



E. G. TURNER

ERIC GARDNER TURNER

1911-1983

A lover of music, a great traveller, an internationalist at heart, a scholar and at the same time a great organizer and promoter—this description, in which friends might readily recognize Eric Turner, comes in fact from an obituary notice of his father. Professor William Ernest Stephen Turner (1881-1963) OBE, D.Sc. FRS, had a remarkable career.¹ Amongst other achievements he established, in 1915, a Department of Glass Technology in the University of Sheffield, of which he was the first director. It gradually became a major international centre for the scientific and industrial study of glass. Eric Turner inherited the energy and the example. He saw how his father had made a comparatively small, specialized unit attractive to scholars world-wide. Like his father, he gambled on the success of such an Institute and, like him, was amply justified. Towards the end of their lives, father and son overlapped disciplines. W. E. S. Turner put out a series of papers on the history of glass which earned him election to the Society of Antiquaries (1958). Eric Turner joined the Organizing Committee of the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi* (he spent many hours studying the medieval glass of English parish churches); and dedicated to his father's memory one of his last papers, that on the painted glass beaker in the Cohn Collection.

Early in his career W. E. S. Turner married Mary Isobel Marshall. Eric Gardner,² their second son, was born on 26 February 1911. He went from Dame School (where swimming was his only distinction) to prep. school (there his writing was the despair of his masters, as it remained to his correspondents and secretaries), to King Edward VII's Grammar School, Sheffield. His school days ended on 4 July 1930, when it fell to him to welcome, in a Latin speech, the visiting dignitary John Buchan;

¹ *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, x (1964), 325-55 (R. W. Douglas). A shorter notice appeared in *The Times*, 31 Oct. 1963.

² The second name is a curious example of textual variation. 'Gardiner' stands in Turner's matriculation record, but 'Gardner' in his marriage certificate and (by his own choice) in *Who's Who* and on his Festschrift.

in October he took up his Demysip at Magdalen College, Oxford.

The college, recently emerged from the long reign of President Warren, was still a relatively small society; among its 150 undergraduates good scholars were no doubt outnumbered by good college men,³ but there was room for talents as diverse as Lionel Brett, N. H. Gibbs, H. Montgomery Hyde, James Lees-Milne, P. B. Medawar and Wilfred Thesiger. Turner worked; for relaxation, he played squash and tennis, and rowed in moderation. Above all, he made music, with other enthusiasts of the string quartet. Chief among these was Derek Allen (a friendship to be renewed when Allen became Secretary of the Academy in 1969).⁴ As undergraduates they shared some of the rigours of unreformed Oxford, where few minds turned to women or politics: if one of his contemporaries was to remember summer light and the scent of wallflowers,⁵ and one of his tutors found 'the best college in the best university in the world' too much of a lotus-land,⁶ Turner recalled the bitter cold of the New Buildings, the coke stove and decaying armchairs of the Holywell Music Room, where he and his fellow musicians (Allen, De Lisle Radice, Turner's elder brother Ernest)⁷ spent many afternoons.

Turner's first tutor must have been J. T. Christie (who moved on to be Headmaster of Repton, 1932, and of Westminster, 1937, later Principal of Jesus): a classic in the old style, an elegant expounder of texts and an accomplished composer in Greek and Latin,⁸ mistrustful of research, but a strict and devoted teacher (his pupils' Saturdays began with Unseens at 9 a.m.).⁹ It may be a tribute to him that Turner himself continued to teach prose

³ 'All of them seemed to have names like Blitherington-Smith or Yuppington-Brown', remembers a freshman of 1932, 'Magdalen had not in those days adopted an admissions policy that put intellectual promise in the forefront of the requisite characteristics' (Peter Medawar, *Memoir of a Thinking Radish* (1986), p. 46).

⁴ *Proceedings of the British Academy*, lxii (1976), 437.

⁵ Wilfred Thesiger, *The Life of my Choice* (1987), p. 77.

⁶ Lord Wolfenden, *Turning Points* (1976), p. 63.

⁷ Italo de Lisle Radice was to make an administrative career in public finance. Ernest Marshall Turner, a fine pianist, came up to Oriel in 1933 to read for the B. Litt.; he was to be Rector of Eyam in Derbyshire from 1946 to 1975. Another contemporary at Magdalen, J. H. Woodroffe, was to marry Turner's sister Margaret.

⁸ He was to publish translations of now unfashionable virtuosity in *More Oxford Compositions* (1964).

⁹ Lord Wolfenden, l.c., p. 57.

composition until very late in his career. Ancient History was in the hands of H. M. D. Parker (a Fellow since 1921), whose *Roman Legions* (1928) still circulates in the annotated reprint of 1958; philosophy fell to the cynical Kantian T. D. Weldon and to the young J. F. Wolfenden, who left Oxford in Turner's last year to be headmaster of Uppingham (1934–44) and so to higher things. What Turner thought of his tutors is not recorded. What they thought of him, he was to learn later: on the basis of his entrance papers, one took him to be a first-class man, two marked him down as a good second. In the event, he confounded the sceptics by taking a first in Mods. in 1932 and a first in Greats in 1934 (the same list included A. N. Sherwin-White, J. B. Ward-Perkins, and A. F. Wells).

