. It also expresses an important principle in intellectual history—the principle that intellectual history cannot seriously be undertaken without the most exact attention to the material circumstances of intellectual work. The draft was later improved by his colleague, but this is the main part of what Hunt wrote:

Dear Fr. Ghellinck,

We thank you very sincerely for your letter in which you state so clearly the grounds for producing a 'provisional' edition of the *Catalogus librorum Angliae* and of Boston of Bury.¹ We very much welcome the frank and open exchange of views on the means of achieving the aim we all have in view, namely of making accessible to scholars the long awaited texts, so valuable, as you say, for the literary history of the Middle Ages.

From the point of view of the wider plan for a *corpus* of English mediaeval Library catalogues it would be a very great advantage to have printed texts of CLA and of Boston to work on; but we are not wholly convinced that a text with the minimum of introduction and a summary critical apparatus, but without any attempt to identify the works of the various authors, would be of great value to scholars. In view of the way the texts were compiled, some attempt at identification of the works mentioned seems necessary, and would surely be appropriate in a series like yours which is notable for the excellence of its apparatus. The examples of 'provisional' texts to which you refer, the edition of the *Martyrologium Hieronimianum* by De Rossi and Duchesne and that of the *Corpus Juris Canonici* by Friedberg are on rather a different footing. There were many editions of both texts in existence already, and Friedberg does give the references to sources.

Here we should like to correct a false impression which our earlier letter created. You say that 'l'œuvre que vous projetez se manifeste tout de suite comme une œuvre de documentation d'histoire bibliothéconomique', while the interest of the *Spicilegium* is in 'la documentation . . . dont peut tirer parti l'histoire littéraire'. We are no less anxious than you to make CLA and Boston really usable for scholars working on the literary history of the Middle Ages. The point we wished to emphasize was that they are texts *very dangerous to use for such enquiries* without a knowledge of the way their compilers worked and of the sources upon which they drew; and it would be impossible to bring this out by a few brief general observations in the introduction.

We think that the best way to make the point clear is to send you one

¹ The first of these texts (generally abbreviated to 'CLA') was the thirteenth-century catalogue made by the Franciscans preserved in the Bodleian manuscript which Hunt had transcribed in 1935; 'Boston of Bury' was the catalogue derived from this and preserved in the Cambridge University Library manuscript which Mynors had transcribed in 1937.

or two specimens of the method of identification we should propose to adopt, (a) for patristic and (b) for mediaeval authors. For patristic authors we should give only a reference to a printed edition (normally Migne, *Pat. lat.*) without any discussion of the true authorship of individual works. For mediaeval authors we should go a little further and indicate summarily, as far as we can, the true author of any particular work. For there is a difference in the weight to be attached to the evidence of CLA and Boston for patristic and mediaeval authors. For patristic authors they merely reflect the manuscript tradition; for mediaeval authors, they may do something more. In both cases we refer to manuscripts only where a special point has to be made, e.g. where the attribution of particular works (or groups of works) to a particular author would be otherwise unintelligible, as in the enclosed specimen of Athanasius, or when the evidence derived from extant manuscripts makes certain the identification of works otherwise only to be guessed at, as in the enclosed specimen of Augustine.

To sum up, we should be prepared to attempt to construct a 'provision' edition of CLA and of Boston, but we should be very reluctant to see such an edition appear without the identification of the works included in them. . . .

. . . We should be glad if you would consider these observations, and send us the comments of the board of Directors of the *Spicilegium*.

So far as I know Fr. Ghellinck's answer has not survived, but in practice the views of the English editors prevailed.

I have described this controversy at some length for two reasons. The first is that, in the light of such criticisms as those of Fr. Ghellinck and, indeed, of thoughts which may arise in the minds of even sympathetic observers, Hunt's lifelong dedication to the task of describing the minutiae of a huge number of individual manuscripts requires justification, and here is its justification in his own words. I have said that Hunt did not easily or frequently think it necessary to explain himself. On this occasion he did so, and it is a striking tribute to the confidence which his colleagues had in his judgement that they left it to him to draft the reply to so formidable a critic as Fr. Ghellinck. His draft shows that their confidence was well justified. No one else could have demolished the thinly veiled dismissal of his and his colleagues' learned activity with more devastating brevity and force.