Certainly, when Turner came to compose an account of his career for the Vienna Academy, it was none of his tutors that he mentioned: 'I studied under Gilbert Murray and Hugh Last. In 1934 the latter proposed to me that I should undertake work on Roman Egypt and Greek papyri, saying that such work was likely to cause a revolution in classical scholarship and "was capable of shaking its foundations". I learned the craft of palaeography under Sir Harold Bell, and produced my first learned paper in 1936, and my first publication of a papyrus text in 1938.' How Turner met Last is not clear; he taught at another college (St John's), until his election to the Camden Chair in 1936. But the advice was decisive; it followed perhaps from Mommsen's, who thought that the twentieth century would be the century of the papyrologist, as the nineteenth of the epigraphist, and had so encouraged the young Wilcken to his career. If Turner's interest was initially in the historical bearing of the papyri, that will have something to do with Last, and something to do with the instruction available to him. Of the founding fathers of Oxford papyrology, A. S. Hunt survived until 1934; he had (wrote Roberts) 'no inclination for teaching and indeed, given his vast output, little time'.¹⁰ With his death, the succession passed to a duo known, in the jokey language of the time, as Low Bell and High Bell. Edgar Lobel (1888–1982) was then Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian. He had already put out his editions of Sappho and Alcaeus (1925, 1927), he had published papyrological articles and contributed suggestions to Hunt's own publications; but (as Turner himself wrote) his main energies in the years 1928–33 were devoted to the MSS of Aristotle's

¹⁰ *Proceedings of the British Academy*, liii (1967), 417.

Poetics.¹¹ Hunt's death opened access to the unpublished Oxyrhynchus papyri; Lobel was appointed University Reader in Papyrology in December 1935, and from October 1938, having resigned from Bodley, he worked full time on the papyri. But whatever his position he was unlikely to provide instruction: 'I never taught', he told Turner later, 'I was under some pressure to do so. So I put on a course. Nobody came, oh nobody came. The time was one p.m. on Saturday.' Last, at the centre of things, since he was also Acting Secretary of the Egypt Exploration Society, prompted the University to invite Harold Idris Bell, Keeper of Manuscripts in the British Museum (1929-44), to accept an Honorary Readership in Documentary Papyrology (1935-50). Bell had published two volumes of the BM's Byzantine papyri (1910, 1917), and texts of remarkable historical interest, admirably commented, in *Jews and Christians* (1924); his talent for synthesis appeared in *Cambridge Ancient History*, x and xi (1934-6). He came to Oxford to lecture; and Turner went fortnightly to visit him in the Keeper's sanctum.¹² He later recalled 'a spare figure with twinkling eyes and kindly demeanour, sitting in front of a huge fire blazing away behind the padlocked wire fire-guard'.¹³ Turner's first paper, published in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* in 1936, acknowledges his help, and Last's; and takes a theme of administrative history, the relation between Egypt and the rest of the Roman Empire as evidenced in the differences between the δεκάπρωτοι in Egypt and the *decemprimi* in the West. They continued to correspond, and to meet when opportunity offered; when Bell died in 1967, Turner described him as 'a prince of scholars'.

Meanwhile there was a question of money. Turner had been awarded a Goldsmith's Senior Studentship in 1935. But he needed employment. In July 1936 Last recommended him to Alexander Souter; in October Turner duly found himself at King's College, Aberdeen, facing an Ordinary Class of a hundred.

As one of three Assistants in Humanity, at a stipend rather less than that the Goldsmiths had provided, Turner moved in a less cloistered world. Candidates for the Ordinary Degree of Master of Arts were still (under the syllabus of 1892) required to offer at least one classical language. His predecessor had been let go,

¹¹ *Gnomon*, lv (1983), 275 ff.

¹² *Journal of Roman Studies*, lvii (1967), xiii ff.

¹³ *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, liii (1967), 131 ff.

because he could not keep order in class. But Turner, despite the soft voice and the stammer, proved equal to the traditional japes which Bajans and Bajanelas played on the newcomer at the end of term or session: diversionary alarm clocks did not divert him, and the decayed kipper beneath his lectern was simply disregarded. 'The class taught me as much as I ever taught it', he told the Class Reunion in 1981. 'One thing I can truthfully say: I have never been frightened of any audience since then.'¹⁴ It was clearly a happy time. Alexander Souter (1873–1949),¹⁵ Professor of Humanity since 1911, was a man of wide learning and prodigious industry (his *Glossary of Late Latin* remains standard); a devout congregationalist, and a firm believer in the scholar's mission (Turner noted with pleasure the story told of Souter, as of others, that, after lecturing at length to a school party on Gal 1:2, he led on to tea with the prayer 'We thank thee, Lord, for the gift of thy word—and for the grace to emend it'). But he was not so formidable as he might have been. One pupil recalls the cigarette and the race-goer's umbrella, the love of music and of travel.¹⁶ Students and assistants enjoyed his kindness and encouragement; and Humanity Manse was a hospitable place, where Turner played Monopoly on Sunday evenings.

1938 brought two changes. Turner was promoted to the permanent staff, as Lecturer in Classics: a joint post, shared between Greek and Humanity, for the teaching of Ancient History (students normally dieted on proses, unseens, lectures, and wide reading found themselves invited, kindly but firmly, to write essays and join discussions). And he exchanged his lodgings for a more permanent establishment. The University was persuaded to rent 113 High Street, Old Aberdeen, to a group of seven (sometimes nine) bachelor lecturers, thereafter known as The Bothy Boys. The group included two classics (Turner and Douglas Young), four mathematicians, a Germanist, an English scholar, and a philosopher; below stairs, a cook and a housemaid slaved devotedly for their comfort. There was vigorous conversation, and frequent parties, at which music combined with fiercely intellectual games. Senior members of the University looked on indulgently at this experiment in communal living; and Turner remembered them with affection—'Archie

¹⁴ 'The 1936–39/40 Arts & Science Classes Reunion 1981 (Account written by Mr W. Morrison).' I owe a copy of this to the kindness of Miss G. E. McDonald.

¹⁵ *Proceedings of the British Academy*, xxxviii (1952), 255 ff.

¹⁶ See W. Douglas Simpson, *The Fusion of 1860* (1963), pp. 166–8.

Cameron's façade of laziness which concealed a deal of work and sensitivity to language and thought;¹⁷ Douglas Simpson's tread and voice echoing through the library;¹⁸ Colonel Butchart's bowler-hat that saved him from serious concussion when he was knocked off his bicycle;¹⁹ Lindley Fraser's amazement that "talking was the thing he most loved doing in life and he was paid to do it"²⁰ etc. etc.'

Talk and parties did not exclude long hours at the desk in King's College Library (the third bay on the right). Papyrological work continued on several fronts. Synthesis is represented by the paper on the *Gerousia* of Oxyrhynchus (1937), and by the bibliographies of political and administrative novelties contributed to the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* of 1937-9. A new venture is the publication of texts. The University of Aberdeen possesses a small collection of papyri, presented in 1896 by Grant Bey. In 1937 Turner took over from J. G. Tait the task of publishing them, and the volume appeared in 1939: texts for the most part scrappy and uninteresting ('I hope you'll find a little corn among the husks', Turner wrote to Last), but presented with full professional apparatus. Meantime, in 1937, an International Congress of Papyrologists had assembled in Oxford, presided over by 'one of the great legendary heroes of scholarship',²¹ the septuagenarian F. G. Kenyon, newly returned from the Spanish Front.²² The joint secretaries were C. H. Roberts and T. C. Skeat. Turner, still an unknown, saw the occasion as a turning point. 'Through participation in the Congress' (he wrote) 'and the example of my teacher Bell, I realised the importance and fruitfulness of international collaboration in scholarship, and developed a passion for foreign travel.' In 1938 Turner was able to meet the old master himself, Ulrich Wilcken; the publication of *PAberdeen* began correspondence with C. H. Roberts and other colleagues.

The war made at first relatively little difference. Academic life continued. Among recent arrivals in Aberdeen was a new lecturer in history. Louise Barbara Taylor had herself been an

¹⁷ Professor of Greek since 1931.

¹⁸ University Librarian. 'He actually patrolled the library' (remembers a student) 'to make sure we were all working—and to pass the time of day with the prettiest of the girls.'

¹⁹ Secretary to the University.

²⁰ Jaffrey Professor of Political Economy.

²¹ *Gnomon*, xxiv (1952), 527 f.

²² *Proceedings of the British Academy*, xxxviii (1952), 292.

undergraduate in Aberdeen (1926–30); she had then taken a B.Litt. at St Hugh's College, Oxford (1930–2), and proceeded to a Lectureship in Bangor (1933–8). She returned to her own university in 1938. Turner proposed to her on 19 September 1940, and they were married on 3 October in King's College Chapel.

Meanwhile, the wartime intelligence work at Bletchley Park had begun, deeply secret and long to remain so; and in January 1941 Turner was summoned to join the group. From 17 Feb. 1941 to 30 June 1945 he remained in the employment of the Foreign Office (ending with the grade of Temporary Senior Administrative Assistant). To begin with, he was billeted in a railwayman's cottage, with a landlady whose garbled clichés enlivened a gloomy environment. Louise resigned her post at the end of the session, and joined him in his new billet in the village of Simpson. After a few months they moved to a house of their own in Woburn Sands, then a small village on the edge of extensive woodlands, in which Turner delighted to walk when shiftwork left him free for a few brief hours of daylight. He became a keen gardener, especially of vegetables; Louise served briefly in the Bletchley Police force, until their children were born (Hilary, 13 August 1942; Nicholas, 25 June 1944). Turner remembered friends from this period, notably Walter Ettinghausen (later, as Walter Eytan, to have a distinguished career in the Israeli Foreign Service); of his work for the project he never spoke.

In July 1945 the Turners could return to Aberdeen. They decided to rent, and settled on renting a small palace. Tillydrone House, 12 The Chanonry, Old Aberdeen, had been built about 1767 as the country residence of a New Aberdeen merchant; it was a Palladian bungalow, with a drawing room which could have contained two of the prefabricated houses of the time, and their gardens (a mixed blessing in days of fuel rationing), and a basement to house cook and housemaid. Here, convenient to Seaton Park, King's College, and the Botanic Gardens, papyrological work resumed. In the John Rylands Library in Manchester a part of the splendid collection remained unedited; C. H. Roberts had been working on it since before the war (he had published the theological and literary texts in 1938); in 1946 Turner joined him, and the partnership published the fourth (documentary) volume in 1952. International relations resumed more slowly. In April 1949 Turner went to the Epigraphic Congress in Paris, where he met Louis Robert, Jean Mallon, and

Dennis van Berchem (who became a life-long friend and colleague); then, in September, the International Congress of Papyrologists met, again in Paris, a cheerful week, culminating (as Turner later recalled) in a day's visit to Chartres with Bell and Mynors, fireworks at Versailles, and a performance of *Britannicus* as long as it was memorable.