A second reason for dwelling at some length on this point is that a memoir of Hunt can only be of interest if it makes clear—what he himself never found it necessary to clarify in print—the general purpose served by the many detailed enquiries on which he was engaged throughout his learned life. This debate brings his work and that of his collaborators into the context of the general

development of medieval scholarship during the period from 1930 to 1980. This half-century saw the culmination and decline of two great efforts in medieval scholarship: the English *constitutional*, and the continental *scholastic*, interpretation of the Middle Ages. The first was defective in its parochialism; the second in its lack of parochialism. The first was strong in its grasp of times and places, but limited in its ideas; the second was strong in its grasp of doctrines, but weak in relating these doctrines to practical situations. The first was inspired by the belief that the institutions of government preserved all that was most important in the doctrines of the Middle Ages. The second was inspired by a conviction that the medieval tradition of scholastic thought was the continuing central theme of European civilization. Under the influence of this conviction, a mass of work was produced of great historical and intellectual importance. Its weakness was that it touched only lightly on the conditions which promoted scholastic thought and the pressures to which it responded. The conflict between Ghellinck and the group of scholars with whom Hunt associated was a confrontation between those, like Ghellinck, who wished to describe the stream of thought as an object in its own right, and those who insisted that material circumstances and limitations were an essential part of any realistic intellectual history. It is this contrast which gives the controversy a place of general interest and lasting importance in the history of medieval studies.

Whether or not Fr. Ghellinck was right in thinking that the bare lists of books and libraries would have rendered *d'énormes services* to medieval intellectual history, he was certainly right in predicting that the world would have to wait a long time to have the texts in the form which, as the English scholars insisted, alone made them capable of being used. One reason for this was that the end of the war brought new duties and distractions to all participants. Consequently, the project scarcely moved forward during the next fifteen years, until Richard and Mary Rouse took it up and brought new minds to the task. This is not the place to attempt to assess how much still remained to be done in editing the texts, identifying their contents, and investigating the circumstances in which they were planned and carried out. That is a story which will be told elsewhere.

V

In October 1945 Hunt left Liverpool and returned to Oxford as Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library. Earlier,

he had refused to be considered for important librarianships—notably at Liverpool—on the ground of his lack of administrative experience and skill. But he viewed the Bodleian offer with enthusiasm: ‘there is so much to be done in Bodley’, he wrote on 15 November 1944, ‘and there surely ought to be possibilities for trying to be of some use to people who are working on manuscripts, though I am very vague about the actual duties of the Keeper’. His enthusiasm grew as he learnt more: ‘It is a marvellous prospect’, he wrote on 14 January 1945. ‘When telling me the duties of the Keeper, Craster (then Bodley’s Librarian) put first helping and advising readers, for which I was very glad.’

His immediate impressions on arrival confirmed these high expectations: ‘The work of the library is very exhilarating’, he wrote in describing a sale of Harmsworth Trust manuscripts. ‘I fixed my attention on several manuscripts very inadequately described.’ This was his first venture to the sale-room to pick up manuscripts, which were not expensive, but which made significant additions to the Bodleian collections. The decade after the war was a golden age for acquiring unspectacular but interesting manuscripts. A number of important collections came on the market—not least the large residue of the Phillipps library—and the group of friends who before the war had collaborated in *British Medieval Libraries* and ‘Boston of Bury’ were now largely instrumental in selecting manuscripts to add to the Bodleian collections. Until the mid-1950s prices were still low; yet the Bodleian expenditure on new acquisitions rose from an average of about £400 a year before the war to £3,450 in 1952–3 and to £13,362 in 1962–3. In 1975–6 (the year of Hunt’s retirement) it reached the quite exceptional total of £58,472. This was not a symptom of lavish or indiscriminate buying, but of constant watchfulness. Hunt’s eye for significant detail was equally active in finding sources of finance for new acquisitions and manuscripts which were worth buying.

In addition to purchases, his authority and persuasive power encouraged gifts and deposits. In 1958 Hunt wrote of the arrival of 185 boxes of personal papers of Sir Thomas Phillipps (‘they will take some digesting’), followed by the remaining hoard of English topographical manuscripts: ‘They only arrived [Hunt wrote on Sunday, 15 June], on Thursday afternoon, 15 tea chests. We still have these chests to unpack and haven’t counted them, but there are over 500 vols., so we have our hands full’—this (he added) at a time when ‘the university has just decided that we shall keep the whole library open till 10 p.m. in term time and have given us no money for extra staff’.