Meanwhile, in 1948, University College London had created a Readership in Papyrology, and offered it to Turner. The family moved back south, and settled in Berkhamsted on the Euston line. (The other commuters read newspapers; Turner read offprints.) This began Turner's long association with University College. He was Reader, and then (from 1950) Professor *ad hominem*, finally, on his retirement in 1978, an Honorary Fellow; in 1966–8 he served as Dean of the Faculty of Arts, at precisely the time when the office changed from a congenial social chore to a Chairmanship with major financial and administrative concerns—concerns which he went out to meet. The terms of his appointment required him to spend half his time as a specialist, and half in more general teaching for the Department of Greek. Cooperation with successive heads of that Department (T. B. L. Webster, 1948–68; and then E. W. Handley) was always close, and even in his later years Turner regularly lectured on one of the Greek set books, and took his six or eight tutorial pupils, hearing essays and correcting proses and translations with zest (to him, 'translation' often meant several pages, rather than the conventional tortuous paragraph). Nor was the association strictly academic. He was active in the Picture Club and the Chamber Music Club; joined other members of the Professors' Dining Club not merely in dining, but in bottling and corking the Club's wine; and took part enthusiastically in the Department's annual retreat to Windsor Great Park (his presence commemorated, as he noted, by the Turner Route up the Copper Horse).

Intellectual interests were also expanding. On the documentary side there was work on the ptolemaic papyri from Hibeh, published in 1955; and, with more emphasis on synthesis, the project conceived by Martin and Bell, who invited Turner and van Berchem to join the work in 1948, to republish the papers of the Roman army officer Flavius Abinnaeus—not finished until 1962, but already the subject of Turner's paper to the London Classical Society in May 1949. His enthusiasm to communicate to the widest possible audience showed itself in a paper on Oxyrhynchus and its papyri produced with schoolteachers and their pupils in mind (*Greece and Rome*, 1952), duly fortified with

excellent plates. But work on ancient books and ancient writing now makes a decisive appearance. In 1950, now a professor, Turner gave his first London seminar on Greek palaeography to a distinguished audience (among them, G. E. M. de Ste Croix, D. J. Furley, E. W. Handley, J. H. Kells, R. Browning, T. B. L. Webster); for his inaugural lecture, in May 1951, he chose the subject of 'Athenian Books'. This trend was to continue in 'Roman Oxyrhynchus' (1952), 'Recto and Verso' (1954), and the paper he gave to the Papyrological Congress of Vienna in 1955, 'Scribes and Scholars of Oxyrhynchus'. All these, like his later palaeographic work, looked at the practicalities of ancient book production in their social context; as he wrote to the Vienna Academy, 'my interest in papyri expanded from documentary work to the milieu in which our surviving papyri circulated in antiquity (the society, history and literary atmosphere of ancient Alexandria and Oxyrhynchus).'

In the middle of this came a new challenge. On 16 October 1953 the new Institute of Classical Studies of London University opened its doors. Turner had been working quietly towards this end since 1950; and he became the first Director. The beginnings were necessarily modest: the Institute shared premises (50 Bedford Square), and was to conjoin its library, with the Hellenic and Roman Societies; the skeleton staff (as Turner called it in his first report), Joyce Southan as Librarian and Alicia Totolos as Secretary, handled all the academic activity and a book-budget of £200 a year. But in five years the staff and the budget grew with success; and Turner's persuasions secured a new home in the Institute of Archaeology then building in Gordon Square. The Chancellor of the University, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, opened these splendid new premises on 29 April 1958 (she took a special interest in the demonstration of papyrus-making by Mr Baker of the British Museum). 'The actual move' (says the Report) 'was accomplished in ten days, the books being arranged on the new shelves by members of the Library and Institute staff, with the help of some student labour.' One visiting papyrologist remembered his first sight of the eminent Professor Turner: 'I found him in his shirt-sleeves in the Institute, moving books; before long I too was in my shirt-sleeves, moving books.'

Even in its beginnings, the Institute took a leading place in scholarly life, both in forwarding research and (through lectures, seminars, and the Bulletin) in communicating results. It was in that same autumn of 1953 that Michael Ventris published his

decipherment of the Linear B script.²³ The new Institute at once took up the new discipline; its Linear B seminar served as an essential forum, and its Bulletin published texts and surveys of progress. Turner himself contributed a paper on 'Place Names in the Pylos Tablets' to the first issue, and the bibliography of Linear B Studies to the second (1955); and it was he who, after Ventris's death, summed up the revolution in *TLS*, 1956. There were also more traditional topics: Skutsch (on the fragments of Ennius), Webster (on Greek literary portraiture), and Turner (on unpublished papyrus texts) opened a series of seminars by distinguished locals. In the following years Turner took a class on juridical papyri; made his sessions on Greek palaeography and on unpublished papyri annual events; and took the lead in discussions of the papyrological sensation of the decade, the complete *Dyscolus* of Menander (published in 1958). Invited speakers, and distinguished visitors like Nock and Trendall, added to the activity; the sense of purposeful excitement attracted graduate students. In ten years Turner's Institute had become a world centre of classical studies.