Another aspect of his new job, which he was quick to appreciate and act upon, was his responsibility for modern as well as medieval manuscripts, and for administrative as well as literary documents. Nothing was more conspicuous in his thirty-year tenure of the office than his concern for papers of every date and every type. Court rolls and modern diocesan records were among the earliest objects of his energy. On 28 April 1946, he wrote: 'I am having a list of Court Rolls completed for the Register of Manorial Documents, and I am at work with a helper on the conspectus of shelf marks. . . . It is exasperatingly fiddly work.' Almost exactly a year later a new source of trouble made its appearance. On 28 April 1947, he wrote: 'I've been a good deal concerned with Diocesan Records of late. We have taken in a large fresh batch of the Oxford ones. . . . An old mill-stream rose up during the floods and entered the cellar of Church House where the records were kept. . . . I got a team of volunteers and we removed all the wet papers and parchments, and tied each parish into a parcel and carted them all off to our New Building.' These diocesan records kept on arriving for several years as they were released from ecclesiastical custody. Troublesome though they were, they proved to be an endless source of interest to him. He never looked at any documents, however mundane his immediate purpose, without going deeply into the reason for their existence and the forms of life of which they were the record. When the papers of Bishop Wilberforce were being sorted out, he wrote: 'We have been able to learn from them how insufficient is our knowledge of the precise nature of ecclesiastical records.' Characteristically, the chance which brought a growing bulk of diocesan records under his care caused him to revise several long established judgements on the condition of the clergy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and also helped him to deal with practical problems when he was churchwarden of St. Barnabas in Oxford.

Everywhere in his work we see this same interplay between cataloguing, describing, understanding, and forming new judgements on men and their affairs. His judicious buying of manuscripts for the Bodleian was informed by a deep sense of the nature of the collections under his care and of their gaps. He had a special tenderness for the memory of those who were connected with the collections, as we can see in his researches into Archbishop Laud's books, and in his sympathy for Shelley whose letters form one of the main modern acquisitions among the Bodleian manuscripts. Some of Shelley's letters had been the subject of a forgery scare

which he thought ill-judged, and he dealt with it firmly in the course of other business. On 18 March 1945, he wrote:

I went up to London last Monday, partly to look at a MS. that was being sold at Sotheby's (a collection of fifteenth century theological treatises of some interest, which we got for the modest sum of £34), partly to see some of the B.M. people about the authenticity of a much disputed letter of Shelley to Mary. It belonged to the notorious T. J. Wise, but I am convinced it is genuine. To my joy it had an erased number on it which connects it with a series of letters Shelley wrote to Mary while he was eluding the sheriff's officers, and which were stolen from a desk they left at Marlow when they went to Italy (at least I think so). They were bought back by Mary from a disreputable man who pretended he was a natural son of Byron. He made forged copies of some of them which have caused the trouble. But most of it would have been avoided if only people would take the trouble to look at the originals.

This is a good example of the combination of sympathy and acumen which went with his daily work. This combination was nowhere more needed or more freely exercised than in his dealings with the growing number of researchers from all parts of the world who wanted advice, information, and help. It was the appearance of this growing army of workers which transformed the Bodleian from a quiet and scholarly institution with a small income and staff and an ingrained distrust of readers, into a big business with an annual budget of £1.6 million, a growing staff, and all the complications of a rapidly expanding number of readers. This was something which those who persuaded Hunt to return to Oxford in 1945 had not reckoned with. Another thing which they had not fully appreciated was his extraordinary devotion to readers and students of all kinds and ages. In 1945 he had welcomed the Librarian's assurance that the Keeper's first duty was to help and advise readers; but he carried out this duty with a zeal that was almost ferocious—he was a formidable and outspoken critic of shoddy work, and he had a genius for knowing what a reader needed. To all who came to him, whether casual readers, or members of his staff, or colleagues, he was a lavish source of help on a very wide range of subjects. Often he did not need to be asked: he simply noticed the need and met it. On one occasion it is recorded that he happened to notice that a reader had ordered two manuscripts, from which he deduced that a third, in a college library, would also contain relevant material. He promptly informed the reader, and added yet another to the long list of scholars who were indebted to him for timely information which they could have obtained from no other source. It was this part of

his work which inspired the awe and devotion of scholars from all parts of the world: perhaps no one in this country except Henry Bradshaw at the Cambridge University Library a hundred years ago has made anything like the same impression on the workers in a library.