But for Turner teaching and administration did not exclude research and travel. Contributions to *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (1957, 1959, 1962), the final work on the Abinnaeus papers (1962), a whole series of other articles and reviews, the widening exploration of the *Dyscolus*, overlapped with trips to the Triennials in Oxford (1955) and Cambridge (1958), the Papyrological Congresses of Vienna (1955), Oslo (1958) and, in the midst of the Berlin crisis, Warsaw (1961). In 1959 he worked in Milan, in 1961 at the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton; he visited Athens, to celebrate the opening of the Stoa (1956), Kingston, to teach (at the behest of the Colonial Office) in the University of the West Indies (1957), and Egypt, to inspect the work of the EES there (1962-3). Meantime, the classical world came to London for the International Congress of 1959, of whose organizing committee he was chairman. All this made him a distinguished figure (he had been duly elected to the British Academy in 1956). But it had its cost. Overwork took him away from his family, and undermined his health. He returned ill from Greece in 1956, and spent three months in hospital, the first of a series of only partially diagnosed illnesses against which he had to struggle for the rest of his life. In the summer of 1958 his doctor

²³ M. Ventris and J. Chadwick, 'Evidence for Greek Dialect in the Mycenaean Archives', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, lxxiii (1953), 84 ff.

advised a rest and a holiday; Turner duly set out to visit Bell in Aberystwyth—by bicycle. He collapsed again during the Conference of 1959, and spent more time in hospital. By 1962 he was complaining of intellectual exhaustion and persistent insomnia: in June of 1963 he again returned ill from Egypt, and only will-power kept him going through a meeting of young papyrologists in London. 'It is one of the trials of our human situation', wrote Bell, 'that the body, "brother ass", will kick at last if we overtax it too much.' He needed more time; and stepped down from the Director's post.

In the meantime he had taken on another responsibility: that of Chairman of the Committee of the Egypt Exploration Society (1956–78). The EES was (and is) not a normal society: it fulfilled, without premises, the functions of a British School in Cairo. Its membership ranged from old masters to young amateurs, and its digging from prehistory to the Arabs and Mamelukes. A balance had to be held between romance and science, archaeologists and philologists, publication and excavation. Turner, elected to the post on the sudden death of S. R. K. Glanville, and in the crisis year of Suez, stood above the pharaonic factions; and his diplomacy (the 'buttering and log-rolling of societies' which Petrie had so much despised) was crucial in holding things together. During his twenty-year tenure, the Society's membership, and its budget, quadrupled; it secured a new base in Doughty Mews (1968); it developed new activities for members, and a new branch in Manchester (1976); it undertook a new and wider programme of fieldwork, at Saqqara (reopened in 1964), at Buto (from 1964), at the Nubian sites of Buhen (from 1957), Qasr Ibrim (from 1963), and Kor (1964–5). In all this Turner played a leading part, in London as on his visits to Egypt; the egyptological work owed much to his wide influence and international prestige, and his rare talents as publicist, fund-raiser, negotiator, and organizer.

The Graeco-Roman Branch of the Society was naturally a special interest. The Society's digs at Bahnasa (Oxyrhynchus) in 1897–1907 had produced a huge treasure of Greek papyri (50,000 pieces would be a conservative estimate). Publication went on at a brisk, indeed amazing, pace until 1929. Then Hunt's death (1934), and the distractions of the war years, allowed very little progress; only in 1949 is there a new start, under the editorship of C. H. Roberts and then of Turner himself. The volumes, sensational in their literary content, were expensive to print; subventions from UNESCO and the Jowett Trustees paid

a large part. Meanwhile the mass of the papyri remained uncatalogued; only Lobel knew the parts which especially interested him. Turner decided on a major reorganization, and obtained pilot grants from the Gulbenkian Foundation and from the British Academy. It was the Academy which, in 1966, adopted the Oxyrhynchus Papyri as one of its Major Research Projects. The systematic conservation, cataloguing, and photography of the papyri began; and their publication became a collaboration, in which the Academy financed the technical work, the Egypt Exploration Society the printing, and the Universities of London (University College) and Oxford (the Ashmolean Library and the Lit. Hum. Faculty) provided premises and manpower. Volume xxxiii (1968) was the first to be published 'for the British Academy'. Three volumes appeared in that year; since then, at least one volume has come out each year. Turner himself contributed to nine volumes. And it was his activity in recruiting and supervising editors (many of them his own pupils), and his efficiency in pushing the volumes through press, that sustained the momentum of a series which has remained a paradigm of papyrological editions.

Papyrology has always been an international business; and Turner took a leading part in promoting his subject world-wide. From 1965 to 1974 he served as President of the Association Internationale des Papyrologues, and chaired its congresses in Ann Arbor, Marburg, and Oxford. He took the opportunity of a visit to Herculaneum in 1970 to state publicly the case for resuming excavation there.²⁴ Part of his function he saw as educational. Younger scholars from Poland, Italy, Egypt, Germany, Israel, the US, Denmark, and Finland were encouraged to work on Oxyrhynchus material, and their results published in the series. In summer 1963 he organized a meeting of younger scholars in London; in 1967 he took a seminar on the normally stony soil of Cambridge; in 1966-9, on the invitation of the American Society of Papyrologists, he led Summer Schools at Yale, Princeton, Philadelphia, and Berkeley, which were to initiate and encourage a new generation of papyrologists in the United States. His pupils in London included two, John Rea and Michael Haslam, who were to lead the field.

Internationalism functioned also at a higher level. The Union Académique Internationale had been founded in the wake of the First World War, with a view to 'co-operation in the promotion

²⁴ *Cronache Ercolanesi*, i (1971), 7-10.

of knowledge by collective research and publication in those branches of learning fostered by member Academies and Scientific Institutions: philology, archaeology, history, the moral, political and social sciences'. The UAI's enterprises included such distinguished projects as the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* and *Aristoteles Latinus*; its distinguished Presidents (beginning with Henri Pirenne) have included F. G. Kenyon (1929–32) and R. A. B. Mynors (1956–9). Turner served as one of the British Academy's delegates from 1966, and as Vice-President 1970–3; and in 1974 he was elected President himself. Characteristically, he set about producing the first ever Handbook to the UAI and its projects; 'the outside world', he noted in the preface, '... is little inclined to take notice of a body that has no pride in its own achievements.' The result was both humane and informative. 'Comment diable faites-vous?' wrote a Swiss colleague, 'Vous parvenez à être "acribique" sans pédantisme; à être diplomate sans manquer de fermeté; à être rigoureux et repli de poésie et d'humour.'

The activity was tremendous. 'In Homburg hat with two travelling bags'—so the Public Orator of the University of Liverpool, in presenting him for his honorary doctorate in 1978—'he has organized the papyrian studies of the world.' 1971 reached a high point. He was President of the Hellenic Society; Vice-President of the UAI; Chairman of the Committee of the EES; Chairman of the Committee of Management of the Warburg Institute (he had been a member since 1959, and Chairman 1965–78). Besides his regular tutorial work and lecturing, and postgraduate supervision, he was acting head of Department from January to July. In January and February he delivered the J. H. Gray lectures in Cambridge (later *The Papyrologist at Work*); in March he visited Egypt, to organize affairs after the sudden death of W. B. Emery; in early April he delivered the A. S. W. Rosenbach lectures in Philadelphia (later *The Typology of the Early Codex*); in May came the première of Mirek Donal's film *Greek Papyri* (Turner had suggested the subject to the head of the Slade Film Unit; he and his pupils and colleagues starred, with *Zauberflöte* in the background, and many hours of patient labour; the film won a silver medal at the Venice Festival); in November he was in Switzerland, visiting the Bodmer Library. Meantime he was reading proofs of *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. xxxviii; and paying weekly visits to Oxford, to supervise the production of *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*.

Meanwhile work continued on the unpublished papyri.

Turner's interests had now expanded to Greek drama. In 1962 *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. xxvii, published the results of several years' work on new fragments of Sophocles and Euripides and (especially interesting) of the 'Tales from Euripides', the alphabetic series of summaries which offers much new information about the lost plays. The volume contained also Turner's first publication of a Menandrian papyrus. The father of *sit. com.* had enjoyed chequered fortunes: a major favourite in the Roman Empire, then (it seems) bumped from circulation by the loucher but linguistically more laudable Aristophanes, he had emerged from darkness with the publication of the Cairo Codex in 1907. Smaller novelties followed. Then, in 1958, Victor Martin published the complete *Dyscolus* from the Bodmer codex. The world burst into commentary; Turner took a leading part, and announced the find in *The Times* of 6 June. From this point New Comedy had a central place in his work, and in his admiration; it was he who presided over the *Entretien* on Menander of the Fondation Hardt (1969). He himself edited new fragments of *Epitrepontes*, *Karchedonios*, *Kolax*, *Phasma*, and *Samia*; he made a special contribution to *Misoumenos*, first in deciphering a codex of peculiar difficulty, and later in recognizing and reconstructing two coincident fragments to restore a Menandrian prologue of peculiar charm.²⁵ More general questions also engaged him: illustrations in Menander papyri, the general lay-out of *Phasma*, 'Menander and the New Society of his Time', 'The Rhetoric of Question and Answer in Menander'. He published a translation of *Samia* (1972), and introduced the play when his version was broadcast. Among all this, he found further time to work on material from the Egypt Exploration Society's current excavations: Augustan books from the legionary fortress of Qasr Ibrim (1976),²⁶ fragments of the fourth century BC from the great necropolis of Saqqara (1974-6);²⁷ a complete edition of the Saqqara papyri was unfinished at his death.

Turner's palaeographic work continued in parallel. Questions of origin and milieu played a large part in *Greek Papyri* (1968; augmented edition, 1980), the general treatise which remains the standard introduction in English (and in its Greek and Italian versions). An interest in format took shape in *Greek Manuscripts of*

²⁵ *New Fragments of the Misoumenos of Menander* (1965); *Proceedings of the British Academy*, lxiii (1978), 315 ff.

²⁶ *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, lxii (1976), 115 ff. (with M. E. Weinstein).

²⁷ *ibid.*, lx (1974), 239-42; *Le Monde Grec: Hommages à Claire Préaux* (1975), pp. 573-7; *Wiener Studien*, x (1976), 48-60.

the Ancient World (1971; a second edition, based on Turner's notes, appeared posthumously in 1987). In this, Turner's most indispensable book, the plates (at actual size, as he always required) stand in groups by literary genre, and provide a representative view of the material form in which Greek literature was transmitted through a thousand years; the introduction, in typically informal style, more an armchair discourse than a formal treatise, sets out the basics of format and script in less than thirty pages. A still more basic question is that of the physical form of the ancient book. Here there are formidable difficulties; papyri generally survive only in fragments, and reconstructing the original dimensions is a dangerous and (given the inadequate information which many older editions provide) arduous business. For the book-roll the systematic work is still to do; Turner left scattered observations, in *Greek Manuscripts* and in *The Terms Recto and Verso: the Anatomy of the Papyrus Roll* (1978). But for the codex, the triumphant parvenu of book forms, he completed a full-scale study in *The Typology of the Early Codex* (1977). This book collects the evidence, with all its attendant problems of dating and reconstruction; analyses dimensions, internal structure, and procedures of copying; and looks for historical development in shape, lay-out, and material (Turner doubts the priority of parchment over papyrus). No clear, simple patterns emerge; that was to be expected, and takes away nothing from the value of this immense pioneering labour.