Some might think that his energies were dissipated by his availability to every caller and to every call on his time. This was the nature of the man. It was one aspect of his total absorption in the task of the moment. In his earlier years he had been a central point of reference on all points of scholarship for a few friends whenever they needed a steady judgement and a sharp eye backed by a retentive memory. In the second and longer phase of his career after 1945 he performed this function for all who came to study western manuscripts in the Bodleian. His scholarly work during the last thirty-five years of his life must largely be looked for in the books and articles published by others, and in his contributions—generally anonymous—to the cataloguing of manuscripts under his care. The acknowledgements of his help in prefaces and footnotes are beyond counting, and even if they could be counted they would give no idea of the extent to which his suggestions and knowledge of the sources, and above all his instinctive understanding of what other scholars were getting at, had transformed many of the works which he helped to bring into existence. He was content with this role. He felt no proprietorship in his learning. He knew that he was not a fluent writer, and he may have sensed that he lacked something—whether selfishness or ambition or a creative instinct—which makes for great productivity. He had none of the unease which lies at the root of a desire to create something new. His own imaginative life was in the writings of the past. He was in daily contact with one of the world's greatest collections of scholarly work, and he enjoyed this contact. He knew and had handled a large part of it. He gave his close personal attention to the work of cataloguing new accessions and revising the old catalogues of the main collections. His historical account of these collections, in the first volume of the *Summary Catalogue*, besides being lucid and accurate, is filled with little touches, which show that he understood the problems of his predecessors. In everything relating to books his judgement was both firm and clairvoyant. He had none of the instability of enthusiasm, but he was capable of explosive outbursts of joy in the presence of a sudden discovery, whether his own or another's. One colleague recalls 'the day when he walked into my study just as I was about to return an Exeter College manuscript which had been deposited

for photography. He opened it, and almost shouted, "That's Petrarch's hand!" It was this kind of incident which makes his memory live in the Bodleian. From 1945 onwards, his life was dedicated to an ideal. After he had been some years in the Bodleian, he wrote: "The more I reflect on librarianship in big "research" libraries, the more I am sure that the librarian ought to be a scholar—not that he will have much time for scholarship, unless he has the energy of a Delisle. But without it, the place becomes devitalized, and the staff sink to be library clerks."

Although the pursuit of this ideal took up most of his time and left him 'not much time for scholarship', it would be wrong to think of him only as a reference system for others. Although he got little pleasure from original writing, he got intense satisfaction from bringing to light and making intelligible the writings of scholars of all periods. He had early begun the practice of copying texts, and he continued this practice to the end. To copy texts which are difficult in subject-matter as well as script is not a mechanical process, but a process calling for deep knowledge and powers of interpretation. It was a process which gave him pleasure in exercising many kinds of skill. In his later years, his transcripts were largely of medieval grammatical texts. He was drawn to this subject partly no doubt because nearly all the writers whom he dealt with had had to learn Latin in the painstaking way in which he himself had learnt it, and their problems had been his problems. But later, the twelfth-century grammarians drew him into the higher reaches of the subject. Long before grammar had become a fashionable branch of modern philosophy, he had discovered that it was the foundation of all medieval thought and had deeply influenced their approach to philosophy and everything else. His first serious work on the subject was stimulated by the need to write something for the new periodical *MARS*. In July 1938 he visited Durham to study a twelfth-century manuscript in which he had found grammatical notes by a number of masters of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, and he went on to Paris to see two related manuscripts. This led to the first of his grammatical studies which appeared in *MARS* in 1943, followed by a continuation in 1950. The latest of his articles on this subject appeared in 1975.¹ Among his papers there are five boxes of grammatical texts and descriptions of grammatical manuscripts, of which some extracts will appear in the invaluable *cahiers* of the medieval Institute of the University of Copenhagen: an interest-

¹ These articles have now been collected and republished, not altogether satisfactorily, in a single volume.

ing illustration of the continuing truth of Hunt's remark in 1938 about the lack of a suitable periodical for such work in this country.

It would weary the reader, and make no essential addition to this sketch of his scholarly character and achievement, to record the many contributions which he made during the last thirty years of his life to co-operative works and learned committees. It must suffice to mention only one publication and two committees.

The publication is the revised edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by Miss E. A. Livingstone and published in 1974. Hunt's contribution to this was second only to that of the editor herself. He read and revised nearly all the medieval articles, and he entirely rewrote several, notably those on Stephen Langton, Gottschalk, Florus of Lyons, Heiric of Auxerre, Gilbert de la Porrée, and Albertus Magnus. This was the kind of writing in which he excelled—correcting mistakes by stealth, adding new information anonymously, and bringing a wide range of up-to-date scholarship to bear on an article that might occupy half a page.