As scholar and as internationalist, Turner received many honours. He held honorary doctorates from the Universities of Brussels (1965), Geneva (1976), and Liverpool (1978); and corresponding fellowships of the Academies of Finland (1969), Naples (1973), Belgium (1974), Denmark (1975), Austria (1975), and Leipzig (1976). He was a Fellow of the British Academy (1956), and a Member of the American Philosophical Society (1977); an Honorary Fellow of the Warburg Institute and of University College London (1978). The Crown honoured him with the CBE in 1975, and with a knighthood in 1981.

Turner retired from his chair on 30 September 1978. He had suffered further strain, and perhaps bitterness, when the College authorities hesitated for two years to renew the basic post (a Readership) because of financial stringency. The negotiations which followed reached even the gossip column of *The Times*,²⁸ but the College was eventually persuaded, and a distinguished

²⁸ 21 Dec. 1977 (with a reply, 5 Jan. 1978).

appointment made, to carry on the tradition which Turner had created.

The Turners retired to Fortrose on the Black Isle. One house they had owned since 1967, and used as a holiday retreat; later, in 1973, they added a second house next door, to make room for the books and the grand piano. In the old square, facing the ruins of Fortrose Cathedral, there was peace; and when necessary bus and ferry and the night train from Inverness brought him to London to do business. It should have been a peaceful and powerful retirement. Winter 1978 passed in Princeton; Turner intended to work on revising his *Greek Manuscripts*, but in the event spent much of his time on the Cohn Beaker. (The Beaker, in the collection of Mr Hans Cohn of Los Angeles, has a dramatic scene enamelled on the glass; there are also parts of an extensive inscription, which Turner dated to the first century BC. He took it all to be a scene of comedy; and later speculated, perhaps rashly, that the main figures represented Mark Antony and Cleopatra.)²⁹ By March 1979 he had put together the material for an extended edition of *Greek Papyri* (1980). The work on the prologue of *Misoumenos*, of which he was justifiably proud, appeared in final version in *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. xlviii, of 1981.

He was approaching his seventieth birthday, 26 February 1981. On the day he received the volume of texts prepared secretly for the occasion, *Papyri Greek and Egyptian, edited by various hands in honour of Eric Gardner Turner on the occasion of his seventieth birthday*, in which some fifty colleagues from some ten different countries combined to honour him; 'no scholar of his generation', says the preface, 'has done more for papyrology, and for the international collaboration of which papyrologists have always been proud, than Eric Turner.' Some months later, on 9 July, he went to the Palace of Holyrood House to be dubbed Knight.

But there were now serious problems with his health. He had continued to travel vigorously: in April and May 1979 he was lecturing in Athens, Jannina, and Thessaloniki; in early September he was in Budapest for the International Congress of Classical Studies; in late September he was back in Greece, touring the sites with a group of English scholars whom the Greek Government had invited to mark the centenary of the Hellenic Society. In Sparta, at the Menelaion, he collapsed, and returned to London in a wheelchair; the doctors diagnosed a heart attack, and not the first (though earlier attacks had been

²⁹ *Antike Kunst*, xxiv (1981), 39-65.

put down to an unknown virus, and treated with huge doses of aspirin). University College Hospital recommended a pace-maker. This did not deter him from attending, in July 1980, a congress of papyrologists in the grilling heat of New York. But that winter his doctor advised against coming to London for a celebration of his 70th birthday; and when he came on several visits in the first half of 1982 he was clearly weak and shrunken. In November 1982, and again in January–February 1983, he spent time in Raigmore Hospital. It did not stop him working. *Greek Manuscripts* was still in his mind (the award of a Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship helped); but he took time to complete, first, his history of the Graeco-Roman Branch of the Egypt Exploration Society, which appeared in the volume celebrating the Society's centenary;³⁰ and second, his obituary notice of Edgar Lobel, despatched in December 1982 and published after the author's death.³¹ His manuscript notes record the arrival of proofs of *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 1, to which he had contributed more Menander, and the publication of *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. xlix; he looked forward to the Papyrological Congress of Naples. But he was becoming steadily weaker; and died in his sleep on 20 April 1983.

Eric Turner was a man who enjoyed. It would not be difficult to see him as the typical established Englishman: the club, the Academy, the chairmanships; the fresh complexion and the baggy pin-stripes; a certain discreet authority, a touch of unassuming importance. But that ignores not only the energy and the determination, but the zest and the mischief. 'I let them talk till they're exhausted', was his recipe for handling committees; 'A man cannot be both impressive and truthful', he copied out for himself the phrase of E. M. Forster; papyrology's advantage, he told an undergraduate magazine, was that it upset established ideas, which was 'amusing, worthwhile and good for the mind'. Even the Institute of Classical Studies was in its way a gamble; Turner gambled, and confounded the pessimists. He travelled with enthusiasm (as well as a camera and a bottle of Scotch). He spoke his foreign languages with approximate vigour. He made music unselfconsciously, as violist, violinist, and pianist (members of the New York Congress will remember an impromptu recital); only three weeks before his death, an operation on his arthritic fingers (he watched it with interest) gave him the hope

³⁰ T. G. H. James (ed.), *Excavating in Egypt* (1982), pp. 161–78.

³¹ *Gnomon*, lv (1983), 275–80.

of playing the piano again. He listened to music avidly (even twenty-five years after, he was remembering a *Fidelio* in Vienna) and with an open mind: his scores included Bartok's *First Quartet* as well as *La Clemenza di Tito*, among the cassettes Couperin and Rameau rub shoulders with Boulez, Lutoslawski, and Shostakovich. Gadgets fascinated him—as an undergraduate he was much taken up with cars and trains; he was the first man in University College to use a dictaphone, and the first man in Fortrose to instal solar heating panels. At home in Scotland, he made excursions with the Scottish Georgian Society; waited with sang-froid to be rescued, when his dinghy capsized on the Beaully Firth; and celebrated the Black Isle in a Geographical Fugue after Ernst Toch ('Arpafelie, Tarradale, Jemimaville, Rosemarkie, Fortrose . . .'). His brother, he once told me, died in his chair, after a good dinner, while listening to Verdi's *Requiem*: what more could a man want?

The same zest appears in his professional life. Papyrology, he told an interviewer, 'is always exciting. Sometimes I am in a state of continuous excitement for two or three weeks, always probing, trying for more information. One can never be quite satisfied. Perhaps my dream—perhaps I would be satisfied to find an absolutely intact book of Callimachus—but one's never satisfied.' His editorial work covered the widest range, from Greek tragedy to Latin curses, and included new finds of exceptional importance. Much of it is fundamental, but not final; Turner was not so acute or learned or disciplined as Lobel and Youtie, and he had no time to recheck and repolish. But it was he who did the basic work, and he who published it promptly; if others then improved on it, he accepted correction with all good humour ('just plain wrong', he noted of one of his own readings which a later editor had incautiously accepted). 'There is a sense', writes Professor Handley, 'in which he regarded himself, like the Institute he created, as a market-place of ideas. He kept at home a set of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* which was his filing system; into it went new bibliography, new readings, and all the voluminous correspondence and argument he had with scholars all over the world. The volumes almost burst their bindings; but they are the physical souvenir of his quite peculiar meticulousness in acknowledging the good he felt he had gained.'

His palaeographic work was in its way more remarkable. His writing on scripts and on formats show him as a pragmatist, both by inheritance (born to the empirical traditions of the North,

rather than the absolutist and codifying traditions of the South), but also by necessity, given the nature of the papyri—often fragmentary, sometimes of doubtful provenance, rarely carrying an objective date, never carrying the name of the scribe, in part the work of amateurs, in part the work of professionals for whose training and organization we have effectively no evidence. He brought to this material a sharp eye, a strong sense of the practicalities, and an enviable imaginative intelligence; his results and his categories remain central alike to the practice and to the theory of palaeography.

In all this the communicator and the internationalist are central. 'I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue', he quoted from Milton. Turner sought pupils, visited colleagues, answered enquiries, raised funds, chaired committees, held seminars, administered summer schools and lectured to audiences of all kinds with a generous enthusiasm not beneficial to his own work and health. He came to symbolize the *amicitia papyrologorum*; and noted Markland's manifesto for his own³²—'*Quo enim Eruditionis Nomen, si Barbarorum Animos retineamus? . . . Quid prodest, si pro Mitibus, Probis, Simplicibus, Ingenuis, Modestis, Benevolis erga omnes Homines, quales promittit Literata Institutio; ea nos dimittat Feroces, Maledicos, Versutos, Insolentes, Malignos, Implacabiles omnibus qui a nobis dissentire ausi fuerint, etiam in nugis?*' The range and importance of his own work, and the energy and amiability with which he forwarded the work of others, made him for many years the doyen of papyrologists world-wide, and their chief representative to other disciplines; there will be few now working in the subject who do not have kind memories of the scholar and organizer of scholarship, as friend, teacher, or colleague.

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I am deeply indebted to Lady Turner for information and for access to Sir Eric Turner's papers at Fortrose (among these, his own account of his career, written for the Vienna Academy in May 1975; and a very brief chronological sketch of his life, drawn up in his last months). Lady Turner, Dr Hilary Turner and Professor E. W. Handley read a draft of this notice; I owe them many additions and improvements.

For other information I am grateful to Professor Patrick Edwards, Miss A.

³² 'What profit is it if an education in letters, instead of making us, as it professes to, gentle, upright, simple, frank, modest and kindly towards all men, renders us fierce, virulent, cunning, arrogant, malignant and implacable towards all who presume to differ from us even in trifles?' Jeremiah Markland, Εὐριπίδου Ἰκέτιδες (London, 1763), p. iv.

Healey, Miss G. E. McDonald, Miss Frances Mills, Mr A. K. S. Slater, Miss Alicia Totolos, Professor David West, and Mr J. H. Woodroffe.

For a complete bibliography of Turner's writings see *Papyri Greek and Egyptian, edited . . . in honour of Eric Gardner Turner* (Egypt Exploration Society, Graeco-Roman Memoirs, lxxviii, 1981), pp. xiii ff. (to 1981); *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, lii (1984), p. ix (1981-3).

There have been many obituary notices: among the most striking, those by E. W. Handley (Address at the Memorial Service; *The Times* 22 April 1983); Homer Thompson (*Yearbook of the American Philosophical Society*, 1983 (published 1984); and M. Leroy (*Bulletin de l'Académie Royale de Belgique (Classe de Lettres)*, ix (Jan. 1984)).