Of committees, the one which he enjoyed most was the Library Committee of Lambeth Palace, on which he served for many years. He liked it because it was a small and informal gathering of congenial colleagues, and it got things done—nothing less than the restoration and reorganization of a great historic library after its destruction in the war. The other committee which 'got things done' was the manuscripts Sub-committee of the Standing Conference of National and University Libraries, of which he was chairman from 1957 to 1975. It sounds like an administrative nightmare; but it was from this unglamorous height that he exercised an effective leadership in promoting scholarly publications which will form part of the permanent equipment of future medievalists. He succeeded in this, not by administrative skill or dominating personality, but simply by knowing the jobs that needed to be done and the people who could do them, and being obviously right. Two volumes of N. R. Ker's *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries* (with two more to come) and Andrew Watson's Catalogue of dated and datable Latin manuscripts in the British Library, already testify to the efficacy of this unobtrusive form of leadership. It was work which he could promote and encourage without strain and without formality because he saw the whole field with the eye of a master and a friend.

A final extension of his genius for collaboration was occasioned by his election as a Fellow of this Academy in 1961. This led to his becoming a member and then chairman of the Committees on the

Medieval Latin Dictionary and British Medieval Texts. The editors of all the projects connected with these committees soon learned like everyone else to draw abundantly from his overflowing well of knowledge.

VI

In the peculiar circumstances of Hunt's life and work—the brevity of his published work and the abundance of unpublished material, together with his wide and deep influence on contemporary scholars conveyed in short notes and verbal observations—it seemed proper to make this memoir a record of co-operative enterprises in which he played a major part even though his name was seldom publicly associated with them. I have tried to give a view of his work as it appeared from near at hand, and as it can still be found in his voluminous papers. To go further and attempt to portray the man, as he appeared to the many scholars who came to him in the Bodleian for work and in his home in Walton Street for refreshment, would go beyond the scope of what I have attempted. Everyone found him helpful to an astonishing degree—helpful both in the range of his original observations and in his willingness to communicate them freely. Everyone found his home life—largely shaped and coloured by the immense good nature and exuberance of his second wife, Kit Rowland—a scene of warm and abundant hospitality. Everyone who knew him will remember his characteristic attitude at home, puffing his pipe under the eaves of his remarkably expressive eyebrows, often silent while others talked, breaking out at times into a deep chuckle or a body-shaking laugh. Not so many saw his rare outburst of indignation, or his stubborn persistence in defending some scholarly truth, or his outspoken enforcement of some simple rule like not smoking in a non-smoking compartment. With all his faculty for appreciating others, he could be very formidable, and even ruthless, as a critic.

The story would be seriously incomplete if these aspects of his personality were omitted. But one example of his absolute rigour on questions of scholarship or the plain rules of life must stand for all. I owe the example to Dr Myres, formerly Bodley's Librarian, and I give it in his words:

Did I ever tell you the tale about Richard's encounter with the old King of Sweden—another learned man—when he visited Bodley? Richard had set out for his inspection some MSS. to take his fancy in Selden End, including the one which figures Noah's Ark portrayed as a Viking Long Ship. The King was delighted with this, and ventured

a date for it. 'No, *No*, *NO!*' thundered Richard, thumping the table with indignation, and announced a different century. But the King stood his ground, pointing to details of construction and rigging, in justification of his date. Richard replied with equally decisive palaeographical considerations, and soon they were hard at it, like a couple of terriers, whom I and the royal equerries, with their eyes on the clock, had the greatest difficulty in separating. When they were eventually persuaded to let go of their respective ends of the bone of contention, both seemed equally delighted with the learned rough and tumble, and equally oblivious of the tattered and irrelevant protocol.

There, in all his simplicity, is the scholar whom we knew.

After the death of his wife in December 1977, the vivacity went out of his domestic life, but he continued to work, and he was still at work when death came suddenly in the night of 13 November 1979.

R. W. SOUTHERN

Note: The compilation of this record has been made possible by the help of many friends of Richard Hunt. I am especially indebted to Dr N. R. Ker, Sir Roger Mynors, and Mrs Joan Varley who have allowed me to use a large collection of letters in their possession, which illuminate different phases of the works described above. They, together with Dr Beryl Smalley, Professor and Mrs Richard Rouse, Mrs G. D. G. Hall, Dr J. N. L. Myres, Dr Bruce Barker-Benfield, Dr A. C. de la Mare, and other members of the Bodleian staff, have enabled me to fill many gaps and correct many errors in my memory of events and in my knowledge of the complicated business of the Bodleian.